



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Gov. Ricketts Joins NDOT, State and Local Dignitaries to Celebrate Progress on Lincoln South Beltway



Photos from today's event are available by [clicking here](#).

October 8, 2020 (Lincoln, Neb.) — Today, the Nebraska Department of Transportation (NDOT), together with Governor Pete Ricketts, Senator Deb Fischer, Congressman Jeff Fortenberry and other state and local dignitaries gathered to celebrate progress on construction of the Lincoln South Beltway. Through the collaborative efforts of NDOT and its partners, work is well underway on the \$352 million project to connect US Highway 77 (US-77) and Nebraska Highway 2 (N-2).

The NDOT has been working towards delivery of the South Beltway for decades and following passage of the Build Nebraska Act and the Transportation Innovation Act, they were able to partner with the City of Lincoln, Lancaster County and the US Department of Transportation to secure funding and prioritize the project. In spring of 2018, additional funds were available with the awarding of a \$25 million TIGER grant to NDOT.

“The Lincoln South Beltway has been talked about since the late ‘60s because of its potential to improve mobility, safety, and help grow Nebraska,” said Governor Ricketts. “The passage of the Transportation Innovation Act, along with continued innovative approaches from the Nebraska Department of Transportation helped move this project forward. These initiatives, along with Senator Fischer’s Build Nebraska Act and extensive partnership with our Nebraska Federal Highway administration officials, helped us reach this point. Thank you to Director



Schneweis, Chris Hawkins, and their teams who are finally helping turn this vision into reality.”

The Lincoln South Beltway is the largest and one of the most complex projects the NDOT has undertaken. Construction of the 11-mile east-west four-lane freeway will reduce congestion on Nebraska Highway 2 through Lincoln and improve regional mobility.

Preliminary work began in February, with construction beginning in earnest in May of 2020. Construction is anticipated to be completed in spring of 2024, a full four years ahead of the original schedule. NDOT announced the use of an innovative financing approach to accelerate construction of the project over three years while still allowing payment over the same eight-year time frame.

“I am proud to celebrate the progress on the Lincoln South Beltway, and glad to have helped with funding from my Build Nebraska Act,” said Senator Fischer. “I also helped secure a \$25 million federal TIGER grant, which will accelerate the construction schedule for this project. This new beltway will move Nebraska forward by reducing congestion and making Lincoln safer for our families.”

“It’s been a long and winding legislative road to get here today,” Congressman Jeff Fortenberry said. “It demonstrates the great things we can accomplish when we work together on the local, state and federal levels, and then stick with it to completion. I’ve seen this project from different angles, first as a member of the Lincoln City Council when it was in its formative stages, and then as a member of Congress when I helped provide federal support. The Lincoln South Beltway Project is one of the largest and grandest transportation initiatives in our state’s history. It will ease congestion and promote safety.”

“The expedited South Beltway will help transform Lincoln and is a testament to Nebraska’s ingenuity and energy and will help benefit citizens for decades to come,” said State Senator Mike Hilgers.

“While we still have a long way to go before the first vehicle travels along the beltway, today’s celebration represents a monumental accomplishment, said Lincoln Mayor Leirion Gaylor Baird. “The people of Lincoln, Lancaster County, and Nebraska can take great pride in the intergovernmental cooperation, the innovative ideas, the determination, and the hard work that have led us here.

“It is an honor to be working on the largest project ever for the State,” said Chris Hawkins, Chief Operating Officer of Hawkins Construction Company. “It took a lot of work to get here, with lots of challenges but also great opportunity. We are grateful to be partners on this historic project.”

“The people who got us here today come from all over our agency, our friends at Benesch and many more people who played key roles in getting this work accomplished,” said NDOT Director Kyle Schneweis. “I’m so proud to be a part of this team – the work they’ve accomplished to get us here is simply outstanding. But we couldn’t have done it alone. We have so many to thank, including Governor Ricketts, our FHWA partners, State legislators, Senator Fischer, Representative Fortenberry, the City of Lincoln and Lancaster County. But the work has just begun, and we have a long way to go. We look forward to coming back here in a few short years to celebrate the beltway completion and all the benefits it provides to our transportation system and the citizens of Nebraska.”

#NDOT#

Contact:

Jeni Campana, (402) 479-4512
jeni.campana@nebraska.gov