

NEBRASKA

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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Pete Ricketts, Governor

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Nebraska Department of Transportation Joins Local Community Celebration of Hwy 281 Bridge Opening South of Spencer

July 30, 2019 (Lincoln, Neb.) — Monday, the Nebraska Department of Transportation (NDOT) joined Governor Pete Ricketts and other state and local officials in celebrating, with the local community, the opening of Highway 281 over the Niobrara River south of Spencer. The highway has been closed since March 13 due to flooding that caused significant damage and washed out a segment of the highway just south of the bridge.

“The importance of getting the Highway 281 bridge opened back up and reconnecting the communities and people who have felt the effects of its closure can’t be overstated,” said Governor Ricketts. When bridges and highways are closed, it impacts people’s daily lives and routines tremendously – from getting to work, the store, or a doctor’s appointment or simply just driving up the road to visit family and friends – that’s why it was so important to get this bridge in place and get traffic moving again. I want to thank the community, NDOT, and all our private sector partners for their efforts and dedication on getting the temporary bridge constructed in an expedited time-period.”

Governor Ricketts was joined by State Senator Timothy Gragert; NDOT District 8 Engineer Mark Kovar; Chief Operating Officer Chris Hawkins from Hawkins Construction; Tom Pinder from Acrow Bridge; and John Prouty, from Prouty Construction, in celebrating the opening of Highway 281.

“This really was about partnership, patience, and persistence, and we are thankful we had all of that from the community and our industry partners. It was not easy to get to this day, but we are so pleased to have the road open and have traffic going over the river,” said Mark Kovar, NDOT District 8 Engineer.

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The NDOT partnered with contractors and subcontractors to open the temporary bridge and restore mobility within months of the historic 2019 flooding. Olsson, of Lincoln, Nebraska, worked alongside the NDOT on the design work of the project and on May 22, Hawkins Construction of Omaha was awarded the \$25,470,887 contract, which covers the temporary bridge and roadway as well as a permanent 1,050-foot bridge over the Niobrara River Channel.

Hawkins mobilized within hours and with the help of Acrow Corporation of America, of Parsippany, New Jersey, supplier of the temporary bridge; subcontractors Kirkham Michael, of Omaha, Nebraska, construction engineering; and Prouty Construction, of O'Neill, Nebraska, grading contractor, were able to open several days ahead of the projected August 1 contract date.

The temporary bridge will be open to one-lane traffic controlled by a traffic signal, with a 12-foot-wide width restriction. Motorists with legal loads are permitted to cross the bridge, but no overweight or over dimensional vehicles will be allowed. The traffic restriction will be in place until the permanent bridge is completed, currently scheduled for November 2020.

Completion of the entire project is anticipated to be spring of 2021. Motorists are reminded to use caution when driving through the construction zone and to wear seatbelts.

To view pictures from the Highway 281 opening please click here:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/138626721@N05/sets/72157709986409967/>

Photos can be used by crediting "Jake Daniels, NDOT."

#NDOT#

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