

Thank you.

To the more than 300 stakeholders who met with us in eight meetings over the span of five days across the state to discuss our project prioritization process, I sincerely appreciate your time, insights and willingness to listen to your neighbors about their transportation and economic needs.

I've seen this process work in other states, but I've never seen it work so well. I have a greater appreciation than ever for the residents of Nebraska. In meeting after meeting, you were willing to discuss scope options, think hard about which projects should take priority and be started first to deliver the biggest bang for the buck based on the data you had in front of you. The experiences and community information you brought was value added to the process and will be essential to the NDOR team as we finalize project prioritization. For a summary of trends heard in each community please review the daily blog at <http://roads.nebraska.gov/media/4842/july-summary.pdf>

I also want to thank the NDOR team. Dozens of people contributed behind the scenes – too many to thank here. The core leadership team, made up of Khalil Jaber, Brandie Neemann, Korey Donahoo, Amy Starr and Sarah Kugler facilitated every meeting and deserve to be recognized. There's tremendous value in having the same team members hear and then analyze feedback. As soon as we have completed that analysis, we'll share more specific meeting summaries.

In the meantime, a few overarching themes emerged which will inform our analysis and decision-making:

- Participants are supportive of the “build a great system, not a few great projects approach” as demonstrated by the breakout group discussions about scope options and prioritizing segments instead of prioritizing only a few long corridors.
- NDOR will take a hard look at some of the scope options. Participants pushed us for even more options and we'll keep working on that.
- Nebraskans know their communities best, and NDOR makes better decisions when we collaborate with communities. One of my favorite stories coming out of the Gering meeting was the input received from residents about a plant that closed across the state line and report that truck traffic seems to have increased in the area. I'm not sure whether the truck count has changed or not, but what I am sure about is that by listening to stakeholders, we are more aware of when conditions change. We needed to hear from you as we prepare to select the first round of projects under BNA/TIA – and we'll need to hear from you again before we select the next round.

In closing, the new state brand seems even more meaningful to me this week than last.

“Good Life. Great Journey.”

Thank you for being a part of this great journey with NDOR.

