

# NEBRASKA

Good Life. Great Journey.

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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Jim Pillen, Governor

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

# Governor Pillen Visits Five Nebraska Communities in Fly-Around Tour Focused on Connecting Nebraska

*Multidiscipline Approach to Supporting Nebraska: Transportation, Broadband, and Economic Development*

July 10, 2023 (Lincoln, Neb.) – On July 6, Governor Jim Pillen visited five communities to share more about his vision for a strong and resilient Nebraska through targeted infrastructure investments. His vision to grow Nebraska’s economy through reliable transportation and broadband is part of his commitment to maintaining and strengthening the quality of life for all Nebraskans. He was accompanied by Nebraska Department of Transportation (NDOT) Director Vicki Kramer, Nebraska Department of Economic Development (DED) Director K.C. Belitz, and State Broadband Director Patrick Haggerty.

The fly-around tour comes on the heels of NDOT releasing its Surface Transportation Program for fiscal year 2024, which outlines more than \$758 million in construction projects across the state as well as projects programmed for development 2025-2029. Nebraska’s state roads are critical to preserving the Good Life across the state – they connect Nebraskans and serve as the backbone of our economy. The projects in the Surface Transportation Program are not only intended to address crucial components to infrastructure, such as preserving existing roads and bridges and modernizations – they’re also crucial in improving safety, support farm to market needs and enhancing quality of life.

Governor Pillen also recently announced the award of \$405 million to Nebraska through the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) program awarded by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA). The BEAD funding will help expand high-speed internet to rural communities as well as address issues of digital equity. The Office of Broadband was established within the Nebraska Department of Transportation by Executive Order No. 23-02, and will be overseen by the new Director of Broadband, Patrick Haggerty.

Identifying strong business potential within Nebraska is another key priority of Governor Pillen and newly appointed director of the Nebraska Department of Economic Development, K.C. Belitz. The fly-around tour was an optimal opportunity to highlight the hard work of DED to advance higher education opportunities, develop youth talent and apprenticeships, revitalize existing economies, expand housing incentive programs in both rural and urban communities, and so much more.

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“Born and raised in rural Nebraska, I understand how mobility and accessibility are cornerstones to connection in our communities. From commuting safely on our roads to taking online college courses to expanding a brick-and-mortar business to having an online shop, it’s all a part of how Nebraska must continue to grow through connectivity,” said Governor Pillen. “Our state highway network has seen significant progress over the last decade, but we still have work to do. We must do better to get reliable high-speed internet. A connected Nebraska is a thriving Nebraska, and the Broadband Office, supported by NDOT, will provide the strategic and coordinated approach to deployment, bringing vital services to rural Nebraska and its local economies.

“Nebraskans understand the importance of a reliable transportation network, the NDOT’s investments enhance connectivity while supporting safety and increased economic opportunity,” said NDOT Director Vicki Kramer. “Governor Pillen, along with state and local leaders, have built on the commitments of the Build Nebraska Act to ensure we keep the momentum of the last ten years going through the next twenty. The projects selected for construction in the 2024 Surface Transportation Program represents the states dedication to maintaining our roadways through asset preservation as well as large scale capital improvement projects to support continued economic growth to grow Nebraska.”

“The historic investment in high-speed internet provides a unique opportunity for Nebraskans,” said State Broadband Director Patrick Haggerty. “We understand how important connectivity is for people every da High-speed internet allows better access to medical providers, improves opportunities for students, provides growth opportunities to small business, connects our families, and supports our economies. Our office, with the support of NDOT, looks forward to working with communities and providers to bring high-speed internet for all Nebraskans.”

“Economic development has dramatically shifted in recent years,” add K.C. Belitz, DED Director. “As partners come together from multiple disciplines to meet the needs of the state in workforce development, community development, and economic development, the need for reliable connections on our roadways and through high-speed internet is a priority for us all. Connections between partners remain key to achieving our unified goals.”

To view photos from today’s fly-around tour visit <https://flic.kr/s/aHBqjALqFw>.

#NDOT#

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