

WAYFINDER

2021, Issue 1



WAYFINDER

Published quarterly by the
Nebraska Dept. of Transportation
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Governor Pete Ricketts

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NEBRASKA

Good Life. Great Journey.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

ANNOUNCEMENT:

It is with great pleasure that we introduce to you our rebranded quarterly publication: **Wayfinder Magazine.**

Definition of Wayfinder: A sign, landmark, or other indicator used to assist people in navigating to a particular location.

As you may know, in 2017, the Department of Roads and the Department of Aeronautics merged to form the current Department of Transportation. Previously, the Department of Roads produced, and has produced up to this point, a magazine publication titled "Roadrunner." Unfortunately, that name does not lend itself to the inclusivity of the Department and all of the work that is encompassed here.

We hope this magazine will help our readers better understand the state of Nebraska, learn about the important work the Department is doing, and ultimately make your travels in and through the state the best Journey possible.

We hope each time you read through Wayfinder, the Department's tagline rings true; In Nebraska and on our highways, it truly is a **Good Life, Great Journey.**

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FROM THE DIRECTOR

As many of you are aware, I began my journey with the Nebraska Department of Transportation on March 15th. Before this great opportunity, I spent over 30 years with the Iowa Department of Transportation in various roles. While originally from Nebraska and a proud graduate of the University of Nebraska at Omaha, I found myself beginning my transportation career across the Missouri River in southwest Iowa. It was tough being a Husker as Iowan's strongly support their Cyclones and Hawkeyes. My experience at IDOT was equally split between field and central office responsibilities. My roles included being a district engineer and the director for IDOT's construction, maintenance, materials, local systems, specifications, and contracts functions. I've recently led the Strategic Planning Division, focusing on performance management, leadership development, strategic communication, legislative policy, business analytics, and research.

When the Director opportunity presented itself, it gave me a natural progression for my career and provided a way to come home. I have worked closely with NDOT in the past and knew this was an organization that I would like to become associated with. I hope to share my experiences and also learn from each of you.

Governor Ricketts has challenged each of us to create a transportation system that is efficient, effective, and focused on our customers' needs. There are five areas that I will focus on as I begin my tenure with the department. They are all equally important to me, and I will briefly define them below.

- **Partnership and Collaboration:** While we have a rich tradition of tackling challenges and getting things accomplished, the challenges that we will face in the future will require strong partnerships. These partnerships will include the public, local government, legislators, construction industry, engineering firms, academia, federal and state agencies, to name a few.



John R. Selmer

- **Customer Experience:** We need to continue to strive to understand our customers' needs not only from typical touchpoints but from the entire customer journey perspective.
- **Leadership Development:** We will all have the role of leadership at some point within our career. Is our environment conducive to the development of this talent?
- **Employee Engagement:** As we strive to meet future challenges, we need the skills and talents of all employees. We need to enhance current workflows/policies to allow for input, ownership, and accountability. This effort will also improve our understanding of the organization's purpose and progress.
- **Safety:** The work we do every day is rooted in safety, from the design of future roadways to the highway system's operation. Our goal is to provide a safe and reliable transportation system so that everyone goes home safe, including ourselves.

I'm sure that these focuses are not new to you or the department. I look forward to advancing the good work that has been accomplished to prepare us for what lies ahead.

I look forward to the next stage of the journey here at NDOT!

Gorynski Appointed to State Highway Commission



Alec Gorynski

Alec Gorynski, of Omaha, Nebraska, was appointed by Nebraska Governor Pete Ricketts on October 28, 2020 to serve as District 2 Commissioner on the Nebraska State Highway Commission. District 2 includes Douglas, Dodge, Sarpy and Washington counties, as well as part of Cass County. Gorynski succeeds E.J. Militti, whose official appointment ended in September 2019 after serving on the Commission since 2010. Gorynski's term runs through September 13, 2025.

Gorynski is a Nebraska native and was born and raised in Malcolm. He holds a Masters of Public Administration from the University of Nebraska at Omaha, and Bachelor of Science degrees in Psychology and Criminal Justice from Peru State College.

Gorynski is a community development funder, investor, technical expert, and leader with over a decade of experience across private, nonprofit, and government sectors. Currently he serves as the Vice President of Community Development and Corporate Philanthropy for First National Bank, and President of the First National Community Development Corporation.

Complementing his professional experience, Mr. Gorynski is a co-founder and board member of Spark – a community development intermediary; past-president and Treasurer of Omaha 100 – a nonprofit CDFI; and holds board and sub-committee positions with the Nebraska Arts Council, the Omaha Community Foundation, and InCommon Community Development. ▲

The State Highway Commission was created by the Nebraska Legislature in 1953 to ensure citizen input in the planning, design and operation of the state highway system. It acts as a liaison between the public and Nebraska Department of Transportation regarding highway matters and holds commission meetings throughout the year to provide a forum to receive public input.

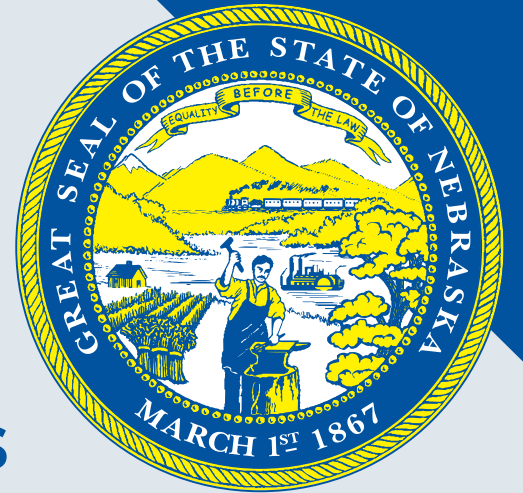
The Commission consists of eight private citizens with one member appointed from each of the eight highway districts. Each commissioner is appointed by the Governor and approved by the Legislature to serve a six-year term.

CURRENT STATE HIGHWAY COMMISSIONERS

NAME	CITY	COUNTY	DISTRICT	APPOINTED
David Copple	Norfolk	Madison	3	1/29/2009
Jerome Fagerland	Atkinson	Holt	8	10/01/2001
Mary Gerdes	Johnson	Nemaha	1	11/17/2015
Alec Gorynski	Omaha	Douglas	2	11/13/2020
Jim Hawks	North Platte	Lincoln	6	11/28/2017
Jim Kindig	Kenesaw	Adams	4	09/14/2011
Doug Leafgreen	Gering	Scotts Bluff	5	01/21/1999
Greg Wolford	McCook	Red Willow	7	10/01/1999

2021 NEBRASKA LEGISLATURE

Transportation and Telecommunication Committee Convenes



The 107th Nebraska Legislature convened January 6 for the start of its 90-day first session. Eight members of the body were elected to serve on the Transportation and Telecommunication Committee.

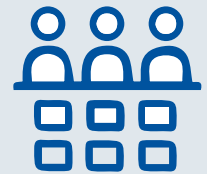
One of 14 standing committees of the Legislature, it is responsible for processing legislation involving motor vehicles, highways, railroads, common carriers and aeronautics. During session, the Committee meets on Mondays and Tuesdays in Room 1113 on the 1st Floor of the Capitol.

The Committee holds public hearings on bills, which begin in mid-January and last through early March, then decides which bills should be advanced to the full Legislature for debate.

LB 174 is one of the bills that will advance and is intended to modernize sections of law relating to the Nebraska Department of Transportation (NDOT) that have become outdated, streamline certain NDOT responsibilities, and make it easier for the public to interact with the NDOT.

The bill will:

- create efficiencies in licensure of local highway and street superintendents by allowing for one combined license instead of two,
- provide efficiencies in accident reporting by updating damage requirements and by not requiring parties in an accident to complete a report if law enforcement has already done so,
- redact customer information regarding accident reports to keep the private information safe, and
- make other technical/clean up changes in statute.



COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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Henderson, District 34

Vice Chairperson

Sen. Suzanne Geist
Lincoln, District 25

Sen. Joni Albrecht
Thurston, District 17

Sen. Bruce Bostelman
Brainard, District 23

Sen. Machaela Cavanaugh
Omaha, District 6

Sen. Wendy DeBoer
Bennington, District 10

Sen. Dan Hughes
Venango, District 44

Sen. Mike Moser
Columbus, District 22

Additional information about the Committee, including proposed bills, hearings scheduled and other updates can be found on the official Unicameral Legislature web page at <http://www.nebraskalegislature.gov/>

NDOT Ready to 'Spring' into Action with Safety Initiatives



As the busy construction season gets underway, NDOT has planned several safety initiatives to remind motorists of the need for increased awareness when traveling on Nebraska highways.

National Work Zone Awareness Week (NWZAW), April 26-30, focuses on the theme "Drive Safe, Work Safe, Save Lives." This annual spring campaign held at the start of construction season encourages safe driving through highway work zones. The key message is for drivers to use extra caution in work zones. NDOT and their contractor and construction partners urge motorists to slow down and keep their eyes on the road while driving through work zones.

In conjunction with the week, NDOT employees will also recognize "Go Orange Day" on April 28 by wearing orange t-shirts emblazoned with a safety message. Billboards featuring NDOT employees will be launched for display at several locations throughout the state during the construction season.



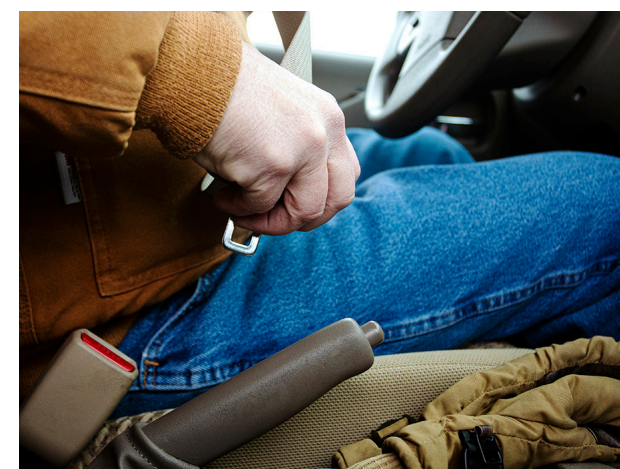
NDOT's first annual Buckle Up Phone Down (BUPD) Week, March 29 - April 2, focuses on reminding individuals, businesses and schools that two of the most impactful decisions that drivers can make are to buckle up and put their phone down. NDOT's latest [Buckle Up Phone Down ESPN ad](#) demonstrates the simplicity of the message.

Since the safety initiative was launched in October 2020, 19 businesses and 11 schools have accepted the BUPD challenge to always wear their seat belts and put their phones down while driving. Not only are they protecting themselves, they are role models for their families and communities.

Plans during BUPD week include partner spotlights and activities for students. Schools interested in becoming a Buckle Up Phone Down School can go to the [NDOT Buckle Up Phone Down website](#) to sign up and receive a starter kit with a packet of materials and posters. Additional resources are available on the BUPD toolbox for both schools and businesses.

Too often, many of our employees have encountered close calls by distracted or inattentive drivers. NDOT remains committed to educating the public about safe driving throughout the construction season. Your safe travel is our business.▲

ACCEPT THE CHALLENGE



Snow Fighters Battle 'BIG ONE'

NDOT snow fighters proved once again they were ready for anything that Mother Nature threw their way after a major winter storm blanketed much of central and eastern Nebraska on January 25 with record-breaking snowfall amounts.

The four official National Weather Service sites – Eppley, Valley, Lincoln and Norfolk – all set records for snow on January 25. Grand Island also received 10.4 inches of snow. It was the first time in 20 years that Lincoln received a foot of snow in a single day and just the sixth time since 1948 that 10 inches of snow was reached. In Omaha, it was the most snow in one day since 1975.

The snow began falling in the early morning hours of the 25th, then picked up speed...with snowfall averaging 1-2 inches an hour at times in some locations, including Lincoln, which was in the bullseye of the storm. The heavy snow and very poor visibility resulted in near blizzard conditions at times.

NDOT crews worked nonstop starting on the 24th, continuing through the 25th and beyond to clear Nebraska roadways and keep traffic moving. NDOT plows covered thousands of miles on Interstate 80 and other major highways around the state.

"This latest storm tested our forces with the amount of snow over a long period of time, said Moe Jamshidi, Acting Director of NDOT. "Thanks to their efforts, along with our partners at Nebraska State Patrol (NSP), we were able to keep our roadways open."

As a visual documentation of the speedy response of NDOT snow fighters, a look at 511.nebraska.gov showed hazardous driving conditions at 7:00 am on January 26 with pink (completely snow-covered) for most of central and eastern Nebraska. Another look eight hours later showed the roads had changed to blue (partially covered) and green (normal or wet). This is a true testament to how hard the snow crews worked and continued to work throughout the storm.

Several NDOT district engineers noted that this was no different than any other snowstorm, with the priority to get the roads cleared as quickly as possible to provide for the mobility and safety of the traveling public. That mantra was put to the test again in many parts of the state in the weeks that followed.

Although the snowfall amounts were not as great as the "BIG ONE," February was a very snowy month as well in many parts of the state, with Lincoln recording 14.8 inches through the end of the month and 47.8 inches so far for the season, compared to 26 inches in a normal winter and 17.6 inches recorded last winter. At that pace, the entire winter is likely to make history as one of the snowiest on record.

Kudos to our NDOT snow fighters who get the job done regardless of how big or how small the challenge! ▲



NDOT crews worked nonstop to clear Nebraska roadways and keep traffic moving. NDOT plows covered thousands of miles on Interstate 80 and other major highways around the state.



28 JAN 2021
KUDOS TO ROAD CREW

Email received from Cindy who resides in Cass County:

I want the Road Crew that have been clearing the snow, etc. to have a big KUDOS from this Cass County Resident and fellow state employee. I have traveled this route from my home in Cass County for 43 years. The older I get the more I appreciate the work of the road crews assigned to that stretch of highway. Monday morning my husband took me to work at 7 a.m., before the snow started...we met the crew on the way in....I had went to my office in downtown Lincoln so I could get paperwork to work on home...we left downtown Lincoln by 9:00, stopped for errands, were out on the highway by 10:30 and home by 11:00...saw the road crew out working...On Tuesday morning I left home at 9 a.m.the roads were snow packed but CLEAR and flat...winter driving for sure after a foot of snow...of course Lincoln was 14 but after clear sailing on the highway...mess at 84th & O street and as usual took me just as long to get to my office as it took me to get to Lincoln. Left Lincoln at 6:00 p.m. and was pleasantly surprised, my stretch of road from 84th & O home WAS CLEAR AND DRY...CRUISE ON THE WHOLE WAY HOME... so again thank you for the crew that gets this old lady to work (who should retire)!!!

Tom Goodbarn, District 1 Engineer Notes, "Don Warnke's crew out of Palmyra manages this section of Hwy. 34 and consistently delivers on their mission. I was very impressed by the performance delivered by our crews during this last big event."

Midwest Experiences Yet Another Historic Storm in March

Wyoming and Colorado received a record snowfall of 30 inches with high winds the weekend of March 13th. Nebraska also experienced wind, heavy rain and blizzard conditions. NDOT teammates and the Nebraska State Patrol worked flooding, snow and traffic control due to the closures in Wyoming. Nebraska closed I-80 in the western part of the state on Saturday evening and closures for westbound I-80 traffic continued to move eastward as facilities reached capacity. I-80 was reopened on Tuesday morning allowing travel to move west again.

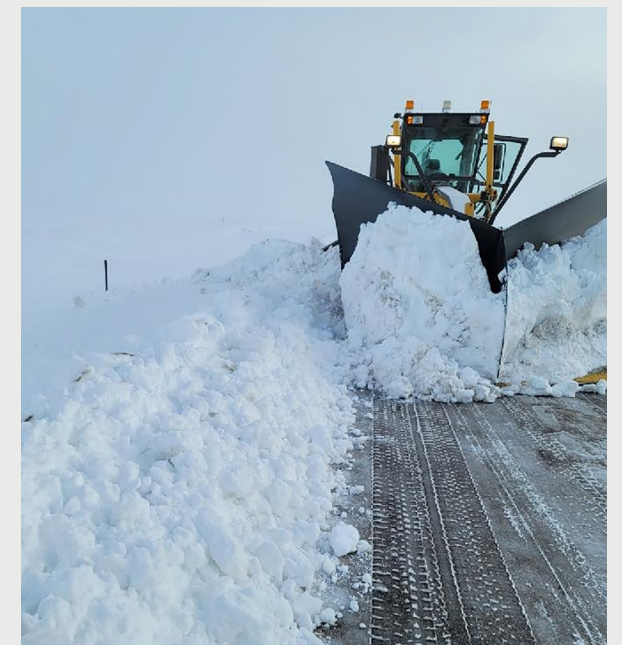
Snowfall Reports (in)			
1 Ssw Windy Peak	52.5	2 Se Yellow Pine Campgr	34.5
W Deep Creek Campground	32	Buford	31.5
11 Ne Chugwater	29	2 Ne Rob Roy Reservoir	27
2 Ssw North Cheyenne	26	1 Wnw Cheyenne	25.8
1 Ee Cheyenne	25	1 Ne Cheyenne	25
2 Ssw Federal	24	Ene Nash Fork Campground	22.5
2 Sse North Cheyenne	21.5	2 Sw Campbell Creek Cam	20.4
10 W Hawk Springs	20	1 Sse Wheatland	20
2 E Cheyenne	20	3 Ne Cheyenne	19.5
2 E Cheyenne	18.8	1 Nw Cheyenne	18.1

data valid as of 5:00:42 pm - WWS Cheyenne

Record snowfall amounts in Wyoming and Colorado forced the closure of westbound I-80 traffic in Nebraska.



NDOT teammates kept busy with blowing operations on I-80 near Kimball.



Blowing operations on I-80 near Kimball after March blizzard.



These trucks at North Platte began to journey west once westbound I-80 was opened to traffic on Tuesday, March 16th. Westbound I-80 traffic was forced to pull off as far east as Grand Island as facilities reached capacity.



Good Life. Great Journey.

STATEWIDE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

2040 STP: Looking Ahead to Nebraska's Transportation Future

The 2040 Statewide Transportation Plan (2040 STP) is a road map to the year 2040, which will guide NDOT into the future of Nebraska's transportation system. This is a pivotal time in the world of transportation, and the rate of change is only increasing.

The 2040 STP gives the state and its partners information about Nebraska's transportation system, including how it is funded and the influences that are most likely to cause changes between today and 2040. The 2040 STP uses this information to set 20-year goals and objectives for Nebraska's transportation system, set performance metrics for gauging progress, and set a course for evaluating and implementing new policies and processes. The 2040 STP ensures Nebraska is ready to rise to the challenges and opportunities on the road ahead to 2040 and continue its mission to provide the best possible statewide transportation system for the movement of people and goods.

This draft plan was developed through a collaborative effort with transportation partners and stakeholders as well as internal staff. This included feedback from a Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC) formed to help provide insight throughout the planning process. The SAC included transportation stakeholders and community leaders across Nebraska.

In January 2021, after many months of work, where stakeholder input, research, and data were compiled and reviewed, draft final recommendations were presented to the public during a virtual open house. This virtual engagement opportunity included an update on the long-range planning process to date and provided Nebraskans with an opportunity to provide feedback on various components of the plan, including potential future impacts to transportation, the plan's goals, objectives and recommendations.

Additional information on the virtual open house is available at www.2040ndotvoh.com. Questions may also be emailed to NDOT at LRTP@nebraska.gov. Once the public comment period is completed, the draft long-range Statewide 2040 Transportation Plan will be available for review and once approved, the final plan will be published. ▲

The Nebraska transportation system covers many different modes of transportation. From highways and bridges to airports and rail facilities, the Nebraska transportation system offers many modal options to move goods and people across Nebraska.

EXISTING INVENTORY AND CONDITIONS



ROADS

Nearly 21 billion vehicle miles traveled (VMT) in 2019
 1.42% average annual increase in VMT
 10,000 centerline miles on the state highway system
 Pavement 86.7% good condition

BRIDGES

3,523 bridges on the state system
 • 59.8% bridge deck area in good condition
 11,521 bridges on the local system
 • 57.6% bridge deck area in good condition

AVIATION

82 public airports
 • 8 providing commercial aviation
 • 14 moving air cargo

RAIL

11 freight rail companies operating on 3,488 miles of track
 1 passenger rail line with 5 stops
 38 intermodal facilities

SHARED TRANSPORTATION

6.6 million public transit trips in 2019
 Public transit in 82 of 93 counties
 5 private intercity bus carriers
 3 Transportation Network Companies (TNC)
 40 active vanpools
 6 Nebraska Mobility Management Regions

Business Intelligence Transforms Data for Improved Decision-Making

Business Intelligence (BI) has evolved at NDOT over the past five years, and is steadily gaining traction in the workplace. But, for those who haven't yet explored this option, what are the benefits of BI and how can it help you in accomplishing your work tasks?

By Linda Wilson
Communications & Public Policy Division

According to Lou Anne Daugherty, IT Supervisor in NDOT's Business Technology & Support Division, Business Intelligence is a process that uses strategies and technology for analyzing current and historical data, with the objective of improving decision-making. Or, simply stated, Business Intelligence (BI) transforms data into meaningful information that business decisions can be based on.

Daugherty has worked specifically with BI for the past 6 of her 32 years at NDOT and is excited about the data now available to NDOT employees to aid in making better business decisions. She leads a team of 12 talented individuals who work on Database Administration, BI, Report Administration, and GIS. They have implemented BI and Reporting Portals, GIS web applications for the State GIS portal as well as the Enterprise Data Warehouse (EDW). The team also works with divisions and districts to diagram business processes for replicated data.

"BI is used at NDOT for key performance indicators (KPI's) or performance measures to tell us how we are doing and where we can improve," said Daugherty. "It's a quick way to visualize where you are excelling or where there are problems. Divisions and districts can use the data and focus on answering specific performance questions."

"A good example would be the Roadway Design Task on Schedule Dashboard. It's a visualization of what percentage of tasks are completed on schedule compared to percentages of tasks completed. If you see a percentage that is high or low, you can drill down and find out why. Maybe it's a resource problem you need to address, or maybe a date has been entered incorrectly. This dashboard is a good example of 'how are we doing?'"

BI Portal Access

Over the five years that the NDOT BI Portal has been available, the dashboard site has evolved from a few dashboards to 49 and growing. This information is easily accessed through an online service portal, available on DOT Spot. To access the BI Portal, click on Tools and scroll to Business Intelligence Portal. The portal is arranged by divisions. Find the dashboard title you want to view and click on it. Also available are a list of dashboards and a link to the service portal to request access if needed.

As NDOT has grown and knowledge of business intelligence has increased, the BI Portal continues to improve and evolve. "We get feedback from the divisions and districts and most has been

"Business Intelligence is used at NDOT for key performance indicators or performance measures to tell us how we are doing and where we can improve."

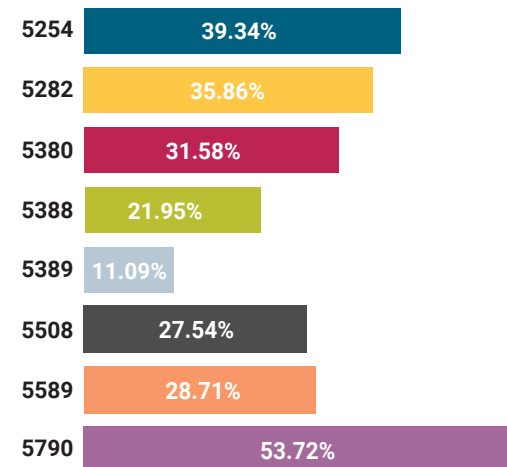
- Lou Anne Daugherty, IT Supervisor

positive, if we do receive unfavorable feedback, we use it to improve," said Daugherty. "Our highest dashboard usage was in October 2020 when we had 418 hits to the dashboards, January of 2021 we had 332 hits."

While BTSD provides a BI data and dashboard service, they also partner with the Strategic Planning Division in a project called Linking Infrastructure Challenges with Data (LINC-D). In this project, Strategic Planning contracts with a vendor to provide a higher level of BI that includes predictive analysis and machine learning.

Great Partnership

"This has been a great partnership between the two divisions as BTSD BI Developers work closely with the Performance Management Engineer, Korey Donahoo, in creating the district and division performance measures. Many more data analytics projects are planned in the future."



TASK ON-SCHEDULE COMPLETION DASHBOARD

Project Task ID	Project Task Name	No Right-of-Way	Right-of-Way Needed
5254	PUBLISH THE SCHEDULE	-22.0	-29.0
5282	INITIAL PROJECT REVIEW AND SETUP	-21.5	-28.5
5380	PLAN-IN-HAND VISIT	-14.0	-21.0
5388	SCOPING REPORT (PIH)	-13.5	-20.5
5389	DESIGN LOCS TO ROW		-19.5
5508	ROADWAY DESIGN DETAILS	-7.0	-11.0
5589	WATERWAY DATA SHEET TO EPU	-5.0	-10.0
5790	PLANS PACKAGE REVIEW	0.0	0.0

Task Completed on Scedule Percent



Task Completed Percent



According to Daugherty, BI would not have been possible without Data Governance, with knowledgeable representatives from the business side to help identify, define, and organize the enterprise data. The Data Governance Group meets twice a month to set guidelines to help the business side understand better how the data is sourced and where it ends up. The Data Governance site is available on DOT Spot by going to Teams and clicking on Data Governance.

The BI process has resulted in many new developments, including the creation of cubes (pivot tables), dashboards, chart select guides, and dashboard/report design guides. Daugherty remains optimistic for the future of BI, with plans in the works to bring more advanced data analysis to NDOT. They are also looking at data quality (DQ) tools to ensure that the data from the source systems is accurate and consistent. Yet another tool in the BI toolbox is Master Data Management (MDM).

Daugherty emphasized the importance of having accurate and consistent data available to all NDOT employees, adding, "What excites me the most about BI is that more and more users are asking about the data! The more eyes we have on the data, the better it becomes." ▲



NDOT's Bridge QA Program Provides Unique Approach

By Linda Wilson
Communications & Public Policy Division

NDOT's Bridge Quality Assurance (QA) Program is part of the National Bridge Inspection Standards (NBIS), established in 1968 with passage of the Federal-aid Highway Act by Congress to ensure the safety of the nation's bridges for the traveling public. The NBIS provides for the proper safety inspection of bridges and a program to train employees involved in bridge inspection to carry out the program.

The program requires that bridges exceeding 20 feet in total length are inspected at least once every 24 months by certified bridge inspectors. The Nebraska NBIS is responsible for managing over 15,000 bridges for safety and quality of data. This number includes both state and local bridges.

Nebraska's program stands out from others because it is one of a few that uses a consultant for its QA program. This is important because Federal Regulation requires states to be responsible for the safety inspection of all public road bridges in their state, regardless if the state owns the bridge or not. This also underscores the importance of counties conducting timely safety inspections of their bridges.

Extensive Program

Mark Traynowicz, State Bridge Engineer, noted that NDOT has a good working relationship with its counties, and the extensive QA program helps to fine tune the NBIS program in Nebraska so the certified bridge inspectors continue to get better at conducting safety inspections and keeping appropriate records. The QA program conducts random and focused reviews on every aspect of the NBIS program, from safety inspections to posting signs to bridge owners' records.

Babrak Niazi, NBIS Program Manager, oversees the successful completion of these reviews, working closely with NDOT's QA bridge consultant, TranSystems. He facilitates to alleviate any issues that may arise and to ensure the safety of Nebraska's over 15,000 bridges for the traveling public.

TranSystems, of Kansas City, Missouri, completed a Quality Assurance review using data from the 2019 National Bridge Inventory (NBI) dataset that was submitted to the FHWA in spring 2020 by NDOT. The review was accomplished using the sampling criteria outlined in Chapter 1 of the Nebraska Bridge Inspection Program Manual (BIPM). A report was prepared that summarized the findings and recommendations from the QA evaluation.

REVIEW RESULT	2016	2020
Compliant → All required items are included in file	30%	60%
Substantially Compliant → File is missing one required item	36%	29%
Non-Compliant → File is missing two or more required items	34%	11%

Nebraska Bridges: Highlights of 2020 QA Review

Inspection Frequency – The NBIS require bridges to be inspected within a Not-To-Exceed (NTE) interval of 24 months.

Key Finding: 94.8% (239 of 252) of the sampled bridges had an inspection interval within the NTE interval set in the Bridge Management AASHTOWare (BrM), an improvement of 7% from the previous year.

Bridge Inspection Quality Check – Team leaders are required to inspect and code bridges according to established national and state inspection procedures. These procedures are defined for each NBI and Nebraska item in the BIPM.

Key Finding: The average agreement rate of the major NBI structural condition items: Deck, Superstructure, Substructure, and Culvert is 90%, three points higher than the last cycle. The lowest score for an inspector last year was 70.6%, up significantly from 56.1% of last cycle. The average inspector score last year was 91.6%, an uptick from the previous year's 90.4%.

Bridge Owner Interviews for Record Keeping – Twenty individual owners were visited and 252 bridge records were reviewed in 2020. Individual bridge files were examined for completeness and compared to the requirements in Chapter 2 of the BIPM.

Key Findings: 89% of files reviewed last year had all information or were missing only one item; the previous year's owners' group was at 70% for this metric. Owners are increasingly storing complete or nearly complete bridge records.

A total of 252 bridge files were reviewed at 20 separate bridge owners' offices. Niazi noted that results for 2020 were substantially improved when compared with the previous four years. The majority of owners visited in 2020 were last seen in 2016. When comparing 2020 to 2016, nearly 95% of the bridges reviewed in 2020 were inspected within the required time interval. In addition, nearly 90% of files reviewed in 2020 were substantially complete, compared to 66% in 2016.

Excellent Reviews

The review covered 23 metrics developed by the FHWA, which are broadly categorized into areas of organization, qualification of personnel, and the frequency and procedures used in bridge inspections. (See sidebar for brief highlights of major findings from the review conducted by TranSystems last year.)

Niazi noted that TranSystems has provided excellent QA reviews over the past 8 years, and NDOT looks forward to working with Omaha, Nebraska-based QA consultant Schemmer Associates over the next few years as they continue the important work of the NBIS program.

"As the NBIS Program Manager, I have found the third-party quality assurance (QA) study to be a great tool for our team to identify weaknesses of the NDOT's NBIS program," said Niazi. "QA study by a third-party consultant provides meaningful results throughout the year for setting our team's future program objectives, along with the ability to continuously improve them."

David Mraz, FHWA Nebraska Division Office Bridge Engineer, applauded NDOT for their efforts, noting, "NDOT's National Bridge Inspection Standards (NBIS) Quality Assurance program clearly captures the spirit and intent of the NBIS Quality Control/Quality Assurance regulation. NDOT's leadership recognizes the importance of investing in an independent review by a consultant, thus providing beneficial feedback to its NBIS program manager in order to maintain NBIS compliance as well as greatly improve the overall quality of the state's NBIS program. Importantly, by investing these resources in their NBIS Quality Assurance program, NDOT achieves the goal of providing safe bridges for the traveling public throughout Nebraska." ▲

"NDOT's National Bridge Inspection Standards Quality Assurance program clearly captures the spirit and intent of the NBIS QC/QA regulation. Importantly, by investing these resources, NDOT achieves the goal of providing safe bridges for the traveling public throughout Nebraska."

- David Mraz, FHWA Nebraska Division Office Bridge Engineer



Bridge inspections are completed in accordance with National Bridge Inspection Standards (NBIS).



Drones are used to supplement visual inspections of bridges.

Aviation Art Contest 2021 Winners Announced

By David Morris
Division of Aeronautics Manager of Flight Operations

Since 1986, the Department of Transportation – Division of Aeronautics has sponsored an annual Aviation Art Contest for the benefit of our youth. The program goal is to motivate and encourage young people to become more familiar with and participate in aeronautics, engineering, math and science. There are three age categories of contestants: 6-9, 10-13 and 14-17 for boys and girls. This year's theme was "A Friendlier World With Air Sports."

In addition to receiving trophies, the first-, second- and third-place winners from each category will receive checks for \$150, \$100, and \$75, respectively. They will also receive postcards of their winning art poster. All winners will receive a certificate signed by the NDOT–Division of Aeronautics, Director Ann B. Richart, AAE, as well as a print of their winning poster.

Congratulations to all the contestants. Your work was outstanding and made tough decisions for the judging committee. Thank you to the parents, teachers and mentors for all the time, hard work and support you have put into this program.

A special "thank you" to the Nebraska Aviation Council (NAC) for providing checks for our contest winners. Without your continued generous support, this program would not exist. ▲



Category III Senior (Age 14-17)
First Place
Erica Heiman
Osmond Community School, Osmond



AVIATION
Category II Intermediate (Age 10-13)
First Place
Daniela Naranjo
Knickrehm Elementary, Grand Island



Category I Junior (age 6-9)
First Place
Nithin Mehta
Lincoln Christian School, Lincoln

ART CONTEST WINNERS

Category I Junior (Age 6-9):

- First – Nithin Mehta, Lincoln
- Second - Vivaan Mahapatra, Gretna
- Third - Julia McNamara, Papillion

Category II Intermediate (Age 10-13):

- First – Daniela Naranjo, Grand Island
- Second – Abigail Rempe, Grand Island
- Third – Marley Sepmore, Eagle

Category III Senior (Age 14-17):

- First – Erica Heiman, Osmond
- Second – Ella Kobza, Rulo
- Third – Elianna Bruxellas, Humboldt