



September 2021

The Heartland Expressway is a Federally designated, high priority corridor. When completed, the Heartland Expressway will provide four-lane, divided highway access between Rapid City, South Dakota and Denver, Colorado via Alliance, NE, Scottsbluff, NE and Brush Colorado.



*You're Invited!*

## 2021 HEARTLAND EXPRESSWAY ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEETING

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 22<sup>ND</sup>, 2021

11:30AM-1:00PM

WESTERN NEBRASKA

REGIONAL AIRPORT, SCOTTSBLUFF

\$20 REGISTRATION FEE -  
CASH OR CHECK ONLY

RSVP TO JULIA HERTAUS AT  
JULIAH@NEPADD.COM OR 308-633-6829  
BY SEPTEMBER 16<sup>TH</sup>, 2021

*Keynote by the new  
NDOT Director,  
John Selmer*



# Board of Directors



**Deb Cottier**  
Northwest Nebraska  
Development Corp.  
Chair



**Annie Folck**  
City of Gering  
Vice-Chair



**Julia Hertaus**  
Panhandle Area  
Development District  
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**Doug Leafgreen**  
Nebraska Highway  
Commission  
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**Joe Kiely**  
Port to Plains  
Alliance  
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**Doug Hoevet**  
NDOT District 5  
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**Karen Anderson**  
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**Elyse Schlake**  
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**Nathan Green**  
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**Tim Garwood**  
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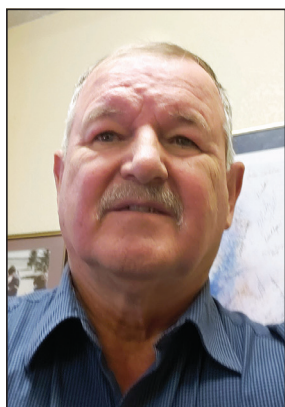
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Box Butte  
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**Pat Heath**  
City of Gering  
Alternate

## Notes From The Hill



**Deb Fischer**  
U.S. Senator, NE

“The Heartland Expressway connects communities across Nebraska and helps our producers bring their high-quality goods to destinations around the globe. The Build Nebraska Act, which I championed in the Nebraska Legislature, helped direct more funding to the expressway. I’ve also worked to secure federal grant money to keep it going. I’m happy to report that the U.S. Senate recently passed a bipartisan infrastructure bill that would provide roughly \$2.5 billion for Nebraska roads and highways. These investments will improve and update Nebraska infrastructure for years to come,”



**Adrian Smith**  
U.S. Congressman  
Third District, NE

“Trade is crucial to Nebraska’s Third District – the number one ag district in the nation – and the Heartland Expressway will connect it directly with its two leading trading partners of Canada and Mexico. This project links consumers, producers, farmers, ranchers, and small businesses to more efficient markets. I will continue to support this project which benefits Nebraskans.”



**John Stinner**  
Nebraska State Senator  
48th District, NE

“One of the federally designated high-priority corridors that will be positively impacted by the Transportation Innovation Act is the Heartland Expressway. This expressway connects Nebraska to other transportation networks, such as the Theodore Roosevelt Expressway in Montana, North & South Dakota and the Ports to Plains Corridor running from Denver, Colorado down to Monterrey in Mexico.

A few years ago, I had the pleasure of attending the Heartland Expressway’s Annual meeting, which outlined the work that had been done in connecting the Heartland Expressway to these surrounding networks. All of these efforts are a vital part of economic development

for rural Nebraska, connecting our entrepreneurs and small business owners to interstate and international commerce.”

## A Note From The Chair



Serving as Chair of the Heartland Expressway Association (HEA) this past year has been a challenge with perhaps less than stellar results. It’s difficult to gauge the interest level, or keep up the enthusiasm when you can’t even meet face to face!! We were not able to participate in the Ports to Plains Alliance, our umbrella organization, like usual, with their annual meeting being held virtually. We also did not make our annual ‘trek’ to Washington, DC to check the pulse of the federal programs, elected officials, and other partners. Like most of the rest of the world, we did what we could from the confines of our home towns, offices, and home-offices. But we persevered. The dedication of the volunteer members of this Association continues, even as we are faced with re-defining how we do our work. If the pandemic has taught us anything, it is that where there is a will there is a way.

We were fortunate to be able to plan and carry out a goal-setting session which has led us to an exciting new venture to improve our communications efforts with a solid new plan. We will be sharing some of the key items from that plan at our Annual Meeting luncheon as we officially unveil our new look which we will use to rebrand HEA as the organization that will lead us into the future. Sage Strategies, Inc. was selected to help us fine tune our message, our target audience and determine how best to reach as many people as we can who have a stake in the furthering of the 4 lane divided highway from Limon, Colorado to the South Dakota border, through western Nebraska and Eastern Wyoming.

We were pleased to stay engaged with NDOT. We said our farewell to Director Kyle Schneewis and welcome John Selmer to that position. We also were able to respond to a request from Congressman Smith’s office and coordinate a letter of support from NDOT to move forward on funding requests in the amount of \$10

million in directed spending for the next phase of the 4 lane. NDOT was quick to get behind our request to the Congressman to include Heartland Expressway in the renewed specific funding. We hope it remains in the reauthorization bill for the new transportation bill working its way through Congress right now. And a huge thank you to Congressman Smith for including us in his request. That is the kind of funding we are counting on to get this highway finished.

Our partnership through Ports to Plains has also seen some changes this year. Staff members have been faced with some health challenges, our long-time Washington lobbyist has retired, and the geography from one end of the corridor to the other has not gotten any shorter. Through it all, we have received support from all of them that has allowed us to stay in the game of chasing resources to improve our portion of the system. The work is so important in each of the 3 high priority corridors, including Ports to Plains to the south of us and Theodore Roosevelt Expressway to the north. I am thankful I was able to attend one board meeting in person this summer in Lubbock, and the work along the entire route continues.

We would not be able to do any of this work without the support from our members. I also want to give a special thanks to all the employers who give their staff the time to serve on this board. We all have ‘real’ jobs but are able to devote some time and talent to this cause. That does not go unnoticed. Thank you.

One thing that has not changed this year is our commitment to seeing improvements made on the state and national highway system. We learned during the pandemic how critical supply chains are, how dependent we are on trucking to move goods and how much better the system could be if we had a single designated, 4-lane divided highway all the way from Mexico to Canada. The Ports to Plains Alliance is as important if not more so today, and we will not give up on the idea until we are successful. We invite you to join us. Please take a moment and read this annual report and if you are interested, give me a call and let’s talk about what your business, community, organization, or just you personally can do to help us on our journey.

*- Deb Cottier*  
Chair of Heartland  
Expressway Association

# History of Heartland Expressway



**Doug Leafgreen**  
**Nebraska Highway Commission**  
 Ex-Officio

As a member of the state Highway Commission, I have been very pleased with the Nebraska Department of Transportation leadership in moving forward on the Heartland Expressway this past few years. This is such an important project for the Nebraska panhandle and movement of trade through the entire Heartland. Through improved safety, saving on travel time to improving economic opportunities. The Heartland Expressway is a win-win for everyone.

The Heartland Expressway is a major route to popular tourist destinations such as the Black Hills and Scotts Buff National Monument. In addition, the Heartland Expressway is the central portion of the Ports-to-Plains Corridor, for movement of goods and products between Mexico, the United States, and Canada.



**Doug Hoevet**  
**Department of Transportation**  
 District Five  
 Engineer

In the last publication we celebrated the opening of the expressway segment south of Alliance and reiterated NDOT's commitment to the corridor. NDOT demonstrated this continued commitment with the construction of the next section of the expressway. Those who travel south of Alliance will witness the considerable construction progress on US-385 north of the L-62A junction. Building a project with two new lanes is a simple concept, however, due to a number of site challenges construction has not been an easy task. Despite several challenges, it is clear that our contractors and staff have answered the call. Together they are producing a project that will enhance travel and be a project that will make Nebraskan's proud.

Future work on the Heartland Expressway will focus on the planning and design aspects of the next segments that connect Minatare with L-62A. For additional information regarding the Heartland or other transportation related topics, we encourage people to visit [www.dot.nebraska.gov](http://www.dot.nebraska.gov).



## A short timeline of the history of the Heartland Expressway

- ▲ Heartland Expressway vision of a four-lane highway connecting Denver, Colorado to Rapid City, SD was born in 1988.
- ▲ Heartland Expressway joined Port-to-Plains as a member on December 31, 2009.
- ▲ Corridor management study completed October 2014.
- ▲ Heartland Expressway Association joins 4 Lanes 4 Nebraska statewide expressway advocacy group September 2015.
- ▲ September 2016: NDOT public prioritization process results in selection of U.S. 26 from Minatare to U.S. 385 scheduled to begin construction by 2024.
- ▲ October 2017: Dedication of the Heartland Expressway ground breaking for the Alliance South portion (4 lane for 15 miles on US Hwy 385)
- ▲ October 2019: Opening of Alliance South portion

## Legislative Milestones

- **1988-** Construction of a statewide Expressway System in Nebraska mandated under LB 632 and LB 1041 to connect urban centers to the Interstate. Heartland Expressway from Kimball to Scottsbluff is included in this plan.
- **1991-** Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) passed into law, identifying the Heartland Expressway as a Federally Designated 'High Priority Corridor'.
- **2005-** Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient, Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) becomes law. South Dakota delegation secures \$70 million to finish construction of the Heartland Expressway from Rapid City to the Nebraska-South Dakota state line.
- **2011-** Build Nebraska Act (LB 84) is passed, providing funding for state highway capital improvement projects. 25% of funds are to be dedicated for expressway construction. Portion of the Heartland Expressway on US 385 included in Tier I projects.
- **2012-** Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) signed into law, providing two years of funding for surface transportation. There were no funding allocations to specific High Priority Corridor projects.
- **2013-** Wyoming approves a 10 cent fuel tax increase expected to generate \$71.8 million.
- **2015-** Nebraska and South Dakota lawmakers approve 6 cent fuel tax increases expected to generate an additional \$75 million per year for state and local roads in Nebraska and \$40.5 million per year in South Dakota.
- **2015-** Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act) becomes law, providing 5 years of federal funding to surface transportation and the Highway Trust Fund.
- **2016-** Nebraska passes the Transportation Innovation Act in law, allocating a total \$450 million to Nebraska projects.
- **2017-** Law passed that allows for NEPA Assignment, wherein the state may legally assume environmental review responsibilities for highway construction. This also presumably shortens the time frame for construction by accomplishing that assessment sooner than the federal government can do it.
- **2018-** Nebraska lawmakers pass LB 1009 enabling an increase of expressway speed limits to 70 mph
- **2021-** Congressman Smith requested \$10 million of designated spending to be included in federal legislation to the Heartland Expressway.

# Recent Highlights

## Schenendorf Retires



The Heartland Expressway Association wishes a fond farewell to Jack Schenendorf, the lobbyist for Ports to Plains Alliance for past decade and a half, who retired the end of July. Jack is a bit of a legend in DC, particularly in the transportation realm, having served as committee staff for the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee of the House before signing on with Covington & Burling. As our lobbyist, we depended on Jack to not only help us navigate Washington DC, but to have the experience to know when to push an issue and when to wait and see. We will miss his counsel and his friendship. We wish him the best retirement can bring. We look forward to

building a relationship with Hance Scarborough, who has long represented the TX end of the corridor, and who will take over duties in Washington as well.



**Though separated for over a year by pandemic restrictions, work has continued to progress along the entire corridor. Deb Cottier, HEA Chairman, was able to attend the in-person Ports-to-Plains meeting held in Lubbock, TX this summer**



**Thank you to Greg Yanker, Milo Rust, and Bill Law for serving on the Heartland Expressway Association board. We appreciate the service you gave to this organization and wish you well in your future endeavors.**



Beginning in January 2021, the Heartland Expressway Association board sought out a new communication plan, better marketing strategies, and fresh look to come out of quarantine with. With leadership from Terry Rajewich, formerly with Nebraska Public Power District, our organization attended a strategic planning workshop in which goals were set, concerns for the future were voiced, and motivation was built. Sage Strategies, Inc. was selected to aid us in the new communication and marketing venture but also has a great deal of knowledge on the Ports-to-Plains corridor which is a bonus. The goal has always and will always be to reach the greater audience of the four-lane divided highway from Limon, Colorado to the South Dakota border, through Western Nebraska and Eastern Wyoming and continue to further its progress. Our grand reveal of the HEA rebrand will take place at our Annual Meeting on September 22, 2021 over a luncheon at the Western Nebraska Regional Airport in Scottsbluff.

# What are the Benefits?

## Benefits of the Corridor...

Since 1988, the Heartland Expressway vision has realized the value in a safe and reliable transportation corridor connecting Western Nebraska and Eastern Wyoming communities with the Colorado front range and Black Hills of South Dakota.

Congress has designated the Heartland Expressway as a **'High Priority Corridor'** since 1991.

### Economic Benefits

Nebraska Trade Partners via Trucking:



Canada: \$1.571 Billion



Mexico \$659 Million

- The Ports-to-Plains Alliance Corridor accounts for over 25% of US trade with Mexico and Canada.
- Heartland Expressway completion will bring an estimated average:
  - \$2.5 million annual savings from accident reduction
  - 385-950 additional annual jobs
  - \$9.5-\$24.8 million in annual earnings

2014 NDOT Corridor Development and Management Plan  
Nebraska Department of Economic Development

## Ensuring Rural Highway Safety

**1.5 to 1:** Rate of fatal crashes per total crashes on two-lane roads vs. four-lane roads in Nebraska

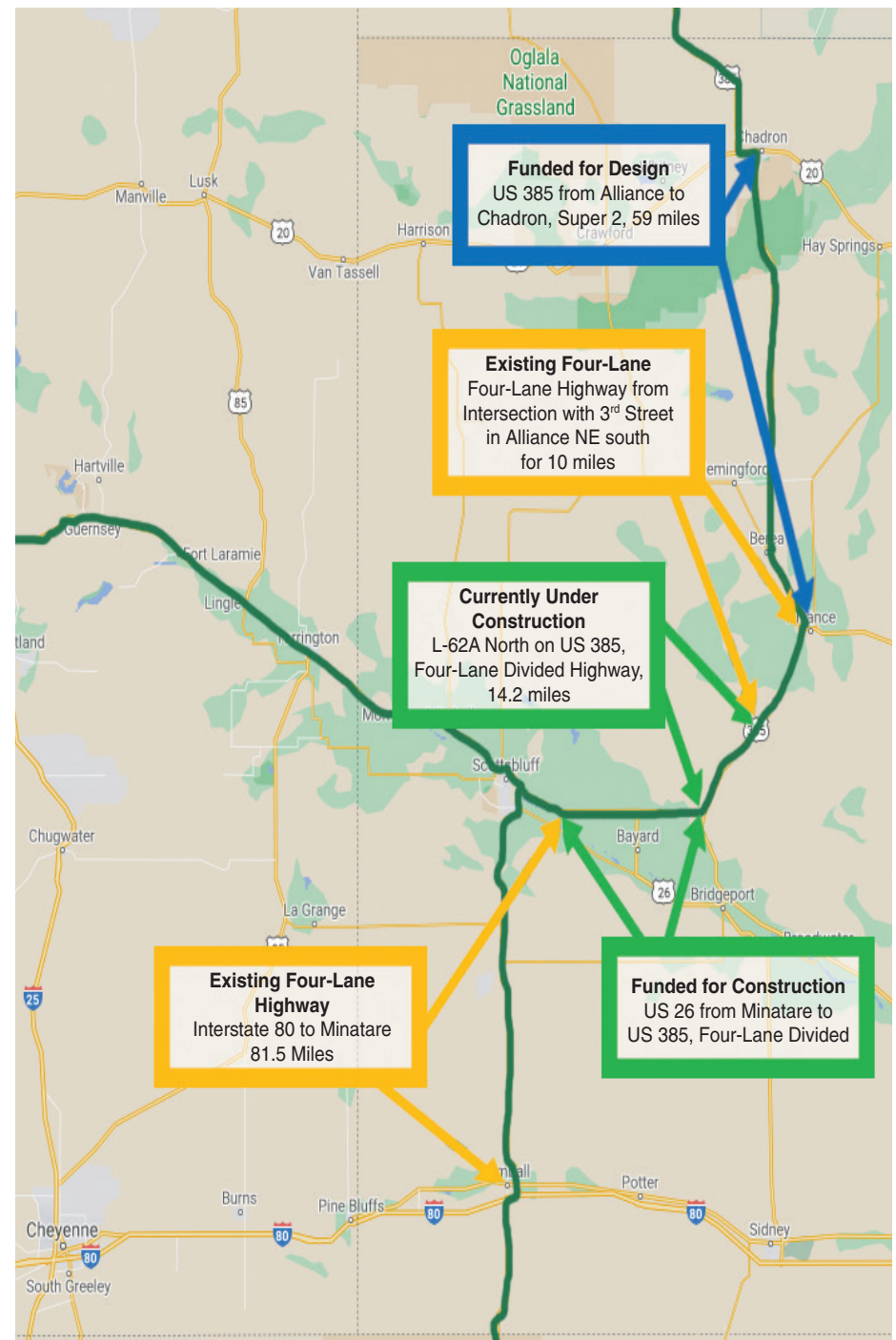
**3 to 1:** Rate of fatal accidents on rural roads vs. urban roads in Nebraska

**12** fatalities were recorded on unfinished Heartland Expressway roads from 2014- 2018

Nebraska Department of Transportation  
2016 - 2018 Crash Data

## Corridor Construction Update

Heartland Expressway Association would like to extend the deepest gratitude to the state for the continued communication.



## Ports-to-Plains History

In 2008, the Heartland Expressway Association (HEA) was formalizing their board of directors and association status. The Ports-to-Plains (P2P) Expressway was expanding their reach to include Canada and Mexico. The cooperation between 3 federally designated high priority transportation corridors (Ports-to-Plains, Heartland and Teddy Roosevelt Expressways) developed mutually beneficial strategies to impact federal allocation of US Highway Administration budgets. HEA has a seat on the board of Ports-to-Plains, is included in planning of joint ventures (such as the annual Washington, DC Fly-In) and participates in board meetings and the annual meeting. This team provides support, participation and coordination between HEA and the other 2 portions of the Alliance. We are grateful for their assistance.



**John Osborne Ports-to-Plains Chairman**  
Ports-to-Plains Alliance Chairman, from Lubbock, TX manages the board from the Alliance perspective as well as the southern leg of the corridor specifically, which requires a great deal of balance.

## Ports-to-Plains Alliance Partners

**ND Theodore Roosevelt Expressway**

**MT Cal Klewin**  
cal@trexpressway.com

Visit our Websites!

[www.trexpressway.com](http://www.trexpressway.com)

[www.heartlandexpressway.com](http://www.heartlandexpressway.com)

[www.portstoplains.com](http://www.portstoplains.com)

**SD Black Hills Community Economic Development**

**Fran White**  
fwhite@tie.net

**NE Heartland Expressway**

**Julia Hertaus**  
juliah@nepadd.com

**WY City of Torrington**

**Billy Janes**  
bjanes@torringtonwy.gov

**CO Port-to-Plains Expressway**

**Joe Kiely**  
joe.kiely@portstoplains.com

**NM TX**



**Cal Klewin Theodore Roosevelt Expressway Executive Director**  
Cal Klewin, Executive Director of the Theodore Roosevelt Expressway, is a native of Bowman, North Dakota. His economic development background has allowed Klewin to promote the awareness and potential economic impacts that corridor infrastructure can have to a region.

## Ups and Downs for Heartland Expressway in Colorado

The past year saw a cross section of opportunities for the Highway 71 Heartland Expressway Corridor from Limon, Colorado to the Colorado-Nebraska border. Colorado Department of Transportation has included a \$27.38 million SH 71 Corridor Improvements projects in its 10-Year Vision Plan. This project includes reconstruction of corridor, shoulder widening, safety, operational, and Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) components. CDOT's Fact Sheet for the project with additional details in available at <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1xN1MhDR0SsvXqQTmfdOeeKcS1lbRPaQ0>.

In a lost opportunity was the effort to include the portion of the Heartland Expressway between I-70 at Limon and I-76 at Brush as part of a Future Interstate Designation along with the Ports-to-Plains Corridor in Colorado, Oklahoma, New Mexico and Texas. CDOT would not provide support for the designation.

# Join These Members

## Join these members!

### Gold

- Platte Valley Bank • Regional West Health Services
- Box Butte General Hospital

### Silver

- Panhandle Area Development District
- Black Hills Community Economic Development

### Bronze

- Alliance Tractor and Implement • Aulick Industries • Hiner Foundation

### Associate

- Alliance Chamber of Commerce
- Scottsbluff/Gering United Chamber of Commerce
- Ameri-Co Carriers • Twin Cities Development
- Panhandle Trails Intercity Public Transit

### Government Members

- Box Butte County • Scotts Bluff County
- City of Alliance • City of Chadron
- City of Gering • City of Kimball
- City of Scottsbluff • City of Terrytown
- City of Torrington



**Julia Hertaus**  
Panhandle Area  
Development District

Panhandle Area Development District's (PADD) partnership with the Heartland Expressway Association is one that naturally encompasses the entire Panhandle region as many entities are cross-represented between the two organizations.

I serve as the point of contact for HEA but am also in charge of preparing for meetings, billings, social media, graphic design work, event coordination, and many other tasks tied to the organization.

If you're interested in learning more about HEA, contact me and let's have a chat! I look forward to hearing from you and can be reached at [juliah@nepadd.com](mailto:juliah@nepadd.com) or 308-633-6829.



**Advocacy Support**

**Entity Name**

**Contact Name**

**Address**

**City**

**State**

**ZIP**

**E-mail Address**

## Advocacy Opportunities

- ☐ Heartland Expressway Advocate: \$5,000 or greater annually
- ☐ Pioneer Advocate: \$2,500-\$4,999 annually
- ☐ Gold: \$1,000-\$2,499 annually
- ☐ Silver: \$500-\$999 annually
- ☐ Bronze: \$250-\$499 annually
- ☐ Associate/Not for profit: \$100 annually
- ☐ Governmental Jurisdiction: \$0.36 per capita annually

**Join Today - [www.heartlandexpressway.com](http://www.heartlandexpressway.com)**