



NORTHWEST NEBRASKA

DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
CHADRON AND CRAWFORD



September
2025

Newsletter Published
Quarterly - 090125

from the Director's Desk

As I contemplate beginning my 16th year as Executive Director of NNDC Sept. 1, some things seem like they happened yesterday while others seem a lifetime ago.

What I do know is I am at a loss as to how to accurately sum up my feelings about it. As I begin to create a succession plan (sort of) for the next person to hold this position, I am easily distracted by walks down memory lane. Some of the best times of my life have been in this job. And they unmistakably connect to previous experiences that prepared me for further community development work. By far though, it's the people I remember most. And a whole bunch of them I no longer see often enough, but remain as colleagues, mentors, friends, confidantes and fellow Nebraska-lovers.

I have always believed the most important part of any meeting or conference is the social interaction and friendship building that takes place. And boy, have I been fortunate in that regard. Another goal I have aspired to, is to always enjoy what you do



– because the stress and headaches will always be there, but if you do not enjoy the process or at least the result, you will be miserable – a lot. I've had a lot of fun.

On a serious note, Chadron and Crawford deserve to have someone in this position who cares deeply about this place to take on the daily work of community building and people retention. As government and business both change at the speed of light (or at least the speed of the internet), keep in mind the things that actually matter to most people who live here. Find someone who will be equally concerned about quality of lifestyles as they are with job creation and filling storefronts. We have such an incredible place to live. I hope it can continue to be a source of inspiration when needed. This work is about caretaking and making that a center of how you approach development. NNDC needs your support – sharing your ideas, volunteering and financially contributing to keep this position in place. I hope you will be willing to help.

I will be retiring at the end of the year but hope to be involved in some projects into the future. I'll be watching and just a phone call away.

Boost Your Website Traffic Today!

Many businesses in Dawes County have realized that driving website traffic is essential to their growth and success. One effective way to achieve this is by leveraging the valuable backlinks available through the Northwest Nebraska Development Corporation (NNDC). NNDC membership not only enhances your online visibility but can also lead to an impressive increase in consumer visits to your website. In fact, studies show that business organization membership can result in nearly an 80% boost in traffic. Just having your business and website listed on the NNDC site can be worth thousands of dollars in revenue, making it a smart investment for any local business.

Backlinks (links from one website to another) are critical for improving your website's visibility on search engines. When your business is listed on the NNDC's website, you receive a high-quality backlink. This not

only enhances your site's credibility but also signals search engines that your business is trustworthy, which can lead to higher rankings in search results. The NNDC recently redesigned its website, making it a valuable source for these backlinks. A single quality backlink can have a significant impact on your website traffic. Search engines view these backlinks as endorsements, indicating that your business is a reliable source of information.

Additionally, being listed in the Northwest Nebraska Development Corporation directory creates local citations (consistent mentions of your business name, address, and phone number). These citations help improve your local SEO, making it easier for potential customers to find you when searching for services in your area. This translates to more visitors to your website.

While backlinks and local citations are crucial, the ben
(Continued on Page 3)

Digital Leap Forward: New Northwest Nebraska Development Corporation Website Showcases Value and Drives Investment

DAWES COUNTY, NE—The Northwest Nebraska Development Corporation (NNDC) is proud to introduce a new website, [nndc-chadron.com](https://www.nndc-chadron.com), created in partnership with Golden Shovel Agency. The website will be valuable for reinforcing the potential existing in the region and NNDC with existing members, while providing valuable resources to existing and potential new businesses.

“The new website will express our value to existing members, help us stay current with communication trends, and access real-time data on visits to existing and potential businesses,” said NNDC Executive Director Deb Cottier. “Additionally, the website will allow us to reach a larger market than Dawes County and take our message to more potential recruitment possibilities.”

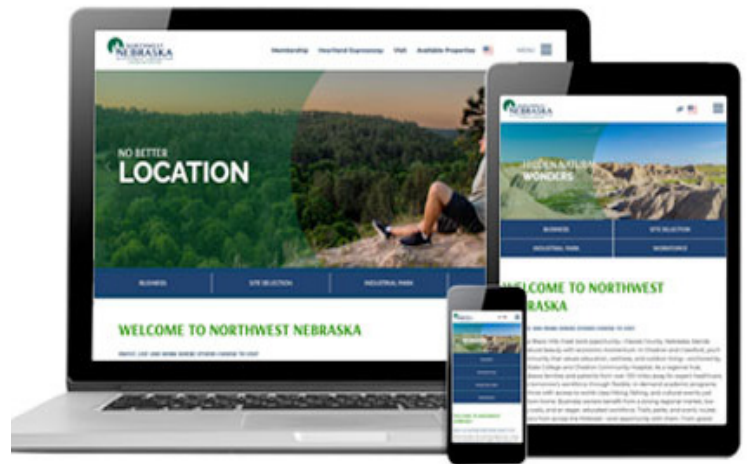
The website’s modern format is immediately noticeable with the ability to click directly to sites/information, offering clients immediate access to information while associating that critical data with NNDC. The membership directory is easily accessible for members and potential customers interested in what the members provide.

“I appreciate that priority links on the homepage, such as Sites or Heartland Expressway, are easily found, and I’m excited to have a place to post pertinent news items. And I’m so happy with the look of the pages – photography, graphics, etc.,” said Cottier. “A new benefit we will gain from the site is dynamic analytics to inform the organization and Board of Directors of site usage to better direct marketing efforts on quarterly data.”

The new website will help Cottier address the organization’s main goals, such as the Heartland Expressway advocacy and a workforce development project called Career Connections of Western Nebraska. Chadron will host a career exploration day on September 24 for 250 high school sophomores from the region, attending hands-on sessions in five different Career Pathways (Health, Education, Ag, Criminal Justice & Trades) with three stops each at local businesses. Local businesses benefit from this assistance by keeping the region’s local employee base.

NNDC worked closely with Golden Shovel Agency on a marketing blueprint that ultimately led to the creation of the new website in partnership, geared to economic development in the region. Golden Shovel Agency will continue to support the organization’s goals in small business support, resident attraction, and long-term growth.

“I am thankful that we first had a marketing blueprint



created by Golden Shovel Agency. That set the stage for getting buy-in from the Board of Directors and ultimately our grant funding source to further redesign our website,” said Cottier. “The two projects fit well for our small organization to have a document that was developed with a lot of community input, that provided some framework for building a new website. I have found the Golden Shovel Agency staff knowledgeable, receptive to suggestions, accessible for questions and frankly, easier to work with than I expected, given the physical distance.”

To explore Northwest Nebraska Development Corporation’s new website and learn more about the region’s opportunities, please visit <https://www.nndc-chadron.com/>.

NORTHWEST NEBRASKA DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION is committed to fostering economic growth and enhancing the quality of life across Dawes County, Nebraska. Established to support business owners, workforce talent, existing local businesses, and tourists, NNDC has a mission centered around creating vibrant economic opportunities and positioning Dawes County as an attractive destination to live, work, and explore.

GOLDEN SHOVEL AGENCY is a full-service economic development communications firm that helps communities, regions, and states grow and prosper. With over a decade of experience in the industry, its team of experts provides tailored solutions to attract and retain businesses, create jobs, and promote economic growth. Golden Shovel Agency specializes in website development, marketing and branding, workforce development, strategic planning, and business retention and expansion. Its innovative approach and commitment to customer service have earned it a reputation as a trusted partner in economic development.





**Support Our
Hometown Teams!!**

Boost Your Website Traffic

(Continued from Page 1)

Benefits of being a member of the Northwest Nebraska Development Corporation extend beyond just online visibility. Membership provides access to a wealth of resources designed to elevate your business. This includes marketing exposure, credibility within the community, and valuable business referrals—all of which can further drive traffic to your website.

To fully leverage your membership in the Northwest Nebraska Development Corporation and enhance your website traffic, consider these practical strategies. Actively participate in events to increase your visibility in the community. Your business name will appear on event pages, providing additional opportunities for traffic generation.

In conclusion, joining the Northwest Nebraska Development Corporation is a smart investment that can have a substantial impact on your website traffic. By taking advantage of the authority, backlinks, and networking opportunities that come with NNDC membership, you can significantly enhance your online visibility and attract more visitors to your site. Take an active role, participate in events, contribute valuable content, and showcase your membership to maximize these benefits. An engaged presence within the Northwest Nebraska Development Corporation community can be a game-changer for your website traffic, ultimately leading to increased sales for your business.



“Like Us” on Facebook!

Address is:

<https://www.facebook.com/home.php#!pages/Nebraska-Northwest-Development-Corporation/168528639830938>

Or Visit Our Website at:

www.nndc.chadron-nebraska.com

Heartland Expressway Assoc. Hosts Annual Meeting

More than 30 people attended the Heartland Expressway Association’s annual meeting luncheon in Alliance the 21st of August. We were happy to see elected officials, federal elected officials’ representatives, a State Senator and friends old and new.

The annual report includes some of the highlights of the entire year and can be found on our facebook page. We are always happy to hear from NDOT about current projects, and we had Austin Kellogg, Construction Engineer for District 5, at our meeting. He shared some timelines for the next phase of building 2 more lanes of highway from the eastern city limits of Minatare further east to the junction of L62a and US highway 385 at Angora hill. The complexities

of moving utilities, planning around irrigation ditches and rights of way acquisition make for a logistical puzzle. But the plans are in place to move some dirt yet in 2025 in



Lauren Garduno at Luncheon

(Continued on Page 3)

Heartland Annual Meeting--

(Continued from Page 2)

order to utilize some federal funds dedicated to the project. Most of the new work will begin in 2026. The improvements on Chadron North (from highways 20 and 385 junction) are also on track to begin in 2026. This will include a good deal of asphalt (resurfacing and rebuilding the shoulders completely along the 16-mile route to the state line). There will also be 2 passing lanes added to make the road safer. He shared that other items from along the route (from Alliance to Chadron) are still on planning documents but would likely not be added to the 4 year plan until approximately 2030.



This update highlights one of the biggest struggles we have in building this 4-lane divided highway. It must be done in pieces to be affordable for the NDOT to attempt to complete. That means multiple years of study, planning, design work – a piece at a time. The Ports to Plains Alliance has been aware of this issue for the 3 expressways that make up that route. It just takes so long to get anything of distance accomplished in a rural area where towns, activities and businesses are so far apart. In view of that reality, Ports to Plains has launched a bold endeavor to coalesce efforts and provide some solutions for the 8 states involved in the corridor (from south TX on the Mexico border to Montana’s Port of Raymond crossing into Canada).

Lauren Garduno, CEO of Ports to Plains was our keynote speaker and he laid out the plans to ask that federal legislation be considered next year (the Reauthorization of the Surface Transportation Act) in Congress to include the creation of a new Interstate funding program. The ‘ask’ will include 3 things: 1. Naming the remaining Ports to Plains Corridor (northernmost portion of Ports to Plains Expressway and all of the Heartland and Theodore Roosevelt Expressways) as Future Interstates; 2. Asking that a multi-state Interstate feasibility study be completed on that route; and 3. There be created an Interstate funding formula similar the one that built the existing Eisenhower Interstate system. This would provide funds for states to apply for to finish all the multi-state Future Interstate projects that exist in the US. These funds would be in addition to existing funds each state currently receives. This is a huge effort, and we have enlisted Ports to Plains lobbyists at Hance Scarborough in Washington to find other organizations in the US who might be willing to sign on to this effort. We are collecting signed resolutions from elected officials to prove to DOT’s and the federal representatives that this is an idea whose time has come.

This is an enormous task, and one that may take multiple attempts. The Ports to Plains board feels as though the administration currently in office may be receptive to a large-scale, nation-wide impact program. The results may not be fully realized for years, but it is something that



Crowd at Annual Meeting

needs to take place to build a secure economy in the heartland. Many innovations, safety improvements and opportunities can come to each of the communities along the route if this becomes a reality. And Nebraska is literally in the middle of the route. We have demonstrated our desire and ability to work together to improve our access

NNDC Board of Directors 2025

- Drew PopePresident
 - *Crites & Shaffer*
- April GrantVice President
 - *Crawford City Council*
- Corey PourierTreasurer
 - *Big Bats*
- Rob BilaSecretary
 - *Platte Valley Bank*
- Sydney HolmesBoard Member
 - *Chadron Community Hospital*
- Dr. Ron PattersonBoard Member
 - *Chadron State College*
- Jennifer BransonBoard Member
 - *NPPD*
- Jessica SanfordBoard Member
 - *Dawes County Abstract*
- George KleinBoard Member
 - *Chadron City Council*
- Alicia RobertsonBoard Member
 - *Crawford Livestock*
- Jake StewartBoard Member
 - *Dawes County Commission*
- Past President
- Jennifer BrownEx Officio
 - *CFO Chadron Community Hospital*
- Tom MenkeEx Officio
 - *City Manager*

STAFF

Deb Cottier, Executive Director Northwest
Nebraska Development Corp.

337 Main Street • Chadron, NE 69337
432-4023 (work) • 430-5959 (cell)

NNDC is an equal opportunity provider and employer.