

## 20 Years of Advocacy – A Snapshot

*As published in Highway 20 West Association and US 20 Corridor Association newsletters  
Not a comprehensive history of the Association or the project*

---

### July 1994

- *“Currently US 20 from Sioux City to Moorland is divided into two sections in the Planning Study section of the Five Year Transportation Improvement Program. One section is from Sioux City to Early and the other is from Early to Moorland. As you know, a Corridor Development Study was completed in 1992 and our office began location work on the Early to Moorland section in 2003. Even though work is occasionally interrupted to work on other projects, we are continually moving forward on the US 20 location study. A time frame on an Environmental Statement has not been set.*

*“Although not directly related to US 20 West, but important to the US 20 corridor as a whole, a decision has been reached on the alignment of relocated US 20 through the Iowa River greenbelt area in Hardin County. That decision will allow the completion of a new facility from Iowa Falls to Cedar Falls/Waterloo.”*

-Martin J. Sankey, P.E., Office of Project Planning, Iowa DOT

### November 1994

- *“...please accept this letter as my personal support for completing the 4-lane alternative on U.S. Highway 20 between Fort Dodge and Sioux City.*

*“I have consistently and strongly supported the completion of Highway 20 all the way across the State of Iowa for a number of reasons. Primarily, the completion of Highway 20 will help reduce traffic on the already congested Interstate 80 and increase economic development opportunities for northwest Iowa.”*

-Terry E. Branstad, Governor

- US 20 West Association becomes permanent sub group of the US 20 Corridor Association.

### January 1995

- *“In November of 1993, the Federal Office of Management and Budget advised all states, through the Federal Highway Administration, that any funds for projects provided by the appropriations process but not yet obligated or under construction would be withdrawn by Congress in an effort to balance the national budget. Iowa had two such special-funded projects that were rescinded, one of them being the US 20 corridor project. The Department resisted the withdrawal, but to no avail. Consequently, those Congressional funds (about \$1.5 million) are no longer available for the US 20 corridor segment under discussion.*

*“The withdrawal of said Federal dollars has not altered the Planning Section priority on this corridor segment. The Department continues to fund from other sources the ongoing work of Location and Environmental Study for the corridor. It is anticipated that this work will be completed in the next year. “*

-Richard D. Michaelis, P.E. Transportation Center Planner, Iowa DOT

### **March 1995**

- *“We began to study possible alternatives for improvements to the segment of US 20 between Moorland and Moville in 1991. A corridor feasibility and development study was completed in December 1992. A number of alternative improvements were analyzed, with the key feasibility test being whether an improved corridor will general sufficient net economic development to warrant the investment. The report showed that from the corridor perspective the expenditure of funds to improve US 20 would be beneficial. “*

-Darrel Rensink, Director, Iowa DOT

### **June 1996**

- *“The 1996 session Legislature brought good news for supporters of a 4-lane Highway 20 across Iowa.*

*“A key piece of legislation – House File 2421 – includes language that is favorable toward development of a new state transportation system known as “Access Iowa Highways.”*

*“If the bill is signed by the Governor, I believe that “Access Iowa Highways” will lead to a 4-lane Highway 20 from Sioux City to Dubuque.*

*“A key paragraph in the bill requires the DOT to designate portions of the Commercial and Industrial Network of highways as “Access Iowa Highways” and includes:*

- *The direct and priority linkages between economic centers within the state with populations of at least 20,000; and*
- *The enhancements of intrastate mobility in Iowa.”*

- Senator Rod Halvorson, Fort Dodge

### **January 1997**

- *“Congratulations on your recent accomplishment! The DOT Commissioners’ vote to approve the right-of-way purchase and engineering study for 4-lane Highway 20 is a magnificent milestone on the way to realizing the dream that some of you have worked on for as many as 25 years. The credit goes to those who have worked the longest, the hardest and with the most persistent determination.*

*“As members of the Transportation Appropriations Subcommittee, we pledge to continue our role in support of 4-lane Highway 20. As you know, this is the beginning of a new phase of our joint efforts. Now, we must maintain the momentum and acquire the funding to complete the project without losing the support of the Commissioners and the legislature. We will be there with you and for you. Thanks for your efforts. We hope, one day, to be in the parade at the grand opening of 4-lane Highway 20.”*

-Senator Steve King and Senator Mary Lou Freeman, Chair, Transportation Appropriations

- The first mention of legislative day is January 1997.

### **November 1997**

- Highway 20 Summit, November 19, 1997 in Iowa Falls with participants arriving by buses originating in Dubuque and Sioux City

### **May 1998**

- *“...the Commission moved the I-35 to U.S. Highway 65 stretch from the 1999 program schedule to 1998. This action will construct two bridges and place concrete paving on the previously graded two lanes, thus completing a 4-lane expressway between I-35 and south of Iowa Falls. In addition, the long-term schedule for Highway 65 to Iowa 14 and on to Dike is now set for construction in 2001 and 2002, with a 2003 completion - yes, again a 4-lane format. Adding these eastern sections is very important to further work on the western stretch from Fort Dodge to Sioux City as these sections will increase the amount of traffic and support needed to go all the way west. Further, officials estimate that the 80+ mile western section may be added to the 2006 to 2010 construction planning on this western section and will purchase right-of-way in 2001 – again on a 4-lane format.”*

-Floyd Magnusson, president, US 20 Corridor Association

### **July 1998**

- Hooray! The DOT Commissioners said Highway 20 as a 4-lane corridor will be completed from the Mississippi River to the Missouri River by the year 2010. This was reported at their June 30 meeting.

### **November 1999**

- Land Acquisition Schedule – Moorland to Early

Webster County to Calhoun County line	2001-2002
Calhoun County	2002-2003
Calhoun County line to Early	2001-2003

## **April 2000**

- On Highway 20, the following schedule is currently in place:

Grundy County: 12 miles: Relocation from junction of Highway 14 to Black Hawk County to be paved in 2000.

Grundy County: 14 miles: Relocation from Hardin County line to east junction of Highway 14 – grade in 2001 and pave in 2002.

Bridge over Iowa River to be let in March 2000.

Hardin County: 13.2 miles: Relocation from US 65 to Grundy County – grade in 2000 and pave in 2001.

Webster County: 13.2 miles: Calhoun County line to Highway 169 – right-of-way in 2002-2003, grade 2004, pave 2005-2006.

Calhoun County: 24.3 miles: right-of-way 2002-2003, grade 2004, pave 2005-2006.

Sac County: 28.5 miles: right of way 2001-2003, grade 2005-2006, pave 2006+.

Highway 71 to Moville: 36 miles: 2006-2009.

## **October 2000**

- Ribbon Cutting Ceremony, November 3, 2000, Highway 20 south of Dike

## **January 2001**

- At the December meeting of the Highway 20 Corridor Association, two Iowa Department of Transportation staff members, Mark Johnson and Dakin Schultz, delivered a stunning blow. They told our Association the Highway 20 4-lane project had been set back two years.

At the January 9 DOT Commission meeting, Association members were told the project is back on track.

## **July 2001**

- Commission Chairman Tom Aller made the comment that, “At this point, the commission has not committed to finish this road in 2009. We may very well do that, but, I just wanted to be sure that someone did not go away thinking it was guaranteed.”

## February 2003

- *“During my tenure as a State Senator and my recent Congressional campaign, a top priority was to improve transportation in western Iowa. Expanding US Route 20 to a 4-lane highway across Iowa has been in the works for over 40 years. While the US 20 Corridor is almost finished, less than 97 miles from Fort Dodge to Sioux City, Iowa, remain to be completed. It is vital for western Iowa’s future economic growth that efforts be made to complete the Highway 20 project.”*

-Congressman Steve King

## April 2003

- *“I, too, recognize the benefits that this expanded highway could bring the cities’ and towns’ economies along that corridor. It is clear that the maintenance and development of Iowa’s infrastructure is important to our state. Completing a roadway that spans Iowa and connects to Chicago is important to the economy of Iowa’s 1<sup>st</sup> District.”*

-Congressman Jim Nussle

## May 2003

- Both the Iowa House and Senate passed Concurrent Resolutions in April 2003 supporting the completion of U.S. 20 across Iowa as a 4-lane. These resolutions were broadly supported in both chambers of the Iowa General Assembly with members of both majority parties signing on as sponsors. And legislators outside the U.S. 20 Corridor were supporters as well.

These Concurrent Resolutions support comments in Governor Vilsack’s 2010 commission plan for Iowa. Goal number four in the 2010 plan reads, “Develop the Environmental Corridor Comprehensive Plan for Highway 20, from Dubuque to Sioux City. This model for the future could link 50 communities, protect natural resources, enhance wildlife habitat, promote tourism, attract business, support agriculture and beautify the landscape.”

## September 2003

- More than 1000 people gathered on Friday, August 22, 2003, for the dedication and ribbon cutting on a 27-mile section of 4-lane U.S. Highway 20 in Hardin and Grundy Counties. While this milestone was heralded, sentiment for completing the project across the state was strong.

“A 4-lane highway means jobs... Ultimately we want to see this highway linked from Dubuque to Sioux City.” Governor Tom Vilsack

“We are committed to working with you on completing the project. We are committed to fulfilling that dream.” Congressman Tom Latham

“While it is fitting to celebrate the dedication of this one-of-a-kind bridge, we have much work ahead. I plan to work toward the final ribbon cutting when the entire U.S. 20 Corridor is completed.” Congressman Steve King

## **June 2004**

- More than 60 supporters of 4-lane U.S. 20 gathered in Webster County to break ground for several additional miles of the highway on April 23. With Congressman Tom Latham in attendance, the ceremony marks new westward expansion of 4-lane U.S. 20.

Congressman Latham, a long-time supporter of 4-lane U.S. 20, secured two separate appropriations from the federal budget totaling \$4 million for this seven mile section.

## **September 2004**

- Interest in the completion of U.S. Highway 20 as a 4-lane across Iowa brought together more than 128 representatives of business, industry, municipalities, and economic development at the recent U.S. 20 Summit. Organized by the U.S. 20 Corridor Association, the Summit provided a forum for supporters to state their case.

## **March 2005**

- Representatives of the US 20 Corridor Association presented petitions encouraging the swift completion of 4-lane US 20 across Iowa to the Iowa DOT Commission during their meeting February 8, 2005. The petitions contained approximately 10,000 signatures.

## **July 2005**

- 4-Lane US 20 Ribbon Cutting, Webster County, July 12
- At the June Iowa DOT Commission meeting, Commissioner Suzan Boden moved to include \$10 million for 4-lane US 20 in Webster, Calhoun, and Sac Counties in the 2006 Transportation Plan. This was unanimously approved by all Commissioners.
- The US 20 Corridor Association has authorized the development of a political action committee to support our cause for promoting the completion of US 20 as a 4-lane across Iowa. The resulting committee, PAC 4\*20, has been established and is now accepting donations.

## **September 2005**

- The \$21.4 million earmarked in the transportation bill for 4-lane US 20 in western Iowa is the result of teamwork among members of the Iowa Congressional delegation. The earmarks are designated as follows:
  - Merville to Early - \$8 million
  - Webster, Calhoun, Sac, Ida, and Woodbury - \$11 million
  - Webster, Calhoun, and Sac - \$2.4 million

## **January 2006**

- 2006-2010 Iowa Transportation Improvement Program
  - \$78.8 million programmed for 4-lane US 20 on new alignment from Moorland to Iowa Highway 4 (Rockwell City), paving of two lanes by 2010

- \$10 million for right-of-way purchase in Webster, Calhoun, and Sac Counties in 2006 – Moorland to Early
- \$3 million for right-of-way purchase from US 71 to Calhoun County line

### **March 2007**

- US 20 Summit, April 13, Sioux City Convention

### **November 2008**

- The Iowa Department of Transportation Commission voted to approve an amendment to their 2009-2013 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) on October 14, 2008. The amendment programs additional revenues generated by TIME-21 and includes an additional \$48 million for 4-lane US 20 in western Iowa.
- The Federal highway Administration issued a “Finding of No Significant Impact” statement on proposed 4-lane US 20 from Early to Merville. With this statement, preliminary environmental and archaeological work can be considered complete so design work can begin.

### **May 2009**

- US 20 Association represented at Siouxland-Washington Conference for the first time

### **May 2010**

- Groundbreaking planned for Sac/Calhoun County line in June

### **December 2010**

- Ribbon cutting set for intersection of new US 20 at intersection with Iowa Highway 4 in December

### **June 2011**

- Governor Branstad creates Transportation 2020 Citizens Advisory Council

### **September 2012**

- The Iowa Department of Transportation expects the latest 4-lane segment of US 20 to open in late November. This 26.2 mile section from Iowa Highway 4 northwest of Rockwell City stretches to Jackson Avenue in Sac County, just west of Early. Due to incentives built into the contracts, this opening is one full year ahead of original schedule.

The US 20 Corridor Association, working with the Iowa DOT, will hold a ribbon cutting to market the opening of this latest successful construction project.

## August 2013

- ...just 32 miles remain in the gap to be programmed by the Iowa DOT and built to complete statewide 4-lane US 20. The estimated cost for this work is \$375 million.

## March 2014

- ...the plan would be to have two lanes paved from east of Merville by the end of 2016. Correctionville would be completed by the end of 2015. The final two lanes from east of Merville to Correctionville would be open by the end of 2018.

The mileage from east of Merville to east side of Correctionville is 12.5 miles. This section is funded in the current DOT Five Year Plan.

There are three remaining segments that still need funding:

- Correctionville to east of Holstein: 11 miles
- East of Holstein to County Road M27: 9.6 miles
- County Road M27 to Early: 9.9 miles

## March 2015

- On Tuesday, February 24, both the Iowa House and Iowa Senate passed legislation calling for an immediate 10 cent per gallon increase in the state's fuel user fee.

On Wednesday, February 25, Governor Terry E. Branstad signed it into law.

On Sunday, March 1, Iowa began collecting the additional revenue which will bring in \$200 to \$230 million annually into the Road Use Tax Fund, the constitutionally-protected means for the funds to be used only for road/bridge work in Iowa.

From Lee Enterprises: *"Gov. Terry Branstad said Wednesday a 10-cent per-gallon fuel tax increase he signed should be good news for western Iowans who have waited for decades to see U.S. Highway 20 widened to a 4-lane divided connector across Iowa. 'I anticipate that the DOT Commission will move forward on that in an expeditious way,'" Branstad told reporters.*

## July 2015

- The Iowa Department of Transportation Commission met to approve the next five year plan for upcoming transportation projects on June 9 in Council Bluffs. Included in the plan is the completion of statewide 4-lane US 20 by the end of calendar year 2018, which includes the remaining portions between Early to Merville.