

Dealing with the Public and Elected Officials

Greg Vavra
South Dakota LTAP



33rd Annual North Central Local Roads Conference
Rapid City, SD - October 17-18, 2018

Items of Interest

- Commissioner Complaints
- Public Complaints - Entitlements
- Skill Sets of Elected Official
- Communication
- Public Meetings
- What have you done for me lately

Dealing with the Public and Commissioners (Panel)

Greg Vavara, South Dakota LTAP
Ron Bohaty, Lancaster County NE
Ritch Gimbel, Bottineau County, ND



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What was is an issue you had to deal with the public and or County Commissioners

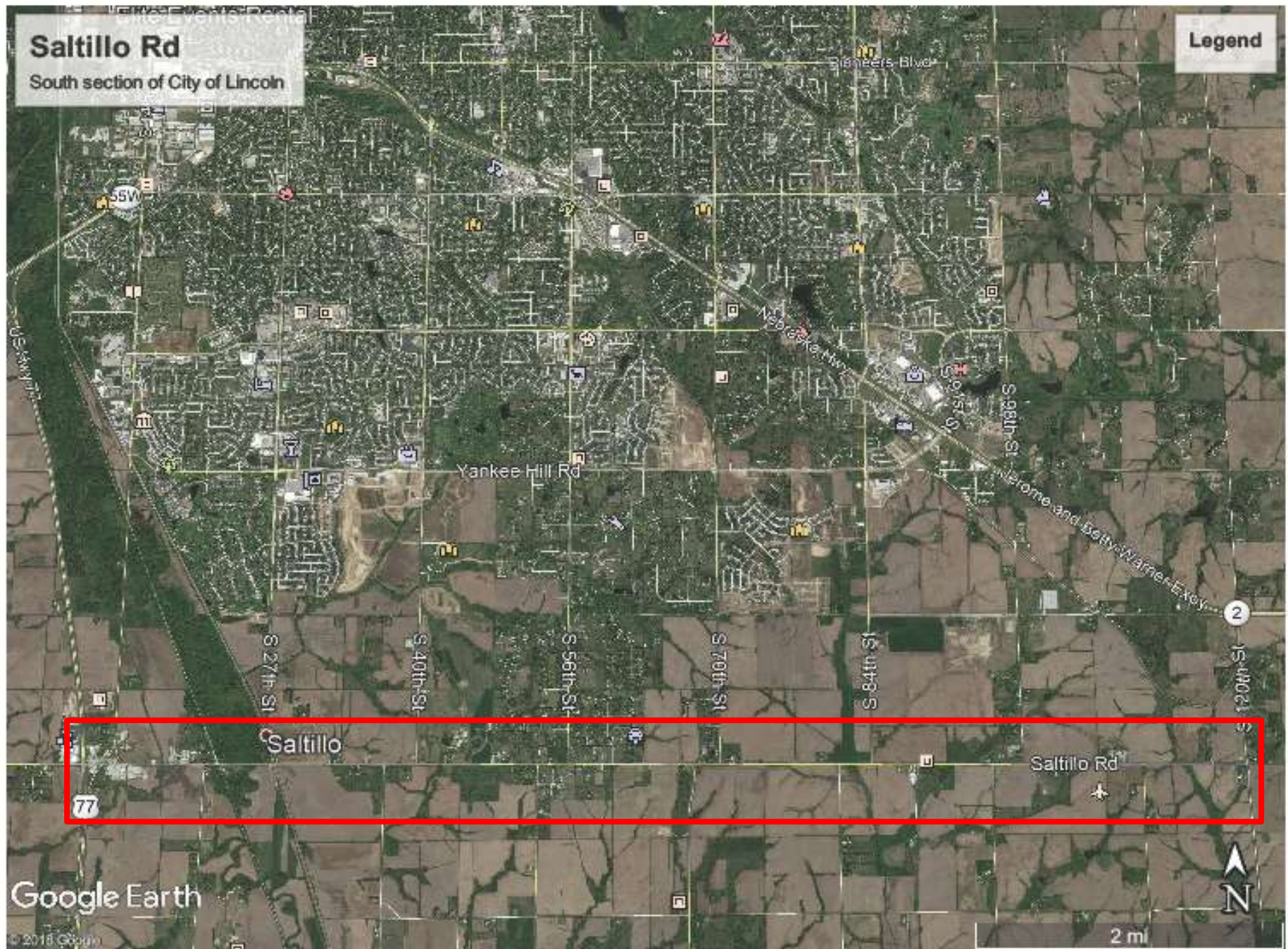
Saltillo Rd, Lincoln NE

1. Safety concerns from the public and school district.
2. Crashes resulting in injury or fatality.
3. Close to city limits with urban traffic.
4. Being used as bypass for south side of city.

Saltillo Rd

South section of City of Lincoln

Legend



Google Earth

© 2018 Google

2 mi

— Proposed South Beltway



Source: City of Lincoln

SHEILA STORY/Lincoln Journal Star



Saltillo is Lancaster's
'most deadly road'

DRIVE CAREFUL

COUNTY ROAD MEETING - CITY COUNTY BUILDING

~~OCT. 29 - 6:30PM~~

Norris High School student dies after accident on Saltillo Road



COUNTY-WIDE PROBLEMS...

INFRASTRUCTURE IS

UNDERFUNDED...AND THERE ARE

COUNTY WANTS TO IMPROVE SALTILLO ROAD



01:07 / 01:18



10/11 News, Lincoln NE



STUDENT DIES IN CRASH

AFTERNOON AFTER A CRASH NEAR

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT BRIANNA

TITTERINGTON DIED THIS

What's the background?

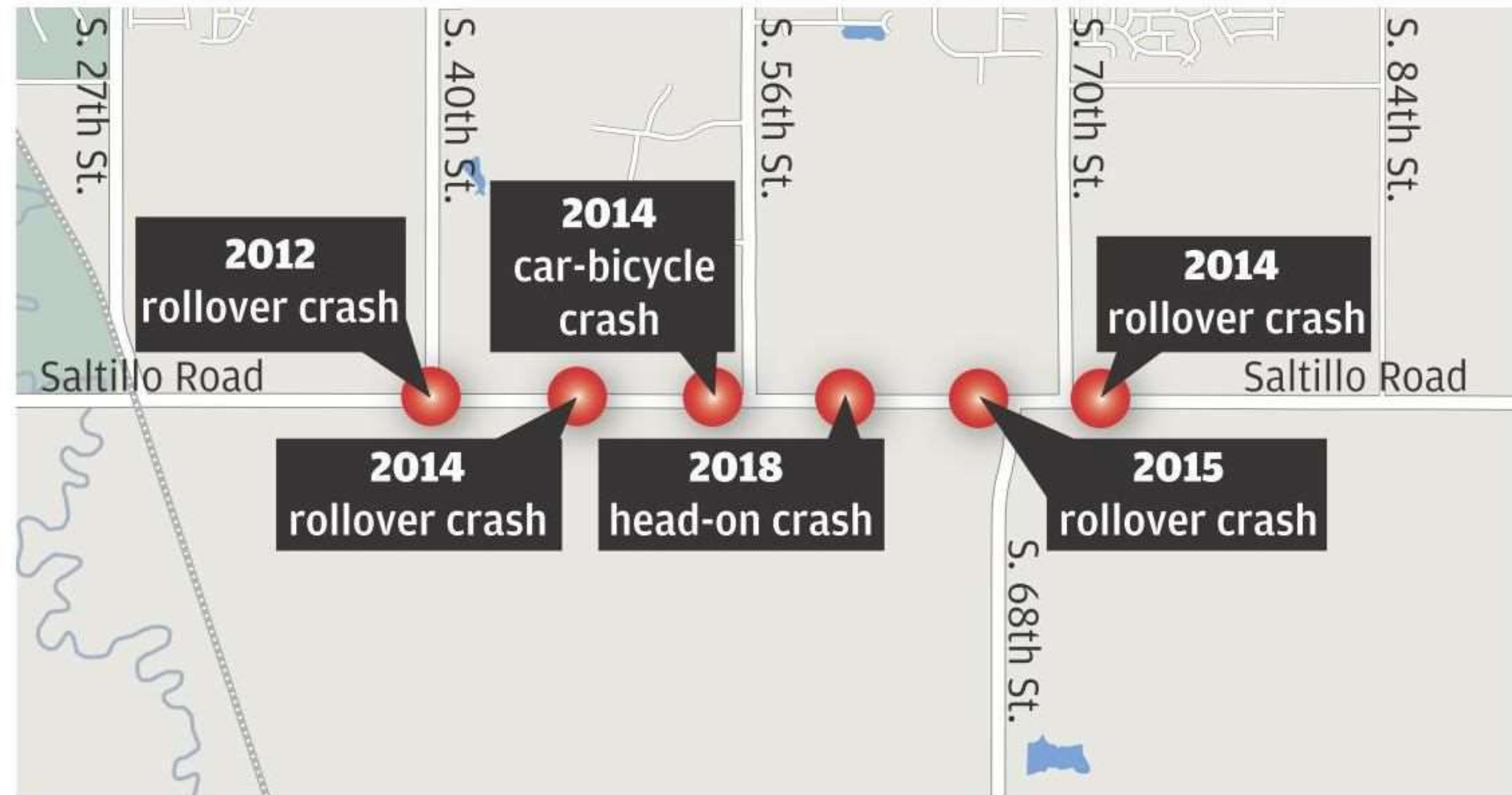
- Safety study of Saltillo was underway prior to the 2018 crash.
- Speed study of Saltillo and adjoining roads.
- Commissioners didn't have a designated public meeting.
- Meet with Commissioners twice at regular weekly meetings for traffic study & signs.

What about the media?

- Media contact with our department.
- Media contact with public & family.
- Media contact with law enforcement.
- Social media
 - Facebook, Twitter, Change.org, Journal Star, Messenger, School forums, etc.

Deadly stretch

Since 2012, crashes along Saltillo Road between 27th and 84th streets have killed six people.



maps4news.com/©HERE, Lee Enterprises graphic

Time for a Change to the Deadliest Road in Lancaster County



Cindy Nelson started this petition to Pamela Dingman - Lancaster County Engineer

With yet another serious car accident on Saltillo Road, it is time for a change. How many more accidents must there be before we make real changes to ensure this road is safer to drive on? It is time for the county engineer to put time and resources into this deadly road. Reduce the speed limit, widen the road, put decent shoulders along the road, or put one of your famous roundabouts in. Anything is better than nothing.

13,114 have signed. Let's get to 15,000!



Cody Lewis signed 5 hours ago



Darrell Maynard signed 8 hours ago

Lincoln, 68510
United States



☒ Display my name and comment on this petition

Sign this petition

By signing, you accept Change.org's [Terms of Service](#) and [Privacy Policy](#), and agree to receive occasional emails about campaigns on Change.org. You can unsubscribe at any time.



Saltillo Rd

South section of City of Lincoln

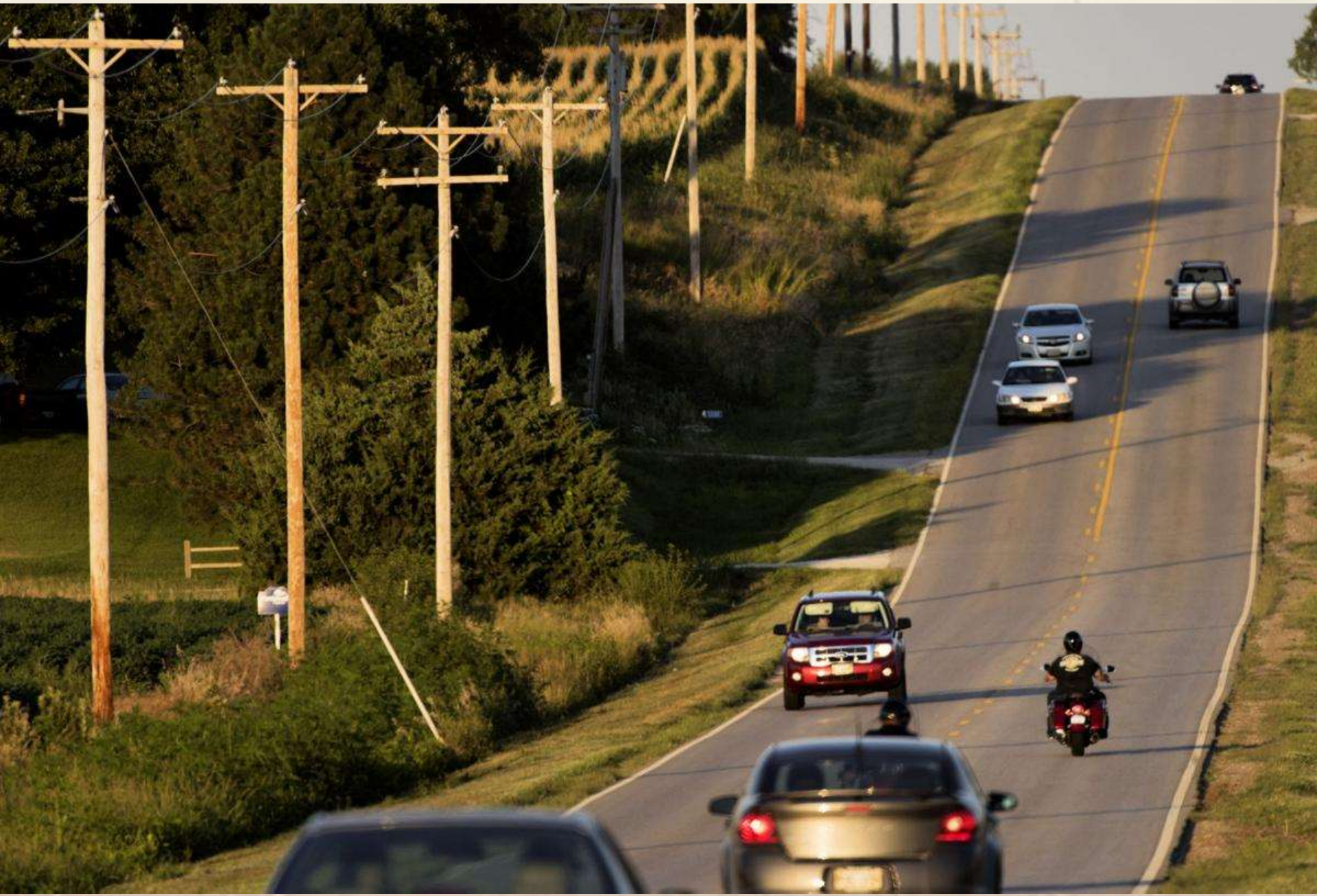
Legend



Google Earth

© 2018 Google

7.14 ft



Saltillo Rd

South section of City of Lincoln

Legend



Google Earth

© 2018 Google

8.11 ft

Updates



County Engineer receives \$7.2 million grant for Saltillo Project

Our voices are being heard!! See attached article. It's a step in the right direction.



Cindy Nelson
6 months ago

How was issue addressed?

- Use facts to communicate clearly.
- Don't allow emotions to lead reactions.
- Speed limit lowered in some areas.
- Direct contact with the family to listen.
- Started our department Facebook page.
- Roadside Memorial program approved.

Lancaster County Engineer announces reduction in speed limit on Saltillo Road



TRAVIS DR
KENNETH D SCHROEDER
DEPUTY COUNTY SURVEYOR





What is Your Best Practice for Communicating with the public/Commissioners?

- I feel the best practice is to communicate quickly and accurately.
- Don't give information you shouldn't release, and/or isn't confirmed factual.
- If you don't work with the media and give some information, they will find other sources to write their story.

Has this Best Practice been Successful?

- Yes - Everyone involved in this process will interpret your level of achievement or failure with their own measurement. I respond to Commissioners, Public, Media, etc., in a timely manner with solid answers. Don't give inaccurate information.

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2017 Spring flood in Bottineau County

- 3 bridges in the county were destroyed
- 115 small sites across several townships

How was issue addressed?

- Needed to communicate with each township board to explain how the repairs will be addressed, also how it might become a FEMA disaster
- Communicating about road closures and rerouting was important with the following:
 - The Media
 - Locals
 - Emergency Service

What is Your Best Practice for Communicating with the public/Commissioners?

- All of the flooding issues were also relayed to my commission board on a regular basis.
 - The County Commissioners were aware of my plans and what the next steps that would take place
 - I addressed the County Commissioners concerns or questions on a regular basis

Has this Best Practice been Successful?

I keep my County Commissioners informed as much as possible.

It takes the guesswork out of their job and mine.

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