

Jefferson County Commissioners Update February 2025

Commissioner Mark Schoenrock, Board Chairman

As we begin a new year 2025, I would like to thank my fellow commissioners for having the confidence in me to serve as the Jefferson County board chairman for 2025. I would like to thank Commissioner Dux for his many years of service on the board and to congratulate Commissioner Schwab in her election and swearing in. We also say thank you to Gale Pohlmann for his many years of dedicated service as a Jefferson County commissioner.

We look forward to serving our fellow citizens and all of our county officials in this new year 2025. We are first and foremost public servants and share the common objective of understanding our citizens concerns, always being accessible to you, bringing the best county services to you in the most cost efficient manner, and being transparent in all of our actions. As Abraham Lincoln stated long ago, we dedicate ourselves to the principle that this is a government of the people, by the people and for the people. We never forget that we are public servants, here to serve those who had the confidence in us to elect us to these positions.

We are very proud of our Jefferson County team, serving our fellow citizens 24/7. We have so many talented and dedicated Jefferson County team members who strive to serve the public daily with vital and essential services. Our board will always be dedicated to ensure that the resources are there to provide the best quality service to our citizens.

By far the biggest challenge facing us is to continue to provide top quality county services to our citizens in the most cost efficient manner possible. As we have relayed to Governor Pillen and many members of the Legislature, the cumulative cost of services provided by Jefferson County, as it has for our families, businesses and schools, due in large part to irresponsible federal government spending, has increased nearly 20% in the past four years. Our tax asking has increased by 12% in that same period. Our citizens do not want to see any of these essential services cut, and on the other hand do not want to pay more in taxes. We are working hard to address that challenge as a county board, as all of county government, and working with Governor Pillen, the Legislature, and our federal congressional delegation. We remain committed to maintaining that same high level of service across all of county government, and working hard to find the most cost effective means to continue to provide those services, never forgetting that our revenues come from the hard work of our citizens.

An essential part of our board's duties involves representing Jefferson County citizens with the many other organizations that daily provide essential services to our citizens. In my case, I serve in leadership capacities for the Nebraska Association of County Officials, Blue Rivers Area Agency on Aging, Public Health Solutions district health board, and Blue Valley Community Action. Commissioner Schwab will be serving on Southeast Nebraska Development District, Region V Systems and Apace. Commissioner Dux will be serving on LB 840 committee and Twin Valley RC&D. Each of these organizations provide

essential services to Jefferson County citizens and it is vital that Jefferson County has a place at the table and is ably represented in each. We are also integrally involved with the Legislature and Governor Pillen to best represent the interests of Jefferson County.

We are very grateful for the completion of our new Endicott Clay and Steele City roads. Both of these roads are new 9" concrete roads serving hundreds of people daily. The Endicott road was largely funded by a grant we worked hard to obtain from the United States Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration. The Steele City road was largely funded after negotiations with TC Energy, after the Keystone pipeline cleanup project was completed. We are also happy to report that we are now actively in the environmental study portion for our new PWF road to complete the last seven miles to the Gage County border. We worked hard with Senator Fischer and Congressman Smith to obtain \$8.5 million in federal funding for this project. We hope to have the environmental study completed this year and go out for bids shortly thereafter. The board will need to approve a bond to complete the project as the \$8.5 million will not pay for the entire amount of the estimated cost of approximately \$13 million. We were also successful in obtaining \$500,000 from the Nebraska Bridge Match program for the bridge that will be replaced as part of the PWF project.

The board is working hard on numerous other challenges that face the county and our citizens. The board meets every Tuesday at 9am, except for the fifth Tuesday, and our meetings are zoom accessible. As always, please contact any of us if you have questions or concerns. We are here to serve you.

With a firm reliance and trust in God to protect and guide us, we now go forward, rolling up our sleeves, and here to do the people's work. Thank you for the privilege of representing and serving each of you!

