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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



National Register of Historic Places
Multiple Property Documentation Form

This form is used for documenting multiple property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. See instructions in *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* (National Register Bulletin 16B). Complete each item by entering the requested information. For additional space, use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer to complete all items.

New Submission Amended Submission

A. Name of Multiple Property Listing

Historic and Architectural Resources of the Detroit-Lincoln-Denver Highway in Nebraska

B. Associated Historic Contexts

(Name each associated historic context, identifying theme, geographical area, and chronological period for each.)

Highway Development in Nebraska, c.1890 – 1974

The Detroit-Lincoln-Denver Highway in Nebraska, c.1911 – c.1965

C. Form Prepared by

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D. Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register Criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation. ([] See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Michael J. Hunt 05-22-14
Signature and title of certifying official Date
Director, Nebraska State Historical Society
State or Federal agency and bureau

I hereby certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

[Signature] 7-13-2014
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Table of Contents for Written Narrative

Provide the following information on continuation sheets. Cite the letter and the title before each section of the narrative. Assign page numbers according to the instructions for continuation sheets in *How to Complete the Multiple Property Documentation Form* (National Register Bulletin 16B). Fill in page numbers for each section in the space below.

	Page Numbers
E. Statement of Historic Contexts (If more than one historic context is documented, present them in sequential order.)	E1-E29
F. Associated Property Types (Provide description, significance, and registration requirements.)	F1-F29
G. Geographical Data	G1
H. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods (Discuss the methods used in developing the multiple property listing.)	H1-H3
I. Major Bibliographical References (List major written works and primary location of additional documentation: State Historic Preservation Office, other State agency, Federal agency, local government, university, or other, specifying repository.)	I1-I5

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for application to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Historic and Architectural Resources of the Detroit-
Lincoln-Denver Highway in Nebraska

Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section E Page 1

E. Statement of Historic Contexts

Introduction

This Multiple Property Document for Historic and Architectural Resources of the Detroit-Lincoln-Denver Highway in Nebraska is based on the Historic Highway Survey completed for the Nebraska State Historical Society and the Nebraska Department of Roads in 2001-2002. The following historic contexts were developed as a component of the Historic Highway Survey. See Section H for a discussion of the project and the identification and evaluation methods of the Historic Highway Survey.

Historic Highway Development in Nebraska

Prior to the twentieth century, much of the country, including Nebraska, had largely undeveloped road networks. The Oregon, California, and Mormon Trails and the route of the Pony Express were among the earliest transportation routes through Nebraska. The railroads followed, dominating the nineteenth century as the preferred method of transportation, while a system of vehicular roads for horse carriage, and later automobile, travel developed haphazardly. Rural roads typically followed section lines, which were reserved for right-of-way by the Nebraska Territorial Legislature, or historic routes of overland travel.

By the 1880s, interest groups began pressuring the federal government to reevaluate its role in the development of roads. The popularity of the bicycle and the introduction of the automobile in the 1890s raised public awareness of the need for adequate road networks. In response to the poor condition of the nation's road system, the "Good Roads Movement" emerged. A group of bicyclists organized the League of American Wheelmen, founding the first of many organizations to promote road improvements as part of the Good Roads Movement. With the motto, "lifting our people out of the mud," they lobbied the federal and state governments for better roads.¹ Advocates of the Good Roads Movement pushed for federal, state, and local support and financing for road building and maintenance activities. Rural Free Delivery (RFD) of postal services, begun in 1896, also increased awareness about the nation's substandard roadways and broadened the support for good roads, especially among those served by RFD. Although mail service was technically required in all conditions, poor roads could prohibit delivery and some local applications for RFD were even denied due to insufficient road connections.²

The nation's first state highway department was formed in Massachusetts in 1893, and Massachusetts was the only state to devote significant funding to roads between 1894 and 1903.³ The federal government formally became involved in roads in 1893 with the formation of the Office of Road Inquiry within the United States Department of Agriculture. The engineers within the Office of Road Inquiry quickly allied with the "Good Roads" movement and the department evolved into a central source of technical information regarding roads. The Office of Road Inquiry collected data and released bulletins and circulars addressing road construction and administration issues.⁴ After being renamed the Office of Public Road Inquiry in 1899, it also established a materials testing laboratory to identify suitable road materials.⁵

The 1905 Agriculture Appropriations Act terminated the Office of Public Road Inquiry and established the Office of Public Roads, a permanent federal road agency with an annual budget of \$50,000.⁶ Based on continued laboratory tests, the Office of Public Roads issued typical material specifications and testing procedures, as well as construction guidelines in 1911 and bridge specifications shortly thereafter. Highway standards were also developed by professional trade

¹ George E. Koster, *A Story of Highway Development in Nebraska* (Lincoln, NE.: Department of Roads, 1997), 7, 11.

² Bruce E. Seely, *Building the American Highway System: Engineers as Policy Makers* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1987), 27.

³ Seely 12-13, 22.

⁴ Seely, 9.

⁵ Seely, 16-17.

⁶ William Kaszynski, *The American Highway* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co, Inc., 2000), 30.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Historical and Architectural Resources of the Detroit-
Lincoln-Denver Highway

Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section E Page 2

organizations, a few states, and even the Lincoln Highway Association, which developed "Seedling Miles" to demonstrate the use of concrete for pavement.⁷

With the coming of the automobile and through the efforts of citizen groups and local governments, the development of roads took on major focus in the early twentieth century. By 1902 numerous national, state and local groups were involved in road promotion, including the National Good Roads Association, 32 affiliates of the Automobile Club of America, and 18 state and 14 local road associations. Despite the early efforts of these groups, only 154,000 miles of the country's over two million miles of road were improved in 1904.⁸ Although prior to the turn of the century the automobile was a luxury only for the wealthy, by 1904, there were over 55,000 vehicles in use across the United States and by 1910 this number had skyrocketed to approximately a half-million.⁹ As a result, the early twentieth century saw a proliferation of "named highways" across the United States, which sported descriptive names. In Nebraska, the Lincoln Highway, Meridian Highway, and Omaha-Lincoln-Denver (O-L-D) Highway were marked by 1913. The Blue Pole Highway, Grant Highway, Golden Rod Trail, Sun Flower Trail, Sunshine Highway, and Alfalfa Trail are just a few of the many other named early twentieth-century roads in Nebraska. As the automobile gained popularity and travelers made their way across the state and the country, these routes became well-traveled thoroughfares.

During this period, road development was largely initiated by private interests, composed of local, state, or regional associations, who cooperated in the designation, promotion and improvement of regional and cross-country routes. Citizen organizations, like the Omaha-Lincoln-Denver Transcontinental-Highway Association, the Lincoln Highway Association and the Meridian Road Association, were formed to designate, promote, and improve these long distance highways. These groups also lobbied state, federal, and local governments to cooperatively plan and construct roads. Local commercial clubs, business associations, automobile clubs, and merchants often contributed labor and funds to bring major roads through their towns and improve local roads that linked to their routes. These interest groups were significant in the ultimate development of a national highway system.

Road organizations promoted their routes through published guidebooks, which advertised their highway by offering route directions and identifying tourist services and sites of interest. Two national guidebook series identifying routes throughout the country, including those in Nebraska, were the *Tourist Information Bureau* and the *Automobile Blue Book*. The earliest guidebook published specifically for Nebraska was the *Official Road Book*, released in 1913 by the Nebraska State Automobile Association. In addition to the published road and route guides, gasoline, oil and tire companies often published state maps identifying early named highways. These state maps not only provided information on a variety of highways, but also served as a marketing device. The Standard Oil Company of Nebraska and Goodrich Tire Company are known to have published some of the earliest commercial maps of the state of Nebraska.

In Nebraska, the Good Roads Association was officially formed in 1918, offering a forum in which private citizens and organizations could express opinions and lobby for highway development. The organization's purpose was to encourage the most efficient and economical expenditure of highway monies. It also offered state and local officials accurate information to help guide them in enacting legislation concerning Nebraska's roads.¹⁰

Early State Road Legislation

Nebraska's first county road law pre-dates statehood, passed by the Territorial Legislature on January 26, 1856. An 1862 map prepared by civil engineer Augustus Harvey indicates the first ten territorial routes in Nebraska. They were: Omaha City to Cedar Island, Plattsmouth to Archer and the Kansas line, Brownville to Nebraska Center, Tekomah to Pawnee, Florence to Fontanelle, Nebraska City to Grand Island, Bellevue to Catherine, De Soto to Pawnee, a suitable point on the

⁷ Seely, 29.

⁸ Seely, 24 and 9.

⁹ Koster, 7.

¹⁰ Nebraska Good Roads Association, *The Nebraska Good Roads Quiz* (n.p., 1940).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Historical and Architectural Resources of the Detroit-
Lincoln-Denver Highway

Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section E Page 3

Platte River to Dakotah, and Pawnee to Nebraska Center.¹¹ Although the Territorial Legislature recognized the need to develop a road network connecting settlements throughout the entire territory, their first road law delegated responsibility for road construction to the individual counties. Therefore, each county was responsible for surveying public roads, maintaining them to standards spelled out in the law, and overseeing construction labor within its boundaries. To facilitate road construction and maintenance, the law authorized county commissioners to impose taxes and appropriate labor.¹² Despite the legislation, roads throughout Nebraska remained poorly maintained and largely undeveloped. The majority of traffic on territorial roads was local in character; therefore, interest in road construction and improvement rarely extended beyond township lines.¹³ These local roads often remained in poor condition because maintenance meant higher taxes.

After achieving statehood in 1867, Nebraska's state government began to more fully recognize the need for good roads; however, it continued to delegate responsibility for their construction to the counties. State legislation passed in 1879 granted individual counties the authority to build and maintain roads, reserved section lines for public roads and established a standard 66-foot road width. The law also authorized a tax levy to finance maintenance projects. Finally, the new state law actually mandated the creation of roads, which the earlier territorial legislation had failed to do. Even so, road construction was still dependent on local taxation. Men within a community usually opted to pay off their tax levy with road work, while expressing little interest in additional taxation. As a result, while Nebraska had 79,462 miles of road by 1904, most were unimproved and poorly-maintained section line roads that followed the rectangular "grid" of the township-range system of land survey.¹⁴ This eventually created "stair step" routes with numerous 90 degree turns for Nebraska's early "named highways," which often followed local roads in an effort to speed completion and save money.

The first state agency with road-related responsibilities was the State Board of Irrigation. Created on April 24, 1895, it was charged with supervising irrigation practices to manage Nebraska's water resources, while preserving the integrity of affected waterways. Overseeing the construction of State Aid bridges was among the Board's early responsibilities, and it naturally evolved into the state agency that dealt with road issues. With the introduction and popularity of the automobile, the Board sought legislation regarding motor vehicles in 1905. The Nebraska Legislature passed a motor vehicle registration fee of \$1.00 and responded to safety issues regarding speed limits, the operation of a vehicle near horses and the use of brakes, signals, and lights.¹⁵

The need for better roads in Nebraska and the state's involvement in road construction was spurred by a rapid increase in motor vehicle registration. The number of registered vehicles in Nebraska climbed from a mere 1,087 in 1906 to 11,399 in 1910, 211,750 in 1919 and a staggering 419,198 by 1929.¹⁶ As the number of automobiles increased in Nebraska, the state government recognized the growing need for improved roads. In 1911 the Nebraska Legislature changed the name of the Board to the State Board of Irrigation, Highways and Drainage and increased its responsibilities to include road construction and maintenance.¹⁷ The Board was also directed to elect a civil engineer to serve as the "State Engineer." Finally, the legislation raised vehicle registration fees to \$2.00, with the increased revenue going to county road funds.¹⁸ The State Aid Bridge Act, which passed the same year, was the first legislative action resulting from this increased interest in roads. The act not only increased the state's authority over local road administrators, but it also resulted in increased local expenditures.¹⁹

¹¹ Wardner G. Scott, "Nebraska Public Highways," *Nebraska History* XXVI, no. 3 (July-Sept. 1945), 164.

¹² Koster, 11-12.

¹³ Clinton Warne, "Some Effects of the Introduction of the Automobile on Highways and Land Values in Nebraska," *Nebraska History* 38, no. 1 (1957), 43-44; Koster, 2.

¹⁴ Nebraska Highway Advisory Committee, *Nebraska Highway Needs* (Lincoln, NE.: Nebraska Highway Advisory Committee, 1948); Koster, 13.

¹⁵ Koster; iv, 14-15.

¹⁶ Koster, 14-15, 20-22. Nebraska's population in 1930 was 1,377,963, with 271,994 individuals between the ages of 0 and 14. That means there was approximately one car for every 2.65 Nebraskans over the age of fifteen.

¹⁷ Koster, iv.

¹⁸ Koster 16.

¹⁹ Warne, 44.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Historical and Architectural Resources of the Detroit-
Lincoln-Denver Highway

Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section E Page 4

Federal Funding for Nebraska's Highway Construction

Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1916

Limited federal and state funds were available for road construction in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. In 1916 Congress passed the first formal highway policy with a regular appropriation of funding to the states. By this time the number of automobile registrations in the country had reached 2.3 million and the auto industry and motorists were lobbying heavily for programs and funds to improve roads.²⁰ The Federal-Aid Highway Act, signed by Woodrow Wilson on June 11, 1916, was the first time the federal government was directly involved in financing road building efforts. Approximately \$5 million was appropriated the first year with the funding escalating each year until reaching \$75 million.²¹ Managed by the Secretary of Agriculture, funding was allocated by a formula based on a state's population, land area and road mileage. Under this act the federal government would finance up to 50% of the cost of construction, not to exceed \$10,000 per mile.

In order to obtain federal funds, each state's highway commission had to meet standards set by the Office of Public Roads. To participate in the Federal-Aid Program, a state had to:

- maintain a state highway department to administer the Federal-Aid Act
- assume responsibility of all roads on which federal funds were spent (this could be delegated to local governments)
- classify eligible mileage in eligible road systems based on traffic needs and services rendered
- agree to uniform standards of construction and design
- meet inspection requirements before bills were paid
- agree to further diversion of road funds to non-road purposes after 1935
- match federal funds under mutually acceptable standards²²

The passage of the Federal-Aid Road Act of 1916 discouraged the haphazard construction of roads by counties without state supervision. Individual states now had to support federally-approved highway departments and develop the engineering skills necessary to design Federal-Aid roads. State highway commissions were now responsible for the preparation of plans and specifications, as well as the administration of all road construction and maintenance, while the federal government held the right to inspect all projects.²³ In Nebraska, the Federal-Aid Road Act of 1916 forced the State Board of Irrigation, Highways, and Drainage to take on a greater role in road development. Once Nebraska accepted federal funding, the state became responsible for the construction and maintenance of the Federal-Aid road system.²⁴

Wartime shortages hindered actual road construction following the passage of the Federal-Aid Road Act of 1916. The first Federal-Aid road project in Nebraska, the Lincoln and Emerald Road (West "O" Street), began in July of 1918 and was completed the following year. The project was 5.44 miles in length and was estimated to cost over \$217,000. Several other Federal-Aid projects in the state were completed by 1920, including: a paved portion of the Lincoln Highway from Dodge Street in Omaha to the Saunders County line, an earthen 12.53-mile stretch of the Meridian Highway between Geneva and Belvidere in Fillmore County, and 25.87-miles of the Seward-York-Aurora (SYA) Highway, an earthen road extending east and west of York, in York County.²⁵

²⁰ Seely, 24-25.

²¹ Seely, 43.

²² Nebraska Highway Advisory Committee.

²³ Seely, 42-43.

²⁴ Nebraska Department of Public Works, *Fifteenth Biennial Report of the Department of Public Works 1923-1924* (Lincoln, NE.: Nebraska Department of Public Works, 1924), 14.

²⁵ Nebraska Department of Public Works, *Thirteenth Biennial Report of the Department of Public Works 1919-1920* (Lincoln, NE.: Nebraska Department of Public Works, 1920), 579.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Historical and Architectural Resources of the Detroit-
Lincoln-Denver Highway

Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section E Page 5

Under the Federal-Aid plan, approximately 5,000 miles of highway under 88 route numbers were designated as the state highway system in 1919.²⁶ Maintenance of the state highway system was assigned to the counties. In addition, the legislature created the State-Aid Road Fund, financed by property taxes and appropriated with the same formula as the Federal-Aid. With the establishment of the state highway system, counties were required to form a system of county roads, under the jurisdiction of the County Board, not exceeding 20% of the total mileage in the county.²⁷

World War I brought a slow-down in new road construction and the improvement of existing roads due to a construction deferment and limited labor and supplies. Road construction continued at a slower pace but, by 1918, 16 projects comprising 512 miles had been approved, contracts for 200 miles had been let, 1,600 miles had been surveyed, and plans had been prepared for another 952 miles. After the war, Congress transferred surplus equipment and materials from the War Department to state highway departments. Nebraska received 407 trucks, 74 touring cars, miscellaneous equipment and tons of materials and supplies. The state then sold surplus trucks, equipment and materials to county road departments to use for road construction and maintenance.²⁸

In 1919 the Nebraska Legislature restructured state government, replacing the State Board of Irrigation, Highways and Drainage with the Department of Public Works. The Department consisted of the Bureau of Irrigation, Water Power, and Drainage; the Bureau of Roads and Bridges; and the Division of Motor Vehicle Registration, all under the authority of the State Engineer. The Bureau of Roads and Bridges was responsible for the construction of all state and Federal-Aid roads and the building of all State bridges. It was divided into three sub-divisions. The Maps and Plans Division was responsible for preliminary field investigations and surveys required in planning State and Federal-Aid roads. They also completed special designs for equipment, such as derricks, camp buildings, and wagons. The Division of Road Construction was responsible for all facets of construction, maintenance, and testing for State and Federal-Aid road projects. The Division of Road Equipment, Repairs, and Maintenance was responsible for outfitting counties with equipment, and keeping up with the general maintenance and repair of Department vehicles and equipment. The three divisions worked together to create and maintain Nebraska's early road and highway system.²⁹

The Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1921

Federal funding for highway construction was continued by Congress with the passage of the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1921. This act created the "seven percent system," under which each state was eligible for financial aid for the construction of seven percent of its road mileage. Nebraska's certified mileage at the time was 80,272, allowing for 5,619 miles of roads to be funded under the seven percent system. Within two years, each state was required to designate three percent of their primary roads and four percent of their secondary roads as part of the federal-aid highway system and, as a result, these roads were eligible for assistance.³⁰ Federal funding was to be matched by state funds on a 50-50 basis. Primary roads were designated as an important interstate throughway, and were to be developed into an integrated national road system that would allow easy intercommunication throughout the country. Road designs were required to adhere to the federal government's standards for minimum width, grade, and adequacy of roadbed type for estimated traffic load. States were required to submit their plans to the United States Secretary of Agriculture for approval.³¹

Between 1917 and 1926 Nebraska spent over \$27 million on road construction of which just less than half, \$12.5 million, was furnished by the federal government.³² The 1920s were a boom for highway construction and improvements

²⁶ *Thirteenth Biennial Report of the Department of Public Works 1919-1920*, 755. A description of each numbered highway, including the terminus points, is located on pages 755-759.

²⁷ *Fifteenth Biennial Report of the Department of Public Works 1923-1924*, 14; Koster, 19.

²⁸ Koster, 20, 28.

²⁹ *Thirteenth Biennial Report of the Department of Public Works 1919-1920*, 535-539.

³⁰ Seely, 74.

³¹ *Fifteenth Biennial Report of the Department of Public Works 1923-1924*, 14.

³² "Roads and Road Building in Nebraska," *Nebraska Highways* 1, no. 3 (1927): 6.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Historical and Architectural Resources of the Detroit-
Lincoln-Denver Highway

Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section E Page 6

nationwide with over \$10 billion invested in roads. Most states financed this significant road construction through increased taxation and bonds; however, Nebraska was not allowed to go into debt and unwilling to dramatically increase taxation to pay for improved roads. Until about 1925, road construction and maintenance in Nebraska was financed largely by federal aid and funds from property taxes levied by state, county, and cities. After 1925 road construction and maintenance funding was supplemented by a gasoline tax and vehicle registration fees. Nebraska's fiscally responsible pay-as-you-go policy challenged the Bureau of Roads and Bridges to meet the state's growing highway needs and to keep up with road development in the rest of the country. This policy also forced the Bureau of Roads and Bridges to continually struggle to meet the financial match for federal funding. In an effort to control costs, Nebraska researched road materials and advocated graded dirt roads as a sound and economical option.³³

The trend toward a centralized system of highway construction and maintenance continued into the 1920s. In 1926 the Nebraska Legislature passed a statute requiring the Department of Public Works to maintain the state highway system, except for state highways within the corporate limits of municipalities with a population over 1,400. Other city and village streets in Nebraska were under the authority of municipal agencies. Financing and maintenance for state highways was provided by setting aside 30 percent of all motor vehicle registration fees, and portions of the gasoline tax, first authorized in 1925, as deemed necessary. Prior to this time, counties were responsible for state highway maintenance. The legislation also required highway construction and maintenance contracts, previously let by the counties, to be awarded by the Department of Public Works. The Legislature also gave the Department of Public Works the power to acquire right-of-way directly.³⁴

In 1933 the Legislature changed the name of the Department of Public Works to the Department of Roads and Irrigation. The State Engineer was given the additional duties of Director of Motor Vehicles, Chairman of the State Planning Board, and Director of Highway Safety and Patrol.³⁵

Marking the Way

The early highway organizations gave their roads colorful and descriptive names and marked them haphazardly with logos on telephone poles and other makeshift signposts. However, there was an obvious need for a uniform system for marking interstate roads and presenting warning signs. In 1918 Wisconsin became the first state to adopt a state highway numbering system to replace the haphazard system of named trails. The movement for a nationwide system of highway routes and road signs was proposed at an annual meeting of the American Association of State Highway Officials (AASHO) in 1922. AASHO, formed in 1914 of senior state and federal highway officials, had a role in shaping many aspects of road policy including building, financing, and maintenance.

In an effort to diminish the confusion surrounding named routes and unify the national highway system, the Federal Department of Agriculture adopted the recommendation by AASHO in 1925. When this took effect in 1926, the new numbering system affected 145 roads, or 76,000 miles of road, across the United States. Federal highways were marked by a uniform white shield sign with bold black text. The state's name was included in the top portion of the sign, and the highway number appeared in large bold text on the lower portion. Odd numbers were assigned to north-south highways and even numbers to east-west highways. Route numbers ending in "0" or "1" were reserved for principal cross-country routes.³⁶ Several interstate routes were selected for marking in Nebraska including the Lincoln Highway (U.S. Route 30), Grant Highway (U.S. Route 20) and the Meridian Highway (U.S. Route 81).³⁷ Other early numbered regional highways

³³ Koster, 26.

³⁴ Nebraska Department of Public Works, *Sixteenth Biennial Report of the Department of Public Works 1925-26* (Lincoln, NE: Nebraska Department of Public Works, 1926), 74; Koster 32.

³⁵ Bureau of Roads and Bridges, Nebraska Department of Roads and Irrigation, *Twenty-Second Biennial Report of the Bureau of Roads*, 1938, 16.

³⁶ Kaszynski, 60.

³⁷ *Sixteenth Biennial Report of the Department of Public Works 1925-26*, 65.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Historical and Architectural Resources of the Detroit-
Lincoln-Denver Highway

Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section E Page 7

included the D-L-D Highway (U.S. Route 38), Washington Highway (U.S. Route 75), Cornhusker Highway (U.S. Route 77) and Platte Valley Highway (U.S. Route 26). At this time, the named routes lost their unique identity to a number.

Nebraska adopted a standard system for its state-designated highways when the national system was implemented. In the spring of 1926, the Nebraska Department of Public Works began placing markers along highways in the state. The state highway marker design adopted by Nebraska was a diamond-shaped sign, 15-inches square, with a covered wagon graphic on the upper half and the route number on the lower half. The sign was black and white, which made it easy to distinguish from the yellow and black danger and warning signs. In addition to route signs, the state also placed signs along the highways that were designed to inform motorists. Signs were located at various points along the highway that gave the distance to the next town and other important places ahead. The names of streams were marked with signs on either side of bridge crossings.³⁸

Danger and warning signs, in compliance with the AASHO and the Federal Bureau of Roads, were also placed throughout the state in 1926 to increase safety. These signs came in four shapes and all were of a yellow background with wording or symbols to denote the hazard. The diamond shape was used to mark a hazard within the road, such as loose gravel, new fill, a narrow bridge, or a curve. A square-shaped sign marked hazards outside the road, such as crossroad traffic or school children. The circular shape was used only to mark railroad crossings and the octagon shape was used only for stop signs. Nebraska was in line with the rest of the nation in highway marking. Over 50 percent of the states, including Nebraska, had erected the standard signs by the close of 1926; the remaining states were scheduled to comply by the end of 1927. In order for the standardized highway signs to be effective, they had to be seen by the motoring public. All advertising signs were removed from the right-of-way and an adjacent buffer zone to ensure they would not conflict with the highway markers.³⁹

In 1928, the legislature mandated stop signs be placed on 6,200 miles of Nebraska roads. Signs were placed at the entry of side roads into main highways. These signs gave highway traffic the right-of-way and required all approaching vehicles to stop and wait for traffic to clear before proceeding across intersections. Nebraska continued to conform to the national signage standards set by AASHO and all signs purchased in Nebraska after January 1, 1936, met the most recent set of standards recognized by AASHO and the U.S. Bureau of Public Roads.⁴⁰

Paving the Way

Early routes were largely created by linking sections of existing roads, although these roads were often primitive and not improved. In 1914, State Engineer Donald D. Price reported that Nebraska had three major highways: the Meridian Highway, the Lincoln Highway, and the Omaha-Lincoln-Denver Highway. He also reported that these highways were in fairly decent condition, except for in portions of the western part of the state where they were merely deeply rutted trails. At this point in time only one-and-a-half percent of the total number of Nebraska roads had been "improved" (graded).⁴¹

The 1912-1914 Biennial Report of the State Board of Irrigation, Highways and Drainage stressed the economic benefits of earth roads, with excellent building materials located throughout the state. Improved roads of pavement or macadam (stone set in a binder) were viewed as too costly. Basic road maintenance was outlined in the biennial report as follows:

An earth road should be properly graded wide enough so that two vehicles can pass easily; that the grade should not be crowded too much but should be left rather flat so that the travel can be over any portion of the road; and that after the grading has been done and the grade has been fixed, that it should be

³⁸ *Sixteenth Biennial Report of the Department of Public Works 1925-26*, 65; "Highway Markers," *Nebraska Highways I*, no. 6 (Jan/Feb 1928), 10.

³⁹ *Sixteenth Biennial Report of the Department of Public Works 1925-26*, 65.

⁴⁰ Bureau of Roads and Bridges, Nebraska Department of Roads and Irrigation, *Twenty-First Biennial Report of the Bureau of Roads and Bridges of the Department of Roads and Irrigation 1935-36* (Lincoln, NE: Bureau of Roads and Bridges of the Nebraska Department of Roads and Irrigation, 1936), 103.

⁴¹ Koster, 17; Warne, 45

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Historical and Architectural Resources of the Detroit-
Lincoln-Denver Highway

Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section E Page 8

surfaced with clay and gravel, either one of which is nearly always readily obtainable in the vicinity. Then if the road is kept properly dragged, it will remain in a more or less permanent state and this work can be done at a very low cost.⁴²

Road grading or dragging was imperative to maintain the state's early dirt roads. D. Ward King, a Missouri farmer, invented the "King road drag" method around 1904, to be used in areas that could not afford macadamized roads.⁴³ The United States Department of Agriculture printed King's road dragging method in 1908, complete with a description of the materials needed to construct a drag and the proper technique in its use. It was recommended drags be constructed of split timbers, since squared timbers would only glide over the surface. The Pierce County (Nebraska) Auto Club promoted the use of King's road dragging method. They pointed out that unless the dragging was conducted immediately after a soaking rain, the benefits would be lost. The drag had to be completed while the road was muddy, so "the soft mud is troweled onto the road bed," and allowed to harden in the sun.⁴⁴

Other materials found naturally in Nebraska were also used in road construction. Deposits of limestone and shale were combined to create cement, the most important material used in some forms of early road construction. Niobrara chalk rock combined with Granerose shale, both of which occur naturally in Nebraska, created high-grade cement, much of which was made near the town of Niobrara. Sand was used to create mortar and concrete for construction projects involving curbs, gutters, sidewalks, water pipes, sewers, culverts, bridges, and pavements. Stretching across Nebraska and well-connected by railroad lines, the Platte Valley provided a large source of quality sand, ideal for road construction. Nebraska's varied soil types were also ideal for construction purposes, particularly when using a sand-clay mix.⁴⁵

At the federal level, the Office of Public Roads and its predecessor the Bureau of Public Roads operated research programs focusing on practical issues of road construction, including the construction and performance of various road materials. Concrete and bituminous materials were studied. The Bureau of Public Roads also partnered with trade groups and professional organizations, such as the Asphalt Institute and the American Society of Civil Engineers, state highway departments and universities on research. The Bureau of Public Roads established a research journal, *Public Roads*, in 1918 to disseminate information to the states.⁴⁶

Research addressing road construction and materials was also the focus of universities. In 1915, the Nebraska Legislature directed the State Highway Engineer to work cooperatively with Nebraska's State University on the testing of road construction materials. A cooperative agreement between the Department of Public Works and the University of Nebraska was reached in 1920 to test materials. Nebraska highway engineers were continuously looking for inexpensive, yet high-quality, paving materials and this directed much of the material testing research. In 1919-1920, 1,208 tests were completed to develop a new hard surface that would be cheaper than concrete pavement.⁴⁷

In 1918 legislation was enacted to fund maintenance of the state highway system. Prior to formal funding, maintenance had been recommended but often did not occur. The legislation allowed for the maintenance to be conducted state-wide and for skilled crews to grade highways and bring them up to state and federal standards. Maintenance crews were

⁴² State Board of Irrigation, Highways and Drainage, *Tenth Biennial Report of the State Board of Irrigation, Highways and Drainage 1912-1914* (Lincoln, NE: State Board of Irrigation, Highways and Drainage, 1914), 221.

⁴³ John Stilgoe, "Roads, Highways, and Ecosystems," July 2001, <www.nhc.rtp.nc.us:8080/tserve/nattrans/ntuseland/essays/roadsb.htm> (Accessed 6 March 2002).

⁴⁴ D. Ward King, *The Use of the Split-log Drag on Earth Roads*, U.S. Department of Agriculture Farmers' Bulletin 321 (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1908), 5-8, 9-11; "Road Dragging," *Pierce County Call*, 29 April 1915. Available at the Nebraska State Historical Society, Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln, NE.

⁴⁵ State Board of Irrigation, Highways and Drainage, *Eleventh Biennial Report of the State Board of Irrigation, Highways and Drainage 1915-1916* (Lincoln, NE: State Board of Irrigation, Highways and Drainage, 1916), 325-445.

⁴⁶ Seely, 107 and 109-110.

⁴⁷ Koster 24-25.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Historical and Architectural Resources of the Detroit-
Lincoln-Denver Highway

Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section E Page 9

responsible for surface maintenance, repairing ditches, opening culverts, maintaining official road signs, snow removal, and the emergency repair of roads, bridges, and guardrails.⁴⁸

As traffic increased, Nebraska highway engineers advocated the use of gravel for surfacing highways. Even 25 years after other state highways had embraced permanent surfacing such as concrete and bituminous asphalt, Nebraska was still promoting gravel. In Nebraska, gravel was promoted because the state's soil conditions provided for a hard and fine gravel surface, with an ample gravel supply available from Nebraska's numerous waterways. The state's low rainfall also made it an economical choice for highways.⁴⁹ A 1928 article in *Nebraska Highways* described the fine quality of the state's gravel for use as a road material:

Gravel in Nebraska is distinctly different from the class of roads usually referred to as 'gravel roads' or 'sand gravel roads' or 'sand clay roads' in other states. From the standpoint of materials, Nebraska gravel lies between the above classes and has generally been satisfactory. It partakes of the smoothness of the sand clay road and has the wearing and carrying capacity of the best gravel roads of other states. The material is fine enough so that the surface does not ravel and with proper and continuous maintenance, which it must have, can be kept in good condition.⁵⁰

Despite the limited use of hard surfacing, Nebraska still ranked fourteenth nationally in 1929 in the amount of state highway mileage that was graveled or better.⁵¹ While Nebraska highway engineers were advocating gravel roads, the Bureau of Public Roads was continuing to research and test improved paving materials including asphalt, concrete, and the quality of aggregate.⁵²

By the close of 1928, Nebraska had 8,012 miles of state and federal highways, including 165 miles of paved roads and 3,761 miles of gravel roads. During the late 1920s hard surfacing of roads began to be advocated. Both concrete and asphalt were used for hard surfacing, while gravel was falling out of favor for major roads. By 1929, the Nebraska Legislature was funding approximately 100 miles of paving annually and at the end of 1930, it was estimated that 368 miles of state highways were paved, with more paving projects scheduled for the coming years. Along with improved surfacing, special attention was also given to creating direct routes, curves with long radii, and long sight distances. The Department of Public Works adopted several standards including distances, widths, and smoothness.⁵³ To lessen overall expenses, the department planned to relocate or shorten highways when paving was needed. Rather than completing a relocation project, the department would wait until paving or surfacing was needed, then relocate the segment and pave or surface the new section. These route relocations allowed state engineers to create more direct routes and increase safety by eliminating hazardous railroad crossings or sharp curves and were designed to save drivers time and money.

During the 1931-1932 biennium, both paved and oiled roads were being completed across the state. By the close of 1932, it was estimated that 663 miles of pavement had been completed in Nebraska. At the same time, progress was being made on the construction of oil-surfaced roads. Early use of oil surfacing had been relatively experimental and was restricted to small projects, but by 1932 it was a widely accepted component of the highway construction program. Oil-sand surfacing was constructed by the application of asphaltic road oil and a small amount of very fine material to a sand base and thoroughly mixing them with discs or blades to a depth of five inches. When no free oil remained in the mixture it

⁴⁸ *Thirteenth Biennial Report of the Department of Public Works 1919-1920*, 697-699.

⁴⁹ *Fifteenth Biennial Report of the Department of Public Works 1923-1924*, 31.

⁵⁰ "Report of Nebraska Department of Public Works," *Nebraska Highways* I, no. 11 (July 1928), 4.

⁵¹ Koster, 27.

⁵² Seely, 101-102.

⁵³ Nebraska Department of Public Works, *Seventeenth Biennial Report of the Department of Public Works 1927-1928* (Lincoln, NE: Nebraska Department of Public Works, 1928), 13; Nebraska Department of Public Works, *Eighteenth Biennial Report of the Department of Public Works 1929-1930* (Lincoln, NE: Nebraska Department of Public Works, 1930), 65.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Historical and Architectural Resources of the Detroit-
Lincoln-Denver Highway

Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section E Page 10

was spread and ready for traffic. In some cases protection work was required on the shoulders and back slopes to prevent sand from blowing or washing away. 292 miles of oil-surface roads were completed during the 1931-1932 biennium and an additional 248.7 miles of oiled roads were completed during the 1933-1934 biennium.⁵⁴

In cooperation with the University of Nebraska, the Department of Roads and Irrigation continued testing hard surface materials into the 1930s. Testing proved that a bituminous surfacing would be durable for traffic and weather conditions in the state. The initial cost of construction was also lower than that of concrete paving and local materials could be used, further reducing costs. Although Nebraska continued to use gravel for highway surfacing projects, it was beginning to move towards more permanent hard surfacing materials that would require less maintenance. Gravel surfacing projects gradually dwindled in the 1930s and hard surfacing projects became more popular across the state, especially in populated and high traffic areas.

Several large paving projects were awarded in 1935-36 in an attempt to close the remaining five open patches on Nebraska's principal highways.⁵⁵ In 1935, U.S. 30 was the first highway to be hard surfaced across the state, including both concrete and bituminous materials. At this time, projects were also completed on U.S. 6 and U.S. 8 resulting in completely paved highways.⁵⁶ These projects totaled over \$1.5 million, with the state funding approximately one-half and federal matching funds covering the remainder.⁵⁷ Asphalt evolved as the material of choice for highways, although most of Nebraska's lesser-used county section line roads remain well-maintained gravel surfaces.

Road Development through the Depression and World War II

Federal relief programs during the 1930s provided jobs and funding that contributed to the construction and improvement of roads throughout the country and the state of Nebraska. An ample workforce, lower wages, and lower costs for building materials allowed Nebraska to save money during this period, even as road construction saw an era of "unprecedented progress." Federal funding increased for highway construction in the 1930s. In 1931, \$80 million dollars in emergency Federal-Aid was made available to the states to supplement their required matching funds. In 1931-32, Nebraska received \$4.25 million in emergency Federal-Aid. During the hard times of the Depression, this allowed states to continue with highway construction and put unemployed people to work. The following year, a second emergency relief act was passed by Congress with stipulations. States were required to pay a minimum wage rate (30 cents per hour for unskilled labor and 50 cents per hour for skilled labor) and give hiring preferences to local residents and ex-servicemen with dependents. To employ as many people as possible, laborers were hired for only a 30-hour workweek.⁵⁸

As the Depression continued, the Nebraska Legislature offered measures to assist taxpayers and the counties. In 1933, for instance, motor vehicle registration fees were lowered to lessen the tax burden on individuals and the counties received an increased share of the gasoline tax. Both of these measures decreased the state funds available for highway construction. Also in 1933, the Department of Public Works became the Department of Roads and Irrigation.⁵⁹ A total of 198 federal Civil Works Administration (CWA) projects were completed under the supervision of the Department of Roads and Irrigation. They included constructing new earth roads, widening cuts and fills, producing and placing gravel surfacing, constructing bridges and drainage structures, widening bridges and culverts, improving railroad crossings, painting bridges and guardrails, removing and relaying brick pavement, slope and ditch protection, landscaping and roadside

⁵⁴ Nebraska Department of Public Works, Bureau of Roads and Bridges, *Nineteenth Biennial Report of the Department of Public Works 1931-1932* (Lincoln, NE: Nebraska Department of Public Works, Bureau of Roads and Bridges, 1932), 41-45; Nebraska Department of Roads and Irrigation, Bureau of Roads and Bridges, *Twentieth Biennial Report of the Bureau of Roads and Bridges 1933-1934* (Lincoln, NE: Nebraska Department of Roads and Irrigation, Bureau of Roads and Bridges, 1934), 49.

⁵⁵ The Biennial Report did not specify the five remaining open patches.

⁵⁶ *Twenty-First Biennial Report of the Bureau of Roads and Bridges 1935-36*, 77-78.

⁵⁷ "Ask Paving Bids on No. 6 Highway; Opened July 23," *The Morning Spotlight*, 2 July 1936, 1.

⁵⁸ *Twentieth Biennial Report for 1933-1934*, 189; Koster 41.

⁵⁹ Koster, 44; Scott, 166.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Historical and Architectural Resources of the Detroit-
Lincoln-Denver Highway

Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section E Page 11

planting, constructing and repairing patrol sheds and equipment yards, preparing maps and plans, testing and inspecting materials, and other various tasks.⁶⁰ After the suspension of the CWA on March 31, 1934, the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) began organizing work divisions. CWA projects that had not been completed prior to March 31, 1934, were transferred to FERA and continued as work relief projects. Over 150 work relief highway projects had been approved under this system by November 1, 1934.⁶¹

Highway beautification projects began in 1934 when the Federal Bureau of Public Roads required that at least 1% of total funding to each state be used for "the appropriate landscaping of parkways or roadsides." This advocated roads that conformed to their natural setting, including sensitive siting, conserving soil, selective tree cutting, and appropriate plantings. The Department of Roads and Irrigation cooperated with local civic organizations and assisted with several improvement projects by contributing plans, layouts and consultation. In 1934 the Department built its first rest area or roadside park on the south side of U.S. 20 near the Bryan Bridge, southeast of Valentine. This rest area remained in use for only five years, closing in 1939 when the state did not renew the lease.⁶²

Weather conditions in the 1930s also had a significant impact on road construction activities in Nebraska. Severe flooding in the Republican River Valley in 1935 and extreme drought in the 1930s forced the Department of Roads and Irrigation to allocate financial resources toward cleaning and repairing damaged highways and bridges. Flooding destroyed approximately 341 miles of highway and 307 bridges.⁶³ During the 1930s, a severe drought hit Nebraska and the rest of the Great Plains. In the Sandhills region, the dry, sandy soil could not withstand the winds, which triggered dust storms that hindered road construction. The dry conditions also affected materials, forcing workers to use water to compact the grade work and keep the concrete from drying out.⁶⁴

During the 1930s, Nebraska continued to struggle to match federal funding for road construction on a 50-50 basis. Utilizing its "pay-as-you-go" policy, Nebraska was unable to match approximately \$2 million of the total federal funds available by the end of the decade, which would have totaled approximately \$4 million dollars for road construction.⁶⁵

By 1940, Nebraska had an 11,200-mile highway system, of which only 9,000 miles were maintained. Of the 9,000, 4,784 miles were graveled, 3,804 miles were hard-surfaced, and 412 miles had dirt surfacing.⁶⁶ After the United States became involved in World War II, road construction halted, except for along routes designated necessary to the war effort. For national security, the War Department and the Public Roads Administration identified a system of roads known as the Strategic Network of Highways to access military bases and defend manufacturing plants and other strategic sites. In Nebraska three main routes were designated as a top priority for materials and were eligible for federal funds made available in the Defense Highway Act of 1941:

- US-75 from Kansas line to Omaha
- US-30 and US-30A (Fremont to Omaha spur) from the Missouri River / Iowa line to the Wyoming line
- US-81 from the Kansas line to Norfolk, continuing on US-275 from Norfolk to O'Neill, and then on US-281 from O'Neill to the South Dakota line.⁶⁷

⁶⁰ *Twentieth Biennial Report for 1933-1934*, 190-191.

⁶¹ *Twentieth Biennial Report for 1933-1934*, 195.

⁶² *Twentieth Biennial Report of the Bureau of Roads and Bridges 1933-1934*, 56; Koster 46-47.

⁶³ *Twenty-First Biennial Report of the Bureau of Roads and Bridges of the Department of Roads and Irrigation 1935-36*, 15, 57; Koster, 48.

⁶⁴ Koster, 45-46.

⁶⁵ Koster, 49-50.

⁶⁶ Koster, 43.

⁶⁷ Nebraska Department of Roads and Irrigation, *Twenty-Fourth Biennial Report of the Department of Roads and Irrigation 1941-1942* (Lincoln, NE: Nebraska Department of Roads and Irrigation, 1942), 5.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Historical and Architectural Resources of the Detroit-
Lincoln-Denver Highway

Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section E Page 12

The Defense Highway Act of 1941 further restricted the activities of state highway departments. Federal funds were limited to the Strategic Network of Highways, construction of roads to military bases and defense manufacturing plants, construction of air bases, and advanced engineering surveys for projects to be initiated after the war. A major war effort project undertaken in Nebraska was the completion of the state's first four-lane divided highway on December 8, 1941. Highway 73/75 from the south city limits of Omaha to Fort Crook (currently Offutt Air Force Base) consisted of a 6-mile stretch of two, 22-foot concrete lanes separated by a 10-foot grass median. The road led to the Glenn L. Martin Bomber Plant at Fort Crook.⁶⁸

During World War II, the Nebraska Department of Roads and Irrigation shifted its efforts to defense-related activities and assisted Army and Navy engineers with the design and construction of ordnance plants and airfields. The department provided information regarding soil conditions within the defense areas, rented out survey equipment for engineering work, and collected scrap materials. Work was postponed on active highway contracts so that contractors could assist in Army and Navy projects.⁶⁹

Restrictions on critical building materials during the war forced the department to change design and construction standards and reduce or eliminate the use of critical materials in new construction. At first metal was the only critical material that the department had to do without, but later restrictions included lumber, asphalt products, cement, and other materials. The AASHO Committee on Standards suggested changes in design and construction standards to reduce or eliminate the use of critical building materials. These suggestions were used to the fullest extent possible in the design of highway construction in Nebraska and non-critical materials were used whenever possible. In the case of concrete structures it became necessary to remove almost all steel reinforcement because metal was restricted to military use. Several projects had to be postponed until materials were made available, while some designs were deemed adequate without the steel reinforcements, but became more expensive due to the additional amounts of concrete needed.⁷⁰

Near the end of World War II, in 1944, the condition of Nebraska's highway system was similar to its pre-war state with a total of 9,119 state highway miles, with only 4,050 miles paved. Overall the condition of the roads was poor due to their general neglect and deterioration during the war. In a post-war report to the roads committee of the U.S. House of Representatives, the Department of Roads and Irrigation reported that over half the State's 1,200 miles of concrete pavement was over 10 years old and in need of repair and 40% of its bituminous surfacing was inadequate.⁷¹

Post World War II Road Development in Nebraska

In order to address road deficiencies nationwide, a post-war highway program was implemented by the 1944 Federal-Aid Highway Act. Three categories of funding were established: 1) federal-aid primary roads based on the previously used seven percent system; 2) feeder or secondary roads, including farm-to-market roads, rural free delivery routes and public school bus routes; 3) highways in urban areas with a population over 5,000. Within Nebraska's highway system, roads eligible for funding included 5,630 miles of primary roads, 9,800 miles of feeder or secondary roads, and roads within 18 cities with populations over 5,000. Nebraska was initially scheduled to receive approximately \$8.5 million in funding annually; however, funding was reduced and the program was cut back in 1946.⁷²

As federal funding was limited and roads remained deteriorated following the war, the State of Nebraska reviewed its road system situation. In July 1947, a 35-member Nebraska Highway Advisory Committee, composed of private citizens, was established to assess the state's present and future highway needs. This committee was the predecessor of the State

⁶⁸ *Twenty-Fourth Biennial Report of the Department of Roads and Irrigation 1941-1942*, 5.

⁶⁹ *Twenty-Fourth Biennial Report of the Department of Roads and Irrigation 1941-1942*, 6-7.

⁷⁰ *Twenty-Fourth Biennial Report of the Department of Roads and Irrigation 1941-1942*, 6, 109.

⁷¹ Koster, 49, 57.

⁷² Nebraska Department of Roads and Irrigation, *Twenty-Sixth Biennial Report of the Department of Roads and Irrigation 1945-1946* (Lincoln, NE: Nebraska Department of Roads and Irrigation, 1946), 1, 4.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Historical and Architectural Resources of the Detroit-
Lincoln-Denver Highway

Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section E Page 13

Highway Commission established in 1953. The committee's assessment identified over 6,500 miles of the state highway system that was defective and estimated the cost of repair to exceed \$259 million. They recommended the adoption of a 20-year program of highway improvement, which upon completion would result in an entirely modern and adequate highway transportation system.⁷³ To finance the improvements, the gasoline tax and motor vehicle registration fees were raised in 1949 to increase funds available for road construction. Together these taxes would produce \$5 million in revenue, with \$4.5 million earmarked for matching federal-aid highway funds. This legislation was repealed in a November 1950 referendum by voters who were unwilling to pay for—or did not fully understand the need for—highway financing.⁷⁴

In addition to limited funding, the Department of Roads and Irrigation continued to face material shortages after the war. Steel, used as a reinforcement material, continued to be in short supply into the early 1950s, creating an obstacle in the development of an accelerated highway program. The shortage of skilled engineers also affected the department. Trained engineers who left the department for the war effort were failing to return to positions in Nebraska's Department of Roads and Irrigation, often taking more lucrative positions elsewhere.⁷⁵ By the 1953-1954 biennium, however, the required materials were no longer in short supply and delayed highway projects were back on schedule.⁷⁶

By 1950, Nebraska's state highway system consisted of 9,578 miles of road, of which 5,062 were graveled, 4,386 were hard-surfaced and 130 miles were dirt. In addition to maintaining the state highway system, by this time the state was also responsible for maintaining streets and highways in communities with populations under 2,500.⁷⁷ In the 1950s converting Nebraska's gravel highways, which still included over half of the system, to hard-surfacing was a Department of Roads priority.⁷⁸ With funding remaining tight, the need for highway improvements in Nebraska began to be determined through the establishment of a "sufficiency rating." The rating took into consideration surface conditions, economic factors, safety and service. The rating system process was described by John W. Hossack, former State Engineer, as follows:

Basically, you drove every mile of highway in the state and analyzed it as to its condition, width, and all the various things that would have to do with the condition, life, and service rating of that particular section. Then, every highway got a grade. Kind of like a report card, it got a grade from 0 to 100.⁷⁹

Roadside improvements, begun in the 1930s, continued in the 1950s to reduce soil erosion and improve the aesthetics of the right-of-way. Trees and shrubs were planted in the right-of-way to improve its appearance and screen properties adjoining the roads. Noxious weeds were removed from the right-of-way through the use of chemicals. Brome grass seed was planted on highway shoulders, slopes, and roadsides to prevent wind and water erosion and the growth of weeds.⁸⁰

In 1953 the State Highway Commission was established by the Nebraska Legislature, replacing the Highway Advisory Commission. The State Highway Commission was formed to promote better relations between the public and the Department of Roads and Irrigation and to act as a liaison between citizens, the agency, and the governor. The State Highway Commission also served as an advisor to the State Engineer, establishing broad policies and forming a trunk highway system to be financed with revenue generated from highway user taxes.⁸¹ In 1957 the Nebraska Legislature divided the Department of Roads and Irrigation into three separate agencies: Department of Roads, Department of Motor

⁷³ Nebraska Department of Roads and Irrigation, *Twenty-Seventh Biennial Report of the Department of Roads and Irrigation 1947-1948* (Lincoln, NE: Nebraska Department of Roads and Irrigation, 1948), 3; Koster, 63.

⁷⁴ Koster, 66.

⁷⁵ *Twenty-Seventh Biennial Report of the Department of Roads and Irrigation 1947-1948*, 3.

⁷⁶ Nebraska Department of Roads and Irrigation, *Thirtieth Biennial Report of the Department of Roads and Irrigation 1953-1954* (Lincoln, NE: Nebraska Department of Roads and Irrigation, 1954), 3.

⁷⁷ Nebraska Highway Advisory Committee, 19.

⁷⁸ Koster, 57-59.

⁷⁹ Koster, 68. The quote was from George Koster's 1985 interview with John W. Hossack, former State Engineer.

⁸⁰ Koster, 69.

⁸¹ Koster, 69-70.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Historical and Architectural Resources of the Detroit-
Lincoln-Denver Highway

Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section E Page 14

Vehicles, and Department of Water Resources. The Nebraska Department of Roads (NDOR) included the Bureau of Highways and the Safety Patrol (in 1967 renamed the Nebraska State Patrol).⁸²

The earliest plans for a national interstate highway system were included in a 1939 Federal Bureau of Public Roads report that advocated the construction of a special system of direct interregional highways that would meet the requirements of national defense in times of war, as well as the increasing demands of traffic. However, the project was delayed by World War II.⁸³ Further steps were taken in 1944, when the Federal-Aid Highway Act called upon the states and the Bureau of Public Roads to designate a national system of interstate highways, not to exceed 40,000 miles in total, connecting state capitals, principal metropolitan areas, cities, and industrial centers by direct routes. Finally, the 1956 Federal-Aid Highway Act declared the early completion of the interstate highway system, as authorized under the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1944, essential to the national interest.

The Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 had a significant impact on the development of Nebraska's highways and the volume of traffic they were able to serve. The Act increased appropriations to states for primary, secondary, and urban highway construction and made a provision for a 41,000-mile "Interstate Highway System." It also authorized a 13-year construction period for the Interstate, which would be extended as states faced routing and funding difficulties. The entire system was anticipated to cost over \$27 billion, with the states responsible for only ten percent of the construction costs and the federal government covering the other 90 percent of costs. The intentions of the Interstate Highway System were described as follows:

Consisting of routes of highest importance to the Nation, which connect the principal metropolitan areas, cities, and industrial centers, including important routes into, through, and around urban areas, serve the national defense, and connect at suitable border points with routes of continental importance in the Dominion of Canada and the Republic of Mexico.⁸⁴

General road construction and improvements increased in the late 1950s and continued in the 1960s. Over 500 miles of construction was completed on state highways in 1962. Construction projects were generally geared towards modernizing highways that had become inadequate due to increased traffic loads and deterioration. It was a goal of NDOR to replace gravel surfaces with dustless surfaces in all towns and highway routes across the state. These projects, however, were often overshadowed by the development of Interstate 80 (I-80) across the state. During these decades, the planning, design and construction of the interstate became the central focus of NDOR and the State Highway Commission. Along with the governor, these agencies were responsible for selecting the actual route within a general corridor outlined by the federal government. Work in Nebraska began almost immediately after the 1956 federal legislation was passed, and the construction was planned for four phases over an anticipated 15-year time line.

It took 17 years to complete construction of I-80 across Nebraska's landscape. Despite a slow start in 1956 and 1957 and struggles over the location of the route, construction picked up momentum and the majority of the I-80 was completed in the 1960s. On October 19, 1974, the interstate was fully opened with the completion of a five-mile section west of Sidney. The final cost of completing I-80 in Nebraska was \$390 million, or about \$857,000 per mile.⁸⁵ Although behind the schedule outlined in the 1956 Highway Act, Nebraska was the first state to complete its main line Interstate system. Nationally, only 28,000 miles of the 41,000-mile Interstate system outlined in the 1956 Highway Act were completed by

⁸² In 1981 the Nebraska State Patrol became a separate state agency.

⁸³ James C. Creigh, "Constructing the Interstate Highway in Nebraska: Route and Funding Controversies," *Nebraska History* 72, no. 1 (Spring 1991): 44.

⁸⁴ Nebraska Department of Roads and Irrigation, *Thirty-First Biennial Report of the Department of Roads and Irrigation 1955-1956* (Lincoln, NE: Nebraska Department of Roads and Irrigation, 1956), 1.

⁸⁵ Curt McConnell, "I-80 Changed Car Travel in Nebraska." *Lincoln Journal Star*. 29 March 1999, 14x. The "Golden Link" was meant to symbolize the "Golden Spike" that symbolically completed the first transcontinental railroad.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Historical and Architectural Resources of the Detroit-
Lincoln-Denver Highway

Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section E Page 15

the end of the 1960s. Routing controversies and right-of-way acquisition in urban areas delayed the completion of several sections for extended periods in some states.⁸⁶

Conclusion

In less than a century, Nebraska's automobile routes transformed from a random collection of unimproved dirt roads to a modern system of hard surfaced regional and transcontinental highways and Interstate 80 (I-80). Rutted pathways evolved into the early named highways, promoted by local citizen groups, which in turn developed into a system of state highways that have been continuously improved for safety and efficiency. In Nebraska, as in the rest of the country, road development was influenced by both federal funding and road building standards.

The introduction of the interstate in the 1960s ended the heyday of the earlier transcontinental highways, such as the Lincoln Highway and the D-L-D Highway, which presently serve as regional transportation routes. I-80 across Nebraska serves as a national transportation thoroughfare and the state's major roadway. The Nebraska Department of Roads (NDOR) has worked to improve not only the Interstate but a state Expressway system and all highways within the state. Increased safety and the addition of modern surface materials have been a major focus of these improvements. By the year 2000, the Department had reduced the miles of gravel surfaced highways to only 44 statewide.⁸⁷

NDOR's eight district offices manage approximately 9,950 miles of state roads. These roads represent the evolution of the Nebraska highway system from the early trails of the nineteenth century to the modern Interstate connecting Nebraska with the nation. All of these roads are vital to the state's transportation system.

The Detroit-Lincoln-Denver Highway in Nebraska

Beginnings of the O-L-D/D-L-D Highway

The Omaha-Lincoln-Denver (O-L-D) Highway, later the Detroit-Lincoln-Denver (D-L-D) Highway, formed a portion of one of America's first transcontinental highways. Although the D-L-D only ran from Detroit to Denver, it was a component of a national highway system that stretched from Boston to Los Angeles. The highway began as the O-L-D Transcontinental Highway and, once the link to Detroit was complete, the route became known as the D-L-D. The highway was established by the Omaha-Denver Trans-Continental Route Association in May of 1911, two years before the establishment of the Lincoln Highway Association.

The Omaha-Denver Trans-Continental Route Association was formed when representatives of 17 Nebraska counties located along the Burlington Railroad transportation corridor gathered in Holdrege, Nebraska. It was one of several associations organized nationwide to lobby and raise money for improved roads and the creation of new roads. The meeting was initiated by the Holdrege, Hastings, and Minden Commercial Clubs based on their interest in road and highway development. Since the O-L-D terminated in Denver, Colorado's interests were represented by C. P. Allen, Chairman of the Colorado Highway Commission. Members of the Omaha-Denver Trans-Continental Route Association envisioned that "a great permanent road is someday to stretch away across Nebraska and into Colorado." They also claimed "there is only one great road across Nebraska, and this is it."⁸⁸

In February of 1920, several short highways were joined to create a continuous highway from Detroit to Denver. At the same time the highway was consolidating, the Omaha-Denver Trans-Continental Route Association dissolved and merged with the larger Detroit-Lincoln-Denver (D-L-D) Association, which was active in Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa,

⁸⁶ Kaszynski, 192.

⁸⁷ Information provided by Len Sand and Cindy Veys, Nebraska Department of Roads, 29 April 2002.

⁸⁸ *Heubinger's Map and Guide for Omaha-Denver Trans-Continental Route*, (Des Moines, IA: Iowa Publishing Co., 1911), 10-11. In addition to the Omaha-Denver Transcontinental Route Guide, Heubinger's published road guides for several Midwest routes during the 1910s. They included: *Iowa Official Trans-Continental Route*, *North Iowa Pike*, *Hawkeye Highway*, *Blue Grass Road*, *Waubonsie Trail*, *River-to-River Guide*, *I-O-A Short-Line*, *Panora Speedway*, and *the Inter-State Trail*.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Historical and Architectural Resources of the Detroit-
Lincoln-Denver Highway

Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section E Page 16

Colorado, and Nebraska. Over time, the highway lived up to the expectations of the Omaha-Denver Trans-Continental Route Association, and became a permanent and well-traveled transcontinental road within the state.

O-L-D Route Established

The route of the O-L-D Highway was chosen at the first meeting of the Omaha-Denver Trans-Continental Route Association, in May of 1911. C. P. Allen, an experienced and practical road builder who had examined all the proposed routes, acted in an advisory capacity for the association. Rather than construct a new road, the association chose to lay the route out on existing roads. The association believed that the O-L-D would be the most efficient route to take to Denver, no matter how one got to Omaha or Lincoln. Although the O-L-D route was pieced together from existing roads, over \$400,000 was spent on the physical improvement of the roadbed within the first two years. It is likely that communities along the route donated money and services to the organization, eager for the completed highway to bring economic benefits along with automobile traffic. This money went toward grading and surfacing projects, rail crossings, and the construction of connections between established roads.⁸⁹

In the eastern portion of Nebraska, the original route followed the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad. In the west-central portion, between Oxford (Furnas County) and Culbertson (Hitchcock County), the route followed the Republican River Valley, before turning north to follow the rail line to the Colorado-Nebraska state line. A 54-mile stretch between Hastings and Holdrege was associated with a much earlier transcontinental overland route, the Oregon-California Trail. The earliest O-L-D route ran along section lines and had several jogs and sharp turns between communities. The largest Nebraska communities on this route included Omaha, Lincoln, Fairmont, Hastings, Holdrege, McCook, and Imperial. Several towns along the highway were originally platted by the railroad and appear at regular intervals. In the eastern portion of Nebraska, some of these towns were named alphabetically by the Burlington Railroad: Crete, Dorchester, Exeter, Fairmont, Grafton, Harvard, Inland, and Juniata.⁹⁰

Once the route was determined, association president J. E. Davis was left to officially inspect it and arrange for the publication of a travel road guide. The Omaha-Denver Trans-Continental Route Association coordinated the inspection and mapping with an ambitious publicity event. In July of 1911, just months after the route was laid out on paper, an automobile caravan began the 10-day journey on the O-L-D Highway. J. E. Davis was joined by S. A. Searle of Omaha, representing the Omaha Commercial Club; Joe Long, president of the Blue Grass Road Association; and H. S. Davis of Fremont, Iowa. The official mapping car of the Iowa Publishing Company followed with H. Huebinger, secretary of the company and head of the technical department; publicity agent L. M. Maynard; and expert photographer C. R. Babcock. Other advocates of the O-L-D and promoters of good roads made the trip in additional automobiles.⁹¹

Huebinger and his staff extensively documented the route of the O-L-D. This information was used to create the *Huebinger's Map and Guide for Omaha-Denver Trans-Continental Route* (1911). The guide provided an overview of the Omaha-Denver Trans-Continental Route Association and maps detailing the route through each community. The guide went so far as to document points of interest for the traveler in each town, including banks, garages, and hotels, and visual landmarks outside town, including buffalo wallows, groves, barns, and windmills. Also included were advertisements geared towards the automobile traveler. The 1911 guide was never revised to document changes to the O-L-D/D-L-D route and services within communities along the route.⁹²

To create publicity, J. E. Davis was careful to alert communities along the O-L-D route of the inaugural party's arrival. City councils, commercial clubs, and other organizations sponsored public receptions and met the group upon their arrival. In

⁸⁹ George E. Parisoe, "Omaha-Lincoln-Denver Highway," *American Motorist* (Nov. 1913): 978.

⁹⁰ Carol Ahlgren, "Dry, Long, and Dusty: The Detroit-Lincoln-Denver (D-L-D) Highway in Nebraska," *Society for Commercial Archaeology Journal* 15, no. 2 (Fall 1997): 17.

⁹¹ *Heubinger's Map and Guide for Omaha-Denver Trans-Continental Route*, (Des Moines, IA: Iowa Publishing Co., 1911), 6.

⁹² *Heubinger's Map and Guide for Omaha-Denver Trans-Continental Route*.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Historical and Architectural Resources of the Detroit-
Lincoln-Denver Highway

Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section E Page 17

the communities, association members gave speeches about the importance of good roads and the future of the O-L-D, arguing for continued financial support for the road across the state, as well as for other roads in and around the communities.

Communities located along the O-L-D were receptive to the route and appreciative of the benefits that it would bring. In some locations, communities donated cash and labor to complete the O-L-D route. Farmers along the route also saw the benefits of a maintained highway and pledged to build and maintain the road in front of their respective farms. In some areas, farmers were so receptive that they opened their land and allowed engineers to lay out the new road through their property. In addition to donating property, some farmers also donated money and labor to cut down hills, build bridges, and maintain the road once it was complete.⁹³

Throughout Nebraska commercial clubs and good roads advocates worked together to improve conditions of the O-L-D/D/D-L-D Highway, as well as other local roads. In 1912 the Holdrege Commercial Club reported that it was able to raise enough money to purchase road drags and distribute them to farmers along the O-L-D Highway. Also in 1912, the McCook Commercial Club reported that its efforts resulted in the O-L-D Highway becoming a finished road and one of the best in the state, with their city streets also being improved.⁹⁴

Early Route Markings

During the early development of the O-L-D and other highways, travel was made difficult by poorly marked roads. At the time these roads were established, there were no road markings, such as mile markers, direction signs, and identification numbers. As traffic increased on the highways, this lack of signage made navigation challenging and sometimes dangerous. In order to make travel safer and easier, the Omaha-Denver Trans-Continental Route Association worked to mark the O-L-D route. The official marking for the highway was an 18-inch white band painted on telephone poles, trees, and posts, with the letters O-L-D and later D-L-D painted in black. Private citizens would often mark the route in and around their community. During the early 1920s a group from Lincoln stenciled the O-L-D marking on telephone poles and corners where the route turned between Lincoln and Hastings, and possibly as far west as McCook. After the mid-1920s a handful of concrete road signs were erected by private groups and organizations. One of these markers remains in Lincoln and another is on the border of Lancaster and Seward counties.⁹⁵ The Goodrich Company, manufacturers of automobile and bicycle tires, also began marking the D-L-D route in 1913. The marker, mounted on a 12-foot pole, was a large circle in the form of a bicycle tire with printed directions to the nearest towns of importance and the mileage distance. In July of 1913 a crew was at work installing the signs in Denver, and was moving east with an estimated late-August arrival in Hastings.⁹⁶

By late 1913 several safety concerns were also beginning to be addressed along the route. Warning signs for railroad crossings, bridges, sharp turns and other dangerous places were installed near approaches. These markers consisted of 18-inch red bands painted on posts, telephone poles, and trees. Another safety precaution was completed by the Burlington Railway, when it placed alarm bells at railroad crossings. In an effort to make the rail crossings even safer, the approaches were well graded.⁹⁷

Transformation of the Highway

After 1916, federal and state funding established for road construction and improvements required roads to meet certain design and safety standards, and changes to the D-L-D route and road were inevitable. On April 19, 1919, the D-L-D

⁹³ Samuel H. Lea, "The Proposed Cross State Highway in South Dakota," *Good Roads* 3, no. 11 (N.p., n.d.): 190.

⁹⁴ State Association of Commercial Clubs, *Report of the Proceedings of the Eighth Annual Session of the Nebraska State Association of Commercial Clubs* (N.p., 8 May 1912), 33.

⁹⁵ George E. Koster, *A Story of Highway Development in Nebraska* (Lincoln, NE: Department of Roads, 1986; revised edition, 1997), 33.

⁹⁶ "Permanent Markers For Omaha-Denver Highway," *Hastings Daily Tribune*, 22 July 1913, p. 1.

⁹⁷ Parisoe, 978. At the time of publication, 1913, the Burlington Northern was in the process of establishing the alarm bell system.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Historical and Architectural Resources of the Detroit-
Lincoln-Denver Highway

Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section E Page 18

Highway became part of the state highway system. This change shifted responsibility for improvements and road construction to the state, rather than the Omaha-Denver Trans-Continental Route Association or communities and individuals along the route.

Federal Numbering System

By 1924 the highway was officially designated Nebraska State Highway 6, and would remain so until 1926. After the highway became a numbered route, the D-L-D name gradually fell out of favor and the road was known by its route number. In an effort to diminish the confusion surrounding named routes and unify the national highway system, federal highway authorities announced a numbered system of highways in 1925. When this took effect in 1926, the D-L-D became a federal highway. Since this time, the route has had several numbering changes. When Nebraska erected the first official state and federal highway signs conforming to national standards on June 5, 1926, the route was numbered U.S. 38. In 1931 the route was designated U.S. 6/U.S. 38 and two years later was designated U.S. 6. Finally, in 1940, the segment between Hastings and Culbertson was designated as U.S. 6/U.S. 34, with the other sections of road remaining designated as U.S. 6.⁹⁸

On June 30, 1937, a congressional action designated U.S. 6 as the national route honoring the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR). In 1947 highway markers were placed every 25 miles along the road by the Nebraska Department of Roads and Irrigation. Over the years the GAR signs were removed by theft, vandalism, and routine maintenance requirements, and were never replaced once a supply of extra signs was exhausted. Nationwide, the highway is still recognized as the Grand Army of the Republic Highway, and signs still commemorate it in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Nevada, and Iowa.⁹⁹

Construction and Road Surfaces

The D-L-D Highway has undergone continual improvements since its establishment in 1911, including the elimination of dangerous turns and railroad crossings, construction of culverts and guard rails, construction and repair of bridges, landscaping of the area adjacent to the highway, addition of lights and train signals, creation and improvement of intersections, widening of highway lanes and creation and widening of shoulders.

Federal aid distributed in 1918 was used for the construction and upgrading of roads across the state of Nebraska. Approximately \$43,000 in federal aid was distributed to Adams County where work on the O-L-D near Hastings was a priority. At the time, the O-L-D Association planned to meet in Hastings to demonstrate road building machinery and discuss the status of the highway.¹⁰⁰ In 1919, 15 tractors and 14 graders were purchased for \$35,000 for use on federal aid roads in Nebraska's District 1.¹⁰¹ The majority of equipment was intended for use on the O-L-D. In late 1919, work in Adams County began east of Juniata, with grading projects also underway in Furnas County at Arapahoe, in Red Willow County near McCook and between Hamlet (Hayes County) and Imperial (Chase County).¹⁰²

The Federal Highway Act of 1921 provided federal funding for the construction of highways, which included improvements to the D-L-D Highway. Prior to 1921, improvements and work on the D-L-D was largely limited to grading and privately funded construction. The early and mid-1920s saw an increase in state-sponsored highway work with grading and gravel projects being the most common.

⁹⁸ George E. Koster, Misc. Correspondence (N.p., n.d.). Available at the Nebraska Department of Roads Files, Lincoln, NE.

⁹⁹ "Nebraska Department, Sons of Union Veterans, GAR Highway Project," n.d., <www.geocities.com/heartland/Oaks/4173/SUV/garhigh.htm> (Accessed 10 August 2001). Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Nevada, and Iowa have road markers on US Route 6, identifying it as the GAR Highway.

¹⁰⁰ "O.L.D. Meet May 14 and 15," *Hastings Daily Tribune*, 16 March 1918, p. 8.

¹⁰¹ District 1 was comprised of 12 counties, located in the southeast corner of Nebraska.

¹⁰² Nebraska Department of Roads, Project Database Logs. Available at the Nebraska Department of Roads, Lincoln, NE; "Many Tractors and Graders Bought," *Hastings Daily Tribune*, 21 November 1919.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Historical and Architectural Resources of the Detroit-
Lincoln-Denver Highway

Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section E Page 19

The early O-L-D/D-L-D route was primarily earthen, however; by the 1920s gravel had become the preferred road surface. An analysis of Nebraska Department of Roads (NDOR) project logs shows that the majority of gravel surfacing projects in the 17 counties along the D-L-D occurred between 1924 and 1927. Some counties, such as Fillmore, began graveling on the D-L-D during 1926, while other counties, such as Furnas, continued graveling into 1934. As traffic continued to increase and road surfacing technology advanced, gravel surfaces fell out of favor and bituminous (asphalt) and pavement surfacing projects began to occur along the D-L-D.¹⁰³

By the late 1920s paving projects were started in areas where heavy traffic existed. In 1928 it was estimated that 10 to 20 percent of gravel-surfaced roads had an average traffic load that would soon require a better surface. Several towns and counties had already turned to hard surfacing in areas to accommodate traffic loads. NDOR project logs show that concrete pavement projects generally began earlier in the eastern portion of the state and later moved west. The earliest paved stretch on the D-L-D was built west of Lincoln in about 1917. Other cities had hard surfaced segments of the D-L-D, while rural areas continued with gravel surfacing. In 1918, approximately 5.5 miles of brick surface were constructed between Lincoln and Emerald. Bituminous matting (or asphalt) over concrete pavement was completed in Lincoln during 1919. In 1920, brick pavement was constructed in Fairmont and McCook. Two years later brick pavement was laid on 70th Street in Lincoln.¹⁰⁴ Concrete paving took place in Gretna in 1927.¹⁰⁵ Still, it was not until 1937 that the segment between Funk and Axtell, in Phelps and Kearney Counties, went from gravel surfacing to bituminous or asphalt.

With the exception of concrete or asphalt road surfaces in larger communities, the earliest concrete paving projects noted in the NDOR records occurred in the 1920s. Concrete paving projects listed in the NDOR Biennial Reports include:

- north of Gretna in Douglas County in 1926
- Sarpy County in 1929
- Cass and Lancaster counties initiated in 1930
- Seward County in 1931
- Adams and Red Willow projects in 1930 and 1931 near the large towns of Hastings and McCook
- 12.5 miles of highway beginning at the south edge of Hastings completed in October 1931

On October 19, 1931, a grand opening ceremony with an automobile caravan was held to celebrate the newly completed concrete-paved highway on the south edge of Hastings.¹⁰⁶ Over 100 miles of concrete paving was completed in Nebraska during the spring and summer of 1934 under the state and federal road building program. On the D-L-D this included two 9-mile projects between Friend and Exeter and Dorchester and Friend. In addition, the federal requirement for the expenditure of one-fourth of available emergency federal funds from depression-era programs was responsible for a number of paving projects within towns and cities along the D-L-D including Minden, Lincoln, and Omaha.¹⁰⁷

Several large paving projects were awarded in 1936 in an attempt to close the remaining five unpaved patches on Nebraska's principal highways, including sections of the D-L-D. It was anticipated that D-L-D projects underway in Fillmore and Clay County were to be completed during the summer of 1936 and the portion between Harvard and Fairmont was scheduled to be completed in the spring of the following year.¹⁰⁸ By 1938 the D-L-D had been hard surfaced across the state of Nebraska with either bituminous matting (asphalt) or concrete. Concrete pavement projects continued into the 1960s in some counties. These surfaces were later replaced by asphaltic concrete surface courses (asphalt pavement above the existing or reconstructed surfaces), which were ongoing projects that continued into the 1980s.

¹⁰³ Nebraska Department of Roads, Project Database Logs.

¹⁰⁴ The D-L-D ran north-south along 70th Street in Lincoln, between Burlington Avenue in the south and the railroad tracks in the north.

¹⁰⁵ Nebraska Department of Roads, Project Database Logs.

¹⁰⁶ "Formally Open New Pavement on State Road," *Hastings Democrat*, 22 October 1921, p. 1.

¹⁰⁷ "State Completes 100 Miles Paving During Past Summer," *Hastings Democrat*, 20 September 1934, p. 1.

¹⁰⁸ "Ask Paving Bids On No. 6 Highway; Opened July 23," *The Morning Spotlight*, 2 July 1936, p. 1.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Historical and Architectural Resources of the Detroit-
Lincoln-Denver Highway

Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section E Page 20

Relocation of the D-L-D Highway

In addition to road surface changes, the original route of the D-L-D changed over time. During the late 1920s realignment projects began to take place across the state, a trend that would continue into the 1940s. Since the early highways most often followed the grid of section line roads, relocations included shortening and straightening the route and eliminating unnecessary turns and rail crossings. These changes improved the overall safety of the road and diminished traffic issues within towns. For example, the 1929-1930 Nebraska Department of Public Works biennial report described one early relocation project as follows: "the new routing of the highway through Greenwood (Cass County) on U.S. 38 eliminated approximately 3.5 miles of road and numerous sharp and hazardous curves."¹⁰⁹

Relocations of the D-L-D included the following sections: McCook to Indianola (Red Willow County), Holdrege to Funk (Phelps County), Cambridge to Holbrook (Furnas County), and near Culbertson (Hitchcock County). A 1936 relocation project straightened the route between Funk (Phelps County) and Axtell (Kearney County), eliminating several 90-degree turns and shortening the route. This relocation also shifted the highway into the community of Axtell, which had previously been bypassed. In addition, since portions of the D-L-D were located on railroad right-of-way, when the rail line relocated or ownership of the property changed, the highway route was affected.¹¹⁰ During 1935-1936, a relocation of the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad caused a realignment of the D-L-D Highway. As a result, the road was straightened and shifted north, eliminating eight miles between Arapahoe (Furnas County) and Atlanta (Phelps County), and bypassing Edison by two miles and Oxford (both in Furnas County) by four miles. In other cases, the route was shifted to avoid dangerous railroad crossings.

The 1941-1942 Nebraska Department of Roads and Irrigation biennial report gave detailed information about a recently completed project in Sarpy County, describing typical changes made to improve the road's design and safety.

The heaviest and most important work performed is located on Highway No. 6 between Ashland and Gretna. This route was built during a time when little attention was given to safety standards now regarded as a necessity on all modern highways. Vertical banks of cuts impaired sight distance and threatened drainage elements and roadways by sloughing. Shoulders of heavy fills were too narrow to permit emergency parking and construction scars were so predominant as to present a very displeasing appearance. Deficiencies and hazards were eliminated by the changing of vertical banks to gradual slopes, the excess earth being employed in increasing shoulders to ten feet in width. Final slopes were stabilized against erosion through the medium of topsoil, seeding, mulching and ground cover planting, and the projects received sufficient decorative planting to better [the] environment.¹¹¹

Relocations of the route often eliminated communities from the direct path of the D-L-D. Some communities were in favor of the relocation, which removed traffic congestion from the center of town, but others lobbied for the highway to remain through the central business district. Many of the communities' central business districts along the D-L-D were bypassed by relocations of the highway. Edison and Oxford, small communities located in Furnas County, were two such communities. A route change also eliminated Lamar (Chase County) from the D-L-D route. In 1911 the original highway ran through the center of town. By 1939, a realignment shifted the highway to the east, bypassing Lamar. In Minden (Kearney County) the original D-L-D route ran through the central business district, but a relocation shifted the highway north, bypassing the center of town. A similar project occurred in Holdrege by 1939, with the highway shifting away from the central business district while remaining in town. In Exeter, the 1911 route turned north and ran through the central

¹⁰⁹ Nebraska Department of Public Works, *Eighteenth Biennial Report of the Department of Public Works 1929-1930* (Lincoln, NE: Nebraska Department of Public Works, 1930).

¹¹⁰ "Shortening the Highways," *Nebraska Highways* 2, no. 9 (June 1929).

¹¹¹ Nebraska Department of Roads and Irrigation, *Twenty-Fourth Biennial Report of the Department of Roads and Irrigation 1941-1942* (Lincoln, NE: Nebraska Department of Roads and Irrigation, 1942).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Historical and Architectural Resources of the Detroit-
Lincoln-Denver Highway

Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section E Page 21

business district. By 1939 this route was relocated to the south edge of town. An exception to this trend was the community of Greenwood, which succeeded in relocating the highway through the center of town during 1929-1930.¹¹²

Within the city of Hastings, the proposal to shift the D-L-D to the south side of town led to a three-year controversy, beginning in the late 1920s. Government and local officials could not agree on a permanent route. Several local businessmen had wanted the route of the D-L-D to continue through town along Second Street. This was fine with the state, but the federal government would not continue to pave the highway if it ran through the center of town. The federal government had been mapping a system of highways from a military standpoint, which did not allow for highway traffic through the center of major towns. Instead of following Second Street, the federal government proposed to turn the route south on Elm for one mile, then continue west until it rejoined the original D-L-D route west of Juniata (also eliminating Juniata from the route). In order to move ahead with their plans, the state and federal authorities agreed to place markers for an alternative route through the center of town, and relocate the main route along the south side of town.¹¹³

Tourism along the D-L-D

In addition to advocating road construction and improvements, promoters of the O-L-D/D-L-D route worked to increase tourist traffic. The potential economic benefits of automobile tourism also caused many communities to lobby for inclusion along the route. The focus on tourism along the O-L-D/D-L-D Highway proved to be well-founded, especially prior to the construction of Interstate 80 (I-80) in the 1960s. Highway promoters boasted that 75,000 tourists passed over the O-L-D in 1919 alone, and predicted that over 100,000 would drive the route in 1920. The large number of garages, motels, eateries, service stations and tourist sites established along the highway is further evidence of its success as a tourist route. Many of these establishments advertised in road guides and on maps, trying to lure tourists to their location.

The Tourist Experience

The earliest tourists on the O-L-D Highway found communities enthusiastically embracing the automobile, even if many of their businesses still catered primarily to horse-drawn vehicles and the railroad. Hotels and restaurants could easily serve auto tourists alongside their traditional clientele and savvy entrepreneurs were quickly opening auto-related businesses to serve both local and traveling populations. As such, communities were able to list a surprisingly large range of accommodations Huebinger's 1911 Guide. The town of Friend could offer tourists one first class hotel (the Hotel Coronado), one "good" hotel (Miller's Hotel), two restaurants serving short orders (Dilbert's Café and W. H. Trie & Co.) and two garages (Kahn Bros. and Heagney Auto Co.). Ninety miles west in Minden, tourists could also find ample hotel accommodations, including the Humphrey Hotel, which charged \$2.00 per night, "three equip garages," charging 50 cents for auto storage, a supply station and a vulcanizing plant. Hastings, the largest city on the route after Omaha and Lincoln, had a wider range of hotels from the Hotel Bostwick with \$3.00 rooms to the Klien Hotel with 75 cent rooms. Even tiny Holbrook in Furnas County had a "beautiful natural park" where auto tourists might picnic.¹¹⁴

Individual businesses also advertised in O-L-D/D-L-D Highway guides. The Omaha Rubber Company, for instance, promoted itself as a motorist headquarters with a full line of auto accessories and clothing in Heubinger's 1911 Guide.¹¹⁵ The Osborne Oil Company, "the best gasoline and oils," The Rose, "America's leading tire pump, manufactured in Hastings;" Western Motor Sales Company, "Buick and Cadillac distributors;" and the Hotel Clarke, "fireproof, Nebraska's most popular hotel, tourists welcome," were just some of the businesses that made Hastings a "center of trade" in the Lincoln Automobile Club's c. 1920 Guide. In that same guide, Minden advertised as "A Live City," with ads for The Minden Cafe, "special attention given to tourists," and J. S. Pattison Independent Oil Station, "tourist free camp with rest room, shower bath, screened kitchen and dining room, water, light and fuel," among others. Many businesses also directly

¹¹² "Taking Highways Out of City Streets," *Nebraska Highways* 2, no. 7 (April 1929): 5.

¹¹³ "Impasse Reached in D.L.D Paving," *Hastings Democrat*, 21 August 1930, 1; "Highway Will Go Mile South Now," *Hastings Democrat*, 4 September 1930, p. 1.

¹¹⁴ Heubinger's Guide, 17, 21, 124 and 30.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 1.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Historical and Architectural Resources of the Detroit-
Lincoln-Denver Highway

Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section E Page 22

associated themselves with the highway, including the D-L-D Café in Milford and D-L-D Garages in Hastings and Fairmont.¹¹⁶

Accommodations and businesses along the D-L-D Highway were only part of the driving experience. Heubinger's 1911 Guide also provided a detailed map of the road depicting the surrounding urban and rural landscapes through which early motorists traveled. Heading west from Fairmont, for example, tourists would have passed O-L-D markers as the road turned south and then west. Features, both natural and manmade, identified the route, such as a vineyard, a group of stumps and a school with a basketball court, along with a number of farmsteads. In the six miles east of Hamlet along Frenchman Creek, highway travelers saw one yellow house, several "adobe" farmhouses, one shack, windmills, three bridges, one school, two "rock" features and a mill. They would have also encountered a dangerous railroad grade crossing. Communities also trumpeted the beauty of the surrounding landscape and called out any nearby attractions. "The automobile tourist will really enjoy the change in landscape," wrote Oxford boosters, "the moment he arrives within sight of the famous Republican River." The town of Atlanta included a photograph of an automobile traveling through a "piece of scenery" west of town as part of its section in Heubinger's 1911 Guide. Adventurous tourists could also visit the J. W. Gilbert Farm outside of Friend, which had a wild animal park featuring bison, deer and elk. Finally there were roads themselves. Both Hastings and Minden touted their active Good Roads groups, with the former offering side trips on, "the best roads of the Route." Minden, not to be outdone, claimed to be, "of special interest for automobilists from the fact of its having so many miles of elegant roads, which stretch out like Boulevards."¹¹⁷ As time passed, communities continued to welcome tourist along the O-L-D. Located between the metropolitan hustle of Omaha and Lincoln, Greenwood became a favorite stopover point for tourists and the village board eventually appropriated funds to place an outdoor cooking range and tables in the city park.¹¹⁸

The WPA Federal Writers' Project's *Nebraska: Guide to the Cornhusker State* captured the D-L-D Highway (officially U.S. Highway 6 by 1931) as a tourist route in 1939. Like Heubinger's 1911 Guide, it's "Tour No. 9" documented the road's cultural landscape, but the WPA focused on recreational and cultural opportunities rather than accommodations. This change reflected the "public over private" bias of the WPA, but also the road's evolution from a primitive route with uncertain tourist facilities to a federally-maintained highway with a full range of services. According to the WPA, the D-L-D lacked the scenic qualities other Nebraska routes, particularly U.S. Highway 20 and Nebraska Highway 2, but it did traverse, "a typical cross section of the State," and provide access to a variety of experiences. Sunbathing at Linoma Beach (SY00-113, listed NRHP) on the Platte River, fishing and camping at Memphis Lake Recreational Grounds and viewing a "tree menagerie...of many boxwoods trimmed in grotesque shapes," near Crete were just a few of the purely recreational experiences awaiting D-L-D tourists in the 1930s and 1940s. A wide spectrum of urbanity could be found in Omaha, including everything from fine art at the Joslyn Memorial to tours of the "big three" packing plants near the city's massive Union Stockyards. For history and archeology buffs there was the Nebraska State Historical Society Museum in Lincoln's splendid new Capitol Building or the less formal—and by today's standards controversial—museum outside of Kenesaw where Edward Zeibarth, who possessed a permit to "excavate" Native American graves, housed his artifacts (visits by appointment only). Just like in 1911, there were also the communities and landscapes themselves for tourists to enjoy. "Lying in a valley, with tall cottonwoods lining Main Street," for instance, was the small southwestern Nebraska community of Wauneta with, "the appearance of a mountain town." Finally, the WPA Guide provided information on an essential component of any extended car trip along the D-L-D: a list of radio stations in Omaha, Lincoln and Hastings.¹¹⁹

Over time, roadside development also became part of the D-L-D Highway tourist experience, as business owners turned to unique architectural creations and signage to lure travelers to the products and services they offered. An iconic ten-story lighthouse, which featuring a neon beacon, was added to the Linoma Beach property in 1939. The D-L-D Motel and

¹¹⁶ Lincoln Automobile Club, *Guide Map of the Lincoln Automobile Club* (N.p., c.1920s). Available at the Nebraska State Historical Society, Lincoln, NE.

¹¹⁷ Heubinger's Guide, 143, 95, 29, 17, 24 and 27.

¹¹⁸ "Greenwood Now on Two Great Highways," (N.p., n.d.). Available at the Cass County Historical Society Files, Plattsmouth, NE.

¹¹⁹ Federal Writers' Project, Works Progress Administration, *Nebraska: A Guide to the Cornhusker State* (New York: Viking Press, 1939), Omaha, 235 and 250-251.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetHistorical and Architectural Resources of the Detroit-
Lincoln-Denver Highway

Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section E Page 23

Teepee Court (c. 1955) in Hastings was also a popular travel destination.¹²⁰ Other teepee structures were located on the D-L-D Highway in Nebraska, including an extant gift shop in Atlanta (PP01-001). The Showboat complex (c. 1950), located east of Hastings, was modeled after a Mississippi River paddle wheeler, complete with a side-wheel moored to the Nebraska prairie. Gasoline, supplies, and lodging were provided for the traveling public. Long strips of tourist cabins alternating with covered parking were located on three sides of the central "Showboat" structure. Signage along the highway also beacons travelers, especially at night. The whimsical (or garish) nature of mid-twentieth century roadside architecture and signage would, however, ultimately lose its appeal, as evidenced by a turn to more standardized designs in the 1960s and the eventual demolition of Hastings's Showboat Motel and Teepee Court.¹²¹

Beginning in 1953, tourists along U.S. Highway 6 were sure to stop at Pioneer Village (KN04-153). Created by Chicago plastics tycoon, Harold Warp, who hailed from Kearney County, the extensive tourist site was intended to show the progress of American history through the display of artifacts.¹²² A Streamline Moderne museum was constructed and "historic" buildings brought in from the surrounding countryside were arranged in a "community square." Other buildings were also added to the property to accommodate Warp's extensive collection of artifacts. Warp smartly developed his tourist site at the intersection of U.S. Highway 6 and Nebraska Highway 10, which connected Minden to tourist traffic along U.S. Highway 30 (the Lincoln Highway) located an easy fifteen miles to the north. Extensive signage along both east-west highways continues to catalog artifacts on display at Pioneer Village and invites travelers to "See How America Grew." Pioneer Village marks the apex of tourism along the D-L-D route. Before long, Interstate 80 would divert traffic away from all of Nebraska's east-west highways.

Where to Stay

While most establishments along the D-L-D Highway catered to travelers and local residents alike (including garages, retail shops, groceries, restaurants, recreational facilities, cultural sites and filling stations), lodging establishments were almost exclusively in the travel business. During the early period of the O-L-D Highway, tourists could either get a hotel room or pitch a tent at one of the new "auto camps" springing up along the route. Imperial's Balcony House Hotel (CH04-025, listed NRHP) bridged the lodging gap in the early 1920s by combining a hotel (an old school house moved into town) and a tourist camp. *The Imperial Republican* frequently commented on planned activities and visitor numbers at the camp and free band concerts were often advertised in O-L-D/D-L-D guide maps and the local newspaper. The popularity of the campground and hotel was so great that the owner purchased additional buildings with the intention of making "a modern tourist camp with car booths and all that makes a modern tourist camp."¹²³

Lincoln, Hastings and McCook also developed their own auto camps (sometimes called tourist camps) along the D-L-D route. The Lincoln Automobile Club Tourist Camp at 24th and Randolph Streets advertised as a modern facility with much to offer the traveler in its c. 1920 guide. The establishment was "modern in every way" with new main buildings, hot and cold showers, electric washers, range stoves, electric lights, gravel roads, parking space for 400 autos and tents along with plenty of shade and lots of room in the heart of the city."¹²⁴ Prospect Park (AD04-694), a tourist camp in Hastings, was extremely popular, attracting an estimated 10,000 visitors during the 1923 tourist season alone. In addition to ample camping space where tourists could pitch a tent for 50 cents a night, the park offered a two-room bungalow with a kitchen, shower, and laundry facilities; a bulletin board with information regarding the D-L-D and other highway road conditions; two large ovens; and city police patrol in the evenings. By 1927, tourist facilities at Prospect Park were so successful that the city leased an adjoining two acres to Charles Vernal Lary for the construction of tourist cabins. Each unit had its own

¹²⁰ According to Hasting City Directories the D-L-D Cabin Court was in place by 1950, however, the property was not listed as the "Motel and Teepee Court" until 1960.

¹²¹ *The Motoring Public*, 5; Ahlgren, 19. The wigwam motel in Hastings survived until c. 1985 as apartments, but has since been demolished. Although the Showboat is gone, the county road near its location is still called "Showboat Road."

¹²² Roy T. Bang, *Hero's Without Medals: A Pioneer History of Kearney County, Nebraska* (Minden, NE: Warp Publishing Company, 1952), 149.

¹²³ Greg Miller, "Balcony House," National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, March 2000. Available at the Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office.

¹²⁴ *Guide Map of the Lincoln Automobile Club*, c 1920.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Historical and Architectural Resources of the Detroit-
Lincoln-Denver Highway

Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section E Page 24

water and sewer facilities, a range stove for cooking, and bunk beds. Hot and cold showers were provided in the bathhouse and a small store offered groceries, gasoline, and supplies to guests. Both the camping and cabin facilities successfully attracted travelers and generated income for the city of Hastings.¹²⁵ McCook's tourist camp was located on the south side of the highway (West B) between 4th Street West and Federal Avenue and included a row of nine "shanties on skids".¹²⁶

Auto camps gave way to "cabin courts" and "auto courts" by World War II and before long "motels" would dominate the tourist landscape. On the D-L-D Highway this meant the demise of once popular auto camps. Prospect Park (AD04-0694) closed by 1935, made obsolete by Lary's Cabin Camp at 911 W. J Street along the highway's new southern bypass of Hastings's central business district.¹²⁷ In McCook, the auto camp on West B Street was replaced by a truck / tractor sales and service center sometime prior to 1949.¹²⁸ Six cabins with attached garages were built at the former Lincoln Automobile Club campground, and the property operated as the Antelope Cabin Court for a time, but closed by about 1951.¹²⁹ There was simply too much competition from new businesses. By that time, Lincoln was already home to seventeen auto courts and motels, including the Fairview Tourist Court (LC13:D12-002) at 1400 Cornhusker Highway (U.S. Highway 6). In 1958, there were twenty-five, with the Starlight Motel (LC13:F14-001) and Sharon Motel (LC13:D12-001) being new additions along the highway. Two years later, the national hotel chain entered the Lincoln scene, with Holiday Inn constructing a motel along U.S. Highway 6 immediately east of the Starlight Motel.¹³⁰

A similar story occurred in Hastings, with the D-L-D Cabins & Teepee Court and Showboat Auto Court appearing around 1950 and the Wayfair Motel (AD04-691), XL Motel (AD04-688) and Grand Motel (AD04-692) in place before 1960, with the latter being a Best Western franchise.¹³¹ Advertisements for these motels in the 1960 Hastings City Directory focused on amenities (room phones, TV, radio, air-conditioning) and only occasionally on modernity or materials (usually brick). The title "motel" conveyed modernity all on its own, and many early courts changed their name in an effort to stay relevant. In Hastings this included Sid's Cabins and the Show Boat Auto Court, which were both renamed "motels" by 1960. In smaller towns, less demand meant less completion and tourist courts were more likely to survive. The Arapaho Motel (FN01-070) and Green's Court (FN03-013), both in Furnas County, are two extant examples along the D-L-D route. Some older hotels also catered directly to auto tourists, including Hastings's Clarke Hotel (AD04-022, listed NRHP), which advertised in D-L-D guides and was the only listing under "motels/hotels" in the 1960 city directory.

D-L-D Highway Communities

The impact of the D-L-D Highway on Nebraska communities is difficult to measure, but it is equally difficult to ignore. The highway assuredly effected each community's physical development as auto-related businesses (often followed by other businesses) moved toward each successive highway alignment. It also provided economic opportunities, particularly in those industries that specifically catered to tourists, traveling businessmen and/or truck drivers. Heavier traffic along national routes like the D-L-D Highway also increased the potential customer base for those businesses that could serve both local and traveling populations, including drive-ins, garages and filling stations. Moreover, highway-related businesses and road construction created jobs for both "skilled labor" (such as engineers and auto mechanics) and "non-

¹²⁵ "The Motoring Public," *Historical News* 9, no. 8 (August 1976): 1.

¹²⁶ Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, "McCook, NE, Jan. 1929," Sheet 18.; Lincoln City Directory, 1922. McCook's tourist camp opened sometime after 1921 and closed prior to 1949. Tourist campgrounds are first listed in 1922 Lincoln City Directory (at 24th and Randolph and Vine and Butler in Bethany).

¹²⁷ R.L. Polk & Co, *Polk's Hastings (Nebraska) City Directory*, 1935.

¹²⁸ The City of McCook currently offers free tourist camping in Karrer Park along Highway 6 on the eastern edge of town (Karrer Park Sign, Nebraska Historic Highways Survey Photo No. RW05-000-0110-D06-12)

¹²⁹ Sanborn Map Company, "Lincoln, Lancaster County, Nebraska," 1928 and 1949 Maps (V. 1), Sheet 60; Lincoln City Directories, 1947 and 1951.

¹³⁰ R.L. Polk & Co, *Polk's Lincoln (Nebraska) City Directory*, 1947-1960. LC13:D13-002 (Fairview Tourist Court or Fairview Motel) was demolished after the completion of the 2000-2001 Nebraska Historic Highway Survey. The Holiday Inn at 5250 Cornhusker Highway has undergone significant changes and now operates as the Gatehouse Inn & Suites.

¹³¹ R.L. Polk & Co, Hastings City Directories, 1952 and 1960; advertisements, 58-59 (1960).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetHistorical and Architectural Resources of the Detroit-
Lincoln-Denver Highway

Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section E Page 25

skilled labor” (including food servers, filling station attendants and laborers). Finally, the D-L-D Highway provided industrial and agricultural producers with another connection to outside markets, while also giving local citizens a quicker route in or out of town. Of course, the impact of the D-L-D Highway also varied between communities. In larger communities like Omaha, Lincoln and Hastings this highway was just one of many transportation connections, while in smaller communities it was a lifeline as the automobile surpassed the railroad in commercial, transportation and cultural significance.

Community Planning & Development

The D-L-D Highway had a significant impact on the physical development of Nebraska communities along its route. Omaha and Lincoln are difficult to analyze due to their size, but Hastings is an excellent case study, being large enough to warrant regular documentation through fire insurance maps and city directories. Just one year before the official designation of the O-L-D Highway in 1911, Hastings, a rail hub on the main line of the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad, had six hotels, six livery stables and seven blacksmiths, but it also already had six auto dealers and four “auto liveries” or garages.¹³² The commercial district stretched ten blocks along W. 2nd Street (between Bellevue Avenue and the St. Joe & Grand Island Railroad tracks at Wabash/East Avenue) and four blocks along W. 3rd Street (between Burlington Avenue and St. Joseph Avenue).¹³³ Twenty years later, Hastings was home to at least fourteen automobile dealers, seven garages and thirty filling/service stations.¹³⁴ The commercial district had grown six blocks west along W. 2nd Street (the route selected for the O-L-D Highway) and only one block east and one block west along W. 3rd Street.¹³⁵

Not surprisingly, by 1930 Hastings’s auto-related businesses were crowded along W. 2nd Street in “automobile rows” immediately adjacent to the older commercial district, with the highest concentrations between Colorado and Kansas Avenues (the 300 Block) and between Lexington and Bellevue Avenues (the 1000 Block). On both these blocks approximately 60% of businesses were auto-related, and included the D-L-D Garage (306 W. 2nd Street), Used Car Court (315) Good Year Tire & Rubber Co. (334), Emshoff Tire Service (1020), J.M. Opper Motor Co. (1028) and the B&B Service Station, which offered “Complete One Stop Service: Gas—Oil—Greasing—Tires and Vulcanizing” at 1030 W. 2nd Street. Filling stations for the Osborn Oil Co. (340 W. 2nd Street), National Refining Co. (347), Standard Oil Co. (1008) and Fisk Oil Co. (1039) were located on corner lots of both automobile rows. Farther west along W. 2nd Street was the Ernest Dalton Filling Station (1105), the W.J. Bauer Filling Station & Restaurant (1354) and a Continental Oil Co. Filling Station (1719). Pee Wee Golf, one of the thousands of miniature golf courses that “mushroomed up in...Main Street gap sites and vacant lots,” from the mid-1920s through 1931, also briefly enticed locals and tourists in Hastings at the D-L-D Highway’s intersection with Sanders Avenue.¹³⁶ Scores of other auto-related business were located just off the D-L-D Highway, including the Hastings Battery & Electric Co. “Everything Electrical for the Automobile,” at 210-212 N. Lexington Avenue and the A. E. Stitt Motor Company (Reo, De Soto and Plymouth Dealers) on the southwest corner of W. 3rd Street and St. Joseph Avenue. Similar D-L-D Highway “automobile rows” also developed on 2500 Block of Farnam Street in Omaha and on the 1700 and 1800 Blocks of “O” Street in Lincoln.

Shifting alignments of the D-L-D Highway/U.S. Highway 6 also greatly impacted the physical development of communities along its route. As previously discussed, the highway was rerouted in Hastings in 1930 to bypass the central business district, turning south at Elm Street and then west again on W. J Street. Following the highway was Charles Vernal Lary, manager of the Prospect Park Tourist Camp (AD04-694), who had built “Lary’s Cabin Camp,” at 911 W. J Street by 1935. Five independently-owned filling/service stations also appeared along the new alignment between S. Hastings and S. Baltimore Avenues between 1932 and 1935, including one operated by Ernest Dalton, which had been located at the

¹³² R.L. Polk & Co, *Polk’s Hastings (Nebraska) City Directory*, 1910; Sanborn Map, 1910.

¹³³ Sanborn Map Company, “Hastings, Adams County, Nebraska, August, 1910,” Sheets 15-18.

¹³⁴ R.L. Polk & Co, *Polk’s Hastings (Nebraska) City Directory*, 1930, 368-369 and 385-386.

¹³⁵ Sanborn Map Company, “Hastings, Adams County, Nebraska, September, 1930,” Sheets 2-4, 17, 18 and 31.

¹³⁶ R.L. Polk & Co, *Polk’s Hastings (Nebraska) City Directory*, 1930, 349-342. B&B Service Station Ad, 30; Miniature Golf Courses, Liebs, 137. Surveyed properties include the B&B Service Station (AD04-107) now listed at 1030 W. 2nd Street; J. M. Opper Motor Co. (AD04-108) now listed at 1020 W. 2nd Street and the W. J. Bauer Filling Station (AD04-175) at 1354. W. 2nd Street.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation SheetHistorical and Architectural Resources of the Detroit-
Lincoln-Denver Highway

Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section E Page 26

northwest corner of W. 2nd Street and Bellevue Avenue in 1930. Businesses continued to migrate to W. J Street in the 1940s and 1950s, with Park Motor Court, Myron C. Kent Auto Repair, Hastings Motor Truck Co. and a restaurant operated by Louise Schunk opening before 1941. By 1960, the J Street commercial strip stretched from the Redwood Motel at 600 E. J Street to the Hastings Seed & Supply Co. at 1915 W. J Street. Between these ends stood a number of auto-related businesses, including six lodging establishments, four combined service stations/café, one drive-in, one restaurant and three trucking companies. Other types of businesses had also migrated to the highway from the central business district and the rail-side industrial strip by this time, ranging from a beauty shop and roller skating rink to Timberlake Enterprises (manufactures of truck bodies) and the Overhead Door Company of Hastings.¹³⁷

Hastings was not the only downtown commercial district to be bypassed by U.S. Highway 6 during the 1930s. In Minden, the highway originally passed through the town square, but in 1936 it was rerouted to parallel the Burlington railroad tracks. The result was a new commercial strip at the north end of town, which by 1951 was home to two tourist courts, one restaurant, a used car dealership, four service stations, one service station/café, and the Minden Terminal, which offered gas, oil, tires, a restaurant and John Deere and Massey Harris farm implements. Also along the strip at that time was Melody Lane, with roller skating and dancing, and the future site of Pioneer Village.¹³⁸

The D-L-D Highway and the Local Economy

The various businesses supported by the D-L-D Highway did more than shape the cultural landscape; they also provided jobs. An examination of three D-L-D Highway communities in the 1930 Federal Census, for instance, reveals a fairly diversified auto-related and travel industry (See Table 1 below). In Holbrook, a small town in Furnas County (1930 pop. 488), 23 individuals were listed as employed in highway-related establishments in 1930. Almost half were "proprietors," who owned/operated three garages, two cafes, two filling stations, two rooming houses, one restaurant and one lunchroom. The remaining individuals were employed in these businesses as auto salesmen, filling station attendants, mechanics, laborers, truck drivers and cooks. Two women also worked as "assistant proprietors" to their husbands. Many of these workers represented socially and/or economically vulnerable segments of the population, including Alice Scott, a divorced woman cooking in one of Holbrook's two cafés, and Louis Kolb, a gas station attendant who spoke German as his first language. Two other filling station attendants were bachelors, with 48-year-old Ed Bengston living with his brother and 32-year-old Walter Graves rooming at a boarding house run by Alma Pierce, a 53-year-old widow. 70 miles to the west in Hamlet (1930 pop. 199), the situation was much the same with 11 individuals working in highway-related businesses, including two garages, a restaurant and two filling stations. Two recent immigrants were working in Hamlet's garages: John Zumhingst, a 36-year-old auto salesman, who left Germany in 1907 and Thure Tovolf, a 40-year-old garage owner, who came to the United States from Switzerland in 1911.

The larger community of Milford (1930 pop. 832), located just southwest of Lincoln, supported approximately seven garages, two service stations, two automobile dealerships, an oil company, a battery shop, a trucking company, three eating establishments and a hotel in 1930. These businesses provided proprietorship or managerial opportunities for at least 16 individuals and employed another 35 men and women. Not surprisingly, many highway-related businesses in Milford during this period were family affairs. For instance, John, Dan and Clarence Hershberger all worked in Milford as mechanics, most likely in the garage of 54-year-old Joseph Hershberger. Joining them was Joseph's 19-year-old son, Lee, who worked as a "laborer." Other examples include a café operated by 54-year-old Frank Newton, who employed two unmarried sons, and Milford's sole trucking company, where the proprietor, 27-year-old Floyd Roll, employed his younger brother as a truck driver. Another demographic trend among Milford's highway-related workforce was a tendency for older men to work at filling stations, while women and younger men—at least those not working for their father—found employment in eating establishments. Both of Milford's filling station attendants were in their 60s and five of the community's six wait staff were under the age of 21. Milford's sixth waitress was Bessie Schuck, a 38-year-old widow with three young daughters to support. Finally, while highway-related businesses in Milford provided employment opportunities

¹³⁷ R.L. Polk & Co, *Polk's Hastings City Directory*, 1935, 270; 1941, 252 and 1960, 63.

¹³⁸ *Heroes Without Medals*, 169.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Historical and Architectural Resources of the Detroit-
Lincoln-Denver Highway

Section E Page 27

Name of Multiple Property Listing

for the economically and socially vulnerable, it is also worth noting that several other workers and business owners in this sector had achieved sufficient economic stability by 1930 to own their own homes.

Table 1. Highway-related Jobs in Select D-L-D Highway Communities, 1930¹³⁹

Town	Hamlet	Holbrook	Milford	Total
1930 Population	199	488	832	1,519
Garage, Proprietor	2	2	7	11
Garage, Mechanic	2	4	12	18
Garage, Salesman	-	-	1	1
Garage, Bookkeeper	-	-	1	1
Garage, Laborer	-	1	2	3
Food Establishment, Prop. / Man.	1	5	1	7
Food Establishment, Cook	1	1	3	5
Food Establishment, Wait Staff	-	-	6	6
Food Establishment, Laborer	-	-	1	1
Lodging, Proprietor / Manager	-	3	1	4
Filling Station, Proprietor / Manager	2	2	2	6
Filling Station, Attendant / Salesman	-	4	2	6
Filling Station, Truck Driver	-	1	-	1
Battery Shop, Proprietor	-	-	1	1
Oil Company, Proprietor / Manager	-	-	1	1
Oil Company, Driver	2	-	1	3
Automobile Dealer	-	-	2	2
Automobile Salesman	2	-	-	2
Truck Driver	-	-	4	4
Truck Company, Proprietor	-	-	1	1
Truck Company, Laborer	-	-	1	1
Highway Patrol	-	-	1	1
Road Construction, Contractor	-	2	-	2
Road Construction, Grading	-	1	-	1
Road Construction, Tractor Operator	-	1	-	1
Road Construction, Laborer	-	3	-	3
Total	12	30	51	93

Local histories also provide evidence of job creation and economic opportunity associated with the D-L-D Highway, including in the town of Oxford (1930 pop. 1,155). In this Furnas County community, auto-related businesses provided good jobs and a social safety net during difficult times according to Cleve Gumpton, longtime owner of Oxford's Chevrolet Dealership and the D-L-D Filling Station (FN08-081). Gumpton was able to hire on M. M. Scoles as salesman at \$40.00 per week in 1937 and by the 1960s the business employed thirteen people (a manager, two bookkeepers, one parts man, two salesman and seven service people), with fulltime workers receiving health insurance and a retirement policy.¹⁴⁰ Oxford residents also often depended on the generosity on Marshall Cowan, owner of a service station and small cabin camp, "[who] extended credit to many customers, especially during the lean years."¹⁴¹ The proliferation of auto-related businesses also provided work for local building contractors. In Oxford, Henry Bendler built both the Chevrolet Dealership

¹³⁹ United State Census Bureau, 1930 Federal Census: "District 7, Hamlet Village, Hayes County, Nebraska;" "District 5, Holbrook Village, Furnas County, Nebraska;" "District 25, Milford Village, Seward County, Nebraska."

¹⁴⁰ Oxford Centennial Committee, *Four Score and Seven Years* (Oxford, NE: Laura L. Cowen and Helene L. Luke, 1968), 167-168.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 173-174.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Historical and Architectural Resources of the Detroit-
Lincoln-Denver Highway

Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section E Page 28

/ D-L-D Filling Station and the Ford Dealership (FN08-007), located across the street. Even Gumpton could admit the competition's brick auto showroom "definitely improved the face of the community," upon its completion in 1917.¹⁴²

Of course, the D-L-D Highway also created jobs more directly through road construction and maintenance projects, especially after the road became part of the state/federal highway system in 1916. During a grading project from Emerald to Milford in 1920, for instance, Project Engineer, R.W. Anderson, made \$150.00 per month and 21-year-old Roy Kinsinger, who lived nearby on his parents' farm, made \$80.00 per month as a rodman. D-L-D Highway projects also provided opportunities for local contractors. On the same project, Martz Construction estimated their September culvert costs at \$3,427.15 and their November grading estimates at \$513.52.¹⁴³ Ten years later in Holbrook, highway work employed six individuals: two contractors, three laborers, one grader and a tractor operator. Like Roy Kinsinger in Milford, most of these men were not members of work gang moving through town, but were well-established community members. Four of Holbrook's highway workers in 1930 owned their own homes, and 23-year-old Garrett Lovejoy, lived with his parents.¹⁴⁴ More broadly, the various incarnations of Nebraska's Highway Department also created jobs, some of which were along the D-L-D Highway. In 1939, 44 men joined the newly-created Safety Patrol and in 1954, 51 new "scale officers" manned 12 weighing stations across Nebraska. At least one weighing station was located along the D-L-D route at the intersection of U.S. Highway 6, U.S. Highway 34 and Nebraska Highway 23 in Holdrege. Two years later, "Twenty-one field headquarters were assigned as permanent headquarters for field engineers and their helpers to enable these field men and their families to establish permanent homes in a city with adequate school facilities."¹⁴⁵

From Producer to Market

In the fall of 1910, the *Omaha Bee* argued, "Nebraska is in Need of Highways for Rural Districts," in a half-page article, citing higher lands values and lower agricultural transportation costs in both eastern states and Europe where better roads were already in place.¹⁴⁶ In addition to its other functions, the D-L-D Highway would also contribute heavily to the "farm-to-market" network of highways envisioned by the *Omaha Bee*. As early as 1915, there was an "auto dray" (or truck) operating out of Hastings and fifteen later years a town as small as Milford (1930 pop. 832) had its own trucking company. The trucking business continued to grow through the Great Depression, even as passenger vehicle use fell by 16% in 1936 alone.¹⁴⁷ By 1941, the Department of Roads and Irrigation described U.S. Highway 6 near Holbrook as a, "tourist and freight route across southern Nebraska [that] carries considerable volume of commercial traffic, especially tankers in addition to local farm-to-market movement."¹⁴⁸ Farther east at Gretna, the WPA noted in their 1939 *Guide to the Cornhusker State*, that "trucks loaded with cattle, sheep and hogs bound for the Omaha Market are a familiar sight on this stretch of the highway."¹⁴⁹ Many of these animals had been shipped by train on the Burlington Railroad to be taken the rest of the way to the Union Stockyards by truck.

Trucking continued to grow along U.S. Highway 6, which averaged 3,380 vehicles a day at Gretna and 1,709 at Arapaho in 1950.¹⁵⁰ Charles Youngston of Minden, for instance, transported livestock between Crete, Nebraska (just south of U.S. Highway 6) to Denver, and even as far as Ogden, Utah, with his diesel truck during the 1950s.¹⁵¹ Hastings also continued

¹⁴² Ibid., 164.

¹⁴³ Nebraska Department of Public Works, "Monthly Report," January 1921, 16 and 25; February 1921, 38. Project 134a was an 9.72 earthen road grading project.

¹⁴⁴ United States Census Bureau, 1930 Federal Census, "District 5, Holbrook Village, Furnas County, Nebraska."

¹⁴⁵ A. T. Lobdell, *Nebraska Department of Roads: A History* (Lincoln, NE, 1965), 26, 36 and 38; Twenty-ninth Biennial Report of the Department of Roads and Irrigation, V. 1 Bureau of Highways Motor Vehicle Division Law Enforcement and Public Safety, 1951-1952, 134.

¹⁴⁶ "Nebraska in Need of Highways for Rural Districts; Road Figures," *The Omaha Sunday Bee*, 4 September 1910, 4.

¹⁴⁷ Dorothy Creigh Weyer, *Adams County: The Story, 1872-1972* (Hastings, NE: Adams County-Hastings Centennial Commission, 1972), 897; Twenty-fourth Biennial Report Department of Roads & Irrigation to the Governor of Nebraska, 1941-1942. Volume 1. Passenger vehicle statistics for 1936, Trucking grew by 5% that year.

¹⁴⁸ Twenty-fourth Biennial Report, v. 1, 42.

¹⁴⁹ WPA Guide, 353.

¹⁵⁰ Twenty-ninth Biennial Report of the Department of Roads and Irrigation, 1951-1952.

¹⁵¹ *Heroes Without Medals*, 53.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Historical and Architectural Resources of the Detroit-
Lincoln-Denver Highway

Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section E Page 29

to develop as a trucking center, with 9 trucking companies in 1939, twelve in 1960 and fifteen by 1971.¹⁵² It's important to note, farmers and ranchers were not the only producers to benefit from another shipping option. Hastings, Lincoln and Omaha all had multiple manufacturing concerns and even smaller towns along the D-L-D Highway were home to industry, including an index tab factory in Exeter.¹⁵³

The D-L-D Highway also offered new opportunities for consumers, who—after purchasing a car—could now more easily reach bigger markets. This had a mixed, and sometimes detrimental, impact on local business as can be seen in Greenwood. In the earliest period of the D-L-D, Greenwood competed for potential highway customers even though the route bypassed its commercial district until 1921. In 1912 for instance, the editor of the *Gazette* suggested citizens, “paint a sign...and let auto drivers know that Greenwood is still on the map,” in response to signs asking motorists to bypass Greenwood that were put up by nearby rival Ashland.¹⁵⁴ As previously mentioned, Greenwood would, despite Ashland's best efforts, become a favorite stopping point for tourists during the 1920s and 1930s. Eventually, however, even Greenwood citizens, “purchased autos and drove to Lincoln or Ashland to shop.” The factors leading to the decline of Greenwood's commercial prospects, at least in one author's 1983 summation, were twofold: fires, which repeatedly destroyed the business district, and, “the developing D.L.D. Highway...with the building of U.S. #6 parallel to the railroad tracks in 1930-32, then a new transportation system spoiled what an old transportation system had built.”¹⁵⁵ This pattern was most likely repeated all along the route as small town and rural families eventually drove to regional centers like Omaha, Lincoln, Hastings or McCook for shopping trips, rather than patronizing their nearest retail shops. Tourists also began to bypass smaller towns, as better roads and automobiles allowed them to drive faster and further.

Conclusion

The original D-L-D route in Nebraska was a patchwork of earthen and graded roads that jogged along section lines, roughly following the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy right-of-way and the Republican River Valley. As the popularity of the D-L-D grew, changes were gradually made that altered it from a crude earthen road into today's paved U.S. Highway 6, with its wide traffic lanes and generous shoulders. The road eventually bypassed some towns to create a more efficient route, while in other places it added new communities to its route. Tourism and travel flourished along the route, aided by the publication of various guidebooks and the proliferation of businesses offering motorists goods, services, lodging and recreational opportunities. Finally, the D-L-D Highway had an undeniable impact on the physical, commercial and socio-economic character of the communities through which it passed.

¹⁵² *Adams County: The Story, 1872-1972*, 898.

¹⁵³ WPA Guide, 355.

¹⁵⁴ Greenwood Centennial Commission. *A Centennial History of Greenwood* (s.l., s.n., c. 1967), 33.

¹⁵⁵ Graham, Alice Giekesson. *Heritage and History of Greenwood, Nebraska* (Marceline, MO: Walsworth Pub. Co., 1983), 27.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Historic and Architectural Resources of the Detroit-
Lincoln-Denver Highway in Nebraska

Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section F Page 1

F. Associated Property Types

In order to qualify for listing under this Multiple Property Document (MPD), resources must have a documented association with the D-L-D Highway through one of the four National Register of Historic Places "Criteria for Evaluation:" an event, a person, design/construction and information potential. The evaluation of potentially eligible properties under this MPD will be limited to intact examples of identified related property types meeting one or more of the National Register criteria. D-L-D Highway resources must retain sufficient integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association to convey their historical significance.¹⁵⁶

Application of the National Register Criteria

Related property types are evaluated for eligibility under the four National Register criteria. These are:

Criterion A – Event

A property is eligible for the National Register for significant associations with a single event, a pattern of events or activities, or historic trends in the development of the D-L-D Highway. Related property types will qualify for the National Register under Criterion A for historical association(s) with transportation, commerce, travel patterns and development along the D-L-D Highway during its period of historical significance. These may include the promotion or development of the highway, pioneering or advancement of road construction, or representation of highway-related travel or commerce. Under Criterion A, potential National Register areas of significance might include: commerce, community planning and development, engineering, entertainment and recreation, and transportation.

Criterion B – Person

A property is eligible for the National Register if it possesses a strong association with a person or group significant to the history and development of the D-L-D Highway during its period of historical significance. Under Criterion B the specific contributions of an individual or group must be identified and documented and the associated property must best illustrate the person's significant achievements. These may include a property that best represents an individual's importance in the promotion or development of the highway, contributions to the advancement of engineering or road construction, the advancement or innovation of a type of roadside business or highway-related commerce, or a government official whose contributions to the development of the highway can be specifically articulated. In some cases, a person's residence or place of business could qualify if no associated highway-related property is identified. Under Criterion B, potential National Register areas of significance might include: commerce, community planning and development, engineering, entertainment and recreation, politics and government, and transportation.

Criterion C – Design/Construction

A property is eligible for the National Register if it exemplifies an identified property type, style and/or method of construction and is significantly associated with the history and development of the D-L-D Highway during its period of historical significance. Under Criterion C resources must embody a distinctive characteristic of a type, period or method of construction, represent the work of a master, possess high artistic value, and/or represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction (i.e. historic district). They may exemplify a design, construction method, architectural style, engineering or construction type, innovations or an evolution in road building, or a type of associated roadside commercial building. Under Criterion C, "type, form and function" or distinctive architecture or engineering most often represents significance along with a relationship to the highway. Potential National Register areas of significance might include: architecture, engineering, and landscape architecture.

¹⁵⁶ In Section F, "D-L-D Highway" and "D-L-D route" generally refers to all incarnations of the route through Nebraska, including the Omaha-Lincoln-Denver Transcontinental Route (O-L-D Highway, 1911-1920), the Detroit-Lincoln-Denver Highway (D-L-D Highway, 1920-1926), U.S. Highway 38 (1926-1931), U.S. Highway 38 / U.S. Highway 6 (1931-1933) and U.S. Highway 6 (1933-present). In some instances where a specific year or era is under discussion, more time-specific names are used.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Historic and Architectural Resources of the Detroit-
Lincoln-Denver Highway in Nebraska

Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section F Page 2

Criterion D – Information Potential

Criterion D is usually applied to archeology, and, in the case of historic highways, “historic archeology.” Eligible properties must have yielded, or have the potential to yield, information and/or address research questions. In rare cases, an early alignment of the D-L-D route will qualify for listing under Criterion D if it can yield information about road engineering and construction methods prior to the development of specifications. In these cases, the historical documentation will be inadequate. Eligible highway alignments must remain sufficiently intact to potentially yield information and any archeological investigations must employ appropriate study techniques. Non-extant historic buildings or structures would not qualify under this criterion, since documentation is commonly available and/or other examples of the property type remain extant. Under Criterion D, potential National Register areas of significance might include: archeology (historic, non-aboriginal), engineering and transportation.

Criterion Considerations

In some cases, National Register “Criterion Considerations” should be applied to the eligibility of properties associated with the D-L-D Highway. Two Criterion Considerations are most likely to apply:

Criteria Consideration B: Moved Properties

Moved properties may be eligible for the National Register for their association with the D-L-D Highway if they retain an orientation, setting and general environment similar to their original location. They should also maintain a spatial connection and physical association with the highway.

Criteria Consideration G: Properties Less Than 50 Years Old

Resources that are less than 50 years old must be assessed under Criterion Consideration G. These properties must be associated with the continued development of the route as U.S. Highway 6 and should be rare, exceptionally distinctive or important, or a single example of a property type.

Periods of Significance

Eligible resources will represent the development of the route from its origins as the O-L-D Highway in 1911 through about 1965, when the National Register’s 50-year cutoff for historical significance is approached. Properties must have an association with the highway during its period of historical significance. Resources predating 1911 can still be eligible if they became associated with the D-L-D Highway during its period of significance. In some cases, Criterion Consideration G may be applicable for exceptionally significant properties that are less than 50 years old.

Integrity

Properties must retain acceptable levels of historic integrity to qualify for the National Register. The aspects of integrity are: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. A property or group of properties that meet one or more of the National Register criteria and retain sufficient integrity should be considered potentially eligible for the National Register if dating from the period of significance.

Several resource types were once prevalent on Nebraska’s highways but are disappearing from the highway landscape. In the case of rare property types, the relative scarcity and availability of comparable properties should be used to inform the degree that alterations affect a property’s historic integrity. Fewer alterations are acceptable on highway resources that are ubiquitous, as numerous examples in better physical condition can better represent the property type. To be eligible for the National Register these should retain a higher degree of physical integrity than rarer property types. Alterations completed within the period of significance generally will not diminish the historic integrity of a property.

Property types associated with road construction and travel on the D-L-D Highway changed or evolved due to many factors, including roadway improvements and marketing techniques. In these cases, alterations may not diminish integrity and may have themselves achieved significance. On the other hand, significant alterations occurring beyond the period of

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Historic and Architectural Resources of the Detroit-
Lincoln-Denver Highway in Nebraska

Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section F Page 3

significance will diminish the overall integrity of a resource, disqualifying it from National Register listing. Significant alterations include major structural changes, such as additions or partial demolitions, and modifications to the façade. Many highway resources are vacant or no longer serve their original function; however, this does not usually affect their historic significance or integrity.

Levels of Significance

Resources associated with the D-L-D Highway can be evaluated at the local, statewide or national levels of significance. The Omaha-Lincoln-Denver Highway crossed two states, the Detroit-Lincoln-Denver Highway crossed six states and U.S. Highway 6 currently crosses eleven states. However, no comprehensive surveys have been accomplished through these states and no definitive national context is available, making evaluations at the national level of significance difficult. The scope of this document, therefore, is limited to evaluations at the statewide and local levels of significance.

Statewide significance can be applied under Criteria A, B, C and/or D. Statewide significance should be applied to those property types, such as roadways, that represent the history of the D-L-D Highway, but are also considered major components of the Nebraska highway system as a whole. Resources that represent rare property types or can demonstrate statewide impact or associations should also be assessed for statewide significance. Under Criterion C, properties may also be considered for statewide significance if they are among the best examples of a property type, architectural style, engineering technique or method of construction in Nebraska. In general, a property significant at the statewide level will possess historical associations and/or contemporary importance extending beyond a local area.

Local significance can be applied to Criteria A, B, C and/or D. Local significance may be applied to related property types frequently found on or near alignments of the D-L-D Highway. It will apply to resources that served local and regional trade but bear a documented association to the highway. Resources of local significance include those that are ubiquitous and found in many, if not all, locales.

Related Property Types

Property types are buildings, structures, objects, sites, or districts. For the purpose of this document, historic highway resources are identified as properties associated with transportation, commerce, architecture or engineering. Historic highway resources encompass a wide range of property types. A discussion of the prominent property types and examples related to the D-L-D Highway includes:

- Gas Stations: Curbside Pumps, Filling Stations and Service Stations
- Automobile Agencies, Garages and Dealerships
- The Automobile Row and Commercial Strip
- Commercial Districts
- Truck Transport and Associated Sites
- Tourist Sites
- Markers, Signing and Monuments
- Campgrounds, Tourist Parks and Comfort Stations
- Wayside Areas and Parks
- Boarding Houses, Hotels, Cabin Camps, and Motels
- Roadhouses and Rural Crossroads Stores
- Restaurants, Food Stands, Diners and Drive-ins
- Man-made Landscape Features
- Natural Landscape Features and Viewsheds
- Bridges and Culverts
- Roadways

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Historic and Architectural Resources of the Detroit-
Lincoln-Denver Highway in Nebraska

Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section F Page 4

Gas Stations: Curbside Pumps, Filling Stations and Service Stations

Description

The gas station was developed in the early twentieth century to provide petroleum and other products exclusive to the automobile. They grew rapidly in number with the phenomenal acceptance of the automobile and the associated flood of motorists that took to the road. The gas station became a marketing outlet of both large corporations and hundreds of small independent companies and operators. This property type can be divided by function into two categories: the "filling station" and the "service station." Its form can be further described by these design-based subtypes: the "curbside pump," "shed," "house," "house with canopy," "house with bays" and "oblong box."¹⁵⁷

The early "drive up" source of gasoline was the "curbside pump" placed in front of businesses, such as automobile agencies, garages, dealerships, liveries, implement shops, hardware and general merchandise stores. With a pump and underground storage tank, this was a convenient and effective method for filling an automobile with gasoline. However, the proliferation of these curbside filling stations soon came to the attention of city officials, especially when located in the larger, more concentrated commercial districts. Their underground storage tank and pump often required the operation to be placed in the public right-of-way. Concerns about fire hazards, odor, noise, and pedestrian and traffic conflicts were voiced. Fire and zoning ordinances enacted in larger cities during the 1910s and 1920s eliminated curbside operations. Curbside pumps, however, remained a fixture in small villages and at rural crossroads stores.

The first off-street, drive-in "filling station" is so-named because it offered only a limited line of products and services, mostly a fill of gasoline. Among the first were utilitarian "sheds," which began to appear in the 1910s. Some types were prefabricated; others were built as common sheds by local operators, who based their design on utilitarian buildings used by grain, lumber and coal dealers, or petroleum operations at oil yards or bulk stations. When oil companies began constructing these sheds in neighborhoods and downtowns where aesthetics were important, their appearance quickly became objectionable. These utilitarian structures were sometimes eliminated in the highly concentrated commercial districts by local zoning ordinances.

Operators sought a better appearance for their stations. These often took the form of a "house" and "house with canopy." As the name suggests, the house type filling station took on the appearance or details of a domestic house. The house with canopy was similar to the house type, but had a canopy that extended over the pumps to shelter customers and employees in inclement weather. The typical house type consisted of an office, perhaps a storage or workroom, and single restroom. Products and services were limited and included free air, water for batteries and radiators, lubricating oils, tire repair and a small line of automotive parts. Outdoor grease pits and hoists provided lubrication services.

Many filling stations were built by small independent retailers in a manner preferred by the operator, using designs worked out with local contractors or observations of industry trends. The house and the house with canopy types were erected largely in the 1920s. The large oil companies chose a standardized design. One of the finest examples was an architect-designed station built statewide by the Standard Oil Company of Nebraska during the 1920s. Another example was the standardized stations built by the Continental Oil Company in Nebraska. Standardized designs allowed the public to easily identify the oil company and its products. The filling station sometimes took on other architectural themes as a marketing tool because the public was attracted by the "homelike" appearance, such as quaint cottages. These include the cottage types built by the Phillips Petroleum Company in Nebraska. Spanish Revival was another style commonly employed for filling stations. Sometimes attention-grabbing exotic themes were used in an attempt to pull motorists from the road.

During the 1930s, the filling station began to evolve into the "service station." During the Depression, gas sales sagged.

¹⁵⁷ Property type description for gas stations is based on John A. Jakle and Keith A. Sculle, *The Gas Station in America* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 131-152.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Historic and Architectural Resources of the Detroit-
Lincoln-Denver Highway in Nebraska

Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section F Page 5

Oil companies began to offer a much-expanded line of more profitable products and services, such as tires, batteries and accessories (in the trade, TBA) and automotive repairs. Existing filling stations sometimes adapted this new marketing technique. Canopies were removed to accommodate larger cars and trucks and either attached or detached service bays equipped for lubrication, car washing and automotive repairs were added. Probably the first to transition to the service station type were those of the Standard Oil Company of Nebraska. Some new stations kept the traditional appearance of cottages or other styles but were built with attached service bays, creating the "house with bays." Examples of those built in Nebraska are the Sinclair Oil Company stations. They took on the Spanish Revival details of stucco exteriors and tile mansard roofs, but maintained the canopy.

Most service stations, however, accommodated their growing services with a new and very different type of gas station building: the "oblong box." The Texas Company (Texaco) developed perhaps the earliest and most prototypical example of this modern, stylistic type in 1934. Oblong boxes were most popular in the 1950s through the 1960s. In contrast to the house types, the oblong box was designed to be both functional and to attract the motorist with their modern design. Most often these stations were built in a prominent location along the highway with a streamlined, functional, rectangular form and a flat roof. Typically of brick or concrete block construction, they were sometimes finished in glazed brick or porcelain-enameled panels. The oblong box was often painted with the oil company's trademark colors and included prominent signage. The interior of the oblong box included an office, storage space, a display area, a workshop and service bays. Exterior doors providing access to separate men's and women's restrooms were typically located on one side of the oblong box service station, usually behind the office. The Standard Oil Company of Indiana and Texaco built a number of these service station types in Nebraska in the 1950s and 1960s, using a uniform design, signage and product line. Multiple service stations were once found along the commercial strip of larger towns.

Beginning in the 1970s, the exterior simplicity of the oblong box fell out of favor. Elements such as cedar shakes, brick facing, and gable roofs with cupolas were added to existing stations, such as those of the Standard Oil Company/Amoco. By the 1990s a new station type was introduced, the "convenience store," fronted by a large canopy sheltering the pumps. Sometimes alterations were made to the oblong box to serve as a convenience store operation. Today, the oblong box as a type has been largely replaced with the convenience store and its monumental, freestanding canopy.

Significance

Gas stations located on or within close proximity to historic alignments of the D-L-D route may qualify for listing on the National Register under Criterion A for their association with the highway and the marketing of products and services to the traveling public. Under Criterion B, a gas station may best represent an individual's importance in the promotion or development of the highway, or a business person who advanced highway-related commerce or was associated with the innovation of a marketing technique. A gas station may also qualify for the National Register under Criterion C as a representative example of a design-based subtype (ex. house with bays, oblong box) and/or an identified architectural style related to trends in the marketing of petroleum products. Properties eligible under Criterion C will embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction. Moved properties must retain an orientation, setting and general environs similar to their original location and should maintain a spatial association with the highway. Early examples of gas stations are increasingly rare along the D-L-D route and should be assessed accordingly.

The curbside station is identified only by the pump itself, an object typically not considered individually eligible for listing in the National Register. Furthermore, curbside pumps associated with hardware stores, general merchandise stores or lumberyards would not be eligible for assessment under this MPD, since the primary function of such properties was not highway-related. Examples of early highway-related businesses that may have provided gasoline fills are liveries, automobile agencies, garages and automobile dealerships (see "Automobile Agencies, Garages and Dealerships," below). In these cases, extant curbside pumps could be considered contributing resources, but would still not be individually eligible. Common "sheds" were short-lived examples of petroleum marketing and were soon supplanted by the more substantial and attractive "house" or "house with canopy," gas stations. Most curbside operations and shed type

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Historic and Architectural Resources of the Detroit-
Lincoln-Denver Highway in Nebraska

Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section F Page 6

filling stations are no longer extant, and none were identified along the D-L-D Highway during the 2001-2002 Nebraska Historic Highway Survey.

Filling stations and service stations will most likely be eligible for the National Register under Criteria A and C. Filling stations should be evaluated under Criterion A as early examples of the marketing of petroleum products and other offerings to the highway traveler. Under Criterion C, they may represent a design-based subtype, such as the "house" and "house with canopy," and/or an architectural style. The period of significance largely dates to the 1920s. Although some may display alterations and the removal of their gas pumps, filling stations that retain characteristic features from the highway's period of significance may be eligible for listing. Many early filling stations evolved into service stations. The canopy was often removed to accommodate larger cars and trucks and attached or detached service bays were added to expand the business's offerings. Such changes generally do not diminish the property's integrity, but instead represent its historically significant evolution from a filling station to the service station in type, form and function. Due to the rarity of well-preserved examples of filling stations along Nebraska's highways, they warrant evaluation at the statewide level.

Examples of early filling stations can be found in Hastings (AD04-693) and Palisade (HK03-037). The Hastings station is a small cottage-style building with side gables and a central gablet over the entrance. Palisade's early filling station is a house with canopy type station designed in the neoclassical style. The flat-roofed building and canopy have a continuous frieze and cornice, while canopy's brick-clad square supports have a decorative design. A Spanish Mission Revival-style station with a canopy in Imperial (CH04-035) provides an example of the evolution of many filling stations into service stations. A flat-roofed service bay has been added at a 45 degree angle to the original hipped-roofed gas station, which sits on a corner lot and has a diagonal orientation.

The service station, which appeared inside commercial districts and along the commercial strip of larger towns in the 1930s, can accrue significance under Criterion A for offering an expanded line of products and services, in addition to the continued marketing of petroleum products, to the highway traveler. Criterion C can be met when a service station represents a design-based subtype, such as the "house with bays" or "oblong box," and/or an architectural style. While there are still numerous service stations dating from the period of historical significance along the D-L-D route, they are increasingly vulnerable. At least two service stations have been lost since the 2001-2002 Historic Highway Survey, and another eight have been significantly altered. Even so, they must retain a relatively high degree of integrity. Service stations will be considered eligible for the National Register if they retain sufficient physical integrity to identify their original function, even if they are vacant or have a new use. Very few service stations retain gasoline pumps and their absence does not impact a property's ability to convey its associational significance. Non-historic alterations such as enclosed and downsized windows and service bay openings or additions/alterations to the building are rarely acceptable, as these changes diminish the historic integrity of the property. Due to their commonality, most service stations will be eligible at the local level. Service stations that are less than 50 years old, but possess exceptional significance, should be evaluated under National Register Criterion Consideration G. To be eligible under this criterion consideration, the property must retain excellent historic integrity and appear much as it did when originally constructed.

Excellent examples of historic service stations abound along the D-L-D route. A stucco-clad Spanish Mission Revival-style station (FM03-017) with a canopy and a single service bay is found in Exeter. The Barnes Oil Company (SD01-084), a cottage style station with a canopy and single service bay, is already listed in the National Register of Historic Places in Ashland. An excellent Moderne style oblong box service station (HK02-041) with a curved glass block corner is found in Culbertson, while an Art Deco-style station is located in Lincoln (LC13:D09-220). Modern style oblong box type stations can be found in Hamlet (HY01-018), Holdrege (PP01-006) and Fairmont (FM04-023). Hamlet's stucco-covered service station features one service bay, while the brick station in Holdrege has two service bays with historic wood panel garage doors and also sports a vintage sign. The station in Fairmont has a glass corner office with two service bays and is covered with porcelain-enamelled paneling. "Exaggerated Modern" stations dating from the 1960s are represented in Lincoln (LC13:F12-458) and outside of Greenwood (CC00-221). The latter features a curtain-wall office that slants

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Historic and Architectural Resources of the Detroit-
Lincoln-Denver Highway in Nebraska

Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section F Page 7

outward to meet the flat, overhanging roof, while the former has a curtain-wall office protected by overhanging shed roof and a detached V-shaped canopy.

Beginning in the 1970s elements such as cedar shakes, brick facing, and gabled roofs with cupolas were commonly added to service stations. These alterations do not meet Criterion Consideration G, because they fall outside the period of significance established by this MPD. By the 1990s the convenience store became the fashion. No examples of these stations were recorded along the D-L-D route due to their recent date.

Intersections of the D-L-D Highway with other significant national, state or local routes often attracted more than one gas station. Single or multiple gas stations may also anchor automobile rows and are often found in significant numbers along commercial strips (see "Automobile Rows and Commercial Strips," below). For instance, gas stations once anchored automobile rows on the 300 and 1000 blocks of W. 2nd Street in Hastings.

Automobile Agencies, Garages and Dealerships

Description

The proliferation of automobile agencies, garages and dealerships corresponded with the phenomenal acceptance of the automobile in Nebraska. Highway travelers found these establishments to be convenient for repair service, products and even the purchase of automobiles themselves.

The earliest sales of automobiles were through agencies, which became the marketing operation of choice for the many early automobile manufacturing companies. Few automobiles were offered for sale on-site, but rather the agent took orders for new automobiles, which were then shipped by railroad car. Garages responded to the growing need for automotive repair and other services. Sometimes called "automobile liveries" they represent the evolution from "horse and buggy" to the automobile. Many early agencies operated from liveries or implement dealers, which sometimes evolved into full-fledged garages. One character-defining feature of buildings designed as automobile agencies or garages are their prominently-placed vehicle doorways. These buildings can be of frame, brick or concrete block construction and often feature a stepped parapet with a taller garage bay and industrial-style steel windows. Many agencies and garages also provided curbside gasoline pumps. Garages were found in almost every community, large or small.

As automobile sales soared in the 1920s the first automobile "dealerships" began to appear across Nebraska. Dealerships offered a large stock of new automobiles and an expanded line of parts and services, such as automobile repairs. Dealerships featured display areas to showcase new automobiles, offered a large stock of parts housed in a separate room, and multiple indoor bays for automobile repairs and storage. Like agencies and garages, many early dealerships also offered gasoline from curbside pumps. Early dealerships resembled commercial buildings of the period and were usually constructed of brick. Dealerships in larger cities were built to be large, fashionable and elegant and could include multiple stories. Elevators large enough to carry automobiles served multi-story dealerships, which often held a large inventory. Dealers in smaller communities built scaled-down versions. The Ford Motor Company established a significant number of dealerships during this period, selecting larger towns and county seats for their location.

Automobile sales declined during the Great Depression and World War II and few, if any, new dealerships were built. But with the development of America's "automobile culture" following World War II, new dealerships once again appeared. These new dealerships often adopted the most modern appearance possible, often displaying the rounded corners and oval windows of the Streamline Moderne style. Porcelain-enameled metal panels, pigmented structural glass and glazed brick facades often complimented these designs. Pylon signs and large signage prominently displayed the name of the dealership and/or the manufacturer of the automobiles it offered. Large window-wall showrooms displaying the newest models faced the curbside to attract the most attention. Dealerships also included a parts department that specialized in parts and accessories for the automobile makes and models they sold. Multiple service bays for automobile repairs were

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Historic and Architectural Resources of the Detroit-
Lincoln-Denver Highway in Nebraska

Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section F Page 8

also incorporated into the design. Used cars were typically sold from outdoor lots, sometimes covered with a canopy. Dealerships of this period were increasingly located along newer highway alignments and the commercial strip.¹⁵⁸

Beginning in the 1970s auto dealers began their move to larger lots far from the commercial strips. The main building was removed from the curb-line and rows of autos were placed between the roadside and the building.

Significance

Automobile agencies, garages and dealerships were exclusive to the sale and/or servicing of automobiles. To be eligible for the National Register, these resources should retain overall massing, materials, siting, and design dating from their period of significance. This property type will most likely be eligible under National Register Criteria A and C. Properties located on or within close proximity to historic alignments of the D-L-D route may qualify under Criterion A for association with the highway and the marketing of products and services to the traveling public. Under Criterion B, they may best represent an individual's importance in the promotion or development of the highway, or a prominent business person who advanced highway-related commerce or was associated with the innovation of a marketing technique. Automobile agencies, garages and dealerships may also qualify for the National Register under Criterion C as representative examples of a type, form, function or style. Properties eligible under Criterion C will embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction. Moved properties must retain an orientation, setting and general environs similar to their original location and should maintain a spatial association with the highway. Automobile agencies, garages and dealerships were built in large numbers along the highway and will typically possess only local significance. Eligible properties may predate the 1911 establishment of the highway, but will be built before the 50-year cutoff date. Single or multiple agencies may be found in automobile rows (see "Automobile Rows and Commercial Strips").

Automobile dealerships and garages dating from the period of significance are well represented along the D-L-D route. Good examples of brick garages/automobile agencies dating from the 1910s and 1920s are found in Wauneta (CH06-026), Hamlet (HY01-008) and Lincoln (LC13:F12-409 & LC13:G14-002). The garages in Wauneta and Hamlet each lack parapets and have a window, garage door, walk-in entrance and window configuration. Large plate glass fills the windows of the Wauneta garage, indicating it may have also served as an auto dealership, while the Hamlet garage has industrial-style steel windows flanking a swinging double wood garage door. In Lincoln, one garage (LC13:F12-409) has a stepped parapet accenting a taller central garage bay and brick corbelling, which creates a slight cornice. The other representative garage in Lincoln (LC13:G14-002) has a pedimented parapet above the central garage bay. Pilasters decorated with small, vaguely Sullivaneque, pieces at their capitals define the bays. Holbrook is home to a "stone-faced" concrete block garage (FN06-009), which features a tall parapet with a bracketed cornice.

Buildings designed specifically as automobile dealerships along the D-L-D Highway are typically larger and more elaborate than the garages described above. The brick, two-story Duteau Chevrolet Dealership (LC13:D09-538) is an anchor to Lincoln's O Street automobile row. It is characterized by repetitive bays of large first-story windows, brick spandrel panels and industrial-style steel second-story windows. Bays are defined by pilasters with long concrete panels and concrete capitals decorated with a swag motif. Perhaps the nation's last surviving Hupmobile dealership (DO09:029-033) is located in Omaha's Farnam Street automobile row, which served both the D-L-D and Lincoln Highway until the latter was rerouted through Blair in 1930. This two-story brick building is elaborately detailed with classically-inspired ornamentation. The Ford dealership in Oxford (FN08-007) is a good example of an automobile dealership in a smaller town. The 1917 brick building has undergone alterations, including the infill of two service bays; however, its elaborate parapet and open corner bays still readily convey its original use.

¹⁵⁸ Description of Automobile Agencies, Garages and Dealerships based largely on Chester Leibs, *Main Street to Miracle Mile: American Roadside Architecture* (Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press, 1995), 76-93.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Historic and Architectural Resources of the Detroit-
Lincoln-Denver Highway in Nebraska

Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section F Page 9

The Automobile Row and Commercial Strip

Description

The automobile row and commercial strip were established solely in response to the automobile. They are districts where automotive and transportation-related businesses were concentrated. They represent "new" forms of commercial districts. The first type of automotive commercial district, known as the "automobile row," appeared in the late 1910s and 1920s when groups of automobile-related businesses located in or near established commercial districts. The automobile row included gas stations, automobile agencies and dealerships, auto supply stores and repair garages. The automobile row not only served a large local and regional trade, but also provided products and services for the traveler.

The "commercial strip," better known simply as "the strip," first developed in the post-World War II period when the automobile became engrained in American culture. Automobile-related businesses associated with "the strip" included motels, restaurants, private or franchised drive-ins, gas stations and automobile dealerships. Commercial strips developed remote from commercial districts as highways began to bypass the congested traffic of "downtown." Commercial strips evolve rapidly due to changing marketing trends. Buildings and businesses continue to be replaced or remodeled at a rapid rate. They are now dominated by businesses that date from the 1970s to the present.

Significance

The automobile row is characterized as a concentration of automobile-related business buildings and would be evaluated as a district. These automotive districts provided products and services primarily for local and regional markets, as well as motorists along the D-L-D route. Criterion A would apply to the automobile row's association with travel on the D-L-D Highway. Under Criterion B, automobile rows will rarely represent an individual businessperson, since this property type usually includes multiple businesses associated with a group of individuals. Criterion C would be met when properties within an automobile row exhibit distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction, or when the district as a whole provides a representative example of automobile row development. The period of significance is typically the late 1910s and 1920s. In general, automobile rows will be eligible at the local level. However, the rarity of well-preserved examples might warrant evaluation at the statewide level.

Automobile rows associated with the D-L-D Highway have been identified in Hastings, Lincoln and Omaha. In Hastings, automobile rows developed along W. 2nd Street (the original route of the D-L-D) on either side of the central business district. Today, only the north side of the western automobile row on the 1000 Block remains relatively intact, with the former B&B Service Station (AD04-107) now listed at 1030 W. 2nd Street and a more utilitarian building at 1020 W. 2nd Street, which was home to businesses like the J. M. Opper Motor Co. and Emshoff Tire Service. In Lincoln, at least seven auto-related buildings, including Duteau Chevrolet (LC13:D09-538), are located on "O" Street between 17th and 20th Streets. Omaha's extant automobile row, which is also associated with the Lincoln Highway, is located on the 2500 Block of Farnam Street.

The commercial strip developed in the post-World War II years through the 1960s and served the "automobile culture" of the period. Commercial strips may be eligible under Criterion A for an association with the D-L-D Highway's successor, U.S. Highway 6. Under Criterion B, commercial strips will rarely represent an individual businessperson, since their many businesses would usually be associated with a group of individuals. Criterion C would be met when properties within "the strip" exhibit distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction, or when the district as a whole provides a representative example of commercial strip development. A commercial strip district will display distinctive architectural styles representing period marketing trends.

Commercial strips developed in Hastings, Minden, Lincoln and McCook, as well as in other communities along the D-L-D route. The Hastings commercial strip developed along W. J Street after U.S. Highway 6 was rerouted south of the traditional commercial district in 1930s. Extant properties located along this strip include the X-L Motel (AD04-688),

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Historic and Architectural Resources of the Detroit-
Lincoln-Denver Highway in Nebraska

Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section F Page 10

Rainbow Hotel (AD04-690) and Grand Motel (AD04-692). In Minden, the commercial strip developed when U.S. Highway 6 was rerouted to follow the Burlington Railroad tracks in 1936. Extant properties associated with the Minden commercial strip include: Pioneer Village (KN04-153), the Pioneer Village Motel (KN04-157), a drive-in restaurant (KN04-155) and an auto garage (KN04-156). Cornhusker Highway represents one of Lincoln's D-L-D Highway commercial strips, which includes the Sharon Motel (LC13:D12-001), Starlight Motel (LC13:F14-001) and a service station (LC13:D13-001). In McCook a long commercial strip developed along B Street, the route of the D-L-D Highway.

Historic properties along commercial strips are rarely found in any concentration making the creation of a district difficult. Properties that retain sufficient integrity, however, may be individually eligible under Criterion A for their association with the development of the commercial strip. The commercial strip remains evolutionary and changing to this day.

Commercial Districts

Description

Early highways were routed through towns and "main street" commercial districts, both to promote local support for the new highway and for motorists to take advantage of the offerings found in these districts. Automobile-related businesses located in these commercial districts served local and regional patrons, but also provided services for the traveler. Commercial districts accommodated the frequent stops and services needed by the early motorist, such as food, supplies, lodging and repair services. Individual and multiple automobile-related resources are found in towns along the D-L-D route. Most numerous in commercial districts were gas stations, automobile agencies, garages and automobile dealerships. Brick pavement was often built in towns to improve their commercial areas in the 1910s and 1920s, including along the route of the D-L-D Highway.

Six commercial districts on the D-L-D Highway mark the intersection of major regional or national roads: Fairmont, where the D-L-D crosses the north-south Meridian Highway/U.S. Highway 81; Hastings, where it crosses the north-south U.S. Highway 281 (which also served as part of the Potash Highway after 1923); McCook where it crosses the north-south U.S. Highway 183 (formerly the Great Plains Road); Holdrege where it crosses the north-south U.S. Highway 83; Lincoln where it crosses the north-south U.S. Highway 77 and the southeast-northwest route of today's Nebraska Highway 2 (formerly the Seward-York-Aurora Highway to the west and the Overland Trail to the east); and Omaha where it crosses U.S. Highway 73/75 and ran parallel with U.S. Highway 30 (the Lincoln Highway) until 1930.

In the 1930s, highway development included the bypassing of the smaller communities that were once linked by the highway. Oxford and Edison, for example, were bypassed to the north in 1936. Other communities left off the original route were added. Greenwood was added to the route in 1929 and Axtell in 1936. "Alternative" or "city" routes were created along "O" Street in Lincoln and W. 2nd Street in Hastings when the main route U.S. Highway 6 bypassed their commercial districts.

Significance

Commercial business districts most often merit recognition for periods of significance predating the automobile, and are best associated with railroad transportation, commerce and architecture dating from late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. However, most commercial districts maintained local significance after their inclusion along the D-L-D Highway. At this time, highway-related commerce became an integral facet of their development with the establishment of businesses and services catering to the traveler. The highway brought trade into commercial districts and facilitated further commercial development. Highway-related businesses would contribute to a larger historic commercial district and can be evaluated under Criterion A for their association with period(s) of growth and commerce. They may also accrue significance for an association with community club/chamber of commerce or local government efforts to bring the highway through town as they endeavored to promote their community's commercial growth. Criterion B would rarely be applicable, since the multiple businesses in a commercial district usually represent a large group of individuals associated

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Historic and Architectural Resources of the Detroit-
Lincoln-Denver Highway in Nebraska

Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section F Page 11

with the development of a community's local and regional trade, in addition to its highway-related commerce. Under Criterion C, contributing properties within a commercial district must display a type, form or function or a distinctive architectural style representing property types related to historic period(s) of the D-L-D Highway. Properties will embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction. In general, commercial districts will be eligible at the local level. An automobile row may also be part of a larger commercial district or eligible in and of itself (see "Automobile Row and Commercial Strip," above). The concentration of automotive-related business buildings might warrant evaluation at the statewide level.

The period of significance will include dates up until the time a number of the smaller communities were bypassed beginning in the 1930s (see above). The further development of some types of automotive-related businesses declined with the removal of the highway. In Hastings and Lincoln, the removal of the highway from commercial districts eventually led to the creation of the commercial strip (see Automobile Row and Commercial Strip, above). Where regional or cross-country highways intersect with the D-L-D route, commercial development was often more pronounced.

Brick or concrete paving was commonly used to improve local commercial districts, but it often predates the highway. However, brick and concrete streets may be eligible under Criterion A as contributing to a larger historic district if documented as having been built to accommodate the route of the D-L-D Highway. Built by local governments, these would accrue significance under Criterion A as an early example of community development, long before comprehensive transportation planning became a practice. An example is found in Fairmont (FM04-027) where brick streets were built c. 1920 to accommodate travel through town on the Meridian and D-L-D Highways. Significance under Criterion B could be achieved for a local promoter or government official who worked for street improvements. Although common construction techniques found in communities across the state were typically used for brick streets, Criterion C could be applied for structures that represent a type, period or method of road construction used in commercial districts.

Campgrounds, Tourist Parks and Comfort Stations

Description

As early motorists began to exercise the freedom of long-distance travel, they began to desire facilities for short rests and overnight stops. The earliest motorists brought their own gear and made makeshift camps along the roadside at convenient and attractive locations. This solution worked until the popularity of automobile tourism swelled after World War I, when the flood of travelers camping on the roadside, schoolhouse grounds or private property upset local residents. Leaving unsightly messes, these travelers were sometimes called "tin can" tourists.

Community leaders, however, saw the potential for campgrounds to encourage the motorist to stop in town and do business. In an effort to entice travelers, many communities began to establish simple campgrounds, offering a shaded grove, fire pits, picnic tables and outhouses. In the 1920s, some larger communities built municipal tourist parks with the support of local governments and commercial clubs. Highway associations aggressively advertised the availability of these parks along the route. Conveniences such as a community building or shelter house, fireplaces, concrete slabs that were called "car washing floors," toilets, running water and showers, picnic areas, recreation areas, public telephones and/or electrical hookups were provided. Fees were often required to keep out undesirables and police patrols were sometimes assigned to the facility. Many local entrepreneurs also seized the opportunity, building private tourist parks. These often consisted of cooking facilities, showers and restrooms, electrical hookups, a shelter house or community room and/or a concession stand. The largest communities sometimes offered "comfort stations;" individual buildings that incorporated a community room, showers and restrooms.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁹ Leibs, 169-172.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Historic and Architectural Resources of the Detroit-
Lincoln-Denver Highway in Nebraska

Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section F Page 12

Significance

Campgrounds and tourist parks are potentially eligible for the National Register under this MPD because they were developed exclusively to serve travelers along the D-L-D Highway. They are usually classified as districts or sites. Eligible campgrounds and tourist parks should retain features that convey their use by the traveler. For example, kitchen facilities, shelter houses, washrooms or shower facilities must be present for a tourist camp to be eligible. Moved resources must retain an orientation, setting and general environs similar to their original site in order to contribute to a campground or tourist park. Under Criterion A, campgrounds and tourists parks accrue significance as one of the earliest accommodations developed specifically for the motorist. Under Criterion B, these property types may represent an individual's importance in the promotion or development of a specific campground or tourist park to enhance community trade and commerce. As a type, Criterion C may be met by an individual or a group of buildings or structures displaying a form or function representative of these early transportation facilities. Campgrounds and tourist parks may also be eligible for their overall design. Properties will embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction. The period of significance dates from the 1920s through the 1930s.

Tourist parks or campgrounds were known to have developed in Lincoln, Hastings, McCook and Imperial. The Balcony House in Imperial (CH04-025, listed NRHP) had an associated campground and Prospect Park (AD04-694) in Hastings was home to a tourist campground through the 1920s. A stucco-covered brick building associated with the campground still stands in Prospect Park. The tourist parks in Lincoln and McCook are no longer extant.

A comfort station is eligible as an individual building if it retains sufficient integrity to convey its historic use. One comfort station is located on the grounds of the former Federal Building at 9th and "O" Streets in Lincoln.

Wayside Areas and Parks

Description

Public wayside areas and parks offered amenities to the traveler. Often, they were part of a public park, improved by a community to meet the needs of motorists. They provided stopping places and recreation for highway travelers and included picnic areas and campgrounds. In some cases, provisions were made for public wayside areas along with the construction of Nebraska highways. The first public wayside area in Nebraska was developed in 1933-34 by the state's Department of Roads and Irrigation near the Bryan Bridge on U.S. Highway 20 and consisted of tree and shrub plantings, benches, trails, a footbridge and a water well.

The WPA, a Depression-era "New Deal" program, built parks that offered amenities to the local public as well as the traveler. These parks were built as designed landscapes consisting of shade trees, roads, stone entrances and sometimes a lagoon. Amenities for the traveler included shelter houses, fireplaces, picnic tables, restrooms, campgrounds and recreational offerings.

Significance

Parks and wayside areas provided attractive locations for the traveler. They would accrue significance under Criterion A for their association with the D-L-D Highway, providing amenities to the highway traveler. Criterion B would be applicable to a park or wayside area if it could be documented as the property that best represents an individual's work in promoting the highway's development. Under Criterion C these parks would be significant as designed landscapes that included provisions for the traveler and may also be significant as the work of an important landscape architect or engineer. They will embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction. Parks and wayside areas could accrue statewide significance as the most substantial and distinctive example of this highway-related property type.

One wayside area along the D-L-D route is the D-L-D State Recreation Area outside of Hastings. City parks were also often noted in tourist guides. Huebinger's 1911 Guide to the O-L-D route, for instance, references parks in Omaha,

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Historic and Architectural Resources of the Detroit-
Lincoln-Denver Highway in Nebraska

Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section F Page 13

Exeter, Arapaho, Holbrook and Wauneta and the 1939 WPA Guide to Nebraska mentions Holdrege City Park, McCook City Park (with Athletic Fields) and Kelly Park (with ovens, swimming and tennis), also in McCook.

Boarding Houses, Hotels, Cabin Camps and Motels

Description

Pioneering automobile tourists looked for boarding houses where they could rent a room after a day's drive. These establishments were located in or near the downtown commercial district and were built to accommodate railroad travelers, such as the traveling salesman. Boarding houses provided rooms, bathing and meals. Boarding houses sometimes only offered extended stays with weekly or monthly rates for renters and traveling salesmen.

Like boarding houses, hotels were located in or near the downtown commercial district to accommodate railroad travelers, and often predate automobiles and highway development. They were not ideal for motorists, who were unwilling to unpack their travel gear, did not want to leave their automobiles unattended, and did not want to enter the hotel lobby after a day of dusty travel. Another option was the "commercial" hotel, built in larger cities in the 1910s and 1920s to serve local and regional patrons with amenities such as ballrooms and meeting rooms. Some of the larger commercial hotels also began to advertise as "motor hotels," in an effort to welcome highway travelers to stay overnight.

By the 1930s private "mom and pop" businesspeople began to provide travelers with convenient, comfortable and completely private accommodations in the form of one- and two-room cabins arranged in rows, right angles or courts. These were often called "cabin camps" and many were built along highways at the edge of town. The motorist could drive up to their private cabin and unload their gear. Sometimes a shelter was connected to the cabins to provide protection for the automobile. The cabins were most often vernacular in form with frame construction and gable roofs. A house for the owners, common showers, restrooms and shelter houses were often part of the complex, which may also have included a store, lunch counter, concession stand and/or gas station. The grounds were often park-like in setting with picnic areas and well-cared for grounds. They sometimes also provided a campground for the traveler. Exterior imagery and layout sometimes became aspects in attracting guests. Some owners utilized domestic architecture to give a "homelike" appearance. Others used exotic or fanciful themes or attractions designed purely to attract attention, such as teepees. Some cabin camps later adopted the newer form of the motel by connecting the cabins or enclosing the adjoining automobile shelters.

During the post-World-War II period, individual cabins slipped from fashion and the "motel" took over as the favorable form of lodging for highway travelers. The word "motel" is a contraction of motor and hotel and became the generic label for this type of highway-oriented accommodation. They consisted of single buildings with a string of rooms and ample parking so that motorists could drive up to their room. Motels generally date to the 1950s and 1960s, although several examples may predate this period. They were family operations with a combined office and living quarters for the owners, and sometimes a restaurant and/or gas station. They used prominent neon signs to attract the traveler. Some emulate styles such as the Spanish Revival. Motels were most often found along the commercial strips and the newer highway alignments (see "Automobile Rows and Commercial Strips," above). The opening of Interstate 80 in the late 1960s affected the viability of motels in Nebraska. National chain motels dominated the state's lodging industry in the decades following the 1970s, aggressively competing with independently owned motels and causing many to close.¹⁶⁰

Significance

Boarding houses, hotels, cabin camps and motels represent the evolution of marketing trends in the lodging industry along the highway. Boarding houses and hotels need not be along the route of the highway, since most were located in or

¹⁶⁰ Leibs, 174-179 and 184-191; John A. Jakle, Keith A. Sculle & Jefferson S. Rogers, *The Motel In America* (Baltimore, Md.: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996), 18.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Historic and Architectural Resources of the Detroit-
Lincoln-Denver Highway in Nebraska

Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section F Page 14

near commercial districts for the convenience of the railroad traveler. In order for a boarding house or hotel to qualify for listing under Criterion A, an association with automobile travel along the D-L-D route must be established. Criterion C will not be applicable for this property type, since its form and function are unrelated to the motorist. Boarding houses and hotels will date from before the late 1800s to the early 20th century. To date, no boarding houses associated with the D-L-D highway have been documented.

The commercial hotel offered lodging for the traveler and could accrue significance primarily under Criterion A. Under Criterion B, these property types may include an individual's importance in the promotion or development of the highway or the advancement of highway-related commerce in general or the development of commercial hotels as motorist accommodations in particular. Criterion C is not applicable to commercial hotels, since their form and function are unrelated to the motorist. Examples of commercial hotels that catered to highway travelers were the Clarke Hotel in Hastings (AD04-022, listed NRHP), the Hotel Dale in Holdrege (PP04-010) and the Keystone Hotel in McCook (RW05-011, listed NRHP). Both the Clarke Hotel and Keystone Hotel advertised in the c. 1920 Lincoln Auto Club's Guide to the D-L-D Highway and the Clarke Hotel was the only listing under "motels and hotels" in the 1960 Hastings city directory.

Cabin camps will qualify for listing on the National Register under Criterion A for providing lodging along the highway. Their location and operation were almost exclusively to serve the motoring public. Under Criterion B, this property type may represent an individual's importance in the advancement or innovation of this type of roadside business in particular or highway-related commerce in general. Cabin camps may also qualify for the National Register under Criterion C as examples of their type, form and function or as representative examples of a distinctive architectural style associated with this important type of highway-related lodging. Properties will embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction.

Once a prolific property type along Nebraska's highways, cabin camps are an increasingly rare resource and should be evaluated as such. Along the D-L-D route, two cabin courts have been lost since 2001-2002: the Fairview Motel (LC13:D12-002) in Lincoln and the AA Court (PP04-035) in Holdrege. Due to their rarity, integrity levels for cabin camps will be less stringent, but they must retain some examples of cabins and/or representative building(s) associated with the cabin camp. Alterations to individual buildings or to a complex may be acceptable as some cabin camps adopted the newer form of the motel by connecting the cabins. These should be evaluated for their significance in representing the evolution of the cabin camp to the motel type. Cabin camps are often found in extremely deteriorated condition, but may still meet National Register guidelines if sufficient integrity is present. Cabin camps should be assessed for statewide significance, due to the scarcity of well-preserved examples of this property type.

The Arapaho Motel (FN01-070) is the best, and possibly only, example of this property type still standing along the D-L-D route. It includes seven cabins with shingle-clad gable ends supported by knee braces that date from the 1920s. The office is a c. 1960s double wide trailer. The property also includes a vintage two-post sign with a stepped horizontal signboard that reads "ARAPAHO" in small lettering and "MOTEL" in larger lettering.

Motels will qualify for listing on the National Register under Criterion A for providing lodging along the D-L-D route. Under Criterion B, this property type may represent an individual's importance in the advancement or innovation of this type of roadside business in particular or highway-related commerce in general. Motels may qualify under Criterion C as examples of their type, form and function or as representative examples of a distinctive architectural style associated with this prominent type. Properties will embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction.

Motels are a relatively common along the historic D-L-D route; however, they too are becoming increasingly vulnerable due to completion from modern chains and a lack of demand in smaller towns. The Tower Motel in Holdrege (PP04-260) and the Wafair Motel in Hastings (AD04-691), for instance, were demolished after the completion of the 2001-2002 Nebraska Historic Highway Survey. Even so, motels still must retain a relatively high degree of integrity (higher than cabin

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Historic and Architectural Resources of the Detroit-
Lincoln-Denver Highway in Nebraska

Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section F Page 15

camps) to qualify for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Motels complexes of the 1950s and 1960s should retain their main buildings and display few alterations. Motels facilities may be vacant or may have a secondary use, but they remain eligible for the National Register if they retain sufficient physical integrity to identify their original use. Due to their commonality, local significance would be applied. Facilities that are less than 50 years old need to meet National Register Criterion Consideration G and display excellent integrity.

Examples of motels dating from the 1950s and 1960s along the D-L-D route include: the X-L Motel (AD04-688) in Hastings; the Belair Motel (FM04-025) in Fairmont; the Pioneer Village Motel (KN04-157) in Minden; the Starlight Motel (LC13:F14-001) in Lincoln and the Sage Motel (RW05-273) in McCook. Now the Hastings Express Inn, the Modern style, brick X-L Motel (c. 1960) creates a courtyard with one long L-shaped building to the east and a second building to the west. Rooms sit under a gable roof and both buildings have cross gables at on their street ends that extend outward to create canopies, which are supported by V-shaped metal tubes above brick planters. In Fairmont, the frame Belair Motel is an L-shaped frame building with its office in the corner. In Minden, the brick, L-shaped Pioneer Motel has a V-shaped canopy at the office and some units have enclosed carports. The Starlight Motel in Lincoln has two hipped-roofed buildings facing each other across a courtyard with a swimming pool. McCook's brick Sage Motel features a hip-roofed office and a gable-roofed building with rooms. Green's Court (FN01-013) in Cambridge provides an example of an earlier (probably 1940s) L-shaped, frame "motor court" with a small shotgun type residence/office building.

Roadhouses and Rural Crossroads Stores

Description

The name "roadhouse" often conveys a disreputable meaning. Located in rural areas, the roadhouse offered liquor and food and began to appear in the 1920s and 1930s. Rural crossroads stores, which often predated highway development, provided goods and services primarily to local farmers, but also offered groceries and supplies to the traveling motorist. Some included curbside pumps for gasoline sales and were usually located on the earliest alignments. Roadhouses and rural crossroads stores were built to accommodate local trade and both were constructed as modest vernacular buildings.

Significance

Roadhouses and rural crossroads stores may be significant under Criterion A if an association with travel along the D-L-D route can be established. Criterion C would not be applied to these property types, since their form and function primarily served purposes other than the motorist. The period of significance for rural crossroads stores will sometimes predate the D-L-D Highway. The roadhouse will date to the 1920s and 1930s.

No examples of rural crossroads stores or roadhouses have been identified although several were probably located along the D-L-D route at one time.

Restaurants, Food Stands, Diners and Drive-ins

Description

Eating establishments were a necessity for the long-distance traveler and dining options evolved alongside shifting marketing trends. The earliest motorists often carried their own supplies of food, served and prepared at campgrounds and tourist parks. Early motorists could also turn to restaurants, cafés and lunchrooms in commercial districts through which early highways passed.

During the 1920s and 1930s an assortment of entrepreneurs began serving travelers along highways. The food stand, often operated in conjunction with a private tourist campground or cabin camp, provided a spot for highway travelers to pause and buy a meal. Local roadside stands were small and modest buildings where food, supplies and refreshments were served. Open-air markets or roadside stands were also set up to sell locally grown produce. Diners were small,

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Historic and Architectural Resources of the Detroit-
Lincoln-Denver Highway in Nebraska

Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section F Page 16

locally-owned operations usually found in commercial districts. They consisted of small, and often prefabricated, models sold by national manufacturers. Diners date to the 1930s and served local patrons as well as truckers and travelers.

Restaurants were located on the newer alignments of highways during the post-World War II years through the 1960s. The drive-in was an important milestone in the evolution of the earlier restaurant and diner. Restaurants and drive-ins served local and regional patrons, as well as highway travelers and were primarily located on the commercial strips of larger cities (See Automobile Rows and Commercial Strips, above). The drive-in often consisted of a building with ample parking for cars. Drive-ins featured curb-service dining, with an attendant, commonly called a "car hop," bringing food to customers in their parked cars. Large, distinctive signs and canopies that protected cars and car hops from the elements were other common features. Many also included a curbside menu and call-in station for placing orders. Drive-ins were operated both as family businesses or small regional chains. Chain operations followed distinctive and standardized designs and signage.

The most recent step in the evolution of the drive-in was the introduction of the modern fast-food restaurant in the 1950s, which reached Nebraska in the 1960s and 1970s. These nationally or regionally franchised fast-food companies emerged rapidly in the following decades. Modern fast-food restaurants typically follow the standard floor plan, exterior design and signage required of franchised chains, highly marketed by their name recognition. These standard designs allowed for easy recognition in any location across regions of the country. Most have located on the "commercial strip," replacing the family businesses and smaller chains.¹⁶¹

Significance

Early restaurants located within business district of the 1910s and 1920s will rarely qualify for listing on the National Register individually, but could contribute to a National Register district under Criterion A (see "Commercial Districts" above). As previously mentioned, many restaurants and cafés did advertise in D-L-D guidebooks. Criterion C would not apply since they were located in typical commercial buildings of the period and do not represent a particular type, form or function related to the highway or the traveler.

Diners date to the 1930s and served local or regional patrons, as well as truckers and travelers. They were typically found in commercial districts. They may be eligible under Criterion A by association with travel on the D-L-D Highway. Criterion C would be met when diners represent their type, form and function or a distinctive architectural style associated with this type of roadside business. Properties will embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction. Diners must retain their original form, although some had later additions. The diner is a rare type in Nebraska and should be evaluated accordingly. Only one diner was identified along the D-L-D Highway during the 2001-2002 Nebraska Historic Highway Survey: the Valentine's Diner and Gas Station (AD04-425) in Hastings. While the 1920s cottage-style gas station is still extant, the metal diner building has since been removed from the property.

Restaurants and drive-ins were established in the post-World War II era and served local and regional patrons, as well as travelers. They are mostly found along the commercial strip. Restaurants and drive-ins may qualify under Criterion A for their association with and location along U.S. Highway 20, from where they served local and regional patrons, as well as the highway traveler. Both types may also qualify for the National Register under Criterion C as distinctive examples of a type, form and function or as representative examples of an architectural style associated with this type of roadside business. Properties will embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction. Well-preserved restaurants and drive-ins may be individually eligible or may contribute to a commercial strip historic district. They must retain characteristic features from their period of significance in order to meet National Register criteria. In the case of drive-ins, the removal of original canopies, a most distinctive feature of some drive-ins, would make them ineligible. The properties should also display few alterations outside the period of significance. Drive-ins may be vacant or have a

¹⁶¹ Leibs, 197-213.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Historic and Architectural Resources of the Detroit-
Lincoln-Denver Highway in Nebraska

Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section F Page 17

secondary use, but remain eligible for the National Register if they retain sufficient physical integrity to identify their original use. Properties less than fifty years old would require application of Criterion Consideration G.

Restaurants and drive-ins dating from the D-L-D Highway's period of significance are relatively rare. The Tastee Inn & Out Drive-In (LC13:F11-065) on 48th Street in Lincoln is perhaps the best example of a drive-in. The main building has an overhanging mansard roof and a drive-through window on its north elevation. Detached "flying V" canopies are located in the parking lot. Its vintage sign, with a hamburger reading "TASTEE IN & OUT" sandwiched between "GOOD FOOD" surrounded by bulbs and a neon "ENTRANCE" arrow contributes heavily to the character of the property. More modest drive-ins are found in Hastings (AD04-740), Minden (KN04-155) and Wauneta (CH06-044). The Hastings drive-in is a small brick building with a flat, overhanging roof, while Wauneta's drive-in is housed in a corrugated metal Quonset-style building. Located next to the tourist attraction, Pioneer Village, Minden's drive-in is attached to a one-story residence and features a glass façade and two walk-up order windows, all protected by a flat, overhanging roof. Free-standing restaurants and cafés dating from the period of significance are even rarer along the D-L-D route. The only documented example that is still extant is a small Spanish Colonial Revival-style café in Arapaho (FN01-071). Demolished in 2013, the Art Moderne-style Lone Oak Steakhouse (LC00-098, non-extant) located west of Lincoln was notable for its location on the outskirts of town, its style and its construction material: hay bales.

Franchised fast food outlets appeared nationally as early as the 1950s, but only entered Nebraska markets in the 1960s, 1970s and into the present. No examples of fast food outlets are recorded in surveys of the D-L-D route, since all postdate its period of historic significance.

Markers, Signing and Monuments

Description

Early D-L-D Highway guideposts consisted of an 18-inch band painted around telephone poles with D-L-D painted in black letters. By the mid-1920s communities and D-L-D Highway boosters also began placing concrete markers along the route. The large number of named roads, along with an increased use of motor vehicles; however, caused great confusion among motorists. To improve this situation, the Federal Bureau of Roads announced a plan for a numbered system of highways in the fall of 1925. The department designated 145 roads, or 76,000 miles, across the United States as part of a national, uniform system of marking highway routes. At this time the D-L-D route became U.S. Highway 38 (later U.S. Highway 6) and older markers were replaced with standardized signage for U.S. highways, a shield containing the route number and the name of the state.

Most commercial signs along highways are specifically intended for motorists. Moreover, most signs are intended for visitors, as local citizens typically know the location of businesses and services in their community. "Signs address basic commercial needs: identifying the name and type of business, marking the location, and attracting customers," writes Lisa Maher in her seminal study of motel signs along Route 66, "but signs also fulfill a more important need: making the unknown familiar."¹⁶² Along the D-L-D route, commercial signs pointed travelers to goods and services including gas, food, lodging and automobile supplies. Neon lighting, developed in the 1920s, and individual bulbs illuminated signs at night, enticing travelers to stop. Like the buildings they serve, highway-related signs also reflect the architectural styles of the day, with Art Deco and Art Moderne popular in the 1920s through the 1940s and abstract Modernism taking hold after World War II. By the 1960s plastic replaced metal and neon as the materials of choice for sign makers.¹⁶³ Signs also provide a canvas for iconography and naming devices that reflect regional character and/or marketing techniques.

¹⁶² Lisa Maher, *American Signs: Form and Meaning on Route 66* (New York, The Monacelli Press, 2002), 25.

¹⁶³ Michael J. Auer, "Preservation Brief 25: The Preservation of Historic Signs," TPS, 1991.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Historic and Architectural Resources of the Detroit-
Lincoln-Denver Highway in Nebraska

Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section F Page 18

Like parks, local monuments and memorials along highway routes often served as convenient, and even educational, stopping places for travelers. Commemorative properties were often listed as points of interest in guidebooks, including the WPA Federal Writers Projects' American Guide Series, which was produced between 1935 and 1943.

Significance

Highway markers located on historic and current alignments of the D-L-D route may qualify for listing on the National Register under Criterion A. Highway markers along the route not only provided necessary directional information for the traveling public, but also served as a promotional device. To qualify for listing, the markers must date to the period of significance and retain good integrity including location, design, setting, materials, and association. Markers should generally be in their original location; however, a moved marker may be eligible if it meets National Register Criterion Consideration B. For example, a marker moved slightly to allow a street widening project can be eligible if it maintains a connection and physical association with the D-L-D Highway. Reproduction markers are not eligible for the National Register.

At least three examples of extant D-L-D Highway markers have been identified in Lancaster County. The first (LC13:B09-002) is an example of the concrete obelisk variety with "D-L-D" inscribed one side and "M1" on another. The second marker (LC00-129) is a T-shaped concrete sign with "LANCASTER COUNTY" above "LINCOLN 11 MILES" on the signboard. An arrow and the D-L-D emblem are found on the post. A stone marker with a covered wagon plaque is also found on the grounds of the Federal Building at 10th and O Streets in Lincoln.

Most advertising signs along rural sections of the D-L-D route have been removed in response to highway beautification efforts of the 1960s and today's strict application of state and federal regulations. Those that remain are modern alignments of the highway and are contemporary in nature. One potentially significant exception is a series signs advertising for Pioneer Village (KN04-154), a tourist site in Minden (See Tourist Sites). These signs appear along Nebraska's highways (including U.S. Highway 6, where Minden is located) in great numbers and often feature Pioneer Village's slogan "See How America Grew" and/or examples of artifacts on display at the museum. These signs probably appeared in the 1960s and could achieve significance under Criterion A as an example of highway-related marketing techniques and for their association with one of Nebraska's premier mid-20th century tourist sites, Pioneer Village.

Signs that date from the period of significance are more common along urban alignments, which run through downtown commercial districts and commercial strips. With their simple design, neon lighting and subtle Art Deco or Art Moderne elements, signs for the Arapaho Motel (FN01-070), the town of Exeter (FM03-046), a service station in Arapaho (PP01-006) and an abandoned motel in Culbertson (HK02-042) and are all good examples of early signs (c.1920-1950) along the D-L-D route. After WWII, signs became increasingly complicated with the incorporation of different abstract geometric shapes, which evoked the Modern aesthetic of the day. Arrows, explicitly pointing tourists to their establishment, also became common sign elements. Good examples include signs the Belair Motel (FM04-025) in Fairmont and the Shady Rest Motel (FN01-067) in Arapaho. More elaborate signs also drew tourist attention, including signs for the Red Horse Motel (RW05-272) in McCook and the Plains Hotel sign in Holdrege (PP04-313). The former featured a horse rearing on a pole and the latter included a covered wagon (both signs are no longer extant). Such recognizable iconography reflects Nebraska's Midwestern and Western identity. The Plains Hotel sign also featured a lantern on the top of its support pole, a commonly-used signifier for a lodging establishment. Iconography is also put to use on the Shady Rest Motel sign, which features a white picket fence and a beach umbrella, signifiers for home and vacation, respectively.

Signs, which are classified as objects by the National Register of Historic Places, are not typically considered individually eligible for listing. They should, however, be considered significant contributing resources to the properties they serve, as well as within any commercial districts, automobile rows or commercial strips listed in National Register as historic districts. Signs of exceptional significance may be considered for individual eligibility under Criterion A for their association with highway-related marketing and commerce and/or under Criterion C as outstanding examples of a type or style of

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Historic and Architectural Resources of the Detroit-
Lincoln-Denver Highway in Nebraska

Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section F Page 19

highway-related signage, or for their artistic merit. Signs that are integral to a building should be evaluated as part of the building as a whole.

Commemorative monuments and markers are not typically eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. They may, however, achieve significance under Criterion A in the area of recreation and culture if proven to be an important tourist site and rest area for travelers along the D-L-D route. Commemorative properties would need to meet the requirements established by National Register Criterion Consideration E. No such monuments or memorials are currently identified along the D-L-D route.

Truck Transport and Associated Sites

Description

The D-L-D Highway developed as a highway of commerce. As improvements were made to the highway, it became an important east-west route for truck transport. Trucks would eventually overtake the railroad as the nation's primary method of transporting most types of freight.

The Army first attempted to show the feasibility of truck transport in 1919 with a truck convoy over the Lincoln Highway (U.S. Highway 30). With improvements such as graveled surfaces, truck transport became more feasible and transporters delivered a variety of products, both retail and wholesale, beginning in the 1920s. Crops and livestock were also transported over the highway to local and regional markets in significant numbers during the 1920s, although agricultural production, and in turn agricultural trucking, saw a steep decline during the Great Depression.

Truck stops arrived along highways in the 1950s and 1960s to serve long-distance truck drivers, as well as local and regional patrons. They combined a restaurant and large service bays for trucks. Gasoline was sold to the retail customer and diesel fuel for trucks. Most truck stops were located on the edge of communities. Since its completion in 1974, Interstate 80 now carries much of Nebraska's truck traffic.

Significance

Properties associated with the development of D-L-D Highway as a truck route could accrue significance under National Register Criterion A. With improvements to the highway, trucking companies and independent drivers moved livestock and a variety of other retail and wholesale products along its route. In some cases, Criterion B could be applicable for properties associated with important transporters. Under Criterion C, properties will embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction. Truck stops of the 1950s and 1960s may be eligible under National Register Criterion A for association with commercial transport along the D-L-D route. Under Criterion B, truck stops may represent an individual's importance in the advancement of highway-related commerce in general or the innovation of this type of roadside business in particular. Several were established by prominent businessmen, who may be significant under Criterion B. Under Criterion C, truck stops could be eligible for National Register listing as outstanding examples of their type, form and function.

One example of a property that may be associated related with the trucking industry is a service station (LC13:D13-001) located at 1840 Cornhusker Highway in Lincoln. The building likely dates from the 1950s and features two over-sized service bays beside a two-story office section.

Tourist Sites

Description

From its inception, tourism was envisioned as one of the O-L-D Highway's main functions, which is well illustrated by the special attention given to tourists in Heubinger's 1911 Guide. It continued to serve as a tourist route through the post-

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Historic and Architectural Resources of the Detroit-
Lincoln-Denver Highway in Nebraska

Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section F Page 20

World War II era, as evidenced by the proliferation of motels along its route. From the 1930s through the 1960s, entrepreneurs along the highway developed tourist stops, such as souvenir shops, museums, and sightseeing destinations to profit from tourists traveling the highway. Some featured fanciful and exotic themes to attract the traveler. Most tourist sites disappeared when tourist travel was diverted to Interstate 80 beginning in the 1960s.

Significance

Tourist sites were specifically established to attract travelers on the D-L-D Highway and may qualify for listing on the National Register under Criterion A for their association with roadside commerce and highway-related recreation. Under Criterion B, tourist sites may accrue significance through association with an individual who was important to the development of highway-related tourism and commerce. Tourist sites may also qualify for the National Register under Criterion C in the area of architecture as distinctive examples of a type, form or function, or as representative examples of a distinctive architectural style.

Eligible tourist sites will most likely date from the 1930s through the 50-year cut-off date for National Register listing. Tourist sites that are less than 50 years old will need to meet National Register Criterion Consideration G. Tourist sites associated with the D-L-D route should retain characteristic features from their period(s) of significance, retaining an appearance that expresses their original form and function. The earliest examples of these property types should be evaluated in a statewide context, as very few remain along Nebraska's historic highways. Some modifications to early examples may be acceptable, if these changes do not significantly impact the historic appearance of the tourist site. More recent examples of this property type should retain a high degree of historic integrity to be considered potentially eligible for the National Register. Tourist sites may be vacant or have a secondary use, but will remain eligible for the National Register if they retain sufficient physical integrity to convey their association with automobile tourism.

The best example of a tourist site along the D-L-D route in Nebraska is Pioneer Village (KN04-153) in Minden. Completed in 1953, the complex was built along U.S. Highway 6 and includes a brick Streamline Moderne museum building and a "town green" that represent creator Harold Warp's hometown. The buildings surrounding the green, which were either moved in or built onsite, hold artifacts arranged in chronological order to show the "progress" of American history. Pioneer Village also has an associated hotel, restaurant and campground, as well as an array of vintage signs, both onsite and along the highway. A teepee gift shop in Atlanta (PP01-001) remains a good example of a small-scale tourist site along the D-L-D route, although poor physical integrity currently renders it ineligible for National Register listing.

Man-made Landscape Features

Description

Man-made landscape features often characterize the roadside. These include features that defined the road, giving it a manufactured feeling or association.

Early roadways sometimes passed through a grove of planted trees, creating an avenue of tree canopies. Another important man-made landscape feature found along some Nebraska highways are trees and shrubs planted by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) during the 1930s to manufacture a scenic driving experience. These were often planted in popular varieties of the time, including locust trees, conifers and juniper shrubs. Man-made landscape features also include shelterbelts, built to control wind erosion, which are often found along section lines. Most shelterbelts were planted under New Deal programs, including the "Prairie States Forestry Project" and the CCC. They were planted in rows, featuring cottonwood, Siberian elm, Russian olive, cedar and other conifers.

Significance

"Avenues" of trees would be eligible for listing in the National Register when planted specifically to provide a scenic experience along the D-L-D route. Criteria A would apply for an association with early highway beautification efforts. In

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Historic and Architectural Resources of the Detroit-
Lincoln-Denver Highway in Nebraska

Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section F Page 21

some cases, Criterion C in the area of landscape architecture may also be applicable, should the avenue represent an important style or method of design. Existing avenues of trees incorporated into the D-L-D route would contribute to the setting and feeling of a stretch of highway, but would not be considered individually eligible because they were not planted specifically to enhance the driving experience. A CCC beautification project would qualify for the National Register, either individually or as part of a section of historic roadway, as an example of a specific type of improvement directly associated with the highway. Criteria A and/or C would most likely apply, representing a movement to beautify the highway and a style or method of landscape architecture, respectively. Shelterbelts along section lines, which were often used as original highway alignments, would add to the driving experience and could contribute to an eligible section of roadway. However, shelterbelts were planted for purposes unrelated to the highway's development and cannot be evaluated individually under this MPD.

No man-made landscape features meeting the registration requirements established by this MPD have been identified along the D-L-D route, although examples may be discovered during future research and survey efforts.

Natural Landscape Features and Viewsheds

Description

Natural features such as hills, streambeds and rivers characterize the landscapes through which the highway passes. Natural features and local conditions often dictated early highway routes and methods of construction. "Viewsheds" contribute to the road's setting, feeling and association. They are broad visual landscapes with multiple components (terrain, field patterns, buildings, vistas, etc.) that create the highway's urban, suburban and agricultural settings.

Alignments of the historic D-L-D route pass through a variety of natural landscape features and viewsheds in Nebraska. The route crosses the Missouri River at its eastern end and traverses rolling farmlands before entering the Republican River Valley near Oxford. It then follows the Republic River until Culbertson, where it turns northwest along Frenchman Creek. The route leaves this valley near Wauneta to cross a short strip of sandhills before reaching the semi-arid tablelands around Imperial.

Significance

Natural landscape features provide context to the setting, feeling and association of an historic road segment. Under Criterion A, these features give insight into how the routing of the early highway was determined. They may also demonstrate construction methods applied to roads and structures built in response to local conditions under Criterion C. Viewsheds will also contribute to the setting, feeling and association of the historic road. Natural features and viewsheds can be difficult to delineate within the boundaries of a National Register nomination, and will rarely be individually eligible under this MPD. The diverse scenic features found along the D-L-D route, however, remain important to understanding the historic driving experience and are an essential component in narrative descriptions of the roadway.

Bridges and Culverts

Description

Early highway alignments in Nebraska often incorporated existing bridges at streambed and river crossings. These bridges were built in response to local conditions, but their location often dictated the alignment of early highways. Existing bridges were of various types preferred by counties, bridge contractors or the state engineer.

State legislation in 1911 created the State-aid Bridge Fund to assist counties in the construction of bridges. By 1912 standard plans were developed by the state engineer for use by counties. State-aid truss bridges were required to sustain a minimum twenty-ton load. The following year all counties using state aid were required to use these standard plans, which included some 250 bridge configurations with fourteen-, sixteen-, or eighteen-foot wide roadways. Steel girder

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Historic and Architectural Resources of the Detroit-
Lincoln-Denver Highway in Nebraska

Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section F Page 22

bridges were thirty to forty feet in length with fourteen- or sixteen-foot roadways. Bridges built from 1912 through the 1920s mostly followed standard bridge plans. Truss bridges had either wood or concrete decks. Concrete structures were also gaining popularity at that time, and types included in a 1912 report from Nebraska's state engineer were small arch culverts, box culverts, slab bridges, girder bridges and concrete arch bridges.

The first Federal-Aid Road Act of 1916 included funds for road improvement and by 1919 standard bridge plans for twenty-ton capacity bridges were widened to twenty feet. Transverse joist girder bridges were added to the state's standard plans in the late 1910s and cantilevered stringer/girder bridges date from the late 1920s. However, the through truss and pony truss were still the design choice for lesser waterways. Pile design for substructures underwent a change in the 1930s with open steel pile bents replacing wood pilings. Superstructures of the 1930s included cantilevered spans and stringer bridges. Rigid frame bridge forms were built beginning in the 1930s. Deprivations of materiel caused by World War II meant that little, if any, new bridge construction occurring on Nebraska highways. However, when road construction accelerated in the 1950s into the 1960s, new bridges followed, including modern concrete girder bridges.

Significance

Bridges constructed or incorporated during the highway's period of significance may be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, either individually or as a contributing resource within an historic road section. Bridges significant for their association with the D-L-D Highway and its successor, U.S. Highway 6, would be eligible under Criterion A. For example, a bridge located at a significant crossing on D-L-D Highway or a bridge that represents an early example of a bridge type related to the highway may be eligible under Criterion A. Bridges that best represent an individual's importance in the promotion of bridge improvements in general or the construction of a particular bridge may be eligible under Criterion B. Individual bridges that possess a unique engineering design, are the work of a significant engineer, or demonstrate a transition or innovation in bridge design may be eligible under Criterion C in the area of engineering. Culverts are small-scale resources that are not individually eligible for the National Register; however, original culverts may be contributing features within an historic section of the road.

Several bridge types are located on the D-L-D route. Most are small in scale and are largely single-span pony truss structures or modern concrete girder bridges, although there are significant larger examples. Metal truss bridges were generally constructed in Nebraska between the 1870s and the mid-1930s. Some truss bridges may predate the highway as structures constructed on a local road that was incorporated into the D-L-D route. Examples of metal bridges along the route include a Pratt pony truss bridge near Edison (FN00-108) and a Warren pony truss bridge near Arapaho (FN00-109). Timber beam bridges, popular between 1860 and 1900 and constructed less frequently into the mid-20th century during emergencies or periods of economic difficulty, are also be found on the route. A grouping of c. 1940 wood bridges along a D-L-D alignment in Hitchcock County includes a single span bridge with a wood deck and supports (HK00-087) and two wood deck and trestle bridges (HK00-088 and HK00-089). An earlier, c. 1910, wood trestle bridge near Friend (SA00-185) is located on an original segment of the highway. Concrete bridges in Nebraska include concrete arch structures (after 1910), ridged frame bridge forms (after 1930) and concrete box girder bridges (after World War II). A c.1915 concrete bridge with a low parapet is found near Juanita (AD00-312) on one early D-L-D alignment.

Both modern and historic culverts are located on alignments of D-L-D route. Older culverts, dating from the 1910s to 1920s, are concrete pipe and box culverts with obelisk-shaped concrete markers rising on each side to mark the road. Many early culverts have been altered over the years with their markers damaged or broken off, while others are fully intact. One example of a historic culvert with intact markers is located along an abandoned stretch of highway in Red Willow County just east of McCook (RW0-159).

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Historic and Architectural Resources of the Detroit-
Lincoln-Denver Highway in Nebraska

Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section F Page 23

Roadways

Description

Many segments of the D-L-D Highway dating from its period of significance can still be driven, giving today's motorist a sense of early automobile travel along its route. Other sections of the highway consist of long-abandoned roadways and trails, bypassed as new alignments were built.

The original route of the O-L-D Highway followed existing roads, which served the needs of local farm-to-market transportation and Rural Free Delivery (RFD) mail service. Most were section line roads established by the public land survey system, which, beginning in the territorial period, divided most of Nebraska into 640-acre squares called "sections." This meant the early O-L-D Highway often consisted of a series of 90-degree turns or "stair steps." Roads following the Burlington and Missouri Railroad, which traversed the countryside at an angle, were much more direct, but still presented traffic issues. For instance, county roads built along leased railroad right-of-way often jogged across the tracks, making for sharp turns and dangerous crossings. The earliest alignment of the O-L-D Highway consisted of dirt roadways or simple trails, haphazardly maintained by local governments. Efforts of local citizens and "good roads" boosters sometimes supplemented local funding.

While the O-L-D/D-L-D Highway Association and local citizens did their best to improve the road, it was not until the highway came under state management and federal funding that major improvements and realignments took place. This included the grading, graveling, and later paving, of preferred alignments, while abandoning routes considered dangerous and/or indirect. Bypassed alignments were either incorporated (or reincorporated) into local or county road systems or abandoned completely. In some cases, downtown commercial districts were bypassed in favor of a less congested route.

This leaves a wide variety of roadways that are associated with the D-L-D route, including three main categories: (1) completely abandoned roadways, (2) roadways incorporated into local and county road systems and (3) the current route of U.S. Highway 6. Completely abandoned roadways almost always exist in rural areas. Their condition ranges from fair to nearly indistinguishable and includes materials ranging from dirt two-track to pavement. Abandoned alignments incorporated into local and county road systems are typically in better condition, but due to regular maintenance may have integrity issues. These former alignments are typical gravel in rural areas and paved in urban areas. Current alignments of U.S. Highway 6 typically date from the 1930s and are always paved. They included rural and urban segments. Due to maintenance and the replacement of original paving materials, current alignments will have integrity issues.

Significance

The roadway is the most exemplary property type associated with historic highways. They are linear resources, and will most often be historic road segments found between modern improvements or realignments. In order to be eligible for National Register listing, roadways must retain sufficient integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and/or association dating from the highway's historic period to convey their associational significance and/or embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction. In addition to the road surface, historic roadways may include bridges, culverts, spillways tree alleys and other contributing resources. Under this MPD, roadways will typically represent the D-L-D Highway as whole and should be evaluated at the statewide level of significance.

The highway's first period of development begins with its formal establishment in 1911 and ends with the passage of the Federal-Aid Road Act of 1916. This period is characterized by early efforts of local governments, "good roads" advocates and boosters affiliated with the Omaha-Denver Trans-Continental Route Association. At the time most of the highway consisted of dirt roads and trails. The early road often followed existing section line roads with a uniform 66-foot wide right-of-way or local roads following the Burlington Railroad.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Historic and Architectural Resources of the Detroit-
Lincoln-Denver Highway in Nebraska

Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section F Page 24

A second period of development begins with the precedent-setting Federal-Aid Road Act of 1916, continues with the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1921 and ends with the outbreak of World War II. It includes the designation of the route as a State-aid road in 1919 and as a federal highway in 1926. During this period, the D-L-D route was improved with gravel and hard surfacing, "stair step" routes were eliminated and, in 1936, significant portions of the highway were relocated in conjunction with improvements and realignments to the Burlington Railroad right-of-way. Many of these improvements caused smaller communities along the original route to be bypassed. This period represents the most significant advancement of road construction up until that time.

World War II brought a hiatus of road construction and few improvements occurred. A third period of significance dates from after World War II through the 1950s and 1960s. Roads were further realigned and reflect the current route of U.S. Highway 6. Sections developed after the 1950s and the 1960s have since been improved by modern and standard construction, new bridges, removal and replacement of pavement and the addition of paved shoulders. These road segments do not meet Criterion Consideration G.

Roadways often represent more than one period of significance as the D-L-D Highway continued to evolve. In cases where the road was realigned and vacated, the period of significance will end when existing roads were bypassed and no longer designated as the route of the D-L-D Highway, or its successor, U.S. Highway 6.

A roadway may be eligible under Criterion A for association with a single event or a pattern of events or activities, such as the pioneering or advancement of road construction, transportation and travel patterns, development of the highway, or the evolution of highway-related travel or commerce. Early "stairstep" segments where the highway jogged along section lines would be candidates for evaluation, as would segments where the highway followed the railroad right-of-way. Urban routes could also be eligible under Criterion A in the areas of commerce and/or community planning and development. Alterations to roadways, such as hard surfacing, paving, widening, removal of right angle corners with radius curves, and realignment may contribute to the significance of the road if they were completed during an historic period(s). Locations where the D-L-D route crossed regional or national roads may also be significant under Criterion A.

A roadway that best represents an individual's contributions to highway innovation and development in general or to the construction of a particular road segment may be eligible under Criterion B. This might include a local booster instrumental in getting the highway to pass through his/her town, or a politician who was active in the development of road-related legislation. It is important to note, however, that most highways were built by government agencies, an activity better represented by Criterion A.

Roadways may merit consideration under Criterion C when they exhibit characteristics of a distinctive type or method of road construction or engineering. They may be eligible as examples of early road construction methods; a type of experimental road-building; or the advancement, evolution or transition of improvements to the roadway. Some types of road construction are common and conformed to standard specifications, such as those that are graded and gravel-surfaced. Excellent examples of common road construction methods dating from the period(s) of significance may be eligible under Criterion C. Roadways representing the work of a significant engineer or road builder may also be eligible under Criterion C.

An early roadway may qualify for listing under Criterion D if it has the potential to yield information in the absence of archival or historical references. Archeological investigations, for instance, may yield information on road construction and engineering methods that predate the development of standardized specifications. Such cases would require the development of an appropriate research design. Completely abandoned segments of the original 1911 alignment, which were vacated in favor of better routes, offer the greatest potential for study. These segments were not maintained or improved and may remain sufficiently intact to yield important information regarding the construction of early roads.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**Historic and Architectural Resources of the Detroit-
Lincoln-Denver Highway in Nebraska**

Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section F Page 25

Excellent examples of abandoned D-L-D Highway alignments exist in Chase County between Wauneta and Imperial (CH00-076) and in Red Willow County just east of McCook (RW00-159). The former includes sections of two-track dirt road, while the latter consists of paved segments and earthen segments with original concrete bridges and culverts. Another stretch of two-track earth roadway associated with the early highway can be found in Furnas County (FN00-107). Former alignments incorporated into county road systems include West D-L-D Road in Adams County (AD04-313) and a stretch of gravel road in Fillmore County (FM00-083). Both are wide gravel roadways. Abandoned urban routes included the Highway's original route through Oxford and Edison in Furnas County, and the bypassed commercial district of Minden. In Hastings and Lincoln the original routes of the D-L-D Highway became city routes, after the highway bypassed their congested commercial districts. Examples of brick-paved urban segments can be found in Fairmont (FM04-027) at the intersection of the D-L-D and Meridian Highways and in Holdrege (PP03-304).

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**Historic and Architectural Resources of the Detroit-
Lincoln-Denver Highway in Nebraska**

Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section F Page 26

Eligibility Recommendations

Four properties associated with to the D-L-D Highway have already been listed in the National Register:

- Balcony House, 106 Court St. in Imperial, Chase County (CH04-025)
- Linoma Beach, 17106 South 255th Street, rural Sarpy County (SY00-073)
- Barnes Oil Company, Intersection of Silver Street and U.S. Highway 6, Ashland, Saunders County (SD01-084)
- Keystone Hotel, Northwest corner of Norris and D Streets, McCook, Red Willow County (RW05-011)

As a result of the 2001-2002 Historic Highway Survey, as well as the preparation and revision of this MPD, 94 individual properties and 14 small historic districts were identified as potentially eligible for listing in the National Register for an association with the D-L-D Highway/U.S Highway 6.

Additional site-specific research may be necessary to further evaluate the potential significance of these resources. Eligibility recommendations need to be reevaluated prior to the preparation of a National Register nomination in order to determine if a property has retained the historic features and integrity that made it a potential candidate for the National Register. In some cases, site-specific research will be necessary to demonstrate an association with the D-L-D Highway. The Historic Highway Survey assessed the potential eligibility of resources along five historic highways, primarily under Criterion A and Criterion C. Further research and evaluation may identify additional resources or historic districts related to the D-L-D Highway that qualify for the National Register under one or more of the criteria. The following list should not be considered comprehensive. The list of potentially eligible properties is organized by county following the D-L-D Highway from east to west.

**Potentially Eligible Properties
D-L-D Highway**

Resource name	Location	National Register Criterion	NeHRSI No.
Douglas County			
Automobile Row	Farnam between 25 th Street & 26 th Avenue, Omaha	Criterion A, C	DO09:209-(multiple)
Sarpy County			
Automobile Row	E side McKenna between Angus & Figg, Gretna	Criterion A, C	SY05-017 SY05-043 - 044
Saunders County			
Urch Auto Co.	S side Silver between 15 th & 16 th , Ashland	Criterion A, C	SD01-081
Garage	NE corner Silver & 18 th , Ashland	Criterion A, C	SD01-083
Cass County			
Gas Station	NE corner U.S. 6 & 4 th Street, Greenwood	Criterion A, C	CC06-014
Lancaster County			
O-L-D Marker	Emerald vicinity	Criteria A, C	LC00-129
D-L-D Marker	Lincoln	Criterion A, C	LC13:B09-002
Automobile Row	O Street between 16 th & 17 th (N. side) and 17 th and 18 th (both sides), Lincoln	Criterion A, B	LC13:D08/D09-Multiple
DuTeau Chevrolet	NE corner O Street & 18 th , Lincoln	Criterion A, C	LC13:D09-538
Service Station	NW corner O Street & 26 th , Lincoln	Criterion A, C	LC13:D09-220
Auto Sales / Service	NE corner O Street & 24 th , Lincoln	Criterion A, C	LC13:DO9-564
Sharon Motel	1717 Cornhusker Highway, Lincoln	Criterion A, C	LC13:D12-001
Garage / Service Station	1840 Cornhusker Highway, Lincoln	Criterion A, C	LC13:D13-001
Tastee Inn Drive-in	E side N. 48 th between Holdrege & Aylesworth, Lincoln	Criterion A, C	LC13:F11-065
Garage	2615 N. 48 th Street, Lincoln	Criterion A, C	LC13:F12-409
Starlite Motel	5200 Cornhusker Highway, Lincoln	Criterion A, C	LC13:F14-001
Auto Garage	6039 Havelock, Lincoln	Criterion A, C	LC13:G14-002

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Historic and Architectural Resources of the Detroit-
Lincoln-Denver Highway in Nebraska

Section F Page 27

Name of Multiple Property Listing

Resource name	Location	National Register Criterion	NeHRSI No.
Seward County			
Gas Station	NE corner 1 st & C, Milford	Criterion A, C	SW06-050
Service Station	NW corner U.S. 6 & D, Milford	Criterion A, C	SW06-
Saline County			
Service Station, Gas Station, Auto Sales	NW, NE, SE corners of Washington & 8 th , Dorchester	Criteria A, C	SA03-Multiple
Gas Station	SE corner U.S. 6 & Cedar, Friend	Criterion A, C	SA04-017
Auto Sales / Service	NE corner, 2 nd & Main, Friend	Criterion A, C	SA04-080
Service Station	SW corner U.S. 6 & Maple, Friend	Criterion A, C	SA04-083
Fillmore County			
Gas Station	NW corner U.S. 6 & Burlington, Exeter	Criterion A, C	FM03-017
Garage	N side Seneca between Union & Exeter, Exeter	Criterion A, C	FM03-044
"Exeter" Sign	SE corner U.S. 6 & Exeter, Exeter	Criterion A, C	FM03-046
District: 2 Service Stations & Garage	S side D Street between 6 th & 7 th , Fairmont	Criterion A (Meridian, D-L-D and Potash Highways), C	FM04-022*, 023*, 024*
Belair Motel	S side D Street between 1 st & 2 nd Ave., Fairmont	Criterion A (Meridian, D-L-D and Potash Highways), C	FM04-025
"FOOD" Sign	S side D Street, west of 1 st Ave., Fairmont	Criterion A (Meridian, D-L-D and Potash Highways), C	FM04-026
Brick Street	Fairmont	Criterion A (Meridian, D-L-D and Potash Highways), C	FM04-027
Garage	NWC Omaha & Jefferson St., Graton	Criterion A, C (D-L-D and Potash Highways), C	FM06-005
Clay County			
Garage	W side Clay between Oak & Walnut, Harvard	Criterion A (D-L-D and Potash Highways), C	CY07-042
Filling Station	SEC French & Forest Streets, Sutton	Criterion A (D-L-D and Potash Highways), C	CY12-163
Adams County			
Gas Station	SW corner N. Elm Ave & E. 2 nd St., Hastings	Criterion A (D-L-D and Potash Highways), C	AD04-053
McClelland-Dunn Motor Co.	NE corner, E. 1 st St. & Denver Ave, Hastings	Criterion A (D-L-D and Potash Highways), C	AD04-080
Automobile Row	1020 -1030 W. 2 nd St., Hastings	Criterion A (D-L-D and Potash Highways), C	AD04-107* AD04-108
Automobile Row	N. Lexington between W. 1 st & 2 nd Streets, Hastings	Criterion A (D-L-D and Potash Highways), C	AD04-multiple
Service Station	1354 W. 2 nd St., Hastings	Criterion A (D-L-D and Potash Highways), C	AD04-175
Gas Station	S. side U.S. 6, near intersection with S. Ash Avenue	Criterion A (D-L-D and Potash Highways), C	AD04-425
Filling Station	739 Burlington Ave., Hastings	Criterion A (D-L-D and Potash Highways), C	AD04-426
X-L Motel	1400 W. U.S. 6, Hastings	Criterion A, C	AD04-688
Gas Station	N. side U.S. 6 near intersection with S. Elm Ave, Hastings	Criterion A (D-L-D and Potash Highways), C	AD04-693
Prospect Park	Between W. 3 rd and 4 th St. at Woodland Ave, Hastings	Criterion A (D-L-D and Potash Highways), C	AD04-694
Drive-in	SE corner Elm & South Streets	Criterion A (D-L-D and Potash Highways), C	AD04-740
Kearney County			
Garage	E side Main between 4 th & 5 th , Axtell	Criterion A, C	KN01-021
Garage	E side Main between N. Railway & 2 nd , Hartwell	Criterion A, C	KN02-003
Service Station	SW corner Colorado & 6 th , Minden	Criterion A, C	KN04-123
Pioneer Village Museum and Motel	N side U.S. 6 between Brown and Colorado Streets, Minden	Criterion A, C	KN04-153* KN04-157*
Drive-in	NW corner U.S. 6 & Brown, Minden	Criterion A, C	KN04-154

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Historic and Architectural Resources of the Detroit-
Lincoln-Denver Highway in Nebraska

Section F Page 28

Name of Multiple Property Listing

Resource name	Location	National Register Criterion	NeHRSI No.
Kearney County, cont.			
Garage	E side Minden between 5 th & 6 th , Minden	Criterion A, C	KN04-
Service Station	NW corner Colorado & 3 rd , Minden	Criterion A, C	KN04-
Phelps County			
Garage	NW corner U.S. 6 & West, Atlanta	Criterion A, C	PP01-005
Garage	NW corner U.S. 6 & Phelps, Atlanta	Criterion A, C	PP01-006
Hotel Dale	NE corner East & 4 th , Holdrege	Criterion A	PP04-010
Garage	W side Grant between 3 rd & 4 th , Holdrege	Criterion A, C	PP04-275
District: Garage, Gas Station, Service Station	N. side 4 th Between Tilden & Blaine, Holdrege	Criterion A, C	PP04-309 PP04-310 PP04-311*
Auto Dealership	NE corner 4 th & Grant, Holdrege	Criterion A, C	PP04-015
Furnas County			
Service Station	SE corner U.S. 6 & U.S. 283, Arapaho	Criterion A, C	FN01-017
Shady Rest Motel Sign	S. side U.S. 6 between 3 rd & 4 th , Arapaho	Criterion A, C	FN01-067
Arapahoe Cabin Court	N side U.S. 6 between Nebraska & 7 th , Arapahoe	Criterion A, C	FN01-070
Café	S. Side U.S. 6 between 7 th & 8 th , Arapaho	Criterion A, C	FN01-071
Green's Court	NW corner Old U.S. 6 & Park, Cambridge	Criterion A, C	FN03-013
Service Station	SE corner U.S. 6 & Paxton, Cambridge	Criterion A, C	FN03-080
Garage	SW corner Centre & Meredith, Holbrook	Criterion A, C	FN06-009
Service Station	419 U.S. 6, Holbrook	Criterion A, C	FN06-033
District: Ford Dealership, D-L-D Service Station, Service Station	SE, SW, NE corners of Cornwall & Ogden, Oxford	Criterion A, C	FN08-007* FN08-081* FN08-083
Red Willow County			
Original section D-L-D Highway	Behind U.S. 6 rest area east of McCook, Approx. 1 mile section (access road)	Criterion A, C	RW00-159
Service Station	N side U.S. 6 between Ames & Commercial, Bartley	Criterion A, C	RW01-039
Service Station	S side U.S. 6 between Commercial & Lemon, Bartley	Criterion A, C	RW01-040
Garage	W side 3 rd between D & E, Indianola	Criterion A, C	RW03-028
Service Station	1001 D Street (U.S. 6), Indianola	Criterion A, C	RW03-088
Garage	100 E. 4 th , McCook	Criterion A, C	RW05-140
Garage	NE corner B Street (U.S. 6) & 5 th , McCook	Criterion A, C	
Sage Motel	1003 B Street, McCook	Criterion A, C	RW05-273
Automobile Row	SE corner B Street (U.S. 6) & E 3 rd , McCook	Criterion A, C	RW05-Multiple
Automobile Row	B Street (U.S. 6) between W. 3 rd & W. 4 th , McCook	Criterion A, C	RW05-Multiple
Service Station	NE corner B Street (U.S. 6) & E. 2 nd	Criterion A, C	RW05-
Hitchcock County			
Commercial Building / Garage	E side Taylor between Wyoming & New York, Culbertson	Criterion A, C	HK02-017
Motel & Service Station	N side U.S. 6 between Kleven & Davenport, Culbertson	Criterion A, C	HK02-039
Gas Station	SE corner U.S. 6 & Pearl, Culbertson	Criterion A, C	HK02-040
Gas Station	NW corner Taylor & Warsaw, Culbertson	Criterion A, C	HK02-041
A. M. Oil Co.	W side Kleven between Wyoming & Warsaw, Culbertson	Criterion A, C	HK02-042
Garage	W side Main between Carrigan & County, Palisade	Criterion A, C	HK03-018
Gas Station	NE corner Main & N. Railway, Palisade	Criterion A, C	HK03-037
Former Valley Hotel	NE corner of Main & Smith, Palisade	Criterion A	HK03-045
Gas Station	SE corner Main & Smith, Palisade	Criterion A, C	HK03-049
"Palisade" Sign	NE corner U.S. 6 and Main, Palisade	Criterion A, C	HK03-050
Service Station	SE corner Main & Blake, Palisade	Criterion A, C	HK03-
Hayes County			
Garage	E. side Main between Buffington & Wise, Hamlet	Criterion A, C	HY01-008
Service Station	SW corner Old U.S.6 & Main, Hamlet	Criterion A, C	HY01-018
Chase County			
Old U.S. Highway 6	Approx. 10 miles between Wauneta and Imperial (c. 1911-1957 alignment)	Criterion A, C	CH00-076

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Historic and Architectural Resources of the Detroit-
Lincoln-Denver Highway in Nebraska

Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section F Page 29

Resource name	Location	National Register Criterion	NeHRSI No.
Chase County, cont.			
Gas Station	SE corner Broadway and 5 th , Imperial	Criterion A,C	CH04-035
District: Gas Station & Northside Motel	1615 Broadway, Imperial	Criterion A, C	CH04-042 CH04-033
Hotel Imperial	NE Broadway & 5 th , Imperial	Criterion A	CH04-047
Service Station	SE Broadway & 6 th , Imperial	Criterion A, C	CH04-060
Gas Station	Northeast corner of Pawnee and Arapahoe, Lamar	Criterion A, C	CH05-003
District: Pennington's Garage & Quonset Drive-in	SE & NE U.S. 6 & Tecumseh Street, Wauneta	Criterion A, C	CH06-021* CH06-044
Garage/Auto Dealership	SW Tecumseh & Vinita, Wauneta	Criterion A, C	CH06-026

Notes:

This should not be considered as a comprehensive list of all properties that may be associated with the D-L-D Highway/U.S. Highway 6. Others may yet to be identified based on further intensive research and documentation. Properties listed above may not necessarily fulfill National Register requirements in a final evaluation, but may be compared to others that are proposed for nomination.

In general, resources are to be considered under the property types identified in this list under "Resource Name." Proposed historic districts typically represent extant segments of automobile rows, commercial strips or significant intersections. Inclusion in a potential historic district should not preclude the potential individual eligibility of a resource.

"NeHRSI No." is the survey number assigned to each resource in the Nebraska Historic Resource Survey & Inventory, maintained by the Nebraska State Historical Society, State Historic Preservation Office. The first two letters indicate the county and the following two digits indicating a specific community ("00" is used for rural properties). The three digits following the dash (-) are unique identifiers. Larger communities (including Lincoln and Omaha) use modified numbering systems. An asterisk (*) following the NeHRSI number indicates properties that are the most likely to be individually eligible within a potential historic district. NeHRSI numbers missing their last three identifying digits (HK03-) indicate properties that were not included in the 2001-2002 Nebraska Historic Highway Survey, but have since been identified as potentially eligible for an association with the D-L-D Highway/U.S. Highway 6.

"Location" is a brief verbal description of the property's location. The NeHRSI delineates locations by mapping systems on local plat maps, USGS quadrangles, and county highway maps. Routes of the highway have also been mapped as linear resources, with a site number given for the road in each county. All locations are also added to a GIS system maintained by the Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office.

"National Register Criterion" identifies the criterion though to be most relevant for each property. Additional research conducted for a specific property should consider these criteria but further research may identify that not all criteria listed may be applicable. Conversely, additional research conducted for a specific property may identify one or more applicable criteria that have not been included in this list.

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**Historic and Architectural Resources of the Detroit-
Lincoln-Denver Highway in Nebraska**

Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section G Page 1

G. Geographical Data

Resources evaluated under this Multiple Property Document will be located in the geographical area that encompasses the historic alignment of the D-L-D Highway and the current alignment of U.S. Highway 6 and portions of U.S. 34 in Nebraska. Resources will generally be located within 1/4 mile of an historic or current route alignment.

The D-L-D Highway travels through the following Nebraska counties from east to west: Douglas, Sarpy, Saunders, Cass, Lancaster, Seward, Saline, Fillmore, Clay, Adams, Kearney, Phelps, Harlan, Furnas, Red Willow, Hitchcock, Hayes, Chase.

The c. 1911 route of the D-L-D Highway traveled through the following communities from east to west: Omaha, Gretna, Ashland, Greenwood, Waverly, Lincoln, Emerald, Milford, Dorchester, Friend, Exeter, Fairmont, Grafton, Sutton, Harvard, Hastings, Juanita, Heartwell, Minden, Axtell, Funk, Holdrege, Atlanta, Oxford, Edison, Arapahoe, Holbrook, Cambridge, Bartley, Indianola, McCook, Culbertson, Palisade, Hamlet, Wauneta, Imperial, Lamar. The present route of U.S. Highway 6 route, including portions of U.S. Highway 34, incorporates much of the c. 1911 D-L-D route. However, the following towns were bypassed: Harvard, Juanita, Oxford, Edison, and Lamar.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Historic and Architectural Resources of the Detroit-
Lincoln-Denver Highway in Nebraska

Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section H Page 1

H. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods

Survey Methodology

This Multiple Property Document (MPD) for Historic and Architectural Resources of the Potash Highway in Nebraska is based upon a survey completed for the Nebraska State Historical Society and the Nebraska Department of Roads in 2001 and 2002. See *Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey, Historic Highways in Nebraska* (August 2002) for complete survey methodology and results.

Two past studies also informed this MPD. In 1991, a statewide historic bridge inventory and historic context was completed to identify and evaluate the eligibility of pre-1947 bridges in Nebraska, resulting in the creation of an MPD titled "Historic Bridges in Nebraska, 1870-1942." This MPD, along with the *Nebraska Historic Bridge Inventory Management Plan*, informed eligibility decisions regarding bridges along the five highways surveyed during the 2001-2002 Historic Highway Survey Project. Potash Highway resources were also identified during Nebraska Historic Resource Survey & Inventory (NeHRSI) countywide, reconnaissance-level surveys completed for all of the counties on the highway.

The Nebraska Historic Highway Survey developed a statewide historic context addressing highway development in Nebraska and individual historic contexts for the following highways: Lincoln Highway, Meridian Highway, Omaha-Lincoln-Denver/Detroit-Lincoln-Denver Highway, Potash Highway, and U.S. Highway 20. These were selected as being among the most important regional or cross-country highways in Nebraska. Lack of funding limited the scope of work to these highways, although others achieved prominence for their routes in and through Nebraska.

The statewide context, *Historic Highway Development in Nebraska*, covers the beginnings of organized road development in the late nineteenth century and continues through 1974 and the completion of Interstate 80 in Nebraska. The highway-specific context, *Detroit-Lincoln-Denver Highway in Nebraska*, begins in 1911 with the organization of the Omaha-Denver Trans-Continental Route Association and continues through c. 1965, which currently marks the end of the highway's period of significance. This context discusses the organizational beginnings of the road and establishment of the route, promotion and tourism, realignments and the highway's impact on communities along its route. The historic context also provides a timeline of development and significant events related to the D-L-D Highway. Surveyed properties were evaluated under both historic contexts for their potential National Register significance. The historic contexts are included in Section E of this document. Section F discusses property types and their potential National Register significance.

A wide array of resources was consulted during the creation of the historic highway contexts. Archival research was conducted at the Nebraska State Historical Society and the Nebraska Department of Roads. Resources found at the Nebraska Department of Roads included biennial reports, historic highway maps, and project database logs identifying road improvements and realignments. Other important source materials included: *Heubinger's Map and Guide for Omaha-Denver Trans-Continental Route (1911)*, the WPA's *Nebraska: A Guide to the Cornhusker State*, city directories, Sanborn Fire insurance, various promotional state travel maps, newspaper research and county and local histories.

Properties were selected for survey and documentation base on their identified or understood association with the highway based on their physical appearance. The reconnaissance-level field survey identified historic road features and road-related properties largely from visual inspection. Fortunately, many of the property types related to the highway are readily identifiable, such as bridges, gas stations, cabin camps, and motels. Survey methodology was based on *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Identification and Evaluation* and the Nebraska State Historical Society/State Historic Preservation Office's *Historic Buildings Survey Manual*. Extensive consultation was also conducted with Nebraska State Historical Society and Nebraska Department of Roads staff.

Only one identified historic alignment of the D-L-D Highway, spanning from c. 1911 to c. 1925, was surveyed in rural areas, because it was expected that highway-related resources would be concentrated in urban areas. However, the

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Historic and Architectural Resources of the Detroit-
Lincoln-Denver Highway in Nebraska

Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section H Page 2

roadways of former alignments were documented in some instances. In communities, multiple historic alignments were surveyed in an effort to identify road-related resources. In both rural and urban areas, the reconnaissance survey focused on road-related resources that had an association with the highway, automobiles, and/or tourism. Surveyed properties were generally constructed before 1960 and were located within a ¼ mile of the right-of-way. Identified property types included gas stations, motels and hotels, restaurants, auto garages and dealerships, neon signs, bridges, distinctive culverts, and road segments.

Surveyed properties retained a minimal degree of integrity and convey a sense of function as a road-related resource. Alterations to a property completed prior to 1960 were evaluated as having the potential to contribute to the property's history. If the association of the property was not clearly identifiable, but the property had the potential to serve travelers along the route, the property was documented. Partial complexes or representative buildings were surveyed although demolition and alterations may have diminished their historic integrity.

Previously identified road-related properties recorded in the Nebraska Historic Resources Survey & Inventory (NeHRSI) were reevaluated as part of the Nebraska Historic Highway Survey. This county-by-county survey program began in 1974 and now includes the documentation of over 76,000 properties that reflect the rich architectural and historic heritage of Nebraska. Previously surveyed properties that displayed a severe loss of integrity through major physical changes were not resurveyed. They can, however, provide for a comparative analysis with extant properties.

Surveyed properties were documented with black-and-white photographs and the recordation of locational information in the NeHRSI database. Surveyed properties were mapped on county road maps, town plat maps or USGS quadrangle maps, as appropriate. Surveyed properties are now entered in a Geographic Information System (GIS) maintained by the Nebraska State Historical Society. A total of 918 resources were documented as part of the Historic Highway Survey, including 215 resources related to the D-L-D Highway. See *Nebraska Historic Buildings Survey, Historic Highways in Nebraska* for complete survey methodology and results.

Limitations and Biases of the Survey

This survey was limited in scope and scale to focus on the agencies' objectives within the project budget and schedule. The application of reconnaissance-level survey methodology was necessitated.

The field survey of each highway was limited in the number of alignments driven and resources readily identifiable, as described above. Because early alignments were chosen to capture the history and evolution of the early twentieth century roadways, eligibility assessments focused only on selected routes. In rural areas, the original alignment was primarily chosen for field survey. Other alignments may identify additional properties. Minor realignments were frequent and can only be identified through additional research.

In urban areas, multiple alignments, often including the original alignment and a later (c. 1930s) downtown bypass alignment, were surveyed. Post-1940 alignments in both urban and rural areas can continue to tell the story and evolution of road development and may hold significance in their own right.

As a reconnaissance level survey, research focused on the overall history of the road and property types. Research on individual properties was limited. Field survey efforts focused on the visual identification of resources with a potential connection to the road, such as automobile travel or tourism. For the most part, resources were considered under National Register Criterion A for their association to the highway and Criterion C for their design. Further research on individual properties may identify potential significance under Criterion B for persons associated with highway development and promotion and Criterion D for research potential. In some cases, Criterion Considerations B for moved properties and G for properties less than 50-years old may be applicable.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

**Historic and Architectural Resources of the Detroit-
Lincoln-Denver Highway in Nebraska**

Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section H Page 3

One inherent challenge of reconnaissance level surveys is identifying a property's historical association(s) with limited information. Without completing site-specific research it is unknown what role, if any, a property may have contributed to the history of the D-L-D Highway. For instance, determining whether an auto-related business was established as a direct result of the highway or to serve local and regional patrons is particularly problematic, although it seems likely gas stations, auto dealerships and garages would have benefitted from highway traffic regardless of their origin. In such cases, only site-specific research can establish a resource's history and reveal its level of association and significance. As such, this MPD should be viewed as a stepping-off point. Surveyed properties can be better understood and additional resources may be identified with further historical research. More specified information, addressed only in a cursory manner in this MPD, will also be uncovered as historic properties are evaluated for National Register eligibility.

Further exploration of the driving "experience" along historic highways may also lead to the identification of landscape features and viewsheds with potential National Register eligibility under this MPD. These might include alleys of trees, important landmarks or entire urban, suburban or rural landscapes. However, in terms of the highway's historic character, these properties are often ephemeral. They are also extremely difficult to characterize and quantify, and, as a result, were not surveyed as part of this project.

The initial survey of highway-related properties was completed in 2001-2002 and limitations do exist in the greater amount of knowledge acquired since that time. Post-World War II properties, for example, may have been unintentionally overlooked. An attempt was made to identify properties dating to about 1960; however, evaluation methods for "mid-century modern" resources may now be keener. Finally, it is important to note the transitory quality of place and time. Many highway-related properties have been lost or altered since the survey was completed, while others will reach the National Register's 50-year benchmark for potential historic significance in the next few years.

In an effort to be as accurate as possible, a desktop assessment of each resource included in the 2001-2002 Historic Highway Survey (excluding bridges, roadways and some sites) was performed during the 2013-2014 revision of this document. Utilizing Google Maps and other online resources, this assessment was limited to: (1) determining if each resource was still extant; (2) looking for significant alterations that might impact the integrity of each resource (if street view was available in Google Maps); and (3) finding potential historic districts and/or clusters of highway-related resources. According to the assessment, approximately 26 properties associated with the D-L-D Highway have been lost since the 2001-2002 Historic Highway Survey and several others have been extensively altered. On the other hand, this process also uncovered a handful of previously unidentified highway-related resources and a few successful preservation efforts. Finally, the desktop assessment revealed 14 potential highway-related historic districts ranging in size from two or three adjacent properties to multiple city blocks. These districts typically represent automobile rows, commercial strips and/or important intersections.

Value of the Survey

Products of the Nebraska Historic Highway Survey are of use to NSHS and NDOR in project planning activities and public information efforts. NDOR participated in the project to facilitate project planning and development by proactively identifying and evaluating historic resources. As a result of the project, NSHS was able to update the state's historic resources inventory and gain a better understanding of the state's historic highways and related resources. Both agencies also have roles in highway project planning and compliance under state and federal cultural resource regulations. The statewide context of highway development and the reconnaissance survey results will assist the NSHS, NDOR, and the Federal Highway Administration in determining what road-related properties may be eligible for the National Register.

Both agencies also have the desire to raise public awareness about the history of highway development in the Nebraska and the significance of road-related resources. The project's products, including the survey report and the publication manuscript, serve as educational materials for the general public that advance knowledge and appreciation of Nebraska's historic highways and the resources that define their character.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Historic and Architectural Resources of the Detroit-
Lincoln-Denver Highway in Nebraska

Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section I Page 1

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Historic and Architectural Resources of the Detroit-
Lincoln-Denver Highway in Nebraska

Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section 1 Page 2

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National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Historic and Architectural Resources of the Detroit-
Lincoln-Denver Highway in Nebraska

Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section I Page 3

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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Historic and Architectural Resources of the Detroit-
Lincoln-Denver Highway in Nebraska

Name of Multiple Property Listing

Section I Page 4

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**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

**Historic and Architectural Resources of the Detroit-
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Section I Page 5

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