



Transportation Infrastructure's Role in Economic Growth: North Dakota State Highway 13

Senator Kent Conrad
Budget Committee Testimony
Presented by Jim Sturdevant, Mayor
Wahpeton, ND



North Dakota State Highway 13 is an essential and robust part of the infrastructure and economy serving the south east region of North Dakota and the City of Wahpeton. Highway 13 connects the region from the Red River to the Missouri River with 200 miles of roadway linking agriculture, industry, tourism and education to our communities.

Agriculture: Richland County is the second highest agricultural revenue producing county in the State of ND with agricultural sales exceeding \$261 million dollars annually. (per the USDA Census of Agriculture 2007) The presence of value-added agriculture serves as an economic multiplier creating jobs in the manufacturing, transportation, wholesale, and service industries. Local processors including Minn-Dak Farmers Cooperative and Cargill employ over 600 people and process crops from more than 500 farms dispersed over a seven county area adjacent to Wahpeton and dependent on the Highway 13 corridor. The annual sugar beet harvest requires the trucking of up to 3,000,000 tons of product in 25 ton increments or 120,000 truck trips from farm to first point of delivery. Highway 13 is an essential asset that makes this possible.

Industry: Wahpeton has a diverse manufacturing base ranging from mill work production to data storage technology; More than 1,162 people work in manufacturing in the Wahpeton area with an estimated economic impact of over \$59 million dollars. The Highway 13 corridor is an asset that links major interstate highways I-29 and I-94 giving our community a logistical advantage to prospective employers.

Tourism: Wahpeton's Chahinkapa Zoo hosts approximately 50,000 visitors annually. It is estimated 60% of these visitors are from out of state, representing all 50 states and 15 foreign countries in its' guest registries. The State of North Dakota estimates 1 in 12 jobs are tied to tourism. A strong framework of infrastructure is essential to the tourism industry; ND Highway 13 provides access to 2 national wildlife refuges, 3 state historic sites, 3 state parks and multiple hunting and fishing destinations.

Education: The North Dakota State College of Science is a two-year, comprehensive, residential college with its main campus located in Wahpeton that offers degrees, certificates, and diplomas in over 80 academic options in traditional career and technical studies as well as the liberal arts. Approximately 2,400 students are enrolled at NDSCS representing every County in North Dakota. The academic, athletic and cultural activities of the college are dependent on strong transportation infrastructure and North Dakota State Highway 13.

North Dakota Highway 13 is the gateway to Wahpeton and essential to the economy of the south east region of North Dakota.

Respectfully submitted,
Jim Sturdevant, Mayor