

**U.S. SENATE BUDGET COMMITTEE HEARING**  
**How Infrastructure Investments Can Foster Economic Development and the Agriculture**  
**Economy: US 52**

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Mr. Chairman. I am Connie Ova, CEO of Jamestown/Stutsman Development Corporation. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the Budget Committee today.

Today, I would like to address the following:

- Brief overview of Jamestown/Stutsman Development Corporation (JSDC);
- How Good Road Infrastructure will assist existing business; and
- Foster new economic development in a region.

**Background on Jamestown/Stutsman Development Corporation (JSDC)**

JSDC was organized to develop employment to improve business conditions and to advance the interests of the City of Jamestown and Stutsman County, North Dakota by implementing and sustaining an organized effort to attract new businesses and industry, support existing businesses and industry, and encourage new business starts.

The JDSC has an economic development program available to assist with expanding or relocating business. JSDC's mission is: *In concert with the City of Jamestown and Stutsman County and utilizing their supplied funding, JSDC is dedicated to area economic development growth and diversification with specific focus on increasing and/or preserving primary sector jobs, business and industrial development, creating, fostering, and maintaining business and trade activities, encouraging and providing incentives for business entrepreneurs to locate/re-locate to our community.*

The Jamestown/Stutsman Development Corporation owns an Ag Processing Industrial Park with 55 acres of land available for sale or lease directly adjacent to Cavendish Farms potato processing plant. In addition to that JSDC owns the I-94 Business Park which has 30 acres available for manufacturing, warehouse distribution or national service. The I-94 Business Park is home to Stutsman Harley Davidson, Infinity Building Services and this fall new home to Ag Country Farm Credit Services. In addition JSDC recently purchased property east of Jamestown in Spiritwood Township. JSDC owns 100 acres of prime industrial property in the Spiritwood Energy Industrial Park co-located with Cargill Malt and Great River Energy. I've included information in my handouts directly related to those sites and to opportunities available in this community.

## **JSDC Strategic Plan 2009-2013**

The JSDC Strategic Plan was reviewed and updated most recently in January of 2009 by the JSDC Board of Directors. The JSDC Strategic Plan for 2009-2013 includes seven strategies we are setting our sites on and look at what strategy number one is:

- 1. Transportation/Distribution**
- 2. Information/Communication**
- 3. Training Center**
- 4. Consumer Services, Marketing Regional Hub**
- 5. Synergistic/Complementary Businesses**
- 6. Alternative Energy Sources**
- 7. Exploration of Grants and other Funding Opportunities**

### **Strategy 1: Transportation/Distribution**

**Background:** Jamestown's geographic location is ideal to focus on the transportation and distribution of products and services with access to air, ground, and rail.

**Approach:** Gather data details; communicate with companies within this industry (Regionally, USA, and internationally), establish criteria, measure need and interest, develop a business plan, contact investors and receive feedback, support and promote activities.

### **Economic Development Importance of Transportation**

An efficient transportation system is essential for the future economic health of this region and state.

Improvements to our public roadway system lower costs for producers and consumers, and make North Dakota more attractive in a highly competitive market for jobs and industry.

Failure to maintain our public roadway system will result in lost jobs and opportunities for economic development to neighboring states. Jamestown is diligently marketing the advantage of its central location at the crossroads of major highway and railroad systems; to attract new and retain existing businesses.

North Dakotan must have access to safe transportation services in all areas of the state to ensure personal mobility for work, pleasure and needed services. Maintaining a safe and trouble free transportation system is critical for all to experience the quality of life we have come to expect in North Dakota.

## **Economic Development and Support**

Without a good roadway system people could not get to work; there would be no access to healthcare, education and recreation; farmers would not be able to get their goods to market; and manufacturers would be unable to ship their products or receive supplies. In short, the economy would shut down. But just having a public roadway system is not enough. The system must be well maintained, efficient, reliable, and accessible.

Manufacturers rely more and more on just-in-time delivery which means much of the inventory they previously kept in their warehouse is now on trucks on the public roadway system for delivery to the plant at the time the manufacturer needs the supplies. It is critical to the economy that the roadway system supports consistent and reliable transportation so that just-in-time delivery is successful. This requires a roadway system that is in good condition, has adequate capacity and is well-maintained, even in inclement weather.

Investments in the public roadway system support the economy through: 1) direct job creation through construction activities; 2) indirect and induced job support; and 3) productivity gains.

In addition to job creation and support, productivity gains are realized by investments that reduce travel times, make travel times more consistent (critical for just-in-time delivery), reduce crashes, and reduce vehicle operating costs. Companies across the region such as those represented here today, attest to the importance of the roadway system in terms of location, capacity and condition to their ability to succeed because in today's economy, "time is money." Many areas of the state are seeking public roadway improvements that they believe are critical to support existing and assure future economic development. Transportation costs are a major cost of doing business, which means a high-quality public roadway system is necessary to attract new businesses and support the growth of existing developments.

Agriculture is the number one industry in this community and North Dakota. Good transportation is vitally important to those farmers needing to move commodities to markets, to transport equipment from farm to farm and field to field and to receive goods and services to provide food and fiber to the world.

## **Quality of Life**

One of North Dakota's greatest resources is the quality of life that exists within its borders. Transportation services support North Dakotans with many quality of life benefits. North Dakotans value the ability to move and travel with ease. Our public roadway system provides the primary means to access recreation, education, health care, and services. Increasingly, these quality of life issues are also critical to local economic development. Companies want good roads not only for business purposes, but to attract and support a stable workforce. High levels of accessibility and mobility are key to experiencing the quality of life Jamestown has to offer.

## **What Economic Developers Do**

Most economic development professionals recognize the distinction between growth and development. As a result our work involves more than just attracting the next big employer, or

simply increasing the number of jobs in the community. Our concern is also with increasing the quality of jobs available in the community. Doing so requires working to improve the operating environment in which businesses function. That operating environment includes transportation infrastructure.

People working in the field of economic development address a wide range of issues. Outwardly it may appear we only spend our time courting major businesses, or are content to simply increase the number of jobs in a region regardless of job quality, in reality we are also concerned with and involved in issues of:

- ✓ labor force quality and quantity
- ✓ **transportation and utility infrastructure**
- ✓ education and business technical assistance
- ✓ physical, psychological, cultural, and entrepreneurial environment; economic structure and efficiency
- ✓ institutional capacity to support economic development and growth

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, we consider it imperative that the Congress recognize that significantly increased federal investment in highways and surface transportation in rural states such as North Dakota is vitally important to economic development and to the continued growth of this nation. It is also crucial to ensure the growth and delivery of safe and healthy North Dakota grown food and fiber to the world.

That concludes my testimony. I'd be happy to respond to any questions you may have.