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ABOUT THIS PROJECT

PROJECT NAME: National Road Research Alliance - Phase II

PROJECT NUMBER: TPF-5(466)

PROJECT FUNDING PROGRAM: State Planning and Research

PROJECTED END DATE: January 2026

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RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

Cooperative research increases performance and durability of Iowa's roads

Iowa's highway system is deceptively complex. Every asphalt and concrete road in the state was designed and constructed to last for decades with materials and methods selected for the road's location and the amount of traffic it would eventually support. Continually advancing research has helped Iowa DOT build safer and long-lasting roads to save countless lives and significant maintenance and repair costs; however, this research also comes with a high price tag. A single research project can cost hundreds of thousands—if not millions—of dollars to complete.

The National Road Research Alliance (NRRA) pooled fund gives Iowa and other states and organizations with similar interests an opportunity to join forces and

reap the full benefits of cutting-edge highway research at a fraction of the cost to each member.

"The NRRA allows us to get more value out of our research dollars," said Jeff De Vries, Iowa DOT's liaison to the NRRA. "By pooling our resources with other like-minded states, we can fund more highway research than we could on our own."

The NRRA was first formed in 2016 with a five-year research plan. During that time, the pooled fund initiated dozens of research projects related to asphalt and concrete pavement construction, maintenance, and geotechnics. The program has been so successful that Iowa DOT and the other members voted to extend the partnership for a second phase, which will run from 2021-2025.

Among the NRRA's ongoing research efforts are studies that will test new and improved materials and develop high-tech tools and software to help agencies build longer-lasting roads.

"The knowledge, skills and resources that Iowa DOT has gained from being a member of the NRRA are really invaluable," De Vries said.

The second phase of the pooled fund is expected to conclude in January 2026.

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