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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

#### NEBRASKA GOVERNOR VISITS NORTHEAST NEBRASKA TELEPHONE COMPANY IN JACKSON

“This is the most widespread natural disaster we have ever had in our state’s history,” said Nebraska Governor Pete Ricketts to an audience of NNTC Board members, management staff and media on Thursday, March 28th at NNTC offices in Jackson.

Governor Ricketts, whose visit was scheduled before the flooding happened, stopped by NNTC to discuss rural broadband. While the topic is something the governor is passionate about, he was focused on all the devastation the state has seen in the last three weeks.

NNTC General Manager Pat McElroy told the governor that flooding has impacted the company as well and costs could be around \$350,000 to repair fiber. The greatest cost will be to bore a new fiber line near Spencer, NE after a line was lost from the dam collapse.

Gov. Ricketts says his focus is getting help to Nebraskans for recovery. He says the state and local governments will each contribute 12.5% of repair costs while FEMA pays 75%. 85% of Nebraska counties are currently declared an “emergency” county, Ricketts said.

Governor Ricketts also discussed rural broadband at Thursday’s meeting. “It creates jobs, it provides access to education and especially if you think about the direction it’s going in relation to agriculture with big data and the opportunity to leverage that data. [It gives] the ability to customize seed and water down to the square foot,” Ricketts said.

Last year Governor Ricketts appointed a Rural Broadband Task Force, consisting of 14 members from various parts of the state. The task force has been reviewing issues related to broadband availability to rural Nebraskans and is expected to submit its recommendations to the Legislature on November 1st.

During his visit Gov. Ricketts said he’ll continue to support the Nebraska Universal Service Fund (NUSF). NUSF encourages companies like NNTC to continue to build fiber to provide communication services to rural Nebraska.

The NNTC Board of Directors met earlier that same day to discuss strategic planning for the company with NNTC management staff.

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