



Heritage Tourism Development
Short Report
September 30, 2022

Executive Summary

The **Potter Block Development Project/Hotel Garber** Groundbreaking is scheduled for *Friday, October 7th at 5:30pm*. What was supposed to be a lowkey affair seems to be picking up some steam. There may be press from all over Nebraska in town for the event, Tourism Commissioner John Ricks will be in town, and *Senator Deb Fischer* will tour the downtown the day before. We expect no special treatment for the day, but just want everyone to be aware. A pre-bid meeting was held for the site on Sept. 28th. We hope that a bid is accepted and more substantial construction begins prior to November. We continue to press forward with our pursuit of a **Recreation Trail** in and around Red Cloud. The Nebraska Community Foundation will need the City of Red Cloud to sign an agreement in order to establish a Recreation Trail Account. This will allow the RC Community Fund to accept funds for the project and give them to the City without drawing concerns from the IRS. Please see the sample documents at the end of this report for examples of how that language could be articulated by the City. We wish to stress that RCCF would give the City money to hire individuals or companies to construct and maintain the trail should the City not be interested in providing those services. We have been in contact with the Nebraska Department of Economic Development and Senator Dave Murman's office regarding **LB977**—*which could provide some grant money for our electrical grid concerns*. DED will have to issue formal guidance and application documents before we can proceed. Senator Murman's office pledges to notify us when this happens, but we will check back often. Adam Vetter, Jarrod McCartney, and Dennis Hansen attended the latest **E3** gathering in Sidney on Sept. 22-23. They returned from the trip with a renewed sense of the possibilities for this group, including exploring funding for a part-time "e-navigator" to help coach small business owners and strong leads from the Nebraska Enterprise Fund and the Nebraska Department of Labor that may help the community achieve some of the goals we were hoping to achieve with a USDA Redlg program. Doug Scherlie from **BRAN** (Bike Ride Across Nebraska) reached out to Heritage Tourism and would like to have their group stay overnight on June 6th, 2023. Red Cloud last hosted BRAN in 2018 and won the Best Host Community Award.

Additional highlights:

- Deb Fischer will visit Red Cloud on Thursday, Oct. 6th from 11:30am to 12:30pm. The tour will start at the Cather Center if anyone is interested in joining.
- We're excited about the initial NDOT designs and ready for that work to move forward. We believe we could fundraise to extend the brick to 6th Ave and 2nd Ave.
- As of Sept. 30th, RCCF has raised \$20,400 for its September Month of Giving campaign. Donations will be accepted past the Sept. 30th deadline, but probably not past Oct. 7th.
- The Creative District application was submitted in September and the Nebraska Arts Council is already set to review it. We hope to hear back soon.



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Long Report
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DATA STILL BEING COMPILED FOR SEPTEMBER WEBSITE/SOCIAL MEDIA METRICS

Table 1: July 2022 Tax Data¹

Tax source	2022	July 22	v. July 21	v.previous month	2022 v. 2021	2021 v. 5 year average
County lodging tax revenue	\$4,575	\$991	-11.8%	-19.6%	-22.5%	+21.5%
City sales tax ² payout	\$133,320	\$20,615	-3.4%	+58.8%	-16.9%	+20.2%
Sales tax derived from retail sales	\$128,920	\$18,660	+3.6%	-8.9%	+7.6%	+1.6%

Analysis:

Data is not available yet for the month of September for website and other media use. We will submit that data in November rather than submit partial data.

The overall sales tax and lodging tax situation is on pretty much the same trajectory as it was last month with retail sales being surprisingly strong given the present state of the world economy. While numbers are down for the most part in most categories this year, they are all well ahead of 2019, which was the last “normal” year.

Heritage Tourism Advisory Council

We have decided to hold our meeting bimonthly starting now. *The meetings will be held the 4th Tuesday of every month at 6pm in the Auld Public Library. Due to scheduling conflicts, the next meeting will actually be Nov. 1st.* As Heritage Tourism has grown and as multiple meetings for the Hotel Garber, E3, and other projects have developed, the amount of meetings has become overwhelming. Our feeling is that this will keep volunteer members energized and more productive. HTAC will also be heavily involved in fundraising for operating costs for Heritage Tourism throughout this year and next

¹ Sales tax in Red Cloud is 7%, with 5.5% going to the State and 1.5% going to the City. These payout numbers only reflect the 1.5% payout to the City. Lodging tax for Webster County is at 5% with 1% going to the State of Nebraska. These numbers reflect the 4% that comes back to Webster County. Lodging establishments collect both sales and lodging tax and are approved to collect occupancy taxes and other taxes that the City and County currently do not collect. The Webster County Visitors Promotion Committee grants revenue from the lodging tax to tourism related entities for marketing and/or improvement projects targeted towards attracting visitors.

² Includes use and motor vehicle tax

Red Cloud Creative District

Our application was submitted a few weeks ago. There has been a bit of support for doing murals with the initial certification grant of \$10,000. While it might make more sense to seek out corporate sponsorship, one thing that is eligible for the initial round of funding is improving the audio visual setup at the Community Center. Something like what the high school has done with its high def screen in the gym comes to mind as a possibility as does a new sound system (or both). As a reminder, if we get through the application process before 2024, there's a strong possibility that we will receive an additional \$250,000. After that, we will be eligible to apply for a \$250K grant each year. Eventually, we should be eligible for funding derived from the state turnback tax that Omaha and larger cities currently enjoy. We may need assistance in advocating that Cities of the 2nd class become eligible for the turnback tax funding when that time arrives.

Recreation Trail

The Nebraska Community Foundation wants a better idea of where the trail might go and a signed agreement between the City of Red Cloud and the Red Cloud Community Fund before it will allow RCCF to establish a dedicated Recreation Trail account for fundraising efforts. Essentially, they need this for IRS related reasons, but it will also demonstrate that the trail will be on public lands and therefore grant eligible. RCCF is not allowed to own physical property and therefore any agreement would have to signify that the City is responsible for maintenance and the land that it owns. However, this stipulation would not prevent RCCF or other interested parties from simply donating money to the City to have maintenance concerns and other issues taken care of. We could enter into a separate Memorandum of Understanding if that's a concern. Stacie Heldt will be at the October meeting to discuss this in more detail and will provide a sample agreement (see attached). Being able to establish a Recreation Trail account will make it much easier to market the project and accept donations online and elsewhere.

Downtown Revitalization & Brick Streets

We are eager to see work progress on both of these fronts. RCHTD is in favor of new, smoother streets and as a group will not feel any animosity towards anyone if the final design is not exactly what we wanted. It is beyond time the 1917 bricks were replaced. The look and feel of Red Cloud is actually being diminished by their condition at this point. But the look and feel of downtown is one of the things that sets Red Cloud apart from similar communities and is one of the things that makes the town most memorable in the minds of visitors and in the memories of alumni, so we hope that the baby does not get thrown out with the bathwater when design decisions are made. We ask everyone to also consider landscaping that incorporates greenspace, flowers, etc to make the community more visually appealing. We can connect you with leaders in Valentine who have grappled with these issues. RCCF has a Brick Streets account that could be utilized to help pay for extending the brickwork to 6th Ave and 2nd Ave.

We are excited to see how much sidewalk work will be part of these plans—one of our motivations for pushing DTR was to get the sidewalks improved in those parts of downtown that extend beyond what NDOT was willing to consider. It'd be great if that work could go all the way out to the ballfields.

September Month of Giving

As of this writing, we've raised \$20,400 for the Red Cloud Community Fund. We will accept donations through Oct. 7th to try and hit our \$25,000 goal. We are raising money for Heritage Tourism Development and the future Recreation Trail but will accept donations for any eligible project, including the Ballfields. You can drop off a check with any RCCF board member (Dennis Hansen, Ashley Armstrong, Adam Vetter, Jarrod McCartney, Miles McDole, Ashley Olson, Stacie Heldt, Danny Bengel, Kim Ely, Jay Yost) or donate online here:

<https://www.nebcommfound.org/give/red-cloud-community-fund/>

E3 Project

Please see the summary in the short report and the attached document below to see our vision plan for the next 6 months.

LB 977

See the short report. We're keeping our fingers crossed!

Kay Cover and Pol-y-gron-da-ha Historical Markers

We're awaiting guidance for next steps with these markers. There should be a press release soon and the content of the markers will be reviewed.

Deb Fischer

Deb Fisher's office is visiting primarily because one of her staffers visited Red Cloud recently and was impressed with the Cather Center and all of the work going downtown. They asked for a downtown tour. We're still piecing that together but will visit the Hotel site, Back Alley Bicycles, On the Brix, Hometown Market, the Corner Nook, and buildings owned by Dennis & Sally Hansen, Amy Springer, and Brad & Andrea Frey.

BRAN

Bike Ride Across Nebraska wants to stay in Red Cloud again in 2023. They plan to stay in town and camp overnight on June 6th and depart on June 7th. We would like to know right away if the City is okay with them using the City park, Community Center, etc. From prior discussions with the school, it is very unlikely that either building could be used.

Newsletter & Social Media

If you want to keep up to date on most things Heritage Tourism, please [subscribe to our newsletter](#) or follow us on social media ([Facebook](#), [Instagram](#)).

Events, etc

- Oct. 7: Hotel Garber Groundbreaking
- Oct. 28: Halloween Parade
- Nov. 22nd: 14th Annual Shopping Extravaganza
- Nov. 5th: Indigenous at RCOH
- Dec. 9th: Paramount at RCOH
- Feb. 10th, 2023: Farmers & Merchants Banquet
- May 26-28, 2023: Alumni Weekend
- June 1-3, 2023: Cather Conference
- July 20-22, 2023: Webster County Fair & Rodeo
- Aug. 4-6, 2023: Street Car Days
- Nov. 18 or 19, 2023: RCCF Community Celebration

This is a partial list. You can find a full listing of events on visitredcloud.com/events