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2024 Area Travel Guide



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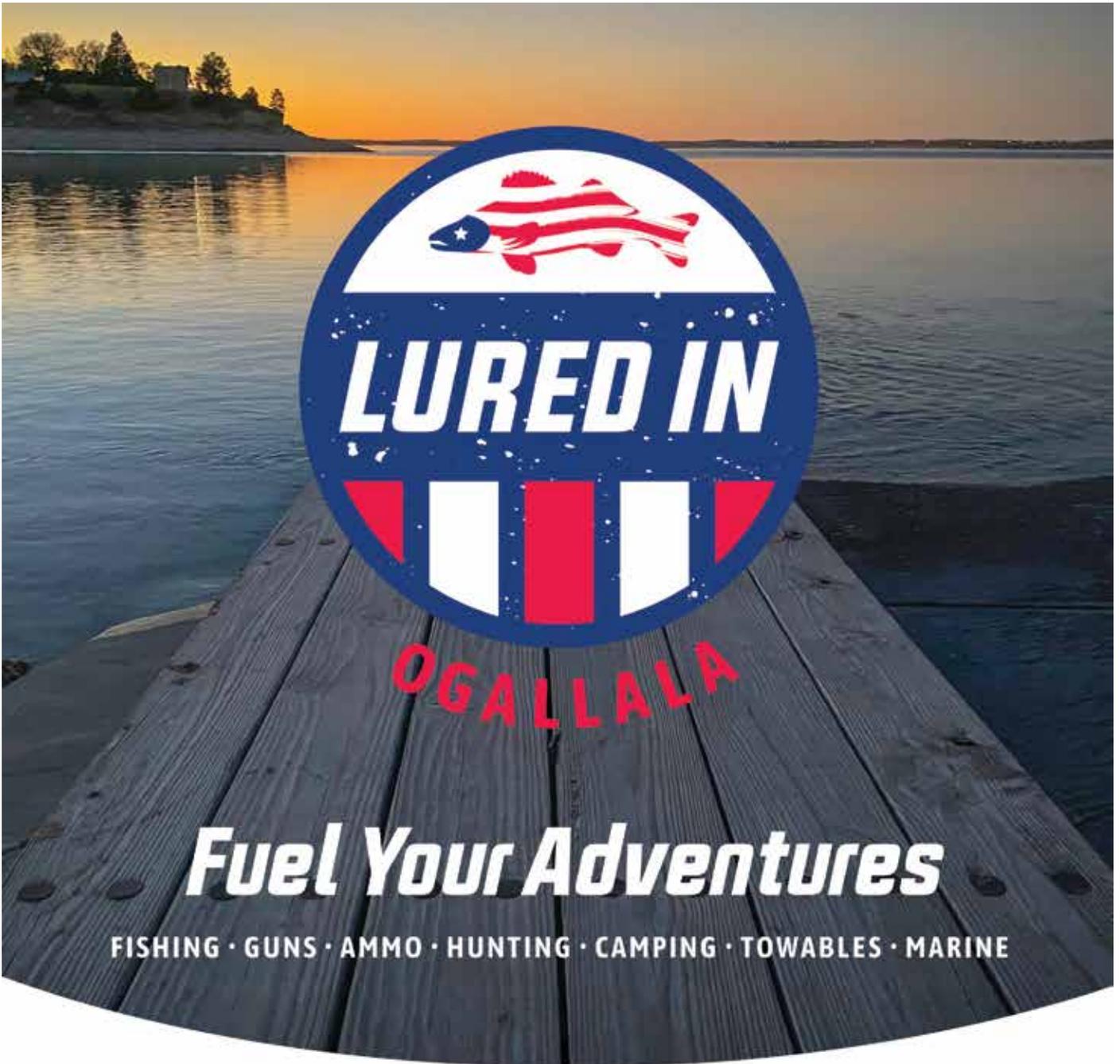
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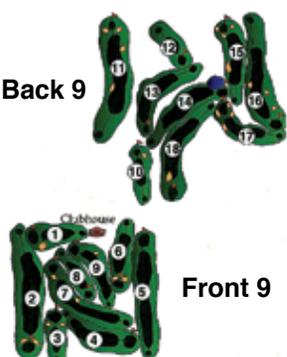
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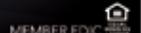
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2024 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

FOR VISITOR INFORMATION, CONTACT 1-800-658-4390

EXPLOREKEITHCOUNTY.COM

JANUARY THROUGH MARCH

Eagle viewing at Lake Ogallala. December through March. Contact Nate Nielsen at 308-284-2332 for more information.

JANUARY

Jan. 20-21: Gun show at the Keith County Fairgrounds. Stefani Thompson at 304-233-2501.

FEBRUARY

Feb. 18-19: Brule Gun Show in the Brule Activity Center. Contact 308-233-2501 or 308-464-0246.

Feb. 25-26: Oregon Trail Home Show at the Keith County Fairgrounds. Adam Peters at 308-289-0151.

MARCH

Crane migration near Lewellen. Contact the Ogallala/Keith County Chamber of Commerce at 308-284-4066.

APRIL

April 20: Season-opening races at Wild West Soap Box Derby. Dave Barrett at 308-289-1464.

MAY

May 11: Catfish Classic, call Chad Vogl at 308-355-2321.

May 31-July 19: Chamber's Sounds on the Square at Rendezvous Square at Ogallala. Music starts at 6 p.m. Fridays May 31, June 14 and 28 and July 5 and 19. Contact the chamber at 308-284-4066.

May 25-26: McConaughy Massacre demolition derby. Wilbur Steinbeck at 308-340-9067.

JUNE

June 1-2: Shut Up & Fish Tournament. Chad Vogl at 308-355-2321.

June 1-2: 19th annual Ogallala Drivers Invitational Golf Tournament. Contact the chamber at 308-284-4066 or sign up online at visitogallala.com.

June 15: 19th annual Terry McCormick Memorial Walleye

Tournament, Rose McCormick at 308-778-7216.

June 15: Junior Fishing Tournament, hosted by Youth Outdoors Nebraska. Shawn Rubek 402-699-3297.

JULY

July 13-14: Hobie Tropical Dreams. Bill McBride at 308-284-2400.

July 27: 35th annual Kites and Castles sand castle building contest and kite flying event. Chamber at 308-284-4066.

July 27-28: Ogallala Round-Up Rodeo. Steve Kraus at 308-289-0285.

July 27-Aug. 4: Keith County Fair. Dave Baltzell at 308-289-2605.

AUGUST

Aug. 3: Brule Day. BJ Van Velson at 308-287-2149.

Aug. 24-25: Hobie Mac Attack Regatta. Bill McBride at 308-284-2400.

Aug. 31- Sept. 2: Paxton Labor Day Celebration.

SEPTEMBER

Sept. 14-15: Ogallala Gun Show, Contact 308-233-2501 or 308-464-0246.

Sept. 19-21: 40th annual Indian Summer Rendezvous, Keith County festival at Ogallala. Chamber at 308-284-4066.

Sept. 28-29: Nebraska Walleye Association tournament. Dave Nadgwick at 402-657-8189.

NOVEMBER

Nov. 16: Ogallala's annual Arts and Craft Show. Chamber 308-284-4066.

DECEMBER

Dec. 5: Christmas Parade of Lights and other Christmas activities. Chamber at 308-284-4066.

ADDITIONS

To add your event to the 2025 Calendar of Events, contact the Keith County Chamber of Commerce at 308-284-4066.

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THINGS TO SEE AND DO

Ash Hollow State Historical Park

Grounds open year-around. Nebraska Game & Parks Park Entry Permit required. Museum open Friday through Sunday from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend, 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. Admission is \$2 for adults and \$1 for children under 12.

Boot Hill

Authentic cowboy cemetery from Ogallala's pioneer days. Located at West 10th & Parkhill Drive (four blocks west of Spruce at West 10th).

Cornhusker Lanes Bowling Alley

East Highway 30 in Ogallala, 16 lanes, Brunswick equipment, open bowling.

Eagle Viewing Center

At Lake Ogallala below Kingsley Dam.

Front Street

Free cowboy museum. Crystal Palace Revue Dance Hall Show (family show – reservations required). Phone 308-284-6000.

Figure Four Traditions

Ranch tours (20 minimum), wagon rides and gift store at the historic Haythorn Ranch 17 miles north of Ogallala.

Golf

Bayside Golf, south side Lake McConaughy, Gate 18, 18-hole course. Men's yardage 6,500. Restaurant and lounge, pro shop, cart rental, driving range, chipping green, patio homes and cabin rentals. Phone: 308-287-4653.

West Wind Golf Club, 18-hole golf course, east on Prospector Road, east of Travel Cen-

ters of America, Men's yardage 6,320. Lounge, pro shop, cart rental, driving range, putting green. 308-284-4358.

Goodall Rec Center, Ogallala

Indoor pool open mid September through mid May. Features a hot tub, infrared sauna, indoor pool, weight training and exercise equipment, and indoor walking track. All-weather outdoor basketball court. Splash pad. Outdoor sand volleyball courts. Located at 505 W. G St.

Kathleen Lute Public Library, Ogallala

Located at 610 W. A St. Fully accredited library with computer and Internet access.

Lake Mac Water Interpretive/Visitor Center

Located south of Kingsley Dam. Features educational look at Platte River water use.

Little Church at Keystone

Free admission. For a tour, phone 308-726-2281 or 308-726-2006.

Mansion on the Hill

1887 residence, West 10th & Spruce. Open Memorial Day through Labor Day. Admission is \$2 for adults and \$1 for children (ages 5-12).

Ole's Big Game Lounge

At Paxton, 200 mounted big game trophies. Nebraska's most famous watering hole.

Outdoor Pool, Ogallala

Open June 1 through Aug. 25. Municipal pool with diving boards and water slide. Special children's wading pool. Located at 307 W. Seventh St.

Parks and Diamonds

Western Diamonds Sports Complex is a lighted complex consisting of four softball and baseball fields and two AYSO regulation soccer fields.

A 1.8-mile hiking and biking trail runs through the complex and playground equipment is available. WDSC hosts several youth baseball and softball tournaments each year.

The American Legion Field is a lighted complex with a concession stand and bleacher seating. There are four lighted tennis courts at Glines/Nye Park, West 10th and B streets.

The city parks have numerous picnic shelters. Four parks have playground equipment. Williams Park, located in north Ogallala, has a disc golf course.

Tri-Trails Historic Park includes markers from historic cattle trails, including the Great Western, Chisholm and Oregon, and also marks the Pony Express Trail.

Petrified Wood & Art Gallery

Located at 418 E. First St. A museum of natural history specializing in ancient woods and fossils collected by Howard and Harvey Kenfield. Gift shop.

Prairie Theatre

202 North Spruce St., (308) 284-2728. Vintage 1930s-style theater showing movies on two screens.

Wild West Soap Box Derby

One of only 24 tracks in the nation, the Wild West Soap Box Derby track at Ogallala hosts a national championship qualifier and local rally races in the spring and summer. Located near Western Diamonds Sports Complex, the lighted track hosts between three and four weekend racing dates each year.



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French visitors return after 50-plus years

Frenchmen Michel Bousard and Dominique Lefeuve visited Ogallala in June 2023, retracing the steps they took more than 50 years earlier as young men while exploring the United States.

Bousard, 75, and Lefeuve, 76, were quite the hit the last time they visited Ogallala, staying on for two weeks at Front Street. The photo on the front cover is them on stage during the Crystal Palace Review show in June 2023.

The pair initially landing at Ogallala was probably an incredible accident when the two French students set out to see American, hitchhiking from New York to San Francisco.

Both business students at the time, the two “found” Ogallala through a ride with a truck driver, who stopped at Front Street for food. The two were introduced during the Crystal Palace Revue, liked the hospitality and decided to stay.

Bousard said his parents, who were not thrilled with his decision to go on a walk-about, lent him the money for the flight to visit the U.S. on that first trip.

The pair arrived at New York City and hitched rides all the way to San Francisco before departing back to France. They worked for money along the way and when they returned to France, they were able to pay his parents back the money for the initial flight.

Lefeuve said it was like a dream for the Frenchmen to visit the U.S.

“We envy the way of life and it was such a pleasure being at Ogallala,” he said.

The reception they received and the hospitality shown to the total strangers on their first trip here were key in them returning to Ogallala.

During their repeat trip to Ogallala last summer,

they were made part of the longest-running summer stock show in Nebraska.

The French pair took it well as the Front Street cast called the visitors to the stage and performed “Big Spender,” as they do with every show.

Many in the cast knew the two visitors were from France, but probably didn’t know that they had visited the same spot more than 50 years earlier, long before anyone performing on the stage was even born.

“We were so impressed by the way we were received the first time, we know we had to come back,” Bousard said. “It’s the reason we had to visit again.”

Bousard said they were received as well this time as they were more than 50 years ago.

“The past time was only confirmed again by the return visit,” Bousard said.



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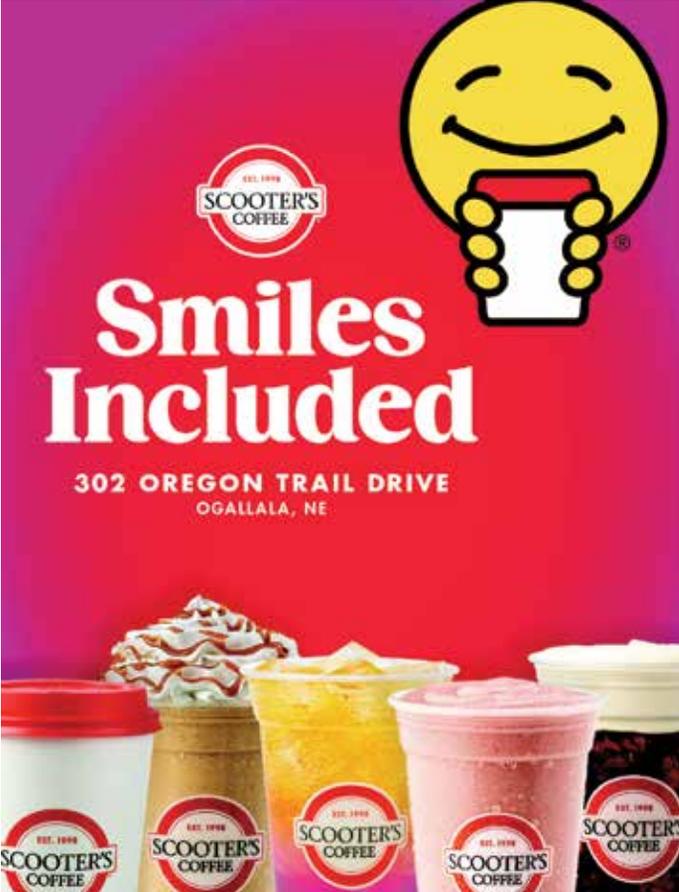
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FOURTH OF JULY FIREWORKS SHOW

The Ogallala Fireworks Show, annually put on by the Keith County Chamber of Commerce and the city of Ogallala, is the best July 4 fireworks show in western Nebraska. Choreographed to music, the show includes the electronic firing of more than 2,000 shells and costs about \$25,000. Annually, the fireworks display is set off at 9:30 p.m. July 4 near Western Diamonds Sports Complex. Those planning to view the display are asked to arrive one hour before the show.



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Nebraska's 'Cowboy Capital'

Named for the Oglala band of Dakota Sioux and located on the Union Pacific Railroad, Ogallala was a lusty cowtown of the Old West.

Chief gateway to the northern plains – that was Ogallala from 1875 to 1888.

During this decade Texas drovers delivered their trail herds of longhorn cattle by the thousands.

Cattlemen met in Ogallala's hotel and saloons with Texas cattle kings and haggled about prices to be paid for the longhorns, which were used to stock the northern plains in Nebraska, Colorado, Wyoming, the Dakotas and Montana.

Cattle also were shipped east on the Union Pacific. Indian agencies and mining camps also provided markets for Ogallala beef.

During summer months, business boomed. Saloonkeeper, storekeeper and hotelkeeper all shared in the prosperity.

At least 10 or 12 herds, each of 2,500 head, could usually be located south of the town, a bawling mass carpeting the plains, while waiting for their new owners. The presence of a hundred or more trail hands taxed the facilities of Ogallala.

Many cowboys spent their nights napping on the "soft side" of a walnut board.

The saloons carried such colorful names

as "Cowboys Rest" and "Crystal Palace." The Ogallala House became the center of social activities for the townspeople and the big cattlemen.

Activity at Ogallala continued at a fever pitch until the end of August. By then, the drives for the season were ending and the drovers who had brought the herds up the trail were gradually drifting to their native Texas.

Business revived briefly during the fall months in October, when the cattlemen of the area began to bring their steers in off the grass for shipment east.

By November, however, Ogallala settled back in quiet and peaceful repose.

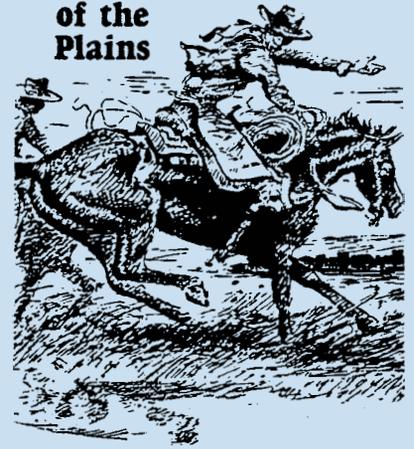
The floaters, gamblers, tradespeople and dancehall hostesses, who made up a large portion of Ogallala's mobile population, drifted off to Omaha or Cheyenne to spend the winter. Only the hotel, one supply store and a single saloon remained open for the winter.

From 1879 to 1884, 100,000 to 125,000 cattle each year were trailed to Ogallala.

By 1884, the trail driving days were virtually ended and the Old West and Ogallala turned to other ways of life. But cattle remain the area's No. 1 industry.

(The word *Oglala* means to "scatter one's own.")

Ogallala, The Gomorrah of the Plains

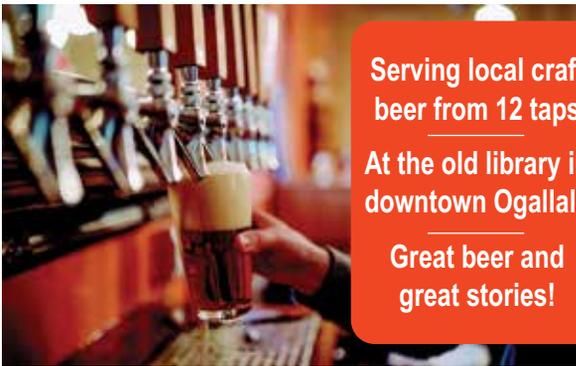


"Gomorrah of the cattle trail."

That's how trail driver Andy Adams described early Ogallala. In his book, "Log of a Cowboy," Adams, who first came up the trail in 1875, said:

"We finally scaled the last divide and there below in the valley of the South Platte, nestled Ogallala, the Gomorrah of the cattle trail. From amongst its half hundred buildings, no church spire pointed upward, but instead three-fourths of its business houses were dance halls, gambling houses and saloons."

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Sounds on the Square



The Keith County Chamber of Commerce sponsors outdoor music concerts on Fridays in the summer in Rendezvous Square, located just south of the chamber. This year's concerts begin May 31 and will be held June 14 and 28, and July 5 and 19. The concerts begin at 6 p.m. Those attending are asked to bring their lawn chairs. Beverages are available.



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Boot Hill marks early western history

Even Ogallala folks' tolerance had a limit, so after three days of drinking and shooting up the town, they sent Sheriff "Buffalo Joe" Hughes in pursuit of rioting Texas cowhands.

His shotgun felled one going out the barroom door. Another died three days later of a gutfull of shot. A third joined his compadres on Boot Hill later in the summer from wounds suffered that night.



A bronze horse and rider, made by Eagle Bronze Foundry of Wyoming, includes incredible detail.

Boot Hill was Ogallala's only official burying site during the "end of the trail" decade from 1874 through 1884.

A hundred or more people were rolled in canvas and dropped into shallow graves during that time, a remarkable death rate for a settlement with only about 130 permanent residents at that time.

In May 1867, the first bodies were buried on the hill. They were three Union Pacific tracklayers killed in an Indian raid a mile east of what is now Spruce Street.

Robert Webster, a drover, was shot to death August 1875, while bathing in the North Platte River. Naked and unarmed, he was gunned down by a fellow cowhand traveling under the name of Woolsey, the final chapter in what began as a practical joke on their Negro camp cook.

A sage said, "The West was hell on women and horses." Boot Hill records agree – though no horse burials were recorded there.

Sarah Miller, the young wife of a local rancher, was buried with her newborn

baby. When her body was exhumed 30 years later for reburial in the "new" cemetery, west of town, it had petrified, one of the gravediggers reported.

However, that gravedigger also called her "Lillie," the name of Bernard Miller's second wife who left town with her husband in good health when the open range era began to shut down.

Other women and children, too, were buried "on the hill," including Cynthia McCey died of consumption, 4-year-old Ida Alice Aufdengarten, who died of snakebite; Mary McMurdo Bleasdale, who died in childbirth; Sheriff Joe Hughes' only girl child, who was crushed by a falling timber; and teenager Gertrude Fisher, who died in the typhoid epidemic of 1884.

The county commissioners paid \$5 to bury one of Dull Knife's braves, who had died traveling north during the Cheyenne Outbreak of 1878-79.

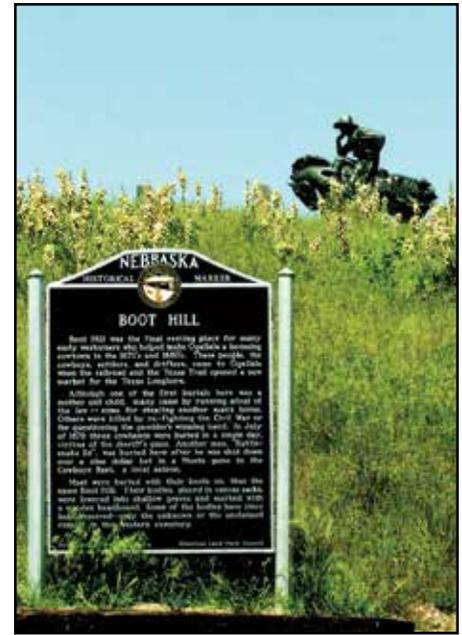
Joseph Hayden won \$100,000 gambling with Texas cattle barons one night and tried to escape east on the 2 a.m. train with a suitcase of gold coins. William Bland and a gang of cowboys took him off the train at Alkali (now Paxton) and somehow, Hayden was shot three times trying to escape.

Pedro, "other name unknown," was shot near Roscoe by a Cheyenne County posse that had trailed him driving a herd of stolen horses.

Bill Campbell, who had achieved almost mythical fame for his exploits on the trail, got drunk in Ogallala one day and accused one of the Moy brothers of being a "Yankee bean eater."

The Texan, once-removed from Georgia, took exception to the slur and later killed Campbell in a duel across the dance floor in the Cowboys Rest Saloon.

A 14-year-old cowboy on his first trip up the trail woke up one morning behind the Crystal Palace Saloon, Ogallala's other



Boot Hill Cemetery, one of Ogallala's most-visited tourist attractions, was the town's only official burying ground during "the end of the trail" decade from 1874-1884. In 2007, an old concrete statue was replaced with a bronze horse and rider. The old concrete statue was refurbished and placed along Highway 30 at the Ogallala Livestock Auction Market near the west end of the city of Ogallala.

establishment, lying between "two fellows with their heads bashed in."

"Rattlesnake Ed" Worley was killed in 1884 by Lank Keyes in a fight over a \$9 monte bet. The following year, Lank's brother, John, killed a man in a barroom battle.

Some of the bodies buried at Ogallala's Boot Hill Cemetery have never been identified.



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New library offers lifelong learning space

Ogallala's new Kathleen Lute Public Library opened late in 2020.

The new library, located at 610 W. A St., just down the street from the old library, is a project that has been decades in the making.

By early 2019, after years of planning and preparation, backers had raised more than \$2 million for the project, thanks to large donations from charitable organizations and local governments, as well as contributions from the community, and ground was broken March 25, 2019.

The one-level, 12,992-square-foot facility is more than twice the size of the old Goodall Library and entirely handicapped accessible, with plenty of off-street parking on its own lot.

The main floor is divided into separate sections for adult and young adult material, and there is a dedicated children's area and computer lab.



THE KATHLEEN LUTE PUBLIC LIBRARY.

A dedicated adult computer lab has 10 stations available for public use, and free WiFi is also available throughout the grounds for patrons to access the Internet on their personal devices.

A genealogy area provides resources to research the rich history of area families and founders.

More than just a library, the new space features a large, dividable conference room that accommodates 100 guests.

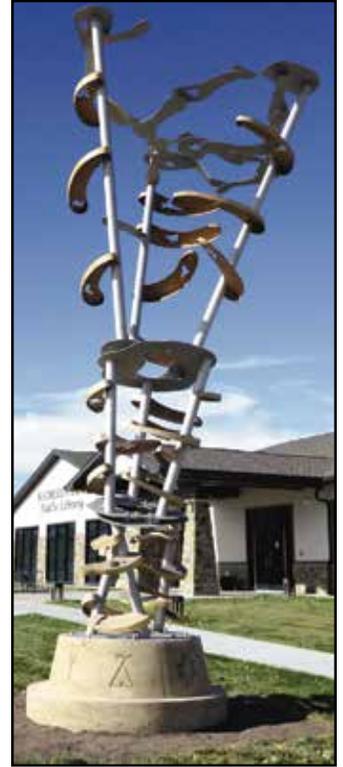
The conference room is avail-

able for rent.

There's a dedicated reading and leisure area and "maker spaces" throughout the facility to inspire creativity in guests of all ages.

Late in 2023, the library received a commissioned piece of art, "Prairie Dust Devil," that will be dedicated sometime this year.

The public is invited to the library and visitors to the area are welcome to see the new space that is dedicated to lifelong learning.



A NEW PIECE OF ART AT THE LIBRARY.

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Gallery remains Ogallala's hidden gem

Although Ogallala's Petrified Wood Gallery retains its title as Ogallala's hidden gem, the local gallery also remains as one Keith County's most visited tourist attractions.

Located at 418 E. First St., the family-friendly gallery is a museum of natural history specializing in ancient woods and other art exhibits.

A relatively new space offers an area for artists to give lessons and for local and traveling art showings. It is also available for private receptions and other functions.

Gallery items have been collected since 1952 and gifted to the community by twin artists-craftsmen Harvey and Howard Kenfield.

A gallery highlight is the prize-winning collection of three-dimensional petrified wood pictures of ghost towns, houses and barns reminiscent of the Great Depression era.

The scenes are created by



DONATES TROPHY – Filmmaker Hank Bagwell (right) recently donated the trophy he won for his film on gallery founders Harvey and Howard Kenfield. Accepting the award is Friends of the Gallery Chairman Rod Ruzanic.

taking small pieces of thin, shale-like petrified wood and hand-gluing them to canvas backgrounds.

Also popular with gallery visitors are pictures of birds

made with naturally colored pieces of petrified wood.

There are also pieces of petrified wood transformed into pine cones, flowers, insects, butterflies, toadstools and even

mice and a piece of cheese.

Visitors also will find a unique collection of lapidary art, including beautifully polished rounds of wood, limbs, agates, spheres and carvings artistically displayed.

There also are fossil cones and fossilized leaf imprints, as well as Native American artifacts, which were found within a 25-mile radius of Ogallala, mostly in the Lake McConaughy area.

It is an amazing collection of natural history, rivaling any in much larger cities.

The collection has won prizes at gem and mineral shows throughout the nation. During one event at St. Louis, Mo., the exhibit won both top awards, the first time in the history of the show that both awards went to the same exhibit.

Gallery visitors also will find a unique gift shop, which helps support operations.

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NEW MURALS – Ogallala has several new murals and all help beautify the community. Done by artists over the past several summers, one welcomes visitors to Ogallala at the bottom of the overpass entrance and another is located just

one block to the west. Murals have been done at Brule and more murals are being contemplated in other county villages. The murals are being added to the community through Keith County Area Development's First Impressions group.



Ogallala and Lake McConaughy's newest
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Rec Center offers everything for fitness

The Goodall Recreation Center, located at 505 E. G St., at Ogallala, offers a facility for those who train or want to stay in shape.

The community undertook two fundraising projects that have transformed the facility into one that offers almost everything for the fitness conscious.

The most recent is a splashpad and playground, while another recent addition involved an outdoor basketball court named in honor of former Ogallala High School coach the late Mark Etzelmiller.

The community raised more than \$400,000 for the splashpad and playground and nearly \$36,000 to improve the concrete court to a new all-weather surface with glass-backboard basketball goals. Both of the new additions are located east of the center.

The center, which has served the community since 1973, also features a recent expansion and the addition of equipment.

The center's Expansion Committee was able to raise more than \$300,000 and receive a \$300,000 matching commitment from the city of Ogallala, paving the way for the center to about double its existing square footage.

In addition to the steel building, which was adjoined to the center on the east side, the project included drainage and ventila-



THE RECREATION CENTER HAS A LARGE INDOOR SWIMMING POOL.

tion work, restrooms, an indoor walking track and an area for aerobics classes.

The area is a welcome addition to a facility that features an indoor pool (open mid September through mid May), infrared sauna, hot tub, weight training and exercise equipment facilities, and shower areas. The indoor pool is closed when Ogallala opens its outdoor facility at 307 W. Seventh St.

The center has nearly 50 exercise machines.

The Goodall Recreation Center is open from 5:30 a.m. until 6:30 p.m. Monday and Wednesday, 5:30 a.m. until 8 p.m. Tuesday and Thursday, 5:30 a.m. until 4 p.m.

Friday. On Saturday and Sunday, the center is open from noon until 5 p.m., with the pool open only to adults from noon to 1 p.m. From 1 until 5 p.m., the pool is open to all on Saturday and Sunday. Activity shifts to the outdoor pool when it opens in the summer.

Keyless entry is available for the weight and exercise equipment room, and the walking track.

Daily rates for both adults and youth are no more than \$3. An annual single, adult membership is \$140 and senior citizen rates are \$103 annually.

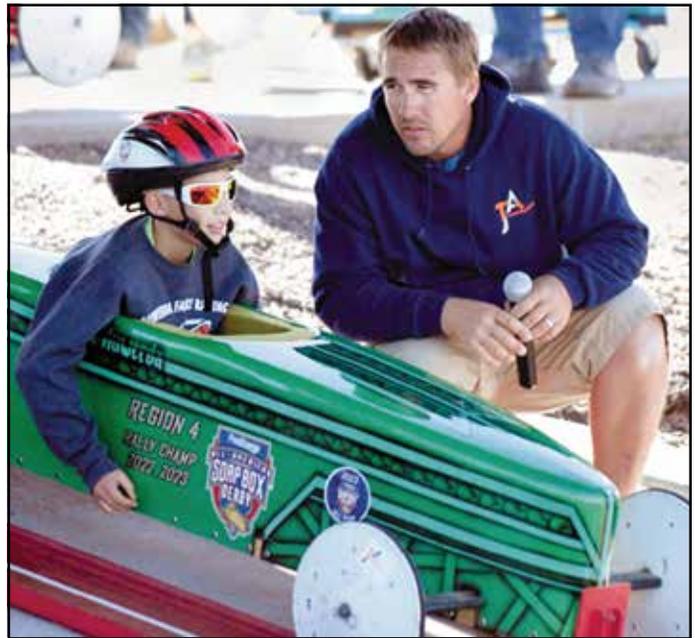
Both those include keyless entry. The phone number is (308) 284-8735.



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Ogallala, NE



MANSION ON THE HILL – Located at Spruce and 10th streets, Ogallala’s 1887 Mansion on the Hill, which is made from bricks kilned at Ogallala, is open during the summer as a period house museum. Hours are from 9 a.m. through 4 p.m. Tuesdays through Saturdays and from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sundays. The facility also is available for rent and those interested may contact the Keith County Historical Society. For more information, contact the Mansion on the Hill at 308-284-0821. If no one answers, leave a message on the machine.

SOAP BOX DERBY TRACK – Ogallala is the site of a soap box derby track, one of just more than two dozen in the United States. The track, which is lighted for night racing, hosts several races each year, one of which is a qualifier for the All-American Soap Box Derby national championships, held annually at Akron, Ohio. Local and out-of-state racers compete each year in stock, super stock, master and super kids divisions. The first race event for 2024 is scheduled for April 20. For more information, contact local soap box derby official Dave Barrett at 308-289-1464.

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Eagle Canyon Hideaway	308-287-2673
Kingsley Dam Resort	308-284-2775
Marina Landing	308-355-3535
North Shore Lodge	308-355-2222
Otter Creek Lodge	308-355-2372
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Arthur Bay RV Park & Storage	720-581-1018
Admiral's Cove	308-355-2102
Big Mac Campground	308-355-5555
Cedar Vue	402-471-1414
JC Cedarview	308-355-2793
Lake Ogallala	402-471-1414
North Shore Lodge	308-355-2222
The Lodge - RV Park, Paxton	308-239-4510
Lone Eagle	402-471-1414
McGreer's Campground (Big Springs)	308-289-4137
Ogallala/I80 KOA Journey	308-284-1300

Oregon Trail Trading Post	308-778-5879
Otter Creek Lodge	308-355-2372
Riverside Campground (Brule)	308-287-2474
South Platte Cabins & Kennels	308-284-2266
Tri Trails KOA	308-284-2415
Van's Lakeview Fishing Camp	308-284-4965

Motels - Big Springs

Motel 6	308-889-3671
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Motels - Lewellen

Lewellen Lodge	308-672-0690
Nancy B's Backyard Bunkhouse	308-778-5408

Motels - Downtown Ogallala

Lazy K	308-284-4056
Oregon Trail	308-284-3705

I-80 Motels - Ogallala

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Best Western Plus	308-289-7011
Days Inn	308-284-6365
Holiday Inn Express & Suites	308-284-6080
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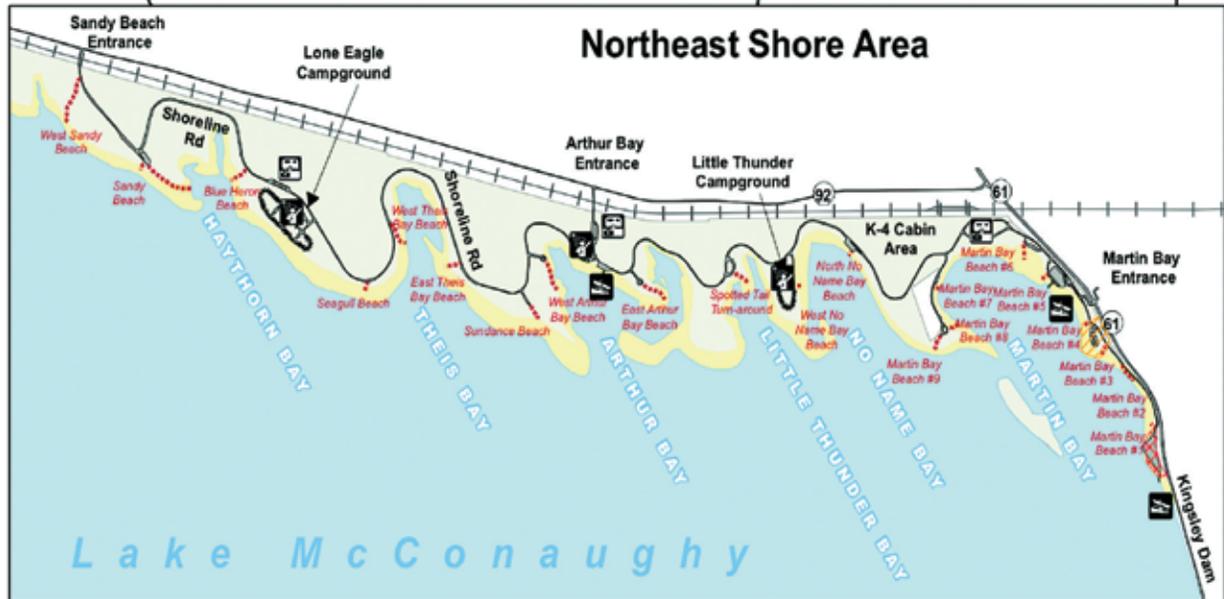
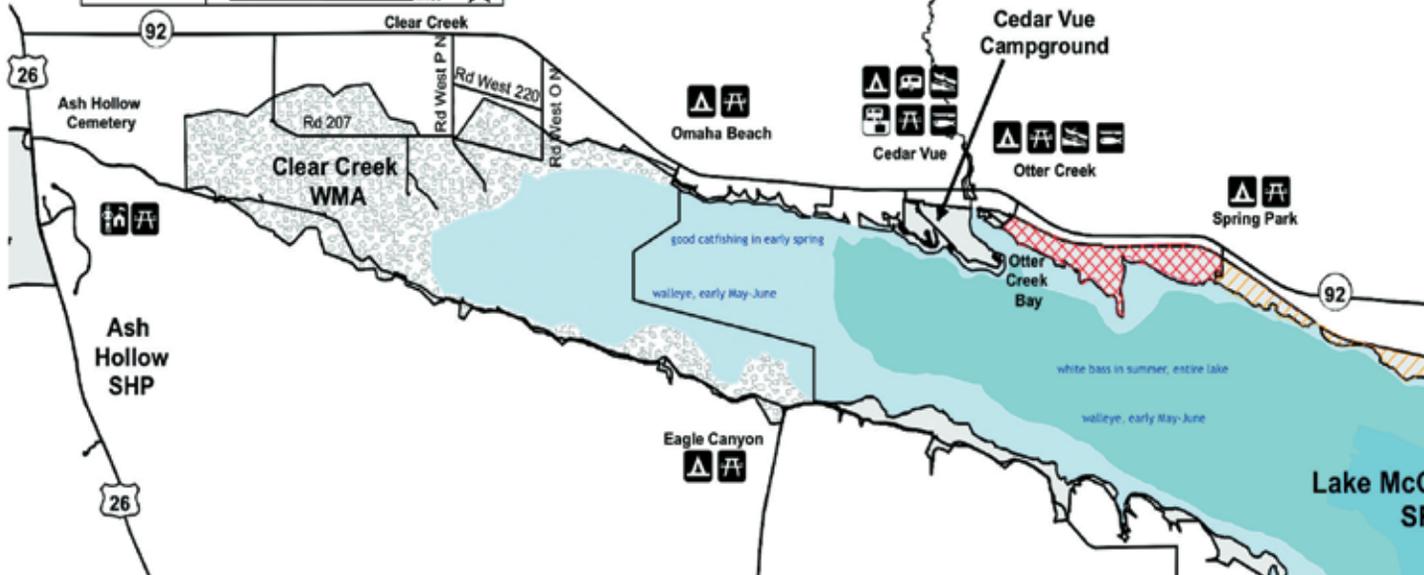
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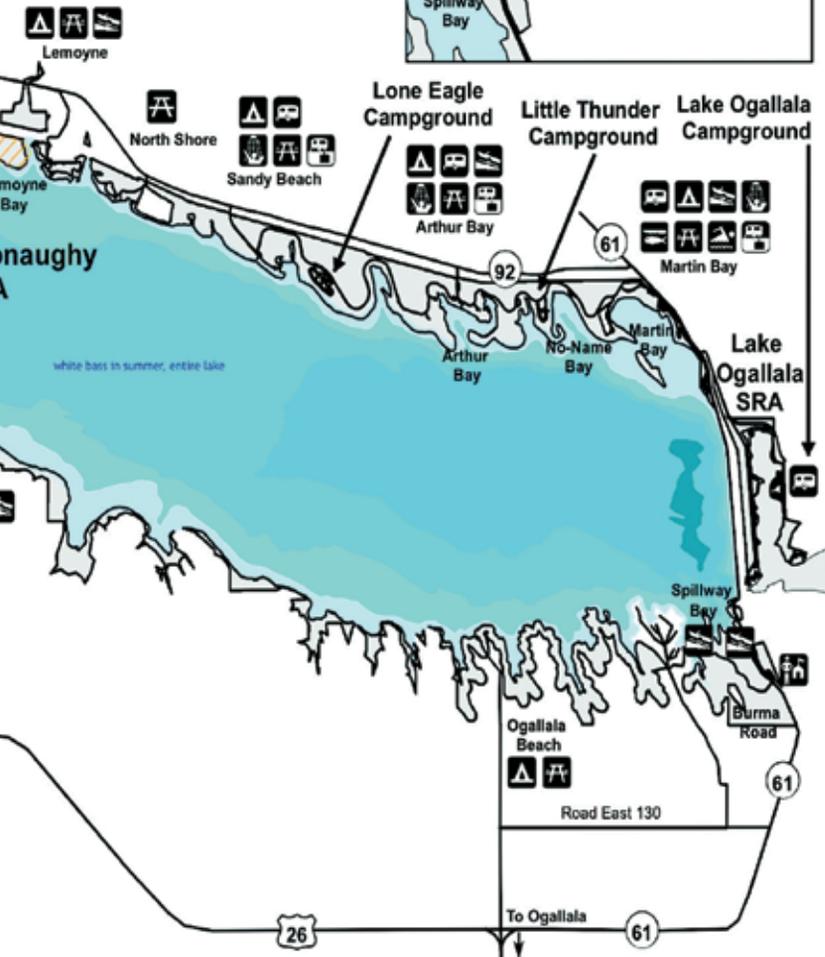
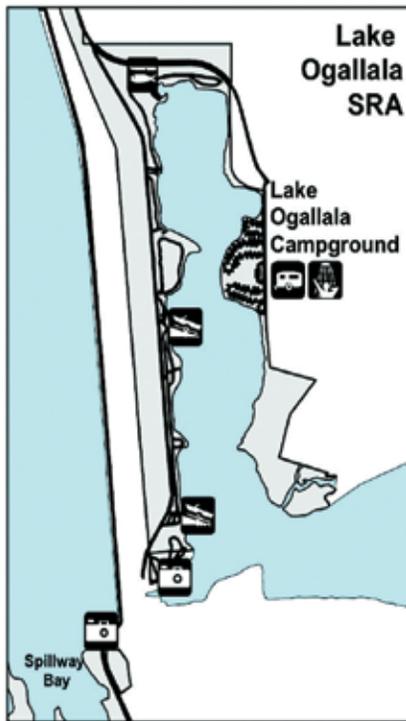
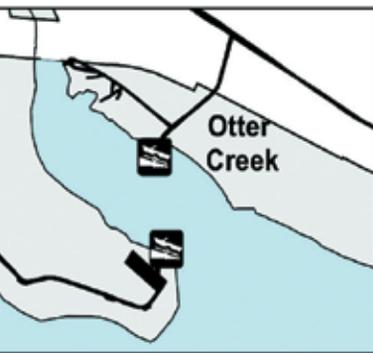
Lake McConaughy

NEBRASKA
- GAME PARKS -

Lake McConaughy Depth (Feet) at full pool	Key
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31-70	Primitive Camping
71-100	Picnic Areas
101-140	Boat Ramps
141+	Shower/Latrine
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	Day Use Zone
	Electrical Campgrounds
	Dump Station
	Swimming Beach
	Fish Cleaning Station
	Viewing Area



Recreation Area



CLEAN Remove all plants, mud, and debris from boat and equipment.
DRAIN Drain all water from your boat, ballast, bilge, livewell, motor, bait bucket.
DRY Disinfect and dry all equipment for 3 days before entering a new waterbody.



For more information, contact the Nebraska Invasive Species Project
<http://snr.unl.edu/invasives> or 402-472-3133

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VISITORS, PLEASE NOTE!
 No three- or four-wheeled ATVs,
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 are allowed in the recreation area.
 A current Nebraska park entry
 permit is required on all vehicles
 entering the recreation area.
 Camping fees are charged
 at all areas.

**NO ALCOHOL OR FIREWORKS
 ARE ALLOWED AT THE
 LAKE McCONAUGHY
 STATE RECREATION AREA**



VISITOR CENTER – Opened in 2001, the \$2 million, 9,000-square-foot Lake McConaughy Visitor/Water Interpretive Center serves the area, its citizens and visitors. In addition to serving as lake headquarters for the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission and Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District, the center includes aquariums, a 50-seat theater

and interpretive displays, explaining the role of water in Nebraska’s past, present and future. The center, located south of Kingsley Dam, is open year-round, and often is the first place newcomers visit as they approach Lake McConaughy, obtaining the necessary permits and information needed to enjoy one of the state’s finest outdoor, recreational areas.

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McConaughy is year-round playground

Can you name Nebraska's biggest playground? Or one of Nebraska's top outdoor vacation destinations? Nebraska's No. 1 site for eagle viewing? Or the site of Nebraska's largest hydroelectric plant?

The answer: Lake McConaughy and Kingsley Dam.

With 35,000 surface acres and 105 miles of shoreline, it is the state's biggest playground and offers year-round fun.

At full storage, McConaughy is 20 miles long, 4 miles wide and 142 feet deep at the dam.

With its cool, clear-blue waters, fishing is the lake's primary drawing card but, because of its white sandy beaches, Lake Mac also is noted for its sailing, camping, windsurfing, scuba diving, water skiing and picnicking.

But it also has year-round activities such as hunting, ice-boating, ice skating and backpacking.

Kingsley Dam, which impounds the North Platte River for irrigation and power generation, was completed in 1941.

The dam is 3-1/2 miles long and 162 feet high. It is 1,100 feet thick at the base.

Construction started on Kingsley Dam in 1936 and was built at a cost of \$43.5 million.

The 50-megawatt Kingsley Dam hydro-



TYPICAL WEEKEND – A typical weekend sight on the beaches of Lake McConaughy, full of campers enjoying the water and white sandy beaches.

electric plant, the state's largest, was completed in 1984 at a cost of \$49 million.

The hydroelectric plant is owned by Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District and was financed by the Nebraska Public Power District, which purchases the power generated by the plant.

At Lake Ogallala, just below Kingsley Dam, is Nebraska's premiere eagle-viewing facility.

The Central Nebraska Public Power & Irrigation District operates a heated eagle-viewing observation facility at Lake Ogallala.

The facility is open from early January to about mid-March, depending on weather conditions.

Special group tours are offered by calling 308-284-2332.

Nearby attractions include Ash Hollow State Historical Park near Lewellen, and Crescent Lake National Wildlife Refuge north of Oshkosh.

Clear Creek Waterfowl Management Area at the west end of McConaughy attracts Canada geese, which can be hunted on the controlled shooting area and much of the lake.



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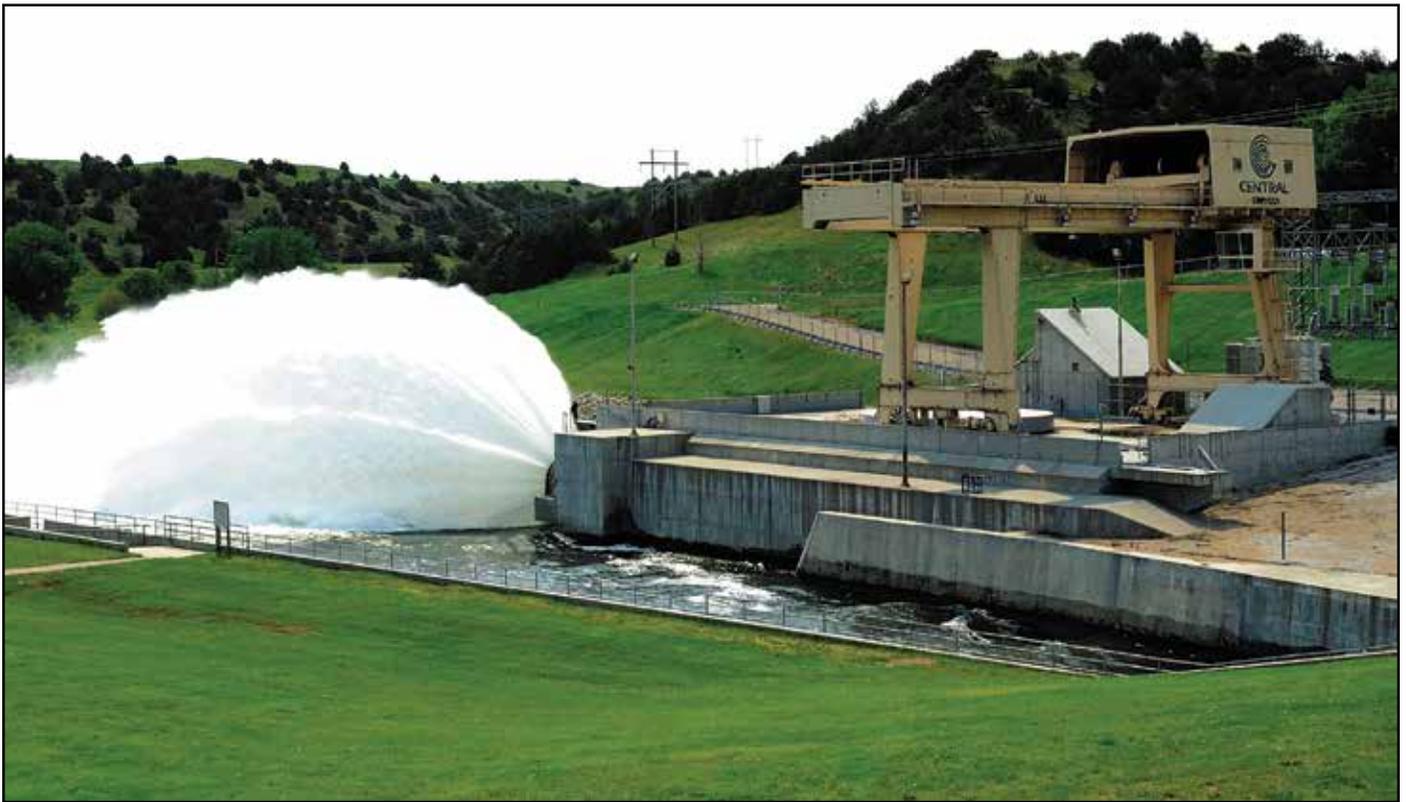


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HYDRO – Completed in 1984 at a cost of \$49 million, the Kingsley Hydroelectric Plant is Nebraska’s largest hydroplant. Owned and operated by Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District, the plant has produced an annual average of 76.4 million kilowatt-hours of electricity, all of which is sold

at wholesale to the Nebraska Public Power District. In addition to generating electricity, water released from Kingsley Dam is used to irrigate 222,000 acres in the Platte River Valley. The system is served by canals and provides groundwater recharge to another 310,300 acres irrigated by wells.

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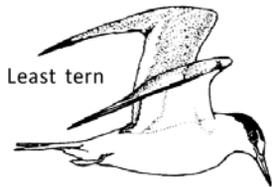
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EAGLE VIEWING CENTER

The Eagle Viewing Center is open from January to March below the Kingsley Hydroplant at Lake Ogallala. Bald eagles congregate near Lake Ogallala during the winter months to feed on fish. The Lake McConaughy area provides habitat for hundreds of species of birds.



Least tern

Sharing the Shoreline



Piping plover

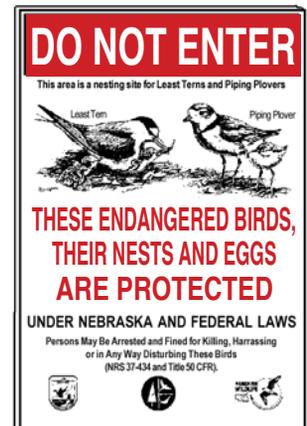
The Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District (owner and operator of Kingsley Dam, Lake McConaughy and Kingsley Hydroplant) hopes you enjoy your visit to Lake McConaughy, but remember, you're sharing the shoreline with others. Please be courteous to others who are enjoying the lake's many opportunities for recreation.

You may also notice other visitors: endangered **least terns** and threatened **piping plovers** that often build their nests on the beaches. If you encounter these birds or their nests (shallow scrapes in the sand), or if you see signs indicating their presence, please avoid the area. Help ensure these birds' future by

"Sharing the Shoreline."



CENTRAL
Nebraska Public Power
and Irrigation District



Lake Mac area is state's birding hot spot

If Nebraska is "Grand Central Station" for birds, then Keith and Garden counties are the turnstile.

The passage of cranes is Nebraska's best-known bird phenomenon, but the central Platte Valley is not the state's birding hot spot.

That honor goes to the area around Lake McConaughy in Keith and Garden counties, according to Paul Johnsgard, professor emeritus of life sciences at the University of Nebraska.

His colleagues have identified 365 species of birds in Keith and Garden counties and 112 breeding species — what Johnsgard called a "cornucopia of birds."

"It's the best place in the state and the third-best in the country to go birding," Johnsgard said. "It has the third largest local list for any locality in the entire United States.

"The area around Cedar



A BURROWING OWL IN THE BRUSH.

Point Biological Station (below Kingsley Dam)...is one of the richest ornithological attractions in the Great Plains, with a species list that is unmatched by any area north of Texas," Johnsgard said.

Lake Ogallala also ranks No.

1 in the state for viewing of bald eagles.

When Lake McConaughy and Lake Ogallala freeze over, eagles gather to feed below the Kingsley hydroplant.

An indoor, heated eagle-viewing facility, built by the

Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District on the shore of Lake Ogallala, is open from early January until March.

Group visits to the center can be arranged by calling (308) 284-2332.

The west end of Lake McConaughy also is a favorite stopover for sandhill cranes.

Two threatened species, the least tern and piping plover, can be watched from just a few feet away at special areas at the Martin Bay parking lot on the north end of Kingsley Dam.

Christmas bird counts, held annually for years, regularly place the number of bird species at Lake McConaughy at 100 or more.

Just west of Lake McConaughy, Garden County and, specifically, Oshkosh has long carried the title of Nebraska Goose Capital, with some of the finest goose hunting in the United States.

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Certain rules apply to those wanting to be on the water

Nebraska Game and Parks Commission officials remind visitors to observe existing laws so everyone remains safe on the water at Lake McConaughy.

All boaters must display an aquatic invasive species decal. Those decals are available in the Lake Mac Visitor Center or at www.outdoornebraska.org.

Boaters should take care to avoid transporting aquatic nuisance species, such as zebra mussels, by making sure to clean, drain and dry their boats before launching at Lake McConaughy or any other waterway.

Those boating on Nebraska's largest reservoir should always keep an eye on the weather and head for shore early when storms approach.



Paddlesports enthusiasts should remember that they are required to carry and use life jackets. Boating safety gear and preparation is a must. Life jackets are required on every type of vessel and people of certain ages are required to wear life jackets.

Water enthusiasts must ensure their boats have all other necessary safety gear before hitting the water.

Nebraska law requires any person born after Dec. 31, 1985, to complete a boater safety course and have proof of completion with them in order to operate any motorboat, including personal watercraft.

Nebraska's boater safety course is recognized in all other states and those from out of state will meet the state's requirement provided their course is NASBLA-approved.

Various classroom courses and test-out option courses are offered throughout the state.

For a complete listing, visit www.boat safenebraska.org or contact the Lake McConaughy Visitor Center at (308) 284-8800. Those living out of state are asked to contact their state's boating authority.

Alcohol consumption is illegal at Lake McConaughy and should be avoided while boating or participating in any water recreation.

Banner Health[®] Ogallala Community Hospital

Ogallala Community Hospital and Banner Medical Clinic combine tradition and technology to provide excellent patient care. Founded in 1952, our facility is a community-owned, 18-bed critical access hospital with attached medical and specialty clinics. Banner Health has leased the facility for over 30 years is also one of the county's largest employers.

Ogallala Community Hospital is one of the very few Critical Access Hospitals in Nebraska to have received The Joint Commission accreditation. This accreditation is a high honor of ensuring safe patient care and best practices. The hospital has a Level 4 Trauma certification with certified Emergency Registered Nurses.

The Specialty Clinic was a \$2 million gift from Banner Health System in 2014. This clinic houses a number of visiting specialists to provide safe and convenient care right here in our community.

Clinic:

Monday to Wednesday

7:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Thursday and Friday

7:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Saturday Walk-in Clinic:

8:00 a.m. - Noon.

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Camping reservations needed

To create a safer, family-friendly environment, all camping at Lake McConaughy and Lake Ogallala State Recreation areas will continue to be by advance reservation only during peak season, May 20 to Sept. 10, annually.

Campers will need a reservation to stay at either SRA during the peak season. This includes all campgrounds and beach camping areas. All overnight visitors should book a campsite on the reservation system before leaving home.

The reservation system allows for campground reservations up to 180 days in advance and beach camping reservations 30 days in advance of a scheduled stay.

Reservations can be made online, on the mobile app ReserveAmerica Camping, or by phone at 308-284-8800 between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. daily.

Same-day reservations may be made



THE MARTIN BAY ENTRANCE.

online or by phone until 5 p.m. MT, if sites remain available.

Once capacities are reached, no additional overnight camping will be allowed. For alternative lodging options, including private campgrounds, hotels or cabins, all alternatives are listed in the this Lake McConaughy Visitors Guide, or visit www.ILoveLakeMac.com.

Campers must arrive and check in with

park staff, in-person, in the Visitor Center or at a staffed entrance booth between 2 p.m. and 9 p.m. MT.

Registered campers will receive an email with more details regarding their reservation prior to arrival.

Day-use activities are not limited and do not require a reservation. Vehicles will be allowed on beaches where the Game and Parks Commission has a managed access point.

During the off-season, through May 17, and after Sept. 9, all overnight camping on designated camping beaches and in campgrounds will be available on a first-come, first-served basis.

Each vehicle entering the park needs a park entry permit. Those permits may be purchased online or at the park.

For more information, visit Outdoornebraska.gov/lakemcconaughey.

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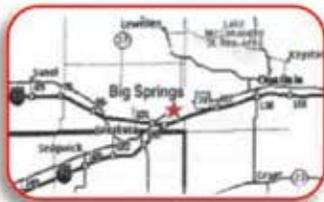
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† **MARTIN BAY COMMUNITY CHURCH**, 1.5 miles north of Lake McConaughy on Highway 61. Pastor Cody McBride. Phone 726-1234.

† **NEW HOPE WORSHIP CENTER**, 319 E. O St., Ogallala. The Rev. Matt Waitley. Kim Piepho is church administrator. Phone 284-6550.

† **OGALLALA COMMUNITY CHURCH**, Southern Baptist, meets in Arterburn Youth Center. The Rev. Doug Lee. Phone (308) 539-1170 or (308) 464-0958.

† **NEW LIFE CHURCH**, 700 Foxhill Road, Ogallala. Campus Pastors Wes and Kimberli Harmon. Phone 308-234-1881.

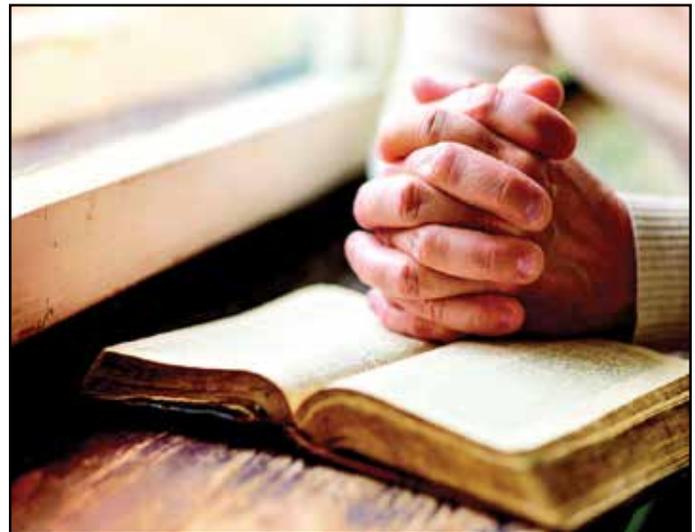
† **PAXTON MENNONITE CHURCH**, 2 miles south of Paxton. Mark Koehn and Tim Wedel, ministers.

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† **ST. LUKE'S CATHOLIC CHURCH**, 417 E. Third St., Ogallala. The Rev. Bryan Ernest. Phone 284-3196.

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New Hope Church

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The Little Church at Keystone was built in 1908. The frame church was built by Catholics and Protestants, and remained in use until 1949. The church has been undergoing renovations during recent years, including a new roof, inside refurbishing and a new sidewalk leading up to the building.

Little Church at Keystone is an early area monument toward religious harmony

KEYSTONE – In 1908, in a town “too small” for two churches, the community of Keystone needed a church.

In a rare display of togetherness, townsfolk built a “combination” church to serve both Catholics and Protestants.

The church is approximately 18 feet wide and 40 feet long.

At the north end was a Catholic altar; at the south end, a Protestant altar. Pews with reversible backs were installed. The stove was an old Union Pacific depot stove.

For Catholic Mass, parishioners faced the Catholic altar. Then, pew backs were flipped over and the Protestant congregation faced the Protestant altar.

The church, with seating capacity of 70 to 75 people, remained in use until 1949.

The first idea for a church was conceived by 11 teenage girls led by Mrs. Bill Paxton Jr., who had organized them into a club similar to present 4-H clubs. Mrs. Paxton also helped found the Keystone Library. Mr. Paxton was a well-known rancher, after whom the town of Paxton is named. When completed, the church cost \$1,200. When it was dedicated on Aug. 16, 1908, it was debt-free.

The first wedding in the church, a marriage between Miss Anna Knight and Mr. William Fenwick, was held four days later, on Aug. 20, 1908.

The Little Church at Keystone still stands as a monument to Catholic-Protestant amity and is put to use occasionally for weddings. It is operated by the Keith County Historical Society.

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Ash Hollow features 30 million years of history

LEWELLEN – Nebraska’s “most intriguing and unusual” state park.

That’s how the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission describes Ash Hollow State Historical Park, located 3 miles southeast of Lewellen on U.S. Highway 26 – or about 30 miles northwest of Ogallala and just minutes from Lake McConaughy.



WINDLASS HILL MARKER

Settlers on their way west came through the area starting in the 1830s and called the valley “Ash Hollow” because of the ash trees growing there.

Open daily, the park is operated by the Game & Parks Commission. A state park entry permit, available at the park, is required. Structures at the park are handicapped accessible.

A modern visitor center interprets the geological, paleontologic, prehistoric, native American Indian, military and 19th century fur trappers, explorers and pioneers.

The Ash Hollow Indian Cave, now covered with a building for protective purposes, further interprets the geologic history of the area.

More than 30 million years of geologic history can be examined at the park. The geologic history of rocks exposed in the park spans that many years. A large number of fossils from various species, including tertiary mammals, can be found in sediments and rocks.

A visual show traces how man used Ash Hollow from prehistoric times through the emigrant days of the mid-1800s.

Ash Hollow has evidence of prehistoric animals including rhinoceros, mammoths and mastodons and also of prehistoric man



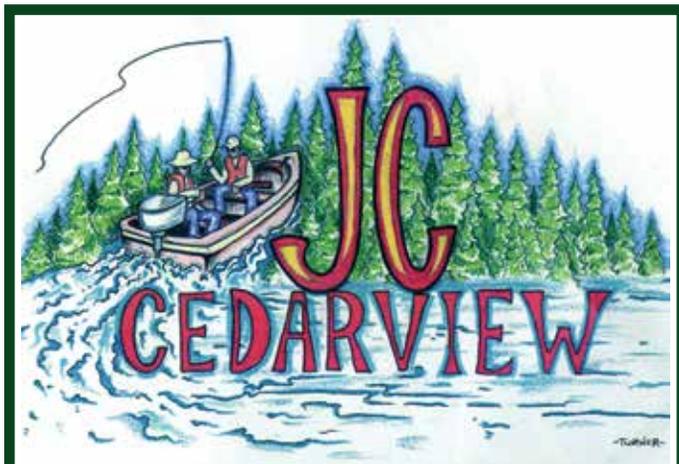
LITTLE ROCK SCHOOLHOUSE

dating back 8,000 to 10,000 years.

Ash Hollow was visited by the Plains Indians, fur traders and trappers, and was the site of U.S. troop maneuvers. Modern-day gatherings in the park re-create those times.

The area was a principal stopping point on the Oregon, California and Mormon trails with emigrants passing through or by Ash Hollow.

In 1835, the area was the site of a major battle between the Pawnee and the Sioux and is near the site of one of the largest engagements between U.S. troops and the Sioux ever fought in Nebraska Territory, the 1855 Battle of Blue Water, a retaliatory attack more often referred to as a massacre committed by the U.S. Army.



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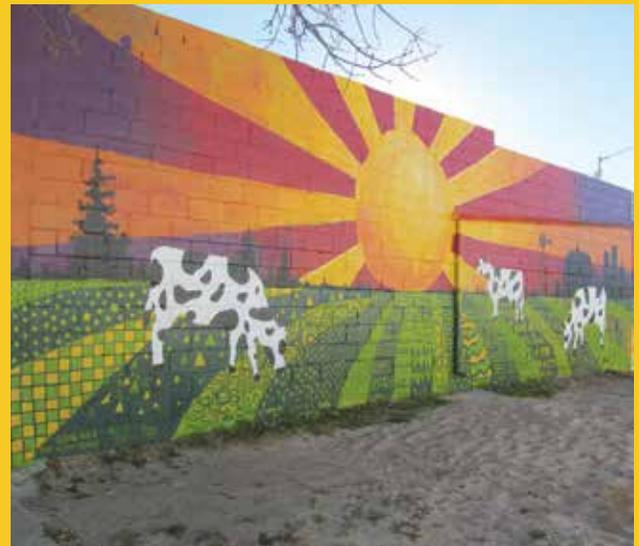
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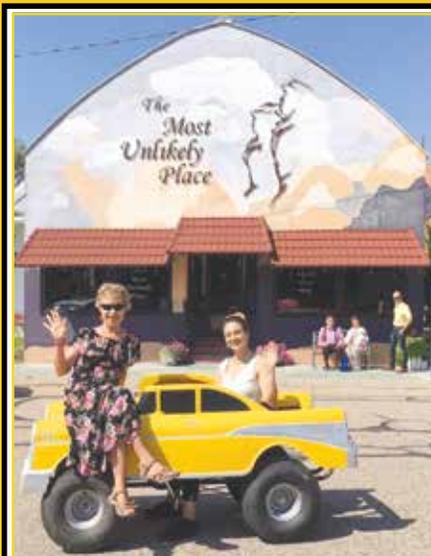


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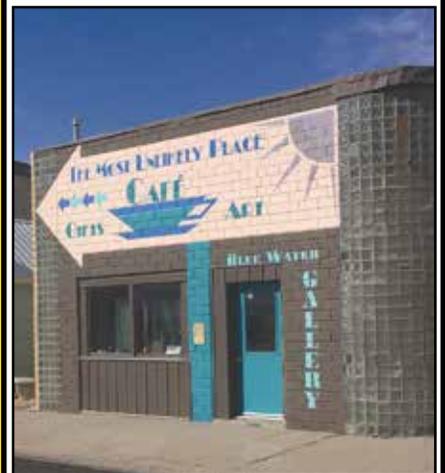
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Ole's features a 'wild kingdom'



This 1,500-pound polar bear is one of approximately 200 mounted animals on display in Ole's Big Game Lounge & Steakhouse, which is located on Main Street at Paxton. Ole's opened the night Prohibition ended on Aug. 9, 1933, and has grown to become known as one of the Nebraska's favorite watering holes.

PAXTON – Paxton, a community of 536, has its own wild kingdom – 200 plus animals to be exact.

The private collection of the late Rosser O. "Ole" Herstedt that dates back to the 1930s, which is located in Ole's Big Game Steakhouse & Lounge, features more than 200 mounted trophies from every continent in the world.

The warm welcome that awaits you in Ole's is a direct reflection of Herstedt, the man who founded what is often called "Nebraska's favorite watering hole."

Born and reared at Paxton, Ole never tired of the friendly people and easygoing lifestyle of this tiny western-Nebraska community.

In fact, his desire to remain in his hometown was what led him to seize a unique business opportunity in 1933.

Ole's opened at 12:01 a.m. Aug. 9, 1933, the night Prohibition ended. The tavern became the local gathering spot. Ole and his friends would spend hours swapping stories of their hunting exploits. In 1938, Ole bagged a deer that he was especially proud of, had the buck mounted and displayed it in the bar. And, that is how it began.

Now, hundreds of pictures and memorabilia share the rustic, knotty pine walls with more than 200 trophy heads of North American and African big game. Many are still world-

class records.

Always one to follow his dreams, Ole traveled to every continent and the lounge became a showcase for his adventures. The feature attraction is an 11-foot-6 polar bear that weighed more than 1,500 pounds when Ole shot it in March 1969 near the Chukchi Sea off Siberia.

It's the wild kingdom atmosphere that includes an elephant, giraffe, buffalo, leopard, deer, jaguar, mountain sheep, bobcat, moose, wart hog, hartebeest, wolverine, kudu, topi, zebra, lion and many others that bring the curious to Ole's Steakhouse & Lounge.

Ole's retirement gave another Paxton native, Tim Holzfaster and his wife, Deb, an opportunity to become the owners of this oasis for weary travelers.

"We just try to provide good food and service," Holzfaster said.

Proof of that lies with the local people, including women and children, who are as likely to be seated under a five-point white-tailed deer as a family from Omaha or a salesman from Michigan.

Ole's and Swede's are located on Main Street at Paxton, just one minute north of Interstate 80 off exit 145. Ole's Big Game Steakhouse & Lounge is a link between the past and the future you won't want to miss.

Be sure to stop. You'll love the food and the adventure.

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**This magazine
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Committee**

Arthur has unique Sandhills ‘treasures’

ARTHUR – This Sandhills community of 120 residents, located 35 miles north of Ogallala on Nebraska State Highway 61, offers not only a spectacular view of the famed geological and scenic wonder known as the Nebraska Sandhills, but has three unique attractions for travelers.

They include the world’s only Baled Hay Church, the world’s tiniest courthouse and the historic Mill Camp Log Cabin built in 1877.

In 1927, members of the Pilgrim Holiness faith baled straw on the Jim Nielson place north of Arthur, tying the straw with wire by hand. Herb McMullen used mules to haul the straw to town.

The bales were stacked on edge with three laths driven through each to hold them together to form the walls. The 28 by 50 foot building was covered with stucco on the exterior and plastered on the inside. Four rooms on the north were made into the parsonage living quarters.

The building was dedicated on July 22, 1928.

In 1963, the name was changed to the Wesleyan Church when two congregations combined. The building was used until 1967.

In 1940, the church was featured in Ripley’s “Believe It or Not” as the only church in the world made of straw.

For years, the building sat vacant, cracking and falling apart. The Arthur County Historical Society bought the building for \$1 and took on the responsibility of restoring and saving this piece of history in 1976 as part of a Bicentennial project. The restoration cost \$5,700 and countless hours of volunteer work as well. In 1985, the parsonage was restored into living quarters as it used to be, using antiques long stored in the old courthouse.

Also featured in Ripley’s “Believe It or Not” was Arthur County’s tiny 26 by 28 foot courthouse, which served Arthur County from 1914 until the courthouse was closed in 1961. The structure was featured in “Believe It or Not” as the smallest courthouse in the U.S.

Thanks to the Arthur County Historical Society, the courthouse still contains furnishings in use when the courthouse closed in 1961.

A third historical attraction in Arthur is the historic Mill Camp Log Cabin built in 1877 by the Bratt Land & Cattle Co., an outfit which ran thousands of head of cattle over a huge cattle empire.

Its ranching empire stretched over an area running 73 miles north and south and 24 miles east and west.

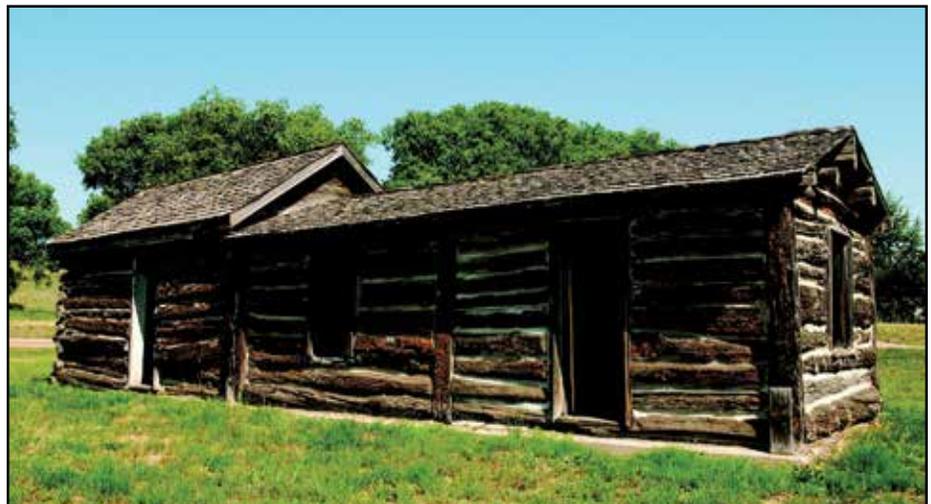
Built with cedar logs cut from trees along the Dismal River and hauled by teams of oxen, the cabin, which was once used by Col. Wm. F. Cody (Buffalo Bill) and his



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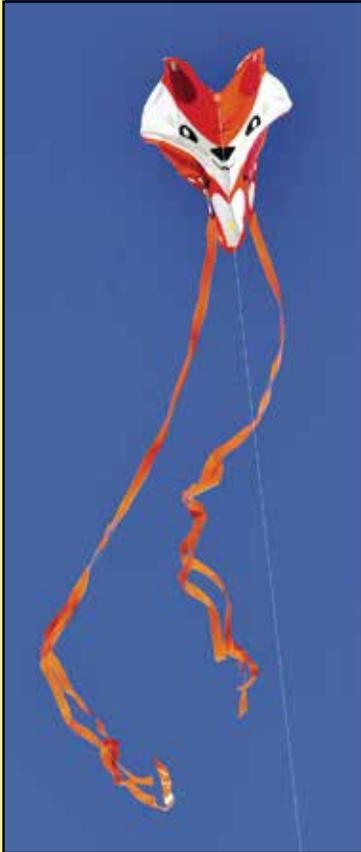


LOG CABIN BUILT IN 1877 FOR BRATT RANCHING EMPIRE

partner, Frank North, was moved to Mill Camp 22 miles northeast of Arthur in 1884. In 1977, it was donated to the Arthur County

Historical Society by Bernice (Mrs. Renold) Macomber. It now stands in North Park in Arthur.

Kites and Castles



FAMILY AND FRIENDS – Kites and Castles at Lake McConaughy is the most family friendly event held during the course of the year. Annually, the event is held on the last Saturday of July. This year, the 35th annual event will be held on July 27. To register, contact the local chamber at 308-284-4066.

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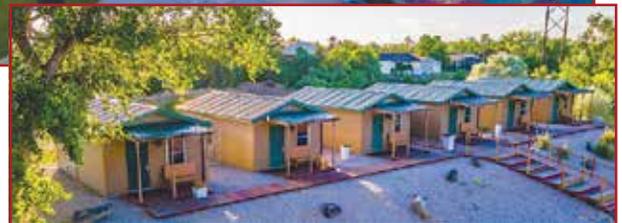
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