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Visit North Platte Grant Awards

(North Platte, Nebraska, July 31, 2024) – Local event organizers continue to work hard to create fun and exciting events in Lincoln County that bring in visitors and contribute to the economic vitality of our community. Visit North Platte’s Grant Awards are to be used for the purpose of promoting, encouraging, and attracting visitors to and within Lincoln County, Nebraska to attend these events. Grant funds, marketing, and operating expenses for Visit North Platte are funded solely through the lodging taxes that are collected and remitted for overnight stays by lodging properties in Lincoln County.

The Visit North Platte Board of Directors approved grant funding at the monthly meeting on July 31, 2024, for the following events which will be held in October, November, and December of 2024. The applications totaled \$35,995 in requests and a total of \$20,495 was awarded.

- **Approved \$4,000 in promotional funding for the Fire on the Prairie event.** Fire on the Prairie is a two-day forging event that will be held at the Prairie Arts Center October 4th-5th, 2024. The event will feature three judges from the Forged in Fire TV Show on the History Channel. Five competitors from Nebraska, Kansas, Missouri, and more will battle it out in the parking lot forging actual blades during a six-hour forging event. The competition will culminate with an actual testing of the blades conducted by the seasoned judges. This is the first year that this event has featured a competition, and while that will be the highlight, there will also be food trucks, artisan booths, Dutch oven demonstrations, and a historical presentation on knives during the day Saturday. On Friday, a meet and greet will take place at Prairie Arts Center, giving the public a chance to speak with judges, bid on knives, and speak to the contestants. This event will bring fans of the art of forging, and of the Forged in Fire TV Show, to visit our area and provide a fun experience for locals as well.
- **Approved \$495 in promotional funding for the Playdate of Terror Haunted House.** In its third season, the North Platte Area Children’s Museum will utilize the promotional funds to join NebraskaHauntedHouse.com, reaching a larger audience from outside a 100-mile radius of North Platte to come and experience this spooky phenomenon. The attraction will have a new theme from previous years and will offer four nights of scares to locals and visitors alike- and don’t let the location fool you, this spooky event is not for small children.

- **Approved \$11,000 in promotional and incentive funding to the American Cornhole League Buffalo Bill Super Regional Cornhole Tournament.** The ACL is hosting the super-regional tournament in North Platte October 18th-19th, 2024, at the D&N Event Center. While previous cornhole events have been hosted in North Platte, this will be the first super-regional event which will raise the number of states that are invited to compete from four to eleven. Cornhole is one of the fastest growing sports in the United States and helping to advertise this event across the eligible eleven states and offering the opportunity for larger payouts to competition winners will help to draw in more attendees. As the sport continues to grow it will be important to emphasize North Platte as a destination for cornhole due to our facilities and central location.
- **Approved \$5,000 in incentive funding to the Midwest Championship Fighting for the 4 Man Pro for Nebraska event during the Salute to Veterans event.** MCF will have their Salute to Veterans event at the D&N Event Center on November 9th, 2024. This will be the fourth year of the Salute to Veterans event, 23rd MCF event, and it will feature pro and amateur mixed martial arts fights and pay tribute to the veterans in attendance. With this year's event MCF hopes to include a Four Man Pro MMA Tournament for a Nebraska Championship. This would be the first fight of this kind in the state of Nebraska. Having incentive funding helps to increase the payout for this tournament which will help to bring in higher level fighters, providing top tier competition for visitors and locals alike, right here in North Platte!

The next round of funding is now open, with an October 1 deadline for events or projects occurring in January, February, and March of 2025. These applications will be considered at the regular monthly Board of Directors meeting scheduled for October 23, 2024. Anyone interested in submitting a grant application is encouraged to contact the Visitors Bureau at 308-532-4729 and discuss their project with a staff member.

Visit North Platte operates under an agreement with the Lincoln County Board of Commissioners to facilitate the Nebraska Visitors Development Act. Grant funds, marketing, and operating expenses for Visit North Platte are funded by lodging taxes collected and remitted by lodging properties from overnight stays in Lincoln County.

It is thanks to the efforts of the lodging property partners located within the county that funds are available to attract more visitors, which have a significant impact on the economic well-being of our Lincoln County communities.

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