

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Visit North Platte Awards Improvement Grant

(North Platte, Nebraska, August 29, 2024) – It is the mission of Visit North Platte to enhance and promote a positive image of the communities in Lincoln County to assist in the development, continuation, and promotion of quality events, attractions, and amenities for the enjoyment of residents and visitors alike, and to help ensure that the highest standards of customer service are practiced in our establishments. One of the ways the Visitors Bureau fulfills this mission is to offer Improvement Fund grant applications to non-profit entities operating visitor services within the borders of Lincoln County, Nebraska.

Visit North Platte has been awarding Improvement Fund Grants annually for the past seventeen years. Over this time, they have committed a total of \$5.9 million to improving tourism facilities and services in Lincoln County.

The money that flows into the Improvement Fund of Visit North Platte is generated entirely by a lodging tax on overnight lodging in Lincoln County. With ongoing efforts from Visit North Platte, tourism has seen success in North Platte and the surrounding area, which makes these funds a force for improving not only the services provided to visitors, but also for enhancing the quality of life for the residents of our communities.

The Visit North Platte Board of Directors approved grant funding at the monthly meeting on August 28, 2024, for the following.

- ***The Board of Directors approved \$7,752 in funding for the Blacksmith Workshop project at the Lincoln County Historical Museum.*** Jim Griffin presented an Improvement Fund Grant application to replace and expand the roof on the existing blacksmith shop at the Lincoln County Historical Museum. This blacksmith workshop is used to provide educational experiences to local youth who regularly visit the museum on school field trips, the residents of our community, and to visitors of the museum. A new roof will not only improve the appearance of the workshop but will also provide a larger area for those viewing the blacksmith demonstrations. The ventilation system included in the new roof will also provide a more pleasant and safe experience for the local blacksmiths leading the demonstrations. The Lincoln County Historical Museum is truly a local treasure, proven by the fact that visitation has grown from 7,500 annually to more than 24,000 under the curatorship of Jim Griffin. Maintaining the condition and integrity of the museum and its exhibits plays an important role in attracting visitors.

The next round of Improvement Grant Funding will open on January 1, 2025. The deadline for intent to apply letters is April 1, 2025, and the application deadline is July 31, 2025. Anyone interested in submitting a grant application is encouraged to contact Lisa Burke, Executive Director of Visit North Platte, at 308-532-4729 to discuss their project.

It is very important to emphasize that the activities of Visit North Platte are funded solely through lodging tax revenue that consists of a 2% collection for promotion activities and a 2% collection for Improvement activities. No other public funds, property taxes, or sales taxes are administered by Visit North Platte.

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