

MINUTES

Western Nebraska Tourism Coalition Meeting (via Zoom)
Thursday, November 16, 2023 – 11:00 a.m. – MST

In attendance: Kerri Rempp (Discover NW Nebraska), Bev Wellnitz (Sheridan County Tourism), Karla Niedan-Streeks (Gering Visitors Bureau), Heather Wolhart (High Plains Homestead), Starr Lehl (Nebraska Tourism Commissioner), Jean Norman (Our Heritage Guest Ranch), Lisa Burke (Visit North Platte), Karen Kollars (Nebraska Tourism Commission), Kendra Mitchell (Cheyenne County/Sidney Tourism), Ben Bennett (US Forest Service), Cassandra Albino (US Forest Service Job Shadow), Kirsten Parker (Golden Spike Tower) and Natasha and Penny (Support Services-Golden Spike Tower).

Chairman Kerri Rempp called the meeting to order at 11:00 am (MST). Self-introductions and community updates were made.

Consent Agenda: It was M/Lisa Burke, 2/Bev Wellnitz to approve the November WNTC Consent Agenda as presented and mailed to the membership. Motion carried.

Education: Riverside Discovery Center (Scottsbluff) was on today's agenda to present the educational program; if/when they join the Zoom, we will go back to this agenda item.

Marketing Committee: Marketing Chairman Lisa Burke opened discussions on WNTC Marketing:

- Kendra Mitchell (Webmaster) reported nothing major to report from the website; traffic has been steady. She is working to keep all information updated on the site including the WNTC agendas and meeting minutes.
- Kirsten Parker gave an WNTC Facebook update; we are growing our social media presence with just over 6,000 followers and post engagement is also up. We've had 22 new followers in the past week.
- Karla Niedan-Streeks reported we are in the 11th hour of final edits for the 2024 Destination Western Nebraska Travel Guide with our publisher Omaha Magazine. A final email request went out to the County contacts requesting any final edits/revisions that are due by the end of the week. Omaha Magazine will have a final proof for edit (the week of November 27th) and then the publication will go to print. Good news is we spent a great deal of time for the 2023 edition getting revisions and corrections made and there have been minimal corrections needed for 2024.

Destination 2024 Cover: Members in attendance were presented (4) options from Omaha Magazine for the 2024 cover; following lengthy discussions the members in attendance requested a revised cover option that took pieces from each presented. Carhenge photo will be at the top, middle photo will be the good horse photo option and bottom photo will be a river tubing photo. Karla will relay the recommendations for the final cover to Omaha Magazine; a final proof of the cover will be reviewed by the Executive Committee following by it being sent to the WNTC membership.

For the next (2025 cover); Kirsten Parker suggested we consider some good golf photos as this sport is on the rise and available throughout the region. All members were encouraged to gather some great golf photography in the spring/summer 2024 for potential use on the 2025 cover. And, new photography is needed for every edition; members who have access to high quality/high resolution photos of their area to gather them and submit to support services to bank the photography for future use.

Lisa will work with Omaha Magazine on the 2024 Destination delivery schedule and storage locations; new publications will be ready for the start of National Western Stock Show 2024 in January.

- Stock Show Bags: Kendra Mitchell advised the membership that we are approaching the deadline to get all advertisers secured for the 2024 Stock Show bags; we currently have 7 confirmed and need 9.

Dusty Trails was discussed as a potential advertiser as well as City of Alliance since Carhenge will be on the 2024 Destination cover. Kendra and Kirsten will reach out to these potential advertisers. We will produce a total of 2,500 bags for the 2024 NWSS.

- WNTC Coop Advertising Opportunity: Lisa Burke stated Maly Marketing was to be on today's call to share details about the WNTC Coop advertising opportunity; where members can put an ad on our WNTC Facebook page. The coop is very inexpensive and a good way to promote your entity and area to a wide audience. We had one member participate in the pilot program last year with very good return on investment. Participation in this program could be used in your application for State Marketing Grant funds; more information on the coop opportunity will be sent to the membership from the Marketing Committee.

Destination 2023 Supply Numbers: Members reported on their remaining supplies of 2023 Destinations; with each report 10 or less boxes on hand close to the conclusion of the 2023 marketing year.

Membership Committee: Hal Enevoldsen will serve as the new Marketing Chairman; Karla and Hal will be meeting in the next month to go over marketing committee efforts and layout the plans for future WNTC membership recruitment and retention.

Nebraska Tourism Commissioner Report: Starr Lehl thanked Karla, Brenda and City of Gering for a great 2023 Nebraska Tourism Conference. The NTC industry November Newsletter just came out with much information on the Unity Summit in February 2024. Starr said their participation on the Harvest Host program went very well this year; all her visitors were very intrigued with Western Nebraska and all that we have to offer to see and do.

Nebraska Tourism Commission: Karen Kollars thanked Gering for a great October Tourism Conference. Reminded WNTC members that the Holiday Passport kicks off tomorrow and the deadline for the summer passport program is the end of November. Stock Show sign-up for working the booth still has lots of openings; deadline for booking rooms at the host hotel with NTC rate is December 14th. All were in agreement to order a free-standing brochure rack for the NWSS booth. Those working the NWSS booth; there are a limited number of evening rodeo performance tickets available. If you're interested in those tickets; email Karen at Karen.Kollars@nebraska.gov. WNTC will provide the red bags for this year's stock show booth. Kirsten asked if it was possible to get Nebraska stickers or something with the NTC logo to distribute at the booth as they are very popular with both kids and adults right now.

Next WNTC Meeting: The next WNTC meeting will be early in January to accommodate those headed directly to work at the National Western Stock Show. The January meeting date (in person meeting) will be January 4, 2024 in Sidney; location to be announced. The March 21, 2024 meeting will be a Zoom meeting again and our May 2024 meeting date will be in conjunction with the annual brochure swap.

There being no further business, the November WNTC meeting adjourned at 11:47 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Karla Niedan-Streeks, WNTC Secretary
November 16, 2023