

WESTERN NEBRASKA TOURISM COALITION MEMBERSHIP MEETING

JANUARY 7, 2026 - 11:00 AM
Heritage Cafe, Kimball, NE

ATTENDANCE IN PERSON:

Jenna Bartja (Visit Nebraska), **Kim Sharples** (Earth Blessings), **Kendra Mitchell** (Cheyenne County Tourism), **Hal Enevoldsen** (Point of Rocks), **William Suit** (Alliance Tourism/Carnegie), **Kerri Rempp** (Discover NW Nebraska), **Brenda Leisy** (Scotts Bluff Area Visitor Bureau), **LouAnn Frei** (A Collective Gathering), **Bev Wellnitz** (Sheridan County Tourism), **Jeanie Snyder** (Sheridan), **Tina Worthman** (Gering Visitors Bureau), **Jamie Bright** (Nebraska Extension), **Kim Nelson** (Kimball County Visitor Committee).

ATTENDANCE VIA ZOOM:

David Wolf (Legacy of the Plains Museum), **Lisa Burke** (Visit North Platte)

CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Hal Enevoldsen called the meeting to order at 11:05 a.m. MST.

INTRODUCTIONS:

Self-Introduction of Members and Guests with Community Updates

CONSENT AGENDA (Agenda, Minutes, Financial Report):

Motion by Tina Worthman and 2nd by Kerri Rempp to approve the consent agenda. Motion carried.

SUPPORT SERVICES:

Hal reported that no applications were received by the deadline. William Suit may help if no one else applies. Kerri Rempp will send out the RFP to members and we will discuss it again at the March meeting.

MARKETING COMMITTEE: (Lisa Burke, Kendra Mitchell, Kerri Rempp, Maly Marketing)

Lisa, Kendra and Kerri had a meeting with Maly Marketing. They will hear in February if they received the grant. They will have more information to present at the March meeting.

Facebook: (Kerri Rempp, Kendra Mitchell) Will Suit and Tina Worthman will be added to the Facebook committee. They will work with the volunteers on a calendar schedule.

Destination Western Nebraska 2026 Magazine (Kerri Rempp):

New magazines have been shipped to North Platte, Sidney, Chadron and Gering and will be sent to Denver for the Stock Show. Kerri has requested the entire editorial document in word document and it will be sent out so people can make changes in this document. Lisa and Kerri have met with another group about the possibility of changing publishers for next year, and will meet with them again. More information will be presented at the March meeting.

Kerri received information from Certified Folder that they have had our information pamphlets in their racks, and so we need to make sure not to put our Western Nebraska information there or they will be discarded.

Boxes of the Red bags were shipped to the Denver Stock Show.

All old Destination Western Nebraska Magazines will be disposed of and recycled.

WNTC MEMBERSHIP (Tina Worthman):

Tina said that she should have membership information to present at the March meeting. She requested that volunteers interested in assisting with membership plan to meet with her at the Nebraska Conference for discussion. She will send an email out to membership.

NEBRASKA TOURISM COMMISSION (NTC) UPDATE (Dave Wolf):

Dave will be at the Nebraska Conference and encourages others to attend. They are working with educating local officials on tourism. They are still working on the hiring process for the new Director and interviews should be starting soon. Dave also mentioned he is on the Grant Committee and they are receiving a lot of grant requests.

NEBRASKA TOURISM COMMISSION UPDATE (Jenna Bartja):

Jenna stated that they are starting interviews for the Director position and will be removing this open position from the website. They hope to fill this position in the next month or two.

Grant Program: Applications for Grants closed on December 18, 2025. They received 75 applications for the marketing grant and 8 applications for the community impact grant, with requests of just over \$2 million dollars.

New Grant Program: Jenna stated that a new grant initiative, the Destination Development Program, is currently in development. She noted that she has been reviewing similar programs in other states, including Colorado, Oregon, and South Dakota. Faith Overall will present information on the program at the Nebraska Tourism Conference. Jenna also shared plans to host a webinar in late March or early April to provide additional details on the grant.

Nebraska Tourism Conference: Registration for the conference has been live and encouraged others to register and attend. More information is at the website. She also stated that Award nominations close tomorrow and these are also on the website.

National Western Stock Show: Jenna handed out entry badges and parking passes for the Stock Show in Denver. She provided instructions to attendees on distributing badges and parking passes, parking, entry procedures, and noted that this information had also been emailed to everyone. A binder will be available at the Stock Show containing information and extra parking passes. At the end of their last shift, volunteers are asked to return parking passes to the folder or hand them off to the next person.

Jenna also stated that Nebraska information with a QR code will be available at the booth for visitors to scan. Volunteers were instructed to refer anyone asking about moving to Nebraska to the visitnebraska.com website and to click on "Relocating to Nebraska" for the appropriate information. She noted that the upcoming crane migration is an important promotion for Nebraska. Volunteers are also encouraged to promote their own region or business while at the Stock Show.

Rodeo ticket availability was emailed to each volunteer, and these tickets can be transferred or exchanged as needed.

TREASURE CHEST IN CHADRON (Kerri Rempp):

Kerri stated that the Treasure Chest event would be a good opportunity for WNTC to attend. The event will be held at the Chadron Fairgrounds on April 16 at 5:00 p.m. with a cost of \$10 per person. She explained that the gathering brings tourism representatives together for a mini brochure swap, a review of 2025 activities, and a preview of plans for 2026, along with guest speakers. Kerri noted that she invites tourism partners to

participate and suggested it would be beneficial for a WNTC representative to speak about the organization and the benefits of membership. Kerri added that the event is in its sixth year and typically draws about 80 attendees. Kendra Mitchell expressed support for WNTC attending the event. Jenna Bartja added that a representative from Nebraska Tourism would attempt to attend. Kim Sharples indicated her interest in having Panhandle Frontier Finds attend and provide a presentation. Kerri noted that invitations are expected to be sent in late January or early February.

HERITAGE CAFE (Deb):

Deb from Heritage Café spoke with the group about the restaurant and her decision to move to Kimball. She shared her dream of opening a restaurant, emphasizing customer service and creating a positive experience for patrons. The business is family-run, with her daughter and son-in-law also involved.

UPCOMING MEETINGS:

March 19, 2026 in Bridgeport, NE

May 14, 2026 in North Platte, NE

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:06 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Kimberly Sharples, WNTC Secretary