

WESTERN NEBRASKA TOURISM COALITION MEMBERSHIP MEETING

SEPTEMBER 18, 2025 - 11:00 AM

Bean Broker Coffee House and Pub, 202 W 2nd St, Chadron, NE

ATTENDANCE IN PERSON:

Kim Sharples (Earth Blessings), **Jo Wells** (Guest Junk Trek), **Kim Nelson** (Kimball County Visitors Committee), **Kendra Mitchell** (Cheyenne County Tourism), **Jack Berg** (Morrill County Visitor Committee), **Hal Enevoldsen** (Point of Rocks), **April Grant** (City of Crawford), **M Jean Norman** (Our Heritage Guest Ranch), **Heather Wolhart** (High Plains Homestead), **Lilly Uhlmann** (Visit Nebraska), **Roger Wess** (Dawes County Historical Society), **Rex Cogdill** (Dawes County Historical Society), **Jenna Bartja** (Visit Nebraska), **William Suit** (Alliance Tourism/Carnegie), **Kerri Remp** (Discover NW Nebraska), **Brenda Leisy** (Scotts Bluff Area Visitor Bureau).

ATTENDANCE VIA ZOOM:

Gil Cohen (Omaha Publications), **Lisa Burke** (Visit North Platte)

Chairman Hal Enevoldsen called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m. MST.

Self Introduction of Members and Guests with Community Updates

Consent Agenda:

Motion by Jean Norman and 2nd by Kerri Remp to approve the consent agenda. Motion carried.

MARKETING COMMITTEE

Destination Western Nebraska 2026 Magazine:

Gil Cohen presented 3 options for the Cover of the 2026 Magazine. After presentation and discussion, motion made by Kerri Remp and 2nd by Lisa Burke to approve the 3rd option with Scotts Bluff large photo on top, and rafters, horseback riders, and bicyclists in smaller photos on the bottom - with the understanding of adjusting these lower 3 photos so that all faces are approximately the same size. Motion carried. Gil Cohen will make changes and send them to the board.

Website Report (Kendra Mitchell):

Kendra requested that members are to let her know of any changes or updates that need to be made. There are approximately 26,000 users. Kendra explained that counties are listed on the website with a WNTC Badge on paid members. Because funding comes from lodging taxes, all lodging is listed. Discussion was held on updating/redoing the website and how the expense could be \$40,000-\$50,000 or more. Motion by Kendra Mitchell and 2nd by Jack Berg to approve Kendra and Lisa to reach out to Hollman/Tech Harbor to see what options are available for the website. Motion carried.

No Facebook Report

Stock Show Bags:

There are 150-200 bags left in stock. Kendra Mitchell had a quote for 1500 bags at \$2953.75 which would be \$330 per sponsor with 9 sponsors; and a quote for 2500 bags at \$4856.89 which would be \$540 per sponsor with 9 sponsors. After discussion, motion by Kerri Remp and 2nd by Brenda Leisy to approve the purchase of 2500 bags. Motion carried.

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES CONTRACT:

Discussion held and to put out RFP (Request for Proposal) before the next meeting, Kerri Remp and Lisa Burke will work on this before the November meeting.

DESTINATION WESTERN NEBRASKA MAGAZINE SUPPLY NUMBERS:

Kendra (Sidney)-20 boxes, Brenda (Scottsbluff) - 6 boxes, Kerri (Chadron)- 6 boxes.

NO WNTC MEMBERSHIP REPORT**NO NEBRASKA TOURISM COMMISSION (NTC) REPORT****NEBRASKA TOURISM/VISIT NEBRASKA UPDATE (Jenna Barja and Lilly Uhlmann):**

- They have put together a New Business packet and it will be available on the website as well.
- A question was asked whether WNTC would like to have a Hotel Room Block for the Stock Show (Jan 9-25, 2026) After discussion, members felt it was good to continue with the Room Block. Jenna/Lilly will check in to prices and hotels. It was also noted that there should be shuttles from the Coors field available. For those who are interested in being a sponsor, they need to know this information by October 10th. Kerri Remp explained that WNTC will reimburse \$175 per shift and a maximum of \$350 for working 2 shifts (2 different days).
- A sign-up sheet was circulated for those interested in working shifts at the Denver Stock Show. The form will also be made available online at a later date.
- Applications are currently open through October for the Nebraska Passport Stop, which runs May 1-Sept 30, 2026. Businesses can register at nebraskapassport.com. This program is a valuable opportunity to attract tourists to participating locations.
- The Agritourism and Adventure Travel workshop will be held in North Platte October 27-29, 2025. Cost to attend the full workshop is \$175.00, which covers transportation and meals throughout the workshop. There is a cap of 55 people, so register early! For more information:
<https://visitnebraska.com/industry-events/agritourism-adventure-travel-workshop-0>
- Nebraska Tourism Conference will be in Lincoln February 10-12, 2026

- Jenna shared that a new Strategic Planning Program will be available for organizations to apply for in the future. The program offers a grant opportunity, with applicants reviewed and chosen by a selection committee. This is an exciting chance for organizations to gain momentum, build upward mobility, strengthen growth, and make a meaningful impact. More details will be shared as they become available.

UPCOMING MEETINGS:

- November 20, 2025 - Scottsbluff
- January 8, 2026 - Sidney or Potter
- March 19, 2026 - Bridgeport

NEW BUSINESS/CORRESPONDENCE (Jo Wells):

Jo Wells shared information about a local group exploring a junk-jaunt–style event in the Nebraska Panhandle, tentatively scheduled for June 5–7, 2026. The effort is in early stages and they may combine efforts with the Frontier Finds group. The event has potential to bring significant tourism dollars to the region while supporting small businesses. Attendees expressed interest, and Jo will continue working with Western Nebraska tourism partners and others as planning moves forward. *Her proposal and vision are attached for reference.*

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 1:20 PM

Respectfully Submitted,
Kimberly Sharples, WNTC Secretary

Southern Panhandle Junk Jaunt/Frontier Finds (Jo Wells)

Vision

Creating a regional “**treasure trek**” that celebrates antiques, vintage goods, and local finds—bringing visitors to our communities, boosting tourism, supporting small businesses, and fostering community pride. Target dates June 5 - 7 2026

Key Priorities

Exploring partnership with Highway 20 Frontier Finds to create a panhandle “treasure trek, junk jaunt”.

Governance and Structure

Non-profit 501(c)(3) status under Oregon Trail Community Foundation
Transparent, accountable financial practices
Governing Board with Subcommittees
Volunteer driven, no paid positions

Funding & Revenue

Donations and Sponsorships
Vendor registration fees (online seamless system)
Booklet sales and advertisements

Expenses

Startup costs and operations (budget in development)
Marketing and outreach initiative
Event logistics and materials

Marketing and Outreach

RFPs issued to marketing agencies/consultants

Partnerships

Chambers of Commerce
Tourism Directors
Local groups and organizations

Impact Goals

Increase local tourism and visitor traffic
Generate new opportunities for vendors, artisans and small businesses
Strengthen collaboration across the panhandle communities

Governing Board With Subcommittees:

Dividing the Panhandle into three (3 Tiers)
Northern Tier: Sioux, Box Butte, Dawes, Sheridan
Central Tier: Scotts Bluff, Banner, Morrill and Garden
Southern Tier: Kimball, Cheyenne, and Dowl

Governing Board consists of five (5) members: One from each tier plus 2 at large,
Subcommittees: Marketing, Sponsorship Sales, Sponsorship Vendors; Donors and Grants. Each subcommittee will consist of a representative from each tier