

Historical Connections

NEWS FROM THE NEBRASKA STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY FOUNDATION



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Celebrating Nebraska's Story: New NHM Exhibit Opens in Honor of America 250



NSHSF Board Members and Trustees gathered to support the opening of the new exhibit.



The Our Nebraska exhibit invites attendees to explore 250 years of the state's interconnected and layered history.

On the evening of Monday, June 29, the Nebraska State Historical Society Foundation proudly sponsored a special reception and ribbon cutting for the new exhibit, *Our Nebraska: The Place, Its People, and Their Impact*. Held in celebration of America 250, the event highlighted the important role Nebraska has played in our nation's history. Board members, trustees, and supporters gathered from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. to mark the opening of an exhibit that captures the stories and contributions of Nebraskans across generations. Guests heard welcoming remarks from Nebraska State Historical Society Director Daryl Bohac and Governor Jim Pillen, while Foundation President Dawn Rockey reflected on the importance of history and the reminder that we are still actively shaping it. Nebraska History Museum Director Araceli Hernandez also shared insight into the extensive collaboration across NSHS departments that brought the exhibit to life.

We recognize the work of the Nebraska State Historical Society staff in bringing this exhibit together, featuring viewing 94 objects, 107 photo reproductions, and 57 profiles of notable Nebraskans. We are grateful to the Board members and trustees who joined us in celebrating this milestone and supporting the Foundation's mission. The exhibit opened to the public on Tuesday, June 30, 2026.



Walk to the Rock Visitors get Hands-on With Nebraska's Native Reptiles During Snake Talk



Amanda Filipi from Nebraska Game & Parks educated visitors on NE's native snakes.



Visitors from France get up close with the mildly venomous Western Hognose.

Visitors to the Walk to the Rock Trails at Chimney Rock recently enjoyed a fascinating presentation from Amanda Filipi, Educator with Nebraska Game and Parks, who introduced guests to some of the snakes that call Nebraska's prairies home. Amanda brought along a bull snake, western hognose snake, garter snake, and milk snake, giving attendees an up close look at each species while sharing information about their unique characteristics and their important role in the prairie ecosystem.

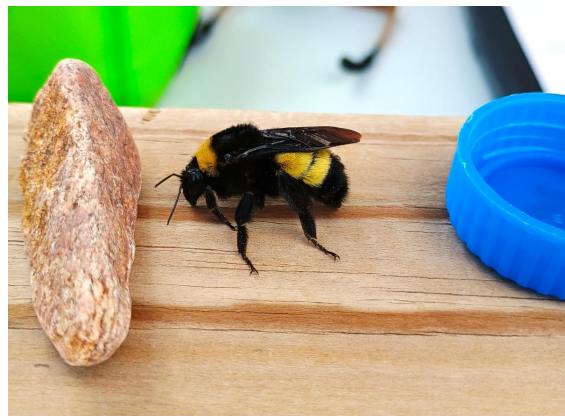
Guests from France, Utah, Oregon, and Florida were treated to a hands on experience as they had the opportunity to gently touch each of the snakes. They even got to say they had touched a venomous snake. While the western hognose snake is technically venomous, its mild venom poses no danger to humans.



Olivia DaRugna returns to Walk to the Rock for Another Year of Bee Studies



Nebraska Game & Parks Wildlife Biologist Olivia DaRugna collects bumble bees during a recent scouting trip at Chimney Rock.



No bees harmed in this study! Bees are gently chilled to be safely studied, before warming up and returning to their travels around the Nebraska prairie.

Last September, Nebraska Game & Parks Wildlife Biologist Olivia DaRugna conducted a bumble bee survey on the Walk to the Rock trails surrounding Chimney Rock. During that survey, she recorded 25 bumble bees across 3 species—American, Brown-belted, and 8 Southern Plains Bumble Bees.

Olivia returned to the trails in June this year to capture more research on bees at Chimney Rock. This was an initial scouting trip to see if there was a bumble bee presence this early in the season. Olivia caught 5 American Bumble Bees (*Bombus pensylvanicus*), which are a Midwest Regional Species of Greatest Conservation Need.



Read Our Latest Blog: Why Nebraska's History isn't Old, it's Ongoing



When many people hear the word “history,” they think of something that happened long ago. Covered wagons. Pioneer settlements. Historic buildings. Artifacts behind glass.

But history isn’t just something we study. It’s something we’re creating every day. The story of Nebraska did not end with statehood, the homestead era, or even the major events we learn about in school. It continues with every generation that shapes our communities, preserves traditions, overcomes challenges, and contributes something new to the places we call home.

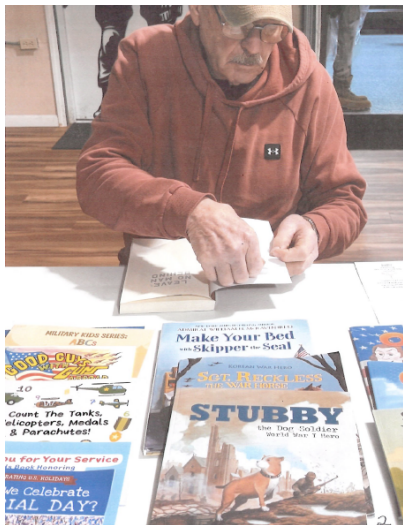


Communities Across Nebraska Put RoamNebraska Grants to Work

This spring, we awarded 38 organizations across Nebraska with our RoamNebraska grants. Through this program, grants support museums, historical societies, libraries, and community partners in delivering core education, preservation, and interpretive programs that bring community history to life. Here's just a sampler of the projects grants have supported so far this year:

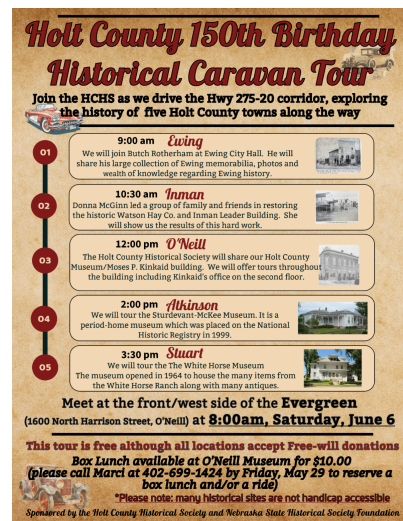


Battle Creek Heritage Park installed a new tipi as part of their historical tribute to the Pawnee Indians. Visitors to the park are drawn into the tipi and the History Walk which shares history about the Pawnee.



Nance County Veteran's Memorial and Military Resource Center used grant funding to create a children's library, complete with new books, carpeting and child-sized furniture.

Seventy-six new books allow children of all ages to learn about various aspects of military history and service.



Holt County Historical Society celebrated 150 years of Holt County with a historical caravan tour spanning five towns across the county. The tour highlighted and celebrated the history and culture of these towns, as well as the dedicated historians and volunteers working to preserve their stories.



Mark Your Calendars for These Exciting Upcoming Events!

JULY 11 - LEWIS AND CLARK VISITOR CENTER - WanderNebraska/Trail Trek Tour:

Join the museum's Executive Director, Doug Friedli, at 9:00 a.m. for a one mile guided hike along the Tree Trail and walk in the footsteps of Lewis and Clark. The trail has a chipped wood surface and is stroller friendly. Living history reenactors will be on site at 10 a.m. and Joe Starita, author of *I Am a Man*, will give a special presentation at 11 a.m.

JULY 31 - COTTONWOOD EVENT NOW OPEN TO ALL! – SPECIAL MORNING TOUR OF FORT ATKINSON AND FORT CALHOUN:

You're invited to a special morning tour of Fort Atkinson and Fort Calhoun led by Archaeologist Nolan Johnson. The tour will begin at 9:00 a.m. and will provide participants with a unique opportunity to explore these important historic sites while learning about their archaeological significance and role in Nebraska's early history. Participants should meet at the Ft. Atkinson State Historical Park Visitor Center (201 So. 7th Street, Ft. Calhoun, NE 68023) at 9:00 a.m. on Friday, July 31. RSVP - LFattig@nshsf.org

AUGUST 8 - BUFFALO BILL RANCH - WanderNebraska/Trail Trek Tour:

Join Nebraska historian and author Jeff Barnes for an insightful tour of Buffalo Bill Cody's home property. A Buffalo Bill impersonator will be on hand and Barnes will sign purchased copies of his book. The tour begins at 10:00 a.m. and will be approximately half a mile on level ground. This event is free and open to the public, but a valid state park vehicle permit is required for park entry.

SEPTEMBER 12 - ENGINEER CANTONMENT - WanderNebraska/Trail Trek Tour:

Nebraska State Archaeologist, Rob Bozell, will share the history of the Engineer Cantonment site as well as archaeological insights. Participants will walk to the site from

the county road. This program begins at 9:00 a.m. and will last approximately one hour. Length of walk is approximately one-quarter mile. Engineer Cantonment is located .2 miles south of the intersection of County Road P51 and Bluebird Lane, Omaha. There is limited parking at the site and all others will need to safely park along side the road. Watch for yard signs with more information. RSVP - LFattig@nshsf.org

[VISIT THE TRAIL TREK WEBSITE TO LEARN MORE](#)



Upcoming Cottonwood Society Events

JULY 31 - SPECIAL TOUR OF JAPANESE HALL AT LEGACY OF THE PLAINS: On July 31 from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m., Cottonwood Society members—and their friends—are invited to a special tour of the Japanese Hall located on the Legacy of the Plains grounds in Gering. The tour will be led by Vickie Sakurada Schaepler, who will share the inspiring story behind the creation of the Japanese Hall, its development, and the history and contributions of Japanese Americans in the North Platte River Valley. We encourage Cottonwood Society members to bring a friend and introduce them to this remarkable Nebraska story. More details will be coming soon, but for now, please save the date for what promises to be an engaging and memorable evening. RSVP for more information - LFattig@nshsf.org



Get Your Tickets for WanderNebraska: The Great Road Trip

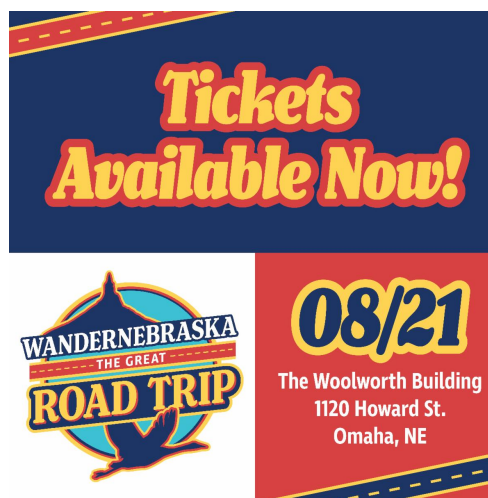
We are excited to announce the date for our 2026 **WANDERNEBRASKA: THE GREAT ROADTRIP!** Mark your calendars for August 21st so you don't miss the fun.

Thank you to our Sponsors!

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