

**Pawnee City, Nebraska
TARGET Report
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Part 1: Introduction

Tourism: A Worthy Community Investment

In Nebraska, tourism means big business and big bucks! It is the state's third largest earner of revenue from outside the state, behind only agriculture and manufacturing and accounts for over \$2.8 billion dollars being spent annually in Nebraska. Tourism creates jobs and generates revenue by bringing in **new** money to a community. It fosters community pride by allowing residents to invest in their heritage, attractions, events and even themselves. These residents share in the economic rewards when visitors spend money in their town.

Tourism is a clean, green industry. It can be a homegrown, out-of-your-backyard type business, such as a furniture store that specializes in using locally grown wood. Tourism can also be a community promoting its local history through an annual event. For the most part, tourism development does not pollute the environment, does not require a large highly skilled labor force, nor require additional housing and school facilities for a community. Tourism can be developed by local, creative people with the foresight to undertake projects within a community's reach. Tourism also lends itself to part-time and seasonal employment and provides opportunities for retired individuals and summer holiday students who are searching for summer jobs.

Rural tourism is one of the fastest growing segments of the national tourism industry as well as here in Nebraska. Statistics show that most people traveling are looking for activities and experiences they cannot find at home. This is where Nebraska's rural communities can shine! While most of our rural areas do not have the chain stores, restaurants and lodging facilities found in urban areas, the hometown facilities are great alternatives. The communities that can offer a traveler the right services and the opportunity to experience something they cannot find at home will be the most successful in Nebraska's growing tourism industry.

What is the TARGET Program?

TARGET, which is an acronym for Tourism Assessment Resource Growth Evaluation Team, was started in 1991. It is a unique program to assist Nebraska's rural communities in getting more out of tourism. TARGET is designed to help Nebraska communities realize what they have, celebrate their strengths, improve on their weaknesses, and ensure they are reaching their tourism potential.

The program begins with a community organizing local TARGET members consisting of those interested in pursuing tourism issues in their community. The local TARGET members come from various backgrounds, such as lodging, restaurants, downtown shops, local historians, event planners, and local volunteers. TARGET members will then complete a TARGET evaluation, where they will evaluate and objectively review their community's past and present tourism efforts and issues. Afterwards, this evaluation will

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be sent to the Nebraska Division of Travel and Tourism and reviewed by the TARGET coordinator. A community visitation date will then be set up in the community between local TARGET members and TARGET members from the Division of Travel and Tourism. The visit from outside TARGET members will allow community residents the opportunity to show off the community—both its positive and negative sides. In this way, the TARGET study allows residents to see their town through the eyes of others. Often a new set of eyes can find qualities, opportunities, and potential problems within a community that might not be readily evident to local residents.

The evaluation includes reviewing a community's success stories and failures, opportunities and roadblocks. As part of this process, the Nebraska Division of Travel and Tourism may be able to help locate others throughout the state to address local needs and concerns. After listening to a community that has already completed a similar project, the TARGET community can evaluate if it is ready to undertake a similar project now, or if it should wait until it is more ready to take on such a task.

After the visiting TARGET members leave, they will provide the TARGET coordinator with their thoughts on what they saw and any suggestions they have for the community. Within three to four months after the visit, the TARGET coordinator will provide the community with a detailed written report with the combined thoughts and suggestions of the visiting team. The written report is a blueprint for a community to achieve tourism success under ideal conditions. It does not take into consideration local politics and how some things are just not feasible. Most communities have been able to implement at least some of the suggestions in their TARGET report. Some communities followed their TARGET reports to the letter, and some were able to use just a few of the suggested strategies. Each community will be different. Overall, each community involved in TARGET felt it was well worth their efforts to go through the process.

This TARGET written report begins with a brief introduction to the TARGET program in Part One. Part Two lists a series of tourism development and marketing strategies that the TARGET area should examine. The report concludes with Part Three, which consists of a list of possible funding sources the community can use for its future tourism projects.

Part 2: Tourism Development and Marketing Strategies

Following is a list of attractions in Pawnee City that the TARGET team visited in July 2003:

- Pawnee City Museum
- Prairie Hills Sports Complex
- My Blue Heaven Bed and Breakfast
- Pawnee Inn and Café
- Site of future recreational trail project
- Hallie's
- Stone Bridge Vineyards
- Toy Pedal Museum
- Downtown Pawnee City

These sites were chosen solely by local TARGET members of Pawnee City. Local officials felt that these sites provided a good sampling of the many attractions and tourism-related businesses found throughout the county.

Nestled among rolling hills, under a wide-open sky, and surrounded by thousands of acres of prime farmland, Pawnee City (pop. 1,033), is located in Pawnee County (pop. 3,087), in Nebraska's southeast corner. While it enjoys a peaceful and rural setting, the community remains well connected to the major population centers of Nebraska, Kansas, and Iowa. A good transportation network helps Pawnee City attract visitors from across the four state region. Highways 50 and 8 intersect in town, while Highway 136—one of Nebraska's nine official scenic byways—connects Pawnee City to Tecumseh, 20 miles to the north. Highway 77, a major Nebraska north-south route is 30 miles to the west. This major highway allows residents of Beatrice and Lincoln easy access to the attractions and events in Pawnee City. Interstate 80 in Nebraska and Interstate 29 in Iowa also are within a short drive to the community. Due to Pawnee City's good location in southeast Nebraska, and the number of major highways surrounding the community, local officials enjoy a great connection and easy driving distances to the following metropolitan areas with a combined population of more than three million people:

- Kansas City, Mo./Kan. (pop. 1,755,899)
- Omaha, Neb. (including Council Bluffs, Iowa) (pop. 698,875)
- Des Moines, Iowa (pop. 443,496)
- Lincoln, Neb. (pop. 237,657)

This extensive population base results in thousands of people visiting, or driving through the city annually. Local officials need to ensure that they are fully capitalizing on these travelers by providing adequate visitor services, fun-filled events, and exciting attractions. Its location and scenic surroundings make Pawnee City the ideal location for a weekend getaway or short day-trip for residents of the surrounding population centers.

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Overall, TARGET members noticed few problems or issues to prevent Pawnee City officials from capitalizing on the town's tourism potential. In fact, Pawnee City residents have much to be proud of in their town. They enjoy a rural setting, but still are near the amenities of urban life in the region's cities. The town's attractions and events, such as Stonebridge Vineyards, hiking trails, the Toy Pedal Museum, and the Pawnee City Historical Museum, are first-rate. The downtown district is clean and well-maintained, evidence that local officials and residents take pride in their community. In fact, many of the downtown district's 56 buildings are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

This unique fact needs to be heavily marketed in all promotional literature, and a historical walking tour of the downtown district needs to be developed to encourage history enthusiasts to visit. Information on the history of the downtown's buildings also should be included on the Pawnee City website, along with photos of each building. The entrance portals leading into town are attractive. In fact, the north entrance portal at the intersection of Highways 50 and 8 is particularly colorful and inviting. A narrow dividing median at this intersection abounds with colorful native plants and flowers. Similar landscaping should be encouraged at the town's other portals. Flowers and colorful landscaping designs are ideal for enticing visitors to spend some time in Pawnee City. Creative floral designs and careful maintenance not only beckon to out-of-town visitors, but reflect the pride and dedication of local residents.

In addition to a clean and inviting historical downtown district, Pawnee City also is home to some interesting tourist attractions and events. The Pawnee City Historical Museum boasts an impressive 19 buildings that visitors can browse through. Each building chronicles the history and settlement of Pawnee City and the surrounding area. Antique farm equipment, the city's first school, household appliances, an impressive 1,600 salt and pepper shaker collection, more than 800 types of barbwire, an experimental tailwind airplane, and an authentic log cabin are some of the buildings and artifacts on display at the museum complex. Events also take place on the museum property, such as educational workshops for Kindergarten-4th grade, the Prairie School, and the Civil War reenactment. The Civil War reenactment is held at the museum complex each September—this year's weekend is September 27th and 28th. It includes the war reenactment, demonstrations, a candlelight tour of the camp, entertainment, and other activities. Civil War reenactments are popular events that have the potential to draw thousands of people from across the region and country. The key is to adequately advertise in publications that attract Civil War and military enthusiasts. Following are some suggested magazines:

- *America's Civil War*
- *Civil War Times*
- *American Heritage*
- *Military Heritage*
- *American History*
- *Civil War Weekly*

- *Blue & Gray Magazine*
- *Civil War News*
- *Civil War Interactive*
- *The Gettysburg Times*
- *Trader's Civil War Magazine*
- *North and South Magazine*
- *Military Images*

A future suggestion for encouraging more visitors is to clear the vacant lot across the highway from the museum, and turn it into a parking lot. Local officials and museum volunteers should be proud of the historical museum, and the artifacts it has saved for future generations to enjoy. In fact, the Pawnee City Historical Museum has the potential to be on par with two other Nebraska museum complexes that attract thousands of visitors annually—the Stuhr Museum of the Prairie Pioneer in Grand Island and Pioneer Village in Minden. Better advertising and marketing, adequate funding, and fun-filled events for various age groups and interests are important to the future success of the museum.

Another interesting museum found in Pawnee City is the Toy Pedal Museum, which recently opened its doors to visitors. A grand opening celebration is scheduled soon. Located in a former church, the Toy Pedal Museum is one of the most unique and interesting museums found in Nebraska. It boasts a collection of hundreds of old mint condition, toy pedal vehicles. The care and dedication given to these toys is evident in the museum's spotless and inviting interior. The facility consists of two rooms upstairs, and a large basement room. The toys are displayed so that visitors can enjoy and examine them up-close. Beside having a wonderful museum, the owners are friendly, knowledgeable about their collection, and very proud to showcase it to visitors and local residents. The owners travel across the country to purchase toy pedal vehicles, and many must be restored and repainted prior to being displayed. One suggestion would be that the museum owners set up a small restoration area in the museum where visitors can watch them restore these vehicles.

Marketing and promoting the museum is key to attracting visitors, both locally and from across the country. The museum owners can contact the Nebraska Division of Travel and Tourism to request a free listing on the division's website—www.VisitNebraska.org. They also need to advertise in publications that market Pawnee City and Pawnee County, as well as advertise in the annual Southeast Nebraska Travel Council publication. Target marketing the museum to people who enjoy toy pedal vehicles also is encouraged. They need to research the Internet for businesses that sell these toys, and request a link be placed on the website to the Toy Pedal Museum website. Information on website funding is included later in this report. Museum owners should contact Elmer's Auto and Toy Museum (www.explorewisconsin.com/ElmersAutoandToyMusuem.com) in Fountain City, Wis., for information on how this group markets and promotes its museum.

In addition to preserving the city's past, Pawnee City local officials also are striving to

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provide activities and events for its younger population. The Prairie Hill Sports Complex includes three fields that can accommodate multiple games and activities. The complex is the result of countless hours and time donated by local volunteers to locate funding sources and raise the necessary capital for the project. Equally important are plans to develop a hiking and biking trail system throughout the city. Since an increasing number of communities are realizing the health benefits associated with having trail systems and adequate green space, local officials across the state are developing more of these activities than ever before. Plans are to connect a Pawnee City trail with a statewide trail, encouraging visitors to spend more time in and around the city.

Pawnee City has its share of quality lodging and dining establishments. Both Hallie's and My Blue Heaven Bed and Breakfast provide visitors with unique places to eat and sleep. They both offer small town charm and hospitality, and allow out-of-towners the opportunity to experience rural Nebraska life firsthand. Pawnee City also is interested in making a name for the community in grape growing and wine production. Located on six acres outside Pawnee City, Stonebridge Vineyard is one of the town's newest and most exciting business ventures. This facility has been supplying wine grapes since 2002, and the owners' future plans are to develop a winery on the property. With more than 13 wineries, Nebraska is quickly becoming known as a wine producing state. Therefore, every effort should be made by local officials to support the owners' efforts to develop a winery in Pawnee City. A host of activities could occur there, including being added as a stop on the "Wine Trail" that begins at James Arthur Vineyards in Raymond. Another winery would further distinguish Nebraska as a wine producing state, and increase its potential for becoming one of the premier wine producing states in the country.

Tourism Development and Marketing Strategies

Improve signage for the Pawnee City Historical Museum throughout town.

Adequate signage is important if an attraction, tourism business, or service is to become or remain successful. While a nice, attractive sign is located near the historical museum, it is not very visible to passersby along Highway 8 that borders the complex. The current sign is placed too far back from Highway 8 and the museum's main entrance road, and partially hidden by high grass and vegetation. To encourage more visits to the museum, especially the spontaneous, unplanned ones, museum volunteers should relocate the sign to a more visible location. A suggested location is closer to Highway 8 at the museum's main entrance. Travelers who are not familiar with Pawnee City may otherwise pass by the museum on their way out of town if there is not adequate signage.

Equally important to the museum's success is adequate directional signage located throughout Pawnee City. These directional signs are especially necessary at major intersections and thoroughfares in town. An ideal location for such signage is at the town's main intersection of Highways 50 and 8. Currently, no sign exists to direct out-of-town visitors to the museum. A sign at this location telling travelers about the museum would encourage more spontaneous and unplanned visits. Signs also need to be placed at

the town's eastern and western entrance portals along Highway 8. Adequate signage to the museum encourages visitors to remain in town longer, thereby potentially resulting in them using other local tourist services, such as restaurants or gas stations. This increased length of stay results in more outside dollars being spent in Pawnee City.

Develop better signage for the Pawnee City information center.

Since Pawnee City officials are determined to attract and retain visitors to the community, they must develop adequate signage to attractions and tourist services. For example, a tourist information center is located downtown, but inadequate directional signage means that many travelers who are unfamiliar with Pawnee City will not be able to easily locate it. TARGET members noticed only one sign that informs out-of-town visitors about Pawnee City's information center. Adequate signage to the information center is imperative to spread the word about the area's quality attractions and events. Local officials also need to encourage establishing smaller "satellite" information centers at local lodging and dining establishments, gas stations, and other tourist-oriented services where travelers could still obtain travel information even if the downtown center was closed.

Charge a nominal admission price, or request donations at local attractions and events.

The Toy Pedal Museum and the Pawnee City Historical Museum are two attractions where most visitors would gladly pay to visit. Because many travelers are prepared to pay admission fees to museums, events, and other activities, Pawnee City officials should plan accordingly and require nominal admission fees or request donations at the entrance. First, local officials need to understand that there are some pros and cons to admission fees versus requesting donations. Since it is the museum volunteers' and owners' decisions whether or not to charge an admission fee or request a donation, the following information is provided to help them make the decision.

Admission Fees

Nominal admission fees to the museums would provide much needed capital to cover overhead costs, such as heating and cooling. Fees also would provide the necessary funding for marketing and promoting the museums, for improvement and expansion projects, for acquiring more exhibits, and for developing new activities and events to retain past visitors and attract new ones. With every visitor paying a required admission fee—or families and group tours paying set fees—funds for future projects would be guaranteed. Also, museum staff can plan these funds into their annual budgets. The downside to admission fees is that in Nebraska, museums are required to pay state sales tax on revenue generated from these fees. Museums are classified as entertainment facilities instead of educational facilities by state government. Even if museums have 501(c)(3) non-profit status, they are still required to pay sales tax due to their classification. The only suggestion available to change this requirement is for museum staff and boards to contact their Nebraska senators offices to discuss this issue. A

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legislative bill to change this classification was unsuccessful in 2001.

Donations

To avoid paying the state sales tax, but still receive much needed revenue, the museum could encourage visitors to leave donations. Many museums across Nebraska, especially smaller ones, use this route to help pay for overhead costs, marketing and promotion, and development and expansion projects. Unfortunately, revenue generated solely from donations is not as reliable as admission fees, especially if the museum is open only short or irregular hours. For many small museums, the benefits of using donations for marketing and development projects instead of paying state sales tax far outweigh the worry of generating less revenue. Pawnee City's museums could encourage donations by placing a notice board near the donation jar explaining projects for which donated funds would be used. A second option is to provide a "fun" way to donate money. One example is the plastic, circular tubs where visitors drop a coin at the top and watch it circle around the inside of the tub until it finally disappears through a small opening at the bottom. Third, museum staff could hold a prize drawing for people who donate funds to the museums. Visitors could drop their names and addresses into a drawing, and at the end of a specified time, museum staff could select a winner's name. A fourth option is to encourage local merchants around town to place donation jars for the museums in their businesses.

Develop a self-guided tour map of the historical museum grounds.

The Pawnee City Historical Museum is in need of a self-guided map of the museum complex. With 19 buildings, the museum grounds is quite extensive, and a map would assist visitors in navigating their way around the facility. The cost to produce such a map need not be expensive. In fact, the local high school art class or the local Boy Scout troop could be commissioned to design a map as a project. Once designed, the map could be reproduced at a local business for a reduced cost. However, when designing the map, museum volunteers need to ensure that it is legible, easy to follow, accurate, and that building names are clearly printed. It also would be beneficial to include summaries of the types of artifacts and exhibits that visitors encounter in each building. A self-guided map would encourage visitors to tour the museum on their own. This is beneficial if museum staff and volunteers are busy giving tours to other visitors. Prior to the final printing, museum volunteers could send a draft copy to the tourism division for input and feedback.

If local officials are worried about potential theft and vandalism of exhibits that may result in unsupervised visitors, following are three suggestions they could implement:

- Assign a volunteer to each facility. These volunteers can answer questions and watch the exhibits to ensure that no one damages or steals them.
- Place fake security cameras in each building. Even though the cameras are not working, visitors do not know that.

- Encourage three or four volunteers to wander around the various buildings in the museum complex. They could wear a vest or button that separates them from regular visitors.

Continue trail development efforts in Pawnee City.

Pawnee City's Community Development Plan (October 1996) recommends that local officials develop a series of recreational trails and greenways running through the city. Trails and greenways are popular tools for, not only relaxation, recreation, and beautification efforts, but also for promoting economic development. Visitors who come to Pawnee City to use the city's recreational trails, or those who arrive in town via a connector trail from another town, will usually spend money in Pawnee City at a local restaurant, convenience store, or other tourist-oriented business. The Community Development Plan proposed links that include an extended "creek walk," and the Iron Horse Trail. The latter is a proposed greenway trail along an abandoned railroad line between Pawnee City and DuBois, eight miles to the southwest. Some segments of the proposed greenway trail are designated as a State Wildlife Management Area, so suggested uses along this trail are designed for low-impact use and habitat protection.

Pawnee City officials are in the process of preserving an old limestone culvert at the corner of G and 4th Streets to connect it to a community-wide trails system. In 1998, funds from Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) were awarded to Pawnee City to preserve this historical culvert, located adjacent to South Park. The park boasts a tennis court, picnic shelters, public restroom facilities, and a playground—activities that nicely complement a recreational trail system. Preservation of the culvert was phase one of the city's trail project. Phase two will develop a community-wide trail system that connects the downtown district, the Pawnee County Fairgrounds, the ball facility, and other community facilities. Phase three will connect the Pawnee City trail to the larger Iron Horse Trail mentioned in the preceding paragraph. Upon completion, Pawnee City will have a quality recreational trail that will benefit short and extended hikes. A trail that connects to DuBois also opens up a series of possible events along the trail, such as a trail run or bicycle racing event between the two communities, a fitness trail, and many opportunities for wildlife photography classes and seminars. A multi-community trail also will encourage more trail users to stop in Pawnee City to purchase drinks and food, or to visit one of the town's attractions or events.

Develop more events at Hallie's.

Opened in an old two-story house, Hallie's provides a unique dining establishment to Pawnee City's tourism industry. The restaurant is open during the day for special meetings and events, and reservation in the evenings. Hallie's could potentially attract visitors from as far away as Lincoln and Omaha for an evening meal, or perhaps a weekend stay in town. Hosting a variety of events and activities at the restaurant also would encourage more local residents and out-of-town visitors. The facility already provides meeting space for a variety of groups, such as education extension groups and

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ladies clubs (members of the Red Hat Club were enjoying lunch there the day of the TARGET visit). Following are suggestions for possible events that could be hosted at Hallie's:

- Theme dinners and events (black tie affairs, potluck dinners, surf and turf night)
- Candlelight dinners with musical accompaniment
- English high tea
- Dinner theatre (actors could interact with diners since an adequate stage area is not available.)
- Holiday events (Christmas party, Thanksgiving dinner, Halloween haunted house, 4th of July barbecue)
- Murder mystery dinner
- Mother's Day brunch
- Father's Day barbecue
- Wine and cheese party
- Birthday parties
- Nebraska Statehood celebration
- Taste of Pawnee County (Residents and restaurants from across the county bring their favorite recipes to a big indoor/outdoor picnic.)

These events are simply suggestions. TARGET members understand that much work is involved to develop regular daily or weekly events. To ensure that the owner and staff do not burn out from hosting regular events, and that local residents continue to patronize the restaurant, events should initially be planned on a monthly or bi-monthly basis. For example, hosting a candlelight dinner each week or night might not be as financially successful as hosting only one on a monthly basis. If the event becomes successful, and local residents and out-of-town visitors request that the event be held more often, Hallie's owner could consider increasing the number of times the event is held.

The number of motorcoach travelers to Nebraska has increased through the years. This type of traveler is a good target market for Hallie's and Pawnee City officials. Many of the aforementioned events and activities are ideal for motorcoach groups, especially the murder mystery and dinner theatre events. Local officials and the owner of Hallie's need to put together a plan outlining how they will attract motorcoach tours and the kinds of activities to help achieve their goal. They can market events and activities to motorcoach tour operators in cities, such as Kansas City, Lincoln, Omaha, and Des Moines. Volunteers at the Pawnee City Historical Museum have put together activities for motorcoach tours, and should be consulted to assist with developing similar activities and events at Hallie's.

On average, motorcoach tours bring in busloads of 35 or more people to a community, resulting in a substantial influx of outside dollars to the local economy. Local officials need to develop high quality and interesting tours and events at Hallie's and throughout Pawnee County to attract motorcoach operators. Paula Bohaty, Group Tour Manager with the Tourism Division, can offer assistance to local officials in planning and marketing

events and activities that would attract group tours. She also can provide a list of motorcoach operators across the region and country that would be interested in future opportunities and activities in Pawnee City and Pawnee County. Paula can be reached by calling 877-NEBRASKA or e-mailing: pbohaty@visitnebraska.org.

Encourage more specialty retail shops in downtown Pawnee City.

When visitors first arrive in downtown Pawnee City, they cannot help but notice the Old West building facades, the impressive courthouse on the hill, and the decorative office signage of local businesses. Even though the downtown district's visual appeal is inviting, and encourages passersby to stop, the variety of shopping opportunities, particularly specialty retail shops, is limited. Most of the city's retail shops offer services primarily geared toward the needs of local residents, such as a hardware store, a watch repair shop, a grocery store, a scrapbook store, and a furniture store. However, Pawnee City's downtown district is ideal for a variety of shopping and dining opportunities that reflect both the character and atmosphere of the town. Following are ideas for specialty retail shops and stores that would complement the character of downtown Pawnee City:

- Small coffee houses that feature poetry and storytelling by writers and historians from across the region
- Antique stores specializing in unusual and hard-to-find antiques
- Locally-owned bookstores
- Health food and natural food stores
- Gift shops specializing in local arts, crafts, and Nebraska products
- Garden stores specializing in regional and local native plants and products.
- Ice cream and candy shops
- Intimate sit-down restaurants that serve local dishes
- Internet-based businesses

Many local officials have sought to develop their communities' downtown districts using particular themes, such as antique and collectible shops. One example of a successful community that has developed and marketed itself around a theme is Walnut, Iowa. This town of only 900 residents in Pottawattamie County has become known as "Iowa's Antique City." It attracts shoppers from Lincoln, Omaha, Des Moines, and traffic from Interstate 80. Local merchants, residents, and officials in Walnut developed a vision that would revive the town's economy by establishing an antiques and collectibles industry. During the years, other similar businesses opened in Walnut, and the town gained notoriety as an antique shopper's haven. In fact, Walnut became so popular as an antique and collectibles community, that then Governor Branstad designated the town as "Iowa's Antique City" in 1987. Today, Walnut boasts 19 antique stores, and even has its own visitor information center that helps attract motorcoach tours and buses.

In Nebraska, the tiny riverside settlement of Brownville is trying to develop itself as an official Booktown, one of only three in the U.S. The objective of developing this town of 150 people into a Booktown is to encourage new growth and economic prosperity

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through the sale of books. One bookstore currently exists in town, but the goal is to move the store to a larger facility and encourage more bookstores, mainly independent booksellers, to Brownville. Along with an increase in bookstores comes an increase in similar type services, such as coffee houses, antique stores, clothing stores, and interesting restaurants. To be considered an actual Booktown, a community must replicate the characteristics of the original Booktown—Hay-on-Wye in Wales. However Pawnee City officials still could incorporate some ideas into their own downtown streetscape.

Prior to developing a downtown theme, or attempting to revitalize the downtown district using specialty retail shops, local officials need to visit other communities throughout the region to study the stores, shops, and other businesses available there. However, when encouraging new tourism-oriented businesses to the city, local officials need to ensure that they attract businesses that local residents also will use. Even though Pawnee City is located within a large population base of potential travelers, the success of the downtown district also depends on local residents patronizing Pawnee City's services. One example is an art store that specializes in high end, quality paintings and works of art. Even though this business' primary market might be the traveling public and Internet orders, the merchant still would need to provide products that local residents would purchase.

Encourage more people in Pawnee City to become involved in the community's tourism industry.

A successful tourism industry is only as strong as the people behind the scene. The more people who are involved in promoting, marketing, and developing the industry, the more successful it will become, as will its potential to produce favorable long-term results. Unfortunately, many communities, especially rural ones with small or aging population bases, do not have the luxury of drawing on large groups of volunteers and local residents to plan, develop, and market attractions and events. According to Pawnee City's TARGET evaluation form, the community seems to have a fairly good support network for tourism. The volunteer base, historical society, and local media provide excellent support. Elected officials, downtown merchants, business leaders, and local civic groups and organizations provide above average support, while the general public provides average support for tourism efforts and development.

Pawnee City officials need to continually encourage new ideas, and projects, as well as people to promote and develop the city's growing tourism industry. As stated in the preceding paragraph, the category that seems to need the most attention is the general public. This is often the most difficult group to get involved in tourism development and promotion, since many do not understand the importance of tourism to the local economy, or realize that people actually want to visit their town or region. Local officials need to be at the forefront to encourage more local residents to become involved in developing Pawnee City's tourism industry. Following is a list of recommendations to help Pawnee City officials encourage new volunteers and community leaders, as well as retain volunteers and prevent burn out:

- **Welcome new residents to town**—Typically people must first feel accepted in the community before they are willing to volunteer to help a particular organization or cause.
- **Use volunteers' time wisely**—If volunteers do not feel that their time is wisely spent, they are less likely to return.
- **Actively seek out new volunteers from the community**—Many communities ignore high school age and junior high school age students as potential volunteers. The renovation of the movie theatre in Schuyler, Neb., is a good example of using local youth on a project.
- **Contact local media**—Television, radio, and newspapers could produce stories on volunteerism and how it benefits the community. They also could highlight areas where volunteers are desperately needed.
- **Make volunteer projects fun**—Develop an event or festival occasion around some of the projects.
- **Tailor volunteers' activities to tasks they can perform**—Talk to volunteers to see what their interests, ability, and commitment are to the project. Place them in roles that they are interested in, otherwise they may not be willing to work.
- **Encourage people in leadership positions to volunteer**—Respected people in high profile positions could encourage others in Pawnee City to volunteer. Many people are more encouraged to volunteer if they know that the mayor, city council members, or the bank president are active volunteers on a variety of community projects.
- **Realize that not all volunteers can come to an office**—Many volunteers, such as shut-ins, disabled people, or students can do mailings, make phone calls, or work on posters from their homes. Volunteers do not necessarily have to come to a central location to be useful.
- **Listen to volunteers**—Volunteers often have excellent ideas for how things should be done, new projects, new events, or different advertising options.
- **Compile a list of local groups that use volunteers**—This list, which should include churches, scout troops, and other organizations, will provide Pawnee City officials with a ready supply of volunteers. It should be regularly updated.
- **Extol the benefits and advantages of a volunteer-minded community**—Periodically, people need to be reminded that without volunteers some activities, attractions, or programs would no longer exist.
- **Meet with other communities**—Pawnee City officials should talk with officials from similar sized communities in Nebraska and surrounding states to see how they attract, nurture, and retain volunteers.

Continue efforts to promote Pawnee County's famous residents.

Pawnee County is home to some famous Nebraskans:

- Irish McCalla—Queen of the Jungle films
- Harold Lloyd—1920s silent film actor
- Kenneth Wherry—Senator in U.S. Congress (1942-1951)
- Governor David Butler—Nebraska's first governor

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- Barry Kennedy—International Jaycee President

Local officials are proud of their famous citizens and have undertaken events and activities to promote and capitalize on their memories. For example, “Knowledge Seekers” is designed to attract motorcoach groups for two interesting historical tours, *Mixing with the Governor and Senator* and *Mixing with the Movie Stars*. These tours recount the lives of Governor David Butler, Kenneth Wherry, Irish McCalla, and Harold Lloyd. Available for one, two, or three days, these programs were first offered in summer 2003. Plans are underway to offer these tours again, and local officials need to ensure that the group tour manager with the Nebraska Travel and Tourism Division has these tours on file to promote to the national and international group tour markets. During the past two years, Pawnee City Historical Museum staff have presented informational programs on local history and the county’s famous residents to community organizations in Pawnee County and Beatrice.

In addition to community presentations and group tours, another event that highlights the county’s wonderful history is the annual “Roaring Twenties.” This event usually is held in October and has been a revenue generator for the Harold Lloyd House in Burchard, Neb. Now in its fourth year, it is held in various Pawnee County communities. “Roaring Twenties” begins with a dinner, followed by comedic acts based upon Harold Lloyd’s films and a silent auction. The 2003 event will include an official open house at the restored Harold Lloyd House. At past events, more than 100 people have participated, many of them dressed in 1920s fashions. The Harold Lloyd House was awarded a Tourism Development Initiative grant in 2000 from the Tourism Division to restore this historic landmark. Now that the house has been developed into an excellent tourist attraction, it is listed on the Pawnee City marketing brochure to entice motorcoach tours and other travelers to visit the site. The Pawnee City Historical Museum also includes many artifacts that once belonged to Harold Lloyd, Irish McCalla, and Governor Butler. These artifacts are showcased in attractive displays and exhibits throughout the facility. Finally, the Pawnee Promotional Network plans to distribute baskets of local products and gifts from around Pawnee County for familiarization tours whose participants are lodging in Beatrice in October.

To attract a greater number of participants and visitors to Pawnee City’s events and activities, such as *Mixing with the Stars*, local officials need to ensure that they actively promote and market them to potential visitors. For example, information on these and other activities must be included in all local and regional marketing pieces, such as community and county tourism brochures, websites, and publications of the Southeast Nebraska Travel Council. They also need to ensure that the information is provided to the Nebraska Division of Travel and Tourism to place on the division’s website and in the annual *Catalogue of Events*. Local officials also could contact the Harold Lloyd Trust & Harold Lloyd Entertainment, Inc., in California, and other Harold Lloyd websites, to request a link on the organization’s website. Because people who visit this website are fans of Harold Lloyd and may be interested in attending events, activities, and seminars dedicated to his life. Similar actions also should be taken to promote events and activities

dedicated to Irish McCalla. It also would be a good idea to contact high profile museums in Nebraska, such as Lincoln's Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery and Sculpture Garden and Omaha's Joslyn Art Museum, to inquire about hosting special exhibits on the lives of these famous Nebraskans. Residents of Lincoln and Omaha constitute the state's largest markets, and if they view exhibits of Harold Lloyd and Irish McCalla, they may decide to visit Pawnee City. The Nebraska Arts Council might be able to provide insight and assistance into the necessary steps to encourage these exhibits.

Local officials need to be commended for their efforts to capitalize on the county's famous residents, and for keeping alive the memories of these famous Nebraskans who impacted the popular culture and politics of their time. By preserving the memories and displaying the lives of these famous individuals, their legacies will live on for current and future generations to enjoy. Many counties and communities that are able to claim connections to celebrities, politicians, sports heroes, or other famous individual do not take full advantage of this notoriety. It is gratifying to see that Pawnee City officials are eager to display and promote the town's claim to fame.

Maintain the Pawnee City Internet website.

Today, more people than ever use the Internet to plan their vacations. In fact, the Nebraska Division of Travel and Tourism has recorded a nearly 4,000 percent increase in the number of people requesting information from the website between April 1996 to December 2002, 705 and 23,171 respectively. On average, the division's website is visited by 50,000 people monthly. Many travelers also plan their vacations only two weeks before their departure date, as opposed to past years when they began planning summer vacations in January or February. Pawnee City is represented by two primary websites. The Pawnee County NEGenWeb website (www.rootsweb.com/~nepawnee) includes genealogical and historical research information on communities in Pawnee County. The second website (www.pawneecity.com) provides tourist and general information in Pawnee City.

Pawnee City officials need to regularly update information on community-related websites. This pertains to websites that local officials have developed, as well as others, such as the tourism division's, that provide information about Pawnee City. Following are basic requirements that Pawnee City officials should incorporate into the town's Internet website:

- A photo gallery that highlights Pawnee City's citizens, events, festivals, attractions, downtown city streets, and surrounding scenery (example: Western Nebraska Tourism Coalition—www.westnebraska.com)
- Information on Pawnee City's and the surrounding area's many tourism attractions, events, and services. (example: Bridgeport Chamber of Commerce—www.bridgeport-ne.com)
- A simple, attractive front page that grabs the user's attention (example: Plattsmouth Chamber of Commerce—www.plattsmouthchamber.com)

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Following are suggested ideas that could be incorporated into the community's website:

- Maps of circle tours, backcountry tours, and mini tours that visitors can download
- A map of the Pawnee City Historical Museum
- Information about Pawnee County's famous residents—Irish McCalla, Harold Lloyd, and Governor David Butler
- Maps of hiking trails in town and throughout the county
- Electronic postcards of the area that users can e-mail to friends
- Links to information on surrounding towns, events, tourism activities, and the Nebraska Division of Travel and Tourism website

If future funding for Pawnee City's website becomes an issue, TARGET members suggest that local officials contact the Nebraska Information Technology Commission about the Community Technology Fund. Unfortunately, there is no current timeline for future rounds; the last round of funding occurred in 2002. For more information on this grant program and the types of projects it funds, local officials should contact the program representative, Anne Byers, at e-mail: abyers@notes.state.ne.us, or (402) 471-3805. The Nebraska Division of Travel and Tourism offers grants to develop community or regional websites. Guidelines for this grant program can be downloaded from the Tourism Division's website at: www.visitnebraska.org. The Peter Kiewit Foundation in Omaha also has awarded grants for websites. Contact information for this foundation is located in the Tourism Development Resources List of this report.

Research Pawnee City's niche markets.

Researching a community's niche markets may seem a simple concept to most tourism promoters, but unfortunately, many local officials do not understand the importance of a targeted marketing approach. The key to a successful tourism industry is determining the community's niche markets, and then catering and marketing to these groups. A niche market is a demographic of individuals and groups with similar interests and needs that can be readily identified and easily targeted by local officials. Examples of niche markets include families, empty nesters, group tours, students, history or railroad enthusiasts, wildlife and birdwatchers, or RV travelers. Once Pawnee City officials determine the county's niche markets, they will be in a better position to reach these markets through a targeted advertising approach, as opposed to a "shotgun approach". A "shotgun approach" means that local officials advertise through a variety of media without much thought to the market that they are trying to reach. A targeted approach, however, means that ads are placed in media viewed by people with an interest in the attractions, events, and activities that are offered in Pawnee City.

Following are strategies that local officials could implement to gain a better understanding of the types of travelers who are likely to visit Pawnee County.

- Conduct a survey of travelers visiting Pawnee County to gain information, such as travel interests, state or country of origin, and age.

- Inventory the types of attractions, events, festivals, and activities located in Pawnee County.
- Research the Tourism Division's target markets and tailor them for Pawnee City.
- Research similar sized communities in the area to learn about their target markets.

Once local officials have decided on the community's major target markets, they need to advertise in publications and media used by these demographics. For example, if one of the community's main target markets is travelers interested in wildlife and birdwatching, local officials need to place ads in publications read by this group. Likewise, producing a wildlife and birdwatching brochure, developing wildlife and birdwatching activities along hiking trails, and devoting a section of the community website to this activity would encourage these travelers to visit Pawnee City.

Encourage more people to visit the Pawnee City Historical Museum.

Museum staff commented that they have problems attracting visitors to the museum, especially local residents. Unfortunately, this problem is not limited to Pawnee City. Many communities across Nebraska face a similar issue. Many local residents do not visit attractions located in their own back yards, regardless of the size of the community. Because they live within a convenient distance, they may think they can visit any time, or honestly do not recognize them as tourist attractions. Interestingly, many life-long Omaha residents have never visited the Joslyn Art Museum, which is Nebraska's premier art museum. Similarly, people living in western Nebraska have never enjoyed the view from the summit of Scotts Bluff National Monument.

The key to encouraging more local residents to visit the museum is to provide them with interesting activities, events, and exhibits. Equally important is promoting all museum events and exhibits throughout the community. One thing that museum officials need to focus on, and aggressively promote to local residents, is the exhibits that are unique to the Pawnee City Historical Museum. These include:

- The impressive 1,000-plus salt and pepper shaker collection
- The houses and furnishings of Irish McCalla, Harold Lloyd, Governor David Butler, and Senator Kenneth Wherry
- The 800 piece barbwire collection
- The antique farm machinery collection
- The annual Civil War Reenactment

These exhibits and events must be emphasized in all of the museum's marketing and promotional literature. Local residents need to know why they should visit the museum to view these exhibits, so museum officials should encourage periodic editorials and articles in the local newspaper about the museum and its outstanding exhibits. Museum officials also need to develop and encourage more hands-on exhibits and living history events. Today's visitors are not as satisfied with simply wandering through a museum and looking at exhibits behind glass. Instead, they want to touch, feel, interact, and become part of what they are viewing. Every county in Nebraska has a historical museum that

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displays historical artifacts and exhibits highlighting the county's history and people. The key to success is to go one step further—take the museum's current attractions and shape them for today's audience. The Kool-Aid Exhibit at the Hastings Museums is a good example of how a museum took a static exhibit and turned it into an interactive and exciting display. Museum officials need to visit with Hastings Museum staff to learn how they are improving the museum's displays.

Create new community events and expand existing ones.

Museum officials noted that the Pawnee City Historical Museum and Pawnee City host a number of wonderful events throughout the year, including Pawnee Pioneer Panorama, the Civil War Battle Reenactment, and the Prairie School held in the Crackerbox School building. They explained that, while these events have been successful, more must be done to attract younger age groups, and more residents of Pawnee City. Following are some examples that museum staff and local officials could implement to encourage a wider variety of people to attend events held in Pawnee City:

- Promote the annual Civic War Battle Reenactment to urban visitors, from cities including Omaha, Lincoln, Grand Island, and Kansas City. News releases should be sent to the media in these cities, and follow-up phone calls should be made.
- Promote local events throughout Pawnee County and southeast Nebraska. Place posters and flyers in gas stations, businesses, restaurants, and hotels throughout the area, including neighboring communities in Kansas, Missouri, and Iowa.
- Give local school children a free tour of the museum grounds the Friday prior to the Reenactment, and a free family pass for the weekend event. If the children are excited about the event, they will be more likely to ask their parents to go that weekend.
- Provide tours of the museum during the Reenactment.
- Follow the Reenactment with a community-wide celebration and street dance.
- Develop more living history events, similar to the Prairie School, throughout the year.

A variety of other possible events are available to Pawnee City, including:

- **Pawnee City Wine and Cheese Festival**—This event could be held at the historical museum, Hallie's, or a new winery.
- **Mixing with the Stars**—This event would expand the *Mixing with the Stars* motorcoach tour developed by the historical museum. It would celebrate Pawnee County's connection to famous actors Harold Lloyd and Irish McCalla. Activities could include look-a-like contests, the actors' films shown on a big screen outdoors along a downtown street, reenactments from the actors' films, a 1920s party (complete with music and dance lessons of the 1920s), and a silent film festival that includes other famous silent film actors. These activities could become part of the successful Roaring Twenties event held each year in different communities in Pawnee County.
- **Old Fashioned Christmas**—Most of downtown Pawnee City is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Local officials should develop a month-long

Christmas event in December.

- **Drama in the Park**—The Pawnee County Arts Council could host and organize a series of outdoor productions in the local city park. They could even stage live performances of films by Harold Lloyd and Irish McCalla.
- **Fall Foliage Tours**—These tours could be self-guided backcountry tours. A historical aspect also could be added to the tours.

Consolidate genealogical resources in one central location.

Genealogy is growing as a national pastime, and an increasing number of travelers are interested in researching their roots and learning about their ancestors. There are literally hundreds, if not thousands, of genealogical websites on the Internet, plus a host of magazines, books, and other publications that inform people how to correctly research their family history. Genealogical travelers are valuable to a community's tourist economy in that they tend to remain longer in a region than typical travelers. Instead of visiting a town for only a week or a few days, they tend to remain until their research work is finished. Many of these travelers utilize the local library, city and county offices, local historical museums, and family history research centers, such as Homestead National Monument in Beatrice and the Family History Center in Gordon. Many communities across the country are making it easier for genealogical researchers to locate the information that they need, thereby capitalizing on this growing trend of travelers.

City and county officials, members of the Pawnee City Historical Society, and other organizations that maintain genealogical resources need to consolidate this information in a central location to reduce the time that researchers spend looking for information. This set-up also would allow local officials and residents the ability to more quickly access the information for their own research needs. The Pawnee City Historical Museum has successfully catalogued genealogical information of the community, county, and surrounding area. In fact, the museum recently received a sizeable donation from a person living in Arizona—350 photos of Pawnee City and the surrounding area that were digitized free of charge. Museum volunteers encourage genealogists and family historians to use the many services and information that are available at the museum. However, if researchers are unable to come to Pawnee City to conduct their research, museum volunteers and staff will locate the information they request and send it to them for a nominal fee.

Since the Pawnee City Historical Museum is the forerunner in cataloguing and promoting the history of the area, it would serve as the ideal location for a family history research center. Following are three options for the center:

- A portion of the Beyreis Building could be partitioned off
- An additional room could be built onto the Beyreis Building
- A separate structure could be built on the museum grounds

The facility must include amenities that are conducive to genealogical and historical

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research, such as large tables on which researchers can spread out information, adequate natural and artificial lighting, comfortable seating, and proper heating and cooling. Local officials and museum volunteers also need to ensure that they continue to maintain up-to-date databases on the following types of information at the facility:

- Cemetery information (preferably in a directory)
- Current and previous census information
- Community and county history books
- Community newspapers and periodicals (if possible, even those out of print)
- Information on early pioneers who traveled along the region's historical trails
- High school yearbooks and church directories
- Public records, such as births, deaths, marriages, and divorces
- Court, land, and probate records
- Military records
- County historical maps

Support efforts to develop a winery operation in Pawnee City.

Nebraska's vineyard and winery industry has steadily grown since the state's first winery opened in 1994. Since then, 13 additional vineyards and wineries have opened across Nebraska, with others planning openings in 2003 and beyond. Of these 13 establishments, eight are located in eastern Nebraska, from Pierce to Brownville. Hopefully, Pawnee City will soon be able to increase the number of Nebraska wineries by developing one at Stonebridge Vineyards. Stonebridge Vineyard's first planting was in 2002 with more than 1,200 vines. In 2003, owners planted an additional 1,450 vines, and now have nine varieties—five white wine grapes, two red wine grapes, and two blue/black wine grapes. Stonebridge Vineyards' success over the years has encouraged its owners to forge ahead with plans to add another excellent winery operation to Nebraska's growing wine industry.

The owners have developed a number of potential projects that local officials must encourage and assist with as much as possible. The benefits to having a winery in a community's "backyard" are great. One, a successful winery is a great economic boost for the community. It brings in outside dollars and visitors, many whom might decide to relocate to Pawnee City after visiting. The economic potential is even more pronounced when Internet sales of wine and wine products from Stonebridge Vineyard are included. Two, a winery provides yet another quality attraction and activity for tourists to enjoy while in town. Event, advertising, and promotional partnerships between the winery, the Pawnee City Historical Museum, and the Toy Pedal Museum, for example, would encourage more visitors to stay in town longer. Also, Pawnee City's prime location near major metropolitan centers, such as Omaha, Lincoln, Des Moines, and Kansas City, means that the winery will always have a substantial population base from which to draw visitors. Three, a future winery serves as an ideal location for new community and fundraising events.

A winery will open up a number of tourism possibilities for Pawnee City's residents and future growth and tourism potential. Following are some excellent ideas for projects, events, and activities that the owners of Stonebridge Vineyards have in mind for the new operation:

- Design the winery facility as a replica of a train depot. The Burlington-Northern Santa Fe Railroad line runs adjacent to Stonebridge Vineyards. Tentative plans were to develop a wine excursion train along the line, but Burlington-Northern decided not to abandon the line near the vineyard. This plan should still be considered if the railroad ever abandons this section of track.
- Advertise the vineyard's history as an excavation site for the University of Nebraska Morrill Hall's Asian elephant display. Due to a tragic accident in 1904, two Asian elephants from the Campbell Brothers Circus, Venus and Hamburg, were buried near the present-day vineyards. The skeletons of the two creatures are now on display at Morrill Hall in Lincoln.
- Distribute wines that reflect local history, such as "Rock Island Red," "Forever Venus," and "Hamburg."
- Decorate sections of the winery's retail area with themes, including circus, jungle, and railroad themes.
- Develop themed picnic areas throughout the vineyard—a railroad theme near the stone bridge, a train depot design at the gazebo area, and a circus tent gazebo near the location where the elephants bones were discovered.
- Develop a hiking trail on the hill above the stone bridge.
- Host wine events similar to the annual Wine and Wings Festival at Cuthills Vineyard near Pierce, Neb.
- Continue efforts to be included along the Southeast Nebraska "Wine Trail," which extends from Omaha. It will eventually include wineries in Tekamah, Blair, Ashland, Springfield, Nebraska City, and Brownville, and will be the state's largest wine trail. A second, smaller wine trail, would extend from James Arthur Vineyards at Raymond and Blue Valley Vineyard at Crete. Inclusion of Stonebridge Vineyard along these wine trails would help the business become a quality travel destination for southeast Nebraska.

The Stonebridge Vineyard is a shining star in Pawnee City's tourism industry, and every effort should be made by local officials to ensure that this attraction and business continues to succeed and prosper. The vineyard's owners have great ideas to expand the business and develop its tourism and economic potential. If local officials are serious about increasing the number of outside dollars to Pawnee City, and developing the

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community's tourism potential, supporting the efforts of the Stonebridge Vineyard's expansion is necessary. A list of technical and financial assistance resources is listed in the Appendix of this report.

Develop a vision for the proposed lake near Pawnee City.

In 1996, the Nemaha Natural Resources District (NNRD) restricted boating on Kirkman's Cove and Iron Horse Trail lakes, which were the area's two primary recreational lakes. These closures were a result of shoreline erosion and water quality problems that were created by power boats. Boating is a very popular outdoor recreational activity among tourists and local residents, and the closure of these lakes was felt throughout the community. The closure meant that travelers and local residents had to drive to other lakes in southeast Nebraska to enjoy boating, thereby taking valuable dollars with them to other communities. Therefore, NNRD staff recognized the need to create an alternative site that would:

- Provide a new recreational site for boat owners to enjoy their sport
- Address flooding on the lower reaches of Turkey Creek
- Create a possible potable water supply for the area
- Provide a much needed economic stimulus to the area through increased development and tourism opportunities

A site located south of Pawnee City was chosen as the most practical and cost effective for constructing a dam that would create a large recreational lake. The proposed lake will range in size from 1,500 acres to 3,000 acres. This compares with the proposed 639 acre Lake Wanahoo near Wahoo, Neb. The recreational and economic opportunities associated with the proposed lake are great. It is located in the center of a large urban base, within easy driving distance of the major population centers of Lincoln, Omaha, Des Moines, and Kansas City. The opportunity for new development along the shoreline, including housing, tourist services (hotels, restaurants, gift shops, convenience stores/gas stations), and outdoor recreation outfits operations and guides, will bring in valuable outside dollars to Pawnee City and the surrounding communities.

In fact, communities located near lakes and large bodies of water usually enjoy a good return on their investment. Ogallala, in western Nebraska, is located near the state's largest lake, Lake McConaughy. This county of only 8,839 people ranks number one in terms of lodging tax dollars generated per capita. Each year, thousands of people visit lakes and other bodies of water for a variety of outdoor activities. It behooves communities located along these bodies of water to provide a variety of services for visitors. Pawnee City officials need to develop a vision and plan for how they would like to capitalize on the proposed lake. It is better to begin planning now and have set ideas of the types of services and activities they would like to offer around the lake instead of waiting until the lake is developed to work on a strategy.

Equally important is to get the public involved in the decision making and brainstorming

processes. Good community support is paramount to taking advantage of all the available economic opportunities of a planned lake. It would benefit local officials to visit to other communities located on or near lakes and rivers around the region and state to see how they have capitalized on their proximity to water recreational areas. Some good examples are Ogallala (Lake McConaughy), Valentine (Niobrara River), Alma (Harlan County Lake), Enders (Enders Lake), Burwell (Calamus Reservoir), and Scottsbluff/Gering (Lake Minatare).

Partner with the Heritage Highway Scenic Byway Committee.

The Heritage Highway (Highway 136) is one of nine officially designated scenic byways in Nebraska. This scenic byway is important to Pawnee City's tourism future since is located less than 20 miles from town. It also connects Pawnee City to surrounding larger communities, such as Beatrice, Nebraska City, Lincoln, Omaha, and Interstate 29 in Iowa. After the designation, a byway management committee was established to oversee the byway's marketing, promotion, and development. Committee members meet in different locations, and Pawnee City officials need to continue supporting the committee's efforts to promote and develop the byway to local residents and out-of-town visitors. The more involved that individuals living along Highway 136 are in marketing and developing aspects of the byway, the more representative the management committee will be. More input and buy-in from residents and organizations along the byway means that the management committee can develop and plan quality marketing and development projects that encourage visitors to travel Highway 136 instead of another route.