

Get to Know....
TREVOR HARLOW
from the



at the University of Nebraska

Trevor Harlow and Trenton Buhr (see Trenton's profile [here](#)) selected an economic development project for their Rural Futures Institute (RFI) serviceship and the community was lucky enough to be selected. Both young men have been in town since May 21st assisting with various projects, including the creation of a multiyear Economic Development Plan for the City of Red Cloud. One of the ultimate goals of this plan would be to enable Red Cloud to create and implement an LB840 Municipal Option Economic Development Plan after the passage of funding connected to LB357, which is geared towards repairing infrastructure. Their work will go well beyond creating drafts of the plan, however, as they have already assisted with the Cather Conference, BRAN (Bike Ride Across Nebraska), and the Red Cloud Proud Community Cleanup Program. Through the rest of the summer they will also draft a basic strategic plan for the Starke Round Barn, bolster the work already being done with Heritage Tourism, assist with the Good Living Tour, create a grants/loans database for the City, and develop a draft of a housing plan. We truly wish we could keep them year round!

RFI, one of four interdisciplinary Institutes of the University of Nebraska (NU), leverages the talents and research-based expertise from across the four NU campuses on behalf of rural communities in Nebraska, the U.S. and around the world. Through a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship, the institute encourages bold and futuristic approaches to address critical rural issues. It works collaboratively with educational,

business, community, non-profit, government and foundation partners to empower rural communities and their leaders. According to RFI's Vision Statement, "Rural America unleashes the full potential of its leadership, economic capacity, cultural creativity and natural resources, creating explicit value for small and large communities within and beyond its geography. Rural places have become the legitimate best choice for leaders, businesses, families, graduates and explorers. Rural people earn global respect for fueling the future of humankind. [View the full RFI Vision Story](#)"

TREVOR HARLOW



Tell us a little bit about yourself

My name is Trevor Harlow, and I'm from a small town just outside of Omaha called Waterloo. I am currently a Senior at the University of Nebraska at Omaha studying Political Science and Environmental Studies. After I graduate this next year I plan on attending graduate school to get a master's in Public Policy with a focus on Environmental Policy. Afterwards I hope to work for the Environmental Protection Agency or a similar department or organization to do policy analyzing and management, or similar type work. I am here in Red Cloud this summer as part of the Rural Futures Institute from the Nebraska University system. This organization pairs students like me with communities around Nebraska to work on specific projects for the community. I couldn't be happier to be here in Red Cloud this summer, and I hope we're able to make a difference for the community in our 10 short weeks here!

Can you talk a little bit about what made you decide to become a Rural Futures Institute intern?

I have lived very close to the biggest urban center in the state (Omaha) and have only really been exposed to that aspect of community, governance, and way of life. I felt that this program would be a great chance to work in a truly rural part of small town Nebraska, and to get a real feel for how that aspect of the country is.

Why did you decide to do an internship in Red Cloud?

I was given a chance to pick the project, and not necessarily the community. I was very interested in Red Cloud's project of economic and community development, and I knew that was the kind of work I wanted to do. I was also very happy to find out Red Cloud was where I would be this summer, I think it is a perfect exposure to a new type of community that is rural and small, but also so alive and active.

Prior to your arrival, did you know anything about Red Cloud?

I had known all about the Willa Cather influence in the community but had never been here before this, so I didn't know much else coming into it.

What is your favorite thing about Red Cloud so far?

The people, and this amazing community they have built. Red Cloud is a lot different than other small towns, they don't just try and be kind and welcoming they are truly trying to build a community with something special that you just don't see everywhere.

Do you have any advice for community leaders to help get young professionals to stay in Red Cloud long term?

I would say that it is important to just market the community in a way that fits their demographic. That age group doesn't look for the same thing that other groups do, so the strategy to sell the community to them is different, and it is all about freedom, opportunity, and ability to live a life they want. I also think it is important to market towards young people that still live in the community, and are out of high school age now. This group is prime young demographic, since they already have a reason to be here. It's important to market secondary education to them, and then Red Cloud second, because you want to have a professional young population. It is all about specific targeted marketing for the group.

If you could have a superpower what would it be and why?

It is a little over the top but messing with gravity would be fun. You realistically could do anything: Want to fly? Lighten gravity. Want to move stuff around with your mind? Mess with its gravity. You can even time travel by really messing with the gravity.

Do you have any hobbies?

I like gardening or amateur landscaping, and in my free time I mostly like to weight lift, play video games, spend time with friends, or be outdoors.

Do you have any pets?

I have a cat named Isaiah, which is named after my great-great-great uncle.

Describe what a perfect weekend would be like for you?

I would say being able to have free time to do what I want and be with my friends. Ideally, going on a weekend trip, something like Kansas City. If I can be with friends, be able to do what I want to do I consider it a great weekend.

What would your high school teachers or guidance counselor say about you if we asked?

They would say I am a goofy kid, but also the most responsible and one of the most dedicated students you'll find. I really set myself apart from a lot of students in high school, because I had clear goals for what I wanted to do, and so I worked hard to prepare myself to get there. I also was inherently very responsible, and a lot of the staff trusted me to make the right call and be respectful.



Pictured L to R: Trevor with Trenton Buhr. Both Trevor and Trenton were provided office space in the Willa Cather Foundation to work on their economic development project.

What are you most proud of?

This past year I got the Waterloo Park and Tree Board reinstated, and so far, we have planted 8 trees, and have done the first part of a complete remodel for a park in the town, based on my landscape design. We added flowers, made new infrastructure in it, and truly transformed it.

Do you have a mantra or mission statement you live by?

Not anything really specific, but I always try to remember that it doesn't matter where you come from, or where you are now, or even where you are going. Everyone can and will make an impact, and it is just up to us to decide how positive of an impact we can make. The potential is in us all though.

What historical figure or celebrity would you most like to spend a week with? Why?

Jimmy Carter. I honestly think that a lot of his policies and way of thinking while in office was relatively good. He may have not executed it perfectly, and may have not done everything right, but ethically and morally I think he was the best we've had. Aside from just the presidency, he is a really great philanthropic and humanitarian guy. It would be great spending time helping him volunteer, seeing the difference he can still make while 91, and being able to talk with him about the current politic climate, I am sure he would have a lot to say.

What is your favorite song and/ or recording artist?

My all time favorite song will always be "Under Pressure" when Queen and David Bowie preformed it together. Yet, I never really have a favorite overall artist, I usually really like an artist that I am into listening to at the time, so Jukebox The Ghost is probably my favorite new and current artist. If I had to choose and overall it very well might be AC/DC or Queen.

Who is your favorite writer/thinker?

I think my all time favorite writer would be Kurt Vonnegut. *Slaughterhouse Five* is one of those books that you read, and never really look at writing in general the same way ever again. I think the way he does his writing is just so unique and amazing that I have to consider him one of the best writers.

Who has been the biggest influence in your life?

Without a doubt my mother. She is easily the most caring and positive—well usually positive—people I know, and growing up with her really shaped me into who I am today. Her positive and caring influence is what makes me want to work in a career were I can help people, it is what makes me genuinely care deeply about all my friends and family,

and it is what makes me want to see a more positive and genuine world more than anything.



RFI Serviceship Interns Trevor Harlow and Trenton Buhr discuss Red Cloud issues with Heritage Tourism & Economic Development Director Jarrod McCartney during the Burlington Depot Social at the 63rd Annual Spring Willa Cather Conference. Photo by Rob Olsen.

What are some of your favorite businesses in Red Cloud? What is it that you like about them?

I love Fat Fox's. I think his pizza is absolutely terrific, I don't know what it is but he does it right! All the business owners have been so kind also, and I think that model of business is just great being kind, open, and always willing to talk to shoppers!

Do you have any advice for someone looking to relocate to rural Nebraska?

I obviously isn't for everyone, that is just something we have to accept, but if you are looking for a place to raise a family, join a real community, and get to know the place you live—then nothing beats rural Nebraska. It is a transition, and it may be difficult at times, but it is worth it if that kind of life is what you want for yourself and your family.

What's your favorite place to visit in Nebraska?

I really like nature and the outdoors. I would say my favorite place would be those types of places within the state, like Ponca State Park and Ashfall Fossil Beds. Those types of places are what I love to visit.

What do you wish everyone knew about the Rural Futures Institute?

That their mission is to help small communities that need it. We may just be college students that are out on this serviceship, but we are all dedicated students that want to make a difference, and have the ability to do so. This opportunity may be one of the only ways some small towns are going to be able to get the affordable help they need, and I think that is so great that this institute is making a real effort to help all those small towns across the state.



Trevor Harlow (standing, middle) and Trenton Buhr were tremendous assets during the Spring Cather Conference.

If you wish to contact Trevor or Trenton please contact Jarrod McCartney at 402-746-4065 or jmccartney@redcloudnebrask.com. You can learn more about the Rural Futures Institute by visiting their website at <http://ruralfutures.nebraska.edu/>