

The Intentional Tourist
by Jarrod McCartney
April 19, 2023

I sigh a little when people tell me there's nothing to do in Red Cloud. Having a lack of things to do or be proud of has simply not been my experience. A simple glance at our community, school, and sports events calendars tells me otherwise. I'm coaching youth soccer in Hastings, my daughter is participating in that along with dance classes, softball, 4H and reading all the books in the library. My wife is organizing the 68th Spring Cather Conference, doing about an event every 10 days or so at the Cather Center, and taking on the role of the communications manager for the Red Cloud Booster Club. Heritage Tourism and the Red Cloud Community Fund continue to make progress on the "E3" program and Business After Hours events, the Red Cloud Creative District, the Hotel Garber project, BRAN 41 planning, Recreation Trail plans, the Red Cloud Area Youth Committee, and much more.

Other organizations are busily planning for Alumni Weekend, the 2023 Golf Season, Street Car Days, the Republican River Stock Tank Float, the County Fair, 4H programs, and more. Farmers are beginning the planting season, teachers and students are wrapping up another school year, and families are getting ready for graduation ceremonies, Mother's Day, and the start of summer activities. The City was awarded a \$1 million grant to address housing issues (thank City Attorney Kory McCracken for this and seek him out if you want more information. Kory has brought in about \$1.3 million in grant funding for the City in recent years. Red Cloud is lucky to have him). The City is also launching the next phase of a nuisance abatement program. There's a real buzz going on in this town and I truly feel like we're building some serious momentum towards not only building a robust tourism industry, but also a sustainable future for people living here.

Part of that momentum is the official designation of the Red Cloud Creative District, one of nine in the entire state. What this means is that we were awarded a \$10K grant from the Nebraska Arts Council (NAC) to be used on creating wayfinding signage and a marketing plan for the district. NAC will send videographers to town this summer and film commercials to promote the district. We are immediately eligible to apply for a \$250K grant for an arts based economic development project. The official mission of the Red Cloud Creative District is to encourage artistic and cultural creativity through advocacy, promoting programs and activities, building out infrastructure to increase access and exposure to the arts for diverse groups of people, youth engagement, becoming a regional hub for arts and culture in rural Nebraska and Kansas, becoming a destination for practicing artists and tourists, and providing opportunities for diverse expression. You can learn more here: <https://www.artscouncil.nebraska.gov/red-cloud-creative-district/>

Please let me know if you're bored and we'll put you to work this summer. We believe Great Stories Grow Here and we'd love to help you create your own.