

The Intentional Tourist  
by Jarrod McCartney  
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What a whirlwind the last month has been. In my office, we've been inundated with grant applications and reporting and marketing. Our latest social media campaign with the Nebraska Department of Tourism was record setting. We've created a new logo for the Red Cloud Creative District and will be launching marketing connected to it in the coming weeks. We're also finally ready to hire a General Manager for the Hotel Garber. We're ready to add brick to the third floor. We're also trying to finalize fundraising efforts—it's not too late if you want to be part of this effort. Naming opportunities start at \$1,000 and range from getting your name on the wall to the lower level event center (\$100K) and lobby (\$250K).

Heritage Tourism is evolving beyond tourism though and maybe headed in a direction that a lot of you might have preferred in the first place. We are looking to evolve into the Republican Valley Tourism & Economic Development Corporation.

The recent crisis with the potential closure of the Heritage Care Center Nursing Home illustrates why we need an economic development corporation. Non-profit foundations are critical to the well-being of rural communities in this modern world where we have a federal government we cannot rely on to provide support for critical services like eldercare and childcare.

It would give us much greater flexibility to respond to crisis issues and to make more headway on other concerns holding the community back, like addressing our lack of quality housing and apartments. Depending on the amount of community and corporate support we receive, we could conceivably branch out into doing more business recruitment and development. Of course, we will not stop focusing on tourism as that has been a reliable source of growth and has attracted millions in revenue and grant dollars. What I would like to see happen is the creation of a team of professionals that can address a variety of community concerns. Of course, what is ideal and the amount of resources we have may not align but we will endeavor to make it happen.

I mentioned the nursing home earlier. It was one of the proudest moments of my service as the Chair of the Red Cloud Community Fund (RCCF) to be able to provide some support to the Webster County Community Hospital Foundation (WCCHF) and keep the nursing home operational. Our joint 3 year fundraising campaign will launch soon and we will attempt to match the \$375K that both RCCF and WCCHF have already raised. Donations will go into a RCCF account that we'll grant out to help the hospital run the facility.

I do want to be clear though—taking this course of action will limit what RCCF will be able to support here in the short term. We may not be able to take on new projects for quite some time and may not be able to provide funding to other worthy causes in the community. We felt that the nursing home was such a critical part of the community that we had to take that risk.

However, we need your support now more than ever because of this new obligation. We will not be able to make this latest fundraising campaign work and we will not be able to keep the nursing home open long-term without consistent support from the community. That means we need your contributions, no matter how big or small. It also means that when you are presented with a choice of where to house your loved ones when it comes time for them to enter a facility that you choose Red Cloud. That decision will keep the facility open and keep good jobs in town, families shopping in local stores, and kids in our schools.

It has been a joy to get to know LaMont Cook through this process and I don't know that there's anyone I would trust more to see us through this difficult time and to steer the future of healthcare in Red Cloud into a sustainable place. But it's ultimately not going to be about what RCCF or LaMont or anyone can do—it's going to be what we can do collectively as a community.

Finally, I want to be clear that both foundations' ability to support the nursing home was due to what we call "legacy" gifts. In other words, someone named our foundations as a beneficiary in their estates and when they passed, their wealth passed on to us with relatively few strings attached. These legacy gifts help ensure the future prosperity of the community and prevent it from being distributed elsewhere. They help us save nursing homes, among other things. If you would like to learn more about leaving a gift for the community foundation in your will, please contact your attorney or estate planning professional today. Todd Meckelburg, the Director of Gift Planning at the Nebraska Community Foundation, is also an outstanding resource. He'll speak at our banquet on November 23rd, but please consider attending or giving him a call now at (402) 323-7330.