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Media Release:

Gov. Ricketts & First Lady Shore Encourage Nebraskans to Apply for Sesquicentennial Celebration Grants ***Sesquicentennial Commission announces grant program to support events, projects celebrating Nebraska statehood in 2017***

(LINCOLN) – Today, Governor Pete Ricketts and First Lady Susanne Shore encouraged communities across Nebraska to apply with the Nebraska Sesquicentennial Commission (NSC) for grants supporting sesquicentennial celebration events.

The NSC has launched the Nebraska Sesquicentennial Grants Program, which will provide funding to help support communities, organizations, and others planning events, programs, and projects in recognition and support of the Nebraska 150 Celebration in 2017.

“The Nebraska Sesquicentennial will be a year-long celebration of our state’s diverse history and culture developed during 150 years of statehood,” said Governor Ricketts. “The Nebraska 150 Sesquicentennial plates are one of the many great ways we are preparing to celebrate this significant event. These plates are not only helping Nebraskans get the word out about our sesquicentennial birthday, but they also provide funding for grants communities can use to join in the celebration. Susanne and I encourage interested communities to apply for these grants.”

Funding for the non-competitive grant program has been made possible through earned revenue from the sale of the Nebraska 150 commemorative license plates, which the Governor and First Lady unveiled last September. The plates cost \$70 and are available for purchase through 2022 at www.clickdmv.ne.gov. To date, the Commission has received about \$18,800.

“The specialty Nebraska 150 license plates have done a tremendous job of helping our organizations promote this historic event as Nebraskans travel throughout the country with them proudly affixed to their vehicles,” NSC Chair Dr. Sara Crook said. “Even better, the money raised from their sale is now being granted back to local communities to assist in bringing special programming and events to commemorate and celebrate our state’s 150-year legacy. It has been a ‘win-win’ proposition, and we thank Governor Pete Ricketts, the Nebraska Legislature, and the Nebraska Department of Motor Vehicles for their support of this important initiative.”

“Our goals at the Nebraska 150 are to bridge communities and individuals to form a larger overall community, build stronger connections between Nebraskans and their state, and create an enhanced sense of state pride,” Nebraska 150 Celebration Executive Director Regan Anson said. “We encourage communities across the state, both large and small, to consider how they can play a role in the Nebraska 150 Celebration and to utilize this grant program to help make their vision a reality. We hope these grants will help energize communities around the celebration and assist them in creating amazing programming reflective of their unique Nebraska story.”

Grant applications will be available beginning on June 15, 2016 at www.ne150.org/grants and will be considered in the order they are received.

Funding for the program is limited and dependent on the availability of funds. Grants, which may range in amounts from \$500 to \$5,000, are restricted to events and activities that originate and/or

take place within the boundaries of the State of Nebraska. Unless otherwise requested and approved in advance, all grant funds must be used between of Sept. 1, 2016 and Dec. 31, 2017.

Applications must be made a minimum of 90 days in advance of the proposed date of the activity or event. Additional details and requirements of the program are outlined at www.ne150.org/grants.

The Nebraska State Historical Society administratively manages the NSC Grant Program. Questions can be directed to Dee Ward at 402-471-0090.

Anson said communities, organizations, schools, businesses, government entities, and others that have on-going parades, festivals, fairs, programs, events, etc. in 2017 can apply to be recognized as Official Projects/Events of the Nebraska 150 Celebration. One-time special events or projects specifically organized for the Nebraska 150 Celebration can qualify as well.

Official projects/events will, among other attributes:

- Bridge Nebraskans across different communities, perspectives, and cultures.
- Build a connection with every citizen to the Nebraska 150 celebration and the state.
- Instill in every Nebraskan a greater sense of pride in our state.
- Encourage connection to Nebraska's history and heritage.
- Celebrate Nebraska's cultural and ethnic diversity.
- Foster a spirit of community involvement and enrichment.
- Create an engaging educational opportunity.

Official projects/events will be publicized via the Nebraska 150 Celebration's website and social media sites. They will also be granted use of the official Nebraska 150 Celebration logo to use for promotional purposes. The application form is available online at www.ne150.org.

Nebraska was granted statehood on March 1, 1867. The state will commemorate its 150th birthday beginning Jan. 1, 2017, with a yearlong celebration involving a wide variety of programs and projects across the state.

Additional information about the Nebraska 150 Celebration is available at www.ne150.org on Facebook at facebook.com/nebraska150 and Twitter @ne150.

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ABOUT THE 150 CELEBRATION

Planning for the Nebraska 150 Celebration began in 2012 when a group of active citizens from across the state formed the Friends of the Nebraska 150 Foundation. In 2014, the Nebraska Sesquicentennial Commission was established by the Legislature and 17 members from across the state were appointed by the Governor to lead the initiative. In 2015, the Celebrating Nebraska Statehood Foundation was established to help coordinate efforts and direct everyone toward collective success.