



NEBRASKA STATEHOOD 150

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Governor and First Lady launch Nebraska150 Celebration, unveil four online programs *Programs focus on volunteerism, fitness, education and oral histories*

(Lincoln, Neb.) Governor Pete Ricketts and First Lady Susanne Shore today launched the Nebraska150 Celebration by unveiling four online programs focused on fitness, volunteerism, education and collecting the histories of Nebraskans. The yearlong celebration begins January 1 and will feature a total of 13 signature programs and events sponsored by the Nebraska150 Celebration.

"Nebraska's 150th birthday celebration is right around the corner," said Governor Ricketts. "Today we are debuting four online programs that will help Nebraskans across the state come together to celebrate how much the Good Life has grown over the last century and a half. Susanne and I invite our fellow Nebraskans to join our family in participating in these challenges and activities."

First Lady Shore said, "In developing programming for this celebration, we focused on projects that would bridge communities, connect Nebraskans, and enhance state pride. We also wanted to create something meaningful that would live beyond 2017 so we are partnering with organizations that can lend their expertise and can carry on the programs."

The four programs leading off the sesquicentennial celebration include the Nebraska Impact Initiative, the Nebraska150 Challenge, Now You Know Nebraska and I Am Nebraska.

The Nebraska Impact Initiative

The Nebraska Impact Initiative challenges Nebraskans to volunteer 150 hours or more either as an individual or as part of a group in 2017. Utilizing an online platform at www.nebraskaimpact.com, the initiative allows participants to register, discover volunteer opportunities, connect with other Nebraskans and track progress. Through the website and social media, the Nebraska150 Celebration will recognize Nebraskans who participate and highlight communities, schools and non-profit organizations that are impacted.

TD Ameritrade, an online investment and trading firm founded and headquartered in Omaha, has sponsored the program.

First Lady Shore said, "Nebraska consistently ranks in the top 10 nationally for volunteerism. What better way to celebrate our 150th birthday than to be number one in 2017? Everyone can play a role and help to build better communities while connecting with friends through Nebraska Impact."

ServeNebraska Executive Director Cathy Plager said, "In 2015, Nebraska ranked sixth in the nation in volunteerism with nearly 34 percent of our population having reported volunteering. Service is part of our heritage and continues to be a way of life. I have every confidence we can

reach our goal of being number one in 2017. I want to thank the Nebraska150 Celebration and TD Ameritrade for working with ServeNebraska in such a meaningful way.”

The Nebraska150 Challenge

The Nebraska150 Challenge is an online fitness program that strives to make fitness fun by motivating and assisting Nebraskans to reach the goal of moving 150 miles or more in 2017.

Through an interactive website, www.ne150challenge.com, individuals and groups will register and document miles for walking, running, biking, swimming, kayaking, skateboarding, jump roping – any type of exercise. An online physical activity converter helps participants easily turn action into miles. Participants will track their progress and earn virtual badges for at certain milestones.

The website features a social media feed; healthy living tips; links to the state’s hiking, biking and kayaking trails; and information about marathons, walks, runs and other organized amateur sporting events throughout the state. The challenge is designed for every age and level of fitness.

The Nebraska150 Challenge is a partnership with the Nebraska Sports Council.

Nebraska Sports Council Executive Director Dave Mlnarik said, “The Nebraska Sports Council is proud to promote and provide staff support for the NE150 Challenge, which fits perfectly within our mission of encouraging healthy and active lifestyle choices. We look forward to helping individuals, families, companies, colleges, K-12 classrooms, social groups and others learn about and benefit from the Challenge.”

Now You Know Nebraska

Now You Know Nebraska is a series of 174 engaging video shorts, each lasting one to two minutes, that will tell some of the state’s most compelling, entertaining and appealing stories and facts, along with historical background to give context. The videos were created by Lincoln-based production firm V2 Content and will be released on the Nebraska150 Celebration’s website, www.ne150.org/nowyouknow and via YouTube.

The primary goal of the project is to supplement the history lessons already being taught in the classroom and provide another engaging learning tool for educators. Five videos will be released each Sunday beginning Jan. 8 so teachers are able to incorporate the content into the upcoming week’s lesson plans and so that differing schedules can be accommodated. The videos will be accessible for the hearing impaired through closed captioning.

Videos address a wide variety of topics and time periods, incorporate all parts of the state, and include education on a variety of cultures, ethnicities and races. However, the video material will not simply repeat lessons already taught in the classroom.

First Lady Shore said, “This has been an incredibly fun project to work on and we are excited for students across the state to see the final product. Each video starts with a fascinating story or fact and then provides background, context and detail, defining the significance of each topic. We did our best to sneak a lot of education into the fun with these videos.”

The Now You Know Nebraska video series is funded in part by Nebraska Humanities.

I Am Nebraska

I Am Nebraska is an oral history project, that invites citizens of all ages to share their Nebraska experience via social media by recording a short video and uploading it to their own Facebook, Twitter or Instagram accounts under the hash tag “I Am Nebraska” (#IAMNEBRASKA).

The Nebraska150 Celebration will aggregate the submissions and feature some on its website, www.iamnebraska.com. Participants can find instructions to produce their videos at those sites as well as watch sample videos produced by the Nebraska150 Celebration.

First Lady Shore said, "I Am Nebraska is a great school or family project. I hope everyone in the state will tell their stories and that kids and students will interview older generations about their Nebraska experiences. These invaluable stories will enable us to document our past and present in an engaging way for our future generations. Best of all, this process will connect Nebraskans as they discover others' stories. I believe we will quickly discover how wonderfully similar and unique our experiences are.

"You don't have to be a professional videographer to participate. All you need is a smartphone or webcam and Internet connection. Tell us what living in Nebraska has meant to you. Share your family history, favorite memories of growing up, the best Nebraska vacation experience how you have witnessed Nebraska change throughout the years, what you were surprised to discovered about the state after first moving here – whatever it is, we want to hear from you!"

I Am Nebraska is funded in part by Nebraska Humanities and is a partnership with the Nebraska State Historical Society and the Nebraska Tourism Commission. The storytelling campaign will work in tandem with the Tourism Commission's efforts in 2017, encouraging Nebraskans to share their stories.

Additional information about the Nebraska150 Celebration is available at www.ne150.org on Facebook at facebook.com/nebraska150 and Twitter @ne150.

ABOUT THE 150 CELEBRATION

Planning for the Nebraska150 Celebration began in 2012 when a group of active citizens from across the state formed the Friends of the Nebraska150 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.

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