

THE OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF THE CITY OF GERING KENO COMMITTEE, MAY 6, 2026

A regular meeting of the City of Gering Keno Committee was held in open session at 4:30 p.m. in the Gering City Hall Conference Room at 1025 P Street, Gering, NE, on May 6, 2026. Present were Committee Members Darrell Bentley, Don Kugler, Julie Morrison, and Amy Doll. Absent: Matt Janecek. Also, present were City Administrator Pat Heath, City Treasurer Lyndsey Mathews, and Secretary Carol Martin. Notice of the meeting was given in advance by publication in the Star-Herald, the designated method of giving notice. All proceedings hereafter were taken while the meeting was open to the attendance of the public.

A. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chairman Bentley called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

B. Open Meetings Act - Neb. Rev. Stat. Chapter 84, Article 14, As required by State Law, public bodies shall make available at least one current copy of the Open Meetings Act posted in the meeting room. Agenda items may be moved up or down on the agenda at the discretion of the Chairman. Additions may not be made to this agenda less than 24 hours before the beginning of the meeting unless they are considered under this section of the agenda and the Keno Committee determines that the matter requires emergency action.

C. Approval of February 4, 2026 Keno Committee Meeting Minutes

Motion by Morrison to approve the minutes of the February 4, 2026 Keno Committee meeting. Seconded by Doll. There was no discussion. The vote was called. "AYES": Bentley, Kugler, Morrison and Doll. "NAYS": None. Absent: Janecek. Abstaining: None. Motion carried.

D. Keno Fund Financial Report

Lyndsey Mathews, City Treasurer, reported the following balances as of March 31, 2026:

- Pooled Cash \$30,383.03
- US Bank Keno \$301,021.03
- Pooled Investments: \$1,060,931.15

Outstanding Obligations:

- Taxes to be paid: \$9,682.95
- Deferred Commissions: \$107,349.19
- Obligations not yet paid: \$35,717.72
- Total Outstanding \$152,749.86

- Pooled Cash \$30,383.03
- US Bank Keno \$301,021.03
- Obligations Owed (\$152,749.86)
- Total Cash Available \$178,654.20

Lyndsey stated that the last quarter brought in \$49,624.91. Julie asked if that had gone down; Lyndsey replied that she has seen it going down. Darrell commented that it was more than the last quarter. Lyndsey said it's about \$3,000.00 more than the last quarter, but not as much as it was a couple years ago. Darrell noted the games of skill have not helped any.

E. Remove from table Stand Up and Play, Gering NE Chapter Keno Fund Application (tabled at the February 4, 2026 Keno Committee meeting)

Motion by Morrison to remove from table the Stand Up and Play, Gering NE Chapter application from the February 4, 2026 Keno meeting. Seconded by Doll. There was no discussion. The vote was called. "AYES": Bentley, Kugler, Morrison and Doll. "NAYS": None. Absent: Janecek. Abstaining: None. Motion carried.

Darrell mentioned that Stand Up and Play had been there before; Amy Seiler (Parks Director), and Robert Thomason (Golf Pro) are in favor of it.

F. Review and discuss applications for Keno Funds

NOTATION

Application information provided in the minutes is taken directly from the Keno Fund Application submitted by each applicant

1) Stand Up and Play, Gering NE Chapter - \$12,450, Cindy & Dan Dickinson

City of Gering Keno Review Committee,

Per your request, we are pleased to supply additional information to you regarding the Stand Up and Play program to provide golfing opportunities for mobility challenged golfers at Monument Shadows Golf Course.

Based on the letter we received February 20, 2026, the following information will address the items listed:

1. Input from City Staff and the Park Department on training, staffing and operation of the VertaCat mobility cart.
 - The initial VertaCat training will be provided by Stand Up and Play staff at no additional charge. When the VertaCat is delivered, their representative will provide a full day of training to go over maintenance, fitting for different types of disabilities and also hold an Adaptive Golf Clinic. All travel and costs connected to the delivery of the VertaCat are covered by the Stand Up and Play Foundation.
 - Monument Shadows Golf Course Staff has obtained information from the Stand Up and Play staff and City of Denver-Golf who have a VertaCat. It is their suggestion to have at least one to two staff members and/or volunteers trained to assist golfers. The initial training lasts approximately 1 hour. Amy Seiler, Director of Parks, Recreation & Leisure Services and Robert Thomason, PGA Golf Pro, will initially receive the training, and then will train volunteers and specific pro shop staff. No additional staff will need to be hired to assist with the training and use of the mobility cart. The trained employees and volunteers will help fitting participants with equipment set up and safety checks, guiding users on the mobility cart and provide driving instructions for new users.
 - The Golf Pro will create a list of volunteers trained to assist golfers. These volunteers then can be assigned to assist VertaCat golfers as needed.
 - Once volunteers and staff are trained Golf Pro will conduct in-service trainings for staff and volunteers to ensure knowledge of equipment is up to date.
 - A golfer's first training session would last approximately 30 to 45 minutes to get properly fitted and run through the controls. To be certified VertaCat user will be required to demonstrate ability to do various tasks on the course such as navigating hills, around vegetation and avoiding water hazards. Golfers will need to provide their own assistance if they need help transferring to the VertaCat.
 - Every certified adaptive golfer who receives the training will be documented at the course and be issued a certification card they will need to present to utilize the equipment.

Reserving the Adaptive Cart, Making a Tee Time and Play

1. You must contact the pro shop directly by phone to reserve an adaptive cart for practice and for on course play. 308-635-2277

2. Please provide at least a 3-day reservation request prior to anticipated use to ensure the cart is available and trained staff member or volunteer is available to assist with set up of cart.
3. Adaptive cart is available on a first reserved first served basis and may need charging time in between rounds.
4. Please be mindful of pace of play expectations at course and operating the carts on the greens in a manner that minimizes scuffing.
5. We do not loan out adaptive cart outside of Monument Shadows Golf Course.

Practice Facilities

There is no charge for adaptive cart use for range, putting and chipping. Please call ahead to make sure we do not have any leagues, programs, or other scheduled play that would close these practice areas. Call the pro shop to reserve the adaptive cart for practice.

Adaptive recreation assistance

Our golf employees are very limited in what services they are qualified to provide guests with adaptive mobility needs. We want you to have the best possible guest experience and have a staff or a volunteer available upon appointment to assist with fitting and player support. Monument Shadows Staff or volunteers are not available for transfer assistance, to the VertaCat. User is responsible for arranging assistance in transfer to the VertaCat.

Adaptive Golf Cart

45-minute information and training session for new VertaCat and ParaGolf participants.

Purpose: Monument Shadows Golf Course is committed to providing golf opportunities to individuals require mobility assistance in order to practice or play golf on the course. Because we desire for all individuals to have the opportunity to play golf we rent a VertaCat mobility cart for use on our course.

To promote a safe and fun experience for golfers using this equipment, Monument Shadows Golf Course requires each participant to complete a 45-minute information and training session with one of our staff prior to any independent use of the cart. This session will include a personal fitting and instructions for using the cart at practice areas and on the golf course. The participant will acknowledge this information by completing a series of signoff statements attesting they understand and can demonstrate safe use of the cart. Users are also required to sign a liability waiver before independently using the VertaCat.

2) Allred Brothers Fireworks Show - \$8,500.00, Justin Allred

Dear Keno Committee,

The Allred Brother's Fireworks Show is made up of myself, my wife Tracie, other family members and close friends. Our show started back in 1994 as a family celebration but, in the last 10 years or so it has grown to a very well attended public show. We all work together and contribute over 250 hours to make this show happen.

If approved, the Keno funds will help offset \$20,000+ cost of insurance, fireworks, and other equipment for the show. We are requesting \$8,500 from the Keno funds and will work to get another \$11,500 through other fundraising efforts. This is an increase of \$1,000 over last year but, costs continue to increase and we would like to make the 250th Anniversary a very large celebration.

The Allred Brother's Fireworks Show provides a fun, safe and enjoyable family friendly Independence Day Celebration and Fireworks Show for citizens of Gering, Scottsbluff and other surrounding communities. The Show was held at The Five Rocks Amphitheater for the first time in 2020, prior to that it was held at the Gering Football Stadium for seven years and on the Gering High School lawn for three years.

We plan to work with Valley Auto Locators again to host a Truck show at Five Rocks prior to the show with food vendors. This has grown substantially over the last few years and is turning into a great and free event for our community!

This show has always been free and open to the public and in the last few years, was the only public illuminations display in the Scottsbluff and Gering area.

In recent years we estimate that there are 3,000+ people of all ages who attend. We believe that most people who attend are from Gering and Scottsbluff but, we know there are people who come from other Nebraska communities such as; Lincoln, North Platte, Sidney and also from places like Wyoming, Colorado, Kansas and even Utah.

We are very grateful to the City of Gering and staff who help make this show possible, it would not be possible without their support!

Thank you for your interest, time and anticipated support of the celebration of our beautiful free country!

Justin Allred, ALLRED BROTHER'S FIREWORKS SHOW

3) Drive 308 - \$2,500.00 - Eric and Camy Anderson, Graham Robbins

The 6th Annual Drive 308 Truck Show will have a meaningful and lasting positive impact on the community by bringing people together, supporting local businesses, and fostering a sense of pride and connection. This event creates a welcoming space where families, enthusiasts, and visitors can gather, share interests, and build relationships across generations. Our truck show draws attendees from surrounding areas, increasing foot traffic for nearby restaurants, shops, and service providers, which helps stimulate the local economy.

In addition, our truck show serves as a platform for showcasing craftsmanship, hard work, and local talent, highlighting the dedication of drivers, mechanics, and owners who take pride in their vehicles. Our truck show pulls in food vendors and is in conjunction with the Allred Brothers Fireworks Show, further strengthening community bonds and fostering tourism.

Overall, the Drive 308 Truck Show at Five Rocks in Gering is more than just an event—it's an opportunity to celebrate community spirit, support economic growth, and create positive, shared experiences that leave a lasting impression on residents and visitors alike.

4) Western Nebraska Pioneers - \$7,698.29 - Chuck & Mayra Heeman

Members of the Keno Committee;

The Western Nebraska Pioneers and Nebraska Outlaws sincerely appreciate the opportunity to apply for Keno funding as it relates to the purchase of a team bus to be used by both teams.

Our main goal in acquiring this vehicle is player and team safety. During our nine years of operation, we have transported players to road games in a variety of ways. For the first six years we chartered travel buses through companies outside our area – our region does not have a charter bus company.

We have chartered buses from Rapid City and Kearney companies, which meant excess pricing, paying for buses to come to Gering empty, hiring drivers from out of the area and paying for their housing. On average the team paid about \$35,000 per season for this service. This became unsustainable financially and we searched for alternate transportation options in subsequent years.

We pursued leasing 15-passenger vans but ran into the same issue. There is no outlet in the region to lease these vehicles. The closest is in Ft. Collins, Colorado, and leasing vehicles on a monthly basis was, again, cost-prohibitive. In addition, there is a safety and liability issue in that our coaches or staff would have to drive these vehicles to and from road games.

In 2025, we rented various vehicles from a local vendor, these were trucks, vans, large SUVs, which again ran into the safety and liability issue of having players and coaches drive. Some games we did not have these vehicles available and players carpooled to places like Ft. Collins, Greeley, Denver and Colorado Springs.

Obviously, this is not the image we want to present as an organization. Getting players to come to Gering is always a challenge, no matter how professional and well-run an organization the Pioneers are. Players have the choice to go anywhere in America – they come here because the Pioneers have established a reputation of treating players well, which includes professional transportation to road games. So when asked to carpool

or drive to their own games, this raises another issue in player recruitment and sustainability for the organization.

During the spring we were offered the opportunity to purchase a used bus that was previously Bridgeport High School's activity bus. While the price was more than we felt comfortable with, it was not so high that it outweighed the above concerns. After having the vehicle inspected and approved mechanically, we purchased it on March 17, 2026, then had it insured, registered and certified as safe after a thorough inspection and servicing program. The receipts for these transactions are attached.

With that, we come to the committee today to apply for funds for the following:

1. Purchase of the bus itself: \$6,000.00
2. State inspection and licensing for the 2026 calendar year: \$552.89
3. One year of auto insurance through Plummer Insurance: \$795.00
4. Needed mechanical work (oil change, filter replacements): \$350.40

The total amount requested is \$7,698.29. This covers the acquisition of the vehicle and one year of licensing, certification and maintenance. For following years the Pioneers will absorb the costs of these items as well as the cost of hiring a CDL-certified driver for all trips to comply with Nebraska Transportation laws.

With the operation of two teams, the increased number of road trips makes this vehicle a much-needed necessity as we continually work to maintain sustainability as a business and ensure the safety of our team when they travel.

We thank you for your consideration of this request and invite any questions you may have. Thank you for your time today and we look forward to a positive response.

Sincerely,

Mayra and Chuck Heeman, Owners, Western Nebraska Pioneers and Nebraska Outlaws

5) Platte Valley Companies Monument Marathon - \$12,200.00, Jennifer Reisig

Event Overview

The **15th Annual Platte Valley Companies Monument Marathon** will take place on **September 26, 2026**, guiding runners through the breathtaking landscape of Western Nebraska—from the Wildcat Hills State Recreation Area, through Mitchell Pass along the Oregon Trail, and around Scotts Bluff National Monument. The event features a full marathon, half marathon, and 5K.

Since its inception, the Monument Marathon has remained focused on promoting healthy lifestyles, showcasing the beauty and history of Western Nebraska, generating local tourism revenue, and raising vital funds that support Western Nebraska Community College students.

COMMUNITY IMPACT

Support for WNCC Students

The Monument Marathon is the WNCC Foundation's largest annual fundraiser. All proceeds stay in the community and directly support:

- Student scholarships
- Emergency assistance
- Academic and student success programs
- Capital projects and programmatic initiatives

During the 2025–26 academic year alone, more than **350 scholarships totaling over \$315,000** were awarded. Since 2012, the Marathon has generated **over \$717,000** to support WNCC students. The economic benefits extend locally as well, as the event prioritizes contracting with Western Nebraska vendors for shirts, printing, photography, videography, and supplies.

Tourism & Economic Benefits

The 2025 race achieved record participation with **669 registered runners**, an 11% increase over 2024. Notably:

- **77%** of runners traveled from outside Scotts Bluff County
- Participants represented **41 states, 246 cities**, and even included runners from **Kenya and Peru**
- Nearly half brought **2–5 additional guests**
- Over **58% stayed at least one night**, with increases in hotel, Airbnb, and campground stays

These visitors bring tourism dollars directly into local restaurants, lodging, shops, and attractions. In 2025, **66% of participants were first timers**, demonstrating strong marketing reach and ensuring continual growth. For 2026, the goal is to raise participation to **700 runners**, continuing steady expansion while replacing the roughly 60% new-runner turnover common in large destination races.

Funding Needs for 2026

To reach these goals and strengthen the economic and cultural impact of the event, the WNCC Foundation requests support from the Gering Keno Committee for the following priority areas:

1. Expo Sponsorship Upgrade – \$5,000

We respectfully invite the Gering Keno Committee to consider becoming the **2026 Monument Marathon Expo Sponsor**, in partnership with the Gering Civic Center. More than **600 runners and their family/friends** pass through the Expo each year, making it one of the most visible sponsorship opportunities.

Sponsorship highlights include:

- Prominent inclusion on Expo materials and event T-shirts
- Logo placement on the Monument Marathon website and digital promotions
- Recognition at the Expo and on race day
- The option to host a vendor table and include materials in runner bags
- Up to **4 complimentary entries** plus **50% employee discounts**

This upgrade enhances the City of Gering's connection to one of the region's most recognized and celebrated events.

2. Targeted Digital Marketing – \$2,500

The Monument Marathon relies on a robust digital strategy to reach runners nationwide. Two of the most effective tools used are **targeted advertising** and **Google remarketing**.

What Google Remarketing Is (and Why It Works)

Google remarketing allows us to display Marathon ads specifically to people who have already interacted with our website, event pages, or similar running-related content online. For example, if someone explores our course map or registration page but doesn't sign up right away, remarketing ensures they later see ads reminding them to register while they browse YouTube, Google, or partner sites. Other running events can also be geo-fenced so their participants will receive our ads.

This makes our marketing:

- **Highly efficient**, because it targets people who already showed interest
- **Cost-effective**, since ads are served only to relevant users
- **Successful in driving conversions**, which has contributed to a **25% growth in registrations from 2023 to 2025**

Keno funds will help us expand this proven digital outreach and stay competitive with larger regional and national races.

3. Native American Drummers – \$1,200

One of the most memorable and meaningful traditions of the Monument Marathon is the performance by **Native American drummers** in the final stretch of the race. Their rhythm encourages runners as they approach the last hill and reflects the cultural heritage of our region.

Funding will cover performance fees, travel, and lodging to ensure this distinctive and well-loved element continues. Many runners report that this powerful moment is one of the most unforgettable aspects of the event.

4. Local & Regional Radio Advertising \$3,500

While the Monument Marathon attracts runners nationwide, maintaining strong **local engagement** is essential. Roughly **one-third** of participants live within 100 miles, and more than **300 volunteers** are needed each year to support runner safety, aid stations, and logistics.

Keno support will strengthen:

- Local radio advertising
- Regional Nebraska radio promotion
- Volunteer recruitment messages

This ensures local residents remain connected to the event and encourages regional participation. The WNCC Foundation and Monument Marathon Steering Committee are deeply grateful for the Gering

Keno Committee's ongoing support. Your investment helps strengthen:

Local tourism

- Community engagement
- Cultural experiences
- Student success at WNCC
- Regional visibility for Western Nebraska

We look forward to the opportunity to partner with you again in 2026 and to continue showcasing Gering as a key part of this premier Nebraska event.

6) ESU 13 - \$802.00, Diane Reinhardt

For the past five years, I have coordinated summer transition camps for students in special education. Until this year, these camps were consistently funded through a grant; however, on March 20th, I was informed that our proposal for this year's summer camp was not approved. This is a critical gap to fill, as the majority of students who attend these camps do not have the financial means to participate otherwise.

This camp will provide students with a realistic, hands-on introduction to the carpentry trade that can spark a lifelong interest in a high-demand career. Students will learn valuable employment skills like time management, accountability, teamwork, respect, communication, and leadership. Since many of our students struggle with socialization, camp provides a supportive space for them to build confidence and make new friends with students from different school districts across the Panhandle. It also gives students a chance to learn in an environment outside of their school setting and offers a unique opportunity to build independence by staying in the dorms. I strongly believe that volunteerism and community service need to be taught, with the hope that these experiences help students realize the importance of giving back to their community when they become adults.

BUILD and BLOOM TRANSITION SUMMER CAMP

This summer camp will be offered to students across the panhandle of Nebraska and will take place June 9-11, 2026. The scheduled activities will take place on the campus of WNCC, specifically the Harms Center and the WNCC Eakes Building in Scottsbluff, Nebraska, in addition to Peaceful Prairies Nursery in Mitchell, Nebraska. Due to a rigorous schedule and potential travel time to Scottsbluff, campers will stay overnight at the WNCC dorms, with 24 hour supervision, provided by two staff, for a period of two overnights. Two additional staff will assist with the camp during the daytime and evening hours.

This camp is open to high school students, in grades 10th- 12+ that are in an educational program for the 2026-2027 school year. Eligible students are those students who are verified for and receive special education services. To ensure the highest standards of safety and individualized instruction, this camp is capped at 20 students.

Days 1 through 3 of "Build and Bloom" will include traditional classroom-style presentations, however, the majority of the camp will take place at Peaceful Prairies Nursery and WNCC's Eakes building sites where students will engage in hands-on activities.

June 9th, Day 1: Camp will begin at 10:00am. Upon arrival at the Harms Center (Room E194) , students will receive a folder which will contain the camp schedule, staff contact information, and information on the

WNCC Trades programs. The day will begin with an icebreaker, providing an opportunity for campers and staff to acquaint themselves with one another. After the icebreaker, staff will go over the schedule for the 2.5 day camp and answer any questions the campers may have. Staff will state their expectations of the campers in following the rules. From 10:30-11:30pm WNCC Construction Trades Instructor, Eric Anderson introduce students to the carpentry trade program at WNCC, showcasing how carpentry and construction provide well-paying career opportunities for those who excel at hands-on learning and want to jump start their career without a four year degree. From 11:30am until noon, students will learn about the non-profit organization(s) that will be receiving the standing flower boxes and how these organizations impact the community.

After lunch, the students and staff will travel to Peaceful Prairies Nursery, in Mitchell, Nebraska where they will spend an afternoon job-shadowing the staff to gain insight into the operational "ins and outs" of a professional greenhouse. Students will receive guidance on regional horticulture, learning which plants and vegetables are best suited for their flower/garden boxes.

The afternoon of Day 1 will conclude with dorm room assignments (determined prior to camp by the project coordinator). After supper, students will walk back to the Harms Center and work with Cassie Behnke, VALTS instructor, to design dedication plaques, using the Glowforge 3D laser cutter/engraver. The plaques will be placed on the completed flower/garden boxes.

Students will walk back to the WNCC dorms at 8:15pm and spend the remainder of the evening socializing.

June 10th, Day 2: At 8:45am the staff and students will travel to WNCC's Eakes building site. Trades Instructors, Eric Andersen and Jason Schwary, will guide students through the essentials of the carpentry trade, ranging from safety and material identification to the practical skills of reading blueprints and operating hand and power tools as students build standing flower/garden boxes. To maximize hands-on experience, students will work in pairs, ensuring each camper has direct involvement with the project. Students will have a one hour lunch break at noon. At 1pm the students will continue with the building of their flower/garden boxes until 3:45pm. Students will travel back to the WNCC dorms where they will write thank you notes to the people that volunteered their time assisting with camp. From 4:30-6pm students will eat dinner and have free time. At 6pm, students and staff will travel back to the Eakes building to plant the flowers/vegetables into their finished boxes. Students will return to the dorms at 8:15pm and will have the remainder of the evening to socialize.

June 11th, Day 3: After breakfast, students will travel to the Harms Center and complete a survey regarding their experiences and opinions of the camp and the things they learned. At 9:00am students will travel to the Eakes building to pick up the flower/vegetable boxes and deliver them to the non-profit organizations. After the boxes have been delivered, students will return to the Harms Center. Camp will conclude at 11:30am.

7) Scotts Bluff County CERT - \$2,818.16, Larry Martin

Gering City Keno Committee,

CERT stands for Community Emergency Response Team. It was developed in 1985 in California after a massive earthquake, to provide trained volunteers to help Law Enforcement and Fire Departments with duties to free up the professionals, so they can do what they need to do. It falls under the Citizen Corps of Emergency Management. Locally, our CERT team was started around 2004 by Bob Hessler, and today we have a team of 42 members, and one of the best in the State of Nebraska.

Our members are all volunteers and come from different backgrounds, such as EMS, FD, LE, military, technicians, clergy, students, extension agents, postal workers, maintenance, construction, office and banking, retired, mothers, fathers, and more. About half of our team has over 15 years invested. We train once a month, plus occasional field callouts to train. We train on basic fire suppression, first aid, fire fighter rehab, supplying meals to Fire and Law personnel during long term events, controlling a perimeter for a crime scene, an evidence search, and structure fires, traffic control, disaster psychology, missing persons search, man-tracking, assisting K9 teams, assisting with water rescue, sonar searches, reports and scribing, and dealing with human mindsets present on their worst day. Everyone on the team has to pass an LE background check, follow guidelines when representing this team and the public. Scottsbluff Police Department is our sponsor and has the final say on whether we respond to a request to help.

We offer assistance to our local LE and Fire Departments when they request it. We also participate in events such as the Monument Marathon, Horizon's Music Festival, County Fair events, Balloon Glow, Gravel Grind Bike Race, Beans Beef and Bluegrass, Oregon Trail Days and others that may need extra eyes watching the crowd, and/or first aid stations.

CERT does not use or have an annual budget, and the money we have in the bank is from dues for purchasing water, snacks and other needs of the members. The equipment we have and use is normally donated. We currently use radios that have been provided for us to use, because departments have upgraded their radio equipment and by the time we get them, the batteries are normally spent and sometimes the chargers and/or other accessories have been lost or are faulty. CERT very much appreciates the radios provided for use and they allow us more timely responses and operations in the field. This is the reason we are approaching the Keno Committee for some funding to purchase batteries and chargers to keep using the radios.

I appreciate the consideration and your time. If you have any more questions, please contact me.
Thank You and Best Regards;

Larry Martin

8) Oregon Trail Days - \$4,100.00, Rebecca Shields

A. Description of Existing Event

Oregon Trail Days is Nebraska's oldest continuous celebration honoring all old settlers to the area. Now in its 105th year providing family entertainment to an estimated 38,000 people at various venues throughout Gering, the mid-July event unites the entire tri-city community through the presentation of twenty-five separate activities over four days. Grants, donations, and sponsorships alleviate cost and allow activities to be available to all ages and economic ranges.

Oregon Trail Days benefits Scotts Bluff County by creating encouragement to both former residents and potential tourists to attend the event, purchasing lodging, food, and fuel in the process. Additional Scotts Bluff County entities have the opportunity to promote their own agenda, encouraging attendance at future events. In 2025, twenty-five foundations, companies/firms, individuals, and others co-sponsored Oregon Trail Days by contributing \$250 to \$1,000.

The target market is everyone with emphasis on honoring the Old Settlers and descendants of pioneers of the area. Every age group is included in activities from the kiddie parade to the Old Settlers gatherings. Grants and sponsorships permit many activities to be free, allowing every financial level to participate.

Zip codes can be recorded for participants (not spectators) of events with registrations. These include the Vera Dulaney Memorial Art Show, International Food Fair, Chili Cook-off, Mud Volleyball, Rod and Custom Car Show, and Horseshoe Tournament. Obviously, zip codes of spectators cannot be obtained.

Oregon Trail Association has applied for funds previously from Scotts Bluff County Tourism Committee and/or Scotts Bluff Area Visitors Bureau. We have not received Tourism funds the past 2 years.

There is a four-point plan for becoming financially sustainable. Depending on the economic barometer at the time, Oregon Trail Association must consider expanding its donor base, increasing participation fees, lowering number of activities, and/or possibly lessening efforts toward free activities or those activities with a poor income to outgo ratio. Self-sufficiency will become more difficult as years go by due to continually increasing costs spread over a continually declining population base, and these factors must be scheduled into a financially sustainable plan.

B. Detailed Marketing Plan

The plan to attract visitors from over one hundred miles away includes use of the local Star-Herald newspaper and Nspire Today! regional publication as both service areas over 100 miles distant (Chadron, Ogallala, Cheyenne). Also, the Star-Herald may be used as a resource to secure advertising in outlying areas through newspapers primarily serving neighboring areas of a 100-mile radius. Additionally, use of Rural Radio

Scottsbluff will be utilized as its signal surpasses the 100-mile mark in every direction; Rural Radio Scottsbluff, KNEB, will be contacted regarding advertising over its sister station, KRVN, of Lexington, Nebraska. In this manner local media and their affiliates will be utilized to reach a larger market.

Marketing Budget

Promotional Merchandising	\$ 7,553.00
Print Media	4,247.00
Audio Promotion	2,500.00
Website Maintenance	<u>700.00</u>
Total	\$ 15,000.00

For most items constituting the Marketing Budget, vendors (local preferred), quantities, and designs have yet to be determined at the time of submission of this grant application.

C. Proposed Impact of Promotion

Scotts Bluff County can expect up to 40,000 people scattered over a four-day period (or longer, if they so choose) expending funds for lodging, food, and fuel. A survey in 2022 showed 180 room-nights were rented at Microtel Inn and Suites, 155 room-nights at Cobblestone Inn and Suites, and 136 space-nights rented at Robidoux RV Park, all of which were attributed to Oregon Trail Days. Just those three facilities totaled 471 room- and space-nights; based on the 2022 \$10,000 grant, that figures to \$21.23 room- and space-night, a quite low figure for that statistic. The amount of lodging tax collected due to Oregon Trail Days could be calculated but would be an extensive project as three of a minimum of twenty-four known facilities generated 471 room- and space-nights during the 2022 event alone. With a proven potential of 40,000 guests, a \$10,000 grant to entice visitors breaks down to a cost of a quarter for every individual.

A not unduplicated count of 37,854 individuals was calculated in numbering attendees at Oregon Trail Days in 2022.

Oregon Trail Association emphasizes staying for the duration of the event through listing all events on the quadrifold, our most extensive marketing tool. Interviews and presentations also tell of multi-day stays for event participation.

Gering venues to be utilized by Oregon Trail Days include Five Rocks Amphitheater, Gardner Park, Gering Civic Center, Gering High School, Grasslands, Legacy of the Plains Museum, Legion Park, Lincoln Elementary School, Oregon Trail Park, Scotts Bluff National Monument, and Tenth and other Gering streets.

Comments heard and stories told indicated many first-timers to Oregon Trail Days from outlying areas intended to not only return to a future Oregon Trail Days celebration but also encourage bringing family and friends with them. Other impressed first-timers strategically visited local friends/family to participate in Oregon Trail Days. Arizona-based Frazier Shows Carnival pumps thousands of dollars into the area economy through the purchase of trucks, equipment, parts, and repairs as the owner has developed a favorable relationship with local vendors. All have a positive impact on Scotts Bluff County promotion and economic growth.

D. Dates of Promotion

Promotion of Oregon Trail Days for 2026 began the first of 2026 and will continue through the Sunday July 12, 2026. The dates for which the event is being promoted is July 9-12, 2026.

E. Proposed Locations of Advertising

Advertising is proposed throughout Nebraska, Eastern Wyoming, and Northeastern Colorado.

9) Gering Public Schools/City of Gering - \$300,000.00, Jennifer Sibal and Stacy Rodriguez

Explanation of Request

Gering Public Schools is requesting \$300,000 in Keno Funds to support the construction of a new all-weather track at Gering High School. The current track has exceeded its useful life and no

longer meets the needs of our students, athletes, or community members. A new track will not only provide a safe and modern facility for school use but will also remain open to the public as a community resource, supporting residents of all ages who walk, run, and stay active.

How Keno Funds Will Be Used

Funds will go directly toward the capital costs of constructing the new track, including site preparation, surfacing, and installation of durable materials. This investment will ensure long-term use and accessibility for both school and community activities.

Community Betterment and Impact

At Gering Public Schools, we often say that the schools are the **heart of Gering**. The energy of our students, the pride of our staff, and the support of our families all flow into this community, shaping its future. This project is about much more than athletics-it is about building a space that reflects who we are and what we value as a city.

6. A Space for All

- Our track is not just for athletes. Every day, community members of all ages-parents, seniors walking laps, youth in summer programs, elementary field days, and families enjoying the outdoors-use this space as their own.
- A new track means a safer, more accessible facility for everyone in Gering to stay active, healthy, and connected.

2. An Economic Driver

- A high-quality track allows Gering to host district, regional, and state-level competitions, bringing hundreds of athletes, families, and visitors to our city.
- These events directly contribute to local businesses - restaurants, hotels, and shops - strengthening our economy while showcasing the pride and hospitality of Gering.

3. A Symbol of Partnership and Pride

- Gering Public Schools and the City of Gering share a unique partnership. Together, we create opportunities that make our community thrive. This track project represents that partnership in action - uniting education, recreation, health, and economic growth in one shared vision.
- The facility will be a visible reminder of the investment this community makes in its young people and in its own future.

10) Old West Balloon Fest - \$10,000.00, Colleen Johnson

Overview:

Our mission is to create a joyful experience for patrons of all ages with a family-friendly, all-inclusive community event. The Old West Balloon Fest is a world-class event that brings pilots and visitors from across the United States and Foreign countries to Scotts Bluff County, Nebraska. This year marks our 12th Anniversary Celebration, and we've added many fun and exciting activities to the lineup.

Showcasing Our Area

The Old West Balloon Fest is more than a weekend event — it has become one of the strongest community-building traditions in our region. Every year, thousands of residents and visitors come together to share something joyful, safe, and uniquely ours. Families, seniors, schools, volunteers, and local businesses all benefit from the energy and tourism generated by the event.

Last year alone, the festival generated significant economic activity for our hotels, restaurants, and retailers. It also provided free programming for the public — including balloon launches, kids' activities, STEM/aviation education, and community nights that bring people together. These experiences are only possible because of partnerships like yours.

The Old West Balloon Fest has designated the Gering Civic Center as the headquarters for the U.S. National Hot Air Balloon Championships. In accordance with our contract with the Balloon Federation of America, all pilot and staff lodging must be located within a five-minute drive of the headquarters. The Civic Center will serve as the site for the master pilot briefing on August 9, 2026, as well as all morning and evening briefings throughout the event. To meet lodging requirements, we have secured the entire Monument Inn and Suites, reserved 20 rooms at Hotel 21, and an additional 25 rooms at the Cobblestone Inn and Suites. This approach ensures that the majority of lodging tax generated by Championship participants will remain within the City of Gering.

Positioning the discovery exhibit in Gering for the majority of the event further supports local economic activity by encouraging visitors to spend time and money at nearby retail businesses and restaurants.

The Old West Balloon Fest showcases our region by attracting visitors from surrounding states such as Colorado, Wyoming, South Dakota, Kansas, and Eastern Nebraska. In 2025, we tracked visitor attendance, revealing that visitors attended from 34 states, Mexico, and Canada, and one visitor from the UK. Visitor attendance was tracked by using the parking pass sales online and by capturing license plate numbers from attendees at the event. By hosting an opening ceremony, we ensure that multiple night stays will take place in Gering, as visitors will attend the ceremonies and additional days of competition. Visitors will need to spend the night in order to attend early morning activities taking place at 6:00 AM. We look forward to the following three years hosting the US National Hot Air Balloon Championships 2026-2028. We know this event will attract many new visitors to our area.

Gering will have the opportunity to generate significant media exposure and strengthen community pride by promoting its role as the headquarters for the National Championships. The nationally recognized YouTube television show "My Town" is scheduled to film during the event, providing exceptional visibility for the City of Gering and the broader Western Nebraska region. Our marketing strategy is designed to attract visitors and encourage multi-night stays, giving guests time to explore the area and enjoy its many attractions. The Nebraska Tourism Office actively supports and promotes the event through social media at VisitNebraska.com, as well as through advertisements, articles in Nebraska Life, banner ads on their website, and a feature in the 2026 Nebraska Visitors Guide.

Lodging tax collections are expected to be maximized, with Gering hotels projected to reach 99 percent occupancy during the event. Sales tax collections should also achieve record levels, consistent with the strong performance seen when Gering previously hosted the Nationals from 2018 to 2022. Media coverage of hot air balloons flying over Scotts Bluff National Monument has been extraordinary, and these images continue to be used across local community websites.

Overall Economic Impact

Visitor Attendance Estimated based on previous years' attendance:

- 5,600 out-of-town visitors (including Eastern Nebraska)
- 4,400 in-state visitors (within a 100-mile radius of the event)
- Total attendance: 10,000+
- Average stay for out-of-town visitors: 2 nights

Direct Visitor Spending

Using the State of Nebraska's Tourism spending figures for our rural area. Out-of-town guests spend on average \$120 - \$150 per day at local restaurants, hotels, and retail establishments.

Based on 2025 tourism figures, we anticipate 5,600 out-of-town guests will visit the event. Using that figure, we can estimate the following:

The low estimate: 5,600 visitors times **\$120 = \$672,000** per day

The High estimate: 5,600 visitors times **\$150 = \$840,000** per day

Most out-of-town guests average a two-night stay, which amounts to the following spending trend:

Out-of-town Visitor Spending two days, low estimate = **\$1,344,000.00**

Out-of-town Visitor Spending two days, high estimate = **\$1,680,000.00**

In-State Visitors (within a 100-mile radius of the event)

Based on 2025 tourism figures, we anticipate a total of 4,400 regional and local guests visiting the event.

Using that figure, we can estimate the following:

The low estimate: 4,400 visitors times \$65 = **\$286,000** per day

The High estimate: 4,400 visitors times \$85 = **\$374,000** per day

Adding up the spending from local, regional, and out-of-state visitors, we estimate the following totals:

Total Visitor Spending low estimate = **\$1,630,000.00**

Total Visitor Spending high estimate = **\$2,054,000.00**

This figure does not include lodging and sales tax

Lodging Impact

Approximately 810 rooms are available in Scotts Bluff County for booking in 2026 for the event, at an average rate of \$150.00 per night. These figures do not include RV spots or Airbnb/VRBO rentals.

810 rooms x 7 nights booked for Nationals at an average cost of \$150 per night = \$850,500.00

Lodging tax collected at 3%:

810 rooms x \$150 x 7 nights = \$850,500.00

3% lodging tax collected = \$25,515.00

Tax Revenue Generated on spending projections of 1.6 - 2.0 million in sales, based on 6% tax rate:

Estimated Local Tax Revenue

\$96,000–\$120,000

These funds support local infrastructure, public safety, and community services.

Total Direct Economic Impact

The total direct economic impact, with adding tax revenue to spending projections, is estimated at **\$1.7 to \$2.1 million**, which benefits local businesses and communities in Scotts Bluff County and surrounding areas.

Marketing

Our destination marketing efforts continue to demonstrate strong results. More than 45% of our 14,700 Facebook and website followers attend the event annually. These figures are based on Facebook analytics, reinforcing Scotts Bluff County's position as a regional vacation destination. Online parking pass sales further highlight our reach, with purchases coming from 26 U.S. states, as well as the United Kingdom, Mexico, and Canada. In addition, 46 of Nebraska's 93 counties were represented. This broad geographic distribution reflects the effectiveness of our comprehensive and targeted marketing campaign.

The event will be advertised through newspapers, local television, statewide social media, National media, the official program, and Rural Radio, reaching all communities in the Panhandle of Western Nebraska, Eastern Nebraska, Eastern Wyoming, Southern South Dakota, and Northern Colorado, including the Front Range, and National exposure through the program *My Town*.

We are committed to marketing the 2026 event and have set aside \$34,500.00 through in-kind donations and sponsorships to promote the Old West Balloon Fest.

Our extensive marketing program to promote the event includes:

- Nebraska Tourism Grant Program

- Rural Radio Ad Spots to run before the event on all major stations
- Advertisements in Inspire Magazine and Nebraska Life Magazine
- Social media blast on Visit Nebraska and banner ad that will run from May through August
- Social media boosted ads on our Facebook page starting in May
- Official program, which features participating balloons and sponsor thank-you advertisements.
- Our official website: theoldwestballoonfest.com
- Links on our website to tourism websites, sponsor websites, and visitor information.

While we have secured strong partnerships and continue to pursue sponsorships and grants, the financial responsibility associated with hosting a national championship exceeds the scope of our traditional budget. The additional support we are requesting will ensure that we can successfully deliver an event that meets national competition requirements, provides high-quality programming for residents and visitors, and continues to generate meaningful economic and cultural benefits for Scotts Bluff County.

The Old West Balloon Fest generates between \$1.6 and \$2.0 million in direct visitor spending, produces up to 5,650 hotel room night stays generating \$25,215 in lodging tax revenue, and contributes between \$96,000 and \$120,000 in sales tax revenue. These outcomes demonstrate the event's significant role in supporting economic development and community prosperity throughout Scotts Bluff County

DISCUSSION REGARDING KENO FUND REQUESTS:

Stand Up and Play, Gering NE Chapter

Don questioned what they were previously asking for \$20,000.00 and now they are asking for \$12,450.00 and wanted to confirm the amount they are asking for now. Darrell said it is \$12,450.00 and they said there was another donation from the Veteran's and some other places that money has come in.

Motion by Darrell Bentley to recommend \$12,450.00 to Stand Up and Play, Gering NE Chapter. Seconded by Julie Morrison.

Discussion: Pat noted that Old West Balloon Fest went to the Occupation Tax Committee and got \$10,000.00 in April.

The vote was called. "AYES": Bentley, Kugler, Morrison, and Doll. "NAYS": None. Absent: Janecek. Abstaining: None. Motion carried.

Allred Brothers Fireworks Show

Motion by Darrell Bentley to recommend \$8,500.00 to Allred Brothers Fireworks Show. Seconded by Julie Morrison. There was no further discussion. The vote was called. "AYES": Bentley, Kugler, Morrison, and Doll. "NAYS": None. Absent: Janecek. Abstaining: None. Motion carried.

Drive 308

Julie thought this is good, they are growing and bringing things in; wouldn't hesitate to give them money and they are doing good things. Darrell has friends in car groups and most of them have not heard of them; they do a different type of thing, but it is more than when they started out and they keep adding stuff. After listening to them and learning more about what they are doing, Darrell became more inclined to move forward with helping them, but there is unsure because they continue to advance funds; however, at this time, does not see any problems. Julie said if they keep growing – it is good, but if they don't grow then they don't need any money. Pat added they also received \$2,000 from the Occupation Tax Committee money in April.

Motion by Don Kugler to recommend \$2,500.00 to Drive 308. Seconded by Amy Doll. There was no discussion. The vote was called. "AYES": Bentley, Kugler, Morrison, and Doll. "NAYS": None. Absent: Janecek. Abstaining: None. Motion carried.

Western Nebraska Pioneers

Amy said they already spent the money. Julie also felt they spent the money and then came back and asked for it; she doesn't see how they can ask for it. Pat asked if this is community betterment for the community. Don noted that this is a private business. Darrell said they turned them down when they wanted to build the signs and turned down two people last quarter because it was a personal business. Darrell indicated he does not want to get something started that they can't stop.

Motion by Julie Morrison to recommend not funding Western Nebraska Pioneers. Seconded by Don Kugler. There was no further discussion. The vote was called. "AYES": Bentley, Kugler, Morrison, and Doll. "NAYS": None. Absent: Janecek. Abstaining: None. Motion carried.

Platte Valley Companies Monument Marathon

Amy is on the steering committee for the Monument Marathon and asked if it is inappropriate for to vote; she would abstain. Darrell doesn't think so because this is different from her job and the steering committee and she is representing Gering Keno. Pat added that Amy is not being paid by Monument Marathon; it is volunteering.

Julie's concern was that someone from the eastern part of the state had backed out as the expo sponsor. Amy said they discussed that at their meeting and that she specifically said she was going to ask Keno because it might receive more publicity at the expo, as everyone goes there to pick up their race packets. Amy said not everyone is at the half marathon start and felt the expo was a better place for that.

Darrell appreciated that and doesn't think the publicity has helped Keno. The committee has told everyone that if something is sponsored by Keno, they need to put up signs. Pat said they put up a banner on the fence at the amphitheater. Amy said it helps with awareness and people may spend more money in the community. Darrell said at least it lets the community know where the money goes. Amy said that shows they are putting money back into the community. Darrell said not only does she want that; she wants the drummers and there are four things being asking for. Amy noted it's twice as much money. Julie likes the drummers and the expo and feels that is enough. Julie asked if they can state what the funds go towards. Amy said that can be in the motion.

Motion by Julie Morrison to recommend \$6,200.00 for Platte Valley Companies Monument Marathon for the expo banner and the Native American Drummers. Seconded by Don Kugler.

Discussion: Pat noted they also received Occupation Tax funds. The Occupation Tax Committee looks at hotels, what comes into the community and people staying in Gering. Pat said the Monument Marathon and the 308 Truck Show have been successful. Pat stated that Oregon Trail Days and the Old West Balloon Fest consistently fill local hotels, bringing visitors to the area and supporting local businesses.

The vote was called. "AYES": Bentley, Kugler, Morrison, and Doll. "NAYS": None. Absent: Janecek. Abstaining: None. Motion carried.

ESU 13

Motion by Darrell Bentley to recommend \$802.00 to ESU 13. Seconded by Julie Morrison. There was no further discussion. The vote was called. "AYES": Bentley, Kugler, Morrison, and Doll. "NAYS": None. Absent: Janecek. Abstaining: None. Motion carried.

Scotts Bluff County CERT

Julie asked if this is like a search and rescue. Pat said it's a great program; they helped out a couple of years ago when there was a day-long power outage. They also helped with the search for Chance, assisted in other events, and assisted with fires out in the canyons. Pat said in the event of a natural disaster, the police, first responders, and utilities will be stretched to the limit and CERT would be an organization they would rely on to help. They would help if there was a tornado in town with search and rescue. Pat said communication is very important in those events, especially when there is no power and typically cell phones won't work either.

Pat was at a conference about 10 years ago, and there was a group from Joplin, Missouri there. When they had a large F-5 tornado go through Joplin, they made the decision years ago not to purchase radios for their vehicles when they had a chance to upgrade. They did not have communications during that time and were running blind. Pat believes radios are important, and these batteries are important. Pat said all the radios were donated to CERT by the Gering Fire Department when they bought new radios. Darrell said they are out there, but are not recognized until they are needed, and they are volunteers. Pat said they are out there if there is a missing child or adult, they will be coordinating and searching for them.

Motion by Amy Doll to recommend \$2,818.16 for Scotts Bluff County CERT. Seconded by Julie Morrison. There was no discussion. The vote was called. "AYES": Bentley, Kugler, Morrison, and Doll. "NAYS": None. Absent: Janecek. Abstaining: None. Motion carried.

Oregon Trail Days

Rebecca texted Amy after leaving the meeting to inform her that the additional \$8,000.00 from last year's concert would be reinvested into this year's concert.. Darrell didn't think Rebecca understood because the \$8,000.00 is the total that they had extra from the mud volleyball and chili cook-off. Darrell knows for fact they have a lot of money in a CD, not just a little bit but a lot of money.

Don said, looking at all of this, their total income last year was \$38,000.00, with a profit of almost \$500.00. Darrell thought three years ago they planned to sponsor the Friday night meal for the Father's Day Classic and believed they could receive money for that. Rebecca brought it up last year and felt that if they funded it for them, then they should receive funding. Julie asked what the Old Settlers would think if they walked in and found fruit and cheese plates. Julie's opinion was that it would be awful.

Darrell appreciated the texts from Rebecca of what they thought it was, but doesn't feel they are on the same page. Darrell accounted for everything that they took in minus their expenses for each event, and it showed how much they took in. The \$7,900.00 extra that they took in from the different events, not just the orchestra, and if KNEB can't make any money at it, how can Oregon Trail Days make any money.

Julie feels that someone needs to talk with Rebecca regarding the luncheon. Pat will speak with Tina that serves on the board. Darrell was disappointed in what they originally wanted the money for and now it isn't what they want it for.

Amy recalculated what they already got the money for, and the difference is food was \$700.00, that didn't change; the Lodging cost, was maybe \$400.00. Amy said they asked for \$900.00 to begin with and then it went down to \$400.00, security expense is \$1,250.00 and then there is transportation and they don't need anything for that. The total amount of those three things that are left outstanding is \$2,350.00.

Amy didn't understand the fruit tray for the Old Settlers, because if they have a sponsor, then they don't need that, and if they don't have a sponsor, is that the only thing they are doing. Julie thought it was awful.

Darrell is concerned the Oregon Trail Foundation or the committee should be the sponsor of it. Pat agreed. Pat thought they should have corporate sponsors for their other events. Julie suggested more clarification about feeding the Old Settlers and they can come back with some amounts. Julie said if they have that money in the bank, then they should not ask the Old Settlers to pay for their lunch.

Amy asked Pat if they received Occupation Tax money as well. Pat said they received \$4,000.00 from Occupation Tax Committee. Julie thought they needed to get the information straight and come back to the committee, but if they did that, Oregon Trail Days would be over. In Amy's opinion, if the only thing that the group wants is to fund the Old Settlers, they could fund that piece of her request of \$500.00. Julie said it is not going to be a fruit and cheese tray; it is going to be a luncheon. Amy said that wasn't what they asked for.

Julie said if they don't have a sponsor then they will have the fruit and cheese tray, and that could not happen. Darrell said they could suggest what needs to be done.

Pat asked if they had an Old Settlers menu. Julie said no. Amy said it was listed as the Old Settlers fruit and vegetable tray for \$500.00, but previously they funded the Old Settlers about \$4,100.00. Darrell thought in the past it was in the mid \$30's. Don said one year it was \$3,929.00, and another year \$4,099.00. Julie questioned why this year they want \$500.00. Amy said it did not specifically indicate it was for Old Settlers, but thought it was for the Old Settlers. Pat suggested a motion for the \$4,100.00 to go only the Old Settlers luncheon. Darrell said they can figure out what they're going to do with the rest of it and how to get their money. Darrell would be happier knowing that they were being taken care of. Amy asked if they could change it. Pat said previously they received \$3,929.30 in 2024 and in 2025 they received \$4,099.90. Pat said if they are requesting \$4,100.00 to go ahead with that amount to the Old Settlers. Julie asked if they could stipulate it for the Old Settler's luncheon. Darrell said they could do that, if they don't care for that, then maybe they don't need the \$4,100.00. Pat said they don't have to take it, and they would have to submit receipts for the meal.

Motion by Julie Morrison to recommend \$4,100.00 for Oregon Trail Days for the Old Settler luncheon with the stipulation it is spent on the luncheon for the Old Settlers.

Discussion: Darrell would feel better to know that the Old Settlers were taken care of. Darrell said if they receive a donation, they can use that money somewhere else; it is in our motion, it is for the Old Settlers luncheon. Don said, if Heritage covers it, they can't take the money and spend it on something else for Oregon Trail Days. Julie asked if they could they come back if they had a sponsor. Pat thought they would make up the difference of what the sponsor would not cover. Darrell said the rest of them are not going to want to sponsor the Mud Volleyball. Pat said the Old Settlers is more of a community betterment than some of the other events. Darrell is pretty sure that the committee will want the \$4,100.00. Darrell said right now they don't know if they if they will have it, and this way they know they have it for the meal if it is worded that way. Julie said they just don't want to spend it. Darrell said they don't know if they are going to have a meat and fruit tray or whatever because they do not know if they will get a sponsor. Julie couldn't imagine that Heritage has enough money to sponsor it. Pat said if the meals are \$4,500.00 they can go after the other \$400.00 from Heritage.

Seconded by Darrell Bentley. There was no discussion. The vote was called. "AYES": Bentley, Kugler, Morrison, and Doll. "NAYS": None. Absent: Janecek. Abstaining: None. Motion carried.

Gering Public Schools/City of Gering

Julie didn't think it was clear what they were asking for. Pat replied that the funds will be used for the tracks which includes the football field or soccer field. Julie said they were talking about bleachers. Pat responded that is down the road. Don said they had the tracks covered. Pat said in their discussion it was going to cover the track and would be ok with that in an agreement. Julie said the track is covered; this is for bleachers and fencing. Amy thought the pad was covered because it is cement. Amy thought that was covered, but not the bleachers. Julie said the pad track will be covered out the foundation or grant. Darrell said they are talking about is the total bill, and they don't have enough money. Darrell said that money was set aside for something big in the future, is this the future or just money to put away. Darrell knows that \$650,000.00 was used for the pickleball courts and they got most of it back. Darrell said they put money away in the 90's for big things in town, but on the other hand, Darrell thought the school has wasted a lot of money. Do they want to have money in the bank or use it on something out there. Julie thought they could do both because they don't have to give them all of it. Pat recommended not give them all that was requested. They requested \$300,000.00, and the available cash obligation that they have available is \$1,239,585.00, but a million of that is the endowment. They wouldn't want to dip into the endowment because they would have to have council approval to do that. Darrell said what good is the endowment if it isn't going to be used. Pat would rather have the endowment go to a city project such as a playground or something like that rather than something combined with the school. Pat suggested to cut in half, and that would drop that fund down with all these other asking

donations. The total available cash would be \$1,028,516.00 and that would stay at a million dollars in the endowment that they could use it for a city project. Julie said something big that everyone sees. Darrell said like the pickleball courts.

Don asked if they see the pickleball courts and the track as being the same. Darrell said no. Don agreed. Pat said no, the pickleball courts are not the same, and suggested considering tennis courts instead, as they are used more frequently than the track. Don did not think the track was used by many people and people use the pathway instead.

Motion by Julie Morrison to for \$200,000.00. Pat recommended to keep it below \$200,000.00 because of the endowment. Julie rescinded her motion to give Gering City Schools \$150,000.00 towards the finished track.

Pat indicated that he wondered if they would get a grant to pay for the whole track. Julie said it is covered by a grant; she heard them indicate that several times. She thought the grant wouldn't be for the concrete.

Julie restated her motion to recommend giving Gering Schools \$150,000.00 for the track. Don seconded the motion.

Discussion: Darrell asked for suggestions. Amy stated that she was struggling to understand what had been discussed and what was being requested. Pat said they could make a motion to deny the request and ask for additional information at the next meeting. Amy clarified that it was not that they did not want to support them. Pat agreed that the request was not clear. Darrell asked if they would like to table the request, similar to Stand Up and Play, for the time being. Darrell said they would not have it completed by August 26th. He noted that the project had already been accepted to move forward and thought the intent was to keep the gates open so the public could use the field. Amy said they really need a track and that it needs to be completed. Don suggested tabling the request until a clearer presentation could be provided explaining what the funding would be used for. Darrell said the information presented was not the same as what was included in the paperwork. Julie agreed and stated that they had indicated the track was covered. Julie asked what the \$300,000.00 request was intended for, such as lighting and fencing, but noted that they had stated it was not for lighting, a scoreboard, or windbreaks. Amy understood that the project would need to be completed in phases but said it was unclear what they were requesting funding for. Pat said the track is open and the field is used for community benefit, but he did not see the bleachers as a community betterment project.

Darrell said when they started the presentation, it was different than what they had in the application and what the money was going to be used for. Julie suggested to table it until they get some more information. Darrell said if they don't give them any money, they will go ahead with it. Julie said they could start on it with the money they do have and then come back. Darrell said they can build the track and get bleachers before track season. Don said track isn't until spring, so they have September and October to get bleachers. Amy said they are playing football at the Middle School, and thinks it is good for Keno to partner with the schools. Amy asked if it mattered if they are clear if it is the track or the bleachers. Pat said it would be nice to say it was for the track or field improvements. Amy said it's the committee's obligation to be good stewards of this money, but she does not feel it was clear what they were asking for.

Motion by Julie Morrison to rescind her motion and to table the application and request a clearer ask of what they want the money for. Seconded by Don Kugler. There was no further discussion. The vote was called. "AYES": Bentley, Kugler, Morrison, and Doll. "NAYS": None. Absent: Janecek. Abstaining: None. Motion carried.

Old West Balloon Fest

Motion by Darrell Bentley to recommend \$10,000.00 to Old West Balloon Fest. Seconded by Julie Morrison. There was no discussion. The vote was called. "AYES": Bentley, Kugler, Morrison, and Doll. "NAYS": None. Absent: Janecek. Abstaining: None. Motion carried.

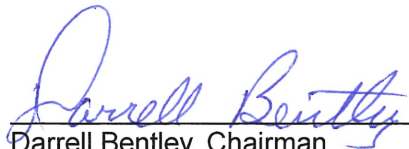
G. **OPEN COMMENT:** Discussion or action by Keno Committee regarding unscheduled business will not take place. This section is for citizen comment only. None.

H. **Adjourn**

Motion by Amy Doll to adjourn. Seconded by Julie Morrison. There was no discussion. "AYES": Bentley, Kugler, Morrison, and Doll. "NAYS": None. Absent: Janecek. Abstaining: None. Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:18 p.m.


Carol Martin, Secretary


Darrell Bentley, Chairman