



RAPPORT

HUMANITIES NEBRASKA

HELPING PEOPLE EXPLORE WHAT CONNECTS US AND MAKES US HUMAN

SMITHSONIAN SPARK! EXHIBIT BEGINS NEBRASKA TOUR IN JUNE

PG 2



**JUNE 26 & 27: LAST
CHANCE TO SEE
WEAVING A NATION**

PG 3



**TRIBUTE TO
SPEAKER CHERRIE
BEAM-CALLOWAY**

PG 8



**20 YEARS OF
PRIME TIME
FAMILY READING**

PG 12

RAPPORT

ISSUE 40 | SPRING 2026

UPCOMING EVENTS

- DUE MAY 1** **MINI GRANTS**
May 1, July 1, September 1
(details on our website)
- DUE JUN 12** **2026 SOWER AWARD**
Nominations due *(see page 3)*
- DUE JUN 15** **MEDIA/DIGITAL GRANTS**
Apply soon!
(details on our website)
- JUN 26-27** **NEBRASKA CHAUTAUQUA**
"Weaving a Nation" Final Year
Hastings (see page 3)
- DUE JUL 1** **PRIME TIME APPLICATIONS FOR FALL 2026**
(details on our website)
- DUE JUL 7** **NEBRASKA FORUM APPLICATIONS FOR '26-'27**
(details on our website)
- DUE AUG 1** **MAJOR GRANTS**
Apply soon!
(details on our website)
- OCT 27** **HUMANITES LECTURE FOR AMERICA 250**
Lied Center, Lincoln

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SMITHSONIAN "SPARK!" TOUR TO BEGIN IN BROKEN BOW JUNE 13

Museum on Main Street exhibition celebrates small-town innovation nationally and locally.

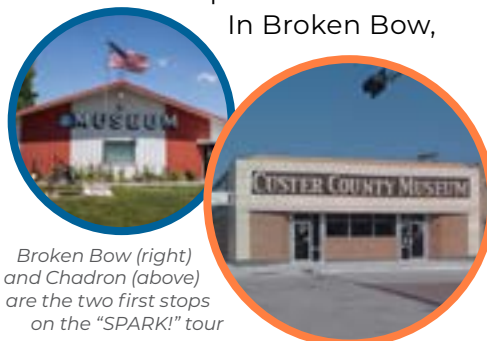
"SPARK! Places of Innovation" will tour Nebraska from June 2026 through March 2027. The exhibit will open in Broken Bow on June 13 and then travel to Chadron, Haigler, Madison, Verdigrée and Aurora.

Inspired by an exhibition at the National Museum of American History, "SPARK!" is designed for small museums by the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES). It uses art, photography, artifacts, and interactives to explore the unique combination of places, people, and circumstances that spark innovation and invention in rural communities across the nation.

Since the First Peoples found ways to live, harvest and hunt on the windswept plains, Nebraska residents have produced a number of innovations, from Edward Perkin's creation of Kool-Aid in Hastings to Stephen Epler's invention of six-man football at Chester High School, to the patented vice grip designed by William Petersen in DeWitt. Fresh ideas continue to be incubated throughout the state, keeping Nebraska's rural towns vibrant and thriving.

Each "SPARK!" host site is preparing local features and activities to go along with the national exhibition that will enable locals to enjoy a more interactive experience.

In Broken Bow,



Broken Bow (right) and Chadron (above) are the two first stops on the "SPARK!" tour



The "SPARK!" schedule is:

- Broken Bow, June 13 - July 25** at Custer County Historical Society
- Chadron, August 3 - September 11** at Dawes County Historical Society
- Haigler, September 21 - October 30** at Haigler Cornerstone Center
- Madison, November 9 - December 18** at Madison Public Library
- Verdigrée, January 5 - February 13** at Verdigrée Public Library
- Aurora, February 23 - March 27** at Plainsman Museum

This exhibition is brought to Nebraska with the help of local funding support. Businesses and other organizations that are interested in sponsoring "SPARK!" may contact Erin L. Moran, director of development, erin@humanitiesnebraska.org.

"SPARK! Places of Innovation" is part of Museum on Main Street, a collaboration of the Smithsonian Institution and Humanities Nebraska. Museum on Main Street is a partnership between the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service and state humanities councils nationwide that serves the small-town museums and citizens of rural America. Support for Museum on Main Street has been provided by the United States Congress.

NEBRASKA CULTURAL ENDOWMENT NOW AT RISK

A message from Executive Director Chris Sommerich

Despite federal funding uncertainties, Humanities Nebraska has maintained most of our programming and grant-making. However, the challenges are now on two fronts with significant cuts to arts and humanities in motion at the state level.

At the federal level, the good news is that Congress expressed strong bipartisan support for the state humanities councils. The National Endowment for the Humanities FY26 budget includes \$65 million for the councils, which is what was supposed to be distributed in FY25 (councils actually received only \$31 million). There are concerns whether that will happen. At this point, the councils haven't seen a federal dollar in 11 months.

Two critical reasons that HN was able to continue our work this past year — to an extent not found almost anywhere else

in the nation — were first: the generosity of private donors, and second: the distributions of earnings from the state and private sides of the Nebraska Cultural Endowment (NCE).

Now, for the first time in the NCE's 27-year existence, the Governor proposed sweeping the entire \$15 million from the state side of the endowment into the state's general budget as a one-time fix. This fund had grown steadily over the years as a match to private donations, so sweeping out any of the fund is a betrayal to the private donors who contributed to the NCE.

The Appropriations Committee has advanced a budget that reduces the governor's proposal to \$5 million, which will result in a projected \$300,000+ reduction in earnings that would have been distributed to HN and the Nebraska Arts Council. Both use these

distributions for awarding grants all over the state, so Nebraskans should expect a corresponding reduction in grants supporting arts and humanities activities in local communities.

However it plays out this time, we are committed to rebuilding this effective partnership and continuing to meet the needs of communities all across Nebraska. You can help by letting your state senator (and your congressional representatives) know how important the arts and humanities are to the well being of your community and in your own life. Visit the websites of Humanities Nebraska, the Nebraska Arts Council, the Nebraska Cultural Endowment, and Nebraskans for the Arts to stay informed.

Learn how you can help at humanitiesnebraska.org



SOWER AWARD NOMINATIONS DUE

DUE
JUN 12

Nominations are welcome for the 2026 Sower Award in the Humanities, to be presented October 27 in Lincoln. Anyone may nominate an individual who has made a significant contribution to public understanding of the humanities in Nebraska. Details and nomination forms are available online at HumanitiesNebraska.org

Past honorees have included talented humanities educators who reach beyond the classroom, volunteers, philanthropists, journalists, filmmakers, and others.

Nomination forms can be found at :

HumanitiesNebraska.org

Select "Sower Award" from the Programs menu.

WELCOME, NEW BOARD MEMBERS!

At the Spring Board Meeting on April 11, Humanities Nebraska welcomed six new board members, three each for the boards of the Nebraska Humanities Council and the Nebraska Foundation for the Humanities.

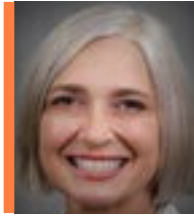
NEW TO THE COUNCIL

Frederik Ohles (Lincoln) is President Emeritus of Nebraska Wesleyan University, where he served 2007 - 2019. He earned a B.A. degree from Carleton College, and his M.A. and Ph.D. in history from Brandeis University. He is author and editor of three published books on European and American history.



B.A. degree from Carleton College, and his M.A. and Ph.D. in history from Brandeis University. He is author and

Spanish language, film, culture, and literature at the University of Nebraska at Kearney, where she earned her undergraduate degree. Her volunteer work includes bringing international films to the area and coordinating other cultural events.



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Anne Stockman (Omaha) is Assistant General Counsel at First Citizens Bank. She brings extensive nonprofit experience, having served on nonprofit boards for much of her career, including as Board President of Omaha Girls Rock and on the guild boards of the Women's Center for Advancement and the Child Saving's Institute.

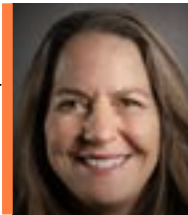


NEW TO THE FOUNDATION

Amy Shane (O'Neill) was superintendent of O'Neill Public Schools, 2006 - 2022. She is coordinator for a six-county community well-being collaborative and coordinates the Holt County Team-Mates program. She is also chair of Avera St. Anthony's hospital board of directors, and serves her local community in other ways.



Amy Sandeen (Hastings) has worked in nonprofit leadership, experiential education, and community engagement for more than 30 years. Currently, she is Director of Major Gifts with the Nebraska Community Foundation and is on the board of the Nonprofit Association of the Midlands. She was a member of the Humanities Nebraska Council board 2016-2022, (chair for 2019-2020) and returned as treasurer to fill a vacancy in 2025.



The Council re-elected **David Vail** of Kearney as chair and **Ana López Shalla** of Omaha as vice chair. **Matt Low** of Omaha was elected treasurer, and **Cecil Hicks, Jr.** of Omaha was elected to the at-large position.

The Foundation elected **Laura Troshynski** of North Platte as president, **Nancy Shank** of Lincoln as vice president, and **Joel Falk** of Omaha as treasurer. **Mike Homa** of Omaha was extended to a seventh year of board service as immediate past president.

THANK YOU TO RETIRING BOARD MEMBERS!

Humanities Nebraska is grateful to these board members who reached the end of their board service in January.

MARY RAIMONDO of Elkhorn was a member of the Foundation board from 2023-2025. **BETH WHITED** of Omaha served on the Council board from 2020-2025 and was elected chair 2023-2024. **JACLYN WILSON** of Lakeside served on the Council board from 2019-2025. Each of these board members provided invaluable wisdom, thoughtful ideas, and many volunteer hours to support the humanities.

SAVE THE DATE!

31ST GOVERNOR'S LECTURE IN THE HUMANITIES

OCTOBER 27, 2026

LIED CENTER FOR PERFORMING ARTS LINCOLN

FREE & OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

You can join these generous contributors and help people across the state explore what connects us and makes us human.

Gifts received between November 1, 2024, and February 28, 2025.

Many donors make multiple gifts throughout the year. Cumulative giving for the year is listed in our annual report.

ORGANIZATIONS	\$1,000-\$4,999	PATRON'S CIRCLE	\$10,000+
\$50,000+ Anonymous Sherwood Foundation	Ameritas Charitable Foundation Lockwood Foundation	Anonymous	Amy Bones David & Laura Buntain Linda Clark Judy & Jack Ekeler Richard & Sandra Fruehling Karen & John Higgins Mike & Shelley Homa Steve & Jeni Homan Tara Knapp Beverly Kracher & Jerry Stegeman Paul & Lynette Krieger Charles & Ellen Lierk Renee & Ed McClymont Emily J. McElroy Helen & Robert E. Nichols
\$20,000-\$49,999 Woods Charitable Fund, Inc.	\$500-\$999 Bluestem Prairie Foundation C.W. Yount Foundation, Inc. Give Nebraska John C. Fremont Days Inc. in memory of Cherrie Beam Calloway PayPal Giving Fund	\$5,000-\$9,999 Jane Renner Hood Margaret Hornady-David Jean & Lee Johnson Art & Chris Zygielbaum	Ana López Shalla & Stephen Osberg June Pederson Sarah & Jeffery Peetz Carolyn Rasmussen Earl & Patricia Scudder Larry Small Dr. Michael Stieghorst & Dr. Sue Conley Christopher & Wendy Swenson Eric & Kristin Wiebe
\$10,000-\$19,999 Shoemaker Family Foundation	\$250-\$499 Anonymous	\$2,500-\$4,999 Pat & Lou Lamberty Don & Rita Otis Andy & Kris Pollock Joel & Erin Russell	<i>Donors who give \$1,000 or more within a calendar year become members of the Patron's Circle. In addition to those listed above, Patron's Circle members in other giving levels for this issue of "Rapport" are denoted by a ●.</i>
\$5,000-\$9,999 Hastings Community Foundation Fliesbach Family Foundation Rogers Foundation	\$50-\$249 Unadilla Community Library	\$1,000-\$2,499 Charlie & Marylin Bicak	

THANK YOU, PATRON'S CIRCLE

In addition to the individuals listed in the green box above and those designated by a green circle on the facing page, Humanities Nebraska thanks these other members of the Patron's Circle (March 1, 2025-February 28, 2026).

Anonymous (3)	Carol Fichter	Calvin Johnson	Jane & Randy Moody	D. David & Martha Slosburg
Bill & Connie Adams	Jane Fliesbach	Kile & Virginia Johnson	Erin L. & Michael L. Moran	Annette & Paul Smith
Virginia & John Aita	Kay Fowles	Bob & Rossell Kelley	Mary Nefsky	Marcus Snow
Effie Athanassopoulos & George Gogos	Julie & Lance Fritz	Pat & Don Kingsley	M.Timothy Nolting & Deb Carpenter-Nolting	Julie Speirs
Anne & Nicholas Baxter	Linda & Mark Graff	Hod & Willa Kosman	Keith & Mallory Peterson	Joe Starita
Cindy & Mogens Bay	Jeffrey & Judy Greenwald	Vikki & Doug Kotil	Lewis & Winifred Pinch	Sen. John & Rita Stinner
Robert & Jo Anne Bettenhausen	Dr. Amy Haddad & Steve Martin	John & Wende Kotouc	Andy & Kris Pollock	Bette Anne Thaut
Dan & Esther Brabec	Dan Hamann & Joan Squires	Kristin & Jon Krueger	Lynn & Dana Roper	Bill & Laura Troshynski
Jason Conrad & David Clark	Carey & Brian Hamilton	Carole Levin	Constance Ryan	Carol Wang
Gerald & Kit Dimon	Tami & Jerry Hellman	Fred & Carol Lockwood	David & Trixie Schmidt	Dori Wanitschke
Kim & Tom Dinsdale	Robert Hillestad	Mary & Rodrigo López	Rhonda Seacrest	Dr. Tom Waring
Beth & Amnon Dotan	Chris Hochstetler & Jacki Proctor	Robert & Christine Makowski	Nancy & Bryan Shank	Beth & Kelvin Whited
Connie & Todd Duncan	Thomas & Carol Holyoke	Jim McKee & Linda Hillegass	Chuck Shoemaker & Lynne Friedewald	Ross & Judy Wilcox
Mike & Becky Evers	Anne M. Hubbard	Ian McLean & Maggie White McLean		Pete & Kristae Zandbergen



INDIVIDUALS

\$500-\$999

John & Dr. Sara Crook
Mrs. Ann & Dr. David Duey
Dr. Dan & Alice Holtz
Dr. Robin & Ann Koozer
Carol Lewis ●
Maxine & Armel MacDonald
Lee-Ellen Matzke
Bill & Gretchen Peters
Brenda Robinson ●
in memory of Cal Robinson
Crystal & Kelly Sandberg
Chris & Vicki Sommerich ●
Peter & Paula Stone
Kate & Roger Weitz
Dennis & Kathi Wells

\$250-\$499

Marcia Barkley
Ed & Maggie Bates
Daniel Claes & Shireen Adenwalla
Linda Crandall
Sid & Patty Dillon
Karen Wyatt Drevo
Jim & Marsha Fairbanks
James K. Fruehling
Tom Gallagher
George & Judy Haecker
Kurt Haecker
Ellen Hargus
Susan Henrie
Jane Renner Hood ●
in memory of Roger Lewis & Rex German
Loren & Cleo Jacobsen
Belva Junker
Audrey Kauders
Patrick & Emily Leahy ●
Dr. Richard & Monica Lloyd
Matt & Laura Low
William & Kathryn Lydiatt in honor of Virginia & John Aita

Linda & Terry J. McClain
Rosemary & Fred Ohles
Glenda Pierce & Jeff Kirkpatrick
Gale & Julie Pokorny
Mary Raimondo
Neal & Deb Ratzlaff
Amy Sandeen
MeMe Smith
Judith & Clarence Ueda
Julia Watson
Rick & Susie Windle
John A. [Jay] Yost & G. Wade Leak

\$100-\$249

Anonymous (4)
Ernest & Marilyn Abariotes
Mary Rabenberg
Jeff Barnes
Elizabeth Barrett
Rick & Kathy Bell
Deb & Tom Berger
Linda Bors
Keith & Dianne Bystrom ●
Larry & Beverly Cast
Ed & Jan Connolly
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Vivian & Spencer Davis
Michael & Janet Davis
Don & Marilyn Deitemeyer ●
Cindy & John Dinkel
Martha Feit
Terry & Catherine Ferguson ●
Sarah Ferneding
Steve & Cathy Fosselman
Alan & Barbara Johnson Frank
Douglas & Patricia Friedli
Tom & Katie Graf
Mike & Marsha Green
Michael & Kathy Gross

Kathleen Hamilton
Mary Kay Hansen
Dee & Jerri Haussler
Doug & Judy Heim
Margaret & Charles Hermes
Cecil Hicks & Nicole Brown
Shari Hofschire
Jane Renner Hood
in memory of Elaine Kruse
Ellen Hornady
Judy & Chris Hove
Jim & Elaine Johnson
Jeannette Eileen Jones & Alexander Vazansky
Jane & Peter Kotsiopoulos
Michael & Karen Markey
Tom & Evelyn McKnight
Team Llama Charitable Fund
Jane Morrison
Gaylord & Vali Mussman
Robert Olson
Harvey & Susan Perlman
Karen & Oliver Pollak
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James R. Robinson & Pamela A. Gardner
Max & Karen Rudolph
Jeff Schovanec
Mark Howard Schulze
William & Laura Shiffermiller
Steve Shively
Robert & Carmen Shively
Linda Simonsen
Eileen Sullivan
Mary Teale Yanders
Sherry & Dennis Thompson
Jerry & Mary Vaughan
Peter Vuchetich
Jeanne Walter
Lynda Waring-Houser

Kent & Susan Warneke
Janyce Warneke
Steve & Joye Wees
Roger Wehrbein
Sarah & Bruce Williamson
Nancy & Philip Wolf
David & Kathy Young

\$50-\$99

Anonymous (3)
Diane R. Bartels
Mayrene Bentley
Patty H. Beutler
Sheila Boerner
Dori Bush
Melissa Cast-Brede
Ann Chambers
Dennis Dohner & Zoya Zeman in memory of Bob Nefsky
Robert & Bette Frels
Twyla Hansen
LeEllen Haynes
Jean Jeffrey
Jean & Gerald Karlen
David & Melodee Landis
David & Mary Lempke
Rebecca & Rick Matticks
Fern Medlin
The Most Unlikely Place
Lori Moore
Jim & Sue Murphy
Vern & Theresa Rasmussen
Ward & Cheryl Reesman
Ruth Ann Schultz
Jack & Norma Stevens
Dorothy & Dean Tuma
Gilbert Vaughan
Mark Zalman

HN SETS GOAL OF 400 SUMMER READING KITS

Once again in 2026, HN plans to create summer reading kits to help kids around the state maintain their reading skills while school is out over the summer.

Each kit will contain award-winning children's books with humanities themes, a discussion guide, and art supplies. Last year, more than 1,000 kits were requested. With HN's reduced budget in 2026, staff has set a goal of 400 kits with less items than previous year, with partial funding from Give to Lincoln Day donors. Every donation via Give to Lincoln Day earns a proportional share of a matching grant from the Lincoln Community Foundation.

To participate in Give to Lincoln Day, follow the link on the HN website beginning May 1.



CORRECTION: In HN's 2025 Annual Report, Bette Anne Thaut was incorrectly listed as from TOWN. The correct town is TOWN.

SPEAKER CHERRIE BEAM-CALLOWAY'S LEGACY

Cherrie Beam-Calloway of Fremont, a member of the HN Speaker Bureau since 1989, passed away on September 11, 2025 after a brief illness.

Combing through diaries and artifacts, Cherrie created a three-part series that presented all the hopes, hardships, and day-to-day activities of Nebraska pioneers. She taught herself an Irish brogue and donned period attire to become an authentic living history presenter, captivating audiences of all ages.

One of many organizers who booked Cherrie's "Promise in a New Land" presentation said, "Everyone in attendance was absolutely fascinated...We felt like we had taken a step back in time."

Countless Nebraska fourth-graders learned about Nebraska's pioneer days from Cherrie.

"The students were attentive and totally engaged throughout the program," said teacher Tina



Cherrie speaking at Florence Mill in Omaha

Schofield of St. Vincent de Paul School in Omaha.

Born on a farm near Oshkosh, the Sandhills girl and her family moved to Fremont when she was a teen. She graduated from Fremont High in 1970 and remained forever committed to her new hometown.

Cherrie co-founded John C. Fremont Days in 1987. She started "A Day in the Past" at Louis E. May Museum to teach thousands of Dodge County students about pioneer life. Cherrie also served on the board of the Dodge County Historical Society from 1992-93.

Jeff Barnes was new to the HN Speakers Bureau when he met Cherrie in 2009. They became fast friends, sharing a love of history and tips on the best places to eat while on the speaker circuit.

"Cherrie was a great source of pioneer history, having collected so many stories for her presentations, and also for local history on the Fremont area," said Jeff.

A Nebraska State Historical Society trustee, Jeff urged her to run for the board. Cherrie succeeded and served from 2014-2019.

"That allowed for her to share her history at another level," he said.

Dan Holtz, another member of

the HN Speakers Bureau, recalled meeting Cherrie when she went to one of his HN programs.

"Along with her ever-present sense of humor, she had a gift for making people of all ages and ethnicities feel valued and heard," Dan recalled. "She endowed the characters in her living history presentations with a deep, relatable humanity that naturally drew in people who invariably wanted to share stories and continue the conversations long after her programs were over."

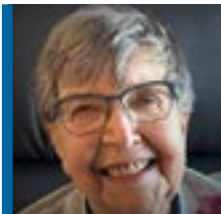
Jeff mourned, "We've lost so many great Nebraska history and heritage people in the past few years, and Cherrie was in the top tier. So many were blessed to hear her stories of our state and I miss her."

Dan concurred. "As my wife Alice says, Cherrie was a Nebraska treasure. Her legacy continues and goes well beyond the hundreds of HN programs she delivered. On top of it all, she was a great and dear friend."

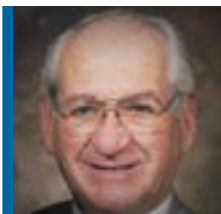


Cherrie speaking at Ainsley Public Library

IN MEMORY



ELAINE KRUSE | 1940-2025 Dr. Elaine Kruse died November 27, 2025. Born in Illinois, she earned her Ph.D. in History from the University of Iowa. After several positions, she found her home as professor of history at Nebraska Wesleyan University. She also held many leadership positions at Wesleyan, including president of the faculty. Elaine was an avid traveler and a voracious reader who shared her love for history and culture with others. She was a vibrant member of the HN Speakers Bureau for several years.



EARL MITCHELL | 1931-2026 Earl Mitchell died on March 11, 2026. After graduating from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) and serving in the Army, he and his wife settled in Norfolk, where they joined other community leaders in forming the Norfolk Arts Center. Earl was instrumental in the design of the Johnny Carson Theatre. He served on the UNL Chancellor's Council, Norfolk Public School board, HN council board (2004-2009), and multiple foundations.

GRANT SPOTLIGHT: BUTLER COUNTY HISTORY

In 2023 and 2024, the Butler County Historical Society (BCHS) hosted a series of programs on the histories of local towns. Instead of presenting these programs themselves, organizers reached out beyond the county seat of David City and invited people to join the program series as partners, each taking ownership of his or her own presentation.

Wide-ranging advertising promotion included social media posts, newspaper advertisements, contributed newspaper columns, guest speaking spots at civic group meetings, and newsletters and posters distributed to waiting rooms, restaurants, and libraries.

BCHS's self-described "little engine that could" approach proved very successful, drawing an average of 250 people per program and earning recognition

for community impact from the Butler County Chamber of Commerce and for historic preservation from the Daughters of the American Revolution. BCHS has published two local history books from the information gathered from the program series to date.

In 2025, a Humanities Nebraska grant helped support BCHS's "History Comes Alive in '25" speaker series expenses, including facility rental, advertising, and mileage reimbursement for speakers traveling from out of town. The series topics included the Pawnee people, the county fair, cemeteries, and "trains, tractors, and trucks".

BCHS organizers said, "Involving local people to present our programs has given us broader ownership of our history and our county." They added, "Our attendees have been from every town in our county.



Broc Anderson of the Nebraska State Historical Society, with the audience at his talk.

Historically, our smaller towns aren't included in our big town events, so these events have helped involve the outlying smaller towns."

Another element of BCHS's success has been the long planning horizon for the series. As of February 2026, plans are already in place for programs on Bicentennial celebrations in June and at fire departments in October. In 2027, programs are taking shape around histories of high schools in the county.

RECENTLY AWARDED GRANTS

Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts, Omaha, \$1,000 for Dr. Jacinda Tran's lecture, "Close to the Clouds: Encountering Digital Diasporas" • **Black Elk Elementary**, Omaha, \$1,600 for two one-hour presentations by African Cultural Connection • **Blixt Locally Grown**, Lincoln, \$1,600 for a historic display to accompany the "Not Too Far Distant" play • **City of Wilber**, \$507 for an historic presentation about the Children's Blizzard of 1888 • **Gage County Historical Society**, Beatrice, \$1,836 to help fund a museum exhibit, "How We Celebrate: Honoring the 250th Anniversary of the United States" • **Kearney Area Community Foundation**, \$2,000 for the 2026 Kearney Area Storytelling Festival • **Midland University**, Fremont, \$2,000 for two film screenings and discussions, plus an interactive garden event • **Nebraska Poetry Society**, Omaha, \$1,200 for Spring 2026 speakers & educational events • **Nebraska Writers Collective**, Omaha, \$2,000 for Verbal Gumbo performance poetry event • **Norfolk Public Junior High**, \$1,875 for three presentations, three writing workshops, and a meet-and-greet with author Andrea Beatriz Arango • **Scribner-Snyder Community Schools**, Scribner, \$1,500 to help fund K-8 students in researching and producing exhibit panels on local history during the 2025-26 school year, leading to a "Scribner Stories" event in May 2026. • **The Social Action Committee of the Unitarian Church**, Lincoln, \$2,000 for its 2026 Winter Lecture Series • **University of Nebraska at Kearney Board of Regents**, \$2,000 to help fund programming related to the "Americans and the Holocaust" traveling exhibit, including two film screenings and a public talk • **University of Nebraska at Lincoln Board of Regents for the International Quilt Museum**, Lincoln, \$1,998 to fund a talk related to the exhibit, "Crown and Stage: The Monarchy and Shakespeare in Quilts"

15
GRANTS
\$23,116
TOTAL

COURTESY PHOTO

HUMANITIES CHAMPIONS CORNER

Carol Levin: Behind the Giving

As soon as Carole Levin arrived at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) in 1998, she sought out Humanities Nebraska.

"I was thrilled to discover the Speakers Bureau," Levin said.

While other states also have state-based affiliates of the National Endowment for the Humanities, Levin mentioned none that she experienced were as active as Nebraska. This was something that deeply excited her, opening a new world of how she could continue to live out her passion for teaching history.

"I think humanities events are more important now than ever, to build a sense of community," Levin said. "I want people who go to these events to not only gain community but develop more empathy, a value we all need to have."

During her career, Levin became

an accomplished multihyphenate in her field. She earned a graduate degree 16th and 17th century English history at Tufts University and taught at the State University of New York and ultimately UNL.

Now in retirement, Levin has discovered a renewed sense of purpose as a donor and beloved speaker for Humanities Nebraska.

"I love teaching and getting information out to people, presenting it in an engaging and clear way," she said.

Levin strives to be a storyteller of the past. She emphasized the importance of learning history in order to connect it with our current age and issues. Currently, she teaches about Joan of Arc throughout Nebraska with the HN Speakers Bureau.

"Joan was not only important in her time, but she is incredibly

important in our time too," Levin said.

She shared her amazement after a recent event in Nebraska City, noting how excited people were to hear of Joan's bravery and the legacy she paved for future women. Afterward, the discussion continued, showcasing the impact of this lesson.

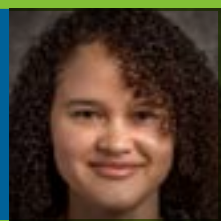
Those moments are what make it worth it for Levin. The Speakers Bureau would not be able to continue without donors and supporters. Levin is a clear advocate for HN's mission.

"Give what you can, even if it's a small amount, and give it every year," Levin said. "You are helping something that helps the state of Nebraska become more vibrant and excellent."



MEET THE INTERN

Nayla Torres Ruiz from Grand Island recently signed on as



project intern through the Intern Foundry, a partnership between

The Foundry Community and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Honors Program. She is working toward degrees in Anthropology, History, and Spanish.

What interested you about working at HN?

I wanted to gain experience with non-profit work as it is a field I am interested in as a transition point between

undergrad and graduate school. I also wanted some hands-on experience. I've always been more of a "thinker" and thought Humanities Nebraska could help me become more of a "doer."

What's your go-to humanities hobby?

I love reading, anything, from history to fiction! I also enjoy learning about other cultures in my free time and write short stories from time to time.

What are your future career plans or goals?

I plan to take a year off from school before applying for PhD programs in sociocultural anthropology.



The Nebraska Cultural Endowment is proud to support Humanities Nebraska.



Investing in the arts and humanities for a greater Nebraska.



Learn more about how we are investing in a greater Nebraska at NebraskaCulturalEndowment.org.

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT QCD AND DAF GIVING

With the flowers blooming and the weather warming up, it signals the start of spring!

As always, we have a number of programs gearing up, and some that are winding down—many of which are highlighted throughout this newsletter.

You are probably familiar with many of the ways you can support HN, including through our secure online portal (or by scanning the QR code below), and via check, but there are a few other ways to give back that seem to be expanding.

Two options that we have seen substantial growth in are QCDs (Qualified Charitable Distributions) and DAFs (Donor-Advised Funds). Both serve different purposes, and offer distinct benefits.

Fidelity Investments explains, “**QCDs** allow individuals aged 70½ or older to transfer funds directly from their IRA to a qualified charity, helping to meet Required Minimum Distributions while potentially reducing taxable income.”

By comparison, “**DAFs** are charitable giving accounts managed by a public charity, where donors can contribute funds and recommend grants to nonprofits over time. Contributions to DAFs



HN recently provided a grant to the Joslyn Arts & Literary Fest for this production of “Voices of the Harlem Renaissance.”

may be tax-deductible in the year they are made.”

HN has also seen an increase in stock donations. Stock donations may offer tax benefits to donors, and have the potential of increasing impact of the donation because the non-profit receives the full benefit of the proceeds from the stock sale.

If you are interested in stock donations or these other ways to support HN, (or if you have any other donation questions), please reach out to Erin L. Moran, director of development, at erin@humanitiesnebraska.org.

Thank you again for your continued support of HN—we are so lucky to have you as supporters!



Questions about the Nefsky Fund? Please reach out!
Send email to: info@nebraskaculture.org

MAKE AN IMPACT



GIVE NEBRASKA is a coalition of 76 diverse nonprofits working to build a vibrant, creative, and healthy community. HN greatly appreciates donors who designated gifts to us through their Give Nebraska workplace giving campaigns. To learn more, please visit givenebraska.org.



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TO UPDATE ADDRESS OR CANCEL SUBSCRIPTIONS,
402.474.2131 or INFO@HUMANITIESNEBRASKA.ORG

AN IMPACTFUL 20 YEARS OF PRIME TIME

This year marks the 20th anniversary of Prime Time at Grand Island Public Library and Norfolk Public Schools. Also, Lincoln City Libraries, which hosted Nebraska's first Prime Time Family Reading in 2002, is in their 20th year offering the program. Prime Time has continuously brought children and families together by strengthening reading, discussion, and comprehension skills.

Grand Island saw immediate enthusiasm from its first Prime Time series in 2006. The program received strong backing from across the community, with schools, local businesses, and local media all coming together to help make the program successful. Since then, Grand Island has hosted 45 Prime Time programs which have served approximately 1,600 participants.

"We continue offering Prime Time because it is a game changer for these children and families to learn the love of literature," Celine Swan, Director of Grand Island Public Library, said. "It changes their lives and hopefully makes them better students."

Since Lincoln City Libraries held that first Prime Time Family Reading at Bennett Martin Public Library in the spring of 2002, the program has continued to grow and diversify. In 2005, Bennett Martin hosted the pilot bilingual English/Spanish Prime Time, which became a regular offering the following year in Lincoln, Omaha, and other communities. In 2013, the first Native American Prime Time series was held, and the first Prime Time Preschool launched in 2017. In 2021, the first trilingual English/Spanish/Karen series was held in Lincoln to serve immigrants from southeast Asia. Altogether, Lincoln sites has offered 33 Prime Time



series reaching roughly 1,500 children and adults.

"I remember having immense respect for these families because it was clear that they valued education and literacy and wanted so much for their children," said Vicki Wood, a former Prime Time coordinator who has retired.

In Norfolk, Prime Time began in 2006 at Grant Elementary. Several other schools and libraries also hosted the program throughout the years. In 2012 when summer school funds were cut, Humanities Nebraska worked with local organizations to design a unique eight-week Prime Time Summer School series to ensure continued learning. Approximately 3,600 children and adults have attended 76 Norfolk series.

"Humanities Nebraska has paved the way for literacy learning and enjoyment. I have seen Prime Time Family Reading impact lives in positive ways," said Norfolk coordinator Lisa Guenther. "May Prime Time Family Reading thrive and continue for many years to come."

To learn more, please visit www.HumanitiesNebraska.org.

For financial support opportunities, please email Erin L. Moran at erin@humanitiesnebraska.org.