

# **City of Scottsbluff, Nebraska**

**Monday, September 20, 2021**

**Regular Meeting**

## **Item Public Inp1**

**Council to receive the Economic Development Certified  
Community Presentation.**

**Staff Contact: Starr Lehl, Economic Development Director**

## Agenda Statement

Item No.

For Meeting of: September 20, 2021

**AGENDA TITLE:** EDCC Presentation

**SUBMITTED BY DEPARTMENT/ORGANIZATION:** Economic Development

**PRESENTATION BY:** Starr Lehl

**SUMMARY EXPLANATION:** The City of Scottsbluff has achieved recertification in the Economic Development Certified Community Program through the Nebraska Diplomats and Department of Economic Development. Brittany Hardin, DED Representative will be attending the council meeting to present the recertification certificate.

**BOARD/COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:** No

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** It is customary to have a picture taken with the Mayor and Council receiving the certificate of recertification to be used for media release at the local and state level.

---

### EXHIBITS

Resolution ☐ Ordinance ☐ Contract ☐ Minutes ☐ Plan/Map ☐

Other (specify) Letter from DED announcing the recertification and final EDCC application submitted by staff \_\_\_\_\_

**NOTIFICATION LIST:** Yes ☐ No ☐ Further Instructions ☐  
Please list names and addresses required for notification.

**APPROVAL FOR SUBMITTAL:** \_\_\_\_\_  
City Manager

---

Rev: 11/15/12 City Clerk



August 6, 2021

Starr Lehl, Economic Development Director  
2525 Circle Drive  
Scottsbluff, NE 69361

RE: Economic Development Certified Community (EDCC) Recertification Application

Dear Starr,

Congratulations! The Nebraska Diplomats are pleased to congratulate the City of Scottsbluff on recertification in the Nebraska Economic Development Certified Community program.

The Department will be sending out a press release to announce that Scottsbluff has been recertified in the Economic Development Certified Community program. Please submit a few bullet points about Scottsbluff that you would like to include in the press release, such as recent economic development accomplishments of the City and any information the community would like to include as quotes. You can submit the information to me via email. The Department requests that the City does not make a public announcement on the recertification until we have issued the press release.

The Department would also like to recognize the City's Recertification at a Scottsbluff City Council meeting or another special event organized locally when you are comfortable. Please think about how you would like to do this, and we will work with you to be flexible.

Through the recertification designation, the City can continue to use the EDCC logo on the City's marketing material. Please continue to be diligent in keeping the City's website and LOIS information up to date.

The recertification will be good for five years, or until August 2026. You will receive a curtsy notification prior to this date. If you have questions please feel free to contact me at [ashley.gerlach@nebraska.gov](mailto:ashley.gerlach@nebraska.gov) or 308-655-0919.

Again, congratulations!

Sincerely,  
Ashley Rice-Gerlach, EDCC Program Manager



**City of Scottsbluff**  
Department of Economic Development  
**Recertification Application**  
**April 30, 2021**



## Table of Contents

<b>Part I</b> Letter from Applicant Municipality	Page 3
<b>Part II</b> Website	Page 4
<b>Part III</b> Location One Information System	Page 6
<b>Part IV</b> Controlled Site or Building Info	Page 8
<b>Part V</b> Community's Identified Targets or Markets	Page 10
<b>Part VI</b> Business Retention & Expansion Program	Page 13
<b>Part VII</b> Community Strategic Plan for Economic Development	Page 16
<b>Part VIII</b> Marketing Materials	Page 16
<b>Part IX</b> Long-Range Funding Plan	Page 17
<b>Part X</b> Labor Market Information and Workforce Attraction Efforts	Page 18
<b>Part XI</b> Housing Initiatives	Page 19
<b>Part XII</b> Nebraska Diplomats	Page 20
<b>Part XII</b> Economic Development Evaluation	Page 23
Appendix I	Page 29
Appendix II	Page 31
Appendix III	Page 33

## Part I – Letter from Applicant Municipality



308-632-4136  
2525 Circle Drive  
Scottsbluff, NE 69361

March 15, 2021

Ashley Rice-Gerlach  
Nebraska Department of Economic Development  
301 Centennial Mall South  
P. O. Box 94666  
Lincoln, NE 69509-4666

Dear Ashley,

The City of Scottsbluff hired Starr Lehl as Economic Development Director in 2017 and currently have a Memorandum of Understanding with Twin Cities Development for the city to work jointly with them in the area of economic development. Starr will be the primary contact for the Economic Development Certified Community recertification.

The City of Scottsbluff worked with Thomas P. Miller and Associates in 2014 on how to strengthen regional economic development in western Nebraska and how to collaborate efforts related to business attraction and retention, entrepreneurship, workforce, housing and tourism.

The plan "United We Grow" was completed in 2015 and has been used as a guiding principal for economic development since its inception.

In July of 2017, the Mayor and City Council made the decision to hire an in-house Economic Development Director, severing ties with Twin Cities Development. This decision has been a successful one for the City of Scottsbluff, with the growth of many existing companies and attraction of several new ones.

Western Nebraska continues to have countless opportunities for economic growth and vitality because of the strong leadership, history of business success and an extraordinary education system.

Recertification in the State of Nebraska Economic Development Certified Community Program will assist by allowing us to continue to showcase the strengths and abilities of the region. Please give our recertification application your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jeanne McKerrigan, Mayor  
City of Scottsbluff

## Part II – Website

The City of Scottsbluff's website is [www.scottsbluff.org](http://www.scottsbluff.org). The website was revamped in 2016.

Please see the outline below for the location of requirements:

### Identification

- a. **Name of community:** Multiple locations are all webpages
- b. **Name of State - Nebraska:** Yes
- c. **Map showing location of community within Nebraska:** Yes
- d. **Location identification found on every page:** Yes
- e. **Action photos showcasing the community:** Yes
- B. Contact Information**
  - a. **Full/completed information:** Yes
  - b. **Contact information found clearly on homepage and in footer/header/sidebar of every page on the site:** Yes, sidebar on all pages, except footer on homepage.
  - c. **If the page features a "Contact Us" button or tab - it should open up another page on the website with the same look and feel and should contain contact information. This should never be a link that automatically opens as an email:** Not Applicable

### C. Navigation

- a. **Should be easy to follow and identify where one is at all times within the site:** In 2020, the original "Departments" and "Government" tabs were combined to make navigation easier for users. In the center of each sub-webpage, a webpage tree shows where a user is on the website. For example, "Economic Development" is located under "Departments & Divisions" which is located under "Government."
- b. **Provides a way back home without having to use the back button:** Yes, as stated above a webpage tree shows how to return to home as well as the home symbol shown on every webpage.

#### D. Economic Development Page

- a. **If providing a link to the community's website, a page or tab must be dedicated to the economic development efforts:** The economic development webpage is at <http://www.scottsbluff.org/economicdevelopment> Additionally, a main tab on the website is titled "Business & Development" which centralizes links to webpages important to economic development.

#### E. Online Properties

- a. **Website must have Location One Information System (LOIS) integrated or linked so all available sites and buildings are accessible to the viewer:** Yes, LOIS can be accessed from the "Business & Development" tab as well as the "Economic Development" webpage. The address is [http://scottsbluff.org/businesses/site\\_selection.php](http://scottsbluff.org/businesses/site_selection.php).

## Part III – LOIS

The Location One information has been updated and provides the available sites and buildings in the community. The City of Scottsbluff is actively pursuing additional site locations by looking at annexation of contiguous properties to the city with utilities either on-site or in close proximity. The proposed area can be characterized by industrial and commercial land uses.

Following the annexation plan, the city anticipates working with MC Schaff and Associates on Blight and Substandard Determination Studies in order to bring some of these newly annexed locations into the Redevelopment Area of the city. Currently, Scottsbluff has three sites being studied in-depth for development opportunities. This is a direct result of the Economic Development study conducted by Thomas P. Miller and Associates in 2014.

Scottsbluff is also working with engineers to extend the city's Redevelopment Area at the request of several downtown and surrounding businesses. The percentage of Blight and Substandard area in Scottsbluff is currently 25.4%, far below the 35% allowable by state law. Four study areas (Areas 13, 14, 15 & 17) will be reviewed by the Planning Commission in May 2021. Area 16 is currently being studied.

Several properties are linked to LOIS through the City of Scottsbluff website located at [http://scottsbluff.org/businesses/site\\_selection.php](http://scottsbluff.org/businesses/site_selection.php). The Scottsbluff properties can be found on the Available Properties tab on the City of Scottsbluff website.

There are currently two commercial lots near the Menards property in Scottsbluff; one covers 26 acres and the other covers approximately 10 acres. There are also sites available located near the airport which include several acres of developable land.

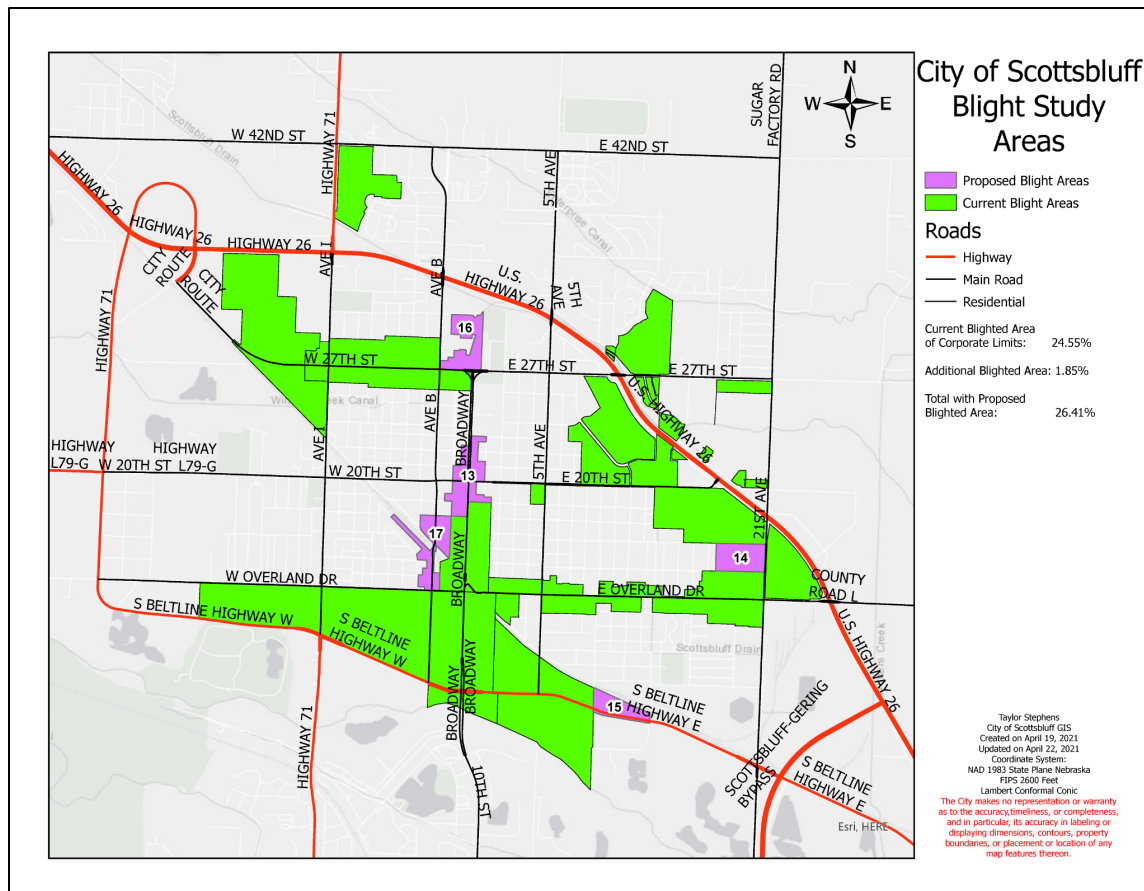


Figure 1 Map of Current and Proposed Blighted and Substandard Areas in the City of Scottsbluff



## Part IV – Controlled Site or Building Information

The Thomas P. Miller and Associates study recommended the cities of Scottsbluff and Gering move forward with the Pioneer Trails Industrial Site in Gering due to the easy access to the four-lane Heartland Expressway leading to Interstate 80 just 40 miles to the south and the connection to Nebraska Highway 385 north. The site also has rail access provided by Union Pacific Railroad.

The City of Scottsbluff is currently working with NPPD to identify one or two properties that would be suitable for development. The plan is to pursue an option on one or both of the properties and take advantage of **NPPD's Site Readiness Assistance Program**. One potential property is the area along 21<sup>st</sup> Avenue directly north of Menards (Figure 2). Another potential property is the area directly west of Walmart along US Highway 26 (Figure 3).

The City of Scottsbluff uses BR&E data extensively to proactively connect with existing businesses to understand and respond to their needs to help them grow, stay and become more committed to the community. Of course, it is exciting to learn of expansion plans and the city is able to sometimes help financially with growth, depending on the business sector. During some business visits a different tone is heard and the business is disgruntled or may even be closing. The city makes every effort to track all aspects of the visit and makes the utmost attempt to respond with any type of assistance available. Networking with other economic development professionals is sometimes the key to assistance and outreach. Follow-ups are done as immediate as possible, which gives credibility to the initial visit, if there is additional information requested, the business visit is flagged with a date to respond by. The city is looking forward to the new DED program to capture and track BR&E visits and will work closely with our DED Field Representative to revamp our program.

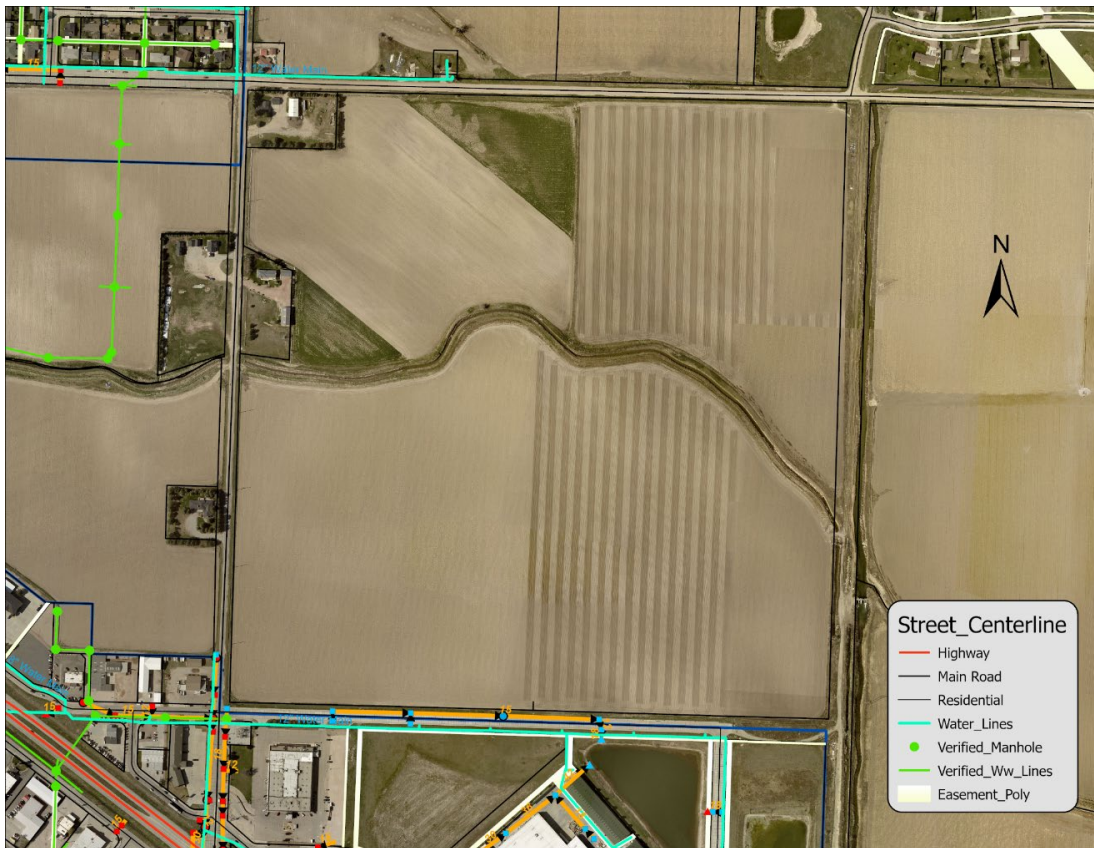


Figure 2 Map of Potential Property north of existing Menards property



Figure 3 Map of Potential Property west of existing Walmart Property

## Part V – Community’s Identified Targets or Markets

In 2017, the City of Scottsbluff reevaluated the goals and strategies identified by the 2014 Economic Development Strategic Plan and found the past goals consistent with current goals. As was the case in 2014 and 2017, the strong regional industries of Scottsbluff in 2021 are agribusiness, manufacturing, plastics and chemicals, and health services.

The sectors are listed below by the estimated number of employees from the 2019 American Community Survey (ACS S2403).

Business Sectors located in Scottsbluff, Nebraska	
1. Healthcare & Social Assistance	2. Professional, & Technical Services
3. Retail Trade	4. Wholesale Trade
5. Accommodation & Food Services	6. Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation
7. Manufacturing	8. Information
9. Educational Services	10. Agriculture
11. Construction	12. Real Estate, Rental, and Leasing
13. Transportation & Warehousing	14. Utilities
15. Finance & Insurance	16. Management of Companies & Enterprises
17. Administrative & Support Services	

Major private employers in the City of Scottsbluff are Regional West Medical Center, Wal-Mart, Western Sugar Cooperative, Panhandle Cooperative System, and Platte Valley Bank.

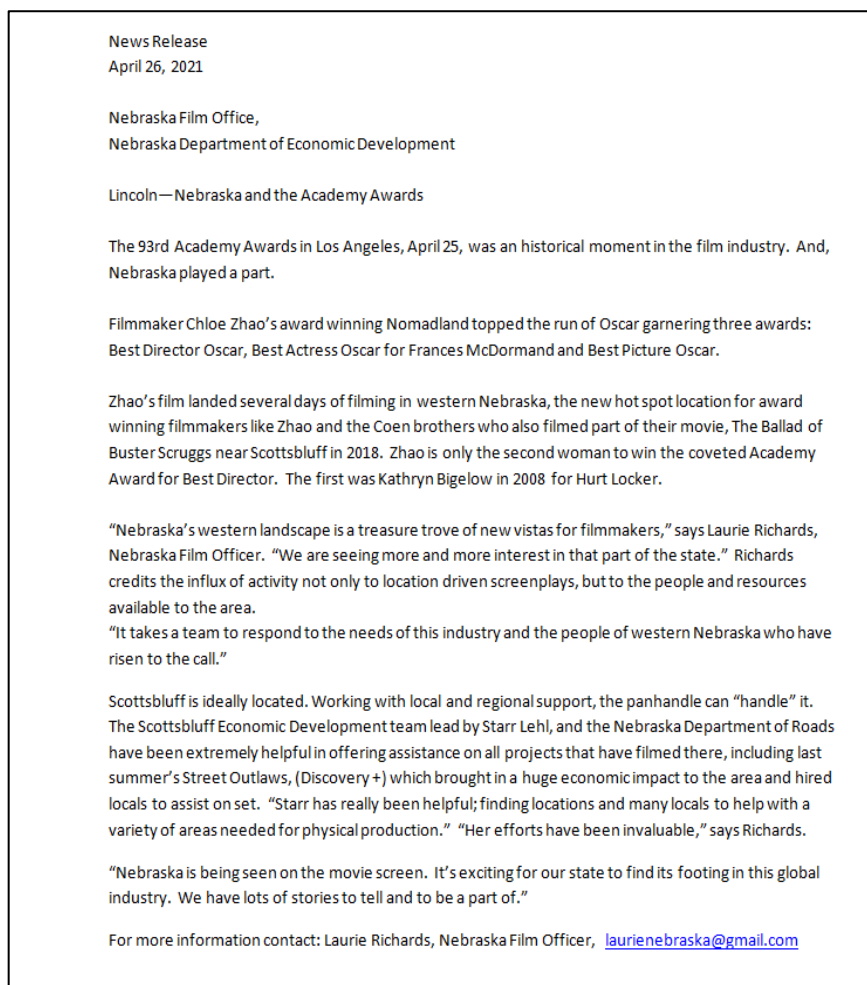
The targeted industry sectors are the same as the current strong regional industries. As identified in the 2014 Regional Economic Development Strategic Plan by Thomas P. Millers & Associates, agribusiness, food processing, & technology, advanced manufacturing & precision metals, plastics & chemicals, and health services. These industries were selected based on desirability and appropriateness for the region.

The City of Scottsbluff Economic Development Department (SEDD) oversees lead generation for the city. The economic development department showcases the community through multiple avenues. SEDD competitively responds to RFIs, provides tours of the community to prospective developers and companies, and provides site visits.

An area where the City of Scottsbluff has been successful is film production. There have been two major movies filmed in the area - in 2017, the Coen Brothers “The Ballad of Buster Scruggs” spent over 30 days in the area. The estimated financial impact to the community was \$3.5 million. In 2018 “Nomadland” used the Scottsbluff area as a backdrop for filming of this recent

Academy Award Winner (Figure 5).

The COVID pandemic hit local hotels and restaurants hard, but the city was able to work with Pilgrim Media Group and hosted the filming of the reality show “Street Outlaws”. By partnering with the Scotts Bluff County Roads Department and the Nebraska Department of Transportation, Pilgrim Media Group was able to locate two Nebraska highways that fit the bill for the filming. The 85+ cast and crew members along with over 40 drivers made an economic impact of over \$1.8 million at a time when the community needed it. Hotel lodging tax in August and September was stable when most counties were seeing a huge loss in taxes.



*Figure 4 News Release for Nomadland Oscar Awards*

### **Marketing Plan to Address Identified Targets**

The City of Scottsbluff Economic Development Department will be utilizing the recently created a Public Education Outreach Committee (PEOC) to assist in reaching out to citizens and businesses. The Scottsbluff PEOC is responsible for social media engagement and marketing for the city. The PEOC produces and publishes posts on the city's social media pages (Facebook & LinkedIn) to highlight the community. Additionally, the PEO is working on creating brochures which will show the opportunities of doing business in Scottsbluff and show the various financial assistance methods offered by the city.



In addition to the future printed brochures, the economic development department's web page at [scottsbluff.org](http://scottsbluff.org) provides information on available sites, available utilities and zoning information, recent studies and plans, and financial assistance methods. Also on the website, is an "About Scottsbluff" brochure which describes the community in greater detail and will be expanded to include priority available sites in the city.

The **FabTech Trade Show** was attended by the city in November of 2017 along with our partners from NPPD and several other Nebraska communities. This show is North America's largest metal forming, fabricating, welding and finishing event. There were several leads generated and friendships made at **FabTech** and the city continues to monitor and reach out to them about moving their business or locating a part of their operation to Scottsbluff. **IPPE - International Production and Processing Expo** was attended in February of 2018, again partnering with NPPD and other Nebraska communities. This event included three co-located events including a Feed Expo, Poultry Expo and Meat Expo. Leads continue to be followed up on and the City of Scottsbluff is planning to send a representative to future shows as they open up following the COVID pandemic.

The city plans to market to the front range of Colorado through our partnership Western Nebraska Community College as they ramp up recruitment efforts following the pandemic for students, the city plans to attend to and use these opportunities to recruit workforce, entrepreneurs and businesses. The city has forged relationships with a couple of realtors in Colorado to assist with lead generation, focusing on companies in our current target market categories for the region. These targets have been looked at closely by the consulting firm of Thomas P. Miller Associates and are being used as the region's goals for recruitment.

## Part VI – Business Retention & Expansion Program

The City of Scottsbluff works closely with many of the major employers in the area and continues to maintain open communication with them. The major employers in the area are targeted with a mix of smaller retail and tourism businesses. Industries visited include manufacturing companies, financial services, banking and insurance, health services, transportation and logistics, technology and engineering, business management and services, and retail. Several leisure service, tourism and Hispanic owned businesses have also been incorporated into the surveys. Businesses are scheduled for subsequent interviews every three years following the initial interview.

Interview teams of two are assigned to complete the in-person business interviews and are made up from local and state representatives. The City Manager and Economic Development Director along with team members from the Nebraska Department of Economic Development, Nebraska Public Power District, USDA Rural Development, Panhandle Area Development District and Scottsbluff/Gering Chamber of Commerce are included in the business visits.

The city has revised the original Synchronist form and has been using it for the visits as we await the new state-wide program to be rolled out. Once the information is gathered by the teams, the city reviews them for follow-up. Companies who reply positively about expansion of their facility and adding employees are prioritized.

The City Manager and Economic Development Director have begun in-person visits to small businesses in Spring 2021 to acquire contact information, help them to establish a web presence, if needed, and by adding a small business tab to the city's website to help support small businesses. The city feels as if some small businesses are being overlooked if they do not belong to the regional chamber of commerce or other organizations and if they have not claimed their business online such as on Google Maps. During these visits, city representatives gather as much information as possible, which this data will be gathered and recorded into a database.

Due to the COVID 19 pandemic, Business Retention and Expansion visits were paused in 2020. As a result, 27 business site visits were completed. The city has partnered with Twin Cities Development and the Scottsbluff/Gering Chamber of Commerce to send out the revised Business Retention & Expansion form via email. Businesses can fill out the form electronically and return it or request a phone or in person interview to complete the requested information.

The City of Scottsbluff uses BR&E data extensively to proactively connect with existing businesses to understand and respond to their needs to help them grow, stay and become more committed to the community. Of course, it is exciting to learn of expansion plans and the city is able to sometimes help financially with growth, depending on the business sector. During some business visits a different tone is heard and the business is disgruntled or may even be closing. The city makes every effort to track all aspects of the visit and makes the utmost attempt to respond with any type of assistance available. Networking with other economic development professionals is sometimes the key to assistance and outreach. Follow-ups are done as immediate as possible, which gives credibility to the initial visit, if there is additional information requested, the business visit is flagged with a date to respond by. The city is looking forward to the new DED program to capture and track BR&E visits and will work closely with our DED Field Representative to revamp our program.

2019-2020 Business Site Visits		
16th Empire	21st Century Equipment	A & L Inc.
Action Communications	Allo Communications	Americo Carriers
Aulick Industries	Black Hills Energy	Buyers Realty
Bytes Computer Service	Cappuccino & Company	Carr-Trumbull Lumber Co.
Dana Weber, CPA	Faneuil Business Services	FNBO
First State Bank	Great Western Bank	JG Elliott Insurance Service
Kelley Bean Company	MC Schaff Family of Companies	Panhandle Coop Association
Platte Valley Bank	Regional West Health	Simmons Olsen Law
Webb Eye Care	Western Farms	West Nebr. Community College

**Local Recognition Program for Industries & Businesses:** Every year, the Scottsbluff/Gering United Chamber of Commerce presents three awards to local business leaders and community members. The Rising Super Star Award is presented to a chamber member who has been in business five years or less who has also given of themselves, their time, talents and resources to benefit the entire community. The Visionary Super Star Award is presented to a chamber member who has been in business for six years or more and has provided a service to the community, both through their work and through their time and talent. The Trailblazer of the Year is presented to a person who is an outstanding leader in the business community and shares their time and talents for community betterment. Below is a list of winners from the past 5 years, and the businesses they represent.

**Rising Super Star:**

2021 - Starr Lehl, Economic Development Director, City of Scottsbluff  
 2020 - Doug Couse, Vice President of Community Banking, Western States Bank  
 2019 - Colleen Johnson, Executive Director, Old West Balloon Fest  
 2018 - Melissa Schneider, Owner/Manager of Sam and Louie's Pizza  
 2017 - Jennifer Rogers, Director, WNCC Foundation

**Visionary Super Star:**

2021 - Billy Estes, Executive Director, Historic Midwest Theater  
 2020 - Steph Black, Executive Director, United Way of Western Nebraska  
 2019 - Susan Wiedeman, Marketing Director, Panhandle Cooperative

2018 - Judy Amoo, Dean of Economic and Community Development, WNCC  
 2017 - Mike and Erika Hackett, Owners of Domino's Pizza in Scottsbluff, Gering and Torrington.

**Trailblazer of the Year:**

2021 - John Stinner, 48th District State Senator  
 2020 - Rick and Judy Keller, Managers of the Gering Civic Center and Owners of The Meat Shoppe Catering  
 2019 - Kent Greenwalt, Mayor of Terrytown  
 2018 - Mike Downey, Vice President, First State Bank  
 2017 Bill and Jim Trumbull, Owners and Managers of Carr-Trumbull Do-It Center



## Part VII – Community Strategic Plan for Economic Development

The previous Strategic Economic Development Plan was completed in 2014, but the Scottsbluff City Council did a thorough review of the plan in 2017. After review of the plan, community leaders felt the plan was still viable, but not very many of the objectives and recommendations had been worked on or met. The decision was made to proceed independent from Twin Cities Development and hire an in-house Economic Development Director. TCD also hired an Economic Development Director, however that person has since vacated the position. The City of Scottsbluff would like to continue the regional approach to economic development and will be working with Twin Cities Development in late April to update the [Strategic Economic Development Plan](#)

The City of Scottsbluff has budgeted \$30,000 in the next fiscal year to update the 2014 Regional Economic Development Strategic Plan. We will get the RFI out immediately following the approval of the 2021-2022 city budget. City leadership feels the original plan has been extremely useful and many of the recommendations have been followed through on to date. The update will incorporate the City Economic Development Position and also a plan to employ a City Small Business and Marketing Specialist and where the focus should be to grow the regional economy.

## Part VIII – Marketing Materials

The City of Scottsbluff has a dedicated webpage to Economic Development. It can be found at [http://scottsbluff.org/government/economic\\_development/index.php](http://scottsbluff.org/government/economic_development/index.php).

Please see the appendix for the Talent Attraction Brochure and Business Resources Brochure.

## Part IX – Long Range Funding Plan

The City of Scottsbluff collects sales tax to fund the City of Scottsbluff Economic Development Director salary and benefits as well as support staff within the city. The fund has consistently generated over \$100,000 per month and has been used extensively to fund business expansions and new business. Since 2015 the city has loaned/granted \$7,535,137, creating over 250 jobs. The City Finance Director currently manages a with a total the Economic Development Loan portfolio of 10,211,688.

The City of Scottsbluff has created a Community Redevelopment Authority (CRA) which has taxing authority. This five-member board currently oversees all TIF (Tax Increment Financing) Projects and also the East Overland Facade and Community Wide Facade Improvement Programs. The city council relies heavily on recommendations from the CRA for project approval as they are brought forward.

There is an effort to bring in some of the smaller communities in the western Nebraska region into a formal group to work on economic development projects and also a fee structure based on the services they are in need of.

There are 13 political subdivisions that are working together and formed the Western Nebraska Economic Development group. This group formed an interlocal agreement for purposes of increasing economic development efforts in the region. The entities include Scotts Bluff County, City of Scottsbluff, City of Gering, City of Terrytown, City of Bayard, City of Bridgeport, City of Minatare, City of Mitchell, Village of Morrill, Village of Lyman, Village of McGrew, Village of Melbeta, and the Village of Henry. The group is working on various projects that affect cities in the group such as a regional landfill and forming at least one land bank after the passage of LB424 during the 2020 legislative session.

The City of Scottsbluff Local Option Municipal Sales Tax Plan and Funding will expire on September 30, 2024 at which time the city plans to move forward with a vote of the citizens of Scottsbluff to renew the plan and funding. The city has done an exceptional job of following the plan originally voted on in 1995 with subsequent renewals and has also been an extraordinary steward of public funds by getting the money out into the community to create and retain good paying jobs with benefits. By doing this, population in the city has increased and created additional retail demand and opportunity for residents in the region. The plan is updated as additional eligible activities and businesses are added through the state legislative process. An example of this is the addition of film production and workforce housing, both of which have been added to the Scottsbluff plan through the guidance of the city's legal counsel.

## Part X – Labor Market Information and Efforts

The most recent [labor market study](#) for Scottsbluff was completed in February 2021 by Nebraska Public Power District. From 2009-2019, both the labor force and employment decreased. In an effort to reverse this trend, the City of Scottsbluff has been working on attracting new companies to the city as well as helping existing businesses expand.

The City has been working closely with Western Nebraska Community College (WNCC) in pursuit of county certification in the ACT Workforce Ready Community program. In 2019 the city's Economic Development Director and the Workforce Development Director from WNCC attended a workshop in Charlotte, North Carolina, to learn best practices and network with other ACT WRC certified cities and counties and formulated a plan to move forward. Shortly after the workshop, the COVID-19 pandemic hit and plans were delayed. Talks have begun to get back on track with this program. More information on the program can be found at <https://www.workreadycommunities.org/>.

In addition, the City of Scottsbluff is working on an internship program with the local schools and community college to show students the variety of jobs available in the city. These internships are in response to reducing rural flight. This program is currently in the initial planning stages.

## Part XI – Housing Initiatives

In 2016, the [Multi-County Regional Housing Study with Strategies for Affordable Housing](#) (MCRHS) was completed. This study found that the greatest challenge for Scottsbluff and the Nebraska Panhandle is a shortage of housing units for low to moderate income families. The MCRHS determined the housing demand for Scotts Bluff County to be 625 new units of which 431 would be owner-occupied and 194 would be renter-occupied.

Most recently, the City of Scottsbluff provided the East Overland Facade Improvement Program. This program focused on the low-income neighborhood around East Overland Drive. The facade improvement program provided a 50% match on improvements to both businesses and residences.

The City has committed \$350,000 in LB840 funds as a partial match for a Rural Workforce Housing (RWFH) Grant. Awards were announced in March. The Scottsbluff funds are earmarked for home construction within the city limits and we hope to see construction beginning in early summer. There are several areas within the city's Redevelopment Area suitable for housing developments as well as many in fill lots with streets and utilities already available, making them prime for the building of new homes. Since 2017, 598 permits pertaining to home improvements or new housing unit construction. Of these, 42 were for new housing unit construction.

A successful CDBG (Community Development Block Grant) was written by PADD (Panhandle Area Development District) for Owner Occupied Rehabilitation in the amount of \$732,000. Pre applications were taken to strengthen the grant application showing a tremendous need to income qualifying residents. PADD is now working with the Nebraska Department of Economic Development Housing Division for release of funds to begin renovations.

A need for contractors to be certified in Lead Based Paint Abatement was recognized and the City of Scottsbluff, WNCC (Western Nebraska Community College) and PADD were able to combine resources and host three training sessions to certify contractors in Lead Based Paint Abatement.

598 building permits have been issued by the City Development Services Division including 39 new residential homes with estimated building costs of \$9,542,930.00. The remaining permits represent home improvements made to existing residences within Scottsbluff's Extraterritorial Jurisdiction.

## Part XII – Nebraska Diplomats

### Nebraska Diplomats

The following are current Nebraska Diplomats.



**John Stinner** is in his second term as the representative of the 48<sup>th</sup> Legislative District. Sen. Stinner is a long-standing contributor of economic development efforts in the state and western Nebraska in particular. He is a staunch advocate of housing efforts in rural Nebraska, recognizes the importance of workforce development, attraction and retention and most recently worked to advance the legislation that expanded the creation of Land Banks that had previously only been afforded to the Metro Omaha area. His role as champion of the effort has provided a valuable tool for rural Nebraska in addressing dilapidated and nuisance properties that inhibit growth of a community. Prior to his election to the Legislature, John was CEO of Valley Bank and Trust Co. in Gering and was a member of the banking and finance committee for Twin Cities Development.



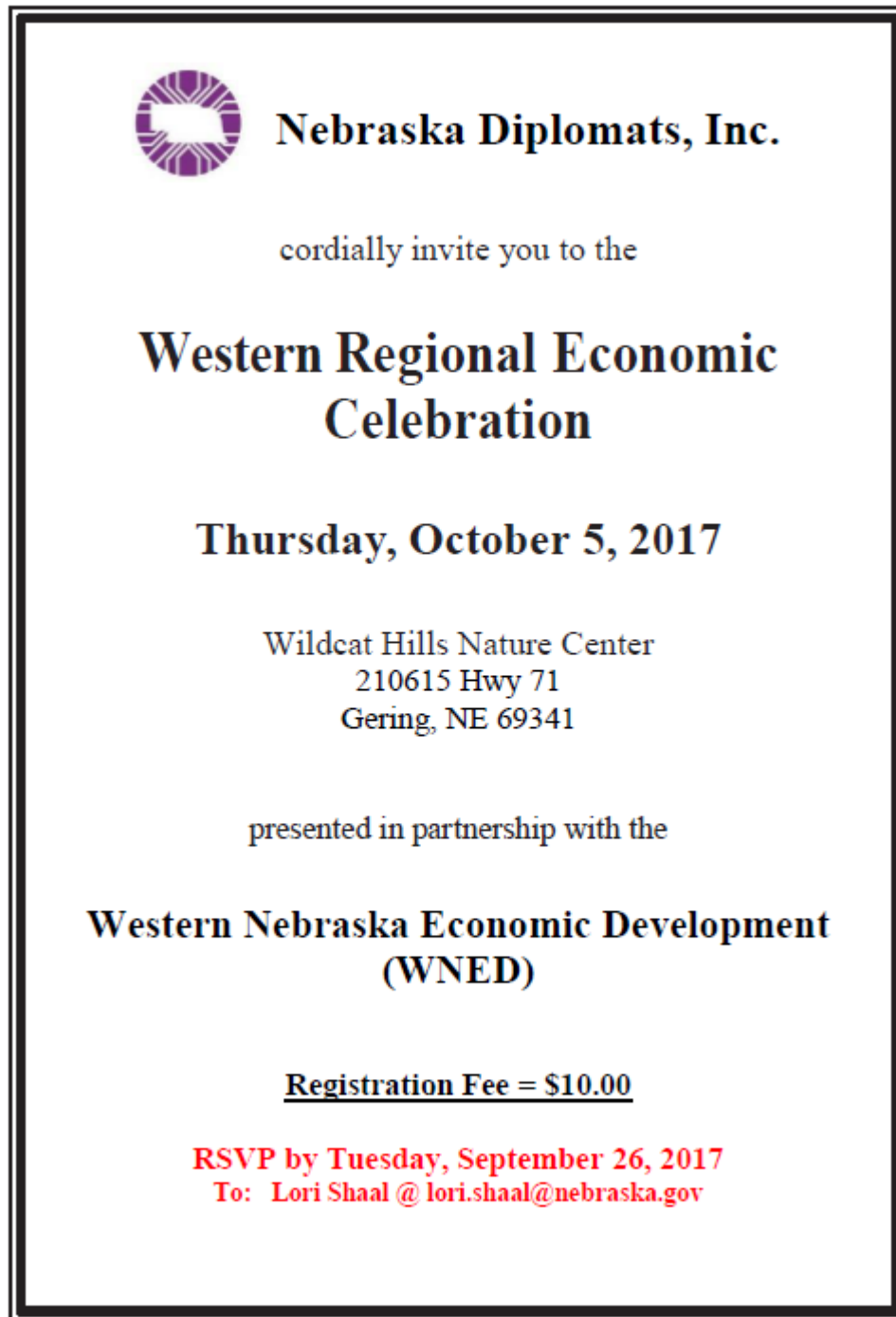
**Owen Palm** is the CEO of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Equipment. In April 2020 he was elected as chair of the Platte Institute Board of Directors. The non-profit board oversees the Institute's mission as it works to "help policy makers across the state remove barriers to growth and opportunity for Nebraskans."

In addition to his roles at the Platte Institute and Blueprint Nebraska, Palm has held board and leadership positions with the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources, the Nebraska chapter of The Nature Conservancy, the Twin Cities Economic Development Corporation, Chadron State College Foundation, and the Scotts Bluff Area Family YMCA. – *KNEB news release*



**Starr Lehl** has a long history in the field of economic development in the community and across the state of Nebraska. Following a nearly 15-year career with the Nebraska Department of Economic Development, Starr has been employed as the Economic Development Director for the City of Scottsbluff since July of 2017. She is currently serving her second Governor-appointed term on the Nebraska Tourism Commission and is a part of several organizations that work to better the growth and development of Nebraska, including the Heartland Expressway Association, Nebraska Economic Developers Association, and local community groups. She has revitalized Scottsbluff's Downtown Business Association and has worked with other community individuals to create a Community Connections group to help connect newcomers to the area become aware of various social and volunteer opportunities, strengthening their connection to the area.

The City was instrumental in planning and hosting the Western Regional Nebraska Diplomats Celebration in October of 2017. The event was attended by over 75 people representing businesses, education, as well as federal and state agencies. The invitation and schedule are included below:



*Figure 5 Western Regional Nebraska Diplomats Celebration Invitation -2017*

## SCHEDULE

- 8:30 a.m. Registration
- 9:00 a.m. Welcome  
*Michelle Coolidge*, Chairman, Western Nebraska Economic Development
- 9:15 a.m. Overview of Addition and Renovation of Wildcat Hills Nature Center  
*Gary Shoemaker*, Nebraska Game & Parks Commission
- 9:45 a.m. Panel Discussion – Engaging Young People in Your Community  
*Nathan Johnson* – Scottsbluff City Manager  
*Jamie Carpenter* – Points West Bank, Kimball  
*John Selzer* – Attorney, Simmons, Olsen Law Firm  
*Angela Kembel* – Owner Cappuccino & Company  
*Bill Boyer* – Director of Programming & Operations, KNEB Radio  
*Amanda Walker* – Organizer of 18<sup>th</sup> Street Farmers Market in Scottsbluff  
*Astrid Munn* – Attorney, Robert Pahlke Law Group  
*Zac Hays* – Design Engineer, Kurt Manufacturing, Lyman
- 11:00 a.m. Recognition of Western Nebraska Diplomats  
*Don Overman*, Scottsbluff  
*Dan Koch*, Alliance  
*John Stinner*, Gering  
*Don Adams*, Sidney  
*Owen Palm*, Gering  
*Joel Weins*, Kimball  
Power in Partnership Recognition – Scottsbluff Public Schools and Aulick Industries, Recipients of 2017 Nebraska Developing Youth Talent Initiative Grant
- 11:45 a.m. Buffet Lunch Catered by The Meat Shoppe
- 12:30 p.m. Remarks – Nebraska Governor, Pete Ricketts
- 1:00 p.m. Remarks – *Courtney Dentlinger*, Director of the Nebraska Department of Economic Development
- 1:30 p.m. Shooting Range Practice

### Shooting Range Costs:

Small Bore Range = \$5.50/gun rental, 20 rounds of ammo for ½ hour  
 Pellet Gun Range = \$3/person – 4 rounds of 12 pellets (no outside guns allowed)  
 Rifle Range = \$5/person for ½ hour  
 Shotgun Range = \$7/person for one round (includes gun rental)  
 Archery Range = \$6/hour per lane (includes equipment rental)

**RSVP by Tuesday, September 26, 2017**

**To: Lori Shaal @ [lori.shaal@nebraska.gov](mailto:lori.shaal@nebraska.gov)**

*Figure 6 Western Regional Nebraska Diplomats Celebration Invitation -2017*



## Part XIII – Economic Development Evaluation

### Business Recruitment and Expansion Projects completed:

Since July of 2017, the City of Scottsbluff economic development efforts have included expansions, recruitments, community events and the revitalization of the Downtown Scottsbluff Association. The city has worked hard to have a member of our staff involved in as many local, regional and state organizations as possible to ensure accountability to our citizens.

### Opportunity Zone

The City of Scottsbluff worked closely with the Nebraska Department of Economic Development to apply for an Opportunity Zone designation. A total of three sites were submitted to the state with one receiving designation. This Opportunity Zone Site was one of 44 in the entire state and the only one west of North Platte.

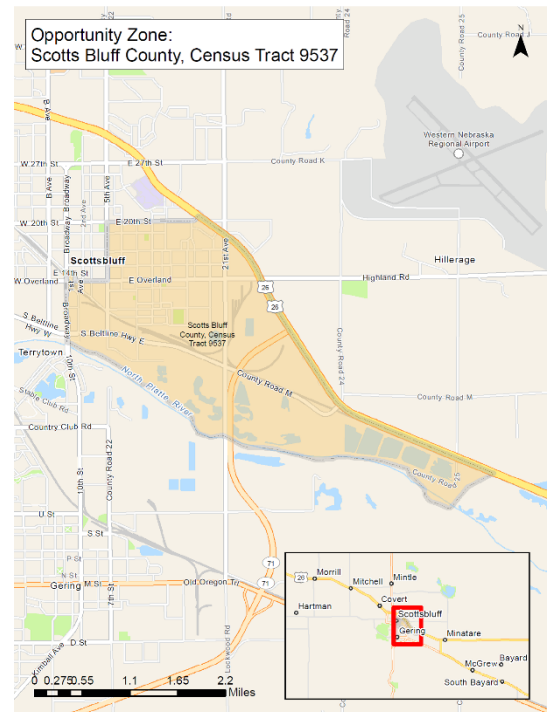


Figure 7 Map of Opportunity Zone

### Heartland Expressway

The City of Scottsbluff has been a member of the Heartland Expressway Association for over 20 years. Once completed, the Heartland Expressway will provide a safe and reliable transportation corridor connecting the Black Hills in South Dakota to Denver, Colorado. The expressway is a partner with the Theodore Roosevelt Expressway and the Ports to Plains Alliance which will connect Canada to Mexico.

The City of Scottsbluff recognizes the value of having expressway access. The Heartland Expressway helps convey to prospective businesses and site consultants that Scottsbluff is a great location for business. With the completed sections connecting Scottsbluff to Kimball, access to the interstate system is direct and efficient. The current construction phase will connect Scottsbluff-Gering to Alliance, thus enlarging the customer and



Figure 8 Map of Heartland Expressway



worker base of the area.

**Business Activity in Scottsbluff:**

The Monument Mall property in the City of Scottsbluff was sold to an out-of-state investor. The new owners have worked diligently on updating signage and parking lot improvements, as well as attracting some new tenants. Hobby Lobby and Dunham's Sports and Dollar Tree are the new anchor stores that now are housed in the former Walmart 110,000 sq. ft. space. Harbor Freight Tools has opened in part of the former Herberger's anchor space. There are several new smaller stores inside the mall as well. The new owners worked with the Scottsbluff City Council to impose an additional sales tax on purchases at the mall. The additional sales tax will be used for improvements at the mall.

Local investors have developed a new Fairfield Inn and Suites by Marriott in Scottsbluff valued at \$10.5 million and was one of the successful TIF Projects.

The Reganis Honda dealership built and developed a commercial area on the northeast side of Scottsbluff for a new dealership. The total capital investment in the project was \$4 million and also a city TIF project.

A local couple has developed a new medical office complex which will house optometry, orthodontics, children's dentistry and other medical offices under one roof. It will also include a fitness center, indoor recreation and daycare. The development cost was over \$12.8 million.

The City of Scottsbluff was able to attract the new business, Prime Metal Products. The company is a sheet metal manufacturing company specializing in custom made HVAC systems for commercial buildings. Prime Metals received the largest LB840 investment in the history of the program of \$1.5 million. The partnership of funds from the City of Gering CDBG Reuse funds and State of Nebraska Department of Economic Development CDBG funds made this project a success committing to create 70 jobs. They are currently at 34 positions and have had good luck finding dedicated employees in western Nebraska and eastern Wyoming as well as recruiting employees from the Colorado front range.

They are planning to expand a portion of their business currently being outsourced in another state and have purchased a building in downtown Scottsbluff. These jobs will be high tech positions designing the HVAC systems as plans are received from developers.

Prime Metals is poised to grow into the residential HVAC market and have committed to leasing 28,000 square feet of additional space in their current location in the next few years.

### Programs Utilized within the Community

The City continues to build relationships and strengthen communications with national, regional and local organizations. Success in the state CDBG program for Economic Development and Downtown Revitalization have helped to bring good paying jobs with benefits and improve Downtown Scottsbluff. The Civic and Community Center Finance Fund has helped in the expansion and renovation of the 23 Club Baseball/Softball Program. A recent award announcement for a CCCFF Planning Grant will assist in finishing the downtown gathering space started through the Downtown Revitalization Program.

A grant from the Panhandle Partnership Greater Good Fund in the amount of \$30,000 helped to fund additional facade and housing improvements in the southeast portion of Scottsbluff. The East Overland Corridor Study completed in 2017 indicated one of the main objectives of the city should be to create a program to help business and homeowners improve the appearance of their properties. The Scottsbluff City Council funded the facade improvement program for two years in the amount of \$253,000 and the return on investment was nothing short of phenomenal totaling over \$1,550,000 in private investment. Needless to say, the program was a huge success and helped to build a new city-wide facade improvement program with \$250,000 of city investment.

### Collaborative Efforts:

Two members of city staff are members of the Regional Governance group in which the cities, county, school districts, community college, chamber and economic development meet on a monthly basis to discuss local issues and create avenues to address issues. The regional governance group impacts action and change in the community and works collaboratively on addressing issues in the area.

The City has been successful in renewing energy in the Downtown Scottsbluff Association by scheduling regular monthly meetings and planning events. The group began meeting again in 2019 and were able to sponsor and oversee many events in the downtown area including hosting the **Capitol Christmas Tree entourage** including many federal agency representatives. Another popular downtown event is **Bands on Broadway**, also started in 2019 as a six-week summer concert series. The event was so successful and by popular demand grew in 2020 to seven weeks. Despite the COVID pandemic, the event took place with proper social distancing, hand sanitizer, masks and signage. Again, public demand

encouraged an additional week of concerts and the 2021 event will be an eight-week concert series.

The City of Scottsbluff has been an active member of the **Scottsbluff/Gering United Chamber of Commerce** by participating in the many workshops and events offered by the chamber. The city also provides speakers and tours for the Leadership Scottsbluff event. Economic development and the chamber work hand in hand to provide services and outreach to local businesses on a continual basis, especially during the pandemic by helping businesses to navigate funding programs offered for COVID relief.

City staff have assisted the **Nebraska Chamber** with their Leadership Nebraska program by helping plan meals and tours and provide speakers when in the Scottsbluff area.

Scottsbluff has been fortunate to have an active and vibrant development district in **PADD** (Panhandle Area Development District). The district has been able to write and submit successful CDBG (Community Development Block Grant) for economic development and housing.

A community member brought a newcomer's welcome idea forward to the city and as a result, **Community Connections** was created. There is now a Facebook Page dedicated to community events and happenings. There were also two in person Newcomer's Welcome Events held in 2019. One of the events was held at the Historic Midwest Theater inviting new residents to learn about civic and non-profit organizations available in the community followed by a movie offered free to new community members. The second event was held at a local park and was similar with food trucks and games.

The **Historic Midwest Theater** continues to shine as a community partner and collaborator with the City. The theater was able to transition through the pandemic by offering drive-in movies at the regional airport. The City of Scottsbluff was able to help with many in-kind man hours and equipment to make the drive-in a success. Other partnerships include the theater premiering "The Ballad of Buster Scruggs", inviting many of the local extras taking part in the film, the land owners and many of the vendors who provided services making the filming possible. The Saturday

matinees offered to children in the summer brings shoppers to the downtown area while kids are watching the movie.

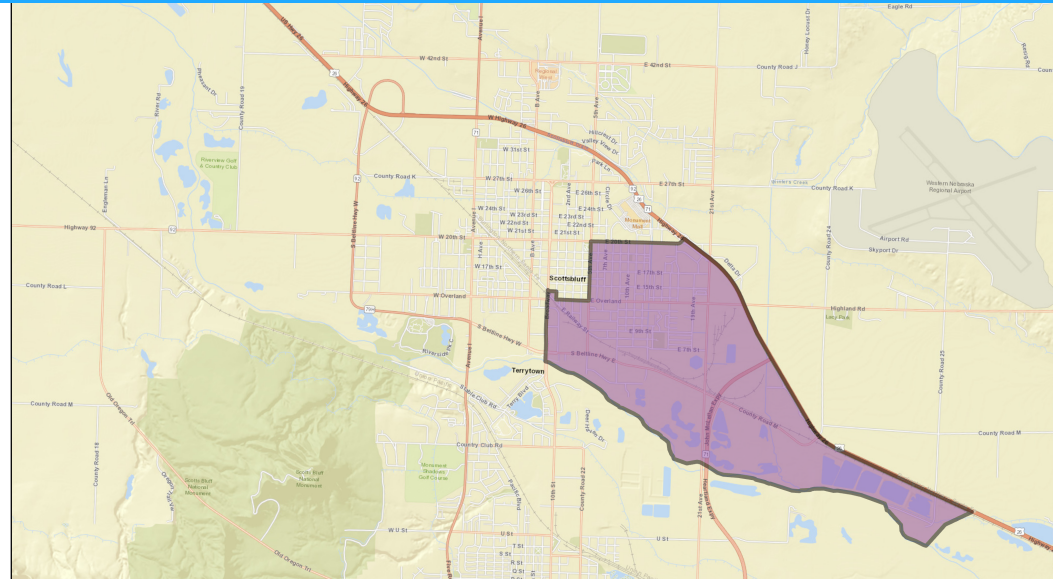
Activity	Information
New Primary Businesses	Prime Metal Products, Factory Crimp Services, McKinney Manufacturing, Aulick Diesel Shop
Direct New Jobs created from New Primary Business	95 Jobs
New Capital Investment from the New Primary Business	\$4,300,000
New Non-Primary Businesses	Gardner Technologies, Complete Family Care, B- Squared Trucking, Western Farms, Reverence Funeral Parlor, Flyover Brewing Company
Direct New Jobs Created from New Non-Primary Businesses	49 jobs
New Capital Investment Created from the New Non-Primary Businesses	\$850,000
Business Expansions Located in the Community	Inventive Media, Bytes Computer Solutions, Pioneer Animal Clinic, Webb Orthodontics, Webb Eye Care, Croell Redi-Mix, JADS Trucking, Candy Barn Express, Bluff's Physical Therapy/HydroZen, CS Precision Manufacturing,
Direct New Jobs Created from Business Expansion	106 jobs
Estimated Jobs Retained from Economic Development Efforts	70 jobs
Businesses Closed	SWBC
Direct Jobs Lost Due to Business Closures	200
Industrial Sites Developed	Pioneer Trails Industrial Park
Volunteers Working on Economic Development	80 volunteers





## Opportunity Zone

Businesses located in the Scottsbluff Opportunity Zone are eligible for tax incentives. Tax incentives include temporary tax deferrals for reinvested capital gains.



## Building Permits



From new construction to renovation, the City of Scottsbluff requires a permit. For more information on permits, please visit [www.scottsbluff.org/permits](http://www.scottsbluff.org/permits) or contact Development Services at 308-630-6243.



City of  
**SCOTTSBLUFF**  
A Place of Opportunity

## Facade Improvement Program

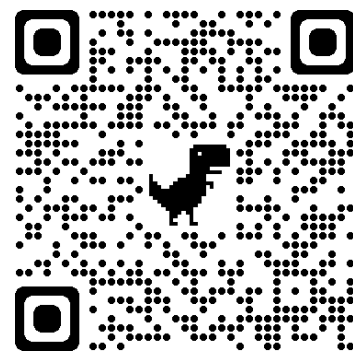


Businesses located in Community Redevelopment Areas are eligible for Facade Improvement Grants. If approved, businesses will receive a 50% reimbursement (\$10,000 max.) on exterior improvements.



## Contact Numbers

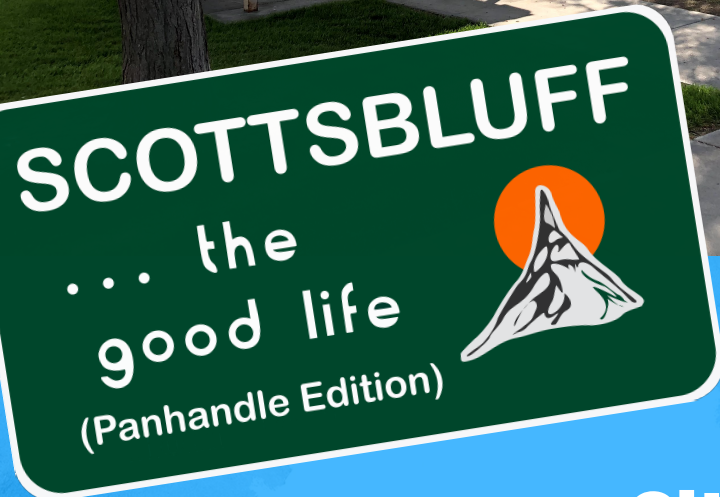
City Hall	308.632.4136
Police Department	308.630.6261
Fire Department	308.630.6231
City Clerk	308.630.6221
Building Permits	308.630.6243
Economic Development	308.630.6213
Sanitation & Utilities	308.632.4136
Planning & Zoning	308.630.6248



## BUSINESS RESOURCES

308.632.4136  
[www.scottsbluff.org](http://www.scottsbluff.org)





## City Hall

Scottsbluff City Hall is located at 2525 Circle Drive.

Hours of operation: 7:30AM - 4:00 PM  
Monday - Friday

## Government

Since 1949, the City of Scottsbluff has operated under a **Council-Manager** form of Government.

The **City Council** is comprised of five members elected at-large. The mayor is the head councilmember and is selected by his/her peers.

The **City Manager** is hired by the council and is responsible for the administrative affairs of the city.

## Financial Assistance



### LB 840



Some businesses are eligible for financial assistance under the LB 840 Program. LB 840 funds are available for eligible expenses including direct loans or locating expenses.

## Tax Increment Financing

Property located in Community Redevelopment Areas may be expensive to develop. TIF allows businesses to use increases in property tax revenue towards certain development costs.



## Partners



Nebraska Public Power District





# THE CITY OF SCOTTSBLUFF

## A Place of Opportunity

*In June of 2016,  
I moved to Scotts Bluff County  
with my husband and three children (two girls ages 11  
and 9, and a son age 6) from Ukiah, California. Immediately, we felt at home.  
We love the friendliness of the people, the lack of traffic, and the quality of life. We knew that  
Moving to western Nebraska was the best choice for us, and our children adjusted very well to the change. The  
beauty of the outdoors is breath-taking, and we venture out every chance we get. In fact we even got a yearly pass to  
the Zoo! Not only is the cost of living less than California, but the wages were surprisingly more than California too.*

**- Tasha Herman, Director of E.R. at Regional West Medical Center**



### Labor Force

35,463  
(BLS, LAUS 2015)



### Average Wage

\$35,179 per year  
(BLS, QCEW 2015)

*This data represents the Scottsbluff Labor Shed composed of: Banner County, NE;  
Box Butte County, NE; Morrill County, NE; Scotts Bluff County, NE; Sioux County, NE;  
& Goshen County, WY.*

## Nebraska is Ranked

**5<sup>th</sup>** Best Economy State  
By Business Insider

**7<sup>th</sup>** Quality of Life  
By Forbes

**15<sup>th</sup>** Cost of Living  
By CNBC



## Available Housing

We have many options to help make your move to the region easy and affordable. Need help with a down payment? Western Nebraska Housing Opportunities offers assistance to those who qualify.



*In August of 2015, I moved from Huntington, Indiana to Scotts Bluff County. The greatest attractions for me to leave Indiana were the people, the job, and getting to be out West. I was able to easily gain employment within my career field. I am able to make more money here and enjoy a lower cost of living.*

**- Gene Gordon, Vistabeam**

## Jobs and Careers

You may be surprised at what we have to offer, including plentiful job opportunities.

[www.WeHaveJobs.net](http://www.WeHaveJobs.net)



*I moved to Scottsbluff from southeastern Idaho in April 2016. Immediately, I was welcomed by the community. Finding a job within my career field was easy, and the company owners are very family-oriented and greeted me with open arms. The wages for this region were higher than southeastern Idaho, making the cost of living in western Nebraska much lower.*

**- John Johnson, Sales Representative for 21<sup>st</sup> Equipment**

Sources: Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) LAUS and QCEW

2525 Circle Drive, Scottsbluff, NE 69361 308.632.4136 [www.scottsbluff.org](http://www.scottsbluff.org)

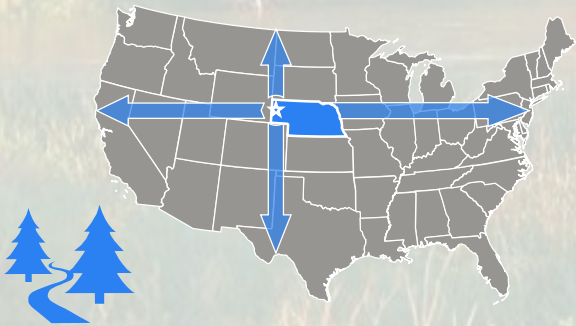




# THE CITY OF SCOTTSBLUFF

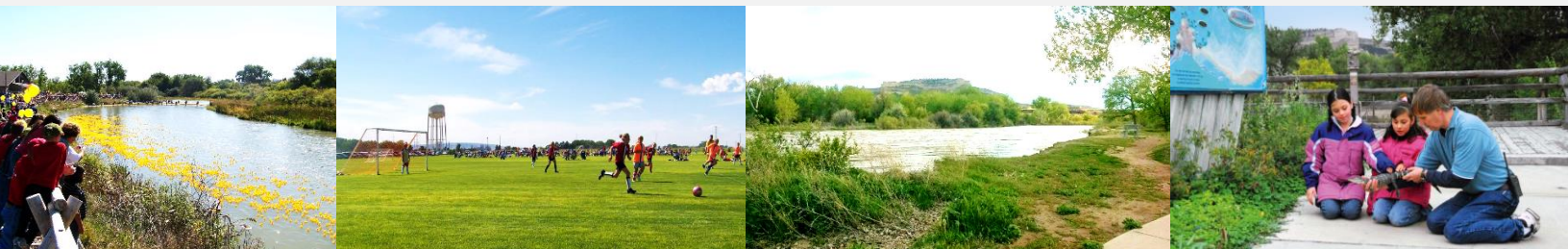
## A Place of Opportunity

### Quality of Life



Residents in our region enjoy great benefits of living here:

- **Cost of Living** is 18% lower than the national average and 12% lower than Nebraska's state average.
- **Commute Times** are less than 50% that of the national average.
- **Healthcare Costs** are 4% lower than the national average.
- **Housing Costs** are 46% lower than the national average.



### Our Great Outdoors



Whether it's kayaking on scenic North Platte River, cycling through majestic rock formations, or hiking through pristine back country, living in the Scottsbluff-Gering region offers residents access to some of nature's most spectacular environments. Our extensive trail system, 3,000+ acres of clean lakes, and abundant wildlife make outdoor recreation and adventure a way of life here, not a weekend destination far from home.

We take fun to a new level with dozens of festivals, carnivals, museums, area attractions, sporting events, and much more.

### Our Great Indoors

As great as our wide open spaces are, we have great indoor assets as well. The Discovery center features a zoo, children's museum, natural history center, and more. Local artists, community theater groups, musical acts, and traveling shows also bring the fun inside at unique venues like our historic Midwest Theater. We have great live performance events and galleries.

For a comprehensive list of all the great adventures that await you in the Scottsbluff area, visit [www.WeHaveJobs.net](http://www.WeHaveJobs.net).



Sources: [BestPlaces.net](http://BestPlaces.net), [Areavibes.com](http://Areavibes.com), and [Holsinger Photography](http://HolsingerPhotography.com)

2525 Circle Drive, Scottsbluff, NE 69361 308.632.4136 [www.scottsbluff.org](http://www.scottsbluff.org)





## About Scottsbluff

The [City of Scottsbluff, Nebraska](#) is located in the Great Plains region of the United States and has a population of just over 15,000 residents. Scottsbluff is the largest city in the Nebraska Panhandle and the 13th largest city in Nebraska. Scottsbluff shares its borders with the City of Gering, and the City of Terrytown for a total population base of just under 24,000 residents. Scottsbluff is the retail center of western Nebraska and eastern Wyoming offering abundant lodging, dining and shopping experiences.

Scottsbluff is the regional hub for business, employment, industry, retail trade, medical care, educational opportunities, and tourism in western Nebraska. Scottsbluff may not be as well-known as the national monument that shares its name, but charm and convenience make it the perfect place for your business! There is a little bit of everything for those who come to Scottsbluff. We pride ourselves on living the good life and would be happy to have your organization a part of ours.

Logistically, Scottsbluff is in the middle of everywhere with north, south, east and west access to U.S. and state highways connecting to Interstates 80 and 76. Denver, Colorado and Rapid City, South Dakota are within 200 miles of Scottsbluff, a short and scenic 3 hour drive. Our local airport helps visitors and business travelers make a smooth, effortless connection to Denver International Airport.



## Quality of Life

Recreation and outdoor activities are important to businesses and their employees. The City of Scottsbluff has 23 parks including softball, baseball and soccer complexes, a 10+ mile walking and biking pathway, a downtown plaza, RV park and a dog park.

There are always great experiences and events happening in western Nebraska - from annual events, to sporting events and concerts, to exploration, there's something for everyone. Some of the most popular events in the region are the Father's Day Classic Car Rally, Oregon Trail Days, Sugar Valley Rally, Bands on Broadway, Farmer's Markets, and many more.

For those that are needing adventure, the Historic Oregon Trail came through the area, [Platte River Basin Environments](#) offers thousands of acres of public land for hunting, fishing, hiking, biking, horseback riding, wildflower viewing and bird watching. Our neighbor to the immediate south, the City of Gering, has nine parks, a municipal golf course, outdoor amphitheater, baseball and softball complexes, beautiful RV park, an expedition baseball league and a new dog park. Scenic journeys to Scotts Bluff National Monument, Lake Minatare State Recreation Area, Wildcat Hills State Recreation Area, Chimney Rock National Historic Site and Museum await your employees and their families.

## Job Training

**Western Nebraska Community College** has a large network of experts throughout the Panhandle and can customize training to your business or your employees. For more information on the Customizable Workforce Training, contact Doug Mader, Workforce Development Director at maderd@wncc.edu or (308) 630-6556. They also have a variety of professional and continuing education and a handful of certificates and license programs already established.

The **Nebraska Department of Labor** administers funds for training (short-term and long-term occupational skills training and on-the job training) under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and the National Dislocated Worker Grant for job seekers that qualify. We focus on and support career fields that fall under the H3 (high wage, high skill,

and high demand) category. The programs support tuition, fees, books, and supportive services for occupational skills training. Under on-the-job training, participating businesses receive a partial reimbursement for eligible participants wages during the training period. This reimbursement is meant to cover the additional costs incurred in training new employees. Business Services are also available through Nebraska Department of Labor to assist businesses in various areas including providing information to access federal programs such as WOTC and Fidelity Bonding. There are local NDOL Career Centers in Scottsbluff, Sidney and Alliance to provide these services.

The Nebraska Department of Labor organizes and hosts job fairs in the community for both individual employers as well as for multiple groups of employers. These are hosted by the department itself or with various partners in the community. In some instances, these job fairs are organized collaboratively amongst the Nebraska Department of Labor offices located in Scottsbluff, Sidney, and Alliance Nebraska. These events can be set up as face-to-face, no contact, drive-thru and as virtual events.

For more details information on labor statistics, please visit the [Nebraska Panhandle Data Dashboard](#).

## Housing

A housing study completed in 2016 shows a housing shortage that has not been addressed to date. There is a need for 55+ maintenance free, duplex type housing and also market rate housing for young families. The community seems to have an abundance of affordable or lower income housing at this time. A link to the housing study can be found here:

[2016 Multi-County Regional Housing Study](#)

## Transportation

**The Heartland Expressway** is first and foremost a surface transportation connection. The vision is a connection, via 4-lane highways, from the front range of Colorado through Western Nebraska, and further north to the Black Hills of South Dakota. The Heartland Expressway is part of a larger vision that encompasses nine states and four existing corridors, the Port to Plains, Heartland, Camino Real, and Theodore Roosevelt. Together they form what is known as the Ports to Plains Corridor (Figure 1).

The Heartland Expressway, a federal high priority corridor, provides an essential economic development tool for rural areas in Colorado, Nebraska, South Dakota and Wyoming while facilitating domestic and international trade from Canada to Mexico.

The Heartland Expressway Association is a group of dedicated volunteers working to coordinate the activities within Colorado, Nebraska, South Dakota, and Wyoming transportation departments to assure that the 4-lane construction provides a seamless artery for routing people and goods through the western states from south to north and vice versa. This corridor improvement is vital to improving safe travel, economic development, and energy development for the region and the United States.

**Western Nebraska Regional Airport** is less than 2.5 miles from town. United Airlines, operated by SkyWest Airlines is proud to offer two passenger flights weekdays and one flight daily on weekends, to Denver International Airport and beyond. For more information on Western Nebraska Regional Airport please visit [www.flyscottsbluff.com](http://www.flyscottsbluff.com)



Figure 1



## Incentives

The City of Scottsbluff can build an incentive package that supports any business in the region. The city has one of 44 Opportunity Zones in the State of Nebraska that to date has not been tapped.

Local tools such as TIF and the city's Economic Development Fund along with the ImagiNE Nebraska Program at the state level will provide businesses with a good balance and complete package. While not all tools available may be accessible for a project, the city is eager to customize the best package possible for your business.

**Tax Increment Financing (TIF)** - the City of Scottsbluff recognizes that property located in redevelopment areas can be expensive to purchase and prepare for development. Tax Increment Financing or TIF encourages private investment in these areas by allowing the city to pledge, for up to 15 years, increases in property tax revenue resulting from the development to the payment of certain costs associated with the development.

Learn more at [TIF Guidelines and Application](#).

**Local Economic Development Funds** use sales tax revenues for certain economic development purposes are authorized for use via legislation. The City of Scottsbluff utilizes a ½ cent sales tax to support qualifying business and industry in the region.

The Economic Development Plan and Application can be found by following these links:

[City of Scottsbluff Economic Development Plan](#)

[City of Scottsbluff Economic Development Grant Application](#)

Examples of eligible activities may include:

- Retention or expansion of a local qualifying business
- Direct loans or grants for fixed assets or working capital or both
- Public works improvements
- Real estate acquisition
- Business recruitment activities



- Relocation expenses

**Opportunity Zone** - the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 established an Opportunity Zone tax incentive, which allows taxpayers to defer paying federal tax on capital gains from the sale of property if those gains are invested in Qualified Opportunity Funds that invest 90% of their assets in businesses located or property used in a designated low-income community (Figure 2). Investors receive modest reductions in their eventual tax bill if they maintain their Opportunity Fund investments for at least five and then seven years. Investors that hold capital in those funds for a full ten years also do not have to pay capital gains tax on the appreciation of their Opportunity Zone investments.

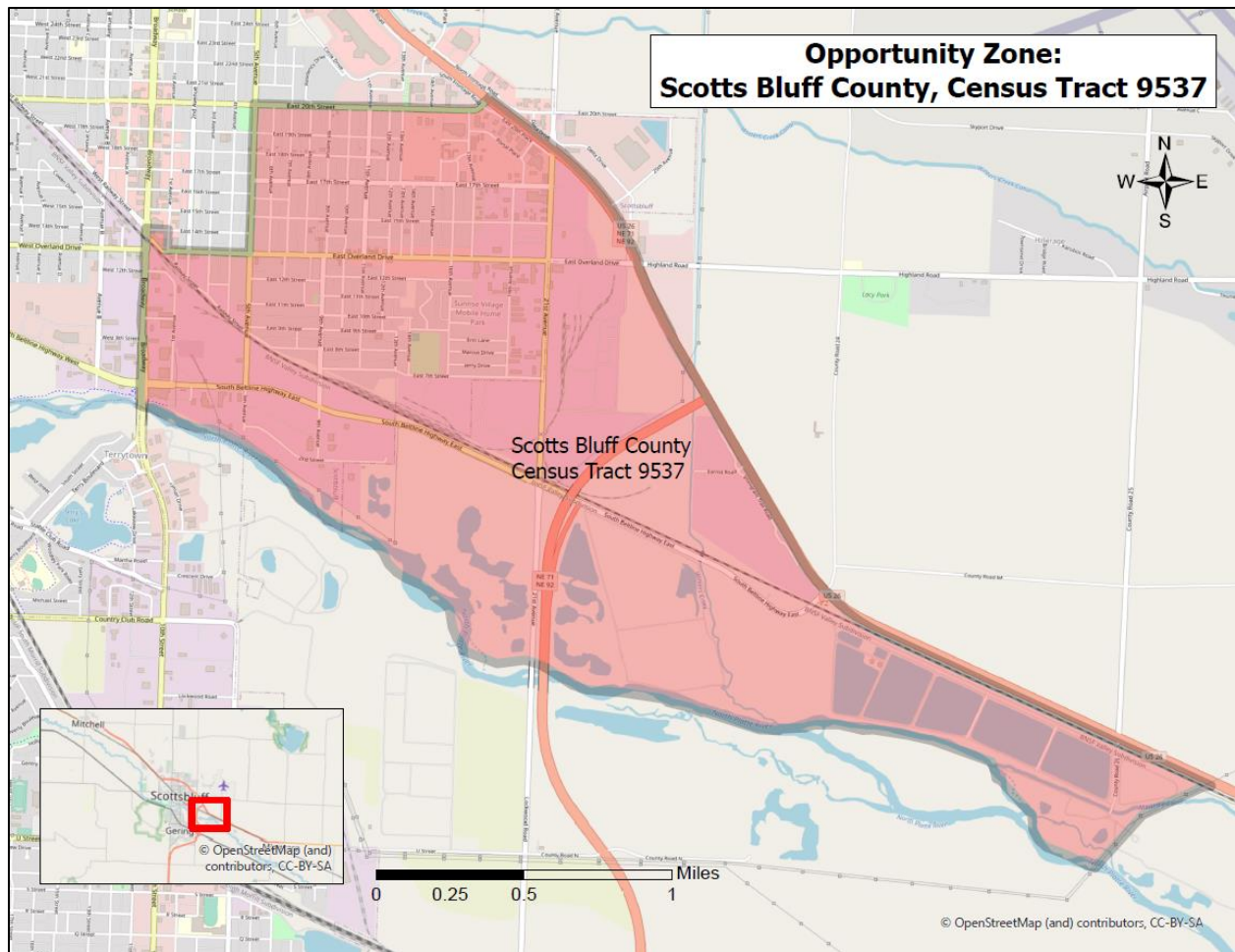


Figure 2

