

City of Scottsbluff, Nebraska

Monday, May 1, 2023

Regular Meeting

Item Reports1

Council to discuss and consider action on a request from Colleen Johnson, representing Old West Balloon Fest, for funding to help defray the costs of the event held in August 2023.

Staff Contact: Sharaya Toof, Economic Development Director



REQUEST FOR FUTURE AGENDA ITEM

If you have a specific topic that you would like the City Council to discuss at a future meeting, please list your name, address, telephone number, and the specific topic. The item will be reviewed and possibly scheduled for a future meeting or forwarded to City staff for appropriate action.

Name: Colleen Johnson on Behalf of Old West Balloon Fest

Address: P.O. Box 251, Mitchell, NE 69357

Telephone #: 308-225-0128

Date of Request: 3/30/23

Description of Requested Topic: Old West Balloon Fest respectfully requests \$20,000.00 from the Community Programming fund for the 2023 event. Please see attached documentation for further information.

Attachment Requesting funds from the Community Programming Fund

Our mission is to create a joyful experience for patrons of all ages with a family friendly, all-inclusive community event. Old West Balloon Fest is a world-class event that brings pilots and visitors from all over the United States and Canada to Scotts Bluff County, Nebraska. By hosting this festival, we hope to grow our local economy by increasing revenue for existing businesses and increase sales and lodging tax funds collected.

We are requesting \$20,000.00 to help us host the Old West Balloon Fest in August 2023, which will feature up to 40 balloon pilots from all over the country. The festival's economic impact on our community will be measured through tax collected reports issued by the state of Nebraska and license plate studies for the morning launches and night glow events.

The following economic impact study was conducted by Scotts Bluff County Tourism, this is their report:

The beauty of a successful ballooning event is immediately noticeable to the thousands of guests and locals that gather with their families to take in the magic of the event. For the event planners and business owners, the impact comes months later when tax receipts are collected. For Scotts Bluff County, we noticed a huge impact in attendance, lodging receipts and the average daily impact for “extra” expenditures.

- Our attendance numbers held steady at approximately 12,500 individuals for all events.*
- 67% of attendees were from outside the area Scotts Bluff County generating a minimum of one overnight stay in the county.*
- Hotel occupancy was at 96% while lodging tax receipts increase about 20% for the month of August.*
- Estimated average daily expenditure per out-of-town guests was \$191.40. representing cost of lodging, meals, and fuel expenditures.*
- A total of approximately \$50,000 extra was collected in local taxes and the total economic impact for Scotts Bluff County was approximately \$2,458, 640.00 for the 6-day event.*

In addition to bringing this epic event to our region, Old West Balloon Fest also showcases our area by attracting tourists who travel from surrounding states: Colorado, Wyoming, South Dakota, Kansas, and Nebraska. Please see the attached

license plate study completed from the 2022 event which will show the diversity of the states and Nebraska counties represented.

Our goal is to ensure that this festival will continue to grow each year in attendance. We plan on accomplishing this by continuing to advertise through the Nebraska Tourism marketing program, Rural Radio, Inspire Magazine, Star Herald, and NBC Nebraska for a total advertising budget of \$18,000.00.

We are committed to giving back to the community. A new event has been added to the lineup. Youth Ballooning Camp will take place August, 7-8-9 from 9:00 to 11:30 am each morning. The purpose of the camp is to teach children the science behind hot air ballooning. They will experience hands on learning. Certified balloon pilots will teach the camp which will include learning the hot air balloon parts, putting the balloon together and participate in the inflation. If the weather permits, we will tether the balloon for the campers. The excitement for the addition of this portion of Old West Balloon Fest has been phenomenal. We anticipate being able to offer the balloon camp to a minimum of 75 and up to 150 children. The youth ballooning camp will be free of charge.

The Old West Balloon Fest will celebrate our 9th anniversary this year and look forward to our 10th anniversary celebration in 2024.



OLD WEST BALLOON FEST AUGUST 7-12, 2023

Western Nebraska's Premier Family Event

RECORD BREAKING ATTENDANCE

Scotts Bluff County released economic impact figures for the event. These figures were based on lodging tax and sales tax collected from August 9-14.

Approximately 12,500 out of town visitors attended the six-day event.

On average those visitors spent approximately \$191 per person in lodging, gas, food and merchandise.

Based on those figures, \$2,387,500.00 was spent in Scotts Bluff County during the six-day event.



Oregon Trail Community Foundation Volunteers conducted a license plate study at Mitchell Airfield on Saturday, August 13, 2022 – This is the report submitted to the Old West Balloon Fest Committee.

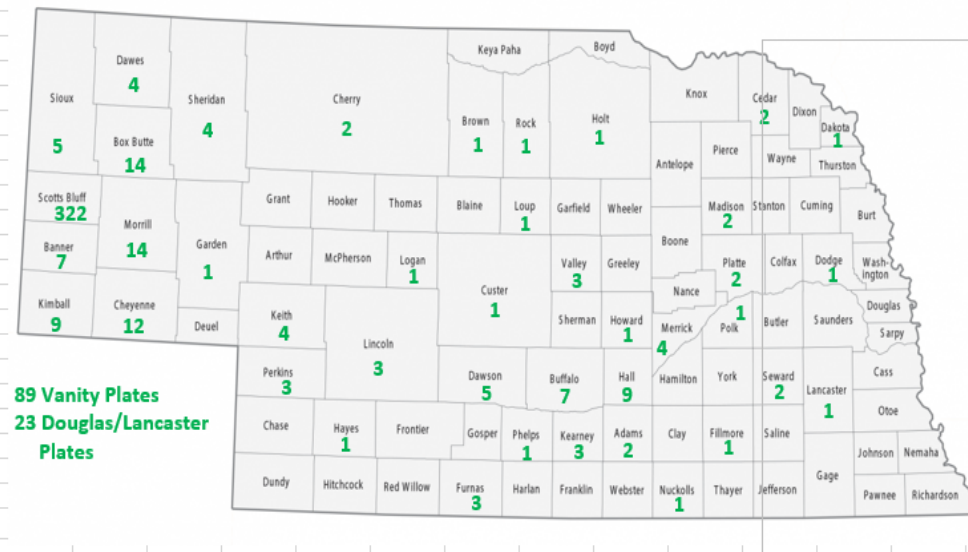
OLD WEST BALLOON FEST 2022 EVENT ATTENDANCE 8/13/22 - 6AM-9AM - MITCHELL AIRFIELD

NEBRASKA

County #	County	# of Cars
2	Lancaster	1
3	Gage	1
4	Custer	1
5	Dodge	1
7	Madison	2
8	Hall	9
9	Buffalo	7
10	Platte	2
13	Cedar	2
14	Adams	2
15	Lincoln	3
16	Seward	2
18	Dawson	5
21	Scotts Bluff	322
34	Fillmore	1
36	Holt	1
37	Phelps	1
38	Furnas	3
39	Cheyenne	12
41	Polk	1
42	Nuckolls	1
44	Nemaha	1
46	Merrick	4
47	Valley	3
49	Howard	1

County #	County	# of Cars
52	Kearney	3
61	Sheridan	4
64	Morrill	14
65	Box Butte	14
66	Cherry	2
68	Keith	4
69	Dawes	4
70	Dakota	1
71	Kimball	9
74	Perkins	3
75	Brown	1
77	Garden	1
79	Hayes	1
80	Sioux	5
83	Rock	1
85	Banner	7
87	Logan	1
88	Loup	1
3-letter plates	Douglas, Lancaste	23
Vanity plates	Varies	89
TOTAL CARS		577

Total Counties Present: 44



89 Vanity Plates
23 Douglas/Lancaster Plates

Old West Balloon Fest 2022

Total Cars: 733

Total Nebraska: 577

Total Counties: 44

Total Scotts Bluff County: 322

Total Wyoming: 72

Total States Present: 19



THE NIGHT GLOW AT WNCC A DELIGHT FOR ALL!

The free night glow offered during the week of events. Based on total parking used, over 3,500 attended the night glow in 2022.

MASS ASCENSION AT MITCHELL AIRFIELD

Visitors attending the two morning mass ascensions and competitions purchased food, drinks and merchandise from over 20 local vendors. New competition and special shapes will be added to the 2023 line-up.





FAMILY FUN EVENT ENJOYED BY PATRONS OF ALL AGES!



NEW THIS YEAR YOUTH BALLOONING CAMP AUGUST 7-9 AT MITCHELL AIRFIELD

Kids will learn about the science of hot air ballooning through hands on learning each morning from 9:30 am – 11:30 am. Hot balloon pilots will teach about hot air ballooning. Campers will help to assemble a hot air balloon while learning the specifics of each component.

Weather permitting the pilots will then tether the children. Each camper will receive a camp t-shirt.

This event is free and sponsored by US Bank Scottsbluff.

WIENER DOG RACES — CRAFT FAIR- AND CORN HOLE TOURNAMENT

The Old West Balloon Fest is committed to give back to the city of Mitchell by extending events from Mitchell Airfield to Center Street on August 12. The all-day events in Mitchell include the craft fair, corn hole tournament, and wiener dog races. New this year, we will hold a sidewalk chalk art contest and kid zone with inflatables provided by Planet Bounce.

Businesses in Mitchell reported record sales during the 2022 event.

OLD WEST BALLOON FEST WIENER DOG RACES!



**Saturday
August 12th
at 11am
at Kiwanis Park**

**Races per age division
\$5 per dog to register**

*All proceeds will be donated to
Pandhandle Humane Society
& Skipper's Cupboard*



*Scan for more
info and to get
registered!*

MARKETING PROGRAM

We are committed to marketing the event and have set aside \$18,000 to promote Old West Balloon Fest.

Our extensive marketing program to promote the event includes:

- Nebraska Tourism Grant Program
- Rural Radio Ad Spots to run before the event on all major stations
- 30 second television commercial spots to run before the event on NBC Nebraska
- Advertisements in Inspire Magazine and Star Herald
- Social media blast on Visit Nebraska and banner ad that will run May through August
- Social media ads on our Facebook page starting in May

SAVE THE DATE

OLD WEST BALLOON FEST
Craft Fair
SATURDAY, AUG. 12TH
7:30AM-2:30PM

SCOTTS BLUFF COUNTY NEBRASKA

Old West
BALLOON FEST

ENJOY CRAFTERS, VENDORS,
CORNHOLE TOURNEY &
WEINER DOG RACES

AN EVENT OF THIS MAGNITUDE
TAKES A LARGE BUDGET AND
OUR COMMUNITIES COMING
TOGETHER TO SUPPORT IT.

The Village of Morrill, Cities of Terrytown, Gering and Scottsbluff are supporting the event with Keno Funds.

Scotts Bluff County is supporting the event with tourism dollars.

Our generous sponsors help to support the event with a \$35,000 commitment.

We are asking for \$20,000 in community programming funds for hotel rooms in Scottsbluff for the pilots and special shape fees to bring new shapes to the event.

Without these funds we would not be able to bring this amazing hot air balloon event to the valley.





INTRODUCING — SNOWBIRD

ONE OF OUR NEW SPECIAL SHAPES