

City of Scottsbluff, Nebraska

Monday, June 5, 2023

Regular Meeting

Item Reports1

Council to discuss and consider action on a request from Jennifer Reisig, representing the WNCC Foundation, regarding funding for the 2023 Monument Marathon to assist with marketing of the event.

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: _____

Address: _____

Telephone #: _____

Date of Request: _____

Description of Requested Topic: _____



**City of Scottsbluff
Community Funds Request**

Applicant Information:

WNCC Foundation
PVC Monument Marathon
1601 E 27th Street

Jennifer Reisig, WNCC Foundation Executive Director
308-630-6550
reisigj1@wncc.edu

Funding Request: \$7,500

Intended Use of Funding: Target marketing/re-marketing through social media and Google.

Organization Information

The WNCC Foundation is a 501c3 non-profit supporting the mission of Western Nebraska Community College. The Foundation provides financial support for scholarships, programs, student emergency funding, and capital improvements.

Description of Event

On September 30, 2023, the 12th annual Platte Valley Companies (PVC) Monument Marathon will showcase the scenic beauty of Western Nebraska from the Wildcat Hills State Recreation Area, through Mitchell Pass alongside the Oregon Trail, and around the Scotts Bluff National Monument. The Monument Marathon is a multi-distance event, with a full marathon (26.2 miles), half-marathon (13.1 miles), 5K, and a half-marathon 3-person relay. From the beginning, the goals of the Monument Marathon, have remained constant:

- Promote a healthy lifestyle
- Introduce and promote scenic Western Nebraska
- Bring outside tourism dollars into the communities of Scotts Bluff County
- Raise funds to support the students at Western Nebraska Community College

Proceeds from the Monument Marathon serve as the major annual fund raiser for the WNCC Foundation in support of student scholarships, programs, and emergency student needs at Western Nebraska Community College (WNCC). The WNCC Foundation awards over \$300,000 in scholarships and student emergency funds annually, in addition to supporting programs, capital projects and student success initiatives. To date, over half a million dollars has been raised by the Monument Marathon since 2012.

The 2022 Monument Marathon had 554 registrations, a 12% increase over 2021. The total number of registrations was higher than the previous five-year average. Our 2023 goal is to maintain the steady increase in race participation by continuing to build on the strong foundation of marketing and the excellent reputation our event has established.

2023 Marketing & Tourism

We began marketing for the 2023 Monument Marathon during the 2022 Monument Marathon Expo with a save-the-date magnet for “Nebraska’s Most Beautiful Race” in every runner bag. We promote “Nebraska like you’ve never seen it”, displaying the natural landmarks, the pine-covered hills, rugged badlands, and peaceful rural landscapes through professional video and photography in all our marketing.

In 2022, the event saw a 40% increase in the number of participants that learned of the Monument Marathon through targeted social media/digital marketing. Participants registered for the Monument Marathon represented 33 different states, 206 different cities, and 5 different countries. Of the 2022 participants, 367 or 66% were new to the event. Each year we have the challenge of replacing “one-time runners” and increasing total participation to grow the overall event numbers, making our digital marketing reach extremely important.

Grant funding will provide us with the capacity to run continuous digital marketing throughout the 2023 campaign, keeping our event in front of our target audience. We will be able to continue to contract with third-party professionals who can better target our preferred audience, increase our digital marketing reach, as well as boost our marketing targeted specifically toward areas within a few hours to a day’s drive. (Please see attached map.)

Increasing our exposure and targeting from 100 miles to 450 miles outside Scotts Bluff County through social media, Google Targeting & Remarketing, live race expos, and Colorado Runner Magazine are our best sources of marketing. Grant funding for the 2023 event will allow us to continue to build on our social media and digital presence in this targeted area and bring new people to the valley.

Our principal target audience is US Runners. As a USATF sanctioned event, our race provides an opportunity for competitive runners to qualify for the Boston Marathon. In addition to competitive runners, we target full/half marathon runners who have set a goal to run in all 50 states. Our goal is for our target audience to consider the Monument Marathon as more than an individual event – but instead consider it an opportunity to bring their family and/or friends to enjoy the rich history, immense beauty, and unique opportunities of Western Nebraska.

Local and Regional Support

The Monument Marathon is coordinated by the WNCC Foundation Staff as well as community volunteers that make up a Steering Committee overseeing the event organization. Additional volunteers serve on a Race Crew that oversees the course. The event has over 300 volunteers that serve as expo personnel, course marshals, bike marshals, and parking attendants – just to name a few. Volunteers from community organizations, student groups from local high schools, and WNCC students work at aid stations, along the course, and start/finish line areas. Other sources of support include sponsorships and in-kind donations from local businesses.

The day prior to the Monument Marathon, the Gering Civic Center hosts our pre-race expo for runner check-in and includes sponsors, small local businesses, and local tourism attractions. Five Rocks Amphitheater, Robidoux RV Park, Wildcat Hills Nature Center, Scotts Bluff National Monument, Flyover Brewery, Scotts Bluff County Roads, and City of Gering Roads all collaborate with us to make the event possible. The safety of our runners is made a priority through partnerships with Region 22 Emergency Management, Valley Ambulance, and our local city/county law enforcement agencies as well as the state, county, and local road entities. Local medical professionals volunteer their time to provide post-race recovery assistance.

With the assistance of community funding from the City of Scottsbluff, we can continue to grow our reach through increased targeted digital marketing. This premier event showcases the historical beauty of Western Nebraska, bringing not only additional runners, but their friends and families to experience all we have to offer. The Monument Marathon Steering Committee and Race Crew, along with the WNCC Foundation and College appreciate the opportunity to partner with the City of Scottsbluff as a Monument Marathon supporter.

Below are just a few of the comments we have received from our participants when asked what they like most about this event:

“The beautiful course and the helpful, friendly volunteers!”

“I really appreciated all of the volunteers who helped out - parking lot, bag drop, sidelines, bike assistants, the sign-up/swag pick-up event the day before...the whole thing was inspiring.”

“I love the community support! The beauty of the race is certainly a draw.”

“It was so beautiful, the weather was perfect, I loved all the variety in surfaces.”

“Everything, the scenery, people, and event are awesome. It is such a well-run event.”

“Great, great course and outstanding runner support.”

Targeted Marketing Area Map



Sample of marketing photography taken during 2022 Monument Marathon.

Snapshots of new video footage filmed during 2022 Monument Marathon.



