

# **City of Scottsbluff, Nebraska**

**Monday, April 1, 2024**

**Regular Meeting**

## **Item Reports1**

**Council to discuss and consider action on a funding request from Jennifer Reisig and Alena Haun representing the WNCC Foundation to assist with marketing of the 2024 Monument Marathon.**

**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: Jennifer Reisig / Alena Haun

Address: WNCC Foundation

1601 E. 27th Street

Telephone #: 308-630-6550

Date of Request: 3/11/2024

Description of Requested Topic: Community funding request  
in support of the 2024 Monument Marathon. Funding  
is requested to assist with marketing of the event.

Full event description and explanation attached.



Western Nebraska Community College  
**FOUNDATION**

**City of Scottsbluff  
Community Funds Request**

**Applicant Information:**

WNCC Foundation  
PVC Monument Marathon  
1601 E 27<sup>th</sup> Street

Jennifer Reisig, WNCC Foundation Executive Director  
308-630-6550  
[reisigj1@wncc.edu](mailto:reisigj1@wncc.edu)

Alena Haun, WNCC Foundation Gifts & Grants Director  
308-635-6375  
[hauna7@wncc.edu](mailto:hauna7@wncc.edu)

**Funding Request:** \$8,500

**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**

The 13th annual Platte Valley Companies (PVC) Monument Marathon will be held on **September 28, 2024**, showcasing 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). All proceeds raised by the PVC Monument Marathon stay local.

The WNCC Foundation awarded over \$344,000 in scholarships during the 2023-24 academic year and assisted with over \$12,000 in student emergency needs so far, this academic year. In addition, the

Foundation supports college programs, capital projects and student success initiatives. Since 2012, over \$550,000 has been raised by the Monument Marathon.

### **Local Benefits of Expanded Marketing**

The 2023 marathon had 533 registered runners. Of those, 64% were new to the event and 74% live outside Scotts Bluff County. Year after year, the PVC Monument Marathon brings visitors from all over the country and from around the world. Participants registered for the 2023 Monument Marathon represented 36 different states, 212 different cities, and 5 countries.

The 2023 tourism survey, given to runners as they arrived at the Expo, showed 36% stayed in hotels. There was an 11% increase over 2022 in the number of non-local race participants that brought 1-2 people with them for a total of 44%. An additional 9% brought 3 or more. Of those, 48% stayed 1-2 nights and 9% stayed 3 or more – a 5% increase over 2022. We continue to grow our tourism impact despite having the challenge of replacing over 60% of "one-time runners" each year. Conversations with the Fairfield Inn revealed they were fully booked for both Friday and Saturday night, the weekend of the marathon, and the Hampton Inn was fully booked for Friday and over 60% booked for Saturday.

The day prior to the Monument Marathon, the Gering Civic Center hosts our pre-race expo for runner check-in. Each runner gets a bag with their T-shirt, gifts, and coupons from local businesses. The Expo has promotional vendors that include sponsors, small local businesses, and tourism attractions. The volunteers and staff of the Monument Marathon take every opportunity to promote the local attractions and businesses to event participants and those accompanying them.

### **Marketing Plan**

Our primary 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. Yet, our marketing goal is for our target audience to consider the Monument Marathon as more than an individual event. We want them to view this as an opportunity to bring their family and/or friends to enjoy the immense beauty and rich history of Western Nebraska.

The event is promoted with the tag lines "Nebraska's Most Beautiful Race" and "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 both our digital and print marketing. Our updated videos display footage, captured by drone, of the scenic beauty of the valley from every angle and include the **City of Scottsbluff logo**.

Grant funding will provide us with the capacity to run continuous digital marketing throughout the 2024 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. We want to increase our exposure and targeting in the 100 mile to 450 mile range outside Scotts Bluff County through social media, Google Targeting & Remarketing. (Please see attached map.) Grant funding will also allow our Race Crew social media specialist to boost paid posts to Facebook/Instagram at select times as well as target select markets that will benefit our event. We saw marked increases in our views, website traffic, and registrations last year during strategic social media campaigns.



In addition to social media and Google marketing, we plan to attend 3-4 live race expos in Colorado, South Dakota, and Eastern Nebraska with a combined attendance of more than 20,000 runners. We also Advertise with Nebraska Tourism through their grant program, running digital banner ads, magazine ads, and two 2-day social media blitzes on the Nebraska Tourism Facebook page. Posters and information cards are personally delivered to running stores across the Front Range, Black Hills, and in Lincoln, NE. Attached is a total marketing budget.

### **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 from community organizations, high school student groups, and WNCC students.

In addition to the Civic Center, the 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. Other sources of support include sponsorships and in-kind donations from local businesses.

With the assistance of community funding from the City of Scottsbluff, we can continue to grow our presence and reach in the running community as well as the tourism market 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. And there is nothing more rewarding than knowing we are raising funds that make a positive impact on WNCC students.

Category		2024 Grant Funds	Pending Request	Grant Funder
<b>Media Marketing</b>				
Star-Herald Local Print Marketing	\$ 2,000.00			
YouTube TruView and Audio Ads	\$ -			
Social Media Outside Area	\$ 3,000.00		\$3,000.00	City of Scottsbluff
Google Targeting & Remarketing	\$ 5,500.00		\$5,500.00	City of Scottsbluff
Colorado Runner Emails	\$ 2,000.00			
Local Radio Ads	\$ 2,000.00			
Local Facebook Ads	\$ -			
<b>\$7500 decrease from 2023 budget</b>		<b>\$ 14,500.00</b>		
<b>Tourism Marketing</b>				
NE Tourism Web Ads	\$ 2,000.00	\$1,500.00		Nebraska Tourism
2023 NE Travel Guide	\$ 5,000.00	\$3,750.00		Nebraska Tourism
NE Tourism Social Media Blitz	\$ 4,000.00	\$3,000.00		Nebraska Tourism
Western Nebraska Travel Magazine	\$ 680.00			
Expo Supplies	\$ -			
<b>No change from 2023 budget</b>		<b>\$ 11,680.00</b>		
<b>Expo Marketing</b>				
Colorado Marathon Lodging & Travel	\$ 600.00		\$550.00	SBAVB
Colorado Marathon Expo Registration	\$ 550.00			
Deadwood Marathon Lodging & Travel	\$ 600.00			
Deadwood Marathon Expo Registration	\$ 50.00		\$50.00	SBAVB
Lincoln Marathon Lodging & Travel	\$ 700.00			
Lincoln Marathon Expo Registration	\$ 275.00		\$275.00	SBAVB
Bolder Boulder Lodging & Travel	\$ 600.00			
Bolder Boulder Expo Registration	\$ 1,525.00		\$1,525.00	SBAVB
Casper Lodging & Travel	\$ 500.00			
Casper Expo Registration	\$ -			
<b>No change from 2023 budget</b>		<b>\$ 5,400.00</b>		
<b>Other Marketing</b>				
Photographers	\$ 1,600.00		\$1,600.00	SBAVB
Sheep Creek Films	\$ 1,000.00			
Website Maintenance Fee	\$ 250.00			
Save the Date Magnet & Postcards	\$ 1,000.00		\$1,000.00	SBAVB
<b>\$5000 decrease from 2023 budget</b>		<b>\$ 3,850.00</b>		
<b>Total Marketing Budget</b>		<b>\$ 35,430.00</b>		
<b>Total City of Scottsbluff Request</b>		<b>\$ 8,500.00</b>		

# Media Plan - Totals

Product	Sub-Product	Quantity	Line Budget	Product Budget
Google PPC			\$5,000.00	\$5,000
Facebook & Instagram Ads			\$5,000.00	\$5,000
CTV/OTT			\$5,000.00	\$5,000
Video Pre Roll			\$1,500.00	\$1,500
	Video Production: TurnKey Video	1	\$400.00	
Audience Targeted Display			\$3,600.00	\$3,600
	Creative Service: Custom Ad Design	1	\$20.00	
Scottsbluff Local Online & Print News Audience	Up to 10 Half Page Ads to run in the Star Herald over the year, 68,570 High Impact Ads on StarHerald.com 133,333 IAB Impressions on StarHerald.com over the course of the year.		\$4,900.00	\$4,900

Annual Budget: \$25,000

Campaign Start Date: 12/15/2023 Campaign Total Budget: \$25,000  
 Campaign End Date: 09/01/2024 Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

In order to run some digital media campaigns, advertiser must have appropriate business accounts/page access for all tactics selected and commit to implementation of required pixels.







## 2024 Monument Marathon Marketing Plan Target Audience(s)

The following targeted audience attributes are created with a hybrid of AI powered\* recommendations and custom selections from Ben Rogers.

<b>Age</b>	25 -34   45 - 54   55 - 64
<b>Education</b>	College   Grad School   No College
<b>Gender</b>	Men   Women
<b>Household</b>	Children: None   Children: Some   Housing Status: Owned   Housing Status: Rented   Marital Status: Married   Marital Status: Single
<b>Income</b>	\$50k - \$75k   \$75k - \$100k   \$100k - \$125k   \$125k - \$150k   \$150k - \$200k
<b>Interests</b>	Health & Fitness Buffs   Running Enthusiasts   Sports & Fitness
<b>Lifestyles</b>	Fitness Fanatics, Runners, Marathoners
<b>In-Market</b>	Sports & Fitness

Source: Open AI | Lee Enterprises | November 2023  
\*GPT-3.5 Prompt: Within Demographics, Lifestyle & Interest, In-Market and Search, please select the optimal or most effective audience targets for online advertising within the selected industry of Non-Profits.  
Selections were reviewed and validated by Ben Rogers, Amplified Digital, & Lee Enterprises along with our technology partners.






Links to promotional videos used in our digital advertising. Snapshot of sponsors at end of videos.

<https://vimeo.com/891643683/982ae79620?share=copy> - Monument Marathon 50 second video (music only)

<https://vimeo.com/891644294/cbe9be3d70?share=copy> – Monument Marathon 30 second video (narrated)



Creative content used for online social media ads:

 **Monument Marathon**  
Published by Stacy Ring · February 21 at 8:20 AM ·

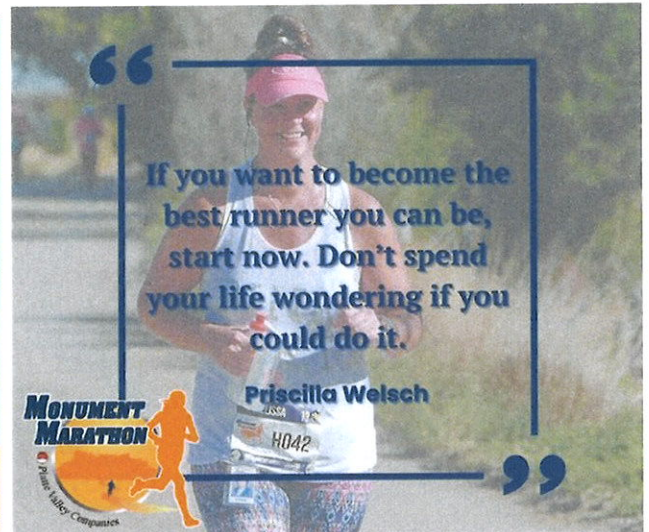
The impact of your run extends far beyond race day! By participating in the Monument Marathon, you are directly contributing to the betterment of students at Western Nebraska Community College. The funds raised from this event are dedicated to providing scholarships and financial assistance to those students who are in need.

We are immensely grateful for your continuous support throughout the years, as it has made a significant difference in the lives of many. As we eagerly anticipate the upcoming Monument Marathon on September 28, we want to express our sincere appreciation for your unwavering dedication to our cause each year. We look forward to seeing you soon for yet another unforgettable event!

9.28.24 [monumentmarathon.com](https://monumentmarathon.com)  
#monumentmarathon #run #runnebraska #marathon #halfmarathon #halfmarathonrelay #running #runner #run50states #bostonqualifier #usatf #goals #2024goals







Sample Digital Ads (not actual size):





# 2024 Monument Marathon Marketing Plan

## Geography

Campaign Geographic Area:

