

NEBRASKA
HIGHWAY
#2
GRAND
ISLAND
TO
ALLIANCE

INSIDE
THIS ISSUE:

New Book Planned	1
SJSB Wins State Award	1
Carhenge Recognized	2
BRAN to Visit the Byway	2
Polar Bear Tank Race	3
Annual Meeting & Banquet	3
Membership Application	3
Red Carpet Training	3
SJSB Attends National Conf.	4

Sandhills Journey Scenic Byway

Newsletter

VOLUME 4, ISSUE 1

FALL 2009

Nebraska Writer Working on SJSB Book

Alan Bartels of Farwell has begun work on a book that will feature Nebraska Highway 2, the Sandhills Journey Scenic Byway from its eastern anchor in Grand Island to its western end at Alliance.

Bartels says *“I will both write and provide photography for the as of yet unnamed book”* He adds *“Stunning photography and delicate prose will put the reader somewhere along Highway 2 in an instant.”*

The book will be a unique blend of photography, description of local events and businesses, local history and culture, nature, poetry, stories of

unique residents, humor and more.

Bartels has been exploring the Sandhills for many years, spending most weekends somewhere in the vast expanse of grass covered dunes.

Bartels knows that it’s the residents of the area that know the interesting, unknown history and unique wonders to be seen and experienced within the byway corridor. Anyone with ideas or suggestions of what to include in the book can contact him at:

bartels@cornhusker.net

Or see the website:

sandcastproductions.books.officelive.com/default.aspx



Photo by Kate Crowe

SJSB WINS OUTSTANDING REGIONAL AWARD



Representatives from the Sandhills Journey Scenic Byway accept the plaque for the 2009 Outstanding Regional Association Award from Jim Pearson, State Byways Coordinator, and Lieutenant Gov. Rick Sheehy. Left to right: Connie Francis, Mitch Glidden, Jim Pearson, Helen White, Terri Licking, Denise Russell, Lieutenant Gov. Rick Sheehy, Tom Witt, Patty Glidden, and Twyla Witt.

For the second year in a row, the Sandhills Journey Scenic Byway was awarded the Outstanding Regional Association Award at the 2009 State Travel Conference held in Norfolk, October 22-23. The Nebraska Department of Economic Development’s Travel and Tourism Division hosts the annual conference and banquet.

“Each nominee honored truly loves Nebraska and wants to see the state’s tourism industry succeed and flourish,” Lt. Gov. Sheehy said. “They have shown that they enjoy being from Nebraska and working hard to make this state a tourist destination.”

2010 SJSB Meeting Dates, Time and Places:

January 23– Annual Banquet and Meeting
 State 4-H Camp Lodge
 Business Meeting 12:00 p.m.
 Workshops—2:00
 Social Hour—5:30 p.m.
 Dinner & Auction—6:00 pm

February 10
Scheduled via Polycom
 2-4 (CT) 1-3 (MT)

March 5 & 6-Polar Bear Tank Race—Mullen & Thedford

March 9 - Evening Crane Viewing—Nebraska Nature & Visitor Center-Grand Island

March 10 –SJSB Meeting—Nebraska Nature & Visitor Center—G.I.

April 14—SJSB Meeting-Visitor Center—Broken Bow

May 1—SJSB Visitor Center opens

May 5—Thedford Area

May 12-Brochure Swap-Hastings

Meetings scheduled via Polycom may be accessed at:

Box Butte County Extension Office, Alliance

Hall County Extension Office, Conference Room B, Grand Island

Custer County Extension Office, Broken Bow

West Central Research and Extension Center Board Room, North Platte

CARHENGES NAMED #2 IN WACKIEST PLACES TO VISIT

Un-henged: Carhenge, Alliance, Nebraska.

No time to see the real thing in England? The next best thing may be Nebraska's wacky answer to Stonehenge: a replica of the English landmark made from automotive jalopies painted grey to look like stone. Other unusual clunker sculptures are also scattered around this memorable and bizarre landmark. One Trip Advisor traveler said, "If you enjoy the unusual, this is a must see." (Baltimore Sun, courtesy of TripAdvisor / October 15, 2009)



BRAN TO VISIT THE BYWAY



(BRAN riders will spend the night in tents at the Hyannis and Thedford football fields.)

BRAN (Bike Ride Across Nebraska) has selected the Sandhills Journey Scenic Byway (Highway 2) as part of the route for the 2010 annual bicycle ride. Riders will begin in Harrison on June 6 and spend the night in Alliance, with the next night spent in Hyannis. Following breakfast on June 8 in Hyannis, they will travel on to Thedford with an overnight stay there. From Thedford they will ride to Burwell, Albion, David City, and finish the week arriving June 12 in Omaha.

Why would 600+ bicyclists want to travel Highway 2 you might ask? The answer given by the Route Selection Committee was emphatically – “Because the riders LOVE the Sandhills”. BRAN will be celebrating their 30th anniversary and where else would their theme “BRAN 30 - Space Cowboy Tour” enjoy a better fit.

BRAN provides a source of economic development and tourism for the towns they travel through. Each overnight community will be awarded a \$500.00 scholarship to be given one of their graduating seniors attending a Nebraska College or University. In addition, each overnight community will vie for the “Best Host Community”. The winning town will be awarded a \$1,000.00 scholarship for a graduating senior of

their choice. Proceeds from BRAN fund \$28,000.00 in annual scholarships for Nebraska High School Students.

This past summer BRAN hosted participants from 35 states and Canada for their annual ride. The average age for the riders was 47 years old, the oldest rider was 84 years old and the youngest at age 6 rode a tandem bike with his father. An example of how popular this event is, one rider rode in the event for the 29th time.

Our Byway Communities have already begun planning for this fun and exciting event. The opportunity to host this group is enjoyed by our residents and we look forward to treating them to a taste of our genuine Sandhills hospitality.

The entire Byway community extends our deepest condolences to the Licking family on the loss of our dear friend and Byway Director, Kori Licking. She was a wonderful person and truly dedicated to the work of this Byway. She will be very sadly missed by all.

SJSB ANNUAL MEETING AND BANQUET

SATURDAY, JANUARY 23, 2010
 12:00 P.M.—Annual Mtg—State 4-H Lodge, Halsey
 2:00—Afternoon Speakers
 5:30 P.M.—Social Hour followed by Banquet &
 Auction at the 4-H Lodge

Tickets:
\$25 per person
 Includes afternoon Workshops,
 Social Hour and Banquet
 (\$10—Afternoon Workshops only)
 \$50 per person with 2010 SJSB membership—Purchase from any Byway Member

2010 POLAR BEAR TANK RACE

The 3rd Annual Polar Bear Tank Race on the Middle Loup River will be held March 5th and 6th at Thedford and Mullen. This event is held to benefit the Sandhills Journey Scenic Byway marketing effort. See www.sandhillsjourney.com for registration flyer.

Schedule:

March 5—Chili Cook-off and Registration of Teams will be held at the Thomas County Fairgrounds, beginning at 5 p.m. CT
March 6—Entrants meet at the Consolidated Building in Mullen at 9 a.m. CT. An awards banquet will be held that evening at 6 p.m. CT at the Thomas County Fairgrounds.

Enter the Chili Cook-off Contest

Bring your best chili and compete for prizes in the March 5th pre-polar bear tank race event. Last year over a dozen competitors entered and competed for the title of “Byways Best Chili.” Judging will be not only on taste, but on presentation as well.



Sandhills Open Road Challenge Race Team from Arnold, won 1st Place in 2009 with a time of 1 hour, 3 minutes, 52 seconds.

For more information on the chili cook-off or the Polar Bear Tank Race, contact: Tom Witt, Box 225, Thedford, NE 69166 (402) 450-2268 or twitt02@nebnet.net.

Become a Member of the Sandhills Journey Scenic Byway

How can you become involved?

Financial and in-kind support from Byway communities and businesses is essential to achieve marketing and promotion that will lead to a real impact in the region.

Byway Projects Include:

- **Fourteen** Visitor Information Centers available to travelers.
- **40,000+** promotional publications distributed.
- **Print** advertising in Nebraska Life, Western Journey, American Road and Heartland Advertiser.
- **Development** of the Sandhills Journey Scenic Byway Visitors/Interpretive Center
- **Website**
- **Hospitality** trainings.
- **Produced** auto tour on CD and cassette tape.
- **Support development** of byway recreation facilities
- **Media** and travel writer networking.
- **Kiosk** information available to travelers.

New Membership Application Form

Membership Type:

- _____ **\$25 Individual or Business**
- _____ **\$25 Community**
- _____ **Tax deductible charitable**

Contribution \$_____ amount

Make payment to Sandhills Journey Scenic Byway

Name of Individual/Business

Mailing Address

City _____ **State** _____ **Zip** _____

E-Mail

County

Please return this form with payment to: Sandhills Journey Scenic Byway Jeanne Davis, P O Box 271, Hyannis NE 69350

RED CARPET SERVICE TRAINING OFFERED - The University of Nebraska Rural Initiative and UNL Extension are co-sponsoring a self-paced, interactive on-line training. This fun, practical and research-based training will combine training on traditional customer service as well as meeting the needs of travelers and tourists. This training is free on-line until Dec. 31st, after which the fee will be \$250. For more information on registering for this training, you may email Connie Francis at cfrancis1@unl.edu or call her at 308-385-5088.

Sandhills Journey Scenic Byway

Website: www.sandhillsjourney.com
(308) 546-0636

Nebraska Highway 2—Grand Island to Alliance

P O Box 271

Hyannis NE 69350

SJSB Vision Statement: To Improve our rural economy by working cooperatively to enhance the visitor experience.

NEBRASKA TOURISM REPS ATTEND NATIONAL BYWAY CONFERENCE

By Terri Licking

‘Elevate Your Expertise’ was the theme for the National Scenic Byway Conference held in Denver recently. Representatives from four of the nine state scenic byways in Nebraska attended. During the pre-conference tours and at the three day conference, attendees gained new knowledge and ideas on marketing, partnerships, signage, authenticity and what is happening at the federal level with the national scenic byway program to name a few. Tourism is economic development, and the conference certainly emphasized that. “What was one of the best parts of the conference was networking with people from other states and learning one on one”, said Marlene VanDiest, vice-president of the Sandhills Journey Scenic Byway.



View from the bus on the Lariat Loop Scenic Byway in the Colorado Rockies.

The National Scenic Byways Program is part of the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). The Program is a grass-roots collaborative effort established to help recognize, preserve and enhance selected roads throughout the United States. The program was established in 1991. Since 1992, the National Scenic Byways Program has provided over \$347 million in funding for 2,672 State and nationally designated byway projects in 50 states, Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia. (www.byways.org/press/fact_sheet.html)

Those attending from the Sandhills Journey Scenic Byway include Terri Licking and Tom Witt, Thedford, Marlene VanDiest, Dunning, Jeanne Davis, Hyannis, Denise Russell, Broken Bow, and Twila Phillips, Mullen. Resource people attending from Nebraska included Jim Pearson, State Byway Coordinator, Christian Hornbaker, Director of Travel and Tourism, Twyla Witt, Div. of Travel and Tourism-Byway Consultant, Bob Broweleit, Sandhills RC&D Director and Connie Francis, UNL Rural Initiative. Jim and Christian were co-presenters on a marketing workshop during the conference.

Other highlights for attendees included field trips to some of the Colorado scenic byways, one of which included a stop at Look-Out Mountain, where Buffalo Bill Cody and his wife are buried, as well as a marathon baseball game between the Colorado Rockies and the San Francisco Giants (the Rockies prevailed in the bottom of the 14th inning)

