

Nebraska Tourism service project in northeast Nebraska this weekend

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

LINCOLN, Neb. (September 23, 2016)— The Nebraska Tourism Commission's third Nebraska Tourism Serves project will take place in northeast Nebraska today and tomorrow. Nebraska Tourism Serves brings volunteers together to celebrate and restore beloved tourist destinations in our state.

This weekend's project will be along the 240-mile [Shannon Trail](#) in northeast Nebraska. The trail is spread out among 16 historic communities. Those lending-a-hand will assist in replacing two of the 13 life-size wooden chainsaw statues of Private Shannon that mark the trail. In the application, Laurie Larsen with Shannon Trail Promoters, said, "All sites have shrubs and/or flowers or grass (wild) that need to be cleaned up or trimmed."

Full schedule for the project on September 23-24:

Friday, September 23

3:00 p.m. Start in Verdel at the Shannon Site on Highway 12 then move to Niobrara, Santee at the Old Ohiya Casino site, Verdigre, Winnetoon, Creighton and Center through this evening.

Saturday, September 24

9:00 a.m. Start in Bloomfield at the Shannon Trail site located behind the Bloomfield Historical Society Museum. The group will regroup and some volunteers will go to Wausa, Hartington, Bow Valley, St. James, Wynot, St. Helena, Crofton and Lindy.

3:00 p.m. All work is planned to be finished.

This is the first year of the Nebraska Tourism Serves program, with the goal to organize four service projects. The first project was held in May, where volunteers helped restore the historic Fort Robidoux near Gering. Another project took place in June, where eager individuals cleared old railroad ties and did various other tasks along the Cowboy Trail near Chadron, preparing the 321 mile trail for completion in the future. In total, the first two Nebraska Tourism Serves opportunities contributed over 260 man hours to these projects, making a significant impact on the tourism potential in two Western Nebraska communities.

The fourth project will be at The Nebraska State Historical Society's Pavelka Farmstead in Bladen, Nebraska, near Red Cloud- the home of Willa Cather. This property provided the setting for Cather's most famous work, *My Antonia*. Those assisting with the cleanup will do a number of maintenance tasks that would improve the visitor's experiences, including painting to cover recent vandalism, repairing the cellar steps, landscaping and cleanup of the home's interior. "The Pavelka Farmstead is one of Nebraska's irreplaceable literary destinations," explained Ashley Olson, executive director of The Willa Cather Foundation. "Once home to the prototype for one of our nation's celebrated literary characters, the farmstead also has the potential to provide an exceptional demonstration of Nebraska's Czech immigrant culture. The Willa Cather Foundation is pleased to work with Tourism Serves to make this site more inviting to guests as we prepare to celebrate the 100th publication anniversary of *My Antonia* in 2018." This service project is set to take place the weekend of Nov. 4. Volunteer information can be found at <http://visitnebraska.com/media/industry/2016-11-30-00-00-00-utc-nebraska-tourism-serves>.

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The mission of the Nebraska Tourism Commission is to expand Nebraska's dynamic and diverse travel industry making it more viable by creating awareness, attracting increased visitors which results in greater tourism revenue and economic gain throughout the state. To learn more, go to VisitNebraska.com.

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