



WYMORE-BLUE SPRINGS AREA FUND

CLIMBing to a brighter tomorrow.

2024 Annual Newsletter

OUR MISSION

We encourage financial generosity and volunteer commitment to ensure we become and remain a thriving place to live, raise families, do business and enjoy the good life.

OUR VISION

Our vision is a proud, attractive community that builds on its history, continually works to ensure a thriving economic, educational, and recreational presence for today and plans to continue its powerful hometown appeal for generations to come.

OUR VALUES

Collaborative

Loyal

Invested

Motivated

Benevolent



A LETTER FROM OUR CHAIR



On behalf of the Wymore-Blue Springs Area Fund Advisory Committee, I would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to you for your unwavering support and commitment this past year. We've made so much progress since 2016 when we became an affiliated fund of Nebraska Community Foundation. My wish is

that each and every one of you will research Nebraska Community Foundation and its 245 affiliated funds at www.NebraskaHometown.org. Please read the stories from these thriving communities, many of them are no bigger than our hometowns.

We've made tremendous strides in improving our parks in Wymore. There has been a major transformation at McCandless Park and this past year, we gave the city of Wymore \$50,823 toward a restroom to be placed in Arbor State Park. Although we will continue to improve our parks, our main focus is building our community's unrestricted endowment, both through current and planned gifts.

What is a planned gift? Often called a legacy gift, they are arranged during a donor's lifetime, but allocated at a future date. One of the most common (and simple) ways to leave a planned gift is through a will or trust.

Think of the love you have for your hometown. This is your opportunity to improve the quality of its future. Leaving a gift to help your hometown thrive is simple, and there are plenty of options to suit your life and situation. Nebraska Community Foundation suggests leaving five percent of your assets to a favorite Nebraska hometown's endowment or local charity. According to NCF's 2021 Transfer of Wealth Study, this collective act would result in \$70 million over the next decade that could be used to improve the quality of life in Gage County.

Remember, **once our wealth leaves the community, it is gone forever. Once our wealth is endowed in our community, it is here forever.** You can learn more at www.fivetothrive.org.

Enjoy our newsletter showcasing what WBSAF has accomplished this past year with YOUR help! Whether you gave of your time, talent, or treasure you play an integral role in our success.

I want my granddaughters to know where their dad and uncle grew up and call home. That is one reason I am invested in the Wymore-Blue Springs Area Fund! – **JANICE COHORST**, *Wymore-Blue Springs Area Fund Chair*



Finally, the long-awaited inclusive playground was installed in September. This last phase of the McCandless Park Project certainly tested everyone's patience. Our prolonged wait time was due to the backlog of playgrounds across the state waiting to be placed by the professional installers who had been assigned to do the work. We are sure that if you would ask any child between the ages of 5–12 and their parents, they would say "It was well worth the wait."

It is wonderful seeing our children entertain themselves on this state-of-

the-art playground. Remember, this \$171,361 amenity was purchased with funds from Gage County Foundation (\$10,000), Margaret & Martha Thomas Foundation (\$57,921), Wymore Library Lance Johnson's Endowment (\$2,000), and WBSAF (\$103,440). The dollar amount from WBSAF was from the Big Give Gage event and collaboration with the Southern Gage Kiwanis fundraising events held throughout the year. Now that the equipment is installed, one can hear many screams of happiness for blocks.

On November 9, WBSAF chair Janice Cohorst headed toward Kearney for Nebraska Community Foundation's annual training. Again, she was thoroughly inspired by every speaker, breakout session, and getting reacquainted with other volunteers around our state and meeting new passionate people wanting to know more about the benefits of philanthropy to their community.



The theme for 2023 Sam Wymore Days was the 100th anniversary of Disney. The hard work of our Fund Advisory Committee paid off as we won the SWD Parade Best of Theme trophy. The float depicted Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs. Just as she and each dwarf have a specific personality, so do the members of our FAC. Each member is an integral part of our success, and we could not accomplish our mission without them.

Cold temperatures on October 29 did not deter many from dressing up in their favorite Halloween costumes. The annual Spooktacular is organized by Southern Gage Kiwanis and WBSAF. Local organizations and businesses sponsor a space in the park to entertain and give out plenty of treats. New this year was the playground which was decorated by the FBLA students with cobwebs, spiders, and bats. Hot chocolate was the drink of choice at the concession stand. This year a total of over \$3,000 was raised to benefit our Southern Gage Parks. We also celebrated with a ribbon cutting of the new inclusive playground for the 5–12-year-olds.



The sixth annual golfing event sponsored by the Southern Gage Kiwanis and the Wymore-Blue Springs Area Fund was held May 6, 2023. Twenty-six golfers participated on a beautiful spring day. Much laughter could be heard throughout the course while trying to get that little white ball into a 4.25 inch hole. All money (\$2,900) raised from this fun-filled day was designated to a new restroom facility in Arbor State Park. Continued financial support of area businesses is greatly appreciated as they provide hole sponsorships and prizes.





In August 2023, the nostalgic signs that for years adorned the entrances of the Arbor State Park received a facelift. The question was asked, "Where did these signs come from?" Many said, "From a gas station," however no one knew which gas station. In diving into the Wymore Nebraska Diamond Jubilee 1881-1956 book, it was noted that there was a Standard Oil supply business in Wymore. According to the Wymore Centennial book 1881-1981, that station was torn down.



What do we all think of in Wymore during Memorial Day? The first thing that comes to mind is the honoring of the U.S. military personnel who died while serving in the United States Armed Forces. Remembering our loved ones who have passed away is another reason to bring you back to your hometown. The third reason is the Alumni Banquet that is always celebrated during Memorial Day weekend. The class of 1958 came to celebrate their 65th class reunion. We had the opportunity to visit with those classmates regarding our fund and the importance of leaving a legacy to your hometown.



Seventy-two Gage County-based nonprofit organizations participated in the fifth Big Give Gage event on September 14. This year, 1,971 donors raised \$369,493.56. Additionally, \$20,775.57 was awarded via sponsorships divided amongst all 72 nonprofits.

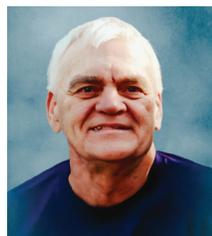
Big Give Gage is a 24-hour event put on by the Gage County Foundation and the Beatrice Community Hospital Foundation. The Wymore-Blue Springs Area Fund exceeded our \$20,000 goal by raising \$31,175! Combined with matching funds,

our final check was for \$32,579.80. Each year we have increased the number of donors. In 2019, the event's first year, we had 94 donors. Five years later we had 149 donors. Every year we have been first on the leaderboard for total donors. Ninety of those 149 were from Southern Gage County. That means we have 59 donors from outside our area supporting our efforts to improve our communities. We have been blessed with so much generosity and are optimistic about the future. Bring on Big Give Gage 2024!

In Memory The Wymore-Blue Springs Area Fund would like to recognize the families of Randy Novotny and Keith Weyer for their generous donations of their loved ones' memorials. Randy's wife, Lori, is a current FAC member and she and Randy have always been dedicated to making their hometown better. Keith was a loving grandfather who enjoyed watching his grandchildren laugh and play. His memorial will go toward making sure there are safe and fun amenities for the children of our communities.



This year again there was lots of activity at McCandless Ballfield. It is wonderful to see the young athletes and their families and friends come to cheer them on. Southern Gage Kiwanis along with Wymore-Blue Springs Area Fund manned the concession stand. During those 15 nights, 240 hot dogs, 114 hamburgers, and three roasters of pulled pork were consumed. Working together with the parents of these youngsters was a pleasure. It brings much happiness to see the city's McCandless Park and Ballfield being utilized.



Randy Novotny
April 23, 1961-
March 2, 2023



Keith Weyer
February 14, 1951-
November 7, 2023



Wymore-Blue Springs Area Fund
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FIVE TO THRIVE – HEART OF OUR HOMETOWN EVENT

On February 19, 2023, the Wymore-Blue Springs Area Fund held an event to celebrate the accomplishments achieved since the organization started, to thank those who have been donors and supporters of the area fund, and to encourage continued giving focused on our endowment. Samantha Thompson, Fund Advisory Committee member, showed a video presentation that she created titled “Celebrating Early Successes!” Sam shared the video after the event on the WBSAF Facebook page.

Special guests for the evening included Dena Beck, Nebraska Community Foundation Affiliated Fund Development Coordinator. Dena provided greetings and an NCF briefing along with information on the Five to Thrive campaign, including data on the projected transfer of wealth in Gage County where over the next 10 years, \$1.4 billion will transfer from



one generation to the next. Due to outmigration, many of the heirs of this abundance no longer live where the wealth was built and may no longer feel connected to the community they grew up in. By giving back just five percent of your assets to your hometown’s endowment, you can secure your family’s legacy and help your hometown thrive.

Todd Mekelburg, Nebraska Community Foundation Director of Gift Planning, shared more insights on giving back and growing our endowment and Beth Roelfs of the Diller Community Foundation Fund provided insights on the success they’ve had in growing their

endowment and projects they have supported in the Diller area.

We ask anyone with current or prior connections to the Wymore, Blue Springs, Barneston, Liberty, and Holmesville area to consider ongoing support of the Wymore-Blue Springs Area Fund Unrestricted Endowment Account. This is a permanent account whose assets are invested to generate an ongoing source of income year after year. Investment earnings from the endowment are used to support community improvements and programs. The money generated from the endowment is used to benefit the community now and in the future.

Learn more at www.fivetothrivene.org. Explore planned giving resources at www.nebcommfound.giftlegacy.com.