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Buffalo County Historical Society to Cut Ribbon on Family History Center

Building at Trails & Rails Museum is new “front door” for the museum campus

Kearney, Neb — Visitors to the Buffalo County Historical Society’s Trails & Rails Museum now have a more convenient way to enter the museum’s campus, complete with paved parking and a welcoming entrance.

Phase 1 of the Family History Center had a soft opening to the public in July. The community is invited to join the society at a ribbon cutting and open house on Wednesday, August 9. The public is invited from 4:15-5:30 p.m. with a Kearney Chamber of Commerce ribbon cutting at 4:30 p.m.

This phase provides 6,000 square feet for archives, offices, a conference room and the museum gift shop along with accessible bathrooms for the public. Inspired by structures from Buffalo County’s history, the building features red brick, large arched windows and an arched entry. It was designed and built by BD Construction.

The Family History Center is an extension of the society’s Trails & Rails Museum and will be located on the museum’s campus at 710 W. 11th Street. It is located to the west of the Union Pacific Depot and steam engine along 11th street in Kearney. Visitors will now enter the museum through the Family History Center.

“We’ve already seen an increase in traffic in the few weeks that we’ve been open,” said Jennifer Murrish, executive director of the Buffalo County Historical Society. “The entrance to the museum is much easier for our visitors and guests to find, especially those coming from out of town.

Being a featured stop on the 2017 Nebraska Passport program has helped with traffic as well. “This summer, we’ve had approximately 2000 visitors, including both in-person and virtual stamps. We have seen a 25% increase in tours and a 15% increase in gift shop sales from the Passport program,” Murrish said. “Many guests are asking about what else there is to do in the area. They have commented on how nice Kearney folks are and how impressed they are with the cultural opportunities. The Nebraska Passport program has been an added bonus to announce our new facility to a wider audience.”

Murrish is optimistic that the opening of phase one will bring forth donors to assist with the remaining \$660,000 needed to complete phase two. “Phase two will extend a west wing onto the building and provide multi-functional museum display space. Our collection grows daily with generous donations representing the entire county. We never know what will walk through the door and it’s often like Christmas-time. “

“I’m hopeful this provides the momentum for donors to step forward to help us complete phase two. The pioneers who made Buffalo County what it is today entrusted today’s generations with a rich legacy that we seek to preserve,” Murrish said.

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About Trails & Rails Museum

The Trails & Rails Museum has six historic buildings visitors can tour, as well as a livery barn, the new JC Marlatt blacksmith shop, and a Union Pacific steam engine and caboose. The Family History Center building will house the Buffalo County records and archives, which are used by researchers worldwide. The Trails & Rails Museum is located on the original Mormon Trail route at 710 W. 11th Street in Kearney. The Museum is owned and operated by the Buffalo County Historical Society, which is a not-for-profit, 501(c)(3) organization. Please visit www.bchs.us for additional details and special events.

About BD Construction

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