

NOTES FROM THE TRAIL

A Publication of the Theodore Roosevelt Medora Foundation

SPRING 2022

Welcome to Notes From the Trail!

You're receiving this publication because we know you care about Medora and its capacity to inspire, educate, and entertain. So three times a year, you can expect to receive this dispatch from the Badlands. We'll tell you the ongoing story of the Theodore Roosevelt Medora Foundation: what's new, what matters, and who's making it happen.

But we want this to be more than just a piece of mail. Just look at that cover! We hope this publication will find a home in your living room – perhaps on your coffee table. We'll always begin with a breathtaking image from our favorite place in the world. Let it serve as inspiration – a conversation starter – and a reminder of what's waiting for you just a ways down the road in Medora.



Tim Olson
Foundation Communications Specialist



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FROM THE DESK OF RANDY HATZENBUHLER



So much of Medora's magic is tied to our senses.

I can close my eyes and imagine the *sight* of fireworks capping off an exciting night at the *Medora Musical*, or the *smell* of steaks freshly pulled from a fondue pot on pitchforks. The rhythmic *feeling* of exploring the Badlands on a mountain bike, and of course, the *taste* of an ice cream cone from the Fudge Depot.

This summer, I'm very much looking forward to the sound of Medora! Specifically, a new sound we'll get to enjoy in the heart of town: the laughter of children and families, and maybe some splashing water, at **Point to Point Park.** This June will bring the grand opening of the park's aquatic features. including a lazy river, a splash pad, and a swimming pool. Those joyous sounds are why we love being able to serve you.

June also brings us to an important milestone for the Theodore Roosevelt Medora Foundation: the outgoing Chair of our Board of Directors, Ed Schafer, will be recognized and honored as part of our Rough Riders Roundup weekend. The Medora we know and love today simply would not exist without Ed's steady hand, wise judgement, and strong character in the past twelve years. The Schafer name is indelibly linked to Medora – and Ed leaves the Foundation his father founded in 1986 in a much better place than he found it. We are all so grateful to him.

Thanks in large part to Ed, we have set our organization on what we call **Our Path to 2065**. (That's the 100 year anniversary of the *Medora Musical*!) It's the frame through which we're looking at the future of Medora. Planning ahead to 2065 might sound daunting – so we're taking the journey five years at a time. I'm proud of the progress our team and our Board of Directors have made:

• We're always considering ways to create a **World-Class Outdoor** experience in Medora. The opening of the Point to Point Trails (previously known as Pancratz Trail) has been a great resource for guests and residents of Medora alike.

• **Legacy Bully Pulpit**, our plan to repair, replace, innovate, and preserve the Top 100 experience at Bully Pulpit Golf Course, has made enormous strides. You can read much more about them on Page 10.

• We're exploring new, exciting ways to honor Medora's **Western Heritage**. More to come on that soon.

Those are three of our six "success tracks" on **Our Path to 2065**. I'll bring you more updates as our journey continues!

As I sign off, I'll point you in the direction of page 18. There you'll find the Theodore Roosevelt Medora Foundation's mission, vision, and values. And if you've been paying close attention over the years, you'll notice something new: we've refreshed our value statements!

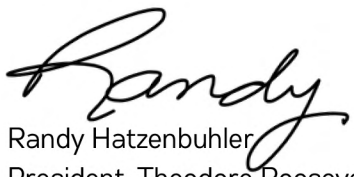
One of our new values is something called the **Ownership** mindset. It's an idea that our entire full-time staff got acquainted with in February at our employee retreat. We were all glued to a presentation by speaker Todd Musselman. He asked us to consider what it means to live with an ownership mindset – that is, the difference between "the doing of life" and "the watching of life."

Todd's words had a great impact on me. So with our value of Ownership in mind, here are a few of the things I'm grateful that I get to do with my work:

- I get to be in the Badlands.
- I get to marvel at amazing sunsets.
- I get to work with wonderful people from all over the world.
- I get to say "thank you" to people who generously give of their time and financial resources to make Medora even more wonderful.
- I get to watch magic happen every night at the *Medora Musical*.
- I get to witness real joy in our guests.

In that spirit, I am so looking forward to another summer in Medora – and our entire team is anticipating a record-setting year. We've set the following goals for 2022: **128,000** guests at the *Medora Musical*, **39,000** nights stayed in our hotel rooms, and **16,750** rounds of golf at Bully Pulpit Golf Course.

That adds up to a whole lot of smiles! I'm eager to see yours soon.



Randy Hatzenbuhler
President, Theodore Roosevelt Medora Foundation

Under Harold's Hat

Lessons, ideas, and values from our founder, Harold Schafer

"My guess is that if I have a legacy, it's going to be Medora, North Dakota."

Those were Harold Schafer's words during an interview in 1997. In that wide-ranging discussion, he spoke about his philosophy on hard work, his success as a businessman, and the revitalization of historic Medora that he helped kick-start.

"Medora is real. It has real history. It's not quite so flashy as Six Flags Over Texas," Harold said, *"but Medora has a greatness to it also."*

It was a greatness that couldn't have happened without Harold's help. In 1962 he renovated the Rough Riders Hotel. A few years later, the show we now know as the *Medora Musical* debuted in the Burning Hills Amphitheatre. And in the decades that followed, a run-down cowtown had become one of the country's most exciting destinations for tourism.

"You can walk around the parking lot [at the Burning Hills Amphitheatre] and find cars from thirty or forty different states in one night at the show," he marveled in 1997.

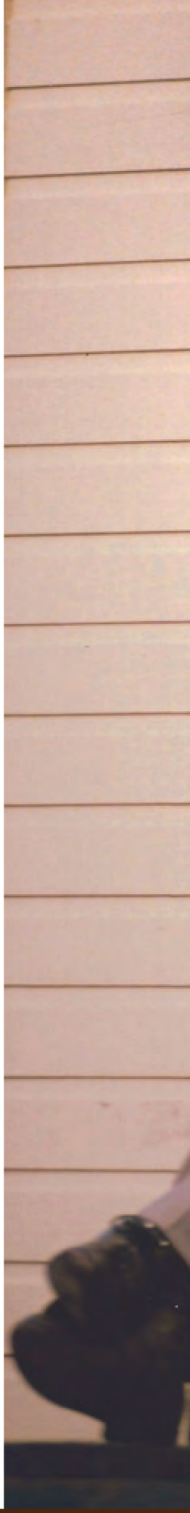
That was twenty-five years ago – and it just so happened that during that interview, Harold was asked, "What's Medora going to look like twenty-five years from now?"

Harold's answer might surprise you: *"I haven't the slightest idea!"*

He continued, *"I had no knowledge it would ever be where it is now. I had no outline in my mind that it would grow like this. And if it should continue to grow, I don't know what it's going to be. But I think it's going to continue to grow."*

We wish Harold could see what Medora has become twenty-five years after that interview. We believe he'd be proud of it.

We invite you to scan this QR code or visit Foundation.Medora.com/Harold and watch an excerpt from that 1997 interview. Harold doesn't just discuss Medora; he covers his legacy, his philosophy of work, and more. It's a fascinating look at a remarkable man.





Theodore Roosevelt™ MEDORA FOUNDATION

Medora EXPLORE IT. ADORE IT. | Medora Musical | Bully Pulpit Golf Course

Our Board of Directors:

Harold Schafer (1912-2001) & Sheila Schafer (1926-2016)
Founders

Tim O'Keefe, *Chair*
Levi Andrist, *Vice Chair*
Michael Zaun, *Secretary & Treasurer*

Michelle Mongeon Allen
Twylah Blotsky
Bruce Furness
Kristi Hanson
Doug Mark
Laurel Nelson
Linda Pancratz
Medora Sletten
Rich Becker
Don Clement
Tom Gerhardt
Jody Hodgson
Tracy Martin
Kathy Neset
Barry Schafer
Rolf Sletten

IT'S TIME TO REFRESH THE MEDORA CHILDREN'S PARK!

May 13 - 15, 2022

In 2001, a group of volunteers came together and constructed the Medora Children's Park over the course of just five days. In the twenty-one years that followed, it's been a wonderful spot for kids to explore (and for parents and grandparents to take a breather!).

Now the time has come to give our beloved park a big clean-up!

If you and your family have made positive memories at the Medora Children's Park, then we would be honored to have you join us for a one-of-a-kind weekend of hard work and joyful memories. **Scan this code** to learn more and register!



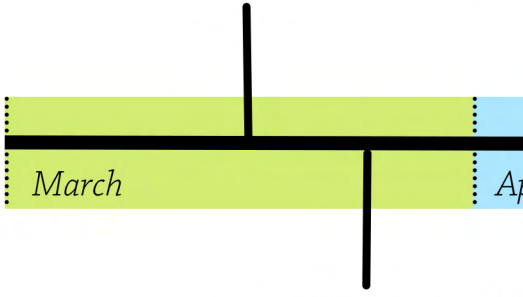
MORE TO



March 18-19: Billy & Elton: The Hits



April 8-9: Country Roads: A Tribute to John Denver



March 25-26: Memories of Elvis in Concert



April 22-23: The Looney Lutherans



O EXPLORE IN MEDORA!

Dates subject to change. Visit Medora.com/Events for a full list of what's happening in town.



Spring TBD: Bully Pulpit Golf Course Opens



June 8: Medora Musical Opening Night



June 11: Rough Riders Roundup



July 4: Independence Day Parade & Fireworks

May

June

July

May 13-15: Children's Park Renovation Weekend



June TBD: Point to Point Park Grand Opening



July 2-10: Medora WISH Kids FREE Week



July 10: Veterans & Military Appreciation Day

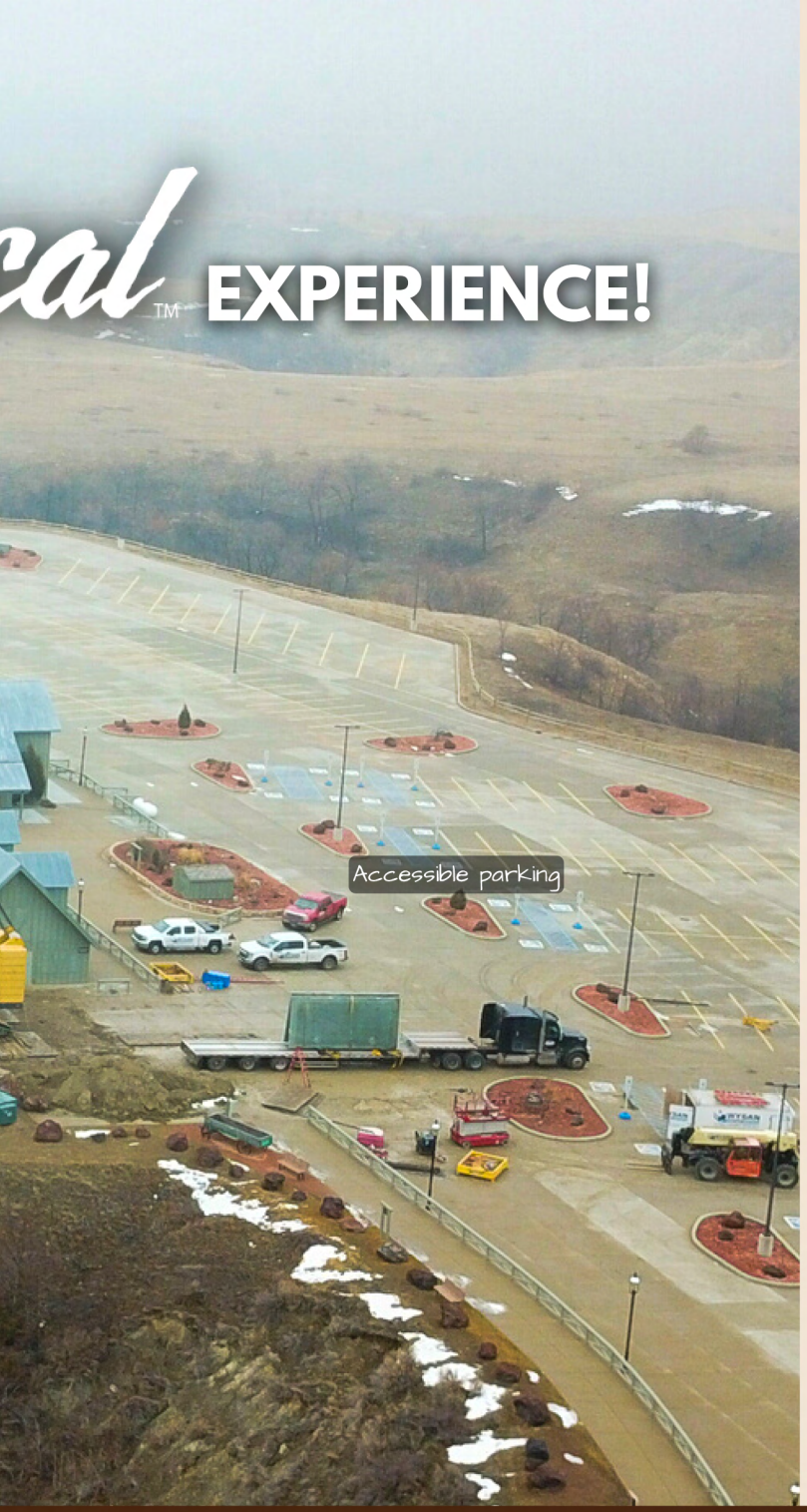


ELEVATING THE Medora Musical

This photo from March 2nd, 2022 shows major progress on our new **high-capacity elevator**, which will vastly improve ease and speed of access to the Burning Hills Amphitheatre for our guests with mobility challenges.

Scan the QR code on this page or visit Blog.Medora.com to learn more about the elevator and our Access Medora initiative!







WE'VE COME A LONG WAY.

THANKS TO YOU.



Harold Schafer's journey to revitalizing Medora largely began with his restoration of the storied Rough Riders Hotel in 1962. But 24 years later, in 1986, he took arguably his biggest step toward securing Medora's future: he and his family donated the entire Medora Division of the Gold Seal Company to create the non-profit Theodore Roosevelt Medora Foundation.

That put the fate of Medora in all of our hands. And thanks to the passion and support of people of all walks of life, this historic place continues to grow and thrive in ways even Harold himself couldn't have imagined.

Scan the code shown on the right or go online to Foundation.Medora.com/Member to join or renew as a TRMF Rough Rider—and help us write the next chapter of Medora's amazing story.

EMILY WALTER: The Queen of the more than

It may sound like the start of a complicated joke: *"I was floating down the Cochin River in India with a ship captain, a hotel manager, an ambassador to Israel, a French contessa, and an Indian curry chef."*

But there's no punchline here; it's just one of countless moments in Emily Walter's storybook life as a vocalist.

"To say 'the world is your oyster' – it really was, for me!" she says, recalling her ten years as a performing artist on cruise ships all over the planet. *"Just about everywhere you could reach by port, I've been."*

Before she was a globetrotting performer – and before she dazzled audiences in Medora as Queen of the West – Emily Walter was a little girl growing up in Racine, Wisconsin. She listened closely to the records her older siblings would play – Barry Manilow, John Denver, The Beatles – and found her own favorites.

"The biggest influences on my voice were Karen Carpenter and Anne Murray," she says.

And Walter's love of performing was never a secret.

"I remember coming out during my parents' parties and singing for the guests," she says. *"I knew from a very young age that this is what I wanted to do. I loved to sing."*

That love became a career, and even a duty, after a chance encounter in college in Nebraska.

"I performed in front of a U.S. Air Force commander at a contest. When I was finished, he said, 'You've got a job in the Air Force Band, if you want it.' And I laughed! I thought, 'Yeah, right.'

"But somewhere between that laughing and now, I became a Gulf War veteran," she says.

As lead vocalist for the U.S. Air Force Strategic Air Command Band, Walter came face-to-face with foreign dignitaries and world leaders – and she was deployed overseas during Operation Desert Storm, where she performed for soldiers.

She says her four years in the Air Force were formative. *"It made me more of who I am today than anything else."*

Emily Walter performs with the U.S. Air Force Strategic Air Command Band circa 1988.

West

The road beyond the U.S. Air Force eventually wound its way to Medora. She was a Burning Hills Singer in the summers of 1994 and 1995. *"I fell in love with this place."*

It was here, Walter says, that she sang her first Patsy Cline tune. *"Being given that song really launched a lot of work for me."*

Indeed: Walter became one of a select few people to be approved by the Patsy Cline Estate to portray Cline. Being in such a rarified group brought Walter a great many opportunities to perform in the United States and around the world.

It's no surprise, then, that wanderlust took hold. *"The biggest thrill for me is to go somewhere I've never been."*

Walter's career as a seafaring performer began in 1999, and sent her all over the globe. *"There are still bucket list places for me, but not a lot!"*

That decade provided her with unforgettable snapshots of an endlessly interesting world. (Floating down the river with a curry chef only scratches the surface!)





Walter headlining the Medora Gospel Brunch, now in its seventh season.

"I got caught in a herd of reindeer at the North Pole. I've seen penguins being born at the South Pole," Walter recounts. *"I've dove off a waterfall in Indonesia. I rode an elephant in Thailand.*

"I developed a love for travel that has never been satiated."

Through it all, the love she developed for the Badlands of North Dakota never left her mind – and in 2010, she was given the opportunity to return as host of the *Medora Musical*.

But her iconic identity took time to develop. *"In that first year, 2010, I went by 'Buffalo Alice,'"* Walter recalls. *"The next year we were trying to come up with another character.*

"Then [Director and Producer] Curt Wollan proclaimed: 'Emily Walter: Queen of the West!' That's where it began," she says.

That stage moniker, she says, became an extension of herself. "There's nothing I love more than gowns and bling," she laughs. "I loved it."

For the next five years Walter was a mainstay of the *Medora Musical* experience – and an inspiration for young audience members. "It was a big world of little girls!" she says. "They would have their pictures taken with me after the show – even wrap their arms around me. It was just amazing."

Even after stepping away from the *Medora Musical* to lead the Medora Gospel Brunch in 2016, her Queen of the West title never went away. *"To this day, some of those little girls come by and say 'That's why I loved coming to the* Medora Musical. *I had that dream of being a tiara-studded cowgirl,'"* she smiles. *"That's really, really cool."*

2022 will mark Walter's seventh year anchoring the Gospel Brunch. *"I began performing professionally in 1986. But I can safely say that in all of these years, this is one of my absolute favorite shows,"* she says. *"If I can do a show for seven years and still feel joy every time I do it? That's a real testament to how [Musical Director] Sandy Tipping put it together. It's incredible."*

And today, the place that started as "just a gig" in the 1990s is home for world-class performer Emily Walter.

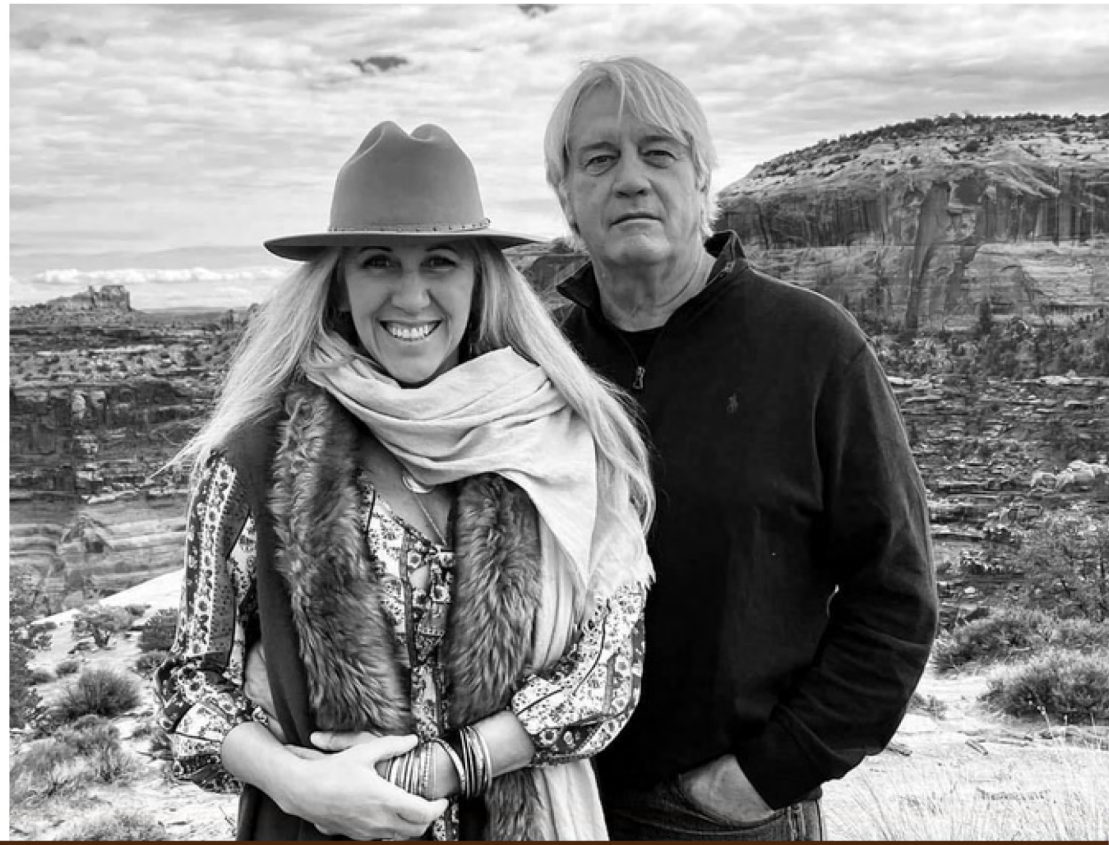
"I feel doubly lucky that I got to see all of the world, and yet one of my favorite places in the world is this tiny, tucked-away little Wild West town in the Badlands," she says.

Emily met her partner of more than a decade, Rolf Sletten, in Medora in 2011. *"When you talk about Medora being home – Rolf is home, for me."*

Most recently, Emily and Rolf completely renovated a historic log cabin that TRMF Founder Harold Schafer had built in the 1960s. *"Together, we're so invested in this place and its people and its history."*

And while she'll never tire of discovering new corners of the globe, Walter says calling Medora her home brings her an important sense of calm.

"We still drive from Bismarck into Medora," she says. *"And when we hit Painted Canyon, the heavens open up and the angels sing. It's still that beautiful, to me."*



Emily Walter & Rolf Sletten together in the Badlands.



The brand-new Hole #8.
Par 4.

Bully Pulpit™ Golf Course

So Much New in 2022



The brand-new Hole #12.
Par 5.

After a year of diligent work to secure the long-term future of Bully Pulpit Golf Course, golfers have much to look forward to in the coming season – including two brand-new holes and an improved, championship-level experience.

"After being a par 69 course in 2021, we're excited to bring par up to 71 this year," says Clubhouse Manager and PGA Head Golf Professional Patrick Rominger. *"That's thanks to two brand-new holes that we're really proud of."*

First is the new #8: a par 4 that will test players' strategic skills. *"It's a tight tee shot,"* Patrick says. *"And golfers will have to use a shorter club as they approach the green."*

"#8 also has a really great Badlands backdrop from the green," he adds.

The new par 5 #12 is all about risk versus reward. *"If you're aggressive off the tee, you can cut the corner off,"* says General Manager Kirby Scharmann. *"But some of the native grasses in that area could get you into trouble."*

Golfers can expect a smoother ride in 2022: more than half of Bully Pulpit's cart paths have been upgraded from asphalt to concrete. *"It should make for a more pleasant ride between holes,"* Patrick says. *"And it helps us prolong the lifespan of our carts!"* Additional cart path upgrades will be made next offseason.

Part of the championship-level experience, Patrick says, is making sure every hole is challenging but fair. *"For that reason, we're taking time this summer to rework Hole #16,"* he explains. *"The view is beautiful, but the green has settled in such a way that it doesn't always play fair."* Players can expect Hole #16 to return in 2023.

For now, our crew is excited about the state of Bully Pulpit for the year ahead thanks to some timely late winter moisture. *"We worked hard to prep the turf for a strong spring,"* says Superintendent Kyle Fick. *"If this trend continues, our guests will be in for a rewarding experience this season."*

Kirby puts it this way with a smile: *"It's going to be a great summer of 'good walks spoiled,' as the saying goes."*

Meet Our New General Manager!



Kirby Scharmann in the Bully Pulpit Golf Course Pro Shop.

It might surprise you to learn that some of Theodore Roosevelt's most iconic words apply perfectly to the role of Golf Course General Manager:

"Do what you can, with what you have, where you are."

"That's exactly what I'm doing at Bully Pulpit," says **Kirby Scharmann,** who stepped into the role of GM in fall of 2021. *"Creating the best experience for every golfer that I can."*

Kirby comes to Bully Pulpit Golf Course with decades of golf management experience, including 35 years in Lake Havasu, Arizona. *"I traded 115-degree days in summer for four seasons a year in Medora,"* he says.

He says there's nothing quite like the reward of hitting the perfect shot down the fairway – and the historic Badlands are an ideal backdrop for a great round of golf.

"The course has a really interesting blend of design characteristics," he says. *"Between the elevation changes and the iconic scenery."*

"The more we talk about it, the more I get the itch to go out and golf!" he laughs.



Thanks to our friends at Midco and an anonymous TRMF donor, kids 17 and under can golf for **free** at Bully Pulpit more than ever before!

Sunday through Thursday - all day
Friday and Saturday - after 3:00 PM
One paying adult must accompany each junior player.

"Midco is thrilled to see so many young people in Medora benefit from the opportunity to participate in golf this summer."

– Paige Pearson Meyer
Director of Corporate Communications at

MIDCO

Theodore Roosevelt™ MEDORA FOUNDATION

Medora EXPLORE IT. ADORE IT. | Medora Musical | Bully Pulpit Golf Course

Our Vision

We connect people to historic Medora for **positive, life-changing experiences.**

Our Mission

PRESERVE the experience of the badlands, the historic character of Medora and the values and heritage of Theodore Roosevelt and Harold Schafer;

PRESENT opportunities for our guests to be educated and inspired through interpretive programs, museums and attractions that focus on the Old West, our patriotic heritage, and the life of Theodore Roosevelt in the badlands;

SERVE the traveling public, providing for their comfort while visiting historic Medora, the Badlands and Theodore Roosevelt National Park.

Our Values

Have **fun**.
Show **respect** for people and place.
Live life with an **ownership** mentality.
Always be **grateful**.
Promote **sales**.

Bringing the TRMF Vision to Life

POSITIVE, LI

"We finally visited all 50 states in 2019. That's how we discovered Medora. We fell in love with it! It's like stepping into a history book – and the scenery is just breathtaking. **Now we're 'green vester' volunteers!"**

– Glenn & Betty Jones
Volunteers from North Carolina

"I tell my friends who have never been to Medora that I live in a town with six streets (it's a saying in my country). **But I can see the whole world from there**."

– Nelly Stoeva
Medora Housekeeper from Bulgaria

FE-CHANGING EXPERIENCES





"We became engaged on a hike at Painted Canyon in the moonlight! And **we had a "four-month honeymoon" at the *Medora Musical***, we were married two days before rehearsals began for the 2007 season."

– Levi & Bethany Andrist
Medora Musical Alumni from Bismarck, N.D.





"My stay at the Rough Riders Hotel last summer was first-class! I think the Medora Foundation is doing out-of-the-box thinking to make Medora a destination. That hard work doesn't go unnoticed. We're feeling it. **The spirit of the West is a real thing!"**

– Katie Dilse
Guest from Scranton, N.D.

*What's your Medora story? Email it to **timo@medora.com,** and your positive, life-changing experience could appear in the next issue of Notes From the Trail.*

Theodore Roosevelt MEDORA FOUNDATION

Medora · Medora Musical · Bully Pulpit Golf Course

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Front: The view from the tee box of Hole #1 at Bully Pulpit Golf Course.
Back: Overlooking Hole #14.

Photos by Chris Wheeler