

NOTES FROM THE TRAIL

A Publication of the Theodore Roosevelt Medora Foundation



SPRING 2024



Theodore Roosevelt
MEDORA FOUNDATION

Medora
EXPLORE IT. ADORE IT.

Medora Musical

Bully Pulpit
GOLF COURSE

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FROM THE DESK OF RANDY HATZENBUHLER

Medora Musical, Momentum and Membership

Last fall we selected RWS to produce the *Medora Musical*. RWS has big shoes to fill. For several decades we have enjoyed working with Curt Wollan and his Stage West Minneapolis-based production team.

On March 4th, a group of twenty-seven individuals from North Dakota traveled to New York City to attend a workshop version of the 2024 *Medora Musical* at the RWS studios. Ever since that day, we have been eagerly anticipating the opening night of the 2024 *Medora Musical*, which is scheduled for June 5th. The show's core elements, which include faith, family, and freedom, remain unchanged.

We were thrilled with the performance. The music and choreography had us singing along, cheering, and emotionally moved. They honored the traditions of the show and found ways to make it feel new. Joe Wiegand as Theodore Roosevelt will be a cohost! Kids will love Sherrif Bear's new friend, Prairie Rose. One of the lead male vocalists, Karter Dolan is from Bismarck, ND! Bill Sorensen returns to the show as the opening variety act June 5th – July 8th.

Momentum is building in Medora. Last fall Million Dollar Quartet filled the streets of Medora for six weeks. This winter and spring, the first seven performances at the Old Town Hall included "Starlets" and "Cash vs King" – all shows sold out. May 10th-11th, we still have tickets available for the Floras, Americana and Gospel songs by a talented husband wife duo. May 17th-18th, members of the University of North Dakota, bring Broadway to the Badlands.

Medora's fan base is among the most loyal and supportive anywhere. We appreciate you and love being able to serve you during your visits to Medora. It amazes us how many people see the *Medora Musical* multiple times a summer. These people have discovered a secret – that every time you see the show, you notice something new, and you enjoy it more each time.

We invite you to become a Rough Rider member and select the benefit that includes two season passes so you can come see the *Medora Musical* multiple times this summer.

The accountant in me likes keeping track of things. This marks the 60th edition of the *Medora Musical*. It is my 36th season. 4.8 million guests have seen the show. Laurie and I will celebrate our 43rd anniversary on June 5th.

We will be at the show on June 5th - we hope you will join us!

See you in Medora,

Randy
President & CEO

The Development Team

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



**Randy Hatzenbuhler,
President & CEO**

Randy is from Mandan, ND, with a BS in accounting and CPA credentials. He and his wife Laurie of 43 years,

enjoy traveling and playing Yahtzee and Randy enjoys getting in a round of golf or a good book when he can. Joining TRMF in 1988 as controller, he initially made a three-year commitment but found himself drawn to Medora's charm, staying for 36 years. From the influential leadership of figures like Harold and Sheila Schafer and Rod and Sandy Tjaden to the dedication of colleagues such as Denis Joyce, John Hild, and BJ Ridl, he has been inspired by the commitment of the Medora community.

Throughout his tenure, he has been involved in various innovative projects, from launching the Volunteer Program to navigating through floods and operating during COVID. His favorite aspect of the job is witnessing the tangible impact Medora has on visitors, whether through acts of kindness or grand productions like the *Medora Musical*. And of course, selling popcorn adds to the joy of the job.



**Daniel Gannarelli,
Development Director**

Originally from Rugby, ND, Daniel has called Medora home for a decade, after graduating from the University of

North Dakota. His fiancé, Anna Friedt, is from Dickinson, and their wedding is planned for this August. Daniel's favorite part of the job is witnessing the joy of philanthropy in action – whether it's receiving a gift or sharing how it positively impacts our guests. As a mentor of his once said, "*Giving is Living!*"

Reflecting on his decade in Medora, one standout memory he recalls is the chaos of a thunderstorm during a Veterans Day celebration. Despite flooding and a packed Pitchfork Steak Fondue, the show had to go on at the *Medora Musical*. With an all hands on deck approach, the team managed to hand dry 2,800 seats in time to welcome the show's evening crowd. This was a memorable demonstration of the true spirit of Medora – coming together to deliver unforgettable experiences to thousands.



**Mike Kraemer,
Major Gift Officer**

Mike grew up in Mandan, ND, and pursued his education in Religion at Olivet Nazarene University. He was ordained in 2002. Mike

shares his life with his wife, Latifah, and three children, all of whom share his passion for Medora. Together, they enjoy hiking, camping, and hunting in the beautiful badlands during their free time.

Growing up, Mike's family trips to Medora were always filled with adventure, from hiking in the badlands to enjoying the *Medora Musical*. As an adult, he wanted to pass on these cherished experiences to his own family, finding joy in creating lasting memories in Medora.

His favorite part of his job is meeting people from all over the state and hearing their heartfelt Medora stories, fueling his gratitude for contributing to the legacy of faith, family, and freedom in Medora for future generations.

In the next Notes from the Trail we will introduce you to the support staff of the development team.

UNDER HAROLD'S HAT

This story from the Bismarck Tribune, December 24, 1955, is one of many that showcase Harold Schafer's Generosity

Christmas came early this year for 15 Slope area families, but although the date was early, the holiday is one of the brightest in many years.

Presents at each home were the same. In every family there was a little girl who for years had longed for a new bicycle all her own but family finances were such that a present was beyond all hope of fulfillment.

Yet, thanks to the generosity of a Bismarck businessman, each of those little girls has a new bicycle and had it in time to ride before the heavy snows made it almost impossible.

The bicycle arrived through a chain of circumstances such that it would almost appear that old Santa Claus himself was behind the scenes with a guiding hand.

The project started when the businessman called The Tribune's Browsing Around columnist, Jack Case, and asked him to run in the column a "give-away" item of a girl's bicycle the businessman's children had outgrown. This request had to be refused, because of a column policy that only pets shall be giveaway items.

This, however, didn't end the plan. The man then offered to give a new girl's bicycle to every little girl who really appeared to deserve one if an item were run offering the bicycle.

This was done, but the item was so worded that it would appear that only one bike was available. It asked readers if they knew of a little girl who wanted and needed a new bicycle but couldn't afford one, and suggested that if letteres were written telling of the circumstances, the little girl involved MIGHT get a pleasant surprise.



FIFTEEN LETTERS came in, none of which were written by the girls themselves. Some came from parents who wanted but couldn't afford such a present for their daughters, others came from older brothers or sisters. But most came from warmhearted neighbors and in one case, a landlord, who took time to write a letter in hopes of bringing a little girl happiness.

None of them, of course realized that the situation was such that every deserving letter would result in what turned out to be the event of a young lifetime for the girls involved.

Time was consumed waiting for letters, reading them and then waiting for the bicycles to arrive, and the delay was enough so even those who had written the letters had almost forgotten them.

THEN BEGAN a chain of events that was repeated over a 600-mile route covering a large portion of central North Dakota. A delivery truck would pull up to a modest home, farmhouse or maybe a school building, depending on the time of day. The driver would inquire for a little girl by name, say, "Here is your new bicycle" and drive away without identifying the donor or the person who had written the letter that brought the gift.

This was repeated 15 times, and in most cases the bicycle came as a complete surprise, even to the family involved. Many of the little girls were literally speechless with joy and were typified by one at Solen who could only repeat "Can I go back into the schoolhouse now?"

From Solen on a series of trips lasting several days the truck, (also paid for by the bicycle donor), went to Elgin, New Salem, Stanton, Center, Hazen, Dodge, Wilton, Turtle Lake, Underwood, and Napoleon. It also made three stops in Bismarck.

AT ELGIN, the little girl was called out of her class room and could only say after viewing the gleaming bicycle, "Aw you're kidding!"

At Hazen, the recipient lived on a road that that day was virtually impassable and so the bike was left with her grandfather who vowed, "I'll take it to her tonight if I have to walk out with it."

At Dodge, the driver and his helper stopped in a café for a cup of coffee before making the delivery. They attracted the attention of a local man who asked their business in town. When he was told the object was to give away a new bicycle, the man answered scornfully, "Maybe I'd better put my name on one."

He was the most surprised man in town a few minutes later when he came home and found that the bike was intended for his daughter.

IN ANOTHER TOWN, it went to a handicapped child whose mother was also largely confined to a wheel chair and at Center it went to a little farm girl with more than a mile to walk to work.

Only sad note came at Underwood where the intended recipient had moved to Minnesota. There the man wrote the letter and was contacted and suggested another little girl who was equally deserving.

**"I was married to the real Santa Claus."
-Sheila Schafer**



During the trip, the truck ploughed many tortuous miles of muddy roads, but the drivers never uttered a word of complaint. It was one trip they were really enjoying, regardless of the difficulty.

Hardest part of the project was to avoid identifying the donor, who had specified that he was not to be known, and to convince the little girls (and their parents) that the bicycles really belonged where they were delivered and were not part of some underhanded scheme.

THE ONLY REWARD the man who gave the bicycles will receive will be in knowing he made a lot of people happy, and in reading the letters they wrote to be forwarded to him. They were much more eloquent than were the words of thanks a surprised little girl was able to stammer while gazing starry eyed at her proudest possession.

The feelings of all of them were probably best summed up in the letter of appreciation written by the mother of all the little girl in Center, who wrote in part, "Thanks for the kind deed. May God Bless you. I was shocked stupid too. I didn't even think to ask the men for supper, as they sure could have eaten as the kids were too excited to eat."

2006 Update:

A happy coincidence occurred when Lois Hohimer, McKenzie, ND, met former Governor Ed Schafer. Lois was one of the little girls that received a bike back in 1955.

Though she never really knew who had given her the gift, she had heard of Harold's generosity in other situations and, on a hunch, asked Schafer if it was his dad that had given the bikes away. Schafer remembered the article and was thrilled to discover that Lois still has the bike Harold gave her fifty-one years ago.

2024 Update:

Stop by the Harold Schafer Heritage Center this summer when you are in Medora to see the bike that Lois has since gifted to the Theodore Roosevelt Medora Foundation and will be on display.

Bully Pulpit™ GOLF COURSE



Bully Pulpit Restored Honoring Jack Marquart's Role In Its Success

Steve and Michelle Campbell of Pennsylvania are on a mission to golf 18 holes in all 50 states. Last summer they checked off their 49th state with a round at Bully Pulpit. They told KFVR-TV that it ranks third on their list of best courses, behind courses in Sedona, Arizona, and Princeville, Hawaii. "It's like putting a golf course in the middle of Yellowstone," Michelle said. "It's one of the prettiest we've done."

This year Bully Pulpit is celebrating its 20th anniversary. It was designed by Michael Hurdzan, a renowned golf-course architect, with Jack Marquart taking the lead as project manager for the Theodore Roosevelt Medora Foundation. Hurdzan and Marquart worked as a team to carve Bully Pulpit out of the Badlands with as little disruption to the natural beauty as possible.

Marquart, a Napoleon, ND native who passed away last year, is credited with keeping the budget for building Bully Pulpit down. While most golf courses in the state were moving 1.1 million cubic yards of dirt in their building process, Marquart's value engineering kept Bully Pulpit's number at 75,000. This ensured that donors' contributing to the golf course got the most bang for their buck. The final price tag for Bully Pulpit was \$3.1 million, compared to \$8.5 million for comparable courses being built at the time.

Bully Pulpit was listed on countless "best" lists from the time it opened, but those accolades have waned, so it was time to take a closer look. One of the biggest challenges of maintaining a golf course in the Badlands is the Badlands itself. Weather is everything, and flooding in low areas had also become a challenge. **With the help of generous donors to its Legacy Bully Pulpit campaign, the Theodore Roosevelt Medora Foundation carried out a plan to make Bully Pulpit better than ever.**



Daniel Gannarelli, TRMF director of development, managed the Legacy Bully Pulpit campaign. “Jack was a great mentor to me,” he says, “He was a philosopher and had such a high regard for our mission and those who help bring it to fruition.”

Improvements made possible through the campaign include building flood protection, reconstructing the cart paths and adding GPS to the golf carts. “The GPS installation has been a huge hit with our customers,” says Clarence Sitter, TRMF’s chief operating officer. “To be able to get the yardage from wherever they are, to see where the landmarks are, to get better directions from one hole to the next has been extremely valuable to our guests. They just rave about it.”

Several of the holes have been redone, including Bully Pulpit’s signature #16. Enthusiasts say that Augusta National has its “Amen Corner,” while #16 is Bully Pulpit’s “OMG corner.” Golfers are awed by the beautiful scenery as they tee off high on a rugged bluff, watching their ball sail for what feels like forever to the fairway far below. A new restroom facility and snack shop has also been added on the back nine, as well as landscape cleanup to improve sight lines and enhancements to the irrigation system.

Sitter says 17,676 rounds were played at Bully Pulpit in 2023, the second-best year ever – up 12.4 percent from 2022. “We’re anticipating 17,750 in 2024, and we have 30 tournaments scheduled already,” he says. “We are also very excited about hosting the second Girls Golf Camp with Amy Olson, professional golfer from Fargo. We expect 150 high-school girls to take advantage of this opportunity to improve their game, earn scholarships and learn about leadership. It really fits with our mission of connecting people to Medora for life-changing experiences.”

Marquart would be very proud of that latest development. “When Jack passed away, I was privileged to visit with his family and view some of his keepsakes,” Gannarelli says. “One was the early layout of the golf course, which was very special. But in the middle of it, he had penciled in a golf and leadership camp. Now 20 years later, his vision has been realized.”

Guy Moos, president of Baker Boy in Dickinson, is a Medora supporter and Bully Pulpit fan. “If I want to take family, friends or colleagues for a special treat, I can’t think of anything I enjoy more than Bully Pulpit,” he says. “Taking in the stunning scenery, spotting wildlife around every corner and playing one of the best courses I’ve ever been on – it really is a little slice of heaven.”



Building In The Badlands

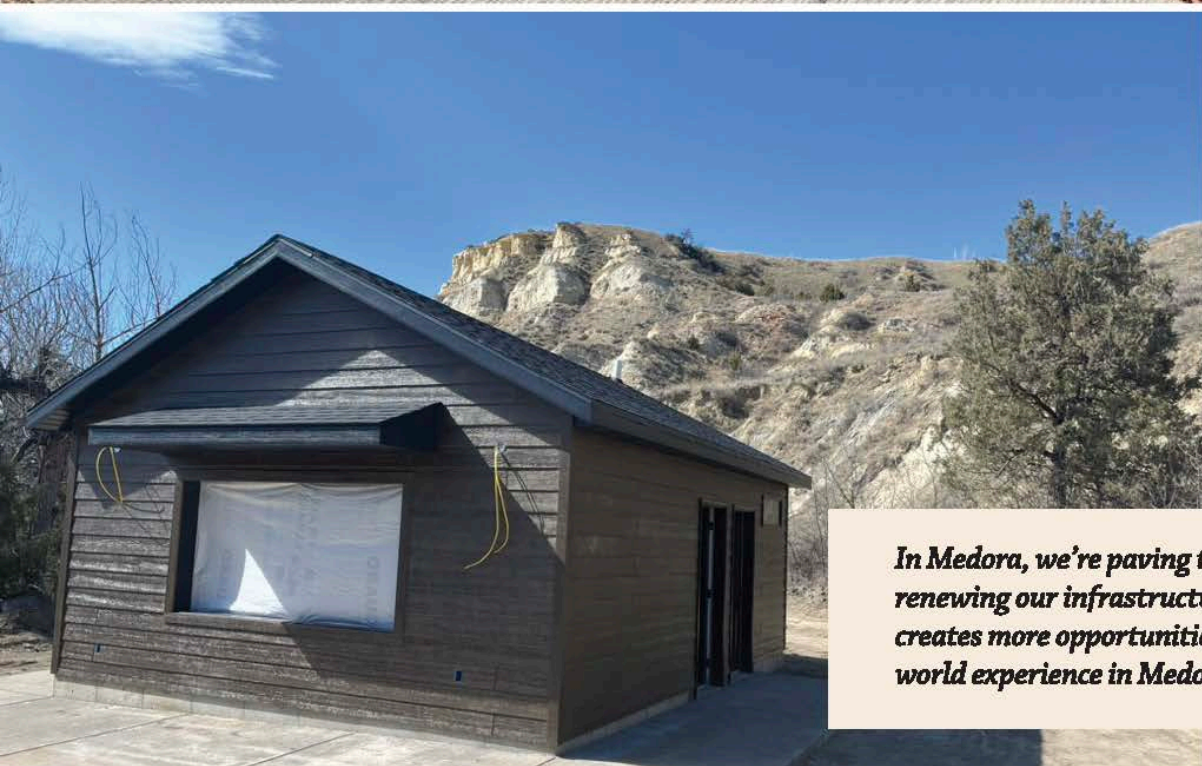
This winter wasn't quite quiet in Medora, we broke out the bulldozers and jackhammers and got to work making magic in Medora. In 2024, we're committed to elevating the guest experience. Whether you're enjoying entertainment downtown or playing a round in the Badlands, you're sure to take notice of the improvements and updates of your Medora favorites.

While word is buzzing about changes to our shows, you may not have heard much about the updates to our venues. One of our most popular downtown spaces, the Town Square Showhall, has been filled with sawdust and hard hats as construction crews got to work on an exciting transformation. Home to our fan-favorite brunch shows, weddings, concerts, and more, the Town Square Showhall is ready to round-up a record-breaking season of events and entertainment.





When you step into the updated Showhall, you'll notice new touches from floor to ceiling. New tiling surrounds the venue's seating space, making the presentation of our brunch arrays and catered meals clean, efficient, and picturesque. Paired with the sparkling tiles you'll find fresh carpeting matching the space's Western aesthetic. If you look up from your toes to the top of the venue, you'll see wooden beams have been altered to offer better views of an updated stage. Beautiful new arches support the structure and add touches of rustic charm. The new architecture blends seamlessly with the original build and frames the Town Square stage in an elegant yet comforting style. Looking past the stage, new dressing rooms have been installed to better host our cast. **These on-site amenities, made possible by a generous gift from John & Cindy Vallely, allow for an improved experience for performers and guests alike.** We invite you to join us for a show this season and enjoy the renovations of this staple Medora structure.



If you prefer to spend your days with a golf club in hand, take a trip to Bully Pulpit Golf Course and enjoy a refreshed round on the best course in the Badlands. Cement has been poured, the foundation layed, and walls installed in the new back nine pit-stop. **Thanks to the Jim and Lynn Arthaud Family on the intersection of holes 13, 14, and 15 you'll find a building tucked away into the Badlands and greens.** Sagebrush Grill North will be serving up a full menu of quick meals, snacks, and refreshments. Golfers can grab a hot sandwich, a cold beer, or any other go-to grub. Plus, we've upgraded from porta-potties to full-service bathrooms.

After stopping by our fresh, new facilities, golfers can travel on updated cart paths to the scenic hole 16, fully playable in 2024. In fact, all 18 holes of our breathtaking course will be fully operational.

In Medora, we're paving the way to decades more of success. Our team is building, renovating, and renewing our infrastructure, programming, and properties. Constructing these tangible changes creates more opportunities for those all-too-important intangible changes guests from around the world experience in Medora.

MORE TO EXPLO



May 10 & 11: The Floras



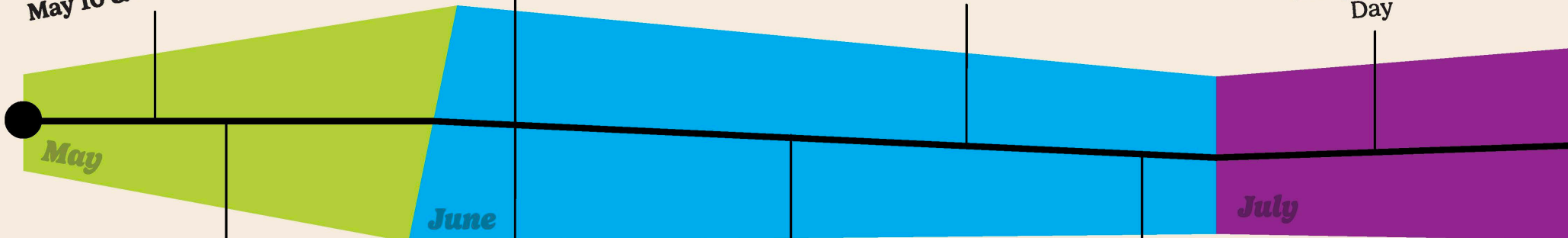
June 5: Medora Musical Opens!



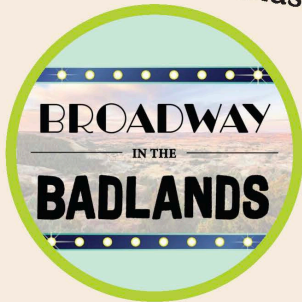
June 15: Medora Gospel Brunch Opens!



July 4: Independence Day



May 17 & 18: Broadway In The Badlands



June 5-19: KIDS FREE!



June 8: The Making of the Medora Musical: An Exclusive Member Pass Holder Event



June 17: Brunch With President Roosevelt Opens!



RE IN MEDORA!



July 12: Bully Spirit Awards a Rough Rider Member Event



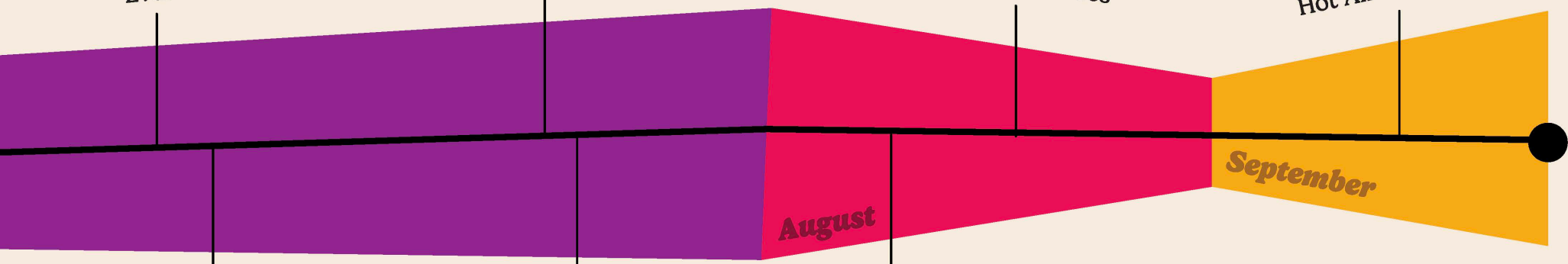
July 19-21: Badlands Chautauqua



August 12: Matt Vee & The Killer Vees



September 8 & 9: Hot Air Balloon Rally



July 14: Veterans and Military Appreciation Day



July 22: Blackhawk



August 3: Maah Daah Hey 100 Bike Race



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



BRUNCH IN MEDORA



How do you take your eggs? Scrambled? Sunny side up? How about with a helping of history? This summer we're introducing a brunch show that will fill you up with invigorating history and the spirit of Roosevelt. Premiering this June 17 at the Town Square Showhall, take a seat, dig into a plate, and enjoy Brunch with President Roosevelt starring Joe Wiegand. We invite you to rise and shine with Roosevelt!

Of course, that's not the only show taking the Showhall stage. The Medora Gospel Brunch will be returning every Wednesday and Friday through Sunday. This year the show will feature a four-piece band and a quintet of singers from the *Medora Musical*. When you take a seat for this famed brunch show, you can expect to hear classic gospel tunes with a great mix of new music and a touch of new talent. Joining some of the stage's new faces is the familiar and beloved Bill Sorensen. North Dakota's greatest showman is returning to the Medora Gospel Brunch to inspire our mornings with a message of humor, hope, and faith.



MORE TO EXPLORE IN MEDORA

After enjoying a performance at the Town Square Showhall, step out to free entertainment and live music on the patio stage. This summer our downtown patio stage will be chock-full of talent from local and regional musicians. Tom Brosseau of Grand Forks, ND returns to the stage with the Great American Folk Show featuring tales and tunes from the prairie. Plus, special guests John Lardinois, Brent Voigt, Vickie Hoffer Hill, and more join Tom on select days. If you're looking to spend an evening wrapped up in timeless melodies and the spirit of the West, take a seat at The Great American Folk Show.

In the afternoon, catch a lineup of excellent entertainers enriching our days with music in Medora. Local musicians Jessie Veeder, Sawdust, Savannah Benz, the 188th Army Band and many more will take the Town Square Wagon Wheel Stage. If you're looking to make some music yourself, step into the spotlight during our weekly Open Mic Nights. Monday nights Marty Sullivan, local musician and open mic expert, will host an evening show of hometown harmonies and talented travelers.

One talented traveler is making the move from Minot to Medora this summer to share his stories, art, and songs on the Andrist Stage. Little ones are invited to gather 'round the campfire with Max Patzner and learn the Medora ABCs - where F is for Fun or Free or maybe Family because this show is the perfect opportunity for free family fun!

The Badlands may be brimming with music, but we're topping things off with a slice of history! New this summer is Walking with the Roosevelts. Theodore and Edith reprisors, Larry and Julia Marple, lead guests on a guided tour through town. Learning about the legendary stories and sagas of Medora has never been more immersive. Where else can you get a history lesson from the characters who made the history?

Medora's summer schedule is bursting with experiences to explore. Book a ticket for a brunch show, listen to live music, jam out with your little ones, or promenade with the president - whatever adventure you choose, you're guaranteed a good time!

A WELL USED MEMBERSHIP

At the Theodore Roosevelt Medora Foundation we are deeply grateful for the support and dedication of our valued business members. Our members play a vital role in fostering the vibrant culture of Medora, from helping us send more people to the *Medora Musical* than ever before to supporting projects and covering everyday expenses.

The summer of 2023 was remarkable, we had 201 business members send 13,941 people to the *Medora Musical* using their season passes. We would like to express our sincere appreciation to every one of our business members, as your commitment helped us fulfill our vision of *creating positive, life-changing experiences* in Medora and preserving the legacy of Theodore Roosevelt, Harold Schafer, and the American West..

We are thrilled to shine a spotlight on one exceptional member: RTC Networks.



"Medora has the slogan "Explore it. Adore it." As a Business Member partner with the TRMF, we get the opportunity to share the magic of Medora with many of our employees and customers. We might be sharing our musical tickets with a customer that has never before had the chance to attend, or with a customer that has had a tradition of attending with their family for generations. Either way, we love being able to help our employees and customers explore, adore and make memories in Medora."

- Shannon Stafslie, Marketing Manager at RTC Networks

201
 Business Members
 sent
13,941
 people to the
Medora Musical

With unparalleled enthusiasm, RTC Networks emerged as our number one user of season passes in 2023. Their support sent an astounding 798 individuals to experience the beauty and magic of the *Medora Musical*.

We asked RTC about their amazing usage of the season passes, and Shannon Stafslieen expressed that it comes down to a love for their team, their customers, and Medora.

As we look ahead to the future and make new memories in Medora, we continue in our commitment to creating a thriving Medora community—one where the arts flourish, history lives on, and the spirit of generosity is felt every day. With the continued support of members, we are confident that we can continue to make a difference in the lives of those who call Medora home and those who are fortunate enough to come explore it and adore it.

Thank you to all our business members for your unwavering support, and congratulations to RTC Networks for your outstanding impact in 2023. Here's to many more years of partnership and shared success.

BUSINESS MEMBERS

Provides support for the TRMF mission. Choose the right tier for your company below:

\$1,000 2 transferable *Medora Musical* season passes + 4 rounds at **Bully Pulpit**

\$2,000 4 transferable *Medora Musical* season passes + 4 rounds at **Bully Pulpit**
 UNLOCKS 15% off golf discount for all employees.

\$4,000 8 transferable *Medora Musical* season passes + 4 rounds at **Bully Pulpit**
 UNLOCKS 15% off golf discount for all employees.

\$1,000 Join with a full 1,000 charitable deduction



If you have questions on memberships, contact us at 701-223-4800 or memberships@medora.com

2024 Medora Musical™

2024 Performance Schedule

SHOW TIMES: ★ Veterans Appreciation

■ 7:30pm ■ 5:30 & 8:30pm ☆ Kids Free Shows
* 5:30 Showing

JUNE

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

JULY

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7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

AUGUST

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

SEPTEMBER

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

Scan this QR code to purchase your Medora Musical Tickets!



Variety Acts



Bill Sorensen
Comedian, Magician,
Showman
June 5 - July 7



Jack Williams
Award-Winning
Ventriloquist
July 9 - August 4



David DiMuzio
World-Famous
Juggler
August 6 - September 7



Since the early days of the Theodore Roosevelt Medora Foundation, our friends at Touchstone Energy Cooperatives have supported the Medora Musical. For 17 years and counting, they have been the exclusive sponsors of our Burning Hills Singers!

“Concern for community is one of our cooperative principles. So many of our members enjoy the Musical and all that Medora has to offer every year. We take great pride in supporting the Musical, doing our part to ensure it sees success for many years to come.”

-Jeremy Woeste
Basin Electric Power Cooperative



Touchstone Energy®
Cooperative

The power of human connections®

Thank you to our area Touchstone Energy Cooperatives for sponsoring the Burning Hills Singers since 2007!

Basin Electric Power Cooperative • Burke-Divide Electric Cooperative
Central Power Electric Cooperative • Goldenwest Electric Cooperative
KEM Electric Cooperative • Lower Yellowstone Electric Cooperative
McKenzie Electric Cooperative • McLean Electric Cooperative
Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative • Mountrail-Williams Electric Cooperative
North Dakota Assn of Electric Cooperatives • Northern Plains Electric Cooperative
Powder River Energy Corporation
Roughrider Electric Cooperative • Slope Electric Cooperative
Southeast Electric Cooperative • Upper Missouri Power Cooperative
Verendrye Electric Cooperative

Impactful Programming

Endowments focused on Families and Veterans Shine in Medora

Medora WISH Endowment Dates:

Kids go free to the *Medora Musical* June 5th - June 18th, July 4th, and the 5:30pm Saturday shows!

Medora Veterans & Active Military Night:

Veterans, reservists, and active military members go free to both July 14 performances!

Men and women of all ages cherish the *Medora Musical*. Children revel in the joyous spectacle, their faces beaming as they watch the Burning Hills Singers dance against the backdrop of the Badlands' sunset. Their hearts beating in rhythm with the ensembles steps while they crunch on buttery popcorn.

Veterans, too, find joy in the *Medora Musical*. They immerse themselves in its patriotic themes, highlighted by the vibrant red, white, and blue fireworks. An event they can share with the whole family. While applause fills the air during regular performances, it's on Veterans Night that tears of reverence and gratitude flow freely.

In 2023, a remarkable 518 Veterans and 12,960 children experienced the *Medora Musical* at no cost to them. Completely free. Thanks to the Medora WISH and Veterans' Day in Medora Endowments.

Yet, Medora is more than numbers and statistics. It is about positive, life-changing experiences. It's about creating magical moments that leave lasting impressions, stirring emotions, and creating moments that last for generations. Both the Medora WISH Endowment and our Annual Veterans free night accomplish this goal.

Kim Koenig, the mother of Medora WISH recipient Alyssa, shared the profound impact of their experience. "Her eyes lit up when she met the cast of the *Medora Musical*. What a special experience for our family."

In Medora, we honor heroes, paying tribute to their valor and selflessness. Our Veterans Night is a heartfelt gesture of gratitude and respect to those who have sacrificed so much for our nation.

Join us in celebrating these wonderful evenings. Get your tickets quick as these shows sell out fast. You won't want to miss the energy from the performers and crowd on these nights—or the savory popcorn.



IF WE BUILD IT, THEY WILL COME

Event barn, cabins to fill growing demand



Who can imagine a more picturesque setting for a wedding than the beautiful Badlands?

What better place for a corporate retreat than amid the peaceful stillness that allowed Theodore Roosevelt to envision his future? Where else can a family gather for a reunion that offers something to do for everyone from toddler to senior?



There is no better place than Medora, of course, but there isn't enough capacity to meet the growing demand. That gap has taken a giant step toward being filled with Theodore Roosevelt Medora Foundation's plan to build an Event Barn and Cabin facility, just southeast of the scenic Bully Pulpit Golf Course.

Shaped like a rustic barn, the large event space will have room to accommodate a couple hundred guests, kitchen facilities, bride and groom/breakout rooms, and plenty of restroom facilities. A scenic outdoor chapel space and firepit area are on one side of the barn, while a pond and bridge on the other side will provide perfect photo opportunities or a place for quiet solitude. Multi-unit cabins for overnight stays will surround the event barn and a campsite is planned across the road.



The Event Barn will be on the Custer Trail Ranch, where five major military operations once camped, including General George Armstrong Custer on his way to the Battle of Little Big Horn. Formerly known as the Eaton Ranch, it is also recognized as the first dude ranch in the United States. "The Eaton brothers, who were friends with Theodore Roosevelt, hosted a steady stream of city slickers longing to experience cowboy life," says Rolf Sletten, historian and TRMF board member. "Eventually they started charging people and turned it into a business."

The project wouldn't be possible without the support of today's successful business leaders. Bully Spirit Award winners, Mike and Peggy Bullinger, made the lead gift of \$1.5 million to jumpstart the campaign.



The Bullingers believe in the future of Medora, as evidenced by their generosity toward this project as well as several others, including Little Bully Pulpit mini-golf course, the Old Town Hall Theater, the Life Skills Center and Bully Pulpit.

While discussing their philosophy about philanthropy, Mike and Peggy joke lightheartedly, "You can't take it with you." But, quickly zeroing in on the question, Mike says, "Medora is where we primarily focus our sponsorships. You get to see the bricks and mortar; you see the benefit to the community and to North Dakota."

A former TRMF board member, Peggy says, "When you give money to different places, you often don't see the results; it just goes into administration. Medora spends the money wisely." Mike adds, "We especially like this project because it's about bringing people together. Plus we like being involved with the people of Medora."

"It's humbling how generous Mike and Peggy are, and we certainly appreciate their trust in us," says Randy Hatzenbuehler, president of TRMF. "Their gift will help bring this vision of a wonderful event space to fruition. It's been needed for quite some time, so the additional cabins will also help us address that need."

Thank you Mike and Peggy Bullinger family for making the lead gift to this project!

Grain Gains Project Traction

Unique gift helps the TRMF fulfill mission.

There's a line in Scripture that says "a grain of wheat must fall to the ground and die before it can yield a rich harvest." Farmers put their faith in this each spring as they plant their crops and anxiously watch over them during the growing season. Sometimes the crop yield is lean; sometimes it's good; occasionally it's fantastic and grain bins burst at the seams.

When that happens, farm families make decisions about what to do with the fruits of their labor. Perhaps this is the year to buy a new piece of machinery or remodel the farmhouse, or maybe give more to the church or one of their favorite nonprofits, such as the Theodore Roosevelt Medora Foundation.

That's exactly what the Ethie Hoovestol family of New Salem, ND, recently decided to do with 108,000 bushels of their wheat harvest. Longtime Medora lovers, they contacted the TRMF and asked if it would be possible to make a gift of this kind. It didn't take long to get back to them with the answer – absolutely! The TRMF worked with grain elevators in Sterling and New Salem to take care of the details and made the process seamless for the family.

According to Daniel Gannarelli, director of development, making gifts of this nature boils down to three things: the right project, the right amount, and the right timing. It was the first time since the Foundation's inception in 1986 that someone had asked about donating grain. Gifts of mineral wealth and appreciated securities are more common, but the gift of wheat has the same benefits. It's one of those win-win scenarios: the family makes a unique gift that supports something close to their hearts, helps with their tax situation, the dollars stay in North Dakota, and the gift goes directly to a project that helps the TRMF fulfill its vision of *connecting people to Medora through positive, life-changing experiences*.

The Hoovestol family's donation will go toward something they believe in – the Event Barn and Cabins, planned to be constructed near Bully Pulpit Golf Course soon. There is a growing demand in Medora for more space for weddings, meetings and other events as well as for more guest accommodations.

Gannarelli says the Hoovestols' gift alongside the Bullingers' gift is a giant step forward to reaching that goal.



Theodore Roosevelt™ MEDORA FOUNDATION

Medora.
EXPLORE IT. ADORE IT.

Medora Musical.

Bully Pulpit.
GOLF COURSE

Our Executive Team

Randy Hatzenbuhler, President and CEO

Emily Kym, Chief Financial Officer

Clarence Sitter, Chief Operating Officer

Daniel Gannarelli, Development Director

Nate Huntington, Chief Projects, Facilities, and Strategy Officer

Lyubomyr Shkandriy, Hospitality Director

Kinley Slauter, Properties and Attractions Director

Sheila Strommen, Human Resources Director

Kaelee Wallace, Marketing and Communications Director

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**.



HOME TO NORTH DAKOTA

Written by Jewel Gray,
Medora Office Manager

Lyubchik, my Ukrainian-American husband, sat at the empty dining room table with just a laptop and a worried look on his face. He was watching the news. On the screen, a politician spoke in quick Russian about their planned takeover of his country of birth. At the same time, he was reading reports of bombs being dropped all over the country. It was February 22, 2022. Russia was invading Ukraine. The war had begun.

For the next couple of hours, we watched the invasion unfold on social media websites such as Twitter to get real-time information, though we'd never used them before. There, I saw videos of bombs being dropped on the city I had lived in for four years with my husband. Though I'm a North Dakota girl, it felt like my home was being bombed. For Lyubchik, it was.

Lyubchik and his parents, Igor and Marina, were safe in Medora with me, but the rest of the family was in Ivano-Frankivsk, Ukraine. Russia invaded Ukraine early in the morning, catching the sleeping country by surprise. As such, Lyubchik's sisters, Ira and Sofia, were unaware they were in danger. Though we were on the other side of the world, he was the one to wake his sisters and let them know their country was at war.

Upon hearing the news, Sofia, his younger sister, took her daughter to find safety. She lifted the door to their underground cellar and climbed down the steep ladder to sit in the dark musty hole among the pickle jars. A makeshift underground shelter. Sofia held her daughter close as the bombs exploded only half a mile away from their Dacha (cottage). We wouldn't hear from her again for hours.

Lyubchik's older sister, Ira, was traveling for work. Her first thoughts were if her husband and two sons were safe and how she could get back to them. They needed to be together. Lyubchik guided Ira home, telling her which roads were safe, which were not, and where the bombs were falling. He helped her reach her family.

My mother and father-in-law were sleeping and unaware of the invasion. We hadn't wanted to wake them until we knew more; it felt right to give them a couple of hours of peace. A gift. However, the time had come. We woke them up in the middle of the night with the news no one ever thinks they'll hear – their daughters were temporarily safe, but their country was at war. Worry showed in Igor's usually stoic eyes, but Marina broke my heart. She wailed for her children.

After speaking with their daughters, they fell back into a fitful sleep. Eventually, so did we. The next morning, I checked my phone with fear in my heart, wondering if there was anything left of Ukraine.

Five Months Later

I don't speed. However, my right foot felt heavy on the gas pedal. Marina, of all people, encouraged this because her daughters were coming home to Medora. The excitement was palpable. We had missed the chance to meet them at the Bismarck airport but despite leaving at separate times, were catching up.

Though we couldn't see them yet, we imagined Ira and Sofia's reactions to seeing America for the first time. How they must have smiled as they witnessed the beauty of the badlands opening from flat ground into the stunning panorama that never fails to surprise first-time visitors. How their children must have beamed with wonder at the new country.

Despite the urge to speed, we made it home safely. Finally, I watched Marina, who only months before had cried in the middle of the night, embrace her daughters. They were safe. Tears streamed down her face—down all our faces. We laughed, hugged, and toured Medora while they tried American foods like peanut butter for the first time.

Yet, the moment was tinted with sorrow. Ira, Sofia, and their children had come alone. Their husbands were in Ukraine, unable to leave its borders. They were prepared to fight if needed, but more prepared to be with their families. We hoped and waited for them.

18 Months Later

Ira was working, so I had the honor of picking up her husband from the airport. I got to watch his face as I drove him home, how he noted that even the trees in North Dakota were different from those in Ukraine. How he wanted to learn every English word as fast as he could, everything from sky to butte, to simple words like grass.

I drove him home to Medora to his waiting wife and sons. I saw their tears of joy as, after a year and a half they were finally reunited. It was beautiful, emotional, but bittersweet. Sofia was alone with her daughter in the United States. Her husband still couldn't leave the country.

21 Months Later

The dining room table was filled with Ukrainian delicacies like perogies, jelly meat, pickled tomatoes, open-face sandwiches, vodka, and wine. We were celebrating a birthday, Ukrainian style. I looked at each person there: Lyubchik and our children, Igor and Marina, Ira, her husband, and their sons, Sofia, her daughter and, at long last, Sofia's husband. His now four-year-old daughter's eyes twinkled with joy as she stared up at her father for the first time in almost two years. Half of her life.

Looking at them, I felt something unexpected. I felt relief. As if a weight that had been there since the beginning of the war had been lifted from my shoulders. We all looked lighter. The fear and anxiety hidden behind their eyes were gone. We'd made it.

The war in Ukraine is still happening. We still listen to the news every day to see how our friends are doing. To see how some friends are dying. To see Ukraine with its beautiful cobblestone streets and European-style buildings being destroyed. Our lives have been changed forever. Yet, Medora turned a difficult experience into something positive. Life-changing. Now, we are together. We have all come home to North Dakota.



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