

NOTES FROM THE TRAIL

A Publication of the Theodore Roosevelt Medora Foundation



WINTER 2026



Theodore Roosevelt
MEDORA FOUNDATION

Medora

Medora Musical

Bully Pulpit
GOLF COURSE

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HELP MEDORA BECOME #1

Medora has been nominated by Parade for America's Favorite Small Town. We need your help to bring this honor home. Cast your vote by scanning the QR code below, share with friends and family, and spread the word. Every vote helps us shine a little brighter and gives us the chance to connect more people to Historic Medora for *positive, life-changing experiences.*

VOTE DAILY





TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 4 | From the Desk of Clarence Sitter
- 7 | Celebrating the Heart of Medora
- 8 | Medora Strikes Gold
- 9 | Giving Hearts Day
- 10 | Medora Spring Concert Series 2026
- 13 | Be Part of Medora's Next Chapter
- 14 | For the Girls
- 15 | More to Explore in Medora
- 16 | Medora Continues to Rise
- 17 | Thank You
- 18 | Meet Our Development Team

MEDORA'S OLD FASHIONED COWBOY CHRISTMAS

PUT ON BY MEDORA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

For 30 years, Medora's Old Fashioned Cowboy Christmas has brought extra magic to Medora during the Christmas season. In 2025, the town came alive as the community gathered for horse-drawn wagon rides, festive fireworks, visits with Santa, food at Eats on the Street, a community dinner, and many other activities. It was a weekend full of western charm and holiday joy!

*Left photo: Volunteer helping with Eats on the Street at Rough Riders Gift
Front cover photo: Guests in front of horse-drawn wagon*



FROM THE DESK OF CLARENCE SITTER

MEMORIES IN THE MAKING FOR AN UNFORGETTABLE 2026

As the calendar turns to 2026 and winter activities are in full swing, there is something special about this time of year in Medora. The days are growing longer. The sun lingers just a little later over the Badlands. You can feel it — the quiet but unmistakable anticipation of spring and another year to make memories for the people in North Dakota and around the world.

While Mother Nature may take her time bringing warmer days, the Theodore Roosevelt Medora Foundation team is already hard at work preparing for all the possibilities this year will bring. Behind the scenes, planning and preparation are in motion to ensure that 2026 becomes a historic year filled with meaningful experiences and lasting memories for everyone who visits Medora.

The anticipation we feel each year is energizing — but this year feels uniquely different in a significant way. For several years, we have been planning, building, and working toward the milestones that 2026 will hold: celebrating the United States' 250th birthday on July 4, the grand opening of the Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library around that same historic date, and the 40th anniversary of the Theodore Roosevelt Medora Foundation on April 2.

On a personal note, my second child, Laura — one of my five children — will graduate from high school this spring. Watching her prepare for the next chapter of her life reminds me of this season in Medora. There is excitement, a little nervous energy, and tremendous hope. Like Laura stepping into her future, Medora in 2026 feels full of promise and possibility.

For generations, Medora has been a place where memories take root. A child's first *Medora Musical*. A sunrise tee time at Bully Pulpit. A stroll around town with an ice cream cone in hand. A week at camp that shapes a young life. These are the moments that become traditions — passed from one generation to the next.

And in 2026, Medora is poised to make history.

We are expecting a visit from the President of the United States on July 1, placing our small town on a national stage during an already historic year. The opening of the Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library will draw visitors from across the nation and around the world, honoring the legacy of a leader shaped by this very landscape.

Growth is visible throughout the community. Hotel 1883 will open its doors, welcoming guests and families in a new way, complementing the cherished experiences at the Rough Riders Hotel and the Badlands Motel — all set against the stunning backdrop of the Badlands. Three new tiny cabins at the Medora Campground will offer cozy stays under wide western skies. The Ranch House at The Ranch at Bully Pulpit will open this year, with the Event Barn planned for 2027, adding even more opportunities for gathering and celebration.

We are proud to host the ND Governor's Cup in 2026 and to serve as the site for the International Roundup Event in partnership with North Dakota Tourism — opportunities to showcase Medora's beauty and hospitality to regional, national, and global audiences.

Even thoughtful updates, such as new bathrooms at the Town Square Showhall, reflect our continued commitment to improving the experience for every guest who walks our boardwalks.

But what will truly define 2026 will not simply be ribbon cuttings or distinguished visitors. It will be the memories made here. The children inspired at the *Medora Musical* or inside the Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library. The couple celebrating during Romance in the Badlands. The family hiking in Theodore Roosevelt National Park or seeing a bison for the very first time. Years from now, people will say, "I was there in 2026."

As spring approaches and anticipation builds, we invite you to be part of this historic year. Come hear the music! Come witness history!! Come experience something timeless in a year that will be remembered!! And come home to Medora in 2026!!!

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Clarence Sitter". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Clarence" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Sitter".

Clarence Sitter, President & CEO, Theodore Roosevelt Medora Foundation



CELEBRATING *the heart* OF MEDORA

2025 VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION EVENT

Medora is a well-loved and well-maintained place. A lot of hard work goes into keeping the streets and pools clean, the boardwalks safe, and shoulder season activities running. From working at the *Medora Musical* in the summer to helping retail prepare for eager shoppers in the spring, volunteers help keep Medora ALIVE year-round.

Every year, the Theodore Roosevelt Medora Foundation hosts a year-end volunteer appreciation event to honor our dedicated volunteers. This year, the theme was Falling for Medora, a perfect choice since the event took place in October, when the trees were vibrant with fall colors. Many attendees could agree they have “fallen for Medora”.

This year, TRMF employees were asked to write why they love our volunteers. Some of the comments included: “Their positivity and kindness!”, “Being willing to help wherever and whenever needed”, and “Willing to go above and beyond”.

Volunteers also had the opportunity to write why they volunteer in Medora, with some of them writing: “Meet new friends”, “Love Medora”, and “Love meeting people from all over and sharing Medora with them”. A few volunteers chose to

share their Medora story, “15 years ago, we came and met green vesters and chose to apply and have been here every year but one since.”

A highlight of the event was a fun video of Sheriff Bear, Prairie Rose, Joe Wiegand as Teddy, and Chief Revenue Officer Daniel Gannarelli. The skit followed them around as they learned how to become volunteers in Medora, doing tasks such as mowing the lawns, staining fences, placing tee boxes at Bully Pulpit Golf Course, and more!

After dinner and remarks from some of the TRMF executive team, the volunteers enjoyed an evening at the fall show, Cash vs. The King.

TRMF appreciates the people who come year after year, working hard to preserve and grow Medora for the next generation.

Do you want to know more about the volunteer program? Visit ***Foundation.Medora.com/Volunteer*** to learn more.

MEDORA STRIKES GOLD

...AGAIN IN 2025!

The entertainment in Medora is incredible, and the *Medora Musical* truly IS the Greatest Show in the West. It is no wonder that the *Medora Musical* and Medora have been going strong for over 60 years.

In 2024, Medora and the Theodore Roosevelt Medora Foundation were honored with a gold Magellan Award for best Overall Family Destination. The Magellan Award is bestowed based on submissions to Travel Weekly, one of the top travel magazines in the United States.

Now, for a second year in a row, Medora has struck gold! Named the top Overall Family Destination in 2025, TRMF and Medora's entertainment are once again award-winning, and it is much deserved. Following on the heels of a historic season, the 60th Anniversary, this win feels special for all those involved.

RWS Global submitted both applications for these awards, honoring not only their hard work but also the legacy of the *Medora Musical*, Medora Gospel Brunch, and more!

Tickets for the 2026 *Medora Musical* will go on sale in February! Make sure to follow along as we announce the cast, band, and more in the next edition of Notes From The Trail and on our social media accounts!





FEBRUARY 12, 2026

GIVING HEARTS DAY

GROW THE FRONTIER SPIRIT

February in North Dakota is a special time for philanthropy. Each year, a 24-hour event supporting North Dakota charities is put on by the Dakota Medical Foundation, Impact Foundation, and the Alex Stern Foundation. Giving Hearts Day is the BIGGEST day of philanthropy in North Dakota.

This Giving Hearts Day, February 12, the Theodore Roosevelt Medora Foundation is raising money for a very important project: the Frontier Endowment. Thanks to generous donors, David & Vivian Meiers, all gifts will be matched dollar-for-dollar, up to \$25,000 for this year's Giving Hearts Day.

The Frontier Endowment provides support for the costs associated with promoting the knowledge of the frontier spirit. Educational experiences for youth, including the Medora Cowgirl Camp, Junior Rough Rider program, and more, are the main focuses of the Frontier Endowment. The Endowment also supports attractions and education for the public about the founding and restoration of Medora, such as the Harold Schafer Heritage Center and rodeo-related events.

Western Heritage will be more than a rodeo facility—it represents a way of life the Frontier Endowment is committed to sharing more widely. With recent enhancements to the Junior Rough Rider program, the Endowment is helping more young people discover Medora through *positive, life-changing experiences*. Thanks to program updates and the removal of participation fees, more than 250 children now receive gifts, newsletters, and information about Medora. The community's next generation continues to grow.

MedoraTM Spring CONCERT SERIES 2026

DON'T MISS A BEAT

Springtime is a beautiful time in the Badlands! For the past several years, we have been promoting year-round entertainment. The 2026 Spring Concert Series will feature some incredible tribute concerts, including Here Come the Judds, PIANOMANIA! Rockin' the 1950's with Jared Freiburg, and The Everly Brothers Experience!

Tickets are limited, so book soon! For more information about tickets, special packages, and more, visit Medora.com/Entertainment.

MAKE IT AN EXPERIENCE

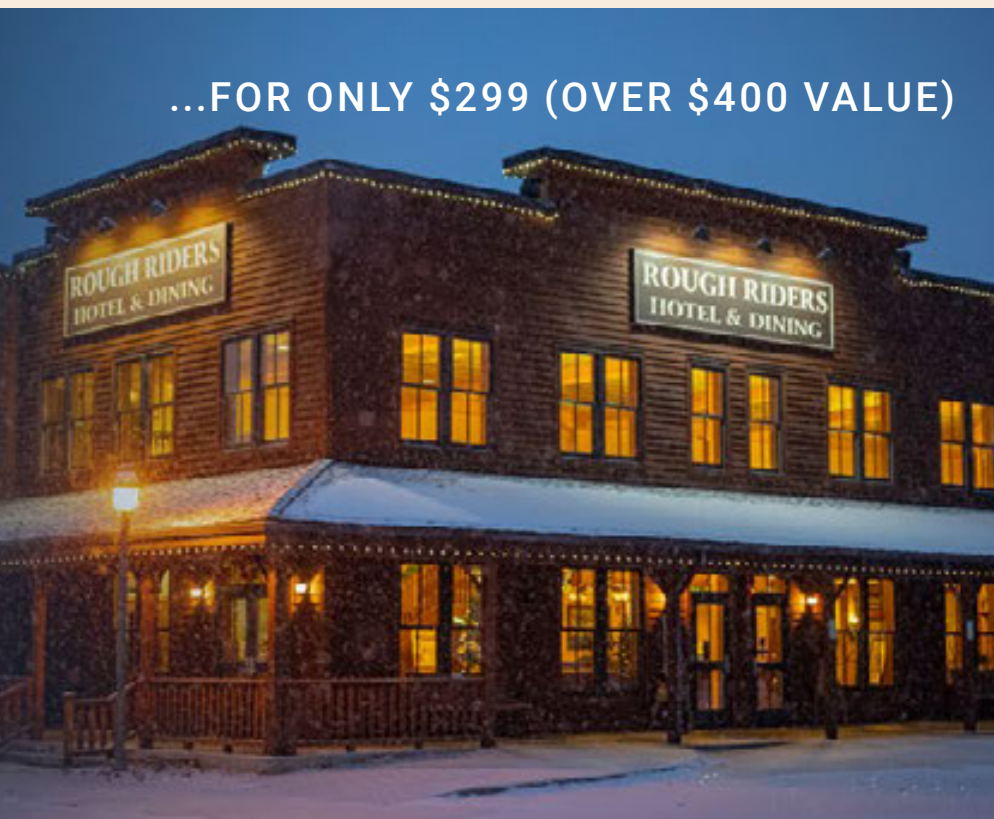
ENJOY AN EVENING OF MUSIC, FINE DINING, AND HISTORIC CHARM AT ROUGH RIDERS HOTEL

...FOR ONLY \$299 (OVER \$400 VALUE)

YOUR RETREAT PACKAGE INCLUDES:

- 2 tickets to a spring concert at the Old Town Hall Theater
- 1 night at the historic Rough Riders Hotel
- Dinner for 2 at Theodore's Dining Room with 2 entrees from the menu, plus a shared appetizer and dessert*
- Complimentary charcuterie at TR's Tavern – the perfect wind-down after the show
- Breakfast the next day
- An exclusive Spotify playlist to set the mood

**Tax and gratuity will be added at checkout.*





HERE COME THE JUDDS

FEBRUARY 20 & 21 AT 7:30 PM

Here Come The Judds is an authentic stylistic and musical tribute to one of the top vocal duos of all time: The Judds. This tribute will feature two of Nashville's most renowned artists, Victoria Venier and Liz Byler Shea. More than a tribute show, Here Come The Judds tells the powerful story of The Judds through their chart-topping music.



PIANOMANIA! ROCKIN' THE 1950'S WITH JARED FREIBURG

MARCH 28 AT 2:00 PM & 7:30 PM

Take a Rock 'n' Roll rollercoaster through one of the most explosive and influential musical styles of the 20th Century in PIANOMANIA! – Jared Freiburg's high-energy celebration of the 1950s. Jared's love for this music was cemented performing as Jerry Lee Lewis in multiple productions of Million Dollar Quartet, and his pedigree can be summed up most easily by the 'Wild One' himself: "I am humbled and grateful to be honored this way. God bless you, Jared, and KEEP ROCKIN'."



THE EVERLY BROTHERS EXPERIENCE

APRIL 17 & 18 AT 7:30 PM

Returning in 2026, the Zmed brothers bring The Everly Brothers back to the Old Town Hall Theater with their incredible tribute show. The Zmeds have celebrated the pivotal music and history of the Everly Brothers since 2016. Audiences loved this show in 2025, and TRMF is excited to host the Zmed Brothers once again in 2026.



BE PART OF MEDORA'S NEXT CHAPTER

2026 MEMBERSHIPS

2026 is a big year for Medora! This year will see the opening of Hotel 1883, the Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library, and more improvements in Medora. Members are some of the most dedicated fans of Medora, putting their dollars directly into what makes Medora run smoothly year-round.

This year, there have been new exciting additions to the Rough Rider Membership and the Business Membership. Junior Rough Riders are now FREE!

The Junior Rough Rider Membership Program ensures that the future of Medora is passed on to the next generation. With the purchase of a Rough Rider Membership, it is possible to sign up six Junior Rough Riders (ages 0-17). They will receive a welcome gift, certificate, and a quarterly activity newsletter.

Visit Foundation.Medora.com/Member for more information on memberships and to sign up to become a member. Or, give our Membership Sales Officer, Karen Sims, a call at (701) 504-5109.

ROUGH RIDER MEMBERSHIP

CHOOSE ONE MAIN BENEFIT

- Full donation
- 2 *Medora Musical* season passes
- 2 golf rounds at Bully Pulpit Golf Course
- \$150 gift card for shopping

PERKS

- Name listed in *Medora Musical* program
- Notes From The Trail newsletters
- Invites to exclusive, member-only events

NEW PERKS

- **FREE** Junior Rough Rider Members
- **FREE** custom popcorn bucket
- **FREE** behind-the-scenes tours
- **PRE-SALE** opportunities for special events
- **FREE** family photos on *Medora Musical* stage

BUSINESS MEMBERSHIP

PERKS

- Transferable *Medora Musical* season passes
- 4 golf rounds at Bully Pulpit Golf Course
- Name listed in *Medora Musical* program
- Notes From The Trail newsletters
- Invites to exclusive, member-only events

NEW PERKS

- *Medora Musical* behind-the-scenes tour
- ### VOUCHERS
- Venue rental **DISCOUNT**

FOR THE GIRLS

2026 CAMPS IN THE
ND BADLANDS



ON THE FAIRWAY

MEDORA GIRLS GOLF CAMP

JUNE 6-8

Medora is more than just a place to visit for fun! There are also great educational camps held every year in Medora. Do you have a young lady in your life who loves golf? The Medora Girls Golf Camp is in its 6th year at the Bully Pulpit Golf Course. Hosted by the Bully Pulpit staff and coaches from across ND, this golf camp has been a *positive, life-changing experience* for the girls who have been a part of it.

For more information about the 2026 Medora Girls Golf Camp and to register, visit Medora.com/GolfCamp. The camp is almost sold out. Make sure to get your young golfer signed up soon!

IN THE SADDLE

MEDORA COWGIRL CAMP

LEVEL 1: JUNE 14-17 | LEVEL 2: JUNE 17-20

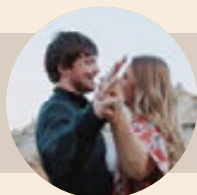
Back for its third year, the Medora Cowgirl Camp will be hosted once again at the Medora Riding Stables and Ranch-O-Rama. Medora Cowgirl Camp is extremely popular, and many of the girls who sign up are on a waitlist. This camp is more than just learning the ropes of being a cowgirl; it is a camp that creates a connection between girls, their horses, the Badlands, and the spirit of Western Heritage.

To learn more about the Medora Cowgirl Camp, visit Medora.com/MedoraCowgirlCamp.



MORE TO EXPLORE IN MEDORA

STAY UPDATED AND BUY TICKETS AT MEDORA.COM



FEBRUARY 12, 13, & 14
Romance in Medora



FEBRUARY 16
Free Entrance to TR National Park



FEBRUARY 20 & 21
Here Come the Judds



MARCH 28
PIANOMANIA! - Rockin' the 1950's



APRIL 17 & 18
The Everly Brothers Experience



MAY 25
Free Entrance to TR National Park

Romance in Medora

A VALENTINE'S GETAWAY

CHOOSE:

FEBRUARY 12 | 5:00 PM

FEBRUARY 12 | 7:00 PM

FEBRUARY 13 | 5:00 PM **SOLD OUT!**

FEBRUARY 13 | 7:00 PM **SOLD OUT!**

FEBRUARY 14 | 5:00 PM **SOLD OUT!**

FEBRUARY 14 | 7:00 PM **SOLD OUT!**

Romance in Medora is back, offering couples an all-inclusive evening designed to slow things down and savor time together. The night begins with champagne and strawberries before settling in for a shared prix fixe dinner. End the night with live music by Adam & Tay and retreat to a cozy room at the Rough Riders Hotel. Wake up to breakfast together the next morning, wrapping up a Medora Valentine's getaway.

Champagne & Strawberries Greeting

Prix Fixe Dinner

Wine Paired with Dinner

Live Music with Adam & Tay

Rough Riders Hotel Room

Truffles

Breakfast Buffet

ONLY \$299 (OVER \$400 VALUE)

MEDORA.COM/VALENTINES

MEDORA CONTINUES TO RISE

BUILDING ON HAROLD AND SHEILA SCHAFFER'S LEGACY



Above photo: The Ranch at Bully Pulpit;
photo taken January 2026

Below photo: Hotel 1883; photo taken
January 2026

CONSTRUCTION FOR A BIG 2026

2026 will see the opening of many large-scale projects!

Almost completed, the new hotel, newly named Hotel 1883, will be open and ready to welcome guests later this summer!

The new hotel will be an incredible addition to Medora, providing more lodging options for our guests. With the projected growth of tourism in Medora, this hotel will be essential for not only guests of the *Medora Musical* but also those who will visit the Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library.

Medora is growing exponentially.

Another TRMF construction project, The Ranch at Bully Pulpit, has also undergone a massive change in the last few months. After the groundbreaking in November, several buildings have already been constructed.



Hotel 1883; photo taken January 2026



The reason behind our growth is people.

We believe the world is a better place when more visitors can stay and play in Medora because they will get to meet wonderful people around town who live and work here and have more time to enjoy all of our experiences.

The new hotel and event barn and cabins help us achieve this. They will be first-class projects that would make Harold and Sheila Schaffer proud!"

—Daniel Gannarelli, TRMF Chief Revenue Officer

TRMF is excited for these new changes and welcomes the growth as we prepare to watch Medora grow in the next several years.

To learn more and get involved with these projects, visit ***Foundation.Medora.com*** or call our development team at (701) 223-4800.



Thank you

2025 was an incredible year when it came to annual giving, memberships, major gifts, and more!

Thank you to all of YOU, our donors, members, volunteers, and supporters of Medora. Your monetary gifts, gifts of time, and love for Medora are what keep Medora special.

You have made many projects possible in Medora, big and small. From the new hotel and The Ranch at Bully Pulpit to fixing the boardwalks and cleaning up town, it is those who support Medora who make a big difference.

As we look forward to 2026, the development team is growing, and so are our goals!



MEET OUR DEVELOPMENT TEAM



KIRBY ROBB

Kirby was born in South Dakota and was raised in Ellendale, ND. He attended college at the University of North Dakota and graduated with a social science degree. After college, he went to work in the lumber business in Fargo, then his love for the game of golf drew him into becoming a golf professional.

Kirby and his wife, Karla, moved to South Heart in 2006 as Kirby became the Head Professional at Pheasant Country Golf Course. Kirby also enjoys coaching high school girls' golf for the Heart River Cougars. They won the state championship last September, making it their third title in seven years. Coaching high school golf is one of his favorite things to do. The rewards are priceless, along with the memories it creates for a lifetime.

Kirby is looking forward to a change of lifestyle by coming to work for TRMF and hopes his skills in communication and hard work can be rewarding to the Foundation and himself.

Kirby enjoys hunting, golfing, and spending time with his family. The many attractions of Medora have been part of his family for the last 20 years, and they are hoping for many more! Kirby feels very blessed to be welcomed here and meet so many great and friendly people. He is excited to be part of this team.



KAREN SIMS

Karen was born and raised in Minot, ND. During her time at Minot State University, she primarily studied music education, being both a vocalist and instrumentalist, but also took some business classes. Over 10 years, during her time at MSU and for a few years after, Karen learned skills of customer service, sales, and business management.

Karen and her husband, Aaron, love cooking together, playing games with family and friends, and spending time with their lab, Eira, and their cat, Dave. She enjoys crocheting, listening to audiobooks, being involved in her church's worship team, and singing in community choirs. In the summer, you can find Karen gardening, golfing, or serving as a crew member for her uncle's hot air balloon.

Karen's connection to Medora runs deep. She remembers visiting Medora growing up, taking in the *Medora Musical* with her family, and in her middle and high school years, she played many rounds of golf with her dad at Bully Pulpit Golf Course. Karen's grandparents, Alan and Elma Doerr, helped volunteer to build the children's playground. Her uncle is also one of the hot air balloon pilots who flies in the Medora Hot Air Balloon Rally every September. Karen was a seasonal employee for TRMF in 2010, working as a cashier at the Maltese Burger (now known as Sheriff Bear's Burgers & Ice Cream), and serving on Summer Project with Campus Crusade for Christ (CRU). She is thrilled to return to TRMF and share the magic and impact of Medora with others.



Theodore Roosevelt
MEDORA FOUNDATION

Medora

Medora Musical

Bully Pulpit
GOLF COURSE

OUR EXECUTIVE TEAM

Clarence Sitter, *President & CEO*
Sam Dobrowski, *Chief Operating Officer*
Daniel Gannarelli, *Chief Revenue Officer*
Emily Klym, *Chief Financial Officer*
Holly George, *Marketing Director*
Lyubomyr Shkandriy, *Hospitality Director*
Kinley Slauter, *Entertainment Director*
Sheila Strommen, *Human Resources Director*

OUR DEVELOPMENT TEAM

Nora Beebe, *Events Coordinator*
Morgan Bruhn, *Development Assistant*
Jacky Emanuel, *Development Officer*
Katrina Hellman, *Graphic Designer*
Micky Huntington, *Executive Assistant*
Destiny Meyer, *Communications Specialist*
Kirby Robb, *Development Officer*
Karen Sims, *Membership Sales Officer*
Jennifer Sykora, *Salesforce Product Manager*
Darla Tescher, *Development Accountant*
Joe Wiegand, *TR Reprisor & TRMF Ambassador*

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** mindset.
Always be **grateful**.
Sell like Schafer.



Theodore Roosevelt
MEDORA FOUNDATION

Medora

Medora Musical

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GOLF COURSE

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