

## 2016 Visitor Improvement Fund grant awards

The 2016 Visitor Improvement Fund grants were awarded Tuesday, November 17. The grants are administered through the Grand Island Convention & Visitors Bureau and approved by the Hall County Board.

These grants are funded by a 2% occupancy tax on Hall County hotel properties. The purpose of the Hall County Visitor Improvement Fund Grants is to provide funding that creates new or improves existing visitor attractions and/or facilities within Hall County. Grant funding may be used to improve visitor attractions and facilities owned by the public or any nonprofit organization in Hall County. Grant funding can be used for multiple-year improvement projects, and projects with the potential to increase visibility of and draw overnight guests to Hall County will be given priority consideration.

2016 grants were awarded to the following organizations.

**1) Nebraska State Fair Foundation** - The foundation was awarded \$75,000 to aid in replacing the old equine arena with a new open-air arena. It would be used during the 11-day state fair and the rest of the year for groups, shows and events by Fonner Park. The total project cost is \$992,851. Funded by a variety of partners, foundations and individuals.

**2) Agricultural Institute of Nebraska** - The Agricultural Institute of Nebraska (AIN) was awarded \$75,000 for improvements to the Husker Harvest Days site. An effort led by AIN along with many community organization, individuals and partners are working to raise nearly 5 million dollars to improve the site. The primary site improvements are drainage, electrical service and parking surface.

**3) Mormon Island** - The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission was awarded \$46,000 for the construction of a Pavilion to serve additional campground space. The commission recently added 33 RV new pads to Mormon Island State Recreation Area for a total of 65 pads. It is the busiest RV campground in the game and parks system

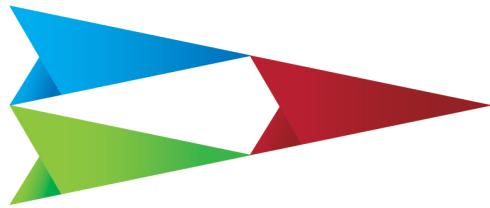
**4) Grand Island Chamber of Commerce – (GILCA)** - The Grand Island Chamber was awarded \$50,000 for 2016, \$50,000 for 2017, and \$50,000 for 2018 on behalf of the Grand Island Livestock Complex Authority (GILCA). The grant funds will be used to assist with marketing the livestock facilities on the Fonner Park Campus. It will be used for 1) Direct Marketing collateral; 2) Website development.

**5) CVB Marketing proposal** - The Grand Island Convention & Visitors Bureau was awarded \$29,000 to update marketing fixtures and displays. This will include banners, updated brochure racks, and displays. Locations and partners include the Central

Nebraska Regional Airport, the Visitor Information Caboose located at the Bossleman's Travel Center and Fonner Park.

**6) Downtown Grand Island Business Improvement District** - The Downtown BID was awarded \$5,000 for light pole banners. The BID is introducing a new brand this year – Arrive Railside. This will aid in bringing a new sense of place to the downtown GI district. Downtown is undertaking a number of marketing and branding efforts to accomplish this task along with a variety of business and community partners.

For more information on the grants, visit <http://visitgrandisland.com/about/tourism-grants.html>. As the official destination marketing organization for this community, the purpose of the convention & visitors bureau is to grow the tourism economy in Hall County and identify the Grand Island area as a destination.



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