

NEWS RELEASE

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Governor proclaims “Celebrate Nebraska Water Month” to promote water education, appreciation

(LINCOLN, NE) At a July 9 ceremony at the Nebraska State Capitol, Governor Pete Ricketts declared July 2018 as “Celebrate Nebraska Water Month.” The proclamation recognizes a joint effort by various Nebraska organizations to encourage residents to study, appreciate and enjoy Nebraska’s water resources.

“Celebrate Nebraska Water” was launched by Humanities Nebraska (HN) with the opening of “Water/Ways,” a new traveling exhibition from the Smithsonian that looks at water as an essential resource and a source for inspiration, spirituality, recreation and political power. Through the Celebrate Nebraska Water initiative, Humanities Nebraska, the six exhibition sites, and many collaborating organizations are working to bring this message to all Nebraskans.

“While many are enjoying recreation at water spots like Lake McConaughy and the Niobrara River, it is important that we remember the history of these resources and not take for granted that Nebraska’s water resources make possible the food our farmers and ranchers grow and the fresh, clean water we rely on from our taps,” said Mary Yager, HN associate director.

She continued, “Water is magic and life!” - a reference to Lincoln Nebraska native and acclaimed nature writer Loren Eiseley, who wrote, “If there is magic on this planet, it is contained in water.”

Joining Humanities Nebraska at the proclamation were representatives of the Nebraska Association of Resources Districts, The Nature Conservancy of Nebraska and the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources.

“We’re excited Humanities Nebraska and Governor Pete Ricketts feel as passionate about Nebraska’s water as our Natural Resources Districts in spreading a positive message to protect our water,” said Larry Reynolds, president of the Nebraska Association of Resources Districts. “Nebraska is the only state in the union to have Natural Resources Districts (NRDs). We are a leader in water sustainability not only in the nation, but around the world in no small part, due to the NRD management system.”

He added, “Nebraska currently has the most irrigated acres in the nation. At the same time, most of our groundwater levels are still recording at pre-development levels. This is a huge achievement.”

During the proclamation ceremony, Yager presented the governor with plantable “Water/Ways” coasters filled with wildflower seeds and featuring trivia about Nebraska water. The coasters will be available at each exhibition site for the public to receive.

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“Water/Ways” is currently on display at the Niobrara National Scenic River Visitor Center in Valentine, as part of ongoing activities to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act. On July 28, Valentine’s Mid-Plains Community College will host “Splash! A Water Symposium” from noon until 4 p.m.

After closing in Valentine, “Water/Ways” will travel to other communities, including Broken Bow, David City, Holdrege, Alliance, and Gering, through April 2019. In addition to Humanities Nebraska, the exhibition is sponsored by the Nebraska Cultural Endowment, Valley Irrigation, Nebraska Environmental Trust and Brown Transfer Company.

To learn more about the “Celebrate Nebraska Water” initiative and the “Water/Ways” exhibition, please visit HumanitiesNebraska.org/water

Humanities Nebraska inspires and enriches personal and public life by delivering opportunities to engage thoughtfully with history and culture. A non-profit organization, Humanities Nebraska is funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Nebraska Cultural Endowment, an appropriation from the Nebraska Legislature, and through private support from generous individual and organizational donors. Visit humanitiesnebraska.org to learn more about HN’s programs and grant opportunities.

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