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Official publication of the Lexington Convention and Visitor's Bureau in cooperation with the Lexington Area Chamber of Commerce.



CELEBRATING 150 YEARS Looking back, moving forward. This is our community.

Cover photo by Brian Neben

What are the benefits of joining the Chamber?



The Chamber serves as a focal point for community-wide information, particularly as it applies to business and commerce. When callers or visitors ask us for recommendations, we refer Chamber partners first, initiating opportunities to reach new customers.



Networking can supercharge your connections to the marketplace. The Chamber arranges events where members – including employees – have opportunities to connect business-to-business as well as customer-to-business.



The Chamber's strength is certainly in its partners. By building relationships with local business men and women, the Chamber becomes a united voice for the community.



Partners can enhance their online presence by linking with the Chamber's 2,000+ Facebook friends, in addition to our connections on other social media sites. We will share events and good news from our partners, reaching up to 3,000 more followers.



On the Chamber's website is one more way customers find you. Our partner businesses are listed alphabetically and also by category, all searchable and user-friendly. Member businesses may select up to five categories that help customers quickly find what they are searching for.



We also list our partner businesses in the annual Lexington Area Visitors Guide, getting business names in front of approximately 2,000 tourists and newcomers each year.



Business partners can add events to the Chamber's online Community Calendar for free. We'll even help you do it.



New Chamber partners get instant publicity with the option of a ribbon-cutting and promotion through email and on social media.



The Chamber offices - also Lexington's Visitor Center - houses a business card display to share our partner's contact with visitors and newcomers. Partners can also display brochures in the office.



Sponsoring events puts your business in the spotlight while showing support for the Chamber, the community and customers. Yes, sponsorship will get you noticed in the best way.



Chamber Bucks - We know that when folks shop local, they support the Lexington economy. Chamber partners can help promote the "shop local" concept by giving and redeeming Chamber Bucks.

PROMOTE – INFORM – CONNECT – ADVOCATE – EDUCATE – PARTNERSHIP

WELCOME

Welcome to Lexington

The mission of Lexington Area Chamber of Commerce is to create and maintain a favorable business climate in the Lexington area by representing the collective interest of business and by becoming involved in other aspects of the community that affect our quality-of-life.

WHERE BUSINESS AND COMMUNITY CONNECT

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CITY SERVICES

Lexington is governed by a five-member elected City Council. Regular meetings of the City Council are on the second and fourth Tuesdays at 5:30 p.m. The city employs a professional manager who oversees day-to-day operations. Lexington Utilities System provides or administers electricity, water, sewer and trash removal.

Lexington Public Library 907 N Washington Street, 308-324-2151

Lexington's 18,528 square feet Public Library opened in late 2005, replacing the previous 40-year-old 4,950 square feet facility. Besides being a beautiful public structure, the Lexington Public Library offers public use computers, free wi-fi, and a growing makerspace. There are also four public meeting rooms, private study rooms, a young adult space, and a children's area for story time and other programming. An updated color scheme, furniture, and signage was added to the library in 2022. The library regularly brings in authors, musicians, storytellers, and other expert speakers to enhance lifelong learning opportunities for

residents. YOUR Lexington Public Library-a place to belong, connect, explore, learn, and grow.

Parks & Recreation

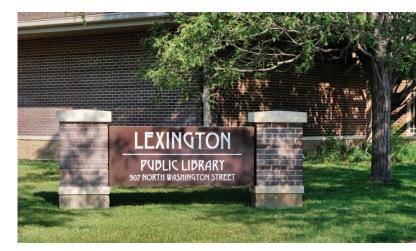
Lexington is home to eight public parks spanning over 100 acres of outdoor recreation space. Two of the largest parks feature renovated lakes with handicap-accessible fishing piers and new walking trails, stocked with fish provided by the Nebraska Game & Parks Commission. Recreational amenities across the city include:

- Nine outdoor tennis courts
- Four competition ball fields
- Multiple soccer fields
- Basketball and volleyball courts
- · Frisbee golf
- · A skate park
- A driving range
- A newly added splash pad
- · Walking trails
- Numerous picnic shelters and playgrounds

Picnic shelters are available for reservations, including the Lexington Veterans Memorial Pavilion and Amphitheatre, which was completed in 2024.











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The Lexington Family Aquatic Center offers a lap pool, a zero-depth pool with a water slide, and a splash pad for family-friendly water recreation.

Indoor facilities include:

- An indoor hitting complex for baseball and golf
- A 27,000-square-foot indoor Fieldhouse for turf sports
- The newly constructed 29,000-square-foot Racquet Center (completed in 2024), featuring four tennis courts and eight pickleball courts

Grand Generation Center 407 E 6th Street, 308-324-2498

The Grand Generation Center (GGC), Lexington's senior center, is open Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Services and activities include:

- Affordable public meals are served daily from 11:30 a.m. to 12:45 p.m.
- Games, crafts, exercise opportunities, and bingo
- The Meals-on-Wheels program for homebound residents, supported by a dedicated team of volunteers
 The GGC is a vital com-

munity resource providing both social engagement and essential services for Lexington's senior population.

Downtown Revitalization In 2010, Lexington initi-

ated a Downtown Revitalization Project. Spurred by a \$350,000 Community **Development Block Grant** (CDBG), both public and private improvements were made. Adding local contributions, more than \$600,000 was invested in Lexington's downtown. Subsequently the City secured CDGB funding to make additional improvements in and around the downtown area, including street and sewer upgrades, and renovation of the downtown Majestic Theatre.

Dawson County Opportunity Center 1501 Plum Creek Parkway

In 2010, the City of Lexington took the lead in developing the Dawson County Opportunity Center. Once a vacated "big-box store," it's now a buzzing hive of activity. DCOC is home to the Lexington campus of Central Community College, the Lexington Area Chamber of Commerce, a branch of the Nebraska Department of Labor, Lexington Public Schools Early Learning Academy, Dawson County Family Partners, and a regional call center for Nebraska Department of Health & Human Services.



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Lexington Housing Authority 609 East Third Street, Lexington, NE 68850 324-4633; TDD 324-6619

HISTORIC TRANSPORTATION

Lexington is at the crossroads of several highways. Highway 30 and Interstate 80 are the main east-west by-ways across Nebraska, while Highways 283 and 21 connect locations from South Dakota to Kansas. Travelers in the past also made their way through Dawson County using one or more of five trails.

Oregon Trail

Possibly the most wellknown trail made its way through Dawson County, the Oregon Trail. The route was the most widely used of all the trails, with more than half a million people using the route for over 25 years. Many of the area's early communities can trace roots to the trail.

Pony Express Route

A symbol of growth westward during the 1800s, the Pony Express was the first link to early settlers. The service was short-lived, operating from 1860-1861, delivering between St. Joseph, MO and Sacramento, CA until the advent of the telegraph.

Mormon Trail

Nearly 100,000 early adventurers crossed near the future site of Lexington by following the Mormon Trail. The trail loosely followed the north bank of the Platte River, which later proved to be a



viable footprint for the Lincoln Highway and Interstate 80. Lincoln Highway

The nation's first transcontinental auto route ran along the Platte River. U.S. Highway 30, recognized as the Lincoln Highway, still serves as an east-west route across Nebraska.

Union Pacific Railroad

The Iron Road was the name given to the first transcontinental railroad. In 1865, Union Pacific began laying rails along the Great Platte River Road and promoted settlement by selling land in the fertile Platte River Valley.

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HISTORY

Lexington, located in Dawson County, has a very rich history. It was first established as a frontier trading post in 1860 by Daniel and Louisa Freeman. It sat along Plum Creek across from a Ponv Express station south of the Platte River. They provided goods to the people traveling along the Oregon and California trails and traded with the many Indian tribes that were still in the area. Louisa writes in her diary that they got along well with the Indians though many of the white settlers did not and as a result much of Plum Creek fell victim to several attacks. The most famous being the Plum Creek Massacre of 1864 and the Turkey Leg raid of 1867. The Plum Creek Massacre has been portrayed in a book called "Captive of the Cheyenne" written by Russ Czaplewski and published by the Dawson County Historical Society. It tells the true account of Nancy Jane Morton's capture by the Cheyenne Indians and the attack on her wagon train.

When the Union Pacific Railroad was built through Dawson County, the Free-

mans moved their store across from the new depot. The town was called Plum Creek. Louisa writes in her diary that their store was on the first level of their new big house, and they boarded newcomers on the second level. Daniel Freeman became the first county clerk and operated the first Plum Creek newspaper called the "Dawson County Banner." Daniel threw himself into bringing people from the east to settle this small town of Plum Creek and was often away from home. It was during one of these trips that he drowned in the Platte River. Louisa and her children remained in the Plum Creek vicinity until she died at the age of 86.

With the building of the Union Pacific Railroad and the rise of the locomotive, the small town of Plum Creek began to expand. People came from all over the United States and settled in Dawson County. I.P. "Print" Olive, a cattleman from Texas, was drawn by the vast prairies central Nebraska had to offer. His family, including his parents and a few siblings,



settled in Plum Creek and quickly became a prominent family in the area. Ira Olive, Print's brother, was more of a businessman while Print and their younger brother Bob, loved the life of the cowboy and ran their cattle business. But times were changing as more and more homesteaders settled the area and the cattleman and farmers argued over land rights. One such argument between the Olive family and two homesteaders ended with Bob Olive be-



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Scan for a list of events ing shot and killed. In vengeance, Print Olive shot and hanged the homesteaders. A crime he would pay for in the Nebraska State Penitentiary. This caused quite a stir in the little town of Plum Creek and the story was later made into a book called "The Ladder of Rivers" by Harry E. Chrisman.

Plum Creek quickly became known as a "cowboy" town. Even though it continued to grow, and business was booming, the community became worried that it would soon have a bad name, and nobody would want to settle in a town filled with scalawags and gun fighters. Several of the community leaders got together and decided to rename the town. Maybe if it had a more "regal" name things would change. In 1889, by a write-in vote, the town name was changed to Lexington.

With the construction of a new bridge over the Platte River south of Lexington and the designation of Lexington as the county seat the community soon became a trading hub. To accommodate all the new people coming into town the community leaders once again came together to build a new luxurious hotel in 1890 called "The Cornland," It was known as the best hotel between Omaha and Denver and offered all the latest amenities such as steam heat and



gas lighting.

Throughout the years Lexington has seen many changes in business and population. Some good, some bad, but it continues to grow and draw people from a wide variety of ethnic backgrounds just as it did when it was the small town of Plum Creek. The Overland Trails were taken over by the railroad and then came the motor car and Lexington changed yet again to accommodate the Lincoln Highway traffic. Motels, diners, and gas stations sprang up along what we now refer to as Highway 30. In the 1960s, the interstate system came through south of Lexington causing the town to arow rapidly in that direction. Overland commerce has never stopped in Lexington, it's merely changed.

In 1973, Lexington was named an "All American City" by the National Civic League



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with Dawson County receiving the "All American City" award in 1993. It is the only county in Nebraska to be so honored. Lexington also has three buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places: The Olive House at 401 E 13th St., the Dawson County Courthouse located at 7th and Washington St., and the H.V. Temple House at 305 E. 13th St. The downtown still has brick streets, and many structures have been restored, such as the Majestic Theatre, which was taken on as a project by the Lexington Public School system and is now operated by the school and a group of volunteers.

To learn more about Lexington's history visit the Dawson County Historical Museum and the Heartland Museum of Military Vehicles where the area's history is proudly displayed!



BUSINESS AND

Lexington's base industry is agriculture because of the abundance and availability of natural resources located in the area: fertile soils, groundwater and a temperate growing season.

Some of the main nonmanufacturing employers are:

- City of Lexington and Dawson County
- Dawson Public Power
 District
- Lexington Public Schools
- Country Partners Cooperative (fertilizer, car care and agronomy divisions)
- · Lexington Livestock Com-

mission Co. (livestock auction)

- Plum Creek Medical Group
- Lexington Regional Health Center
- Ridgeway Senior Living
- State of Nebraska Department of Roads
 Major manufacturers and industries include:
 - Eilers Machine and Welding Inc. (fabricated metal parts, welding and machine repairs)
 - Tyson Fresh Meats (beef and related products for a national and export market)



- Orthman by Unverferth Manufacturing (farm implements for the national and export market)
- Darling Ingredients (meat scraps, tallow and hides)
- Designer Craft Woodworking (furniture, cabinetry for national market)
- Veetronix (communications equipment)
- Chief Ethanol Fuels, Inc. (ethanol plant)

The rest of the area's economy revolves around a variety of manufacturing firms, some which create value-added products from the region's agricultural base and some stand-along products. The service sector includes a variety of motels and retail stores. Lexington is home to many unique specialty shops and ethnic businesses and restaurants.







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FUN AND ENTERTAINMENT

There is so much to see and do in Lexington and the surrounding area!

Stock car races begin in March at the Dawson County Raceway.

The Dawson County Fair will be at the Dawson County Fairgrounds in July. Here, youth participate in life-skills contests ranging from cooking, sewing, and photography. Young ranchers compete in livestock shows showing off their sheep, hogs, cattle, dogs and even cats! The carnival is in town, and many vendors and open-class competitions take place.

August is busy with the "Wings and Wine, Beer & Brats" event at Mac's Creek Winery & Brewery later in the month.

In December, Santa travels to downtown Lexington during the annual Light up Lexington Christmas Parade and visits with children at his house on Saturdays. Fire truck rides are also provided by the Lexington Volunteer Fire Department. There are many events to choose from throughout the entire year!

ANNUAL EVENTS

February

» Chamber/Ag Banquet

March

» Stock Car Races Begin

July

- » Dawson County Fair
- » Chamber of Commerce Golf Tournament
- » Lexington Tennis Tournament

August

FDIC

- » Wings and Wine, Beer & Brats Event
- » High School Rodeo

September

» NSRA Finals

October

» Trick or Treat Plum Creek

December

- » Light up Lexington Christmas Parade
- » Santa Visits and Fire Truck Rides

For the full schedule, visit www.lexcoc.com





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ATTRACTIONS

Mac's Creek Winery & Brewery

Mac's Creek Winery & Brewery is family owned and operated by the McFarland's since 2001 and is located one-half mile north of Lexington along the banks of Spring Creek. Enjoy wines, hard ciders, craft beers as well as walking trails, Creekside fire pits, and quaint cottages. Once you arrive, you'll want to stay the entire day!

Stock Car Races

Race fans can enjoy Fast Family Fun on Sundays starting in March at the Dawson County Raceway. "Where Only the Best, Go 3 Abreast!" **Museums** Three museums showcase the intriguing history of Lexington and Dawson County. Aircraft, tanks and trucks make up the approximately 100 vehicles restored at the Heartland Museum of Military Vehicles. Much of this museum is hands-on, with many of the vehicles available for patrons to touch or even sit in.

Historic aircraft, pioneer implements, railroad artifacts, and tons of Lexington and Dawson County history are preserved at the Dawson County Historical Museum. Exhibits outside the main museum building include a rural schoolhouse, log cabin, and historic church.

The Dawson County Children's Museums is located at 701 Plum Creek Parkway in Lexington. They offer children and adults the opportunity to explore areas of science, math, social studies, and fine arts through free play, exploration, and demonstration.

Biking, Hiking & Sports Facilities

Hiking/biking trails are a popular recreational activity with several trails completed in Lexington as well as the Johnson Lake Trails, located southwest of the city. Johnson Lake Trails is fast becoming a hike/bike destination for users from across the state.

The Optimist Hitting Complex is an indoor hitting facility where future baseball and softball players can practice and participate in lessons and camps.

The Fieldhouse and Driving Range hosts indoor soccer matches and practices as well as a variety of other planned activities.

The Racquet Center features four tennis courts and eight pickleball courts. This facility is free and open to the public.

The Orthman Community YMCA provides many programs that build a healthy spirit, mind, and body for all. The YMCA also hosts numerous community events throughout the year.

Veterans Memorial Pavilion and Amphitheater

Completed in 2023, Lexington's Veterans Pavilion and Amphitheater is the culmination of years of work and fund-raising by the Lexington Veterans Memorial Committee.

The Pavilion is located at the south end of Kirkpatrick Memorial Park, with the nearest intersection being 7th & Taft Streets. It is surrounded by a pentagon-shaped paved walking path. Each corner





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of the pentagon features a lighted kiosk that will present tributes and information for the five branches of the military (Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force and Coast Guard). There is also a Memorial Wall to hold engraved bricks to memorialize veterans (see how to purchase bricks below).

The Pavilion boasts ample parking and the whole complex is completely handicapped accessible. The Amphitheater and seating area are sure to become a favorite entertainment spot for years to come.

Camping

Campgrounds are available at Dawson County Fairgrounds, Groves by Riverside and multiple areas around Johnson Lake. There campers are provided with gravel, or cement pads, all available with electrical hookups,



showers, restrooms, a dump station and fish-cleaning stations.

Golf

There are two golf courses near Lexington: Overton, which is a 9-hole course, and Lakeside Golf Club at Johnson Lake, which is an 18-hole course, both with beautiful green landscapes and cool Nebraska breezes to make playing a joy.









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GOVERNMENT

Lexington is the county seat of Dawson County. Dawson County operates under a commissioner form of government with five commissioners elected to four-year terms on a staggered basis. The commissioners represent different districts on the board. The county also has a sevenmember planning commission with members appointed by the county commissioners to staggered three-year terms.

The City of Lexington operates with the Council-Manager form of government. Council members serve four-year terms. Elected at-large by the public, they in turn select one of the five as mayor for a two-year term. The Council engages the City Manager to oversee the day-to-day operations of the city.

Lexington also has a ninemember planning commission with members appointed for three-year terms.

The Lexington Police Department has a force of 20 full-time sworn officers, and two civilian office staff. The Lexington Volunteer Fire Department shares space and emergency equipment with the Rural Fire Department, which handles emergencies on a contract basis to surrounding rural areas.

Dawson County Sheriff's Office has a staff of over 60, including deputies, jail staff, office staff and part-time employees. Regular patrol provides protection to rural and residential communities throughout the county.

The county has combined dispatch services with the communities of Lexington, Overton, Cozad, Sumner, Eddyville, Farnam and the Johnson Lake area.

GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

City Manager Joe Pepplitsch (308) 324-2341

City Council John Fagot - Mayor John Salem Dora Vivas Jarod Jacob Jeremy Roberts

County Commissioners Richard Zarek PJ Jacobson Kevin Swanson Bill Stewart Rod Reynolds

State Senator Teresa Ibach (402) 471-2805 **Governor** Jim Pillen (402) 471-2244

Lieutenant Governor Joe Kelly (402) 471-2256

U.S. House Representative Congressman Adrian Smith (308) 384-3900

U.S. Senate Representatives Senator Deb Fischer (402) 441-4600

Senator Pete Ricketts (202) 224-4224

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Today Lexington Public Schools is the sixteenth largest school district in Nebraska. The district's seven schools welcome more than 3,000 students each day. But for more than a hundred years, Lexington Public Schools has been providing a world-class education for students.

- Over 40 countries and 20 languages represented by the students at LPS
- Dual Language Program - Half of their daily instruction in English and the other half in Spanish (K-5th)
- Grade Level Campus Concept (Morton Elementary K-1; Sandoz Elementary 2-3; Pershing Elementary 4-5)
- Early Learning Academy for students ages 3 and 4 years old - One of the largest preschool programs in the state of Nebraska, accommodating 90% of the next year's kindergarten class.
- College Program provides students at Lexington High School seventeen (17) dual-credit college courses
- Cognia/AdvancED/NCA Accredited School District since 1914
- Graduation rate of over 90%
- College-going rate of over 70%
- Average class size to teacher ratio: 18:1

LEXINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Central Office 300 S. Washington (308) 324-4681

Early Learning Academy 1501 Plum Creek Parkway (308) 324-1841

Sandoz Elementary 1711 N. Erie (308) 324-5540

Pershing Elementary 1104 N. Tyler (308) 324-3765

- School-Community Partnership, shared facilities with Lexington Middle School and the Orthman Community YMCA
- 32 NSAA State Activities
 Championships
- Largest High School Marching Band in Nebraska with around 200 members

According to Superintendent Dr. John Hakonson, "The diversity of our students and their families has enhanced Lexington by adding to an incredible international presence that you can't get in any other small central Nebraska community. Our students, in **Bryan Elementary** 1003 N. Harrison St. (308) 324-3762

Morton Elementary 505 S. Lincoln (308) 324-3764

Lexington Middle School 1100 N. Washington (308) 324-2349

Lexington High School 705 W. 13th (308) 324-4691

turn, have prospered from the unfailing commitment and support of a dedicated LPS staff and school board, and an unbelievably generous community. Lexington is truly one of a kind and perhaps one of the best kept secrets in the state."

The mission of Lexington Public Schools is to develop capable and responsible lifelong learners. With the cooperation of family, school and community, we will prepare students for the global challenges and the opportunities of the future.

To learn more visit us at www.lexschools.org





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HEALTH CARE

Residents of Lexington and Dawson County have access to numerous, quality healthcare facilities and services.

From providing multilingual support to medical specialists, **Plum Creek Medical Group** is committed to improving the way you're cared for. As your independent, physicianowned health care provider, they ensure health care has possibilities by offering the best treatment options available. Some of the services include preventative care, illness, injury, disease management, aesthetics and wellness. They have clinics located in Lexington, Eustis and Johnson Lake to service their patients. Their care team works with you for a lifetime of good health!

Lexington Regional Health Center (LRHC) is a Critical Access Hospital employing approximately 300 passionate, dedicated people. Lexington Regional is a progressive healthcare facility dedicated to providing exceptional, cost-effective care to Lexington and the surrounding areas. More than just a hospital, Lexington Regional is also home to an emergency room, Family Medicine Specialists Clinic, Bertrand Clinic, Elwood Clinic, a stateof-the-art outpatient services and surgery center, Rehabilitation Services, obstetrics services and more. With over 15 visiting specialists regularly seeing patients at the Outpatient Services Center, comprehensive care is avail-

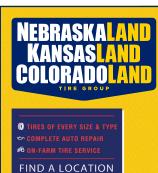
able without having to travel. Specialties include general surgery, cardiology, nephrology, obstetrics & gynecology, podiatry, urology, orthopedics, pain management, wound care, spinal surgery, ear, nose & throat, ophthalmology, pulmonology and more can be seen in the same facility as your primary care provider. Lexington Regional is proud to offer family medicine for families and patients of all ages. The Family Medicine Specialists Clinic is open 7 days a week with extended hours to help accommodate your busy schedule. Lexington Regional Health Center is honored to care for you and your loved ones!

Ridgeway Senior Living gives senior residents the choices they need to create their ideal senior living. Conveniently located in Lexington, we are close to hospitals and physicians. Residents have plenty of entertainment options nearby as well. Lexington has plenty of events for seniors looking for some excitement. They provide independent and assisted living services to make sure seniors get the most out of their retirement years. The community has numerous apartments available in several styles. There are several floor plans to choose from, with options for handicap accessible add-ons and other features. They also provide 24-hour staff that are always available when needed.









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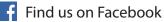
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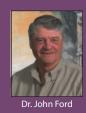
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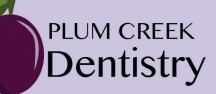
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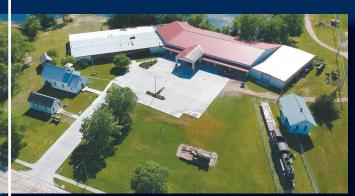
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- Platte Valley Auto
- Plum Creek Dentistry
- Plum Creek Market Place
- Plum Creek Medical Group
- Pro Printing & Graphics
- Reynolds-Love Funeral Home

Advertising Specialties

T.L. Sund Constructors,

Toro Tom's Sports Bar &

Titan Machinery, Inc.

Trius Federal Credit

Strike & Spare Bowl

Runza – LexingtonService Master of Mid-

Sign Pro/Bennett

Sports Bar, LLC

Super 8 Motel -

TEC of Lexington

T.O. Haas Tire

• Three 21 Tavern

Viaero Wireless

YMCA - Orthman

Community YMCA

VVS, Inc. - CanteenWeathercraft Roofing Co.

· Wireless World - Verizon

Lexington

Inc.

Grill

Union

•

Subway/Goodrich

Nebraska





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