

THEY CAME SO IT WAS BUILT—THE GOLDEN SPIKE TOWER AND VISITOR CENTER

Outline Of Need: Bailey Yard--the largest rail yard in the world, has been an attraction in North Platte, Nebraska for many years. Up to this point, there was not a safe place for people to view the rail yard. This posed a danger to the citizens of North Platte and railroad workers.

How Rural Development Helped: Rural Development worked with the Golden Spike Tower and Visitor Center Board to secure a \$3.7 million Community Facility loan for the project.

“Construction of the Golden Spike Tower and Visitor Center would not have been possible without the partnership of the USDA through a Rural Development loan. Without the direction, support and helpfulness of USDA staff and administration, the Golden Spike Tower and Visitor Center would not be the reality it is today.” -- DiAnn Kolkman, Past President for Golden Spike Tower and Visitor Center Board

The Results: The Golden Spike broke ground in May 2007 and officially opened in June 2008. The media covering the Golden Spike included USA Today, the Omaha World Herald, and Modern Marvels; thus bringing worldwide coverage to the City of North Platte.

During the first month of operation the Golden Spike Tower and Visitor Center welcomed more than 6,000 people. This included over 500 people that attended the grand opening in addition to Governor Dave Heineman. Also, in that first month, Director Shelley Harshaw saw Governors, Congressmen, Senators, film companies, media, tourists, and local citizens alike visit.

The outpouring of support has been phenomenal, but the benefits go far beyond that of just the obvious. The community of North Platte will reap the rewards of this project for years to come. The Golden Spike increases the number of tourists that come through North Platte, which helps the local hotels, motels, convenience stores and restaurants. The other visitor centers in and around the area have reported increased activity as well.

The local Arbor Foundation, Vocational Rehab, and RSVP have been referring volunteers to assist with the daily activity at the Golden Spike. This opportunity helps some of the citizens of North Platte to contribute to society and to integrate back into the workforce when ready, bringing another sense of pride to the beautiful community.

Shelly Harshaw is excited for the installation of interactive, educational kiosks. These kiosks will allow children and adults to learn in a fun environment about the history of Bailey Yard and the trains that transport thousands of tons of coal, grain and goods throughout the United States, Mexico and Canada each day.

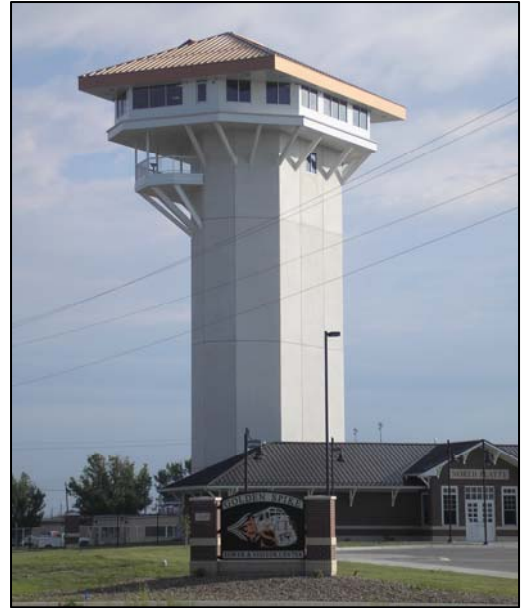
“The completion of the Golden Spike Tower and Visitor Center has been a dream of many Lincoln County residents over the past 20 years. The Union Pacific Bailey Yard is renowned for being the world’s largest classification rail yard in the world, and thousands of visitors travel each year in hopes of catching a glimpse of the Yard. Not only do you have a great view of Bailey Yard, but of the Platte River Valley!” -- DiAnn Kolkman, Past President for Golden Spike Tower and Visitor Center Board



L-R: BAILEY YARD WELCOME SIGN BEFORE AND TODAY'S GOLDEN SPIKE TOWER & VISITOR CENTER SIGN.



L-R: BAILEY YARD OLD VISITOR CENTER AND THE GOLDEN SPIKE TOWER & VISITOR CENTER.



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