

From the Publisher

Celebrating National Tourism Week

The past two years have been the hardest the travel industry has ever faced. Lengthy closures, record job loss, difficulty rehiring, uncertainty and anxiety. A life without travel and in-person connections was hard. But now, the travel and tourism industry are turning its eyes on the future with its theme this year being "The Future of Travel". It is held May 1 through May 7, 2022.



Ray Hibbard

I cannot write about travel this week without acknowledging the passing of our friend, Pat Nichols, aka Pickleball Pat. Pat and his wife Vickie started Nichols Travel in 1978 and ran that business in Edmond until they passed it down to their daughter. Pat would have been the first to tell you that Vickie ran the business and that nobody was sure what he did. If you did not know Pat but want to get a sense of the great guy you missed getting to know, please read his obit on Page 11 of this week's *Edmond Life & Leisure*. Pat wrote it himself and you will be laughing when you read it. Just one of the greatest community supporters and guys you will ever meet.

We are all looking forward to a travel future where friends, family and colleagues can reconnect. Where traveling from one place to another is faster, more seamless and safer than ever before. Where travel is once again the heartbeat of American communities and businesses, welcoming travelers from around the globe to dive into what can only be experienced in Edmond and in person.

The tourism and leisure arm of our city is Visit Edmond. It is headed by Jennifer Seaton as the director, and she has an incredible staff. It can be a difficult job to lead the tourism effort in a town with no mountains, oceans or other natural wonders to attract visitors. Our festivals and celebrations bring tourists into our town including LibertyFest, Downtown Edmond Arts Festival, Heard on Hurd and Vibes. We also have our connection and identification with Route 66. Our community has seen many improvements in recent years to help the effort including our public art program, incredible development of downtown, our Edmond Conference Center and Hilton Hotel and a number of new projects on the way.

With "The Future of Travel" the theme of the upcoming National



Travel and Tourism Week, Visit Edmond has decided to promote the new project closest to becoming a reality. The City of Edmond is partnering with LandPlan Consultants of Tulsa to begin next steps on the ambitious Arcadia Lake master plan. More than \$2 million has been designated from ARPA funds for a strategic vision and master planning for the reimagining of a vital asset to Edmond and the region. Public input will play a vital role in determining not only the final product, but also the future of this exciting part of our city as a regional attraction along Route 66.

This last Monday, folks from Visit Edmond, the City of Edmond, Arcadia Lake Commission Board members and members of the exploratory committee for Arcadia Lake known as the "Dream Team" held a press conference to reveal some of the plans. This event allowed leaders to outline the vision for Arcadia Lake and how the public can be a part of that process. Participants outlined the work of the Arcadia Lake Dream Team and that group's vision and strategy used as a basis for establishing a comprehensive master plan. It was held at the Icehouse Project Stables in downtown Edmond. "Edmond is becoming a true destination for visitors.

The Future of Travel for us includes many exciting developments including the Arcadia Lake Master Plan and the \$18.5 KickingBird Golf renovation," Seaton said.

"When you think about all of the incredible things that Arcadia Lake already has to offer like equestrian trails, mountain biking, fishing and eagle watching, it makes you appreciate the opportunity that we have to build on its potential. Where else can you find this much outdoor recreation in one place, located in one of the fastest growing metropolitan areas in the country?" commented Edmond City Councilman Josh Moore. "I am so thankful that the members of the dream team took the time to sit down and have a serious conversation about improving the lake for everyone involved. We all left the process feeling that we

agreed on the same goals and energized that a master planning process would begin to make those goals a reality," he added.

During COVID, Arcadia Lake visitation doubled. Many people purchased boats and RV's instead of plane tickets. Located on Route 66, Arcadia Lake is a key Edmond destination. Visitors voiced concerns about infrastructure, upkeep, technology and had lots of ideas for improvement. City Council approved an \$18,350 agreement with the Mettise Group to begin a strategic vision.

Edmond recruited citizens who enjoy Arcadia Lake through thirteen different activities. Together, they created a vision and strategy that is fueling the master planning process.

Edmond issued an RFQ for an analysis and master plan for Arcadia Lake in December 2021. A Parks and Recreation committee interviewed four finalists and on March 28, 2022, City Council approved a \$251,998 agreement with an Oklahoma company, LandPlan Consultants, to lead the master planning process. They have been involved in Arcadia Lake trail development for several years and will engage the public and other stakeholders throughout the process. We will be providing details as we get them on what is to come for our Arcadia Lake area

The City of Edmond is scheduled to receive \$12,741,315 in Federal America Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding and has designated \$2 million for Arcadia Lake.

More dollars may be designated from City funds to Arcadia Lake infrastructure and developments after reviewing the final Master Plan recommendations.

Prior to the pandemic, in 2019, the travel industry was a powerful economic engine, supporting jobs and driving local economies in every pocket of America.

Travel generated \$2.6 trillion in economic output, supported 17 million American jobs and delivered a \$51 billion trade surplus to the U.S. Tourism dollars and the best economic development. Folks come to town, spend their money and then

they leave. There is very little use of public services needed for travelers. There is no need to add water lines, more trash stops or grow the size of your schools.

While the industry was hit hard by the challenges of the past two years, we are recovering and positioning our industry for a return to growth. There is great optimism among American travelers to get back on the road and see our great country. Edmond is and will grow to me a wonderful place for visitors to come.

2022 May Bike Month Activities

Our friend at the City of Edmond, Jan Fees, sent me this information for the activities planned for Bike Week in May. Hope you and your family can attend some of them:

May 1, Sunday – BikeFest by ACOG, 12 - 4 PM at the Wheeler District Park, 1701 S. Western, OKC.

May 9, Monday - City Council Proclamation for May Bike Month, 5:30 PM, 20 S. Littler.

May 14, Saturday – Cycle 66 Training Ride, 8 AM, leaving from Littler

Lawn, northwest corner of 1st Street and Littler.

7:30 PM – Cycle 66 Spring Kickoff at The Patriarch, 9 E. Edwards

May 17, Tuesday – Oklahoma Bicycle Society casual ride, 6:15 PM Leaves from the parking lot west of Target.

May 18, Wednesday – Ride of Silence, 6 PM leaving from the parking lot west of Target.

May 19, Thursday – Bicycle-Pedestrian Counting, 5 - 7 PM

May 20, Friday - Bike to Work Day Celebration. Gather at 7:30 AM at

Littler Lawn, northwest corner of Littler and 1st Street. Promotional Ride leaves at 7:45 AM and return for breakfast refreshments and door prizes.

May 21, Saturday – Bicycle-Pedestrian Counting, 10 AM – 12 PM

May 22, Sunday – Bike to Church Day to encourage riding your bicycle to the church of your choice.

All month - ACOG Bicycle Scavenger Hunt (ACOGOK.ORG/BIKE-CENTRAL)

(Ray Hibbard may be reached by e-mail at ray@edmondpaper.com)

Check out what's inside!

- Police report **Page 6.**
- Weekend calendar of Events **Page 6.**
- New church planned for downtown **Page 8.**
- A look at the politically correct crowd..... **Page 10.**
- Obituary notice **Page 11.**
- Smag's recipe for Corn Chowder..... **Page 12.**
- George Gust reviews 'Bad Boys' film' **Page 14.**
- Crossword puzzle **Page 14.**
- Business news **Page 17.**

This, and much more, in this week's edition!

See if you can find 'Four Seasons'

"Four Seasons" in real life is located in front of the Center for Transformative Learning on the University of Central Oklahoma campus, but this week is hidden somewhere in our paper.

Please e-mail contest@edmondpaper.com with the correct location to be entered in the weekly drawing.

Commissioned as a partnership between UCO, the City of Edmond and the Edmond Visual Arts Commission, "Four Seasons" was created by sculptor Kevin Box of New Mexico and was dedicated on the campus on March 24, 2011.

Kevin is a member of the National Sculptor's Guild. His Box Studio LLC is a strong supporter of the Reduce, Reuse and Recycle concept, using recycled metal as part of the casting process for his sculptures. All of his work is 100 percent recyclable.

For more information on Edmond public art, please visit <http://visitedmondok.com/public-art.php>.



THE EDMOND PAPER



Weekly News about Edmond's Families, Neighborhoods & People

Publisher
Ray Hibbard Jr.
ray@edmondpaper.com

Partner
Christopher T. Hoke

Editor
Steve Gust
news@edmondpaper.com

Production
Deanne York

Advertising Director

Business Editor
Alexx Harms
alex@edmondpaper.com

Contributing Writers
Mallery Nagle,
Patty Miller, Rose Drebes,
and George Gust.

Photographer
Melinda Infante

Cover Design Deanne York

Legal Counsel
Todd McKinnis
Ruebenstein & Pitts, PLLC
Copyright © 2022 by
Edmond Media Publishing

107 S. Broadway
Edmond, OK 73034
405.340.3311 (office)
405.340.3384 (fax)

Mailing address:
P.O. Box 164
Edmond, OK 73083

All rights reserved.
Material contained herein may not be reproduced in any form without the express written permission from Edmond Media Publishing.

edmondlifeandleisure.com
facebook.com/edmondlifeandleisure
twitter.com/edmondlifeandleisure
instagram.com/edmondlifeandleisure