

Native Omaha Days Marks Its 25th Biennial Homecoming Celebration

OMAHA, NE, UNITED STATES, July 30, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Native Omaha Days Festival returns this summer for its 25th biennial celebration, marking it as one of the Midwest's most cherished cultural homecomings. From July 28 through Aug. 4, thousands of Native Omahans and visitors from around the world will gather in North Omaha and around the city to honor the legacy, resilience and vibrancy of the community.



Native Omaha Days Festival over the years.

Founded in 1977 by Vera Johnson and Bettie McDonald, Native Omaha Days has grown into a weeklong celebration that blends tradition with progress. The festival, a homecoming reunion and community celebration, features a dynamic lineup of events including live music, cultural performances, historical tours, family-friendly activities for all ages and a much anticipated homecoming parade. The seven-day event has become an economic engine for North Omaha and the city of Omaha with nearly 20,000 people returning to the city and supporting businesses citywide.

This year's celebration included a commemorative street naming ceremony in honor of the festival's co-founders, a symbolic tribute to their vision and impact. The event also marks a historic milestone: it's the first celebration under North Omaha native Mayor John Ewing, the city's first African American mayor.

The Native Omahans Club will once again host their signature events – including the Gospel Fest at Salem Baptist Church on Wednesday night. On Thursday, the Club will host a Mixer at the Elks near 24th and Lake Streets. The Saturday celebration concludes with the Homecoming Dance hosted by the Native Omahans Club at Level Event Center, featuring international recording artist Dominique Hammons and DJ ReRe.

Other events include theatrical performances at the Shirley Tyree Theater, and the ribbon cutting of the new North Omaha Visitors Center hosted by Preston Love, Jr. The "Stroll Down Memory Lane" North Omaha Historic and Revitalization trolley tour offers a free, immersive journey

through North Omaha's historic landmarks and revitalized neighborhoods. Visitors will reminisce about the "good ole days," while learning about the new development projects on the horizon.

The Dreamland Park Concert Series presented by the Empowerment Network and the Native Omaha Days Organizing Committee will feature performances by acclaimed artists Friday through Sunday: Mario Corbino, Enjoli and Timeless, Big Wade and the Black Swan Theory, Jamie Robinson, Tyi Hakeem and Brown Sugar and R-Style. The event will culminate in a high energy jam session on Sunday, Aug. 3.

The festival's beloved Homecoming Parade will take place on Saturday, Aug. 2, beginning at 10 a.m. Grand Marshal Ruth Thomas, a Diamond Member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated with more than 75 years of service, will lead the procession alongside Honorary Grand Marshal Hazel Kellogg, former president of the Native Omahans Club.

For years, the community has asked for more activities for youth, families, teens and young adults. The Organizing Committee has worked with the Empowerment Network/the Nebraska Department of Economic Development, NEXT and other groups to offer new opportunities. On Saturday, families can enjoy free entertainment, food and activities at Family Fun Day hosted at the former Omaha Opportunities Industrialization Center. Teens will have activities hosted by NEXT and 95.7 Thursday through Sunday. Young adults will have events city-wide, and a special area dedicated at the Lot 24.

In addition to the festivities, the Great Plains Black History Museum will host a multi-day African American author book signing, and the Village Festival Square will offer food trucks and local vendor shopping throughout the weekend.

The 2025 festival is presented by the Native Omaha Days Organizing Committee, Native Omahans Club, Omaha Economic Development Corporation and the Empowerment Network, with support from dozens of community partners.

Major sponsors include the Nebraska DED, Douglas County Visitors Improvement Fund, Empowerment Network, Omaha Community Foundation, Nebraska Commission on African American Affairs, American National Bank, North End Teleservices, Omaha Steaks, Visit Nebraska and the Carver Legacy Center. Their generous contributions help ensure the festival remains free and accessible to the public while celebrating the cultural and economic vitality of North Omaha.

The 25th Biennial Native Omaha Days Festival is a testament to the strength, spirit and resilience of our community. The street naming ceremony for co-founders Vera Johnson and Bettie McDonald is an exciting way to kick-off the 25th Biennial celebration and will forever be a reminder of their legacy and vision.

The community is proud to honor our past while building a vibrant future for North Omaha.

Honoring the traditions of the Native Omaha Days homecoming week and the expanded festival approach to provide opportunities for even more residents and visitors of all ages to take part in the community celebration.

Highlights of the 2025 Festival Include:

□ Commemorative Street Naming Ceremony for the late Vera Johnson and Bettie McDonald – co-founders of Native Omaha Days

o Tuesday, July 29 at 6 p.m. – 24th and Laird

o Phyllis Mitchell-Butler (daughter of Vera Johnson) and Magnolia Bryant-Holland (Niece of Bettie McDonald) elected officials and others will give brief remarks before the unveiling.

□ Gospel Fest Presented by the Native Omahans Club

o Wednesday, July 30 from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.

o Salem Baptist Church, 3131 Lake Street

o Live music performances by local gospel artist, groups & choirs

□ The Union for Contemporary Art – Northside Carnation

o Date/Time: Thursday, July 31 / 7 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. (two separate performances)

o Location: Shirley Tyree Theater – 2401 N. 24th Street

o Ticketed Event

o The Union has more exciting events and exhibitions throughout the week

□ Preston Love Invites You To: North Omaha Visitors Center Ribbon Cutting Celebration

o Date/Time: Friday, Aug. 1 at 3 p.m.

o Location: North Omaha Visitors Center – 2205 North 24th Street

Commemorate the historic opening of North Omaha Visitor Center a premier destination to celebrate and promote the rich history, culture, and economic vibrancy of North Omaha.

□ Stroll Down Memory Lane Presented by the Empowerment Network and OEDC (Omaha Economic Development Corp.)

o Free North Omaha Historic and Village Revitalization Tour – Explore North Omaha's rich history and exciting revitalization. on Ollie the Trolley.

o Hop on trolley at 24th and Burdette

o Live Music, Food & Fun

o Pick up a free goodie bag and enjoy the trolley

□ Native Omaha Days 25th Biennial Homecoming Parade

o Date/Time: Saturday, Aug. 2 - Starts at 10 a.m.

o Parade Route: 30th & Lake Streets to 30th and Sprague Streets

o Grand Marshal – Ruth Thomas, Diamond Member of the Delta Epsilon Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority – 75+ Years of Service

o Honorary Grand Marshal – Hazel Kellogg – Former President of the Native Omahans Club

□ Family Fun Day hosted by the Empowerment Network (Sponsored with support from the Nebraska Dept. of Economic Dev. and Native Omaha Days Organizing Committee)

o Date/Time: Saturday, Aug. 2 from noon to 5 p.m.

o OOIC – 2766 N. 24th Street

o FREE – Bouncy Houses, Music, Cartoon Characters, Food

□ Empowerment Network and NE Dept. of Economic Dev. presents First Friday Native Omaha Days edition - Dreamland Park Concert Series

o Date/Time: Friday, Aug. 1 4 p.m. – 10 p.m.

o (FREE) Live Music

o Live music featuring Ed Archibald, Nate Bray, R-Style and Black Swan

□ Dreamland Park Concert Series Presented by the Empowerment Network and Native Omaha Days Organizing Committee

o Friday, Aug. 1 - 4 p.m. - 9 p.m. (FREE)

□ Featuring:

□ Ed Archibald

□ Nate Bray

□ R-Style

□ Big Wade and the Black Swan Theory

o Saturday, Aug. 2 - 6 p.m. - 9 p.m. (FREE)

□ Featuring:

□ Enjoli and Timeless

□ Chad Stoner

□ Dreamland Park Concert Series – Jamie Robinson Presents Native Omaha Days Biannual Jam Session

o Sunday, Aug. 3, 2025 – 2 p.m. to 10:30 p.m. (FREE)

o Featuring:

□ Enjoli and Timeless

□ Nate Bray

□ Tyi Hakeem and Brown Sugar

□ R-Style featuring Jamie Robinson and Mario Corbino

□ Great Plains Black History Museum African American Author's Book Signing

o Tuesday, July 29 and Wednesday, July 30 (1 p.m. – 3 p.m.)

o Thursday, July 31 through Saturday, August 2 (1 p.m. – 5 p.m.) - 2221 N. 24th Street

□ Village Festival Square Food Court hosted by the Native Omaha Days Organizing Committee

o Mobile Food Trucks selling delicious food available for purchase – Thursday, Jul. 31 – Sunday, Aug. 3.

- o Located at 24th and Lizzie Robinson Ave.

- Village Festival Square – Shopping hosted by the Native Omaha Days Organizing Committee

- o Merchant and Business vendors shop unique products and services and Festival swag – Friday, Aug. 1 – Sunday, Aug. 3

- o Located at 24th and Lizzie Robinson Ave.

- Native Omahans Club Presents – Homecoming Dance

- o Saturday, Aug. 2 from 8 p.m. to 1 a.m. @ Level Event Center

- o International Recording Artist Dominique Hammons and special guest DJ ReRe o Purchase tickets at nativeomahaclub.org

More Details: For a complete list of events, visit www.nativeomahadays.org For Native Omahan Club activities, visit www.nativeomahaclub.org

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