NEWS RELEASE

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Sidney one of six communities in the nation highlighted in a recent Surgeon General's report to promote walking and walkable communities

In September 2015, the Office of the Surgeon General of the US Department of Health and Human Services released Step It Up! The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Promote Walking and Walkable Communities to increase walking among people across the United States.

Sidney responded to the call locally in October 2015 by bringing together more than 25 participants representing community and health care organizations, city planning and development, and businesses to create a community-driven plan to increase walking and biking as a way to improve overall health in Sidney.

The city later formalized the group as the Sidney Active Living Advisory Committee. The committee has taken the lead to develop a communications campaign including distribution of a trail map through multiple community venues, trail signs along the path in half-mile segments, and other strategies identified at the planning summit.

Their diligent work towards a more walkable and bikeable community has been highlighted in a recently released Surgeon General's report along with a handful of other communities in the nation.

City of Sidney Economic Development Director Melissa Norgard said, "We are thrilled to highlight the safe, accessible infrastructure for walking and biking in Sidney." She added, "The city has been expanding the trail network for many years which provides ideal means for being active and actively commuting to various key points like the community center, new pool, many parks, schools, and hospital. This is not just good for health but for the economic development and vibrancy of the community as well."

Research shows sitting is now considered the new smoking due to the number of negative effects it has on our health. A 30 minute walk, five days a week reduces the rate of people becoming diabetic by more than half. For men it can also decrease the risk of colon cancer by 50% and prostate cancer by two-thirds.

"We are excited Sidney is leading the way in helping increase the number of people walking and biking to ultimately impact overall health," said Jessica Davies, Assistant Health Director of Panhandle Public Health District.

"We are proud of the great work that the city of Sidney has done to improve the health and wellbeing of its community. Their walkability efforts increase physical activity, improve safety, identify

opportunities for improved access to trails, and create a more integrated system that supports all users of all ages and abilities," said Dr. Tom Williams, Chief Medical Officer and Director of Public Health for the Department of Health and Human Services. "What an honor for Sidney to be highlighted in a national Surgeon General's report."

The full report with the story can be found at https://go.usa.gov/xXRA3. A formal ribbon cutting for the trail signs is being planned in conjunction with National Walk @ Lunch Day for April 26, 2017 at Noon at the Cheyenne County Community Center in Sidney.

Sidney is part of a select group of cities across Nebraska focusing on these efforts as part of the #WalkNE Nebraska Walkable Communities Project. To request further information to support an active lifestyle, please visit www.pphd.org or call 308-487-3600 or toll free 866-701-7173. Panhandle Public Health District is working together to improve the health, safety and quality of life for all who live, learn, work and play in the Panhandle. Our vision is that we are a healthier and safer Panhandle Community.