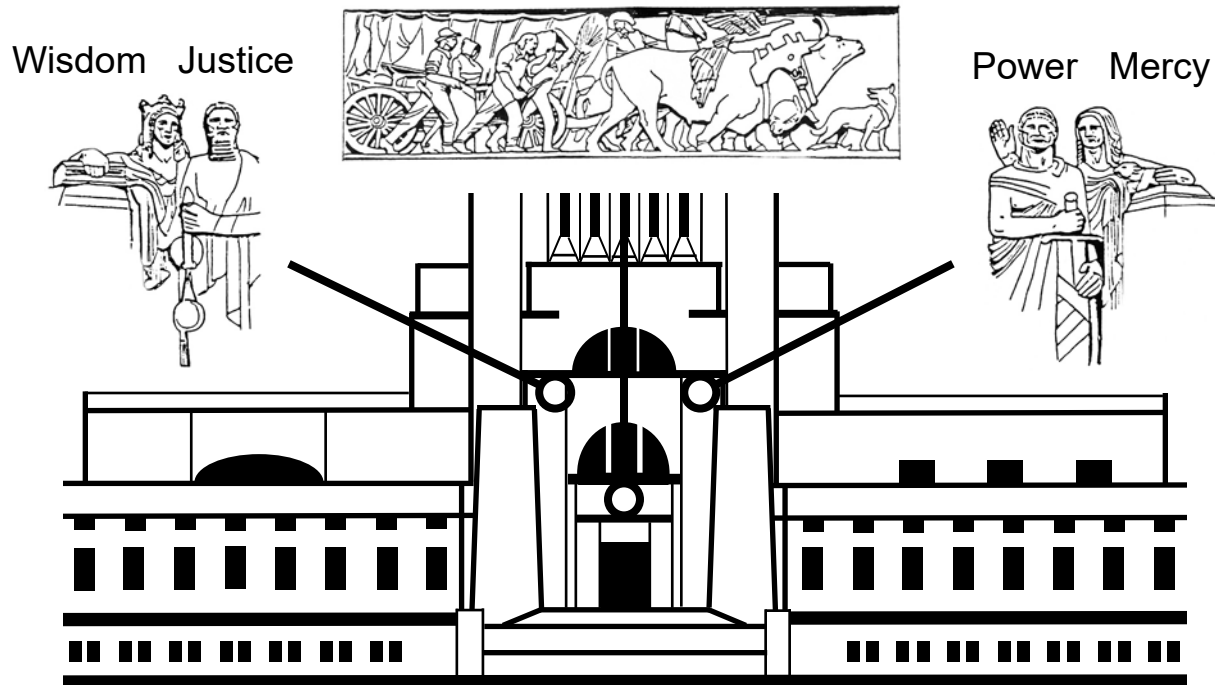


# Special Scout Tour of Nebraska State Capitol

## CITIZENSHIP

*This self-guided tour for Scouts was developed for scout groups focusing on citizenship, government, badges and programs. Each section may be read aloud in the area indicated. Discussion questions in italics are part of each section.*



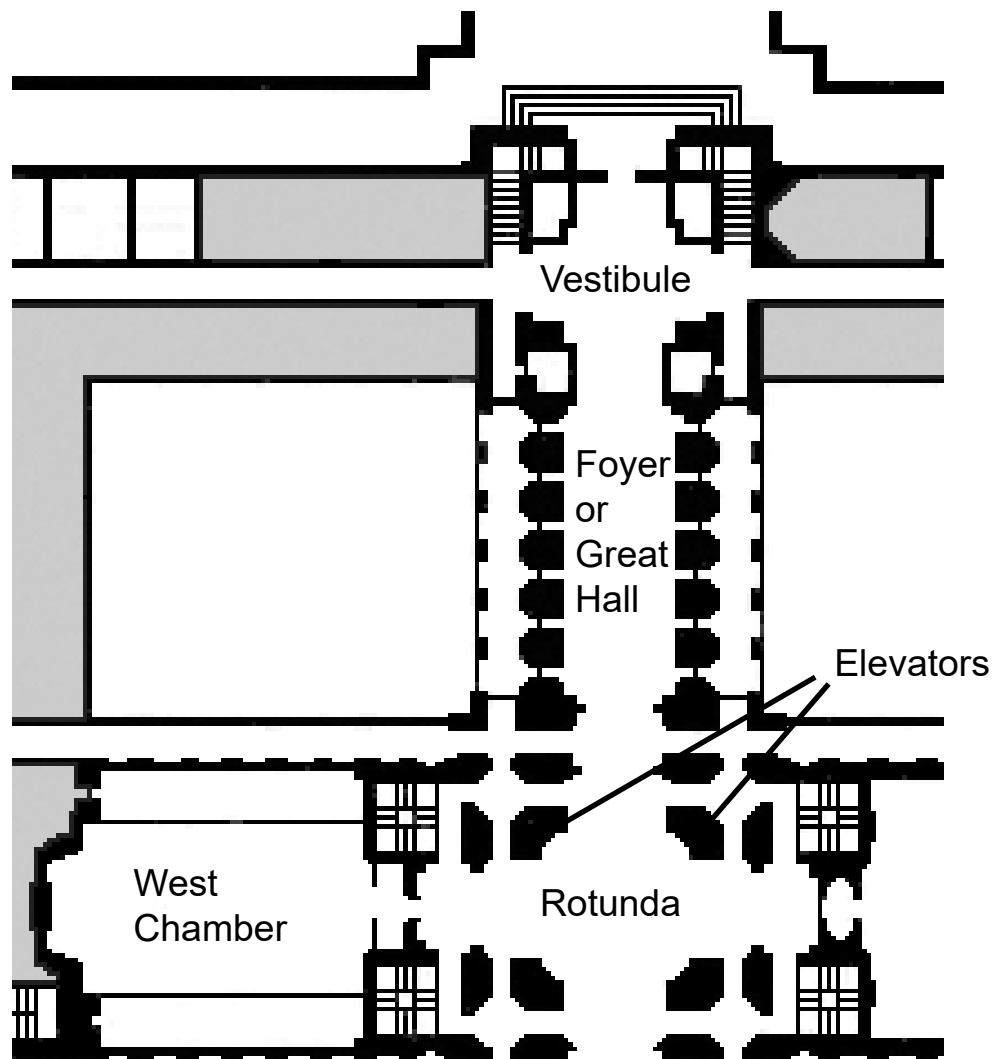
Exterior North Plaza Street Level

The Nebraska State Capitol stands as a monument to citizens and citizenship. The county names around the building show how all citizens from across the state are part of the government that makes its home inside, this building belongs to all Nebraskans. The figures about the main north entrance: Wisdom, Justice, Power and Mercy, guardians of the law, are there to tell citizens and governmental leaders how they should use the law to build a state. The panels with words on either side of the steps honor the early citizens of Nebraska who worked to build our state. The inscription above the door states what our duty as citizen is, to participate in government, watch our leaders and take an active part in making sure the state is a good place to live and work.

*(Have the scouts read each inscription on the bison wing walls "Honour to ..." and in their own words talk about how they can work to make Nebraska better for future generations. Then have them move up to the top of the stairs, or look up, if the stairs are closed.)*

The large carved relief panel above the door is called the Pioneer Panel and shows the people coming to Nebraska to build a new life. The old man is carrying a willow stick which he will use to find water, which is important for all life in Nebraska, the young man carries a basket of seeds with which to begin agriculture, Nebraska's number one industry. The husband and wife are bringing their new baby to Nebraska, one of Nebraska's first citizens. Look how they are walking forward with determination, ready to face any hardship.

*(The tour continues on the interior. Climb the main staircase or enter below via the accessible entrance and take the stairs inside the door to the left or right or the elevators in the center to second floor to continue. On second floor you will find the Vestibule, Great Hall or Foyer, the Rotunda, the Legislative Chamber and the elevators to the Memorial Chamber.)*



## Vestibule Inside North Door

The three murals on the walls show the arrival of Nebraska's first settlers. On the west wall the Homesteaders Campfire shows a family preparing to camp for the night. Settlers left the east with only the things they could carry in their small wagons, tools, cooking supplies and food. The people who came west were very strong and self-sufficient, determined to build a better life for themselves.

Above the north door the First Furrow is being plowed. The early settlers had to rely on themselves for food; hunting and finding plants to eat until their crops were grown. The farms and ranches begun by these early pioneers are the farms and ranches that now provide food for the world.

The east wall shows how early settlers worked together to build their homes, happy to share in the task of building Nebraska's first communities. The first homes were made of sod, the only building material available on the vast treeless prairie. For the early pioneers to survive in the unsettled Great Plains they had to work together, relying on one another for help in hard times and celebrating together in good times.

*(Ask scouts to identify ways people work together and help each other in modern times. Ask them how they celebrate good things in their community. They move to the Foyer.)*

## Foyer or Great Hall

In the foyer the things we do as a state and nation are pictured in the ceiling mosaics. The three center medallions represent time, Past is writing history on a tablet, Present is pulling the ribbon of time through a distaff, and Future gazes ahead to the distance with a crystal ball beside her.

In the rectangular colored tile panels at the top of the yellow marble piers between the onyx indows are the public service activities of a community.

Government is shown by three people voting, Labor shows a blacksmith, Patriotism has a young farmer leaving his plow to follow the flag to military service, and Religion is shown represented by a baptism.

*(Have the scouts look at the other arches and try to identify the other activities of society: family, education, recreation, science, art and philosophy. Have the students discuss how these activities contribute to our society.)*

The murals on the walls of the Great Hall were added to the Capitol in 1967 to celebrate the State of Nebraska's 100th birthday, the State's Centennial. Each mosaic represents an event of Nebraska's history and shows events which influenced Nebraska's growth as a state.

The black and white mosaic is titled The Blizzard of 1888 and shows the dedication of a schoolteacher trying to save children in a blizzard, risking her own life to save children. The teacher is the gold figure in the center, little gold figures are students she tied together with a rope to follow her and not get lost in the blowing snow.

*(Have the scouts discuss the importance of school and teachers in building a better society.)*

The gold tiled mosaic of Tree Planting with blue, green, yellow and orange represents Nebraska's home grown Arbor Day and reminds us how citizens plant trees for future generations.

*(Have the scouts discuss how trees make the world better, providing oxygen, slowing soil erosion, improving water quality, providing food and building materials and making the world more beautiful.)*

The Coming of the Railroad shows how early industry and agriculture of the state were dependent on the transportation provided by the railroad to take our product to markets far away.

*(Have the scouts discuss the types of transportation which are important to Nebraska today.)*

Nebraska's Hall of Fame was begun in 1961 to honor those Nebraskans who have worked to make the world and Nebraska better. They held many different jobs, including statesmen, authors, college professors, tree planters and social workers.

*(Take some time at the end of your visit to walk down the side galleries and see some of the Hall of Fame members and discuss how they contributed to society.)*

## Rotunda

The dome of the Capitol rotunda, 110 feet above, features angels or winged figures which represent virtues, the good things people have in their hearts. These virtues are faith, hope, wisdom, courage, justice, temperance, charity and magnanimity. For people to live together and make the world a better place, virtues are an important part of people's lives. Society and communities work together to provide for all citizens and make life better for everyone.

*(Discuss the Scout Law and the Scout oath and how scouts pledge to be good people and do good things to help other. How do scouts be good and virtuous citizens?)*

On the wall of the rotunda are murals which show the different ways people work for a better life. Some people work with their heads: scientists, doctors, engineers.

Some people work with their hands through agriculture, carpentry and manufacturing.

Some people work with their hearts through music, dance, and writing books.

*(Have the scouts talk about their parents and relatives and have them identify how their jobs could be included under these different labors. Ask them how they work with their heads, hands and hearts.)*

## West Chamber/Unicameral Legislature

The legislative chamber is where the people who make Nebraska's laws work. Nebraska is the only state with just one group of people to make laws. The 49 senators have desks on the floor of the Chamber and the balconies are for the public to come and watch. Remember the saying on the front of the Capitol, "The Salvation of the State is Watchfulness in the Citizen", that means being involved with the legislature, writing letters to your senator telling him or her about your ideas and views on different laws is very important.

*(Have the scouts find their senators name and place of the floor. Later have them write a letter to their senator about an issue which concerns them.)*

State senator  
District #  
State Capitol, P.O. Box 94604  
Lincoln, NE 68509-4604

*(Go to the two north elevators, push the up button to call the elevator and quietly and calmly take the elevator to the 14th floor Memorial Chamber and observation decks, One adult and 6 - 8 students depending upon age and weight, 6 adults maximum. The decks are open when weather conditions permit. In the center of the 14th floor is the Memorial Chamber which is always open.)*

## Memorial Chamber

The Memorial Chamber was placed at the top of the Capitol because people who devote their lives to public service should be honored above others for their work to make the world a better place. The eight murals on the walls show people such as doctors, nurses, firefighters, police officers, and everyday citizens who help neighbors in environmental disasters and help feed those in need.

People who serve in the military during peace time or go to war to fight for our freedom are also honored in this chamber. On one wall a large bronze plaque honors Nebraskans who have received the Medal of Honor, our nations highest honor for military service.

*(Have the scouts discuss how they have helped others and done public service. Return to second floor to view the Hall of Fame members or go to first or ground floor to exit the Capitol.)*