

# HIGH LEVEL HAPPINESS



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The city of Lincoln is among the top five in the nation on lists ranging from businesses and careers to health and happiness. We are active, engaged, and ready to take the number one spot for overall quality of life. The time is right, then, to add depth to our city through a creative endeavor that will draw national and international attention. High Level Happiness proposes building ten large, multifaceted treehouses throughout the city. Each treehouse will be an original design that highlights aspects of Nebraska—our people, our passion, and our history. What better symbol could the city of Lincoln have to represent who we are and what we strive to be? Let's make Lincoln the first Community Treehouse City in the USA.



## Why treehouses:

- Treehouses engender positive power and goodwill, according to Pete Nelson, author of *New Treehouses of the World*.
- By getting people into nature, treehouses provide tremendous health benefits: freeing the mind, soothing the spirit, and healing the body.
- Treehouses can offer a unique venue for events ranging from wedding receptions to outdoor education to business meetings. Such venues will draw national and international attention, boosting Lincoln's economy through both local involvement and tourism dollars.
- Current concerns about safety prevent many people, particularly children, from climbing trees. The treehouses would provide a safe opportunity for those people to explore a different level of our city.
- It is impossible to be grumpy in a treehouse!



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## Why Lincoln:

- Nebraska's sesquicentennial is coming up in 2017—what better way to celebrate where we have been and how we have grown as a community?
- Nebraska is home to Arbor Day and Lincoln is home to its Foundation. Numerous city and county groups are striving to make Lincoln one of the most environmentally friendly cities in the nation. We are also certified as a Tree City USA. Treehouses mesh perfectly with these facets of our city.
- Lincolniters enjoy the outdoors; the treehouses would provide novel locations to explore nature.



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## Why now:

- The current popularity of Animal Planet's *Treehouse Masters* and the resurgence of interest in treehouse building across the globe indicate the time is right for this fun, leading-edge community project.
  - Abundant research indicates that exposure to nature can reduce stress, promote healing, and improve overall well-being, all of which are particularly important in today's high-stress, technology-filled culture. The treehouses will provide an avenue to get people into nature, in support of Lincoln's Community Health Foundation efforts to become the healthiest city in the nation.
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## What they will offer:

- A fun place to play! Just last year, Lincoln was named a U.S. Playful City by the Kaboom! Foundation.
- Treehouses will be equipped for activities ranging from education to receptions to conferences. Each treehouse will be built to accommodate specific functions, with most focused on recreation and education, and others more commercial in nature.
- The design for each treehouse will highlight some aspect of Nebraska: our pioneering spirit, the prairie schooner, life on the plains, indigenous cultures, sod structures, our commitment to trees, our prehistoric past, and so on.
- Each treehouse will be ADA accessible.
- An international design contest will draw attention to the project, adding to Lincoln's growing reputation as a progressive and hip city for young families and professionals, ultimately boosting Lincoln's economy.
- With enthusiastic community support and a profitable treehouse business model, Lincoln's success could lead to treehouses being built in other Nebraska cities, spurring more economic development.



## How they will be funded:

- Startup costs will be secured through grants and in-kind support from community partners.
- Online crowdfunding for the treehouses will keep Nebraskans involved and foster emotional and financial investment.
- Treehouse rentals for various activities will fund ongoing programming and maintenance, enhancing their sustainability.



## Meet the Dream Team:

- John Chapo, Director of the Lincoln Zoo. The Zoo is excited to participate in the project and, if funding is secured, plans to host one of the treehouses.
- Scott Wieskamp, Director of Lincoln Public Schools Facilities and Maintenance immediately saw the educational value of offering an exciting outdoor classroom experience to Lincoln's students.
- Architect Cecil Steward generously offered to tuck the community treehouse endeavor under the wing of the Joslyn Institute for Sustainable Communities (501(c) 3), and to assist with the national and international design contest.
- Michael Hootman has been a Senior Project Designer for some of the premiere architects in the United States. He has worked on major built projects in America, Asia, Europe, and the Middle East totaling more than two billion dollars in construction. He currently sits on the board for Lincoln Green by Design and is Executive Director for LEAF: Lincoln Environmental Arts Festival and has signed on as a mentor.
- Lincoln Green by Design is a project supporter. Nebraska Wildlife Federation signed on to foster appreciation of wildlife, including birds that use trees and butterflies and insects that rely on trees for habitat.
- The Nebraska Historical Society and Museum is currently identifying Nebraska icons and images to be incorporated into the structures.
- We are bringing more people on board every day to create an unforgettable community project.



**Are you ready to make Lincoln the first community treehouse city?**

**Join us as we help Lincoln climb to new heights!**

