

By Carolyn Lee

The Imperial Republican

On June 15 the 2nd Great Western Cattle Trail Tour will kick off in Trenton prior to the dedication of markers in Hitchcock County that mark the Great Western Trail of cattle from Texas to Ogallala and beyond.

At a later date, five markers will be dedicated in Chase County. Member Marvin Large said those markers will be placed by the Blanche Church and on land owned by the Maddux, Osler and Large families.

The Great Western Cattle Trail held the most cattle during the 12 years it was used because the trail could continue to move west as the homesteaders claimed the land that the trail crossed.

Large said during the early 1870s to 1886 “millions of cows were coming up from Texas to be shipped on trains headed from Ogallala to the east.” More were trailed to Montana to graze, then trailed back to Ogallala for the same purpose.

The markers are being put in places along the trail starting in Texas to preserve the history of an era that has been dramatized in song, poetry, novels, movies and television.

Large said in places the ruts from the cattle’s hooves are still visible.

A program to kick off the dedication June 15 will be held at Northshore Marina near Trenton. The program consists of a DVD which presents a 1995 re-enactment of the Cattle Drive.

Also on hand will be prints provided by Gary Kraisinger, author of the book “The Western, The Great Western Cattle Trail 1874-1886.”

The event will begin with lunch at 12 noon CDT. Those interested in including the lunch should contact Harold Potthoff at (308) 276-2548 or (308) 350-1080.