

Midwest Small Town

O'BRIEN COUNTY


TOURISM

AMBASSADOR

Dan Cline is transitioning his blog, "The Country Pilgrim" to a YouTube Channel "Midwest Small Town." He visited several communities in O'Brien County and blogged and/or vlogged about each one. Check it out at countrypilgrim.com or youtube.com/@midwestsmalltown.


Primghar, Iowa

Figure Eight Races Primghar, Iowa




If you've never experienced racing - then there is no better way to get your feet wet in the world of racing, than on an old figure-eight dirt track! There's plenty of dirt and mud flinging in the air - the racing is competitive, and the atmosphere is electric. People drive to Primghar from all over the region to watch the races. For some - it might seem more like a crash-up derby, but make no mistake that competitive racing is in full swing!

Just One More Primghar, Iowa



There's a secret in Primghar, Iowa - and that secret is starting to get out as locals flock to the local golf course to fuel up on some of the best food around at "Just One More." Don't be fooled by the scenery - its more than a county club and golf course - it's an entire dining experience. Bring the whole family - sit back and relax after a round or two of golf and help yourself to a burger and fries! Insider Tip - Don't waste time and go for the Chipotle Burger. Chef Mike built himself a winner with this burger and it's by FAR a local favorite! Everything good, piled high on a beef patty - makes the world a better place.

Walk Downtown Primghar



One of the best things a person can do to learn a few things about small-town America is to walk the downtown district. You can experience a little bit of genuine life and country town living in doing so in Primghar. If you wander around long enough you'll learn a quick history lesson.



The Cobblestone Bar 133 1st St. SE, Primghar

The Cobblestone serves up some of the best drinks around, but they might be most famous for their one-of-a-kind Old Fashioned. The drink is made to perfection and The Cobblestone Bar is a perfect place to experience your first! Take a short stroll downtown, stop for a drink and make your way. The drink itself is a taste of perfection. If you are a bourbon drinker, this is the one! Give it a try!

Courthouse and Railroad Primghar

Primghar holds its place in history as the county seat of O'Brien County, but there was a time when that seat was challenged. Sanborn, Iowa (to the North) had the railroad passing through their town and felt it would be best if they were the county seat – especially when Primghar seemed to lose its traction as a county seat when the railroad didn't pass through. Read more about the history at [Dan's Blog!](#)



Bill's Cabin 3rd St. SE, Primghar

Primghar is in the exact middle of O'Brien County – and fairly easy to find sitting on Highway 59 – and just a short drive north to Highway 18. It's a nice rural destination to check out and stay off the grid for a few nights. Come check out and stay overnight in a grain bin, [Bill's Cabin](#), which is a fun and unique way to enjoy a nice quiet evening in rural America!



Sanborn, Iowa

Sanborn Roundhouse & Turntable Mural Downtown Sanborn

I remember visiting my aunt and uncle when I was a kid – and I remember coming to Sanborn where they settled into retirement. Hank, my uncle, lived his life working on the railroad – and it's how I remembered Sanborn, the town with orange-red cabooses! It's still on display today – you can't miss it! In fact, you DON'T want to miss it. It brings memories back to me as a child – maybe a quick visit to Sanborn will begin new memories for you!





Carnegie Library Sanborn

Try staying at an original Historical Carnegie Library! Whether you are looking for a one-night stay or a quiet weekend retreat – you can stay at the library! If you have a chance to read up on the history of Carnegie Libraries, it's a fascinating one. Sanborn happens to be one of the rare small communities that not only secured a Carnegie grant to obtain the library – but one that literally SAVED their historical landmark – and the best part – you can book a night or two! Wait until you see what they did inside this beautiful piece of history.

Miller Park Campground Sanborn

Check out Miller Park in Sanborn, right next to the golf course. They have approximately 18 spots available – no pull-throughs, but all have hookups! And the best part? You are right next to the golf course – so you can have your nightly entertainment a few steps away!



Miller Park Cabin Sanborn

Also at Miller park is a cabin that sleeps 10 people!



Caboose Sanborn City Park

If you head north down Main Street a few blocks, a park sits nestled against Highway 18 and Main Street – Sanborn City Park, but I like to call it railroad park due to the beautiful orange/red caboose that dominates the northeast corner of the park and calls itself home. It's a beautiful standing railroad car piece from the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Railroad. Get up close to the Caboose and give yourself a chance to soak in a piece of railroad history.



Freedom Rock & Veteran Memorial Sanborn City Park

On the opposite corner of the park – sits another piece of history – pointing to the story of American patriotism and the veterans around the area that it memorializes. The O'Brien County Freedom Rock and Veteran Memorial. Sometimes a picture is worth a thousand words.



Douma County Park Southwest of Sanborn

Just a few miles southwest of Sanborn and located just off Polk Avenue, you'll find a nice, quiet, and pretty park! If you have a camper or RV this might be the perfect place for you to settle in O'Brien County – and the best part? – They have a little pond, perfect for outdoor activities including swimming, small boating, and especially fishing!



Jay's 120 West 7th St. Sanborn

You can't go wrong stopping for a little bite to eat in Sanborn – in fact, if you want to enjoy a nice cup of coffee while filling your plate with a nice hot meal (morning, afternoon, or night) – I'd recommend Jay's.



Locomotion Lanes 205 Main St.. Sanborn

Sometimes you might need a fun inside activity – and who can go wrong with Bowling? Locomotion Lanes is conveniently located in downtown Sanborn, and offers both entertainment AND food! If you are in the mood for something quick, easy, and good at the same time, try a pizza, a burger, or some chicken strips!



Rails Bar & Grill Sanborn

Don't miss out on Rails Bar & Grill! You can't miss this bar and grill, right downtown in Sanborn, Hopping with life, you can't go wrong with a burger here! They have GLOWING reviews! Go bold and try this place out. It's worth it! You'll love the food, the atmosphere, and the people! Think small-town hospitality - Iowa Nice! That's Rails



Yesterday's Memories 106 Eastern Ave., Sanborn

If you love history and love one-of-a-kind museums - Sanborn has it! Yesterday's Memories and Truck Museum - where you can get lost looking at a piece of automobile and truck history! This was easily my top attraction in Sanborn - not to mention probably one of my tops in NorthWest Iowa.



Sutherland, Iowa

Willoway 409 Ash St., Suite 15, Sutherland

The Willoway has rooms available and I love the progressive idea to save the old high school! Walking around the halls gives you that old-school vibe, but then you get to witness some of the other cool things they did to the place - LIKE BUILDING AN INDOOR POOL! Not many towns can claim that they saved the old school - let alone claim an indoor pool for the community!



Keep Aim Boutique 112 W 2nd St., Sutherland

There are plenty of places to shop and eat in Sutherland, but the cool thing about this town is how progressive they are for a small town of 629! Some of the shops downtown are places that one could easily visit in a larger town. Check out Keep Aim, a stylish boutique with fun fashion and home decor, and much, much more - not to forget their online presence as well!



**Main Market-HomeTown Variety
100 W 2nd St. Sutherland**

in Sutherland you'll find the local grocery store, Main Market-HomeTown Variety - but what really grabbed my attention was the shop attached next to it - It had anything you needed - from yarn to bandaids. It was like walking through a small town - LIVE version of Amazon online.



**Rumors Bar & Grill
107 Main St., Sutherland**

Rumors Bar and Grill is a really cool place - with the word on the street that it used to be the old movie theatre? I love it when towns save their old buildings and do something with them - keep the town alive! Sutherland is more than alive - and Rumors is not just some ordinary Bar Food. The food was delicious, and I loved that I could sit down and have locals treat me like I grew up in town.



**Sweeney's Clubhouse
118 Main St., Sutherland**

You can enjoy a nice drink and game of indoor golf at Sweeney's Clubhouse. It's a perfect thing to do whether it's hot or cold outside. They have the virtual golf to keep you below PAR!



Prarie Heritage Center
4931 Yellow Ave., Peterson

The Prairie Heritage Center is a great place to enjoy displays, hike the trails, and engage in bird and wildlife watching.



Howitzer
Sutherland City Park

This M-115 8-inch Howitzer sits in the City Park in honor of all Veterans in the area.



Glacial Trail Scenic Byway
Hwy 10 Sutherland

Take a drive along one of Iowa's best scenic by-ways. The trail is fairly short across the four different counties of O'Brien, Clay, Cherokee, and Buena Vista. The drive covers over 36 miles of breathtaking, rolling hills.



Check out Dan's blog articles at countrypilgrim.com
or his videos at youtube.com/@midwestsmalltown.



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