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## Omaha's Newest and Bluest Resident Ready for Visitors

**OMAHA, NE. September 4, 2019** – He's new, he's blue and he's ready to meet you. Visit Omaha unveils a new attraction at the Bob Kerrey Pedestrian Bridge. You can now visit OMAR the Troll under the bridge, read about OMAR's adventures in a new book, watch the troll come to life in videos on the bridge, and even become OMAR yourself.

"Independent research revealed the Bob Kerrey Pedestrian Bridge was a top attraction for out-of-town visitors," said Keith Backsen, executive director for Visit Omaha, the city's official tourism authority. "Our goal in creating OMAR was to further enhance the riverfront experience and create another distinctly fun reason for people to visit the bridge."

The bronze "OMAR the Troll" statue, now located under the bridge on the Omaha side, was created by Omaha artist John Lajba, known for sculpting the "Road to Omaha" statue in front of TD Ameritrade Park Omaha, and the bronze statues inside The Durham Museum. Omaha scenic and fabrication artist, Michael Torres used concrete to create the authentic look of OMAR's mud and tree branch-enhanced home. The location of the statue was strategically chosen, so when visitors take photos with OMAR they will also capture the underbelly of the bridge – a perfect spot for a troll. Visitors will also be able to interact with OMAR on the bridge. QR coded signs are strategically placed at three locations on the bridge; scan the code with a mobile phone camera and OMAR comes to life in fun, interactive videos. Visitors can even turn themselves into OMAR with a special Snapchat filter that's available on the bridge.

[Click here to see the Snapchat filter, and to use the QR coded signs to view the videos.](#)

A new book, "OMAR finds a home", has been published and follows OMAR as he visits different Omaha attractions searching for where he belongs. Visit Omaha is donating the book to more than 600 third grade classes throughout the Omaha metropolitan area. As students study Omaha, the book teaches them about local tourism assets and aims to inspire civic pride and encourage students to be brand ambassadors for the city. The book is currently being sold for \$12.95 at the Omaha Visitors Center, 1001 Farnam Street, and at the Joslyn Art Museum, The Durham Museum and the Omaha Children's Museum gift shops. Books are also being donated to each branch of the Omaha Public Library.

"Our ultimate goal is that OMAR becomes part of the folklore of our city – someone you have to visit when you come to Omaha, even better ... someone who inspires you to visit Omaha," said Deborah Ward, vice president of marketing for Visit Omaha.

The OMAR sculpture was made possible thanks to a grant from the Douglas County Visitor Improvement Fund. Special thanks to Omaha Mayor Jean Stothert, students from Nelson Mandela Elementary school who helped with OMAR's unveiling, Douglas County Commissioners, the Douglas County Visitor Promotion Council, Omaha City Parks Department, metro area schools, the Omaha Public Arts Commission, and Swanson Russell for their enthusiasm and belief that a troll can inspire a visitor's imagination.

If you're wondering (and we know you are), OMAR stands for **O**maha **M**etro **A**rea **R**iver **T**roll.