

## Nebraska film officer closes curtain on 28-year career

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Laurie Richards with Chloe Zhao, the director of "Nomadland," in Lincoln. Over her long career in the state's film office, Richards has helped find the perfect movie locations in Nebraska.

DANNY LADELY, Courtesy photo

OMAHA — After working to promote the film industry in the state for nearly three decades, Nebraska Film Officer Laurie Richards announced recently that she would be stepping down from her position.

The Nebraska Film Office is part of the state's economic development department that works to recruit filmmakers, producers and directors to do projects in Nebraska. From star-studded feature films to music videos and commercials, Richards has helped attract talent — and money — to the state through careful coordination and location scouting.

"Nebraska has been a well-kept secret for a long time," Richards said. "As more people come here, filmmakers and crews start to talk about their experiences, and people start to realize that there's an opportunity for great locations and resources."

Richards, who began her career with the department as a film liaison in 1994, has a long history of attracting high-profile talent in her 28-year career. She has worked with Alexander Payne, an Academy Award-winning director and Omaha native, on multiple projects filmed in the state including "Citizen Ruth," "Nebraska" and "Downsizing." Richards also helped scout locations for 2021 best picture Oscar winner "Nomadland," some of which was filmed in Scottsbluff.