

LANDESS NAMED NATION'S TOP TOURISM DIRECTOR

Iowa Tourism Office Manager Nancy Landess walked away from a recent national convention with the Travel Industry Association of America's (TIA) highest honor - State Tourism Director of the Year. Nancy received the honor at TIA's ESTO (Educational Sessions for Tourism Organizations) conference held recently in Boston. Nancy received the honor from her peers who selected her from among three finalists. The State Tourism Director of the Year Award is given based on success in several areas, including program development, trade and consumer response, and personal and professional skills.

Nancy is a more than 25-year veteran of the Iowa Department of Economic Development, leading the Tourism Office since 1995. She is currently serving her second term as chair of the National Council of State Tourism Directors. Under her leadership, the economic impact of travel in Iowa has grown from \$3.2 billion to \$4.3 billion annually. Nancy was also instrumental in the creation of Iowa's Welcome Center system, the Tourism Office's cooperative advertising opportunities, and the Vision Iowa program. Congratulations, Nancy! ■



INDIANOLA EXHIBIT HONORED AT STATE FAIR

Congratulations to the Indianola Chamber of Commerce whose exhibit was honored recently as the best in the Iowa Tourism Building at the Iowa State Fair. The exhibit was chosen for its creativity and the friendliness of the volunteers who staff it. In recognition of the honor, Indianola will receive a free exhibit space at the fair in 2005. ■

Volunteers from Indianola accept the blue ribbon for best exhibit in the Iowa Tourism Building from Iowa Department of Economic Development Director Mike Blouin.

INTERSTATE WELCOME CENTERS TO REMAIN OPEN EVERY DAY

Because of the support of tourism organizations from around the state, the Iowa Tourism Office is able to keep the state's four Interstate Welcome Centers open each day. Beginning September 1, the four centers – located near Wilton, Davis City and Sergeant Bluff – are open daily from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The center at Underwood is the Department of Transportation's last seasonal rest area, so the welcome center there has closed for the winter. When it opens again in mid-April, it and the other three Interstate Centers will each welcome travelers daily from 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Thanks to every organization that is participating in the Tourism Office's new brochure distribution program. The tremendous support from Iowa's tourism industry means thousands of travelers can learn more about Iowa and extend their stay in our state because these four welcome centers will be open during the peak travel times. ■

'25 CENTS, 25 EVENTS' HIGHLIGHTS LABOR DAY TRAVEL IN IOWA

The U.S. Mint launches the commemorative Iowa quarter on September 3, just before Labor Day weekend, one of the biggest travel holidays of the year. On its Web site, traveliowa.com, the Iowa Tourism Office is encouraging summer's end getaways by highlighting 25 great Labor Day vacation ideas. The promotion is called "25 cents, 25 events."

"For many people, Labor Day is their last three-day weekend for several months," Nancy Landess, manager of the Iowa Tourism Office, said. "We are inviting people from around the Midwest to take advantage of this long weekend by getting away from home to enjoy an Iowa event or attraction."

From the Artsplash Festival of Arts in Sioux City to the Dayton Championship Rodeo in Dayton, and the Iowa Renaissance Festival in the Amana Colonies, communities across Iowa are rolling out the red carpet for visitors this Labor Day weekend.

Also during the Labor Day holiday, travelers can save a few quarters by visiting traveliowa.com where coupons may be downloaded for money-saving offers at restaurants, hotels, bed and breakfasts and retail outlets. ■



IOWA TOURISM CONFERENCE IS OCTOBER 18 - 20

Little more than one month remains until nearly 300 tourism enthusiasts from around Iowa will gather in Cedar Rapids for the 2004 Iowa Tourism Conference. Registration information for the event is available now in the Travel Industry section at traveliowa.com. The Web site also contains details about special pre-conference events hosted by the Cedar Rapids CVB. This year's conference includes a host of unique educational sessions focusing on grant writing, crisis communications, Internet success and much more. Don't miss this chance to learn, network and enjoy eastern Iowa! ■

GOVERNOR ANNOUNCES \$5.25 MILLION GRANT TO BURLINGTON AND DES MOINES COUNTY



Governor Tom Vilsack announced in August that the Vision Iowa board will invest \$5.25 million in the Great River Gateway project in Burlington and Des Moines County. The announcement came at the board's monthly meeting in Des Moines at which several communities also received awards from Vision Iowa's sister program, the Community Attraction and Tourism program (CAT).

The more than \$27 million Great River Gateway project includes several components designed to enhance cultural and recreational opportunities in the area. These include improvements to Community Field, home of the Burlington Bees minor league baseball team; renovations to Burlington Memorial Auditorium; construction of a new public library; rehabilitation of the current public library so that it can become the Des Moines County Historical Center; and major enhancements at the Big Hollow Recreation Area. Of the \$5.25 million award, \$1 million will come from CAT to assist the Big Hollow Recreation Area, while the remaining



\$4.25 million will come from Vision Iowa and will aid all other portions of the project.

To date, 11 communities have received more than \$215 million from Vision Iowa. Late last year, officials in Cedar Rapids applied for \$14 million in funding for an initiative called Cedar Bend. That application is still pending. At the August meeting, representative from Storm Lake were on hand to debut an application to create a destination park in the northwest Iowa community; they are asking for \$9 million. About \$7.75 million is still available through Vision Iowa.

Also at the August meeting, the board approved awards to several communities from CAT. Prior to today's meeting, about \$14 million remained in the CAT fund, which will receive an influx of \$12 million in new cash each year for the next six years, thanks to legislation passed during the most recent session. While 136 communities have received investments from CAT, 28 communities are still asking for nearly \$20 million, and Vision Iowa leaders expect a steady stream of additional requests for funding.

PROJECTS THAT RECEIVED AWARDS AT TODAY'S MEETING INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

Heart of Hawarden, Hawarden	\$300,000 grant
Rathbun Regional Water/Lighthouse & Visitors Center, Centerville	\$500,000 grant
West Bend Historical Museum, West Bend	\$40,000 grant
Glidden Swimming Pool, Glidden	\$93,000 grant
Lost Island Prairie Wetland Nature Center, Ruthven	\$50,000 grant
Schildberg Recreational Area, Atlantic	\$100,000 grant
Humboldt Family Aquatic Center, Humboldt	\$93,000 grant
New Iowa Civic Center, Columbus Junction	\$525,000 grant
Denison Community Conference Center, Denison	\$450,000 grant
Peosta Sports Complex - Phase II, Peosta	\$100,000 grant
Family Enrichment Project, Fayette	\$285,000 grant
1st Avenue Downtown Streetscape, Dyersville	\$275,000 grant
Lee County Fairgrounds Expansion Project, Lee County	\$125,000 grant
Strawberry Point Revitalization, Strawberry Point	\$200,000 grant
Marengo (Carnegie) Public Library Renovation/Expansion, Marengo	\$400,000 grant



2004 CALENDAR OF EVENTS DEADLINE IS THIS MONTH

September 15 is the deadline to submit events for the printed version of the 2005 *Iowa Calendar of Events*. All events submitted by this date will be considered for our printed Calendar of Events and Web site calendar. Events submitted after that date will be eligible for the Web site calendar only.

There are three ways to send event information:

1 You may submit your event electronically, through our on-line submission form. Log on to www.traveliowa.com, click on the Events Calendar button, choose "Submit an event" and follow the instructions for filling out and submitting your form. We recommend this method.

2 You can download and print the submission form from our Web site. At the bottom of this Web page www.traveliowa.com/calendar/submit_index.htm you'll see a line that says "printable submission form." Click on this line and print out the form, make as many copies as you need to submit your events, and mail or fax in.

3 Request that a submission form be mailed, faxed or e-mailed to you by contacting Kathy Bowermaster at 888-472-6035 or kathy.bowermaster@ided.state.ia.us.

Remember that you only need to submit your events using one method – you don't need to fill out a paper form and an on-line form. Also, please do not submit a typed list of your events. We need to have a separate form or sheet with complete information on each event for data entry and filing. ■

ABA HONORS TWO IOWA EVENTS

The American Bus Association (ABA) has selected two Iowa events for inclusion in its prestigious list of the Top 100 Events in North America. The events are the Van Buren County Barn Tour, held June 25, 2005, and Boone's Pufferbilly Days, held September 9 - 11, 2005. ABA's Top 100 Events Committee, comprised of motorcoach and tour operators, selects 100 events in the U.S. and Canada for this annual inventory. The diverse list, chosen from more than 500 event submissions each year, includes festivals, exhibitions, fairs, sporting events and more. One event from Canada and one event from the United States are singled out each year for top honors in that country. ■

IOWA REPRESENTED AT TRAVEL WRITER CONFERENCE

Iowa Tourism Office Communications Manager Shawna Lode will represent the state at the Midwest Travel Writer Association's fall conference in Duluth, Minnesota, September 8 - 12. Leads from the conference will be available later this month. To request a copy of them, please contact Shawna at 888-472-6035 or shawna.lode@ided.state.ia.us. ■

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