

STATE FAIR HELPS IOWANS CELEBRATE TOURISM

The Iowa Tourism Office is joining forces with the Iowa State Fair this year to celebrate Iowa's tourism industry and the \$4.3 billion it generates annually. As part of National Tourism Week, May 8 - 16, each of the state's 21 welcome centers will give away a pair of tickets to the Iowa State Fair, which celebrates its 150th year in 2004. ■



TRAVEL COUNSELORS ENJOY CENTRAL IOWA

Travel counselors from Iowa's welcome centers set out to explore south central Iowa in mid-April as part of the annual familiarization tour and training. The welcome center tour visits a different part of Iowa each year and gives travel counselors a first-hand look at the many destinations Iowa offers. Another important component of the three-day event is a half-day training session that provides updates from the directors of Iowa's three travel regions, the Department of Natural Resources and the Department of Economic Development. In 2005, the tour heads to eastern Iowa. ■



Suzanne Linton of the Best Western Canterbury Inn poses with Fairfield, the Iowa State Fair mascot, at welcome center training. Best Western Hotels of Iowa graciously sponsored an afternoon "fair food" break for training participants.



Travel counselors from welcome centers around Iowa visited several tourism destinations during the annual Welcome Center Training and Fam Tour, held April 12 - 14. Among the highlights of the tour was a stop at the Inn of the Six Toed Cat in Allerton, where this photo was taken.

FERGUSON HONORED AT UNITY DAY

Congratulations to Carla Ferguson who received the 2004 Iowa Tourism Leadership Award at Iowa Tourism Unity Day on April 30. The Executive Director of the Marion County Economic Development Commission, Carla is a 10-year veteran of the travel industry and has served in various leadership roles with the Travel Federation of Iowa, Central Iowa Tourism Region and Iowa Group Travel Association. Along with representatives from the Pella Chamber of Commerce, Carla helped secure a million-dollar federal grant to aid the development of the Cordova Center on the Rock. ■



VISION IOWA CONSIDERS TWO APPLICATIONS, ACCEPTS CAT REQUESTS

At its meeting in April, the Vision Iowa board heard a presentation from representatives of a project in Burlington that is requesting more than \$7 million in state aid. Cedar Rapids is also vying for \$14 million from the Vision Iowa program, which has only about \$14 million left in its coffers. The board will continue to review these two applications at their next meeting on May 12 in Des Moines.

Vision Iowa's CAT review committee is still accepting applications seeking financial assistance from this program. About \$2.8 million is available for awards and the group is accepting applications through May 14. On the last day of the session, the Iowa Legislature approved a six-year extension of the CAT program. However, it is uncertain when the Vision Iowa Board will review a second round of CAT applications.

Contact Vision Iowa Program Manager Nichole Warren with any questions at nichole.warren@ided.state.ia.us or 515-242-4827. ■

IOWA REPRESENTED AT TRAVEL WRITER EVENT

Shawna Lode, the Iowa Tourism Office's Communication Manager, will represent the industry at the Midwest Travel Writer Association's annual spring conference held May 12 - 16 in Portland, Maine. The event provides a great opportunity for Shawna to talk one-on-one with travel writers and editors from around the Midwest. The conference also includes educational sessions and a trade show. Leads from the conference will be available in late May. ■



2005 COOPERATIVE ADVERTISING PROGRAM ANNOUNCED

The Tourism Office has announced its 2005 Cooperative Advertising Program, offering popular Midwest newspapers and magazines along with a new group travel option and more reach into the Chicago market. The advertising program is supported by a major investment from the Iowa Tourism Office, which negotiates discounts of up to 70 percent on magazine and newspaper ads for its Iowa tourism industry partners.

Publications included in the co-op again are: *The Iowan*, *Midwest Living*, *Home & Away*, *Midwest Meetings*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, *Good Housekeeping*, *Better Homes & Gardens*, *USA Weekend*, *The Des Moines Register*, *The Minneapolis Star Tribune*, and *The Chicago Tribune*. Two new options in 2005 include *The Group Travel Leader* and a network of upscale suburban Chicago newspapers published by the Pioneer Press. Advertising space will also be available in the *Iowa Travel Guide*.

Learn more about the cooperative advertising program by visiting the Travel Industry section of www.traveliowa.com, or contact Kathy Bowermaster at kathy.bowermaster@ided.state.ia.us or 888-472-6035. Space reservations for the Travel Guide are due June 30, 2004. Space reservations for the other co-op opportunities are due November 1, 2004. ■

IMAGINE IOWA'S FUTURE TOUR KEEPS ROLLING

Since early April, communities from around Iowa have been playing host to an important series of events created to discuss the future of our state. Called the "Imagine Iowa's Future Tour," the 10-week traveling show is spearheaded by the group Iowans For a Better Future (IBF).

Born from the Governor Vilsack-appointed Iowa 2010 Commission, IBF's mission is to help Iowans initiate and sustain real change through education, networking and resource development. The Imagine Iowa's Future tour provides a public platform to discuss issues critical to the development of our state, including economic development, the environment, efficient government and much more.

Learn more about the tour events that will take place now through June 4 by visiting imagineiowasfuture.com. ■

IOWANS LEARN FROM, PITCH TO MINNESOTA MEDIA AND TOUR PLANNERS

Nearly 100 Iowans headed north of the border on March 31 and April 1 to attend two important events designed to attract group travelers and regional media coverage. Held March 31, "Meet the Media" featured Becky Beyers, travel editor of the *St. Paul Pioneer Press* and Chris Welch, travel editor of the *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. The two shared insights and suggestions for working with travel writers and editors.

On the following day, the Iowa Tourism Office hosted the "Plant Iowa Showcase," which attracted more than 40 tour planners from the Minneapolis area. The day-long event began with a talk from Sacramento-based tour planner Clayton Whitehead who relayed his Iowa travel experiences. After lunch, the travel planners visited exhibits featuring every part of Iowa. The day wrapped up with a grand prize drawing sponsored by several exhibitors. ■



Clayton Whitehead, a tour operator from California who has escorted several group tours to Iowa, shared his hilarious and heartwarming travel experiences with attendees at the Plant Iowa Showcase.

Fenner Stevenson from the Boone and Scenic Valley Railroad dressed the part at the Plant Iowa Showcase. Here, he explains his destination to a group tour planner from Minnesota.



ONLINE COUPONS ARE BACK FOR SUMMER TRAVEL

Anticipating a busy summer travel season, the Iowa Tourism Office is again offering money-saving coupons on its Web site, traveliowa.com. Any tourism-related business or organization in the state may submit a coupon. The specials will appear online from May 1 through September 6, although the discounted offer may extend past that date. A public relations campaign will encourage travelers to visit the site, print, and redeem the coupons. To learn more, contact Kathy Bowermaster at kathy.bowermaster@ided.state.ia.us or 888-472-6035. Or visit traveliowa.com and click on the Travel Savings icon. ■

WELCOME CENTER TRAVEL COUNSELORS CERTIFIED

Congratulations to Mary Beth McNabb of the Amana Colonies Welcome Center and Nola Moser of the Amana I-80 Welcome Center. Each of these volunteers recently earned the honor of becoming a Certified Iowa Travel Counselor.



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