

UNITY DAY IS APRIL 30

It's not too late to register for Iowa Tourism Unity Day, an annual motivational event that serves as the unofficial start of the busy summer travel season and Iowa Tourism Month, which is celebrated throughout May. Unity Day will take place on Friday, April 30 at the Hy-Vee Conference Center in West Des Moines. Don't miss out on this opportunity to enjoy an insightful keynote speaker, announcement of the 2005 cooperative advertising opportunities, a recap of the legislative session and much more. Registration information is available at traveliowa.com. Please direct your questions to Lonie Mezera at 888-472-6035 or lonie.mezera@ided.state.ia.us. ■

NEW CAT FUNDING

At its meeting in March, the Vision Iowa board announced that the group will begin considering new applications for funding from the Community Attraction and Tourism program (CAT). While the Vision Iowa program provides assistance to projects costing at least \$20 million, CAT is an arm of Vision Iowa that assists smaller initiatives. To date, CAT has aided 119 projects in all parts of the state.

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NEW TRANSPORTATION MAP IS AVAILABLE

Updated with more than 670 changes, the 2004 Iowa Transportation Map is available now. The map shows all state highways, major county roads, major streets in the state's 16 largest cities, a legend listing the cities shown on the map and their populations, airports and rail lines, and an updated chart to find mileage between selected Iowa cities.

The map's cover features a design consistent with the Iowa Travel Guide. The publication also includes a message from Governor Vilsack and Lt. Governor Pederson.

Copies of the 2004 map are available at any Iowa Welcome Center, the state's 18 driver's license locations and six district offices. The map can also be viewed online at www.iowadotmaps.com.



Copies of the map can be obtained by calling the Iowa Tourism Office at 800-345-IOWA or by visiting www.traveliowa.com. The Iowa Tourism Office distributes 500,000 maps a year. ■

MISSISSIPPI RIVER ORGANIZATION EARNS NATIONAL HONOR



AMERICA'S BYWAYS™

The Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission recently became the first organization in the nation to earn the "Go The Extra Mile" award. Given by the Washington D.C.-based National Scenic Byways Program, this award recognizes several accomplishments:

- Making it easier for byway travelers to find their way;
- Fully implementing the America's Byways signage along the Great River Road in Iowa;
- Having the vision to use National Scenic Byways Program seed grant funds to implement the signage;
- Accomplishing this project through the cooperation of Iowa's road management authorities.

The Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission is part of a 10-state organization that works collectively to preserve, promote, and enhance the scenic, historic, and recreational resources of the Mississippi River, to foster economic growth in the corridor, and to develop the national, scenic and historic parkway known as the Great River Road.

This month, Dubuque hosts the Mississippi River Parkway Commission's semi-annual meeting. ■



The Herbert Hoover National Historic Site in West Branch is one of four Iowa attractions that is part of the National Park Service.

CELEBRATE NATIONAL PARKS WEEK

The Travel Industry Association of America (TIA) recently launched a new campaign celebrating America's national attractions, including four in Iowa. "See America's National Parks" is a partnership between TIA, the National Park Service and the National Park Foundation. Hosted on a special micro site at www.SeeAmerica.org, one of the primary goals of the program is to raise awareness of the breadth and diversity of the 388 designated sites within the National Park Service system.

The site includes links to Iowa's four nationally designated destinations: Effigy Mounds National Monument, the Herbert Hoover National Historic Site, the Lewis and Clark National Historic Trail and the Mormon National Historic Trail. The site also features links to each of the nation's national treasures, travel deals, and vacation packages.

The country will celebrate National Parks Week from April 18 - 25. ■

STOUX CITY TO HOST LEWIS & CLARK STAMP CEREMONY

Next month, the U.S. Postal Service will issue a new stamp to commemorate the bicentennial of the official launch of the Lewis & Clark expedition on May 14, 1804. The stamp art depicts Meriwether Lewis and William Clark standing together on a promontory, surveying the countryside.

Sioux City is one of 11 locations along the Lewis & Clark route that will host an official First Day of Issue stamp ceremony. It will take place on May 14 at Southern Hills Mall, located at 4400 Sergeant Road.

The Postal Service also will issue a special 32-page prestige booklet titled *Lewis & Clark: The Corps of Discovery, 1804-1806*. The booklet includes 20 first-class stamps and features informative text, historic illustrations, and scenic photographs. The prestige booklet will include two stamp designs featuring individual portraits of Lewis and Clark. ■



IOWA REPRESENTED AT POW WOW

Iowa Tourism Office Partnerships and Group Travel Manager Mark Eckman will attend the Travel Industry Association of America's Annual Pow Wow in Los Angeles on April 24 - 28. International Pow Wow is the travel industry's premier international marketplace. The event brings together more than 1,000 travel organizations from every region of the nation and more than 1,500 international delegates and domestic buyers from more than 65 countries. Over three days, representatives from these organizations conduct business negotiations that result in close to \$3 billion in future travel to the United States. ■

2005 TRAVEL GUIDE IN THE WORKS

Iowa Tourism Office Publications Manager Kathy Bowermaster is in the early stages of crafting the 2005 *Iowa Travel Guide*. Forms to update your attraction, hotel/motel, bed and breakfast, and campground information will arrive later this month. Organizations and businesses have until June 1 to return their forms to insure inclusion in the *Travel Guide*. Also, please remember that the information gathered for the Travel Guide is the same information that is used to update traveliowa.com. ■

CAT Funding – continued from page 1

Legislators committed \$12.5 million annually to CAT through the end of the 2004 fiscal year. But a tremendous demand for the money meant the board awarded the entire amount by the fall of 2003.

Vision Iowa board chair Michael Gartner said that for various reasons some grant recipients have returned their awards. Other award recipients owed money back to the program because projects were completed under budget. The result is approximately \$2.7 million in unclaimed money.

“The Vision Iowa board is charged with using the state’s money to fund as many worthwhile quality of life projects as possible,” Gartner said. “The changes that have occurred with some previous award recipients mean that money is available now to help even more communities build cultural, recreational, entertainment and educational facilities.”

New applications must be received by May 14, 2004. Communities or organizations that are interested in applying for CAT funds should visit www.visioniowa.org or call 515-242-4827. ■

IOWA REPRESENTED AT LOCATIONS TRADESHOW

From April 16 - 18, Iowa Film Office Manager Tom Wheeler will attend the Locations Trade Show in Santa Monica, Calif. This event is hosted by the Association of Film Commissioners International and gives exhibitors a chance to meet with people charged with finding appropriate sites for upcoming film projects. ■

TRAVEL COUNSELORS SET TO EXPLORE CENTRAL IOWA

Travel counselors from the state’s welcome centers will hit the road for their annual training and tour on April 12 - 14. 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. This year, the tour ventures through south central Iowa and includes highlights such as the Inn of the Six-Toed Cat in Allerton, the Shoppes at Bradley Hall in Centerville, and the Summerset Inn and Winery in Indianola.

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. ■



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