

## Iowans gather this month for Legislative Showcase

The Travel Federation of Iowa's annual Legislative Showcase takes place February 15 at the Iowa State Fairgrounds in Des Moines. This annual event attracts a majority of Iowa lawmakers. A limited number of exhibit spaces are available to tourism-related organizations.

To learn more about how you can be a part of this event, contact Michele Walker at 888-623-4232 or [witr@traveliowa.org](mailto:witr@traveliowa.org) or Shirley Phillips at 712-662-7383 or [setd@pionet.net](mailto:setd@pionet.net).

Earlier in the day, everyone is invited to attend a legislative briefing in the auditorium of the Wallace Building, located just across the street from the state capitol. During this event, legislators will provide their thoughts on the 2005 legislative session. ●

## *Iowa Tourism Unity Day is fast approaching*

**M**ark your calendars for April 29 when hundreds of tourism enthusiasts will gather at the Hy-Vee Conference Center in West Des Moines for the annual Iowa Tourism Unity Day, made possible again this year by the support of the Meredith Travel Group and *Midwest Living* magazine. A message from Iowa native and motivational speaker Mary LoVerde will highlight the event. The schedule also includes a recap of the legislative session and presentation of the Iowa Tourism Leadership Award. Learn more about Unity Day or register for the event by visiting the Travel Industry page at [traveliowa.com](http://traveliowa.com). Nomination forms are also online for the Iowa Tourism Leadership Award. ●



***Made possible again this year by support from the Meredith Travel Group and Midwest Living magazine, Iowa Tourism Unity Day will feature a message from Iowa native and motivational speaker Mary LoVerde.***



## Mark Eckman attends ABA

Iowa Tourism Office Group Travel Manager, Mark Eckman, will attend the American Bus Association's annual marketplace in Chicago, February 4-9. A top event for the group travel industry, ABA offers North American motor-coach and tour owners and operators a chance to meet with representatives of the travel industry in prescheduled seven-minute appointments.

Mark's leads from ABA are available by request. Simply contact Mark at 888-472-6035 or [mark.eckman@iowalifechanging.com](mailto:mark.eckman@iowalifechanging.com). ●



**February 16-20, 2005**

## Iowa exhibits at Des Moines SPORTSHOW

Sports enthusiasts from around central Iowa can learn more about our state's travel opportunities at the 63rd Annual Des Moines SPORTSHOW. Held February 16-20 at the Varied Industries Building at the Iowa State Fairgrounds, the show will include a booth sponsored by the Iowa Tourism Office and staffed by members of eastern, western and central Iowa tourism regions and troopers from the Iowa State Patrol. SPORTSHOW attendees can take home an Iowa Travel Guide and other local literature to help them plan their Iowa getaway. ●

## *Vision Iowa board meets in February*

The Vision Iowa board did not meet in January but will convene on February 9, 2005. Currently, the board is considering 24 Community Attraction and Tourism (CAT) applications that are requesting a combined total of \$18.8 million. About \$3.4 million is still available from CAT this fiscal year. All Vision Iowa funds are allocated and no applications are pending. ●

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# Travel Trends

Research is integral to the success of Iowa's tourism industry. At the Iowa Tourism Office, a great amount of time and energy is dedicated to continually surveying the traveling public—in our state and around the world—so that we may spend our resources wisely, develop an effective marketing plan, and communicate the impact of travel to our constituents.

Over the next several months, please look to this new column, "Travel Trends," to learn about some of the research projects the Iowa Tourism Office conducts.

And don't forget to visit [traveliowa.com](http://traveliowa.com) often, as most of our research is housed there, and is available for your local needs.

## 2004 IOWA WELCOME CENTER SURVEY

Throughout the year, travel counselors at 16 Iowa Welcome Centers administered a survey to every 46th travel party that visits the center. The purpose of the survey is to determine the trip characteristics of the visitors stopping at the centers. Each welcome center had to complete between 150 and 200 surveys during the year in order to participate in the study.

### *Executive Summary*

#### **All Iowa Welcome Centers**

- Iowa Welcome Centers serve the travelers visiting our state by providing travel information and encouraging travelers to extend their stay in Iowa.
- During 2004, 21 Iowa Welcome Centers served 695,622 individuals (down 1.1 percent from 703,471 in 2003) and 257,353 travel parties (down 2.8 percent from 2003).
- These travelers spent an estimated \$217 million during their trips in Iowa.
- Iowa Welcome Center travel counselors influenced 32 percent of the travelers to extend their stay.
- Travelers who extended their stay spent an additional \$30.6 million, up from \$30.2 million in 2003.

If you have any questions about the 2004 Iowa Welcome Center Survey, please contact LuAnn Reinders at [luann.reinders@iowalifechanging.com](mailto:luann.reinders@iowalifechanging.com) or 888-472-6035. ●

## **Sixteen Iowa Welcome Centers**

- Total estimated traveler spending for these 16 centers was \$181 million (up from \$153 million in 2003) for parties taking one trip.
- Per day spending per travel party increased to \$205.72 from \$189.76 in 2003. Lodging accounted for 30.5 percent (\$62.76), food 22.6 percent (\$46.57), transportation 20.6 percent (\$42.36), entertainment 13.5 percent (\$27.77) and shopping 12.8 percent (\$26.26).
- 32.1 percent of the travelers extended their trip in Iowa after receiving information at an Iowa Welcome Center.
- 48.8 percent of the travelers came from Iowa's target markets of Iowa, Illinois, Kansas, Missouri, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Nebraska, and South Dakota. International visitors comprised 1.6 percent of the travelers.
- Travelers spent an average of 4.1 days in Iowa, up from 3.8 days in 2003.
- Travelers took an average of 2.7 trips in Iowa, comparable to 2003.
- Families accounted for 59 percent of all travel parties.
- The average travel party had 2.6 people.
- Hotels and motels were the primary places for lodging with 48.7 percent of the travelers staying there.
- Vacationing travelers made up 49.8 percent and those visiting friends and family were 30.7 percent of the respondents.
- Travelers indicated historical areas as the biggest reason for their visit, followed by general sightseeing and visiting friends and family.



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## *IDED welcomed Janel Davis in January*

In January, the Iowa Department of Economic Development welcomed Janel Davis, an intern from Buena Vista University. Janel will graduate this May with a double major in mass communication and graphic design. After graduation, she plans to continue her education at the University of Northern Iowa where she will join the communications studies program. ●

