

Patsy Ramacitti Receives Distinguished Service Award

Patsy Ramacitti, Chair, Iowa Mississippi River Parkway Commission and Secretary/Treasurer of the National Mississippi River Parkway Commission, was presented the 2005 Distinguished Service Award from the National Mississippi River Parkway Commission (MRPC). The award was received at the 2005 Annual Meeting on September 22-24 in Paducah, Kentucky.

Ms. Ramacitti was presented the award for her substantial contribution to the development and promotion of the Great River Road and its amenities in Iowa and beyond, and her exemplary commitment to the purpose of the MRPC as set forth in its mission statement.

The National Mississippi River Parkway Commission is a ten-state organization which 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 and promote the Great River Road National Scenic Byway.

The Iowa Tourism Office would like to congratulate Patsy on this great honor! ■

Iowa's Newest Welcome Center Now Open!



Southern Loess Hills
Interpretive Welcome Center

The grand opening of Iowa's newest partnership welcome center, Southern Loess Hills Interpretive Welcome Center, was held on October 29, 2005.

The event introduced the center and showcased local culture and food.

Displays and interactive exhibits throughout the center tell the region's history about the Loess Hills, American Indians, pioneers, the Underground Railroad and the wetlands. Pat Shull, president of the center stated, "Fremont County has more wetlands than any other county in Iowa."

The center is located west of Interstate 29 on Highway 2 in Fremont County. The center is open Monday-Saturday 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. and Sundays, noon - 4 p.m. A gift shop is also featured in the center.

To place your brochures at this partnership Iowa Welcome Center please contact:

Pat Hume
Welcome Center Manager
Southern Loess Hills
Interpretive Welcome
Center
2804 Crossroads Drive
Percival, IA 51648
712.382.1272

For information regarding distributing brochures in any of Iowa's Welcome Centers, please contact LuAnn Reinders at luann.reinders@iowalifechanging.com or 515.242.4732. ■



Water Quality and Recreation Attractions Receive Vision Iowa Investments

Community Attraction and Tourism aid approved at October Board Meeting

Four projects from across Iowa received more than \$2.4 million in investments from the Vision Iowa board in October. At its monthly meeting at the Hotel Pattee in Perry, the board approved awards to projects for Arnolds Park, Mt. Ayr, Des Moines and Algona from its Community Attraction and Tourism (CAT) program. The CAT program has assisted 215 projects and invested more than \$69 million.

Board Chairman Andy Anderson said, "Governor Vilsack has challenged Iowans to improve the quality of Iowa's streams, rivers and lakes. Vision Iowa wants to do its part and has chosen three projects this month that will improve recreation and water quality in Iowa. We believe that the Iowa Great Lakes Maritime Museum Project, the Gooseberry Lake Project and the Kossuth County - Smith Lake Nature Center will assist not only in improving the quality of Iowa's waterways, but will provide an improved quality of life and economy."

"Vision Iowa is also very proud to support the Drake Stadium Renovation Project because it is the host of the internationally recognized Drake Relays," Anderson said. "Every year the Drake Relays attract over 37,500 visitors from over 40 states and 70 countries to Iowa. There is no other place where Iowa high school athletes can mix with Olympic gold medalists. We want to see the Drake Relays maintain their national and international reputation."



PROJECTS THAT RECEIVED CAT FUNDING

Iowa Great Lakes Maritime Museum, Arnolds Park

Total project cost:	\$480,891
Requesting:	\$240,445
Amount Awarded:	\$225,000

The Iowa Great Lakes Maritime Museum Project includes the redevelopment of the gateway to Arnolds Park Amusement Park and Iowa Great Lakes Maritime Museum. The gateway project has a dual role of improving the entrance to the amusement park and museum while significantly reducing the level of damaging storm water run-off into the Iowa Great Lakes. The project will include bio-retention cells that absorb damaging run-off, as well as an plaza containing educational signs and exhibits allowing park visitors to learn about storm water management. The project should improve the water quality of the Iowa Great Lakes.

Gooseberry Lake, Mt. Ayr/Ringgold County

Total project cost:	\$8,407,335
Requesting:	\$1,734,135
Amount Awarded:	\$1,050,000

This project includes construction of a 565-acre lake on 2,365 acres of contiguous lands, three miles northeast of Mount Ayr. The lake will have an outdoor recreation area, managed by the Ringgold County Conservation Board, on 182 acres for camping, rental cabins, restrooms and shower facilities, and shelters. It will also include open space for hunting, hiking, wildlife watching, and other outdoor activities.

Kossuth County/ Smith Lake Nature Center

Total Project Cost:	\$947,000
Requested:	\$173,000
Amount Awarded:	\$164,350

The Smith Lake Center will be a 10,000 square foot facility constructed north of Algona at Smith Lake Park. The facility will include educational displays, a multi-purpose room with kitchen, library and resource center, a teaching prep room and office space for the Kossuth County Conservation Board. The facility will be handicapped accessible and will incorporate several energy efficient features.

Drake Stadium Renovation Project- Drake University – Des Moines

Total Project Cost:	\$10,338,337
Requested:	\$1,400,000
Amount Awarded:	\$1,000,000

This project includes major renovations to Drake University's stadium, including reconfiguration and resurfacing of the existing track, installation of an artificial field surface for football and soccer, repair of the stadium's brick structure, seating improvements, improvements to the concessions, renovation of the press box and additional lightening. Two new buildings will be constructed to house locker rooms for visiting teams, concession areas and restrooms.

Individuals, organizations honored at Iowa Tourism Conference

The Iowa Tourism Office and the Travel Federation of Iowa (TFI) presented 16 awards recently at the Iowa Tourism Conference in Council Bluffs. The awards honored organizations, businesses and people who have made considerable contributions to the Iowa tourism industry.

- **Web Site Award**
(population less than 10,000)
www.clearlakeiowa.com
- **Web Site Award**
(population more than 10,000)
www.SeeDesMoines.com
- **Technical Marketing Award**
Reiman Gardens
- **Hospitality in Tourism Award**
Quad Cities Convention & Visitors Bureau
- **Media Friend of Tourism –**
Best of the Midwest - Rediscovering America's Heartland
- **Individual Friend of Tourism**
Melvyn Houser, Chair
Pottawattamie County Board of Supervisors
- **Corporate Friend of Tourism**
Union Pacific Railroad
- **County of the Year**
Marion County
- **Consumer Publication Award**
(population less than 10,000)
Vacation Okoboji Magazine

- **Consumer Publication Award**
(population more than 10,000)
Greater Des Moines Planner's Guide
- **Tourism Event of the Year**
(population more than 10,000)
Sturgis Falls Celebration
- **Tourism Event of the Year**
(population less than 10,000)
Fairfield 1st Fridays Art Walk
- **Tourism Attraction of the Year**
(population less than 10,000)
The Danish Windmill – Elk Horn
- **Tourism Attraction of the Year**
(population more than 10,000)
The University Museum – UNI
- **Tourism Community of the Year** (population less than 10,000)
Le Mars
- **Tourism Community of the Year** (population more than 10,000)
Council Bluffs

Thanks to our Sponsors!

Each year, the Tourism Conference is successful not only because of you, the attendees, but by the generosity of our sponsors. Here's a big thank you to all those sponsors that made the 2005 Tourism Conference possible!

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- Northwest Communications
- Platinum Hospitality Group
- Quad Cities CVB
- Tanger Outlet Center
- Travel Federation of Iowa
USA Weekend Magazine

Congratulations to all our deserving nominees!

Tourism Office Participates in Group Tour Marketplace

The tourism office joins a number of Iowans in selling the state at the annual National Tour Association Marketplace, November 4-8, 2005 in Detroit. Representing the state office, Mark Eckman expects to meet with more than 20 tour operators through a series of seven-minute appointments. As in past years, Eckman will compile his appointment notes and distribute those leads the week immediately following the event.

To request leads, simply contact the tourism office at 515.242.4770 or mark.eckman@iowalifechanging.com. ■



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New study shows tourism growth

At the 2005 Tourism Conference, Nancy Landess announced new statistics that show tourism in Iowa is a \$5.0 billion industry. An annual report from the Travel Industry Association of America reports that tourism expenditures in Iowa grew 8.3 percent from 2003 to 2004. Tourism employs over 62,000 people in the state of Iowa, generating a payroll of \$969 million in 2004. Domestic travel spending in Iowa directly generated more than \$348.74 million in tax revenue for state and local governments in 2004, a 4.3 percent increase over 2003. The entire study, including information about tourism expenditures in every Iowa county, is available in the Travel Industry section at traveliowa.com. ■

Tourism Generated Expenditures
in Iowa 2000 - 2004

