

2001 LEGISLATIVE SHOWCASE IS ANOTHER SUCCESS

More than 90 legislators and 200 members of the Iowa tourism industry braved an evening of sleet and ice to attend the Travel Federation of Iowa's annual Tourism Legislative Showcase. The event, held February 8, gave lawmakers the opportunity to learn about Iowa's tourism industry during an informal evening of food and drinks. Event organizer Tom Smull said he was pleased with the event, despite the ominous weather. "This showcase has earned quite a reputation among the state's legislators," Tom said. "Each year lawmakers and industry members alike are complimentary of the evening." The showcase capped off a day of events including a morning legislative briefing session and free time in the afternoon for industry members to meet individually with their legislators. ■



Representative Effie Boggess (Clarinda) stopped at Catfish Bend Casino's booth to sample the popular bananas foster and mingle with her colleagues.



Quad Cities CVB CEO Joe Taylor spent some time "talking tourism" with Senator Patrick Deluher (Davenport).



Living History Farms' Publicity Coordinator Mark Snell (far left) chatted with Representative Willard Jenkins and his wife Kay.



Vision Iowa Chair Michael Gartner (at right) used the night as a chance to review some of the state's well known and up-and-coming attractions.

VISION IOWA BOARD BEGINS NEGOTIATIONS

The Vision Iowa Board met in mid-February and approved the start of negotiations for the first awards through the multi-million dollar program. The 13-member board set in motion a negotiating team to work with representatives from the America's River project in Dubuque and the Mid-American Recreation and Convention Complex in Council Bluffs. Likewise, a group will negotiate awards from the Community Attraction and Tourism program for the Kirkwood Equestrian Center in Cedar Rapids and the All Seasons Center in Sioux Center. The negotiating teams will determine the type and amount of the awards and will make a recommendation to the entire board for approval. At its February meeting the board also deferred applications for Pella's Windmill Project and Boone's plans for the Iowa Hall of Pride.

The Vision Iowa Board will meet again March 5 and 6 in Des Moines. Please contact Vision Iowa Program Coordinator Susan Judkins at 515-242-4870 or send an e-mail to: susan.judkins@ided.state.ia.us with questions. ■

HOTEL PATTEE EARNS AAA HONOR

Iowa's inventory of AAA Four Diamond rated properties grew recently when the Hotel Pattee in Perry earned the coveted award. The Pattee joins the Abbey Hotel, Davenport; Ameristar Casino Hotel, Council Bluffs; and Quenelles restaurant in Des Moines in receiving the honor. Each year, AAA's team of professional field inspectors conducts unannounced evaluations of the 26,500 AAA-rated lodging properties and 11,000 rated restaurants. The Four Diamond honor means the "properties are excellent and display a high level of service and hospitality." ■



Hotel Pattee proprietor Roberta Green Ahmanson accepted AAA's prestigious Four Diamond in February. Pictured left to right are Bill Clark, Pattee Enterprises; Sherry Freese, AAA Minnesota/Iowa; Green Ahmanson; Ron Siegmund, AAA Minnesota/Iowa; and Howard Kaler, Hotel Pattee.

TRAVEL SHOW LEADS AVAILABLE

Over the last two months, Division of Tourism Group Tour Manager, Mark Eckman, has been busy representing the state at several trade shows. Leads from his appointments at the American Bus Association, Bank Travel Management and the African-American Travel Conference are currently available. Contact Mark at 888-472-6035 or mark.eckman@ided.state.ia.us to request copies of the leads. ■

LOTTERY PROMOTION TAKES SHAPE



Thanks to support from all facets of the tourism industry, the Iowa Division of Tourism has further solidified its partnership with the Iowa Lottery. In mid-February the Tourism Division secured more than 1,000 Iowa getaway packages that will be given to second chance winners of a lottery game that kicks off in late April. The game — titled "Iowa Come Be Our Guest" — offers a top prize of \$1,846. Players that do not win money will have a chance to win an Iowa getaway that includes everything from a stay at a small bed and breakfast to a package from a large hotel. The industry will be among the first to try out the game when it is unveiled at Tourism Unity Day, April 27 in West Des Moines. ■

ADVERTISING CAMPAIGN KICKS OFF IN MARCH

Beginning this month, the Division of Tourism will send its marketing message to the first of 13.9 million adults in the Midwest.

Over the next four months, a combination of television, radio, outdoor and print ads will appear in the state's tourism target markets: Kansas City, Omaha, Sioux Falls, Chicago, Minneapolis/St. Paul, Milwaukee and St. Louis. Each advertisement features the state's toll-free number for tourism information — 800-345-IOWA — and the Web site, www.traveliowa.com. ■

ELECTRONIC NEWS UPDATE AVAILABLE

This month the Division of Tourism will launch a weekly electronic news update service. The *E-Traveler* provides short bullets of news designed to complement the printed monthly newsletter, *The Traveler*. The *E-Traveler's* purpose is two-fold: First, it reminds the industry of deadlines and informs them of meetings. Second, it serves as a great opportunity for readers to use direct links in the e-mail to access information available at www.traveliowa.com. To receive The *E-Traveler*, simply send your e-mail address to Tourism Division Communications Manager, Shawna Lode, at shawna.lode@ided.state.ia.us.

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WELCOME CENTERS EXTENDING TRAVELERS' STAYS

Travelers to Iowa's 23 state and locally owned Welcome Centers are staying longer and spending more money in Iowa, according to the recently released annual study of Iowa's Welcome Centers. The report, which is based on survey results from travelers to each center, shows that last year Welcome Center visitors spent \$160 million in Iowa, up from \$129 million in 1999. Travelers also stayed an average of 3.9 days in Iowa, an increase from 3.8 days in 1999.

Division of Tourism Marketing Manager, LuAnn Reinders, says the survey shows that more than one third of the Welcome Center visitors extended their stays in the state because of the information they received from the centers' helpful staff members. "Nearly one million people visited the Welcome Centers in 2000," LuAnn said. "These travelers are encouraged to visit all of Iowa, including our attractions, events, restaurants and lodging facilities."

The entire 2000 Iowa Welcome Center study is available on-line in the Travel Industry section at www.traveliowa.com. ■

IOWA STATE FAIR PLANS IN MOTION

Each year more than 100,000 people stroll through the Tourism Building at the Iowa State Fair. This year promises the same success when the fair rolls into Des Moines from August 9-19. To make your appearance as a new or returning exhibitor, send a written request to Mike Murwin. Exhibitors from 2000 have the right of first refusal for exhibit space in 2001. Mike will contact interested parties once he knows how many spaces are available this year. Contact Mike at 888-472-6035 or mike.murwin@ided.state.ia.us for details about exhibit costs and obligations. ■

AG TOUR MANUAL DEADLINE APPROACHING

The final deadline to submit information for the 2002-2003 *Iowa Ag Tour Manual* is March 15. Information submitted after that date will not be included in the popular publication. Contact Division of Tourism Group Tour Manager Mark Eckman at 888-472-6035 or mark.eckman@ided.state.ia.us with questions. ■

INDUSTRY SET TO RECOGNIZE LEADERS

Two of the highlights of the annual Iowa Tourism Unity Day — slated for April 27 in West Des Moines — are awarding tourism leadership awards to an exceptional tourism volunteer and paid professional. The Division of Tourism is currently accepting nominations for this year's awards. Nominations are due March 30, and the nomination form is available in the Travel Industry section at www.traveliowa.com. There you'll also find registration forms for Unity Day. Or contact the Tourism Division at 888-472-6035 or tourism@ided.state.ia.us to request either or both forms. ■



Representative Rick Larkin (Fort Madison) teamed up with the Iowa City/Coralville CVB's Melissa Farrens at the Legislative Showcase on February 8, to talk about what's new in eastern Iowa.

See story on page one.

IOWA
DEPARTMENT OF
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Division of Tourism
200 East Grand Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa 50309

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