

LEGISLATURE SETS BUDGETS

Before adjourning in early May, the Iowa Legislature approved the Iowa Department of Economic Development's budget for fiscal year 2002. Because revenues have not met budget projections, all state budgets were cut for the upcoming fiscal year. The Tourism Division's budget beginning July 1 will total just more than \$4.6 million. Funded from two sources, the Division was appropriated \$3.4 million from the general fund and \$1.2 million for marketing from the Community Attraction and Tourism program.

The FY02 budget represents a 24 percent decrease from FY01 when the budget totaled more than \$6.1 million. The reduction will impact advertising, publications, and fulfillment. In addition, the Victor and Waukee Welcome Centers will close on July 1. ■

VISION IOWA BOARD MAKES FOUR AWARDS AT ITS MAY MEETING

The Vision Iowa board awarded four grants in May, providing assistance to projects in Sioux City, Union County, Oelwein and St. Ansgar.

One award came via the Vision Iowa program that provides financial assistance for the development of major projects costing more than \$20 million. The remaining projects were funded through the Community Attraction and Tourism (CAT) program. CAT is a component of Vision Iowa and provides financial assistance for smaller projects.



The Vision Iowa Program award recipient was:

River's Edge, Sioux City - \$21 million grant. The state's funding is contingent upon the applicant securing an additional \$8 million within 90 days. The \$72.7 million project includes the construction of a new events center, Lewis and Clark interpretive center and ground transportation center. The state's investment will offset the cost of constructing the events center, a 10,000-seat facility integrated into the existing historic Municipal Auditorium.

The CAT award recipients were:

Aquatic Center, St. Ansgar - \$60,000 grant. The state's funding supports the construction of a 4,900-square-foot aquatics center that will include a swimming pool, bathhouse and concession area.

Sioux City's River's Edge project will include the Siouxland Events Center, Lewis & Clark interpretive center and ground transportation center. The project joins more than \$110 million in recreational enhancements made in Sioux City over the past decade.

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Three Mile Lake Lodge, Union County (Creston) – \$42,200 grant. Construction of the Three Mile Lake Lodge is the third phase of a four-phase recreation area development plan for Three Mile Lake. The multi-purpose lodge will include a kitchen, restroom facilities and a full basement. Landscaping, handicap accessibility and an access road are also components of the project.

Oelwein Wellness Center and Outdoor Recreation Center, Oelwein – \$350,000 grant. The Wellness Center is a multifaceted facility highlighted by a series of walking/biking trails, a baseball/softball complex, a natural prairie area and much more. The entire project costs \$2.3 million.

At its meeting in May, the board also voted to adopt a new review procedure for CAT applications. The board will consider a revised and improved application form at its meeting on June 13. Until then, no new applications will be accepted. The board also set quarterly deadlines for CAT applications – July 1, 2001, October 1, 2001, December 31, 2001 and April 1, 2002. Board decision-making meetings will occur in September, December, March, and June. Presentations from CAT applicants will occur at those meetings. Interim decisions may be made at the board's discretion. Applications submitted by the deadline may be decided upon during that quarterly review or any future quarterly review at the board's discretion. ■

TAYLOR, ARMSTRONG RECEIVE TOURISM LEADERSHIP AWARDS

More than 265 people attended the annual Iowa Tourism Unity Day, April 30 in West Des Moines, marking the event's best attendance ever. At the event, Joe Taylor from the Quad Cities Convention and Visitors Bureau and Eileen Armstrong from the Adair County Tourism Council received Tourism Leadership Awards. Joe, who won the award for his work as a paid professional, has served as a member of the Iowa Convention and Visitors Bureau Association and has led the Eastern Iowa Tourism Association as both its president and as a member of various committees. The Midwest Travel Writers Association honored him recently with the prestigious Fred Burns Memorial Award for outstanding service to travel writers.



Eileen was one of the founders of the Adair County Tourism Council, she co-created the popular Wings, Wheels and Whistles event, chaired the local RAGBRAI hospitality committee, spearheaded the effort to build the Iowa Aviation Museum and much more. She was honored for her contributions as a tourism volunteer. Congratulations Joe and Eileen! ■

GROUP TOUR PLANNERS EXPERIENCE IOWA

Western Iowa welcomed more than 20 group travel planners from around the nation last month as part of a familiarization tour of the Lewis and Clark Trail from St. Louis to Montana. The group traced the route through Iowa and Nebraska for parts of three days and enjoyed visits to the Western Historic Trails Center in Council Bluffs and Trinity Heights, the Sergeant Floyd Riverboat Museum and Sergeant Floyd Monument in Sioux City. Part of the group spent the night at Harvey's in Council Bluffs, while everyone got an opportunity to dine at Sioux City's Historic Fourth Street. ■

IOWA AT INTERNATIONAL POW WOW

Iowa Division of Tourism Group Tour Manager Mark Eckman and Promotions Manager Mike Murwin attended the Travel Industry Association of America's Annual Pow Wow in Orlando, Florida, May 5-9. International Pow Wow is the world's largest travel show, as more than 6,000 international and domestic travel industry delegates attend for the sole purpose of buying and selling the American travel product. Leads from the show are available by contacting Mark at 888-472-6035 or mark.eckman@ided.state.ia.us. ■

WELCOME CENTER VISITORS GET “A TASTE OF IOWA®”

Each day travel counselors at Iowa's Welcome Centers assist hundreds of people with their travel needs. Visitors at four centers were in for even greater hospitality on May 11 when the Iowa Division of Tourism teamed up with the “A Taste of Iowa®” program to offer a sampling of Iowa treats to guests. The event was part of Iowa's celebration of National Tourism Week, May 6-12. The tastings took place at welcome centers in Sergeant Bluff, Top of Iowa (Northwood), Davis City, and Wilton.

Iowa Division of Tourism Marketing Manager LuAnn Reinders said the goal of the “A Taste of Iowa®” event was twofold. “First, we wanted to give our welcome center visitors a chance to taste and learn about some of the many excellent food products made in Iowa,” she said. “Also, we wanted it to serve as an excuse for Iowans to get out and visit their local welcome centers.”

A Taste of Iowa® is a marketing program managed by the Iowa Department of Economic Development that is designed to help growers, producers and manufacturers sell their products to local, statewide, national or international markets. ■



Gary Witte of Noble Popcorn Farms in Sac City provided his products at the Top of Iowa Welcome Center where hundreds of visitors participated in the “A Taste of Iowa®” event.

LT. GOVERNOR IS AN IOWA TRAVELER IN JUNE

Over seven days in June Lt. Governor Sally Pederson will travel across Iowa on an exciting trip to celebrate culture and tourism in the state. The tour will take the Lt. Governor around the state where she will visit nearly 100 events and attractions, including My Waterloo Days in Waterloo, the Glenn Miller Festival in Clarinda, and the Boone and Scenic Valley Railroad in Boone. The trip kicks off on June 1 in Mason City where the Lt. Governor will attend a Shirley Jones concert. She will end her journey in Des Moines on June 8 where she will present the keynote address at “Imagine Iowa 2010: A Cultural Vision” presented by the Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA). The Division of Tourism is working cooperatively with DCA to coordinate the Lt. Governor's trip. ■

IOWA LOTTERY PROMOTION IN FULL SWING



Leon Roose from Crete, Illinois, tried his luck on an Iowa Lottery ticket at the welcome center near Wilton.

Hundreds of lucky people have won money and various Iowa getaways since the Iowa Lottery scratch game, “Iowa Come Be Our Guest,” hit retailers in early May. Among those winners were several people who stopped at one of Iowa's 23 Welcome Centers on May 9 – Tourism Awareness Day. Each center gave away tickets on this day, extending a special invitation to Welcome Center visitors to lengthen their stay in Iowa.

The scratch tickets are available at lottery retailers statewide. The game continues until all 1.7 million tickets are sold. ■

WELCOME CENTER STAFFERS ARE PROS

Congratulations to several Iowa Welcome Center employees and volunteers who successfully completed an Iowa tourism "exam" and are now Certified Iowa Travel Counselors. The Counselors will receive a certificate and name tag designating them as such. Iowa's newest tourism experts are:

Irma Wardenburg, Amana I-80 Welcome Center
 Barbara Hoehnle, Amana I-80 Welcome Center
 Alice Rudin, Amana I-80 Welcome Center
 Dorothy Kleinmeyer, Amana I-80 Welcome Center
 Luetta Bottaro, Sergeant Bluff Welcome Center
 Alice Killpack, Underwood Welcome Center
 Michelle Westfall, Emmetsburg Welcome Center
 Karen Thielman, Port of Burlington Welcome Center
 Helen Ritter, Davis County Welcome Center
 Janet Wilderdyke, Harrison County Welcome Center
 Janice Kelley, Harrison County Welcome Center
 Don Brooks, Harrison County Welcome Center
 Lila Pitt, Harrison County Welcome Center
 Bill Pitt, Harrison County Welcome Center
 Eva McMillen, Harrison County Welcome Center
 Irene Churchill, Harrison County Welcome Center
 Phyllis Hansen, Harrison County Welcome Center
 Eleanor Soetmelk, Harrison County Welcome Center

WEB IS A RESOURCE FOR 2001 IOWA TOURISM CONFERENCE

It's not too early to start thinking about the 2001 Iowa Tourism Conference, scheduled for October 22-24 in Bettendorf. Log on to the Travel Industry section at www.traveliowa.com to review the event's registration form. Also, look for tourism award nomination forms and silent auction forms, which will be available shortly. ■

SHANA MURRAY JOINS TOURISM STAFF



In early May the Iowa Division of Tourism welcomed a temporary staff member. Nevada, Iowa native Shana Murray will assist at the Tourism Division this summer as an intern spearheading efforts in the Tourism Building during the State Fair and assisting with other tourism projects. Shana is preparing for her senior year at the

University of Northern Iowa where she will earn a degree in Leisure Services. She has already earned her tourism certification from UNI. ■

IOWA
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 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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