

“HAPPY FACE” EVENT IS A SUCCESS!

Twenty-two Iowans hosted tour operators from around North America to an evening of comedy and entertainment at the Put On A Happy Face event held recently in Houston in conjunction with the National Tour Association's annual exchange. The event featured a dinner at Vargo's, a prominent Houston restaurant. After the meal, comedian Wayne Cotter served up laughs for the 40 tour planners in attendance. The Put On A Happy Face planning committee will meet soon to wrap up this year's event and consider plans for future events. ■



Tiffany Menke from the Newton CVB (left) and Ann Vogelbacher from the Central Iowa Tourism Region (right) catch an after-the-show smile with comedian Wayne Cotter.

VISION IOWA BOARD CONTINUES WORK

The Vision Iowa board met November 14 in Cedar Rapids, continuing its work to aid the creation of tourism-related projects in Iowa. Although the group made no awards through the Community Attraction and Tourism (CAT) program or Vision Iowa, the committee did approve plans to start negotiations with representatives from projects in Altoona, Cedar Rapids, Clay County, Lamoni, and Nevada. Fact-finding committees were established for projects in Crawford County and Dallas County. Projects in Avoca and Carroll County were deferred until the applicants provide additional information. The board will continue discussion with representatives from Waterloo, Mason City, Newton, Vedic City and Clinton. Each community is vying for funding from Vision Iowa.

In other business, Vision Iowa Program Coordinator Susan Judkins announced that she has resigned her position and will begin a new job with the Iowa League of Cities in late November.

The Vision Iowa board will meet again December 12 at the Sheraton Four Points on Fleur Drive in Des Moines. ■

LEGISLATIVE DAY IS JANUARY 23



The Travel Federation of Iowa (TFI) and the Iowa Hospitality Association are teaming up again to sponsor Tourism Legislative Day, January 23, 2002. The day-long event begins at 9:00 with a legislative briefing from Iowa lawmakers at the Savery Hotel. Anyone may attend the briefing. Throughout the day, tourism industry members are encouraged to pay visits to their representatives at the capitol. That evening, the Iowa Tourism Building at the Iowa State Fairgrounds is the site of the Legislative Showcase, where communities, businesses and organization set up displays and host visiting legislators. The showcase is a great way for Iowa lawmakers to learn about what's happening in tourism around the state. This event is open only to those who have reserved and paid for an exhibit space. To learn more about Legislative Day or the Legislative Showcase, contact TFI member Vicki Hughes at 319-286-5763 or vickih@cedar-rapids.org.



MARION COUNTY EARNS CEPP CERTIFICATION



Officials from Marion County were recognized recently for earning their initial certification in the Iowa Department of Economic Development's Community Economic Preparedness Program (CEPP). CEPP is designed to assist communities in developing and marketing their local tourism assets. The program's sections include local development of the tourism organization, assessing tourism impact, planning and marketing, and education. The program can be completed in 18 months and requires recertification after three years. Congratulations, Marion County!

Pictured above (left to right): Nancy Landess, Iowa Tourism Office; Robert DeJoode, Marion County Board of Supervisors; K.C. Valster, Marion County Board of Supervisors; Ruby Warren, Marion County Development Commission Chair; William Shepherd, Marion County Board of Supervisors Chair; Debi Flanders, Iowa Department of Economic Development.

LEGISLATORS MEET IN SPECIAL SESSION

The Iowa Legislature met for a rare one-day special session on November 8 in Des Moines. The session was called after Governor Tom Vilsack issued an executive order in October to cut the state's budget across the board by 4.3 percent. During the special session, legislators exempted several government programs from the budget decrease by restoring some funding to various state agencies. The Iowa Department of Economic Development, however, will endure the entire budget reduction, including the loss of about \$150,000 in Tourism Office funds. ■



THREE IOWA EVENTS ARE TOPS

The American Bus Association recently included three Iowa events in its annual round-up of the top 100 events in North America. ***The list included the River-Cade Festival in Sioux City, the Iowa State Fair in Des Moines, and the Midwest Old Threshers Reunion in Mount Pleasant.*** Tourism professionals from the United States and Canada reviewed nominations for the listing. The top 100 events are chosen for their appeal to group travelers and their portrayal of the rich diversity of North America. ■



WANTED


TEAM IOWA LEADERS

Through the end of the year, the Iowa Tourism Office is accepting new recruits to the TEAM Iowa Leaders program. TEAM (Tourism Enhancement And Marketing) Iowa was created by the Iowa Department of Economic Development's Tourism Office to develop a network of state and local tourism professionals and volunteers trained in several areas of tourism development. The team members are available to provide technical outreach support to communities, counties and other organizations.

To learn more about the program, contact Iowa Tourism Office Program Manager Lonie Mezera at 888-472-6035 or lonie.mezera@ided.state.ia.us. ■

REGIONAL TOURISM CONFERENCE COMING TO IOWA

Iowa will host the CenStates Travel and Tourism Research Association (TTRA) when the group holds their annual meeting in Des Moines September 11-13, 2002. CenStates TTRA is a regional chapter of TTRA, focusing on local and regional marketing issues. Iowa Tourism Office Marketing Manager LuAnn Reinders is a former board member of the CenStates group. Members of the Iowa tourism industry are welcome to attend the conference, which will provide a great opportunity to learn applied research techniques. Sessions at past conferences have included case studies for CVBs, web site research tactics and generating local economic impact statistics. Look for registration information and additional details in the near future. ■



CONSUMER CONFIDENCE RISES SLIGHTLY, TIA REPORTS

The Travel Industry Association of America's latest Travel Confidence Survey shows a slight increase in travel intentions by Americans for the next six months. **Americans are looking for travel deals and incentives, with a substantial number of those with travel plans saying that airline discounts, special offers from hotels, special offers to travel within their home state and travel tax credits would make them travel more than already planned.** However, significantly fewer Americans agree that there are many travel discounts available. Among those not planning leisure trips in the next six months, economic concerns continue to be most often mentioned. ■



IOWANS PARTICIPATE IN SEE AMERICA DAY

Thanks to each business and organization that participated in the Travel Industry Association of America's "See America Day" promotion. The initiative encouraged Americans to travel on Veteran's Day, November 11, and take advantage of special offers in each state. Iowa was well represented in the promotion, as several attractions and lodging facilities provided money-saving travel offers. ■

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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Happy Holidays from the Iowa Tourism Office!

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