

## New Interim Director for IDED

Governor Chet Culver and Lt. Governor Patty Judge have appointed Michael Tramontina, current director of the Department of Management, to serve as acting director of the Iowa Department of Economic Development.

Tramontina replaces Mike Blouin, who resigned to take a job with the Greater Dubuque Development Corporation. Announcements of all the Culver/Judge administration's appointments are posted at [www.govelect.iowa.gov](http://www.govelect.iowa.gov). ■

## 2007 publications available

The 2007 Calendar of Events is now available at Iowa Welcome Centers, by ordering online at [www.traveliowa.com](http://www.traveliowa.com), and by calling the toll-free tourism number: 800.345.IOWA. Iowa's current travel packet for requests includes the 2007 *Travel Guide*, Calendar of Events and the 2006 Transportation Map. The 2007 map will be printed and available in March. ■

## Spring/summer tourism advertising campaign begins

**P**ick up a popular Midwest travel publication this spring and you'll likely see one of the Iowa Tourism Office's ads. The Tourism Office has begun their spring 2007 advertising campaign with placements in familiar favorites as well as some new vehicles. Over the next few months, Iowa tourism ads will appear in regional and national publications such as *Midwest Living*, *Endless Vacation*, *Country Living*, *Woman's Day*, *Reader's Digest*, *USA Weekend*, *The Iowan* – more than 25 magazines and travel directories in all.

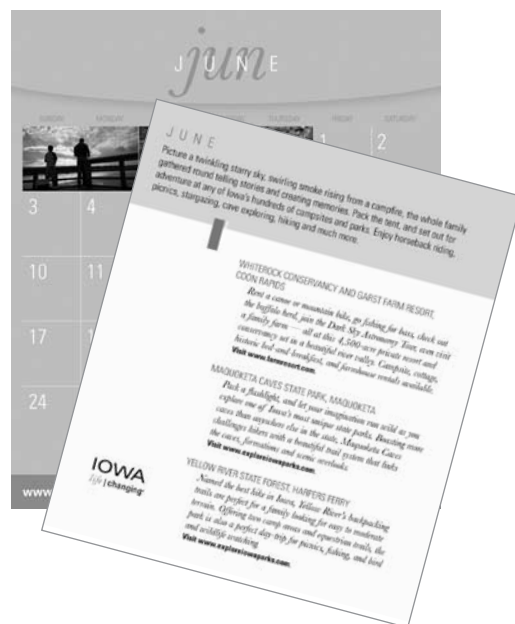
"Our number one priority is influencing travelers to order the Iowa Travel Guide and visit our Web site to see all the attractions, destinations and accommodations we have to offer," said Nancy Landess, manager of the Tourism Office. "We know that when they browse through our publications or begin exploring the Web site, they'll be surprised and pleased at the variety of experiences to choose from in Iowa."

"We have chosen a broad selection of publications, from tried-and-proven performers such as *Midwest Living* to niche magazines like *American Road*, *Parents*, and *Minnesota Meetings & Events*," Landess said. "We will track our responses on a daily basis and monitor Web site activity throughout the campaign."

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## CD mailer holds a calendar year of travel information

The Iowa Tourism Office will be using a new promotional piece to pitch Iowa travel ideas to the media and freelance travel writers. A plastic "jewel box" CD case, designed to prop open and sit upright, will contain 12 calendar pages highlighting photos and story ideas for 2007, along with inserts for Iowa Tourism Month and other special promotions. The Tourism Office will send the CD case to select media and travel writers to help keep the state top of mind for travel coverage during 2007. ■





## Vision Iowa board member resigns

Mary Ellen Chamberlin of Davenport has resigned from the Vision Iowa board after serving since the program's creation in 2000, most recently as vice-chair of the board. She has been a conscientious contributor to the work of the board and to the overall success of the program. Chamberlin has served as a member of numerous national and local boards and commissions, and is currently president of the Riverboat Development Authority, president of the Quad-City Riverfront Council, and a member of the board of directors of the Quad Cities CVB. The Tourism Office extends appreciation and thanks to Mary Ellen for her dedication to the Vision Iowa program.

The next Vision Iowa board meeting will be held February 14 in Johnston. Details of the agenda can be found at [www.visioniowa.org](http://www.visioniowa.org)

## TRACKING THE WEB USER

### Tourism Office studies individual Web site users as they explore [www.traveliowa.com](http://www.traveliowa.com)

**D**o you ever wish you could sit down with your Web users and actually watch as they navigate your Web site? The Iowa Tourism Office did just that, in a series of live and remote Web Usability Tests during October 2006. The Iowa Department of Economic Development contracted with User Centric to conduct Web Usability Testing through one-on-one sessions with participants from Iowa, Illinois and Minnesota. Tourism Office staff watched, listened and learned from a remote location as a scripted facilitator led each participant through a series of specific tasks using the [traveliowa.com](http://traveliowa.com) Web site. Participants were then asked to comment on the ease or difficulty of performing each task.

Overall, participants responded positively to the Iowa travel site, and were appreciative of the features and information available to them. Most were accustomed to using search engines and online mapping services, and looked for similar features on the state site. For example, when asked to locate an Iowa map, most participants expected to find an interactive map or a map that could be customized to the area in which they were searching. Out-of-state users wanted a basic orientation to the state's regions and locations of major cities. They like to have easy-to-read interactive maps with the ability to "click" for more information. They also wanted to see attractions and lodging facilities highlighted on maps.

Participants were generally successful at tasks involving a search for activities and events in particular areas; however they wanted to be able to sort by categories, themes or interest areas such as museums, outdoor activities, types of festivals, etc. When a long list of results appeared, they wanted the ability to sort by type of activity as well as by location or region. Search results should be obvious and easy to read. Several participants mentioned that they would like to see a list of "top attractions" or suggestions to start their planning, rather than having to search on their own.

Several individuals mentioned that they'd like to see more photos of attractions, events and destinations. While they appreciated the photos shown, they said, "the more photos, the better." Photos should appeal to a wide range of users – not just families, specific age groups or other demographics. Travelers want to feel welcome and see themselves or people like them in the photos.

Other features mentioned as important to the travelers:

- Detailed accommodations information with photos and links.
- Direct links to specific local transportation Web sites and schedules.
- Coupons and special offers.

While most of the users found the Web site helpful, they still wanted to order the free Iowa Travel Guide, Calendar of Events and Map online so they could have printed materials to take on their trip and share with family and friends. They liked how you could immediately find the link to order the publications, and suggested that a description of each publication would be helpful when ordering, along with an estimate of how long it would take to arrive.

The Iowa Tourism Office monitors Web site activity through monthly web stats (including Iowa travel packets ordered), a multi-state survey administered by Texas A & M University, and monthly user reports for the online Travel Guide. The Tourism Office will continue to assess the Web site and make improvements based on this research. ■

# Join Fellow Tourism Leaders April 27



Have you marked your calendar for the annual spring kick-off to Iowa Tourism Month? Tourism Unity Day will be held at the Hy-Vee Conference Center in West Des Moines April 27. It's a motivating day of networking and news on tourism in Iowa. Top-rated speaker Steve Gilliland's keynote address, "Enjoy the Ride," will help change your attitude and performance on the journey to success. Don't miss it! Registration materials will be in the mail soon, or visit the Industry Information section of [www.traveliowa.com](http://www.traveliowa.com) and fill out the form online.

The Iowa Tourism Leadership Award nomination form is also online – nominate a deserving tourism professional or volunteer for this important award. For more information about Unity Day, contact Lonie Mezera at [lonie.mezera@iowalifechanging.com](mailto:lonie.mezera@iowalifechanging.com) or 888.472.6035. ■

## Tourism Office staff represents Iowa in-state and nationally

Here are a few of the activities in which the staff will participate this spring:

**Mark Eckman** – Destination Showcase in Washington D.C. March 1; POW WOW International Marketplace April 21-25 in Anaheim, Calif.

**Tom Wheeler and Jason Boten** – 2007 AFCI Locations Trade Show (Expo) April 12-14, Los Angeles, Calif.

**Nancy Landess** - National Council of State Tourism Directors spring meeting in Washington D.C. February 22-23. Nancy has served as chairman of this national association, and received their State Tourism Director of the Year award in 2004.

**Kathy Bowermaster** –Silos and Smokestacks Partnership Panel meetings in March and June; also serves on the signage review committee and grants panel.

**Lonie Mezera** – Iowa Tourism Office representative on the TODS (Tourism Oriented Directional Signage) Committee in meetings February 20 and March 20.

**LuAnn Reinders** – 2007-2008 board member of CenStates Travel & Tourism Research, and chair of Newsletter Committee.

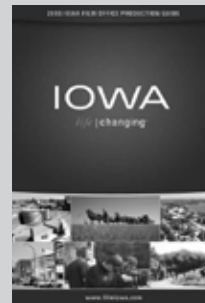
## Tourism Advertising Campaign

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Beginning with March/April editions of Midwest Living and AAA Living, in-state advertising partners will begin to see their ads run under the Iowa tourism banner in colorful co-op advertising sections. The Tourism Office negotiates very competitive rates from a number of magazines and newspapers and then offers the advertising space to Iowa's tourism destinations and attractions at a further discount, allowing both the state and local tourism organizations to stretch their advertising dollars.

"The co-op program has grown into our most effective marketing tool," said Landess. "It's a win-win opportunity for the industry to join us in promoting Iowa to a much wider audience than either of us could alone."

View a detailed brochure on the Iowa Tourism Cooperative Advertising Program, and download a copy of the 2007 media schedule in the Travel Industry section of [www.traveliowa.com](http://www.traveliowa.com). ■



*Tom Wheeler,  
manager of  
the Iowa Film  
Office, will  
distribute the  
Iowa Production  
Guide to  
location scouts  
and key film  
industry contacts  
at the AFCI  
Locations Expo.*

# Tourism

## By the Numbers

**20**

Magazines and newspapers in the  
tourism co-op program

**27**

Publications in the consumer media schedule

**11 million**

Combined circulation for the co-op

**\$390,000**

Tourism Office's approximate investment in  
the consumer media schedule

**\$715,000**

The approximate amount invested in the  
co-ops from the Tourism Office and industry  
advertising partners

**IOWA**  
*life* | changing®

Iowa Department of  
Economic Development  
200 East Grand  
Des Moines, IA 50309

PRSR STD  
POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
Des Moines, IA  
Permit No. 1195

## Mark your calendar ...

Clip out and save these 2007 Iowa Tourism Office dates and deadlines

**March 23, 2007**.....Iowa Tourism Leadership Award nomination deadline

**April 16, 2007**.....Unity Day early bird registration deadline

**April 27, 2007**.....Iowa Tourism Unity Day, West Des Moines

**June 1, 2007** .....Iowa Travel Guide attractions, accommodations & campground information deadline

**June 30, 2007** .....Iowa Travel Guide advertising space reservations deadline

**July 30, 2007** .....Iowa Travel Guide advertising materials deadline

**August 9-19, 2007**.....Iowa State Fair

**September 1, 2007** .....Iowa Tourism Conference early bird registration deadline

**September 7, 2007** .....Iowa Tourism Conference Award nomination deadline

**September 15, 2007** .....2008 Iowa Calendar of Events deadline

**September 21, 2007**.....Tourism Conference Silent Auction donation forms due

**October 22-24, 2007** .....Iowa Tourism Conference, Dubuque

**November 1, 2007** .....2008 Cooperative Advertising program space reservation deadline

**Ongoing:** .....Welcome Center brochure enrollment

**Ongoing:** .....Iowa Wine & Beer Promotion Board event grant applications