Traveler

News From The Iowa TourIsm Office
March 2007

2006 Iowa Welcome Center Report Findings

During 2006, Iowa’s Welcome Centers extended the stay of 30% of their travelers visiting in Iowa, adding an estimated $23 million to Iowa’s tourism economy, according to the recently released 2006 Iowa Welcome Center Survey Report.

The report also shows that an average of $212.19 was spent per day by each travel party, an increase of nearly $4 per day over 2006. Transportation spending increased by 10.5% to $54.05 per day, but this increase was offset by a decrease in spending on food (from $47.36 in 2005 to $45.78 in 2006) and entertainment (from $27.32 in 2005 to $24.46 in 2006). Lodging and shopping expenditures remained relatively level from the previous year.

Other key findings of the report show:

- 48% of the travelers came from Iowa’s target markets of Iowa, Illinois, Kansas, Missouri, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Nebraska, and South Dakota. International visitors comprised 1.7% of the travelers.
- Travelers spent an average of 3.6 days in Iowa.
- Travelers took an average of 2.8 trips in Iowa.
- Families accounted for 59% of all travel parties.
- The average travel party had 2.5 people.
- Hotels and motels were the primary places for lodging with 49% of the travelers staying there.
- Vacationing travelers made up 46% and those visiting friends and family were 32% of the respondents.
- “Historical areas” was listed as the primary interest, followed by general sightseeing and visiting friends and relatives.
- Average age of an Iowa Welcome Center visitor was 55.8 years.

The Iowa Welcome Center Survey Report is administered through a partnership between the Iowa Welcome Centers and the Iowa Tourism Office. Fourteen Iowa Welcome Centers participated in the 2006 study. View the full report in the Traveler.
Warm Reception for Legislators at Annual TFI Showcase

Chilly temperatures and warm hospitality combined February 6 at the Travel Federation of Iowa’s annual Legislative Showcase. Over 75% of the senators and about half of the House members attended the showcase, held at the 4-H Building at the Iowa State Fairgrounds. Booth space was sold out with more than 80 exhibitors on hand to talk tourism with Iowa’s elected officials. Earlier in the day, nearly 100 industry representatives attended the Travel Federation of Iowa’s legislative luncheon. Learn more about the Travel Federation of Iowa at www.travelfederationofiowa.org.

Bonnie Verburg, Pella Historical Village and Rep. Dave Tjepkes, Webster County.


Rep. Tami Wieneck, Black Hawk Co.; Don Short, Candy Street, Aaron Steinmann, Silos and Smokestacks.

Terri Johnson, Danish Immigrant Museum; Rep. Lance Horbach, Tama Co.; Karina Petersen, Danish Immigrant Museum (intern from Denmark).

Pam Herzberg, Clarinda Chamber; Rep. Royd Chambers, O’Brien Co.

Mary Beth Lawler and Jane Knutson, Iowa Falls; Sen. Larry McKibben, Marshall Co.; Rod Scott, Iowa Falls.

Kathy Faber, Ice Cream Capital of the World; Sen. Larry Noble, Polk Co.; Greg Edwards, Des Moines CVB.

Vicki Comegys, Des Moines CVB; Sen. Brad Zaun, Polk Co.; Greg Edwards, Des Moines CVB.

Kathy Krogmeier, Blank Park Zoo; Rep. Dan Huseman, Cherokee Co.

Angie Wuthrich, AIB student; Kathy Dirks, Harrison County Welcome Center; Sen. James Seymour, Harrison Co.; Sen. Ron Wnek, Woodbury Co.; Renea Anderson, Harrison County Development.
Choice Hotels renews partnership

Choice Hotels of Iowa recently renewed its partnership with the Iowa Tourism Office. For the third year in a row, Choice Hotels will sponsor welcome center activities such as the annual April training workshop and update session at the tourism conference. The agreement also includes the promotion of Iowa Tourism and Choice Hotels of Iowa at the Iowa State Fair through the distribution of information sacks and prize drawings for $150 gift cards. Thank you Choice Hotels!

Vision Iowa –

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Planners meet Iowa in D.C.

On March 1, the Iowa Tourism Office participated in Destinations Showcase, a tradeshow for the meetings market. Approximately 1,500 meeting planners attended the Washington D.C. event. Iowa Tourism encouraged planners to visit the state booth by offering a drawing for the new LG Chocolate phone and MP3 player. The planners received a small tin container in the mail before the showcase with information instructing them to stop at the Iowa booth and register for a chance to win the phone. In addition to learning about Iowa meeting amenities at the trade-show, the planners were directed to the Meetings/Conventions section of traveliowa.com for contest results and convenient access to searchable information about meeting facilities across the state.

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Industry section of www.traveliowa.com, or contact LuAnn Reinders at luann.reinders@iowalifechanging.com for more information.

Welcome Center notes:
- Remember to sign up for the Brochure Enrollment Program so we can distribute your brochures in the four interstate Welcome Centers this summer. Find more details in the Industry Information section of traveliowa.com.
- The I-80 Welcome Center near Underwood opens April 20. If you are enrolled in the brochure distribution program for that center, you may ship new brochures after that date.
- The 2007 Welcome Center Training and Familiarization will be held April 16-18 in Central Iowa. A staff member from each Welcome Center will attend training and participate in a fam tour of the region.