

2009 Tourism Conference

Bids are in, site visits are complete and the host site for the 2009 Tourism Conference will be the Meskwaki Bingo Casino Hotel in Tama. The property recently completed a new hotel and convention center and upgraded the casino area.

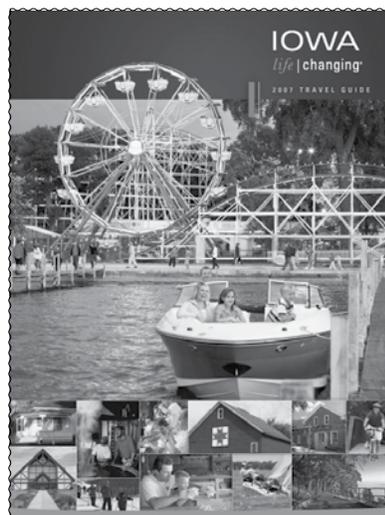
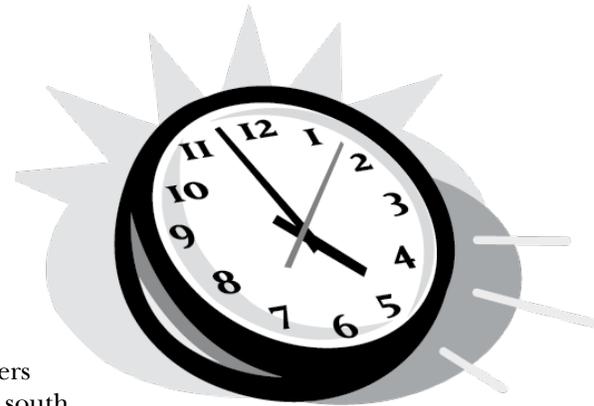
Mark Eckman and Lonie Mezera from the Tourism Office, Sue Armour from the Mason City CVB, Stacy Hubanks from the Dubuque CVB and Glenn Walinski from the Sioux City CVB served as the site selection committee. The 2009 Conference is set for Oct. 19-21. ■

Welcome Centers Now Open Extended Hours

The four Interstate Iowa Welcome Centers are open extended hours, thanks to additional funding appropriated to the Iowa Tourism Office by the 2007 Legislative Session.

The four state-owned Welcome Centers – located north of Davis City on I-35, south of Sioux City on I-29, northeast of Underwood on I-80 eastbound and west of Wilton on I-80 westbound – are now open year-round from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily (with the exception of certain holidays). Each center now employs two full-time state-certified Travel Counselors. Any Iowa event, attraction, lodging property or community may display their brochures at no charge in any of the state-operated Welcome Centers.

“Our Welcome Centers are an incredible resource for people traveling Iowa – whether from in-state or out-of-state,” said Governor Chet Culver. “Certified travel counselors at each center can assist with directions, suggest additional destinations and answer travel-related questions. They are true front-line ambassadors for our state.” ■



Travel Guide Deadlines

Ad space reservations for the 2008 *Iowa Travel Guide* are due right away. Ad materials will be due July 31. Travel Guide listing updates for accommodations, attractions, campgrounds and communities are also due. If you have a new listing or have not yet updated your previous listing, contact Kathy Bowermaster at kathy.bowermaster@iowalifechanging.com or 515.242.4708. ■



New Wine and Beer Promotion Board Members Named

Iowa Department of Economic Development Director Mike Tramontina named Bob Wersen of Tassel Ridge Winery and Teresa Albert of Millstream Brewing to the Iowa Wine and Beer Promotion Board. Tourism Office staff member LuAnn Reinders will continue to serve on the board. The three-member board is responsible for advising the Iowa Department of Economic Development on promoting the Iowa wine and beer industries.



Film Incentives Already Working

Single A Films announced last month in Davenport that John O'Donnell Stadium will play the backdrop to a full-length feature film that will begin shooting in July. The project is about a Dominican Republican baseball player coming to the United States and working his way up from the minor leagues to the major leagues. The player was inspired to begin his baseball career in Iowa after watching the "Field of Dreams." The film is set in the present, and the player joins the Swing of the Quad Cities. ■



Caucus Web Site Launched

People interested in learning more about Iowa's Caucuses can find information on the newly-launched web site www.iowacaucus.org. The site includes information on the caucuses themselves as well as facts about Iowa's workforce, quality of life (including tourism) and diversity. ■



Community Development Division Coordinator Named

Cali Beals has been named the new Division Coordinator for Community Development. She will assist Division Administrator Tim Waddell. Beals has been a part of the Iowa Department of Economic Development (IDED) for 18 years. Most recently, she managed the entrepreneurial services for IDED which included setting up community-based seed funds and coordinating the Venture Network of Iowa and Regional Development and Business Accelerators programs. ■



Two Projects Receive Vision Iowa Grants

The Vision Iowa Board approved \$820,000 in Community Attraction and Tourism (CAT) grants to projects in Grinnell and Shell Rock at the June board meeting in Ottumwa.

In other Vision Iowa news, Governor Culver recently named board member Regenia Bailey of Iowa City Vice-Chairperson of the Board.

PROJECTS RECEIVING FUNDING:

The Next Chapter: A New Public Library for Grinnell – Grinnell

Total Project Cost:.....	\$ 7,500,000
Amount Requested:	\$ 1,500,000
Amount Awarded:	\$ 750,000

The proposed project will include the construction of a 26,000 square foot library and adjoining parking lot. This award is contingent upon the building being LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certified.

McCague Park Enhancements – Shell Rock

Total Project Cost:.....	\$264,000
Amount Requested:	\$ 79,200
Amount Awarded:	\$ 70,000

The McCague Park Enhancements project includes reconstructing the tennis courts, construction of a new T-ball field, new basketball court, new volleyball courts, new soccer fields, new play equipment and a new trail connecting to other city parks. This award is contingent upon the completion of fundraising, including a larger contribution from the county board of supervisors, in 90 days.

To date, 12 Vision Iowa projects have been awarded a total of \$218,550,000. The CAT program has provided funding to 269 projects, awarding \$87,997,671. For more information, go to www.visioniowa.org. ■



Tourism Month Promotion with Kum & Go Complete

The Iowa Tourism Month promotion with Kum & Go ended June 30. The winner of the \$500 gas card available from www.traveliowa.com and the 20 \$100 gas card winners from the Welcome Centers will be drawn early this month. ■



Travel Federation of Iowa

The Travel Federation of Iowa (TFI) is a statewide, grassroots organization representing all facets of Iowa’s travel industry. TFI provides a unified legislative voice for the industry.

A highly effective District Leader program, which has become a model for other industries, provides important and timely communication between industry constituents and their legislators. TFI is responsible for the annual Legislative Showcase, designed to demonstrate to legislators the impact of tourism in Iowa. The organization also publishes the Fast Facts booklet with stats and legislative priorities related to the tourism industry.

For more information, visit www.travelfederationofiowa.org.

Tourism

By the Numbers

7

Number of years the Vision Iowa program has been in existence

12

Number of Vision Iowa projects funded

269

Number of Community Attraction and Tourism (CAT) projects funded

306

Dollars, in millions, awarded through Vision Iowa

1.6

Dollars, in billions, of construction costs for Vision Iowa and CAT awarded projects

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200 East Grand
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AAA Value

AAA recently ranked Iowa third in travel value. AAA's Annual Vacation Costs survey indicated that a family of two adults and two children can expect to pay an average \$269 per day for food and lodging. In Iowa, however, the average daily cost was \$201.

New Travel Book Includes Iowa Spots

Nine Iowa locations are included in the new travel book titled "1000 Places to See in the U.S.A. and Canada Before You Die." Iowa's listings are the Iowa State Fair, Effigy Mounds, the Loess Hills, the Villages of Van Buren, Living History Farms, The Raj in Fairfield, the Amana Colonies, Cedar Rapids and the Bridges of Madison County.