

\$200,000 Available in Second Round of Out-of-State Marketing Grants

A total of \$200,000 will be available for out-of-state marketing grants for Fiscal Year 2009. Advertising (print, broadcast or billboard) must be placed between July 1, 2008, and June 30, 2009. Applications are available on the region Web sites – www.traveliowa.org (Western), www.iowatourism.org (Central) and www.easterniowatourism.org (Eastern) – and must be received in the Iowa Tourism Office by 4:30 p.m. on Wednesday, April 30.

Two Iowa Hotels Named Best Values

Budget Travel named two Iowa hotels to their list of the Top 100 Best Values in the February 2008 issue. The Sheraton West Des Moines ranked #19, while the Hotel Vetro in Iowa City ranked #69. Only 24 hotels in the United States were included on the list.

Get the Touch

One lucky visitor to the Iowa Tourism Office's booth at the Affordable Meetings Mid-America tradeshow, April 9-10 in Chicago, will win an Apple iPod Touch. The iPod allows users to listen to their favorite music, surf the Internet, watch movies, send e-mail and more. The giveaway is engraved with www.traveliowa.com.



REGISTER ONLINE FOR UNITY DAY

Featured speaker
Chip Madera

There's still time to register for Unity Day, set for Friday, April 18, at the Hy-Vee Conference Center in West Des Moines. The day's agenda includes a legislative update, announcement of 2009 co-op options and networking opportunities.

Chip Madera will be the featured speaker. He discovered his life's purpose – encouraging and inspiring others to seek, discover and explore their ultimate potential – after being diagnosed with cancer in 1995. A Certified Speaking Professional, Madera presents over 100 motivational programs and leadership/staff training programs a year. His strategic, straight-forward and humorous approach to the seven critical policies that create “wows” for your customers will inspire you to take action and get results.

Registration is available online at www.iowalifechanging.com/register. (If you do not have Internet access, contact the Tourism Office at 515.242.4705 for registration assistance.) Cost of the one-day educational event is \$30 if registered before April 1; \$40 after. The cut-off date for online registrations is April 7. Walk-in registrations will be accepted on the day of the event. ■





VISION IOWA AWARDS \$340,000 IN GRANTS

The Vision Iowa Board approved \$340,000 in grants for a streetscape project in Marengo and an aquatic center in Corning at their February meeting in Council Bluffs.

The following projects were approved for grants awarded from the Community Attraction and Tourism (CAT) Fund:

Marengo Downtown Revitalization – Streetscape Phase I

Total Project Cost: \$1,588,000
Amount Requested: \$342,000
Amount Awarded: \$240,000

Phase One of the Downtown Revitalization, occurring over a three-block area, will include new sidewalks incorporating decorative concrete and/or pavers, benches, decorative planters and lighting, perennial plantings, ADA updates to make the downtown handicapped-accessible, park improvements and other utility-related updates.

Adams Community Aquatic Center – Corning

Total Project Cost: \$2,202,000
Amount Requested: \$110,000
Amount Awarded: \$100,000

This project includes the construction of a municipal aquatic center to serve Corning and Adams County.

To date, Vision Iowa projects have been awarded a total of \$218,550,000. The CAT program has provided funding to 283 projects, awarding a total of \$95,171,777. The next Vision Iowa Board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 12 in Des Moines. For more information, visit www.visioniowa.org. ■

Important Dates This Month

MARCH 15

Visit Iowa Farms Conference, Scheman Building, Ames

The Visit Iowa Farms conference, designed for Iowa producers involved or interested in agritourism as an additional revenue stream for their farm operations, is set for Saturday, March 15.

Agritourism brings opportunities for rural Iowans to educate, inform and entertain travelers on rural life and agriculture.

The conference will open with comments from Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Bill Northey. Session topics, all focused on marketing, include marketing plan development, Web site marketing, creating a hospitality mindset and farm signage. Question and answer sessions are planned with producers.

Visit www.ucs.iastate.edu/mnet/iowafarms/home.html to register.

MARCH 21:

Tourism Leader Nomination Deadline

Nomination materials for the 2008 Iowa Tourism Leadership Award can be found in the Travel Industry Information section of www.traveliowa.com. Nominations are due to Lonie Mezera at the Iowa Tourism Office by March 21. The award will be presented at Unity Day. Contact Lonie at lonie.mezera@iowalifechanging.com or 515.242.4727 for more details.

MARCH 31 – APRIL 3:

Great Places Workshops, Various Locations

Four Iowa Great Places regional forums will be held across the state – March 31 in Storm Lake, April 1 in Corning, April 2 in West Union and April 3 in Albia – to provide general information about the program, application process, grant funding and Great Places Citizen Advisory Board's expectations.

Staff from the Iowa Tourism Office will present a session on marketing and advertising. Other session topics will include community visioning, incorporating "green" or sustainable principles and fundraising.

Meeting sites will be announced as they are confirmed. To RSVP (encouraged, but not required) visit www.iowagreatplaces.gov or contact Francis Boggus at francis.boggus@iowa.gov.

2007 Welcome Center Survey Complete

Travelers in Iowa spent more money in 2007 than in 2006, according to the 2007 Iowa Welcome Center Survey Report. Travel party spending per day on lodging, entertainment, transportation, food and shopping increased 5.4 percent from \$212.19 in 2006 to \$223.66 in 2007. Transportation achieved the highest gain at 12.3 percent.

The Welcome Center Survey indicates spending for all people who stopped at a center at \$176 million. In addition, certified travel counselors extended the stay of 29 percent of travelers, resulting in an additional \$23 million spent in Iowa.

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE REPORT:

- The centers welcomed nearly 540,000 visitors and more than 206,000 travel parties.
- The top areas of interest were general sightseeing (61 percent), historical areas (46 percent), visiting friends and family (41 percent), camping/out doors (21 percent) and shopping (17 percent).
- The average travel party size was 2.5 people.
- The average travel party spent 3.8 days in Iowa.
- 60 percent were traveling with family members.
- 46 percent were taking a vacation and/or leisure trip.
- More than half (53 percent) stayed in a hotel or motel.

The complete report and other industry research can be found online in the Travel Industry Information section of www.traveliowa.com. ■

WELCOME CENTERS HELP KEEP IOWA BEAUTIFUL

The Iowa Welcome Centers have a new supply of vehicle trash bags courtesy of Keep Iowa Beautiful. The bags, perforated for use over the head rest in cars, are available while supplies last.

Keep Iowa Beautiful was founded in 2000 and is affiliated with the nationally-acclaimed Keep America Beautiful. ■



ASSOCIATION
Spotlight



IOWA WINE AND BEER PROMOTION BOARD

The Iowa Wine & Beer Promotion Board was established by the Iowa Legislature in 1986. The Board is appointed by the Iowa Department of Economic Development (IDED) Director and consists of three members - one representing IDED, one representing the Iowa wine makers, and one representing the Iowa beer makers.

The Board advises the IDED on the best means to promote native wine and beer made in Iowa. The account is funded by a tax (\$5.89 per 31 gallons of beer and \$1.75 per gallon of wine) on native wholesale of Iowa wine and beer.

The Iowa Wine & Beer Promotion Board participants are class "A" wine or beer permit holders in the state of Iowa. In the case of brew pubs in Iowa, those who also sell liquor or other wines do not qualify as native beer or wine establishments and do not pay tax into the special fund for promotion of native wine and beer.

Visit www.iowawineandbeer.com for more information. ■

Tourism

By the Numbers

5th
Anniversary of Matchstick Marvels, Gladbrook

25th
Anniversary of the Boone and Scenic Valley
Railroad, Boone

50th
Anniversary of the DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge

70th
Anniversary of the Great River Road

100th
Anniversary of the Chautauqua Building, Sac City

150th
Anniversary of Iowa State University

Source: DeSoto National Wildlife Refuge, Matchstick Marvels,
2008 Iowa Travel Guide

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

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POSTAGE
PAID
Des Moines, IA
Permit No. 1195

Snow Doesn't Deter Legislators from TFI Showcase

Even a winter snowstorm didn't stop 89 legislators from attending the Travel Federation of Iowa (TFI) Legislative Showcase on February 6 in the Paul R. Knapp Animal Learning Center at the Iowa State Fairgrounds in Des Moines. Nearly 60 percent of both the House and Senate toured booths from various tourism attractions and destinations. Photos from the event are available in the Travel Industry Information section of www.traveliowa.com.

