

TFI Legislative Showcase to be held in February

The Travel Federation of Iowa's (TFI) annual Legislative Showcase will be held Tuesday, February 3, at the Paul R. Knapp Animal Learning Center on the Iowa State Fairgrounds. The event provides the tourism industry the ability to network with legislators and talk with them about travel-related issues.

The day begins with a Legislative Seminar at Noon where TFI's lobbyists will provide talking points for attendees to use when speaking with their legislators. Booth set-up begins at 2:30 p.m.; the Showcase runs from 5 – 8 p.m.

Cost is \$20 for the Legislative Seminar (includes lunch) and \$150 per booth for region members (\$300 for non-region members). Tourism industry members must be associated with a booth to attend the Showcase. Visit www.travelfederation-ofiowa.org for more information and to download the exhibitor registration form.

The Central Iowa Tourism Region, Iowa Group Travel Association and Greater Des Moines CVB will host a joint meeting/seminar on Wednesday, February 4, at the Des Moines Botanical Center in Des Moines.

The first session of the 83rd Iowa General Assembly will convene Monday, January 12, 2009. ■



2009 Travel Guide Now Available

The 2009 edition of the *Iowa Travel Guide* is now available! The newest version includes more than 100 additional attractions, hotels, bed and breakfast and RV park listings. As usual, the guide is available for order online at www.traveliowa.com or by phoning 800.345.IOWA. All Welcome Centers carry copies of the guide as well.

A total of 250,000 were printed. If you'd like to obtain multiple copies of the guide for distribution at your organization, contact Kathy Bowermaster at kathy.bowermaster@iowalifechanging.com or 515.242.4708. ■

CAT Funds Diverted for Flood Relief Replaced

The \$1.9 million in Community Attraction and Tourism (CAT) funds that were diverted to the Jumpstart Iowa Fund have been replaced. The Vision Iowa Board will resume regular business soon. Their next meeting date had been tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, February 11, but they may meet in January. Check www.visioniowa.org for updates. ■



VISION IOWA

Vision Iowa Awards \$85,000 in Marketing Grants

The Vision Iowa Board approved 11 marketing grants totaling \$85,000 during their December meeting in Des Moines.

Legislation passed during the 2008 session allocated \$100,000 of Community Attraction and Tourism (CAT) funds for tourism marketing through fiscal year 2013. The Vision Iowa Board created a grant program to distribute the funds. The only eligible applicants were previous CAT or Vision Iowa award recipients.

Funding could be used for print, broadcast, online or outdoor advertising. There was no minimum grant amount; the maximum allowable grant was \$10,000. Applicants were required to match at least 50 percent of their request locally.

The following projects were approved for marketing grants:

- All Seasons Center, Sioux Center - \$5,000
- Blank Park Zoo, Des Moines - \$10,000
- City of Clinton - \$10,000
- Dubuque County Historical Society, Dubuque - \$10,000
- Englert Civic Theatre, Iowa City - \$10,000
- Fairfield Arts & Convention Center, Fairfield - \$5,000
- Iowa Valley Community College District and Ellsworth Community College, Iowa Falls - \$5,000
- Performing Arts & Education Association of Southwest Iowa, Red Oak - \$7815.33
- Phelps Youth Pavilion, Waterloo - \$10,000
- Project AWAYSIS, Storm Lake - \$10,000
- Project RESTORE, Stuart - \$2184.67



In other business, the Board unanimously approved the Mason City Vision Iowa contract. Board members also thanked Cathy Reece for her service as CAT Committee Chair. Because Reece opted not to run for re-election as a county supervisor, she will go off the Vision Iowa Board at the end of 2008. ■

Iowa Tourism Office Goes Social

The Iowa Tourism Office recently launched two social media efforts. Industry members and travelers alike can become a friend of Travel Iowa on Facebook or follow Travel_Iowa on Twitter. Links to both sites can be found on www.traveliowa.com.

Need an Intern?

The Iowa Tourism Office is developing a database of tourism industry internship opportunities available for 2009. If your office has a need for a summer intern (either paid or unpaid offered for college credit), please contact Lonie Mezera at lonie.mezera@iowalifechanging.com and request an internship form. The deadline for returning the form is Monday, January 26. Submissions will be compiled into a statewide list and be made available to Iowa colleges and universities to share with their student base. ■



Make Someone's Day — Nominate them for the Tourism Leadership Award

Nomination materials for the 2009 Iowa Tourism Leadership Award are available in the Partner Information section of www.traveliowa.com. The award, to be presented during Unity Day on Friday, April 24, recognizes an outstanding individual who has shown exemplary leadership within the industry and who has significantly contributed to enhancing Iowa tourism.

The nomination process is simple; just answer the questions about your nominee on the form and supply up to three optional letters of recommendation. For more information, contact Lonie Mezera at lonie.mezera@iowalifechanging.com or 515.242.4727. Deadline is Friday, March 20. Watch for more information on Unity Day in future newsletters. ■

CITR's Web Site Earns International Honors

The Central Iowa Tourism Region (CITR) earned a silver award in the tourism category of W3 Awards competition. The international W3 Awards recognize excellence on the web and the professionals behind the sites. CITR's site was designed – and submitted to the competition – by Urbandale-based Trilix Marketing Group. In total, W3 received more than 3,000 entries from ad agencies, public relations firms, web designers, graphic designers and web enthusiasts. ■



Mike Berger Joins Sgt. Bluff Welcome Center Staff

Mike Berger joined the Sergeant Bluff Welcome Center on October 24. He has five years of experience from the Sergeant Floyd Welcome Center, where he earned his Certified Travel Counselor status. ■

Tourism

By the Numbers

Iowa Gaming

17

Number of commercial casinos in Iowa.

182

Millions of dollars Iowa's commercial casinos spend on products and services from Iowa-based businesses.

2,000

Number of hotel rooms, in total, available at Iowa's commercial casinos.

9,400

Number of people employed by Iowa's commercial casinos.

150,000

Square feet of meeting space available at Iowa's commercial casinos.

Source: Iowa Gaming Association

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Economic Development
200 East Grand
Des Moines, IA 50309

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Iowa Represented at NTA

Colleen Murphy (second from left) from the Iowa Tourism Office and others from Iowa promoted the state during the National Tour Association (NTA) Annual Convention in Pittsburgh, PA, last month. Pictured with Colleen (from left) are Julie Kronlage, Dubuque Convention and Visitors Bureau; Beth Nickel, Burlington Convention and Visitors Bureau; and Ann Vogelbacher, Central Iowa Tourism Region. The convention is a one-stop shop for doing business in the packaged travel industry. The five-day event offered a mix of business appointments, professional development and networking events. Leads from the show are available in Excel format through the end of December at www.traveliowa.com/downloads/NTAappts.xls. ■

Happy Holidays
from the Iowa
Tourism Office!