

Travel Guide deadline approaching

June 1 is the deadline to update information for the *2006 Iowa Travel Guide*. If you have questions about your listing(s), please contact Kathy Bowermaster at 888-472-6035 or kathy.bowermaster@iowalifechanging.com. Please remember the information submitted for the *Travel Guide* is also used to update traveliowa.com. ●

2006 cooperative advertising options announced

The Iowa Tourism Office recently announced its 2006 cooperative advertising options. The program offers a variety of advertising choices in a range of prices and a host of publications. Among the new offers this year are two fall ad options, the deadline for which is June 30. Learn about the entire program and download the space reservation form in the Travel Industry section at traveliowa.com. ●

Governor announces Great Places

In late March, Governor Vilsack announced his plans for Great Places. The concept is designed to bring together the resources of state government to build capacity in communities, regions, neighborhoods or districts to cultivate the unique and authentic qualities that make these places special. The Great Places initiative will also bolster the state's other successful economic tools like Vision Iowa and the Iowa Values Fund.

According to Anita Walker, director of the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs, Great Place is a breakthrough approach that demystifies state government.

"Rather than building a dream piecemeal, we will provide a one-stop shop," she says. "We'll work together to synchronize and streamline programs to fit a place's vision, not to make the vision fit our programs. Our goal is to work in collaboration with local leaders, combine resources for high impact and deliver results."

The state's Great Places team – made up of representatives from 18 state agencies – is requesting invitations by July 1 from places that want to pursue the initiative. Throughout July and August, Great Places "coaches" will work with these places to get their offers ready for presentation in September. By October 1, a citizen advisory council appointed by Vilsack will help select three "pilot" Great Places. Negotiation of partnership agreements with those places will take place through the fall, with final agreements by December 31, 2005. Learn more at iowagreatplaces.gov. ●

The Great Places initiative will begin with several regional forums around the state.

MAY 17 — CLEAR LAKE
Surf Ballroom, 4 to 6 p.m.

MAY 18 — SPENCER
Spencer Community Playhouse,
4 to 6 p.m.

MAY 19 — COUNCIL BLUFFS
Western Historic Trails Center,
4:15 to 6:15 p.m.

MAY 23 — DUBUQUE
Mississippi River Museum,
4 to 6 p.m.

MAY 24 — PELLA
Pella Opera House, 4 to 6 p.m.

MAY 25 — CEDAR FALLS
Oster Regent Theater,
4 to 6 p.m.

MAY 26 — MUSCATINE
Stanley Auditorium,
3:30 to 5:30 p.m.

JUNE 1 — CEDAR RAPIDS
CSPS, 4 to 6 p.m.

JUNE 2 — DES MOINES
Meredith Campus, 4 to 6 p.m.

JUNE 9 — SIOUX CITY
Martin Ballroom, 4 to 6 p.m.



Vision Iowa board makes six awards at April meeting

At their meeting in April the Vision Iowa board approved awards to six projects around Iowa. The awards came from the Community Attraction and Tourism (CAT) program, a component of Vision Iowa that provides financial assistance for smaller projects.

To date, the CAT program has invested approximately \$61 million in 172 projects. On April 1, the most recent quarterly application deadline, 15 communities submitted applications for CAT funding. The combined amount of those requests is more than \$9.4 million.

Area Recreation Center (The ARC), Maquoketa

Total project cost: \$4,493,403

Requested: \$900,000

Received: \$825,000 grant

A 36,000 square-foot facility, The ARC will include an indoor swimming pool, an outdoor mist plaza, a gymnasium and jogging/walking track, an exercise/aerobic room, a weight room, and a lobby/reception area.

Liberty Center, North Liberty

Total project cost: \$3,115,000

Requested: \$1 million

Received: \$750,000 grant

This proposed project will create a pedestrian-oriented extension to North Liberty's commercial district. The project includes development of a trail around an existing pond, a pedestrian bridge, the creation of a waterfall, landscaping and more.

Prairie Heritage Center, O'Brien County

Total project cost: \$551,000

Requested: \$212,190

Received: \$200,000 grant

The Prairie Heritage Center project calls for the construction of a 4,876 square-foot environmental education center that will house a meeting room with kitchenette, a display area, rest-rooms, offices and a work space. A full basement will house storage and utilities. The building will also feature interior and exterior educational displays.

Project Oelwein: Downtown Revitalization

Initiative, Oelwein

Total project cost: \$8,666,843

Requested: \$983,656

Received: \$750,000 grant

Two components make up this project. The first is a new public library that will include an activity room, a kitchenette, a children's library, an adult reading area, and a genealogy room. The second component is streetscape improvements that will link the new library to downtown Oelwein. These enhancements feature sidewalk and intersection updates, utility upgrades, the addition of seating and gathering areas, streetlights and sculptures.

Hitchcock Nature Center,

Honey Creek/ Pottawattamie Co.

Total project cost: \$529,955

Requested: \$103,000

Received: \$90,000 grant

This project includes renovations and additions that will transform the Hitchcock Nature Center lodge from a meeting facility to an interpretive center. Planned improvements include construction of a 50-foot observation tower, development of outdoor classroom space and an entrance courtyard, development of an interpretive trail, new exhibit space, computer kiosks and more.

Diamond Trail Fitness Center, Sully

Total project cost: \$574,315

Requested: \$140,000

Received: \$100,000 grant

This project involves the construction of a new recreation and fitness center that will have a free weights area, a fitness area, a therapy room, an aerobic equipment area and office space. The facility will contain state-of-the-art aerobic and training equipment, and computer kiosks will provide health and fitness information.

Shawna Lode resigns from Tourism Office

After nearly seven years in her current position, Iowa Tourism Office Communications Manager Shawna Lode announced her resignation in late April. On May 20 she will begin a new job as Public Information Officer for the Iowa Finance Authority (IFA). Another area of state government, IFA coordinates various housing programs for low- to moderate-income Iowans.

Best of luck to Shawna in her future endeavors. ●

Iowa Tourism Office, Sportsman's Warehouse team up for tourism month

May is Iowa Tourism Month and to draw attention to the importance of the travel industry, the Iowa Tourism Office is inviting people to register for free outdoor gear. As part of a partnership with Sportsman's Warehouse, which has a store in Ankeny, the Tourism Office launched a public relations campaign in late April to celebrate tourism. During May, visitors to Iowa Welcome Centers in or near Underwood, Sergeant Bluff, Northwood, Le Claire, Davis City, Wilton or Burlington may register to win merchandise from Sportsman's Warehouse. Visitors to traveliowa.com can try their chances at winning the same items. The Web site will also encourage visitors to post their Iowa fishing stories; people who submit the first 30 stories will win a gift from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. Visit traveliowa.com and click on the fishing icon to learn more. ●



Becky Gruening honored for tourism leadership



On April 29, Becky Gruening, director of tourism and travel at the Greater Des Moines Convention and Visitors Bureau, received the 2005 Iowa Tourism Leadership Award. Nancy Landess, manager of the Iowa Tourism Office and Vicki Hughes, president of the Travel Federation of Iowa announced and presented the award at Iowa Tourism Unity Day.

A 30-year veteran of the travel industry, Gruening is charged with developing new marketing programs for packaged and leisure travel and developing educational programs for members of the Greater Des Moines CVB. She is also an avid volunteer, having served on the boards of the Central Iowa Tourism Region, the Travel Federation of Iowa, and the Iowa Group Travel Association. Gruening was also elected to the prestigious National Tour Association's Board of Directors and Executive Council, a national organization based out of Lexington, Ky. ●

DOT releases 2005 map

Last month the Iowa Department of Transportation released the 2005 Iowa Transportation Map. Printed copies of the map are available at the state's 18 driver's license locations and at all six DOT district offices. The Iowa Tourism Office also distributes 500,000 maps a year, many at the state's 19 welcome centers. To order the map by phone, call 515-242-4705 or 800-345-IOWA. To easily access the map online, go to iowadotmaps.com. ●



Travel Trends

Research is integral to the success of Iowa's tourism industry. At the Iowa Tourism Office, a great amount of time and energy is dedicated to continually surveying the traveling public, in our state and around the world.

Last month's issue of *The Traveler* relayed several Iowa-based web sites that are helpful tools for tourism organizations. This month's listing features national sites that are excellent resources for tourism-related information.

Accuweather.com

Travel Counselors at Iowa Welcome Centers prefer this site for up-to-the-minute weather.

www.accuweather.com

Americans for the Arts

This site features information and research, including economic impact reports.

www3.artsusa.org

Travel Industry Association of America

This organization has created a site with a great deal of general information about the travel industry nationally.

www.tia.org

U.S. Census Bureau

Here, users can gather "Quick Facts" at the state and county level. Quick Facts are also available for 20 Iowa cities.

www.census.gov



Booth wins award at international expo

At the recent Association of Film Commissioners International convention in Santa Monica, Iowa Film Office Manager Tom Wheeler earned praise for his booth that featured Iowa. The exhibit received third place for most informative among the hundreds of international displays. Iowa Department of Economic Development staffer Jason Boten helped design the booth and also attended the expo. Congratulations, Tom and Jason! ●

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



Paul Tabor from Tabor Home Vineyards in Baldwin explains the wine-making process to travel counselors from Iowa Welcome Centers.

Eastern Iowa hosts Welcome Center FAM

More than 50 travel counselors from Iowa's 19 welcome centers enjoyed eastern Iowa during the annual Welcome Center Familiarization Tour and Training held in mid-April. The tour visited attractions, restaurants and lodging facilities in and around Waterloo/Cedar Falls, Cedar Rapids and Anamosa. In 2006, western Iowa will host the tour. ●

Travel Counselors receive certification

Six travel counselors from various Iowa Welcome Centers successfully completed an Iowa tourism "exam" and are now Certified Iowa Travel Counselors. The Counselors will receive a specially designated certificate and nametag. Eighty-two travel counselors have received certification since the program started in 2000. Iowa is one of only eight states endorsed by the Travel Industry Association of America for having a Travel Counselor Certification Program.

Congratulations to:

*Kelly Doonan, Danish Windmill Welcome Center
Dewey C. Brockmann, Western Historic Trails Center
Saundra Clem Leininger, Western Historic Trails Center
Teresa Sward, Western Historic Trails Center
Dick Zion, Western Historic Trails Center
KC Hummel, Western Historic Trails Center*