

Tourism Awards and Silent Auction forms are online

Planning for the 2005 Iowa Tourism Conference is in full gear, and the Iowa Tourism Office has posted two important documents on its web site, www.traveliowa.com. The 2005 Iowa Tourism Award nomination form and Silent Auction donation form are both available now in the site's Travel Industry section. The deadline to submit an award nomination or make a donation to the silent auction is September 1. ●

Fall cooperative advertising deadlines approaching

Reminder: The advertising deadline is approaching for the 2006 *Iowa Travel Guide* and the new fall co-op advertising options: *ArtScene Magazine* and *USA Weekend*. Download information and space reservation forms from the Travel Industry section at www.traveliowa.com – fill out and return by June 30, 2005 to secure a spot in these publications. ●

Tonja Richards joins Tourism team



Welcome to Tonja Richards who was recently named Communications Manager for the Iowa Tourism Office. Formerly, Tonja worked as a marketing manager for the Business Development Division of the Iowa Department of Economic Development. Throughout her career, Tonja has held marketing and public relations positions for both public and private-sector organizations in Tennessee. A native of Ida Grove, Tonja received a BS in Public Relations and Advertising from Middle Tennessee State University. Extend a warm hello to Tonja at tonja.richards@iowalifechanging.com or 515.242.4754. ●

Iowans head to national conference

Fifteen delegates from eight counties in northeast Iowa will represent the Silos and Smokestacks National Heritage Area at the International Heritage Development Conference in Nashville, Tenn. June 4-8. Iowa's group is one of the largest registered for the conference, which is sponsored by the Alliance of National Heritage Areas. The U.S. is home to 24 National Heritage Areas, and the conference will address heritage development issues and explore how heritage development equals economic development. Iowa Tourism Office staff member Kathy Bowermaster will join the delegation as a member of the Silos and Smokestacks Partnership Panel. ●



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Eight projects get Vision Iowa investments in May

Eight projects in all regions of Iowa received more than \$1.5 million in investments in May from the Vision Iowa board. At its monthly meeting, the board approved awards to projects in Dunlap, Council Bluffs, Eldora, Mount Pleasant, Adams County, Denver, Reinbeck and Clarion from its Community Attraction and Tourism (CAT) program. Including these awards, the CAT program has assisted 180 projects and invested more than \$61 million.

Projects that received CAT funding in May are:

French Icarian Colony Restoration, Adams County

Total project cost: \$256,594
Requested: \$71,000
Received: \$65,000 grant

This project includes restoration of the Dining Hall and Icarian School building on the French Icarian Colony site. Once completed, these facilities will become part of a larger complex that will include reproductions of Icarian homes and shops, as well as a welcome center and recreation area. The colony will host tours, workshops, events and demonstrations, and will double as a living museum.

Greater Denver Activities Complex, Phase II, Denver

Total project cost: \$794,163
Requested: \$355,000
Received: \$220,000 grant

This project involves various improvements to the Greater Denver Activities Complex, including baseball/softball and soccer field lighting, parking lot improvements, new dugout roofs and benches, a walking trail, a playground and more.

Boyer Valley Youth Athletic Complex, Dunlap

Total project cost: \$540,333
Requested: \$270,000
Received: \$220,000 grant

This recreation park will include a softball field, a baseball field, two soccer fields, a walking path, a bike path, exercise stations, parking, picnic area, an arboretum, grandstands, restrooms, concessions stands, fencing, lighting and a utility shed.

Bayliss Park Improvements, Council Bluffs

Total project cost: \$4,793,035
Requesting: \$2 million
Received: \$750,000 grant

Planned enhancements to Bayliss Park include the addition of a new fountain, a new interactive water feature, a performing arts stage with audience area, new seating areas, landscaping improvements, enhancements to the major entrances and the addition of public art.

Grand Theater, Eldora

Total project cost: \$34,000
Requested: \$13,500
Received: \$11,500 grant

This project involves the installation of new seating at the Grand Theater, including removing the old seats and sealing/repairing the floor. Built in the 1920s, the theater shows first-run movies.

Food Service Building, Mount Pleasant

Total project cost: \$ 498,782
Requesting: \$125,000
Received: \$100,000 grant

Located at the Old Threshers Reunion site, this facility will house a dining area and five separate kitchen areas that can accommodate numerous food providers. This project will allow the reunion site to host additional and larger events.

Elmwood Park Family Aquatic Center, Reinbeck

Total project cost: \$1,596,995
Requested: \$300,000
Received: \$100,000 grant

The project calls for the construction of an aquatic center featuring zero depth entry, six lap lanes, a single flume water slide, diving boards and a larger deck area. Demolition of the existing pool will take place in August 2005, so that construction may begin on the new aquatic center. The new facility is scheduled to open by July 4, 2006.

Clarion Aquatic Center, Clarion

Total project cost: \$1.5 million
Requested: \$105,000
Received: \$100,000 grant

This project primarily involves renovation of the existing pool to create a more attractive and safe location for residents and visitors. The upgraded aquatic center will feature a new bathhouse, zero depth entry, a new filter and gutter system, play equipment and more.

New brochure highlights Iowa wineries and breweries

The Iowa Wine & Beer Promotion Board has released a new brochure featuring 27 Iowa wineries and one brewery.

Detailed maps show the locations of the facilities and the hours during which visitors can tour and taste fine beverages crafted in Iowa. Some sites offer tours of production facilities and vineyards.

Iowa's expanding wine industry has taken root in all parts of Iowa, and 11 wineries have been added to the newest version of this brochure, including wineries in southwest, central, southeast and northeast Iowa. Travelers will also find two wine trails listed: the Amana Colonies Wine Trail and the Iowa Wine Trail.

The Iowa Wine & Beer brochure is available at Iowa Welcome Centers, most Iowa wineries, and at Millstream Brewing. The Web site for Iowa Wine & Beer (www.iowawineandbeer.com) features the same information and maps, along with links to individual Web sites for many of the establishments. Order a brochure online or by calling 515.242.4737 or by sending e-mail to iowawineandbeer@iowalifechanging.com. ●



Choice Hotels International supports Iowa Tourism

The Iowa Tourism Office is pleased to announce that Choice Hotels International (CHI) has graciously agreed to a partnership during the upcoming Iowa State Fair and throughout the year with the state welcome centers. Thanks to CHI's investment in Iowa tourism, fairgoers can enter a daily drawing for a \$150 gift card, good at a CHI property. In addition, the CHI deal will support operations of the Interstate welcome centers. Look to future issues of *The Traveler* to learn about plans for the 2005 Iowa State Fair. ●



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.

WEB SITE STATE BENCHMARK SURVEY

First Quarter 2005

The survey is a collaborative effort among 16 states and is conducted by the Department of Recreation, Parks & Tourism Sciences at Texas A&M University.

A total of 4,276 visitors to www.traveliowa.com responded to the on line survey.

Summary

A significant majority (75.9%) of the Web site users were from out of state. Within the next six months, 75.9% of respondents are planning to visit Iowa. Of those planned visits, 58.7% of respondents were planning a vacation, 15.4% were planning to visit family and relatives and 13.5% were looking for a weekend getaway. Most of the respondents (53.4%) were planning a trip. Of those respondents who answered, 95.9% of users said that using the Web site for travel planning was important.

In rank order, this is the information they were looking for when searching www.traveliowa.com:

Highway map	74.3%
Calendar of events	66.7%
Local attractions	64.1%
General state information	63.7%
Historical sites	57.8%
Request information	56.2%
State park information	54.4%
Activity information	48.8%
Accommodations	48.1%
Fairs & festivals	48.1%
Discount coupons	47.8%



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DOT releases new biking map

The 2005 version of the Iowa Transportation Map for Bicyclists is now available. When initially published in 2000, this map received rave reviews from bicyclists and map enthusiasts alike.

This statewide map shows hundreds of miles of bike trails that pass through woodlands, prairies and parks --- all highlighting the beauty of Iowa's landscapes. In addition to the off-road trails, traffic levels are indicated for all paved roadways so bicyclists can choose the road routes that match their levels of riding experience to enhance safety.

The bicycle map is free and available at driver's license stations and Iowa Welcome Centers. To order the map by phone, call 515.242.4705 or 800.345.IOWA (4692). Two Web sites are available to either view the map online or order a paper copy. Please go to either www.iowabikes.com or www.iowadotmaps.com. ●

