

The Travel Federation of Iowa elects 2005-2006 officers

The Travel Federation of Iowa (TFI) met July 14 to elect officers for the coming year.

New leaders are: Kim Burger, Cedar Falls Convention & Tourism Bureau, president; Vicki Hughes, Ushers Ferry Historic Village, past president; Tom Kuhlman, Iowa Great Lakes Chamber, treasurer; Ann Vogelbacher, CITR, secretary. Other members include: Catherine Bergman, Hamilton County S.E.E.D.; Becky Gruening, Greater Des Moines Convention & Visitors Bureau; Fenner Stevenson, Boone & Scenic Valley Railroad; Angie Tyner, Council Bluffs CVB; Shirley Phillips, Sac Economic Development and Tourism; Julie Allesee, Clinton Convention & Visitors Bureau; Michele Walker, WITR; Carrie Koelker, EITA.

TFI is the advocacy organization for the Iowa tourism industry and includes representatives from each region. ●

New IDED Director and Deputy named

Governor Tom Vilsack has appointed Mary Lawyer to serve as acting director of the Iowa Department of Economic Development (IDED), replacing Mike Blouin, who resigned in early July to focus on exploring a 2006 gubernatorial run. Lawyer was previously the deputy director of IDED, and has been with the agency since 1990. Lawyer has named Tina Hoffman, IDED communications director, as acting deputy director.



The 2005-2006 Economic Development Board held their first meeting July 7. Members of the board are: Kathy Alden, Dougherty; Peg Armstrong-Gustafson, Waukee; Bonnie Barney, Tiffin; Linda Bloodsworth, Davenport; Bob Bocken, Fort Dodge (chairman); Jerry Courtney, Burlington; Arvind Dandekar, Marion; Nancy Dunkel, Dyersville; Cindi Keithley, Council Bluffs; Gary Kirke, West Des Moines; Craig Lang, Brooklyn; John Lisle, Clarinda; Marcia Nichols, Johnston; Marcia Rogers, Cedar Rapids; Toby Shine, Wahpeton. (Ex-Officio: Michael Gartner, Iowa Board of Regents;

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Iowa State Fair countdown begins

Things are buzzing at the fairgrounds as preparations continue for the 2006 Iowa State Fair. The Iowa Tourism Building will include more than 30 exhibitors from all parts of the state. The Iowa Tourism Office will offer free Iowa Travel Guides, maps, and Calendars of Events. Fairgoers will also be able to enter a daily drawing for a \$150 Choice Hotels gift card. Those who do not attend the Fair can enter the drawing online at www.traveliowa.com during the run of the fair.



The Iowa Department of Economic Development (IDED) will be the major sponsor of the first day of the fair, August 11. Get a close-up look at the Ethanol 91 Indy car and visit IDED's exhibit on the Grand Concourse to test your knowledge about Iowa tourism attractions, companies and products. ●



Flora A. Schmidt Scholarship

The Iowa Tourism Office is again offering a student scholarship to cover registration for a college student wishing to attend the Iowa Tourism Conference October 24-26. The scholarship is the Flora A. Schmidt Scholarship. Flora is a former tourism industry colleague and has financed this opportunity now for several years. Attending this event in past years has served her well and she wishes to continue to offer this opportunity to Iowa college students. Application deadline for the scholarship is September 23. Contact Lonie Mezera at the Iowa Tourism Office for more information: lonie.mezera@iowalifechanging.com or 888.472.6035 ●

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Dr. R. Gene Gardner, Iowa Association of Community College Trustees; Dr. John Hartung, Iowa Association of Independent Colleges and Universities; Representative Clarence Hoffman, Denison; Representative Philip Wise, Keokuk; Senator E. Thurman Gaskill, Corwith; Senator Tom Courtney, Burlington.)

Meeting dates and agendas for the board can be found at www.iowalifechanging.com/idedboards ●



July Vision Iowa Awards

The Vision Iowa Board granted more than \$2 million to five projects around the state at its July meeting in Decorah. Funds were given to Carson, Clear Lake, Coralville, DeWitt and Hamburg from the Community Attractions and Tourism (CAT) grant program. The CAT program, along with its sister program Vision Iowa, has provided millions of dollars to quality-of-life projects around the state since their inception in 2000.

“Vision Iowa and CAT grants are known for improving the quality of life of Iowans, and these projects will only strengthen that reputation,” said Andy Anderson, chair of the Vision Iowa Board. “In addition to enhancing their communities, they will have a lasting economic and cultural impact that will be felt for years to come.”

Including July’s awards, the CAT program has given out over \$63 million in aid and assisted 189 projects.

Carson Community Center, Carson
Total project cost: \$1,344,448
Requesting: \$672,224
Receiving: \$400,000
The City of Carson plans to construct a community center that will contain many features, including a senior center, fitness room, kitchen, stage, community hall and a meeting room for the American Legion.

Storm Shelter/Community Center/ VFW Post, Clear Lake
Total project cost: \$1,256,000
Requesting: \$402,247
Receiving: \$200,000
This facility will act as a meeting space for community and county events, service organizations and civic groups. It will also serve as the new post for the VFW and Women’s Auxiliary.

Coralville Public Library Renovation and Expansion, Coralville
Total project cost: \$14,068,090
Requesting: \$1,900,000
Receiving: \$930,000
The proposed new Coralville Public Library is a key ingredient in the city’s plan to beautify and revitalize the downtown area. The new facility will double the current library space and will include a new, larger parking lot.

DeWitt 6th Avenue Reconstruction and Streetscape, DeWitt
Total project cost: \$1,000,719
Requesting: \$500,000
Receiving: \$250,000
This project includes street reconstruction, increased parking, decorative lighting, colored concrete, landscaping, and the addition of the city’s logo in the middle of an intersection. In addition, benches, hanging banners, flower pots/ baskets will be added.

Hamburg Downtown Streetscape Project, Hamburg
Total project cost: \$701,482
Requesting: \$350,000
Receiving: \$250,000
This community improvement project includes brick sidewalks, historic lighting, landscaping, benches, receptacles, planters and a flag pole. The project cost includes only aesthetic pieces of the project and does not include routine activities such as street repair or curb and gutter replacement.

The board also formally approved a contract for up to \$5 million for Cedar Rapids’ Cedar Bend redevelopment project, which was awarded last October. ●

2006 Tourism Region boards in place

The three tourism region organizations have elected board members and officers for the coming year.

Eastern Iowa Tourism Association: Kirk Brandenberger, Keokuk CVB, president; Gary Wheat, Waterloo CVB, president-elect; Julie Bonert, Dyersville Chamber; Darryl Eggers, Potter's Mill; Rich Hall, Dubuque Opera House; Vicki Hughes, Ushers Ferry; Sue Czeshinski, Dubuque CVB; Kristie Wetjen, Amana Colonies CVB; Kim Burger, Cedar Falls CVB. www.easterniowatourism.org

Central Iowa Tourism Region: Pete Malmberg, Dallas County Conservation, president; Timm Harrison, The Cottage B&B, vice-president; Paulette Franklin, Altoona Chamber; Lee Ann Bakros, Des Moines Playhouse; Kathy Lenz, Hometown Perry Iowa; Laurie Lietz, Clear Lake Area Chamber/CVB; Jessica O'Riley, Iowa State Fair; Jill Vandervoort, Bos Landen Golf Resort; Denice Gradeless, Albia Chamber of Commerce. www.iowatourism.com

Western Iowa Tourism Region: Abbey Larson, Okoboji Tourism, president; Cindy Thompson, Pottawattamie County Conservation, vice-president; Jim Robbins, Monona County; Freda Dammann, Manning; Angie Duncan, Midwest Partnership; Elaine Farwell, Clarinda Chamber; Angie Tyner, Council Bluffs CVB; Marilyn Monson, Storm Lake Chamber; Matt Pearson, Northwest Communications; Terri Johnson, Danish Immigrant Museum. www.traveliowa.org



Mike Blouin, former director of IDED, met with tourism industry representatives and toured local attractions in Council Bluffs, Perry and Amana during the last week in June.

Here, Blouin answers a question from a participant in the Council Bluffs meeting, held at the Union Pacific Railroad Museum June 27.

Travel Trends

Research is integral to the success of Iowa's tourism industry. At the Iowa Tourism Office, several research studies are used to survey the traveling public, in our state and around the world.

Second quarter results from State Benchmark Survey

Out-of-state vacation travelers are continuing to use www.traveliowa.com to plan their 2005 Iowa vacations. Second quarter results are in from the State Benchmark Survey of Iowa Website Users, a multi-state study conducted by Texas A&M University. The results offer an interesting picture of our Web site users:

- 73.9% are not residents of Iowa.
- 50% are planning to travel in Iowa within 1-3 months
- 56% are planning a vacation
- 60% say they'll spend more than \$101 per day while traveling
- More than 54% are from households without children.
- 82.8% have some college or a college degree
- 75.9% are 35+ years old

Most travelers were using the Web site to plan a trip to Iowa (51.5%) or to see what there is to do in Iowa (23%).

For more information on the Web survey or other research projects for the Iowa Tourism Office, contact LuAnn Reinders at 888.472.6035 or luann.reinders@iowalifechanging.com.



New Internet domain for travel businesses and organizations: *.travel*

.travel is the Internet top level domain exclusively for businesses, organizations and individuals in the travel industry. .travel will register domain names with the extension, “.travel”, for example, ‘discoveryholidays.travel’. Any business, organization or individual that is a member of NTA, ABA, IACVB or another qualifying travel industry trade group is eligible if it falls within one of 18 business sectors of the travel industry. For more information on this opportunity, contact one of those national associations or www.tralliance.info. ●



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