

# Sesquicentennial Update

Volume One

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- **Iowa Bankers Association Partnership**
- **An Invitation from former Governor Robert D. Ray**
- **Sesquicentennial Debut**
- **History of the Celebration**
- **Sesquicentennial Calendar of Events**

*Tourism Sesquicentennial Update is published monthly in partnership with the Iowa Sesquicentennial Commission, Inc.; Iowa Department of Economic Development, Division of Tourism; and Iowa Bankers Association. Copies are free. Copyright 1996, Iowa Sesquicentennial Commission, Inc. Excerpts are permitted when source is cited.*

IOWA  
You make me smile. 

IOWA  
**150**  
Celebrate  
Our State  
1846 • 1996  
© 1996, Iowa Sesquicentennial Commission, Inc.

The Smart  
Choice!  
IOWA BANKS

## “CELEBRATE OUR STATE”

Iowa turns 150 on December 28, 1996, Statehood Day. When you get to be that age, they have a name for it: *Sesquicentennial* (Sess-kwi-sen-tenn-ee-ull). Iowa's Sesquicentennial is a historic event — and a celebration of the rich promise of days to come for the people of Iowa.

Every county and city in Iowa is planning a celebration for the state's big birthday. So no matter where you visit, you're going to find us in an extra festive mood. We're going to light the sky with fireworks. Lead the parades of local pride. Restore our great historic structures and create new works of art. We're going to celebrate our past and prepare for our bright future. Claim our place in history and gain a head start on our next 150 years. Hundreds of events are planned so you can be part of the pageant. Here are just a few examples:

Paddle into history on the *Iowa 150 Mississippi River Adventure*. A fleet of 500 canoes will navigate more than 300 miles of “Old Man River” from New Albin to Keokuk on a 14-day voyage, August 4 – 17.

In Southeast Iowa, Scott County invites you to “150 Days of Celebration.” This Sesquicentennial Salute will kick off with a parade on May 25 in Davenport/Bettendorf. The opening day will be followed by dozens of special events, concerts, exhibits and projects that culminate in the grand finale weekend — the *Big River Rendezvous*, October 10 – 13, with riverboat adventures on water — featuring the *Delta Queen* — and festivals on land.

The *Tri-County Triathlon* challenges athletes to swim, run and bicycle their way through Central Iowa's Boone, Webster and Hamilton counties, October 3 – 5.

In the nation's capital, the Smithsonian Institution — also celebrating its 150th year — is putting the spotlight on Iowa. Our *folks* and way of *life* will be a main attraction at the Smithsonian's *Festival of American Folklife*. More than a million people will learn about Iowa in Washington, D.C., June 26 – 30 and July 3 – 7, 1996. As a premier statewide

Sesquicentennial celebration, the Iowa exhibit will then move from the Smithsonian to the Iowa State Capitol Grounds where it will be enhanced and restaged as the 1996 *Festival of Iowa Folklife*, August 22 – 25. Free and open to the public, this festival will feature concerts, great storytelling, hands-on workshops with traditional musicians, ethnic and regional dance performances, and opportunities to learn the special techniques of great Iowa cooks and craftspersons.

Iowa will lead the nation in 1996 in celebrating the anniversary of the Mormon pioneer exodus of 1846 (another 150-year anniversary!). Iowa communities will host grassroots celebrations throughout the year honoring the courage and sacrifice of the Mormon pioneers. From June 23 – July 13, the *Iowa Mormon Pioneer Trail*

*Sesquicentennial Wagon Train* will traverse the state to view the routes and sites of the original Mormon pioneers. Choirs, special programs, symposiums, and local pioneer celebrations will commemorate the great exodus.

From the Iowa State Fair to RAGBRAI to the Iowa Games, this is the year Iowa's favorite events

become part of a yearlong Sesquicentennial birthday bash! If you tour through Iowa during this milestone year, you'll see a progressive, 21st-century state built upon Iowans' Midwest heritage. That's worth celebrating!

For more information, specific dates and destinations, check your 1996 *Iowa Calendar of Events*. To order your free copy, call 1-800-345-IOWA.

Join the people

of Iowa for

the yearlong

Sesquicentennial

celebration!



## HOTLINE

For up-to-the-minute  
details on upcoming

Tourism and

Sesquicentennial

events, call the Iowa

Tourism and

Sesquicentennial

Hotline:

1-800-528-5265.

This special hotline

is sponsored by the

Iowa Bankers

Association and your

local Iowa bank —

one more way Iowa

banks are investing

in Iowa.

## IOWA BANKERS ASSOCIATION PARTNERSHIP

by Neil Milner  
EVP & CEO  
Iowa Bankers Association



Iowa banks have a long history of involvement in local and statewide economic development. In 1995, a historic partnership with the Iowa Division of Tourism was initiated when the Iowa Bankers Association (IBA), and its 500 member banks, agreed to distribute the new *Iowa Travel Guide*. The IBA sponsored statewide television advertising to promote the availability of the Travel Guides at Iowa banks. With the tremendous support shown by local banks, distribution reached nearly 100,000 in just one month.

This year, the IBA developed a unique partnership with the Iowa Division of Tourism and the Iowa Sesquicentennial Commission to help "Celebrate Our State." Iowa's banks will play an active role as a presenting partner of the "Iowa Voyager" as it travels across Iowa to many local and statewide events. This custom-designed traveling exhibit trailer showcases famous Iowans, Iowa scenes, community events and Iowa innovations.

In addition, the IBA will promote this historic year by:

- Publishing a year of special monthly newsletters, which will be available only in bank lobbies. The newsletters will feature upcoming Tourism and Sesquicentennial events, explore Iowa's rich history, and include letters and articles by state leaders.
- Distributing the 1996 Iowa Sesquicentennial/ Tourism Calendar of Events.
- Providing first-point distribution of the 1996 *Iowa Travel Guide*.
- Sponsoring a 24-hour, toll-free hotline for information about Iowa Sesquicentennial and Tourism events.
- Hosting special in-bank promotions of Iowa Sesquicentennial/Tourism merchandise; the commemorative edition of *Iowa, A Celebration of Land, People & Purpose*; and the celebration of Statehood Day.

The IBA and its member banks are excited about this unique partnership and the opportunity to showcase Iowa's many strong economic and lifestyle attributes. It's one more way Iowa banks are investing in Iowa.

## AN INVITATION FROM FORMER GOVERNOR ROBERT D. RAY

Robert D. Ray  
Iowa Sesquicentennial Committee  
Chairman  
President & CEO  
Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Iowa

If you have ever given a speech or appeared in a play, you've probably experienced a moment — just before you step on stage — when time seems to stand still. You're there thinking about many different things as you wait silently in the wings. You remember all of the rehearsals and preparation. You decide you need more time to get ready. You feel the audience's excitement. Then, suddenly — it's show time!

For all of the volunteers and the administrative team who have been planning Iowa's 150th birthday celebration — this is our special moment. After more than three years of hard work, the curtain is rising. And what a show it will be!

On December 28, 1995, we launched our yearlong Sesquicentennial celebration with a Sesquicentennial Debut at Iowa's first state capitol in Iowa City. It set the stage for thousands of events and activities in all of Iowa's 99 counties, letting Iowans and people throughout the world know what this special place called "Iowa" is all about. For the next 12 months, we'll showcase our state and our people with:

- **Major events**, such as the Smithsonian Institution's *Festival of American Folklife*, and the restaging of Iowa's role in that festival on our own Capitol Hill in Des Moines.
- **Thousands of local festivities**, fairs, homecomings and family reunions.
- **Original works of art and literature**, such as our commemorative book, *Iowa, A Celebration of Land, People & Purpose*, the video *My Iowa*, and other commissioned musical and dramatic works that illuminate our traditions and spirit.
- **Historic preservation projects** and tourism promotions that highlight our special places and our hospitality.
- **Educational programs** that will help us pass along all of these wonderful insights and experiences to future generations.

The Sesquicentennial promises to be quite a production — and it's coming soon to a community near you! You're invited to be part of it.

**Tourism Hotline:**  
**1-800-528-5265**



## SESQUICENTENNIAL DEBUT

"It's stupendous, it's outstanding, it's beyond all my expectations of what it would be!" Those were just some of the words Governor Terry E. Branstad used



Governor Terry E. Branstad reads the Sesquicentennial Proclamation at a press conference in the Senate Chamber of Old Capitol. (Chairman, Honorable Robert D. Ray and Cochair C.J. Niles in background.)

to describe the Sesquicentennial Debut in Iowa City on Statehood Day, December 28. After months of anticipation, Iowa's yearlong celebration of 150 years of statehood is finally under way.

The kickoff activity took place at the Old Capitol, where a typical government day in 1846

was re-created by a host of state lawmakers and officials. More than 4,000 people watched actors in 1846 attire, including Governor Terry E. Branstad, Lt. Governor Joy Corning, former Governors Robert D. Ray and Norman Erbe, as well as other statewide elected officials and dignitaries. Period music was provided by the City High School Quartet and the Boland-Dowdall Duo.

The afternoon provided children of all ages and their families with a variety of entertainment, including hands-on art activities, storytelling, the Eulenspiegel Puppet Theater and folk singer Dave Moore. The day was capped off with festive birthday cake — 940 pieces of cake were eaten in just 20 minutes — and a stunning winter fireworks show.

The All-Iowa Birthday Debut rounded out the evening with entertainment by the Kuhlmann Sisters of Des Moines. Some 950 guests took part in the festivities at the Iowa Memorial Union. The culinary history of Iowa was featured with four food stations, each representing a different 50-year period of time. Guests enjoyed venison stew, sausages and cheeses, and a variety of sweets at the dessert station.



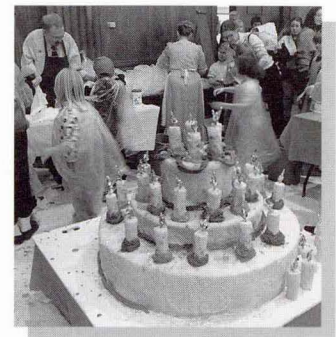
Governor Terry E. Branstad and former Governor Robert D. Ray portray the role of the first governor of Iowa, Ansel Briggs, at the Old Capitol, Iowa City.



Governor Terry E. Branstad and former Governor Robert D. Ray cut the Iowa birthday cake.

Executive Director Scott Raecker gathered around a birthday cake, shaped like Iowa, to blow out the candles as 1,500 balloons dropped from the ceiling. It was a moment which will long be remembered.

Scott Raecker summed it up when he said, "We're just absolutely thrilled with the response we've had!" Indeed, the Iowa Sesquicentennial Commission has now set the stage for what promises to be a year like no other the state of Iowa has ever seen!



Iowa youth build a papier-mâché birthday cake for Iowa at the Debut family activities in Iowa Memorial Union, Iowa City.

## HISTORY OF THE CELEBRATION

On December 28, 1846, President James K. Polk, signed into law a bill making Iowa the 29th state in the Union. Now, 150 years later, Iowans all across the state are celebrating the Sesquicentennial anniversary of that historic day.

The celebration will last one whole year — from December 28, 1995, to December 28, 1996. Throughout this year, Iowans are joining together for our state's greatest celebration ever. We are highlighting our accomplishments, celebrating our diversity, showcasing our progress, humbly congratulating each other for the contributions we have made to the world, and enthusiastically preparing for the future. Celebrating all these elements — and more — is making Iowa's 150 statehood anniversary a huge success.

The Sesquicentennial opportunity encourages Iowans to look back at the entirety of Iowa's collective history — from prehistoric times to 1846 to just last year. We are also celebrating who we are today, and peering into and planning for the future. Across the state, communities are incorporating the Sesquicentennial theme, *Celebrate Our State*, into a multitude of exciting events. From the beginning to the end of the Sesquicentennial year, Iowans are leaving countless legacies that range from planting trees on school grounds to sponsoring community discussions on Iowa's future.



# SESQUICENTENNIAL CALENDAR OF EVENTS

*The countdown is over!* The Sesquicentennial year has begun! Iowans have developed an exciting array of new and existing events to honor this historic celebration. Events taking place between January 1996 and March 1996 that have received endorsement from the Iowa Sesquicentennial Commission, or that have been planned in partnership with Iowa's 99 County Sesquicentennial Commissions, are included below.

Whether you take a quick or studied look through this list, you will learn a great deal about the plans for Iowa's 150th birthday commemoration. You're invited to join in the fun!

## JANUARY 1996

- |                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| Jan. 1 – Feb. 24  | "Pioneers on the Prairie" Exhibit, Grout Museum District, Waterloo          |
| Jan. 1 – Feb. 25  | Grant Wood: An American Master Revealed, Joslyn Art Museum, Omaha, Nebraska |
| Jan. 1 – Dec. 31  | Heritage Highlights, Grout Museum District, Waterloo                        |
| Jan. 1 – Dec. 31  | Country School Exhibit, Buena Vista Historical Society, Storm Lake          |
| Jan. 20           | Polk County 150 Gala, Des Moines  |
| Jan. 21 – 22      | Bald Eagle Appreciation Days, Keokuk  |
| Jan. 26 – 28      | 16th Annual University of Okoboji Winter Games, Iowa Great Lakes            |
| Jan. 28 – Feb. 11 | Annual Scholastic Art Awards Exhibition, Ames                               |
| Jan. 31           | Heartland Fair, Des Moines  |

## FEBRUARY 1996

- |                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| Feb. 1 – Nov. 15 | 4-H'ers Explore Iowa Through the Sesquicentennial, Statewide               |
| Feb. 2           | Winter Festival, Muscatine   |
| Feb. 2 – 4       | Soaring with Eagles, Bonaparte   |
| Feb. 3           | Wright County Winterfest, Lake Cornelia Park                               |
| Feb. 3           | Bike Ride to Rippey (B.R.R.), Perry  |
| Feb. 3           | Great Melrose Variety Show, Melrose  |
| Feb. 8 – 11      | Eastern Iowa Home Improvement and Landscape Show, Waterloo                 |
| Feb. 9 – 11      | <i>The Quilters</i> , A Musical, Roxy Theatre, Alta                        |
| Feb. 10          | Movies To Go Iowa Film Awards, Convention Center of Greater Des Moines     |
| Feb. 12          | Chamber of Commerce Annual Banquet, Carroll                                |
| Feb. 15          | Lions Annual Pancake Supper, Paton   |
| Feb. 16 – 18     | <i>The Quilters</i> , A Musical, Roxy Theatre, Alta                        |
| Feb. 19          | "Women and the Art of Healing" Exhibit, Cedar Rapids                       |
| Feb. 29          | 150 Leap Year: Iowa's Musical Heritage, Five Season's Center, Cedar Rapids |

To request a copy of the Iowa Division of Tourism's *Sesquicentennial Calendar of Events*, which lists over 1,100 local events taking place statewide, call 1-800-345-IOWA, or pick up at your bank.

# IOWA

... GET A LICENSE TO CELEBRATE!



## NEXT ISSUE!

- Governor Branstad Letter
- Iowa Voyager Itinerary
- February – March Calendar of Events
- Sesquicentennial Product Information

Buy Sesquicentennial License Plates Today And Support Iowa's 150th Birthday Celebration.

Choose between beautiful scenic and classic patriotic designs for just \$15.00, with an annual renewal fee of only \$10.00 plus regular registration fees. Personalized plates are available for \$40.00, and gift certificates can be purchased for friends and relatives. All of the proceeds will be used to help Celebrate Our State, with a portion returning to your county to fund sesquicentennial activities and programs in your area.

License plates can be purchased from your county treasurer, or for more information call the Iowa Sesquicentennial Commission at 1-800-IOWA150.

SESQUICENTENNIAL  
1846 • 1996 IOWA

© 1993, Iowa Sesquicentennial Commission, Inc.

IOWA  
150  
Celebrate  
Our State  
1846 • 1996