

## Dubuque Receives Vision Iowa Award

Mason City, Forest City, Eldora and Waterloo Receive CAT Funding

The Vision Iowa Board made its first Vision Iowa award in more than two years at their February 14 meeting in Johnston. The Dubuque County Historical Society received an award of \$8 million for the Great Rivers Center and RiverMax Theater. Projects in Mason City, Forest City, Eldora and Waterloo were awarded a total of \$1,224,000 in funds from the Community Attraction and Tourism (CAT) Fund.

The Great Rivers Center and RiverMax Theater in Dubuque will be located next to the National Mississippi River Museum and Aquarium and the Grand Harbor Resort and Waterpark, along the Mississippi River. The project also involves restoration work on two National Historic Landmarks: the William M. Black steamboat and the Old Jail. The total project budget is more than \$42.2 million, with \$8 million in Vision Iowa funding. Dubuque received a \$40 million Vision Iowa grant in 2001 for the America's River Project.

Projects receiving approval for grants from the Community Attraction and Tourism (CAT) funding:

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## 2006 Iowa Welcome Center Report Findings

During 2006, Iowa's Welcome Centers extended the stay of 30% of their travelers visiting in Iowa, adding an estimated \$23 million to Iowa's tourism economy, according to the recently released 2006 Iowa Welcome Center Survey Report.

The report also shows that an average of \$212.19 was spent per day by each travel party, an increase of nearly \$4 per day over 2006. Transportation spending increased by 10.5% to \$54.05 per day, but this increase was offset by a decrease in spending on food (from \$47.36 in 2005 to \$45.78 in 2006) and entertainment (from \$27.32 in 2005 to \$24.46 in 2006). Lodging and shopping expenditures remained relatively level from the previous year.

### Other key findings of the report show:

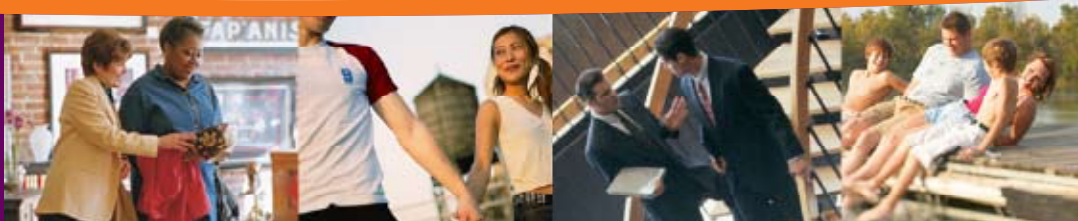
- 48% of the travelers came from Iowa's target markets of Iowa, Illinois, Kansas, Missouri, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Nebraska, and South Dakota. International visitors comprised 1.7% of the travelers.
- Travelers spent an average of 3.6 days in Iowa.
- Travelers took an average of 2.8 trips in Iowa.
- Families accounted for 59% of all travel parties.
- The average travel party had 2.5 people.
- Hotels and motels were the primary places for lodging with 49% of the travelers staying there.
- Vacationing travelers made up 46% and those visiting friends and family were 32% of the respondents.
- "Historical areas" was listed as the primary interest, followed by general sightseeing and visiting friends and relatives.
- Average age of an Iowa Welcome Center visitor was 55.8 years.

The Iowa Welcome Center Survey Report is administered through a partnership between the Iowa Welcome Centers and the Iowa Tourism Office. Fourteen Iowa Welcome Centers participated in the 2006 study. View the full report in the Travel

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*Kathy Meisner of the Sgt. Floyd Welcome Center encourages a Sioux City traveler to complete the Welcome Center survey.*



# Warm Reception for Legislators at Annual TFI Showcase

Chilly temperatures and warm hospitality combined February 6 at the Travel Federation of Iowa's annual Legislative Showcase. Over 75% of the senators and about half of the House members attended the showcase, held at the 4-H Building at the Iowa State Fairgrounds. Booth space was sold out with more than 80 exhibitors on hand to talk tourism with Iowa's elected officials. Earlier in the day, nearly 100 industry representatives attended the Travel Federation of Iowa's legislative luncheon. Learn more about the Travel Federation of Iowa at [www.travelfederationofiowa.org](http://www.travelfederationofiowa.org).



*Bonnie Verburg, Pella Historical Village and Rep. Dave Tjepkes, Webster County.*



*Rep. Tyler Olson, Linn Co.; Angela Halpin, Council Bluffs CVB; Kelli O'Brien, Council Bluffs; Rep. Andrew Wenthe, Fayette Co.; Kathy Fiscus, Council Bluffs CVB.*



*Rep. Tami Wiencek, Black Hawk Co.; Don Short, Candy Streed, Aaron Steinmann, Silos and Smokestacks.*



*Terri Johnson, Danish Immigrant Museum; Rep. Lance Horbach, Tama Co.; Karina Petersen, Danish Immigrant Museum (intern from Denmark).*



*Pam Herzberg, Clarinda Chamber; Rep. Royd Chambers, O'Brien Co.*



*Mary Beth Lawler and Jane Knutson, Iowa Falls; Sen. Larry McKibben, Marshall Co.; Rod Scott, Iowa Falls.*



*Kathy Faber, Ice Cream Capital of the World; Sen. Larry Noble, Polk Co.; Rep. Mike May, Dickinson Co.*



*Vicki Comegys, Des Moines CVB; Sen. Brad Zaun, Polk Co.; Greg Edwards, Des Moines CVB.*



*Kathy Krogmeier, Blank Park Zoo; Rep. Dan Huseman, Cherokee Co.*



*Angie Wuthrich, AIB student; Kathy Dirks, Harrison County Welcome Center; Sen. James Seymour, Harrison Co.; Sen. Ron Wieck, Woodbury Co.; Renea Anderson, Harrison County Development.*



## Choice Hotels renews partnership

Choice Hotels of Iowa recently renewed its partnership with the Iowa Tourism Office. For the third year in a row, Choice Hotels will sponsor welcome center activities such as the annual April training workshop and update session at the tourism conference. The agreement also includes the promotion of Iowa Tourism and Choice Hotels of Iowa at the Iowa State Fair through the distribution of information sacks and prize drawings for \$150 gift cards. Thank you Choice Hotels!

### Vision Iowa -

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*Andy Anderson (left), Vision Iowa Board Chair, and Jerry Enzler (center), Executive Director of the National Mississippi River Museum and Aquarium, speak with the media after the announcement of Vision Iowa's \$8 million grant to Dubuque.*

#### Winnebago River Trail Bridge - Mason City

Total Project Cost ..... \$759,220  
Amount Requested ..... \$110,220  
Amount Awarded..... \$100,000

#### Forest City Municipal Aquatic Center - Forest City

Total Project Cost ..... \$3,297,000  
Amount Requested ..... \$100,000  
Amount Awarded..... \$100,000

#### Hardin County Fair Grandstands Seating Project - Eldora

Total Project Cost ..... \$95,000  
Amount Requested ..... \$28,990  
Amount Awarded..... \$24,000

#### RiverLoop Expo - Waterloo

Total Project Cost ..... \$5,474,442  
Amount Requested ..... \$2,347,917  
Amount Awarded..... \$1,000,000

To date, 12 Vision Iowa projects have been awarded a total of \$218,550,000. The CAT program has provided funding to 255 projects, awarding a total of \$81,780,671. For more information, go to [www.visioniowa.org](http://www.visioniowa.org). ■



### Group tour newsletter returns

The PlanIt Iowa! Newsletter returns to publication with the Winter 2007 edition. Targeted at group tour planners, PlanIt will cover "what's new, unusual and just plain different" in Iowa. Annual winter and summer issues will be distributed to 1,600 tour planners, Iowa DMOs and tour suppliers. Story ideas are welcome, and can be directed to Mark Eckman at [mark.eckman@iowalifechanging.com](mailto:mark.eckman@iowalifechanging.com) or 888.472.6035.

## Reminder!

### Unity Day Registration and Leadership Award Nomination Available

Visit the Industry Information section of [traveliowa.com](http://traveliowa.com) for all the information you need to register for Iowa Tourism Unity Day, April 27 at the Hy-Vee Conference Center in West Des Moines. You can fill in and print your registration form, and also view the requirements for Tourism Leadership Award nominations, due March 23. Register for Unity Day by April 16 and receive the early bird rate of \$30. Other questions about Unity Day? Contact Lonie Mezera at [lonie.mezera@iowalifechanging.com](mailto:lonie.mezera@iowalifechanging.com) or 888.472.6035.

### EXTRA! EXTRA!

Blank Park Zoo is inviting all Unity Day attendees to visit the zoo after the event concludes. Just wear your Unity Day nametag and receive free admission to the zoo on the afternoon of April 27. Learn more about Iowa's 2006 Attraction of the Year and plan your visit: [www.blankparkzoo.com](http://www.blankparkzoo.com) ■

### Advertisers featured in consumer e-mail marketing initiative

Organizations that advertised in the 2007 Travel Guide have the opportunity to be featured in a special e-mail marketing message to travelers who have requested Iowa tourism information. You can view the first e-mail message here: [www.traveliowa.com/enews/traveliowanm.html](http://www.traveliowa.com/enews/traveliowanm.html). The Tourism Office will send three more e-mail marketing messages throughout the year, featuring different Travel Guide advertisers in the text and photos. This was an added value for Travel Guide advertisers this year. ■



# Tourism

## By the Numbers

**30%**

**Travelers extending their stay after visiting an Iowa Welcome Center**

**\$23 million**

**Estimated additional dollars spent by travelers extending their stay in Iowa**

**2.5**

**Average travel party size of Welcome Center visitors**

**\$212.19**

**Average spending per travel party, per day**

**49%**

**Travelers staying in a hotel or motel**

*Source: 2006 Iowa Welcome Center Survey Report*

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## Planners meet Iowa in D.C.

On March 1, the Iowa Tourism Office participated in Destinations Showcase, a tradeshow for the meetings market. Approximately 1,500 meeting planners attended the Washington D.C. event. Iowa Tourism encouraged planners to visit the state booth by offering a drawing for the new LG Chocolate phone and MP3 player. The planners received a small tin container in the mail before the showcase with information instructing them to stop at the Iowa booth and register for a chance to win the phone. In addition to learning about Iowa meeting amenities at the tradeshow, the planners were directed to the Meetings/Conventions section of [traveliowa.com](http://traveliowa.com) for contest results and convenient access to searchable information about meeting facilities across the state. ■

## Community Development Division News

Thom Guzman has been named to the position of acting division administrator of the Community Development Division by IDED Interim Director Mike Tramontina. Thom is currently the director of the Downtown Resource Center at IDED. Thom can be reached at [thom.guzman@iowalifechanging.com](mailto:thom.guzman@iowalifechanging.com) or 515.242.4733. ■

## Welcome Center Report – continued from page 1

Industry section of [www.traveliowa.com](http://www.traveliowa.com), or contact LuAnn Reinders at [luann.reinders@iowalifechanging.com](mailto:luann.reinders@iowalifechanging.com) for more information.

### Welcome Center notes:

- Remember to sign up for the Brochure Enrollment Program so we can distribute your brochures in the four interstate Welcome Centers this summer. Find more details in the Industry Information section of [traveliowa.com](http://traveliowa.com).
- The I-80 Welcome Center near Underwood opens April 20. If you are enrolled in the brochure distribution program for that center, you may ship new brochures after that date.
- The 2007 Welcome Center Training and Familiarization will be held April 16-18 in Central Iowa. A staff member from each Welcome Center will attend training and participate in a fam tour of the region. ■