

2008 Travel Guide Information Needed

Now is the time of year when we begin collecting information for the 2008 Iowa Travel Guide and web site. Update sheets will be mailed to all communities, attractions, hotels, bed and breakfasts and campgrounds listed in the 2007 guide, with changes and additions due June 1, 2007. If you have new visitor sites, accommodations, or campgrounds that have not been listed before, please let us know so we can send submission information to them. Travel Guide advertising reservations are due June 30, and rate/space information will be made available at Tourism Unity Day, April 27. For questions about the Iowa Travel Guide, please contact Kathy Bowermaster at kathy.bowermaster@iowalifechanging.com or 888.472.6035. ■

Iowa Tourism Unity Day This Month

It's not too late to register for Tourism Unity Day, set Friday, April 27 in West Des Moines. The day's agenda includes a motivational keynote message from Steve Gilliland, a legislative update, unveiling of the 2008 cooperative advertising program and much more. A \$30 per person early bird registration rate is available if postmarked by April 16. After that date, the price increases to \$40. Visit the Travel Industry Information section at www.traveliowa.com to learn more about Unity Day and to download a fill-able registration form. Plus, all attendees wearing their Unity Day badge will receive free admission to the Blank Park Zoo after the event. Thanks to Meredith Travel Marketing and *Midwest Living* for their continued support. ■

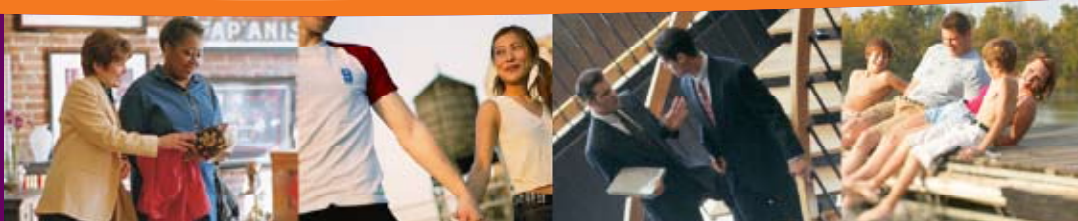
RFPs for 2009 Conference

RFPs for the 2009 Iowa Tourism Conference, set for the central region, are now available either through the Tourism Office (contact Lonie Mezera at lonie.mezera@iowalifechanging.com or 515.242.4727) or in the Travel Industry Information section at www.traveliowa.com. ■



Jessica O'Riley Joins Tourism Staff

Jessica O'Riley joined the Iowa Tourism staff as Communications Manager in March. Jessica spent nearly nine years as Marketing Coordinator for the Iowa State Fair. She will be responsible for the Traveler newsletter, weekly E-Traveler e-newsletter, public relations efforts and more. Contact her at jessica.oriley@iowalifechanging.com or 515.242.4754. ■



TOURISM CONFERENCE

Plans are well underway for the 2007 Tourism Conference, October 22-24, in Dubuque. The informative and entertaining speakers, breakout sessions and other conference events would not be possible without the support of our sponsors. Thanks to these following partners who have already signed on for this year's event:

AAA Living/AAA Four Diamond Awards
Associations Inc.
Best Western Hotels of Iowa
Choice Hotels of Iowa
CTM Brochure Display
The Des Moines Register
Diamond Jo Casino
Dubuque CVB
Dubuque Greyhound Park & Casino
Dyersville Chamber of Commerce
Iowa Gaming Association
Iowa Group Travel Association
Iowa Wine & Beer Promotion Board
Meredith Travel Marketing
Metro Iowa Plus
Midwest Living
Midwest Meetings
Platinum Hospitality Group
Prairie Meadows Racetrack and Casino
Sioux City CVB
Skyline Exhibits Central Iowa
Tanger Outlets



Winning "tastes" like Cherry Chocolate

Last month, Mark Eckman staffed the Iowa Tourism Booth at the Destinations Showcase, a tradeshow for meeting planners, in Washington, D.C. To drive planners to the Iowa booth, the Tourism Office sent a pre-event mailer encouraging them to visit the exhibit and enter a drawing for a new LG Cherry Chocolate phone and MP3 player. More than 100 planners submitted entries and the lucky winner was Sandra Costantino of INA located in Haddonfield, New Jersey. Meeting planner leads are available by contacting Mark at mark.eckman@iowalifechanging.com or 515.242.4770. ■

ASSOCIATION Spotlight



This is the first installment in a regular feature on Iowa's statewide tourism industry organizations. We hope that you will find the series informative and encourage you to contact the individual organizations if you'd like to learn more.

The Iowa Group Travel Association (IGTA) works with lodging/dining properties, attractions and destination marketing organizations (DMOs) to facilitate group travel to Iowa. They provide leads from group travel trade shows, mailings, advertisements and their web site. To date the organization has nine Grassroots Members and 128 Full Members. For more information, visit www.iowagrouptravel.org. ■

Five projects receive grants at March Vision Iowa Board Meeting

More than \$2 million in Community Attraction and Tourism (CAT) grants were given to projects in Audubon, Gladbrook, Humeston, Des Moines and Winneshiek County during the March 14 Vision Iowa Board meeting.

PROJECTS RECEIVING FUNDING:

Downtown Revitalization Project Featuring the John James Audubon Birdwalk Trail – Audubon

Total Project Cost: \$1,252,541
Amount Requested: \$ 594,871
Amount Awarded: \$ 300,000

Gladbrook Fitness and Wellness Center - Gladbrook

Total Project Cost: \$528,000
Amount Requested: \$205,000
Amount Awarded: \$150,000

Revitalize Humeston – Humeston

Total Project Cost: \$961,352
Amount Requested: \$317,649
Amount Awarded: \$275,000

Civic Centerpiece Campaign – Des Moines

Total Project Cost: \$7,105,828
Amount Requested: \$1,400,000
Amount Awarded: \$1,250,000

Paving Our Way to Success - Winneshiek County Conservation Board

Total Project Cost: \$1,603,668
Amount Requested: \$593,668
Amount Awarded: \$450,000

To date, 12 Vision Iowa projects have been awarded a total of \$218,550,000. The CAT Program has provided funding to 260 projects, awarding a total of \$84,205,671. For more information, visit www.visioniowa.org. ■

Locations Expo

From April 12-14, Iowa Film Office Manager Tom Wheeler and Community Development Division staff Jason Boten will be promoting Iowa at the Association of Film Commissioners International (AFCI) Locations Trade Show in Santa Monica, Calif. It is the industry's longest-running trade event for production locations and resources. ■

POW WOW Marketplace

Julie Weeks of the Ames CVB, Becky Gruening of the Des Moines CVB and Mark Eckman from the Iowa Tourism Office will be representing Iowa at the annual POW WOW Marketplace April 23-25 in Anaheim, California. ■

Welcome Center News

The I-80 Welcome Center near Underwood will open April 20. If you are enrolled in the brochure distribution program, you may ship new brochures after that date.



Welcome Center training will be held April 16-18 at Eagle City Winery in Iowa Falls. Following Monday's training session, the Welcome Center counselors will take a two-day fam tour of North Central Iowa.



Don't forget to sign up for the Brochure Enrollment Program so we can distribute your brochures in the four interstate Welcome Centers this summer. For more details, visit the Travel Industry Information section of www.traveliowa.com.



Tourism

By the Numbers

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Number of children in the travel parties of 69% of travelers who answered our web survey.

63

Percentage of travelers who said that our Web site influenced their travel with new ideas and more information for a trip they were planning.

77.6

Percentage of web users surveyed that are not Iowa residents.

41,252

Number of users who found www.traveliowa.com using the search phrase "Iowa tourism."

238,101

Unique visitors to www.traveliowa.com in 2006.

Sources: 2006 Texas A&M Benchmark Survey, webStats.iowa.gov

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Tourism Exhibits Move to Varied Industries Building at State Fair

Some exciting changes are in store for communities and attractions used to exhibiting at the Iowa Tourism Building during the Iowa State Fair. This year those displays will be moved to "Iowa Tourism Hall" in the Varied Industries Building's south conference rooms (located just off the main exhibit floor). One of the most popular buildings on the Fairgrounds, the VI Building draws hundreds of thousands of visitors over the course of the 11-day event.

This year's Fair "Sounds Like Fun" August 9-19. Contact Lonie Mezera at lonie.mezera@iowalifechanging.com or 888.472.6035 with questions about exhibiting at the Fair. ■

