



Central Iowa Tourism Region 2021-2022 Annual Report

2022 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Officers

President

Lori Foresman-Kirpes

Polk County Conservation

Vice President

Kris Blocker

Boone County Convention & Visitors Bureau

Treasurer

Laura Elfers

Silos & Smokestacks National Heritage Area

Anne Drannen

Embassy Suites by Hilton Downtown Des Moines

Staci Scheurenbrand

National Balloon Classic

Travis Stevenson

Boone & Scenic Valley Railroad

Katie Stien

Catch Des Moines

Diana Thies

Iowa Falls Chamber/Main Street

Diane Van Wyngarden

Iowa State University

Amy Zeigler

Iowa Tourism Office/IEDA

REGION STAFF

Ann Vogelbacher

Executive Director

Kasie Westrum

Administrative Assistant





MISSION STATEMENT

To enhance tourism in central Iowa through information, education, and promotion in cooperation with government and business.

One of three tourism regions in the state, the Central Iowa Tourism Region (CITR) works with communities, attractions, events and visitor services on tourism development and marketing initiatives. Programs are determined by the board of directors with input from the membership and facilitated by region staff and committees.

Your involvement supports relevant and innovative programs that directly benefit your business, organization, city, county, or area. Region training & programs provide opportunities to network and cultivate partnerships with others from your area.

SPECIAL PROJECTS

CITR Booth at the Iowa State Fair

Committee Members: Sherrie Colbert, Deann De Groot, and Sarah Litwiller

Participated with a booth in the Varied Industries Building during the fair which attracts over one million visitors annually.

- Created new banner display featuring hidden gems and Central Iowa Road Trips. Offered prize drawings and car coasters to attract visitors to the booth. Created video featuring attractions, businesses, events, and communities from over 30 industry members who shared footage.
- Industry volunteers and region staff worked the booth. Volunteers could feature their business, attraction, community, county, and area during the shifts worked.
- Distributed Central Iowa Travel Guides and visitor information from the booth.

Guide Training & Certification Program

Program offered in partnership with Iowa State University and includes a one-day workshop and option to receive Professional Guide Certification through onsite coaching and assessment.

- Held two workshops in 2021-2022 with over 100 industry members attending.
- Program draws attendees from across the state and 267 have completed the workshop since the program began in 2019, and 58 completing professional guide certification.

Career Fair

Participated at two Iowa State University Career Fairs.

- Shared employment and internship opportunities with almost 50 students majoring in hospitality and event management, health, wellness, government, or human & social services.
- Industry members from across the region and state can provide internship and job postings to be shared.

POWER OF TRAVEL DAY

Partnership with Iowa's three tourism regions and the Iowa Tourism Office.

- Education & networking event to engage and energize all industry members.
- Keynote and break-out sessions on tourism data & research, sales strategies, social media, and industry idea generation.

ADVOCACY/LEGISLATIVE

Central Iowa liaisons to the Travel Federation of Iowa Board: Kris Blocker, Anne Drannen, Staci Scheurenbrand, Jean Stowell, and Ann Vogelbacher

- Continued to advocate on behalf of Iowa's travel and tourism industry. Identified partners with similar goals to assist with advancing our agenda.
- CITR leadership roles in 2022 – President, Anne Drannen and Treasurer & Secretary, Ann Vogelbacher.
- District leader program to facilitate industry communications with elected officials about issues facing the tourism industry.
- Surveyed industry members to determine legislative needs & priorities.
- Offered scholarship program for industry training sessions.
- Produced annual fast fact tourism statistics and awareness information.
- Held This is Iowa Tourism Legislative Showcase, a forum for industry members to share information with elected state officials about the importance of travel and tourism to Iowa and their local area. Hosted legislative seminar/luncheon in conjunction with the showcase.
- Coordinated Silent Auction at the annual tourism conference.

CITR is a proven public/private partnership with an over 30-year track record of successful programming in collaboration with the Iowa Tourism Office and all industry segments.

MARKETING

Central Iowa Travel Guide

- Produced 2022 Central Iowa Travel Guide, a 68-page magazine style publication supported through advertising.
- Partnered with over 40 industry members and businesses that purchased advertising in the guide.
- Distributed over 25,000 guides through the Iowa Welcome Centers, our booth at the Iowa State Fair, to group travel planners, and in response to website and other visitor inquiries.



Travel Iowa Marketplace

2022 Travel Iowa Marketplace Committee Members:
Lori Foresman-Kirpes, Diana Thies, Cari Nicely, and Diane Van Wyngarden

- The 2022 event is planned for November, and CITR has coordinated the Marketplace for 26 years.
- The marketplace brings together group tour and meeting planners with industry members to meet face-to-face to share information and opportunities.
- A familiarization tour will be held the day before in conjunction with the marketplace.

GRANTS/SCHOLARSHIPS

- Administered projects for the Iowa Tourism Grant Program. Wrote grant contracts, monitored projects for compliance and processed grant reimbursements.
- Encouraged industry members to serve on the state-wide review committee for the Iowa Tourism Grants program.
- Awarded scholarships to industry members to attend the annual Iowa Tourism Conference.



EDUCATION

Education Committee Members: Lee Ann Bakros, Laura Elfers, Danielle Rogers, and Travis Stevenson

Hosted educational programs in conjunction with CITR meetings:

- Annual Meeting – A Taste for Travel Writing: How to Work with Travel Writers & Influencers
- Iowa Tourism Town Meeting and A Roadmap to Recovery – DEI at the Core
- Positive Energy, Positive Teams, Positive Results
- Tourism Topics Panel - South Central Iowa Road Trip, WITR T-Bone Trail, and Re-opening Strategies & Experiences, and Industry Issues & Challenges Session

Hosted virtual programs:

- Exceptional Customer Service: Create an Impressive Reputation for Your Organization
- Marketing in Uncertain Times
- Creating Effective Profile Forms Panel Session
- Hospitality Business Recovery Summit
- How to Shift Your Tourism Sales & Marketing Efforts

COOPERATIVE PARTNERSHIPS & INDUSTRY RELATIONS

The Central Iowa Tourism Region is funded through a successful and strong private and public partnership. Membership investments and involvement represent businesses and organizations from all facets of the tourism industry. These investments and our contract with the Iowa Economic Development Authority's Iowa Tourism Office are critical to our unified voice.

CITR Business/Organization Members

Membership is available to counties within the region and to businesses, organizations and others interested in tourism in Central Iowa.

Albia Chamber of Commerce
Altoona Area Chamber of Commerce
AmericInn of Newton
AmericInn of Ottumwa
AmericInn Hotel & Suites of Osage
AmericInn Motel & Suites of Osceola
The Amsterdam Hotel, Pella
Area 15 Regional Planning Council
Barn Boutique, Northwood
Boone County Convention & Visitors Bureau
Boone County Fair
Bridgeview Center, Ottumwa
Britt Hobo Days Association/Hobo Museum
Brookstone Inn & Suites, Fort Dodge
Catch Des Moines
Cedar River Complex
Center Grove Orchard
Centerville Rathbun Lake Area Chamber of Commerce
Chariton Chamber Main Street/Tourism Lucas County
Chariton Valley Planning & Development
City of Eldora
City of Newton
Clarion Chamber & Development
Cobblestone Inn, Boone
Cobblestone Inn, Clarion
Cobblestone Inn, Newton
The Continental Hotel
Country Inn & Suites, Northwood
Country Inn & Suites, Pella
Courtyard By Marriott, Ankeny
Creston/Union County Tourism
Crossroads Partners, LLC Best Western Starlite Village, Fort Dodge

Dallas County Fair Association
Des Moines Playhouse
Destination Downtown Newton Alliance
Dexter Museum
Diamond Jo Casino, Worth County
Dysart Development Corporation
Embassy Suites by Hilton Downtown Des Moines
Fox Ridge Winery LLC
Franklin County Fair Association
Franklin County Tourism
Gaela Wilson Consulting
Garner Chamber of Commerce
Garner Inn & Suites
Golder Hospitality – My Place Altoona and My Place Ankeny
Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden
Greenfield Chamber/Main Street
Griff's Valley View RV Park
Grimes Chamber & Economic Development
Grinnell Area Chamber of Commerce
Hamilton County Conservation
Hardin County Fair Board
Heart of Iowa Wine Trail
Heartland Museum, Clarion
The Highlander, Iowa City
Hilton Garden Inn, West Des Moines
Historic Park Inn
Historic Valley Junction Foundation
Honey Creek Resort
Hotel Grinnell
Hotel Pattee
Image Solutions
Indianola Chamber of Commerce
Int'Veld's Meat Market/Butcher's Brewhuis & Deli

Iowa Arboretum, Inc.
Iowa Falls Chamber/Main Street
Iowa Gold Star Military Museum
Iowa Golf Council
Iowa Mormon Trails Association
Iowa Museum Association
Iowa Railroad Historical Society - Boone & Scenic Valley Railroad
Iowa State Fair
Iowa State University
Jasper Winery
Jefferson Matters: A Main Street & Chamber Community
John Wayne Birthplace Society
Jordan Creek Town Center
Lake Red Rock
Lakeside Casino Resort
Legacy Hotel Group - County Inn & Suites & AmericInn, Ames
Legacy Learning Boone River Valley
Legacy Travel Group
Living History Farms
Lucile's Steaks and Spirits
Madison County Chamber of Commerce
Mahaska Chamber & Development Group/MCRF
Mahaska County Historical Society
Marshalltown Area Chamber of Commerce
Matchstick Marvels Tourist Center
McNeill Stone Mansion B&B
Meet Ottumwa
MyCountyParks.com - Iowa's County Conservation System
National Balloon Classic
National Balloon Museum
National Sprint Car Hall of Fame & Museum, Knoxville

Osage Chamber of Commerce
Osceola Chamber-Main Street
Our Iowa Magazine
Outlets of Des Moines
Pella Convention and Visitors Bureau
Pella Historical Society & Museums
Pella Opera House
Perry Area Chamber of Commerce
Polk County Conservation
Prairie Meadows Casino Racetrack Hotel
Prairie Rivers of Iowa
R Campground Inc.
Reiman Gardens, Ames
Science Center of Iowa
Seven Oaks Recreation, Inc.
Silos & Smokestacks National Heritage Area
Star Destinations, Inc.
Story City Greater Chamber Connection
Summerset Winery
Surf Ballroom & Museum
Tassel Ridge Winery
"The Cow" Coffee & Pie Shoppe
The Iowan Magazine/Heuss Printing
Thomas Jefferson Gardens of Greene County
Top of Iowa Welcome Center
Traer Historical Museum
Traer Salt and Pepper Shaker Gallery
Trainland U.S.A.
Villages of Van Buren
The Wallace Centers of Iowa
Warren County Fair
Winn-Worth Betco

Central Iowa Tourism Region Counties

Appanoose, Boone, Butler, Cerro Gordo, Clarke, Dallas, Davis, Decatur, Floyd, Franklin, Greene, Grundy, Hamilton, Hancock, Hardin, Jasper, Keokuk, Lucas, Madison, Mahaska, Marion, Marshall, Mitchell, Monroe, Polk, Poweshiek, Story, Tama, Wapello, Warren, Wayne, Webster, Winnebago, Worth and Wright.

iowatourism.com



Central Iowa Tourism Region

PO Box 454, Webster City, IA 50595-0454
515.832.4808 or 800.285.5842

iowatourism.com

Ann Vogelbacher
Executive Director
ann@iowatourism.com

Kasie Westrum
Administrative Assistant
kasie@iowatourism.com