

Central Iowa Tourism Region 2022-2023 Annual Report



MISSION STATEMENT

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

Central Iowa Tourism works with attractions, events, hotels, restaurants, natural resources, communities, counties 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.

Training & programs provide opportunities to network and cultivate partnerships with others from your area, the region and from across the state.

Education/Professional Development

Hosted professional development and education programs at Central Iowa Tourism meetings. Initiated new opportunity to sponsor education programs with the National Balloon Classic sponsoring the speaker for the December and March seminars and Meet Ottumwa sponsoring the May meeting. Workshop/seminar topics in 2022-2023:

- Let's Talk Tourism - CITR Updates, Industry Needs Sharing, Identifying and Sharing Your Target Markets, and What's Working for Industry Members.
- How to Succeed In The Changing World of Social Media.
- How to Make Better Videos and Tips & Tricks for Better Photography.
- Annual Meeting - Networking with Style, and Panel Session on Programs & Promotions to Encourage Visitation Year Round, Including the Off Season.

Guide Training & Certification Program

Program offered in partnership with Central Iowa Tourism and Iowa State University Extension and Outreach.

- Includes one-day workshop filled with interactive methods and techniques for creating and delivering dynamic guided programs. Individuals who complete the workshop are eligible to pursue the optional Professional Guide Certification.
- Over 100 industry members attended the Guide Training Workshops held in 2022-2023.
- Since piloting the program in 2019, over 350 industry members completed the Guide Training Workshop from 76 different cities across Iowa. Certification sessions take place across the state, with over 80 Iowans now achieving Professional Guide Certification.
- The certification process includes an on-site certification and coaching session held at the attraction, business or community of the individual pursuing certification. The program is unique in offering the certification sessions on-site across the state of Iowa.
- Funding support for the program in 2023 was provided by a grant through the Iowa Arts Council, Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs.

Attendee Comments

The guide training was excellent!

Lot's of great tips & tricks.

Very well done - All our guides should attend this course.

This is one of the most clear, concise and compelling workshops I've ever attended!

Advocacy/Legislative

- Advocated on behalf of Iowa's travel and tourism industry through the Travel Federation of Iowa.
- Produced annual Iowa fast fact tourism statistics and Power of Travel awareness materials.
- Coordinated 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 the showcase in partnership with statewide industry members and sponsors including Iowa Restaurant Association, Iowa Hotel & Lodging Association, Templeton Distillery, Iowa State Fair and the Top of Iowa Welcome Center.
- Hosted legislative seminar and luncheon in conjunction with the annual legislative showcase.

2022-2023 Central Iowa Tourism Highlighted Projects

Booth at the Iowa State Fair

Promoted Iowa attractions and destinations, hidden gems and Central Iowa Road Trips from our booth in the Varied Industries Building during the Iowa State Fair.

- Distributed Central Iowa Travel Guides, Iowa maps, the Iowa Travel Guide, and other brochures and information from the booth.
- Industry members who helped staff the booth could feature their business, attraction, county, community, or area during their shift.
- New for 2022 those staffing the booth could supply copies of their brochure to be distributed during all 11 days of the fair.
- Distributed car coasters to attract visitors to the booth and tie-in with the road trip theme.
- Created video highlighting attractions, businesses, events, and communities that played in the booth. Over 30 industry members shared video footage.
- Attendance at the Iowa State Fair tops one million visitors annually.



CITR Travel Iowa Marketplace

This group travel focused tradeshow is an excellent opportunity for exhibitors to meet in person with tour planners interested in traveling in Iowa. Central Iowa Tourism has coordinated the marketplace for over twenty-five years.

- Almost 40% of the planners attending the 2022 marketplace were first-time attendees and had never attended before.
- The marketplace has a proven track record with 100% of planners indicating they would incorporate a destination or activity on a tour as a result of meeting with an exhibitor.
- The 2022 familiarization (FAM) tour for tour planners featured a farm-to-table lunch and stops at new and iconic attractions in Madison County and the surrounding area.
- A reception for tour planner and exhibitors the evening before marketplace was added in 2022 and offered additional networking.



Central Iowa Travel Guide

Produced the 2023 Central Iowa Travel Guide, a 68-page magazine style publication featuring destinations, attractions, trails, camping, hotels, cabins, dining, golf, tour operators, media, education, and other services.

- 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.



Central Iowa Tourism Region

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Central Iowa Tourism Region is a proven public private partnership with a thirty-five year record of successful programming. County and private membership investments from businesses, organizations, government, and non-profits come from all facets of the tourism industry. These investments plus your project support & participation are critical to our unified voice and programming.