

FY 2024 Board of Directors

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Travis Stevenson
Boone & Scenic Valley Railroad

Diana Thies
Iowa Falls Chamber/Main Street

Diane Van Wyngarden
Iowa State University

Sherrie Colbert
Iowa Gold Star Military Museum

Region Staff

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Plan of Action 2023-2024

Central Iowa Tourism Region

Mission Statement

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

Executive Summary

The Central Iowa Tourism Region, also known as CITR, is a nonprofit organization that was incorporated in 1987. Membership in the region is open to counties and to Iowa businesses and organizations. A multi-property membership is available to businesses with multiple locations. Varying benefits are associated with each membership level.

The mission of the Central Iowa Tourism Region is to enhance tourism in Central Iowa through information, education and promotion in cooperation with government and business. The activities to achieve this mission are carried out by the membership of the region through project committees, the board of directors and region staff.

The Action Plan is intended to guide the board of directors, committees, and staff by providing a blueprint for activities to accomplish the goals of the organization for 2023-2024.

General Goals

- Increase the number of visitors and dollars spent by visitors in Central Iowa.
- Increase awareness among attractions, events and businesses about the services provided by the region.
- Increase industry participation and membership in CITR.
- Provide outstanding professional development and education opportunities to the membership.
- Maintain a strong and effective organization.
- Utilize public/private partnerships to accomplish region projects.
- Raise the profile of CITR and Iowa's tourism industry to build support by elected officials.

Membership/Partnerships Committee

Goal: Retain current members and continue to recruit new members to the region.

Mission: This committee will develop strategies to retain and grow membership in Central Iowa Tourism, work to strengthen existing partnerships, and identify new partners.

Objectives:

A. Work with the membership committee to continue recruitment and retention program activities.

Action Steps

1. Evaluate current membership benefits and explore new opportunities to provide additional value to paid members. Asset creation/marketing initiatives may include paid and organic content on social media platforms, including a possible private Facebook page for CITR members to connect, distribute information, promote programs/events, and share resources.
2. Review membership dues and make recommendations to the board of directors.
3. Hold member orientation/refresher sessions virtually and in-person at CITR meetings at key times of the year. These sessions allow current and potential member to learn more about region programs and the benefits of membership.
4. Encourage members to become involved with region committees.
5. Make personal contact with new members through a welcome email or phone call and new member orientation packet. Continue to recognize new members and member prospects attending their first meeting at region meetings.
6. Send orientation materials and make personal contact with new staff at member organizations when staffing changes occur.
7. Connect with potential new members through referrals and information from current members and other sources.
8. Encourage members to provide membership information and recruitment packets to potential members in their community or area.
9. Produce membership materials including membership application form, benefits summary and membership orientation materials.

Responsibility: Region Staff, Membership Committee and Members

B. Work with county representatives and boards of supervisors to maintain involvement of all 35 charter counties and to expand and grow county partners.

Action Steps

1. Provide resource information to county appointed representatives so they can communicate the benefits of county participation to their boards of supervisors, along with regular membership communications.
2. Send regular updates to county boards of supervisors including annual report, travel guide, meeting schedule, and county benefits summary sheet.
3. Encourage county representatives to share information/updates with their board of supervisors.
4. Send annual allocation requests to those counties that require this information in advance for their budgeting process. Make in-person presentations by request.

Responsibility: Region Staff and County Representatives

Education

Goal: Provide quality educational opportunities for CITR members.

Mission: This committee determines topics and speakers for the seminars held in conjunction with region meetings.

Objectives:

A. Determine educational needs of members.

Action Steps

1. Work with education committee to select topics and speakers for seminars held in conjunction with region meetings.
2. Continue to solicit input from members at region meetings for potential topics and speakers.
3. Deliver/enhance educational opportunities through in-person meetings and activities and virtually.
4. Communicate with the other regions, state staff and other resource providers to share speaker ideas and partner where appropriate.

B. Provide quality educational seminars at CITR meetings.

Action Steps

1. Continue to offer two-part sessions, when possible to maximize the level of training offered at region meetings, budget and travel by members.
2. Encourage members to take what they learn at region meetings to the next level. Create opportunities for members to share how they are utilizing or implementing strategies from region meetings.
3. Hold Annual Meeting to conduct election of board members, recognition of region volunteers and launch programs for the coming year.
4. Investigate additional partnerships to supplement resources for training opportunities.

Responsibility - Region Staff, CITR Education & Annual Meeting Committees, Attendees and Members

Travel Federation of Iowa (TFI) – Iowa Tourism Unity Summit

Goal: Work in partnership with TFI and Western Iowa Tourism Region to provide a statewide educational event in the fall.

Objectives:

A. Host event in partnership with WITR and TFI.

Action Steps:

1. Secure industry member from central region to serve on planning committee.
2. Work with planning committee to secure location that moves around the state.
3. Work with committee members to select topics and speakers and other enhancements to this statewide training opportunity.
4. Assist with registration, promotion and implementation of the event.
5. Post-event analysis.

Responsibility: Region Staff and Committee Members

Grant Programs

Goal: Organizations and businesses are aware of opportunities to apply for funding through the Iowa Tourism Grant Program.

Objectives:

A. Iowa Tourism Office Grant Program.

Action Steps

1. Promote availability of the grant program to region members and county representatives.
2. Encourage industry members to serve as reviewers for the Iowa Tourism Grant program.

Responsibility: Grant Committee Members, Region Staff and Applicants

Legislative

Goal: Elected officials will support tourism programs in Iowa and the central region.

Objectives:

A. Support the legislative goals of the Travel Federation of Iowa.

Action Steps

1. Appoint four representatives from the region and the CTR Executive Director to serve on the TFI Board of Directors.
2. Secure District Leaders from the region.
3. Work with the TFI to schedule advocacy training for District Leaders and others from the region.
4. Serve on TFI related committees and serve as an advocate for TFI's programs and goals.
5. Inform region members about legislative issues.
6. Provide additional appointments to state boards and committees as requested or as opportunities arise.

Responsibility: Region Staff, CTR Board, TFI Board, District Leaders and Region Members

B. Provide assistance on local governmental issues as requested.

Action Steps

1. Provide resource materials and statistical information to local organizations, communities and areas.
2. Assist local tourism groups on an as-needed basis to develop funding streams for tourism and plans for tourism.

Responsibility: Region Staff and Members

Marketing

Goal: Increase visitation to Central Iowa and increase awareness by potential visitors.

Mission – Brochure Committee: This committee makes recommendations for production of the CITR Travel Guide and identifies potential enhancements to the guide as budget allows.

Mission – Travel Iowa Marketplace Committee: This committee works to plan and implement the Travel Iowa Marketplace tradeshow.

Objectives:

A. Produce and distribute the annual CITR travel guide.

Action Steps:

1. Secure advertisers to help support production of the 2024 guide.
2. Request updates for the travel guide from members and county representatives. Utilize information provided to prepare updates to the content of the guide so the publication is as up-to-date and accurate as possible for travelers.
3. Work with the brochure committee on the design of the guide, quantities to be printed, potential changes or improvements to the guide, etc.
4. Offer advertisers in the guide a reader response listing and forward leads when received.
5. Continued distribution of the travel guide. Distribution includes the Iowa Welcome Centers, inquiries from the web site, in-office requests by telephone and mail, fulfillment, Iowa State Fair, tradeshows, and other special requests including quantities for meetings & conventions, new residents and employees, and other distribution points.

Responsibility: Region Staff, Brochure Committee & Advertisers

B. Provide an opportunity to meet one-on-one with tour planners at the Travel Iowa Marketplace.

Action Steps

1. Secure event space for the marketplace.
2. Work with planning committee to determine budget, theme, schedule and policies for the marketplace.
3. Coordinate all planning and implementation of the show including exhibitor registration, tour planner registration, sponsorships, familiarization tour, etc.

Budget: to be determined

Responsibility: Region Staff, CITR Planning Committee and Exhibitors

C. Serve as a referral source for planners seeking meeting space in Central Iowa.

Action Steps

1. Forward leads and inquiries to region members from those planning meetings, conventions, reunions, etc.

Responsibility: Region Staff and Members

Booth at the Iowa State Fair

Mission: This committee determines policies, timelines, and plans for participation with our booth at the Iowa State Fair.

Objectives:

A. Maintain funding

Action Steps:

1. Identify potential funding partner(s) and partner benefits.
2. Share opportunities with industry members as needed

B. Implementation

Action Steps:

1. Determine booth furnishings, display(s), etc.
2. Volunteer recruitment and communications
3. Offer opportunity to provide video clips, organize into playlist.
4. Coordinate shifts, information, tickets, restocking of brochures, etc.
5. Ensure staffing of the booth.

Responsibility: Region Staff, Committee Members and Volunteers

Social Media Staffing Co-Op

Goal: Investigate possibility of offering a co-op for organizations interested in pooling resources to contract for social media staffing services.

Objectives:

A. Promote/confirm industry member interest in this program

Action Steps:

1. Share opportunity with industry members with funding commitment needed.
2. Determine if there is sufficient support to provide no or low-cost social media staffing services for CTR.
3. Identify potential contractor(s) for staffing.

B. Implementation – if sufficient interest from partners interested in moving forward

Action Steps:

1. Develop initial agreement(s) outlining services and expectations.
2. Facilitate communications among participants.
3. Quarterly billing of participants and monthly payment to contractor.

C. If there is not sufficient interest from partners to move forward with a co-op:

Actions Steps:

1. Share information about potential contractor(s) interested in contracting individually instead of through a co-op program.

Special Projects

Goal: Identify and undertake special projects on behalf of CITR that further the goals of the region and industry partners to benefit the tourism industry.

Objectives:

A. Identify potential special projects and prioritize these

Action Steps:

1. Identify potential ideas for special projects.
2. Develop recommendations and select priority projects for funding.

B. Implementation of special projects approved by the CITR board

Action Steps:

1. Research potential costs for special projects and develop a budget for each project.
2. Research potential cooperative projects with other partners where appropriate.
3. Committee members for special projects will be recruited to provide feedback and guidance as needed.

CITR Committee Mission Statements

FY 2024 • July 2023 - June 2024

Annual Meeting Committee

This committee assists with planning and implementing the CITR annual meeting.

Activates Winter 2024

Brochure Committee

This committee makes recommendations for production of the CITR Travel Guide and identify potential enhancements to the guide as budget allows.

Activates Fall 2023

Education Committee

This committee determines topics and speakers for the seminars held in conjunction with region meetings.

Activates Summer 2023

Membership & Partnerships Committee

This committee will develop strategies to retain and grow membership in Central Iowa Tourism, work to strengthen existing partnerships, and identify potential new partners.

Activates Summer 2023

Iowa State Fair Committee

This committee determines policies, timelines, and plans for participation with our booth at the Iowa State Fair.

Activates Winter 2024

Travel Iowa Marketplace Committee

This committee works to plan and implement the Travel Iowa Marketplace tradeshow.

Activated Spring 2023

Travel Federation of Iowa Tourism Unity Summit

This committee works in partnership with CITR, WITR and TFI to assist in planning and implementation of this educational event held in the Fall.

Activates Summer 2023

Special Projects Committees

To be determined: these committees will coordinate efforts undertaken through the special projects approved by the CITR board of directors.

Iowa Department of Transportation – Tourism Signage Committee

CITR will appoint one representative to the committee that reviews applications for tourism related signage programs coordinated by the Iowa Department of Transportation.

CITR bylaws require that you be a county appointed representative or private member to serve on region committees.