



Western Iowa Tourism Region Meeting Minutes Nov. 16, 2016 • Oakland Community Center

Call to order: The meeting was called to order by President Erika Newton at 10:30 a.m.

Welcome: Erika introduced Pottawattamie County Supervisor Melvyn Houser who welcomed us to Oakland. Melvyn also serves on the Tourism committee and told us their mission was to connect people and parcels with trails. They fully recognize that tourism is a large part of Quality of Life and they continue to enhance all the attractions and events in Pottawattamie County.

Packet: President Newton went over the packet of information.

Approval of Agenda: Pat Hume moved to approve with Ruby Bentley seconding. *Motion carried.*

Approval of September 2016 Meeting Minutes: Becky Hatting moved to approve with bob Mortensen seconding. *Motion carried.*

Financial Report: Freda Dammann presented the financials and asked for questions. Kathy Dirks moved to approve with Julie Hering-Kent seconding. *Motion carried.*

State Tourism Office Report: Jenna Beary thanked everyone for attending the tourism conference and donating to the silent auction. There were just shy of 280 attendees this year and all the surveys are in and she is tabulating the results. The 2017 Tourism Conference will be held in Sioux City on Oct. 25th - 27th. Planning will begin with the committee after the first of the year. Bids are being obtained for the 2018 Tourism Conference in Central Iowa.

Brooke Miller reported that the Vernon Group out of Cedar Rapids is in the process of a survey, reviewing the current Iowa Travel Guide, and forming a Task Force to look at the future, format, and functionality of the current guide. All input is welcomed. Volunteers are needed for planning for the 2018 Travel Guide.

The 2017 Travel Guide is very close to going to the printer and there will be a pre-order on the website. You should be able to get a quantity shipped to you in February.

Membership: Pat Hume reported that we have one new member, Launch Pad Children's Museum in Sioux City.

Travel Federation of Iowa

Legislative report – Andy Milam noted that we are 42nd in the nation for tourism marketing budgets. This is not satisfactory and even though we receive great results, we can do better. As a tax generator for the state, we could use some of those funds to continue to market.

2017 Legislative Showcase will be held on Jan. 31st at the Richard O. Jacobson Exhibition Building). There is also the Legislative Seminar to be held at the Latin King at 12:30 p.m.

District Leaders. Thanks to all of you who have agreed to serve again this year. There has been initial contact with the District Leaders so if you signed up and did not receive the communication via Constant Contact, get a hold of Shirley and she'll give you a link

Issues Should be on the way to you soon. We are compiling a lot of information for you so when it's complete, we'll send it to you. You'll want to set up a meeting with your legislator and discuss these before the session begins. Remember there are at least 20 new legislators this year and certainly new leadership as the Republicans now have majority in the Senate and the House.

Special Projects: Shirley reported on the following:

Photography: We have purchased some additional photos for the region and will be looking for others. If you have suggestions as to which photos are needed, please let us know. If you have great photos to share with the region, please do. We'll continue to seek out professional photographers to provide pictures to us. If you are having any winter or early spring events, please let me know as soon as possible so we can get someone to cover them.

Itineraries: We have a consultant working on itineraries for our region and will be sharing them on our website and with the state. If you have an idea for an itinerary, please let me know so we can work on it.

Customer Appreciation • Hospitality Training: All three regions have agreed on this special project and it has now grown from 27 communities to 35. Eastern Iowa has expanded their program. WITR will host 10 sessions in our region and they are spread throughout the region. Please feel free to attend any one of these and as soon as there is a schedule available, we'll be sharing it with all of you.

The ideal scenario is to have well trained front end people who will help sell your community.

Office Move: Because of Shonna's resignation, it was decided to move the office closer to Shirley. It has been located in Red Oak for 30 years.

- Our new office address is in Sac City and the contact information is on the back of your agenda.
- Most of the items in the office will be moved on Nov. 18th so give us a little bit to get everything in order.
- In the meantime, you have Shirley's contact information listed on the back of your agenda, so please contact her while we are in the transition period. We should be relocated by the first of December.
- We will be looking for someone to work in the office as well.
- There are many details to be worked through - moving bank accounts, installing phones, working with the website consultant, changing addresses on all our information, etc. With the holidays, it's going to be a challenge.

Shonna's last meeting: Erika thanked Shonna for representing the region for the past nine years and congratulated her on her new position at Earl May in Shenandoah and wished her well. She was presented with concert tickets.

Adjourn: Kathy Dirks moved to adjourn with Pat Hume seconding the motion. The meeting was adjourned.

Lunch followed with presentations by these speakers:

Agent Scott Haugaard, FBI on Cyber Security. We seem to be ill equipped to deal with all the hacking and identity theft these days. How do you protect yourself?

Lt. Sam Arkfeld, Pottawattamie Co. Sheriff's Dept. on Active Shooters and how to handle a crisis at an event or in your workplace.

Kent Grisham, Communications & Media Services on how to handle crisis of natural proportions or in a crisis of any sort with the media.