

Western Iowa Tourism Region Meeting Minutes Feb. 15, 2017 • Carrollton Centre, Carroll

Call to order: The meeting was called to order by President Erika Newton at 10:34 a.m.

Welcome – Rosanne Nees of the Carroll Chamber of Commerce welcomed us to Carroll and told us about the many sporting events they host to bring visitors to Carroll. They also boast Templeton Rye, Legendary Rye and the Santa Maria Winery.

Jayme Quirk from the Carrollton told us about the renovations to the rooms and public spaces at the Carrollton

President Newton went over the items in the packet which included the agenda, information on the back of the agenda, copies of the minutes, budget report, Legislative Issues, Hospitality Training schedule, & Power of Travel registration form.

Approval of Agenda: James Kessler moved to approve the agenda with Kathy Dirks seconding the motion. *Motion carried.*

Approval of Nov. 2016 Meeting Minutes: Kenner Baxter moved to approve the minutes with Becky Hatting seconding the motion. *Motion carried.*

Financial Report: Freda Dammann presented the report stating that all 36 counties in Western Iowa are now paying members. Lisa Riggs moved to approve the report with James Kessler seconding the motion. *Motion carried.*

Taskforces:

Membership: President Newton reported that we had no new private members but were pleased that our 36th county, Ringgold, has now joined.

Advertising: President Newton went on to explain the current advertising options for the region.

Our cooperative advertising insert reached over 550,000 travelers for \$1,100 per ad. This advertising insert was distributed in Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, South Dakota and Iowa. On line advertising of the insert provides exposure to thousands of additional travelers.

The Omaha World Herald wraps are the other advertising pieces. In the past the Region has partnered with the Omaha World Herald to provide advertising opportunities to connect people for as little as \$275 for a full color 3"x4" ad. These are distributed to 250,000 subscribers. The advertising piece is also promoted on the front page of the Omaha World Herald website www.omaha.com with direct links to advertisers' websites. The World Herald website receives over 45 million impressions over the summer months of June, July & August Erika asked if there was interest in either opportunity this year.

Shirley suggested a Survey Monkey that would allow the members to indicate if they want to pursue this advertising this year. The results will be reviewed by the board.

Travel Federation of Iowa

Legislative report: Andy Milam reported that the 2017 Legislative Showcase and Luncheon seminar were successful this year with 78 legislators attending (32 Senators & 46 Representatives.) He thanked everyone who had made contact with their legislator so far this year and encouraged more to become involved in the process. He went on to note that there

would be a bill pursued to increase the marketing funding for the state so we can continue to raise in the ranks of the Midwest regional average. So far we are 42nd in the nation in tourism marketing dollars. Since we are a \$8.1 billion industry that generates \$466.7 million in tax revenue, it seems logical that the state should want to increase marketing funds to lure people to Iowa.

You should be receiving the Capitol Report from our lobbyists either directly from them or Shirley's emails. Please try to attend your legislator forums and talk to them regarding tourism issues. Get to know them personally so they can contact you with questions and you can remain in contact with them.

Special Projects: Shirley Philips reported on the following:

Customer Appreciation • Hospitality Training: 35 communities will be hosting hospitality sessions. Ours will be in Manning, Harrison County (Mondamin), Sac City, Le Mars, Clarinda, Okoboji, Sioux City, Stuart, Elk Horn & Red Oak. There is a schedule in the packet so feel free to attend any throughout the state.

Survey Monkey for advertising and special projects: The board and staff want to know your ideas before the board retreat in March on what you might need from the region next year. If you liked having Roger Brooks come last year and you found it beneficial, let us know. If you find the hospitality training appealing, we can find more speakers. If you think a leadership institute would be good for our region, let us know. Look for the link in one of the emails soon.

Communications – Emails or Constant Contact? We have been reaching out to the members through email since the Constant Contact open rate was only 35%. We hope that you are receiving them. Please make sure our addresses are marked “safe senders” so our emails get through to you.

Power of Travel: Information is included in your packets. Make your lodging reservations soon and enjoy multiple sessions and great speakers this year.

Clay County Fair Opportunity: Becky Hatting brought us the annual opportunity to work the Clay County Fair, Sept. 9-17, 2017. People can sign up for half day or whole day. Just contact Shirley and we'll get the schedule filled out.

2017 Iowa Tourism Conference: This will be held in Sioux City Oct. 25 – 27th. The conference committee is meeting and looking for suggestions for sessions and speakers. We want to make sure everyone has a great time in Western Iowa, so please send your suggestions to Shirley who can share with the committee.

Our Annual Meeting: Will be held June 7, 2017 at the Sioux City Convention Center. There will be recognitions of volunteers, Annual Silent Auction, and much more.

Adjourn

Andy Milam moved to adjourn with Kathy Dirks seconding. Meeting adjourned at 11:38 a.m.

Following the meeting, introductions were held, then lunch and then the State Staff held their annual Town Meeting to provide all kinds of information to the members.

Respectfully submitted,
Shirley Phillips