

## **Western Iowa Tourism Region Meeting April 26, 2018 • Manning**

Vice President Freda Dammann called the meeting to order at 12:55 p.m. following the Roger Brooks Destination Development Summit. She walked the attendees through the packet of information which included the dates of upcoming meetings and conferences.

**Approval of Agenda:** Kenner Baxter moved to approve with John Westergaard seconding the motion. Motion carried.

**Approval of Feb. 21, 2018 Minutes:** Julie Hering-Kent moved to approve with Kathy Fiscus seconding the motion. Motion carried.

**Financial Report:** Andy Milam presented the report noting that we are in line with our budget and asked for questions. Lisa Riggs moved to approve the report with Kathy Dirks seconding the motion. Motion carried.

**State Tourism Office Report:** Amy Zeigler gave the report noting that the Summit was a great professional development opportunity for everyone in the state.

- Cooperative Advertising program - webinars are online now showing the packages available. Shawna Lode is the contact with Jenna Beary on maternity leave.
- The 99 Counties, 99 Restaurants campaign which markets road trips began in February, has had a great response with more than 30,000 users at 2.5 minutes and 12,000 downloads. They are spending another \$18,000 to market it on social and also other search engines.
- They are thinking about other 99 lists - like outdoor recreation, museums, etc.
- Maintenance campaign goes from March until the end of June; 350,000 clicks, Facebook had 40% of the traffic; the website traffic volume is at 14 million users.
- State Welcome Centers - There is a re-imagination taskforce in place to extend the role of the centers with the Iowa brand as a place to live, work & play. Kim Manning from Cedar Falls is representing the tourism industry and others are from IEDA, Dept. of Cultural Affairs, DOT, IowaWorks, etc. Watch for more on this as it develops.

**Travel Federation of Iowa:** Freda re-introduced Andy Milam who reported that the legislature has now passed the 100 day mark (typical length of session) and are not being paid and no longer have staff, however we are told they will not rush their work.

The biggest issue is the agreement on the tax proposal. They are pretty solid on the budget for FY19 but depending upon the outcome of the tax proposal, they will determine how it will affect the state in years to come.

- There was a House bill to allow the DNR to increase hunting fees but it stalled in the Senate until the resolution on the tax cuts is complete.
- The administrative part of the IEDA budget looks good but some of the programs are cut. The Tourism regional marketing dollars are back to \$900,000 but Craig & Amy will continue to work to get these back to the original \$1.2 million.

- Within the IEDA, the High Quality Jobs has been cut to \$10 million (\$15.9 million to \$5.9 million). All types of programs come from this fund including Great Places. In the House they want to increase it to \$13 million so the lobbyists will continue to work on this.
- Another bill would take REAP down to \$10 million. The \$3 million reduction might be used for the anniversary of the State Park system but for those communities that depend on REAP for parks, trails, etc., we need to get the fund restored.
- CAT is at \$5 million with trails at \$1 million.
- Hotel/motel tax is the bill moving it from 30 to 90 days. It moved out of the House and the bill needs to get out of committee with the Senate Ways & Means. The Senate is holding a lot of tax proposals until the bigger tax plan is complete. From the Iowa Code section that governs the Hotel/Motel tax, it states:
  - a. *The sales price from renting of lodging which is rented by the same person for a period of more than thirty-one consecutive days.* (This means that is you exceed 31 days, you don't pay any tax for the entire stay. This needs to be changed so it doesn't short change communities.)

**Power of Travel Day:** Shirley reported that it is scheduled for Sept. 19, 2018 at the Gateway Center in Ames. Because of this, we have re-scheduled our September meeting to October. There have been a lot of changes because of the Tourism Conference and Power of Travel changing seasons. The keynote speaker is Nick Westergaard and we are working on a full day's schedule. The CenStates Conference begins that evening in Des Moines.

**Clay County Fair:** Shirley reported that there is still one spot open –it is the last day, Sunday, Sept. 16<sup>th</sup>.

**Freedom Rock Itinerary:**We are working on a multi-page Freedom Rock Tour around Western Iowa. We're proud to have rocks in all but four counties and the last four are scheduled to be painted. This will also be included on our website under "Make Iowa Your Next Trip" section. We have also added or shared itineraries under this category, so help us spread the word by putting this on your Facebook page when we send it.

**Next meeting:** Our next meeting will be our Annual Meeting on Wednesday, June 13<sup>th</sup>, 2018 at the Orpheum Theatre in Sioux City.

**Adjourn:** Andy Milam moved to adjourn at 1:30 p.m. with Kathy Dirks seconding. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,  
Shirley Phillips