

**Western Iowa Tourism Region Meeting**  
**Dec. 12, 2018 • Boulders Inn & Suites Event Center, Holstein**

President Freda Dammann called the meeting to order at 10:32 a.m. and walked everyone through the items in the packet.

**Welcome:** Mayor Connie Ludvigson welcomed everyone to Holstein and spoke about the businesses and Christmas events.

**Approval of Agenda:** Pat Fleshner moved to approve with Brian Kessler seconding the motion. Motion carried.

**Approval of Oct. 2018 Minutes:** Becky Fear-Hatting moved to approve with Julie Hering-Kent seconding the motion. Motion carried.

**Financial Report:** Shirley presented the report noting that everything is in order for this time of year. Lisa Riggs moved to approve the financial report with Kathy Dirks seconding the motion. Motion carried.

**State Tourism Office Report:** LuAnn Reinders and Brooke Miller

- A new Iowa Made Products gift guide has been included on [Traveliowa.com](http://Traveliowa.com) and social media with companies who could sell online and support the interest. Have seen success with the vendors and will have the numbers soon.
- A new mobile guide, Along the Route, is a web-based mapping tool to help travelers plan road trips across the state and it even starts out-of-state and brings you into Iowa. Currently this is promoted socially & updates will continue so it can be fully launched in the spring.
- Cooperative advertising program is launched and deadlines in place. They are receiving promised results from the digital and social started over the summer.
- Registration for the Iowa Tourism Conference, Feb. 6 -8, 2019 at Prairie Meadows is online at [traveliowa.com/conference](http://traveliowa.com/conference). TFI is doing the silent auction this year, so you are encouraged to donate. The forms are also online.
- If you have anything fresh and new, you are encouraged to contact Jessica O'Riley as she is working on "What's New in 2019". This is for media, welcome center travel counselors and for [Traveliowa.com](http://Traveliowa.com).

**Tourism Conference Scholarships are available:** Shirley again encouraged people to fill out an application for the 2019 Iowa Tourism Conference. Registration information is now online at [traveliowa.com](http://traveliowa.com). The cost for the conference is \$225 and the room rates at Prairie Meadows are \$ 112 - ask for the Iowa Tourism Conference block. We will be able to fund 10 scholarships again this year as indicated in our proposed budget. It always helps to have a couple of alternates.

**Travel Federation of Iowa:** Andy Milam gave the TFI report.

Our identified issues for next session are:

- Language has been changed on the lodging proposal to monitor enforcement language so all lodging properties pay the applicable taxes with penalties for noncompliance.
- Extend the length of stay from 31 to 90 days for when hotel/motel tax is collected. No lodging tax is collected from anyone that stays longer than 30 days, including the first 30 days of their stay.
- Funding for the state tourism office – continue to advocate for a larger budget as a return on our investment. Tourism is now an \$8.5 billion Industry for Iowa with \$507.1 million in taxes generated. It only makes sense that we use some of the tax generated to continue to market Iowa. We need people to travel here, move here and work here.
- School Start Date: continues to be talked about because Aug. 23<sup>rd</sup> falls on Friday in 2019. We have to be prepared as some legislators are being pressured by the schools to start earlier. As you remember we compromised on the Aug. 23<sup>rd</sup> start date and worked with Save Our Summers. Education now takes 51% of Iowa's entire budget – meaning if they continue to want more money, it has to come from somewhere and tourism is a tax generator.
  - We will continue to support IWILL, Enhance Iowa – the CAT program, and any activity involving Workforce Development.
  - We are currently developing a Fast Facts booklet which will help you with the issues and they will also be distributed to all the Legislators.
  - If you still want to sign up for District Leaders, contact Shirley.

**Iowa Tourism Steering Committee –** Andy Milam reported

There is a movement spearheaded by IDMA to create a new umbrella organization. There are a lot of moving pieces right now and no plan has been set. Financing is a huge concern, need for this continues to confuse people and there will be more discussions.

**Jamie Cook – Pheasants Forever:** Jamie shared with the group the projects of the Iowa Pheasants Forever. He is the first statewide coordinator for some time and has been working to establish Pheasants and Farming Initiatives. There is one set up in Southwest Iowa and since Western Iowa is a mecca for hunting, there are opportunities. He also explained how important outdoor recreation is to our tourism efforts.

**Economic Impact Statements:** Shirley explained again that these are on our website, just click on the Members tab at the top and then economic impact and you can see how you compare to the other counties in Western Iowa. You can also print out your individual county copy. All notices have been sent to your county supervisors for inclusion in their budget process. Actual bills will be sent in June so they can be paid after the first of the fiscal year. They have also been sent an economic impact sheet for their county.

**Roger Brooks Destination Development Summit 2.0:** April 23 & 24, 2019 at the Carrollton Inn in Carroll. Gather a team from your community. We will be picking up where we left off in Manning and developing an Action Plan for your Unique Selling Proposition for those participating. Registration information will be out soon.

**Next meeting:** Our next meeting is the Western Iowa Tourism Region Town Hall Meeting with the state staff in Carroll on March 13<sup>th</sup>. That will be our first meeting after the Iowa Tourism Conference in February.

**Introductions** were made by everyone who shared what they wanted Santa to bring to their attraction this year.

**Adjourn:** Kathy Dirks moved to adjourn at 11:27 a.m. with Becky Fear Hatting seconding. Meeting adjourned.

**Kathy Peterson of PeopleWorks** presented “Working with you is killing me” – a hands on presentation enjoyed by all.

Respectfully submitted,  
Shirley Phillips