

Western Iowa Tourism Region Meeting
Mar. 13, 2019 • Carrollton, Carroll

President Freda Dammann called the meeting to order at 10:31 a.m. and guided everyone through the items in the packet.

Welcome: Ashley Schable, Carroll Area Chamber of Commerce, welcomed everyone to Carroll saying they were working on their new unique selling proposition – alcoholology. With their winery, brewery and distillery, they are planning to market them all together.

Approval of Agenda:

Cheryl Warner moved to approve with Brian Kessler seconding the motion. Motion carried.

Approval of Dec. 2018 Minutes: Lisa Riggs moved to approve with Kathy Dirks seconding the motion. Motion carried.

Financial Report: Shirley presented the report noting that all our expenses were in order except the fulfillment line item that we will be amended. Julie Hering Kent moved to approve the financial report with Gaela Wilson seconding the motion. Motion carried.

State Tourism Office Report: Since the State Staff was on hand, we deferred this to the end of the meeting.

Travel Federation of Iowa: Andy Milam gave the report.

Legislative Session has passed the first funnel date – meaning that any bills that pertain to money must make it past the first funnel.

Lodging: A new issue came up for lodging this past week: a house bill that would disallow the State from doing business with hotels that did not complete a state certified training program on human trafficking. We do have contact information for this training, but perhaps we can do something on a broader scale – like Power of Travel.

SCHOOL START DATE: There were four bills introduced on the school start date and they all died in the first funnel. They could come up again because of all the snow days missed. Some schools are adding minutes to each day to comply, others are just adding days on to the end of the school year, but they are not happy. School funding now takes well over 50% of our state budget.

Last session, funding for schools increased to an all-time high of \$3.2 billion annually. That is an increase of \$765 million since the start of the 2011-12 school year.

Another recurring issue in the Iowa hotel industry has come to our attention:

Out-of-state school groups successfully take advantage of tax exemptions they are not entitled to. Many hoteliers do not catch this error as the group supplies a tax exempt certificate. The issue is these certificates will be from the state issued (not Iowa) and only good for that state's sales & use tax; We are leaving thousands, if not tens of thousands of dollars, in taxable hotel/motel revenue on the table.

Other bills of interest: Welcome Center bill to update sections; Enhance Iowa –new responsibilities for the board; Public Lands – SSB 1221 would have ended the charitable conservation contribution tax credit or water quality projects involving acquisition – watch for a critical decision that will affect conservation from how much to allocate toward REAP & trails, to funding for Natural Resources & Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund; some of the sports betting bills are still alive.

Legislative Showcase & Silent Auction: Shirley reported that this year's event wasn't as well attended as we were competing against six other events. Sixty four legislators did attend (20 less than last year) so we may need to adjust the date. The state graciously gave TFI the Silent Auction which raised a little over \$8000 to help with our advocacy 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 which shows 15 years of statistics.

Roger Brooks Destination Development Summit 2.0: April 30 & May 1, 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 is in your packet.

2019 Clay County Fair: There are just 4 open slots to work the fair. Please let Shirley know if you are interested.

Meeting Bids: We will be sending out bids to host meetings after the Board Retreat on April 11 & 12th. Hosts are expected to supply the meeting room and morning refreshments. Watch for emails for information on submitting bids.

Reception for LeRoy & Freda Dammann: Maureen Halbur invited everyone to Manning on April 11th at 6 p.m. for a Retirement Social at the Manning Hausbarn Conference Center.

Next meeting: Our next meeting is the Annual Meeting on June 5th at the Manning Hausbarn Conference Center. .

Introductions were made by everyone who shared what they were looking forward to this summer.

Adjourn: Lisa Riggs moved to adjourn at 11:30 a.m. with Kathy Dirks seconding. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Shirley Phillips

The State Staff enlightened us on recent research and plans for marketing, as well as updates from various staff members and their individual projects.