

Western Iowa Tourism Region Meeting Sept. 22, 2021 • Audubon Recreation Center

President Kenner Baxter called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m. and guided everyone through the items in the packet.

Welcome: Doug Olson, President of the Audubon Recreation Center, told us the facility, which is about 3 years old. There are two full time employees and 14 part-time employees and they host many events for the community. They will be expanding soon.

Introductions were held.

Approval of Agenda: Becky Fear Hatting moved to approve the agenda, with Kathy Dirks seconding the motion. *Motion carried.*

Approval of January 2020 Minutes: James Kessler moved to approve the minutes, with Andy Milam seconding the motion. *Motion carried.*

Financial Report: Jayme Quirk presented the report. Lisa Riggs moved to approve the report with Kiana Johnson seconding the motion. *Motion carried.*

State Tourism Office Report: Amy Zeigler and Katie Kenne presented the report.

1. The tourism office held a webinar September 21 and reviewed:
 - The Year of the Road Trip campaign results, including Fuel Your Road Trip and digital passport results
 - Arrivalist metrics for the first half of 2021, showing an increase of in-state travel, shorter (both in distance & length) trips, & a higher percentage of day trips, in comparison to 2019.
 - This is Iowa campaign launch for the end of 2021
 - The new fall/winter X Hours Away campaign, a hyper-targeted digital and social ad buy to inspire overnight travel to regional, out of state audiences, including a co-op marketing option for partners to be involved.
 - o Co-op investment is \$750 and partners need to have 2-3 High Res images approved for use by Travel Iowa. The social post will need to link to content on traveliowa.com (either existing or new).
 - o Sign up for interest [here](#).
 - The 2020 Iowa Tourism Economic Impact Report preliminary data, which shows approximately a 29% decrease in visitor spending statewide.
 - o Economic Impact Report will be reviewed in more detail at the Power of Travel Day
 - The Iowa tourism strategic plan process, which will culminate the first phase of the process in October with a series of listening sessions across the state and a final situation assessment, as the basis of the strategic plan.
 - The webinar recording is available by request from Katie Kenne at katie.kenne@iowaeda.com.
2. Iowa Tourism Grant (ITG) Application Due September 29
Reviewers are needed to assist with reviewing eligible applications and the selection of the

recipients. If you would like to [submit your name to be a grant reviewer](#), please email Katie Kenne at katie.kenne@iowaeda.com.

3. Save the Dates for Power of Travel - October 26 at the Embassy Suites, Des Moines and the 2022 Iowa Tourism Conference - April 19-20 at the Downtown Des Moines Marriott.

T-Bone Trail Report: Sara Slater presented a PowerPoint on the recent T-Bone Trail promotion. This was followed from Oregon to New York. We will be meeting with the Iowa Gallivant and Iowa Beef Council to see how we can continue this. The Facebook reach since March is 845,000 and combined views of the videos is 318,000 to date.

Travel Federation of Iowa report: Andy Milam reported:

- A survey would be coming out shortly and encouraged everyone to take it so the issues can be developed for the 2022 Legislative Session.
- We always need more District Leaders so if you are interested, please reach out to Andy or Shirley and we will sign you up.
- We will be working on the Fast Facts booklet and will get these printed as soon as our issues are identified so you have a tool when speaking to your legislators.
- There has been the first redistricting map submitted but through public forums and meetings, these maps could be changed a second or third time so your representatives may change. We'll keep you informed.
- Andy encouraged everyone to know who your legislators are, establish a relationship with them, host coffees and forums for them, so you have a direct connection with them.

2021 Clay County Fair (Sept. 11-19): Shirley thanked everyone who took a shift at the Clay County Fair. There were visitors from all the surrounding states, and even Texas and California. Attendance at the fair was 277,309, slightly lower than 2019. The weather was great and people were anxious to be out at the fair. The estimated economic impact from the fair was \$1 million. Thank you to all those who sent brochures for the display.

2021 Power of Travel Day: This will be held on Tuesday, October 26 at the Embassy Suites Downtown Des Moines. We have hired some great speakers. Please watch for more information.

Next meeting: Our next meeting will be held on Dec. 1, 2021 at the Manning Hausbarn Heritage Park Konferenz Center. This will be the State Staff Town Hall meeting.

Adjourn: Andy Milam moved to adjourn the meeting and Kiana Johnson seconded. Meeting Adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,
Shirley Phillips

Speakers following the meeting included:

Stacy Kluesner – Iowa Restaurant Association who shared valuable information on the impact of 2020 on their industry and more challenges to follow.

Troy Hart and Roy Watson – Hart Family Hotels shared the lodging perspective, how hard it is to find a labor force, much like the restaurant business, and the future of their industry.