

Western Iowa Tourism Region Meeting February 9, 2022 • Community Memorial Building, Lake City

President Kenner Baxter called the meeting to order at 10:31 a.m.

Welcome: Paul Iverson of the Community Memorial Building welcomed everyone and gave them a brief history of the building and its phase one - \$1 million renovation. He explained phase two and three which includes a military museum in the south balcony.

Approval of Agenda: Andy Milam moved to approve the agenda, with Jessica Brownmiller seconding the motion. *Motion carried.*

Approval of December 2021 Minutes: Bob Mortensen moved to approve the minutes, with Kathy Dirks seconding the motion. *Motion carried.*

Financial Report: Jayme Quirk presented the report. Income and expenses are in line for this time of year. 35 of the 36 counties have paid their partnership dues. Lisa Riggs moved to approve the report with Sara Slater seconding the motion. *Motion carried.*

State Tourism Office Report: Amber Rottinghaus and Jessica O'Riley gave the report.

National Pizza Day

- Thank you to everyone who shared your favorite pizza places with the Iowa Tourism office. They were all included in our [pizza listicle](#), which was shared on our social media pages.
- Other Content
 - Please [let us know](#) of **hidden gems** in your area for upcoming content. These should be attractions that may only be known about by the locals, such as the Carnegie Bistro & Ale House in Lake City.
 - Please let us know about **working farms** in your area that are open to the public for tours and other agriculture experiences. Learn more about this request in today's ETraveler.
- Notable Dates
 - Tourism awards are due March 4 at 5 p.m.
 - Registration for the Tourism Conference is now open, as is the room block. Amanda Brinkman will be one of the keynote speakers. She had a TV shows called "Small Business Revolution."
 - The next tourism office webinar is March 17.
 - Jessica reported there would be two travel guides again this year – spring & summer and fall & winter.

Tourism Conference Scholarships: President Baxter reported that we had received 10 applications for scholarships. Shirley will notify them on how to register.

T-Bone Trail Report: Shirley reported that as of February 6th, the posts reached 1,018,000 with another 328,000 video views. The Iowa Gallivant continues to post blogs about lodging, restaurants and attractions during the winter months. Shirley reported that all restaurants have been identified and scheduled for 2022 with Bonus Beef Stops added. If there is an issue with dates and time for the restaurants, please let us know right away. Sara Slater reported on the questionnaire for the T Bone Trail. Please fill it out and get it back to us soon so Jay can plan his trip to your county. We encourage you to interact with Jay when he comes and it's important to share the blogs of your county on your own social media.

There is also a sheet with the certified lodging properties in each county as of Feb. 4th. Shirley will continue to update this, but the lodging identified on the proposed schedule will “have to be certified” before we can promote them.

It’s imperative that you promote the certification in your communities and counties. There is a bill in the legislature to extend the deadline to June, however we can’t in good faith promote uncertified properties on the T Bone Trail. Please see that they are certified by April 1st. If we need to change properties, we will do so and those properties will be provided with promotional opportunities. This includes county conservation boards who rent cabins.

Travel Federation of Iowa report: Andy Milam reported.

- Andy reported that Eastern Iowa has severed ties with Travel Federation so there are two regions financially supporting the organization, but we are still collaborating with the whole state. If there are Eastern Iowa representatives who would like to be involved, we would welcome them.
- The industry has a new lobbying firm – LS2 Group from Des Moines.
- The school start date legislation is dead right now, but we will be watching.
- Iowa Water Land & Legacy that Iowans voted for over a decade ago still needs to be funded. There is current legislation regarding local option sales tax (LOST) usage. Please talk to your legislator about this. We’ve been told that the current LOST will remain with those cities and counties that currently have it.
- We are supporting the Iowa Restaurant Association on their supply issues.
- February 1st was the annual TFI Legislative Showcase and it was successful. We were pleased with the turnout and everyone enjoyed themselves.
- TFI will be holding their annual Silent Auction at the Iowa Tourism Conference so if you’d like to contribute a package, please do so. The conference will be held April 19 & 20, 2022 at the Marriott Downtown Des Moines.

Clay County Fair 2022: We have once again been offered the opportunity to exhibit at the fair September 10-18. This is free to our members to participate. Please let Shirley know if you are interested in promoting your attraction and community for half or full day shifts.

Guide Training and Certification Program: Diane Van Wyngarden, Iowa State Extension & Outreach, discussed the availability of this training. There is a handout on the table, please contact her for more information.

Next meeting: Our next meeting will be held March 23, 2022 in Le Mars.

Adjourn: Andy Milam moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:27 a.m. with Theresa Jackson seconding the motion. Meeting Adjourned.

Speakers following the meeting were Cathy Greteman with Star Destinations & Windstar Lines and Darcy Maulsby, Iowa’s Storyteller.

Respectfully submitted,
Shirley Phillips