

# FY22 ANNUAL REPORT



**iTIP**  
Iowa Travel Industry Partners





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**ONE VISION  
ONE MISSION  
ONE VOICE**

# HELLO

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Hello iTIP Members, Partners, and Friends,

Fiscal Year 2022 represents the inaugural year of operation for Iowa Travel Industry Partners. It was a year of development and growth in order to lay the framework for the future sustainability of the association.

A top, first, priority of the Board of Directors was the hiring of leadership to ensure momentum of the association continued to move forward. Chelsea Lerud was hired as Interim Director in August 2021, followed by being named Executive Director in April 2022. The hiring of Lerud brought seven years of tourism experience, lots of passion, and respect from leaders across the state to your association.

The next priority was to foster each of the D.R.E.A.M. committees to encourage the development of programming to provide value to the industry. The contents of the FY22 Annual Report outlines the many ways in which your state association began the work of developing a powerful resource for Iowa's tourism industry.

The future of tourism in Iowa is bright. The Iowa Travel Industry Partners looks forward to continuing to grow and develop desired programming to fit the needs of Iowa's tourism industry for competitive and respected growth. United, the travel industry can accomplish great things.



Yours in tourism,

*Chelsea M Lerud*

**Chelsea Lerud**

Executive Director

[clerud@iowatravelindustry.org](mailto:clerud@iowatravelindustry.org)

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## VISION

For Iowa to be a vibrant travel destination with thriving diverse communities which inspire visitors, led by a recognized brand and a united Association of travel professionals leading the way to make Iowa a destination of choice.

## MISSION

Iowa Travel Industry Partners mission is to be the unified driving force of the travel and tourism industry promoting Iowa and its communities to positively impact the economy and quality of life for all Iowans.

## VOICE

The program areas identified are not a plan, but rather a blueprint for how together the travel industry can identify opportunities and take action on critical issues with the purpose of growing travel in Iowa.

**“UNITED, WE CAN ACCOMPLISH GREAT THINGS.”**

## BOARD

**REBECCA PETERS**, President,  
Vacation Okoboji

**GREG EDWARDS**, Vice President,  
Catch Des Moines

**KEVIN BOURKE**, Treasurer,  
Discover Ames

**NICKI BRUS**, Secretary,  
Visit Quad Cities

**TAVIS HALL**, Past President,  
Experience Waterloo

**JESSICA DUNKER**, Iowa Restaurant Association

**MARK ECKMAN**, Council Bluffs Convention &  
Visitors Bureau

**WES EHRECKE**, Iowa Gaming Association

**KIM GRZYWACZ**, CIT Signature Transportation

**DAVE HERRELL**, Visit Quad Cities

**LINDSEY JAMES**, Visit Mason City

**ASHLEY JOHNSON**, Cedar Valley Sports Commission

**CARRIE KOELKER**, Eastern Iowa Tourism Association

**JENNIFER PICKAR**, Cedar Falls Tourism &  
Visitors Bureau

**KEITH RAHE**, Travel Dubuque

**JOSH SCHAMBERGER**, Think Iowa City

**JOHN VALLIERE**, Iowa PGA

**GINGER WILLIAMS**, Charles City Area  
Chamber of Commerce

## ITIP STAFF & SUPPORT

**CHELSEA LERUD**, Executive Director

**ERIN SCHMITZ**, Administrator

**DAVID ADELMAN**, Lobbyist, Cornerstone  
Government Affairs



## 2021 - 2022 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

# DREAM COMMITTEES

DEVELOPMENT | RESOURCES | EDUCATION | ADVOCACY | MARKETING



## DEVELOPMENT

**The development committee focuses on membership, fundraising, and relationships.**

- 71 organizations registered for FY 21-22 membership, representing all membership levels and statewide locations.
- 5 Affiliate Partner memberships equate to growing relationships with our industry sectors and associations.
- Raised \$22,000 in sponsorships to host statewide events and provide support for Iowa presence at national events.

## COMMITTEE

**Chair:** Kim Grzywacz, CIT Signature Transportation  
Tom Devine, Jackson County Tourism  
Kristi Franz, Explore Sioux City  
Julie Kronlage, Travel Dubuque  
Kerrie Kuiper, Fort Dodge Convention & Visitors Bureau  
Nancy Roth, Kalona Historical Society  
Spiff Slifka, Howard County Business & Tourism  
John Valliere, Iowa PGA

## RESOURCES

**The resources committee focuses on grants, mentorships, professional services, and technical tools.**

- Developed and instituted a year long Mentorship Program. Four mentor / mentee pairings have been established to share industry knowledge with partners.
- Creation and launch of Economic Impact Calculator in partnership with CyBiz Labs at Iowa State University. 100 event scenarios have been run through the calculator to analyze impact for the hosting organization and community.
- Release of Destination Survey to allow for data set comparisons of participating organizations to advocate for funding streams and grow their organizations.

## COMMITTEE

**Chair:** Mark Eckman, Unleash Council Bluffs  
Terry Baker, Fairfield Convention & Visitors Bureau  
Kevin Bourke, Discover Ames  
Kirk Bradenberger, Keokuk Convention & Visitors Bureau  
Kerrie Kuiper, Fort Dodge Convention & Visitors Bureau  
Rebecca Peters, Vacation Okoboji  
John Valliere, Iowa PGA  
Korey Woodbury, Hotel Millwright



## EDUCATION

**The education committee focuses on networking opportunities, best practices, accessible training, and professional development.**

- Established regular membership meetings to allow for industry collaboration and growth. Each session featured a keynote presentation important to all membership types. In person sessions included industry round table discussions for hot topic discussions.
- Provided new alternative educational programming such as book clubs, virtual webinars, and industry segment conversations. The alternative programming allowed for interactions with members aligned with their interests.
- Partnered with Eastern Iowa Tourism Association to host a general membership meeting on legislative priorities and the iLEAD Leadership Symposium.

## COMMITTEE

**Chair:** Jennifer Pickar, Cedar Falls Tourism & Visitors Bureau  
 Jill Ackerman, Marion Chamber of Commerce  
 Jackie Bohr, The Hotel at Kirkwood  
 Jessica Dunker, Iowa Restaurant Association  
 Kim Grzwacz, CIT Signature Transportation  
 Lindsey James, Visit Mason City  
 Julie Stow, Cedar Rapids Tourism  
 Ginger Williams, Charles City Area Chamber of Commerce



## ADVOCACY

**The advocacy committee focuses on identifying key issues, creating meaningful coalitions, empowering members, and engaging in advocacy events and programming.**

- Hired Cornerstone Government Affairs to ensure the tourism industry remained a priority during the 2022 legislative session. Partnering with the lobbying firm allowed for professionalized advocacy, increased communication, enhanced relationships, and the introduction of iTIP to Iowa's leaders.
- Partnered with Eastern Iowa Tourism Association to provide legislative representation to Iowa's tourism industry.
- Hosted the first Tourism Night Legislative Reception for 100+ attendees of industry partners and elected officials which allowed for new connections to be created.
- Advanced conversations with Iowa leaders to advocate for additional recovery dollars encouraged the creation of the Destination Iowa program with American Rescue Plan Act dollars.

## COMMITTEE

**Chair:** Dave Herrell, Visit Quad Cities  
 Wes Ehrecke, Iowa Gaming Association  
 Tavis Hall, Experience Waterloo  
 Carrie Koelker, Eastern Iowa Tourism Association  
 Rebecca Peters, Vacation Okoboji  
 Nick Pfeiffer, Think Iowa City  
 Keith Rahe, Travel Dubuque  
 John Valliere, Iowa PGA



# Heaven?

# No, it's IOWA!



## MARKETING

**The marketing committee focuses on the development of the Association's brand and collateral materials while keeping all the niche markets in mind. The niche markets include but are not limited to sports, group travel, meetings, and Destination Marketing Organizations.**

- Collaborated with Tour Iowa sub-committee to craft group tour promotion for American Bus Association Marketplace to provide Iowa national recognition. Hosted 20 one-on-one group tour planner conversations as well as over 500 event attendees traveled through the Iowa booth.
- Worked with Team Iowa sub-committee to begin to create the work plan for successful sports tourism promotions to Iowa.
- Continued to enhance the association's website as well as establish social media channels for multiple audiences (association partners, group tour planner, leisure traveler).

## COMMITTEE

**Chair:** Matt Parbs, The Sawmill Museum  
Sara Broers, Social Connections, LLC  
Michaela Brown, Brown's Century Theatre  
Nicki Brus, Visit Quad Cities  
Carla Eysink, Marion County Development Commission  
Trina Flack, Catch Des Moines  
Tavis Hall, Experience Waterloo  
Libby Hohn, Clear Lake Chamber of Commerce  
Lindsey James, Visit Mason City  
Ashley Johnson, Cedar Valley Sports Commission  
Kerrie Kuiper, Fort Dodge Convention & Visitors Bureau  
Rebecca Peters, Vacation Okoboji  
Lesley Webster, Visit Clinton  
Ginger Williams, Charles City Area Chamber of Commerce  
Susan Yarolem, Celebration River Cruises



# ITIP IN ACTION

**The Iowa Travel Industry Partners Board of Directors and Association staff have worked hard in the last year to ensure a strong foundation is built for the long term sustainability of the association and tourism industry.**

- ✓ Hired full time executive director, Chelsea Lerud, to lead the growth of the association and foundation work.
- ✓ Worked to enhance relationships with the Iowa Economic Development Authority and additional statewide affiliate associations in order to collaborate on growth for the industry as a whole.

**Growth for the industry is a continued mission for iTIP. The association Board of Directors is committed to continuing the growth in FY23.**

- ✓ Work in conjunction and cooperation with the Iowa Economic Development Authority and Iowa Tourism Office for the implementation of the industry strategic plan. Identify key imperatives and objectives that align with the mission of iTIP to advance Iowa's tourism and hospitality industry.

## UNITY COLLABORATION PARTNERSHIP





## MEMBERSHIP WITH iTIP

Thank you to each of the 71 organizations that signed on for membership with the association during the inaugural year. All membership types provided statewide representation.

# FY22 MEMBERSHIP



## MEMBERSHIPS

General Members .....	<b>37</b>
Lodging Properties .....	<b>4</b>
County Partners .....	<b>2</b>
Affiliate Associations .....	<b>5</b>
Destination Marketing Organizations .....	<b>22</b>
Vendor Partners .....	<b>1</b>

## AFFILIATE ASSOCIATIONS

**Eastern Iowa Tourism Assoc.**  
**Iowa Bicycle Coalition**  
**Iowa Gaming Association**  
**Iowa Restaurant Association**  
**Iowa Tourism Office**  
**RAGBRAI**

Become a member of Iowa Travel Industry Partners to join an association that informs, connects, inspires, and educates members to be the unified driving force of Iowa's travel and tourism industry.

- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Affiliate Association</b> - identified as industry trade association representing an area greater than 3 counties)</li> <li><b>County</b></li> <li><b>Lodging Properties</b></li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Destination Marketing Organization</b> - identified as Destination Marketing Organization/Convention &amp; Visitors Bureau, Sports Commission, Chamber of Commerce, or Economic Development Organizations that employs at least 1 full-time individual dedicated to tourism</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>General Membership</b> - identified as Attractions, Museums, Restaurants, Services, Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development Organizations, Individuals and all others</li> </ul> |
|---|--|--|

# TOP PRIORITIES FOR FY23

## DEVELOPMENT

1. Build relationships across the state and industry in order to increase membership by 50%.
2. Launch a member retention program to enhance member engagement and allow for drop of no more than 5% of current members.
3. Develop fundraising and sponsorship opportunities to support association activities and increase member visibility.

## RESOURCES

1. Enhance mentorship program to increase pairings by 60% and encourage all industry segments to participate.
2. Continue promotion of economic impact calculator to increase use and assist with member storytelling.
3. Develop an online library of resources to assist members with growth of their individual organizations.

## EDUCATION

1. Enhance opportunities for members to engage with the organization to receive affordable and meaningful professional and personal development.
2. Explore avenues for the creation of an industry wide recognizable certificate or accreditation program.
3. Research and begin to design a leadership program growing from and partnering with current industry leadership programming.

## ADVOCACY

1. Provide an opportunity for intake from members on issues to define the 2023 legislative priorities agenda.
2. Advocate to support investment for implementation of the state's tourism industry strategic plan and pursue legislation for alternative funding opportunities for tourism.
3. Enhance annual advocacy event(s) with elected officials.

## MARKETING

1. Continue to develop and implement niche market marketing plans and strategies for areas to include but not limited to groups, sports, leisure and meetings markets.
2. Grow association collateral to share the organization's story for member and non-member promotions.
3. Analyze the need for specific niche publications and begin to build partnerships to create content.





## IOWA TRAVEL INDUSTRY PARTNERS FOUNDATION

The Iowa Travel Industry Partners Foundation is a 501c3 nonprofit organization dedicated to empowering the Iowa Travel and Tourism Industry, by providing education, research, advocacy, and workforce development. The Foundation is organized as a support organization for Iowa Travel Industry Partners for the following specified purposes:

### A.

To analyze, identify and fulfill the educational needs of those who are interested or engaged in the travel industry or destination organizations. Their needs will be met by offering education programs to travel industry and destination organization employees.

### B.

To conduct studies and obtain and disseminate data relating to the travel industry or destination organizations and destination clients.

### C.

To engage in charitable activities, provide scholarships and other programs for leadership development and provide or facilitate donations to provide opportunities for Iowa tourism as a unified voice.

## 2021-2022 ACCOMPLISHMENTS



- Researched capital campaign processes and identified potential private partners.

- Began conversations on the development of hospitality certificate programming in partnership with like minded affiliate associations.

- Awarded 2nd annual Joe Taylor Vision Award to outstanding industry leader.

## LOOKING AHEAD TO FY23

- Build relationships with private corporate partners statewide to enhance tourism programming developed by the Association.

- Research and develop framework for future educational, grant, scholarship, and research programming.

### Iowa Travel Industry Partners Board of Trustees

**MARK ECKMAN**, President, Council Bluffs Convention & Visitors Bureau

**LINDSEY JAMES**, Treasurer, Visit Mason City

**JESSICA DUNKER**, Secretary, Iowa Restaurant Association

**GREG EDWARDS**, Catch Des Moines

**CARLA EYSINK**, Marion County Economic Development Commission

**NICK PFEIFFER**, Think Iowa City

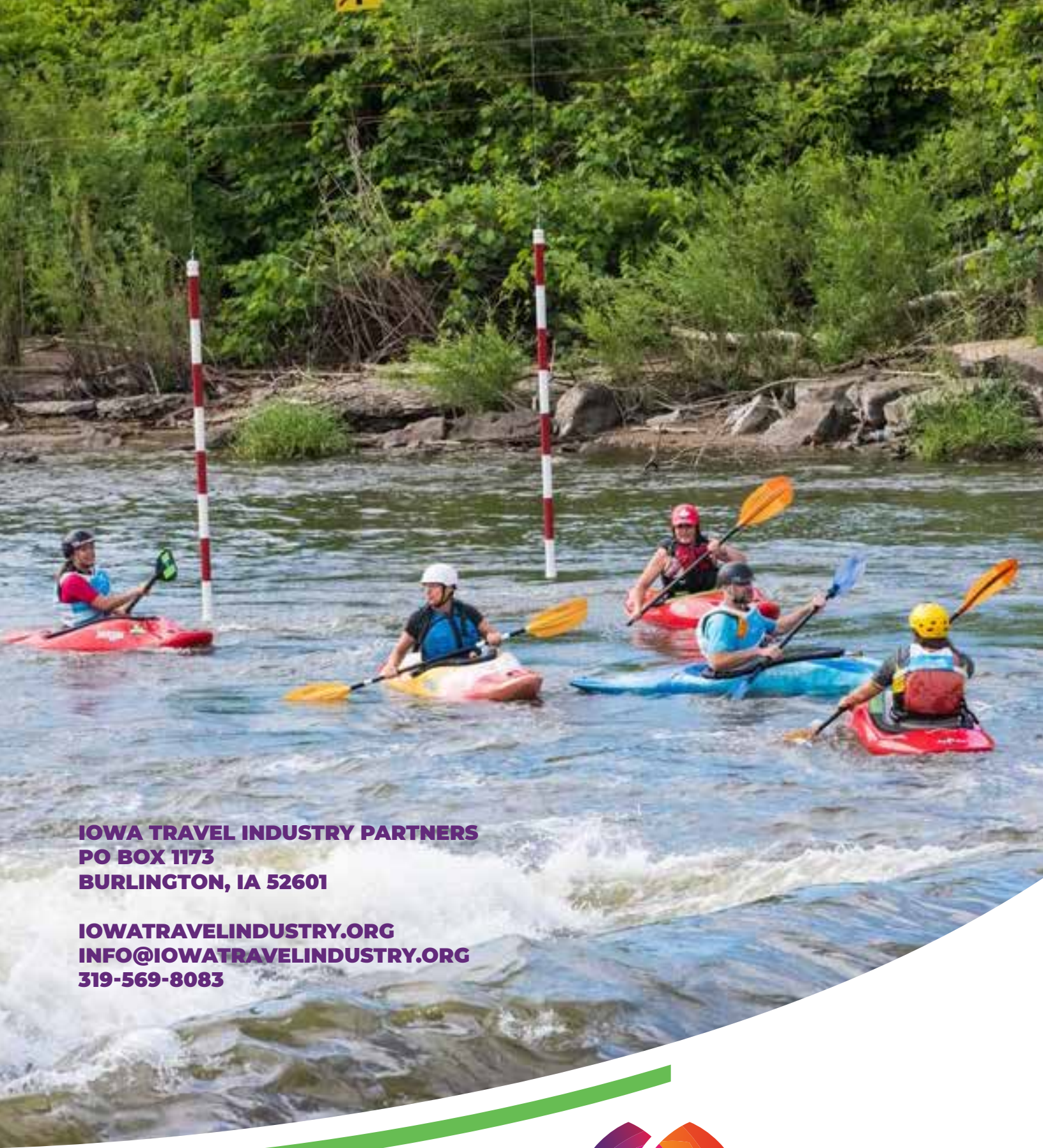
**KEITH RAHE**, Travel Dubuque

### ITIP Foundation Staff & Support

**CHELSEA LERUD**, Executive Director

**ERIN SCHMITZ**, Administrator





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*Iowa Travel Industry Partners*