



# FY23 ANNUAL REPORT



**iTIP**  
Iowa Travel Industry Partners



# TABLE OF CONTENTS



- 3** Letter from Executive Director
- 4** Board of Directors
- 5** 2022 - 2023 Accomplishments
- 8** iTIP in Action
- 9** Membership with iTIP
- 10** iTIP Foundation
- 11** Top Priorities for FY24

# ITIP MEMBERS, PARTNERS AND FRIENDS

Thank you for allowing Iowa Travel Industry Partners to support you and your organization's work to continue the momentum for Iowa's tourism industry. Fiscal Year 2023 represents the second year of operation for Iowa Travel Industry Partners. It was a year of continued development and growth in order to carry the momentum from FY22 forward and to continue to shape the future sustainability of the association.

A huge success of the year was being awarded a year-long vendor contract from the Iowa Economic Development Authority (Iowa Tourism Office) to execute a comprehensive niche marketing campaign. This campaign included statewide attendance at five national trade shows, niche marketing placements, statewide sports software, and the creation of a sports highlights video. Members had the ability to participate in each of these efforts to promote their destination/attraction to nationwide planners. This entire campaign has helped bring exposure and awareness to the state and iTIP members.

Additional association work continued to foster each of the D.R.E.A.M. committees to enhance programming opportunities to provide value to the industry. The contents of the FY23 Annual Report outlines the many ways in which your state association continued the work of creating the powerful resource for Iowa's tourism industry.

The future of tourism in Iowa is bright. 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. Through unity, collaboration, and partnerships, the travel industry can accomplish great things.



Yours in tourism,

*Chelsea M Lerud*

**Chelsea Lerud**

Executive Director

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

515-207-0009





## VALUES

COLLABORATE  
INNOVATE  
WE, NOT ME  
BE DIRECT  
GIVE IT A CHANCE  
LEAD

## MISSION

**Tourism's Champion;**  
increasing visitation and  
improving Iowa's economy  
through partnerships.

## VISION

A united team of  
travel professionals, providing  
resources to foster diverse  
communities that  
inspire travelers.

## BOARD

**GREG EDWARDS**, President, Catch Des Moines  
**KIM GRZYWACZ**, Vice President,  
CIT Signature Transportation  
**KEVIN BOURKE**, Treasurer, Discover Ames  
**NICKI BRUS**, Secretary, Visit Quad Cities  
**REBECCA PETERS**, Past President, Vacation Okoboji  
**JESSICA DUNKER**, Iowa Restaurant Association  
**MARK ECKMAN**, Council Bluffs Convention &  
Visitors Bureau  
**WES EHRECKE**, Iowa Gaming Association  
**KRISTI FRANZ**, Explore Sioux City  
**TAVIS HALL**, Experience Waterloo  
**DAVE HERRELL**, Visit Quad Cities  
**LINDSEY JAMES**, Visit Mason City  
**CARRIE KOELKER**, Travel Dubuque  
**JENNIFER PICKAR**, Cedar Falls Tourism & Visitors Bureau  
**KEITH RAHE**, Travel Dubuque  
**JOSH SCHAMBERGER**, Think Iowa City  
**JOHN VALLERIE**, Iowa PGA  
**GINGER WILLIAMS**, Charles City Area  
Chamber of Commerce

## iTIP STAFF & SUPPORT

**CHELSEA LERUD**, Executive Director  
**DAVID ADELMAN**, Lobbyist,  
Cornerstone Government Affairs  
**LILLIE BRADY**, Lobbyist,  
Cornerstone Government Affairs



# 5 PILLARS

DEVELOPMENT | RESOURCES | EDUCATION | ADVOCACY | MARKETING

## DEVELOPMENT

### Nurturing relationships and collaboration

- 104 organizations registered for FY23 membership, representing all membership levels and statewide locations.
- 8 Affiliate Partner memberships equate to growing relationships with industry sectors and associations.
- 6 Vendor Partners allow members to seek out vetted businesses to partner with for their tourism initiatives.
- Raised \$40,000 in sponsorships to host statewide events and provide support for Iowa presence at national events.

## RESOURCES

### Providing technical tools

- Continued promotion of Economic Impact Calculator to membership. 370 event scenarios have been run through the calculator to analyze impact for the hosting organization and community.
- Additional five mentor / mentee pairings established to share industry knowledge with partners.
- Began discussions of co-op facilitator opportunities for members and surveyed membership on desires for future programming.
- Supported a partner through a strategic planning process of incorporating tourism into their program of work.



## EDUCATION

### Developing networking opportunities and statewide professional development

- Hosted iLEAD Leadership Symposium for 19 attendees wanting to advance their leadership skills. Registrants focused on topics of strengths finder, mental health & empathetic listening, succession planning, partnerships & collaboration, peer learning, board of directors development, and empowered choice.
- Presented two webinars for industry partners to learn about upcoming legislative priorities and working with travel writers.
- Held iTIP Summer Celebration to bring industry partners together for networking, peer learning, and encouragement for their summer work.

## ADVOCACY

### Leading and inspiring a legislative agenda that prioritizes tourism

- Hosted Tourism Night Legislative Reception for 150 attendees of industry partners and elected officials which allowed for new connections to be created. Encouraged participation of Affiliate Associations to increase the depth of conversations.
- Continued collaboration with Cornerstone Government Affairs to ensure the tourism industry remains a top priority with legislation advancement.
- Enhanced communication with the Iowa Economic Development Authority and Iowa Tourism Office teams to demonstrate the ability to collaborate together on behalf of the industry.
- Increased visibility of the industry through two Capital Visits during session to advocate for tourism appropriations funding.

# MARKETING

## Sharing iTIP's story and promoting niche markets

- Contracted a collaboration with Travel Iowa to implement a comprehensive niche marketing campaign for meeting planners, group tour operators, and sporting events rights holders.
  - Hosted 148 one-on-one planner conversations as well as interacted with 1,000s of trade show attendees traveling through the Iowa booth at 5 national trade shows.
  - Developed and released the 9th edition of the Iowa Tour Guide in partnership with Premier Travel Media.
  - Began development of the 1st edition of the Iowa Meetings Guide in partnership with Small Market Meetings.
  - Implemented state partnership with Huddle Up Group & Sports Tourism Index for partners to reach sporting event rights holders.
  - Released an Iowa Sports Highlights Video to use during in person and web promotions.
- Continued to enhance the association's website and social media channels to keep members and partners informed.
- Participated in Global Meetings Industry Day and National Travel and Tourism Week promotions.





## ITIP IN ACTION

**The Iowa Travel Industry Partners Board of Directors and 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.**

- ✔ Developed and began implementation of a three year strategic plan.
- ✔ Secured contract with the Iowa Economic Development Authority to execute a comprehensive niche marketing campaign to focus on meeting planners, group tour planners, and sporting event rights holders.
- ✔ Enhanced relationships with additional statewide affiliate associations in order to collaborate on an elevated voice for the industry.
- ✔ Executed MOU agreement with dissolved Eastern Iowa Tourism Association Board of Directors to continue their mission of advocacy, education, and scholarship work for the industry.

## FUTURE GROWTH

**Growth for the industry is a continued mission for iTIP. The association Board of Directors is committed to continuing the growth in FY24.**

Work in cooperation with the Iowa Economic Development Authority for the implementation of the tourism industry strategic plan. Identify key imperatives and objectives that align with the mission of iTIP to lead the industry.



# MEMBERSHIP WITH iTIP

Thank you to each of the 104 organizations that engaged with iTIP on membership with the association. All membership types provided statewide representation.

**AFFILIATE ASSOCIATIONS:** Association of Iowa Fairs, Iowa Bicycle Coalition, Iowa Gaming Association, Iowa Museum Association, Iowa PGA, Iowa Restaurant Association, Iowa Tourism Office, RAGBRAI

## MEMBERSHIPS

General Members . . . . .	<b>62</b>
Lodging Properties . . . . .	<b>8</b>
County Partners . . . . .	<b>4</b>
Affiliate Associations . . . . .	<b>8</b>
Destination Marketing Organizations . . . . .	<b>22</b>
Vendor Partners . . . . .	<b>6</b>

*(CTM Media Group, de Novo Marketing, Neapolitan Labs, Premier Travel Media, Shrpa, Small Market Meetings)*



## FY23 MEMBERSHIP



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. Membership levels include:

- **Affiliate Association** - identified as industry trade association representing an area greater than 3 counties)
- **County**
- **Lodging Properties**
- **Destination Marketing Organization** - identified as Destination Marketing Organization/Convention & Visitors Bureau, Sports Commission, Chamber of Commerce, or Economic Development Organizations that employs at least 1 full-time individual dedicated to tourism
- **General Membership** - identified as Attractions, Museums, Restaurants, Services, Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development Organizations, Individuals and all others

# TOP PRIORITIES FOR FY24



## EXPANDING VALUE

1. Educate the industry on the value iTIP provides
2. Take pulse of the industry to be informed of the value they expect
3. Develop programs in partnership with one affiliate member organization

### SUCCESS BENCHMARKS:

- 20% year over year membership growth
- 50% active member participation
- Niche Market Trade Show Vendor Funds: **Attend sports, meetings, group travel trade shows**

## AMPLIFYING INDUSTRY VOICE

1. Define strong state legislative priorities
2. Support members: local government hurdles and developing relationships with elected officials
3. Continued alignment and Support of Iowa Tourism Office Strategic Plan
4. Establish yearly comprehensive state lobbying legislative program

### SUCCESS BENCHMARKS:

- 60% of membership attend statewide legislative events
- 30% of membership attend Capitol Visits

## SUSTAINING THE ORGANIZATION

1. Evaluate Dues Structure: County Memberships
2. Increase sponsorship and participant support of current programming
3. Identify and pursue additional funding sources

### SUCCESS BENCHMARKS:

- Gain County Level Membership: **10 counties in year 1**
- Diversify the budget through fundraising: **20% growth year over year**

# 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.

The Foundation presented 15 awards to industry leaders and organizations for their outstanding work over the last year. Congratulations!

## EXCELLENCE AWARDS

Arts, Culture & Heritage (small):

**American Gothic House, Eldon**

Arts, Culture & Heritage (large):

**Iowa City Downtown District**

Only in Iowa (small): **Madison County**

Only in Iowa (small):

**Field of Dreams Movie Site, Dyersville**

Rising Star (small):

**Andy Kelleher, Main Street Lansing**

Rising Star (large):

**Emma Schwaller, Council Bluffs CVB**

Service Excellence (small):

**SOMM Wines, Fairfield**

Service Excellence (medium):

**King's Pointe Resort & City of Storm Lake**

Service Excellence (large):

**Catch Des Moines**

Sustainability Initiative (small):

**Okoboji Blue Water Festival, Okoboji**

Sustainability Initiative (large):

**Wallace Centers of Iowa, Des Moines & Orient**



## Individual Awards

■ Joe Taylor Vision

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

■ Abby Kisling Leadership

Award: **GINGER WILLIAMS**,  
Charles City Chamber &  
Tourism

■ Legislator of the Year:

**CARRIE KOELKER**, Senate  
District 33

■ iTIP Partner of the Year:

**NICK PFEIFFER**, Think  
Iowa City



## 2022 - 2023 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

■ Researched capital campaign processes and identified potential private partners.

■ Developed and implemented a comprehensive awards program.

■ Supported annual Iowa ProStart Culinary & Management Competition hosted by the Iowa Restaurant Association.

## LOOKING AHEAD TO FY23

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

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

## 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

**KIM GRZYWACZ**, CIT Signature  
Transportation

**NICK PFEIFFER**, Think Iowa City

## iTIP Foundation Staff

**CHELSEA LERUD**,  
Executive Director



**IOWA TRAVEL INDUSTRY PARTNERS  
PO BOX 1173  
BURLINGTON, IA 52601**

**IOWATRAVELINDUSTRY.ORG  
INFO@IOWATRAVELINDUSTRY.ORG  
515-207-0009**

DESIGNED BY: WEB GRAPHICS, INC



**iTIP**  
*Iowa Travel Industry Partners*