

FINAL REPORT

TOURISM STUDY COMMITTEE

**Presented to the Legislative Council
and the Iowa General Assembly
January 1993**

Prepared by the Legislative Service Bureau

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AUTHORIZATION AND APPOINTMENT

The Tourism Study Committee was established by the Legislative Council to review state tourism programs to determine their ability to attract private participation, involve the tourism industry, and increase instate and out-of-state travel to Iowa tourism sites and to seek tourism industry input on ways to improve Iowa tourism programs and coordination between state and private tourism efforts. The Committee was authorized two meetings but the Committee held one meeting.

Members of the Committee were:

Senator Leonard Boswell, Co-chairperson
Representative Dennis Black, Co-chairperson
Senator Jack Hester
Senator James Riordan
Senator Harry Slife
Senator Albert Sorensen
Representative Bill Bernau
Representative Chuck Gipp
Representative Mark Haverland
Representative Bill Royer

COMMITTEE PROCEEDINGS

The Committee held one meeting on December 15, 1992, and heard testimony from a number of individuals associated with tourism in Iowa regarding the state of tourism in Iowa and how it could be improved.

Mr. Dave Reynolds, Administrator, Division of Tourism, Iowa Department of Economic Development, presented an overview of Iowa tourism programs and the Iowa tourism industry. Mr. Reynolds also provided statistics on revenue generated from tourism in Iowa and the funds allocated by the state to tourism programs in recent years.

Ms. Nancy Landess, Marketing Manager, Division of Tourism, Iowa Department of Economic Development, provided information on the welcome center system in Iowa. Ms. Landess also discussed the financial impact of the system on Iowa's economy and plans to expand the system.

Ms. Michelle Walker, Executive Director, Western Iowa Tourism Region, discussed the regional system in general and the activities and impact of the western region in particular. Mr. Joe Taylor, President, Eastern Iowa Tourism Association and Communications Manager, Quad Cities Convention and Visitors Bureau, also provided information on the regional system and that the regions are important for marketing assistance, public relations, and other support to local communities.

Mr. Rich Harter, Director of Marketing, Des Moines Convention and Visitors Bureau, testified regarding the activities of the Iowa Convention and Visitors Bureau Association. Mr. Harter suggested that, among other things, more state and local coordination, advertising blitzes, and media links are necessary in the future to advance Iowa tourism.

Mr. Marion Lucas, Executive Director, Iowa State Fair, provided general information about fairs in Iowa, noting that the economic impact of the fairs, including the State Fair, is estimated to be around \$100 million each year.

Mr. Dale Jackson, owner of Ellendale Bed and Breakfast, West Des Moines, spoke about bed and breakfast establishments generally and the activities of the Bed & Breakfast Innkeepers Association in particular. Mr. Jackson stated that the primary objectives of the Association are promotion and membership.

Ms. Tammy Kuhn discussed the Iowa Arts Council's activities as they relate to tourism. Ms. Kuhn noted that the Arts Council provides about \$1 million in grants to local artists that generate significantly more than that amount to local communities.

Ms. Carole Moll, President of Iowa Association of Campground Owners and owner of Timberline Best Holiday Travel Park, presented information on the camping market in Iowa. Ms. Moll related that changing demographics such as aging baby boomers and an increasing senior market favor the growth of the camping industry in the future.

Ms. Jana DeBrower, President of Iowa Group Travel Association, and Tourism Director, Waterloo Convention and Visitors Bureau, stated that the 50 and over age group dominates the group travel market and that this segment of the population has approximately \$400 billion in disposable income. Ms.

DeBrower indicated that Iowa will need to expend some advertising money to tap into this market.

Mr. Craig Walter, Executive director, Iowa Lodging Association, discussed the scope of the lodging industry and its significant impact on the economy. Mr. Walter also recommended increased emphasis on economic development, including funding, and a reworking of the hotel/motel tax.

Mr. Bill Fisher, President and Director of Marketing, Adventureland, suggested that more favorable regulations regarding highway signage would be helpful to Adventureland and spoke about the impact to the tourism industry of a transition to a 12 month school year.

Ms. Lisa Riggs, Danish Windmill Welcome Center, provided information on the economic impact of the windmill as an attraction and a welcome center. Ms. Riggs indicated that the windmill has a \$9.8 million impact on the community.

Mr. Kirk Taylor, President of Atlantic Bottling Company, related that his company's interest in tourism stems from the fact that more tourists means more opportunities to sell the Coca-Cola products bottled by his company. Mr. Taylor gave examples of this, indicating that from the State Fair, Veterans Auditorium events, and the balloon races in Indianola, \$200,000 wholesale and \$500,000 retail business is generated.

Mr. Bill Rooney, Radio Iowa, described how Radio Iowa has been operating over the last few years and that Radio Iowa is a vehicle for advertising local events. Mr. Rooney stated that Radio Iowa has seen over 300 percent growth in the past three years.

Mr. Don Shoup, Amana Society, presented information on tourism and the Amana Society and provided statistics on its economic impact in the area. Mr. Shoup also indicated that working with the Tourism Division and cooperative advertising sponsors has helped generate increased inquiries through increased spending on tourism.

Mr. Tom Kuhlman, Director, Iowa Great Lakes Chamber of Commerce, stated that tourism in the great lakes area is a \$65 million industry. Mr. Kuhlman then described how he sees state efforts fitting into the "tourism machine" and continuing to provide increased jobs and tax dollars.

Mr. Rich Mills, President, Iowa Travel Council, noted that the Iowa Travel Council has built a good relationship with the tourism industry and with the General Assembly. Mr. Mills stated that the tourism industry in Iowa is too modest and more should be done to promote Iowa. Mr. Mills also

indicated his support for the establishment of permanent standing committees on tourism in the General Assembly.

Mr. Dave Reynolds then provided concluding remarks on the presentations to the Committee, which he said were intended to provide the Committee with a better idea of how broad and diverse the tourism industry is in Iowa. Mr. Reynolds noted that work on improving the industry in Iowa has not advanced due to budget constraints. Mr. Reynolds then provided the Committee with several proposals, including permanent tourism committees, making 1993 a study year for developing a five-year tourism master plan, nonreversion of tourism appropriations, and the licensing and selling of tourism products.

COMMITTEE DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Co-chairperson Boswell noted that the topic of tourism has been added to the responsibilities of the Senate Small Business and Economic Development Committee and recommended that a standing subcommittee of that Committee be appointed. After discussion, the members of the Committee approved the following recommendation:

That the General Assembly adopt a standing subcommittee on tourism in each house to work with the Division of Tourism to develop a plan for tourism in the future, including the possible creation of standing tourism committees in each house and exploring a revolving loan system to expand local tourism activities and empower localities.

INFORMATION RECEIVED

The Committee received the following information:

1. Tourism Enhancement And Marketing (TEAM) notebook, including a newspaper insert entitled "Adventure at Every Turn".
2. Iowa Visitors Guide & Calendar of Events for 1992.
3. Western Iowa Tourism Region, '92 Annual Report & '93 Marketing Goals.
4. Western Iowa Tourism Region Tour Manual.
5. American Hotel & Motel Association Lodging Industry Profile.

6. A copy of a Des Moines Register Editorial entitled "School Days, New Days" and a document entitled "Reasons to Question 'The Extended Year Schooling Concept'".
7. A document entitled "Travelers 'Get in Touch With Iowa' at Fairs of All Sizes".
8. The Summary of Final Report and Recommendations of the Recreation, Tourism and Leisure Interim Study Committee, September 1987.