

**Western Iowa Tourism Region Meeting**  
**Jan. 29, 2020 • Cobblestone Inn & Suites, Holstein**

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

**Welcome:** Andy introduced Holstein's Mayor, Kathy Breyfogle, who welcomed everyone to Holstein and told us all the local industries and specialty shops. Brianna Butcher welcomed everyone to the Event Center at Cobblestone Inn & Suites.

**Approval of Agenda:**

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

**Approval of November 2019 Minutes:** Lisa Riggs moved to approve the minutes, with Brian Kessler seconding the motion. *Motion carried.*

**Financial Report:** Shirley presented the report. Julie Kent moved to approve the report with Bob Mortensen seconding the motion. *Motion carried.*

**State Tourism Office Report:** This was deferred to the afternoon until the Town Hall Meeting..

**Travel Federation of Iowa report:** Shirley gave the following report:

**Hotel/Motel – 30 to 90 days**

Many of you will recall that TFI's priority bill (HF 760) to change the hotel/motel tax from 30 days to 90 days passed both the House and Senate (twice) last year, but unfortunately in slightly different versions. Since it is the second year of a two-year General Assembly, HF 760 is alive again, so legislators are working to get the bill ironed out and across the finish line.

The best thing that TFI members can do to is to reach out to your legislators and tell them that you would really like to see this bill finalized so it can be implemented as soon as possible. We hope to have good news in the next update.

**School Start Date**

We have not yet seen any proposals that would move the school start date earlier; however, it is still very early in session. This is a great time though to point out to your legislators that this year's late Labor Day (Sept. 7) will mean there will be two full weeks between the start of the school and Labor Day. For attractions that depend on summer months, those is a lot of lost revenue, and in turn, is a lot of lost revenue to the State for priorities like education.

**Iowa Water & Land Legacy**

IWILL stands a chance of funding this year. The Governor proposed this in her Condition of the State speech. If sales tax is raised one penny, it will provide us with some additional money to clean up our lakes & rivers. The catch is that they are arguing about how much money to provide for trails and REAP. So be sure to watch this and voice your opinion.

Shirley 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. Also if you do not receive the Capitol report from the lobbyists, Shirley can forward it to you.

The 2020 Fast Facts booklets was disbursed.

**2020 Legislative Showcase** will be held on Monday, Mar. 2<sup>nd</sup> Registration information should be coming soon but the showcase will be similar to last year's with the banners and it will be held at the Iowa State Fairgrounds. There will be an additional cost for extra people to attend.

**American Bus Association FAM Tour:** Lisa Riggs (Danish Windmill) & Shannon Rodenburg (Wells Blue Bunny Visitors Center) spoke about the "Savor the Flavor" Tour held in Western Iowa. Lisa explained we visited attractions and enjoyed ethnic treats in Stanton, Corning, Elk Horn, Templeton, Manning, Le Mars and Sioux City. With the largest pre-fam tour, we welcomed tour operators from the United States and Canada with Lisa and Shirley Phillips as guides. Shannon explained how they enhanced their tours in Le Mars from the Brown Family Theater to the Blue Bunny Ice Cream Parlor and even a local barista who gave a demonstration on how to make a French Press. She also explained how the community of Le Mars made a \$15,000 investment to participate in the ABA Marketplace. They have booked six tours in the past 3 weeks, so it was beneficial for them to participate.

**2020 Clay County Fair (Sept. 12 – 20):** Shirley explained that we have an opportunity to host a booth at the Clay County Fair but need to fill all the slots before she can turn in the contract. If you feel you want to reach out approximately 300,000 people, please contact Shirley so we can fill the schedule before the end of February when the contract is due. There is no cost to participate but you must be willing to fulfill your shift.

**Other business:** President Milam thanked Jamie Riedell of Kings Pointe, Cassie McNees of Clarinda Chamber of Commerce and Jill Heisterkamp of Calhoun County Economic Development for judging the tourism awards this year. The Awards Banquet will be held at the Iowa Tourism Conference, Mar. 2-4, 2020 in Des Moines.

**Introductions were held.**

**Next meeting: Our next meeting will be held on April 15 2020, at the Audubon Recreation Center in Audubon.**

**Adjourn:** Jill Heisterkamp moved to adjourn the meeting and Kenner Baxter seconded. Meeting Adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,  
Shirley Phillips

**The Iowa Tourism Town Hall Meeting followed lunch.**

**Kanan Kappleman** presented statistics from the marketing plan and the structure of the office since they have moved to their new location. She introduced the current staff. She also mentioned that the job previously held by Jacque Matsen would be filled as a chief strategic marketing person for both IEDA and IFA.

**Katie Kenne** updated everyone about the upcoming Tourism Conference. She told how you can register and what the social evening will entail. She discussed the #thisisiowa campaign, and talked about a video co-op offering, the Mother's Day Gift Guide, the State Park Promotion (this is the Centennial year for the State Parks so the DNR is leading the effort with the tourism office supporting), Influencer campaigns, and Wine & Beer Promotion.

Katie also explained this year's grant program and thanked Freda Dammann, Lana White and Blair Weigum for judging the grants.

**Jessica O'Riley** spoke on behalf of LuAnn Reinders and the research available to the industry. She also reported there would be two visitors' guides this year and they are in need of fall and winter photos, as well as any wintertime events and attractions for the fall and winter guide that will be available in early September with the advertising deadline of July 17<sup>th</sup> (all ad prices are on the [traveliowa.com](http://traveliowa.com) website).

She asked that you send all your upcoming events to her well in advance so she can pitch them to travel writers and media. If you are approached by bloggers and instragramers and need the state to check them out, please contact her and she will let you know if they are legitimate.

Jessica explained Amy Zeigler's job is to keep the website up to date so we were given instructions on how to do this. Also there is an "Along the Route Tool" where your information will be propagated when you travel.

Amber Rottinghaus was introduced as the new social media staff.