

## **FY'12 Executive Committee**

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### **V.P. Marketing**

John Sutter  
*National Mississippi River Museum  
& Aquarium*

### **V.P. Membership**

Cassie Bott  
*Fireside Winery*

## **EITA Office Staff**

### **Executive Director**

Carrie Koelker  
*carrie@easterniowatourism.org*

### **Administrative Assistant**

Abby Kisling  
*abby@easterniowatourism.org*

*Eastern Iowa Tourism Association  
P.O. Box 189  
Dyersville, Iowa 52040  
Phone: 563-875-7269  
Fax: 563-875-2358  
800-891-3482  
www.easterniowatourism.org*



*See the Beauty... Sample the Fun.*

## FY'12 Eastern Iowa Tourism Association 2011-2012 Proposed Strategic Work Plan

### **Mission Statement**

To create a thriving economic environment in Eastern Iowa by promoting our region as a principal destination for potential visitors and by serving as a catalyst to enhance our members' tourism marketing efforts.



# Education

## GOALS

### I. Provide quality education sessions for the members.

#### Objective(s)

#### A. Determine educational needs through membership input.

##### *Action Steps*

1. Continue to survey members at meetings.
2. Establish an education committee representing the various types of EITA memberships.

#### B. Provide educational opportunities at meetings.

##### *Action Steps*

1. Schedule education sessions and/or roundtable discussion opportunities for the entire Fiscal Year 2012 no later than July 2011, and for Fiscal Year 2013 no later than July 2012.
2. Supply the schedule of education sessions to the membership in advance.
3. Promote the sessions through the EITA newsletter, announcements at meetings and bi-monthly mailings.
4. Host "industry specific" roundtables at general membership meetings or in conjunction with meetings.

#### C. Work in partnership with other organizations to share costs and benefits of high quality speakers.

##### *Action Steps*

1. Invite the active participation of other tourism-related organizations to share costs and benefits of the seminar.
2. Invite both EITA members and non-members, with lower registration fees for members.

#### D. Work in partnerships with IDEED to research the potential of a webinar

##### *Action Steps*

1. Research a topic or speaker in conjunction with the Iowa Tourism Office.
2. Determine if it should be in addition or replace a General Membership Meeting.
3. Invite and welcome statewide participation.

## FIVE YEAR GOALS

- Continue improving educational opportunities, using professional keynote speakers.
- Explore opportunities for professional development for staff and include in annual budget allocations.
- Secure additional funds from IDEED to secure high caliber speakers.



# Grants

## GOALS

### I. Assist in tourism efforts of EITA members and contributing counties non-member tourism non-profits in Eastern Iowa.

## **Objective(s)**

### **A. Continue the EITA grant program.**

#### *Action Steps*

1. Grant applications will be made available after July 1, 2011.
2. Grant applications will be accepted until Friday, October 7, 2011.
3. Evaluations will be completed and awards announced within a reasonable time following evaluation.
4. Pending funds from IDED \$22,000 will be awarded in three categories; Education, Promotion, and Advertising.
5. Project Agreement forms will be accepted no later than January 6, 2012.
6. Awards will be reimbursed by June 30, 2012.
7. Continue on-line application on the web site, and have the new FY'12 application in advance on site enabling members to plan ahead.
8. Review the grant application and update or change format if needed.
9. Maintain grant opportunities through the State of Iowa.

### **A. Provide assistance to members in improving grant-writing skills.**

#### *Action Steps*

1. Provide sample applications, on request.
2. Return summary checklist of review comments to all applicants along with the grant announcement mailings.

### **B. Continue the Community Development Scholarship Grants.**

#### *Action Steps*

1. Pending funding from the Iowa Department of Economic Development, IDED scholarship applications will be available to attend two IDED Training Sessions.
2. Complete the required grant application to apply and obtain the funds.
3. Continue to evaluate applications by a sub-committee.

### **C. Distribute funds and provide assistance to the Out-Of-State Marketing Grant Programs.**

#### *Action Steps*

1. Notify the membership of grant opportunities.
2. Select liaisons to serve on the state-wide grant review panel.
3. Administer the funds and grant requirements within the EITA office for FY'11.
4. Encourage future Out-of-State Marketing Grant Program to continue.

## **FIVE YEAR GOALS**

- Increase grant opportunities through the State of Iowa.
- Explore grant opportunities from other sources to support EITA services to members.



## **GOALS**

### **I. Support State funding for the Iowa Office of Tourism to the Midwest Regional average.**

**Objective(s)**

**A. Support passage of the Iowa Office of Tourism recommendation to the legislature for FY'12-13 funding.**

*Action Steps*

1. Communicate legislative information to the EITA membership.
2. Provide written requests for support to legislators and members when pertinent.
3. Continue support of Vision Iowa, Community Attraction Tourism (CAT), and RE-CAT funds for tourism development.
4. Promote additional need of marketing funds for the Iowa Tourism Office's usage.

**B. Assist state efforts to explore alternative funding sources.**

*Action Steps*

1. Maintain active involvement with the Travel Federation of Iowa (TFI).
2. Serve on committees as necessary to assist with research and development of a funding source.
3. Provide leadership to explore these options.

**II. Support tourism related legislative goals as established by the Tourism Federation of Iowa (TFI).**

**Objective(s)**

**A. Actively support the ongoing activities of TFI.**

*Action Steps*

1. Secure four EITA members to serve on the TFI board along with the EITA Executive Director.
2. Actively encourage EITA members to participate on TFI committees and leadership roles.
3. Work together with tourism lobbyist to ensure passage of tourism-friendly bills.
4. Increase grassroots involvement with tourism industry legislative issues.
5. Continue support of the Community Attraction and Tourism Development Fund, and Vision Iowa Fund.
6. Secure active District Leaders in all Eastern Iowa districts.
7. Financially support the TFI budget with \$5,000 in region funds.
8. Provide leadership candidates to serve on TFI in capacities that enhance the organization and have the best interest of the region and grass roots industry in mind.
9. Encourage participation within region to participation actively in TFI's priorities, issues, and events.

**B. Communicate TFI Legislative Priorities to EITA members.**

*Action Steps*

1. Include a TFI report at the General Membership meetings.
2. Strive to schedule one educational session each year that focuses on legislative issues.
3. Work with TFI to produce and distribute legislative handbook to all members.
4. E-mail TFI Capital News Reports to membership electronically.
5. Provide a link to the TFI website.

**FIVE YEAR GOALS**

- Research alternative funding sources for the Iowa Tourism Office.
- Groom additional candidates for leadership roles.



## GOALS

### I. Increase awareness of and visitation to Eastern Iowa.

#### Objective(s)

##### A. Distribute 25,000 Eastern Iowa Visitors Guides.

###### *Action Steps*

1. Monitor the Visitor Guide activity and distribution.
2. Continue to focus on an economical method of production.
3. Secure sufficient advertising in the 2012 Visitor Guide to fully cover the cost of production.
4. Utilize guides as follow-up to requests and distribution. Others will be distributed to travel media and tour planners.
5. Distribute to Iowa Welcome Centers, on a supply needed basis.
6. Solicit at least three competitive bids for printing and review printing options.
7. Establish a plan for distribution of Visitor Guides to include membership distribution.
8. Place ads to generate requests of Visitor Guides.
9. Host an on-line EITA Visitor Guide for traveler's needs and reference.
10. Forward leads to advertisers from the postcard insert.
11. Offer ad design creation and assistance for the 2012 EITA advertisers at a minimal or reduced fee.

##### B. Continue participation with the Iowa Group Travel Association (IGTA).

###### *Action Steps*

1. Attend the IGTA/CITR Iowa Bank Club Marketplace. Research participation to attending on and every other year basis.
2. Follow up on the leads distributed through IGTA.
3. On request, make IGTA leads available to members.
4. Promote the itinerary section of our website in our distribution of materials at the show and in our follow-up.
5. Provide a link to the IGTA website.

##### C. Contribute membership dues to the Iowa Destination Marketing Association (IDMA)

###### *Action Steps*

1. Attend their quarterly scheduled meetings
2. On request, supply an update the membership.
3. Follow up on leads distributed by IDMA.
4. Provide collaboration between the Eastern Iowa DMO's and their Association.

##### D. Attend the NTA Marketplace.

###### *Action Steps*

1. Attend and participate in the December NTA Marketplace.
2. Provide leads to membership.
3. Organize follow-up and promote itineraries.

**E. Market and enhance the EITA website.**

*Action Steps*

1. Update on a regular basis.
2. List web address in all ads and publications.
3. Enhance the site as a membership and marketing tool.
4. Drive additional traffic to the EITA web site.
5. Promote advertising banners and visitor guide ads to generate additional revenue for the EITA budget.
6. Offer additional advertising options on the website for 2 month segments.
7. Update the itinerary section of the EITA web site. Encourage partnerships and members to work together in providing tourists with region options.

**F. Utilize QR codes to drive traffic to the EITA website.**

*Action Steps*

4. Create additional QR codes for different venues.
5. Utilize a tracking mechanism to code the response from ad placements etc.

**G . Maintain active positive media relations.**

*Action Steps*

1. Serve as a resource and information referral for media inquiries about Eastern Iowa.
2. Utilize local travel writers and encourage to attend our General Membership Meetings. Coordinate efforts with the local communities to have them participate.
3. Serve and work with the Iowa Tourism Office as needed with media relations and connections.

**H. Participate in selected Iowa Office of Tourism co-op ads.**

*Action Steps*

1. Place an EITA ad in selected publications.
2. Encourage EITA members to participate in the advertising co-ops.

**I. Monitor changing group tour trends.**

*Action Steps*

1. Explore existence of group tour marketplaces, such as ABA and NTA. Evaluate and participate if budget allows after receiving input from EITA membership.
2. Review and update current itineraries on the website.

**II. Continue an effective means of internal public relations.**

**Objective(s)**

**A. Improve continuous communication with members and potential members.**

*Action Steps*

1. Conduct visits to current and potential members.
2. Offer additional membership information on the EITA website.
3. Continue to publish and distribute a quarterly newsletter for EITA members.
4. Update members electronically with region updates.

**III. Track effectiveness of EITA marketing programs.**

## Objective(s)

**A. Continue to track visitor requests and leads and record in the “Visitor Request Statistics Report”, comparing results to the previous year.**

### *Action Step*

1. Monitor & record all incoming inquiries.
2. Provide a spreadsheet to the EITA Executive Committee on visitor guide distribution.

## **FIVE YEAR GOALS**

- Continue to evaluate the potential of the website, driving additional traffic to the site by advertising placements and social marketing research.
- Increase circulation of the EITA Visitor’s Guide.
- Increase and encourage members to utilize the site.



# **Membership**

## **GOALS**

**I. Focus on member retention, while continuing to recruit new members in the Eastern Iowa Tourism Association.**

### Objectives

**A. Conduct a membership campaign for fiscal year 2012.**

#### *Action Steps*

1. Encourage members to recruit two new members in exchange for their own complimentary membership.
2. Reward members with a “free” meeting certificate when they recruit a new member.
3. Staff and committee will conduct personal and telephone new member recruitment calls.
4. Staff and committee will conduct calls to current members to encourage renewal.
5. Re-design the membership brochure into a flyer and alter the on-line version.
6. Make personal contact with new members.
7. Retain county partnerships within the region.
8. The EITA Staff, Executive Committee, and the Membership delegation will focus and encourage membership within the region, counties, and communities.

**B. Improve communication of EITA membership benefits to current and recruited members.**

#### *Action Steps*

1. Discuss programs, benefits and industry trends through the EITA newsletter, bi-monthly mailings and during reports at meetings.
2. Define the value of EITA investment through a brochure sent to current and prospective members during the membership campaign. Current members will receive a membership flyer with their invoice in June. Include with the brochure a letter listing accomplishments for the year. The staff will sign the letter and the Executive Committee will be listed.
3. The EITA staff will send a letter notifying county members of their upcoming invoice. This letter will include a list of EITA accomplishments for the year.

**C. Enhance the relationship with the Eastern Iowa 28 County Board of Supervisors.**

*Action Steps*

1. Continue to coordinate communication between the County Board of Supervisors and the County Appointed Director and Alternate.
2. Secure all County contributions from Eastern 28 Counties.
3. Retain county contributions and partnerships.
4. Monitor the need of hosting a Annual County Director and Alternate meeting in conjunction with a General Membership Meeting.

**D. Focus on retaining our current Membership**

*Action Step*

1. Utilize the recent research from the membership survey.
2. Maintain a pulse on our members needs.
3. Continue to schedule *Eastern Iowa road trips* to visit our communities and members.
4. Review and detail the membership survey results and forward to the Executive Committee for direction and execution.

**II. Unify the EITA Membership**

**Objectives**

**A. Increase and enhance membership participation.**

*Action Steps*

1. Encourage members to participate on committees.
2. Recognize new and current members at EITA meetings through the membership report, by general introductions.
3. Contact county supervisor offices as requested or through local representatives.
4. Conduct regular member visits throughout the fiscal year. (These will be scheduled in conjunction with other meetings when possible).
5. Recognize and thank renewed membership investments with a letter from the EITA office.
6. Recognize and thank new member investments with a new member packet and letter from the EITA office.
7. Organize membership roundtables and networking opportunities at a scheduled General Membership meeting.
8. Hold a new membership orientation prior to a General Membership Meeting, to encourage participation and familiarize them with current programs.
9. Encourage new members to align themselves with an industry peer.
10. Continue the current time schedule for the General Membership Meetings.

**B. Improve communication regarding what Eastern Iowa does, how programs are completed and how they benefit members.**

*Action Steps*

1. Distribute Strategic Action Plan annually based on analysis by staff and committees and feedback from members.
2. Distribute the Annual Report to the membership at the July Annual Meeting.

## **FIVE YEAR GOALS**

- Increase membership by 5%, by 2014. (275)
- Evaluate dues structure in accordance with services provided.
- Update and filter the prospect list.
- Encourage and explore partnerships with the Eastern Iowa CVB's to promote EITA memberships within their communities.