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.
**ADVOCACY/LEGISLATIVE**

Eastern Iowa Liaisons to the Travel Federation of Iowa Board:
Wes Ebrecro, Aaron McCreight, Keith Rahe, Rustin Lippincott and Carrie Koelker.

- Provided Leadership roles and served on various committees.
- Secured the 2018 Legislative Priorities and Supporting Issues.
- Co-sponsored the annual Iowa Tourism Conference and Tourism Awards in Sioux City, Iowa.
- Coordinated the Legislative Showcase in Des Moines by bringing together industry representatives with elected Iowa officials to deliver tourism information and explain the importance of Tourism to Iowa and the economy.
- Coordinated a statewide District Leader program with industry members.
- Held District Leader trainings for delegates.
- Coordinated an industry statewide survey to tabulate the legislative needs and priorities.
- Connected and communicated industry stakeholders.
- Published the TFI Fast Facts for Tourism statistics and awareness information of the elevated priorities.
- Met with elected officials to enhance and grow Iowa’s Tourism Industry.
- Continued to contract lobbyists and provide electronic TFI Legislative Updates and Capitol News to the EITA membership.
- Assisted specific needs and district leaders with talking points and contacts.
- Supported issues of the TFI 2018 Legislative Priorities.
- Attended monthly TFI Board Meetings and various committee meetings.
- Monitored and supported various issues impacting the industry.
- Attended Destination Capitol Hill in Washington D.C.
- Continued to raise awareness, embark programs and incorporate plans from the Iowa Tourism Sector Plan, a five year industry vision for tourism in Iowa.
- Continued to serve and offer input on of the Iowa Tourism Umbrella Organization committee.
- Surveyed the industry about merging the Iowa Tourism Conference and Legislative Committee and implemented a new version and plan for winter 2019 to replace the routine fall Tourism Conference.

**GRANTS/SCHOLARSHIPS**

- Updated the current scholarship grant application.
- The three Iowa Tourism Regions joined forces to provide statewide educational components.
- Recommended and encouraged industry leaders to serve on the statewide review grants review process and committee.
- Awarded Tourism Conference scholarships to regional members.

**COOPERATIVE PARTNERSHIPS & INDUSTRY RELATIONS**

The Eastern Iowa Tourism Association is funded on a successful and strong private and public partnership. Membership investments and involvement represents businesses, organizations, and individuals from every facet of the tourism industry. Membership investments and our Iowa Economic Development Authority’s Iowa Tourism contract are a critical piece to our unified voice.

- Worked and served on various statewide committees.
- Coordinated partnerships, conversations, and assisted in partnership funding to continue the County by County statewide Impact Study.
- Assisted and secured industry members with various technical assistance and support as needed.
- Served on the Iowa Destination Marketing Alliance Board, the Umbrella Organization steering committee, and the Travel Federation of Iowa Board.
- Attended Destination Capitol Hill in Washington DC to represent all region members with a statewide coalition.
- Secured membership in Iowa Destination Marketing Alliance and attended the bi-monthly meetings.
- Served on a statewide committee.
- Maintained membership to the Iowa Group Travel Association and partnered with IGTA to host the May General Membership Meeting.
- Attended various community events, press conferences, and industry events.

**EDUCATION**

Spiff Sifkka, Vice President

- Hosted educational programs in conjunction with General Membership Meetings. Regional attendance at each meeting ranged from 65-110 industry leaders.
  - Transform Your Volunteers Job Description from Instructional to Inspirational — Williamsburg
  - Picture This Making Videos with your own Photos and Making It All Happened: Productivity & Performance — Waterloo
  - Annual Town Hall Meeting & Travellowa.com — Camanche
  - MyCountyParks & GoodBlogs — Lansing
  - Iowa and It’s Significance with Dan Gable — Maquoketa

**MEMBERSHIP**

Laura Bandfield, VP of Membership

- Memberships were available to counties in the Eastern region, businesses/organizations, and others interested in tourism for Eastern Iowa.
- In 2018, EITA secured participation and contributions from 26 of the 28 Eastern Iowa counties. (Iowa and Van Buren withheld county contributions.)
- 249 members—including new processed memberships.
- Continued a membership campaign encouraging communities to communicate the benefits of Eastern Iowa Tourism.
- Updated the membership section on our website and added additional region business documents and links.
- Attended numerous member events and site visits.
- Offered technical assistance to various members, committees, partnerships, and communities.
- Secured and encouraged liaisons to serve on the Iowa Tourism Awards committee.
- Appointed delegates to serve on the Iowa Tourism Conference Site Selection committee.
  - Regional attendance at each meeting ranged from 65-120 industry leaders.
  - Hosted four bonus session opportunities for regional members.
  - Coordinated statewide activities with partners and other regional organizations.
Kim Manning, Vice President

- Printed the 2018 Eastern Iowa Visitor Guide for distribution in all Iowa Welcome Centers and mailed to ad placement and web site inquiries.
- Maintained the additional four pages to accommodate members and advertising.
- Purchased an ABD truck wrap to showcase Eastern Iowa.
- Partnered with over 60 tourism industry members in the 2018 Eastern Iowa Travel Guide and Region website. Ad sales totaled $38,500. The Guide is solely supported from advertiser sales.
- Parted with 2018 Eastern Iowa Travel Guide and Region website.
- Enhanced the newly launched website and membership portal with membership enhanced components.
- Advertisers received leads from a reader response card included in the Travel Guide.
- 20,800 Travel Guides were distributed and downloaded from the region website.
- An online guide with active advertiser links to the website for a flipbook online version.
- Maintained membership to the Iowa Group Travel Association and partnered with IGTA to host the May General Membership Meeting.
- Secured membership in Iowa Destination Marketing Alliance and attended the bi-monthly meetings.
- Assisted travelers and group tour planners with their itineraries.
- Kept website updated with current contact information.
- Greeted various groups and travels that attended conferences, luncheons, and member’s events.
- Handled media interviews and industry news.

Design On a Dime
Design consultants, freelance writers, and voice over consultants were hired on contract to fulfill the needs of industry members’ marketing campaigns. The three professional consultants held one on one consultations with their selected free-lance specialist in an environment coordinated by the association. Finalized artwork, branding, video, and voiceover specific needs and provided upon completion to fulfill their marketing specific needs.

- This was held March-April 2018 with consultations on three separate dates in Cedar Rapids, a central location within the region.
- The freelance writer Ruth Paarmann, graphic designer Deanna Roberts, and voiceover consultant Bob Bruce assisted with the development of the projects.
- 14 industry partners participated in this event and were delivered completed products for logo enhancement, brand messaging, website verbiage, social media interactions, brochures, website content, and videos.

Power of Travel Day
Region Committee Members: Julie Kronlage and Carrie Koelker.
A joint partnership between Iowa’s three tourism regions and the Iowa Office of Tourism. This will be held September 19, 2018 in Ames, Iowa.

- Started planning the upcoming event.
- Served on the committee to bid, select, and secure speakers for the event.
- Determined to continue with the one day education and networking opportunity. Power of Travel is designed to energize and appreciate the tourism industry for their partnership and involvement. The event will include breakout sessions on a variety of topics with a keynote address focused on sales, capturing mind-share, and problem solving.

Website Membership Component

- Enhanced their membership connection with routine membership blasts.
- Enhanced and continued to update the membership platform based website.
- Volunteers and paid professionals are able to access industry announcements, meeting materials, as well as association business.
- Continued to update the viable tool for the members and the industry of Eastern Iowa.
- A link to traveliowa.com to view calendar of events and Eastern Iowa’s endless opportunities for the traveler.

Iowa Tourism Leadership Institute
Committee Members: Ann Vogelbacher, Carrie Koelker, Allyson Walter, and Julie Stow

- Partnered with the Central Iowa Tourism Region to pool funding resources and enhance collaborative efforts.
- Held April 2018 at the Hotel Kirkwood in Cedar Rapids with 29 statewide tourism industry members participating. There were course avenues for first-year, second-year, and third year graduates.
- Planned curriculum consisted of core courses based on the year of attendance and electives. Courses included developing your leadership influence, team building & personality assessment, board & staff partnerships. High impact communications, leading change, collaboration & strategic alliances, and negotiation skills. Electives included working with volunteers, ask an attorney, facilitation skills, best practices & local case studies, grant writing, and effective meeting skills.