

Insider  
For April 1, 2009  
By Kim Burger

Last Wednesday the Waterloo and Cedar Falls Visitors Bureaus hosted a Spring Packaging Fair. The event met with such enthusiastic success that we plan to offer a similar networking opportunity next fall as well.

Representatives from approximately 300 Cedar Valley attractions, hotels and restaurants were invited to meet with one another to combine their offerings into compelling packages that offer special pricing or ease and convenience, or exclusive opportunity to access. Themed offerings were also encouraged to attract specific interest groups like families, women, outdoor adventurers, couples seeking romance, sports enthusiasts, etc. Packaging can generate several benefits including extended stays by enticing customers to visit additional attractions. Packaging can also bring visitors during the off-season, increase volume through joint marketing efforts, and draw attention to smaller attractions.

Over 50 hospitality representatives convened at the Five Sullivan Brothers Convention Center. Brief “appointments” were arranged so everyone in attendance was offered the opportunity to meet one-on-one with other attendees to explore partnering to create a package. We encouraged bundling an experience with a dining and overnight offering for each package. While many came ready with ideas to put into action, others plugged into the synergy of the room and will polish off their offers with additional follow-up. The finished packages are due to the Bureaus on April 15<sup>th</sup>. At that time, they will be offered to the traveling public through our usual routes of promotion including advertisements, on-site brochure distribution and through our web sites.

We are always looking for ways to bring our tourism partners together to brainstorm about new and interesting ways to present our communities’ offerings to visitors and Dawn Breakenridge and Carissa Skarin, from the Waterloo and Cedar Falls Visitors Bureaus respectively, pulled this event together in grand style. Keep an eye on our web site [www.cedarvalleytourism.org](http://www.cedarvalleytourism.org) in coming weeks as these exciting new packages are unveiled.