

Insider

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By Kim Burger

As I greet people at various meetings and events, I am often asked how business is going and if our work is cyclical. People ask if we have a down time, assuming business might slow down during the winter months. Walk-in traffic through the Visitor Center does tend to drop dramatically (making this an excellent time to train new volunteers), but I am happy to report that our visitor numbers hold fairly steady throughout the year.

Summer festivals and outdoor events always draw big crowds, but university-related events pick up during the school year helping to keep numbers level. The National Wrestling Coaches Duals is a great example. Of course business trips and shopping occur throughout the year as do visits to cultural attractions.

The work in our office never really slows down either, except perhaps during the Christmas Season. This time of year tends to be when we do a lot of showcasing and we have an exciting line up planned. We recently returned from exhibiting at the St. Louis RV Travel and Vacation Show. This was a first time for us, although we have worked the St. Charles Travel and Vacation Show in the past. We selected this show this year due to the fact that the Big Woods RV Park is scheduled to open this summer. We were pleased to find that approximately 10,000 people attended the show and many seemed genuinely interested in a trip up to Iowa. We'd like to thank Big Woods Campground, the Grout Museum, The Falls, Community Main Street and Ace Fogdall RV for donating items for the gift basket we used to entice people to give us their contact information with.

Next week we will travel to Des Moines to exhibit at the Iowa Bike Summit promoting our bicycle friendliness, trails, downtown and other attractions. I have been attending the Summit over the last couple of years, but this year we'll have an opportunity to showcase and to attend the Bike Clubs' Annual Pre-RAGBRAI meeting where suggestions for improvements and the announcement of this year's route will take place. This is precisely the audience we are seeking to expose our Cycle Cedar Falls promotion to, so we are excited for the opportunity.

In a few more weeks, we'll head back to Des Moines to showcase to state legislators as we do every February. Well over 100 representatives of the tourism industry set up displays promoting communities, events and attractions that can be found throughout the state and we remind the legislators that our industry actually *generates* revenue for the state. We understand this is an especially challenging year and look forward to meeting with our senators and representatives so we can personally thank them for their work and encourage their continued support.

This spring I'll be off to Columbus, Ohio on two different occasions to meet with group tour planners and then again to meet with sports events rights holders. Both audiences

usually have a high level of interest in what we have to offer here in the Cedar Valley and we are generally able to bring back some new groups and events.

With all of this promotion, we're hoping to greet lots of new folks in the Cedar Valley in coming months, so help us give them all a warm welcome!