

Insider  
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Cedar Falls Edition  
By Kim Burger

It's show time! This tends to be the time of year when a lot "showing" goes on. You can attend a show to shop for farm equipment at the Hawkeye Farm Show at the Dome on February 20-22, or get ideas about how to add on to or improve your home at the Eastern Iowa Home Improvement Show on February 7-10 at the Five Sullivan Brothers Convention Center, or maybe you'll sniff out some valuable furnishings or finery at the Antiques and Collectibles Show at the Dome March 14-16. Hopefully you didn't miss learning how to plan a wedding at Wedding Extravaganza recently held at the Sullivan Center or shopping for a boat at the Iowa Boat and Vacation Show at the Dome this past weekend. You'll have another similar chance, though if you attend the Eastern Iowa Sportshow coming up March 7-9 at the Dome.

The other side of all these shows is that of the exhibitor. We often times exhibit at these shows so visitors in town for the event can be presented with a visitor guide and map or with dining or accommodation referrals. We also seek out consumer and tradeshow opportunities outside of the area to promote the Cedar Valley for future visits.

The Cedar Rapids/Iowa City, Quad Cities, and Des Moines Sportshows present opportunities to showcase our outstanding trails and other outdoor recreation. We often times exhibit at golf and cycling shows in Minneapolis, LaCrosse and Chicago as well. The National Sports Commissions and Teams events allow us to meet with tournament owners to promote our facilities and community for consideration. Affordable Meetings and Iowa Meetings Association and Iowa and American Society of Association Executives shows bring meeting planners and facility owners or destination marketing organizations together.

The National Tour Association and Bank Club and American Bus Association Marketplaces and Going on Faith Shows target group travel. These shows match group travel leaders with destination marketing representatives who offer itineraries and trip planning assistance.

Next week members of the travel industry throughout the state of Iowa will exhibit at the Iowa State Fairgrounds so state legislators and their staff members can "tour the state in an evening" and learn about all the exciting tourism destinations our state offers and the impact travel expenditures have on our economy. Did you know that the average travel party consists of 2.5 people who spend an average of \$212.19 per day? In 2006 these expenditures amounted to \$225,180,000 in our county, and \$5.8 billion in our state. We've shared this message with our legislators for a number of years asking them to invest a little more in marketing our state as a destination and I am pleased to say they responded, making additional funding available last session. As a part of our exhibit, we plan to showcase the advertisements we have now been able to produce as a result of that

support and next year should be able to show them increased visitation and spending figures!

As you can see, there is a lot of “showing” going on in a variety of ways. Consumer and tradeshow are important tools we use to promote our community as a quality destination for visitors.