

Insider

For February 27, 2008

Cedar Falls, Waterloo and Waverly Editions

By Kim Burger

It's that time of year again, when cabin fever sets in and we begin to yearn for Spring which, in turn leads to preparing for a busy summer season. One of the first things on our list as we make our preparations is to celebrate Tourism Month in May. This celebration gives us a chance to honor special events, attractions, businesses and organizations who have helped to make the Cedar Valley a special place to visit and this year will be no exception. In fact, we have a special added feature to offer as a part of the celebration. Mr. Rob Bell will be in the Cedar Valley to deliver the third in a series of three outstanding Service Speaks presentations that have lead up to our celebration of Tourism Month, *and* he will serve as our keynote speaker during the 4th Annual Cedar Valley Tourism Awards Luncheon!

We know you're going to like him as a great many of you have already attended Service Speaks presentations at UNI that were delivered in January when Nancy Friedman gave us useful tips about providing great customer service. Holly Stiel, the second in a series, will travel to the Cedar Valley to teach us the finer points of providing good service presenting sessions at 9:30am and 3pm on the March 26th and again at 9:30am and 1:30pm on March 27th. All of these sessions will be at Maucker Union Ballroom and reservations can be made by calling 273-6899.

In addition to Mr. Bell's May customer seminars and keynote address, we'll announce our special awards honorees during a luncheon event that will take place on Thursday, May 8th from 11:30am until 1:30pm at the UNI Commons Ballroom. To make reservations, please give either bureau a phone call (233-8350 Waterloo, 268-4266 Cedar Falls).

We would also like to encourage you to nominate that person, place, event or organization that you feel stands out in the community. Making a nomination is fast and easy to do. Just visit call our office or visit our web sites (www.cedarfallstourism.org or www.waterloocvb.org) to download an application.

This year's award categories are as follows:

Event of the Year is a hallmark event or festival that has created a significant economic impact on the community, has attracted substantial out-of-town visitors, generated media profile, and/or has positively promoted the Cedar Valley as a tourist destination. This category has been celebrated for the last two years with previous recognitions going to the College Hill Arts Festival and the Waterloo Bowling Association.

Attraction of the Year is a local attraction that has substantially contributed to the local tourism industry by bringing in a significant number of visitors and enhanced the quality of life in our community. This category has been recognized at all of our celebrations and

winners include Lost Island Water Park, John Deere Tractor Assembly, and the Gallagher-Bluedorn Performing Arts Center.

Friend of Tourism Waterloo and Friend of Tourism Cedar Falls are a group or individual who has made outstanding contributions to the development of a vibrant and professional tourism industry. Previous recipients of the recognition include the Cedar Falls Envoys and Main Street Waterloo, the Cedar Falls Historical Society and the Waterloo Black Hawks, and Cedar Falls Tourism and Visitors Bureau Marketing Committee and volunteer Dorothy Sallis.

Business/Organization of the Year is an organization that offers a unique product or service that contributes to the local tourism industry. The organization excels in product and marketing innovativeness, quality or product experience, and supports higher quality of life and tourism-related goals. Recipients of this award include the Waterloo Jaycees, Ramada Hotel and Five Sullivan Brothers Convention Center, and Barmuda Corporation.

Hotel of the Year is a hotel with service that exhibits excellence, a positive attitude and attentive staff, an availability of outstanding facilities, ambience, innovation, and the ability to provide visitors with a memorable stay. This category was new last year and the Holiday Inn University Plaza was honored as its recipient.

Recipients of the Cedar Valley Tourism's Choice Awards include the UNI Dome, and University Museums for the A *T.rex* Named Sue Exhibit.

As you can see, we have some big shoes to fill, but we also have a vast array of high quality events, attractions and organization to celebrate, so send us your nominations!