

Insider  
For March 12, 2008  
By Kim Burger



We, at the Tourism Bureau, spend a lot of time and money recruiting people to visit our community and it's important to us that they be treated to a warm welcome and great customer service when they arrive. That's why we jumped at the chance to partner with the University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Valley Chamber of Commerce, Hawkeye Community College, and University Book and Supply to present the Service Speaks series. We were also extremely encouraged by the astounding reception you, the community, gave to the project by attending Nancy Friedman's sessions in January. Ms. Friedman, aka the Telephone Doctor explained "How to be an Island of Excellence in an Ocean of Mediocrity" during four free workshops offered on the UNI campus. Nearly 1,800 people attended the sessions, approximately half of whom are employed by the university and half from throughout the Cedar Valley community at large.

In a matter of weeks, we'll be bringing another nationally known speaker, Ms. Holly Stiel, to town to share lessons learned during her 16+ years of experience as a hotel concierge in San Francisco through her "Spirit of Service" sessions. Holly will explore the human side of customer service and enlist the act of role playing to deliver her message. We'll learn to accept what IS and to recognize people's real agendas. We'll also learn the "art" of service and how to gently say "no" when a "yes" is not acceptable. Ms. Stiel can be heard on Wednesday, March 26<sup>th</sup> at 9:30am and 3pm and again on Thursday, March 27<sup>th</sup> at 9:30am and 1:30pm in the Maucker Union Ballroom on the UNI campus.

These sessions promise to be enjoyable and constructive as we strive to polish our customer service skills – and better yet, they are free to attend! We do need to know you are coming, though, so please call 273-6899 to make your reservation. We're excited the university is making these sessions available and are hopeful they will inspire our community partners to consider the possibility of carving out a niche for ourselves in the area of great service. Wouldn't it be grand if the Cedar Valley made a name for itself as THE place where people are served with intelligence, professionalism and courtesy? These are the qualities that build long term and profitable relationships. I hope you'll plan to join us.