

Insider  
For April 29, 2009  
By Kim Burger

As we wrap up the month of April, which is National Volunteer Month, I have to acknowledge the work and dedication of the many volunteers who assist us. The Tourism Bureau exists to foster, market, service and promote our community as a quality destination for visitors and I am so pleased that well over 100 volunteers give generously of their time and talent to make this happen.

The tourism industry in our area is thriving, even during these challenging times. Our last quarterly hotel/motel tax revenues were up 10% over the same period last year. While no one can predict what lies ahead for our economy, I take great comfort in the fact that so many people care deeply enough about the potential of the Cedar Valley that they willingly and regularly devote a most precious commodity – time - to the success of our activities. Why, in the last year alone, a total of 3,700 volunteer hours were spent greeting visitors, stuffing mailings, and attending meetings and events to further our collective cause. The sheer volume of this assistance is astounding, but of even more significance is the talent offered by these engaged individuals. Our volunteer force is comprised of students, retirees and working professionals and I believe the diversity of their ideas is a large part of our success. Thank you students, Envoys, Marketing Committee members, Advisory Board members for everything you do. We are a public organization and we sincerely appreciate your contributions and pledge to continue to seek your input and implement your suggestions whenever possible.

Next Thursday, May 7th the Envoys will gather at the Visitor Center to be honored for their efforts, socialize with one another, and prepare for the summer season ahead. If you have been considering getting involved, this is a great time to come and meet everyone, enjoy some refreshments and observe our meeting.

The end of April also means that Cedar Valley Tourism Award nominations are due. The Cedar Falls and Waterloo Tourism Bureaus will hold our Fifth Annual Cedar Valley Tourism Awards on Wednesday, May 13<sup>th</sup> from 11:30am to 1:30pm at the Waterloo Center for the Arts. Tickets are \$20 each and tables of eight are available for \$150. Brent Matthias will provide a motivating message about customer service and honorees representing the Cedar Valley Attraction, Event, Business or Organization, Hotel and Special Friends of the Year will be announced. Last year's recipients include the Cedar Valley Trails, NWCA Duals, Galleria de Paco, Hampton Inn, Senator Bill Dotzler, Dennis Downs and the Cedar Falls Municipal Band. We invite you to attend our celebration and to provide nominations for these awards.

Reservations can be made by calling either office at 268-4266 or 233-8350. Nomination forms can also be obtained at either office or downloaded from the What's Hot section of our web site at [www.CedarFallsTourism.org](http://www.CedarFallsTourism.org).