

Insider
For July 1, 2009
By Kim Burger

The world's a changin' and we're doing our best to keep up with it! New modes of communication seem to crop up daily and some have completely changed the way we do business. While we continue to print visitor guides, maps, and other brochures, publish web sites and newsletters, and send and receive emails by the hundreds each day, we are also experimenting with LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter.

After learning about these new forms of communication at our State Tourism Conference last October, we began to experiment. It seemed to be an easy and economical way to reach a whole new audience and introduce them to all that great things there are to see and do in the area. We now have around 350 fans on our Facebook and just under 250 people follow our tweets on Twitter. Is this a passing fad? I tend to think not. While the face of social networking is sure to change, I suspect our options for communication will continue to grow. We are currently using these medium to let people know about special events and invite you to follow us, too. All you need to do is log onto www.twitter.com/CedarFalls or www.facebook.com/CedarFallsIowa and join.

Another great new mode of communication is You Tube. If a picture is worth a thousand words, a video's got to worth at least ten thousand...maybe more! I know I find myself logging on for demonstrations regarding household repairs, how to crochet or plant my potatoes, and more. We are now using it to serve up videos promoting the community as well. You can find videos about Cedar Falls, UNI, activities of our Bicycle Friendly Community Task Force and more. We've also posted the commercial we and the Waterloo Convention and Bureau had created to run during Panther Sports Talk programs. Check us out at <http://youtube.com/user/visitcf>.

Yes, the world's a changing, but some things also stay the same. While our visitor guide is accessible 24/7/365 on the internet, potential visitors are still interested in the printed version, as evidenced by the 4,000 visitor packets we mailed out over the past two months as a result of advertisements we ran in the Ladies Home Journal, Better Homes and Gardens, Iowa Outdoors, the Iowan, Family Circle, AAA Home and Away and others. The official Cedar Valley Visitor Guide is a collaborative project we do with the Waterloo Convention and Visitors Bureau and Courier Communications. The Bureaus are currently updating editorial content for the 2010 guide and Courier sales staff members are preparing to call on area businesses to renew their ads. With an 85,000 total print quantity and the benefit of both offices working to get these guides into the hands of visitors throughout the entire year, an ad is money well spent. We hope you'll consider renewing when your sales rep contacts you.