

Insider

For August 26, 2009

By Kim Burger

School's in session and I'd like to welcome back our university students! The stores and streets are bustling with activity as students equip their dorms and apartments and it's great to see full parking lots on campus again!

As I observe this additional traffic I am reminded of an exciting new event the Cedar Falls Raceway will be hosting on September 4th and 5th, the Pinks "Arm Drop Live" Drag Race! This segue way referencing the students is NOT to suggest that there is any race-car-like driving on the streets – really – it's the additional activity I am noticing! In fact, Scott Gardner, owner; and Dan Driscoll, manager; of the track expect to host 400 teams and 10,000 spectators to the event. It will draw a lot of national media attention as well – especially when you consider excitement Rich Christensen brings to these races. Millions of fans tune in regularly to the Speed channel to watch him rev up the drivers and the crowds. It promises to be a highly charged and entertaining weekend in the Cedar Valley!

Events of the stature rarely happen in markets of our size, but they are coming to the Cedar Valley thanks to the expertise, experience and energy Scott and Dan have in running quality racing events. They have operated Cedar Falls Raceway since 2007 and also own and operate the Cordova Dragway Park in Cordova, Illinois. At Cedar Falls Raceway, they host 50 races per year with a variety of exciting events like the Night of Fire, National Hot Rod Association's National Open, and Harleys and Hot Rods, all recently held at the track.

National events of this stature also require money and I am very pleased to report that a generous grant of \$10,000 from the Cedar Valley Sports and Entertainment Commission helped make it possible for this exciting event to come to our area. This is exactly the kind of activity the Commission was created for. The expected teams and spectators will surely fill area hotels, restaurants and retail shops; and the national media coverage is priceless.

The Sports Commission board is led by Dawn Breakenridge, Executive Director and Mark Gallagher, President and *Sports Manager for Waterloo Leisure Services*; and its members include Brock Goos, *Cedar Falls Recreation Division*; Denny Boaz, *Irv Warren Golf Course*; George Scully, *University of Northern Iowa*; Kevin Evans, *Oakridge Realtors*; Jon Olson, *Hellman Design*; Ron Steele, *KWWL*; Shawna Rowe, *Waterloo Black Hawks*; Steve Husome, *United Beverage*; Darren Corson, *The Other Place*; Jim Langel, *Wartburg College*; Billy Buckridge, *College Square Mall*; Drew Conrad, *University of Northern Iowa*; John DeLorbe, *Black Hawk Tennis Club*; Jackie Lee, *Isle Casino Hotel Waterloo*; Tiffany Kudron, *Waverly Area Development Group*; Aaron Buzza, *Waterloo Convention and Visitors Bureau* and myself. Our mission is to attract, create and support sports and entertainment events that will have a positive impact

on the economy and quality of life of the entire Cedar Valley Area and to position the Cedar Valley as a premier destination for these events.

Other events the commission has recently supported include the National Wrestling Coaches Association's Cliff Keen National Duals, NCAA Division III Women's Golf National Tournament, USA Wrestling Kids/Cadet National Tournament, Knight of Columbus National Softball Tournament, ASICS USA Wrestling Folkstyle National Championships, NCAA Division III Cross Country Championship, American Youth Basketball TOUR, USHL All-Star Game, USA Wrestling Preseason Nationals, to name a few. In looking back at 2008, we estimate the events the Commission has supported have brought \$6.5 million to the Cedar Valley.

I'd like to thank the volunteers who serve this organization and the sponsors who help make it possible for us to offer grants to bring quality sporting and entertainment to the Cedar Valley. I'd also like to encourage you to get out to Cedar Falls Raceway September 4th and 5th to take in the excitement of the races, enjoy the live music on Saturday, and become a new drag racing fan! Admission is \$15 per day for adults and additional details can be found at www.cedarfallsraceway.com.