

Annual Report

Cedar Falls Tourism & Visitors Bureau

Fiscal Year 2021



CEDAR FALLS TOURISM

FISCAL YEAR 2021 | Annual Report

MISSION STATEMENT

To foster, promote, market and service our community as a quality destination.

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TOURISM DOLLARS...

2019 Domestic Travel-Generated Tax Revenue in Iowa

- Federal = \$508.6 Million
- State = \$540.0 Million
- Local = \$133.8 Million

2019 Domestic Travel Impact in Iowa - Top 5 Counties Local Tax Receipts (\$ Millions)

- Polk = \$36.7
- Linn = \$13.7
- Scott = \$11.1
- Johnson = \$7.1
- Black Hawk = \$5.4

Black Hawk County local tax receipts increased 3.2% from 2018-2019.

Source: U.S. Travel Association, August 2020



CEDAR FALLS

Tourism & Visitors Bureau
6510 Hudson Road | Cedar Falls, IA 50613
319.268.4266 | cedarfallstourism.org



Cedar Falls We Know How To Weekend!

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As the saying goes, “May you live in interesting times.” This is an understatement of the history we are making. I often wonder how it will be recorded and what we will learn from it. We, like everyone else, experienced numerous challenges and negative impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic. Our strength as a leisure destination in a relatively small community rich with trails and other outdoor recreation helped prop us up enough to weather the storm a bit more successfully than other destinations.

Hotel/motel tax revenues dipped to \$754,251 which is 12% below the five-year average. I am proud to say that even in the midst of the pandemic, we focused our attention toward the future and followed through on our plans to add a full time sales and marketing coordinator to our team. We found a good one in Adam Bolander who joined us in August and has diligently worked to learn the industry, cultivate relationships, and develop the tools necessary to promote Cedar Falls as a Midwest meetings hub. Read more about our accomplishments in this area on page 8.

The rest of the staff spent the year preparing for our next level as well. Bonita Cunningham cultivated closer relationships with partner/stakeholders and perfected our new on-line calendar of events. Becky Wagner developed several new group itineraries including Barn Quilt and Historic Route 20 Tours. Linda Maughan continued to entice visitors by creating interesting and inspirational content through advertisements and a number of social media platforms. Deb Lewis worked with INRCOG to improve the route of the American Discovery Trail and to promote the newer Great American Rail Trail, both of which traverse through Cedar Falls.

This will be my last annual report, as I am retiring after a 24-year career at the Cedar Falls Tourism & Visitors Bureau. It has been an honor and a privilege to help develop and promote this community as a quality destination. I am grateful for the opportunity and anxious to observe as new leadership takes the reigns and navigates us to the next level we are poised to claim. We look forward to more meetings over the next few years following the investments made by owners of Bien VenU Event Center and Cedar Falls Convention & Event Center. The River Place Plaza is complete and offering a full range of events, the Lost Island Adventure Park is set to open next year, and fundraising is currently underway for Cedar River improvements that include a white water course in the downtown area. Hold on to your hats because we're ready to soar!



Cedar Falls is on a number of national routes including Historic Route 20, the Great American Rail-Trail and the American Discovery Trail

New Cedar Falls Beer Trail includes 8 local breweries and taprooms

Kim Manning
Kim Manning, Manager

FISCAL YEAR 2021 MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS



Meetings

1. *Arranged for cooperative advertising in meetings publications with the Hilton Garden Inn and Holiday Inn.*
2. *Updated Meeting Planner Guide and made significant design improvements for meeting planners on CedarFallsTourism.org.*
3. *Established a corporate LinkedIn account for the Bureau.*
4. *Created a "When You're Ready, We're Ready" video campaign illustrating COVID accommodations..*
5. *Produced a virtual familiarization tour.*



Sports

1. *Provided \$22,500 in assistance to Cedar Valley Sports Commission*
2. *Awarded grant to Iron Strengthens Iron for two new wrestling camps that brought more than 2,000 visitors for three days.*
3. *Won the bid to host 7-on-7 football in the UNI-Dome and The Cedar Valley Sportsplex. Proposals and services were coordinated by Cedar Valley Sports Commission and Cedar Falls Tourism & Visitors Bureau.*



Leisure

1. *Began using the Notify Me profile to send out weekly messages about what's coming up this weekend via CedarFalls.com and the City of Cedar Falls app.*
2. *Developed promotional brochure for North Cedar Neighborhood Association.*
3. *Launched "Find Your Happiness" video campaign, reaching over 6,700 Facebook users.*
4. *Helped create new Lime Light organization to elevate the arts in the Cedar Valley.*



Coordination and Collaboration

1. *Coordinated story ideas and contacts for week-long Our Town feature on KCRG-TV in June.*
2. *Nominated Three Pines Farm for Iowa Outstanding Attraction and Black Hawk County Conservation for Iowa Outstanding Event for their Holiday Light Show at Hickory Hills. Both won the awards..*



Asset Development

1. *Created and implemented the Cedar Falls Beer Trail.*
2. *Coordinated a Cedar Valley Tour of Lights route and promoted it through several interviews and social media.*
3. *Worked with INRCOG to realign the American Discovery Trail to match the Great American Rail Trail for safety.*



Group Tours

1. *Participated in Iowa Group Travel Association virtual Familiarization (FAM) tour and trade show.*



Organization and Promotion of Events

1. *Continued to provide assistance to Sturgis Falls Celebration by serving on the board and coordinating social media, promotions and KidsWay Activities.*
2. *Continued to provide assistance to Cedar Basin Music Festival by serving on the board and helping recruit volunteers.*

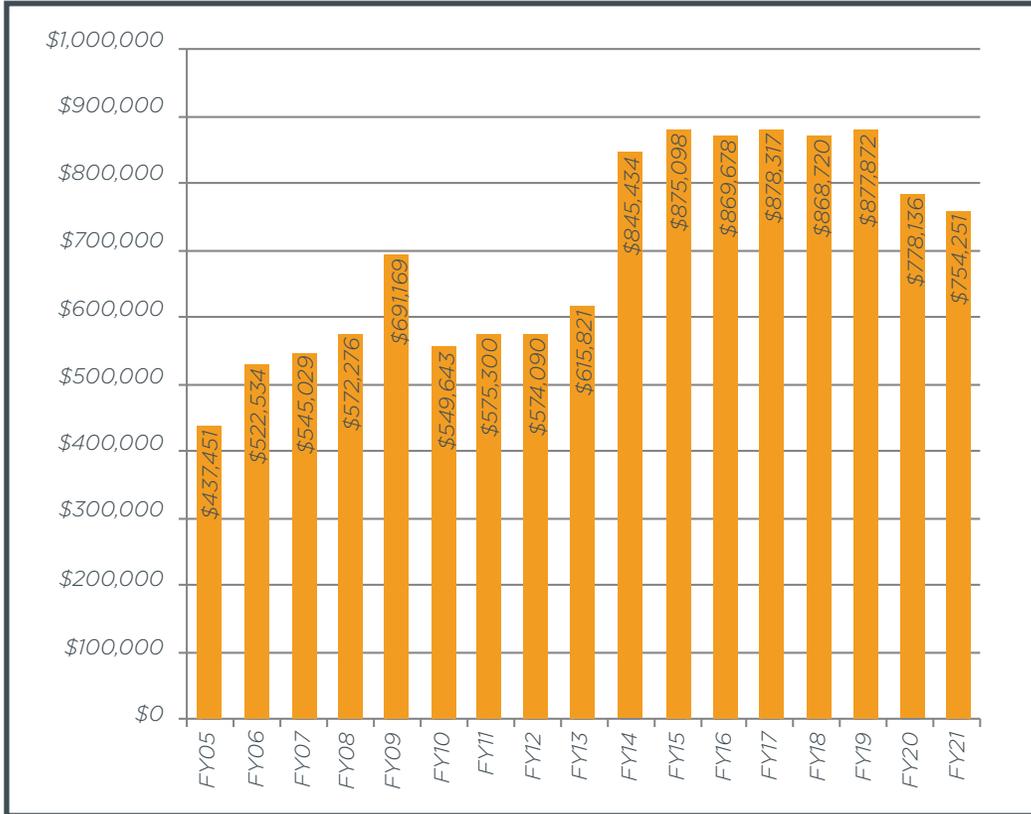


Increased Community Support

1. *Continued producing weekly Hospitality Highlights newsletter (561 subscribers), monthly Weekender newsletter (313 subscribers) and maintained robust social media presence on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.*
2. *Pivoted messaging during COVID-19 to promote local restaurants and other businesses to help keep them open.*

HOTEL/MOTEL TAX COLLECTIONS

Hotel/motel tax revenue has generally increased each year – averaging 6% – except for spikes caused by the 2008 flood and the 2013 opening of the Hilton Garden Inn, and the dramatic downturn in 2020 caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.



Notable Events

- FY99** Country Inn & Suites opens
- FY02** AmericInn opens
- FY06** Wingate opens
- FY08** Comfort Suites opens
- FY09** Flood of 2008 causes disruption
- FY09** Super opens
- FY10** Suburban opens
- FY12** University Inn closes
- FY13** Hilton Garden Inn opens
- FY20** Hampton Inn opens
- FY20** Holiday Inn & Suites opens
- FY20** COVID-19 causes disruption effects 4th quarter deposit; 12 permits in Black Hawk County deferred payment until next quarter.
- FY21** COVID-19 continues to cause disruptions.

PROGRAMMING EXPENDITURES

Advertising Placement Expenditures - scaled back due to COVID-19

Publication/Event	Circulation	Cost	2020						2021						
			Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	
LEISURE ADS															
AAA Living - IA Display Ad	2.1m	\$265													Aug
Amperage Digital Ads & Creative		\$5,690													
Bikelowa.com	70k+	\$1,000													
CV365*	90k+	\$7,000													
Eastern Iowa Tourism Assoc. Travel Guide**	20,000	\$500	January 1, 2020-December 31, 2021*												
Facebook + other Social		\$158													
Iowa Co-op Travel Guide	60,000	\$2,703			September 2020-February 2021						March 2021-August 2021				
Iowa Co-op - Travellowa.com Leads*	1.5m	\$750													
Iowa Public Television		\$1,875												May-August	
UNI Alumni Association	68+k	\$3,000													
ZLR - Development & Digital Campaign		\$35,000													
SPORTS ADS															
None															
GROUP ADS															
Travel Iowa Marketplace		\$75													
MEETING ADS															
ISAE Directory***		\$464													
PUBLIC RELATIONS ADS															
None															

Teal indicates FY20; Orange indicates FY21

*Indicates joint project with Experience Waterloo - 50/50 split

**Indicates co-op with Community Main Street and Cedar Falls Historical Society

***Indicates co-op with Hilton and Holiday Inn & Suites

PROGRAMMING EXPENDITURES (CONTINUED)

Membership and Subscription Expenditures - scaled back due to COVID-19

Organization	Cost
GROUP MEMBERSHIPS	
<i>Iowa Group Travel Association January -June 2021</i>	\$125
LEISURE MEMBERSHIPS	
<i>Eastern Iowa Tourism Association</i>	\$165
<i>Iowa Bicycle Coalition</i>	\$35
<i>Iowa National Heritage Foundation</i>	\$25
MEETINGS MEMBERSHIPS	
<i>Iowa Society of Association Executives</i>	\$130
PUBLIC RELATIONS MEMBERSHIPS	
<i>Cedar Valley Non-Profit Association</i>	\$200
<i>Greater Cedar Valley Alliance & Chamber Ambassador</i>	\$0
<i>Iowa Destination Marketing Alliance (IDMA)</i>	\$2,500
<i>Volunteer Center of the Cedar Valley</i>	N/C
SPORTS MEMBERSHIPS	
<i>Team Iowa - Paid through our investment in the Cedar Valley Sports Commission</i>	\$0

Travel Expenditures - limited due to COVID-19

Organization	Cost
LEISURE TRAVEL	
<i>Iowa Bike Expo - Virtual</i>	\$100
<i>Iowa National Heritage Foundation - Virtual</i>	\$10
MEETINGS TRAVEL	
<i>Iowa Society of Association Executives Quarterly Meeting x1</i>	\$40
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	
<i>Eastern Iowa Tourism Association Meetings x 2</i>	\$63
<i>Iowa Arts Summit</i>	\$299
<i>Iowa Tourism Conference x3 staff members attended</i>	\$890
<i>Virtual Marketing Outlook</i>	\$299

GRANTS FY21

Marketing & Tourism Development Grants

Organization	Amount Awarded	Purpose
<i>Cedar Basin Music Fest 2021</i>	\$1,000	<i>Promotion</i>
<i>Cedar Valley Sports Commission</i>	\$22,500	<i>Sponsorship</i>
<i>Graphic Edge Bowl</i>	\$2,500	<i>Facility Expenses</i>
<i>Iowa Realtors Summer Meeting 2021</i>	\$1,500	<i>Facility Expenses</i>
<i>ISI Wrestling Camps</i>	\$10,000	<i>Promotion, Equipment Rental, Transportation</i>
<i>Old Time Power Show 2021</i>	\$1,000	<i>Promotion</i>
<i>Pink Ribbon 2021</i>	\$250	<i>Promotion</i>
<i>Playmaker 7v7 Back to Ballin Football</i>	\$10,000	<i>Facility Expenses</i>
<i>Sturgis Falls Celebration 2021</i>	\$1,000	<i>Promotion</i>
<i>Suffragist, The</i>	\$1,000	<i>Promotion</i>
Total Awarded	\$50,750	

Community Betterment Grants*

Organization	Amount Awarded	Purpose
<i>Cedar Falls Community Theatre</i>	\$1,000	<i>Meeting room enhancements</i>
<i>Cedar Falls Historical Society</i>	\$900	<i>Victorian Home Sign</i>
<i>College Hill Partnership</i>	\$600	<i>Banners to promote Farmer's Market</i>
<i>Hearst Center for the Arts</i>	\$1,000	<i>Hearst to You Outreach Hearst in Your Neighborhood</i>
<i>UNI Gallagher Bluedorn Performing Arts Center</i>	\$5,184	<i>Sound equipment for Showmobile</i>
<i>Veterans of Foreign Wars</i>	\$5,000	<i>Gold Star families monument</i>
<i>Waterloo Cedar Falls Symphony</i>	\$2,000	<i>Education for Cedar Valley youth and travel</i>
Total Awarded	\$15,684	

*Community Betterment Grants are awarded in FY21 for the FY22 year.

**Playmaker 7v7
Back to Ballin Football
at UNI-Dome**



**Iron Sharpens Wrestling
at Bien VenU
(ISI Wrestling
Camps Grant)**



FY21 Event Sales Efforts and Results



Newly Developed Sales Resources

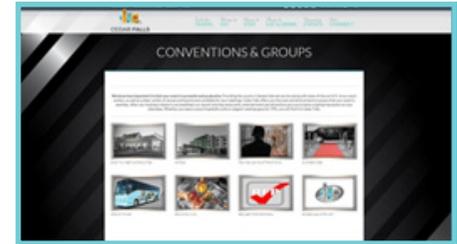
The all new Meeting Planner Guide has been redesigned using large photos and strategic text so that every page sells itself. Filled with capacity charts, floor diagrams and room measurements it has been tailored specifically with the event planner in mind.



In March of 2021 we released the Cedar Falls Virtual Tour showcasing the city's stunning event centers and highlighting our finest amenities. The video was sent out to over 300 event planners giving them the opportunity to visit Cedar Falls "virtually" in the midst of the pandemic.



A one-stop-shop for event planners! www.cedarfallstourism.org/weknowhowto-meet now offers a revamped experience from beginning to end. The user-friendly landing page gives event planners the opportunity to view spaces, explore amenities, submit an RFP all in one, easy to navigate location.



PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

Served on the following boards and committees:

- Cedar Basin Music Festival
- Cedar Falls Community Main Street
- Cedar Trails Partnership
- Cedar Valley Non-Profit Alliance
- Cedar Valley Sports Commission
- College Hill Arts Festival
- Eastern Iowa Tourism Association Board
- Experience Waterloo
- Grow Cedar Valley Ambassadors
- Grow Cedar Valley Governmental Relations
- Grow Cedar Valley Affiliates
- Iowa Department of Transportation Tourist Directional Signage Committee
- Iowa Destination Marketing Alliance
- Iowa Group Travel Association
- Iowa Travel Industry Professionals
- Pedal Fest Planning
- Sturgis Falls Celebration

VISITOR CENTER SERVICES

SERVICE PROVIDED	FY18	FY19	FY20*	FY21**
Visitor Center Traffic (Door Counter)	13,976	11,797	6,714	4,514
Welcome Bags	1,431	1,111	1,163	296
Visitor Packets Mailed (Individual, Bulk Ad Mailing & Relocation Packets)	9,015	9,640	8,648	12,606
Visitor Center Meetings & Rentals	88	76	41	7
Host Motor Coach	8	8	6	0
Web Site Visits	93,247	98,621	93,267	91,414

* COVID-19 March 2020 through June 2020

**COVID-19 July 2020 through May 2021

2021 Iowa Tourism Awards
 Outstanding Attraction - Three Pines Farm
 Outstanding Event - Hickory Hills Holiday Light Show



USA Gymnastics at Bien VenU



Dann Schultz Memorial Snow Disc Golf Tournament at Tourist Park



Cedar Falls Beer Trail Kickoff event

WHO IS INVOLVED?

Bureau Staff

Kim Manning, *Manager*
Adam Bolander
Bonita Cunningham
Deb Lewis
Linda Maughan
Becky Wagner

Advisory Board

Leslie Prideaux (Chair), *University of Northern IA Alumni Assoc.*
Kim Bear, *Community Main Street*
Mary Carlson, *Volunteer*
Brooke Croshier-Sidebotham, *University of Northern IA*
Amy Dutton, *UNI Small Business Development*
Annie Gougler, *Humble Travel Service*
Tavis Hall, *Experience Waterloo*
Ashley Johnson, *Cedar Valley Sports Commission*
Brent Johnson, *BikeTech*
Doug Johnson, *UNI Book Store*
Jim Schaefer, *Grow Cedar Valley*
Drew Stensland, *Lead for America*
Stephanie Sheetz, *Community Develop. City of Cedar Falls*
Andy Woodrick, *Hilton Garden Inn*

***Meet at 4 pm the third Wednesday of each month*

Marketing Committee

Luann Alemao, *Luann Alemao & Associates*
Blake Argotsinger, *Gallagher-Bluedom Performing Arts Center*
Rosemary Beach, *Volunteer*
Carrie Eilderts, *Cedar Falls Historical Society*
Kirsten Jergsen, *Western Home Communities*
Jay Koweil, *KWWL Television*
Maria Murphy, *Western Home Communities*
Gayle Pohl, *University of Northern Iowa*
Sandy Thomas, *Open Door Hospitality*
Andy Woodrick, *Hilton Garden Inn*

***Meet at 12:30 pm the second Thursday of each month*



Tourism Staff - Linda, Adam, Becky, Kim, Deb, Bonita

ENVOYS

We are grateful for the approximately 75 volunteers that are on our contact list. Thank you to the following Envoys for their assistance during fiscal year 2021. Our volunteers help make many of our accomplishments possible.

ENVOYS

Steve Adams
Komivi Amekedzi
Lynn Barnes
Bob Beach
Rosemary Beach
Dennis Bergeson
Mary Bozik
Dick Brammer
Carol Brown

Bertha Caballero
Mike Caballero
Phyllis Carter
Dorothy Clausen
Rich Congdon
Rita Congdon
Larry Duchenwald
Richard Eades
Sue Eastman
Marcella Ericson

Sharon Fackler
Donna Falk
John Falk
Bobbette Fortney
Judith Harrington
Ron Heth
Bob Hewlitt
Doris Hewlitt
Patrick Igou
Jane Jackson

Lyle Krueger
Doris Lang
John Lang
Bob Manning
Bev Michael
Alvira Morris
Sid Morris
Troy Olson
Ginny Poppen
Cathy Reindl

Jim Reindl
Dori Ressler
Larry Ressler
Carol Schaffner
Mary Smith
Gene Theis
Joy Thiel
Mike Tompkins
Ron Van Der Meide
Libby Vanderwall

Rick Vanderwall
Bob VanGorp
Wendy VanGorp
Lee VerMum
Kurt Wiethorn
Lois Wishmeyer

Total Envoy Hours

212

HOSPITALITY SERVICES

In FY21, due to COVID-19, the decision was made to no longer have the Visitor Center open on the weekends. Volunteers who are referred to as “Envoys” provided information to guests or assisted event organizers at the following events:

- Hawkeye Farm Show
- Iowa High School Football Playoffs
- Iowa State High School Bowling
- Playmaker 7v7 Back to Ballin Football
- Sturgis Falls Children’s Parade
- USA Folkstyle Nationals Wrestling

The bureau also maintains several information centers around town and quarterly distribution:

- All Cedar Falls Hotels
- Behrens-Rapp Information Station
- Big Woods Campground
- Black Hawk Conservation Office
- Cedar Falls Historical Society
- Cedar Falls Library
- Cedar Falls Recreation Center
- Cedar Falls City Hall
- Community Main Street Office
- Cup of Joe
- Gallagher-Bluedorn Performing Arts Center
- Grow Cedar Valley
- Hansen’s Dairy
- Hartman Reserve Nature Center
- Hearst Center for the Arts
- Iowa State Trooper’s Office
- Oster Regent Theatre
- UNI Sports & Event Complex
- University Book & Supply
- Waterloo-Cedar Falls Symphony Office
- Western Home Communities

PRINTING

Brochures

Brochure	Quantity	Cost
2020 Cedar Falls Waterloo Visitor Guide-continued to use in 2021	60,000	\$0
2021 Cedar Falls Waterloo Visitor Guide - Gatefold Supplement Mailer*	10,000	\$880
Cedar Valley Metro Map Pads	200	\$893
Cedar Valley Trail Maps** (printed and paid in FY20)	20,000	\$3,127
Other Misc. In-house publications***	5,220	\$470

*2021 Cedar Falls Waterloo Visitor Guide Gatefold

**Trail Map expenses were split with 15 partners - Cedar Falls Tourism & Visitors Bureau, Experience Waterloo, Cedar Trails Partnership, Black Hawk County Conservation, Cooks Outdoors, Crawdaddy’s, Scheels All Sports, Andy’s Bike Shop, Bike Tech, Hall Bicycle Company, The Runners Flat, Cedar Valley Bicycle Collective, Cedar Valley Cyclists, Cedar Valley Association for Soft Trails, Waterloo Bicycle Works

***Brochures and fliers printed at Visitor Center include Annual Report, Black Hawk Co. Barn Quilt Tour, Beer Trail Passport, Cedar Falls City Map, Events & Facility Guide, Fun Things, Group Tour Itineraries, Group Profile Sheet, Special Experiences for Groups, Pedal Fest, Specialty Shops, Visitor Guide 1/2 sheet, UNI Overseas Recruitment Fair, Volunteer Recruitment Brochure, Volunteers on Tap, Walking Tour