

# Annual Report

Cedar Falls Tourism & Visitors Bureau

Fiscal Year 2022



# CEDAR FALLS TOURISM

FISCAL YEAR 2022 | Annual Report

## MISSION STATEMENT

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

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|   |          |  |           |
|---|----------|--|-----------|
| <i>Executive Summary.....</i>           | <i>2</i> | <i>Grants.....</i>                             | <i>7</i>  |
| <i>Major Accomplishments.....</i>       | <i>3</i> | <i>Hospitality &amp; Visitor Services.....</i> | <i>8</i>  |
| <i>Hotel/Motel Tax Collections.....</i> | <i>4</i> | <i>Tourism Dollars.....</i>                    | <i>9</i>  |
| <i>Programming Expenditures.....</i>    | <i>5</i> | <i>Visitor Profile.....</i>                    | <i>10</i> |
| <i>Event Sales &amp; Marketing.....</i> | <i>6</i> | <i>Who is Involved.....</i>                    | <i>11</i> |

### 2021 Cedar Falls Torch Awards



Attraction/Event of the Year Iowa 7v7 Football  
Back to Ballin



Partner of the Year  
River Place Plaza



Restaurant/Nightlife of the Year  
George's Local



Volunteer of the Year  
Mike Cunningham



# CEDAR FALLS

Tourism & Visitors Bureau  
6510 Hudson Road | Cedar Falls, IA 50613  
319.268.4266 | [cedarfallstourism.org](http://cedarfallstourism.org)



# Cedar Falls *We Know How To Weekend!*

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*FY22 was a year filled with many changes. The team at the Cedar Falls Tourism & Visitors Bureau has embraced new leadership, while working hard to bring new conventions, meetings and events to the area, and continuing to attract groups and leisure visitors.*

*As the tourism industry is rebounding, we had a stellar year for hotel/motel tax income, with Cedar Falls hitting the \$1 MILLION mark for the very first time! To be exact the figure was over \$1.2 million, with the Tourism Bureau receiving half of these dollars to continue our work. Several factors led to this including realizing the impact of two new hotels and two new event centers that opened in late 2019, increased daily hotel rates, and a general uptick in visitors to our area as conferences and events return to normal.*

*We are cautiously optimistic that the hotel/motel income will stay steady, if not see an average amount of growth over the next year. We were lucky to have a healthy reserve fund available over the past couple of years to continue steady marketing efforts. We're looking forward to another great year in FY23!*

*Jennifer Pickar*

Jennifer Pickar  
Tourism & Cultural Programs Manager



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



*Cedar Falls Beer Trail includes 8 local breweries and taprooms*



# FISCAL YEAR 2022 MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS



## **Meetings**

1. *Launched successful Bring Your Meeting Home local outreach campaign.*
2. *Produced second meeting planner video tour of Cedar Falls.*
3. *Booked 34 new conventions, meetings and events that brought overnight visitors, 25 of these were our direct leads.*
4. *Hosted seven site visits, bringing meeting and event planners to Cedar Falls and local venues.*



## **Sports**

1. *Provided \$22,500 in assistance to Cedar Valley Sports Commission.*
2. *Assisted with second annual 7v7 Iowa Football Tournament.*
3. *Provided significant financial support to IHSA State Football Semi-Finals and Finals.*



## **Leisure**

1. *Collaborated with Experience Waterloo on the 2022 Visitor Guide, brought sales and design in house, netting \$30,000+ in advertising income. Printed 30,000 guides.*
2. *Hosted travel writers x3.*
3. *Mailed information to 690 group tour planners and hosted two group tours.*
4. *Annual digital media campaign reached 8.9 million potential visitors.*
5. *Received \$10,000 Iowa Tourism grant to market outdoor recreation to MN and WI visitors.*
6. *Promoted Cedar Falls with a booth at the Iowa Bike Expo in Des Moines and Canoeacopia in Madison, WI.*



## **Tourism Collaboration**

1. *Helped improve statewide tourism advocacy and communication efforts by serving on iTIP board and education committee.*



## **Asset Development**

1. *Revamped the Cedar Falls Beer Trail for 2022.*
2. *Completed a new Prairie Pathways Sign featuring the American Discovery Trail and the Great American-Rail Trail in George Wyth State Park.*
3. *Worked with INRCOG to realign the American Discovery Trail to match the Great American Rail Trail for safety.*

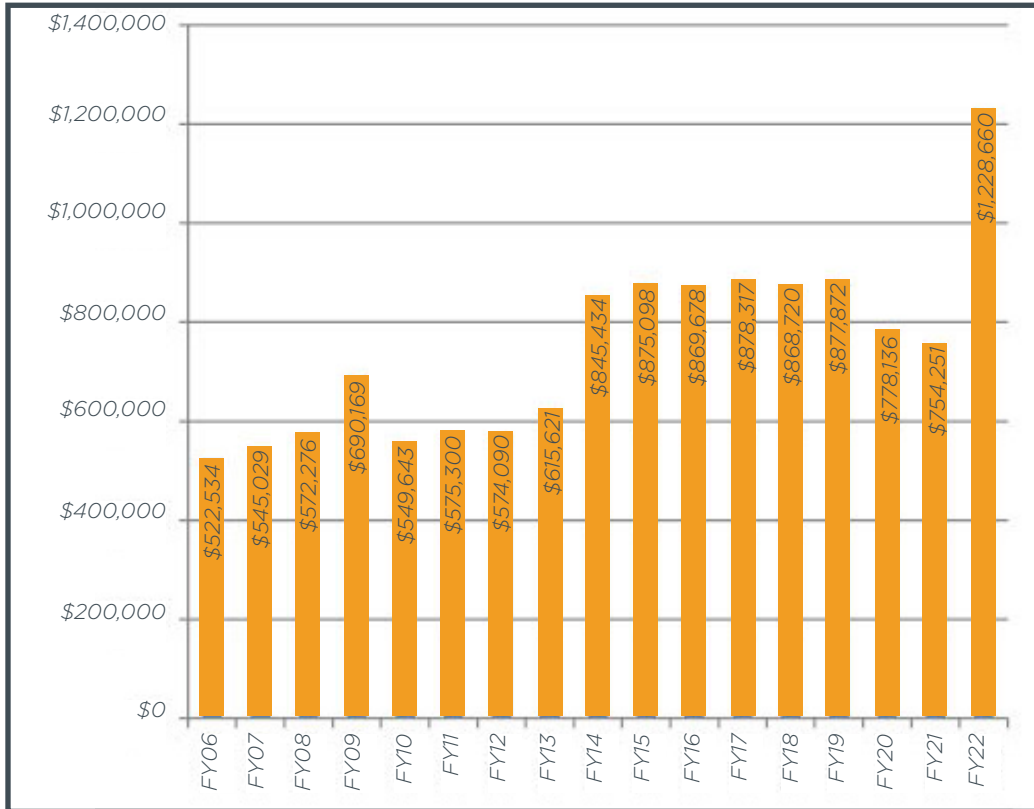


## **Event Promotion & Community Support**

1. *Led efforts to maintain CedarValley365.com calendar.*
2. *Promoted events throughout the year on KWWL.*
3. *Used newsletters, website and social media channels to share event information.*
4. *Hosted Rock the Lot Tailgate Kickoff to UNI Football season in partnership with UNI Panther Sports Network.*
5. *Created new Cedar Falls Tourism Torch Awards honoring four individuals and businesses.*
6. *Organized Cedar Falls Holiday Lights Tour to showcase the community's holiday cheer.*

# 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. The spike in FY22 reflects the return of travel and the addition of two new hotels that opened right before COVID-19 hit the U.S.



## Notable Events

**FY99** Country Inn & Suites opens

**FY02** AmeriInn opens

**FY06** Wingate opens

**FY08** Comfort Suites opens

**FY09** Flood of 2008 causes disruption

**FY09** Super 8 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

**FY22** Hotel/Motel Tax collections hit over \$1 million for the first time in bureau history

# PROGRAMMING EXPENDITURES

## Advertising

| Leisure Ads                        | Description  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| AAA Living                         | Ad in one monthly publication; 21 million distribution in MN, WI, IA, ND, NE, IL and MI                              |
| Bike Iowa                          | Annual 12 month ad on their website; 4 million page views  |
| Eastern Iowa Travel Guide          | Annual publication; joint ad with Community Main Street and Cedar Falls Historical Society                           |
| Facebook/Social Media              | Boosted 12 posts during the year   |
| IA Co-op Arrivalist                | Reports that allow us to see where visitors are coming from, how long staying and other travel related data          |
| IA Co-op X Hours Away Social Media | 1 month of social media posts to markets that are within a driveable/overnight distance                              |
| IA Co-op Banner at Travellowa.com  | Banner ad on Travel Iowa website for 12 months with link to CFTVB landing page                                       |
| IA Co-op Iowa Travel Guide         | Ad in two travel guides; Spring/Summer - distribution 55k; Fall/Winter - distribution 45k                            |
| IA Co-op Travellowa.com Leads      | Joint w/Experience Waterloo; Extranet portal by Travel Iowa to request our visitor guide; sent out 8,740 during FY22 |
| Targeted Digital Campaign          | Annual 12 month digital marketing campaign   |
| Targeted Digital Campaign          | A one month MN and WI digital trails ad campaign, funding provided by Travel Iowa Grant                              |
| UNI Alumni Newsletter              | 10 newsletters sent during year to 68,737 email addresses with a 26% open rate                                       |
| Meeting Ads                        |  |
| ISAE Directory                     | Listing in annual directory of Iowa Associations   |
| LinkedIn                           | 2 sponsored ads  |
| Sport Ads                          |  |
| Iowa High School Sports Network    | 30 second welcome video on screen at UNI-Dome during IA High School Football Semi-Finals and Finals                  |
| Panther Sports Properties          | Radio spots during UNI volleyball, women's basketball and men's basketball plus one Facebook onsite display          |

ONCE A **PANTHER**,  
ALWAYS A **PANTHER**!

Return to your roots and visit Cedar Falls! See how the campus has matured and how The Hill and Main Street have improved! See [www.CedarFallsTourism.org](http://www.CedarFallsTourism.org) for events and information.

#WeKnowHowToWeekend Every Day of the Week!

CEDAR FALLS

UNI Alumni  
Newsletter

Only in **CEDAR FALLS**

- 100+ MILES OF TRAILS
- 30+ UNIQUE SHOPS AND ROUTINES
- 20+ BEER GARDENS & RESTAURANTS
- 1 COOL ICE HOUSE MUSEUM

CEDAR FALLS TOURISM

Eastern  
Iowa  
Tourism  
Visitor  
Guide  
Ad

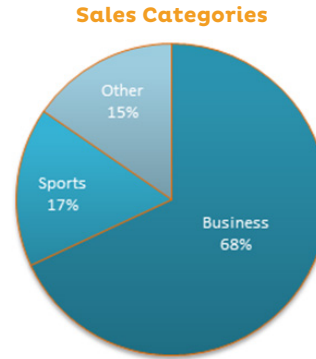
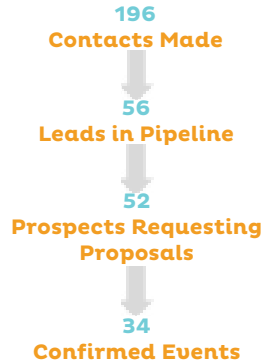
EVERY  
DAY FEELS LIKE  
WEEKEND

CHOOSE YOUR OWN ADVENTURE

CEDAR FALLS TOURISM

IA Co-op Banner  
at Travellowa.com

## Event Sales Efforts and Results



## Newly Developed Sales Resources

*The Bring It Home campaign was launched in October 2021 to encourage local organizations/corporations to host meetings & conferences in Cedar Falls with the intent to attract visitors to our community.*



*During this campaign we did an on air interview with KWWL that was pushed out across social media. Through that initiative we connected with GiANT by Tobroco. In May of 2022, in partnership with Bien VenU, we hosted the inaugural GiANT North American Dealer Conference which brought in over 100 visitors from across the US, Canada and the Netherlands.*

*Through this campaign we have also worked with First Bank (Leadership Iowa), Moxie, Amperage and Pipac Insurance in support of their conferences.*

# GRANTS FY22

## Marketing & Tourism Development Grants

| Organization                                 | Amount Awarded  | Purpose                     |
|--|-----------------|-----------------------------|
| <i>ARTapalooza and Car Show</i>              | \$1,200         | <i>Promotion, Execution</i> |
| <i>Cedar Basin Music Festival</i>            | \$500           | <i>Promotion</i>            |
| <i>Cedar Valley Classic Gymnastics</i>       | \$1,500         | <i>Equipment Rental</i>     |
| <i>Cedar Valley Sports Commission</i>        | \$22,500        | <i>Sponsorship</i>          |
| <i>FIRST Robotics Iowa Regional 2022</i>     | \$5,000         | <i>Facility Expenses</i>    |
| <i>IHSAA Football Playoffs</i>               | \$15,000        | <i>Facility Expenses</i>    |
| <i>Iowa Shrine Bowl</i>                      | \$500           | <i>Promotion</i>            |
| <i>Iron Sharpens Iron Wrestling Camp</i>     | \$1,500         | <i>Equipment Rental</i>     |
| <i>Leadership Iowa</i>                       | \$400           | <i>Transportation</i>       |
| <i>Playmaker 7v7 Back to Ballin Football</i> | \$2,000         | <i>Facility Expenses</i>    |
| <b>Total Awarded</b>                         | <b>\$50,100</b> |                             |



FIRST Robotics at McLeod Center



Iowa High School Athletic Assoc. Semi-Finals & Finals Football at UNI-Dome

## Community Betterment Grants\*

| Organization                                | Amount Awarded  | Purpose                                      |
|---|-----------------|--|
| <i>Cedar Falls Historical Society</i>       | \$6,500         | <i>Behrens-Rapp Station Roof</i>             |
| <i>Cedar Valley Soccer Club</i>             | \$5,750         | <i>Mission Playground</i>                    |
| <i>College Hill Partnership</i>             | \$2,250         | <i>Pettersen Plaza Tables</i>                |
| <i>Grow Cedar Valley</i>                    | \$4,500         | <i>Main Street Bridge - Underpass Mural</i>  |
| <i>Volunteer Center of the Cedar Valley</i> | \$2,000         | <i>Partners in Volunteerism</i>              |
| <i>Waterloo Cedar Falls Symphony</i>        | \$3,000         | <i>Evolution of American Music Residency</i> |
| <b>Total Awarded</b>                        | <b>\$24,000</b> |  |



FY22 Community Betterment Grant College Hill Partnership Farmers Market Banners



FY22 Community Betterment Grant Signage at the Cedar Falls Historical Society's Victorian Home

\*Community Betterment Grants are awarded in FY22 for the FY23 year.



## HOSPITALITY SERVICES

Volunteers who are referred to as “Envoys” provided information to guests or assisted event organizers at the following events, staffed the Visitor Center during weekdays, unlocked the Behrens-Rapp Information Station and distributed brochures to hotels and other locations in Cedar Falls.

- Bands of America Regionals
- Eastern Iowa Sport Show
- Hawkeye Farm Show
- Iowa High School Football Playoffs
- Iowa State High School Bowling
- Iowa State Trap Shoot
- Playmaker 7v7 Back to Ballin Football
- Sturgis Falls Children’s Parade
- UNI Panther Visit Days
- 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

## VISITOR CENTER SERVICES

| SERVICE PROVIDED  | FY19   | FY20*  | FY21** | FY22    |
|---|--------|--------|--------|---------|
| Visitor Center Traffic (Door Counter)                                     | 11,797 | 6,714  | 4,514  | 5,512   |
| Welcome Bags  | 1,111  | 1,163  | 296    | 789     |
| Visitor Packets Mailed (Individual, Bulk Ad Mailing & Relocation Packets) | 9,640  | 8,648  | 12,606 | 9,686   |
| Visitor Center Meetings & Rentals   | 76     | 41     | 7      | 42      |
| Host Motor Coach  | 8      | 6      | 0      | 2       |
| Web Site Visits   | 98,621 | 93,267 | 91,414 | 150,054 |

\* COVID-19 March 2020 through June 2020

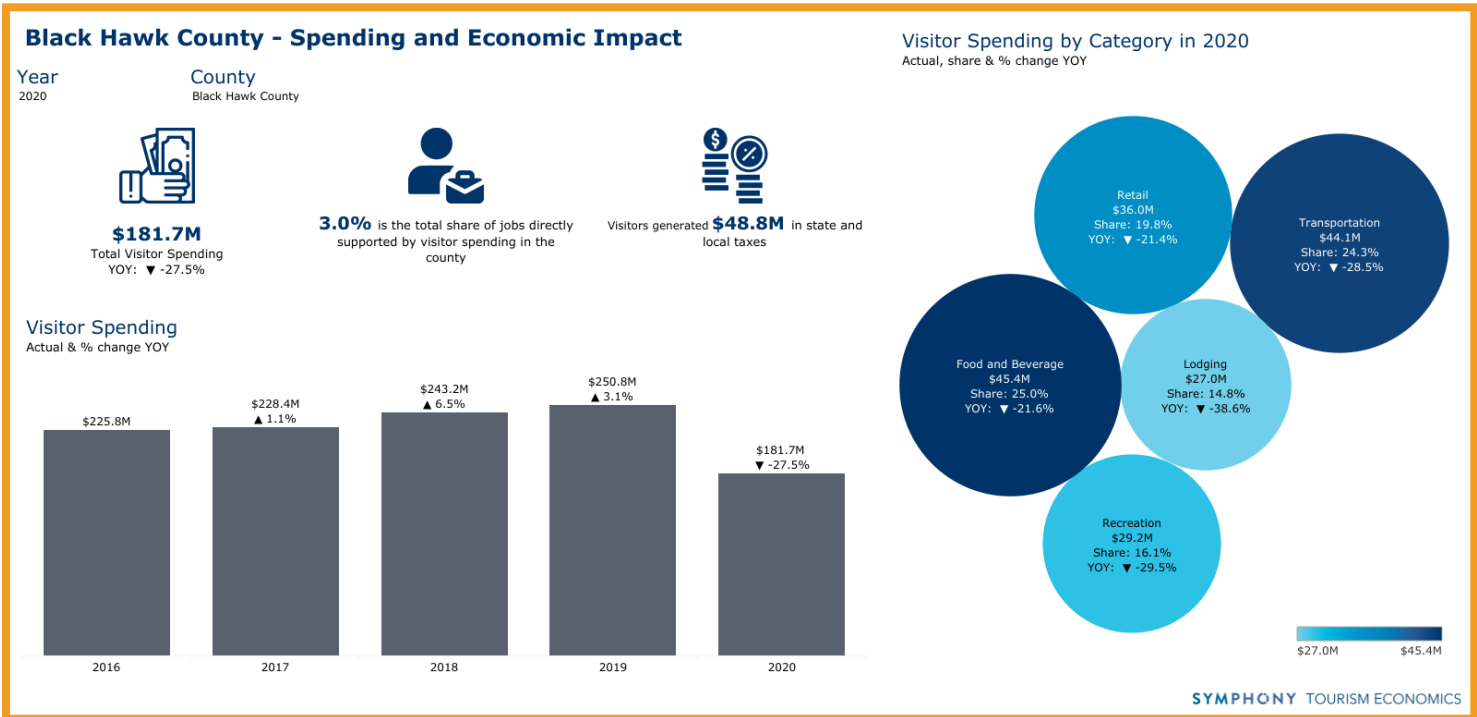
\*\*COVID-19 July 2020 through May 2021

# TOURISM DOLLARS

The Iowa Arrivalist Dashboard, (via Travel Iowa) provides total Iowa travelers, state of origin, day of travel, length of stay, seasonality, where they travel in Iowa and more. Below you will see county-level data for Black Hawk County for 2020.

Arrivalist sources information from mobile devices while travelers are in Iowa. Arrivalist data set includes travelers that have traveled at least 50 miles from home, spent a minimum of two hours in Iowa, spent up to 14 days in Iowa to be counted as a completed round trip, includes Adults 18+, U.S. visitors only, excludes commuters, devices include regular GPS pings and smartphone users only.

You can see that visitor spending dipped due to the pandemic.



# Cedar Falls Visitor Profile

Arrivalist's State Visitation Dashboard features state-wide data segmented by city for insights on monthly visitation, origin markets, length of stay and more. Via a Travel Iowa partnership we can access this information and isolate visitors who spent some and/or most of their Iowa trip in Cedar Falls.

|                                |              |                            |                     |  |                         |
|--------------------------------|--------------|----------------------------|---------------------|--|-------------------------|
| <b>Iowa Visitation Profile</b> | Year<br>2020 | Primary Destination<br>All | Origin State<br>All | US Calibrated Data<br>Long Term Analysis<br>(Calibrated) | Top Destination<br>City |
|--------------------------------|--------------|----------------------------|---------------------|--|-------------------------|

Total Est. US Adult Trips:  
**643,131**

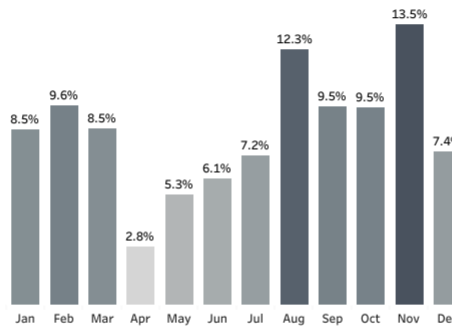
Average Nights:  
**0.8**

Average Distance Traveled:  
**165.6 Miles**

## Top Origin Markets (DMAs)

| DMA                       | Trips   | Share of Trips | Average Unique Nights |
|---------------------------|---------|----------------|-----------------------|
| Cedar Rapids/Waterloo/D.. | 209,681 | 32.6%          | 0.5                   |
| Des Moines/Ames           | 157,590 | 24.5%          | 0.9                   |
| Rochester/Mason City/Au.. | 64,309  | 10.0%          | 0.6                   |
| Davenport/Rock Island/M.. | 46,689  | 7.3%           | 0.8                   |
| Minneapolis/Saint Paul    | 25,842  | 4.0%           | 1.0                   |
| Sioux City                | 23,073  | 3.6%           | 0.9                   |
| Chicago                   | 15,934  | 2.5%           | 1.2                   |
| Omaha                     | 11,195  | 1.7%           | 1.2                   |
| Madison                   | 7,284   | 1.1%           | 1.8                   |

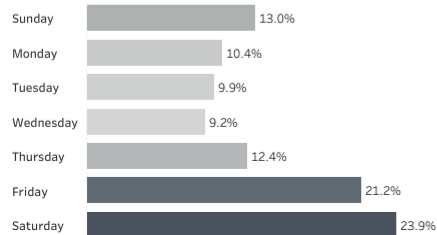
## Trips by Month



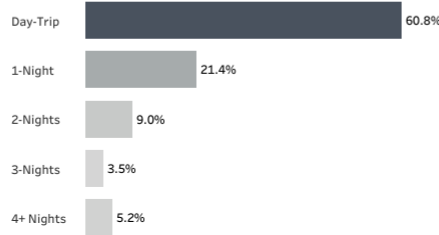
## Top Destinations

| Top City / County | Trips | Share of Trips |
|-------------------|-------|----------------|
|                   |       |                |
|                   |       |                |
|                   |       |                |
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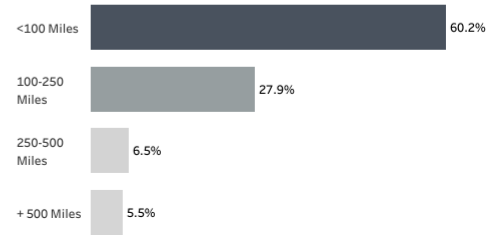
## Trips by Day of Week



## Trips by Length of Stay



## Trips by Avg. Distance Traveled (Miles)



# WHO IS INVOLVED?

## Bureau Staff

**Kim Manning**, *Manager (July)*  
**Jennifer Pickar**, *Manager (August-June)*  
**Adam Bolander**  
**Bonita Cunningham**  
**Deb Lewis**  
**Linda Maughan** (*July-August*)  
**Becky Wagner**

## Advisory Board

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

*\*\*Meeting agendas and minutes are found at CedarFalls.com*

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

# 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 2022. Our volunteers help make many of our accomplishments possible.

## ENVOYS

|                 |                   |                    |               |                   |                   |
|-----------------|-------------------|--------------------|---------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Lori Adams      | Phyllis Carter    | John Falk          | Doris Lang    | Carol Schaffner   | Wendy VanGorp     |
| Steve Adams     | Dorothy Clausen   | Bobbette Fortney   | John Lang     | Mary Smith        | Kurt Wiethorn     |
| Lynn Barnes     | Elda Cole         | Annette Freeseaman | Bob Manning   | Gene Theis        | Lois Wishmeyer    |
| Bob Beach       | Rich Congdon      | Judith Harrington  | Bev Michael   | Joy Thiel         |                   |
| Rosemary Beach  | Rita Congdon      | Ron Heth           | Troy Olson    | Patty Tometich    | Total Envoy Hours |
| Dennis Bergeson | Larry Durchenwald | Bob Hewlitt        | Ginny Poppen  | Mike Tompkins     | 672.25            |
| Mary Bozik      | Richard Eades     | Doris Hewlitt      | Cathy Reindl  | Ron Van Der Meide |                   |
| Dick Brammer    | Sue Eastman       | Patrick Igou       | Jim Reindl    | Libby Vanderwall  |                   |
| Carol Brown     | Marcella Ericson  | Jane Jackson       | Dori Ressler  | Rick Vanderwall   |                   |
|                 | Sharon Fackler    | Lyle Krueger       | Larry Ressler | Bob VanGorp       |                   |