

Chariton Valley PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

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March Events

March 4, 9:00 am
Tourism Outreach Meeting
Eldon Visitor Center

March 20, 5:00 pm
COG (Council of Governments)
Orientation Meeting
ADLM Office
Moravia

March 27, 5:00 pm
COG (Council of Governments)
Orientation Meeting
Pin Oak Marsh
Chariton

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Historic Hills Entrance Signs Complete

If you drive into southern Iowa you will notice attractive new roadway additions. Large, community entrance signs, sporting the Historic Hills regional tourism logo, have been erected to welcome visitors.

Local representatives from the counties of Appanoose, Clarke, Davis, Decatur, Lee, Lucas, Monroe, Van Buren, Wapello, Wayne, and Chariton Valley Planning and Development, have been quietly working for several years to finalize the city entrance sign project.

The signs are a cooperative effort with the nine counties active in the Historic Hills Tourism Corridor including Appanoose, Davis, Decatur, Clarke, Wapello, Van Buren, Monroe, Wayne, and Lucas. In total there are 39 signs region-wide.

Through the signs the Historic Hills Corridor will achieve commonality, increase awareness, and add attractiveness for visitors. The project supports the regional marketing plan focused on preparing southern Iowa for a growing visitor economy.

Kathleen Chester, Lucas County Tourism and Historic Hills Advisory Committee member, notes, "It is great to finally see all of the hard work pay off. Everyone in the Historic Hills Corridor is committed to working together to open the door for our region to welcome opportunities for growing our tourism economy. While one of our rural communities standing alone would find it challenging to attract high volumes of visitors, by working together we have a much stronger pull." The brick pillared signs include landscaping components of small shrubbery and a red bud tree, which are naturally indigenous trees to the area. The inclusion of a red bud tree adds to the already 20,000 red bud trees planted in the Historic Hills region over the past three years.



Lucas County Tourism advocates gather for a recent "ribbon cutting" celebration for the completion of the sign project.

"The concept of red bud tree plantings as an attractive feature for the region to promote was actually borrowed from Chariton's success," explains Chester. "Historic Hills representatives recognized that the Spring beauty of Chariton and Red Haw's red bud trees could be replicated region-wide and stand out as a special scenic feature."

Funding for the project was possible due to a federal transportation enhancement grant and from financial contributions from local groups. Sign locations were made possible by easement gifts from local land owners.

Gert Patterson, Tourism Lucas County and Historic Hills Advisory Committee member explains, "Without all of the local support from volunteers, authorities, and various organizations the signs would not be possible. It is so great to see our community complete such a rewarding project while working cooperatively with the other members of the Historic Hills Corridor."

Communities that did not install a sign and would like to do so may contact Chariton Valley Planning and Development and Nichole Moore for information about costs and design.

CREDIT STATEMENT: Programs and activities of the Chariton Valley Planning and Development are sponsored in part by the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration. Project partners include the Iowa Department of Economic Development, Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs, Iowa Department of Transportation, regional tourism and economic development agencies and local governments from Appanoose, Clarke, Davis, Decatur, Lucas, Monroe, Wayne and contiguous Iowa counties.

Harkin Announces \$200,000 Grant for Scenic Byway Development in Southern Iowa Counties

Senator Tom Harkin, senior member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, announced on December 5, 2007, that the Department of Transportation under the national scenic byways program is awarding \$200,000 for a Corridor Management Plan for the Historic Hills Scenic Byway.

“This funding will be used to boost the profile of one of Iowa’s most beautiful thoroughfares and will help draw new visitors to our state,” Harkin said. “Investments like this are key to further developing tourism in Iowa.”

The Historic Hills Scenic Byways Corridor Management Plan received a \$200,000 grant to develop a plan to implement strategies related to land use, traffic conditions, amenity development and marketing outreach. The Historic Hills scenic Byways Corridor counties are in Lee, Van Buren, Wapello, Davis, Appanoose, Monroe, Wayne, Lucas, Clarke and Decatur.

The Federal Highway Administration’s scenic byways grants recognize, preserve, and enhance America’s scenic roads and highways throughout the United States.

Iowa tourists spent more in 2007

Travelers in Iowa spent an average of \$223.66 last year for food, lodging, shopping, entertainment and transportation, a 5.4 percent increase over the \$212.19 spent in 2006, state tourism officials say.

Traveling parties that responded to a survey at the state’s 20 travel centers said they would spend a total of \$176 million in Iowa. About 540,000 visitors stopped at the centers, the state said.

An average traveling party had about 2.5 people in it.

The surveys showed 61 percent of travelers were interested in general sightseeing, 46 percent historical areas, 41 percent were visiting family and friends, 21 percent were camping, and 17 percent were shopping.

Overall, Iowa tourism is a \$5.8 billion industry that employs 63,400 workers, officials say.

Rural Lands, Rural Livelihoods: Using Land and Natural Amenities to Revitalize Rural Iowa

Why focus on the natural resources amenities and land as a component of rural development in Iowa? A recent conference presented by the Agricultural Law Center of Drake University Law School addressed this question.

In the 80’s and 90’s, economic development can be summarized as the Triple P of pork, prison, and poker. Today, Iowa may be moving to a new Triple P of places, people, and pilot projects. The shift is reflected in programs like the “Great Places” initiative of the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs, and by projects like the Honey Creek State Park and Resort near Centerville. One effect of moving to a “places” approach to rural development is how it requires citizens to consider what it takes to make an area or region an attractive place for people to live and for employers to seek.

Enterprises or land uses based on some dimension of natural amenities are typically long term and have a natural or living dimension - among these, planting

vineyards, trees, grasslands, wetlands and prairie restorations. Additionally, there are a variety of new enterprises that play support roles to these natural amenities, such as wineries, homestead cheese makers and canoe outfitters, just to name a few. As these enterprises develop, other shops, cafes and bed and breakfasts crop up, helping an area evolve into a regional tourist destination, creating an identity and attractiveness for a region that can be marketed.

Scenic byways are a great example of building tourist drawing power by using existing natural amenities. They create new motivation to protect and enhance the natural features comprising the scenic values of picturesque landscapes, open spaces, and historic buildings.

Hunting, fishing, canoeing, horse-back riding, bird-watching, bicycling, walking trails, and many other outdoor activities co-exist nicely with traditional agricultural practices. You don’t have to take

the cattle off of the land to enjoy the land for other uses.

Resource based activities connect people with nature. People become engaged with natural amenities and the land, and this direct contact serves both as a form of education about nature and also creates new allies in the public debate, such as funding natural resource investments. The issue of nature-based education is especially significant for today’s youth, who, in an age of computer games and the internet are increasingly separated from the natural world. The fears about the environmental illiteracy of children has created support for new initiatives like “No child left inside” programs that are presented by some conservation organizations.

If you would like to review all of the presentation materials, visit www.law.drake.edu/centers/agLaw/ and click on Rural Lands Rural Livelihood Conference.

Mission Statement

Designated as an Iowa Council of Governments under Iowa Code 28H by the Iowa Legislature effective July 1, 2007, Chariton Valley Planning and Development will conduct business for the purpose of enhancing economic prosperity and planned growth in order to improve quality of life in Appanoose, Lucas, Monroe, and Wayne counties in the State of Iowa. Primary activities will serve to stimulate and support: job creation; business investment; attraction and retention of a skilled workforce; quality of life, recreation, and cultural enhancements; provide for infrastructure installation and maintenance.