



Chariton Valley PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

Historic Courthouse District
205 1/2 N 13th
Centerville, IA 52544
Phone: 641.437.4359
Fax: 641.437.1161

Executive Director,
[Tracy Daugherty Miller](#)

Community Development
Planner
[John P. McCurdy](#)

Marketing and Design,
[Kathleen Chester](#)

Programs and activities of the Chariton Valley Planning and Development, Inc., a 501 (c)3 non-profit organization, are sponsored in part by the [U.S. Department of Transportation](#), [Federal Highway Administration](#) and [Federal Transit Administration](#). Project partners include regional tourism and economic development agencies and local governments from Appanoose, Clarke, Davis, Decatur, Lucas, Monroe, Wayne and contiguous Iowa counties.

MONTHLY POST

MEETING AND MANAGING CHANGE

Volume 1, Issue 5

June 2005

McCurdy Joins Chariton Valley Planning and Development Staff

It is the pleasure of Chariton Valley Planning and Development to introduce the latest addition to our planning team, John McCurdy.

John's undergraduate background is in International Relations from Drake University. Additionally, John holds graduate degrees in Community and Regional Planning and Public Administration from Iowa State University.

With an extensive background in the community planning profession, John served as a press relations liaison for Governor Vilsack and most recently conducted smart growth research for the Greater Dallas County Development Alliance. The City of Hartford, Iowa's Comprehensive Plan is also on the list of John's credentials.

At Chariton Valley Planning and Development, John will lead Historic

Hills transportation and tourism planning, coordinate the Historic Hills Scenic Byway program, and facilitate other regional development opportunities.

A native of the Atlantic, Iowa area, John returns to his rural roots and has made his home in Appanoose County with his wife, Ann.



John McCurdy, Community Development Planner

John relays that the area's successes with multi-county cooperatives and economic diversification attracted him to the Chariton Valley region.

M i s s i o n S t a t e m e n t

Incorporated in May 2004, Chariton Valley Planning and Development will conduct business as a 501 (c)3 corporation for the purpose of enhancing economic prosperity and planned growth in order to improve quality of life in Appanoose, Lucas, Monroe, Wayne and contiguous 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.

Honey Creek Resort State Park

With the close of the legislative session came a collective sigh from the many southern Iowans who have been waging a campaign for the State of Iowa's first, full-scale destination state park. Following years of discussion and planning with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, US Army Corps of Engineers, and Iowa's elected officials, Honey Creek Resort State Park on Rathbun Lake gets the nod and \$28 million in bonding authority for construction.

The Honey Creek Resort State Park on Rathbun Lake was a vision conceived by Rathbun Lake pioneers in the 1970s. Proponents, including the late Robert Beck and Joe Levis, touted the idea of a destination park on Rathbun Lake and even saw the State of Iowa purchase the real estate for such a notion in the mid-1970s. Until an all-out assault by regional supporters in the past five years, however, the concept of a hotel and convention center, guest cabins, golf course, and equestrian/recreation complex did not take root in the state-wide consciousness.

A meeting of historic proportion in southern Iowa was key to swaying the opinion of state policy-makers to give the Rathbun Lake "super park" a try. On May 18, 2000, nearly 800 supporters of the destination park on Rathbun Lake showed up at public hearing hosted by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) in Centerville.

The overwhelming turn-out of support at the Centerville public hearing was nothing less than amazing to IDNR staffers who had faced criticism at earlier hearings in the state where locales other than Rathbun Lake were suggested. An awestruck IDNR spokesperson, Arnie Sohn, issued a fitting response at the initial hearing when gazing upon the crowd, "Wow."

Many public hearings and meetings later brought milestone funding earmarks for the project. When efforts to secure a private developer to take on the entire project failed in late 2004, the strategy of bonding for the destination park and leasing out amenities to concessionaires was more fully explored and validated.



Governor Vilsack to Dedicate "Super Park" at Ceremony

At a special lakeside ceremony, Governor Thomas Vilsack will sign legislation to officially jumpstart construction of Honey Creek Resort State Park on Rathbun Lake. The dedication program is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, June 15, 2005 at 10:30 AM at the building site.

Photo L: Governor Tom Vilsack

"This project is monumental in improving the quality of life and recreational opportunities in the area." Governor Vilsack, a long-time supporter of the destination park concept, told Tracy Daugherty Miller in March 2003. "This represents the best of Iowa."