



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs Invests \$200,000 in Waukeee's Raccoon River Valley Trailhead Public Art Initiative

Waukeee, Iowa— The Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA) continues to build and sustain a more culturally vibrant Iowa by awarding more than \$1.3 million for projects in six communities designated Iowa Great Places.

DCA approved an Iowa Great Places Citizen Advisory Board recommendation to designate and award funding to the following five communities as Iowa's newest Great Places: Sixth Avenue Corridor (Des Moines), Grinnell, Linn County, Manning and the Raccoon River Valley Trail (Waukeee). Hamilton-Webster Counties was named an Iowa Great Place in 2010 and received additional funding for a new project during this most recent grant round.

This year, the board reviewed applications from nearly a dozen Iowa communities requesting approximately \$3 million. Common themes identified across the communities awarded funding include an emphasis on creating livable, walkable communities, revitalizing downtowns and urban neighborhoods, and capitalizing on outdoor recreational corridors.

"The Department of Cultural Affairs is committed to empowering Iowa to build and sustain culturally vibrant communities," DCA Director Mary Cownie said. "These communities awarded funding recognize their own unique sense of place and we are proud to invest in projects that foster economic growth and enhance the cultural identity of Iowa."

"These awards represent a diverse group of hard working Iowans who recognize the value of capitalizing on their most authentic community assets," said Nick Glew of Marion, chair of the Iowa Great Places Citizen Advisory Board. "The board was truly impressed by the local and regional collaborations these project demonstrate and the private sector investment they are leveraging."

The Iowa Great Places program challenges Iowans to create community development proposals that exemplify bold thought and innovation; encourage creativity and entrepreneurship; foster a sense of place

and identity; and demonstrate a commitment to enhancing community vitality and quality of life. Proposals are submitted to and reviewed by the 12-person Iowa Great Places Citizen Advisory Board, which looks for the following criteria in making its recommendations:

- a guiding vision plan and interrelated set of strategies
- broad-based support for projects that include multiple local and regional partners and public-private partnerships
- strong organizational capacity demonstrated by financial and programmatic performance and service to constituents

Great Place Designee: Raccoon River Valley Trail (RRVT)

Applicant: City of Waukee

Grant Award: \$200,000

- **Project**
Raccoon River Valley Trail (RRVT) Public Art & Cultural Corridor Initiative
- **Project description**
Iowa Great Places funding will support a regional vision to enhance and promote this popular trail through the development of a unifying public art theme that reflects the history and culture of the region. The plan is embraced by 14 communities and three counties located along the 89-mile trail, which accommodates more than 150,000 visitors annually. Significant public art structures and cultural amenities will be installed within the trail system, beginning with a signature trailhead design in Waukee, envisioned by RDG Dahlquist Art Studio of Des Moines. The RRVT system is owned and operated by Dallas, Guthrie and Greene Counties, in partnership with the fourteen trail communities, which include Waukee, Adel, Redfield, Linden, Panora, Yale, Herndon, Cooper, Jefferson, Jamaica, Dawson, Perry, Minburn, and Dallas Center.
- **Comment**
“On behalf of the City of Waukee, our Project Team and all the Trail Communities we thank you and the Great Places Program for this significant award. The completion of this project along with the Iowa Great Places designation will certainly yield significant cultural, recreational, health and economic benefits for the region and statewide - now and well into the future.” – Randy Jensen, RRVT Committee
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The City of Waukee is recognized as the fastest growing city within the state of Iowa and is located in Dallas County—one of the fastest growing counties within the United States. The official Census estimate based on July 2013 data is 17,077. Waukee offers a family-friendly environment featuring quality parks, schools and trails. The City is also dedicated to economic development and expanding business opportunities, including the creation of its future mixed-use development, Kettlestone. For more information, visit www.waukee.org.