

# 1000 Friends of Iowa

## 2007 Annual Report



Stone City, Iowa 1930

Grant Wood, 1891-1942

Citizens United for Responsible Land Use

### Mission

*1000 Friends of Iowa* promotes responsible development that

- Conserves and protects our agricultural and natural resources
- Revitalizes our neighborhoods, towns and cities, and
- Improves the quality of life for future generations

### Vision

Our Vision is of a sustainable Iowa where appreciation, preservation, and celebration of the uniqueness of our productive soils, dwindling natural areas and culture of the heartland are at the center of all land-use and economic decisions.

### Values

- Integrity
- Honesty in our dealings
- Accountable to mission, donors, members, partners, and the public
- Trustworthy
- Respect
  - For people and community
  - Fairly hear both sides of issues
  - Fairness and honesty as we work toward sustainable, lasting solutions
  - Work with all Iowans to promote sustainable solutions for future generations as well as present generations
  - Inclusive of all

### Goals

- **Organizational Structure:** Develop and maintain a strong organizational structure.
- **Membership & Funding:** Achieve 1000 members and an adequate funding base.
- **Education:** Educate members, the general public and the press about responsible land use through innovative programs, projects and research.
- **Communication:** Maintain ongoing communication with members through appropriate publications.
- **Public Policy:** Monitor relevant policy developments.

***A Message from the President of the Board,  
Laura Belin***

**Recognizing the Treasures Around Us**

*Don't it always seem to go  
That you don't know what you've got till it's gone  
They paved paradise  
And put up a parking lot*

*-Joni Mitchell, Big Yellow Taxi*

The theme for this year's annual meeting is "Discovering One's Own Place As a Caretaker of Global Treasure."

Thinking about this phrase, it occurred to me that we can only preserve the best features of our landscape and our communities if we first acknowledge their value.

Do lowans recognize the treasures in our midst?

**Our world-class soil** is a non-renewable resource being lost at an unacceptably rapid rate. Like the Griffieon family (our annual meeting hosts), many members of 1000 Friends of Iowa grew up in the country or still live on the land. Yet our fellow lowans may not see the value in conserving our agricultural resources, especially if farmground is destroyed in the name of economic development.

Though we lack nationwide tourist attractions on the scale of the Grand Canyon or Yellowstone National Park, **lowa's natural areas** include valuable waterways, prairie and wetland habitats and the geologically unusual Loess Hills and the Driftless area. To build support for wise land use, we need to educate lowans about how natural areas sustain wildlife and soak up stormwater that might otherwise contribute to flooding.

We can enhance local culture as well as economies when we keep up **our historic buildings**. Every year, 1000 Friends of Iowa's Best Development Awards remind us of the potential to find new uses for structures that may seem obsolete. Whether or not they are housed in architecturally noteworthy buildings, **our locally-owned businesses** contribute to the quality of life in our communities. Our Best Development Awards also highlight the benefits of building in the city rather than on the suburban fringe.

In fact, **our small towns** themselves are more valuable than lowans may realize.

I was reminded of this by the members of RAGBRAI's "Team Schmooze," who come from all over the country. They donated generously this summer so that 1000 Friends of Iowa could reach out to flood-damaged communities, which need to rebuild and preserve their town centers. Team member Al Brody said, "The Iowa that keeps us coming back is one of rural communities with lowans that have a propensity for spontaneous acts of incredible hospitality. [...] Team Schmooze believes the 'specialness' of small town Iowa can be preserved and the Schmoozers want to help KFOI with their mission."

1000 Friends of Iowa is also connecting the dots between land use decisions and the **global environment**. We have assisted the Community Development Division of the Iowa Department of Economic Development, so that communities seeking expertise from that division can learn about green practices. We urge policy-makers at the state and local level to embrace more balanced transportation policies, so that people can get where they need to go even if they cannot or choose not to drive. Changes to our transportation planning and funding priorities could substantially reduce our oil consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.

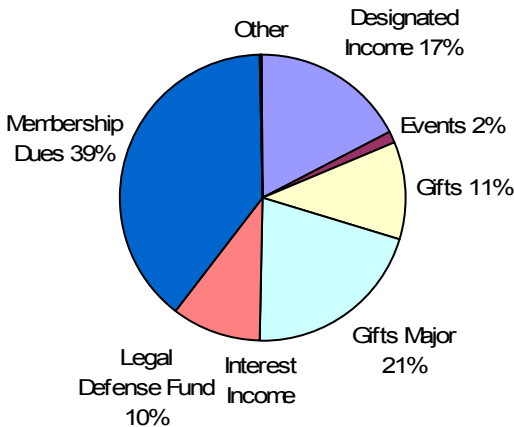
However you understand the phrase "global treasures," and whatever concern prompted you to join 1000 Friends of Iowa, we appreciate your involvement and welcome your feedback on our work. Thank you for helping sustain what you love in Iowa's land and communities. Knowing what we've got before it's gone will allow us to build on our strengths for the benefit of future generations.

# 1000 Friends of Iowa

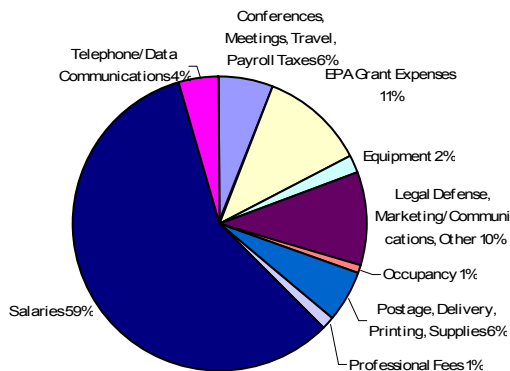
## 2007 Financial Statement

MetaBank Balance as of 12/31/2007: \$36,015.68

1000 Friends of Iowa 2007 Income



1000 Friends of Iowa 2007 Expenses



## 2007 Staff and Contractors

Brett Lorenzen, Executive Director  
Stephanie Weisenbach, Program Coordinator

Barbara Morrill, Office Manager

*Note: The majority of salaries go to direct program expenses.*

### Thank you to all of our 2007 Members, Donors, Volunteers & Allies!

1000 Friends of Iowa would not exist without the generosity, energy and participation of our Members, Donors, Volunteers and Allies.

Thank You!

1000 Friends of Iowa appreciates the generous in-kind contributions of office space from Elizabeth Holland and graphic design services from Susan Koch Bridgford at Koch Brothers.

#### Board of Directors

LaVon Griffieon, Ankeny  
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# 2007-2008 Activity Report

## Des Moines Metropolitan Area Smart Growth Project

1000 Friends of Iowa exceeded expectations in the completion of a project funded by the Environmental Protection Agency Region 7. After the release of a study of local codes and ordinances in early 2007, we received input from decision-makers and city staff about next steps in the project and how to use the remaining funds to launch a longer-term smart growth agenda in the region. Two premier workshops, "Tools to Implement Smart Growth" and "Transit Oriented Development" were facilitated by Conan Smith, Executive Director of the Michigan Suburbs Alliance in late August of 2007. In addition to the workshops, 1000 Friends organized one-on-one meetings with Mr. Smith and metro area decision-makers and planners. From this visit arose a newfound interest in Transit Oriented Development, a strategy that could unite regional leaders around a common goal.

Upon closure of the EPA grant, 1000 Friends continues to advance the goals of this project. Participation in the Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization's Stakeholders Working Group allows us to have a new level of influence with the MPO and a range of new voices in the transportation planning process. This working group is the result of years of our organization asking the MPO to improve participation processes at the forefront of planning, instead of always reacting to road projects. The Des Moines Metropolitan Area Smart Growth project brought new partnerships for 1000 Friends, and a more detailed vision that we can work collaboratively to achieve.

### Civic Engagement

1000 Friends of Iowa continues to advise local citizens who contact our office with concerns about local land use issues. A few examples of the issues we've helped citizens to address:

- A proposed ethanol industrial park in Mitchellville
- A proposed extension of Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway in Des Moines that would severely impact the Des Moines River Greenbelt area and neighborhoods
- The proposed Northeast Polk County Beltway
- A road widening project threatening excessive amounts of farmland in Alamakee County
- The threats of demolition to two downtown

Lorrimer historic buildings in Union County

- 1000 Friends members also utilized our help with advancing pro-active initiatives like the Cedar Rapids Smart Growth Scorecard, and a new subdivision ordinance for Iowa City that reflects smart growth principles.

### Climate Change

After a national and international awakening on the impacts of climate change, organizations like 1000 Friends of Iowa in different states and at the national level began taking action. Smart Growth America, a national organization that we work in coalitions with, led an effort to help groups like ours influence climate action plans. Our staff participated in two national meetings to learn about upcoming research and strategies to advance land use and transportation solutions to quantifiably reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The Iowa Legislature established the Iowa Climate Change Advisory Council, which was appointed by Governor Chet Culver in the fall of 2007.

We immediately became involved to provide recommendations on land use and transportation strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. In the spring of 2008, Governor Culver appointed our Program Director to replace a vacancy and serve as a voting member of the 23-member Council. 1000 Friends' priorities concerning climate change are the policies most related to transportation and land use. These include: smart growth and land use planning, expanding public transit, and passenger trains. 1000 Friends has recruited and worked with environmental groups, Des Moines Mayor Frank Cownie, city planners, city council members, transportation planners, the Iowa DOT, and many others to craft recommendations we can all support. Convening and educating these stakeholders is solidifying a long-term commitment to create compact development that reduces our reliance on the automobile.

### Public Policy

Highlights from our work in the 2008 legislative session:

- **Transportation Funding:** Our staff, board members and volunteers worked to educate citizens and decision-makers about the need for transportation reform prior to granting additional money to fix a broken system. With the powerful road-building lobbyists dominating the legislative process at the capitol to get more road money, we knew that
- Activity Report Continued**

mobilizing citizens was our most powerful tool for victory. Phone calls and mailings to members in targeted legislative districts occurred weekly out of our office. Tabling opportunities in the Des Moines metro area allowed us to reach ordinary citizens, talk with them about transportation, and use legislative district maps to help them identify and contact their legislators. We promoted a fix-it-first approach to spending road dollars, instead of funding sprawl-inducing highway projects. We also advocated for increasing state funding for public transit. This resulted in two public transit studies. One will occur through state agencies to identify how to help meet the state's energy independence goals and the needs of Iowa's growing senior population through expanding transit. Another study will be with a special "interim" committee of legislators to meet between sessions for examining funding strategies to expand public transit and passenger trains in Iowa.

- **Brownfield Incentives:** Prior to the beginning of session, 1000 Friends knew that new tax incentives for brownfields would be addressed. Brownfield sites are abandoned or underutilized properties where real or perceived contamination prevents productive redevelopment of the site. 1000 Friends sought the expertise of staff at the Northeast Midwest Institute, a research organization based in Washington DC, to help create an effective program for Iowa. They compiled a thorough report on proposals to make strategic investments in brownfields redevelopment, using examples and lessons learned from other states. By utilizing the assistance of the Institute and working with lobbyists, we were able to help shape the content of the state brownfields legislation. The legislation passed through both chambers to create a pilot program of tax incentives available in 2009.

- **Sustainable Development Initiative:** 1000 Friends supported legislative language to create an initiative, housed out of the Iowa Department of Economic Development, to align the agency's programs with sustainable practices. The legislation allows \$500,000 of Iowa Values Fund money to be spent annually on the initiative. This initiative is based on a fix-it-first approach to repairing our existing infrastructure before building new, redeveloping under-utilized land, and promoting mass transit. 1000 Friends has been involved for years in urging this agency to embrace better planning principles. During the final weeks of session, we generated phone calls from 1000 Friends members in key legislative districts and helped to seal the deal for final passage. Being involved in this initiative has enabled our advocacy to

transform into implementation of responsible development.

## Communications

**Printed and Electronic Communications:** 1000 Friends has been making incremental progress on upgrades to our materials. A new display board with new graphs and photos connecting land use to climate change has been displayed at community events. Our brochures have an updated message and images. The new website has been launched and we are employing new tactics to communicate with members and the general public. Our email alerts and updates are now colorful, easy to digest, and able to be sorted by various contact lists for specific communication purposes.

**Iowa News Service:** 1000 Friends of Iowa maintains a subscription to the Iowa News Service. This service allows us to choose spokespeople and experts, timely news items, and create news stories that get electronically shipped to radio stations across Iowa. In 2007 alone, we created ten news stories with this service. The INS tracks the usage of the stories. We learned that in 2007, each story had an average of 53 stations that aired it across Iowa ranging on topics from buying locally to promoting our Best Development Award winners. One story helped to release a national report, *Growing Cooler: The Evidence on Urban Development and Climate Change*. This story was picked up by Clear Channel and aired across the U.S., featuring spokespeople from Smart Growth America and 1000 Friends of Iowa.

*1000 Friends of Iowa*

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