

ONAWA, IA

Home of the widest main street in the US



Welcome to Onawa.

Every year Onawa is host to more than 25,000 guests as visitors come to participate in one of their great events or tour their attractions.

The number of guests dwarfs Onawa's population of 2,700, but you'll find them friendly, helpful and excellent hosts. Welcome to Onawa: The Gateway to the Loess Hills, Location of the only exact replica in the world of the Lewis and Clark Keelboat, Home of the Original Eskimo Pie and the Widest Main Street USA.

Onawa was established in 1857 and incorporated in 1859. They celebrated their Sesquicentennial in 2009. Onawa is the Indian word that means "wide awake." Onawa's founders were without exception men of honor. They planned for a town to be their future home, not a thing of mere speculation. Onawa began as a typical river town. Because it was predominantly an agricultural town, there was a constant struggle to add diversification to the economy. In less than two years after Onawa was formed, it was a thriving community. It had sawmills, stores, a newspaper and homes, and became the county seat.

In the past year, City Administrator Larry Burks has been working with the City Council to set up goals for the community. About every six months the Onawa Chamber of Commerce works with the Mayor and the City Administrator to host a Town Hall Luncheon to review the goals and the accomplishments. A new housing development is in the works, the water treatment plant is being refurbished, a new fire station will be completed soon, and West Monona School District is building an addition of another gym.

Monona County was the only county in Iowa that did not have a Habitat for Humanity Home. Two homes broke ground in 2010 and will soon be completed for two families.

The Onawa Chamber of Commerce is active in the community hosting various events throughout the year including an annual Easter Egg Hunt, a job fair, an Administrative Professional Day's luncheon, a Halloween promotion and the annual Christmas promotion.

Burgess Medical Center provides the hospital and the personnel needed to operate an efficient, modern health facility for area residents.

West Monona School District has a diverse population of students and faculty.

Several new businesses have launched in Onawa recently including Cobb Mountain Handbags, Ag Horizons and Camelot Real Estate.

Service groups also tackle projects throughout the area. The Onawa Kiwanis Club, the American Legion, the American Legion

Auxiliary, Ducks Unlimited, West Monona Booster Club and VIPs, church groups, the Burgess Health Center Auxiliary, Friends of the Onawa Public Library, Green Thumbs Garden Club, 4-H Clubs, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, the Monona County Fair Association, and the Onawa Chamber of Commerce are just a few of the groups in town who work together to promote Onawa and provide services.

There are several things that Onawa is known for: -Onawa is the birthplace of the Eskimo Pie. Some of the original equipment to package the Eskimo Pies is located in the Monona County Historical Museum located in the museum complex in Onawa.

-Onawa has the Widest Main Street in the USA. With 10 lanes for traffic to flow through or to park, the main street through town is called Iowa Ave. It plays host to a yearly celebration and classic car show the second Saturday in June called Main Street Madness.

-During the second weekend in June, the Lewis and Clark Festival is held each year. The Festival brings buckskinners and historians together to re-enact the 1804 era in time when the Lewis and Clark Expedition traveled through the area. The festival is held in the Lewis and Clark State Park located a few miles west of town along Blue Lake. The 27th festival will be held June 10-12, 2011. Activities are also held in town including Art in the Park and a Buffalo Burger Feed.

-The third weekend in June brings another car show with Graffiti Night

in its 27th year. The Classic Car Club has hosted the event each year. They also host an annual Swap Meet the third weekend in August. This will be their 29th year.

-Onawa is the county seat for Monona County and hosts the annual Monona County Fair. The fair was first held in 1876 as a Harvest Fair. It soon evolved into the place for the youth and residents of the county to showcase their talents. It was incorporated in 1904 and continues today as one of the last FREE fairs in the area.

-The Burgess Health Center Auxiliary hosts an annual craft show at the Fairgrounds the second Sunday in September. Ventures has a reputation for having quality handmade items to select gifts for the entire family.

-Burgess Health Center hosts the annual Poinsettia Ball the first Saturday of December each year. The ball provides quality entertainment while raising funds to assure the continuation of quality care for the community. In conjunction with local health care providers and the clinic providers, the hospital is able to sustain the award-winning care that has been

the norm for the area. The Burgess staff extends their devotion into the community to assist with the annual Big Blue Run held in June, coordinate the "Go to Move" program in the West Monona School District, offer Home Health and Hospice services, community blood pressure screenings, wellness screenings and inoculation clinics.

-Western Iowa's largest one day bike ride is held each year on the fourth Saturday in August. The 19th Annual Onabike will be held Saturday, Aug. 27, 2011. Nearly 400 riders each year enjoy riding through the scenic Loess Hills. Two

routes are available for the riders - the first a 29 mile mostly flat route, the second a 63 mile ride through the Loess Hills. The ride starts in Onawa, goes east, and then heads north into the hills. Depending on the route chosen by the rider, the route turns back south through the beautiful valley. The ride is sponsored by the Onawa Chamber of Commerce. For more information, contact the chamber at (712) 423-1801 or e-mail onabike@onawa.com.

Residents are especially proud of the Onawa Museum Complex. The Monona County Historical Museum preserves the history of

the county with displays and information about the area's heritage. The Onawa Kiwanis Railroad Museum complex boasts a caboose and an old railroad depot with many displays. The complex also has a log home, a country one room school house, a church, a jail, and a blacksmith's shop. And the Monona County Veteran's Museum is devoted to the many men and women from Monona County who have served our country. Displays include items from all the war eras with memorabilia and newspaper articles. Tours are available upon request.

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