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Vilsack, Pederson announce appointments to Iowa Great Places Board

DES MOINES – Governor Tom Vilsack and Lt. Governor Sally Pederson made appointments today to the first Iowa Great Places Board. Executive Order 39, which was signed by the Governor January 11, 2005, created the Board within the Department of Cultural Affairs.

Iowa Great Places is designed to bring together the resources of state government to build capacity in communities, regions, neighborhoods or districts to cultivate the unique and authentic qualities that make these areas special places to live and work. Communities are encouraged to capitalize on their historic fabric, built and natural environment, housing options, retail amenities, entrepreneurial incentives, business development, diversity, arts and culture.

The Board will advise in the design of the Iowa Great Places initiative and assist in the selection of three pilot Great Places. Board members include community and cultural leaders, local government officials, housing developers, business owners, and parks officials. The Governor and Lt. Governor appointed the following 12 members:

Robin Anderson of Mason City, Executive Director of the Mason City Chamber of Commerce. Ms. Anderson serves on the Citizen's Committee for the Restoration of the Frank Lloyd Wright-designed Park Inn Hotel; is a Board Member of the Mason City Convention and Visitors Bureau and the Mason City Downtown Association; is a Board Officer for both the Stebens Children's Theatre Foundation Board and the Choral Music Guild; a member of the Executive Committee of the Mason City Youth Task Force, and a Program Facilitator for the YIELD group (Youth Investing Energy in Leadership Development); and currently serves on the Iowa Values Fund Loan and Credit Guarantee Board.

David Bernstein of Sioux City, President of State Steel. Mr. Bernstein is Vice President of the Board Sioux City's Orpheum Theater and spear-headed a \$1 million effort to save the Theater. Mr. Bernstein is also a Co-founder of "Saturday in the Park" and is well-known for events management and concert promotion.

Claire Celsi of Des Moines, Public Relations Executive for Strategic America. Ms. Celsi is a volunteer for Beavertdale Business Coalition's Main Street Grant application and past recipient of United Way Special Volunteer Recognition.

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Samantha Ericson of Pleasant Hill, Co-founder and Vice President of the Community Housing Initiative, Iowa's first Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO).

Mark Ginsberg of Iowa City, Owner of M.C Ginsberg Jewelers. Mr. Ginsberg also established the M.C. Ginsberg Community Arts Partnership and is the founder of the annual *Iowa City Jazz Festival*.

Tom Hanafan, Mayor of Council Bluffs. Mayor Hanafan is Vice President of the Council of Officials for the Metropolitan Area Planning Agency (Council Bluffs), Board member for the Iowa Public Agency Investment Trust, and a member of the League of Iowa Municipalities Hall of Fame.

Quentin Hart of Waterloo, Retention Coordinator for Hawkeye Community College. Mr. Hart is a board member of Opportunity Works and Chair of the McElroy Scholarship Committee.

Terry Lynch of Marion, Director of Marketing for Fox Engineering in Ames. Mrs. Lynch is a former City Manager of Iowa Falls, former Personnel and Budget Director of Webster City, and Past Chair of the Iowa League of Cities Associate Member Advisory Committee. She is a past Subcommittee Chair for the "Cedar Rapids Freedom Festival."

Bill Menner of Grinnell, Executive Director of Poweshiek Iowa Development. Mr. Menner is also the Director of Grinnell Renaissance advocating restoration of historic properties and the development of Renaissance Grinnell; the coordinator of local fundraising effort for the STRAND Theater, and a fourteen-year veteran reporter for Public Radio.

Gil Spence of Dubuque, Director of Parks for the City of Dubuque. Mr. Spence is active in the National Recreation and Park Association, Iowa Foundation for Parks and Recreation, and the Dubuque Area Lifetime Center.

Amanda Styron of Mount Pleasant, Student at the University of Iowa. Miss Styron is Executive Coordinator of the Johnson County Cultural Alliance; a member of the Board of Directors for the "James Gang" in Iowa City; Youth Workshop Coordinator for "Imagine Iowa's Future" and Executive Director of the "10,000 Hours Show."

Rita Vagas of Davenport, Scott County Recorder. Ms. Vargas is a Member of the Community Foundation Board and the Family Resource Board. She is active in the League of United Latin American Citizens and Big Brothers/Big Sisters. She is also a volunteer for Habitat for Humanity Women's Build Project.

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