

HFA: Iowa Finance Authority
Nominee: Iowa Finance Authority 2008 Annual Report
Category: Communications/Annual Report

Entry Description

The Iowa Finance Authority (IFA) offers nearly 50 programs that benefit the state of Iowa and impact the lives of nearly every Iowan. But after asking a handful of Iowans what IFA does, we received five different answers ranging from “housing stuff” to “banking.”

Our goal for the fiscal year 2008 annual report was to not only show our accomplishments as required annually by the Iowa Legislature, but to also educate Iowans on IFA’s array of programs and services and show how much IFA invests in every county.

Iowa is home to nearly 1,000 vibrant communities and famous Iowa pride, which is evidenced in the homes that line our streets. We knew that this is something Iowans would easily connect with, so in collaboration with our marketing agency, we developed an IFA roadmap as part of the annual report to showcase how IFA’s wide spectrum of projects connects with everyday life in Iowa.

The Iowa Department of Transportation provided the electronic files for the official state road map, allowing us to modify the map to meet the needs of the annual report. This partnership was imperative to the report’s success.

This report includes all of the components required of us in our annual report, plus much more, in an unexpected medium. When the map is opened, it the reader is welcomed with an inviting letter from our Executive Director, as well as a small CD that contains our annual performance report to the Iowa Legislature and financial statements.

The first side of the map includes an overview of IFA’s programs. The goal of this element was to provide a summary of what IFA does in a way that both an individual who has never heard of us or a veteran legislator looking for program information could understand. This side of the map highlights each program’s key fiscal year 2008 accomplishments, as well as growth in core programs.

The opposite side of the map showcases IFA’s investment by county data in four core IFA programs, using an easy-to-read key. Not only does this showcase IFA’s statewide impact, but it highlights Iowans throughout the state that benefited from a variety of IFA programs over the year. To capture some of these stories from across the state, we hired a photographer to take photos, which we have added to our photo library and continue to use in other collaterals as well as on our Web site.

Legislators need to know how IFA impacts their districts specifically, and have historically been given the data from other state agencies in a text report printed on reams of paper. The roadmap provides the data in a format that is memorable and easy to comprehend.

The FY 2008 annual report gives legislators, partners and Iowan citizens the opportunity to see how IFA has impacted not only the state as a whole, but specific communities as well. It provides an overview of the programs IFA provides and the pictorial support helps Iowans see how IFA can potentially serve them.

The annual report has received great reviews from staff, legislators media and others. IFA staff members take the report with them to meetings and conferences where it is always makes an impression!

We plan to implement the FY08 annual report concept into other reports in the future. It is already serving as the theme for the 2009 HousingIowa Conference, which is "Affordable Housing: Iowa's Roadmap to Recovery."

The printing cost of the annual report was less than in past years, because there was no binding, stitching, die cuts, etc. The print order was a simple double-sided print with folding. The project took 80 hours of staff time from start to finish, including planning, gathering and organizing historical and county data, as well as writing the copy, organizing photo shoots and coordinating with our marketing agency. We initially printed 2,500 reports, but had to re-order another 1,000 copies within weeks due to the favorable response and high demand. The total cost for the annual report was \$35,000 and included printing, marketing firm time and photography.

The return on investment of the finished product is well worth the resources committed. A framed copy of the annual report hangs in our buildings entrance, and many employees also have it on their office walls. Our Governor's office has applauded the piece, and it will be used for years to come to effectively showcase IFA's work.