

# Guinness Book of World Records Event

**Iowa Finance Authority**

Communications: Special Event Marketing

**HFA Staff Contact**

Elizabeth Christenson

[elizabeth.christenson@iowafinance.com](mailto:elizabeth.christenson@iowafinance.com)

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**RECORD BREAKING YEAR**

The Iowa Finance Authority assisted a record number of homebuyers in 2019. To celebrate, involve the community and gain earned media around this milestone, we set out to break another record involving homes of a different variety – a Guinness Book of World Record for the most gingerbread homes decorated simultaneously.

The Iowa Finance Authority helped 3,337 Iowans purchase a home in 2019, the most in the agencies' history. We wanted a way to fun, exciting way to share and celebrate the community benefits of homeownership.

Since we had a record setting year getting Iowans into homes, we thought it only made sense to break another record – a world record for the most gingerbread home simultaneously decorated. We wanted to tie in the holiday spirit with a little competition to make an exciting and memorable event.

**STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES**

**Objective 1:** Beat the Guinness Book of World Records for building the most gingerbread houses at one time, which was currently 250 houses.

**Objective 2:** Gain earned media coverage of the event to increase awareness of IFA's homeownership programs.

A challenge of hosting this event was the short notice – it was determined that IFA had assisted the most homebuyers in one year just three weeks before the event was hosted.

To help ensure the success of the event, we not only needed to find the right place and time to hold such event but also had to ensure we could get enough people there at once to break the record.

To accomplish this, we sought out a partnership with the Des Moines Downtown Winter Farmers Market held at the Iowa Events Center, which would have a built-in audience for the event. They agreed to partner with us and co-promote the event to their attendees.

We worked closely with the Guinness Book of World Records to ensure our event was pre-approved. We worked through the extensive list of requirements, including an onsite food inspector, an appropriate amount of official stewards and witnesses, an official counting method, including giving everyone a wristband at the door and having a steward confirm their completion with, at a minimum, frosting on all four sides of the house and at least four different types of candy on the house, as well as photographic and video evidence of the event in its entirety.

**AUDIENCE**

**Primary Audience:** General public – specifically couples and families. We knew we needed to gather a large audience and that couples and families would be interested in a fun, holiday activity they could do for free in December. An IFA staff member emceed the event, making it fun for families, building up the suspense of how close we were to breaking the world record throughout the event and also sharing some fun facts about our homeownership programs throughout the morning.

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**Secondary Audience:** IFA staff and lender and Realtor partners. We did not break the record of homeowners assisted alone. It was important to us that we also use this opportunity to thank our partners and homeownership team staff for their tremendous efforts and they appreciated this fun family event in their honor.

**CAMPAIGN TACTICS:**

We chose to concentrate most of our efforts in central Iowa as that is where the event was being held. We focused on media relations and social media. All tactics were deployed within two-week period in December 2019.

- Social Media
  - Heavy social media use including Facebook (boosted posts) Instagram, and Twitter posts.
- Media Relations
  - We contacted local media in Des Moines and received broadcast television and digital coverage.
- Event Materials
  - T-shirts for the official stewards, witnesses and volunteers
  - Signage for each set of tables, with no more than fifty stations per steward area
  - Tape to mark each area out on the floor for each steward station
  - Gingerbread kits and scissors
  - Stage and microphone for official announcements and videography of the event
  - Wristbands to be given to each individual at the door

**RESULTS**

All campaign objectives were met and exceeded.

**Objective 1:** Beat the Guinness Book of World Records for building the most gingerbread houses at one time.

**Result:** We had 350 people attend the event and had **275 houses** built simultaneously – to successfully beat the **GUINNESS WORLD RECORD!**

**Objective 2:** Host a community relations event that thanks partners and staff for their efforts and gain earned media coverage.

**Result:** We had 20 staff and partner families attend the event and had significant media coverage with live shots on the leading local news station the morning prior to the event, totaling \$10,000 in earned coverage in addition to value ads, including social media posts from the station and reporter.

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**BENEFITS THAT OUTWEIGH COSTS**

We were able to keep the cost of the entire event below \$15,000. Hy-Vee grocery store provided the house kits to us at cost so we could keep supply cost low. This record breaking community relations event raised awareness of homeownership programs, celebrated a record number of homebuyers assisted and beat the world record for the number of gingerbread homes decorated simultaneously!

**REPLICABLE**

The event is highly replicable, by any housing finance agency. A Guinness World Record event is an attention-grabbing way to bring awareness to any milestone, with a little creativity and planning. Guinness World Records has detailed planning templates and requirement checklists readily available to aid in the development of a similar event.

# GINGERBREAD JUNCTION: A WORLD RECORD EVENT

Day of Signage, Decorations, Staff Apparel



# GINGERBREAD JUNCTION: A WORLD RECORD EVENT

News Release, Media Coverage & Email Invitation



Select phone and webpage to see press coverage

**THE IOWA FINANCE AUTHORITY PRESENTS**  
**GINGERBREAD JUNCTION**  
**A WORLD RECORD EVENT**

**Is A Guinness World Record on Your List?**

To celebrate a record-setting year at the Iowa Finance Authority, we're attempting another record - A GUINNESS WORLD RECORD... but we need your help.

**When:**  
**This Saturday, December 14 at 10 a.m.**  
Check-in begins at 9:30 a.m.

**Where:**  
**Downtown Winter Farmers' Market**  
**Hy-Vee Hall | Des Moines**

**What:**  
The Iowa Finance Authority presents: Gingerbread Junction, a sweet celebration! 2019 was a record-setting year for IFA, as we assisted more homeowners than ever before. To celebrate our sweet success, we're attempting a **GUINNESS WORLD RECORD** for the most gingerbread houses built at one time.

**It's totally free and all supplies are included - so bring your friends, bring your family, bring your neighbors... and prepare to go down in his-tor-y.**

[SEE EVENT DETAILS](#)

**#IFAGingerbreadJunction**

# GINGERBREAD JUNCTION: A WORLD RECORD EVENT

Event Recap Video (Select image to see video)



# GINGERBREAD JUNCTION: A WORLD RECORD EVENT

Event Photos





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