

# Delightful Des Moines

Host to the 2008 National Junior Angus Show July 13-19, Iowa's capital city showcases down-home country charm.

by Kindra Gordon

Set amidst corn and soybean country, it's obvious that Des Moines, Iowa's, agricultural roots run deep. The city will welcome Angus enthusiasts from across the country July 13-19 for the 2008 National Junior Angus Show (NJAS).

Established as a military post, Des Moines has stood as Iowa's capital city since 1857. Tours are offered daily of the State Capitol building. Its 23-karat gold dome is a beacon that can be seen for miles around the city.

Another highly visible sight is the geodesic dome of the Des Moines Botanical Center (along I-235) where there are free-flying birds and more than 1,750 species of flora to explore, including exotic plants and fruit trees.

More exotics can be found at the Blank Park Zoo, which has earned the nickname "Iowa's Wildest Adventure." This nicely sized zoo showcases animals from tropical rainforests, the Australian Outback and Africa.

Also worth exploring is the Science Center of Iowa, where visitors can experience a virtual cave, create giant bubbles, design a planetarium show and watch a movie at the Blank IMAX® Dome Theater.

For big adventure, head east of the city to Adventureland Park. It features more than 100 shows, attractions and rides, from mild to wet-and-wild. With roller coasters sporting names like Sidewinder, Mixer and Space Shot, Adventureland rivals any regional theme park in the country.

## Country life

In downtown Des Moines, country comes to the city each Saturday during the Farmer's Market. Tents line the streets with displays of fruits, vegetables, baked goods, clothing and knickknacks. A variety of musical groups provide entertainment as you stroll.

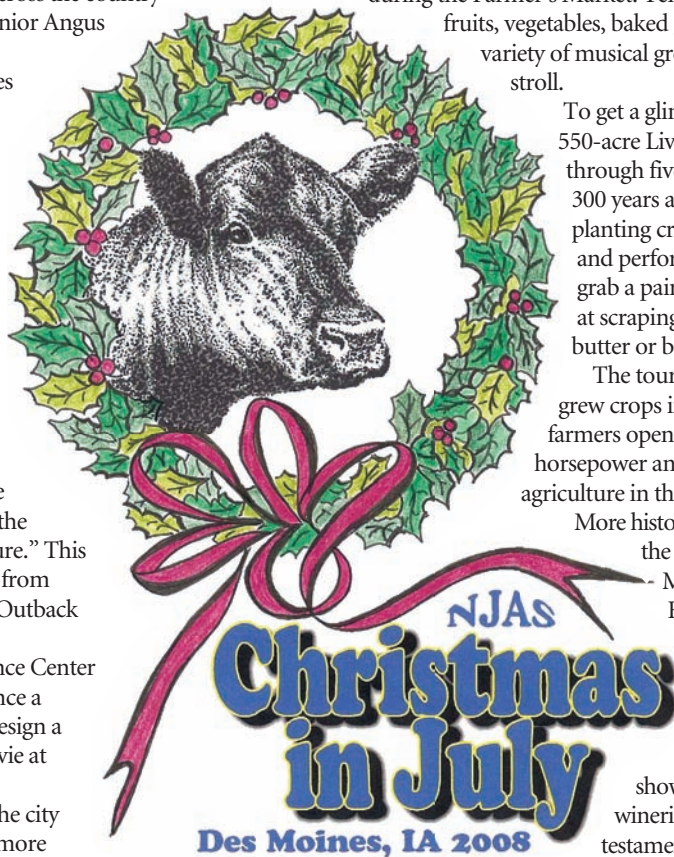
To get a glimpse of Iowa's ag history, visit the 550-acre Living History Farms. Visitors walk through five historical time periods spanning 300 years and see period-costumed interpreters planting crops, cooking meals, shucking corn and performing other daily tasks. Guests can grab a pair of free work gloves to try their hand at scraping a deer hide, churning cream into butter or building a fence.

The tours showcase how Native Americans grew crops in Iowa in the 1700s; how early farmers opened the prairie with oxen; and how horsepower and cast-iron machines revolutionized agriculture in the early 1900s.

More history and agriculture can be enjoyed at the Amana Colonies 93 miles east of Des Moines ([www.amanacolonies.com](http://www.amanacolonies.com)).

Founded more than 150 years ago by German settlers seeking religious freedom, this collection of villages is today a National Historic Landmark. Along with museums and entertainment, its many shops showcase arts, crafts, woodworking and wineries. This landmark is a unique testament to past traditions, and it's a great place to start or end your trip to Iowa.

To plan your trip, contact the Greater Des Moines Convention and Visitors Bureau at 1-800-451-2625 or [www.seedesmoines.com](http://www.seedesmoines.com).



## Iowa stats

- ▶ Famous Iowans include Herbert Hoover, John Wayne, Johnny Carson and Ashton Kutcher.
- ▶ Des Moines has gained national recognition as a major insurance center (the third largest in the world) with nearly 60 life, health and casualty companies.
- ▶ Des Moines' downtown skywalk system makes up more blocks per capita in Des Moines than in any other city of comparable size in the

- U.S. The skywalks serve as an important link to parking garages, hotels, restaurants, stores and businesses — which is especially nice during winter.
- ▶ An Iowa farmer can produce enough food and fiber annually to feed nearly 280 people worldwide.

