

Office of the State Archaeologist/Iowa Archeological Society
Public Outreach and Education along the RAGBRAI Route:
July 20–26, 2008

The *Register's Annual Great Bike Ride Across Iowa* (RAGBRAI) has proven to be an immensely successful annual activity that excites and unites people from Iowa as well as the Midwest—and even internationally—in a statewide event with tremendous public appeal and exposure. The OSA proposes to use RAGBRAI as a vehicle for educating the general public about Iowa Archaeology while assisting the IAS in promoting the Society and recruiting new members.

In effect an “Iowa Archaeology Week,” linking to RAGBRAI 2008 offers OSA and IAS a ready-made method of reaching tens of thousands of Iowans to highlight current archaeological research within the state. This traveling public outreach program will replace Iowa Archaeology Month as OSA’s major outreach event for 2008. The goals are to bring Iowa archaeology into to those involved in RAGBRAI (both interested riders and community members), to highlight various aspects of archaeology throughout the state, and in doing so, involve as many IAS members as possible as both organizers and participants in the archaeological presentations.

We propose to sponsor a team of OSA riders who will participate in RAGBRAI. These riders and support staff—the target number is 12—will provide a visible focal point in their “*Team Iowa Archaeology*” shirts for the archaeological programming events which will occur at each overnight stop along the route. IAS participation will be focused at each of the seven host communities that will serve as overnight

stops along the RAGBRAI route¹. The educational emphasis will be on local archaeological resources of each host community. In addition to evening events, daytime programming for local libraries, children’s summer camps, historical societies, or other appropriate venues will be offered as a companion set of activities.

Evening programming may include artifact road shows, technology demonstrations (i.e., flintknapping, weaving, and ceramic production), presentations on area archaeology, site tours, and informational handouts at a booth or table. Handouts may include fliers outlining area archaeology, IAS brochures, posters, and other promotional materials including shirts, bandanas, wrist bands, etc. Local IAS members, OSA staff, and volunteers will distribute these materials, present programs, and discuss local archaeology with interested RAGBRAI riders and the general public—at no charge. It is expected these activities will encourage an interest in Iowa archaeology and increase IAS membership.

IAS members, OSA staff, and associated volunteers who ride the route should be willing to engage in conversations that promote and discuss archaeology with interested riders and community members at the overnight stops and along the route. The OSA riders will carry and distribute pamphlets on local archaeology as well as other handouts. They will also direct RAGBRAI participants to the IAS/OSA information

¹ Route selection is announced in late January—this will be when intensive planning and organizing activities will need to commence.

booth and evening events. IAS members associated with the host communities will be particularly valuable volunteers who may also consider providing support for the OSA ride and presentation teams for an evening (e.g., places to pitch tents, access to showers, possibly meals).

The OSA hopes to partner with the IAS and its local chapters and members as well

as a variety of state and local organizations (SHSI, AIA, libraries, county conservation centers, museums) to make this a successful venture.

For more information, please contact the OSA's Iowa Archaeology/RAGBRAI Committee co-chair, Cindy Nagel (cindy-nagel@uiowa.edu).