



Buy Iowa Online

JANUARY 2010

FALL/HOLIDAY 2009 STATS

21 vendors made sales

88 products purchased

Buyers from 14 states

Top selling items:

candles
books
bath & body
children's apparel
food products

Total website visitors:

November 1,700
December 2,029

20 new sellers:

And Sew On
Bill & Karen Johnson
Bonnie & Jim Stalder
Buy Fresh Buy Local
Carroll Chamber
C-My Designs
Daisy Girl Bath & Body
Eric Nelson
Glenwood Chamber
Heartland Views Photography
Inclement Press
Jewelry by Jacque
Junction Creamery
Kiscd by the Son Garden
Knotty Pine Steakhouse
Pam McGuiness
Prairie View B&B
RAV Photography
The Rug Man
Tim Martin Photography

SUCCESSFUL HOLIDAY SEASON

The first official Christmas shopping season for Buy Iowa is over, and we feel it went well.

To prepare for the shopping season, our staff added 19 new sellers as well as new products from sellers who were already participating.

But where would we be without advertising and publicity?

Buy Iowa received publicity through the holiday shopping guides published in *The Iowan* magazine, and Farm Bureau's *Family Living*.

Each article featured several products and their sellers; and gave a link to the Buy Iowa website so readers could purchase the products.

Several of the featured items sold, and the buyers often bought other products as well! These types of articles demonstrate how the whole group benefits when individual members are highlighted.



MARKETING BUY IOWA: You can help

We have 4 different promotional materials available in our office for you to use: business cards, post cards, seller brochures and buyer brochures. Here are several ways you can use these materials to help promote Buy Iowa:

- Put Buy Iowa materials in public places throughout your community (library, city hall, bank, chamber office, etc.)
- Give Buy Iowa information to other potential sellers
- Include the Buy Iowa Facebook and/or Twitter logos & links in your emails
- Ask your local newspaper to run a story about Buy Iowa and local entrepreneurs
- Ask your local Chamber of Commerce to put a link to Buy Iowa on their website
- Take materials to craft shows, farmer's markets, art fairs, and other community events
- Tell people! Word of mouth is one of the best promotion tools you can use
- Ask to have your name listed in the business directory on your community website with a link to Buy Iowa (we can provide you a link directly to your products)

ADVERTISING & PROMOTIONS UPDATE

- Products from 7 vendors were featured in *The Iowan* magazine's, *Holiday Gift Guide*, in the November-December 2009 issue. Each product was highlighted by a photograph and short description, along with a link to the Buy Iowa Online website. The guide can still be viewed at www.iowan.com/holiday-gift-guide-2009.cfm.
- An article about Buy Iowa was included in the December 2009 issue of Iowa Farm Bureau's monthly publication, *Family Living*. The article, "*Shop the Web For Local Gifts*," was contributed by freelance writer, Kristin Danley-Greiner.
- The Fall 2009 issue of *Community Matters*, a quarterly publication of Iowa State University Extension, Community and Economic Development, has a front page article about Buy Iowa titled "*Southwest Iowa Online Shopping Site Makes Rural Development Global*" by Lynn Adams. The article and photos can be viewed at www.extension.iastate.edu/communities/newsletter/vol3issue3.pdf.
- A new direct link is located on the University of Iowa's Alumni website. This link will be present from November 2009 to mid-April 2010 and can be viewed at www.iowaalum.com/merchandise/index.html.
- Social networking seems to be the hottest thing going, and Buy Iowa has been doing promotions through Twitter and Facebook. Currently more visitors link to the site through Facebook than any other website.
- Vendors with products on Buy Iowa Online represent 19 of the 22 counties the Rural Development Center serves. We still need sellers from Adams, Audubon and Crawford Counties. Please let us know if you know anyone who may be interested.
- Staff is developing a brief "website shopping experience" survey for customers. We hope customer feedback will help us continue to improve the shopping experience.

TRACKING YOUR SALES

One of the most popular questions our staff receives is, "Have I made any sales?" There are two ways for you to find out.

When you make a sale, you will be notified by email. In addition, you can log in to your seller account at any-time.

To log in to your account:

1. Go to the Buy Iowa homepage
2. Enter your assigned user name and password.
3. Click on the "My Account" tab and scroll to the bottom of the page.
4. Click on "My Seller Account."

From here, you will be able to see the inventory you have on hand, as well as the sales you have made.

For assistance call or email our office.



When you make a sale, you will be notified by email.