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**For Immediate Release
September 9, 2008**

Museum presents Corn Palace program

Learn more about how Sioux City became “**The Original Corn Palace City**” at a Tuesday Twilight Talk on Tuesday, September 16 at 6:30 p.m. at the Sioux City Public Museum.

Held in conjunction with the current Museum exhibit of the same name, the slide show of historic photographs will chronicle how the idea to celebrate 1887’s bountiful harvest grew into a national promotional campaign for Sioux City. The Sioux City Public Museum will open at 6:00 p.m. to allow audience members the opportunity to view the photographs, documents and artifacts on display in the exhibition before the program begins.

“The Corn Palaces represent one of the unique chapters in local history and people are still fascinated by them today,” says presenter Matt Anderson, Museum archivist. “While the Corn Palaces only lasted for five years, they remain an enduring symbol of community progress and ingenuity.”

Modeled after the great “Ice Palaces” that St. Paul, Minnesota had built in previous years, the Corn Palaces were designed and built as temporary buildings, made of wood, corn and other grains. The World’s first palace made of corn took six days and 350 workers to complete, costing approximately \$25,000. Placed on the corner of Fifth and Jackson, the Palace was 100 feet high and covered at least one quarter of a city block. The last Corn Palace built in 1891 cost nearly \$100,000 to complete (more than \$2 million in 2008 dollars). However, poor attendance, due to bad weather and competing festivals, cost the community in the end. Though there were plans to build another palace in 1892, the Corn Palace committee and Sioux City financiers announced that the community could not afford to build it. In 1893, a financial panic set in throughout the country and much of the Corn Palace’s financial backing was lost for good. The era of Sioux City’s grand palaces came to an end.

“**The Original Corn Palace City**” exhibit will be on display through November 2, 2008. The Sioux City Public Museum is housed in the historic John Peirce Mansion at 2901 Jackson Street in Sioux City. Regular hours are Tuesday through Saturday 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and Sunday 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. Admission is free. For more information, call 712-279-6174 or visit www.siouxcitymuseum.org.