



## WHO WE ARE & HOW WE WORK

**Silos & Smokestacks National Heritage Area (SSNHA)** is a 37-county region of Northeast Iowa recognized by the U.S. Congress to preserve and tell the story of American agriculture. The region's many natural, cultural, historic and recreational resources collectively shaped a nationally distinctive landscape. SSNHA supports a group of more than 120 designated Partner Sites working together to preserve and tell their own unique piece of the agricultural story.



In partnership with the **National Park Service (NPS)**, SSNHA joins 48 other National Heritage Areas to preserve our nation's stories. SSNHA is the only NHA solely dedicated to America's agricultural story. As an Affiliated Area of the

NPS, we are eligible to receive federal matching funds to facilitate the development of our story.

Serving as our region's coordinating entity; Silos & Smokestacks, the non-profit organization, does not own any sites. It is charged with carrying out the work of the Heritage Area by creating and supporting the network of sites and events that interpret and educate people about American agriculture, agribusiness, farm life and rural communities – past and present. **Silos & Smokestacks works with communities to develop, interpret and preserve the region's agricultural heritage by providing grants, interpretive services, educational assistance, capacity building and awareness-building activities.**

## INTERPRETIVE THEMES

The agricultural heritage of our region is explored through the interpretation of six themes. Each theme draws attention to different features of the area's heritage. Together the themes form an intellectual framework allowing visitors to unite the varied stories presented by the Partner Sites and build a greater understanding of the role of agriculture in American life.

### THE THEMES:

- **The Fertile Land**  
Prehistory and natural history of the region
- **Farmers and Families**  
People who farm the land
- **The Changing Farm**  
Evolution of farms over time
- **Higher Yields: the Science and Technology of Agriculture**  
Revolutions in agriculture
- **Farm to Factory: Agribusiness in Iowa**  
Evolution and role of agribusiness in shaping the character of the region
- **Organizing for Agriculture: Policies and Politics**  
Efforts made by Iowans to shape agriculture related policies

## WHO TO CONTACT

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## GRANTS

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**Silos & Smokestacks provides grants to assist partners and communities in developing, preserving and interpreting our region's agricultural story.**

**SSNHA General Grant** – 1:1 matching grants to preserve and tell the story of American agriculture through exhibits, interpretive signage, programs, education, events, etc. Due typically in summer.

**SSNHA Intern Grant** – Extends a college student's education beyond the classroom at Partner Sites. Due February.

**SSNHA Bus Grant** – Helps schools in the Heritage Area fund the transportation costs associated with field study trips to Partner Sites. Cycle opens August.

## MARKETING & AWARENESS

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**Silos & Smokestacks provides partners with opportunities to increase public awareness, interest and visitation to the Heritage Area.**

**Promotion** – Partner Sites have a number of free and paid opportunities to promote their sites; including a comprehensive listing in the SSNHA website and visitor guide, online events calendar, email and website promotions for agriculturally related partner programs and regional coop advertising.

**Public Relations** – To share what's going on at Heritage Area Partners Sites, SSNHA works with regional and national media to provide story ideas and updates to regional and national media.

**Visitor Engagement** – SSNHA engages visitors with the region's story through hosting booths at community/partner events, holding the **Capture the Heart of America** Photo Contest, sharing Partner Site updates on social media and a variety of other programs.

## INTERPRETIVE SERVICES

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**Silos & Smokestacks provides guidance to partners in developing their site's agricultural interpretation and visitor experience.**

**Individual Consultation** – Need an extra set of eyes on an exhibit, brochure or tour? SSNHA staff is available to visit your site and assist in these efforts.

**Interpretive Planning** – Through informal discussions, ideas will be reviewed on how to create a positive visitor experience from entrance to exit at your site.

**Outdoor Interpretive Signs** – To have a visible connection to all Partner Sites, a guidebook in planning, creating and designing your outdoor interpretive signs is available. Complete with templates, color palate, typefaces and logos.

## EDUCATION

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**Silos & Smokestacks provides Partner Sites with opportunities for professional development for their staff and volunteers, along with tools to develop their educational programming.**

**Annual Trainings** – To stay current on issues influencing the Heritage Area and to increase skills and knowledge of its Partner Site staff and volunteers, an annual meeting occurs every spring. Other workshops and webinars are held based on request from Partner Sites.

**Curriculum Development** – Help is available to Partner Sites to develop educational curriculum in relation to agriculture and meet Iowa CORE standards. The website [campsilos.org](http://campsilos.org) is a great resource for agricultural education and Iowa history, including free lesson plans.

**Speakers Bureau** – SSNHA staff is available to speak at Partner Site meetings, events, etc. about the Heritage Area, including Silos & Smokestacks 101 training to connect site staff and volunteers to what the Heritage Area is and how to greet visitors.

