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Iowa State Association of Counties

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To promote effective and responsible county government for the people of Iowa.

ISAC's Vision:

To be the principal, authoritative source of representation, information and services for and about county government in Iowa.

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County Conservation System

Iowa's "New" County Conservation System

The existence of County Conservation Boards in Iowa is not really a new concept. "It is my purpose here to show that such parks are needed, that they are needed now; that they should have the highest scientific value, and that in Iowa they are everywhere practicable!" wrote Thomas H. Macbride in his

1896 paper titled COUNTY PARKS. He further comments, "The necessity for such parks in Iowa seems to me to be threefold: 1) As directly affecting public health and happiness; 2) For proper education; and 3) To preserve to other times and men something of primeval Nature." This was 20 years before the initial Iowa Conservation Commission was formed in 1917 (reorganized into the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) in 1986), or the State Park System in 1920. So why would we call it "new"?

Thomas F. Hazelton

CEO, Iowa's County Conservation System
515.963.9582

While that MacBride paper may have heralded thoughts of a new county park system, it would take 47 years and two world wars before the concept would eventually get some legs. It was indeed the State Conservation Commission that presented a bill to the Iowa General Assembly in 1943 to permit the establishment of conservation-recreation agencies at the county level. The staff of the Iowa Conservation Commission (ICC), sportsman's groups, individuals and legislators worked on this bill until it appeared in an acceptable form and was passed by the Iowa General Assembly in the spring of 1955. The state law required that each individual county must pass a referendum during a general election in order to establish a county conservation board – the first 16 were voted into existence in 1956. With our current form of county government having been established in 1870, the first county conservation boards coming along some 86 years later puts them in a "new" county department category!

The early years were very much organizational in nature – by 1958 the ICC established the Office of County Conservation Activities. To facilitate networking and sharing, the expanding statewide system was divided into six regional "Districts" made up of 15 to 18 counties each. These have served us well for nearly 60 years and remain an integral feature of our structure and organization. To further interlace the infant network, 14 of the initial boards got together and formed the Iowa Association of County Conservation Boards (IACCB) in 1959. Together the state conservation office and IACCB would nurture the fledgling county conservation system to the incredible success story it would become.

Whether it was funding operations, program expansion or staffing needs the challenge of financing individual county boards has consistently appeared in meeting minutes across the state from day one. Outside funding sources were pretty much non-

County: Webster County

Project: Veterans Memorial Park

Project Budget: \$700,000



The Veterans Memorial Park is located in Webster County's John F. Kennedy Memorial Park (five miles north of Fort Dodge). The park consists of tree-lined paths, sculptures, an amphitheater, open shelter, and flags. To date, 321 flowering pear trees and marble markers have been placed in honor of local citizens that have served in the military.

Late in the summer of 2007, the reality of the war in Iraq was brought home to Fort Dodge when a local Marine was killed in action. The community gathered to honor this man and his family as he was escorted home. Out of this tragedy, came the idea to honor our local service men and women with a living memorial dedicated to their sacrifices. Fundraising and designing the Veterans Memorial

project was started in 2008 and has undergone four phases of development. The club has privately raised almost \$700,000 to create the beautiful tribute to local service men and women. Today the memorial is a popular place for outdoor weddings, family photos, and a quiet reminder of the sacrifices many have made for our freedom.

County Contact: Matt Cosgrove, Webster County Conservation Director, mcosgrove@webstercountyia.org

Partners: The Veterans Memorial Park is a project that is sponsored by the Fort Dodge Noon Sertoma Service Club. The project was inspired by Terry Moehnke, a local optometrist and city council member. The park's creation has involved hundreds of volunteers, thousands of service hours, private fundraising, a variety of in-kind donations by local businesses, and a unique partnership with the Webster County Conservation Board.



County Conservation System

existent, and the addition of a new county department in most counties was not necessarily looked upon favorably by existing departments – from a shared funding perspective that is. Enter the local support. The concept of local development, management and ownership of parks, recreation and natural areas caught on like wildfire! Almost immediately, the “buy-in” was there – from the board of supervisors, to business leaders, to the local non-government organizations and the volunteer public.

The 1960s added an additional 43 county conservation boards to the 50 established in the late 1950s – the exponential expansion was phenomenal. By the end of the tumultuous decade, a statewide directory listed some 697 areas encompassing 40,266 acres under CCB management – remarkable for a 93-county system that at-the-time operated with collective budgets totaling \$6.75 million. We received a significant outside funding boost in 1965 with the creation of the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LAWCON) which states, “..... to provide funds and matching grants to federal, state and local governments for the acquisition of land and water, and easements on land and water, for the benefit of all Americans.” Though the State Assistance portion of LAWCON provides 50/50 matching funds, decades of diverting funding streams at the federal level have left grant dollars at the state level at a low ebb, and with very intense competition for available funds. Various grant programs through the state of Iowa emerged over the years with funding provided by license/registration fees, or federal DOT dollars – many subject to annual budget appropriations – not dedicated, not permanent.

In addition to Allamakee County forming the 99th county conservation board in 1989, another significant development occurred – DNR closed the ICC Activities Office. The county conservation system had matured, and the ICC was ready to let go of the

reins. A few months of nervous reorganization to accommodate the “new normal” followed – putting the now 30-year old IACCB organization at a new level of leadership for networking and coordination....and then we were off and sprinting into the future!

County: Ringgold County

Project: Dragoon Trace Nature Center

Project Budget: \$424,239



The Ringgold County Conservation Board is excited to see the Dragoon Trace Nature Center coming to life. The Dragoon Trace is an historic trail that runs north and south through central Iowa and Missouri, including Ringgold County. It was originally made by the migration of animals, such as bison. Later used by the

pioneers, this was the road to change Iowa’s civilization. Executive Director Kate Zimmerman says, “The objective is to educate individuals so they will learn how to help sustain our natural resources and make choices that benefit them and the environment. Public attractions and educational opportunities in small Iowa communities benefit multiple groups of people and increase tourism in a neglected part of the state, increasing quality of life.” This project includes unique natural resources and creative funding alliances that will enhance the cultural, recreational and educational assets in Southern Iowa and offer a diverse program selection to the public that will cater to all ages.

The Dragoon Trace Nature Center is being designed with environmental friendly features and sustainable, low impact, green methods for long term efficiency. The Conservation Board’s goal is to utilize renewable resources and energy efficient resources for the nature center and to educate the public on the importance of these features. Some of these features include: solar lighting, geothermal heating and cooling, renewable building products, energy star appliances, water reducing faucets, alternative wetland sewer system, rain gardens and double entry on main entrance to reduce heating/cooling loss. The nature center is a Sand Creek Post and Beam traditional wood barn that will be 100% unique and showcase Iowa’s natural heritage.



County Contact: Kate Zimmerman, Executive Director, Ringgold County Conservation Board, ringgoldccb@ringgoldcounty.us

1990 brought us another historic development to benefit Iowa’s natural resources as the legislature approved the Resource Enhancement And Protection program (REAP) with huge bipartisan support. Though never having been fully funded at the \$20 million authorization, it has provided over \$70 million directly to county conservation boards in the past 27 years via direct payments and grant programs. (That number would be well over \$110 million had the program been fully funded.) County conservation has been a staunch advocate for REAP each of these 27 years – defending the formula, participating in the public processes and demonstrating the local benefits of this broader quality of life state-funded program.

Partially fueled by REAP, the early ‘90s also brought the expansion of Integrated Roadside Vegetation Management (IRVM) Programs across the state. 37 counties currently operate a roadside program – 12 of which are housed within the local county conservation board. The Living Roadways Trust Fund was established in 1988 to provide funding for integrated roadside vegetation management activities to eligible cities, counties, and applicants with statewide impact. Since inception, \$17 million has flowed through this grant program, the bulk of which has come from REAP. All-told, REAP has directed

County Conservation System

over \$354 million through nine funding streams towards Iowa's state, county and city natural resources.

Through the '90s and early 2000s, Iowa's county conservation system quietly expanded on all fronts – most notably the focus on quality conservation education programming and facilities. The system employed but a handful of full-time naturalists in the late '70s - growing to well over 100 by 2010. This was in direct relation to the addition of nearly 65 new nature centers around the state during the same time period! Uniquely, much of the financing for these beautiful facilities came from private sources and various grant programs. Almost every successful nature center project was associated with a local conservation foundation or county conservation friends group. Local support is critical. It's pretty amazing that some of these centers became a reality with little to no local tax dollars invested.

The other major expansion throughout the middle years came with explosion of the desire for trails everywhere across the state! Nearly 2/3 of the interconnecting statewide trail system is owned/managed by county conservation boards, and rightfully so. One merely has to imagine the thousands of adjoining landowners to these linear parks – many along abandoned railways, to grasp the scope of the need for local management and relationships. The sheer number of bridges, crossings and other support infrastructure is also mind-boggling. This trend has continued into the 2010s, but slowed considerably as external funding sources have diminished and competition for available grant monies has escalated. The number of trail projects

and infrastructure maintenance needs that sit on the back-burners due to lack of funding is staggering. Currently, there are NO grant opportunities for trail maintenance.

County: Mahaska County
Project: Caldwell Park Environmental Learning Center
Project Budget: \$3 million building and construction
Up to \$2 million displays



The Caldwell Park Environmental Learning Center project began in 2008 when a group of Mahaska County residents and the Mahaska County Conservation Board began plan-

ning to replace the aging and undersized Mahaska County Conservation Center at Russell Wildlife Area. The MCCB's award winning environmental education program had simply outgrown its facility.

When the waters receded from the flood of 2010, a local farmer discovered a mammoth bone. With the help of numerous partners an excavation was begun. The MCCB was fortunate to be able to acquire the bones through a grant from the Walter McQuiston Trust. The bones and mammoth history will be a prominent display at the ELC.

The MCCB then partnered with the Mahaska County Recreation Foundation, and the Oskaloosa Recreation Trail now loops through Caldwell Park. The local American Legion Auxiliary Post approached the MCCB about placing the Mahaska County Freedom Rock on the site, and the Board wholeheartedly supported the project.

The final piece of the puzzle came into place in November when the citizens of the unincorporated areas of Mahaska County voted to use a portion of the Local Option Sales Tax to help fund the construction of the project. The MCCB will be responsible for funding all of the interior displays and furnishings. The MCCB is planning on breaking ground on this project in the early summer of 2017, so the Caldwell Park Environmental Learning Center soon will have gone from being a vision to a destination for all Iowans.

County Contact: Dave Sedivec, Mahaska County Conservation Director, sedivec@mahaskacounty.org



County Conservation also maintained a presence at the Iowa State Fair for 40 years (1968-2008) promoting the expansive opportunities available within the young and growing statewide network. By 2006, the commitment of time and resources to market to fair visitors from a distinctly local region was deemed to be inefficient considering the advancement of technology and the growth of websites and the internet. Enter a new facet of county conservation in Iowa – MyCountyParks.com. Emerging with just a two-page presence in 2006, an \$80,000+ investment by Linn, Polk and Black Hawk CCBs spear-headed the 2009 launch of a dynamic, interactive website representing all 99 county conservation boards! The site was immediately recognized as the Iowa Tourism Website of the Year – connecting residents and visitors to the wealth of quality of life and outdoor recreation opportunities in each and every county. It also launched the beginning of an online reservation system for facilities and events - available to all counties - now processing 15,600+ reservations a year, and directing over \$1.6 million in revenues to participating counties. Subsequent versions of the website have been rolled out with strong statewide support and the infusion of an additional \$220,000 for ever-progressive development and maintenance. The 2013-2014 addition of an intranet-like County Conservation Portal proved to be a perfect solution to enhancing the ability of county conservation boards to network and share administratively. This secure, cloud-based system, coupled with a Version 4 of MyCountyParks.com put Iowa's county conservation system on the map once again – recognition from ISAC in 2015 with their Excellence in Action Award and a 2016 NACO Achievement Award from the National Association of Counties.

County: Buchanan County

Project: Cortright Wildlife Area

Project Budget: \$425,000



The Cortright Wildlife Area acquisition is a model example of how conservation groups effectively acquire and protect natural areas in the face of daunting land prices and small conservation budgets. This project provides 190 acres of forest, forested wetlands, prairie, trails, ponds, and Wapsipinicon River shoreline for public recreation. The project succeeded due to the Conservation Board's success in rallying partners and piecing together grants.

After purchasing the property, the Conservation Board looked immediately to its strong partner friends, and grant writing on the state and federal level began in earnest and were successful. Following the purchase and protection of the Cortright Wildlife Area, management work also needed to be funded.

Once the public saw the great work happening at Cortright, more landowners came forward wishing to see their adjoining bottomland forest become of part of this great public resource. Each of the partners and funders for this project were keys to success. The leveraging aspect of each contribution allowed the next step of fundraising to proceed and each grant request was strengthened. This is the nature of conservation projects in Iowa!

County Contact: Dan Cohen, Buchanan County Conservation Director,
bccbdan@iowatelecom.net

Partners: Interested Landowner, Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, Iowa Finance Authority, local bank, local conservation groups, State Pheasants Forever and National Wild Turkey Federation, REAP, Wildlife Habitat Stamp Program, NAWCA, Iowa DNR, USDA, and neighboring landowners



County Conservation System

So we have arrived in 2017 – just shy of our 62nd birthday. A quick snapshot of our county conservation system today provides some astounding statistics: 1,850 areas under management encompassing nearly 200,000 acres; 66 nature centers in operation with 6 more in development; over 10,500 campsites; over 1,600 miles of trails; 27,000 annual programs/events with over 757,000 participants; 148,000 acres open for public hunting; 180 cabins in 54 counties; \$1.25 billion of infrastructure assets (excluding land); and an incredible \$851 million of annual local economic impact for Iowa's economy! To accomplish all that needs doing – there are 612 permanent employees, 300+ seasonal employees, 495 conservation board members, and thousands of additional volunteers making up the people portion of who we are. There has been much visioning of "what could be" from those that have gone before us translated into actions building a diversity of bridges to continue the successes we are experiencing today. That \$6.75 million in collective budgets in 1970, has grown to \$77.2 million in 2016. An \$851 million return on a \$77 million investment annually. Throughout this feature projects are highlighted from across the state that exhibit this amazing work.

The paths we have followed from our infancy hail stories of trials and tribulations, victories and defeats, and scores of dynamic individuals stepping up into leadership roles when needed. We also recognize the all-too-infrequent efforts of our legislators to mobilize sufficient strategies to protect, preserve, support and enhance our diminishing natural resources and outdoor recreation opportunities. Iowa consistently ranks near the bottom of all states in public ownership of land, clean water, and support for tourism. The need for funding on many fronts must be substantial, consistent, dedicated and permanent. As referenced elsewhere by other articles in this magazine – the people of Iowa have spoken, and continue to speak loudly for state legislators to act on what they have been directed to do – fund the Trust for Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation. The need for dedicated supplemental funding across the state is well-documented in the 58-page, 2017 report on the Un-Met Needs of County Conservation. This living document demonstrates a current need of \$664.4 million to get on with tackling the backlog of infrastructure maintenance and improvements, program expansion and natural resource protection. If the projected \$23 million that could be available annually to county conservation through the Trust would become available – we still have 29 years of catching up to do. The need for future, outside funding is measurable and palpable – what Iowa will look like for future generations depends collectively on all of us today – doing the right thing. Funding the Trust will be the single most important quality of life issue we have seen in our lifetimes.

Leveraging Funds

CCB's – Making Your Dollar Go Farther

Today we live in a world where every dollar counts and public funds are scrutinized like never before. As a result of the “doing more with less” philosophy, Iowa’s County Conservation Board (CCB) System has evolved into a financial conduit for leveraging state, federal, city, and private funds to match your local county property tax dollars. Amazing quality of life projects are occurring in all 99 counties across Iowa as a result of Iowa’s unique County Conservation Board System and its ability to leverage funds.

Matt Cosgrove

Director, Webster County Conservation
ISAC Board of Directors
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Iowa’s impressive statewide trail network is a prime example of the ability of CCBs to plan, organize, construct, and manage trails that cross a variety of political sub-divisions and boundaries. In many cases, CCBs are the driving force behind these regional projects and enter into a variety of agreements to make the projects work. In a recent 15-mile trail expansion in Fort Dodge and Webster County, local partners used federal, state, city, county, and private funds to complete a \$6.7 million dollar trail expansion project over three years. In this case, the county invested \$400,000 to leverage \$6.3 million dollars and, upon completion, provided 15-miles of additional trails for their constituents. The group also raised nearly \$400,000 from local businesses and private donors in three months.

Improving Iowa’s water quality is another example of the ability of CCBs to work across political boundaries and coordinate projects on a variety of public and private lands. Many CCBs are involved in Watershed Management Authorities (WMA) that leverage state, federal, and local funds to implement watershed improvements throughout a targeted watershed. The majority of these projects involve private lands and are typically far too expensive for a single Conservation Board or agency to tackle alone. For example, Story County Conservation Board has partnered with the Squaw Creek Watershed Management Authority (and others) on numerous state, federal, and locally funded water quality improvement projects in the South Skunk River Watershed. Story County is currently working with Prairie Rivers of Iowa to assess water quality throughout the county and to explore the best partnership mechanisms among non-governmental organizations, counties, and WMAs to affect water quality improvements.

County: Chickasaw County
Project: Gilmore Wapsi Access
Project Budget: \$700,000



Gilmore Wapsi Access is a very popular public use area, especially with hunters, and shows what can happen when different agencies partner with each other.

This property’s existing habitat is diverse. Over one mile of the Wapsipinicon River runs through the property. There are natural and man-made wetland areas on both sides of the river along with reestablished grassland areas. There are approximately 150 acres of floodplain woodland, 37 acres of CRP, 20 acres in alfalfa, and 30 acres which was formerly pasture.

County Contact: Brian Moore, Chickasaw County Conservation Director, ccb_19@iowatelecom.net
Partners: Chickasaw County Board of Supervisors, Iowa DNR, Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, Iowa Pheasants Forever State Trust, NAWCA, REAP, Chickasaw County, and Pheasants Forever

Protecting Iowa’s land and water for future generations requires successful partnerships to purchase and to maintain parks, public hunting areas, historic sites, and sensitive habitats. CCBs rely on a variety of partners to acquire and protect our public lands. An example is Buchanan County Conservation Board’s popular Cortright Wildlife Area, a 190-acre acquisition project along the Wapsipinicon River. The board worked with a conservation-minded landowner to protect the unique natural qualities of the land and allow public access. The project was made possible through partnerships, donations, and grants through organizations including Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, Pheasants Forever, Iowa’s Resource Enhancement & Protection Program (REAP), Iowa Finance Authority, a local bank, local conservation groups, National Wild Turkey Federation, Wildlife Habitat Stamp Program, federal North American Wetland Conservation Act program, Iowa DNR, USDA, and neighboring landowners.

In many counties, non-profit foundations and “friends groups” provide the catalyst to raise private dollars and provide a critical volunteer base that helps your local CCB accomplish its mission. Every year countless volunteers organize fundraisers, help with environmental education programs, remove invasive species, staff nature centers, assemble playground equipment, or just lend a helping hand in your county parks. This crucial “friend” component of the County Conservation System is unique to Conservation Boards in county government. Our “friends” help to tell our story and open fundraising opportunities that may never exist without this local connection.

Whether the projects are big or small, your County Conservation Board is bringing partners to the table and leveraging resources that make Iowa counties great places to live, work, and play!

Enduring Partnerships

Enduring Partnerships

With the first 60 years behind us, it is hard to envision where Iowa's county conservation system would be today without the support of our boards of supervisors, tremendous local partnerships, and those essential outside funding sources. Thousands of acres would still be unprotected, once-in-a-lifetime opportunities would have been missed, and those bridges we are collectively building for others to follow would be far shorter and fewer. The partnership stories over the decades echo a familiar ring, "I got a call today..." or "Someone stopped in the office to let us know..." It's the spark that finds a connection and ignites a fuse for progress. Short, simple, conversations alerting a brief moment in time, guiding us to do the right thing, to do our jobs of conserving Iowa's ever diminishing natural resources, enhancing outdoor recreation opportunities, or advancing outdoor education and historical interpretation outreach.

It is through partnerships that we come together to push ourselves toward a better quality of life, to a brighter, more resilient, and sustainable future. Think of all the hours, all the planning, and all the strategies! Maybe it was putting together a timely and attractive funding package, or convening the people resources to make things happen in your county. It has always been about local control, local visioning, local support, and local dollars. Each county conservation board (CCB) has assembled its own unique network of friends, business leaders, non-government organizations, and elected officials, to create a local consortium of folks to bring forth dreams and work together to make them reality. Once developed, these support teams tend to foster decades of ongoing magic. There's really nothing else quite like it in the country!

It is with great pride and satisfaction that we can now look back on countless occasions over the decades of partnership successes across the state. Ribbon cuttings that celebrate trail connections, nature center openings, or the preservation of natural resources; all jobs "well done"! Interconnecting local control and support with external State and National resources demonstrate the Iowa success story of the CCB system.

As we endeavor to secure sustainable funding to support the vast array of un-met needs to protect and enhance Iowa's natural resources, it is reassuring to know that our most valuable resource, local partnerships, will stand with us. Our joint successes have cemented our resolve to continue, we know that we don't have to do this by ourselves.

Adam Shirley

Director, Mitchell County Conservation
President, County Conservation Directors
Association
mccb@osage.net

County: Marshall County

Project: Natural Playscape

Project Budget: \$73,125.10



The Marshall County Conservation Board is in the process of constructing a natural playscape at Grimes Farm which will include at least 15 play areas where children and adults can touch, smell, listen, and experience nature. The key to this project is to bring back the magic of nature play. A nature playscape is defined as a space with as little man made components as possible. By using native plants and

materials, rolling hills, and trees, playscapes represent a natural place such as a forest, stream, or other natural habitat. Playscapes are designed with the intent of bringing children and people back to nature.

Partners: Public and Private Donors

County: Marshall Project: Monarch Prairie Part- ners Pollinator Seeding Project Budget: \$5,795



The 485 acre Iowa River Wildlife Management area just north of Marshalltown received a splash of color in 2015 with the seeding of a pollinator mix of native prairie. The area seeded was previously pasture and contained little diversity in plant life. The effort of the USFWS to restore a corridor of habitat along I-35 from Minnesota to Texas was ideal for this Marshall County restoration effort. The response of the seeding was immediate with plants flowering in their first year that sometimes take several years to show their full glory. This habitat restoration plan is in response to pollinators like monarch butterflies and honey bees that have seen drastic reductions in their populations in recent years. In addition to providing habitat and food for insect life the native vegetation will provide much needed nest and winter cover for species like Pheasants and Wild Turkeys. An



additional 36 acres is planned to be restored at the area in 2017.

County Contact: Mike Stegmann,
Marshall County Conservation
Director, mccb@marshallcountya.gov

Partners: Marshall County Conservation Board, Iowa DNR, USFWS, Pheasants Forever

Securing the Trust Fund

Historic Efforts to Secure Public Trust for Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation

This year, the Iowa Legislature and Governor have an extraordinary opportunity to leave a legacy more enduring than anything the state has accomplished in decades – to fund the state’s constitutionally protected Natural Resources and

Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund. Accomplishing this measure requires fractionally raising the state sales tax by 3/8 of one cent. It doesn’t seem like much, but for Iowans and visitors to the state, this will be monumental. The Fund will provide needed enhancements to water quality, parks, trails, hunting, fishing and more. There will be stronger efforts than ever before to clean Iowa’s water and to reduce the threat from future floods. Campgrounds, shelters, and other infrastructure will finally have dedicated funds for repairs and upgrades. Iowa no longer will be ranked near the bottom among other states in making these needed investments.

The Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund represents the most researched, vetted, and strategic means for addressing the myriad of state water quality, conservation, and outdoor recreation needs. It has its roots in a decades-long conversation among Iowans on the need to find a sustainable and meaningful way to care for land, water, and the people who rely on these resources. Accomplishments have occurred – most notable was passage of the 1989 Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) Act. However, REAP has never been fully funded, and along with other state conservation programs there is so little funding that Iowa typically ranks among the bottom two to three states in investing in natural resources, parks, and recreation areas.

In 2006, Iowa legislators recognized the normal ways of funding conservation programs were not adequate, and established a Sustainable Funding for Natural Resources Advisory Committee (SF Committee) to study the issue and make funding recommendations. The legislation called for individuals to be appointed by the Governor, and specified the participating groups to include Iowa Farm Bureau and Farmers Union, Pheasants Forever and Ducks Unlimited, Iowa Environmental Council and Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, Soil and Water Conservation Districts and IDALs, Iowa Renewable Fuels Association, and more. County Conservation Boards were also given a seat on the committee. Bipartisan representation included two republican and two democratic legislators, from both the House and Senate. In total, the Committee consisted of 18 members from the diverse groups.

The SF Committee went to work right away. It began by defining aspects of natural resources and how people interact with these resources. During much of 2006 and 2007, members researched the state’s natural resources needs, and began looking at sustainable funding mechanisms that had the potential to meet these needs. All meetings were open to the public. As a legislative-enacted committee, the group was able to call on state experts to present on aspects of financing, legislative processes, and natural resources needs. Presentations also were given by experts from other states where sustainable funding mechanisms were already in place. A “Willingness to Pay” survey of Iowans was conducted to determine to what degree, and upon what conditions, Iowans were willing to pay to address state natural resources needs.

Dan Cohen

Executive Director

Buchanan County Conservation Board

bccbdan@iowatelecom.net | 319.636.2617

County: Wayne County

Project: Lakeside Park Shelter Renovation

Project Budget: \$21,000



Wayne County Conservation recognized a need to expand as well as remodel the Lakeside Park shelter. With grant funding, Wayne County Conservation remodeled and repaired the shelter meeting all objectives. A fireplace, additional space for picnic tables, upgraded electric, new cement floor, a serving table with electric outlets and a handicapped walkway are some of the additions. The building requires very little maintenance and is an extremely popular place to rent for picnics, weddings and reunions. Please stop by and visit Lakeside Park if you are traveling through Wayne County.



County Contact: Bonnie Friend, Wayne County Conservation Board Executive Director, wccb2301@gmail.com

Partners: Langtry Foundation Grant and Build with Bags Grant Program

Securing the Trust Fund

An amazing thing happened. After more than a year of research, the diverse members of the SF Committee came to unanimous consensus on some findings and recommendations, including the following:

- Although it would take billions of dollars to fully meet all of Iowa's natural resources needs, an annual investment of an additional \$150 million will provide substantial progress over time. This relies on a strategic plan for spending that recognizes the importance of various state and local programs. For example, county conservation boards would receive funds to better enhance natural areas, improve water quality, and provide outdoor recreation locally. A strategic formula, based on the Committee's research, was unanimously recommended (see chart on page 13).
- For Iowans to have faith that funds will be used only for natural resources and outdoor recreation, any funding mechanism needs to be constitutionally protected in public trust. Spending should be subject to an annual audit and shown in an annual report.
- The funding mechanism has to be able to meet the \$150 million funding need, be sustainable, and, if possible, should be indexed for inflation. Polling data indicated a desire that all Iowans have an investment in natural resources funding. More than 40 potential mechanisms were identified, and several received in-depth study. The Committee came to unanimous consensus that the best mechanism to meet these funding aspects was a 3/8-cent state sales tax increase.
- In 2007, the Iowa Legislature established a bipartisan Legislative Interim Committee to study the SF Committee recommendations. Presentations were made to the Interim Committee, which analyzed the funding formula, sales tax funding mechanism, polling data, and other SF Committee work. In 2007, the Interim Committee unanimously adopted the SF Committee's recommendations, and suggested the Legislature allow the question of a constitutional amendment establishing the Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund be considered by the Iowa electorate.

Changing the Iowa Constitution is no small feat. It requires passage through the Iowa House and Senate in two successive Legislative Assemblies. A tax cannot be raised through referendum vote in Iowa, so the language in the Amendment could only refer to funding being dependent on the Legislature and Governor adopting a future sales tax increase. To clarify and help the process, the funding formula was written into a Legislative Code proposal, which was eventually enacted into state law (Chapter 461). A group known as Iowa's Water and Land Legacy (I WILL) formed to help educate legislators and the public about the initiative and funding formula. In 2008 and 2009, ballot placement of the Constitutional Amendment proposal to establish the Trust Fund, dedicating the first 3/8th-cent of the next sales tax increase to the Fund and requiring an annual report and audit of all spending, was passed through the two Iowa Legislature sessions – each time with near-unanimous support.

In 2010, Iowans were given their chance to voice support in the ballot booth – and they spoke loudly! More than 62% voted to change the Iowa Constitution and establish the Trust Fund. More people voted for the measure than voted for any candidate for state office. Subsequent polling in 2014 shows 81% of Iowans support having a functioning Trust fund, and 67% support a fractional tax increase to fund the Trust. For comparison, the fuel tax increase was adopted in 2015 with 48% public support.

Today, the best hope for meaningful work on Iowa's water quality and other natural resources and outdoor recreation needs and desires is the dedicated Trust Fund and funding formula that currently sits empty. The public has spoken. The question now is about political will.

Dan Cohen works as Executive Director for the Buchanan County Conservation Board, and served as a representative on the Sustainable Funding for Natural Resources Advisory Committee from 2006 to 2009.

County: Polk County

**Project: Thomas Mitchell Camp Creek Stabilization
Project Budget: \$1,070,643**



Camp Creek, which flows through Thomas Mitchell Park near Mitchellville, underwent restoration work in 2013-2014. The project was designed to improve water quality in addition to protect downstream habitat and existing and planned park infrastructure. This was accomplished through stabilization of both the streambed and collapsing banks along Camp Creek.

As a follow up to the overall restoration project and as part of the bank stabilization work, nine access points composed of limestone steps leading down the water's edge were installed along the waterway in 2015. The steps serve as a dual feature which provide much-needed stabilization of the bank as well as offer recreational access to the creek for park visitors. These features placed throughout Camp Creek encourage families to go down to the water's edge and invite them to explore a stream habitat in a safe manner.

County Contact: Kami Rankin, Community Outreach Supervisor, kami.rankin@polk-countyiowa.gov

Endorsing the Trust Fund

County Conservation Directors Endorse Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund

During its annual meeting in Des Moines, the County Conservation Director's Association (CCDA) re-affirmed its support and endorsement for funding the Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund. The organization, which consists of Conservation Board Directors from counties throughout Iowa, recognized the constitutionally-protected Trust Fund as the best means for the state to make progress on problems related to water quality and other natural resources, as well as meeting outdoor recreation needs of citizens.

The CCDA also endorsed the funding strategy currently written into state law (Iowa Code Chapter 461), which was the product of years of research, public opinion polling, and bipartisan legislative agreement. The formula was the basis for the public's vote on the constitutional amendment that created the Trust Fund, and calls for funds to be distributed largely through existing channels to both state and local partners in a manner that requires little need for new bureaucracy (see chart on page 13).

Thanks to Iowa voters who overwhelmingly voted to amend the Iowa Constitution in 2010, the first 3/8-cent of the next sales tax increase will be placed in the Trust Fund and spent on Iowa's natural resources and outdoor recreation needs. The Constitution prohibits the use of these funds for any other purposes – the funds cannot be raided or reassigned. The Constitution also requires spending from the Trust Fund be accountable through public reports and audits. Unfortunately, the Trust Fund has yet to receive any money. The Iowa Constitution does not allow a tax increase by referendum. Only the Legislature and Governor can enact the tax increase to fund the Trust and these players have yet to do so. The increase can occur as a simple, stand-alone measure, or as part of a broader tax reform.



County Conservation Board Directors from throughout Iowa gather during their annual meeting to pose with a banner announcing their endorsement for funding of the Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund. (photo by Tom Hazleton)

County: Butler County

Project: Paul Schoeman Memorial Nature Area Development

Project Budget: \$50,000 (through the first three phases) | \$261,000 Total Project



Paul Schoeman Memorial Nature Area was donated to the Butler County Conservation Board as a park and natural area. In 2013, seeking to increase usability of the area and develop local ownership in the project, Dike-New Hartford Middle School Students were invited to generate, research, and present several development ideas for the area that would meet the intended use as a public park while maintaining the integrity of the natural area. After a series of meetings, conservation board staff utilized several ideas generated by the students to form a plan containing five main development priorities. Since completion of the plan, two donations have allowed for the completion of three of the five priorities.

To have an immediate impact and increase area access, phase one of the project included the development of a new parking area, information kiosk, and hiking trail system. In phase two, interpretive signs were created and placed along the trails to allow park users to learn about habitats and wildlife at the park. Staff planted food plots to provide food for a wide variety of wildlife while students built and installed Bluebird houses. In phase three, the Conservation Corps installed a boardwalk and wetland observation deck which allows people to get out into the area's wetland. Future development plans for the area include the construction of an observation tower, construction of a composting toilet facility, increasing the size and depth of a pond on the west portion of the property, and the installation of a windmill powered water pump to create a small stream which will aerate the water and help maintain water levels in the pond.



County Contact: Mike Miner, Butler County Conservation Director, butlerccb@butler-bremer.com

Partners: Butler County Conservation Board, Dike-New Hartford Middle School, Dike-New Hartford High School, Iowa Conservation Corps, Private Donors

Endorsing the Trust Fund

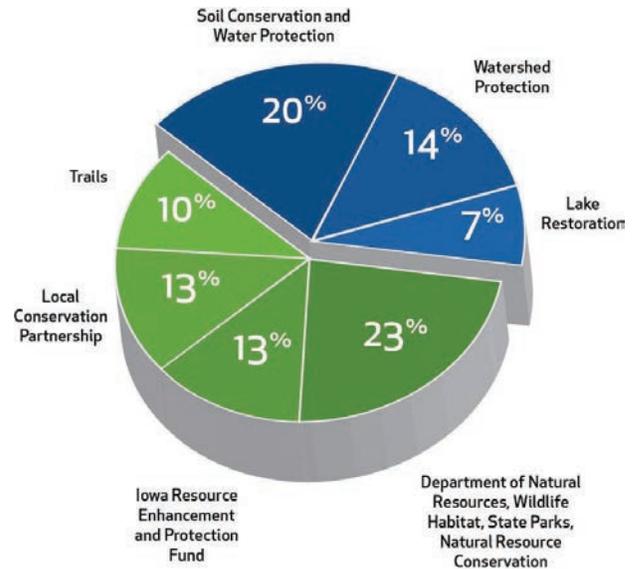
Buchanan County Conservation Board Director Dan Cohen served on the Advisory Committee that first recommended the Trust Fund in 2007. According to Cohen: “Keep in mind that the Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund represents the only plan that will be brought forth this year to address water quality, outdoor recreation, and other natural resources needs that is comprehensive, strategic, well-vetted by stakeholders, approved by Iowa citizens, and protected in the Iowa constitution”.

Most Trust Fund dollars will directly address water quality concerns, but there also is much to be gained for parks and outdoor recreation. “Iowa’s park system and trails are important to state and local economies, helping attract and retain businesses and skilled workers who expect appealing recreational opportunities,” said Tom Hazelton, CEO of Iowa’s County Conservation System. “There are many double benefits, too – protected and enhanced hunting and fishing areas often also are protected and enhanced for water quality.”

“Iowans do not want to wait for meaningful work to address the state’s water quality crisis, and are eager for improved places to interact in the outdoors,” said CCDA President Adam Shirley, Director of the Mitchell County Conservation Board. “Hundreds of rivers, lakes, and streams are listed as impaired for recreation use. Some older local and state parks facilities require major maintenance and upgrades, or need to be updated to meet modern needs. Many recreational trails are disconnected or need repair. With all of this, we live in a state that ranks 47th in the country in spending on natural resources and outdoor recreation. The Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund represents a turning point toward a better Iowa for today’s citizens and a legacy for future generations.”

ISAC has made funding the Trust Fund and retention of the current funding formula a Top Priority for this legislative session – recognizing broad support among all affiliates of local government.

For more information about the Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund, visit: <http://www.iowaswaterand-landlegacy.org/about/>.



Funding Distribution Formula for the Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund. Source: Chapter 461 Code of Iowa.

County: Dickinson County

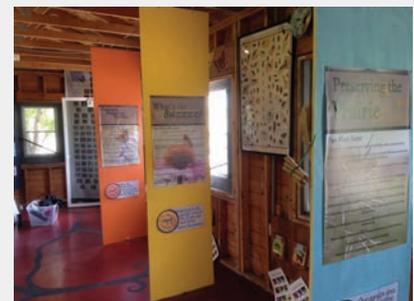
Project: Pollinator Paradise

Project Budget: \$1.7 million



Dickinson County Conservation is devoting its efforts into the design and construction of the new Pollinator Paradise. This will be an addition to the current Dickinson County Nature Center that will be devoted to education about pollinators, and will contain a greenhouse to grow pollinator plants, a live bee hive, interactive displays for learning and a showcase of the butterflies’ life cycle. During the summer season, we will rear monarch caterpillars until they reach adulthood so people can see the entire life cycle up close and then will release those butterflies into the wild. We also have plans to have a walk-through caterpillar and multiple sculptures of pollinators. This facility will help educate the public year-round and will especially enrich the annual Bee and Butterfly Festival held during monarch migration. This annual festival draws in about 600 people each year and is growing.

Dickinson County Conservation currently has a very small Pollinator Paradise center housed in a tiny garden shed that is only open during the summer season. The plans for the new building addition will greatly increase the availability and impact of this offering and will increase awareness of the ever-growing importance of pollinators.



County Contact: Lee Sorenson, Dickinson County Conservation Director, lsorenson@co.dickinson.ia.us

Partners: Local and Private Funds

IWILL Coalition

In 2010, a campaign led by the Iowa Water and Land Legacy (IWILL) coalition waged a successful effort in passing a voter-approved law establishing the Iowa Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund. While 62% of voters overwhelmingly supported creating the trust fund to preserve Iowa's natural resources, in the six years following not one penny has been set aside.

This year, the IWILL coalition is back to continue working on behalf of taxpayers and those concerned with the future of Iowa's greatest legacy. The coalition is broader than ever, attracting conservatives, business leaders and farmers, adding to the long-established list of conservationists, hunters and anglers, and conservation groups. As co-chairs of this coalition, we have seen first-hand the changing perspectives amongst elected officials in recognizing the importance of improving Iowa's water quality.

Why is this exciting coalition expansion occurring now? Because nothing spurs people into action like urgency and the prospect for success.

Pitting utilities and counties against each other in a very public lawsuit is a big concern for all Iowans. No matter who "wins" in court, ultimately everyone loses. Hard feelings will linger and if we engage now we can prevent future lawsuits.

Additionally, we do not believe Iowans overwhelmingly voted to establish a trust fund to then not fund it. Legislators and the Governor have an opportunity to finally address a priority by those same voters who put them in office.

Attracting and retaining families that will help Iowa's economy grow and prosper means having clean water and more recreational options, whether that is in our waterways or on trails. By working together to solve a pervasive problem, we send a strong message to current and future employers that we take our responsibility as Iowa citizens seriously.

Just as our roads, highways and bridges are vital to economic growth, so too is our natural resources infrastructure in advancing the health, wellbeing and workforce retention of our communities both large and small.

County: Adams County

Project: Lake Icaria Improvements

Project Budget: Approved: \$2.9 million | Final Costs: \$2.67 million



With the passage of a \$1.3 million general obligation bond by 72% in Adams County and combining that with an essential county purpose bond, grants, and funding from the County's REAP account, Adams County was able to accomplish this amazing project.

The project included four separate parts all happening at the same time. 1. Updating the Timber Ridge Campground at Lake Icaria to include 39 full-service campsites, and 22 electric with water sites. This part of the project included leveling of all campsites, installation of all new electric lines that could handle larger units, water lines, sewer lines, and a sewer lift station. 2. Construction of five restroom/kitchenette additions to the current cabins. Lake Icaria currently offers 14 cabins for rental. 3. Demolition and installation of two restroom shower facilities in the Lake

View Camping Area. The new restrooms are of the new solid concrete variety and family style. 4. Installation of six miles of force main sewer line and two lift stations that now pump all of Lake Icaria's waste to the City of Corning for treatment. This is a much safer system in terms of protecting Lake Icaria's water quality.

Benefits to the local community and economy have already been seen as a result of this project. Our cabin reservations are on the increase, and with the implementation of a camping reservation system this January, we anticipate increased camper usage also.

County Contact: Dan Carl, Adams County Conservation Director, accb@adamscountyyia.com

Partners: Adams County Board of Supervisors, Corning Municipal Utilities, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Iowa West Foundation, Schildberg Foundation, Adams Community Foundation, REAP and the Adams County Conservation Board

IWILL Coalition

Our coalition includes health organizations like the American Heart Association and American Cancer Association, as both recognize the serious impact the outdoor environment has in making Iowans healthier. They joined our coalition for a news conference and are encouraging their members to get involved and share their support for funding the Trust.

Our growing list of mayors includes Sioux City, Storm Lake, Des Moines, Muscatine, Charles City, Coralville, Fairfield and Cedar Rapids, with many others coming on board as well.

Farmers are eager to participate in the state's Nutrient Reduction Strategy, which has the goal of a 45% reduction in nitrogen and phosphorous runoff in Iowa. As more data becomes available and widespread, we can use real-time information with these innovative conservation tools and methods that make water cleaner, land more valuable and farming operations more profitable.

Many of our new coalition members are focused on their communities' local needs, recognizing the valuable contribution the trust fund will make in keeping up important infrastructure for parks and tourism within their respective regions. Locally, we encourage you to educate your neighbors and friends. Get them engaged as well.

The prospect for success has never been closer. Hearing lawmakers of both parties offer encouraging words of support for water quality is nice, but the fact that multiple legislative proposals addressing the problem were brought forth last year is beyond encouraging. This year, we are hopeful that as legislators and the Governor seek to reform the tax code, funding the trust with a 3/8 sales tax increase remains a priority.

That's why, with readers of this issue in mind, we hope you will help our coalition by writing, emailing, calling and visiting with your Representative or Senator, and encourage them to make funding the trust a priority.

Visit www.lowasWaterandLandLegacy.org today and add your name to the growing list of supporters from every county in this state. Like and follow us on Facebook and Twitter to help magnify our grassroots voice loudly and often.

The time to fund the trust is long past due, and IWILL will not stop until our goal for a sustainable, protected funding source through a 3/8-cent increase in the state's sales tax has been met.

County: Palo Alto County Project: Lost Island Huston Park



The Lost Island Huston Park has taken on several updates in the past year. Updates include a campground renovation, a dock, and three new lake accesses, along with completion of a recreational trail going through the park and an ongoing lake restoration project.

The Palo Alto County Conservation Board was fortunate to partner with the Iowa DNR on the Lost Island Lake restoration project in an effort to remove the rough fish in the lake. In short, this extensive project consisted of fish barriers, water control structures, seining, and the release of predator fish to control future rough fish numbers. Water quality has improved dramatically, along with improved fisheries. Partnerships were key to the success of this project. Other partners included the Palo Alto County Supervisors, Lost Island Lake Protective Association, Palo Alto Soil and Water Conservation District, and Ducks Unlimited.

Huston Park borders beautiful Lost Island Lake and is a place for visitors and local residents to enjoy a variety of outdoor recreation, such as, fishing, boating, camping, wildlife viewing, swimming, and hiking.

The Palo Alto County Conservation Board updated the campground this past year to provide larger campsites, water and electrical hook-ups, and angled sites to pull in. In addition, a playground was installed. The campground re-opened in August and was nearly full every weekend. The campground and playground project were funded by a gaming grant. The county budget and trust fund was used for the 25% matching funds, along with local donations from Iowa Trust & Savings Bank- Emmetsburg, Iowa State Bank-Ruthven, Art & Audrey Smith Foundation-Emmetsburg, River Valley Telephone, and Farmers Bank-Spencer.

There were also many other projects. Three lake access points in the park were re-constructed using REAP funds. A new boating/fishing dock at Lost Island Huston Park was funded by a state Water Recreation Access Cost-share grant. Lost Island Protective Association (LIPA) provided the 25% matching funds. The recreational trail has been completed through the park and has been a huge draw for Lost Island Huston Park. The trail was funded with gaming grants, and the Lost Island Protective Association provided the 25% matching funds for the trail.

Lost Island Huston Park continues to make progress. These amenities and improvements strengthen our community in many ways for future generations.

County Contact: Mary Barrick, Palo Alto County Conservation Director, paccb@ruthventel.com



ISAC Meetings

2017 ISAC County Day at the Capitol and Legislative Conference

Registration for the 2017 ISAC County Day at the Capitol and 2017 ISAC Legislative Conference are now open for both events. County Day at the Capitol will be held on Wednesday, March 8, 2017 and will begin at the State Historical Building - see more on the next page. The Legislative Conference will take place on March 9-10 at the Des Moines Marriott Downtown. All Legislative Conference activities and affiliate meetings will take place in one location again this year, the Des Moines Marriott Downtown. You can find all of the information that you need to prepare for the Legislative Conference on the conference website under the Meeting and Events Tab at www.iowacounties.org. From conference registration information to affiliate agendas to maps of downtown Des Moines, the website is updated on a regular basis with new and important conference details. Online housing will close at 4:30 pm on Friday, February 10, 2017. Pre-registration for both events will close on Friday, February 24, 2017. It is very important to pre-register for ISAC conferences so that we make sure to have enough food and materials for all attendees.



Kelsey Sebern
Meeting/Event Administrator
ksebern@iowacounties.org

Don't Miss These Great Legislative Conference Educational Seminars!

All educational seminars will be held from 9:00 am - 10:15 am on Thursday, March 9 in the Iowa Ballrooms on the second floor of the Des Moines Marriott Downtown.

Civility: Where Do We Go From Here...and What Role Can I Play

Civility as a concept has moved from 'nice to necessary' with the recent and current issues in our communities, country and abroad. J. Scott Raecker, Director of The Robert D. and Billie Ray Center at Drake University, will present current context for the work of The Ray Center to enhance a culture of civility. Scott will present strategies on how to address our most pressing issues and what we can each individually do to positively impact both dialogue and actions.

Supervisory Training - Recognizing Signs and Symptoms of Drug/Alcohol Use

Drug and alcohol use can have a number of consequences for the employer. Lisa J. Hanus, Manager of the Drug/Mobile Testing Services, UnityPoint Clinic-Occupational Medicine, will discuss the signs and symptoms of drug and alcohol use and why this topic should be important to all those in a supervisory role within the county.

Supreme Court Update for Counties

The current Supreme Court docket includes many cases of interest to counties involving issues from police shootings to property rights disputes. The near future may include challenges to the Waters of the United States definition, the Clean Power Plan, and the Fair Labor Standards Act overtime regulations. And what are we to expect from the newest Supreme Court Justice? Discuss this and more in this Supreme Court update with Lisa Soronen, Executive Director of the State and Local Legal Center.

SAVE THE DATES!

2017 smart connections
Learn | Innovate | Solve
April 27
Holiday Inn Airport
Des Moines

 **ISAC LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE**

Performance Management and Effective Performance Reviews

MAY 11 Des Moines Area Community College | Des Moines
MAY 24 Iowa Central Community College | Storm Lake
MAY 25 Indian Hills Community College | Ottumwa
MAY 31 Kirkwood Community College | Cedar Rapids
JUNE 7 North Iowa Area Community College | Mason City
JUNE 8 Iowa Western Community College | Atlantic


11th annual
ISAC Scholarship Golf Fundraiser
August 2, 2017
Toad Valley Golf Course
Pleasant Hill



Join us on Wednesday, March 8, for County Day at the Capitol.

Schedule of events

10:00 am - 11:00 am
Legislative Updates
State Historical Building Auditorium

11:00 am - 3:00 pm
Affiliate Displays and
Legislative Interaction
Capitol Rotunda

11:30 am
Lunch
Capitol Rotunda West Wing

Registration is open for County Day at the Capitol. This event will begin at the State Historical Building auditorium. There will be special presenters on the hot issues of the time. From there, the group will travel to the Capitol. The time at the statehouse will give county officials the opportunity to participate in the lobbying process by meeting with their legislators.

This year's event is being held in conjunction with the 2017 ISAC Legislative Conference, March 9-10. Hotel accommodations are available at discounted rates on Tuesday, March 7 at Legislative Conference hotels.

We have secured space in the Capitol Rotunda for affiliate displays. This will give each individual affiliate the opportunity to introduce legislators and the public to your important roles in the effective administration of county government.

Lunch will be provided for legislators and attending county officials in the Capitol Rotunda West Wing. This will again give county officials the opportunity to interact with legislators. Please pre-register for an accurate lunch count.

In order to have the opportunity to meet with your legislators on this day, each county is encouraged to set up meetings with their legislators in advance. Most days of the session are extremely busy and having a scheduled time with your legislators is very important to make the most of your day.

As an ISAC member county it is important to be involved in the legislative session and to work to promote ISAC's legislative priorities and objectives. County Day at the Capitol will give our members the opportunity to support ISAC's efforts and work towards improving county government.

It is our hope that by making a concentrated effort to focus on county issues on just one day, that we will have the greatest impact at the Capitol.

Please pre-register at www.iowacounties.org, and mark your calendars now for March 8, 2017! Pre-registration closes at 4:30 pm on Friday, February 24.

ISAC Brief

Since 2010 during the Fall School General Session ISAC has annually honored one individual as an ISAC Golden Eagle. The ISAC Golden Eagle was created to recognize and honor individuals who have provided extraordinary public service to county government through ISAC and/or NACo.

Golden Eagle Honorees are selected from nominations submitted to the ISAC Golden Eagle Committee, which consists of board and staff members. The committee will then submit its recommendation to the ISAC Board for approval. The ISAC Golden Eagle honoree(s) will be recognized during the 2017 ISAC Annual Conference General Session on August 23.

Those eligible for induction include:

- Current or former elected and appointed county officials
- Business or civic leaders
- ISAC Preferred Vendors
- Persons providing assistance to counties as trainers, consultants or advisors
- Former members of ISAC staff

*Current ISAC board members and staff are not eligible.

Honorees will be selected on the basis of their service rendered to county government through ISAC and/or NACo. Such service may include:

- Leadership in ISAC and ISAC-affiliated boards
- Service to NACo
- Service on state or national boards or commissions
- Service to counties in training, education and development of local leadership
- Advocacy for counties and good local government
- Assistance and support to counties

Past honorees include:

2010 – Jane Halliburton, former Story County Supervisor and ISAC board member
2011 – Kim Reynolds, Lt. Governor and former Clarke County Treasurer
2012 – J. Patrick White, ret. Johnson County Attorney and ISAC Past President
2013 – Mike Wentzien, Supervisors Lobbyist
2014 – Richard Heidloff, former Lyon County Treasurer and ISAC Past President
2015 – Sue Vande Kamp, former Story County Recorder
2016 – Linda Langston, former Linn County Supervisor and NACo Past President

To nominate qualified individuals to be honored as ISAC Golden Eagles, please complete the form on the next page and return it to:

Iowa State Association of Counties
Attn: ISAC Golden Eagle
5500 Westown Parkway, Suite 190
West Des Moines, IA 50266

A form can also be found on the following page or on the ISAC website, www.iowacounties.org.

Please return submissions before May 26, 2017. A golden eagle is not guaranteed to be honored annually. If you have any questions regarding the ISAC Golden Eagle, please contact Rachel Bennett at 515.244.7181 or rbennett@iowacounties.org.



Rachel Bennett

Communications and Marketing Manager
rbennett@iowacounties.org

ISAC Golden Eagle Nomination Form

The Iowa State Association of County recognizes individuals who have provided extraordinary public service to county government through ISAC and/or NACo as ISAC Golden Eagles.

Individual Nominated:

Position:

Brief Biography:

In your view, what has this person done to provide extraordinary service to ISAC and/or NACo? Why do you feel this person should be an ISAC Golden Eagle honoree?

Nominated by:

Forward this form to:
Iowa State Association of Counties
Attn: ISAC Golden Eagle
5500 Westown Parkway, Suite 190
West Des Moines, IA 50266

**Please return submission prior to May 26, 2017.*

ISAC Brief

ISAC Board Meeting Summary – Friday, January 20, 2017

ISAC President Peggy Rice called the meeting to order and led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Representative Mike Sexton swore in Peggy Rice as 2017 ISAC President. Representative Sexton swore in the remainder of the ISAC Board and Executive Committee.

The December 14, 2016 meeting minutes of the ISAC Board of Directors were reviewed and approved unanimously.

President Rice recessed the ISAC board meeting and reconvened at the conclusion of the ICTS board meeting.

Brad Holtan reviewed the financial report for December 31, 2016. He highlighted the NCO School, ISAC Fall School of Instruction and royalty revenue. Brad also presented the ISAC 990 and the ISAC Education Foundation 990T which were approved unanimously.

Bill Peterson reviewed the process for adopting the FY 2018 ISAC Budget. The budget recommendation from the ISAC Executive Committee will take place and be acted on during the February 9 meeting of the Board.

Brad presented the ISAC Board Conflict of Interest Policy and asked that board members return the signed acknowledgement.

Kristi Harshbarger gave an update on legal matters.

Rachel Bennett reviewed the new timeline for the ISAC Golden Eagle nomination process. Nominations are currently being accepted through May 26, 2017.

Rachel gave an update on the ISAC online voting tool that will be used for ISAC voting members to vote on the 2018 ISAC Legislative Priorities next fall.

Bill Peterson reported that the ISAC Board seat on the Case Management and Mental Health Disability Services (CM&MHDS) Board is vacant. Changes were made to the CM&MHDS 28E agreement so that the representative doesn't need to be a member of CM&MHDS. The Board unanimously appointed Mark Sybesma to the CM&MHDS Board.

The Board unanimously appointed Burlin Matthews to fill the ISAC Board vacant seat on the State Elections Administrators Training (SEAT) Board.

Jamie Cashman and Lucas Beenken gave an update on the first week and an outlook of the legislative session. The Board unanimously approved a proposal that included up to \$1,000 in funds to be used for a social media campaign for hands free communication with other coalition members.



2017 ISAC Board of Directors

Front Row (L to R):

3rd Vice President: Burlin Matthews, Clay County
1st Vice President: Lonny Pulkrabek, Johnson County Sheriff
President: Peggy Rice, Humboldt County Auditor
2nd Vice President: Eric Stierman, Dubuque County Treasurer

Middle Row (L to R):

Assessor: Jean Keller, Bremer County
Recorder: Marilyn Dopheide, Carroll County
Community Services: Shane Walter, Sioux County
Supervisor: Carl Mattes, Humboldt County
Public Health: Kathy Babcock, Chickasaw County
Engineer: Brad Skinner, Montgomery County
Attorney: Wayne Reisetter, Dallas County
Past President: Joan McCalmant, Linn County Recorder

Back Row (L to R):

Information Technology: Joel Rohne, Worth County
Environmental Health: Joe Neary, Palo Alto County
Past President and NACo Representative: Melvyn Houser, Pottawattamie County Auditor
Planning and Zoning: Tim Huey, Scott County
NACo Board Member: Grant Veeder, Black Hawk County Auditor
Supervisor: Mark Sybesma, Sioux County
Conservation: Matt Cosgrove, Webster County

Not pictured:

Emergency Management: AJ Mumm, Polk County
Veterans Affairs: Elizabeth Ledvina, Tama County

Kelsey Sebern gave an update on the 2017 ISAC NCO School that was held January 18-19.

County Day at the Capitol will be held on March 8 in conjunction with the ISAC Legislative Conference which is March 9-10. Kelsey reviewed the Legislative Conference educational seminars and the highlights of the agenda.

Rachel gave an overview of the 2017 schedule of webinars and requested ideas for future webinars that would highlight county projects that are being done across the state.

Kelsey presented a proposal to the Board for hotel rooms at the convention center hotel for the Annual Conference from August 2018 through 2021. The rates are very comparable to current rates and include a 3% increase each year. The Board unanimously approved the future hotel rates at the convention center hotel as proposed.

Kelsey gave an overview of the 2017 ISAC Leadership Institute that will cover performance management and effective performance reviews. Dates have been set across Iowa in May and June.

Brad and Bill distributed a handout and discussed the issues that occurred in conjunction with registration opening for the ISAC Legislative Conference. They explained why the issues occurred and how they were different from past registration problems, what standard procedures are for customer service, and what steps are being taken to guarantee that similar problems aren't experienced in the future. The board expressed frustration and amply discussed future testing and solutions.

President Rice and Bill reported on the NCCAE State Association Presidents and Executive Directors meeting that was held in Washington, D.C. in January.

Rachel gave an overview of Iowa events that will occur during the NACo Legislative Conference being held in Washington, D.C. in February.

President Rice adjourned the meeting following reports and inquiries from board members.

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From the Secretary of State

As we ring in the New Year, my office has another cause for celebration – our address confidentiality program, Safe at Home, is celebrating its first anniversary.

Safe at Home (SAH) was enacted on January 1, 2016 and it has been a year of growth for this vital program that assists survivors of domestic and sexual violence, stalking and trafficking.

The program was established to provide participants with a designated substitute mailing address, free mail-forwarding, and confidential absentee voter registration. The goal of SAH is to help prevent private addresses from being listed on public records. I'm pleased to report that about one-third of SAH participants voted through my office via absentee ballot; many of them said it was the first time in many years.

Because of the need to maintain confidentiality, county officials and staff play a vital role in the SAH Program. I appreciate how much effort your offices have put into helping spread the word about SAH during this first year.

Our partnership with the Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence and the Iowa Coalition Against Sexual Assault has proven to be an excellent streamlining process for applicants, who can access our application online or through one of these advocacy programs. Applications can then be mailed to our office in the Lucas Building in Des Moines.

All participants will receive a designated address, which consists of both a phantom street address and a PO Box – the apartment number is what distinguishes the different participants.

Public and private entities are required by law to accept a Safe at Home address as the participant's legal address. Participants can use their SAH address anywhere a mailing or residential address is required, including on their driver's licenses, library cards, school records, employment records and utility bills.

All questions and concerns are welcome at the SAH office as we continue to develop this program. If an agency needs to confirm where a SAH participant lives in a certain district, a request for verification must be made in writing on official letterhead or emailed to our office. Our office will then only confirm or deny if that participant does indeed live in that district.

The mail-forwarding process has been smooth so far. We use a lot of stamps in our office, but these costs are paid for by surcharges from domestic violence and protective order violation convictions.

SAH staff send along mail received that same business day, which could cause a five to seven business day delay to the participant themselves, especially with snowy winter weather during the holiday season. We forward all first-class mail, government packages and prescriptions.

These actions are just a few easy things that the Secretary of State's office can do to help those affected by violence. This program is ideal for those who are relocating away from abusive situations and are looking to rebuild their lives with a fresh start. We need to be diligent in 2017, as a team, to continue educating the public and government officials about this vital program.

This year, Melanie Shellenberger joined the team as the full-time Safe at Home program administrator. If you have any questions regarding SAH, please contact Melanie at 515.725.7233 or safeathome@iowa.gov.

For quarterly email updates, sign up for our newsletter on our website, safeathome.iowa.gov. Thank you for all you do to help victims become survivors in the state of Iowa.



Paul D. Pate
Iowa Secretary of State
paul.pate@sos.iowa.gov

Melanie Shellenberger
Safe at Home Administrator
melanie.shellenberger@sos.iowa.gov
515.725.SAFE (7233)

Carol Olson
Elections Deputy
carol.olson@sos.iowa.gov

2017 Calendar

February 2017

- 2 Supervisors Statewide Meeting
(Embassy Suites Des Moines Downtown)
- 9 ISAC Board of Directors Meeting
(ISAC Office)
- 25-1 NACo Legislative Conference
(Washington, D.C.)

March 2017

- 8 County Day at the Capitol
(Iowa State Capitol, Des Moines)
- 9-10 ISAC Legislative Conference
(Des Moines Marriott Downtown)

April 2017

- 7 ISAC Board of Directors Meeting
(ISAC Office)
- 13 ISAC HIPAA Program Training
(Courtyard by Marriott - Ankeny)
- 23-26 ISSDA Civil School
(Holiday Inn Airport, Des Moines)
- 27 Smart Connections Conference
(Holiday Inn Airport, Des Moines)

May 2017

- 11 ISAC Leadership Institute
(Des Moines Area Community College, Des Moines)
- 24 ISAC Leadership Institute
(Iowa Central Community College, Storm Lake)
- 25 ISAC Leadership Institute
(Indian Hills Community College, Ottumwa)
- 31 ISAC Leadership Institute
(Kirkwood Community College, Cedar Rapids)

June 2017

- 7 ISAC Leadership Institute
(North Iowa Area Community College, Des Moines)

- 8 ISAC Leadership Institute
(Iowa Western Community College, Des Moines)
- 15 ISAC Board of Directors Meeting
(ISAC Office)

July 2017

- 21-24 NACo Annual Conference
(Columbus, Ohio)

August 2017

- 2 ISAC Scholarship Golf Fundraiser
(Toad Valley Golf Course, Pleasant Hill)
- 22 ISAC LPC Retreat
(Veterans Memorial Community Choice Credit Union Convention Center, Des Moines)
- 23-25 ISAC Annual Conference
(Veterans Memorial Community Choice Credit Union Convention Center, Des Moines)

September 2017

- 14 ISAC LPC Meeting
(ISAC Office)
- 17-20 ISSDA Jail School
(Holiday Inn Airport, Des Moines)
- 27-29 ISAC Board of Directors Retreat
(Humboldt County)

November 2017

- 16-17 ISAC Board of Directors Meeting
(ISAC Office)

December 2017

- 3-6 ISSDA Winter School
(Holiday Inn Airport, Des Moines)

If you have any questions about the meetings listed above or would like to add an affiliate meeting to the ISAC calendar, please contact Kelsey Sebern at ksebern@iowacounties.org.

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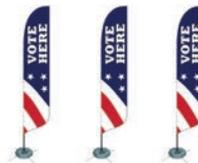
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