

The Iowa  
County

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# The Iowa County

The official magazine of the  
**Iowa State Association of Counties**  
701 E. Court Avenue Des Moines, IA 50309  
(515) 244-7181 FAX (515) 244-6397  
[www.iowacounties.org](http://www.iowacounties.org)

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## 2002 Legislative Priorities

### 2002 Legislative Priorities

*All 99 counties of Iowa are dedicated to the best service at the lowest possible cost for the citizens and taxpayers they serve. The counties, through ISAC, support the concept of representative government and encourage the preservation of flexibility for elected officials to best represent the people who elect them.*

*In keeping with these principles, Iowa county officials are proud to present their "Top Legislative Priorities" for 2002. With the prime interest of the citizens and taxpayers in mind, we respectfully request that the following eight legislative objectives be considered and approved by the 79<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of Iowa and approved by Governor Vilsack. These Top Legislative Priorities were approved by the ISAC membership November 15, 2001.*

#### **Local Government Fiscal Reform Act**

We recommend the creation of an Iowa Commission on State and Local Taxation that is adequately funded and staffed by the state, and immediate property tax reforms which would include:

- 1) County financial management plans,
- 2) A 25 percent unreserved-undesignated fund balance allowance for counties in general and rural funds,
- 3) Strong unfunded mandate protections, and
- 4) General obligation bond flexibility.

#### **Bio-terrorism: Local Public Health Funding**

The public's safety should be ensured at the community level. This includes being able to deal with the new bio-terrorism challenges. We advocate the following:

- 1) Devoting all the tobacco settlement dollars to health related programs,
- 2) Committing funds for local public health infrastructure in the amount of at least \$5 million per year for the next 10 years,
- 3) Increasing food license fees to negate reliance on property tax dollars for this service, and,
- 4) Reinstating the equipment component of the EMS program and designing innovative funding sources for equipment purchases so EMS volunteers can upgrade to new state standards.

#### **MH/DD Funding and the State Budget Crisis**

There is extreme variation among Iowa counties with regard to the amount of state and county funds available for Mental Health/Developmental Disabilities (MH/DD) community-based services. There no longer exists enough reserves to replace the FY02 reduction for future years. The short-term solution would be for the state to appropriate the allowable growth recommendation of the State County Management Committee. The long-term solution would be to enact the

Mental Health Restructuring Task Force Report.

#### **Essential Purpose County Bonding for Infrastructure**

In recent years counties have had limited resources available for capital projects, including new construction, renovation, maintenance, and improvements. To help counties with capital projects, the General Assembly should amend Iowa Code §331.441(2)(b), to allow counties to issue essential county purpose bonds for major infrastructure and capital projects.

#### **Mosquito Arbovirus Surveillance**

Certain varieties of Iowa mosquitoes have been found to transmit encephalitis, a potentially fatal disease affecting the human brain. The Legislature should establish and fund a statewide mosquito surveillance program through a system of contracts with local health departments and the state entomologist.

#### **County Technology Fee and E-Commerce**

The electronic commerce legislation (HF 2205) that passed the General Assembly in 2000 contained a fiscal note stating that implementation of electronic recording statewide, would cost \$50,000 to \$100,000 per county. In order to implement electronic recording statewide without imposing the cost on the property taxpayer, we request legislation allowing a \$5 technology fee to be collected with each recorded document.

#### **E911 Issues**

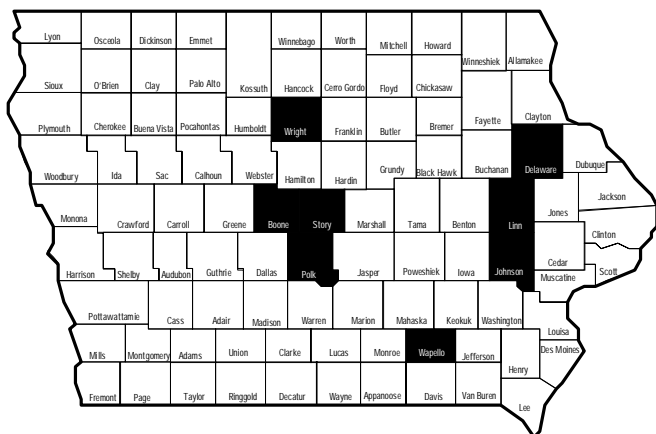
In order to best serve and protect the public, county officials have identified several E911 issues that need immediate attention by our state lawmakers.

- 1) E911 Surcharge Reporting: Iowa Code §34A.7A(1)(a) should be amended to require that all telephone companies remit quarterly wireless surcharges in standard format and should include consistent service information.
- 2) E911 Liability: Iowa Code §34A.7(6) exempts telephone companies and wireless providers from liability. Liability protection should be extended for actions of E911 boards, supervisors, commissions or other agencies involved in the planning and application (dispatch) of emergency dispatch services, including E911.
- 3) E911 Tapes: E911 tapes are being used by the media to dramatize emergency responses. This is an invasion of privacy. Iowa Code §22.7 lists many instances where public access is not permitted. Restricting public access to E911 tapes should be added to this list.

#### **Auditor's Election Reform**

County auditors, through ISAC, are recommending a number of changes and updates to the Iowa Code pertaining to elections procedures. These issues involve ballot specifications and preservation, absentee voting, elections by mail, voter registration clarifications, electioneering near polling places, and establishment of special election time frames.

# counties in the spotlight



One of Iowa's premiere county parks has gotten bigger and better. At the request of the **Johnson County** Conservation Board (JCCB), the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation purchased, at auction, a 43 acre parcel immediately adjacent to the county's F.W. Kent Park. This property is a natural extension of Kent Park that provides a much needed buffer along Echo Avenue. It will also provide habitat for state threatened Ornate Box Turtles, which nest in the park. The highly erodible land (HEL), currently in row crop, will be seeded to native grasses with shelter belts placed at strategic locations. There is considerable potential for wetland development in the natural watercourses as well.

On December 4, the **Polk County** Board of Supervisors directed the sale and authorized the issuance of \$45 million in Essential County Purpose General Obligation Bonds to continue work on key components of the Iowa Events Center. The bonds were sold at a rate of 4.67%. The lead underwriter, selected by competitive bid, is RBC Dain Rauscher, Inc. of Chicago. On October 30, the Board approved moving forward with \$90 million in Essential County Purpose General Obligation Bonds for the Iowa Events Center. One-half of that amount, or \$45 million, was issued to cover costs related to construction of components of the project for the next several months. The Essential County Purpose GO bonds will be used for work relating to the construction of the new Hy-Vee Exhibition Hall and the renovation of the existing Veterans Memorial Auditorium. A lawsuit challenging bonds for the construction of a new arena will be heard by the Iowa Supreme Court on Friday, December 14. The \$208 million Iowa Events Center consists of the 17,000-seat Wells Fargo Arena, the 250,000 square-foot Hy-Vee Exhibition Hall, a renovated Veterans Memorial Auditorium, and the site of the Iowa Hall of Pride.

The **Delaware County** Supervisors were honored as a board in Des Moines with the Corporate Award from the Iowa Community Action Association. This was in appreciation for their help with assisting the low-income members of the society. More specifically, the supervisors were directly responsible for remodeling the old jailhouse and providing the space so

that Operation: New View, an assistance agency, could have space for their office.

*(Taken from the Manchester Press, Oct. 30)*

The **Boone County** Board of Supervisors and the Boone County Landfill each received a 2001 Innovative Project Award from the Iowa Society of Solid Waste Operations. Boone County received the award due to their participation in a cooperative effort with the Iowa Tire Initiative (ITI). ITI was formed in 1999 to raise awareness about proper tire management and disposal. Mary Wittry, president of the Iowa Society of Solid Waste Operations, said, "The participation of Boone County was key to how well the ITI has met its goals."

*(Taken from the Boone New-Republican, Nov. 9)*

The **Wapello County** Board of Supervisors have approved a \$20.5 million civic center project that would be built as part of the Ottumwa Coliseum. The plan includes building a 600-seat theater in conjunction with the existing coliseum. The city of Ottumwa would pledge \$10 million and Wapello County would contribute \$1 million with Bridge View Inc. pledging \$2 million. The supervisors approved the county contribution, pending a resolution that would determine how interest on the bonds would be paid and if voters approve it.

*(Taken from the Times Herald, Nov. 30)*

**Linn County** plans to implement a sanitary sewer project to be the first project of its kind for the county. Linn County government may soon help provide city water service to about 30 homes just beyond the Cedar Rapids' city limits. Linn County's Board of Supervisors approved submitting an application for a \$67,000 community block grant to help fund the water project. The project will improve property tax values and quality of life for the homes.

*(Taken from the Gazette, Dec. 3)*

## New County Officials

Steven Reitz - Wright County Engineer  
*(position formerly held by Randy Will)*

Don Toms - Story County Supervisor  
*(position formerly held by Dennis Ballantine)*

Robert Sperry - Story County Engineer  
*(position formerly held by Harold Jensen)*

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# around the statehouse

## 2002 Legislative Session Issues

*"Experience should teach us to be most on our guard to protect liberty when the Government's purposes are beneficent. The greatest dangers to liberty lurk in insidious encroachment by men of zeal, well-meaning but without understanding." - U.S. Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis*

*"Judicial reform is no sport for the short-winded." - Arthur Vanderbilt*

January 14 brings the opening of a new legislative session in newly refurbished chambers on both sides of the statehouse rotunda. Unfortunately, an overcast gloom will mar the shine of the newly refinished desks. The cloud that will hang over the legislative session from the opening gavel is the decided lack of tax revenue.

### DHS and Court Reorganization

As this space mentioned last month, we are in the midst of a recession and the state's revenue shortfalls, which we thought to be significant a year ago, are peanuts this time around. With the Department of Human Services (DHS) reorganization and the court reorganization, the question facing both the Governor and legislators is how to somehow balance public service delivery and an empty treasury vault. It's one thing for some county officials to reorganize, for example, the Departments of Natural Resources or Public Health to achieve efficiencies and better day-to-day services. It is another to reorganize and cut an agency which serves, as the Good Book put it, "the least of our brethren" or the courts and their daily influence on the lives of people of all incomes and social strata.

The winter district workshops, which are held in December in most of ISAC's six districts, were dominated by discussion about the proposed court reorganization plan announced in late November by Chief Justice Louis Lavorato. Among the concerns were increased costs to county attorneys and county sheriffs involving vehicular trips from their courthouses to any one of the proposed 28 regional centers for clerks of court. But there also have been numerous questions about the costs associated with consolidation of court records from courthouses to regional offices.

### County Consolidation

Both DHS and the court reorganizations have brought talk about whether all of this was meant to lead to county consolidation. (These fires have been stoked from time to time by a certain *Des Moines Register* columnist.) In fact, such consolidation cannot be imposed simply with the stroke of a pen or by passage of legislation. According to Article III, section 30 of the Iowa Constitution, among the "local or special laws" which the Iowa General Assembly may not pass are those for "locating or changing county seats." In addition this section states that "no law changing the boundary lines of any county shall have effect until upon being submitted to the people of the counties affected by the change, at a general election, it shall be approved by a majority of the votes in each county, cast for and against it." But, amid the topic of local government efficiencies or the lack thereof,

**By: Robert Mulqueen**

ISAC Public Policy Analyst



there has been little talk outside Des Moines and Polk County about the provisions of Iowa Code chapter 331 which address merging cities with the counties in which they reside.

The mechanics for "city-county consolidation forms of government" and for "community commonwealths" have been in the Iowa Code since 1988 and 1991 respectively. Such an approach would not be easy, but is worth a serious examination. All eyes have been on attempts, first a decade ago, then within the last year in Polk County to re-examine the relationship between the county and the capital city. The lack of any discussion about this untouched portion of the Iowa Code as an alternative to only discussing county consolidation is reminiscent of the story related years ago about the American newspaper reporter interviewing Mohandas Gandhi during the late 1930s. Knowing that the Mahatma had attained a law degree in Britain prior to returning to India, the reporter asked, "After all you've been through here, what do you think of Western Civilization?" Replied Gandhi, "I think that it would be a very good idea."

### ISAC Legislative Priorities

With the abundance of issues which face county officials every legislative session, it is useful to set forth the priority issues which have received that billing from ISAC board of directors and general membership at the Fall School. This year, they include the following:

- 1) Enactment of a **local government fiscal reform act** which would include an examination of state and local income, sales and property taxes and the services funded by each revenue source.
- 2) **Cope with new threats to the public's health** through a) adequate local public health programs, b) adequate local public health infrastructure, c) an increase in food license fees for better food safety, and d) reinstatement of the equipment portion of existing emergency medical services funding.
- 3) Enactment of short-term and long-term **mental health and developmental disability funding**.
- 4) Allow counties **essential purpose bonding for infrastructure** projects.
- 5) Establishment and funding of a **statewide mosquito surveillance program**. This is particularly important in view of the entry, last year, of the West Nile virus into Iowa.
- 6) Grant authority to counties to impose a **fee on recorded documents** with which to pay for implementation of a **statewide electronic real estate records system**.
- 7) Enact an **omnibus Enhanced 911 Act** which would include new provisions involving a) 911 surcharge reporting, b) liability protection, and c) restricting access to E911 audio tapes.
- 8) Enactment of an **omnibus technical election procedures**.

## Examining Tort Defenses

By: David Vestal  
ISAC Deputy Director



**Mills County Lawsuit:** *Saddler v. Miller* was filed in June of 1999. The defendants are various former Mills County officials, including the sanitarian and the board of health. The lawsuit, filed in Mills County, has been transferred to Pottawattamie County

The plaintiffs claim that the county sanitarian was negligent in 1) routinely approving septic systems which were too small for that particular house, 2) approving septic systems without requiring a percolation test or professional soil analysis as required by the administrative code; and 3) failing to inspect each site at the time of installation.

This is a nightmare factually. The claim does not involve one house that had a septic system fail. This is a class action lawsuit claiming that every septic system installed in the county for the last 10 years was mistakenly approved. At least 750 houses are involved.

What if the plaintiffs are correct, and even though state standards call for a 1,500 gallon septic tank for a five bedroom house, the county sanitarian routinely approved 1,000 gallon septic tanks? Are there any defenses available to the county? Three come to mind:

**1. Discretionary Duty:** Iowa Code § 670.4(3) says that counties are not liable for claims arising from “the exercise or performance or the failure to exercise or perform a discretionary function or duty.”

In 1998 in *Goodman v. LeClaire* the Iowa Supreme Court explained what this statute means. It said that counties are immune from tort liability under this exception if 1) the action in question is “a matter of choice for the acting employee” and 2) if the decision was based on public policy considerations. Their idea is that we don’t want lawyers second-guessing tough policy decisions made by county officials.

In *Goodman* the issue was whether the city of LeClaire had been negligent in the way it excavated dirt and waste material from private property, and this was held to be a matter of discretion.

In other jurisdictions, cities and counties have generally not been found liable for the wrongful issuance of a permit. This is considered a discretionary function for which the government cannot be held liable.

Is there any discretion involved in the Mills County situation? The plaintiffs say no, that a routine inspection and issuance of a permit for a septic tank is ministerial, and involves no discretion.

**2. Negligent Inspection:** Iowa Code §670.4(10) was enacted in 1986. It provides that a county is immune from liability for any claim based upon an act or omission of a county official or employee, “whether by issuance of permit, inspection, investigation, or otherwise, ...if the damage was caused by a third party, event, or property not under the supervision or control” of the county.

One example of how this statute might apply is a 1990 Iowa Court of Appeals case called *Williams v. Bayers*. In that case Francis Wagner went to Bev’s Beauty Boutique. After a wash and set, she began to descend the three flights of steps to the ground. Wagner fell and eventually died from her injuries. Her estate sued, claiming that the city of Davenport failed to make proper inspections of the building. The Iowa Supreme Court said that under 670.10(4) the lawsuit was barred. “The only involvement the city has was through its inspection and issuance of permits,” said the Court. This did not “constitute supervision or control over the person or premises as contemplated by the statute.”

In this case, Mills County will claim that since the homeowners’ property was not under the control of the county, then the county is immune from any liability related to issuance of a permit or inspection of a septic system.

**3. Public Duty Doctrine:** The argument here is that septic tank inspections are not just for the protection of property owners. They also protect neighbors and all people using local lakes and streams, who are at risk if a septic system fails.

The common law rule, known as the public duty doctrine, is that a county and its agents act for the benefit of the public, and therefore there is no liability for the failure to furnish services to specific individuals.

The latest decision on the public duty doctrine was in a 2001 case called *Kolbe v State*. In that case, a bicyclist named Kolbe was struck by a vehicle driven by Justin Schulte. Kolbe sued the state, alleging that the state was negligent in issuing a drivers license to Justin Schulte, who was visually impaired. The state responded that in issuing drivers licenses it owed a duty of due care to all of the public, but not to Kolbe or any other particular individual. The Iowa Supreme Court agreed with the state, and said that under the public duty doctrine, this claim was barred.

So one argument would be the laws which require the sanitarian to conduct an inspection do not create a particularized duty running from the sanitarian to the person inspected. That’s never been decided by the Iowa Supreme Court.

Counties seem to have at least three defenses available to negligent inspection claims. The reason these defenses are available is because the Legislature and courts have concluded that public welfare is served by encouraging counties to undertake these inspections. Last time we checked, the Mills County case was headed to trial. We’ll keep you posted.

### Parting Ponderable:

Q: What’s got four legs and an arm?

A: A happy pit bull

# health check

## Financial Aspect of Our Well-Being

There are two things I think about at this time of year. Food and money. They both seem to be related to resolutions. We won't even go into the food thing. So, money is our topic for this issue. Because we are thinking about taxes and how we saved or spent our money, now might be a good time to look at the financial aspect of our well-being.

Let's start out with a saying. "Money will buy...A bed, but not sleep; A book, but not brains; Food, but not an appetite; Medicine, but not health; Luxuries, but not culture; Amusement, but not happiness." Author Unknown.

I think we must put finances in its proper perspective. Here are some thoughts about what role money plays in our life.

**Root of all Evil?** – Money is not the root of all evil. But, the love of money might be! We must think of money as a resource. It can give us a bit of security. We can help those less fortunate. It is when we try to get money for money's sake or when it's accumulation hurts others that a problem begins.

**Need rises with income** – For some reason when we get a raise it gets absorbed into our budget and never to be seen again. Our "needs" rise to meet the amount of pay. Make a conscious effort to hold back "new money" to be used later. I

*By: Sandy Longfellow*  
ISAC Benefits  
Administrative Assistant



had an installment loan at my local credit union. When it was paid off, they wisely inserted the payment into my savings. I like it that way and it hasn't really impacted my monthly budget. Incredibly my savings account is going up!

**Media convinces you to make spending mistakes** – We are bombarded day in and day out with ads that are specifically designed to get us to spend money! Companies spend billions hiring people to convince us we need to diet, have more hair, get a new car, eat more, use a cell phone, and every other thing you can think about. They play on all of our emotions to get even our friends to help consume more! Understand advertising for what it is – a power play to get you to spend money.

**Money can't buy happiness** – Let's remember all the good things that were done during the holidays and continue to do good for others instead of concentrating on spending for ourselves. Amazingly getting more money doesn't always solve our financial problems, but less spending might! Happy New Year to you all!

# technology center

**Q. I have noticed that a website appears larger on my computer at home than it does on my computer in my office. What is the cause of this discrepancy?**

A. The answer involves the resolution setting on your computer's monitor. When you increase your screen's resolution it allows your monitor to display in finer detail because more dots/pixels are able to appear on the screen. If you increase the number of dots/pixels the text will become smaller because the rectangle making up each character takes less space on the screen. If you have a 14" monitor, try 800 x 600 with small fonts or 1,024 x 768 with large fonts. If your monitor is 17", try 1,280 x 1,024 with either large or small fonts. For a 21" monitor, the setting you would choose is 1,600 x 1,200 with large fonts.

To change this setting you will need to go to your computer's Control Panel and choose Display, Settings and slide the bar until the number of pixels match the resolution that you are changing it to.

### Computer Terminology

Just a few definitions to help you understand computer jargon.

**RAM (Random Access Memory)** is a configuration of memory cells that holds data for processing by a computer's Central Processing Unit or CPU. Random refers to the fact that the CPU can retrieve data from any individual location,

*By: Tammy Norman*  
ISAC Technical  
Administrative Assistant



or address, within RAM at any time.

**Boot Drive** – the drive from which the operating system loads, usually C.

**Cache Memory** – high speed memory located between the CPU and the main memory. Cache memory is designed to supply the processor with the most frequently requested instructions and data. Cache memory can be three to five times faster than main memory. Two levels of cache are typical: Level 1 cache, usually inside the processor, and Level 2 cache, which sits between Level 1 cache and main memory.

**Website Note:** It is that time of year again. The legislative session will begin soon and so will the County-A-Day program. Please check out the County-A-Day section of our website, where a calendar and an overview of the program is now available. If you would like to participate in the program, please contact me via e-mail at [tnorman@iowacounties.org](mailto:tnorman@iowacounties.org) or by phone at 515-244-7181. We look forward to hearing from you. Please keep your questions and comments coming in. Until next month, keep clicking!



## The 2001 National Association of Case Management (NACM) Conference

This year the national conference sponsored by NACM was held in Los Angeles at the Marriott Hotel near the LAX airport on October 20-24. In my effort to report to you my long anticipated experience at the national conference in such an infamous place as Los Angeles, I am at a loss as to the emphasis of such a report. I can honestly say I have lasting impressions of the experience at both a personal and a professional level.

### Noteworthy Sessions

The conference began for me with the Research Symposium on Sunday morning. The presenters were from the University of Kansas, School of Social Welfare on the topic "Mission Possible: Case Management, Recovery and Competitive Employment." The research summarized what doesn't work and what does work. Does this sound familiar? Doesn't work: elaborate training in job seeking skills, sheltered enclave type employment as a step toward employment. Does work: practical assistance, job leads and active job development, making employment an integral part of rehabilitation and mental health services—the same workers, same team and same agency are helping the person to succeed at work. Because the research was evidence-based and was done studying outcomes of actual vocational services (not just theory) it made a great deal of sense and caused some excitement for the few of us who attended. If you would like a copy of the handout, e-mail the request to me at lgethmann@iowacounties.org.

A trend that surprised me was to see the number of sessions devoted to case management for children, not with MR, but with mental illness. I met a woman from Virginia who worked for a residential provider with facilities that cared for 300 children starting at the age of two. Let us hope that our state will support families and explore preventive measures that are causing children to need such services before we get to the point in Iowa that we need case management for children with mental illness on such a scale.

I also attended two sessions with Dan Dubovsky. He and his son, Bill, presented on "Therapeutic Alliances: What Helps and What Hinders from a Consumer and Family Perspective." This was well presented and enlightening as we remember that case management is a service provider and we need to respect the frustrations experienced by our clients and families. His second presentation was on "Failures in Traditional Mental Health and Substance Abuse Treatment Programs: Fetal Alcohol Syndrome as a Possible Explanation." This topic is one that will need to be examined by the mental health professionals and all of us who come in contact with individuals exhibiting specific characteristics. Often people are not recognized as being prenatally exposed to alcohol and are given diagnoses and medications that are not accurate or

*By: Linda Kemp Gethmann*  
ISAC Case Management Specialist



effective. At this time FAS is not considered on Axis I in the DSM-IV and therefore the psychiatrist making a diagnostic decision can be influenced by the fact that he/she will not get paid if FAS is the determination. Research this topic on your own. You may find that you have people on your caseloads that exhibit characteristics of this disorder. Re-examination of current interventions may show why some interventions work and why some will never work.

### The Effects of Sept. 11 Tragedy

Now for the personal perspective of this year's national gathering of case managers. The tone of the gathering was most subdued. The number of people attending did not seem to exceed the number who attended the CCMS conference last August. Sessions I attended with well know presenters had 14 to 20 participants. The plenary session began with a thank you for attending for even some of the paid NACM staff were too frightened to fly. We were told that this mid-October conference was the first the Marriott had had since September 15 and that the hotel had laid off 50 people from a manager to bell hops. The restaurant was never full; the halls were never crowded between sessions. The few exhibitors we started with finally gave up for lack of people to whom they could show their wares and left. There were uplifting speakers who made efforts to light a fire in the audience but any enthusiasm didn't seem to carry over. This year was different. This year was one of reflection.

I will remember the flights to get there and get home. I will remember being searched and patted down in LAX and having to remove my belt so it could be scanned. I will remember the National Guard at LAX carrying rifles. But most of all, I will remember the impact all of this has made on the hospitality industry not only in Los Angeles but also across the country. Money is being funneled into New York and rightly so. However the economic suffering is not just in New York. I do hope if you are one who is concerned about flying, vacationing or going about your usual travel habits, that your fears will soon subside. It will be good for the country and good for you as well.

I have souvenirs from Santa Monica and pictures of palm trees, all reminders of a very different national conference. I look forward to the next national conference wherever it will be held with high hopes for my profession in our efforts to keep better informed and with higher hopes for a return to peace and security for my country.

# fiscal facts

## Help With Budget Planning

County budget planning and collective bargaining are soon under way involving discussions about cost of living increases, expenditure and revenue adjustments, and salary/wage setting. Here are some economic growth indicators that can be useful during budget deliberations.

### Consumer Price Index (CPI)

The CPI is the most widely used measure of inflation reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor. It measures the average change in prices of a fixed market-basket of consumption goods and services purchased by two population groups: All Urban Consumers (CPI-U) and Urban Wage Earners & Clerical Workers (CPI-W). CPI does not reflect substitution among items in response to relative price change, nor does it include such factors as income taxes and changes in preferences.

The most commonly used inflation index is the national CPI-U, which represents about 80 percent of the total U.S. population and is based on the expenditures of all families living in urban areas. Whereas, CPI-W is a subset of CPI-U and represents about 32 percent of the total U.S. population that meets the additional requirement of having more than one-half of the household's income coming from clerical and wage occupations. Seven major goods and services make up the consumer price index, including: food and beverages, housing, apparel and upkeep, transportation, medical care, entertainment, and other goods and services.

The national CPI shown below can vary depending on how the index change is calculated. Two common ways are the third quarter change and annual average change from one year to the next year. The CPI for the Midwest is comparable to the national CPI.

| Consumer Price Index (not-seasonally adjusted) | Average Change from 3rd Quarter 2000 to 3rd Quarter 2001 | Annual (fiscal year) Average Change 2000-2001 |
|--|--|---|
| CPI-U  | 2.7%   | 3.4%  |
| CPI-W  | 2.6%   | 3.4%  |

For additional information, visit the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics website at <http://stats.bls.gov>.

### Social Security Wage Base/COLA Increases

Social Security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) beneficiaries will receive a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) of 2.6 percent starting with payments made in January 2002. Social Security and SSI benefits increase automatically each year based on the rise in the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers (CPI-W) from the third quarter of one year to the third quarter of the next year. Additional information may be obtained from the Social Security Administration web site at [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov).

Visit the Research section of ISAC's website ([www.iowacounties.org](http://www.iowacounties.org)) for more information on budget planning.

By: *Cris Plocher*

ISAC Fiscal/ Policy Analyst



### Employment Cost Index

The Employment Cost Index is calculated by the Federal Bureau of Labor Statistics as part of their National Compensation Survey to measure the change in compensation costs, including wages, salaries and employer costs for employee benefits. This indicator represents services that tend to be labor intensive. It is free from the influence of employment shifts among occupations and industries. The following table shows the national ECI for its two major categories: state/local governments and private industry. The ECI for civilian workers is a combination of these two categories. The ECI for the Midwest is comparable to the national ECI.

| Employment Cost Index (not-seasonally adjusted) | Average Change from 3rd Quarter 2000 to 3rd Quarter 2001 | Annual (fiscal year) Average Change 2000-2001 |
|---|--|---|
| state and local gov't                           | 4.4%   | 3.6%  |
| private industry                                | 4.0%   | 4.0%  |
| civilian workers                                | 4.1%   | 3.9%  |

### State and Local Government Purchase Price Index

Even though the government purchase price index (GPI) is no longer required to be shown on city and county budget forms published in the newspaper for Notice of Public Hearing, there still may be interest in knowing what this inflation factor is. The GPI measures nationwide state and local government consumption expenditures and gross investments (based on real prices). However, this represents only a portion of government expenditures, it does not take into account government interest payments and transfer payments to other entities, which can be a significant amount.

| State & Local Gov't Purchases Price Index | Average Change from 3rd Quarter 2000 to 3rd Quarter 2001 | Annual (fiscal year) Average Change 2000-2001 |
|---|--|---|
| GPI                                       | 3.8%   | 3.5%  |

GPI is obtained from the National Income and Product Account (Table 7.11 – Chain-Type Quantity and Price Indexes for Government Consumption Expenditures and Gross Investment by Type) and is determined by the Bureau of Economic Analysis of the U.S. Department of Commerce. To access this website, go to <http://www.bea.doc.gov>.

### Unemployment Rate

The United States unemployment rate for October 2001 is 5.4 percent of the 142.3 million civilian labor force. The State of Iowa has a lower unemployment rate of 3.4 percent of the 1.6 million civilian labor force as of October 2001. However, Iowa's unemployment rate October of last year was lower at 2.5 percent.

## Meet Your Board Members

### Marvin Van Haften

ISAC Board Member

Marvin Van Haften has had a total of 30 years in law enforcement. He currently serves as the Marion County Sheriff and the Marion County Medical Examiner Investigator. His past employment



included Marion County Deputy Sheriff and working at the Pella Police Department. He is a member of the National Sheriffs Association, Iowa State Sheriffs & Deputies Association, FBI National Academy, National Association of Medical Examiners and the International Association for Identification.

“County government is the closest to the people and ISAC tries to improve and make county government more responsive to the public needs and services.” In his free time Marvin enjoys his 415 acre farm consisting of prairie, timber, wildlife, pasture and cropland. His family includes wife Joyce, five grown children, nine grandchildren and guardian of two MR adults.

ALUMNI

## CORNER

### Warren Richart

Warren Richart was the Benton County Treasurer for 24 years and former ISAC President. He wasn't ready to retire though after leaving his treasurer position, he now works at Wal Mart in the produce department. Besides being a member of the ISAC Alumni Association, he is involved with the VFW, American Legion, Lions, and IPERS Improvement Association. His only advice to ISAC is “keep up good works!” Warren's family includes his wife Mary, daughter Teresa that works at General Mills and son Warren Jr. that works at Universal Engineering. His only hobby is attending ISAC Alumni meetings. Warren currently lives in Urbana, IA and can be reached at [wcr@nftins.net](mailto:wcr@nftins.net).

## ALUMNI

CORNER

### Carol Nielsen

Carol Nielsen worked in the Adair County recorders department for 37 years, 13 years as deputy and 24 years as recorder. Carol enjoyed learning new things as recorder and the fellowship with other employees. She is now retired and enjoys reading and traveling. She is currently a member of the Avondale United Methodist Church, Adair County Historical Society, Good Samaritan Auxiliary, and the Greenfield Optimist Club. She hopes ISAC “keeps members informed of legislative doings and laws passed.” Carol lives in Fontanelle, IA.

*For information on becoming an ISAC Alumni Member contact Jerri by phone at 515-244-7181 or by email at [jnboa@iowacounties.org](mailto:jnboa@iowacounties.org).*

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# ISAC brief

## Record Attendance at Fall School

Approximately 1,000 county officials from around the state were in attendance at the 58th Fall School of Instruction & Policy Setting Conference hosted by ISAC November 14-16 at the Holiday Inn Airport in Des Moines, IA. Governor Tom Vilsack spoke Thursday morning about his commitment to work with counties on the decrease in mental health funding because of the restructuring with the Department of Human Services. He took questions from county officials dealing with his estimate of when mental health cuts will be made, if he would veto a property tax limitation bill, and immigration. The keynote speaker for the conference was Wilson W. Orr, director of the NASA Sustainability and Global Change Program at Prescott College in Arizona. He discussed how communities are facing many complex local issues such as population growth, weather threats, and water use, and how their decisions today will affect their future.

County projects that received ISAC Innovation Awards were: "Story County Dual Recovery Program" submitted by Gayla Harken, Story County; "Indoor Emergency Warning System" submitted by Walter Wright, Linn County; "Home Alone Rangers" submitted by Gina Hardin, Des Moines County; "Assessors' Web Site" submitted by Gary Bilyeu, Story County; and "Election Process Presentation" submitted by Mary Mosiman, Story County.

The Association's legislative priorities were proposed and voted upon by the membership in attendance. County officials were nominated for the ISAC Executive Board positions. The following county officials were approved: President - Grant Veeder, Black Hawk County Auditor; 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President - Richard Heidloff, Lyon County Treasurer; 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President - J. Patrick White, Johnson County Attorney; 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice President - Angela Connolly, Polk County Supervisor. ISAC will be holding their Spring School March 20-22, 2002 at the Holiday Inn Airport in Des Moines, IA. The conference is the Association's business meeting, where the Association's next fiscal year's budget is brought up for approval.



Above: The view of the ISAC Registration Desk. Below Left: Hamilton County officials plus Stan Watne from Wright County performed "Who Moved My Cheese?" Below Right: The audience reacts to the humorous mouse costumes.



Left: Governor Tom Vilsack discusses the state budget crisis. Below Left: Kaye Braaten speaks on NACO benefits. Below: Keynote speaker Wil Orr discusses how urban spread has harsh consequences.



Above: Story County receives an innovation award for "Election Process Presentation." Left: Story County also received an innovation award for "Story County Dual Recovery Program."



Above: Pat Gill, Woodbury County Auditor, talks at Chet Culver's press conference. Above Right: Sandra Burke presenting at the "Changing Faces of Iowa" seminar. Right: Kim Wilson presents the seminar "Time Management."



## ISAC 2001 Fall School Events



Above: The exhibit area at the Holiday Inn Airport. Right: ISAC staff members Connie Wacht, Sandy Longfellow, Bob Mulqueen, and Lauren Adams. Below: Cass County staff and family members in attendance to honor Joyce Jensen at the President's Reception.



Above Left: Attendees at the President's Reception. Above Right: County officials and spouses dancing the night away at the ISAC Dance.



Above: Chuck Reiken auctions the tickets to the Iowa State vs. Iowa football game. Right: Lowell Tesch, Mitchell County Auditor, won the quilt raffled off for the ISAC Scholarship program. Below: Attendees at the ISAC Past President's Breakfast.



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# ISAC brief

## District Workshops



The following legislators spoke at the District 1 workshop in Des Moines. Top: Rep. Mike Cormack. Middle: Rep. Scott Raecker. Bottom: Rep. Barbara Finch.

Winter district workshops recently took place in November and December and offered county officials a chance to discuss the financial problems facing the state. The workshops are organized by the ISAC district offers and include a business meeting, update from ISAC on legislative matters, and individual affiliate sessions. Legislators in the specific districts are invited to attend and have time to address the issues that they feel will be of importance during the upcoming legislative session.

District 5 held their workshop November 29 in Ottumwa and had three legislators in attendance. District 1 held their workshop December 5 in Des Moines and heard from Cynthia Eisenhauer, Director of the Department of Management and Ellen Gordon, Director of Homeland Security. There were also eight legislators in attendance. District 2 held their workshop December 6 in Charles City. The election of officers took



place and legislators were in attendance. And finally, District 3 held their workshop December 18 in Cherokee



The following people also spoke at the District 1 workshop in Des Moines. Top: Rep. Bill Dix. Middle: Rep. Rod Roberts. Above: Cynthia Eisenhauer, Director of the Department of Management. Left: Ellen Gordon, Director of Homeland Security.

# ISAC school

## Spring School of Instruction Agenda Holiday Inn Airport, Des Moines

### Tuesday, March 20, 2002

5pm - 7pm Early Bird Registration (Holiday Inn)

### Wednesday, March 21, 2002

8am - 4:30pm ISAC Registration (Holiday Inn)  
 9am - Noon Optional Affiliate Time  
 1pm - 4:30pm Affiliate Time  
 6pm - 8:30pm President's Banquet

### Thursday, March 22, 2002

7:30am - 4pm ISAC Registration (Holiday Inn)  
 7:30am - 8:30am Coffee & Rolls with Exhibitors  
 8:15am - 10:30am ISAC General Session/Business Meeting - Years of Service, Scholarship Award, Keynote Speaker, Vote on ISAC Budget  
 10:30am - 10:45am BREAK  
 10:45am - Noon ISAC Seminars

Noon - 1:30pm **OPEN LUNCH**  
 1:30pm - 4pm Affiliate Time  
 4pm - 5pm Ice Cream Social with Exhibitors

### Friday, March 23, 2002

8am - 11am ISAC Registration (Holiday Inn)  
 9am - Noon Affiliate Time

## Fall School 2002 Lottery Winners

The following counties are eligible for three rooms at the Holiday Inn Airport, Des Moines for the ISAC Fall School 2002. Adams, Allamakee, Appanoose, Benton, Bremer, Butler, Clayton, Crawford, Des Moines, Dickinson, Floyd, Franklin, Hamilton, Hardin, Henry. Howard, Humboldt, Jasper, Jefferson, Keokuk, Lee, Lucas, Madison, Marion, Mitchell, Monona, Montgomery, Sac, Tama, Wapello, Warren, Winneshiek. Your county auditor will receive a form, before the school, to fill in with the three names who will receive the rooms. Remember that your county is responsible for payment of the rooms. This was our third year of having a lottery drawing. In the fall of 2002, we will start all over.

# ISAC school

ISAC's registration policies are aimed at encouraging several people from one county office, particularly deputies and clerks, to attend the School by offering reduced fees for additional registrations. It also offers those who pre-register the chance to save money. (At the door registration fee is \$70 per person.) **Here's how it works.** If four people in the auditor's office from County X want to attend the School, the first person on the pre-registration form pays \$60. The other three pay \$50 each. That means the total fee for the County X auditor's office would be \$210.

There are some restrictions on this policy, however. They are:

1. **Only those who pre-register can qualify for the reduced rate.** If you work in the auditor's office in County X, but didn't decide you wanted to attend the School until the day before and did not pre-register before the deadline, you will have to pay the full \$70 at-the-door registration fee. In the example, given for County X, if the auditor's office had waited until the School for four people to register, it would have cost the \$280.
2. **All pre-registrations must include payment and a registration form.** To pre-register, the auditor's office would have to include the \$210 with the registration form. If the correct payment is not enclosed, ISAC will return the registration form to the county. ISAC will not bill a county for pre-registration.
3. **Certain county officials are not eligible for the \$50 fee.** All supervisors and administrative assistants must pay \$60 if they pre-register and \$70 if they register at the School. Administrative personnel not employed by the office of an affiliate, such as full-time zoning administrators or personnel directors are not eligible for the reduced fee.
4. **Anyone who is not a member of ISAC is required to pay \$210** (or three times the at-the-door fee) to attend an ISAC School.
5. **NO CASH** will be handled at the registration desk. We also do not accept credit cards. Please be prepared to write a check.
6. **Refunds are restricted** to those who request them from the ISAC office in writing within 14 days of the close of the School and are due to an illness, death, or adverse weather. A note of explanation must accompany the written request for a refund. **(A non-refundable \$10 administrative fee will be charged on all refunds.)**
7. ISAC will make **reasonable accommodations** for the disabled with 24 hours advance notice. Attendees needing special sleeping room accommodations should notify the hotel directly. Auxiliary Aids: If you require the assistance of auxiliary aids or services to participate in this conference because of a disability, call Jerri Noboa (515) 244-7181 or email at [jnboa@iowacounties.org](mailto:jnboa@iowacounties.org)

---

## Spring School March 20-22, 2002

Holiday Inn Airport, Des Moines, IA

County \_\_\_\_\_ Office \_\_\_\_\_  
PLEASE PRINT

Name 1 \_\_\_\_\_ (\$60) Banquet (\$25) \_\_\_\_\_

Name 2 \_\_\_\_\_ (\$50) Banquet (\$25) \_\_\_\_\_  
Supervisors & Administrative Assistants: see registration policy #3

Name 3 \_\_\_\_\_ (\$50) Banquet (\$25) \_\_\_\_\_

Name 4 \_\_\_\_\_ (\$50) Banquet (\$25) \_\_\_\_\_

**Deadline: March 8, 2002**

Send form, along with payment to: Iowa State Assn. of Counties  
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**Four Points Sheraton** 1810 Army Post Rd. Phone: 515-287-6464 \$72 single/\$72 double/\$79 suite

*(Recorders and engineers will be meeting at the Four Points Sheraton. The hotel has agreed to bill the county for hotel rooms, provided you supply them with a purchase order number.)*

**Hampton Inn** 5001 Fleur Dr. Phone: 515-287-7300 \$79 single/ \$89 double/ \$84 king/ \$94 double king

**Heartland Inn Airport** 1901 Hackley Ave. Phone: 515-256-0603 \$67 flat rate

**Motel 6** 4817 Fleur Dr. Phone: 515-287-6364 \$35.99

**Super 8** 1920 Hackley Ave. Phone: 515-285-5180 \$53.89 flat rate

**Wingate Inn** 6800 Fleur Dr. Phone: 515-285-7777 \$84 flat rate

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*Why Should Counties Care?* By 2003, each state and participating Indian tribe will delineate the boundaries of areas in the state (or on tribal lands) that supply water for each public drinking water system (PWS), identify significant potential sources of contamination, and determine how susceptible each system is to sources of contamination. Once these state assessments are completed, public water systems will be strongly encouraged to develop appropriate source water protection plans based on the assessment results. County governments need to play a significant role in developing and implementing those plans because it is the people living and working in communities across the country who have the most to gain or lose from the quality of their drinking water. The protection of a community's drinking water supply depends primarily on the efforts of local governments, given their land use authority and proximity to the problem. *To order a copy of Source Water Protection: A Guidebook for Local Governments,*

*contact NACo at 202-661-8807 or by email at [jdavenpo@naco.org](mailto:jdavenpo@naco.org). The kit provides information on the tools, techniques, and strategies to help county officials, especially those in rural areas, protect drinking water supplies.*

## 2002 Acts of Caring Awards

Once again in 2002, the National Association of Counties (NACo) will recognize and promote volunteer programs through the Acts of Caring Awards, a national ceremony honoring community-based initiatives convened by county governments that provide a legacy for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and beyond. An "act of caring" is a community service provided by a county-sponsored volunteer program that enhances or preserves the quality of life. Up to 33 programs will be recognized and deemed examples of outstanding Acts of Caring. All Acts of Caring honorees will be recognized at a national ceremony to be held in Washington, D.C. during National County Government Week in April 2002.

Based on county size, as many as three programs will be recognized in each of 11 categories, including Arts & Culture; Civic Education & Public Information; Criminal Justice; Elderly Services; Emergency Management; Environment; Health Services; Libraries; Parks & Recreation; Programs for Children & Youth; and Social Services. Any county government or affiliated volunteer group with an active program that meets the specific criteria is eligible to participate. Applications must be received by **Friday, January 18, 2002**. *For more information on the criteria and how to apply call 202-387-8550 or the ISAC office at 515-244-7181.*

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Some of our work has been as simple as determining the proper shelving for a set of records or setting up storage for microfilm or optical disks in an environmentally secure and protected location. Other projects have involved developing state-of-the-art answers for a county's documents imaging challenges.

In addition to system installation, we do backlog conversions for almost all imaging systems using online information, micro-film, aperture cards or jackets. Conversions typically date back to the time when computer indexing of land records began.

As an ISAC partner, Owens King Company will continue to support your association and demonstrate today's and tomorrow's technology at ISAC schools and programs. County governments and the technological applications most suitable for them will remain our focus. At every step of date processing decision-making, we will be working to identify your emerging needs, providing technological answers and be supporting you in maintaining control of your information.

### Contact For Further Information:


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## JANUARY 2002

- 1 ISAC OFFICE CLOSED
- 9 CRIS Board of Directors - ISAC Office
- 9 CCMS North West Support - Storm Lake
- 11 Legislative Liaisons Meeting - Holiday Inn Airport, DM
- 15 CCMS Administrators - Best Inns & Suites, DM
- 17-18 ISAC Board of Directors - Hotel Fort Des Moines, DM
- 22 Statewide Supervisors' Meeting -  
Holiday Inn Airport, DM
- 23-24 ISAC University - Hotel Fort Des Moines, DM
- 30 Statewide CPC - Best Western Inn, Ankeny

## FEBRUARY 2002

- 21-22 ISAC Board of Directors - Holiday Inn Airport, DM

## MARCH 2002

- 1-5 NACo Legislative Conference - Washington, DC
- 6 CCMS Central Support - Botanical Center, DM
- 6-8 CoZo Annual Conference - Osceola
- 13-14 CCMS Fundamentals - Best Inns & Suites, DM
- 20-22 ISAC Spring School - Holiday Inn Airport, DM

## APRIL 2002

- 10 CCMS North West Support - Spencer
- 16 CCMS Administrators - Best Inns & Suites, DM
- 17 CCMS Cost Report Training - Best Inns & Suites, DM
- 18 CCMS Support Staff Training - Best Inns & Suites, DM

## MAY 2002

- 8-9 CCMS Advanced Case Managers  
- Best Inns & Suites, DM

## JUNE 2002

- 5 CCMS Supervisor Forum - Best Inns & Suites, DM
- 6 CCMS Supervisors Training - Best Inns & Suites, DM
- 9-13 County Attorneys Spring Training - Arnolds Park

## JULY 2002

- 10 CCMS North West Support - Storm Lake
- 12-16 NACo Annual Conference - New Orleans
- 16 CCMS Administrators - Best Inns & Suites, DM

*If you have any questions about the meetings listed above, please contact Jerri at (515) 244-7181 or by email at [jnboa@iowacounties.org](mailto:jnboa@iowacounties.org).*

**ISAC's Mission: To improve and promote efficient and fiscally sound county government for the people of Iowa through publications, education, advocacy, and other services.**



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