

The Iowa County

Iowa State Association of Counties



March 2010
ISAC Legislative Webinar
NACo NCGM





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ISAC's Mission:

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.

ISAC Legislative Webinar

ISAC is making a change to the usual format of the summer legislative workshops by utilizing GoToMeeting, a web conferencing tool that allows meetings to be held online rather than in a conference room. The ISAC Board of Directors has approved the use of GoToMeeting, which will mean cost savings for the counties. There will be no charge for participating in the GoToMeeting webinar and county officials will not have to travel to participate.

In the past, ISAC staff has traveled across Iowa in June to hold workshops in all six districts. These workshops have included the following:

- updates on the recent legislative session are given;
- area legislators question and answer time;
- affiliate meetings with state officials; and
- social networking via meetings and lunch.

ISAC believes that the goals and objectives of past workshops can be accomplished via GoToMeeting. Through this new method of holding the summer legislative workshops on GoToMeeting, ISAC staff will schedule a specific day for the legislative presentation. During this presentation, county officials will be able to log onto the website to view the presentation from the staff, view charts and graphs that show the impact of legislation, and send questions to the ISAC staff all via the GoToMeeting application.

ISAC staff will work with the individual affiliates to schedule a date to hold their affiliate meeting via GoToMeeting. Affiliates will be able to discuss the past legislative session as well as discuss issues that will affect them in the future. Departments can be invited to present to affiliates regarding specific legislation that was passed or rules that have been or will be adopted.

ISAC staff will miss traveling across the state and meeting with county officials face-to-face, but will make it a priority to attend the affiliate summer conferences. Please let ISAC staff know when your conferences are going to be held so that they can make plans to attend and spend time with county officials, finding out more about their day-to-day jobs and the challenges that counties are facing.

When the time gets closer, ISAC will send out an email with the date that the legislative workshop will be held. With legislators pushing for a shortened session for cost savings, this meeting may be held earlier in the spring, rather than waiting until June. Moving the workshop to early spring will ensure that everyone is aware of legislative changes before July 1, the date when a majority of new legislation goes into affect.

By: Hanna De Groot

ISAC Public Policy Specialist



Continue to read ISAC updates for more details as the ISAC staff is excited to try GoToMeeting and see if this is a way that ISAC can conduct more cost-saving meetings in the future. Please read on to better understand how the webinar meeting will work.

Once the workshop is scheduled, ISAC staff will email the attendees with workshop date, the GoToMeeting ID to view the presentation, and a conference call-in number to listen to the presentation. ISAC will be hosting the presentation, and there is no cost to the attendees.

To join a meeting from an email invitation:

1. Open the email that contains the meeting invitation.
2. Click the link provided in the email to join the meeting.
3. If prompted, click **Yes, Grant** or **Trust** to accept the download.
4. If requested, enter the meeting password provided by your meeting organizer.
5. When prompted, type in your name and optionally, your email address.

Upon clicking **OK** in the Name and Email dialog, you will be entered into the meeting. The Attendee Control Panel and the GoToMeeting Viewer window will appear.

To join a meeting from the GoToMeeting Web site

1. Open an Internet browser (Internet Explorer, Fire Fox, etc.) and go to www.gotomeeting.com.
2. In the left-navigation bar click the **Join Meeting** button.
3. If prompted, click **Yes, Grant** or **Trust** to accept the download.
4. On the *Join a Meeting* window, enter the meeting ID you received from your meeting organizer.
5. If requested, enter the meeting password provided by your meeting organizer.
6. When prompted, type in your name and optionally, your email address.

Upon clicking **OK** in the Name and Email dialog, you will be entered into the meeting. The Attendee Control Panel and the GoToMeeting Viewer window will appear.

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The Definition of a Culvert

By: **Nate Bonnett**

ISAC Legal Counsel



The outcome of the case *Chicago Central & Pacific Railroad Company v. Calhoun County Board of Supervisors acting as Trustee for the Drainage District No. 86* turned on the definition of a “culvert.” At issue in the case is who should bear the cost of repairing a drainage tile that collapsed under the railroad tracks. The railroad sought to recover repair costs, insurance and e-rail charges, and delay costs. In December, 2009, the Iowa District Court for Calhoun County ruled in favor of the county.

In May 2008 the railroad discovered the failed tile line when it located a sinkhole in the embankment supporting the track structure, at which time it made temporary repairs to avoid compromising the stability of the track. In July 2008, upon notice from the drainage district that it would not repair the tile, the railroad paid for the permanent repair to be done. The tile was replaced by a steel tube that supports the railroad bed in the same manner as the original tile. Subsequently, the railroad requested payment from the drainage district and was denied at a hearing in November 2008.

The statutes for drainage district improvements are found in Iowa Code Chapter 468. Iowa Code §468.126 provides that the drainage district “shall keep the improvement in repair...” Iowa Code §468.111 provides that “the cost of ...repairing...any culvert..., when such improvement is located at the place of the natural waterway or place provided by the railroad company for the flow of water shall be borne by such railroad company without reimbursement therefore.” The District Court also considered federal case law that provides a “culvert” has the purpose of “carrying [the railroad’s] roadbed over the improvement” and its construction “accrues solely to the benefit of the railroad.” *Chicago N.W. Trans. Co. v. Webster*, 880 F. Supp. 1290 (N.D. IA 1995).

Thus, the railroad argued that the drainage tile was an “improvement,” that no benefit was accruing to it from the tile being in place, and that it wasn’t located in the natural waterway, as there

was another culvert 14 feet away that represented the natural waterway. For this reason, the railroad argued, the drainage district should reimburse them for the cost of repair. Conversely, the drainage district took the position that the drainage tile was a “culvert,” the railroad was clearly the sole beneficiary of the tile, as evidenced by the sinkhole caused by the collapsed tile, the natural waterway represented the entire area, and that the railroad had a duty to repair. Both parties presented various statutory and common definitions of “culvert,” what area encompassed the “natural waterway,” and expert testimony regarding the benefits to the respective parties.

The District Court determined the meaning of the term “culvert” was ambiguous, and as such, sought to find a reasonable interpretation of the statute to best achieve its purpose and avoids absurd results. The Court found “no reason that the Iowa legislature would have required a railroad to bear the additional expense of a bridge or culvert at the intersection of the railroad with an open drain ditch but would have intended the drainage district to bear the cost of constructing and maintaining the tile under a railroad’s roadbed.” This is especially true, it thought, when both a culvert and a tile provide for water passage through the embankment and support the roadbed, and the railroad is in a superior position to choose the proper tile that will support the weight of the roadbed and the trains that travel it.

The railroad has appealed the case to the Iowa Supreme Court. The outcome of this case is important to every county in Iowa and, as such, ISAC will keep you updated on the results of the appeal. Additionally, in accordance with the ISAC Litigation Policy, the Board of Directors voted unanimously to authorize ISAC to seek funds from counties across the state to help defray the cost of the litigation to Calhoun County. The Board recommended a contribution of \$500 per county, such checks may be made payable to the “ISAC Multi-County Fund.” Please consider supporting Calhoun County in this matter.

capitol comments

Continued from previous page.

A more detailed description will be sent out at a later date. To view a tutorial on GoToMeeting, visit www.GoToMeeting.com and go to the “How it Works” section and then select “Watch Demo.” This is an extremely user-friendly tool, and ISAC staff will be on hand to help anyone in need of assistance.

As this was being written, the sky was spewing forth more snow to add to the record amount of snowfall Iowa has already seen this year and there was a wind chill of 8 degrees Fahrenheit. We are looking forward to spring at ISAC and planning for the spring/summer legislative workshop!

Community Services Network

By: *Robin Harlow*

ISAC Technology Project
Manager



In my next two articles, I will discuss different aspects of the new Community Services Network (CSN) that is being implemented in 95 counties in the next several months.

In January 2010, 13 counties began using CSN. The concept of CSN grew out of the need for the counties to work together to meet common needs in the management of clients, providers, services and, at the same time, to meet all of the associated required reporting. In the last two and a half years the CSN steering committee has worked to build a system that would meet these needs. Bringing these 13 counties on board marked a major milestone in the growth of CSN. This is only the beginning of what will be a remarkable set of tools that will allow counties to manage their local needs and at the same time assist the whole.

What does CSN do?

Client Management: There is vast difference between what is and will be stored in CSN when compared to the old system (COMIS). To contrast the difference in the size, if COMIS was equal in size to a coffee cup, then CSN is equal in size to the table the coffee cup sits on. The increase in the information that is stored will benefit the county by giving the county a 360 degree view of their clients. Over time, the CPC will be able to see all human services (GA, VA, MH/DD, SA) the client is receiving from the county. CSN allows the client to be the center of the information, with the services being received as orbiting the client.

Provider Management: CSN contains a central list of providers (along with services and rates) across all counties. If a CPC manages a client that is located four counties away, the CPC will be able to query the providers based on the services required and county where the client is located. The CPC will then be able to compare providers and arrange the best level of service for that client. As a group, the counties can begin comparing these providers. For example, questions can be asked as to why some providers are charging more for equal services. Over time, a rating piece can be put in place that would allow a CPC to rate their providers. On aggregate, this rating and associated comments would then be available during future rate negotiations.

Since the services are associated to a provider by location, a CPC can see where certain areas of the state might lack access to services. They will be able to pinpoint concentration of populations and their needs so that services can be developed to meet those needs.

Those providers and associated services and rates will be controlled locally by the county, but the information will be managed centrally so that all counties will benefit.

Communication: Currently, when a CPC receives a new application they must rely on the client memory to complete the application. With CSN, the CPC can quickly see if the client has received or is receiving services in another county. CSN stores historical information related to names and addresses. This information will help the CPC determine if the William sitting in their office was a Will or Bill or even a Richard. If the CPC locates a potential match to the client, the CPC is given the contact information for the county currently providing or that has provided services to this client in the past. With a quick phone call, the previous county can give the new county access so that the new county can review the file to determine if there is a match. Once it is determined, the new county can work out a transition plan with the previous county.

A new county will not have to rely on the client's memory or recollection of service received in a client's previous residence. The client's information will follow the client.

Reduced Claims Entry: Currently, CSN is on track to process about 1.5 million electronic transactions from the State of Iowa to the county in relation to Medicaid billings a year. Annually, there are roughly 1 million transactions manually keyed by the CPC (or their staff) into the old system. These transactions are then re-keyed by the county auditor into their payment system. With CSN, these transactions will be processed electronically. Once CSN is fully operational, CSN will be tailored to deliver these transactions electronically to the auditor for payment. Future plans are to work with providers to move toward electronically billing on the other 1.5 million manual transactions.

This will mean that instead of having resources devoted to data entry or claims processing, those resources can be devoted to working with clients, providers, and stakeholders to help the counties optimize their human services.

Next month I will continue discussing more aspects of CSN.

Password Management

By: Tammy Norman

ISAC Office Manager



Q: I have passwords for different accounts and can't seem to remember any of them; do you have any suggestions for password management?

A: Passwords are an important security issue that all computer and internet users should take seriously. If you are like most users, we tend to use the names of pets from our childhood, nicknames or important dates as our passwords. These passwords, though easy for us to remember, do not create a very safe and secure password for computer users to be utilizing. Passwords should be made up of uppercase and lowercase letters, numbers and punctuation. Your password should never be shared with anyone and should be changed often. However, these passwords, though much safer and secure, are extremely difficult for most users to remember or apply without writing them down and storing them. Once you write your passwords down or store them in a document on your computer, you are once again creating a security risk. Luckily, there are some solutions out there to assist you in password management; below are just a few examples:

RoboForm – This software is available in a free version which enables you to store your passwords online or offline, automatically logs you into online accounts, and enables you to complete online registration forms or checkout forms with a simple mouse click. A version of this software entitled RoboForm2Go enables you to download your password and registration form information onto a USB flash drive and take it with you. There is a free version with limited features but if you wish to purchase the full version, it can be yours for \$19.95 per license. If this software is something you may be interested in, simply go to

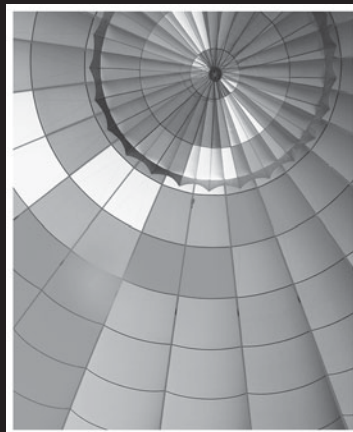
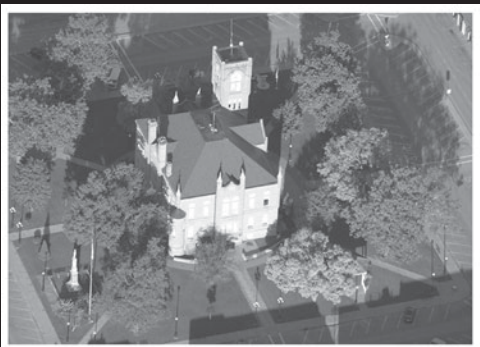
www.roboform.com.

AnyPassword – This software is available in a free version that stores passwords. The pro version offers encrypted storage of passwords, a fast search function, fills in forms, creates customized passwords and can be stored on a USB flash drive. The pro version is available for the purchase price of \$24.95 per license. To access information about this software, simply go to www.anypassword.com.

SplashID – This is another password management software that has the added feature of being able to synchronize between your desktop and handheld devices. It offers many of the same features of RoboForm and AnyPassword. There are several different versions and the price differs depending on the handheld device you are using. You can check out this product line at www.splashdata.com.

If password management software is something you wish to investigate, please take a moment and go to each of these websites and check out the different features. If you have IT staff available, please discuss the different options with them and use their expertise in helping you make your final decision.

Website Note: Please take a moment to register for ISAC University which will be held on April 19 – 20 at the West Des Moines, Marriott. If you have a question regarding new technology and would like it addressed in this column, please contact me at 515.244.7181 extension 315 or at tnorman@iowacounties.org. Until next month, keep clicking!



about the cover

The cover pictures were taken by Lauren Adams, ISAC Financial Administrative Assistant, during a hot air balloon ride. A portion of the ride went over the Lucas County Courthouse, as pictured. I'm always looking for interesting photos for the cover of the magazine. For consideration, please send your photos to rbicego@iowacounties.org.

Springtime - an Early or Flourishing Stage of Development

We've all survived another long winter in Iowa, with the bitter cold, ice and snow, snow, and more snow. Spring is around the corner. I don't know about everyone else, but I love the new growth, the changing season, warm weather, outdoor activities, longer days, and an overall sense of new beginnings and good feelings. As soon as the calendar hits March 1 the new feelings of hope and anticipation for what's ahead begin. It's amazing what one day can do...February 28 - blah... March 1 - YEA!! Even though March may bring cold weather, snow, rain, slush, and dreary days it just doesn't have the same feel to it. I know that it's brief and Spring is on its way so I view these days differently. The same viewpoint can be applied to the "winter" of changes we have had in case management, the new assessment (bitter cold), the changes in time tracking to address the billing units (snow), addressing risk factors and the new on-call service. We dread winter's arrival, we prepare for it, we deal with it, and we survive it.

Well, here we are, surviving the new assessment and the changes in time tracking for billing in units. As assessments come due, case managers are using the new form. It's time consuming and much longer, however, the comments I have heard in the field have been that there is more information being obtained and new information is being learned about the consumers you serve. As we all learn how to use this new form it gets easier to use, anxiety lessens, and we "move on/survive." Myself included. When I first started reviewing assessments with the new form it was taking me quite a long time to complete. As I have become familiar with it, I have found it easier to go through. I realize it isn't the same as what case managers are doing, but the point is as we get to know a new item the fear and anxiety goes away.

By: Cindy Chappelle

ISAC Case Management Specialist



As Spring arrives and Summer approaches we have several things to look forward to:

- Getting to know the new assessment and how to complete it becomes easier
- Packing away heavy sweaters
- Getting into a routine of tracking billable units
- Planting flowers
- As the months go by more & more assessments are being completed for the first time (which is the most time consuming and hopefully the annual reviews won't be as time consuming)
- Opening windows and feeling the warm breeze
- Case managers are learning how to address risk factors and new things are being learned about the people you serve.
- The days are getting longer...sunny days means a sunnier disposition.

With the new season upon us, hopefully it will bring a new sense of calmness (however small) in regard to the changes. Allow the "feel good" feelings in with the warm weather and also allow them to influence your role as a case manager and your role in the world of your consumers.

Spring is when you feel like whistling even with a shoe full of slush. -Doug Larson

Remember to set your clocks forward on Sunday, March 14, for daylight savings time!

Don't miss it!

ISAC's **2010 Spring School**
of Instruction

March 24-25, 2010

Downtown Marriott and Renaissance Savery Des Moines

More information? Visit www.iowacounties.org

ISAC meetings

ISAC University 2010

Come join us for this exciting day-and-a-half conference that will give you down-to-earth training on how to become an effective leader. The conference will provide unique content that is packed with powerful success strategies. The dynamic speakers will give you practical information that you can begin using as soon as you return home.

Location: West Des Moines Marriott (1250 Jordan Creek Parkway, West Des Moines, IA 50266)

Conference Registration: The registration fee for the 2010 ISAC University is only \$150. Your registration includes dinner on Monday evening, lunch on Tuesday afternoon and refreshment breaks both days. Please register at www.iowacounties.org by Friday, April 9, 2010. Space is limited, so register today!

By: Stacy Horner

ISAC Meeting/Event Administrator



Hotel Reservation Information: Please call 800.228.9290 to make your hotel reservation. To receive the conference rate of \$89/night (plus applicable taxes), you must identify yourself with the *IA ST COUNTIES* group block. All reservations must be received by Monday, March 29, 2010 and must be guaranteed with a major credit card. After this date, rooms are subject to availability at the standard rate. Check-in is at 3:00 pm, and check-out is at 12:00 pm.

The West Des Moines Marriott provides complimentary on-site parking and wireless high speed Internet in every room, as well as a smoke-free environment. The hotel features a fitness center, indoor pool and whirlpool. The hotel also has an on-site restaurant, CK's Steakhouse, and lounge.

Conference Agenda

Monday, April 19, 2010

12:00 pm - 12:45 pm

Registration

12:45 pm - 1:00 pm

Welcome Remarks

1:00 pm - 2:00 pm

General Session - "Go to a Place We May Never Have Been: The Essence of Leading Others"

2:00 pm - 3:00 pm

General Session - "Professionalism and Why it's Important"

3:00 pm - 3:15 pm

Refreshment Break

3:15 pm - 4:45 pm

General Session - "Understanding the ABCs of XYZ Generations"

5:30 pm - 7:30 pm

Dinner and Closing Keynote Presentation - "Staying Alive-Mentally"

Tuesday, April 20, 2010

7:30 am - 8:00 am

Morning Refreshments

8:00 am - 10:30 am

Opening Keynote Presentation - "Creating a Positive Customer Service Environment"

10:30 am - 10:45 am

Break

10:45 am - 12:15 pm

General Session - "Leading in Times of Challenge and Change"

12:15 pm - 1:00 pm

Lunch

1:00 pm - 3:00 pm

Closing Keynote Presentation - "Little Victories, Big Results!"

3:00 pm - 3:15 pm

Closing Remarks

*Please find more information including speakers and meals at www.iowacounties.org.

ISAC Corporate Hotel Rates

The Iowa State Association of Counties has signed an agreement with the following hotels. To receive the ISAC rate, please call the hotel directly to make your reservation using the instructions for each hotel below. Please contact shorner@iowacounties.org if you have any questions. We hope that you enjoy your stay in Des Moines!

Des Moines Marriott Downtown

700 Grand Avenue
Des Moines, IA 50309
800.514.4681

Des Moines Marriott Downtown to offer a corporate guest room rate of \$112/night (plus applicable tax) to anyone associated with ISAC. This \$112 rate is for single or double occupancy and includes high-speed internet access. Please note that this rate is subject to availability.

Amenities:

- Smoke-free facility
- All room types feature luxurious bedding (down comforters, custom duvets and cotton-rich linens), cable/satellite TV, coffee maker/tea service, iron and board and hairdryer
- Guests are free to enjoy the indoor pool, whirlpool and health club
- On-site restaurant, Rock River Grill and Tavern, open for breakfast, lunch and dinner
- Room service
- Complimentary shuttle for airport, gratuity shuttle for downtown locations
- Valet parking
- 4:00 pm check in, 12:00 pm check out

To receive the ISAC transient rate, please call 800.514.4681 to make your reservation. Please ask for Iowa State Association of Counties or ISAC corporate guest room rate.

Fairfield Inn & Suites by Marriott Des Moines Airport

6880 Fleur Drive
Des Moines, IA 5032
515.309.4444

Fairfield Inn & Suites Des Moines Airport to offer a preferred corporate rate of \$89/night (plus applicable tax) to anyone associated with ISAC. The \$89 rate is for either a standard king or double queen room seven days a week. The rate for a king executive suite is \$109/night (plus applicable tax).

Amenities:

- Hotel opened July 2008
- Smoke-free facility
- Complimentary deluxe continental breakfast including a Belgium waffle bar and Jimmy Dean hot breakfast sandwiches
- Complimentary on-site parking
- Complimentary high speed and wireless internet access
- Complimentary business center
- Complimentary drink ticket to use next door at Johnny's Italian Steakhouse
- Room service provided by Johnny's Italian Steakhouse
- Heated indoor pool and spa
- 24 hour fitness center
- 24 hour on-site convenience store, The Market
- Complimentary shuttle that travels within a five-mile radius of hotel
- King executive suites are furnished with two flat screen LCD TVs, microwave, mini refrigerator, DVD player, and more
- Rooms have new luxurious "Green Tea Bedding Package"
- 3:00 pm check in, 12:00 pm check out.

To receive the preferred corporate rate, please call 515.309.4444 to make your reservation. Please ask for the Iowa State Association of Counties preferred corporate rate.

Sheraton West Des Moines

1800 50th Street
West Des Moines, IA 50266

Sheraton West Des Moines to offer a corporate rate of \$90 (plus applicable tax) to anyone associated with ISAC (includes members, vendors, employees, visitors and guests). This \$90 rate is for a standard king or two double beds. Please note that this rate is subject to availability and should the preferred rate not be available, the best available house rate will be given.

Other room types will also be available for the ISAC corporate rate. One room suites will be \$110, two room suites will be \$115 and club level will be \$120 (plus applicable state guest room tax). Club level gives access to the Club Lounge with a complimentary continental breakfast and hors d'oeuvres. These rates are available to anyone traveling for business or pleasure. All guest room rates are eligible for Starwood Preferred Guest points. December 31, 2010 is considered a blackout date and is unavailable for the ISAC corporate rate.

Amenities:

- All room types feature a Signature Sheraton Sweet Sleeper Bed, 27-inch television, sofa bed, coffee maker, iron and board and hair dryer
- Guests are free to enjoy the full service business center, indoor pool, whirlpool and sauna
- On-site restaurants, Park Place Restaurant and Waterfall Grille
- Room service
- Same day dry cleaning and laundry service
- Complimentary shuttle service for airport and within 3-mile radius of hotel
- Complimentary hotel parking
- High-speed internet access is available for a fee
- 3:00 pm check in, 12:00 pm check out

To receive the ISAC corporate rate, please call 515.233.1800 or 888.627.8043 to make your reservation. Please ask for the Iowa State Association of Counties/ISAC rate.

Stoney Creek Inn-Des Moines

5291 Stoney Creek Court
Johnston, IA 50131
515.334.9000

The Iowa State Association of Counties has signed an agreement with Stoney Creek Inn-Des Moines to offer a corporate rate of \$89/night (plus applicable tax) to anyone associated with ISAC. This \$89 rate is available for either a deluxe or standard room in the main building. Please note that this rate is only valid Sunday-Thursday.

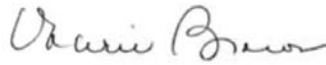
Amenities:

- Smoke-free facility
- Deluxe and standard rooms are furnished with either one extra king-sized bed or two double beds, desk, chair, dresser, TV and spacious bathroom
- Deluxe rooms feature a refrigerator and microwave
- Complimentary expanded continental breakfast with coffee available 24 hours
- Complimentary high-speed internet access
- Full-service bar with pizza (Bearly's Saloon)
- Wilderness park pool area features a heated indoor pool, whirlpool, dry sauna, fireplace, video game room and outdoor patio
- Fitness center available
- Complimentary shuttle service (Based on availability during the hours of 7:00 am-10:00 pm)
- Dry-clean service and guest laundry
- 3:00 pm check in, 11:00 am check out

To receive the ISAC corporate rate, please call 800.659.2220 or 515.334.9000 to make your reservation. Please ask for Iowa State Association of Counties/ISAC corporate rate.

Tell Us About Your Program

NACo wants to know what activities and programs you have planned for National County Government Month. We will share this information with other counties to help them have a successful celebration and also use it to promote NCGM in the national media. Please fill out the form below and send to Jim Philipps via fax at 202.393.2630 or e-mail your NCGM activities to jphilipps@naco.org. Thank you for your help and commitment to county government.



Valerie Brown
NACo President
Supervisor, Sonoma County, California

YES! Our county is participating in National County Government Month. This is what we have planned:

County Contact: _____

Title: _____

County: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Return by FAX to Jim Philipps at 202.393.2630 or e-mail activities to jphilipps@naco.org.

Also send form to Rachel Bicego 515.244.6397 or rbicego@iowacounties.org. Please find all NCGM information including fliers like the one on the following page at www.naco.org.

Celebrate National County Government Month

Healthy Counties

Show Your Pride in _____ County!

Please join _____ County in promoting "Healthy Counties" by celebrating National County Government Month. Learn more about how _____ County is delivering essential health care services, providing high quality recreation programs and promoting healthy living activities in our community.

<ADD YOUR COUNTY'S EVENTS HERE>

<ADDITIONAL INFORMATION>

Suggestion: Contact Info



www.naco.org/NCGM

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National County Government Month
April • 2010



Social Web Sites Catching on in Counties

By: Charlie Ban
NACo Staff Writer

Communicating directly with individuals is easier than ever with the proliferation of social media Web sites, but a NACo survey shows 55 percent of counties don't make use of these tools.

Facebook and Twitter, among other Web sites, allow users to release information directly to the public into a community of people who have demonstrated interest by becoming a fan of or following a county on those sites, respectively. Rather than relying on a resident to visit a county's Web site to read news releases, updates forward directly to user's accounts. Of 121 respondents, more counties use Twitter (50 users) than Facebook (43 users), but many use both.

The majority of counties that have a social media presence delegate the responsibility for administrating them to their public information officers or whichever department maintains the account.

Teresa Hamilton Hall, Roanoke County, Va.'s public information officer, said careful monitoring and updating content is the commitment that comes with using social media tools.

"The last thing you want to do is develop a page and let it lapse," she said. "If you're going to do that, it's almost better not to try, because your 'fans' are going to be on the lookout for new information. That's why they express their interest in your county."

Hall maintains both sites with the aid of a program that routes Twitter entries onto the county's Facebook page. Among counties who report using social media, 82 percent do so to provide news, and Roanoke's page does that actively. Hall updated the county's Facebook page with 10 entries on Jan. 26, including eight from Twitter.

Several respondents report using Twitter to disseminate information in emergency situations.

Roanoke maintains Facebook accounts for its public library; parks, recreation and tourism, and planning departments, and the county school system.

Hall says she has only had to delete a few user postings, and did so in conjunction with the county's decorum at public meetings policy.

"If you act a certain way at a meeting, you will be asked to leave," she said. "We treat our social media community the same way."

Wake County, N.C. Information Technology Manager Bill Scanlon said his county's investment in social media resources was carefully leveraged against other communications tools.

"We use social media tools because they have proven to be effective communication methods," he said. "If other methods were as effective, we would use them, too."

Some survey respondents voiced concern for the security of their county's computer system when exposed to social networking. Scanlon said the Web sites, like many, pose risks, but no more than a non-social networking site.

"Viruses can attack us from multiple perspectives, so it's important to have a strong education effort to guard against them and most importantly, guard the computers themselves with anti-virus measures," he said.

Scanlon said choosing not to use social media to support a county's communication plan because of Internet security worries was moot, because employees could likely still access their personal account from their computer. Wake County is currently reviewing its acceptable-use policy for computers at work.

According to the NACo survey, most counties do not have any policy regarding personal use of these social media tools, though of the 17 that do, 16 restrict use while on county time.

Of the 121 respondents, all counties with more than 600,000 residents use social media, and 36 of 49 counties with more than 142,000 residents use it. Smaller counties aren't necessarily out of the picture, though. The City and Borough of Wrangell, Alaska, with just over 2,000 residents, maintains a social media presence.

Kathy Smith, public information officer for Spotsylvania County, Va., with fewer than 91,000 residents, hopes to get involved, soon.

"I personally have Facebook and Twitter, but as a one-person PIO office, I would not have the time to monitor and respond to Facebook at this time," she said in response to the survey. "I plan on starting Twitter for the county soon."

ISAC has a Twitter account which we use as another platform to keep members informed. Follow us at www.twitter.com/IowaCounties. You can also follow NACo at www.twitter.com/NACoTweets.

Making Medicare Make Sense

Q: Since most Medicare prescription drug plans (Part D plans) have a temporary limit on what they will cover, can you give us some tips on how to bridge what is known as the Medicare prescription drug coverage gap?

A: Most Medicare prescription drug plans have a temporary limit on what they will cover for prescription drugs, or what is known, as the “coverage gap.” The good news is that all Medicare drug plans provide coverage if you have an unexpected illness or injury that results in extremely high drug costs. This is called “catastrophic” coverage. It assures that once you paid \$4,550 out-of-pocket for drug costs this calendar year, almost all of your drug costs above that amount are covered.

So, if your plan has a coverage gap, which most plans do, when your total drug spending by the plan and you reaches \$2,830 then you will enter the coverage gap where you would be responsible for 100% of the costs of your drugs (unless the plan you are in offers some coverage for your drugs during the coverage gap - which is an enhanced plan). And then, as mentioned above, when your total out-of-pocket costs reach \$4,550, then almost all of your drug costs above that amount would be covered by the plan, except for a small copayment for each drug until the end of the year

Now, none of this applies to you, if you are receiving the full extra help under the Limited Income Subsidy program, or what is known as LIS assistance. You would continue to pay the same copayment or coinsurance amount during a coverage gap if your plan has one.

Now, if you do have a coverage gap in your prescription drug plan, here are some ways you can avoid or delay entering the gap, and continue to save money on drug costs while in the gap:

- **Consider switching to generic, over-the-counter (OTC), or other lower-cost drugs.** Ask your doctor about generic, over the counter, or less-expensive brand-name drugs that would work just as well as the ones you’re taking now. Switching to lower-cost drugs may be enough to help you avoid the coverage gap and can save you hundreds or thousands of dollars a year.

- **Cost savings information through the use of mail-order pharmacies, generics, or less-expensive brand-name drugs is also available by visiting the “Compare Medicare Prescription Drug Plans” section of www.medicare.gov.**

- **Keep using your Medicare drug plan card, even while in the coverage gap.** Using your drug plan card ensures that

you’ll get the drug plan’s discounted rates and that the money you spend counts toward your out-of-pocket costs to get you out of the coverage gap quicker.

- **Explore national and community-based charitable programs** that might offer assistance (such as the National Patient Advocate Foundation or the National Organization for Rare Disorders). These organizations may have programs that can help with your drug costs. Comprehensive information on federal, state, and private assistance programs in your area is available on the **Benefits CheckUp** (www.benefitscheckup.org) Web site.

- **Look into Pharmaceutical Assistance Programs** (sometimes called Patient Assistance Programs) that may be offered by the manufacturers of the drugs you take. Many of the major drug manufacturers are offering assistance programs for people enrolled in a Medicare drug plan. You can find out whether a Pharmaceutical Assistance Program is offered by the manufacturers of the drugs you take by visiting www.medicare.gov and selecting “Lower Your Costs During the Coverage Gap.” Or you can visit www.Rxassist.org. RXassist offers a comprehensive database of these programs, as well as practical tools, news, and articles so that health care professionals, and patients, (beneficiaries) can find the information they need, all in one place.

And, the last tip I have to help avoid or delay entering your prescription drug plan’s coverage gap is to:

- **Apply for extra help.** If you have Medicare and have limited income and resources, you may qualify for extra help paying for your prescription drugs. Contact Social Security by visiting www.socialsecurity.gov or calling 1.800.772.1213. TTY users should call 1.800.325.0778. **Note:** Not all types of coverage will count toward your out-of-pocket costs.

Remember, after you have paid \$4,550 (in 2010) out-of-pocket for drug costs in this calendar year, almost all of your drug costs above that amount are covered. If you want to switch to a plan that offers at least some type of coverage in the gap, you can do so between November 15 - December 31 each year. Your coverage will begin on January 1 of the following year.

For More Information: All Medicare drug plans are different, so you should call your plan if you have questions about how the coverage gap will work for you. If you need help finding other resources, such as the ones described above, you can call your State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) for free personalized health insurance counseling to people with Medicare and their caregivers. In Iowa that program is called, The Senior Health Insurance Information Program (SHIIP), of Iowa, and they can be reached at: 1.800.351.4664.

Government Has Potential to Achieve Greatness

By: Steve Hamill

US Communities General Manager

Over the past few years, Americans have become increasingly critical of government and cynical about government's ability to "do good." Despite these stereotypical views and criticisms, we see countless compelling examples to demonstrate that government can achieve greatness.

We applaud the dedicated government officials and employees who work tirelessly for the overall benefit of the American public and would like to offer a helping hand by sharing real-life examples of governments achieving greatness.

There is no better time for government to exhibit greatness than the present. Governments, under intense economic pressures, are still expected to preserve life and public safety, plus quality-of-life, public benefits that are often taken for granted. At least 48 states in the United States are facing a cumulative budget shortfall of \$166 billion, or nearly a quarter of their budgets. More than ever, government at every level is faced with the burdensome challenge of doing more with less.

This article is the first in a series that will examine the different ways governments have been successful in delivering efficient, effective, fiscally responsible and innovative results in the communities they serve. The series, titled the Great Government Series, will demonstrate how incremental budget reductions and revisions to standard models of operation have the potential not only to close budget gaps but also to improve outcomes.

The Great Government Series will explore the role that improved operating results — IOR — play in the path to achieving greatness. IOR will be used in the series to refer to new knowledge, ideas, methods or innovations that have been used by one or more government agencies to increase productivity, reduce costs and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of operations, services and programs.

A simple, yet innovative method of achieving IOR is through the use of cooperative procurement. Cooperative procurement (or piggy-backing off another government agency's previously solicited contract) has been proven to reduce administrative and product costs, increase efficiencies and stretch shrinking budgets during difficult times.

Cooperative procurement aggregates the purchasing power of multiple government agencies in order to drive down deeper discounts on goods and services. Cities, counties, states and

school districts across the country are demonstrating IOR and greatness today by utilizing cooperative procurement.

The city of Los Angeles recently saved 10 percent through its purchases of office supplies from Los Angeles County's contract with Office Depot. Since 2006, the city has estimated savings and rebates of approximately \$1.8 million based on the purchase of \$18 million in office supplies. When the city was outfitting 400 new workstations in its new Police Administration Building, it saved more than \$13.5 million by using Fairfax County, Va.'s contract with Haworth.

Fairfax County also purchases its office supplies from Los Angeles County's contract with Office Depot. The county received discounts of up to 72 percent on certain products and achieved rebates of nearly \$700,000 in FY09 alone.

New Jersey recently adopted Charlotte/Mecklenburg County's auto parts contract with AutoZone. Based on a projected purchase of auto parts for state fleet vehicles and equipment of \$9 million to \$10 million in FY09, the state expects to save about \$1.5 million to \$2 million by using the cooperative contract.

Budget constraints were preventing San Antonio, Texas from replacing aging construction equipment or procuring additional equipment. The city relied, instead, on renting equipment. Currently, it uses four contracts for equipment rental and spends \$679,000 annually. Through the use of North Carolina State University's contract with Hertz Equipment Rental, the city is forecasting a direct savings of \$132,000 annually or an approximately 25 percent decrease in costs from its current rental equipment contracts.

Throughout the United States, governments are demonstrating efficient, effective, fiscally responsible and innovative ways of meeting their constituents' needs. Using cooperative procurement is just one example of governments achieving IOR, even during difficult times.

We view the Great Government Series as a collaborative and living effort. We welcome input from our government leaders and the public at large. If you have thoughts on great government or would like to share some examples of great government in your community, we'd love to hear from you.

Please contact us at greatgovernment@uscommunities.org.

Apply for Prestigious Innovations Award

Harvard University invites you submit your program or nominate an initiative for the *Innovations in American Government Award*.

Administered by the Ash Institute for Democratic Governance and Innovation at Harvard Kennedy School, the Innovations Award is heralded as the premier public-sector award in the nation. It is given annually to programs that serve as examples of creative and effective government at its best.

This year the Innovations program has also launched a new initiative, *Bright Ideas*, designed to recognize and promote promising government programs and partnerships.

All units of government—federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial—from all policy areas are eligible to apply for recognition.

The top winner of the 2010 Innovations Award will receive a \$100,000 grant to support replication and dissemination activities. Top finalists will also receive monetary grants.

Applications and additional information for both initiatives are available on our website: www.innovationsaward.harvard.edu

Applications are due April 7, 2010.

Census Day Promotional Materials

Census Day is April 1, 2010. You can make your community part of this important nationwide civic event by displaying a 2010 census poster (or several) in public areas. Most posters are 16"x20" and may be displayed from February through May 2010. You can find a selection of poster online at <http://2010.census.gov/>, or you may request posters, brochures, and other census promotional items through your local Census Bureau partnership specialist.

Wendi Muir, Sr. Partnership Specialist - Des Moines Local Census Office

Contact: 515.867.1246 or wendi.anne.muir@census.gov

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Joe De La Rosa, Partnership Specialist - Sioux City Local Census Office

Contact: 712.435.9121 or joseph.j.de.la.rosa@census.gov

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Abbie Peterson, Partnership Specialist - Ames and Cedar Rapids Local Census Office

Contact: 319.601.1643 or abbie.peterson@census.gov

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Shavondia Hunter, Partnership Assistant - Waterloo Local Census Office

Contact: 816.668.0493 or vondia21@yahoo.com

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miscellaneous

IPPA Educational Opportunity

The Iowa Public Procurement Association (IPPA) is offering an educational opportunity for public purchasers. The class, entitled Legal Aspects of Public Procurement, will be held on April 12-14 at the Hoover Building (1305 East Walnut, Level A, Conference Room 8, Des Moines).

Designed to be an educational exploration of the Legal Aspects of Public Procurement, this course will provide a foundation of the principles and general concepts of the law as it applies to public procurement. Course content will address issues such as the UCC, the Model Procurement Code, Sale

of Goods Act and the legal implications surrounding solicitations, contracting and post award issues. Attention will be given to the ethical issues facing the profession relevant to the law. Taught by a procurement professional, not an attorney, this course will focus on actual procurement situations with actual procurement implications.

A link to more information can be found at www.iowacounties.com or you can contact Judy Lehman with any questions, j.lehman@cedar-rapids.org or 319.286.5022.

employment

Code Enforcement Officer

Applications are currently being accepted for the Code Enforcement Officer for Story County Planning and Zoning Department. Job duties involve performing new construction inspections, reviewing/issuing zoning, home business, agricultural exemption and floodplain development permits and managing code enforcement program. The position requires a job-related Bachelor's degree, for example, a Community and Regional Planning degree with a background in planning and enforcement. A strong understanding of the functions of a planning and zoning office is required. Three years experience in planning and zoning department with strong clerical and people skills for enforcement work is required. (Note: additional years of job-related experience may be substituted for the Bachelor's degree.) Apply to Human Resources, Story County Administration, 900 Sixth Street, Nevada Iowa 50201; jsayer@storycounty.com; or fax to 515.382.7206 by 5:00 pm March 19, 2010. Hiring pay range is \$34,400 to \$42,392 annually. Story County is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

County Sanitarian

Story County is hiring for the position of County Sanitarian. The sanitarian will manage the Environmental Health Department and administer and/or enforce environmental and health laws at the local level and will work with grants between various agencies. A Bachelor's degree in related field required. Thorough understanding and broad background in environmental health and knowledge of laws, rules and regulations affecting environmental health as would be acquired through three to five years of experience is also required, and REHS certification preferred. Apply to Human Resources, Story County, 900 Sixth Street, Nevada Iowa 50201; jsayer@storycounty.com; or fax to 515.382.7206 by April 1, 2010. The hiring Range for this position is \$51,232 to \$64,088.

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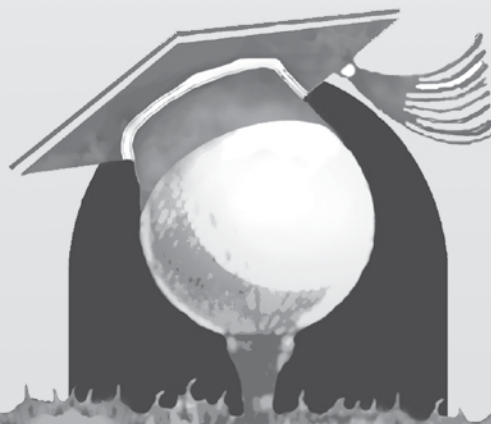
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2010 calendar

March 2010

- 4 County Day at the Capitol
- 6-10 NACo Legislative Conference (Marriott Wardman Park Hotel, Washington DC)
- 24-25 ISAC Spring School of Instruction (Downtown Marriott/Renaissance Savery, Des Moines)

April 2010

- 1-30 National County Government Month
- 13-14 IPHA's Governor's Conference on Public Health (Scheman Center, Ames)
- 13 CCMS Administrators Meeting (Courtyard by Marriott, Ankeny)
- 14 CCMS Support Staff Training (ISAC Office, Des Moines)
- 19-20 ISAC University (West Des Moines Marriott)
- 29 ISAC Board of Directors (ISAC Office, Des Moines)

May 2010

- 5 ISAC Legislative Webinar
- 12-14 ISCTA Annual Conference (Clear Lake)
- 13 CCMS Advanced Case Management (Adventureland Inn, Altoona)

June 2010

- 3 CCMS Supervisors Training (Hilton Garden Inn, Urbandale)
- 16-18 ICIT Mid-year Conference (West Des Moines Marriott)
- 16-17 CCMS Fundamentals Training (Holiday Inn Airport, Des Moines)

July 2010

- 13-14 ICEA Mid-year Conference (Gateway Hotel, Ames)
- 14 ISAC Scholarship Golf Fundraiser (AH Blank Golf Course, Des Moines)
- 16-20 NACo Annual Conference (Reno, Nevada)
- 29 ISAC Board of Directors (ISAC Office, Des Moines)

August 2010

- 4-6 ICRA Summer School (Hotel Julien, Dubuque)
- 5-6 Supervisors Executive Board Retreat (Iowa City Sheraton)

September 2010

- 16-17 ISAC Board Meeting and Retreat (Cass County)

October 2010

- 28-29 ISAC Board of Directors Meeting (ISAC Office, Des Moines)

November 2010

- 17-19 ISAC Fall School of Instruction (Coralville Marriott Hotel and Conference Center)

December 2010

- 7-9 ICEA Statewide Annual Conference (Scheman Center, Ames)
- 9 ISAC Board of Directors Meeting (ISAC Office, Des Moines)

Please visit ISAC's online calendar of events at www.iowacounties.org and click on 'Upcoming Events.' A listing of all the meetings scheduled thus far in 2010, agendas and meeting notices can be found on ISAC's website. A majority of ISAC's meetings offer online registration. If you have any questions about the meetings listed above or would like to add an affiliate meeting to the ISAC Calendar, please contact Stacy Horner at 515.244.7181 or shorner@iowacounties.org.

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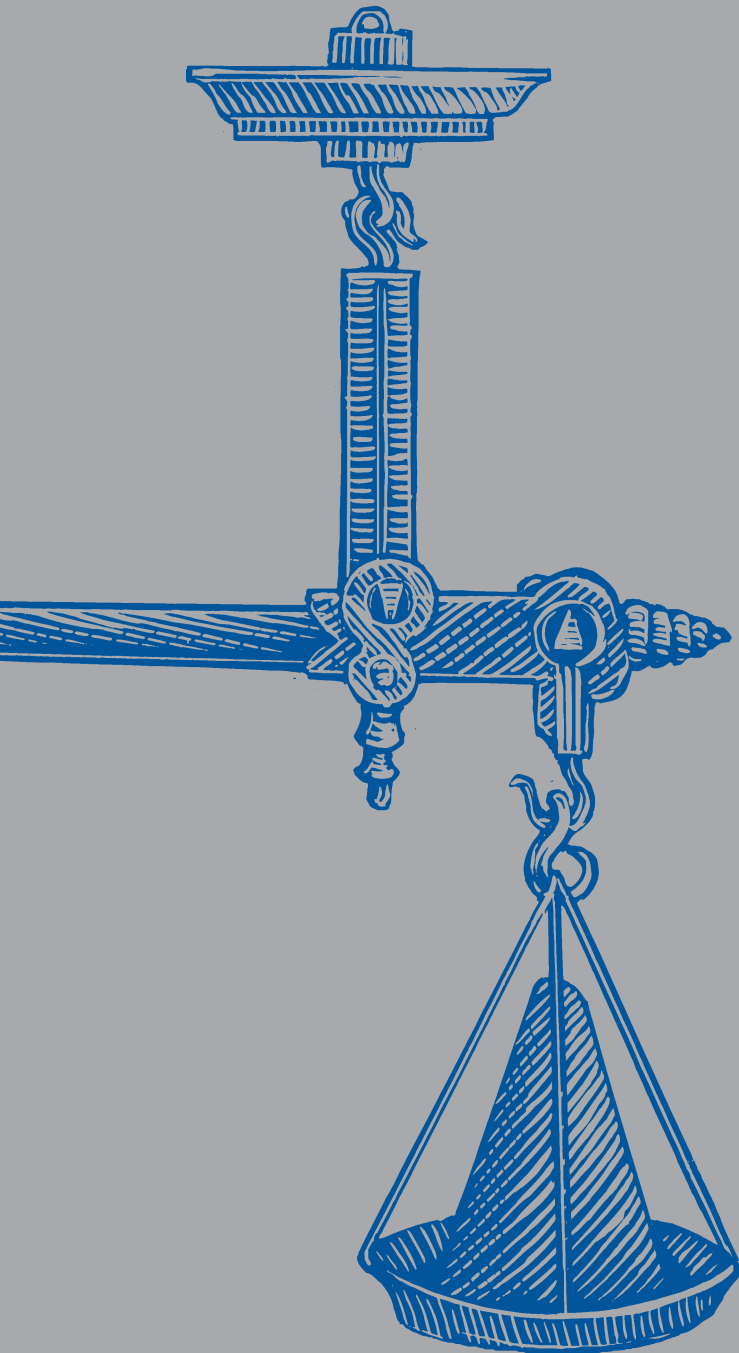
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