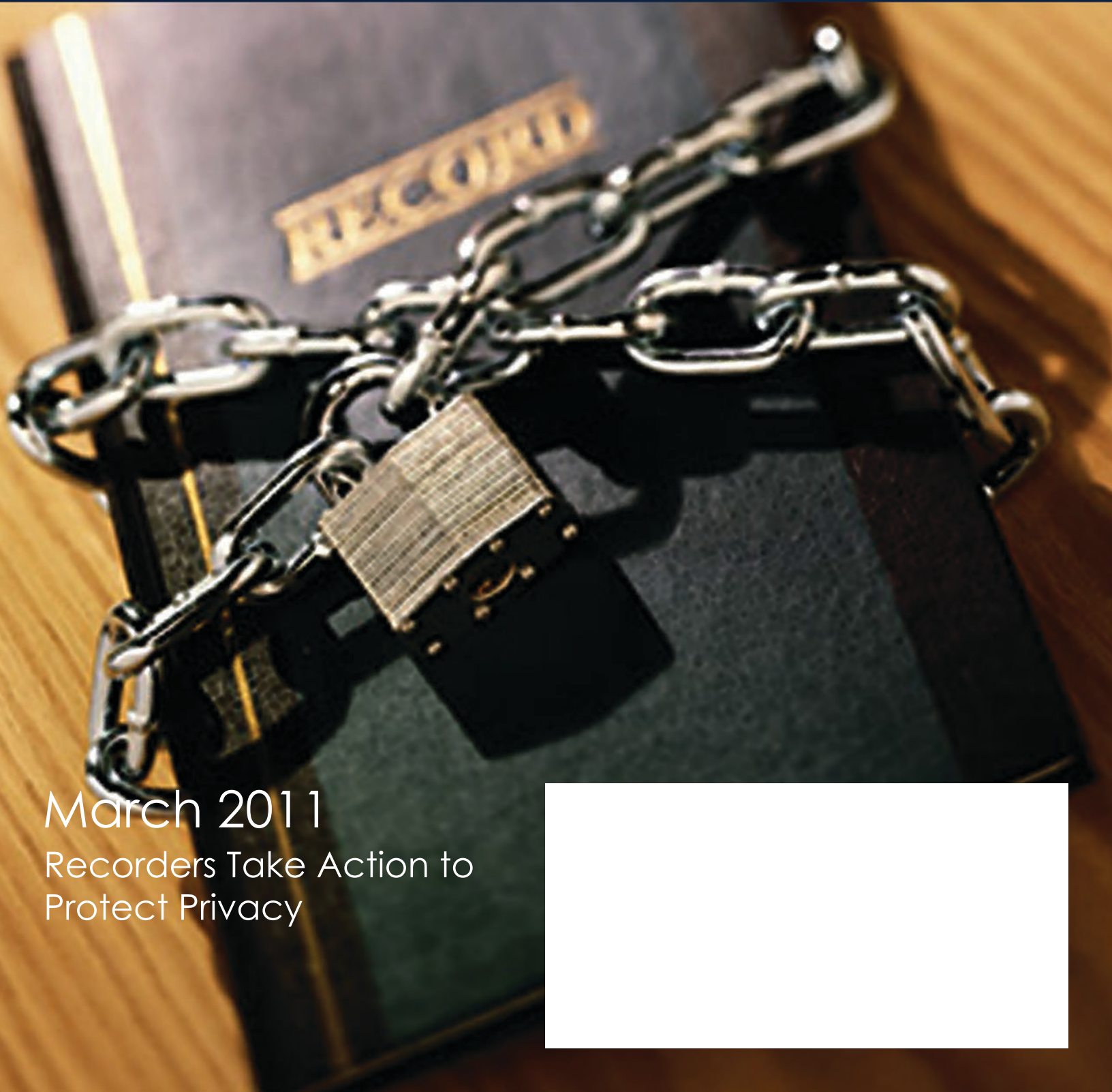


The Iowa County

Iowa State Association of Counties



March 2011
Recorders Take Action to
Protect Privacy





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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.

Recorders Take Action to Protect Privacy

By: Deb Winke and Nancy Parrott

Allamakee and Jasper County Recorders

Twenty-nine months. That's how long Iowa County Recorders have been engaged in a process to find the right balance between the need to prevent private information from being used for identity theft, and the legal obligation to provide easy access to public records. The results of this process will soon be apparent as more images of real estate documents are made public through the Iowa Land Records web site – iowalandrecords.org. Current real estate records are now being posted for public access. "It has been a long and challenging process," says Deb Roberts, Floyd County Recorder and Chair of the Iowa Land Records governing board. "We're committed to completing this phase and then continuing into the future. We coined the phrase 'Redaction is a Team Sport', because everyone has a stake in privacy protection and open records." Several steps are being taken to protect the privacy of Iowans. These steps include a comprehensive redaction project, increased requirements for authorized user registration, and increased system security measures.

Redaction. It is defined by Iowa law as the permanent removal of "all or a portion of personally identifiable information from documents" including social security numbers, bank account numbers and credit/debit card numbers. More than 10 million documents (or 44 million pages) are being scanned and inspected for this private information. If it is found, the information is permanently redacted or "blacked out" before it is posted on the Iowa Land Records web site. More than half the real estate documents have been checked thus far, and those records will soon be available to the public.

User Registration. Before a person is allowed to access images of real estate records through Iowa Land Records they are required to register and agree to the policies of the web site. Registration requirements and policies have been strengthened and

user activity will be monitored. Users who violate the terms and policies of the web site will have their accounts disabled. Under the new "Terms of Use" if a user finds any private information in a real estate record which may have been missed by the redaction process, they are required to report it immediately so that the information can be restricted. Everyone who uses the web site has a shared responsibility to protect the privacy of Iowans, and users who do not agree to this policy will be denied access to document images.

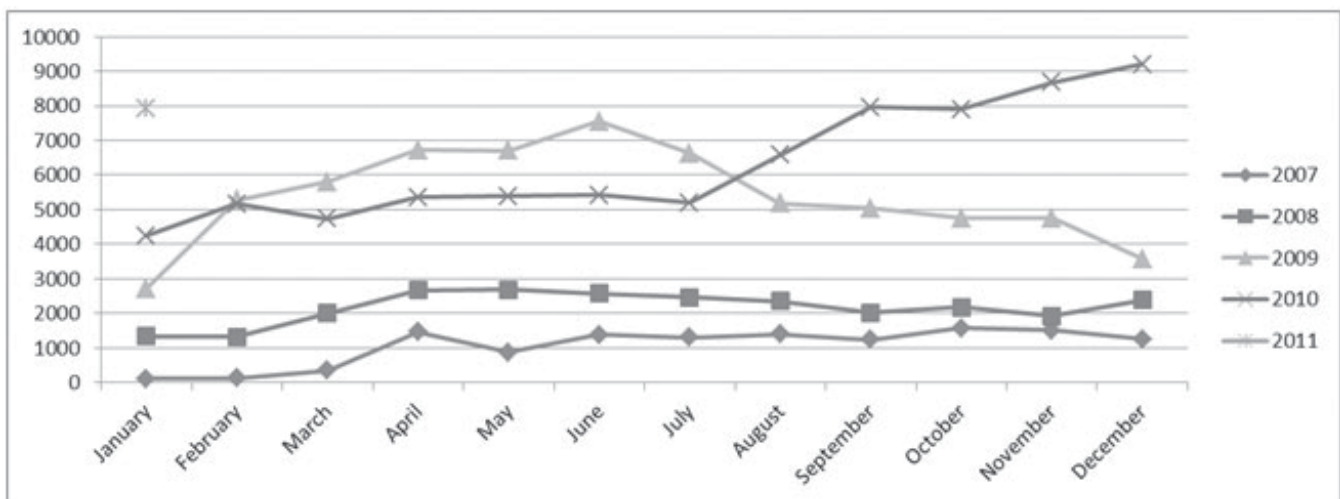
System Security. Technical changes have been made to ensure that confidential information is secured and segregated from public information. Unfortunately there are people seeking to misuse private information for their personal benefit, and no web site or information system is immune to hackers and thieves. System changes which were required to implement the redaction project also made it possible to increase security and protect private information. Additionally, as a result of these changes Iowa County Recorders now have an additional backup of real estate records which can be used for disaster recovery.

It has taken twenty-nine months to reach this point, but County Recorders have learned that privacy protection will be an ongoing challenge. As new documents are recorded or as older paper documents are converted to digital formats, the redaction efforts and security requirements will continue. For this reason ISAC and the Iowa County Recorders are seeking legislation (currently SSB 1050 – update when going to press?) to establish a long-term funding plan for the Iowa Land Records system. The proposal would establish an ongoing supplemental recording fee of \$2.00 per document to help sustain the project including redaction and other privacy protection activities.

Electronic Recording Gains Acceptance

During the last quarter of 2010 more than 15% of all documents recorded in Iowa were electronically submitted. December, 2010 was also a record month for electronic recording – topping 9,000 documents for the first time. Iowa continues as a national leader in electronic recording and remains as the only statewide electronic recording system in the United States. While the number of counties in the U.S. which accept electronic documents has grown in recent years, Iowa still has a significant share – making up about 20% of the total. Electronic submissions for 2011 are also off to a great start when compared with prior years.

Iowa County Recorders are exploring ways to further increase the number of electronic recordings. “I wish everyone would submit electronically,” says Joyce Jensen, Cass County Recorder and member of the Iowa Land Records governing board. “It is so much easier and faster for everyone. It is a win for the county and the customer.” There is hope that the recording fee for electronically submitted documents can be reduced to provide an incentive. That action is tied to pending legislation to establish a long-term base fee of \$2.00 per document for the Iowa Land Records system.



letter to the editor

Job Creation in Iowa, a Three Point Program

By: Stan Walk

Mitchell County Supervisor

Governor Branstad has made job creation the centerpiece of his administration for the next four years. Branstad promises over 200,000 new good paying jobs during this timeframe. Branstad believes by lowering the commercial property tax rate at least 40% and also lowering the corporate income tax rate, Corporate America will sit up, take notice and relocate to the heartland. Branstad believes this reduction of taxes will tip the scales in favor of Iowa when it comes to industry looking to relocate or initially starting up a new facility. Lowering these taxes may help, but this is not the area of concern for industry.

CNBC ranks the American States for their overall benefits and assistance to business/industry. In the 2010 ranking released this past July, Iowa came in 6th overall, down two places from their 4th place ranking in 2009. Iowa led all other states in the Midwest as a top state for business.

The following is how CNBC ranked Iowa: Cost of Business-1st; Workforce-20th; Quality of Life-17th; Economy-10th; Transportation-32nd; Technology & Innovation -29th; Education-16th; Business Friendliness-12th; Access to Capital-36th and Cost of Living-17th.

Iowa ranks 1st in the Cost of Business. Here is how CNBC defined Cost of Doing Business: "Cost is a major consideration when a company chooses a state. We looked at the tax burden, including individual income and property taxes, business taxes, even the gasoline tax. Utility costs can add up to a huge expense for business, and they vary widely by state. We also looked at the cost of wages and state workers' compensation insurance, as well as rental costs for office and industrial space."

According to CNBC, Iowa already ranks # 1 when it comes to the Cost of Doing Business. Yet industry is not flocking to Iowa. Therefore one must draw the conclusion there are other factors at play. Making reduced commercial property and income taxes the main concern appears to be a misplaced priority.

Look at the Transportation and Infrastructure category. Iowa ranked 32nd. Iowa just missed being at the bottom third of the 50 states for good Transportation and Infrastructure. CNBC defined Transportation and Infrastructure as: "Access to transportation in all its modes is key to getting your products to market and your people on the move. We measured the vitality of each state's transportation system by the value of goods shipped by air, land and water. We looked at the availability of air travel in each state, and the quality of the roads."

Excellent transportation is the key to marketing, yet Governor Branstad refuses to consider raising the gas tax. The majority of Iowans even understand and support a 10¢ a gallon gas tax increase. If manufacturers can not get the goods to market in a timely and economical fashion, every thing else is immaterial.

A third category where Iowa falters miserably is: Access to Capital. According to CNBC "Companies go where the money is, and venture capital—an increasingly important source of funding—flows to some states more than others."

Here Iowa ranks in the bottom third of states, 36th.

But even if Iowa could improve their Transportation and Access to Capital rankings, Iowa has another problem that was not ranked by CNBC. This unpublished category is: Selling the Benefits of your State to Industry.

Why are other states that can and do offer fewer benefits to industry beating Iowa when it comes to job creation and retention? These states are effectively marketing themselves. Iowa has failed to sell its positive benefits.

The Iowa Legislature needs to concentrate on a three point program to improve industrial growth and relocation: First; substantially increase the monies flowing into the Transportation and Infrastructure funds of Iowa and its political subdivisions.

Second; Iowa needs to provide financial incentives to those with access to substantial amounts of capital to invest in new initiatives. The best ideas in the world will never go forward without a viable means to make it happen.

Third: Iowa needs to market ourselves. Iowa has been the best kept secret for business incentives. Areas such as Illinois and the coasts may consider a move if provided accurate information on Iowa's advantages and incentives. Many local economic development commissions are highly skilled in assisting with all of the otherwise burdensome paperwork. They will not move here if they never learn about us.

If Iowa refocuses in these three key areas, Governor Branstad's goal of 200,000 good paying jobs can become a reality.

Commercial Property Tax Changes on the Horizon

By: **Mary Beth Mellick**

ISAC Fiscal/Public Policy Specialist



It's no secret that one of the top priorities for Iowa law-makers this legislative session is to provide property tax relief to commercial property owners. The goal is to revitalize growth and stimulate business investment in Iowa, thereby creating new jobs. The challenge of this proposal – and the hope – is to structure it in such a way that it doesn't negatively impact local governments.

Proposals on the Table

The Governor's plan is to reduce commercial property taxes by 40% over the next five years, tax new investments immediately at 60% of their valuation, and roll back commercial property 8% annually over five years. At the time this article was written, legislation reflecting the Governor's proposal had not been introduced; however, a separate piece of legislation, HF 9, had been filed by members of the Legislature.

House File 9 differs from the Governor's proposal. The bill couples the assessment limitations of residential, agricultural, and commercial property by limiting the percentage increase in all of those classes of property to the percentage increase of that class of property that is the lowest percentage increase under the allowable (4%) limit. The bill also provides that the lowest percentage increase is to be applied to industrial property in the same manner that it's applied to the other three classes of property.

Property Taxes 101

To understand the Governor's proposal and HF 9 is to first understand Iowa's property tax system, which isn't an easy task. Thomas F. Pogue, PhD, a Professor of Economics at the University of Iowa, best clarified Iowa's property tax structure in a 2004 report for the Iowa Policy Project. Though dated, the explanation still holds true:

Residential, commercial, and industrial property is assessed at market value, while agricultural property is assessed based on productivity. As a result of statewide limits on the annual growth in assessed values enacted in 1977 and 1978, the assessed value of property may be less than its actual (market or productivity) value. Since 1980, the limit on annual growth has been 4% (8% for utilities). To hold the increase in assessed values below these limits, the Iowa Department of Revenue each November sets the limitation (rollback) percentages to be applied for each class of property by county auditors. The rollback percentage is multiplied by the actual value to obtain the assessed value of the property. In recent years, the residential rollback has fallen to near 50% [45% in 2010], while rollbacks for all other classes of property, including com-

mercial, have been at or near 100% (that is, they are assessed at 100% of actual value). The effect of the rollback has been to reduce the tax share of residential property, while increasing the shares of all other property classes.

Impact to Counties

Rolling back commercial property taxes 8% over five years, as the Governor is proposing, would result in a significant loss of revenue to local governments, especially in the higher populated counties. A simple estimate shows that the statewide loss in commercial property tax revenue would be \$16 million annually (8% multiplied by the total commercial property tax revenue collected in FY 2011), or a total of \$80.7 million over five years. Polk County would stand to lose an estimated \$4 million annually or \$20 million over five years, while Linn, Scott, and Johnson Counties would lose a little over \$1 million annually or more than \$5 million over five years.

The Governor has provided few details for property tax relief to local governments, other than using potential new sources of revenue, including the revenue coming to the state due to economic growth, the additional revenue generated by the extension of the Bush tax cuts, and by a restoration of the gaming tax to the level at which it was originally agreed to years ago. The amount of revenue generated as a result of each of these proposals is not yet known.

Property Tax Relief – Refundable Income Tax Credit

One other proposal being reviewed by ISAC and various county officials, and a proposal that would be the least negative to local government budgets, provides property tax relief through a refundable state income tax credit. An example of how such a credit would work: A business owner's property is valued at \$500,000, is taxed at the full value, and the levy is \$45. Thus, the property tax owed on the property is \$22,500. If the goal is for commercial property tax owners to receive a 25% rollback (or a 25% property tax reduction), it would drop the taxable value of this property to \$375,000, and the property tax owed would be \$16,875, a \$5,625 reduction.

In theory, under this approach, state government would back-fill the \$5,625 in revenue loss to various local taxing authorities (city, county, and school). Otherwise, each of these authorities would have to reduce expenditures, or, to the extent allowable, raise property tax rates, negatively impacting residential and agriculture land owners within the taxing authority's boundaries.

Continues on page 20.

Genetics-based Discrimination in Employment

The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (“EEOC”) recently released new data on the number and type of private sector discrimination charges filed for 2010. Let’s take a look at those, but first, an explanation of the new kid on the EEOC block, the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act, which regulations took effect January 10, 2011.

Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act

The Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008 (“GINA”) was enacted in recognition of the increased knowledge and advancement in the field of genetics, including the use of genomic medicine in treating disease. The law’s purpose is to prevent the misuse of genetic information to discriminate in health insurance and employment.

“Genetic information” has a broad definition under the law that applies to both individuals and an individual’s family. It includes information about genetic tests, family medical history, receipt of or request for genetic services, and participation in genetic research. It also applies to individuals in the fetus stage or an embryo legally held by an individual for assisted reproductive technology purposes.

Title I of the act applies to health coverage, including group health plans sponsored by local and state government employers, private employers, unions, health insurance issuers, and Medicare supplemental insurance issuers. Generally, these entities are prohibited from discrimination based on genetic information in setting group or individual premiums, in determining eligibility for coverage, and are limited on the use of genetic testing and collection of genetic information. The law also requires the HIPAA privacy regulations to be revised to include genetic information as protected health information. Regulations for Title I are under the purview of Health and Human Services, Labor, and the Treasury, and are not covered in this article.

Title II of the act makes it illegal to discriminate against current or prospective employees because of genetic information. Employers are prohibited from requesting, requiring, or purchasing genetic information and are strictly limited from disclosing genetic information. As the EEOC has stated, “An employer may never use genetic information to make an em-

By: Nate Bonnett

ISAC Legal Counsel



ployment decision because genetic information doesn’t tell the employer anything about someone’s current ability to work.¹⁷

The law borrows heavily from Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, as well as other employment discrimination statutes, in its application to employers. Title II of GINA took effect November 21, 2009.

Harassment based on an individual’s genetic information is also prohibited. Genetic information harassment is illegal if it is so severe or pervasive that it creates a hostile or offensive work environment or contributes to an adverse employment decision. Isolated, non-serious incidents of boorish behavior or offhand comments are not prohibited by the law, but they have no place in the work environment. In addition, retaliation against an employee or applicant for seeking to enforce their right to a genetic discrimination-free employment environment is prohibited. Any genetic information maintained by an employer must be kept confidential and in a separate file with other medical information. It cannot be disclosed except for very limited circumstances, such as pursuant to a court order or as part of a government investigation involving GINA compliance.

GINA does contain some narrow exceptions to the prohibition against an employer acquiring certain types of genetic information. Those include the following:

- Inadvertent acquisition (such as an overheard conversation);
- Acquisition via voluntary participation in an employer sponsored health or wellness program, if specific requirements are met;
- Acquisition of family medical history as part of a request for leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act;
- Acquisition through commercial or publically available documents, like newspapers or websites, if there was no intent to locate genetic information;
- Acquisition through legally required workplace genetic monitoring programs, such as for biological effects of toxic substances; and
- Acquisition under certain limited purposes for employees who engage in forensic DNA testing for law enforcement, to ensure quality control of results.

Continues of page 18.

Engage

In the next few months I want to explore the work that the Public Technology Institute (PTI) has completed on citizen engagement. Funded by a grant from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, PTI has completed a very successful two-year initiation of a Citizen-Engaged Community Designation program. The majority of the two year project was spent on researching, developing and fine-tuning the application process, promoting the inaugural round of applications, developing and providing resources and roadmaps, and designating cities and counties that demonstrated excellence as Citizen-Engaged Communities.

But, before I go too far, I want describe what is meant by a citizen engaged community and then explain a few key features that will be important to understanding this concept in the coming months.

What are Citizen-Engaged Communities?

The Center for Rural Pennsylvania describes citizen-engaged communities (CEC) as a “belief that local governments, community organizations and public agencies make better decisions and have greater positive impact on their communities when they increase the frequency, diversity, and level of engagement of community residents.”

PTI (as being a technology advocate) defines CEC as “efforts to provide the public with multi-channel (web, civic media, Interactive Voice Response, 311/call agents) access to government services and information.”

Key to growing this concept is the ability of local governments to overcome turf battles and cooperate to share information so that as a whole, the local government can better serve the citizen.

Citizen Relationship Management (CRM)

Citizen relationship management is a growing effort at all levels of government to respond quickly and accurately to citizen requests or inquiries for answers to questions and general information about policies, practices, and procedures. Ultimately, the goal of CRM is to foster closer, more effective and efficient working relationships, to better anticipate and meet citizen needs and to develop a more detailed working understanding of what citizens want, expect, and need from those who serve them.

Much of the work with developing CRM centers on bringing together the various departments and their associated information so that it can be used to meet citizen’s expectations. Key to this is developing county level knowledge bases.

By: Robin Harlow

ISAC Technology Project
Manager



Knowledge bases

In short, knowledge bases can be defined as a system for storing facts and data that is used to solve problems. A good knowledge base is the foundation to a well run CRM.

We currently have two good examples of how knowledge bases are working today.

First, as we work to complete the rollout of the Community Services Network (CSN), a key component of the rollout is making sure that we adequately support users with their issues and questions. As we tested CSN in the last 12 months, we have also tested our ability to create tickets and resolve issues. Part of a sound support strategy is to help the user help themselves. This can be accomplished by making use of a knowledge base to help the user solve their issues and questions.

We use a Kayako’s Fusion support product with CSN. The product was inexpensive, but at the same time met all of our needs as a fledging support team. The main strength of the product will be to allow us to build “articles” that will then be stored in the product’s knowledge base. The product has a web portal that will go public on March 1st that will allow the user to login and open a support ticket. As the user types the subject of the ticket the product will begin to search the knowledge base for possible answers for the user. By the time the user completes the subject line, they are presented with several possible “articles” that appear to match their subject. They can at this point choose to review as many of the “articles” as they wish or they can continue to the body of the ticket and describe in detail their issue or their question. If the “articles” in the list meet the user’s needs, we consider this a success; if the user opens a ticket, we consider it a failure.

The value of this approach in the long run is the user gets an answer faster at a lower cost than the traditional way of calling a support person, then having the support person enter a ticket to track the issue. The best ticket is no ticket at all.

Continues on next page.

The Art of Googling

By: Tammy Norman

ISAC Office Manager



Q: When I inquire about a trivia fact or directions, I am told “Why don’t you Google it?” What does “Googling” mean and how do I do it?

A: Google is a type of search engine that is widely popular and very simple to use. I must admit, if I owned a Droid or another version of a smartphone, I would be “googling” all the time. I rely on Google to resolve many an argument over a title of a song or movie and it aids in those brief memory losses that tend to occur when we are extremely busy. There are several different search engines to choose from and you are definitely not confined to Google. Google is the most widely known and used at this time, however, there are many out there including Microsoft’s Bing, Yahoo! Search, Ask.com, and Go.com, among others. Search engines are great resources to aid you in seeking out information. You can use a search engine to assist you with computer issues; I have solved many software questions, just by simply typing my question or problem into Google.

Search engines are great resources in locating restaurants, hotels and planning your next vacation trip. I used Google to aid me in searching the Internet to find the type of breed and breeder for my family’s pet. Google and other search engines are today’s version of the local library or the encyclopedias that used to be stored in family rooms across the country. Today, if students need to research a project, they will use Google, Bing or another search engine.

To use a search engine effectively, you will want to make sure that you type your question or inquiry as exact as you can. The broader your question, the more useless links will appear. Always take a moment, to think about what you are searching for and type in the phrase or question precisely. Luckily, over the years, search engines have become more intuitive enabling end users to find their answers quickly and easily.

Search engines offer great maps that can aid you when traveling or locating destinations, just look under “Maps”. You will need to type in the address you are beginning your trip from and the destination address. You will be shown different options for traveling and have the ability to print off directions along with a visual map. They also offer photos and clipart that can be used for presentations, just look under “Images.” So take a moment to become familiar with the different search engines, find the one that works best for you and you may soon find yourself a “Googler” too.

Website Note: The ISAC Spring School registration is currently online, so please take a moment and sign up for this exciting conference. If you need assistance with the online registrations or if you have a question regarding new technology and would like it addressed in this column, please contact me at 515.244.7181 ext. 315 or via e-mail at norman@iowacounties.org. Until next month, keep clicking!

Continued from page 9.

The second example is a cooperative effort between Butler County and the County Strategic Technology Advisory Resource (CoSTAR) to beta test a product called GovQA. GovQA allows the citizen to ask questions or look for answers in the GovQA’s knowledge base. Much like the CSN’s support product, it is based around building answers or articles around citizen’s anticipated questions. Butler County spent time to work with each department to make sure their articles were in the system. In the first 4 months of operation, the Butler County QA system answered 1228 questions through GovQA. This

meant that a citizen was able to get the answer from their website and not have to call the office. According to Gartner Research, email and phone inquiries cost an estimated \$4.50 each. Based on these statistics, Butler County’s total savings for this period was \$5,526.00. This makes the \$150 per month fee for GovQA seem insignificant.

In the coming months, I want to explore in more depth what the key components of engaged communities and suggest how this can be applied to county government.



ISAC Excellence in Action Award Preliminary Nomination Form



The Excellence in Action Award Program is a competitive awards program which seeks to recognize innovative county government employees, programs, and projects.

Nominators are being asked to submit a preliminary form. CoSTAR will review the preliminary nominations and reduce the number of nomination down to no more than three nominations per category. The finalists for the award will then be requested to submit a more in-depth application.

CoSTAR will then rate each finalist's in-depth application based on the following seven attributes: creativity; innovation; cost savings; replication; leadership; increased efficiency; cooperation with others; and perseverance.

See reverse side for the minimum standards that each nomination must meet.

To nominate, use the form below (or on a single page) to submit; the name of the project or individual; name of the nominator; nominator's phone and email; and explain the project or individual and the reason for the nomination (200 words or less).

Send the completed nomination to: Iowa State Association of Counties, 501 SW 7th Street, Suite Q, Des Moines, IA 50309. You may email your form (or questions) to Robin Harlow at rharlow@iowacounties.org

Send in your nominations today! Deadline for the preliminary nominations is May 1, 2011.

-----NOMINATION FORM-----

Name of Project: _____

Category (reverse side for descriptions): Individual/Departmental ___ County inter-office___ Inter-governmental ___

Name of Nominator: _____ Nominator's Phone: _____

Nominator's Email: _____

In 200 words or less explain the project/individual and the reason for the nomination:

Large rectangular box containing ten horizontal lines for writing the nomination explanation.

Nominations are being received in the following categories:

Individual/Departmental: The county employee/department that demonstrates excellence in action in improving the services delivered to the citizens of their county.

County inter-office: Projects that demonstrate excellence in action in crossing local county office lines to deliver services to the citizen.

Inter-governmental: Projects that show excellence in action in crossing governmental lines to deliver services to the citizen.

All applications must comply with the following minimum standards:

- 1) The program must have become operational after January 1, 2010, and must have measurable results.
- 2) County officials and/or staff, as part of their official duties, must have played a significant role in developing and implementing the program, with limited assistance from outside.
- 3) Meet the following criteria:
 1. It must do one or more of the following:
 - offer a new service to county residents, fill gaps in the availability of existing services, or tap new revenue sources;
 - improve the administration or enhance the cost effectiveness of an existing county government program;
 - upgrade the working conditions or level of training for county employees;
 - enhance the level of citizen participation in, or the understanding of, government programs;
 - provide information that facilitates effective public policy making; or
 - promote intergovernmental cooperation and coordination in addressing shared problems.
 2. In the case of a program that is in response to a federal or state law, regulation, or order, the program must go beyond mere compliance with the statute, regulation or order, and must display a creative approach to meeting those requirements.
 3. The program must have proven measurable results (e.g. cost savings, enhanced employee productivity, improved constituent service, created better intergovernmental cooperation).
 4. The program must be innovative and not rely on the application of techniques or procedures that are common practice in most counties of similar population size.
 5. All aspects of the program must be consistent with acceptable governmental and financial management practices and must promote general governmental accountability.

The winning project(s) will receive the Excellence in Action Award and statewide recognition at the ISAC Fall School of Instruction. All winning projects will be forwarded to the National Association of Counties (NACo) Achievement Program for possible additional recognition.



Attitudes Are Contagious

By: Jackie Olson Leech

ISAC Case Management Specialist



What are attitudes anyway? Attitudes are simply “ways of thinking.” How many days have you driven to work feeling good and positive only to arrive at work to hear negative conversations and comments? After several hours you start to feel angry and those negative attitudes around you start to beat you down. Attitudes are contagious! I’m sure many of you can relate to days like this in some way or another.

You attend meetings in which most of the discussion tends to focus on what is going wrong rather than about ideas on how to make things better.

Groups of people complain about the way “things” are run and how there is no time to get the work done.

You leave your workplace at the end of the day feeling drained from all the negative energy.

Attitudes are contagious!

I’m sure no-one wants to be that “one person” who focuses on the negative, and the downside to everything or that “one person” who tends to lead conversations with an angry tone with nothing positive to say...or, how about that “one person” who others want to avoid or exclude. I’m sure we all know someone that just doesn’t appear happy to be at work. Well, attitudes are contagious!

We all have bad hours, or a bad afternoon, and even a bad day. Take a look at your “bad” days and see if they have turned in to “bad” weeks or months. If so, take a look at your “attitude”, after all, attitudes are simply “ways of thinking.”

A positive attitude in the workplace can make a big difference...”what kind of a difference” you ask? How about:

1. Overall career success: Who is more likely to get promoted, be viewed as a team leader, and be the person in the office others want to be associated with, the person who thinks positively or the person who constantly complains?

2. Stress reduction: If you can change your perception to something more positive, the stressful feelings will go away. Instead of problems, see challenges. Ask yourself how you can make something easier or enjoyable. By asking yourself different questions you will come up with different answers. By turning something you had perceived as a “problem” into a challenge your attitude can change, therefore, reducing your stress surrounding the once upon a time “problem”.

3. Improve employee/co-worker relations: Co-workers, consumers, and providers would rather deal with someone positive. Doesn’t it stand to reason that persons who think positively, and who believe in themselves would have better relationships with others?

4. Improving the attitudes of others:

You can be the employee/co-worker/person that can help create a positive attitude in the workplace or at home by “being the change” you want to see. Refuse to participate in negative conversations. Soon, others may find themselves drawn to you because they can’t help but like being in the company of someone positive. Hopefully, positive attitudes will spread. If there is still that one person who maintains a negative attitude, maybe they won’t bring the negativity around you, because they know you won’t participate in negative talk.

5. Improve interpersonal relationships: People like positive people. They are drawn to a pleasant demeanor. Who would you rather be around...someone negative and angry, or someone positive and pleasant?

How can someone develop a positive attitude you ask?

1. Gratitude: Be appreciative of what others do. Especially to those that have gone above and beyond. Appreciation feels good for both the giver and the receiver.

2. Celebrate the victories: Many people tend to focus on everything they don’t like and on what’s going wrong. Try to focus on things that are going well by taking, even a few minutes, to celebrate the victories. (The report is completed, all F/F’s are done, filing is caught up, had a good staffing, you complimented a co-worker). Take time to feel good about what you are doing. Even if it doesn’t feel like much to you, it means the world to the people you serve.

3. Turn problems into opportunities: Don’t focus on the “problems”. Every problem or challenge can be an opportunity to learn and grow. Don’t wallow in the issue; focus on the potential to become better.

4. Smile: Force yourself to smile even if you don’t feel like it. A smile will actually shift how you feel internally. When others see you smiling, they feel better as well. (I can truthfully say that this works. My mood always improves when I put a smile on my face and just continue with my day.)

When you think about the people you like to have around you on a daily basis what qualities do they have? What is it that draws you to them?

Your attitude at work (and home) can be the most telling aspect of how others look at you. What kind of employee/co-worker/person do you want to be? How do you want others to see you? Remember, “Attitudes are Contagious!”

Site: www.positive-attitude-tips.com

NCO School a Success!

ISAC hosted New County Officer's School (NCO School) on Wednesday, January 26, 2011 - Thursday, January 27, 2011 at the West Des Moines Marriott. Attendance exceeded the 200 mark and we were bursting out of the hotel's meeting rooms, but this didn't have an affect on all of the newly-elected county officials that participated in the two-day training. While the NCO School is specially designed for new county officials, it is also an excellent opportunity for many incumbent county officials to brush up on some important subjects and to meet their new peers.

ISAC planned the first day of training, which consisted of more general issues that apply to all county officials, such as open meetings law, ethics and budgeting. The day concluded with dinner and David Bush's keynote message, "Becoming an Extraordinary Leader." The second day of the training was specific to the offices that were up for election this past November. The recorders, treasurers and supervisors all had great affiliate attendance and provided some excellent training and resources for these new officials. ISAC would like to thank all of the newly elected county officials that participated in NCO School, as well as those incumbent officials who welcomed these new members and supported their new role in county government.

Spring School is just around the Corner!

The ISAC Spring School of Instruction will be held March 23-24, 2011 at the Des Moines Marriott Downtown and Renaissance Savery Hotel. Please make sure and check out the spring school website (<http://www.iowacounties.org/SpringSchool.htm>) for the latest, up-to-date conference information before you plan your trip to Des Moines.

I also wanted to highlight some important details in the conference agenda.

Wednesday, March 23

7:30 am-6:00 pm ISAC Registration and Information Desk Hours

7:30 am-6:00 pm Exhibit Hall Hours

7:30 am-9:00 am Exhibitor Morning Refreshments (Marriott Exhibit Hall)

- Assorted breads and pastries, fruit and coffee will be available as you network with the exhibitors and learn about their new products or services.

8:30 am-9:00 am Exhibitor Learning Center (Marriott 3rd Floor)

- Host Your Data with Integrity™ - Online Solutions for Countywide Information Management presented by Midland GIS Solutions

By: Stacy Horner

ISAC Meeting/Event Administrator



9:15 am-9:45 am Exhibitor Learning Center (Marriott 3rd Floor)

- Saving for Retirement with the NACo 457 Deferred Compensation Plan presented by Nationwide Retirement Solutions

10:00 am-10:30 am Exhibitor Learning Center (Marriott 3rd Floor)

- PaperLESS Solutions presented by "Solutions," Inc.

9:00 am-10:30 am ISAC Educational Seminars (Marriott Ballroom)

- **My Month of Eating Local - A Journey to the Heart of the American Dream** presented by Rob Marqusee, Woodbury County Director of Rural Economic Development

- **Financial Needs of Iowa County Roads** presented by Steve DeVries, ICEASB Executive Director

- **Spending Taxpayer Dollars: Competitive Bidding and Requests for Proposals** presented by Darin Raymond, Plymouth County Attorney

10:45 am-12:00 pm ISAC Business Meeting and Awards Ceremony (Marriott Ballroom)

- The ISAC business meeting is where the ISAC budget is approved by the membership and the ISAC scholarship award winners are recognized.

12:00 pm-1:30 pm Open Lunch/Exhibitor Ice Cream Social (Marriott Exhibit Hall)

- An ice cream sundae bar will be available in the Exhibit Hall so that you can grab a sweet treat with the exhibitors before you head to your afternoon affiliate meetings.

1:30 pm-4:30 pm Affiliate Time (Marriott and Savery)

4:30 pm-6:00 pm Exhibitor Reception and Vendor Drawing (Marriott Exhibit Hall)

- This will be your last opportunity to network with the exhibitors and to sign up for the vendor prizes. Snacks and beverages will also be available at the reception. **MUST** be present to win.

6:00 pm-8:30 pm Hospitality Rooms (Marriott and Savery)

8:30 pm - 11:00 pm ISAC Dance (Savery)

- From big band to current hits to your requests, Knight Life Productions has an extensive music library playing favorites from all genres. Enjoy a night full of fun and music! Beverages and light snacks will be available during the dance.

Thursday, March 24

7:30 am-3:00 pm ISAC Registration and Information Desk Hours

7:30 am-8:00 am Morning Refreshments (Marriott 2nd Floor and Savery Pre-Function Area)

8:00 am-12:00 pm Affiliate Time (Marriott and Savery)

12:00 pm-1:00 pm ISAC Networking Lunch (Marriott Exhibit Hall)

- All registered conference attendees will receive a box lunch and have the opportunity to network with other affiliate members. The box lunch will include a turkey or roast beef sandwich, potato salad, apple, chips, chocolate chip cookie and bottled water. If you have any dietary needs (e.g. vegetarian), please email shorner@iowacounties.org no later than Tuesday, March 8, 4:30 pm.

1:00 pm - 5:00 pm Affiliate Time (Marriott and Savery)

Last, but not least, here are the affiliate meeting room assignment at the 2011 ISAC Spring School. Affiliate agendas can be found at www.iowacounties.org/springschool.htm.

Des Moines Marriott Downtown

Iowa County Recorders Association:

Iowa Ballroom Salons A-C

Iowa State Association of County Supervisors:

Iowa Ballroom Salons D-E

Iowa State County Treasurers' Association, Inc.:

Iowa Ballroom Salons F-H

County Conservation Directors Association of Iowa:

Cedar Rapids Room

Iowa County Engineers Association:

Council Bluffs Room

Iowa Emergency Management Directors Association:

Davenport Room

Iowa County Information Technology Organization:

Dubuque Room

Iowa State Sheriffs' and Deputies' Association:

Waterloo Room

Renaissance Savery Hotel

Iowa State Association of County Auditors:

Herbert Hoover Terrace Room

Iowa State Association of Assessors:

Des Moines Room

Iowa County Community Services Association:

Savery Ballroom

The following affiliates will not be participating in affiliate time at the spring school: Iowa Environmental Health Association ; Iowa Counties Public Health Association; The Iowa County Attorney's Association, Inc.; and County Zoning Officials.

If you have any questions regarding the 2011 ISAC Spring School of Instruction, please don't hesitate to contact me at shorner@iowacounties.org or 515.244.7181.

National County Government Month

National County Government Month (NCGM) is celebrated each April by the nation's counties to raise public awareness and understanding about the roles and responsibilities of county government. The 2011 theme is "Serving Our Veterans, Armed Forces and Their Families."

More than 1,000 counties participate in NCGM each year by hosting a variety community outreach events and activities. These include tours of county facilities, recognition ceremonies for county employees and volunteers, distribution of information about county programs and services, sponsoring student essay contests, meetings with business and community leaders, and adoption of resolutions.

Since 1991, the National Association of Counties (NACo) has encouraged counties across the country to actively promote county government programs and services. Formerly National County Government Week, the designation was expanded to a full month for 2010 to offer more counties more opportunities to plan and participate. Counties aren't expected to hold public awareness activities throughout the month, but can schedule activities any time during the month.

Contact: Tom Goodman

Tell ISAC what you are doing to be featured in the magazine.

More info at <http://www.naco.org/programs/countiesdo/Pages/nccgm.aspx>.

ISAC Board of Directors Meeting Summary - January 28, 2011

Bill Peterson conducted an orientation to explain the role as a board member and various ISAC operations for new and other interested ISAC Board members.

ISAC President Marge Pitts called the meeting to order at 10:00 am and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Former Clay County Auditor and ISAC Past-President Phil Hurst swore in 2011 ISAC President Marge Pitts. He then swore in the following Executive Officers: Wayne Walter, 1st Vice-President; Darin Raymond, 2nd Vice-President; and Harlan Hansen, 3rd Vice-President. The remaining members of the Board were sworn in.

The ISAC Board of Directors meeting minutes from December 9, 2010 were reviewed and approved unanimously.

The ISAC Board recessed, and the ETC board convened. The ETC Board meeting minutes from December 9, 2010 were reviewed and approved unanimously.

Robin Harlow discussed the FY 2012 ETC budget and the three challenges the CASS Committee faced when creating the budget: building a budget that will be operational from one that was developmental; strengthening the reserve fund; and capturing depreciation and amortization. The recommended timeline for staffing additions increases personnel expenditures significantly. In summary, the FY 2012 ETC Budget proposed increasing revenues from \$301,000 to \$521,000. The revenue increase was achieved primarily by increasing the flat fee collected from \$2,000 to \$4,000 per county. The remaining revenue is generated through the proportional share allocation formula. The FY 2012 budget and cost allocation plan were approved unanimously by the board.

Robin Harlow discussed the need for a new position being added to support the continued CSN rollout that will be responsible for user support and program analytics. The position will be paid by ISAC and reimbursed by ETC out of the FY 2012 budget. The board approved the new position.

After a brief update on the ETC/CSN and CCMS Module projects, the ETC board adjourned. Upon reconvening, the ISAC Board approved the hire and cash flow of the Program Support Analyst position.

Brad Holtan presented the financial report from the statements ending on December 31, 2010. The board approved the report unanimously. The board also approved ISAC's tax forms and a recommended bank reconciliation policy.

Bill Peterson discussed possible office locations that are being explored and asked the board to be ready to make a decision as soon as February.



Stacy Horner gave a conference and meetings report that included the New County Officers School wrap-up and a spring school update.

Rachel Bicego presented the spring school Exhibitor Learning Center proposals to the board. After a board vote, the presenters were determined as: "Solutions," Inc., Nationwide Retirement

Solutions, and Midland GIS Solutions.

Bill Peterson introduced Linda Langston, Linn County Supervisor. Linda announced that she will be running for NACo 2nd Vice-President. Support from the board was requested and granted unanimously. Financial implications of the campaign were discussed and the board authorized the creation of a campaign fund and the movement of \$15,000 to the fund from solely private dollars (e.g. sponsor fees, exhibit booth fees). It was made clear that no money used on the campaign would come from member county dues. Any fundraising will offset the ISAC expenses.

Jane Halliburton thanked the board for being named the 2010 ISAC Golden Eagle and offered her support of Linda.

Bill Peterson nominated and, if chosen, will sponsor Cara Morgan, Fremont County Supervisor, to attend the County Leadership Institute.

Terri Henkels, Polk County Public Health and ISAC Board of Director, gave an update on the work of the Prevention and Chronic Care Management Advisory Council.

Linda Hinton and Mary Beth Mellick updated the board on actions taken during the first three weeks of the legislative session.

Bill Peterson reviewed the findings of the commercial property tax meeting held on January 21, 2011.

Mary Beth Mellick distributed and presented the 2011 County Financial Overview to the board.

After seeing no objections from the board ISAC will become a member of the Coalition for a Better Iowa.

The board adjourned at 3:40 pm.



2011 ISAC Board of Directors

Front Row (L to R): Darin Raymond, 2nd Vice President and Plymouth County Attorney; Wayne Walter, 1st Vice President and Winneshiek County Treasurer; Marge Pitts, President and Clay County Auditor; and Harlan Hansen, 3rd Vice President and Humboldt County Supervisor.

Second Row (L to R): Lu Barron, NACo Representative and Linn County Supervisor; Judy Miller, NACo Representative and Pottawattamie County Treasurer; Nancy Parrott, Jasper County Recorder; Anna O'Shea, Dubuque County Zoning; Lori Elam, Scott County Community Services; Terri Henkels, Polk County Public Health; Deb McWhirter, Butler County Assessor; and Mike McClain, Jones County Engineer.

Back Row (L to R): Dave Morlan, Boone County Emergency Management; Melvyn Houser, Pottawattamie County Supervisor; Wayne Chizek, Marshall County GIS; Chuck Rieken, Past-President and Cass County Supervisor; Grant Veeder, NACo Board Representative and Black Hawk County Auditor; Mike Balmer, Jasper County Sheriff; Dan Cohen, Buchanan County Conservation; and Jon McNamee, Black Hawk County Environmental Health.

Not Pictured: Sally Stutsman, Johnson County Supervisor

preferred vendor highlights

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mwalker@hhlawpc.com

legal briefs

Continued from page 8.

EEOC Discrimination Data

The EEOC's discrimination charge data for private sector employers, which includes local government, hit a record high in 2010 at 99,922 charges filed. The EEOC collects annual data on the number of discrimination charges filed under the laws it enforces (Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Equal Pay Act, Age Discrimination in Employment Act, Americans with Disabilities Act, Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act). For the first time, employer retaliation surpassed race as the most prevalent charge filed, garnering 36,258 charges across all the laws enforced by EEOC. Charges based on race, sex,

national origin, religion, age, disability, and equal pay all increased. The EEOC recorded 201 charges under GINA in its first year of enforcement.

In response to charges, the EEOC filed 250 lawsuits, resolved 285 pending lawsuits, and resolved 104,999 private sector charges through various administrative mechanisms, obtaining approximately \$404 million from employers.

1. <http://www.eeoc.gov/laws/types/genetic.cfm>

preferred vendor highlights

Inmate Medical Budget Protection: Savings Made Simple

By: McKay Insurance Agency, Inc./
Correctional Risk Services, Inc.

Through a new program offered to County Governments and Sheriff Department's in Iowa, you can now rely on a partner that specializes in reviewing and adjudicating inmate medical claims, affording a more efficient and effective way to save money on the thousands of dollars spent each year to provide *outside* medical care to jail inmates. These same services have been successful in helping jails save over \$8 million in the past five years throughout 19 States.

McKay Insurance Agency of Knoxville, IA and Correctional Risk Services, Inc. (CRS) of Nashville, TN have strategically joined forces so that we can better serve the County Governments and Jails across the State of Iowa. This partnership will help us have a local marketing and service presence, creating an even easier way to learn about this unique program and allowing you to take advantage of our money saving and budget protecting program.

The service that CRS provides is called *Inmate Medical Claims Saver*. When a County Jail has to take an inmate in custody to an outside medical provider, we take over all post-care billing responsibilities. After receiving the bill from the provider, we first determine whether or not the inmate was actually in custody during those treatment dates. Once determined he/she was, we scrub the bills to make sure the treatment was provided and the medical coding was accurate. CRS will then use its buying power to have your claims re-priced. Your County will be able to take advantage of our national PPO network discounts, giving you the same discounts received by national insurance carriers. If CRS is able to reduce the amount you pay – we will retain a percentage of those savings. If no savings are passed along, no fee is charged. Because of this no risk, win-win type of situation, over 200 jails are reaping the benefits of this service. In fact, one County that utilizes the *Inmate Medical Claims Saver* service has saved over \$660,000 on their offsite inmate medical expenses over the past 5 years.

The proprietary stop-loss insurance product that McKay Insurance Agency and CRS is able to provide is called *Inmate Medical Budget Protector*. This insurance policy is designed to protect your County's budget against costly and unexpected catastrophic inmate medical expenses. With a \$10,000 deductible and coverage of \$250,000 (minus deductible) of accrued medical expenses per inmate per policy year, your

County can better set annual budgets as well as giving you the ability to better stay within those budgets. Today, the overwhelming majority of Counties self-insure the risk of paying for a catastrophic inmate medical claim. Yet, these same Counties insure the risk of the County courthouse burning or the risk of a County vehicle being in an accident. One example of how a County saved money utilizing this unique *Inmate Medical Budget Protector* insurance policy is when an inmate in custody sustained a head injury totaling \$120,239. Because this County had the foresight to purchase our product, the total out of pocket for the County after the insurance

reimbursement was only \$10,000, saving their budget over \$110,000.

CRS does **NOT** require a County to enter into a long-term contract. In fact, if for any reason your County wishes to terminate our service for any reason, all we ask is for 30 day's written notice. Because of the track record we have in helping Counties save money and the ease in which we provide these savings, it's no wonder our slogan is "Savings Made Simple".

For more information on these programs, please contact Dan McKay - McKay Insurance Agency: 800.942.0283 - dmckay@mckayinsagency.com or DJ Kreal – CRS: 615.376.6101 - djk@crisks.com. Information is also posted on www.crisks.com.



capitol comments

Continued from page 7.

An alternative approach would be to give the same commercial property taxpayer a refundable state income tax credit equal to the value of the 25% rollback. Using the same example as above, the taxpayer's commercial property would be taxed by local governments at its full value, but the taxpayer could claim a refundable state income tax credit equal to 25% of the taxable value – the same \$5,625 as calculated above. The tax credit would need to be refundable to ensure that the taxpayer received the same fiscal benefit under this approach.

The advantage of this approach is that it ensures that no shift

would occur in taxes from one class of property to another. In addition, this approach does not negatively impact local government revenues because the tax credit is funded directly by state government.

Contact Your Legislators

Though the details remain unclear on how the 2011 Legislative Session will play out, it's vital that counties contact their legislators and express the importance of providing relief to local governments in the face of a reduction in commercial property taxes. Stay tuned.

employment

County Engineer

The Keokuk County Board of Supervisors is seeking a licensed professional engineer to oversee the daily operation of the Keokuk County Highway Department. The annual pay range is \$75,000 to \$95,000 based upon qualification and experience. The position must have a demonstrated ability to lead a diverse workforce, communicate effectively with county management, employees and the general public. A Professional Engineer's license issued by the state of Iowa is required with three to five years of experience working in a county second-

ary roads system. Employment applications and a complete job description can be obtained from the Keokuk County Auditor, Courthouse, 101 South Main Street, Sigourney, IA 52591 (641.622.2320) or www.keokukcountyyia.com. Qualified applicants should send a completed application, resume and cover letter by March 18, 2011 to Keokuk Board of Supervisors, Courthouse, 101 South Main Street, Sigourney, IA 52591. Keokuk County is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Pre-employment drug testing and background checks are required.

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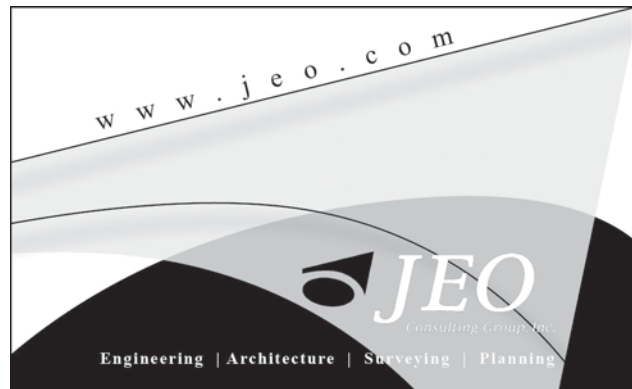
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2011 calendar

March 2011

- 3 County Day at the Capitol
(Des Moines)
- 5-9 NACo Legislative Conference
(Washington D.C.)
- 23-24 ISAC Spring School of Instruction
(Marriott and Renaissance Savery,
Des Moines)

April 2011

- 5-6 Iowa Governor's Conference on
Public Health
(Scheman Center, Ames)
- 12 CCMS Administrators Meeting
(Stoney Creek Inn, Johnston)

May 2011

- 5 CCMS Advanced Case Management
(Hilton Garden Inn, Urbandale)
- 6 ISAC Board of Directors Meeting
(ISAC Office, Des Moines)
- 18-20 County Zoning Officials Spring
Conference
(Dubuque)

June 2011

- 2 CCMS Supervisors Training
(Hilton Garden Inn, Urbandale)
- 15-16 CCMS Fundamentals Training
(Holiday Inn Airport, Des Moines)
- 15-17 ICIT Conference
(West Des Moines Marriott)

Please visit ISAC's online calendar of events at www.iowacounties.org and click on 'Upcoming Events.' A listing of all the meetings scheduled for 2011, 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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your road program?

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with concrete for
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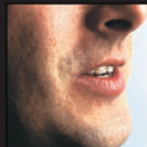
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