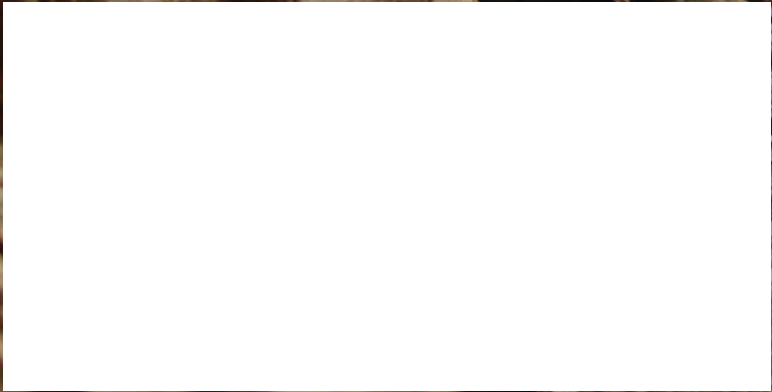
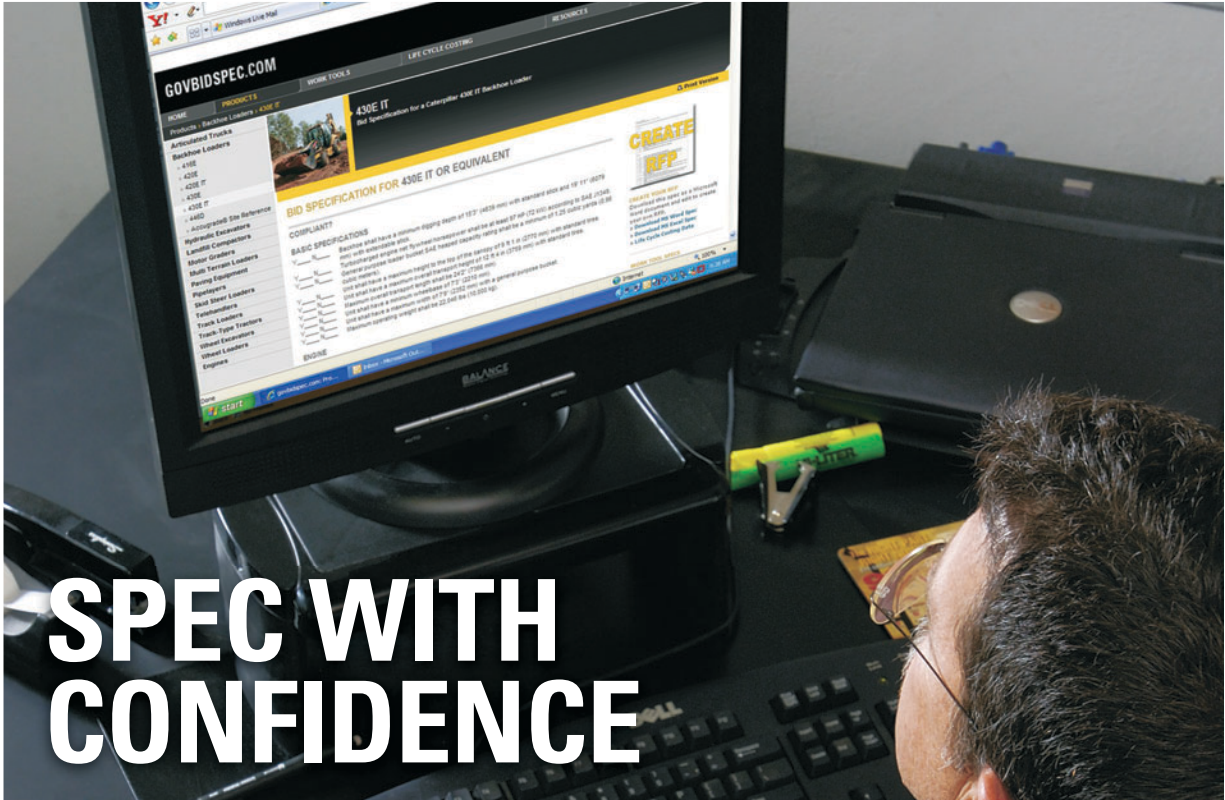


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ISAC's Mission:

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.

capitol comments

A Fuel Tax Increase Is Still Necessary

According to the Iowa Department of Transportation's December 29, 2006 report to the legislature, the minimum additional amount of road funding needed in Iowa is \$200 million per year for the next 20 years. This dollar figure would be sufficient to meet the most critical needs of the state, county, and city road infrastructures. The legislature took the first step toward addressing the infrastructure needs in 2007 with the passage of HF 932, which created the TIME-21 Fund. I am pleased to report that the legislature took the next step this session by approving SF 2420, a bill that will generate a substantial amount of revenue for the TIME-21 Fund. However, this is not the final step.

As you all know, in early January before the legislative session kicked off, Governor Culver voiced opposition to a fuel tax increase. Because it was not feasible to generate \$200 million on fee increases alone, there is still a need for additional sources of revenue to fully fund TIME-21. In other words, if you were looking for \$200 million, you didn't get it. This is certainly not to say that SF 2420 is not a much needed piece of legislation; in fact, it is an extraordinarily valuable piece of the puzzle.

If SF 2420 had not passed, then the state, counties, and cities would have received zero additional dollars for roads. This would have been a tremendous disappointment to all those entities that sorely need the funds to repair an infrastructure that is crumbling, perhaps at an accelerated rate due to the past winter. It would have also been a disappointment to the legislators and policy specialists who invested many hours working together cooperatively seeking compromise. They understand, as I know you do, that we must start now if we want to strengthen our infrastructure and not get further behind. SF 2420 represents a commendable start and I urge you to thank those legislators who voted in favor.

According to Legislative Services Agency estimates, SF 2420 will start generating additional road funding to the tune of about \$2.3 million to the counties in FY 09 and \$32.3 million by FY 13. These figures are just a portion of total TIME-21 revenues of \$11.6 million and \$161.4 million in FY 09 and FY 13, respectively. The bill does several important things to generate and protect revenue for roads. Please bear with me while I try to refine this complex bill down to a few points.

First, the registration fee will increase for all pickup trucks, effective January 1, 2009. For new and used pickups less than three tons that are used for a business trade (commercial or agricultural), the fee will be increased from \$65 to \$150 per year for vehicles less than seven model years old. For pickups older than seven model years the registration fee will be gradually phased down to \$50 per year. The registration fee for all currently owned pickups will be grandfathered at \$65 as long as it remains in the same ownership.

An owner who registers a vehicle as business-trade will be required to provide proof, under penalty of perjury, and will be issued a special license plate. Penalties for improper registration can go as high as \$2,250, and these collected fines will go back to the general fund

By: **Nate Bonnett**

ISAC Public Policy Specialist



of the county where the conviction was had. If a pickup is solely for personal use it will be assessed registration fees via the weight and value schedule. This will result in a more equitable registration fee for those driving heavier vehicles. Additionally, the weight and value schedule for cars will be adjusted up so that the minimum fee will be \$50 for owners of vehicles purchased after January 1, 2009.

Second, title fees will increase for a number of vehicles from \$10 to \$20 with the additional \$10 per title being credited to the TIME-21 fund. Third, registration fees on trailers less than 2,000 pounds will increase from \$10 to \$20 and trailers more than 2,000 pounds to \$30. An additional \$10 per registration from this increase will be credited to TIME-21, as well.

Next, the use tax (which is just a term for a "sales" tax as it applies to vehicles) on all vehicle sales will be repealed in favor of a fee for new vehicle registration of 5% of the purchase price, which is the same amount as the current use tax. You may wonder, "why bother" if it is the same amount of money? It's because the fee for new vehicle registration is constitutionally protected. In the future this money must go to roads and bridges and cannot be scooped for other non-road uses. There is no such protection for the current use tax.

The legislation also directs the DOT to conduct an analysis of the additional revenues necessary to provide \$200 million to the TIME-21 fund by FY 2011-2012. The report will consider the monetary impact a fuel tax increase could have on the fund. This brings me back to the title of the article.

As you know, a fuel tax increase is still necessary and it will have a positive impact on the amount of road funds that will go to counties. A one cent increase in fuel tax will generate approximately \$23 million per year to Iowa. By our estimate, \$6 million of this (26%) is paid by non-Iowans who use our roads. This is the most feasible way for out-of-staters to help pay for the roads. Plus, any amount of TIME-21 revenue in excess of \$200 million will revert back to the road use tax fund formula, thus providing counties with a greater percentage allocation to continue to take care of over 90,000 miles of roads and nearly 20,000 bridges. Governor Culver has timely indicated that he would like the legislature to consider a fuel tax increase in 2009. Current and potential legislators can make this a campaign topic over the summer, and the DOT report ensures that it will be discussed next session.

About the Cover

The cover photo was taken by Rachel Bicego to display the increasing decay in Iowa's road conditions. Unfortunately, it is a sight that has become common across the state. Special thanks are extended to Tammy Norman for her assistance.

Local Government Legislation

By: Representative Mary Gaskill (D-Wapello)

House Local Government Chair



For the past two years, I have had the pleasure of chairing the Local Government Committee in the Iowa House of Representatives. This was an assignment I sought feeling that my experience as an Auditor in Wapello County provided me insight into local government that others might not have.

As chair of the Local Government Committee, it is important to work with ISAC and county and city officials. My goal is to help make your jobs easier while still ensuring that the laws of the state protect our citizens and their tax dollars.

I am especially proud that we were able to establish a Local Governance Innovation Commission and Fund and the Tim Shields Center for Governing Excellence in 2007. The fund currently has \$700,000 in it, which is to be used for grants to assist in creating innovative local governance and revenue models. The commission is in the process of establishing the Tim Shields Center, which will provide objective and nonpartisan research and training for policymakers and government officials. It will also coordinate the research capacities of community colleges, public and private universities, and local government organizations, such as ISAC.

I am also pleased that we have passed, and Governor Culver has signed into law, legislation allowing cities and counties to bond for peace officer communication equipment as an essential county purpose. I worked with county supervisors on House File 2366 to provide counties with another option for paying to update this essential equipment.

One of the bills that passed last year was brought to me by the Iowa County Recorders Association. A number of recorders noticed that many documents that were open to the public in the their offices

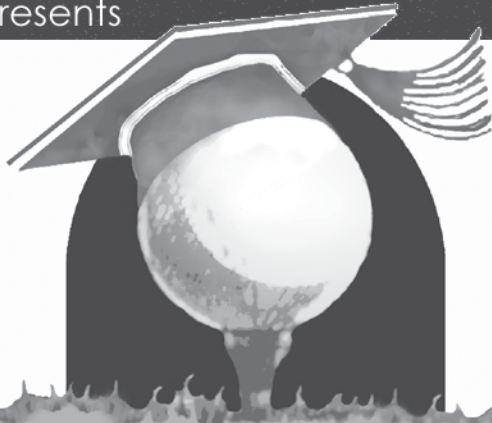
contained social security numbers. This was disturbing to them, and me, because of the potential for identity theft. Working together, we passed legislation to make sure that documents in the future will not request personal identity information and that in older documents this information is redacted before going up on a web site.

Not all the county related legislation I work on goes through the Local Government Committee. One bill in particular that I spent a great deal of time on this year came out of the State Government Committee, and will help save significant taxpayer dollars in the future. House File 2620, which has been passed by the House and Senate, will limit the number of special elections that can be held in one year. As floor manager of that bill, I worked with election officials to limit cities and counties to four elections a year – in March, May, August and November. School districts will also be limited to four election days a year. According to Secretary of State Mike Mauro, there have been more than 409 elections since January 2006. In Polk County alone, it has cost taxpayers more than \$1 million.

As I write this article, we are still at least one week away from adjournment. As a result, we still do not know what bills will get to the Governor for his signature and which will linger on the debate calendar. We know that some bills, such as the legislation updating the recorders duties, will have to wait until next year. I encourage county officials to stay in contact with me and other legislators over the summer so that we can begin work on your agenda for next year.

By the time you read this, I will hopefully be back home. Feel free to call me at 641-682-6417 or email me at mary.gaskill@legis.state.ia.us.

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Attorney General's Opinions Clarify Role of County Government

Key Opinions: I cleaned up my office recently, and in going through stacks of old documents, I kept coming across the same Iowa Attorney General's opinions over and over again. That got me thinking. Out of the hundreds of opinions that the Attorney General has issued, there are a dozen specific opinions that tell us the most about county government in Iowa. So here is my list of those 12 opinions, in no particular order. For those of you playing at home, feel free to make up your own lists. All of these opinions are posted on the front page of the ISAC website: www.iowacounties.org.

June 19, 1985: This is the best Attorney General's opinion on county home rule as it applies to budgeting matters. It explains in great detail the role of the elected officials versus the role of the board of supervisors. It also describes how the board's authority is significantly curtailed once the budgeted money has been appropriated. If you have to choose the best Attorney General opinion on county government, this one gets my vote.

October 12, 1984: This opinion, regarding law enforcement communications equipment, says that boards of supervisors cannot enter into 28E agreements regarding the functioning of another elected county official's office without the approval of that other elected official. It reaffirms the idea that elected county officials have jurisdiction over their offices, despite the general supervisory authority of the board of supervisors.

April 25, 1979: This opinion discusses the fact that every expenditure of public money must have a clearly documented "public purpose." So in this case, the question was whether public money can be spent for a retirement dinner for a public employee. The answer was a qualified "yes."

December 24, 1990: What is the term of assistant county officers? They are considered employees at will who serve at the pleasure of the principal officer making the appointment.

July 3, 1979: With certain exceptions, a county law enforcement officer only has official powers within the geographical area of his employing county. These powers can be expanded through the use of a 28E agreement, says the Attorney General.

February 15, 2000: County supervisors may not require another elected county official to comply with their comprehensive hiring policy. The opinion also clarifies that county supervisors may not unreasonably refuse to approve appointments made by other elected county officials.

June 21, 1991: This opinion provides some guidance on the thorny issue of when a county board of supervisors has to pay for requested improvements in the district court facilities. The test is whether the improvements are necessary for the immediate, necessary, efficient, and basic functioning of the court. If not, then it is up to the board of supervisors to decide whether to comply with the request.

By: David Vestal

ISAC General Counsel



April 27, 2001: This opinion tackles the age-old issues of conflict of interest and incompatibility of office. The opinion confirms that due to Iowa Code § 331.216, any county supervisor can be appointed to serve on any county board, including the conservation board and the board of health.

April 12, 2001: This opinion explains the statutory role of the board of supervisors and the county auditor regarding control over the courthouse and the maintenance and custodial personnel. The supervisors and the auditor both act as caretakers of the courthouse, but the auditor acts subject to instruction from the supervisors.

September 13, 1995: County supervisors have discretionary power to determine the number of deputies, assistants, and clerks hired by an elected official.

April 22, 1991: Regarding ordinances, Iowa Code § 331.302(5) allows a county board of supervisors to suspend the multiple reading requirement and to give final approval by affirmative vote at a single meeting.

April 28, 1993: This opinion goes through the traditional incompatibility analysis and explains, for instance, that veterans affairs commissioner and county supervisor are not incompatible because a position on the veterans affair commission is not an "office."

Hiring Outside Counsel: A recent district court decision from Pottawattamie County serves as a reminder about the perils of county officials hiring outside legal counsel. In *Pottawattamie County Board of Review v. Wilbur*, the county attorney and the county assessor disagreed about who should represent the county in assessment litigation. The assessor had routinely hired outside counsel on his own, but then the county attorney advised the assessor that an assistant county attorney was going to take over that role. The two county officials disagreed and this lawsuit resulted. The district court looked to the very similar 1994 Iowa Supreme Court case of *Polk County Conference Board v. Sarcone*, as well as Iowa Code § 441.4, and held that the assessment provisions in the Iowa Code require the county attorney to have control over assessment litigation and outside counsel's involvement.

That case was just limited to assessment litigation. But it follows the 2006 Iowa Supreme Court case of *Stream v. Gordy* (716 N.W.2d 187) which talks more generally about county officials hiring outside counsel. In that case, the court held that county officials do not have authority to hire outside counsel without the advance approval of the board of supervisors. And that if county officials do not secure this advance approval, they are personally liable for any attorney's fees incurred.

Parting Ponderable: "He who is outside the door already has the hard part of his journey behind him."
-Dutch proverb

Is the Mortgage Crisis Affecting Iowa?

Newspapers around the country have been reporting for months now on the subprime mortgage crisis and its many consequences. Here's a brief recap: In the early to mid part of this decade, a great number of people bought homes, refinanced their existing mortgages, or took out home equity loans using adjustable-rate mortgages (ARMs). ARMs were enticing to many people because of their low initial interest rate and the corresponding low monthly payments. However, many of the ARMs issued in 2004 and 2005 in particular were 2/28 or 3/27 ARMs, which means that the low initial interest rate was fixed for only two or three years, with the rate subject to change throughout the balance of the 30-year mortgage. In 2007 and 2008, those ARMs are starting to adjust their interest rates, and they're going up fast. As interest rates rise, monthly payments rise. If families can't keep up with the higher monthly payments, foreclosure often results. In fact, the U.S. Conference of Mayors (USCM) estimates that 1.4 million homes with a combined value of \$316 billion will be in foreclosure in 2008.

The significant rise in foreclosures also will have substantial impacts on our nationwide economy. USCM estimates that the mortgage crisis will shave \$166 billion off U.S. gross domestic product (GDP). That economic downturn translates into 524,000 fewer new jobs across the country. And fewer jobs means less consumer spending. As one example, USCM estimates that only 15.7 million new cars will be sold in 2008 – that would be the auto industry's worst year in a decade.

And of course, a rise in foreclosures has a negative impact on property values. According to USCM, residential property values will decline by \$1.2 trillion this year. A large chunk of that, \$675 billion, is due to an oversupply of home inventories and weaker market demand, and was estimated to occur even before the mortgage crisis. But the mortgage crisis will reduce home values by an additional \$520 billion. Most of the decline in property values will occur in the nation's largest metro areas, where home prices radically appreciated in the early part of this decade. Home prices in California, for example, are estimated to decline by 16% (\$630 billion!) in 2008. In the Midwest, home prices are projected to decline by \$21 billion in Illinois and a little over \$2 billion each in Minnesota and Missouri. But the rest of the region appears to be largely insulated from the mortgage crisis, at least in terms of property value. Foreclosure rates are up, to be sure. But in Kansas, Wisconsin, South Dakota, Nebraska and Iowa, the Conference of Mayors estimates no net decline in home property values in 2008.

A different group, however, does project a loss in property values – and property taxes – for Iowa and every other state. Congress's Joint Economic Committee (JEC) estimates that there are 38,000 outstanding subprime loans in Iowa, over 8,000 of which will fall into foreclosure between July 2007 and December 2009. The JEC estimates the cumulative property value loss of those foreclosures at \$257 million – \$210 million of direct value reductions on the foreclosed properties and \$47 million of indirect value loss “caused by the spillover effects of foreclosures.” That value loss translates into

By: Jay Syverson
ISAC Fiscal Analyst



a total property tax loss of \$3.2 million over the same period, assuming constant tax rates.

So the JEC study estimates a significant property value loss in Iowa due to the mortgage crisis, while the USCM study projects no significant impact. For a local viewpoint, the Polk County Assessor's first quarter 2008 newsletter notes that home sales are down, “but prices continue to hold steady.” In fact, the median home sale price in Polk County was at an all-time high in 2007, even through the end of the year.

Outside of the rather narrow property value context, the USCM study projects a negative overall economic impact in many of Iowa's metro areas. The local economies in Cedar Rapids, the Quad Cities, Des Moines, Dubuque, Iowa City, Sioux City, and Waterloo-Cedar Falls will all be hurt directly by the mortgage crisis. Sioux City's economy, for example, is projected to grow by 1.4% in 2008, but that's 0.7% lower growth than would have been expected without the housing crisis. That lower growth translates to \$33 million in lost economic impact. Similar figures apply to the rest of the cities mentioned above. In two of Iowa's metro areas – Ames and Council Bluffs-Omaha – the economies are not expected to be impacted by the mortgage crisis.

The mortgage crisis's impact could be more significant in rural Iowa. The Des Moines Register found that high-interest mortgages are much more prevalent in rural Iowa than urban Iowa. Overall, 27% of rural loans taken out from 2004-2006 are classified as high interest, which means they carry a rate at least 3 percentage points above a federal benchmark. In contrast, just 19% of urban loans are high interest. In a number of rural counties, the portion of loans classified as high interest is well over 30%. In Greene County, for example, more than 50% of all loans originated between 2004 and 2006 are high interest. Floyd, Lee, O'Brien and Ida counties all have more than 40% high-interest loans. In Charles City, one Floyd County community, two-thirds of loans originated between 2004 and 2006 are high interest. Because high-interest loans are more likely to default than so-called “prime” loans, the danger for a high proportion of foreclosures exists in many of these rural counties.

In summary, the extent of the mortgage crisis's impact on Iowa is unclear. We have been somewhat insulated from home value declines, largely because home value appreciation in Iowa never approached the outrageous levels on the coasts and in larger metropolitan areas. However, Iowans have not been insulated from the proliferation of ARMs. As ARMs adjust their interest rates, Iowans are just as susceptible to increased monthly payments – and potential foreclosure – as the rest of the nation.

Visit the following websites for more information:
<http://usmayors.org/metroeconomies/1107/report.pdf>
<http://data.desmoinesregister.com/homeloans/iatracts.php>

Lincoln Visits Dubuque

Just a year and a half before he would be elected president, Abraham Lincoln visited Dubuque, Iowa, with little fanfare, but in first-class style. The one-time prairie lawyer had undergone an impressive transformation, mirroring the growth of his home state of Illinois.

The man who had grown up in log cabins was a big noise in the Republican Party by this time, having run for U.S. Senate in 1858 against perennial presidential contender Stephen A. Douglas. Lincoln carried the popular vote, but the incumbent Douglas won, because the state's legislative districts were not proportionally balanced at the time. Democrats won a majority in the legislature, and, prior to 1914, it was state legislatures that elected U.S. senators.

The senatorial race received nationwide coverage, which largely focused on the seven debates between the two held from August through October. Lincoln's debate oratory put him on the road to the White House, although he wasn't seriously considered as a presidential candidate until after his Cooper Union speech in New York in February, 1860.

At the time of his Dubuque visit in the spring of 1859, he was a popular political speaker on a mainly regional basis who still needed to work his day job to provide for his family. As he said of his public speaking in a letter to Hawkins Taylor of Keokuk later in the year, "I am constantly receiving invitations which I am compelled to decline." He couldn't afford to accept them. "It is bad to be poor—" he stated somewhat exaggeratedly, "I shall go to the wall for bread and meat if I neglect my business this year as well as last."

His business was lawyering, and he had, for several years, been in the front rank of that profession in Illinois. Lincoln took on local cases riding the state's Eighth Judicial District from 1837 until the year he was elected president, 1860. However, he was now a highly respected attorney, frequently in the hire of the railroad companies, which deserve much of the credit both for Lincoln's relative prosperity and for the phenomenal growth in Illinois's population and economy. Lincoln received an annual retainer and a free railroad pass from the Illinois Central, which kept employing him even after he sued them to collect a then-enormous \$5,000 fee for their 1856 case against McLean County, Illinois. (Lincoln, we must here disclose, was successful in preventing the county from collecting property taxes from the railroad, because the state had already assessed a special tax on it.)

By: Grant Veeder

ISAC NACo Board Representative
Black Hawk County Auditor



In April of 1859, Lincoln was reportedly in Galena, Illinois, arguing successfully in a trial on the Illinois Central's behalf.

More court hearings involving the railroad company were forthcoming in Galena, and Lincoln and his clients took advantage of the hiatus to travel fifteen miles or so to the Key City of Dubuque. Since there wasn't a bridge there until 1868, they had to detrain in Dunleith (now East Dubuque) and take the ferry across the Mississippi.

Lincoln wasn't just traveling on his free pass. He and the railroad officials arrived in Dunleith in a private car, and then were put up at the swank Julien House in Dubuque. This forerunner of the current Julien Inn had recently doubled in size when the owners remodeled and modernized it.

The Illinois Central hoped at that time to establish a western terminus in Dubuque, and also to extend its line through eastern Iowa. However, we can only guess whether the railroad officials and their hotshot attorney transacted any business to this end while spending a day and a night at the hotel. No records have come to light that detail their activities except the scanty remembrances collected in F.I. Herriott's *Lincoln in Iowa*. Herriott says that a number of young Republican leaders, including future Senator William B. Allison, "attended at the Julien House to observe the notables," and were mightily impressed by Lincoln's free pass and private car.

Herriott also briefly describes what was apparently a separate private meeting, where a number of local lawyers got to meet "Senator Douglas' great antagonist." There is no indication that Lincoln gave a speech or did any politicking beyond this small group.

After the brief side trip, it was back to work at the courthouse in Galena for Lincoln, and on to greater fame and greater trials.

The Illinois Central eventually expanded into Iowa, leasing the Dubuque and Sioux City road from Dubuque to Iowa Falls in 1867, and reaching Sioux City in 1870.

The Julien House was expanded again after the Civil War, but the building burned down in 1913. The present Julien Inn stands on the same site at Second and Main Streets.

Beyond Mr. Herriott's writings, I am indebted to Clifford Krainik, whose article, "Mr. Lincoln Comes to Dubuque," appeared in *Julien's Journal* in February, 2004.

Learning From Brain Injury

In March, I attended the Brain Injury Association of Iowa Conference, "Best Practices in Brain Injury Service Delivery: XVI" at the Hotel Fort Des Moines in Des Moines. Dr. Al Condeluci, well known speaker, author, and national leader in human services, opened the conference talking about "Cultural Shifting: Building Social Capital." In this discussion, Al looked at how people with disabilities, whether physical, cognitive or emotional, continue to be devalued because our society has still not shifted from a micro (clinical medical model) to macro perspective in achieving an interdependent culture. The result of this failure is that those with disabilities have not been able to attain the common goals we all share. These goals, according to Condeluci, boil down to 4 areas of our lives: a home; a ride; a job; and a friend. Whereas 70-80% of the general public own their own homes and have a job, 6.1% of those with a disability own a home, and only 4.1% have a job. Al did a study suggesting that those in the general public have a support network of 151 people, while those with disabilities have support from 26 individuals, most of whom are paid staff. Condeluci believes that it's only in the community that different people come together on a regular basis to do something in common, therefore developing relationships. Through this regular engagement with others we begin to see our similarities, rather than our differences, drawing us closer together. In his breakout, Al discussed the action and solution for shifting to an interdependent culture.

Dr. Tim Feeney, also well known speaker, author, and consultant, spoke on "Self-Regulatory Interventions." Themes shared with Al include the importance of the personal relationship and the idea of a bridge builder - building on the person's strength and listening to them. Self-regulation is helping the person with a brain injury learn to help themselves, not through skill building necessarily, but by using what they already have. Through routine, scripts, and a framework, the person with a brain injury begins to see his/her choices, ultimately reducing impulsivity. In his breakout, Tim went into more detail of the framework that he uses in working with others. Initially, he reviews with the person ahead of the event what the person's goal of the event is, a plan, what obstacles may be present, and after the event, reviews with the person, from their perspective, how the event went. Although a simple concept, in reviewing a video of Tim working with a person using this framework, it is not always a clear cut process, and it takes a lot of repetition and consistency in order to see true choice in behavior. Another theme shared by Condeluci and Feeney is the ideal of "cross-disability focused." In other

By: Jackie Olson Leech

ISAC Case Management Specialist



words, regardless of a person's disability, the ideal of bridge building, cultural shifting and self-regulation can apply.

Geoffrey Lauer, Executive Director of the Brain Injury Association of Iowa, spoke on "How to Best Fight for War Fighters with Brain Injury." With a 90% survival rate in the War on Terror, due to improved body armor, transport, and trauma care, the incidence of brain injuries are much higher. The final report of the Presidents Commission on Care for America's Returning Wounded Warriors issued on July 25, 2007, indicated that 2,726 severe traumatic brain injuries (TBI) occurred, and some estimates suggest the number could grow as high as 150,000. Due to this, mandatory screenings of all Operation Iraqi Freedom veterans was implemented April 2, 2007 for TBI clinical reminder through the Department of Veterans Affairs. Lauer stated that because of this, and increased public awareness due to Bob Woodruff's story, there will be more money available for brain injury research and vocational rehabilitation expertise will be in more demand.

Because of the veterans administration backlogs, there are concerns that vets returning to the states with brain injuries are not getting adequate assistance and resources once they return to their communities. Lauer encouraged the audience to contact the Brain Injury Association of Iowa and request a presentation to increase awareness in your community or agency of the veterans returning to the states with brain injuries and what resources are available for them. You can contact the Brain Injury Association of Iowa by calling 1.800.444.6443, or visit their website at www.biaia.org.

Where Are We Going?

In a blog story, "Where Are We Going?" on www.boloji.com, Dr. Morice Deogratias relates the following story about Albert Einstein who once was traveling from Princeton.

"When the train conductor came punching the tickets Einstein reached in his vest pocket, couldn't find his ticket, so he reached in his trouser pockets. It wasn't there, so he looked in his briefcase but couldn't find it. Then he looked in the seat beside him. He still couldn't find it.

The conductor said, "Dr. Einstein, I know who you are. We all know who you are. I'm sure you bought a ticket. Don't worry about it." Einstein nodded appreciatively.

The conductor continued down the aisle punching tickets. As he was ready to move to the next car, he turned around and saw the great physicist down on his hands and knees looking under his seat for his ticket.

The conductor rushed back and said, "Dr. Einstein, Dr. Einstein, don't worry, I know who you are. No problem. You don't need a ticket. I'm sure you bought one."

Einstein looked at him and said, "Young man, I too, know who I am. What I don't know is where I'm going."

Like Einstein, the technology ticket can be purchased, but where will that ticket take us? Without a clear understanding of our destination, how will we know when we have arrived? Additionally, even if the county knows the destination, just purchasing the technology ticket is a challenge.

The overall mission of the County Technology Clearinghouse (CTC) is to construct a framework that will help counties with both the purchase of the ticket and the assistance in how to determine what the destination is.

In March, I spoke of the journey through the technology jungle for counties and how the new CTC interim strategic plan might assist this journey. The CTC plan outlines the goals. Goal 1 is building upon and leveraging the efforts of others. Goal 2 is building and maintaining partnerships among Iowa counties and between counties, stakeholders, and constituents. Goal 3 is establishing and maintaining resources to provide standardized e-government services by county government to the citizens of Iowa. Goal 4 is constant assessment of county e-government activities, needs, and funding. Goal 5 is developing and providing needed services to assist counties and affiliates. Goal 6 is maintaining operational flexibility. These six goals can be grouped together into the three things that most successful journeys require: a navigator, a pilot, and a transport. All three items can be set in a beginning framework corresponding with the CTC goals. Below, each area is described and the activities within them are outlined.

By: Robin Harlow

ISAC Technology
Project Manager



The Navigator

E-government Information, Collection and Dissemination (Goals 1 and 2):

Activities in this area involve communications in all forms; including interpersonal, telephone, paper publications, web publications, and by other means. The CTC envisions activities in the following programs:

- Advice and referral services (phone calls and web links);
- Outreach (publications like guidebook and E-county news, list servers for affiliates and members);
- Education and training; privacy, security, infrastructure, and e-government;
- Research, assessment, and planning; and
- E-government standards communication.

The Pilot

E-government Coordination and Leadership (Goals 3 and 4):

The CTC is in a unique position to provide this needed function. It is envisioned that activities will be supported in this function in the following areas:

- Coordination of e-government projects among counties;
- Coordination between counties and stakeholders;
- E-government resource development;
- Technology related meeting facilitation;
- Pilot project development; and
- Project guidance and management.

The Transport

E-government Services (Goals 1,5, and 6): Where the CTC determines there is an unmet need, the CTC may provide services in the following programs:

- Online services (Iowa Counties Access Network) through ETC, email, and web-hosting;
- Data exchange services;
- Data warehousing services; and
- IT disaster recovery coordination.

Administrative Activities: In addition to activities above, there will also be activities related to the administration of the CTC. Administrative activities include: Board(s) meeting support; focus area administration and planning; legislative review; and information resource management. The application of the CTC framework would not only assist the individual county with meeting its technology needs, but also assist all counties with meeting their collective technology needs to the greater connected world that all counties exist in today. Using collective technology solutions to power county services will assist in delivering these services in a cost-efficient manner with service levels citizens are increasingly demanding from their county government.

Next month I will outline some of the future challenges or issues that counties can expect to have to resolve, and how using the CTC's framework could assist the counties in addressing them.

technology center

Webcams

By: Tammy Norman

ISAC Office Manager



Q: I am interested in purchasing a webcam; do you have any suggestions to help me in my search?

A: A few items to keep in mind before purchasing your webcam are: purpose, budget and skill sets.

Purpose – If your purpose when purchasing a webcam is to chat online with family and friends, you will want to purchase a webcam that has audio capabilities and a clear color picture. If you would also like to create and send videos to them, you need to ensure that the file formats are compatible with their computers and the videos are saved in an AVI format, which is a standard Windows format. If you were thinking more of surveillance of your home or office while you are away, you will want to invest in a better webcam, and it will need additional software.

Budget – Webcams can be purchased for as little \$20 and as much as \$300. Keep in mind what you use the webcam for will determine the amount of money you should pay. If you simply want to chat online or share video with family and friends, a lower end webcam will work fine. However, if you want to set up your own surveillance system, you will need to purchase a higher end webcam. Surveillance will require special software such as WebCam Monitor v4.30.

Image quality is another thing to consider. Higher resolution webcams will create a better image. What do you use as a monitor? Is it a CRT or an LCD screen? Some webcams do not work well on flat surfaces and are designed to clip onto an LCD screen. Do you want audio? If you do, make sure your webcam will have this feature and if it doesn't you will need to purchase a microphone. Check the hardware and software requirements. Does your computer have enough memory? Will it work with your version of Windows?

Skill Sets – Luckily most webcams are extremely simple to use and come with the software necessary to set up and utilize them. If you want to simply chat online, you will be able to purchase a webcam that is easy to install and has software to download onto your computer. If you want to set up your own surveillance system, you may need to get some assistance. However, there are some easy to follow, online tutorials, and with an additional software purchase, you should be able to set up your own system relatively easily.

Have a question regarding new technology and would like it addressed in this column? Contact me at 515-244-7181 ext. 315 or via e-mail at tnorman@iowacounties.org. Until next month, keep clicking!

Website Note: The ISAC Legislative District Workshops are now online and available for you to register. Do not miss out on the opportunity to discuss what happened during the legislative session with ISAC staff and your local legislators.

ISAC meetings

ISAC Legislative District Workshops

By: Stacy Horner

ISAC Meeting/Event Administrator



Each June, the ISAC staff travels to the six ISAC districts to conduct a series of district meetings to provide country officials with a summary of the legislation that passed during the last session and to discuss important issues. Legislators are invited to come discuss their perspective on the legislative session or to raise important issues for our members to consider. The 2008 ISAC Legislative District Workshops will be held on the following dates and locations:

Thursday, June 19

District 6 Workshop at Coralville Marriott Hotel and Conference Center (300 East 9th Street, Coralville, IA 52241)

Friday, June 20

District 5 Workshop at Indian Hills Community College-Advanced Technology Center (525 Grandview Avenue, Ottumwa, IA 52501)

Tuesday, June 24

District 1 Workshop at Stoney Creek Inn and Conference Center (5291 Stoney Creek Court, Johnston, IA 50131)

Wednesday, June 25

District 4 Workshop at Mid-America Center (One Arena Way, Council Bluffs, IA 51501)

Thursday, June 26

District 3 Workshop at Buena Vista University-Siebens Forum (610 West Fourth Street, Storm Lake, IA 50588)

Friday, June 27

District 2 Workshop at North Iowa Area Community College-Muse-Norris Conference Center (500 College Drive, Mason City, IA 50401)

You can register for the district workshops on-line at www.iowacounties.org. The pre-registration fee is \$35 and registration is \$40 at the door. Morning refreshments and lunch is included in your registration fee, as well as a copy of the legislative summary book.

The agenda is as follows:

9:00 am-9:30 am	Registration
9:30 am-9:45 am	District Meeting
9:45 am-10:45 am	General Session
10:45 am-11:00 am	BREAK
11:00 am-12:00 pm	Legislators Roundtable
12:00 pm-1:00 pm	LUNCH
1:00 pm-3:00 pm	Affiliate Meetings

If you have any questions at all, please don't hesitate to contact me at shorner@iowacounties.org or 515.244.7181.

Membership Is The Answer

As an Associate Member of ISAC, a commercial enterprise, professional association, or private group is able to maintain a direct line of communication to the decision-makers of Iowa's 99 counties. Currently, we are pleased that 60 companies have become 2008 Associate Members and we expect more to follow as the year progresses.

The ISAC Associate Member program originated in July of 1988 to match needs expressed by vendors who wanted to be a part of ISAC and show their support without becoming an actual member of our organization. At a small cost, this membership is a virtual gold mine of opportunity, especially to any company who is interested in expanding its business and strengthening its relationships with Iowa counties. It allows a company to help itself, to help the county officials, and first and foremost, to help all citizens of Iowa.

Associate member dues only make up about 2% of ISAC's budget; however, the associate member program is vital to many of the programs that ISAC offers to our members. Through sponsorships, advertising, and exhibiting at our conferences, in the magazine and in the county directory, our associate members enable us to keep our registration costs low at our conferences. The advertising costs offset the expensive costs of our publications, like *The Iowa County* magazine. Overall, the financial burden that they bear through ISAC, on your behalf, should not be overlooked. Without our associate members, ISAC could not offer the services we do to our members and continue to keep your dues and registration fees within a county budget's meager restraints.

Forming close connections and relationships with county officials allows an associate member to better understand the unique challenges and demands that county officials face and how to then better serve these needs. ISAC offers these networking opportunities through two conferences each year, one in November in Coralville and one in March in downtown Des Moines. Approximately 900 county officials are in attendance at each conference. As previously mentioned, many associate members participate in the conferences by exhibiting, by advertising in the conference program, and by becoming conference sponsors. Each of these opportunities is made much more affordable by discounts offered to these members. Also, early registration provides for more visibility because opportunities are on a first come first serve basis. Further benefits include: an electronic database of county officials with contact information; a product or service article published in *The Iowa County* magazine; being listed on the ISAC website with contact information; all advertising and booth spaces at

By: Rachel Bicego

ISAC Marketing/Communication
Coordinator



a 10% discount; one free registration at each of the ISAC schools of instruction and additional registrations at a discounted price; company listing in the conference programs; a copy of the ISAC Directory of County Officials; a subscription to *The Iowa County* magazine; and additional signage when exhibiting at the ISAC conferences.

So please, support our Associate Members and thank them for their continued support of ISAC and the counties of Iowa. On the following page is a current list of all 2008 ISAC Associate Members and an 'Associate Member Highlights' article. The publication of this article is one benefit that ISAC extends to all associate members. Articles are accepted on a first come first serve basis and must be received by the first Friday of the previous month for inclusion.

Statewide, the 99 counties of Iowa have the annual purchasing power of about \$2 billion. This is no small market and it is one, that is continually growing. In an attempt to further increase ISAC's Associate Member program, we are willing to offer a free conference registration to the 2008 Fall School of Instruction to any county who recruits a business to become a 2008 ISAC Associate Member. We feel that this will enable counties throughout the state to utilize companies that have a proven track record of providing their services to the counties. Please talk to the companies that you work with and discuss how the ISAC Associate Member program will help them break into the statewide county market.

For more details on the Associate Member Program, other corporate opportunities, or the free conference registration offer, please contact Rachel Bicego at rbicego@iowacounties.org or 515.244.7181.

2008 ISAC Associate Members

Advanced Correctional Healthcare
Aerial Services
Al-Jon Inc.
AMZ Financial Insurance Services
Anderson-Bogert Engineers & Surveyors, Inc.
Auxiant
Barker Lemar Engineering Consultants
Barlett & West Engineers, Inc.
Commerce Bank

...list continues on page 13

2008 ISAC Associate Members

List continued from page 12...

Compass Business Solutions
 Corporate Express
 Cost Advisory Services, Inc.
 Cott Systems, Inc.
 County Risk Management Services, Inc.
 Dan Corbin, Inc.
 Danko Emergency Equipment Co.
 Delta Dental of Iowa
 Durrant
 Election Systems & Software
 ESRI
 French-Reneker-Associates, Inc.
 Goldberg, Sullivan & McCreery
 IMAGETek
 IMAGETek
 Iowa Concrete Paving Association
 Iowa Gaming Association
 ING
 IPAIT
 IPERS Improvement Association
 JEO Consulting Group, Inc.
 John Deere Co.
 Kuehl & Payer, Ltd.
 Lawson Software
 Mail Services
 Matt Parrott & Sons
 MAXIMUS, Inc.
 McClure Engineering
 MedOne Healthcare Systems
 Midland GIS Solutions
 NACo
 Nationwide Retirement Solutions
 OfficeMax Enterprise
 Premier Election Solutions, Inc.
 Public Financial Management
 Risk Management Solutions of Iowa, Inc
 Ruan Securities Corporation
 Rueter's
 Shive-Hattery, Inc.
 Snyder & Associates, Inc.
 Solutions, Inc.
 Speer Financial, Inc.
 Springsted Incorporated
 Storey Kenworthy
 The Schneider Corporation
 The Sidwell Company
 Trileaf Corporation
 TrueNorth Companies
 Tyler Technologies/INCODE Division
 U.S. Bank
 Vanguard Appraisals, Inc.
 Wellmark BC/BS of Iowa

Imagetek, Inc.



By: Dane Meuler

Imagetek, Inc. VP Business Development

Microfilm Scanning: Microfilm has been touted as an archival medium, whether stored as rolls of film, microfiche or aperture cards, that will last hundreds of years. There is no doubt that the microfilm will last that long, but there are two nagging questions.

1. Will the images still be readable in hundreds of years?
2. How can you provide more ready access to the information?

Readability of the images on microfilm has become a very visible issue as various "diseases" have manifested themselves. Vinegar Syndrome, Redox, and residual thiosulfate have all caused images to fade or become unreadable. The symptoms and costs of treatment are too numerous and too complex to outline in this article, but feel free to call Imagetek to learn more (800.422.1330). Now that many are noticing the degradation evident on their film, there is a move to convert the film to a digital medium.

The other risk to readability is the cost and availability of the microfilm reading and printing equipment. In the 1980's there were dozens of manufacturers and models of equipment. Today there are a handful of models and even fewer manufacturers. Readability will depend on the availability of the equipment required to view microfilm.

By scanning and digitizing the microfilm, an organization can not only make the information more accessible, but the images will not fade and can be inexpensively backed up for redundancy. The challenges of scanning microfilm are not insignificant, mostly due to the nature and variety of the microfilmed images. The image quality can vary in a group of images throughout a roll or through a collection of fiche or aperture cards and will challenge any microfilm scanning equipment. In some cases the film is so bad that it is nearly impossible to create a good digital image. Waiting to perform the conversion to digital will not improve the results.

There are a few helpful hints when performing a conversion of your microfilm.

- The sooner the better;
- Put the images in a document management system and create backups to ensure the long term retention of the images;
- Perform an inventory at the time of the scanning. Many organizations are not sure what they have in books, on film, or in the imaging system.

Scanning your microfilm will preserve it for generations to come and will make it more accessible to all the citizens and employees of your County. In addition to challenges with microfilm, you can turn to Imagetek to help you with your bound and unbound books, loose-leaf paper records, and large format documents.

know your ISAC board members

Harlan Hansen
Humboldt County
Supervisor



Year you started on the ISAC board: 2008

Years of public service: 13

Education: B.S. Mechanical Engineering

The hardest thing I've ever done: is getting my degree in engineering.

A dream I have is to: visit Denmark and Norway.

You'd be surprised to learn that I: was a hog farmer.

My first car was: a 1950 Olds, 4 door.

The most adventurous thing I've ever done is: running for a political office.

I'm most proud of: my wife and family (3 daughters, 10 grand children).

My favorite way to relax is: golf in the summer and wood working in the winter.

My favorite Iowa meal is: a good steak.

My favorite movies are: the Indiana Jones series.

My favorite music is: 50's.

My favorite place in Iowa is: home.

Joe Buffington
Henry County
Zoning



Year you started on the ISAC board: 2008

Year you began public service: 2002

Education: University of Iowa - BBA (Finance), MA (Urban and Regional Planning)

The hardest thing I've ever done: is raising my children on a daily basis.

A dream I have is to: retire to a boat on the ocean.

You'd be surprised to learn that I: have crossed the equator, the Arctic Circle, and the international dateline.

My first car was: a 1966 MGB GT.

The most adventurous thing I've ever done is: sky diving.

I'm most proud of: my children Sam, Emerson, and Addison.

My favorite way to relax is: to tinker with anything mechanical.

My favorite Iowa meal is: sweet corn.

My favorite movie is: The Big Sleep.

My favorite music is: 70's Rock/Jazz.

My favorite place in Iowa is: in and around Iowa City.

2008 ISAC Fall School of Instruction Educational Seminars

ISAC will be hosting a variety of educational seminars during the 2008 ISAC Fall School of Instruction at the Coralville Marriott Hotel and Convention Center. We are asking all of our members to provide suggestions for seminar topics so we can present seminars that are of great interest and will provide valuable education. Thanks for your help in making the 2008 ISAC Fall School of Instruction a success!

Please send all your input and ideas to Stacy Horner at shorner@iowacounties.org or 515.244.7181 by Friday, May 30, 2008.

Linn County Helps the Homeless

Linn County recently won the National Association of Counties' "Acts of Caring" award for its second annual sleep out for homelessness awareness.

Where would you sleep tonight if you were homeless?

Some people are fortunate to have friends or families they could call. Many others must rely on homeless shelters. In Linn County, there are a number of shelters available to individuals and families who have nowhere else to go.

During fiscal year 2006 (the most recent data available in Linn County) the number of homeless persons served by Linn County shelters and transitional housing programs was at its highest point in five years. Sadly, nearly half of the 4,000 people served by these shelters were children.

"Homelessness is a real issue in our community," said Don Tyne, director of Linn County Veteran Affairs and co-chair of the Linn County Sleep Out planning committee. "It's a constant task to educate the public that being homeless doesn't always mean sleeping under a bridge. A homeless person may be staying with family or friends or even in a hotel, but if they don't have a permanent residence of their own, they are still homeless. Homelessness is a shadow of the poor health care system our nation faces. It can happen to anyone."

According to Tyne, 25% of all homeless persons in Linn County are veterans, which follows the national average.

Tyne is the driving force behind what has become an annual event in Linn County to raise awareness of homelessness while raising money for local shelters.

On Saturday, November 17, 2007, Linn County held its second annual Sleep Out for Homelessness Awareness on the Coe College campus in downtown Cedar Rapids. More than 150 people collected pledges and slept outside in tents, cardboard boxes, and sleeping bags to raise awareness of homelessness. Volunteers raised \$16,000 – twice as much as the first year. 100% of the money raised was donated to eight Linn County homeless shelters. The Sleep Out was co-organized by Linn County Veteran Affairs and Community Circle of Care, Inc., and was part of National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week. Organizers held educational activities and group discussions about homelessness. Information about local homelessness and the area programs that serve the homeless was also on display.

"We were absolutely thrilled with the turnout," said Dave Langston, board president of Community Circle of Care, Inc. and co-chair of the sleep out. "We more than doubled our participation from last year. We have a dedicated planning committee that worked hard to get the word out to the community and to secure donations from area businesses," said Langston.

Thanks to these efforts, Linn County was one of 18 recipients of the National Association of Counties' (NACo) Acts of Caring Award. More than 70 entries were received. The Acts of Caring Awards recognize the top county volunteer programs in the country. The awards program is carried out by NACo in partnership with Freddie Mac.

Tyne, Langston, and Linn County Board of Supervisor Chair, Linda Langston, accepted the award at a breakfast ceremony on Capitol Hill April 10 as part of National County Government Week, April 6-12.

"This is an honor," said Supervisor Langston on receiving the award. "To be chosen for an Acts of Caring Award when more than 70 entries were received is a testament to the volunteers who made the sleep out successful."

Operational costs of the sleep out were funded by the Junior League of Cedar Rapids, the Iowa Finance Authority, the Van Meter Industrial Corporate Fund of the Greater Cedar Rapids Community Foundation, and by donations from area businesses. Coe College donated use of its campus and security for the event.

To learn more about Linn County's Sleep Out for Homelessness Awareness, contact Don Tyne, director of Linn County Veteran Affairs, at (319) 892-5160 or veteran@linncounty.org.



NACo news

NACo Annual Conference in Kansas City, MO

July 11-15, 2008
Kansas City Convention Center
301 West 13th Street
Kansas City, Missouri 64105

What is included in your registration fee

Every registration type includes the following:

- All Workshops, Symposia, Mobile Workshops
- General Sessions
- One Boxed Lunch and one Boxed “Brunch”
- Exhibit Hall Access
- Conference-Wide Event
- Inaugural Gala Reception

Registration fees do not include Pre-Conference Seminars that have a fee associated. Register at www.naco.org.

Registration and Housing

Please register online or complete the Registration and Housing forms available on this website. You CANNOT obtain a hotel reservation unless you register for the conference. Any housing requests submitted without a complete registration form will not be processed. If you intend to use the printed forms, fax your completed forms to the fax number located at the bottom of the form(s).

In order to pick-up your badge on-site in Kansas City, all registration fees must be fully paid.

Planning Your Arrival Date

If you are not a member of or participating in a committee, caucus or pre-conference seminar, we suggest you schedule your arrival for Sunday, July 13.

Cancellation Policy

A refund of your conference registration fee, less an administrative fee of \$50 will be made if written notice of registration cancellation is postmarked no later than May 30, 2008. Cancellations postmarked May 31 – July 3, 2008 will be subject to an administrative fee equal to one-half of the registration fee. Fax your written cancellation request to: (919) 882-1570 or email: registration@conferencedirect.com.

No refund requests will be honored for registrations cancelled after July 3, 2008 or for “no shows”. All registration cancellations will immediately cancel any associated hotel reservation. *All cancellations must be in writing.*

Attire

Attire is business casual.



counties in the spotlight

Buchanan County Supervisors Participate in the Meals on Wheels Program

This year, Buchanan County Supervisors Mike Ferreter, Ellen Gaffney and Ralph Kremer helped out in both the kitchen and by delivering the meals for frail elders in their county. The event included preparing, packaging, and delivering meals to seniors as a part of the Meals on Wheels program.

The Hawkeye Valley Area Agency on Aging worked again this year to encourage city and county leaders to help promote the home delivered meal program our agency offers to homebound seniors across 10 counties as part of the national Mayors for Meals program.

Senior nutrition programs across the United States promote March for Meals in their local communities through public

events, partnerships with local businesses, volunteer recruitment, and fundraising initiatives. For more information on the program and to get involved in the program please visit <http://www.mowaa.org/>.



Photo by John Klotzback, Independence Bulletin Journal.

Recovering Lost Treasurers

Iowa Department of Administrative Services

It adds up very quickly. A few hundred bucks here, \$75 there. Or someone moves out in the middle of the night without a trace of a forwarding address, leaving behind a pile of abandoned bills. When people neglect to pay fines, utilities, or other public fees, local governments are left holding the bag, handicapped in their ability to recover the money – if recovering these funds is possible at all.

In the past – and when the tab owed was significant enough – local governments would turn to credit bureaus or collection agencies. However, with fees for such third party services ranging as high as 40% on the total amount owed, full repayment was never possible and, in many cases, local governments were forced to write off the loss – essentially penalizing the entire community. Fortunately, there's now a low cost and extremely effective way to recover previously lost revenues without requiring local governments to stage manhunts just to balance their books.

The Value of Coordination

The Income Offset Program (IOP), administered by the Iowa Department of Administrative Services, State Accounting Enterprise (DAS/SAE), is a process that allows the state to withhold money owed to a person (such as an income tax refund) when that person is indebted to the public. While initial legislation for this program, signed into law in the late 1970s, was focused at the state level, recent advances now extend the IOP to any political subdivision in Iowa, including counties and municipalities. And this broader reach is truly paying off. In FY 07, \$17 million was recovered, benefitting public treasuries at every level throughout the state.

“I love this program,” said Toni Landers, Afton City Clerk. “We’re just becoming involved but are already seeing results, something that never would have happened if we were still using the credit bureau.”

Another municipal official, DeeAnn Lansink in the City Clerk’s office of Primghar, said that, compared to the processes of placing liens on property or utilizing small claims court – which can take months – the IOP is like a fast track to financial resolution. Plus, it eliminates other costs such as court fees, mileage and the time spent to track people down. She estimates that IOP has helped her city to recoup at least \$3,000 annually – funds that otherwise would be lost.

Essentially, the Income Offset Program is a simple matter of matching taxpayer identification numbers (federal ID or social security). If DAS/SAE is aware of a person owing money and that same person is due a tax return, Iowa Treasure Hunt payment or Iowa Lottery winnings, the money is held until the debt is paid. Once all obligations are satisfied, the person receives the remainder of his or her money.

However, before DAS/SAE can make a match, it must first get a request to do so from the offsetting agency (county) seeking payment. Additionally, the offsetting agency can’t make a request until it can document that it has made every reasonable effort to contact and collect from the person or organization owing money. Such con-

ditions are critical to protect against any overzealousness on the behalf of the offsetting agency/government.

If resolution of the debt has not occurred and the debt is at least \$50, then the offsetting agency may proceed by signing a Memorandum of Understanding with DAS/SAE and submitting a liability file. The liability file needs to include the name of the person or vendor owing money, the taxpayer identification number, the amount of the liability, and a written statement declaring the debt to have occurred.

Matchmakers Make the Catch

With a liability file on record, DAS/SAE can then pull any warrant and place it in a fund for the offsetting agency. DAS/SAE then notifies the offsetting agency that the funds are being held. The offsetting agency, in turn, must send the debtor or vendor a Notice of Held Warrant within 10 days of notification. The notification letter must include:

- The agency’s right to the payment in question;
- The agency’s right to recover the payment through this offset procedure;
- The basis of the agency’s case in regard to this debt;
- The right of the debtor to request a split of the payment between parties when the payment in question is jointly owned by two or more persons (tax refund);
- The debtor’s right to appeal the offset and the procedure to follow in that appeal; and
- The agency or division and a phone number for the debtor to contact in case of questions.

The notification letter should give the individual or vendor a certain number of days in which to respond. This is important because the offsetting agency has just 45 days from the date of the match to notify DAS/SAE of any action to be taken. If 45 days pass without any direction from the offsetting agency, the entire amount is released.

Low Cost Solutions to High Cost Problems

The fee for participating in the IOP is just \$7 for each offset when money is actually kept. If funds are released before being sent to the offsetting agency, a fee is not charged.

At a time when county budgets face more stresses every day, the value of a process such as IOP is practically immeasurable, which is why more political subdivisions are participating all the time. If you feel your county could benefit, contact DAS/SAE today.

For more information, contact the Iowa Department of Administrative Services/State Accounting Enterprise at offsets@iowa.gov.

9 Ways to Go Green: Environmental Considerations for Your Next Furniture Purchase By Linda VanWyk

Having grown adept at seeking recycled products, government buyers now find the environmental bar raised higher. Where it was once enough to buy recycled, nowadays the purchasing mandate is likely to take into account a much broader swath of environmental concerns.

So what constitutes an environmental product according to this new definition of green? Recycled content matters, of course, but so do a host of other attributes involving how a product was made, packaged and shipped.

Consider how this trend affects purchases of one big-ticket item: office furniture. Here are nine considerations now in play for government purchasers who want to buy green:

Built to last: The longer a chair lasts, the longer it takes to wind up in a landfill. From an environmental standpoint, it doesn't get any simpler. That's why durability is the foremost green criterion for office furniture purchases. What to look for? The best warranty you can find. There's no surer indication of a product's durability than the manufacturer's confidence in it.

A word of caution: Beware of "lifetime" warranties loaded with fine print. A straightforward warranty that covers multi-shift usage and doesn't get bogged down with exclusions is preferable to a so-called lifetime warranty packed with conditions and qualifiers.

Easy to change: Before Herman Miller introduced the Action Office panel system in the late 1960s, reconfiguring an office meant demolishing fixed walls and choking landfills with waste. Since Action Office, reconfiguring has meant moving some panels around. The advent of modular systems furniture ushered in a new way of thinking about environmental responsibility in the workplace. Today's rule of thumb: If it's not easy to reconfigure and reuse, it's probably not worth considering.

Cradle to cradle: Since the onset of the Industrial Revolution, most manufacturers have assumed a cradle-to-grave life cycle — that is, you use a product until it wears out and then bury it. Instead, today's progressive manufacturers are working toward a cradle-to-cradle approach, which assumes that a product eventually will be recycled rather than disposed of.

Cradle-to-cradle manufacturers develop products that are easy to take apart, easy to recycle and generally easy on the environment — even to the point of evaluating the chemical makeup of raw materials to be sure they're earth friendly. If you're looking to buy green, look first for a manufacturer with a cradle-to-cradle philosophy.

A breath of fresh air: Ever notice how new cars, new construction and new furniture all have a distinctive odor? Better that you didn't — because that smell indicates harmful contaminants are evaporating into the air. Many government workplaces are subject to strin-

gent regulations pertaining to the emission of these volatile organic compounds, or VOCs.

To help protect your employees, choose low-emitting office furniture that meets standards set forth by either the independent Greenguard Environmental Institute or the Business and Institutional Furniture Manufacturer's Association.

Recycled at the beginning: Many furniture makers reveal the percentage of recycled content in their products, so it's relatively easy to narrow your choices in this regard. Herman Miller's flagship Aeron chair, for instance, contains 66 percent recycled materials; its Ethospace frame-and-tile system contains 35 percent.

You might even see a breakdown comparing post-consumer to pre-consumer recycled content. Post-consumer is preferable because it encompasses materials that have completed their life cycle in the consumer market and otherwise would be discarded — plastic bottles, for instance. Pre-consumer materials consist largely of manufacturing scrap that was never used in the consumer market.

Recyclable at the end: Even more important than the percentage of recycled content is whether your furniture is recyclable at the end of its useful life. If you're serious about taking advantage of recyclability down the road, pay attention to how a piece of furniture is put together and how easy it is to take apart. If it's a hassle to disassemble, its components likely won't be recycled someday even if they theoretically could be.

Let it shine: Can your choice of office furniture reduce your electric bill? Absolutely. Consider glass tiles, translucent screens, low-height panels — anything that lets light reach interior spaces. The more daylight your workplace gets, the less artificial light it needs — and the happier your employees will be.

Wrap it up: It's hard to be attentive to environmental measures on the factory floor — and it's all too easy to forget about them entirely out on the trucks. Bulky packaging can sideswipe the best intentions if it ends up in a landfill. Stay green by requesting returnable packaging (like shipping blankets) or recyclable alternatives — corrugated cardboard and polystyrene foam, for instance, are recyclable in many markets.

Meet the maker: Finally, consider how the furniture supplier you're evaluating does business, not just how it makes products. Does the company still sound green after articulating its policies toward renewable energy, solid-waste recycling, water conservation and air emissions? Also, are any of its facilities LEED-certified by the U.S. Green Building Council?

The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design program promotes green construction practices and awards buildings that make the grade. Given stricter environmental criteria, government buyers are examining the green characteristics of furniture from a broader perspective than ever before. Fortunately, the industry is ready with environmental practices that stand up to scrutiny.

For more information about environmentally responsible purchasing, visit www.gogreencommunities.org.

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Editor's Note: For consideration of materials to be published in *The Iowa County* magazine, please submit before the first Friday of the previous month. (Materials for the June magazine are due on Friday, May 2.)

Thank you! Rachel

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- 8 CCMS Advanced Case Manager
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- 14-16 Treasurers' Statewide Meeting
(Carroll)

June

- 5 CCMS Supervisors Training
(Holiday Inn Airport, Des Moines)
- 11 ISAC Scholarship Golf Fundraiser
- 11-13 ICIT Annual Conference
(Sioux City)
- 17 CRIS Board
(ISAC Offices)
- 18-20 CCMS "Fundamentals"
(Holiday Inn Airport, Des Moines)
- 19 District 6 Legislative Workshop
(Coralville Marriott Hotel and
Conference Center)
- 20 District 5 Legislative Workshop
(Indian Hills Community College, Ottumwa)
- 24 District 1 Legislative Workshop
(Stoney Creek Inn and Conference
Center, Johnston)
- 24 CRIS Cost Report Training
(Carroll County Conservation Education
Center, Carroll)

- 25 CCMS Board
(ISAC Offices)
- 25 District 4 Legislative Workshop
(Mid-America Center, Council Bluffs)
- 26 District 3 Legislative Workshop
(Buena Vista University, Storm Lake)
- 26 CRIS Cost Report Training
(Kirkwood Community College,
Cedar Rapids)
- 27 District 2 Legislative Workshop
(North Iowa Area Community College,
Mason City)

July

- 8 CCMS Administrators
(Holiday Inn Airport, Des Moines)
- 11-15 NACo Annual Conference
(Kansas City, MO)
- 17 CCMS "East Support Group"
(Coral Ridge Mall, Coralville)
- 25 ISAC Board of Directors
(ISAC Office)
- 30-1 Auditors' Summer Conference
(Clear Lake)
- 30-1 Supervisor's Executive Board
(Boone)

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 2008, 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, please contact Stacy Horner at (515) 244-7181 or shorner@iowacounties.org.



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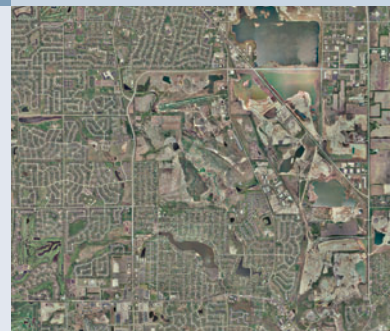
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