

The Iowa County



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Culver

Who Will Be Iowa's Next Governor?

October 2006

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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.

Congressman Jim Nussle - Gubernatorial Candidate

Traveling the state and listening to thousands of Iowans, I know we all have one thing in common – we want Iowa to grow. If we're going to create new jobs, grow our economy and provide exciting opportunities for generations to come, all of us must work together to achieve this common goal.



Each region, county and town has a place in Iowa's destiny. Let's embrace our local communities and ensure they have a voice in helping Iowa grow. We should start by recognizing the different strengths of our state and capitalizing on our unique advantages, homegrown resources and innovative research.

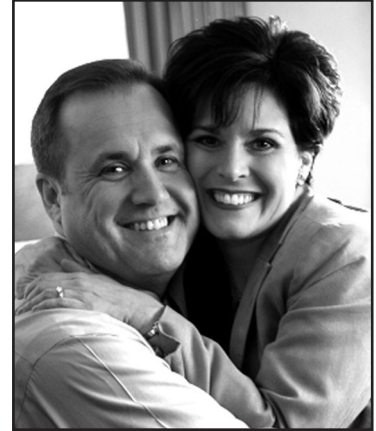
Iowa should be the most competitive state in the country and the number one place for businesses to grow and create jobs. As the former president of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, I know that people create jobs, not government. I know that Iowa grows best when our small businesses have the ability to create the jobs and opportunities of the future. Unfortunately, Iowa's tax system is muzzling entrepreneurial success, stifling individual investment and forcing Iowans to leave the state in hopes of better opportunities. In the most recent study by the Tax Foundation Iowa is ranked 42nd in the country for economic growth because Iowa's tax code and regulatory structure are anti-competitive.



In order to improve Iowa's business climate, we must provide small businesses the right incentives to expand and create new jobs. I have proposed a Blue Ribbon Commission on Tax Reform to provide recommendations that reduce or eliminate burdensome taxes, such as the current commercial property tax, in order to make Iowa more attractive for growth. We must reform our current tax system which is forcing entrepreneurs to move to other states and stifling our homegrown

businesses from growing and further adding to Iowa's economy.

It's not enough just to focus on the tax and regulatory structure – we also must tackle the rising cost of health care, which increasingly squeezes small business owners and makes it more difficult to provide adequate coverage for working Iowans. Today, 60% of uninsured employees work for small businesses. It's a clear sign we need to help these folks by allowing them to pool their risk through my plan for coverage pools. By making it more affordable for small business owners to provide health insurance, we will foster economic growth and provide affordable, accessible health care for those Iowans currently uninsured.



We also must develop and grow a quality infrastructure that brings the state together - east and west, urban and rural - and improves Iowa's economic climate and attracts new businesses and opportunities. I'm proud of my record of securing funding to modernize our state's infrastructure, and I will continue as Governor to show the same commitment to updating our state's transportation system. Our roads, bridges and infrastructure must be able to support and encourage business growth and job creation across the state.

In order to grow Iowa's economy, we must work together and capitalize on our state's collective strengths. It starts with Iowa's entrepreneurs and small businesses that are the engines of our economy. This is critical if we're committed to energizing Iowa's future by creating jobs and developing new opportunities. For further information visit www.jimnussle.com.

Secretary of State Chet Culver - Gubernatorial Candidate

As Iowans go to the polls to elect a new Governor on November 7, we face important challenges. Iowa is at a crossroads. For the past eight years we have made real progress in getting Iowa's fiscal house in order and preparing our state to excel in the 21st century economy.

However, real challenges remain. We've lost too many manufacturing jobs. Many of our rural communities feel left out. Our community colleges and universities are becoming too expensive. For too many, affordable health care and a secure retirement are out of reach.

I believe this is no time to slow down, to stop or to retreat. It is time for a new Governor with bold ideas, energy and vision, with the courage to seize the opportunities among our challenges, and a plan to Lead Iowa Forward. We can build on our strengths in agriculture, manufacturing and education to create good jobs with good benefits in every corner of the state.

As Governor, I would make the creation of renewable energy and alternative fuel industries the primary focus of our economic development efforts. My plan, available at www.chetculver.com, shows how we will lead the nation with a \$100 million Iowa Power Fund targeted at encouraging private sector investments in renewable energy and alternative fuels.



This focus will ensure that our economic growth comes not just from service jobs in the big cities, but from high-paying jobs, jobs close to the land, in every part of the state. It also will allow Iowa to become the first state in the nation to break free from our dependence on foreign oil and price-gouging big oil companies.

In addition to my plan, I offer eight years of experience as a statewide elected official. As Secretary of State I have traveled to all 99 counties and have had the unique opportunity to work with county officials on projects that benefit all Iowans. For example, I have worked closely with the Iowa State Association of County Auditors to implement the Help America Vote Act in a way that ensures efficiency and security in Iowa's election systems. We have offered training to auditors and their staff; cooperatively implemented the state's

first unified voter registration system and streamlined the election reporting process.

As you know, at every level of government there is pressure to streamline processes to be both efficient and effective. I believe we can use technology to achieve better, faster and more responsive government. As Secretary of State I have made it a priority, and we have led the nation. We have cut red tape and saved taxpayers millions.



The Iowa State Association of Counties has been a partner in many of these projects, and I look forward to a continued strong relationship with county officials and employees. My experience has given me much faith in the ability of local elected officials to address important challenges facing Iowans without undue interference from the state level.

One of the state's most immediate challenges involves property taxes. Commercial rates are third in the nation in a recent survey. Our over-reliance on property taxes to fund schools leads to inequities. They hit fixed-income Iowans disproportionately. Funding education will be a top priority in a Culver administration. However, it is vital that the funding be fair and equitable across school districts.

Finally, I will fight to protect Iowa's public pension system, IPERS. I will never put IPERS' fiscal security at risk, and I will always protect the pensions of Iowa employees. My top priority is to ensure that the IPERS fund is safe and sound for the more than 250,000 members and beneficiaries, including teachers, law enforcement officers and public employees who work hard every day all across this state.

I believe that IPERS is a solemn promise to the employees, retirees and families who are counting on it; and as Governor, I will always protect that commitment by ensuring that IPERS is responsibly funded and managed. The fund's goal is to produce the best return on investments possible in order to strengthen Iowans' retirement, and I believe it should stay that way, period. As Governor I will continue to fight for Iowans and our Iowa values.

NACo's Annual Conference

The benefits of membership in the National Association of Counties (NACo) are tremendous. In August, NACo held its annual conference in Cook County, Illinois. The annual NACo gathering provided an excellent opportunity for county officials from across the country to meet with their colleagues and learn new ways to provide better services to their citizens. What happened at NACo this year?

Leadership: Through spirited campaigns, four candidates sought the office of second vice president for NACo. Each candidate was well-qualified and the race brought an element of suspense to the conference. The candidates were Supervisor Teresa Altemus (Gloucester County, Virginia); Supervisor Valerie Brown (Sonoma County, California); Police Juror Joe Fuller (Rapides Parish, Louisiana) and Commissioner Harry B. Montoya (Santa Fe County, New Mexico). These people spent the entire conference running to affiliate meetings, caucus gatherings and state receptions to promote their messages. All four candidates spoke to the attendees at the Iowa reception.

At the NACo business meeting, Supervisor Valerie Brown finally prevailed as vote tallies were announced state by state. During the campaign she emphasized her platform of listening to members, building on teamwork, and strengthening partnerships with such groups as state associations and the National Conference of State Legislatures.

Meanwhile, Commissioner Colleen Landkamer (Blue Earth County, Minnesota) took the reins as the new NACo President, while the other executive officers moved up to the next office. Two Iowans were reinstated on the NACo Board. Story County Supervisor Jane Halliburton was appointed by President Landkamer as one of her "board members-at-large" and Black Hawk County Auditor Grant Veeder will continue to serve as the designated Iowa representative.

Workshops and Seminars: County officials were treated to numerous choices of workshops and seminars to satisfy a wide range of educational interests. Some timely topics included regional interoperability, juvenile detention reform, implementation of the Help America Vote Act, and diversified power sources and alternative energy strategies for counties. Other topics covered basic governing matters such as balancing budgets and how to run a meeting.

Policy-Setting Committees: The first two days of the conference were devoted to subcommittee and full steering committee meetings. NACo steering committees function very much like ISAC steering committees. These 13 committees adopt public policy positions and recommendations for NACo legislative direction. The final steering committee reports were approved by the full membership at the business meeting. This fall, the NACo Board of Directors will determine top policy

By: John Easter

ISAC Director of
Intergovernmental Affairs



priorities for NACo from these steering committee reports. Members of the steering committees are named by the state associations on an annual basis.

Affiliate Meetings and Caucuses: Like ISAC, NACo has many affiliate groups representing various elected and appointed county officials. Among the affiliates are the county treasurers and finance officers, clerks and recorders, information officers and administrators. I always attend affiliate meetings for county intergovernmental relations officials. The various affiliates hold their own business meetings throughout the conference. In addition, there are a number of caucus groups organized within NACo. Of particular interest to Iowa delegates is the Rural Action Caucus. This Caucus is a bipartisan coalition of 800 rural elected officials that strives to improve conditions in rural counties through effective federal legislation. By national standards, our entire state is rural so even Iowa's largest counties qualify for membership in the Rural Action Caucus.

Presidential Politics: In the week prior to the conference, NACo publicly announced its "Presidential Election Project." This program is designed to promote the county message with presidential candidates through local officials in Iowa and New Hampshire. For almost a year, NACo officers and staff have worked with ISAC and the New Hampshire Association to define the county message on carefully selected issues. County officials from these two states who are equipped with a consistent and ongoing message will have a strong influence in helping candidates develop their platforms. As local officials build credibility on the selected issues, NACo and ISAC become good resources for the candidates. A meeting with NACo executives and staff from the two associations was held during the conference to continue building strategy on this important initiative.

Membership Growth: This was obviously an active conference for many Iowa county officials. In addition to conference meetings, NACo provides members with numerous other benefits. For example, NACo is the advocate for county government with Congress and the Executive branch in Washington, D.C. The bi-weekly *NACo News* provides valuable information about the latest happenings in county government. One benefit that has attracted recent membership growth is a new program called the "Prescription Drug Discount Card Program." This is a unique program that can provide prescription drug discounts to county residents, including the uninsured and seniors. Seventy Iowa counties are now members of NACo. The growing membership reflects the tremendous benefits of NACo.

Sex Offender Residency Law Should be Repealed in 2007

By: David Vestal

ISAC General Counsel



Current Law Flawed: As we approach the 2007 legislative session, it is time to take an honest look at Iowa's sex offender residency law. The law, Iowa Code §692A.2A, was adopted in 2002. It generally says that a person who has committed a sex offense against a minor "shall not reside within 2,000 feet of an elementary or secondary school or a child care facility." Iowa is one of 14 states that have enacted residency restrictions for sex offenders. There are a number of reasons why the 2,000 foot law needs to be repealed:

Residency Not the Issue: At the core, this law makes no sense. There is no relationship between where sex offenders live and where they offend. This is why there is no evidence that residency restrictions reduce sex offense recidivism, protect children or enhance public safety.

Family Members: The biggest flaw in the residency law is that it assumes that sex offenses are committed by "the stranger down the street." The sad reality is that the vast majority of these crimes are committed by trusted adults - family members, friends, clergy members - people the children already know. This is not about "stranger danger." Parents have to do a better job of keeping their children out of harm's way.

No Place to Live: The 2,000 foot law has been compounded by cities that have gone even further, banning offenders from living within 2,000 feet of swimming pools, libraries, parks or trails. Some cities have banned sex offenders from living anywhere in the city. This forces them to live in places like cemeteries, county parks and interstate rest stops. But this approach doesn't solve the problem. All this does is move the problem around and give local residents a false sense of security.

Cuts Ties to Community: The residency restriction is destabilizing. It disrupts the lives of sex offenders, forcing them to move out of their homes, find new jobs, and cut what contacts they had established with the community. But research has shown that criminal offenders with stable housing, employment and social support are much less likely to reoffend compared to those who lack stability.

Better Classification: One problem is that we need a more specific sex offender classification system. The current system does not distinguish between true pedophiles, who are a risk to the community, and other offenders who are not.

Unintended Consequences: The 2,000 foot law is driving some sex offenders underground, making it harder to track their movements. Especially if sex offenders cannot find any place in a community to live legally, they sometimes decide it is easier not to register as a sex offender in the first place.

Limited Resources: We live in a mobile society. People move constantly, including sex offenders. The current law forces local law enforcement agencies to spend enormous time and en-

ergy enforcing the residency restriction.

At NACo, we heard from a police officer who is in charge of enforcing Illinois' residency law within the city of Chicago. She talked for 25 minutes about the problems she faces on a daily basis in trying to keep track of thousands of sex offenders. When she was done, she asked for questions. The first questioner raised his hand and asked, "Does all of this make Chicago's children any safer?" She thought about it for a second and then shrugged and said "No." What a waste of resources.

Legislative Fix: This law was passed because legislators felt immense pressure to "do something." Even today, those who suggest that the 2,000 foot law is not working are accused of being soft on sex offenders. It is easy to demagogue this issue, but everyone agrees that children need to be protected from sex offenders. The issue is how to accomplish that goal in an effective and meaningful way.

The 2,000 foot law should be scrapped. If we are going to try something different, the 2007 legislative session is the right time to do it, since it is not an election year. So if what we are doing is not working, what should we do instead? We need:

- better capabilities when it comes to tracking sex offenders;
- better risk assessment tools; and
- better public education programs that teach parents and children about preventing sex abuse and the importance of reporting sex abuse. This world is full of a lot of dangerous people, and parents have to be taught to do a better job of protecting their own children.

There is no simple fix. But whatever solution the Legislature comes up with has to recognize that residency restrictions cannot solve this problem.

Clarification: In my August column I wrote about arrest powers of deputy sheriffs. In response to the column, Carroll County Attorney John Werden pointed out that under *State v. Snider*, a 1994 Iowa Supreme Court case, any peace officer has authority to arrest for state traffic violations anywhere in the state. But the holding is limited to traffic violations. He also pointed out that for offenses committed in their presence, peace officers have "citizen arrest" powers like everyone else under Iowa Code §804.9.

Parting Ponderable: The winner of the famous Iowans trivia contest was Janette Blackburn, Mills County Treasurer. She was the first one to correctly identify the three Iowa celebrities mentioned in last month's column. Good job, Janette.

case management

In A Perfect World

These are busy times that we live in. It seems like the only constant is change, and that the rate of change seems to accelerate exponentially with the passage of time. Sometimes it feels like we're in a canoe trying to keep from going over the edge of Niagara Falls and just when it seems like we're holding steady, we're given a plastic spoon in place of our wooden paddle. Given these circumstances, it's sometimes easy to fall into the fantasy of "In a Perfect World."

You know how this game works - as a coping strategy, you speculate how good life would be if we lived in a perfect world. For example, in a Perfect World, I would perpetually be 27 years old and would have thick, dark hair; an adoring wife (e.g. a Jennifer Aniston/June Cleaver hybrid); and an obedient, cuddly dog who is a cross between Lassie, Benji, and Old Yeller (before the foaming-at-the-mouth corncrib scene). Every year the Cubs would win the World Series, the Iowa Hawkeyes would win the NCAA football and basketball championships, the UNI Panthers would win the NCAA Division I-AA football championship and the Iowa State Cyclones would ... well, maybe have a baseball team.

Guess what? My reality is somewhat different. I am rapidly approaching 50 and I recently listed my hair color as two types - "grey" and "gone." My wife is an intelligent, funny, organized person who should probably be canonized after 24 years of putting up with my antics (16 years of marriage and 8 years of patiently waiting for me to get smart enough to ask). However, "adoring" is not the first adjective that leaps to mind when I think of her. She's not afraid to point out errors in my logic when the situation warrants (which is much more frequent than I'd like to admit) and has even been known to refer to me (affectionately, I'm sure) as an "idiot." My dog is a 70 pound odorous Airedale/Retriever/Brillo Pad mix who ping-pong's off of walls, doors, and the cat since going blind over a year ago (a conclusion that only took the vets six months and an ungodly amount of money to come to). The Hawkeyes could someday actually win a BCS title, but the likelihood of this occurring is slim at best. As for the Cubs... "Wait 'til next year" seems to ring a bit hollower with each passing year. Now that you know the ground rules - let's play a little bit of "In a Perfect Targeted Case Management World."

In a Perfect Targeted Case Management World... There Wouldn't Be All This Paperwork

In reality TCM is a Medicaid-funded service that is subject to both state and federal scrutiny. As such, a high level of documentation is required. Recent audits have been conducted by Iowa Medicaid Enterprise (state) and the Office of the Inspector General (federal), along with the regular state DHS/DBDPS accreditation process. Although this has been a hectic and somewhat confusing time period (some agencies will

By: Dan Vonnahme
ISAC Case Management
Specialist



have had all three different "surveys" occur in less than six months), this could actually be an opportunity for these oversight entities to communicate in order to consolidate and sharpen definitions of documentation requirements. Also, although much of the documentation that we currently do is time-consuming, it does force us to look at questions/issues that we might otherwise not remember to address. These insights can certainly lead to improvements in the client's quality of life.

In a Perfect Targeted Case Management World... Money Would Not Be An Issue

In reality money is ALWAYS an issue and everyone would always like a bit more than what they've got. However, funds are tight and we are being asked to become more accountable for the services that we provide, as well as those that we help coordinate to support the clients we serve. I think the real frustration with funding recently has been the fragmentation of the funding streams from the actual services/supports that clients want and need. If we truly believe in "consumer-directed services and supports" we must come up with a better way to link available monies to them. Currently "funds available" don't always seem to equate to "funds usable" in a meaningful way to consumers. Stating that funds exist without specific operational definitions, procedures and oversight in place is somewhat akin to giving a toothless man a sirloin steak to eat.

In a Perfect Targeted Case Management World... Everyone Would Understand What We're Doing

In reality most people and agencies don't know what Targeted Case Managers do - and some even prefer not to know. Therefore, we are charged with the responsibility to clearly illustrate the good work that we do perform - through both our words (including written documentation) and our deeds. It is no longer enough to simply "Go forth and do good." We must now also prove HOW we "do good" and how these good actions lead to good outcomes for all involved - consumers, funding entities, taxpayers and the community in general.

"A Perfect World" (TCM or otherwise) would be a wonderful place to exist, but reality won't let us get there. However, we can and should strive to move closer toward this place, because while a "Perfect World" is a fantasy, a "Better World" is a distinct possibility.

Wireless Technology

By: Tammy Norman

ISAC Technology
Services Coordinator



Q: Can you explain the difference between Bluetooth and Wi-Fi?

A: Both terms refer to wireless technology. Bluetooth enables electronic devices to talk to each other and Wi-Fi refers to a wireless Internet environment.

Bluetooth was created initially by the Bluetooth Special Interest Group (SIG) in 1998. SIG consisted of Ericsson, IBM, Intel, Nokia and Toshiba corporations. Bluetooth technology was named after a 10th century Viking king that helped to unite Denmark and part of Norway. In the same way, Bluetooth technology unites different technologies and enables them to “talk” with one another. Your PDA can communicate with your cell phone, enabling you to synchronize your address books stored in each. It allows your laptop to connect to your printer without any cables. In the beginning the most widely used aspect of the Bluetooth technologies was the ability to allow an end-user to use a head set with their cell phone. Utilizing Bluetooth, you are able to connect to the Internet via your cell phone. If you are traveling and need access to the Internet, you can use your cell phone as a modem for your laptop computer. The key factor is that both the laptop and the cell phone must be Bluetooth enabled. If your laptop is not already Bluetooth enabled, you can make it so by purchasing a USB Bluetooth adapter. To enable your cell phone, you will need to check with your service provider.

While Bluetooth enables your devices to talk with one another without cabling, a Wi-Fi environment allows computers to be connected to a network or the Internet without an Ethernet cable. Wi-Fi stands for wireless fidelity. You can easily create a Wi-Fi environment in your home or office. To do so you will need to make sure your laptop or desktop computer has a wireless transmitter. If it currently does not, you can purchase a wireless adapter to plug into your USB port of either computer. Older computers may require a software program to enable them to detect and connect to a wireless network. A router will need to be purchased to enable your current Internet service to become wireless within your local environment. You may want to check with your Internet provider to help with the purchase of a router. Wi-Fi “hotspots” are rapidly spreading to hotels, Internet cafes, campgrounds and even cities are offering wireless Internet environments at little or no cost.

Website Note: Please forward any items that you would like addressed in this column to my attention at 515-244-7181 or via e-mail at tnorman@iowacounties.org. Until next month, keep clicking!

Grillin' CTC on the Barbie

By: Robin Harlow

ISAC Technology Project Manager



In August 2006, ISAC invited all the presidents from our affiliates to participate in a roundtable discussion on the County Technology Clearinghouse (CTC) and the associated Advisory Board. Bill Peterson and I presented ideas and answered questions about the CTC. Below are some of the questions and answers from the meeting.

Q: What would be the steps involved in making the Clearinghouse operational?

A: There will be five steps:

- 1) Activate an Advisory Board.
- 2) Advisory Board performs an assessment of information technology and processes.
- 3) Advisory Board develops a strategic plan.
- 4) Advisory Board implements an action plan.
- 5) Advisory Board performs a post-project assessment and determines future life.

Q: What is the purpose of the Advisory Board?

A: The initial purpose would be to perform assessments and develop strategic and operational plans for the Clearinghouse. In the long term, the purpose would be to oversee the strategic plan and monitor operational activities so that the Clearinghouse would fulfill the mission as defined by the Advisory Board.

Q: What will be the main benefits of a Technology Clearinghouse?

A: The County Technology Clearinghouse could provide coordination that should result in three major benefits:

- Savings by counties and county offices working collaboratively;
- Savings by leveraging the resources of one project for use by other projects; and
- Increased and improved services to Iowa residents, particularly in smaller counties, through the development of electronic county services, and by preventing the development of technology silos between various county projects.

Q: What is the timeframe?

A: Ideally ISAC would like to have the first facilitated Advisory Board meeting before the end of the year.

Need more information? The minutes and PowerPoint presentation from the “President’s Roundtable” discussion are available at www.iowacounties.org/Technology.htm. Additional questions may be directed to me at rharlow@iowacounties.org or 515-244-7181.

by the numbers

Universal Health Care

By: Jay Syverson

ISAC Fiscal Analyst



A seminar during NACo's annual conference in Chicago made the case for implementing a single-payer national health insurance plan in America. This month's *By the Numbers* looks at the data behind this push to implement Universal Health Care (UHC), as proffered by the presenters: Dr. Claudia Fegan, a physician at Cook County Hospital and a member of Physicians for a National Health Program; Margaret Laws of the California HealthCare Foundation; and Susan L. Adams, Ph.D., RN and president of the Marin County (California) Board of Supervisors.

Total U.S. health care spending per capita is \$5,290. About \$3,200 of that is public spending. The U.K., Sweden, France, Germany and Canada all have total health spending of \$3,000 or less per capita. That means that *public* health care spending in the U.S. is greater than *total* health care spending in all those other countries. On an individual level, the average family health insurance premium in 2005 cost over \$10,000, with the average worker paying over \$2,700 of that.

And what do we get for our money? Well, 46 million people – about 15% of the U.S. population – are uninsured, and another 15% are under-insured. U.S. life expectancy, at 77.2 years in 2002, is lower than in all the other countries mentioned above (Sweden tops the list at 80.2). Conversely, our infant mortality rate (7.0 per 1,000 live births) is higher than other countries (again, Sweden's 3.1 rate is best). We even have fewer nurses per capita (7.9 per 10,000 population) than many other developed nations (Ireland tops the list at 14.8). So where is our money going?

A staggering proportion of U.S. health care spending (31%) is consumed by administration, and that is what UHC intends to fix. According to its proponents, the U.S. can provide UHC for the same amount of money that is being spent on the system now. They claim that \$350 billion in potential savings exists in administrative waste, and that a single-payer system can harness those savings to provide coverage to everyone. UHC proponents point to Canada as the example. When Canada adopted its UHC plan in the early 1970s, health costs in both Canada and the U.S. were about 7% of GDP. Since then, in Canada that number has risen to 10%; in the U.S. it's grown to over 15%.

UHC is certainly not the only plan to expand health coverage in America. Other options include tax incentives, purchasing alliances, limited-benefit policies and consumer-directed health plans (e.g. HSAs). Future columns may dig into the numbers behind those proposals. For more information on UHC, visit www.pnhp.org (Physicians for a National Health Program).

health check

A Dollar Here - A Dollar There

By: Sandy Longfellow

ISAC Administrative Assistant



Fall is here and it is beautiful! Children are in school and activities begin. When my children were in school, I was amazed at how much it cost to be in marching band. There were music lessons, uniform fees, travel costs and I'm not even going to mention fundraisers!

If we are not in a good financial position, the temptation is to charge all these things and we end up in an even worse financial position. To change your situation, a commitment is needed. So, where do you start? Here are a few ideas.

Housing and Utilities

- If you are struggling with a mortgage that is too much for you, seriously consider moving to a less expensive home.
- Raise the deductibles on your homeowner's or renter's insurance.
- Eliminate premium channels on your cable.
- Use shades and drapes to regulate home temperature.
- Install a programmable thermostat.
- Turn off electronics that are not in use.

Transportation

- Get all the discounts you are entitled to on your car insurance.
- Avoid repair bills by maintaining your car.
- Keep your car for years and avoid a car payment.

Food

- Eat at home when you can - eating out adds up.
- Double your recipe and freeze half for a later meal.
- Avoid recipes that require exotic ingredients that you might not use again.
- Check your fridge often and eat up things before they go bad.

Health Care

- Buy generic drugs.
- Use walk-in clinics instead of emergency rooms.
- Review hospital bills for errors.
- Monitor insurance claims to make sure they are paid.

Clothing and Services

- Avoid dry clean only clothes.
- Sell things you aren't wearing.
- Check out consignment stores and garage sales.
- Buy coordinating items with clothes you have.

ISAC meetings

ISAC Fall School 2006

By: Jerri Noboa

ISAC Meetings Administrator



ISAC's Fall School is coming up soon: November 29-December 1 at the Marriott and Renaissance Savery in downtown Des Moines. I informed you last month that that Marriott will become a smoke free hotel starting around September 1st and I have now been informed that the Renaissance Savery will also enforce a smoke-free policy. The letter I received stated they are doing this because of new information from the Surgeon General on hazards of secondary smoke. Both hotels will have smoking areas outside of the hotel. Smoking will not be allowed in the downtown skywalks.

When you arrive at the Marriott this fall there will be some noticeable changes. The facility is under renovation and will be for the next three years. The most noticeable change is the main ballroom which will have new wood paneling, chandeliers, carpeting and new "airwalls" between spaces. Other things to be updated are a new restaurant and bar called Rock River Grill and Tavern. The Skywalk lounge is to be converted into a private dining room. Guest rooms will receive new bathrooms and bedding. During the construction a satellite front desk will be located in the lobby and a restaurant will open in the former Pitchers location. I know that the ballrooms will be finished when you arrive, but as to the others, we will just have to wait and see. I will update you next month.

One major I-235 construction update. If you are coming in from the west on I-80 and expecting to exit onto the I-235 interchange, it is closed due to construction. They have you detouring at exit 136 and traveling south two miles and then east two miles to get onto I-235, which is okay if you are going on further west. Living in Des Moines, I try to avoid I-235 whenever possible. Personally, I would exit I-80 (avoiding I-235), use exit 135 (2nd Ave.) and just keep going south on 2nd Ave. (approximately 5 miles) until you reach downtown Des Moines. At Grand Avenue, turn right (west) to proceed to the Renaissance Savery (4th Street), Marriott (7th Street), or Fort Des Moines (10th Street). This is one exit and a straight shot to Grand Avenue. Remember you can always go to <http://www.i235.com/> to get the latest construction news.

If you haven't registered yet for ISAC's Fall School, visit our website (www.iowacounties.org). Lodging information, seminar descriptions and affiliate agendas are also available.

ISAC brief

New ISAC Staff Member

By: Brad Holtan

ISAC Accounting Manager



My name is Brad Holtan and I am the new Accounting Manager for the Iowa State Association of Counties, effective August 22, 2006. My responsibilities will be to ensure efficient and effective management of the association's fiscal activities. This means that I will be developing accounting policies, strengthening internal controls and managing the day to day financial activities. I am very excited to be a part of ISAC, and I look forward to meeting each of you.

I grew up on a farm just outside of Forest City, Iowa. I attended the University of Northern Iowa (however, that didn't distract me from cheering for the Hawkeyes). I graduated in 2001 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in accounting, with a minor in finance. Upon graduation, I accepted an assistant auditor position with the State Auditor's Office, located in Des Moines. For the past five years, I have assisted and supervised many government agency audits including the Judicial Branch, the Iowa State Fair Authority, and both large and small counties throughout Iowa. I learned a lot about county operations throughout my last five years, and I look forward to using that knowledge at ISAC. I have met many county leaders and I look forward to meeting many more.

My wife, Kristen, and I were married in August 2005. Even though she is a UNI graduate as well, our paths didn't cross until we started working for the State Auditor's Office. She accepted a position with Principal Global Investors about a year ago as an investment accountant. We currently reside in Pleasant Hill, just east of the Highway 65 bypass.

I look forward to working with the affiliates, members, and ISAC staff. If you ever have questions or concerns, feel free to contact me by phone at (515) 244-7181 or by email at bholtan@iowacounties.org.



Scholarship Application

ISAC is now accepting applications for our scholarship program. Eligibility is limited to children of county officials or county employees. This does not include city employees, employees of county extension offices, or candidates who are themselves county employees. Children of county assessors are eligible to apply for this scholarship. At least one \$1,000 scholarship shall be awarded annually. The candidates must be seniors in high school. The scholarship can be awarded to anyone who will be a full-time student of any college requiring at least a minimum of two years for a degree. **For the complete list of requirements please visit ISAC's website (www.iowacounties.org).**

Name of Applicant _____

Address _____

City _____ Zip _____

County _____

Home Phone _____ E-mail Address _____

Date of Graduation _____ Name of High School _____

Proposed college _____

Have you taken the SAT/ACT _____ If so, your score _____

Total Class Size _____ Rank in Class _____ Grade Point _____ on a 4.0 scale

Which parent of yours is a county official or employee?

Parent's Name _____

County Department _____ County Position _____

County Phone # _____

Financial Need: In the space provided, explain your financial need for this scholarship:

ISAC brief

Essay: On another sheet of paper type an essay of no more than 250 words explaining your career plans and future goals. MAKE US SEE THE REAL YOU.

Extra Curricular Activities: In the space provided, please identify your most significant extra curricular activities, school activities, work experience, etc. that might be helpful to the committee in judging your application.

References: We need personal reference letters from three (3) individuals other than family members. (Such as teachers, employers, advisors)

Music Award: We are also offering the BureauCats Music Award, which is a \$1,500 scholarship. This scholarship is available to an applicant who intends to participate in music on some level while in college, for instance, concert band, symphony orchestra, instrumental ensembles, choir, swing choir, or chorus. If this applies to you, on another sheet of paper labeled "music essay", tell us about any plans you may have in this area.

Technology Award: We are also offering the Iowa Counties Information Technology (ICIT) Award, which is a \$2,000 scholarship. This scholarship is available to an applicant who intends to pursue a two (2) or four (4) year degree in a technology related major and/or a degree that leverages/incorporates technology. If this applies to you, on another sheet of paper labeled "Technology Essay", tell us about any plans you have in this area.

For you to be considered for a scholarship you must:

- 1. Return application filled out completely**
- 2. Enclose your typed essay**
- 3. Include three letters of personal reference**

Return to: Iowa State Association of Counties, 501 SW 7th St., Suite Q, Des Moines, IA 50309-4540. **Applications must be received by 4:30 p.m. on December 15, 2006.**

I hereby certify that this application contains no misrepresentation or falsifications and that the information given by me is true and complete to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signature of Applicant: _____

counties in the spotlight

New Law Enforcement Center

On August 5 the public was invited to tour the new \$5.2 million Bremer County Law Enforcement Center. Construction began in October 2003, about 10 months after voters approved a 1% local option sales tax to support the project. The law center is shared by Bremer County and the city of Waverly. The new facility boasts better technology, improved security and more space. The jail space has increased to a capacity of 79. (Taken from the *Globe-Gazette*, August 3)

Partner in Economic Development

The Allamakee County Board of Supervisors was recognized by the Northeast Iowa Business Network as a Partner in Economic Development. The Northeast Iowa Business Network is an association of six counties working together for economic development in northeast Iowa. The organization works collaboratively to support existing businesses, provides education and training to new businesses and jointly markets northeast Iowa to prospective businesses and those interested in returning to the area. (Taken from the *Standard*, August 18)



Plymouth County Courthouse Gets Fried

The Plymouth County Courthouse literally received a shock when a lightning bolt struck nearby the courthouse. The lightning bolt is presumed to have hit a tree on the west side of the courthouse that radiated into the building's wiring. The strike fried \$56,551 worth of computers, communication systems and fire alarms. The phone system was completely replaced for \$41,550. (Taken from the *Daily Sentinel*, August 9)

Flag Raising Ceremony

Linn County Board of Supervisors Lu Barron, James Houser and Linda Langston helped raise the new Linn County flag during a flag raising ceremony on July 12 at the county's Administrative Office Building. This past spring, the Board of Supervisors invited the public to vote for a new Linn County flag design. The flag design that received the most votes was moved into production and is now complete and ready for display. The flag will be displayed at all county buildings as permitted as modifications to the flag pole halyards at each location are completed. The new flag replaces the old Linn County flag that was stolen from the State Fairgrounds in Des Moines. It was the only copy known to exist.



Financial Award

Linn County has received an Award for Outstanding Achievement in Popular Annual Financial Reporting from the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) for the eighth consecutive year. This is a prestigious national award recognizing conformance with the highest standards for preparation of state and local government popular reports. The report was prepared by Steve Tucker, Finance Director; Dawn Jindrich, Budget Director; and Joi Bergman, Grants and Communications Manager. GFOA is a non-profit professional association serving 16,000 government finance professionals throughout North America.

Need Information About
ISAC's Fall School?

Visit ISAC's website!
www.iowacounties.org

License Restrictions Curb Teen Accidents

By: *Jacqueline Byers,*
NACo Director of Research

A recent article in *USA Today* reported that deaths due to automobile accidents that involve teens ages 15-17 have declined dramatically in states that have implemented teen-driving restrictions. Nearly every state has implemented some type of restriction.

The article cites a study recently released by Johns Hopkins University's Bloomberg School of Health. This study, National Evaluation of Graduated Driver Licensing Programs, financed through grants from the U.S. Highway Traffic Safety Administration and the Centers for Disease Control, was prompted by the fact that nearly two-thirds of victims in fatal crashes involving teen drivers were passengers, pedestrians or victims in other cars. The collection of data for this study provides evidence that teenage accidents are a major problem, not just for the drivers, but for others who may be involved in these accidents.

The study looked at the laws that have been adopted recently that put restrictions on teen drivers. Imposing these restrictions can reduce fatal crashes involving teens by up to 21%, according to the report. Among the laws put in place by various states that can help reduce accidents are establishing:

- a minimum age for a learner's permit;
- a mandatory waiting period before applying for a driver's license;
- a minimum number of hours of supervised driving;
- a minimum age for having an intermediate license (where unsupervised driving is limited to less hazardous situations);
- restrictions on nighttime driving;
- restrictions on carrying passengers; and
- a minimum age for having a full, unrestricted driver's license.

In the period between 1994 and 2004, nearly 9,000 16-year-olds were involved in motor vehicle accidents. States that had a graduated licensing program saw an 11% reduction in crashes by 16-year-olds during this same period.

States that instituted a three-month or longer waiting period to get a license, restricted nighttime driving hours and required 30 hours of supervised driving at a minimum or restricted the number of passengers, experienced between a 16% and 21% drop in fatal accidents in this age group. In the 19 states that have implemented at least five of the restrictions cited above in a comprehensive program fatalities decreased by up to 21%.

Federal statistics show that 16 year olds were involved in 957 crashes that killed 1,111 people in 2004. Federal and state highway officials hope the results of the study may encourage states to raise the minimum age for full driving privileges to 17 years of age, up from the more common 16 years.

The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety believes that delaying licensing until 17 years and then implementing a graduated licensing program is the best method of reducing crashes. Highway officials believe the study provides the ammunition that many state legislatures need to convince those who are opposed to raising the age for licensing.

Many legislators in rural areas report strong opposition to raising the age because it will be an undue hardship on those who own family farms and rely on teens to help drive vehicles. Others who oppose raising the age say the U.S. is a society dependent on cars. Primary among this group are representatives of the National Youth Rights Association who believe that raising the age is discriminating against young people.

State highway and law enforcement officials feel exactly the opposite. They believe nothing is too strong or too discriminating if it saves the lives of young people.

First County Change a Light Campaign

At the recent NACo Annual Conference, NACo and Office Depot announced a new partnership to bring counties the first County Change a Light Campaign. This Campaign is part of a national initiative with the Environmental Protection Agency's ENERGY STAR Change a Light Campaign.

The ENERGY STAR Change a Light Campaign encourages individuals to change the most frequently used light in their home to an energy efficient (ENERGY STAR qualified) light bulb – saving them money on energy bills and reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the process.

Simply encourage all members of your county staff to pledge to change the most frequently used light in their home to an energy efficient one.

The NACo/Office Depot Change a Light Campaign is in conjunction with the US Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) ENERGY STAR Change a Light Campaign. Governments, corporations, utilities, manufacturers and others take part in this national effort.

Key Facilitation Skills

Meetings are essential in your professional life. This article is about “hands-on, how-to” strategies for effectively facilitating a meeting. It has been said that people support what they help create. If you agree with the previous sentence (and most people do), it is only fitting that tips for being the guide on the side (and not the sage on the stage) will enable you to superbly execute the function of the facilitator.

Be clear on your intent for holding a meeting - know what impact, result or outcome you are trying to create. Start with the finished product or mind. Focus on what you want people to “feel, be or do” when you are finished with the meeting. Indeed, it is hard to be a productive facilitator when you are confused.

Write a value proposition. This short sentence clarifies the purpose of the gathering. Create an effective value proposition by completing this sentence: “The purpose of this meeting is to _____.” Share this proposition with the attendees very early during your opening remarks. Recently, an effective facilitator opened the meeting (his first words) with this value proposition: “The purpose of this meeting is to provide you with some tools in relation to core selling skills. If we can provide you with some tools that you can immediately use, would that be worth your time?” Everyone nodded in agreement. He used the value proposition to give his meeting a clear focus and an exciting beginning. Using your unique style, you can do the same by sharing the value proposition during the first few minutes of the meeting.

Honor the time investment of the meeting participants. Outline your meeting by using the PAL acronym—Purpose, Agenda and Limit. Start the meeting on time, strive to stay on schedule and end the meeting on time. This sounds so very simple, but we have all been to meetings that start late, get untracked and go on too long.

If appropriate, appoint a “traffic cop” to help you do some of the “heavy lifting” during the gathering. Instruct this person to interrupt you and attendees if you sway from the purpose. This helper can also perform other logistical duties as needed.

Note good (but not pertinent to the stated purpose) ideas to be discussed at a later time on a flip chart labeled “The Parking Lot.” This allows you to validate people’s input and build an effective agenda for the next gathering.

If the meeting appears destined to go past the scheduled break time or the limit, stop several minutes beforehand and say something like this, “It appears that we may be surpassing our time allotment. Let’s get a consensus. Should we stay and finish this work or what other suggestions do you have?”

Communicate effectively. Being the guide on the side means involving others. Use this prioritized communication format to become a magnificent facilitator:

- Listen intently. Model excellent listening skills for all of the attendees. Validate everyone’s input by taking notes or having a helper write key ideas on a flip chart.
- Ask questions to stimulate discussion. Get excited about people’s comments and support what they are helping to create.
- Self disclose; cogently convey your thoughts. Franklin Roosevelt said, “Be brief, be sincere and be seated.” When it is your turn to speak, seek to tell a story that is short, positive and has a relevant moral. People “hook to” stories because they Amplify, Clarify and Engage (ACE) the listener.

Get visual, but don’t overdo it. Recently folks have been suggesting that there are simply too many Power Point presentations. One facilitator calls it “Death by Power Point.” Another invites presenters to “Ditch the Deck” and go back to the basics of a sound meeting. The message here is simple - innovate by using props, flip charts, etc., and create the proper balance between visuals and human interaction.

Be aware of both the social and task needs of the group. The task needs include accomplishing the purpose of the gathering, stopping to summarize periodically, getting through the agenda and perhaps creating an action plan (who will do what by when). Social needs are important, too. They serve as “social glues” and they “bond” the attendees together. They include food, fun and ritual.

A fine facilitator said, “We have a ritual of passing around a stuffed penguin at our monthly staff meeting. While each person is holding this bird, they have to share their worst mistake of the month. More importantly, they have to share what they are doing now to correct the situation. We then vote who gets to keep ‘The Bird’ in his/her cubicle for that month. I believe in rituals because they give people something to look forward to. I have found that when rituals die, the energy in the meeting dies, too.”

Mary Kay Ash, the founder and CEO of Mary Kay Cosmetics, once said, “People want two things more than sex and money. That’s praise and recognition.” Thank everyone for making the time to contribute to the success of the meeting and you will create a wonderful opportunity for having a successful meeting next time.

There will always be a time and a place for ‘The Sage on the Stage,’ but memorable leaders (facilitators) enable others to be a part of something larger than themselves. In essence, this is the calling of ‘The Guide on the Side.’ Now go have a terrific meeting!

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Bidding and Management Recommendations for Public Building Projects

By: Harold Pike, President of the Iowa Competitive Bidding Alliance, Inc.

This is a guest editorial. The opinions expressed are solely that of the author.

This article is for public officials considering the construction of a new building or the remodeling of an existing building. There are many reasons to discuss the type of project delivery system to be used before proceeding with a project. Robert W. Dorsey, Distinguished Teaching Professor of Construction Science Emeritus at the OMI College of Applied Science in Cincinnati, Ohio, defines a project delivery system as the comprehensive process by which a building is designed and constructed. Public board members should have a thorough understanding of what the board's obligations are and what the potential liabilities are that can result from each delivery system. After this takes place, the board members can then vote intelligently upon which delivery system is the best and most economical for the taxpayers that they represent.

In today's environment, with the pressures and demands put upon our public officials for expediency, there are a couple of items that are sometimes overlooked when it comes to considering how to approach a new or remodeling project. That is, what is best for the taxpayer and still maintains the best quality in a public building program.

The state of Iowa has for the past 150 years used a bidding and management delivery system which has proven to be very functional and prudent for the taxpayers. In the building industry it is referred to as the traditional system or the Triad. Think of a triangle having three equal but separate legs. Each leg of the triangle has a responsibility for the whole triangle. If each leg were to be named, one would represent the owner and the other two legs would represent the architect and the general contractor, respectively. These parties represent equal responsibility and a desire to work together and complete a building project they can be proud of. The owner has control of what they need in the building and the architect, with owner's approval, controls the design and administration of the project. This would entail plans, specifications, testing, building codes, and a host of other legal items that go into getting ready for public bidding. A qualified general contractor would then have the responsibility to deliver the project to the owner per plans and specifications, including an agreed upon time when the project will be ready for the owner's use. The architect and the general contractor bring value to a project. They are obligated to retain insurance that holds the owner harmless for design errors and omissions or the building quality of the structure. The owner has only two people to turn to for any questions or problems, that being the architect and the general contractor.

In recent years, public officials have been exposed to another delivery system (sometimes referred to as construction management) that does not offer the protection of the traditional system. This delivery system allows for separate contracts to be issued to each company performing different portions of the construction work (ex: masonry, painting, flooring, electrical, etc) and each contract is to be administered by the owner. This may expose the taxpayer to additional risks and responsibilities, and may have legal consequences. In other words, the owner assumes some of the duties which would normally be handled by the architect and general contractor in the traditional delivery system. Another risk may be in the interpretation of the plans and specifications between multiple contracts and a construction item that may not be covered by any contractor's contract. This item then falls through the cracks with the taxpayer covering the additional cost to do the work. This delivery system quite often has an open-ended contract with the owner for such things as supervision, cost to review change orders, meeting time above and beyond what they expected. This delivery system can be very expensive over the traditional system.

In order to understand the different building delivery systems, public boards need to fully examine the pros and cons of each system, and weigh out what is the best for their constituents (the taxpayers). One format for doing this is to invite both systems to give a presentation to the board during an open meeting and include a question and answer session for both parties. The process was used by a school board in central Iowa and it helped board members that were unfamiliar with construction sort out the positives and negatives for each system and helped them determine the best approach for their upcoming middle school building program. After hearing the in-depth presentations, each board member had a better understanding as to the best system for the community and the taxpayers.

In closing, there is no perfect building delivery system, but a public official needs to be educated about the different options so they can decide for themselves the best system for the taxpayers, the least risk exposure to the public and the highest product quality.

The Iowa Competitive Bidding Alliance was formed in 2001 to uphold, promote and protect the laws of the state of Iowa in the planning, bidding and construction of public works projects throughout the state of Iowa. If you have need for more information about this subject, please contact Jim Carney or George Appleby at the Iowa Competitive Bidding Alliance, 400 Homestead Building, 303 Locust Street, Des Moines, Iowa 50309-1770, (515) 282-6803.

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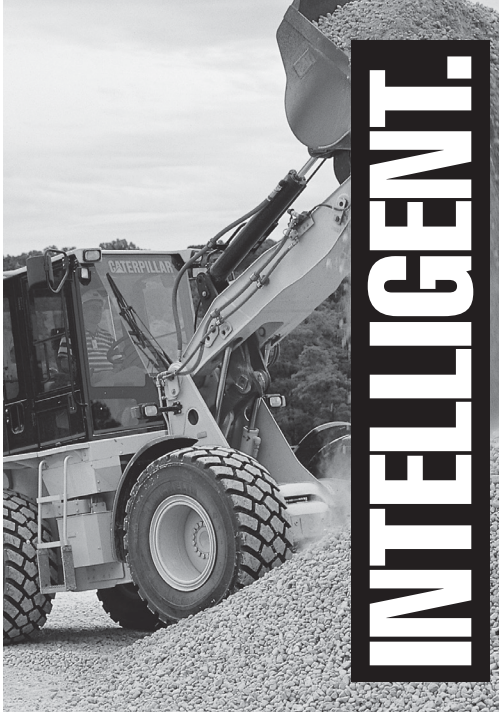
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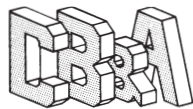


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Quote of the Month:

Sometimes a player's greatest challenge is coming to grips with his role on the team.

- Scottie Pippen



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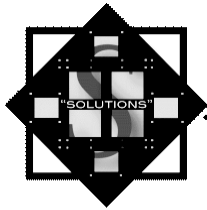
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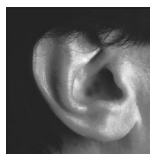
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Register online for ISAC's Fall School of Instruction
November 29-December 1

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OCTOBER

- 3 CCMS Administrators
(Hilton Garden Inn, Des Moines/Urbandale)
- 4 CCMS North West Support Group
(Buena Vista County Case Management
Office, Storm Lake)
- 5 CCMS East Central Support Group
(Palisades-Kepler State Park, Mount Vernon)
- 6 ISAC Steering Committees
(Adventureland Inn, Des Moines)
- 18 CCMS Support Staff Training
(Hilton Garden Inn, Des Moines/Urbandale)
- 19-20 CCMS Strengths
(Hilton Garden Inn, Des Moines/Urbandale)
- 21-25 Assessors Fall School & Conference
(West Des Moines Marriott)
- 26-27 ISAC Board of Directors (ISAC Office)

NOVEMBER

- 2 CCMS Advanced Case Managers
(Hilton Garden Inn, Des Moines/Urbandale)
- 12-15 County Attorneys Conference (Waterloo)
- 28 SEAT (Des Moines) CANCELLED
- 29- ISAC Fall School
- Dec. 1 (Marriott & Renaissance Savery, Des Moines)

DECEMBER

- 5-7 Engineers Conference
(Scheman Center, Ames)
- 7 District II Winter Meeting (location TBA)
- 8 Annual Drainage Conference
(Starlite, Fort Dodge)
- 13 District IV Winter Meeting (location TBA)
- 13-15 CCMS Fundamentals
(Hilton Garden Inn, Des Moines/Urbandale)
- 15 ISAC Board of Directors (ISAC Office)
- 25-26 ISAC Office Closed

JANUARY

- 9 CCMS Administrators
(Hilton Garden Inn, Des Moines/Urbandale)
- 17-18 New County Officers School
(Holiday Inn Airport, Des Moines)
- 19 Statewide Supervisors Conference
(Holiday Inn Airport, Des Moines)

Please visit ISAC's online calendar of events at www.iowacounties.org and click on 'Upcoming Events.' A listing of all the meetings scheduled thus far in 2006, 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 Jerri Noboa at (515) 244-7181 or jnoboa@iowacounties.org.

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