

# The Iowa County

Iowa State Association of Counties

Igeek  
food-on-a-stick

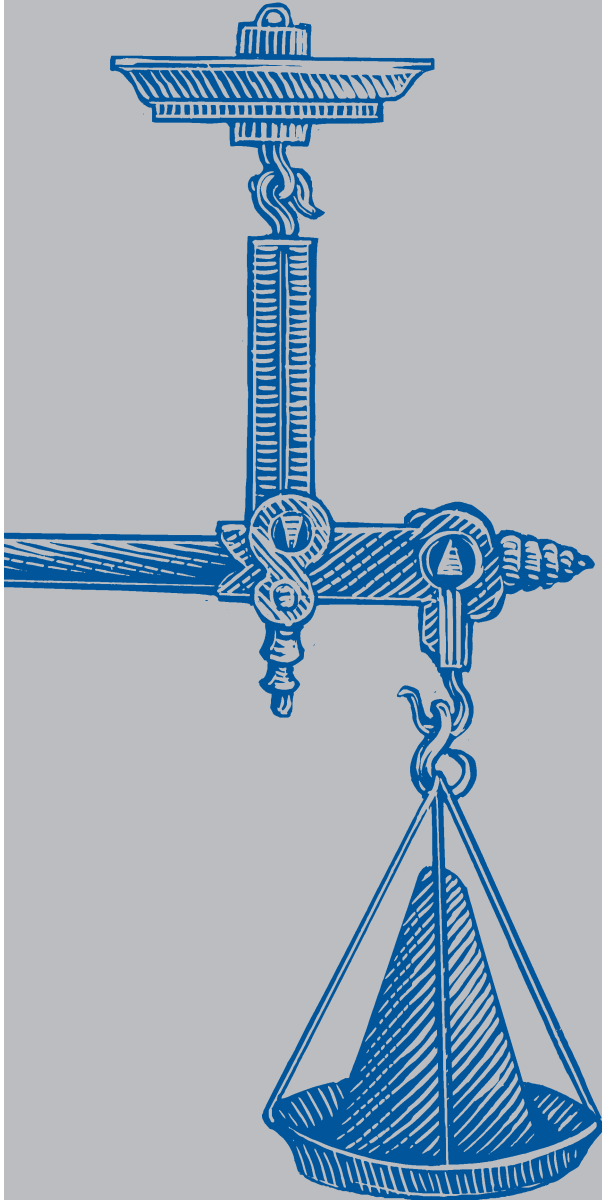
September 2009

geekthelibrary.org  
2009 Golf Fundraiser Wrap-up

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# Iowa County

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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.

## Iowa Counties Get Their Geek On

*geekthelibrary.org*

Iowans in Dallas, Polk, Story, Warren and many more counties may soon add a new verb to their vocabulary—geek. Many central Iowa public libraries are participating in ‘Geek the Library,’ a community-based public awareness campaign launched this summer. The campaign highlights what people are passionate about and how libraries can support them, in an effort to heighten awareness about the critical funding issues public libraries face.

‘Geek the Library’ features local advertising that introduces ‘geek’ as a verb, and encourages the public to talk about what they ‘geek’—whether it’s engineering, superheroes or art. The public awareness campaign illustrates the fact that everyone is passionate about something—everyone ‘geeks’ something—and that the library supports them all.

“This campaign is designed to provoke conversation about the vital role that public libraries and librarians play in today’s challenging environment,” said Cathy De Rosa, global vice president of marketing for Online Computer Library Center (OCLC), a nonprofit library cooperative heading campaign development and implementation. “We hope it will spark important community discussions about how public libraries can remain strong throughout central Iowa, and ultimately across the country.”

The awareness campaign, which is funded by a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, features print and radio advertising, social networking elements, a Web site and grassroots community initiatives to draw attention to the need for increased library support. The campaign Web site, [www.geekthelibrary.org](http://www.geekthelibrary.org), provides information about how people can get active and support their local library.

As the economic downturn continues, millions of Americans are turning to local libraries for educational opportunities, job-searching resources and entertainment. The increased demand for library services is taking a toll on libraries already experiencing flat or decreasing budgets. And state and local cuts are impacting public library hours, programs and staffing, forcing some libraries to close indefinitely.

While most people have visited their public library and understand its important role in their community, many do not know that libraries are at risk or that local funding for libraries is heavily influenced by community members. In Iowa, the majority of library funding comes from local tax dollars. City funding per capita varies widely across the state from about \$17 to more than \$65 per year. But the average city per

capita funding level is about \$30—less than the cost of a dinner out for most families.

“Libraries are working harder than ever to provide the services their communities need—but resources are strained,” said Mary Wegner, state librarian of Iowa. “Public libraries in Iowa and across the country play a vital role in transforming people’s lives and building community, and we’re excited about helping Iowans better understand the challenges of library funding and how every individual is part of the equation.”

Working with local library leaders, OCLC is piloting the public awareness campaign in parts of Georgia and in central Iowa. A small number of additional libraries and library systems will also participate later this summer. The pilot campaign efforts will run through December 2009. In 2010, OCLC will make the campaign materials and other guides, along with information from the pilot campaigns, available to library leaders throughout the country to assist them in their efforts to strengthen local support for libraries.

The public awareness campaign hopes to start a conversation about library funding to inspire more people to take personal responsibility for keeping their local public libraries vital in their communities. The campaign will not support or oppose any candidate for public office, nor attempt to influence legislation.

**About OCLC:** Founded in 1967 and headquartered in Dublin, Ohio, OCLC is a nonprofit library service and research organization that has provided computer-based cataloging, reference, resource sharing, eContent, preservation, library management and Web services to 71,000 libraries in 112 countries and territories. OCLC and its member libraries worldwide have created and maintain WorldCat, the world’s richest online resource for finding library materials. Search WorldCat.org on the Web at [www.worldcat.org](http://www.worldcat.org). For more information, visit [www.oclc.org](http://www.oclc.org).

**About Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation:** Guided by the belief that every life has equal value, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation works to help all people lead healthy, productive lives. In developing countries, it focuses on improving people’s health and giving them the chance to lift themselves out of hunger and extreme poverty. In the United States, it seeks to ensure that all people—especially those with the fewest resources—have access to the opportunities they need to succeed in school and life. Based in Seattle, Washington, the foundation is led by CEO Jeff Raikes and Co-chair William H. Gates, Sr., under the direction of Bill and Melinda Gates and Warren Buffett. Learn more at [www.gatesfoundation.org](http://www.gatesfoundation.org).

**By: Hanna De Groot**

ISAC Public Policy Specialist



With the 2010 Census looming ahead, it is vital to be aware of the importance of the census and how local governments can participate.

ISAC staff has been participating in monthly roundtable meetings that are a public forum for updates on census activities, sharing information, asking questions, and brainstorming new ways to increase Iowans' participation in

the census. Iowa is becoming a more diverse state and it is important to reach all the different segments of the population.

ISAC is pleased to use its resources to relay information from the U.S. Census Bureau, so please be aware of the information both in print and online.

## Complete Count Committees Key to Successful Census in 2010

Every 10 years, as mandated by the U.S. Constitution, our nation conducts a census — an effort to count every person living in the United States. This multibillion-dollar operation requires years of planning and more than a half million temporary workers.

The key to this endeavor is having every household fill out and mail back a completed census form. Participation is critical, as the results determine how Congress is apportioned and how more than \$300 billion in federal funds are distributed annually to state, local and tribal areas.

One way to help ensure that everyone is counted is to form Complete Count Committees in communities, municipalities, cities, counties, states and tribal governments across the country.

Complete Count Committees are volunteer teams consisting of community leaders, faith-based groups, schools, businesses, media outlets and others who are appointed by elected officials and work together to make sure entire communities are counted.

“We want the 2010 Census to be the most accurate yet, and we are again calling upon Complete Count Committees to help us achieve that goal,” said Tom Mesenbourg, acting director of the U.S. Census Bureau. “To ensure an accurate count and distribution of funds for schools, roads and elderly services, the support of local Complete Count Committees is vital.”

A variety of state, county, municipal, tribal and community-based organizations formed 11,800 Complete Count Committees during Census 2000. These committees developed targeted outreach plans specific to their communities to supplement what the Census Bureau was already doing through paid advertising and partnership efforts. As a result, these committees helped inform local residents — including those historically hard to reach in census counts — of the importance

of responding to the census. In part because of these efforts, the response rate for Census 2000 increased for the first time in 30 years and the undercount of those historically missed during a decennial census was reduced. In short, the efforts of nearly 12,000 local Complete Count Committees, when combined with the Census Bureau's paid advertising and partnership program, made a huge improvement in the quality and accuracy of Census 2000.

In 2010, we need even more of these committees to help educate and inform our increasingly diverse nation. Complete Count Committees can start now to create awareness within their communities about the upcoming 2010 Census. They can donate space for testing and training temporary census workers, publicize recruiting efforts and obtain endorsements from local leaders. They can conduct census rallies or parades, media luncheons, and interfaith breakfasts and weekend events as we get closer to Census Day.

The 2010 Census will have one of the shortest census questionnaires in the history of the United States, dating back to the first census in 1790. The 2010 Census will ask just name, gender, age, race, ethnicity, relationship and whether the householder owns or rents their home. The census form will take only about 10 minutes on average to complete, and answers are protected by law and strictly confidential.

For more information about forming a Complete Count Committee, contact your Census Bureau regional office and ask to speak with a Partnership staff member. Staff can provide you with training materials, timelines, suggested activities, and a Complete Count Committee handbook to make your committee a success. Visit the Census Bureau's Web site <http://www.census.gov> and click on “Regional Offices” for contact information.

## Iowa Opens Meetings Law

For the next several months, the Legal Briefs article will serve as a refresher course on various topics important to county officials. This material is being excerpted from the most recent New County Officers Manual produced by ISAC. This month a portion of the Iowa Open Meetings Law is covered.

### What Governmental Bodies Are Covered?

Here are examples of bodies that are subject to Iowa's Open Meetings Law:

- A "governing body of a city or county" such as the board of supervisors.
- A multi-member body formally and directly created by a board of supervisors.
- Any advisory board, task force or other body "expressly created by executive order" of a county board of supervisors to develop and make recommendations on public policy issues.

Governmental bodies often use advisory committees or task forces to provide them with advice or input before they make decisions on complex matters. Government officials and members of the public alike often wonder: Is an advisory body subject to Iowa's Open Meetings Law if it has no decision-making authority? The answer is usually going to be yes. Counties don't use "executive orders," but this law is supposed to be interpreted broadly, so you should assume advisory boards are covered. Which basically means posting an agenda and allowing public access to observe the meeting.

Regarding unions, negotiating sessions, strategy meetings of public employers or employee organizations, mediation and the deliberative process of arbitrators are exempt from Iowa's Open Meetings Law. Public employers cannot insist that negotiating sessions, after the initial two meetings, be open to the public.

### What Is A Meeting?

How does Iowa law define a "meeting?" Are breakfast gatherings of a quorum of a governmental body at a local café "meetings" subject to Iowa's Open Meetings Law?

Iowa's Open Meetings Law says a governmental body "meets" when there is:

- Any gathering in person or by telephone conference call or other electronic means, whether formally noticed or informally occurring,
- Of a majority of the members, and
- At which there is any deliberation or action upon any matter within the scope of the governmental body's policy-making duties (Iowa Code §21.2).

A governmental body "meeting" does not include a purely ministerial or social gathering at which there is no discussion of policy or intent to avoid the Open Meetings Law, even if a quorum is present. For example, a quorum of a board of supervisors gathering for breakfast at the local café would be a "meeting" if members discuss or take action on county business.

Many county officials continue to believe that it is only a meeting if a vote is taken. That is absolutely not the case. As long as there is discussion regarding county business, that is enough to constitute a meeting, so long as a quorum is present.

What about fact-finding trips, where county supervisors go to view a vacant lot so that they can decide if it is a suitable place for a jail? Is that a meeting? The best explanation I've seen is contained in a 1981 Attorney General Opinion 81-7-4: "it appears that gathering for "purely ministerial" purposes may include a situation in which members of a governmental body gather simply to receive information upon a matter within the scope of the body's policymaking duties. During the course of such a gathering, individual members may, by asking questions, elicit clarification about the information presented. We emphasize, however, that the nature of any such gathering may change if "deliberation" occurs. A "meeting" may develop, for example, if a majority of the members of a body engage in any discussion that focuses at all concretely upon matters over which they may exercise judgment or discretion."

So a majority of the supervisors can go to that vacant lot. And they could, for instance, ask the realtor questions about the lot. That would not be a "meeting." But it could turn into a "meeting," for instance, if one supervisor starts talking to the other supervisors about the merits of the lot. So county officials need to be circumspect.

A quorum of a board gathering for breakfast at the local café would not be a "meeting" if members only chat about the Hawks, Cyclones or Panthers, or other matters that are not within the scope of the board's business.

What about the recent situation where two members of a three member board of supervisors showed up for a meeting with another group? A majority of the board was there, and they discussed county business. So was that covered by the Open Meetings Law? Yes. What if one supervisor said he was not there as a supervisor, but as a representative of another group? The law doesn't care. That's still a meeting, which means an agenda has to be posted, and minutes taken and published.

Continues on page 18.

## Broadband Update and Refresher

In the article I wrote for the May 2009 issue, I discussed the significant amount of funding being provided to deliver broadband access to all citizens. On August 6, Iowa took the first step in this process by awarding a contract to ConnectedNation to map, plan, and implement sustainable adoption of broadband access across Iowa.

The State of Ohio has recently completed their mapping and planning and is implementing the plan. The ConnectedOhio's website, <http://www.connectedoh.org/>, has more information than I can fit into this article. Browse the website to gain a flavor of where we in Iowa will soon be.

Because the long-term success of the plan will involve active participation by the counties, I want to review (in case you missed it the first time) the key components of the plan.

1. **Mapping:** create a statewide broadband availability map to identify underserved and unserved areas.
2. **Market research:** conduct extensive market research to understand the barriers to broadband adoption.
3. **Local task force:** create and facilitate local technology planning teams to produce tactical business plans for improved technology use.
4. **Public and private partnerships:** generate collaboration between the public and private sectors to encourage broadband deployment and adoption.
5. **Availability:** create programs for improved computer ownership and Internet use in low-adoption areas.

It is important to understand why these five components were selected.

**Mapping:** Without an availability map, it will be hard to determine where the high priority areas exist. It is very important that a baseline be established to determine the progress we have made. Based on conversations with leading mapping organizations, mapping usually costs around \$200,000 to produce. Once produced the maps become organic and are updated as new areas are served.

The grant guidelines published in early July 2009 require that the grant application determine who were underserved or unserved in the area covered by the grant. Mapping is a key link to having a successful grant application.

**Market Research:** In conjunction with the mapping, there is the need to develop market information that will help build strategies to overcome barriers to adoption. For example, based on work done by the USDA's Economic Research Service, regard-

*By: Robin Harlow*

ISAC Technology  
Project Manager



less of location (urban or rural), low-income households access the internet less at home than high-income households. The researchers may believe that internet use is related to household income. The Economic Research Services notes that the underlying causes behind this relationship cannot be explored further without better data on household internet use, education, age, and the pricing/cost of broadband internet access.

**Local Task Force:** All the maps and data in the world are useless unless we have a way to develop and implement plans for improved technology use. Project teams could be developed that would consist of members from education, government, private sectors, agriculture, and non-profit groups. ConnectedNation would facilitate county by county statewide technology awareness and a planning campaign that:

- Takes inventory of all the resources that the state and private sector have developed that could be deployed at the community level in a more coordinated fashion so as to build demand for computing applications and increase computer literacy;
- Leverages existing regional and community leadership infrastructure for assessment and visioning in technology planning;
- Monitors and measures positive impact over time; and
- Coordinates technology planning for both private and public entities in every county to identify relevant applications and drive adoption across nine different community sectors.

**Public and Private Partnerships:** The local task forces will work with all private sector providers and/or local governments to extend broadband services. This can be done by:

- Identifying the most appropriate technology to fill coverage gaps (fixed wireless, mobile wireless, DSL, cable, etc.);
- Conducting feasibility assessments and propagation studies;
- Determining the cost of building out service for all unserved areas;
- Helping to build the business plan for expansion and sustainability; and
- Designing and supporting communications efforts to promote available services.

**Availability:** The plans will address affordability, availability, awareness advocacy, adoption, and applications. For example, a part of the technology plan might address the movement of surplus (outdated, but useable) from local government or businesses into a program that could use the local school's lunch program to identify potential recipients of this equipment.

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# technology center

## Fun Gadgets

**By: Tammy Norman**

ISAC Office Manager



This month, I wanted to take a moment and have you check out some fun gadgets that are currently available or will be available in the near future. A few of them will be useful and others are just for fun.

### **Wi-Fi Detector Shirt**

Ever wondered if a building you are in has Wi-Fi capabilities? You no longer have to speculate, simply purchase and wear the Wi-Fi detector shirt and you will know whenever you are in range of Wi-Fi. It uses three AAA batteries and can be purchased online at [www.thinkgeek.com](http://www.thinkgeek.com).

### **Projection Cell Phone**

Samsung and LG introduced prototypes of a projection cell phone in January 2009, available to the general public in 2010. The Samsung's Show displays 480 x 320 pixel video and stills and has the ability to project an image of approximately 50" across in a dimly lit room. The price for this product has yet to be determined. LG is also in development stages of a cell phone projector with talk that it will be offering better resolution than the Samsung. Time will tell which product is the better buy. I will keep you posted as information becomes available.

### **Emergency Cell Phone Charger**

This item that may not fit into the "fun" category but is definitely useful, the Dynamo phone charger allows you to liter-

ally crank your phone back to life. By simply cranking on this charger for three minutes you will be able to have up to eight minutes of conversation time or one hour of standby time. The charger comes with several different adapters and even includes a flashlight. This would definitely not replace your phone's standard charger, but if you are ever stranded, it could be a life saver for under \$15.00. For more information and to purchase, simply go to <http://inspectusa.com/>.

### **iCap**

This unique baseball cap contains an MP3 player with speakers in the bill which eliminates the need for head phones. While the iCap is not for everyone, it does feature a 1 GB MP3 player, an FM stereo tuner, voice recorder, a USB computer cable, an AC wall charger and adjustable speakers. To find out more about this product simply visit <http://www.icapmp3.com>.

**Website Note:** The ISAC Fall School registration is available. Please take a moment and sign up for this exciting conference. If you need assistance with the online registrations or if you have a question regarding new technology and would like it addressed in this column, please contact me at 515.244.7181 ext. 315 or at [tnorman@iowacounties.org](mailto:tnorman@iowacounties.org). Until next month, keep clicking!

# technology center

Continued from page 7.

### **Moving forward**

Marie Curie once said that she "was taught that the way of progress was neither swift nor easy." Implementing access to broadband will not be "swift or easy". It will involve working across inter-governmental boundaries and engaging the private sector for the projects to be successful. But in the very

near future each county will need to step forward and become a very active member of the local task force. This involvement will allow the county to provide leadership on what will be (or is) one of the key fundamental infrastructures for future growth of any county.



## 17th Annual CCMS Conference

**By: Deb Eckerman Slack**  
ISAC Case Management  
Services Manager



It is hard to believe, but another conference has come and gone! We had a total of 318 registered attendees and a handful of walk-in registrants. A few session topics included disability and ability awareness issues; information on personal-ity changes after a brain injury; guardianship issues; and cul-tural and generational differences.

The CCMS staff felt it was a suc-cessful conference (and not just because we had no major issues arise!). Some comments over-heard during breaks and lunch in-cluded: “Of all the years I have attended these, this is the best one so far;” “The speakers are awe-some!;” “Dr. Shannon is so knowledgeable, and one of the best speakers I have ever heard.,” and “It was hard to decide which session to attend, because I wanted to go to all of them.”

Our opening keynote was presented by Kathie Snow. She is a parent, an author, a trainer, and hosts the Disability is Natural website, [www.disabilityisnatural.com](http://www.disabilityisnatural.com). Kathie is a high energy person with a passion for her message. Her keynote and breakout sessions focused on people’s strengths and abilities, using People First Language, and moving individuals with dis-abilities from “client-hood” or dependence to citizenship, in-clusion and interdependence. All of this should sound famil-iar to case managers.



Our afternoon keynote was delivered by Tyler Greene (pictured below, left), a young man from Waterloo who made a DVD for his BSA Eagle Scout project to highlight “Ability Awareness,” and has made it available to all 365 Iowa school districts. The project morphed into some-thing that he never imagined. In two-plus years, well over 6500 DVD’s have been requested from all 50 states and 20 other countries. His delivery was in-formative, humorous and he got the au-dience involved with his “Jeopardy” game. We thank Tyler for sharing his life and valuable message with us.



On Thursday we were lucky to have Dr. Joseph Shannon from Columbus, Ohio and Dr. Wally Kisthardt (pictured below, right) from Kansas City. These men are brilliant in their knowledge base, and as an added bonus they are truly gifted speakers who are able to share their knowledge in an understandable and humorous way.

Post conference sessions for Mandatory Reporter Certifica-tion and a session on ethics were offered on Friday. Case man-agers are required to have the mandatory reporter training, and licensed social workers are required to attend ethics train-ing every two years to maintain their license.

Our goal at CCMS is to provide high quality, cost effective trainings. We value the comments and feedback we receive on the evaluations and strive to continue to bring you relevant topics and highly qualified speakers to enhance your knowl-edge and job skills.



# ISAC meetings

## 2009 Fall School Update

Planning is well underway for the 2009 ISAC Fall School of Instruction, being held November 18-20, 2009 at the Coralville Marriott Hotel and Conference Center. Please bookmark the 2009 ISAC Fall School webpage at [www.iowacounties.org](http://www.iowacounties.org). It is updated often with all the latest conference information that you will need to prepare for the conference.

### Conference Registration and Housing Information

Registration for the 2009 ISAC Fall School opened on Monday, August 17. If you haven't registered for the conference, please remember that you **MUST** register for the conference before you are able to reserve your hotel room through the Iowa Housing Bureau. Advanced conference registration closes at 4:30 pm on Monday, November 2; however, the ISAC conference room blocks will only be available until 4:30 pm on Friday, October 16, 2009.

Registration on the ISAC website is the same as it has been in the past. After registering for the conference, you will be emailed or faxed an ISAC Meeting Registration Confirmation/Invoice. This confirmation/invoice will include three additional items that you will need in order to make your hotel reservation through the Iowa Housing Bureau: the Iowa Housing Bureau website; a 10-digit ISAC ID; and a unique convention ID (4-digit). Please remember that only **ONE** hotel room reservation is allowed per conference registration, and the name on the reservation must match the name of the meeting registration made on the ISAC website. If you have any questions about the conference registration process, please don't hesitate to call us at 515.244.7181 or visit the conference website to view registration information and hotel reservation instructions at [www.iowacounties.org](http://www.iowacounties.org).

### Shuttle Service and Parking Information

All of ISAC's five overflow conference hotels will provide complimentary shuttle service to/from the Coralville Marriott Hotel and Conference Center throughout the entire conference! If you wish to drive and park, parking is available at the Coralville Marriott Hotel and Conference Center (conference site) for a daily fee of \$8 per car. If you choose to park at the conference site, we suggest having both cash and a credit card available for payment. Please visit the conference website at [www.iowacounties.org](http://www.iowacounties.org) to view the list of overflow conference hotels.

### Conference Agenda

The conference agenda is available on the 2009 ISAC Fall School webpage. Your conference registration includes refreshments each morning, as well as a box lunch featuring assorted sandwich favorites, fruit, chips, cookie and beverage on

**By: Stacy Horner**

ISAC Meeting/Event Administrator



Wednesday, November 18, and a Mexican lunch buffet on Thursday, November 19. Both lunches will be served in the exhibit hall. If you have any special dietary needs, please email [shorner@iowacouties.org](mailto:shorner@iowacouties.org) by 4:30 pm on Monday, November 2. After this date, we cannot guarantee meeting any special dietary needs. If you have communicated your dietary needs to ISAC, you will receive a special meal ticket with your conference registration packet. All conference attendees are **REQUIRED** to wear their name badge to **ALL** conference events, as it serves as your conference meal and admission ticket.

### ISAC Educational Seminars

The ISAC educational seminars will take place on Wednesday, November 18, at the times listed below. We have planned a wide variety of topics that will be beneficial to all affiliate members, so please plan to attend! More information, including presenters, can be found on the fall school webpage.

#### **9:00 am - 10:15 am**

**Preparing for the Public Health Emergency: What You Can Do Now?:** The threat of the H1N1 flu in early May has served as a stress test for response systems at all levels of government, pinpointing weaknesses in the planning, training and exercising of an effective response to the threat, as well as in managing public expectations and concerns. Through a panel discussion you will benefit from lessons learned this spring from local and state public health officials and be able to apply that information toward better preparedness for future public health emergencies in your county.

**Recipe for a Career and a Life of Joy and Passion:** Every elected and appointed official in county government confronts a daily personal challenge to sort out work pressures and personal needs. Many people don't achieve that balance. The resulting problems affect an individual's health, happiness and performance. Organizations become less successful when the employees are failing to reach their behavior and performance potential. The HR Doctor will share field-tested concepts to help every attendee achieve more than they thought they could. In turn, service to the public will be enhanced...with no tax increase!

**How to Close the Retirement Gap:** This retirement workshop can be found in the Learn It! Educational track and has been intended for use with employees who are currently participating within the Nationwide Retirement plans. It defines retirement gap, so that the learner may glean the danger it

Continued on next page.

poses to his or her lifestyle at retirement. It walks the learner through exercises designed to illustrate where a gap shows up and explains four specific steps that can be taken to alleviate a gap. It concludes with an application that helps the learner comprehend the best options for him or her to close the gap and encourages action towards increasing deferral amounts and making better use of asset allocation.

## **10:30 am - 11:45 am**

**Complying with the Fair Labor Standards Act:** This workshop will give a synopsis of the Fair Labor Standards Act from both the employer and employee perspective. Prepare to learn about who is covered by the Act, the rights and responsibilities of those covered, and several recent changes to the Act concerning military leave, serious health conditions, substitution of paid leave, employer and employee notice obligations, and the medical certification process.

**Getting Around to Getting Counted:** The 2010 Census is less than a year away! Because the data is used in the distribution of more than \$300 billion in federal funds, the census count is especially important to counties. In all likelihood, this census may also be one of the most difficult in recent history. Get a start on the process by learning about the outreach programs and activities available to you as you prepare for the census in your county.

**Iowa's Open Government Law: Balancing the Public's Right to Know with the Government's Ability to Function:** When must meetings be open? How much can be charged for public records? How quickly must public records requests be answered? Maintaining compliance with the open government laws can be tough, especially under a tight budget. This session will outline the basics for sunshine law compliance and will be open for Q & A.

## **1:15 pm - 2:30 pm**

**Organizational Self-Defense:** Organizations and, in particular, the managers and supervisors who make them work, face

challenges daily which threaten to increase personal and professional liability. Tough economic times only increase these risks. Bullying, threats of violence, charges of unlawful discrimination, and negligence in performing - or failing to perform - duties properly are very real issues in county government! No matter what your job title or profession, you cannot be successful unless you are also an HR professional! The HR Doctor will present practical workable strategies to mitigate, interrupt or prevent human resource liabilities.

**The Technology behind Social Networking:** If you have no idea what a Facebook, Twitter, or blog is all about, join us as we gently introduce these social networking tools to you. Gain an understanding and pickup practical tips on how to manage and use these new tools. This seminar will conclude with a humorous game show that is guaranteed to entertain and reinforce these topics.

**Planning and Facilitating Effective Meetings:** Make your meetings more successful. Learn how to implement guidelines for effective group decision-making. Create templates for decision group action and develop ways to encourage inclusive and effect participation.

## **ISAC General Session**

The ISAC general session on Wednesday, November 18, will feature a keynote presentation by Michael Samuelson, President and CEO of The Health and Wellness Institute (HWI) and Vice President of Health and Wellness Services for Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Rhode Island. We would like to thank ISAC Endorsed Company, Wellmark Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Iowa, for sponsoring the keynote presentation.

Please don't hesitate to contact ISAC at 515.244.7181 or [shorner@iowacounties.org](mailto:shorner@iowacounties.org) if you have any questions in regards to the 2009 ISAC Fall School of Instruction. We look forward to seeing everyone in November!



ISAC's  
*Fall School*  
of Instruction

2009 *Fall School* of Instruction  
Coralville Marriott Hotel and Conference Center  
Coralville, Iowa  
November 18-20, 2009

**SAVE THE DATE!**



## ISAC Scholarship Golf Fundraiser Nets \$31,000!

On Wednesday, July 15, ISAC held its fifth annual Scholarship Golf Fundraiser at Jester Park Golf Course in Polk County. The event, which was hosted by the Iowa State Sheriffs' and Deputies' Association and the Iowa State Association of County Supervisors, raised over \$31,000 for the ISAC Scholarship Fund! ISAC uses the Scholarship Fund proceeds to award college scholarships to Iowa high school seniors who are children of county officials and employees. ISAC would like to thank the golfers, volunteers, and sponsors for making the event a great success. This year's champions were a team from Union County. A full list of our sponsors is below.

## A special thanks goes out to all of our sponsors and volunteers!

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Coralville Marriott and Hotel Conference Center - 1 overnight stay  
Cost Advisory Services, Inc. - \$200  
County Risk Management Services - rolling cooler  
Des Moines Farmer's Market - bag and t-shirt  
Des Moines Marriott Downtown - 1 overnight stay and breakfast for 2  
Des Moines Renaissance Savory Hotel - 1 overnight stay and breakfast for 2  
Des Moines Symphony - 2 silver tickets  
Doll Distributing - Putter, golf bag, and racing collector's hood  
Dos Rios Cantina and Tequila Lougne - \$50 gift card  
Fairfield Inn & Suites - 1 overnight stay  
Farmall Land Museum - tractor and t-shirt  
Garden & Associates - \$100  
Harrah's Casino - 2 nights stay and \$100 to 360 Steakhouse  
Holiday Inn Airport - 1 overnight stay and breakfast  
Iowa River Power Restaurant - \$50 gift card  
Inn at Okoboji - 1 overnight stay  
Iowa Speedway - race and Billy Currington tickets  
Iowa State University - autographed basketball  
Jacobson-Westergard & Associates - \$100  
King's Pointe - 1 overnight stay and 4 waterpark passes  
Mannatt's Construction - \$250  
Marion County State Bank - \$200  
McGowan, Hurst Clark & Smith - wine cooler and wine  
People's National Bank - \$150  
Pirate's Cove Miniature Golf - game tokens  
Pottawattamie County - gift basket  
Queen II Excursion - excursion boat ride on Lake Okoboji  
Riverside Casino & Golf Resort - 1 weekday stay and 2 lunch buffets  
RSM McGladrey - golf gear and golf balls  
Schildberg Construction, Inc. - \$250  
Southwestern Community College - sports package  
Speer Financial - \$200  
TrueNorth - men and women's golf gear  
Wellmark Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Iowa - \$250

**Lunch Sponsor** - Iowa Pork Producers Association  
**Beverage Cart Sponsor** - \$1,500 - Snyder & Associates, Inc.  
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## NACo Annual Conference

**By: Grant Veeder**

Black Hawk County Auditor,  
NACo and ISAC Board Member



The 2009 National Association of Counties (NACo) Annual Conference occurred from July 24 to 28 in Nashville, Davidson County, Tennessee, at the Gaylord Opryland Resort and Convention Center. This is a massive complex with nearly 2,900 hotel rooms, nine acres of indoor gardens, and numerous shops, restaurants, etc., all under a clear dome. It is very convenient in some ways and a tad strange in others. For one thing, it takes a while to get to know your way around. I think I got lost every day I was there.

Also in attendance from Iowa were representatives from Sioux, Scott, Pottawattamie, Linn, Johnson, Humboldt, Cass, and Black Hawk Counties, and Bill Peterson and Rachel Bicego of ISAC staff.

Most of my meetings the first couple of days of the conference involved the Finance and Intergovernmental Affairs (FIGA) Steering Committee. One of the more controversial FIGA issues was Lands in Trust. In essence, counties want more involvement when the federal government provides for public land to be taken into trust by Native American tribes. The effect on a county's tax base can be significant, but the steering committee has been at pains to be sure that NACo's approach is fair to both the tribes and the counties.

Early on, I also attended a meeting of a new task force, called by NACo First Vice President Glen Whitley to prepare for his presidential initiative in 2011 of raising awareness of county government. Glen correctly points out that county government has a large role to play in economic recovery, emergency management, health services and other areas, and it is in the best interests of all involved to be knowledgeable about that role.

I have spent most of a year on another task force considering possible changes to the NACo bylaws regarding governance. At Nashville, amendments went to the Board of Directors for one more brush-up before they went before the full membership. The primary aims of the changes were to reduce the time and money spent by those seeking to be president of the organization, to reduce by one the executive officers on the presidential track, in order to make it more accessible to members with term limits or other restraints on their time; and to better assure regional representation at the upper level of NACo leadership by having four Executive Committee members elected from geographic regions. Along with this and other business, the Board of Directors took time for the presentation of an award by the Americans for the Arts organization,

which honored Linn County Supervisor Linda Langston with its County Leadership in the Arts Award. See more on page 15.

While in Music City, we were, it may interest you to learn, treated to a good deal of music. After all, they say there's thirteen hundred fifty-two guitar pickers in Nashville. The conference-wide event was an affair at the nearby Grand Ole Opry. I confess I wasn't familiar with the guitar pickers involved, but it was a polished show in a hallowed hall. There were more experiences available: Among other things, history buffs could visit the Hermitage, Andrew Jackson's nearby estate. It is an impressive country home with an adjacent garden of surpassing beauty, in which Jackson and his wife lie buried.

The Iowa delegation met on Monday evening to caucus on the second-vice-presidential vote to be held on Tuesday, but before we met, candidate Lou Maggazu of Cumberland County, New Jersey made it known that he was conceding to candidate Lenny Eliason of Athens County, Ohio, who already had a preponderance of support in large states. Both Lou and Lenny attended our caucus anyway, and their comments reflected the best traditions of the organization. But it appeared that Lou's decision had derailed the expectation of an interesting business meeting on Tuesday.

Fortunately, the Governance Task Force rode to the rescue. We knew that discontent was brewing as the floor vote on the amendments to the bylaws approached. The main objection was that the new bylaw regarding the representatives of the four new regions called for those reps to be members of the Board of Directors. The line of thinking was that the reps should have experience with the organization that would allow them to hit the ground running in these high-level positions. However, many in the membership at large saw this as an effort to close off participation to all but a prescribed set of insiders. When this amendment came up for vote, the discussion on the motion was protracted, raucous and divisive. Confused amendments to the motion were offered, argued, forgotten, remembered, and modified. Eventually, a revision opening the positions to all members passed, but one suspects that some in the crowd enjoyed venting long-standing dissatisfactions, desiring the healing powers of robustly-voiced indignation and acrimony.

Continues on page 15.

## Linn County Supervisors Leave Their Mark

Americans for the Arts, the nation's leading nonprofit organization for advancing the arts in America, in conjunction with the National Association of Counties (NACo) presented the 2009 National Award for County Arts Leadership to Linn County Supervisor Linda Langston at NACo's Annual Conference.



The award honors an elected county board or individual leader who has significantly advanced the arts in the communities they serve and is part of the Public Leadership in the Arts Awards series.

Langston receives the 2009 County Arts Leadership Award (pictured left) for her ardent support of arts and culture in Cedar Rapids and throughout Linn County. As a county supervisor, Langston provided \$75,000 in funds

towards recovery efforts at the Greater Cedar Rapids Community Foundation, in response to last year's major flooding that devastated Linn County and Eastern Iowa. Langston is currently promoting a one percent public art fund for new construction and re-construction as part of the flood rebuilding efforts. She is also a strong supporter of the Linn County Historical Society.

Americans for the Arts established the National Award for County Arts Leadership in 1999 to recognize the positive role county

government leaders play in improving arts programs, increasing funding to the arts, and making the arts accessible in their communities. Past recipients include: Douglas M. Duncan, County Executive in Montgomery County, Maryland; the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors; County Commissioner Park Helms of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina; County Commissioner Betty Lou Ward of Wake County, North Carolina; the Broward County Board of Commissioners of Broward County, Florida; the Jefferson County Commission of Jefferson County, Alabama; the Lackawanna County Commissioners of Lackawanna County, Pennsylvania; the Howard County Government of Howard County, Maryland; and Franklin County Commissioners, Ohio.

Linn County Supervisor Lu Barron (pictured right) has been elected president of Women of NACo (WON). Barron will serve a two-year term through August 2011.



Founded in 1975, Women of NACo (WON) works to enhance the effectiveness of female county officials and engage women officials in seeking leadership positions in their communities and within NACo. WON supports equal opportunities for women in the political process.

Supervisors Barron and Langston also participated in a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) sponsored national preparedness workshop in Cambridge, Massachusetts in July. The workshop focused on reviewing and updating the Target Capabilities List (TCL) that identifies long-term goals for national preparedness. FEMA reimbursed expenses for the workshop.

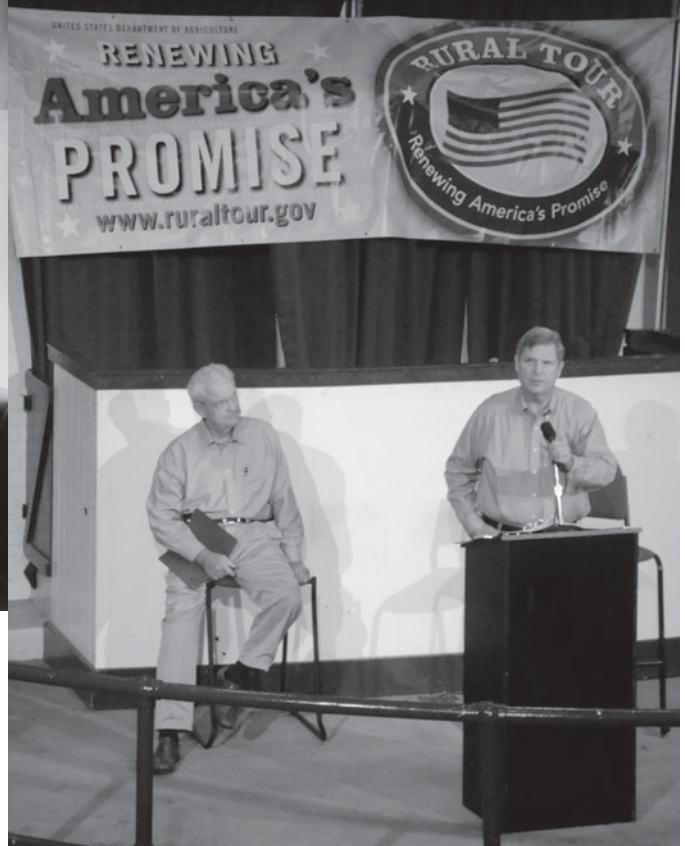
Continued from page 14.

Some measure of order and respect was regained, a few healing hugs were exchanged, and incoming president Valerie Brown of Sonoma County, California was finally able to give her inaugural address. The other officers include President-Elect Teresa Altemus (Gloucester County, VA), First Vice President Glen Whitley (Tarrant County, TX), and newly-elected

Second Vice President Lenny Eliason. Next year, there will be no election for second vice president, as the bylaws changes include reducing the officers of the association by one.

See what you're missing by not attending NACo conferences? Make plans now to take part next year in Reno, Nevada.

# miscellaneous



Photos included on this page are from events throughout the summer of 2009. Top left: Grant Veeder at the NACo Board of Directors meeting at the NACo Annual Conference. Top right: NACo annual conference facility. Middle and bottom left: 2009 District Legislative Workshops. Bottom right: Secretary Vilsack and Congressman Boswell at the Vilsack Rural Tour held at the fairgrounds.



## 2009/2010 District Officers

ISAC would like to offer thanks to all of the attendees of this year's District Legislative Workshops. We feel that they were very successful in offering feedback from this year's legislative session. A special thank you to the legislators that attended and offered their comments on the session.

### District One

President: Karen Squiers, Marshall County Auditor  
Secretary/Treasurer: Marvin Grace, Warren County Supervisor

### District Two

President: Jack Plathe, Kossuth County Supervisor  
Vice President: Carl Mattes, Humboldt County Supervisor  
Secretary/Treasurer: Gloria Carr, Floyd County Auditor

### District Three

President: Richard Haack, O'Brien County Supervisor  
Vice President: Burlin Matthews, Clay County Supervisor  
Secretary/Treasurer: Mardi Allen, Dickinson County Supervisor

### District Four

President: Richard Crouch, Mills County Supervisor  
Vice President: Marsha Carter, Shelby County Auditor  
Secretary/Treasurer: Joyce Jensen, Cass County Recorder

### District Five

President: Ernie Greiner, Keokuk County Supervisor  
Vice President: Steve Burgmeier, Jefferson County Supervisor  
Secretary/Treasurer: Carol Copeland, Des Moines County Auditor

### District Six

President: Linda Langston, Linn County Supervisor  
Vice President: Rod Sullivan, Johnson County Supervisor  
Secretary/Treasurer: Lori Elam, Scott County Community Services

# miscellaneous

## Iowa Great Places

Governor Chet Culver and Lt. Governor Patty Judge announced that 17 cities and counties across the state will receive 23 Iowa Great Places grants totaling \$1.9 million. Now in its fifth year, Iowa Great Places is an initiative that combines state resources with local assets to help Iowans make their communities, regions, districts or neighborhoods great places to live, work and raise a family. Following is the list of the counties that are receiving Iowa Great Places funding:

- **Adams County:** Corning Opera House & Cultural Center - \$20,000
- **Adams County:** French Icarian Colony - \$25,000
- **Adams County:** Lake Icaria Improvements - \$23,100
- **Appanoose County:** Lelah Bradley Playing Fields - 150,000
- **Jackson County:** Copper Creek Trail - \$100,000
- **Warren County:** Memorial Park Amphitheatre - \$100,000

# employment

## Marshall County Engineer

Due to an approaching January 2010 retirement, the Marshall County Board of Supervisors is accepting applications for the position of County Engineer. Salary \$90,000 - \$105,000 depending on qualifications. Marshall County (Population 39,500) is located in Northeast Central Iowa. The county seat is Marshalltown, Iowa. The County Engineer, under general direction of the Board of Supervisors, is responsible and accountable for the overall planning, direction, coordination and control of a 930 mile road system and 35 fulltime employees. Qualified candidates would possess knowledge and experience in the safe and efficient maintenance, design, administration and engineering of all Marshall County Secondary Roads and equipment. The candidate must be a licensed Professional Engineer in the State of Iowa.. Minimum five years experience as a functioning County Engineer in Iowa preferred but not required. Position is open until filled. Send resume, references and salary history to: Marshall County Board of Supervisors, 1 East Main St., Marshalltown, IA 50158, 641.754.6330 or [bos@co.marshall.ia.us](mailto:bos@co.marshall.ia.us).

# miscellaneous

## 2020 Vision: Creative Solutions for Our Changing World

Join us at our annual conference on September 25 at the DMACC Ankeny Campus to hear how people around the world can and are responding to current and impending environmental and economic changes with compassion and intelligence, in a way that minimizes human suffering over the short term and, over the long term, enables future generations to develop sustainable, materially modest societies that affirm the highest and best qualities of human nature. Register and learn more at [www.iaenvironment.org](http://www.iaenvironment.org).

The Keynote Speaker will be Richard Heinberg from Santa Rosa, CA. He has been writing about energy resource issues and the dynamics of cultural change for many years. A member of the core faculty at New College of California in Santa Rosa, he is an

award-winning author of nine books including, *Powerdown: Options and Actions for a Post-Carbon World*, and *The Party's Over: Oil, War and the Fate of Industrial Societies*.

Other speakers include Jonathan Todd, CEO of the award-winning John Todd Ecological Designs, who will propose innovative ecological solutions to Iowa's water pollution problems. The founders of Transition Colorado will show us how communities around the globe are moving from fossil fuel dependence to local resilience, one community at a time. Other speakers include Fred Kirschenmann, Distinguished Fellow Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, and Kamyar Enshayan, Director of the Center on Energy and Environmental Education.

## legal briefs

Continued from page 6.

Remember the basic rule: a quorum of a governmental body may gather informally, if the conversation is strictly social and discussion of business is saved for scheduled meetings.

### Agendas

Government bodies usually must give notice and provide a tentative agenda 24 hours in advance of a meeting. The notice must give the time, date, place and tentative agenda of each meeting. The notice must be posted on a bulletin board or other prominent place accessible to the public at the principal office of the government body, or at the building where the meeting will be held, if there is no principal office. Agendas must also be provided to news media who have filed a request for notice.

Agendas for public meetings play a vital role in the ability of citizens to watch the decision making process that affects public affairs at every level of government in Iowa. Clear and effective agendas are a matter of good policy, because they keep citizens informed and help public officials be better prepared for meetings.

Agendas must provide notice sufficient to inform the public of the specific actions to be taken and matters to be discussed at the meeting. An agenda that merely states "approve minutes, old business, new business" does not provide reasonable notice to the public.

The precise detail needed to communicate effectively will depend on the situation, including whether the public is

familiar with an issue. The less the public knows about an issue, the more detail is needed in the tentative agenda.

Officials and citizens alike should remember that meeting agendas are the public's invitation to watch government in action. So, agendas should take care to describe the specific actions to be taken and matters to be discussed in public meetings.

### Emergency Meetings

What if a government body has to conduct an emergency meeting and doesn't have time for the normal 24-hour advance public notice? The notice requirement goes right to the heart of open government. Why? Because the public has a right to know when a government body will meet, and what's on the agenda, in order to decide whether to attend and observe an open session. So, what happens in an emergency where action must be taken quickly? How does the law balance the public's need for notice and the government's need to act quickly?

The general rule is a 24-hour notice is required. Less notice may be given only if, for good cause, 24-hour notice is "impossible or impractical." Whether an emergency makes 24-hour notice impossible or impractical depends upon the facts. Officials should ask whether action can reasonably be deferred to a later time that allows for 24-hour notice. Is faster action really necessary? If faster action is necessary, you need to put in the minutes why a 24-hour notice was not possible.

## Making Medicare Make Sense

**Q:** Medicare recently announced new information on their *Hospital Compare* website that includes how frequently patients return to the hospital after being discharged and additional data on mortality rates. What is this resourceful information, and why should I compare hospitals?

**A:** On July 9, 2009, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), unveiled important new information on their *Hospital Compare* consumer website, [www.hospitalcompare.hhs.gov](http://www.hospitalcompare.hhs.gov) offering consumers more insight about the hospitals in their communities.

For the first time consumers will be able to see how frequently patients return to a hospital after being discharged, a possible indicator of how well the facility did the first time around.

Today, on average, 1 in 5 Medicare beneficiaries who are discharged from a hospital will re-enter the hospital within a month. Reducing the rate of hospital readmissions to improve quality and achieve savings are key components of the current administration's health care reform agenda.

Research has shown that hospital readmissions are reducing the quality of health care while increasing hospital costs. *Hospital Compare* data show that for patients admitted to a hospital for heart attack treatment, 19.9% of them will return to the hospital within 30 days, 24.5% of patients admitted for heart failure will return to the hospital within 30 days and 18.2% of patients admitted for pneumonia will return to the hospital within 30 days.

Also, since 2007, CMS has been displaying on *Hospital Compare*, one year of claims data on mortality rates for heart attack and heart failure. In 2008 pneumonia mortality rates were added to the web site.

On July 9, besides adding the readmission rate data, CMS added three full years of claims data on mortality rates for

heart attack, heart failure and pneumonia. More data gives a clearer picture of the quality of care delivered at different hospitals over time, which ultimately increases the value of CMS' mortality information to hospital patients, health care payers, employers, policymakers, and other health care stakeholders.

*Hospital Compare* also includes ten measures that capture patient satisfaction with hospital care through actual surveys of patients after discharge. As well, Hospital Compare shows what Medicare pays for selected hospital procedures.

Public reporting of these and other measures is intended to empower patients and their families with information they need to engage their local hospitals and physicians in active discussions about quality of care. CMS believes that all hospitals, regardless of their readmission and mortality rates should use the data available in these free, detailed reports to find ways to continually improve the care they deliver.

The information contained on *Hospital Compare* is available for consumers to use in making health care decisions; although, consumers should gather information from multiple sources when choosing a hospital and not view any one process or outcome measure on *Hospital Compare* as a tool to "shop" for a hospital. For example, patients and caregivers could use the website to help them discuss plans of care with their trusted health care providers. In an emergency situation, patients should always go to the nearest, most easily accessible facility.

Consumers have been able to rely on *Hospital Compare* since 2005 to provide information about the quality of care provided in over 4,700 of America's acute-care hospitals. In 2008 alone, the Hospital Compare website had over 18 million page views, and has received about 1 million page views each month of 2009 so far.

For questions, call 1-800-Medicare, which is 1-800-633-4227 or visit [www.cms.hhs.gov](http://www.cms.hhs.gov), or [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov).

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# calendar

## September

- 17-18 ISAC Board of Directors Retreat  
(Honey Creek Resort, Moravia)
- 23 ISAC Steering Committee Meetings  
(Holiday Inn Airport, Des Moines)
- 23-24 NEHA Region 4 Conference  
(Arrowwood Resort, Okoboji)

## October

- 13 CCMS Administrators Meeting  
(Adventureland Inn, Altoona)
- 16 Fall School Hotel Blocks Close  
(4:30 pm)
- 21-23 CCMS Fundamentals Training  
(Courtyard by Marriott, Ankeny)
- 26 Fall School Hotel Cancellation  
Deadline (4:30 pm)
- 29-30 ISAC Board of Directors Meeting  
(ISAC Office, Des Moines)

## November

- 2 Fall School Registration Ends  
(4:30 pm)
- 5 CCMS Advanced Case  
Management Meeting  
(Hilton Garden Inn, Urbandale)
- 18-20 ISAC Fall School of Instruction  
(Coralville Marriott Hotel and  
Conference Center, Coralville)

## December

- 8-10 Iowa County Engineers  
Association Annual Meeting  
(Ames)
- 10 ISAC Board of Directors  
(ISAC Office, Des Moines)

Please visit ISAC's online calendar of events at [www.iowacounties.org](http://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](mailto:shorner@iowacounties.org).



## about the cover

As part of the [geekthelibrary.org](http://geekthelibrary.org) campaign, featured on page 4, billboards were used to heighten awareness. The specific billboard (seen left) used for the cover was created uniquely for the Iowa State Fair. What says fair more than "food-on-a-stick?" The billboard was located at the intersection of University Avenue and Hubbell Avenue in Des Moines, and remained on display for the duration of the fair. Other billboards can be seen across Iowa and on [www.geekthelibrary.org](http://www.geekthelibrary.org).

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