

# The Iowa County



## Security Regulations

The Last Piece  
in the HIPAA  
Puzzle

December 2004



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# The Iowa County

December 2004 \* Volume 33, Number 12

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Denise Obrecht, EDITOR



#### 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.

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## HIPAA Security Deadline Looms

By: **Linda Hinton**

ISAC Assistant  
Legal Counsel



The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) security regulations take effect on April 21, 2005, less than five months from now. The security rules are a key part of HIPAA - federal legislation that was passed into law in August 1996. The overall purpose of the act is to enable better access to health insurance, reduce fraud and abuse, and lower the overall cost of health care in the United States.

By now, counties should have designated a HIPAA Security Officer and have implementation plans under way. The ISAC HIPAA Security Committee has completed its review of the regulations and provided sample policies and procedures on the ISAC website ([www.iowacounties.org](http://www.iowacounties.org)). Two new documents were added to the website in early November: a version of the sample policies and procedures that has been adapted to be more relevant to small to mid-sized counties and a check list to assist counties in their review of the regulations.

The ISAC HIPAA Security Committee presented training via the Iowa Communications Network on October 22. They reviewed the materials that are on the website. In addition, a review of the HIPAA Security Committee's work was provided to the supervisors' affiliate at the ISAC Fall School of Instruction.

The website materials take you through the various sections of the regulations. The regulations require counties to protect the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of electronic protected health information (EPHI) against any reasonably anticipated risks and fall into three broad areas: administrative safeguards, physical safeguards, and technical safeguards.

Administrative safeguards include policies and procedures for managing day to day operations, the conduct and access of county employees to EPHI, and the selection, development, and use of security controls. Physical safeguards relate to the protection of electronic information systems and EPHI from unauthorized access. Technical safeguards include requirements for using technology to protect EPHI.

### Compliance With The Regulations

Much of the regulation represents best practices in internet security, but it is important to remember that compliance with the regulations is only required for your HIPAA-covered operations. Counties are "hybrid" entities with some areas covered by HIPAA and some not.

There are two types of regulations: required and addressable. Counties must comply with those standards that are required. A county **MUST** do the following in regard to addressable standards:

1. Decide whether the addressable standard is a reasonable and appropriate security measure to apply within the county's security framework depending on factors such

as the county's risk analysis, risk mitigation strategy, security measures already in place, and cost.

2. Based upon this decision, the county has three options:
  - a. Implement the addressable standards that are determined to be reasonable and appropriate.
  - b. Implement alternative security safeguards that accomplish the same end, if the addressable standard is either an inappropriate or unreasonable security measure for the county.
  - c. Document the decision not to implement the addressable standard, the rationale behind that decision and how the standard is being met, in cases where the county decides that a given implementation standard is neither reasonable nor appropriate.

### Counties should take the following steps in order to meet the April HIPAA Security deadline:

- Appoint a HIPAA Security Officer. *Please contact ISAC with the name of your security officer, if we do not have one listed for your county on the ISAC website.*
- Create a HIPAA Security Committee to address the regulations. Remember in doing so to include all of the relevant departments beyond IT.
- Look at each of the HIPAA standards and document your current level of compliance.
- Create an inventory of all systems that maintain EPHI within the county.
- Perform an evaluation of each system to determine HIPAA compliance.
- Do a risk analysis to identify all reasonable risks and vulnerabilities to the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of EPHI.
- Determine the actions to be taken to address each risk or vulnerability.
- Create an action plan to implement the recommended safeguards.
- Create policies to address each of the 54 standards and implementation features embodied in the HIPAA regulations.
- Implement the recommended safeguards.

## Common Questions Regarding HIPAA Security Regulations

### What are the differences between the security standards and the privacy standards?

According to the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), "Security and privacy are inextricably linked. The protection of the privacy of information depends in large part on the existence of security measures to protect that information." 68 Fed Reg at 8335. However, there are differences between the security standards and the recently effective privacy regulations.

First, the security standards require covered entities (CEs) to implement basic safeguards to protect electronic protected health information from unauthorized access, alteration, deletion and transmission. The privacy regulations, by contrast, set standards for how protected health information should be controlled by setting forth what uses and disclosures are authorized or required and what rights patients have with respect to their health information. Second, the security standards apply only to EPHI and do not apply to verbal or written information. HHS believes it has the authority to develop security standards for both verbal and written information. However, because the proposed rules developed by the Clinton Administration only covered electronic information, the Bush Administration claimed for consistency purposes the final rule should only cover electronic health information. Therefore, this could leave the door open for additional security standards for verbal and written information in the future.

### What are the penalties for not complying with HIPAA Security Regulations?

CEs that do not comply with the security requirements are subject to a number of penalties. Civil penalties are \$100 per violation, up to \$25,000 per year for each requirement violated. Criminal penalties range from \$50,000 in fines and one year in prison up to \$250,000 in fines and 10 years in jail. Though not formally defined in HIPAA, CEs that do not comply with the security rule could find themselves facing other unfavorable consequences:

- *Negative publicity* - Non-compliant organizations may be discussed in public media (newspaper,

radio, television) for not adequately protecting their customers' EPHI.

- *Loss of Customers* - Customers are increasingly aware of their rights under HIPAA and want their EPHI protected. They may refrain from doing business with organizations they believe do not adequately protect EPHI.
- *Loss of Business Partners* - HIPAA requires that covered entities permit other organizations to create, receive, maintain, or transmit EPHI on their behalf *only if* the second organization can appropriately safeguard the information. CEs may be unwilling to exchange EPHI with organizations that do not adequately protect EPHI.
- *Legal Liability* - Many attorneys are aware of HIPAA and are ready to sue on behalf of clients whose rights are violated. For the first time ever, the federal government has put forth a set of requirements prescribing how EPHI must be protected. Attorneys are prepared to use these requirements to file civil suits against non-compliant CEs.

### Is there anyone that we can talk to if we run into problems implementing security standards?

HIPAA Security Committee members are willing to serve as a resource to counties as you work through the HIPAA requirements. They will answer questions and provide advice and technical assistance to counties as you embark on the task of complying with these regulations. The members of the committee are: Jim Rice, Cerro Gordo County MIS Director; Randy Snyder, Warren County IT Director; Bill Horning, Johnson County Information Services Network Administrator; Matt Hirst, Scott County IT Director; Julie Harris, Keokuk County IT Director; and Bob Canney, Black Hawk County MIS Director.

*Information taken from Susan J. Freed with Davis, Brown, Koehn, Shors & Roberts, P.C.*

## Political Dynamics

After considering the election results in Iowa, I can't help but be reminded that voters in this state take their politics seriously. Several major things happened that are worth noting and will make for some interesting political dynamics.

### Two-Way Trends

On Election Day, Iowa voted Democratic *and* Republican. For the first time since 1984, the majority of Iowa voters supported the Republican candidate for President. In the "winner-take all" contest for Iowa's seven electoral votes, President George W. Bush edged out U. S. Senator John Kerry in a very close race. The interesting thing is that while the voters were awarding victory to the Republican presidential candidate for the first time in 20 years, Democrats made significant gains in Iowa statehouse races for the first time in a decade.

A net gain of three Democrats in the House of Representatives narrows the Republican majority there from 54-46 to 51-49. Meanwhile, Democrats gained four seats in the Iowa Senate to evenly divide the chamber with Republicans at 25-25. The last time there was an even split in the Iowa Senate was in the early 1930s. At that time the Lieutenant Governor acted as the president of the Senate and cast the deciding vote in case of a tie. Today the president of the Senate is selected from within the body itself and needs a 26-vote majority to be elected.

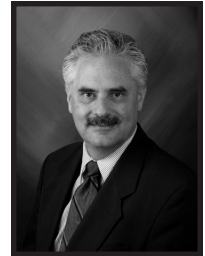
*What does this mean for the people of Iowa?* First, it will likely force state lawmakers to work toward the center of the political spectrum. Radical proposals from the left or right will have little chance, if any, for passage. In order for a bill to pass the Senate, it must have a majority of those elected voting in the affirmative, or a minimum of 26 votes. For either caucus to pass anything, they must have at least one member cross over from the other party to vote with them.

What is more, Senator Charles Larson (R-Linn) is on a tour of duty in Iraq, so until he returns, Republicans will be at a one-vote disadvantage. Will Democrats take advantage of having one more vote present while Senator Larson is gone? Not likely. Remember, 26 votes are needed for passage of bills and election of a Senate President. They would need at least one Republican Senator to vote with them. They are not likely to do anything to alienate Republican colleagues at this point.

*Who will preside in the chamber? How will committees operate?* As of this writing, Senate caucus leaders are busy researching what other states have done when a legislative chamber is evenly split. Some alternate with one party controlling in the first year, and then the second party assumes leadership in the second year before the next election. In other states, a co-leader system is used. In Iowa, a sharing system such as that is likely. It will probably be some kind of system that includes co-floor leaders and co-committee chairs, and

By: **John Easter**

ISAC Director of  
Intergovernmental Affairs



evenly divided committee memberships. The Senate President will probably be from one party the first year, and then the second party the second year.

*Republicans have a one-vote edge in the House so won't this give them an advantage?* Technically that may be the case in the House but that would necessitate that each of the 51 caucus members be present and voting on passage of controversial legislation. Also, any measure passed by the House must also pass the Senate where both parties equally share the power, and then be approved by Governor Vilsack who is a Democrat.

By placing the power in such balance, the voters of Iowa are sending a clear message that they want the two parties to work together. So it is likely that matters before the Iowa Legislature will be more moderate, constructive kinds of things. The "easy" stuff will be considered. Education and economic development issues are considered to be prime topics for debate.

But what about controversial issues like property tax reform? At first thought it may seem impossible but, in fact, there may be no time better than the present to take on the issue. Now is the time to address imbalances in the property tax system caused by the rollback and to look at reducing or eliminating property tax credits and replacing them with exemptions. State lawmakers can share equal praise (or blame) in solving major issues such as this.

### Consolidation of Local Governments

We hear a lot of talk about the need for consolidation of local government in Iowa. "We need less government so the solution is consolidation. Fewer local governments would be more efficient and would ease the tax burden. What can be done to make it easier for some of them to combine jurisdictions into one?"

In Iowa, the issue of governmental consolidation has always been a matter for the local citizens to determine. The Iowa Code emphasizes a local approach rather than a "top-down" prescription from the state. While there is a lot of talk about consolidation of county governments, citizens from counties around the state are not clamoring for change. After considering the 65 - 35 defeat of the proposed merger of the City of Des Moines and Polk County, citizens in this area don't seem to be clamoring for consolidation of their local governments either.

The elections are finally over. If only we could have just a couple more weeks of those really informative paid political advertisements...wouldn't that be interesting? NOT!

## Decisions Support Employer Regarding Comp Time Use

### Comp Time

The latest NPELRA newsletter reported on two important federal court decisions regarding the use of comp time. Though neither decision is binding on Iowa counties, they suggest how Iowa counties should be interpreting the federal comp time law.

Under the federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), employees must be allowed to take comp time off “within a reasonable period after making the request if the use of the comp time does not unduly disrupt the operations” of the employer. (29 U.S.C. §207(o)(5)).

So what does this language mean? There are two schools of thought. Public sector employees have argued that it means that they can take comp time whenever they wish, as long as they provide sufficient advance notice to the employer. Public sector employers, on the other hand, have tended to interpret the language as meaning that the employer still has discretion as to when to allow employees to use comp time, and need not allow an employee comp time if that will require paying overtime to another employee.

In a California case called *Mortensen v. Sacramento County*, a deputy sheriff submitted a request to use comp time on one particular day. Other deputies had already been granted leave for that day, meaning that the sheriff would either have to pay another deputy to work overtime or be short-staffed. So the sheriff denied the request.

The deputy sued, and cited an opinion letter from the U.S. Department of Labor stating that inconvenience to the employer is not a sufficient reason to deny a comp time request. But the 9<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court of Appeals sided with the county, and held that the FLSA does not require public employers to grant comp time requests for any one particular day.

The other case is *Scott v. City of New York*, a 2004 federal district court decision. In that case, about 16,000 current or former New York City police officers sued, claiming that the city had a practice of denying comp time request for no good reason.

The court in that case agreed with the *Mortensen* decision, and held that an employer does not have to grant a request to use comp time on a particular date. The law, according to that court, simply means that an employer must grant the leave within a reasonable time after the leave request.

Recent federal cases suggest that public employers are not required to allow employees to use their comp time on specific dates. But since some cases have come out the other way, and because the Department of Labor has staked out a position in favor of the public employees, this issue may ultimately be decided by the U.S. Supreme Court.

In the meantime, counties should make sure that employee requests for comp time are honored whenever possible. Requests should only be denied for darn good reasons. But the bottom line is that employers probably do not have to allow employees to pick the date of their comp time use.

By: David Vestal

ISAC General Counsel



### Approving County Contracts

Here’s the scenario: The county sheriff has for years approved a contract with a vendor to provide meals for the jail. Given the size of the jail, the contract amounts to \$150,000 a year. But the sheriff has never come to the board of supervisors to get their approval for the contract. The sheriff apparently takes the position that the money is in his budget, and has been appropriated, so he can spend it as he sees fit.

The sheriff in this example can indeed generally spend the money as he wishes. But that does not give him the right to sign the vendor contract without the board of supervisor’s approval.

Generally, the power to make contracts on behalf of a county rests exclusively with the board of supervisors. Other elected officials cannot sign contracts on behalf of the county unless they have the express authority to do so (see McQuillin, *Municipal Corporations*, section 29.15 (1999)).

Any contract entered into without formal action by the board of supervisors is void (see *City of Akron v. Akron-Westfield Community School District*, 659 N.W.2d 223 (Iowa 2003)). So although the sheriff can determine who he will contract with, and at what price, he still has to get the board’s signature on the contract.

### RLUIPA

In the past, I have written about the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act (RLUIPA). This is a federal law which guarantees prisoners in county jails the right to practice their religion, and also makes it harder to force churches to comply with county zoning ordinances. The U.S. Supreme Court has agreed to hear a case this term regarding the constitutionality of RLUIPA. The case, *Cutter v. Wilkinson*, involves challenges to Ohio prison regulations.

**Correction:** In the October column, I reported that information concerning private burial sites must be included on the declaration of value when land is sold. Technically, that information is included on the groundwater hazard statement which is submitted *with* the declaration of value. Thank you to those who pointed out my error.

**FLSA Reminder:** Under the changes to the federal Fair Labor Standards Act that went into effect on August 23, 2004, any full-time county employees who are paid less than \$23,660 annually are eligible for overtime.

### Parting Ponderable

What do Eskimos get from sitting on ice too long? Polaroids

P.S. For those of you who were curious, the song lyrics printed here last month were from “Louie, Louie.”

# health check

## A Season of Good Will!

Trying to decide whom to visit and when during the holidays can be a very stressful activity. Our family created a new tradition. Last year we rented some hotel rooms in a central area and decided to spend the weekend together. We chose the weekend before Christmas. By using this date, Christmas day is free for other family members.

We had a wonderful, relaxing time! We were able to swim, shop and sightsee. The television that was normally on all the time was amazingly off. We were able to spend time visiting and playing games. We also were able to enjoy each other's children. Something we did to offset the cost was to draw names for gifts rather than get everyone something. This was a welcome change. We did buy each of the children a small gift and it was great fun watching them being opened.

One holiday stress relief tip is to set realistic goals for yourself. Times change and we need to try to change our traditions to fit our needs. I was reluctant to bring up this new tradition with my family, but the result was well received by all.

Gift giving is another topic at this time of year that brings stress. How much should you give? What should you give? I did

**By: Sandy Longfellow**

ISAC Administrative Assistant



discover an option for people who have everything. Decide on a theme for the gift you are giving. For me the theme would be chocolate! Then, fill a basket with items relating to that theme. In this basket you could include special chocolates from a specialty shop, a cookbook, calendar, kitchen tools all relating to the theme of chocolate. You can pick the size of the basket to determine cost. Many other themes come to mind: golf, snacks, cooking, pasta, toys.

I would also suggest that giving of time and energy to those who are less fortunate is a great way to help the blues at this time of year. Have someone over for cookies and hot chocolate that doesn't have family living close. Help out preparing grocery bags of food for the needy. Involve your children in these activities as well to ensure that we count our blessings!

Here are a few thoughts to conclude with:  
"To the world, you may be just one person. To one person, you may be the world." - *Anonymous*  
"A joyful spirit is evidence of a grateful heart." - *Maya Angelou*

# technology center

## PowerPoint Tip

**Q: "Is it possible to create an illusion of being on the Internet in a PowerPoint presentation without actually being connected to the Internet?"**

A: Yes! You will find this tip to be a great tool for you and gives your presentation a seamless flow. To create this illusion, you will need to go online and copy the Internet pages that you want to view in your PowerPoint. There are a couple of ways to copy the Internet pages; you can do a "Ctrl", "Print Screen" or you can do a "Ctrl" "C" and your page will be copied. Now open an image software program such as "Image Composer" or "Microsoft Photo Editor" and paste the Internet page into it by selecting "Paste" or "Ctrl" "V." Save it as a "jpg" file and now open PowerPoint and start a new presentation.

For the PowerPoint pages that you want to look like the Internet, you will need to right click on the page, select "Background", "Fill Effects", "Picture", "Select Picture" and you will be able to browse for the Internet page images you saved. Select the image and click "Insert", your image is now the background of this slide. Create all the pages of the website that you want to show or "surf."

Now that you have your images in place, you will need to begin on the first page and insert a text box by selecting "Insert", "Text Box." Now take your mouse and when the crosshair image appears slide your mouse to create the size of text box you wish to use. Once you have your text box created, select the

**By: Tammy Norman**

ISAC Technology Services  
Coordinator



outside edge of your text box and right click, select "Hyperlink", "Place in this document" and select the page that you wish to click on and go to. For example, you have a button that states "Links", you need to create a hyperlink that directs you to the next slide that shows the "Links" page. You can do this for each page/slide of your presentation. You can also have the back and forward buttons to go back to the "Home Page" or the next slide/page of the presentation.

Once you have all your hyperlinks created, and you view your Presentation as a "Slide Show", you will see the "hand" icon appear whenever you hover over the hyperlinks. When the hand appears you will be able to click on this and go where your hyperlink directs you. Special note, if you click without the appearance of the "Hand" you will go to the next slide of your presentation not to the hyperlinks location and the illusion may be lost. You can use this tip when you know you do not have Internet access but you want your audience to experience what the website will actually look and feel like.

**Website Note:** The NCO School is fast approaching, so take a moment and register online ([www.iowacounties.org](http://www.iowacounties.org)). Until next month, keep clicking!



## NADD 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Conference

On October 26, I flew to Vancouver, BC, Canada, to attend the National Association for the Dually Diagnosed (NADD) 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Conference, titled “Mental Health Aspects of Developmental Disabilities: Promising Treatment & Service.” The mission of NADD is to advance mental wellness for persons with developmental disabilities through the promotion of excellence in mental health care. As those who work in the mental health field know, we often encounter individuals with intellectual disabilities coupled with a major mental illness. I believe that we have encountered this more recently, not because it is more prevalent, but because clinicians have become more educated in this area of expertise and have better assessment/diagnostic tools to meet the special needs of individuals with intellectual disabilities.

### Developmental Approaches to Mental Health/Intellectual Disability (MH/ID)

While I attended four days of sessions, the most interesting session I attended was titled “Developmental Approaches to Mental Health/Intellectual Disability (MH/ID)” presented by Laurie Charlot, PhD., Assistant Professor of Psychiatry at UMass Medical School in Worcester, MA. She stressed that to accurately diagnose a mental illness in an individual with an intellectual disability we must understand the impact of developmental and cognitive features in the psychiatric assessment. She also warned that misdiagnosis and over-diagnosis of psychiatric disorders in individuals with intellectual disabilities can be a problem if clinicians don’t take into account developmental aspects of behaviors, but instead look at the behaviors as pathological.

Dr. Charlot illustrated this by giving us a case study of a person who was screaming, non-compliant with repeated requests to leave the event, could not be redirected, expressed belief that characters who were in costume were real, could not be shaken from this belief, and had to be physically removed from the event. What is your quick diagnostic hypotheses? The real answer is a 4 year old at a costume party!

The session emphasized that the cognitive development of the individual must be taken into account when completing a psychiatric assessment on an individual with an intellectual disability, and the previous case study was a perfect example of this. Dr. Charlot reminded us of our developmental psychology courses and the different stages that every individual goes through, for example, the magical thinking stage. This stage is characterized when fantasy and reality distinctions are poor. Individuals may talk to people not present, not due to hallucinations, but because they are fantasizing; where wishes may be expressed as beliefs, and can be misconstrued as delusions. These are not symptoms of psychotic thinking, but are due to the nature of the cognitive constructs. This again reminds us that some “symptoms” or behaviors may seem patho-

By: **Deb Eckerman**

ISAC Case Management  
Specialist



logical for a typical developing adult, yet may be *typical* for a person with a particular set of skills and challenges.

Dr. Charlot indicated that it was important to get information from other informants who know the individual, but she also warns that this information can also present problems, including overemphasizing external symptoms (i.e. aggression, breaking things, etc.) and under-reporting of internal symptoms, as it’s difficult for informants to know what others feel. She also stressed the fact that some observable behaviors can mask underlying medical issues. For example, mania presents itself in irritability, restlessness, pacing, running back and forth, can’t sit still, can’t focus, can’t sleep - the same symptoms of a person with akathisia.

### Summary - Look At The Whole Picture

In summary, Dr. Charlot reminded us that in all psychiatric assessments, and even more importantly when assessing an individual with an intellectual disability, we must look at the whole picture. This includes the clinical course/history of the illness and individual, the family pattern of illness, associated features and responses to treatment. She reminds us that sometimes there is NO acute psychiatric problem in the individual, but it is normal for them in their particular stage of cognitive development. Her recommendations for treatment are to 1) learn from developmental research and how developmental profile of skills and challenges can alter surface features of psychopathology; 2) acknowledge the individual’s unique developmental profile versus using age-based references when assessing psychopathology; and 3) use data to impact on systemic trends in care that will promote wellness, increase the quality of life and focus on prevention.

Although it was a long week, it also provided for some good learning opportunities with interesting and lively discussions. It is always fascinating to listen to the latest research and opinions from various professionals, not only in the U.S. but from other countries as well.

*If you are a case manager and have an address, phone, staff, or e-mail change please contact Sandy Longfellow at 515-244-7181 or [slongfellow@iowacounties.org](mailto:slongfellow@iowacounties.org).*

# ISAC brief

## Successful Move to New Conference Facility

More than 950 county officials traveled to Des Moines for ISAC's 61st Fall School of Instruction held at the Downtown Marriott and Renaissance Savery in Des Moines, Iowa on November 14-16. Two general sessions were held during the conference. During Monday's general session Bill Hansell, NACo President Elect, discussed the importance of NACo services and then recognized Bob Paulson, Winnebago County Auditor, for his years of service on the NACo Board of Directors. Juli Burney was the keynote speaker for the conference and received a standing ovation for her presentation of "Individuals Count."

ISAC's business meeting was held Tuesday morning. ISAC's legislative priorities were debated and approved. The top priorities recommended by the ISAC Board of Directors included: establishing a reformed property tax system in Iowa that will broaden the tax base and likely reduce the burden for most taxpayers; creating a new method to distribute the secondary road and farm to market shares of Road Use Tax Funds among counties; implementing new standards for elections in Iowa; and securing state funding for individuals committed to hospitals for substance abuse or mental health treatment. The priorities are the basis for ISAC's lobbying efforts during the upcoming legislative session.

ISAC Innovation Awards were given to four projects this year. "Drivers License Issuance" - Palo Alto County; "Special Needs - Medically Fragile Emergency Shelter Program" - Linn County; "[www.GetYourTags.com](http://www.GetYourTags.com)" - Iowa State County Treasurer's Association (ISCTA); and "Damage Assessment 2004" - Story County. Tuesday's General Session concluded with a farewell speech by ISAC President J. Patrick White and a speech on the upcoming year by ISAC 1<sup>st</sup> VP Angela Connolly.

ISAC's Spring School of Instruction will be held at the Downtown Marriott and Renaissance Savery in Des Moines, Iowa on March 16-18, 2004. Plan to attend!



*Above: County officials enjoyed the roundtable discussion during ISAC's seminar "Partnering for Better Results." Right: Jul Bruns presented the ISAC seminar "Listen Up! Conflict and Anger: What are my choices?" Below: Keynote speaker Julie Burney receives a Recorder's Cookbook from ISAC President Pat White at the end of her presentation.*



*Right: Executive Director Bill Peterson helps Community Services Affiliate President Mary Williams during the ISAC scholarship raffle drawing.*



*Left: NACo President Elect Bill Hansell gives Bob Paulson, Winnebago County Auditor, a Pendleton blanket for his years of service on the NACo Board.*



*Left: ISAC President Pat White awards Lisa Gibney from Linn County an ISAC Innovations Award for their "Special Needs - Medically Fragile Emergency Shelter Program."*

## Fall School Sponsors

Please thank and support the following companies that offset the costs associated with the Fall School through their conference sponsorship.

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## Thank You to Companies That Support ISAC

Thank you to the 70 exhibitors that attended ISAC's Fall School of Instruction. Exhibitors not only support the association financially, they also add to the wealth of information on how county officials can improve their individual counties through the use of their products and services.

Also, thank you for the 21 companies that advertised in the Fall School program. Their advertising allows ISAC to offset the cost associated with printing the program. To view the ISAC Fall School program visit ISAC's website ([www.iowacounties.org](http://www.iowacounties.org)) and click on 'Publications.'

## ISAC Fall School 2004

**By: Jerri Noboa**

ISAC Meetings Administrator



I would like to thank everyone that completed an evaluation form at the conclusion of the ISAC Fall School of Instruction held November 14-16, 2004 at the Downtown Marriott and Renaissance Savery in Des Moines. After compiling the results of the evaluation forms, I decided to respond to some of the comments. Please contact me if I can answer any further questions (515-244-7181 or [jnobia@iowacounties.org](mailto:jnobia@iowacounties.org)).

*Scheduling enough time between the meetings and exhibit breaks so you can get from the Marriott to the Renaissance Savery.* This matter was discussed at a meeting with the incoming affiliate presidents and additional time will be given in the Spring School affiliates agendas.

*Have breaks at both hotels.* The breaks were intentionally put in the exhibit area to bring in county officials throughout the day. The exhibitors pay a large fee to exhibit at our conferences, which keeps your registration fee down.

*Have vendors two days.* The vendors requested only having the exhibit hall open one day. This allows them to have less staff at the conference, be out of the office less and spend less in travel expenses.

*Tell us earlier where the affiliates will be at so we can get our sleeping room there.* We stated in April which hotel affiliates would be meeting at and it was posted on the ISAC website at that time. Visit ISAC's website ([www.iowacounties.org](http://www.iowacounties.org)) to see the hotel assignments for ISAC's Spring School.

*It was hard walking between the two hotels.* Please ask the hotels to shuttle you. I know it takes time, but if it saves your feet, it is well worth it.

*Need a bigger dance floor.* We will have a bigger dance floor for the Spring School.

*Move back to the Holiday Inn Airport.* Many people don't realize that we outgrew the Holiday Inn Airport. There wasn't enough space for 900 county officials and break out rooms for each affiliate. Some of the affiliates were packed in their rooms, with county officials even standing in the doorway.

*Have affiliates under one roof.* We are so big that there is not one facility in the state that can accommodate all of us under one roof.

## New County Officers School

ISAC will host its New County Officers (NCO) School at the Holiday Inn Airport in Des Moines January 19-20, 2004. This event is organized specifically to provide newly-elected county officials with the baseline information they need to begin their job. The NCO School is also an excellent opportunity for incumbent county officials to brush up on important county subjects.

### Wednesday, January 19

ISAC has lined up many of the most knowledgeable presenters in the state to spend Wednesday covering issues which pertain to all county officers, such as county budgeting, ethics, and county home rule.

In the morning, all attendees will receive training on open meetings/public records, ethics and personnel law. Then after lunch, attendees will get to choose which sessions they want to attend. Here are the afternoon breakout sessions for the NCO School:

**County Home Rule:** Provides an overview of the concept of County Home Rule, which defines the legal relationship between the state and the counties. Reviews Chapter 331, the county chapter of the Iowa Code.

**Budgeting 101:** Explains the basics of how a county budget is put together, including discussions of the general fund and the special revenue funds, the budget adoption process and the budget amendment process. The session will be taught by county auditors.

**Property Tax Overview:** Features an introduction to Iowa's property tax system, including such topics as property assessment, statutory budget limits, the rollback, and TIFs. This session will allow attendees to compare their own county's fiscal health to that of other counties.

**Working with the Media:** Provides advice on how to get the county message across to the local news media. The session will provide two different perspectives on the topic. A local government communications expert will talk about how to handle media interviews, and how to frame your message so that it gets media coverage. Then a newspaper executive will discuss what counties do right and do wrong when it comes to working with the media.

**Resolving Courthouse Conflicts:** Provides a framework to understand the complicated relationship between county boards of supervisors and other elected officials. Discusses who gets to decide what when it comes to things like approving expenditures, disciplining staff, office hours and salaries.

At the end of the day on Wednesday, ISAC will host a reception, to allow new county officials to meet and network.

### Thursday, January 20

On Thursday, several ISAC affiliates will be putting on a full day of individualized training. So, for instance, the county supervisors association will provide training for county supervisors. So far, the affiliates that will be providing training for new members are:

- supervisors
- sheriffs
- auditors
- treasurers
- general assistance

### 2005 NCO Manual

Those attending the NCO School will receive a CD of the 2005 NCO Manual, which contains in-depth information about each of the subjects presented during the day, as well as many other subjects of importance to county officials. The NCO Manual is currently being updated and expanded.

### Registration

Registration for the two-day school (Wednesday and Thursday) is \$80 in advance, \$90 at the door. That includes lunch both days, all coffee breaks, the reception, and a CD of the NCO Manual. The registration deadline is January 14, 2005. Visit ISAC's website ([www.iowacounties.org](http://www.iowacounties.org)) under 'Upcoming Events' to register.

### Hotel Accommodations

Sleeping rooms at the Holiday Inn Airport in Des Moines (1-800-248-4013) are \$69 single/\$79 double. Be sure to mention ISAC when making your reservation. The cut-off date for reservations is January 5, 2005.

### Directions

The Des Moines International Airport is located across the street from the Holiday Inn Airport and is 3 miles south of downtown Des Moines. From I-35, use Exit 68, travel 7 miles east to Fleur Dr. From I-80 west, take Hwy 65S, use Exit 141, travel 17 miles to Exit 97 Fleur Dr., travel north 1 mile. A map of the area can be found on ISAC's website ([www.iowacounties.org](http://www.iowacounties.org)).

### Questions?

Contact David Vestal at the ISAC office (515) 244-7181 or [dvestal@iowacounties.org](mailto:dvestal@iowacounties.org).

# counties in the spotlight

The Mason City Noon Rotary Club awarded its first Public Employee Service Above Self Award to **Cerro Gordo County** Treasurer's Office Administrator Patricia Welch. The award was presented during the club's October 18 meeting. Ann Butcher, an accounting clerk in the Finance Department, was recognized for her public service to the City of Mason City at the meeting as well.

The award was established by the club to recognize a city and a county employee who best exemplify the mission of public service. Nominees were evaluated on their commitment to public service, leadership, encouraging excellence, and the Rotary Four-Way Test.

Welch, who has worked for the county since March 1976, was nominated by Treasurer Michael Grandon. The other nominees from the county were Heather Mathre, Budget Manager in the Auditor's Office, and Fran Templeton, Office Manager for the Case Management Department.

The BureauCats, a rock 'n roll band almost entirely comprised of **Scott County** employees, will be performing on Friday, December 3rd at the Starlite Ballroom at the Mississippi Valley Fairgrounds in Davenport. In an effort to continue to raise money for the ISAC Scholarship Fund, they are charging a \$5 admission fee. They also plan to start giving money to middle schools for use in purchasing instruments for children to use who ordinarily might not be able to afford one. Appearing with the Cats will be their special friends Michelle Hilligoss, Ray Wierson, and Kim Lyon. Support the BureauCats and the ISAC Scholarship Program!

The Iowa Innovation Fund has awarded **Boone and Poweshiek counties** a \$63,850 grant to work with Iowa State University's public policy and administration program faculty to explore how the communities can share local services. "The Olive Tree Project: Helping Citizens Define Their Communities" is directed by Rick Morse, assistant professor of political science. ISU researchers will



Patricia Welch was recognized by the Mason City Noon Rotary Club on October 18, 2004, for providing exemplary public service. She is pictured with Cerro Gordo County Treasurer Michael Grandon who nominated her for the award.

work with county and city officials to identify common community values and services essential to preserving each area's unique identity. The research team will hold a series of public community forums, conduct surveys, analyze data and hold countywide meetings with service providers and stakeholders to find opportunities for collaboration.

*(Taken from Brooklyn Chronicle, October 27)*

City and county officials may have to dip into cash reserves because of continuing high gas prices. Diesel fuel, typically 10 to 12 cents per gallon cheaper than gasoline, is now more expensive than gasoline in **Linn County**. Linn County budgeted \$255,000 for fuel this fiscal year, anticipating that it would buy about 200,000 gallons with an average price of about \$1.15 per gallon. But the current prices the county is paying are \$1.45 a gallon for gasoline and \$1.54 for diesel. It is difficult to project fuel expenses a year in advance, which is typically how far out counties have to plan their budgets. Higher costs for fuel mean fewer supplies in other areas and reduced training - common areas that are cut to offset the increase of fuel.

*(Taken from Times-Republican, November 6)*

Visitors to **Polk County** spent more than \$1 billion last year, up 7% from 2002, according to The Travel Association of America. Major attractions (Jordan Creek Town Center, Iowa State Fair, Blank Park Zoo, Iowa Cubs baseball) and the presidential campaigns in Iowa this year brought in more money than ever before.

*(Taken from the Tribune, November 8)*

The Iowa Recycling Association presented eight awards to recipients that represent excellence in recycling and reuse. ISAC co-sponsored the awards. Winners included:

- Best School Recycling Program: Scattergood Friends School, West Branch
- Best Public Education Program: Rural Iowa Waste Management Association, Eldora
- Best Business Recycling Program: Wells Manufacturing Corp., Centerville
- Best Local Government Recycling Program: **Polk County** Recycling and Waste Reduction Program, Des Moines
- Recycling Project of the Year: Dubuque Metro Area Solid Waste Agency, Dubuque
- Recycling Facility of the Year: Taylor Recycling Facility of Iowa, Des Moines
- Murray J. Fox Recycling Innovation Award: Mid-American Recycling, Des Moines
- Recycler of the Year: Dr. Catherine Zeman, Recycling and Reuse Technology Transfer Center at UNI, Cedar Falls

Awards were presented at the sixth annual awards banquet on October 25 at the Sioux City Convention Center.

*(Taken from the Waterloo-Cedar Falls Courier, November 8)*

## NACo's 2005 Acts of Caring

For the first time, the National Association of Counties (NACo's) 2005 Acts of Caring Awards will present cash awards to the volunteer programs that win the Legacy Award for Excellence and Innovation and the Youth Service Award. The winner of the Legacy Award will receive \$1,500. The Youth Service Award winner will receive \$1,000.

The Acts of Caring Awards recognize the top county volunteer programs in the country. The programs are honored for their community service and the legacy they provide for the future. This is the sixth year for this unique awards program.

In 2005, the awards will be presented during National County Government Week, April 10 - 16 in a ceremony on Capitol Hill. All winning programs will receive etched glass awards and recognition from NACo and members of Congress.

Up to 18 programs will be recognized and deemed examples of outstanding Acts of Caring. Based on county size, as many as three programs will be recognized in each of the following six categories: Community Improvement; Criminal Justice/Emergency Management; Elderly Services; Health Services/Social Services; Libraries; and Programs for Children & Youth. The types of programs that can be included in Community Improvement are arts & culture, historic preservation, environmental programs, services to help animals, civic education and recreation and parks.

Awards will be presented in each of three population categories to ensure that large and small communities, and urban, suburban, and rural areas all receive the recognition they deserve.

The Legacy Award is presented to the program that most fully embodies the spirit of volunteerism by addressing a unique need. This award is given to the top program in the contest because it sets itself apart by providing unparalleled service in its community. It is selected from the entire field of Acts of Caring applicants.

The Youth Service Award is presented to the program that best identifies a critical need in the youth community and addresses it, in part, by engaging young people in service.

An "act of caring" is a community service provided by a county-sponsored volunteer program that enhances or preserves the quality of life. Winners will be selected by an independent panel of judges. Any county government that is a member of NACo with an active program that meets the contest criteria is eligible to participate. A county program that won an Acts of Caring Award in the past two years is not eligible in 2004.

The deadline for entries is Friday, January 21, 2005. Entries should be sent to NACo at 440 First St., NW, Washington, DC 20001. An award application is available online. Go to the NACo's website ([www.naco.org](http://www.naco.org)) and click on 'Awards.'

## Five Star Program To Award Grants That Support Wetland, Coastal Habitat Restoration Projects

The National Association of Counties (NACo) and the Five Star Restoration Challenge Grant Program project partners are currently accepting applications for the 2005 Five Star Restoration Challenge Grants. The Five Star Program provides modest financial assistance on a competitive basis to support community-based wetland, riparian and coastal habitat restoration projects that build diverse partnerships and foster local natural resource stewardship through education, outreach and training activities. Project sites can be public land, such as parks, streams, and school campuses, or private land, such as corporate facilities.

In 2004, 50 projects out of approximately 180 applicants, received grants averaging \$10,000. Examples of entities that received funding and assistance through the Five Star Program are: county and city governments, non-profits, schools and school districts, and local environmental groups. The stars in "Five Star" are the partners, funders, and/or participants who offer cash and in-kind services necessary to complete the restoration project including:

- Local or tribal governments (e.g., boards of county commissioners, departments of planning, environment or parks and recreation)
- Schools or youth organizations (e.g., state or local youth conservation corps, county job training programs)
- Local businesses or corporations
- Conservation organizations or local citizens groups
- State and federal resource management agencies
- Foundations or other funders

Begun in 1997, The Five Star Restoration Challenge Grant Program is a partnership between NACo, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, the Wildlife Habitat Council, and made possible with support from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. The deadline for applications is March 1, 2005. Applicants will be notified of their awards in mid-June. An application and examples of past Five Star projects is available online. Go to the NACo's website ([www.naco.org](http://www.naco.org)) and click on 'Technical Assistance.'

*For more information, contact Jason Shedlock at 202-942-4252 or [jshedloc@naco.org](mailto:jshedloc@naco.org).*

## in memory

### Barb Martley

Former Lucas County CPC Administrator, Barb Martley, passed away November 14. Barb began working as the Lucas County General Relief in August 1996 and then in November 1996 was also appointed as the Lucas County CPC Administrator. She served on the ISAC Board of Directors 1996-1997 and 2000-2001. Barb is survived by 15 grandchildren, two sons, and four daughters. Funeral services were held in Corydon, Iowa on November 20.



## classified ad

### Assistant County Engineer

Candidates applying for the Cherokee County Assistant Engineer position should be highly motivated individuals with the ability to plan, organize, assign and supervise the work of engineering technicians; ability to perform complex drafting and engineering design work; knowledge of the principles of land surveying and legal descriptions and plats; and strong computer skills and CADD knowledge. Successful applicants should possess excellent communication and people skills. This position offers a competitive salary and benefit package.

The complete job description and application may be picked up in person at the Cherokee County Engineer's Office, 5074 Hwy 3, Cherokee, Iowa, 51012 until position is filled. The successful candidate will have a four-year college degree in a related engineering field and be a registered professional engineer. Pre-employment physical with drug/alcohol screening required. EOE

## miscellaneous

### Homeland Security Training

To help city and county officials better understand their role in emergency management and homeland security, Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management, in partnership with the Iowa League of Cities and ISAC, will present a free 3-hour seminar covering the following topics:

*The Emergency Management/Homeland Security Process* - Homeland security and emergency management is a growing and evolving process within the state of Iowa. This presentation gives a holistic view of emergency management and homeland security in Iowa. It will cover the state law requirements found in Iowa Code chapter 29C and how they guide homeland security and emergency management in Iowa.

*The Homeland Security Grant Process* - Have you heard that Iowa received homeland security money, but are not sure how it is distributed? The homeland security grants process can be confusing. This presentation gives the basics on the grant process: eligible grantees, the application process, acceptable uses and allowable expenditures, and the future of grant distribution.

*The National Incident Management System (NIMS)* - The National Incident Management System (NIMS) is going to fundamentally change the way local, state and federal government and response agencies respond and react to incidents and disasters. This presentation gives background information on

NIMS and what is required of local units of government to ensure compliance with the program.

These sessions will provide a valuable understanding of homeland security in Iowa and the grant process that goes along with these programs. You will also have the opportunity to ask questions. Dinner will be provided free of charge. Space is limited. The sessions will be held from 5pm-9pm the following dates and at the following locations:

- December 8, 2004 - Des Moines Area Community College, Ankeny, Conference Center, Lakeview Inn, Building 7
- December 9, 2004 - University of Northern Iowa, Cedar Falls, Commons, Slife Ballroom
- December 13, 2004 - Buena Vista University, Storm Lake, Siebens Forum, Hansen 8
- December 14, 2004 - Southwest Community College, Creston, Room 180
- December 15, 2004 - Indian Hills Community College, Ottumwa, Quad Rooms

The registration form can be found on ISAC's website ([www.iowacounties.org](http://www.iowacounties.org)). Once completed, fax the form to Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management at 515-281-7539, attention Kathy Karn. If you have questions regarding this event, please contact Kyle Karsjen at 515-281-3231 or [Kyle.Karsjen@hlsem.state.ia.us](mailto:Kyle.Karsjen@hlsem.state.ia.us).

## Riding the Rails of Iowa's Economy

By: Diane McCauley, Rail Policy Analyst, Iowa Department of Transportation

A single train locomotive can move thousands of tons of freight. By itself, that's an extraordinary power. Yet, what many people don't realize is that rail transportation in Iowa is a principal force in sustaining and developing the state's economy. Let's look at a few facts:

- Freight on trucks, trains, barges, and other modes of transportation has grown rapidly - nearly 20% from 1993-2002.
- Freight volumes on all modes of travel are projected to *more than double* in the next 20 years.
- Iowa's railroad network carries 37% of Iowa's freight, yet makes up only 3% of Iowa's 130,000-mile transportation system.
- In 2002, rail shipped over 84 million tons of freight into and out of Iowa, with grain as the primary export and coal as the primary import product.

Let's put these freight statistics into perspective. Each high capacity rail car carries the equivalent of four semi-trailer loads. Therefore, Iowa's railroads annually carry the equivalent freight tonnage of 3.2 million semi-trailers. In other words, they carry over 8,800 semi-trailer loads a day, 365 days a year.

By diverting freight off the highways, Iowa's railroads play an enormous role in preventing or reducing traffic congestion, lessening wear and tear on the roadways, and lowering maintenance and rebuilding costs. With many highways at or near capacity and governments fiscally challenged, rail will remain a critical component in Iowa's integrated transportation system and in the efficient movement of the state's ever-increasing freight volumes.

Rail transportation is also environmentally friendly. It conserves limited natural resources and protects air quality. A gallon of diesel fuel will move a ton of freight approximately 406 miles by rail or 60 miles by truck. The Environmental Protection Agency estimates that for every ton-mile, a typical truck emits roughly three times more nitrogen oxide and particulates than a locomotive.

As private industries, Iowa railroads are major business contributors, which boost the state's economy in a number of ways. Iowa's railroad industry annually spends:

- Over \$268 million to maintain and improve Iowa's rail infrastructure;
- Over \$232 million a year for wages and benefits to over 3,700 Iowans;
- Over \$122 million in retirement benefits to 9,600 retired railroad workers and family members; and
- Significant amounts in property taxes to local governments.

Rail transportation is an excellent buy for Iowa shippers, improving business competitiveness. On average, it costs 42% less to move freight by rail now than in 1985. Many of Iowa's current industries depend upon reliable rail service for their continuing existence and profitability. Iowa's farmers and many value-added agricultural industries are heavily dependent on rail

to provide access to distant, often more profitable markets.

Iowa's rail network currently consists of approximately 4,100 miles of rail lines, down from the peak of over 10,000 miles in 1915. The loss of a community's rail line can endanger industry dependent on low cost rail shipments and eliminate that transportation option for future development.

Access to convenient and cost-effective transportation options is a significant consideration when new or existing industries are considering relocation or expansion. The availability of rail service might be the deciding factor; one that attracts or retains a business, and increases local employment and the county's tax base. Iowa communities are encouraged to take advantage of the opportunities afforded by rail transportation, and to join the significant segment of Iowa's economy already "riding the rails."

### Railroad Resources

The Iowa Department of Transportation's Office of Rail Transportation provides a number of services and administers several funding programs that may be of assistance to local jurisdictions. Here is a short list of some of the more significant services, programs and resources offered.

*Office of Rail Transportation Website - [www.iowarail.com](http://www.iowarail.com)*

Find background information on Iowa's railroads, the Iowa Department of Transportation's Office of Rail Transportation programs, contact information, current events, and much, much more.

*Iowa Railroad Ties Newsletter*

A recently launched email newsletter features news and insights about Iowa's rail transportation system and the role it plays in the state's economy. Read the inaugural issue and subscribe to receive future copies at [www.iowarail.com](http://www.iowarail.com).

*Have a concern with a rough highway/rail crossing?*

The State Grade Crossing Surface Repair Program provides funding to pay 60% of an improvement, while local highway jurisdictions and railroad each pay 20% of the cost of a surface repair. Contact Mary Jo Key at 515-239-1108 or [mary.jo.key@dot.iowa.gov](mailto:mary.jo.key@dot.iowa.gov).

*Interested in improving safety at a crossing?*

The Federal Aid Rail/Highway Crossing Safety Program pays 90% of the cost of new or upgraded crossing protection. Contact Jim Gibson at 515-239-1549 or [james.gibson@dot.iowa.gov](mailto:james.gibson@dot.iowa.gov).

*Are you involved in current or proposed rail-related industrial development?*

Limited funding is available to assist in construction of rail structures to serve new or expanding industries. Contact Larry Mesenbrink at 515-239-1066 or [larry.mesenbrink@dot.iowa.gov](mailto:larry.mesenbrink@dot.iowa.gov).



## Employee Retention: You'd Better Love 'Em, or You're Gonna Lose 'Em

By: Jennifer Hodnett Ledet, Consultant & Trainer

We've probably all experienced the frustration and high cost of employee turnover at one time or another. If you have an exit interview program set up, you may have an idea of the causes of employee turnover in your organization. If you don't conduct exit interviews, you're left to wonder why your best and brightest are leaving you.

Keeping top performers is one of the hottest HR topics today. You may be surprised to learn that the results of study after study show that employees are not leaving their current jobs for more money! I've seen survey results where employees ranked what was most important, and money was the fifth (or lower) most important value – not the first. So why are they leaving, and what can you do to keep them? Well, using various survey results and studies, I've compiled the following list of recommendations for retention.

### 1. Cultivate a Positive Corporate Culture

Foster a sense of family and community, so people feel like they have a sense of belonging and camaraderie. Make yours a “family friendly” culture – whenever possible, try implementing policies such as flexible scheduling, personal growth classes, work-life balance techniques, etc. Most people, whether married or single, with or without kids, rank this as an important aspect of their jobs. Organizing social activities outside of the workplace also creates a social network that employees might not want to abandon for the sake of a new job.

### 2. Train Your Supervisors

I can't emphasize the importance of the supervisor enough. A majority of respondents to a recent survey listed dissatisfaction with their supervisor as their reason for leaving their jobs. The supervisor plays such an important role in the work/life satisfaction of employees, and yet, employers often fail to invest in this resource. The first step you should take is to ensure that your supervisors are properly trained in effective supervisory techniques. They should receive training in the legal ins and outs of supervision, such as non-discriminatory practices and developing and maintaining a respectful work environment. Your corporate culture and managerial philosophy should then reinforce this attitude. You might even want to schedule a day or half-day in-house training/development program for supervisors once a month or once a quarter. It's an investment that might mean the difference between the supervisor being your most important asset rather than your greatest potential liability.

### 3. Offer Training and Growth Opportunities

Allow your employees to develop new job skills. A recent survey conducted by the Associated General Contractors of America found that 28% of the respondents (who were construction workers), want their companies to help fund their continuing education classes or provide tuition reimbursement for their pursuit of advanced degrees. But we're not just talking about formal education. You could allow employees to cross-train and learn other jobs, and then, whenever possible, promote from within. The best candidate for an available position may already be working for you. By making it easy to move within the organization, you may find that people will be less likely to look outside.

### 4. Provide Meaningful and Challenging Work

A recent survey by the Families and Work Institute found that wages had a 2% impact on job satisfaction, while job quality and workplace support had a combined impact of 70%. Workers stay because they like their jobs and they feel appreciated. Giving employees greater control and decision-making authority demonstrates your trust in their abilities to accomplish goals. You should, of course always recognize and reward your employees for their performance and effort.

### 5. Offer Competitive Wages & Beefed Up Benefits Packages

Money may not be everything, but you should pay competitive wages in order to be able to recruit effectively. (Believe me, I know how difficult this can be in the public sector.) An enhanced benefits package, particularly attractive retirement plans and health insurance will also serve as incentive for employees to stay. You may even want to have a human resources/benefits professional conduct a benefits analysis to make sure that you're providing the kind of benefits that your employees want and to ensure that you're getting the most for your benefits dollars.

These are but a few ideas for keeping your top performing employees. Even if you can't match the pay and stock options offered by some big companies, you can compete by creating the kind of workplace that employees want to return to each and every day.

*Jennifer Hodnett Ledet is a human resources management consultant and trainer based in Thibodaux, LA. She has extensive experience in the human resources field, with much of it in the public sector. She may be reached via e-mail at: [jenniferledet@charter.net](mailto:jenniferledet@charter.net). This article was reprinted with permission from Louisiana Parish Government.*

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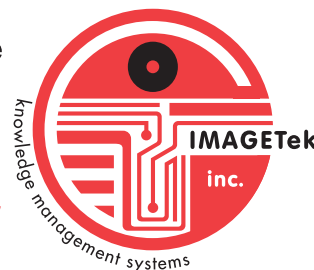
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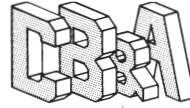
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## Quote of the Month:

"I stopped believing in Santa Claus when I was six. Mother took me to see him in a department store and he asked for my autograph."  
- Shirley Temple



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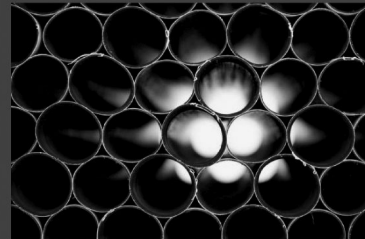
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## 2005-2006 County Directory Coming Soon!

The 2005-2006 ISAC County Directory will be for sale at the New County Officers School January 19, 2005. Order forms are also available on ISAC's website ([www.iowacounties.org](http://www.iowacounties.org)) under 'County Information.' The directories will be sold for \$15 to county officials, \$25 to non-county officials.

**2005-2006 County Directory**  
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## DECEMBER

- 1 District 4 Winter Meeting  
(Griswold Community Center, Griswold)
- 1-3 CCMS Fundamentals  
(Hilton Garden Inn, Des Moines/Urbandale)
- 2 District 2 Winter Meeting  
(Elks Lodge, Charles City)
- 3 Annual Drainage Conference  
(Starlite, Fort Dodge)
- 7 CCMS Training Committee (ISAC Office)
- 7-9 Engineers Annual Conference  
(Scheman Center, Ames)
- 8 Emergency Management/Homeland  
Security Process (DMACC, Ankeny)
- 9 District 1 Winter Meeting  
(Holiday Inn Airport, Des Moines)
- 9 Emergency Management/Homeland  
Security Process (UNI, Cedar Falls)
- 12-15 Sheriffs & Deputies Winter School  
(Downtown Marriott, Des Moines)
- 13 Emergency Management/Homeland  
Security Process (BVU, Storm Lake)
- 14 Emergency Management/Homeland  
Security Process (SW CC, Creston)
- 14 Recorders Task Force (ISAC Office)
- 15 Emergency Management/Homeland  
Security Process (Indian Hills, Ottumwa)
- 16 IEHA Board of Directors (ISAC Office)
- 16 CCMS NE Support Group  
(East Bremer Diner, Waverly)
- 17 ISAC Board of Directors (ISAC Office)
- 17 District 5 Winter Meeting  
(Hotel Ottumwa, Ottumwa)
- 24 ISAC Office Closed
- 27 ISAC Office Closed
- 31 ISAC Office Closed

## JANUARY

- 11 CCMS Administrators  
(Hilton Garden Inn, Des Moines/Urbandale)
- 12 CRIS Board of Directors (ISAC Office)
- 19-20 New County Officers School  
(Holiday Inn Airport, Des Moines)
- 21 CCMS Board of Directors  
(Holiday Inn Airport, Des Moines)
- 21 Statewide Supervisors Meeting  
(Holiday Inn Airport, Des Moines)
- 28 ISAC Board of Directors (ISAC Office)

## FEBRUARY

- 17 ISAC Executive Board (ISAC Office)
- 24-25 ISAC Board of Directors (ISAC Office)

## MARCH

- 2-4 CCMS Fundamentals (location TBA)
- 4-8 NACo Legislative Conference  
(Washington DC)
- 16 CCMS Board of Directors (Marriott, DM)
- 16-18 ISAC Spring School  
(Marriott & Renaissance Savery, DM)

## APRIL

- 12 CCMS Administrators/Support Staff Meeting  
(location TBA)
- 13 CCMS Cost Report Training (location TBA)
- 27 ISAC Board of Directors & League of Cities  
Board of Directors Dinner/Meeting
- 28 ISAC Board of Directors (ISAC Office)

## MAY

- 12 CCMS Advanced Case Manager  
(Hilton Garden Inn, Des Moines/Urbandale)

## JUNE

- 7-8 CCMS Supervisors Training (location TBA)
- 8-10 Information Technology Annual Conference  
(Cedar Rapids)

## JULY

- 13 ISAC Board of Directors (ISAC Office)
- 15-19 NACo Annual Conference (Hawaii)

## AUGUST

- 4-5 Supervisors Executive Board (location TBA)

### Upcoming Schools

November 13-15, 2005 - Downtown Marriott/  
Renaissance Savery, Des Moines

March 19-21, 2006 - Downtown Marriott/Renaissance  
Savery, Des Moines

November 29-Dec. 1, 2006 - Downtown Marriott/  
Renaissance Savery, Des Moines

*For agendas or additional information on any of the above listed meetings please visit our website at [www.iowacounties.org](http://www.iowacounties.org) and click on 'Upcoming Events!' If you have any questions about the meetings listed above, please contact Jerri at (515) 244-7181 or by email at [jnboea@iowacounties.org](mailto:jnboea@iowacounties.org).*

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