

The Iowa County

GIS: Understand Today &
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December 2005



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The Iowa County

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GIS In County Government	4-5
Capitol Comments <i>John Easter</i>	6
Legal Briefs <i>David Vestal</i>	7
Health Check <i>Sandy Longfellow</i>	8
Technology Center <i>Tammy Norman</i>	8
Case Management <i>Dan Vonnahme</i>	9
Counties in the Spotlight	10-11
ISAC Brief	11-16
NACo News	17
Miscellaneous	17
Calendar of Events	23

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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.

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The Evolution of GIS Within County Government

By: Jason Siebrecht, Linn County; Matt Boeck, Mahaska County; and Wayne Chizek, Marshall County

For many counties over the past 15-20 years, the definition of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) has evolved from hand-maintained paper maps to a series of non-related digital computer-aided design (CAD) map files with aerial photography, and now to a countywide relational database of geographic information.

As technology changes, so do the applications that counties invest so heavily in to assist local governments in managing resources. Technology has become more and more demanding, efficient and mobile to keep up with society. GIS is really no different. As GIS applications mature with complete datasets (e.g. property lines/parcels, road centerlines, aerial photography), they create the ability to analyze this data in conjunction with other county business applications. Counties will continue using GIS to manage property parcels, which typically is the primary purpose for their investment; however, the tools are now available to study the past and look for better, more efficient ways to do business within county government.

First Level of GIS Implementation

Services and functions provided by county government in Iowa include, but are not limited to, economic development, emergency management, environmental health, human services, land-use planning, law enforcement, parks & recreation, public health, real estate assessment/taxation, and transportation infrastructure. Typically, the first level of GIS implementation in any of these service/function areas is an inventory application phase (the collection of various data). Examples of inventory application include parcel maps (indicate the number of parcels, where they are located, ownership, and addressing) and transportation infrastructure maps (identify roads, bridges, rights-of-way and utilities). A large number of counties are in the process or have completed inventory applications for many of the services/functions mentioned above.

As data collection or inventory applications mature, most counties begin to implement analysis applications. For many counties this is the first time that they have had the ability to digitally and visually overlay their data and truly do analysis of that data. For example, using this data to assist local leaders working to attract new business or assist with economic development becomes a reality. Developing and maintaining a successful GIS with the ability to connect to other data sources allows local governments to provide detailed information about the area, its history and available resources, all of which might be deciding factors for new business opportunities. It is very important to stress, however, that data maintenance will be ongoing and needs to continue to have long-term support. As with any successful application, GIS will only be as good as the data it stores and maintains.

Using GIS For Disasters

This year's hurricane disasters required many Americans to gain firsthand experience with emergency mitigation and cleanup operations. With limited county personnel, actions can be taken to prevent or mitigate the damage from flooding and other natural disasters that commonly occur in Iowa. Flood prone areas can be mapped, along with elevation contours, locations of homes, schools, businesses, roads and bridges. Linking these features to county assessor databases allows potential damage assessments to be made. The use of census data could determine the number of lives at risk. If a natural disaster was to occur, maps and lists of property owners and dwellings can be quickly generated and possibly be linked to E911 databases to provide necessary contact information. These analysis tasks are very geographic in nature, which is a perfect fit for GIS. The bottom line is that with up-to-date layers of digital information and access to a variety of databases, officials will have a powerful tool to use. This tool can help mitigate future expenses in the event of a natural disaster and potentially increase revenues by assisting current business growth, while also being used to attract new commerce and industry.

So how is this done? Regardless of county size, once a GIS-enabled parcel map layer is available, the ability to link to other business applications (such as assessor systems, permitting systems, etc.) creates an enormous amount of analysis that may aide in more informed decision-making. The important thing to keep in mind is that GIS is only a tool and will only provide feedback when it and other county business database applications can efficiently communicate. The days when county governments would buy a certain application to fulfill a specific need are disappearing. Today's applications, while still meeting business needs and maintaining data security, need to allow other applications, such as a GIS, to efficiently connect to one another for data analysis.

Over the last few years, it has become very common to see GIS data being stored, maintained and managed by relational database management systems (RDBMS), such as Microsoft SQL, Oracle, etc. As organizations make this migration, proper database management becomes increasingly important, particularly when other applications need to be connected. Today database management goes well beyond the mainframe and desktop environments. It is very likely that in the future Internet-based applications will be driving most of our business information and allow for more mobile applications to access and manipulate data.

Why Counties Use GIS

Though GIS in county government is used primarily to manage property parcels, it is quickly becoming a tool that allows county officials to compare and study various databases in order to visualize needs, plans or outcomes. Whoever thought a parcel-mapping application would demand so much from a database? Not only are map layers being stored and maintained in a RDBMS, but now we are seeing GIS applications communicate with other databases being maintained by various county offices. Proper database management is a key concept, not only to keep other county business applications performing well, but also to allow your GIS mapping applications to efficiently communicate with those databases and, hence, to allow counties to evolve to more advanced levels of GIS applications.

These advanced level applications include what can be referred to as forecasting/management/policy-making applications. These applications involve not only analyzing currently available data, but also determining its past trends and forecasting those trends into the future. They include the ability to model “what if scenarios” and provide management and policy makers an insight into how policy decisions made today may affect their citizens and the county as a whole in the future.

These types of applications can assist in determining scheduled maintenance and expansion of transportation infrastructure, or pinpoint possible sources of disease. Such applications can model the effect of placing emergency facilities and response capabilities in specific locations, or the effect of re-allocating law enforcement resources to be more effective and possibly more efficient. Applications of this nature can project future population growth and demographics that will determine the need for human services and recreational facilities.

As a county progresses from inventory applications to analysis applications and eventually to forecasting/management/policy-making applications, the GIS evolution process not only includes these types of applications, but the addition of more sophisticated analysis tools. A few examples of these are transportation network analysis tools (routing, facility location and service area analysis), spatial analysis tools (analysis of spatial relationships between data layers) and 3D analysis tools (three dimensional visualization and analysis tools).

It doesn't take long to realize that an investment to establish a countywide GIS can provide improved efficiency and accuracy for a more demanding population. That investment may be time (if done ‘in-house’), money (if contracted through a vendor) or a combination of both to create various data layers and/or applications. However, once a GIS has been established, county officials have a powerful tool to automate and enhance many tasks. As a county's GIS matures, many additional layers and applications can be added, such as fire districts, Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) information, building footprints, or septic tank locations, to name a few. As the

number of applications increase, so will the expectations of the user community. Having a long-range plan for the integration of new database applications is key to meeting increasing demands of an evolving GIS.

It quickly becomes apparent that to truly utilize GIS to its fullest capability and to provide the most benefit to the county, data and applications must be developed over time for as many of the county services/functions areas as resources allow. Focusing entirely on just one or two of those services/functions will no doubt delay a county's evolution toward analysis and forecasting/management/policy-making applications. It is also important to keep in mind that one of the most valuable resources counties can invest in for any technology is the people using and managing data and technology. It was mentioned previously that a successful GIS is only as good as the data; this also applies to the people interacting with the system. Without qualified people to maintain the data, create applications, analyze data, and manage processes, a GIS becomes little more than just an inventory tool.

A Tool For Any County

Small counties are at somewhat of a disadvantage compared to their larger neighbors. They do not have the resources to hire and maintain a GIS coordinator and/or staff (specialists, analysts, programmers and webmasters). As a result, many GIS tasks are often performed by personnel in various departments, such as assessors, auditors, engineers or planning & zoning people. These counties also tend to rely more heavily on vendors and other private companies due to the lack of onsite staff. For many this is a viable alternative when the benefits of a GIS are considered. Many tasks are enhanced by GIS so current county employees can focus their time elsewhere. Keep in mind that GIS remains a tool for any county and that periodic user training for designated existing staff may prove more beneficial than totally relying on outsourcing basic analysis tasks.

County government has a responsibility to provide their services/functions to the citizens in an efficient and equitable manner. GIS and other information technologies are tools that, in the long run, allow counties to meet those responsibilities. Though changes are inevitable, it is extremely important to have an organizational understanding and support for technology and its future growth. Two things about technology at any level are undeniably true: it will change and its uses will most certainly grow. Each county must determine if they are willing to evolve and do the same.

The Meth Epidemic

Last year, the Iowa General Assembly enacted legislation to help fight the manufacture of methamphetamine. Senate File 169 made ephedrine a Schedule V controlled substance and placed restrictions on the non-prescription sale of pseudoephedrine. The legislation requires that products containing over 360 milligrams of pseudoephedrine be sold only by pharmacies. Retailers selling products containing less than 360 milligrams must sell them from behind the counter; purchasers must present government-issued photo identification and sign their names and addresses in a logbook.

This new law has been effective in curbing the manufacture of meth in Iowa. According to members of the Iowa State Sheriffs and Deputies Association, there has been as much as an 80% reduction in meth lab seizures in our state. This is a great achievement by our General Assembly and local law enforcement so kudos should be awarded to them. But the battle is not over. While production is down, importation in Iowa is rising considerably. Law enforcement officials are concerned that meth is coming in primarily from surrounding states and Mexico. For counties, meth abuse causes legal, medical, environmental and social problems.

The National Association of Counties (NACo) recently conducted two nationwide surveys concerning the production, distribution and use of meth in U.S. counties. The results of these surveys were published by NACo in a booklet titled *The Meth Epidemic in America*. The findings depict the criminal effect of meth on communities and the impact of meth on children.

Criminal Effect Of Meth On Communities

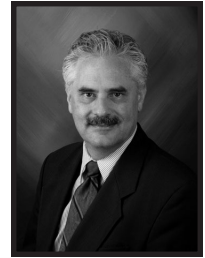
Of the 500 local law enforcement agencies surveyed, NACo found that 87% of those responding have experienced an increase in meth-related arrests during the last three years and the problem is nationwide in scope. It was found that meth is the leading drug-related law enforcement problem in the country, far surpassing cocaine, marijuana or heroin as the number one drug problem. Meth-related arrests represent a high proportion of crimes requiring jail time. Fifty percent of the counties estimated that one in five of their current inmate population is there on a meth-related crime. Moreover, the survey found that 70% of the respondents say that other crimes, such as burglaries or robberies, have increased because of meth use and 62% report increases in domestic violence.

Impact Of Meth On Children

Meth is a major cause of child abuse and neglect. The survey found that 40% of responding child welfare officials report increased out-of-home placements because of meth in 2004. Over the last five years, out-of-home placements in California and Colorado were up at least 70%. Closer to home, 69% of the responding Minnesota counties reported an increase in out-of-home placements, as did 54% of the counties in North Dakota. Finally, the survey found that meth hurts children and families over the long run. Fifty-nine percent of the responding counties felt that the

By: **John Easter**

ISAC Director of
Intergovernmental Affairs



particular nature of the meth-user parent has increased the difficulty of family reunification.

In Iowa, Department of Human Services officials believe that a drop in the number of child abuse cases in the last year could be attributed to passage of SF 169. They caution, however, that the current-year statistics may not necessarily be a trend and that the number could change by the end of the year. At least there may be some hope.

NACo Methamphetamine Action Group

In order to address this growing epidemic, NACo created the Methamphetamine Action Group (MAG). MAG's mission is to encourage the nation's county officials to assume the leadership necessary for the battle against America's most serious public health issue: methamphetamine manufacture, importation and use. MAG is co-chaired by Story County Supervisor Jane Halliburton and Association of Minnesota Counties Executive Director Jim Mulder.

MAG is taking several action steps to assess the impacts of methamphetamine, to educate county officials on the dangers of meth and to provide tools and support for local efforts in combating the epidemic. It is working to develop a coordinated national policy response that includes the federal, state, and local governments, as well as the private sector. MAG interacts with such external organizations as the White House, Congress, federal agencies and various private-sector organizations to advance a policy agenda that addresses meth problems. Finally, MAG will identify best local-level practices as models for other local governments to address education, prevention, enforcement and treatment of meth challenges.

There's Work To Be Done

MAG has prepared policy direction for NACo and counties nationwide. Among the action steps is support for precursor control through the Combat Meth Act (S.103/H.R.314) to place federal restrictions on ingredients used to produce meth, similar to SF 169 in Iowa. The legislation has been incorporated into the FY06 Commerce-Justice-Science appropriations bill in the U.S. Senate. In addition, NACo has indicated support for legislation to require the EPA to establish the voluntary clean-up of former meth labs. NACo also endorsed H.R. 2335, the Meth Endangered Children Protection Act, to provide \$10 million per year for rapid response drug-endangered children teams.

Comprehensive solutions are multi-faceted. The meth epidemic involves intergovernmental cooperation at all levels and across many branches of government. Iowa has established itself as a leader in precursor control and curbing meth labs, but there is so much more to do with prevention, education, treatment, law enforcement and environmental clean-up. We must keep our momentum going.

Legislature Set to Explore County Use of Eminent Domain

When the Legislature convenes in January, one issue that will be getting attention is eminent domain. This issue has surfaced because of the U.S. Supreme Court's June 23, 2005, decision in *Kelo v. City of New London*. In that case, the city approved a redevelopment plan for a wharf area of the city. Most of the property in the area was purchased by the city from willing sellers. The city began condemnation actions against the remaining owners. Connecticut law allowed the use of eminent domain for economic development. The property owners challenged the city's authority, claiming that it was in violation of the Fifth Amendment's Takings Clause, which says that private property may not "be taken for public use, without just compensation."

The property owners claimed that the city's action, taking private property for economic development purposes, did not satisfy the "public use" requirement of the Takings Clause.

The Supreme Court, on a 5-4 vote, said that economic development is a "public use," even though the land will technically not be used by the general public. The Court said that the redevelopment plan was intended to promote economic development, and economic development is a "traditional and long accepted governmental function."

The Supreme Court cited two prior cases to support its decision. In *Berman v. Parker*, 384 U.S. 26 (1954), the Court upheld a plan by Washington, D.C. to condemn private land and sell part of it to developers as part of a community redevelopment program. In *Hawaii Housing Authority v. Midkiff*, 467 U.S. 229 (1984), the Court upheld a Hawaii statute that allowed the use of eminent domain to force the sale of land in some cases to reduce the concentration of land ownership.

The majority said that *Kelo* was just another example of giving legislatures the power to decide what public needs justify the use of eminent domain. But the message heard around the country was clear; because of *Kelo* no one's home or farm is safe from government seizure. As one commentator said, *Kelo* was "a sucker punch against private land owners."

The concern is that with urban sprawl, agricultural land is increasingly being targeted for use for factories, malls, and housing complexes. So counties would be tempted to use condemnation to claim this land for economic development.

But the truth is that in many ways, *Kelo* is a non-issue for Iowa counties. The Legislature has already disallowed the use of eminent domain by counties for economic development. Legislation enacted in 1999 provides that agricultural land cannot be condemned for economic development purposes.

According to Iowa Code §6A.21, "agricultural land" includes real property in tracts of 10 acres or more, if used for the production of agricultural commodities. It includes farm residences.

By: David Vestal

ISAC General Counsel



Currently, agricultural land cannot be condemned for: housing and residential development, recreational development paid for with private funds, commercial or industrial enterprise development, or recreational trails.

So currently in Iowa, counties cannot use *Kelo*-type eminent domain to take agricultural land for economic development project. That is just not possible.

After *Kelo*, ISAC did a survey to get a handle on where and how eminent domain is currently used by Iowa counties. About half of the counties responded. Here are some of the findings. Most counties responding said they had not used eminent domain in the last five years; only one reported using it more than twice in the last five years. So counties rarely use eminent domain in the first place. In almost all cases, eminent domain was used for road expansion or road improvement. In one case it was used for landfill expansion. Almost all counties responding to the survey agreed that eminent domain is used only as a last resort. More than half of the counties responding said that it would be "harmful" or "very harmful" if the counties' eminent domain powers were seriously restricted by the Legislature. Several respondents echoed the comments of one county official, who said that a county road expansion project was only completed because the county was able to use eminent domain: "The entire project was in jeopardy due to one landowner."

One danger is that the Legislature will respond to *Kelo* by restricting counties' ability to use eminent domain for road projects. The problem with *Kelo*, according to critics, was that it allowed the taking of private property for private economic development projects, as opposed to public projects. No one seriously objects to the use of eminent domain to provide needed public services like roads or sewers.

The other danger is that the Legislature will use *Kelo* as an excuse to restrict county use of eminent domain when the "*Kelo* problem" was already addressed in Iowa six years ago. When the Legislature starts turning up the rhetoric on this issue, and vows to "protect property rights," remember that Iowa law already prohibits counties from condemning agricultural land for economic development purposes.

Parting Ponderable: Match the Iowa County name with the origin of that name:

- | | |
|----------|---|
| Buchanan | Named for a Hungarian patriot and statesman |
| Kossuth | Named for the first white settler in Iowa |
| O'Brien | Named for the 15 th president of the United States |
| Mahaska | Named for a leader for Irish independence in 1848 |
| Dubuque | Named for Indian word for "white cloud" |

health check

Impaired Driving

*"Alcohol is society's legal, oldest and most popular drug."
- National Educational Foundation of America, 2002*

Many years ago when my daughter was in high school, there was an auto accident close to where we lived in which a young lady was killed by a drunk driver. It was a busy intersection close to the football field where she was going to marching band practice on a Saturday morning.

We try to impress on our children the importance of being careful – defensive driving. One of the most effective things we can do as parents is to be a good example. Show your children how to be responsible. I think the best way is not to drink; but if you do, show them when to have a designated driver, call a cab or take other measures to insure safety.

There are holidays coming up in which alcohol plays a role. To help you prepare for these events, here are a few facts about drinking and driving. If you would like more, go to www.madd.org.

- ✓ Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death for people from 2-33 years old.
- ✓ The average person metabolizes alcohol at the rate of about one drink per hour. Only time will sober a person up. Drink-

By: Sandy Longfellow

ISAC Administrative Assistant



- ing strong coffee, exercising or taking a cold shower will not help.
- ✓ Research has found that lap/shoulder safety belts, when used, reduce the risk of fatal injury to front seat passenger car occupants by 45%.
- ✓ For children, where restraint use was known, 30% were unrestrained; among those who were fatally injured, 53% were unrestrained.
- ✓ Beer is the drink of choice in most cases of heavy drinking, binge drinking, drunk driving and underage drinking. Male drivers were involved in more fatal crashes (25%) than females (12%).
- ✓ The rate of alcohol involvement in fatal crashes is more than three times as high at night as during the day (61% vs. 18%).
- ✓ Thirty-eight percent of all pedestrians 16 years of age or older killed in traffic crashes in 2000 had alcohol in their system. *(Even walking can be dangerous when you are impaired!)*

Have a safe and happy holiday.

technology center

Handhelds

Q: I have been told that I should trade in my paper-based planner for a PDA; any suggestions on what I should buy?

A: PDAs, or “personal digital assistants,” have evolved in the last few years. In years past, PDAs, also called handhelds, were primarily glorified electronic organizers that allowed you to store names, addresses, phone numbers and a calendar. Now they are so much more. The first step you need to take is to decide what you will be using your PDA for. Do you want to just replace your address book and planner? If so, you will be fine with a Palm. If you want to be able to type documents and create spreadsheets, you will need to purchase a Pocket PC. Other factors that you need to consider in purchasing a handheld are the following:

Display: Budget models will have a monochrome or “black and white” display, while pricier models will come with full color. Color displays are easier to read and have a higher contrast ratio. You will want to pay attention to the resolution of the displays. Some Palms come with a 160x160 but you will be happier with at least a 320x320 resolution display. Sunlight also causes issues; if you will be using your PDA outdoors quite a bit, you will want to ensure the model you choose comes with either a LCD or TFT screen. The only issue with a TFT screen is that indoors

By: Tammy Norman

ISAC Technology Services Coordinator



they must utilize a backlight and this tends to drain battery life.

Memory: Every handheld comes loaded with enough memory to handle basic handheld tasks; however, if you wish to create spreadsheets or play games, you will want to opt for at least 32MB of RAM. If you wish to have the ability to utilize MP3 playback, you will need 256MB.

Battery: PDAs are only as good as their battery life, so this is an important feature to consider. You will want to make sure that the PDA can use rechargeable batteries. The best solution is to purchase a PDA that allows for a cell that is rechargeable and you are able to replace. You can then carry a spare or opt to replace it in the future with a cell of higher capacity.

Data Input: How well you adhere to the software rules of the hand-writing recognition system will determine how pleased you are with this feature. They are making strides in data input, but it still has a ways to go, especially if your handwriting is messy. You always have the option of the onscreen keyboard or you can purchase a handheld with a QWERTY keyboard that works well for those who do not mind small keys. However, you can always opt to purchase an accessory keyboard too.

Confessions Of A Technophobe Love Thy Neighbor's Dog?

OK, I admit it – I am not the most technologically savvy person in the world. I don't understand why the joke about the blonde using "White-Out" on her computer monitor is funny, and I've tried to toast Pop-Tarts in the floppy drive of my computer. But the truth of the matter is that technology is part of doing business in the world today, whether that business is manufacturing cars, selling toys through e-commerce, or providing service to constituents in county government. We all have a choice to make – we can either continue with "business as usual" or we can try to incorporate some of the tools at our disposal. But the problem with "business as usual" is that it requires everyone around you to adopt the same philosophy. Dinosaurs ruled the world at one time. And "business as usual" worked until the Big Comet hit. Today, the only "dinosaurs" we see are alligators, crocodiles, and a few aging hippies who come out of the woodwork whenever a Grateful Dead tribute band shows up. "Business as usual" only really works if we accept that "change as usual" is part of the equation.

A Blast From The Past: 1989

Let's take a step back: The year is 1989 and a bright, young case manager with a full head of jet-black hair (let's call him "Dan") goes forth to "do good in the world." He is armed with pen and paper, a telephone, and support staff assistance. All phone calls go through a receptionist, who must check a "sign-in" sheet to determine if Dan is available (provided that he remembered to sign-out on his way out the door). If it looks like Dan is in, the receptionist will transfer the call back to his desk. If he doesn't answer, she will ask the caller to hold while she gets on the intercom to ask the entire office if anyone has seen Dan. If not, she will take a message on one of those pink "while you were out" sheets, which will later be transported to the quagmire that is Dan's desktop. Throughout the course of the day, enough of these messages are generated to create the illusion that you are in the visitor's locker room at Kinnick Stadium. Hopefully, he will see this one upon his return, because the "urgent" box is checked. However, there is no way to contact him because he is visiting a client who doesn't have a phone.

Dan, in the meantime, is meeting with his client to do a staffing. He has made blotchy photocopies of the reports from the previous year and supplements this information with scribbled hieroglyphics tethered together with arrows and boxes. It looks like a basketball diagram for a high post flex offense. This report will eventually be given to his tolerant clerk/typist. Using her ultra-modern IBM Selectric, she will type what she perceives Dan is trying to say. Dan will make

By: **Dan Vonnahme**

ISAC Case Management
Specialist



corrections with a red pen and hand the document back for her to re-type. This process will occur another three or four times before the document is ready to mail out (sometimes about three months after the written plan was supposed to go into effect).

Technology Today

Now, let's take a peek ahead. Fabio of the Future drives his E-85 fueled car to a staffing at his client's house. Back at the office, his supervisor knows where he's at because his Outlook schedule shows his appointments throughout the rest of the month. Fabio puts his cell phone on silent ring, knowing he can check for cell phone and e-mail messages after the meeting is over. He has already completed a scaled assessment that provides a detailed, computer-generated narrative report about his client's current life and service needs. They can now focus more time and attention to what the client hopes to accomplish in his life. With the help of the client and his team, Fabio writes a personalized service plan on his laptop during the meeting and prints out copies for everyone. He then takes a moment to use his voice-activated transcription software to directly dictate his progress note while the details of the meeting are still fresh in his mind.

Be Aware

This is just a very brief example of what can, will, or already has happened. Communication (written and verbal) is more direct and immediate. Documentation can occur in the field, requiring fewer resources back at the office. Yes, we are expected to do more and to do it quicker. And yes, funding issues for client services have become increasingly complex, but technological tools can assist us in this venture. I'm not saying you have to jump on the bandwagon for every new development at its inception - sometimes economies of scale make it advantageous to wait for mass production. But we should at least try to be aware of what's out there so we can make prudent decisions down the line.

As I close this article, using my "hunt & mash" method of keyboarding (I learned to type on a manual typewriter), I'd like you to think of technology as the neighbor's Rottweiler – you may never consider him to be "man's best friend", but if you give him a biscuit and take some time to get to know him, he might just wag his tail and not bite you in the butt.

counties in the spotlight

Changes In County Government

Editorial note: This is the fourth of a six-part series exploring the changes that have taken place in county government. Three to five county officials in each elected affiliate have been asked to answer questions about their memories of the past and outlook for the future.

Participants from the Treasurers Affiliate:

Richard Heidloff, Lyon County Treasurer, 24 years in position and county government

Bill Fennelly, Scott County Treasurer, 10 years in position, 25 years in county government

Jeff Garrett, Washington County Treasurer, 8 years in position and county government

Why do you enjoy being a county official?

Richard: I enjoy meeting the customers and helping them. There is a sense of accomplishment when problems are resolved or challenges met and solved.

Bill: I enjoy being a part of the progressive team at Scott County and working together for the good of our citizens. I also enjoy being a member of the Treasurers Association and looking for better methods to serve the citizens of the state of Iowa.

Jeff: Between the property tax, motor vehicle, and driver's license functions of the treasurer's office, there is a good chance that almost every resident of the county will have some contact with the treasurer's office on an annual basis. No other occupation gives you the chance to meet such a wide variety of people.

Since you started your current position, how has the position changed?

Richard: The obvious is the changes in processes due to technology. Every aspect of the office has changed due to this technology. It has changed the number of people in the office and the services that we can offer.

Bill: We have changed the software for tax and motor vehicle systems and moved our office from the courthouse to the Scott County Administrative Center.

Jeff: The biggest change in the smaller treasurers' offices has been the addition of driver's license issuance in 2000. Integrating an entirely new department, with an entirely new set of functions and procedures, into an already busy office can be a real challenge. The positive comments we receive from constituents, however, make the extra effort worthwhile.

What do you feel has been the biggest change overall in county government?

Richard: Technology has certainly been the biggest outward change. It has altered every process in the office. The resources to keep pace with the demands and technology are not always there to do it properly.

Bill: The internet. Property taxes and vehicle registrations are paid online. The assessor, recorder and auditor display property tax data online. Every department in Scott County has a website presence bringing service 24/7.

Jeff: The obvious trend is that county government is continually expected to provide the same or higher level of service with fewer resources.

Where do you feel the focus should be in the future of county government?

Richard: I believe that county government is all about service. If Iowa is to grow and be successful it will take the local taxing authorities to provide the information and the day to day services that are needed, required and requested by the people in our area.

Bill: Are 99 counties too many? I don't know - are 50 states too many? We need to be open minded to give the citizens the most bang for their buck and still be responsive to their service needs.

Jeff: Customer service. The reason county government exists is to serve our constituents. Keeping that underlying focus will help us to make decisions that are worthy of the trust placed in us by constituents.

How does county government need to adapt to the changing times?

Richard: We need to be willing to look at different solutions and ways of doing business. Just because it is different does not mean that it will be good policy to follow. However, if we do not look at different ways of doing business, we might miss an opportunity to improve ourselves.

Bill: We need to keep abreast of technology, but not on the bleeding edge. We need to take enough time to offer the best value for the tools available.

Jeff: County government must continue to explore and expand the use of technology. Through the use of new technologies, services and information can be delivered to citizens in such a way that is both convenient for the citizen and cost-effective and efficient for the county.

counties in the spotlight

First Annual Employee Appreciation Day

Benton County recently held its first annual Employee Appreciation Day October 21. Jill Marlow, Benton County Auditor, said, "Our employees are extremely important to the operation of Benton County and they are very loyal as evidenced by the many years of dedicated service they have given, and we wanted to recognize and thank them."



Benton County Supervisors Ron Buch, Dave Vermedahl, and Jason Sanders award recent retiree Lyle Bolton (29 year employment) with an engraved desk set.

County offices were closed for a few hours to hold the event (some offices could not be "closed" for the event, but were operated with a reduced staff). During the event, pins were given to county employees with five years of service or more, in five-year increments. Certificates for part time employees and employees with less than five years employment were printed. A tri-fold was made listing the recent retirees and the current employees with their years of service. Four long-time employees that recently retired were recognized with an engraved desk set.

A presentation was given on the importance of maintaining a family "health tree." The County's Wellness Committee presented a Heart Healthy Cookbook to each attendee. A wellness survey was given to determine if the county wellness programs being provided were meeting the interests of the employees. Employees were also updated on changes to their flexible spending plan and 457B plans. Cookies and coffee were provided afterwards.

Mary McLaughlin, Benton County IT Director, said, "The event was a success, noted by the smiling faces of the employees during the presentations. A time set aside for coworker camaraderie, to say 'thanks' for doing a great job, and to make an assessment and acknowledge workers for years of dedication. Definitely a good time."

Correction

November's "By the Numbers" column stated that Page County doesn't spend anything on library funding. In fact, Page County has budgeted \$18,513 for library funding for each of the last two years. That works out to just over \$5 per rural resident.

Top Young Area Leader

Terrence Neuzil, member of the Johnson County Board of Supervisors, was recently selected as one of the top young leaders in the area by the *Corridor Business Journal*. The *Journal* is an independent business weekly publication for the Cedar Rapids – Iowa City Corridor. The publication recognized the 35-year-old Neuzil because he has "embraced his role as a member of the Johnson County Board of Supervisors and has established himself as a point person for the area's future." The *Journal* also pointed out that Neuzil worked with the board in the creation of a strategic plan that has "assisted in the county's growth, communication and budget needs." The *Journal* also acknowledged Neuzil for teaming up with Linn County Supervisor Lu Barron in the creation of the Johnson-Linn County Leadership Summit which has "allowed government officials to join forces and work on projects within the Corridor." Neuzil is currently in his fifth year as a member of the Johnson County Board of Supervisors.



ISAC brief

Fall School Sponsors

Special recognition needs to be given to the 2005 Fall School sponsors. Please thank these companies for the support they give to ISAC.

The Sidwell Company	platinum
Cott Systems, Inc.	gold
Iowa Gaming Association	gold
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Cost Advisory Services, Inc.	silver
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ING	silver
ProMap, a division of the Schneider Corporation	silver
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Quilogy Inc.	silver
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Solutions, Inc.	silver

ISAC brief

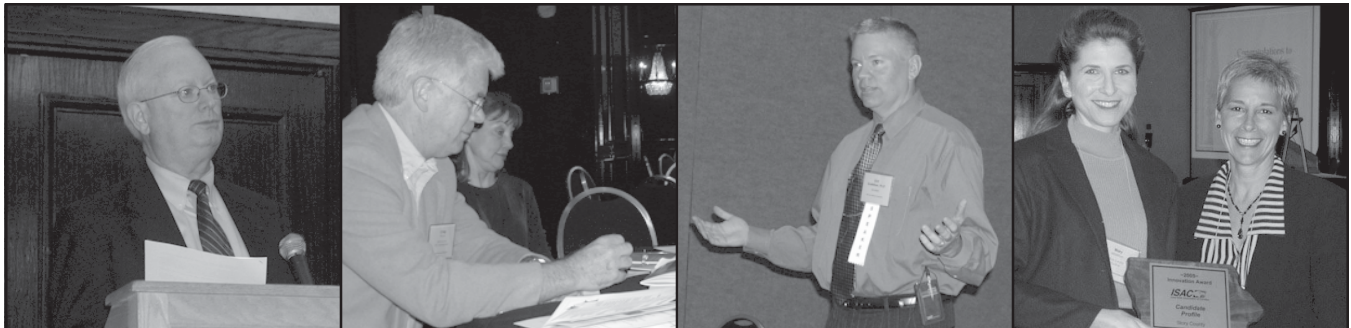
ISAC's Legislative Package Approved At The Fall School

More than 800 county officials traveled to Des Moines for ISAC's 62nd Fall School of Instruction held at the Downtown Marriott and Renaissance Savery in Des Moines on November 13-15. During the ISAC general session the 2006 legislative package was debated and approved. The top priorities include: establishing a reformed property tax system in Iowa that will stabilize the tax base and enhance local accountability; implementing new standards for elections in Iowa; supporting the local control of eminent domain for use of obtaining road rights-of-way; increasing food license fees to fully fund state and local food safety inspection activities; and encouraging the State of Iowa to pay back the \$6.2 million due to a federal audit of the Medicaid Adult Rehabilitation Option (ARO). The priorities are the basis for ISAC's lobbying efforts during the upcoming legislative session.

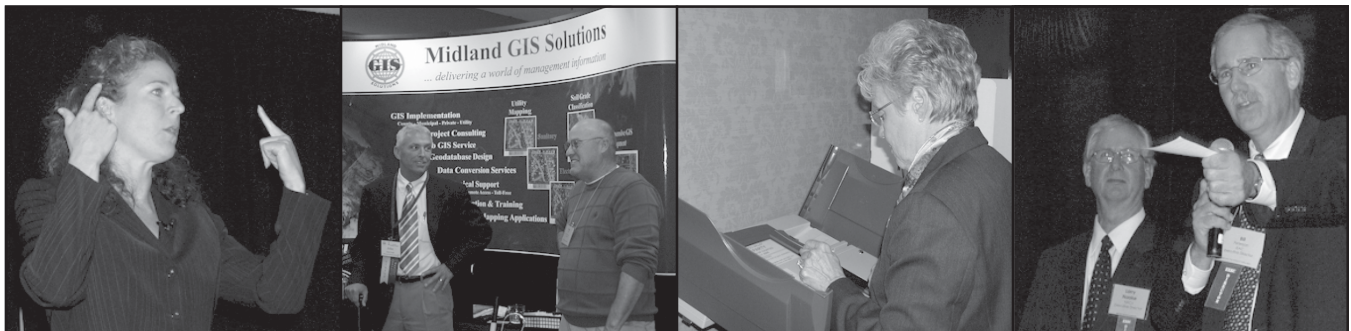
Karen Purves was the keynote speaker for the conference and presented "Build Better Relationships - 19 Words that Undermine Your Effectiveness." The general session concluded with a farewell speech by ISAC President Angela Connolly and a speech on the upcoming year by ISAC 1st VP Denise Dolan. ISAC Innovation Awards were given to six projects this year: Butler County Resource Center, Bi-State Aerial Photo Consortium (Scott County & Muscatine County), Story County Candidate Profile, Community Training & Response Center (Linn County), Des Moines County Operation Knock & Talk, and Iowa Land Records: CLRIS (Recorders).

Over 150 county officials attended the "Popcorn and Politics" session on Monday night of the conference to learn about NACo's Presidential Caucus Initiative. NACo and ISAC are working together to bring issues of local government to the forefront in the next presidential campaign. NACo is targeting the states of Iowa and New Hampshire.

Thank you to the 66 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 to the 23 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) and click on 'News' then 'Publications.'



Photos from left: Robert Josten presented an ISAC seminar on practical economic development. Craig Wood, Linn County, and Irene Blair, Webster County, engage in a group activity during the Socially Responsible Leadership seminar. Jim Gustafson presented an ISAC seminar on Socially Responsible Leadership. Mary Mosiman, Story County Auditor, received an ISAC Innovation Award from ISAC President Angela Connolly.



Photos from left: Karen Purves was the keynote speaker for the conference. County officials enjoyed talking with the many exhibitors promoting their services. Joyce Jensen, ISAC Past President & Cass County Recorder, cast her vote for President during the Popcorn & Politics session. Bill Peterson, ISAC Executive Director, and Larry Naake, NACo Executive Director, explained the NACo Presidential Caucus Initiative.

ISAC Spring School 2006

By: Jerri Noboa

ISAC Meetings Administrator



The ISAC staff is busy planning the ISAC Spring School of Instruction scheduled for March 19-21 at the Marriott and Renaissance Savery in downtown Des Moines. We are excited to announce a new change with the schedule. The exhibitors will be sponsoring a reception on the Sunday night of our conference from 6pm - 8pm in the Marriott Exhibit Area. We anticipate this will be a relaxing time for you to socially visit the exhibitors and network with other conference attendees. Heavy appetizers, desserts and drinks will be served. The following night a legislative reception will take place at the Savery. ISAC will invite every senator and representative from the Iowa Legislature to join conference attendees for this event. We hope this will be a chance for you to connect with your area legislators. Online registration for the ISAC Spring School will begin December 1. Please call the ISAC office (515-244-7181) if you have any questions or concerns regarding this event. I hope to see you there!

Spring School Agenda

Sunday, March 19

- 1pm - 3pm Committee Meetings
- 2pm - 5pm ISAC Registration (Marriott Exhibit Area)
- 3pm - 5pm ISAC Seminars (Marriott, 2nd floor)
- 6pm - 8pm Exhibitors Reception (Marriott Exhibit Area)

Monday, March 20

- 7am - 4pm ISAC Registration (Marriott Exhibit Area)
- 7am - 9am Coffee & Rolls (Marriott Exhibit Area)
- 9am - 11am General Session (Marriott, 2nd floor)
- 11:15am - 5pm Affiliate Time
- 2:30pm - 3pm Break & Vendors Drawing (Marriott Exhibit Area)
- 5:30pm - 8pm Hospitality Rooms
- 6pm - 8pm ISAC Board Dinner
- 8pm - 9pm Legislative Reception (Renaissance Savery)
- 9pm - Midnight ISAC Dance (Renaissance Savery)

Tuesday, March 21

- 8am - 4pm ISAC Registration (Marriott, 2nd floor)
- 8am - 4pm Affiliate Time
- Noon - 1:30pm CCMS Luncheon (Marriott)

Spring School Lodging

Online hotel reservations can be made for the Downtown Marriott (700 Grand Ave, 515-245-5500) and the Renaissance Savery (401 Locust, 515-244-2151). Visit ISAC's website (www.iowacounties.org) and click on 'ISAC's Spring School of Instruction' for links to their online reservation systems.

Sleeping rooms are also available at the Hotel Fort Des Moines (1000 Walnut). Call 800-531-1466 and ask for booking #3427.

The Marriott and Renaissance Savery are offering rates of \$73/flat with suites at \$175. The Hotel Fort Des Moines' rates are \$73/flat and suites at \$93.

Affiliate Meeting Sites

- *Marriott*: Auditors, Emergency Management Directors, IT, Recorders, Supervisors
- *Renaissance Savery*: Assessors, Community Services, Conservation, Engineers, Public Health Nurses, Sheriffs, Treasurers

Spring School Registration

Online registration will be made available December 1. Early bird registration (before 3-1-2006) is \$70 per attendee. Late registration (after 3-1-2006) is \$80 per attendee. You will receive a price break (\$10) for each additional registration per affiliate/office, excluding supervisors. Online meeting registration will be available until March 14.

Notice to Retiring County Officials

Have you thought about becoming a member of the ISAC Alumni Association? Anyone who is a former elected or appointed county employee is eligible to join. The dues are \$25 per year and you receive a subscription to *The Iowa County* magazine and a free registration to the ISAC schools, along with being entitled to the same sleeping room rates as other attendees. Five dollars of your dues go to the Alumni Association's scholarship program. If you are interested in joining, please give Jerri Noboa a call at 515-244-7181 to receive a membership application or visit the ISAC website at www.iowacounties.org under 'About Us' then 'Iowa State Association of Counties' then 'Members.'

ISAC University

Every January following a non-election year, ISAC presents "ISAC University," a continuing education conference for county officials. This year's conference will be held January 18-19, 2006 at the Holiday Inn Airport in Des Moines with a focus on leadership development. County officials will attend sessions helping them to understand their leadership styles and enhance their leadership skills. Attendees will gain practical advice for managing conflict, adapting to change and communicating with their colleagues and the public. New features this year include a reception, dinner and keynote speaker, all included with the registration fee of \$125. Online registration will be available beginning December 1, and the registration deadline is January 12. In order to maximize the effectiveness of each session and encourage interactive learning, registration will be limited to 150 people. No at-the-door registration is allowed. The tentative agenda for the conference is below. For more detailed seminar descriptions, a keynote speaker summary, lodging information, and to register, visit ISAC's website (www.iowacounties.org) or contact Jay Syverson at 515-244-7181.

Wednesday, January 18

11:30am – 12:45pm Registration
12:45pm – 1:00pm Welcome and Opening Remarks
1:00pm – 3:00pm Seminars
1) Managing Conflict and Effective Communication
2) Media Relations – Now and in a Time of Crisis
3:15pm – 5:15pm Seminars
1) Managing Change in a Changing Workplace
2) Breaking Through the Barrier of a Skeptical Public
5:15pm – 6:00pm Reception
6:00pm – 8:15pm Dinner and Banquet
Keynote Speaker: Mark Towers
NACo Leadership Institute Experience
- Melvyn Houser, Pottawattamie County
- Linda Langston; Linn County

Thursday, January 19

7:45am – 8:15am Coffee and Rolls
8:15am – 9:30am Civility in the Public Arena: Leading with Character
9:45 – 11:45am Leadership Panel
11:45am – 12:30pm Lunch
12:45pm – 2:45pm The 5 Practices of Exemplary Leaders
3:00pm – 4:15pm Leading with Emotional Intelligence
4:15pm – 4:30pm Closing Remarks

Managing Conflict and Effective Communication

Unresolved conflict can easily overwhelm a new supervisor and his or her team's productivity. This session will provide an opportunity for participants to learn about the dynamics of unhealthy conflict and the conflict styles of their employees. Presented by Paul Hedquist; Employee and Family Resources

Media Relations – Now and in a Time of Crisis

The media is judge and jury in the court of public opinion – are you prepared for the verdict that may be reached about your county? This session will demystify the media and editorial process and prepare county officials to address tough questions and crisis situations. Presented by Eileen Wixted; Wixted, Pope, Nora & Associates.

Managing Change in a Changing Workplace

Change is the only constant in today's workplace. This session is designed to explain the evolution and importance of change management. Participants will be given tips on how to handle change, as well as adjust their attitudes toward the inevitable twists and turns of daily life. Presented by Dennis Dornink; Employee and Family Resources.

Breaking Through the Barrier of a Skeptical Public

This interactive session will address the issue of how elected and non-elected public officials can effectively communicate with a public that often doesn't have much faith in the legitimacy of government. Presented by Lance Noe; Drake University.

Civility in the Public Arena: Leading with Character

The Institute for Character Development is a sustained statewide initiative focused on developing a grassroots understanding, appreciation and widespread use of civility and principled decision-making in daily life. This session will emphasize how the six pillars of character should guide the decisions and actions of public leaders. Presented by Scott Raecker; Institute for Character Development.

The Five Practices of Exemplary Leaders

Leadership is everyone's business. This session will help participants learn and build on the five specific practices found essential to a leader's performance and success. Presented by Tom Westbrook; Learn Associates and Drake University.

Leading with Emotional Intelligence

For leaders, emotional intelligence is almost 90% of what sets star leaders apart from the mediocre. Participants will learn about emotional intelligence while they build the skills that advance their own EI. Presented by Tom Westbrook; Learn Associates and Drake University.

For more detailed seminar descriptions, keynote speaker summary and lodging information visit ISAC's website (www.iowacounties.org).

Look Beyond General Fund To Stretch Budget

By: Jay Syverson, ISAC Fiscal Analyst

The general basic fund produces the most property tax revenue for all Iowa counties. The fund, however, is capped at a rate of \$3.50 (except in certain unusual circumstances). As more counties reach that cap, they need to look at alternatives to funding services out of general basic. The two most likely alternatives are the general supplemental fund and the rural fund.

General Supplemental Fund

Let's start with the general supplemental fund. First, the fund can only be used if "the basic levies are insufficient to meet the county's needs...." In other words, you can't use the supplemental levy until the basic levy reaches its cap. The 96 counties at or above \$3.50 in the general basic fund have met that requirement. Second, the general supplemental levy can ONLY be used to pay for items specifically listed in Iowa Code §331.424(1). That section lists about 10 items; among the most significant are elections, operation of the courts, certain employee benefits (FICA, IPERS and unemployment, as long as the salaries are associated with general county services), and "any insurance necessary in the operation of the county." The Code language is, for the most part, quite plain and clear. Lastly, it's important to note that the general supplemental fund is limited by use, not by rate. That means that the levy rate can be as high or as low as is necessary to pay for the costs of eligible services.

Services Paid From The Rural Fund

As for the rural fund, there are two ways to know whether or not a service is eligible to be paid for from the rural services fund. First, and easiest, is if the service is explicitly listed in the Iowa Code as a general or rural service. Iowa Code §331.428(2) lists five categories of services – weed management; libraries; landfill operation; FICA, IPERS and unemployment for salaries associated with rural county services; and aviation authorities – as rural. These services are unique in that they "shall not be [paid for] from the general fund." In most cases, that means that they will be paid for from the rural services fund. Two of those services, aviation authorities and employee benefits, may also be paid for from the rural supplemental fund. Like the general, the rural supplemental fund is limited only by use and may only be used when the basic fund has reached its cap. (Eighteen counties are at or above the \$3.95 rural basic cap in FY 2006.)

There are also a number of services identified in the Code as general. Iowa Code §331.427(3) lists a number of general services in addition to those eligible for the general supplemental fund under Iowa Code §331.424(1). Expenses for these services, which include those provided by a joint emergency management commission and a county conservation board, "shall not be [paid] from the rural services fund."

The second, often ambiguous, way to determine a service's

eligibility to be paid for from the rural fund comes from Iowa Code §331.421(8) – the definition of "rural county services." The Code allows services to be paid for from the rural fund if they "are primarily intended to benefit those persons residing in the county outside of incorporated city areas...." As you can imagine, determining the primary intended benefactor of a service relies on interpretation and is often subject to debate. But the flexibility in that definition allows counties to pay for from the rural fund services that they believe "primarily benefit" rural residents, even if the Code is silent on a specific service. The most visible example of counties interpreting a service as "primarily benefiting" rural residents is uniform patrol. Many counties (56 in FY 2006) now pay a portion of uniform patrol costs from the rural basic fund. Those counties have determined that the having the sheriff's deputies patrol the county is a public safety service that "primarily benefits" the rural areas. In fact, some counties have gone so far as to document statistics – including the amount of time, miles traveled, and citations issued in the rural areas – that help support their claim.

The uniform patrol issue sets a general test, but not a conclusive one, for determining the "primary beneficiary" of a service. If cities in the county provide a service to residents of incorporated areas that is similar to the service the county provides to residents of unincorporated areas, then the county service is probably "primarily intended" to benefit rural residents. In the uniform patrol example, city police departments patrol the city streets, much like county sheriffs' departments patrol the rural areas. Thus, the county service "primarily benefits" rural residents. Other examples of county services that may be similarly provided in cities include sanitation, land use and building controls, and ambulance services. Also, if a county contributes to jointly funding a service with its cities, and the county's contribution is based on the population of the rural areas, then that expense may be eligible to be paid from the rural fund, as long as it isn't expressly prohibited by Code. An important consideration is that expenses and revenues for a service should generally be accounted for in the same fund. For example, if a county is paying for contract law enforcement services from the rural fund, the county should also deposit in the rural fund revenues received under those contracts.

Counties looking to get the most out of their budgets should transfer all eligible expenses to the supplemental funds. And if you're among the 78 counties that have hit the cap in general basic but still have room to spare in rural basic, you may also want to identify services that "primarily benefit" rural residents and transfer expenditures for those services to the rural fund. As always, supervisors should consult their county attorneys when making these important, often controversial, decisions.

New ISAC Staff Member

My name is Angie Umbaugh and I would like to introduce myself as the newest member of the ISAC staff. I began working for ISAC on October 24 as the receptionist. I will be answering all of the telephone calls for ISAC, organizing the County-A-Day Program and working on a variety of other projects throughout the year. I look forward to getting to know all of your names, faces and voices!



Before coming to ISAC, I attended Iowa State University and received a Bachelor of Science degree in business management with a human resources emphasis in May 2004. Throughout college I worked as an administrative assistant at the Iowa State University Seed Science Center, as well as Iowa State University Student-Athlete Services. I also had an internship in human resources at Household International in Beaverton, Oregon. After graduation I worked for Communications Data Services (CDS) as an image support operator in Boone. After a year at CDS, I began to miss interacting with people and speaking with customers. I decided that I wanted to get back to a more customer service oriented field, and ISAC seemed to be the perfect fit. The people here are amazing and I feel honored to be a part of such a fine organization.

I was born and raised in Ames and still live there today. Ever since I was 4 years old, gymnastics has been my passion. After watching the 1984 Olympics I wanted to be just like Mary Lou Retton. After an overwhelming recruiting process, I signed a letter of intent and received a gymnastics scholarship from Iowa State University. As a freshman I received the honor of being named the 1998 Big 12 Gymnastics Newcomer of the Year.

Outside of the office I enjoy watching movies, football games and gymnastics competitions. I enjoy listening to music and spending time with family and friends as well.

I am extremely excited about the upcoming year at ISAC. If you need to contact me call (515) 244-7181 or email me at aumbaugh@iowacounties.org. Again, I look forward to meeting all of you and working with you in the future.

More Counties Contribute To Scholarship Fund

Since the list of county contributors to our scholarship golf fundraiser was published in August issue of *The Iowa County*, three additional counties have sent donations. They are Buchanan, Hancock and Van Buren counties. Thank you for your support of the ISAC scholarship fund!

By The Numbers:

Farming 'til the Cows Come Home

By: Jay Syverson, ISAC Fiscal Analyst

Think Iowa is an agricultural state? You have no idea. In 2002, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), nearly 90% of Iowa's land, over 31 million acres, was used for farming. That astounding number is nearly unchanged since 1992. There are, however, some interesting trends within the data worth mentioning.

One thing that has changed since 1992 is the average size of farms. The 2002 Census of Agriculture pegged Iowa's average farm size at 350 acres, up from 325 acres 10 years earlier. Not surprisingly, the largest farms are more prevalent now than in 1992. Properties between 1,000 and 1,999 acres account for 7% of Iowa's farms, up from 4.5%, and the proportion of Iowa farms over 2,000 acres has tripled to 1.5% since 1992. But the smallest farms are also more prevalent now than ten years ago. Thirty-five percent of Iowa's farms, up from 27% in 1992, are less than 100 acres in size. On the other hand, the middle ground, including farms between 100 and 999 acres, which accounted for more than two-thirds of all Iowa farms in 1992, has been dwindling. Though still the biggest category, these farms now account for just over 56% of Iowa's farms.

Other interesting trends:

- Farmers are getting older – The average farmer is now 54 years old, up from 50 in 1992. The Iowa Legislature began to address this situation in 2005 by enacting a beginning farmers tax credit program intended to “facilitate the transfer of agricultural assets” to beginning (and, presumably, young) farmers.
- More women are farming – While the number of male farmers has declined from 93,000 to 84,000 since 1992, the number of female farmers is up more than 60% to 6,200; females now account for almost 7% of principal farm operators.

Iowa Farm Facts:

- 20.6% of working Iowans were employed in farm or farm-related jobs in 2002, although just 5.6% were employed in actual production.
- There are approximately 64,500 farms in Iowa.
- Iowa accounted for more than 20% of the nation's total value in both corn and hog production in 2003.
- Sioux County led the state in agricultural sales with \$617 million in 2002; rounding out the top five counties are Plymouth, Carroll, Kossuth and Hardin.

Iowa Prepared For Possible Pandemic

By: Don McCormick,
Iowa Department of Public Health

History has shown that, approximately every 30-35 years, something occurs called a pandemic – an outbreak of disease that covers an exceptionally wide geographic area. In the 20th century, the world experienced three pandemics; the Hong Kong Flu in 1968-1969, the Asian Flu in 1957-1958, and the Spanish Flu in 1918-1919.

Nobody knows when the next pandemic will occur; nor is it known what kind of virus will cause the next pandemic. The point is to be prepared and have a plan in place should it become necessary, says Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) Director Dr. Mary Mincer Hansen, R.N., Ph.D. “If public health is to fulfill its mission of protecting Iowans, we must anticipate events rather than simply react to what’s happening.”

Long before the national discussion began regarding a possible pandemic stemming from an avian flu strain, state agencies in Iowa were working together to ensure the state is prepared to deal with a variety of emergencies. State agencies collaborating to handle such a scenario include IDPH, Homeland Security and Emergency Management, the Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, the Department of Public Safety and others. Local public health agencies, private health care providers and hospitals have also contributed to the state plan for dealing with a possible pandemic. Hansen says that briefings on the plan have been given to groups such as ISAC, the Iowa Hospital Association and the Iowa League of Cities, and talks continue with provider groups, businesses and others.

The plan is organized using the World Health Organization’s (WHO) Pandemic Influenza Phases. This six-phase system approach will allow IDPH and other organizations to coordinate their activities according to each phase and in regard to nine focus areas. Those focus areas are: pre-vaccine preparedness; consideration of antivirals; prioritization of vaccine once available; distribution of vaccine and antivirals; surveillance; laboratory activities; personal protective equipment and infection control; travel related issues; and hospital surge capacity.

“It’s our job to be prepared and keep the public informed of how Iowa will respond,” says State Epidemiologist Dr. Patricia Quinlisk. “We must not lose sight, however, of the diseases that pose the most risk to Iowans today and on a regular basis, such as the regular flu.”

Modeling studies have shown that in a “medium-level” case scenario (with no vaccines or drugs), a pandemic would likely mean 900 – 2,000 influenza deaths in Iowa. Approximately 1,000 Iowans die each year from regular influenza and its common complication of pneumonia, while more than 10,000 die of heart disease. An additional 6,000 die annually of cancer.

Dr. Hansen encourages Iowans concerned about personal preparedness to visit www.protectioniowahealth.org where they can learn about individual steps that they and their loved ones can take. She also recommends all Iowans get the flu shot this year and make use of common sense ways to stop the spread of germs. This includes frequent hand washing, covering your mouth when coughing, and staying at home from work or school when ill with symptoms like coughing and fever.

“Throughout this upcoming flu season, Iowa’s public health community and our fellow public and private state and local partners will keep Iowans informed to reduce their risk of illness,” Hansen added.

NACo news

Acts of Caring Applications Available

NACo is accepting applications for the 2006 Acts of Caring Awards. An “act of caring” is a community service provided by a county-sponsored volunteer program that enhances or preserves the quality of life. Up to 18 programs will be recognized and deemed examples of outstanding Acts of Caring. Any county government that is a member of NACo with an active program that meets the criteria is eligible to participate in the Acts of Caring Awards. A county program that won an Acts of Caring Award in the past three years is not eligible for an award in 2006. Awards are presented in three population categories to ensure that large and small areas receive the recognition they deserve.

The deadline for applications is January 27, 2006. All Acts of Caring honorees will be recognized at a national ceremony on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. during National County Government Week in April. Additionally, they will be recognized in *County News*, on the NACo website and in all national media releases and promotions. *For application information visit NACo’s website at www.naco.org. Contact Tom Goodman with questions at 202-942-4222 or tgoodman@naco.org.*



**A SOCIAL WORKER GAVE HIM SOMETHING
TO SWING BESIDES HIS FISTS.**

She put hope in his hands. She is Dr. Evelyn Montanez, a psychiatric social worker who brought her “healthy bodies, healthy minds” program — including after-school sports, t’ai chi, even nutrition — to at-risk kids at elementary school P.S. 128M in New York City. This program, in partnership with Derek Jeter’s Turn 2 Foundation and the Morgan Stanley Children’s Hospital of New York–Presbyterian, has changed the lives of young people like Hansel Rodriguez.



Before intervention, Hansel would strike out — at his family, classmates and himself. But by channeling his energy, he’s become one of the strongest players on his team, confident and connecting with the world. In schools, in communities, help starts with a social worker. Tell us your story, or find a social worker, at www.HelpStartsHere.org.



Social Workers
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Advertisers Index

Aerial Services, Inc.	21	ProMap Corporation	22
Aero-Metric, Inc.	22	Public Sector Personnel Consultants	23
AIG Valic	21	Ruan Securities Corporation	19
Calhoun-Burns and Associates, Inc.	22	Snyder & Associates, Inc.	22
French-Reneker-Associates, Inc.	21	Solutions, Inc.	21
Horizons, Inc.	23	The Sidwell Company	24
IPAIT	2	TrueNorth Companies	19
JEO Consulting Group, Inc.	23	URS Corporation	19
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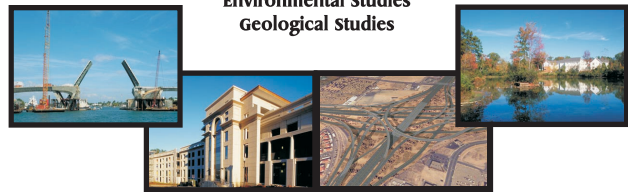
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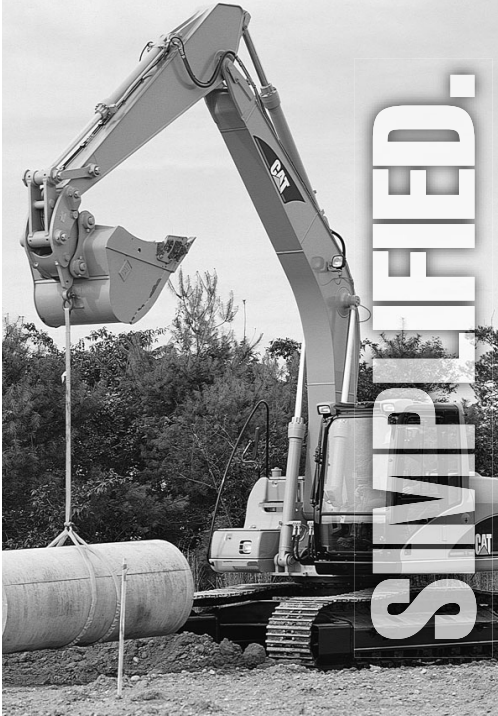
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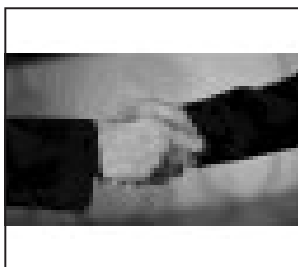
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Quote of the Month:

"What is defeat? Nothing but education; nothing but the first step to something better."

- Wendell Phillips

calendar

DECEMBER

- 1 District II Winter Meeting
(Elks Lodge, Charles City)
- 6-8 Engineers Annual Conference
(Scheman Center, Ames)
- 7 District IV Winter Meeting
(Griswold Community Center, Griswold)
- 9 District I Winter Meeting
(Baymont Conference Center, Des Moines)
- 15 Annual Drainage Seminar
(Starlite Village, Fort Dodge)
- 16 ISAC Board of Directors (ISAC Office)
- 23 ISAC Office Closed
- 26 ISAC Office Closed

JANUARY

- 2 ISAC Office Closed
- 10 CCMS Administrators
(Hilton Garden Inn, Des Moines/Urbandale)
- 17-20 SEAT III
(Hilton Garden Inn, Des Moines/Urbandale)
- 18 CCMS East Support Group
(Coral Ridge Mall, Coralville)
- 18-19 ISAC University
(Holiday Inn Airport, Des Moines)
- 19 CCMS East Support Group (Muscatine area)
- 20 Statedwide Supervisors Meeting
(Holiday Inn Airport, Des Moines)

MARCH

- 1-3 CCMS Fundamentals
(Hilton Garden Inn, Des Moines/Urbandale)
- 4-8 NACo Legislative Conference
(Washington DC)
- 19-21 ISAC Spring School of Instruction
(Marriott & Renaissance Savery, Des Moines)

APRIL

- 11 CCMS Administrators
(Hilton Garden Inn, Des Moines/Urbandale)
- 12 CCMS Cost Report Training
(Hilton Garden Inn, Des Moines/Urbandale)

MAY

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

JUNE

- 6-7 CCMS Supervisors Training
(Hilton Garden Inn, Des Moines/Urbandale)
- 21-23 CCMS Fundamentals
(Hilton Garden Inn, Des Moines/Urbandale)

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