

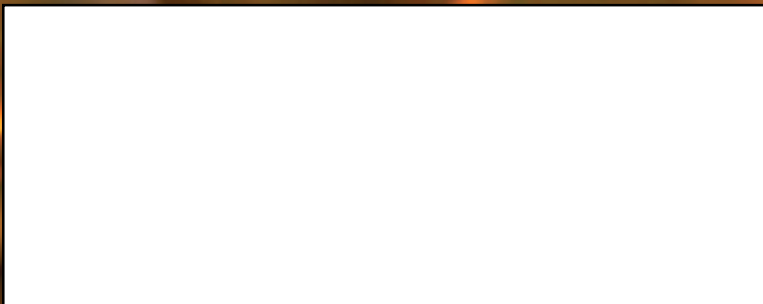
The Iowa County



Introduction to ISAC's
Newest Affiliate:
The Iowa Counties
Information Technology
Organization

January 2003

ISAC
Iowa State Association of Counties



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The Iowa County

The official magazine of the
Iowa State Association of Counties
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(515) 244-7181 FAX (515) 244-6397
www.iowacounties.org
Denise Obrecht, EDITOR

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ISAC members are elected and appointed county officials from all 99 counties. The Iowa County (ISSN 0892-3795) is published monthly by the Iowa State Association of Counties 501 SW 7th St., Ste. Q, Des Moines, IA 50309-4540. Periodicals postage paid at Des Moines, IA 50318. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The Iowa County, 501 SW 7th St., Ste. Q, Des Moines, IA 50309-4540. Subscriptions: \$20 per year.



ISAC's Mission:

To promote effective and responsible county government for the people of Iowa.

ISAC's Vision:

To be the principal, authoritative source of representation, information and services for and about county government in Iowa.

Iowa Counties Information Technology Organization: ISAC's New Affiliate

On Thursday, November 21, 2002, county information technology professionals were voted on by the general membership to become an established ISAC affiliate. The ISAC Board of Directors adopted an amendment to the ISAC Articles of Incorporation and directed that it be submitted to a vote during the business meeting at the ISAC Fall School. The effect of the amendment was to add the Iowa Counties Information Technology (ICIT) Organization as an ISAC affiliate, making them ISAC's 15th affiliate. Wayne Chizek, Marshall County GIS Director, is currently ICIT's president and Robert Canney, Black Hawk County MIS Director, was chosen to represent the ICIT affiliate on the ISAC Board of Directors. As an introduction, Wayne answered a few questions about the ICIT affiliate.

How Did The ICIT Affiliate Originate And Why?

Chizek: The concept of a county technology organization originated in the late 90's as counties began adding IS/IT staff and/or departments. The need for such an organization became even more apparent as counties started to implement GIS systems. In July of 2001 an organizational committee was formed. By November of that same year the new statewide ICIT Organization was a reality. The purpose of this organization is to promote professionalism, cooperation, mutual assistance and sharing of knowledge and experience. This organization is committed to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas, information, and technology as they relate to county government activities and statewide legislation.



How Many Active Members Do You Have? Do You Share Members With Other Affiliates?

Chizek: ICIT currently has about 90 members from 50 counties throughout Iowa and those numbers have been increasing weekly since becoming an ISAC Affiliate. ICIT membership is extended to any county employee and/or any employee of any board that the county board of supervisors has appointed or is a member of, within the state of Iowa. This may include, but is not limited to, personnel with the following job responsibilities: Information Technology, Geographic Information Systems, Mapping, Internet Technology, Networking, Telecommunications, or anyone who has technological duties. So, we do share some members with other affiliates.

How Do You Think Your Organization Will Change After Becoming An ISAC Affiliate?

Chizek: The ICIT organization and its members have earned a lot respect throughout Iowa during our short existence. Being an affiliate of an association with the respect, recognition, history and organization of ISAC will take ICIT to another level of acceptance throughout Iowa. We plan to justify that level of acceptance as we bring other counties and county officials a better understanding of technology and its role in county government. We want to work through the ISAC process to make meaningful changes legislatively to improve the quality of life in the unincorporated areas of our counties.

What Benefits Will ICIT Bring to ISAC?

Chizek: ICIT's primary goal is to be a technical resource for EVERY Iowa county. We feel so strongly about including every county that we have on the ICIT Board a Technology Advocate position whose primary responsibility is to represent those counties lagging in technology. We feel that technology is the means that will allow elected county officials, department heads and employees to improve local government services to the citizens of Iowa. We want technology to have a positive impact in each county and for each county to be proactive implementing technology rather than waiting for mandates for the state of Iowa and/or the legislature.

How Will The ICIT Affiliate Benefit ISAC?

Chizek: There have been many technology issues before counties in the past few years and the number is increasing exponentially every year. By working with ISAC and its members, we hope that we can bring an understanding of the issues and solutions that will support the idea that local county government is the best government for the people of Iowa.

For further information on the Iowa Counties Information Technology Organization visit their website at <http://www.icit.state.ia.us/> or contact Wayne Chizek at wchizek@co.marshall.ia.us.

Consolidation Is The Hot Topic

"The really basic thing in government is policy. Bad administration, to be sure, can destroy good policy, but good administration can never save bad policy." - Adlai E. Stevenson (1952)

Much has been made of the announcement that the city of Louisville and Jefferson County, Kentucky are consolidating into one political subdivision effective this month. This was the result of a city-county referendum held in the fall of 2001. In September, the *Christian Science Monitor* carried a feature story on the Louisville-Jefferson County merger. In early December, the radio news program "All Things Considered" featured a lengthy piece on the same story which emphasized that this would move Louisville up about 60 notches among the 100 biggest cities in the United States. Former Indianapolis mayor Richard Hudnut was interviewed about the effects of the consolidation of Indianapolis (30 years ago) with surrounding Marion County. The Louisville-Jefferson County consolidation was the topic of the lead editorial in the December 8, 2002 *Des Moines Register*, as well as the cover story of *Governing Magazine*.

In 1988 and then again in 1991 legislation in Iowa was enacted which sets forth the framework for political subdivisions to design various new forms of government. Calls of consolidation are not a creature of the last decade of the 20th Century but were contained in a state report on Iowa government organization in 1934. Because comments by members of state commissions, state legislators, and newspaper editorials and columns have become more frequent in the last 12 years or so, several questions need to be addressed.

How Small Is Too Small?

In 1990, Purdue University released a study which examined a variety of consolidation referenda across the nation and looked at a variety of local government combinations. They found that the expected economies of scale in many local government services did not occur. Why? The Purdue report stated, among other findings, that when consolidations occur employee wages are made uniform, boosting the pay of the lowest paid employees. This is certainly an advantage for the workers on the low end of the wage scale, but it also would increase local government budgets. In addition, newly consolidated governments extend services to localities not previously covered by the previously constituted government.

Who Makes The Decisions About Consolidations?

Some parties who have advocated county consolidation imply that such mergers might be accomplished with the mere stroke of a pen in Des Moines. Au contraire. Counties may not be consolidated through executive decision or by passage of legislation unless the Iowa constitution is amended. Article III, section 30 states that the Legislature shall not pass "local or special laws" which, among other things, incorporates cities and towns or locates/changes county seats. It also says that "no law changing the boundary lines of any county

By: Robert Mulqueen

ISAC Public Policy Analyst



shall have an effect until upon being submitted to the people of the counties affected by the change."

What Determines That A Local Government Is Efficient Or Inefficient?

Some intone the hallowed cry that "government should be run like a business." Well, government is not a business. It is about public service delivery. The implication is that the business model is always and everywhere efficient. Beyond that dubious claim, efficiencies are not the paramount purpose of government. Public notice of meetings, multiple bids for projects, public hearings, open meetings.....all of these procedures are to make available public access to the budget process and to the administration of programs paid for with tax revenues. Efficient? No. Publicly accountable? This process is supposed to assure accountability.

What Courses Of Action Can Be Taken To Deal With Duplication Of Services?

Local government consolidations are one way to deal with this. But another is by means of intergovernmental arrangements, often referred to as 28E agreements after the section in the Iowa Code which provides for them. Counties and cities are frequently parties to hundreds of such service sharing agreements, which range from public safety services for a very small town to be provided by the county sheriff to multi-jurisdictional solid waste services which include the administration of landfills and recycling efforts.

How Do You Define Consolidation?

According to the various portions of Iowa Code chapter 331 mentioned above, the local governments which pursue a consolidation, a charter government, or a commonwealth may define these steps as they see fit. Staff and officials of ISAC have addressed this subject by referring both county officials and those who call for significant changes in county government to those portions of the Iowa Code which offer a variety of approaches to forming new local governments. The possibilities include 1) county supervisors and elected row officers along with other appointed department heads, i.e. the current model, 2) county supervisors and an elected county executive administrator, 3) county supervisors and an appointed county manager, 4) a county charter establishing an elected county or city-county legislative body and some form of executive structure, 5) county-city consolidation with various options as to administrative structure, 6) multi-county consolidation, and 7) a community commonwealth which can take various forms, including one county and one city, multiple county - multiple city consolidations, or some loose confederation allowing each city some autonomy. There's a seat at the table for everyone to discuss this.

legal briefs

Supreme Court Rules On Immunity And County Bidding Procedures

On November 14, the Iowa Supreme Court issued two noteworthy decisions. Copies of the decisions are available on the ISAC website under 'Hot Topics.'

Discretionary Immunity

In *Messerschmidt v. City of Sioux City* (01-1209) the Court decided a case about discretionary immunity. This case involves a city rather than a county, but the legal issues involved are identical.

While volunteering at the Big Parade celebration in Sioux City, Cheryl Messerschmidt was seriously injured when a drunk driver ran into the golf cart in which she was seated. The accident occurred after a member of the event committee who was in charge of security decided to remove the road barricade which had prevented cars from moving in this area during the celebration. Messerschmidt and her husband sued the city claiming it had removed the barricade too soon after the fireworks.

The city sought to get out of the lawsuit on the basis that Iowa Code §670.4(3) broadly immunizes local governments from liability "based upon the exercise of...a discretionary function." The district court rejected the city's claim of immunity, and a jury returned a million-dollar verdict for the Messerschmidts.

On appeal, the Iowa Supreme Court said that discretion was involved in the city's decision to remove the barricade. But it went on to hold that the decision was not based on political, social, or economic policy considerations, so the city's actions in removing the barricade to allow frontage road access were not entitled to discretionary function immunity.

According to the Court, the decision to remove the barrier "was nothing more than an ad hoc decision, tailored only for the particular facts as presented the night of the Big Parade. Matters such as when to lift a temporary road barricade do not require evaluation of policies but instead involved implementation of everyday decisions routinely made by the city."

The million-dollar verdict was upheld.

Bidding Procedures

In *Horsfield Construction, v. Dubuque County* (00-1965), Horsfield Construction, Inc. (HCI) bid on a Dubuque County highway improvement project. HCI was the lowest bidder at \$1.2 million. The Board sent HCI a letter stating that the Board had "approved your bid" and "We look forward to working with you and understand that you can begin work on the project yet this fall." The county later rejected all bids and re-bid the project. HCI sued the county for breach of contract. In a bench trial, the district court ruled that there was no binding agreement because HCI and the county never executed a formal written contract required by Iowa Code §314.1 ("...all contracts shall be in writing..."). HCI appealed and the Iowa

By: **David Vestal**

ISAC Deputy Director



Court of Appeals affirmed the decision.

The Iowa Supreme Court granted further review of the case. The Supreme Court held that the requirement in Iowa Code §314.1 that all contracts be in writing is satisfied if the written bid and the Board's written approval constitute an otherwise binding agreement. In other words, the Court held that the statute does not require that the parties enter into a formal written contract.

The Supreme Court found that a binding contract was created when the Board approved HCI's bid. At that point, the county had no authority to revoke the contract, even though no formal contract had been signed. The Court reversed the district court judgment and sent the case back to the district court for a determination of HCI's damages.

Correction

Story County Assessor Gary Bilyeu pointed out that my discussion in last month's column regarding appointing assessors needs to be corrected. In the case I discussed, *Baliff v. Adams County Conference Board*, the main issue in the case was that a woman named Judy Beckett had attended a February 1997 conference board meeting at the request of her mayor and had voted as members of the mayors' voting unit. I stated that "the Iowa Administrative Code provides that only mayors can vote." That's not correct. As it points out in the case, a mayor may appoint a mayor pro tem to vote in the mayor's place. That's in 701 Iowa Administrative Code 71.19(3)(b). But since no one claimed that Beckett was a mayor pro tem, for brevity's sake, I left out the part about mayor pro tem being able to vote. But it was incorrect and I apologize for any confusion that I caused.

I also need to clarify what went on in *Baliff*. The Conference Board met February 1997 and voted to reappoint the assessor to another six-year term commencing on January 1, 1998. Then in February of 1998, one month into the assessor's six-year term, the conference board discovered the error in the earlier vote, which rendered the earlier vote null and void, and voted as if the earlier vote had never occurred. That is why in the December column I said that in February 1998 the Conference Board "voted to deny the reappointment." As I said, the Conference Board did not vote to remove the assessor. Removal of an assessor can only occur "for cause" according to Iowa Code § 441.9. They just voted on his reappointment one month into his new term.

Parting Ponderable: "In 1973, more people watched the TV special, "Elvis, Aloha from Hawaii via Satellite," than had tuned in to witness the first man on the moon." *Iowa Alumni Magazine*, December 2002.

Keyword: Bundle Up!



Well, yes, it is January! What can we expect but cold, wintery weather? There are many things that we can do to guard against mishaps at this time of year. Here are a few supplied by FEMA and the Red Cross.

Dressing for the Cold

- ♦ Wool retains most of its insulation properties when wet. Some man-made fibers retain their insulation properties as well as or better than wool.
- ♦ Wear a Hat. Radiation accounts for more than half of heat loss from the body. The head may lose up to one-half of the body's total heat production at 40 degrees F, and up to three-quarters at 5 degrees F. A hat that covers the ears and neck area is particularly effective.

When Outside In The Cold

- ♦ Avoid caffeine. It is a stimulant and thus can cause the heart to beat faster and hasten the effects the cold has on the body.
- ♦ Avoid alcohol, a depressant, which can slow the heart and also hasten the ill effects of cold body temperatures. When one has consumed alcohol, increased warm blood flow can trick body "heat sensors" into believing all is well. This short circuits the mechanism that would normally trigger shivering.
- ♦ Watch for signs of frostbite — a loss of feeling and a white or pale appearance in fingers, toes, or nose and ear lobes.

By: **Sandy Longfellow**

ISAC Administrative Assistant



- ♦ Watch for signs of hypothermia — uncontrollable shivering, slow speech, memory lapses, frequent stumbling, drowsiness and exhaustion.

Winter Car Kit

- ♦ Flashlights with extra batteries.
- ♦ First aid kit with pocket knife.
- ♦ Small sack of sand for generating traction under wheels.
- ♦ Brightly colored cloth to use as a flag.

Stranded in a Car

- ♦ Pull off the road, set hazard lights to flashing, and hang a distress flag from the radio aerial or window. Raise the hood.
- ♦ Remain in your vehicle unless help is visible within 100 yards.
- ♦ Conserve fuel, but run the engine and heater about 10 minutes each hour to keep warm, cracking a downwind window slightly to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning.
- ♦ Paper is a good insulator and can be wrapped around the body (under your clothes) to add insulation.
- ♦ Do minor exercises to keep up circulation: Clap hands and move arms and legs occasionally.

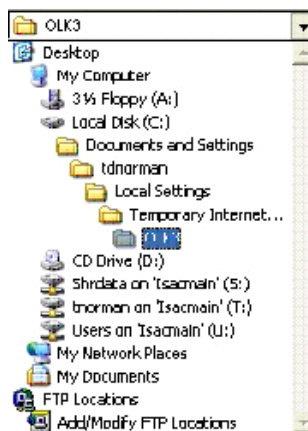
technology center

How To Recover E-mail Attachments When Lost

Q. I received an e-mail with an attachment; I made changes to it and saved it but later could not locate it. Where does it go and can I retrieve it?

A. Yes, you can retrieve your document. Whenever you receive a document in an e-mail message and open it the document is opened in a temporary file which is buried deep in your hard drive. You can easily find where these files go by doing a "Save As" and noting the file path. In this case, it is under my "C drive", "Documents and Settings", "tdnorman", "Local Settings", "Temporary Internet Files", "OLK3". See Diagram. This will vary depending on how your communication software is set up. Once you locate where these attachments are defaulted to go, you will be able to retrieve them at a later date, if you happen to work on them and just click "Save."

A quick way to avoid going deep into your directory and retrieving these attachments after editing is to do a "Save As." Once you open



By: **Tammy Norman**

ISAC Technical Administrative Assistant



your attachment from an email, click on "Save As" and save it into your own personal directory. You will now be able to easily find your document in the future.

Remember whenever you open an attachment, then make corrections or changes, just click "Save" (not "Save As") and reply back to the sender, the corrections that you made will not be sent back with your response. To ensure that your changes will be saved you must "hard save" the document in your personal files and reattach it.

Website Note: The 2003-2004 ISAC County Directory will be available in hard copy form for the price of \$15 for county employees and \$25 for the general public. If you would like to reserve yourself a copy, visit our website under "Publications" then "Directory of County Officials." We will be posting the directory onto the website in an Excel format also. Until next month, keep clicking!

counties in the spotlight

Palo Alto County and the communities of West Bend, Graettinger, Ruthven, Mallard and Emmetsburg were all certified as Iowa SAFE communities by Governor Tom Vilsack. The certification is awarded to communities that complete a four-step process and write a three-phase action plan designed to build community strengths and reduce risks related to substance abuse, crime and violence. Some of the goals of the communities included developing and promoting activities for youth that are drug and alcohol free (as well as violence free), utilizing drug prevention programs in the county, and promoting increased community involvement from youth and other sectors.

(Taken from the Messenger, November 9)

Van Buren County received the County of the Year award for the fifth time in 13 years from the Iowa Tourism Office and the Travel Federation of Iowa. The federation listed Van Buren County's ability to transform from a quiet set of little towns into a bustling center for festivals, rallies and other events as the main reason for awarding it the County of the Year. The

county hosted 51 events in 2001. Each year the Villages of Van Buren offers training in customer service to more than 50 tourism professionals in order to prepare front line workers for the busy summer.

(Taken from the Fairfield Daily Ledger, October 25)

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ISAC brief

County Directories For Sale at NCO School

The 2003-2004 ISAC County Directory will be available at the New County Officers School January 22-23, 2003. The directories will be \$15 for county officials and \$25 for non-county officials. Contact information for county officials, congressional delegates, ISAC legislative liaisons, associate members and state offices are included. If you will not be attending the NCO conference visit our website (www.iowacounties.org) under 'Publications' and download an order form. Reserve your copy today!



2003-2004 County Directory



New County Officers School Coming Soon!

The New County Officers (NCO) School offered by ISAC is fast approaching! This conference is aimed at county officials that have taken office within the last two years and any other county official that feels they could use a refresher course on the issues that county officials face with their position, services offered by ISAC, and services offered by NACO.

This years NCO School will be held January 22-23 at the Holiday Inn Airport, Des Moines. Four seminar sessions will be held Wednesday, January 22 with attendees able to pick from seminars such as Budgeting 101, Open Meetings/Public Records, Resolving Courthouse Conflicts, Sources of Law, Personnel Law, Ask the Experts, and Ethics. During lunch a NACO representative will be discussing the many hats of county government. And finally a reception will be held on Wednesday night. On Thursday, January 23 a short presentation will be given by ISAC staff on the legislative process then affiliates will meet on their own the rest of the day. Visit the ISAC website (www.iowacounties.org) under 'Upcoming Events' for a registration form, agenda and hotel information. The deadline to register for this conference is January 14, 2003.

Spring School Registration Available On-Line

Registration information for the 60th Spring School of Instruction & Business Meeting is available on ISAC's website under 'Upcoming Events.' This years conference is scheduled for March 19-21, 2003 at the Holiday Inn Airport. The deadline to register is March 7, 2003. Hope to see you there!

Record Attendance for ISAC's Fall School!

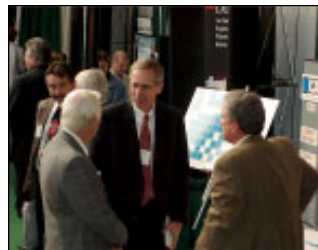
ISAC's 59th Fall School of Instruction & Policy Setting Conference was held November 20-22, 2002 at the Holiday Inn Airport in Des Moines, IA. Approximately 1,200 county officials, exhibitors, alumni and legislators were in attendance. Affiliate meetings were held each day, along with ISAC's general session on Thursday morning. During the general session, ISAC's legislative priorities were approved, innovation award winners were honored and baseball legend Bob Feller gave a keynote address. On Thursday afternoon a raffle was held by the auditors and an auction of a baseball signed by Bob Feller and tickets to an Iowa State football game. Proceeds from these events totaled over \$20,000 and went to the ISAC scholarship fund. The conference was a huge success and thank you to all that attended! ISAC's Spring School will be held March 19-21, 2003.



Above: Alumni members at the November ISAC Alumni meeting at the Holiday Inn Airport. Left: Grant Veeder with Gerry Bair, Department of Revenue of Finance, at the President's reception held in Grant's honor. Below: Exhibitor area in the Holiday Inn Airport. Forty-five organizations exhibited at the ISAC Fall School.



Above: Jean Hirth, Franklin County Public Health, receives an innovation award for "Franklin County Navigator" from Grant Veeder. Above right: Dick Heidloff speaks on his vision as ISAC president in 2003. Right: Eric Ciliberti, Associate Director & County Liaison with the White House Office of Intergovernmental Affairs, speaking at the general session. Below right: Bob Feller as the featured keynote speaker for the general session. Below: Innovation award winners from Bremer County for the entry "Courthouse GIS Day."



Above: Bill Peterson, ISAC Executive Director, talking with exhibitors at the fall school. Below right: Bob Feller speaking during the auction. Below right: Wayne Chizek presenting during the seminar "County Data: Do You Sell It or Give It Away?" Below: Grant Veeder awarding Polk County officials an innovation award for their Mobile Response Team.



ISAC's Policy Process

The relationship between levels of government is dynamic. Intergovernmental relations involves more than just contacting legislators. There are many facets involved in the process as counties participate in developing public policy that affects local government. The goal for counties in this effort is to produce policy that enables county officials to serve their citizens in the most flexible, efficient, and cost-effective way possible.

This article describes the entire process used by ISAC in bringing the county message to our state policy makers. As the 80th General Assembly and Governor Vilsack prepare to convene a new session, it is a good time for new county officials to learn the process ISAC uses throughout the year. It is also a good time for the rest of us to become reacquainted with our own strategy.

Steering Committees and Policy Development

Our public policy process begins with the seven ISAC steering committees. Committee chairs are appointed by the ISAC President. Their terms are for two-years and they are on a staggered basis. Each ISAC affiliate is entitled to name three members to each steering committee.

The following ISAC staff members are appointed to each of the steering committees: County Administration and Organization - Bill Peterson; Environment and Public Health - Robert Mulqueen; Human Services - Anastasia Baker Hurn; Land Use and Rural Affairs - Robert Mulqueen; Public Safety - David Vestal; Taxation and Finance - John Easter and Jay Syverson; Transportation - John Easter.

The steering committees meet two times in the early fall to recommend policy direction for ISAC. Policies are created in two essential ways.

First, the committees establish policy statements. Policy statements express long-term or continued statements of principles important for local control, local government authority, and efficient county operation. These statements are designed to guide the Association in responding to proposed public policy issues affecting county government.

Second, the committees adopt and prioritize legislative objectives. These are matters that ISAC will initiate as legislation or as amendments to legislation. They are prepared in a problem/solution format. Policy statements and legislative objectives reflect proposals raised by the ISAC affiliates, unmet objectives from the previous year, and any other item brought to the steering committee by other organizations.

Once the steering committees have done their work, the ISAC Board of Directors reviews and approves each report and identifies "top policy priorities" during the October board meeting. These top priorities are typically selected from legislative objectives, but sometimes policy statements are included. While the ISAC staff works on all of the issues raised by the steering committees, the "top policy priorities" receive special

By: John Easter

ISAC Intergovernmental Relations Director

attention during the legislative session.

At the ISAC Fall School, the entire package (including the identified top priorities) is ratified by the full membership. ISAC publishes the package in a handy booklet for the General Assembly and other interested groups. ISAC also produces a brochure highlighting the top policy priorities. All of this information is available on ISAC's website (www.iowacounties.org) under 'Legislative Information.'

Role of the Affiliates in the Legislative Process

Each affiliate has its own way of dealing with the legislative process. ISAC staff is available to assist the affiliates with their legislative programs, but the ultimate responsibility rests with each affiliate.

All affiliates designate a person as their legislative liaison. These liaisons serve as the primary contact point through which ISAC staff communicates with the affiliate memberships during the session. For example, with the assistance of ISAC staff on the hill, the liaison will often coordinate legislative strategy (such as letter writing or telephone contacts with legislators) when important issues come up.

Most affiliates have a legislative committee that reviews bills and provides direction to their liaison and ISAC. Such committees help spread the workload among a cross-section of their own affiliate members. Individuals on these committees also become a good resource for the affiliate liaison and ISAC staff to rely on when special expertise on an issue is needed.

Affiliate Legislative Liaison Meetings

Throughout the policy cycle, the ISAC lobbying staff and all affiliate legislative liaisons hold special strategy meetings. There are usually about four of these meetings during the year. These meetings help ISAC to develop strategy within and among the various affiliates. These meetings also enable each affiliate to become acquainted with other affiliate representatives and learn about their issues and how they deal with them.

The following are ISAC staff and their issue areas.

- *John Easter (lobbyist)* - Tax and finance, human services, transportation and any other issues as needed.
- *Bob Mulqueen (lobbyist)* - Environment, land use, public health, elections, economic development and any other issues as needed.

In addition to the lobbyists, the following ISAC staff share in the workload with affiliate liaisons by providing technical legislative analysis to help formulate ISAC positions.

- *Bill Peterson* - Any issue as needed.
- *Jay Syverson* - Tax, finance, and fiscal impact analysis.
- *Anastasia Baker Hurn* - Mental health, juvenile issues, welfare reform and general research.

- *David Vestal* - Corrections, law enforcement, criminal justice and general research.
- *Deb Westvold* - Mental health and social services.

ISAC Bill Review and Registration Process

Each morning during the legislative session, the ISAC lobbying team reviews the daily bill packet and makes initial assignments to the appropriate ISAC legislative review staff and affiliate(s). The ISAC lobbyist/staff initials and the affiliate assignment is noted on the upper right corner of the bill. A copy of each assigned bill is provided to them as indicated.

In order to lobby on a piece of legislation, interest groups must register to lobby on it. There are four ways for ISAC to register to lobby on a bill. They are: For; Against; Undecided (Senate); and Monitor (House). Accordingly, when it is obvious that ISAC should register, an "F", "A", "U", or "M" will be written on the upper right hand corner of the bill, along with the review staff initials and affiliate assignment.

Often there are bills that *could* have an impact on counties but the ISAC lobbyists may not be sure during their initial review. In such cases, we do not register on the bill, but we send it out to affiliates with a notation of "FYI." ISAC proceeds with appropriate action on these bills once the affiliate(s) analyze the bill and make their recommendations.

Legislative Newsletter

One of the most effective communications tools for our membership during the legislative session is the weekly ISAC Legislative Newsletter. This newsletter is about three to four pages in length and features the hot topics of the week. It reports important changes and developments on key issues and alerts county officials which legislators to contact, when to contact them, and the appropriate message that needs to be made.

This grassroots newsletter is e-mailed to every county official that has email capabilities (that ISAC is aware of). If a county official does not have email, the auditors in each county handles the distribution. This device helps crystallize the county position on important issues and brings continuity of the county message across the state. It also helps to assure timely contacts with state policy makers.

"County-A-Day" Program

A recent addition to the policy process is called the "County-A-Day" program. This is a program for county officials of each county to spend one predetermined day at the capitol during the legislative session. The goals of this effort are to raise awareness of counties with state policymakers and to assist ISAC in lobbying efforts. The continuous presence of county officials works to enhance relations between state and local officials by having a fresh set of new county people in the capitol each day. This program also provides our membership an opportunity to learn the legislative process first-hand. While supervisors are responsible for heading the delegation from

each county, other elected and appointed county officials are encouraged to participate. If you would like to reserve a day for your county contact Denise Obrecht at 515-244-7181 or dobrecht@iowacounties.org.

Summary of Legislation and District Workshops

At the end of each legislative session, the ISAC staff compiles and summarizes all enacted bills that affect counties into a legislative summary book. These summary books are organized into topic areas that correlate with ISAC steering committees. Also included are indexes of bill summaries listed by affiliate.

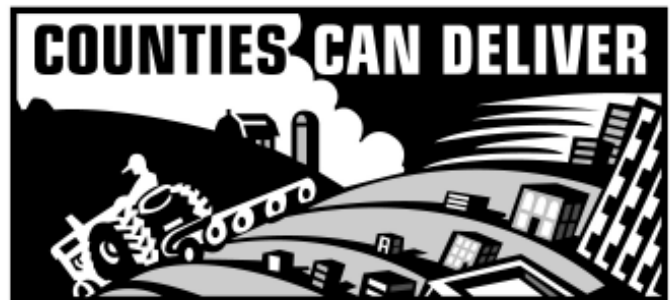
The final stage of the policy cycle is the June District Workshops. The workshops consist of meetings with the county officials in each of the six ISAC districts throughout Iowa. At this meeting, copies of the bill summary books are distributed and ISAC staff provide presentations about the legislative year and its outcomes. Area legislators are invited. Finally, breakout sessions for affiliate groups are held and ISAC staff make special presentations to them about bills affecting their particular areas.

Legislative Interim Committees and Administrative Rule Making

After the district workshops, and until the cycle starts up again with the steering committee process, ISAC monitors legislative interim committees. The committees are appointed by legislative leaders to study certain issue areas. Many committees look at matters that affect counties and ISAC is often asked to provide testimony to these committees.

The interim period also provides time for ISAC to track the administrative rule-making process by executive branch agencies. Many rules are promulgated to implement legislation that ISAC has worked on. Again, this sometimes involves testimony on issues of interest to counties and appropriate coordination with affiliates.

Finally, affiliates use the interim period to study issues to propose to ISAC steering committees for the following year. ISAC staff provides assistance to affiliates during the interim if requested. Before you know it, it is time to start all over again.



Dick Heidloff, ISAC President, chose the legislative theme "Counties Can Deliver" for 2003.

2002 Innovation Award Winners

The 2002 Innovation Awards were presented to five projects during ISAC's Fall School General Session November 21, 2002. The ISAC Innovation Program provides the opportunity for officials and staff of counties in Iowa to receive appropriate recognition by their peers and the public for superior and innovative efforts in their profession.

Courthouse GIS Day

submitted by Kathy J. Thoms, Bremer County, Director of Finance and Management

Bremer County wanted to showcase their new GIS by participating in GIS Day, which is an international day set aside to promote geographic awareness. After researching the possibilities, the planning committee chose to educate the county's 5th grade students through a program of nine geography-based stations throughout the courthouse that would educate them in an interactive, hands-on environment.

Since 80-90% of county information is geographically based, GIS was considered the common denominator for county offices. A secondary goal was to have all these offices work together on the project.

The students worked in small groups that recorded answers to questions as they traveled through the stations. A cut glass globe traveling trophy was awarded to the group with the highest score.

Without the successful intermingling of the offices this project would not have been as successful as it was. The offices took great pride in sponsoring a learning station. Their application stated "it was definitely a group effort." The teachers, bus drivers, and chaperones were as impressed with the capabilities of the GIS, maps and activities as the 291 children that participated. The teachers now look at Bremer County as a resource for information.

Dallas County Archives and Records Center

submitted by Anne Mau, Dallas County Board Secretary

Dallas County is ranked the fastest growing county in Iowa and as with any growth area, space needs are a concern. In 1997, the fourth floor of the courthouse was targeted for renovation. The records stored there needed a new home but because of the volume, two off-site locations were designated. As a result, these issues were identified: accessibility, distance from the courthouse, efficiency of retrieval, liability/safety, confidentiality, housing and adequacy for preservation.

Dallas County wanted to create and implement a records storage facility that would operate under a records management program, with oversight of an Archivist Records Manager.

The designated facility was equipped with climate control, shelving and insulation among other things. The advisory committee used guidelines from resources recommended by the State Historical Society.

The project involved many different agencies and groups including: Dallas County Board of Supervisors, all county departments, residents of the Dallas County Care Facility, cadets from Woodward Academy, members of the genealogical and historical societies, Philip Swartzkopf of Adel donated and set-up shelving, and many community volunteers.

The project secured valuable county records, opened up essential space in the courthouse, freed up staff by having one person in charge of records available to the public, and procedures and policies in place to secure confidentiality and allow public access.

The Innovation Award application stated that "we feel that the most important benefit was formulating and implementing a plan that encompasses the present and future while protecting the past."

Franklin County Navigator

submitted by Jean Hirth, Franklin County Public Health

Franklin County has an increasing number of Hispanics who have a difficult time accessing services. Several problem areas were identified: 1. Language barriers both oral and written 2. Cultural differences, 3. Trust vs. Mistrust, 4. Complicated "systems", 5. Lack of ability to read and write English.

Because of these things, the county found children and families with unmet health and basic needs. These unmet needs resulted in a decrease in the children's attendance at school. The county felt that these children were missing their greatest chance to be educated and become productive citizens in the county.

With a grant the first year from the 4 County Decat Group, the county hired an individual to be a "Navigator," working with families to guide and connect them to services that were recommended by professionals working with the families.

Here's how it works: a teacher might identify a child who is struggling in class and refers the child to the school nurse. The nurse does a vision screen and finds a referral to an optometrist is necessary. The "Navigator" is given the information and connects the family with local providers and helps the family make an appointment. The "Navigator" would also follow through to see that the child gets the needed glasses. The child becomes successful at school.

The Navigator is guided by the Franklin County Family Focus Team with monthly reports and problem solving on various issues. The Focus Team is comprised of members from the local school districts, city and county officials, hospital, ISU extension, sheriff, AEA, DHS, county case managers and others. Jean stated in the application that "our project improved the services to the residents of Franklin County."

"Mobile Crisis Response Team" submitted by Maria Walker, Polk County Program Planner and "www.iowatreasurers.org" submitted by Mary Maloney, Polk County Treasurer and President of the Iowa State County Treasurers Association, will be featured in the February issue of The Iowa County.

Cost of Living Adjustments Can Come From More Than One Source

By: **Jay Syverson** ISAC Fiscal Policy Analyst

An annual ritual for County Compensation Boards is determining if, and by how much, to adjust the salaries of county employees. One tool often used in helping to determine what changes should be made is the Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA). The COLA was adopted in 1973 when Congress enacted legislation to “prevent inflation from eroding Social Security.”¹ Social Security benefits and payments are adjusted (nearly always increased) by a certain percentage on an annual basis. The percentage by which the benefits and payments are adjusted is derived from the Consumer Price Index (CPI), which is published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).

But did you know that there are multiple CPI figures? When the COLA Law was enacted in 1973, the CPI-W was the only index that existed, and so it was the index upon which COLAs were based. Now, however, the BLS releases a CPI for all urban consumers (CPI-U), along with the original CPI-W. The CPI-W is actually a subset of the CPI-U, in that while the CPI-U covers purchases made by *all urban consumers*, the CPI-W covers purchases made only by consumers *whose household income predominantly comes from hourly-wage and clerical jobs*. The CPI-U covers a broader portion of the population (87%) than does the CPI-W (32%), and is by nature more applicable to county officials, most of whom are paid on a salary basis. It should also be noted that neither of the indexes measure price changes in rural areas. Currently, however, no index exists that measures price changes in rural areas, so the BLS recommends that one of the urban measures be applied even in unincorporated areas.

Since its inception, the CPI-U has consistently grown faster than the CPI-W. Congress has not seen a need, however, to change the formula for COLAs, which still uses the CPI-W. This means that if County Compensation Boards are using the formula specified by Congress when determining annual COLAs, they may be inadvertently shorting their county officials. Let’s look at the latest adjustment as an example. The COLA published on the Social Security Administration’s website is 1.4% (rounded). That figure is based on CPI-W data. The COLA that ISAC calculated using CPI-U data is 1.6% (rounded). That annual difference of 0.2% can translate to almost \$35,000 in salary shortfall over a 30 year career as a county official.²

The Bureau of Labor Statistics makes no recommendation as to what measure a county, or anybody else, should use as a basis for COLAs or salary escalations. Neither does ISAC, for that matter. We merely think it is important that County Compensation Boards realize where their numbers are coming from and what they represent. County officials likewise should be informed when it comes to such an important issue as compensation. *For more information on this issue, visit www.bls.gov/cpi.*

¹ ssa.gov

² starting salary of \$30,000

When Not to Use E-mail

The more serious your message, the more personally you should convey it. Never address these two topics in e-mail.

Performance problems. If you’re concerned about someone’s skills, attitude or personality, discuss it face to face. And don’t confide in an e-mail to a colleague that you’re displeased with someone’s effort or ability; you never know who might read your message.

Pay issues. Discuss all facts and figures about employee compensation off-line. Negotiate specific pay and benefit offers in person; never make offers or counteroffers via-e-mail.

(Taken from Workforce)

Taking on a Verbal Bully

In the past, you’ve avoided openly disagreeing with one of your colleagues, but today they said something that you just can’t let slide. Use these techniques to prevent verbal bullies from interrupting before you make a point.

- State a principle everyone-even a bully-can accept. Making a calm, sensible statement works better than labeling or finger pointing. Example: Replace “I don’t appreciate your rudeness” with “I think we’ll accomplish more if we can each talk without being interrupted.”

- Steer clear of sarcastic statements disguised as questions. Example: Rather than “Would you please let me finish?” simply state “Please let me finish.”

- Break their rhythm. If the verbal bully starts to argue, don’t play along. Instead, say “Here’s an idea to bring us back on track.” Pause for effect to capture others’ attention before you continue.

(Taken from Communication Briefings)

NACo news

NACo Achievement Awards

The National Association of Counties is looking for a few good programs. In these current times, with budget shortfalls and increasing demands, what is your county doing that is innovative to meet the needs of your residents?

We want to know! The Achievement Award program, now in its 34th year, seeks to recognize counties, employees and departments for implementing creative ways to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of county government.

By submitting an application describing your county’s program to the *2003 NACo Achievement Award Program* you may have an opportunity to win a national award and recognition, have your program showcased as a model county on NACo’s website, have your program highlighted in *County News*, and attend a ceremony at NACo’s annual conference, to be held this year in Milwaukee, WI.

Interested? Achievement Award applications were mailed to all counties in mid-December and will be on the NACo website at www.naco.org. Or call Joe Hansen, NACo Research Assistant at 202-661-8834 or jhansen@naco.org.

NACo's Commitment to Rural Counties

With approximately two-thirds of the nation's 3,066 counties designated as rural, the National Association of Counties is firmly committed to addressing the unique challenges facing rural America. The Rural Action Caucus, which has evolved into a bipartisan coalition of over 1500 rural elected officials, continues to strive to improve conditions in rural counties through effective legislation moving through the U.S. Congress.

The Caucus is not only the rural advocacy arm of the organization, but also serves as the conduit for technical and programmatic assistance through the NACo County Services Department. Iowa county official Jane Halliburton, Story County Supervisor, is the current chair of the organization.

Background

The Rural Action Caucus was established in 1996 when the Rural Renaissance Task Force was formed. The purpose of the task force was to help rural counties develop local strategies for improving their economies and quality of life.

The task force outlined several important initiatives. First, the task force recommended that NACo form a Rural Action Caucus to represent the interests of rural counties on Capitol Hill, federal agencies and with the Administration. Second, to establish an informational clearinghouse so that rural local county officials could easily access information about innovative programs nationwide. Lastly, that the organization consider the impacts on rural and urban counties during future policy debates.

NACo's Rural Action Caucus (RAC) has continued to grow since its inception in 1997. Over the last year, this bipartisan coalition of rural county officials has focused on the deployment of advanced telecommunications to rural areas, access to affordable healthcare, and the reauthorization of the farm bill. During the farm bill debate, RAC was an active participant in increasing rural development funding.

NACo's Rural County Governance Center

Complimenting RAC has been NACo's Rural County Governance Center. Established in 2001, this on-line clearinghouse acts as a virtual library for NACo's rural county members on best practices, possible grant funding opportunities and information on current issues facing rural counties. In addition, NACo has several grants and technical assistance programs that support rural counties. One such program is through the Department of Health and Human Services and focuses on increasing citizens' ability to access healthcare. Through this grant, NACo sponsors technical assistance to rural counties and has been active in developing rural health access networks in several states.

WANTED

Rural County Officials to Make a Difference.
Become a Member of the Rural Action Caucus Today!

- Join one of NACo's Most Effective Advocacy Groups for FREE!
- Advocate on top NACo priorities such as reauthorization of TEA-21 & workforce programs, USDA rural development and annual appropriation issues.

If interested contact Joe Dunn at (202) 942-4207 or jdunn@naco.org.

NACo's Deferred Comp Beats All Others

NACo's deferred compensation program, administered by Nationwide Retirement Solutions, (NRS) placed first among its competitors for its return on the fixed annuity option offered to county employees, according to a study conducted by the independent consulting firm, Buck Consultants.

The NACo program is the largest deferred compensation program in the country for county employees. This study reviewed the fixed annuity option offered by NRS and its eight largest competitors.

The report was released at the fall meeting of NACo's Deferred Compensation Advisory Committee. This study has been conducted every year since 1989 and the NACo program has always come out on top. "We are committed to providing county employees the best retirement program in the country and to continuing our 20 year partnership with NRS to deliver such a quality program," said Larry Naake, NACo executive director.

In addition to evaluating the competitiveness of the fixed option offered to county employees, Buck Consultants also reviewed the creditworthiness of Nationwide Insurance and concluded that Nationwide strengthened its standing in 2001 in the analysis of risk based capital ratios and had a below average number of problem assets.

Deferred compensation is a voluntary retirement savings program that allows county employees to regularly save, on a pre-tax basis, for their futures. *For further information contact Lisa Cole at (202) 942-4270 or lcole@naco.org.*

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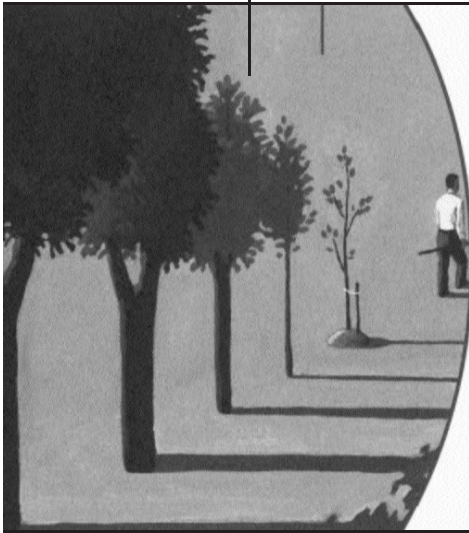
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JANUARY

- 8 CCMS Northwest Support Group
- AEA Bldg., Storm Lake
- 8 CCMS North Central Support Group
- Bennigan's, Clear Lake
- 10 Legislative Liaisons - ISAC Office
- 14 CCMS Administrators - Best Inns & Suites, DM
- 15 CCMS Northeast Supervisor's Support Group
- Bremer County Case Management, Waverly
- 21 CCMS Board Meeting - Holiday Inn Airport, DM
- 21 Statewide Supervisors
- Holiday Inn Airport, DM
- 22-23 New County Officers School
- Holiday Inn Airport, DM
- 23-24 ISAC Board of Directors - Holiday Inn Airport, DM
- 24 CCMS West Support Group
- Godfather's Pizza, Atlantic
- 29 CRIS Board Meeting - ISAC Office

FEBRUARY

- 9-12 Sheriffs & Deputies Patrol School
- Four Points Sheraton, DM
- 19-20 ISAC Board of Directors - ISAC Office
- 28-Mar. 4 NACo Legislative Conference, Washington DC

MARCH

- 12 CCMS Central Support Group
- Botanical Center, Des Moines
- 12 CCMS Fundamentals of Case Management
- LOCATION TBA
- 19 CCMS Board of Directors
- Holiday Inn Airport, DM
- 19 - 21 ISAC Spring School of Instruction
- Holiday Inn Airport, DM

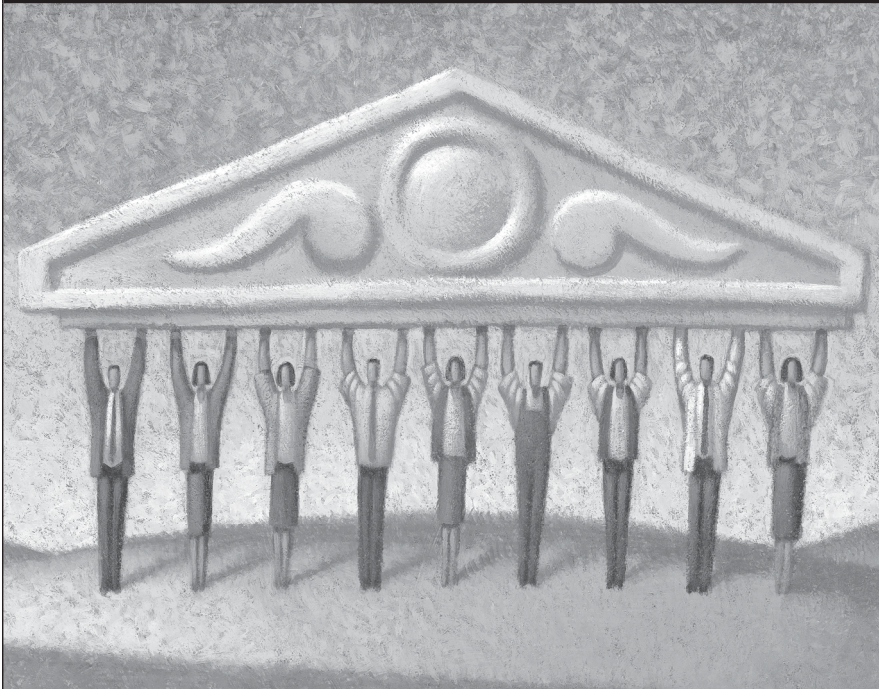
APRIL

- 15 CCMS Administrators - LOCATION TBA
- 16 CCMS Cost Report Training - LOCATION TBA
- 17 CCMS Support Staff Training - LOCATION TBA

For agendas or additional information on any of the above listed meetings please visit our website at www.iowacounties.org and click on 'Calendar of Events!' If you have any questions about the meetings listed above, please contact Jerri at (515) 244-7181 or by email at jnboa@iowacounties.org.

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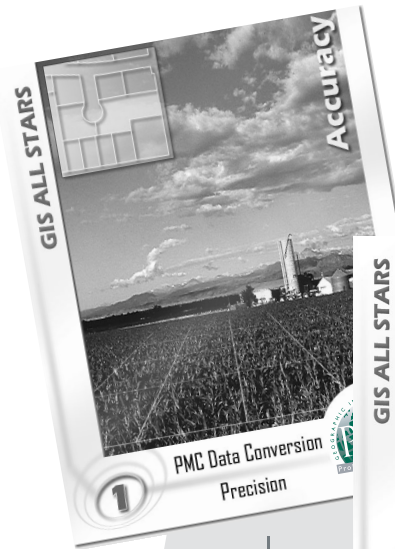


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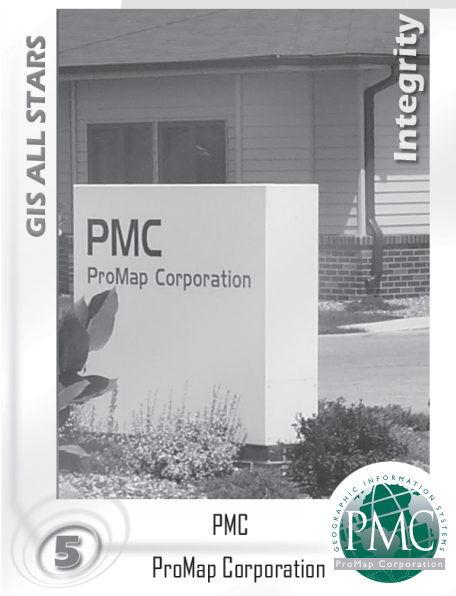
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