

# The Iowa County

IOWA STATE  
ASSOCIATION  
OF COUNTIES



## *ISAC District Workshops: Discussing The Results of the Legislative Session*

IMWCA Offers Stable &  
Affordable Rates

Must County Supervisors Police  
Other Elected Officials?

Innovation Award Application

**July 2002**



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# The Iowa County

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Cover Photos: ISAC staff and special guests that attended the ISAC workshops pose in Storm Lake. Robin Pruisner from Department of Natural Resources speaking in Des Moines. David Miller from the Iowa Emergency Management Division speaking in Des Moines. Rep. David Miller speaking in Ottumwa.

## IMWCA Offers Stable & Affordable Rates

The Iowa Municipalities Workers' Compensation Association (IMWCA) has provided workers' compensation coverage to local governments since 1981. The association was created in response to insurance market conditions that made coverage difficult, if not impossible, for cities to acquire. A small group of mayors from across the state approached the Iowa League of Cities (formerly the League of Iowa Municipalities) for help in solving this problem and IMWCA was the result of their cooperative efforts.

The association's mission is to offer workers' compensation coverage to governmental entities at stable, affordable rates. Formed under Chapter 28E of the *Code of Iowa*, IMWCA was designed to provide joint self-funding of workers' compensation benefits for municipal employees. The original agreement was restated in 1987 allowing counties to join the association, and again in 1998 allowing other 28E entities to join. Today there are over 400 members, including 59 counties. IMWCA is governed by a seven member Board of Trustees comprised of elected and appointed officials representing members of the association. There are currently four city and three county officials serving on the board, each serving a three-year term. Board terms are staggered so that at least two seats are up for election by membership each year.

The Iowa League of Cities, "the League," provides administrative services through an agreement with IMWCA. The agreement provides for underwriting, claims, financial and loss control services. League staff also publishes two bimonthly newsletters for the association, *The Informer* and *Safely Speaking*. With market conditions today similar to those of 20 years ago, there has been renewed interest in IMWCA, and the association has experienced unprecedented growth in the past year. The Board of Trustees and League administrative staff remain committed to providing stable, affordable rates and quality member service as the association continues to grow.

*The Iowa State Association of Counties (ISAC) formally endorsed the Iowa Communities Assurance Pool (ICAP) and the Iowa Municipalities Workers' Compensation Association (IMWCA) at the ISAC Board of Directors meeting December 14, 2001.*

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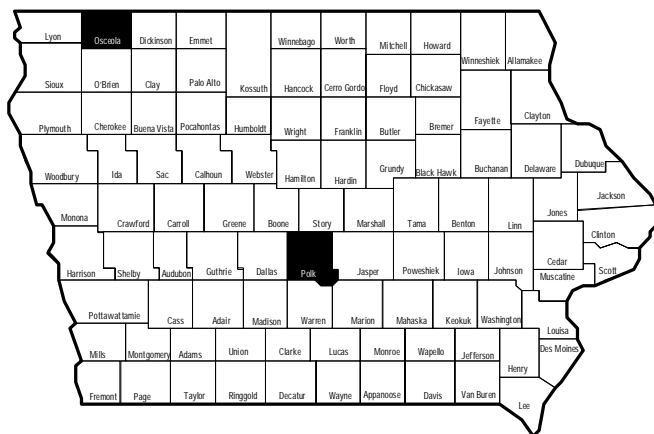


**Robert Layton**  
Urbandale City Manager



**John Mardis**  
Evansdale Mayor

# counties in the spotlight



**Osceola County** will be celebrating its courthouse centennial July 5 at 1:30pm. A general invitation is extended to all, with events to include a dedication of the courthouse and recognition ceremony for the Osceola County Veterans Memorial monument (first stage completed).

Osceola County is located in northwest Iowa and was established at the October 1871 General Election. It is the last and smallest county established in Iowa. It also has the fortune to be the highest spot in Iowa. Osceola County was once known as the “Great American Desert,” as there were no trees and only tall grasses. Osceola County proved itself well and is home to some of the richest soil in the state.

On February 6, 1872, an election was held to build the county’s first courthouse. The issue passed, and a contract was let August 12, 1872, to Henry Pflingsten to furnish and put up the first courthouse at a cost of \$3,447 and to be finished by November 1, 1872. At two separate occasions, additions were made to better accommodate the needs of the county. Nearly 30 years after the building of the first courthouse, the building was condemned by the grand jury.

At the General Election of 1901, the issue to build a new courthouse passed. The contract was let by C. E. Atkinson of Webster City, IA to build the new 60 foot by 84 foot two story courthouse with a basement. The building costs were to be as follows: courthouse \$45,197; steam heating plant \$3,073; marble counters and steel vault fixtures \$6,585; gas lighting plant \$505; gas light fixtures \$619; wood furniture \$2,355; decorating and oil paintings \$2,000; Goddess of Justice \$200; cement walk \$1,532; curb \$440; landscape plans \$50; sheriff’s residence \$3,200; jail and heating plant \$2,800.

The courthouse has seen many changes such as wiring for electrical fixtures in 1915, the removal of the dome and clock tower, and replacement of the Goddess of Justice on the square cupola in 1925. In August 1961, the remaining cupola and statue were removed and a new roof installed. In 1982, to make the courthouse more handicap accessible, the north entrance of the courthouse was completely remodeled with an addition to include a ramp for accessibility to the ground floor and an elevator for accessibility to the remaining two floors. The bathrooms were remodeled in 1982 and again in 1998 to

make them ADA compliant. The courthouse has been constantly maintained and receives comments and praise for its condition and beauty. The rededication ceremony to be held July 5<sup>th</sup> represents a courthouse that has served its people well and a county that was built on faith and trust by its inhabitants for a better tomorrow.



*Left: Osceola County Courthouse as it appeared in 1902. Below: The current Osceola County Courthouse in Sibley, IA.*



**Polk County** will be honored with two of the 2002 Awards of Excellence from NACIO (National Association of County Information Officers) during NACo’s Annual Conference in New Orleans, LA. The Polk Future Employee Newsletter received two superiors in the categories of internal publications published regularly in magazine format and external publications published regularly in newsletter format. The awards were submitted by Marie Grabenbauer, Polk County Training Specialist.

NACIO will host its 2002 Awards of Excellence Banquet at the Hard Rock Café in New Orleans from 5:30pm-7:30pm on Friday, July 12. Bus transportation between the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center, where NACo will be hosting its 2002 Annual Conference, and the Hard Rock Café will be provided. Admission is free for NACIO members and/or their guests. For further information visit <http://www.nacio.org/OnlineStories/hardrock.htm>.

NACIO’s 2002 Awards of Excellence Competition, which received a record 540 entries, ranks as one of the most competitive competitions the organization has ever sponsored in its 26 year history. NACIO founded in 1966, is an affiliate of the National Association of Counties (NACo), and strives to create a better understanding of the duties of county government and to improve the communication skills of NACIO members and all other county officials.



# around the statehouse

## Counties Tighten Their Belts

*“Annual income twenty pounds, annual expenditure nineteen pounds, nineteen shillings, and six pence, result happiness. Annual income twenty pounds, annual expenditure twenty pounds, six pence, result misery.”*  
- Mr. Micawber in “David Copperfield” by Charles Dickens

*“I know, but I had a better year than Hoover.”*  
- Babe Ruth responding to a reporter’s comment that his salary was more than the president

The 2002 legislative session was both a tough one financially and a bit of a strange one. Of course each session has its own personality, but this one had the personality of a schizophrenic surgeon. It was an election year session that occurred right after reapportionment. This meant that some members were still mulling whether to run against a colleague, move or just not run again. Others had already made these decisions and, thus, there were quite a few lame ducks. Legislative leaders ordered it to be a shorter session and scheduled to be only 90 days long, even shorter than an even numbered year session usually is. This shortened other schedules as well, notably the time at the outset for finding sponsors for legislation. Because this was pared back to four days (it is usually at least two weeks), several of the legislative initiatives which ISAC’s committees had set never saw the light of day. There wasn’t time to sit down with the appropriately chosen legislators to ask about sponsoring our proposals.

### The State Revenue Picture

Two clouds hung over the session, the dismal state revenue picture and hogs. (For the discussion of hogs, see the June “Around the Statehouse”.) People who keep track of such statistics have said that this plummeting of expected revenue had not been this serious since a similar economic downturn during the 1950s. And, for what it’s worth, we are not alone. Over 40 states are experiencing severe income shortfalls and have been for well over a year. Georgia’s deficit is the size of the entire Iowa budget. Oklahoma, Georgia and other states have chosen to put their regents universities sports programs – with the exception, of course, of sacred football – in mothballs for at least this year. Arizona, even as dependent as they are on tourism, has chosen to close their state parks this year.

The path to belt tightening in Iowa was chosen initially through across-the board cuts in 2001. Then this year after the Revenue Estimating Conference again forecast even more less-than-meager state revenues, what had been cutting the muscle of state programs and state agencies became the tough surgery of cutting away sinew and bone. State employees were furloughed. More cuts were included in the FY03 budget. Here is where much of the differences between the governor and the legislative leadership came to a head. Both tried to forestall any cuts in K-12 education spending, but certain social services spending became the focal point of some lengthy floor debate by Republican and Democratic legislators.

**By: Robert Mulqueen**  
ISAC Public Policy Analyst



In the first two weeks following the adjournment of the regular legislative session, there occurred 1) the first special session, a fruitless exercise, and 2) speculation about what appropriations the governor would veto. Then, the next avalanche of bad news came around the first of May. The Revenue Estimating Conference said that there would not only be a \$200 million shortfall for FY03, but in the two months remaining in FY02 there would also be a \$200 million shortfall. This meant that there must both be cuts and funding found to shore up what was left that couldn’t (or wouldn’t) be cut in the remaining days of this fiscal year and the FY03 budget must be reworked. The latter must be done both because of the shortfall and because Governor Vilsack had vetoed the majority of the FY03 budget which had been approved in April. This raised the curtain for the second special legislative session held May 28.

### The Effect On Counties

So, between January 14 and May 28, what happened to legislation effecting counties? Of ISAC’s eight top priorities, portions of four received attention. Though we actually lost money for local public health funding, the legislature restored the option for counties in using their state grant for emergency medical services. Funding for dealing with bio-terrorism may soon be on its way, though this is all from Uncle Sam. Two pieces of legislation, HF 2627 and HF 2430, will assist counties in funding and in a redesign of the administration of mental health policy. A small amount of money, from that devoted to waste tire programs, will go to mosquito arbovirus surveillance. The technical election law bill, HF 2472, was approved, though it was the only election law legislation that made it to the governor’s desk. Other approved items of note include HF 582 (annexation policies), SF 2124 (statewide mutual aid compact), and SF 2192 (omnibus highway and motor vehicle policy).

Reductions in funding of importance to counties within HF 2627, the FY03 appropriations approved during the special session of May 28 include:

- \$939,000 decrease in the Iowa Empowerment Fund,
- over \$550,000 decrease in Department of Public Health funding for public health nursing,
- \$1,670,000 decrease in mental health state cases, community services fund, and personal assistance funding,
- \$8 million reduction in REAP,
- \$25,400 reduction in funding for state prisoners in county jails, and
- zero funding for local housing assistance, closing agricultural drainage wells, and Loess Hills Conservation.

It was not pretty. The belt tightening is bringing pain to the county midsection. What wiseguy recently intoned that the recession is over?

## Must County Supervisors Police Other Elected Officials?

### Harassment Lawsuit

The board of supervisors has a duty to control the conduct of other elected officials. That was a federal court jury's conclusion recently in a federal district court case called *Erickson-Puttmann v. Gill* (# C-01-4007-MWB).

In early 2001, Woodbury County Social Services Coordinator Patty Erickson-Puttmann filed a sexual harassment lawsuit against the county, and against Pat Gill, Woodbury County auditor/recorder. The essence of her complaint was that she was subjected to a hostile work environment in violation of Title VII of the federal Civil Rights Act. In particular, she alleged that for a period of three years, commencing in August of 1997, Gill harassed her by threatening her with arrest and falsely accused her of interfering with official investigations, violating of the Open Meetings Law, and having conflicts of interest.

Erickson-Puttmann complained to the Woodbury County Board of Supervisors on four different occasions over a three-year period. She complained once in 1998 with no results. The second time she complained, in 1999, a supervisor told Gill to come to the Board with any complaints about Erickson-Puttmann and not deal with her directly. The third complaint was early in 2000. There was no record of the supervisors taking any action in response to this complaint.

Erickson-Puttmann finally filed a formal written complaint in July of 2000. The following month the Board wrote Gill a letter in which they objected to his "ill-tempered behavior," said he had "succeeded in making the courthouse an unpleasant place to work," and concluded that he had "almost single handedly created a hostile work environment in this building."

The harassment continued, and in February of 2001 Erickson-Puttmann sued. Gill and Woodbury County each filed motions for summary judgment, attempting to get out of the lawsuit. In May of 2002, Judge Mark Bennett handed down his decision on the defendants' motions.

In its motion for summary judgment, the Woodbury County Board of Supervisors claimed that it was not liable because it took proper remedial action. The Board also argued that it was powerless to actually prevent Gill from repeating his conduct because he was an independently elected official.

Judge Bennett responded that the Board "is not quite as toothless to protect its employees from harassment by a county official as it professes." The judge said that the Board could have acted sooner, and could have "considered using its budgetary powers over the county auditor to attempt to conform Gill's behavior."

The Judge said the Board also could have threatened to seek Gill's removal by a court of law pursuant to Iowa Code chapter 66, which allows courts to remove elected officials in cases of "willful misconduct."

By: *David Vestal*  
ISAC Deputy Director



Because of the Board's failure to take these steps, Judge Bennett ruled the Board was not entitled to summary judgment. In his motion for summary judgment, Gill was able to successfully argue that he was not liable for sex discrimination under either Title VII or the Iowa Civil Rights Act because he was not Erickson-Puttmann's employer. So Gill was dismissed from the lawsuit.

When a jury trial was held on the matter in June, the jury returned a verdict totalling about \$30,000 for Erickson-Puttmann for past emotional distress. The jury decided that the Board's actions were not sufficiently prompt and effective to relieve the Board of liability for the allegedly hostile work environment created by Gill.

This decision, although not binding on all boards of supervisors, raises the possibility that courts may find that all boards of supervisors have a duty to control other elected county officials when the board knows they are sexually harassing county employees. This could ultimately mean seeking the removal of the elected county official.

Whatever it takes, the board needs to move quickly and forcefully, to effectively protect county employees. This could include using the board's considerable budgetary power. Remember, the jury apparently believed that the Woodbury County Board should have done more, and done it sooner.

The Board has not decided whether to appeal. In discussing the case with the Board's attorney, Doug Phillips of Sioux City, his advice to other counties is to document all efforts to control the behavior of other elected officials. Phillips said there were many such attempts by the Board over a three-year period, but there were no documents to prove what the Board did.

### Parting Ponderable

Occasionally we all wonder why we take on battles knowing that the odds are stacked against us. The answer is..... because the horse may laugh: "You remember the old English story. An angry king is about to put a disloyal servant to death. 'My lord,' the servant says, 'give me only one year of life and I will do something amazing and unheard of. I will make your horse rear back and laugh with happiness.' The king says, 'That's impossible, horses don't laugh.' The servant answers, 'I have the power to, in only one year, teach your horse to laugh at all your jokes. And when I succeed I will ask you, if your grace will, to spare me. And if I should fail I will peacefully lay down my life.'

The king ponders and agrees. Later a friend asks the servant why he made such a stupid, impossible vow. The servant said, 'Well, in a year the king may die, or I may die. Or the horse may laugh.'" - Peggy Noonan

# health check

## Do I Really Need Sunscreen?



By: *Sandy Longfellow*  
ISAC Administrative Assistant



In times past, smooth white skin was the height of fashion and culture. Women took extraordinary steps to avoid being in the sun. They wore large hats and used parasols. In modern times, however, women (and men) go extraordinary lengths to be exposed to the sun. A “golden” tan is thought to be a must. Modern times have also brought on a great increase in skin cancer.

Statistics from the American Cancer Society reveal estimates that in 2002 there will be 53,600 new cases of melanoma in this county and about 7,400 people will die of this disease. Melanoma accounts for about 4% of skin cancer cases but causes 79% of skin cancer deaths.

This is a significant problem with common sense prevention steps. Here are a few things to think about.

- \* UV rays from artificial sources such as tanning beds and sunlamps are just as dangerous as those from the sun.
- \* Plan outdoor activities early or late in the day to avoid peak sunlight hours between 10 am and 3 pm.
- \* Use a sunscreen with an SPF of at least 15 on exposed skin – even on cloudy days.
- \* Reapply sunscreen about every two hours – even water-resistant sunscreens.

- \* Wear hats, sunglasses and protective clothing.
- \* High risk groups include children, people with red hair or blue eyes as their skin is usually burns rather than tans, and people who work outdoors.
- \* Drink lots of water

There are people that can be a very positive influence in changing the mindset concerning exposure to sun! Parents can assist by buying hats and t-shirts for their children and insisting on sunscreen. Peer modeling by teenagers, such as lifeguards, can have a big impact on others when they use hats, sunglasses, shirts, and sunscreen.

Another important thing to remember is self examination for changes in moles. Look for moles with changes in shape, size, or color or become crusty, ooze or bleed. A good source of information for warning signs is the American Cancer Society website at [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org)

I mentioned drinking water briefly above but it is essential! You should drink at least 8 glasses of water on a regular day. It is a must that you drink extra water before, during and after you are planning to do some type of exercise in hot weather.

# technology center

## Categorizing Contacts

**Q.** “Could you explain how to categorize your contacts in Outlook Express? For instance, sometimes I want to call the pharmacies in town to do pricing on an RX and would like to be able to pull all the pharmacies up at one time instead of clicking on them individually.” - Linda

**A.** Yes, it is possible to do this. In Outlook Express, you will need to select from your toolbar; “Addresses”, “New”, “New Group.” It will be necessary to give your group a name and add your members. Members can be added by selecting them from your address book (if it has already been established) or by selecting “New Contact.” If you need to make a new contact, you will need to do the following: click on “New Contact”, “Name” and complete the boxes as indicated. You will also need to complete the business or home information, if you want to utilize phone and fax numbers. However, if you just want to use email, the “Name” tab is the only one necessary to complete.

In Outlook, you will need to create distribution lists. To do this, you will need to open your “Inbox”, select “New” from your toolbar and “Distribution List.” You can select members

By: *Tammy Norman*  
ISAC Technical  
Administrative Assistant



from existing address lists or by selecting “Add New.” Note that when you add a new contact from the distribution list view, it will only allow you to input the contact’s name and email address. You can check the box “Add to Contacts.” This will allow you to go back later and add additional information. If you do not check this box, an email address and name is all the information that it will contain. The choice is yours. Once you have built a distribution list, you can select it and send out your email message to several different people or companies with just one click of the mouse. This is a real time saver!

**Website Note:** I would like to share with you a fun item. It is entitled “Comet Cursor” and the website address is: <http://funpage.cometsystems.com/>. This website offers many “fun” cursors to use on your computer and it is an easy download. Please keep your questions and comments coming in for this column and the websites. We look forward to hearing from you. Until next month, keep clicking!



## AAMR Annual Conference



With the luck of rotation, I was fortunate to be sent to the AAMR (American Association on Mental Retardation) Annual Conference this year in Orlando, Florida. Having never been to Florida, I found the alligators in the water filled ditches along the roads and the dead armadillos littering the shoulders fascinating. The location of the conference was in a resort hotel on the grounds of the Disney World complex. Although I did not take the time (or the money) to visit the various attractions, it was still a fun place to be close to.

### Keynote Address: AbleLink Software

The Disney Institute provided the opening keynote on the topic of "Management Disney Style: Making Magic through People." The overriding theme was to present the culture of your organization (which includes values and mission) to your employees at the time of application. Disney World employs 57,000 people and through the hiring process allows the applicant to get a good taste of what working there involves and always allowing opportunities for gracefully getting out at any time in the application process if it is not a good job match.

A topic of interest through a keynote address and workshop was the latest in technology for persons with cognitive disabilities. They (AbleLink) have developed software products for money management, task prompting, schedule management, Internet access, teaching how to use the mouse, and many others. The software allowed for short videos of the instructions using audio of familiar voices, such as a parent. We saw video of individuals using the software and they appeared absolutely delighted with their accomplishments. It really was quite an exciting glimpse of what is available out there.

### Managing Risk and Liability in Self-Determined Lives

As is so often said, we live in a litigious world. We live with the ever present thought of litigation and liability, should an individual with whom we work with meet any harm. The session was entitled "The Right to Risk and Its Impact on Quality Outcomes: Managing Risk and Liability in Self-Determined Lives." The speakers included John Rose and Christopher Lyons with the Irwin Siegel Agency, Inc. These two men are lawyers and clearly understood the efforts of advocates and providers to allow people with cognitive disabilities to live self-determined lives and to deal with the accompanying risks. In their words, they wanted participants to "learn how to promote a service delivery system that provides greater choice in support for consumers, while not legally endangering organizations." Christopher Lyons spoke of several specific cases in which a consumer was injured or had died while making independent choices. Families have sued providers for allowing the person to be on their own and their lawyers typically give the argument that a person with mental retardation should not be allowed to be alone or out on their own no matter what skills of independence they have demonstrated. Mr. Lyons has won those cases on behalf of providers

By: *Linda Kemp Gethmann*  
ISAC Case Management Specialist



using the argument of right to risk and through the use of the professional determinations as found in the ASSESSMENT done by the agency and the PLAN created by and with the agreement of the interdisciplinary team.

The assessment was to show what drives the person, where they want to go in life, and present a clear picture of the individual thus showing that the professionals in their support system understand them well. Creation of the plan was to show how the person wanted to get more meaning in life through choice and according to their unique capabilities. Through effectuation, they coached to make sure you are following or deviating from the plan as appropriate. Deviation from the plan would be indicated as monitoring on a regular basis shows the deviation is necessary. The plan, assessment, the process, all show a standard of care unique to the individual and their life issues. The plan cannot be based on what is "typical" for someone with that diagnosis. Courts need to see professional judgement and action and need to see that if we take away choice with risk, we take away being fully human.

The propensity to sue, whether related to grief or simple opportunity, is a reality. It is not a stretch in my mind that the case manager could be brought into the situation along with the provider. One more reason to have professional, well-done paperwork. One more reason for the provider to have their own professional, well-done paperwork.

### Useful Websites

The vendors present at the conference provided excellent material to bring back. The following are some of the web sites I gathered that may be useful to you.

- [www.aamr.org](http://www.aamr.org) - American Association on Mental Retardation
- [www.tash.org](http://www.tash.org) - International advocacy association of people with disabilities, their family members, other advocates and people who work in the disability field.
- [www.thenadd.org](http://www.thenadd.org) - National Association for Dually Diagnosed
- [www.brookespublishing.com](http://www.brookespublishing.com) - Resources regarding developmental disabilities.
- [www.tripsinc.com](http://www.tripsinc.com) and [www.guidedtours.com](http://www.guidedtours.com) - Trips and vacations for people with disabilities.
- [www.FragileX.org](http://www.FragileX.org) - The National Fragile X Foundation
- [www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/](http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/) - National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities (Center for Disease Control and Prevention)
- [www.thecouncil.org](http://www.thecouncil.org) - The Council offers person-centered solutions that keep people safe, offers people choices, and directs dollars wisely.

*Keep believing in the work you do!*

## CORNER

### Miles Butler

Miles Butler served as a Hamilton County Supervisor for 16 years. Miles enjoyed being a county supervisor because “you can make a difference at the county level for the people you serve.” He hopes ISAC continues to increase the partnership with the legislature and provide for the people of Iowa. Currently Miles is a Right-of-Way Agent for Xenia Rural Water of Bouten, IA, covering the area SW of I-35. He has memberships with the Hamilton County Democratic and Hamilton County League of Woman Voters. His family includes wife Jackie, Hamilton County Public Health Nurse; daughter Jodie, risk coordinator at Kalona Middle School; and son Matthew, owner of refinishing business in Grove City, OH. In his spare time Miles enjoys playing cards and visiting his four grandchildren. His wife Jackie says, “He use to enjoy playing basketball and baseball, now he does it from his recliner. He tried to develop a skill in remodeling after losing the supervisor seat but both he and I decided our marriage couldn’t handle that.” Miles lives in Webster City and can be reached at mbutler@ncn.net.

Visit ISAC’s website at [www.iowacounties.org](http://www.iowacounties.org) and go under “About ISAC” for information on current alumni members, benefits of becoming an alumni member and an application form. For further information contact Jerri by phone at 515-244-7181 or by email at [jnboa@iowacounties.org](mailto:jnboa@iowacounties.org).

## Meet Your Board Members

### Lois Rude

ISAC Board Member



Lois Rude has two big duties in Linn County, serving as the Linn County General Assistance Director and Director of the Linn County Health Services Program. Her employment with the county started in 1979 when she accepted the position of administrative assistant in the Public Health Department. With the help of Linn County and encouragement of family and friends, Lois took classes at Mount Mercy College in Cedar Rapids while working full-time and received her Bachelor’s of Business Administration in December 1996. “This is my first year on the ISAC Board and I enjoy listening to the ideas of this diverse group of dedicated individuals and learning from them.” Lois hopes that ISAC will continue to act as a forum to advise, assist and represent county governments as it has done for over 30 years. This year commemorates the 35<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary for Ronald and Lois Rude. They are proud parents of two sons: Daniel in Las Vegas, NV and Brian in Iowa City with their grandson Cory. Lois enjoys traveling, visiting family and friends, listening to music and trying out new restaurants.

### Lannie Miller

ISAC Board Member



Lannie Miller is in his 8<sup>th</sup> year holding the position of Palo Alto Supervisor. “Being on the ISAC Board has given me a broader perspective of government beyond the county level.” Lannie has membership with the Iowa Pork Producers, Iowa Beef Producers, Iowa School Board Association, local school board, task force for a proposed hotel in West Bend, and is the head of the MH/DD Commission. His past employment includes farming and owning a truck line with his sons. Lannie’s family includes wife Charlene, who is a merchandise manager at Community Lumber in West Bend, two boys and six girls. In his free time Lannie enjoys golfing and fishing.

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## ISAC Travels the State for District Workshops

ISAC staff returned from traveling the state to six different cities discussing such topics as the state's recession and hog lot confinements. District workshops were held June 11 (Des Moines), June 12 (Atlantic), June 14 (Ottumwa), June 19 (Cedar Falls), June 20 (Forest City), and June 21 (Storm Lake). The schedule for the workshops included a general session from 9:30am-11am and then affiliate time the rest of the day. During the general session Bill Peterson, ISAC Executive Director, discussed how the economy has created a recession in over 40 states in the United States. He emphasized the need for counties to embrace technology through Internet accessibility in the courthouse, email for employees and the establishment of a county website.



*Jack Bishop, Polk County Supervisor, welcomed county officials to Des Moines.*



*Lee Duin, Polk County Treasurer Assistant Director, explains how the treasurer's new website will allow citizens to pay their property tax on-line.*

And in conclusion of the general session, Lee Duin (Polk County Treasurer Assistant Director), Kim Reynolds (Clarke County Treasurer), and David Jaminson (Story County Treasurer) showcased the new treasurers website that will be in place September 1, 2002.

Over lunch, county officials listened to local legislators discuss how they felt the legislative session went and their thoughts on the future of Iowa. During affiliate time supervisors and engineers listened to staff



*Bob Knowler, Woodbury County Treasurer, enjoys lunch in Atlantic.*



*Sen. Paul McKinley spoke in Ottumwa and Rep. Clarence Hoffman in Atlantic during lunch.*

from the Iowa Emergency Management Division discuss the Iowa Mutual Aid Compact that addresses major or specific disasters and optimizes resources. Mike Wentzien, Supervisors Association Lobbyist, offered his thoughts on how the legislation session went and specific items



*David Miller, from the Iowa Emergency Management Division, addresses the engineers and supervisors in Des Moines.*

of interest to supervisors. In the afternoon supervisors, and other affiliates that were interested, discussed how the livestock confinement bill was going to affect counties. Bob Mulqueen walked county officials through the legislation passed regarding CAFOs (SF 2293). Robin Pruisner and Erik Wiklund from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources discussed the role of the DNR and specifics of the matrix system.



*Mike Wentzien, Supervisors Association Lobbyist, shares his view on the legislative session.*

And in conclusion David Vestal, ISAC Deputy Director, outlined the county's authority to regulate CAFOs.

A special thanks to Linda Traux, Butler County Public Health Nurse, for taking David's place in Cedar Falls, and Mark Linda, Black Hawk County Environment Health Specialist, for taking David's place in Forest City and Storm Lake. Please visit

ISAC's website under "Hot Topics" for the PowerPoint presentations used and information distributed at the workshops.

## Final Results of 2002 ISAC Priorities

Last summer, ISAC steering committees met to determine the legislative objectives and policy positions for ISAC. The ISAC Board of Directors reviewed and approved each steering committee report and identified top legislative priorities from the reports. The entire package was then ratified by the full membership at the 2001 Fall School of Instruction.

For 2002, eight ISAC priorities were presented in the theme of "County Government - Service to the People." This theme helped shape the ISAC message by emphasizing the professional nature of county officials and the services they provide to the public. No one should ever expect a legislative session to go perfectly, and the 2002 session was no exception. The shortfall in state revenues consumed most of the legislative energy and attention, so 2002 was not a good year for new proposals. Accordingly some ISAC priorities were approved by the General Assembly, and others were not. Here is an account of what happened on the eight ISAC top priorities.



### Local Government Fiscal Reform Act

The 2002 battle over the property tax limitation picked up where it was left off in 2001. The focus was in the House Ways and Means Committee where SF 514 - Property Tax Limitation was held over. The year began with a rewrite of SF 514 by the Iowa Farm Bureau. They abandoned the limitation by a formula proposed the previous two years, and replaced it with a laundry list of provisions that reflected legal and legislative losses in recent years involving county sales and property tax policy. This alternative proposal was just as bad as any proposed before.

ISAC maintained its strong advocacy for the Local Government Fiscal Reform Act as presented the year before. Specifically, this proposal includes:

- Iowa Commission on State and Local Taxation;
- County Financial Management Plans;
- 25% unreserved-undesignated fund balance in the general and rural funds;
- Strong unfunded mandates protections; and
- General Obligation Bonding Flexibility.

In the fall of 2001, ISAC staff traveled the state to meet with county officials and their state representatives to educate them about the ISAC proposal and to seek support for it. During the legislative session this strategy paid off as a strong majority of House members continued to support the ISAC plan as the best plan going for property tax reform. However, the House leadership continued to stand behind the Farm Bureau package, so a stalemate ensued and nothing happened. No proposal ever came to a vote in the Ways and Means Committee or on the House floor.

### Bio-terrorism: Local Public Health Funding

For the second year in a row, not all of the tobacco settlement dollars were spent on health related programs. Some of it was scooped to divert to other funding due to the state's precarious revenue problems. The little funding which is supposed to be dedicated to county public health nursing was reduced by a small amount. This year's budget troubles precluded dedicating any new money to local public health infrastructure. There was no increase in food license fees, though ISAC has advocated and lobbied the issue since 1997. In 1998, a small increase was approved, but this amount still does not pay the cost of the program. The Legislature restored the option of spending emergency medical services grant money for equipment and training.

## **MH/DD Funding and the State Budget Crisis**

In 2002, ISAC once again sought continued redesign of the mental health system along with modifications of the allocation formula of allowable growth dollars. Two pieces of legislation were enacted to help move toward these goals.

For FY03, HF 2627 provided allowable growth funds for mental health along with an allocation formula that applies a withholding factor based on mental health fund balances and establishes an eligibility requirement of at least a 70% MH/DD fund levy. The ISAC proposal recommends these factors as a way for counties to show maintenance of effort in their mental health programs. The theory is that a balance between these factors will help to assure dollars are going where the need is greatest.

HF 2430 - Mental Health Redesign, was recommended by ISAC and reflected the input from other interested groups in the mental health field. Basically the legislation combines the State County Management Committee and the MH/DD Commission into a new MH/DD Commission. The Commission is granted rulemaking authority for mental health policy and it will become the forum in which continued redesign of the system will happen. HF 2430 was signed into law on May 2, 2002.

## **Essential Purpose County Bonding for Infrastructure**

HF 2140 was introduced early in the legislative session to help counties in financing certain road and bridge projects. The bill was assigned to the House Local Government committee but it never came out of subcommittee. This was primarily because of the reluctance of the state to authorize debt financing to the state or any political subdivisions during tight economic times. This bill may also have been a victim in the struggle over the property tax limitation.

## **Mosquito Arbovirus Surveillance**

Because revenues for the state budget are seriously declining, there was no legislation introduced to provide for statewide funding of a mosquito surveillance program. A small step was achieved in HF 2554 that contained an authorization for spending waste tire program funding. Specifically, the legislation provides that 5% of funds appropriated for waste tire programs be spent for a study of the West Nile Virus. Governor Vilsack signed this bill into law on April 22, 2002.

## **County Technology Fee and E-Commerce**

There was no action on a proposal to allow counties a \$5 technology fee on recorded documents for use in establishing a statewide digital land records system. SSB 3082 would have provided counties with this revenue stream, but the Iowa State Bar Association, banker groups and realtor groups are resisting this change because they "do not want to tack another fee on their clients."

## **E911 Issues**

As introduced, HF 2491 contained two ISAC priorities involving the E911 system. First it provided liability exemption for members of a joint E911 service board or communications council, and E911 administrators. Second, in order to protect witnesses and victims from media and criminal exploitation, the legislation provided for a restriction of E911 audio tapes from public access. HF 2491 was approved by the House State Government Committee but was never brought to floor debate.

## **Auditors Election Reform**

HF 2472 was approved and contained significant portions of the technical election law changes that have been recommended by the auditors association for the last three years. The Governor signed the legislation into law on April 26, 2002.





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**September 1, 2002.**

*Awards will be presented during the General Session of the Fall School of Instruction in November.  
There is no limit to the number of applications from each county/affiliate.*

## The Iowa Downtown Summit Set

The Iowa Downtown Resource Center and the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs will “strike up the band” at Music Man Square in downtown Mason City when the Downtown Summit takes place August 20-21, 2002. The role of arts, culture and entertainment in downtown economic development will be discussed in presentations and concurrent sessions over the two-day period. This two-day gathering offers participants an opportunity to learn from and interact with noted professionals and local practitioners who are creating renewed excitement and economic vitality in downtowns across the state and nation.

Twelve workshops offered in four concurrent sessions will feature topics ranging from marketing downtown through special events, bringing the right players to the table for arts & entertainment districts, ambiance friendly streetscapes, developing downtown housing, developing art, culture & entertainment friendly ordinances and building codes, public art downtown and bringing history alive through performing arts.

Those interested in attending should register by calling the Iowa Downtown Resource Center at 515/242-4733 or email [downtown@ided.state.ia.us](mailto:downtown@ided.state.ia.us). Registrations received on or before August 12 are \$65 per person; after August 12, the fee is \$90. Registration fees include two meals. A \$55 per person group discount is available for communities registering three or more people at the same time before August 12.

## Iowa Mutual Aid Compact (IMAC)

On April 22, 2002 Governor Vilsack signed into law the Iowa Mutual Aid Compact (IMAC). IMAC is an intrastate voluntary program under new code section 29C.22 that allows for one political subdivision to assist another political subdivision in a disaster that has been declared either by the local member political subdivision, or the Governor. Political subdivisions must be signatories of the compact to implement assistance through IMAC.



IMAC is closely related to the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC), which is utilized on an interstate basis for much the same reason. When the member political subdivision has exhausted all of its resources, and needs further assistance, it can reach out to its neighboring members for support. The new legislation will not replace or negate current agreements members may have with other political subdivisions. For more information contact Craig Estep at the Iowa Emergency Management Division, (515) 281-3231.

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"To avoid criticism, do nothing, say nothing, be nothing." - Elbert Hubbard



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# calendar

## JULY

- 4-5 ISAC OFFICE CLOSED
- 10 CCMS North West Support -  
Godfather's, Arnold's Park Okoboji
- 10 CCMS North Central Support - Bennigan's, Clear Lake
- 12-16 NACo Annual Conference - New Orleans
- 16 CCMS Administrators - Best Inns & Suites, DM
- 17 - 18 Engineers Mid-Year Conference  
- Gateway Hotel, Ames
- 23 ISAC Board, IA School Association Board & IA League  
of Cities Board Dinner - Fort Des Moines, DM
- 24-26 Auditors' Summer School - Amanas
- 31 CRIS Board - ISAC Office

## AUGUST

- 8-9 Supervisors Executive Board - Union Co. Area
- 13-15 CCMS Annual Conference - Holiday Inn Airport, DM
- 14-16 Recorders Annual Conference  
- Holiday Inn, Mason City

## SEPTEMBER

- 4 CCMS Central Support Group - Botanical Center, DM
- 5 ISAC Steering Committees - Holiday Inn Airport, DM
- 12-13 Iowa County Attorneys Association (ICAA) Legislative  
Committee Workshop - DM
- 17 CCMS Mandatory Reporter Training  
- Best Inns & Suites, DM
- 18-19 CCMS Fundamentals - Best Inns & Suites, DM
- 19-20 ISAC Board of Directors - Waterloo area
- 22-25 Sheriffs & Deputies Jails School  
- Holiday Inn Airport, DM
- 25 Alumni Meeting - ISAC Office

## OCTOBER

- 2 CPC's Statewide Meeting - Best Western Inn, Ankeny
- 3 ISAC Steering Committees - Holiday Inn Airport, DM
- 9 CCMS North West Support - Spencer
- 15 CCMS Administrators - Best Inns & Suites, DM
- 17-18 CCMS Strengths Based Training  
- Best Inns & Suites, DM

- 22-23 Mental Health Conference - Scheman Center, Ames
- 24-25 ISAC Board of Directors - ISAC Office

## NOVEMBER

- 7 CCMS Support Staff Training - Best Inns & Suites, DM
- 10-13 County Attorneys Fall Training Conference - DM
- 20 CCMS Board of Directors - Holiday Inn Airport, DM
- 20 ISAC Board of Directors - Holiday Inn Airport, DM
- 20-22 ISAC Fall School Conference - Holiday Inn Airport, DM

## DECEMBER

- 5 District II Winter Meeting - Elks Lodge, Charles City
- 6 Annual Drainage Meeting - TENTATIVE
- 8-11 Sheriffs & Deputies Winter School  
- Downtown Marriott, Des Moines
- 10-12 Engineers Winter Meeting - Scheman Center, Ames
- 13 ISAC Board of Directors - ISAC Office

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



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