

The Iowa County

*Courthouse
Preservation*

September 2005

ISACA
Iowa State Association of Counties

Experience.



Your representatives on the
IPAIT Board:

- Floyd Magnusson
Supervisor Webster County
- Robert Hagey
Treasurer Sioux County
- Dianne Kiefer
Treasurer Wapello County

Providing liquidity
management through money
market and short-duration
fixed income vehicles:

- Diversified Fund
- Direct Government
Obligations (DGO)
- Fixed Term Investments

Successfully managing public funds since 1987, we have made it our business to understand the investment needs of public agencies in order to effectively provide the products and services that are needed. We offer you peace of mind through:

Safety of principal
Liquidity of assets
Competitive rates of return

Iowa Public Agency Investment Trust
Contact Ron Shortenhaus, 1-800-872-4024, www.ipait.org



ISAC Sponsored. Investors Management Group, Investment Advisor

The Iowa County

September 2005 * Volume 34, Number 9

Courthouse Preservation	4-5
Capitol Comments <i>John Easter</i>	6
Legal Briefs <i>David Vestal</i>	7
Health Check <i>Sandy Longfellow</i>	8
Technology Center <i>Tammy Norman</i>	8
Counties in the Spotlight	9-10
ISAC Brief	11-12
NACo News	13-14
Miscellaneous	15-16
Classified Ad	16
Calendar of Events	23

The Iowa County: The official magazine of the
Iowa State Association of Counties
501 SW 7th St., Ste. Q Des Moines, IA 50309
(515) 244-7181 FAX (515) 244-6397
www.iowacounties.org
Denise Obrecht, EDITOR



ISAC's Mission:

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

ISAC's Vision:

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

ISAC OFFICERS

PRESIDENT

Angela Connolly - Polk County Supervisor

1ST VICE PRESIDENT

Denise Dolan - Dubuque County Auditor

2ND VICE PRESIDENT

Kim Painter - Johnson County Recorder

3RD VICE PRESIDENT

Mike King - Union County Supervisor

ISAC DIRECTORS

Dale Hyman - Polk County Deputy Assessor

Pam Dettmann, First Assistant, Des Moines Co. Attorney

Mary Williams - Benton County Community Services

Steve Lekwa - Story County Conservation Director

Deanna Bachman - Marshall Co. Emerg. Mgmt.

Robert Haylock - Hardin/Butler County Engineer

Mark Linda - Black Hawk Co. Environ. Health

Wayne Chizek - Marshall Co. Information Technology

Kathy Nicholls - Wright County Public Health Nurse

Gary Anderson - Appanoose County Sheriff

Lannie Miller - Palo Alto County Supervisor

Lee Duin - Assistant Director, Polk County Treasurer

Timothy Huey - Scott County Zoning

J. Patrick White - Johnson County Attorney (Past Pres.)

Grant Veeder - Black Hawk County Auditor (NACo rep.)

Jane Halliburton - Story County Supervisor (NACo rep.)

ISAC STAFF

William R. Peterson - Executive Director

Lauren Adams - Financial Administrative Assistant

Karmen Anderson - Receptionist

John Easter - Director of Intergovernmental Affairs

Deb Eckerman - Case Management Specialist

Linda Hinton - Assistant Legal Counsel

Linda Kemp Gethmann - Case Management Specialist

Sandy Longfellow - Administrative Assistant

Jerri Noboa - Meetings Administrator

Tammy Norman - Technology Services Coordinator

Denise Obrecht - Marketing/Communications Coordinator

Jackie Olson Leech - Case Management Specialist

Jay Syverson - Fiscal Analyst

David Vestal - General Counsel

Dan Vonnahme - Case Management Specialist

Deborah Westvold - Case Management Director

ISAC members are elected and appointed county officials from all 99 counties. *The Iowa County* (ISSN 0892-3795, USPS 0002-150) 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.

Turning Your Courthouse Into An Attraction *Making Historic Preservation A Priority*

The historic seats of county government in Iowa represent some of the finest works of public architecture in the state and the nation. A county courthouse is both a symbol of government and a monument to county history. Beginning in the 1840s, courthouses were built in Iowa and are living symbols that shape the state.

Courthouse construction was often a key time in the development of the county. Kerry McGrath, Local Governments/CLG Coordinator, Iowa Historic Preservation Office, said Iowa's prosperity and leadership in agricultural developments in the later half of the 19th century and early 20th century meant that boards of supervisors had the means to hire nationally recognized architects to design the buildings. "As with most 19th century construction, these buildings were meant to last, they reflect high levels of skill in their construction and good materials were used." Most of Iowa's county courthouses are listed on the National Register, attesting to their historic significance.

Why Preservation?

To some, retention of old buildings suggests a "non-progressive" position. Others realize that historic public buildings represent a community's long term investment. They understand that the buildings literally cannot be replaced; their design, construction, and materials may no longer be available. McGrath said in an agricultural state, such as Iowa, where land is often more valuable than buildings, historic preservation allows one to conserve and preserve land.

Maintaining historical structures is challenging. County officials struggle with tight budgets and are overwhelmed with the upkeep of courthouses. Dallas County supervisors recently asked their citizens for approval of \$10 million to restore their courthouse. Dallas County officials had to vacate their courthouse in late December and early January after structural problems were noticed. County officials were moved to temporary trailers and buildings around the Adel square.

At some point in time, county officials are faced with the question of courthouse preservation or construction of a new building. Mark Hanson, Dallas County Supervisor, said you have to determine the quality of your physical structure. "Notwithstanding the question of whether the building from the exterior looks good, is how good are the bones. In our case it is not only beautiful, but the Bedford (Indiana) Limestone used for the courthouse will last indefinitely. Some individual blocks are 3 ½ tons apiece. Thankfully our voters by referendum supported this thought process with an 84% approval on July 12, 2005." Hanson did say it could be a more difficult call for smaller counties, without the sufficient tax base or citizen support. Building new allows for a design to specification.

McGrath said that older buildings are more efficient than newly constructed ones. She said the high ceilings, sash windows, and transoms above the doors allow air to circulate during warm months and can be closed off to keep heat in particular areas. If a county outgrows its courthouse or it is evident that construction of a large addition would detract from the historic

Grant Resources Available

There are grants available to counties that face the large bills that come from courthouse renovation. Grants are offered by the State Historical Society of Iowa and the Department of Cultural Affairs. There are two grant programs administered by the State Historical Society that can be used for courthouse preservation. They are the Historical Resource Development Program (a.k.a. REAP/HRDP) and the Historic Site Preservation Grant (HSPG) program. These grant programs can be used by multiple types of applicants, and for multiple types of projects. Courthouses are just one of many project types.

The REAP/HRDP program requires that buildings are listed on the National Register of Historic Places before the grant is submitted. The REAP/HRDP program also requires that the county be a Certified Local Government (CLG). Visit http://www.iowahistory.org/grants/shsi_grants/hrdp/hrdp.html for further information.

*By: Kathy Gourley,
Grants Manager State Historical Society*

The HSPG program requires a courthouse to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. There are 79 counties with courthouses listed on the National Register; there are an additional two county courthouses (Delaware County and Hamilton County) that have been determined eligible for the Register. The HSPG program does not require CLG status. Visit http://www.iowahistory.org/grants/shsi_grants/hspg/hspg.html for further information.

In the HRDP program, the following counties have received grants: Audubon (\$2,200); Clay (\$20,000); Davis (has received 4 grants for courthouse preservation totaling \$75,000); Montgomery (\$20,000); Van Buren (\$18,000); Wapello (\$20,000); Winneshiek (\$23,000); Woodbury (\$25,000). In the HSPG program, the following counties have received grants: Appanoose (\$70,000); Dickinson (\$54,525); Franklin (\$73,144).

significance, one option is the county can built a second structure and continue to use the old courthouse for a different purpose. McGrath is quick to say that the best preservation of courthouses is good maintenance. "Historic preservation is fiscally sound. Maintain what you have and new construction or costly repairs will not be needed. A building is like a field, a row crop, or livestock; if you cut corners, you do not get a quality product and in the long term you lose money. Woodbury County, Davis County, Van Buren County, Page County, Polk County, Lucas County, Franklin County - all of these counties have maintained or reinvested in their historic courthouses."

Ways To Encourage Community Preservation

County officials can make historic preservation a priority through comprehensive planning, zoning and subdivision regulation, adoption of building codes, development of incentive programs and by encouraging model projects that combine environmental and historic preservation and are sustainable. McGrath suggests helping citizens establish organic farming operations on historic farmsteads; encouraging industries to utilize extant buildings, particularly historic ones, such as schools or commercial structures; encouraging the school district(s) to offer courses in Iowa history and biology at multiple grade levels; encouraging the county conservation commission to incorporate historic preservation into its programming; establishing a county-wide historic preservation program with an active historic preservation commission to provide leadership and guidance (www.iowahistory.org); participating in the Certified Local Government Program, which provides assistance to Iowa's city and county historic preservation commissions; and encouraging the county cemetery commission to work with the historic preservation commission to maximize preservation efforts.

Thirty-six Iowa counties have established county-wide historic preservation programs. The mission of these programs is as follows:

- Promote the educational, cultural, economic and general welfare of the public through the recognition, enhancement, and perpetuation of sites and districts of historical and cultural significance;
- Safeguard the county's historic, aesthetic, and cultural heritage by preserving sites and districts of historic and cultural significance;
- Stabilize and improve property values;
- Foster pride in the legacy of beauty and achievements of the past;
- Protect and enhance the county's attractions to tourists and visitors and the support and stimulus to business thereby provided;
- Strengthen the economy of the county;
- Promote the use of sites and districts of historic and cultural significance as places for the education, pleasure, and welfare of the people of the county.

McGrath said historic preservation does not mean that every old property must be saved; its intent is finding contemporary uses for properties with demonstrated significance. "I don't view historic preservation as a problem, I see it as a way to reap benefits from the past." Hanson can attest to that. "In Dallas County, some will stop at the courthouse, wander around and imagine the earlier days." Courthouses are an attraction, drawing people into the community to shop, live, and trade.

Relief Through Tax Credits

By: Renie Neuberger, Consultant

There is a tax credit that could help counties with the costs of restoration. The credit is now called "the historic preservation and cultural and entertainment district tax credit." The credit is granted against state income tax imposed against personal net income, business tax on corporations, franchise tax and premium tax.

An entity without a state tax liability may transfer or sell its tax credit to another. In many cases, the dollars generated from the sale of the historic preservation tax credit fills the last critical gap in financing and makes it possible for the project to move forward. Any consideration, or dollars, received for the credit may be subject to federal income tax. Most likely your project would not be subject to federal tax liability.

An entity without a state tax liability may also qualify for a cash refund. The refund may be no more than 75% of the credit amount and is subject to a discount rate set by the state. The refund is received by filing a state tax return.

Unfortunately, the Iowa historic preservation and cultural and entertainment district tax credit program is underfunded. The credit amount, statewide, is capped at \$2.4 million annually. Projects that are located in a designated cultural and entertainment district are subject to a \$4 million cap. Demand for historic preservation credits has been so great that credits are currently being awarded for SFY 2018. Projects in cultural and entertainment districts are currently being awarded credits for SFY 2008. As you can probably guess, the credit for 2018 is worth very little to an investor. You may be able to interest someone in the credit for \$.10 per credit. A credit for 2008 may be worth about \$.85. Is your courthouse in a cultural and entertainment district (CED)? If not, you may want to see if it could be.

The annual cap for the historic preservation and cultural and entertainment district tax credit needs to be raised beyond the \$2.4 million cap. The Iowa Values Fund did allocate an additional \$4 million to CEDs. Historic tax credits are an economic development engine for communities all across Iowa. I believe the return to the state more than pays for the credit.

NACo Annual Conference

The annual National Association of Counties' (NACo) conferences are always informative and productive. The 2005 conference in Honolulu, Hawaii was no exception. This meeting is where county officials from across the country ratify their national policy platform and elect new officers. Many issues of significant interest to Iowa county officials were considered.

Steering Committees

Like ISAC, NACo organizes its policy development process by using steering committees. Each of NACo's 11 steering committees has a number of standing subcommittees. The committee and subcommittee meetings I attended involved the Finance and Intergovernmental Affairs steering committee.

Among the policies adopted were positions of support for HR 3163 to delay the implementation date for the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) from January 1, 2006 to January 1, 2010. Activities to implement HAVA have been delayed since it was first enacted in 2002. This has caused federal funding shortfalls and delays in the establishment of voting systems standards. Counties are responsible for providing voting systems that meet specified standards and federal funding for those systems is \$600 million - \$800 million short at this time. That would translate into a cost for local taxpayers.

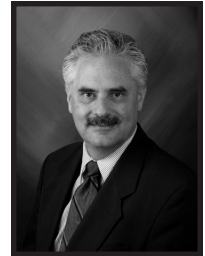
The committee also discussed NACo's support for legislation to strengthen the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act. This year marks the 10-year anniversary of the enactment of the original federal legislation. NACo has joined the associations for governors, state legislatures, mayors, and cities to request broader definitions of mandates, strengthen enforcement, enhance fiscal impact assessments, and create new accounting mechanisms to identify actual costs after mandates have been imposed. Legislation to provide these things is expected to be introduced this fall.

Affiliate Meetings

NACo is comprised of many affiliate groups of county officials. They typically hold business meetings at the NACo conferences. I have been a member of the National Association of County Intergovernmental Relations Officials (NACIRO) for about 20 years. Our business meeting provided an opportunity for members to compare and contrast legislative trends affecting counties in our various states. This information is useful in learning new legislative strategies or situations to avoid. Every year at the annual meeting our members enter the "silliest bill of the year" contest. It is amazing to learn the things that legislators from around the country try to do. The prize is a one-year free membership in our association, and I happened to win this time. My entry was HF 383, a bill to legalize the sale of wild turkey bones.

By: **John Easter**

ISAC Director of
Intergovernmental Affairs



Work Sessions

There were a variety of excellent work sessions from which to choose. I attended a workshop designed to educate county officials about the recent U.S. Supreme Court decision (*Kelo v. City of New London*) affirming that eminent domain is an important tool for local governments in the redevelopment and revitalization of economically distressed areas. The court stated in its opinion that the pursuit of economic development is a "public use" within the meaning of the Fifth Amendment's Takings Clause. This ruling basically reinforces current law but it has ignited some legislative reaction in the Congress and some state legislatures to introduce proposals to further protect property rights.

General Sessions

The general sessions featured the topics of economic globalization, juvenile justice and the multifaceted problem of methamphetamine in our society. Of particular interest, actor and writer Matt Farnsworth spoke about two independent films he recently directed concerning methamphetamine. Both were filmed on location in Iowa and he used clips from each during his presentation. *Iowa* is a feature film that depicts a group of young people who fall into the clutches of methamphetamine production and use. *Ride the White Buffalo* is a documentary about the growing devastation of methamphetamine on individuals, families, and communities in our culture. It was a compelling presentation and it helped educate county officials in attendance about this serious epidemic.

Iowa Leadership

Two Iowa county officials played important leadership roles at the conference. Bob Hagey, Sioux County Treasurer, was named President of the National Association of County Treasurers and Finance Officers (NACTFO) for the coming year. I was honored to attend the annual NACTFO banquet and witness the installation ceremony. It is obvious that his colleagues from across the nation have placed their confidence in his leadership skills and collaborative style.

Jane Halliburton, Story County Supervisor, concluded her term as chair of the Rural Action Caucus and was tapped by the incoming NACo President Bill Hansell to serve on the NACo Board of Directors. Supervisor Halliburton was also named as co-chair of the NACo Methamphetamine Action Group. The mission of the group is to encourage the nation's county officials to assume the leadership necessary for the battle against America's most serious public health issue: methamphetamine manufacture, importation and use.

Supreme Court Clarifies Statute on Job References

Immunity Upheld: If someone calls and asks about the job performance of a former employee of yours, can you speak freely? That was the issue in *Hlubek v. Pelecky*, a recent Iowa Supreme Court case.

Mark Hlubek was a drivers ed instructor employed by the Mississippi Bend Area Education Association (AEA). In January 1999, a student at North Scott Community High School claimed that Hlubek sexually harassed her. An investigation found no harassment. The AEA conducted a separate inquiry and found other potential incidents of inappropriate conduct. Termination proceedings were instituted. Hlubek then resigned. He was acquitted on criminal assault charges, but there was substantial evidence that some sort of sexual harassment had taken place.

Later, representatives of the Maquoketa School District contacted Glen Pelecky of the Mississippi Bend AEA concerning Hlubek's job performance. Pelecky did not go into specific details but did say that the AEA was "dissatisfied" with Hlubek's performance and decided not to renew his contract.

After talking with Pelecky and conducting a background check, the Maquoketa School District declined to employ Hlubek. He sued Pelecky, contending that Pelecky interfered with his employment contract and potential business relationship.

The Scott County District Court granted summary judgment in favor of Pelecky on all of Hlubek's claims. The ruling was in part based on Iowa Code §91B.2, which creates immunity for former or current employers who provide information to prospective employers. The immunity provisions require individuals involved to act in good faith and in a reasonable manner.

Hlubek appealed. The Supreme Court affirmed the district court decision. This was the first time the Iowa Supreme Court had interpreted Iowa Code §91B.2. The Court said that the purpose of the statute is to provide "immunity from civil liability for an employer who acts reasonably in providing work-related information about a current or former employee of the employer."

The Court concluded that Pelecky acted reasonably and in line with the immunity provisions outlined in that Code section. So in some sense the statute "worked." Pelecky was able to warn a potential employer about Hlubek without incurring legal liability.

Two observations: 1) this lawsuit went all the way to the Iowa Supreme Court, despite the fact that Glen Pelecky hardly said anything incriminating about Hlubek – he did not even mention sexual harassment. Imagine what would have happened if he had told the potential employer everything that he knew about Hlubek; and 2) you have to wonder what Pelecky's response is going to be the next time a potential employer calls – will he be willing to go through this ordeal again, or will he just provide name, rank and serial number?

By: David Vestal

ISAC General Counsel



Board Procedure: At the NACo annual conference there was an interesting session on running board meetings. One topic was how a specific board vote can be revisited.

According to Robert's Rules, this can happen in two ways. A "motion to reconsider" must take place at the same meeting in which the original vote was taken, and the motion must be made by a board member who was on the winning side on the first vote. A "motion to rescind" can take place at any time, but it cannot cancel or countermand an action that has already occurred in response to the first vote. A motion to rescind requires a two-thirds vote, unless prior notice has been given of the intention to make the motion, in which case a majority vote is required.

Boards of Health: I stated in one of my past columns that elected officials cannot enter into contracts on their own; they must also be approved by the board of supervisors. I then got calls asking, "what about boards of health, do the supervisors have to sign their contracts as well?" The answer is no. Boards of health are different, because Iowa Code chapter 137 specifically says that boards of health have the power to "contract for public health activities and projects with public or private entities or individuals."

Parting Ponderable: There was a November 2001 survey done by the Iowa Department of Public Health. The purpose of the survey was to gauge attitudes about public health issues. But it also contains a profile of the county supervisors that responded to the survey. The survey received responses from 94 county supervisors around the state, which is a 25% response rate, so it may not accurately represent all of Iowa's county supervisors. But it is sure interesting. For instance:

- average age of county supervisors is 58;
- 88 % of county supervisors are male, and only 12% female;
- 44% of county supervisors held another elected office first;
- of those that had held another office, 49% had served on a school board, 22% had served on a city council, 12% were township trustees and 10% were mayors;
- average supervisor has served 9 years;
- 40% of county supervisors live within a city, 60% live outside a city;
- average supervisor has lived in the county for 45 years;
- as far as the highest degree earned, 49% of county supervisors have a high school diploma, 34% have a bachelor's degree, and 3% have a master's degree;
- as far as outside employment, 55% of county supervisors are employed part-time, 29% have full-time jobs, and 14% are retired;
- 41% of county supervisors list their occupation as "farmer;" none list their occupation as "religious."

health check

Safety

Many years ago, I was carrying an ironing board across my living room without folding it down. As a result, I sustained a “basketball player” injury by putting down my hand to cushion the fall. My wrist was broken. I regretted very much not closing the ironing board before moving it. Here are a number of areas in which we can have a big impact on home falls and injuries.

Burns: Install smoke detectors and check the batteries yearly. Keep a fire extinguisher and have it inspected regularly. Set your water heater for 120 degrees to avoid burns. Don’t smoke in bed.

Kitchen Burns: Turn pot handles toward the back of the stove. Smother burning food or grease with a lid or pot. Keep matches and lighters out of harm’s way. Never wear long, loose sleeves while cooking.

Heating System: Have your furnace checked yearly. Change filters when necessary. Watch for pilot lights that don’t stay lit.

Falls are the number one cause of fatal injuries for older people. Take the following precautions:

- Remove cords that cross the areas where you walk.
- Keep the stairs clear – never store anything on them.
- Be sure stair handrails are secure.
- Light up dark rooms – have numerous night-lights in critical areas.

By: Sandy Longfellow

ISAC Administrative Assistant



- Keep a step stool handy and never use substitutes like boxes or buckets.
- Think about where rugs are placed – they can be a tripping hazard.

Bathrooms: Be sure to have rubber suction mats or adhesive appliques in showers and tubs. Think about installing grab bars in the tub.

Carbon Monoxide: Leaks can result from a faulty stove, fireplace or heater, or if the family car is left running in the garage. Symptoms include fatigue, headache, nausea, and dizziness. Have a carbon monoxide detector in your home and keep the batteries up-to-date. Since carbon monoxide is odorless and colorless and is as lethal as fire, a detector is imperative.

Tagged Shut Off Valves: Label gas, oil, and water shut off valves so they are easy to identify.

Emergencies: Have emergency phone numbers by the telephone or put them on your speed dial. Make sure your address is marked clearly and well lit on your house so emergency vehicles can find it easily.

These are only a few things to check out. Take a stroll around your home and see what precautions you can make.

technology center

Printers

Q: We are looking to purchase a new printer for our office, what is the difference between laser and inkjet? Do you have any suggestions or tips for us before we make this purchase?

A: The difference between a laser printer and an ink jet printer is the type of cartridges and the processes that are used to print images onto paper. Inkjet utilizes a process in which a cartridge sprays small streams of quick drying ink, while a laser utilizes laser technology and static electricity to fuse images onto paper. Inkjet printers are designed primarily for the home user due to the low purchase prices, but the usage charges can be costly. The cartridges and special paper needed make the cost per copy much higher than a laser printer. However, they are ideal for end users that have light printing needs.

A laser printer costs more to purchase initially, although the cost per print is much less than the inkjets. If your office is extremely small and your usage light, you will be able to make due with an inkjet printer. However, if you have a larger office and staff and your print habits are moderate to high, you will be better off with a laser printer. Another factor to consider in your office will be the networking. If you plan to allow several employees access to the printer, then you need to ensure that it is

By: Tammy Norman

ISAC Technology
Services Coordinator



network compatible.

With these issues addressed, what printers are the best in their field? In my humble opinion, you cannot beat the HP printers, especially their lasers. In our office we have a HP LaserJet 4M that is over 10 years old and still going strong. We also have a HP OfficeJet Pro 1170 that is over seven years old and still functioning. Canon and Epson also make excellent inkjet printers and have reputable products.

One final word of advice: beware of purchasing refurbished laser cartridges and refilling inkjet cartridges. You can utilize these methods of cost savings, but ensure that you are purchasing your refurbished laser cartridges from a reputable company that offers guarantees on their products. If you decide to refill your inkjet cartridges, keep in mind that certain cartridges contain the print head itself and it is important to purchase these new.

Website Note: Please forward any items that you would like addressed in this column to my attention at 515-244-7181 or via e-mail at tnorman@iowacounties.org. Until next month, keep clicking!

Outstanding Elected Official

Linn County Supervisor Lu Barron was selected the Heritage Area Agency on Aging Outstanding Elected Official for 2005. This award recognizes Barron's contributions to policy making that have enhanced the lives of seniors as well as increased the awareness of aging issues at a regional level. During her years on the board of supervisors, Barron has demonstrated a commitment to helping the elderly remain independent and in their own homes as long as possible, retaining the county-owned care facility, and expanding senior dining in rural areas. The agency's seven-county area includes Linn, Benton, Cedar, Jones, Iowa, Washington and Johnson.

Woodbury County Promotes Organic Farming

The Woodbury County Board of Supervisors took a bold step to revitalize the county's rural communities by adopting a resolution to provide real property tax rebates for those who convert from conventional to organic farming practices. Woodbury County is the first in the nation to offer tax incentives for organic farming. The supervisors have committed to granting a total of \$50,000 in annual tax rebates, each year for five years, to those Woodbury County farmers who convert and become certified organic farmers. The organic food market is growing at an annual rate of 20%, while domestic supplies of organic dairy, soybeans, and grain fall far short of current demand. Organic farming might save smaller family farms by offering lower startup costs and encouraging potential young farmers to stay in farming instead of leaving for higher paying jobs. Woodbury County intends to reverse decades of rural population decline due to the growth of large farms typically employed for commodity farming.

(Taken from the Danbury Review, July 6)

Scott County Awarded Top 10 Digital County

Scott County was recognized as one of our nation's most digitally-advanced county governments by placing 5th in their respective population base for the national 2005 Digital Counties Survey. The survey is an annual study by the Center for Digital Government (Center) and National Association of Counties (NACo). In recognition of their work and innovations, the survey's top-10 digital counties were showcased and honored at a national awards ceremony in Honolulu, Hawaii. The survey grouped counties into four population categories: 500,000 or more; 250,000-499,999; 150,000-249,999; and less than 150,000. A top-10 ranking was established for each category.

GIS Grant Winners

After a review of applications by the NACo/ESRI commission, the following counties were awarded a NACo/ESRI GIS grant package: Allamakee, Black Hawk, Calhoun, Clayton, Fayette, Henry, Howard, Louisa, Marion, Polk, Poweshiek, Sac, Winneshiek, and Wright counties. Since 2001, more than 300 counties have received this valuable package, available through partnership with ESRI. ESRI, the world's leader in GIS technology, is committed to furthering counties' ability to work more efficiently.

Improving Quality Of Life In Cherokee County

Cherokee County Supervisors are considering a proposal to build a massive lake in Cherokee to promote economic development and quality of life. Cherokee County supervisor Terry Graybill feels a lake would keep young people in town, raise property values and attract business that are seeking quality surroundings. In discussions with the USDA, it was apparent that Cherokee is not without competition because they informed the county that there are half a dozen other counties in Iowa alone that are talking about building lakes. A NRCS government study of the proposal will be completed by late summer or early fall.

(Taken from the Storm Lake Pilot-Tribune, June 7)

New Website Design

ISAC is proud to unveil a whole new look for our website. The new design is visually appealing with changing photos and user-friendly with fewer buttons. We hope you will enjoy the layout of the website. Please fill out the form under 'Contact Us' with any comments or questions. Visit ISAC's website (www.iowacounties.org) to view the new design!

The screenshot shows the ISAC website with a new design. At the top left is the ISAC logo (Iowa State Association of Counties) and contact information: 501 SW 7th St, Ste. 0, Des Moines, IA 50309-4550, 515-244-7151. A navigation menu on the left includes: About Us, Services, News, Corporate Opportunities, and Links. The main content area features a 'Welcome' message and a 'New & Noteworthy' section with links to ISAC Golf Fundraiser, How The Legislators Voted, ISAC Innovation Grant Discount Card, and ISAC Innovation Awards. Below this are three 'Hot Topic' sections: 'ISAC's Fall School of Instruction' (register now for Nov 13-15, 2005), 'Legislative Process Starts' (two steering committee meetings in September), and 'View Upcoming Events' (conferences and workshops sponsored by ISAC). The footer contains copyright information for 2005 and links for Home, Contact Us, and Search.

counties in the spotlight

Changes In County Government

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

Participants from the Supervisors Affiliate:

- Bob Sandy, Warren County Supervisor, 7 years in position, 57 years in county government
- Jack Spies, Plymouth County Supervisor, 30+ years in position, 30+ years in county government
- George W. Boykin, Woodbury County Supervisor, 7 months in position, 21 years in county government

Why do you enjoy being a county official?

Bob: I enjoy working with and serving the public and getting to know other county officials. When I was an engineer I enjoyed designing a project and seeing it become a reality.

Jack: I'm very interested in county government. Helping citizens in my area and making every attempt to hold down property taxes (very successfully it seems) is extremely satisfying.

George: I enjoy working with the different individual people and groups that the county has an effect on everyday. There is a lot of good that goes on with these groups.

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

Bob: As supervisor, this position is moving more each year from a part-time job to a full-time job. When I started as county engineer in 1958, rules and regulations were few and you were able to design and construct a project in a short period of time. Now you are fortunate to complete a project within 3-4 years.

Jack: The emphasis 30 years ago was on roads and budgets. Now the emphasis is on other mandated programs and economic development.

George: The county board has had a lot more responsibilities added to them and fewer funds to carry out those responsibilities.

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

Bob: Growth and services provided by county government has been the biggest change.

Jack: Keeping informed about all aspects or departments in county

government. There are so many areas to know and understand.

George: The biggest change has been taking the expenses of programs that has been passed onto us from the federal government to the state and then finally to county governments.

4. If you could, would you go back to how things were when you began your career in county government, or do you prefer the present times?

Bob: I prefer today, though when I first began my career in county government things were much simpler and smaller. The growth in county government has resulted in the establishment of additional departments and sizeable increases in personnel.

Jack: I would prefer to go back but the new times are important and very challenging.

George: I think I would like to see a little bit of both. Change has to occur to keep up with technology and the needs of our society. But we must remember to keep things simple and user friendly.

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

Bob: I feel counties need to focus on economic development to increase the tax base. I see a continued increase in required services, both mandated and needed, and the tax base needs to grow accordingly.

Jack: To get back to the basics of the duties as county supervisors. I have concerns on the new projects which are raised continually.

George: The focus should be that we retain as much local control as possible. We must work closer with our state representatives to keep them aware of our local situations.

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

Bob: Go with the flow. County government has done a good job in the past and will rise to the occasion in the future.

Jack: Perhaps supervisors need to be making final decisions rather than forming committees to alleviate the public pressure. Supervisors end up with the final results, even though the people electing them are not given the opportunity to state their feelings. Electors have no idea who to visit to make their feelings known. They do know their supervisor.

George: We must make it easier for people to receive services from county governments and one way of doing this is stay on the cutting edge of technology. We also must provide all of our services better and more efficiently by working with other governments, businesses, educational institutions and individuals.

My Internship With ISAC

This past summer I had the opportunity to be ISAC's summer intern. At the start of the internship, my knowledge of what ISAC and county government did was very limited, but I feel through this internship I have received knowledge of both. I genuinely enjoyed my internship at ISAC. It was nice to be treated as a full member of the ISAC staff, and everyone here was great to work with. It was great to meet a large number of county officials throughout the state. I was able to visit some places in Iowa I had never been to before, so it was a wonderful way for me to tour the state.

During my internship, I attended ISAC staff meetings, the legislative workshops, some of the affiliate meetings (the auditors' conference and the supervisors' meeting) and the July ISAC board meeting. By attending these meetings, I got to know some county officials and understand the importance of their jobs. I got the "inside" look at what county officials felt was important enough to have declared positions for the state legislature, their concerns for their constituents, and daily responsibilities they had to carry out.

I also got the opportunity to have "mini-interviews" with the ISAC staff as a way to understand their contribution to ISAC. This helped me understand more about how ISAC is able to serve its members. It was also a good way for me to get to talk to some of the staff that I didn't have a chance to work with every day and get to know them better. Through some of my conversations with them, I gained insight to aspects of a job that I might want in my own career someday.

A few other things I was able to do during my internship were looking up items in the Code of Iowa, researching job position announcements, and my biggest project: city/county reorganization movements. This project is what I spent most of my time working on. What was supposed to be a 5 or 6-page paper became a 28-page research paper on restructuring local government. This paper helped me understand some issues that county officials are faced with and helped me see their perspective more easily. This project expanded into a research paper followed up with a survey to all the county supervisors. It was an attempt to find out what the policymakers of county government felt about local governance issues. Hopefully this project will be finalized with some interviews of supervisors after the surveys are returned and analyzed. The results will be presented at the ISAC Fall School.

By: Amanda Hollis

ISAC Intern



I am a graduate student at Iowa State University for the Public Administration program. I will be able to use my work from the city/county reorganization project to graduate from Iowa State this spring. Every year ISAC gives a scholarship to a graduate student at Iowa State University in the Public Administration program who has an interest in county/local government. I was honored to receive the ISAC scholarship this year and will use the financial support for the remainder of my schooling.

This summer was a positive experience and I would promote county government to any future graduate students whose minds aren't made up for their careers. Before taking this internship, if a person asked me what I had in mind after graduation, I would probably have just shrugged my shoulders and given a vague answer. This internship definitely cemented that I wanted to be involved in local government. I like how it is more responsive and "grassroots" than the other levels of government. Though my internship has ended, my interest in county government has not, and I plan to be at most, if not all of the ISAC Fall School, as well as shadow one of ISAC's lobbyists at the Capitol during the next legislative session. I look forward to seeing how my research project progresses throughout the fall.

The Public Policy and Administration Program at ISU offers a professional Master of Public Administration (MPA) degree program designed to educate and train students for careers in public management and policy analysis at the federal, state, and local levels of government, and in the related areas in the private and the nonprofit sectors of the economy, as well as the international systems. The program is open to all majors and to pre-service students, as well as in-service employees. The MPA degree program consists of 37 credit hours. For further information visit www.public.iastate.edu/~mpa.

ISAC brief

ISAC Fall School 2005

By: **Jerri Noboa**

ISAC Meetings Administrator



Lunch on Sunday

ISAC's Fall School of Instruction will be held November 13-15 at the Marriott & Renaissance Savery in downtown Des Moines. During the 2004 Fall School, many conference attendees had problems finding a spot to grab a quick lunch the first day of the conference. As promised in last month's magazine article, I now have a "Grab N Go" menu that will be available from Pitcher's located on the street level of the Marriott on Sunday, November 13. The following food items will be available from noon - 6:00pm. All items are very reasonably priced, cash sale only: mini Pizza Hut pizzas, assorted sandwiches (many different varieties & wraps), soup of the day, potato chips, whole fresh fruit, vegetables served with ranch dip, cookies, brownies and beverages.

Exhibitors Lunch on Monday

ISAC is excited to provide a lunch during the conference! On Monday from 11am - 12:30pm there will be a luncheon sponsored by the exhibitors on the 3rd floor Marriott Exhibit Hall. This will be a luncheon where we will have various food stations throughout the exhibit area featuring finger foods: small sandwiches, crackers/cheese, breads, vegetables, etc. Be sure to visit the exhibitors and thank them for this new event.

Entertainment

By popular demand The Whitesidewalls Rock 'N' roll Revue will be back on Monday, November 14. The dance will be held in the Renaissance Savery Ballrooms located on the second floor.

Online Registration Available

Register online for the ISAC Fall School of Instruction. Visit ISAC's website (www.iowacounties.org) and click on the ISAC Fall School of Instruction box. Early bird registration (before November 1) is \$70 per attendee. Late registration is \$80 per attendee. You will receive a price break (\$10) for each additional registration per affiliate/office, excluding supervisors.

Lodging Options

The ISAC room block at the Marriott is full, but rooms are still available at the Renaissance Savery and Hotel Fort Des Moines. The Renaissance Savery is offering the rate of \$69/flat with suites at \$175. The Hotel Fort Des Moines' rates are \$69/flat with suites at \$89. Mark your calendars and register today!

District Officers Determined

The following county officials were named to district boards during the ISAC district workshops in June.

District I

President - Cheryl Hunter, Boone County Treasurer
 VP - Mary Mosiman, Story County Auditor
 S/T - Steve Pence, Hardin County Recorder

District II

President - Bob Amosson, Cerro Gordo County Supervisor
 VP - Sis Greiman, Hancock County Supervisor
 S/T - Holly Fokkena, Butler County Auditor

District III

President - Ken Chalstrom, Clay County Supervisor
 VP - Jack Bensley, Sac County Supervisor
 S/T - Rick Hecht, Sac County Supervisor

District IV

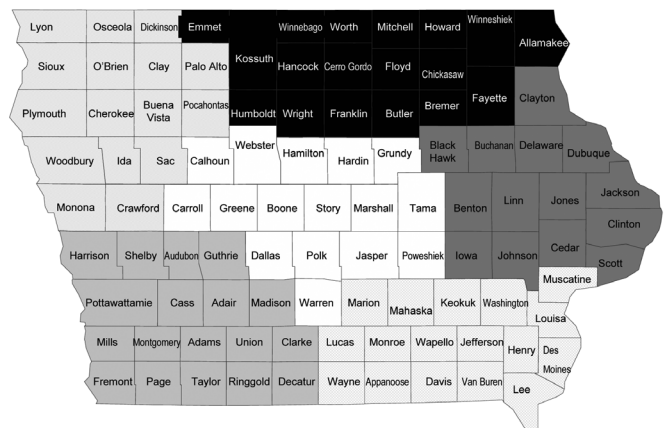
President - Melvyn Houser, Pottawattamie County Supervisor
 VP - Chuck Rieken, Cass County Supervisor
 S/T - Dale Sunderman, Cass County Auditor

District V

President - Mike Petersen, Wapello County Supervisor
 VP - Ernie Greiner, Keokuk County Supervisor
 S/T - Phyllis Dean, Wapello County Auditor

District VI

President - Sally Stutsman, Johnson County Supervisor
 VP - Rhonda McIntyre, Clinton County Treasurer
 S/T - Mary Williams, Benton County Community Services



Legend for Districts:
 District 1: White box
 District 2: Black box
 District 3: Light gray box
 District 4: Medium gray box
 District 5: Light gray box
 District 6: Dark gray box

Facing HAVA Compliance Issues

By: Alysoun McLaughlin,
NACo Associate Legislative Director

When President George W. Bush signed the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) in October 2002, county officials greeted the new law with a combination of relief and consternation. There were many reasons for relief. The federal government was finally going to pick up part of the tab for administering elections for federal office. A new federal agency was going to update existing technical guidelines for voting equipment and take over the overburdened testing and certification process. Counties that wanted to replace their much-vilified punch card voting equipment would be able to participate in a federal buy-out.

After months of intense lobbying by NACo, NACRC and other organizations representing state and local officials, the final legislation left most decision-making in the hands of state and county officials rather than federalizing elections in Washington, D.C.

However, there was also much cause for consternation. Federal funding through the appropriations process was already proving difficult to secure. It was unclear how long it would take for the new Election Assistance Commission (EAC) to get up and running. Meanwhile, the law set an ambitious deadline of Jan. 1, 2006 for states and counties to meet mandates that would prove to be expensive and difficult to implement - including implementation of statewide voter registration databases and deployment of voting equipment that would permit disabled voters to vote secretly and independently in every polling place in the country.

History of Federal Voting System Standards

Many of the issues raised by critics of electronic voting are not new and neither is the federal role in addressing them. In 1975, the National Bureau of Standards (now the National Institute of Standards and Technology) issued a report that cited failings in the use of computing technology for tallying votes and called for national performance standards. Ten years later, Congress appropriated funds for such a project and after five years of development, the Federal Election Commission (FEC) issued the first Performance and Test Standards for Punchcard, Marksense and Direct Recording Electronic Voting Systems in 1990.

By the time HAVA was signed into law, most states had adopted the standards and required new voting equipment to be certified by independent testing labs overseen by the FEC and the National Association of State Election Directors.

The FEC was engaged in a process of updating its standards to address new and emerging technology; these revised standards would be issued in 2002, but would not comprehensively address key concerns of HAVA, such as human factors and the use of voting equipment by individuals with disabilities.

HAVA transferred the staff and responsibility for these standards from the FEC to the new EAC and set forth a formal process for updating these standards with leadership from the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST). NACo,

NACRC and other organizations representing state and local officials were provided the opportunity to sit on an advisory panel along with technical experts and representatives of voter advocacy organizations.

Although the updated standards would remain voluntary, many states plan to use them in determining how best to implement HAVA. Congress gave states two years to do so by requiring the EAC, in cooperation with NIST, to issue updated voting systems on Jan. 1, 2004.

Because of delays in establishing and funding the commission, the EAC and NIST were unable to meet the 2004 deadline specified by HAVA. Seventeen months later, the voting system standards are still in development, and NIST has warned that it will not complete a new redraft of the standards prior to the deadline for HAVA implementation.

Voting Systems Guidelines - A Little Too Late

A document titled Voluntary Voting System Guidelines Version 1, Initial Report, was forwarded to the EAC on May 9. This document augments the 2002 requirements and focuses on new guidance of the highest priority, such as accessibility and security. It provides some criteria for evaluating printer technology that permits voters to verify a printed copy of their ballot, technology that is not addressed in the existing version of the standards.

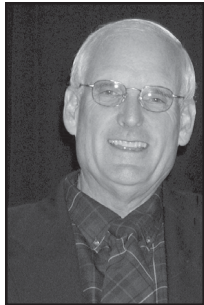
Once the EAC submits these recommendations for publication in the Federal Register, they will be made available for three months for public comment and approval before final action can be taken - meaning that counties cannot wait for even these limited guidelines to be finalized before making their decisions about purchasing new technology. There is a very real danger that some states and counties will purchase equipment to meet the deadlines that will subsequently fail to meet revised standards that may not be issued until 2006.

One possible solution that emerged at the recent EAC hearing is grandfathering technology that meets the 2002 standards. By itself, however, any grandfather clause in the voting system standards would not lift the burden from states and counties of purchasing new accessible voting equipment before 2006 - and then potentially having to replace or upgrade it in the near future to meet the federal standards.

The most feasible alternative appears to be including language in federal appropriations legislation that would prohibit the Justice Department from using its funding to enforce provisions of HAVA that require many states and counties to purchase new polling place equipment. In effect, such language would grant a one-year reprieve from the requirements of HAVA.

Although such an amendment has so far failed to gain momentum, Congress will not finalize appropriations legislation until later this fall. An increasing number of county officials are asking their members of Congress to do something about HAVA.

NACo Presidential Initiatives



Umatilla County, Ore. Commissioner Bill Hansell took the reins as NACo's 60th president after elections on July 19 at NACo's Annual Meeting. Hansell was first elected to the NACo Executive Committee as Second Vice-President in July 2002.

Responding to the Meth Epidemic

NACo President Bill Hansell is committed to raising public awareness about and helping counties respond to the nation's methamphetamine drug epidemic. The increasingly widespread production, distribution and abuse of meth is now present in urban, suburban and rural communities nationwide. The drug is affecting law enforcement, health, substance abuse treatment, social service, environmental, and housing agencies at the county level.

President Hansell has appointed a NACo Meth Action Group to provide county leadership for a national initiative to fight the growing meth epidemic. NACo released the results of its first survey of counties regarding meth in July 2005; the study found that meth is the leading drug-related local law enforcement problem in the country, and that meth is a major cause of child abuse and neglect.

Court Appointed Special Advocates

President Hansell is a strong supporter of the Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) program, under which local volunteers advocate for the needs of abused and neglected children in the juvenile justice system. Under Hansell's leadership, NACo is working with the National CASA Association to promote an enhanced partnership between counties and CASA. CASA volunteers provide non-binding advice to judges as to the best possible outcome for a child, with the goal of finding a safe, permanent home and hope for a better life. The program is intended to supplement the efforts of state and county child welfare agencies.

Technology

President Hansell wants to enhance NACo's communications and efficiency through the use of portals and virtual meeting technology. With his leadership, NACo is working to host a portal that will improve collaboration between NACo members; provide a centralized repository for information on NACo initiatives; leverage virtual meeting technology to reduce travel costs and provide enhanced information sharing; reduce phone costs through the use of Voice over IP technology; create, manage and share documents for publishing to NACo members and other audiences; and provide customized calendars for meeting planning and collaboration.

Meth Abuse Survey Results

On July 5, NACo released two surveys on the growing methamphetamine crisis in the nation. The methamphetamine epidemic in the United States, which began in the West and is moving East, is having a devastating effect on our country. The surveys focused on the law enforcement and child protective service impacts to county government. NACo surveyed 500 county law enforcement officials and found that nearly 60% of them reported that methamphetamine was their largest drug threat. Additionally, 87% reported an increase in meth related arrests starting three years ago. Furthermore, meth abuse has led to increases in other crimes. Seventy percent of those surveyed state that robberies or burglaries have gone up and 62% report increases in domestic violence. The results from the child welfare survey confirmed the dangers that children face when their parents are using methamphetamine. Of the 303 counties that were surveyed, 40% of county child welfare officials reported an increase in out of home placements because of meth in the last year. The full NACo survey is available at www.naco.org.

Pre-Employment Drug Testing

Are you serious? Can we? Should we? Those are the questions most frequently heard when discussing drug testing of county employees with public officials. Many are uncomfortable with the idea of prying into the personal lives of their prospective employees. These officials often feel that what folks do on their own time is really none of the county's business. That may be true in some instances, but drug and alcohol abuse by employees all too often becomes the county's business.

Substance abuse is the number one cause of just about everything bad that happens in the workplace. Employees who abuse alcohol or drugs are twice as likely to be late for work, three times more likely to miss work altogether, four times more likely to injure themselves or others at work and five times more likely to file a workers' compensation claim than workers who are non-abusers.

So what can you do to reduce the cost to your county and avoid hiring abusers? The answer is simple. Implement a program that requires all prospective employees to pass a drug test before you hire them. Look for a provider that is able to do onsite and offsite collection and maintains a reliable chain of custody protocol. Additionally, make sure the provider you choose is capable of detecting not only a wide array of legal and illegal substances but also various masking agents.

NACo offers a pre-employment screening program that provides drug testing and background checks as well as an employee hotline designed to provide employers with an early warning device for problems occurring in the workplace. *For more information on this program, please contact Nancy Irish at nirish@naco.org or 202/661-8824.*

Spurring Locally Owned Renewable Energy

By: Robert Mulqueen,
Iowa Environmental Council Policy Analyst

Renewable energy is not a new phenomenon in Iowa or the upper Midwest. The farm windmills in countless photographs of Midwestern farms taken in the 1920s and '30s were either pumping water or, in a few cases, turning turbines and generating small amounts of electricity. For over a decade we have either driven by or seen news photographs of the big wind farms in northwestern and north central parts of the state. But what most people have seen are just that - the big wind farms. There are other examples of wind turbines, of course - the turbines on Interstate 80 at Stuart and the turbine which has been operating for a number of years at the Adair exit. There are many other small turbines scattered through the state, many of them operated by farmers or small businesses.

Iowa Environmental Council's Energy Workgroup

Small and locally owned renewable energy is just what the Iowa Environmental Council's energy work-group had in mind last summer when we met to discuss the advantages of locally owned energy sources and what should be done to encourage such enterprises. By the middle of 2004, Iowa was the fourth state in the ranking of electric power generated by wind power. The vast majority of this output is, and will continue to be, generated by wind farms owned or operated by large private utility companies. But it has been long thought that farmers and small business owners, schools and local governments could also generate their own electricity or generate enough to sell to the electric grid (i.e., to utilities) as a means of cutting back on their own power expenses. Minnesota helped give evidence of this two years ago when its state legislature followed passage of financial incentives for large wind turbine operations with a measure that assisted with the building of small generators.

The Council's energy workgroup met each month through the summer and fall of 2004. We invited and were joined by several state legislators who helped us craft a bill. Though there has been controversy about the use of tax breaks as an incentive, we could think of no short-term alternative as a means of spurring the kind of renewable electric development which the workgroup discussed.

The group had some disagreements, but we did reach consensus that such a proposal would contain:

- State tax credits that would be transferable. This flexibility would particularly benefit public or non-profit entities, such as school districts, that have no tax liability.
- Eligibility for not only those groups who wanted to build and operate a wind turbine, but also for those who were

intent on other renewable energy sources, such as methane from landfills, anaerobic digesters or solar panels.

- Specific intent that these tax credits would go to the owners of small renewable energy resources. Farmers, small business owners, schools, small electric utilities, such as rural electric co-operatives and municipal utilities were the local Iowans which our work group had in mind.

In the first weeks of the 2005 legislative session, the Environmental Council worked with other interest groups that had a similar intent, one of them being the Iowa Farm Bureau. Two study bills were drafted and both were pored over by a Senate subcommittee led by Senators Hubert Houser (R-Pottawattamie) and Brian Schoenjahn (D-Fayette). These two proposals were similar. One emphasized tax credits for small energy producers. The other stated that the credits would go to energy purchasers, (i.e., the utilities that would buy the product of small renewable energy operations). They were merged into SF 390.

Adoption Of SF 390

Senate approval of SF 390 in March was followed by spirited debate in the House of Representatives in May. This measure, unlike another tax credit provision approved during the last two days of the legislative session, does not depend upon property taxes to pay for the state credit. SF 390 establishes procedures for small energy producers to apply to the Iowa Utilities Board for approval of credits.

The program applies to a maximum of 100 megawatts of power statewide. The tax credit would be awarded at a rate of one and one-half cents per kilowatt generated and sold to the electric grid. The tax credits awarded will have a life of 10 years. Credits awarded by the utilities board are capped at two and one-half megawatts per applicant. This will prevent a few electric generators from being awarded a large share of the credits. Once again, this underlines the intent of making tax incentives available to small, local groups. Once all of the available credits are awarded, the cost to the state treasury will be about \$5.5 million a year.

SF 390, which was signed into law on June 15, is a modest effort at spurring locally owned renewable energy. It's a start at what could become commonplace in Iowa - a higher proportion of our energy needs met by clean, renewable energy which is locally owned.

Child Support Unit Launches New Employer Website

Employers who make Iowa child support payments on behalf of their employees may now make those transfers online. The Iowa Child Support Recovery Unit (CSRU) launched a business-focused Internet site that will allow employers to do most of their child support business online, such as make payments, report new hires, and report terminations or absences.

“The more convenient we make it for employers, the faster we can direct court-ordered payments to the kids who need support,” said Kevin Concannon, director of the Iowa Department of Human Services.

CSRU administrator Jeanne Nesbit said that using the Internet to conduct child support business is voluntary for employers, but she expects it will be popular. “We realize every business is different. Some employers will appreciate the control and economy of going online to make payments or report their newly hired employees, others will use it because it’s faster than mailing payments or faxing reports and will save money on postage and paper costs,” she said. Wage withholding is already the most important source of child support dollars, accounting for more than 70%. “We developed this site to give employers an option for communicating with us, and for fulfilling their child support requirements,” she said.

Brochures and other aids were mailed to businesses to help get them started online. Employers who didn’t receive them or want more copies can email csrue@dhs.state.ia.us or call toll-free (877) 274-2580.

Apply For Prestigious Innovations Award

Harvard University invites you to apply for an Innovations in American Government Award. Administered by the Ash Institute for Democratic Governance and Innovation at the John F. Kennedy School of Government in partnership with the Council for Excellence in Government, the Innovations Award is heralded as the premier public-sector award in the nation. It is given annually to programs that serve as examples of creative and effective government at its best.

All units of government - federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial - within the United States are eligible to apply. Each of the winners of the 2006 Innovations Award will receive a \$100,000 grant to support replication and dissemination activities. Applications and additional information are available at www.innovationsaward.harvard.edu. Applications are due September 15, 2005.

By the Numbers:

Median Home Values

By: Jay Syverson, ISAC Fiscal Analyst

Aside from when they’re buying or selling a property, people don’t think about their homes’ values too much. One exception – tax time. So with an eye toward September 30th, the due date for the first installment of property taxes, let’s look at the variation among housing markets, and property taxes, around the state.

It might surprise you to learn that Polk County is only the 4th highest-valued housing market in Iowa, with a 2000 median home value of \$103,100, according to Iowa State University. Johnson County, with a median value of \$131,500, ranks first. Story and Dallas Counties come in second and third, and Warren County rounds out the top five. High property values correlate pretty well with high tax bills, but variation among local tax rates accounts for some discrepancies. For example, the median residential tax bill in Polk County is \$1,996, ranked second in the state behind Johnson’s \$2,132. The higher than average tax rate in Polk County bumps them from fourth in the value rankings to second in the tax rankings.

On the other side of the spectrum, five of the six lowest-value counties are on the Missouri border. Wayne County ranks 99th with a median value of \$35,600. The distinction of the lowest median property tax bill, however, rests farther north. Pocahontas County residents, with a median value of \$40,400, enjoy a median annual tax bill of just \$440. For a complete listing of median home values and property tax bills, visit ISAC’s website (www.iowacounties.org).

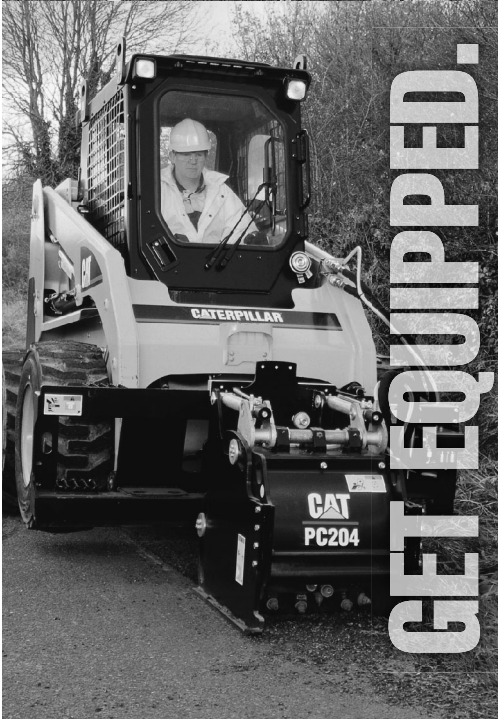
classified ad

Shelby County Assessor

Shelby County is currently taking applications for the position of County Assessor. Send resume to the Shelby County Examining Board, Attn: Sandy Ronfeldt, 612 Court St., Harlan, IA 51537. Application deadline is September 30, 2005. Position begins immediately.

COMPACT EQUIPMENT WITH LARGE EQUIPMENT ANCESTRY

MEET THE KIDS.



NOW YOU CAN GET THE SAME CAT® QUALITY IN A SMALLER PACKAGE.

We've built a reputation around quality and durability and are pleased to bring that expertise to smaller machines, as well. In fact, you could say that Caterpillar® Skid Steer Loaders, Mini Excavators and Mini Wheel Loaders are chips right off the old block.

Featuring elements borrowed from our larger equipment such as pilot controls, robust frames and convenient service access, Cat compact equipment is exactly what you expect from Caterpillar...only smaller.

Combined with the unmatched support from your Cat dealer, Cat compact equipment is also your best value. Stop by today and meet the next generation of Cat equipment. We think you will like what you see.



ziegler.cat.com

10315 Hickman Rd.
Des Moines, IA 50322
515.270.2800
800.342.7002

3366 5th Ave. S.
Ft. Dodge, IA 50501
515.576.3161
800.342.1848

11490 265th St.
(Hwy. 18 West)
Mason City, IA 50401
641.423.7240
800.342.1849

308 North Lawler
Postville, IA 52162
563.864.7461
800.526.0889

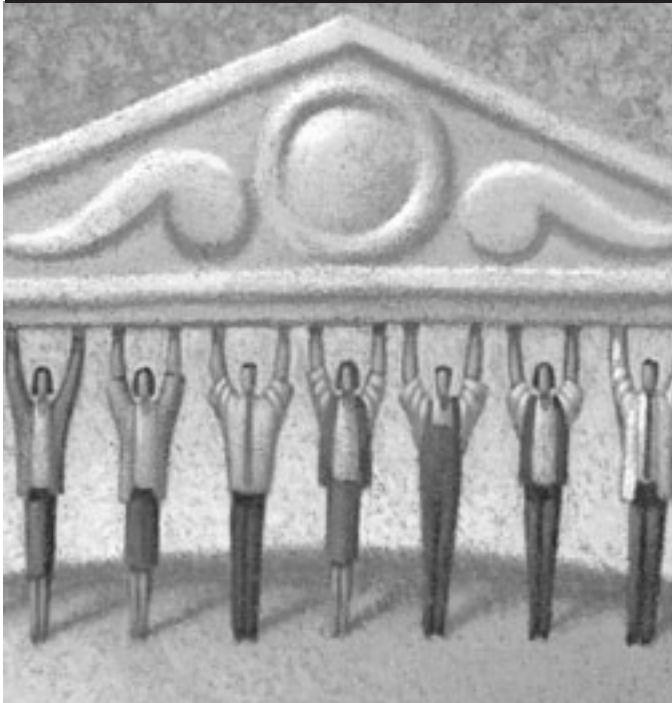
5300 Harbor Drive
Sioux City, IA 51111
712.252.4401
800.342.1847

©2003 Caterpillar Inc.

Spec equipment with ease at www.GovBidSpec.com

Many Solutions. One MAXIMUS.

The Single Best Source for Local Government Solutions.



MAXIMUS is an industry leader. Our clients include every major city and county in the nation, every state, and the federal government. We offer a range of services to help our clients such as: identifying alternatives to tax increases; providing guidance and resources to comply with mandated regulations; reengineering service delivery to enhance effectiveness and efficiency; determining fair and competitive wages for their employees; searching for the right executives to manage their business; and protecting their investment in their fleets. Cities can benefit from our cost of service studies, GASB 34 implementation assistance, fixed asset valuation and systems, management reviews, compensation/classification studies, pay equity assistance, executing recruiting, and fleet management reviews and systems.

Founded in 1975, MAXIMUS has more than 5,500 employees located in more than 260 offices across the country to serve you. Visit www.maximus.com to find out more, or call Diane Blaschko, Vice President, at 651-739-8086 or E-mail her at dianeblaschko@maximus.com.

MAXIMUS
HELPING GOVERNMENT SERVE THE PEOPLE*

When I retire...

I'm going to the moon



What are you going to do?

Live your dreams,
Invest in your future now!

The National Association of Counties (NACo), through its partnership with Nationwide Retirement Solutions (NRS), has provided retirement programs to counties and county employees for over 20 years. Learn how NACo's 457 Deferred Compensation and 401(a) Match Programs can help secure the financial future of county employees.

For more information contact Lisa Cole, NACo Director of Enterprise Services, at 202.942.4270 or email lcole@naco.org.

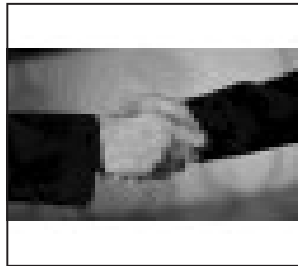




www.gmdsolutions.com

“Solutions”, Inc. - We're more than a business;
We're your partner and Certified IT Department.

Microsoft
CERTIFIED
Partner



Microsoft Certified
Professional
Systems Engineer



Quality Software, Services, and Products



2311 W. 18th St.
Spencer, IA 51301
Phone: 712-262-4520
Fax: 712-262-3477



**CONSULTING ENGINEERS
LAND SURVEYORS
MANAGEMENT CONSULTANTS**

1725 N. Lake Ave.
Storm Lake, Iowa 50588
Phone 712.732.7745

1609 Hwy. 18 E
Algona, Iowa 50511
Phone 515.295.2980

423 West Main Street
Sac City, IA 50583
Phone 712.662.7859

Email Address: mrk@kpltd.com

**WATER • WASTEWATER
TRANSPORTATION • BRIDGES
SWIMMING POOLS
DRAINAGE • LAND SURVEYING
EXECUTIVE SEARCHES
MANAGEMENT STUDIES**

**PUBLIC
SECTOR**

**PERSONNEL
CONSULTANTS**

Staff In Various Major Cities

2643 Beaver Avenue, #351
Des Moines, IA 50310
(888) 522-7772

SPECIALISTS IN CLASSIFICATION AND COMPENSATION

VISIT OUR WEBSITE:
www.compensationconsulting.com

**GIS • LIDAR • TOPOGRAPHIC MAPPING
AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY • ORTHOPHOTOGRAPHY**



605.343.0280 | sales@horizonsinc.com
OFFICES in MN & SD | www.horizonsinc.com



AERIAL MAPPING PROFESSIONALS



**Municipal
Building & Site Design
Transportation
Land Development**

**ENGINEERS • ARCHITECTS
SURVEYORS • PLANNERS
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS**

Mason City, IA Rochester, MN
Mpls/St. Paul, MN Delafield, WI

641-424-6344 yaggy.com



**YAGGY
COLBY
ASSOCIATES**

AERO-METRIC

PHOTOGRAMMETRIC & GIS SERVICES

Aerial Photography - Precision Digital Camera - LiDAR
Airborne GPS and Inertial Measuring - Digital Orthophotography
Analytical Triangulation - Digital Terrain Modeling
Precision Scanning - Digital Mapping

AERO-METRIC, INCORPORATED

4020 TECHNOLOGY PKWY. - SHEBOYGAN, WI 53083
P.O. BOX 449 - SHEBOYGAN, WI 53082-0449
TEL: (920) 457-3631 FAX: (920) 457-0410
E-mail: ame@aerometric.com
www.aerometric.com

Quote of the Month:

"I attribute my success to this:
I never gave or took an excuse."
- Florence Nightingale

EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE BY DESIGN

KIRKHAM MICHAEL Consulting Engineers

iowa ■ nebraska ■ kansas ■ colorado ■ arizona
11021 Aurora Avenue, Urbandale, Iowa 50322, 515-270-0848
P. O. Box 486, Cedar Falls, Iowa 50613, 319-277-3851
www.kirkham.com

JERICO

JERICO SERVICES, INC.

Dust Control Chemicals Base Stabilization
Salt Wetting Equipment Sand Pile Mixing Ice Control Chemicals
Liquidow® Calcium Chloride
Indianola, IA Weeping Water, NE
(800)397-3977 (800)422-4820
www.jericoservices.com

SPEER FINANCIAL, INC. PUBLIC FINANCIAL CONSULTANTS SINCE 1954

Lowering Your Borrowing Cost With:

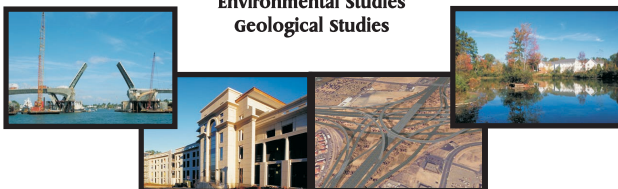
- Independent Financial Advice.
- A Team of Financial Specialists Responsive to Your Schedule.
- Expertise in Credit Techniques and Rating Agency Presentations.
- Innovative Approaches Tailored To Your Tough Financing Problems.
- Preparing Long-Term Financing Plans.
- Aggressive Marketing of Competitive Bond Sales To Generate Many Bids.
- Your Effective Advocates With Underwriters in Negotiated Placements.

Please Call Vice President Larry Burger in our Iowa Office

Suite 608 • 531 Commercial St. • Waterloo, IA 50701
(319) 291-2077 • FAX (319) 291-8628

Suite 4100 • One North LaSalle St. • Chicago, IL 60602
(312) 346-3700 • FAX (312) 346-8833

Civil Engineering
Comprehensive Planning
Transportation
Zoning Ordinance Planning
Subdivisions Regulations
Agricultural Preservation Planning
Brownfields / Redevelopment Planning
Homeland Security / Emergency Management Planning
Environmental Engineering
Indoor Air Quality Consulting
Asbestos / Industrial Hygiene Services
Environmental & Pollution Control
Solid & Hazardous Waste Management / Engineering
Environmental Studies
Geological Studies



Brian Wight, PE 515.284.5500
2670 106th Street, Suite 180, Urbandale, Iowa 50322

URS

calendar

SEPTEMBER

- 9 ISAC Steering Committees
(Holiday Inn Downtown, Des Moines)
- 21-23 CCMS Fundamentals
(Hilton Garden Inn, Des Moines/Urbandale)
- 22-23 CPCs Statewide Meeting
(The Inn At Okoboji, Okoboji)
- 22-23 ISAC Board of Directors (ISAC Office)

OCTOBER

- 6 ISAC Steering Committees
(Holiday Inn Airport, Des Moines)
- 8-12 Assessors Annual Conference
(Marriott, West Des Moines)
- 11 CCMS Administrators
(Hilton Garden Inn, Des Moines/Urbandale)
- 12-13 General Assistance Retreat
(Holiday Inn & Coral Ridge Mall, Coralville)
- 13-14 CCMS Strengths
(Sheraton, West Des Moines)
- 19 CCMS Support Staff Training
(Hilton Garden Inn, Des Moines/Urbandale)
- 26 CRIS Board of Directors (ISAC Office)
- 27-28 ISAC Board of Directors (ISAC Office)

NOVEMBER

- 8 CCMS Advanced Case Manager
(Hilton Garden Inn, Des Moines/Urbandale)
- 13 ISAC Board of Directors
- 13-15 ISAC Fall School of Instruction
(Marriott & Renaissance Savery, Des Moines)
- 16 SEAT Session II
(Renaissance Savery, Des Moines)
- 30-Dec. 2 CCMS Fundamentals
(Hilton Garden Inn, Des Moines/Urbandale)

DECEMBER

- 1 District II Winter Meeting
(Elks Lodge, Charles City)
- 6-7 Engineers Annual Conference
(Scheman Center, Ames)
- 7 District IV Winter Meeting (location TBA)
- 16 ISAC Board of Directors (ISAC Office)

JANUARY

- 10 CCMS Fundamentals
(Hilton Garden Inn, Des Moines/Urbandale)
- 18-19 ISAC University
(Holiday Inn Airport, Des Moines)
- 20 Statewide Supervisors Meeting
(Holiday Inn Airport, Des Moines)

FUTURE ISAC SCHOOLS

- Downtown Marriott/Renaissance Savery, Des Moines
- November 13-15, 2005
- March 19-21, 2006
- November 29-Dec. 1, 2006
- March 18-20, 2007
- November 28-30, 2007

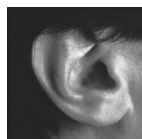
For agendas or additional information on any of the above listed meetings please visit our website at www.iowacounties.org and click on 'Upcoming Events.' If you have any questions about the meetings listed above, please contact Jerri at (515) 244-7181 or by email at jnoba@iowacounties.org.

1.800.707.4248

www.barkerleamar.com



LISTENING ▶ UNDERSTANDING ▶ SOLVING ▶ IMPLEMENTING



Environmental
Solid Waste
Civil Engineering
Drilling

Des Moines • Moline • St. Louis

Information
Technology

Geographic
Information
Systems (GIS)

#112863

**SIDWELL IS KNOWN FOR MAPPING MILLIONS OF
PARCELS. NOW WE'RE HELPING NAVIGATE GIS
DATA SECURITY AND PRIVACY ISSUES, TOO.**



From the assessor's office to emergency management, GIS users are finding applications within every department — as well as the general public. That's one more reason to look to Sidwell. Our web hosting services provide access to GIS data, while establishing best practices for data security and privacy. With streamlined Internet access, data pays for itself faster, local governments save time as people download information directly, and everyone sleeps a little bit easier.

To find out more, call 630-549-1000. Or visit www.sidwellco.com.

format:
High Oblique

year:
2004

season:
Spring

coverage:
Rural

state:
Indiana

county:
St. Joseph

Aerial Photograph:

