

# ISAC meetings

## ISAC University Recap

By: **Stacy Horner**

ISAC Meeting/Event Administrator



ISAC would like to thank all of you who attended the 2012 ISAC University held on January 18-19. Approximately 140 county officials and employees attended this year's event at the West Des Moines Marriott. The two-day conference provided county leaders with unique content, powerful success strategies, and tactics for improving their leadership skills. It was also a great opportunity for those attending to network with county officials from various backgrounds and to learn how to create successful results in county government.

Big Ten Television Network Analyst and Former College Basketball Coach, Rich Zvosec, also known as "Coach Z," opened the conference with "Loading Your Backpack for a Lifetime Journey." Callista Gould from the Culture and Manners Institute presented the "Art of Introductions," which served as a great refresher course on using proper manners and etiquettes, and when the use is culturally appropriate. Katie Roth, owner of PorticoHR, gave an HR seminar entitled "Finding Good Employees – The Needle in the Haystack Conundrum," that emphasized the recruitment and retention of good employees.

The first day concluded with dinner and a closing keynote by Aaron Thomas, Aplington-Parkersburg High School Athletic Director and Coach. Aaron's keynote, "My Family's Story: Courage, Passion and Overcoming the Odds" was easily relatable. He talked about the murder of his father, Ed Thomas, which followed the Parkersburg tornado that destroyed most

of their community. His family's story definitely hit close to home for many of our attendees.

On Thursday, Charlie Wittmack, Internationally Renowned Explorer, told of his worldwide journeys during his opening address, "Committed to the Core." After a short break, Nathan Wright, Lava Row Founder, addressed all of our social media questions and concerns through his knowledgeable presentation, "Your Social Media Toolbox." Next, Dennis Dornink from Employee and Family Resources, Inc. presented "The Relational Side of Leadership."

The conference concluded with lunch and a message from Fred Greiner, Fareway Stores, Inc. President/COO, on the "Importance and Value of Outstanding Customer Service." In Fred's presentation, we not only learned about the history of Fareway, but we also heard first hand what Fareway does to uphold their company values and how both their employees and customers play an important role in the growth of their company.

ISAC would again like to thank all who participated in the 2012 ISAC University, as well as Wayne Walter, Winneshiek County Treasurer and ISAC President, for "hosting" the conference. It was a great success! Below and on the next page see what your colleagues had to say about the conference.

I attended my first ISAC University in January 2012 and want to relay to you how valuable I found the experience. When I saw the conference information in *The Iowa County* magazine last fall, I thought it looked good. Now that it is over, I can honestly say that I thought it was great. I was very happy with my decision to attend and came away with inspiration, new knowledge and meeting new people, all who work toward making Iowa a good place to live as county government employees.

I found value in each session/speaker. Aaron Thomas, Wednesday evening's keynote, movingly spoke about a community and his family overcoming tragedy and challenges and how each person has the opportunity to affect lives around them. Charlie Whitmack, Thursday morning's first speaker, told of working toward accomplishing goals and challenges in life

through his adventures of climbing Mt. Everest and his World Triathlon experience. Coach Z relayed the importance of how we fill in the dash in our lives - the space between our birth date and death date. Current trends in social media, etiquette information, finding good employees and current hiring processes, and hearing how a company (Fareway) works toward maintaining its founding principles in an ever changing world, all were very informative. I want to thank all who helped with making ISAC University happen. As I drove toward home that day, I felt I had added to my life by being at the conference and thought about all of what was presented those past two days. It has been fun to share some of those things with others who were not able to be there.

- Joleen Hibbing, RN, LBSW, Hamilton County Case Manager

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I thoroughly enjoyed ISAC University. The topics were pertinent and interesting. The social media presentation made me aware of things I would never have encountered on my own and made me think about how to handle things in the future. Hearing Aaron Thomas speak about his father and how the family handled their crisis was heartrending. The motivational speaker described his journey and made me feel lacking in comparison. All in all, a wonderful meeting.

- Eric Stierman, Dubuque County Treasurer

This was my first time attending ISAC University. The speakers and their topics were extremely relevant. In addition to being interesting to listen to, they brought a business perspective to their presentations and interacted well with the audience. For example, the presentation on social media and how it relates to county usage was very timely and informative.

The ISAC staff does an incredible job of securing high quality speakers and pertinent topics applicable to county elected officials and employees. If you have never attended ISAC University, I would encourage you to register the next time it is offered and bring back new information for your county.

- Burlin Matthews, Clay County Supervisor

This was my first year attending ISAC University. As always when signing up for any continuing education class, it makes you wonder if the classes are or will be worth your time or just an excuse to get out of the office. For me, I make it my goal to walk away with some piece of knowledge or idea that I can apply either in my personal life or my professional life. This year ISAC University was well worth my time!

Rich Zvosec, otherwise known as “Coach Z” was the opening keynote speaker who explained to us how to “load our backpack for a lifetime journey.” He was humorous, easy to listen to, and made each of us stop to think about what we had in our backpacks. One tool that he supplied us with was a blank 3x5 card; on that card we were to fill out the following three objectives to conquer; 1) a personal goal; 2) a professional goal; and 3) a famous person we would like to meet and include what we would say to them if in fact that should occur. Coach Z also talked about “dominating our dash.” You know, the one that will appear on our tombstone someday between our birth and our death. That dash represents all the time that we spend alive on earth and only those that know us, know what that line is worth.

The following speaker Collista Gould, taught some and refreshed others on proper manners, superior etiquette and culture. It was such a relief for me to know that it is still proper etiquette to put name tags on the right side of our chest. I see name tags all over people at public meetings and it drives me crazy!

Katie Roth finished up before supper break with “The Needle in the Haystack,” with points to help us find and retain good employees. The number one rule in recruiting, “past performance is the best indication of future behavior.” I guess leopards can’t change their spots!

We had a little free time for people to check into their rooms, network, socialize or relax before supper and to listen to one more speaker for the night. Not recognizing the name on the agenda, little did I comprehend that it was Aaron Thomas whose father was murdered shortly after the tornado hit the town of Parkersburg. As Aaron talked about his family’s story of courage, passion and overcoming the odds, the atmosphere of the room went sober. They should have put a Kleenex box on every table with the coffee as there were no dry eyes in the room. Overcoming the odds with courage and passion was truly a topic that everyone can relate to on a daily basis whether at work or home. Aaron closed with the suggestion that every day, we drink, swear, steal and lie. Drink-from the fountain of communication; Swear-to do something today that will benefit your life; Steal- a little time each day to be by yourself and reach your goals; Lie-in bed, thank God for everything and anything! What an ending to a great day of classes.

Wow, how could they possibly top another day of class? The next morning they did just that. The opening speaker was an internationally renowned explorer, Charlie Whittmack. As his wife lay in a hospital bed that morning waiting to give birth, he was standing in front of our crowd telling his amazing life story of his journey and to teach us about the commitments we need to endure in ourselves. They forgot to put Kleenex on the table again as Charlie’s story of his journey brought a tear to each and every one of us.

There were two more great speakers to go, however; we needed a break after the tear jerking story. Nathan Wright not only amazed us with his knowledge of social media but scared us into taking the proper precautions when it comes to electronic information. In closing we heard from the President and COO of Fareway, Fred Greiner. Considering Fareway was just one little store in the town of Boone years ago and now they are spread all over Iowa, we had much to gain on the importance and value of outstanding customer service to grow a business. An industry that was familiar to the whole room.

Surprising to me, all of the speakers are or were from Iowa. I walked away from ISAC University with many thoughts and ideas to analyze and apply in my personal life, my professional life and to share with my staff. I now drink, swear, steal and lie every day while I still have time to dominate my dash. Thank you for an outstanding job of planning ISAC University 2012.

- Renee Twedt, Story County Treasurer