

ISAC Districts: Organizational Options

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At the September 2011 meeting of ISAC's Board of Directors, the group discussed the organization of ISAC's six districts. As a result of the conversation, the Articles of Incorporation/By-Laws/Membership Committee was asked to research and make recommendations on the matter. Grant Veeder, as chair of this committee, surveyed the officers of the ISAC districts regarding meetings held, elections and terms of officers and other procedural matters. In October 2011, the committee met to discuss the ISAC districts' functions and organization. The responses from ISAC district officers showed the districts felt meeting as a district at least once a year was important, but districts varied widely in their structure, procedures and other functions. Research was also conducted regarding the history of the ISAC districts. It appears that ISAC's district boundaries may have originally been modeled after the DOT's districts and that ISAC's current bylaws did not mention the districts. ISAC's board policies stated that "district officers shall be chosen from each ISAC district according to that district's selection policy and be reported to ISAC."

As a result of the committee meeting, the recommendation was made that:

The ISAC Board amend the ISAC bylaws to list the counties in the six ISAC districts and to state that district officers may be chosen from each ISAC district according to that district's selection policy; and to further recommend that ISAC should present procedural options at the legislative district meetings in June 2012, including a sample policy that each district could use.

ISAC's Board of Directors approved listing the districts in its bylaws and making district officers optional in its board policies at its October 2011 meeting.

So as to clarify the organization and functions of each ISAC district, while still allowing for flexibility and variances amongst the districts, ISAC will be asking each district to pass a resolution at the upcoming June legislative district meetings regarding its preferred organizational structure. The basic options are the following:

1) No formal structure. This would mean the district would not have bylaws and would not appoint officers. The district boundaries would still exist for purposes of ISAC's June district meetings and for the ISAC affiliates that utilize districts in their leadership and organizational structures. Districts that

should consider this option are the ones that do not have meetings or activities other than the June legislative meetings, which are hosted by ISAC.

2) Approve bylaws based on ISAC's sample. You can find ISAC's sample district bylaws on the front page of ISAC's website, www.iowacounties.org. Districts that should consider this option are the ones that have some meetings or activities beyond the June legislative meetings and do not currently have their own proposed bylaws. These sample bylaws are designed to provide some consistency and structure to district activities and organization; however, it is not necessary that a district modify its historical practices in order to fall within the requirements of the sample bylaws. Current district officers should review the sample bylaws and modify to fit the district's particular needs and practices. For example, the sample bylaws provide for officer elections each year, but if a district currently elects officers every other year, then the bylaws can be modified to reflect that. I will be contacting district officers directly, and we can work together to change the sample bylaws as necessary. If you are not a district officer and have ideas or suggestions for the bylaws, please contact one of your district's officers – you can find a list of your district's current officers on ISAC's website.

3) Approve bylaws developed by district leadership. A district's bylaws should be designed in a manner that best suits the district's needs and plans, and if a district has its own ideas and plans for bylaws, they can certainly use their own format. For example, District 3 decided at its June 2011 legislative district meeting to have a committee work on preparing bylaws, with the goal of getting more types of county officials involved in district leadership.

If a district decides to proceed with either option 2 or option 3 above, a copy of the final and approved district bylaws should be sent to ISAC, attention to Kristi Harshbarger. This will allow ISAC to be better able to assist districts with questions and provide policy continuity as district leadership changes.

Please let me know if you have questions. I look forward to assisting the districts with this project and seeing everyone in June! See a complete schedule of the 2012 ISAC Legislative District meetings on the following page.