



The Iowa County

Iowa State Association of Counties

December 2009
ISAC Scholarship Application





ISAC's 2009 Golf Outing proved a diamond in the rough.

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The Iowa County

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Rachel E. Bicego, EDITOR

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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.

Employment Law

For the next several months, the Legal Briefs article will serve as a refresher course on various topics important to county officials. This material is being excerpted from the most recent New County Officers Manual produced by ISAC. This month we will continue with the second installment of a three month series on employment law.

Application Procedure

After you have recruited an adequate number of qualified applicants, the next step is to evaluate each one's suitability for employment. The two primary goals of the application procedure are: 1) to determine whether the applicant has the necessary qualifications for the job; and 2) to insure that nobody is denied the job solely on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age or other non-job-related factors.

The procedure that you follow should be thorough and professional. At the same time it must be devoid of practices that may discriminate against any minority group or protected class of citizens. The three main components of the application procedure are the application form, the job interview, and various types of written and oral tests.

The Application Form: The application form is required by the state's veteran preference law and serves many useful purposes:

- Makes possible a preliminary screening of the qualifications of applicants.
- Identifies background information on which to focus employment interviews.
- Assures job seekers that their interest in employment is known to your county.
- Provides a pool of potential candidates when vacancies occur.

Essential information you can obtain from an application form includes the applicant's identification (name, address, and phone), his or her interests (which jobs, salary levels) and a summary of his or her background (education and training, work history and special qualifications). It is a requirement of state law that all application forms inquire about the applicant's military service during time of war.

Your application form should be as simple and brief as possible and still provide essential information about the job applicant. Unnecessarily long application forms may discourage people from applying. And an application form that doesn't

reveal what you need to know is next to useless. In addition, under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the application cannot contain any disability-related questions.

The Job Interview: The job interview is also an extremely useful tool. Interviews provide the opportunity to observe such things as the applicant's behavior, personality and ability to communicate which cannot be obtained from an application form. It can also provide the job applicant with the feeling that he or she is personally cared about in an otherwise impersonal process.

The interview further allows you the opportunity to inform the applicant of both your expectations of employees and of the benefits available to them. As with application forms you must be extremely careful not to ask questions that may be discriminatory. Under ADA, a county official should never ask if the applicant has any problems that would prevent him or her from being able to do the job. Rather, the county official should ask, "Do you have the ability to perform the essential functions of the job for which you are applying, with or without an accommodation?" If an applicant has an obvious disability, or reveals a disability, the EEOC rules permit the interviewer to ask, "Will you need an accommodation to do the job?" or "What kind of accommodation would you need?"

Testing: After the completion of the interview, some form of test may be administered for certain types of jobs. The three most important criteria for any test are that it must be objective, valid and reliable. By objective, it must disregard non-job related factors such as race, religion, politics, sex, etc. It must identify only those skills necessary to fill the position. A test is valid only if it measures what it purports to measure. If a test is reliable, a person taking it at two different times should make substantially the same score each time.

It is perfectly legitimate to require a prospective administrative assistant to satisfactorily complete a typing test or to require an applicant for the road crew to demonstrate the ability to operate a truck or road grader. But be sure that you are not requiring more experience or education than is necessary to perform a given job.

Continues on next page.

Keep in mind that testing is just one of a number of selection devices and no single test or group of tests can determine whether an applicant should be accepted or rejected. Some important qualities cannot be measured by test. An intelligent selection decision is one which considers the information gathered from the application form, the job interview and any tests you may have administered. It is also desirable to check with the applicant's previous employers to obtain information regarding their performance on the job.

There are no state laws regulating county pre-employment drug and alcohol testing, and the only limits are those established by the Fourth Amendment search-and-seizure provisions of the federal Constitution. But a county should not engage in pre-employment drug testing without a written drug testing policy which has been approved by the county attorney. The ADA is neutral on drug testing. Drug and alcohol testing of those seeking jobs requiring commercial drivers' licenses is covered by federal law.

Orientation

Once a decision is made and a person has been hired, it is important that he or she be oriented to the new job. New employees should also be thoroughly informed of the county's personnel policies and have a clear understanding of what is expected of them and of what they can expect of their employer. Be sure to introduce them to other workers in their area and make them feel welcome and comfortable.

Equal Employment Opportunity: All persons regardless of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, belief, marital status, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity must be guaranteed genuine and equal access to available job opportunities. There is no conflict between equal employment opportunity and merit principles. Both require that selection, hiring, promotion, transfer and layoff decisions be based solely upon the person's individual ability and merit without regard to race, color or other non-job related factors.

Discrimination, in addition to being illegal, is also very costly. In many cases, courts have awarded back pay to employees

and applicants who have been victims of discriminatory treatment. The court costs themselves are expensive and can be a great financial burden on a local government's budget. Some political jurisdictions have had to forfeit federal grants in aid because they did not comply with federal EEO regulations. Furthermore, the under-utilization of women and minorities in the workforce denies the employer and public the benefit of their talents and skills.

Personnel Policies: Personnel policies should be in writing, and both management and employees should study them and be aware of what they say. This practice will eliminate confusion and assure that each office is following the same policies.

Uniform personnel policies are an essential part of sound management practice. Jealousy between employees of different offices or departments within your county will be held to a minimum if everyone is treated equally. Your employees may not always like or agree with everything that you do but they can and should always perceive you as fair. Every county should adopt personnel policies for employees that are not covered by a collective bargaining agreement. However, an elected official can choose not to adopt the county-wide personnel policies for his department.

Each employee should be required to sign a form acknowledging that they have received, and understand, the personnel policies.

Personnel Records: Personnel records maintained by the county are confidential public records under Iowa Code §22.7(11). So they do not have to be provided to the public. They do, however, have to be provided to the employee. Any employee is entitled to obtain a copy of his personnel file, including performance evaluations and disciplinary records (Iowa Code §91B.1).

But county records containing information about a specific employee's compensation, vacation and sick leave usage are public records available to anyone, according to the Iowa Supreme Court.

Budget Cuts Impact ISAC Top Priorities

By: *Linda Hinton*

ISAC Government
Relations Manager



On October 8, Governor Culver announced that due to declining state revenue, he was implementing a 10% across-the-board cut in state government spending. Revenue estimates project declines in state revenue of 8.4%, or \$414.9 million, compared to last year. Department plans were submitted to the Governor and finalized on October 28. Line items that impact counties were generally cut in the vicinity of 10%.

The major cuts for the counties are in property tax credits and Human Services. The property tax credit cut totals \$10,138,560, with specific cuts to the Family Farm Credit of \$2,215,055 and the Homestead Credit of \$6,442,162. Approximately 22% of the property tax credit cut will be absorbed by the counties and the rest will be shared by the other property taxing entities.

Specific cuts in the DHS budget and the amounts include the following:

- MH/DD
 - o Property tax relief
\$7,792,000
 - o MH/DD growth \$5,410,877
 - o MH/DD community services \$1,579,011
 - o State cases \$1,151,081
- Detention \$1,000,000

The breathing room that the county MH/DD funds received from the enhanced Medicaid match will be eaten up by the cuts to state MH/DD funding.

Another area of interest is DHS reorganization plans. The current proposed reduction in force focuses on central office, but the department plan calls for a two-year reorganization of field operations that would result in fewer service areas, more less-than-full-time offices, and centralization of some services. Counties can expect less funding from DHS for the cost of housing DHS staff offices.

The Public Health Department reports that there will be the following percentage cuts in county funding:

- Community partnerships 6%
- EMS county association contracts 10%
- Essential services to local boards of health 7%

Other areas of cuts that will impact the counties include corrections, veterans' affairs, and the court system.

The ISAC Board met on October 29 and 30 to review the steering committee reports and set the top legislative priorities for the coming legislative session. The session is scheduled to be shortened to 80 days with a primary focus on getting the 2011 budget done. The 2011 budget will be a challenge since there is no reason to believe that revenues will rebound quickly and the federal stimulus funding that was used to shore up the 2010 budget is scheduled to be gone.

In developing the top priorities for the coming session, the Board was of the opinion that business as usual was not the way to go. ISAC generally asks for increased state funding in a number of areas, including MHDD, TIME-21, local public health, emergency management, and REAP. Funding for the first two have been perennial top priorities in recent years. In order to craft ISAC priorities that were in sync with the difficult legislative session ahead, the Board decided to seek maintenance of county funding in these difficult financial times. It is important for the policy makers to understand that counties cannot replace the property tax credits and property tax relief that are being trimmed from this year's budget and that those and further cuts will result in increased property taxes in FY 2011.

After deciding on the funding objective, the Board agreed to include repeal of the LOST-TIF in the top priorities and then to craft two separate top priorities around the themes of cost savings and revenue enhancements for local governments.

Techie Holiday Gifts

By: *Tammy Norman*

ISAC Office Manager



Q: Can you give me some holiday gift ideas for the “techie” in my household?

A: I love to answer these types of questions because it gives me an excuse to do research on the “fun” side of technology. It can be hard to find gifts for anyone but especially for those who are “techie.” The following suggestions are for those hard to buy for techie family members and friends.

iPod Nano: The iPod Nano features an amazing video camera, an FM radio with live pause, a voice over feature that speaks the name of the songs and artists on your playlist, and for those who love to walk or jog with their iPod, it has a built in pedometer. The 8GB model lists for \$149.00 on the Apple website, and the 16GB version is available for \$179.00. It is available in a variety of colors for the hard to please in your family. You can also pick this up on Amazon for less money but limited colors.

Zagg Invisible Shield for iPhone: For the iPhone owner on your holiday list, a great gift idea is the Zagg Invisible Shield. It is available for under \$25.00. The shield protects the iPhone without sacrificing the style. It is made from the same invisible film that is used on military helicopters to prevent rock chips in their rotor blades...so it has to be tough!

Mind Flex Game: I have watched the video on this gift idea, and the Mind Flex Game seems pretty amazing. The object of the game

is to move a ball around an obstacle course using only your mind (for some of us that may be a challenge in itself). It sells for the low price of just \$79.99 on Amazon.

Roku Player: This cool gadget allows you to view unlimited movies from Netflix with a monthly subscription of \$8.99 with a one time purchase of the Roku player, which ranges for a one time price of \$79.99 (SD) to \$129.99 (HD-XR) depending on the definition of video. One last detail, a high-speed internet connection with at least 1.2 Mbps is required.

Kindle Wireless Reading Device: This is a must have for the avid readers in your household, especially the techie ones. Weighing just over 10 ounces and at the depth of only 1/3”, it has the ability to download and store books in less than 60 seconds. You can literally carry your own library with you everywhere you go. The price is \$259.00 on Amazon.

Website Note: Take a moment to register for the exciting ISAC University which will be held on January 20– 21 at the West Des Moines Marriott. Space is limited, and the deadline to register is January 13, 2010. If you have a question regarding new technology and would like it addressed in this column, please contact me at 515.244.7181 ext. 315 or tnorman@iowacounties.org. Until next month, keep clicking!

SAVE THE DATE!

ISAC University 2010

January 20-21, 2010
West Des Moines Marriott



More information on page 11 and at www.iowacounties.org.

Twas the Fright Before Christmas

By: *Robin Harlow*

ISAC Technology Project
Manager



In the spirit of the holiday season, I thought I would take the time to modify 'Twas the Night Before Christmas'. I must give apologies to Clement C. Moore and thanks to Chelsea Walden for editing.

Enjoy and Happy Holidays.

Twas the Fright Before Christmas



Twas the night before Christmas, when all through the house
All the gadgets were stirring, even my mouse;
The photos were uploaded to Flickr with care,
In hopes that in five years they still would be there;
The children were listening to iPods on their heads,
While playing Modern Warfare 2 on the edge of their beds;
My dish satellite was playing some holiday sap,
And I was struggling with a Quicken reconciliation gap.
When out of my laptop's screen there arose such a clatter,
I fell backwards over my chair in one big splatter.

I jumped to my screen in such a flash,
That I tore my hamstring and kicked over the trash.
My screen had taken on a green and red glow,
It blinked and it blinked then gave a short bellow.
When, what to my tearing eyes should appear,
The word 'virus detected' and then things started to disappear.

The virus was so lively and quick,
I knew in a moment it must be the Saint Nick X-mas trick.
More rapid than spam the messages they came,
I cursed out loud as I read them out by name;
'No more photos! No more documents! You've been smitten,
Gone are those stupid Christmas letters you've written!

To the root of your drive I will crawl!
Now erase away! Erase away! Erase away all!
As I stood there baffled and continued to cry,
My wife walked in and said "Oh my my!"
So through my hard disk the virus it flew,
Away went my work; all my family photos as Saint Nick only grew.

And then, in a twinkling, I remembered an ad,
It promised to fix your machine and get rid of the bad.
As I hustled to the phonebook, the ad I did find,
And the tech came quickly to get me out of this bind.
He was dressed very sharply, his shirt it was pressed,



Continues on next page.



And his pants were rivals of my Sunday's best.
A bundle of manuals he had flung on his back,
And he looked like a hero; he was just the right hack.
His mouth did frown! His forehead it did furrow,
But I could tell by his actions that he would be very thorough!
He looked at the screen and he started to smile,
Turned to me quickly and said, "This might take quite a while."
Asked if I have a backup of work of most recent,
I replied sheepishly "no" and felt most indecent;
His only reply was a small little grunt,
Putting his head down, began to hunt.
The virus was tough, it was most repelling,
And the tech was quick and his speed compelling;
The virus soon tired, it tripped and it fell,
But the tech's finger were swollen, and his armpits began to smell.
The tech reached deep, to make one final push,
With super human strength, he knocked it on its tush.
The virus was gone, my laptop was free,
A backup located, I was hugging with glee.
He restored my photos, my documents, all my hard work,
The virus was gone; it had no place to lurk.
As the tech left, I heard him exclaim,
"Back up, back up now or your life won't be the same!"



The TCM Year in Review

By: Deb Eckerman Slack
ISAC Case Management
Services Manager



It's hard to believe that another year is coming to a close. 2009 proved to be a challenging year for Targeted Case Management (TCM) providers. Much time and energy was expended by CCMS staff, case managers and case management supervisors alike responding to proposed rules changes (Chapter 90 and 79). The rule changes were published for public comment in March of 2009. Comments were made by over 75 people to the proposed rule changes. Along with the hundreds of comments to the proposed rule changes, were attendance by CCMS staff and case management staff from across the state at the Administrative Rules Review Committee meetings held at the Capitol. Not only was there good attendance at these meetings where concern was voiced regarding the proposed rule changes, but there was personal contact made to ARRC members.

The major changes for case management that these rules specified were billing for case management services in 15 minute increments, utilizing a standardized assessment form and providing 24/7 on-call service for individuals receiving TCM by case management providers. Our concerns were:

15 minute billing: Currently TCM services are billed in a monthly unit based upon a projected cost report of reasonable and proper costs of operation in accordance with federally accepted reimbursement principles (OMB A-87 principles). The service is cost based in nature. Our argument against the proposed rule change was that it created a culture where case managers were spending less time with the individuals they serve and more time on increased tracking responsibilities. Another concern was the narrow definition of what was billable (face-to-face contacts with an individual and collateral contact on behalf of an individual) would result in artificially high reimbursement rates that would cause "sticker shock."

Utilizing a standardized assessment: The new rules dictate the use of a standardized assessment (Form 460-4694). The assessment is a 24-page document that we felt was not user friendly, initially taking approximately three hours to complete, and did not focus on the strengths, needs and desires of the individuals we serve. We also felt that as case managers we were not qualified to make determinations of some risks identified in the assessment (e.g. is there structural damage to the home the individual is residing in) and in being responsible for addressing the risks to eliminate or accommodate them.

Implementation of a 24/7 on call system by TCM providers:

This rule dictates that TCM providers have an on-call system to ensure that, in the event of an emergency, members have access to a case manager 24 hours per day, including weekends and holidays. We had several concerns with this rule including: it was unclear why this was needed due to the fact that case managers already must develop a detailed and individualized crisis plan for each individual they serve to address crisis and emergency situations; case managers are prohibited by rules from providing a direct service; and the cost for this service would be duplicative in nature and add more cost to an already strained Medicaid budget.

Unfortunately, even with the tremendous response in opposition to these proposed rule changes, they were passed and adopted effective July 1, 2009, with a delayed implementation of the on-call system to be effective October 1, 2009.

Where Are We Today?

...on billing: Iowa Medicaid Enterprise (IME) broadened the scope of the definition of a billable activity to include mandated paperwork completed on behalf of an individual that fell under the realm of assessment, care planning, linking/referring and monitoring and follow up. Iowa Medicaid Enterprises also agreed to change the definition of a billable unit to any allowable case management activity of one to 15 minutes in length. TCM providers continue to bill TCM services on a monthly unit rate based on the projected FY 2009 cost report. Providers are tracking their time in accordance to the new billable activities definition in order to do a projected cost report to develop a rate, and will begin billing in 15 minute increments effective July 1, 2010.

...on the assessment: All TCM providers were to begin utilizing the standard assessment on October 1, 2009. As of this writing, IME is in the process of changing the assessment in response to issues we brought to their attention in regards to the standardized form.

...on 24/7 on-call: IME has indicated that they are going to contract with ISU to utilize the Iowa Concerned Hotline as the frontline screening for this service. They will be sending an informational letter to all TCM providers regarding this and

Continues on page 15.

ISAC meetings

ISAC University 2010

Come join us for this exciting day-and-a-half conference that will give you down-to-earth training on how to become an effective leader. The conference will provide unique content that is packed with powerful success strategies. The dynamic speakers will give you practical information that you can begin using as soon as you return home.

Location: West Des Moines Marriott (1250 Jordan Creek Parkway, West Des Moines, IA 50266)

Conference Registration: The registration fee for the 2010 ISAC University is only \$150. Your registration includes dinner on Wednesday evening, lunch on Thursday afternoon and refreshment breaks both days. Please register at www.iowacounties.org by Wednesday, January 13, 2009. Space is limited, so register today!

By: Stacy Horner

ISAC Meeting/Event Administrator



Hotel Reservation Information: Please call 800.228.9290 to make your hotel reservation. To receive the conference rate of \$89/night (plus applicable taxes), you must identify yourself with the *Iowa State Association of Counties-ISAC University* group block. All reservations must be received by Wednesday, December 30, 2009 and must be guaranteed with a major credit card. After this date, rooms are subject to availability at the standard rate. Check-in is at 3:00 pm, and check-out is at 12:00 pm.

The West Des Moines Marriott provides complimentary on-site parking and wireless high speed Internet in every room, as well as a smoke-free environment. The hotel features a fitness center, indoor pool and whirlpool. The hotel also has an on-site restaurant, CK's Steakhouse, and lounge.

Conference Agenda

Wednesday, January 20, 2010

12:00 pm - 12:45 pm
Registration

12:45 pm - 1:00 pm
Welcome Remarks

1:00 pm - 2:00 pm
General Session - "Essentials of Leadership"

2:00 pm - 3:00 pm
General Session - "Professionalism and Why it's Important"

3:00 pm - 3:15 pm
Refreshment Break

3:15 pm - 4:45 pm
General Session - "Understanding the ABCs of XYZ Generations"

5:30 pm - 7:30 pm
Dinner and Closing Keynote Presentation - "Staying Alive-Mentally"

Thursday, January 21, 2010

7:30 am - 8:00 am
Morning Refreshments

8:00 am - 10:30 am
Opening Keynote Presentation - "Creating a Positive Customer Service Environment"

10:30 am - 10:45 am
Break

10:45 am - 12:15 pm
General Session - "Leading in Times of Challenge and Change"

12:15 pm - 1:00 pm
Lunch

1:00 pm - 3:00 pm
Closing Keynote Presentation - "Little Victories, Big Results!"

3:00 pm - 3:15 pm
Closing Remarks

*Please find more information including speakers and meals at www.iowacounties.org.



Criteria and Procedures for ISAC Scholarships

The Iowa State Association of Counties (ISAC) is a private, nonprofit corporation whose members are county officials and employees from the 99 counties in Iowa. ISAC has established the following criteria and procedures for granting scholarships:

1. Eligibility is limited to children of county officials or county employees. This does not include city employees, employees of county extension offices, or candidates who are themselves county employees. Children of county assessors are eligible to apply for this scholarship.
2. At least one (1) \$1,000 scholarship shall be awarded annually.
3. The candidates must be seniors in high school.
4. This is a one (1) year scholarship, and can be received only once by an individual.
5. The scholarship can be awarded to anyone who will be a full-time student of any college requiring at least a minimum of two (2) years for a degree.
6. The scholarship monies will be paid directly to the college; one-half upon acceptance, one-half upon completion of the first semester.
7. The candidates must provide personal reference statements from three (3) individuals other than family members, complete an application, and submit to an interview.
8. The criteria used in awarding the scholarship will be scholastic achievement, financial need, participation in extracurricular/community activities and overall character.
9. The selection committee shall award all scholarships and the decision of the selection committee shall be final.
10. The selection committee shall consist of seven (7) members, to be appointed by the ISAC President. The selection committee shall consist of one (1) representative from each ISAC district, plus one (1) member of the ISAC Board of Directors.
11. ISAC reserves the right to verify any information provided on any application.
12. Scholarships will be awarded at the ISAC Spring School in March.
13. Scholarship winners have two years to use their award. During the two years, they may apply to the scholarship committee for an extension of the time limit. The scholarship committee shall recommend to the ISAC Board of Directors whether to allow the extension of the time limit.
14. **Applications must be postmarked by December 18, 2009.**
15. **Applications should be mailed to:**
ISAC, 501 SW 7th St., Suite Q, Des Moines, IA 50309-4540



Scholarship Application

Name of Applicant _____

Address _____

City _____ Zip _____

County _____ Home Phone _____

E-mail Address _____ Name of High School _____

Mother's Name _____ Father's Name _____

Which parent of yours is a county official or employee? _____

Parent's Name _____

County Department _____ County Position _____

County Phone # _____

Proposed college _____

Have you taken the SAT/ACT _____ If so, your score _____

Total Class Size _____ Rank in Class _____ Grade Point _____ on a 4.0 scale

Financial Need: In the space provided, explain your financial need for this scholarship:

Essay: On another sheet of paper type an essay of no more than 250 words explaining your career plans and future goals. **MAKE US SEE THE REAL YOU.**

Extra Curricular Activities: In the space provided, please identify your most significant extra curricular activities, school activities, work experience, etc. that might be helpful to the committee in judging your application.

References: We need personal reference letters from three (3) individuals other than family members. (Such as teachers, employers, advisors)

Transcript: Please enclose a copy of your high school transcript with your application.

Technology Award: We are also offering the Iowa Counties Information Technology (ICIT) Award, which is a \$2,000 scholarship. This scholarship is available to an applicant who intends to pursue a two (2) or four (4) year degree in a technology related major and/or a degree that leverages/incorporates technology. If this applies to you, on another sheet of paper which you label "Technology Essay", tell us about any plans you have in this area.

For you to be considered for a scholarship you must:

- 1. Return application filled out completely**
- 2. Enclose your typed essay**
- 3. Include three letters of personal reference**
- 4. Enclose your high school transcript**

Return to: Iowa State Association of Counties, 501 SW 7th St., Suite Q, Des Moines, IA 50309-4540.
Applications must be postmarked by December 18, 2009.

I hereby certify that this application contains no misrepresentation or falsifications and that the information given by me is true and complete to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Signature of Applicant: _____

NACo President Brown Urges All Counties to Celebrate

The National Association of Counties (NACo) President Valerie Brown is calling on all counties to begin planning today for National County Government Month (NCGM). The theme for NCGM, to be celebrated throughout the month of April 2010, is "Healthy Counties."

"County governments are integral to America's health system and provide many essential services for their residents," said Brown, supervisor, Sonoma County, California. "I know counties are most proud of their healthcare services and healthy living programs. That's why the theme for National County Government Month is Healthy Counties."

Since 1991, NACo has encouraged counties to actively promote county government programs and services. Formerly National County Government Week, the designation was expanded to a full month to offer counties more opportunities to plan and participate. Counties aren't expected to hold public awareness activities throughout the month, but can schedule activities any time during the month.

Brown urged county leaders to hold open houses or public tours of county facilities, visit local schools and business groups to discuss available county services, and highlight exceptional services and programs.

"By starting to plan today counties can make the most of the opportunity to promote effective local government efforts to serve and protect communities," Brown said. "I am excited about this year's Healthy Counties theme as I am making advocacy for national health reform that works for counties a hallmark of my year as NACo president."

Beginning in January, a booklet will be available from NACo which will provide helpful information about how to plan successful NCGM celebrations. For more information, visit www.naco.org or contact Jim Philipps at 202.942.4220 or jphilipps@naco.org.

CCMS

Continued from page 10.

asking if the providers intend on using this service. Some providers have already begun providing this service within their own agencies. For those providers that are going to use the Iowa Concerned Hotline, IME have indicated that they are in compliance with the new rules as they are in "good faith" moving to providing this service.

We are also facing a possible percentage cut to TCM budgets in response to the 10% across the board budget cuts mandated by Governor Culver.

Stay Tuned

Anyone who has been involved in TCM services for any length of time knows that it is an ever evolving process. What the New Year will bring for us is anyone's guess at this point. In the meantime, we will continue to do what we do best; provide a valuable service to the vulnerable individuals that we serve. On that note, we at CCMS wish you and yours a wonderful Holiday Season.

Important Reminders About Asbestos

When members of ISAC engage in remodeling and demolition projects, they have important obligations to protect their employees, the public, and the environment from asbestos. Asbestos is present in many building materials and even a small amount of asbestos can cause cancer and other health problems.

In most cases, a proper survey and laboratory tests must be conducted prior to work beginning. If asbestos is present, it must be properly removed by trained people. In many cases, units of government are prohibited from accepting bids from contractors that do not hold a permit for asbestos removal. Regulation of asbestos in Iowa falls into three categories.

Occupational Health: The Occupational Safety and Health Bureau of the Iowa Division of Labor Services enforces OSHA standards designed to protect employees from asbestos in the workplace. Employers and building owners are required to perform certain activities to protect workers. The Iowa Division of Labor also has a Consultation and Education Bureau that can provide training and other OSHA assistance at no cost. Visit <http://www.iowaworkforce.org/labor/index.html> or call 515.242.5870 for more information about OSHA.

Clean Air: The Air Quality Bureau of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources enforces standards designed to protect the environment and the public from asbestos. Special requirements apply to school buildings. Visit <http://www.iowadnr.gov/air/prof/asbestos/asbestos.html> or call 515.281.8443 for more information.

Licensing and Permitting: Handling asbestos is not a job for amateurs. Businesses planning to engage in asbestos removal must first obtain a permit from the Iowa Division of Labor Services. Individuals planning to work in the asbestos industry must first obtain a license from the Iowa Division of Labor Services. There are different licenses for five disciplines. Visit <http://www.iowaworkforce.org/labor/asbestos.htm> or call 515.281.5666 for more information.

MyCountyParks.com Earns Award

MyCountyParks.com, a site encompassing 99 counties and nearly 1,800 parks, natural areas and historical sites, received the Tourism Web Site of the Year award during the Iowa Tourism Conference.

“This site is a true collaborative effort from all 99 of Iowa’s County Conservation Boards,” said Iowa Tourism Office Manager Nancy Landess. “It has been a tremendous tool for the county parks system - programs are seeing added attendance and drawing in participants from farther away, campgrounds are having some of their busiest years and it has rejuvenated the county conservation board system.”

The winning website was based on outstanding website design, comprehensive information contained in the site, ease of use for travelers, measurable success and use of website in overall marketing campaign. A total of 19 awards were presented at the conference. Professionals representing several facets of the Iowa tourism industry judged the nominations.

“What a great recognition for Iowa’s county conservation system!” commented Tom Hazelton, Special Programs Manager for Linn County Conservation, and the site administrator for MyCountyParks.com. “A lot of visionary thinking and hard work has gone into this effort over the past three years, and the collective participation and input from across the state is what we do best. This award honors all those who have brought MyCountyParks to the world.”

Iowa’s county conservation system was established in 1955, and currently has over 182,000 acres in 1,765 areas across all 99 counties. With 59 nature centers in the system, they are a leader in outdoor & conservation education - and over 11,500 campsites and nearly 100 cabins allow for extended visits to Iowa’s county parks, and those great family memories.

Slip-Sliding Away...

By: IMWCA

Iowa Municipalities Workers' Compensation Association

"We're workin' our jobs, collect our pay... Believe were gliding down the highway, when in fact we're slip-sliding away..." Paul Simon made this a hit song in 1975 on the "Still Crazy After All These Years" album.

Unless they're ice skating or skiing, you don't want your employees to be slip-sliding away, especially around the workplace. According to the Bureau of Labor statistics, falls account for 12.4% of all workplace fatalities, and according to the National Safety Council (NSC), slip and fall injuries account for almost 30% of all workers' compensation claims. And if that's not enough to get your attention, according to the NSC, up to 90% of all slips, trips and falls are preventable.

Winter weather often makes for wet or icy conditions underfoot. When people enter buildings, cold, wet footwear meets warm walking surface, and viola, we have the recipe for a slip and fall. To complicate things, counties are not afforded the luxury of putting things on hold for the weather to clear. When the snow falls, public employees get busy clearing the streets and roads so their citizens can go about their appointed rounds. Law enforcement, fire and EMT workers do not have the luxury of waiting for a clear day. When an emergency call comes in, they answer, no matter the weather conditions. This all adds up to a multitude of exposures for our public work force. But going back to the NSC data, we know slips and falls are preventable, so what can be done to prevent them?

Apply the basic risk management process of identifying the loss exposure, examining alternatives, selecting the best alternatives, implementing the selected techniques, and monitoring the results.

For example, buildings frequented by the public will likely receive priority for clearing sidewalks, parking, steps, etc. Don't forget those mats just inside the door, commonly referred to as "walk-off mats." As a general rule, the first 15-20 feet inside the entrance is the most critical area for slip and fall prevention. Another good idea is to place signs to remind

people of the slippery conditions during and just after weather presents a slipping hazard. Here are a few do's and don'ts:

- Wear footwear appropriate for the conditions inside and outside.
- Clean footwear of mud, snow, etc. when entering a building.
- Walk, don't run, through work areas.
- When carrying a load, make sure you can see around it.
- Clean up, correct, remove and/or report unsafe conditions.

Street and road workers know the perils of winter weather, but everyone can use a few timely reminders. While you rarely have to remind a seasoned equipment operator to dress for the weather, including proper footwear, it's a good idea to cover the proper way to enter and exit the cab of a motor grader and snow plow equipped vehicles. Drivers often spend their entire shift in the cab, and after sitting for long periods, care needs to be taken not to pull or strain themselves as they exit. Here are a few tips for heavy equipment operators:

- Use three points of contact when entering and exiting equipment. Maintain both hands and one foot, or both feet and one hand, in contact at all times.
- Enter and exit equipment facing it.
- Use all the steps; never jump from equipment.
- Take the time to inspect your equipment during the shift, using it as an opportunity to get out of the cab and stretch.

You may wonder on a cold winter day in Iowa if we're all a little bit still crazy after all of these years of winter and the associated headaches springing from strains and sprains related to winter weather. But as we're doing our jobs and collecting our pay, slip-sliding down the streets and roads of life, using a little common sense, slowing down and taking some extra time will get us back home safe and sound in "My Little Town," another Paul Simon hit song.

The Iowa Municipalities Workers' Compensation Association is an ISAC Endorsed Company. Please find more information at www.imwca.org or by contacting Tim Kirgan, tkirgan@iowaleague.com or 515.974.5338.



Making Medicare Make Sense

Q: Can you tell me about Medicare's fall open enrollment that began on November 15 and tell me about some of the changes to Medicare's health and prescription drug plans for 2010?

A: Medicare's annual election period or what is also known as fall open enrollment began on November 15, and will run through December 31. This is the time of year, every year, where you can change from your current health and prescription drug plan to a different plan for the upcoming year, or enroll in either for the first time. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, (CMS) wants beneficiaries to know that the Medicare program is strong and, in 2010, they will have a broad array of health care choices — choices that are better and stronger than ever.

The Medicare agency has made it simpler for beneficiaries to choose a new health or drug plan by reducing the number of duplicative plans. These were plans offered by the same sponsor with similar benefits; plans that made it hard for beneficiaries to distinguish differences between the plan offerings. We've also reduced the number of plans that had low enrollment. As well, we have worked with the Medicare Advantage (MA) plans to reduce cost sharing on important benefits like inpatient hospitalization and home health services.

But, even with the MA plans that are not renewing their contracts with Medicare, more than 99% of affected beneficiaries will have other MA plan choices available in their area.

As well, beneficiaries will continue to have broad access to Part D Prescription Drug plan choices in 2010. The average number of Part D plans in each region is 46—about 23 basic and 23 enhanced— and no region will have fewer than 41 plan offerings.

And, all beneficiaries affected by being in a current MA or a Part D Prescription Drug plan that is not being offered in 2010 will receive information directly from both their current plan and from the Medicare agency, CMS, letting the beneficiary know they need to make a choice for coverage in 2010. CMS will also be targeting outreach efforts in geographic areas where a significant number of beneficiaries are impacted.

It is important for Medicare beneficiaries to know that they are

still covered by original Medicare for their Part B physician services, and Part A hospital services, even if their current health or prescription drug plan is not being offered next year.

For many beneficiaries, health plan coverage under the original Medicare fee-for-service program may be their best choice. Other beneficiaries will decide that coverage under a MA plan (like HMOs or PPOs) will best meet their needs for 2010. Beneficiaries should consider all of their choices — even deciding if their current prescription drug plan is the best one for them for the coming year, using the resources we have available — to make the best selection to meet their health care needs.

We know that Part D beneficiaries, or those with a Medicare Prescription Drug plan, should see only slight changes in their Part D premiums and benefits in 2010. Part D premiums will be lower than we previously estimated in this summer's Mid-Session review estimate. The estimated average Part D premium for standard coverage is \$30, about a difference of \$2 from the current 2009 year.

And, whether you are joining for the first time or reviewing your plan options because you want to find out if there is a better plan for your health care needs, follow these three important steps:

Step 1: Prepare – Take time to gather the information

Step 2: Compare – Compare plans in your area based on cost, coverage, convenience and quality, (you can compare plans now, but not enroll until November 15)

Step 3: Decide – Decide which plan is best for you and join.

CMS has a number of tools and resources available to help beneficiaries and their family members compare health and drug options, including updated information that is available at 1-800-MEDICARE and www.medicare.gov.

On www.medicare.gov select "Compare Medicare Prescription Drug Plans" or "Compare Health Plans and Medigap Policies in your area." These tools can help you find which plans in your area cover your prescriptions or the health benefits you want, and which pharmacies you can use to fill prescriptions. If you are conducting a prescription drug plan search, it is best to have your prescription drug bottles with you so that

Continues on next page.

you can base the search on the prescriptions you are currently taking, if any, and the dosages, and amounts.

Also, CMS is conducting an aggressive education effort so beneficiaries know about the choices available to them and to help them select the most appropriate health care option for them. We've joined with thousands of individuals and organizations across the country, including local State Health Insurance Assistance Programs (SHIPs) to help beneficiaries review their health and drug plan options and enroll in a different plan if they choose. The SHIP programs offer free non-biased personalized health insurance counseling and assistance and they are a grantee program of CMS. They do not sell insurance. For your state's SHIP program call 1.800.Medicare, 1.800.633.4227.

All Medicare beneficiaries should have received the 2010 Medicare & You handbook, where one is mailed to each beneficiary household and in which there is an overview of the plan options in their state for 2010 as well as local resource numbers.

CMS will also continue our vigorous oversight of plan marketing activities to protect beneficiaries from inaccurate or

misleading information or from prohibited tactics by a small minority of unscrupulous agents or plans. Extra surveillance and outreach activities will also be focused on areas where the most Medicare beneficiaries are affected by plans not renewing their contracts with Medicare, because more plans will be marketing to these Medicare beneficiaries.

Medicare plans are on notice: CMS will immediately apply the strongest tools at its disposal to stop and sanction any plan found to be violating its rules. We will have zero tolerance for violators.

In short, for Medicare's fall annual enrollment period there will be a wide range of health and drug plan options available across the country, including original Medicare. Beneficiaries should take advantage of the tools and information available through CMS and its partners to identify and enroll in the coverage option that best suits their needs in 2010. Enrollment is through December 31. New plan choices will go into effect on January 1, 2010.

For more information, please call 1.800.Medicare, or 1.800.633.4227.

employment

Jasper County Engineer

The Jasper County Board of Supervisors is accepting applications for the position of County Engineer. Salary range \$75,000 to \$125,000 depending on qualifications and experience. Jasper County is the 18th most populous of the 99 counties in Iowa at an estimated 37,213. The county seat is Newton, located 32 miles east of Des Moines. The County Engineer, under general direction of the Board of Supervisors, is responsible and accountable for the overall planning, directing, coordinating and control of a 1235 mile road system and 42 full time employees. Qualified candidates would

possess knowledge and experience in the safe and efficient maintenance, design, administration and engineering of all Jasper County Secondary Roads and equipment. The candidate must be a licensed Professional Engineer in the state of Iowa. Minimum three years experience as a functioning County Engineer in Iowa preferred but not required. Position is open until filled. Send resume, references and salary history to: Jasper County Human Resources, 101 1st Street North, Newton, Iowa 50208 or hr@co.jasper.ia.us. Phone: 641.787.1024.

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2009/2010 calendar

December 2009

- 8-10 Iowa County Engineers Association Statewide Annual Conference (Scheman Center, Ames)
- 10 ISAC Board of Directors (ISAC Office, Des Moines)

January 2010

- 11 CCMS Training Committee Meeting (ISAC Office, Des Moines)
- 12 CCMS Administrators Meeting (Embassy Suites on the River, Des Moines)
- 20-21 ISAC University (West Des Moines Marriott)
- 22 ISAC Board of Directors (ISAC Office, Des Moines)

February 2010

- 11 Statewide Supervisors Meeting (Holiday Inn Airport, Des Moines)
- 17-18 CCMS Fundamentals Training (Holiday Inn Airport, Des Moines)
- 18-19 ISAC Board of Directors (ISAC Office, Des Moines)

March 2010

- 4 County Day at the Capitol
- 6-10 NACo Legislative Conference (Marriott Wardman Park Hotel, Washington DC)
- 24-25 ISAC Spring School of Instruction (Downtown Marriott/Renaissance Savery, Des Moines)

April 2010

- 1-30 National County Government Month
- 13-14 IPHA's Governor's Conference on Public Health (Scheman Center, Ames)
- 13 CCMS Administrators Meeting (Courtyard by Marriott, Ankeny)
- 14 CCMS Support Staff Training (ISAC Office, Des Moines)
- 29 ISAC Board of Directors (ISAC Office, Des Moines)

Please visit ISAC's online calendar of events at www.iowacounties.org and click on 'Upcoming Events.' A listing of all the meetings scheduled thus far in 2009/2010, agendas and meeting notices can be found on ISAC's website. A majority of ISAC's meetings offer online registration. If you have any questions about the meetings listed above or would like to add an affiliate meeting to the ISAC Calendar, please contact Stacy Horner at (515) 244-7181 or shorner@iowacounties.org.

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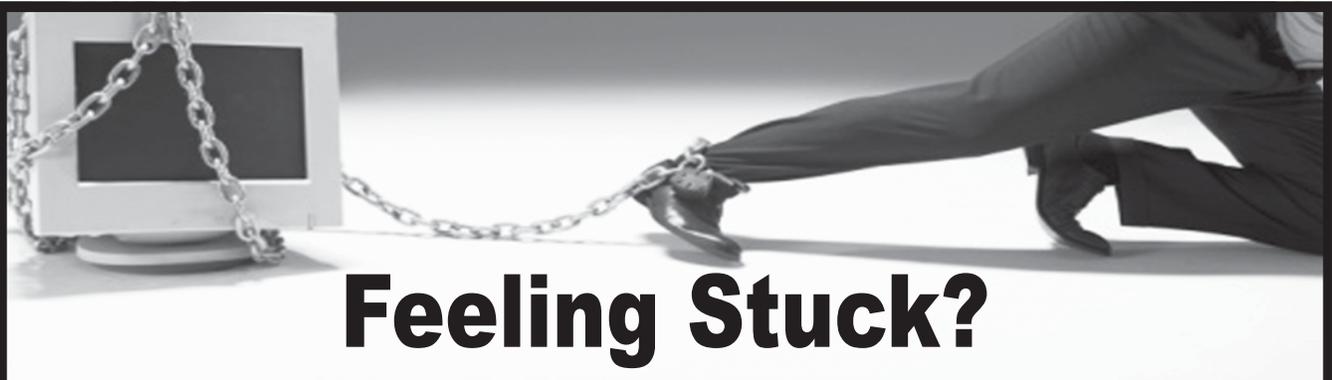
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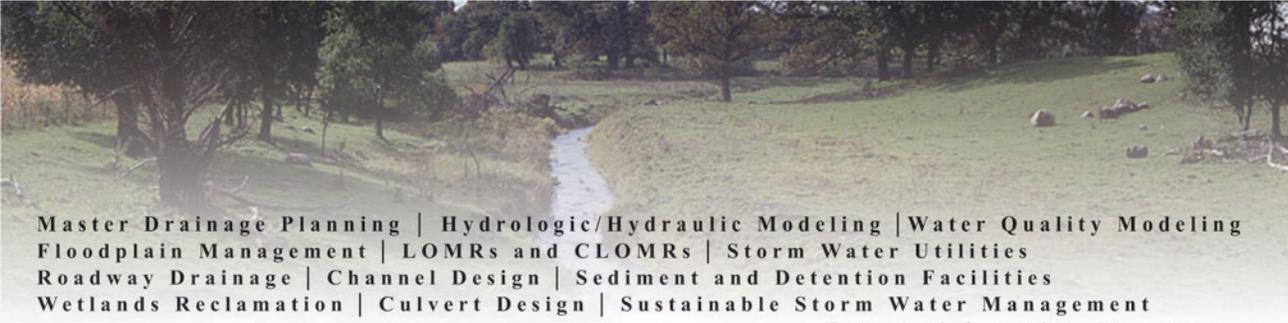


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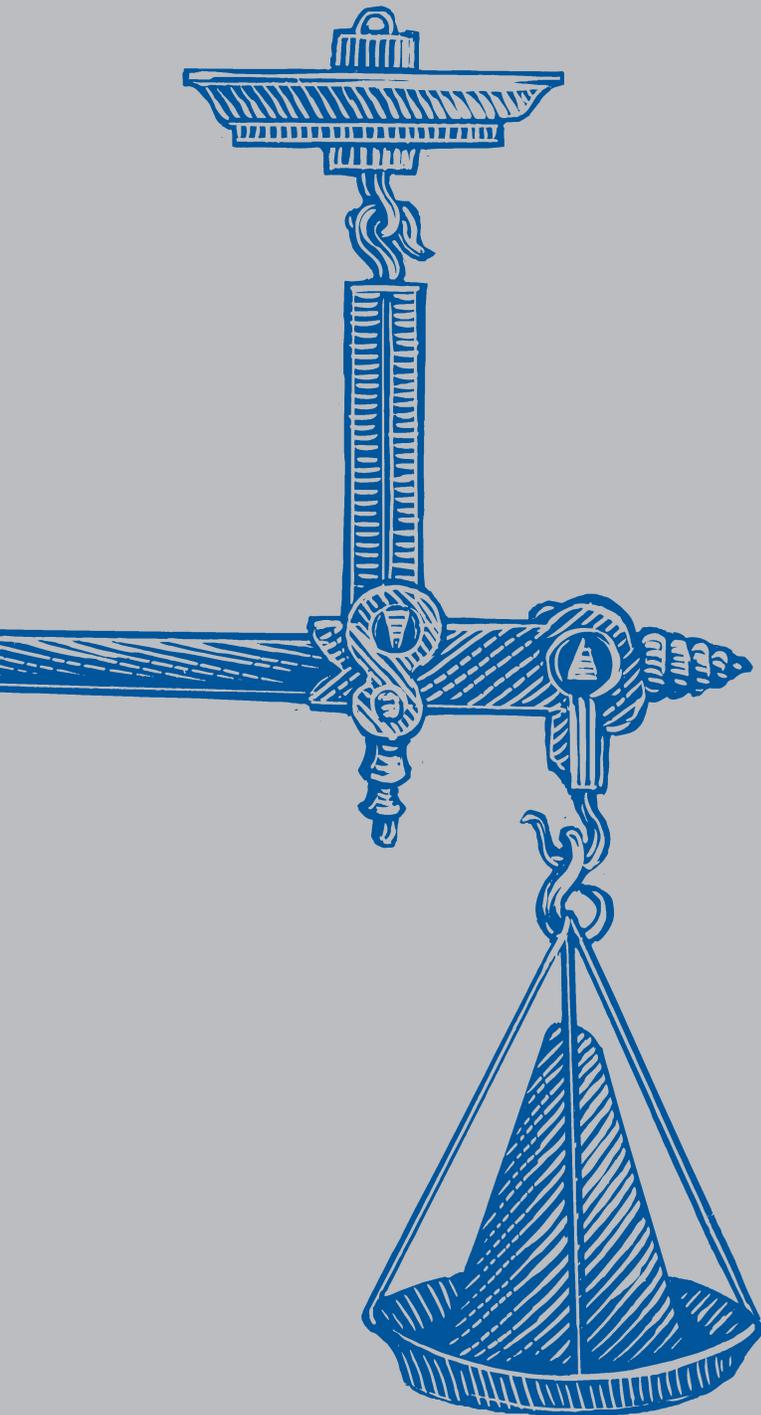
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