

The Iowa County

2003

Innovations



County

Government



February 2004

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The Iowa County

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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.

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County Government Innovations

Innovative and collaborative, two words that describe counties, especially during tough economic times. ISAC's Innovation Award Program provides the opportunity for officials and staff of counties in Iowa to receive appropriate recognition by their peers and the public for superior and innovative efforts in their profession. Through this program counties can share the best public service ideas in Iowa, demonstrating that county government public servants are progressive, competent and caring.

Five awards were given this year to outstanding projects that made their county more service oriented, resulted in monetary savings for their county, brought about cooperation with another entity, or solved a problem in a courthouse.

Telephone Book Emergency Pages

Living close to a nuclear power plant could pose a danger, so having critical emergency information readily available is a must. The Duane Arnold Energy Center needed a way to communicate with the public in the unlikely event of an emergency at the nuclear power plant in Palo.



Scott Hansen, Benton County Emergency Management, receives innovation award from ISAC Past President Dick Heidloff.

Research indicated that a majority of people at home can locate their telephone book quickly in times of emergency, so the Emergency Planning Department of the Duane Arnold Energy Center coordinated with the Benton and Linn County Emergency Management Agencies on using the local phone books as a tool to keep necessary emergency information where the public can

find it. "The benefit we realize is critical emergency information that is readily available to both permanent and transient populations in Benton and Linn counties," stated Scott Hansen, Benton County emergency management coordinator. The program started in 1996 and Hansen said the information was useful during the Y2K period and the September 11, 2001 attacks. Due to the success of this program, the creators are working with FEMA and Homeland Security to make this a national program using telephone book publishers.

Leadership Development Academy

How can a county offer the training so vitally needed for staff when there is a tight budget? Polk County decided to identify individuals within the organization to serve as instructors and coaches for staff members. Six individuals were selected to adapt the skill sets they learned at external academies to meet internal needs and then taught the new skill sets to employees

throughout the organization by planning class agendas for the Polk County Leadership Development Academy. "By establishing the Leadership Development Academy, we were able to implement five projects with existing staff and provide an opportunity for employees to participate in the development of leadership and project management skills," stated Marie Grabenbauer, Polk County senior human resources analyst. A few examples of the learning teams include:

- Avoid the Rush – a project to obtain bus passes and carpool
- GASB 34 – compiled an initial inventory of county owned assets and conducting research on what other counties are

doing to provide a benchmark for best practices.

- HIPAA – educational seminars for county employees and working on Phase 2 of HIPAA compliance.

"The Leadership Development Academy is a great way to develop employees, complete projects that need to be done, and provide opportunities



Polk County employees receive innovation award from ISAC Past President Dick Heidloff.

for employees to interact with employees from other departments," wrote Grabenbauer.



Participants in the 2002 Leadership Development Academy.

Building Environmental Health Service Capacity

Nine counties in northwest Iowa have been working together to educate and train the boards of health, board of supervisors, environmental health practitioners, service contractors, and the general public regarding environmental health issues and county based environmental health risks. In the regional effort of Pocahontas, Buena Vista, Cherokee, Ida, Sac, Palo Alto, Kossuth, Dickinson, and Clay counties, educational programs were developed around four major topics: on-site waste water, water quality, food safety, and public health nuisances. “We learned that



ISAC Past President Dick Heidloff awards Kim Johnson, Buena Vista County, and Tammy McKeever, Clay County, an innovation award.

people would attend educational opportunities if they do not have to travel a long distance,” stated Tammy McKeever, Clay County environmental health director. “We also found that providing training is not expensive, but does require good organizational skills.” Regional presentations were scheduled in 17 counties located within Northwest Iowa for local boards of health and boards of supervisors. For those counties that did not attend a regional presentation, individual visits were scheduled. The presentation was also conducted at civic service clubs, home shows and county fairs. “Weak information flow is the greatest barrier to building local environmental health services,” wrote McKeever.

Citizen Response Project

How can a county streamline information and referral service to the general public? Polk County created an Intranet-based, shared database that is searchable by keywords, services and departments. The database makes it possible for any staff member to attain information such as hours of operation, fees and contact information for services with one mouse click from any Polk County PC. “We molded the project from the beginning with creating a case for change, gaining commitment and studying how to embed the change into our Polk County environment,” stated Anthony Jefferson, Polk County business analyst/FSS. In the past, the staff member responsible for referrals and general information had notebooks of reference material includ-

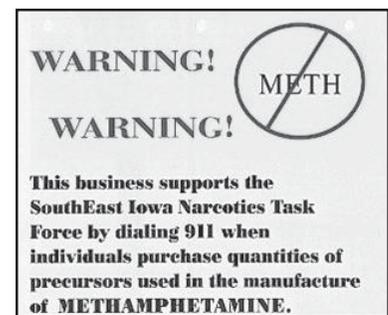


Anthony Jefferson, Polk County Business Analyst, receives innovation award from ISAC Past President Dick Heidloff.

ing pamphlets from outside agencies and detailed notes of county services. “The lack of consistency, accuracy and shelf life of the data would result in a ‘best guess’ scenario with some staff better equipped to handle the request than others,” stated Jefferson. The efficiencies gained from converting to an Intranet based, shared database range from improved customer service to empowerment of the staff. Jefferson wrote, “The fiscal impact of this project and its success, are second only to the increase in satisfaction level of our callers.”

STOP Meth

Des Moines County developed a program that joined merchants of the community with area law enforcement to reduce the production of methamphetamine. The STOP Meth program was created after it was discovered that the majority of people being arrested for the purchase of methamphetamine precursors at local retail outlets were not residents of Des Moines County. “The arrest records show that Des Moines County has become the regional shopping center for meth makers, leaving the tax payers to pay for the arrest, prosecution and incarceration,” stated Patrick Jackson, Des Moines County attorney. The program centers on teaching area retailers to be alert to consumers purchasing drug making materials and what type of information law enforcement will need to make an arrest. Jackson said the stickers posted in area merchants windows alerts meth makers that if you manufacture meth and buy your supplies in Des Moines County you will be reported and arrested. “The cost of the program is small compared to the cost savings it will provide to the county,” wrote Jackson.



Above: Stickers are posted in retailers windows to alert meth makers. Below: Des Moines County Supervisors Ed Blow and Tim Hoschek receive innovation award from ISAC Past President Dick Heidloff.



Innovation award applications are available annually in March and awarded at ISAC’s Fall School of Instruction. For further information download a copy of ISAC’s Innovation Program brochure on ISAC’s website (www.iowacounties.org) under ‘Publications’ or contact Sandy Longfellow at slongfellow@iowacounties.org.

Updating The Food Safety Laws In Iowa

"The American does not drink at meals as a sensible man should. Indeed, he has no meals. He stuffs for ten minutes thrice a day."
- Rudyard Kipling 1891

"Never eat more than you can lift." - Miss Piggy 1983

Americans are going out to eat, whether a comfortable restaurant with white linen table cloths or a small boxy building in which you constantly hear a worker asking "Do you want fries with that?" The number of Americans who partake in a meal outside their own home has been increasing each year for the last decade. They are confident in the notion that what they eat is prepared in a clean environment where preparation and the storage of perishables are done professionally.

More Food Consumed In More Retail Facilities

That confidence has, in Iowa, been well founded. Well, pretty well founded. The evidence is that the vast majority of professional food preparation in this state has been and continues to be based upon procedures called for in the food safety provisions of the Iowa Code. But, since the early to mid-1990s, concern has been creeping into the voices and judgments of those folks who most people are not aware of, food inspectors. This concern has nothing to do with mad cow disease. It does have to do with the ability of state and local food safety specialists to continue with a regular discipline of inspections of restaurants and grocery stores. Not only have the numbers of people who have a meal outside the home gone up, the number of food service establishments (i.e. restaurants) in Iowa has gone up. More food is consumed in more retail facilities. As both of these numbers climb, the greater the chances of "foodborne pathogens" (disease causing germs) existing in the food preparation unless there continues to be food preparation education and food safety inspections.

Since September 2001, another concern has been voiced by both food safety specialists and those involved in law enforcement and security. That concern is the possibility of domestic terrorism by means of infecting food supplies at the either the beginning of the food chain — in fields and feed lots — or at the consuming end in groceries or in retail food service.

In 1986, following significant state agency reorganization, the Iowa Department of Inspections and Appeals was created. A part of its mission was to have authority over food safety and inspections of restaurants and grocery stores. The new agency approached local governments and local boards of health about taking over a significant amount of the inspections and to offer the training for food preparation and storage. Local environmental health technicians would be responsible for the lion's share of inspections. In turn, local government public health offices which performed these tasks would collect the state food service permit fees. These fees, under this system, would make local government food inspection services self-sustaining. This new task for numerous boards of health would not involve spending general

By: Robert Mulqueen
ISAC Public Policy Analyst



fund dollars in order to administer this service. The small number of inspectors who worked directly for the Department of Inspections and Appeals would collect such permit fees on behalf of that agency.

Food Safety Legislation

By the mid-1990s, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration had enacted a new model food code based on, according to the Department of Inspections and Appeals (DIA), "scientifically developed factors focusing on public health and the prevention of food borne illness." Inspectors would, under the new model, "check to see how food is handled, stored, prepared and served." Legislation was drafted and introduced in the 1997 Iowa legislative session which would replace the food code which had existed since the late 1970s and replace it with the new FDA model. The measure didn't move that year and was reintroduced in 1998. The proposal would, again according to the DIA, mean that inspectors would no longer be regulators. "They now serve to provide 1) risk assessment of food establishments based on the types of foods served, the preparation steps these foods required, the volume of food, the population served, and previous compliance history, 2) monitor procedures to control potential hazards, 3) counsel and educate the establishment's staff." The 1998 bill was floor managed in the House of Representatives by then-Representative Gary Blodgett (R-Cerro Gordo County).

The second portion of the 1998 legislation dealt with what had become a shortcoming of the food safety system which had been in place for a decade, the food service permit fees. Every food service establishment had to purchase a permit from the state. That permit, frequently spotted by the public in a frame on the wall near the cash register, is that business's "bill of health" telling the consumer that it is licensed to sell food for consumption on the premises or for later preparation. The cost of that permit pays the local government which may be the food safety agent of the DIA. This fee would pay the cost of inspection and not the county general fund. But the permit fee had not changed since 1978.

The 1998 legislation was approved in the House of Representatives intact. However, a Senate amendment cut the proposed food permit fees in half. This was the final version. The good news was that the new FDA food code model would now be the Iowa Food Code. The bad news was that the financial shortfall at the local government level would continue and boards of supervisors would have to continue to subsidize food safety programs.

This session, the Legislature will have the opportunity to examine and approve new food safety legislation which would update the food code and would emphasize the economic security necessary to assure Iowans of quality local food safety programs. Let's do it right this time.

Labor Rules We Don't Know

FLSA

In March the U.S. Department of Labor is expected to finalize a new rule revising the 1938 Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). Once there is a final rule, ISAC will help counties familiarize themselves with its contents. For now, some counties are still having difficulty operating under the current FLSA. And many of the issues that arise now will still be issues under the new regulations.

The FLSA excludes elected county officials and persons appointed by elected county officials to serve on a policymaking level. Under the FLSA, employees are classified as either exempt or non-exempt. Exempt employees must have as their primary duty the performance of executive, administrative or professional duties, which are defined as follows:

- Executive duties: manages the enterprise in which he/she is employed or a recognized subdivision of the enterprise and regularly directs two or more other full-time employees;
- Administrative duties: performs non-manual work directly related to management policies or general operations of the employer and performs work requiring the exercise of discretion and independent judgment;
- Professional duties: performs work requiring a long course of specialized study and work that requires the consistent exercise of discretion and judgment. Includes professions such as teaching, registered nursing, law and accounting.

Exempt employees are not entitled to overtime pay even if they work more than 40 hours a week. The Department of Labor considers exemptions from the FLSA to be the exception, rather than the rule. And an employer must prove that the exemption is applicable.

Non-exempt employees would include secretaries, bookkeepers, receptionists, computer technicians, office help, clerks, custodians and maintenance workers. Non-exempt employees are entitled to time and a half for any hours over 40 per week. Law enforcement personnel are treated separately and have a longer work period than the normal seven day week.

Compensatory time at the rate of time and one-half for each overtime hour worked may be paid in lieu of overtime. Compensation practices that can get counties into difficulty include:

- Not paying for short lunch breaks: Counties are not required to pay non-exempt employees for meal periods that last 30 minutes or longer. But if employees only take shorter lunch breaks, say 20 minutes or less, and then return to work, then this break time must be counted towards the employee's time worked. Likewise, employees who work through their lunch can be a problem, as well as employees who eat at their desk. Employees must be completely removed from duty if the time is not to be counted as work time;
- Ignoring dual employment: Counties often fail to recognize that non-exempt employees who have more than one county position may be working over 40 hours when both jobs are taken into account. And for FLSA purposes, the county is considered one employer. It is not department-by-department;
- Permitting non-exempt employees to work more than 40

By: *David Vestal*

ISAC Deputy Director



hours: This happens when counties do not carefully track hours worked. For instance, if a clerk has to work late to cover an evening meeting, or an employee comes into work before anyone else because she rides to work with her spouse, those extra hours have to be counted as time worked;

- Permitting non-exempt employees to volunteer: Even if an employee volunteers to work the extra hours for free, they are counted towards the employee's time worked. However, if the employee is a "bona fide volunteer" the hours do not have to be added to the employee's regular work hours for overtime purposes. But allowing non-exempt employees to volunteer for any activity is risky;
- Failing to correctly identify compensable work time: Non-exempt employees must be paid for attendance at in-service training, coffee breaks of less than 20 minutes, work done at home, work-related travel time during the workday, and on-call time;
- Misclassifying supervisory staff: Office supervisors whose primary duties are performing the same work as the people as the people that they supervise are often misclassified as exempt employees, but they should be considered non-exempt if they primarily do non-exempt work;
- Misclassifying computer personnel: In order to be exempt, computer personnel must perform work requiring highly-specialized knowledge in systems analysis, programming or software engineering, and must consistently exercise discretion and judgment; and
- Assuming that "salaried" means "exempt": Classifying someone as a salaried employee does not necessarily mean that they are exempt. Even though an employee receives a salary, he or she can still be non-exempt, depending on the job duties involved.

Employers who violate the FLSA are potentially liable for back wages for two years, or three years if there is a willful violation. Here are some suggestions for county employers, and these will probably not change under the new rules: 1) make sure all county employees are correctly classified as either exempt or non-exempt; 2) maintain adequate records regarding wages and hours worked and preserve all records for at least three years; 3) have a written policy for all employees regarding the workweek, overtime and compensatory time; and 4) have ongoing training on FLSA issues.

It is impossible to thoroughly summarize the FLSA in 900 words. If you have FLSA issues, consult either your county attorney or the U.S. Department of Labor in Des Moines (515-284-4625).

Parting Ponderable:

"This woman has to be gotten to a hospital."

"A hospital—what is it?"

"A big building with patients, but that's not important right now."
Airplane! (1980)

case management

New CCMS Employee



Hello! I would like to introduce myself. I am Deb Eckerman, and I am the new County Case Management Specialist at ISAC. I am extremely excited to be working with ISAC, as I have had the privilege of utilizing their County Case Management Services for the past five years.

Prior to coming to CCMS, I was the Targeted Case Management and Supported Community Living Director at Golden Circle Behavioral Health in Polk County. I held that position for over two years, after being promoted from the supervisor's position that I had held for over two years. I began as a case manager in 1997, after being handed a caseload of 30 individuals and the Chapter 24 standards and told to run with it!

I earned my BA degree from the University of Northern Iowa and am a licensed social worker. Prior to my case management experience, I have worked in an Adult Day Program, a Community Support Program, as a Recreation Therapy Director, and in the County Care Facility (that dates me). I have been extremely lucky to have the invaluable experience all of these positions have given me.

By: Deb Eckerman

ISAC Case Management Specialist



I live in Ankeny and have lived there for almost 12 years. I have four children, ages 19, 16, 11 and 9. They keep me busy, between chauffeuring to various sports and school events, homework, cooking and endless laundry! If the four kids weren't enough, I also have two large dogs and two cats. I work to relax!

I look forward to a long tenure at CCMS and working with Deb, Dan, Linda and the entire ISAC staff. I would like to extend an extra thank you to Connie Wacht, whose position I am taking. She spent almost two weeks with me for initial training, and I appreciate her insight and professionalism, but most of all her patience and attitude. I'm sorry that she will not be staying on, but am extremely pleased for the opportunity to work with this agency.

health check

Calcium: Not Just Milk

What makes us change our behavior? That is a question that would earn you millions of dollars if you found an effective answer. Many wellness programs major goal is to get employees to lead more healthy lives, which consists mostly of behavior change.

A few months ago I was attending a wellness seminar and a vendor asked me to fill out a form that asked in what ways you add calcium to your daily diet. A simple question but I couldn't think of any. This, of course, was embarrassing. Then a few weeks ago, I went into get an x-ray of my wrist thinking I might have gotten a small fracture from a fall. Well, there was no fracture but the doctor mentioned that there was the beginning of osteoporosis as the "defining lines of the bones weren't as crisp as we like to see them."

There is no history of osteoporosis in my family so I hadn't really considered it a problem. Obviously, I was wrong. So, I began to do some research to begin some "behavior change." How much calcium do you need and how do you get it? Here are some of the results of my search.

- It is never too late to begin to replenish calcium.
- Requirements: ages 4-8, 800 mg; ages 9-18, 1,300 mg; 19-50, 1,000 mg; over 50 1,200 mg.
- If you don't get enough calcium in food your body will steal it back from your skeleton, thus bone loss. Bone loss begins at age 35 so it can be a real threat.

By: Sandy Longfellow

ISAC Administrative Assistant



- Regular weight bearing activity (exercise) helps bones retain calcium.
- Food high in calcium: milk, swiss cheese, yogurt, salmon, broccoli, figs, kale, ice cream (yea!), cottage cheese, eggs. Many foods are now enriched with calcium such as orange juice.
- Supplements: Change your diet first, but most women could use a supplement. There is some calcium in multivitamins but probably not enough. Tums EX is good at 300 mg each but don't go over the recommended dosage. There are also other chewable supplements.
- Can you get too much calcium? Government researchers have set a safe upper limit at 2,500 mg. a day but most people will never hit that.

Here's a bonus: When 230 women with PMS took 1,200 milligrams of calcium a day for three months, they reported symptoms such as pain, food craving, mood swings, and water retention had diminished. Low calcium intake may cause the body to secrete PMS-causing hormones!

Do your research and make some changes!

Meet the Board Members

Lee Duin has been the Assistant Director for the Polk County Treasurer for 23 years. His past experience was holding the office of Lyon County Treasurer for eight years. Lee was sworn in as a member of the ISAC Board of Directors on January 16, 2004.



Lee said, "As an ISAC board member, I look forward to the challenge of finding creative solutions to the difficult issues facing county government." He said he is enthusiastic about expanding his understanding of county government through interaction with other board members. "In addition, I believe government should diligently pursue technology in the advancement of customer service," said Lee. He hopes that ISAC will embrace and promote current and new technologies as a key component in achieving ISAC's mission to promote effective and responsible county government for the people of Iowa.

Lee is a member of the Iowa State County Treasurers Association serving two terms as president in the early 1980's and currently serving on the ISCTA Executive Board as ISAC Director. He is a member of the National Association of Counties, Our Lady's Immaculate Heart Church and the Knights of Columbus. He enjoys spending time with family, fishing, golfing (although he says he is lousy at it), cross country skiing, mountain hiking/backpacking, canoeing, traveling, and working out at the fitness center.

Family members include his wife Anne who has been employed by Qwest Communications for the past 25 years. His daughter Amy is an attorney at law in Denver, Colorado and her husband Brian is a pilot at Continental Airlines. His son Andrew is a mechanical engineer in Highlands Ranch, Colorado and his wife Eileen works with food promotions at the National Beef Council.

Spring School Information

ISAC's Spring School of Instruction & Business Meeting will be held March 17-19, 2004 at the Holiday Inn Airport in Des Moines, IA.

Visit www.iowacounties.org for information on:
 registration
 hotel accommodations
 entertainment
 affiliate agendas

ISAC Fall School 2004

By: **Jerri Noboa**

ISAC Meetings Administrator



Let's talk hotels, rates and reservations for ISAC's Fall School scheduled for November 14-16, 2004. We will be meeting in the Marriott/Downtown and the Renaissance Savery. Sleeping accommodation can be made at the Marriott, Savery or The Hotel Fort Des Moines (all connected by skywalk). The bulk of the meetings will be at the Marriott, i.e. general session, exhibitors and registration. Hospitality rooms will be available at all three hotels and still arranged through ISAC.

There is no need for a lottery system. Everyone can make their own reservations. The only exception being, ISAC will still make reservations for ISAC, CCMS and CRIS Board of Directors, disabled individuals and hospitality rooms. You can make your hotel reservation now. The Marriott reservations can be made on-line or by phone, the Savery and Hotel Fort Des Moines are not ready for the on-line registration yet, but you can make them by phone.

The Marriott and Savery are offering rates of \$69/flat with suites at \$175. The Hotel Fort Des Moines' rates are \$69/flat and suites at \$89. Here is how you contact them.

Marriott 700 Grand Ave, 515-245-5500 / 800-514-4681

State you want rooms under the Iowa State Association of Counties block or on-line. If you would like to make your reservations on-line visit ISAC's website (www.iowacounties.org) and click on 'Upcoming Events', then 'Fall School 2004.' A link has been made to the Marriott's reservation system. All reservations must be accompanied by a first night room deposit, guaranteed with a major credit card. You may opt to send in a claim form with a letter asking to have the room billed back to the county. This must be done before arrival date.

Renaissance Savery Hotel 401 Locust, 515-244-2151

State you want rooms under the Iowa State Association of Counties block. All reservations must be accompanied by a first night room deposit, guaranteed with a major credit card. You may opt to send in a claim form with a letter asking to have the room billed back to the county. This must be done before arrival date.

Hotel Fort Des Moines 1000 Walnut (10th & Walnut), 515-243-1161 / 800-531-1466

Ask for booking #3062. You need a credit card to hold the reservation or, they will accept purchase orders/claim forms, but this must be done before arrival date.

Visit ISAC's website (www.iowacounties.org) under 'Upcoming Events' for further information on ISAC's 2004 Fall School.

Iowa's NACo Representative: *Bob Paulson*

Sincere, loyal, thorough, soft spoken, and respected. The words used by NACo board members to describe Iowa's NACo board representative Bob Paulson, Winnebago County Auditor. Bob has represented Iowa on the NACo board since 1988. He is currently one of the longest serving NACo board members. "This has been a highlight in my career as far as being a county official," said Bob.



Bob Paulson, NACo Board Member

National issues have always been of interest to Bob, so when the ISAC board asked for Iowa county officials to apply for the NACo board position he sent in his application. With his experience as a former deputy sheriff and county auditor for several years, he was chosen to represent Iowa on a national level.

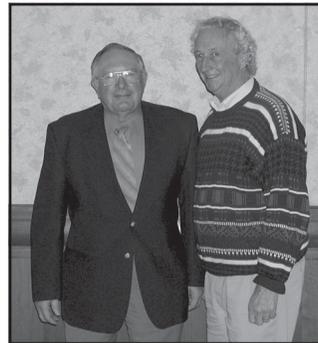
Duties of NACo Board Members

There are 120 members on the NACo Board of Directors. Their duties include: supervise, manage and control the business and property of the association; determine NACo's mission as identified by the members; monitor NACo's success in fulfilling its mission and ensure that NACo will be able to continue to fulfill its mission.

Bob said being a NACo board member does require a lot of time but most of the meetings are held on weekends. "I haven't had to miss as much office time as you would think," said Bob. There are four board meetings each year: a legislative conference in late February, spring meeting around Memorial Day in a western state, annual conference in July, and then a winter meeting normally held in the home state of the current NACo president. Bob has been active on NACo committees, and is currently Subcommittee Vice Chairman of the Agriculture and Rural Affairs Steering Committee.

Bob also serves on the ISAC Board of Directors and attends nine board meetings a year. With his work on the NACo board and ISAC he has become familiar with a much broader array of issues. Jane Halliburton, Story County Supervisor, has served with Bob for five years on the NACo board and the ISAC board. Jane serves on the NACo board and the ISAC board because of her position as Rural Action Caucus chair. She said, "I think Bob's work on the NACo board has been very important to his Iowa colleagues. Bob is by nature a very thorough person. He listens carefully and brings back long reports on what he has been experiencing on the national level and shares that with his colleagues in Iowa." She said Bob is very respected by his colleagues in county government. "Bob is always a very positive, pro-active person. He has been very well received and has gained confidence."

Bob has had the chance to meet county officials from all over the United States and has made friends with many county officials in the Midwest. He said, "It is the interaction with the state and county officials that makes the time worthwhile." Bob and W. Reed Madden, Commission President from Greene County, OH, were sworn in on the NACo board the same day. The two have traveled together, shared rooms at NACo events to save on expenses, and through the years their wives have become friends too. Reed said, "Bob is just a natural. You just want to put your arms around him, he is a teddy bear type guy." A highlight for Reed was in May 1999, when he and Bob were chosen to go to Europe and represent Wisconsin because of their activeness in the Midwest Conference of Counties.



Bob Paulson and Reed Madden at the December NACo meeting in Branson, MO.

"He has got to be a devoted employee. He is the person that gets the job accomplished. Quit is not a word with him."

The Growth of NACo

Bob feels NACo has evolved into a leading advocacy organization for county government issues, it has been strengthened financially and is more recognized. "It has risen to much more national prominence," said Bob. NACo is the only organization that represents counties nationally. There are 64 counties in Iowa that are members. Bob said, "I think when counties don't participate in NACo they are missing many of the issues. We have state issues that are important but we also have national issues that are equally important to our counties."

Bob said his highlights of being on the NACo board include being invited to the White House twice, once with Vice President Gore and President Clinton. "I feel that ISAC has given me a great privilege to represent the counties of Iowa on the National Board of Directors. It has been great learning experience."

Reed said, "He has represented ISAC very well. He is a farmer, he is a friend, he is a true county statesman."

NACo's Legislative Conference

NACo's Legislative Conferences will be held Feb. 27-March 2 at the Hilton Washington & Towers in Washington D.C. County officials are invited to hear presentations by key national leaders, receive legislative updates, network with other county officials and exchange information in a national forum in the nation's capital. Conference information can be found at www.naco.org.

counties in the spotlight

Ralph Kremer, Buchanan County Supervisor and ISAC Past President, was recognized at the annual dinner of the Iowa Northland Regional Council of Governments (INRCOG) as the group's 2003 Regional Citizen of the Year. Kremer was recognized for his work with Hawkeye Valley Area Agency on Aging, ISAC, Farm Bureau, INRCOG and other local and regional organizations. First elected to serve Buchanan County in 1973, Kremer has served INRCOG as vice chairman, four years as treasurer and five years as secretary. He is currently a member of INRCOG's executive committee and will serve as Chairman next year.

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communication

Make the Most of a Seminar

Are you getting the most of the seminars you attend? Maximize your investment by following these steps:

- **Outline your goals.** Why are you attending this seminar? What do you hope to learn? Review the seminar brochure and highlight topics of interest. Go with specific questions. If you don't hear the answers during the presentation, ask the speakers directly.
- **Keep an open mind.** You're likely to hear a number of new ideas, some of which would require change to implement. Be receptive to these suggestions.
- **Join in.** The more you commit yourself to participating in the seminar, the more you will gain. Answer questions posed by the presenter, participate in exercises and offer your expertise.
- **Write a summary.** Review your notes soon after you return to your office while they're still fresh in your mind and prepare a report. That will help you retain the information, and you'll always have it to review later.
- **Share what you've learned.** If you benefited from the seminar, your colleagues will too. Conduct a mini-seminar for them.

(Taken from Communications Briefings, October 2003)

Encourage Quiet Staffers

Do certain employees make the majority of the suggestions at staff meetings, while others shrink in the background? Encouraging people to contribute equally is tough because some are naturally more assertive than others. Use these techniques to balance employees' participation:

- **Make eye contact with employees who participate less.** Look at them and ask if anyone else has a comment or question. Raise your eyebrow inquiringly, but don't call them by name.

- **Direct specific questions to quieter individuals**, but inform them in advance. The technique should make shy staffers feel more comfortable participating.
- **Ask shy members to present information to the group.** Just make sure to give them plenty of time to prepare.
- Require an infrequent participator to help you by recording ideas on a flip chart. That builds engagement.

(Taken from Communication Briefings, January 2004)

Keep Meetings Under Control

If your meetings tend to stray from the agenda or grind to a complete halt, learn how to retain control. The following phrases will keep the meeting moving along:

- "Are we getting off track?" Ask the group to help refocus the discussion.
- "So what you're saying is..." Reflect or clarify what's just been said when you suspect the group's getting stuck or going in circles. This can help redirect the conversation.
- "Your turn first, then yours." Part of your job is maintaining order, so make sure everyone is heard.
- "What have we decided?" Summarize periodically, as well as at the meeting's end. This is critical for clear, productive communication.

(Taken from Communications Briefings, October 2003)

Sarcastic Remarks

Don't let co-workers off the hook when they make sarcastic remarks. Respond with: "When you say that, what are you really trying to say?" Remember that the more dignified and professional you are, the more powerful your question becomes.

(Taken from Communications Briefings, October 2003)

Community Health Centers Providing Safety Net

“Of all the forms of inequality, injustice in health care is the most shocking and inhuman.” - Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Although Dr. King’s comment on health care disparities was made nearly 40 years ago, inequities in access to health care persist in Iowa and throughout the country. A recent survey by the Kaiser Foundation revealed the third consecutive year of double-digit increases in the cost of health insurance, with the Midwest region experiencing a 13.8% increase in 2002. At the same time, the U.S. Census Bureau reported the number of uninsured in the U.S. – and in Iowa – continues to rise, largely due to the increasing cost of health insurance, employers passing on those cost increases to their employees, and the rise in unemployment.

While this information forecasts a less than promising future for health care, community health centers (CHCs) are helping cities and counties ensure quality, affordable health care services for everyone in their area – particularly the uninsured and underinsured.

The first CHCs opened its doors in 1965 in Boston to deliver health care services in a unique way – by giving community members a voice in deciding how their health care would be delivered. Today, CHCs serve as the medical home for 14 million Americans through more than 3,000 clinic sites, including seven centers in Iowa located in Burlington, Davenport, Des Moines, Council Bluffs, Ottumwa, Sioux City, and Waterloo, as well as additional satellite clinics in Keokuk, Marshalltown, and Wapello.

CHCs are federally-funded ‘safety net’ providers located in areas designated as medically underserved, typically distressed inner-city neighborhoods and isolated rural communities that face significant barriers to health care delivery, such as an inadequate number of providers and lack of transportation to medical services.

Through a unique service delivery model, CHCs provide comprehensive primary, preventive, oral, and mental health care, as well as substance abuse treatment and other enabling services, such as translation and transportation, to their patients. While the CHC patient population consists primarily of uninsured or publicly insured individuals, their services are available to all community members regardless of income or ability to pay. With the majority of each CHC governing board comprised of center users, CHCs are able to better tailor their services to meet the specific needs of their community; thereby making a considerable impact on the overall well-being of both patients and the community.

Impact of CHCs

In 2002, Iowa CHCs provided care for more than 91,000 patients, with the majority of those being individuals with no insurance (43%) and those utilizing Medicaid, Medicare, or other public insurance (37%). Several studies show that CHCs have a considerable impact through cost savings, the delivery of quality

By: Theodore J. Boesen, Jr.

Exec. Director, Iowa/Nebraska Primary Care Association

care, and in addressing health disparities.

Based on national data, the National Association of Community Health Centers (NACHC) projects Iowa CHCs save the state nearly \$6 million annually in Medicaid expenditures through a reduction in specialty care referrals and fewer hospital admissions. It is further estimated increased usage of CHC services in Iowa would result in savings of nearly \$68 million through a reduction in unnecessary emergency room visits.

In addition to providing cost savings, CHCs have proven to provide quality care to their patients. Studies reported in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* and the *Journal of Public Health Management Practice* show that CHCs consistently score at or near the highest levels in quality assessment measures and score the highest among all health care providers for proportion of pediatric patients receiving preventive services.

CHCs have also made a significant impact on improving health outcomes for chronic conditions among the medically vulnerable through their participation in the Health Disparities Collaboratives. This nation-wide initiative combines the active involvement of the patient in her/his own care with the use of evidence-based practice guidelines and protocols that apply the most current knowledge to the patient’s care. Participating CHCs share their clinical information with each other through a registry, which helps the care team guide the course of treatment, anticipate problems, and track progress. CHCs are currently participating in collaboratives that address diabetes, cardiovascular disease, asthma, depression, cancer, and HIV with the goal of extending the model to all chronic diseases.

The Future of CHCs

President Bush, with the support of Congress, is aggressively pursuing the expansion of CHCs throughout the country. This initiative includes increasing funding for new and expanded CHCs by \$2.2 billion through fiscal year 2006. As part of this initiative, several Iowa communities – including Cedar Rapids, Dubuque, Decatur County, Denison, Fort Dodge, Muscatine, Perry, Remsen, and Storm Lake – are exploring the possibility of establishing a CHC.

While we recognize that resources are scarce, there are opportunities for local governments to become involved in community health center efforts. First, by advocating at the state level to develop policy options that will improve health care for all Iowans. Second, by identifying partnering opportunities to establish new centers or expand existing centers.

By supporting community health center efforts in your area and throughout the state, we can achieve greater equality in health care access for all Iowans.

To learn more about community health centers in your area or explore opportunities to establish a CHC in your community, contact the Iowa/Nebraska Primary Care Association at 515-244-9610 or ianepca@aol.com.

Midstates Community Development Conference

The Midstates Conference, a joint Iowa Nebraska - South Dakota community development conference will be held March 23, 2004 at the Marina Inn in South Sioux City, Neb. The focus of the one-day program is advancing community and rural development in the three state region. Debi Durham, president of the Siouxland Chamber and The Siouxland Initiative, will present "Partnering Without Borders for Economic Development." A special afternoon program, "Finding YES," presented by David Landis, will give participants key tools to work more effectively with other citizens on local community development projects.

Twelve workshops on successful community development efforts, including entrepreneurship, citizen involvement, raising private funds for public good, and using new technologies for economic development will be presented by local leaders who were involved in these efforts. The conference has been planned by Iowa State University Extension and USDA Rural Development, who are working with many agencies and organizations in the three state area.

Registrations are due by March 15. A conference program and registration form are available on ISAC's website (www.iowacounties.org) under 'Upcoming Events.' For more information, call Alan Vandehaar, ISU Extension, at 712-276-2157.

in memory

John Torkelson, **Hancock County** Supervisor, passed away Saturday, December 27th at his home in Forest City at the age of 74. He had been a county supervisor for 13 years. John M. Torkelson was born in Thompson, Iowa on August 13, 1929, the son of Osmund and Bessie (Olson) Torkelson. He received his education in rural school near his home. John served in the US Army during the Korean Conflict. Following his discharge from the service he returned home and began farming and working at the Torkelson Gravel and Excavating business. He married Bonnie Olson on June 5, 1965 in Hinkley, MN. The couple made their home on a farm southeast of Forest City. His wife, Bonnie and four children survive John. Cards and notes of condolences may be sent to the following address: Mrs. John Torkelson, 2085 River Road, Forest City, IA 50436

associate member highlights

Midland GIS Solutions

Midland GIS Solutions is a full-service Geographic Information System (GIS) development, implementation, maintenance, and consulting company providing digital GIS mapping programs to cities, counties, regional governments, universities, non-profit organizations, and private corporations throughout Missouri, Iowa, Nebraska, and Kansas. Midland GIS Solutions, developed under the corporate structure of Midland Engineering, Inc., a full-service surveying and mapping company operating throughout the four-state region for nearly 30 years, and manages projects across Missouri with a growing number of projects extending into Iowa, Nebraska, and Kansas.

In Iowa, Midland GIS Solutions is currently developing a full GIS mapping program for Clarke County, as well as a regional GIS program for Clarke Electric Cooperative. The com-

pany has assisted several cities in the state with digital mapping services and is currently developing or assisting with GIS development and maintenance in numerous counties and cities throughout the region. Owned and operated by Registered Land Surveyors, Midland GIS Solutions is quickly developing a reputation among their clients for delivering superior GIS mapping services efficiently and affordably, offering quality, experience, and consistency, and following up on each project.

GIS technology, while an extremely beneficial mapping tool for county assessors, has far-reaching geographic management capabilities throughout county government. Whether mapping land use, managing county resources such as roads and bridges, predicting flood potential, mapping utility networks, analyzing demographics, assisting with emergency management issues, or any of many other potential applications, GIS technology brings all of this data quickly and accurately directly to your desktop computer.

An associate member of the Iowa State Association of Counties, Midland GIS Solutions strongly believes in the potential benefits a GIS mapping program can offer to county governments in Iowa and welcomes the opportunity to demonstrate their program to the Association's members. Contact Midland GIS Solutions at 877-375-8633 or www.midlandgis.com.



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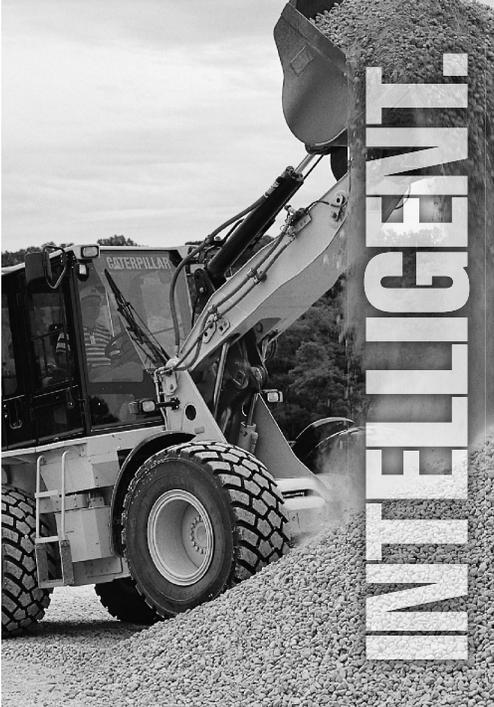
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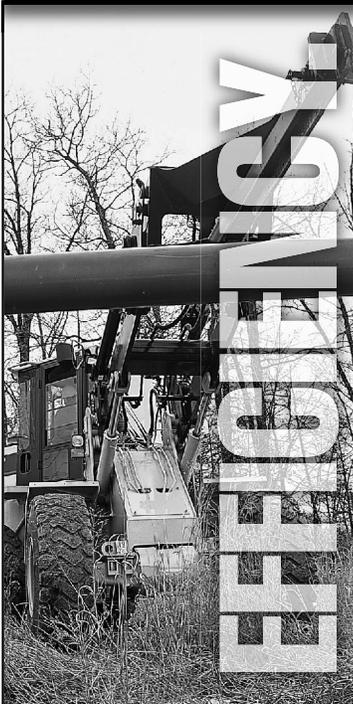
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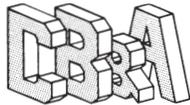
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calendar

FEBRUARY

- 4 CCMS NW Support Group
(Season's Center for MH, Spencer)
- 5 ISAC Executive Committee Meeting
(ISAC Office)
- 8-11 Sheriffs & Deputies Patrol School
(Four Points Sheraton, DM)
- 9-10 Introduction to ArcSDE Using ArcInfo 8
(location TBA)
- 11-12 Introduction to ArcSDE Using ArcInfo 8
(location TBA)
- 12 Engineers Computer Committee (ISAC Office)
- 12-13 ISAC Board of Directors (ISAC Office)
- 19 Scholarship Interviews (ISAC Office)
- 19 CCMS East Support Group
(Coral Ridge Mall, Coralville)
- 20 Engineers Executive Board (ISAC Office)
- 23 Community Services Legislative (ISAC Office)
- 26 Scholarship Interviews Snow Day
(ISAC Office)
- 27 - Mar. 2 NACo Legislative Conference
(Washington D.C.)

- 17 CCMS Board of Directors
(Holiday Inn Airport, DM)
- 17-19 ISAC Spring School (Holiday Inn Airport, DM)
- 25 Community Services Legislative (ISAC Office)
- 30-31 Iowa Environmental Health Assn. Annual Meeting
(Scheman Center, Ames)

APRIL

- 8 Community Services Legislative (ISAC Office)
- 15 ISAC Board of Directors/IMWCA, ICAP & League Boards Picnic (Jester Park)
- 16 ISAC Board of Directors (ISAC Office)
- 20 CCMS Administrators (location TBA)
- 21 CCMS Cost Report Training (location TBA)
- 22 CCMS Support Staff Training (location TBA)
- 25-28 Sheriffs & Deputies Civil School
(Holiday Inn Airport, DM)

MAY

- 5-6 CCMS Advanced Case Manager
(location TBA)
- 12-14 Treasurers Statewide Meeting (Dubuque)
- 20 Engineers Executive Board (ISAC Office)

MARCH

- 4 CCMS Central Supervisors Support Group
(ISAC Office)
- 10-11 CCMS Fundamentals of Case Management
(Baymont Conference Center, DM)
- 11 Community Services Legislative (ISAC Office)
- 15 IPAIT (ISAC Office)

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.

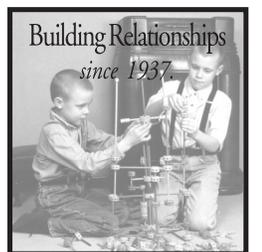
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