

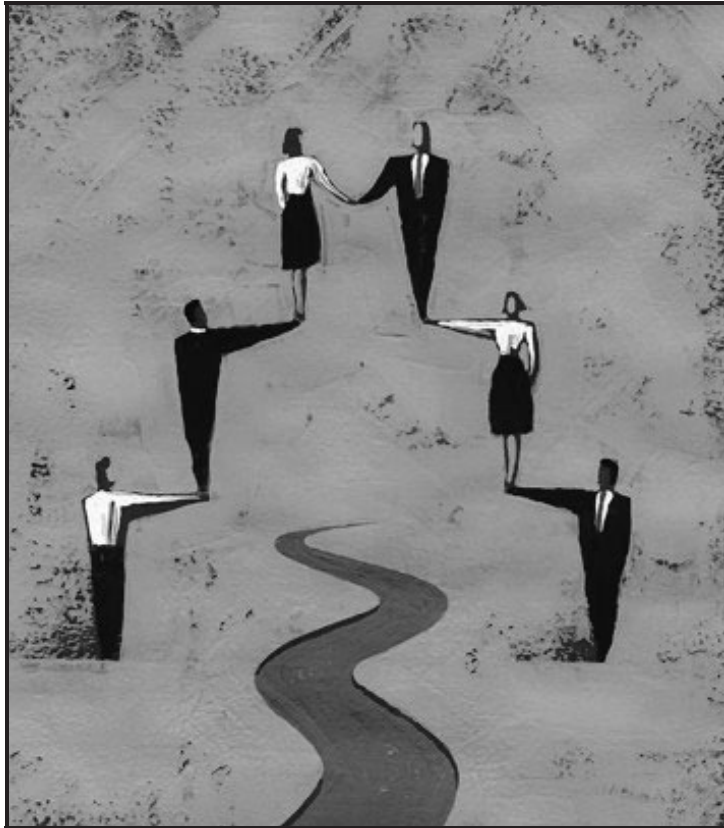
# The Iowa County



**Property Values Are Increasing.  
Shouldn't We Be Celebrating?**

June 2005

# Experience.



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# The Iowa County

June 2005 \* Volume 34, Number 6

<b>Property Taxes</b>	4-5
<b>Capitol Comments</b> <i>John Easter</i>	6
<b>Legal Briefs</b> <i>David Vestal</i>	7
<b>Health Check</b> <i>Sandy Longfellow</i>	8
<b>Technology Center</b> <i>Tammy Norman</i>	8
<b>Case Management</b> <i>Deborah Westvold</i>	9
<b>Counties in the Spotlight</b>	10-12
<b>Associate Member Highlights</b>	13
<b>ISAC Brief</b>	13-15
<b>NACo News</b>	16
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	17
<b>Calendar of Events</b>	23

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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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## ASSESS THIS:

### Why You Should Stop Whining and Learn to Love the Property Tax

By: David Brunori, author and research professor

The devastating news has hit again, as it does around this time every few years. Sometimes, the media deliver it somberly, like casualty reports from a distant battlefield, with photo spreads of depressed Americans shaking their heads in despair. Other times, it's delivered like a call to arms, quoting angry citizens demanding that their government do something to alleviate their suffering.

No, it's not news of war, disease, poverty or crime. The terrible news is that . . . property values are increasing. That's right. This collective unhappiness is a reaction to the property tax assessments going out around the area, informing people that - gasp! - their houses are worth more. Mine certainly is. The assessed value on my house in Northern Virginia is up some 70% over what it was three years ago.

I, for one, am celebrating. But so many other people seem suddenly to have forgotten that this is a good thing. I know that lots of us don't view purchasing a home the same way we view investing in the stock market, but the economic effect is just the same. If you buy a house for \$250,000 and it doubles in value in a couple of years, you've just made a remarkable return on your investment. If it doubles again, you could be a millionaire. You can sell your house for a substantial (and, for most Americans, a tax-free) profit. You can borrow against it on favorable terms. You can leave a substantial inheritance to your loved ones. You are - in short - rich.

Yet this decidedly good news is invariably spun into a very depressing tale, with a familiar, dreaded villain: the property tax. Once those assessments come out, all we can talk about is how we'll have to shell out more for property taxes. Yes, there are some homeowners, particularly older ones on a fixed income, who struggle to absorb a bigger tax bill. But that's why many

state have caps of various sorts to help ease their pain.

The rest of us, amid our complaining, lose all focus on the upside. Yet our fear and loathing of the property tax is largely unwarranted - it is, in fact, the ideal way to raise money for local government services.

#### The Unpopular Way of Raising Revenue

Unfortunately, not everyone agrees. The property tax has long been among the most unpopular ways of raising revenue, largely because it's so visible. You can see how much your assessment has risen each year, and how much you'll have to pay. If you've paid off your mortgage and no longer pay your property tax in monthly installments, you get a large tax bill every year - lots of Americans used to get them right before the holiday gift-giving season. Who appreciates that? And the system was plagued for much of the last century by shoddy administration, which meant that identical houses were sometimes assigned vastly different values. Though most of those problems have long since been addressed, the property tax remains an object of public scorn.

But it shouldn't. We all want well-staffed police and fire departments, well-paved roads, regular trash collection and, above all, good schools. The property tax is the one tax that provides a stable, continuous stream of revenue to localities to ensure that these services are adequately funded. To me, its visibility is a virtue - even if it's often painful. Homeowners know exactly what they're paying out, and they can see what they get in return. In this regard, the property tax is capitalized into your housing values; that is, your property's value goes up because of the services being provided as a result of the taxes you pay on your property. The correlation between good public services and high property values is no coincidence. Just ask any real estate agent.

#### Variations In Other States

From state to state, there are wide variations in the taxes levied by local governments. New York and Connecticut have among the highest per capita state and local tax burdens in the country. Alabama and South Carolina have among the lowest. Guess what? New York and Connecticut spend the most money per capita on public services, while Alabama and South Carolina spend the least. Most people choose where they want to live. I live in Fairfax County [Va.], and I pay a lot in property taxes, but we have one of the best public school systems in the nation, and safe streets. I could move to a place with lower taxes, but I like what I'm getting for my money. So do lots of other folks. Despite all the grumbling about property taxes, we don't see a trail of vans heading out of the D.C. area to lower-tax - and lower public service - environments.

The property tax is simple to administer and to pay. We

*The property tax is the one tax that provides a stable, continuous stream of revenue to localities to ensure that these services are adequately funded. To me, its visibility is a virtue - even if it's often painful.*

don't spend a lot of time on it. There are no forms to file, and no accountants need be hired. And it can't be evaded. This helps minimize the government's administrative costs. But honest taxpayers should appreciate it as well.

We rarely think of these virtues, though. Instead, opponents continue to demonize the tax and call for more limitations on local governments' ability to levy it.

But look at the results of that approach. Lots of states have decimated their property tax systems. California's Proposition 13, which was passed in 1978, was the granddaddy of the movement to restrict the tax. On its heels, 43 more states enacted some form of property tax limitation. While politically popular, the results in California have been devastating for local government, and particularly hard on the state's once-excellent public school system. After Proposition 13 came into force, per pupil spending in the state, usually a good measure of school quality, fell from fifth in the nation to 40th. Test scores dropped and private school attendance skyrocketed.

There is no economic justification for limiting property tax rates and assessments. Such limits keep revenue artificially low and merely shift the burden of paying for government to other types of taxes, such as state income and sales taxes. Indeed, without a strong property tax, local governments are at the mercy of state (or in the case of the District [of Columbia], federal) aid to pay for fundamental services, which virtually guarantees that local government services will be underfunded.

The politicians in Richmond [Va.] and Annapolis [Md.], no matter how well-meaning, simply won't spend as much as we would like on our local services. We should pay for them ourselves. And, lest we forget, all state and federal money comes with strings attached. The lawmakers who give local governments money also like to tell them how to spend it.

The next reaction to rising property taxes is usually to propose larger homestead exemptions, which allow homeowners to exempt a portion of the value of their residences from taxation. But larger homestead exemptions, of the type that Virginia legislators are proposing, do nothing but reduce local tax revenue and provide relief to rich folks living in mansions along the Potomac, who get the tax relief from homestead exemptions just like everybody else, even though they probably don't need it.

## Improvement In The Property Tax System

All this said, I do concede that there remains a problem with the property tax: its effect on low- and fixed-income homeowners. Rapidly increasing real estate values often mean that property tax burdens rise faster than income. Low-income homeowners and those on pensions or other fixed incomes do struggle to pay the property tax.

While Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia all offer some form of tax relief for elderly and low-income taxpayers, the focus at assessment time is rarely on helping those who need it most. And more relief can be provided without dismantling the local public finance system.

Governments, for instance, can enact circuit breakers, which limit property tax liabilities to a certain percentage of one's income. The income thresholds and reduction limits vary from state to state, but circuit breakers generally target those who

need help the most. In the District, for instance, only those earning \$20,000 a year or less qualify for the program.

There's lots more that can be done. The states and the District could provide property tax rebates to low-income homeowners, in the form of either income tax credits - as Maryland, for one, provides - or a check. Virginia and Maryland could also make use of deferral programs like those used by 24 states and the District. These programs allow senior citizens to defer payment on property taxes until their homes are sold, at which time the accrued taxes are paid out of the sale proceeds. I know, if they die before selling their homes, their heirs will no doubt complain about the property taxes. But at least there would be no threat of Grandma being forced to sell her house to pay them. The problem with deferrals in the District and elsewhere is that most senior citizens don't know about them and so don't apply for them.

If we help the poor and elderly meet their property tax burdens, all legitimate complaints about the property tax dissolve. For all of you who still have a problem with your taxes, there are three choices.

You can sit back and think about what you're getting for your tax dollars. Are the schools good? Is the snow plowed? Does someone answer the phone when you dial 911? You just may be convinced that the price of your civilization is not terribly high.

Still unhappy? Then write your local politicians and ask them to lower the tax rate. Just because assessments are going up doesn't mean the government has to collect more taxes. Call them up and see if they'll lower the rate. If enough people call, maybe they will.

Alternatively, move to a place that has a smaller tax burden and fewer government services.

*There is no economic justification for limiting property tax rates and assessments. Such limits keep revenue artificially low and merely shift the burden of paying for government to other types of taxes...*

*This article is reprinted with permission from the Feb. 13 issue of The Washington Post. David Brunori, a contributing editor to State Tax Notes magazine and a research professor of public policy at George Washington University, is the author of several books on state and local tax policy. You may reach him at [dbrunori@tax.org](mailto:dbrunori@tax.org).*

# capitol comments

## Top Priorities

What will be the final outcome for the top four ISAC legislative priorities this legislative session? The priorities recommended by the ISAC Board of Directors and approved by the membership at the 2004 ISAC Annual Conference are property tax reform, Secondary Road Fund Distribution Advisory Committee (SRFDAC) recommendations, technical elections legislation and involuntary commitments. As of this writing, the session has gone well beyond the anticipated closure date of April 29, 2005. While the final outcome is still uncertain, here is what I anticipate will happen on each of these issues.

### Property Tax Reform

During the 2004 interim, ISAC and the Iowa League of Cities joined together to create a plan for property tax reform to bring to the General Assembly. This comprehensive package was designed to make the system more simple, equitable, stable and fair. The areas addressed included assessments and valuations, county and city budgets and tax systems, and a revenue limitation to replace the current levy limits. The measure removed local governments from the complicated system of state property tax credits and repealed the "rollback" in order to reduce the disparity between classes of property.

Legislation reflecting the entire proposal was introduced in the Senate as SSB 1240 and in the House of Representatives as HSB 293. While these bills were never moved out of subcommittee in either chamber, ISAC and the League established strong credibility by bringing forth this comprehensive approach. Property tax received a great deal of attention in the Governor's Task Force on Local Governance. One subcommittee was charged with evaluating the total system and making recommendations for property tax reform. For most of the session, legislative attention on property tax issues was focused on this subcommittee. Our local government plan was presented here along with many other proposals. In the end, the subcommittee was not able to reach consensus on any particular legislative proposal.

Numerous other property tax bills were introduced throughout the session. Most offered solutions to only specific parts of the system. Some contained parts of the ISAC/League plan. The House and Senate each approved bills that did not include features of the ISAC/League plan, but as of this writing, neither have been considered in the opposite house.

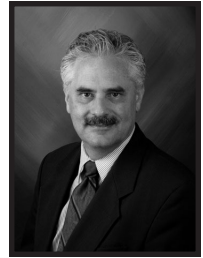
### SRFDAC

HF 674 reflects the recommendation by the secondary road fund distribution advisory committee (SRFDAC). This measure changes the methodology for distribution of the county share of the road use tax fund. Over the years, the Quadrennial Needs Study, used by the Iowa Department of Transportation (DOT) as the basis for distribution, has become increasingly inefficient. County allocations became unpredictable. Drastic swings in county funding were causing budget and planning problems for supervisors and engineers, so a new and more predictable system became necessary.

In the 2002 legislative session, SF 2192 directed that

By: **John Easter**

ISAC Director of  
Intergovernmental Affairs



SRFDAC be established to consider methodologies for distribution of secondary road and farm-to-market funds among counties, and to make recommendations to the General Assembly. The committee was comprised of members appointed by the supervisors' and engineers' associations and the DOT. Members were from small, medium and large counties. A new "Factor Breakdown Method" was recommended by SRFDAC to better distribute road use tax funds among counties. The proposal includes a five-year phase-in period. To date, 89 counties have affirmatively adopted resolutions in support for this plan, while only six counties oppose the plan. The remaining counties have taken a position of conditional support or no position at all.

This legislation is currently pending before Governor Vilsack for his signature. He is expected to sign it into law.

### Technical Elections Legislation

HF 644 was a multi-part package containing many non-controversial changes to Iowa elections laws to help make the process operate more efficiently and cost-effectively. It has been introduced over the last few years but has always become a vehicle for other election amendments. This year was no exception.

From the beginning of this year, ISAC and the county auditors have requested that any amendments that are controversial be left out of the bill. Throughout the session, lawmakers fought back inclinations to politicize the bill with controversial amendments. But in the end, the Senate added the Voter Verified Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) at the insistence of the Secretary of State and others. Even though it was well known around the Capitol that the House would not bring the bill up for consideration with VVPAT in there, it was added anyway and HF 644 died. Passage of HF 644 was so close, yet so far away.

### Involuntary Commitments

Mental health and substance abuse placements are becoming more difficult to find due to the state decreasing the number of beds at the four mental health institutes. Since 1999, available state beds have decreased by 40%, while private psychiatric beds have decreased by 60 beds. Because of these conditions, there is continued pressure to shift the responsibility for finding placements for persons committed under Iowa Code chapter 229 from the state to the counties. Accordingly, ISAC has been working to clarify that the finding of placements is the state's responsibility unless a solution is mutually agreed upon at the local level.

ISAC was not able to move this issue forward, however, we were able to kill HF 280, which would have shifted the responsibility for such placements to the counties. We remain at status quo on this issue. There is nothing in the Code that requires counties to accept the responsibility for finding beds for persons being committed to a hospital for psychiatric care.

## Lawsuit Provides Guidance Regarding County Contracts

### Valid Contracts

Contracts signed by elected county officials are not valid unless they are ratified by the board of supervisors. This is the important lesson from a recent federal district court decision in *Van Arkel v. Warren County*.

Jim Van Arkel was hired as budget director by Warren County Auditor Bev Dickerson in 1991. He signed an employment contract. Later, the Warren County Board of Supervisors approved a resolution which said in part, "Be it resolved that upon the recommendation of Beverly Dickerson...James Van Arkel will be hired as a CPA effective September 1, 1991..."

In 1996, Van Arkel was appointed to the consolidated position of assistant to the board of supervisors and county budget director. In 1998, Bev Dickerson retired and was replaced as county auditor by Traci VanderLinden. Over time VanderLinden was approached by multiple department heads with complaints about Van Arkel. On April 15, 2002, VanderLinden fired Van Arkel.

Van Arkel sued in federal court, alleging breach of contract and violation of the employment requirements of Iowa Code chapter 331. In this ruling, both sides were seeking summary judgment, desiring to have the lawsuit resolved prior to trial.

Warren County argued that Van Arkel's employment contract was invalid because it was never approved by the Board of Supervisors. The Supervisors adopted a resolution approving Van Arkel's hiring, but the resolution did not specifically refer to the employment contract. That, argued Warren County, would make all of the specific terms in the employment contract void.

But didn't the county auditor's signature make the employment contract legally binding? The federal judge said no. He relied on *Fouke v. Jackson County*, 51 N.W.2d 71 (Iowa 1892) for the proposition that county auditors do not have the authority to bind the county because "it is the board alone, acting officially, that can bind the county by express contract."

The judge pointed out that Iowa Code §331.301(2) provides that "the power of a county is vested in the board of supervisors, and a duty of a county shall be performed by or under the direction of the board, except as otherwise provided by law." Then he pointed out that, under Iowa Code §331.302(1), a board of supervisors can exercise its power "only by the passage of a motion, a resolution, an amendment or an ordinance."

The judge said that the Board resolution "affirming Van Arkel's employment makes no mention whatsoever of the written agreement." Because of this oversight, the judge ruled that the contract was void due to "the lack of express language referencing and ratifying" Van Arkel's contract.

In other words, despite the employment contract signed by the auditor, the judge ruled that Van Arkel had no binding contract with Warren County. Dickerson, the Court said, had no authority to bind Warren County. This should be an impor-

By: David Vestal

ISAC General Counsel



tant message to all elected officials: in order for a contract to be valid, it must be formally ratified by the board of supervisors.

There are exceptions to this rule. But unless you are sure that one of the exceptions applies, the assumption should be that every contract needs to be ratified by the board of supervisors. Any contract entered into without a formal motion or resolution of the board of supervisors is void.

Now you have gotten this message twice. The Iowa Supreme Court said just about exactly the same thing in the 2003 case of *Akron v. Akron Westfield Cmty. Sch. Dist.*, which was discussed in this column in May 2003.

### Removal

There are other important issues raised in the 39-page *Van Arkel* decision. For instance, he alleged that the County did not follow the requirements in Iowa Code §331.321(3), because he was not notified of his termination by certified mail, he was not given specific reasons why he was fired, and he was not given a post-termination hearing. But the Court ruled that these requirements only apply to those who are terminated from one of the 25 specific positions listed in Iowa Code §331.321(1), such as medical examiner and weed commissioner. Since neither assistant to the board of supervisors or budget director are among the 25 positions, the removal requirements did not apply.

### Progressive Discipline

Van Arkel also argued that the policy in effect when he was hired in 1991 said that county employment was "terminable at any time, with cause shown by the Employer..." The letter he received only said that he was fired for "irreconcilable difference in management philosophies," and he argued that this does not constitute a "for cause" termination.

The County responded that the applicable personnel policy should be the one in effect when he was fired in 2001, and pointed to clear language in that policy that said that employees are at-will.

The Court held that the policy in existence at the time of the firing was the controlling policy. In examining the 2001 policy, the Court said that it contains "no provision requiring an employee be fired 'for cause.'" The judge granted the County's motion for summary judgment and threw out all of Van Arkel's claims.

**Parting Ponderable:** If you need further evidence that this world is going nuts, according to the Social Security Administration website here are some of the cutting-edge boys names that are currently more popular than traditional names like Robert, Steven and Thomas: Caleb, Gabriel, Logan and Tyler.

# health check

## Goal Power

J.C. Penney once said, “Give me a stock clerk with a goal and I’ll give you a man who will make history. Give me a man with no goals and I’ll give you a stock clerk.” Success, in anything, requires goals. Someone else said, “Failure is not reaching your goal, but in having no goal to reach.”

Many times, I think we get into a routine and get comfortable. We just continue to do day after day what we have always done. Maybe we need to believe that anything is possible and sit down and apply this thought to our lives.

How do you go about achieving goals? Here are some important steps:

- **Write It Down.** Be sure each goal is specific, measurable and has a deadline.
- **List Benefits.** Exactly why should I have this goal? How will I benefit personally?
- **Analyze your situation.** What are your strengths and weaknesses? Is there anyone that can help you with your goal?
- **Obstacles and Risks.** Identify everything that could prevent you from reaching your goal.
- **The Plan.** Now you have the information you need, make your action plan. What are you going to do?
- **Deadline.** Always have a deadline. It is not written in stone.

By: **Sandy Longfellow**

ISAC Administrative Assistant

You might have to adjust it, but be aware of your deadline.

- **Celebrate.** When you reach your goal, pat yourself on the back. Feel good about what you have accomplished and share your joy!

Here also are a few *myths* concerning goals provided by [www.thegoalguy.com](http://www.thegoalguy.com).

#1. *Goal setting is not that important.* Reality: Success requires goals – end of story! A life of meaning needs goals and specific plans to achieve them. Success does not happen by accident.

#2. *Goals don’t need to be written.* Reality: Written goals clarify thinking, objectify their potential and reinforce commitment. Keep them in your head. The palest ink is better than the strongest memory. Goals once out of sight soon become goals out of mind!

#3. *A good plan is all you need to be successful.* Reality: Success is active, not passive. All plans require action. Preparation is not substitute for action. Commit to the philosophy of implement now – perfect later.

Don’t be afraid to succeed. Get your goal plan started. Feel the satisfaction of accomplishment!



# technology center

## Microsoft’s Online Templates

**Q: I would like to create an employee time sheet in Word, do you have any suggestions?**

A: I recommend using Microsoft’s Office online templates. They are extremely simple to use and you are able to modify them to fit your needs. To access the Microsoft online templates, you can go to the following address <http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/default.aspx> and click on “Templates”, under “Microsoft Office Programs” select “Word” and several pages of templates will be revealed, one of them will be entitled “Time Sheet.” You can also access these templates by opening Word, selecting “File”, “New” and from the popup menu that appears on the right side bar select “Templates on Office Online.” Once the webpage is opened you can surf to the templates by clicking under “Microsoft Office Programs” and selecting “Word.” (Note: I utilize Office 2003; your version of Word may differ slightly.)

Once you select a template just click on the “Download” button and save it onto your computer. Each template alerts you to the version of Word that you must have to enable you to utilize the template properly. Now that you have saved the template onto your computer, you are free to adapt it to fit your purposes. You are able to delete text or insert images. Once completed you

By: **Tammy Norman**

ISAC Technical  
Services Coordinator

will need to save it onto your computer or network drive as a template, so that you or others will be able to access the modified version of this form. To save as a template, you will need to perform a “Save” as you do any other document, except from under “Save as type” select “Document Template”, this newly created form is now a Word template. In the future you will be able to retrieve this document by selecting “File”, “New” and “Templates on my computer.” (Note: make sure that you have modified your computer to pull these templates from the location you are saving them to. You can do this by selecting “Tools”, “Options”, “File Locations”, “Workgroup Templates” and click on the “Modify” button and browse to the location you are saving these new templates and click “OK.”)

**Website Note:** Register on-line for the June ISAC District Legislative Workshops ([www.iowacounties.org](http://www.iowacounties.org)). Please forward any items that you would like addressed in this column to my attention at [tnorman@iowacounties.org](mailto:tnorman@iowacounties.org) or by calling 515-244-7181. Until next month, keep clicking!



## ***Change is Inevitable. Change is Constant.***

**- Benjamin Disraeli**

It seems as if case management services have been experiencing growing pains over the past few years as the Home and Community Based Waiver Program in Medicaid continues to expand. Last year when the state added pre-vocational, day habilitation, and residential services to the array of services available to persons on the HCBS Waiver, case management programs saw an increase in the number of persons referred to Targeted Case Management Services in order to access these services. This year the legislature has adopted two major initiatives that will also increase the number of persons referred for Targeted Case Management Services.

### **Elimination of Waiting Lists for the HCBS Waiver**

The legislature has appropriated \$6 million for FY 2006 to allow the Department of Human Services (DHS) to eliminate the waiting lists for all of the waivers for persons for whom the state has financial responsibility. These include individuals on the AIDS/HIV Waiver, Physical Disability Waiver, Ill and Handicapped Waiver, Brain Injury Waiver and adults with state case status waiting for the Mental Retardation Waiver. Information provided by DHS in April indicated that there are over 500 individuals on the state waiting list for the Mental Retardation and Brain Injury Waivers. The impact on case management programs may be seen as early as July 1, 2005, when DHS begins making referrals to case management programs. Most case management programs will experience an increase in the number of persons referred for targeted case management. In some instances, case management programs will need to add more case managers to keep up with the increased number of persons mandated to receive case management services.

### **Children's Mental Health Waiver**

The legislature has also directed DHS to submit a Medicaid plan amendment to the federal Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to add a Child Mental Health (CMH) waiver to the HCBS program to serve up to 300 youth with a serious mental illness. The individuals who will be served by this new waiver are children who meet the admission criteria for a Psychiatric Medical Institution for Children (PMIC). A requirement for participating in this new program is that each participant have a Targeted Case Manager. This new waiver will certainly result in the addition of new case managers to serve these individuals. It is anticipated that each case management program will be able to determine whether or not to enroll as a provider of case management services of this new waiver. The implementation details of this new waiver are still being developed.

**By: Deborah Westvold**

ISAC Case Management Director



### **Role of Case Management**

Case Management plays a vital role in the management and oversight of the HCBS program. Beginning with the assessment process and continuing with development of the individualized comprehensive plan and coordination and monitoring of services, case managers are an integral part of the management and oversight of this significant Medicaid service. Since case management is a mandated service for individuals enrolled in the Mental Retardation, Brain Injury, and, if approved, the Children's Mental Health Waiver, all case management agencies need to be prepared to accept these new referrals in a timely manner. In some instances this will mean the hiring of additional staff. In this age of "unfunded mandates", it is refreshing to note that these expansions of the HCBS program are actually funded. Medicaid reimburses case management programs for all of their costs for Targeted Case Management Services. In addition, the individuals who will begin receiving HCBS Waiver services as a result of this increased state funding are persons for whom the state has responsibility for providing the non-federal matching funds.

*For additional information please feel free to contact Deb Westvold at 515-244-7181 or by e-mail: [dwestvold@iowacounties.org](mailto:dwestvold@iowacounties.org)*

### **CCMS Annual Conference**

August 10-12

Holiday Inn Airport, Des Moines

Registration Will Be On-Line By the  
End of June

[www.iowacounties.org](http://www.iowacounties.org) under  
'Case Management'

# counties in the spotlight

## Victims Not Brushed Aside In Polk County

By: Dan Miller, Staff Writer, NACo News

Barbara Link woke up to a ringing phone in the middle of the night on Oct. 29, 1995. Her car, which she had lent to her 38-year-old son Dennis, had been found in a nearby river in Polk County. When she arrived on the scene and identified her car, a police officer connected it with a deceased person at the local hospital. Dennis, a musician who was on his way to his girlfriend's house after returning home from a concert, had been stabbed five times by a group of drunk young people. A wound to the heart killed him.

As Link and her husband stood in the hospital, listening as the medical examiner told them what had happened to their son, two people stood in the background. The individuals were counselors from Polk County Victim Services.

Polk County Victim Services is a multi-faceted agency that provides advocacy services, counseling and support for crime victims. The organization, which has a counselor on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week, makes sure that victims' voices are heard as they help them navigate through medical decisions, legal decisions and emotional recovery.

"Our mission is to provide a continuum of proactive services and advocacy to victims and survivors of crime," said Sandra McGee, senior counselor. "We promote a safe and caring community through public education and collaboration."

Victim Services provided help to 1,632 clients in the past fiscal year, including 962 violent crimes, 410 adult sexual assaults and 242 child sexual assaults. McGee estimates that 80% of the agency's funds come from Polk County while the rest comes from grants. Its current operating budget is approximately \$150,000.

The agency deals with victims of robbery and theft, hate crimes, sexual assault or abuse, and the families of murder victims. In addition to advocating for the victims in the decisions they need to make after the crime, the agency also helps handle media attention and organizes support groups. "We support crime victims throughout their healing process," McGee said. "We offer choices through education and community resources and we are committed to giving survivors a voice."

Polk County Supervisor E.J. Giovannetti praised the agency's work, stating that the organization provides vital services to the community. "People are constantly talking about how helpful they are in difficult circumstances," said Giovannetti. "We constantly have people come back after tragedies and say 'We don't know what we would have done without that program.'"

Victim Services began in 1974 as a rape and sexual assault program with a staff of two. The program evolved into its current state by adding advocacy, counseling and crisis intervention components. Victim Services currently encompasses several individual programs, including the Sexual Assault Pro-

gram, the Violent Crime Program, a volunteer program that dispatches volunteers to perform various functions and the Intra-Family Sexual Abuse Program.

The Intra-Family Sexual Abuse Program takes a proactive approach to handling child sexual abuse by the hand of a caretaker or guardian. Program staff coordinates meetings with treatment providers, the county attorney, law enforcement, therapists and others to provide services to the victim and abuser. The program makes sure the child is placed in a safe environment and doesn't have contact with the offender.

After Link's initial contact with Victim Services, the agency asked her to speak on a victim impact panel - a group of victims who speak to prisoners about how their lives have been affected by crime. "These inmates listen to our stories and it's amazing how our lives touch their lives," Link said. "We'll get questions, comments and tears from the inmates and the victims. There's kind of a bonding there between the victims and offenders."

Link, who writes as a hobby, also participates in writing workshops with the inmates. The inmates express themselves through poetry, rap and prose. According to Link, the 12-week course enlightened the inmates and the community members on the others' plights. "We, as victims, got to know the offenders at a much more personal level. To hear some of their stories about their lives - so many had been abused as children - this was such a bonding experience," she said. "In a lot of instances we know that we changed their lives."

Melissa Harper (not her real name) first met a representative from Victim Services after she was sexually assaulted in 1993. Representatives from Victim Services supported Harper by providing emotional counseling, accompanying her on doctor's visits. "I know that I would not be here if it were not for the Victim Services unit," Harper said. "I didn't have to take care of anyone there. They were listening, they let me talk. They were always very welcoming and said 'Come on in.'"

Harper attended Victim Services-sponsored support groups for more than two years before she started speaking for the organization. Harper has spoken at an anti-sexual assault rally called Take Back the Night as well as with local prisoners. She is now a backup counselor at the agency and is on the payroll part-time. "I've given back a little of what they've given to me," she said. "The things that I've done through Polk County Victim Services has provided me with the support that makes me feel like I got the way bigger end of the deal. My association with them has certainly changed my life."

*(Taken from the April 11 issue of NACo News)*

# counties in the spotlight

## County Fairs in Iowa

### June

8-12	Linn Co., Hawkeye Downs Fair, Cedar Rapids
15-19	Wapello County Regional Fair, Eldon
17-19	Allamakee County, Big Four Fair, Postville
22-26	Butler County Fair, Allison
22-26	Mighty Howard County Fair, Cresco
22-26	Worth County Fair, Northwood

### July

5-9	Winneshek County Fair, Decorah
6-10	Calhoun County Expo, Rockwell City
6-10	Lee County Fair, Donnellson
6-11	Greater Jefferson County Fair, Fairfield
7-10	Cherokee County Fair, Cherokee
7-12	Wright County District Junior Fair, Eagle Grove
8-10	Keokuk County Fair, What Cheer
9, 11-13	Sioux County Youth Fair, Sioux Center
9-15	Linn County Fair, Central City
10-16	Marshall Co., Central Iowa Fair, Marshalltown
11-17	Delaware County 4-H & FFA Fair, Manchester
12-17	Henry County Fair, Mount Pleasant
12-17	Keokuk County Expo, Sigourney
12-18	Greene County Fair, Jefferson
13-17	Allamakee County Fair, Waukon
13-17	Cedar County Fair, Tipton
13-17	Davis County Fair, Bloomfield
13-17	Franklin County Fair, Hampton
13-17	Mitchell County Fair, Osage
13-17	Monona County Fair, Onawa
13-17	Wapello County 4-H Expo, Ottumwa
13-18	Floyd Co. Ag & Industry Days, Charles City
13-18	Pottawattamie County Fair, Avoca
13-18	Ringgold County Fair, Mount Ayr
13-18	Shelby County Fair, Harlan
13-18	Van Buren County Fair, Keosauqua
13-18	Webster County Fair, Fort Dodge
14-17	Dallas County Fair, Adel
14-17	Iowa County Fair, Marengo
14-17	Taylor County Fair, Bedford
14-17	Winnebago County Fair, Thompson
14-18	Fremont County Fair, Sidney
14-18	Pocahontas County Fair, Pocahontas
15-21	Jasper County Fair, Colfax
15-21	Marion County Fair, Knoxville
16, 21-25	Poweshiek County Fair, Grinnell
16-21	Adams County 4-H & Youth Fair, Corning
18-22	Washington County Fair, Washington
18-23	Appanoose County Fair, Centerville
18-23	Grundy County Fair, Grundy Center
19-23	Fayette County Fair, West Union
19-24	Hancock County Fair, Britt
19-24	Ida County Fair, Ida Grove
19-25	Crawford County Fair, Denison
19-25	Humboldt County Fair, Humboldt
20-24	Adair County Fair, Greenfield
20-24	Benton County Fair, Vinton
20-24	Boone County Fair, Boone

20-24	Cerro Gordo Co., North Iowa Fair, Mason City
20-24	Hardin County Fair, Eldora
20-24	Harrison County Fair, Missouri Valley
20-24	Great Jones County Fair, Monticello
20-24	Madison County Livestock Fair, Winterset
20-24	Montgomery County Fair, Red Oak
20-24	Muscatine County Fair, West Liberty
20-24	Tama County Fair, Gladbrook
20-25	Carroll County Fair, Coon Rapids
20-25	Decatur County 4-H & FFA Fair, Leon
20-25	Polk County 4-H & FFA Fair, Des Moines
21-25	Buena Vista County Fair, Alta
21-25	Monroe County 4-H & FFA Fair, Albia
22-25	Palo Alto County 4-H Fair, Emmetsburg
22-27	Mahaska Co., Southern Iowa Fair, Oskaloosa
22-27	Story County 4-H Fair, Nevada
23-27	Clinton County 4-H Club Show, DeWitt
23-27	Mills County Fair, Malvern
23-28	O'Brien County Fair, Primghar
23-28	Union County Fair, Afton
25-28	Johnson County 4-H & FFA Fair, Iowa City
25-28	Lyon County Fair, Rock Rapids
25-30	Louisa County Fair, Columbus Junction
26-31	Dubuque County Fair, Dubuque
26-31	Hamilton County Fair, Webster City
26-31	Page County Fair, Clarinda
26-Aug 1	Wayne County Fair, Corydon
27-31	Black Hawk County 4-H & FFA Fair, Waterloo
27-31	Buchanan County Fair, Independence
27-31	Jackson County Fair, Maquoketa
27-31	Plymouth County Fair, Le Mars
27-Aug 1	Clarke County 4-H Fair, Osceola
27-Aug 1	Pottawattamie Co., WestFair, Council Bluffs
27-Aug 1	Warren County Fair, Indianola
27-Aug 2	Des Moines County Fair, Burlington
28-30	Osceola County Livestock Show, Sibley
28-31	Emmet County Agricultural Show, Estherville
28-31	Sac County Fair, Sac City
29-Aug 2	Audubon County Fair, Audubon
30-Aug 4	Lucas Co. 4-H Achievement Show, Chariton
30-Aug 5	Cass County Fair, Atlantic
31-Aug 4	Dickinson County Fair, Spirit Lake

### August

2-7	Bremer County Fair, Waverly
2-7	Scott Co., Mississippi Valley Fair, Davenport
2-8	Clayton County Fair, National
3-7	Kossuth County Fair, Algona
3-7	Woodbury County Fair, Merville
11-14	Cherokee Co., Marcus Community Fair, Marcus
11-21	Polk County, Iowa State Fair, Des Moines

### September

1-5	Chickasaw County Big Four Fair, Nashua
1-5	Guthrie County Fair, Guthrie Center
10-18	Clay County Fair, Spencer
15-18	Black Hawk Co., National Cattle Congress, Waterloo

*Taken from the Association of Iowa Fairs*

# counties in the spotlight

## Linn County Courthouse Plaza

Linn County held a dedication of the new Linn County Courthouse Plaza and celebration of the 80th anniversary of the building. The Board of Supervisors hosted the event on May 18 from 11:30 am to 1:30 pm. A brief ceremony was held with remarks by judicial and county officials.

## Anti-Mosquito Alliance

Polk County and Des Moines area city officials have developed a \$148,000 plan that includes a coordinated ground assault and periodic air raids to ward off the threat of West Nile virus. They believe the effort will wipe out the mosquitoes, stop the virus' spread and save the taxpayers money. West Nile killed six Iowans in 2003 and two last year. The high price of mosquito fighting chemicals prompted Polk County to join forces with leaders in Des Moines, West Des Moines and Urbandale to build a coalition and buy the chemicals in bulk. Other suburbs might join the alliance next year.

*(Taken from the Des Moines Register, April 23)*

## Dallas County Growing Fast

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Dallas County is one of the nation's fastest-growing counties and placed No. 10 in percentage population gain. Dallas County grew by 6.6% from July 2003 to July 2004 and 21.7% from April 2000 to July 2004. No other Iowa county placed even in the top 100 for either one-year growth or growth from 2000 to 2004. Pocahontas County had a 6.3% drop in population from July 2003 to July 2004. Overall the state grew by 1% over the 4-year period, with most growth driven by new commuter counties along Interstate Highway 80. Nationally, Dallas County is somewhat of an anomaly. Census officials said that of the 100 fastest growing counties between 2003 and 2004, 60 were in the South, 23 in the West and 17 in the Midwest. The nation's fastest growing county, Flagler County, Florida saw a 10.1% increase. Fourteen of the top 100 growth counties were in Florida. The county with the highest numerical increase was Maricopa County, Arizona, which added 112,000 residents. Los Angeles was again the most populous county with 9.9 million residents.

*(Taken from the Des Moines Register, April 15; Gazette, April 15)*

## Economic Development Grants Awarded By IDED

Economic marketing grants of \$175,000 each were awarded to three regions in Iowa from the Iowa Department of Economic Development (IDED). Counties in Iowa have collaborated to create county economic development groups that market their communities as a part of the larger region. The counties maintain their separate economic development organizations, but will work together in marketing efforts utilizing the grant from IDED. The regional marketing effort will be much stronger than any one entity could hope to achieve. The grants are awarded over three years and match contributions from local governments and private sector groups involved in the continuing effort to create a stronger Iowa economy.

Jones County and the East Central Intergovernmental Association, comprised of Dubuque, Delaware, Jackson, Cedar, and Clinton counties, have joined for an economic development initiative. The initiative will establish a marketing plan and database of all of the resources that the region has to offer - from industrial sites to infrastructure. Nearly \$450,000 was generated in matching funds and will be used to hire an economic development coordinator, create a website and pursue a venture capital fund to help spur business expansion.

The Mid-Iowa Growth Partnership, comprised of Calhoun, Hamilton, Hardin, Humboldt, Kossuth, Palo Alto, Pocahontas, Webster and Wright counties, will create a Value Added Agricultural Association for north central Iowa which will work to find uses for ethanol by-products, partner with ISU to provide research, and inventory the major value added agricultural industries and businesses in the area. In addition, the plan calls for the development of collaborative marketing materials, a website and boosting the group's presence at national trade shows. Together the counties raised over \$300,000 in matching funds.

The Western Iowa Advantage, made up of Adair, Audubon, Carroll, Crawford, Greene, Guthrie and Sac counties, will use the grant funds for direct economic development marketing, including website development.

The Northeast Iowa Marketing Group, comprised of Allamakee, Clayton, Delaware, Fayette, Howard and Winneshiek counties, received a \$145,000 grant from IDED to assist in a regional marketing strategy.

*(Taken from the Telegraph Herald, March 23; Corwith CWL Times, April 6; Adair News, April 7; Daily Register, April 13)*

# associate member highlights



Anderson-Bogert Engineers & Surveyors, Inc. is a small, highly specialized engineering company specifically catering to Iowa county needs, including:

- GIS Implementation and Data Management
- Budget and Financing for Capital Projects
- Public Information Processes
- Bridge Inventory and Prioritization
- Pavement Management
- Trails and Enhancements
- Grant Applications
- Transportation Planning
- Traffic Safety and Traffic Modeling
- GPS Survey and Ground Control

We have over 20 specialists in the areas of:

- Civil Engineers
- Traffic Engineers
- Airport/Aviation Engineers
- Water/Wastewater Engineers

- IDOT Certified Construction Inspectors
- GIS Specialists
- Registered Land Surveyors
- CAD Technicians

Our technical expertise and project management skills have been instrumental in assisting counties and rural municipalities in all aspects of engineering such as:

- Planning Capital Improvements Projects
- Public Outreach and Information Campaigns
- Obtaining Grants and Funding
- Designing and Bid Letting Capital Projects
- Administering and Inspecting Construction
- Updating and Managing Data

Our company philosophy is to deliver high quality engineering on time, and to provide service that makes your job easier.

For more information on how we can assist you, please contact: Jeffrey C. Morrow, P.E.

319-377-4629

[jmorrow@anderson-bogert.com](mailto:jmorrow@anderson-bogert.com)

[www.anderson-bogert.com](http://www.anderson-bogert.com)

Let us help you direct your future.

## ISAC brief

### Register On-Line for ISAC District Legislative Workshops!

[www.iowacounties.org](http://www.iowacounties.org)

The ISAC District Legislative Workshops consist of meetings with the county officials in each of the six ISAC districts throughout Iowa. At these meetings, the ISAC staff provides a presentation about the legislative year and its outcomes. Area legislators are invited. Affiliate time is held in the afternoon. The on-line registration fee is \$35, at the door registration is \$40.

#### Meetings Dates:

District I - June 9

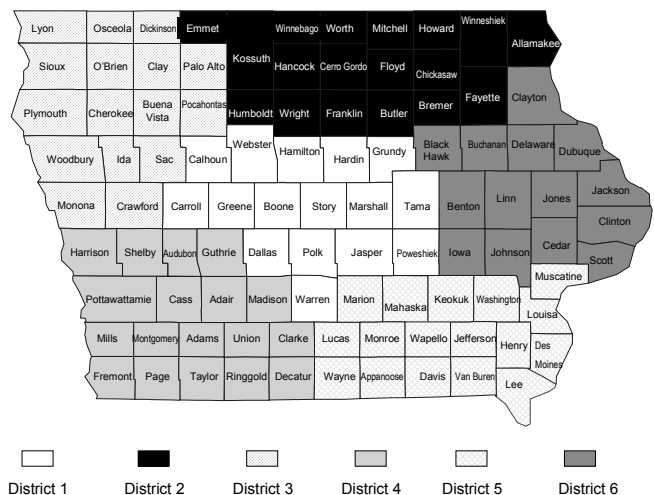
District II - June 8

District III - June 24

District IV - June 23

District V - June 10

District VI - June 17



District meeting locations and agendas are posted on ISAC's website ([www.iowacounties.org](http://www.iowacounties.org)), along with registration information.

## Analysis Shows County Spending Growth Slows

*Higher taxes offset lagging state dollars*

### Expenses

Statewide spending growth by Iowa's county governments has slowed in recent years, according to an ISAC analysis of county annual financial reports filed with the Iowa Department of Management. Spending growth peaked in FY 2000, when counties spent nearly 8% more than they did in FY 1999. Since then, however, annual spending growth has averaged only 2.4%, and fell to 1.5% – more than a full percentage point below inflation – in FY 2004, the most recent fiscal year for which complete data is available.

County spending in three major areas has declined over the last two years: physical health & social services (PHSS), mental health and capital projects. PHSS expenses include those for services to the poor, to elderly persons and to pregnant women, as well as for sanitation, veterans' affairs and chemical dependency. Those expenses have decreased by an average of 2.6% over the last two years. State law caps the amount of property tax dollars counties can raise locally to spend on mental health services, so spending growth in that category relies largely on state funding decisions. Mental health spending is off about 2% since FY 2002. While some road construction expenses can fall under capital projects, most spending in that area is for significant structural investments like courthouse or jail renovation. Spending on capital projects has declined almost 3% annually over the last two years, and 4.5% annually since FY 2000.

Spending growth has remained strong in other areas of county budgets, including public safety and government services. Public safety expenses have increased most steadily, averaging growth of 7% annually in climbing from \$196 million in FY 1998 to \$294 million in FY 2004. Government services expenses have grown by about 5% annually over the last six years. Those services include many state-mandated functions provided by the so-called "row officers." Examples include elections (provided by the auditor), motor vehicle registration (treasurer) and document recording (recorder).

Other services have experienced spending growth of more moderate levels. Administration expenses have increased 4% annually over the past six years but fell sharply in 2004, down almost \$5 million. Transportation budgets have generally grown more slowly, but more steadily, and have averaged increases of about 2.5% over the past six years. At nearly \$360 million in FY 2004, road construction and transportation costs account for the biggest portion – nearly 23% – of county spending. (Public safety and mental health spending come in second and third, at 19% and 18%, respectively.)

**By: Jay Syverson**

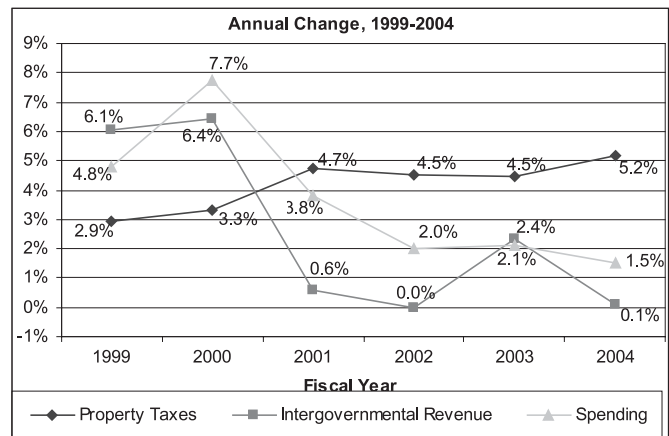
ISAC Fiscal Analyst



### Revenue

On the revenue side, property taxes – the most visible aspect of county budgets – and other county taxes and fees have had to bear a greater share of the funding for local services as a result of lagging intergovernmental revenues from both the state and federal governments and reduced interest income. Property taxes (including utility excise taxes) have grown about 4.2% per year over the last six years. That pace has picked up lately, increasing to 4.8% annual growth during the last two years. Revenues from local option sales taxes (LOSTs) and gambling taxes have also been growing, up 10% annually and 7% annually, respectively, over the last six years. The increase in LOST revenue is due in large part to an increase in the number of counties voting to implement the one percent sales tax since 1998. As of January 1, 1998, only 36 counties had voted to impose a LOST; in FY 2004 more than twice that number, 74 counties, were receiving LOST revenue. Additionally, fees for licenses or permits issued by counties, as well as charges for services (including recording fees, landfill fees and recreational fees, among others) have been bringing in increased revenue at a clip of about 6% annually.

One of only two major sources of county revenue that have been lagging lately is "use of money and property," which reflects earnings from investments and the rental of county property. Revenues in this category have declined an average of 13% annually over the last six years, and are off nearly two-thirds from their \$58 million peak in FY 2001, down to \$20 million in FY 2004. This decline is due in large part to the historically low interest rates available for short-term investments.

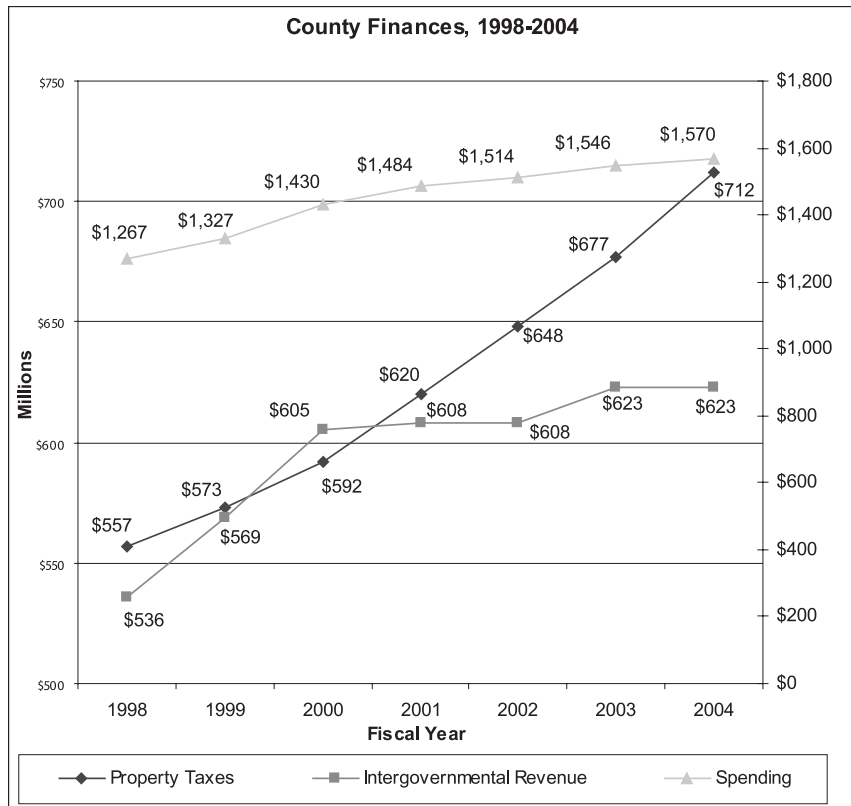


## Decline In State Funding

The other category in which revenue growth is lagging is intergovernmental revenue. Revenue sharing from the state and federal governments to counties has recently come to a standstill, up just 0.1% from FY 2003 to FY 2004. Intergovernmental revenue was up over 6% in both 1999 and 2000, climbing by \$32 million and \$37 million, respectively. Over the last four years, however, state and federal revenue sharing has increased a total of only 3%, rising from \$605 million to \$623 million. That modest increase (0.7% annually) can be attributed primarily to increases in state and federal grants and entitlements, which have been sufficient enough to offset the elimination or decline in several state tax reimbursements.

Part of the decline in state reimbursements is due to various property tax credits being under-funded. The funding level for the agricultural land and family farm credits, for instance, was down from its statutory level of \$39 million to less than \$35 million in FY 2004. Similarly, the elderly & disabled property tax credit (net of rent reimbursement) was funded at only \$2.6 million in FY 2004, less than half of its peak of \$5.8 million in FY 2001. Homestead credit funding has been on a downward slide as well, falling to \$103 million in 2004 from its FY 2001 peak of \$114 million. In fact, the state appropriation for the military credit is the only one to have held somewhat steady at \$2.5 million.

But a bigger reason for the decline in state funding has been the elimination of replacement dollars, originally enacted by the state when some type of local government revenue source was eliminated. At least two replacement programs, along with a similar state shared revenue program, were eliminated during the 2003 legislative session in conjunction with the "reinventing government" bill. The biggest cut came in the form of eliminating the personal property tax replacement fund. More than \$15 million in county revenue in FY 2003 was eliminated for FY 2004 and beyond. Additionally, the legislature sped up the phase-out of the machinery and equipment (M&E) tax replacement in 2003. That program had provided as much as \$41 million to local governments in FY 2001, but was slashed to \$11 million in FY 2004, and will go to zero in FY 2005 and beyond. Finally, a standing appropriation to cities and counties of \$8.8 million of franchise tax revenues was eliminated in 2003. FY 2004 marks the last year for counties to receive their share (40%) of franchise taxes, some of which will be distributed to the Community Attraction and Tourism (CAT) fund in future years.



Counties, of course, aren't the only group hurting from cuts to these state programs. Cities, schools and other local governments lose money as well. In fact, a report from the Iowa Fiscal Partnership calculates that the state has cut \$119 million in property tax replacement funds from all local governments combined since FY 2001. Approximately \$38 million of that cut has affected counties directly, according to the Partnership.

Local governments in general, and counties in particular, are often lambasted by taxpayers, the media, and even some state lawmakers as out-of-control spenders. The data simply does not bear out that charge. While property taxes and other local taxes and fees have certainly been growing faster than inflation, they seem to be doing so in large part to atone for lagging revenues in other areas of county budgets, particularly shared revenues from the state and federal governments. The biggest contributor to those lagging intergovernmental revenues has been the elimination or reduction in property tax replacements and reimbursements from the state. Statewide, actual county spending has increased by only 1.8% annually over the last two years. That's 0.4 percentage points below the annual inflation rate of 2.2%, as measured by the consumer price index.

## The Retirement Gap

As American workers of all ages plan for retirement, they wonder, “Will I have enough to retire, or will I have a retirement gap?” The difference between additional sources of income such as a pension plan, Social Security or individual investments and what is needed during retirement is the retirement-income gap.

Employees should consider all sources of retirement income to ensure that contributions to retirement funds and any earnings are likely to cover the gap between other sources of retirement income and income needs during retirement.

The 2005 Retirement Confidence Survey, released in early April by Washington, D.C.-based Employee Benefit Research Institute (EBRI), examines income sources of current retirees and current worker expectations of retirement. EBRI surveyed 1,200 working and retired Americans 25 and older.

The following results from the study illustrate why many Americans have a retirement gap.

- 52% of workers report that the total value of their savings and investments is less than \$25,000 excluding the value of their primary home.
- 65% of workers were somewhat to very confident in their financial security in retirement. Thirty-seven percent of workers who had not saved at all for retirement were at least somewhat confident that they would have enough savings for retirement.
- 55% of workers believe that they are behind schedule in planning and saving for retirement.
- 42% of workers have performed a retirement needs calculation, but 37% of these workers performed their own retirement needs calculation and estimated their retirement outcomes. An additional 10% guessed how much it would take to fund their retirement.

As a result of this gap in retirement, many workers are postponing retirement. This strategy may work for some; however, due to health or workplace stress, others find themselves forced to retire with fewer sources of income than they would like to have or need. Retirees who must retire often experience a decline in their quality of life and some end up living in poverty or needing federal assistance.

When employees retire, they may be faced with challenges on how to keep financially afloat. One solution is to participate in their employer’s 457 deferred compensation plan. Retirement planning and education provided by an employer-based deferred compensation program can help prepare workers to close the gap in retirement.

Deferred compensation plan participants can take advantage of the following: investing money for retirement; deferring taxes until withdrawal; and taking advantage of a variety of investment options. Employees who participate in the NACo deferred compensation program can find out if they have a retirement gap by contacting Nationwide toll-free at (877) 677-3678.

## Bankruptcy Reform

President George W. Bush signed legislation that will make the most sweeping changes to federal bankruptcy law since 1978, including provisions that will make it easier to collect delinquent property taxes. The law is designed to crack down on abuse of Chapter 7 bankruptcy, which can permit individuals to wipe out significant debt.

Instead, the legislation will force filers that meet an eligibility formula to file under Chapter 13, which requires filers to make a repayment plan. The law would also lengthen the time during which filers are required to continue repaying debts and before which an individual can file for bankruptcy again.

The final bill passed the House of Representatives by an overwhelming margin of 302-126, after passing the Senate by the even greater margin of 74-25, despite the efforts of critics who argued that the legislation will make it more difficult for eligible individuals to file for bankruptcy and characterized it as a major giveaway to industries that hold consumer debt.

Very little of the controversy, however, had to do with Title VII, which affects the treatment of tax liens in a bankruptcy filing. Title VII contains major changes to the treatment of ad valorem property taxes, including:

- reestablishing the priority of tax liens
- closing loopholes that make it possible for attorneys to downgrade the priority status of a tax lien
- reducing the authority for bankruptcy judges to unilaterally reduce property tax assessments and interest rates charged on delinquent amounts
- extending the timeframe for repayment to five years after the date of the relief order, rather than six years from the date of assessment; and
- permitting administrative cost recovery of attorney fees and other expenses incurred by counties to tax claims where authorized by the state.

Ray Valdes, tax collector for Seminole County, Fla. hailed the language as “a major victory for local governments” and pointed out that it serves as a model for county officials’ lobbying efforts in Washington, D.C., since “a significant accomplishment has taken place because there was a consolidated effort by a small number of concerned and dedicated individuals that refused to give up or give in.”

Similar legislation had passed either the Senate or House of Representatives every year from 1998 to 2005 and has passed both chambers twice. Once it was vetoed by President Bill Clinton; the second time a House-Senate conference committee deadlocked over a controversial amendment related to bankruptcy filings of abortion clinic protestors. This year, the abortion clinic amendment was defeated on the Senate floor.

## New Child Support Website for Employers

Doing business with Iowa's Child Support Recovery Unit will soon be a little easier for many employers that make child support payments on behalf of their employees. Employers will be able to go online to [www.iowachildsupport.gov](http://www.iowachildsupport.gov) to make those payments and do much more, thanks to a new business-focused website that is scheduled to be available around July 20, 2005.

The website will allow employers located anywhere in the United States to go online to complete most of their child support business, including making payments, reporting newly hired or rehired employees or contractors, and reporting employee terminations or absences.

*For more information, email the Iowa Child Support Recovery Unit at [csrue@dhs.state.ia.us](mailto:csrue@dhs.state.ia.us) or call toll-free (877) 274-2580.*

## Grant Writing Workshop

The Polk County Sheriff's Office, in partnership with Grant Writing USA, will present a two-day grant writing workshop in Des Moines, June 9-10, 2005. All government and non-profit professionals are welcome to attend. Grant Writing USA delivers nationwide training programs and workshops that dramatically enhance performance in the areas of grant writing, national foundation and government grant maker research and relations, program planning, and personal and organizational excellence. Each element plays an important role in grant writing success and all are covered in this, Grant Writing USA's signature, two-day workshop. More than 4,000 government and nonprofit agencies across America now turn to Grant Writing USA for grants training.

This workshop is suitable for beginning and experienced grant writers who desire to increase their fundraising competitiveness and broaden their funder focus. Tuition payment is not required at the time of enrollment. Please read the "Payment Policy" section of our online registration. Tuition is \$349 and includes all materials – workbook and accompanying 220MB resource CD that's packed full of tools and more than 200 sample grant proposals. Seating is limited, online reservations are necessary, walk-ins are not allowed.

*For more information including venue location and maps, graduate testimonials and instant, online enrollment, please visit <http://GrantWritingUSA.com>. Hosted by the Polk County Sheriff's Office at the Des Moines Regional Police Academy 433 S.E. Army Post Road, Des Moines, IA 50315.*

## Emergency Preparedness Exercise

An emergency preparedness exercise was featured at the ISAC Spring School on March 17, 2005 in Des Moines. The goal of this one-hour exercise was to engage boards of supervisors in preparedness by identifying and discussing local and regional emergency planning issues and public health issues associated with a crisis; assessing critical teamwork and communication needs to prepare for a large scale crisis; and identifying gaps in local preparedness.

Three of the program's participants - Rick Wulfekuhle, Emergency Management Coordinator; Edward Bottei, Iowa Statewide Poison Control Center Director; and Cheryl Jahnel, Mitchell County Board of Supervisors Chairman - formed a panel to develop the exercise for the boards of supervisors with support from the Center and University of Iowa Master of Public Health candidate, Aaron Termain.

The idea for this type of exercise for boards of supervisors grew out of the Train-the-Trainer Program offered by the Upper Midwest Center for Public Health Preparedness. The Iowa Center for Public Health Preparedness was established at the College of Public Health at the University of Iowa in May 2001. The Center is one of a select number of Centers for Public Health Preparedness and is funded by a grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. In September of 2003, the Center expanded to include the states of Nebraska and South Dakota, and was renamed the Upper Midwest Center for Public Health Preparedness.

Over the past three years the program has trained approximately 150 individuals from various disciplines in emergency preparedness in order to strengthen the region's response to public health emergencies.

The March 17 exercise was well received by the supervisors, igniting much interest and discussion. In response, the planning committee is working to expand the current exercise into an in-depth four-hour module. The committee intends to pilot the extended module at one of the ISAC district workshops in June.

*For more information on this exercise please contact Cheryl Jahnel at 641-732-5861, ext. 126. For more information on the Upper Midwest Center for Public Health Preparedness Train-the-Trainer Program, please visit [www.public-health.uiowa.edu/icphp/ed\\_training/ttt/](http://www.public-health.uiowa.edu/icphp/ed_training/ttt/).*

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AIG Valic	21	Public Sector Personnel Consultants	18
Calhoun-Burns and Associates, Inc.	22	Ruan Securities Corporation	20
French-Reneker-Associates, Inc.	21	Solutions, Inc.	21
Horizons, Inc.	21	The Sidwell Company	24
IPAIT	2	TrueNorth Companies	18
JEO Consulting Group, Inc.	22	URS Corporation	20
Jerico Services, Inc.	22	Ziegler CAT	19
Kuehl & Payer, Ltd.	21		

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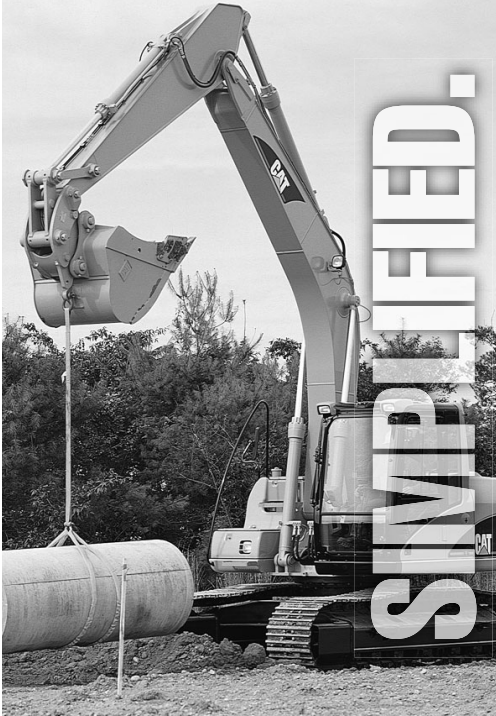
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For more information contact Lisa Cole, NACo Director of Enterprise Services, at 202.942.4270 or email [lc@naco.org](mailto:lc@naco.org).



## Scholarship Golf Fundraiser

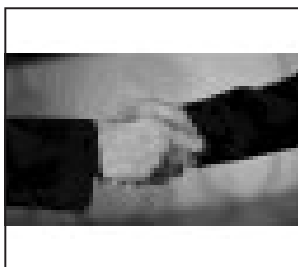
The first annual ISAC Scholarship Golf Fundraiser is scheduled for Wednesday, June 15th at Jester Park Golf Course in Granger. If you're not a golfer, please join us for a steak dinner and raffle after the golf. All proceeds from the event will go to the ISAC Scholarship Fund, which awards scholarships amounting to about \$12,000 annually to children of county officials and employees. For registration information visit ISAC's website at [www.iowacounties.org](http://www.iowacounties.org).



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## JUNE

- 3 CCMS Board of Directors (ISAC Office)
- 7-8 CCMS Supervisors Training  
(Baymont Conference Center, Des Moines)
- 8 District II Workshop  
(Waldorf College, Forest City)
- 9 District I Workshop  
(Holiday Inn Airport, Des Moines)
- 9 CCMS NE Support Group  
(Mikkelson Park, New Hampton)
- 10 District V Workshop  
(Indian Hills Community College, Ottumwa)
- 14 CRIS Cost Report Training  
(Marriott, Cedar Rapids)
- 15 ISAC Scholarship Golf Fundraiser  
(Jester Park, Granger)
- 15-17 Information Technology Annual Conference  
(Cedar Rapids)
- 16 CRIS Cost Report Training  
(Marriott, West Des Moines)
- 16 CCMS North Central Support  
(Coffee & Co., Hampton)
- 17 District VI Workshop  
(Grand River Center, Dubuque)
- 22-24 CCMS Fundamentals  
(Baymont Conference Center, Des Moines)
- 23 District IV Workshop  
(Mid America Center, Council Bluffs)
- 24 District III Workshop  
(Buena Vista University, Storm Lake)

## JULY

- 12 CCMS Administrators Meeting  
(Hilton Garden Inn, Des Moines/Urbandale)
- 13 ISAC Board of Directors (ISAC Office)
- 15-19 NACo Annual Conference (Hawaii)
- 20 CRIS Board (ISAC Office)
- 27-29 Auditors Summer Conference (Fort Dodge)

## AUGUST

- 4-5 Supervisors Executive Board (Atlantic area)
- 10-12 CCMS Annual Conference  
(Holiday Inn Airport, Des Moines)
- 11-13 Records Annual Conference  
(Grand Harbor Resort, Dubuque)

## SEPTEMBER

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

## OCTOBER

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

## NOVEMBER

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

## DECEMBER

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

*For agendas or additional information on any of the above listed meetings please visit our website at [www.iowacounties.org](http://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](mailto:jnoba@iowacounties.org).*

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