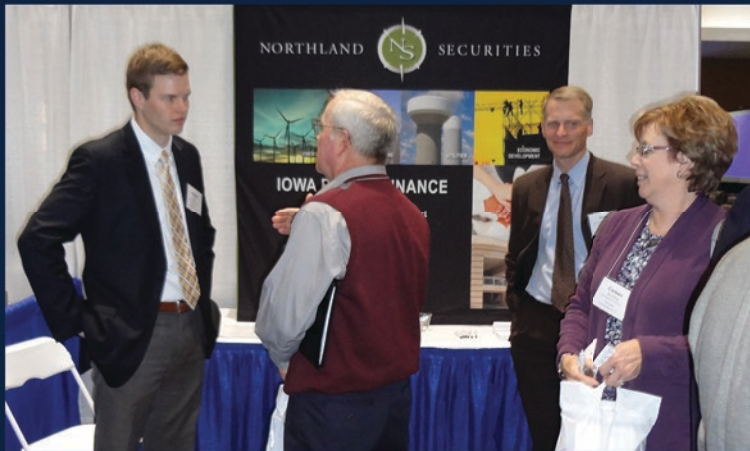


# The Iowa County

Iowa State Association of Counties



January 2014

ISAC Legislative Priorities

Two Easy Ways for Congress to Raise  
its Public Approval Rating

Fall School Wrap-up



# THE NEW CAT® 12M2 MAKES THE GRADE



The new Cat® 12M2 Motor Grader and its all-wheel drive counterpart—the 12M2 AWD—continue the legacy of Caterpillar quality, innovation, and reliability. The new models are ideal for:

- Road Maintenance
- Heavy Blade Work
- Precise Finish Grading
- Snow Removal

The M Series 2 motor graders offer a long list of new features that boost production, trim operating costs, enhance operator comfort and convenience, and simplify routine maintenance.

Caterpillar's hallmark control system uses two electronic joysticks to provide complete control of the powertrain and blade while reducing hand and wrist movement by nearly 80 percent. The new machine's frame and components provide outstanding structural integrity for the most demanding applications.

***To learn more about the new 12M2 models, contact your Ziegler CAT sales representative.***

## A Special Message for 140G and 140H/143H Users

If you consider the popular 140G and 140H/143H motor graders your long-time workhorses, you'll quickly see how the new 12M2 and 12M2 AWD models may become your new go-to Cat machines. The new models share a common platform and wheelbase with the 140M2 machines, but the technical advancements, operating improvements, and the net horsepower provided by the C9.3 ACERT engine raise the bar on performance and reliability.

MODEL	Engine Model	Net Horsepower 1st–8th Gear	Operating Weight Typically Equipped	Wheelbase
140H	Cat 3176 ETA	165–205	33,371 lb	243 in
12M2	Cat C9.3 ACERT	173–223	38,228 lb	241 in
140M2	Cat C9.3 ACERT	193–243	41,128 lb	241 in
143H	Cat 3176C DITA	165–205	34,888 lb	243 in
12M2 AWD	Cat C9.3 ACERT	183–243	40,418 lb	241 in
140M2 AWD	Cat C9.3 ACERT	202–263	43,316 lb	241 in

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# The Iowa County

January 2014 \* Volume 43, Number 1

The Iowa County: The official magazine of the  
Iowa State Association of Counties  
5500 Westown Parkway, Suite 190  
West Des Moines, IA 50266  
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Rachel Bennett, EDITOR

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ISAC members are elected and appointed county officials from all 99 counties. *The Iowa County* (ISSN 0892-3795, USPS 0002-150) is published monthly by the Iowa State Association of Counties, 5500 Westown Parkway, Suite 190, West Des Moines, IA 50266. Periodicals postage paid at Des Moines, IA 50318. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to [rbennett@iowacounties.org](mailto:rbennett@iowacounties.org). Subscriptions: \$25 per year.

## ISAC OFFICERS

### PRESIDENT

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### 2ND VICE PRESIDENT

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### 3RD VICE PRESIDENT

Peggy Rice - Humboldt County Auditor

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Kathy Babcock - Chickasaw County Public Health

Lonny Pulkrabek - Johnson County Sheriff

Wayne Clinton - Story County Supervisor

Jeff Garrett - Washington County Treasurer

RJ Moore - Johnson County Zoning

Marge Pitts - Clay County Auditor (Past President)

Darin Raymond - Plymouth County Attorney (Past President)

Wayne Walter - Winneshiek County Treasurer (Past President)

Lu Barron - Linn County Supervisor (NACo Board)

Linda Langston - Linn County Supervisor (NACo President)

Grant Veeder - Black Hawk County Auditor (NACo Board)

## ISAC STAFF

William R. Peterson - Executive Director

Lucas Beenken - Public Policy Specialist

Rachel Bennett - Marketing/Comm. Coordinator

Jamie Cashman - Government Relations Manager

Cindy Chappelle - Case Management Specialist

Hanna De Groot - Public Policy Specialist

Deb Eckerman Slack - Case Management Services Mgr.

Kristi Harshbarger - General Counsel

Robin Harlow - Technology and Research Manager

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Jackie Olson Leech - Case Management Specialist

Madeline Schmitt - Data Integrity Analyst

Jeanine Scott - ETC/CSN Program Manager

Molly Steffen - Case Management Specialist

Dylan Young - Data/Information Technology Specialist

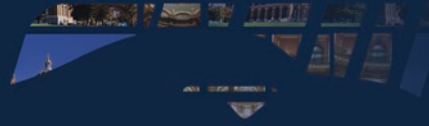
### ISAC's Mission:

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.





# Iowa State Association of Counties 2014 Legislative Priorities

Eighty-Fifth Iowa General Assembly  
State Capitol  
Des Moines, Iowa 50319

Dear Legislator:

As the state of Iowa and its local governments face continued governance challenges, the need for a strong partnership between the state and the counties is critical. It is important that the two levels of government work together to meet citizen demands while staying within our resources. Accordingly, we are providing you with this copy of the Iowa State Association of Counties (ISAC) 2014 Legislative Priorities. The county platform was crafted by the ISAC Legislative Policy Committee and approved by the full membership at the 2013 ISAC Fall School of Instruction on November 13, 2013.

ISAC's top priorities for the coming session include long term funding solutions for Iowa's roads as well as issues related to Iowa's mental health and disability services system. Adjusting user fees to maintain county essential services to the citizens of Iowa will also be critical as a result of the property tax relief enacted in 2013. Lastly, ISAC supports legislation that would place increased oversight on Rural Improvement Zones.

We look forward to working with you this session, and we hope to continue to improve the state and local partnership. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us or a member of our government relations team: Jamie Cashman, Hanna De Groot, or Lucas Beenken.

Sincerely,



Harlan Hansen  
President



William R. Peterson  
Executive Director

## The County Voice at the Capitol

ISAC employs three full-time government relations professionals to be the eyes and ears of county officials and employees throughout the state. Jamie, Hanna and Lucas work closely with county officials throughout the year to develop and advocate for the county platform. During the legislative session they spend their time at the Capitol and are great resources for legislators. Don't hesitate to contact them for any county-related information.



**Jamie Cashman**

Government Relations  
Manager

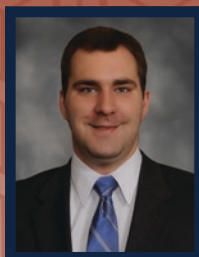
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The Iowa State Association of Counties (ISAC) is a private, nonprofit corporation that was incorporated on October 8, 1964. Senate File 37, which was adopted on June 30, 1971, allowed counties to pay member dues to the organization. ISAC members are elected and appointed county officials from all 99 counties. Counties pay voluntary dues to belong to ISAC in return for a number of services. ISAC members participate in one of 15 different statewide affiliated associations corresponding to each county office.

ISAC's mission is to promote effective and responsible county government for the people of Iowa. To that end, ISAC's stated purpose is to secure and maintain cooperation among the counties and county officials, promote comprehensive study of local problems and find ways of solving them, provide methods of interchange of ideas among various county officials, and promote and work for the enactment of legislation that is most beneficial to the citizens of Iowa. These endeavors support our vision of being the principal, authoritative source of representation, information and services for and about county government in Iowa.



# Iowa State Association of Counties 2014 Top Priorities

## Road Funding

**PROBLEM:** Iowa's roads and bridges are a vital component of the continued growth of the state's economy, and every road jurisdiction is struggling to adequately maintain its portion of the road system. The cost of building and maintaining roads continues to increase, while the user fee per gallon of gasoline has not increased since 1989. In addition to general inflation, Iowa's road maintenance issues have been exacerbated by harsh winters, floods, and heavy equipment usage. Due to the shortfall in road funding, counties have turned to bonding in order to provide critical funding for maintenance of roads and bridges. These bonds are repaid with property tax revenues, contrary to the state's goal of reducing property tax expenditures throughout the state. Additionally, the use of bonds fails to capture funding from the out-of-state vehicles impacting Iowa's roads.

**SOLUTION:** ISAC recommends the following:

1. ISAC supports long term, sustainable transportation funding solutions including a phased-in 10-cent increase in the motor fuel tax. This would generate an estimated \$230 million for infrastructure maintenance and improvement.
2. TIME-21 seeks to focus \$225 million on the priorities set by the TIME-21 study. The \$225 million cap to the TIME-21 fund must be maintained, and increased revenues in excess of this cap should be distributed through the Road Use Tax Fund formula.
3. ISAC supports legislation that would enable the Iowa Department of Transportation to provide primary highway funds to counties and cities in lieu of federal funds.
4. ISAC supports enabling legislation to allow the development of public-private partnerships aimed at economic development by encouraging businesses to locate in areas where adequate infrastructure exists through incentive programs and by entering into development agreements which leverage private dollars with public funds in areas where site specific transportation improvements are required.

## Mental Health and Disability Services

**PROBLEM:** Counties are facing continuing funding challenges regarding the new regional mental health and disability services (MH/DS) system. All regions will be fully functional on July 1, 2014. It remains to be seen whether the state has adequately funded the regions in order for the service system to maintain current services, let alone provide expanded services and services to additional populations as envisioned by redesign. In addition, there are two expense issues that need to be resolved: the split employment of the mental health advocates between the counties/regions and the judicial branch, which is inefficient and wastes tax dollars, and the funding of evaluations of competence to stand trial, which is not clearly a county or region responsibility. Finally, the requirement that the DHS director approve the regions' budgets or any budget amendments encroaches on home rule and will unnecessarily slow down a region's ability to make the decisions necessary to meet the needs of its citizens with disabilities.

**SOLUTION:** ISAC recommends that the Legislature:

1. Eliminate the 80% reversion to the state of projected savings to the county/regional system from the Healthy and Well Iowa program, and direct these savings into investments in the regional service system.
2. Amend the Iowa Code to vest all employment responsibilities, including payment, for the judicial mental health advocates with the state, or, in the alternative, with the regions.
3. Clarify that the cost of evaluation and restoration of competence to stand trial pursuant to Iowa Code chapter 812 is a state funding responsibility.
4. Eliminate the requirement that the DHS director approve either the regions' budgets or any ensuing budget amendments.
5. Provide sufficient state funding both for FY 2014 and FY 2015 to ensure that the counties, and then the regions, have the resources necessary to provide and manage core services.

## User Fees

**PROBLEM:** Property tax reform passed in 2013 will take an estimated \$761.9 million out of county property tax revenues over the next 10 years. Counties provide necessary services and meet ever-increasing state mandates through property tax revenues. Adequate funding for roads, mental health services, local public health, the Environment First Fund, the Rural Enhancement and Protection (REAP) program and emergency management are areas of concern for counties. In addition, there are a number of services that counties provide to the public that are subsidized by property taxes because the fees charged to the customers are not adequate to pay for the service. Many fees have not been raised in years and the increased expenses are funded by the property tax payer. This is an area that could be addressed by either increasing fees or providing additional state funding to take the burden off of property taxes.

**SOLUTION:** Provide an avenue for additional funding for county government. One progressive tax alternative is to allow counties to impose a local option income tax surcharge. Another is to allow more local control of increases for fee-based services. Examples of fees that are controlled by the state and that need adjustment include:

- Driver's license fee – increase the amount provided to support this local service from \$7 to \$10;
- Parking fine and court debt collections – allow counties to charge \$5 for collecting delinquent parking tickets for cities and debts for the court system;
- Real estate transfer fee – increase the transfer fee from \$5 to \$10 not to exceed \$100;
- Marriage license fee – increase the marriage application fee from \$35 to \$45, allowing the counties to retain \$14 (currently \$4) to support this local service; and
- Civil fees - increase sheriff's civil fees for the provision of services in civil actions to better reflect the costs of carrying out these duties.

# Iowa State Association of Counties 2014 Top Priorities

## Rural Improvement Zones

**PROBLEM:** Current law authorizing Rural Improvement Zone (RIZ) projects, designed to encourage private lake development in counties with less than 20,000 in population, can have a significant financial impact on county budgets with little recourse for local officials. RIZ districts can be established with little input by the elected officials within a county and have no end date. Without clear definitions in the Iowa Code Chapter 357H, which provides for the establishment of RIZ projects, the RIZ law is unnecessarily broad – allowing almost any area to be considered a lake development and almost any purpose to be considered an improvement.

**SOLUTION:** ISAC supports legislation that:

1. Requires county approval before any RIZ project is approved and allows the county to consider tax impacts and cost-benefit analyses in making its determination on the RIZ project.
2. Requires a fiscal impact statement be prepared by the entity or persons requesting the RIZ prior to final approval.
3. Limits all RIZ districts to a certain number of years.
4. Requires the base year to be reestablished or advanced to the current valuation level at the time of renewal of a RIZ district and/or project.
5. Prohibits tax abatement in RIZ districts.
6. Defines “lake” for purposes of Chapter 357H of the Iowa Code.

## Iowa State Association of Counties 2014 Legislative Objectives

- Agricultural Building Value
- Agricultural Exemption from Zoning and Building Codes
- Bonding for County Courthouse Improvements
- Conservation Resources
- Election Reform
- Food Safety
- Posting Notices
- Recording Assignments of Mortgages
- Records Requests

### Agricultural Building Value

**PROBLEM:** The value generated from agricultural buildings is automatically subtracted from the value generated for agricultural land by the productivity formula. The result is that the construction of any new agricultural building adds zero net value to Iowa’s property tax base. This situation serves as a disincentive to agricultural economic development for county governments because large-scale livestock operations impose significant additional costs on counties, such as road maintenance, without expanding the tax base to help pay for those costs.

**SOLUTION:** Agricultural buildings should be valued at their replacement cost new less depreciation, and then the appropriate agricultural factor should be applied per Department of Revenue rule. The value of agricultural buildings would not change from its current level, but the value would be in addition to the value generated by the productivity formula for agricultural land. This could be accomplished by adding the following new language at the end of Iowa Code §441.21(6): “Beginning with valuations established as of January 1, 2014, a structure located on agricultural land, excluding agricultural dwellings, shall be valued at its replacement cost new less depreciation, and then adjusted by the appropriate agricultural factor. Such structures shall be valued as agricultural structures and the valuation determined under this subsection shall be in addition to the valuation determined for agricultural land, excluding agricultural dwellings, shall be valued at its replacement cost new less depreciation, and then adjusted by the appropriate agricultural factor. Such structures shall be valued as agricultural structures and the valuation determined under this subsection shall be in addition to the valuation determined for agricultural land under subsection 1.”

### Agricultural Exemption from Zoning and Building Codes

**PROBLEM:** The exemption for farm houses and buildings from county building codes and zoning regulations needs to be clarified. Legislative amendments (1963) and an opinion from the Attorney General’s Office (#97-1-1) have made it virtually impossible for counties to apply objective standards in uniformly and consistently administering the exemption. Because of the changing nature of agriculture, this state-mandated exemption will only become more difficult for counties to administer. When counties adopt building and zoning regulations, the public health, safety, and welfare benefits of those regulations should be applied to all households regardless of the owner’s occupation. The exemption also prevents a county from enforcing setback requirements on farm buildings. Buildings too close to the road have a significant impact on drifting snow, road maintenance, and traffic safety.

**SOLUTION:** Amend Iowa Code §§331.304(3) (b) and 335.2 to eliminate the farm house exemption. The building exemption would still apply to “farm barns or farm outbuildings,” and the zoning exemption would still apply to “land, farm barns, farm outbuildings, or other buildings or structures” used for agriculture. Amend the relevant sections of the Iowa Code to allow for the inclusion of farm buildings in county setback requirements.

# Iowa State Association of Counties **2014** Legislative Objectives

## **Bonding for County Courthouse Improvements**

**PROBLEM:** Iowa law requires counties to provide and maintain space for the state-run court system. Under current law, bonds issued for public buildings are authorized as “essential county purpose” bonds if the cost of the building project does not exceed dollar amounts specified in the Iowa Code. The limits are indexed to county populations and increase incrementally from \$600,000 to \$1.5 million. Essential county purpose bonds issued within these parameters require a 10-day notice to the public and are not subject to reverse referendum. Bonds that exceed the limit are considered general county purpose bonds and must be approved by referendum with 60% of the voters approving. This is keeping some counties from providing and maintaining adequate space for the courts.

**SOLUTION:** Amend the Iowa Code to conform the requirements for essential county purpose bonds with the requirements for Iowa’s cities and base bond amount limitations for public buildings on the amount of the bonds issued rather than on the total cost of the project. Essential county purpose bond limitation amounts would apply to the principal amount of the bonds issued rather than the cost of the project.

## **Conservation Resources**

**PROBLEM:** Iowa’s natural resources need a consistent and protected funding source. Lack of funding translates into fewer investments that are important to quality of life and economic activity in Iowa communities. The Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) is a nationally recognized state funding program that helps counties make improvements to parks and facilities, protect important outdoor recreation areas, build and improve trails, protect water quality and conserve soil, conduct education programs, manage roadsides, and preserve and enhance historic sites and tourism attractions. REAP investments are known to enhance Iowans’ quality of life, and are economically important to Iowa communities. Funding of conservation resources is supported by the public - in November 2010, 63% of Iowa voters approved the creation of a constitutionally protected Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund. REAP has never been fully funded, and the Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund has not yet been funded.

**SOLUTION:** ISAC supports the increase in the state sales tax by at least 3/8<sup>th</sup> of a cent to fund the Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund and full funding for REAP.

## **Election Reform**

### *Absentee Ballot Postmark*

**PROBLEM:** Ballots from voters that are received through the mail after Election Day cannot be counted if their return envelopes have no postmark or have an illegible postmark. Due to no fault of the voter, the ballot is rejected. The practice of postmarks being placed on return envelopes is inconsistent throughout the state of Iowa.

**SOLUTION:** Amend Iowa Code §53.17(2) to state that no absentee ballots received after polls close on Election Day will be counted.

### *Absentee Envelope Reduction*

**PROBLEM:** Iowa Code requires the use of two envelopes to return an absentee ballot by mail: 1) an envelope bearing an affidavit and 2) a return envelope. The use of two envelopes to return an absentee ballot is costly and complicated for some voters.

**SOLUTION:** Amend Iowa Code §53.8 to reduce the number of envelopes used to return an absentee ballot from two to one. The single envelope will bear the voter affidavit and return address, and will contain the absentee ballot.

### *Close of Voter Pre-Registration*

**PROBLEM:** Under current law, the deadline to pre-register to vote for primary and general elections is 10 days before the election. Pre-registering allows a voter to be listed on the election register. The pre-registration deadline is 11 days prior for all other types of elections. This mandates county auditor offices to be open on the Saturday 10 days prior to each primary election. Turnout on this Saturday is minimal due to the availability of Election Day registration and an increase in absentee voting during regular courthouse hours, at satellite voting locations, and by mail. Offices are being unnecessarily opened and staffed at a high cost to taxpayers.

**SOLUTION:** Change the pre-registration deadline to 11 days prior to the primary election.



# Iowa State Association of Counties **2014** Legislative Objectives

## **Food Safety**

**PROBLEM:** Food safety inspections in Iowa are accomplished through the combined efforts of the Iowa Department of Inspections and Appeals, county and city health departments. These agencies are responsible for assuring food safety in over 21,000 restaurants, grocery stores, warehouses, bars, schools, mobile food units and temporary food stands.

Cyclospora, salmonella, e Coli and other food-borne illness outbreaks are occurring more often and in food that was once considered safe. Current funding in Iowa, last increased in 2008, does not cover the costs associated with conducting a modern, science-based inspection program. Re-inspections to confirm the correction of critical violations, plan reviews and new educational requirements combine to severely impact food inspection budgets already strained by increasing costs.

Iowans expect that government will provide adequate inspection services, but underfunding through license fees has eroded the ability of state and local agencies in Iowa to provide even the most basic level of restaurant, grocery, care facility or school inspections.

**SOLUTION:** Improve the funding mechanism for Iowa's food safety program, including administration, inspections and educational activities. This may be done through an increase in food licensing fees, through state general funds allocated to the local health departments, or a combination thereof. Consideration should be given to adopting fees for plan reviews of new food establishments, re-inspections, and school food programs.

## **Posting Notices**

**PROBLEM:** It is a costly requirement for counties to post all notices in newspapers. Counties currently spend in excess of \$3 million per year to publish various notices and other required documents in the newspaper. There are other options that would be much less costly and just as accessible to local citizens.

**SOLUTION:** ISAC supports changes to Iowa's open records law that would allow local governments to publish abbreviated notices in the newspaper with a reference to how the entire document may be accessed, including having the document mailed to the constituent upon request; allow counties to designate only one official newspaper for publication purposes; and allow publication of resolutions by reference, utilizing a summary statement and informing citizens that the entire text is available for their review.

## **Records Requests**

**PROBLEM:** Government officials are required to spend significant time and resources to comply with record requests from out-of-state companies seeking data and information about Iowa's taxpayers for resale. The United States Supreme Court has ruled that open records statutes can constitutionally limit access to public records to residents of that state, holding that it is acceptable to allow only open records requests for "those who fund the state treasury and whom the state was created to serve." Currently, Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Missouri, New Hampshire, Tennessee and Virginia have public records statutes that are available only to their residents, but Iowa has no such protections.

**SOLUTION:** Amend Iowa's open records statute to allow government officials to charge reasonable fees (not just actual costs) to fill records requests from out-of-state businesses and non-Iowa residents that are requesting records not related to any property they own in Iowa. Alternatively, amend Iowa's open records statute to require governmental entities to respond only to records requests from residents of Iowa, in-state businesses, or related to property owned in Iowa by the requestor.

## **Recording Assignments of Mortgages**

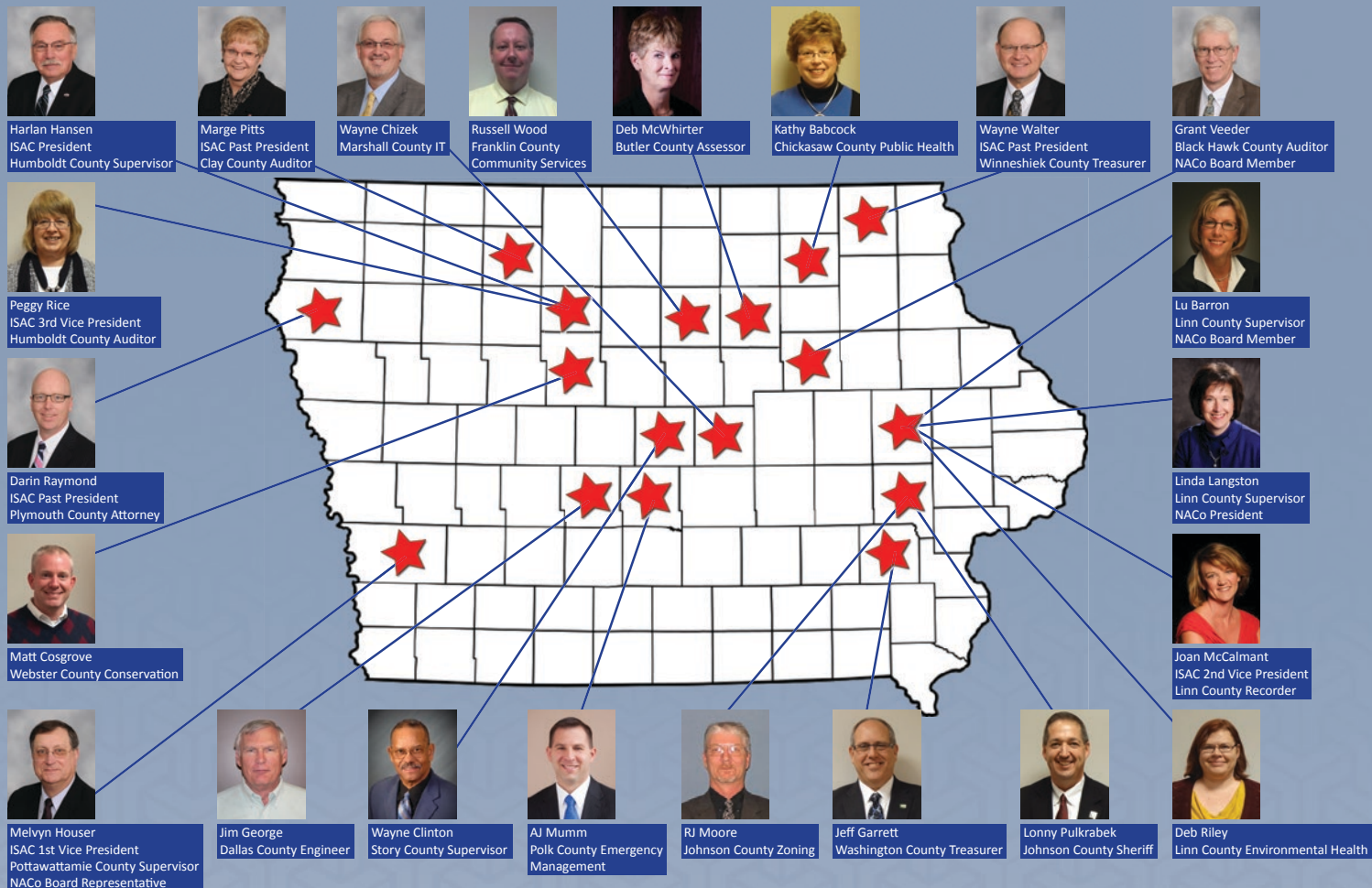
**PROBLEM:** Mortgages are often pooled, sold and resold as mortgage-backed securities. Companies like Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems, Inc. (MERS) have been developed to act as the mortgagee of record when recording land instruments. Members of MERS can then trade, sell, transfer and otherwise assign mortgages without recording these mortgage assignments with the county recorder. As a result, property owners lose the ability to have clear chain of title and counties lose the recording fees on these mortgage assignments. In addition, treasurers have difficulty locating lenders for tax sales.

**SOLUTION:** Clarify Iowa's recording statutes to require that assignments of mortgage must be recorded with the county recorder.

# Iowa State Association of Counties 2014 Legislative Priorities

## 2014 ISAC Board of Directors

Each of ISAC's affiliates has one seat on ISAC's Board of Directors (except Supervisors, which have three). According to ISAC's Articles of Incorporation, the Directors shall be elected annually at the annual or special meeting of each affiliated association.



## 2014 ISAC Legislative Policy Committee

This Legislative Policy Committee is composed of two representatives from each ISAC affiliate. The committee has worked together to create this short and cohesive set of legislative objectives for ISAC to pursue in 2014.

**Committee Chair:** Melvyn Houser, Pottawattamie County Supervisor and ISAC 1st Vice-President

### Assessors

Dale McCrea, Muscatine County  
Deb McWhirter, Butler County

### Auditors

Ken Kline, Cerro Gordo County  
Dennis Parrott, Jasper County

### Community Services

Lori Elam, Scott County  
Shane Walter, Sioux County

### Conservation

Dan Cohen, Buchanan County  
Matt Cosgrove, Webster County

### County Attorneys

Darin Raymond, Plymouth County  
John Werden, Carroll County

### Emergency Management

Mike Goldberg, Linn County  
AJ Mumm, Polk County

### Engineers

Paul Assman, Crawford County  
Lyle Brehm, Tama/Poweshiek County

### Environmental Health

Eric Bradley, Scott County  
Jon McNamee, Black Hawk County

### Information Technology

Micah Cutler, Franklin/Hardin County  
Jeff Rodda, Polk County

### Public Health

Kathy Babcock, Chickasaw County  
Patti Sallee, Louisa County

### Recorders

Kathy Flynn Thurlow, Dubuque County  
Sue Vande Kamp, Story County

### Sheriffs and Deputies

Don DeKock, Mahaska County  
Jerry Dunbar, Washington County

### Supervisors

Wayne Clinton, Story County  
Cara Marker-Morgan, Fremont County

### Treasurers

Judy Crain, Fremont County  
Dianne Kiefer, Wapello County

### Zoning

Joe Buffington, Henry County  
RJ Moore, Johnson County



*Save the Date!*



Join us March 12, 2014!



Iowa State Association of Counties  
5500 Westown Parkway, Suite 190  
West Des Moines, IA 50266  
Phone: 515.244.7181  
Fax: 515.244.6397

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

## Fall School a Success

ISAC would like to thank all attendees of the 2013 ISAC Fall School of Instruction held on November 13-15. More than 800 county officials traveled to Des Moines for this year's fall school held at Veterans Memorial Community Choice Credit Union Convention Center. We would also like to thank the nearly 60 exhibitors that attended. Their attendance enables us to keep

registration fees low. A conference of this scale would not be possible without the support of our exhibitors and preferred vendors (listed on page 21).

As always, we greatly appreciate any feedback about our conferences and events. All feedback is taken into consideration when planning and making alterations to future conferences. Please contact us at [shorner@iowacounties.org](mailto:shorner@iowacounties.org) if you ever have any comments or suggestions.

## ISAC Steps to Wellness

The ISAC Steps to Wellness program was a huge success! Participants walked an average of 10 miles each. Please see the amazing statistics below from the attendees who returned their log forms at the conference. If you have ideas on how to improve or expand on this program, please contact [shorner@iowacounties.org](mailto:shorner@iowacounties.org). Let's see how far we can walk next year!

Total number of participants: 80  
Total number of steps walked: 1,620,902  
Total number of miles walked: 810  
Average number of steps per participant: 20,261  
Average number of miles walked per participant: 10.1 miles

The top three walkers who will receive a free 2014 Spring School of Instruction registration are:

Michelle Giddings, Franklin County Auditor (59,003)  
Eldon Kruse, Lyon County Recorder (56,697)  
Machel Eichmeier, Hardin County Treasurer (47,274)

Randomly selected winners are:

Elaine Armstrong, Page County Supervisor  
Carolyn Robertson, Mills County Auditor

Thank you to the 2013 ISAC Steps to Wellness Participants:

Elaine Armstrong, Page County Supervisor  
Nancy Auen, Sac County Recorder  
Jacki Backhaus, Worth County Auditor  
Teresa Backman, Winneshiek County Recorder  
Bonny Baker, Taylor County Auditor  
Kathy Bennett, Calhoun County Recorder  
Al Bloemendaal, Sioux County Supervisor  
Carolyn Blum, Shelby County Treasurer  
Susan Bonham, Harrison County Auditor  
Phil Bootsma, Osceola County Supervisor  
Kurt Brown, O'Brien County Recorder  
Carleen Bruning, Montgomery County Recorder  
Sandy Bubke, Monona County Zoning  
Gloria Carr, Floyd County Auditor  
Jerri Christman, Guthrie County Auditor

Kris Colby, Winnebago County Recorder  
Rhonda Deters, Grundy County Auditor  
Machel Eichmeier, Hardin County Treasurer  
Michelle Eisenman, Hancock County Auditor  
John Etheredge, Johnson County Supervisor  
Kris Glienke, Cherokee County Auditor  
Michelle Giddings, Franklin County Auditor  
Shirley Goyette, Clay County Recorder  
Paula Hart, Jones County Environmental Health  
Dick Heidloff, Lyon County Treasurer  
Vickie Jurens, Emmet County Treasurer  
Teresa Kanning, Cass County CPC  
Jan Keidemann, Bremer County CPC  
Liz Kenison, Worth County Recorder  
Becky Kirchgatter, Cerro Gordo County Deputy Auditor  
Donna Klein, Sioux County Deputy Treasurer  
Christine Kleinmeyer, Keokuk County Treasurer  
Arlyn Kleinwolterink, Sioux County Supervisor  
Ron Kohn, Mills County Supervisor  
Charles Kruse, Grundy County Recorder  
Eldon Kruse, Lyon County Recorder  
Ana Lair, Henry County Treasurer  
Chris Lee, Des Moines County Conservation  
Paula Lemke, Cerro Gordo County GIS  
William Leupold, Dickinson County Supervisor  
Sue Lloyd, Buena Vista County Auditor  
Sara Lucas, Cherokee County Assistant Auditor  
Tracey Marshall, Cass County Treasurer  
Hank Mason, Monona County IT  
Eugene Meiners, Carroll County Supervisor  
Cindy Messersmith, Chickasaw County Recorder  
Cara Morgan, Fremont County Supervisor  
Nate Mueller, Clinton County Zoning  
Tina Mulgrew, Jasper County Deputy Auditor  
Terrence Neuzil, Johnson County Supervisor  
Karla Niederkofler, Winnebago County Auditor  
Charlie Parkhurst, Shelby County Supervisor  
Kris Pauley, Harrison County Deputy Auditor  
Shannon Paulus, Mitchell County Supervisor  
Colleen Pearce, Cerro Gordo County Recorder  
Julie Phillips, Ida County Recorder  
Sheila Phillips, Harrison County Treasurer's Office



Marge Pitts, Clay County Auditor  
Veronica Rardin, Boone County Recorder  
Peggy Rice, Humboldt County Auditor  
Carolyn Robertson, Mills County Auditor  
Dusten Rolando, Floyd/Chickasaw County Engineer  
Kris Rowley, Dickinson County Auditor  
Kim Schae, Hamilton County Auditor  
Peggy Schluttenhofer, Wright County Treasurer  
Janelle Schneider, Adair County Recorder  
Karen Schwanebeck, Marion County Recorder  
Tracie Siemers, Cerro Gordo County Auditor

Kelly Spees, Jefferson County Recorder  
Wade Stierwalt, Scott County CPC  
Patti Treibel, Hamilton County CPC  
Jayson Vande Hoef, Osceola County Supervisor  
Bret VandeLune, Polk County Zoning  
Amanda Waske, Ringgold County Auditor  
Suzanne Watson, Pottawattamie County CPC  
Bonnie Whitney, Palo Alto County Recorder  
Dan Widmer, Washington County Auditor  
Deb Winke, Allamakee County Recorder  
Denny Wright, Sioux County Supervisor

## Books for Blank

A HUGE thank you goes out to all Books for Blank donors. The ISAC community service project was a huge success, raking in 86 books donated and \$567.25 in cash donations. ISAC staff dropped off the books and a check to Blank Children's Hospital in Des Moines, and they were very thankful for the extremely generous donation. Below are the names of some of the donors. We apologize in advance if we missed any names.

Mary Andrew, Decatur County Treasurer  
Anonymous Donors  
Elaine Armstrong, Page County Supervisor  
Marilyn Austin, Iowa County CPC  
Kathy Babcock, Chickasaw County Public Health  
Darrell Bauman, Dallas County Treasurer  
Kathy Bennett, Calhoun County Recorder  
Sarah Berndt, Henry County CPC  
Al Bloemendaal, Sioux County Supervisor  
Carleen Bruning, Montgomery County Recorder  
Nancy Booton, Lee County Recorder  
Debbie Cannon, Ringgold County Treasurer  
Wayne Clinton, Story County Supervisor  
Dan Cohen, Buchanan County Conservation  
Kris Colby, Winnebago County Recorder  
Richard Crouch, Mills County Supervisor  
Phil Dougherty, Cerro Gordo County Supervisor  
Jill Eaton, Marshall County Community Services  
Michelle Eisenman, Hancock County Auditor  
Patty Erickson Puttmann, Woodbury County CPC  
Denise Fraise, Lee County Auditor  
Joan Fraise, Lee County Auditor's Office  
Shirley Goyette, Clay County Recorder  
Katie Hammond, Louisa County Conservation  
Robin Harlow, ISAC  
Brad Holtan, ISAC  
Stacy Horner, ISAC  
Andrea Jansen, ISAC  
Vickie Jurrens, Emmet County Treasurer  
Don Kampman, Grundy County IT Director

Liz Kenison, Worth County Recorder  
Sheila Kobliska, Chickasaw County CPC  
Ron Kohn, Mills County Supervisor  
Laura Kopska, Tama County Auditor  
Eldon Kruse, Lyon County Recorder  
Paula Lemke, Cerro Gordo County GIS  
William Leupold, Dickinson County Supervisor  
Sue Lloyd, Buena Vista County Supervisor  
Joan McCalmant, Linn County Recorder  
Deb McWhirter, Butler County Assessor  
Cindy Messersmith, Chickasaw County Recorder  
Jeff Miller, Dubuque County Conservation  
Larry Murphy, Fayette County Alumni  
Sharon Nieman, Plymouth County Community Services  
Tammy Norman, ISAC  
Nancy Parrott, Jasper County Recorder  
Shannon Paulus, Mitchell County Supervisor  
Bill Peterson, ISAC  
Julie Phillips, Ida County Recorder  
Zetta Pilch, Iowa County Attorneys Case Management Project  
Plymouth County  
Recorders affiliate  
Peggy Rice, Humboldt County Auditor  
Todd Rickert, Tama County CPC  
Chuck Rieken, Cass County Supervisor  
Deb Roberts, Floyd County Recorder  
Joel Rohne, Worth County IT Director  
Patti Sallee, RN, Louisa County Public Health  
Janelle Schneider, Adair County Recorder  
Karen Schwanebeck, Marion County Recorder  
Karen Shafer, Ringgold County Recorder  
Sue Shonka, Bremer County Treasurer  
Ann Skaggs, Van Buren Recorder  
Kelly Spees, Jefferson County Recorder  
Molly Steffen, ISAC  
Grant Veeder, Black Hawk County Auditor  
Shirley Wandling, Henry County Recorder  
Amanda Waske, Ringgold County Auditor  
Deb Winke, Allamakee County Recorder  
Denny Wright, Sioux County Supervisor

# meetings

## 2014 Spring School

It's a new year, so don't forget to mark your calendars for the 2014 ISAC Spring School of Instruction being held in conjunction with County Day at the Capitol. Online registration for both events will open at 8:30 am on Wednesday, January 15, 2014. Spring school will take place on March 13-14, 2014 at the Des Moines Marriott Downtown. County Day at the Capitol will be held on Wednesday, March 12, 2014. Please remember that you must pre-register for spring school on the ISAC website before making your hotel reservation through the online housing system. Agendas are included on the following page.

In addition to the Des Moines Marriott Downtown, hotel room blocks will be available at the Renaissance Des Moines Savery Hotel, Holiday Inn Downtown and Embassy Suites Des Moines Downtown. A limited number of hotel rooms will be available on Tuesday evening, March 11 prior to County Day at the Capitol, so please note this when making your hotel accommodations.

All spring school activities and affiliate meetings will take place in one location again this year, the Des Moines Marriott Downtown. You can find all of the information that you need to prepare for the spring school on the conference website, <http://www.iowacounties.org/meetings-and-events/spring-school-of-instruction/>. From conference registration information to affiliate agendas to maps of downtown Des Moines, the website is updated on a regular basis with new and important conference details.

This year's ISAC General Session will feature Keynote Speaker Stephen P. Tryon. Stephen Tryon is a Senior Vice President, Human Capital Management for online retailer Overstock.com, with responsibility for Facilities and the sustainability program. His past assignments at Overstock.com included managing the company's logistics operations

**By: Stacy Horner**

ISAC Meeting/Event Administrator



and international business. He joined Overstock in 2004 after 21 years as a soldier. While in uniform, Steve served as the Legislative Assistant to the Chief of Staff of the Army, Director of Plans for the 10th Mountain Division, Assistant Professor of Philosophy at the United States Military Academy, and commander of a company of paratroopers. He holds degrees from the United States Military Academy and Stanford University and is the author of *Accountability Citizenship* (2013). He has provided an article on page eight of this magazine. More information about Tryon will also be available on the ISAC website.

Affiliate agendas and miscellaneous affiliate meeting requests are due to ISAC by 4:30 pm on Friday, January 31, 2014. Online housing will close at 4:30 pm on Friday, February 14, 2014. Pre-registration for both events will close on Friday, February 28, 2014.

Please don't hesitate to contact ISAC (515.244.7181 or [shorner@iowacounties.org](mailto:shorner@iowacounties.org)) if you have any questions about our upcoming events in 2014!

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## **2014 County Day at the Capitol Agenda**

### **Wednesday, March 12, 2014, Iowa State Capitol**

#### **Wednesday, March 12**

9:00 am - 10:00 am	Affiliate Display Setup (Capitol Rotunda)
9:30 am	Event Registration (Wallace Building)
10:00 am - 11:00 am	Legislative Updates (Wallace Building Auditorium)
11:00 am - 3:00 pm	Affiliate Displays and Legislative Interaction (Capitol Rotunda)
11:30 am	Lunch (Capitol Rotunda West Wing)
3:00 pm	Affiliate Display Teardown (Capitol Rotunda)

## **2014 Spring School of Instruction Agenda**

### **March 13-14, 2014, Des Moines Marriott Downtown**

#### **Wednesday, March 12**

3:00 pm - 7:00 pm	Affiliate Committee Meetings (Time is available for small affiliate committee meetings - limited space available on first come, first served basis.)
4:00 pm - 6:00 pm	Exhibitor Setup

#### **Thursday, March 13**

ISAC Registration and Information Desk Hours: 8:00 am - 6:00 pm

Exhibit Hall Hours: 8:00 am - 6:00 pm

7:00 am - 8:00 am	Exhibitor Setup
8:00 am - 6:00 pm	ISAC Registration and Information Desk (Des Moines Exhibit Hall, Marriott)
8:00 am - 6:00 pm	Exhibit Hall Hours (Des Moines Exhibit Hall, Marriott)
8:00 am - 9:00 am	Exhibitor Morning Refreshments (Des Moines Exhibit Hall, Marriott)
9:00 am - 10:15 am	ISAC Educational Seminars (Iowa Ballroom, Marriott)
10:30 am - 12:30 pm	ISAC General Session (Iowa Ballroom, Marriott)
12:30 pm - 1:30 pm	Open Lunch
12:30 pm - 1:30 pm	Exhibitor Ice Cream Social (Des Moines Exhibit Hall, Marriott)
1:30 pm - 4:30 pm	Affiliate Time (Marriott)
4:30 pm - 6:00 pm	Exhibitor Reception and Vendor Drawing (Des Moines Exhibit Hall, Marriott)
6:00 pm - 8:30 pm	Hospitality Rooms (Marriott)
8:30 pm - 11:00 pm	ISAC Dance (Iowa Ballroom, Marriott)

#### **Friday, March 14**

ISAC Registration and Information Desk Hours: 7:30 am - 3:00 pm

7:30 am - 3:00 pm	ISAC Registration and Information Desk (Marriott 2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor)
7:30 am - 8:00 am	Morning Refreshments (Marriott 2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> Floors)
8:00 am - 12:00 pm	Affiliate Time (Marriott)
12:00 pm - 1:00 pm	ISAC Networking Lunch (Des Moines Exhibit Hall, Marriott)
1:00 pm - 5:00 pm	Affiliate Time (Marriott)

## **ISAC University**

Don't forget to register for this exciting and extremely educational conference being held on January 22-23, 2014 at the West Des Moines Marriott. All county officials and employees are encouraged to attend. More information including a detailed agenda can be found at [www.iowacounties.org](http://www.iowacounties.org). Pre-registration closes on January 14, 2014. See you there!

# meetings

## Two Easy Ways for Congress to Raise its Public Approval Rating

**By: Stephen Tryon**

Senior Vice President,  
Overstock.com  
Spring School Keynote Speaker



The recent article “Rancor in Washington Fans Public Disapproval” (*Wall Street Journal*, p. A1, July 24) notes that public disapproval of Congress has reached an all-time high of 83%. More telling still, the same article indicates people are finally making the shift from a general disapproval of Congress to a specific disapproval of the members of Congress who represent them—only 32% indicated their congressional representatives deserved re-election. These statistics should bother members of Congress. Months from now, Americans will have the chance to replace 87% of Congress if enough Americans choose to replace the Senators and Representatives who will stand for re-election. There are two easy steps our Senators and Representatives can take now that will dramatically improve the public approval rating of the United States Congress.

First, members of Congress need to change their websites to get them out of the 1990’s and into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Any internet executive will tell you that an engaging website is the key to driving desired behaviors by customers. Yet the websites of our members of Congress are still little more than electronic bulletin boards: one-way streets for members to pound their chests and tell us how wonderful they are. The techniques for soliciting constituent input are old-school and perfunctory: we can write letters or send emails, texts and blogs. These techniques are the 1990’s equivalent of a suggestion box—they offer no meaningful affirmation that a constituent’s input will be read or acted upon, and no feedback that shows an aggregation of what other voters think. Skyrocketing disapproval ratings tell us something needs to change.

Marketing professionals like to talk about the “call to action” in their promotional materials. They also like to talk about the “value proposition” included with any offering. The websites of our members of Congress have neither calls-to-action nor value propositions that are meaningful to most voters. Incorporating some basic features common to virtually all internet businesses would be easy. Member’s websites should have a secure account for every voter registered in that member’s district (or state, for websites of senators). Every bank in America has a secure-account feature; Congress could adopt this technology in short order. Once this feature is in place, a member of Congress could solicit input from her constituents (call to action!) and display the results of all input received to date as a reward for citizen participation (value proposition!). This simple strategy alone would dramatically and rapidly improve public approval ratings for Congress.

Second, members of Congress could all agree to take the Political Courage Test available online at [votesmart.org](http://votesmart.org). Richard Kimball, the President of Project Vote Smart, tells me that the numbers of congressional representatives who take the Political Courage Test has dropped from about 75% to less than 20% over the past 15 years. It has become common wisdom in both major parties that taking the test is politically risky because it forces yes or no answers to questions that officials would prefer to answer in an essay. But this merely highlights another major source of the public’s dissatisfaction. Many people have trouble telling politicians apart because of the politicians’ unwillingness to clearly take a stand on many issues. Last year’s presidential debates exemplified this problem: each candidate accused the other of holding views which the other candidate subsequently denied. When each of the two leading candidates for the presidency of the United States cannot discern what the other believes, we have a communication problem.

There is undoubtedly risk for a politician to communicate clearly and succinctly, but it is a job requirement of any elected public servant to accept that risk. Even as a business executive, my colleagues expect me to answer yes or no to yes-or-no questions, providing additional detail if invited or as required. This standard of conduct is essential for accountability to our shareholders and our employees. Congress has sent many Americans in harm’s way in recent years. Those Americans have gone willingly because they were sworn to defend our Constitution. Members of Congress also take an oath to defend our Constitution—they should not be exempt from the political risk of taking a standardized Political Courage Test.

The mere fact that members of Congress shy away from the test implies that they are somehow tricking voters into sending them to Washington through clever messaging. Consumers today are uncomfortable with this ambiguity. We can compare prices between like products using our cell phones as we walk from store to store. The fact that our elected officials feel it necessary to avoid a clear, standardized statement of their beliefs contributes to the public’s perception that members of Congress are hiding something, telling us what we want to hear at campaign events while doing we-know-not-what when out of public view. Having every sitting member of Congress take the Political Courage Test would send a clear message to Americans that our representatives are committed to giving us what we vote for.

Continues on next page.



## New Year's Resolutions

**By: Molly Steffen**

ISAC Case Management  
Specialist



Each January gives us the opportunity to reflect on the past 12 months and to begin to think about the possibilities of the coming year. For many of us, this ritual includes declaring our New Year's resolutions that typically have a negative focus on some of the weaknesses we would like to change about ourselves. In the following article by Sidney Anne Stone, she offers a different view which recommends incorporating a more positive approach to setting New Year's resolutions, which asks us to consider focusing on our strengths.

Although I have only been with CCMS for a short time, I have already met so many positive and energetic people who focus on building and strengthening our programs that will move us forward going into the New Year.

Here's to a happy and successful 2014!

\*\*\*\*\*

Every year while my friends and colleagues are making their lists of New Year's resolutions, I make a list of things for which I am grateful. I pat myself on the back for not only surviving but thriving through another year, and I recognize my list of accomplishments throughout that year.

Going into a fresh new year, I try to bring something positive from the year before. That positive energy propels me into the upcoming year ready to take on all-new challenges and exciting adventures. As with anything, if you go into it looking at the negative, you will bring the negative with you. If you focus on

the positive, that positive energy comes with you. I've always looked at resolutions as focusing on all the negative things that you don't like about yourself and, quite honestly, are probably not going to change anyway. By early- or mid-February, most of those same friends and colleagues are depressed and miserable about how they failed to achieve anything on their list of resolutions.

The best we can all hope for is to be the best possible versions of ourselves. Instead of focusing on all of that noise in our heads and thinking about all the ways in which we think we fall short, maybe we should just spend that energy building ourselves up. Take a mental inventory of ourselves, focus on the good and build on it. Find what is working in our lives and play to our strengths.

Don't get me wrong, I am not suggesting that we don't all have room for improvement. I just think that when you start in a negative place, you stay there. Starting a fresh year with a list of things you don't like about yourself and want to change is negative. Shift your focus to all of your positive achievements in the last year and you may find yourself naturally building momentum and wanting to keep it up.

When I look back at this last year and feel good about it, I want to continue on that path. It is not a formal list but it energizes me, and I want to bring it with me into the new year -- and, hopefully, you will too!

## congress approval...

Continued from page 8.

Two simple steps could rapidly and dramatically improve the public approval ratings for the United States Congress. Adopting standard 21<sup>st</sup> century web site technology would engage voters and give them the immediate gratification of knowing their views count. Taking the non-partisan Political Courage Test en masse would send a clear message that members of

Congress care about the public's perceptions and are doing their part to provide effective governance.

*Stephen Tryon, a former fellow in the office of Senator Max Cleland, is a Senior Vice President at internet retailer Overstock.com and the author of Accountability Citizenship.*

# ISAC brief

## Board Meeting Summary - November 13, 2013

The meeting was called to order and NACo representatives Andrew Goldschmidt and Lisa Cole were introduced to discuss NACo membership and services.

Bill introduced Jamie Cashman, future ISAC Government Relations Manager. Jamie gave a background and expressed his pride and excitement over the opportunity.

Wayne Chizek, Nominating Committee Member, reported the following 2014 ISAC Executive Committee

recommendation on behalf of the nominating committee that was made up of Harlan Hansen, Chair, Wayne Walter and he:

President Harlan Hansen

1<sup>st</sup> Vice President Melvyn Houser

2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President Joan McCalmant

3<sup>rd</sup> Vice President Peggy Rice

The recommendation was approved unanimously and the meeting was adjourned.

## General Session Summary - November 13, 2013

The General Session was called to order by ISAC Vice President Harlan Hansen, and the invocation was given by Burlin Matthews, Clay County Supervisor. Vice President Hansen led the membership in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Grant Veeder, ISAC Articles and Bylaws Committee Chair and Black Hawk County Auditor, explained a recommended amendment to the ISAC Articles that counties were notified of via mail prior to the conference. The membership amended the ISAC Articles to add two additional past presidents of ISAC to the ISAC Board of Directors.

ISAC Executive Director Bill Peterson recognized the ISAC Preferred Vendors and conference exhibitors. He unveiled the new ISAC website.

Linda Langston, NACo President and Linn County Supervisor, gave a NACo welcome and promoted her initiative: Resilient Counties.

Wayne Chizek, CoSTAR Committee Chair and Marshall County GIS Director, presented the 2013 ISAC Excellence in Action Awards to the ICIT Tech Team and the Johnson County Green Building Certification Program.

Melvyn Houser, ISAC Legislative Policy Committee Chair and Pottawattamie County Supervisor, presented

the 2013 ISAC Legislative Priorities to the membership. The membership moved the Rural Improvement Zones policy statement to a top priority by majority vote.

Grant Veeder notified the membership that the auditors will be furthering and broadening the discussion to include additional issues as the session moves forward in regards to the records requests legislative objective.

The 2014 ISAC Legislative Priorities were accepted as amended by the membership.

Mark Sybesma, Sioux County Supervisor, honored Mike Wentzien, former supervisors lobbyist, as the 2013 ISAC Golden Eagle. Mike Wentzien addressed the General Session.

Vice President Hansen shared the goals of his upcoming term as ISAC President.

The Veeder Twins performed "The Post-Election Blues."

Keynote Speaker Lance Spitzner, Training Director, SANS Securing the Human Program, presented "Exposing and Solving Your County's Human Vulnerabilities."

The General Session was adjourned.



## **Board Meeting Summary - December 4, 2013**

ISAC Vice President Harlan Hansen called the meeting to order and led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance. Incoming board members were in attendance, so introductions were given.

The ISAC Board of Directors meeting minutes from October 17-18, 2013 were reviewed and approved unanimously as written.

The ISAC Board was recessed and reconvened following the ETC Board meeting.

Bill Peterson reported that ISAC currently administers a self-funded health plan for 23 counties and ISAC staff. Wellmark Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Iowa acts as the third-party administrator for the plan. Amanda Baker, Wellmark, gave a presentation reviewing program highlights for 2013 and expected changes for the future. Amy Gould, Wellmark, gave an update on the ISAC Wellness program and reported huge success with an overall 81% member participation rate in 2013.

Bill gave an overview of the financials of the ISAC Group Health Program and reported an estimated net gain of \$240,000 with an ending fund balance of \$21.85 million in 2013. He reviewed the financial projections for FY 2014 and FY 2015 each including the Program paying for ACA fees (PCORI and transitional reinsurance fees) out of program reserves. The Board expressed concerns over the drop in reserves reflected in the report. Bill explained that the drop in reserves reflected would only occur if the program losses reached the maximum level. The following recommended actions were approved unanimously by the Board:

1. Approve recommended base rates with income increase of 5.59%.
2. Adopt discount proposal with loss of discount limited to 5% per year.
3. Adopt proposal to pay PCORI and transitional reinsurance fees through FY 2015.

Linda Hinton reported that clarification is needed in regards to the motion from the floor during the Fall School General Session moving the Rural Improvement Zones (RIZ) policy statement to a top priority. Language for two proposed top priorities were given to the Board. One proposal focused on RIZ alone and one included Tax Increment Financing language as was present in the original policy statement. The RIZ only top priority was approved unanimously by the Board.

Discussion ensued about the process of amending the legislative priorities from the floor without proper vetting by the committee and education/information present for all members. The

Board was asked to explore options for future procedure for amendments from the floor that would require advance notice, research, information, deliberation, etc.

Joan McCalmant requested on behalf of the Iowa County Recorders Association (ICRA) that the language regarding vital records copies increase under the User Fees legislative top priority be removed due to a vote by ICRA not to pursue the increase this year. The Board unanimously removed the language as recommended.

Jamie Cashman presented a staff work plan and goals for the top priorities and objectives for the upcoming session.

Hanna De Groot reported that an ISAC appointment to the Center for Rural Health and Primary Care Advisory Committee needs to be made. The Board unanimously appointed Shelby Kroona, Hamilton County, for the position at the recommendation of the Iowa Counties Public Health Association.

Melvyn Houser and Grant Veeder gave an update on NACo.

Brad Holtan gave an overview of the financial report dated October 31, 2013. The report was accepted unanimously by the Board.

Kristi Harshbarger gave an update on issues related to records requests.

Bill reported that he will be working with Linda Hinton to establish a limited contract for services during the next legislative session. Linda will act as support in dealing with mental health and disability services related issues.

Bill was approached by Story County regarding the need for funding assistance for its upcoming vision planning session – the next step in their goal setting process. Bill recommended funding a third of the basic costs of the project and using it as a pilot project moving forward with our goal setting program. ISAC will participate and have access to all reports. The recommended funding was approved unanimously by the Board.

Stacy Horner reviewed the fall school survey results, updated the board on ISAC University, the Spring School of Instruction, and the board meeting schedule for 2014.

The board meeting was adjourned following reports and inquiries from board members.

# lincoln letters

## Habeas Corpus, Part 4

**By: Grant Veeder**

Black Hawk County Auditor,  
NACo Board of Directors



Abraham Lincoln's common reputation is that of a kind and forbearing man. There is much evidence to support this estimation. But in order to preserve "the last best hope of earth," as he termed the democratic experiment that was the United States, Lincoln had to be willing to send young men to their deaths, to destroy the lives and livelihoods of thousands of people, and to take away rights cherished by all Americans, as in his suspension of the writ of habeas corpus.

Lincoln also had to put the execution of his policies in the hands of a vast number of subordinates, some of whom did not share his deft touch. General Ambrose Burnside comes to mind. Burnside earned plaudits early in the war for a successful amphibious assault in North Carolina. This led to promotions that unfortunately betrayed a lack of imaginative initiative. His frontal assaults at Antietam and Fredericksburg resulted in needless and horrific loss of life. Thus, he was demoted and put in charge of the Department of the Ohio. While not on the front lines, the states on the north side of the Ohio River had a large anti-war element, known politically as the Copperheads, and which had a more sinister manifestation as a shadowy quasi-military organization called the Knights of the Golden Circle. Burnside's ham-handed approach to dealing with this behind-the-lines threat was to issue in April of 1863 his General Order #38, which imposed the death penalty for those who actively aided the enemy. For good measure it also said that "[t]he habit of declaring sympathies for the enemy will no longer be tolerated in this department," and could result in hanging or at least exile.

Declarations of "sympathies for the enemy" covered a wide range of statements, and punishing any of them would appear to violate the Constitution's protection of free speech. This brings us to the third actor of our drama, Democratic Representative Clement Vallandigham of Ohio. Congressman Vallandigham was a notorious Copperhead and a powerful speaker who consistently criticized Lincoln and his war measures and strenuously opposed emancipation. He lost his seat in the House in 1862 but decided to run for governor of Ohio in 1863. When he heard of Burnside's Order #38, he openly scorned it, saying the Constitution gave him leave to "spit upon it and stamp it under foot." Learning that he was being shadowed by army agents, he provocatively baited them at a large rally, declaiming that the war was "for the purpose of crushing out liberty and erecting a despotism;... a war for the freedom of the blacks and the enslavement of the whites." Vallandigham was arrested on May 5 for his utterances, and the following day went before a military commission, which on May 16 found him guilty and

sentenced him to imprisonment for the remainder of the war.

Lincoln was unhappy to hear of this overzealousness on the part of Burnside, but the war was going badly and he felt he would encourage more anti-government activity if he undermined the authority of a military commander. Given that a nationally-known figure was being targeted, could Lincoln have prevented the arrest in the first place? Possibly, but he had his hands full. His Army of the Potomac, under a new general after Burnside's blunders, was trying to engage Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia at the time the order was promulgated, and Vallandigham was arrested near the end of the week-long Battle of Chancellorsville. Lee brilliantly defeated Joseph Hooker's superior numbers, and the butcher's bill drove Lincoln to distraction. When he received the news of the battle's outcome, he paced the floor in anguish, muttering to himself, "My God, my God, what will the country say?"

Several days later Lincoln commuted Vallandigham's sentence to banishment behind Confederate lines. This did not quell the furor that arose from Clement's arrest. Although a constitutional question was at stake, much of the hubbub was political in nature. Republicans supported the government's position in the case, and while not all Democrats were against the war, they were almost all against Lincoln, and found the Vallandigham imbroglio a convenient tool to stir up the party faithful in the year before Lincoln would presumably be seeking a second term. Congress had passed a law in March authorizing Lincoln to suspend habeas corpus, thus taking away the argument that Lincoln was violating the law by suspending it on his own, but critics said that the habeas writ should still be in operation in Union states away from the fighting, and besides, Vallandigham was only exercising his right to free speech.

Among other protestations, a group of Democrats in Albany led by former Congressman Erastus Corning sent Lincoln a list of resolutions censuring the administration for a number of its actions regarding civil liberties. Lincoln answered the charges in detail in a letter that became known as it circulated around the country as the Corning Letter. "Mr. Vallandigham," wrote Lincoln, "avows his hostility to the war on the part of the Union, and his arrest was made because he was laboring, with some effect, to prevent the raising of troops, to encourage desertions from the army, and to leave the rebellion without an adequate military force to suppress it.... Long experience has shown

Continues on next page.



that armies can not be maintained unless desertion shall be punished by the severe penalty of death. Must I shoot a simple-minded soldier boy who deserts, while I must not touch a hair of a wiley agitator who induces him to desert?" It is estimated that the Corning Letter was read by one-third of Americans, and it rallied support for the war in one of its darkest periods.

After Vallandigham's appeal for a writ of habeas corpus was rejected by the U.S. Circuit Court judge, his attorneys sought to have the case heard by the Supreme Court on a petition for a writ of certiorari. (That's this month's legal Latin look-up.) In *Ex Parte Vallandigham*, a skeleton court in February of 1864 voted 4-0 that it constitutionally had no jurisdiction over military tribunals unless Congress gave it to them, and thus would not consider the case. By this time, Vallandigham had left the Confederate States for Canada, whence he continued

his unsuccessful campaign for governor. By June of 1864 he had snuck back into Ohio, and Lincoln wrote but never sent a note telling the authorities to keep an eye on him. Both Lincoln and Vallandigham had survived the latter's first martyrdom; Lincoln was inclined to avoid a second.

In the Corning Letter, Lincoln focused on the latitude allowed by the Constitution when the public safety was threatened. He said he wouldn't disdain the government's extraordinary wartime powers just because they wouldn't be legal in times of peace. But does this mean that the military has unfettered authority during a war, answerable only to the commander-in-chief? The Supreme Court would eventually have something to say about that.

*To be continued.*

## counties in the spotlight

### Innovative Bridge Project in Buchanan County

Buchanan County Secondary Roads has replaced the bridge on V-65 south of Jesup. The new bridge is part of a demonstration project utilizing a new design software program developed by the Short Span Steel Bridge Alliance (SSSBA). Called eSPAN140, the design software was developed to provide a more economical manner of replacing bridges. Access to and use of the software is free at [www.shortspansteelbridges.org](http://www.shortspansteelbridges.org).

The old bridge was built in 1947 and had a sufficiency rating of less than 50. It has been replaced with a modern 40-foot-wide bridge with steel beams and rebar galvanized by AZZ Galvanizing Services.

Buchanan County Engineer Brian Keierleber, who is spearheading the project, explains, "This is an opportunity to participate on a project that will provide major cost savings for the residents of Buchanan County in the short term and will develop a process to have major cost savings in the long term."

This demonstration bridge project is a joint effort with West Virginia University, the University of Wyoming and Iowa State University.

You can follow the progress of the bridge, including its fabrication, delivery and installation on the SSSBA blog at <http://blog.shortspansteelbridges.org>.



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## affiliate highlights

### Iowa County Recorders Certification Program Grads

The Iowa County Recorders Association (ICRA) recognized the first graduating class of a new Iowa County Recorders Certification program at a ceremony held on Friday, November 15, 2013. The graduation event occurred in conjunction with the ISAC Fall School of Instruction in Des Moines. Forty-seven Recorders and three Deputy Recorders received certificates and pins for completing the program.

The certification program provides Iowa county recorders and deputy recorders with the opportunity to learn how to effectively and professionally fulfill their elected duties and to better serve their communities. It was created by the ICRA with the assistance of personnel from the Iowa State University Extension and Outreach office. Participants in the program must complete 30 credit hours of training including 21 core credits and 9 elective credits. The areas covered in the program are leadership and ethics, open meetings and open records, communications, human resources and office management, the Iowa Code and resources, technology applications, and local government and budgets.

County recorders and deputy recorders who become certified must complete continuing education classes to retain their certification. The completion of the program is a testimony to the dedication these graduates have to providing excellence in public service.



Congratulations to the new Certified Iowa County Recorders and Deputies!

First row (L-R): Steve Mangan, Karen Ford, Marie Krutzfield, Kelly Spees, Janice Jacobs, Eldon Kruse, Chuck Kruse. Second row (L-R): Deb Winke, Sue Vande Kamp, Karen Schwanebeck, Teddy Walker. Third row (L-R): Joan McCalmant, Toni Wilkinson, Melissa Bird, Deb Peyton, Nancy Auen, Sue Meyer, Cindy Messersmith. Fourth row (L-R): Travis Case, Megan Clyman, Kristin Colby, Colleen Pearce, Liz Kenison, June Brady, Shari OBannon, Julie Phillips, Judy McCarthy, Arlene Schauf. Fifth row (L-R): Janelle Schneider, Denise Meeves, Peggy Cummings, Deb Kupka, Tena Hinkel, Lorie Thompson, Lisa Smith, Kathy Bennett, Jo Greiner. Sixth row (L-R): Bonnie Whitney, Ann Skaggs, Shirley Goyette, Sandie Smith, Carleen Bruning, Nancy Parrott, Jolynn Goodchild, Marilyn Dopheide, Teresa Bockman. Absent, Denise Allan, Tracy Casady, Deb Roberts, Rita Vargas

### Assessor Outstanding Member

Sheri Blough Neff, Jefferson County Assessor, was nominated and selected to receive the "Outstanding Member" Award at the Iowa State Association of Assessor's Annual Conference and School of Instruction held in Des Moines September 29 – October 2, 2013. The recipient of this award is selected based on leadership qualities, professionalism and contributions to the Association.

Sheri attended Indian Hills Community College. She started her assessment career in 1973 and was appointed Deputy Assessor in 1977. In 1986 she was appointed Jefferson County Assessor. Sheri is a member of the International Association of Assessing Officers (IAAO), Iowa State Association of Assessors (ISAA), and has earned the designation of Master Senior Appraiser (MSA) from the National Association of Master Appraisers.

Sheri makes sure to keep all of her taxpayers informed of revaluations, policy changes, and constantly strives to have an educated staff. She leaves quite an impression on the newer members of the ISAA as she is always willing to share her experience and knowledge.

Sheri has served the ISAA in several capacities over the years, currently serving on the IPERS and Ag Land Use Adjustment committees. In 2007, she also served as ISAA President.







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See you at the ISAC Conference in November!



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# 2014 calendar

## January 2014

- 14 CCMS Administrators Meeting  
(Hilton Garden Inn, Johnston)
- 22-23 ISAC University  
(West Des Moines Marriott)
- 24 ISAC Board of Directors Meeting  
(ISAC Office)

## February 2014

- 4 ISAC Executive Board Meeting  
(ISAC Office)
- 5 Statewide Supervisors Meeting  
(Courtyard by Marriott, Ankeny)
- 19-20 ISAC Board of Directors Meeting  
(ISAC Office)

## March 2014

- 1-5 NACo Legislative Conference  
(Washington Hilton, Washington, D.C.)
- 12 County Day at the Capitol  
(Des Moines)
- 13-14 ISAC Spring School of Instruction  
(Des Moines Marriott Downtown)

## April 2014

- 1-2 Governor's Conference on Public Health  
(Ames)
- 8 CCMS Administrators Meeting  
(Hilton Garden Inn, Johnston)
- 25 ISAC Board of Directors Meeting  
(ISAC Office)

## May 2014

- 14-16 ISCTA Annual May School  
(Ramada Hotel and Convention Center, Waterloo)

## June 2014

- 11-13 ICIT Midyear Conference  
(West Des Moines Marriott)
- 25 ISAC Board of Directors Meeting  
(ISAC Office)

## July 2014

- 8 CCMS Administrators Meeting  
(Stoney Creek Inn, Johnston)
- 11-14 NACo County Solutions and Idea Marketplace  
(New Orleans, LA)
- 29-2 Auditors Annual Conference  
(Hotel Blackhawk, Davenport)

## August 2014

- 21-22 ISAC LPC Retreat  
(Hilton Garden Inn, Johnston)

## September 2014

- 11-12 ISAC Board of Directors Retreat  
(Humboldt County)
- 28-1 Assessors Annual Conference  
(Embassy Suites Des Moines Downtown)

## October 2014

- 14 CCMS Administrators Meeting  
(Hilton Garden Inn, Johnston)
- 15-16 CCMS Fundamentals Training  
(Courtyard by Marriott, Ankeny)
- 16-17 ISAC Board of Directors Meeting  
(ISAC Office)

## November 2014

- 6 CCMS Advanced Case Management Meeting  
(Stoney Creek Inn, Johnston)
- 12-14 ISAC Fall School of Instruction  
(Veteran's Memorial Community Choice  
Credit Union Convention Center, Des Moines)

## December 2014

- 3 ISAC Board of Directors Meeting  
(ISAC Office)
- 9-11 ICEA Annual Conference  
(Ames)

If you have any questions about the meetings listed above or would like to add an affiliate meeting to the ISAC calendar, please contact Stacy Horner at [shorner@iowacounties.org](mailto:shorner@iowacounties.org).

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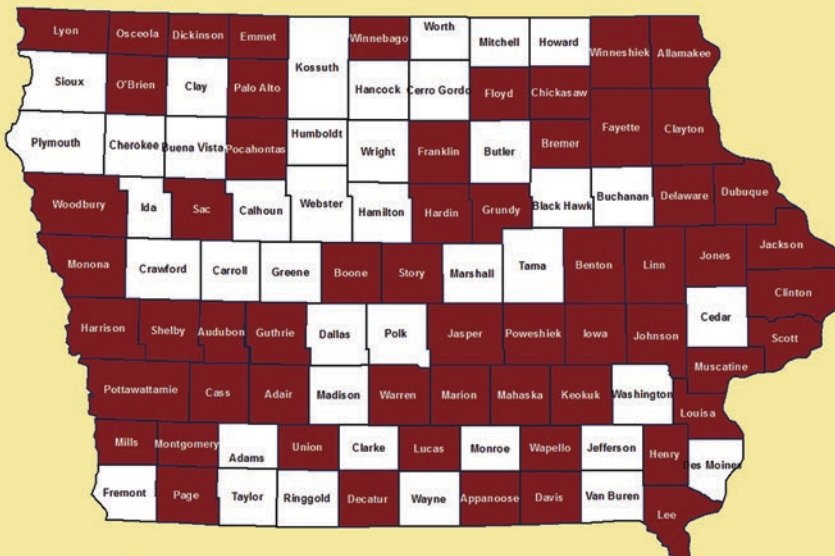
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