



ISAC EXCELLENCE IN ACTION AWARD

A competitive awards program that seeks to identify and recognize innovative county government employees, programs, and ISAC affiliates.

The ISAC Excellence in Action Award committee will rate each nomination based on the following seven attributes: creativity, innovation, cost savings, replication, leadership, increased efficiency, cooperation with others, and perseverance. Awards will be presented at the 2021 ISAC Annual Conference General Session on August 25 in Des Moines. Winners will also be recognized on the ISAC website and in a news release.

- ✓ **INNOVATION AND CREATIVITY**
- ✓ **LEADERSHIP**
- ✓ **REPLICATION**
- ✓ **COST SAVINGS**
- ✓ **EFFICIENCY**
- ✓ **COOPERATION**
- ✓ **PERSERVERANCE**

NOMINATION FORM

- Attach a narrative of the program or individual (three page limit) Criteria and guidelines included on the next page.
- Return all nominations by June 1, 2021 (postmarked date) to:
Iowa State Association of Counties
Attn: Jacy Ripperger
5500 Westown Parkway, Suite 190
West Des Moines, IA 50266
- OR email your application form (containing all the information on the form below) to **jripperger@iowacounties.org**.

Please fill out each field completely:

Please indicate nomination type: Program Individual

Name of program/individual: Conservation Board County or affiliate: Webster

Name of nominator: Matt Cosgrove Title: Conservation Director

Nominator's phone: (515) 576-4258 Nominator's email: mcosgrove@webstercounties.org

ISAC Excellence In Action

Webster County Conservation Board – Tiny House Project

Thanks to a recent partnership with Iowa Central Community College and the Fort Dodge Correctional Facility, Webster County has joined the growing “glamping” movement; a form of glamorous camping. Three tiny houses are available for overnight lodging at Iowa’s largest Off-Highway Vehicle Park.

In 2017, the Conservation Board opened a 33-site, \$3 million dollar full-service campground that was funded through a variety of state, federal and local dollars. A recent partnership with the college and correctional facility allowed the board to install three tiny houses within the campground to provide another lodging option and generate additional income for Webster County. The Conservation Department manages the Gypsum City OHV Park through a cooperative agreement with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources and Webster County Improvement Corporation. The park offers 800 acres and over 60-miles of trails for off-road motorcycles, ATV’s and Off-Road Vehicles (ORV). Gypsum City is Iowa’s largest destination for off-road, motorized recreation.

The project was created through a joint venture with ICCC’s Carpentry Program that is housed in the Fort Dodge Correctional Facility. ICCC Instructor Dan Oswald coordinates the program. A pilot program through a federal “Second Chance” Pell Grant funded the project. Traditional students were not using the allocated money for Pell so the funds were used to offer college level classes and degrees in the walls of the prison. The houses were constructed inside the correctional facility by inmates learning the construction trades and were delivered to the park upon completion. Each house took approximately a semester to complete from start-to-finish. The houses include a restroom, sleeping areas, kitchens and air conditioning. The houses offer a variety of themes (Mill House, Hunting, Bunk House) and different floorplans. They can accommodate two – four guests. The houses are available for rent on the www.mycountyparks.com website for \$50-75 per night.

The Conservation Board paid the college \$12,000 per house for materials, supplies, equipment and delivery. The Conservation Staff completed the installation and spent approximately \$5,000 on interior furnishings and the exterior decking.

In 2020, the tiny houses gained popularity during the pandemic and served as an escape to park visitors and riders. The houses generated over \$15,000 in revenue and online reservations at the park increased by over 100%. At this current rate, the board will have all three houses completely paid-off in less than four years. The additional revenue created by the

houses will be re-invested in the campground. The board is considering the addition of more tiny houses and cabins.

The program has been a “win-win-win-win” for the community college, correctional facility, inmates and Webster County. We look forward to expanding the partnership in the years to come.

Tiny Homes!



- **The Bunk House**
- **Sleeps 4 (Great for families)**
- **\$75/night**

The Mill House

- **Sleeps 2**
- **\$50/night**



The Hunting Cabin

- **Sleeps 2**
- **Wheelchair friendly**
 - Ramp, widened door openings and lowered countertops
- **\$75/night**



