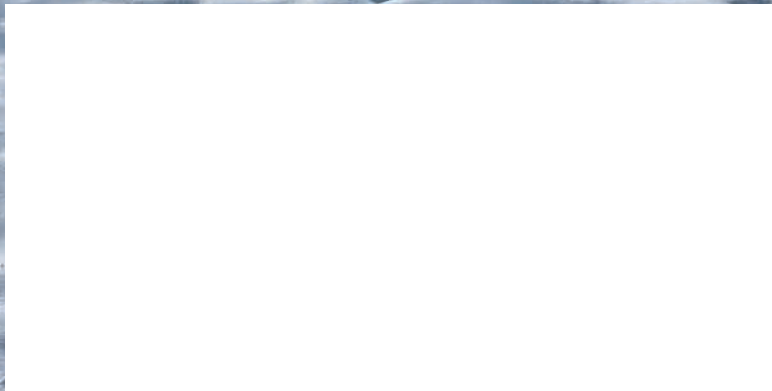


The Iowa County

magazine

December 2021
County Supervisors



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Rachel Bennett, EDITOR

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County Supervisors

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ISAC's Mission:

To promote effective and responsible county government
for the people of Iowa.

ISAC's Vision:

To be the principal, authoritative source of representation,
information and services for and about county government
in Iowa.

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Endorsed Preferred Vendor of the Month

Group Benefit Partners - ISAC Group Benefits Program

With a new year approaching, counties are already working to determine their FY 2023 budget. The employee benefits package is a major spend for employers, and Iowa counties are no exception. It can be difficult to predict anticipated expenses for employee benefits when renewal rates are not released until the spring. Members of the ISAC Group Benefits Program have an advantage – renewal rates for July are already being shared with member counties. Counties in the ISAC Program can set budgets and renew their plans six months before their renewal date. If your county is interested in learning more, please reach out to Group Benefit Partners (GBP) to see how we can work together.

Other advantages of joining the ISAC Group Benefits Program:

Unbiased Consulting from Group Benefit Partners

Counties that participate can use GBP's consulting services for all aspects of their employee benefits package. Options such as joining the ISAC pool, looking at fully-insured options, considering self-insuring, or implementing a partial-self fund plan can all be considered. GBP works with private and public employers across the state and can work with counties to make decisions that have a long-term positive impact on both the employer and the employee.

Free Third-Party COBRA Administration

COBRA rules and regulations have always been complicated, and COVID considerations have only added to the burden. Employee terminations, Medicare entitlement, divorce, and death all have different impacts on length of eligibility and effective dates. The liability counties take on, and the time spent administering COBRA benefits can be overwhelming. That is why in July 2021, ISAC began offering free Third-Party COBRA Administration to member counties. Midwest Group Benefits works alongside GBP to relieve the employer of the added challenges of properly administering COBRA to Qualified Beneficiaries.

Employee Navigator – Online Benefits Enrollment Platform

All ISAC GroupBenefits enrollments are processed on one online platform, Employee Navigator. Counties can choose to self-administer the portal or allow employees to access and make benefit selections online through a computer or smart phone. Regardless of how enrollments are entered, human resources has a "one-stop shop" for viewing eligibility, running reports, keeping and distributing documents, and storing all benefit details. Any policy sponsored by ISAC is cached on the Employee Navigator portal. In addition, the COBRA administration is electronically synced; that means that with just a couple clicks, an employer can enter a termination, process COBRA documentation, and have all the required paperwork mailed directly to the employee.



Ryan Berven

Partner, Group Benefit Partners
ryanb@gbp-ins.com

Endorsed Preferred Vendor of the Month

Here is what county administrators have to say about using Employee Navigator:

- I love being able to enroll all benefits in the same program/platform.
- It has a user-friendly format.
- It streamlines the enrollment process.
- Employee Navigator is so easy to use and navigate.

Many outside brokerage firms might charge \$5,000/year or more for an online enrollment platform. ISAC Group Benefits Program member counties receive this tool free of charge from GBP and ISAC.

Consolidated Billing

The online enrollment tool allows member counties to receive one monthly invoice for all ISAC-sponsored group benefits. Medical, Dental, Vision, Life, Accident, and Critical Illness premiums are reported on one bill and paid directly to ISAC with one payment. This significantly reduces administrative paperwork and reconciliation upkeep for the auditor's office or HR department.

Educational Webinars

With all the complexities surrounding employee benefits, employers often feel like they need an accountant, attorney, and insurance expert all in the same day. ISAC and GBP sponsor quarterly educational webinars featuring topics such as legislative regulations, eligibility requirements, and compliance obligations.

For more information, please reach out to Brad Holtan (ISAC), bholtan@iowacounties.org, or Ryan Berven (GBP), ryanb@gbp-ins.com.



Legislative Outlook - ISAC 2022 Top Priorities

Competency and Treatment for Persons in the Justice System

Inmates are confined in county jails when their criminal cases are suspended pending a competency evaluation and treatment (if deemed appropriate) per Iowa Code Chapter 812. Those individuals are frequently mentally ill with exacerbation of severe symptomology. Wait times for inmates in county jails to the Iowa Medical and Classification Center (IMCC) can be three to nine months and at Cherokee Mental Health Institution (MHI) two to four months. The inmate frequently remains untreated and symptomatic behaviors include suicidal and homicidal ideation, assaultive behaviors, delusional thinking, etc. Those inmates who are found 'not competent and not restorable' have their criminal proceedings dismissed per law. They are typically returned to the community due to limited beds in the two remaining MHIs. It is rare that MHIs or private community providers have security staff for those individuals who, due to their incompetence, continue to have assaultive or dangerous behaviors.



Lucas Beenken, Jamie Cashman

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Iowa Law established competency evaluations to be done for certain individuals who have mental health/brain health issues who have been arrested in Iowa Code Chapter 812. Four problems currently exist: 1. It can take three to nine months, as stated earlier, to get a person into state programs that provide the evaluations; 2. Iowa law is unclear on who is responsible for payment of the competency stay under Iowa Code §812.3; 3. When persons are determined incompetent to stand trial, they are not always able to access services while incarcerated and instead, their illnesses may continue to exacerbate; and 4. Frequently, hospitals are not able to accept placements of individuals with high acuity into their inpatient psychiatric units due to the level of care that they require and the level of care that can be provided in the unit.

To address this, Iowa Code §812.3 should be changed to clarify which state agency is responsible for competency evaluations and holds for persons with mental health/brain health issues. Secondly, the state should appropriate the funding necessary to expand the number of beds available for competency evaluations so persons do not need to wait, possibly without services or medication, for extended periods of time to get the evaluations done. In addition, the development of a civil forensic unit should be explored at the state's current MHIs for non-violent offenders and at IMCC for offenders who may be considered dangerous. Once an individual is deemed not restorable but still a danger to the community, that person should be placed in the appropriate unit. If at a certain point, that individual is no longer in the custody of the department of corrections, they should be funded by the Department of Human Services (DHS). There also needs to be a change in the Iowa Code process in 812 that changes their custody from the Department of Corrections (DOC) to DHS at that point. This is not a 229 issue. Because this originated out of a criminal proceeding, it should not be turned over to 229. DHS and DOC need to jointly develop a civil forensic unit with input from law enforcement, MH/DS Regions, Judicial Mental Health Advocates, etc. There needs to be a facility where individuals with mental illness can obtain treatment in a secure environment. This will also allow those who have been found 'not competent and not restorable' a multi-tiered program based upon the individual's acuity for a safe reentry to the community.

Lastly, DHS and other state agencies should work with the Iowa Community Services Association and the Iowa State Sheriffs' and Deputies' Association to implement Tertiary Care Hospitals in the state that are geographically dispersed to meet the needs of individuals who require a higher level of care than is currently available in an inpatient unit in Iowa.

Mental Health and Disability Services (MH/DS)

With the historic change in how MH/DS are funded in SF 619, there is a need to address a number of issues for counties/regions to ease this transition and to make sure there is a continuity of these essential services for all Iowans. As we move through the transition to funding MH/DS services to the State of Iowa, ISAC supports that the following issues be addressed either through legislation or administrative rule. One, ISAC supports that all remaining carry-forward balances at the end of this fiscal year remain in the region of origin to be used either directly for services in those counties or returned to the taxpayers in those counties. Two, with the carry-forward balance restrictions being reduced to 5% after FY 2023 in SF 619, ISAC supports that it be increased to 25% to maintain timely payment to providers should the State of Iowa fall behind on its quarterly payments to the MH/DS regions. Also, if determined, legislation might be required to clarify and ease the payroll payment process between county and regional employees in this transition process.

Legislative Outlook - ISAC 2022 Top Priorities

Iowa's Natural Resources, Outdoor Recreation, and Water Quality and Quantity

There continues to be a need to provide adequate, sustainable, and dedicated state financial resources to address statewide needs related to Iowa's natural resources, outdoor recreation, and water quality. Water quantity management also is needed to minimize or mitigate damage caused by floods that seem to be occurring on a much more frequent basis. In 2010, Iowans voted to add the Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreational Trust Fund to the Iowa Constitution to address these and other natural resources and outdoor recreation needs. Unfortunately, the Trust has yet to receive any funding. The Trust Fund, if fully funded, is the best-known mechanism to address Iowa's natural resources, outdoor recreation, and water concerns and, in so doing, promotes public health, rural revitalization, economic growth, and quality of life for Iowans.

We have also recently seen the COVID-19 pandemic cause an unprecedented demand for outdoor recreational opportunities throughout Iowa. This renewed interest in the outdoors has confirmed that Iowans value their natural resources. It also demonstrates that Iowans expect more places and improved facilities as they venture out. It will take a dedicated investment to meet public demand and expectations. The Trust makes this investment and provides a legacy for generations to come.

Another significant tool in supporting these efforts, is the Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) Program, which is authorized in Iowa Code to receive \$20 million annually, plus revenues from the sale of natural resource license plates. However, the program has never been fully funded and in recent years cuts have been more dramatic, with some funding diverted to state park operations and maintenance. The REAP Program is scheduled to sunset in 2026. This important state program provides diverse funding for Iowa's historical resources, county parks, city parks, public green space, conservation education, roadside vegetation management, and state open spaces.

To address this, ISAC recommends passage of a statewide sales tax increase of at least 3/8th of one cent, to fund the Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund as per the Iowa Constitution. Also, funds from the Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust should be distributed through a formula that maintains the integrity of the constitutional amendment, similar to language found in Iowa Code Chapter 461. This funding formula was developed by the Sustainable Funding Committee, and was the basis upon which Iowans voted to establish the Trust Fund in 2010. This will also fully fund REAP.

In addition, absent the Trust Fund, REAP should be fully funded, with a sunset extended until at least 2031. Finally, and to address water quantity issues, ISAC encourages the passage of legislation that would support and encourage public sector entities, such as counties, to be directly involved in water mitigation projects that would involve county conservation boards, engineers, and supervisors.

Open Meetings

Counties and other governmental entities have seen through the necessity of conducting meetings electronically/virtually through the COVID-19 pandemic that doing so is not only simple and convenient but can also provide significant benefit to both members of the governmental body as well as to interested parties such as stakeholders and residents. The ability to join a meeting via audio and/or visual means reduces travel time and expense, allows greater flexibility, can reduce scheduling conflicts, allows for easy recording, and could increase stakeholder and public engagement and participation.

Under current law, a governmental body can conduct a public meeting by electronic means only in circumstances where such a meeting in person is impossible or impractical. Gubernatorial proclamations throughout 2020 and 2021 authorized counties and other governmental bodies to conduct meetings via electronic means, but upon the expiration of the proclamation counties were once again required to justify meeting via electronic means, and the term "impractical" has been interpreted different ways and has garnered differing legal opinions.

With the success demonstrated and the convenience and benefits realized during the pandemic, ISAC believes the option to conduct a public meeting via electronic means should be allowed without justification. We are calling on the legislature to amend Iowa Code Chapter 21 by striking the requirement that meeting in person be impossible or impractical in order for the meeting to be conducted electronically.

Feature - County Supervisors

Hello and welcome to the new year. I am Richard Crouch the incoming ISAC President. This is an office that I have watched a great many people serve with admiration and humility.

I am a lifelong resident of Mills County. I have been married to my high school sweetheart for 53 years. Together we raised four children, three sons and a daughter. We also have a wonderful granddaughter, and they all live in close proximity to the family home. I farm 1,200 acres of corn and beans and have a small cow herd. Each spring I look forward to the environment around us waking up from the winter and starting the growing process all over again.

I have been a county supervisor since 2001, and in that same year, I attended ISAC Fall School of Instruction (now known as the ISAC Annual Conference). This was an eye-opening experience where I quickly found out that the best way to digest all of the information we learned in the sessions, was in the meetings that immediately followed in the hallway, with a cup of coffee in hand, and listening to the others discuss and breakdown the impact of what we learned in the session and the impact it will have on all of our counties.



Richard Crouch
Incoming ISAC President
Mills County Supervisor
rcrouch@millscountyiowa.gov

That is what is so amazing about this organization. As we face the many issues that come up each year; we are in this together. The strategy may be different on either side of the state but what is discussed and brought up are issues that pertain to us all. There is always someone you can lean on or turn to for support.

In the coming months, counties in the state of Iowa, just like every other state, will be facing changes. Whether it is an increase in population, mental health issues, connectivity, infrastructure, or the development of new businesses, just know that ISAC, its members, myself included, are here to support you and each other. That is what makes this organization great.



Tim Neil
Incoming ISACS President
Bremer County Supervisor
tneil@co.bremer.ia.us

Greetings from your 2022 Iowa State Association of County Supervisors (ISACS) President! My name is Timothy Neil, and I live in Plainfield with my wife, Renee

We are self employed at our business, The Oak Tree, Inc. I have previously been Mayor and have served on the Plainfield City Council for many years. I worked with the county on many joint issues and projects during that time, and I felt it would be a good move to run for Bremer County Supervisor. I wanted to become more involved in projects at the county level. I think the best and most rewarding part of my job is being able to help the citizens of Bremer County with their concerns and issues.

I became involved with ISACS when I became District 2 President. I have since been Secretary Treasurer for ISACS and have moved my way up to becoming your next ISACS President. I am looking forward to continuing to serve and represent our members.

I support the new program of becoming a certified county supervisor and encourage the other supervisors in Iowa to take advantage of this exciting program.

I have enjoyed my last 11 years as a Bremer County Supervisor and look forward to many more.

Best wishes in the coming year!
Tim Neil

Feature - County Supervisors

Greetings from northwest Iowa and from the Supervisors Education Committee! I am just coming off our most recent planning/brainstorming committee meeting and want to update you about the Certified Iowa County Supervisor program. To date, I am happy to announce that statewide our enrollment is nearing 90, and I remain hopeful that we will reach our initial goal of 100 enrollees in this first year of the program. It is so gratifying to see so many of our colleagues committing to being the most efficient and knowledgeable leaders possible.

Our major effort today was to plan agendas for the 2022 meetings and conferences. I am honored to chair such an innovative, creative group of supervisors from each of the six districts around the state. Together, we attempt to put together sessions that will be most informative, relative, and timely. As I mention those committee members, I hope that you know that you have input on what these next conferences will address. I will list the names of each of those members so that you will know who to contact to share ideas and give direction for the topics that are most important to you.

I also want to thank you for the many comments that you shared concerning our programming during the Annual Conference. I was happy to hear that you felt the sessions were relevant and the presenters were of a very high quality. I know that together we will only get better in our planning efforts, special thanks to Katie Cook and Rachel Bennett for their continued help in facilitating our efforts.



Tim Schumacher
Chair, ISACS Education Committee
Emmet County Supervisor
tschumacher87@yahoo.com

Supervisors Continuing Education Committee

Chair: Tim Schumacher, Emmet County
District 1: Crystal McIntyre, Warren County
District 2: Sandy Loney, Humboldt County
District 3: Jeri Vogt, Crawford County

District 4: Scott Belt, Pottawattamie County
District 5: Dale House, Van Buren County
District 6: Sharon Keehner, Clayton County
District 6: Jeff Madlom, Delaware County



Katie Cook
Member Support Coordinator
kcook@iowacounties.org

Happy Fall y'all! For those I haven't had the pleasure of meeting yet, I'm Katie Cook with ISAC, and I assist in the management of the Certified Iowa County Supervisor program and the Supervisors Education Committee. It's been an honor to watch this program grow and work more closely with the supervisors affiliate over this past year. Please always feel free to reach out to me if you have any questions or concerns!

The first year of the program is coming to a close with 31 total credit hours available. The curriculum for year one tracks were focused primarily on Public Administration and Local Issues. A breakdown of the 2021 credits are included below. (Please note: 2021 ISAC NCO School, Statewide Supervisors Meeting, and ISAC Spring Conference were virtual events and access to materials and CEUs remain available.)

The curriculum for year two is focused on Leadership and Community Outreach and Development. 2022 ISAC University has a great lineup of presentations, offering a minimum of 10 Leadership CEUs. You won't want to miss it!

2021	Public Admin CORE	Local Issues EFFECTIVES	Leadership CORE	CD&O EFFECTIVES
2021 ISAC NCO	10.5			
2021 Supervisors Statewide		2.5		
2021 ISAC Spring Conference	4.5	1.5		
2021 ISAC Annual Conference		5	3.5	3.5
Minimum event attendance		3		
		Total Hours		31

Questions or comments? Need help with registration or checking your CEUs? Contact Katie! kcook@iowacounties.org | 515.369.7028

Elected Officials Role in Employee Safety

Creating a safety culture: The elected officials' role in employee safety

Elected officials are leaders in their community and in managing the county. They are visible and active in the process of setting the vision and goals for the county, including safety and health. With all their duties, it's easy to sometimes overlook the goal of providing a safe work environment and the role these leaders play in safety.

Setting safety goals and paying attention to safety helps provide a safe community for citizens and a safe workplace for employees, so everyone has the opportunity to go home safely at the end of the day. Happier constituents, improved productivity and employee morale, and a positive impact on the financial bottom line may all be byproducts of a sound safety culture. Experience shows that elected officials that are active in safety have better safety and health programs, which equates to lower workers' compensation premiums and fewer injured employees.

The first important component to a sound safety culture is developing and enforcing policy. Personnel policies are a key part of this, and performance reviews should include a safety component. Although the person performing the review will vary from county-to-county, department heads should ensure each review includes a discussion of how the employee follows safety rules and procedures. Making safety a major component of a job performance review sends a message to everyone working at the county that safety is important.

The elected officials should also pass and enforce work rules and safety procedures that protect employees from known safety hazards. If the county department has blood borne exposure under the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) definition, then it is the responsibility of the county to ensure there are safety rules and procedures in place to address these exposures adequately. Once policies and procedures are adopted, the county must also ensure, either directly or through departmental supervisors, that the rules are followed.

As policies are established, a sound safety culture continues to develop by paying attention to the hiring process. Creating current and accurate job descriptions prior to advertising an opening and interviewing potential candidates are the first steps. Once a job offer is ready to be made, it should always be contingent upon the candidate completing a pre-placement physical. To ensure the pre-placement physical process works, consider implementing a pre-placement physical policy, and use a designated health care provider to conduct the physical. Hiring someone physically incapable of doing the job can lead to injuries to the employee. Investing in the right process can save money and time and ensure the county hires the right person for the right job.

Once the right person is hired, properly training them to do the job is critical. It's also important to ensure that everyone in the workforce knows and understands the applicable OSHA standards with which the county must comply. Encourage staff to attend safety and compliance workshops, since it is the responsibility of the employer to ensure compliance. The board of supervisors should receive a report from the safety committee regarding efforts to comply with safety regulations on a regular basis.



**Iowa Municipalities Workers'
Compensation Association**

www.imwca.org

Elected Officials Role in Employee Safety

As alluded to earlier, OSHA plays a key role in outlining and monitoring employee safety and health procedures. Iowa is a state plan state, which means Iowa develops and operates its own safety and health programs that are overseen by the Federal OSHA. Municipalities in states without a state OSHA plan are often exempt from OSHA regulations. However, in Iowa private employers as well as state and local governments, including counties, are covered by Iowa Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) regulations. These rules state that the employer is responsible for providing employees, including volunteer emergency medical technicians and reserve peace officers, with a safe and compliant workplace. Failure to provide a safe work environment may lead to fines for counties and potential penalties that can be leveled at individual elected officials that are deemed willful violations or criminally negligent.

Budgeting for training, equipment and other expenses required for safety, such as physicals, vaccinations, and hearing tests, is another way elected officials can take a proactive role in creating a culture of safety in their county. For example, if a county has employees working in the right-of-way, then traffic control devices, high visibility clothing and proper procedures must be provided and used. If a county can't afford to do the job safely, it must find alternative methods, such as contracting. Some smaller local governments have worked together to develop safety equipment sharing programs.

Many counties of all sizes appoint board members to committees for various functions of the county. There are road, watershed, and solid waste committees. Typically, the board of supervisor members on these committees work with the employees in the affected department, attend meetings, and generally become the board "expert" on that function. A natural extension is to appoint a safety committee for the county, and to appoint a board member to serve on the committee. The committee members can be responsible for a safety manual, communicating with employees on safety item budget needs, and, of course, attending the county safety committee meetings. There are also opportunities for board members and other elected officials to attend safety workshops. The Iowa Municipalities Workers' Compensation Association (IMWCA) holds presentations on different safety aspects each year free of charge to members.

As visible and active leaders in the community and in setting the vision for the county, elected officials have a unique and important role in encouraging safe work practices in their county. Their leadership can ensure that every county employee goes home safe at the end of each work day.

The Iowa Municipalities Workers' Compensation Association (IMWCA) may be reached at 515.244.7282 or imwcainfo@iowa-league.org.

Created in 1981 in response to the increasing cost and unavailability of workers' compensation coverage for municipal employees, this self-funded risk pooling program is administered by the League and owned and controlled by and for the benefit of Iowa's cities, counties and their respective 28E entities. IMWCA is a program endorsed by ISAC.

Broadband Together Program

Broadband Together Program

Counties and cities in Iowa that want to provide, improve, or expand local broadband can get help through a joint effort between the State of Iowa Office of the Chief Information Officer (OCIO) and FG (Fiberutilities Group), an Iowa-based network services company.

Through the Broadband Together™ program, FG provides strategic broadband consulting services to local governments in all 99 counties in Iowa. The program helps communities establish their strategic direction as they move through the decision-making process to provide or improve broadband services. FG serves communities as a neutral party whose assistance is available at no cost, thanks to funding by the OCIO. However, communities may choose to retain additional consulting expertise from other firms as their broadband journey evolves.



515.281.5503

broadbandtogether@networkbetter.com

FG will guide interested communities across Iowa through a multi-step approach on their Broadband Together journey program, which began in September 2021 and runs through August 2023. FG's efforts will be led by: Kent Van Metre, Vice President of Client Services; Lee Seydel, Chief Technology Officer; and Mariah Hurley, Manager of Client Operations.

"The funding environment for broadband improvements is very robust right now," Van Metre said. "Broadband Together helps communities organize and align their thinking regarding what kind of broadband project is best for them. That starting point makes understanding and leveraging existing or new funding opportunities more effective."

OCIO is currently processing applications for a seventh broadband grant fund. The current offering is \$200 million from the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (CSLFRF) as part of the American Rescue Plan (ARP). This is on the heels of a grant round of \$100 million appropriated by the Iowa Legislature in 2021. Prior broadband grants awarded more than \$61 million dollars to broadband providers for tackling connectivity issues in unreached areas of the state.

FG can be used by Iowa counties and cities as an educational resource to better understand broadband; provide opportunities to enhance or expand broadband alternatives; coordinate various broadband-related resources; or work with a selected service provider to explore broadband options.

FG offers consultation and expertise in key areas of broadband strategy development, including:

- Strategic consulting and advisement;
- Broadband planning approaches;
- Guidance related to the definition and delivery of broadband;
- Terminology and capabilities of broadband;
- Insights on the economics of broadband;
- Methods and considerations for roadmap development;
- Understanding the current local broadband landscape;
- Options related to evaluation and/or assessments;
- Possible paths to achieve desired outcomes; and
- Possible funding alternatives.

Broadband Together Program

Never has the need for broadband been more apparent than during COVID-19. A new normal emerged in communities as basic life services, such as work, education, and healthcare, shifted to a content-rich, digital-delivery model. The need for broadband has become essential and urgent as families and businesses adapt to the realities of working, learning, and receiving healthcare remotely. Demand for broadband is showing no sign of slowing down.

The Broadband Together program consists of the following eight sequential steps that provide the basic structural components counties and cities need to frame their unique approach to meeting their broadband goals.

Step 1: Broadband Goals and Definitions

Clarifies what attributes broadband could have in your community. This formal definition becomes the “true north” that helps frame all subsequent discussions.

Step 2: Broadband Delivery Methodology

Explores the pros and cons of various broadband delivery structures, including public-private partnerships.

Step 3: Basic Broadband Data

Quantifies existing broadband products and the providers per the Iowa broadband map. Performs a basic internet profile of service providers along with a basic user survey to identify gaps.

Step 4: Broadband Currency

Identify and catalog noncash currency your community could leverage to support the delivery of new broadband services.

Step 5: Broadband Adoption Initiatives

Explores options to build support, increase constituent understanding, and generate greater demand for broadband in your community.

Step 6: Project Costing Consideration

Outlines “Plan – Build – Operate” components of a broadband project including a basic understanding of project costing.

Step 7: Project Funding Alternatives

Leverages the information gathered in the previous steps and reviews options for integrating funding alternatives into your broadband approach.

Step 8: Broadband Strategy Document

Generates a strategy document that defines your community’s direction for future action creating a well-defined starting line for your broadband journey.

As a neutral party, FG can connect communities with additional resources, such as:

- Local, regional or state contacts;
- Stakeholder engagement services;
- Third-party vendors or partners;
- Potential funding sources; and
- Broadband project management.

Communities interested in engaging FG to help provide, improve, or expand local broadband should contact OCIO at 515.281.5503 or FG at BroadbandTogether@NetworkBetter.com.

IPAIT Fiscal Update

Inflationary Pressures Persist

Businesses, consumers, the Federal Reserve, and local governments are all focused on inflation. Is it “transitory,” and what does this mean for investors? For their part, the Federal Reserve continues to say that the current rise in inflation is “expected to be transitory.” Most economists agree that inflationary pressures are being caused by the strains of nearly shutting down the global economy and then restarting it with a large primer of fiscal and monetary stimulus.

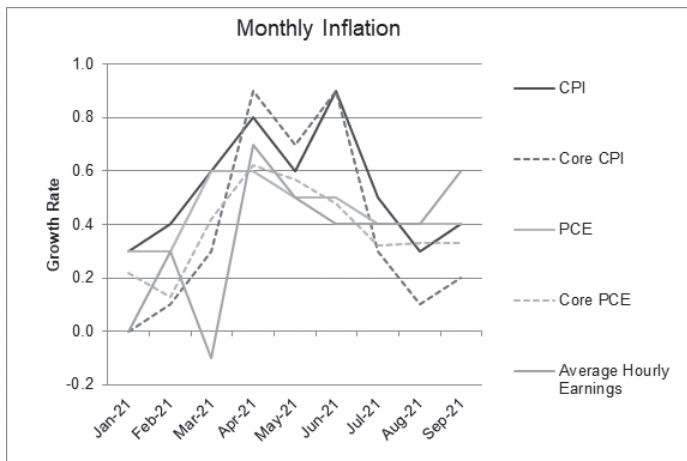
At PMA, we agree that the supply chain issues created in large part by a surge in demand should resolve themselves over the next six to 12 months as jobs are filled and demand slows. However, we are focused on the extent to which some increases in costs may persist or become more imbedded in the economy. For this, we are most closely watching wage growth. In our view, labor has strengthened significantly in bargaining power in recent years, in part due to the pandemic as supply/demand imbalance has been exaggerated by a mismatch of needed employee skills. Further, risks rise when near-term price shocks become further compounded in additional price hikes in the economy.

There are multiple measures of inflation. The most widely known is the Consumer Price Index (CPI), which measures the change in out-of-pocket expenditures for a fixed basket of goods. There is also a Core CPI measure that excludes food and energy prices, which tend to be more volatile. The Fed’s preferred measure of inflation is Personal Consumption Expenditures (PCE), which measures price changes based on actual domestic consumption. Core PCE excludes food and energy. While broadly similar, CPI and PCE utilize somewhat different baskets of goods and calculation methodologies.



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Elevated inflation is clearly seen in monthly data. In addition to CPI and PCE, this data set includes growth in average hourly earnings in the private sector. By all measures, inflation has declined from the highs reached in April through June. However, inflation accelerated somewhat in September, which has renewed concerns about elevated prices. We think it is particularly notable that growth in Average Hourly Earnings accelerated in September. A rise in the cost of labor is important because when wages and salaries increase, companies must either pass that cost along to consumers through higher prices for goods and services, or the company will experience a decrease in profit margin.

Certainly we are all noticing the higher prices in our daily lives as many companies have the pricing power to increase

prices. On a year-over-year basis, CPI growth was 5.4% in September. This level feels high to U.S. consumers who have seen CPI trend in a range of 1.5% to 2.0% over the decade that followed the Financial Crisis and Great Recession. An important consideration is that not all prices move equally. September CPI was particularly high for food and energy. Increases in the cost of food accelerated in September, but price increases slowed for energy compared to August. New vehicles and shelter also saw costs rising at an accelerating pace in September. The Fed is focused on sustained rises in the overall price level, rather than increases for specific items. Discerning these effects and identifying whether higher costs are passed through to other areas of the economy, will be important in understanding future inflation risks.

IPAIT Fiscal Update

Markets and the Federal Reserve

During October, markets priced in an earlier first-rate hike by the Federal Reserve and a quicker initial path of hikes thereafter. The yield curve is steep from three months to five years with a spread of 108 basis points as of November 4. This steep curve reflects market expectations for the Federal Reserve to raise rates over the next one to five years with longer term rates already pricing in future rate hikes. Markets are projecting two rate hikes in 2022 with the first in June and additional rates hikes in 2023, 2024 and possibly beyond. Concerns about persistent inflation have pushed market expectations for higher policy rates ahead of the Fed's projections. The Federal Reserve will update these projections in its December meeting.

	Treasury Rates (%)		
	11/4/21	09/30/21	Change
3 Month	0.03	0.03	0.00
1 Year	0.14	0.07	0.07
2 Year	0.42	0.28	0.14
3 Year	0.69	0.51	0.18
5 Year	1.11	0.97	0.14
10 Year	1.53	1.49	0.04
30 Year	1.96	2.05	-0.09

Source: Bloomberg

These more aggressive, or hawkish, market expectations have flattened parts of the Treasury yield curve (note the decrease in the two-year/10-year spread during the period shown in the chart). In addition, increases in three-year and five-year rates which are similar to the rise in two-year Treasuries show market expectations for the Fed to slow rate hikes after first moving more quickly. The decrease in the 30-year bond is another important sign. Expectations for a more hawkish Fed are pushing down long-term inflation projections.

The Fed reminds us at each meeting that its policy is data dependent. If employment doesn't continue to improve or if inflation data slow, current market projections may prove overly aggressive. Indeed, since the Federal Reserve meeting concluding on November 3, Treasury yields have mostly declined as the result of continued dovish statements by Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell. Overall, we believe this is a relatively dovish Federal Reserve that sees global deflationary pressures and continues to characterize the current inflation as transitory. We expect rates to remain volatile as markets price in evolving inflation expectations and the upcoming tapering of the Fed's balance sheet.

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ISAC Brief

Summary of Minutes: ISAC Board of Directors Meeting - November 10, 2021

ISAC President Carla Becker called the meeting to order and led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance. The meeting minutes of the September 16-17, 2021, ISAC Board of Directors were approved.

Wendy Moran and Jose Garcia, McGowen Hurst Clark and Smith, P.C., presented the FY 2021 ISAC Audit report to the Board. A clean opinion was offered for the entire engagement. The governance letter to the Board was included in the report. The audit report was accepted by the Board.

The ISAC Board recessed and was reconvened following adjournment of the ICTS Board.

Tim Neil, Bremer County Supervisor, was sworn in as a member of the ISAC Board of Directors to represent the Iowa State Association of County Supervisors. His appointment filled a vacancy.

Rachel Bennett discussed the voting totals from the online ISAC membership vote for the 2022 ISAC Legislative Priorities. Jamie Cashman and Lucas Beenken gave an overview of the new legislative objectives. The emergency management affiliate and staff recommended the removal of Local Emergency Management Payment Funds objective. The Board voted unanimously for its removal and unanimously ratified the legislative objective and policy statements as voted on by ISAC voting members and as amended.

Three recommendations for ISAC's top legislative priorities were given to the Board for consideration: the ISAC Legislative Policy Committee (LPC); ISAC voting totals; and ISAC staff. The Board unanimously set four legislative objectives as ISAC's top priorities for the 2022 legislative session:

1. Competency and Treatment for Persons in the Justice System
2. Iowa's Natural Resources, Outdoor Recreation, and Water Quality and Quantity
3. Mental Health and Disability Services
4. Open Meetings

Ryan Berven, Group Benefit Partners (GBP), gave an update on GBP initiatives, highlighted utilization, reviewed plan design updates, and gave FY 2023 recommendations. A lot of progress and new business growth have been made.

Brad Holtan gave an overview of the ISAC Group Health Program's experience and financial projection. He reviewed changes that are suggested to the 2023 ISAC Group Health Program that include:

- Effective January 1, 2022
 - Eligibility terminations – end of month
 - Dependents age 26 – end of month
- Effective July 1, 2022
 - Remove limits on skilled nursing and hospice/hospice respite
 - Remove pre-cert limits
 - Remove common accident deductible
 - Streamline dental accident
 - Rare condition management provided by Wellmark
 - Require use of CVS for Specialty Drugs (10 members)
 - Transparency on ID Cards (adding deductible and OPM information)
- Effective July 1, 2023
 - Increase employee portion of Specialty Drug co-pays
 - Will discuss during county renewals for union negotiation purposes

The Board unanimously approved the 2023 ISAC Group Health Program recommendations as follows:

- Effective January 1, 2022
 - Approve changes as outlined above
- Effective July 1, 2022
 - Approve recommended base rates with income increase of 5.34% at \$200,000 stop-loss. Base rate increase of 1.5%.
 - Approve experience, wellness, and large claim adjustment plan.
 - Approve reduction of the reserve balance adjustment from 3% to 0%.
 - Adopt discount proposal with loss of discount limited to 5% per year.
 - Adopt proposal to pay PCORI through FY 2023.
 - Approve 2022 Wellness Program and funding.
 - Approve elimination of Plans 8, 10, and 11.
 - Approve July 1, 2022, changes as outlined above.

Brad alerted the ISAC Board that during its January meeting that ISAC staff will present a recommended 28E agreement that will move the ISAC Group Health Plan to a governmental plan. The ISAC Board will act as the Board for the Plan.

Brad Holtan gave highlights and reviewed financial statements and the quarterly investment report dated September 30, 2021. The reports were accepted unanimously.

The Board unanimously approved an ISAC credit card resolution adding Courtney Biere, ISAC Office Support Coordinator, to the credit card list.

Kristi Harshbarger gave a legal update on the opioid settlement including the need for all counties to register to participate. She requested support from the Board to encourage involvement and approve a recommended resolution that was slightly modified and approved by the Board.

Kelsey Sebern reviewed the 2022 ISAC Board of Directors meeting schedule and the agenda for the 2022 ISAC University being held January 19-20, 2022, at the West Des Moines Sheraton.

Kelsey reviewed and the Board unanimously approved the recommended agenda for the 2022 ISAC Spring Conference.

Rachel Bennett gave information related to the 2022 NACo Legislative Conference being held February 12-15, 2022, in Washington, D.C.

Richard Crouch reported that the ISAC Nominating Committee met on October 28, 2021, and recommended the following slate of officers for 2022.

- ISAC President – Richard Crouch
- 1st Vice President – Brian Gardner
- 2nd Vice President – Kris Colby
- 3rd Vice President – Barry Anderson

The Board unanimously approved the recommendation and the ISAC Nominating Committee meeting minutes.

President Carla Becker gave closing comments and adjourned the meeting.

ISAC University 2022

Full agenda and list of speakers online.

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2021-2022 Calendar

December 2021

- 14-17 ISSDA Winter School
(Holiday Inn Des Moines Airport)
- 15-17 ICEA Conference
(Veterans Memorial Community Choice Credit
Union Convention Center, Des Moines)

January 2022

- 19-20 ISAC University
(Sheraton, West Des Moines)
- 21 ISAC Board of Directors Meeting
(ISAC Office)

February 2022

- 2 ISAC Executive Committee Meeting
(ISAC Office)
- 9 ISAC Board of Directors Meeting
(ISAC Office)
- 10 Statewide Supervisors Meeting
(Embassy Suites Des Moines Downtown)
- 12-16 NACo Legislative Conference
(Washington Hilton, Washington, D.C.)

March 2022

- 9 ISAC County Day at the Capitol
(Iowa State Capitol Building)
- 10-11 ISAC Spring Conference
(Veterans Memorial Community Choice Credit
Union Convention Center, Des Moines)

April 2022

- 10-13 ISSDA Civil School
(Holiday Inn Airport, Des Moines)
- 28 ISAC Board of Directors Meeting
(ISAC Office)

May 2022

- 3-5 Public Health Conference of Iowa
(Hybrid - Scheman Conference Center, Ames)
- 19-20 Western Interstate Region (WIR) Conference
Anchorage, Alaska

June 2022

- 21-24 ISACA Summer Conference
(Hotel Julien, Dubuque)
- 29 ISAC Board of Directors Meeting
(ISAC Office)

July 2022

- 13 ISAC Scholarship Golf Fundraiser
(Otter Creek Golf Course, Ankeny)
- 21-24 NACo Annual Conference
(Adams County/Aurora, Colorado)

August 2022

- 24-26 ISAC Annual Conference
(Veterans Memorial Community Choice Credit
Union Convention Center, Des Moines)

September 2022

- 18-21 ISSDA Fall Jail School
(Airport Holiday Inn, Des Moines)
- YTBD ISAC Board of Directors Retreat
(Mills County)

October 2022

- 9-12 Assessors Fall School
(Airport Holiday Inn, Des Moines)

November 2022

- 17 ISAC Board of Directors Meeting
(ISAC Office)

December 2022

- 4-7 ISSDA Winter School
(Holiday Inn Des Moines Airport)
- 14-16 ICEA Conference
(Veterans Memorial Community Choice Credit
Union Convention Center, Des Moines)

If you have any questions about the meetings listed above or would like to add an affiliate meeting to the ISAC calendar, please contact Kelsey Sebern at ksebern@iowacounties.org.

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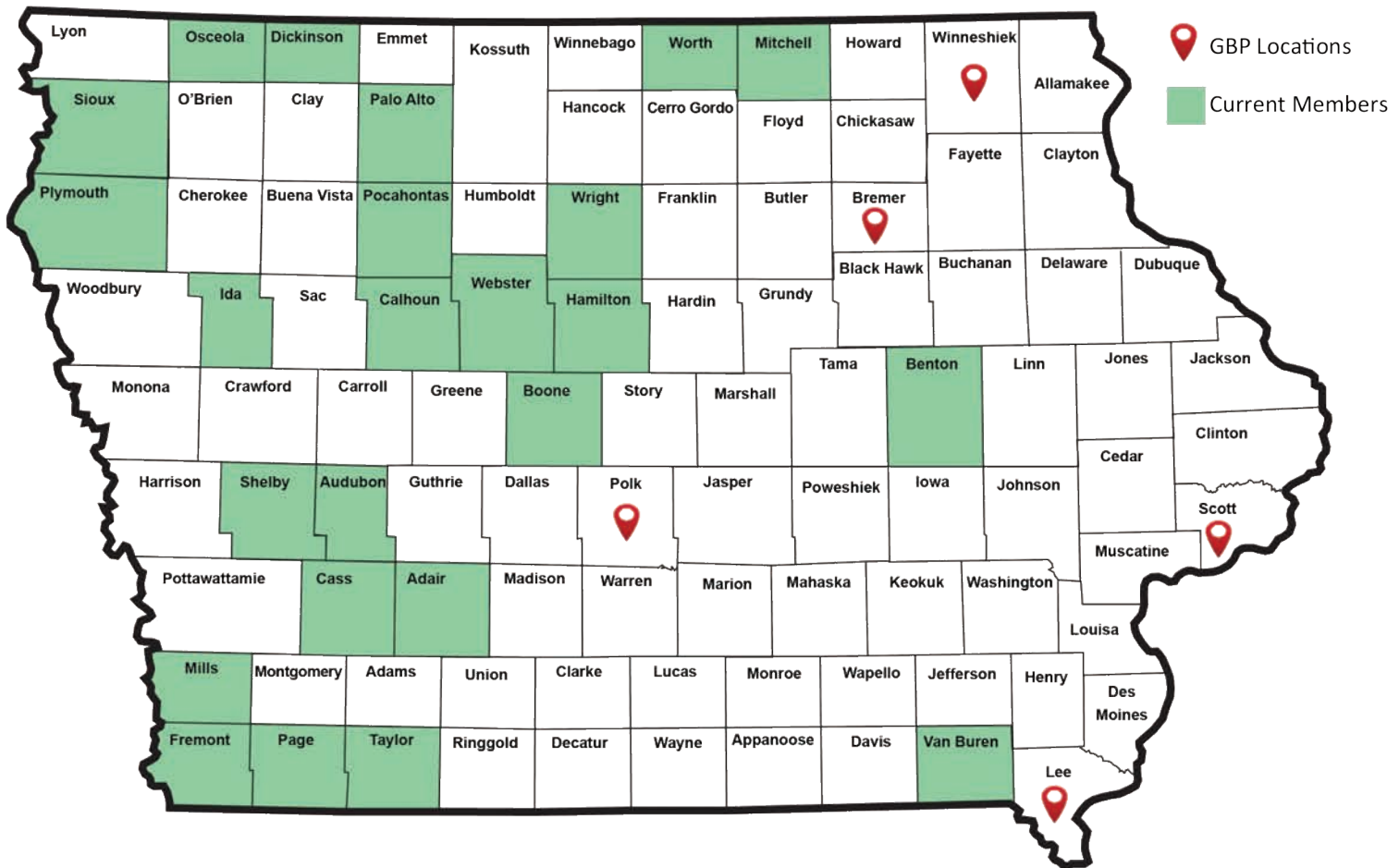
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