

The Iowa County

magazine



January 2022

ISAC Top Legislative Priorities
Iowa's Natural Resources, Outdoor
Recreation, and Water Quality and Quantity

ISAC University Speaker Features



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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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2022

IOWA STATE ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES

TOP LEGISLATIVE 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. In 2010, Iowans voted to add the Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation 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 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. The COVID-19 pandemic caused 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.

The Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) Program 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.

SOLUTION: ISAC recommends the following:

1. Passage of a state-wide 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. This will also fully fund REAP.
2. Absent the Trust Fund, REAP should be fully funded, with a sunset extended until at least 2031.
3. 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.
4. 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

PROBLEM: The state open meetings law allows a government body to conduct a meeting by electronic means only in circumstances where such a meeting in person is impossible or impractical. The term impractical is open to interpretation and has produced differing legal opinions given various circumstances. Under the Governor's Declaration of Disaster Emergency proclamation for the COVID-19 pandemic, governmental bodies were authorized to hold meetings by electronic means, so long as proper notice and access were provided to the public. Many counties became reliant on meeting via electronic means, and in fact, experienced an increase in public access and participation. With the expiration of the authorization, governmental bodies are again subject to the "impossible or impractical" threshold and cannot regularly convene via electronic means despite the use of technology not contemplated by current law that often allows more access and transparency than fully in-person meetings.

SOLUTION: Amend Iowa Code §21.8(1) by striking "only in circumstances where such a meeting in person is impossible or impractical". This authorizes a governmental body to conduct business by electronic means regularly or on occasion, at its discretion, so long as all other open meetings requirements are met.

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Competency and Treatment for Persons in the Justice System

PROBLEM: 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. There have been four Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) complaints filed since 2013 resulting in tens of thousands of dollars in fines against the Iowa Department of Human Services (DHS). It is unknown if or how many civil lawsuits have been filed by staff who have been permanently disabled or the total cost to the State of Iowa.

Iowa Code Chapter 812 established competency evaluations to be done for certain individuals who have mental health/brain health issues who have been arrested.

Four problems currently exist:

1. It can take three to nine months 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.
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.

SOLUTION: 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.

The state should appropriate dollars 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.

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 (DOC), they should be funded by DHS. There needs to be a change in the Iowa Code process in 812 that changes their custody from 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 Advocate, 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.

The Iowa 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 need a higher level of care than is currently available in an inpatient unit in Iowa.

Mental Health and Disability Services

PROBLEM: With the historic change in how mental health and disability services (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.

SOLUTION: 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:

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. Legislation might be required to clarify and ease the payroll payment process between county and regional employees in this transition process.

ISAC Legislative Top Priority Feature

Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation – Iowa’s Top Priority!

ISAC has long made natural resources, outdoor recreation, and water quality and quantity top legislative priorities. From their support of Iowa’s Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) program to ongoing efforts to move legislators to fund Watershed Management Authorities and the Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund, county officials indicate over and over that Iowa communities require clean waters, reduced threats from flooding, and opportunities for people to enjoy healthy places in the outdoors.

A beautiful state

Iowa is a land between two great rivers, with more than 17,000 miles of interior rivers, creeks, and streams, and with impoundments, lakes and ponds, that attract people like magnets. The splendor of Iowa’s nature is not some grandiose mountain range or sprawling beach but is found among natural gems that dot the landscape in all Iowa counties, providing places for Iowans to unwind and pursue outdoor recreation. When strategies are implemented to reduce flooding, local communities gain an added measure of built-in resilience. Where people have access to clean water, trails, park facilities, and natural areas, there are known benefits. Iowans get healthier – mentally and physically. Local businesses emerge to cater to visitor demands. Communities thrive. People want to live, work, play, and stay in these places. Unfortunately, state investments are not sufficient to allow Iowans to fully realize these benefits. There are huge backlogs of projects needing to be implemented for clean water, flood control, trails, and parks. Iowans, compared to residents of most other states, are left wanting.

Promises made

In 2010, Iowans voted overwhelmingly to amend Iowa’s Constitution by creating a Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund. The ballot language stated the Fund is for “purposes of protecting and enhancing water quality and natural areas in this State including parks, trails, and fish and wildlife habitat, and conserving agricultural soils in this State. Moneys in the fund shall be exclusively appropriated by law for these purposes.” Hence, the Trust Fund is protected by the Iowa Constitution for these purposes, and cannot be raided or redistributed in another manner. A promise was made to and by Iowans – the State would invest in a legacy of stewardship of its natural resources and opportunities to enjoy the outdoors. Iowa no longer would be ranked near or at the bottom nationally in making these needed state investments. Public will was asserted. Political will, however, has fallen short. More than 11 years after Iowans went to the polls, the Trust Fund remains empty.



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Counties at the forefront

Generations of Iowans have worked to provide the natural resources and outdoor recreation opportunities that do exist today. Every parcel of public land and water, substantial park improvement, and section of trail has a unique story, with champions who struggled to accomplish great things with limited funds. Counties are often at the forefront, with conservation departments, supportive boards of supervisors, and others leading and partnering on successful, local projects. Success is difficult, but it has been made possible by some past legislation and sources of funding. The last broad state funding legislation for natural resources and outdoor recreation was REAP, enacted in 1989 – more than 30 years ago. Unfortunately, REAP too has struggled, having never been fully funded by the State. Iowans demand and deserve more, and counties can’t do it on their own.

ISAC Legislative Top Priority Feature

The game-changer for all Iowans

Iowans continue demonstrating their need for natural resources and outdoor recreation, with demand for park facilities, trails, and natural areas reaching all-time highs this year during the COVID-19 pandemic. In November, voters in Polk County were asked to fund a bond initiative for local natural resources and outdoor recreation needs. Eighty-one percent voted in favor in Iowa's most populated county. In 2014, Adams County put their bond initiative to the test. Eighty-three percent voted in favor in Iowa's least populated county. These votes demonstrate Iowans' passion and willingness to fund that which is important to them.

Short-term, local initiatives are great, but the constitutionally protected Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund is the game-changer for all Iowans in this moment. Iowa's political leaders must enact the funding mechanism – a mere 3/8 of one cent increase in state sales tax. There have been several proposed ways to do this over the years. Last year's Invest in Iowa initiative would have done it through tax reform.

Funding the Trust will generate nearly \$200 million annually, protected by the Iowa Constitution to be used only for natural resources and outdoor recreation purposes. It keeps promises made to and by Iowans – for cleaner water, reduced flooding, protected soils, improved parks, and more enhanced places to hike, hunt, fish, bike, boat, picnic, watch wildlife, and relax and enjoy beauty in the outdoors. It represents a legacy for all Iowans – a gift to ourselves and future generations.

Dan Cohen, Executive Director, Buchanan County Conservation Board and ISAC Legislative Policy Committee member representing the County Conservation Director's Association. Editor's note: He's also an excellent photographer.

Photo captions:

A beautiful state – a doe and buck stroll the waters of the North Maquoketa River on a hot July morning. Past natural resources and outdoor recreation success stories have led to the current status of Iowa's nature and outdoor recreation opportunities. Is Iowa now poised for a major success? (photo by Dan Cohen)

A green heron wades in wetland waters. Investments in clean water draw wildlife, and are critical to health and pleasure of Iowans. (photo by Dan Cohen)

ISAC Legislative Top Priority Feature

Investing in the Outdoors – American Rescue Plan Act

County conservation previously engaged with you on these pages this past May - as we were emerging from the year-long learning curve of negotiating a pandemic...the cover of The Iowa County announcing "Time for Success". Fast forward eight additional months and lots has happened – providing fresh and exciting opportunities for those successes! We also know that our local county parks are generating the experiences and adventures across Iowa that people are yearning for...perhaps it is time to dust off those bucket lists of projects and commence with visioning the possibilities?

On March 11, 2021, President Biden signed the American Rescue Plan (ARPA) into law. The plan provides \$350 billion of Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (CSLRF) for cities, counties, and states to help reduce the economic impact of the pandemic and assist those most affected by the virus. Iowa counties received \$612 million. The United States Treasury (UST) has published guidelines that can help cities and counties invest these funds to improve parks and outdoor spaces for the following purposes:

1. To improve spaces in areas that have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic, which can include improving park space that will benefit the health and wellness of these communities.
2. To help with maintenance and upkeep issues caused by the increased use of parks during the pandemic.

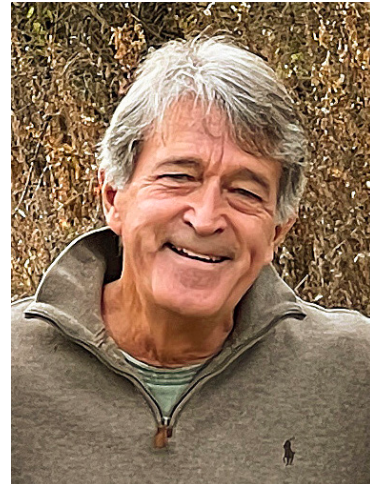
Another \$240 million will be available in Travel, Tourism, and Outdoor Recreation Competitive Grants to help communities dependent on these activities to recover and boost future resilience. These funds can be used for a variety of projects related, to or supporting: cultural, arts, and tourism facilities; nature-based infrastructure; zoos and aquariums; and strategy development for travel, tourism, and outdoor recreation.

In addition to UST guidelines, the National Association of Counties (NACo) and ISAC have hosted informational meetings and created FAQ documents for investing ARPA funds in recreation and the outdoors. These guidelines and recommendations can be used to inform elected officials about the maintenance issues related to increased user demand, the challenges your department faces with aging infrastructure, and the justification for investing ARPA funds in local parks and outdoor spaces. At a time when people needed an outlet for social connection and physical activity, the outdoors was there to provide countless mental and physical health benefits!*

Why should we invest ARPA Funds in the outdoors?

Return on Investment (ROI) – In the world of county government, there is always more demand for funding than funds available; however, investing funds in parks and the outdoors can create a positive ROI for taxpayers. Dollars invested in campground infrastructure will generate camping fees and increased revenue. Dollars invested in trails promote local recreation tourism that creates an economic boost for local businesses. Funds invested in parks, playgrounds, and outdoors spaces create healthy communities resulting in lower medical costs.

Quality of Life – Creating attractive communities has never been more important as local, national, and global businesses compete for a talented and sustainable workforce. Countless studies and reports indicate that young professionals are choosing where to live based on a community's amenities opposed to the traditional approach of residing where an employer is



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ISAC Legislative Top Priority Feature

located. Investing funds in local parks and outdoor recreation opportunities is, therefore, an investment in workforce development AND retention. Growing the local, rural economies in Iowa is going to take an investment in amenities, infrastructure for technology, and access to quality outdoor recreation and natural resources. Outdoor activities are a cost-effective antidote that can serve as the social fabric that brings kids, families, and communities together safely, and they can be a powerful part of making long-term positive life changes.*

Economic Impact – Somewhere north of \$610 million is the conservative estimate of the annual economic impact that Iowa's county conservation operations collectively pump into local economies across the state. Each of our 99 county conservation boards play a key role in this statewide economic engine – both locally and regionally. Collectively, if you bundle up the state-wide impact of certain outdoor activity categories you will find: 1,949 miles of trails managed by CCBs generate \$26,292,790 of economic impact; 11,100+ county conservation campsites generate \$41,719,583 of economic impact; and, 146,262 acres of CCB hunting lands generate \$58,504,800 of economic impact. As referenced previously, it is not difficult to observe that your return on investment (ROI) for dollars directed to support these activities, projects, and adventures are a good choice for the future economic health and quality of life for residents of your county!

Leveraging Funds – We live in a world where every dollar counts and public funds are scrutinized like never before. As a result of the “doing more with less” philosophy, Iowa's County Conservation Board (CCB) System has evolved into a financial conduit for leveraging state, federal, city, and private funds to match your local county property tax dollars. An investment in local parks and outdoor spaces will be leveraged several times over with a variety of funding partners. Collectively, Iowa's County Conservation System has current unmet needs in 2021 totaling over \$1.08 billion, coupled with an aging \$1.25 billion of infrastructure across the state. The demonstrated need is profound. The heightened and sustained demand for outdoor recreation opportunities is necessarily leading us to prioritizing timely investments in the future for our local citizenry – of utmost importance for consideration. Whenever supplemental funding is made available – supporting infrastructure advancements that provide decades, if not a lifetime of valuable program expansion and/or quality of life measures is a significant opportunity.

Public Support – Outdoor spaces became a refuge in 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused Americans to rediscover the great outdoors. National, state, and local parks have seen unprecedented attendance during the past 20 months. Some county campgrounds have experienced a 300% increase in camping, Iowa trails have seen a 200% increase in monthly trail traffic, and bicycles are difficult to purchase. Boat ramps on Iowa's lakes and rivers are exceeding capacity and stores are unable to keep kayaks on the shelves. Trends established in 2020 have boldly continued throughout 2021 – steady streams of visitors arriving from those nearby backyards, across the state of Iowa and adjoining states around the region. Iowans consistently support funding for local conservation and recreation needs, as evident in the 2010 approval of Iowa's Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund by 63% of Iowa voters.

- Sixty-six percent of U.S. adults say that they support their local government dedicating revenues, taxes, and levies that specifically target park and recreation operations or expansion projects.**
- Nearly 80% of parents support an initiative by their local government to dedicate revenues, taxes, and levies to park and recreation operations, making them more likely than non-parents (61%) and U.S. residents overall (66%) to feel this way.**
- Gen-Xers (73%), Gen-Zers (72%), and millennials (68%) are strong supporters of their local government dedicating different funding sources to target park and recreation operations or expansion projects.**
- ARPA provides a unique, first-step opportunity for local governments to make a historic investment in our parks, trails and wild places, an investment that offers an excellent ROI for Iowa's future generations. This one-time, unprecedented funding offers local leaders the ability begin the process of investing in quality of life projects and ultimately creating healthy communities. It will take long-term, dedicated, and sustainable funding through local investment and programs like Iowa's Natural Resource and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund and REAP to achieve the “Iowa” we envision for those future generations.

(*Outdoor Industry Association, March 2021)

(**Statistics from the National Recreation and Parks Association)

ISAC Legislative Top Priority Feature

And It All Ties Together

Located within less than an hour of the Omaha Metro and nestled in the beautiful Loess Hills of western Iowa, Harrison County has the best of both worlds with nearby city attractions and rural living. A drive to the city will get you shopping malls, museums, restaurants, and a zoo. Closer to home, small towns dot the rural landscape amongst the farms with local shops and artists, quaint eateries, cobblestone streets, and unique community attractions. Being this close to a major city gives residents many opportunities; however, there is the want and need to step out your back door and be able to explore the natural world within just a few minutes. Not only for our residents...but those that live in the urban areas are wanting to escape their normalcy to experience rural Iowa.

The Harrison County Conservation Board (HCCB) meets those needs with 18 areas encompassing nearly 1,800 acres of outdoor recreation for fishing, camping, hunting, and hiking, to name just a few. The Missouri River borders Harrison County on the west, with flats rising dramatically into the wind-blown Loess Hills and its water carved ravines. Native prairies, wetlands, and forests intertwine throughout the hills and the county. These areas also draw visitors and tourists exiting off the interstate to explore the back roads and discover new places.

One of the most popular areas, as well as the main headquarters for HCCB, is the Willow Lake Recreation Area, located along a winding road just outside of Woodbine. Long a place for families to go camping and fishing, this area has grown by leaps and bounds over the years, attracting thousands of people. There are six deluxe rental cabins, a 41-site campground, the 26-acre lake with fishing jetties and a pier, six miles of hiking trails, and picnic shelters and playgrounds. Seven full-time staff are located on site to take care of the parks, conservation education program, natural resource management, and administration – all working out of an older building with limited space. With continued growth of the HCCB and meeting the expectations of the public, it had become evident that a larger and new facility was needed.

So, in 2013, HCCB started planning for a new nature center, conservation classroom, administrative offices, and a maintenance shop to replace an aging and very energy inefficient structure with limited space. Work began with selecting a design firm to create a conceptual schematic that captured all the criteria that a key stakeholder group identified. Donations trickled in along with some local grants. HCCB committed program dollars, REAP allocations, and other revenue sources. Excitement began to build with the public, but significant funding was still out of reach. Being just outside of the boundaries of many corporations charitable giving guidelines, local fundraising and grant opportunities were sought.

Then COVID hit. Like other county conservation boards, HCCB saw a huge increase in people wanting to get outdoors to experience any and all types of recreation, environmental education opportunities – ultimately rediscovering themselves and their families. We saw records broke in the cabins, campgrounds, swimming area, playgrounds, fishing, and on hiking trails. With continued support of the Harrison County Board of Supervisors, they unanimously understood the impact that recreation has on the local economies, resulting in the county to committing \$871,000 to the Willow Lake Nature Center. This allowed leverage of that money for larger grants, leading several of these sources to finally partner in this exciting adventure.



Scott S. Nelson

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ISAC Legislative Top Priority Feature



With all the sources of funding, it was getting closer to the total project cost of \$3.9 million, but it was still too far away from being able to start construction. When the American Rescue Plan Act funding was made available to the counties, the Harrison County Board of Supervisors committed \$1 million! Again, they saw the benefit of tourism, recreation, and education as the driving factor. After years of planning and procuring of funds, construction began on the Willow Lake Nature Center in September of 2021. The true belief of investing back into the county with a shovel-ready project, coupled with the economic impact for Harrison County communities, this project will increase the quality of life of residents and visitors with outdoor recreation and education. And to double-down, the focus of the learning center will be on water and water quality, with first-class exhibits and displays that will inform our visitors and students the importance of clean water, not only for recreational purposes and natural habitat, but for how everyday families can make an impact for future generations.

As of this article, the anticipated grand opening of the new Willow Lake Nature Center will be in the spring of 2023. As the building takes shape, public enthusiasm will lead to increased visitation, resulting in students,

families, and visitors alike wanting to learn about water and water quality and to get outdoors to explore all of the HCCB's park and wildlife areas. But that won't be the ending, just a beginning: to expound on an already successful program; reach as many people that yearn of that outdoor experience; and to learn about not just the Harrison County natural resources – but all of Iowa's natural wonders.

Funding Iowa's Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund is the next big step for the state. We need a dedicated, permanent, substantial, and reliable funding source to improve our water quality, protect our soils, enhance our wildlife habitat and increase outdoor recreation opportunities throughout Iowa. All the data proves that Iowans want and need for water quality, economic development, rural revitalization, and public health. County conservation boards provide all of this, but one of the major roadblocks is the lack of funding. The Trust gives Iowa that funding opportunity to meet the demands and make a better place for everyone.

ISAC University Speaker Feature

Richard Deming, MD will be the Keynote speaker at ISAC University on Thursday January 20, 2022. Dr. Richard Deming is a community leader, humanitarian, philanthropist, and a national leader in cancer care and research. He is Medical Director of MercyOne Cancer Center in Des Moines, Iowa. He received a bachelor's degree from South Dakota State University and his medical degree from Creighton University. He was commissioned into the US Navy while in medical school. He did his internship in internal medicine at Naval Hospital San Diego. He entered the Navy Undersea Medicine programming, completing his submarine training in New London, CT and his diving training at the Navy Experimental Dive Unit in Panama City Florida. Dr. Deming was the Diving Medical Officer for the United States Navy's Explosive Ordnance Disposal, Group One. He completed residency training in Radiation Oncology at the University of California, San Francisco. He then served as a staff radiation oncologist at the National Cancer Institute and Bethesda Naval Hospital. Dr. Deming moved to Des Moines in 1989.

Dr. Deming is known in the community for the compassionate care he provides cancer patients and their families. He is involved in many national, state, and community organizations and is the recipient of numerous awards. He was awarded the Lane Adams Award by the American Cancer Society for excellence and compassion in patient care. He is the recipient of "the one hundred" Award by Massachusetts General Hospital for his work with cancer survivors. He was awarded the Iowa Cancer Champion Award for his tireless efforts in the field of advocacy. He received the Iowa Star Award from the Des Moines Register for making a measurable difference within the community and improving the quality of life for Iowans everywhere. He was awarded the St. George National Medal by the American Cancer Society for leadership in reducing the burden of cancer.

Dr. Deming is actively involved in public policy advocacy to reduce the burden of cancer. He recently served as National Board Chair of the American Cancer Society's Cancer Action Network and currently serves as vice chair for the Iowa Cancer Consortium and is Principal Investigator for the National Cancer Institute Community Oncology Program. For his commitment to his patients and his profession, Dr. Deming was honored in 2012 with the Creighton University Alumni Merit Award.

Dr. Deming is the founder of Above + Beyond Cancer, a nonprofit organization dedicated to elevating the lives of those touched by cancer. Dr. Deming has led cancer survivors on medical missions and inspirational mind-body-spirit pilgrimages to Mount Everest, Mount Kilimanjaro, and Machu Picchu. He is inspired by the courage and compassion of his patients and their families. His greatest ambition is to encourage others to pursue lives of meaning, purpose, passion, and compassion.

Dr. Deming's presentation will focus on life lessons that he has learned from his patients and their families; lessons that can help all of us as we journey on that bumpy road that we call life. Dr. Deming says, "Adversity can lead to personal growth. You don't learn much about yourself when everything is going well. It's when things are difficult that you find the strength that is already deep within yourself. Finding and cultivating your strength leads to resilience. Cherish the difficult moments in your life as your best teachers."

Pioneering physician Dr. William Osler wrote, "A good physician treats the disease; a great physician treats the patient who has the disease." Dr. Deming understands that being an oncologist involves caring for whole patient – including the physical, emotional, psychological, philosophical, and spiritual dimensions. Dr. Deming reminds us, "An oncologist taking care of a patient is a human being caring for another human being. This is the essence of humanity."



This philosophy of care inspired Dr. Deming to endow a chair of medical humanities at Creighton University School of Medicine, his alma mater. It has also propelled his interest in developing integrative medicine at the MercyOne Cancer Center, where music, poetry, art, literature, yoga, meditation, nutrition, and acupuncture contribute to healing.

The practice of medicine is both a science and an art. Dr. Deming is a master of both.



Dr. Richard Deming, MD

<https://aboveandbeyondcancer.org>

ISAC University Speaker Feature

Effective Communication is the Main Determinant of Leader Success

The ultimate test of leadership is to navigate the complexity of change. The change effort could be to increase employee engagement or team performance; it could be to ensure smooth transitions during times of succession planning; it could be focused on organizational efficiency in service delivery; or it could be focused on organizational effectiveness of service outcomes. Regardless the change initiative, leaders in county government have a great number of “best practices” that are routinely presented to them for use in the form of leadership theories, strategies, and tools.

The reality of change coupled with the complexity of county government is this: each situation is unique. Your success as a leader will be determined based on your unique application of theories, strategies, and tools.

However, there is one aspect of successful leadership required in all situations. Successfully navigating change in any situation requires effective communication. In fact, the argument here can go as far as this: the ability to communicate effectively is the most important ingredient to ensuring leadership success, period. Here are three reasons:

1. Effective communication creates clarity, confidence, and community.
 - a. Action Item: conduct an audit or review of your communication. Think about your emails, phone calls, one-on-one meetings, team huddles, dashboard reports, and more. The goal of each engagement or artifact is to communicate in a way that establishes clarity of the change, confidence in the approach to change, and community among those involved to actually change. Before any communication, review it for tone, appropriateness, and impact; ensure it is creating clarity, confidence, and community.
2. Effective communication is positive communication, which can create positive meaning, which can create positive relationships, which can create positive culture.
 - a. Action Item: conduct an audit or review to evaluate whether or not your communication is, first of all, positive. If your mindset is positive, other aspects of your leadership will also be positive. If it is negative, guess what? If negative, other aspects of your leadership will also be negative. Are you being positive and are you focused on leveraging that positivity to create positive meaning in the work? If so, great, because that will establish a positive relationship between you and others, which can manifest into a positive culture.
3. Effective communication is a process of positive mindset, empathy of future state expectations relative to current state realities, and constantly establishing reminders of being dissatisfied with the current state, the vision of the future state, and the milestones in the plan to bridge the two.
 - a. Action Item: Do not think of communication as an event. Rather, think of communication as an ongoing effort. Also, think of it as a requirement to meet people where they are, rather than where you would otherwise hope they would be. This is empathy and it is a critical part of effective communication. Also, remember that communication involves collaboration, coordination, negotiation, and, as such, will require many modes, methods, and media to get your point across and have it be understood, accepted, and acted upon.

As noted, effective communication is a process. It is not an event. It is an ongoing set of coordinated actions of verbal and non-verbal exchange among people. When done effectively, positive change can occur and, from which, even greater levels of challenges and change can be planned and implemented effectively. This is what all employees want in county government, and it is what all residents in our counties deserve.

Effective communication is the most important determinant of success for a leader. Are you communicating effectively? These topics and more will be discussed at ISAC University on January 19-20, 2022. You can learn more and register for the leadership conference at www.iowacounties.org.



Dr. Debby Thomas
Senior Director of Leadership
Coaches, NACo High
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www.naco.org/skills

ISAC University Speaker Feature

What would you do if you couldn't fail?

Enjoy a breathe. Zoom out, and gift yourself the freedom to explore this question. And to explore it without judgement!

We live in a time of constant judgement. Everything is evaluated, critiqued, and measured. Now sure that can be a positive thing at times, but it can also be detrimental because we cut ourselves off from goals simply because the end result may not be perfect.

So in this moment, give yourself the gift of freedom to explore a goal that you may want for yourself. Maybe it's to close more deals. Perhaps run a 5K. Or maybe it's to deepen the connection between you and a loved one. No wrong answer here! Just throw it on the white board.

Or maybe this isn't a goal. Maybe this isn't something you want to go and achieve, but it's a side of yourself you'd like to embrace.

Let's say someone at some point told you that you're not creative. Or you're not athletic. Or you're not capable of being a Leader. Well this is the time to turn up the volume on that side of yourself. That person told you what I like to call a "Dangerous Lie." It's a lie, because well, it's just their opinion, it's not a hard fact. And it's dangerous because maybe you believed it, and because you accepted it as truth, you backed away from certain opportunities. Opportunities where you would need to be creative, or athletic, or a Leader.

Right now, put pen to paper and just brain dump. No right. No wrong. No realistic and unrealistic. No possible or impossible. We are going to prove some of these dangerous lies wrong, and show the real truth of who you are and what you are capable of!

In my journey, I experienced this intensely with NBC American Ninja Warrior. I was first hired as a host – not a competitor. Part of my job as a host was to attempt the obstacles and fail for everyone's entertainment! But after two years of hosting – and winning an award for NBC – I fell in love with the sport and wanted to compete!

But to compete, you need to succeed not fail! I went to the Ninja Warrior gyms (Yes, they're real!) and would fail over and over and over again. But I was improving. Improving to the point that physically I was starting to progress through the obstacles, but I quickly realized the biggest obstacle to overcome was not outside of me, but inside of me. You see, after failing for two seasons as a host, I needed to learn that, "I always fail." was a lie.

Could you question a lie right now? A lie that said you are not capable of achieving a goal. A lie that said you are too much this or not enough that. What would it take for you to prove this lie wrong?

For me, it was proving to myself (and my self-doubt) through action. Through showing up, and getting better, and failing, then failing a little better, and after some time looking at the evidence and thinking, "Hey, that was actually, kinda, not terrible! How about that!" The power of this is that when fear and nerves and doubt start to voice their opinion, we can look to this tangible bank of hard proof of your progress and prove them wrong.

Ok, so how do we put this in motion, how do we start?! It's just that. We start. Today. Right now. Exactly where you're at, and with exactly what you have to work with right now. My question to you is: what is the smallest action you can take right now to make your goal real?

In this moment, no action is too small because we want to make your goal REAL. Take it off the shelf or bring it out of its cage of "impossibility." You see, in my journey with American Ninja Warrior, the first step actually was reaching out to top competitors and asking if I could train with them. Then of course I needed to take big steps after that, but simply reaching out opened the door and made this goal real. It was now happening.

So could you email a colleague for advice? Could you run one block today? Could you carve out five minutes to meaningfully connect with a loved one?



Alex Weber

alex@imalexweber.com

ISAC University Speaker Feature

Remember, this will all grow. Momentum is real. But we need to start!

And to start ugly! Imperfectly. Dive in! No matter if it's an elegant swan dive, an epic cannonball, or flat out belly flop. All that matters is you get in the water of what you want to happen. And hey, if you're gonna get in the water, might as well make a splash!

Here's to gifting yourself the freedom to explore a goal or side of yourself. The courage to take that first small step. And the strength to spectacularly fail - then keep going, growing, and getting better.

I look forward to joining you soon, and teaming up to make your goals real. Remember, anything is possible when you're unstoppable.

Your friend in growth, Alex

ISAC University Speaker Feature

Dan Meers goes to work each day like many others, dressed in a suit. The only difference is that instead of wearing a tie with his suit, Dan wears a tail. You see, Dan is a professional mascot.

Dan began his career in 1986 at the University of Missouri – Columbia. Dressed as the school mascot, Truman Tiger, it didn't take long for Dan to establish himself as one of the top college mascots in the nation. After finishing second in 1988, Dan was selected the nation's #1 college mascot at the 1989 National Collegiate Mascot Championships. As graduation approached, Dan began to receive offers to use his talents at the professional level. After graduating with honors, Dan decided to trade in his tiger stripes for bird feathers and began his professional career as Fredbird, the mascot for the St. Louis Cardinals baseball team. Although many thought Dan's "bird legs" were a perfect match for his costume in St. Louis, Dan stayed only a short time. He was offered a job in professional football and decided to exchange his bird suit to become a wolf.

Today Dan is widely known as KC Wolf, the official mascot of the Kansas City Chiefs. He travels throughout the United States and the world entertaining thousands of people

both in and out of costume. Dan is in high demand not only as a mascot but also as a humorous and motivational speaker to audiences of all ages. His enthusiasm, optimism, and love for life are contagious and make Dan an inspiration to all those he meets.



Dan Meers
dmeers@chiefs.nfl.com



It's been said that if you ask a person their occupation you will find out how they pay their bills, but if you ask a person their preoccupation then you will discover the passion of their life. Dan definitely has a unique occupation. For the past 32 years he has paid his bills by running around as an NFL mascot. However, Dan's preoccupation, what he is truly passionate about, is encouraging others to strive for the best in life and to enjoy it each and every step along the way. Dan believes that your life is like a coin. You can spend it any way you wish but you will only get to spend it one time, so spend it wisely. During his presentations Dan shares some of the valuable lessons he's learned during his long career as a professional mascot. Whether at home, work, or in the community, Dan challenges his audience to live each day to the fullest by wisely investing their lives and not just spending them.

ISAC Brief

IPAC Member Meeting Summary and Update

An IPAC member meeting was held on Thursday, November 18 in conjunction with the SEAT Level III training. The IPAC membership approved new IPAC Board members as follows: Vice President – Jennifer Garms, Clayton County Auditor; Secretary – Michelle Eisenman, Hancock County Auditor; and Member At Large – Eric Van Lancker, Clinton County Auditor. The membership also affirmed the Future's Committee members as follows: Karen Showalter, Black Hawk County Elections Administrator; Josh Rozendaal, Black Hawk County Elections; Carla Becker, Delaware County Auditor; Jennifer Garms, Clayton County Auditor; Adam Wedmore, Cerro Gordo County Auditor; and Travis Weipert, Johnson County Auditor.

Michael Bird, Spindustry CEO, gave a brief presentation on the software rewrite process, showcased screenshots of the new software, and discussed how the new software will be easier to administer and allow for flexibility on the hardware which can be used. In the future, tablets as well as laptops will be able to be used at the polling locations.

Software Rewrite Process Progressing

The Futures Committee Workgroup continues to work with Spindustry. Spindustry is currently working on the backend of the software and has been testing hardware options for scanning. The deployment plan is allowing for the software to be deployed to pilot counties in 2022 with a full deployment to the IPAC membership in 2023. Updates will be posted on the IPAC Basecamp website.

Training

In the future, videos will be created for the IPAC membership on how to create an election in the IPAC software and updated PEO training tutorials to assist with the primary and general election cycle.

We are very excited about the future of the IPAC program and will continue to provide updates throughout the software rewrite process. If you have any questions regarding IPAC, please contact IPAC Board President Carla Becker, cbecker@co.delaware.ia.us, or IPAC Program Manager Tammy Norman, tnorman@iowacounties.org.



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2022 Calendar

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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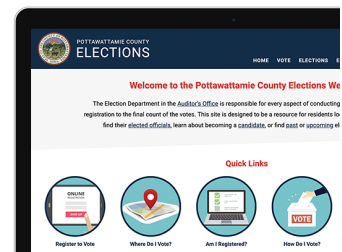
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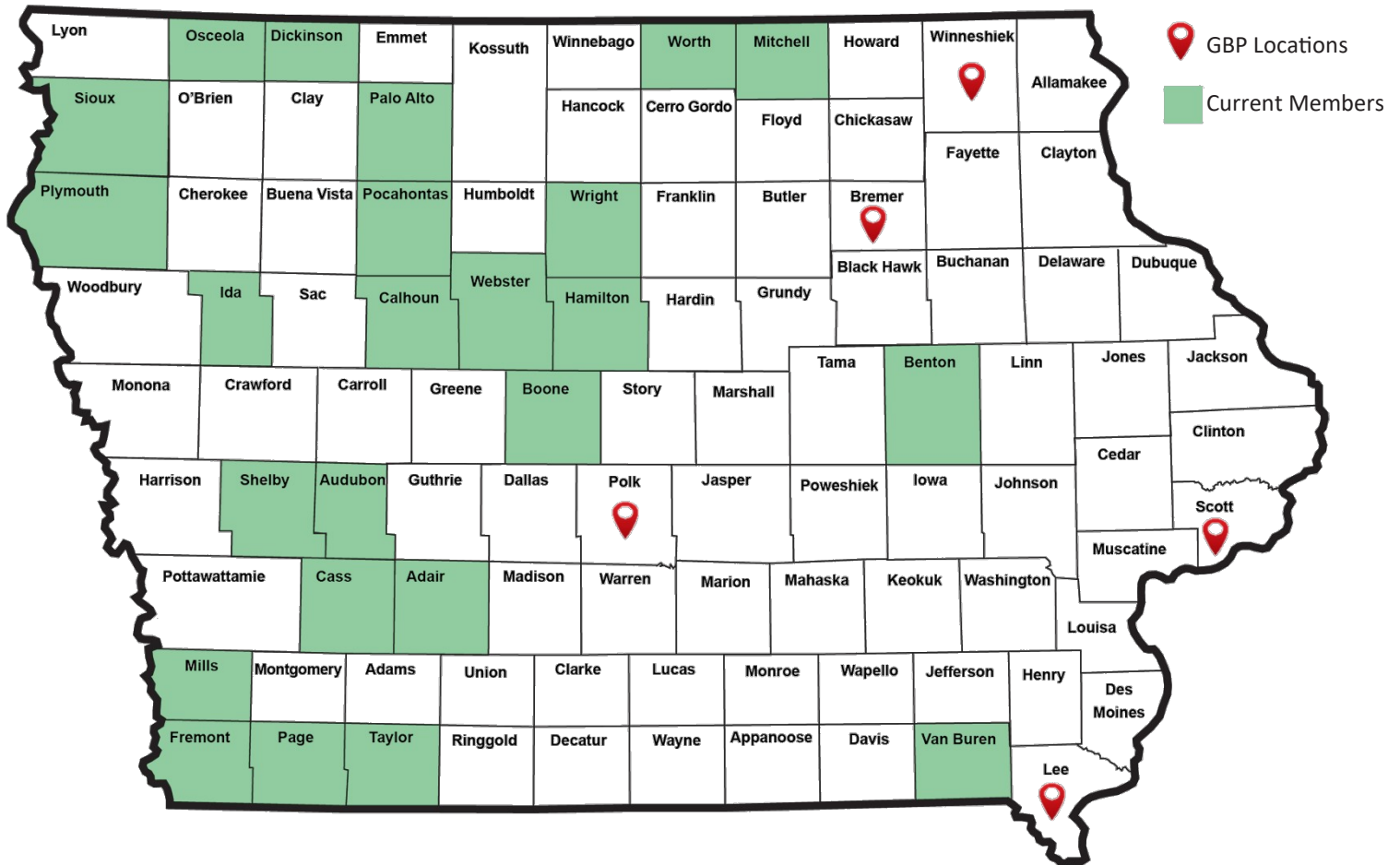
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