

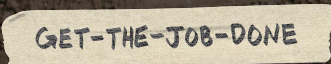
# The Iowa County Magazine



February 2025

**YOU'RE ALMOST DONE** WITH A  
LANDSCAPING PROJECT. YOU'VE ONLY  
GOT **5 YARDS OF ROCK** TO PUT IN 3 BEDS.  
BUT THE NEWBIE **ACCIDENTALLY TORE A**  
**HYDRAULIC HOSE,** LEAVING YOU WITH 5  
YARDS OF ROCK TO SHOVEL BY HAND.  
THAT'S WHEN YOU **CALL YOUR ZIEGLER**  
**REP.** HE LINES UP YOUR REPAIR BY 2 PM  
SO YOU CAN **COMPLETE THE**  
**PROJECT ON TIME.**

**ZIEGLER** 

**THE**  **DEALER**

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# The Iowa County

February 2025 \* Volume 54, Number 2

The Iowa County: The official magazine of the  
Iowa State Association of Counties  
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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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**1ST VICE PRESIDENT** Linda Zuercher, Clayton County Treasurer  
**2ND VICE PRESIDENT** Mary Ward, Cass County Recorder  
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ISAC members are elected and appointed county officials  
from all 99 counties. The Iowa County (ISSN 0892-3795, USPS  
0002-150) is published monthly by the Iowa State Association of  
Counties, 5500 Westown Parkway, Suite 190, West Des Moines,  
IA 50266. Periodicals postage paid at Des Moines, IA 50318.  
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to [rbennett@iowacounties.org](mailto:rbennett@iowacounties.org).  
Subscriptions: \$25 per year.

# Iowa's Natural Resources

## Outdoor Recreation, Land Stewardship and Agricultural Partnerships

As Iowans have witnessed in recent years, our local agricultural communities continue to combat tasking business endeavors pivoting around low commodity prices, uncertain world-wide markets, and recurring natural disasters. Nevertheless, Iowa's current and proven economic benefits driven by natural resources, environmental sciences, environmental education, and outdoor recreation have never been stronger.

Iowa's county conservation boards facilitate and offer over 2,000 public parks/recreational areas throughout our 99 counties. These publicly owned and managed natural areas host 24.5 million visitors annually, which, furthermore, stimulates Iowa's annual economics in a plethora of ways. To learn more about county conservation boards' outdoor recreational opportunities, environmental education programs, and natural resource-based endeavors, visit [mycountyparks.com](http://mycountyparks.com).



Will Horsley  
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As a county conservationist and natural resources professional, I often hear non-resident outdoor enthusiasts say Iowa's outdoor recreational opportunities are truly the best kept secret in the United States. Their words leave me contemplating why us Iowans are not doing a better job of advertising natural resources and outdoor recreational opportunities in order to capitalize on an undisputed and proven statewide economic benefit.

A state study prepared by legislative leadership has proven the economic benefit of Iowa's outdoor recreation to generate \$8.7 billion in consumer spending, employing 83,000 Iowans, contributing \$2.7 billion in wages, and \$649 million in taxable revenue. These fiscal resources could be viewed as impressive and serve as a strong component of Iowa's economic diversification. However, it has been estimated and predicted that we have only "scratched the surface" in regard to the extreme volume of future fiscal resources that could be generated in the realm of Iowa's outdoor recreational opportunities.



Today, Iowans undoubtedly can juxtapose the promoting of: outdoor recreational economics; watershed protection and water quality; natural resources and conservation management; resource enhancement and protection; sustainable agriculture and soil quality; and, most importantly, a higher quality of life to our residents. Iowa's Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund was supported by 63% of Iowans in 2010. This constitutional amendment could serve as an essential component to better the great state of Iowa and its residents perpetually. Hopefully, this funding component will be implemented in future legislation as it undisputedly would provide amazing benefits to Iowa.

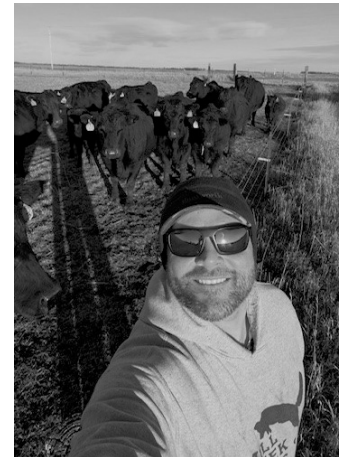
For an Iowan to say the strong majority of the state's economics are not pending and resolving on agricultural practices would be absurd. Today's agricultural professionals can boast that they are doing their part in regard to providing for and feeding our country, as well as a large part of the world.

Unfortunately, in recent years division between agricultural professionals and public/private conservation agencies has become a recurring theme. Wherein years past, professional respect and balance was common, today's professional requirements demand a more competitive perspective in order to ensure future occupational success. In many cases, there is criticism when potential procurement of Iowa acres is designated into public parks, natural resources, and outdoor recreation.

## Iowa's Natural Resources

Currently, a campaign of motivated agricultural and conservation-based leaders are successfully working together and cultivating their collective relationships to bridge the gap between professional differences. It truly is encouraging to see local agricultural professionals and county/state/private conservation organizations collaborating to benefit their collective work objectives and promote their future success. These combined efforts of grazing, haying, and farming on public acres not only support and expedite local agricultural leaders but also benefit natural resource professionals. This is seen through management practices that promote ecological diversity and suppress invasive/non-native plant species.

To learn more on these advantageous concepts and partnerships between agriculture and natural resource/conservation-based agencies, I would encourage anyone to pursue their local leadership and solicit their interest. There is no better time than today for us to leave our past perceptions behind and work together in order to promote a balanced and poised relationship between agriculture and natural resources/conservation.



*Respectfully composed and submitted by Will R. Horsley – Director, Clay County Conservation, Spencer, Iowa. A lifelong Iowan, USMC Veteran, professional conservationist and outdoor enthusiast, and Iowa cattle producer/farmer who strongly believes in promoting concepts of sustainable land stewardship and water quality, natural resources and conservation, and environmental education. "Semper Fi"*



**March 13-14 | Des Moines**

**Yeehaw! Saddle up and get ready for a Wild West adventure at the ISAC Spring Conference!**

**Dust off your cowboy boots, grab your Stetson hat, and get ready to step into the untamed heart of the Old West! Join us March 13-14 for the Association's annual business meeting during which the ISAC budget is approved and the ISAC scholarship award winners are recognized. The Conference will also feature educational seminars, networking opportunities, and time to meet with your affiliate.**

**Registration closes at 4:00 pm on Thursday, February 27.**

**Please plan to join us from 5:00 pm - 7:00 pm on Wednesday, March 12, at the Hilton Downtown for a Legislative Reception. There is a separate registration for the Reception.**

**Grab your posse and don't miss out on this Wild West adventure!**

# County Budget Process Updates and Reminders from DOM

For counties in Iowa, February often means clearing snow and deicing roads. No matter the weather, one activity guaranteed to be undertaken by counties in February is setting the next fiscal year's county budget. The purpose of this article is to provide a general overview of the statutory county budget process and highlight recent legislative changes.

By this time of the year, counties have held a variety of budget workshops or meetings to arrive at their proposed property tax asking and expenditures for the next fiscal year. HF 718 passed during the 2023 legislative session requires counties to hold an initial public hearing on their proposed property tax asking in addition to their regular budget public hearing. The purpose of this additional hearing (referred to here as the "Proposed Property Tax Hearing") is to give citizens the opportunity to speak to the county's proposed tax asking earlier in the budget process.

Traditionally, county budget public hearings have required notice in all the county's official newspapers selected under Iowa Code Chapter 349. This is the case with the Proposed Property Tax Hearing as well. In addition to the newspaper notice, HF 718 required a mailed notice to taxpayers to alert them of the upcoming county budget public hearing, as well as the budget hearing of their school and their city (if they live within city limits). The mailed notice provides a direct communication to taxpayers alerting them of budget hearings they can attend, as well as information to help citizens understand the proposed tax rates and compare the current year tax asking to the proposed budget year tax asking.

HF 718 determined the content of the mailed notice, and SF 2442, adopted in the 2024 session, made a few amendments.

## **Per Iowa Code § 24.2(a), the mailed notice must include the following:**

- The date, time, and place of the county, city, and school Proposed Property Tax Notice Hearings
- The county, city, and school's web site.
- The total Current Year Tax Rate and Dollars and Proposed Budget year Tax Rate and Dollars for comparison, as well as a calculated effective tax rate. The "Effective Tax Rate" is a rate produced by holding current tax asking constant using the budget year's taxable values.
- An example of the tax impact on the following properties:
  - A residential property with 100,000 of value in the current year and 110,000 of value in the budget year
  - A commercial property with 300,000 of value in the current year and 330,000 of value in the budget year
- The percentage of current year property tax asking in relation to other taxing authorities. This helps the taxpayer understand how much of the tax asking in their area is from the county versus their school versus their city (if applicable) and other taxing authorities.

## **Proposed Property Tax Hearing Important Dates**

**By 4:00 pm on March 5:** This is the deadline for cities, counties, and schools to enter Proposed Property Tax Hearing information in the Department of Management (DOM) online budget system. This information is populated into the Proposed Property Tax Hearing statement county auditors mail to taxpayers.

**It is crucial to note, if a county (or city) fails to file all necessary information with DOM by 4:00 pm on March 5, taxes levied by the county (or city) shall be limited to the prior year's budget amount.**



Carrie Johnson  
Fiscal and Policy Analyst Senior  
State and Local Budgets Division  
Department of Management  
[carrie.johnson@dom.iowa.gov](mailto:carrie.johnson@dom.iowa.gov)

# County Budget Process Updates and Reminders from DOM

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**By March 15:** By this date, county auditors mail Proposed Property Tax Hearing notices to taxpayers in their county.

**NO EARLIER than March 20:** Counties (and cities and schools) hold their Proposed Property Tax Hearing.

In addition to the mailing, a hearing notice must be published no later than 10, but not more than 20 days prior to the date of hearing in all of the county's official newspapers. Early in the budget process, counties must carefully review the publishing schedule of their official newspapers to properly plan their newspaper publishing dates and hearing dates.

The hearing is an opportunity for citizens to speak to the amount of property tax the county is requesting. Please remember, this public hearing is separate from any other meeting and no other county business shall be conducted at the hearing. No action is required from the board of supervisors after the Proposed Property Tax Hearing. It is important to note as the budget process moves forward, the Board of Supervisors cannot request more tax than what was requested in the notice for the Proposed Property Tax Hearing.

After the Proposed Property Tax Hearing, the county proceeds with the budget process in the same manner as prior years. The board of supervisors needs to set a date for their second public hearing, this hearing being on the entire budget (referred to here as "Full Budget Hearing"). The Board must set the date of the Full Budget Hearing at a separate meeting after the Proposed Property Tax Levy hearing. The notice for the Full Budget Hearing must be published not less than 10, but no more than 20 days prior to the hearing date in all official county newspapers. The Full Budget Hearing notice must include a statement regarding the process for citizens to protest an adopted county budget. DOM has included this information in the hearing notice counties use for publication.

Hearings are a chance to receive input from the citizens on the county budget. Citizens may present information which causes the board of supervisors to seek to change their budget. Budgeted expenditures and tax asking may be reduced as a result of the public hearing, but may not be increased from the amount published in either public hearing notice. The final budget must be adopted by resolution of the board of supervisors. To allow for more time to work through the steps of the budget process, HF 718 moved the budget submission deadline for counties to **April 30**.

The budget deadline is critical to note. Taxes levied by a county whose budget is certified after April 30 shall be limited to the prior year's budget amount. This can be a significant financial penalty. In the past, the penalty could be waived and a budget extension granted by the director of DOM if the county demonstrated to the satisfaction of the director that the deadline was missed because of circumstances beyond the control of the county. SF 2442 set the specific reasons DOM can provide extensions moving forward .

Beginning with the FY 2025-FY 2026 budget submission, a county can request a budget extension **only for these reasons**:

- A newspaper failed to publish a notice of hearing as required under § 24.2A after the city/county gave the newspaper sufficient time to publish the notice.
- A verifiable public emergency or weather-related event that forced the cancellation of a public hearing as required under § 24.2A.
- An illness or unexpected vacancy of one or more board/council members caused a lack of a quorum necessary to hold a hearing as required under § 24.2A.
- A failure of state software or a state process caused the board to miss the required date to certify the city/county's budget.

# County Budget Process Updates and Reminders from DOM

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## County General Basic and Rural Basic Rate Calculations

Taxes for general county services are levied on all taxable property within the county. “General County Services” are broadly defined as those services that are primarily intended to benefit all residents of a county, excluding certain services financed by other statutory funds.

*Taxes for rural county services are levied on all taxable property not within incorporated areas of the county. “Rural County Services” are broadly defined as services primarily intended to benefit persons residing in the county outside of incorporated areas, excluding certain services financed by other statutory funds.*

Counties also have tax rates available to service debt and for specific reasons stated in law, such as levies approved at election to support Emergency Medical Services. This article focuses specifically on the Basic and Supplemental levies.

Legal rate limits for the General Basic and Rural Basic rates are established in Iowa Code § 331.423. HF 718 and amendments by SF 2442 provided a mechanism for the county General Basic and Rural Basic tax rates to be reduced if non-TIF taxable growth triggers are met or exceeded.

Please note the following regarding the General Basic and Rural Basic tax rate calculations:

- The rate for the current year becomes part of the calculation for the following budget year.
- The maximum tax rates for all counties will go to 3.50 for General Basic and 3.95 for Rural Basic in FY 2028-FY 2029.
- The tax levy and resulting tax rate are limited by constraining growth by 1%, 2%, or 3% each year, depending on the trigger hit.
  - Non-TIF taxable growth under 2.75%, no reduction
  - Non-TIF taxable growth over 2.75% but less than 4%, 1% reduction factor applied
  - Non-TIF taxable growth over 4% but less than 6%, 2% reduction factor applied
  - Non-TIF taxable growth over 6%, 3% reduction factor is applied
- If a county was under either of the Basic rates (3.50/3.95) in FY 2024-FY 2025 **and** their valuation growth from FY 2025 to FY 2026 was under 2.75% the county is not subject to a reduction and could levy up to 3.50/3.95.
- The DOM online budget forms calculate each county’s maximum General Basic and Rural Basic rates once the county files their budget year valuations.

Recent legislation did not make changes to the General Supplemental and Rural Supplemental tax rates. Supplemental levies are limited in purpose but do not have specific rate limits. Iowa Code § 331.424 (1) sets forth the uses for the General Supplemental and include purposes such as funding the cost of elections, FICA, IPERS, and health insurance among other items. Iowa Code § 331.424 (2) specifies the allowable uses for the Rural Supplemental and include items such as FICA, IPERS, and unemployment compensation premiums associated with salaries for rural county services.

Counties cannot utilize the General Supplemental or Rural Supplemental rates unless their corresponding General Basic or Rural Basic levy rate is at its statutory maximum. Bear in mind, this means the General or Rural Basic levy must be at the individual county’s calculated statutory limit as presented in the DOM online budget system before that county can use the applicable supplement levy.

Setting a county budget and determining tax asking to fund county services is a significant responsibility. DOM provided county auditors with detailed budget instructions to clarify the required steps as well as an example budget calendar. As counties work through those statutory requirements to submit budgets, DOM is available to provide technical assistance.

# County General Purpose Threshold Adjustments Announcement

Pursuant to Iowa Code §§ 331.442(5)(a) and 384.26(5)(a), as amended by House File 718 (2023), the Department of Management is obligated to update the voting threshold amount for general purpose bonds of counties and cities each year based on the Consumer Price Index for Urban Consumers (“CPI-U”) for the most recent 12-month period. The threshold establishes amounts allowed to be issued in general purpose bonds before a vote must occur. Below are the updated threshold amounts:

**CPI-U:** 2.7% (November 2023 – November 2024)

<https://www.bls.gov/cpi/tables/supplemental-files/news-release-table1-202411.xlsx>

## County General Purpose:

Population	2024 Threshold	2025 Threshold
20,000 or less	\$130,000	<b>\$133,510</b>
20,001 to 50,000	\$260,000	<b>\$267,020</b>
50,001 or greater	\$390,000	<b>\$400,530</b>

County General Purpose debt includes items such as an airport, county health center, museum and joint city/county buildings. The full definition of County General Purpose debt is found in Iowa Code § 331.441(2)(c).

## 2025 ISAC Board of Directors Sworn in on January 14

### ISAC OFFICERS

PRESIDENT John Werden, Carroll County Attorney  
 1ST VICE PRESIDENT Linda Zuercher, Clayton County Treasurer  
 2ND VICE PRESIDENT Mary Ward, Cass County Recorder  
 3RD VICE PRESIDENT David Muhlbauer, Crawford County Supervisor

### ISAC DIRECTORS

Carissa Sisson, Franklin County Assessor  
 Amanda Waske, Ringgold County Auditor **\*NEW\***  
 Russell Wood, Franklin County Community Services  
 Mike Miner, Mitchell County Conservation  
 AJ Mumm, Polk County Emergency Management  
 Wade Weiss, Greene County Engineer  
 Sandy Bubke, Monona County Environmental Health  
 Micah Van Maanen, Sioux County Information Technology  
 Josh Busard, Johnson County Planning and Zoning  
 Kevin Grieme, Woodbury County Public Health  
 Brad Kunkel, Johnson County Sheriff  
 Lonnie Mayberry, Mills County Supervisor **\*NEW\***  
 Jayson Vande Hoef, Osceola County Supervisor **\*NEW\***  
 Patrick Sweeney, Polk County Veterans Affairs  
 Barry Anderson, Clay County Supervisor (Past President)  
 Brian Gardner, Linn County Sheriff (Past President)  
 Carla Becker, Delaware County Auditor (Past President)  
 Richard Crouch, Mills County Supervisor  
 (NACo Board Representative and Past President)



# Statewide Prosecutions Section: Cold Case Unit

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Iowa has over 400 cold cases. These horrific crimes impact all segments of society, from inner city population to small rural communities. Victims in these cases can range from the young to the elderly, both male and female. No segment of society is immune.

Effective July 1, 2024, the Iowa Legislature approved a general fund appropriation to the Iowa Attorney General's Office for three cold case field investigators and one statewide attorney general prosecutor. These positions are intended to support law enforcement and county attorneys on cold cases they may have in their jurisdiction. The investigators are geographically located across the state to serve the people of Iowa better.



Lead Investigator Steven Ponsetto  
Office of the Iowa Attorney General  
Statewide Prosecutions Section, Cold Case Unit  
[coldcase@ag.iowa.gov](mailto:coldcase@ag.iowa.gov)

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The attorney general's cold case unit provides a focused investigative effort to identify unanswered questions. This may be done through evidence review, witness statements, law enforcement reports, public documents, tip information, and other investigative processes.

## What is a cold case?

Any death case identified as a homicide, a missing person under suspicious circumstances, or any unidentified human remains (UHR), and when active leads have been exhausted as determined by the originating law enforcement agency.

## Mission:

The mission of the cold case unit is to assist law enforcement and prosecutors in cases involving unresolved homicides, missing persons under suspicious circumstances, or unidentified human remains by providing investigative, prosecution, and victim service support.

## Vision:

The vision of the cold case unit is to provide justice for victims, answers for families, and accountability for offenders.

As with any investigation, tips and other forms of information may play a significant role in solving or moving a case forward. In 2024, the following tip lines were created within the attorney general's (AG's) office and are actively receiving information. These tips are vetted and then shared with the appropriate law enforcement agencies.

- 800.242.5100
- [coldcase@ag.iowa.gov](mailto:coldcase@ag.iowa.gov)

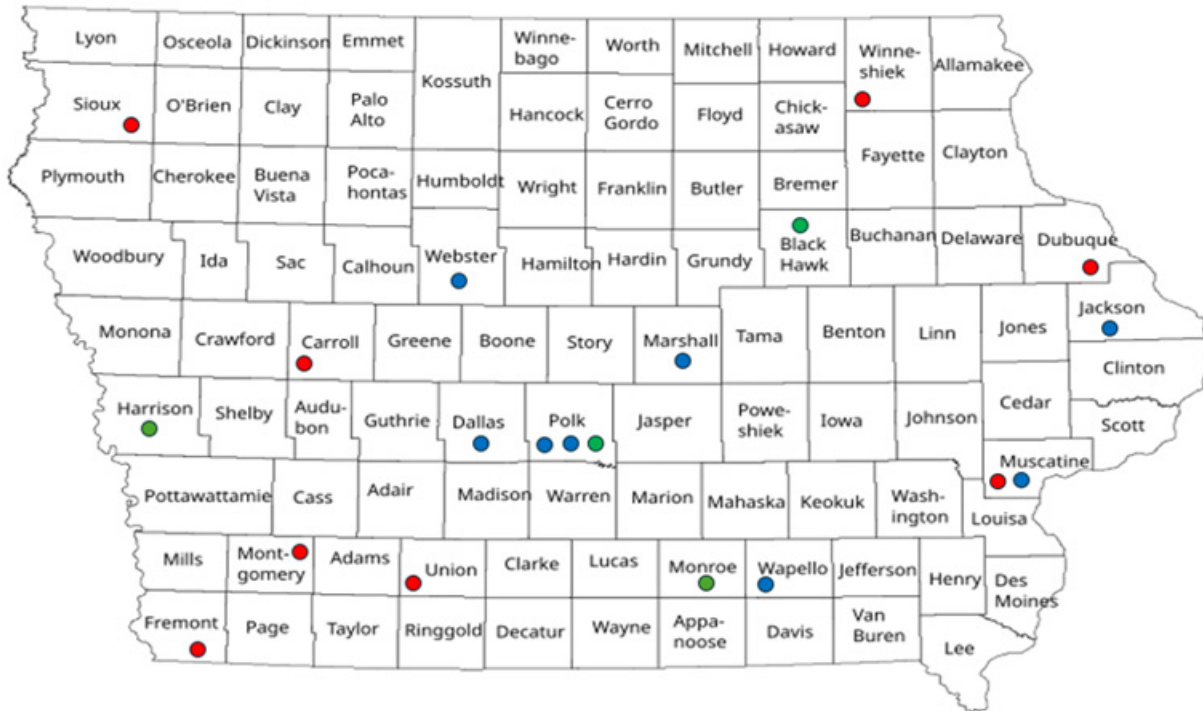
***Please share your information, no matter how small it may seem. The smallest detail can make a difference.***

## The Cold Case Unit is providing assistance in the following investigations.

- SO's - Black Hawk, Harrison, Monroe, Polk = 4
- PD's - Des Moines (2), DeWitt, Ft. Dodge, Marshalltown, Maquoketa (2), Muscatine, Ottumwa, Wauke, West Des Moines (2) = 12  
Total Cases = 16 {DCI Involved = 10, Medical Examiner Involved (UHR) = 1}
- AAG – Cold Cases referred for prosecution consideration = 9 (Union Co. 2)
  - Misc:  
Iowa AG's office developed cold case information for a possible Hewitt, TX homicide - unidentified human remains found in 1978

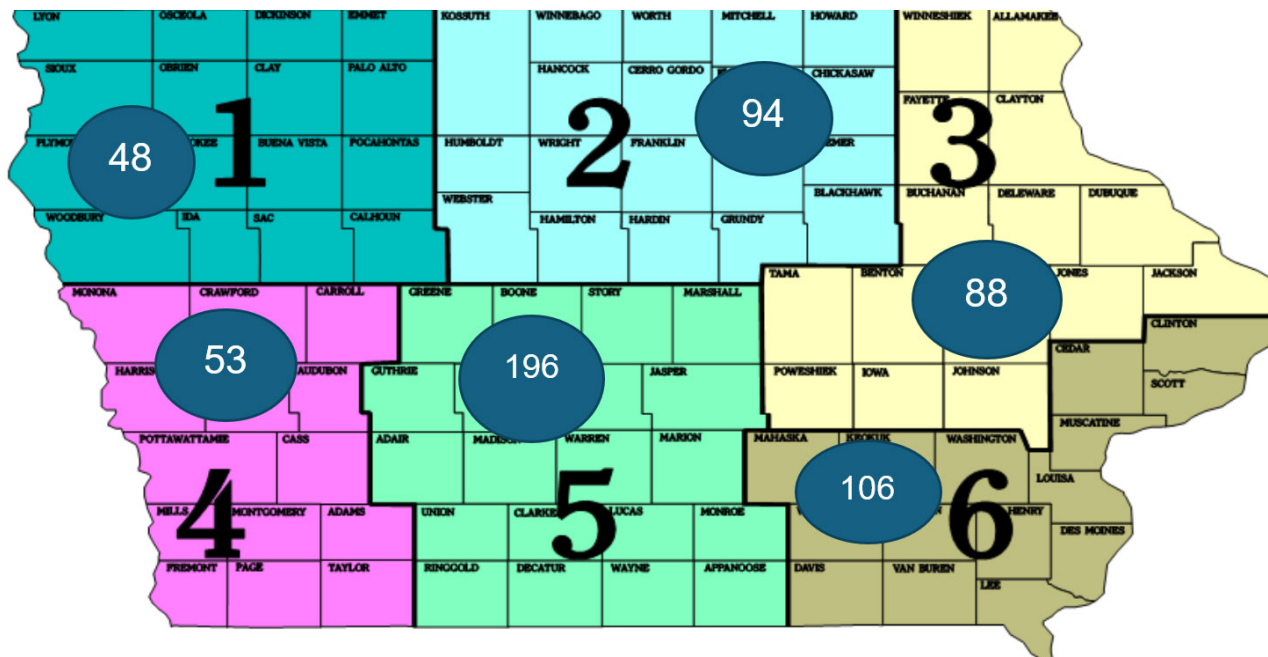
# Statewide Prosecutions Section: Cold Case Unit

As of December 23, 2024



Cold Cases in Iowa ([iowacoldcases.org](http://iowacoldcases.org)).

Iowa LEIN - Law Enforcement Intelligence Network Map



## What's Next for ICAP

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When they told me the word count for this article, I initially felt panicked. How could I possibly say everything I want to say in just 1,500 words, especially after the year we all experienced?

Those of you who deal with insurance for your county likely know exactly what I'm referring to – the year was unlike any other for those of us in the industry.

A number of property coverage providers have departed the Iowa marketplace in recent years; those that have remained have been forced to tighten their underwriting guidelines, increase rates and become more selective with the risks they cover. No property and casualty (P&C) provider has been immune, including those that provide for Iowa counties.

You likely already know this, as counties felt the impact of increased property coverage pricing last year, and at this point, your county has likely been introduced to a wind/hail deductible. Fortunately for us, Iowa Communities Assurance Pool's (ICAP's) wind/hail deductible endorsement places a few feathers in the Pool's figurative cap.

To start, our wind/hail deductible is applicable only in instances of a catastrophic wind/hail weather event as designated by the Insurance Services Office (ISO). In non-catastrophic wind/hail events, a member's stated deductible applies. This is a special distinguisher, as our deductible does not apply in all occurrences of wind/hail, as the option for most other providers seems to do.

The second big distinguisher to ICAP's wind/hail deductible is the fact, this year, it is subject to an out-of-pocket maximum. This maximum is based on a member's total insured value (TIV), as stipulated in the Pool's 2025 wind/hail endorsement. This maximum will be incredibly advantageous to Iowa counties, as it will enable them to plan for a "worst case scenario" (as relates to their deductible) should they experience widespread storm loss. We had many requests for this over the course of the last year, and we are very proud to be able to provide it.

With that, we've also heard and heeded your requests for higher cyber liability limits. For 2025, every ICAP member will automatically receive the option to secure a \$1 million cyber liability limit with their anniversary/renewal; higher limits of \$2 million and \$3 million can be quoted upon request.

Also upon request is automatic notice of claim filings for your respective county. This is a benefit of the new claims management system and will prove beneficial to ensuring member contacts are kept apprised of any P&C claim activity that might impact their county.

As part of the Pool's move to a new administrator, we are also making adjustments to the way ICAP representatives respond to claims. For you, as member representatives, this will equate to faster response and a quicker turnaround time as it relates to handling of a claim. It does not escape the ICAP team, nor the ICAP Board, that response times have been delayed over the last year, and the last few months have been exceptionally challenging, especially during our transition to a new claims management system. We are cognizant of the challenges this has posed, and we are committed to improving.

In the interest of this, ICAP has not only made the move to a new administrator, we've also placed added emphasis on the services and resources provided by our local team. Some of the ways members will see and experience this include: alternate deductible options; options related to limits; the introduction of new team members and the implementation of an executive director for the Pool; and the completion of a property valuations process, which will benefit every county that secures property coverage through the Pool.



Megan Hirst  
ICAP Program Director  
[megan@icapiowa.com](mailto:megan@icapiowa.com)



# Iowa Land Records: 20 Years of Digital Access

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## Preserving Iowa's Past, Modernizing for the Future

Imagine a time, not long ago, when accessing essential land records—deeds, mortgages, and other critical documents—meant carving out hours of your time to visit your county courthouse. These paper-based processes were time-consuming and required significant space for secure storage. Outdated technologies like microfiche added to the challenge, as they require careful maintenance and are sensitive to environmental conditions.

## IOWA LAND RECORDS

Kristen Delaney-Cole  
Communications and Marketing  
Coordinator, Iowa Land Records  
[www.iowalandrecords.org](http://www.iowalandrecords.org)

---

The dawn of the digital age demanded the need to revolutionize this process. This year, we celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Iowa Land Records (ILR) website, which has transformed the way land records are managed and accessed across the state. What began as a bold vision to create a county land record information system is now a trusted resource for thousands of users annually.

## From Vision to Reality

As we celebrate 20 years of ILR, we also recognize the visionary leadership of the Iowa County Recorders Association. The vision was ambitious: to unify all county recorders and create an accessible online system that would simplify and modernize land record management for Iowans and industry professionals alike.

To achieve this, ILR had to unite all 99 counties under a single, cohesive platform. It also demanded extensive collaboration between county recorders and key stakeholders in Iowa's real estate industry, including attorneys, mortgage lenders, real estate agents, surveyors, and more. Countless hours were spent drafting workflow plans, analyzing operational requirements, and implementing technology solutions.

"We made a determination to build it ourselves, like a recorders 'Field of Dreams,'" recalls Johnson County Recorder Kim Painter, an early contributor to ILR's development.

This spirit of innovation not only overcame significant logistical hurdles but also set a new national standard for land records management.

## Milestones in Modernization

In January 2005, the ILR website was launched, providing free online access to search for land records statewide.

Since then, Iowa Land Records has reached several key milestones in the past two decades:

- 2005: December in 2005, the first electronic document submission was recorded by Allamakee County, marking a pivotal step forward in modernizing Iowa's land record system.
- 2006: E-Submission services were introduced in all Iowa counties, enabling electronic document recording across Iowa.
- 2010s: System enhancements were made to improve performance and accessibility, and a system for redacting personally identifiable information was established.
- 2020s: A comprehensive modernization plan was initiated, focusing on updating E-Submission and Search applications, and updating infrastructure was implemented. ILR systems were moved to the "cloud".
- 2025: Legislation is being advanced to update base recording fees for the first time in 40 years and to update standards for document preparation and indexing. Standards were last updated before the advent of electronic recording.

# Iowa Land Records: 20 Years of Digital Access

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Today, ILR:

- Provides access to more than 24 million public land records.
- Electronically processes more than 62% of all recorded documents.
- Provides a statewide technology platform for delivering other electronic services.

## Why It Matters

ILR provides benefits to many Iowans. Citizens, mortgage lenders, real estate attorneys, realtors, title agents, surveyors, and many others can easily access property records from anywhere, saving time and reducing costs. County recorders, who are the stewards of these vital documents, are working to standardize land record systems to ensure better accuracy and accessibility.

## Celebrating Leadership, Looking Ahead

Looking to the future, ILR is poised to implement generational improvements in data quality, accessibility, and services. ILR is based on the same principles that led to its creation:

- Recording functions are best provided locally.
- Local recording functions and information access can be provided through an efficient, statewide system.
- The system should follow common standards and best practices.
- Recorders are best positioned to establish standards, policies, and best practices on a statewide basis.
- The needs of constituents and stakeholders should guide the services provided.
- The application of new technologies is necessary to provide better service and efficiency for our users.

Building on the progress of the past two decades, Iowa Land Records remains a model of efficiency and collaboration. By working together, we are able to do things that are not possible as individual counties.

This 20-year milestone is a testament to the power of innovation and collaboration. Iowa county recorders are proud to preserve Iowa's past while modernizing for the future, ensuring that land records remain secure, accessible, and adaptable for years to come.

To learn more about Iowa Land Records and its Modernization and Fee Policy Initiative, visit <https://iowalandrecords.org/fee-policy-modernization>, or scan the QR code below.



## First Six Months on the Job

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My career has largely taken place at the Iowa State Capitol. My first post-college job was serving as a clerk in the Iowa Senate. I worked in the office of a legislative leader, as a multi-client lobbyist, on research staff, and for nearly a decade I built relationships at the Capitol on behalf of Central Iowa communities at a regional chamber of commerce. It feels fitting that I hit the six-month mark at ISAC as the 91st General Assembly commences for the 2025 Legislative Session.

Over the course of the past six months, it has been both a whirlwind and an absolute pleasure getting to know the many individuals and organizations impacted by the work of ISAC. When I assumed the role of Executive Director, I outlined a plan for the first 90 days that focused on listening, learning, and leaning in. Complete immersion into all-things county government has provided me ample opportunities to learn. I have attended three trips to learn from the National Association of Counties (NACo), the ISAC Annual Conference, the ISAC Leadership Seminar, the ISAC New County Officers School, and four ISAC Board of Directors meetings, and I continue to meet one-on-one with ISAC Board Members. Each opportunity I get to talk about the work of ISAC, I raise my hand.



Andrea N. J. Woodard  
ISAC Executive Director  
[awoodard@iowacounties.org](mailto:awoodard@iowacounties.org)

---

It is thanks to the ISAC team and their guidance that I feel confident leaning in this legislative session to support the ISAC Government Relations Team. Over the course of the session, you will find me visiting the Iowa Capitol on a regular basis, listening to the conversation on our key priorities of property tax reform, funding state mandates, Medicaid funding, and funding of the Iowa Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation Trust Fund, and leveraging my relationships with elected leaders to further those priorities. If you plan to visit the Iowa Capitol this session, reach out. I'd welcome the chance to join you.

Like many, I go into the new year with goals in mind. Over the course of 2025 I will be focusing on a few priorities that impact you. In my first six months, I set goals to listen, learn, and lean in. Each of the goals I've set for this year will continue a focus on listening, learning, and leaning into all things ISAC. Here is what you'll see from me in 2025:

**99-County Tour:** Following the 2025 Legislative Session, the ISAC team will start traveling the state, connecting with county officials and department leaders. We will be sharing more details in the coming months, and when we reach out to set up time to connect, we hope you'll say, "Yes!"

**16 Affiliate Organizations:** I will be setting up meetings with each of the 16 affiliate organizations represented by ISAC. I strongly believe that building relationships with the leadership of each affiliate is an important step in understanding the organization.

**Focus on Government Affairs:** Leaning into my own career experience, and identifying the right approach to supporting this important work is a top goal of mine during 2025. I firmly believe that building relationships with our elected state leaders throughout the year is fundamental for success during the legislative session.

I have one ask for you. I challenge each county, county official, and department leader to participate in at least one way with ISAC over the course of 2025. If you are not currently involved, reach out to our team or myself for ways to engage. Like many things in life, you get out of it what you put in. Join me in the effort to listen, learn, and lean in during 2025.

# 2025 Calendar

## February 2025

- 18-21 ISSDA Spring Jail School  
(Holiday Inn Des Moines Airport)
- 19 ISAC Board of Directors Meeting  
(ISAC Office)
- 25 ISAC Leadership Seminar  
(Renaissance Savory Hotel Des Moines)

## March 2025

- 1-4 NACo Legislative Conference  
(Washington Hilton, Washington, D.C.)
- 12 ISAC Legislative Reception  
(Hilton Des Moines Downtown)
- 13-14 ISAC Spring Conference  
(Veterans Memorial Community Choice  
Credit Union Convention Center, Des Moines)

## April 2025

- 1-2 Public Health Conference of Iowa  
(Holiday Inn Des Moines Airport)
- 13-16 ISSDA Spring Civil School  
(Holiday Inn Des Moines Airport)

## May 2025

- 7 ISAC Board of Directors Meeting  
(Virtual)
- 21-23 Western Interstate Region (WIR) Conference  
(Pennington County, South Dakota)

## June 2025

- 4-6 ICIT Conference  
(The Meadows Event and Conference Center)
- 18 ISAC Scholarship Golf Fundraiser  
(Toad Valley Golf Course, Pleasant Hill)
- 18-20 ICRA Summer School  
(West Des Moines, Iowa)
- 19 ISAC Board of Directors Meeting  
(ISAC Office)
- 24-27 ISACA Summer Conference  
(Hilton Garden Inn West Des Moines)

## July 2025

- 11-14 NACo Annual Conference and Exposition  
(Philadelphia, Pennsylvania)

## August 2025

- 20-22 ISAC Annual 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](mailto:ksebern@iowacounties.org).

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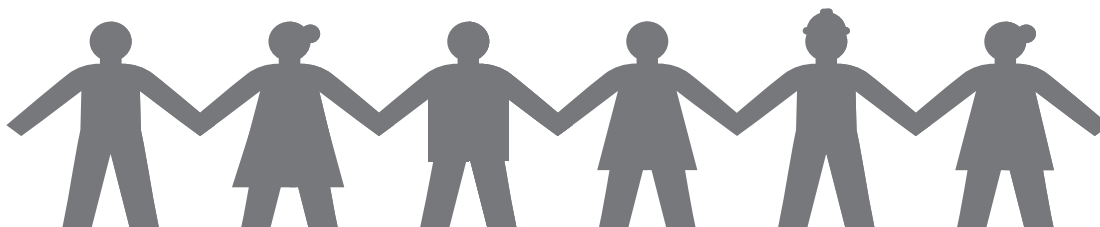
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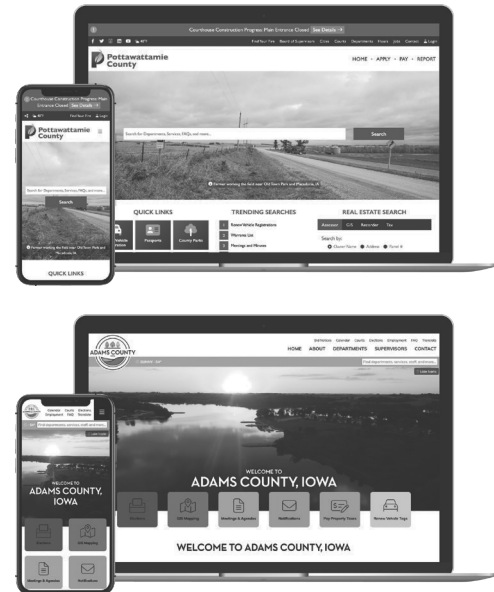
Rebecca Bissell  
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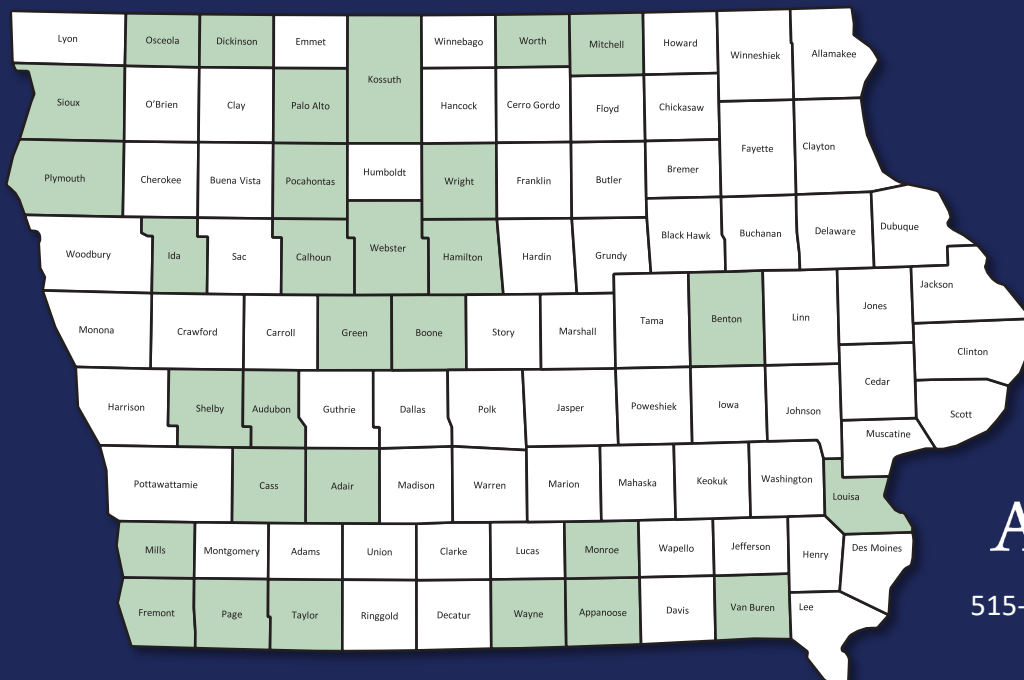
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