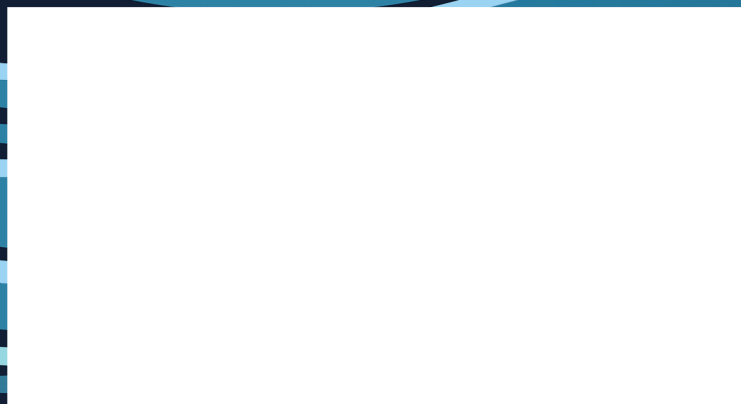


The Iowa County Magazine



August 2025
ISAC Annual
Conference
At Sea



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The Iowa County

August 2025 * Volume 54, Number 8

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Iowa State Association of Counties
5500 Westown Parkway, Suite 190
West Des Moines, IA 50266
515.244.7181 FAX 515.244.6397
www.iowacounties.org
Rachel Bennett, EDITOR
Courtney Biere, PRODUCTION AND LAYOUT

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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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Beth Manley - General Counsel
Tammy Norman - IPAC Program Manager
Lynsey Pierce - Assistant Attorney
Brock Ridders - Software Developer
Jacy Ripperger - Marketing Manager
Joel Rohne - IT Strategy Manager
Kelsey Sebern - Event Manager
Rachel Schaapveld - ICACMP Program Support Specialist
Molly Steffen - Operations Manager
Jessica Trobaugh - ICACMP Project Manager
Dylan Young - IT DevOps Manager

**** The views and opinions expressed in articles authored by
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CONFERENCE AGENDA-AT-A-GLANCE

TUESDAY, AUGUST 19

1:00 pm - 6:00 pm
12:00 pm - 4:00 pm

Affiliate Committee Meetings
ISAC LPC Meeting

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 20

7:00 am - 8:00 am
8:00 am - 9:00 am
9:00 am - 11:00 am
11:00 am - 12:00 pm
12:00 pm - 4:30 pm

Affiliate Committee Meetings
Morning Refreshments (Pastries & Fruit)
ISAC General Session
Lunch
ISAC Educational Seminars and Tracks

THURSDAY, AUGUST 21

7:30 am - 8:30 am
8:30 am - 11:00 am
11:00 am - 12:30 am
12:30 pm - 5:00 pm
5:30 pm - 10:00 pm

Hot Breakfast (Breakfast Bowls)
Affiliate Time
Lunch and Vendor Prize Drawing
Affiliate Time
County Night at the Ballpark

FRIDAY, AUGUST 22

7:30 am - 8:00 am
8:00 am - 12:00 pm

Full Hot Breakfast
Affiliate Time

AFFILIATE TIME MEETING ROOMS:

312-313 | Assessors
302-303 | Auditors
314 | Conservation
309-310 | Engineers
317 | Planning and Zoning
301 | Public Health
307-308 | Recorders
304-306 | Supervisors
315-316 | Treasurers

NOT MEETING:

Attorneys
Community Services
Information Technology
Emergency Management
Environmental Health
Sheriffs and Deputies
Veterans Service Officers



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AUGUST 20-22, 2025 | DES MOINES



ISAC EDUCATIONAL SEMINARS AND TRACKS

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 20

Personality Assessment Track

12:00 pm – 3:00 pm

Meeting Room 307-310

12:00 pm – 3:00 pm – Workplace Culture is Our Lighthouse: Knowing Our Team's Personalities Makes It Shine!

Dr. Bill Withers will work with attendees to help them assess and leverage their strengths and personalities toward improved performance and engagement to improve county office and department workplace culture.

Two key outcomes of this session for county officers and professionals include:

- Raising your team's self-awareness of who they are relative to their role so that they can better engage with each other and county stakeholders.
- Heighten your team's sense of purpose: what they do; why they do it; and how to better serve each other and their many constituents and stakeholders.

Bill will also share an assessment tool or two that are available for county offices and departments to use at no cost. Attendees will leave the workshop with both ideas and resources to perform similar exercises in your county.

Human Resources Track

12:00 pm – 4:30 pm

Meeting Room 302-305

12:00 pm – 1:15 pm – Investigatory Interview Process

This presentation will do a deep dive into the investigatory interview process. The seminar will share the basic roadmap for conducting investigations but focus will primarily on practical strategies for getting the most out of your interviews. The goal of the discussion will be to help employers build interview skills to: develop rapport and build trust as an investigator; identify witness baseline responses; and tactfully explore inconsistencies, perspectives, and motives. The presenter will then show how these skills can assist attendees to make objective credibility decisions to make reliable and accurate fact findings.

1:30 pm – 2:45 pm – Conflict in the Workplace and Beyond

The subsequent portion of the Track will evaluate general points of conflict that exist in a public employment context, including how to manage and respond to general employee conflict, how to address conflict within boards and councils, and how to handle conflict within the community and the media that may impact the public employer.

3:00 pm – 4:15 pm – Evaluations, Discipline, and Performance Reviews: Best Practices for Managing Iowa Public Employees

This presentation will focus on the proper procedures and considerations for public employers to take when evaluating, disciplining, and reviewing the performance of current employees in the state of Iowa. Participants will learn relevant information and laws affecting the management of public employees and how to implement those through workplace practices. Discussion during the presentation will focus on when and how to perform the evaluations, reviews, and potential discipline actions as well as what issues to focus on and avoid.



ISAC CONFERENCE-WIDE EVENT THURSDAY, AUGUST 21

COUNTY NIGHT AT THE BALLPARK 5:30 PM - 10:00 PM

Don't miss this year's conference-wide event! County Night at the Ballpark is being held at 5:30 pm on Thursday, August 21, at Principal Park in conjunction with the ISAC Annual Conference. Registration is \$15, and a limited number of tickets are available.

Free Shuttle | 5:15 pm - 10:00 pm

Two shuttles will run on continuous loops between the Hilton and Principal Park. The drop-off/pick-up location will be clearly marked with signage.

Picnic | 5:30 pm

All you can eat hamburgers, hot dogs, chips, potato salad, and soft drinks are included with your \$15 registration. The picnic will be located on the party deck in right field.

Game Time | 6:38 pm

Iowa Cubs vs. Sugar Land Space Cowboys – registration includes a reserved ticket in Section 4.

Iowa Precinct Atlas Consortium Program Update

The Iowa Precinct Atlas Consortium (IPAC) Team is busy preparing for the upcoming city/school election, that will be held on November 4, 2025. The Team and programmers are collaborating with the IPAC Future's Committee to test the software, which is scheduled for release on August 18, 2025. The software update will resolve the issues revealed in the 2024 General Election. There will be no sync app update needed; the sync app used for the General Election can be used for the upcoming city/school election. Reports have been updated and enhanced. Exciting new features include the ability to choose your hardware options.



Tammy Norman
IPAC Program Manager
Iowa State Association of Counties
tnorman@iowacounties.org

New Hardware Options

IPAC members can choose to use the following when online:

- Laptops
- Surface Go tablets
- iPads

If IPAC members prefer to remain offline, they have the following options to choose from:

Primary/Server

- Laptops
- Surface Go tablets
- Mini PC with touch screen

Secondaries

- Laptops
- Surface Go tablets
- iPads

Software Enhancements

The following enhancements have been added to the city/school software release:

- iPad and Surface Go tablet cameras can be used to scan IDs
- Ability to choose which election to sync offline
- QR code added to the dashboard for tablets to scan to connect to the primary server
- Online dashboard

The IPAC Team is currently visiting member counties that have requested demos of the new hardware options. The first demo was held in July and future demos are being scheduled.

Training and Opportunities

An in-person training will be held in conjunction with the ISAC Annual Conference at 1:00 pm - 4:30 pm on Tuesday, August 19, in Meeting Room 302. Online registration will open this month. Tutorials and videos will also be available for members to use for the city/school election.

Iowa Precinct Atlas Consortium Program Update

IPAC Help Desk

The IPAC Team is available to assist IPAC members. The IPAC Help Desk will submit a ticket, which will be seen by all members of the IPAC Team. To submit requests for assistance, please email the IPAC Team at ipac@iowacounties.org. If you have any questions regarding the IPAC Program, please contact Carla Becker, IPAC Board President, or Tammy Norman, IPAC Program Manager.

The IPAC team is here to assist you, and we are looking forward to a successful city/school election cycle.



Dylan Young
IT DevOps Manager



Brock Ridders
Software Support Specialist



Jake Brunkhorst
Software Developer



Ashley Clark
IT Resources/Project Manager



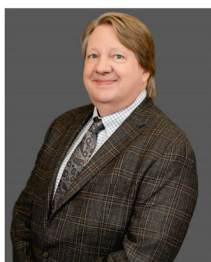
Brandi Kanselaar
IT Software and Systems Analyst



Molly Steffen
Operations Manager



Tammy Norman
IPAC Program Manager



Joel Rohne
IT Strategy Manager



Andrew De Haan
IT Director



Brad Holtan
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The IPAC Team

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Are You Overpaying? How to Lower Insurance Costs

There's a phrase, "You can only spend a dollar once," meaning once it's spent, it's spent. This highlights the finite nature of money, encourages careful spending habits, and insists that each dollar should be allocated to the highest priority or most valuable use. With current budgeting restraints placed on counties, what options are available? Here are some items of consideration regarding your insurance/property and casualty coverages as well as workers' compensation as it relates to **Iowa Communities Assurance Pool (ICAP)** and **Iowa Municipal Workers' Compensation Association (IMWCA)**.

ICAP provides property and casualty coverages for counties. The last several years have been traumatic in the property and casualty insurance industry due to high claims usage - weather events and high reinsurance rates which funneled down to you, the buyer. Several carriers left the state, while other carriers had rate increases from 30% to 70%. Thankfully, 2025 has seen price relief!

ICAP's 2025 property rates (which include scheduled and unscheduled equipment) had a 0% rate change! Contributions/premiums may have increased but as a direct result of higher property values, more equipment, etc.

An important benefit/feature of the ICAP program, any building or equipment added throughout the policy year under \$90,000 in value is added with NO additional charge.

ICAP works to keep your property contribution premiums low. ICAP has committed to conduct professional valuations on all member-owned buildings valued at replacement cost and \$200,000 and up. This is a five-year commitment with Southeast Iowa (E on the map) valuations now in process. By ensuring appropriate replacement cost valuations, appropriate premiums will be collected which will offset when claims occur – especially those under the "blanket provision".

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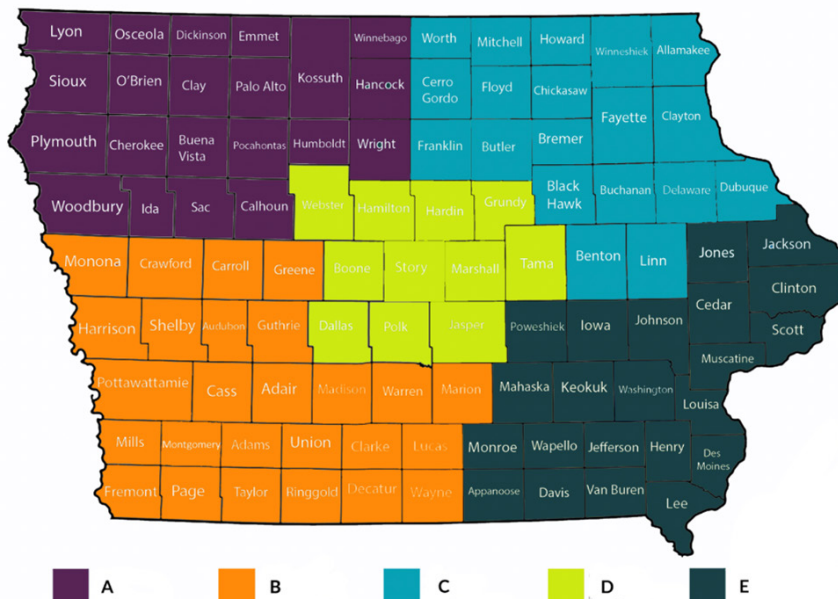
 

Willene White

County Risk Management Services, Inc.
(CRMS) representing ICAP and IMWCA

www.crmsia.com

PROPERTY VALUATIONS



Are You Overpaying? How to Lower Insurance Costs

Lowering your premium can also be achieved through higher deductibles. This is true not only for property, equipment, auto, and physical damage, but also liability coverages. A cost analysis can be performed to determine if the deductible options are truly beneficial to your county.

ICAP updated their wind/hail deductibles in January 2025 to limit outlays for which its members are responsible. There is a 2% wind/hail deductible, but ONLY if the storm is designated as a catastrophe by the Insurance Services Office (ISO).

Another cost saving action is to verify at anniversary any security systems, sprinkler systems, etc. that are in place in your county-owned buildings. These items represent discounts that are often overlooked.

ICAP's liability rates were unchanged from 1986 to 2020 – a 34-year span demonstrating the stability of the pool! The ICAP Board has worked tirelessly to ensure the best rates possible with minimal rate changes in 2025.

A recent national article, “*Nuclear Verdicts Surged to New Record High in 2024*”, provided results of a recent research study regarding liability verdicts. This was a national study, but what was disconcerting was the list of states that made the Top 10. It wasn't Iowa, but our neighbors to the south, Missouri (\$1.2 billion in verdicts), and to the east, Illinois (\$654 million in verdicts).

Two other ICAP benefits that are overlooked are the ICAP Safety Grant and Free Legal Access that provide direct savings if used. IMWCA also has programs/grants available for member use. The sole purpose – prevent losses!

IMWCA enjoys a large market share of the municipal workers' compensation coverage in Iowa. Compliant with Iowa Code, IMWCA has various discounts and programs available.

IMWCA offers direct cost savings that can be realized when placing workers' compensation coverage. Counties that focus on proactive safety measures and efficient claims management, implement strong safety programs, return to work programs, and ensure accurate payroll and classifications of employees will experience the best pricing available. With all available discounts/credits, the average county experience modification factor (MOD) in the state for several years was 57%. There are counties currently at 33% premium cost from the standard Iowa rates!

An intentional, dedicated Safety Committee and Safety Program can save thousands of dollars year after year. The example above, 33%, in actual dollars amounted to \$107,121 for 2024. However, the pendulum can swing the other way as well.

The great news is that your county does not have to invent a training or loss control program, nor do you need to hire a specialist. Both ICAP and IMWCA have dedicated risk management and loss control specialists available at your request. Both have a tremendous library for training, checklists, and more.

Learn more about these programs — access the resources and trainings mentioned at www.icapiowa.com and www.imwca.org.

CRMS serves as the bridge between counties in Iowa, their agents, ICAP, and IMWCA. We work with officials and local insurance agents to help counties access property, casualty, liability, and workers' compensation coverages and resources to help prevent and respond to loss. CRMS programs currently provide coverage for 81 counties in Iowa and are endorsed by ISAC. Please reach out to your local agent or any of the CRMS representatives with questions. Learn more about CRMS at crmsia.com.

On July 10, I traveled to Philadelphia to attend the 2025 National Association of Counties (NACo) Annual Conference. I was accompanied by 15 elected officials, three of their spouses, and six staff members from ISAC. This year's event welcomed the largest group of first-time attendees in NACo history at 370 new participants. It was inspiring to see leaders from across the United States gather to share ideas, advocate for their jurisdictions, and collectively work to better serve their constituents.

Agriculture and Rural Affairs Steering Committee

As a member of the Agriculture and Rural Affairs Steering Committee, I participated in discussions focused on challenges faced by rural communities nationwide. Key issues included:

- **Young Farmer Retention:** A shared concern among attendees was how to attract and retain young farmers in rural areas.
- **Broadband Access:** The need for robust and accessible broadband is critical to keeping pace with our fast-moving, tech-driven world.
- **Farmland Preservation:** We discussed innovative ways to maintain farmland, including partnerships with industry and manufacturing that support agricultural jobs and qualify for manufacturing credits.
- **Artificial Intelligence (AI):** AI presents significant potential in agriculture. As one of the fastest-evolving sectors, farming stands to benefit greatly from AI integration.
- **Federal Collaboration:** The Trump Administration emphasized the importance of working with organizations like NACo to support and grow domestic industries and keep jobs in America.



Richard Crouch
Mills County Supervisor
NACo Board Representative
rcrouch@millscountyiowa.gov

NACo Federal Cost Shift Report

NACo released a report addressing the federal cost shift from recent spending cuts, outlining the considerable impact this may have on counties. The report aims to inform and prepare county leaders to respond to these intergovernmental changes. The looming financial burden underscores the importance of innovation and adaptability in local governance.

Key Legislative Discussions

The One Big Beautiful Bill Act was discussed at length, especially its implications on emergency services in rural areas. A major concern is the sharp decline in volunteerism, with the average volunteer now aged 60 and older. This trend poses serious challenges for sustaining rural emergency response systems.

USDA and Rural Issues Work Session

I also attended a work session focused on the USDA office reorganization and how it impacts grant partnerships, such as those through CDBG. The four primary concerns affecting rural communities identified during this session were:

1. Declining volunteerism
2. Closure and underfunding of rural hospitals
3. Communication infrastructure
4. Implementation of AI in agriculture

A particularly thought-provoking conversation centered around the use of agricultural land for solar energy. Can land serve both solar and farming purposes? How do counties establish land use regulations that protect farmland without infringing on property rights?

2025 NACo Annual Conference

NACo 90th Anniversary and Committee Work

This year marks NACo's 90th Anniversary. It was fascinating to reflect on NACo's history, how county officials once traveled cross-country by train to attend these early gatherings. During the Membership Committee meeting, we discussed strategies for boosting attendance and enhancing future conferences.

Rural Action Caucus Committee



Energy innovation, particularly solar and wind were the focus. We explored how rural technology, broadband, AI, and drone advancements can fuel economic development and create new opportunities for rural Americans.



Rural Healthcare Challenges

Healthcare was again a major topic of concern. With rural hospital closures increasing, largely due to funding shortages, counties are being forced to do more with less. Rising costs of Medicaid and SNAP, and the shifting of over \$1 trillion in responsibility to local governments, demand that counties either cut services or raise taxes. These difficult choices highlight the urgent need for creative, sustainable service delivery in rural areas.

Final Reflections

Philadelphia served as an exceptional host for this year's conference. I was grateful for the opportunity to explore the city's historic landmarks, including the Liberty Bell, the Declaration of Independence, and the United States Constitution. These powerful reminders of our nation's foundation reinvigorated my sense of purpose in public service. As county and community leaders, it is essential that we remain grounded in our history while pushing forward to build a better future for the people we serve.





Renewable energy projects by Apex Clean Energy are helping rural Iowa counties and their communities renew their economic base, while providing a reliable and affordable energy source. One project at a time!

Why Iowa Land Records Matters

Today, Iowa Land Records includes over **24 million real estate records** and provides the capacity to process thousands of recording transactions, facilitating more than **\$31 million annually for Iowa counties**. In recent months, a steady increase in electronic submissions indicates a continued shift toward more efficient and accessible operations within the real estate and land records industry. While the rise in electronic submissions does not necessarily reflect an increase in real estate activity overall, it highlights how technology is helping counties streamline workloads, reduce turnaround times, and meet evolving service expectations. As counties continue to balance resources and responsibilities, the infrastructure supporting electronic submission through Iowa Land Records plays an increasingly important role in meeting the needs of recorders, real estate industry professionals, and the public alike.



Kristen Delaney-Cole
Communications and Marketing Coordinator
Iowa Land Records ESS
kristen@clris.com

A Revenue Plan for Every Iowa County

As counties continue to modernize, Iowa recorders are requesting a **modest update to the base document recording fee from \$5 to \$10 per page** in 2026.

This proposal would:

- **Simplify** the fee structure by removing outdated add-on fees.
- Provide **\$2 per document** to a recorder's technology fund.
- Support **\$3 per document** to sustain and improve Iowa Land Records.

These fees are **paid by document submitters**, not by local budgets or property taxpayers. Collectively, this change has the potential to generate an additional **\$8 million for county budgets statewide** to support the growing needs in every county.

A Valued Public Service

Iowa Land Records was created with the understanding that real estate touches every community and must continue to provide electronic access to these important records no matter where people live. Whether it's a lender in Polk County, an agricultural producer selling farmland in Page County, or a title company working across county lines, Iowa Land Records provides **free, centralized access to recorded documents** from every corner of the state.

As a public service, not a private for-profit organization, Iowa Land Records operates with transparency in funding, accountability in decision-making, and reinvestment in system improvements for all Iowans. Additionally, Iowa Land Records undergoes annual audits, complies with open meetings and public records laws, and collaborates closely with the evolving needs of its users.

County recorders leverage Iowa Land Records to ensure seamless integration, policy alignment, data consistency, and reliable support services. Counties retain control of their records while benefiting from shared infrastructure, including redaction services, cybersecurity, and ongoing technology upgrades.

Why Iowa Land Records Matters

Local Benefits, Statewide Impact

Through Iowa's statewide collaboration, Iowa has avoided the fragmented, inconsistent systems seen elsewhere. Iowa Land Records benefits include:

- Free, 24/7 access to public land records
- Secure and timely E-Submission services
- More consistent document indexing and redaction processes
- Reliable service across county lines

This proven, forward-thinking model continues to draw national attention. Recently, the national Property Records Industry Association (PRIA) established a workgroup to explore ways to encourage other states to create an aggregated land records system similar to what Iowans have had for more than 20 years.

Learn More in the Annual Report

As your county continues to serve its residents with modern, transparent, and efficient services, **Iowa Land Records stands ready to support that work.** We encourage you to learn more about the system, the proposed fee update, and what it means for your community in the newly published **2024–2025 Iowa Land Records Annual Report.**

View the Annual Report: <https://iowalandrecords.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/2024-2025-Annual-Report-published-July-2025.pdf>

For questions or additional information, please contact support@clris.com.



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CONTACTS

Travis Squires | +1 515 247-2354
Tim Oswald | +1 515 247-2358
Garrett Pochop | +1 515 247-2359
Matthew Gillaspie | +1 515 247-2353
Will Braverman | +1 515 247-2344

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2025-2026 Calendar

August 2025

20-22 ISAC Annual Conference
(Veterans Memorial Community Choice Credit
Union Convention Center, Des Moines)

September 2025

16-19 ISSDA Fall Jail School
(Holiday Inn Des Moines Airport)

October 2025

1-3 ISAC Board of Directors Retreat
(Carroll County)
5-8 Assessors Fall School
(Holiday Inn Des Moines Airport)

November 2025

19-20 ISAC Board of Directors Meeting
(ISAC Office)

December 2025

2-5 ISSDA Winter School
(Holiday Inn Des Moines Airport)
3-5 79th Annual Iowa County Engineers Conference
(Veterans Memorial Community Choice Credit
Union Convention Center, Des Moines)

January 2026

29 Statewide Supervisors Meeting
(Embassy Suites Des Moines Downtown)

March 2026

11 ISAC Legislative Reception
(Hilton Des Moines Downtown)
12-13 ISAC Spring Conference
(Veterans Memorial Community Choice Credit
Union Convention Center, Des Moines)

August 2026

19-21 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.

2025 ISAC Preferred Vendors

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representing ICAP and IMWCA
Assured Partners

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With farm income down and margins tight, Iowa's farmers and ethanol producers need new markets. By lowering ethanol's carbon intensity, we're opening doors to growth and opportunity.



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Strengthening Agriculture, Energizing Communities.**

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**FOR COST ALLOCATION SERVICES AND
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Contact Jeff Lorenz (515)-238-7989
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Contacts:



Paul Kruse
Senior Vice President,
Director-Iowa
515.224.2720
pkruse@pmanetwork.com



Caleb Walter
Vice President,
Investment Services
515-224-2721
cwalter@pmanetwork.com



Anita Tracy
Associate Vice President,
Investment Services
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graph LR; A[Capital Planning] --> B[Bond Issuance]; B --> C[Post-Sale Compliance]; C --> D[Placement Agent]; C --> E[Municipal Advisory]; C --> F[Underwriting]
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Scott Stevenson, Managing Director
(515) 471-2721 | SStevenson@dadco.com

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Worksite & Ancillary Program

- Group accident and critical illness plans
- Accident includes AD&D and wellness
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- Broad network of providers
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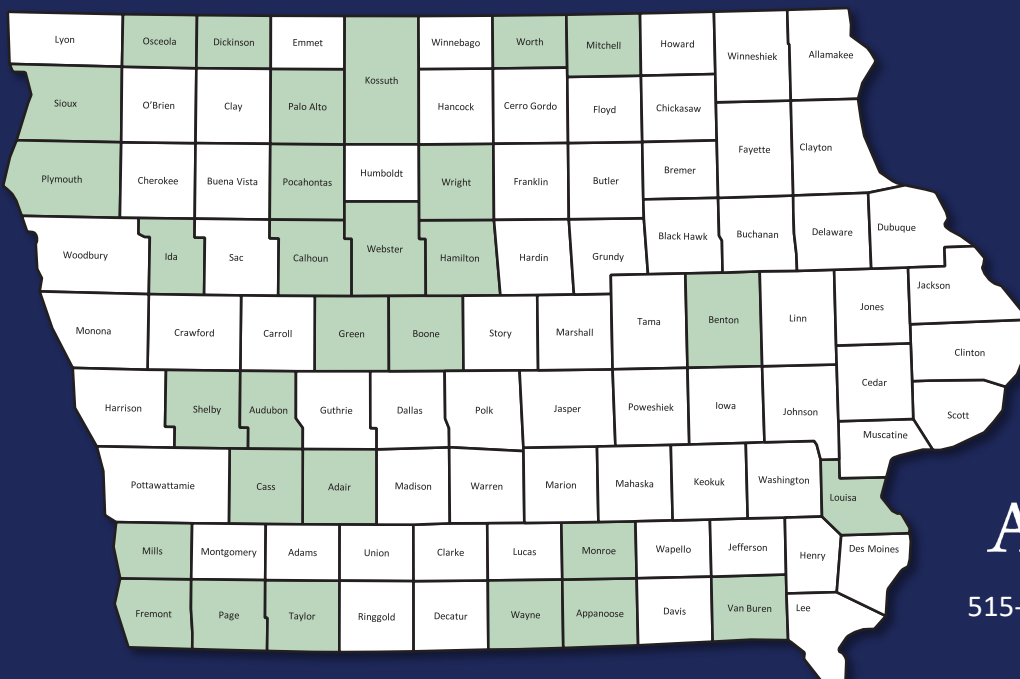
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