



City Administrator & Staff Update

2025.09.12

- **Iowa League:** The Iowa League Conference starts this coming Wednesday in Des Moines. Following that I will have a vacation out to Denver to see Michael for his birthday and hopefully get him the last of his things.
- **CityScape:** Check out this month's City Scape magazine for the article on WB's pollinator program!
<https://mydigitalpublication.com/publication/?i=851594&p=16&view=issueViewer>
- **Housing Committee:** The first meeting of the new housing committee is next week at the Chamber.
- **SEIRPC:** Mike Norris will be attending the October 1, 2025, meeting to review the Homes for Iowa (Prison homes) program and outline some of the basics. We will touch on a few other topics related to housing and rehab as well.
- **Bolton & Menk:** Met to review projects, funding opportunities and upcoming presentations (stormwater). Looking for engineering proposals – Agency trail, Intersections, etc.
- **Matt Rinker:** Rep. Rinker will be attending on 10/1 to discuss legislative priorities going into the next session.
- **Noise Cameras:** Article: Noise cameras debut in small-town Iowa; DSM takes note
<https://www.axios.com/local/des-moines/2025/09/08/noise-cameras-iowa-des-moines-tickets-avoca>
- **Carl A Nelson:** I was discussing a presentation with Carl A. Nelson for council on the topic of construction management and the new options available under Iowa Code. Looking at perhaps early December for an introduction to the program.
- **KPI:** KPI is interested in volunteering on some of our prairie and pollinator efforts as well as meeting with us to discuss some opportunities for some onsite programs at their facility. Meeting next week to discuss.
- **DNR Article and grant:** DNR saw our article in the CityScape magazine and reached out to discuss our program and some potential funding.
- **IDNR Tree Inventory:** Lisa Louck from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources stopped by this morning to let us know she will be updating the Street Tree Inventory over the next few weeks. As part of this process, she'll be walking around town taking photos. Lisa wanted to make sure her intentions were known in case residents have questions or concerns while she's conducting the inventory.

Building (Crooks)

Building

1. Six new permits issued in past week.
2. Certificate of Occupancy issued for Alice Place
3. Inspection completed on SCC alteration project

Code Enforcement

1. Thirteen new nuisance notices mailed out. Several for junk & junk vehicles and low tree limbs over the streets
2. Follow up was completed on outstanding nuisance issues with many being closed

License

1. Five new mobile food licenses issued

Misc.

1. Met with potential buyers of commercial property
2. Met with property owners regarding nuisance issues
3. Completed review of possible residential property split

Finance (Moore)

- This week, I wrapped up the AFR and the Annual Urban Renewal Report to the point where both are now sitting patiently in line, just waiting for the audit report to arrive and give them the final stamp of approval. I've been chipping away at the County TIF Report and making steady progress there.
- I also kicked off preparations for the upcoming budget season — sharpening my pencils (figuratively) and getting ready for what is sure to be an exciting few months. In between all of that, I've been handling other duties as needed, because there's always something to keep me on my toes.

IT (Newberry)

- AppLocker Enforcement – Implemented enforcement on the City Hall side, strengthening endpoint security by blocking unauthorized or malicious applications.
- RMM Software Review – Conducted an evaluation of a new Remote Monitoring and Management (RMM) solution. Preliminary analysis shows significant long-term cost savings. I anticipate this item will be on an upcoming agenda for consideration.
- Evidence Room Security Camera – Began installation of an exterior camera outside the evidence room. Installation was delayed due to building restrictions on mounting to the sprinkler system; an alternative mounting solution is required.
- Storage Array Maintenance – Replaced a failing hard drive in the array using a previously purchased spare, restoring full system redundancy.
- Ongoing IT Operations – Completed standard weekly tasks, including verification of backups, log reviews, and regular maintenance checks.

Police/Fire (Logan)

- On October 13, 2025, we will be hosting a test date for the Fire Department. We had a decent turnout a couple years ago for this so hopefully we can get some more candidates.
- Opened applications for the open Police Officer Position and have received 12 resumes since Monday at 200pm.
- The testing for the Police Officer will be on October 18th at 1000 am. We will start here at the PD and then move up to the school for the outside testing.
- We have the potential for a 29-hour police officer position that we are discussing and looking to bring forward to council based on current applications, etc.
- Did a final walkthrough Alice Place on Wednesday afternoon and they had everything completed that was on my list.
- Working on the numbers for the PD. We have a support ticket into command central. Our link is not working currently.

Public Works (Williams)

Streets

- Street patching

Utilities

- Lift station rounds
- Water and sewer labs
- Clean lift stations
- Locates (31)

Other Activities

- Parks and Broadway trash and recycling
- Service trucks and squad cars.
- Sign maintenance
- Building maintenance and cleaning up.
- Haul brush/grass.
- Mow
- Water plants
- Work on sidewalk (Alice Place)
- Backfill sidewalk

Projects

- Alice place curb is repaired
- Four seasons have started the dirt work for the Va clinic
- Four season plans are starting water and sewer hook-up for the Va in the next couple weeks
- We are working on getting the new turn lane ready at Walmart
- Four seasons has found and fixed a water leak on Beaverdale Rd

Additional Items/Upcoming Items of Interest

- Jacob signed up to take grade 3 wastewater test.
- Cole has signed up to take his grade 2 in water treatment
- The soffit lights at city hall are in the process of getting replaced to Led lights
- We will start chlorinating our water system at the end of the week. This is a yearly maintenance item that will last around 3 weeks. When we finish, we will flush all the hydrants in town.

2025.09.03

Streets

- Patching

Utilities

- Lift station rounds
- Water and sewer labs
- Clean lift stations
- Locates (24)

Other Activities

- Parks and Broadway trash and recycling
- Service trucks and squad cars.
- Sign maintenance
- Building maintenance and cleaning up.
- Haul brush/grass.
- Mow
- Water plants
- Spray weeds
- Work on sidewalk (Alice Place)
- Backfill sidewalk
- Trench power for Droppett

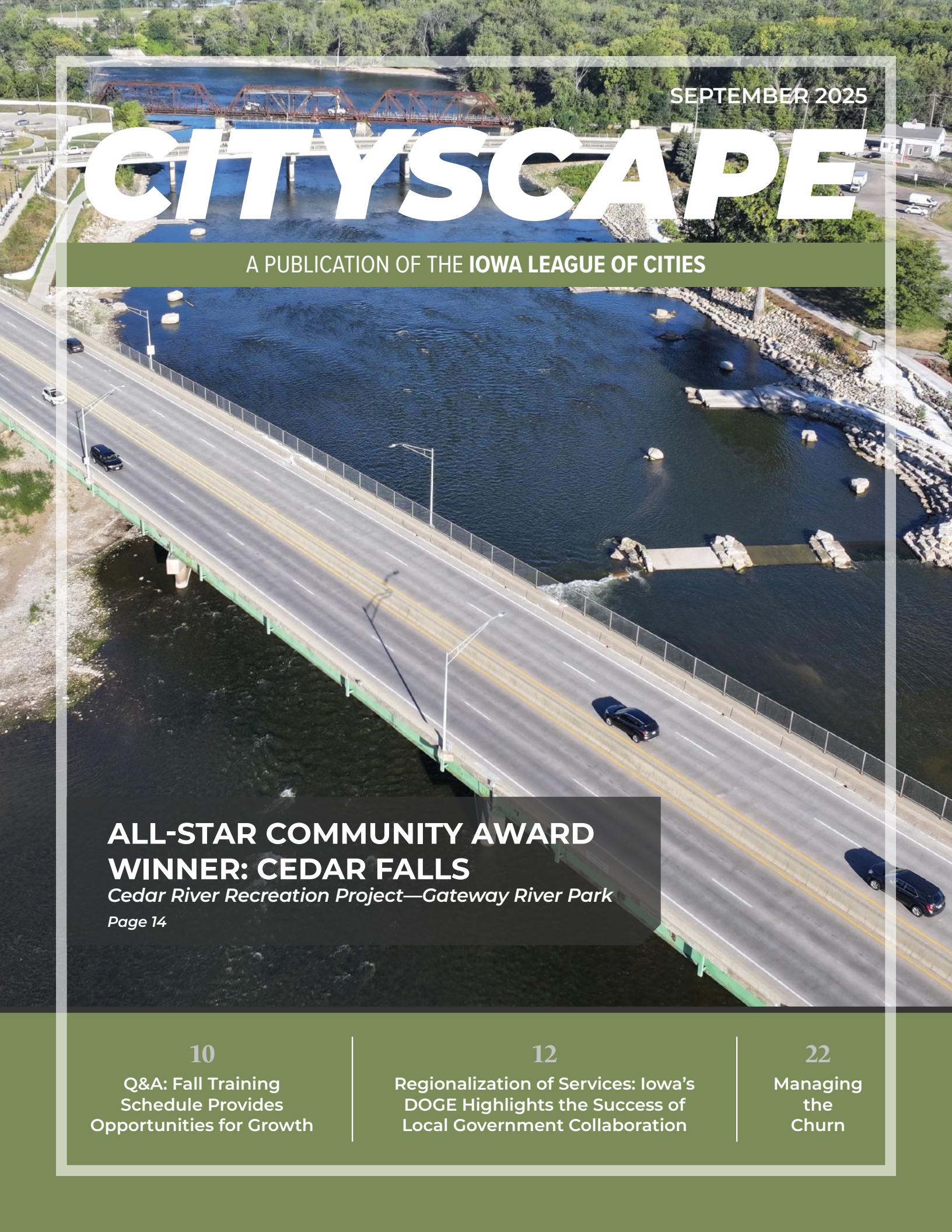
Projects

- Alice place driveway is poured but they need to redo curb
- Four seasons have started the dirt work for the Va clinic
- Four season plans are starting water and sewer hookup for the Va in the next couple weeks
- We are working on getting the new turn lane ready at Walmart

Additional Items/Upcoming Items of Interest

- Jacob signed up to take grade 3 wastewater test.
- Droppett is now hooked up and working
- The soffit lights at city hall are in the process of getting replaced to Led lights

- We will start chlorinating our water system at the end of the week. This is a yearly maintenance item that will last around 3 weeks. When we finish, we will flush all the hydrants in town.



SEPTEMBER 2025

CITYSCAPE

A PUBLICATION OF THE IOWA LEAGUE OF CITIES

ALL-STAR COMMUNITY AWARD WINNER: CEDAR FALLS

Cedar River Recreation Project—Gateway River Park

Page 14

10

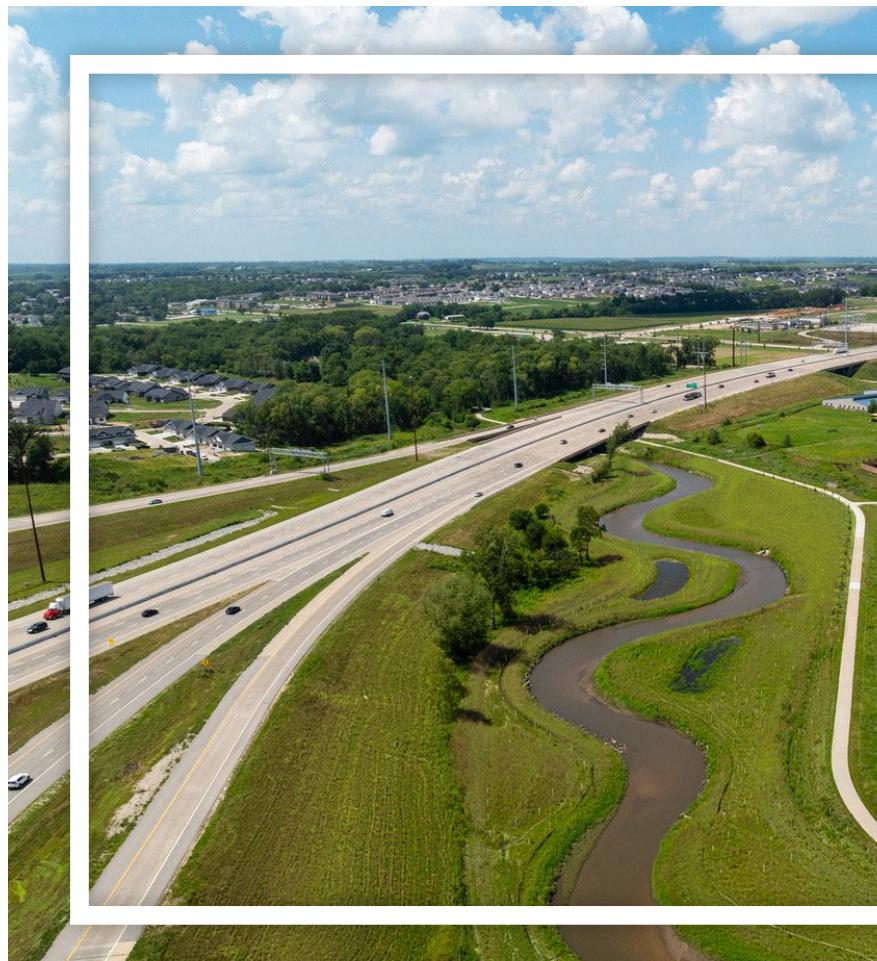
Q&A: Fall Training
Schedule Provides
Opportunities for Growth

12

Regionalization of Services: Iowa's
DOGE Highlights the Success of
Local Government Collaboration

22

Managing
the
Churn



CARING FOR OUR NATURAL RESOURCES

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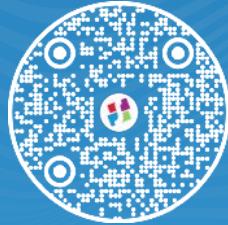
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CONTENTS

September 2025 | Volume 81 | No. 3

FEATURES

16 — Pollinator parks and native plants bring purpose while beautifying spaces. West Burlington is using micro prairies to build in resiliency.

20 — Need ideas for your next public engagement session? Learn about some effective alternatives to gather useful engagement and build relationships with your community.

IN EVERY ISSUE:

- » **4** League Column
- » **6** City FYI
- » **10** Questions Answered
- » **22** In Depth

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE...

12 — Cities are leading the way on finding efficient, effective ways to regionalize services to make dollars stretch farther.

14 — Cedar Falls is one of our All-Star Community Award winners with their Gateway River Park project. Read about how the city transformed their waterfront into a centerpiece for the community.

18 — Need an explainer for Iowa's property tax system? We've got the primer to help you brush up on the ins and outs of one of the most talked about parts of city government.

Executive Board

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Cityscape (ISSN 1088-5951) is published monthly by the Iowa League of Cities,
500 SW 7th Street, Suite 101, Des Moines, IA 50309, (515) 244-7282, FAX (978) 367-9733.
A subscription to *Cityscape* is \$25/year for members and \$60/year for non-members.
Periodicals postage paid at Des Moines, IA. U.S.P.S. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to
Iowa League of Cities, 500 SW 7th Street, Suite 101, Des Moines, IA 50309.

The Importance of Collaboration in the Legislative Process

Our nation's democracy is built on a representative model, where elected officials are entrusted with the responsibility to set policy on behalf of the people. This work happens in Congress, state legislatures, city councils, and local government boards. A veteran lobbyist I respect liked to say that the legislative process is designed more to stop bills than to pass them. While that might be a bit of an exaggeration, it does highlight how thorough and deliberate the process is meant to be, aimed at refining ideas until they're ready to become law.

Getting any piece of legislation across the finish line usually requires compromise. Whether that happens before a bill is introduced or during its journey, it's rare to see legislation pass exactly as originally written. Even in environments where many lawmakers share similar views, collaboration is still essential and that means working with a variety of individuals and groups who bring different perspectives to the table.

Over the past few years, there have been efforts to change the resources available to local governments. These funds are not just line items in a budget, they represent critical investments in public services and infrastructure, such as road maintenance and construction. In many cases, cities rely on private contractors to carry out this work. When local funding is reduced, it

doesn't just affect government—it affects businesses, workers, and the broader economy.

That's why it's essential to share information about proposed legislative changes with those who may be impacted: road builders, concrete suppliers, developers, and others who count on a strong partnership with local government. These conversations aren't meant to raise alarm, but rather to highlight the real-world effects of underinvestment in our communities. It's a way to bring people together during the legislative process and connect legislators to community needs.

In recent years, the League has focused more intentionally on building partnerships to support legislative efforts. Some of these relationships are issue-specific and temporary, while others are long-standing and grounded in shared values. For example, we regularly collaborate with the Iowa State Association of Counties, the Iowa Association of School Boards, and the Iowa Association of Municipal Utilities. We also engage with organizations representing private businesses. While we may not always see eye to eye, ongoing relationships help keep communication open and create opportunities for mutual understanding and compromise.

Strong relationships are at the heart of legislative success. While statewide associations can advocate with the

legislature, real progress often begins at the local level. It's easy to assume everyone is aware of what's happening at the Capitol, but the truth is, people are busy. They may not realize how proposed legislation could affect their work or community. That's why it's so important for local elected and appointed officials to help bridge that gap and keep their community informed.

Ultimately, relationships matter. They require time, communication, and mutual respect. Whether you're an elected official, a business owner, or a community leader, there's value in coming together, discussing shared goals, and working toward a common vision for the future of our cities and our state.

It's never too late to start those conversations. 



Alan Kemp is the Executive Director for the Iowa League of Cities.

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ISG CONFERENCE SPEAKERS



Don't Just Dream, Deliver: A Grassroots Approach to Recreation Destinations

September 18 | 9:30 A.M.

Brett Harris, PLA, *Landscape Architect*



Keynote Speaker

September 18 | 12:00 P.M.

Dave Williams, *Performance Strategist*



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Upcoming Events & Important Dates

City Finance 101 Workshops

October 30 - Oelwein

Annual Conference & Exhibit

September 17-19 - Des Moines

IMFOA Fall Conference

October 15-17 - Des Moines

Budget Workshops

November 5 - Cedar Falls

November 12 - Lake View

November 13 - Ottumwa

November 18 - Atlantic

November 20 - West Des Moines

November 25 - Virtual



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www.iowaleague.org/leading-iowa-good-government-in-iowas-cities

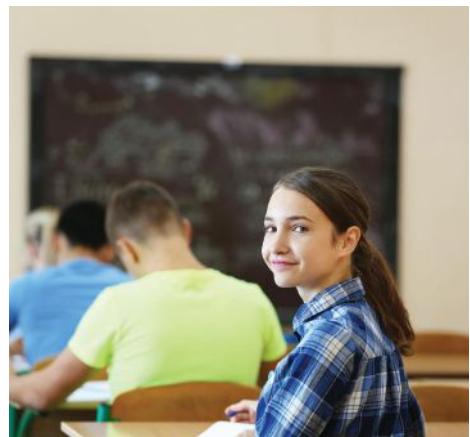


People's All-Star Award Voting

The All-Star Community People's Choice Award is underway with 3,480 votes cast in the first round. Voting continues on our Facebook page right up until our Annual Conference & Exhibit so keep voting each round to help decide the People's Choice. Good luck to our remaining projects!

If I Were Mayor Essay Contest Returns

Calling all future leaders! The Iowa League of Cities is holding our annual If I Were Mayor Essay Contest. The contest is sponsored by Snyder & Associates and is open to all 7th grade students in Iowa to tell us what they would do to improve their community if they were mayor. Regional winners will receive a \$250 college scholarship, with one statewide winner receiving a \$500 scholarship.



Details can be found at www.iowaleague.org/awards/if-i-were-mayor.

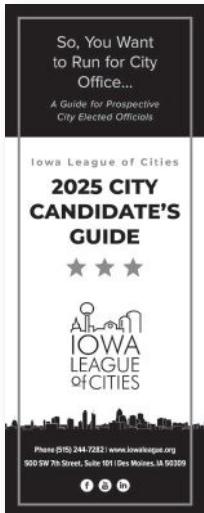
Correction in Last Month's Issue

The *Iowa's Whistleblower Law* article featured in the August 2025 issue of *Cityscape* was written by Ann Smisek, Shareholder, and Andrew Brueck, Law Clerk, at Ahlers & Cooney, P.C. Ann can be reached at asmisek@ahlerslaw.com.

Board Highlights

The Iowa League of Cities Executive Board met August 14, 2025. Highlights include:

- Approved June 5, 2025 minutes, June 2025 financial report, associate applications, the membership report and the investment report.
- Approved the League's participation in an Amicus Brief.
- Reviewed and approved the appointment of Ty Wheeler to the IPERS Benefits Advisory Committee.
- Received reports from the nominating committee and awards committee.
- Received reports from the Legislative team and the Communications department.
- Received an update on the Annual Conference & Exhibit.



Regular City Elections

Local elected officials make some of the most important decisions for your community from budgets and services to streets and public safety. The next regular city election will be held on November 4, 2025. If you have citizens interested in running for office, please make use of our *2025 City Candidate's Guide*, which shares the key dates and requirements, process and steps to running for local office.

The guide can be found at www.iowaleague.org/publications/city-candidates-guide.

Municipal Leadership Academy Begins After City Elections

The League's biennial Municipal Leadership Academy (MLA) begins after the regular city elections. The long-running workshop series helps newly elected officials better understand municipal government and their role as city officials.

The popular series is seen as essential training for those new to office and a great refresher course for veteran council members and city staff. MLA is offered in three parts, with Part 1 held in various locations around the state in December along with a virtual option. MLA Part 2 is offered online in January and MLA Part 3 is held in April with a mix of in-person workshops and a virtual session. Continue to check the League website, www.iowaleague.org, and our e-newsletter, *League Weekly*, for additional information.





FINANCING SOLUTIONS
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INFRASTRUCTURE

Project Finance:

Planning Through Maturity

Capital Planning Bond Issuance Post-Sale Compliance

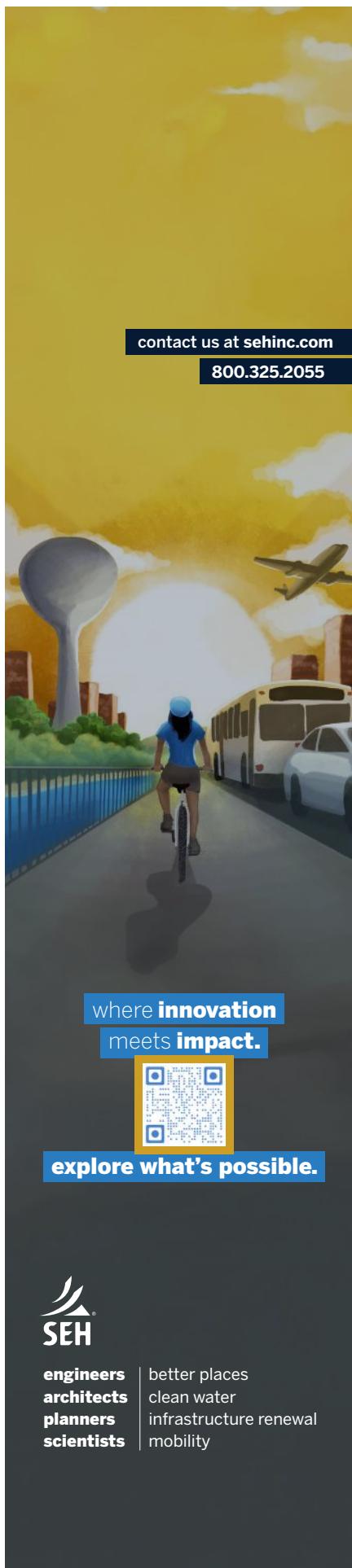
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Celebrating America 250 in Iowa Cities

Honoring our past, engaging our communities, and looking toward the future

Katie Wheeler, Director of Communications & Engagement for the Iowa League of Cities. She can be reached at (515) 974-5332 or katiewheeler@iowaleague.org.

In 2026, the United States will mark its 250th anniversary—a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for Iowa communities to celebrate our nation's history and tell their own local stories. Iowa's America 250 effort encourages cities to host events, share traditions, and highlight the people and places that make their communities unique.

There's no one "right" way to participate. The goal is to create experiences that are meaningful, inclusive, and fun — and that inspire residents to connect with both their community and our shared national heritage.

Here are a few ideas cities can consider:

1. Community Walking Tours

Invite residents to explore historic districts, notable buildings, or public art installations through guided or self-guided walking tours. Incorporate storytelling, photos, and maps to bring local history to life. A themed "250-year journey" could connect moments in national history with key milestones in your city's past.

2. Scavenger Hunts

Scavenger hunts are a great way to get all ages involved. Participants can follow clues to significant landmarks, parks, or businesses, learning bits of local and national history along the way. Add a modern twist with a mobile app or QR codes linking to historical facts, short videos, or oral histories from community members.

3. Nominate an Unsung Local Hero

Invite residents to submit stories of neighbors, teachers, veterans, or community leaders whose contributions deserve recognition through America250's "Our American Story" program. Learn more at america250.org/nominate.



4. Cemetery Tours and Memorial Events

For communities with historic cemeteries or veterans' memorials, consider special tours or remembrance events to honor those who served and shaped the community. Focus on personal stories that connect to larger themes of freedom, service, and resilience.

5. America's Potluck

Host a neighborhood gathering on Sunday, July 5, 2026 to share a meal, stories, and connection—modeled after the America250 initiative.

6. "Then and Now" Photo Exhibits

Display side-by-side photographs showing historic views of local streets, buildings, and parks alongside current images. These can be shown in storefronts, city buildings, or as a traveling display.

7. Volunteer and Service Days

In honor of America 250, organize community service projects such as park clean-ups, tree planting, or restoration of historic sites. This is a hands-on way to contribute to the future while honoring the past.

Share Your Plans

If your community is organizing an America 250 event, Iowa's America 250 committee would love to hear about it. Sharing your plans ensures your event can be added to the statewide calendar and promoted as part of the larger celebration.

By blending creativity with local history, Iowa cities can make the America 250 celebration not just a commemoration of the past, but a vibrant community experience that will be remembered for years to come. «

Find America250 logos, more ideas and details at history.iowa.gov/learn/iowa-america-250/iowa-america-250.

Q&A: Fall Training Schedule Provides Opportunities for Growth

Mickey Shields, Deputy Director and Grace Hillock, Membership Services Coordinator for the Iowa League of Cities. They can be reached at mbrsrvcs@iowaleague.org.

Each fall, the League and others host a variety of conferences and workshops designed for city officials that provide education on a range of topics. It's always a busy part of the year, but an important time for newer and veteran city officials to enhance their understanding of municipal government. Also, with 2025 being a regular city election year, many communities will have new council members who will need to quickly pick up the basics of city government through training and local orientation programs.

Q: What League training events should we consider during the fall months?

Starting with training events hosted by the League, there are a few important opportunities we host that cover a variety of topics. The annual **Budget Workshops** are held in November through five in-person workshops and one virtual session. These workshops provide the latest budget information to cities and are designed for city clerks, city administrators/managers and finance officers (but are open to all city officials). The series equips attendees with training on the latest fiscal issues important to city budgets, assistance in completing the city budget form and preparing for the budget season.

The League will also host the **Municipal Leadership Academy (MLA)**, which is a biennial workshop series that begins after the city elections. MLA is done in three parts with Part 1 conducted in December through five in-person workshops around the state along with a virtual offering. The series is primarily intended for newly elected officials, but can be a great refresher for veteran officials as well (both elected and appointed). Part 1 focuses on city budgets, open meetings and city government operations. Part 2 is held virtually in early January while Part 3 is done in April with five in-person workshops and one virtual session.

Q: What about some other training opportunities that occur this fall?

Several organizations that collaborate with the League and support city governments also provide excellent educational sessions in the fall. The Municipal Professionals Institute, put on by Iowa State Extension, will be conducted virtually October 1-3 and include a mix of classes for city clerks and finance officers. The Iowa Municipal Finance Officers Association (IMFOA) hosts its Fall Conference each year, with the 2025 edition scheduled for October 15-17 in Des Moines. The conference is open to



IMFOA members and always provides relevant guidance on topics of importance to city clerks and finance officers.

The Iowa Municipal Attorney Association (IMAA) also conducts an annual conference every fall as their 2025 event will be held November 21 in Johnston. The day-long conference provides city attorneys guidance and information on important legal issues and offers attendees continuing legal education (CLE) credits.

Several other organizations and state agencies also provide educational opportunities throughout the year. Some may provide training (and credits) for water and wastewater utility operators, some may be focused on the various public safety fields, some may have a community development emphasis, and more. As always, we encourage city officials to subscribe to *League Weekly*, the League's e-newsletter, to stay abreast of our events and other opportunities that support city officials.

Stay up to date on upcoming trainings!



Your one-stop shop for the ever-changing news, events and resources impacting Iowa local government. Subscribe to *League Weekly* email newsletter at www.iowaleague.org/get-involved/newsletter-signup.



Q: We understand there is a newly adopted state code requirement for new city officials to complete open meetings and open records training. What do we need to know to make sure our new officials are in compliance?

This is correct as the state legislature included an open meetings/open records training mandate in House File 706, which was approved during the 2025 legislative session. The new law makes the Iowa Public Information Board (IPIB) responsible for managing the training mandate, and the IPIB board has issued guidance on the law:

- The training requirement is for **new** elected officials and members of governmental bodies (such as library boards, planning and zoning commissions, etc.). Members in office prior to July 1, 2025 and re-elected or re-appointed to office are not required to complete the training, although they are encouraged to take open meetings/open records training.
- The law provides new officials 90 days from taking the oath of office or assuming the duties of the office to complete the training.
- Eligible training cannot be less than one hour in length, and no more than two hours.
- Cities are required to maintain, and make available for public access, a certificate of completion for each member.
- If an official who is required to complete the training fails to do so, the individual has 60 days to complete the training upon notice of the deficiency. If the individual does not complete the training, the open meetings/open records penalties and fines as provided in the state code can be assessed.

IPIB has also issued guidance that will allow organizations to be an "approved trainer" and provide eligible open meetings/open records training. The League will be able to offer such training in the future to ensure city officials have a variety of opportunities; again, stay up to date via *League Weekly* for upcoming training. <<



Regionalization of Services: Iowa's DOGE Highlights the Success of Local Government Collaboration

Cody Carlson, Manager of Government Affairs for the Iowa League of Cities. He can be reached at (515) 244-7282 or codycarlson@iowaleague.org.

As the saying goes, “If you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far, go together.” The wisdom of this adage is becoming increasingly important for Iowa’s communities as the state continues to explore strategies for increased efficiency in implementation, management, and funding of local services our residents rely on. The origin of cities is rooted in the idea that we are better off when we pool our resources. From the first cities of Dubuque and Burlington incorporated in the early 1800s, to the predecessor of the Iowa League of Cities founded at the turn of the 20th century, local officials have long understood that it doesn’t make sense for individuals or families to try and meet all their needs in isolation – whether that was building roads, providing clean water, or ensuring public safety.

The idea of working together is baked into the very DNA of local government. So when recent news out of Iowa’s Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) Task Force indicated suggestions surrounding regionalization of services would be included in the final report of recommendations for review by the Governor, the Iowa League of Cities lauds what is not really a new idea, but rather a return to Iowa’s first principles.

In August, Governor Reynolds’ Iowa DOGE Task Force met to present preliminary recommendations aimed at improving the way public services are delivered and paid for across the state. The final report, which will be delivered to the Governor by the end of September, is expected to outline dozens of strategies for saving taxpayer dollars while maintaining or enhancing service quality.

While the full list of recommendations has not yet been released, several concepts and programs were praised and discussed in detail during the August meeting. Among the most notable was a call for state-administered grant funding to help cities and counties explore regional service delivery partnerships with neighboring jurisdictions. The idea is straightforward: by combining administrative functions, sharing infrastructure, or consolidating operations, local governments can reduce duplication and achieve economies of scale, but the start-up costs of such efforts can be a barrier without collaboration from the state.

The Iowa League of Cities has been actively engaged with DOGE committee members and has long supported regionalization efforts where they make

sense for communities. The task force’s proposal for a dedicated grant program aligns closely with local government priorities, particularly the desire for state-local partnership on long-term strategies to ensure essential services remain efficient, cost-effective, and accessible. As League members know from experience, the first hurdle to regional cooperation is often the upfront investment, whether it’s in technology integration, new facilities, or governance transition planning. State seed funding could make these opportunities feasible for more communities.

The DOGE Task Force cited two Scott County initiatives as powerful examples of regional service delivery in action. According to research of task force members, these programs together have saved taxpayers at least \$80 million over the last five years while improving service coordination.

The first is the Scott Emergency Communications Center (SECC), formed in 2008 under Iowa Code Chapter 28E, which allows governments to enter into joint agreements. This collaboration between the cities of Davenport, Bettendorf, and Scott County created a unified dispatch center for police, fire, and emergency medical services. Instead of each jurisdiction maintaining its own dispatch operation with separate staffing, equipment, and maintenance, the SECC centralizes the function, ensuring quicker response times and consistent service quality. The facility’s governance structure also ensures that all member entities have a voice in operations and budgetary decisions, making it a model that other Iowa regions could replicate.

The second highlighted program was the Waste Commission of Scott County, an intergovernmental agency serving member communities plus the county itself. The commission manages recycling, household hazardous materials, and waste disposal services under a self-sustaining business model that does not rely on direct tax dollars. Its governing board, composed of the mayors of member cities and the chair of the county board of supervisors, provides both political accountability and direct community input. The ability of the Waste Commission to leverage economies of scale while maintaining local representation has been central to its long-term success.

Scott County is not alone in its regional approach - similar models exist in Iowa for joint fire districts,

regional transit agencies, shared library systems, and multi-county emergency management offices. However, these successes often remain under the radar. Local leaders are accustomed to keeping their focus on day-to-day service delivery, but as fiscal pressures mount from inflationary cost increases to limited revenue growth, it will be increasingly important to look beyond individual city or county boundaries for creative and expanded partnerships to maintain services for Iowans.

By sharing stories like those of the SECC and the Waste Commission with lawmakers, local officials can demonstrate that regional collaboration is not a theoretical concept, rather it's a proven strategy.

The tools are already in Iowa law through mechanisms like Chapter 28E agreements; the challenge now is lowering the barriers to entry and encouraging more communities to explore these partnerships and then celebrating their successes together.

The DOGE Task Force's recognition of regionalization is a timely reminder: when we pool our resources, we can protect service quality, control costs, and strengthen our communities for the long term. The next step will be ensuring the state's recommendations are paired with the funding and policy support needed to make more Scott County-style successes possible across Iowa. 

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All-Star Community Award Winner: Cedar Falls

Mike Armstrong, Communications Coordinator for the Iowa League of Cities. He can be reached at (515) 244-7282 or mikearmstrong@iowaleague.org.

Each year, the Iowa League of Cities presents the prestigious All-Star Community Awards to honor cities that demonstrate excellence in municipal governance and community innovation. These awards celebrate the creative vision and determination of Iowa communities striving to enhance the lives of their residents. In 2025, the City of Cedar Falls was selected as the winner in the category of cities with populations over 10,000, recognized for its groundbreaking Cedar River Recreation Project—Gateway River Park.

The Cedar River has long been at the heart of Cedar Falls, its namesake, its history, and its most significant natural asset. In the 1800s, early settlers harnessed the river's power to operate mills and spur economic development. However, as industrial use declined, the river gradually lost its place in the community, becoming more of a flood

control channel than a cherished amenity. For decades, its full potential as a recreational and aesthetic treasure went untapped.

Recognizing the community's deep-rooted connection to the river and a growing interest in revitalization, Cedar Falls developed the Riverfront Master Plan, forming the blueprint for what would become the Cedar River Recreation Project. The city envisioned transforming the river from a neglected hazard into a vibrant, accessible, and safe public space—a premier destination for water-based recreation and community enjoyment.

The results have been nothing short of transformative.

The Cedar River Recreation Project is now a multi-use riverfront area catering to three primary user groups: in-stream users, on-bank users, and anglers. Each group now



enjoys enhanced access and new amenities. For in-stream enthusiasts, a series of engineered jetties create dynamic whitewater waves and calm swimming pools, suitable for kayakers, tubers, and swimmers. These features are designed to function across varying water levels, extending the recreational season and ensuring consistent usability.

For those who prefer to stay dry, the city constructed scenic terraces and paved paths leading to the river, including an art plaza and gathering areas for relaxation, strolling, biking, and picnicking. Meanwhile, anglers benefit from new calm-water pockets created by the jetties, offering ideal fishing conditions while enhancing aquatic habitats.

This revitalization effort has transformed the Cedar River from a passive landscape feature into an active, inclusive destination that welcomes people of all ages, abilities, and interests.

Safety was a key driver of the project. The river previously contained a deteriorating cofferdam, known locally as the “Clay Hole”, whose exposed rebar and crumbling concrete posed serious hazards. The project removed this dangerous structure and replaced it with a new deflector, engineered to produce three different whitewater features with varying intensities for recreational users.

Accessibility was another critical priority. The riverbanks, once overgrown with invasive weeds and strewn with debris and riprap, are now inviting and open. The addition of trails, access points, and park amenities makes it easier than ever for residents and visitors to connect with the river.

Cedar Falls also aimed to boost tourism and downtown economic development through this project. With an expected 25,000 to 45,000 annual visitors, Gateway River Park has the potential to significantly stimulate the local economy. According to the city’s economic studies, each visitor may spend an average of \$173, directly benefiting

downtown businesses including restaurants, shops, entertainment venues, and lodging providers. This increased activity also enhances tax revenue through sales and hotel/motel taxes, funds that can be reinvested into public infrastructure and services.

Importantly, the project addresses modern societal needs. In the wake of rising concerns about mental and physical health, as amplified by the pandemic, Cedar Falls has prioritized creating spaces that encourage outdoor activity, social connection, and well-being. The Gateway River Park offers the community a place to gather, move, and recharge—proven methods for combating social isolation and improving quality of life.

Sustainability was a key consideration as well. Beyond just creating a recreational venue, the project was designed to be environmentally responsible. By removing harmful riprap and enhancing aquatic habitats, the city has ensured that the Cedar River is not only more accessible, but also healthier and better preserved for future generations.

From a long-term growth perspective, the project is a powerful economic development catalyst. The unique offering of a whitewater and river recreation park, especially in proximity to a historic downtown and a major university, positions Cedar Falls as a standout destination in the region. With over 3.8 million people living within a three-hour drive, the tourism potential is immense. Anticipated growth includes new housing, expanded businesses, additional recreation vendors, and further infrastructure investment—all reinforcing Cedar Falls’ appeal as a place to live, work, and play.

Ultimately, the Cedar River Recreation Project exemplifies the power of visionary planning, community collaboration, and strategic investment. By revitalizing a long-overlooked natural resource, Cedar Falls has not only created a vibrant recreational asset, but also strengthened its identity, boosted its economy, and improved the well-being of its residents.

The Iowa League of Cities congratulates the City of Cedar Falls on this remarkable achievement, a true testament to what’s possible when innovation, sustainability, and community spirit come together. 

Planting for the Future: Why West Burlington Is Embracing Native Plants and Pollinator Parks

Gregg Mandsager, City Administrator for West Burlington.
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In West Burlington, a meaningful transformation is taking root, and not just in our soil, but in our vision for the future. Across our community, native prairie plants and grasses are being planted in parks, along trails, and even around our wastewater treatment plant. The City has launched several native prairie and pollinator park projects, transforming public spaces into thriving habitats for pollinators with resilient native plants, all while creating places for community enjoyment. These micro prairies and pollinator parks aren't just beautiful; they're purposeful. They reflect a commitment to sustainability, habitat restoration, and practical stewardship of city resources.

A Grassroots Effort with Big Impact

This work is rooted in partnerships—with local experts, passionate volunteers, and organizations like the University of Iowa's Institute for Sustainable Communities (IISC). Through this growing network, we've created something uniquely West Burlington: a city-led, community-supported approach to conservation and smart land use.

We've teamed up with Sam Hollingsworth of Prairie Roots for prairie design and installation, while Master Gardeners from the community generously gave their time to help get the plants in the ground. City staff, particularly from Public Works, have been essential in site preparation, mulching, watering, and maintenance. Together, we're proving that even small urban projects can have meaningful environmental and social benefits.

Where It's Taking Root

We've launched several prairie initiatives across the city:



- **City Hall & Trail Micro Prairies** – Compact, densely planted gardens featuring native grasses and wildflowers. These vibrant sites were designed in partnership with Prairie Roots and installed with help from local volunteers and city staff.
- **Pat Kline Park** – A larger prairie restoration designed by IISC students and faculty, including Professor Mike Fallon. Their work included research, design, and community outreach—culminating in a new kind of park that prioritizes ecology and education.
- **Wastewater Treatment Plant** – Native habitat has been added both inside and outside the plant's perimeter. A short walking path allows residents to explore this natural space, see native wildflowers in bloom and pollinators in action.

Why Native Plants?

Native plants like milkweed, coneflowers, little bluestem, and black-eyed Susans are well-adapted for Iowa's soil and climate, offering a sustainable and efficient alternative to traditional turf grass. Native plantings are far more resilient and require less water, mowing, and maintenance once established. Their deep root systems:

- Help retain soil and prevent erosion.
- Improve water infiltration and reduce runoff.
- Store carbon and support healthier air and water.
- Survive droughts and extreme weather.

By shifting from turf to prairie in select public spaces, we're saving time, fuel, and money—freeing up resources for other city needs, such as road repairs and community projects.

Beyond their practicality, prairies are essential to restoring biodiversity. They provide vital habitat for pollinators—bees, butterflies, birds, and other species whose populations are declining due to habitat loss and pesticide use. By integrating prairies into our public spaces, we're helping pollinators thrive while improving soil health, filtering stormwater, and reducing maintenance costs. In a time of increasing environmental challenges, small local actions like these help build resilience.

Supporting Pollinators, Naturally

Pollinators are critical to ecosystems and agriculture, yet many are under threat. Cities like West Burlington can play an important conservation role by restoring native habitats in public spaces. Our plantings include a wide range of species that bloom from early spring through late fall, beautifying the city and ensuring a continuous food source for pollinators throughout the growing season.

Education Through Nature

Educational signage will soon be added to each prairie site, highlighting what's growing, why it matters, and how residents can engage with these spaces. We hope these natural areas will not only enhance beauty and biodiversity but also inspire learning—serving as living laboratories for local students, scout troops, gardeners, and nature lovers.

Whether you're walking the trail, watching butterflies, or just enjoying a quiet moment outdoors, these spaces

offer something for everyone and demonstrate our shared responsibility as stewards of the land and city resources.

A Model for Sustainable Growth

West Burlington's prairie and pollinator projects are a testament to what's possible when cities think long-term and work collaboratively. With thoughtful planning and community partnerships, we're making the most of our public spaces—saving resources, supporting wildlife, and enhancing quality of life.

By restoring a piece of Iowa's natural landscape, West Burlington is investing in both its environment and its future—creating healthier spaces for people, pollinators, and generations to come.

As we continue to grow as a community, we're doing so in a way that respects and restores Iowa's natural heritage. Our small prairies

may not cover vast acres, but they carry a big message: that sustainability starts at home, and that every square foot of native habitat matters. 



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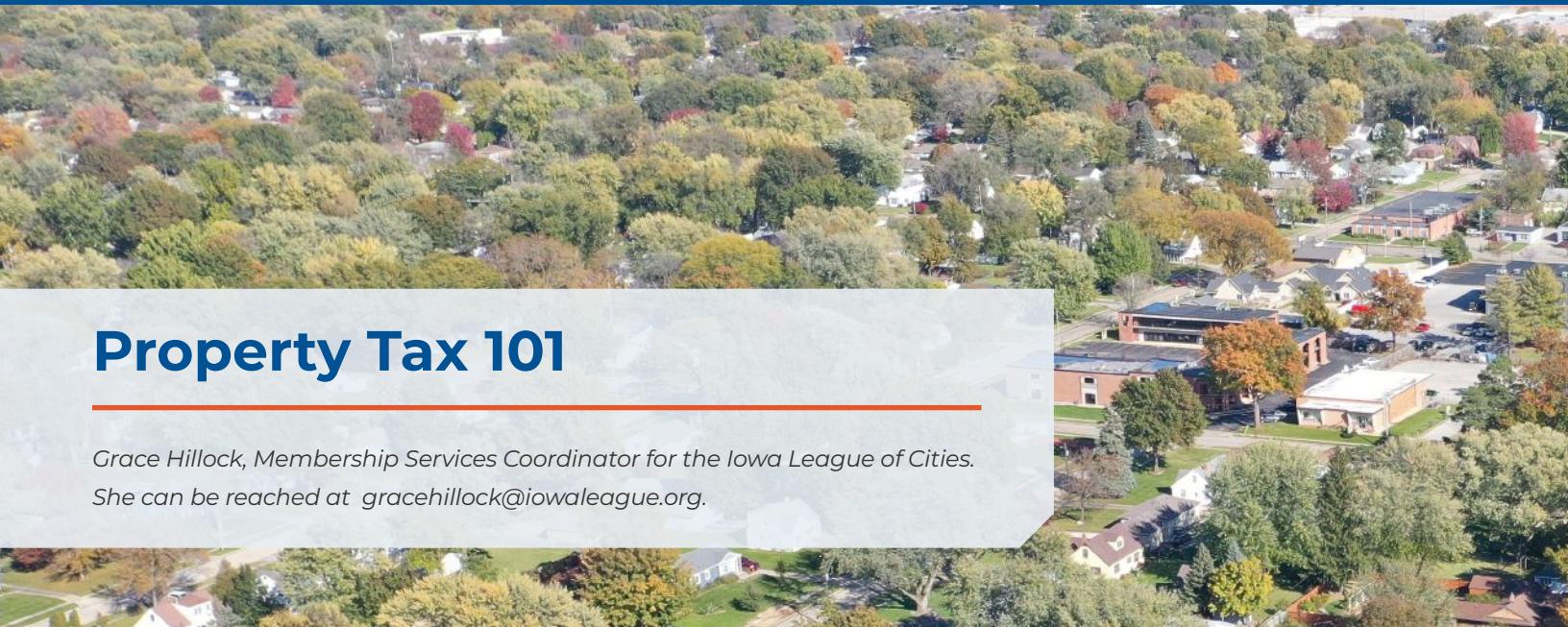
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Property Tax 101

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Property taxes remain a priority topic of legislatures and cities due to their impact on residents and cities. Although no additional reforms were passed in the 2025 Legislative session, a refresher of components of the property tax system remains relevant to prepare for anticipated focus in the upcoming legislative session.

City governments big and small, rural and urban, rely on local property taxes to fund the essential services residents and businesses depend upon for everyday life. Property tax rates are determined after cities determine revenue needs for providing local services and fund entities beyond cities. Schools and counties receive funds from property taxes as well as varying other entities such as hospitals and assessors.

Property taxes levy “real property” such as land, buildings, structures, and improvements on the land. These include six classes of property: residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, multi-residential, and utilities/railroad. All property classes are assessed at the city or county level every other year following a complex state regulated system prescribed in Iowa Code, except annual state level assessment for utilities/railroad.

Taxable value is the portion of the assessed value on which a tax is applied, after equalization, rollbacks, and credits and the results of any appeals are applied. Since the 1970s, property values have been subject to an assessment limitation, or rollback, that suppresses the amount of value

that can be taxed. Currently, agricultural and residential taxable valuations cannot grow by more than 3%. They are also tied together so that if one grows by less than 3%, the other must be rolled back to meet the lower amount. In recent years, sweeping changes to the rollback and other components of the property tax system have reduced revenues in cities and contributed to budget constraints. A broad piece of legislation, House File 718, was approved by the Iowa Legislature in 2023 that made substantial changes to the property tax system. In 2024, a subsequent piece of legislation, Senate File 2442, made modifications to the prior legislation. Included were provisions that eliminated a number of levies previously available to cities, a formula that reduces a city’s general fund levy if its non-TIF taxable property values grow by certain percentages, expansions of homeowner tax credits and changes to the required budget adoption process. Currently, four tiers of annual non-TIF taxable value determine the amount of Combined General Fund Levy (CGFL) that cities are legally able to implement. In FY 2029, the maximum CGFL will be \$8.10 for every \$1,000 of assessed value.

Expanded Credits & Exemptions

Another significant element of the 2023 legislation added a new Homestead Exemption for property owners 65 and older as well as an expansion of the Military Property Tax Exemption. The Homestead Exemption is in addition to the existing Homestead Tax Credit. The latter credit is currently funded by a state appropriation. The Homestead



Tax Exemption for property owners aged 65 and older, however, is not funded by the state and instead lowers the taxable value on eligible properties. In FY 2025, the additional taxable value exemption equals \$3,250. In FY 2026 and beyond, the exemption increases to \$6,500. The Military Property Tax Exemption amount was increased to an exemption from tax on \$4,000 of taxable value, beginning with FY 2026. The state previously reimbursed a portion of this exemption to local tax authorities, but the legislation removed funding for the previously partial reimbursement on the original exemption amount, and also did not fund the expansion. This expansion of the exemption and removal of former partial reimbursement lowers the taxable value on eligible properties and reduces local revenues, particularly in communities with high residential property tax bases.

Property Tax Abatement Agreements and Limitations

New restrictions were put in place for property tax abatement programs by requiring the use of minimum assessment agreement for commercial properties. Such agreements must contain specified information, including a minimum actual value for the completed improvements, and must be certified by the assessor. This applies to revitalization areas created in FY 2025 and after, and for first-year exemption applications in existing revitalization areas filed on or after July 1, 2024. Another important piece of the legislation restricted when city governments can put forward a referendum to voters for certain types

of general obligation bonds. Under the current law, such referendums can only be held at November elections – previously, cities had the ability to schedule special elections for these types of bond referendums.

Annual Taxpayer Statement Notices

Annual Taxpayer Statement Notices were mandated as a result of the HF 718 and SF 2442. The purpose of this notice is to provide property taxpayers with clear, accessible information regarding changes in property valuations, proposed tax rates, and the allocation of property tax revenues by service category. These notices are required to use a mandated format that includes the percent change of taxes from the previous year, valuations to be used for estimated payments, and a link to the DOM website with more information. State law requires political subdivisions to hold a public hearing on the proposed property tax amounts for the budget year and new taxpayer statements. The notice must include the scheduled public hearing date on the budget to be held on or after March 20. This hearing is in addition to the public hearing required under *Code of Iowa* Section 24.9 (to approve the annual budget) and must be separate from any other meeting of the governing body, including any other meeting or hearing related to the political subdivision's budget. Improvements to the form to create standardized, transparent notices to empower taxpayers and support the legislature's goal of responsible tax reform are priorities of the League's Government Affairs team in the next session. 

Beyond Public Input Meetings: Alternative Methods for Engaging Communities



Chris Janson, AICP, Senior Team Leader for MSA Professional Services, Inc. He can be reached at cjanson@msa-ps.com.

When you hear “public engagement,” what comes to mind? If your answer involves a weeknight public hearing in a city hall conference room with a few regulars in attendance and maybe some cookies on the table, you’re not alone.

But traditional engagement formats—public hearings, open houses, planning charrettes—aren’t always effective in reaching a representative cross-section of your community. These approaches tend to attract residents who are already civically engaged, leaving behind large portions of the population, especially working families, young adults, renters, and underrepresented groups. In today’s planning and municipal environment, inclusive and authentic engagement is both an ethical obligation and a practical necessity. Fortunately, there’s more than one way to connect.



Pop-Up Engagement at Community Events

Rather than asking residents to come to you, go where they already are. Farmers markets, high school football games, city festivals, or library events provide perfect

opportunities to “pop up” with a simple booth or table. A few posters, some maps, a friendly face, and perhaps a bowl of candy can spark informal conversations and input from people of all demographics.

Why it works: these environments feel natural and low-pressure. Residents who wouldn’t attend a formal public meeting might be willing to share thoughts while buying sweet corn or waiting for a parade to start, and their opinions may feel more authentic and less scripted—lending to real-time, real-life responses that help shape the plan or project at hand.

Pro tip: keep materials visually engaging and your questions simple: “What’s one thing you’d change about downtown?” Or “Where do you feel unsafe biking?” Capture ideas on sticky notes or through quick dot-voting activities.

Digital Storytelling & Social Media Campaigns

Public engagement doesn’t need to happen in person. Many citizens are active on Facebook, Instagram, and increasingly on community-specific platforms like Nextdoor. Leverage these tools to run campaigns that tell the story of your project, share progress, and gather feedback.

Create short videos that highlight what’s at stake or what problems you’re solving. Ask residents to submit photos of places they love—or places that need improvement. Use polls or comment threads to get quick takes on proposed ideas.

Why it works: digital tools let you reach residents on their terms, during their available time. They’re especially useful for younger demographics and for keeping momentum between formal milestones.

Pro tip: pair social media posts with paid promotions to boost reach—especially for time-sensitive decisions. Include Spanish-language versions or other translations as appropriate to your community.



Coffee Shop Office Hours

Some of the most meaningful engagement happens in one-on-one or small-group settings. Hosting “office hours” at local coffee shops, diners, or libraries gives residents an approachable way to ask questions and share ideas in a neutral, informal space.

Why it works: it humanizes the process. Residents often feel more comfortable opening up in casual environments rather than formal council chambers.

Pro tip: rotate your locations—try a rural café, a downtown shop, or a neighborhood park. Publicize the hours on your city’s website and social media. Consider partnering with a local civic group to help host.

Community Ambassadors Program

Community ambassadors are trusted local residents—often from underrepresented neighborhoods or populations—who serve as liaisons between city staff and their communities.

Instead of asking residents to show up at City Hall, ambassadors gather feedback where they live and work.

Ambassadors might host a kitchen-table conversation, lead a neighborhood walk audit, or distribute surveys to their networks. They can also help translate materials, debunk misinformation, and encourage participation in city initiatives.

Why it works: ambassadors can reach people the city never would—because they already have established trust, shared language, and cultural understanding.

Pro tip: compensate ambassadors for their time. Even small stipends or gift cards show that you value their role as collaborators, not just volunteers.

Mobile Planning Labs

Transform a trailer, tent, or city vehicle into a mobile planning lab. Bring maps, posters, tablets, and interactive displays into neighborhoods—especially those historically overlooked. Park near grocery stores, churches, or housing developments and invite residents to drop by.

Why it works: this approach eliminates the transportation and time barriers that keep many from traditional meetings. Plus, there’s novelty in seeing a pop-up planning station on your neighborhood block.

Pro tip: include kids’ activities or a coloring table to make it family friendly. Bring bilingual staff if needed. Offer a small giveaway—like reusable bags or local coupons—as a thank-you.

Feedback by Text or Phone

Not everyone has internet access or time for a meeting, but nearly everyone has a phone. Consider setting up a text-in feedback number where residents can respond to questions with a simple SMS. Similarly, offer voicemail hotlines for people to leave comments in their own words.

Why it works: it’s low-barrier, accessible 24/7, and more inclusive of those without smartphones or broadband internet.

Pro tip: keep questions short and specific. Promote the number on flyers, mailers, and utility bills.

Rethinking Engagement = Rethinking Relationships

Ultimately, engagement is about relationships. The goal isn’t just to check a box—it’s to build a community of informed, empowered residents who feel heard, respected, and invested in their city’s future.

That takes creativity, flexibility, and a willingness to let go of one-size-fits-all approaches. And it requires city leaders to meet residents where they are—not just physically, but emotionally and culturally.

Small towns and growing cities alike can benefit from these alternative methods. Start with one or two that fit your capacity and community, then build from there. The result? Better plans, stronger buy-in, and a city that truly reflects its people. 

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Managing the Churn

Mickey Shields, Deputy Director for the Iowa League of Cities. He can be reached at (515) 244-7282 or mickeyshields@iowaleague.org.

Turnover in municipal government has significantly accelerated in recent years and is being felt across Iowa in all types of positions. It's also evident in elected offices, as numerous communities are struggling to find residents willing to run for office or serve full terms on city councils.

Focusing on appointed positions, the National League of Cities published an article in October 2024 detailing growing concerns about turnover in local government and the challenges in attracting and retaining talent. Citing the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the article noted the ratio of vacancies to hires was 3.7 to 1—a much higher rate than in the private sector, which stood at 1.5 to 1. The article further explained how turnover can create a negative cycle, as vacancies force existing staff to take on more duties, increasing burnout and leading to further departures or early retirements.

League staff and the Executive Board have also discussed the growing difficulty many members are experiencing in attracting candidates for elected office. While specific data is limited, numerous media outlets have reported on the issue, citing recent local elections where seats went uncontested—or where no candidates filed at all. The League has also seen an uptick in midterm vacancies in mayoral and council positions, further challenging adequate representation.



High turnover is disruptive in any organization. For municipal staff, it often results in increased workloads, delays in service delivery and reduced productivity. At the council level, it may lead to slower decision-making, unclear goals and confusion over roles and responsibilities.

High turnover is disruptive in any organization. For municipal staff, it often results in increased workloads, delays in service delivery and reduced productivity.

While the reasons for the current wave of turnover are numerous, cities must be prepared to manage its impact while also finding ways to make public service more attractive and rewarding. It's a challenging endeavor, but one that can offer long-term benefits.

The Immediate Plan of Action

When turnover occurs, cities must quickly implement a short-term action plan to ensure the organization continues to function effectively. For staff-level vacancies, having a few core policies and procedures in place can ease the transition:

- **Job descriptions** – While always important, these documents are especially helpful during turnover, clarifying the responsibilities of each position.
- **Job duties and assignments** – A detailed list of ongoing duties and special projects can help guide interim arrangements.
- **Standard operating procedures** – Many cities maintain departmental manuals that outline the steps required for regular tasks and specific scenarios.
- **Contingency plans** – Some cities develop targeted contingency plans for key roles, such as the city clerk or city administrator, outlining essential responsibilities in case of a vacancy.

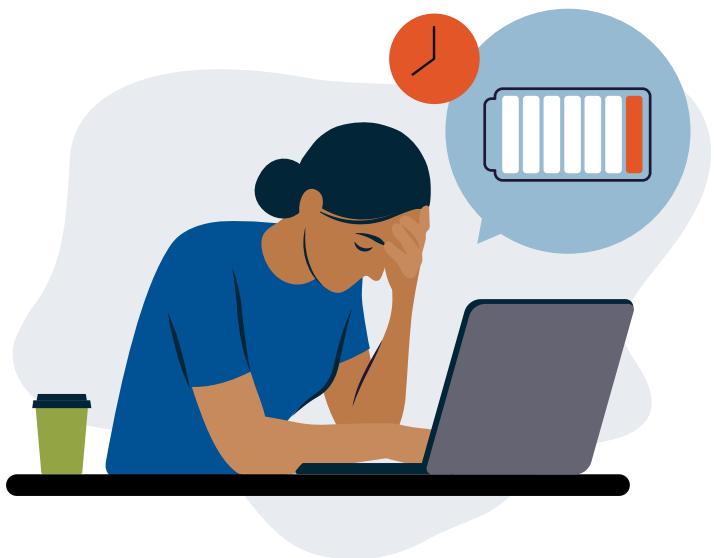
These foundational tools help ensure continuity. Still, councils and staff must often make important short-term decisions to maintain operations until vacancies are filled.

More cities are also cross-training staff, enabling employees to cover a wider variety of duties or shift between departments. This approach increases flexibility and efficiency but should be managed carefully to avoid employee burnout.

In some cases, cities may hire interim professionals—such as a retired city clerk or police chief—to provide temporary support. While helpful, availability of such individuals is limited.

For elected officials, Iowa Code provides some support. If a mayoral vacancy or absence occurs, the mayor pro tem assumes those duties temporarily. The law clarifies that the council member serving in this role retains voting rights while presiding. Similarly, council vacancies do not prevent governance, as remaining members typically constitute a quorum.

However, multiple vacancies can present challenges to meeting quorum requirements. Mayoral vacancies can also delay routine duties such as signing ordinances, checks or representing the city. Just as staff burnout can occur from picking up extra duties, extended gaps in elected leadership can strain councils as well.



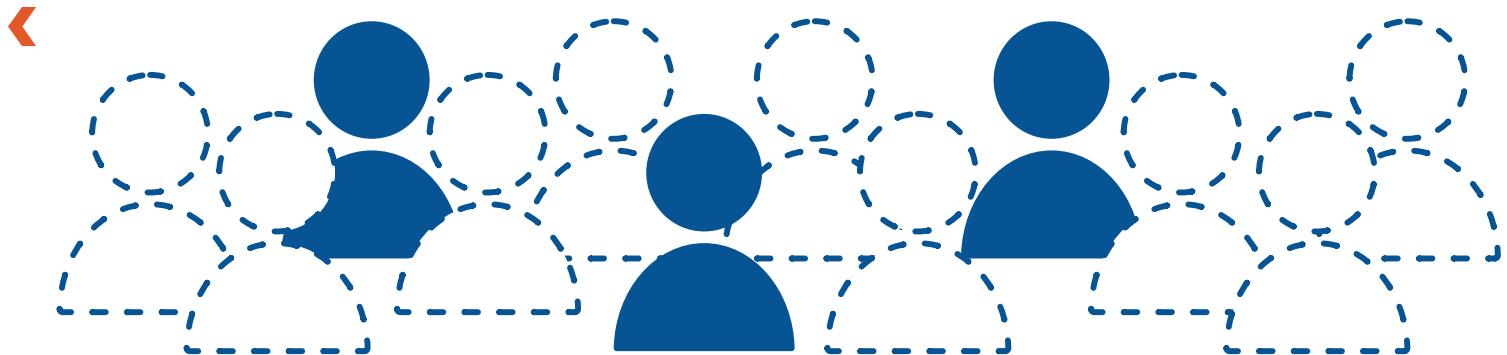
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Every organization experiences turnover, the key is being prepared to meet immediate needs while keeping long-term goals in view. No city can operate in “contingency mode” indefinitely. The solution lies in planning.

Keeping the Big Picture in Focus

Every organization experiences turnover, the key is being prepared to meet immediate needs while keeping long-term goals in view. No city can operate in “contingency mode” indefinitely. The solution lies in planning.

Many cities conduct goal-setting exercises or adopt strategic plans, which provide a vision for the near future. These often include goals related to infrastructure, community development, public safety, recreation and other core services. Strategic plans may also address staffing, budgeting and broader community priorities.

Similarly, most cities maintain Capital Improvement Plans (CIPs) that outline long-term investments in roads, bridges, utilities, equipment and vehicles. Cities with zoning codes may also adopt comprehensive plans, which guide land use and development strategies.

While these plans may not include specific benchmarks for turnover or vacancies, they provide essential structure to keep city leaders focused amid disruption. Turnover is time-consuming and unpredictable. A strong planning foundation helps cities stay aligned with their mission and quickly return to regular operations.

More recently, an increasing number of cities have adopted succession plans and formal recruitment and retention policies. Succession planning identifies experience levels, anticipated retirements and potential leadership candidates. At the same time, recruitment strategies aim to make city employment more attractive.

Wages and benefits remain a central component of retention, but many cities are also examining community-wide improvements to attract and retain workers, recognizing that employee satisfaction often extends beyond the workplace.

Planning also signals professionalism. A city that demonstrates strong organizational vision and structure is more likely to attract civic-minded residents to serve in elected office.

A Call to Action

The opportunity to positively impact a community remains one of the strongest motivations to serve in local government. Current mayors and council members hold the unique ability to shape the future—and that work begins now. ↪

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*Miracle League Field at Cedar River Park
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» CITY SHOUT-OUTS

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This page features examples of these.**



Bondurant Breaks Ground on the Grain District

More than a year after the **Bondurant** City Council adopted the Grain District Downtown Redevelopment Plan, work is progressing to transform the former Landus grain elevator site into a vibrant mixed-use district that city leaders say will help strengthen the fast-growing city as a destination for the region.

Building on the momentum of recent redevelopment efforts in the existing downtown, this 24-acre district combines historic character with modern amenities to support vibrant commercial, upper-story residential, and civic spaces. A key feature of the plan is the reuse of the district's iconic concrete grain elevators, transforming them into landmarks that celebrate Iowa's agricultural roots. The regional Chichaqua Valley Trail runs directly through the Grain District, enhancing access and positioning downtown as a key destination for cyclists and trail users. Guided by the award-winning Grain District Downtown Redevelopment Plan and supported by a strong public-private partnership, the Grain District is redefining downtown Bondurant as a thriving hub for businesses, residents, and visitors.



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and take action toward a brighter future.



Learn more about
our \$10K seed grants.



Image: Dave Foster

"Rural communities are not successful by accident. It has to be very intentional. There is a lot of planning, there has to be follow through. It's not just going to happen. These things are important, which is why we chose Community Heart & Soul."

—Crystal Duffy, *Project Coordinator of Our Postville Community Heart & Soul, Postville, Iowa*

Visit our website at www.communityheartandsoul.org
or call us at 802.495.0864 to learn more.



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Housing Committee Appointments

Committee appointments: Housing Committee appointments are made by the Grow Greater Burlington Board of Directors, with recommendations from Partnership staff, Committee Chair, and Housing Committee.

Committee is limited to eleven (11) seats (not including Partnership Staff or Committee Chair)

Chairman, Mike Norris, Southeast Iowa Regional Planning

Committee Composition:

Two (2) private developers and/or Real Estate professionals:

1. Melissa Schwenker, Ruhl & Ruhl
2. Ryan Nagrocki, Midwest Home Builder/Midwest Realty Group

Two (2) financial institutions:

1. Brock Ita, Connection Bank
2. Jeff Burkhart, Two Rivers Bank & Trust

One (1) human service non-profit organization:

1. Sara Hecox, Great River Housing Trust Fund

Six (6) Designated seats:

1. Southeast Iowa Regional Planning Commission - Zach James
2. Alliant Energy – Kay Sackville

Cities of:

3. Burlington - Chad Bird
4. West Burlington – Gregg Mandsager
5. Mediapolis – Chuck Massner
6. Danville - Jerry Strause

Housing Committee Plan

Purpose: Leverage the findings of the 2023 Des Moines County Housing Needs Assessment to identify and pursue strategies to solve the housing needs of Des Moines County.

Objective: Workforce development and population growth. Area employers cite lack of housing as a barrier to attracting and retaining talent.

Vision: Lead, unite, and facilitate.

Chartered by: Chamber Board of Directors, transferred to Grow Greater Burlington in 2025.

Chairperson: Mike Norris

Staff Liaison: Taylor Collins

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Composition: Two (2) private developers and/or Real Estate professionals. Two (2) financial institutions. One (1) human service non-profit organization. Six (6) Designated seats: Southeast Iowa Regional Planning Commission, Alliant Energy, Cities of Burlington, West Burlington, Mediapolis, and Danville.

Scope of Work:

Committee shall meet at least quarterly

Identify obstacles and opportunities related to workforce housing

Develop and recommend public/private policies that encourage residential development

Address political and social fragmentation

Address regulatory issues around housing

Deal with abandoned houses and factories

Information about market distributed to investors

How to encourage more single family homes



Chamber of Commerce
Convention & Visitors Bureau
Downtown Partners, Inc.
Economic Development

Measures of Success by EOY 2028:

Increased new housing starts, bonus points for homes below \$300,000

25% increase in number of new or REHAB rentals or multi-family options by 2028 (compared to 2024)

One new single-family residential development in Burlington and West Burlington

Public satisfaction with Greater Burlington housing status, measured by surveys