

Eleven Iowa Community Organizations Receive AmeriCorps Funding

August 5, Governor Vilsack announced over \$1.7 million of AmeriCorps grant awards made by the Iowa Commission on Volunteer Service to 11 community organizations. Eight of those receiving awards are existing organizations and three are new AmeriCorps programs. The AmeriCorps programs, funding and the counties they serve are:

- Habitat for Humanity \$167,340: Black Hawk, Jasper, Johnson, Linn, Marion, Polk, Pottawattamie and Scott;
- Project UNITE - Storm Lake Community Education \$27,101: Buena Vista;
- Youth Connections – Neighborhood Centers of Johnson County \$116,319: Johnson;
- United Neighbors - AmeriCorps \$130,000: Bremer, Cerro Gordo, Dallas, Grundy, Polk, Pottawattamie, Scott, Wapello, Webster and Woodbury;
- Upper ExplorerLand \$93,242: Allamakee, Clayton, Howard and Winnishiek;

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Great Places: An Invitation to Iowa's Future

They came by email and fax, typed on official stationery, engraved on wedding stock and handwritten on the back of a spare piece of paper. They were short and sweet, and packed to the margins. And, they all put to rest any notion that Iowans aren't bursting with pride in all that is Iowa.

This spring, the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs, in partnership with 18 state agencies, issued a call for invitations to participate in a brand new initiative called "Iowa Great Places." One hundred forty-five invitations were received from 91 counties. Iowans were challenged to think about what is genuine and authentic about the place where they live, and what it would take to make that a great place.

Take a trip to every corner of Iowa and all that's in between, past, present and future. Great places have a special identity and come in all sizes, urban and rural—and so did the invitations.

They were as big as the 10-county Great River Road along the Mississippi, the length of the Loess Hills from Plymouth to Fremont Counties along the Missouri River, and captured two tiers of counties on our southern border in the Historic Hills Corridor, from Clarke and Decatur to Van Buren. They envisioned the revitalization of historic corridors like the White Pole Road, a historic trail marked by white poles, connecting Adair, Casey, Menlo, Stuart and Dexter.

They were compact – well-defined sections of our cities that see themselves as cultural magnets or shopping districts, like Beaverdale; East Village and Ingersoll in Des Moines;

Sioux City's Floyd Boulevard market, that wants to attract people with authentic, locally-grown, organic food.

Some invitations came from small towns that have experienced rebirth before and are confident they can do it again:

Pomeroy was "nearly wiped off the face of the earth by a devastating tornado in 1893,"

writes Denita Luke. "The spirit of the people prevailed," she continues. And now, the community has a new vision to attract artisans to live and work in Pomeroy making it a cultural destination.

Riceville survived a fire that destroyed the town in 1901. It wants to reclaim its place as "Gateway to Mitchell County."

Olin would like a town square, instead of the vacant lot in the middle of town. City Clerk, Jean McPherson, envisions benches, bike racks, picnic tables and a fountain as an inviting resting spot for hikers and cyclists who travel a nearby trail.

Albia, which has one of the few town squares on the National Register of Historic Places,

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"This dedicated team works with projects that benefit low- and moderate-income households."

Sandy Ehrig, Division Administrator

FEATURED TEAM: COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

The Community Facilities and Services team is responsible for leveraging local funds with federal Community Development Block Grant dollars (more than \$15 million) to complete worthy projects. These projects benefit low- and moderate-income households including water, sewer, daycare facilities, senior centers

and vocational workshops through an annual competition. The deadline for the 2006 funding application is quickly approaching (November 22) with announcements to be made in early March for successful projects.



Hank Manning leads the team responsible for providing nearly \$20 million of HUD Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding to Iowa's communities annually for water, sewer and community facilities such as day care, senior centers, and vocational workshops. Hank enjoys working directly with communities to see successful completion of projects. He has worked with this competitive program for the State of Iowa for 22 years.

Hank is known for competitive running, as well as noon hour laps and his love of travel, especially abroad to visit family.



Dan Narber is a project manager, responsible for administering the CDBG program, including application review, funding decisions, and monitoring. Dan is the labor compliance specialist for all CDBG projects. He enjoys working with communities and the ability of CDBG to be a catalyst for project reality.

Dan has been with the Iowa Department of Economic Development (IDED) for nearly 10 years and enjoys family time, along with running and golf when he's off the job!



Leslie Leager is a project manager as well as environmental review specialist and GIS mapper for IDED. She has been with IDED for four years and especially enjoys the work with grant administrators and the recipients of CDBG funding.

Leslie likes to spend time outside in the garden or taking walks with her husband and adorable seven month old baby, Carter.



Michael Brown is the procurement specialist for the team as well as manager for Career Link and renewable energy projects. He has been with IDED for six years and enjoys the interaction with people from all over the state and the opportunity to learn.

Michael enjoys spending time with his wife, son Zachary and dog, Hannah. He loves to read and golf is a new interest.



Jean Johnson works with RACI projects, CDBG conference planning ICN sessions and recently added the philanthropy work group to her list of coordination. Jean really enjoys the people she works with and describes them as supportive, positive and open-minded. She has worked with IDED for eight years.

Her young family keeps her busy, though she continues to find time for cooking, reading, and running! The Johnsons have three children 7, 3, and 2 years of age.



Barb Harvey is responsible for supporting Hank's team. She enjoys the variety of her work and has been with IDED for eight years. Barb enjoys spending time with her family and friends.

Statewide Volunteer Service Conference to be held November 9 & 10

Long known as the premier volunteer conference in the state, the Iowa Conference on Volunteer Service, "Enriching Iowa's Tradition of Service," will be held November 9 and 10, 2005 at the Sheraton West Des Moines (formerly the University Park Holiday Inn).

After a brief hiatus, the reorganized conference returns to provide training and network-

ing opportunities for volunteer management professionals, national service directors and participants, and nonprofit program directors.

The conference will feature 30 workshops organized into several tracks: Volunteer Management, Professional Development, Iowa's Promise, AmeriCorps, and Senior Corps. Facilitated roundtable discussions focused on a variety of topics will provide

informal learning and networking opportunities.

During a special ceremony, the newest inductees of the Iowa Volunteer Hall of Fame, recipients of the Governor's Youth Leadership Awards and Keep Iowa Beautiful Awards will be honored.

Featured keynote speakers include Mary Marcadante and David Eisner:



Mary Marcadante

is an inspiring and dynamic professional speaker who will help the people in your organization recognize, appreciate and celebrate in themselves, their relationships, work and life. For the past 20 years she has given over 1500 speeches, seminars and workshops around the world to a diverse group of clients. An award-winning speaker, Mary has helped

over 250,000 people improve their communication skills, enhance their self-esteem and manage stress. A published author and writer, Mary will help your people remember the messages you want them to hear long after she has finished her speech. She is the author of *Living with Enthusiasm: How The 21-Day Smile Diet Can Change Your Life* (Inspired Life Publishing, 2003), *My Mother, My Friend* (Simon & Schuster, 2001) and *Inspiring Words for Inspiring People*. She is a contributing author to four best-selling *Chicken Soup for the Soul* books and *A Woman's Way To Success in Business*. She is also a regular contributor to client publications and writes personal development articles for *Skin, Inc.*, a national skin care salon owners' industry magazine.



David Eisner is the Chief Executive Officer of the Corporation for National and Community Service, which administers the Senior Corps, AmeriCorps and Learn and Serve America programs. He was appointed by President Bush and began serving in December 2003. David is a nationally rec-

ognized leader on nonprofit capacity-building, infrastructure and organizational effectiveness, and focuses his efforts on strengthening the organization's accountability, improving customer service and increasing public trust. The goal of the CEO's management efforts is to make the Corporation's programs more efficient, effective and accountable; to ensure that national and community service programs add value to traditional volunteering and the nonprofit world; and to bring a far greater degree of consistency, predictability and value to the Corporation's programs.

For more information, visit www.volunteeriowa.org

2005 Iowa Tourism Conference

October 24, 25 & 26

Mid-America Center • Council Bluffs

Presented by: Travel Federation of Iowa and Iowa Tourism Office, Iowa Department of Economic Development
Hosted by: Western Iowa Tourism Region and the Council Bluffs Convention & Visitors Bureau

Mark your calendars for this event! From networking to educational sessions, this is the Iowa tourism industry's biggest event! Participants at this year's conference can expect many motivating and informational sessions. Four keynote speakers will present on wide ranging topics. Murray Banks, one of the nation's foremost speakers, will speak on "The Challenge of Change."

Breakout sessions on topics such as Culinary Tourism and Online Marketing will be offered. In addition, both Governor Tom Vilsack and Iowa Department of Economic Development director Mary Lawyer have been invited to present the AAA Four Diamond Awards.

Social activities are also part of the fun! There will be a silent auction, an Iowa

Wine & Beer reception and the Iowa Tourism Awards. Additionally, karaoke night and dining dollars for local restaurants will give participants a chance to experience what the Council Bluffs area has to offer.

Sign up for the conference by visiting the Iowa Tourism Office's web site at www.traveliowa.com and click on the

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- Rural Education And Community Help (REACH) – Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence \$139,540: Bremer, Cerro Gordo, Dallas, Grundy, Polk, Pottawattamie, Scott, Wapello, Webster and Woodbury;
- Keepers of the Land – Iowa Department of Natural Resources \$384,400: Boone, Buchanan, Clayton, Dickinson, Dubuque, Emmet, Franklin, Fremont, Guthrie, Johnson, Linn, Louisa, Polk, Pottawattamie, Ringgold, Scott, Shelby, Warren, Webster and Winneshiek; and
- Partners-In-Learning \$194,547: Dubuque

The three new AmeriCorps programs which are:

- Iowa Legal Aid program, \$124,001, which provides legal and related services for under-served and at-risk populations in the cities of Cedar Rapids, Dubuque, Ottumwa, Des Moines, Iowa City, Waterloo, Council Bluffs, Sioux City, Mason City and Davenport;
- Northwest Iowa Youth AmeriCorps Program, \$189,345, which seeks to expand the capacity of nonprofit youth-serving organizations in Clay, Dickinson, Palo Alto, Emmet and O'Brien counties; and
- The Governor's Iowa's Promise AmeriCorps Initiative, \$147,561, which will assist communities across the state in fulfilling America's Promise to children and youth.

These 11 programs will place 259 volunteers with AmeriCorps programs across Iowa.

The awards include \$767,340 in stipends for higher education to the 259 volunteers for their service to Iowa.

Re-funding of these eight existing AmeriCorps programs, and funding of the three new programs, brings the total number of AmeriCorps programs in Iowa to fifteen – with nearly 400 total volunteers serving Iowa through AmeriCorps programs. AmeriCorps is a national service program that unites diverse Americans to strengthen citizenship, foster the ethic of service, and help communities.

Over the last five years, 1,200 AmeriCorps volunteers have contributed 805,552 hours of volunteer service to Iowa communities. The investment of these AmeriCorps volunteers in Iowa is valued at \$10.8 million. This investment brought big results for Iowa in 2004, as the Vilsack/Pederson Administration sought to improve student achievement, community safety, and the quality of our natural resources. A few of the highlights that have resulted from AmeriCorps programs are:

- 5,431 K-12 students have benefited from tutoring and/or mentoring relationships,
- 140 miles of Iowa trails have been restored and maintained, and
- 3,000 elderly Iowans received donated cell phones for emergency response.

"These AmeriCorps programs are actively strengthening the social fabric of Iowa's communities", said Governor Vilsack. "I am proud we have three more AmeriCorps programs to serve Iowans."

Senator Harkin Visits Main Street Iowa Projects

Groups of community leaders and business people from eight Main Street Iowa communities welcomed Senator Tom Harkin in early August as he visited their downtown revitalization projects.

The Senator was instrumental in securing funding for these projects as part of a federal grant of nearly \$500,000 awarded to Main Street Iowa through a special appropriation from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Since 2002, Harkin has secured nearly \$1.5 million for the Main Street Iowa program.

Senator Harkin's tour included the following projects:

August 1

- Valley Junction, West Des Moines, the Lagniappe second-story addition (\$43,000 award)
- Corning, the Corning Opera House window restoration (award-ed \$20,000)
- Bedford, the Hotel Garland, building restoration (\$40,000 award)

August 4

- Burlington, construction of a new downtown grocery store (\$40,000 award)

August 8

- Central City, renovation of three properties funded by an award from a 2004 Main Street Challenge Grant
- Dubuque, restoration of the Old German Bank/Silver Dollar (\$43,000 award)

August 9

- Charles City Cultural Center, installation of an elevator (\$37,000 award)

August 10

- Jewell, renovation of a property at 632 Main Street (\$40,000 award)

Two additional recipients of the 2005 Main Street Challenge Grant were State Center with an award of \$40,000 for restoration of the property at 132 West Main Street and Waterloo with a \$40,000 award for renovation of the Fowler Building.

Main Street Iowa received a \$497,050 appropriation from HUD for use in the 34 designated Main Street communities. \$300,000 of this grant was combined with \$43,000 remaining from a previous HUD appropriation to provide financial assistance for downtown property restoration and rehabilitation. The nine projects were selected from Main Street Challenge Grant applications based on their impact on downtown.

The remaining funds are being used for business development training and technical assistance, an opportunity available to all Iowa communities. Senator Harkin has requested additional funds for the Main Street Iowa program; final approval will be determined late this year.



"In communities from Bedford to Burlington, Main Street Grants have helped to spur economic development in downtown areas," Harkin said. "Whether restoring an opera house in Corning or repairing damaged buildings in Central City, Main Street Grants have helped to revitalize historic downtown buildings, providing Iowans with places where they can gather for generations to come."

– Senator Tom Harkin



Great Places: An Invitation to Iowa's Future

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wants to focus now on Buxton and its mining history, recreating an authentic experience, with train rides and a trip down a coal shaft.

Lake City has "everything but a lake," but knows how to "dream big and deliver on those dreams," writes Paul Iverson.

Iowans seem perfectly content *without* the proverbial "mountains and oceans." They write of the vineyards and wine country in Avoca, musical heritage in Mason City and Clear Lake, an equestrian paradise in Warren County and the "golfing, camping, picnicking, paddling, shooting, birding, hiking, hunting, biking..." in the "Outdoor Family Zone" in Northwest Polk County.

Iowans know that a great quality of life is essential if we are going to keep, or lure back,

our talented young people. And, our young people must think so too. They are behind a number of our Great Places invitations. U of I Student Body President Mark Kresowik is the primary contact for the Creative Corridor invitation. The Young Professionals group authored the invitation from Ft. Dodge.

And the ISU Greek Community wants to build a better relationship with Ames and Campustown as a Great Place.

What's next? Great Places Coaches are being dispatched to every place that submitted a Great Places invitation. They will work with the local teams to move the vision forward. In October, the Great Places Citizens Advisory Board will select three pilot places to be part of our learning laboratory, in which the state



will discover coordinated, focused ways to deliver technical and financial assistance to deliver powerful results. Every one of the 145 places that extended an invitation to Great Places will benefit from this initiative, through the coaching process, new training opportunities and the chance to come together as a community and focus on the future.

That's happening already. In Davenport, which calls itself Iowa's front porch; and in Council Bluffs, where Donna Kinney writes, "Here I am, just another Iowan who loves to brag about the beautiful hills, trails and, of course, the friendly people who live here in Council Bluffs, Iowa." Iowans have set aside their signature modesty, thought about what's good and great about our state, and with the brass of 76 trombones, blown their own horns. That takes confidence, creativity and vision. And, that is the first step toward transforming what's good to Great Places in Iowa.

We invite you to take a reading tour of our Great Places invitations available on the Web at www.culturalaffairs.org/greatplaces/ and experience what Iowans love about Iowa.

Anita Walker

Director of the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs



Great Places Steering Committee

Great Places Event October 11

Are you and your community one of 145 places participating the process of becoming an Iowa Great Place? Then mark your calendar for October 11, 2005, for the Great Places Conference at Hancher Auditorium in Iowa City. Those participating in the process will be invited to afternoon workshops at Levitt Auditorium in Iowa City. The evening event will celebrate all great places communities and Governor Vilsack will announce the three Great Places Pilot projects.

Keynote speaker Richard Florida, author of *Flight of the Creative Class* and an expert on creatives in the workplace, will highlight the evening.

For more information on Iowa Great Places, visit www.iowagreatplaces.gov

For more information regarding Richard Florida, visit www.creativeclass.org

Clinton Hosts 2005 Iowa Downtown Summit

Nearly 200 people from 65 communities attended the 19th Annual Downtown Summit in Clinton on August 23 and 24, 2005.

The Summit, sponsored by the Iowa Department of Economic Development and the Federal Home Loan Bank, was presented by the Iowa Downtown Resource Center and featured presentations by nationally-recognized experts and local practitioners on downtown revitalization in both rural and urban communities.

Workshops were offered in three tracks - "Prescription for Success," "Developing Downtown Real Estate," and "Financing Change." Field trips explored upper floor housing, riverfront development and local architecture.

The Iowa Architectural Foundation also presented the 2005 Community Design Excellence Awards. Recipients included Main

Street Mount Pleasant for the Mount Pleasant Library and Civic Center; John and Diane Strawn, owners of the Mid-Iowa Publishing Building in State Center; and the Central City Main Street reconstruction and enhancement.



Grinnell Hosts Community Design Team

A park, fountain, and veterans building were the focus of an intense day-and-a-half workshop in Grinnell this summer. "People in Grinnell had been talking about Central Park for years—what they like and don't like and how they'd like to see it improved," said Bill Menner, Executive Director of Poweshiek Iowa Development, located in Grinnell. Grinnell participated in the Iowa Architectural Foundation's Community Design Program in the hope of finding new solutions to what they viewed as an underutilized city park with accessibility problems.

Community Design Program team members, comprised of design professionals, Iowa State University design students, city officials, and concerned citizens came together on June 16-17, 2005, to explore such ideas as widening the sidewalk for Grinnell's popular Farmer's Market, giving the Veterans Memorial Building a facelift and building a replica Walter Burley Griffin-designed fountain in the Northwest corner of the park where tourists can easily visit.

The ideas and visions laid out by the group were presented to the community during the Walter Burley Griffin Society's annual meeting held in Grinnell on June 17. Grinnell is now planning to make the ideas presented at the workshop a reality. "The Community Design Program helped us to visualize what's possible, allowing us to better share that vision," says Menner of the program.

For more information on the Community Design Program, please visit www.iowaarchfoundation.org or call 515-244-1888.

New IDED Director and Deputy Named

Governor Tom Vilsack has appointed Mary Lawyer to serve as director of the Iowa Department of Economic Development (IDED), replacing Mike Blouin who resigned in early July to focus on exploring a 2006 gubernatorial run. Lawyer was previously the deputy director of IDED and has been with the agency since 1990.



Lawyer has named Tina Hoffman, IDED communications director, as deputy director.



2005 Planning Calendar

OCTOBER

- 1 Deadline for Iowa Volunteer Hall of Fame Nominations
- 11 Great Places Conference Iowa City
- 24-26 Tourism Conference, Council Bluffs

DECEMBER

- 7 Housing Fund Applications Due

NOVEMBER

- 3 "Getting to Know IDED"
- 9-10 Iowa Conference on Volunteer Service, West Des Moines
- 21 HOME (Tax Credit) Applications Due
- 22 Community Facilities and Services Fund, Water and Sewer Fund Applications Due
- 24 Thanksgiving

Happy Holidays!

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UPDATE ON STATE PROGRAMS PROMOTING COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS AND PHILANTHROPY

Through the Endow Iowa Program, the State of Iowa has provided "start-up" grants to qualifying Community Foundations and 20 percent state tax credits to donors to those Foundations or to their "affiliate funds." The donors can be individuals, corporations, insurance companies or other financial institutions.

In the 2005 General Assembly, legislators chose to continue the Endow Iowa Program at \$50,000 per year for the next three years, and increase the amount of tax credits available to \$2 million per year for the next four years (2005 through 2008.) The specific legislation providing these incentives is House File 809 (Section 17) for the Endow Iowa Program and House File 868 (Sections 71 through 81) for the Tax Credit Program.

The other major component of the state's initiative is the County Endowment Fund. This program will provide approximately \$5,000,000 annually to Community Foundations throughout the state (one founda-

tion in each county that does NOT have a state-licensed gaming facility). This program is now well underway, at the time of the last Tools and Trends issue, we were in the middle of the application process for this program. At the present time, organizations from all eligible counties have applied for funding and all organizations have rated successfully except one. The one that is unfinished is a county where two different organizations applied to represent the same county.

In addition to the state application process, some of the organizations are being reviewed by the National Council on Foundations to determine if they can be confirmed as complying with the national standards for community foundations. This process is the last remaining hurdle before the organizations can receive County Endowment funding.

The first distribution of funds through this program is anticipated for the fall of 2005 (most likely the end of October). Upon

receipt of the state funds, 25 percent must be placed in a permanent endowment fund within each Community Foundation. The remaining 75 percent of the funds are to be granted out to local charitable organizations. Although these state funds will clearly have a beneficial impact in each of the recipient counties, an even greater impact can be expected as those Community Foundations grow and obtain significant donations from their own local areas.

In order to qualify for funding many of the newer organizations have "affiliated" with larger, well-established foundations. This allows the organizations to share the operating costs, thereby lowering the cost to each individual organization. These affiliations also result in greater cooperation and a more regional approach, rather than each community or county competing against each of its neighbors.