



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 1, 2021

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## Joint meeting and light agenda for the Environmental Protection Commission next week

**MEDIA CONTACT:** Jerah Sheets at 515-313-8909 or [Jerah.Sheets@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:Jerah.Sheets@dnr.iowa.gov).

DES MOINES—The Environmental Protection Commission will meet early this month to join the Natural Resource Commission in a general discussion on July 7.

A light agenda includes asking commissioners to go forward with a rule proposal affecting certified and licensed people such as water treatment operators.

Commissioners will meet by video conference at 10 a.m. To join by video, connect with <https://meet.google.com/pcd-ryjg-uoq>. To join by phone, call 240-794-2779, and enter the PIN code of 934 190 235 followed by the pound (#) sign. The meeting is open to the public. There is no scheduled public participation. Written comments may be submitted up to one day before the meeting to Jerah Sheets at [Jerah.Sheets@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:Jerah.Sheets@dnr.iowa.gov) or to DNR, 502 E. Ninth St., Des Moines, IA 50319.

At 10:30 a.m., commissioners will be asked to refer Global Fiberglass Solutions, Inc. to the Iowa Attorney General's office regarding disposal of wind turbine blades.

At noon, commissioners will break for lunch with the Natural Resource Commission, with a joint meeting following at 12:30 p.m. From 2 to 5 pm., interested commissioners will take an educational tour of the water quality and natural resource improvements at Easter Lake.

Find the complete agenda and more information at <http://www.iowadnr.gov/About-DNR/Boards-Commissions>.

Commissioners include: Ralph Lents, Menlo, chair; Harold Hommes, Windsor Heights, vice chair; Stephanie Dykshorn, Ireton, secretary; Brad Bleam, Rockwell City; Rebecca Dostal, Traer; Amy Echard, Farmersburg; Patricia Foley, Huxley; Lisa Gochenour, Logan and Mark Stutsman, Hills. Kayla Lyon is the DNR director.

## Updated: Four safety tips to enjoy fireworks, protect sensitive people

**Note:** This is a joint press release from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, the Iowa Department of Public Health and the State Fire Marshal's office

### **MEDIA CONTACTS:**

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As much as we love fireworks displays, drifting smoke can cause breathing problems for some and drought conditions may pose additional risks this year.

Dry conditions and the threat of fires may cause some towns, especially in northern parts of the state, to take extra precautions with their fireworks displays. Whether attending a display or celebrating in your backyard, keep these four safety tips in mind.

“First, if your family or friends suffer from asthma or respiratory difficulties, it's important for them to stay upwind, a safe distance from fireworks smoke,” says Brian Hutchins, DNR air quality supervisor. “The elderly and children are also vulnerable to high levels of smoke.”

Sensitive people are most likely to have trouble breathing when air is stagnant. With no breeze, fine particles can be trapped near the ground and build to unhealthy levels.

Smoke contains fine particles and gases, which can be hard on the lungs. Fine particles in fireworks' smoke are produced from black powder used to shoot fireworks skyward along with the metals that produce brilliant colors.

Those unable to avoid areas of dense smoke should limit outdoor activity and contact their health care provider if experiencing difficulty breathing.

Second, while fireworks and celebrations go together, remember fireworks, even sparklers, can cause serious burns, eye injuries and hearing loss. The Iowa Department of Public Health encourages families to make sure an adult supervises fireworks and keeps young children from playing with or igniting them. They also recommend wearing earplugs to [protect against hearing loss](#).

Keep fireworks pointed away from you and others when igniting them, and back up quickly after lighting. If fireworks don't ignite or burn fully, don't try to relight them or pick them up. Keep a bucket of water or hose on hand to respond to a fire or mishap.

The Department of Public Health reports Iowa had seven inpatient hospitalizations and 15 hospital admissions for emergency room treatment related to fireworks injuries last year. Check for more safety tips from the [Consumer Product and Safety Commission](#). Check with local authorities for restrictions on shooting fireworks inside city limits. Note that fireworks are prohibited in state parks, only sparklers are allowed.

Third, play it safe if dry conditions prevail at your location. Shooting off fireworks is no fun if they ignite a fire, burning lawns or nearby fields. It's also smart to check the State Fire Marshal's website at <https://dps.iowa.gov/divisions/state-fire-marshal> for any countywide

burn bans. According to the State Fire Marshal Division, municipalities and citizens are allowed to shoot fireworks despite a countywide burn ban. However, if fireworks are determined to start a fire while a burn ban is in effect, responsible persons could be charged.

“If you’re going to shoot fireworks, it’s always good to keep a bucket of water or a garden hose handy in case of fire, and never point or shoot fireworks at another person,” says State Fire Marshal Dan Wood. “With the severe drought throughout the state, it’s also a good practice to keep fireworks at least 300 feet from structures and dry vegetation.”

If fireworks are allowed, place your launchpad on a hard, flat spot such as bare dirt or concrete. Avoid areas with trees, grass or buildings that might catch fire. For more consumer safety information from the State Fire Marshal Division, visit “[Make Sure Your Fourth Rules](#)” web page.

Finally, play it safe and [dispose of your unused fireworks](#) carefully. Safe storage and disposal protects you, your family and your waste haulers. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has [fireworks guidelines for businesses](#).

Last year, fine particle levels [exceeding national standards](#) were recorded in Davenport, Des Moines and Muscatine on the Fourth. Des Moines exceeded the standard again the following day. Learn more about [fine particles \(PM2.5\)](#) and how [fireworks displays](#) can affect sensitive populations.

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## DNR Derelict Building Grant Program awards grants to rural communities

**MEDIA CONTACT:** Reid Bermel, [reid.bermel@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:reid.bermel@dnr.iowa.gov) or 515-217-7230.

DES MOINES – The DNR Derelict Building Grant Program awarded grants to nine small, rural Iowa communities to help deconstruct or renovate abandoned structures, remove asbestos, and limit construction and demolition materials going to the landfill.

The DNR Derelict Building Grant Program was instituted by statute to help rural communities with populations of 5,000 or less remove environmental hazards, improve community appearance and minimize costs by recycling and reusing building materials through deconstruction or renovation of abandoned, derelict buildings.

DBGP funding is awarded annually on a competitive basis with cash matches required. Applications for the next funding round will be due on Feb. 25, 2022.

The following projects will receive a total of \$400,000 as reimbursement grants:

**City of Anita, Cass County** — \$8,500 to abate asbestos and complete a phase 1 environmental site assessment for an old abandoned church.

**City of Farragut, Fremont County** - \$5,100 for renovation to help stabilize the foundation of a building that eventually the city would like to use for a Public Works shop.

**City of Fremont, Mahaska County** - \$66,000 to abate asbestos and deconstruct an old commercial building. City plans to redevelop the space into a new commercial building.

**City of Mapleton, Monona County** - \$31,250 for renovation of an old commercial building. Plans are to have business occupy the ground level with housing options on the second floor.

**City of Millersburg, Iowa County** - \$15,000 for asbestos inspection and abatement on the former school. This is the first step the city is taking to redevelop the structure.

**City of Rake, Winnebago County** - \$69,000 for the deconstruction of an old school building. The city plans to develop a multi-use recreational path in the area where the old building used to be.

**City of Wall Lake, Sac County** - \$121,700 for asbestos abatement, renovation and deconstruction of an old school building. New site will be transformed into a family recreation center.

**City of Wapello, Louisa County** - \$73,450 for asbestos inspection, asbestos abatement, and deconstruction of the existing roof of an old retail store. Renovated structure will be used for retail/commercial space with living options on the second floor.

**City of Waukon, Allamakee County** - \$10,000 for renovation of retail building. The site will be used for a restaurant once work is completed.

For more information about the grant program, application forms and resources, visit: [www.iowadnr.gov/Environment/LandStewardship/WasteManagement/DerelictBuildingProgram.aspx](http://www.iowadnr.gov/Environment/LandStewardship/WasteManagement/DerelictBuildingProgram.aspx).

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## DNR enforcement actions

**MEDIA CONTACT: Tamara McIntosh, DNR, at 515-725-8242 or [Tamara.McIntosh@dnr.iowa.gov](mailto:Tamara.McIntosh@dnr.iowa.gov).**

DES MOINES – DNR staff work with individuals, businesses and communities to help them protect our natural resources by complying with state and federal laws. This approach is very effective. In the few cases where compliance cannot be achieved, the DNR issues enforcement actions. The following list summarizes recent enforcement actions. Find the entire, original orders on DNR's website at [www.iowadnr.gov/EnforcementActions](http://www.iowadnr.gov/EnforcementActions).

**Consent Orders** A consent order is issued as an alternative to issuing an administrative order. A consent order indicates that the DNR has voluntarily entered into a legally enforceable agreement with the other party.

### **Cerro Gordo County**

MD Products and Solutions, Inc.

Cease all illegal discharges to Mason City's storm sewer system and to waters of the state and pay a \$3,000 administrative penalty.

### **Madison County**

Tim Donham

Cease illegal open burning of solid waste; properly reuse, recycle, or dispose of solid waste consistent with Iowa law; and pay a \$2,500 administrative penalty.

**Muscatine County**

Doug Eichelberger

Cease illegal open burning; cease use of an unpermitted and uncontrolled incinerator; properly dispose of all solid waste on site, including burnt material and ash, at a permitted solid waste facility and provide disposal receipts to the Department; and pay a \$3,500 administrative penalty.