



Public places in Iowa to go smokefree July 1

By Don McCormick*



Gov. Chet Culver signs House File 2212 - the Smokefree Air Act - into law.

On April 15, Governor Chet Culver signed House File 2212 – the [Smokefree Air Act](#) – into law, prohibiting smoking in nearly all public places in Iowa, including most workplaces, restaurants, and bars. The legislation made Iowa the 24th state in the nation to pass a smoke-free air law.

“My goal is to make Iowa the healthiest state in the nation, which is why I am proud to sign the Smokefree Air Act,” Governor Culver said. “This is a bill which reflects commitment and compromise; passion and practicality. Simply put, this is a bill for which the time has come.”

Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) Director, Tom Newton stressed the significance of the new law. “Beginning July 1, the vast majority of Iowa’s workers will no longer be exposed to the 4,000 chemicals and 250 carcinogens in secondhand cigarette smoke while on the job,” Newton said. “This is an important advancement for public health in our state and will improve Iowans’ quality of life for many, many years to come.”

Workers in states with smoke-free workplace laws report experiencing fewer respiratory symptoms, such as coughing, wheezing, chest tightness and difficulty breathing, than before their workplaces became smoke-free. People working in smoke-free environments are less likely to visit the doctor for respiratory illnesses and miss fewer days of work. Additionally, states with smoke-free workplace laws report seeing a 3 percent reduction in adult smoking prevalence overall. Research also shows that teenagers who work in a smoke-free environment are more than 30 percent less likely to ever start smoking than those who are exposed to smoke while at work.

Staff in the IDPH [Division of Tobacco Use Prevention and Control](#) are busy preparing for the law’s July 1 implementation date. While many of the details regarding enforcement of the new law – for which IDPH will be responsible – remain to be written into the Iowa Administrative Code, the division expects education to be a primary component. To that end, the division has created a temporary [Web site](#) and telephone number for the public to ask questions and get the most up-to-date information about the law. A permanent toll-free number and Web site where business owners and the public can find information and post questions is being established and will be operational before the law goes into effect on July 1, 2008.

Since April 15, IDPH Community Health Consultant Brent Saron, has fielded more than 220 questions about the new law and is entering them into a database, so all questions can be answered as soon as accurate information becomes available. “At this point, it’s natural for the public and business owners in particular to have questions about the new law,” Saron said. “Every question asked helps the division during this important period of developing the administrative rules. The questions will also help us develop our education campaign.”

(Cont.)

Public places in Iowa to go smoke-free July 1 (Cont. from page 1)

For quick facts about Iowa's new Smokefree Air Act, visit www.idph.state.ia.us/tobacco/smokefree.asp. Check back regularly as the site will be updated as more details become available. To ask a question, use the site's "Contact Us" feature or call 281-7739.

* Don McCormick is a public information officer at IDPH.

Culver announces new physical activity challenge

At an April ceremony recognizing outstanding Culver/Judge 100-Day Challenge teams, Governor Chet Culver issued a new challenge to state employees. Building on the achievements of the most successful Lighten Up Iowa effort ever (now called [Live Healthy Iowa](#)), Culver announced the 100-Way Challenge.

"The results are in! Iowans have eaten better, exercised more, and gotten healthier," Culver said of the program, which helped almost 36,800 Iowans shed more than 138,000 pounds and log nearly 1,066,000 hours of physical activity in 100 days. "You got active. Now, I'm asking you to stay active!"

The new challenge begins in June and focuses on the unlimited opportunities for outdoor physical activity in Iowa. The Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) will develop a Web site for state employees similar to the site used for the 100-day challenge. The site will include a list of activities that state employees can do to stay active, from participating in [RAGBRAI](#) to hiking through a state park to getting in an hour of yard work over the weekend.

Stay tuned for more information about this innovative challenge by visiting the [IDPH Web site](#) and reading IDPH Director Newton's [Quick Reads](#) publication. To be added to the *Quick Reads* mailing list, write to rcooper@idph.state.ia.us.



Agency conducts mock anthrax response

By Rick Kozin*

In April, the [Polk County Health Department](#) practiced its ability to respond to an anthrax attack. In a little more than three hours, more than 900 people, playing the role of patients exposed to the fearsome bacterium, received simulated medication at a clinic set up for the exercise at [McCombs Middle School](#) in Des Moines. The goal was to treat 300 people per hour. Officials met their goal, helping 921 people in the time allotted.

"I thought it was going to be more like a pandemic [that] broke out and it would be something like [the movie] *I Am Legend*," said Dakota Meadows, an eighth-grader from Johnston whose role included feigning a seizure during the exercise. "I didn't think we would have a defense against it. I was definitely reassured," Meadows said.

Anthrax can be contracted through skin exposure, inhalation or digesting undercooked meat from infected animals. Saturday's scenario involved exposure through inhalation. In an actual outbreak, the Polk County Health Department would be responsible for providing oral medication to all Polk County residents.

(Cont.)

Agency conducts mock anthrax response

(Cont. from page 2)

A total of 73 nurses and volunteer staff from the Warren, [Dallas](#) and Polk county health departments; the Iowa Department of Public Health; [Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management](#); [Mercy College of Health Sciences](#); [EFCO Corp.](#) and [MidAmerican Energy](#) helped guide patients through the clinic, taking medical histories, providing information and dispensing fake medication. Physicians worked with patients feeling ill or showing symptoms of infection. A mental health counselor was also on hand and practiced working with those who were role-playing panic or anxiety. The [Des Moines Police Department](#) and [Polk County Sheriff's Office](#) provided security.

In a similar exercise held in 2003, the Polk County Health Department dispensed antibiotics to 500 people in just over three hours. Since that exercise, the department streamlined their floor plan, deepened their understanding of and training in incident command strategies and replaced cell phones with 800 MHZ radios for communication.

“By implementing these three changes, we were able to reduce our staffing at the clinic by one-third and increase our volume of patients by 50 percent,” said Terri Henkels, director of the Polk County Health Department.

The department is working, through a Cities Readiness Initiatives grant, with Dallas County Public Health, [Guthrie County Public Health](#), [Madison County Public Health](#) and [Warren County Public Health](#) to develop strategies for mass, community prophylaxis for in the metropolitan Des Moines area.

** Rick Kozin is a public information officer at the Polk County Health Department.*

Delta Dental to provide funding for community water fluoridation

[Delta Dental of Iowa](#), in collaboration with the Iowa Department of Public Health, has established a Community Fluoridation Award to assist in fluoridation of public water supplies in Iowa communities where fluoride is deficient or non-existent. Up to two awards of \$6,000 may be given annually to Iowa communities demonstrating the greatest need for fluoridation.

The [American Dental Association](#) (ADA) endorses the fluoridation of community water supplies as a safe and effective measure for preventing tooth decay. Fluoride is typically added to public water supplies across the country. According to the ADA, the average cost to add fluoride to a community water supply ranges from \$0.50 a year per person in a large community to approximately \$3.00 a year per person in a small community.

But the investment is well worth it. In fact, every \$1 invested in water fluoridation saves \$38 in dental treatment costs. Water fluoridation is also endorsed by the [American Medical Association](#), the [America Academy of Pediatrics](#), and the U.S. Surgeon General. The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) list fluoridation of drinking water as one of the top 10 public health advances of the 20th Century.

If your community is interested in applying for the Community Fluoridation Award, visit www.deltadentalia.com and click Public Benefit Program. Applications should be completed no later than July 1. For more information, contact Suzanne Heckenlaible at Delta Dental at 515-261-5559 or sheckenlaible@deltadentalia.com.



Seventy-three nurses and volunteer staff served 921 people during the 3-hour exercise.

 DELTA DENTAL®

Iowa children with hearing loss get help

By Tammy O'Hollearn*

Since late January, Iowa families who have children with hearing loss but who could not afford to buy hearing aids and audiological services may apply for funding from the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH). IDPH has received 87 applications for assistance to cover hearing aids, FM systems, ear molds, batteries, and audiological services.

All applicants thus far have had medical insurance. However, most insurance carriers only cover screening and diagnostic testing, not hearing aids. Since fitted hearing aids can cost upwards of \$900 each, this leaves families to face some tough decisions: *Do we wait? What if we only aid one ear? How do we pay for these devices or services? Do we take out a loan or put it on our credit card? Will one of our family members loan us the money? Will the provider let us make payments?*

Thanks to \$238,500 from the Iowa Legislature to cover uninsured or underinsured Iowa children with hearing loss, families who qualify can get help through June 30 of this year. The program is significant in that hearing loss can disrupt language development; spoken language depends on the ability to hear speech. The earlier hearing loss is found and addressed, the greater the chances are a child will be able to develop listening abilities and use spoken language. The use of hearing instruments such as hearing aids is an essential part of this process.

For more information, visit www.idph.state.ia.us/iaehdi and click on Parents or Professionals or contact Tammy O'Hollearn, [Iowa Early Hearing Detection and Intervention](#) coordinator, at (800) 383-3826.

* Tammy O'Hollearn is the Iowa Early Hearing Detection and Intervention coordinator at IDPH.

Partners asked to help prepare for all-digital TV

On February 17, 2009, all full-power broadcast television stations in the U.S. will stop broadcasting on analog airwaves and begin broadcasting only in digital. The impact to local public health service areas could mean that residents may lose access to emergency broadcasts unless they purchase a new TV or other equipment.

To help consumers with the transition to all-digital TV broadcasting, the federal government has established the [Digital-to-Analog Converter Box Coupon Program](#). Every U.S. household is eligible to receive up to two coupons, worth \$40 each, toward the purchase of digital-to-analog converter boxes. Please consider promoting this valuable service to the people you serve by requesting flyers, brochures or posters from the [National Telecommunications and Information Administration](#) (NTIA) at Dan.Rumelt@fcc.gov or 202-418-7512.

--Success Story--

Diana Hanson, an audiologist with [Iowa Methodist Medical Center](#), reported on her experience helping families who have children with hearing loss.

Having this funding available for families is so wonderful. It is difficult to tell parents that their child has hearing loss and then to say that their health insurance most likely will not cover the cost of hearing aids. Now I am able to give them the news and let them know the State of Iowa has set aside money for children's hearing aids. Parents are so happy and have one less thing to worry about. A family I recently worked with has two school-age boys, each of whom wears hearing aids. They were in desperate need of new devices. The family was trying to save money to buy them and, at the same time, trying to decide which child would get new hearing aids first. With this money, both boys will be able to get hearing aids at the same time. The mother, Connie Dippel, noted that it was such a relief to know that the financial burden of hearing aids would be lifted from them. She described it as a "godsend." This program is needed and she hopes it will continue in the future as there are no other funding sources that she has found. Connie also shared her appreciation for how easy the application process was.



Calhoun County uses NACCHO assessment tool

By Don McCormick*

Last July, the [Calhoun County Department of Health](#) discovered that it did not fully meet 26 percent of the criteria contained in the [Iowa Public Health Standards](#). Having failed to meet 38 of these 145 important benchmarks, the county knew it needed to develop a strategic plan and apply a systematic evaluation process for all of their programs.

Department Administrator Jane Condon recognized that it would be a grueling process but didn't want to spend most of her staff's time simply developing an assessment method. "Surprisingly, our search for an existing assessment tool didn't take long," Condon said. "The answer had been sitting on the shelf in my office for nearly 3 years."

The tool Condon found is called [Making Strategic Decisions about Service Delivery: An Action Tool for Assessment and Transitioning](#). Produced by the [National Association of County and City Health Officials](#) (NACCHO), the tool offers guidance for assessment processes at the community, organizational, and individual service levels, but is very flexible and allows movement back and forth between the sections.

The assessments calls for participation from other public and private health service partners and require an objective knowledge of the financial and statistical facts of the agency. The tool provides guides for decision-making and covers relevant questions about capacity and mission. Other sections of the manual include: developing partnerships; funding ideas to support population-based activities; creating political will; developing workforce; monitoring contracts and performance; and delivering technical assistance.

"Although the tool focuses mainly on Medicaid reimbursement, we customized it to assess services covered by all funding sources," Condon said. "This was a one-stop-shop for us. I'd recommend it to anyone wanting to assess their agency's capacity to increase provision of population-based public health services."

The first copy of the manual is automatically mailed free of charge to NACCHO members. The price of additional copies to members is around \$40. Non-members may order copies for about \$60 each. For more information, visit www.naccho.org.

* Don McCormick is a public information officer at IDPH.



Jane Condon and the NACCHO resource.

Congratulations to this year's IDPH [801 Grand Power Climb](#) team! The 17-member team, made up of IDPH employees, spouses and significant others, was the fastest co-ed team this year. Additionally, the team was [ranked 2nd overall](#) based on the times of the four fastest team members. During the annual stair climb, participants ran three times up the 41 flights of stairs in the Principal Financial Building on 801 Grand Avenue in Des Moines. More than 600 people participated this year and raised over \$100,000 for the [American Lung Association](#) to increase awareness about lung disease, assist with smoking cessation, fund a summer camp for kids with asthma, and more. The IDPH team raised \$2,721.



Local agency focuses on employee preparedness

By Angela Drent*

The [Siouxland District Health Department](#) (SDHD) has developed a program to improve personal preparedness among employees. The initiative, called "[20 Weeks to Preparedness](#)," focuses on developing an emergency kit, a family communication plan, and a home evacuation plan.

SDHD didn't just design the program, they implemented it. "The majority of our employees indicated a new and heightened awareness for preparedness planning and preparation for themselves and their family," said SDHD Director Fran Sadden. "If you implement this program at your agency or business, it will not only increase awareness regarding preparedness among employees, but will also assure that your agency is more likely to implement its own emergency response plan."

How it works

SDHD is sharing all of the *20 Weeks to Preparedness* materials online. While organizations are free to implement the program any way they like, Sadden shared how it went at her agency. It began with a short presentation during an all-agency meeting. At the gathering, all employees were given a starter emergency supply kit containing hand sanitizer, a personal medication card, a *20 Weeks to Preparedness* calendar, a [Protect Iowa Health](#) Guidebook, and a whistle.

During the 20 weeks that followed, employees got a small, yellow card in their mailboxes. The card detailed a list of items to collect for the supply kit that week or an action step for becoming better prepared. The following Thursday, a reminder containing the same information was sent to employees via e-mail.

Who can use it

The program has been tailored to suit not only health departments and hospitals, but also community health centers, businesses, and other organizations. In Region 3, Sadden reports that all local public health agencies and many public health partners in Woodbury County have received a presentation and the program materials.

Shelby Petersen of Siouxland Community Health Center says that her agency recently implemented the program. "*20 Weeks to Preparedness* is an outstanding tool for enhancing awareness of the importance of the impact that preparedness requires," Peterson said. "Employees' personal preparedness enhances their ability to respond to the community at large."

Other organizations, such as the [Center for Siouxland](#) and the [Iowa Poison Control Center](#), have already implemented the program. For more information or to download materials, visit www.woodbury-ia.com/departments/DistrictHealth and click on 20 Weeks to Preparedness.

* Angela Drent is a health planner at the Siouxland District Health Department



According to a [National Opinion Survey](#) conducted in 2007 by the American Public Health Association:

- 32% of respondents have not taken any steps to prepare
- 87% have not done enough to prepare
- 14% have a 3-day supply of food, water, and meds
- 46% do not have a disaster supply kit
- 27% believe that the area where they live is likely to be affected in the next 1-2 years

EMS more than just responding to emergencies

By Polly Carver-Kimm*

Mention EMS and most people think of flashing lights and sirens. After all, that's what [Emergency Medical Services](#) is about, right? True, the emergency care provided by EMS is at the core of emergency medical services. However, in Iowa, EMS saves lives by preventing emergencies as well as responding to them.

Two examples of the preventive function of EMS come from Cedar Rapids and West Des Moines. In each case, EMS providers show they're going beyond emergency response to help protect and connect with their communities.

Promoting bicycle helmets

In 2006, 416 of the 426 Iowa bicyclists injured were not wearing helmets. [Clive Fire Department](#) Assistant Chief, Brian Helland helps to promote helmet use by organizing community-wide bike rodeos and even setting up bike-helmet giveaways at local trails.

"If we see kids riding without a helmet, we'll get their attention and offer them a free one," Helland said. "Sometimes the kids will ride back and forth, deciding if it would be cool to wear a helmet. They usually end up stopping and taking one."

Helland says the West Des Moines EMS efforts appear to be working. In the four years he has been involved in the program, more than 600 helmets have been given away. This past summer, a head count on a local bike trail showed 87 percent of children and adults were wearing helmets.

Improving installation of child seats

Child safety seats or booster seats are required by Iowa law for all children from birth to age 6. Unfortunately, most seats are installed improperly, and, therefore, may not function correctly in the event of an accident.

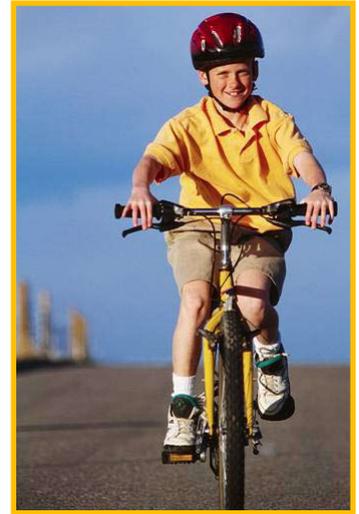
Derek LaGrange of [Area Ambulance in Cedar Rapids](#) conducts monthly child passenger safety seat checks. He's also had special training in transporting children with special needs. Within weeks of that training, a mother with a special needs child arrived at a check-up event.

"Here was this mother with an \$850 or \$900 car seat, and no one had shown her how to use it," Derek recalls. "She was so thankful. Her husband was serving in Iraq and she was on her own."

Derek says the seat's improper installation not only compromised its ability to provide protection during a crash, but also the positioning of the seat was causing breathing problems for the child. Derek now works with a group for mothers of special needs children to ensure they have proper safety seat training.

Helland and LaGrange are just two examples of EMS providers who have taken emergency medical services beyond a reactive function to a proactive effort. There are 13,000 certified EMS providers in Iowa and more than 800 authorized services.

* Polly Carver-Kimm is a public information officer at IDPH.





Bureau of Environmental Health Services

Recently, Focus spoke with Carmily Stone, chief of the IDPH [Bureau of Environmental Health Services](#).

What does your bureau do?

We provide technical assistance, services, and information to and for local environmental health specialists, local boards of health, and all Iowans. Environmental health impacts all Iowans every day by making sure the water they drink, the food they eat, the air they breathe, and the community they live in is safe.

So Iowans really rely on you to keep them healthy.

Iowans can do a lot to keep themselves healthy by eating right, getting enough physical activity and doing other things for their personal well-being. But when it comes to environmental health, you're only as healthy as the world around you. Luckily, we have a lot of partners to help us ensure healthy environments.

What do you do to keep water safe?

On this front, our bureau conducts or contracts out pool inspections, reviews local water fluoridation programs, certifies backflow assembly testers, registers water treatment devices, and permits new and existing public pools.

What about food safety?

The bureau addresses food safety through the Grade A Milk Program and the EHS-Net Project. Staff conducts hundreds of inspections every year to ensure that the milk you get at the store was processed under proper conditions. EHS-Net conducts studies in restaurants to try to identify environmental antecedents to foodborne illness.

What else do you do?

The bureau keeps Iowa communities safe by tracking hazardous substance spills and releases, planning for emergencies, providing information to make homes a healthier place to live, and identifying environmental exposures and relating them to health data. We also inspect tattoo and tanning facilities, and we identify and assess potential public health threats posed by hazardous waste sites.

How do you achieve so much with such a small staff?

Oh, we could never do this alone! We rely on over 130 contracts with local environmental health agencies to help us conduct 5,000+ inspections annually at public swimming pools and spas, tattoo establishments, tanning beds, and services provided through our Grants-to-Counties program.

How do you ensure your partners are trained for these various duties?

Having qualified and knowledgeable environmental health professionals is very important to us. We offer new sanitarian training each year to bring new county environmental health specialists to Des Moines for four days to provide them resources, key contacts, and field experiences to apply in their own county. We also work with the Iowa Environmental Health Association to sponsor opportunities for continuing education.



IDPH Environmental Health Division Director, Ken Sharp demonstrates how to use a probe for soil analysis during New Sanitarian Training.

Team Voices - Environmental Health Services

(Cont. from page 8)

What challenges do you face?

Our biggest challenge is funding. Environmental health isn't always viewed as a priority when it comes to budgets because people don't understand what environmental health is. This is why we're doing more to provide education to local boards of health, local boards of supervisors, and key decision makers and explaining how environmental health impacts them and their families on a daily basis. Another challenge is workforce; in Iowa, a great many environmental health mentors will retire in the coming years and we need to fill those spots. To mitigate this, we are developing a new internship program that will involve the state and local health departments and academic institutions to increase awareness and interest in environmental health.

New asthma inhalers to help protect the environment

By Don McCormick*

Remember all the fuss in the 1970s over CFCs? Also called chlorofluorocarbons by people in white lab coats, CFCs are the chemical compounds that were widely used as refrigerants, propellants, and cleaning solvents.

However, they were also known to reduce the ozone layer that surrounds and protects the earth against the sun's harmful rays. Loss of ozone can increase the risk of skin cancer, cataracts, and other health problems.

For this reason, CFCs have been removed from almost every product in the U.S. since 1978. CFCs have been allowed for certain medical uses, however, such as asthma inhalers, until safe and effective alternatives can be created.

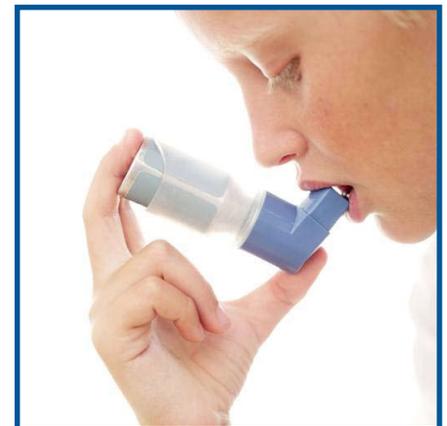
Thanks to a new type of asthma inhaler now available, people with asthma and friends of the environment can breathe easier knowing that the [U.S. Food and Drug Administration](#) (FDA) has issued a [mandate](#) to eliminate CFC-based asthma inhalers. By December 31 of this year, the mandate requires that CFC inhalers will no longer be produced or distributed in the U.S.

"Replacing the old inhalers will be a new type that uses safe, effective, and environmentally friendly hydrofluoroalkane (HFA) as a propellant," said Andrea Hoffman, coordinator of the [Iowa Asthma Control Program](#) at the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH). "While the chemical used to propel the medicine from the inhaler is changing, the medicine inside the inhaler is not. Also, the shape, size and convenience features of the new inhalers will pretty much remain the same."

However, there are some differences, Hoffman points out. For example, the propellant in the HFA inhalers will be less forceful than that of CFC-based inhalers. The new inhalers will also require different cleaning and care, and users will notice a slight difference in smell and taste.

"Asthma requires daily management and focus," Hoffman stressed. "Patients should talk with their doctor about asthma treatment plans and transitioning to an HFA inhaler."

A new prescription will be needed for the HFA inhaler. Also, the new inhalers may cost more. For more information on the FDA mandate, go to www.fda.gov/cder/mdi/mdifaqs.htm.



HFA inhaler manufacturers are offering patient-assistance programs to ensure that patients who cannot afford HFA inhalers can get them. For information, contact:

- Schering-Plough (1-800-656-9485)
- GlaxoSmithKline (1-866-475-3678)
- Ivax (1-305-575-6000).

Patients needing financial assistance may also contact The Partnership for Prescription Assistance at 1-888-477-2669 or online at www.pparx.org.

* Don McCormick is editor of Iowa Health Focus.

“Biggest Loser” trainer visits Iowa

Kim Lyons of NBC’s “[The Biggest Loser](#),” visited Central Elementary School in Nevada as a featured guest of Get Fit Nevada, an affiliate program of Live Healthy Iowa (formerly known as Lighten Up Iowa). Lyons, who is the author of *Kim Lyons’ Your Body, Your Life: The 12-Week Program to Optimum Physical, Mental & Emotional Fitness*, also visited the Nevada High School to deliver a motivational speech on wellness and overall health and fitness.

“Coordinating with chambers of commerce, hospitals and local businesses, Live Healthy Iowa assisted nearly 40 Iowa communities this year in promoting healthy eating behaviors, physical fitness, prevention and wellness,” said Troy Vincent, director of Live Healthy Iowa’s parent program, [Live Healthy America](#). “By working with local community leaders in cities such as Nevada, DeWitt, Dubuque, Lemars, Keokuk, Ames, and Fort Dodge, we’ve been able to provide a platform for redirecting the focus from fixing disease and illness to prevention and health promotion.”

The [Nevada Parks and Recreation Department](#), the [Story County Extension Office](#) and the [Nevada Chamber of Commerce](#) were instrumental in bringing Lyons to their community.



Kim Lyons

Public Health Leadership Institute applications due June 1

The [Great Plains Public Health Leadership Institute](#) has begun recruiting for its Year 4 class. Nationally recognized and supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the educational opportunity is designed for both established and emerging leaders in public health in Iowa, South Dakota, and Nebraska. It targets professionals whose organizations are dedicated to improving the health and well-being of populations and communities and are part of the public health systems serving the region. Tuition stipends for Iowa, South Dakota, and Nebraska scholars are available.

For more information, visit www.greatplainsleadership.org or contact Brandon Grimm at 402-561-7562 or blgrimm@unmc.edu. The deadline for applications is June 1, 2008.

Iowa Department of Public Health

Lucas State Office Building
321 E. 12th Street
Des Moines, IA 50319-0075
Phone: 515-281-7689
www.idph.state.ia.us

Questions or comments? Contact
focus.editor@idph.state.ia.us.