

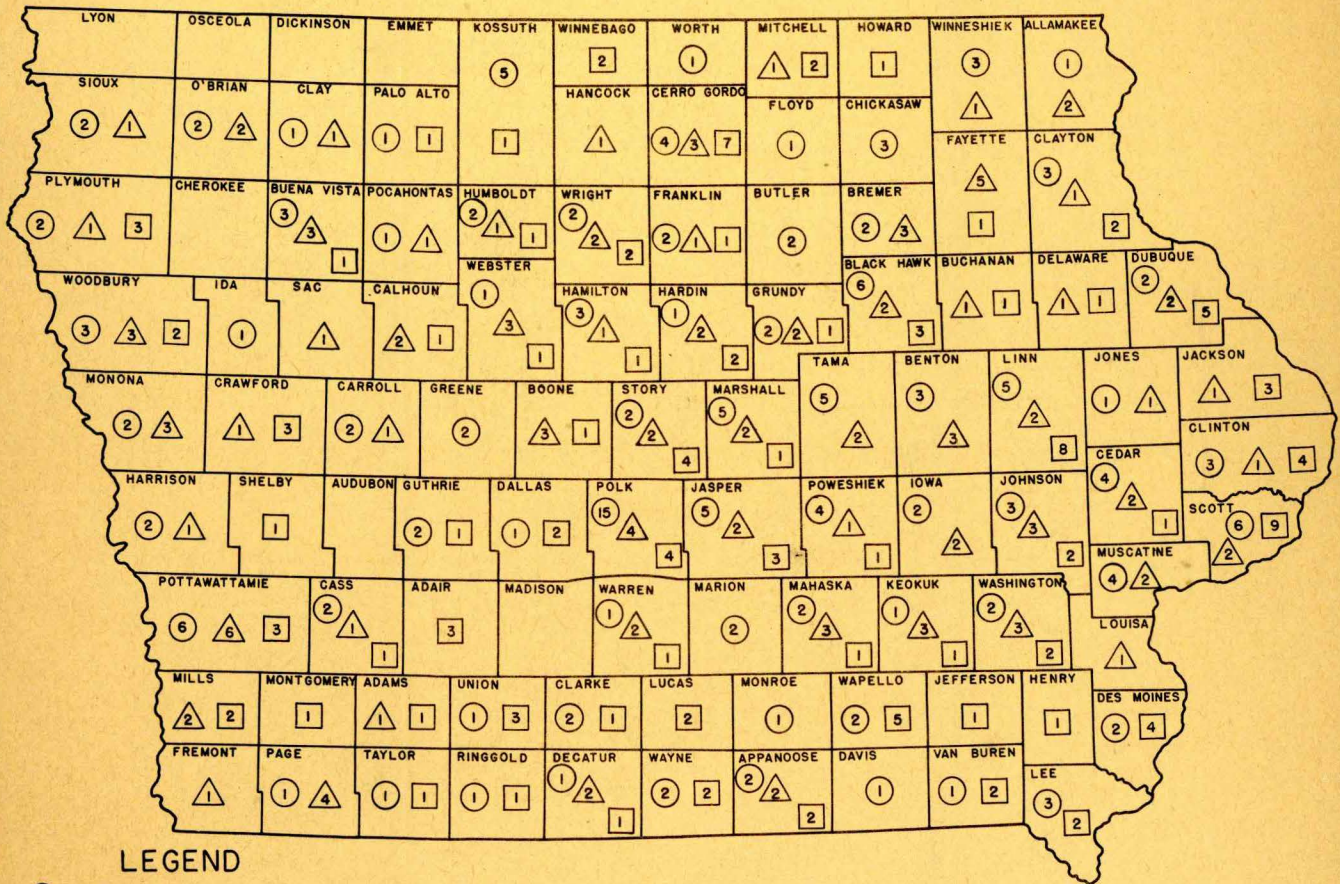


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# PLANNING NEWS

Vol. 2 N<sup>o</sup> 6 JUNE 1937

## ACCIDENTS RESULTING IN FATALITIES ON PUBLIC HIGHWAYS 1936



issued monthly by the Iowa State Planning Board  
Des Moines Iowa





# PLANNING NEWS

Vol. 2 - No. 6

Des Moines, Iowa

June 1937

## IOWA'S FATAL ACCIDENTS ANALYZED

State Planning Board Survey Studies Causes and  
Circumstances Back of 1936 Death Toll

Basic analysis of factors involved in fatal highway accidents in Iowa during 1936 has been completed under a research project undertaken last fall by the Iowa State Planning Board in cooperation with the State Motor Vehicle Department and the Works Progress Administration.

The purpose of the study is to determine more fully the role played by each factor involved in fatal automobile accidents, whether related to engineering, education or enforcement, as an aid in the establishment of more effective safeguards on the highways.

What is expected to be the most valuable result of the survey will be the information

obtained from cross-tabulation of accident factors in significant combinations. The basic data now completed for 1936 are to be subjected to this cross-tabulation.

For instance, the cross-tabulation is expected to show the relationship between age of the driver and kind of ac-

cident which occurred, between age and manner of driving, between age and physical or mental condition of the driver.

It also will show the correlation between types of vehicles involved in accidents, their operating condition, and such factors as type of accident, condition of road, visibility, etc.

Relationships will be sought between type of accident and physical or mental condition of driver, between traffic law violations and resultant police action and court action.

All possible combinations of any significance will be studied, breaking down as far as possible the stories of

Iowa's fatal accidents into combinations of details, with the hope thereby of casting new light upon actual causes of accidents.

The automobile in itself is incapable of inflicting either grievous bodily harm or damage to property. It becomes an instrument of destruction only

### COVER DESIGN

In connection with the survey of highway traffic accidents described in the accompanying article, a "spot" map has been prepared showing the location and type of each fatal accident in Iowa in 1936. The cover design of this issue of Iowa Planning News shows the location by counties of fatal accidents in Iowa last year, symbols indicating two major types of accidents, with all other types covered by a third symbol.



when under human guidance or control (or lack of control while in human hands). Every single movement of an automobile is motivated by impulses from the person behind the wheel.

Is it not logical, therefore, that the forces directly or indirectly acting upon the individual operating the motor vehicle be analyzed to determine the causes of accidents?

It can be argued that the individual is not personally responsible for a dangerous condition of the roadway, or for the existence of some other hazard. But there is no argument against the premise that how the individual operates how motor vehicle while facing these hazards is a matter under his control.

Accident data have been obtained from Motor Vehicle Department records, local police records, newspaper reports and other sources. The truth about what happens in an automobile accident is

Rear End . . . . .	17
Side Swiped . . . . .	22
Not Stated . . . . .	6
Vehicle Colliding with --	
Pedestrians . . . . .	155
Animals . . . . .	4
Fixed Objects . . . . .	35
Miscellaneous --	
No Collision* . . . . .	80
All Others . . . . .	3

\*The "No Collision" would include accidents in which drivers lost control over their cars, resulting in overturning in ditches, and similar situations.

#### Types of Vehicles

Types of vehicles involved in accidents also have considerable bearing on what happens on the highways. The following vehicle types were involved in fatal accidents during 1936:

Passenger Cars . . . . .	462
Light Trucks . . . . .	13
Heavy Trucks . . . . .	111

## DEATH RIDES THE HIGHWAY

not always easily ascertained due to excitement and other factors resulting in conflicting reports.

The Iowa State Planning Board presents herewith some of the basic information now compiled for fatal accidents in Iowa during the calendar year 1936.

During last year, 508 persons were killed in 454 accidents on the public highways of Iowa. In those same accidents, 550 other persons suffered injuries of varying degrees. Also in those same accidents 496 motor vehicles were damaged, many of them wrecked.

#### Types of Accidents

The types of accidents in which persons lost their lives on Iowa highways in 1936 were as follows:

Vehicle Colliding with Vehicle --	
On an Angle . . . . .	81
Head-on . . . . .	51

Note: Figures in the tables in this article refer either to number of fatal accidents, or to number of persons involved, as the case may be.

Busses . . . . .	5
Street Cars . . . . .	6
Railroad Trains . . . . .	40
Motorcycles . . . . .	9
Bicycles . . . . .	8
Animal-drawn Vehicles . . . . .	3
All Others . . . . .	6

#### Condition of Drivers

Condition of drivers in accidents is a very essential factor in determining causes of accidents, but at the same time is a very elusive one when it comes to ascertaining the truth. In the fatal accidents of 1936, the records obtained failed to show the condition of drivers in 283 accidents. In the rest, however, the following was ascertained:

Normal . . . . .	195
Asleep . . . . .	7
Had Been Drinking . . . . .	27
Physical Defects . . . . .	6
Confused by Traffic . . . . .	18
View Obstructed . . . . .	17
Blinded by Headlights . . . . .	21
Other Conditions . . . . .	89

Closely allied with the condition of



drivers in accidents is another factor designated as "improper driving." This factor, however, seems to have been less elusive and hence a better record was obtained. The following indicates types of improper driving noted in fatal accidents in 1936:

Speeding . . . . .	53
Reckless Driving . . . . .	15
On Wrong Side of Road . . . . .	49
Violated Right-of-way Rules . . . . .	9
Lost Control . . . . .	122
Cutting In . . . . .	5
Passing on Curve . . . . .	2
Passing on Hill . . . . .	5
Passing on Wrong Side . . . . .	1
Failure to Signal, Wrong Signal . . . . .	2
Failure to Stop at "Stop" Sign . . . . .	11
Car Loose Without Driver . . . . .	2
Hit-run Drivers . . . . .	18
Following Too Closely . . . . .	7

Others . . . . . 24  
No Information . . . . . 5  
\*These involved disregard for traffic signals (with one exception), crossing on a diagonal, crossing where there was no traffic signal, with the factors involved in 24 cases not ascertained.

Condition of Pedestrians  
Condition of pedestrians killed in accidents last year was recorded as follows:

Normal . . . . .	7
Had Been Drinking . . . . .	13
Attention Diverted . . . . .	25
Confused by Traffic . . . . .	23
View Obstructed . . . . .	1
Physical Defects . . . . .	2
Alleged Carelessness . . . . .	35
Other Conditions . . . . .	9
Not Stated . . . . .	56

Age of driver is often an important

## SOMEBODY WAS KILLED IN EVERY ONE OF THESE ACCIDENTS

Disregarded Officer or Signal . . . . .	27
Improper Parking . . . . .	4
Too Wide Right Turn . . . . .	2
Cut Corner on Left Turn . . . . .	1
Combinations of Above . . . . .	74
Other Improper Driving . . . . .	17
Not Stated . . . . .	82

### Pedestrian Fatalities

Pedestrians killed in traffic accidents often lose their lives because of carelessness or other disregard for traffic rules. What pedestrians who were killed in 1936 were doing forms another interesting phase of the causes of highway fatalities. They were noted as follows:

Crossing Intersections* . . . . .	36
Crossing Road Not at Intersection . . . . .	26
Playing, Skating, etc. in Roadway . . . . .	19
Walking in Roadway . . . . .	38
At Work in Roadway . . . . .	8
Coming out from Between Parked Cars . . . . .	8
Getting on or off Other Vehicle . . . . .	5

factor in safety on the highways. The age range of drivers in fatal accidents occurring in Iowa in 1936, including both sexes, was as follows:

0 to 13 . . . . .	3
14 to 15 . . . . .	6
16 to 19 . . . . .	46
20 to 25 . . . . .	123
26 to 34 . . . . .	102
35 to 44 . . . . .	109
45 to 54 . . . . .	67
55 to 64 . . . . .	37
65 and over . . . . .	27
Not Ascertainable . . . . .	135

Not Ascertainable as to Either

Sex or Age\* . . . . . 8

\*For example, hit-run drivers.

### Victim Age Groups

Another interesting - and sometimes pathetic - view of highway fatalities lies in the study of the ages of persons killed and injured. The following shows the age groups, both male and female, of both pedestrians and vehicle passengers



ACCIDENTS RESULTING IN FATALITIES  
BY DAYS OF MONTHS  
1936

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Sun	5	1	4	7	6	9	8	14	9	5	7	4	79
Mon	4	1	6	6	5	4	8	6	3	5	5	2	55
Tues	2	0	4	2	2	3	7	7	8	3	8	7	53
Wed	2	1	2	5	1	2	7	6	10	8	4	6	54
Thurs	10	4	4	3	6	1	1	10	5	14	9	4	71
Fri	6	1	2	4	6	4	9	10	2	7	6	5	62
Sat	0	2	6	9	6	8	3	8	14	8	6	10	80
Total	29	10	28	36	32	31	43	61	51	50	45	38	454

killed in accidents in Iowa in 1936:

0 to 4	11
5 to 14	48
15 to 24	92
25 to 64	269
65 and over	81
Not Ascertainable	7
Total Killed	508

The same story as regards those who were injured but lived, in the same accidents in which the above 508 lost their lives, follows:

0 to 4	11
5 to 14	39
15 to 24	144
25 to 64	124
65 and over	5
Not Ascertainable	227
Total Injured	550

The data compiled in the survey show the above information broken down into age groups by sex, and separately for pedestrians and passengers.

Considering rural vs. urban locations as factors in the traffic hazard picture, the following shows the comparison for 1936, with fatal accidents occurring as indicated:

In Cities and Towns	168 - 37%
In Open Country	286 - 63%

Physical Characteristics

Physical characteristics of the sites of accidents are believed to have much bearing on the hazards of the highways. Fatal accidents in 1936 occurred in the following types of locations:

At Intersections	111
On Straight-away	243
On Curves	27
On Sharp Turns	6
At Railroad Crossings	39
At Bridges or Overpasses	20
At Tunnels or Underpasses	1
On Hills	42
Combination of Above	43
Miscellaneous	8

Types of Roadway

Types of roadway coupled with condition of the surface are known factors back of many accidents. The following roadway types were noted in the fatal accidents of 1936:

On Dirt Road, Untreated Surface	32
On Gravel or Stone	88
On Pavement	320
Not Stated	14

Control Systems

Traffic control systems are not always a certain safeguard against accident, although their effectiveness in



warning motorists of danger and preventing accidents is above question. It was interesting to note that no fatal accidents occurred last year at railroad crossings where crossing gates were in operation. But other traffic control systems were in effect in the following fatal accidents:

Officer or Watchman on Duty . . . . .	2
Automatic Signal Working . . . . .	6
"Stop" Signs in Place . . . . .	20
Warning Signs: "Slow", etc. . . . .	46
Control Not Functioning . . . . .	1
Weather and Light	

Weather conditions always are a known factor in traffic hazards. Weather and light conditions in fatal accidents in 1936 were noted as follows:

Clear . . . . .	180
Cloudy . . . . .	28
Fog or Mist . . . . .	19
Raining . . . . .	16
Snowing . . . . .	11
Daylight . . . . .	200
Dusk or Semi-darkness . . . . .	34
Dark - Street Lights Burning . . . . .	2
Dark - Street Lights Out . . . . .	1
Dark - No Information on Lights . . . . .	202
Not Stated . . . . .	215

As indicated, figures given in these tables are for 1936 only. The accident survey will eventually include the same information over a period of five years, 1932 to 1936.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### New Land Use Reports

Two new reports have been added during the past few days to the series of published reports on urban land use in Iowa cities. The new volumes cover the cities of Marshalltown and Keokuk. These studies have been made by the Iowa State Planning Board under a Works Progress Administration project, in cooperation with local administrations or planning commissions as demonstrations of land use surveys preliminary to city planning and zoning activities by each municipality. Reports have now been published for Webster City, Sioux City, Muscatine, Burlington, Marshalltown and Keokuk. Copies for all but Webster City and Sioux City are available at 50¢ each. Address the Iowa State Planning Board, Des Moines.

#### NEW MEMBERS WELCOMED BY IOWA STATE PLANNING BOARD

The Iowa State Planning Board this month welcomed into its membership four new persons under the reorganization of personnel as provided by the act passed by the 47th General Assembly establishing the State Planning Board as an official branch of state government.

New members of the board are: Dr. F. J. Colby, Forest City, representative of the Iowa State Conservation Commission; Irving H. Knudson, Ellsworth, representative of the Iowa Highway Commission; Otto S. Muntz, Des Moines, chairman of the Greater Iowa Commission, and Edwin P. Chase, editor of the Atlantic News-Telegraph.

Members of the former board who were retained by reason of their office or continued by organization or Governor's appointment are: H. H. Kildee, Ames, Dean of Agriculture, Iowa State College; Chester A. Phillips, Iowa City, Dean of the College of Commerce, State University of Iowa; Dr. A. C. Trowbridge, Iowa City, State Geologist; Dr. Walter L. Bierring, Des Moines, State Commissioner of Health; Miss Agnes Samuelson, Des Moines, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, and George J. Keller, Des Moines, State Administrator, Works Progress Administration.

The new board held its first meeting June 23, and reelected Dean Kildee as chairman for his fourth consecutive year. He has been chairman since organization of the unofficial Iowa State Planning Board in the spring of 1934.

A. H. Wieters, sanitary engineer of the State Department of Health, was reelected secretary. R. H. Matson continues as director. Prof. P. H. Elwood, head of the Department of Landscape Architecture, Iowa State College, will continue as consultant for Iowa for the National Resources Committee.

Governor N. G. Kraschel, who has shown great interest in the work of the State Planning Board, addressed the meeting. He has since provided the first allotment of state funds for the board's use to supplement WPA aid.

\* \* \* \* \*



## SIX PROPOSALS FOR CHARITON BASIN

Area Planning Board Maps Program for Immediate Action;  
Asks State Aid to Get Projects Going

Six specific proposals for action have been submitted by the Chariton River Basin Planning Board to the Iowa State Planning Board, in the six-county area demonstration project being undertaken. The proposals were contained in resolutions adopted by the area organization early in June, and presented to the State Planning Board at its meeting June 23.

The proposals are:

1. That the Soil Conservation Service be requested to establish a watershed demonstrational area along the Chariton basin, with a program for soil and moisture conservation. The proposal also contemplates the assignment of a soil conservationist for each county and location of one or more experimental farms within the area.

2. That the Iowa Geological Survey make such examinations as are necessary to locate suitable natural deposits of agricultural and structural limestone necessary in the furtherance of soil and water conservation.

3. That the Agricultural Adjustment Administration be requested to include the Chariton basin demonstrational area in its 1937 aerial mapping program.

4. That the Resettlement Administration be requested to establish a demonstration project within the area, and that facilities of the standard loan program be extended.

5. That the Iowa Agricultural Extension Service be requested to place a home demonstration agent in each county in the area.

6. That the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Iowa Agricultural Experiment Station and the Iowa Agricultural Extension Service be requested to undertake a soil survey and examination in Lucas county.

Previous to the adoption of these project proposals, there came from the

State Department of Health an offer to establish a district public health program in this area, with the services of a sanitary engineer and a public health nurse provided through funds to be obtained by the Department of Health from federal sources.

The proposal is being discussed with representatives of the six counties, and if approved by the counties will probably be inaugurated at once.

Announcement of the health program came simultaneously with the release of a report by the Iowa State Planning Board containing results of a public health resources survey made in this and other sections of the state under a WPA project.

Further organization activities have been reported by Sam V. Carpenter, chairman of the basin planning board. Committee personnel is being selected for various study projects which are now contemplated and expected to get under way during the coming months.

Temporary offices for the Chariton River Basin Planning Board are being established in the office of the Association of Commerce at Centerville.

\* \* \* \* \*

An "Orchid" from The Register

"To the members of the first official state planning body, The Register wishes complete success. They and the state administration will be rendering invaluable service to Iowa by sticking to their determination to be a fact-finding and not a policy-determining body, by carefully refraining from short-sighted political consideration at the cost of reducing honestly acquired prestige, and finally, by being everlastingly sensitive to the wish for better communities and better lives on the part of the people of Iowa themselves."--Excerpt from editorial in the Des Moines Sunday Register, June 27.

\* \* \* \* \*



of trees.

2. Suggestions have been made for the improvement of the city park, and for the improvement and cleaning up of the east bank of the Rock River which divides the city.

3. Suggestions and recommendations have been made pertaining to the removal of nuisances and unsightly appearances within the corporate limits.

4. Recommendations have been made with reference to pruning and planting of trees.

5. At present there is under consideration the location of a locally owned golf course.

#### Entire County Interested

Rock Rapids is the county seat and central trading point of Lyon county. It has about 2,300 inhabitants. During each year, numerous meetings and conventions are held here, as well as the Lyon County Fair. The entire county with its population of approximately 15,000 has an interest in Rock Rapids to the extent that the people of the county frequently visit their county seat both for business and pleasure.

It is true that every city and town faces problems of planning similar to those of Rock Rapids, and it occurs to this writer that all cities and towns can well afford to spend more time on the proposition of planning for the future. At least, it does not interfere with progress to have some bird's-eye view of what you are going to do with reference to definite improvements of a public nature which, no doubt, are going to come at some time in the future.

#### Community Assets

Publicly owned projects and others sponsored by the community, such as parks, playgrounds, swimming pools, band pavilions, monuments, boulevards, zoning, parking facilities, abatement of nuisances, public meeting places, are all assets to a community that have their value and place. These are things that make better cities and towns and give those communities their permanent and enduring values. They should be properly

planned. It is such as these that make for a better and more abundant life for the people who inhabit the towns and the surrounding communities.

Planning in Rock Rapids as a means for civic improvement is meeting with approval on the part of our citizens. The city council and mayor are cooperating with the Committee in this movement, and have made available the services of the city engineer for any technical engineering services or advice. We realize that we are new in this program of planning, but we are looking forward to better things for Rock Rapids.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### EDITORIAL

There are undoubtedly many cities and counties which do not feel the need for a planning program.

The citizens and public officers of some particular community may think that they possess all the finest that a community needs. They have beautiful parks, wide streets, the best soil in the world, no erosion problems, no sociological, health or housing problems.

And hence, they conclude, "we do not need a planning program."

But without planning, what assurance have they that they can keep and pass on to their children those valuable assets of which they now boast?

What do they know of the future? How are they protecting their resources against exploitation and depletion? What do they know about possible shifts in their population, or the possibility of a new type of population coming in with some new industry? How are they looking ahead to meet future problems?

It would seem that a good look at some other area which, too, once was rich in natural resources and community assets, but because of the lack of forethought and planning is now struggling to save what little remains of its former wealth, would awaken some communities to their own need for planning.

\* \* \* \* \*



## IMPRESSIVE CONFERENCES HELD

June Discussion Meetings Give Great Impetus to Planning Movement Throughout North Iowa

"The cause of conservation and planning in North Iowa moved forward a long stride by virtue of this conference."

Thus did Editor W. Earl Hall express his opinion of the Northeast Iowa Conference on Planning held in Mason City, June 25, in an editorial appearing in the Mason City Globe-Gazette the following day. He stated further:

"Through the entire conference was this one fundamental thread:

"Natural resources are given to man for his use, not for his destruction."

Quotes Father Wolfe

Quoting from the talk made by the Right Rev. Monsignor J.M. Wolfe, Chairman of the Dubuque City Planning Commission, Mr. Hall writes:

"Monsignor Wolfe developed this idea in a conspicuously effective way. The coming generations have the same claim upon nature that we have. There's a duty upon us to leave the world as good if not a little better than we found it!"

Referring to the talk by Prof. P. H. Elwood, National Resources Committee consultant for Iowa, Mr. Hall wrote:

Purpose of Planning

"And planning, as Prof. Elwood so impressively pointed out, is interpreting and applying this principle in a practical commonsense way."

Two such conferences were held during June. The one at Mason City was sponsored jointly by the city administration and the Iowa Conference on Planning. The latter organization was the sponsor of a Northwest Iowa Planning Institute, held just a week earlier, at Gull Point State Park on West Okoboji Lake.

In succeeding issues of Iowa Planning News will appear more detailed reports of talks made at both these conferences.

Significant of the Mason City pro-

gram were the talks made by persons not associated with state or federal governmental organization, and the discussions which followed these talks. Participating were Father Wolfe, Mayor Ralph B. Slippy of Waterloo, Dr. I. H. Hart, president of the Cedar Falls Chamber of Commerce; Mr. Robert E. Robertson, Cerro Gordo County engineer; Editor Hall, who is president of the Iowa State Safety Council, and Dwight G. McCarty of Emmetsburg, well known north Iowa lawyer and authority on legal phases of planning.

Four Radio Programs

One particularly notable contribution to the success of the Mason City conference was the time given on behalf of the conference by Radio Station KGLO, owned and operated by the Globe-Gazette. Daily mention of the conference was made over the air.

Four special radio programs were devoted to the conference during eight days. First was the address of Mayor Leo A. Davey of Mason City, who extended his personal and official invitation to the people of North Iowa to attend. Next came a discussion of the conference program by Mayor A. B. Phillips of Clear Lake, who served as chairman of the afternoon program. This was followed by an explanation of the purposes of the six planning conferences which have been held in Iowa during the past 15 months, presented the night before by Floyd H. Corliss, field secretary of the Iowa State Planning Board. Finally, on the evening of the conference day there was presented a 15-minute interview with Prof. Elwood conducted by Mr. Herbert T. Barclay, city manager of Mason City.

Both the June planning conferences contributed much toward the achievement of the objective of all educational efforts of local and state planning



groups --- to stimulate thought which will in turn produce action for the adoption of planning in each community, and county.

Through planning each town and county may find the means for conserving natural and physical resources, for the solution of long-standing social and economic problems, and for making each of these communities better places in which to live.

These and other conferences have added new converts to the school of thought that recognizes value and use in planning for the future welfare of a nation and a people.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### FOUR IOWA RIVERS ADDED TO FLOOD CONTROL BILL

Under provisions of a bill (HR-7646) introduced in Congress late in June, four additional Iowa river basins would become eligible for further soil erosion and flood control study by the Corps of Engineers and the Soil Conservation Service.

The proposed studies would be undertaken under authority of the Omnibus Flood Control Act of 1936. Under the original act, only the Weldon and Fabius rivers in Iowa were eligible for study. In the event of passage of the present bill, eligibility would be extended to include the Chariton, Floyd, Iowa-Cedar and Little Sioux rivers.

Approximately 18,000 square miles of Iowa river drainage basin area would thus be covered in these studies. Previous reports on these streams made by the Corps of Engineers covered only four phases, -- flood control, navigation, irrigation and water power --- without giving sufficient emphasis to the soil conservation aspects of water control.

The new surveys will, if undertaken, remedy this omission and will result in more comprehensive planning for flood control and soil conservation than has heretofore been possible.

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#### CHARITON BASIN HEALTH REPORT ISSUED

Public health resources of the six counties of the Chariton River Basin in Iowa are summarized in a partial and preliminary report of a state-wide survey made by the Iowa State Planning Board in cooperation with the State Department of Health. The six counties are Appanoose, Clarke, Decatur, Lucas, Monroe and Wayne.

"Looming large in the balanced development of any region is the development of an adequate program for public health," it is stated in the foreword to this report. "Each year sees unhappiness, wretchedness, economic loss and death resulting from disease, accident and ignorance which could have been prevented by an adequate public health program.

"To show the people of the six counties comprising the Chariton River Basin in Iowa just what health conditions are in this region, to show the reflection of this condition in the present public health program, and to indicate some practical steps which may be undertaken now to improve the situation are the purposes of this report."

The state-wide survey was nearly completed in June. A report is to be prepared covering the entire state in much the same manner as the six-county report. Copies of the Chariton Basin report have been prepared for free distribution within the six counties above enumerated. The price elsewhere will be 25¢ per copy. Address the Iowa State Planning Board, Des Moines.

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#### Current Issue Delayed

This issue of Iowa Planning News has been unavoidably delayed in publication because of the belated arrival of paper from the manufacturer. A strike was the cause of the delay in shipment, it was stated. It is expected that the July number will appear at the usual time. We beg the forbearance of our readers.

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# I O W A   P L A N N I N G   N E W S

Edited & Published by the  
Iowa State Planning Board Staff  
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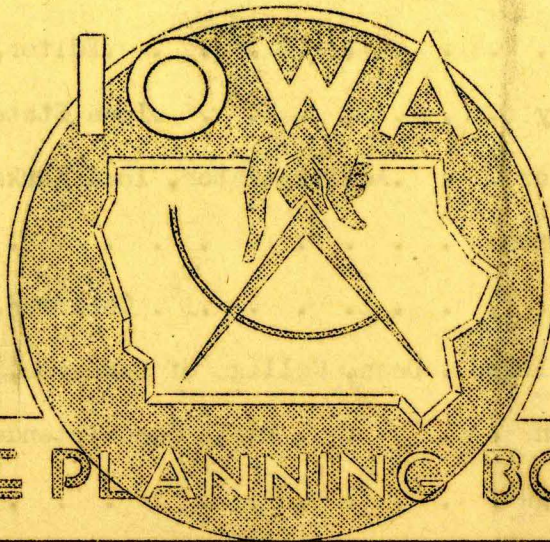
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Project Operation

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