

september 2024

ecia spotlight



See more of Cascade on pages 4 & 5

Cascade Planning for Revitalization



PEI Awarded \$40K DRA Grant

Prosperity Eastern Iowa (PEI), a partnership of regional economic development stakeholders recently secured a \$40,000 DRA Core grant. Katie Steffensmeier, coordinator for Prosperity Eastern Iowa and ECIA's Community Outreach and Economic Development Coordinator accepted the award on behalf of PEI at the grant award ceremony held on August 27th.

With the announcement of the Field of Dreams expansion and new baseball stadium in Dyersville, communities are eager to improve their marketing efforts, local amenities, parks, facilities, and infrastructure through collaboration and support of the Field of Dreams project. The marketing efforts included Dubuque, Delaware, Jackson and Jones Counties. In Phase I, which was just completed in March of 2023, PEI inventoried and assessed the current assets throughout the region and determined the gaps and opportunities creating the "Field of Opportunities" database for the region and an interactive map. Phase II brought to life the regional marketing efforts moving from the planning phase to implementation. Several projects that were identified as priorities in the first phase of this project were incorporated into this plan bringing further excitement of the Field of Dreams expansion, encouraged tourists to remain in the region to visit the smaller communities. This included regional marketing inserts in the Travel Dubuque guide, special features on their website, and a social media campaign. Selfie stands and an illustrated map of the region were also part of this grant.

The latest Core grant, also in partnership with Travel Dubuque, will continue the momentum and address further needs of the counties. Video is engaging and becoming more popular as more people look to social media for their travel plans and attracting them to our small and rural communities. This form of marketing can also be very expensive. This grant will create a regional marketing effort that captures short form vertical video to be used in TikToks, Instagram reels and beyond as a means of marketing the area as a destination. There will also be a brochure-size guide for each county, additional advertising and regional distribution of the marketing materials. This will all be centered around the excitement of the Field of Dreams expansion and will encourage tourists to remain in the region to visit the smaller communities and more rural areas experiencing more of Eastern Iowa.

Derek Lumsden, PEI President and Jones County Economic Development Executive Director said, "This is a huge win for our region. Partnerships among our entities are critically important and developing these marketing videos will help us entice people to visit here to have the times of their lives." Planning meetings with key stakeholders will begin in October.

PEI offers a wide range of programs, community training and business support services to start and grow businesses and to recruit and retain workforce. Additionally, there is a strong private-sector financial community and a solid network of economic development agencies that offer numerous choices and opportunities for growing and expanding businesses and creating entrepreneurs. PEI supports the communities by providing resources and developing initiatives to encourage a strong economic base and continued growth.

To check out the Travel Dubuque guide featuring the counties, please visit <https://bit.ly/3TaAoIV>.



Upcoming USDA Trainings

Procurement 101

This free training will explain the importance of cities having a procurement policy. Liz Kemp, ECIA's Rehab Specialist, will discuss what procurement policies consist of, why to have one, and when to use it.

There will be two sessions to choose from:

Oct. 9 - 11:45 am-1:00pm (lunch served at 11:45 am, training starts at 12:00 pm)

Oct. 24 - 5:15-6:30 pm (dinner served at 5:15 pm training starts at 5:30 pm)

Both sessions will be in person at ECIA and available via Zoom.

Watch your inbox for registration information and link.

Unlocking the Power of Community Data: Visualizing and Sharing Your Local Data

This free, three-part, hybrid workshop will help members of county and community agencies or nonprofit organizations, as well as to ISU extension staff, learn how to better utilize local data for informed decision-making as a step to strengthen community resilience and quality of life.

The workshop will be offered in three sessions:

Oct. 1 - Zoom session, 1:30-3:30 pm

Oct. 9 - In-person session at the ISU Extension and Outreach Dubuque County Office, 9:00 am-4:00 pm

Oct. 17 - Zoom session, 2:00-4:00 pm

Those who attend all three parts of the workshop will receive a certificate of completion. Advanced registration is required and is limited to 25 participants. To learn more and to register, visit the ISU Extension and Outreach Indicators Program [website](#).



Maria Elgin
36 years



Carl Reimer
27 years



Holly McPherson
22 years



Jennifer Walker
15 years



Mark Jobgen
7 years



Tricia Wagner
7 years



Liz Kemp
7 years



Ben Cooper
2 years



Mindy Meyers
August 26



Mike Gomoll
August 26

ECIA Anniversaries & New Hires in August/September

Congratulations to the above staff who recently celebrated work anniversaries or are new to ECIA. Your dedication and hard work in and for the ECIA region are truly appreciated.

Cascade Planning for Rev



Cascade Communications staff at 2023 National Night Out

CEDC Awarded Funding to Assist with Downtown Revitalization Efforts - The Cascade Economic Development Corporation (CEDC) was awarded a \$5,000 Ripple Effect grant from Aureon and a \$28,000 Core Grant by the Dubuque Racing Association (DRA) to help develop and implement a downtown beautification plan.

In partnership with Cascade Communications, the CEDC is working to enhance the downtown experience by providing free Wi-Fi throughout the downtown, city park, and Legion Ballfield Park to further attract visitors and residents to the downtown area. The enhanced Wi-Fi system will offer flexibility for community events, allowing street vendors to enjoy secure connections for their point-of-sale operations while residents and visitors can stay connected throughout the entire downtown and park areas.

The CEDC president Brad Ludwig indicated, "We are very grateful to Cascade Communications for making this important amenity available to the community and visitors. Cascade Communications has absorbed a lot of these costs, and we look forward to the service expanding to the downtown."

In 2022, the CEDC and City of Cascade invited the Iowa Economic Development Authority to complete a down-

italization



Downtown Cascade

town assessment. The report highlighted the downtown area's potential for revitalization, noting its compact size, walkable layout, and recent positive developments. The CEDC is acting on these recommendations by developing a beautification and revitalization Master Plan that incorporates the ideas and desires of the community. Ludwig said, "We are very grateful for the DRA as without their assistance we would be unable to complete this very important plan to move Cascade's downtown forward."

A key component of the plan is to make downtown Cascade more pedestrian-friendly and inviting. This includes creating shaded areas and ensuring the overall walkability of the district. By making the downtown more appealing, the CEDC hopes to attract not only local residents but also the many tourists who visit nearby attractions such as the Field of Dreams.

The Ripple Effect grant and DRA grant were written by ECIA staff and will help the CEDC move forward with its revitalization plans and create a plan for a more vibrant and welcoming downtown for the Cascade community.

Coaching Update

ECIA staff have been involved in the Keep Iowa Beautiful (KIB) Hometown Pride (HP) program since 2017, but increased efforts in 2021 when this state organization approached ECIA to take on more communities. Since then, seven staff have been coaching 31 communities. The KIB HP program has been a win/win for staff and the communities because it provides a coach to work side-by-side with community champions to help move projects along in a variety of ways.

The goal of the KIB HP program is to teach the community champions project management, from developing a list of their dreams, to prioritizing them, and teaching the strategies to see projects through to fruition. Coaches provide grant writing assistance for the communities, and as grants are becoming increasingly scarce and more competitive, coaches are dedicated to helping guide KIB HP fund-raising efforts. Projects are both large and small, and in some cases events that are completely funded by volunteer time and local donations, like Mechanicsville's first time Party in the Park event where much of the town showed up! Some KIB HP projects are just beginning while others will soon be celebrated with a ribbon cutting ceremony upon their successful completion. Grants written and awarded in FY2024 for KIB HP projects totaled \$359,428.

ECIA Region KIB HP Communities:

Cedar County: Cedar County Economic Development Co., Stanwood, Tipton, Mechanicsville, West Branch; **Delaware County:** Colesburg, Delaware, Delhi, Dundee, Earlville, Edgewood, Greeley, Hopkinton, Manchester, Masonville, Ryan; **Dubuque County:** Asbury, Holy Cross, Luxemburg, New Vienna, Peosta, Rickardsville, Sageville, Worthington; **Jackson County:** Andrew, Baldwin, LaMotte, Maquoketa, Miles, Preston, Sabula

Phase 1 Completed for Delaware Park

During the annual community picnic September 8, the City of Delaware celebrated a number of projects that have helped refresh their park.

Several organizations and grants contributed to the projects. Delta Dental of Iowa, Foundation for the Future of Delaware County, Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative, the McDonough Foundation, the McElroy Trust, Outrun the Rays, and other private donors contributed to achieving the fundraising goals.

The City also thanked volunteers, park committee members and other city officials who made the projects possible. "We want to take this opportunity to thank the people who helped us with these projects. We've had so many grants and we are so appreciative," Barb Ries, council member and member of the city's park board, said prior to the ribbon being cut.

The celebration marked the end of the first phase of park updates, a process that was started two years ago by Delaware's KIB HP committee. The headliner was a second new set of ADA-compliant Mommy & Me swings and rubber mulch. There were several other enhancements to the park: a pair of Trellis swings; improvement of the original swing set; new sand at the playground; repainting the merry-go-round; adding a little free library; and a water bottle filling station/drinking fountain.

Grants have historically been a big part of the city's park, as it was a grant 19 years ago that allowed them to install the current playground.

Hopes for the next phase include a large pine tree that can be decorated for Christmas, new picnic tables for the shelter which were recently grant funded, and possibly a new shelter itself.



Delaware Hometown Pride Committee

New Pickleball Courts Celebrated

On July 27th stakeholders dedicated a project that's been a year and a half in the making: two new pickleball courts at Silver Lake Park in Delhi. The event was held in conjunction with the community's annual Delhi Daze event, where last year, the project was publicly launched as a Delhi KIB HP project.

"People come in and ask, 'When can we play?' They are so excited that there will be pickleball in Delhi," Nancy Preussner, owner of Roast and Toast in Delhi and KIB HP committee member, said leading up to the dedication.

The idea came about during a KIB HP meeting in early 2023 on the heels of a community survey where pickleball was mentioned many times. The Hometown Pride program is a five-year commitment and provides a community coach to work with volunteers to help realize projects and events. From that point on, the committee tenaciously pursued the project through fundraising and grants, securing private donations totaling \$10,563, scoring a Rural Enrichment grant of \$20,000 and a donation from a local pickleball enthusiast in the same amount in 2023. The McElroy Trust came in at \$7,500 and the Foundation for the Future of Delaware County granted \$1,250. When nearly all the money was raised, the group worked together to obtain project quotes and schedule the work.



Delhi Hometown Pride committee and stakeholders

"The conservation board and staff were great project partners. They got rid of the old sand volleyball court, brought in all the dirt for underneath the courts, and are doing the landscaping and got benches for inside the courts," Pam Overman, KIB HP committee member, said.

Worthington Fall Event

The City of Worthington Hometown Pride will be celebrating Fall with their 2nd Annual Harvest Fest on October 6th at 11am in Veteran's Square Park. 2023 marked their first Harvest Fest which launched a scarecrow creation contest that was such a hit, it is returning this year along with a chili cookoff, popcorn, prize giveaways, and a tailgate for the NFL game! All proceeds will go towards future KIB HP community projects.

Earlville Receives Funds

Earlville KIB HP volunteers and the Earlville Community Club partnered with the City of Earlville and were recently awarded \$2,000 for street enhancements and signage from the Dyersville Community Foundation. Funds will go towards improving signage around Earlville, and welcoming banners with information about Earlville will be added to the light poles in the downtown area.



McDonough Foundation Awards

ECIA is grateful to the McDonough Foundation for supporting the following KIB HP activities:

City of Hopkinton Ballfield Fencing - \$2,500

Delaware County Historical Society Museum Cataloging Project- \$2,500

City of Delaware Park Improvements - \$2,000

Green Space Gets a Boost

The City of Maquoketa was awarded a \$30,000 Dubuque Racing Association (DRA) Core grant for the green space redevelopment project on Main Street in downtown Maquoketa. A permanent stage and restroom facility with multiple other amenities will fill the space that was destroyed by fire in 2008. The total project cost is an estimated \$1,450,000, and the Maquoketa Betterment Corporation & Hometown Pride Committee continues to fundraise as they near this goal.



Green space rendering

Josh Boldt, City Manager commented, "The community is extremely pleased with DRA's support. In 2023, the DRA also supported the project at \$25,000 which led to architectural renderings to help the Maquoketa Betterment Corporation & Hometown Pride to fundraise."

IowACE Seeking to Grow Membership

Join the City of Dubuque Housing Inspectors who have recently signed on with The Iowa Association of Code Enforcement (IowACE). IowACE is actively seeking to grow its membership throughout the State and is focused on building better working relationships between jurisdictions to facilitate more robust code enforcement programs throughout the state of Iowa.

IowACE welcomes all individuals to join who are involved in any municipal code enforcement. While our current membership heavily leans towards individuals that enforce the International Property Maintenance Code, we are actively seeking members from other areas of code enforcement, such as:

- Animal Control Officers/staff
- Zoning Enforcement Officers/staff
- Law Enforcement Officers/staff
- Fire Code Enforcement Officers/staff
- Health/Safety Code Enforcement Officers/staff
- Miscellaneous staff involved in code enforcement

Membership is \$70.00 per year and includes membership to the American Association of Code Enforcement.

IowACE is holding their annual convention, open to members and non-members: November 7, 2024 from 7:15 AM - 4:00 PM thru November 8, 2024 from 7:15 AM - 12:00 PM. Location: The Hotel at Kirkwood Center, 7725 Kirkwood Blvd, Cedar Rapids, IA 52404.

For more details and registrations visit or click: <https://iowace.starchapter.com/>

Questions can be directed to Lucas Gonyier, City of Dubuque Inspector, Lgonyier@cityofdubuque.org

East Central Intergovernmental Association

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