

january 2024

# ecia spotlight



Kelley Deutmeyer led ECIA from 2001 to January, 2024 (From left to right: Chandra Ravada, ECIA Director of Transportation, Planning and Transit Services; Peter Buschman, Delaware County Supervisor; and Kelley Deutmeyer, ECIA Executive Director)

## Deutmeyer Retires After 22 Years







Front left to right: Sherri Sigwarth (Mayor Balltown), Megan Schmitt (Mayor Centralia), Jim Adams (Mayor Asbury), Ann McDonough (County Supervisor), Brian Maiers (Mayor Holy Cross). Back left to right: Kevin Schmitt (Mayor Sageville), Harley Pothoff (County Supervisor), Wayne Kenniker (County Supervisor), Jay Hefel (Mayor Farley), Roger Langel (Mayor New Vienna), Sandy Gassman (Mayor Epworth), Steve Knepper (Mayor Cascade), Jason White (Greater Dubuque Dev Corp). Not Shown: Ed Raber (County Staff)

## Dubuque County Mayors Unite

ECIA coordinates regular meetings for mayors in each county within our region to encourage idea sharing. Mayors come together to support each other in their struggles, celebrate successes, tackle legislative topics, learn about project and funding opportunities, and to enjoy each other's company. County Supervisors, staff, and other special guests including representatives from the State frequently join the meetings to partake in the open dialogue.

Cities take turns hosting the meetings and selecting local restaurants to serve dinner at the beginning of every meeting. At the close of the recent Dubuque County Mayors meeting held at the Meadows Golf Club in Asbury, attendees decided to take a group photo to document the evening and their growing comradery.

## \$1.1 MM ICAAP Application Approved

The City of Dubuque submitted an Iowa Clean Air Attainment Program (ICAAP) application for \$1.1 million to complete phase II of their STREETS project. IADOT staff recommended the application to the IADOT Commission for ICAAP funding, and the Commission officially approved the recommended project at their January 11th meeting.

According to Chandra Ravada, ECIA Director of Transportation, Planning, and Transit Services, "This funding will help us to implement the STREETS project for all intersections within the city and create a smart traffic signal system designed to reduce congestion on area roadways that will provide sound information to stakeholders and serve as a framework for the deployment of similar systems in small urban areas with populations under 100,000."





# Underground Storage Tanks - Know Before You Own

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, there are over 542,000 underground storage tanks (USTs) nationwide that store petroleum or hazardous substances. With age, a tank may leak and contaminate soil, groundwater, and air if left untreated. Contamination of groundwater may lead to contamination of drinking water. These toxins can also lead to potential fire and explosive hazards, cause long term health effects, and be costly to remove and cleanup in the event of leak. Gas stations may be the most commonly thought of site for USTs. However, USTs can be found on various properties especially if the property has been developed for over fifty years. Old sites may have heating oil tanks which can also be costly and potentially dangerous for humans if not maintained properly or closed and removed if no longer in use.

Does the site you are about to acquire contain a tank? Is it regulated? Does the property owner have UST insurance? Is the tank being operated and/or in use any longer?

It is important to ask these questions and understand the answers to each before acquiring a property that has a UST. Why? Once you own it you may be liable and possibly even responsible for cleanup and removal of the tank. In Iowa there may be funding available to close a tank out for the tank owner/operator if certain requirements are met. If you acquire and don't ensure the requirements are met, the funding may vanish, and you may be on the hook for paying for the removal of an old tank that is no longer in use. Best practice: Contact an environmental professional before you own a site that may contain an underground storage tank.

For more information on UST: <https://www.epa.gov/ust> and <https://www.iowadnr.gov/Environmental-Protection/Land-Quality/Underground-Storage-Tanks>.

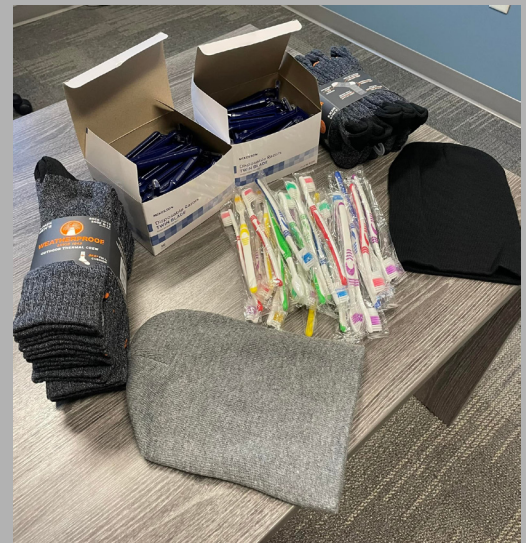


## 2023 Care & Share a Success

Community Solutions of Eastern Iowa (CSEI) held their annual Care & Share event during the month of November recognizing Homelessness Awareness Month. The event gathers high need items for street outreach (for those living outside) and for those who have been recently housed in a CSEI program.

In its first year (2022), CSEI offered four collection sites receiving much-needed supplies including gloves, sleeping bags, warm socks, knit hats, cleaning supplies, backpacks, hygiene items, and towels/linens. In addition, the month-long event raised cash donations of more than \$7,000.

Only a year later in 2023, the Care & Share program grew its efforts, offering 17 collection sites and creating a QR code for cash donations via Go Fund Me, raising more than \$58,000.





# Deutmeyer Retires After



Kelley, early 80s as an intern



With Bill Baum at ECIA's 30th, 2004



Asbury Meadows groundbreaking, 2005



Washington



Christmas banquet, 2001



Being interviewed for launch of Prosperity Eastern Iowa, 2005



ECIA construction, 2008



WLN Women of Achievement

In 2001, Kelley Deutmeyer returned to ECIA, to the organization where she worked from 1984 to 1992 as an account clerk, to take the Housing Supervisor position. In 2002, after Bill Baum, who hired her in '84, took a job with the City of Dubuque, she became ECIA's longest running Executive Director. She has spent a total of 30 years of her life with ECIA; 22 of those years, growing the organization with new programs, services, and of course, staff.

The following are thoughts from community leaders on a couple of the signature projects Kelley most recently executed during her 20+ years at ECIA that were part of a 2022 Iowa League of Cities Hall of Fame nomination:

"As a member of the ECIA Executive Committee and Council, I have had the opportunity to work with Kelley on a regular basis. One such project was the pocket neighborhood in Maquoketa. Every county and city in our area is experiencing a housing shortage, especially affordable housing. Kelley had researched the pocket neighborhood concept for many years, which is a cluster of smaller homes with common amenities close to employment, schools, parks, hospital, grocery and other essential services. Knowing the long-range benefit of the project, Kelley successfully worked with the City to provide the needed infrastructure to a property the County had received on a tax sale. She negotiated a land purchase agreement with the Supervisors and she and her staff facilitated the planning, grant writing, down payment assistance, and construction of 10 single family affordable workforce homes. Through the pandemic and the derecho, she persevered through it all and all 10 homes have been constructed. Thanks to Kelley's determination and drive, the city now has ten new homeowners and taxpayers in a modern neighborhood." John J. Willey, Chairman, Jackson County Board of Supervisors.

"Kelley works closely with local governments, from the ground up. Through her leadership at ECIA, Kelley has been involved with community innovation, planning, housing, transportation and almost every aspect of local government that connects our services to our residents. Working with Kelley on the Regional Transit Authority building project, I saw Kelley's commitment and thorough knowledge of local, state and federal programs involved with the project. Kelley was instrumental in bringing all the parties to the table, understood how to navigate the many "bumps along the way", to assure project completion. Kelley is always an advocate for local government. She works to promote our communities, encouraging local officials not only to make the best of their community, but to BE THE BEST in their community. She goes out of her way to find opportunities to assist our communities, not just through project planning and funding. More importantly, Kelley reaches out to leaders within our community,



# 22 Years



D.C., 2012



Kelley speaking at Dubuque's Intermodal groundbreaking, 2014



ement, 2011



At the Capitol for Parks to People, 2014



Halloween, 2019



Pocket neighborhood ribbon cutting, 2022

encouraging cooperation, training, and partnerships. Kelley regularly brings together municipal, county, state, federal capacity, assuring that our communities have the opportunity to be heard, and to thrive!" Linda Gaul, Earlville City Clerk.

During the 'Hall of Fame' nomination process, the ECIA team had this to say about Kelley: "resourceful and creative... tenacious... charismatic...has it together all the time...gets things done then puts it away and starts on the next...someone to aspire to...tough...kind...intelligent...genuine...forward-thinking... amazing... door is always open... family-oriented... very interested in staff as people... caring... passionate... motivating... motivated... inspirational... energizer bunny... hardworking... dedicated... supportive... enthusiastic... outside the box thinker... good listener... brave... savvy... insightful... appreciative... positive...directs effectively... progressive... continuously evolving... thoughtful... considerate... love her energy!"

Below is a list of service and project awards Kelley received during her tenure:

2008 – Kelley received a Governor's Volunteer Award for assisting the Community Development Division in developing a green framework that will guide the resources of the division in helping Iowa communities become more sustainable.

2011 – Kelley received the Women's Leadership Network (WLN) Women of Achievement award.

2012 – Kelley, along with 14 other Executive Directors representing the National Association of Development Organizations, was invited to participate in a forum on Building Blocks for Economic Development and Job Growth in Washington DC, meeting with key White House senior staff.

2021, 2022, and 2023(2) – The Maquoketa pocket neighborhood project received the NADO Impact award, the HousingIowa Single-Family Housing Development award, the Iowa Council of Governments Innovative Project award, and the NAHRO Award of Merit. Kelley spearheaded and led the efforts to fund and construct 10 single family affordable workforce homes.

Congratulations, Kelley! Enjoy this next phase of your life.

# New Program Announced by IEDA

The Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) Program is a federally funded program designed to assist states, local governments, and tribes in implementing strategies to reduce energy use and carbon emissions and to improve energy efficiency.

The purpose of the EECBG program is to support:

- Building energy assessments or audits and upgrades
- Upgrading wastewater or water supply facilities for energy efficiency
- Replacing traffic signals and streetlights to improve energy efficiency
- Demonstrating innovative renewable energy project deployment

There are two separate funds:

The Community Fund has a total of \$1.2 million available for competitive grant awards to eligible Iowa local governments for community-driven energy efficiency retrofit projects. Project awards may range from \$50,000-\$300,000. A 10% cost share is recommended for a competitive application.

The Innovation Fund has a total of \$600,000 available for competitive grant awards ranging from \$50,000 up to \$600,000. Eligible project types include very innovative energy efficiency and very innovative renewable energy demonstration projects in Iowa. A 50% cost share is required.

Application Deadline: March 18, 2024

Project Completion: June 30, 2026

For more details visit: <https://www.iowaeda.com/iowa-energy-office/energy-block-grant/>, and contact Amanda Dupont [adupont@ecia.org](mailto:adupont@ecia.org) / 563.690.5761 at ECIA for more information and assistance with your application. The cost to write the grant is \$2,000.

## EIRHC Awarded Over \$500,000

The Iowa Finance Authority (IFA) Board of Directors announced the award of a total of more than \$11.2 million in grants to 26 Local Housing Trust Funds to support local housing initiatives. The grant awards are made available through the Local Housing Trust Fund program and are expected to assist 2,824 families supporting a range of initiatives aimed at developing or preserving housing for low-income households across the spectrum of housing needs. This includes the development and preservation of housing, infrastructure development, transitional housing, assistance for homeless individuals, rental assistance, homeownership support, bolstering the capacity of local housing organizations and other efforts that directly address local housing needs.

Among those awarded was the Eastern Iowa Regional Housing Corporation Housing Trust Fund in the amount of \$501,190.00, serving 118 people in Cedar, Clinton, Delaware, Dubuque, (excluding the City of Dubuque) and Jackson Counties.

“The 2024 Local Housing Trust Fund awards represent the largest annual amount with the largest projected impact allocated through the program since inception,” said IFA Director Debi Durham. “Today’s awards will support housing initiatives that will ensure that nearly 3,000 families have the ability to live, work and thrive in our communities.”





# CSEI @Home Photovoice Call for Artists

**What does home mean to you?** Photovoice is a storytelling technique used to put a camera in the hands of people to explore and share their perspectives on a certain topic. CSEI's mission of addressing homelessness and housing instability is the reason we are focusing on the prompt of @Home. Home could be your favorite place to be or a place you wish you didn't need to be. It could be a community, a pet, or a person... The CSEI Photovoice wants to exhibit the various perspectives of what @Home means to our community.

What you need to know:

- We are not looking for professional photographers.
- Special camera equipment not needed – just a cellphone that can take photos.
- Please visit the Call for Artist form at the website below for full details and disclosures. Complete all the forms in full and submit 2-3 examples of your work by January 31, 2024.
- Only one person per household is eligible to participate.

If selected:

- \$300 Visa gift card for each artist whose photos are selected for the exhibition.
- Special invitation to the opening reception at the Dubuque Museum of Art on June 7, 2024.
- Photographs will be on exhibit at Dubuque Museum of Art, 701 Locust St, Dubuque, IA from May 30th until July 21st.



For more information on the event: [cseiowa.org/events/photo-voice](https://cseiowa.org/events/photo-voice).

## EIRHA Receives \$677,000+

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) announced the Lead Risk Hazards award of \$300,000 to the Eastern Iowa Regional Housing Authority (EIRHA) to identify lead hazards in voucher assisted homes throughout EIRHA's 7-county region. With the use of these funds, lead hazard inspections will be conducted by certified Lead Inspection Risk Assessors in eligible voucher assisted units. EIRHA will also provide resource referrals to property owners for lead hazard controls in order to create safer environments for the clients it serves.

HUD also awarded EIRHA \$377,800 to address housing-related hazards. The Capital Fund Housing-Related Hazards funds will be used by the Public Housing agency to evaluate and reduce residential health hazards, such as fire safety, carbon monoxide, and mold and moisture in public housing. In addition, these funds will help get the PHA ready to comply with the National Standards for the Physical Inspection of Real Estate (NSPIRE). NSPIRE improves HUD's oversight by aligning and consolidating inspection regulations used to evaluate HUD housing across multiple programs.



# HP Coach is Passionate about Communities

As Economic Development & Community Outreach Coordinator for East Central Intergovernmental Association (ECIA), Katie Steffensmeier, of Dyersville, coordinates Prosperity Eastern Iowa and handles intake for four federal grant programs. She recently took on additional responsibility by stepping into the role of mentoring Earlville and Delaware, as their Hometown Pride coach. Keep Iowa Beautiful (KIB) expanded its Hometown Pride program by partnering with ECIA in the summer of 2021. The program's mission is to "enhance the economic and cultural vitality of communities by supporting, facilitating and furthering the implementation of community and county plans and ideas in a coordinated strategy with the assistance of a community coach," according to its website. As a Hometown Pride coach, "I help keep the ball rolling and have the privilege of working with very talented and driven folks in the communities. This process is inspiring because you get to meet many individuals who are passionate and dedicated to where they live," Steffensmeier explained. "Born and raised in Iowa, I think the rural areas of Iowa are a best kept secret. We have the best places to grow up and raise a family with great schools and wonderful and unique communities. KIB is here to help enhance that, whether it's with their grants like Paint Iowa Beautiful program and the KIB scholarships for students, or the photography contest that draws awareness to the beauty in our state.

"I personally identify with the program mission, by supporting and sustaining small communities, we help all of Iowa shine." According to Steffensmeier, the Earlville Hometown Pride group was doing a lot behind the scenes before the group formally launched. "Their Sunday Market has been a great success. I remember Whitney Strong said over 80% of the vendors were local and making items out of their home. We wouldn't have known that if she and Heather Vonderhaar hadn't jumped on their idea," she said. "It also draws awareness to the fact that we have a lot of talent in our smaller towns and having an opportunity to showcase those talents has been very popular." When Earlville's Hometown Pride group hosted a downtown walk around with leaders from the Downtown Resource Center at IEDA, Steffensmeier felt it was a great learning experience. "We got to see Earlville through a fresh set of eyes, and they've made recommendations on what can be done to improve the downtown area. They gave us lots of great input on things ranging from doing historical tours, signage to growing leaders and restoring one of the last brick storefronts," she said.

"In Delaware, it's exciting to successfully raise funds for the park project. Not every grant we write or fundraiser we have is successful, but it contributes to the overall goal. Budgets are tight right now and getting grant funding and donations is quite challenging. I'm very proud of the fact that we're slowly raising the funds we need to improve the park," said Steffensmeier. "The City of Delaware and one of our key leaders, Erin Learn, are also fundraising for new swings, including a handicap accessible swing, and to replace the sand and grass under the playground equipment with a softer surface, as well as a complete landscape improvement. We've raised close to \$20,000 for the park, which is amazing for a town with less than 200 people."

Earlville is in the process of going through recommendations from the Downtown Resource Center, according to Steffensmeier. "We're sifting through lots of ideas. I think the group hopes we can bring more business to Earlville and to the Main Street area. The market will definitely be back next year with Heather Vonderhaar and Whitney Strong at the helm."

Being a Hometown Pride coach has revealed to Steffensmeier how much she loves her state, especially the rural parts, and her passion working with people. "I grew up on a farm basically in the city of Dubuque, but had family in Bankston, Farley and Holy Cross. I was jealous that my cousins could ride their bikes everywhere, and I grew up on too busy a street for that," she said. "I've also learned even a small group can have a lasting impact. It's amazing how meeting with a group can spark a great idea that no one would have on their own."

