

Keep Iowa Beautiful®

KEEP AMERICA BEAUTIFUL AFFILIATE

February 2025 Newsletter



Photo Credit: Sharon Scarff, 1st Place Iowa Wildlife & 1st Place Best of Show

[15th Annual Keep Iowa Beautiful Photography Contest Submission](#)

Host a Pick-Up Iowa Event in Your Community!

We're excited to invite you to join volunteers across Iowa for Keep Iowa Beautiful's 2025 [Pick-Up Iowa Program](#)!

Help us reach our statewide goal of **2,500 volunteers collecting 2,500 bags of litter**—one cleanup event at a time! Organizations and residents across Iowa are encouraged to **organize and host their own clean-up events in their towns**.



What is Pick-Up Iowa?

Pick-Up Iowa focuses on removing litter and trash from Iowa's roadsides, neighborhoods, streets, school grounds, parks, forests, and streams to keep public spaces clean and beautiful. This initiative supports the [Greatest American Cleanup](#), the nation's largest community improvement program. As a Keep America Beautiful affiliate, Keep Iowa Beautiful is encouraging volunteers across the state to host a clean-up event.



Who can participate?

Anyone can participate! Cities, community and civic associations, schools, church groups, local sports teams, college clubs, groups of families and friends, businesses, Scouts, and others can organize their members and participate in Pick-Up Iowa.

When do I schedule an event?

Pick-Up Iowa will be held **April 1st through June 30th, 2025** on any dates that work for your group. **Sign up is open NOW!** Click the button below to register your event.

Join us in making our community cleaner, greener, and more beautiful! By working together, we can make our neighborhoods more beautiful in time for America's 250th celebration!

[Register Your Event NOW!](#)

Announcing the Winners of the 15th Annual Photo Contest

Thank you to all of the talented photographers who entered our annual photo contest! This year's competition was incredibly strong, with over 900 photos submitted—each one capturing the beauty of Iowa in a unique way. While only a few could be selected as winners, we truly appreciate every participant's creativity and passion for showcasing our great state. Your photos continue to inspire and remind us why keeping Iowa beautiful is so important. Check out the 1st place category winners below!



Iowa Cities

“Hazy Des Moines,”

Scot Howe of Urbandale



Iowa Landscape

“Little George Park,”

Svitlana Kay of Harlan



Iowa Water

“Floating Dock,”

William Beardsley of Spirit Lake



Iowa Wildlife

“Cliff Swallows Arguing,”

Sharon Scarff of Wayland



Iowans in Action

“Rodeo,”

Lee Navin of Ankeny



Hometown Pride

“Early Morning in July,”

Katie Kettering of Clinton

View the complete list of winners at the bottom of this newsletter.

[15th Annual Photo Contest Winners](#)

**Apply for the Iowa Grocery Industry Association's
Build with Bags Program by May 2nd, 2025**

The primary goal of the [Build with Bags Program](#) is to tackle an environmental concern that has been receiving a great deal of attention—the use of plastic and disposable shopping bags.



To address this issue, the Build with Bags Program has defined four primary goals:

1. Reduce the consumption of plastic bags,
2. Encourage the use of reusable bags,
3. Increase the amount of plastic bags recycled, and
4. Establish a grant program to aid parks and schools in purchasing products made of recycled plastic bags

By providing a monetary incentive for communities to develop their plastic bag recycling efforts and directing grant awards to purchase products made of recycled plastic bags for their schools and parks, the fund both decreases plastic in landfills or as litter and increases demand for recycled plastic products.

The Build with Bags Program is a cooperative effort of the Iowa Grocery Industry Association, Keep Iowa Beautiful, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, Metro Waste Authority, and Plastic Recycling of Iowa Falls.

[Apply Now](#)

Keep Iowa Beautiful Board of Directors Update

On February 19th, the Keep Iowa Beautiful Board of Directors gathered for their annual planning meeting. During the meeting, the Board unanimously voted to renew Mark Wiskus and Nate Westre for a second term and Megan Jones and Geri Huser for a third term.

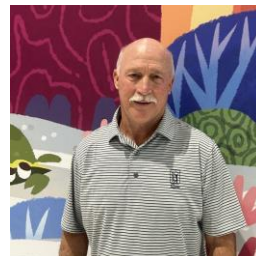
The Board also approved the slate of officers for 2025. Congratulations to Doug Shull on his re-election as Board Chair and Treasurer, Mike Richardson as Vice Chair, and Liesl Seabert as Secretary.

In addition, Keep Iowa Beautiful is excited to welcome four new board members: Ethan Pitt, Cheri Monahan, Pat Logan, and Chad Hickcox. Click the button below to learn more about their work and background!



Ethan Pitt

Iowa Area Development Group



Pat Logan

Copy Systems Inc.



Cheri Monahan

ITC Midwest



Chad Hickcox

Fareway

[Board of Directors](#)

Hometown Pride Hitting the Ground Running in 2025!

Pocahontas Hometown Pride

Six committees were honored with community grants from the Pocahontas County Foundation during its 20th Annual Grant Awards Event:

- Gilmore City: Shelter House
- Havelock HTP: Outdoor Drums
- Laurens HTP: Signs at Sportsman's Pond
- Pocahontas HTP: Patio in Heritage Park
- Rolfe HTP: Bike Station and Water Bottle Refill
- Varina HTP: Concrete Sidewalk



Baldwin Hometown Pride

Successfully reached their fundraising goal for a new park pavilion! The committee is now collaborating with an architect to finalize the project's specifications and plans to present them to the city council, seeking approval to move forward with bidding.

Low Moor Hometown Pride

Completed their final fundraising goal for new playground equipment with a Union Pacific and Clinton County Development Association grant, alongside local contributions from the Low Moor HTP committee. The playground will be installed this spring at the park located at the City of Low Moor baseball field.

[Hometown Pride Program](#)

15th Annual Photo Contest Winners

Robert D. Ray Best of Show Awards

- 1st Place: "Cliff Swallows Arguing," Sharon Scarff of Wayland
- 2nd Place: "Little George Park," Svitlana Kay of Harlan
- 3rd Place: "Hazy Des Moines," Scot Howe of Urbandale

Iowa Cities Awards

- 1st Place: "Hazy Des Moines," Scot Howe of Urbandale
- 2nd Place: "Woodbine at Dusk," Sarah Lenz of Woodbine
- 3rd Place: "Fall in Elkader," Trent Hanselmann of Dubuque
- Honorable Mention: "Historic Downtown Dubuque," Kay Munson of Dubuque

Iowa Landscape Awards

- 1st Place: "Little George Park," Svitlana Kay of Harlan
- 2nd Place: "Iowa's Fire Tower," Cody Davis of Grinnell
- 3rd Place: "Surrounded by Corn," Sharon Scarff of Wayland
- Honorable Mention: "Surrounded by Green," Anji Bennett of Lake View

Iowa Water Awards

- 1st Place: "Floating Dock," William Beardsley of Spirit Lake
- 2nd Place: "Falling for Autumn," AJ Ash of Waukee
- 3rd Place: "Aurora Borealis Over Clear Lake," Alec Heggen of Clear Lake
- Honorable Mention: "Window to Serenity," William Beardsley of Spirit Lake

Iowa Wildlife Awards

- 1st Place: "Cliff Swallows Arguing," Sharon Scarff of Wayland
- 2nd Place: "Swallowtail on Purple Flowers," Bill Benson of Carroll
- 3rd Place: "Between the Rows: Protective Mama," Benjamin Neff of Beaman
- Honorable Mention: "The Great One," Cody Davis of Grinnell

Iowans in Action Awards

- 1st Place: "Rodeo," Lee Navin of Ankeny
- 2nd Place: "Crop Duster," Adam Orgler of Johnston
- 3rd Place: "Combining Natural Curves," Anji Bennett of Lake View
- Honorable Mention: "Fly Iowa Air Show," Lee Navin of Ankeny

Hometown Pride Awards

- 1st Place: "Early Morning in July," Katie Kettering of Clinton
- 2nd Place: "Potter's Mill," Scott Hoag of DeWitt
- 3rd Place: "Sunset Flight," Heather Johnson of Ankeny
- Honorable Mention: "Fair Food," Adam Orgler of Johnston

Public Favorite Award

- “Floating Dock,” William Beardsley of Spirit Lake

Your Support Matters!

Consider supporting Keep Iowa Beautiful to help us continue our work improving Iowa communities! Remember: donations to Keep Iowa Beautiful are tax deductible!

Donations can be made online or checks can be mailed to our office:

Keep Iowa Beautiful

2910 Westown Pkwy. Suite 302

West Des Moines, IA 50266

[DONATE](#)

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