



Photo Credit: Buck Christensen, 1st Place Iowa Landscapes

14th Annual Keep Iowa Beautiful Annual Photography Contest Submission

April 2024 Newsletter





Keep Iowa Beautiful Announces Annual Award Winners and Scholarship Recipients

Keep Iowa Beautiful is thrilled to announce our 2024 annual award recipients and scholarship winners! These individuals, groups, communities, and businesses were honored in a ceremony at the Capitol with Governor Reynolds and Lt. Governor Gregg on April 15th for the positive impact they have had on our state.



The Donald F. Lamberti Hometown Pride Vision Award recipient is **Sandy Ehrig**, for her dedication to enhancing the quality of life in rural Iowa. Sandy is the Past Chair of the Iowa Rural Development Council, Past Co-Chair of the Empower Rural Iowa Initiative, and recently retired from Farm Bureau where she managed Renew Rural Iowa, recognizing entrepreneurs across the state. She currently serves as a City Councilwoman for the City of Nevada.

Keep Iowa Beautiful presented two communities with Robert D. Ray Awards of Excellence. The **Community of Perry** is recognized for its outstanding efforts in community engagement and historic preservation, epitomized by the collaborative renovation of structures such as the historic La Poste building. The second award went to the **Community of Camanche**, for building strong community partnerships through the Hometown Pride program to enhance the community and its local amenities.

The 2024 Keep Iowa Beautiful Organization Award recipient is **Empower Rural Iowa**, for empowering rural communities and resource providers to engage in collaboration and create positive change for rural Iowa. Since its creation in 2018, Empower Rural Iowa has implemented nine grant programs, hosts an annual convening for leadership programs, supports work related to business succession planning and employee ownership, and has been a partner for many initiatives, including Thriving Communities and Rural Vitality.

The recipient of the Keep Iowa Beautiful Corporate Award is **Wellmark**, for supporting community development efforts and collaboratively identifying challenges and opportunities for Iowa's rural communities. From Blue Zones to Healthy Hometown, and now Rural Vitality, their mission has been to support communities in developing healthy and vibrant places to live, work, and play. Through their most recent effort, Rural Vitality, Wellmark has pulled together statewide partners to create a coalition that will work together in addressing systemic challenges in rural areas using data and leadership.

Congratulations to these much-deserving winners of the 2024 Keep Iowa Beautiful Annual Awards!

Keep Iowa Beautiful awarded the Byers Environmental Scholarship to **Isabelle Bolton** of Camanche. With nearly 600 hours of community service and a dedication to environmental stewardship, Isabelle has demonstrated a commitment to the wellbeing of her community and state. She plans to attend Iowa State University in the fall to study Environmental Science and Global Resource Systems.



The 2024 William J. Fultz Communications & Marketing Scholarship was awarded to **Chloe Zittergruen** of Keswick. Chloe's dedication to community service is evident in her work with 4-H and as President of her local FFA chapter, and her commitment to agricultural advocacy is inspiring. She plans to attend Iowa State University this fall to study Agricultural Communications and Horticulture.

The Schnepf Community Service Scholarship was awarded to **Jacie Hoeg** of Wapello. Jacie earned this award through her nearly 300 annual hours of community service and her commitment to giving back to her community. She plans to attend Iowa State University in the fall to study Human Resource Management with a minor in Agricultural Studies.



Congratulations to Keep Iowa Beautiful's 2024 scholarship recipients! For more information, visit <https://keepiowabeautiful.org/keep-iowa-beautiful-awards/>.

Don't Forget: Register for 2024 Pick-Up Iowa



Keep Iowa Beautiful invites Iowans to join the Great American Cleanup and an estimated 3 million volunteers across the nation by removing litter from public areas during Pick-Up Iowa from March 11th through July 31st.

The first 35 communities that sign up for Pick-Up Iowa will be eligible for a \$50 reimbursement for purchases made to aid their pick-up event. Qualifying purchases may include trash bags, gloves, litter grabbers, or food and beverages for

volunteers. **Don't miss out - applications are due April 30th.** Awarded communities will receive notification on May 6th, 2024.

"I am continually impressed by the dedication and care Iowans invest in ensuring their communities thrive both physically and economically," said Andy Frantz, Executive Director of Keep Iowa Beautiful. "We are thrilled to sustain the partnership between Pick-Up Iowa and the Great American Cleanup, empowering Iowans to take action in reducing litter in their towns."

Pick-Up Iowa creates focused efforts to clean up trash along Iowa's roadsides, neighborhoods, streets, school grounds, parks, forests, and streams. In 2022 and 2023, Pick-Up Iowa saw 48 pick-up events across the state, totaling 7,000+ volunteer hours and resulting in 3,000+ trash bags of litter and debris collected.

Community members or groups are invited to participate. Organizations who often host clean up events include civic associations, schools, church groups, local sports teams, college clubs, groups of families and friends, businesses, Scouts, and others.

[Sign Up Now](#)

Hometown Pride Program Now Accepting Statements of Interest from Communities

Is your town grappling with challenges such as population decline, neglected spaces, or leadership burnout? Keep Iowa Beautiful invites communities like yours to join our Hometown Pride program, a proven initiative designed to revitalize and strengthen local communities.

Hometown Pride, a Keep Iowa Beautiful initiative, has already empowered **107 Iowa towns**. With the help of thousands of volunteers, Hometown Pride communities have completed over **1,500 projects**, raising **millions of dollars** for community betterment. We now want to partner with more communities.



Hometown Pride empowers your community to:

- Cultivate Local Leadership: Develop a new generation of leaders passionate about the well-being of your town.
- Enhance Community Amenities: Create and improve local facilities and spaces that contribute to a vibrant and attractive community.
- Foster Civic Pride: Cultivate a sense of belonging and pride among residents.
- Boost Economic Vitality: Improved leadership, amenities and pride will make your community more attractive and supportive for businesses.

Communities interested in being part of Hometown Pride are invited to submit a Statement of Interest by **May 8**.

We understand that finalizing funding and participants might be a work in progress, and we do not expect a fully detailed plan at this stage. We are seeking an overview of your community's current discussions, indicating your readiness to embark on the Hometown Pride journey.

For submission guidelines and the submission form, visit <https://keepiowabeautiful.org/become-a-hometown-pride-community/>.

Hometown Pride Updates

Check out some of the great work happening in our Hometown Pride Communities!

Maquoketa Breaks Ground on Community Green Space

The Maquoketa Betterment Corp/Hometown Pride recently held a groundbreaking for their new community green space! This will be a great amenity for the community of Maquoketa to enjoy.



Shellsburg Mural Restoration Underway

Shellsburg Hometown Pride's mural restoration project is now underway! The owners of Pearl Street Social Club have completed tuckpointing of the building in preparation for the restoration of the historic Gold Medal Flour mural.

Varina Hometown Pride Hosts Dinner and Raffle Fundraiser

Varina Hometown Pride and the Varina Fire Department held a dinner and raffle on March 17 to raise funds for new handicap accessible sidewalks in City Park and new turnout gear for the Fire Department! The event was a success, with over \$15,000 raised for the two projects.



Report Vehicle Litter to the No Litter Hotline

You can help reduce litter in Iowa! Call Keep Iowa Beautiful's No Litter Hotline to report **litter thrown from vehicles** today.



When you see litter happening on Iowa's roadways, call 1-888-NOLITTR (1-888-665-4887) to report littering from a vehicle.

Please provide as much detail about the incident as possible:

- **License plate number (required)**
- Time and specific location (street & city)
- What was thrown from the vehicle
- A vehicle description (color, make and model)

Reported offenders will receive a warning letter from Keep Iowa Beautiful drawing attention to their offense. This sends the message that people, like you, are watching.

Social Media Submissions

Keep Iowa Beautiful wants to share your community's good news!

Are you proud of a completed project in your town? Do you want to show off a new mural in your downtown? Did you host a fun, exciting event for your community? We want to know about it!

Tag us on social media, or click on the button below to share short descriptions of events, projects, or news from your town! You can include pictures and captions as well. Keep Iowa Beautiful will share your post on our social media!

[Submit Your Stories](#)

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

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[Donate](#)

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