

july 2024

ecia spotlight



Roseann Sabers, ECIA Documentation Specialist promoting the ECIA Home Repair Program at the Dubuque County Fair kid's event last week.

Making Homes Safer



KIB Volunteer Spotlight

Each month, Keep Iowa Beautiful (KIB) shines a spotlight on the amazing volunteers who help them achieve their mission and strengthen their community. Learn more about an integral member of the Worthington KIB Hometown Pride Committee, Jill Klaren!

“Jill has really stepped up for our committee – coming up with new fundraising ideas, projects, and positivity that she has brought to the rest of the group. She was the catalyst for some of Worthington’s big fundraising events such as Saint Nick’s Night and Worthington’s First Annual Harvest Festival. She also knew the artist that was able to create the mockup for the mural we’re planning on doing this year. We are so happy that she’s been excited and helpful in conducting these events and presenting her ideas to the rest of the group!” – Dylan Michels, Worthington Hometown Pride Coach.

Sign up for the KIB Newsletter to stay up to date with everything happening around the state and in our communities <https://keepiowabeautiful.org/>.



Maquoketa City Manager Recognized

Congratulations to Maquoketa City Manager Joshua Boldt for his selection of this year’s Emerging Leader Award from the Iowa City/County Management Association (IaCMA). The award recognizes a local government and the chief administrator or assistant chief administrator in recognition of their innovative and successful programs, and the recipient must be in their first time in the position.

Josh Boldt (pictured between City of Dubuque Assistant City Manager Cori Burbach and West Branch City Administrator Adam Kofoed) graciously commented, “It’s a true team effort here and sometimes I just know how to stay out of the way.”

Roast and Toast Receives Grant

It’s rare when for-profit businesses are eligible to apply for grants. But thanks to the Backing Small Businesses program, launched in 2021 by American Express and Main Street America, 500 small business owners were awarded \$10,000 each through a competitive application process this month. Roast and Toast, a coffee and wine shop based in Delhi, applied and secured one of these uncommon grants. “We are going to use the money to improve some equipment in our store so we can run more effectively. One thing we are upgrading is our oven so we can bake more goods in a shorter amount of time,” said Emily Preussner, manager of Roast and Toast.

“Later this year, we (all the successful applicants) have the chance to apply for an additional \$30,000 that will be awarded to 25 small businesses. Half of that award must be used for community development,” commented Nancy Preussner, Roast and Toast owner.

Since the program’s initial launch, it has provided over \$9 million in grants to 1,180 small business owners nationwide to help economically vulnerable small business owners recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and grow their businesses.



ECIA Region Awarded \$3 MM

ECIA was recently selected to receive an additional \$3 million through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL), because of its existing high-performing Brownfield Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) program. ECIA's existing RLF program has successfully made loans or subgrants leading to three brownfield cleanup projects that are either completed or in progress. The BIL grant will extend program capacity to provide funding for more cleanups in the ECIA region.

"The EPA Brownfields RLF supplemental funds provides critical dollars to aid communities in removing environmental contaminants and cleanup sites. This funding will replenish ECIA's revolving loan fund, enabling us to disburse and revolve funds for even more brownfield cleanup projects," said ECIA Development Coordinator and Brownfields Project Manager, Dawn Danielson. The ECIA Brownfield RLF program offers low interest rates with loan

terms up to five years. A portion of the loan may be forgiven upon completion of the cleanup project. Any public or private entity looking to clean up a contaminated property and not the responsible party for the contamination may be eligible to borrow RLF funds for the cleanup. ECIA accepts loan requests year-round on a first come first served basis for as long as funds remain available.

One example of EPA RLF funding is ECIA financing the remediation of the 1000 Block of South 4th St in Clinton. The block consisted of five properties, each with main floor commercial space and upper-story housing. The derelict properties sat vacant for over 20 years. In 2023 the City was awarded an EPA cleanup grant and applied for loan assistance from ECIA's Brownfield RLF to fund demolition and dispose of all material as hazardous waste due to asbestos contamination. Site cleanup was completed April 30, 2024. Redevelopment plans include possible housing and commercial use. Additionally, ECIA funded the cleanup of two properties in Stanwood in 2023 and has committed funds to a cleanup of the former YMCA in Clinton.

ECIA is accepting applications for Brownfields RLF financing. For more information contact Dawn at ddanielson@ecia.org.



EPA Region 7 Brownfields and Land Revitalization Branch Supervisor Stanley Walker presents check to ECIA Brownfield Development Coordinator Dawn Danielson

ECIA Seeking Input

ECIA is partnering with the Institute for Transportation at Iowa State University to develop a transportation safety plan "to identify issues and eliminate fatalities and serious injuries for all roadway users - pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, and drivers," according to ECIA. The plan will examine infrastructure projects and policies aimed at addressing safety issues, as well as ways to fund and implement recommendations.

The plan will cover 58 cities, 57 of which are in Delaware, Dubuque, Jackson and Clinton counties in Iowa. The other city is East Dubuque, Ill.

As part of the development of the plan, "staff seek community input to help identify areas unsafe for walking, biking, driving or using transit," an online announcement states.

ECIA will be at the Manchester Farmers Market from 7:30 to 11 a.m. on Aug. 17.

Area residents also can give their feedback via an online survey. More information and the survey are available at eciatrans.org/transportation_safety_plan/index.php.

Making Homes Safer



before

Just west of Bankston and north of Farley in Dubuque County sits a an old, two-story farmhouse along the road with a view of the vast countryside. Jeremy and Melanie Junk live in the house pictured above with their three children and noticed their siding was in rough shape from all the wind that whips through the area, with some of the original wood siding even exposed in the process.

The family signed up for the Home Repair Program and because the home was built in 1925, they were directed to the Lead Paint and Healthy Homes program (LPHH). Once deemed eligible, our certified lead inspectors were able to confirm that the exposed siding with peeling paint on it, was indeed, lead. “The house had aluminum siding over top of original wood siding that had been painted with lead paint, but storm damage and wind had taken its toll and exposed a lot of the original siding,” said home inspector Kyle Finke.

Along with siding the home to make it lead safe, the program was also able to address other safety and health hazards in the home. The LPHH program replaced an old, deficient furnace with a new energy efficient furnace, added smoke detectors, installed GFCI outlets in the kitchen and throughout the house, replaced a broken window, installed a new, safer door, and added downspout extensions to the gutters.



“This project exemplifies the true purpose of the LPHH program. This family, living in a large older home, faced multiple challenges in maintenance, upkeep, and repair of the home. Program staff were able to step in and complete transformational work that addressed health and safety deficiencies that were a detriment to the health of the family. The most successful project outcome is that this home is healthy and safe for the children. A secondary outcome is a beautiful home!” said LPHH Program Manager Kim Glaser.

For more information, please call 563-690-5776 or email homerepairs@ecia.org.

EIRHA Receives Funding

HUD awards \$104,300 to EIRHA. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) announced that it will award \$10 million to 65 Public Housing Agencies (PHAs) in 32 states across the country to make needed capital improvements in public housing developments. These funds will enhance safety and security for residents.

The Eastern Iowa Regional Housing Authority (EIRHA) will use these funds to update the fire alarm systems in the elderly units, purchase fire rated doors, purchase new sealed battery smoke and CO2 detectors, and new fire extinguishers for all elderly complexes.

The funds are awarded through HUD's Capital Fund Emergency Safety and Security Program, which supports public housing authorities as they address the safety of public housing residents. These grants may be used to install, repair, or replace capital equipment or systems that contribute to a safer living environment for residents, including security systems/surveillance cameras, fencing, lighting systems, emergency alarm systems, window bars, deadbolt locks, doors, and carbon monoxide detectors.

HUD also awarded EIRHA \$12,675 to provide housing counseling services. Carl Reimer, EIRHA's HUD certified Housing Counselor, is the point of contact and will provide the home buyer education services to the qualifying families.

EIRHA Passes HUD Inspection with Flying Colors!

HUD suspended the Uniform Physical Condition Standard (UPCS) inspection and implemented the National Standards for the Physical Inspection of Real Estate (NSPIRE) inspection. The new NSPIRE model prioritizes health, safety and functional defects over appearance.

The HUD NSPIRE inspection of EIRHA's public housing units was conducted in April, 2024 and the EIRHA was awarded a score of 94/100! EIRHA's Director of Housing and Support Services, Michelle Schnier shared, "This is amazing considering we were told most PHA's are scoring a lot lower with the new NSPIRE inspection process than through the old inspections conducted through UPCS. Our maintenance staff, Leonard O'Connell and Ben Cooper worked hard at preparing the units and attending training to ensure that our score would be above 90. They worked in conjunction with Carl Reimer, Kristi Oberhoffer, and Michelle Huseman who also went through the training and worked with the tenants to keep their units in good shape. They all did an outstanding job!"



Raising Awareness in a Creative Way

On June 7th, more than 200 people attended the @HOME Photovoice opening reception to learn more about Community Solutions of Eastern Iowa (CSEI) and to see photographs from 21 local photographers of what “home” means to them.

Photovoice is a research method that was developed about 25 years ago. The intent is to gather participant-taken photographs and narratives to translate experience into actionable knowledge.

“We had been looking for a meaningful way to share what we do day in and day out - help people have a home and help people keep their homes - but we found that most people didn’t know the name of our organization, much less what we do. Using photovoice principles is a perfect fit for what we want to communicate: everyone has an idea of what home means to them. It’s deeply personal”, stated Jennifer Walker, Director of Special Programs ECIA/CSEI.

ECIA Board members Beth Bonz and Cori Burbach, along with the Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque’s Jason Neises and his wife, Erin, were guest bartenders. More than 200 people attended the opening reception. The exhibit was open until July 20th.

Subscribe to CSEI’s newsletter <https://tinyurl.com/cseinews>, and learn more at cseiowa.org.



The photographers!





Debbie Maier
37 years



Michelle Huseman
36 years



Matt Specht
21 years



Craig Elskamp
6 years



Kyle Finke
2 years



Jack Studier
1 year



Christine Efferding
1 year

Well done!



Kathleen Hoffmann
July 1



McKenna Leuchtenmacher
July 1



Rebecca Kennedy
July 22

ECIA Anniversaries & New Hires in June and July

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.