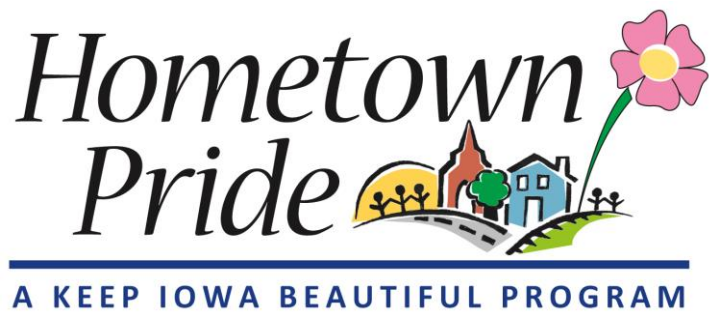


**Building Stronger Communities
Developing Sustainable Futures**

2016-2017 ANNUAL REPORT



Building Stronger Communities, Developing Sustainable Futures

2016-2017 ANNUAL REPORT

GUIDE TO HOMETOWN PRIDE AREAS

- Pocahontas County Hometown Pride – Margo Underwood, finishing year 5.
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Please note: Hometown Pride reports reflect a wide range of projects and programs, some developed by the organization, and some resulting from the influence of the program. The Hometown Pride program is funded equally by private donations and public support from the Iowa Economic Development Authority.

PROGRAM REPORT CARD

- **Financial Support**
- **Grants Received**
- **Volunteer Involvement**
- **Community Vitality**
- **Cultural Impact**
- **Economic Impact**
- **Marketing / PR**
- **Return on Investment (ROI)**
- **Sustainability Elements**
 - **Leadership**
 - **Management**
 - **Endowment / Finances**
- **Suggested Program Adjustments**

Pocahontas County Hometown Pride Program

Margo Underwood – Community Coach

Celebrating Five Years of Hometown Pride

The Pocahontas County Hometown Pride Program was established on July 1, 2012, and includes nine communities: Fonda, Gilmore City, Havelock, Laurens, Palmer, Plover, Pocahontas, Rolfe and Varina. The smallest community is Varina, population 71 and the largest community is Pocahontas, population 1,789. This year we completed five years of the Hometown Pride program in Pocahontas County. A Hometown Pride celebration and bus tour of the projects completed is scheduled for September 30, 2017.

Meetings and Projects

During this past year, the nine Hometown Pride Committees met monthly, except in December, to implement their community plans. In addition to the 99 Hometown Pride committee meetings held, many work days were scheduled to complete 30 community projects this past year. These projects included:

1. Painting community buildings and a log cabin - 5 communities;
2. New recycled plastic park benches, picnic tables, planters and waste receptacles for city parks– 5 communities;
3. City park and landscaping projects – 4 communities;
4. Tree planting projects – 4 communities;
5. New playground equipment – 3 communities;
6. Community signage – 2 communities;
7. Iowa Living Roadways Community Visioning Program – 1 community;
8. Iowa Living Roadways Trail Visioning Program – 1 community;
9. New community trail and new trail signage – 1 community;
10. ISU Landscape Architecture College of Design class project – 1 community;
11. New school memorial project - 1 community;
12. Monthly Hometown Pride Infomercials published in the Pocahontas County newspapers.

Funding Sources and Media Coverage

The nine Hometown Pride Committees received 30 grants to partially fund these projects. Grants received included: Diamond Vogel and Keep Iowa Beautiful's Paint Iowa Beautiful; Iowa Grocery Industry Association Build with Bags; Pocahontas County Foundation; Humboldt County Community Foundation; Iowa Resource Enhancement and Protection Conservation Education Program; Alliant Energy Branching Out; MidAmerican Energy Trees Please; Iowa Living Roadways Community Visioning Program; Iowa Living Roadways Trail Visioning Program; Keep America Beautiful; Casey's Community Foundation and Pocahontas County Economic Development Commission.

In addition to these grant funds, local and area businesses, organizations and residents contributed funds, equipment and labor to complete the projects. Hundreds of volunteer hours were donated by over 300 volunteers during this past year. Building strong

partnerships has been a key component in the success of this program in all nine communities.

Media coverage of the Hometown Pride program and projects has been outstanding during all five years of the program. The Pocahontas County newspapers, which include the Pocahontas Record Democrat, Laurens Sun and Buena Vista County Journal, cover all nine communities in Pocahontas County. In addition, the Humboldt Independent and the Fort Dodge Messenger regularly include news articles about the Hometown Pride program and projects. Several of the Hometown Pride committees have Facebook pages and post information and photos of their projects. Pocahontas County also has a Facebook page and posts Hometown Pride information.

Return on Investment

Since the Hometown Pride program began, 151 grants have been received, totaling \$729,778.91 to complete community projects in the nine communities. The return on investment (ROI) for the grants received is 792%. For every dollar invested by the local partners (PCEDC, Pocahontas County and the nine communities), the Hometown Pride committees received \$7.92 in community grants and funds.

Leadership Development

Two leadership development sessions were held during the year; a two-day High School Freshman Leadership Series and an Adult Leadership Series consisting of three evening sessions. The Freshman Leadership sessions focused on student leadership concepts, goal-setting and service learning, and included special projects for middle school students at the Pocahontas Area Community Schools and the Laurens – Marathon Community Schools. Approximately 75 middle school students participated in the Freshman Leadership Series.

The Adult Leadership Series had 33 participants and included the following topics:

- Finding Your Passion – Live with Purpose;
- What is Your Personality Type: Learn How to Effectively Work with Others; and
- Live Like an Eagle and Soar for Your Dreams.

Both the Freshman Leadership Series and the Adult Leadership Sessions were sponsored by the Pocahontas County Economic Development Commission (PCEDC). Leadership development has been a top priority of the Pocahontas County Hometown Pride program and the PCEDC during the past five years of the Hometown Pride program and will continue in 2017-2018.

Pocahontas County Foundation and Building Endowment Funds

The Pocahontas Hometown Pride program and the Pocahontas County Foundation have had a strong partnership for the past five years. The Community Foundation Board of Directors identified the Hometown Pride program as a key focus area for funding annual projects. Each of the nine Hometown Pride Committees applied for grant funds from the Pocahontas County Community Foundation during the past year to fund their community projects. Building the endowment is another priority of the Foundation and the Hometown Pride committees for the future.

Sustainability and the Next Five Years

The Hometown Pride program will continue in Pocahontas County with local financial support provided by the Pocahontas County Economic Development Commission, Pocahontas County and the nine communities. Keep Iowa Beautiful will also continue to support the Pocahontas County Hometown Pride program, but at a reduced funding level. Margo Underwood will serve as the Community Coach providing approximately 12 hours of coaching services per week.

Leadership development, building the community foundation endowment, new county-wide projects and a community evaluation assessment have been identified as key strategies to implement during the next five years of Hometown Pride in Pocahontas County. Action steps to implement these strategies will be identified during the next year.

Two current county-wide projects will continue during the next year: the County Trails Project and the County Art Project. Two special committees have been formed to implement plans for these projects. A Pocahontas County Trails Master Plan was completed by the Pocahontas County Trails Committee and approved by the Pocahontas County Board of Supervisors this year. The County Art Core committee is currently working with David Dahlquist to design art sculptures to be placed in Gilmore City and Pocahontas.

The First Impressions Exchange Program was initiated in five of the nine Hometown Pride communities and the long-range goal is to schedule visits in the four remaining communities: Havelock, Palmer, Plover and Varina. The five communities that completed the First Impressions Exchange Program visits to similar-sized communities found the experience to be excellent and very helpful in learning how visitors see and perceive their communities.

Pride in the Communities

Hometown Pride Committee members are building pride in their communities, one project at a time. They are wonderful committed volunteers, leading by example with a positive “can do” attitude. Hometown Pride continues to expand across community boundaries and throughout the county. There is a greater vision now, shared by residents throughout Pocahontas County. It has been a very productive and successful five-year program. We’re looking forward to the next chapter of Hometown Pride in Pocahontas County. - *Margo Underwood, Hometown Pride Community Coach*

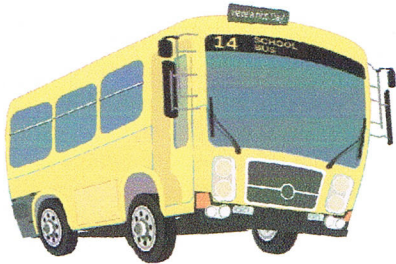


The Varina Hometown Pride Committee installed new playground equipment and picnic tables in Varina City Park. The playground equipment was purchased with a Pocahontas County Foundation grant and the picnic tables were purchased with an IGIA Build with Bags Grant.



The Pocahontas Hometown Pride Committee planted new perennials and trees in Princess Park in Pocahontas. The Native American Mural was painted by the Pocahontas High School Art Class students and the paint was purchased with a Paint Iowa Beautiful grant.

POCAHONTAS COUNTY HOMETOWN PRIDE



BUS TOUR

CELEBRATING 5 YEARS OF HOMETOWN PRIDE

SAT, SEPTEMBER 30, 2017

FONDA - GILMORE CITY - HAVELOCK - LAURENS
PALMER - PLOVER - POCAHONTAS - ROLFE - VARINA

YOU'RE INVITED...

All are invited to participate in a FREE Hometown Pride bus tour through the nine towns of Pocahontas County. The purpose of the tour is to celebrate and showcase the projects in each town. Dick Gruber will provide county historical information throughout the tour, and representatives from each of the nine towns will explain each of their projects.

You are welcome to ride the temperature-controlled bus for the entire tour or for just a portion to better fit your busy schedule.

For more information or to reserve your seat on the bus, please email pcedcmktg@evertek.net or call 712-335-4636.

SCHEDULE

11:00 a.m. Lunch & Presentation @ Elbert Park
11:45 a.m. Board Buses @ Elbert Park
12:20 p.m. Plover Tour
12:45 p.m. Havelock Tour
1:10 p.m. Laurens Tour (and rest stop)
2:05 p.m. Varina Tour
2:30 p.m. Fonda Tour
3:05 p.m. Palmer Tour (and rest stop)
4:15 p.m. Gilmore City Tour
4:45 p.m. Rolfe Tour
5:15 p.m. Pocahontas Tour
5:30 p.m. Unload Buses @ Elbert Park

* schedule subject to change



POCAHONTAS COUNTY
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Keep Iowa Beautiful®

KEEP AMERICA BEAUTIFUL AFFILIATE



The Rolfe Hometown Pride Committee members and community volunteers recently planted eight new trees at the Rolfe Care Center, rodeo grounds and in the public area along the streets to beautify the community and provide additional shade in years to come. The trees were purchased with a grant received from Trees Forever and Alliant Energy's Branching Out Program.

Pocahontas County Hometown Pride cordially invites you to attend a meeting in your community in 2017 to see what all the excitement is about!



Hometown Pride Schedule

- June 7** - Palmer Hometown Pride Committee:
4:30 p.m. @ Library.
- June 12** - Laurens Hometown Pride Committee:
5:30 p.m. @ City Hall.
- June 13** - Gilmore City Hometown Pride Committee: 5:30 p.m. @ Senior Citizens Center.
- June 20** - Pocahontas Hometown Pride Committee: 5 p.m. @ City Hall
- June 21** - Varina Hometown Pride Committee:
6:30 p.m. @ Library.
- June 27** - Havelock Hometown Pride Committee:
5 p.m. @ Library.
- June 27** - Plover Hometown Pride Committee:
6:30 p.m. @ Library.
- June 28** - Fonda Hometown Pride Committee:
5 p.m. @ City Hall.

Sponsors of the Keep Iowa Beautiful Hometown Pride Program are the Pocahontas County Economic Development Commission and Pocahontas County. For more information, contact Margo Underwood, Community Coach, at mlunderwood@cltel.net

Brevity is the Soul of Whit

By Jamie Whitney

The president is an idiot. Vain, weak, puerile, hypocritical without manners, without social grace. And as he talks to you, punches his fists under your ribs. Evidently a person of very inferior cast of character wholly unequal to the crisis. His speeches have fallen like a wet blanket here. They have put flight to all notions of greatness. By all odds, the weakest man who has ever been elected. Will go down to posterity as the man who could not read the signs of the times. Nor understand the circumstances and interests of his country. Who had no political aptitude, who plunged his country into a great war without a plan. Who failed and fell without a friend. Do you ever realize that the desolation, sorrow, grief that pervades this country is owing to you? If you don't resign, we are going to put a spider in your dumpling and play the devil with you. Peace sir, make peace. The city of man sits at least on your side. You have seized the reins, made yourself dictator, established a monolithic new form of government which must dominate over the rights of the individual. Your reign presages a terrible time when all of liberties will be lost in favor of the rights of the monolith. The founders look on in dismay. So we have the dilemma put to us. What to do when his power must continue two years longer, and when the existence of our country may be endangered before he can be replaced by a man of sense. How hard in order to save the country to sustain a man who is incompetent? If he should be reelected for another term of four years of such a retracted administration, we hope a bold hand can be found to plunge a dagger into the tyrant's heart for the public welfare. Harsh words, right? Who was deserving of such rancor? The above were insults, according to author George Saunders, were directed at an Abraham Lincoln as he served as President of the United States by a bevy of folks, including in newspaper editorials and in letters directed to him personally. As a way who suffered from "melancholy," which is almost certainly what we'd call clinical depression nowadays, it probably didn't do anything positive for his mood. Well, President Lincoln was indeed elected to a second term, and a "bold hand" was indeed found, unfortunately, but it was a pistol rather than a dagger that felled that particular "tyrant." One of America's most beloved presidents wasn't exactly adored in the midst of a bloody civil war that claimed more American lives than any other conflict before or since. Shot on Good Friday, Lincoln passed the following day and was laid to rest on Easter Sunday. President Lincoln's religious views were fairly ambiguous. Close friends said they wouldn't call him a believing Christian, but Honest Abe was a regular church goer who could and did quote scripture in speeches and in writings. Like President Lincoln, I count myself as a fan of the New Testament, but I'm no preacher. So, during this Lenten season, try to remember what the Good Book says when insults are hurled your way despite your intentions: *Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you - Ephesians 4:31.* Have a happy Easter, everyone. Please be kind to one another in both words and actions.

Eight miles of C56 blacktop will get quick fix this spring

By Jamie Whitney

The Pocahontas County Board of Supervisors learned that a portion of County Road C56 will get a "Band-Aid" prior to a full fix in the future. County Engineer Jack Moeller informed the board at its March 28 meeting that a portion of the county blacktop. "We have some broken up pavement west of Palmer," informed Moeller. "It's kind of a mess," agreed supervisor JoAnn Peters. "It really went down hill the last couple of years." Moeller said the immediate plan was to remove and replace 800 feet of paving on C56 just east of Iowa Highway 4. Next year, more of C56 is slated for repaving. "It will survive for the rest of the year, and we'll pave more next year," said Moeller. When asked if the 800 feet of repaving would necessitate closing the road, Moeller said, "Ideally not. When we strip up existing asphalt and it can't hold trucks, we'd close the road and re-do the rest, but that's not something I'm expecting." The engineer informed the board that he had received three bids to complete the work, with Blacktop Services of Humboldt submitting the low bid of \$55,532.50. Moeller said the work should be completed this spring.

Keep Iowa Beautiful

KEEP AMERICA BEAUTIFUL AFFILIATE



The Pocahontas County Leadership Series began during March with over 30 participants pre-registered for the three evening sessions. Pictured above are the attendees from the first session. The final session is scheduled for April 27. The Pocahontas County Economic Development Commission is sponsoring the Leadership Series again this year.

Pocahontas County Hometown Pride cordially invites you to attend a meeting in your community in 2017 to see what all the excitement is about!

Hometown Pride Schedule

- April 1 - Varina Hometown Pride Committee: 3 p.m. @ Library.
- Apr. 5 - Palmer Hometown Pride Committee: 4:30 p.m. @ City Hall.
- Apr. 10 - Laurens Hometown Pride Committee: 5:30 p.m. @ City Hall.
- Apr. 11 - Gilmore City Hometown Pride Committee: 5:30 p.m. @ Senior Citizens Center.
- Apr. 17 - Rolfe Hometown Pride Committee: 4:30 p.m. @ Community Center.
- Apr. 20 - Pocahontas Hometown Pride Committee: 5 p.m. @ City Hall.
- Apr. 24 - Havelock Hometown Pride Committee: 5 p.m. @ Library.
- Apr. 24 - Plover Hometown Pride Committee: 6:30 p.m. @ Library.
- Apr. 26 - Fonda Hometown Pride Committee: 5 p.m. @ City Hall.

Pocahontas COUNTY Hometown Pride

Sponsors of the Keep Iowa Beautiful Hometown Pride Program are the Pocahontas County Economic Development Commission and Pocahontas County. For more information, contact Margie Underwood, Community Coach, at munderwood@ghl.net

Hometown Pride groups awarded seven Paint Iowa Beautiful grants

Des Moines — Diamond Vogel Paint and Keep Iowa Beautiful announced the grant awards for the 2017 Paint Iowa Beautiful program. The program provides free paint to a wide variety of public service projects throughout Iowa. The program is administered through Keep Iowa Beautiful with the paint provided by the Diamond Vogel Paint Company. "Governor Branstad is signing a proclamation this week designating April as Keep Iowa Beautiful month and we are pleased to do our part by awarding paint to 91 community projects in Iowa," said Doug Vogel, Vice-President, Trade Marketing, of the Iowa based company. "The partnership with Keep Iowa Beautiful allows Diamond Vogel Paint to assist and work with the many local volunteers that help build

stronger Iowa communities." Gerald Schnepf, Executive Director of Keep Iowa Beautiful added, "The Paint Iowa Beautiful program helps us increase our assistance to neighborhoods, communities, historic projects and other public service organizations in improving the attractiveness and beauty of our home areas. These projects definitely improve the beauty of Iowa, its countryside and its communities." In the 14 year partnership with KIB, Diamond Vogel has awarded over 8,922 gallons of paint for 676 community projects in Iowa. Gilmore City — Hometown Pride Committee; Low income housing buildings; Chris McKee. Havelock — Hometown Pride Committee; City Hall and garage; Cindy O'Neill.

Havelock — Hometown Pride Committee; MARS (children's meeting place); Amanda Tripp. Laurens — Hometown Pride Committee; Park pergola; Hilary Reed. Pocahontas — Hometown Pride Committee; Park log cabin; Gary Vrba. Plover — Hometown Pride Committee; City building; Janice Garrard. Varina — Hometown Pride Committee; Park shelter house, bell and Merry-go-round; Stephanie Archer.

To the Editor

To the editor: Noted this week: Fort Dodge High School will hold their first academic banquet. Also noted this week: the local Lions held their annual academic banquet for the students of PAC. This Banquet, held annually for decades, began with the Rolfe Lions and was passed on to the Pocahontas group after the schools consolidated. Be proud gentlemen that your organization recognized the value of recognizing academic excellence long before the folks in Fort Dodge. Hosting this event is only one of the many services that our local Lions provide for our communities. Well done! Marcy Schoberg Pocahontas

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2004 CHEVY IMPALA, MAROON	\$3,350	\$2,775
2014 CHEVY MALIBU LT, GRAY	\$3,900	\$3,400
2005 MERCURY SABLE G5, V-6	\$4,175	\$3,450
2005 PONTIAC GRAND PRIX GT, SILVER	\$2,800	\$2,250
2005 PONTIAC GRAND PRIX, WHITE	\$4,995	\$4,450
2005 PONTIAC GRAND PRIX GT, SILVER	\$3,375	\$3,500
2006 HONDA ELANTRA GLS, SHARP	\$3,100	\$2,450
2007 CADILLAC STS V-6, AWD, 105K MILES	\$9,450	\$8,995
2008 FORD FUSION SEL, RED	\$11,995	\$10,995
2013 BUICK VERANO, 13K MILES, WOW!	\$16,495	\$15,995
2014 CHEVY MALIBU LT, SHARP	\$12,500	\$12,995
2014 DODGE AVENGER, RED, SHARP	\$10,450	\$9,400
2015 LINCOLN MKZ, MAROON, LOADED!	\$14,750	\$13,995
2014 CHEVY MALIBU LT, SHARP	\$11,995	\$12,995
2014 CHEVY MALIBU LT, WHITE, SHARP	\$17,500	\$16,995
2015 DODGE DART SXT, BLACK	\$10,995	\$10,375
2016 BUICK LACROSSE, LIKE NEW	\$25,350	\$24,750
2012 DODGE RAM 4X4 QUAD CAB, BLACK	\$6,450	\$5,450

TRUCKS	WAS	NOW
2006 CHEVY CRAWLER 4X4, SILVER	\$12,900	\$9,995
2007 CHEVY SILVERADO 4X4, 6.6L, 1500	\$16,900	\$15,975
2008 CHEVY COLORADO CREW 4X4	\$12,625	\$10,995
2008 GMC SIERRA CREW CAB DIESEL 4X4	\$24,500	\$23,450
2009 CHEVY SILVERADO 4X4 CREW CAB, 6.6L	\$16,100	\$17,850
2012 SILVERADO 4X4 CREW, LOW MILES	\$26,350	\$25,450
2013 GMC SIERRA EXT CAB 4X4, RED	\$25,800	\$24,500
2016 CHEVY 2500 6.6L V-8, GAS, 22000 MILES!	\$38,400	\$33,000

SUVS	WAS	NOW
1996 CHEVY BLAZER 4X4 LT, 4-DOOR	\$2,900	\$2,450
1999 TOYOTA 4 RUNNER SR5	\$5,350	\$4,895
2000 CADILLAC ESCALADE, BLACK	\$3,995	\$2,995
2004 LINCOLN NAVIGATOR ULTIMATE	\$6,975	\$5,995
2005 CHEVY TRAILBLAZER EXT 4X4	\$12,500	\$11,450
2008 BUICK ENCLAVE Q4, AWD, RED	\$12,250	\$11,250
2008 CHEVY EQUINOX LT, BLACK, AWD	\$7,900	\$7,750
2008 FORD EXPLORER EDGE BAUER 4X4, RED	\$9,275	\$8,450
2009 CHEVY TRAVELER LT, 60K MILES	\$12,150	\$11,450
2010 GMC ACADIA SLE, AWD, 105K MILES	\$11,995	\$10,995
2010 CHEVY SUBURBAN LT, BLACK	\$21,995	\$19,895
2010 GMC ACADIA SLE, AWD, 105K MILES	\$14,425	\$13,995
2014 CHEVY EQUINOX LT, WHITE	\$15,975	\$14,750
2015 CHEVY TRAVELER LT, AWD	\$12,995	\$11,425
2016 FORD ESCAPE Titanium, GRAY	\$19,400	\$18,495
2016 JEEP COMPASS SPORT, AWD	\$15,250	\$14,750

VANS	WAS	NOW
2002 FORD WINDSTAR LX, RED	\$3,525	\$2,995
2003 OLDS SILVERADO 4X4, 6.6L	\$2,995	\$2,895
2008 CHRYSLER TOWN & COUNTRY TOURING	\$6,875	\$5,995
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2016 CHRYSLER TOWN & COUNTRY, WHITE	\$21,900	\$20,995
2016 DODGE GRAND CARAVAN SXT	\$19,400	\$18,350

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Conservation Corner

By Corinne Peterson



June 14, 2017

Sing a song of experience, a pocket full of rye. Four and twenty blackbirds baked in a pie.

When the pie was opened, the birds began to sing. Wasn't that a dainty dish to set before the king?

Though the blackbirds in the English king's pie were undoubtedly Old World, nonetheless this familiar nursery rhyme will introduce this week's wetland friend, the New World *Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*, the yellow-headed blackbird.

Yellow-headed blackbirds belong to the *Icterus* family of perching birds that are noted for their strong, direct flight and pointed bills. Their plumage varies from iridescent black to yellow to brilliant orange as worn by bobolinks, meadowlarks, blackbirds, cowbirds, grackles, orioles, and tanagers. The coloring of yellow-headed blackbirds also sets them apart. Mature males have bright yellow or orange-yellow head and breast feathers and in flight show a white wing patch. The smaller females and immature males are brown in color overall. Most of their yellow coloring is confined to their throat and chest, their lower breast is streaked, and their wing patch is small and insignificant.

In marshes, yellow-heads are dominant over red-wings and will take all the prime nesting spots. Each male may attract and mate with up to eight females in his territory. Each female lays 2-5 eggs and raises one brood per summer. To help prevent nest predation, the nest is built in cattails or reeds over open water. And even though a nestling may occasionally fall in, they are able to swim to safety.

Yellow-headed blackbirds eat mostly insects in the summer and seeds the rest of the year. They are not picky eaters, gobbling up aquatic insects, beetles, grasshoppers, dragonflies, caterpillars, flies, ants, and spiders. Yellow-heads overwinter in Mexico where they forage on farm fields in "rolling flocks" as they leapfrog from the back of the flock to the front. Did you know they will flip over stones to unearth food?

Red-winged blackbirds are known for their lilting song with its liquid, gurgling *konk-a-lee* that ends in a trill. In contrast, the song of the yellow-headed blackbird begins with a harsh, rasping note and ends with a long, descending buzz that has been described as sounding like a rusty hinge. Throughout the summer months, yellow-headed blackbirds may be found feeding and nesting in wetlands across Canada and the United States. Here in Pocahontas County you may see and hear them at Little Clear Lake, Lizard Lake, Sunken Grove, and Swan Lake.

Even though yellow-headed blackbird populations are holding their own, loss and degradation of habitat is always a concern, especially drainage projects and exposure to herbicides and pesticides. I'll close with the rest of the rhyme which includes one of my dad's favorite tricks to play on unsuspecting grandkids.

The king was in the counting house, counting out his money.
The queen was in the parlor, eating bread and honey.
The maid was in the garden, hanging up the clothes.

When down swooped a blackbird and snipped off her nose.

Happy Father's Day!



Gundersons give 'Gettysburg Address' for Rolfe Lions

On June 5, Charles and Gloria Gunderson addressed the Rolfe Lions Club about their trip to Gettysburg, Pa. They showed pictures and maps that detailed the historic Civil War battle, including one of an injured Rebel fighter being comforted by a Union soldier. The Gundersons are pictured with Rolfe Lion Glenn Markley. Submitted photo.

What's Happening at the Rolfe Public Library

Build A Better World: The 2017 summer reading program has officially started and there are many wonderful programs planned here at the library, stop in and ask for a calendar. Please join us on Thursday, June 15 at 10:30 a.m. as we introduce the coolest toy ever, littleBits, here at the library where you can unleash your inner inventor. Friday, June 16 at 10:30 a.m. we will meet at the Rolfe Flower Bin, thanks in advance to Sarah Munson. Mark your calendar for Thursday, June 22, as the Blank Park Zoo will present a show at 1 p.m. in the Community Center, and Friday, June 23, Corinne Peterson will meet us at Street Park as we discover the "Building Blocks of Nature." Any questions call or stop by the Rolfe Public Library.

Thank you to the Hanson Family for an amazing show of laughter, juggling, plate spinning and unicycles...you made it look so easy! And a big thanks to Al Sroufe for the RAMS Event Center.

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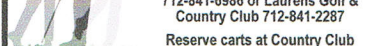
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Rolfe City Officials

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City Clerk: Julie Lancaster
Treasurer: Tom Andersen
Fire Chief: De Sindergrad
Water & Street Superintendent: Glenn Munson
Gas Superintendent: Dave Sandvig
Attorney: Tony Higgins, Greg Stoebe

Council meets at Community Center the 2nd Monday of each month, 6:30 PM.

Four Hometown Pride groups awarded Build with Bags Grants

Hometown Pride groups from Fondra, Laurens, Palmer, and Varina are the 20 Iowa groups who have received nearly \$35,000 awarded schools, parks through initiative led by Iowa Grocers.

Many city parks and schools throughout Iowa will soon have new park benches, planters or picnic tables courtesy of the Iowa Grocery Industry Association's Build with Bags program.

The announcement was made that 20 Iowa communities would be receiving grants of up to \$2,000 to purchase items made from recycled plastic bags. Items include park benches made by Plastic Recycling of Iowa Falls. One park bench represents approximately 10,600 bags that won't end up in the landfill.

"We are pleased to announce the winners of the Build with Bags grant program," says Michelle Hurd, president of the Iowa Grocery Industry Association. "Now in its eighth year, the Build with Bags program continues to encourage individuals to recycle their plastic bags so those bags can be turned into products that beautify our communities. This year's grant winners are reaping the rewards of their recycling efforts, and we hope other communities will follow suit and expand their recycling efforts."

A total of 51 applications were submitted from which 20 winners were selected by a committee of four representatives in support of the Build with Bags program. Each community member individually scored applications. The scores were then combined for an overall point total. This year, the top 20 applicants with the most points received grants totaling \$34,949.52.

Applications were evaluated based on set criteria that included a statement of need for the grant and the community's own plastic bag recycling efforts. Grant applicants were also asked to verify the recycled plastic content in the products they were looking to purchase and obtain an endorsement

letter from a local grocer who is supportive of the community's project and recycling plans.

Geographic location also played a factor as the committee wanted to disperse the grant awards throughout the state of Iowa. Local Iowa grocers played an important role in making the grants possible. Store representatives throughout the state wrote letters of support that led to their communities being selected to receive a grant.

"While the endorsement letter was not the most weighted category in the selection process, it is an important component of the Build with Bags program," Hurd explains. "In the program committee's eyes, it reflects how the applying community is working with its local grocers to establish long-term projects and goals that help increase the awareness of plastic bag recycling."

Encouraging purchases of furniture and equipment made from recycled plastic for parks and schools through its grant program is one of four goals established by Build with Bags partners. The other three include increasing the amount of plastic bags recycled, reducing consumption of plastic bags and increasing the safe use of reusable bags.

Participating retailers include FarmVest Stores and Hy-Vee locations statewide plus many independent grocers.

Build with Bags, a cooperative effort of the Iowa Grocery Industry Association, Keep Iowa Beautiful, Metro Waste Authority in Des Moines, Iowa Department of Natural Resources and The Des Moines Register, was originally launched in August 2009. Now in its eighth year, the Build with Bags Grant program has awarded \$284,124.52 in grants to more than 170 Iowa communities.

For more information on Build with Bags or its grant program opportunities, visit www.iowagrocers.com.

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POCAHONTAS RECORD-DEMOCRAT

OFFICIAL COUNTY NEWSPAPER

For we shall gather in his name...

Faith United Methodist Church
Humboldt, Rutland, Gilmore City, Livemore
Pastor Alberta Ervin, Lead Pastor
Pastor Christy Ehrle, Associate Pastor
Saturday Evening: Humboldt - 5:30 p.m.
Sunday: Humboldt - 8:55 a.m.
Livemore - 9 a.m.
Gilmore City - 10:30 a.m.
Rutland - 10:30 a.m.

Sunday School - Humboldt - 10:11-11:15 a.m.
Livemore - 10:30 a.m.
Rutland - 10:30 a.m.

First Lutheran Church, Gilmore City
Tracy Norem - Lay Pastor
8:45 a.m. - Sunday School: 10:00 a.m. - Worship

Shared Ministry, Rolfe
9:00 a.m. - Worship: 10:00 a.m. - Sunday School

St. John Catholic Church, Gilmore City
Rev. James Tigges
Every Saturday - 7:00 p.m. - Mass

St. Margaret Catholic Church, Rolfe
Father Paul Bormann
Every Sunday - 10:30 a.m. - Mass

St. Mary Catholic Church, Mallard
Fr. Tom Hart
7:45 a.m. - Sunday Mass
Weekdays, Tues. & Thurs. - 7:45 a.m.

Trinity Lutheran Church, Missouri Synod, Mallard
Pastor Neil Haysen
9:00 a.m. - Sunday School (Education Hour)
10:00 a.m. - Worship

United Methodist Church, Mallard-West Bend
Rev. Beatrice Kinzler, Pastor
See Schedule at www.wbmunmc.com

Mallard
9 a.m. - Sunday Worship • 10:15 a.m. Celebrate (for kids)
West Bend
9:15 a.m. Adult Class • 10:30 a.m. - Sunday Worship
Kids/Youth Meet on Wednesdays

St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Rolfe
Rev. Jerry Schultz, Pastor
9:30 a.m. - Worship

Wed, June 14, 7pm Committees: 7:30pm Council

If any changes need to be made in your church notes, please let us know. We will be happy to update them. Thank you.

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Fremont County Hometown Pride Program

Doug Friedli – Community Coach

The Fremont County Hometown Pride Steering Committee of six members was formed in 2013 to set goals and oversee the program. Members meet quarterly and include representatives from across the county: community volunteers, economic development rep, an elected County representative, business people, farmers, community foundation board members, Extension Service, and the DNR.

Ten communities in Fremont County have Hometown Pride committees. Most of them meet monthly: Bartlett, population 18; Farragut = 461; Hamburg = 1,111; Imogene = 69; Percival = 77; Randolph = 188; Riverton = 331; Sidney = 1,001; Tabor = 1,237; Thurman = 209. The number of rural residents is 2,404, for a total population in the county of 7,106.

Alarming, the population of Fremont County has declined 62% since peaking at 18,546 in 1900. In June 2016, the Des Moines Register reported that Fremont County had lost another 7% of its population from 2010 to 2015 (due to the 2011 flood, a tornado in 2012, youth out-migration and deaths). That gave Fremont County the dubious honor of having the largest percentage loss of any of the 99 counties in Iowa. This news created a call to action for Hometown Pride to focus on underlying issues to attract new residents and businesses. As one county supervisor said, “Our towns need to quit competing with each other and start working together.” A community leader said, “We need to change. If we keep doing things the same old way we will continue get the same results.”

Therefore, in the past 12 months, Fremont County Hometown Pride has hosted a series of county-wide Community Vitality meetings focusing on three people attraction priorities:

- 1) **Affordable Housing.** Each community has issues with the lack of affordable and adequate housing. RDG Consultants were commissioned by the Hometown Pride steering committee to conduct a county-wide housing study. It was paid for with contributions from each Hometown Pride community and from the six banks in the county. The final report was presented on June 28, 2017. It showed an assessment of the needs and opportunities for each community along with recommendations based on success stories from other rural communities. This study will be a helpful tool in working with elected officials, developers and finance companies.
- 2) **Connectivity to Broadband.** Access to high-speed internet is unreliable and unaffordable for a majority of the residents in Fremont County...especially for residents living in the rural rolling hills. Promises from State officials to bring service to every acre through Connect Iowa have not been fulfilled in extreme Southwest Iowa. President Trump promised to address this issue during his speech in Cedar Rapids last month. Fremont County could provide a case study. A Hometown Pride committee has been meeting with 3 providers plus USDA officials to try to find a way to bridge the digital divide. We know first-hand that it is nearly impossible to attract new young residents and new businesses to a county that does not have high-speed connectivity.

- 3) Recreational Amenities. Fremont County has a number of natural and built recreational amenities. There are over 17,000 acres of land open to public access for hunting, fishing, birdwatching, etc., third most of any county in Iowa. There are trails and a state park and scenic byways. But these amenities are a best kept secret. A committee of Hometown Pride volunteers is strategizing on how to develop a marketing plan to attract visitors to these amenities.

In the past 3.5 years, 333 Hometown Pride community meetings have been held. There have been 23 county-wide planning sessions. In addition, the coach has had 89 meetings with 12 different support organizations who provide resources for Fremont County Hometown Pride projects.

Attendance at monthly community meetings varies from 2 to 20 volunteers. A total of 264 residents have been involved so far in the planning and implementation of numerous community and county-wide betterment projects and events, volunteering a total of 7,993 hours. Since Hometown Pride started in 2014, 74 grants have been received for community betterment projects totaling \$332,357. Three communities have started new endowments now totaling \$57,234.

Return on Investment

Hometown Pride requires a county-wide contribution of \$20,000 per year to help pay for the coach and receive support from Keep Iowa Beautiful. So, for a total of \$60,000 invested so far, Fremont County's monetary return on investment has been 915%. A financial benefit of \$549,451 (\$332,357 in grants received + \$57,234 permanent endowments + \$159,860 value of volunteer hours @ \$20 per hour). Plus, the priceless intangible returns on investment:

- Improved communication, understanding and cooperation between communities. A county-wide bus tour initiated conversations and friendships. A shared calendar of community events helps with coordination of events. The county-wide Trail of Treasures event, the Shoe Drive and the Community Vitality meetings are building trust and deepening relationships.
- Appearance improvement projects are contagious. Improvements to one property have inspired the neighbors to clean up their properties.
- Completing small projects which built confidence to take on bigger projects.
- Improved relationship with the Fremont County Community Foundation. Newly acquired grant writing skills have resulted in grants to nine of the ten Hometown Pride committees for community betterment projects. FCCF is managing endowed accounts for three Hometown Pride communities.
- Leadership succession. Farragut, Imogene, Randolph, Riverton, Sidney, Tabor and Thurman have already successfully transitioned the HP chair position from the initial leader to the next.
- Volunteer engagement. New volunteers are coming to meetings in nearly every community. Many of them are people who have not previously been involved in community leadership.

Visible outcomes in the past year

As shown in pictures attached from the individual communities Hometown Pride Facebook pages, projects include tree and flower plantings, painting public properties for beautification, community clean up days, erection of new welcome signs, public art installations and addressing derelict and nuisance properties.

Key projects in the past year

Bartlett. Erected a new welcome sign.

Farragut. RAGBRAI fundraiser. Downtown improvements of new benches, flower pots, banners, painting building facades. Secured the property for the new bicycle / hiking trail.

Hamburg. Improvements to the Fallen Heroes Veterans memorial park, including artifacts from 911. Completion of two murals on downtown buildings. Coordinated Hometown Pride volunteers from across the county to clean up Waubonsie State Park/

Imogene. Received a grant to paint a downtown building.

Percival. Received a grant for a walking path around the park. Started raising funds for an endowment. Cleaned up several nuisance properties that were destroyed and abandoned after the flood of 2011.

Randolph. Completed several improvements to the city park including new playground equipment, renovation of the baseball field and planting new trees. Installed welcome banners downtown.

Riverton. Working on completing a new welcome sign.

Sidney. Working on phase 2 of the public art cowboy boot project funded by local businesses. Boots will be painted by local students.

Tabor. Weekly farmers market events, youth clean-up day, new street lights with banners and flower pots. Coordinated the county-wide Shoe Drive project to raise funds and recycle used shoes.

Thurman. Community-wide clean-up day. Received a grant for a new message board.

Community Plans / Vision / Priorities

Bartlett (unincorporated). Improve appearance for this entrance into Fremont County's northwest corner on Interstate 29. Develop building lots for new homes (25-minute commute to Council Bluffs/Omaha). Convince elected officials to address the storm water drainage issues.

Farragut. Develop the abandoned rail road property through town into a bicycle and walking trail to Shenandoah (they have received \$485,000 in grants so far for this project). Create and enhance amenities for the trail users. Find financial resources to rehabilitate

downtown buildings. Grow their new community endowment fund from \$17,000 to \$25,000.

Hamburg. Continue to improve first impression appearance and attractiveness in this gateway into Iowa's southwest corner along exit #1 on Interstate 29. Continue to grow their population by welcoming new families, supporting existing industries and downtown businesses. Grow their new community endowment fund from \$38,000 to \$50,000.

Imogene. Improve first impressions for visitors...especially bicyclers using the Wabash Trace Trail.

Percival (unincorporated). Continue to enhance the City Park with amenities that all age groups can enjoy. Convince county officials to address the drainage issue and to enforce legal action against unresponsive property owners. Raise \$10,000 to start a community endowment to honor the legacy of present and former residents.

Randolph. Enhance recreational amenities in the City Park. Support the efforts of local groups who are restoring and maintaining a historical home and the old depot. Create murals downtown.

Riverton. Recruit more volunteers to work on community betterment projects.

Sidney. Complete phase two of the cowboy boot public art project. Grow the endowment to sustain a new public swimming pool and other community betterment projects. Continue efforts to raise funds for a "Safe Routes to School"/walking trail.

Tabor. Implement phase one of the Safe Routes to School / Walking Trail plan (a grant of \$48,000 has been received). Start phase three of street light poles. Figure out the Safe Route to School.

Thurman. Provide infrastructure and amenities to attract more residents to move into town now that the damage of the 2012 tornado has been cleaned up. Complete the new water system (grants of \$750,000 have been secured). Enhance the amenities at the City Park.

Hometown Pride Sustainability and/or Exit Strategy

- A meeting was hosted on June 20, 2017 by the Fremont County Economic Development Corp to discuss the future of Hometown Pride. Most communities expressed a desire to continue the program in some manner after the five-year contract with KIB expires in November 2018. Volunteers from each community are serving on a committee to set goals and strategize plans to revise and sustain the program.
- Grant writing skills have been gained by 50 volunteers who attended two grant writing workshops sponsored by Fremont County Hometown Pride.
- Endowments. Farragut, Hamburg, Percival and Sidney are each building permanent community endowments which will provide annual local funding sources for future betterment projects.
- Tax-free status. Sidney and Tabor Hometown Pride committees applied for and received 501(c)(3) charitable status from IRS. Imogene Sons and Daughters already has this

designation. Hamburg explored it. This status will help these communities manage their own fundraising in the future.

- The community coach has been helping local volunteers develop leadership and fundraising skills to complete community betterment projects. And strategic plans to attract more residents.

In the News

There is no county-wide newspaper in Fremont County. The Hamburg Reporter is published by the Nebraska City News Press. The Sidney Argus Herald is published by the Shenandoah Valley News. The Tabor Beacon is published locally. The nearest local radio stations are KMA in Shenandoah and B103 in Nebraska City that do report some local news. The nearest TV stations are in Omaha. Therefore, many people get updates on local Hometown Pride projects from social media such as Facebook.

- Bartlett. Was featured in a two-page article in the Omaha World Herald describing the situation five years after the 2011 flood.
- Farragut Hometown Pride Facebook page. Pictures of the bench project. And an interview about the Shoe Drive. <https://www.facebook.com/farragut.pride>
- Hamburg Hometown Pride's Veteran's memorial project was featured in the Iowa Historian magazine. Their Facebook page features pictures of their new welcome sign. <https://www.facebook.com/Hamburghometownpride/?fref=ts>
- Percival Hometown Pride Facebook page. Promotion of the upcoming Trail of Treasures Flea Market on their newly purchased message board sign. <https://www.facebook.com/Percivalhometownpride>
- Randolph Hometown Pride Face book page features pictures of kids planting flowers. <https://www.facebook.com/Randolph-Hometown-Pride-288299618294929/>
- Sidney Hometown Pride Facebook page. Cowboy boots art project received 8,500 views! <https://www.facebook.com/SidneyHometownPride>
- Tabor Hometown Pride Facebook page. Pictures of the weekly Farmers Market, street light project, flower baskets, painting project. <https://www.facebook.com/TaborHometownPride>
- Thurman Iowa Facebook page. Pictures of fundraisers and town clean up. <https://www.facebook.com/Thurman-Iowa-161610993907938/>

Project Photos – Fremont County Hometown Pride



Farragut Bench Installation



Farragut Painting Party



Farragut Painting Party



Hamburg Fallen Hero's Park



Landscaping on Main Street



New Hamburg Welcome Sign



Imogene Playground Equipment



RAGBRAI in Imogene



Percival Fire Station Painting



Percival Welcome Sign



Percival Playground



Percival Tree Planting



Randolph Flower Planting



Randolph Shoe Drive



Sidney Boot Committee



Sidney Welcome Sign



Sidney Cleanup Day



Sidney Boot Float



Sidney Wellness Center



Tabor Farmers Market



Tabor Flower Baskets



Tabor Painting Party



Tabor Public Art



Tabor Street Lights



Thurman Cleanup Day



Waubonsie Park Cleanup Crew

Louisa County Hometown Pride Program

Doug Elam – Community Coach

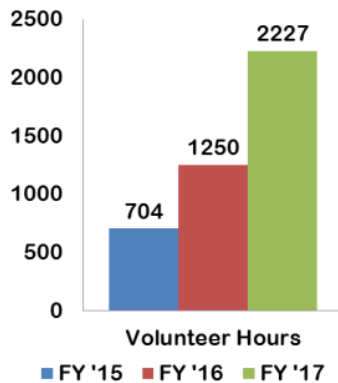
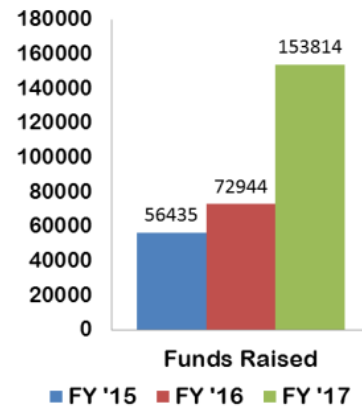
Louisa County Hometown Pride is comprised of nine communities: Cotter, Columbus City, Columbus Junction, Fredonia, Grandview, Letts, Morning Sun, Oakville and Wapello, plus a Rural committee. For several of the committees, attendance has dropped off to none, but more groups are growing than are attenuating. The most notable is Fredonia, going from one or two disinterested people to a fully engaged group of five or six! The largest group now is Wapello with up to 20 people at a meeting.

Special events – The most visible event for this year was the rededication of the William Henry Harrison Reddick grave in Letts. Reddick was a Civil War veteran and the recipient of one of the very first Medals of Honor for his participation in what has come to be known as The Great Locomotive Chase - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_Locomotive_Chase

Other public events were - the dedication of the city park in Oakville, tree planting in Letts and the upgrades to the Veterans' Memorial in Morning Sun.

Number and type of grants obtained:

IDOT/Trees Forever	
Visioning Grant/Morning Sun	
(1)	80,000.00
DNR - Derelict	
Building/Letts (1)	37,500.00
Donations & Fundraising (24)	12,573.81
Louisa County Foundation	
Grants (6)	11,500.00
Washington Riverboat	
Foundation/Wapello (1)	5,000.00
Trees Forever/Letts (1)	2,500.00
United Fund/Letts &	
Fredonia (2)	2,342.60
Adopts-a-Planter/Wapello (1)	1,058.00
Louisa County Foundation	
Emergency Grant/Fredonia(1)	741.92
Paint Iowa Beautiful/Letts &	
Wapello (2)	597.32

Volunteer hours – 2,227**TOTAL FY '17 = 153,813.65****Miles Traveled – 24,924****Projects completed for the period:**

- Lt Reddick grave rededication in Letts
- Upgrades to the Community Orchard in Wapello
- New plantings in downtown Wapello
- Grandview 'Welcome' sign and landscaping
- City Park in Oakville
- Sally Lewis house painted in Cotter
- Landscaping to the Veterans' Memorial in Morning Sun
- Community Garden in Morning Sun
- Convict Road presentations by the Rural Committee
- 1,000 Convict Road brochures designed and printed
- Recycling Center/Book Nook in Oakville
- Countywide litter clean up
- Easter Egg Hunt in Morning Sun
- St Patrick's Day Parade in Morning Sun
- Halloween Party hosted by Morning Sun
- Elmwood Cemetery landscaping
- "Sands of Time" book about the Convict Road written and pending publication by the Rural Committee
- Monthly newsletter to help communicate with the stakeholders (see attached)
- Nearhood Park (formerly Mill Race Park) landscaping
- Year Two Celebration with guest speaker Margo Underwood, Pocahontas Hometown Pride
- RAGBRAI through three Hometown Pride communities and the County
- New or Updated Facebook pages –
 - Wapello: <https://www.facebook.com/wapellohtpride/>

- Morning Sun: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/739885669452209/>

Community plan / vision status – Morning Sun received a Trees Forever/DOT Visioning grant. Wapello and Letts will put in for Visioning grants this September. All the comprehensive plans in the county (Columbus Junction/City, Wapello, Louisa County and a FEMA plan for post-2008 flooded Oakville) were reviewed for visioning and goal setting.

Community foundation / endowment relationships – The partnership between the Louisa Foundation and Hometown Pride continues to grow. All of the committees that requested grants received funding this past year. The City of Fredonia did not make a request during the regular grant cycle, but found that there was a need for an ‘emergency’ grant. With the support of Hometown Pride, a council member who had never written a grant before did so and then made a public presentation to the Foundation for their assistance. The grant was funded and the Fredonia City Hall will be receiving two new windows as well as shutters for all nine windows.

Leadership and skills training activities – Leadership training was offered to members of the community through a joint effort of the County Extension Office and the Louisa Development Group. Also, the Hometown Pride Coach is working with groups and individuals to create new skills in grant writing and public presentation. One example of this is a new member of the Columbus Junction Committee making an appeal to the Columbus School Board to have the Fitness Center at the school open to the public. This will be a very long process and one where he will gain new insights and abilities.

Sustainability and exit strategy issues – The Year-Two Celebration on October 18th was themed “The Long Game” – celebrating the successes and looking toward the future. Pocahontas Hometown Coach Margo Underwood was the guest speaker and encouraged the groups to work together on a countywide project. This combined effort is part of a broader strategy to have all the committees communicating and moving forward in a unified effort. To that end a day-long ArtTrail event is being planned for April 14, 2018 highlighting the county and the communities.

There is still little discussion about what comes after the five years is up, but three communities (Letts, Wapello and Morning Sun) are already working on projects that will continue long after October 2019.

Overall change in community behavior and appearance and other changes being initiated by others as a result of the PRIDE concept – The appearance of downtown Wapello is one of the more striking changes in the communities, but the flags, community garden and Elmwood Cemetery upgrades in Morning Sun show continued engagement over the course of the last three years. Oakville has been able to invest over \$15,000 in their park because of their participation in Hometown Pride. The pavilion there has been repaired and painted, new playground equipment installed and a disc-golf course added because of this program. None of this would have been possible if people didn’t pull together and show pride in their communities.

The North Park in Wapello, a Splash Pad in Morning Sun and the removal of a derelict building in Letts are investments in the future that reflect a change in attitude by residents.

Special needs or issues – It is still difficult to find the right chemistry in the some of the communities. The great surprise this past year was Fredonia becoming a viable player in the program. Very few residents of the county would have ever expected this community to come alive and move forward in Hometown Pride. But the concerns from last year are still true this year; there are many people who just don't care or have given up, BUT there are many who haven't. Showing those who want to make a difference that their time and resources will have a positive impact on their community is an ongoing struggle, but one worth fighting on behalf of rural Iowa.

At least one major news item in electronic form –

The rededication of Civil War Medal of Honor recipient William H. H. Reddick's grave made front page news in the Columbus Gazette and Wapello Republican (see attached)

Photos (see attached)

Quotes from key people –

"We never could have done this (Reddick Grave Rededication) without the support of Hometown Pride." Bill Kemp, Letts City Council

"I think we can all agree Hometown Pride has made a difference in Louisa County." Sherry Humphreys, Steering Committee Chair

"You are an answer to prayers!" Sally Lewis, house painted in Cotter

"I've never seen these groups (rodeo and baseball) in the same room talking civilly to one another, much less working together!" A Wapello Citizen attending a North Park planning meeting

Letts – Reddick Grave Rededication



Morning Sun – Community Garden

MORNING SUN NEWS-HERALD
Serving the Best Little Town Under the Sun

75¢ Per Copy Official City, School Paper Thursday, June 22, 2017 Issue 25 • Volume 129 • 8 Pages

Community Garden "growing" strong

The Morning Sun Hometown Pride's Community Garden is looking good. Produce plants planted by the Morning Sun Elementary students is growing with crops soon to be available. Stop by and check it out, and maybe pull a weed or two if you see any.

Morning Sun School Board approves purchase of Chrome Books

The Morning Sun School Board, in a regular meeting held Tuesday, June 13, moved to purchase 65 Chrome Books for use by students in the 2017-2018 school year.

The board approved two resignations and hired two staff members.

The resignations of principal Brian Gravel and school nurse Pat Darbyshire were accepted.

The board approved hiring Marj Gibson, librarian, for 4 hours per week, and Deb McElhinney, school nurse, 4 hours per week.

Beth Sherpohl, representing the 4th of July Committee, attended the meeting and thanked the board for the school's help on the celebration.

In other action on the board:

- Recognized Morning Sun alumni students Kale and Casey Noble for accomplishments in the meetings.
- Noted that over 100 students have participated in the summer lunch program.
- Heard a report from Fletcher that summer are on schedule for completion.
- The tuck-point project on the gym floor project has been completed. Electrical painting in the gym, as well as the installation of new windows, were set for the week of June 19, and will be replaced set for next week.

Oakville – City Park Upgrades



Grandview – Welcome Sign



Cotter – Sally Lewis House/Paint Iowa Beautiful



Letts – Trees Forever Planting



Jasper County Hometown Pride Program

Jeff Davidson – Community Coach

On October 1, 2017, Jasper County Hometown Pride will be at the halfway point of the five-year program. In 2017, two additional towns decided to join the program for a total of nine:

- Baxter
- Colfax
- Kellogg
- Lynnville
- Mingo
- Monroe
- Newton
- Prairie City
- Sully

Mingo is the smallest participating community at population 301; Newton remains the largest at 15,150. Each town has a Hometown Pride committee that meets monthly, has officers, and records meeting minutes. A few of the committees have Treasurers who keep track of grant and donation revenue as well as accounts receivable, but the majority have their accounting taken care of by the local municipal government.

Community Vision Plans. The community coach has guided each Hometown Pride committee through a process to develop a Hometown Pride Vision Plan. These provide each community with a blueprint of what it would like to accomplish during the five-year tenure of the formal Hometown Pride program, and beyond, when the committee remains in place after the community coach departs. The Vision Plans are important in that they are determined by the committee, rather than the community coach, and they allow the individual personality of each town to come forward.

The Vision Plans are reviewed bi-annually to ensure that progress is being made. This review provides the opportunity for the committee to celebrate when items are completed and removed from the list and to add new items that have become priorities. The Vision Plans provide guidance for fund-raising and grant applications.

In two Jasper County communities, the Hometown Pride Community Vision Plans provided an impetus for broader community strategic plans in 2017. In Baxter, the school superintendent coordinated with Hometown Pride, the City, and the local economic development organization to produce the “Baxter Summit.” This strategic plan, signed off on by all four organizations, is intended to drive the community forward in the next five years.

After observing the planning being conducted by Hometown Pride, the Colfax City Council requested that the community coach assist them with a pared down version of a City

Council Strategic Plan. This document used community input work from the past several years and was completed over a six-month period during City Council Work Sessions. The final document was adopted by the City Council in February. It will be updated after each local election to ensure it continues to represent the will of the seated City Council.

Grants. In April 2017, an accounting was made of grants received during the first two years of Hometown Pride in Jasper County. Twenty-five grants were awarded for a total of \$722,000. These included funding from the following programs: Prairie Meadows Community Betterment, Jasper Community Foundation, Iowa DNR Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP), Iowa Living Roadways, Paint Iowa Beautiful, Yo Ho Tools, Build with Bags, and the Casey's Foundation. The largest award, \$510,000 from the Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP), will go toward constructing a paved multi-use trail on the former Rock Island Railroad right of way between Monroe and the Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge near Prairie City.

In discussions of improvements to Holmdahl Park in Kellogg, the Kellogg Hometown Pride Committee discovered \$18,000 in leftover FEMA funds from the last flood earmarked for flood recovery activities in Holmdahl Park. An inquiry was made to FEMA, who indicated the funds were still available for use in the park. A modern playground set was procured with the available funds, and 20 volunteers coordinated by the Hometown Pride Committee converged on the park on June 3 and erected the playground in four hours.



Volunteers assembling playground equipment in Kellogg's Holmdahl Park.

University of Iowa and Iowa State University assistance. The community coach has emphasized to all the Hometown Pride committees that if we have a project that goes beyond our expertise, we need to find outside expertise to help. The University of Iowa (UI) and Iowa State University (ISU) have successfully provided project expertise and assistance several times.

In 2017, three class projects were completed for Jasper County Hometown Pride communities. These included evaluation of two failing street bridges in Mingo by a UI Civil and

Environmental Engineering class, a business entrepreneurial project in Prairie City assisted by a UI Business College class, and a greenspace evaluation for Newton by an ISU College of Design class. All projects were executed very well by the students and have resulted in guidance for moving the projects forward. There are fees of \$500-\$950 associated with the projects, but the research completed is estimated to have a value of at least \$20,000 per project.



University of Iowa Civil and Environmental Engineering students evaluate a bridge in Mingo.

Economic Development. Jasper County Hometown Pride continues to stretch beyond the traditional community beautification role of the Hometown Pride program into economic development and community development. We define economic development loosely as bringing in money from outside of the community into the community. Community development focuses on the concept of placemaking: How can we make our Hometown Pride communities as strong and appealing as possible, so that people are attracted to living there?

Economic development opportunities are much less prevalent in small communities than in larger ones, but they are out there. We have developed several initiatives unique to Jasper County involving regional rail trails and regional recreation facilities.

Regional rail trails that connect into the Des Moines metro. Jasper County is fortunate to have two regional rail trails which connect into the Des Moines metro trail system, the

existing Chichaqua Valley Trail, and the, as yet unnamed, trail under development between Monroe and Altoona. Both of these trails are the focus of activity for the Hometown Pride committees in Baxter, Mingo, Monroe, and Prairie City.

In Baxter and Mingo, Hometown Pride is focused on attracting bicyclists from the Des Moines metro into Jasper County. Efforts include making park and trailhead facilities more attractive, working with local bars and restaurants to make their businesses more appealing, and enhancing wayfinding signage. Mingo Hometown Pride has installed the first bike camping area on the Chichaqua Valley Trail, and Baxter is soon to follow. The first new wayfinding signage has been installed in Baxter, along with street banners designed by Hometown Pride that feature bicyclists. The Friends of the Chichaqua Valley Trail group includes Hometown Pride committee members and is a great partner in communicating information about the trail.



Recently installed wayfinding signage in Baxter

In Monroe and Prairie City, the principle effort of the Hometown Pride committees is getting the first phase of the regional rail trail off the ground. Approximately \$800,000 in funding has been secured, including the \$510,000 Federal Land Access Program (FLAP) grant which Hometown Pride coordinated. Construction of Phase 1 will occur in 2018. Monroe and Prairie City Hometown Pride committees have been assisting the Jasper County Conservation Department with preparation for design and engineering tasks for Phase 1. Additional Hometown Pride projects related to the trail include planning the trailhead in Monroe, selecting a name for the trail, and determining a route to avoid the grain co-op in Prairie City.



Monroe trailhead concept

Regional recreation facilities. Being so close to the Des Moines metro, there is the opportunity to develop regional recreation facilities through Hometown Pride that can bring outside money into the communities. Colfax Hometown Pride is focused on the development of Quarry Springs Park. This is a 480-acre former Martin Marietta quarry located between downtown Colfax and I-80. The property was donated to the City, and Hometown Pride and the Colfax Parks Board have joined forces to develop the area. Hometown Pride coordinates grant administration activities, and has already secured park development grants from REAP, Prairie Meadows, and Yo Ho Tools. In June 2017, a grant application was submitted to the State Recreational Trails program which would allow trail development in the park to begin. Hometown Pride has also been a key player in the development of the Quarry Springs Park Master Plan which includes private development which will accelerate park development.

Newton Hometown Pride is coordinating a unique opportunity involving the City of Newton, Newton Main Street, and the Des Moines Area Community College (DMACC). An area adjacent to downtown known as the DMACC Greenspace is where the former Maytag Corporation Plant One washing machine factory was located. The site has been fully remediated and donated to DMACC, and a planning process coordinated by Hometown Pride is tasked with developing the area into a community event space and campus green for DMACC. The first step was for an ISU design studio class to produce development concepts for the site, which occurred in spring of 2017. These are now being used to develop a preferred design option, which will be adopted by the participating entities and used to raise funds and to seek grants.



ISU Design Students present design concepts for the DMACC Greenspace to Newton community members.

Other Hometown Pride projects. Besides the projects highlighted above, there are other projects occurring in each Hometown Pride community related to making each town as strong and appealing as possible. These include:

- Geise Park redevelopment plan and implementation strategy in Baxter. Community reaction to the park improvements has been so positive that unsolicited donations are starting to come in.



- Highway 117 entranceway enhancements in Colfax. Banners obtained with grants obtained by Hometown Pride will be erected in fall 2017.
- Enhancements are planned to Holmdahl Park in Kellogg in addition to the recently installed playground.
- Restoration of the Lynnville School memorial at Ballfield Park in Lynnville, and construction of the Al Terpstra Field portal.



- Enhancements to the playground at Mingo Community Park in Mingo. Mingo also hopes to work with Iowa DOT on a pilot project for one of the innovative bridge replacement strategies developed by the University of Iowa students.
- Restoration of the tennis courts at Tools Point Park in Monroe using grants obtained by Hometown Pride.
- Construction of the first bouldering course in Jasper County at Aurora Park in Newton using grants obtained by Hometown Pride. Newton Hometown Pride has also coordinated a project to restore several downtown murals in Newton.



Murals in downtown Newton.

- Prairie City Hometown Pride helped obtain grants for the library to install automatic door openers, the police department to obtain safety equipment, and the Fire/EMS department to secure a new ambulance.

- Sully Hometown Pride has obtained grants and volunteers have completed work on improvements to Central Park, and a new emergency generator was secured for the City Hall Community Center.



Completed Central Park stage in Sully.

Housing. In 2017 housing was recognized as a priority for all Jasper County Hometown Pride communities. How can we get more housing constructed and rehabilitated, more kids in the school systems, and increase property tax revenue from new housing? In response, the community coach was able to coordinate with the Jasper County Economic Development Corporation to fund a Housing Market Study for all nine Hometown Pride towns. RDG Planning and Design was hired, and a study completed during winter 2017.

The housing study involved public input throughout the county and was extensively covered by the media. The final report highlights several needs for specific housing types, and provides documentation of pent up housing demand which will help to finance future projects. The study helped to confirm generally held notions of housing demand in Jasper County with actual empirical evidence and data.

The housing study is already providing a blueprint for moving housing efforts forward. Prairie City is meeting with property owners interested in annexing and zoning property into the city for residential development. Colfax is proceeding similarly in trying to open up ground for residential development. Newton is seeing projected new housing starts accelerated significantly, as well as new housing types such as townhouses, and second floor residential units downtown.

Summary. In not quite 2 1/2 years, Hometown Pride has made a significant impact in Jasper County. The Hometown Pride committees are providing leadership to move the nine communities forward and make them as strong as possible. Committee members are discovering that what they do makes a difference and that community members will take notice. Media coverage is excellent. Hometown Pride projects frequently make headlines in local newspapers and radio programs. There has been occasional coverage by Des Moines metro media outlets.

One of Hometown Pride's greatest accomplishments has been coordination and partnerships with other local organizations. These include the nine Hometown Pride municipal governments, parks boards, chambers of commerce, Main Street organizations in Colfax and

Newton, historic preservation organizations, economic development organizations, school districts (2 school superintendents serve on Hometown Pride committees), garden clubs, the County Conservation Department, and community betterment organizations. Outside organizations that have coordinated efforts with Jasper County Hometown Pride include the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, Iowa DOT, Iowa EDA, the Iowa Finance Authority, the Central Iowa Regional Transportation Planning Association (CIRTPA), Friends of the Chichaqua Valley Trail, USDA, ISU Extension, the ISU College of Design, and the University of Iowa Office of Outreach and Engagement.

Thanks to all and looking forward to the upcoming year.

Sac County Hometown Pride Program

Kathy Evert – Community Coach

The Sac County Hometown Pride Initiative completed its second year May 31, 2017. The county-wide program includes nine (9) communities, the county and the county-wide economic development and tourism organization. The communities are:

- Auburn
- Early
- Lake View
- Lytton
- Nemaha
- Odebolt
- Sac City
- Schaller
- Wall Lake

The population of the communities range from 80 to 2100. There is an eleven (11) member county-wide steering committee in place with representatives from each of the nine (9) communities along with a representative of the county supervisors and the county-wide economic development and tourism organization. The steering committee meets quarterly and is chaired by Bruce Perry of Sac City. Agendas and minutes are prepared and maintained of the steering committee meeting and meeting notices are published.

Seven of the nine communities have a committee and have been meeting on a regular basis. These eight have a chair person and set an agenda for each of the meetings. Not all are publishing minutes but are keeping handwritten record of their progress. They each provide information to their local news media and publicize their efforts locally. These communities have all posted their Keep Iowa Beautiful Hometown Pride Community signs. The community of Nemaha is the smallest community in the county, population of 80, and has not yet formed a committee of volunteers. The Early committee stopped meeting at the end of 2016 and attempts to start-up a new committee continues.

County-Wide Efforts

Working together across all the city lines in the county is a good way to build collaboration and momentum for community pride in a county. As the community coach, starting near the end of the first year of Hometown Pride in Sac County, I have encouraged and supported joint meetings and county-wide projects. The Steering Committee established an early goal of offering a leadership series to anyone in Sac County and completed two of the three sessions planned in the first year. The sessions were well done and attended, and received positive feedback. The third in the series was postponed from April to September 2016; it focused on working with different personalities and included personality profiles for all attendees. There were 12 attendees. The Steering Committee is planning a second Leadership Series which begins September 14, 2017.

Following a joint meeting between Sac City and Lake View Hometown Pride committees in September 2016, a former and long-time county event – Bike Around Sac County (BASC) was suggested and is planned for August 12, 2017. A route that includes five of the communities has been set; each community is participating and promoting the ride to local riders and visitors alike. It is another way to promote Sac County to residents and visitors alike.

The joint meeting also generated a county-wide effort to promote the trails in the county and encourage more to be developed. The first step in this effort was agreements to have each community designate a “Share the Road Route.” These were presented to the county supervisors who agreed to fund the signs and have them posted in 2017.

For the first time, Lake View and all of Sac County participated in a tourism promotion and give-away this year at the Omaha Boat Sports and Travel Show in February. Information from all communities was included in the booth, community volunteers staffed the booth, and several of the communities contributed to give away a bicycle and a weekend getaway to Sac County. Thousands of attendees to this large show stopped at the booth to receive or request information about things to do, places to stay, trails and more.

Impact

Hometown Pride in Sac County has helped accelerate several projects across the county and is often cited as the catalyst for good things to happen and get done! Hometown Pride is having a positive impact and has furthered collaboration and support in small communities. From small wins to larger capital projects, the volunteer spirit and determination is alive and well. These projects are important for the economic development and vitality of each community and the county as a whole.

Each community and committee is unique and all have completed, initiated and/or supported several projects during the year. A summary of them are found below.

Grants:

Securing grant funding and raising funds for priority community projects is a top priority and activity for all of the Hometown Pride communities in Sac County. As the community coach, I keep the committees apprised of programs and deadlines and am often asked to look for resources. I offer my assistance in reviewing and critiquing grants as they are drafted. Some of the larger grant awards during the second year in Sac County included:

- Wall Lake, \$10,000 from the Wellmark Foundation for their tennis court renovation project;
- Schaller, \$5,468 from Sac County Endowment Fund for their street sign project;
- Lake View, \$50,000 from Wellmark Foundation for their splash pad project;
- Odebolt, \$10,000 from the Renze Trust for their swimming pool project;
- Odebolt, \$25,000 from the Sac County Endowment Fund for the swimming pool filtration and pump project.

Economic Development:

Economic development initiatives for Sac County are led by the county-wide Sac County Economic Development and Tourism Development Corporation (SETD). It is staffed with a full-time executive director. The SETD is an active partner with the Hometown Pride in Sac County and supports its mission and goals. Projects and activities undertaken by Hometown Pride committees support the foundation of economic and tourism development by bettering the appearance of communities, showing strong community and volunteer involvement, adding and/or enhancing the amenities and attractions to attract and retain residents and visitors, supporting economic development initiatives, and advocating for key projects. Some of the key projects this past year are highlighted below and include: improvements to swimming pools, new street signs, plans for a splash pad, improvements to tennis courts, plans for a new trail, and more.

Planning:

Communities in Sac County had participated in the Trees Forever Community Visioning plans/Iowa Living Roadways prior to joining Hometown Pride. They continue to refer to those plans and work on portions as special projects for their communities. As the community coach, I have encouraged the committees to think of some short-term and long-range efforts they want for their communities and are often part of their monthly agendas. Lake View's Hometown Pride developed a strategic plan at the beginning of their existence. Wall Lake conducted surveys in their community to gauge what priorities were on the minds of their residents.

Below are the highlights by community.

* Auburn Hometown Pride has undertaken two long-term projects - the overall upgrade of the community center building and a one-mile recreational trail connecting the community to Grant Park. Grants have been pursued and fundraisers held to help provide local matching funds for the trail project. Their first approach is to secure funding for engineering and design. The project has significant local support of all ages and the city of Auburn.

The Hometown Pride committee consists of 5-6 volunteers and maintains the landscaping along the main street of Auburn, holds an annual Memorial Day brunch, an annual spay and neuter clinic for cats and dogs, and recently assisted with a community survey that resulted in the city receiving \$164,000 in grant funds to rehabilitate four houses.

* Early completed the installation of new street signs their first year and has discussed city park improvements. We will work to add a new Hometown Pride committee again in Early as soon as possible.

* Lake View completed a five-year strategic plan in September 2015. Their long-range plans are focused on an event center (the draft feasibility study was completed last June), tourism promotion and historical kiosks. The Hometown Pride Committee added a splash pad for Speaker Park to their list of projects and is moving forward with over \$100,000 raised this past year. The project received a big boost from a \$50,000 Wellmark Foundation grant and a pledge by the City of Lake View of \$20,000. Several individuals and businesses have pledged or donated funds, the committee has held several fundraisers and a direct mail

campaign. The goal is \$120,000 and should be reached very soon. The event center project is on hold at the present time.

The committee meets monthly and has 11 volunteers. They elect officers each year, set an agenda and record minutes of each meeting. They were successful in creating a community foundation this past year. They also held their annual shoreline clean-up of Blackhawk Lake.

* Lytton meets most every month, often schedules work sessions in their community garden. They started a community garden last year and expanded it to include a butterfly garden, beautifying two empty lots in their community. Those projects continue again this year and they group is working to add a garden shed to the property. The committee held a community BBQ to thank and recognize local volunteer firefighters in September and plans are underway for September 2017. The committee decorates the town gazebo with Christmas lights and helps other organizations with clean-ups. Lytton Hometown pride hosted the county steering committee in May.

*Odebolt Hometown Pride is also the community's long-standing Odebolt Betterment Committee; will be 10 years in existence this next year. The committee met every month, except December, and includes 12 volunteers. The group designated fundraisers and grant writing efforts to assist the City in replacing filters and improving their community swimming pool. They have been strong advocates and make regular contacts to try and attract a retailer to fill their lack of a grocery store as well as other potential businesses for vacant buildings. Funding was secured to complete the swimming pool improvements; funds are now being pursued for a sail shade project at the pool. Fundraisers include an annual pancake breakfast during Creek Days in June. The committee wanted to improve the main intersection (Hwy 175 and 39) of their community by dressing-up an old storage building. They recruited sponsors and have added large barn quilt signs along the east side of the building. They are now pursuing have them lit with solar lights. A member of the Odebolt Hometown Pride committee initiated a county-wide museum passport card for this summer and all but one museum in the county is participating. A gift basket will be given to one lucky passport winner.

Odebolt works on and supports several organizations and amenities in the community including Heritage Square and the Rural Schools Museum. They fund new Christmas decorations and lights and continuously looks for opportunities to beautify their community.

* Sac City has been an active committee and holds several events during the year. They met monthly last year and logged over 230 volunteer hours. Their long-term plans are to establish a recreational trail, canoe access to the Racoon River and improving the entrances to the community. A new major project being discussed is river clean-up of the Racoon River, starting at Sac City and then expanding throughout the county. They were successful in obtaining a Paint Iowa Beautiful grant again this year and their first Build with Bags grant. New benches will be added along the Racoon River area for the canoe access.

Special events this past year included the First Responders Appreciation Event on 9/10 with over 400 residents and 21 first responders attending. A "Project Blue Light" where 200 blue light bulbs were given to anyone, a trunk or treat event, Christmas lighting contest, and an

accomplishment event where many local organizations shared their successes during the past year. The group actively recruits new members to their committee as turnover occurs. The Sac City group also initiated a joint meeting with Lake View to talk about shared goals and opportunities. The first meeting was held in September and a follow-up held in May. County-wide efforts have resulted from these first two meetings.

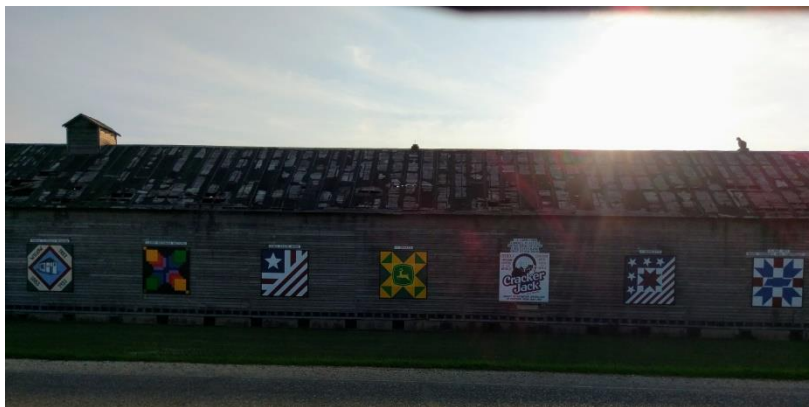
* Schaller held their meetings each month except January and February. There are six (6) members of the Schaller committee. They pursued grant funds and donations to replace and add new street signs in their community and improving or replacing the flagpole in front of city hall. They were successful in raising the funds for new street signs and wayfinding signs and they are being installed this summer. The Schaller Hometown Pride Committee held a community picnic fundraiser before the Popcorn Days Queen contest, had an entry in the parade and sold breakfast burritos before the parade. They participated in the citywide garage sale as one of their fundraisers. They acquired new planters for downtown, secured sponsors/donations for them by selling memorial plaques, and had them full of plants in the summer and fall, Christmas trees for the Christmas season, and planted again this spring. The group is now focusing on adding entrance signs to their community and has begun fundraising.

* Wall Lake completed a community-wide survey shortly after the committee was formed. It helped identify priority projects for the community as a whole, and the committee has been serving as a resource and coordinator for projects. The municipal pool was a top priority and the committee is working with the City of Wall Lake to develop a long-range plan for the pool and surrounding area. The City of Wall Lake completed the project in time for this summer season.

The committee hadn't met for several months and as the community coach, I scheduled a meeting for them in March; they've been meeting on a monthly basis again, have recruited several new committee members and are planning several projects.

They've completed the hanging flower baskets in the business district, held a successful movie night last year and are planning to hold three this next year. One of the recommendations from their First Impressions exchange with Ackley were to improve the entrance signs for Wall Lake. The committee is working on some design concepts and identifying wayfinding signage needs, too.

Photos of Sac County Hometown Pride 2016-2017







Capitol Neighborhoods Hometown Pride Program

Beth Hicks – Community Coach

Overview

The Capitol Neighborhoods Hometown Pride program was established on September 2, 2014. This program works with the neighborhood associations, organizational partners, businesses and residents of the Capitol East, Capitol Park and MLK Jr. Park neighborhoods on the east side of Des Moines. All three neighborhoods have submitted extensive neighborhood plans to the City of Des Moines within the last two years and are part of the Viva East Bank! (www.vivaeastbank.com) collaborative initiative leveraging resources and partnerships in order to implement their plans. Viva East Bank! accomplishes a significant portion of their work through four work group areas that will be further discussed below: Housing; Public Space & Infrastructure; Business Districts; and Community Building/Programming.

Viva East Bank! By the Numbers

- Median household income is \$23,833;
- 33% of the population is below the poverty level;
- 34% of the population is under the age of 18;
- 41% of the under 18 population is below the poverty line;
- The elementary schools are all over 90% free & reduced lunch;
- More than 1 in 10 are on public assistance;
- 1 in 3 adults do not have a high school degree;
- Only 1 in 20 adults have a college degree;
- 23% of the population speaks a language other than English at home;
- 1 in 5 homes is in below normal, poor or very poor condition.

Partner Networking / Meetings

Community Coach, Beth Hicks, regularly attends the following meetings:

- Neighborhood Leadership Council meeting, the last Wednesday of the month from 4:30-6 pm at MLK Jr. Park Shelter/Community Center; average attendance nine (9).
- Viva East Bank project management meeting, weekly at the City of Des Moines Armory or Community Housing Initiatives office; average attendance seven (4).
- Capitol East monthly neighborhood association meeting, the second Wednesday of the month from 6:30 -8 pm (dinner served at 6:30 pm) at Capitol View Elementary School; average attendance 15-20.
- Capitol Park monthly neighborhood association meeting, the second Thursday of the month from 7-9 pm at Wesley United Methodist Church; average attendance 20-25.
- MLK Jr. Park monthly neighborhood association meeting, the third Tuesday of the month from 6:30-8 pm at MLK Jr. Park Shelter/Community Center; average attendance six (6).
- Viva East Bank public space and infrastructure work group meeting; quarterly at the City of Des Moines Parks & Recreation office.

- Viva East Bank housing work group meeting: quarterly at Greater Des Moines Habitat for Humanity office.
- City of Des Moines Police Department “Fuel Up First” meeting; monthly at Salvation Army office or Police Department.
- Iowa Lutheran Edible Landscaping Project meeting; quarterly at Iowa Lutheran Hospital.

Neighborhood Leadership Council Members

- Beth Hicks, Community Coach, Hometown Pride;
- Amber Lynch, Planner, City of Des Moines;
- Laura Peters, Planner, City of Des Moines;
- Brian Bonanno, Resident Engagement Director, Community Housing Initiatives;
- Charice Williams, Board Chair, MLK Jr. Park Neighborhood Association;
- Odell Jenkins, Board Vice Chair, MLK Jr. Park Neighborhood Association;
- Pastor Keith Hackle, Senior Pastor, Philadelphia Seventh Day Adventist Church, MLK Jr. Park Neighborhood;
- Chelsea Lepley, Board Chair, Capitol Park Neighborhood Association;
- Todd McBride, Board Member, Capitol Park Neighborhood Association;
- Marge Ramsey, resident/former Board Secretary, Capitol Park Neighborhood Association;
- Alaire Saunders, Director, Community Center at Wesley United Methodist, Capitol Park Neighborhood;
- Jack Leachman, Board Chair, Capitol East Neighborhood Association;
- Lia Miller, Board Member, Capitol East Neighborhood Association.

Funding Summary (funding obtained through KIB HP and VEB partner efforts)

- \$2,500 from Neighborhood Investment Corp. for KIB community coach position (2016).
- \$3,000 from Polk County Betterment for KIB community coach position (2016 only).
- \$4,500 from City of Des Moines for KIB community coach position (2016 and 2017).
- \$15,000 from Mid-Iowa Health Foundation for Fuel Up First at East High School.
- \$10,000 from NeighborWorks for East High Cares programming.
- \$30,000 from NeighborWorks for business development work.
- \$15,000 from United Way for youth summer enrichment programming for 2016.
- \$10,000 from United Way for youth summer enrichment programming for 2017.
- \$3,000 from Polk County Betterment for MLK Jr. Park neighborhood association event sponsorship, and resident outreach (2016 and 2017).
- \$3,000 from Polk County Betterment for Capitol Park neighborhood association resident outreach and programming (2016 and 2017).
- \$3,000 from Polk County Betterment for Capitol East neighborhood association resident outreach and programming (2016 only).
- \$1,000 from Metro Waste Authority for Hiatt Service Day (2016 and 2017).
- \$1,500 each from United Way for Boys & Girls Club garden and Philadelphia Seventh Day Adventist garden.

- \$2,500 from the Greater Des Moines Community Foundation for the “Better Together” award.

Accomplishments

Housing. Safe, affordable housing is an essential element of a healthy neighborhood. This work group was formed to take a multi-pronged approach to improving the housing stock in the neighborhoods. Partners focus on a variety of strategies to ensure the real estate market is healthy, while also preserving affordable housing.

This work group focuses on the following goals from the neighborhood plans:

1. Improve conditions of existing housing;
2. Promote redevelopment and creation of new housings;
3. Promote home repair and other education opportunities.

Key nonprofit housing partners include:

- Community Housing Initiatives;
- Greater Des Moines Habitat for Humanity;
- Home, Inc.;
- Neighborhood Finance Corporation; and
- Rebuilding Together Greater Des Moines

Key 2016 Accomplishments include:

- \$1.63 million total investment;
- 12 residential properties acquired for future new construction or rehabilitation;
- 4 new homes constructed and sold;
- 3 loans provided by Neighborhood Finance Corporation;
- 2 existing homes rehabbed and sold;
- 65 homes received critical repairs and/or weatherization;
- 2 homeowner education workshops held;
- 5 blighted and public nuisance structures demolished.

Infrastructure and Public Spaces. This work group coordinates physical improvements throughout the East Bank, including streets, sidewalks, parks, and other public spaces in the neighborhoods. Major transformations happened again this year thanks to a variety of partners involved in Viva East Bank!

Overall goals in this area include:

- Improving connectivity (bicycle and pedestrian focus);
- Enhancing overall community appearance;
- Maintaining and improving existing public spaces;
- Maintaining and improving existing physical infrastructure; and
- Evaluating security needs.

Key 2016 Accomplishments include:

- \$2.16 million invested;
- Over three miles of new sidewalk were poured in the Capitol East and MLK Jr. Park neighborhoods; these sidewalk improvements help connect residents to neighborhood parks, schools and businesses;
- More than \$1.25 million invested by the City of Des Moines in street repairs and curbs in the Capitol Park and Capitol East neighborhoods; these improvements enhance the appearance of the neighborhoods while making travel smoother for residents and visitors;
- More than \$100,000 transformation of Redhead Park in the Capitol East neighborhood. The Circus has come to Redhead Park! Years ago, performers from the Barnum & Bailey Circus camped in the very space where Redhead Park stands today. A circus-themed playground, complete with a mini Ferris wheel, was installed by volunteers from the Meredith Corporation through Rebuilding Together. Other improvements included a colorful basketball court mural, new landscaping, and a historical sign sharing the story of Redhead Park. The park shelter was also refurbished and dedicated to neighborhood champion and long-time Capitol East resident Nadine Hogate;



- A fitness equipment circuit was installed in MLK Jr. Park thanks to a generous donation from AARP. These stations build upon an annual wellness fair hosted by MLK Jr. Park neighborhood association;
- Joshua Christian Academy received a new playground thanks to 200 youth volunteers representing 27 states and seven countries through the Greater Des Moines Habitat for Humanity's Rock the Block program. The school's 120 students, who helped pick out the new equipment, love recess more than ever!



Looking ahead, this work group will focus on the following projects:

- Working with the “Step It Up” and “DSM Connects” initiatives that aim for further improve pedestrian safety and walkability around East High School, Hiatt Middle School and Carver Elementary School.

Business Districts. Although only Capitol East and Capitol Park have business districts, they are important to one another because of proximity and variety of foods, services, etc. offered to residents both near and far. The most active district is the East Grand corridor, a primarily Latino-owned business area.

This work group focuses on the following goals from the neighborhood plans:

- Strengthen existing businesses;
- Create distinct identities for each business district;
- Facilitate and expand commercial investment;
- Determine appropriate redevelopment plans;
- Increase business occupancy rates.

Key 2016 Accomplishments include:

- \$35,145 invested;
- Jazz in July event at La Placita business district in Capitol East with 500 attendees enjoying live music and local food;



- Business owner outreach by Iowa State University Extension to Latino entrepreneurs.

Looking ahead, this work group will focus on the following projects:

- Establish consistent working groups (identify priorities of property owners & tenants);
- Develop programs to assist existing owners and tenants;
- Explore tools to incentivize redevelopment and private market investment.

Community Programming / Building. By focusing on adult education, youth programs and the overall health of East Bank residents, we are working with residents and partners to identify new programs, ways to leverage existing programs and create meaningful opportunities to engage.

Through Viva East Bank!, our partners work to provide activities and enrichment programs for residents of all ages through community events and programs that:

- Foster social capital;
- Connect neighbors;
- Strengthen families;
- Engage youth; and
- Build community identity.

Key 2016 Accomplishments include:

- \$62,664 invested;
- Fuel Up First hot breakfast program at East High School held every Monday school was in session through a partnership with Des Moines Police Department and the Salvation Army. On the last Monday, more than 1,000 students were served by community volunteers;



- Monthly neighborhood meetings were held by all three Viva! neighborhood associations;

- National Night Out events were hosted the first Tuesday in August by each neighborhood association to bring awareness to community connection and crime prevention;
- MLK Jr. Park summer youth programming was hosted at the Philadelphia Seventh Day Adventist Church for 30-40 elementary aged students over a six-week period. Students were offered a variety of reading and enrichment activities with funding from United Way and partnerships with Child & Family Policy Center and the State Public Policy Group.
- Capitol Park neighborhood association sponsored a Block Party as a way for neighbors to connect through good food, a bike rodeo and a tour of homes in various stage of renovation.



- More than 150 residents enjoyed watching “Norm of the North” at MLK Jr. Park as part of Movie in the Park in June;
- Over the summer, 100 eighth graders entering ninth grade at East High School attended a one-day skill building workshop focused on the transition into high school. East into East focuses on three primary areas: academic achievement and skill building, employability, and citizenship. This program was made possible by Gear Up Iowa.
- More than 500 students at Hiatt Middle School in the MLK Jr. Park neighborhood gave back to their community with service projects as part of “Hiatt Service Day.” Each grade level participated in litter cleanup, garden cleanup and planting, letter writing or flower planting throughout the day.



- A core group of dedicated students at East High School continue to learn the value of service and leadership, creating and connecting with volunteer opportunities within the greater community. In 2016, students completed a recycled plastic lid mural at

the Hiatt Middle School garden, held a clothing drive for youth in need, made lunch bags for Meals on Wheels and completed several community beautification projects.



- Community volunteers greeted more than 500 juniors at East High School with free breakfast pizza and smiles the morning of district-wide ACT testing. All three neighborhood associations and local businesses provided funding and volunteers.



- The 4th annual Holiday Party was a popular event at Hiatt Middle School. More than 400 students and family members created arts and crafts, and enjoyed face painting and a photo with Santa & Mrs. Claus. More than 2,000 warm winter clothing items were distributed at no cost. A free dinner from Teriyaki House, located in the Capitol Park neighborhoods, was also served.



- The Des Moines Area Religious Council (DMARC) began bringing their mobile food pantry to Carver Elementary School in Capitol Park twice a month in November. The Viva! area does not have a large grocery store or food pantry located

within its borders. Families are allowed to receive a three-day supply of food once a month.

The full Viva East Bank! 2016 annual report can be viewed here:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B4AZhIMkQTqJa0s2b3FYRnQxb1k/view>

Media/Partner Coverage

- <http://businessrecord.com/Content/Default/-All-Latest-News/Article/Viva-East-Bank-wins-Community-Foundation-award/-3/248/73086>;
- <http://data.desmoinesregister.com/central-iowa-networking/single.php?id=3073>;
- <http://www.marionstar.com/story/money/business/biz-buzz/2017/06/15/bank-of-america-settlement-money-des-moines-mortgage/401079001/>;
- <https://www.instituteforchildsuccess.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/BRUNER-Research-Symposium-Place-and-Early-Childhood-Bruner.pdf>;
- <http://www.desmoinesregister.com/story/money/business/development/2017/01/28/widening-gap-how-dms-rising-home-values-left-behind-some-neighborhoods/96373234/>;
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