



Photo Credit: "Great Blue Heron Shakes off the Morning Dew," Peyton Renning of Des Moines
1st Place Iowa Wildlife and 3rd Place Robert D. Ray Best in Show

Swing into Summer! Tees, Trees and Keeping Iowa Beautiful!

July has flown by, and what a HUGE month it has been for Keep Iowa Beautiful! Thanks to the incredible dedication of volunteers, partners, and supporters across the state, we are celebrating a summer of record-breaking success and exciting growth.

First, a massive thank you to everyone who stepped up to make our communities shine! This month, we officially wrapped up both our 2026 Pick Up Iowa and 2026 Plant Iowa Beautiful programs. From litter cleanups to vibrant community plantings, your hard work has left a beautiful, lasting footprint across the state.

We also hit the green for our Fifth Annual Keep Iowa Beautiful Golf Tournament, and we are thrilled to announce that it was a massive success! Thanks to our players, sponsors, and silent auction participants, the event exceeded its goals, raising funds that will directly support our statewide programs.

As if that wasn't enough to celebrate, our impact is growing! We are proud to have officially launched 17 new communities into our Hometown Pride program this month. We can't wait to work alongside the volunteers in these communities to help empower local residents and enhance their hometowns.

Read on to see the full recap of these achievements and discover how Iowans are working (and playing) together to Keep Iowa Beautiful this summer!

**With gratitude,
The Keep Iowa Beautiful Team**

Announcing 17 New Hometown Pride Communities

Congratulations Hamilton County, Union County and Newell!

Hometown Pride is growing! Keep Iowa Beautiful is excited to announce that our high-impact community improvement program will expand to 17 new communities in the coming year.



Hometown Pride helps communities build pride, develop new leaders, and enhance public spaces through volunteer-driven projects and professional community coaching.

3 New Initiatives, Covering 17 Communities

- Hamilton County - Launching Fall 2026 in Blairsburg, Ellsworth, Jewell, Kamrar, Randall, Stanhope, Stratford, Webster City, and Williams
- Union County - Launching Spring 2027 in Afton, Arispe, Creston, Cromwell, Lorimor, Shannon City, and Thayer
- City of Newell – Launching August 2026

These communities were selected for their strong collaboration, readiness, and shared commitment to long-term community improvement.

Each community will work with a Hometown Pride coach to launch a volunteer-driven program that develops new local leaders and completes community improvement projects such as park and trail upgrades, public art, beautification projects, new gathering spaces, and community events.

Keep Iowa Beautiful's Hometown Pride program is supported by many valued partners across Iowa, including investments from the Iowa Economic Development Authority and Alliant Energy Foundation.

We're excited to support these communities as they turn local ideas into lasting impact!

[Read the full press release here.](#)



Twelve Plant Iowa Beautiful Projects Completed

First-ever Plant Iowa Beautiful program was a big success!

After receiving 150+ applications, KIB selected 12 recipients of \$500 mini-grants for planting and beautification projects across Iowa. More than 400 volunteers planted nearly 1,000 flowers, bushes and trees to beautify parks, main streets, and other public spaces. Thank you to all for your hard work to keep Iowa looking its best! These grants were made possible through the generous support of Keep America Beautiful and Landus Cooperative. For more information and photos, [visit our website](#).

Projects Shown:

Top - Storm Lake Hometown Pride

Bottom - Poweshiek Economic Development Collaborative



Pick-Up Iowa - 2026 Results

Pick-Up Iowa Wraps Up an Incredible Year!

From April through June, volunteers across the state rolled up their sleeves and showed some serious love to our beautiful home. Thanks to your hard work, Iowa's parks, schools, and roadsides are cleaner, greener, and more beautiful!

To help celebrate America's 250th Birthday on July 4, 2026, this year Pick-Up Iowa was part of a national movement to support Keep America Beautiful's Greatest American Cleanup initiative. To

show our support, we set a goal of having 2,500 volunteers participate in Pick-Up Iowa, and our amazing volunteers smashed that goal!

Our Collective Impact by the Numbers:

- 102 community events hosted from border to border.
- 2,995 amazing volunteers who showed up and stood out.
- 8,823 total volunteer hours dedicated to beautifying Iowa.
- 64% of events successfully involved youth volunteers!

Whether you picked up litter for one hour or organized an entire town clean-up, THANK YOU. Your pride in our state is the reason Iowa stays beautiful.



Strong Des Moines



Girl Scout Troop 01433



Loess Hills Audubon Society



Record Breaking Golf Tournament!

Fifth Annual Golf Tournament Raises \$110,000!

The results are in, and we are absolutely thrilled to announce that our Fifth Annual Keep Iowa Beautiful Golf Tournament was the highest-grossing event in our organization's history! Thanks to your generosity and support, we raised **\$110,000**, shattering our original goal of \$100,000 by \$10,000.

An achievement like this takes a village, and we want to extend our deepest gratitude to everyone who made the day possible. Thank you to our incredible sponsors and golfers for stepping up to the tee and providing the financial support that fuels our mission, as well as Copper Creek Golf Club for hosting the event year after year. We also owe a huge thank you to our auction item donors and our auction buyers, whose enthusiastic bidding in both our silent and live auctions helped drive us over the finish line. Finally, this day wouldn't have been possible without the hard work, planning, and energy of our wonderful volunteers, staff, and board members who ensured the entire event ran flawlessly.

Every dollar raised will stay right here in Iowa, helping us fund community enhancement programs. Thank you all for partnering with us to keep our state beautiful, vibrant, and thriving!



THANKS TO OUR LEAD SPONSORS!



POLK COUNTY
Board of Supervisors



Tom Hockensmith

THANKS TO OUR GAME & HOLE SPONSORS!

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Pennie Carroll and Associates,

Ruth's Chris Steak House
Skinner Law Firm
Speed's Golf Cars
Tasty Tacos
The Pizza Bar by Taste of New York
Woods of Copper Creek

Grant Opportunities

Empower Rural Iowa FY27 Grant Application Cycle Open

Attention Iowa Communities: Empower Rural Iowa's FY27 grant application cycle is now open and Iowa communities and organizations are encouraged to explore and apply for the following funding opportunities:

- BOOST

- Innovation-Housing 2.0
- Child Care Planning Grant
- Rural Housing Readiness Assessment Grant

Grant applications are due August 26 at 4pm. Program details and grant guidelines are available on the [Center for Rural Revitalization website](#) and applications must be submitted through the following website: <https://www.iowagrants.gov/index.do>.

For questions, contact Keep Iowa Beautiful Board member, [Sacha Wise](#).

Your Support Matters!

Consider Giving to Keep Iowa Beautiful

From painting the state beautiful to instilling civic pride in our communities, the programs we provide are thanks to donations from supporters like you!

[Donate to Support Iowa Communities](#)



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