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Three New Hometown Pride Initiatives Bring Community Development Program to 17 Iowa Communities

Hamilton County, Union County, and the City of Newell will join Keep Iowa Beautiful's Hometown Pride program, strengthening local leadership, regional collaboration, and volunteer-driven community development across Iowa.

Keep Iowa Beautiful (KIB) is proud to announce the selection of three new Hometown Pride initiatives that will bring the organization's successful community development program to 17 additional Iowa communities over the next year.

Across Iowa, Hometown Pride communities are turning local ideas into lasting impact. Through volunteer-led projects supported by professional community coaching, the program helps communities strengthen leadership, build community pride, enhance public spaces, and create momentum for the future. From parks and trails to public art, beautification projects, new gathering spaces and community-building events, Hometown Pride empowers local volunteers to turn their own vision into reality.

The newest Hometown Pride initiatives include:

- **Hamilton County**, including the communities of Blairsburg, Ellsworth, Jewell, Kamrar, Randall, Stanhope, Stratford, Webster City, and Williams. Hometown Pride will launch in fall 2026.
- **Union County**, including the communities of Afton, Arispe, Creston, Cromwell, Lorimor, Shannon City, and Thayer. The program will begin in early spring 2027.
- **The City of Newell**, which will begin Hometown Pride in August 2026.

The communities were selected based on their demonstrated readiness and enthusiasm for working together to create long-term community improvements. The application process itself reflected one of Hometown Pride's greatest strengths: neighboring communities, local governments, businesses, nonprofit organizations, and regional partners coming together around a shared vision for the future.

"Hometown Pride is built on the belief that the best ideas for a community come from the people who live there," said Andy Frantz, Executive Director of Keep Iowa Beautiful. "These communities have already demonstrated the collaboration, commitment, and leadership that make Hometown Pride successful. We're excited to support their volunteers as they turn local ideas into lasting impact."

Unlike traditional grant programs, Hometown Pride focuses on building local leadership and community capacity rather than funding individual projects. With the support of a professional community coach, volunteers identify priorities unique to their communities and work together to move projects forward. Over the course of the program, communities complete projects such as parks and trails, public art, community events, beautification efforts, and new gathering spaces. Communities receive five years of coaching to build momentum, and most continue Hometown Pride for years afterward as local volunteers keep projects moving.

More than 100 communities have participated in Hometown Pride since its inception in 2012. Together, these communities have:

- Completed **2,500 community projects**
- Raised **more than \$23 million** for local projects
- Engaged up to **2,000 volunteers annually** in leading positive change

Hamilton County

The Hamilton County application was developed through a collaborative effort involving Hamilton County, Hamilton County Growth Partnership, Ames Regional Economic Alliance, and the nine participating communities (Blairsburg, Ellsworth, Jewell, Kamrar, Randall, Stanhope, Stratford, Webster City, and Williams).

Keep Iowa Beautiful will hire a new Hometown Pride Community Coach for Hamilton County later this summer.

Union County

The Union County application was coordinated by Union County Development Association with support from the seven participating communities (Afton, Arispe, Creston, Cromwell, Lorimor, Shannon City, and Thayer). Local funding partners for Union County include:

- Union County Development Association, Greater Regional Health, Dwight & Marilyn Conover Foundation, Creston/Union County Tourism, High Lakes Outdoor Alliance, Alliant Energy Foundation, BUNN, American Family Insurance (Katie Turner & Turner & Associates Inc.), Akin Building Centers, and KSIB Radio

Keep Iowa Beautiful will hire a Hometown Pride Community Coach for Union County in early 2027.

Newell

The City of Newell submitted its application with support from the Newell Community Foundation and additional local partners. Newell will be served by existing Hometown Pride Community Coach Margo Underwood.

State-wide, Keep Iowa Beautiful's Hometown Pride program is supported by many valued partners, including investments from the Iowa Economic Development Authority and Alliant Energy Foundation. Together, these partnerships help communities strengthen local leadership, foster regional collaboration, and create lasting improvements that enhance quality of life across the state.

About Hometown Pride

Hometown Pride is a volunteer-driven community development program of Keep Iowa Beautiful that helps Iowa communities strengthen local leadership, build community pride, and create lasting improvements through professional community coaching and regional collaboration. Communities identify their own priorities and local volunteers work together to complete projects that enhance quality of life, foster civic engagement, and build momentum for the future. Learn more:

keepiowabeautiful.org/programming/hometown-pride/

About Keep Iowa Beautiful

Keep Iowa Beautiful is a statewide nonprofit organization that empowers Iowans to create vibrant communities and build hometown pride through volunteer-driven enhancement programs. Since 2000, Keep Iowa Beautiful has partnered with communities across Iowa to strengthen local leadership, inspire civic engagement, and improve the places Iowans call home. www.keepiowabeautiful.org