



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Union County Selected for Keep Iowa Beautiful's Hometown Pride Program

Seven communities will launch the volunteer-driven community development program.

Keep Iowa Beautiful (KIB) is proud to announce that Union County has been selected to join the organization's Hometown Pride program, bringing new opportunities for local leadership development, regional collaboration, and volunteer-driven community improvement across the county.

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.

Union County's Hometown Pride initiative will include the communities of Afton, Arispe, Creston, Cromwell, Lorimor, Shannon City, and Thayer. The program will officially launch in early spring 2027.

Union County was selected based on its strong collaboration, demonstrated readiness, and shared commitment to long-term community improvement. The application process itself reflected one of Hometown Pride's greatest strengths: communities 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. Keep Iowa Beautiful will hire a Hometown Pride Community Coach for Union County in early 2027.

More than 100 Iowa 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 improvements
- Engaged up to **2,000 volunteers annually**

Supporting Partners

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

At a state-wide level, 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. 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.com