



Photo Credit: "Young Buck, Late Summer," Justin Cox of Iowa City
Honorable Mention Iowa Wildlife

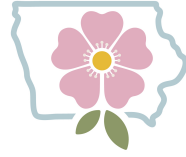
Closing out Summer with Stories of Iowa Pride!

Summer is almost over, but things are as busy and exciting as ever! In this month's newsletter, we are thrilled to share several updates on our ongoing efforts and the community pride we see in every corner of the state!

As fair season gets underway, we are proud to support the hard-working staff keeping the Iowa State Fairgrounds clean and beautiful! We are also taking a moment to send a huge thank you to the Alliant Energy Foundation for their incredible continued support of our mission. Additionally, we are excited to announce that our annual photo contest is officially open! Lastly, we are spotlighting a few communities whose civic pride comes shining through, whether it be through Hometown Pride projects, or beautification efforts thanks to Paint Iowa Beautiful grants!

Thank you for your continued dedication to keeping Iowa beautiful. Grab a cold drink, dive into this month's stories, and enjoy the rest of your August!

With gratitude,



Keeping the Iowa State Fairgrounds Beautiful

Proudly Supporting the OK Crew

The 2026 Iowa State Fair is officially underway, drawing millions of visitors to celebrate the best of our state.

Keep Iowa Beautiful is thrilled to continue our annual partnership with the Iowa State Fair by supporting the "OK Crew," the dedicated team responsible for keeping the grounds pristine every day. To show our appreciation, we are proud to provide custom T-shirts, buckets and trash-grabbers to support their vital work.



Thank you to the hardworking OK Crew for keeping the Iowa State Fair clean and welcoming! Have a wonderful and safe Iowa State Fair!

(Pictured above, Keep Iowa Beautiful Executive Director, Andy Frantz, and Board Vice-Chair, Mike Richardson, with members of the OK Crew on opening day of the 2026 Iowa State Fair)



Capture Iowa's Beauty

The 17th Annual Photo Contest is NOW OPEN!!

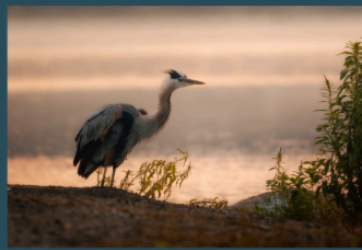
Showcase your perspective of our state's rural and urban landscapes in the Keep Iowa Beautiful Annual Photography Contest! Open to amateur and experienced photographers alike, the contest features over \$2,000 in cash awards and a dedicated Youth Winner category for grades K-12.

Contest Categories:

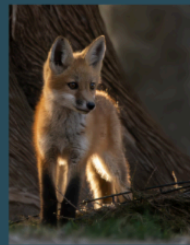
- **Iowa Landscape:** Farm fields, rolling hills, wooded forests, and more.
- **Iowa Water:** Rivers, streams, ponds, and lakes.
- **Iowa Cities:** Urban centers, street scenes, and landmarks.
- **Iowans in Action:** People living, working, and playing.
- **Iowa Wildlife:** Mammals, birds, fish, bugs, and other critters.
- **Hometown Pride:** Photos of participating Hometown Pride towns.

Deadline to Enter: Friday, December 11, 2026

Participants may enter photos in as many categories as they like. To view past winners, read complete rules, and submit your entries, visit the [Keep Iowa Beautiful website](#) today!



Showcase Iowa's Beauty Through Your Lens 17TH ANNUAL PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST



Top Row (L to R): "Ice Fishing," Silas Clough, "Glitter City," Scott Hoag, "Great Blue Heron Shakes off the Morning Dew," Peyton Renning, "Heaven with a Zip Code," Scott Hoag

Bottom Row (L to R): "Juniper Tree Overlooking Fall Colors Along the Mississippi," Suhaib Khan, "Crawling Through the Corn," Dave LaBelle "Red Fox Kit Backlit," Jim Rose, "Lake Dreams," William Beardsley



Sponsor Spotlight

Alliant Energy Foundation Invests in Hometown Pride

For years, the Alliant Energy Foundation has been a partner of Keep Iowa Beautiful, investing in the future and vitality of our state's communities.

Alliant Energy Foundation's generosity helps to support our Hometown Pride program, which has strengthened more than 100 Iowa communities since 2012, including many served by Alliant Energy. Thanks to generous support from the Alliant Energy Foundation and other dedicated sponsors, these communities receive professional coaching and guidance to help transform local visions into lasting results.

We extend our deepest gratitude to the Alliant Energy Foundation for your commitment, visionary philanthropy, and unwavering belief in the incredible power of Iowa's volunteers and communities!





Hometown Pride Highlights

Park Pavilion in Peosta

The Kelly Oaks Park Pavilion in Peosta is almost complete! The pavilion is part of a larger Kelly Oaks Park community project. From trails to playgrounds to passive natural areas, this park will provide Peosta with an amazing new centerpiece for the city.



Sioux Rapids Car Show

The Sioux Rapids Hometown Pride Committee hosted a successful car show raising over \$1,800. Proceeds from the car show support the Sioux Rapids Hometown Pride Committee and help fund community improvement and revitalization projects as they continue to invest in rebuilding their town in the aftermath of a devastating flood in 2024.

Dedication of Pond in Laurens

Congratulations to Laurens Hometown Pride and the community of Laurens on the dedication of the Sportsman's Park Pond Restoration Project. The dedication was held during Laurens' Summer Celebration. New interpretive signage was installed near the pond's edge explaining the restoration process and the components of a Healthy Pond Ecosystem.



Growing Community Pride, one Brushstroke at a Time

A Spotlight on Recent Paint Iowa Beautiful Projects

Summer is the perfect time for outdoor projects! Even with the hot weather, Iowans across the state have been hard at work brightening, beautifying and refreshing parks, community centers and main streets thanks to our Paint Iowa Beautiful partnership with Diamond Vogel!

Take a look below at a few of the many Paint Iowa Beautiful projects that have been completed so far this year. And make sure to follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) to read more about the projects across the state as they are completed.



Top Row (L to R): Colfax Main Street Mural, Fairfield Central Park Gazebo, Forest City Mural
Bottom Row (L to R): Pocahontas Elbert Park Shelter, Minden City Hall, Rock Rapids Island Park Bathhouse

Grant Opportunities - DUE NEXT WEEK

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



Keep Iowa Beautiful | PO Box 1056 | Johnston, IA 50131 US

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