



Photo Credit: "The Best Campsite in Iowa," Cody Davis of Grinnell
Second Place Iowa Landscape, 16th Annual Photo Contest (2026)

Autumn Outlook

October is a busy month here at Keep Iowa Beautiful and we are grateful to share some exciting things this month.

First up, we are thrilled to welcome a brand-new Community Coach to the team, who is ready to jump in and launch the Hometown Pride program in Hamilton County. And our Annual Photography Contest is officially open; we can't wait to see what you love about Iowa, captured on film!

Plus, we've got your regular monthly updates on how volunteers within our Hometown Pride and Paint Iowa Beautiful programs are making a difference across Iowa.

So, settle in and read about all the great things happening this month!

With gratitude,



New Hometown Pride Community Coach

Meet Julie Wright

We're excited to welcome our newest Hometown Pride Community Coach, Julie Wright!

Julie will serve as the Hometown Pride Community Coach for Hamilton County, marking the official launch of the Hometown Pride program in the 9 communities of Blairsburg, Ellsworth, Jewell, Kamrar, Randall, Stanhope, Stratford, Webster City, and Williams.

Wright brings a strong combination of experience as a business owner, business coach, and all-star volunteer for her own hometown. She has been the owner of a professional service firm for more than 30 years and is a business advisor for the Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses program. As a volunteer in Clear Lake, Wright led an initiative to raise millions of dollars and coordinate hundreds of volunteers to create one of the region's largest tourist attractions – Central Gardens of North Iowa. She is co-owner of a main street business and author of the soon-to-be published book, "Prosperous Towns." Wright holds a B.S degree from Iowa State University in IAd/Business – Marketing.



You can read more about Julie and the Hometown Pride program in our [recent press release](#).



Celebrate Iowa Through Photography

Participate in our Annual Photo Contest!

In honor of October as Photographer Appreciation Month, we are celebrating the professional and amateur photographers who participate in our Annual Photography Contest each year!

Over the past 17 years, so many talented individuals have captured the best of Iowa: from rolling farmland to rodeos to animals, big and small. And we are continually blown away by the talent of Iowa photographers.

Please enjoy the collage of some of the Robert D. Ray Best of Show winners over the years and use this as your reminder to **enter the Keep Iowa Beautiful 17th Annual Photography Contest!**



Enter the Photo Contest TODAY!

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.](#)

Deadline to Enter: Friday, December 11, 2026

Photo Credit, clockwise from top left: "Cliff Swallows Arguing," Sharon Scarff, "Heaven with a Zip Code," Scott Hoag, "A Misty Sunrise at Hitchcock," Buck Christensen, "The Squad," Jesse Streinz, "Snake Allen in Bloom," Sharon Scarff



Hometown Pride Highlights

Walker Bandshell Completion

In our March newsletter, we shared that the Walker Hometown Pride Committee was raising funds for a new bandshell. We are excited to follow up and report that the bandshell is officially complete and being used for concerts and community events. The Walker Hometown Pride Committee raised \$54,675 to make this project a reality. Congratulations Walker Hometown Pride!





Annual Coaches Meeting

Keep Iowa Beautiful held our annual Hometown Pride Coaches meeting in Waverly on October 13! Executive Director Andy Frantz and Associate Director Lorin Ditzler joined the team of Community Coaches from across the state to connect, share, and celebrate another year helping Iowa thrive!

Alta and Marathon Selected for Community Visioning Program

Alta and Marathon, two of our Hometown Pride communities, have been chosen to participate in the Iowa's Living Roadways Community Visioning program for 2027!



Through this program, a committee of residents will look at landscape issues, set goals for change, and develop implementation strategies for meeting community goals. To read more about this program, visit the [Iowa's Living Roadways Community Visioning website!](#)



Paint Iowa Beautiful

Community Paint Projects Across Iowa

From Oakland to Alta to Bellevue, volunteers across Iowa are giving a refresh to beloved landmarks and public buildings.

Want to hear more about projects like this? Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#)!



(L to R): Eckels Memorial Public Library (Oakland), Hanover Historical Society (Alta), Nelson Unit Lodge in Bellevue State Park (Bellevue)

Coming Soon!

Applications for **Paint Iowa Beautiful 2027** will open soon!
[Visit our website](#) and today to check out what other communities have done with their grants and get inspiration for your next project!



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!

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