ISU Extension CED Featured at ISU’s Smithsonian Folklife Exhibit

Sandra Oberbroeckling,
Community Relations Specialist

Can anyone design? What does design mean to you? How does design affect people’s lives?

These are just some of the questions that visitors to the Iowa State University exhibit, “Transforming Communities: Design in Action,” will explore at the 2012 Smithsonian Folklife Festival on the National Mall in Washington, DC, this summer. ISU’s exhibit will highlight the central role of design in the land-grant mission, and extension’s past, present and future impact on communities.

Every year, the Folklife Festival, a ten-day event attracting more than one million visitors, commemorates our living heritage by presenting community-based, cultural exemplars. Examples of past themes are rhythm and blues, space travel and Tibetan culture. This year’s theme, “Campus and Community: Public and Land-grant Universities and the USDA at 150,” is being produced in partnership with the Association of Public Land-grant Universities (APLU) and USDA.

“The Folklife Festival is a pretty significant stage on which to promote ISU,” said David Ringholz, associate professor and director of industrial design, who leads the team designing the exhibit.

In ISU’s exhibit, multi-layered messages will be communicated through a mix of interactive technology and personal conversation, in which ISU Extension and Outreach Community and Economic Development (CED) is featured prominently. Outreach projects such as the PLaCE (Partnering Landscape and Community Enhancement) program, the Iowa’s Living Roadways Community Visioning Program, and the landscape architecture community design studio are only a few of those that are included. CED

In This Issue

- Page 4 Microloan program helps Ottumwa entrepreneur live the dream
- Page 5 ISU’s STATCOM helps Perry Public Library define its vision
- Page 6 Students employ design activism to confront food uncertainty in Des Moines
- Page 9 Extension specialists take Road Scholar program to Guatemala
- Page 11 Extension CED seeks communities for two-year partnerships
From the Director: Not Forgetting the 'U'

Dear Friends:

Our official program title is Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Community and Economic Development. We shorten that to CED, but I would like to focus on the “University” part of our title as I write my comments for this edition of Community Matters.

With the 150th anniversary of the Morrill Act, there has been a tendency to wax nostalgic on the history of the land-grant university and the Extension programming engendered by the land-grant movement. Iowa State University is steeped in tradition and history, as are most land-grant universities. Iowa was the first to charter a university (ISU) under the Morrill Act signed by Abraham Lincoln in 1862. The first county Extension office opened in Iowa. George Washington Carver was ISU’s first African-American graduate. “3-H clubs” were born in Iowa, before the term “4-H” came into use (again, in Iowa).

Yet, with all its traditions, Iowa State University is always about the future. The university’s research is often focused on what can be, or how what exists today can be used as a foundation for a better tomorrow. The ultimate fruits of the university’s teaching are found in the accomplishments of its graduates. Think of it this way: I work at a place where I grow older, but the vast majority of people I associate with are always the same age—18 to 22 years old.

What makes ISU different than the prototypical university is its land-grant status. In referring to the Morrill Act, Lincoln called for the creation of the “public’s universities.” He advocated the idea that all should have access to a university education and learning based upon merit rather than status or wealth. These accessible places of learning would help the country grow and prosper. The Morrill Act itself was a provision for America’s future.

Much of what Iowa State University and ISU Extension and Outreach do involves working with communities to fulfill our land-grant mission of focusing upon the future. Virtually every article in this edition of Community Matters describes research or outreach programming that addresses the future of communities, organizations, or individuals. The point of ISU’s Smithsonian Folklife Festival exhibit is to explain to the world how we help communities create their futures. Much in the same vein as all those 18- to 22-year-olds setting the foundation for their future through education, we help communities build their futures. The exhibit is in part designed to make the viewer think about what can be, what is possible.

Universities are about the future. What is so exciting about our work in Extension CED is that we are asked to extend this futuristic place to the communities in our state and beyond. As we continue in our mission today, I can’t help but feel a sense of gratitude to Justin Morrill and Abraham Lincoln for thinking about our future.

Timothy O. Borich
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Find us on Facebook at http://www.facebook.com/ISU.Extension.CED and Twitter @ISUExtensionCED

Program Builder at your fingertips:

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Community Matters is published quarterly for Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Community and Economic Development staff and their clients. Comments, questions, and suggestions regarding the content of this newsletter should be directed to:

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faculty and staff attending are CED program
director Tim Borich and community
development specialists Lynn Adams,
Steve Adams, Jane Nolan Goeken, Himar
Hernández and Karen Lathrop.

ISU faculty and staff will be making
presentations throughout the festival.
Representing the CED program will be
Borich and Hernández. Borich will
outline about some of the past and current
programming and staffing in design
extension to lay the foundation for broader
nationwide extension programming.
Hernández will speak on how communities
can engage their immigrant populations
and what Extension is doing to help
minorities break barriers to open and
expand their own businesses. Other
speakers include Luis Rico-Gutierrez, dean
of the ISU College of Design; Ringholz;
Lisa Fontaine, associate professor of art and
design; Arthur Croyle, associate professor
of art and design; and Jennifer Drinkwater,
art and design lecturer and featured artist.

The “Maker Bot,” developed by ISU students, teaches
visitors about design thinking in 3D.

The ISU exhibit is 26 by 18 feet and stands
10 feet tall at its highest point. On one side,
TV monitors will show video of examples of
the university’s completed and ongoing
projects in Iowa communities, as well as
innovative student design projects yet to be
implemented.

The center column will have a 180-degree
LED large-format display screen topped by
a circular, ribbon-board LED crawl. Four
interactive touchscreen workstations on a
table encircling the column will offer games
that encourage visitors to explore what
design is and how designers think and
create. For example, one children’s game
will guide the design for a butterfly habitat,
while an adult game will focus on solving
community challenges for seniors. As
visitors complete their games, light pulses
will travel up the column to the LED crawl,
which will display their ideas. Seen from
the tent’s entrance, the column and crawl
will help attract visitors into the exhibit.

Various interactive activities will happen
in two design performance spaces within
the exhibit. In one area, design faculty and
extension and outreach program specialists
will conduct demonstrations, mini-
workshops on creativity and interactive
design charrettes (intense, collaborative
design activities in which people
brainstorm, discuss and draft solutions
to a design problem). Video monitors,
whiteboards and movable wall panels will
aid their activities.

The second area features Drinkwater’s
Morrill Hall interactive studio project,
“Working Over Wood: Recomposing the
Grant Wood Murals.” Visitors can help
recompose the nine-panel 1934 Grant
Wood mural, “When Tillage Begins, Other Arts Follow.”
Drinkwater recreated the mural on
steel panels, allowing participants
to position painted magnetic
pieces to reflect their own
interpretations.

ISUs journey to the Folklife
Festival began more than a
year ago, APLU invited land-
grant universities to submit
proposals to participate. ISU
submitted two proposals under
the direction of Associate Vice
President for Research Chitra
Rajan. The proposal from the
College of Design and ISU
Extension and Outreach, “Rise with the occasion:
Land-grant institutions as platforms for
knowledge, infrastructure, social innovation
and entrepreneurship.” was selected.
Universities were chosen to exhibit four
representative program areas: reinventing
agriculture, sustainable solutions,
transforming communities and building on
tradition.

ISUs exhibit came to life after countless
hours of effort by dozens of people from
the Offices of the Executive Vice President
and Provost, Vice President for Research
and Economic Development, and Vice
President for Extension and Outreach;
College of Design; University Relations;
University Marketing; University Museums;
and Information Technology Services.

“It's an opportunity for everyone to see ISU
the way we see ourselves—as a top-tier,
high-tech, cutting-edge, relevant university
that is grappling with the most complicated
problems of our era. That's top of mind for
us as we put together this exhibit that will
represent the university on the national
stage,” Ringholz said.
Microloan Program Helps Ottumwa Entrepreneur Live the Dream

By Mark Edelman
ISU Extension and Outreach Economist

On March 24, 2012, at 525 Market in Ottumwa, José Rodas’ lifelong dream came true when he opened the doors of his own business, Tortillería Los Twins, and sold his first tortillas.

Despite speaking only a little English, Rodas and his wife Magdalena not only realized their dream, but along the way were awarded the local New Business of the Year award at the first annual Vision Awards ceremony at Indian Hills Community College on April 27. This award is given to individuals and businesses in a 10-county region that have demonstrated exceptional entrepreneurial spirit.

Tortillería Los Twins didn’t happen overnight. Since arriving in Ottumwa in 2000, Rodas and his family worked tirelessly to save enough to realize their dream of one day owning a business. Rodas took a job at the local meat plant, where he still works nights, while Magdalena stayed home to care for their children. The family saved enough to purchase a home, but continued saving to achieve their goal.

As he was developing plans for his business ideas, Rodas became acquainted with Himar Hernández, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach community development specialist based in Wapello County. Hernández realized that a gap exists between Hispanic entrepreneurs and access to capital and technical assistance. To bridge that gap, Hernández and a local support committee established a local microenterprise development program.

Hernández asked Mark Edelman, ISU Extension and Outreach economist and director of the Community Vitality Center (CVC), for assistance in establishing an affiliation with Iowa MicroLoan. Iowa MicroLoan is an independent nonprofit foundation organized by CVC and ISU Extension and Outreach in 2008 to provide microcredit and technical assistance statewide to small business entrepreneurs who have workable business plans but face difficulty accessing credit. Since its founding, Iowa MicroLoan became an approved microfinance intermediary for the US Small Business Administration and US Department of Agriculture microlending programs and has approved more than 50 loans to small entrepreneurs across Iowa who were not able to access capital for their businesses.

“Iowa MicroLoan’s clients are balanced in terms of gender, rural-urban location, and start-ups versus existing small businesses. Half of our clients are below HUD [Housing and Urban Development] low-income standards. Minorities and persons with disabilities are represented in proportion to the population,” said Craig Downs, Iowa MicroLoan president. “We are very pleased with the partnership model emerging in the Wapello County MicroLoan Program,” he added.

By affiliating and sharing the risk of loan losses 50–50, Iowa MicroLoan and Wapello County MicroLoan were able to leverage and multiply the benefits from their resources to more entrepreneurs. The Wapello County Extension Council also allocated some funding for local microenterprise technical assistance in connection with the new program. Hernández created a Spanish-language version of the application, which is available statewide.

In January 2012, Wapello County MicroLoan and Iowa MicroLoan approved their first loan to Rodas using the Spanish-language form. The loan financed the purchase of the equipment necessary to produce the tortillas. With help from Hernández, Rodas developed a marketing plan and obtained the required city and state permits.

Since opening in March, Tortillería Los Twins has created three jobs and is currently reporting strong sales to daily customers. Local companies and organizations have approached Rodas in an effort to market and sell the tortillas through local distribution networks.

Rodas said that without the assistance of Hernández and ISU Extension and Outreach, he would have never opened his doors. Hernández is currently assisting Rodas with expanding the business, packaging and additional marketing.

In the future, José and Magdalena hope to repay the loan, expand into the flour tortilla business, and sell their tortilla chips to restaurants once they start producing them. But for now, they both smile and show their shiny new Vision Award to the daily customers.

Two other businesses are currently applying for nano-loans through the Wapello County MicroLoan Program. Hernández believes that the Wapello County MicroLoan Program and its affiliation with Iowa MicroLoan may become a model for microenterprise development programs and Extension and Outreach in other areas of the state.

For information about Iowa MicroLoan, visit www.iowamicroloan.org. Entrepreneurs who are interested in applying for a microloan in Wapello County should contact Hernández at himarh@iastate.edu.
ISU’s STATCOM Helps Perry Public Library Define Its Vision

By Sandra Oberbroeckling, Community Relations Specialist; and Samantha Liametz, Undergraduate student, Greenlee School of Journalism

Gaining insight into public opinion is not always as easy as striking up conversation with whoever walks into the library or city hall. What do you want to know? How are you going to conduct your research? And once you have collected data, how do you make sense of it?

For community service providers, especially public libraries, answering these questions is an ongoing endeavor. Changes in demographics, along with every new technological advance, create new needs and desires among library patrons.

“I always want to ensure that we are serving the community since it’s a public organization funded by taxpayer money,” said Mary Murphy, Perry Public Library executive director. “Each library is unique because it serves its own community and each community wants different things out of their library.”

Murphy was hired as the Perry Public Library’s executive director approximately 20 months ago, and shortly after starting she formed a library visioning committee. The committee is made up of the previous library director, the previous director’s predecessor, four current staff members and an IT specialist. In addition, Murphy received two grants with which she hired library specialist. In addition, Murphy received two grants with which she hired library consultant George Lawson.

“As we met in the early days, we brainstormed about ideas and created a wish list and then narrowed down to the feasible wish list given real-life constraints, said Murphy. “This process took some time. We also had a half-year hiatus in the process because a new DMACC Learning Academy opened next door and we wanted to assess the impact it would have on our operations.”

One way that Murphy wanted to reach out to the public was through a survey. She consulted with her colleagues via blog, and was encouraged by the assistant director of the Boone Public Library to seek assistance from the Iowa State University Department of Statistics. Murphy found what she was looking for in STATCOM (Statistics in Community), a collaboration among statistics graduate students who do pro bono consulting.

“Our only qualification is [that the client is] nonprofit or a government agency,” said Lisa Bramer, a graduate student involved with STATCOM. Although STATCOM works primarily in Story County, its services are available statewide.

The STATCOM graduate students developed a questionnaire in both online and print versions for the Perry Public Library study. “Once we have an idea of the client’s needs, we try to design questions that are going to be measurable, instead of open-ended questions,” said Bramer. STATCOM works closely with clients, who preview the survey and make suggestions as needed before the final version is distributed.

“It was stupendous how I talked to Lisa on the phone. We exchanged e-mails and had less than a two-hour meeting and they came up with the survey,” said Murphy. “I previewed it. They put it up [online] and sent me the links and all the copies. It was pretty easy.”

Input from regular library patrons was valuable, but Murphy also wanted to find out why some residents don’t use the library. To target that demographic, STATCOM devised a one-page, multiple-choice questionnaire. On Friday evenings and Saturdays, Murphy distributed the short form to customers at Hy-Vee.

The survey went live on April 8, the first day of National Library Week, and data collection ended on May 8. As an incentive to participate, respondents’ names were entered into a raffle for a $50 gift card from either Casey’s or Kum & Go. A total of 327 questionnaires were completed, 236 of which were the long version. Of the long versions completed, 64 were done online.

STATCOM students are in the process of analyzing the data with statistical software. Twenty-nine surveys were completed in Spanish; Spanish-speaking STATCOM members translated these into English. The final product will be a report of the survey results including graphs and a graphic display of the open-ended questions called a word cloud.

“If you ask people open-ended questions, [the statistical software] will pick out words or phrases and count how many times they are mentioned. It creates what is called a word cloud,” said Bramer. The size of each word in the cloud is proportional to the number of times it is mentioned. The more often a word is mentioned, the larger it becomes, she added.

Bramer anticipates that the Perry Public Library report will be completed at the end of June. “They were very easy to work with,” said Murphy. “I am anxiously awaiting the results.”

STATCOM has been serving Iowa government entities and nonprofit organizations since 2007. Depending on the project, the students will provide clients with different products and reports. In some cases, STATCOM will present the clients with the statistical coding so they can continue their research.

Each STATCOM client works with a team of four to eight students, including one STATCOM executive member. The scope of projects ranges from one-time research to continuous research or annual research. The services are free for any nonprofit or government agency. Organizations interested in using these services can contact STATCOM by e-mail at statcom@iastate.edu.
Most of us take for granted our ability to hop in our cars and drive to the grocery store or the farmers’ market when we need food. Many of us also take for granted our ability to pay for enough food to feed our families.

Unfortunately, Iowa is not immune to food insecurity, as a group of landscape architecture students discovered last fall. These students were part of the fall 2011 landscape architecture community design studio offered by the College of Design at Iowa State University.

The community design studio is co-taught by Julia Badenhope, ISU associate professor, and Tim Keller, ISU professor, who encouraged their students to explore topics beyond the realm of typical landscape architecture projects.

In that spirit, 14 students in the studio partnered with the Des Moines Area Religious Council (DMARC) on a project called Relieving Food Uncertainty. DMARC is a nonprofit organization that supplies and operates 12 food pantries in the Des Moines area. Focusing on DMARC’s Move the Food program, the students endeavored to help DMARC provide healthy food for those in need, as well as to improve the program’s efficiency.

“It was definitely the first project of its kind that any of us had done,” said Annie Glawe, a 2012 graduate of the landscape architecture program and part of the student team. “It was sort of pressing the boundaries of landscape architecture, but that is something we are trying to do in the profession right now.”

The project goal was to define and map hunger patterns to gain insight into major efficiency opportunities within the current plans. With this information, the students were able to redesign the pantry system while also investigating means of integrating fresh foods into the system. Their final efforts worked to alleviate the stigma associated with receiving aid.

“Our process was the really strong part of what we did,” said Adam Hageman, another 2012 graduate of the landscape architecture program and part of the student team. “We focused on using practical research to better understand the problem and come up with a good holistic solution.”

A key component of Relieving Food Uncertainty was research. The students gathered data with which to make informed design decisions. A large portion of the data they collected was from a study commissioned by Drake University. Mary Swalla Holmes, a private consultant and member of the Iowa Food Bank board of directors, interviewed 68 pantry users and documented their lifestyles, including but not limited to health, transportation, demographics and use of food aid. The data in her report allowed the group to better define pantry users, a crucial aspect of the project.

Another component of the data collection was a geographic information system (GIS) map of Des Moines area poverty that students created using the census data. The data available depicted 200% poverty, the equivalent of a single person earning $21,780/year. The map reveals several areas in Des Moines in which 71–80% of the population lives at the 200% level.

“People at this 200% are making enough that they don’t qualify for the pantry aid, but they aren’t making enough to really provide for themselves,” said Glawe.

In the mapping process, the team also correlated Des Moines Area Regional Transit Authority (DART) bus stop locations with all existing food resources in Des Moines, allowing them to identify specific areas that lacked access to public transit.

“Once we had all of that, we could overlay those maps to pinpoint where our design ideas were most appropriate and most needed. For example, the mobile food pantry was suggested in areas where there was low access to bus stops, low access to food resources—grocery stores, food pantries, farmers’ markets, and high poverty,” said Hageman.

Students Employ Design Activism to Confront Food Uncertainty in Des Moines Area
in Des Moines Area

Another critical component of the project was gaining the practical knowledge needed to understand the challenges DMARC and Move the Food were facing. Some team members took action by volunteering at the food pantries. Others attended the 2011 Iowa Hunger Summit hosted by the World Food Prize Foundation.

Since financial support is key to DMARC's ability to provide assistance, the team hosted a fund-raiser on campus during ISU Homecoming. Sarai Schnucker Rice, executive director at DMARC, advised the students that cash-only donations are most effective. With cash, Move the Food can purchase foodstuffs in bulk from a distributor rather than at retail prices for a significant savings.

DMARC believes that every dollar donated provides a meal for one person. With this in mind, the students organized a fund-raiser in which donors could decorate one paper plate for every dollar they contributed. The plates were later displayed as an art installation on central campus with the plates strung together. The students raised $600 for the Move the Food program.

Armed with data and practical experience, the students developed multiple solutions that could be implemented in Des Moines. “One of our goals as a team became healthy food is more of a right because it is part of life,” said Glawe.

One proposed design focused on urban agriculture. Students designed a permaculture-based gardening system with a community center and a victory garden. They also encouraged the idea of working with other community organizations and creating a community supported agriculture (CSA) program operated through the pantry. The CSA would provide healthy food available for delivery to those not eligible for pantry aid. It would also provide a means of income for the pantry. The proposal also includes a produce delivery system for individuals who were unable to get to the current pantry locations.

Another design solution focused on transportation. “We found that pantry users find it difficult to get to the pantry because most of them do not have cars,” said Glawe. Using the existing B-Cycle program in Des Moines, the students proposed adding bike stations in more residential areas to enhance accessibility to food resources. The B-Cycle program allows individuals to rent bikes at various locations in Des Moines.

One proposed design integrates food pantries with local grocery stores. Because many pantry users do not obtain all of their food from the pantry, they also need to visit local grocery stores. The students developed three in-store pantry ideas with the potential to reach individuals who are not able to visit the pantry regularly. Incorporating the pantry service into the grocery store would also reduce the embarrassment that some pantry users feel. The “Cupboard” creates an area in the store that provides services similar to those of DMARC’s pantries. The “Shelf” designates one aisle of the store to healthy food available for food assistance. Finally, the “Card” is a membership program that allows individuals to choose from regular aisle items that have been marked with blue dots.

The project culminated in an exhibit in early December at Reiman Gardens titled “Barriers: An Artistic Exploration of the Issues Regarding Hunger and Habitat Loss in Iowa.” In addition to the hunger project, the exhibit featured a display on habitat loss that was created by another group of students in the community design studio. A third group designed the exhibit. A set of presentation boards illustrating the proposed designs was given to DMARC.

Relieving Food Uncertainty was awarded an excellence award and an honor award for planning and analysis by the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) Central States. The students and instructors were recognized on May 3, 2012, during the ASLA Central States Conference in Kansas City, MO.
Research Spotlight

Centerville To Be Next EDA Sustainable Economies Pilot

By Sandra Oberbroeckling
Community Relations Specialist

Rubbermaid left town. The population is aging. Incomes are low. That’s on the one hand. On the other hand? The Honey Creek Resort increases tourism. Downtown businesses on the courthouse square are filled. Locals who have done well elsewhere invest in their hometown or move back home.

Interesting things are happening in Centerville, Iowa, making it a prime candidate for the Iowa State University Center for Industrial Research and Service’s (CIRAS) Sustainable Economies Program. The program, which is part of the Iowa Economic Development Administration (EDA) University Center housed at CIRAS, uses economic analysis of financial, social, and environmental indicators to help communities develop a strategy for sustainable growth.

“Centerville and Appanoose County have suffered manufacturing losses in the past decade; however they still have strong manufacturing capacity and opportunities for growth,” said Mike O’Donnell, program director of the Iowa EDA University Center program. “Additionally, we feel the community is very motivated to assess their economy and establish goals for the future.”

The Sustainable Economies project is working with several pilot regional trade centers to discover ways of integrating sustainability objectives into both business- and community-level long-range planning. Carroll has recently completed the program and Lee County (Keokuk and Fort Madison) is currently implementing its projects. The program uses a set of 104 sustainability indicators and dashboards that compare Iowa’s 40 regional trade centers on financial, environmental and social statistical measurements—“The Triple Bottom Line”—that can be improved through community action.

Pilot cities receive a regional economic assessment from ISU economists Dave Swenson and Liesl Eathington and assistance from other university-based groups as appropriate. ISU Extension and Outreach community development specialists are an integral part of the program, helping the community engage with the data and apply what they learn to develop plans and projects.

“Our statistical data can tell us a lot about what’s happening in a community over time, but it only partially tells us why some things happen and why some communities seem to be more flexible, adaptable and resilient,” said Abbie Gaffney, ISU Extension Community and Economic Development specialist. “We started this project in ‘Can-Do Carroll,’ which is a city that steps up to every challenge and seems to thrive despite being fairly isolated from larger urban areas. In Lee County, we’ve found a community that inherited a century-long political divide that is working hard to find ways of coming together to improve the economy of their community and the lives of their residents. Centerville looks like it will be a town that’s taken some knocks but persevered and wants to be involved in creating a good future for the town and a revitalized region,” she said.

The Centerville project will kick off with a daylong summit to be held Tuesday, July 10, 2012, at the recently renovated Majestic Theatre. The focus of the day will be on presenting the economic analysis and sustainability indicator data and identifying economic development strategies that may help Centerville succeed in accomplishing its vision.

“We’re impressed with Centerville’s commitment to leadership,” said Mark Reinig, CIRAS economic development program manager. “The Appanoose Economic Development Corporation has been working with us in developing relationships with area resources and businesses. We are looking forward to working with the AEDC in delivering programming that will be a good fit for Centerville and Appanoose County in implementing their projects. We’ve been fortunate to have a very engaged board of supervisors and city council who have a lot of great ideas and energy behind making improvements.”

Extension GIS Workshop Help Planners Use Census Data Effectively

By Samantha Liametz
Undergraduate Student, Greelee School of Journalism

Understanding how to interpret census data is a valuable skill for city planners, especially those in Iowa. The 2010 Census revealed significant population and demographic shifts in the state since 2000. Planners need to understand these changes in order to make informed decisions about the future of their communities.

To address this need, Mónica Haddad, Iowa State University associate professor of community and regional planning, designed a one-day workshop for planners on spatial exploration of the 2010 Census. In this hands-on workshop, planners will learn to work with data from the 2010 Census, ACS (American Community Survey) and a third party using geographic information systems.

Beyond basic understanding of the data, Haddad will cover obtaining data from the American FactFinder, joining census data to GIS shapes files, and querying data and analyzing patterns. Other topics will include how to design effective maps, create graphs and compute statistics and analyze census data across space and time.

The first workshop was on May 22. Because of the positive feedback she received, Haddad has scheduled another workshop for Friday, August 10, 2012, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on the ISU campus. The registration fee is $250 per participant. The workshop is sponsored by the Iowa Chapter of the American Planning Association and may be submitted for 6.5 AICP certification maintenance credits. For more information, contact Haddad at 515-294-8979 or haddad@iastate.edu.
Extension Specialists Take Road Scholar Program to Guatemala

By Diane Van Wyngarden
Community Development Specialist

Next January, 25 lucky individuals will be heading south of the border for a nine-day travel seminar in Guatemala through the Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Road Scholar Program. The program will provide comprehensive learning about Guatemalan life and culture, with special attention to indigenous Mayans living in the villages along the shores of beautiful Lake Atitlan.

Seminar participants will experience Guatemalan music, art, foods, agriculture, textiles and education while exploring the country’s beautiful landscapes. They will gain an understanding of the culture and become better equipped to connect with Guatemalans who have immigrated to Iowa.

Guatemala is a country of high mountains, active volcanoes and Lake Atitlan, said to be one of the most beautiful lakes in the world. The rich culture and heritage of the Maya are obvious in Guatemala’s scenic highlands, where half of the population is directly descended from the Maya and speak more than 20 indigenous languages. It is also a land of grinding poverty. Guatemala is among the poorest countries in the Western Hemisphere. Nearly 60% of indigenous families live in poverty. Malnutrition rates are high, education rates are low and infant mortality is a constant worry.

This trip is not a typical vacation package—participants not only learn about Mayan lifestyle, but experience it first hand and work together to improve it. Travelers will meet Mayans in their homes and will spend one morning working as volunteer teams to assemble a cookstove kit and donate the stove to an indigenous family as part of the ONIL stove project (www.helpsinth.org/programs/stove.php). Stove material costs are included in the program fee. The ONIL stove project is one of several ongoing efforts to improve the living conditions of indigenous families.

I-WALK Serves as a Model for Walkability Project in Wisconsin

By Samantha Liametz
Undergraduate Student, Greenlee School of Journalism

Christopher Seeger, Iowa State University Extension landscape architect, is sharing his expertise with T.Y. Lin International and Yaggy Colby Associates on a walkability study in La Crosse, Wisconsin. Christina Peterson, a project engineer at Yaggy Colby Associates, saw Seeger’s presentation on the application he created as part of I-WALK (Iowans Walking Assessment Logistics Kit) at the National Safe Routes to School Conference in August 2011 and asked him to serve as a consultant to the project.

The project team will use facilitated VGI (volunteer graphic information) to help La Crosse identify walkability issues. Volunteers will be assessing intersections and recording on GIS-enabled smartphones the number of curb ramps and their condition, whether or not crosswalks are painted, how many

guides. Optional upgrades include group roundtrip airfare from Des Moines to Guatemala and hotel single occupancy. The seminar is open to anyone interested. However, seating is limited to 25 persons and available on a first-reservation basis. Portions or the entire program fee may be tax-deductible.

For more information contact or Diane Van Wyngarden at dwv@iastate.edu or Himar Hernández at himarh@iastate.edu. View the itinerary and additional information online at www.extension.iastate.edu/roadscholar.
Fairfield Residents Get Down to Earth and ‘Dig In’ for Sustainability

By Samantha Liametz,
Undergraduate Student, Greenlee School of Journalism

This year, Fairfield volunteers got down and dirty in honor of Earth Day and Global Youth Service Day. On Friday, April 20, more than 500 students, parents, teachers, and administrators planted more than 100 trees at four schools. Then on Sunday, April 22, more than 200 volunteers planted another 173 trees in Chautauqua Park near the Fairfield Loop Trail. By the end of the weekend, more than 400 trees were planted throughout the community. The event culminated in a free picnic with live music.

The weekend’s activities launched a new initiative called “Dig In.” The program was designed in Fairfield and Fairfield is the first pilot community, according to Scott Timm, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach community development specialist and sustainability coordinator for the City of Fairfield.

“This is a grassroots effort using Alliant’s Hometown Rewards program and its Trees Forever [Branching Out] program to kick off Fairfield’s goal to save 5.059 kilowatt-hours throughout the town by the end of 2013,” said Timm. Meeting this goal will save about $1.5 million across the community, he added.

The Alliant Energy Hometown Rewards program is an Iowa-only, two-year grant partnership that urges communities to reduce energy use through adopting energy-efficient behaviors and investing in energy-efficient upgrades. The partnership works with every aspect of the community from individual residents to the local government and city council. The city of Fairfield is one of three communities accepted into the program.

The Dig In program builds upon the energy initiatives outlined in the city’s strategic Go Green Plan by identifying the community’s current energy use, setting goals for improvement, implementing strategies and measuring the results. In addition to reducing kilowatt-hours, goals of Dig In include offering free educational workshops relevant to all sectors of the city and engaging at least 50% of residents in the program. If Fairfield meets these goals, the city will receive a cash award from Alliant Energy, which will help finance the purchase of a solar photovoltaic installation on a city building. All residents are encouraged to take a pledge to save energy. The pledges range from simply turning off the lights and unplugging electronics when they are not in use to attending a Hometown Rewards program workshop or replacing old appliances with new energy-efficient versions.

Maquoketa’s ‘Future Choices’ Take Shape

By Abbie Gaffey
Community Development Specialist

Residents of Maquoketa are engaged in a unique visioning process designed to raise awareness of possible development paths that align well with local needs and assets compared to the cost of doing nothing.

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Community and Economic Development (CED) has partnered with the Maquoketa Chamber of Commerce and the City of Maquoketa’s Office of Economic Development in a two-year project to help the community improve its local economy, enhance the downtown, and explore its “Future Choices.” Maquoketa residents formed a diverse steering committee to work with CED in coordinating a variety of services that, to date, have included a regional economic analysis, a communitywide survey, and five neighborhood visioning sessions.

ISU economists David Swenson and Liesl Eathington conducted an economic analysis that provided necessary data for the community to identify local trends over time. These data also serve as a means of comparing Maquoketa to a group of similarly-sized peer communities and as a tool to isolate economic areas upon which to capitalize in order to maintain or grow population and industry in the future.

Nora Ladjahasan, ISU assistant scientist, coordinated a survey that helped identify not only expressed community needs but areas where local perception was contrary to the findings of the statistical analysis.

“It is important for citizens to have researched data to work with in decision making,” said project coordinator Alan Vandehaar, ISU Extension and Outreach community development specialist. “But people also need to understand what data means and how to apply it. We provided several opportunities for the steering committee to meet with the economists to learn about the data and ask
questions. Then we immediately began to use the data for the community survey and in constructing alternative scenarios.”

The alternative scenarios that emerged from this process included: becoming an aging-friendly community; expanding the professional community; growing the manufacturing sector; developing the arts, recreation and tourism sector; and doing nothing. Each scenario was illustrated with possible visions for its impact on enhancing the downtown.

Becoming an aging-friendly community involves developing health and wellness services and quality-of-life opportunities that cater to an older population with greater wealth to spend and invest in the community.

The economic analysis showed that Maquoketans go out of town for many professional services such as architectural, engineering, accounting, information systems and business services. The professional community development path seeks to provide more of those services locally.

Growing the manufacturing sector as an development scenario came from an economic analysis of the region’s core industrial strengths and the locally expressed desire for better-paying jobs.

Developing Maquoketans arts, recreation and tourism emerged as an alternative based on the area’s scenic location and natural amenities such as the caves and the Maquoketa River, as well as survey respondents’ desire for more cultural events. As a development path, tourism brings money into the community from nonresidents.

The final scenario was to do nothing, which is always an option, according to Tim Borich, ISU Extension and Outreach CED director. “Even doing nothing has a cost, though. A community’s willingness to invest in itself matters. It matters to the people who live there and the businesses that want to thrive there,” he said.

Seventy Maquoketa citizens attended neighborhood visioning sessions held on May 9 to provide feedback on the scenarios. Their input will be used to fine-tune the scenarios for presentation at a communitywide visioning session on August 15.

Iowa communities interested in conducting their own alternative scenarios processes are encouraged to contact ISU Extension and Outreach CED about becoming a “Communities to Community” city. (See story below about this new program option.)

Did You Know?

Extension CED Seeks Communities for Two-year Partnerships

By Abbie Gaffey
Community Development Specialist

Wanted: Single Extension unit seeks LTR with eligible communities. Must like visioning, long-range strategic planning, new technologies, and economic development. Kids OK. Engagement required.

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach’s Community and Economic Development (CED) unit is launching a new program called “Communities to Community” (C2C). Through this program, CED will enter into partnerships with up to five Iowa communities in different areas of the state.

The C2C program will offer a two-year schedule of bundled design, educational, business and leadership development services available through CED and the ISU College of Design. The services will be customized to promote the positive changes and outcomes client communities desire. Examples of outcomes include stabilizing downtown environments; improving citizen participation and local leadership; encouraging diversity; capitalizing on small business, retail trade and tourism opportunities; meeting housing needs; or achieving quality-of-life goals.

“We are interested in spending more time with a community to really help achieve goals and develop substantial ways to measure that progress,” said Tim Borich, ISU Extension and Outreach CED director. “We have the services of economists, planners, architects, landscape architects, sociologists and community development specialists. We also have both undergraduate and graduate students and it is important to us to involve our students in service to Iowa’s communities as part of their education.”

C2C will require a two-year contract with ISU Extension and Outreach with financial commitment ranging from $20,000–$40,000 depending on the services desired. Client communities will be asked to focus on measurable, achievable outcomes to document the impact of their efforts in order to help other Iowa communities learn from their experience.

“The two-year commitment not only gives us time to help a community achieve and measure goals, but to coordinate student design workshops, classes and student travel to the community that fits within the academic calendar and the community’s schedules,” Borich said.

Some of the services available for bundling through the C2C include the following. Descriptions of each service are available on CED’s Program Builder website at www.extension.iastate.edu/programbuilder/:

• Community surveys
• Economic analysis
• Retail trade analysis and training workshops
• Community visioning and strategic planning
• Community design workshops (student studios)
• Community engagement processes
• Leadership development
• Geographic Information Systems (GIS) workshops and projects
• Tourism development and planning
• E-commerce training
• Diversity training
• Nonprofit board management
• Facilitation
• Elder-friendly community planning
• Housing trust fund development
• Housing needs assessments and planning
• Fund-raising training
• Educational workshops on community-specified topics

Communities interested in participating in the C2C program should contact Borich at 515-294-8707 or borich@iastate.edu.
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