Extension and Outreach Offers One-stop Data Resource for Iowans

Sandra Oberbroeckling
Community Relations Specialist

Got data?

The answer is “Yes!” thanks to the new Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Indicators Portal.

Through the Indicators Portal website, anyone with access to the Internet can find, use, and visualize information in a variety of formats by visiting one central site. The portal is currently up and running in beta version, and new features and tools are being added or updated frequently.

The Indicators Portal project is a strategic initiative funded by the Office of the ISU Vice President for Extension and Outreach designed to provide one-stop information for decision makers at both the local and regional levels. The portal is available to the public to view content, test user interfaces, and provide comments and recommendations. The site provides easy-to-follow instructions on creating a free account and using the portal via webinar, a downloadable user guide, and a PowerPoint presentation.

The Indicators Portal project is led by Christopher Seeger, ISU associate professor and extension specialist, and Bailey Hansen, GIS specialist for the ISU Extension and Outreach Community and Economic Development program. Other Extension CED faculty and staff contributing to the project are Biswa Das, Cindy Kendall, Sandra Burke, Leisl Eathington, and David Peters.

“Our goal for this project is that the Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Indicators Portal provides unbiased access to the data,” said Seeger.

Users can search the portal by county; do comparisons with neighboring counties, agricultural statistics districts, Extension and Outreach regions, regional councils of government, and rural-urban continuum codes; or create a custom list of counties for comparison. Data at the city level will be made available in early 2016, and eventually the portal will offer access to data for school districts and townships.

Data categories currently in the portal include housing; population and demographics; households, families, and youth; education; income and poverty; and workforce.

“In This Issue

Page 4 ISU students create retail designs for culturally diverse businesses
Page 5 Increasing entrepreneurship Among African Americans in Iowa
Page 6 Extension CED partners with University of Kentucky to get design students ‘In Motion’ using web mapping
Page 10 Documents that nonprofit boards should have on hand

continued on page 3
Dear Friends,

It probably comes as no surprise that I have been thinking a lot lately about change. Tim Borich was a part of the Community and Economic Development Program for 36 years, the last 11 as director. His steady leadership guided the program through the entire range of headwinds, tailwinds, and crosswinds that typically buffet an organization such as ours, and we've reached this point in 2016 better for his guidance. But where do we go from here? What does the next year hold for Community and Economic Development? The next three, five, or ten years?

Change can be intimidating, even scary. As I reviewed the articles in this newsletter, however, it occurred to me that there are probably few organizations as prepared as ours to navigate change, because change defines the mission of this program. Every article in this Community Matters newsletter – indeed every Community Matters newsletter that we’ve published – captures our work as change agents, facilitators, and collaborators. Since our inception, we have used research-based knowledge, community development best practices, and good old-fashioned face-to-face conversations with Iowans to help communities navigate change.

• To facilitate change we first must recognize it. The Indicators Portal project (see page 1) is a major investment in our program by the Vice President for Extension and Outreach, one goal of which is to be able to identify the significant (and subtle) changes taking place across our state. An inventory of the types of data that eventually will be accessible through the portal would fill the rest of my letter. All this information will be invaluable in helping all of Extension and Outreach determine program priorities and in addressing the big question of what we should be doing in the next three, five and ten years.

• We must be able to respond to change. Our new community development specialists Victor Oyervides (page 8), Jill Sokness (page 9) and Becky Luers (page 11) are all hired through partnerships with local communities and organizations. The work they pursue is in direct response to needs identified by those local partners to reach new audiences with locally relevant programming.

• We must be able to proactively create change. The Agricultural Urbanism Toolkit (page 5) and I-WALK project (page 6) are great examples of the tools we offer Iowans who want to improve the quality of life in their communities, in these cases by promoting access to locally grown foods and creating safer routes to school for children.

Over the coming months we will keep you informed of our efforts to transform our own program. We are in the early stages of re-envisioning how Community and Economic Development does its work, which will include engaging even more ISU faculty and students in identifying, responding to, and proactively creating change.

Change is the only constant, but we’re OK with that!

Gary Taylor
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Find us on Facebook at http://www.facebook.com/ISU.Extension.CED and Twitter @ISUExtensionCED
Program Builder at your fingertips:
This map of Community Matters subscribers was generated in a matter of seconds using the Iowa County Count Map Tool on the Indicators Portal site.

Another set of publications available through the data portal is the Data for Decision Makers reports. These county- or Extension region-specific publications contain population demographics and socioeconomic data. Although Data for Decision Makers had been available in print format from ISU Extension and Outreach, the most current version was printed in 2003. Using the Indicators Portal, decision makers can generate reports featuring the most current data available for their county on demand as a PDF file.

The data portal team continues to explore possible partnerships and opportunities to share data and has been training ISU Extension and Outreach staff on how to access information on the portal and how it will benefit Iowans.

In time, the portal will host ISU research and extension data and related extension publications.

The main priority of the project is to make access to data as user friendly as possible through a variety of platforms. The primary platform for the Indicators Portal is a traditional laptop or desktop computer; however, the development team is refining interfaces that will work on tablets and smartphones.

“The Indicators Portal provides one-stop access to reliable, current data about the people of Iowa,” said Cathann Kress, Iowa State University vice president for extension and outreach.

“We’re positioning our faculty and staff to be the experts on all things Iowa and a better resource for local decision makers. With our people on campus and in every Iowa county responsible for providing education to solve today’s problems and prepare Iowans for the future—having consistently easy access to the most current data is important.”

The Indicators Portal is located at http://indicators.extension.iastate.edu. Users are encouraged to send feedback, data requests, and error reports to http://indicators.extension.iastate.edu/data-and-feature-request-poll. Keep up to date on new project features by following the twitter account @ISUExtensionIP or clicking on the “Subscribe to our newsletter” link on the Indicators Portal homepage.
ISU Students Create Retail Designs for Culturally Diverse Businesses

By Sandra Oberbroeckling
Community Relations Specialist

This fall, retailers in Marshalltown learned new ways to market their wares, while 33 interior design students from Iowa State University got a taste of designing for a diverse group of businesses.

The students were part of an interior design studio taught by Interior Design program faculty members Lisa Bates and Amy Mikovec.

“We worked with 14 retailers in Marshalltown on Main Street and within their local mall from the end of August to the end of September,” said Bates, who is also part of ISU Extension and Outreach’s Community and Economic Development (CED) program. “A wide variety of retail work this semester included two ethnic grocery stores, an upholstery store, a local bike shop, and a local liquor store.”

The Marshalltown Central Business District sponsored the project through a grant from the Marshalltown Development Foundation. Jenny Etter, director of Marshalltown Main Street, “was instrumental with locating and recruiting the local businesses and did all the leg work to find those to participate,” according to Bates.

“We decided to make it a communitywide project, not just downtown,” said Etter. “We wanted to include the mall because even though the stores are newer they still need help—it’s all about marketing and presenting their businesses.”

The students visited with the individual retailers to better understand their needs before developing design proposals. “Not all of the people spoke real fluent English so there were some challenges, but the students seemed to take it in stride,” Etter said. Jon Wolseth, CED community development specialist, was on hand to interpret between Spanish and English speakers as needed.

“The project in Marshalltown was an eye opening experience for me in relation to my future career as an interior designer,” said Katie Law, junior in interior design. “It gave me a lot of insight as to how impactful design can be on a local economy and on small business owners.”

“Diversity was another aspect of this project that was highly influential for me since my partner, Joelle Swanson, and I were working with Zamora Fresh Market. We directly dealt with cultural differences [within] Marshalltown and were challenged with how we could balance the authenticity of the market with a design language that was aesthetically pleasing with a higher percentage of local shoppers,” Law added.

Claire Wolbers, junior in interior design, also valued the experience of designing for different cultures.

“3rd Generation Upholstery has years of experience with fabrics, furniture, and custom sewing. Their master of craft taught me how to display merchandise in a new way for customers in the local neighborhoods,” Wolbers said. “Thanks to 3rd Generation Upholstery and Marshalltown, I am now better able to design for varying cultures and commercial businesses exhibiting their unique art.”

Another challenge that students had to address was the limited resources available to their clients. As a solution, students created both short- and long-term design proposals for each business owner.

“Some things that need to be done cost money—that was the only deterrent,” said Etter. “The students did a good job of coming up with ideas that didn’t cost anything—for example, rearranging product, or highlighting certain items.”

“The store owners were impressed with the knowledge that [the students] had and felt that they were really listened to,” she added. “I have seen already that some of the suggestions have been implemented.”

The class presented their final designs to the participating retailers on presentation boards and in report form. According to Bates, the store owners offered positive feedback and were excited by the process.

Etters has indicated that people would like to have an annual project, and mentioned the possibility of starting a local development fund to pay for some project implementation.
Increasing Entrepreneurship Among African Americans in Iowa

By Glennda M. Bivens, Community Development Specialist, and Sandra Oberbroeckling, Community Relations Specialist

Despite a last-minute date change and inclement weather, 16 aspiring African-American entrepreneurs braved the elements to begin the process of creating their own businesses at the Untraditional Start-A-Thon, a one-day event at the Des Moines Public Library on November 22, 2015.

The Untraditional Start-A-Thon, an effort of Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, the Small Business Development Center (SBDC), and the Iowa Black Business Coalition, brought together lawyers, professors, and award-winning entrepreneurial leaders to share their knowledge with participants.

“This effort, led by the Iowa Black Business Coalition with the support of sponsors from throughout the state, shows that there are individuals and organizations committed to increasing entrepreneurship amongst African Americans using a culturally relevant framework,” said Glennda M. Bivens, community development specialist.

Start-A-Thon attendees completed their business model canvas and talked through creating an LLC or corporation for their respective businesses. In addition, an online learning community was established for participants to learn about creating a visual identity, marketing analytics, and more.

Seven participants also competed in the US Small Business Administration's InnovateHer Business Challenge 2016 pitch competition.

Participants came from as far as Iowa City to partake in the event. Ini Augustine, president of the Iowa Black Business Coalition said, “People are ready, hungry, and are willing to do what it takes to become business owners. I feel like we are responding to what people want.”

“Entrepreneurship is strong in Iowa. With resource organizations partnering together, we are able to get the resources and tools to entrepreneurs to help them succeed,” said Lisa Shimkat, state director, America's SBDC Iowa. “This event showed us the tenacity and dedication of our Iowa business owners and the ideas and business concepts developed and shared through events like this is inspiring.”

Ag Urbanism Toolkit Celebrates Successful Food Systems Projects

By Courtney Long, Design Fellow
Community Design Lab

On Friday, December 18, more than 100 designers, farmers, local school coordinators, chefs, and representatives from health organizations gathered at Reiman Gardens in Ames to celebrate the successful completion of the Agricultural Urbanism Toolkit project's second year.

The Agricultural Urbanism Toolkit is a program developed by the Iowa State University Community Design Lab (CDL) and funded through the Leopold Center of Sustainable Agriculture's Marketing Food Systems Initiative. The toolkit uses agricultural urbanism strategies such as school gardens, farmers markets, and food hubs to promote local food-system revitalization in communities.

The goal of the event was to engage in a cooperative learning environment, allowing attendees to learn about successes and challenges from panel and breakout-session experts. In addition, participants learned from each other about various food-system components, including awareness campaigns, policy, edible landscapes, public markets, and shared-use kitchens.

Community groups from Des Moines and Cedar Rapids that have been working with the Agricultural Urbanism Toolkit since 2013 shared their stories about the community coalition development process and the food-system project implementation phase.

Susan Wolverton, professor at Coe College and partner in the Cedar Rapids efforts of Agricultural Urbanism Toolkit, stated that “having the Iowa State CDL team take Coe College students, faculty, and staff through the design process of identifying goals for key areas on campus gave the overall project momentum and allowed us [Coe College] to take the next steps toward implementation.”

CDL also released the 2016 application for partner communities at the event. The application is available online at http://research.design.iastate.edu/communitydesignlab/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2014/03/2016_Agricultural-Urbanism-Toolkit-Application.pdf or at the CDL website: http://research.design.iastate.edu/communitydesignlab/news-events. Communities or organizations can apply until February 18, 2016.
Quarter page

Extension CED Partners with University of Kentucky to Get Design

By Sandra Oberbroeckling
Community Relations Specialist

Approximately 85 students and faculty from the University of Kentucky’s programs in landscape architecture and interior design spent nine intense days researching and developing design proposals to improve walkability and bikability in the area, aided by technology developed by Christopher Seeger, Iowa State University associate professor and extension landscape architect.

Using a crowdsourcing technique that Seeger calls facilitated VGI (volunteer geographic information), the students used their smartphones and geospatial apps to collect and assess landscape infrastructure and then visualize and analyze the data using open-source software and traditional GIS (geographic information systems) mapping processes.

The methods used in the University of Kentucky project are adapted from those developed by Seeger for the I-WALK (Iowans Walking Assessment Logistics Kit) project. Administered by ISU Extension and Outreach and the Iowa Department of Public Health, I-WALK was designed as a means of developing a sustainable model for community coalitions to update and evaluate local safe routes to school on an ongoing basis. The program consists of three components: teacher tallies, an online parent/child survey, and walkability workshop in which volunteers use smartphones to photograph and document the conditions of streets and sidewalks.

Seeger connected with the University of Kentucky through Ryan Hargrove, assistant professor of landscape architecture. Hargrove had attended Seeger’s presentation on I-WALK at the CELA (Council of Educators in Landscape Architecture) 2015 annual meeting, and subsequently invited Seeger to participate in the 2015 Design Week studio project “In Motion” at the University of Kentucky from August 26 through September 1. In Motion was developed to kickoff the new school year while tackling transportation issues resulting from rapid growth on and around the University of Kentucky campus in Lexington.

For the In Motion project, University of Kentucky faculty developed eight scenarios, each with a starting point, a destination, and stops in between, which mimic typical daily activities of a student. Teams of students acted out the scenarios on foot and on bikes. Using commercial smartphone applications with GPS recorders, students mapped a total of 42 walking and biking routes and e-mailed them to Seeger.

In addition to crowdsourcing the routes, students documented features along their routes using Fulcrum, the smartphone application used for the I-WALK program that allows users to photograph a feature, enter a description, and then upload it as a data point on an online map. The students categorized the features by aesthetics, comfort, safety, and way-finding and...
Students ‘In Motion’ Using Web Mapping

ranked them as excellent, very good, good, fair, or poor. This technology allowed
the students to quickly develop a shared
composite map identifying key areas of
concern to be addressed in the design
process.

Seeger created a website and wrote a
program that converted and consolidated
GPX (GPS exchange) files into a format
that functions more efficiently with web-
mapping software. Digital maps of the
routes and features identified by students
can be viewed on the site. A composite
map showing the frequency of use of all
the routes can be shown, as well as the
frequency of the routes for the individual
scenarios. In addition, a heat map
indicating the length of time participants
spent at specific locations along the routes
is available in composite form.

The map of the features documented can
be viewed with or without filtering. That
is, viewers can see features from all the
categories, or they can view by category
(aesthetics, comfort, safety, or way-finding).
On all the maps, users can click on any
data point to view a photo and description
of the feature.

“With the information we got from design
week’s Fulcrum data we then did people
observations on north campus in the areas
where Fulcrum data showed more traffic.
Then we divided into four groups and
each group selected a portion of a corridor
to propose a street space design,” said
Carolina Segura, lecturer in the University
of Kentucky Landscape Architecture
program.

The project was mutually beneficial,
providing a new learning experience to
the University of Kentucky students and
faculty, as well as creating an opportunity
for Seeger to experiment with new digital
mapping techniques that will greatly
expand the capability of walkability
programs such as I-WALK. The project
opens the door to further collaboration
between the University of Kentucky and
ISU Extension and Outreach.

The maps, student designs, and project
updates are available for anyone to view
at the UK Design Week 2015 website at
Victor Oyervides has walked the walk as an entrepreneur in both the United States and Mexico. Now he talks the talk for the Community and Economic Development (CED) program of Iowa State University Extension and Outreach.

In October 2014, Oyervides joined ISU Extension CED in a joint position as a community development specialist and director of the West Liberty Chamber of Commerce. He is one of eight CED specialists who hold joint appointments and one of five who are fluent in Spanish.

Oyervides earned a bachelor's degree in architecture from the Universidad Autónoma de Coahuila in northern Mexico. He started his first business as an exporter in Edinburg, Texas, located in the southeast corner of the state along the US-Mexico border. He also started a business in the town of Saltillo, Mexico, located more than 200 miles southwest of Edinburg. He imported fine paper used by print shops, advertising agencies, and government agencies, along with running a graphic design studio.

The challenge of maintaining businesses on both sides of the border prompted Oyervides to hire a person to help with sales and marketing so he could focus on the import-export paperwork required by the two governments. That person eventually became his wife.

In 2006, Oyervides and his family moved to southeast Iowa, where he started and managed a New Iowans Center in Mount Pleasant. Part of Iowa Workforce Development, the New Iowa program assists immigrants in becoming part of their local community. Here, he trained immigrants from 34 different countries on citizenship, employment readiness, and the English language. He also provided counseling to the Anglo community on diversity and cultural sensitivity.

In February 2013, Oyervides launched Emprendedores Latinos de Iowa (ELI), a project of the Iowa Center for Economic Success. The goal of the project, which is funded by the Northwest Area Foundation and USDA, is to expand entrepreneurial assistance to Latino business owners and entrepreneurs in southeast Iowa. When Oyervides joined ISU Extension CED, he brought the ELI project with him.

Through ELI, Oyervides trained more than 150 business leaders and entrepreneurs, 38 of whom are Latinos. He also established ELI Conecta, a network of Latino entrepreneurs in southeast Iowa. The project culminated with a one-day business conference in West Liberty on September 14, 2015.

Oyervides' efforts have resulted in 33 new businesses—10 of which are Latino owned—in Muscatine, West Liberty, Columbus Junction, and Cedar Rapids. An additional 13 businesses were expanded or improved. He is also involved with Juntos, an activity-based program in which Latino youth and their parents learn strategies for succeeding in school and for setting goals after finishing high school.

“That's one goal that we're working on, and also we're working on leadership and entrepreneurship, so our goals are to create a Latino entrepreneurial community, a start-up community for Latinos, a networking of systems that doesn't exist for them right now here in east and southeast Iowa,” he said.

Did You Know?
Extension and Outreach Offers Multidisciplinary Faculty Expertise

When people hear Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, they typically think of the field specialist in their local county extension office. However, in addition to extension field specialists, more than 100 ISU faculty members have ties to ISU Extension and Outreach, with at least one in every college.

In keeping with ISU’s land-grant mission, Extension and Outreach carries research and education beyond the ISU campus and to the people of Iowa.

The CED Extension program has faculty members with expertise in architecture, business, arts and visual culture, economics, interior design, landscape architecture, planning, and sociology. Visit www.extension.iastate.edu/communities/campus-faculty-and-staff to learn more.
Extension CED Latino Programming Efforts Expand to NW Iowa

By Abbie Gaffey
Community Development Specialist

Building capacity for Latino programming efforts of Iowa State University Extension and Outreach’s Community Economic Development (CED) program starts by fielding a diverse team that possesses a variety of education, experiences, expertise, and empathy for all new Iowans. Jill Sokness is the newest member of this team and brings with her a commitment to building cross-cultural understanding.

Sokness’s educational background includes a bachelor of arts in English from Colorado State University and a master’s in Latin American and Caribbean studies from the University of Connecticut. She has traveled extensively in Latin America, and has studied Spanish in Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Nicaragua, and Panama. For four years, she wrote a blog about solo female travel that included travel tips, personal anecdotes, and photos, encouraging readers to leave their comfort zones, experience other cultures, and see the world.

Sokness also has a variety of work experience that integrates well with the type of work in which the CED Extension unit is involved, such as outreach and community programming in urban areas, work in employment services for Latino populations, and educational programs for Latino students. She will commence her work by beginning a Juntos program in Sioux City.

“I am excited to start our first Juntos for a Better Education series in March, in partnership with the Sioux City School District. It’s an opportunity for Latino parents to get involved with their children’s education in preparation for high school and college and do so with the children, building on the family bond and making it stronger,” Sokness said.

The Juntos program is a middle and high school success and college-preparedness course for families and youth (see Juntos article on this page).

Other members of CED’s Latino programming effort focus on community empowerment, leadership development, small business development, and energy efficiency programs for Latino-owned businesses. Sokness hopes to also work with Latino businesses in the future.

“It is imperative for our present and future economy to engage the Latino and immigrant populations in promising professions, which includes training and entrepreneurship. Educators, established businesses, agencies and organizations, and other community members can help ensure that new populations find a place to contribute, and to be involved and happy,” Sokness said.

Sokness’s position is a joint position with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. This will enable her to work throughout the Siouxland metropolitan area, serving a population that often lives in one state and works in another and where services are often also shared across state lines.

“Through this position, I hope to build bridges and make connections to bring more opportunities to the Latino community in Siouxland,” Sokness said.

Juntos Program Comes to Siouxland Latinos

This spring Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, in partnership with the Sioux City School District, will bring Latino youth and their parents in the Sioux City area juntos (i.e., together) for a better education.

“Juntos for a Better Education” is five-week program for Latino parents and their children designed to help them make education a goal for the family. The program addresses the types of classes into which students should be enrolled, preparing for standardized tests such as the SAT, and applying for financial aid. Additionally, the program helps parents interact with school officials to take a more active role in their children’s educational achievement.

ISU Latino outreach field specialist Jill Sokness, was trained to facilitate and coordinate the Juntos pilot program in Sioux City, along with Deb Jorgensen, a middle school ESL (English as a Second Language) teacher, and Ricky Azpeitia, a Spanish-language translator/interpreter, who will be facilitators for the pilot program.

Other members of the CED Latino programming team include Himar Hernández, based in Ottumwa, who provides leadership development training and entrepreneurship training along with his duties as assistant director for the CED unit; Jon Wolseth, based in Perry, who brings a background in anthropology and sociology to his work with community problem solving; Victor Oyervides, based in West Liberty, who works with entrepreneurship programs; and Scott Timm, based in Fairfield, who works with energy-efficiency programs for Latino-owned businesses. The members of this team also help inform other staff of the CED unit about the needs of immigrant populations and improve the cultural competency of the unit to more effectively work within changing community demographics.

The program kicks off with an information night on Tuesday, February 9 for families with 8th-grade ESL students in the Sioux City public school system. This event will be from 5:30 pm to 8:00 pm and includes dinner, as well as childcare and parking. It will be held at the Midtown Community Center at 525 14th Street in Sioux City.

Juntos courses will start on Tuesday, March 1 from 5:30 pm to 8:00 pm, again with dinner and childcare provided. It will run every Tuesday of the month (March 1, 8, 15, 22, and 29).

ISU Extension and Outreach has incorporated Juntos successfully throughout Iowa. Because Sokness has a dual appointment with the University of Nebraska Extension in Dakota County, getting the program started in South Sioux City is also an opportunity to reach many more families through Juntos. The curriculum is fun and engaging, with valuable tools and information to make positive change and help Latino youth reach their higher education goals.
Documents that Nonprofit Boards Should Have On Hand

By Brian Perry, Community Development Specialist, University Extension Community Development Collaborative

The consultations and provided programming for Iowa nonprofits have shown that there are boards of directors that do not have access to all documents relating to the business of the nonprofit. This isn’t purposeful negligence on the part of these boards as much as it is a failure to recognize the value of older documents.

Documents that are beneficial to boards of directors include the articles of incorporation, the bylaws, the operations policy manual, the conflict-of-interest document, meeting minutes, and the IRS 501(c)3 letter.

Articles of Incorporation
The articles of incorporation provide the board with the original purpose of the organization and address issues relating to federal tax exemption, immunity, etc., when discussing legal issues. The articles of incorporation should be amended when the registered office or agent changes, or if the purpose of the organization changes. The articles of incorporation are filed with the Secretary of State of Iowa.

Key components of the articles of incorporation include:
• A distinguishable name for the organization, its purposes, and contact information
• A lawful purpose
• A registered office and agent
• Indication of whether there is a membership with voting rights for board members
• Provisions essential for federal tax exemption eligibility (such as restrictions on advocacy and specifications that only reasonable compensation for services rendered be paid to individuals)
• Provisions addressing the directors’ immunity from liability and indemnification of directors and officers

State law requires trusts and charitable trusts to provide specific information that is not required of other nonprofits. Unincorporated associations are not governed by statutory requirements, but should create comparable articles of organization.

Bylaws
The list of bylaws is the “birth to death” document that includes the reason that the nonprofit was founded and how that mission has changed, a succession plan, and a plan for the closure of the organization. It is much easier to plan for these possible consequences than to react in haste as these events occur. Each board member should have a copy of the bylaws at each meeting as a reference for determining what they can and cannot do.

At a minimum, the State of Iowa requires that bylaws address the following:
• How many directors are on the board
• How often the board meets and notice-of-meeting requirements
• Board member nomination and election provisions
• If there is a membership with voting rights, how often the membership meets and notice-of-meeting requirements
• The committees of the board
• Responsibilities of the officers of the board
• The fiscal year of the nonprofit
• The process by which to amend the bylaws

This document describes policies, procedures and resources of the nonprofit. Content of the manual may include:
• An organizational chart
• Board and committee descriptions, list of staff working with each, and new board member procedures
• Human resource policies and procedures, (new hire and termination procedures, workers compensation information, employee insurance coverage, reimbursement procedures, etc.)
• Job descriptions (specifically for officers of the corporation)
• Conflict of interest policy
• Financial policies and procedures (in detail and listed as daily, weekly, monthly, annual, IRS 990 filing forms with attorney general’s office, etc.)
• Legal policies
• Information technology policies and procedures (use of Internet and e-mail)
• Records policy
• Editorial policies (for publications and social media)
• Communications policy (who speaks for the organization, including crisis communication)
• Events policy
• Fund-raising policy
• Insurance (list policies)
• Emergency and evacuation procedures; disaster preparation and recovery
• Information on related entities
• Procedure for amending the manual

Conflict-of-Interest Document
A policy governing conflicts of interest is perhaps the most important policy a nonprofit board can adopt. To have the most impact, the policy should be in writing, and the board and staff should review it regularly. Board members should sign a conflict-of-interest form annually as a reminder of the policy and to ensure that no changes to members’ circumstances have created a conflict of interest.

A conflict-of-interest policy should (a) require those with a conflict (or who think they may have a conflict) to disclose the conflict/potential conflict, and (b) prohibit interested board members from voting on any matter in which there is a conflict. Further, the policy should state how the board will manage the conflict.

IRS Form 990 asks not only whether the nonprofit has a written conflict-of-interest policy, but also about the process that the nonprofit uses to manage conflicts, as well as how the nonprofit determines whether board members have a conflict of interest.

Conflicts that are not managed can result in significant penalties imposed by the IRS, called “intermediate sanctions,” assessed against the person who benefits as well as against the organization.

Often people are unaware that their activities or personal interests are in conflict with the best interests of the nonprofit. The goal of many organizations is to simply raise awareness, encourage disclosure and discussion of anything that may be a

continued on page 11
Becky Luers Brings Focus on Youth to Community Development

By Callen Scurr, Undergraduate Student Greenlee School of Journalism

Throughout Becky Luers’ career, children have played a starring role, whether as actors in a play she directed, as campers at the YMCA day camp, or as budding volunteers under her tutelage.

“I’ve always enjoyed working with children,” Luers said. “They are so creative and uninhibited.”

In February 2015, Luers joined the Community and Economic Development Program of Iowa State University Extension and Outreach as a specialist in educational programming and youth development at the Des Moines County Extension Office in West Burlington.

Luers is deeply rooted in the Burlington area, having lived and worked there for most of her life, with the exception of four years at Western Illinois University, where she studied English and theater arts.

After leaving Western Illinois in 2004, Luers began work at the Burlington YMCA/YWCA as a before/after-school staff person, working with students in grades K–5 on crafts, homework, and leadership skills. She later was hired as the YMCA/YWCA school-age child-care director, a position that required her to obtain licensure through the YMCA of the USA.

It was while working for the YMCA/YWCA that Luers decided to pursue a degree in psychology from the University of Phoenix by taking online courses. She earned both a bachelor of science and a master of science in psychology in 2011 and 2013, respectively.

In 2010, Luers went to work for the West Burlington Independent School District as a social educator for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). In this position, she educated parents, students and educators on the importance of social development and growth at school, as well as developed after-school curriculum and summer theater classes for students. She also provided counseling and referrals to individuals and families with multiple types of issues.

Already an avid volunteer in her community, Luers took a position as the assistant director of the Greater Burlington Partnership’s programming and youth development.

Meeting Minutes
Minutes meetings are approved by vote of the board. New members should be supplied with a multiple years of minutes so that they enter their term informed of past action. Ideally the board would be supplied with an ongoing summary of board actions (votes taken).

IRS 501(c)3 letter
The IRS 501(c)3 letter (or appropriate 501(c) letter) should be supplied to board members so that they are familiar with the contents of the letter and the type of nonprofit they are serving. Many small start-up nonprofits automatically file for 501(c)3 status not realizing that their choice is inappropriate for their mission.

To learn more, or to request Board Training or Board Triage, contact Brian Perry at bmtperry@iastate.edu or at 501-772-8988.

References


National Conference of Nonprofits Conflict of Interest’s website.
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