

Community Matters Now



A bi-monthly publication for Iowa leaders from Extension and Outreach Community and Economic Development

COUNTY EXTENSION STAFF TO DELIVER MARKETING HOMETOWN AMERICA *By Lynn Adams | Community Development Specialist*

Iowans in rural communities understand that the trend of depopulation is resulting in a diminished capacity for local governments to provide services, as well as fewer volunteers who can engage in civic and local activities. While many communities have gotten quite creative with ideas to encourage newcomers, from giving away a residential lot to providing free childcare, others need help in coming up with an effective marketing plan.

Enter Marketing Hometown America.

Marketing Hometown America (MHA) is a researched based approach to recruiting newcomers and increasing quality of life in rural communities currently offered by extension professionals in eight states. The program was created by the University of Nebraska Extension specialists who noticed a trend of population increases in some of the state's most rural communities in the west and conducted research to determine why people were coming and why they stayed or left. They used what they learned to develop a process incorporating inclusive community engagement that results in a shared vision of community identity based on a town's assets, along with an action plan to promote it to people for relocation.

The MHA process intentionally focuses on the value of inclusivity about which participants learn, for both people already living among them and for potential newcomers. This ability to authentically welcome people can translate into new energy, growth of volunteer capacity, and a sense of unity and pride. It can be revitalizing from within while attracting people considering relocation from without. Extension professionals, including specialists at Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Community and



Economic Development (CED), conducted the first version of MHA for several years, meeting with successes by communities such as increased volunteerism, enhanced community cohesiveness, and completing community enhancement projects. Lessons were learned along the way, and a multi-state team of Extension professionals revised the original process over the past 18 months.

In January and February 2022, CED specialists trained ISU Extension and

Outreach staff from county offices throughout the state as MHA coaches to support communities with this program. Through this new delivery model, the MHA coaches will be more "local" and have unique insight into the assets, needs, and desires of their client communities.

Communities interested in learning more about MHA can contact their county extension office or CED specialist Lynn Adams at adamsml@iastate.edu or 712-309-2132.

ONLINE RESOURCES

[INTERCULTURAL DEVELOPMENT INVENTORY®](#)

[INTRODUCTION TO PLANNING AND ZONING WORKSHOPS](#)

[MARKETING HOMETOWN AMERICA](#)

[MUNICIPAL PROFESSIONALS INSTITUTE AND ACADEMY](#)

SPRING BRINGS NEW PEOPLE, PROGRAM, AND VIEWS

Quite unintentionally, we put together this *Community Matters Now* issue with a theme of "new." New people, a new program, and a new way for communities to examine what they have to offer current and potential residents. Sometimes things work out despite our best efforts.

New people

Toni Veldhuizen will join CED as a program specialist after graduating from ISU in May with two majors and a minor. Overachiever, yes, and we are extremely pleased she will direct her skills and work ethic toward the Municipal Professionals Institute and Academy and other CED programs. Jay Maxwell, another high achiever, will bring his considerable knowledge of data science and GIS to CED to work with our data team on its MANY projects and publications. Lastly, Mark Reinig has been at the center of the economic development world in Iowa for many years. We are excited that he came to us

from CIRAS to help us continue to build bridges to local governments and rural and economic development organizations and professionals throughout the state.

New program

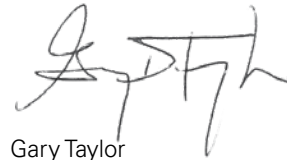
We added the Intercultural Development Inventory® (IDI) to our program offerings in response to the expressed needs of our stakeholders for an assessment that can be used to open conversations about cultural diversity and inclusiveness. The population of rural Iowa is increasingly diverse, and tools such as IDI® can contribute to building cohesive communities.

New views.

Marketing Hometown America (MHA) has been around for a while, but with the recent revision of the curriculum, we have changed up our delivery model. We have trained staff from county extension offices across the state to deliver MHA and coach communities through a process of identifying community

strengths, building on those strengths to improve quality of life, and using those strengths to recruit new residents. County staff are members of the communities where they work, and so are in the best position to guide and support community leaders as they develop and implement promotional action plans. The MHA process has led communities throughout the Midwest to new insights about themselves that resonate positively with residents and newcomers in unforeseen ways.

Spring is a time for "new." Good thing we don't have to plan it—it just happens!



Gary Taylor
Program Director, Iowa State University
Extension and Outreach Community and Economic Development

REINIG BRINGS WEALTH OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT EXPERTISE TO EXTENSION AND OUTREACH

Mark Reinig recently joined the Iowa State University Extension Community and Economic Development (CED) unit as a full-time community development specialist. Reinig, who was previously a collaborator with CED, began his new position January 4.

Employed at ISU for the past 19 years, Reinig was the economic development program manager at the Center for Industrial Research and Service (CIRAS). He was the economic development coordinator for the City of Ames for 15 years before joining ISU.

Reinig earned a bachelor's degree in business at ISU. He is a certified economic developer, a designation earned by only a small percentage of economic development professionals in the United States. Certification is awarded by the International Economic Development Council. Currently ISU's only Certified Economic Development

professional, he is a member of the IEDC and has served on its Higher Education Advisory Committee.

Reinig was appointed by the administrations of three past U.S. presidents to serve on White House disaster response teams responding to Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, the DeepWater Horizon Gulf Oil Spill in Mississippi, and Hurricane Irma in northern Florida. Reinig is past president and board member of the Professional Developers of Iowa. He is also president/chair of the Iowa Rural Development Council and is serving his second appointment to the Governor's Empower Rural Iowa Initiative Task Force. He is a member of the organization's executive committee.

As a community development specialist, Reinig will deliver educational programming in rural housing, economic and community

development, and strategic planning. He will work with CED team members to develop new programming and will engage with county and municipal officials, as well as other community stakeholders, to meet myriad goals.



In his spare time Reinig spends time with family and also enjoys reading, hunting, and fishing. His newest hobby is painting. Reinig will be based at the Clayton County Extension and Outreach office in Elkader.

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Community Matters Now is published monthly 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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COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OFFERS NEW CULTURAL COMPETENCY PROGRAM

By Himar Hernández | CED Assistant Program Director

Since the 1990s, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Community and Economic Development (CED) and other organizations have been working with communities, organizations, and companies in Iowa to better understand demographic changes and how to adapt.

The focus has been on understanding the numbers and the cultures that are reshaping our state and making it a new Iowa. CED specialists have responded to these needs in the past by providing education on different cultures and by sharing best practices in community development.

This work has not gone unnoticed with both Iowa and CED receiving national attention on being a model of inclusiveness and community engagement. From respected media outlets such as *The Wall Street Journal* and NBC, Iowa's way of welcoming and celebrating diversity was praised and validated.

To better support its clients' needs in terms of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), CED has added a new program that will provide education and coaching to its customers in the area cultural competency.

The Intercultural Development Inventory® (IDI) is the world's premier cross-cultural assessment program used by thousands of individuals and organizations to build intercultural competence to achieve diversity and inclusion goals and outcomes. In contrast to many "personal characteristic" instruments, IDI® is a cross-culturally valid, reliable, and generalizable measure of intercultural competence along the validated intercultural development continuum. Research has shown that IDI® has high predictive validity for both bottom-line, cross-cultural outcomes in organizations and intercultural goals in education.

In March, members of CED's civic engagement and equity team became certified to deliver and administer IDI.® Since then, the team has procured three

contracts to deliver the program, including a private foundation's board of directors, participants of a community leadership academy, and managers of an Iowa company that recently has expanded internationally. The objectives of IDI® are:

1. Helping participants and organizations understand the importance of cultural competency.
2. Assessing participant's levels of cultural competency and helping them learn the skills needed to be able to be part of their own organization's DEI goals in a confidential way.
3. Assessing the organization's levels of cultural competency and how to set measurable goals for growth that will translate in higher efficiency and better communication.

Communities and organizations interested in learning more about IDI® can contact Himar Hernández at himarh@iastate.edu or 641-799-6681.

TWO SOON-TO-BE ISU GRADS TO JOIN THE COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TEAM

Toni Veldhuizen

Antoinette (Toni) Veldhuizen will join the Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Community and Economic Development team as a program specialist in mid-May. Her primary responsibility will be assisting with the Iowa Municipal Professionals Institute and Academy; however, she will provide support to a variety of other CED programs.

This year, Veldhuizen will earn a double bachelor's degree in agricultural studies and agricultural life sciences education communications option with a minor in general business from ISU. As a student, she has been active in Sigma Alpha, the sorority for professional women in agriculture, the Farm Operations Club, and the Student Alumni Leadership Council.

Veldhuizen is a native of Iowa, growing up on a small acreage in Runnells, and has been involved in some way with ISU Extension and Outreach for a number of years, starting with 4-H. She comes to CED from the Vice President of Extension and Outreach Office, where she worked as a student assistant and interned with the Warren County Extension Office as a summer program assistant. Through both

positions, she learned about community outreach, supporting and educating youth, providing excellent customer service, and being part of a team environment.

In her free time, Veldhuizen enjoys spending time with family and friends, walking her dog Duke, helping her family raise Boer goats, traveling, and outdoor activities.

Jay Maxwell

Jay Maxwell is the newest member of the CED program's data team. As a data analyst, Maxwell will help the team maintain its *Data for Decision Makers* publications, assist with ArcGIS workshops and documentation, and work to provide data-oriented solutions to the team's internal and external clients.

Maxwell will graduate in May with a degree in data science from ISU. Through the program, he learned data visualization and analytics, which paired well with his minor in GIS offered by the College of Design, where he worked with spatial data to produce maps and analyses based on Census and remote-sensing data.



Maxwell has spent the past three years programming, learning statistical methodology, and creating maps, abilities that will enhance the already strong skill set of CED's data team.

No stranger to ISU, Maxwell earned his first degree in journalism and mass communication from the Greenlee School of Journalism and Communication. He met his wife of 16 years, Sara, in the ISU Cyclone Football "Varsity" Marching Band. The couple spent 10 years on Maui, Hawaii, where Maxwell was a downhill bicycle tour guide for a family-owned eco-adventure company and his wife was a SCUBA instructor for a local dive shop.

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