New Research and Development Partnership Launches in Dubuque

By Christopher Weishaar  
Extension Communications Specialist

A unique, new partnership in Dubuque, Iowa, hopes to strengthen development efforts in the area, as well as share successful strategies with other communities across Iowa and Wisconsin to support more sustainable economies.

The Dubuque Institute for Sustainable Communities and Economic Development is a collaboration between Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, University of Wisconsin-Extension and the City of Dubuque. The institute will focus on issues important to the greater Dubuque regional economy and successful strategies that can be replicated in other communities across both states.

“Building this unique partnership with the University of Wisconsin-Extension and the City of Dubuque is very much in line with Extension and Outreach’s mission to build partnerships and provide learning opportunities to improve the quality of life” said Tim Borich, program director, ISU Extension and Outreach Community and Economic Development. “This will be a unique undertaking for the universities and there is no better place for it than Dubuque, given the community’s track record in building a strong regional economy and its level of engagement on sustainable development.”

The institute and its faculty and staff will be located in the historic Roshek Building, which is owned by a local not-for-profit, Dubuque Initiatives, and is the first LEED Platinum Historic Rehabilitation project in Iowa. Staff will research the area’s successful history of regional development, strategies for addressing new challenges within the region and share the learning and results with other communities. It is expected that the institute will be established and staffed by this fall.

“Dubuque is honored to be a part of this pioneering collaboration and to host the institute staff and offices,” Dubuque Mayor Roy D. Buol said. “Sustainable growth is key to our Sustainable Dubuque goals of economic prosperity, environmental integrity, and social/cultural vibrancy. We look forward to working with current and future institute partners to improve the Dubuque economy and develop models for other communities.”

Part of the creation and location of the institute includes new university positions based out of Dubuque, including a full-time joint ISU/UW-Extension faculty position funded and supported by both organizations and intended to serve shared needs related to community leadership development and extension programs in both Iowa and Wisconsin, with a focus on regional development and leadership; a full-time specialist, with a focus on economic...
From the Director

Dear Friends:

What do you get when you combine a Badger with a Cyclone? Hopefully, the combination will lead to some exciting new Extension programs for both Iowa and Wisconsin. (If you answered “Cy-ger” or “Bad-clone,” you were thinking too much.)

The University of Wisconsin-Extension and Iowa State University Extension and Outreach have partnered in a joint effort to promote leadership development programming in both states. The two universities have reached an agreement to create a joint faculty position that will assist in the development of extension programming and applied research related to community leadership development. The faculty position will be based in Dubuque, and tenured as an associate or full Professor at Iowa State University with faculty status at the University of Wisconsin – Madison. The two extension systems are sharing the cost associated with the position and providing additional extension staffing. This agreement represents one of the first of its kind in the country between two land-grant institutions.

Housed in the same facility with the leadership development professor will be existing extension staff associated with economic development and local government programming. It is our hope that this facility in Dubuque will help bridge the two systems in a manner that enhances both and creates a model for future collaboration.

In past issues of Community Matters, I have used my “From the Director” letter to discuss how Iowa State University Extension Community and Economic Development is not only an Iowa program, but has ties to other land-grant universities across the region and country. This agreement and the initiative from which it was derived, represent a tangible benefit of these networks to residents of Iowa and Wisconsin alike.

I should use this column to thank people more than I do. Building this bridge between two states and their land-grant universities is not as easy as one might think. Universities have systems in place to compete with one another (e.g., sports, research funds, grant funding, students). Yet, extension system administrators, university counsel offices, university academic administrators, and human relations officers from both institutions gave us license to try to something different.

It can be a very uncomfortable position when you are the first to try a new approach, an innovative method, or a new partnership. It should be noted that there were people at both institutions that could have prevented this agreement from happening, but did not. Instead, they were supportive and encouraging. Innovation by definition is risky. I just want to say thank you to those who encouraged our program by allowing us to try something new.

Timothy O. Borich
Director, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Community and Economic Development

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and justice for all

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Natural Resources and Economic Development; a part-time specialist, with a focus on community development and finance; and student and graduate internships in conjunction with the two institutions.

The institute staff will work with regional universities, colleges and other academic institutions in both states, as well as extension and colleges within the two universities. Faculty and staff will look for other regional, national or international institutions to conduct research within Dubuque and support collaboration with private sector businesses and organizations in the community.

“We are excited by the multiple opportunities for partnering that the institute will be able to take advantage of in Dubuque,” said Tom Blewett, program director for Community, Natural Resources and Economic Development, University of Wisconsin-Extension. “The strong local colleges and universities, a highly engaged private sector and extensive existing research efforts on community sustainability are all great assets. These partnerships will be a great way to extend knowledge and application beyond our traditional campuses and into Wisconsin and Iowa communities.”

The institute will initially focus on a broad range of activities, including research-based case studies, market analyses, educational program implementation, research and education, and sustainability studies. These activities will be aimed at looking at historic, current and future efforts to address specific issues; aiding the public, private and non-profit sectors with training and strategies; investigating methods for successful growth and sustainability; and identifying best practices for other communities.

“Dubuque has worked hard over the last several decades and we are now blessed with one of the most successful regional economies in the country,” said Rick Dickinson, president of the Greater Dubuque Development Corporation. “Having two world class education and research institutions like Iowa State University and the University of Wisconsin-Extension recognize the community’s efforts and join us to expand and replicate these successes is a great opportunity for this region.”

Did You Know?

Extension and Outreach’s RECAP Gets Makeover and New Name

By Samantha Liametz, Undergraduate Student, Greenlee School of Journalism

Finding community and county data for Iowa just got easier. ISU’s Regional Economic and Community Analysis Program (RECAP) website has been redesigned to take advantage of recent advances in information technology. The revamped program, now called the Iowa Community Indicators Program (ICIP), is designed to provide users with the data they need with the simplicity they want.

“What we are seeing is there is a whole group of users out there [who] just want a number quickly,” said Liesl Eathington, ICIP director and former RECAP director. “They don’t want to have to spend a lot of time learning to navigate these increasingly complex websites.”

Despite the new name and website, the underlying function of ICIP has not changed significantly. The program offers secondary data and research on local demographic, social and economic trends in Iowa. The changes to the site focused primarily on better serving the audience using the data.

“The name change was secondary. The motivation behind [the change] was to refresh the website,” Eathington said. “The whole market for secondary data changes really quickly. Each time we have advances in information technology … it gets easier and easier to find data, but those same technology advances mean there are new ways to present the data.”

ICIP users can use census profiles to explore population characteristics in their city or county. They can also analyze recent and historical retail trends and see conditions in trends in their local retail sectors. Data on a variety of topics can be compared across communities.

ICIP also has interactive thematic maps geographic patterns of community indicators such as in economic, demographic and social data. In addition, the site provides links to interactive mapping sites where users can create customized maps. Eathington plans to add to this portfolio in the future.

A major change to the site is that the data provided gives insight into historical trends.

“To substitute for the interactive complexity tools, we instead decided to add more historical data,” said Eathington. “People can go back as far as 1950 or even 1900 for some of the indicators. People are really interested in the long-term trends, especially population and agriculture land values.”

The program is funded and overseen by multiple ISU academic and Extension and Outreach units including the Department of Economics, the Department of Sociology, ISU Extension and Outreach Community and Economic Development and the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

Check out the new website at www.icip.iastate.edu. For additional information and/or suggestions, contact Liesl Eathington through the “Contact Us” tab on the ICIP website.
Skywalk Mural Adds a Splash of Color to Downtown Sioux City

By Sandra Oberbroeckling, Community Relations Specialist

Downtown Sioux City is becoming a bit more colorful thanks to Sioux City native Irene Lopez. This summer, Lopez participated in a student-in-residence program created by Downtown Partners and Iowa State University Design West.

The primary goal of the student-in-residence program, which has just finished its second year, is to fund beautification efforts in the downtown area. The program also provides an opportunity for design students to gain practical experience.

Lopez, an ISU junior in graphic design and an alumnus of Sioux City’s North High School, spent the summer working at Design West. She assisted with middle- and high-school design workshops and worked with local artists on the 2012 ArtWalk. She also designed and painted two murals. Her first mural is on the Children’s Museum on Pearl Street, and the second is located on the west corridor of the “four corners,” the center of the downtown skywalk system between 4th and 5th Streets and Pierce and Nebraska Streets.

“This is a really great opportunity for me to use all that I’ve learned in my graphic design program, as well as to improve the downtown area of my hometown,” said Lopez.

Ragen Cote, director of Downtown Partners, also finds this partnership to be an exciting venture, now and looking into the future. “We are very excited to partner with ISU Design West and have a way for students to be consistently involved in beautifying our city with their talent and expertise,” she said.

Susan Fey, program coordinator at ISU Design West, echoes both Cote and Lopez. “It’s fabulous to see such a great talent like Lopez come back to her community and improve areas of the downtown,” said Fey. “Irene has been so dedicated to these projects this summer, and we have been fortunate to have her aboard!”

Lopez returned to ISU this fall to continue working toward her degree in graphic design.

Main Street and Extension CED Assess Downtown Perry

By Himar Hernández, Community Development Specialist

Some of you remember when downtown was the heart of your community. The storefronts were all occupied, many by local small businesses, and Main Street was the social and commercial hub. Unfortunately, in many towns—both rural and urban—downtown has lost its significance. Local businesses can’t compete with big-box stores and Internet shopping, schools consolidate and more people commute to other towns.

Perry, Iowa, is one of many cities and towns all over the country trying to re-establish downtown as the center of the community. Trying to picture the future of our downtowns can be a challenge if we do not have a complete understanding of retail trends, consumer behaviors and new uses of historic buildings.

Enter Thom Guzman, director of the Iowa Downtown Resource Center, and Himar Hernández, community development specialist with Iowa State University Extension and Outreach. September 5–6, Guzman and Hernandez led a two-day comprehensive downtown assessment in Perry.

The Iowa Downtown Resource Center is home to the Main Street Iowa program, which aims to improve the social and economic well-being of Iowa’s communities by assisting selected communities to capitalize on the identity, assets and character of their historic commercial districts. Main Street is economic development within the context of historic preservation.

Guzman and Hernández began the assessment process with a driving tour of Perry as a whole. Then they toured downtown on foot and met with 104 community leaders, individuals and groups representing the private and public sectors. The team conducted an evaluation of the downtown buildings, infrastructure and businesses and met with groups of residents at different times to learn how the citizens of Perry view downtown and what they would like to see there in the years to come. Bob Wilson with the Perry Chamber of Commerce and Butch Niehbur, city administrator for the City of Perry, assisted by promoting attendance to the meetings and the final community presentation. Citizens with all types of different backgrounds and experiences participated in the interviews and continued on page 9
Biswa Das Joins Community and Regional Planning Faculty

By Sandra Oberbroekling,
Community Relations Specialist

When it rains, it pours. At least that's what happened to Biswa Das when he traveled to Iowa State University for a job interview the same week that his wife gave birth to their first child. The results were a new job and a healthy baby daughter.

The newest addition to the ISU College of Design Community and Regional Planning Department and Extension Community and Economic Development (CED), Das comes to ISU from Kansas State University, where he served as a research assistant professor and an extension associate. At ISU, he is an assistant professor and extension specialist.

Das's position was held by professor emeritus Paul Coates, who specialized in state and local government and directed the Office of State and Local Government Programs (OSLGP). With an economics background, Das adds a new twist to community and regional planning. He earned a master of arts and a master of philosophy in economics from University of Hyderabad in India. In 2004, he earned a PhD in agricultural economics from Texas Tech University.

As an extension specialist, Das will focus on developing publications and training in the area of public finance. He is interested in creating a guide to fiscal health indicators, along with publications that compare counties with peer counties to give them a sense of how they are performing. He plans to conduct training sessions for county extension staff to demonstrate what resources are available. Unlike Coates, Das will not oversee the annual Municipal Professionals Institute and Academy, but he will teach sessions in his areas of expertise.

Since he started at ISU on August 1, Das has been collaborating with Cindy Kendall, extension program specialist in OSLGP, and Gary Taylor, associate professor of community and regional planning, to build on CED's existing public finance outreach. Das, Taylor and Kendall will consult with the Iowa Association of Counties to get a better understanding of what counties need and what type of information would be beneficial.

One of Das's goals is to create a virtual finance center that would be a resource for Iowa counties as well as for county governments nationwide. The center would house data from the department of revenue and provide economic analysis of data for Iowa's 99 counties. This database will make it possible to generate annual reports for each county.

“We want to create a template for entering data using a program connected to a spreadsheet-based document, which in turn plugs the data into a Word document that can be printed out as a PDF,” Das said. This process would start with county-level data and eventually focus on data at the city level.

Das's experience at Kansas State makes him uniquely qualified for local government outreach. While at Kansas, he introduced a new planning and visioning program called “Envisioning Economic Prosperity for Your Community.” This fee-based program is community driven and takes a bottom-up approach to decision making.

“We provided a platform for communities to come together and make informed decisions based on research output presented,” Das said. Participating communities identified top priorities on which to focus over the next one to five years.

In the two years that Das was involved in the program, he worked in one urban area and six rural areas and learned a great deal about community involvement. “I have new ideas to incorporate into existing programs here,” he said.

In addition to his outreach activities, Das will teach a public finance class in community and regional planning titled “Public Budgeting and Finance Management” starting in spring 2013. This advanced undergraduate class will be very hands on.

“I want to work with the Iowa Association of Counties to provide students the opportunity to spend time with officials and get firsthand exposure on how the budgeting process works,” he said.

Das is looking forward to the opportunities that ISU offers. “I want to do targeted economic development planning,” he said. “At K-State the work was more broadly based. At ISU I want to focus on specific areas, for example, planning for recreation or tourism.”

Housing Summit Offers Hope for Families Pursuing the American Dream

By Samantha Liametz,
Undergraduate Student, Greenlee School of Journalism

The housing crisis and the poor economy have led many people in the United States to believe that the “American Dream” of home ownership has become the “Impossible Dream.”

No so, according to participants in the 2012 Tri-State Housing Summit, a meeting of private businesses, government agencies and nonprofit organizations from northeast Missouri, west-central Illinois and southeast Iowa. The goals of the summit are to highlight successes of different housing programs and to discuss other ways of providing housing for more American families.

The summit, held on June 7 in Canton, IL, was hosted by the North East Community Action Corporation (NECAC); the Two Rivers Regional Council of Governments from Quincy, IL; the Canton Tourism Commission, NeighborWorks America; University of Missouri Extension; and Iowa State University Extension and Outreach.

Among the featured speakers at the meeting was Nadia Anderson, ISU assistant professor of architecture. In her presentation titled “Housing and Neighborhood Development,” Anderson discussed sustainable housing design. Other speakers included a legislative panel; Stacey Epperson of Next Step, a nonprofit affordable housing organization in Louisville, KY; and John Springs, mayor of Quincy.

According to Frank Owens, ISU Extension and Outreach community development

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Julia Badenhope recognized early in her career that she wanted to focus less on amassing a body of built work and more on facilitating community transformation.

“What I really care about is helping people make the world a better place—not doing it for them, but enabling them to redefine what their problems are and develop sophisticated strategies to solve them,” said Badenhope, FASLA, Iowa State University associate professor of landscape architecture.

In her 20 years at Iowa State, Badenhope has developed a participatory design process that goes beyond physical design and guides communities in exploring their values and sense of place. Her work empowers residents to make meaningful planning decisions, engages landscape architecture students in challenging service learning, involves the profession in communicative planning techniques, and helps state and federal agencies better implement their programs.

For these substantial achievements, Badenhope was one of 33 landscape architects invested as Fellows of the American Society of Landscape Architects at the organization’s annual meeting in Phoenix in late September.

Among the highest honors a landscape architect may receive, the Fellow designation is conferred in recognition of exceptional accomplishments over a sustained period of time. The Iowa Chapter of the ASLA nominated Badenhope in the knowledge category, citing her “strong record of academic and professional involvement and her integration of teaching, research and outreach in her conceptualization, development and implementation of the Iowa’s Living Roadways Community Visioning Program.”

Community visioning
Badenhope established and directs the Iowa’s Living Roadways Community Visioning Program. The collaborative effort between the ISU landscape architecture department and the nonprofit Trees Forever environmental advocacy organization is funded by the Iowa Department of Transportation.

For 16 years, the program—honored with the American Planning Association’s and Federal Highway Administration’s highest national awards—has helped small towns access professional planning and design services and compete for project funding to enhance the beauty and safety of the routes residents drive, walk and bike every day. Through the visioning program, Iowa State organizes teams of landscape architects, student interns, faculty and staff to help selected communities create conceptual transportation enhancement plans. Trees Forever then helps them carry out their projects.

To date, 191 Iowa towns have completed the visioning process, and 94 percent of these communities have completed at least one project resulting from the program.

“Julia’s leadership in taking the process of landscape architecture and community planning to thousands of rural Midwesterners is without parallel,” said Al Bohling of Shive-Hattery Architecture and Engineering in Cedar Rapids, a landscape architect with the visioning program since its inception in 1996.

“Her understanding of the real issues facing the rural areas of the Midwest and their struggle to not just survive, but to sustain a lifestyle, has made the Iowa’s Living Roadways Community Visioning Program an immense success,” he said.

For Badenhope, the program provides a vital link between students, practitioners and residents of communities that often don’t have access to professional design assistance.

“I think by going through the collaborative problem-definition process and exploring opportunities as part of the visioning program, our clients are prepared to be creative in ways they otherwise wouldn’t be. Students get a chance to be part of that process as design interns and often work as professional designers with the program after graduation,” she said. “We’ve educated students and changed the way the profession thinks about small towns and the way small towns think about health and diversity and design.”

Community design studio
Badenhope also brings her passion for participatory design into the classroom. With Professor J. Timothy Keller, FASLA, she has played an integral role in developing the curriculum for the landscape architecture community design studio, in which students address challenging issues facing real communities.

“We’ve reformulated the fifth-year capstone studio into an advocacy studio to change the idea of landscape architecture from simply site design to a mode of inquiry and engagement with the world at large,” Badenhope said.

The entrance signs in Decorah were proposed as part of the visioning process.
Communities continued from page 6

Recent projects have included impact analysis and disaster recovery scenarios for the eastern Iowa communities affected by the Delhi dam failure, and development of more efficient food-aid systems to alleviate hunger and increase access to healthy food for Des Moines-area residents in need of assistance.

The Des Moines project won an Honor Award for planning and analysis in the ASLA Central States’ 2012 student competition and the Award of Excellence, selected from all award entries from the six-state region, including professional offices and academic practitioners—the first time a student submission received this top honor.

“Students learned how to take an abstract problem like hunger and reframe it as a tangible problem resulting from functions of transportation; food production, preparation and distribution; and perception of need,” Badenhope said. “They then created systems to fill gaps and overcome barriers. They worked hard to understand the issues and provide workable, inventive solutions.”

“Julia incorporates community design into the student experience to produce civic-minded graduates who are well prepared to address complex societal problems,” said Keller, who taught both the Delhi and Des Moines studios with Badenhope.

Community disaster recovery

Badenhope’s personal work involves long-term community disaster recovery. Over the past several years, she has worked closely with communities like Elkader, Parkersburg, New Hartford, Mapleton and the Lake Delhi region of the Maquoketa River that have suffered catastrophic damage from tornadoes and flooding.

“People don’t talk about memory and loss, but if you’re dealing with communities and disaster, there’s a lot going on, not least of which is grief and feelings of loss,” Badenhope said. “Memory and community sentiment are embodied in objects and places, so when these are destroyed, the immediate response is to rebuild exactly the way things were, but they can’t do that and survive. I help people find a place for grief and loss but at the same time understand how not to replicate the problem that led to the loss.”

Badenhope combines participatory qualitative research—helping communities define what’s really important to them—with participatory quantitative research to help them understand spatial patterns and “how these evolved patterns of land use reflect values that are sometimes in conflict,” she said.

Badenhope and her staff use digital maps, images and participatory GIS (geographic information systems) to capture the relationships between human values, use patterns and desires for change. Physical planning and design then build upon these findings.

“Where I want to be in the process is in that enabling role, helping residents develop good data and a strong understanding so they can take the information we generate through practical research and communicative design and planning and be effective in getting what they need to recover emotionally and shape their future,” she said.

Public-Private Partnerships Increase Impacts

By Lynn Adams,
Community Development Specialist

Alley Poyner Macchietto Architecture has a passion for design as well as the mission to re-energize communities through design. While other firms expand into urban areas, the firm’s principal Michael Alley views a rural branch office as a natural step. So, on September 19, Alley Poyner Macchietto, which is based out of Omaha, NE, opened a satellite office in the town square of Red Oak, IA. The firm hosted the Chamber coffee in the morning followed by a catered picnic lunch.

The office suite is temporarily located in a building owned by the Red Oak Downtown LLC while Alley Poyner rehabilitates a building a few doors down that it has purchased for its permanent location.

Subletting office space in the building are Iowa State University Extension and Outreach community development specialists Lynn and Steve Adams; Periwinkle Investments, a property management group; and the coordinator for the Southwest Iowa Coalition, a nonprofit, rural development advocacy organization. There is work space for interns and the ability to expand for adding future collaborators.

Alley Poyner Macchietto specializes in rehabilitation, restoration and repurposing of historic buildings, making it a good fit for Red Oak, which has been working on restoring the downtown area since 1996, when the city sought planning assistance from Iowa State University. This shared sense of mission makes sharing a space and collaborating with Alley Poyner an ideal arrangement for ISU Extension Community Economic Development (CED).

As communities and individuals begin projects and initiatives, ISU Extension and Outreach CED can educate and use data, research and design, enabling clients to conceive innovative projects and make informed decisions about economically sound approaches. CED offers a diverse array of services and programs to build community capacity. Increasing vitality within neighborhoods and communities is multi-faceted.

Extension specialists facilitate community engagement processes to build consensus for projects and to develop strategic plans and can digitally render concepts for decision-making processes. These efforts are strengthened by leveraging private-sector organizations that share ISUEO’s mission and passion.
Where People Go to Discuss Civic Affairs, or What's in a Place?

By Katia Balassiano, Assistant Professor, Community and Regional Planning

Encouraging robust citizen participation at community meetings is difficult enough, let alone engaging new residents from diverse backgrounds to play an active role in local decision making. Many rural towns in Iowa are facing this conundrum as the number of immigrants joining their communities continues to grow.

Leaders in these “new gateway communities” recognize the need to integrate new residents and some have initiated strategies such as hiring bilingual municipal employees, holding “talking circles” with long-time residents to see how they are reacting to the changing demographics, and supporting research designed to understand how these changes affect the community. However, traditional participatory mechanisms, such as public meetings and hearings where people are encouraged to voice their concerns and interests, often exclude those who are unfamiliar with the formats governing such processes.

Another factor often overlooked is the actual physical spaces where local decision making happens. Public buildings such as city hall can intimidate people who don’t regularly attend public meetings, and more so for people less familiar with the English language or American culture. Some populations might also be hesitant to attend meetings or visit public buildings because such spaces are not welcoming or do not serve their particular needs. As a result, certain people are not regularly participating in “joint governance” through which individuals and institutions plan and manage common affairs. If participation in governance is limited to a few people, one can imagine that a community’s goals and actions will probably reflect the interests of those few people, rather than the shared interests of all its residents. Therefore, the question remains: How can municipalities get more people to actively participate in decision making?

In spring 2012, two Iowa State University faculty members looked at this question as it relates to physical space. Katia Balassiano, assistant professor of community and regional planning, and Marta Maldonado, associate professor of sociology, conducted a pilot study in Perry, Iowa, to determine where people go to discuss community affairs. Perry is the quintessential example of a rural new gateway community, with Latinos comprising 35% of the overall population and Latino children making up 45% of the school-age population. However, relatively few Latinos in Perry hold positions in public office or attend public meetings.

With assistance from Rosa Gonzalez, ISU Extension and Outreach families program assistant; and Himar Hernandez and Alan Vandehaar, ISU Extension and Outreach community development specialists; Balassiano and Maldonado held eight workshops involving 82 participants with various lengths of residence in the community. Fifty-four participants identified themselves as Latino. The workshops led participants through a series of tasks that resulted in locating the places people go (and don’t go) to discuss community matters on aerial photos and street maps. Following the workshops, Nora Ladjahasan, assistant scientist for ISU’s Institute for Design Research and Outreach, helped analyze the data.

The preliminary findings link the physical places workshop participants identified to ethno-racial demographic variables. The bar graph compares the types of spaces used for discussing community affairs identified by Latinos with those of the non-Latino respondents. The top three choices among both Latino and non-Latino participants were municipal parks and recreation facilities, schools, and non-Latino-owned businesses.

The percentages of Latinos and non-Latinos who prefer municipal facilities and schools are similar, however, 30% of non-Latinos use non-Latino-owned restaurants for discussions of community affairs compared to 9% of Latino respondents. Significant differences between Latino and non-Latino participant preferences include places that provide services for low-income households, Latino-owned businesses, community festivals and entertainment. A higher percentage of
Civic affairs from page 8

Latinos use these spaces for discussing civic affairs more than non-Latinos.

Workshop participants were also asked to describe the characteristics of the places where they discussed community affairs. Latino respondents described their favorite places as 1) providing information, help, and services; 2) being children- and family-friendly; 3) accommodating both formal and informal gatherings; 4) having food for purchase or being able to host catered events; and 5) facilitating a sense of togetherness or community. The more of these characteristics that a place had, the more popular it was for community discussions.

Balassiano and Maldonado were also interested in the workshop process itself—that is, would participants find the experience empowering? If the process helped people learn about community resources, then perhaps this methodology could be used in other municipalities to generate more extensive participation in local decision-making. In fact, the majority of participants indicated that before the workshop they did not always know where to go to express their needs or concerns, and nearly 70% of participants indicated on evaluation forms that they learned something new about community resources during the workshops.

If the goal is to integrate communities and create equal opportunities for participation in governance, then discussions about community issues might need to take place outside of traditional, institutional settings. Some people communicate easily with their political representatives; others use more informal mechanisms and networks. City hall is an important place for some people, while others may prefer speaking informally at a local soccer match. Ultimately, this workshop methodology may benefit organizations working to protect spaces of, and for, the increasingly diverse public, and in reconsidering where local decision making takes place. The long-term goal of this research is to develop a replicable and transferable methodology that helps communities progress toward more harmonious integration, inclusive governance and improved livability.

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included small business owners, retirees, youth, Latinos, educators, community leaders and residents.

Based on the information collected, Guzman and Hernández made a series of observations and recommendations for Perry, such as collaborating with the school and the Historic Preservation Commission, working with ISU Extension and Outreach to provide business education workshops, and establishing local investment groups to acquire and rehabilitate downtown buildings. The team also encouraged the community to look for grant sources and partnership opportunities.

Communities interested in downtown revitalization can contact Thom Guzman at www.mainstreet@iowa.gov.

Housing summit from page 5

specialist, the housing summit is a great example of how multiple organizations can work together to achieve a common goal. Owens is a member of the Tri-State Development Housing Task Force and was part of the summit planning team.

The Tri-State Housing Summit took place in conjunction with NeighborWorks America Week June 2–9, a national initiative that brings nonprofits, families and others in the community together to reinvest in housing.

The summit was hosted by NECAC, Culver-Stockton College, the Two Rivers Regional Council of Governments from Quincy, Ill., Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, University of Missouri Extension, the Canton Tourism Commission and NeighborWorks America.

Extension, League of Cities Offer Finance 101

By Samantha Liametz, Undergraduate Student, Greenlee School of Journalism

In this climate of shrinking government budgets and a “do more with less” mentality, financial management and fiscal planning have become hot topics among municipal professionals. To do their jobs more effectively despite limited resources, local elected officials need additional skills in government finance.

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Office of State and Local Government Programs is partnering with the Iowa League of Cities to launch City Finance 101 workshops. These workshops will provide elected officials with a better understanding of government finance, resources, responsibilities and some fraud-prevention methods and the tools needed to understand the financial information to make better decisions regarding budgets, projects and safeguarding the assets of a community.

The workshops have been developed into a single interactive session taught by Cindy Kendall, ISU Extension program specialist, and Janon Douglas, municipal consultant. Two-hour sessions are scheduled at the following locations across the state starting this October through May 2013:

- October 24, 2012 – Forest City (6:00–8:00 p.m.)
- November 8, 2012 – Corning (6:00–8:00 p.m.)
- March 21, 2013 – New Hampton (6:00–8:00 p.m.)
- April 25, 2013 – Mount Pleasant (6:00–8:00 p.m.)
- May 11, 2013 – Spencer (10:00 a.m. –12:00 p.m.)

Additional information on each session can be found on the Office of State and Local Government Programs website at www.extension.iastate.edu/communities/oslgp/finance101.

The cost of each workshop is $30, which includes a meal. Registration will be available on the Iowa League of Cities website at www.iowaleague.org. Please contact Cindy Kendall at ckendall@iastate.edu or 515-290-1811 with any questions.
Extension LA Christopher Seeger Ears Awards for I-WALK Program

By Samantha Liatetz,
Undergraduate Student, Greenlee School of Journalism

Most of us don’t think about how accessible our built environment is when we use the global positioning system (GPS) in our smartphones to find the closest gas station or restaurant. Christopher J. Seeger, on the other hand, has made it part of his life’s work.

Seeger, Iowa State University associate professor of landscape architecture and extension landscape architect, developed a ground-breaking program that uses web-mapping methodologies developed at ISU and smartphone GPS to map the environment along the routes children use to walk or bicycle to school.

This innovative program, called I-WALK (Iowans Walking Assessment Logistics Kit), garnered two awards for Seeger. He received the ISU College of Design 2012 Outreach and Public Service Award at the College of Design’s Award Day on April 18, 2012. The American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) Central States also recognized him with a merit award in planning and analysis. The 2012 ASLA Central States awards were presented on May 3 at the ASLA Central States conference in Kansas City, Missouri.

Seeger designed I-WALK as a means of developing a sustainable model for community coalitions to update and evaluate on an ongoing basis local safe routes to school. The program consists of three components: teacher tallies, an online parent/child survey and walkability workshop. He has helped 16 communities throughout Iowa implement the program.

Public health partners and community volunteers use a smartphone application to photograph and record the condition of intersections, midblock sidewalks, and additional features that impede pedestrians and cyclists. The information is then uploaded to a geospatial server at ISU, where the information is both shared as an interactive web map with the public and used to develop an analysis of the walkability of the area around the school. Using the GPS information from the survey, a safe and barrier-free walking route can be identified for residents.

During the 2012–13 academic year, Seeger is bringing I-WALK to 13 schools in 12 new communities. Much of the protocol will stay the same; however, Seeger and his team are developing a new version of the GPS application.

“It will let us continue doing what we are already doing; however the user interface is improved,” said Seeger. Additional enhancements to the application also allow for participants to evaluate existing sites on certain criteria—for example, a restaurant for the healthy eating options on its menu. “Data locations already exist now. [Participants] are selecting data points and doing an evaluation of each location,” he said.

When the application was initially implemented, participants input data themselves through images of broken sidewalks or dangerous intersections. The new app will provide a new perspective and possibly lay the groundwork for a new project.

This summer, Seeger piloted a version of I-WALK for older adults. As with the original I-WALK program, this version of the process employed a survey and GPS field assessment to gain insight into the community. The online survey was adjusted to focus on the locations that older adults most typically bike and walk to, how they get there, and the barriers they encounter on the way. For instance, the survey measured trends of individuals driving to a certain location in town and then walking to their destinations from there.

With the success of both of these programs in the last year, Seeger plans to continue to further develop programs focused on Safe Routes to School and increasing accessibility for older adults.

Additional information on the I-WALK project can be found at www.i-walk.org.

Featured Publications

This report updates a 2007 study led by Iowa State University economist Daniel Otto. The goal of the study is to provide a comprehensive profile of Iowa’s outdoor recreational resources, levels of participation, and the economic impact associated with those outdoor recreation activities. As well as updating the 2007 report, the 2012 report incorporates data regarding how the availability of outdoor recreation can facilitate more physical activity among Iowans, which in turn can contribute to lower health care costs. The study was commissioned by the Nature Conservancy with support from the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation.

This report examines both the primary and secondary effects of the drought and the potential consequences for Iowa. Iowa State University economists Dave Swenson and Liesl Eathington define and discuss the challenges in estimating economic impacts of the drought. In addition to the direct effects caused by the sharp reduction of the state’s water supply, the drought will also have long-term “ripple effects” on the economy and the environment. The report can be downloaded as a pdf at www.extension.iastate.edu/communities/content/report-examines-immediate-and-long-term-impacts-2012-drought.
ISU Research on Water Quality Earns Prestigious AAEA Award

By Nathan Cook, CARD Communications Specialist; and Kristin Senty, Economics Department Communications Specialist

An interdisciplinary research team from Iowa State University received the prestigious Bruce Gardner Memorial Prize for Applied Policy Analysis or their work on water quality preservation and restoration at the Agriculture and Applied Economics Association (AAEA) annual meeting in Seattle August 12–14, 2012.

Joe Herriges, economics professor; Cathy Kling, economics professor and interim director of the Center for Agricultural and Rural Development; Dan Otto, economics professor and extension economist; Kevin Egan, former graduate student (now at University of Toledo); and John Downing, professor in the Department of Ecology, Evolution, and Organismal Biology; were recognized for their collective work on “Assessing the Value of Water Quality Preservation and Restoration: The Iowa Lakes and Rivers Projects.”

“I was delighted that our research was chosen to receive the Bruce Gardner Policy Award. Professor Gardner was a true inspiration—he continuously demonstrated that excellence in economic research could effectively improve policy analysis, making a real difference in both policy outcomes and human lives,” Kling said.

Their research was in response to the diminishing water quality of Iowa’s lakes and rivers, and assessed the economic value of those waterways in terms of their attraction as a source of recreation. The study surveyed Iowans’ perceived value for and recreational use of 132 of Iowa’s lakes and 73 of the state’s river segments.

“This was an exciting foray into the interface between research and policy,” Kling said of the multi-year research project. “We leveraged resources from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources and the US Environmental Protection Agency to collect a unique, multi-year data set on how Iowa households use these environmental resources.”

The results showed a sizable economic impact on Iowa’s communities, drawing more than 6,350 jobs, $824 million in sales, and $130 million in personal income from the use of rivers alone. The Lakes Valuation project, which stretches as far back as 2002, found that 12 of the 132 lakes generate more than $40 million in spending annually. Overall, Iowans spent just over $9 million on direct spending on average per lake.

Lake visitation increased 33 percent from 2002–2009, the years in which lake usage surveys were sent out. Of the four lakes with the largest increase in usage, three had undergone major restoration efforts. “The findings indicate that Iowans value improved water quality, and (the study) provides a means for economically ranking water quality improvement projects at the state level,” Kling said.

Results from the lakes and rivers surveys can be viewed at www.card.iastate.edu/lakes/ and www.card.iastate.edu/environment/nonmarket_valuation/iowa_rivers/.

The AAEA, formerly the American Agricultural Economics Association, is the main professional association serving the interests of members working in agricultural and broadly related fields of applied economics.

Partnerships from page 7

Successful collaborations happen when partnering organizations have an awareness of each other’s roles, functions and capacities. They also integrate with us and understand when a project’s outcome is reliant on their abilities. ISU Extension and Outreach and the consumers it serves look to the private sector for access to additional resources and expertise.

Collaborators with an acute awareness of the complexity of the development process from concept to outcomes understand the importance of working symbiotically in a public-private partnership to achieve results. A private partner can build on what ISU Extension CED delivers to maximize the outcomes and impacts. They make it possible for CED to incorporate efficiencies, evaluate progress and discover new, good practices.

Conversely, architects working with developers need data as they deliberate about appropriate uses for restored and new structures. They need to answer questions such as: Is there a housing need? What type? Will a lakefront lodge on the edge of town drive retail trade in the downtown?

In what has become an age of shrinking budgets and resources, public-private relationships can make the difference for long-term, sustainable outcomes in community economic development. Collaborations between the two that can build on one another’s strengths instead of taxing one another’s resources is a recipe for success and is what is being created at the new Alley Poyner Macchietto office space in Red Oak.
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