

ECIA Spotlight

ECIA Releases New Brand

We're excited to share the next chapter of ECIA!

Over the past several months, we've taken a thoughtful look at who we are, the work we do, and the impact we strive to make across Eastern Iowa. The result is a refreshed brand that better reflects our purpose and the partnerships that make our work possible.

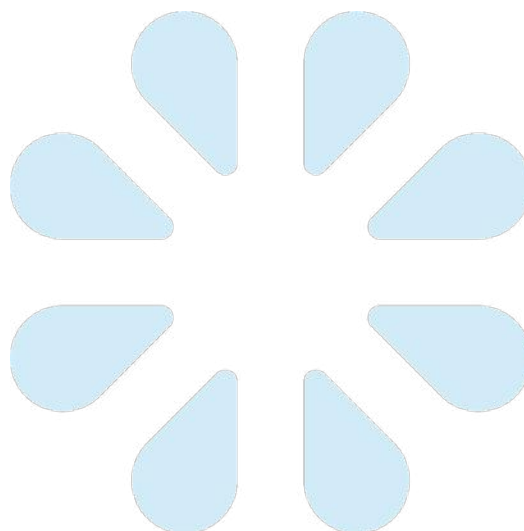
While our look has evolved, our commitment remains the same. We will continue serving as a trusted resource for communities by connecting expertise, resources, and partnerships that help turn ideas into lasting progress.

By now, you've hopefully seen our new brand from direct email driving you to our website and across our communications. We hope you'll take a few moments to explore the refreshed experience and learn more about what it represents. If you haven't checked it out yet, please visit <https://weare.ecia.org/>. The ECIA website will be updated in the coming months.

The mark is rooted in the idea of seeds—small but expansive by nature—representing knowledge, ideas, and people gathered around the table. Each seed reflects a seat, a voice, and a place within a shared system where growth happens through connection. As seeds take root and expand, they symbolize how knowledge becomes a living resource that makes more possible over time. The circular motion of the form evokes progress in motion—continuous, evolving, and always becoming—like a system that is actively building what comes next.

Thank you for your continued partnership and for the important work we accomplish together. We look forward to building what's next with you.

ECIA's Marla Quinn, Municipal Support & Communications Manager, will be leading a staff committee to develop a comprehensive internal and external communications strategy. This will include being more intentional about internal communications and external outreach. Marla will still do city code updates, write grants, and remain a main point of contact, but her existing marketing duties will expand to include internal and external communications.





Glovik Park Ribbon Cutting

The City of Maquoketa and Maquoketa Betterment Corporation/Hometown Pride held a dedication and ribbon cutting to celebrate Glovik Community Park in downtown Maquoketa, the city's newly completed event venue and community gathering space!

This is the culmination of more than three years of hard work, driven by dedicated volunteers. Early designs were conceptualized in 2023, followed by an ambitious fundraising campaign that raised approximately \$1.4M. Funding sources included \$55,000 in Dubuque Racing Association Core grants and the remainder in donations from more than 190 individuals, families, businesses, and non-profit organizations.

Glovik Community Park features a stage for outdoor concerts and performances, a sensory play area, restrooms, seating, and more. It will also be the site for Maquoketa's annual summer concert series and many other community events.

Congratulations to all who worked hard to make this a reality, including the volunteers of Maquoketa Betterment Corporation/Hometown Pride! If you have questions about this project, call Tricia Wagner, Grant Writer & Program Development Specialist at 563-556-4166 x255.



Dubuque Utilizing Brownfields Funds

ECIA recently received an additional \$500,000 in revolving loan funds (RLF) to continue work in the city of Dubuque. The projects committed with RLF funds currently are the YMCA at 1550 Elm St and the former Iowa Coffin Co at 455 E 15th St.

The City also received a \$500,000 Brownfield Assessment Grant to administer community wide projects to conduct environmental assessments and planning activities at brownfield sites. Target areas are the North end, Washington Neighborhood, and Southport area of downtown.

For more information on the ECIA Brownfields program, contact Dawn Danielson at 563-556-4166, x214.



Past event attendees enjoy one of the many games at Fun Fest

Stanwood Gets Grant for **Event**

Stanwood Fun Fest is a fairly new community event that started in 2023 by one individual with a little help from family and friends. Usually held in September, this free family friendly event has bounce houses, games, activities, entertainment, food vendors, and refreshments. The first year was a challenge, as one of the struggles in small communities is finding enough volunteers for events; comparable to finding volunteers for critical community groups like volunteer fire departments and ambulance. They pulled it off though, and about 300 attended the first year and in 2024, even more enjoyed the day.

The City provided seed money for the first Fun Fest thanks to leftover money from a past sesquicentennial event. Businesses are asked for support via a mailed letter and a Facebook Messenger note. Event organizers also coordinated a soup supper during winter to raise money to keep the event free of charge. The Community Foundation of Cedar County granted the event \$4,000 for last year's main activities vendor and this year, \$5,000 for permanent supplies including a 20' x 40' heavy-duty tent and six picnic tables. Thanks to community support of physical donations, cash, and time, the event is again slated for September 19th.

Rural areas like Stanwood must continue to offer things that engage the community while attracting and retaining residents. Fun Fest has rejuvenated this community and appeals to visitors from throughout the county and beyond.

LaMotte Builds **Pickleball Court**

Over the past two years, La Motte Area Advancement (LAA) has made it their goal to renovate the much loved and used basketball court in town. Converting the basketball court into a multi-use space accommodates those who share a love for both basketball and pickleball.

While the old court was functional, it presented several safety hazards due to cracking concrete and worn fencing. It was well loved and still used. Noticing the trend of pickleball and not wanting to give up the basketball court, LAA decided to give the court an overhaul and to provide a diverse recreational option for all residents and visitors.

The total project cost was \$73,574. The funding package included the City contributing \$35,974 through their parks and rec budget, grants totaling \$8,000, and fundraising proceeds from two annual events (Hurkey Hustle and Music on the Main) totaling \$29,600. The City of La Motte and LAA have assumed responsibility for maintenance and upkeep of the new pickleball court.

For more information on this project, please contact Amanda Dupont, at 563-556-4166, x236.

Two LaMotte youth enjoy the new pickleball court.





Manchester Awarded Catalyst Grant

The City of Manchester received its first Community Catalyst Building Remediation grant for \$100,000 in July for work to be done at 116 S. Franklin Street (red brick building on the corner, pictured above).

The upper story will be fully renovated and repurposed into three high-quality residential loft apartments. These will include two one-bedroom units and one spacious two-bedroom unit, each designed to offer comfortable, modern living within a historic setting. Two of the units will feature private, south-facing balconies, providing natural light and views of downtown Manchester and the nearby Maquoketa River corridor.

Upgrades will include new mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems, energy-efficient windows, and contemporary finishes, creating attractive housing options that support additional downtown revitalization.

The first floor, previously used as a brewery, will be redeveloped into an experiential restaurant space. The former tank room will be converted into a commercial kitchen, while the existing bar and open floor area will be reconfigured into a welcoming dining environment. The design will incorporate an interactive dining element, allowing guests to engage with the culinary staff in a unique way; the first of its kind in ECIA's region!

Total project cost is \$616,628.22. Other parts of the funding package include \$34,061.00 in local incentives and \$482,567.22 from private loans.

Dan LoBianco, ECIA Project Manager, wrote the successful grant.

CSEI Receives \$10,000

Community Solutions of Eastern Iowa (CSEI) was recently awarded \$10,000 in grant funds to be used toward the Housing Helpline through the McDonough Foundation. Individuals who are at risk of homelessness in Dubuque and Delaware counties are encouraged to call the Housing Helpline to access information, referrals, and resources within their communities regarding housing instability and/or homelessness. The \$10,000 in grant funds from the McDonough Foundation will help CSEI further its mission to address housing instability throughout Dubuque and Delaware counties.





Start Now to Address **Vacant Structures**

The IDNR Derelict Building Program is available for Iowa towns with populations of 5,000 or less to address neglected commercial or public structures that have sat vacant for at least six months.

Other areas of eligibility criteria include:

- The building must not reside on the National Historic Register.
- Only a City government may be an applicant and they must own or be in the process of owning the building. Applicants may partner with non-profits on projects, but the building must be owned by the applicant.
- Applicants must work with the Iowa Waste Exchange to determine what can be diverted from the landfill. This is one of the program's main focus areas to recycle and reuse building materials and eliminate hazards (both inside and out) posed by these empty structures.

Derelict Building grants are typically due in late February for applicants who are seeking funding assistance for the following:

- conducting asbestos inspections
- asbestos abatement
- structural engineering analysis
- phase I and phase II site assessments
- building deconstruction
- building renovation expenses

For assistance in determining project eligibility and grant assistance, contact, contact Marla Quinn, Municipal Support and Communications Manager, at 563-556-4166, x241.

DBP FY 27 Highlights

- Total Derelict Building grant funds available - \$1.4 MM
- Total grant funds includes an additional \$1 MM
- NEW FALL ROUND to address asbestos before the regular round
- **ECICOG Turbo Talk (free webinar): Derelict Buildings, August 20 at 1:30 PM, register [here](#)**



Developing Retail in your Downtown

Retail is one of the most visible — and challenging — elements of a downtown. While communities often focus on the businesses they've lost, successful districts instead ask: What kind of retail ecosystem fits today, and how can we support it intentionally?

The Iowa Economic Development & Finance Authority's 2026 Downtown Forum is designed for organizations — rather than individual retailers — that play a role in shaping downtown retail success. Participants will explore practical strategies to strengthen existing businesses, recruit the right new retail and create an environment where retail can thrive.

Participants will learn how to:

- Assess the feasibility of retail in their downtown
- Use market data to guide decision-making
- Support and retain current retailers through intentional programming
- Increase foot traffic and cross-promotion
- Recruit new businesses and prepare spaces for future retail
- Respond to evolving retail trends in small and mid-sized communities

The forum includes best practices, peer discussion and hands-on exercises to help participants leave with ideas they can realistically implement in their own communities.

Choose your date and location:

- August 4 — Orange City
- August 5 — Waverly
- August 11 — Earlham
- August 12 — Washington

All workshops are scheduled from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Lunch is on your own.

Cost: Free. Refreshments are provided.

Registration deadline: August 3

Click [here](#) to register.

June - July

ECIA Anniversaries



MATT SPECHT
23 YEARS



CRAIG ELSKAMP
8 YEARS



CHRISTINE EFFERDING
3 YEARS



JACK STUDIER
3 YEARS



REBECCA KENNEDY
2 YEARS



KATHY HOFFMAN
2 YEARS



MAE HINGTGEN
1 YEAR



CHELLE KLOOTWYK
1 YEAR

New Hire



ERIC ESSER
MAINTENANCE TECHNICIAN

Promotions

Congratulations to Mindy Wiley and Carl Reimer on their new positions. On July 1, Mindy was promoted to Housing Services Supervisor, and Carl, a Housing Development Supervisor.

