

ECIA Spotlight

EPA Staff Tours Dyersville and Dubuque

Along with staff of our congressional representatives, the EPA visit in August illustrated firsthand how EPA Brownfields funding is helping transform properties and spur economic development in the two cities.

Dyersville – Baseball Building and “If You Build It” Exhibit (completed 2019, pictured below) - Federal and State visitors learned about the property’s history and how ECIA’s EPA Brownfields Assessment grant provided some of the first dollars in, helping identify and address environmental concerns and advance redevelopment. Environmental assessments identified asbestos and lead-based paint, which were abated. Dwier Brown, Field of Dreams star, ultimately purchased the property and invested \$1 million in redevelopment. The project also leveraged Community Catalyst, TIF and local assistance, for a \$1.33 million total investment.

The Landing and Textile Brewery (completed 2018) - The Landing received \$34,077 and Textile Brewery \$2,638 in Brownfields assessment funding. Though relatively small, these investments were critical first steps in addressing vacant, abandoned and deteriorated downtown properties.

At The Landing, two underground storage tanks were removed, contaminated soil was addressed, and the site was capped for public parking. The City brought in approximately 13,000 cubic yards of clean soil, raising the site out of the flood zone, and installed new infrastructure. Two electric vehicle charging stations were also added.

Redevelopment created an 84,000-sq. ft mixed-use structure with 33 apartments and condominiums, four commercial spaces, and 35 ground-level parking spaces. The adjacent building was renovated into Textile Brewery.

Together, the projects represent \$19.9 million in redevelopment investment and 66 jobs created. They also spurred additional downtown investment, including renovated retail space, restaurants, and public parking. The broader downtown area represents approximately \$26 million in total investment.

Three additional Dyersville properties received Brownfields funding in 2017. Across the six sites, ECIA’s EPA Brownfields Assessment grant provided \$46,323 in assessment funding. Collectively, the projects represent approximately \$31.3 million in redevelopment investment, 76 new housing units, nine commercial spaces, and 198 jobs created.

Dubuque – Historic Millwork District, North and South Port, Bee Branch and Comiskey Park (2022–present) - The City shared how it leveraged approximately \$2 million in EPA Brownfields funding into more than \$942 million in total reinvestment. EPA also recognized the City’s recent \$500,000 EPA Community-wide Assessment grant and ECIA’s receipt of additional EPA Supplemental Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund funding.

The visits provided a firsthand look at the lasting impact of EPA’s partnership with Iowa communities and Brownfields funding’s role in transforming challenging properties into revitalization and economic growth opportunities.





Delaware County Receives Grant for **Homeless Prevention**

It may be difficult to believe, but there are people experiencing homelessness in Delaware County, and they need help. Thanks to a recent \$100,000 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), the County will partner with Community Solutions of Eastern Iowa (CSEI) to provide case management and financial assistance to those who live in the county, who are at risk of losing their permanent night-time residence.

CSEI, staffed through ECIA, regularly helps this vulnerable population through case management and financial assistance, and this grant will do the same. Program outcomes include:

- Provide case management and financial assistance to at least 12 households;
- Provide each household with up to 3 months of rent and/or utility assistance, including arrears;
- Commit to an additional four hours a month of case management support to Delaware County, whether in person or through Helpline contacts.

Targeted financial assistance paired with individualized case management helps citizens both survive crisis and build a

path toward long-term stability. Participants receive support with income growth, employment connection, benefits navigation, budgeting, and landlord mediation tools that strengthen self-sufficiency and reduce future risk.

Mindy Wiley, ECIA Housing Services Supervisor said, "this was the perfect opportunity to partner with CSEI to devote needed time and resources to people who may be experiencing or facing homelessness in Delaware County. This Iowa Economic Development Authority Community Services CDBG program is new and ECIA project partners saw the need and opportunity to provide targeted assistance to this population."

Amanda Dupont, ECIA Project Specialist, wrote the successful grant application, and can be reached at adupont@ecia.org for more information on this and other CDBG programs.



ECIA Secures \$30,000 for Inspiration Stables

Inspiration Stables is a small nonprofit in rural LaMotte, making a huge impact through adaptive horseback riding, serving mostly youth who have autism, Down Syndrome, ADHD, developmental delays, depression, and more. They contracted with ECIA for grant writing this spring and Tricia Wagner, Grant Writer & Program Development Specialist, wrote this successful application.

This boost from the Dubuque Racing Association (DRA) Core grant program will go towards the new indoor riding facility being built on the property, which will allow this organization to offer these wonderful opportunities year-round, not just during the warm months...For people like Brynn (pictured above): When 5-year-old Brynn arrived at Inspiration Stables last year, she had never spoken a word. Diagnosed with nonverbal autism, Brynn's world was full of curiosity—but her ability to express it was locked inside.

Then one sunny spring afternoon, everything changed. Brynn met Max, a gentle therapy horse with a calm presence and kind eyes. With quiet trust, she climbed into the saddle for the very first time. As she settled in, something extraordinary happened. "Go," she said.

One small word—but it broke years of silence.

The new facility will include an arena, community viewing room, six-stall barn, apartment for on-site caretaker, handicap accessible entry to all locations, covered outdoor horse pasture, paved sidewalk around building from parking area, and outdoor storage building. The project will be completed by the end of 2027.

Two ECIA Affiliates Receive **DRA** Core Grants

RTA - \$20,000. DRA funding will go towards implementing the MOVE Initiative (Mobility Outreach, Visibility & Education) through the procurement of a consultant to develop rider education materials, improve passenger information resources, and strengthen community-based outreach efforts across Delaware, Dubuque, and Jackson counties. The project will address persistent misconceptions about public transit and improve public awareness of available transportation options. Through collaboration with human service agencies, healthcare providers, workforce organizations, and other community partners, MOVE will help residents better understand and access transportation needed to reach employment, healthcare, education, and other essential services.

CSEI - \$10,000. This funding will allow CSEI to establish a Lived Experience Advisory Committee (LEAC), which is a formal advisory group who have experienced homelessness and/or housing instability within our community. Committee members will be compensated for their time and expertise and will provide input on program design, service delivery, and strategic priorities. The LEAC will also help strengthen relationships between our organization and the local homeless community by creating consistent, intentional opportunities for dialogue, trust-building, and mutual understanding. The long-term goal is that this committee will be a trusted sounding board for best practices across any and all community services interacting with this population, helping improve coordination, responsiveness, and system-wide effectiveness.





West Branch Named All-Star Community

West Branch was named a 2026 All-Star Community by the Iowa League of Cities for its Heritage Hill redevelopment project. The City was recognized at the League's Annual Conference & Exhibit in Bettendorf, September 23–25.

The All-Star Community Award is the League's most prestigious honor, recognizing innovative efforts in areas such as urban renewal, development, preservation, collaboration, and quality of life. West Branch was one of just three Iowa cities to receive the 2026 award.

For decades, the former Croell cement plant occupied a prominent downtown site, creating noise, dust, truck traffic, and a physical and social divide. Beginning in 2013, City leaders identified relocating the facility and redeveloping the 3.4-acre property as a priority to improve quality of life and strengthen the community's future.

The project required years of planning, environmental review, engineering, and collaboration among local, regional, and state partners. Guided by public input, the City incorporated the redevelopment into its Capital Improvement Plan and comprehensive planning efforts, emphasizing neighborhood connectivity, walkability, and housing opportunities.

ECIA supported the project through an EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant, providing \$72,760 for environmental assessments, cleanup, and reuse planning in 2018 and 2019. ECIA also helped secure a \$50,890 DNR Derelict Building Grant for asbestos abatement and deconstruction. The \$135,563 deconstruction project was completed in June 2020.

Today, Heritage Hill demonstrates the impact of long-term planning, public engagement, and strategic investment.

Maquoketa Named Thriving Community

Maquoketa, Boone, Grinnell, and Le Mars have been selected as Iowa's 2027–2028 Thriving Communities, recognizing their commitment to expanding housing opportunities. The designation, awarded by the Iowa Finance Authority and Iowa Economic Development Authority, provides statewide recognition and scoring advantages for several housing programs. For Maquoketa, the honor recognizes ongoing efforts to increase housing options and strengthen partnerships. City Manager Joshua Boldt said the designation will help attract investment and support housing for workers, families, and seniors.

"This designation reflects the strong commitment our city officials, employers, and community partners share in expanding housing opportunities in Maquoketa," said City Manager Joshua Boldt. "We are proud of the work already underway and look forward to using this recognition to build new partnerships, attract additional investment and create more housing options for our workforce, families, and seniors."

West Branch City Administrator, Adam Kofoed, shown above at the podium, was also named City Administrator of the year at the League's annual conference. Congratulations, Adam!



Staff go **Over the Edge** for a Good Cause

Three brave ECIA staff volunteered to take a gigantic step off the top of Dubuque's tallest building on September 11! Gail Kuhle, RTA Transit Operations Supervisor, Marla Quinn, Municipal Support and Communications Manager, and Tricia Wagner, Grant Writer and Program Development Specialist, were three of 75 people to rappel down 142 feet (12 stories) for United Way of Dubuque Area's Over the Edge annual fundraising event.

Over The Edge is a unique opportunity for individuals and organizations to sign up to participate in an event that culminates in a community-wide celebration. Volunteers raised money to support United Way of Dubuque Area Tri-States (UWDATS) by rappelling off a historic Dubuque building. All funds raised go to UWDATS' Community Impact fund which supports 37 local programs creating healthy communities, youth opportunities, financial security and community resiliency.



Two of ECIA's affiliates, the Regional Transit Authority (RTA) and Community Solutions of Eastern Iowa (CSEI), receive United Way funds for free rides to medical appointments and to help the most vulnerable through CSEI's Housing Helpline. Together, Gail, Marla, and Tricia raised \$3,995 for the UWDATS' Community Impact fund. Way to go, ladies!





Jean Celebrates 40 Years

Jean Dalsing has been a bus driver with the RTA for 40 years. In her own words, Jean reflects on her time.

What do you enjoy most about your work?

I really do enjoy the day-to-day opportunities (challenges). Every day is different, depending on the riders and the weather. There's been a lot of blood, sweat, and tears over the years. I had good bosses and not so good bosses. I'm a people person though, with a lot of connections through my other jobs. I'm proud to be the union steward.

What has your biggest career accomplishment or challenge been over these 40 years?

I was always dealing with new management before ECIA took over in 2006. The Rodeo* stuff is the biggest accomplishment. I enjoy seeing my friends across

the State and at Nationals. I can't keep track of all the contests I've won.

What is your favorite memory of your time here?

My water broke in 1998 at the stock car races, where I had taken a bus load of Sunny Crest Manor residents. I stayed until the end and drove everyone back to Sunny Crest, where four nurses came out and were very concerned. Randi Jo was born the next day.

Any final thoughts?

You get to meet a lot of interesting people. They remember you and look forward to seeing you again. I also work at Luther Manor, the Y, and Good Will's respite care program. Change is hard, especially when the long-term employees retire. I like to keep busy, as you can tell, and I always make time for family.

*The Community Transportation Association of America (CTAA) honors and celebrates the value of rural and community transit operators through an annual national competition on a course that tests skills on every level of the drivers' abilities – Jean (pictured above) placed 2nd this year in the minivan category!

August - September

ECIA Anniversaries



MARIA ELGIN
38 YEARS



CARL REIMER
29 YEARS



MINDY MEYERS
26 YEARS



HOLLY MCPHERSON
24 YEARS



MARK JOBGEN
9 YEARS



TRICIA WAGNER
9 YEARS



LIZ KEMP
9 YEARS



DAWN DANIELSON
7 YEARS



BEN COOPER
4 YEARS



AMBER KELLEY
4 YEARS



SUE SHAULL
3 YEARS



KELLY DAVIS
1 YEAR



RYAN FELLER
1 YEAR

Upcoming Grant Deadlines

- Jones County Community Foundation. October 15.
- Iowans Create Community Mural Program. (get matched with an artist), October 28.
- 2026 Wastewater and Drinking Water Treatment Financial Assistance Program (WTFAP). October 30, 4:30 p.m. CT.
- Georgia-Pacific Grant. October 31.
- Trees Forever. November 1.
- GIG Fund - Arts Midwest. November 4.
- Black Hills Energy Power of Trees. November 15.
- Foundation of Cornerstone Communities. November 5.
- RJ McElroy Trust. November 18.
- Walmart - Spark Good Local Grants. November 30.
- Iowa LTAP Work Zone Sign Package Program. Rolling.
- Pedestrian Curb Ramp Construction. Rolling.
- Trees Please. Rolling.

