



JUNE 2026

IOWA RETIRED SCHOOL PERSONNEL ASSOCIATION

From the President Anne Cowley

I have just returned from touring our beautiful state for two weeks in May. On week 1, I traveled to Spirit Lake, Iowa Falls and Dubuque. I met wonderful people in all those districts who took the time to come to our informative sessions to help you with life-long learning and also learning how to save money. I was fed and entertained and had a thoroughly enjoyable time. During the third week of May, I journeyed to Ft. Madison, Centerville and Perry. Again, I met more wonderful people from our lovely state and had a very enjoyable stay in all three cities. For me, the highlight was staying in the Hotel Patee in Perry. I picked the Irish Room but those of us on the exec board were able to see a few of the other uniquely themed rooms in this charming hotel. Another wonderful surprise was appointing a new Vice President in District 6. All of us are very pleased to welcome Sally Barrett to our Executive Board. Many of you will have a chance to meet and greet her as she will be attending the State meeting in Sioux City on October 7 & 8. Others will meet her at next year's round of District meetings.

We were pleased at these meetings to meet our PH Balance Scholarship winners. Jean Hoffman does such a great job getting the information out to as many high school guidance counselors as possible. This year, thanks to those of you who gave generously at district and state meetings, we were able to give a \$1000 scholarship in each of the six Districts. Bravo to the winners and to Jean and her committee in each district that reads and evaluates each applica-



President:
Anne Cowley
413 Eton Court,
Sioux City, IA 51104
712-204-5182
amusicwest@aol.com

tion.

Another valuable session at these meetings was presented by our Past President, Beth Hieronymus, who spoke about ICOD: In Case of Death or Disaster in a funny yet meaningful way to help us prepare for those unexpected emergencies that may be just around the corner. She also spoke about membership, which is always a timely subject in any organization. Look for her article about this later in this newsletter. Also check out what new member benefit we will be offering soon. Those in attendance at our meetings in Districts 4, 5 and 6 got a preview and I hope that they were just as excited as our Exec Board upon hearing about this.

While I mentioned that we now have a new VP, in October we will be in need of another VP as Sally will be moving up to President -Elect. We will also need a new Secretary as Mary Jo O'Connell insists she will be retiring after our State meeting. Yes it is a four year commitment but I have discovered that the time flies by and you are not alone in doing your job. The people on the Exec Board are very willing to lend a hand or an ear and give you all the help you need. Also, you don't have to do this alone. Two people may consider one job just like our Co-President Elects.

Finally, our annual State Meeting will be held in Sioux City this coming October 7 & 8. The agenda will include voting on the annual budget and hearing about the grant projects from around the state, what worked and what didn't and listening to a wonderful speaker and lots of musical entertainment. So please plan to come to Sioux City, see where the only person on the Lewis and Clark Expedition that died is buried or maybe try your luck at the Hard Rock Casino. You might also win a prize in the human slot machine that premiered at last year's state meeting. Bring yourself and your friends. IRSPA will pay the mileage for one car and a room for the local president. Again, October 7 & 8 in Sioux City. I hope to see lots of you there! Until then, have a safe and happy summer. - Anne

District 1 Annual Meeting

The Spirit Lake unit hosted the District 1 meeting on May 5, 2026. That day was Cinco de Mayo, and the Lakes Area Senior Center had a multi-cultural vibe. The colorful decorations, the menu, and a portion of the entertainment reinforced the south-of-the-border ambience.



District 1 attendees in Spirit Lake

District 1 coordinator, Jeanne Handeland, opened the meeting and facilitated the many smooth transitions. Instead of breaking into small groups, many topics were discussed in a large group format.

Attendees were entertained by Karen Schwaller who is a writer, author, speaker, farm wife, and mother from Milford, Iowa. Karen's sense of humor captivated the audience as she shared anecdotes and reflections through the lens of her Iowan farm family. After speaking about her experiences as a director of her church's education program, she expressed her admiration for teachers. Karen asked the audience to think about a teacher who had impacted them, because teachers can make a difference in their students' lives. She reminded us that, "Some students come to learn, and some students come to be loved."



Margaret White introduced author Karen Schwaller.

Jean Hoffman introduced the District 1 PH Scholarship recipient, Emmaleigh List from Odebolt, who is a student at OABCIG.

After a delicious Mexican lunch, the audience was delighted by Brizeida Alvarado who sang three songs that reflected her Mexican roots. Her performance was enhanced by her colorful costume and her lively personality. Article submitted by Toni Hood



Jenny Boggess introduced Brizeida Alvarado

District 2 Annual Meeting

Spring has definitely sprung in Iowa Falls. On May 6th, 2026, HCARSP members hosted the District 2 meeting. Colorful decorations, centerpieces, and gift bags accented the "Flower Power" theme. This is a small unit, and unit president Mary Kirkdorffer commented that everyone pitched in, and the result was very much enjoyed by their guests.



Humboldt County, Harden County, and Carroll-Green County units met their membership goals.

Treasurer Barb Bielenberg explained the state treasurer's duties. She gave each of the District 2 units membership goals for the next year.

This year, Hardin County, Carroll Greene, and Humboldt met their membership goals.

Membership issues are, and will remain, a much-discussed topic. Beth Hieronymous noted that 14 grant applications were granted to units that had proposed plans for membership recruitment. To learn more about the grant opportunities, open the "About" and "Resources" tabs at irspa.org.

The District 2 PH Balance Scholarship recipient is Tanner Bergmann, a senior at Wapsi Valley High School. We were unable to meet Tanner today, but we extend our congratulations and best wishes.

A former consumer science teacher, Deb Johnson, spoke about the 100-year history of Pine Lake State Park. Deb has a personal connection with the area because her grandfather was the first park ranger, and her father and uncles worked with their father in the earliest years of the park's development. One of her grandfather's friends was a Fox Indian chief. The Fox and the Sac Indians, part of the Meskwaki nation, made their home along the Iowa River.

As the glaciers melted, they left behind a beautiful landscape. The citizens of Eldora were determined to create a state park; in

1919, they gave 36 acres to the state. In 1923, the dam was completed, and the first man-made lake in Iowa became the centerpiece of the park. Today, the area is a prime location for swimming, boating, fishing, hiking, picnicking, and all manner of outdoor recreation. Deb's presentation was enhanced by slides featuring historic pictures and interesting information.

Helen Wall was in charge of the delicious lunch enhanced by pianist Lois Nassen's lovely background music. Marlene Reece, HCARS secretary, concluded the meeting by thanking everyone for attending and inviting us to visit this scenic area again. Article submitted by Toni Hood



District 2 hosts organized a lovely "Flower Power" day in Iowa Falls.



A good time was had by all at the District 3 annual meeting in Dubuque.

to speak and showed how deserving he was of this Scholarship.

The entertainment after lunch was by the DARS-PA Singers. Mem-

bers from our Unit formed this group to perform at nursing homes in the area. We had a lively sing-along which included all the old songs that we grew up with. Article submitted by Rose Evans



DARS-PA singers

District 3 Annual Meeting

The Dubuque Area Unit held the District 3 Meeting at the Best Western Plus Hotel on May 7. We started the meeting with delicious rolls and coffee cakes made by local members.

Interesting discussions were held when the State Officers had a question-and-answer session for all attendees. Everyone seemed to learn valuable information from the Officers.



Jenna Hirtz

Jenna Hirtz from the Dubuque Arboretum talked about its history. She also included interesting information about

future plans for the Arboretum. This made everyone excited about having good weather so that we can all visit.

Jean Hoffman presented the BH Balanced Scholarship to Zach Knepper from Don Bosco High School. The entire group was impressed when Zach agreed



Jackson County met its membership goals. District 3 Coordinator, Mary Jo O'Connell, and Barb Bielenberg congratulate Nancy Wagner. The Black Hawk County unit also met its membership goals.

I apologize if there are omissions in this newsletter. My email program deleted all my folders. President Anne Cowley issued an ASAP alert; most, if not all, articles and pictures were resubmitted. I want to thank everybody who pitched in at the 11th hour! They say, "It takes a village; is there an app for that?"
Toni Hood, IRSPA newsletter editor

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

Articles for the September Newsletter are due no later than Friday, August 14, 2026

Get info to Toni Hood
E-mail: tonihood@myctl.net
Home Telephone: 515-332-5819
Cell Phone: 515-269-3823

District 4 Annual Meeting

Unit president, Sue Kimpson, set the tone for the day when she greeted the attendees with a former superintendent's admonition to, "Have a great day." Tom Burkgren, the head of Perry Hospitality Incorporated's management team, spoke about Hotel Pattee. The hotel is known as one of the finest boutique hotels in the world, and its history is fascinating. Originally opened in 1913, the hotel has 40 individually decorated themed guest rooms. The property also has a state-of-the-art bowling center, a dedicated library, food and beverage availability, and an elegant ambience. There are 127 pieces of artwork by 30 artists worth over 4 million dollars. Tom laughingly said, "This is an art museum disguised as a hotel."

The day's theme, "It's More Than a Game," was woven into the décor with small basketball stress balls on the tables and displays of athletic memorabilia. Lori Seeley, dressed appropriately in bloomers, entertained us with a slide show featuring historic and personal information about Iowa girls basketball. In 1930, Perry's Jayettes won their first state tournament. From 1935 until 1951, the program was abandoned because it was thought to be too strenuous and immodest for females. Girl's basketball eventually resumed, and Perry is very proud of its successful record-another reason she calls

tive presentation.

Lori's speech was a perfect segway for the next speaker. Cassie Hager Smith had an illustrious career as a Perry Jayette. In 2002, her undefeated team was the 3A Iowa Basketball Champion; Cassie was the MVP of the tournament. After high school, she went on to play basketball at UNI where she stepped up to new challenges. She is one of the few players in the history of the University of Northern Iowa to record 1,000 career points and 1,000 rebounds. Cassie also led the conference and held the school record for single-game, season, and career blocked shots. She was picked to try out for the WNBA, but health issues prevented that level of playing. Cassie recounts that there were other disappointments; she often didn't get enough court time, games were lost by narrow margins, and her passion made her too emotional. She was able to overcome any obstacle by applying the lessons she learned from



Cassie Smith and Lori Seeley in "Paradise"



District 4 committee entertained guests at the lovely Hotel Pattee in Perry, Iowa.

her town "Perrydise." Lori entertained us with humorous anecdotes, but she often reminded us that sports are "More Than a Game." Sports help build leadership skills, resilience, discipline, and many other personal and social skills. Lori noted that 80% of female CEOs participated in sports. Lori's passion for basketball, her 40 years of educational experience, and her natural exuberance contributed to an entertaining and informa-

competitive sports. Cassie commented that she always had great coaches, talented teammates, and many mentors and role models. The 6' 7" former player remembers her father saying, "People will look up to you literally and figuratively." After teaching at the elementary, middle, and high school levels, Cassie is now the principal at the Humboldt Middle School. The lessons that she learned as a basketball standout serve her well. She understands that all relationships are built on a foundation of respect. As an administrator, Cassie deals with game-changing situations. She builds school culture using the values she learned as an athlete. Strong relationships with staff, students, parents, and community members are keys to maintaining a positive, functioning team. Dedication, determination, and discipline are important qualities of and on any court. Article submitted by Toni Hood

District 5 Annual Meeting



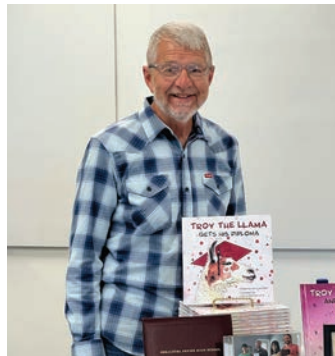
Appanoose - Wayne County Unit members attending District Five Meeting: Sitting left to right: Mary Peterson, Jill Manning, Zelda Star, Jane Kaster, Dave Sparks, Lois Hayes, Cheryl Hausch, Wayne Jackson, Bob Thomas, Marilyn Jackson, Rose Evans

The annual meeting of District Five of IRSPA met on Wednesday, May 20, 2026, on the campus of Indian Hills Community College in Centerville, Iowa. The host unit was Appanoose/Wayne County. There were 27 members present. At times, others in attendance included the Dean of IHCC Joni Kelley, AMBA representatives Paul Strid and Tonya DeJong, and two speakers.

Shared information included handouts from the state treasurer, an update on the most recent membership grant project, and program ideas for future local meetings.

Two of the District Five units were awarded grants for this year. Those units were Davis County and Polk County/DM. We were all encouraged with ideas for recruitment of new members.

The Parent in Heaven Scholarship report included a bio of this year's District Five recipient,



Merle Lee Mann - Speaker
Children's Book Author from Oskaloosa



Speaker - Dale Clark (Board Member of the Wayne County Historical Society)
Spoke on Woolly Mammoth Discovery in Wayne County, IA



Treasurer's representing their Units as they met their membership goals
Rose Evans - Jasper County Unit
Nancy Madsen - Wapello County Unit
Marcia Fenton - Lucas County Unit

Jake Gallagher of Grinnell. He is going to Simpson College to major in elementary education.

Guest speakers included Merle Mann of Oskaloosa, author of children's books. The books are based on Merle and his wife having been the parents of seven foster/ adopted children (now adults) and the family's llamas.

The other speaker was Dale Clark of the Wayne County Historical Society. He shared that in 2024, partial remains of a 13,600-year-old mastodon were found in Wayne County! This was a very interesting tale to tell.

Thank you to Debbie Robinson and all of the Appanoose/Wayne members for an enjoyable, informative meeting. Next year's host will be Marion County on May 5, 2027. Article submitted Rose Evans

Hawkeye Buffalo & Cattle Ranch



<https://www.facebook.com/hawkeyebuffaloranch/>

Hawkeye Buffalo & Cattle Ranch is a family farm in northeast Iowa. Our heritage dates back to 1854 when my great-great-grandparents settled in a sod house just a mile from our farm. The bison have returned, and we invite you to connect with the land, our family, and our farm.

Tours include an informative lesson on the history of buffalo in Iowa and a chance to feed the buffalo. Tours are \$15 for adults and \$10 for children. With an IRSPA membership card or showing your copy of the IRSPA newsletter with the Hawkeye Buffalo advertisement, the **cost is \$10 for adults and \$5 for children.** Tours are set up on an as needed basis so you must call in advance to set up your tour. The Buffalo Ranch is southwest of Fredericksburg next to Split Rock Park and Campgrounds at 3034 Pembroke Ave. Visitors often get a chance to see other wildlife too - deer, sandhill cranes, hawks, songbirds, and occasionally eagles. Buffalo meat is also sold on location.

Check us out at [Hawkeyebuffalo.com](https://www.hawkeyebuffalo.com)

Phone: 641-229-6701

District 6 Annual Meeting

The Lee County Unit of Retired School Personnel recently hosted the District Six meeting for the Iowa Retired School Personnel Association at the Union Presbyterian Church in Ft. Madison. District six includes Iowa,

Treasurers representing their Units as they met their membership goals:
Ernie Dicks (Van Buren County)
Linda Johnson (Henry County)

Johnson, Cedar, Clinton, Muscatine, Scott, Keokuk, Washington, Louisa, Jefferson Van Buren, Henry, Des Moines

and Lee Counties. Members heard from state officers and committee members as well as a thorough update of IPERS. Lee County member, Sally Barrett was appointed to the state committee as 2nd Vice President. The program presented to the group, featured "Ella K. Ewing, The Missouri Giantess" who lived in Northeast Missouri. She grew to be 8'4" and toured throughout the U.S. for audiences to view her abnormal height and stature.

Submitted by Jill Anderson-Cox



L-R are Lee County members in attendance. Gretchen Kirchner, Jill Anderson-Cox, Linda Moander, Judy Bartachek, Sally Barrett, Judy Walrath, Ed Bazow, and Woodie Brassil. Ella was designed by Heather Luft, Keokuk Middle School Art Instructor.

The World is Your Oyster When You Belong to IRSPA

IRSPA is pleased to share that we have partnered with Collette to offer a variety of domestic and international travel options for our members and guests. So far, we have arranged to explore these locations:

June 2027 – Discover Painted Canyons of the West featuring Utah's Five National Parks. Over 9 days we will explore Colorado National Monument, Moab, Arches National Park, Canyonlands National Park, Dead Horse Point State Park, Capital Reef National Park, Bryce Canyon National Park, Zion National Park and Las Vegas. An informational webinar will be August 19, 2026 at 5:30 pm.

September 2027 - Reflections of Italy. This 10-day tour includes Rome, Vatican Museums, Sistine Chapel, St. Peter's Basilica, Orvieto, Assisi, Perugia, Cortona, Florence, Chianti Winery & Cooking class, Venice, and Murano Island. The informational webinar will be held on November 4, 2026 at 5:30 pm.

December 2027 – Spotlight on New York City Holiday. Our hotel is located in Times Square, and this 5-day tour includes Greenwich Village, Wall Street, a Christmas Spectacular at Radio City Music Hall, Statue of Liberty, Ellis Island, 9/11 Memorial, and a Broadway Show. The informational webinar date/time TBD.

March 2028 – Shades of Ireland. This 10 day tour will have us celebrating St. Patrick's Day in Ireland and features Dublin, Irish Dinner & Entertainment, Blarney Castle, a Brewery experience, Jaunting Car Ride, Ring of Kerry, Cliffs of Hoher, a Sheepdog Demonstration and Castle Stay. Pre-Tour Extension in London; Post-Tour Extension in Edinburgh. The informational webinar date/time TBD.

Details for each tour will be posted soon on www.irspa.org, shared through communication with local units, in our newsletter, at our Annual State Meeting this October 7 and 8 in Sioux City, and at District Meetings. Space will be limited so mark your calendars and then pack your bags. The only criterion to sign on for any of our trips is that one person in your party must be a member of IRSPA. Membership has its advantages with IRSPA and let Collette will handle the rest!

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District Speaker AMBA AND IRSPA

AMBA insurance stands for Association Member Benefits Advisors. It is a national marketing and sales organization that partners with associations—such as retired educators, public employees, and professional groups—to provide tailored insurance products. IRSPA partnered with AMBA as the exclusive association benefits provider for members. AMBA offers a series of short webinars that provide valuable resources about important topics such as Long Term Care, Medicare, Medical Transportation, and more. The talks are educational and informative. These short webinars provide valuable resources and information about important topics like Long Term Care, Medicare, Medical Transportation, and more. These webinars could serve as a unit program. You can find the webinars at irspa.org under the “events” tab.



AMBA representatives Paul Strid and Tonya De Jong introduced new insurance plans and health care options.

<https://irspa.org/index.php/events/educational-webinar-series>

In Case of Death and Disaster: Beth Hieronymous presenter

Beth, like many effective speakers, has a personal connection to this topic. A close relative is failing due to cognitive and physical ailments. Beth has had a difficult time securing the necessary documentation that is legally, financially, and personally required. This has made her realize how pre-organized documents can reduce stress for families in crisis by preventing delays and conflicts while ensuring that the owner's wishes are honored. Beth commented, “I wish I had done something like ICOD years ago for my parents. Now I realize how important this will be for me in the future.”

ICOD typically contains personal data, financial accounts, healthcare directives, deeds and titles, contact lists, and relevant assets and liabilities. Families with access to this information can communicate with one another and with the necessary professionals.

Beth shared a copy of AMBA's 12-category checklist. Vital information is consolidated in an easy-to-understand format. Using this checklist improves accessibility, prevents settlement delays, and may prevent financial mistakes. When individuals are experiencing disasters and other unexpected life events, a checklist lowers the risk of forgetting critical items. Families who utilize ICOD experience fewer misunderstandings and less stress.

There are digital platforms that can be updated as needed. Digital planning can be used to secure, share, and store documents and photos. These platforms are easy to update and revise as wishes, finances, and life circumstances change.

Beth's presentation emphasized the importance of being proactive. An ICOD document can minimize the effects of personal and family emergencies. Gathering documents and information can feel overwhelming. Completing an ICOD form does take time, but that task can be done in stages. Reacting to an emergency can be unduly complicated by having to engage in activities that could have been completed in an orderly, organized manner before a stressful life event.

- Toni Hood



Beth Hieronymous

District Speaker - Charter School Bill

IRSPA members did an amazing job of fighting against the recommendation of the DOGE report to replace IPERS with defined contribution plan. As a result of your actions, no legislation passed that was detrimental to IPERS.

IPERS is essential for our members and good for the state of Iowa. Last year 2.4 billion dollars was distributed across Iowa, and it came from the return on the investments from when you were working. Together with a coalition of other groups wanting to protect our pension, we were able to stop the threat in its tracks. That means that your pension remains secure as one of the best systems in the country. Since Governor Reynolds is not running for re-election, be sure you follow what the gubernatorial candidates are saying about protecting IPERS and supporting public education.

While some legislation passed during the session was good for public schools, there wasn't much of it. There will now be increased access to vouchers and more tax dollars following from public schools to charter schools. One of the most detrimental bills passed was the new charter school legislation and what it did to remove restrictions on home schooling. I apologize to our members for the misinformation that I gave at our district meetings on the final results of the bill.

Here is a summary of the charter school legislation that passed almost entirely along party lines and signed by Governor Reynolds:

- Teacher Salary Supplement money follows the students to Charter Schools (\$684 per Student) rather than going to the public school where the student lives.
- Ensures charter employees can participate in IPERS.
- Establishes a new loan program for charter school facilities under Iowa Finance Authority.
- Charter school students have access to concurrent enrollment classes at the local public school.
- Requires public schools to give charter school students access to extracurricular activities and

driver education in their districts.

- Provides for AEA services to charter schools.
- Makes the University of Northern Iowa a charter authorizer, alongside the State Board of Education.
- Overhauls the statewide voluntary preschool program, permitting community-based providers to directly receive and administer state preschool funds.



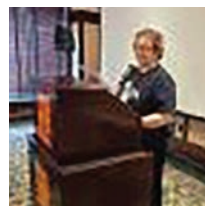
John at Iowa Falls

The bill also made radical changes to home schooling:

- Removes the limit of four students unrelated to the instructor allowing for an unlimited number of students at all grade levels to get their education from anyone.
- Removes the ban on home school instructors being allowed to charge fees and tuition with no limits on amounts or nature of the fees.
- Specifically allows home school instructors or parents to issue a diploma that must be accepted equivalent to high school diploma without any course of study or proof of preparation for college.

We have an election coming up and by the time you read this the primary elections will be over. Do your homework to see how each candidate for house, senate, and governor will support public education instead of working to dismantle it.

Article submitted by John Hieronymous



Barb Bielenberg awarded certificates to units that met their membership goals.



Chryss Hartman encouraged participation in IRSPA leadership roles and suggested using the IRSPA website for program ideas.



Laurie Marple led large group discussions and discussed the roles and duties of the state officers.

New Vice-President

I'm extremely pleased to announce that Anne has appointed Sally Barrett as Vice President for the 2025 - 2026 year. Sally is a member of the Lee County Unit.

Her contact information:

Sally Barrett
1107 Grand Avenue
Keokuk, Iowa 52632
319-524-2220 (home)
319-795-2747 (cell)
piscataway72@gmail.com



Anne Cowley welcomes Sally Barrett as the new IRSPA Vice President.

IRSPA CONTACTS

Past President:

Beth Hieronymus
3322 Muscatine Ave., Iowa City, IA 52240
319-360-4634 - bhieronymus62@gmail.com

President:

Anne Cowley
413 Eton Court, Sioux City, IA 51104
712-204-5182 - amusicwest@aol.com

Co-Presidents Elect:

Chryss Hartman
2114 Belle Ave., Davenport, IA 52803
563-320-0603 - candm61877@aol.com

Laurie Marple, 1220 Rustic View Ct.
Eldridge, IA 52748
563-320-3708 - marple854@aol.com

Vice-President:

Sally Barrett
1107 Grand Avenue, Keokuk, IA 526332
319795-2747 - piscataway72@gmail.com

Secretary/Historian:

Mary Jo O'Connell
1700 Avoca Street, Dubuque, IA 52201
563-557-1451 - moconnell12@msn.com

Treasurer:

Barb Bielenberg
14788 110th St., Sloan, IA 51055
712-428-6268 - bielenb46@yahoo.com

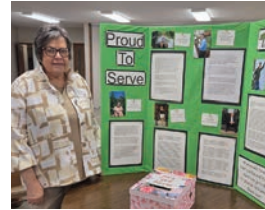
Newsletter Editor:

Toni Hood
1006 6th Ave. N., Humboldt, IA 50548
515-332-5819 Home; 515-269-3823 Cell
tonihood@myctl.net

PARENT IN HEAVEN (PH) BALANCE SCHOLARSHIP

The Parent in Heaven (PH) Balance Scholarship is a voluntarily funded scholarship by members of IRSPA. We hope the recipients understand that we recognize the tremendous loss when a student loses a parent before high school graduation; in a small way, we would like to offer some support to help them further their education. Students may attend a technical school, community college, or four-year college.

A \$1000 Scholarship is being offered in each of the six districts this year.



Jean Hoffman, who initiated the PH Balance Scholarship, displayed a collage of the winners at each of the district meetings.

The PH Balance Scholarship was first awarded in 2022 to one student. In 2023 and 2024, students from Districts 3 and 4 were chosen. In 2025, three students from Districts 1, 2, and 6 received scholarships. For the

first time, in 2026, one student from each of the six districts will receive a \$1,000 scholarship.

When the scholarship was initiated, the goal was to reach a point where the PH Balance Scholarship program could benefit all six districts while being self-funded. That goal has been reached. The scholarship monies are generated from volunteer efforts at unit, district, and state meetings; members may also elect to hold fundraisers. Money is often received as a memorial. Scholarship money can also be part of a unit's dues. Business partners are invited to contribute to the scholarship fund in exchange for appreciative certificates and ads in the IRSPA newsletter.

Jean Hoffman spearheaded the PH Balance Scholarship program. Jean's hard work and compassionate commitment contributed to the scholarship's success. Jean commented, "The PH Balance Scholarship fills a void and touches the heart in ways beyond measure. The students who have received this scholarship are deeply appreciative—grateful not only for the financial support but for being seen. It gives them a sense that others recognize the unimaginable loss they have endured. Thank you for believing in their dreams and for showing that belief through your generosity."

Jean Hoffman

Thank you to Northwest Bank of Estherville for your contribution to the PH Balance Scholarship.



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PH Balance 2026 Scholarship Winners

District 1



Emmaleigh List

Emmaleigh List from Odebolt, Iowa, is a senior in the OABCIG school district, hopes to become a teacher. She has participated in Yearbook Art Club, Quiz Bowl, E-Sports, Band, Honor Band, Jazz Band, Musical Theatre, and Tag; she has earned college credits, and she is biliterate.

Emmaleigh is described as being selfless, sincere, and compassionate. She leads by example, and has a clear moral compass. College has always been her goal because she has a thirst for learning and for new experiences.

District 3



Zach Knepper

Zach Knepper from Don Bosco Catholic School is a well-rounded young man who excels in academics, athletics, music, and the performing arts. He used his leadership skills in his role as FFA Chapter President.

This busy student is known to show his character and his faith by his actions. He brings his positive attitude to his many and varied activities. He is a hard worker, and is respected by his coworkers and supervisors.

Zach is a hard worker, and he plans to return to farming after he earns his Ag Business Management Degree from Iowa State.

District 5



Jack Gallagher

Jack Gallagher attended Grinnell High School. He has participated in football, basketball, and track. This summer, he has the honor of playing in the Shrine Bowl.

Jack, despite his quiet nature, is known as a good leader. He is described as a confident, but humble, young man.

Jack's mother was an elementary teacher, and Jack completed a job shadow assignment at her former elementary school. He plans on following in his mother's footsteps after majoring in elementary education and physiology at Simpson College.

District 2

Tanner Bergmann, from the Wapsi Valley School District, is District 2's PH Balance recipient. Tanner fits the IRSPA motto "Proud to Serve" as he volunteers often in his community. He is described as "wise beyond his years," but he is described as a mature young man who is humble, respectful, and hardworking."

Baseball was his high school focus. He hopes to continue playing at Central College.



Tanner Bergmann

District 4

Natalie Vana is a student in the Logan-Magnolia High School, and she is District 4's scholarship recipient. In addition to excelling in academics, Natalie is involved in volleyball, basketball, track, various clubs, and volunteering.

Managing the boys basketball team, working at a local boutique, and coaching gymnastics are activities that contribute to her strong work ethic, her motivation, and her self-discipline.

During high school, Natalie earned college credit and is a licensed CNA. She plans on attending DMAC and intends to obtain a double major in Biology and Nursing.



Natalie Vana

District 6

Sedric Lamb, a Louisa Muscatine student, is District 6's PH Balance Recipient. A well-rounded student Sedric has participated in baseball, wrestling, football, and FFA.

Community activities and volunteering also demand much of Sedric's time. Sedric believes that character is shown by actions, as well as by words. His recommendations speak of his resilience, humility, and respect for others.

His participation in FFA influenced his decision to pursue his interest in agronomy. He will attend Morningside College where he intends to major in Agronomy.



Sedric Lamb

District 1

SIoux CITY AREA IRSPA

District One is in full swing with its 2026–27 program year. In March, Anne Cowley, state president, joined our meeting. Caden Hoffman and Hannah Paulson presented their state speech performance. We also finalized plans for hosting the district meeting in May.



Photo of DEARSPA tour of FFA feed room.

In April, we visited the FFA greenhouse and barns with student-led tours. It is always rewarding to reconnect with former students and see how they are

growing into productive citizens.

May was a busy month. We hosted the district meeting at the Senior Center in Spirit Lake, with 40 members in attendance. The highlight of the day was Brizadia Alvarado, who brought a Mexican flair to our



Cinco de Mayo-themed celebration. Brizadia, a former student, now attends Iowa Lakes Community College, where she studies music performance under the direction of Brett Fuelberth. She sang several songs in Spanish, including one she wrote herself. Her passion was evident



Carolyn Brown demonstrates Hardanger

and reinforced the idea that music is a universal language.

At our regular May meeting, Carolyn Brown demonstrated the art of Hardanger embroidery and displayed many beautiful examples of her work. Carolyn is a retired home economics teacher and a member of DEARSPA.

Submitted by
Jean M. Hoffman

District 2

BUTLER, BREMER, CHICKASAW & FLOYD IRSPA

Members of the Big 4 unit (Butler, Bremer, Chickasaw & Floyd counties) gathered May 20th at the First Citizens National Bank in Charles City. We enjoyed a very dynamic book talk by author Michelle Sprout Murray of Mason City. Her book

"Amazing Iowa" really came alive as we learned about Great tales and curiosities from "The Hawkeye State".

Many members knew Michelle as she grew up in Charles City where her father, Lyle Sprout was a Principal for many years.



Big 4 Co-Presidents Sherry Cannon and Julie Parker at our April meeting. Joining them are Judge Brown and Al Koenigsfeld.



District 2

MASON CITY (MCARSPA) IRSPA

The Mason City Area Retired School Personnel Association met at the Village Court Family Restaurant on May 18. We honored our 2026 Merit Award winners:



Our Merit Award winners, left to right, Lily Clausen, Brynlee Dickman, and Lane Hansen

Lily Clausen, Mason City High School, Brynlee Dickman, West Fork High School, and Lane Hansen, Mason City High School. All three plan to enter the teaching profession after college. We were happy to have members of their families as our dinner guests.

Our speaker was Paul Sabin, who spoke about his life on the railroad and his current project of setting up the Manly Railroad Museum.



Our speaker, Paul Sabin

We also welcomed Judge Brown, our District 2 Coordinator, who gave an update on the District Meeting and other IRSPA activities.



Judge Brown, District 2 Coordinator

Submitted by
Karen Dole

www.irspa.org

Check it out!

District 2

WEBSTER COUNTY IRSPA

Have you ever wondered what happens in a minimum security prison? Well on March 2, some fifty members of the Webster County IRSP met at Friendship Haven and found answers to this question. Mike Boatman, Deputy Warden at the Fort Dodge Correctional Facility, presented our program entitled "Everything You Wanted to Know About Prison". Here are some highlights of his presentation -

There is over 200 on staff at the prison, with a shortage of 30 - 40 officers at this time. Presently every male that is incarcerated goes thru Oakdale where they are assessed and sent to a prison from there. Iowa has 9 prisons. Fort Dodge is a Minimum Security Prison with an average of 1250 inmates, 81 who are serving life sentences. 23 years is the average sentence for an inmate. Religious services and Prison Fellowship are available to the men. There are support services through AA and programs for violence & cognitive needs. Mental health issues are handled



Mike Boatman, Deputy Warden
Fort Dodge Correctional Facility

through therapies and some medications. The men are encouraged to get involved in the programs available to them. Mr. Boatman stated that people have the ability to change; some



Pictured left to right: Aidan Recker,
Allison Utley, Saiya Noborikawa

are inherently evil but most can change. The roll of those employed at the prison is to teach new skills and new behavior. High school and college classes are offered through ICC. The

District 2

WEBSTER COUNTY IRSPA

prison is actually a small community. We learned a lot about another facet of our community.

The April 6th meeting was held at the Corpus Christi Center.



Pictured left to right:
Blessing Cunigon, Malia Urban

Per our tradition, The Fort Dodge Senior High All State Individual Speech Contest students shared their performances. Saiya (junior) performed an original oratory,

Allison (senior) shared poetry, and Aidan (senior) gave an expository address. Such talented students!

First Covenant Church was the host for our May 4th meeting. President Janet Carlon opened our meeting with a prayer. Before the meal was served, Janet reminded all of us to give our volunteer hour to Becky Nelson Riley and pay our 2026 - 27 membership dues, if we have not done so. The program for the May meeting is meeting our scholarship winners and a Memorial Service. Judy Sheker introduced the 2026 scholarship recipients; Malia Urban and Blessing Cunigon, both of Southeast Valley High School. Malia is planning to attend Buena Vista in the fall and is interested in teaching Elementary Education, STEM, and Coaching. Blessing hopes to attend Loras Collage, majoring in Special Education.

Five members of the Webster County IRSP were remembered during the Memorial Service. Those members will be remembered for their dedication to education. Rest In Peace.

Our meeting concluded with President Janet Carlon giving a final farewell to a productive year and wishing all a fantastic summer!

- Submitted by Deb Larson

District 2

HUMBOLDT COUNTY IRSPA

Humboldt's IRSPA unit met on April 14th, 2026, after a winter hiatus. President Anita Fagen-Miller welcomed the members back and introduced Humboldt librarian Julie Larsen who spoke about the library's summer reading programs.

The Humboldt Public Library offers programs for all ages. There are activities and programs for toddlers, children, teens, and adult patrons; one library user is a 103-year-old active reader. In 2025, 69 adults participated in the summer reading program; additionally, there were 307 children and 68 teen participants for an impressive 444 reader total.

With the exception of the adult program, there is an accountability factor. Students must keep reading logs in order to be eligible for a maximum of four prizes. Teens can integrate writing, art, technology, and outdoor activities into their summer reading progress reports. Adults can elect to fill out a Bingo sheet or become involved in the "Plant a Seed Read" initiative.

The IRSPA audience was impressed with the number and variety of programs the library staff is offering. There are almost daily activity selections. Some, but not nearly all, of the activities include plant swaps, a history book club, a crochet workshop, a cemetery program, technology seminars, and a cooking workshop for teens.

The summer reading program's "grand finale" is an outing to Sheldon Park. In conjunction with the Humboldt Conservation Program, many fun and educational activities are planned. There will be a county-wide bus service for the chil-



Library enthusiast Toni Hood with
Julie Larsen

dren, and lunch will be provided.

The Humboldt Public Library is an excellent example of the Carnegie Library's mission statement which is to strengthen community connections through free access to information and education. Julie Larsen's presentation showcased the many initiatives our library's staff has developed



A road trip to Iowa Falls' District 2 meeting replaced Humboldt's May meeting. Those attending were: Darlene Stirling, Shirley Bakken, Toni Hood, Barb Zabel, and Anita Fagen-Miller

to foster a love of reading and learning by offering free programs that enrich individuals and strengthen community involvement.

On May 6th, five members of the Humboldt unit attended the District 2 meeting in Iowa Falls. This road trip served as our May meeting. Members took advantage of IRSPA's policy of reimbursing

mileage; we also felt it was a way to support the hospitality of our District 2 host unit.

Article submitted by Toni Hood

District 3

JACKSON COUNTY IRSPA

The Jackson County School Personnel met at St Mark's and enjoyed a delicious luncheon prepared by St. Mark's wonderful cooks on Friday May 1. The program was presented by Jenna

Spain who teaches both TAG and Title I Reading at the elementary level. It was easy to see why Jenna has won awards and grants for her program.

She showed us Bee Bobs which allow Kindergarteners to program robots. She also had Microbits that students can program. TJ Schultz has

been her mentor and he explained that the dirt on the moon has been stimulated. The students were able to plant using the moon stimulated

dirt. Jenna Stevens has also supported her with information about the soil on the moon. Jenna Stevens and AJ Schultz are mentors to Jenna. Stevens works with Farm Bureau and AJ Schultz works with Convivium in Dubuque and they help with soil instruction.

Another project for her TAG students (who are students in the top 10% of their class) was to learn about how to build bridges. Jenna steps back and allows the students to solve problems. The bridges are judged for being light and for how much weight they can hold.

Another challenge presented to the students was how to make cement out of moon dirt. They wondered what if they had to build a base on the moon. Since it takes so much fuel to go out of orbit, the weight on the spacecraft is limited so the resources on the moon have to be used Betty Miller, former kindergarten teacher, helped Jenna with lesson plans for the students to learn what it was like in a one room school. Jenna taught the classes at North Bend Community Center. Jenna wanted the students to know about the schools that used to be in Jackson County, especially since Briggs is being reconstructed into Maquoketa Elementary and Cardinal will be closed.

Jenna has also taught about erosion and the students built a wall to help stop erosion. At EICC (Clinton Community College) they learned about 3-D printing. The harmful effects of UV waves was taught. The students work in teams and Jenna facilitates their learning. There is always a problem for students to solve. Since writing connects our bran to reading, Jenna incorporates writing as much as she can.

Jenna brought her service dog, Mesa, that was lots of fun to see. There will be an Maquoketa State Bank outdoor luncheon soon where we



Jenna Spain with her robots, Bee Bobs & Microbits.



Barb Downey celebrates her 94th birthday with her Jackson County friends.

can all contribute toward the program that allows schools to have a trained dog in the school.

Following the program, a short business meeting was held. We were happy to hear we have 3 new members after the special meeting that was held in April at MAE. Mattiesens served a delicious meal and Paul Strid from IRSPA told the many benefits that members of Iowa Retired School Personnel can have including vision, dental, cancer, heart, life, accident insurance, and long-term care insurance, annuities, emergency medical transportation and Medicare supplements. Look at the website: irspa.org for more details. Barb Bowman and Nancy Wagoner then held a painting party that was enjoyed by everyone that could stay! That day in April there was a storm so unfortunately some people could not stay.

Article submitted by Roberta Rosheim



COUNCIL BLUFFS IRSPA

After our winter break the Council Bluffs unit met on March 18, 2026 at the Council Bluffs Country Club with 36 members and 4 guests in attendance.

Abraham Lincoln High School Speech Students under the direction of Dirk Waller gave an entertaining program. Rowan gave an after-dinner speech on "Road Kill", Maxine did a prose presentation on "Hoarding", Kinnick did an after-dinner speech on "Unfortunate Names", and Dylan did storytelling about "A Boy Who Shouted Wow!" It was wonderful to see what is happening in our schools.



Dirk Waller with Abraham Lincoln
Speech Students

A memorial was held for our members or spouses we lost since our November meeting: Margie Argotsinger, Fred Maher, Ted Linkletter (husband of Marilyn), and Dave King (hus-

band of Gjoa). Dr. Vergarie Sanford said a prayer for the deceased members. Twenty-five-dollar memorials for each have been made to our Scholarship Fund.

Our final meeting of the year was on April 15, 2026 at the Council Bluffs Country Club with 40 members in attendance. Everyone in attendance was treated to a free lunch thanks to a \$500 grant we applied for and were awarded from IRSPA, which enabled us to have a very successful Scholarship Fundraiser that day. Our Scholarship is given through Southwest Iowa Educational Foundation.

This year we had a "Membership Challenge" to encourage members to bring in new members. Deb Goodman won the drawing for a gift card for bringing in a new member.

CBRSP members Beverly Fletcher and Diane Johnson have taken on the role of Co-coordinators for District 4. The District 4 meeting was hosted by the Dallas County Unit in Perry on May 21, 2026.

We have welcomed three new members this spring: Carla Hawkins, Vibeke Jensen and Mary Ann Bragg. After a successful year we are on summer break until September 16th.

Article submitted by Julie Dillehay, Secretary



CRESTON AREA IRSPA

The Creston Area Retired School Personnel Association unit met April 14, 2026 at the Orient United Methodist Church in Orient. 11 members and 4 guests were present. Charlotte Roberts provided the morning treats. Angie Wortman, owner of Stitches & Bows in Orient, and her mother (who at



2026 April Creston Program

almost 96 does embroidery) presented the program. She shared many of the creative items that they make and also has in her store there in Orient. Our business meeting included plans to attend the District 4 Meeting in Perry on May 21st. District co-coordinators Beverly Fletcher and Diane Johnson were two of our guests. We meet on the second Tuesday of each month, except August, November, and December at 8:30 AM. The location varies so go to the IRSPA.org website for contact information.

District 4

DCARSPA IRSPA

Following our winter break during which the officers worked hard at finalizing plans for the District 4 Meeting in May, we kicked off the second half of our year with one of our favorite speakers, Kristen Holthaus. Kristen works at 21st Century Rehab in Perry and her



Kristen Holthaus from 21st Century Rehab testing member, Connie Sheehy's grip strength

topic was "What I wish People Knew". To prevent problems with physical health, such as the loss of grip strength with age, she addressed three factors: water, protein and strength/function. When asked what the best kind of exercise was the best, she replied "The kind you like best."

At our April meeting we welcomed Angie Beaudet and her therapy dog, Kona, along with friends Jordan



Angie Beaudet and her therapy dog, Kona, along with friends Kathryn Gay from Lifeline K-9 Training and Jordan Kovac from Perry Middle School

Kovac from Perry Middle School and Kathryn Gay from Lifeline K-9 Training. Angie explained she was "realizing a lifelong dream" when she obtained Kona. She has worked with Kathryn to train her to be used at Perry Middle School. They

have seen the effect Kona has on student behavior; offering a calming presence when a student is stressed. Kathryn stated, "Every single school deserves a therapy dog."

This spring we offered teachers throughout Dallas County the opportunity to apply for a \$250 grant to aid in enhancing learning in the diverse populations in their classrooms this school year or the next. The money could be used to buy supplies for classrooms, to purchase supplies for a special project, or to pay for a field trip or activity- the only limit was their creativity. Thanks to

a \$500 grant from IRSPA and a collaboration with the local Rotary Club who funded bicycle helmets for the 5th grade, we were able to fund six projects which included materials for STEAM projects, a book club and graphing calculators. We also awarded \$20 in

Perry Bucks to a teacher in each of the four schools in Perry for Teacher Appreciation Week in May.

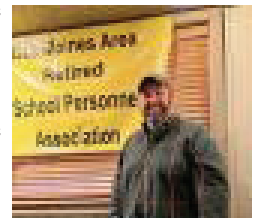


Ola Johnson, HS ESL Teacher, receiving \$20 in Perry Bucks for Teacher Appreciation Week. from DCARSPA treasurer, Holly Daniels

District 5

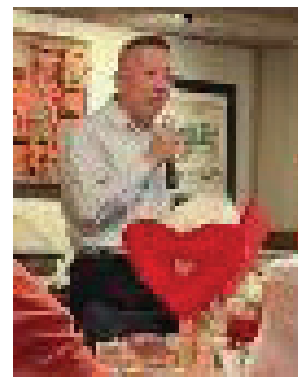
DES MOINES AREA IRSPA

At our January 2026 meeting we heard from Roger Hargens, President of ACCU Molding of Ankeny. He was awarded businessman of the year for the state of Iowa by Governor Branstad. They produce micro-miniaturized medical devices. Recently they have expanded into hearing aids, then surgical devices



Roger Hargens, President of ACCU Meeting

like pacemakers the size of a tic tac. ACCU Molding is now in the top 40 of makers of medical devices. About 14 years ago, they got involved in eye surgery with a device that goes over the eye for cataract surgery. Now they are doing business with the top seven eye sur-



Vinh Nguyen from Lutheran Social Services presented "Life as an Immigrant in Iowa"

geons of the world. Every year ACCU Molding sponsors two students to attend DMACC and guarantees them a job. They have sponsored over 100 kids through the program. The newest part of the program is end of semester bonus – students get paid \$6 an hour going to school and then get \$10,000 at graduation; plus, a free college education.

In February we heard from Vinh Nguyen who presented "Life As An Immigrant In Iowa." Vinh has been a DM student, teacher and coordinator of the ELL program. He currently works for Lutheran Social Services as a teacher. He is involved in several cultural programs. He was born and raised in Viet Nam at the height of the war. After several years in refugee camps he was finally sponsored by a Catholic charity. Now that Catholic charity has stopped helping refugees because Trump administration policies due to an executive order stopping any refugee acceptance. People were waiting for flights here when they had to return to the refugee camps, where they would have nothing because they had given everything away in preparation for coming to the US. Only 7,500 refugees were accepted in October, all from South Africa. They have not been in a refugee camp; they were not advocated by the UN. Now 30 million refugees around the world with nowhere to go. His agency was slotted for receiving 10 refugees. Vinh works for Lutheran Social Services to help the new refugee populations to integrate into their new society. He cautions us to keep positive and hope things will change.

In March our program was Andy Keller who presented the program - "Living with Coyotes in an Urban Setting." Andy is a wildlife biologist for the DNR specializing in human interactions with wildlife. He has spent 16 years with the Iowa DNR Wildlife Division. The division started working with urban deer and now coyotes. He has been working with cities to educate them about coyote ecology and how we can live alongside coyotes, a native species to Iowa. For information and questions, contact Andy Keller, Iowa DNR, 515-975-8318, Andrew.Kellner@dnr.iowa.gov.



Andy Keller, wildlife biologist for the DNR



Chris Higgins from The Dream Team

Our April speaker was Chris Higgins from The Dream Team, a non-profit cycling team established in 1996 out of concern for disadvantaged and at-risk youth. Dream Team was founded by Jim Green and Frank Owens through a partnership with Bike World, RAGBRAI and the YMCA,

Owens and Green would train disadvantaged youth for four or five months and then go on RAGBRAI. This is still their grounding vision. They currently have kids from middle school through high school. They have a weekly Podcast with youth talking about challenges: shorturl.at/cfjFMm , www.dreamteamdesmoines.org. They do take donations of bike clothing.

Our 2026-7 Scholarship winners, Katlyn Park and Rylan Henke were introduced. They each received a \$2500 scholarship. Katlyn would like to continue being a special ed teacher. Rylan is a music major. He has been in music since middle school. He would love to teach middle school or high school after he graduates from Drake. They both thanked members for their scholarships. Submitted by William Snyder



Katlyn Park & Rylan Henke



LEE COUNTY IRSPA

Lee County Retired School Personnel held their May meeting at the St. Paul United Church of Christ in Keokuk. Those in attendance were treated to the Keokuk High School choir department under the direction of Jason Woodley. The unit will present 3 \$500 scholarships to local seniors majoring in education. Recipients will be announced at the June meeting to be held at the New Bethel Church in Keokuk on June 3. Announced was that a card shower is being held for members Jim and Bev Merritt celebrating their 71st anniversary. Greetings can be sent to 20 Village Circle, Keokuk.

Submitted by Jill Anderson-Cox



www.irspa.org
Check it out!

District 6

DAVENPORT AREA IRSPA

Our local chapter has had a great spring, with interesting speakers and entertainment.

In March, after our lunch and business meeting, we listened to the Davenport Chordbusters with two men, as



Scholarship winners

well as two women!

In April, Christian Butler spoke to us about his cross-country bike ride to raise money for kids and camps. His donations went to a local camp near

the Quad-Cities.

Our May meeting was a busy one, as we installed new officers, held our annual necrology ceremony, presented two scholarships to graduating seniors, and enjoyed music from the CASI Golden Tones.

Our two \$1000 scholarship winners were Reese Jackson and Morgan Vannorsdel.

Both are going into the education field.

Our new officers are Judy Shannon (President), Linda Ceurvorst (Vice-President), Dean Breneman (treasurer), and Carla Breneman (secretary).



Chordbusters

We will not meet again until September. Enjoy your summer!! - Submitted by Cheryl Sly



Christian Butler

District 6

KEOKUK COUNTY IRSPA

Hi from Keokuk County Retired School Personnel! We met on March 18 at Hope Lutheran Church in Sigourney. Our speaker for the program was Abby Sieren. She teaches Agriculture in the Classroom at Keota, Sigourney, and Tri-County Schools. Abby works with the children to teach them the importance of agriculture and the industries composing the agriculture business. The children learn about the industries connected to agriculture such as milk production facilities, jobs of those who work in farrowing houses, animals that produce our food, and careers in agriculture that are available. Abby meets once a month for 30 minutes in each classroom. Linda Miller, District Six Representative, contacted our group about retirees in Iowa and Washington Counties who could be contacted for membership as their groups have disbanded. KCRSP applied for a scholarship to recruit new members and received \$400.00. A basket of information about KCRSP will be sent to local schools to recruit new members.

The April Meeting was on Wednesday, April 15, at Hope Lutheran in Sigourney. Our speaker was Kristin Woods, Branch Manager of the Midwest One Bank, and Director of the Keokuk County Economic Development group. There are five pillars or goals that the KCED strives to achieve for the community. The five pillars are: Excellent Schools, Quality Child Care, Affordable Housing, Employment, and Recreation.



Nathan Wood, our May speaker.



Kristin Woods, our April speaker

Kristin explained how the projects connected with each goal have been achieved in the community. Treasurer Linda Crouse announced that baskets of information about KCRSP have been passed out to prospective retirees in all five county school districts. This was made possible by the \$400.00 scholarship received from the IRSP. Membership Chair Vicki Griner will be contacting retirees about possible membership in KCRSP.

The May Meeting was on Wednesday, May 20, at Hope



Abby Sieren, our March speaker

Lutheran in Sigourney. Our speaker was Nathan Wood, New Superintendent of the Sigourney Schools. A Sigourney native, Nathan graduated from Sigourney High School in 2003. A graduate of William Penn College in Oskaloosa, he taught Special Education, Junior High Science, and was a School Adminis-

trative Manager in Sigourney Schools. He was a part time Superintendent at Montezuma, and began working for the Great Prairie AEA in 2012. By 2024 Nathan was the Head Administrator at Great Prairie AEA. Starting in the fall of 2026, he will be part time Superintendent of the Sigourney Schools. Nathan wants to see school infrastructure improvements at Sigourney High School. He encouraged those present to visit the schools in either fall or spring to see what is happening in the Sigourney School District. Our new slate of officers for 2026-2027 are: President, Luann Eakins; Vice-President, Sandy Steinke; Secretary, Mary Williams; and Treasurer, Linda Crouse. New members will be encouraged to attend the September Meeting. The next meeting will be on September 16 at Hope Lutheran in Sigourney. Our program will be retired teacher Jane Luetje speaking about Musical Experiences.

Submitted by Mary Williams

District 6

JOHNSON COUNTY IRSPA

We began our spring meetings with Geoff Fruin, the City Manager of Iowa City. President Mary Mascher introduces our guests, and planned the programs.

City Managers have a lot of knowledge and can direct citizens to people who are able to give direction to the populous of the community in answering questions. He also sits in on City Council meetings and has a wealth of knowledge.

An example of Geoff's help is presenting a proclamation to your City Council.

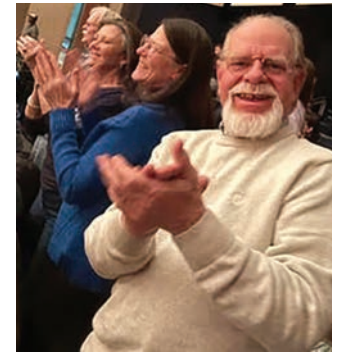


Judy Nyren, presented in April.

There is certain wording, length and timing for having a proclamation signed. If you have a belief in an issue or project, let the citizens know by creating a proclamation. Your City Manager could offer good help. Maybe we should have an IRSPA Day.

On a hot spring day, we visited the African American Museum in Cedar Rapids. We all learned a lot.

City Manager Fruin showed the future of Iowa City and what physical changes would be made. There



Mike and Terri Finlay, Beth Hieronymus, Mike Petersen enjoy a jazz band and chorus at U of I.

are many local plans. We watched a slide presentation of our new swimming pool and areas of development for roads, new businesses, and housing.



John Hieronymus, legislative contact, reports at the District 6 meeting in Ft Dodge. Good News: our hard work saved IPERS! Bad news: Charter Schools entering Iowa and receive money.

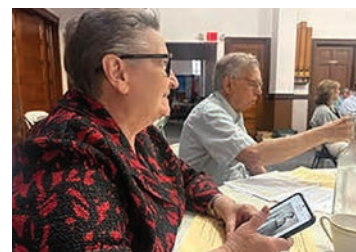
Our April meeting included Judy Nyren presenting the slavery railroad in Iowa City. That led to a discussion by members as to places we could visit that had to do with slavery in Iowa City. Do you have a Historian in your community? Judy tells great stories. This is the second time she has presented Iowa City History to our JCRSPA.

Michael Petersen is pictured above because he is our social director. He has planned outings for us on a regular basis. He has three planned for the summer.

Article submitted by Nancy L Porter



Mary Mascher presents City Manager Geoff Fruin.



African American Museum trip. Back row: John Hieronymus, Terri Finlay, Nancy Porter, Dave Ulrick, Beth Hieronymus, Mike Petersen
Front row: Chris Reynolds, Elaine Tarnutzer, Linda Graham, Marlene Johnson



Volunteer Hours

IRSPA is fortunate to have great local Volunteer Hour Representatives here in Iowa who keep in touch with their local people. We are proud of all the members who keep track of and report their hours every year. Collecting our volunteer hours paid off nine years ago when our organization was honored with the Governor's award for Volunteerism in Iowa and our IRSPA President received the award at the State Capital in Des Moines. IRSPA continues to grow in hours collected each year.

Below is a reminder for members of what constitutes volunteer hours for collection. Any time a member works for no pay or no reimbursement, they need to keep track of that time. Hours are divided into two categories: Youth and Education and Community. When working with public or private schools, Boy or Girl Scouts, 4-H, baby sitting grandchildren or others, this all counts as volunteering. The time it takes to drive to and from volunteering also counts. Youth programs, working with speech and drama students, assisting in music with youth, spelling bees, Kids Against Hunger Program, Dollars for Scholars, working with groups that serve children or youth all counts. Working with Boys and Girls Homes, Children's Shelters, GED programs, testing, Scholarship Committees and others all count for volunteer hours.

All other volunteer work falls under the COMMUNITY when dealing with non-student ages. Examples are: volunteering at libraries, museums, churches, church committees, community centers, Senior Citizen Centers, fundraisers, parks, hospitals, Community Kitchens, Food Banks, Hospice Facilities, Nature Centers, Chamber of Commerce, fairs, cemeteries, Meals on Wheels, Church Mission work, Legion work, Grant Writing, Humane Society, planting flower areas, etc... Volunteering at groups such as AARP, Elks, NRTA, NAACP, Delta Kappa, Lions and others all count.

We report our Iowa Volunteer Hours in September to our Iowa Governor's Office, the Volunteer Iowa Office, AARP and the Volunteer Promotions office

of Iowa Economic Development Authority. Nationally we report hours to the National Independent Sector in Washington DC. and several others. All of these offices report and use these volunteer hours to help Iowa gain grants.

We encourage you personally and your local members to keep track of the hours when you volunteer and report them to your representative the end of August.

- Sandy & Jay Thede, Supportive Services



Dear AMBA,

My husband and I are in our 70's and I am starting to worry about the cost of care when it comes to in-home care or a nursing home. We also receive annual rate increases for our Medicare Supplement plans. I understand there is a plan N for Medicare supplement which has a cheaper monthly premium, but we run the risk of paying excess charges for part B of Medicare. Is there a reasonable way of reducing our monthly costs without running the risk of financial exposure when it comes to our health insurance?

Signed,

Worried Sally

Dear Sally,

Your concerns are justified. More than 70% of people over the age of 65 will need long-term care services and support at some point. The average cost of a nursing facility can be over \$90,000 per year while help in the home can be as much as \$46,000 a year. Annual rate adjustments for Medicare Supplement seem to be higher and higher each year. Your question is a valid one and your timing is perfect. We now have a product that provides financial protection when it comes to extended care and has a component which will provide a person up to \$5000 a year to cover the costs of excess charges, if they occur. The plan was introduced this past April 2, 2026, and actually reimburses you up to \$300 a year for prescription costs. This plan is a new version of the original Recovery Care program, which many of the retirees are switching over from. If you are interested in learning more about this new program, please contact Paul Strid, our AMBA representative, at 708-347-7081 or by email at paul.strid@getamba.com.

Thank you for your inquiry,

AMBA

Things to do in Sioux City

Places to visit around Sioux City. Sioux City is in three states—Iowa, South Dakota, and Nebraska!

You can easily see the tri-state river intersection from an overlook at Stone State Park (located at 5001 Talbot Road), which features the Dakota Point Trail and a panoramic three-state view. To stand at the physical triple point, you can hike the riverbank trail starting near the Dakota Dunes Dog Park (just off Interstate 29 in South Dakota). The marker itself is right at the water's edge.

Dorothy Pecaut Nature Center, 4500 Sioux River Rd. Visit this free outdoor educational facility to explore the Loess Hills and their natural history. Enjoy exhibits, trails, gardens, and see what Sioux City may have looked like before it was inhabited by United States citizens.

Sioux City Railroad Museum, 3400 Sioux River Rd. Several buildings and structures throughout the complex to be explored. Take a ride on a grand scale miniature train. Vintage locomotives, railcars, machinery, and equipment. This site was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2018.

Trinity Heights, 2509 33rd St. Towering statues of the Immaculate Heart of Mary Queen of Peace and the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the life-sized sculpture of the Last Supper.

Lewis and Clark Campsite Rock, 1280 Larsen Park Rd. (Painted by Ray "Bubba" Sorenson)
Sergeant Floyd River Museum, 1000 Larsen Park Rd. The MV Sergeant Floyd, a dry-docked riverboat situated next to the Missouri River, is home to an Iowa Welcome Center, a river museum and a gift shop. Learn about Native American culture, fur trapping, the Lewis & Clark expedition, hard-working steamboats and more.

Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center, 900 Larsen Park Rd. Commemorates a history of the time when Lewis and Clark's Corps of Discovery traveled through this area. The only member of the expedition to die was Sgt. Floyd; he is buried in Sioux City.

Flight 232 Memorial, Park Rd. (West of Anderson Dance Pavilion)

Palmer's Olde Tyme Candy, 405 Wesley Pkwy. The Palmer family has been making candy together since 1878.

Famous for the Bing candy bar. Open 9 to 5:30.
Warrior Hotel, 525 6th St. A beautifully restored, historic 1930s Art Deco hotel.

Sioux City Public Museum, 607 4th St. A museum about the history and culture of Sioux City. Displays include a video about the city's history, Native American artifacts, pioneer artifacts, historic transportation vehicles, agriculture, industry, geology and fossils, and

the 1989 crash of United Airlines Flight 232.

Sioux City Art Center, 225 Nebraska St. Two of its five galleries are dedicated to featuring selections from its permanent collection of over 900 works including a Grant Wood mural.

Hard Rock Hotel & Casino, 111 3rd St. Explore Hard Rock's expansive rock and roll memorabilia collection.

The Sergeant Floyd Monument, 2601 S. Lewis Blvd. The monument honors Charles Floyd, a member of the Lewis and Clark Expedition, who died on the upstream voyage in 1804 and was buried here.

The Mid America Museum of Aviation & Transportation, (inside Sioux Gateway Airport) Military, commercial and general aviation artifacts and memorabilia. Story about the miracle around United Flight 232.

ATTENTION:

When submitting articles for the newsletter, please put your District name and number in the Subject line of the email.

EXAMPLE

To: tonihood@myctl.net (Toni Hood)

Cc:

Subject: District 6 - Clinton County

This will keep everything more organized and cut down on confusion or your email getting overlooked.

Thank you! DPI Printing Inc.

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

Articles for the
September Newsletter are due no
later than Friday, August 14, 2026

Get info to Toni Hood

E-mail: tonihood@myctl.net

Home Telephone: 515-332-5819

Cell Phone: 515-269-3823

Website: www.irspa.org

Iowa Retired School Personnel Association
2026 Annual Meeting & Conference Registration
October 7-8, 2026

Redeemer Lutheran Church, 3204 S. Lakeport Street, Sioux City, IA 51106

Member Name _____

Address _____

Email _____ Phone _____ IRSPA Unit _____

There are no fees for the Conference except for meals.

Banquet – 6:00 pm – Wednesday Evening, October 7 Menu: Pot Roast, New Potatoes, Cream Corn, Salad, Bread/Rolls, Assorted Pies. (This price includes tax and gratuity.)

_____ reservation(s) @ \$18 per guest = \$ _____ Gluten-free options are available Please indicate if you require gluten free.

Lunch – Noon – Thursday, October 8 Menu: Cheddar Meat Loaf, Baby Carrots, Lettuce Salad, Bread/Rolls, Dessert. (This price includes tax and gratuity.)

_____ reservation(s) @ \$12 per guest = \$ _____ Gluten-free options are available Please indicate if you require gluten free.

TOTAL PAYMENT = \$ _____

Coffee (decaf. & regular), lemonade & water will be available at all times.

Please return your registration with your meal reservation and a check made out to IRSPA by **September 22, 2026**, to Robert Swanson, 3221 Cheyenne Blvd., Sioux City, IA 51104.

ROOMS: Holiday Inn Express, 4723 Southern Hills Drive, Sioux City. 712-274-0100 Reserve by **September 6, 2026**, \$127. Copy & Paste the booking link below into a web browser and change the check-in date on the calendar to October 7, 2026.

<https://www.ihg.com/redirect?path=hd&brandCode=EX&localeCode=en®ionCode=1&hotelCode=SUXSC&PMID=99801505&GPC=EDU&cn=no&adjustMonth=false&showApp=true&monthIndex=00>

Redeemer Lutheran serves wonderful meals to fund their mission projects. There will also be jams, jellies, pickles and pickled beets, AND a variety of pies for sale. Bring a cooler!

Iowa Retired School Personnel Association
2026 Annual Meeting & Conference
Tentative Agenda

Wednesday, October 7, 2026

Come early and visit Sioux City sites

3:00 pm Check in at Holiday Inn Express, 4723 Southern Hills Drive, Sioux City

5:00 – 6:00 pm Registration at Redeemer Lutheran Church, 3204 S. Lakeport St., Sioux City
Social hour

6:00 pm Dinner

7:00 pm Musical entertainment East High School Orchestra and
West High School Vocal Music Group

Reminder of silent auction - Jean Hoffman

Thursday, October 8, 2026

7 to 11 am Checkout at Holiday Inn Express

9:00 am Registration and morning refreshments

9:30 am Memorial for deceased members

9:45 am Welcome, Pledge of Allegiance and Introduction of Board
Legislative and IPERS - John Hieronymus
AMBA - Paul Strid and Garrett Mowery

10:50 Stretch, rest room break

11:00 Sarah Morgan – Camp High Hopes

11:45 Group pictures by district

Noon luncheon

1:00 Annual meeting

Invitation to October 6 - 7, 2027 Annual State Meeting in District 5

Please leave name-tag holders on the table as you leave.

Newsletter

Iowa Retired School Personnel Association

3221 Cheyenne Blvd.
Sioux City, IA 51104

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Rockwell City, Iowa 50579
Permit #145

~ WE REMEMBER ~

<u>Name</u>	<u>City</u>	<u>Unit</u>
Burgart, John	Savage, MN	Dubuque Area
Gheer, Helen	Davenport	Davenport Area
Hainline, Avis	Osceola	Creston Area
Hanson, Geri Life Mbr	Iowa City	Johnson County RSP
Happ, Robert	Peosta	Dubuque Area
Hardin, Donna Suthers	Maquoketa	Jackson County RSP
Heiman, Kim	Newton	Jasper County RSP
McCoy, Pauline	Creston	Creston Area
McMahon, Zola	Maquoketa	Jackson County RSP
Miller, Marge	Council Bluffs	CBRSPA
Pedrick, Gwen	Douds	Van Buren County
Pinchney (Pickney), Jeanne	Marion	No Unit, age 101
Robinson, Cyrus	Davenport	Davenport Area
Rodecker, Vina	Sioux City	Sioux City Area RSP
Schubert, Leo	Bettendorf	Davenport Area
Sea, Darold	Sioux City	Sioux City Area RSP
Uhlenhake, Kathy	Moravia	Appanoose-Wayne

PLEASE NOTE: Send relevant notices, changes of address, and/or subscription cancellations to bielenb46@yahoo.com

LEGISLATIVE FUND

Contributions to the Iowa Retired School Personnel Association legislative fund for the improvement of retirement benefits are being accepted for the current year (Oct. to Oct.) Please make your contributions as generous as possible.

\$5.00 _____ \$10.00 _____ \$15.00 _____ Other _____

Name _____

Street Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

If Member of Local Unit _____

Unit Name

County

MAIL EITHER FORM TO:

Barb Bielenberg • 14788 110th St,
Sloan, IA 51055 • Make Checks payable to IRSIPA

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Iowa Retired School Personnel Association

Name _____
Last First M.I.

Street Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

If Member of Local Unit _____

Unit Name

County

Annual Dues: \$15 • LIFE MEMBERSHIP: \$300