

Fix It First

A Transportation Spending Strategy

The 2008 legislature supported TIME-21, *Transportation Investment Moves the Economy in the 21st Century* to the tune of \$160 million per year. In the original bill public transit, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure and passenger rail were not eligible for any funding from the TIME-21 fund. 1000 Friends lobbied hard the entire session with the message “Fix It First” to prioritize road maintenance and control sprawl-promoting infrastructure. The message seemed to fall on deaf ears, until the federal government sent stimulus money that repaired many Iowa roads in 2009.

The economy is getting plenty of attention these days, but not because our transportation investment is moving it in the direction the name indicated. Decades of spending on new road construction, instead of regular repair, have left many states’ roads in poor condition, and the cost of pushing back repairs is growing at an alarming rate each year.

A new report from Smart Growth America and Taxpayers for Common Sense examines road conditions and spending priorities in all 50 states as well as the District of Columbia. The report recommends changes at both the state and federal level to reduce future costs, benefit taxpayers, and create a better transportation system.

The report, ***Repair Priorities: Transportation spending strategies to save taxpayer dollars and improve roads***, stated as of 2008, 53% of Iowa’s state-owned major roads had fallen out of good condition, meaning they will now be increasingly expensive to repair and maintain.

Only 46% of Iowa’s roads were in good condition, the state in which repairs are least expensive. The condition of 1% of Iowa’s roads was not reported.

Poor roads add an average of \$335 to the annual cost of owning a car

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1000 Friends of Iowa is a statewide non-profit organization founded in 1998 based in Des Moines, Iowa.

1000 Friends of Iowa promotes responsible development that

- Conserves and protects our agricultural and natural resources
- Revitalizes our neighborhoods, towns and cities, and
- Improves the quality of life for future generations

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Cowles Montessori School “2010 Healthiest School in Iowa”

By Colleen Kinney

Cowles Montessori School, part of Des Moines Public Schools, is proud to be recognized as the 2010 “Healthiest School in Iowa” by the Wellness Council of Iowa. Cowles is fortunate to have an active parent group, dedicated staff, and curious students who want to learn ways to be healthy, responsible citizens in their community. The approximate 350 students (pre-Kindergarten to 8th grade) learn valuable healthy living skills including gardening, composting, nutrition education and food preparation.

In the Spring of 2010, the 7th and 8th graders designed and constructed a greenhouse as part of their botany lessons. The students are growing various herbs and vegetables from seeds as well as creating a business plan and organizing a plant sale to ensure the greenhouse is financially sustainable.

The Cowles Farm to School chapter, “*Knowing, Growing and Sowing*,” supported in part through a \$5,400.00 grant from the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS), offers students and staff the opportunity to learn about, and gain new appreciation for, how and where the food we consume is produced and making nutritious, local food choices.

Research shows that children who have a direct hand in preparing a healthy meal (growing ingredients, researching recipes, cleaning, cutting and cooking) are more likely to eat it. In late October 2010, parents and staff organized “Healthy Harvest”. Students cleaned, peeled and chopped locally-grown organic fresh vegetables to make soup. As two dozen slow cookers simmered, a farm worker shared information about CSAs, organic farming and composting and a nutrition expert gave presentations about the nutritious benefits of fall produce.



In mid February 2010, Cowles organized a “Love Your Smile” event as part of National Children’s Dental Health Month. Over 350 students prepared and sampled fruit spinach yogurt smoothies and ate locally-grown mixed greens and spinach during the “Crunch Lunch Bunch.”
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Help Us Put the Brakes on the Smart Growth Roller Coaster



Summer is the season for roller coaster rides, but Iowa's smart growth roller coaster ride is lasting too long. After a slow uphill climb, we were all waving our hands in the sky when smart planning language made it into the Iowa Code in 2010. However, the bottom seemed to fall out from under our ride when the first bill in 2011 threatened to remove the smart planning language.

The 2011 legislative session offered ups and downs with the dissolution of the Rebuild Iowa Office (a national model that linked flood recovery and smart planning). The Administrative Rules Committee members were successful in their call for the state City Development Board to rescind a rule-making request that allowed the CDB to question if cities asking to annex land had considered smart growth principles. It seemed like we had hit bottom when Iowa's Department of Management director shared with the Iowa Smart Planning Task Force that he had read their smart planning recommendations and "they were a real sleeper". But as a final plunge, Congress recently voted to defund the national EPA Office of Smart Growth.

Have you had enough? We are tiring of this ride, too. We are asking for your financial support to increase our efforts to educate citizens and policymakers about smart growth principles and how their implementation can save Iowa taxpayers millions of dollars. There is a faction of legislators who oppose smart growth. Here are some facts the faction have managed to ignore:

- From 2008-2010 HUD allocated more than \$642 million to Iowa for flood mitigation.
- Close to \$2.4 billion in federal aid was spent in Iowa to either, restore households, assist businesses, repair or restore public facilities, or otherwise aid in the 2008 flood relief effort.
- An estimate of over \$10 billion was spent on flooding in 2008 alone.
- Rebuilding in flood plains occurred because of lack of state laws prohibiting it

While the Missouri River was flooding western Iowa, our legislature continued to gut smart planning efforts. Iowa's inability to coordinate planning is costing Iowans and American citizens tax dollars in addition to what homeowners, businesses, communities and our entire state has lost because of flooding. We can no longer afford to ignore coordinated comprehensive planning that upholds Smart Planning Principles.

We need to keep the momentum going, but let's ditch the roller coaster. I am asking you to vote for responsible land use with your wallet. Please join with other Iowans who value our natural resources and environment. 1000 Friends' immediate need is to hire a program coordinator to forge ahead with the work that has already been started. But we need your commitment to support this effort financially to achieve success. Please use the enclosed self addressed envelope and make your donation to 1000 Friends today.

Sincerely,



LaVon Griffieon

June 28th Sustainable Planning Workshop Highlights



Attendees listen during the workshop

Each presentation offered unique perspectives from personal experiences complemented with facts and figures from many areas of expertise.

Wayne Petersen, Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship presented on green infrastructure for storm water management. Among other solutions, he described rainscaping in Iowa as “beautiful landscapes that manage and protect water and soil.” Visit www.rainscapingiowa.org for more information.

Permeable Pavement was another solution to storm water management. Tom Brownlow (pictured right) discussed the success Charles City has had with the installation of permeable pavement.

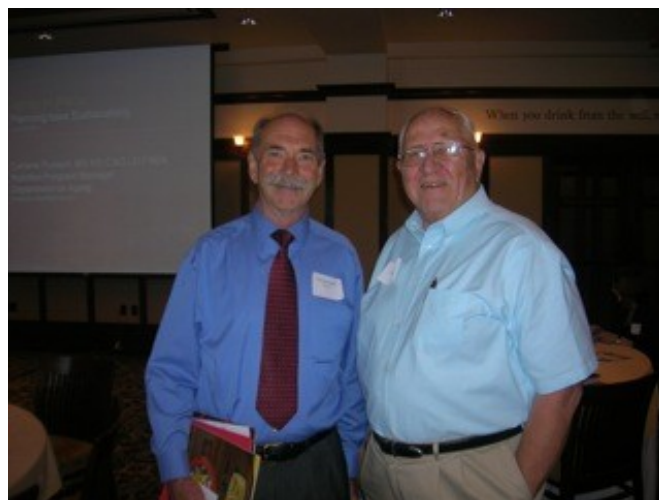


From left to right: Linda Gobberdiel, Roger Millar, LaVon Griffieon and Mary Brubaker

THANK YOU to all who presented and to all who attended the 2nd Annual Sustainable Planning Workshop!

The workshop took place on Tuesday, June 28th at the Hotel Pattee in Perry, IA. The event’s theme was “Planning Iowa Sustainably – Building on What We Have.”

The event featured Roger Millar, Director of Smart Growth America’s Leadership Institute. Other presenters included representatives from the Iowa Flood Center, Iowa State University, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Iowa Department of Agriculture & Land Stewardship, and the Iowa Department on Aging.



Presenters Tom Brownlow, left, and Erv Klaas, right

Roger Millar, Director, Smart Growth America Leadership Institute (pictured left) discussed the impact local efforts of communities and activists can have.

He discussed the growing interest in Smart Growth and Sustainability, and encouraged those in the audience who’ve spent years working for changes. Millar said “If you’re out advocating for smart growth issues, know that 60-80% of Americans polled are behind you. It’s not just activists, **Americans want these changes.**”

“Fix It First” *continued from front page*

Iowa’s highway spending priorities

Between 2004 and 2008, Iowa spent 36% of its highway capital expenditures on road expansion – \$190 million each year on average – and only 32% on repair and maintenance of existing roads – \$172 million. That 36% of spending went to expand Iowa’s road network by 363 lane-miles.

Iowa would need to spend \$552 million annually for the next twenty years to get the current backlog of poor-condition major roads into a state of good repair and maintain all state-owned roads in good condition. Shifting more funds toward repair would go a long way toward addressing the state’s maintenance needs.

“Spending too little on repair and allowing roads to fall apart exposes states and the federal government to huge financial liabilities,” said Roger Millar of Smart Growth America. “The cost of repair rises as roads age, and fiscally responsible leaders will recognize that prioritizing funding for repair isn’t just a matter of smoother roads, it’s a matter of protecting taxpayers from future costs.”

According to the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), every \$1 spent to keep a road in good condition avoids \$6-14 needed later to rebuild the same road once it has deteriorated. In addition, poor roads add an average of \$335 to the annual cost of owning a car – in some cities an additional \$740 more – due to damaged tires and suspensions and reduced fuel efficiency. While Iowa has invested heavily in repair and maintenance in recent years, thanks to federal stimulus programs, insufficient investment over the long-term has led to a backlog of roads and bridges in “poor” and “deficient” condition requiring \$212 million annually in major rehabilitation costs over the next twenty years. Funding, to the extent possible, the annual maintenance need to keep Iowa’s road and bridge system in a state of good repair - currently \$1.2 billion - is the most fiscally responsible transportation investment the state can make.

To read Smart Growth America’s report on Iowa roads, go to: <http://www.smartgrowthamerica.org/documents/smart-transportation-iowa.pdf>.

4th Annual “Growing Sustainable Communities” Conference

Mayor Roy D. Buol and the Dubuque City Council are pleased to host Dubuque’s fourth annual “Growing Sustainable Communities” conference on Wednesday, October 12, 2011. The theme of this year’s conference is “Economy, Engagement, Eco-Efficiencies.” Three pre-conference workshops will be held the afternoon of October 11. The conference this year will provide the opportunity to learn from national and regional experts about four of our sustainability principles: Resource Management; Reasonable Mobility; Smart Energy; and Community Knowledge.

Visit <http://www.cityofdubuque.org/index.aspx?NID=1079> for complete details and registration information.

Regional Plan for Sustainable Development Launches September 13, 2011

Are you interested in creating a strong future for the greater Des Moines metropolitan area? Then join the Des Moines Area MPO on Tuesday, September 13th from 4 to 8 p.m. at the State Historical Building for the launch of the regional plan for sustainable development.

This plan will consider housing, land use, economic and workforce development, transportation, and the environment simultaneously in an effort to forge a more sustainable future.

More information about the project is available at www.dmampo.org/sustainability.html.

Air Quality Solutions Needed NOW for Muscatine

Mark Twain once wrote, "I remember Muscatine--still more pleasantly--for its summer sunsets. I have never seen any, on either side of the ocean that equaled them."

Today, Muscatine has the worst air quality in Iowa.



"Photo by B. Adam Burke, courtesy of Midwest Energy News."

In 2010 and 2011, the city violated the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for sulfur dioxide and particulate matter smaller than 2.5 microns more times than any other city in Iowa. For the first half of 2011, Muscatine was the only Iowa city that violated the NAAQS.

The use of coal as its primary energy source is a major cause and a significant contributor to the air quality problems plaguing the city. The city and surrounding area are again looking at the possible designation of nonattainment for sulfur dioxide and for fine particulates. Nonattainment designations are made by the Environmental Protection Agency for areas that cannot meet and sustain the NAAQS. If a city goes into nonattainment, it means that air quality is significantly harmful to human health and certain types of air permits are not accessible.

The people of Muscatine live under a cloud created by coal combustion. The pollution level there is equivalent to having 5 to 6 average-sized coal-fired power plants in one city. Muscatine has a total of 13 coal boilers: Grain Processing Corpo-

ration (GPC) has six, Muscatine Power and Water has three, Central Iowa Power Cooperative's Fair Station has two, and Monsanto and Mid-American Energy's Louisa Generating Station each have one. There are also numerous other industrial facilities in the city and the county that contribute to the air pollution problem.

To compound the issue, many of the coal boilers are in or near "the Bowl," an area along the Mississippi River surrounded by bluffs and hills. The topography of this area holds pollution close to the ground for longer periods of time, which means residents of the Bowl are the most susceptible to the illnesses and diseases associated with air pollution.

Considering Muscatine's air quality issues, now is the time for the Muscatine community and its leaders to begin its transition to a clean and renewable energy economy and to consider the structure of their natural environment as they transition. If you want to learn more about coal-fired power plants and efforts to clean up Muscatine's air visit www.coailiniowa.org, or email Jbrackett@plainsjustice.org or cleanairmuscatine@gmail.com.

Sustainable Clinton A Local, Community Effort

The Sustainable Clinton group was started by the Clinton Franciscan Center for Active Nonviolence and Peacemaking in the fall of 2010.

Sustainable Clinton has since taken on a life of its own with area residents banding together to take on new projects. The group is currently working on plans for a community garden in the Clinton area.

The Sustainable Clinton group meets once a month on Sundays from 2-3pm at The Canticle, 841 Thirteenth Avenue North in Clinton.

For more information visit:
<http://www.clintonfranciscans.com/Sustainable-Clinton.html>

Cowles Montessori School *continued from page 2*

In April 2010, LaVon Griffieon of Griffieon Family Farm gave an “Omelette Farm” presentation to more than 140 pre-primary students and staff. LaVon described the animals she raises and discussed what raising them sustainably on her

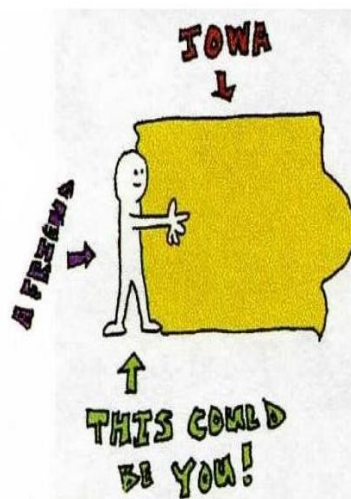


family’s century-old farm involves. The students prepared and enjoyed Iowa-produced scrambled eggs, spinach and ham. As part of the egg lesson, one classroom experienced incubating 24 eggs resulting in 18 chicks. Families were able to take the chicks home, care for them and reap the benefits of fresh eggs.

Students from Cowles are doing more than learning about sowing and growing vegetables. They are connecting with Iowa farmers. During these nutrition education events, students have personally met several food producers, and experienced making high-fiber, zero trans-fat meals and snacks. Many youngsters do not have the opportunity to get in touch with the food they eat. Thanks to Farm to School, they are learning about where their food comes from, and the fresh, slow-cooked choices available to them.

1000 Friends of Iowa lobbied the legislature for the establishment of a Farm to School Program. The \$80,000 appropriation was one of the brightest, and least expected victories of the 2007 session. It is rewarding to see such great progress with the program at Cowles Montessori School.

What's The Name "1000 Friends of Iowa" All About?



Iowa needs friends. Comprised of air, water and soil—she’s a little different than your other friends. But she still wants to be a good friend to you! In order for her to continue to maintain her natural resources, we so often take for granted, she’s gonna need some action from you!

At 1000 Friends of Iowa, we provide you with the resources to start taking this action. So, what kind of action are we talking about? 1000 Friends focuses on environmental policy, lobbying for things like smart growth and sustainable agriculture.

You + 999 = 1000

Here’s where you come into the picture. If we had YOU plus 999 other members each contributing \$100 per year, we’d be able to work toward our mission for one full year. With your support we can continue to be a best friend to Iowa, preserving her natural resources ensuring you have clean air to breathe, fresh water to drink, and rich soil to grow food.

The above handout was created by Carole Mapes, 2011 Spring 1000 Friends of Iowa Intern—Thank You Carole! Visit our website to view and download color copies of Carole’s work!

SAVE THIS DATE—November 12, 2011

1000 Friends of Iowa will hold our Annual Meeting on November 12, 2011

Details will be posted as soon as they are available on our website at:

www.1000friendsofiowa.org

We will email/mail updates as details are finalized as well, so be sure to watch your inbox/mailbox for updates!