



A Word from Leadership

The Data Behind the Crisis

By Josh Lampman, Chair, Data & Analytics Committee | Dubuque County Democratic Party

Iowa’s most valuable resource isn’t corn, soybeans, or even the Mississippi River—it’s the dark, fertile topsoil that makes everything else possible.

A century ago, that soil averaged nearly 14 inches deep across much of the state. In many regions today, it’s six inches or less. Scientists estimate Iowa loses roughly five tons of topsoil per acre every year, far faster than nature can regenerate it. Once the top soil is gone, it doesn’t come back on any timeline that matters to a farmer, a family, or a community.

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This is an economic crisis as much as an environmental one. Healthy topsoil isn’t just “dirt”; it’s a high-performance system that holds water, feeds crops naturally, and reduces the expensive inputs farmers need to stay productive.

As that layer thins, the math stops adding up:

- **Yield Stability:** Harder to sustain as soil health declines.
- **Input Costs:** Rise as the land requires more artificial support.
- **Efficiency:** The land begins demanding more to produce less.

The solutions already exist, and many Iowa farmers are leading the way by implementing these strategic practices:

- **Cover Crops:** Living anchors that hold soil in place through harsh winters.
- **No-Till Farming:** Rebuilding organic matter by leaving the ground undisturbed.
- **Contour Farming:** Strategic planting that slows runoff on sloped fields.

These aren't radical ideas—they are data-driven strategies with proven results. Our local experts and producers are already doing the work, but they need a community that listens and a policy framework that supports them. We are committed to elevating this conversation—connecting producers with resources, advocating for conservation-focused policy, and ensuring our region understands exactly what is at stake. The land that shaped Iowa's identity deserves a serious, coordinated response. We intend to help provide one.

FROM THE EDITOR. . .

Growing up in Iowa, particularly Dubuque, I was raised to believe we had the cleanest drinking water in the country. We believe everything adults told us when we are children, so maybe it wasn't the *whole country!* Imagine my surprise when 4 years ago a message went out warning Dubuque residents of the dangerously high percentage of chemicals within our water. Years later, finding out that our water sources, rivers, food, and health are all connected and suffering from water contamination. Just last year, I am informed the Iowa has some of the largest new cases of cancer, particularly breast cancer in the nation. Maybe it is the water, maybe it's low funded health research, but maybe it's time we stop ignoring these conditions and start working to get Iowa healthy.

HALL OF FAME CELEBRATION
Build What's Next

JOIN US
MAY 9, 2026

A night to honor service, celebrate progress,
and fuel what's next.

May 9 · Diamond Jo Casino · 6 PM

GET YOUR
TICKETS
TODAY!

[Tickets](#)



FEATURED EVENTS

APRIL 26

MFC Presents:
The Law & Your
Community

[Learn more →](#)

MAY 3

Lindsay James for
Congress "Sowing
the Seeds

[Learn more →](#)

MAY 13

LWV of Dubuque
primary candidate
forum

[Learn more →](#)

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

Dubuque is stronger when neighbors come together to care for the place we call home. Organizations like Dubuque Trees Forever and the Dubuque Soil & Water Conservation District are doing that work every day — planting trees, protecting our natural resources, and helping build a healthier future for our community.



The Dubuque County Conservation Board was created in 1957. Previous to that in 1955 a County Conservation Law was passed by State Legislature creating the 99 county conservation boards in Iowa. This later developed into one of the most successful conservation programs in the United States. Since that time the Board members, serving without pay, have supervised the acquisition and development of parks, preserves, and recreation areas for Dubuque County residents and guests.

[Dubuque County Conservation Events](#)

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT continued

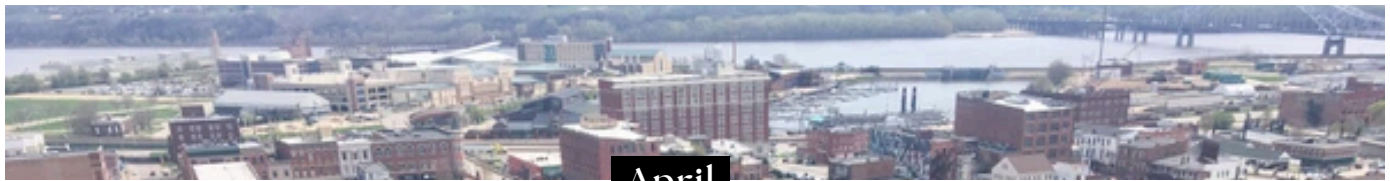
Awards & Recognition



- 2024 Outstanding Frontline Staff (DEAI initiatives) - Travel Dubuque
- 2023 Gold Award for new rivermuseum.org with increased accessibility - American Advertising Federation
- 2022 Outstanding Attraction of the Year (Metro category) - Travel Iowa/Iowa Economic Development Authority
- 2022 Business of the Year - Area Residential Care
- 2021 Travelers' Choice - TripAdvisor
- 2021 Award of Excellence for Iowa Marine Engine & Launch Works exhibit - American Association for State and Local History (AASLH)
- 2020 Travelers' Choice - TripAdvisor

The National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium is operated by the Dubuque County Historical Society. Our focus blends the interpretation of the stories of Dubuque, the county and the region with the history and role of rivers like the Mississippi. The main campus features three buildings, the Diamond Jo National River Center, Fred W. Woodward Freight House, and the William Woodward Mississippi River Center, connected by a walkway along Dubuque's historic Ice Harbor. Throughout campus and our Mathias Ham Historic Site, National Rivers Hall of Fame, and RiverWorks Discovery® program, there are many ways to connect to stories of natural science and human innovation all influenced by our inland waterways.

This Time in Dubuque



April

Dubuque's story is built on moments of challenge, growth, and resilience – from its first city marshal to historic floods and game-changing rail connections. Take a look at what happened here this month in the past.



April 1, 1837

Dubuque's first formal law enforcement began when Philip Moreheiser was named the city's first marshal.



April 1, 1861

One of the most devastating events in Dubuque's history, the Mississippi River crested at a record 26.81 feet.



April 26, 1965

The Dubuque and Sioux City Railroad successfully crossed the Mississippi River, a pivotal moment for the city's growth as a transportation hub.

City of Dubuque

Property Tax Proposal: Council approved a tentative increase of up to 1% (max \$10.16 per \$1,000); final rate could still be lowered

→ Why it matters: This directly impacts what homeowners pay next year

Street Repairs: 2026 plan covers 10 miles of roads across 60+ areas, with work already underway

→ Why it matters: Smoother commutes and long-term infrastructure upkeep

Budget Timeline: Department reviews continue through April, with a final vote on April 28

→ Why it matters: This is when spending decisions become official



Call your representative

Civil rights and education are up for debate March through May.

Request your absentee ballot

Application: Must be received by the County Auditor no later than 5:00 PM, 15 days before the election.

Volunteer with or donate to

a local women-led organization supporting health, education, or community development.

Dubuque County

Tax Rates: Overall levy unchanged, but urban residents may see a slight increase while rural rates dip slightly

→ Why it matters: Even “no change” budgets can shift who pays what

Capital Projects: \$2.8M approved for infrastructure and facility improvements across the county

→ Why it matters: Funds go toward roads, buildings, and public services

Mental Health Services: Patient advocate role expanding to full-time to manage 280+ active cases

→ Why it matters: Increased support for residents navigating the mental health system

Iowa

Foster Care Law: Eliminates 30-hour training requirement → shifts to personalized plans based on experience

→ Why it matters: Could make it easier (and faster) to become a foster parent

Child Care Assistance: Now available to workers regardless of income if they work 32+ hours/week in child care

→ Why it matters: Helps stabilize the workforce and lower child care costs for providers

Property Tax Reform: Proposal would cap local revenue growth (2-5%) and expand homestead exemptions

→ Why it matters: Could reshape how property taxes grow—and who benefits most

“

“This right to vote is the basic right without which all others are meaningless. It gives people, people as individuals, control over their own destinies.”

— President Lyndon B. Johnson

”

The Road to June 2nd

[Are you registered to vote?](#)

US Senate



Josh Turek



Zach Wahls



Clint Twedt-Ball



Kathy Dolter



Lindsay James

2nd Congressional District

House 65



Carolyn Wiezorek

House 71



Sam Wooden

Seat 72 Candidates



Eli Licht



Matt Robinson

Absentee Ballots

1. Request your ballot by 5:00 PM, 15 days before Election Day.
2. **Primary elections require party affiliation (held in even-numbered years).**
3. Return your ballot using the official envelope provided.
4. It must be received by 8:00 PM on Election Day.
5. You can mail it, drop it off, or have a family/household member return it.
6. Ballots must go to the Auditor's office—not your polling place.
7. You can still vote in person if you surrender your absentee ballot.

[Find your polling precinct](#)



Election Countdown

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Mark your calendar: the **primary election is June 2**, and Election Day is November 3rd. Whether you're voting early, by mail, or on Election Day, making a plan now makes all the difference.

Want to be a candidate?
Get in touch today!
You don't have to have all the answers – just the heart to begin. We'll help with the rest.

Federal

U.S. Senate:

Josh Turek
Zach Wahls

2nd Congressional District:

Clint Twedt-Ball
Kathy Dolter
Lindsay James

Iowa State

Governor: Rob Sand

Secretary of State: Ryan Peterman

Attorney General: Nate Willems

State Treasurer: John Norwood

Secretary of Agriculture: Chris Jones

State Auditor: Taylor Wettach

Dubuque County

2 County Supervisors:

Kristin Dietzel
Rick Dickinson

County Attorney:

Steven Drahozal

County Treasurer: open

County Recorder:

Ann Sweeney

tate House

Representatives:

64: open
67: Michael Coonrad
65: Carolyn Wiezorek
71: Sam Wooden
72: Eli Licht & Matt Robinson

Stories of impact

Tree Hugger

By Faith Blaskovich

Tree Hugger? You bet I am! A proud, life-long, dedicated Tree Hugger about to celebrate Arbor Day 2026, by planting a few more. The first Tree Huggers—363 Bishnois Hindus—in 1730 literally clung to trees to protect them from being cut down to build a palace. They sacrificed their lives in the protest, but their actions led to a royal decree prohibiting cutting any trees in Bishnois villages. Their legacy inspired the CHIPCO (“to cling”) movement in the 1970’s. A group of peasant women in the Himalyan Hills of India threw their arms around trees to protest their being harvested. Their actions inspired more action, leading to forestry reforms and preservation across India.

The Father of Arbor Day, J. Sterling Morton, made a proposal to the Nebraska State Board of Agriculture 154 years ago. Recognizing that the Nebraska plains needed trees for windbreaks, fuel, building material, shade, soil health, and other benefits, the first Arbor Day was set for April 10, 1872. The idea quickly spread among the states, and on the centennial of that first Arbor Day, President Richard Nixon recognized the day nationwide, and in 1972 the Arbor Day Foundation was established. How many trees have I planted? Hundreds, and counting...

“A nation that destroys its soils destroys itself. Forests are the lungs of our land, purifying the air and giving fresh strength to our people.” Franklin Delano Roosevelt The last Friday in April is designated as Arbor Day, this year April 24. Join me in planting a tree-or several—in celebration. Dubuque is a designated “TREE CITY”, and has received several awards for its accomplishments. Contacting “Branching Out” (563-543-9172) will help with free tree information, and is a good starting point. The EB Lyons Center at the Mines of Spain will



be hosting a program about the Tree Hunter, who has documented and photographed the giant trees of Iowa, Sunday, April 26, noon.

Join the many Tree Huggers this Arbor Day, and promote one of the most valuable treasures in ou environment!

The creation of a thousand forests is in one acorn.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

These organizations proudly serve communities across Iowa by empowering women and connecting them with vital resources and opportunities. We thank them for their work and encourage you to support organizations like these in your own community. Whether you donate your time, resources, or your story, every contribution matters. We are all in this together—go rise, girls!



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Submit your story to help shape the conversation.

Selected submissions may be featured in a future newsletter.

[Submit Your Stories Here!](#)

Stay connected and be part of what’s next!



[DBQDEMS.ORG](https://www.dbqdem.org)