

Child care – Answering the Call

Child care has joined workforce and housing as one of the most critical needs across Iowa. According to a report from the Iowa Department of Human Service's Iowa Child Care Resource & Referral, 28% of Iowa communities are considered child care deserts. A child care desert is defined as a city with more than 50 children in the community and more than three children per available child care slot.

Child care shortages are complex issues that must be addressed at many levels. As communities tackle this issue, it is no surprise that Iowa's rural utilities are engaged and supporting long-term solutions.

Glidden: New Child Care Center Coming Soon

Conversations and planning for a child care center in Glidden began several years ago. These discussions led to the development of Lil Wildcat Education Center, Inc. in 2020. This entity will construct and operate a child care facility in the community.

Fundraising is nearly complete for this new 5,327 sq. ft. child care facility that will be located next to the Glidden-Ralston School building. The new daycare will be licensed with rooms for infants through five-year-olds, plus a before-and-after-school program. Though the center will be located near the school, it will operate year-round to provide consistent child care throughout the year.

Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative (RVEC) is

supporting the new child care facility in several ways through its contributions and also by coordinating funds from Basin Electric Power Cooperative and CoBank. RVEC also secured funds through the USDA Revolving Loan & Grant (REDL&G) Program to provide a \$360,000, 10-year, 0% interest loan from its Revolving Loan Fund. Construction will begin this fall. Weather permitting, the facility will open in the Spring of 2022.



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Roster Changes at IADG

Leadership Transition

Rand Fisher recently announced his retirement from IADG, naming January 31, 2022, his final day. This day is also Rand's anniversary date, marking 25 years of service, providing economic development leadership on behalf of IADG's rural utility sponsors. In announcing his retirement, Fisher expressed his appreciation and gratitude to the IADG Board of Directors, utility sponsors, community partners, and IADG stakeholders.



The IADG Board of Directors took swift action in selecting Bruce Nuzum to assume the duties as President of IADG starting February 1, 2022. During this transitional period, Nuzum has been assigned the title of CEO. Bruce joined IADG in 1997 and most recently served as IADG's Senior V.P. of Finance and Operations.



New to the IADG Team

Carl Hanson joined IADG in August as the V.P. of Value-Added Agriculture, replacing Mike Meissen following his retirement. Carl's main focus is finding and facilitating ag projects and building and maintaining strong agribusiness partnerships. Carl brings a wide range of experience, including growing up on a dairy farm in northeast Iowa and earning a degree in agricultural studies and agronomy from Iowa State University.



Carl's work experience includes serving as an agribusiness banker for Great Western Bank and business development and account management for AgYield and AgriCharts.

This is an exciting time for IADG. Congratulations to Rand, Bruce and Carl on their career announcements.

More on the
IADG transition
in the
4th quarter
Iowa Ventures



Expanded Housing Options in Wilton

Construction is now underway at **Chandler Pointe** in Wilton, IA, on a \$6.9 million development for residents 55 and older. This new housing development will provide 35 one-and-two-bedroom apartments for residents with mixed-income levels.



The Chandler Pointe units will feature a modern, open concept design and have sought-after amenities such as dishwashers, in-unit washers and dryers, and extra-large storage space. Community spaces include a solarium and community room residents can use for social/recreation, educational, and wellness events.

“High-quality, affordable housing in many rural communities is often non-existent or without amenities such as dishwashers or age-in-place features like emergency alert systems or features for those with mobility challenges,” said Barry Accountius, Vice President for Woda Cooper. “Chandler Pointe will provide these options, along with on-site management to ensure it remains a place people are proud to call home for years into the future.”

Many partners came together to make this project happen. IADG and **Eastern Iowa Light & Power** worked with the local development group in Wilton on the project that led to securing the site. The expected completion date is late 2022.



Percival Scientific Expansion Progress

Progress is visible on the **Percival Scientific** expansion of its existing facility in the Perry Industrial Park. Percival engineers, designs, and fabricates environmental growth (research) chambers for universities, colleges, governmental institutions, and businesses worldwide.



Percival Scientific's increase in product demand facilitated the 32,770 sq. ft. expansion. The new space will be dedicated to expanded production and training. An additional enclosed semi-truck loading dock will accommodate the increased production.

Percival originally moved to a shell building in the Perry Industrial Park and was recognized with an Iowa Venture Award in 2000. **Central Iowa Power Cooperative** and **Minburn Communications** provided support for the project through the REDL&G program. **Guthrie County REC** provides electric power to Percival and the Perry Industrial Park.

Hancock County Health System Upgrades in Britt



The community and area surrounding Britt, Iowa, have access to upgraded facilities and services after completing a multi-phase renovation to the **Hancock County Health System (HCHS)** campus in Britt. The \$7.4 million renovation project relocated and expanded Surgical Services to house two major operating rooms, two procedure rooms, and four same-day surgery rooms. The Emergency Department also was expanded to two trauma rooms, four private exam rooms, a centralized nursing station, and a decontamination room. Other improvements included the construction of a new front entry, remodeling of the main atrium lobby area, technology upgrades, and relocating the Senior Life Solution (outpatient program) to the first floor, allowing for easier access.

Corn Belt Power Cooperative and **Prairie Energy Cooperative** supported this expansion by providing financial assistance secured through the USDA Rural Economic Development Loan & Grant Program. Statewide, rural utilities are utilizing this program to support important business expansion and community vitality projects.

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Stanton: Child Care Needs Spur Additional Development

Stanton has many projects focused on adding to the community's quality of life while attracting technology companies and new citizens. One key project is the expansion of the **Stanton Child Resource Center (SCRC)**.

Two to three years ago, the community began initial conversations to expand and renovate the existing SCRC facility. But with new considerations due to COVID-19, the planning group began exploring options for a less-expensive facility.



As additional people were brought into the planning conversation, an opportunity arose to tap into property in a 22-acre section of land owned by the Stanton Area Industrial Foundation. This was the impetus for a master plan for the development of the Stanton Technology Park.

The new 11,000 sq. ft. SCRC facility will accommodate up to 130 children, which is 50 more than the current facility. It will be the first business in the new Stanton Technology Park.

"A lot of people are looking at getting out of the cities. They'd like to raise their children in a rural setting, but they need good jobs, housing, and reliable daycare," says Kevin Cabbage, CEO and general manager of Farmers Mutual Telephone Company. "We will start with the daycare and then build around it. This is just one component of an answer to growing southwest Iowa."

The project is currently in the fundraising stage, and dirt work will be completed Spring of 2022. The new SCRC is expected to open in the Spring of 2023. **Southwest Iowa REC, Central Iowa Power Cooperative, and Farmers Mutual Telephone Company** support this effort, which will provide electric power and telecommunications to the daycare and future technology park.

"Southwest Iowa REC is pleased to support the Stanton Child Resource Center and Stanton Technology Park," says Phil Kinser, CEO of Southwest Iowa REC. "Local families are well-served by the center, and the need to serve more children and families is critical to area development."

Panora: Little Panther Expands to Meet Demand

Little Panther Daycare & Preschool in Panora is moving forward with a 1,440 sq. ft. expansion of its existing building. This addition will allow the facility to accommodate 15 more children and two additional full-time employees.

Currently, Little Panthers has a three-year wait for its classrooms. Page Arganbright, director of Little Panther, recognized two local cooperatives that stepped up to provide 0% interest loans to support



the expansion and speed the path to construction. Cozy Nelsen, CEO of **Guthrie County REC**, says Little Panther was one of the first projects funded through Guthrie County REC's Revolving Loan Fund.

"Little Panther Daycare is an invaluable asset for Panora and the surrounding area," says Nelsen. "Guthrie County REC is proud to continue to support this much-needed expansion."

The **Panora Telco** leadership was similarly enthusiastic. General manager Andy Randol says they have also supported Little Panther from the beginning because they know the critical role daycare provides in the community.

Dysart: New Facility Expands Services

Little Knights Learning Center in Dysart recently moved from space within the school to a new building constructed next door. This new facility expanded the classrooms from three to five and increased the overall capacity from 69 to 85 students. As the only stand-alone daycare in Dysart for the past few years, they also expect to provide services to families from the surrounding area.

Being located adjacent to the school allows for convenient drop-off and pick-up of students of all ages. The new daycare facility has its own kitchen, enabling them now to serve breakfast, as well as a dedicated playground. A Ripple Effect grant of \$10,000 (\$5,000 from **Aureon** and \$5,000 from **Farmers Cooperative Telephone Company (FCTC)**) was awarded to support this project.



For more information about the USDA REDL&G and Ripple Effect programs, contact **Steven Benne (sbenne@iadg.com)** or **Brittany Morales (bmorales@iadg.com)**

As with most challenges, there are many answers to help alleviate child care needs in Iowa. IADGs rural utility partners continue to demonstrate their commitment to community by providing technical and financial assistance to support impactful community initiatives, including child care facilities across the state.



IADG Holds RLF Workshops

IADG's partners operate **72 Revolving Loan Funds (RLFs)**.

This includes all of IADG's member electric cooperatives, as well as a large number of municipal utilities and independent telecommunications companies.



These RLFs were originally established with grants received through the USDA REDL&G program and utility matching funds. From these RLFs, over **1,000 projects** have been supported, generating a total investment of **\$753 million** and creating and retaining **13,100 jobs**.

Maintaining a strong understanding of RLFs, their administration and loan policy, reporting, and marketing is crucial. On October 21 and 26, IADG held workshops to provide a comprehensive overview of starting and operating a successful RLF. If you are involved with an RLF, but were not able to attend a workshop, contact **Steven Benne (sbenne@iadg.com)** to get access to the recorded session.

Historic Field of Dreams Game



In 2016, when **Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative (MVEC)** launched MVlink, its fiber internet service, they did not know that a mere five years later, they would be supplying internet to one of the most anticipated (and watched) baseball games in history. For the inaugural game at the **Field of Dreams**

in **Dyersville** on August 13, BaAM, the production company that built the infrastructure for the big game, relied heavily on MVlink's services. Through MVlink's 10 gigabit Network, BaAM, in turn, provided services to MLB and Fox Sports for production. MVEC also facilitated solutions that handled all voice connections to accommodate the influx of fans.

The entities responsible for this high-visibility project were very complimentary of not only the quality of the network connection but also the quality of customer service MVEC provided. Organizers commented that putting this game on in such a rural area was one of the most challenging things they have done, but MVEC's piece was flawlessly handled.

"We had a vision for MVlink several years ago and invested in smart grid technology to improve our electric service to members. Because we invested in this technology, it has allowed us to extend our service to fiber internet, providing members in rural Iowa with the fastest internet speeds available. The Field of Dreams project was another opportunity to showcase MVlink's capabilities. I am really proud of our whole team's effort to provide flawless service in a challenging environment. Event organizers built an 8,000-seat baseball stadium in the middle of an Iowa corn field—MVlink made their jobs a little easier and gave them one less thing to worry about. Once again, we were able to step up and meet the needs of those we work for," stated Jeremy Richert, CEO, Maquoketa Valley Electric Cooperative.



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IADG

Iowa Area Development Group

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Annual Conference
November 10-12, 2021
Louisville, KY



The NREDA Annual Conference brings together rural economic development professionals from across the nation. Sessions include economic development success stories and out-of-the-box thinking and strategies. More details are available at nreda.org.