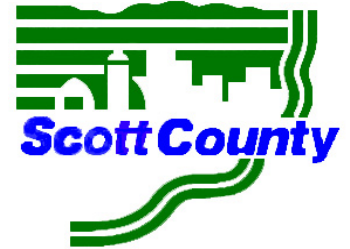


## Scott County's Mission

*Scott County is dedicated to protecting,  
strengthening and enriching our community by  
delivering quality services and providing  
leadership with PRIDE.*



## Scott County Board of Supervisors

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## 2013 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Mental Health Transition Funds and Redesign

Property Tax

Transportation Infrastructure Funding

Adequate funding for Medicaid

## **Mental Health Transition Funding**

Scott County applied for transition funding in the amount of \$2,000,000 of which \$1,400,000 was approved by DHS to the Legislature. The remaining \$900,000 is for FY12 expenses of Vera French and Handicap Development Center for services they provided without county assistance due to the funding shortage by the State. Scott County paid all of its State bills for FY12. The County ended the fiscal year with under \$300,000 of fund balance. In our recent bond rating by Moody's it was pointed out the mental health fund lack of fund balance and its current funding situation is a weakness in the overall financial condition of the County. This weakness affects the County's bond rating and interest costs.

We urge legislators to take up the transition funding as soon as possible. The money requested is pass through money to our two agencies for services. Any delay will create serious problems in continued service delivery by those two agencies as soon as February.

## **Mental Health Redesign**

Scott County has passed a resolution that expresses our intent to join a region with Cedar, Clinton, Jackson and Muscatine Counties. We have developed a regional position paper which is included in this packet.

## **Property Tax**

Counties are vital partners with both cities and the state in attracting new businesses, and helping retain and grow existing businesses. We share the concern of the tax burden on businesses but believe that local government should not shoulder the burden of tax relief. We believe the state should find a meaningful way to reduce the tax burden and not shift it to other taxpayers or use it as a way to reduce local government services. The State should fully funded property tax credits.

## **Transportation Infrastructure Funding**

Counties are spending an increasing amount of local tax dollars to fund projects that were once fully fundable by Road Use Tax revenue. Maintaining and improving the road network is vital in continuing to grow the state's economy. The funding source needs to increase to keep up with the inflationary increases. Scott County believes that the current funding formula with the \$225 million cap to the TIME 21 Fund should remain and any increase be distributed like the other RUT disbursements.

## **Adequate Funding of Medicaid**

The Medicaid program must be adequately funded to sufficiently meet the needs of Iowa's most vulnerable populations. The recent Mental Health Redesign legislation, as well as the Affordable Care Act both propose to significantly increase the enrollment in Medicaid and we are concerned that the increase will not be met with the necessary increase in funding.

We also believe that the current Iowa Care Program is not designed to allow recipients a medical home in their home county. This program is causing unintended financial burden on many counties including Scott County. As of January 1, 2013 there is no longer transportation to doctor visits to Iowa City and individuals with this coverage are coming to the county for financial help to cover the cost of transportation. Also the insurance only covers services in Iowa City. The insurance does not cover ambulance services. Medic Ambulance is now running deficits of \$140,000 to \$200,000 due to nonpayment of Iowa Care patients. Like many counties, Scott County, pays a portion of the ambulance services deficit to insure there are services in the entire county. Ambulance service coverage must be included in all programs going forward.

## **Other Issues**

**Passenger Rail:** Scott County supports passenger rail to Iowa City and on to Omaha. We believe this is an economic development issue and see it as a way to position our State for the future. As in all transportation infrastructure and services we see the operation of the services a state responsibility. We do see the local rail stops including building facilities a local responsibility. As a County we have been long supporters of rail and will continue to work for its development. We urge the legislators to allow this service to continue into Iowa.

**Iowa E911:** The Iowa E911 Task Force had drafted recommendations to the system as required by Senate File 2332 Section 12. This document recommends equalizing wire and wireless E911 surcharge rates at \$1.00 and the elimination of the need to have a referendum to charge the surcharge on wired lines. These two recommendations will have a significant positive impact on Scott County taxpayers. Scott County is the only county in the state that does not have a wired surcharge. The County forgoes approximately \$500,000 to \$600,000 of revenue each year. This revenue would go directly to the debt service of the consolidated dispatch center and reduce taxes. Also the increase in the surcharge will allow the replacement of equipment at the center in operating budgets in the future and not require bonding. This funding source is a way for Scott County to reduce property taxes.

**Allocate certain funds by population:** Counties should receive Emergency Management Planning funds and Veteran's funding by population.

**Full funding of REAP:** The Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) program has never been fully funded. Lack of funding translates into fewer investments that are important to quality of life and economic activity in Iowa communities. For example, current funding levels only allow one of every five competitive REAP grant applications from county conservation boards to be funded. REAP is a nationally recognized state funding program that helps counties make improvements to parks and facilities, protect important outdoor recreation areas, build and improve trails, protect water quality and conserve soil, conduct education programs, manage roadsides, and preserve and enhance historic sites and tourism attractions. REAP investments are known to enhance Iowans' quality of life, and are economically important to Iowa communities.

**Food Inspection Fees:** The food inspection program in Iowa is under the jurisdiction of the Iowa Department of Inspections and Appeals (IDIA). IDIA conducts the food program either by direct inspections from State employees or via 28E agreements with local public health or other agencies. Fees for food permits and other food programs are set by the State Legislature. Although the Iowa legislature authorized the increase of food establishment licensing fees in 1979, 1997 and in 2008, the current license fees do not sufficiently cover the costs to operate the program. The issue of inadequate food fees has been repeatedly included in legislative priorities of ISAC, ICPHA, IPHA and IEHA. In Scott County, fees have only covered between 60% and 65% of the costs of the program. Scott County agrees with the position paper of Food Licensing Fees adopted by the Iowa Environmental Health Association which supports increasing the food licensing fees, establishing a food licensing fee schedule and linking the fees to the Consumer Price Index so that fees can keep pace with rising costs.

**Medical Examiner Issue with Autopsies:** Scott County has seen a dramatic rise in costs of autopsies. The Iowa Administrative code has requirements of when an autopsy must or should be performed and by which agency. Out of State autopsies can only be performed with the permission of the State Medical examiner. Scott County is a border county and we have developed a long relationship with a medical doctor in Illinois. These services are performed at a much lower rate than with the State Medical Examiner. We believe the rules need to be revised to allow the County Medical Examiner working in conjunction with the county attorney to choose the least expensive services. As a county we have been trying to hire a doctor to perform autopsies in Scott County but that has not yet been successful. Again counties should be able to find services at costs that will not require an increase in property tax.

**Juvenile Detention Home Fund:** The Juvenile Detention Coalition of Iowa is currently drafting a bill to make changes to the language to Iowa code section 1. Section 232.142

(Maintenance and cost of juvenile homes – fund). The changes have all been agreed upon by the eight member juvenile detention directors of the Juvenile Detention Coalition of Iowa of which Scott County is a member. These changes will improve accountability for how the state funds are distributed to the ten detention centers and strengthen the statewide network of juvenile detention homes. The changes are as follows:

- Caps the number of statewide detention home beds at the level licensed as of July 1, 2012
- Changes to funds distribution which include:
  - Prohibiting the inclusion of expenses incurred to support out of state juveniles
  - Prohibiting the inclusion of expenses incurred to support children placed outside the judicial district (unless the court rules placement would be detrimental to the child, or the detention facility where the juvenile is placed is geographically closer)
- Directs the Department of Human Rights to work with detention directors to review the current distribution formula and recommend changes that improve accountability and strengthen the statewide network of juvenile detention homes.
- Requires expenses submitted for reimbursement to be verified by an independent auditor, with final review by the state auditor.

**Recorder Fees:** According to a study by the Iowa County Recorder's Association, the actual costs to counties to provide a marriage license is slightly over \$13. Currently, \$4 of the \$35 fee is retained by counties and the remainder is returned to the State. The Association has proposed a \$10 fee increase to be kept by counties so that the cost of the service is not shifted to property taxes. The \$45 fee is less costly than in most contiguous states and substantially lower than many other states. Scott County supports the increase.

The Iowa Land Records information system (ILR) is the recorders' statewide web site, established in the Code of Iowa. It has grown to a repository of over 10 million documents, and increasing numbers of our largest banks and credit unions are recent subscribers are using e-submission services through ILR. The fee for e-recording provided for the web site was initially \$3, and by law went back to \$1. The proviso was that recorders would report to the General Assembly and request increases as needed. It has been more than 5 years since an increase was sought, while demand for services has increased, adding to costs for hardware, software, and personnel. Scott County supports an increase to the fee for e-submission that goes to the website from \$1 to \$2.

This increase would help make the site robust and an even greater asset to businesses and citizens.

**Administrative fee for collection of court fees and delinquent parking tickets:**

Codify the current \$5.00 administrative fee for the collection of Clerk of Court fees and add the \$5.00 fee for the collection of delinquent parking tickets by the County Treasurer.

**Mobile Home Titles:** Allow mobile homes to be titled in the county where they are located.

**Tax Sales advertisement on state or county websites:** Allow tax sales to be advertised on county or state websites in addition to the office and instead of one newspaper and office.

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# EASTERN IOWA MH/DS REGION



Cedar, Clinton, Jackson, Muscatine and Scott County Supervisors and staff have been meeting since April 2012 to work on the formation of a 28E government for the delivery of Mental Health and Developmental Services on a region basis as outlined in state law. The group facilitated the approval of guiding principles that each county discussed and approved for the use in the development of the agreement and to convey the intention of the region's formation to the State. In September all of the Boards met and passed a joint resolution that was sent to the Department of Human Services to record the intent that the five counties will become the Eastern Iowa MH/DS Region. The counties are continuing to meet to develop the 28E agreement.

## Excerpt from Resolution:

WHEREAS, these discussions have lead to the development of guiding principles to be used in the development of a 28E agreement for services which are 1) the region must move forward in the spirit of cooperation with trust amongst all, operating on the premise of open communication and respect for differences of opinion, 2) each county's property tax dollars should be spent on services for their residents, 3) each county has one vote, 4) each county needs to maintain a local presence (local access office) for their residents, 5) each county must provide uniform services while including utilization of an open provider panel, 6) the region should not create another layer of government and should maintain current administrative costs, not increase them, and 7) case management providers are chosen by the county, not the region;



## Eastern Iowa MH/DS Region's Legislative Proposal's

Allow counties to remain at their current Mental Health Levy per person equivalent. Use a waiver or grandfather rule so the transition to regions can be more effective. Requiring counties to reduce their levy to the proposed \$47.28 could result in service reductions in the county. Board of Supervisors in regions would better be able to pool new State money if there was not a consequence that a neighboring county could reduce their property tax rate by using the pooled monies. The State backfill should be for new services that are needed in the region or an increase in population that need the services.

The current language allows counties to form a region without prescriptive methods. We believe that regions should be able to determine the way the region should be governed within the 28E agreement. Creating a "one size fits all" job description and business plan for the regions is not productive or going to guarantee equal access to services.

The current language as stated in SF2315 does not require "pooling" of funds. Regions can determine other funding arrangements and specify it in the regional governance agreement. We want this language to remain.

Regions should have the flexibility to develop their own 28E agreement for services as best fits their region. The Eastern Iowa MH/DS region believes that the guiding principles will create the most effective governance model and produce the best services for our region.

A review at the State level of the "core services" and "core plus services" needs to occur because typically the "core plus services" can prevent the need for the more costly core services.

Phase in the implementation of "legal settlement to residency" as the shift of consumers will have a dramatic impact on regions. Evaluate and clarify the rules describing "residency" this session so counties will know the financial impact. Consider service impacts in border counties.