

The Paper

Our Town, Our Paper!



Laurens, Iowa



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Local News

Diane Dirks Inducted into Iowa 4-H Hall of Fame

Diane Dirks of Pocahontas County was inducted into the 2025 Iowa 4-H Hall of Fame during a ceremony at the 4-H Exhibits Building at the Iowa State Fair on Sunday, Aug. 17. Ninety-two Iowa counties participated this year and selected 122 inductees for their outstanding service and dedication to 4-H. Inductees or their surviving family members were presented a certificate by the Iowa 4-H Foundation President, Don Timmins, and State 4-H Program Leader, Mitchell Hoyer, as they were introduced on stage.

Dianne began her 4-H journey in O'Brien County, spending nine years as a member before deciding to give back to the program. That decision, said Ashlie Jergens, ISU Extension and Outreach Pocahontas County Youth Coordinator, led to a 29.5-year career with ISU Extension and Outreach Pocahontas County. In addition to her work, Dianne served as a 4-H leader for approximately 15 years with the Guys and Gals of Grant 4-H Club and volunteered as an Achievement Show judge in Pocahontas County, helping youth prepare for fair success.

Her decades of service have impacted countless youth, volunteers, and families, embodying the true spirit of 4-H, helping young people learn, grow, and lead.

Counties select inductees for their exceptional work in contributing to the lives of 4-H members and the overall 4-H program, said Ashlie Jergens, ISU Extension and Outreach Pocahontas County Youth Coordinator. Many inductees serve as club leaders, youth mentors, fair superintendents or fair board members, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach county council members, county youth council members, fair judges, financial supporters, chaperones or ISU Extension and Outreach staff members. The inductees have demonstrated dedication, encouragement, commitment and guidance to Iowa's 4-H'ers through the years.

"We are honored to recognize these special individuals, for their advocacy and dedication to the Iowa 4-H program," shared Iowa 4-H Foundation Executive Director, Emily Saveraid.

"This is a great way to honor the volunteers and staff across the state of Iowa that generously give their time and talents to foster positive partnerships with our 4-H youth," said Tillie Good, Iowa 4-H staff and volunteer development manager.

The Iowa 4-H Hall of Fame was initiated in 2002 to help commemorate the 100th anniversary of 4-H. A summary of previous honorees was on display at the 2022 Iowa State Fair in the 4-H Exhibits Building. These summaries are also available at the Iowa 4-H Foundation office in the Extension 4-H Youth Building at Iowa State University. Information about previous inductees to the Iowa 4-H Hall of Fame also is available on the Iowa 4-H Foundation website, organized by year and by county. Go to: <https://www.iowa4hfoundation.org/what-we-do/recognizing-service/iowa-4-h-hall-of-fame>



At the Library
with Glenda Mulder
September 17, 2025

We've had lots of fun with the giant magnetiles on loan from the State Library, but they had to be returned last week. It was fun to see what different kids would build, (houses, castles, rocketships, sidewalks) and watching kids work together. We still have the State Library's big pipe building kit, but just for another week or so. My favorite with these was the boy who built a "horse" to ride around the library! These STEM activities are so fun because you can literally see the "lightbulb moments."

October is Banned Books awareness month, so to be ahead of the game, we made our selection from a list of most frequently banned and challenged books. We chose *Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You* by Jason Reynolds. This book takes you on that journey, showing how racist ideas started and were spread, and how they can be discredited. It has often been challenged, ostensibly for bad language (I've listened to the first three chapters and haven't noticed this yet!) and discussions of race. I bet we will have an interesting discussion September 29th!

Mark Your Calendar

September 29 @ 7 p.m. - Book Club *Stamped* by Jason Reynolds

October 7 @ 6:30 p.m. - Take it Tuesday

After School – Kids Make & Take

October 6 & 20 @ 5:30 p.m. - Evening Tot Time

October 15 - Library Foundation Potato Bar Supper 5-6:30 p.m.

October 15 @ 7 p.m. - Spooky Stories with Darrin Crow

December 9 - Hugo Kringle/The Dulcimer Guy

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Services Held for William M. Alexander

William M. Alexander, age 83, of Laurens, passed away on Sunday, September 7, 2025, at his home in Laurens, Iowa.

Memorial Service was held at 11:00 AM on Thursday, September 11, 2025, at Bethany Lutheran Church in Laurens, Iowa. Private Family Burial took place following the service. The visitation was from 9:30 - 11:00 AM, Thursday, before the service time. Powers Funeral Home of Laurens handled the arrangements.

William Michael Alexander was born on June 10, 1942, in Omaha, NE. He was the son of Michael and Marie (Roesing) Alexander. He graduated from Holy Name High School in Omaha in 1961 and went on to Creighton University School of Law, graduating in 1972. Bill worked for Qualley Law firm in Sioux City. In 1976, he established the Alexander Law Firm in Laurens. On January 2, 1984, Bill was united in marriage to Patricia Orwig in Sioux City. The couple settled in Laurens where Bill continued to practice law until retiring in January of 2018.

Bill was a member of the Iowa, American and Pocahontas County Bar Associations. He was also a member of the Bethany Lutheran Church, the Lions and Kiwanis Clubs, Knights of Columbus and Laurens Senior Pioneers. Bill's hobbies included: gardening, fishing, camping, grilling and spending time with family. He especially enjoyed watching and participating in sporting activities for his children and grandchildren. Bill and Pat enjoyed spending time with their dogs.

Survivors include his wife Patricia "Pat" of Laurens; children, Jason Kluver, Jessica (Jason) Baumeister, Keton (Taylor) Alexander, Mark, Beth, and Megan Alexander; 17 grandchildren; sister, Micki Alexander; brothers-in-law: Roger Arnburg, John Orwig, Tim Orwig and Alan Hesse; sisters-in-law: Nancy Orwig, Becky Arnburg and Karen Orwig and many nieces & nephews.

Bill was preceded in death by his parents; brother, Andrew; brothers-in-law, Dan Orwig and Charles Miller and sister-in-law, Mary Miller.



Tom Lichter Returning to Fonda Arts Center

Singer/Pianist Tom Lichter is returning to the Fonda Arts Center!

As one of Iowa's favorite musicians, Tom will take the stage at 3 p.m. on Sunday, September 28th performing a variety of popular favorites.

Tom is a graduate of Fonda High School where he was recognized from the onset as one of those who "wears his music like his skin" - a natural. A Newell area resident, he has been sharing the joy of his talent ever since with audiences of all ages.

All this happening at the Fonda Arts Center on the Northwest corner of Fourth and Main Streets in Fonda. Everyone is welcome! As always, free admission, free refreshments - donations greatly appreciated!

LUNCH & LEARN

September 22nd

8:30 AM - 9:30 AM
Pocahontas Iowa State Extension Office
305 N Main St.
Pocahontas, IA 50574
Coffee and pastries will be provided

OR

11:30 AM - 12:30 PM
Northwest Career Academy
300 West Garfield St.
Laurens, IA 50554
A light lunch will be provided

Come learn about the
\$96 MILLION INVESTMENT
to support small
businesses, manufacturers,
and entrepreneurship!

Register:



<https://forms.gle/VQs4aFg4ticnKCbC6>



VENTURENET IOWA

InnoVenture Iowa

This project is being supported, in whole or in part, by a federal award number 21031-0015 awarded to America's Small Business Development Center (SBDC) Iowa by the U.S. Department of the Treasury.

This Week at Bethany Lutheran

Pastor David E. Klappenbach

Wednesday: September 17, 2025

7:00 PM ~ Confirmation class

7:00 PM ~ Council Mtg.

Thursday: September 18, 2025

2:00 PM ~ Circle Group

Sunday: September 21, 2025

Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost

9:15 AM ~ Adult SS

9:15 AM ~ Rally Sunday ~ 1st day of
Youth SS

9:30 AM ~ Coffee Fellowship

10:30 AM ~ Worship w/Communion,
Installation of Teachers

11:30 AM ~ Potluck

6:00 PM ~ Bethany Prayer Group

Monday: September 22, 2025

7:00 PM ~ Hand Bell Rehearsal

Tuesday: September 23, 2025

8:30 AM ~ Prayer Group

9:30 AM ~ Tuesday coffee at Bethany

Wednesday: September 24, 2025

7:00 PM ~ Confirmation class

*Worship, Love,
Accept~ Together in
Christ's Name*



This Week at Laurens United Methodist Church

Pastor Deb Parkison

Sunday, September 21:

Sunday School 9:15

Fellowship Coffee @ 9:30 AM

Worship Service 10:30 AM

Administrative Council Meeting @
11:30 AM in the Wesley Room



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This Week at First Christian

Pastor Rev. Rita Cordell

Thursday Sept. 18

2-5 p.m. - Clothes Closet Open

Sunday, Sept. 21

9:30 a.m. - Sunday School

10:30 a.m. - Worship

4 p.m. - Service at LCC



Resurrection of Our Lord Catholic Church

**Pocahontas, IA -- Priest:
Father Paul Nguyen**

MASS TIMES:

Daily Mass as scheduled in the
weekly bulletin

Saturday at 5:00 PM and Sunday at
10:30 AM

Confessions: Saturday 4:15 pm at
Resurrection

Subscribe Early and Save on CropsTV Season 6

CropsTV, powered by Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, will return for its sixth season in January 2026, continuing its mission to deliver timely and relevant crop production information directly to farmers and agricultural service providers.

CropsTV offers the flexibility of on-demand viewing, allowing subscribers to watch episodes at home, in the office or anywhere with an internet connection. Season 6 will feature expert-led discussions on emerging topics, including corn stunt and Curvularia leaf spot, two new corn diseases to monitor and spray drone technology. Other timely topics are still being finalized, but will include information related to nutrient, crop and weed management updates, water quality and conservation practices.

Season 6 will offer two new opportunities for CropsTV subscribers:

1. **Early-bird pricing:** Those who subscribe to CropsTV Season 6 between Sept. 1 and Dec. 1, 2025, can take advantage of the early-bird price of \$100. After Dec. 1, the subscription price increases to \$125.
2. **Short Message Service Notifications:** All CropsTV Season 6 subscribers will have the option to opt in for SMS (text message) updates, ensuring they stay informed about new episodes and updates throughout the season.

“CropsTV has been a popular online learning opportunity for farmers and agricultural service providers since it launched in 2020,” said Leah Ten Napel, field agronomist with Iowa State University Extension and Outreach. “We are excited to offer these new opportunities for the upcoming CropsTV season and provide timely, relevant crop production information in a way that is flexible to fit people’s busy schedules.”

All episodes are eligible for Certified Crop Advisor credits. A CropsTV subscription includes:

- Access to all Season 6 episodes as they are released
- The CropsTV Guide email newsletter
- Optional SMS (text message) updates
- Additional educational materials with each episode

While you can subscribe early to CropsTV and save, viewing begins Jan. 6, 2026, and subscribers will have access to Season 6 content through April 15, 2026.

To subscribe, access CropsTV on the ISU Extension Store.

For more information, visit CropsTV - Season 6 or contact: cropstv@iastate.edu.

Training on Open Meetings and Records Laws Offered Sept. 15

Iowa public officials can learn how to meet new state requirements on government transparency during two live, virtual sessions on Monday, Sept. 15 from noon to 2 p.m. or 4 to 6 p.m.

The training, provided by Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Community and Economic Development, introduces Iowa’s open meetings and open records laws, often called “sunshine laws” because they shine a light on how government works.

“These laws are really about keeping government open and accessible,” said Sara Shonrock, community development specialist with ISU Extension and Outreach. “People need to know when decisions are being made and how to access public information. That’s what builds trust.”

The Iowa Legislature recently passed a law requiring newly elected or appointed officials to complete training on open meetings and records. That includes board and commission members, municipal staff and extension council members.

The Sept. 15 sessions will walk through the basics, including how to properly give notice of a meeting, what needs to go on an agenda, when it’s legal to go into closed session and what counts as a public record.

“People want to follow the rules, but sometimes the details can be confusing,” Shonrock said. “We break it down so it’s clear and practical, with examples that apply to everyday situations.”

Registration is open now, and participants can choose the time that works best for their schedule. The cost of the workshop is \$50, and the maximum class size is 30 people. The minimum class size is 15 people.

Additional sessions will be posted soon. For updates and future training dates, visit the Open Meeting and Open Records Training webpage.

Suicide Prevention: Build Awareness through Education and Training

Each year, Iowa families, schools, workplaces and entire communities are affected by the deep pain of suicide. But every Iowan has the power to help change the outcome, says Morgan Newell, a health and human sciences educator with Iowa State University Extension and Outreach.

“Suicide is a statewide concern that we can all do something about,” Newell said. “September is Suicide Prevention Awareness Month, a time to shine a light on this pressing, yet preventable, public health challenge.”

Iowa saw a decline in overall suicide deaths from 590 in 2022 to 496 deaths in 2023. But amid this improvement, an alarming trend emerged: Teen suicides increased during the same period.

“Our youngest Iowans are facing unprecedented mental health pressures. Suicide rates among young people and rural residents remain especially troubling, emphasizing the need for both clinical care and strong community-based support,” Newell said.

Build awareness through education and training

Suicide is preventable. Research shows that providing access to

support, removing barriers to care, and engaging in early, empathetic conversations can dramatically reduce suicide risk.

“Prevention is not just about responding to a crisis. It is about building resilience ahead of time,” Newell said.

Warning signs that someone may be struggling include:

- Talking about feeling hopeless or being a burden
- Withdrawing from others or losing interest in activities
- Expressing unbearable emotional pain
- Giving away possessions or saying goodbye
- Increased use of alcohol or drugs
- Major changes in mood or sleep patterns

“These signs are not always obvious. That is why community-wide education and open conversations about mental health are critical,” Newell said.

Building awareness through education and training is one of the most effective ways to strengthen communities and reduce suicide. ISU Extension and Outreach offers Mental Health First Aid and Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR) training to equip Iowans with the skills to identify signs of mental health distress and respond with compassion and support. These programs are available across the state and are valuable for individuals, organizations, schools and workplaces. To enroll in either training, contact your ISU Extension and Outreach county office.

Free, confidential support services available

In addition to training, Iowans

can turn to a variety of free, confidential support services:

- **988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline.** Call or text 988 anytime to connect with trained counselors who can assist in mental health emergencies.
- **Your Life Iowa.** Call 855-581-8111, text 855-895-8398 or chat online at yourlifeiowa.org for support and referrals to local services.
- **Iowa Concern Hotline.** Available 24/7 at 800-447-1985, this service offers help with stress, legal questions, financial issues and mental health concerns.
- **Veterans Crisis Line.** Veterans and their families can call 988 and press 1 or text 838255 for 24/7 support.
- **SAMHSA National Helpline.** Call 800-662-HELP (4357) for treatment referrals and general support in English or Spanish.

“This month serves as a reminder that suicide is not inevitable. It is preventable. Every Iowan can be part of the solution by learning how to recognize risk, opening up safe conversations and guiding others toward the help they need. Whether offering a listening ear, taking a training, or simply keeping crisis numbers available, small actions can lead to life-saving outcomes,” Newell said.

Suicide prevention is about more than reacting to emergencies, the extension educator continued. It is about building a community where no one feels invisible, isolated or unsupported. In 2025, Iowa continues to move forward by empowering communities with the tools, education and compassion necessary to save lives.