



Iowa Institute for  
Cooperatives

# CO-OPVIEWS

News and information for the benefit of Iowa cooperatives.

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## 2021 Legislative Session Underway at the Capitol

By: *Katie Hall, Director of Government Affairs*

Iowa's 2021 legislative session began on January 11, welcoming 27 new legislators. The legislative priorities for this session include COVID-19 relief and assistance for local businesses, initiatives to grow and maintain Iowa's economy, recovery programs post-pandemic, and rural broadband expansion. We also expect central filing to be a topic of interest again this year as interest groups work to move Iowa from direct notice to a central "electronic" filing system.



Both Iowa's Senate and House recently announced committee chairs for 2021. The Senate Agriculture Committee will continue to be chaired by Senator Dan Zumbach (Ryan), Vice-Chair Senator Annette Sweeney (Alden), and Ranking Member Senator Kevin Kinney (Oxford).

The House Agriculture Committee will continue to be chaired by Representative Ross Paustian (Walcott) and will feature some new faces: Vice-Chair Representative Chad Ingels (Randalia) and Ranking Member Representative Kenan Judge (Waukee).

The Iowa House also created a new Information Technology (IT) Committee which will focus on technology infrastructure, cybersecurity, and rural broadband connectivity and deployment. This committee will be chaired by Representative Brian Lohse (Bondurant), Vice-Chair Representative David Sieck (Glenwood), and Ranking Member Representative Dave Williams (Cedar Falls).



### COVID-19 GUIDELINES

According to the newly-released COVID-19 protocols for the 2021 Session, state lawmakers, their staff, and the general public will not be required to wear a face-covering in the Capitol building. However, masks and face shields will be available for those who want to wear one, and people are encouraged to bring their own mask. Visitors will be subject to a health check questionnaire when they enter the Capitol, as building security also administers a temperature check.

Currently, committee rooms are unavailable to reserve since they are only open for legislative business.

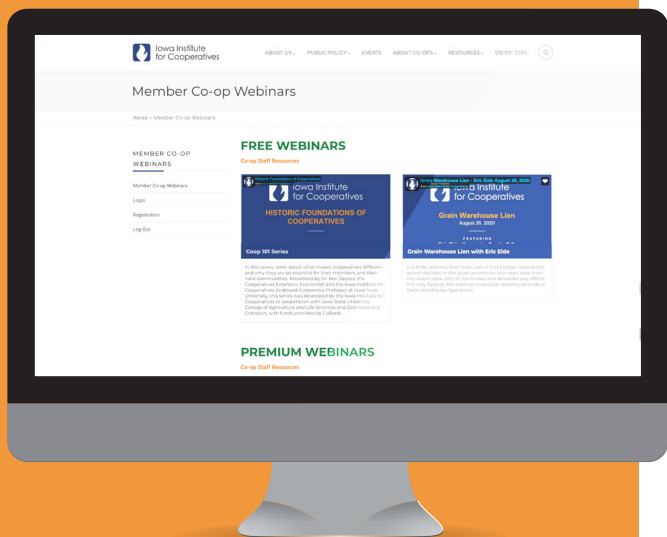
Senate and House subcommittee meetings will be held virtually, and information regarding those meetings will be published at least a day prior. Members of the public can attend virtual subcommittee meetings and provide written comments on legislation through the state's legislative website.

### IIC LEGISLATIVE EVENTS

Our annual Welcome Back Reception, hosted by The Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives, Iowa Communication Alliance, IowaBio and Fuel Iowa has been canceled. We are working through details and viable options to host a virtual Co-op Day at the capitol, but are also aware of e-meeting fatigue that will most likely grow as the year progresses.

We will keep members posted as new opportunities to connect with legislators materialize. In the meantime, our federal and state legislators are still taking phone calls and e-mails.

Contact Katie Hall at [khall@iowainstitute.coop](mailto:khall@iowainstitute.coop) if you would like specific contact information for any of our legislators or if you would like to receive IIC's weekly legislative update.



## Now Playing in an Office Near You

### Video Library Makes Co-op Resources Accessible

The pandemic and the inability to meet in person, forced the Iowa Institute to reevaluate how we hold our events. It also gave us the opportunity to reassess our programs. The topics covered in some programs are well suited for a one-hour webinar. These webinars will be available online in our Member Video Library.

“In a time when in-person events are not feasible, the online library will help us continue to fulfill our mission of supporting Iowa’s cooperatives by ensuring that our members still have access to valuable resources,” says Dave Holm, Executive Director of IIC.

When you first access the library, you will be asked to register. Once you are verified, you will gain access to videos on cooperative management, cooperative leadership, and many more topics. Videos like our Co-op 101 series and the 2020 Annual Meeting are available to view any time and refer back to as needed. Premium Webinars like our CFO Winter Series will be available to purchase, either as a whole series or as separate videos.

To register, please visit us at [iowainstitute.coop](http://iowainstitute.coop). The Member Video Library can be found under the Resources tab, or on our homepage under Supporting Iowa’s Cooperatives.

## 2021 Annual Meeting Recap

### IIC Holds Virtual Meeting

If there was a theme for IIC’s 70th and first-ever virtual Annual Meeting, held on November 24, 2020, it would be adaptability, following the precedent set by the rest of 2020.

President of the IIC Board, Doyle Anderson, began by commenting on the challenges of the previous year, followed by Resolutions Committee Chair, Reuben Skow, who discussed the committee’s review of the current resolutions. IIC’s Director of Government Affairs, Katie Hall, then reviewed any new or updated resolutions including an increase in funding for Iowa’s infrastructure grant program, encouraging cooperative employee development at Iowa community colleges, and support of accessible and affordable childcare plus many others. For more information on IIC’s legislative priorities, contact Katie Hall.

Dave Holm, Executive Director of IIC, followed up with a review of 2020 and how IIC has adapted services to its members during the pandemic. IIC’s staff took advantage of the opportunity to get creative leading to the development of the online Member Video Library and partnerships with other state cooperative councils.

Tom Halverson, President and CEO of CoBank, connected with us from his home in Denver, Colorado. His presentation focused on the macroeconomic consequences caused by the global pandemic, which will be the U.S. government’s biggest challenge for the next five to ten years. Tom also touched on other topics like the interdependence of rural and urban America, how remote working could affect our communities before he wrapped up by answering questions from members.

To watch our 70th Annual Meeting, please register for our Member Video Library at [iowainstitute.coop](http://iowainstitute.coop).



Dave Holm’s presentation included this thought-provoking quote from Dave Hollis:

***“In the rush to return to normal, use this time to consider which parts of normal are worth rushing back to.”***



# IIC Welcomes Three New Board Members

Guiding the future of the organization, Iowa Institute's Board of Directors is member-elected to best represent both geographical regions and cooperative industry sectors of Iowa. The board consists of member directors, manager directors, regional members, and sector-specific members. Join us in welcoming our new members!



**DAN DIETZENBACH**

*NE Patron Member  
Farmers Union Cooperative Board Member*

Dan is currently in his 10th year serving as a board member on the Farmers Union Cooperative Board. Dan and his wife, Michelle, have operated a dairy and crop farm southeast of Fort Atkinson for 16 years while raising their three children, Ryan, Derek, and Anna. He has also spent the last 24 years serving his community as a member of the Fort Atkinson Volunteer Fire Department as well as an emergency medical responder with the South Winneshiek First Responders.



**JIM GOSSETT**

*SW District Staff/Manager Member  
CEO, Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative*

Jim was named the CEO of Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative (RVEC) in 2017. He is involved with RVEC's "Co-op 101" initiative with ISU Extension and Outreach, which allows community college students to explore co-op principles, history, and the impact of co-ops in their communities. Jim serves on the Carroll Area Development Corporation Board of Directors, the DMACC Business Administration Advisory Committee, and the DMACC Carroll Campus Foundation Board. He has two grown sons who live in Minnesota with their families.



**BRIAN THILGES**

*Regional Board Member  
Land O' Lakes*

After 24 years working for Land O'Lakes and its predecessor companies, Brian Thilges is well-versed in cooperatives. As a part of their Ag Member Relations team, he currently manages relationships with Land O'Lakes member cooperatives across Iowa. He also has been involved in many areas of cooperative management: strategic direction, board development, cooperative system values, plus government relations, and industry advocacy. Brian and his wife, Karen, live in Algona where they have raised their two children, Andrew and Amanda.

## TALENT MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR CO-OPS

*These one-hour webinars are provided through a partnership with FCCS and Cooperative Network and are ideal for cooperative directors, CEOs and Human Resource Managers.*

### **JANUARY 26 - 1:00 P.M.**

#### **Talent Management Strategy**

Learn more about the current talent landscape and workforce trends, hiring right, engagement factors, and rewards and compensation for employees.

### **MARCH 2 - 1:00 P.M. Succession Planning**

Learn how to manage the succession planning process, and about the board's role in CEO/GM succession. We will also explore elements of effective succession planning and how to avoid pitfalls.

### **MARCH 30 - 1:00 P.M. Executive Selection**

Discussion about a board's role in securing the right CEO / GM, and when to promote from within or hire outside the co-op. Features management of the selection decision-making process and how to enhance a diverse leadership team.

## Iowa Institute for Cooperatives

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### IIC Staff

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## UPCOMING EVENTS

### FEBRUARY 1 - 1:00 P.M.

#### COMMUNICATION DURING CHANGE

*Presented by Kristen Ireland &*

*Erin Mies, People Spark Consulting*

In this live, interactive session, we'll discuss how to effectively communicate during change, and learn simple, practical skills to communicate pivotal changes being implemented in your cooperative.

### MARCH 4: 9:00 A.M. - 4:00 P.M.

#### CREDIT CONFERENCE

*Radisson Ames, 2609 University Blvd, Ames, IA*

IIC and the National Association of Credit Managers Heartland Affiliate are hosting a Credit Conference, featuring several speakers of interest in the morning followed by the NACM Credit Exchange in the afternoon.

For more information and to register, please visit the Events page at [iowainstitute.coop](http://iowainstitute.coop).