



Iowa Institute for
Cooperatives

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CO-OPVIEWS

News and information for the benefit of Iowa cooperatives.



Bobby Martens Meet the New IIC Executive Director

Bobby Martens brings nearly 19 years of experience from Iowa State University, where he served as Associate Professor of Supply Chain Management and the Iowa Institute for Cooperatives Endowed Professor of Economics. With strong academic and industry relationships across various sectors, Martens is well-prepared to help Iowa cooperatives address current and future challenges. Known for fostering thought leadership and developing programs for Iowa businesses, his expertise will strengthen resources and opportunities for the state's cooperatives.

Having grown up on a family grain and cow-calf farm in North Dakota, Martens remains deeply connected to agriculture and rural America. He is committed to building on the Iowa Institute for Cooperatives' legacy as a trusted resource and partner for cooperatives, following nearly three decades of dedicated leadership under Dave Holm.

Strengthening Iowa Cooperatives' Future Together

Bobby Martens, Executive Director for the Iowa Institute for Cooperatives

As I begin my role as the Executive Director of your Iowa Institute for Cooperatives, I am humbled to work to enhance your cooperatives' success! Since the passage of the Capper-Volstead Act in 1922, cooperatives have played a critical and transformative role in shaping the economic, social and cultural fabric of rural America. The cooperative model has not only supported local economies but also fostered a sense of shared purpose, ensuring that wealth and opportunity remain within the community, rather than flowing outward to distant corporate interests.

When I reflect on rural Iowa today, it's hard to imagine how different this landscape would look without the cooperative model. The deep connections formed between farmers, businesses and rural residents through cooperatives have created a strong foundation for communities to grow and adapt.

Cooperatives have empowered farmers and rural residents to become stewards of their own economic futures, granting them a level of control over their livelihoods that few other business models offer.

In addition to their economic role, cooperatives have been fundamental in advancing rural community development. Over the decades, cooperatives have provided essential infrastructure, such as reliable electricity, broadband internet, access to financial markets and capital and the assets needed to connect production agriculture to upstream and downstream supply chains.

In a world where change is happening at an unprecedented pace, the cooperative model remains as vital as ever. As we navigate through the complexities of globalization, technological advancement and shifting markets, cooperatives continue to provide a stable and adaptive framework for local economies. Cooperatives continue to be uniquely positioned to meet the demands of modern life while staying true to the core principles of cooperation that have sustained rural economies for more than a century.

On behalf of the Iowa Institute for Cooperatives, I want to extend our heartfelt gratitude for your trust and partnership in advancing our shared mission. We are committed to working tirelessly alongside you, our members and partners to enhance the success of cooperatives across Iowa.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS! The Iowa Institute for Cooperatives is gearing up for an exciting year ahead, packed with opportunities for learning, networking and growth. Whether you're a new director or a seasoned leader, these events are designed to equip you with the tools to drive your cooperative forward.

A complete list of 2025 events will be forthcoming!

♦ **Jan. 27-28** | Director Certification Program in Ames, IA

Dates to be announced:

- ♦ **March:** Advanced Director Program
- ♦ CFO/Accounting Workshop
- ♦ Summer Intern Day

- ♦ Management Development Program
- ♦ Board Officers' Workshop
- ♦ Accounting Workshop
- ♦ HR Workshop
- ♦ Board Presidents Conference

Update From the Hill

Megan Carlson, Director of Government Affairs

With 2024 behind us, the Iowa Institute for Cooperatives is setting its sights on what 2025 will bring to the cooperative industry. One of the key focuses we've been preparing for is the beginning of the 91st General Assembly of the Iowa State Legislature.

The 2025 legislative session will convene on Monday, January 13. This will be the first year of the 91st General Assembly. In Iowa, the first session of the biennium lasts 110 days, and the second session is 100 days. The final day of the first session is May 2. However, that date only indicates the end of legislators' per diem; historically, it takes another couple of weeks to wrap up the session, and, in all likelihood, the first session will end around mid-to-late May.

ELECTION UPDATE

This year's election cycle will bring several new faces to the statehouse in January. After the midterm elections in November, House Republicans picked up three more seats, bringing the balance in the Iowa House to 67-R, 33-D. There will be 16 new representatives, both Republicans and Democrats, when the session convenes in January. Senate Republicans gained one seat, moving their majority to 35-R, 15-D.

CHANGES IN THE SENATE

Iowa Senate Republicans' 35-seat majority allows them to retain their supermajority. This means Senate Republicans will continue to not have to rely on any Democrats to approve governor appointments, which require two-thirds support for approval. The Senate will have six new members in January. There were no changes in Senate Republican leadership roles with their caucus reelecting Sen. Jack Whitver (R-Grimes) as Majority Leader and Sen. Amy Sinclair (Allerton) as Senate President. Senate Democrats did see a change in leadership as the former Minority Leader Pam Jochum (Dubuque) did not seek reelection to

the Senate. Senate Democrats chose to elect Sen. Janice Weiner (Iowa City), Sen. Weiner was elected in 2022 and has quickly gained the respect of her senate colleagues.

HOUSE LEADERSHIP HOLDS

The House did not see change in the top leadership positions. Speaker Pat Grassley (R-New Hartford) was reelected as Speaker and Rep. Matt Windschitl (R-Missouri Valley) was reelected as Majority Leader. Rep. Jennifer Konfrst (D-Windsor Heights) was also reelected to serve as Minority Leader.

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Rep. Mike Sexton (R-Rockwell City) and Sen. Dawn Driscoll (R-Williamsburg) will continue to serve as House and Senate Agriculture Committee Chairs. The Ways and Means Committees also retained their committee chairs with Rep. Bobby Kaufmann (R-Wilton) and Sen. Dan Dawson (R-Council Bluffs). The House and Senate Transportation Committees will both have new chairs with Rep. David Young (R-Van Meter) and Sen. Dan Zumbach (R-Ryan).

IIC POSITIONS APPROVED

At our annual meeting in November, members approved our legislative policy positions for both the state and federal levels for the upcoming year. These updated resolutions will be available on our website at www.iowainstitute.coop. If you have any questions about policy resolutions, election results or contacting legislators, please reach out to Megan Carlson at mcarlson@iowainstitute.coop.



Meet Megan

The New Director of Government Affairs

Welcome Megan Carlson as she joins the Iowa Institute for Cooperatives. Megan has deep roots in agriculture and an impressive background in government relations. Growing up on a family farm in southeast Iowa, she developed a strong connection to rural communities. After earning degrees in Ag and Society and Political Science at Iowa State University, Megan gained seven years of legislative experience, including time in the Iowa House and at a multiclient lobbying firm in Des Moines.

In her new role, Megan will be the bridge between our members and policymakers, working to ensure cooperative voices are heard on key legislative and regulatory matters.

Megan states, "I plan to keep members of Iowa cooperatives informed and engaged on legislative issues through weekly updates, clear communication and fostering active participation in advocacy efforts."

Be sure to connect with Megan as she helps us navigate the challenges and opportunities ahead!

PLAN TO ATTEND - WELCOME BACK RECEPTION

January 14 | 3:30-5:30 PM

Downtown Embassy Suites, 101 E Locust Street, Des Moines, IA

Join us for a Welcome Back Reception as we kick off the opening sessions of the Iowa Legislature! Connect with fellow co-op leaders and lawmakers to celebrate the start of a new legislative season and discuss key priorities for Iowa's cooperatives.

transforming TOGETHER

2024
ANNUAL MEETING

IIC Annual Meeting Highlights

The Iowa Institute for Cooperatives annual meeting, held on November 26, 2024, in Ames, brought together over 100 cooperatives from across Iowa under the theme "Transforming Together." The day focused on reflecting on the past year, celebrating milestones and looking forward to future opportunities.

A highlight of the event was the surprise induction of Dave Holm, IIC's retiring director, into the Hall of Fame, recognizing his 30 years of dedicated service. The celebration also honored 2024 Hall of Fame inductees Don Feldman and Keith Spackler for their significant contributions to the cooperative community.

The meeting featured a keynote from Michael Lombardi, former NFL assistant coach and analyst, who delivered an insightful talk on leadership, high-stakes decision-making and creating a winning culture both at work and at home. Lombardi shared his experience of leading teams in one of the highest-pressure environments, the NFL, and applied those principles to cooperative leadership. His message emphasized the importance of strong leadership, building a culture of collaboration and making decisions that drive long-term success.

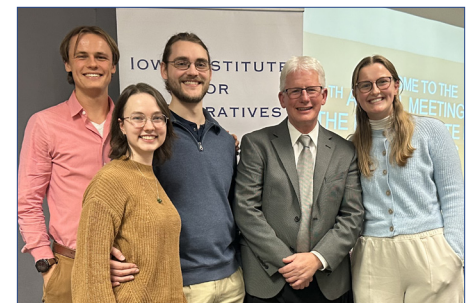
The morning featured regional caucus meetings to set legislative priorities, followed by the "Issues in Common" session. Dr. Wendy Wintersteen, President of Iowa State University, discussed the \$11.8 million legislative request for education appropriations aimed at supporting agricultural initiatives in rural Iowa.

Additional breakout sessions covered a range of topics, including conservation farming practices, tax incentives for renewable energy and economic outlooks for the cooperative sector. These sessions offered valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities ahead.

Overall, the day provided ample opportunity for networking, catching up with colleagues and looking ahead to the future of cooperatives in Iowa.



2024 Hall of Fame inductees Keith Spackler (left) and Don Feldman (right).



Dave Holm was able to celebrate his retirement as Director of IIC with his children (left to right) Michael, Lauren (Nicus's fiancée), Nicus and Aspen.



Caught off guard, Dave Holm, retiring after 30 years of service, was surprised by Doyle Anderson(r) and Eric Eide(l) with a well-deserved induction into the 2024 Hall of Fame. A fitting tribute to a true cooperative champion.



Keynote speaker, Michael Lombardi, drawing from his NFL experience, captivated the audience with lessons on leadership.

Together, we're transforming. Together, we're innovating. Together, we're investing in tomorrow's future.

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MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

**JAN
14**

LEGISLATIVE WELCOME BACK RECEPTION

TIME: 3:30-5:30 PM

Downtown Embassy Suites | 101 E Locust Street, Des Moines IA

**JAN
27-28**

2025 DIRECTORS CERTIFICATION PROGRAM (DCP)

Gateway Hotel and Conference Center | 2100 Green Hills Dr, Ames, IA

The Director Certification Program (DCP) is now a 2-day, 3-phase program designed to cover essential topics such as Cooperative Foundations, Strategic Thinking, and Financial Acumen. This new structure replaces the previous 4-partial-day format and better accommodates busy directors while providing a strong foundation for future leadership. The revised DCP also serves as a prerequisite for the upcoming Advanced Director Programming, ensuring that directors are better prepared for the next level of cooperative leadership.

TBA

ADVANCED DIRECTOR PROGRAMMING

Advanced Director Programming will be introduced in 2025. As a prerequisite to ADP, attendees are required to attend either the original 4-phase DCP or the new 3-phase DCP. DCP must be completed before taking the Advanced Director Programming. We envision rolling out three 2-day Advanced Director Programs over the next two or three years.



REGISTER TODAY

Scan the QR code or visit our website, iowainstitute.coop, to register for any of these events or to discover what other events are coming up. For more information, please contact our office at info@iowainstitute.