



Iowa Institute for Cooperatives

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# CO-OPVIEWS

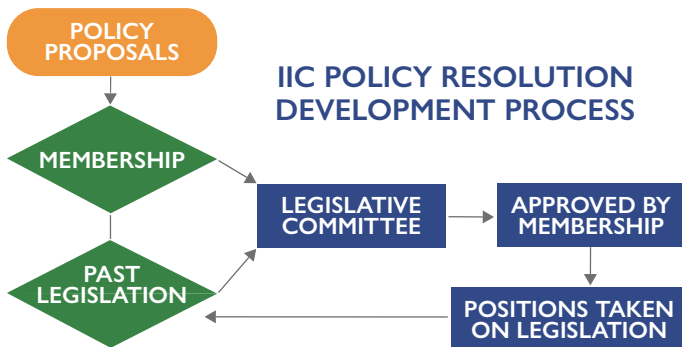
News and information for the benefit of Iowa cooperatives.

## Shaping Policy with Purpose *Policy Development at the Iowa Institute for Cooperatives*

Each year, the Iowa Institute for Cooperatives takes a thoughtful and structured approach to shape its legislative policy agenda. The goal is simple: ensure IIC’s advocacy reflects the priorities of its member cooperatives and delivers a strong, united voice at the Capitol.

### LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

Central to IIC’s legislative policy development process is the IIC Legislative Committee, a standing committee which traditionally meets prior to the IIC Annual Meeting (see next page). The Legislative Committee, composed of cooperative leaders from across the state, reviews membership interests and needs, considers legislative issues that arose during the previous session, and evaluates IIC’s current policy resolutions. The IIC Legislative Committee is a critical link to policy, because any new or modified policy positions (resolutions) to be considered by the voting delegates at the annual meeting must first be presented to the IIC Legislative Committee. In other words, no new or modified policy positions can be introduced at the annual meeting without first going through the IIC Legislative Committee.



The Legislative Committee is especially effective because of the diverse subject matter knowledge of its membership. The committee includes representatives from a wide range of cooperative sectors, including Agriculture, Electric, Petroleum, Telecom, Regional Cooperatives, Farm Credit, Credit Unions, Safety Directors, Auditors, Attorneys, and Risk Management professionals. This broad representation ensures that the policy

development process reflects the full spectrum of cooperative interests and expertise across Iowa.

### DURING THE IIC LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE MEETING, THE COMMITTEE:

- Reviews and proposes updates to existing policy resolutions.
- Considers new issues that may warrant additional resolutions.
- Evaluates expiring resolutions, which sunset every five years, to determine whether they remain relevant or should be removed or revised.

### AT THE ANNUAL MEETING

Once the committee finalizes its recommendations, the recommendations are presented to the full IIC membership during the Annual Meeting. Recommendations for policy resolutions are reviewed in Member Meetings by sectors (agriculture, energy, farm and cooperative credit; rural electric; credit unions; telecom; and issues in common). Each sector chairperson is appointed by the IIC board president. All new proposed policy resolutions and any renewing policy resolutions are presented to the full membership for discussion. Member Meetings normally include an expert or panel to conduct a deeper dive into a particular policy position or group of related policy positions. This year, a panel will be engaged to discuss rural electric usage and generation considering new types of electricity usage, such as data centers.

During the Annual Business Meeting, delegates (one member of each member-cooperative, in good standing, is registered as a voting delegate) are asked to vote on the proposed legislative policy resolutions. The success and cohesiveness of IIC’s policy positions depends on the support of its member cooperatives. Because a simple majority vote does not represent a strong consensus and could weaken the organization’s stance on an issue, a policy resolution must receive at least a two-thirds majority vote from the delegates to be adopted. Once approved, these resolutions become part of the IIC Policy Resolutions, where they remain active until they sunset after five years. The democratic process ensures IIC’s Policy Resolutions are grounded by the collective voice of its membership.

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## PUTTING POLICY INTO ACTION

Adopted resolutions guide IIC’s advocacy during the legislative session, ensuring staff and members speak with a unified voice. IIC only registers on bills that align with these priorities, keeping advocacy focused and transparent. All resolutions are available on the IIC website, and lobbyists must be officially registered on a bill through the Iowa Legislature’s website. Collaboration is also key, with partners like the Iowa Credit Union League and Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives helping to strengthen Iowa’s cooperative voice.

## HOW MEMBERS CAN GET INVOLVED

The strength of IIC’s policy work depends on active member participation. You can join the process by attending committee

meetings or contacting Megan or Bobby to get involved in the Legislative Policy Committee. Stay informed by reviewing current policy resolutions on the IIC website, and engage in discussion by participating in sector meetings to share your perspective on the issues that matter most to your cooperative.

## LOOKING AHEAD: IIC ADVOCACY & POLICY SUMMIT

One of the best opportunities for members to get involved is the upcoming **IIC Advocacy and Policy Summit, January 26–27 in Des Moines**. This event will focus on legislative engagement, featuring expert-led sessions and a legislative breakfast where members can meet directly with lawmakers.

The summit is designed to empower cooperatives to shape policy and strengthen IIC’s collective voice in Iowa’s future.

## 2025 IIC LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

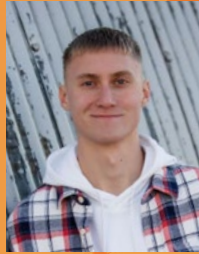
IIC BOARD VP, LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE CHAIR	Terry Panbecker	CEO	PRO Cooperative
IIC BOARD PRESIDENT	Doyle Anderson	Farmer/Board Member	AgState
AGRICULTURE	Ben Schemmel	CEO	Tama Benton Cooperative
	Sarah Schmidt	VP of Marketing	AMPI
	Jared Ehrp	Regional Manager	NEW Cooperative, Inc.
	Bruce Kempf	CEO	Mid-Iowa Cooperative
	Craig Backhaus	CEO	North Iowa Cooperative
	Todd Netten	CFO	CFE
	Brian Bailey	CFO	Heartland Co-op
	Jason Schwenneker	CEO	Nexus Cooperative
	Scott Black	CEO	Five Star Cooperative
	Bill Beukema	CEO	StateLine Cooperative
	Justin Huebner	Grain Division Manager	Two Rivers Cooperative
	Dennis Barr	CFO	Innovative Ag Services
ELECTRIC	Craig Codner	CEO	Butler County REC
	Haley Moon	Senior Manager of Policy and Advocacy	Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives
REGIONAL	Amber Glaeser	Director of State Government and Industry Affairs	Land O'Lakes
	Jake Hamlin	Director, State Government Relations	CHS
	Jason Berkland	VP, Commercial Ag Sales & Underwriting - Agribusiness	Nationwide
	Michael Dolch	Director, Government Affairs	AGP
ENERGY	Kirby Wagner	Associate Manager of Government Relations	GROWMARK
	Scott Richardson	Energy Division Manager	Key Cooperative
COMMUNICATIONS	Gary Petersen	CEO	NCC
	Daniel Stalder	Broadband Advocate	Iowa Communications Alliance
CREDIT UNION	Madison Grady	Director of Government Affairs	IA Credit Union League
SAFETY DIRECTORS	Nick Steinbeck	Director of Safety and Compliance	Heartland Co-op
	Melanie Wells	Director of Environmental Health Safety	AgState
AUDITOR	Dennis Gardiner	Managing Partner	Gardiner + Company
ATTORNEY	Eric Eide	Shareholder	Nyemaster Goode
	Eric Fischer	Shareholder	Nyemaster Goode
	Bill Hanigan	Partner	Hanigan Law Group
	Joe Leo	Partner	BrownWinick Law Firm
RISK MANAGEMENT	Lane Danielson	Principal, Practice Leader	TrueNorth Companies
FARM CREDIT	Taylor Jans	Lead Relationship Manager	CoBank
	James Nygren	Director, Legislative Affairs	FCSA

# IIC ANNOUNCES 2025 SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

After a thoughtful selection process, the Iowa Institute for Cooperatives is excited to announce the eight recipients of the 2025 Iowa Institute Scholarships. Congratulations to our winners, and a big thank you to our members for their continued support of the IIC scholarship program.

These scholarships are awarded to full-time students at two- and four-year schools who have work experience or an internship at an Iowa Institute for Cooperatives member cooperative. Each recipient will receive a \$2,500 scholarship for the 2025–2026 school year.

Since the program began, IIC has awarded more than 119 scholarships totaling over \$239,000 in tuition assistance.



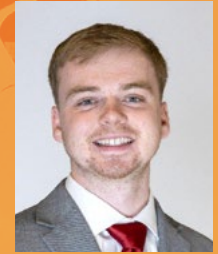
**Bennett Flohrs**  
NuWay-K&H Cooperative  
University of St. Thomas  
Accounting



**Jacob Fuller**  
NEW Cooperative  
Iowa State University  
Agricultural Studies



**Samuel Haack**  
Heartland Co-op  
Drake University  
Law



**Cameron Hiemstra**  
Key Cooperative  
Iowa State University  
Animal Science



**Miranda Reed**  
River Valley Cooperative  
Iowa State University  
Agricultural Studies



**Jonah Schumacher**  
Key Cooperative  
Iowa State University  
Animal Science



**Leah Thier**  
Innovative Ag Services  
Iowa State University  
Animal Science



**Rylee Wells**  
Heartland Co-op  
Iowa State University  
Agricultural Business  
& Economics

## CELEBRATING CO-OP MONTH

### *Cooperatives Build a Better World*

Rural communities all have one thing in common, they are made stronger by cooperative business models. Every October, we celebrate this with Co-op Month, a time to highlight the importance of cooperatives and the impact they have on the people and places they serve. Cooperatives are built on the values of community ownership, education and empowerment, shared success, and sustainability, all of which are vital to building a better future for all Iowans.

The cooperative model allows rural communities to come together, pool their resources, and create something strong and sustainable. Whether it's an agricultural co-op, an electric co-op, or a local credit union, these organizations give members a voice in decisions that affect their livelihoods and futures. Today, co-ops operate in all 99 Iowa counties, making them an essential part of nearly every corner of the state. The profits made by co-ops are then reinvested back into the community rather than being sent to detached shareholders; keeping revenues local and helping communities strong.

In times of uncertainty, having a network of trusted people who share knowledge and support one another is invaluable. Co-ops provide that foundation by offering education, training, and leadership opportunities to their members. Because cooperatives are owned and operated by the people they serve, they reflect the real needs and values of their communities. Members are encouraged to learn, grow, and take active roles in guiding the organization's direction. This sense of empowerment helps build confidence and ensures that decisions are made

with local priorities in mind. The result is a stronger, more informed community that is prepared to take on any challenge.

One of the most powerful aspects of a co-op is it being equal opportunity. Every member's voice carries the same weight, regardless of financial status or position. This structure promotes collaboration rather than competition. When everyone's voice matters, everyone benefits. Members share in the risks and the rewards, which strengthens community bonds and encourages collective growth. In a co-op, success isn't measured by how much one person gains, but by how much everyone grows.

As we recognize the good co-ops do across Iowa, it's clear their impact goes far beyond today. Built on the values of sustainability and community, co-ops focus on thoughtful, long-term decisions that keep rural areas thriving. In fact, Iowa's local grain and farm supply cooperatives alone pay more than \$32 million in property taxes each year, a direct investment in the schools, roads, and services that support rural life. Their dedication to local investment and shared success ensures they remain the backbone of their communities and continue to build a better future and a better Iowa.



2025 NATIONAL CO-OP MONTH

# Don't Miss Out! Mark Your Calendar

## 2025 Human Resources Conference

November 4 - 5

Digital Ag Innovation Lab  
3800 University Blvd, Ames, IA

Join us for two days of co-operative focused Human Resources education and networking. Click here for more information or to register by Oct. 28.

## Director Certification Program (DCP)

January 15 - 16, 2026

Save the date! Details to come.

## Policy & Advocacy Summit

January 26 - 27, 2026

Save the date! Details to come.

## Advanced Director Program (ADP)

February 26 -27, 2026

Save the date! Details to come.

## Contact Us

### IIC Staff

**Bobby Martens**, Executive Director

**Matthew Eddy**,  
Director of Cooperative Education

**Megan Carlson**,  
Director of Government Affairs

**Sofia Ingersoll**, Business Manager

**Mike St. Clair**, Lobbyist

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Iowa Institute  
for Cooperatives

# 2025 Annual Meeting

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 25, 2025

We're looking forward to celebrating the Iowa Institute for Cooperatives' 75th Annual Meeting at a new venue. Here's a preview of the day's highlights. The full agenda is available online and onsite. Come celebrate this milestone year, connect with colleagues, and expand your network.

### DAY AT A GLANCE

**8:30 – 11:30 AM** Registration with coffee, juice & pastries

**9:00 – 10:45 AM** Member meetings

**11:00 AM – 12:00 PM KEYNOTE SPEAKER:**  
Jeff Lanza, Former FBI Director

**12:00 – 12:45 PM** Lunch

**12:45 – 2:00 PM** Annual Business Meeting & Hall of Fame presentations

**2:15 – 4:00 PM** Breakout sessions

**4:00 – 6:00 PM** Social Reception

REGISTER TODAY



## Keynote Speaker

**Jeff Lanza**  
Former FBI Agent

Retired FBI Agent, Jeff Lanza, has over 20 years of experience investigating cybercrime, organized crime, human trafficking, and terrorism. He has lectured at Harvard and Princeton Universities and authored two highly reviewed books.

As the keynote speaker, Jeff will help leaders apply real-world lessons in integrity and accountability to everyday decisions. Drawing on his FBI experience, he'll show how strong ethics build trust, protect reputation, and strengthen the cooperative from the inside out.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 25  
Iowa FFA Enrichment Center, Ankeny



75 Years Strong