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# POLK COUNTY UPDATE NEWSLETTER

## POLK COUNTY IOWA : SETTING NEW STANDARDS

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### Iowa Events Center receives profit FY 09/10

Global Spectrum, management company for the Iowa Events Center, has notified Polk County that we will be receiving a profit in excess of \$425,000 for FY 09/10. This is the largest profit since the Iowa Events Center began operations in 2005. Prior to the construction of Wells Fargo Arena and HyVee Hall, Polk County subsidized the operations of Veterans Memorial Auditorium and the Convention Complex at over \$800,000 dollars annually. Since engaging Global Spectrum to manage/operate the IEC facilities, Polk County has not had to provide any subsidy for the entire complex (four buildings, HyVee Hall, Wells Fargo Arena, Convention Complex and Veterans Memorial Auditorium).

Since Global became operator of the facilities, Polk County received a profit of \$84,355 in 2007 and \$355,180 in 2008 and \$77,114 in 2009. The partnership between Polk County and Global Spectrum has truly been a “win-win” for Polk County taxpayers.



### NCAA Wrestling Award for 2013

The Polk County Board of Supervisors are very excited about the NCAA Division I Wrestling Committee announcing that Iowa State University has been selected to host the 2013 NCAA Division I Wrestling Championships at Wells Fargo Arena in Des Moines, IA.

The Des Moines Local Organizing Committee (LOC) spent nearly two years working through the bid process, with input from Polk County and other entities.

“Booking this event was truly a collaborative effort and one that the whole community can now celebrate,” said Greg Edwards, President/CEO of the Greater Des Moines Convention and Visitors Bureau (GDMCVB). “We’re proud to continue bringing quality events into Greater Des Moines to benefit the local economy.”

Des Moines has become a city known for executing high level sporting events in years past, including the AAU Junior Olympics, Drake Relays, USA Track and Field Championships, High School State Wrestling Championships and the World Disc Golf Championships, so when Polk County officials made the decision to build Wells Fargo Arena, events such as this were on the list of those they hoped to attract.

“Showcasing the NCAA Wrestling Tournament at Wells Fargo Arena is exactly the type of national event that was envisioned for the Iowa Events Center since it was first conceived. This event will provide a huge economic development impact and allow us to share with thousands more all that Des Moines and Polk County have to offer,” stated Polk County Supervisor Angela Connolly.

## UPCOMING COUNTY EVENTS

Hike Polk County.....	August 3
Nature Play Dates.....	August 4
Music in the Park.....	August 7
Willow Weaving Workshop.....	August 8
Nature Friends.....	August 9
nature's story hour.....	august 11
summer stargazing.....	August 20

The Board of Supervisors convenes each Tuesday at 9:30 a.m. in room 120 in the Administrative Building.

### **Polk County Auditor's Office Receives Largest Grant in US for Voter Education**

Polk County Auditor Jamie Fitzgerald announced that his office was awarded the largest grant by the Election Assistance Commission to conduct mock elections in Des Moines high schools this fall.

Polk County was awarded nearly \$50,000 to conduct mock elections on actual candidates and student ballot initiatives. This program will allow students to utilize social media in the voter education process, vote on actual machines and conduct the election from start to finish.

Fitzgerald said that he is very excited about the program and hopes to spread it to all high schools in Polk County next year.

#### **Satellite Voting for General Election**

Polk County will once again offer satellite voting to Polk County residents wishing to vote early in the November 2nd General Election. Satellite voting stations will be available from October 12 through October 23 at many area libraries and senior centers. For more information on these and other election issues, please call 286-3247 or visit our website: <http://auditor.co.polk.ia.us/>

### **Polk County SART (Sexual Assault Response Team) in progress**

In 2005, the Polk County Board of Supervisors through CF & YS again attempted to address the issue of sexual assault. After significant effort, time and cooperation with Planned Parenthood, area hospitals and Polk County, a SART was formed.

Prior to the inception of SART, many women waited as long as 4-6 hours to be seen by a physician in our ERs; now they are treated and released 1.5 to 2 hours after having been seen by a violence counselor and a SANE (sexual assault nurse examiner) and law endorsement, if desired.

Although much of the cost is borne by federal grants administered by the state, some must be paid by the private sector--\$50,000-\$55,000 annually--primarily to pay "on-call" fees of the SANES .

As a result of the collaborative, between February 2006 and January 2010, Mid-Iowa SART has served over 765 victims in Polk County. Medical services are available any time day or night.

Mid-Iowa SART's mission is to empower victims of sexual assault by providing compassionate and comprehensive care through a specifically trained, multi-disciplinary team approach.

If you're contemplating a donation to a worthwhile cause, please consider becoming a partner in the care of our community with the Mid-Iowa SART team. You may donate to Mid-Iowa SART through the Community Foundation website and selecting Mid-Iowa SART as the designated fund. For more information, see [www.desmoinesfoundation.org/page30469.cfm](http://www.desmoinesfoundation.org/page30469.cfm) or [www.midiowasart.webs.com](http://www.midiowasart.webs.com)

### **Moody's Rating recalibration**

Moody's Investors Service has recalibrated municipal ratings to a global scale. Our prior rating to recalibration was Aa1 for GO bonds and has been restated as Aaa on the global rating scale (GRS). The County has two series of Limited Tax GO bonds that are now recalibrated from Aa2 to Aa1.

Fitch Ratings explained that part of the rationale for enhancing the credit rating was based on the continued very low default history and the inherent strength that allows public finance issues to maintain fiscal balance.

As a result, the recalibrations caused the County's credit ratings to improve to the highest ratings possible. According to Fitch Ratings, public finance issuers (Polk County) remain among the highest in the Fitch rated universe.

## **simple strategies hold the line on costs**

Working for the citizen's of Polk County, Mary Maloney Polk County Treasurer is always on the lookout for cost reduction strategies.

"Citizens inform us they are throwing away the return payment envelope we mail out with the property tax statement", Maloney explains. It is estimated that citizens throw away 60% of the return payment envelopes and instead use the internet to make their property tax payment. Based on this public input, in September 2009 Maloney took the first step to phase out return payment envelopes by eliminating one of the two return payment envelopes.

Taxes for the 2009/2010 installments will be calculated this month and 176,000 property tax statements will be mailed out in August 2010. You don't need to wait for a statement to make a payment. Your property tax information is already on our [www.IowaTaxAndTags.gov](http://www.IowaTaxAndTags.gov) website. Due to the anticipated volume of walk-in traffic in our office, you are encouraged to use our online payment system at [www.IowaTaxAndTags.gov](http://www.IowaTaxAndTags.gov) where you may make a full or partial payment. To further reduce mailing and inventory costs, return payment envelopes are being completely phased out. When citizens pay on the internet with the eCheck payment option the cost is only \$0.40 after the cash discount is applied. That is \$0.04 cents cheaper than using a postage stamp.

If your mortgage company pays your property tax, you may retain your statement for record keeping purposes.

"We understand that not everyone has a computer and we realize that not everyone who owns a computer will choose to pay online. We will always accept payment through traditional means, e.g., in person payments or mailed payments with a check," said Maloney. When the property tax statement is mailed out (approximately mid August) will include a telephone number and an email address for our office. You may call or email our office to request envelopes.

You can now renew current and delinquent vehicle tags online at [www.IowaTaxAndTags.gov](http://www.IowaTaxAndTags.gov).

### **For More Info OR Questions**

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[www.polkcountyiowa.gov](http://www.polkcountyiowa.gov)