

Town of Iowa

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MAYORS QUARTERLY REPORT: April 12, 2024

Greetings all, it's time again for an update and it is my hope that there are some things you can take comfort in knowing, as well as some things to be optimistic about.

I would like to start with a couple of updates, the first being my availability to the residents of the town. As has been my practice since I have taken office to be available 1 ½ hours prior to all council meetings, this will no longer be the case. As many of you know this is a part time position that I choose to work full time as I care about the Town of Iowa. Many know that I am very reachable by phone, they also know that if you leave a message I will call back. If you wish to meet with me that can be scheduled as well. Please remember the office staff and I are here to help; respect for fellow human beings is always welcome.

Secondly, we are making progress on our GIS program, which is going to be beneficial over the next few years as projects in town will begin to improve our infrastructure issues.

As we all know and are reminded by the most recent electrical outage, we have had our share of challenges the past few months. At the time of this writing most of the town has had restoration of power, however some 80 residents or so have been without power for over 24 hours and it appears will be another 24 hours before restoration is completed. I am one of those still without power, but this too we will work through just as we did with the water issue. I, like you, do not like disruptions of what we deem "normal", but life has a way of making us stronger when we work through unexpected challenges together.

I am excited to report that the remaining months of this year I will be diligently working on Economic development. This past council meeting, for those who did not attend, we as a town have established the Old Spanish Trail Economic Development district. In short it is a designated area that the town's attention will be focused on to encourage new businesses to locate. The main push will be retail businesses.

From the last meeting as well a task list was approved to begin working on drainage. This process will be done on a priority basis. It will not be a fast process but methodical and deliberate so that it is done correctly. For those that have requested ditches to be cleaned out, this process will be implemented within the scope of the project.

As many of you know we are back to having the Farmers Market on the 1st Saturday of each month and for those who would like to plan we will be having the Chili Cook-off in November and the Gumbo Cook-off in January. In addition, we will be adding 3 “Festivals” over the next 12 Months. The first up will be the “American Heritage Festival” on July 4th. Then we will have our “Christmas Festival- Lighting of the Park” on November 30th. And finally in 2025 we will have the “Iowa Heritage Festival” on March 29th of 2025. We are looking forward to all the community involvement.

As some may remember, we have had to cut spending to bring the budget in line with the revenues that we receive. I am happy to report that because of last year’s budget cuts we have significantly reduced our spending to live within our means. However, this coming budget will have to be reduced approximately 300k, as it is my goal to have the town on the positive side of the ledger this coming year. All of our tax dollars must be spent to not only maintain the infrastructure but to make necessary improvements to provide the quality of life we all wish to have in town. I know it seems like everything is moving slowly but slow and steady is better than fast and hap hazard. So just like you the town will tighten the belts again this year.

I trust that if you have any concerns or comments that you do not hesitate to reach out to my office and inquire. Together with respect and common sense we can make Iowa a destination and a sought-after place to live and work. I encourage all to attend the church of your choosing, interact with others in the community in a positive way and remember the elderly and your neighbors helping them when you can. Life is only lived once, join me in trying to make the most of it!

Regards,

Mayor Watkins