

# ADVOCACY



## WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU?

Palpable changes in local communities have resulted from letting those in power know what cultural creatives need to thrive. Here are just a couple of examples:

**Ruth Nash** was recognized as the "#1 Arts Advocate" by the Iowa Arts Council in 2001 for good reason. Was there anything she didn't do for the good of Dubuque? She championed the causes of the Dubuque County Fine Arts Society, Dubuque Museum of Art, Dubuque Area Committee on Foreign Relations, Downtown Planning Committee, Historic Bluffs Neighborhood Association and the Dubuque Cultural Alliance. In addition to all of these accomplishments, she began DubuqueFest, the first festival in town. She also started the Red Pony program, ArtStart, and the Rocco Buda Arts Gallery. She forged a path on which the rest of us could glide.



**Temple for the Performing Arts:** When the City of Des Moines set its sights on an urban renewal project, local activists, the State Historic Preservation Office, and the Midwest Office of the National Trust for Historic Preservation investigated options other than demolition. The City of Des Moines responded by issuing a request for proposals and approved a plan by Harry Bookey to rehabilitate the 1911 Masonic Temple. The Temple



is now the centerpiece of downtown activity and houses retail and office space as well as performance and rehearsal space.

**Bogenrief Studios:** Since 2002, Mark and Jeanne Bogenrief of Bogenrief Studios have received over sixty offers to leave Iowa set up business elsewhere. It was only through the combined efforts of concerned citizens, the Cherokee Area Economic Development Corporation and the Cities of Cherokee, Spencer and Sutherland that an economic development package emerged to fit the Bogenrief's plans to create multiple artist's colonies in Northwest Iowa. Although the Bogenrief's have barely had time to move into their new studios, they have already brought in two new artist residents to the state of Iowa.



## EASY ADVOCACY

Here's the lowdown on how to carry out EASY ADVOCACY:

1. Read the ICC Legislative Platform. If you have questions, contact Cynthia Nieb at [cnieb@iowalink.com](mailto:cnieb@iowalink.com) or 515-321-7746.

2. Contact five to ten other people you know will be willing to support the ICC Legislative Platform and ask them when they will be available to meet with you and your state legislators in December (the point is to meet before the Iowa General Assembly convenes in January). Get a couple of dates and times from the legislators. You need to have a small group go with you to provide support, make certain that you hear what you think you've heard, and demonstrate to legislators that you are just the "tip of the iceberg" in terms of support for the ICC Legislative Platform. If you are facing difficulty in finding some like-minded people to work with you, call Cynthia Nieb at 515-321-7466 or email her at [cnieb@iowalink.com](mailto:cnieb@iowalink.com), and she'll attempt to find fellow and sister advocates for you in your area.

3. Call the legislators and set a date. If you don't know who your legislators are, go to this URL and type in your address: [www4.legis.state.ia.us/find-leg/](http://www4.legis.state.ia.us/find-leg/). Home contact information is at the above-cited web site or you can contact Cynthia Nieb at [cnieb@iowalink.com](mailto:cnieb@iowalink.com) she'll look it up for you.

4. Meet with your state senator and representative. Explain the platform to him/her. Do the obligatory ask — ask the legislator to commit to the platform. If s/he says "no," ask why. If you feel comfortable, provide a counter argument. If you'd like some help, contact Cynthia Nieb by telephone or email, and she will attempt to find a good answer for you. Let legislators know that you'll be getting back to them because their stance on these issues is important: you plan to write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper indicating the results of your meeting with him/her. During the entire meeting, whether the legislators agree with you or not, it is essential that you be as polite as possible—despite the bad rap legislators have gotten the past few years, they really do try to make good decisions.

5. If you were not able to get a commitment, talk to Cynthia, obtain answers to the legislator's questions, and try again. If after the second meeting the legislator will not budge, politely inform them that you will be writing a letter to the editor explaining the fruits of your efforts.

6. Regardless of whether or not you obtain an ICC Legislative Platform commitment, the next step is to write a letter to the editor of your local paper. Examples are available on the ART SCENE web site at [www.artsceneiowa.com/culturaladvday.html](http://www.artsceneiowa.com/culturaladvday.html). Of course, you are welcome to write your own individualized letters—these are just examples.

7. Let Cynthia Nieb know of your challenges and successes at [cnieb@iowalink.com](mailto:cnieb@iowalink.com) or 515-321-7466. She'd also like to THANK YOU for working so hard to make Iowa a better place in which to live.

8. Call and/or write your legislators just to check in during the month of January. Remind them of your previous discussion and inform him/her that you will be attending Cultural Advocacy Day in February with a number of constituents from your area. This lets the lawmaker know it wasn't just a whim on your part to meet with him/her—you and others like you WILL NOT DROP THE ISSUE.

9. Come to Cultural Advocacy Day on February 9th and bring either a car load or a bus full of people.

The easiest advocacy of all is that which takes place every week of every month of every year.



## WHAT HAPPENS ON CULTURAL ADVOCACY DAY?

9 A.M.

Advocacy Training at State Historical Building, Atrium, 600 E Locust Street, Des Moines, IA.

9:45 A.M.

Begin Cultural Advocacy Day "March to the Capitol."

10 A.M.—2 P.M.

Meet with state legislators, mingle with other cultural creatives, enjoy A TASTE OF IOWA and listen to Iowa-grown entertainment.

# GET INVOLVED

## 2005 Legislative Platform Summary

The Iowa Cultural Coalition (ICC) serves as the main advocacy, technical assistance and communications network available to people and organizations who create and appreciate all forms of art, historic preservation, museums, science and cultural educational endeavors in Iowa. We serve the needs of every Iowan by supporting the people and resources in the state that make it a joy to live here. The following is the Iowa Cultural Coalition Legislative Platform:

**Historic Preservation Tax Credits:** There are two amendments to improve the program that should be acted on in the current Iowa legislative session:

- The cap of the program should be increased from \$2.4 million to 20 million per year. A significant number of additional large and small projects could claim the credit each year with this increase, further increasing the overall investment in the historic resources of our communities to \$80 million per year.
- Overall, 10% of the total program funding should be dedicated to only small projects (under \$200,000). This dedicated part of the pool would encourage investment in the historic neighborhoods, rural resources, and smaller downtowns by allowing the credit to be claimed more quickly. Even at the current funding level of \$2.4 million, this would dedicate \$240,000 to these projects, which would not significantly increase the wait for the large "average" project. At the same time, if the average small project were \$100,000, thus claiming \$25,000 in tax credits, the dedicated pool would fund about 10 projects across the state each year. When the funding is increased, a significantly higher number would be funded, and this pool would be available earlier.

**Cultural Trust:** Pass legislation that dedicates \$10 million dollars to the Cultural Trust over a 5-year period. The Cultural Trust will leverage state dollars to promote cultural organizations' ability to maintain a viable operating budget.

**Cultural Districts:** Enabling legislation for this program must be passed during this legislative session. Cultural and Entertainment Districts mark our state treasures as desirable place to live, visit, and celebrate.

**Cultural Grants:** All grant program appropriations must be adjusted to more adequately meet the needs of constituents across the state. Grant dollars leverage local investment, develop legacies and save our heritage, and solidify communities. The following grants require funding at these suggested amounts:

- Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP): appropriation of \$20 million per year through 2021. REAP/HRDP then receives 5% of that appropriation per year.
- Historic Site Preservation Grant (HSPG): appropriation of \$1.2 million per year.
- Iowa Community Cultural Grant: appropriation of \$600,000.