



A portion of the following letter was printed in the April 3, 2005 Sunday Edition of the Des Moines Register Opinion section.

A Closer Look at Local Government and Proposed Consolidations

We are writing in response to your article of March 27, 2005, "Iowa can transform local government".

Twelve members of the Iowa House and Senate, chaired by Governor Vilsack, have been working on reshaping Iowa Schools, Cities and Counties.

Your article and this committee's efforts would infer that government at the local level has done nothing in regard to the sharing of services. Saying that perhaps we are incapable and unwilling to do that unless it is mandated by the State Legislature.

What has local government done? Appanoose county has identified a minimum of thirty nine (39) agreements of sharing of services and cooperative agreements with communities in our county, other counties, as well as our county with the State of Iowa and with the federal government.

There is no doubt that other counties can show similar agreements, and perhaps many more.

The agreements we refer to are those in writing and do not speak of those that are done on a daily basis without benefit of a written agreement.

The count of local government employees often includes people acting as trustees and council people or on committees who volunteer their time or work for little reimbursement.

Perhaps we could look at some of the broader or more global issues that may impact this matter. Perhaps our legislature and Governor could look at what they can do with the more than 1200 mandates they have placed on local government.

Some of these mandates were issued without benefit of any funding. Let's look at one issue and how State Government handled it. Many years ago Clerk's of Court responsibilities were transferred to State Government from the counties.

Clerk's and their employees salaries were in line with other county officials. Now several years later Clerk's salaries are significantly higher than their counterparts in county government.

We are not talking about a few dollars we are talking a difference of several thousand dollars.

We at the local government level are constantly schooled on the need to share services.

One thing is clear in each presentation. Change must come from the bottom up, not the top down.

Even state legislators have commented on local government's ability to put politics aside when it comes to doing business on behalf of Iowa's taxpayers. Legislators have acknowledged the efficiency and effectiveness of local government. The legislature could take lessons on that.

By state legislation we must certify budgets to the state long before the legislature establishes roll backs, tax credits and other consideration for local government for the upcoming year. We are working with the "what if" factor, not knowing what will be coming down from the top for the county level of government.

In closing, yes, perhaps we all need an initiative to move forward with sharing. However before the Legislature recommends anything they need to clean their own door step first.

Appanoose County
Board of Supervisors
Dean Kaster, Jody
McDanel and Bob
Pontious
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Future dates where CVTPA will be represented are as follows:

August 8-9: Waverly
October 3-4—Council Bluffs

CVTPA Shares Vision with Commissioners

Representatives of the Chariton Valley Transportation Planning Affiliation (CVTPA) and the Davis County Development Corporation (DCDC) presented information to the Iowa Transportation Commissioners in Mt. Pleasant on April 12, 2005. CVTPA represents a multi-county transportation coalition of Appanoose, Clarke, Davis, Decatur, Lucas, Monroe, and Wayne Counties.

Among presenters were Dave Simonsen, CVTPA Technical Advisory Committee member and Joy Evans, a Board Member of DCDC, who relayed the construction needs of Highway 63 as a part of an overall, multi-county approach that includes: Highway 2; Highway 5 between Knoxville and Albia; and an I-35 Overlay in Clarke County.

Red Bud Tree Sales

Check with your local chambers for information in regard to Red Bud tree sales.

Many chambers within the Historic Hills Corridor have adopted Red Bud tree sales in response to the marketing strategy promoted by the Historic Hills initiative to develop southern Iowa as a regional destination tourism area.

*Laced with lavender
Red Haw State Park (at right) in
Lucas County is brimming with Red Bud
trees.*

