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IOWA WEST FOUNDATION ANNOUNCES GRANTS FOR FIRST QUARTER

(Council Bluffs, IA) The Iowa West Foundation, which is headquartered in Council Bluffs, has announced nearly \$2.8 million in grants for the first quarter of 2011. The grants will be used to assist 20 non-profit organizations and governmental entities with funding for area projects.

The largest grant this round was awarded to the Green Hills Area Education Agency for preschool programs in school districts located in Pottawattamie County, Iowa. The \$1.2 million grant ensures that four year-olds – with the most at-risk factors for possible school failure – will have the opportunity to get a quality early childhood education.

“Last year the Foundation commissioned an expert evaluation of the Pottawattamie County Preschool Initiative,” said Todd Graham, President & CEO of the Iowa West Foundation, “and it showed that the children’s math and reading test scores had dramatic gains.” Graham added that the Foundation made the grant because “increasing educational attainment” is an overarching goal of the Iowa West Foundation, and that the evaluation, which was done by Dr. Susan Hegland of Iowa State University, proves that the program “is having a positive impact.”

“Our goal is to keep public preschools at a quality level in Pottawattamie County,” explained Dr. Lane Plugge, administrator of Green Hills Area Education Agency, “and we appreciate Iowa West’s funding to continue helping at-risk children start on a successful tract.”

(more)

Two other large grants from the Foundation totaled \$1 million, and each serve as a catalyst for economic development.

- The Pottawattamie County Board of Supervisors received a \$600,000 grant for its “Community Improvements to Increase Economic Stability” fund, also known as CITIES. Rural communities in the county develop an overall priority list of infrastructure projects, and the CITIES fund leverages public funding to complete these important community projects.
- A \$400,000 grant was awarded to the Pottawattamie County Development Corporation to fund a downtown revitalization fund, which supports downtown projects in Council Bluffs. The projects, such as the recent restoration of the Hughes-Irons Building on the historic 100 Block of West Broadway, typically add to the revitalization of the downtown area. In the case of Hughes-Irons, approximately \$2 million previously came from this fund supported by Iowa West.

Funding for the Foundation’s grants comes from investment earnings and the Iowa West Racing Association (IWRA), which receives contracted fees from casino operators – Ameristar and Harrah’s. IWRA distributes funds to the Foundation, which is an independent 501 (c) (3) organization that makes grants in southwest Iowa and eastern Nebraska.

Requests for applications for the third quarter of 2011 will begin June 1, 2011 and will be accepted through July 1, 2011. Completed applications will be due July 15. The deadline to request applications for the second quarter has passed. For more information including deadlines, interested organizations may visit the Foundation’s website at www.iowawestfoundation.org or contact Deb Debbaut, Grants Manager, at 712-309-3003. The Foundation has recently updated its funding guidelines and procedures, which can be viewed at the website. Applicants can apply on-line through the web site.

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(A listing of grant recipients and their projects is attached for your reference.)

Iowa West Foundation 2011 First Quarter Grants

Recipient	Project Description	Awarded
City of Carson (IA)	Community center sound system	\$5,992
City of Lewis (IA)	Restoration of city's historic bandstand	\$5,000
College of Saint Mary	Summer academy for Latina high school students in Omaha metro area	\$3,000
Council Bluffs Airport Authority	Utilization assessment of airport area	\$25,000
Crossroads of Western Iowa	Lift vans for persons with disabilities to attend activities	\$30,000
Food Bank for the Heartland	Development of new food bank facility in Omaha	\$50,000
Green Hills AEA	Preschool programs in Pottawattamie County school districts	\$1,200,000
Lenox (IA) Public Library	New computers for use by area families	\$1,500
Loess Hills Humane Society, Inc.	Stray, abandoned and owner surrendered animals program in Mills County (IA)	\$5,000
Lutheran Services in Iowa, Inc.	Teen pregnancy prevention programs and other services	\$5,000
Merrymakers Association	Entertainment programs in southwest Iowa care centers	\$4,000
MICAH House Corporation	Case management and homeless services at shelter in Council Bluffs	\$35,000
Midlands Humane Society	Construction of an animal care and control facility in Council Bluffs	\$300,000
Muscular Dystrophy Association	Summer camp for Iowa and Nebraska youth	\$5,000
Nebraska Writers Collective	"Poets on Loan" pilot programs in four Council Bluffs and Omaha schools	\$1,500
Omaha Botanical Center, Inc.	Marketing support of Lauritzen Gardens 10th anniversary	\$38,700
Omaha Community Foundation	Nonprofit capacity building program for local nonprofits	\$25,000
Pottawattamie County Board of Supervisors	CITIES program to assist communities in meeting infrastructure needs	\$600,000
Pottawattamie County Development Corporation	Support of the downtown revitalization fund	\$400,000
Wings of Hope Cancer Support Center	Funding for the "Hierarchy of Healing" counseling program in Council Bluffs	\$25,300

\$2,764,992

The following fire departments also received Iowa West Foundation funding for equipment through the Pottawattamie County Firefighters Association:

- Carson Volunteer Fire Department
- Carter Lake Volunteer Fire Department
- Crescent Volunteer Fire Department
- Lewis Township Fire Department
- Minden Emergency Services
- Treynor Fire District