

JOHNSON COUNTY, IOWA

SUSTAINABILITY UPDATE

FISCAL YEAR 2018



In fall 2017, Johnson County earned a Gold SolSmart award from the national SolSmart program for making it faster, easier and more affordable for residents in the unincorporated areas to add solar to homes or businesses. Johnson County was the first county in the Midwest to earn the gold level.

To Our County Residents and Visitors:

From the ground to the sky, the County pushed ahead with sustainability projects in FY2018, rejuvenating a bioretention cell, helping add solar to household roofs, and more! Please enjoy the highlights in our annual sustainability brochure.

Sincerely, Your Johnson County Board of Supervisors

Mike Carberry Lisa Green-Douglass

Kurt Friese Janelle Rettig Rod Sullivan

JOHNSON COUNTY SUSTAINABILITY

Helping Homeowners Take a Shine to Solar

In 2018, Johnson County, with six cities, teamed up with the Midwest Renewable Energy Association to launch a Solarize program for Johnson County and West Branch residents to learn more about solar energy and potentially add **affordable solar** to their homes. More than 75 people

attended the kickoff in April (*above*), and by July 2018, more than 32 households were adding solar, accounting for more than 200 kW of renewable energy.



Solarize
Johnson County

Giving Bikes a Lift



the public in addition to promoting bicycle riding for employees.

County sustainability staff helped the City of Iowa City create a “Bike Shorts” video on [Using the Bike Rack on a City Bus](#). County involvement in bike education and engagement activities is part of the Gold Bicycle Friendly Business Designation earned in 2017. The County hosts quarterly bicycle education programming for

Sustainability Funds Help Nonprofits

In the 2017-18 fiscal year, the County awarded nearly \$18,000 in grants to help certain local nonprofit organizations complete **energy efficiency projects** and, in some cases, leverage utility company rebates. The Crisis Center of Johnson County replaced two furnaces, while the Domestic Violence Intervention Program and the Johnson County Agricultural Association (fairgrounds) each added LED lights to buildings. The fairgrounds also have added LED parking lot lights, which save energy and lower costs.



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Half-Million Energy Efficiency Milestone



MidAmerican Energy awarded Johnson County a \$98,308 rebate after the Ambulance Service and Medical Examiner Facility completed the Commercial New Construction program. The award brought the total amount of rebates earned by the County since 2013 to **\$500,741**. The County has also built an energy-efficient

Secondary Roads garage and completed other energy efficiency or renewable energy projects for seven existing buildings.

Veterans Affairs Memorial Honors and Sustains

In 2018 the County's Commission of Veterans Affairs launched a campaign, "Pave the Way: Operation Expand Memorial," to further honor veterans and expand the current Armory and Veterans Memorial near the County Administration Building.



The project includes a brick path

around the existing memorial structure, using **repurposed bricks** from the Iowa City Pedestrian Mall, and two raised brick beds where additional engraved bricks will be placed. Engraved bricks may be reserved for \$100 each; veterans do not need to be Johnson County residents to be honored with a brick. To learn more, call 319-356-6049 or visit www.johnson-county.com/memorial.

Bioretention Cell Rejuvenation



The bioretention cell near the Administration Building saw refreshed soil and plantings in 2017. By spring 2018, 12 varieties of flowers and grasses were thriving. The cell slows and filters stormwater—an important function in urban areas where concrete makes many surfaces impervious to water.

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Resource Reuse and Reduction



Since 2013, County departments and offices have been sharing unused office supplies and furniture through a virtual Surplus Supply Store to save money and reduce resource use. In spring 2018, the store became real, making **responsible supply use** even easier.

In addition, area educators and nonprofit organizations were invited to a special surplus event in June. Binders, paper, hole-punches, carrying cases, staplers and other items were grabbed up for reuse.

Sustainability and Energy Reinvestment Fund

The County established this internal fund in July 2014 to help complete energy-efficiency and other resource-saving projects. Projects funded in the past year include the bioretention cell rejuvenation featured on page 3 of this brochure.

What's Next?

In spring 2018, the County began a greenhouse gas inventory of its operations, including fleet/vehicle use and building energy use. The report will help the County further identify ways to reduce its carbon footprint.



www.johnson-county.com/gogreen

greenteam@co.johnson.ia.us

Johnson County, Iowa

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