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Contact: Lorin Ditzler, Indianola Hometown Pride

Phone: 515-442-0723

Email: Lorin@warrencountyhometown.com

Indianola Awarded "Iowa Great Places" Designation

Competitive state-wide award recognizes Indianola as a unique community with strong leadership

The City of Indianola has been awarded the "Iowa Great Places" designation by the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs.

Iowa Great Places is a competitive program, based on a rigorous application process, that recognizes Iowa communities that "cultivate the unique and authentic qualities of their local places." The designation allows Indianola to apply for Iowa Great Places funding (average award \$204,000), provides training and technical assistance, and grants the use of "Iowa Great Places" branding for the community.

The designation is the result of a months-long application process, led by Indianola Hometown Pride, under the direction of the Indianola City Council. More than 40 people, representing a wide range of Indianola organizations, contributed to and endorsed the application (a list of all involved is available at www.warrencountyhometown.com).

"We are thrilled and grateful to receive this honor," said City manager Ryan Waller. "Earning this designation is a tremendous accomplishment, and is the result of the long-standing dedication of our residents toward making our community the best it can be."

Indianola Hometown Pride chair, Taylor Litchkey, added: "Indianola is truly a great place, and it's a privilege to see that recognized at a state-wide level. It took almost a year of hard work to secure this recognition, and we want to thank the many individuals who worked together to make this happen."

The theme of Indianola's application was "Destination Indianola." It focused on 4 elements of what makes Indianola great, along with a collective vision for the future of these assets in our community:

- **Arts and Culture:** Indianola is home to arts and culture anchors like the National Balloon Classic, Des Moines Metro Opera, and local performing arts organizations like Carousel Theatre. The application included plans to build on this by adding public art, establishing an art center/gallery, marketing our year-round attractions, updating community branding and more.
- **Education:** We are home to Simpson College and an exemplary K-12 education system. The application included a vision for improving the campus-to-community connection with an "art corridor" between campus and the downtown Square.
- **Great Outdoors:** Indianola has 14 parks, 8 miles of trail and nearby regional outdoor attractions like Lake Ahquabi, Summerset trail and the Annett Nature Center. The application highlighted early plans for a new pavilion in Buxton Park, created by a group of volunteers, to provide a new performance and gathering space.
- **"Small Town" Way of Life:** Residents love the small town feel of Indianola. The application showcased the City's ambitious plans for streetscape improvements on the Square, which is the geographic "heart" of our small town way of life.

The Vision presented in the application was based in part on the recently completed comprehensive plan for the City of Indianola, which received input from 1,700 residents.

The designation is granted for 5 years, for the period of 2020-2025. After that time, Indianola will be eligible to apply for re-designation.