For more than two decades, Iowa’s Living Roadways has helped Iowa communities create positive changes and improvements along transportation corridors. Trees Forever, Iowa State University, Iowa DOT and partners work with local volunteers to showcase small towns.

Iowa’s Living Roadways includes:

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We’re excited to offer Stewards of the Beautiful Land again! This program will provide communities with know-how on native plants and trees, as well as foster advocates for our natural resources across the state. What a great way to plant a better tomorrow with our partners!

Leslie Berckes, Trees Forever Program Director

Stewards of the Beautiful Land is an opportunity for Trees Forever to work with more county roadside managers to improve pollinator habitat along our roads!
Making Waves in Iowa!

We took a piece by piece approach to the many plans generated by our 2017 Community Visioning work to bring it to reality. We pulled together the right people to hone the ideas and create a clear plan. Looking back now, we are blown away to realize that concept to completion took only three years!

Deb Benston
Adel Community Visioning Committee Member

Adel

After completing Community Visioning in 2017, the community of Adel is celebrating the completion of two major projects, which make their town safer, easier to access, more aesthetically pleasing and greener. Iowa’s Living Roadways partners assisted Adel throughout the entire process, from brainstorming, facilitating conversations, designing, and connecting the committee with potential funders. Adel’s committee raised more than $85,000! With this money, they will install lighting on the old railroad bridge that crosses the Raccoon River (part of the Raccoon River Valley Trail system), and they landscaped a core section of the trail with native trees, shrubs, and prairie plants. With such dedicated people, no wonder the Raccoon River Valley Trail was named a 2019 Iowa Great Place!

A few of Adel’s youngest residents help plant the trees of their future along the Raccoon Valley River Trail.

Lester

Those traveling through and visiting the village of Lester will have a much easier time finding local attractions as a result of the 2017 Community Visioning program. Trees Forever and partners facilitated conversations about improvements in the community, which led to four new entryway signs north, south, east, and west of town welcoming travelers to this oasis along Highway 9 in northern Iowa. To complement the entryway signs, wayfinding signage was also installed directing out of towners to the Community Center, ball fields, parks, village brush pile, and more. New street signs throughout town give a consistent feel when driving down Lester streets. Then, taking things a step further, businesses and homeowners were encouraged to install new address signs that reflect the theme of Lester.

Lester’s Community Visioning group improved the quality of life for residents by building a trail through the main park in town, which connects the playground and equipment, shelter house, little old schoolhouse and the Community Center. The trail has completely changed the feel of the park and made it more inviting and usable. Kids love riding their trikes and scooters on the hard surface right in the middle of the park.

Lester’s Community Visioning group and even split off a smaller trails sub-committee to get the park trail built. More than $50,000 has been raised through volunteers and donations, and it seemed like once we got a couple of people to donate, other businesses and volunteers stepped up.

Darcy Gerber
Lester Visioning Committee Member

Massena

Massena’s downtown has a whole new feel after participating in Community Visioning in 2017. Massena’s committee was able to accomplish a lot in a short two years thanks to TIF dollars from nearby wind turbines, desire and ability to get grant funding and a positive, active committee. With the assistance of Iowa’s Living Roadways partners, the entry signs were refreshed and reestablished; the ballfields were lighted; and trees were planted around the historic gas station and barbershop in Heritage Park. The Trees Forever staff connected the committee with the nonprofit’s Branching Out partnership with Alliant Energy, which funded the planting.

To cap off all of their work, they are putting the finishing touches on a whole new downtown streetscape, complete with bumpouts (extensions of the curb to allow more plants - see below), new lighting, resurfaced street and plantings. While the facelift improved the ambience, one creative fundraising tool added the finishing touch. Along with the addition of new lighting downtown, they included speakers so that music programming was being played regularly for a donation, which they received in the amount of $500. Massena is not finished: they currently are working on installing 3 building facades downtown in front of an open lot which replicate former businesses. We’re looking forward to seeing what else they will roll out before the big Fourth of July parade in 2020.

Darcy Gerber
Lester Visioning Committee Member

Dyersville

After a flood devastated many properties in Dyersville, Iowa, the Dyersville Community Visioning committee transformed the flooded area into a beautiful green space for the community to share! When Iowa’s Living Roadways partners started talking to Dyersville residents, they were trying to figure out what to do with the federal buyouts and removal of 50 homes following flooding in 2008, 2010 and 2011. The community was connected to many experts through Community Visioning, including Trees Forever’s field coordinator Patty Reisinger. Reisinger facilitated many conversations in the community as they decided to transform the flood-devastated area in Westside Park. Now thanks to many partnerships coming together, including a Black Hills Energy and Trees Forever’s Power of Trees grant for trees, Westside Park has a tree-lined community trail that connects to other community trails and signs that help tourists navigate.

Patty Reisinger
Trees Forever Field Coordinator

Many communities deal with flood prone areas, and Dyersville’s hard work with Westside Park is a great example of a community turning a problem into an asset.

Congratulations to our newest participants in Iowa’s Living Roadways Community Visioning!

2019 Participants

Audubon
Bedford
Coggon
Durant
Hinton
Royal
Sumner
Treynor
Van Meter
Walcott

2020 Participants:

Avoca
Elkader
Fairfax
Lost Nation
Madrid
Mingo
Mount Pleasant
Polk City
Reinbeck
Wellsburg

Success Stories: Adel, Lester, Massena and Dyersville

2017 Community Visioning

2019 Iowa Great Place!
Iowa’s Living Roadways 1996-2019

Community Visioning
Community Projects
Trails Visioning

Numbers indicate total projects in each county.

Thanks to our members and sponsors!

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Iowa’s Living Roadways 1996-2019

Community Visioning
Community Projects
Trails Visioning

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Thanks to our members and sponsors!
Making Waves in Iowa!
Iowa’s Living Roadways Accomplishments:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Visioning</th>
<th>Trails Visioning</th>
<th>Projects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>265 Communities</td>
<td>271 Communities</td>
<td>523 Planting projects awarded funds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18,590 Volunteers</td>
<td>14,139 Volunteers</td>
<td>92 out of 99 Iowa counties reached</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>94,874 Volunteer hours</td>
<td>45,184 Trees and shrubs</td>
<td>13,853 Volunteer hours</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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- Living Roadway Trust Fund Community Assistance provides hundreds of classes, workshops, presentations and educational materials about native plants and trees to Iowans of all ages.
- Stewards of the Beautiful Land, back by popular demand, is an educational course that provides hands-on learning opportunities for community members, leaders and professionals in the prairies and woodlands of Iowa. In 2020 participants will learn about Iowa’s native ecosystems, practice plant identification skills, meet local partners and discover how to communicate the importance of our assets to elected officials.

Students in Allison, Iowa, learned how a diversity in tree species creates a healthy forest during an activity using umbrellas. Each umbrella color represents a different species and faces different pests and diseases. Living Roadway Trust Fund supports many educational activities, such as this one, and also provides educational materials, including posters, booklets, stickers and more.

Audubon participants take a look at the new designs as 2019 participants.

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