



Press photo by Travis Fischer

The Charles City Public Library has a new sidewalk for patrons to use while City Hall and the plaza between the buildings are under renovation.

## New sidewalk improves public library access during City Hall’s renovation

By Travis Fischer  
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The Charles City Public Library got a new sidewalk this week as work on the City Hall renovation continues.

“It’ll make getting into the library easier during the rest of the project, so that’s appreciated,” said Library Director Annette Dean.

Access to the library’s front door had been partially limited as work on the pedestrian mall extends outward from the City Hall, requiring patrons to enter from the riverside sidewalk.

The new sidewalk not only keeps the path to the library open while construction continues, it also resolves a drainage problem

in the old sidewalk that had patrons navigating a large puddle to get in and out of the building.

Dean says that the new sidewalk is supposed to be a temporary accommodation and she is unsure if or how it will be incorporated into the final design of the project when it is completed next year.

## Federal grant will advance project dates for two Floyd County bridges

Supervisors also start officially dropping out of SW Bypass TIF District

By Bob Steenson  
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Two Floyd County bridge replacement projects are moving forward ahead of schedule, made possible by funding from the federal Competitive Highway Bridge Program (CHBP).

The Floyd County Board of Supervisors at their meeting on Monday, June 30, passed a resolution and an agreement with other counties and cities and the Iowa Department of Transportation, which is managing the funds, approving participation in the program.

Both projects are on the Rockford blacktop (County Road B45) between Rockford and Highway 14, Floyd County Engineer Adam Miller said.

One of the bridge replacements had already been in the Floyd County Secondary Road Department’s five-year plan and will be moved ahead, and the other one will be added. Both changes required amending the five-year plan with the Iowa Department of Transportation, which the Board of Supervisors also did Monday.

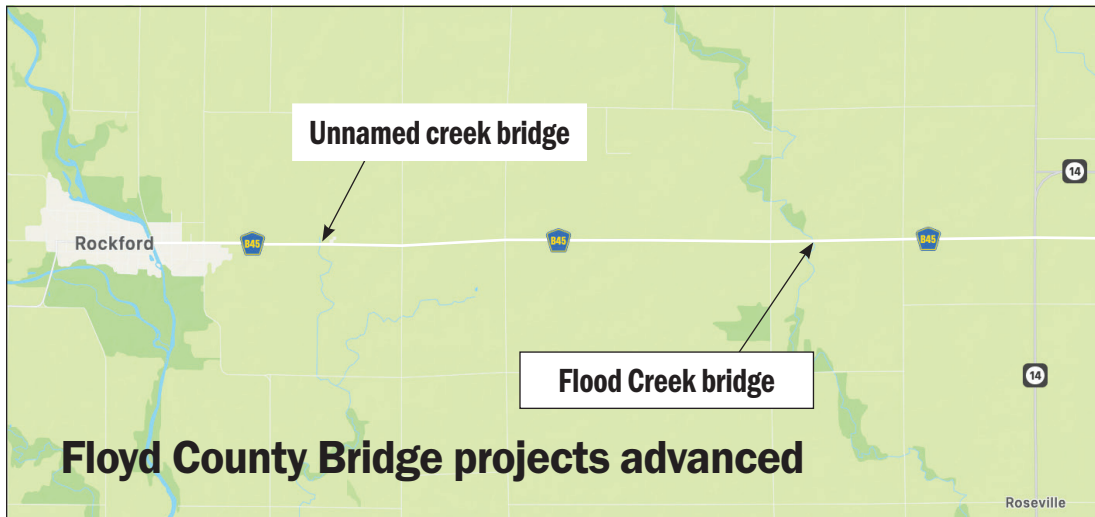
One of the bridge projects is over an unnamed creek and the other is over Flood Creek. Both are now scheduled for fiscal year 2026-27.

The supervisors approved a resolution acknowledging the county’s responsibilities in the grant program and approving the chair signing a letter of support.

It also approved a 28E (inter-governmental) agreement that will be signed by all 19 counties, including Floyd, and the four cities that are part of the CHBP.

Miller, who was on vacation and not at Monday’s meeting, had said he expects the two Floyd County bridges will cost about \$1 million each, and the CHBP will pay about 80% of the cost, meaning the program would be providing about \$1.6 million for the two bridges and the county would pay about \$400,000, to come from its farm to market road funding.

CHBP is a federal bridge funding grant and Miller said Iowa was in line to get about \$30 million to \$33 million in funding.



Press graphic by Bob Steenson

Two Floyd County bridge projects have had their expected construction dates moved up because of being granted federal bridge replacement funds.

Part of the reason some of the funding was targeted at Iowa is the large number of deteriorating bridges, he said.

Floyd County had submitted three structures for the grant, and the two on B45 had made it through.

This is the second significant grant the county has received in recent years toward bridge projects. Last year Floyd County, along with Bremer and Fayette counties, were approved for \$25 million in a U.S. Department of Transportation RAISE grant.

Floyd County received more than \$9 million of that, which will replace seven bridges in the county.

**ALSO AT MONDAY’S BOARD** meeting, the supervisors:

- Began formally dropping out of the Southwest Bypass Urban Renewal Area, leaving that political entity entirely in the hands of the city of Charles City.

The board passed a resolution terminating the joint agreement and passed the first reading of an ordinance that would repeal two previous county ordinances that had established the district and set up how TIF revenue from the district would be shared.

That revenue was one of the sticking points, because the county has used its share to help pay annual contributions to the Charles City Area Development Corp. An agreement with the city will increase the city’s

share of support for the CCADC and reduce the county’s share.

Another part of the legal paperwork was passing an agreement between the county and the CCADC, saying that the county will pay \$48,100 annually to the CADC for the current 2025-26 fiscal year and two more fiscal years after that, in return for economic development services.

Charles City and Floyd County had created the Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district in the 1990s as the only joint city-county TIF district in the state, so the city could leverage the county’s property valuation to boost the TIF district’s bonding capacity.

That need no longer exists, and having both the city and county involved means double the amount of hearings, legal opinions, and other expenses required to take actions in the district, city and county officials have said.

- **DISCUSSED HOW LONG FLOYD** County should remain involved in legal actions regarding the proposed Summit Carbon Solutions pipeline, which would have a main line and arterials through Floyd County. Floyd County is sharing the cost with eight other counties for legal representation by the Ahlers & Cooney law firm, currently part of a suit objecting to the decision that had been reached by the Iowa Utilities Commission regarding the pipeline.

No decision was made, and it was suggested that the principal attorney involved, Tim Whipple, should be invited to a board meeting to give a progress update. That discussion would be likely held in closed session under the Iowa Open Meetings Law exemption for discussing strategy with legal counsel for matters that are currently in litigation or where litigation is imminent.

- Heard a brief presentation from Jacob AgriVia and a Tyler Perry-based engineering firm that specializes in drainage district work and is looking to provide service to Floyd County. Hagan is a licensed engineer and Buman said he expects to get his engineer license within a year. They offered a straight \$100 per hour fee for services.

- The meeting was also briefly interrupted when a remote video participant began displaying pornographic images and shouting profanities and racial epithets on the boardroom’s video screens — a form of remote access “Zoom bombing” that has disrupted public meetings across the country.

This was the second time this had happened at a supervisor board meeting, despite increased security efforts after the first instance in March. County Auditor Morrigan Montagne said after the meeting Monday it is possible future remote meeting access may be limited to telephone teleconference.

## Art-a-Fest lists artists for this year’s event

To the Press

Charles City Art-a-Fest has announced the artists scheduled to appear at this year’s annual event. They come from three states in addition to Iowa, and represent a wide variety of media.

The 2025 Art-a-Fest will be held from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 16, in Central Park.

In addition to the artists listed below, three student artists will also be featured, sponsored by Prologue Books and Wine. They are Nick Williams, Taylor Mhyre and Nyssa Salinas.

HERE ARE THE ARTISTS announced as appearing at the 2025 Art-a-Fest:

- **Wayne & Karen Ruff, Bennington, Nebraska** – Metal, stone, wood, and pottery sculptures.
- **Troy Richard Thomas, Tiffin** – Watercolor and oil paintings.
- **Lisa Glaser, Des Moines** – Silversmithing, lost wax casting, lapidary arts.
- **Anna V. Gilbert, Bonduant** – Jewelry and oil paintings.
- **Ron Kahler, New Ulm, Minnesota** – Functional and horsehair pottery.
- **Douglas Cole, Sumner** – Wheel-thrown stoneware pottery.
- **Carmen Nielsen, Princeton, Minnesota** – Ceramics.
- **Jonathan Purdy, Cedar Falls** – Abstract painting, printmaking.
- **Brittany Wheeler, Waterloo** – Polymer clay earrings.
- **Karen Homann, Hudson** – Handwoven textiles.
- **Bruce W. Litterer, Shell Rock** – Realistic colored pencil drawings.
- **Alissa Walton, Shell Rock** – Mixed media, dark fantasy art.
- **Mickey Johnson, Waterloo** – Glass bead fountains, gemstone/art glass jewelry.
- **Family Fancies, Alpharetta, Georgia** – Metal sculpture, beaded jewelry, fabric/leather bags.
- **Michelle Juhl, Greene** – Textile crafts using recycled clothing.
- **Judy Sebern Beachy,**

**Des Moines** – Watercolor, abstract acrylic, collage.

- **Dennis Helmers, Charles City** – Jewelry from silverware.

- **Kathi Fehr, Clutier** – Handweaving with recycled materials.

- **Anissa Valladares, Boone** – Expressionist and impressionist painting.

- **Ann Bishop McGregor, Charles City** – Soft pastel landscapes and florals.

- **Melissa Nelson, New Hampton** – Jewelry, stained glass sculptures.

- **Bruce Robert Butcherworth, Floyd** – Fine art photography.

- **David Prehm, New Hampton** – Painting (various styles).

- **Stephen Schiller, Charles City** – Fine art photography with watercolor effects.

- **Ruben Ruiz, Huxley** – Wheel-thrown and hand-built pottery.

- **Gerald Lee Tomkins, Evansdale** – Oil painting (figures, portraits, landscapes).

- **Travis Miller, Greene** – Abstract acrylic painting.

- **Mariah Piippo, Mason City** – Textural and acrylic painting.

- **Kurt Wedeking, Charles City** – Functional woodworking.

- **Wendy Ebberts, Rockwell** – Acrylic, collage, watercolor.

- **Meredith Hamm, Charles City** – Nature-themed mixed media.

- **Ashley Koebrick Schmidt, Charles City** – Realism and photorealism oil painting.

- **Janiece Bergland, Floyd** – Watercolor (landscapes, figures, portraits).

- **Annie Noodle, Mankato, Minnesota** – Whimsical fantasy illustration.

- **Larry Holden, Marshalltown** – Mixed media: painting, photography, sculpture.

- **Alexa Johnson, Mason City** – Acrylics, collage, watercolor, fiber arts.

- **Dale O’Connell, Lucas** – Alcohol ink painting.

- **Candida Deree, Waterloo** – Fused glass.

- **Dennis Haahr, Ames** – Handmade wood cutting boards and décor.

## County gets clean audit

By Bob Steenson  
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Floyd County received an unmodified or “clean” opinion on its annual audit for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2024, with no significant deficiencies reported, according to a presentation recently at a Board of Supervisors meeting.

Elizabeth Thyer, CPA and partner with Gardiner + Co., presented the findings, saying that the audit, which examines county finances, accounting procedures and internal controls, showed the county remains in strong financial condition overall.

The county’s net position (assets minus liabilities) increased by about \$3.65 million, or 7.1%, over the previous year, reaching \$55.1 million. Most of those assets are land, infrastructure, buildings and equipment.

Revenues grew to \$21.6 million, up about \$588,000 from the previous year, while expenditures increased by \$1.1 million to nearly \$17.9 million. Road and bridge work accounted for much of the spending increase.

Overall property tax rates for 2024 went down 8.9% for urban and went down 6.3% for rural. The effect of the changes in valuations, tax rates, state rollbacks, uncollected taxes, exemptions and credits to taxpayers caused a 5.47% decrease in overall property tax-related revenue collected for fiscal year 2024, the audit says.

**MAJOR FINANCIAL ACTIVITY DURING THE YEAR** included issuing \$4.8 million in general obligation bonds to help fund a new countywide emergency communication system, and continuing work on the new law enforcement center and courthouse upgrades, largely funded by bond proceeds and federal American Rescue Plan Act dollars.

The county’s debt increased to about \$19.6 million, well below its legal debt limit of \$77.3 million.

While Thyer noted no material weaknesses or significant compliance issues, the audit includes routine recommendations. That includes segregation of duties so no one person handles transactions from start to finish, but also recognizes that is not possible with the size of staff county officials have.

Such a segregation of duties notice is typical on audit reports for all but the largest Iowa city and county governments.

The audit also noted a few times where accounts needed to be timely reconciled.

Thyer stressed that the audit does not look at every county transaction, but examines samples from the various funds and accounts.

The audit also noted the impact of new state laws that cap property tax growth, which county officials said may require future adjustments in budgeting and operations.

The full audit report is available through the county auditor’s office or the Iowa Secretary of State Office.