



# In Your City's Corner: City Connection Toolkit

Fostering community pride and connection is important to your citizens — and we know it matters to your city, too. Yet, with limited time and resources, building that connection can be challenging. That's why your League is here to help. We've created a sample content calendar designed to bring your city to life for your residents, helping them feel more engaged and informed. This calendar offers flexible content ideas you can share in various ways: through social media, your city's website, newsletters, or even as fun activities at city hall. Also check out our [\*Social Media Plug & Post Kit\*](#), a quick-start storytelling kit for Iowa cities. Let's work together to bring your community closer!

*Questions? Please reach out to [communications@iowaleague.org](mailto:communications@iowaleague.org).*



# America 250: Celebrating the Semiquincentennial

In 2026, the United States will mark 250 years since the signing of the Declaration of Independence — our nation’s semiquincentennial. This milestone offers cities across Iowa a unique chance to highlight and celebrate their contributions to America’s story.

Governor Kim Reynolds has launched the **Governor’s Task Force on Celebrating America’s 250th Birthday** to honor this quarter-millennium moment. The task force will shine a spotlight on Iowa’s important role in U.S. history and the many ways Iowans have shaped — and continue to shape — the nation’s past, present, and future.

## IDEAS FOR PROGRAMS AND CONTENT:

- Virtual field trips
- Partnerships with local schools
- Features on local history, cemeteries, and historic registries
- “Today in History” posts
- Historic trivia
- Community scavenger hunts

## QUESTIONS TO HELP GUIDE YOUR PROGRAMMING:

- What was happening in your community during the Revolutionary Era?
- How has your community evolved over time? Who lived here historically, and how did major events shape their experiences?
- How have natural features — rivers, plains, forests — shaped settlement, migration, development, or environmental change?
- How can the history and ongoing presence of Indigenous peoples deepen understanding of past events and present-day challenges?
- Which historic places are preserved today, and what additional stories could they tell?

**More details on statewide plans, events, and resources will be shared here:**

[governor.iowa.gov/america-250/get-involved](https://governor.iowa.gov/america-250/get-involved)

# January

Questions? Please reach out to [communications@iowaleague.org](mailto:communications@iowaleague.org).



Click here to watch a quick video explaining how to use this toolkit.

## Staff in Action

Snap photos of staff as they go about their daily tasks, such as fixing roads, maintaining parks, or assisting in City Hall. Highlighting these moments shows the dedication behind essential services.

### **Suggested Post:**

Behind every service, there's a dedicated team working hard to keep our city running smoothly. From fixing roads to maintaining our beautiful parks, and helping residents at City Hall, these everyday moments showcase the effort and commitment our staff puts in day in and day out.

## Did You Know?

Help residents learn more about the services, history, and features that make their city unique.

Custom “Did You Know?” graphics are available to download and accompany each post to create a consistent, informative series.

The League is available to help you come up with ideas for a monthly “Did You Know?” *See next page for suggested ideas.*



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## City Budget Video

The city budget process can be complicated. Download this video that breaks down the process and gives suggestions on how your residents can get involved: [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1uZrmYoBRYtKuiRjsiwOJU\\_zGfjXq23pi/view](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1uZrmYoBRYtKuiRjsiwOJU_zGfjXq23pi/view).

### **Suggested Post:**

Ever wonder how cities like [YOUR CITY GOES HERE] decide where your tax dollars go? Sophie breaks it all down in a fun, easy-to-understand video! Learn about the city budgeting process and how you can get involved. Watch now: [INSERT VIDEO]

Resources: <https://iowaleague.org/resource/simplicity-city-budgets-video/>

## Monthly Citizen Spotlight

Each month feature a different resident — of all ages and backgrounds — who shares what they love about the city. Include their photo, and a brief quote. Gather several at once so you have spotlights for the next month, ask people to participate when they come into city hall, you see them at the park, at a council meeting, etc.

### **Suggested Post:**

**Faces of [City Name]: Meet [Citizen's Name]!**

[Citizen's Name] has called [City Name] home for [number] years. When asked what they love most, they said, “I love [specific thing about the city, like parks, local events, friendly neighbors] — it really brings the community together!”

Let's celebrate the amazing people who make our city so special!

# Did You Know? Suggestions:

## AFTER A STORM

### Suggested Post:

“Do you know what to do first following a major storm? After ensuring your safety, make sure you take photos of the conditions and damage to your property before starting to clean up. Documentation is essential for any assistance after a storm from your insurance or FEMA programs.”

## POTHOLES

How and when do potholes get filled? How much time and money go towards keeping the roads in good condition and how do potholes happen?

*If your team can't provide answers, some general info can be found here: [iowadot.gov/news/2025-01-27/potholes-are-popping-across-iowa-temperatures-fluctuate](https://www.iowadot.gov/news/2025-01-27/potholes-are-popping-across-iowa-temperatures-fluctuate)*

## WINTER PREPAREDNESS

### Suggested Post:

“Did you know we got \_\_\_ inches of snow last year? We used more than \_\_\_ lbs of salt brine and plowed \_\_\_ miles of street to keep our city moving safely.”

## LEAF CLEANUP/COLLECTION

### Suggested Post:

“Did you know that after leaves are collected by [city/county/other], those leaves are used for compost? After composting, yard waste goes back to communities for potting soil, garden beds, lawn maintenance, and other uses. It's a cycle of green.”

*Tip: Dependent on where you live and who collects. For example in central Iowa, Metro Waste Authority has this program: [www.mwatoday.com/waste-recycling/yard-waste/grow-gold-compost/](https://www.mwatoday.com/waste-recycling/yard-waste/grow-gold-compost/)*

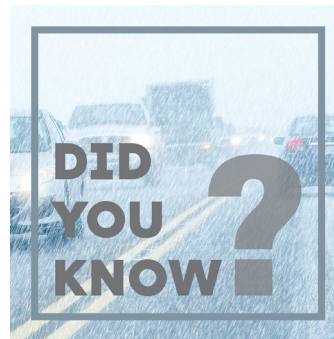
## STREET SWEEPING

### Suggested Post:

“Did you know that street sweeping is important for several reasons? It helps improve traffic safety, maintains community aesthetics, and contributes to storm sewer maintenance by removing debris that can clog storm drains. Cities have been using street sweeper machines since 1843 to keep their streets clean.”

**CLICK ON EACH GRAPHIC TO  
DOWNLOAD AND USE WITH YOUR POSTS**

Image will open in a browser. Right click on the image and select “Save Image As” and choose the desired location on your computer to save the photo to.





# Did You Know? Suggestions:

## RECYCLING

### Suggested Post:

“Did you know? Our city recycles over \_\_\_\_ tons of material every year! By participating in our recycling program, you're helping to reduce waste and protect the environment for future generations. Thank you for doing your part!”

*Tip: Include a link to recycling guidelines or upcoming recycling events in the area to encourage more participation.*

## GREEN SPACE

### Suggested Post:

“Did you know? Our Parks Department maintains over \_\_\_\_ acres of beautiful green spaces right here in [City Name]. Next time you're at one of our parks, remember the hard work our team puts into making them great for everyone!”

## WALKING AND BIKING TRAILS

### Suggested Post:

“Did you know? [City Name] offers more than \_\_\_\_ miles of scenic walking and biking trails! Whether you're looking to get some fresh air or explore nature, our trails are a great way to enjoy the outdoors.”

## LIBRARY

### Suggested Post:

“Did you know? Our library houses over \_\_\_\_ books, e-books, and other resources! Plus, the library hosts free events for all ages. Be sure to stop by and see what's new!”

*Tip: Include a link to the library's website or upcoming event schedule, encouraging more residents to visit.*

## FIRE DEPARTMENT

### Suggested Post:

“Did you know? Our dedicated fire department responds to over \_\_\_\_ emergencies every year, keeping our city safe day and night. Thank you to our first responders for their commitment!”

*Tip: If your city shares services with another city possibly mention that here.*

## FRESH WATER

### Suggested Post:

“Did you know? Our city provides over \_\_\_\_ gallons of fresh, clean water daily to residents and businesses! Thanks to our Public Works team for ensuring we all have access to safe drinking water.”

## CITY FLOWERS

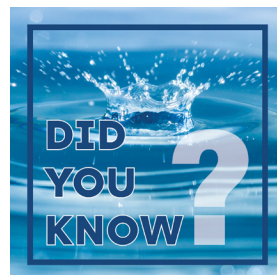
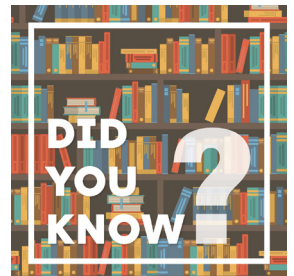
### Suggested Post:

“Did you know? Our city flower pots are put together by volunteers. Thanks to our volunteers for making [City Name] welcoming!”

*Tip: possibly include a photo of the volunteers*

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# February

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## Unique Equipment

Showcase any interesting or unique equipment used by different departments — like specialized vehicles, tools, or machinery. People love seeing what it takes to keep the city running smoothly!

### **Suggested Post:**

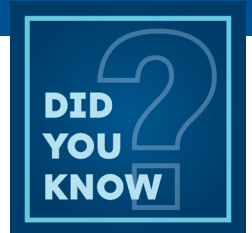
Have you ever seen one of these vehicles out on the road days before a storm? It's a salt brine truck! Salt brine is used to treat roads before a snowstorm lowers the freezing point of water on the road, reducing snow accumulation. Just don't get too close behind these vehicles!

## Did You Know?

Help residents learn more about the services, history, and features that make their city unique.

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## Where Does My Property Tax Money Go?

### **Suggested Post:**

Ever wonder where your property tax dollars go? In [Your City Name], they help fund essential services that keep our community running smoothly — like public safety, road maintenance, parks, and libraries.

Your contribution makes a BIG difference in making [Your City Name] a great place to live.

## Monthly Citizen Spotlight

Each month feature a different resident — of all ages and backgrounds — who shares what they love about the city. Include their photo, and a brief quote. Gather several at once so you have spotlights for the next month, ask people to participate when they come into city hall, you see them at the park, at a council meeting, etc.

### **Suggested Post:**

#### **Faces of [City Name]: Meet [Citizen's Name]!**

[Citizen's Name] has called [City Name] home for [number] years. When asked what they love most, they said, “I love [specific thing about the city, like parks, local events, friendly neighbors] — it really brings the community together!”

Let's celebrate the amazing people who make our city so special!

# March

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## Everyday “Unsung Heroes”

Feature those team members who often work behind the scenes but play a critical role, like custodial staff, tech support, or maintenance crews. A spotlight on their contributions helps build community appreciation.

### **Suggested Post:**

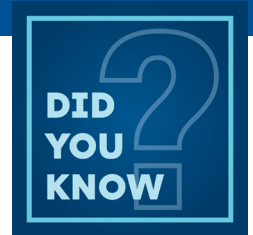
Today we wanted to celebrate [Name] and [Name], two of our street cleaning crew who work hard every day to keep our roads clean and safe. From rocks and debris to downed tree limbs, these two are the first responders to clear our streets. Thank you [Names]!

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## Local Leaders Day

The League hosts Local Leaders Day each spring. Check our webpage for date and details. Be sure to take pictures while attending and post about your experience.

### **Suggested Post:**

Mayor [Name] joined elected officials, city administrators, and legislators to collaborate and advocate for [City] statewide at the Iowa League of Cities’ Local Leaders Day. We’re working hard to tell [City’s] story to our legislators to best serve our community.

## Monthly Citizen Spotlight

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### **Suggested Post:**

#### **Faces of [City Name]: Meet [Citizen’s Name]!**

[Citizen’s Name] has called [City Name] home for [number] years. When asked what they love most, they said, “I love [specific thing about the city, like parks, local events, friendly neighbors] — it really brings the community together!”

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# April

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## Staff Appreciation

Share moments from staff appreciation events, like awards, team lunches, or birthday celebrations. This shows residents that city employees are valued and fosters a positive community spirit.

### **Suggested Post:**

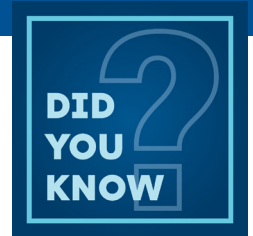
It's been a busy few weeks, but we didn't want to miss a chance to celebrate our amazing parks team for all their work this spring getting our great facilities ready for the season. From cleaning parks and the sprayground to checking our equipment, they have us ready for another great year of outdoor activity.

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## Pet Poop FAQs

### **Suggested Post:**

Not only is it the polite thing to do, picking up your pet's waste contributes to better water quality. Pet waste can transmit parasites, including tapeworms and E.coli, and viruses, such as Parvovirus. When it rains, it can run into the storm sewer and then into local waterways.

## Monthly Citizen Spotlight

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### **Suggested Post:**

#### **Faces of [City Name]: Meet [Citizen's Name]!**

[Citizen's Name] has called [City Name] home for [number] years. When asked what they love most, they said, “I love [specific thing about the city, like parks, local events, friendly neighbors] — it really brings the community together!”

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# May

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## Municipal Clerks Week ✨

### **Suggested Post:**

Municipal Clerks do so much for cities and ours is no different. [Clerk's Name] is a crucial part of our city government and [does these things]. This Municipal Clerks Week, we extend our thanks and appreciation to [Clerk's Name] and our administrative team for all their essential work throughout the year. Thank you!

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## City Pride

### **Suggested Post:**

We are proud to be one of the 939 cities in Iowa serving our local community through good stewardship and responsive governance. Local government is decision-making and service at its most accessible. We are your neighbors you talk to at the grocery store, PTA meetings, or at the coffee shop. We are here for you and that means the world to us. Thank you to everyone in [City] for your part in making this the best place to live, serve, and play every day.

## Monthly Citizen Spotlight

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### **Suggested Post:**

#### **Faces of [City Name]: Meet [Citizen's Name]!**

[Citizen's Name] has called [City Name] home for [number] years. When asked what they love most, they said, “I love [specific thing about the city, like parks, local events, friendly neighbors] — it really brings the community together!”

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# June

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## Community Wide Scavenger Hunt

### Choose & Gather Items to Hide

Select at least 5 unique items for the scavenger hunt. These could be mini flags, printed city logos, specially marked coins, or another city-themed item. Aim for items that are fun, noticeable, and easy to hide in public spaces.

### Take Photos of the Items

Capture clear, close-up photos of each item so participants know exactly what they're looking for. Ensure each item's details are easy to recognize in the photos.

### Post the Photos Online

Post the photos on your city's official Facebook page along with a brief description of the scavenger hunt rules. Mention that participants should comment on the Facebook post with their item finds to win.

### Create a Display at City Hall

Print the item photos and display them on a community board at City Hall, along with the scavenger hunt details. This helps residents without social media access participate, too.

### Promote the Scavenger Hunt

Spread the word through social media, newsletters, and posters at community centers or local businesses. Encourage everyone to join in on the fun and to post their item photos in the comments on Facebook.

#### *Suggested Post:*

The weather is warming up — it's the perfect time to get outside and explore [CITY NAME]! We've hidden [X number] [ITEMS] around town, just waiting to be found. Be the first to snap a photo of an item and post it in the comments to win! Remember, each person can only win once, so there will be [X number] winners total.

The contest runs all through June, so get out there and start hunting! *[Optional: Winners will receive a prize!]*

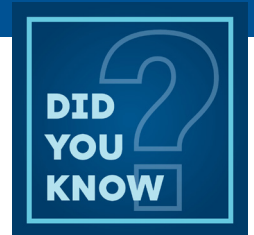
Happy exploring, and may the best spotters win!

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## Monthly Citizen Spotlight

Each month feature a different resident — of all ages and backgrounds — who shares what they love about the city. Include their photo, and a brief quote. Gather several at once so you have spotlights for the next month, ask people to participate when they come into city hall, you see them at the park, at a council meeting, etc.

#### *Suggested Post:*

#### **Faces of [City Name]: Meet [Citizen's Name]!**

[Citizen's Name] has called [City Name] home for [number] years. When asked what they love most, they said, "I love [specific thing about the city, like parks, local events, friendly neighbors] — it really brings the community together!"

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# July

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## Volunteers Making a Difference

Capture photos of volunteers during events, clean-ups, or other community projects. Include a short story about their impact and encourage others to volunteer.

### **Suggested Post:**

Big shout out to [Name] for being an incredible champion of [City]. You may have seen them serving on our [city board/advisory], out on [trail] picking up trash, or helping with events around town. [Name] consistently puts their time and energy into making our community better. Thank you for all you do!

## Parks and Recreation Month 🌳

It's Parks and Recreation Month, a perfect time to highlight your team and the great work your city does to provide and maintain parks, trails, greenspaces, and activities for your community.

## Scenic Spotlights

Photos of summery, scenic locations around town.

### **Suggested Post:**

[City Name] is glowing this summer! Check out some of our staff's favorite scenic spots — where are yours? (Add photos of scenic views or parks.)

## How Your City Celebrates Summer

Take the time to highlight how your city celebrates summer. Whether it's a 4th of July celebration, fireworks shows, festivals, or other city events, showcase how you celebrate summer. Use Facebook events as well to help drive attendance.

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### **Suggested Post:**

#### **Faces of [City Name]: Meet [Citizen's Name]!**

[Citizen's Name] has called [City Name] home for [number] years. When asked what they love most, they said, “I love [specific thing about the city, like parks, local events, friendly neighbors] — it really brings the community together!”

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# August

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## Staff In Action

Snap photos of staff as they go about their daily tasks, such as fixing roads, maintaining parks, or assisting in City Hall. Highlighting these moments shows the dedication behind essential services.

### **Suggested Post:**

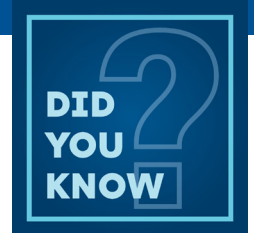
It's not just kids heading back to school — our incredible community staff are prepping facilities and ensuring a smooth start for [City Name] families!

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## Back to School

Invite elected officials or staff to share their own school photos! It's nostalgic, relatable, and great for engagement.

### **Suggested Post:**

We're throwing it back to high school! Here are a few flashbacks from your city council. Got your own yearbook gems? Share them in the comments!

## Monthly Citizen Spotlight

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### **Suggested Post:**

#### **Faces of [City Name]: Meet [Citizen's Name]!**

[Citizen's Name] has called [City Name] home for [number] years. When asked what they love most, they said, “I love [specific thing about the city, like parks, local events, friendly neighbors] — it really brings the community together!”

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# September

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## Staff Appreciation for Labor Day

If possible, a quote from the mayor can be a great addition to any post.

### **Suggested Post:**

On this Labor Day, we celebrate the dedication, creativity, and commitment of our city staff. [City Name] is a better place because of you!

## How Your City Celebrates Fall

Highlight community traditions — pumpkin patches, apple festivals, or local fall favorites.

## Iowa League of Cities Annual Conference & Exhibit

The League hosts our Annual Conference & Exhibit on September 17-19 this year. If any of your officials are attending, ask them to take a few pictures and share on social media.

### **Suggested Post:**

Some of our team joined @IowaLeagueofCities for their Annual Conference & Exhibit this month to share with our neighbors and explore new solutions for our city. With more than 500 attendees, we were in good company and can't wait to bring some new ideas and resources to [City Name].

## Staff Spotlights

Pick a staff member and highlight the great work they do for the city. Use this as a chance to continue showing all the unseen ways your staff serves the community and adds value to people's everyday lives.

## Monthly Citizen Spotlight

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### **Suggested Post:**

#### **Faces of [City Name]: Meet [Citizen's Name]!**

[Citizen's Name] has called [City Name] home for [number] years. When asked what they love most, they said, "I love [specific thing about the city, like parks, local events, friendly neighbors] — it really brings the community together!"

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# October

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## Staff In Action

Snap photos of staff as they go about their daily tasks, such as fixing roads, maintaining parks, or assisting in City Hall. Highlighting these moments shows the dedication behind essential services.

For October, focus could be on leaf removal, street sweeping, park cleanups, or winter preparations.

## Did You Know?

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## Start of Budget Season

The League has videos and graphics through our SimpliCity campaign that you can use to help explain the budget process. In subsequent posts, tie in any public input opportunities.

Assets available here: <https://iowaleague.org/resource/simplicity-city-budgets-video/>

### **Suggested Post:**

City budgets can get complicated. But you shouldn’t need a degree in economics to understand how your city spends its taxpayer dollars — or how you can be a part of the budgeting conversation. Head to Sophie’s Soda Shop for a lesson in city budgets in this short and bubbly video. Check it out!

## Scenic Spotlights

Post a few photos of your favorite places to see your city in the fall, such as a tree-lined street, park, or public building.

### **Suggested Post:**

The leaves are changing and [City Name] is showing off its colors. What’s your favorite spot to see the fall colors?

## Monthly Citizen Spotlight

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### **Suggested Post:**

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# November

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## Holidays

Observe Veterans Day and Thanksgiving with short, heartfelt posts recognizing service and community.

## Did You Know?

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## Election Day

Election day is November 3. Make sure your residents know the process and where and how to vote. Most info will come from your county auditor or the Secretary of State’s office here: <https://sos.iowa.gov/voters/election-day>.

### **Suggested Post:**

Election day is coming up on November 3. Do you know where your polling place is? Find your polling place and make your plan to vote!



[Click to download graphic](#)

## Monthly Citizen Spotlight

Each month feature a different resident — of all ages and backgrounds — who shares what they love about the city. Include their photo, and a brief quote. Gather several at once so you have spotlights for the next month, ask people to participate when they come into city hall, you see them at the park, at a council meeting, etc.

### **Suggested Post:**

#### **Faces of [City Name]: Meet [Citizen’s Name]!**

[Citizen’s Name] has called [City Name] home for [number] years. When asked what they love most, they said, “I love [specific thing about the city, like parks, local events, friendly neighbors] — it really brings the community together!”

Let’s celebrate the amazing people who make our city so special!

# December

Questions? Please reach out to [communications@iowaleague.org](mailto:communications@iowaleague.org).

## Staff In Action

Snap photos of staff as they go about their daily tasks, such as fixing roads, maintaining parks, or assisting in City Hall. Highlighting these moments shows the dedication behind essential services.

For December, focus could be on how the city prepares for the winter, show off snow equipment, etc.

## Did You Know?

Help residents learn more about the services, history, and features that make their city unique.

Custom “Did You Know?” graphics are available to download and accompany each post to create a consistent, informative series.

The League is available to help you come up with ideas for a monthly “Did You Know?” See page 4 & 5 for suggested ideas.



[Click to download graphic](#)

## How Does Your City Celebrate Winter/Holidays

Take the time to highlight how your city celebrates winter. Are there any unique community events planned or special traditions around the holidays? Do you put up lights or decorations? These are chances to showcase your city to existing and potential residents.

## Get Outside This December!

### **Suggested Post:**

Just because it's chilly doesn't mean you have to stay inside! We're encouraging residents to bundle up and enjoy our city parks, trails, and outdoor spaces all month long.

Snap a photo of yourself, your four-legged friend or your family enjoying the outdoors — walking the trail, visiting a park, or just playing in the snow — and share it with us by tagging [City Name] or sending it in a message.

Everyone who submits a photo can stop by City Hall for a sweet winter treat!

## Year in Review

Celebrate your accomplishments from the year. Any metrics that can be added help tell the story. A photo album or multi-photo post can remind people of community events. Some data points you could include things like:

- Number of volunteer hours
- Miles of street paved/repared
- Number of new business permits
- Number of community events
- Lane miles of snow plowed



# Tips and Practices

Whether you're just getting started or know these platforms inside and out, things are constantly evolving and we're learning too. Channels change how their algorithms work and what gets prioritized in feeds. Here are some simple tips to keep in mind when posting on Facebook:

- Aim for at least 2-3 posts per week. Consistency is key.
- When possible, put links in the comments rather than the post. Facebook prefers to keep people on their feeds rather than promoting external links.
- Mix up the types of posts you use. Photos, video, graphics, and plain text all hit differently and variety is a plus.
- Make use of Facebook's scheduling tools. If you have a block of time, you can schedule out a month's worth of posts quickly and easily.

## Facebook Image Rules

### Sizes

**Profile Photo:** 320 x 320 pixels (width by height)

**Cover Photo:** 851 x 315 pixels

**Post Images:** 1080 x 1080 or 1080 x 1350 pixels

**Stories:** 1080 x 1920 pixels

### Format

JPG or PNG

### Max File Size

30MB

## Getting Started with Video

*With help from Facebook for Politics and Government.*

### Embrace vertical formats

Vertical videos fill more screen space as your community is scrolling through their feeds. Shoot videos vertically or crop existing ads to 9:16 (for story and Reels ads) or 4:5 (for feed ads), along with 1:1 (feed and in-stream).

### Keep videos to 15 seconds or less

Get your main message across in the first 3 seconds and create videos that are 15 seconds or less. Convey clear, concise, single-minded messages that are aligned with your ad objective.

### Design for sound-off but delight with sound on

Most people browse their phones with sound off, so don't rely on sound to convey messages. Instead, include text and captions where possible so that your message is understood with sound off. For Stories and Reels, consider prioritizing sound as an enriching experience for your audience.

### Don't Chase Perfection

You're not expected to have three point lighting or sound engineers on call. Informal videos show authenticity while keeping you from getting bogged down in production. Have a plan, be yourself, and strive for good content rather than perfect production.



# Tips for Great Smartphone Photos

## Lighting is Key

Take photos in natural light whenever possible. If indoors, use well-lit areas and avoid harsh shadows.

## Focus on Faces

Tap on faces to focus and ensure they're clear. For action shots, snap a few extras to capture the best moment.

## Capture Context

Show surroundings or equipment in the background to help tell the story of what's happening.

## Use Portrait Mode

For close-ups or individual shots, use portrait mode (if available) to give photos a professional, depth-of-field effect.

## Keep it Steady

Hold your phone with both hands to keep photos sharp. For low-light shots, lean on a stable surface to avoid blur.

## Capture Candid Moments

Encourage staff to continue their activities as you snap photos. Natural, candid shots often feel more authentic and engaging.

