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New Albin Named All-Star Community

The City of New Albin was named a 2025 All-Star Community by the Iowa League of Cities for its AlgaeWheel project. The city will be recognized at an Awards Banquet at the League's Annual Conference & Exhibit, held in Des Moines from September 17-19.

The All-Star Community Award is the most prestigious honor given by the League to cities. Entries are judged by a panel of former city officials and others familiar with municipal government. Judges determine winners based on innovative efforts in areas such as urban renewal, development, preservation, collaborative efforts or quality of life improvements. New Albin was among three of Iowa's 940 cities to garner such recognition.

When faced with the need to replace its aging wastewater treatment facility, New Albin's city leaders knew that simply following the traditional path might not be the most prudent or efficient choice. Instead of settling for the standard solution, the city embarked on a journey to find an approach better suited to its size, budget, and long-term needs. Following an example set by Indianapolis, New Albin used an AlgaeWheel system, which is a nature-based approach to wastewater treatment. Instead of relying solely on mechanical and chemical processes, the system integrates biological processes, using algae and bacteria in a symbiotic relationship to clean wastewater. The algae-based system promises comparable initial costs with significantly reduced long-term expenses, minimal maintenance needs, and a much smaller physical footprint.

The Iowa League of Cities commends the City of New Albin for its foresight and leadership in adopting such an innovative solution. By daring to step away from the conventional and embrace a technology that better aligns with its unique needs, New Albin has set a valuable example for other small towns across Iowa.

Congratulations to New Albin and all its residents on its AlgaeWheel project. This year's other All-Star Community Award winners are Jefferson and Cedar Falls.

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The Iowa League of Cities is the oldest, continuously operating municipal league in the country. Founded in 1898, the League is a not-for-profit organization that serves as the unified voice for cities, providing advocacy, training and guidance to the cities of Iowa.