



MAYOR'S MEMO

Community Updates, Directly From Your Mayor

Welcome To The 12th Edition!

TOPICS: Winter Storm Operations,
City Council Transitions &
Coffee With The Mayor



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The holiday season is busy for everyone, including the city. As we wrap up year-end projects and look ahead to 2026, the City Council will hold a goal-setting session on Dec. 12 with current and newly elected members, along with staff. This session will help define next year's priorities and guide budgets, capital projects, and policy work. With tight budgets, careful prioritization is essential.

While the discussion will take place on Dec. 12, the resulting plan will be brought forward at a future Council meeting for formal approval. This approach ensures there will be more opportunities for public input and community engagement before the plan is finalized.

SNOWFALL RESPONSE & CITY OPERATIONS

Our first snowfall of the season was a significant one. Because the City operates with a lean staff, our Streets Department receives support from colleagues at Parks, Water Resource Recovery and Indianola Municipal Utilities during snow events. You may see pickups with plows from multiple departments. It's truly an all-hands-on-deck effort. This storm required overnight work and two days of rotating crews to ensure safe travel throughout the community. Thank you to everyone who helped clear the snow. For reminders and resources, please visit www.indianolaiowa.gov/winter.

ECONOMIC GROWTH & NEW BUSINESSES

Residents often ask what's new here. Based on the many Indianola Chamber of Commerce ribbon cuttings this year, the answer is: A lot. From retail to services to restaurants,

2025 has been strong for local business growth, with more openings expected in the coming months.

COMMUNITY HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2025

- As of Nov. 30, 66 new homes have been permitted or built.
- IMU will commission its new solar field on South K Street at 2 p.m. on Dec. 19. The public is welcome to attend.
- Since May, the City has filled previously vacant leadership roles, including city manager, community and economic development director, and public works director.
- The police chief position is the final vacancy, with the selection process expected to be completed by the end of the year.

Staff has kept major initiatives on track. Their dedication is evident in what we've accomplished.

CITY COUNCIL UPDATES

We will welcome incoming Council Member Tiffany Davis in January. She, along with re-elected Ward 2 Council Member Ron Dalby, At-Large Council Member Bob Lane and myself, will be sworn in at the Council's meeting on December 15. Tiffany will officially take office Jan. 1, succeeding Ward 4 Council Member Christina Beach. I want to extend my sincere appreciation to Council Member Beach for her dedicated service to Ward 4 and the Indianola community. Her commitment and contributions have been invaluable, and we thank her for her years of leadership.

COFFEE WITH THE MAYOR

Beginning Jan. 7, I will launch "Coffee with the Mayor," a monthly listening session for community members. The first gathering will be at 9 a.m. at Crouse Café. These meetings will offer a chance to ask questions, share ideas and learn more about City projects. Future sessions will rotate locations but will continue at 9 a.m. on the first Wednesday of each month.

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RESIDENTIAL TAX ABATEMENT DISCUSSION

At its Dec. 1 meeting, the Council scheduled a public hearing for Dec. 15 to continue discussions on residential tax abatement. This follows two study sessions, where staff presented an overview of abatement options available to Indianola. During these sessions, four potential approaches were outlined:

1. **5-Year Sliding Scale (current policy):** 100%, 80%, 60%, 40%, 20%.
2. **5-Year Alternate Scale (based on other communities):** 75%, 60%, 45%, 30%, 15%.
3. **3-Year Sliding Scale (aligned with State annexation code):** 75%, 60%, 45%.
4. **No Abatement:** Immediate full taxation on new construction.

The Council provided general direction to staff to prepare a proposal that would eliminate abatements for new construction while retaining them for renovations to existing homes. This proposal will be brought forward for public input and Council consideration at the Dec. 15 meeting.

Due to changes in Iowa property tax law last year, school taxes can no longer be abated. This means any abatement applies only to city and county taxes. Indianola Community School District taxes make up about 46% of the total property tax bill.

STAYING ENGAGED

I encourage residents to attend City meetings, ask questions and stay connected. At "Coffee with the Mayor," I'll offer brief remarks, followed by open discussion. Your participation helps shape the future of our community.

SIP, SHARE, CONNECT.

COFFEE WITH THE MAYOR

INDIANOLA MAYOR STEVE RICHARDSON

Ask questions, offer insights
and stay engaged with your city.

9 AM • JANUARY 7, 2026 • CROUSE CAFÉ

