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JOHN DEERE CELEBRATES 100 YEARS IN CEDAR VALLEY

John Deere has been in the Cedar Valley for 100 years now. On March 14, 1918, John Deere purchased the Waterloo Gasoline Engine Co., which grew into the John Deere Waterloo Tractor Works.

The talent and skill of Iowans have helped make the company a world leader in the tractor business and have kept Iowa feeding the world. Over the years, Iowa farmers, engineers and laborers have made big advances in John Deere tractors and what it takes to build them.

VIDEO: See what Senator Dotzler of Waterloo, a retired John Deere employee, had to say about how Iowans have kept the company on the cutting edge.

In the coming months, there will be lots of opportunities to learn more about how Iowans have helped build John Deere. The [Waterloo-Cedar Falls Courier](#) had a special section March 25, and a year's worth of activities is planned in the Cedar Valley, including a community-wide celebration June 15-16.

Check out [The John Deere Journal](#) for details on events around Iowa and the United States.

ARTAPALOOZA 2018 CEDAR FALLS – APPLY NOW!

Apply by May 14 for the 13th annual ARTapalooza on Main. The fine arts festival will take place September 8, from 9am to 4pm in Cedar Falls. Categories include jewelry, painting, drawing, ceramics, photography,

sculpture, metal, wood and mixed media. The festival also features musicians, street performers and hands-on art activities. Complete details are available at www.communitymainstreet.org.

FUTURE READY? NOT WITHOUT INVESTMENT IN IOWANS

Last week, the Senate approved a plan to make Iowa more “Future Ready.”

Iowa business leaders have said for years that their biggest challenge is finding enough skilled and qualified workers to fill immediate jobs openings. The goal of [HF 2458](#) is for 70 percent of Iowa workers to have education or training beyond high school by 2025.

I fully support this bipartisan bill. At the same time, the Legislature must follow through by increasing its investment in education, job training and infrastructure so that Iowa’s people and communities have the resources to become Future Ready.

Registered apprenticeships are expected to play a key role in achieving Iowa’s Future Ready goals. Apprenticeships are a proven solution for recruiting, training and retaining Iowans for good jobs in energy, information technology, healthcare, financial services, transportation, advanced manufacturing, food and beverage preparation, and building trades.

A new website can help employers understand how apprenticeships work and find resources to set up an apprenticeship program at their business. Job seekers can learn how an apprenticeship allows them to earn a paycheck while preparing for their careers. Go to www.earnandlearniowa.gov.

MENTAL HEALTH CARE IMPROVEMENTS MOVE FORWARD

Iowa’s lack of adequate mental health services is a big concern for most Iowans, according to an [Iowa Poll](#) earlier this year.

Extensive bipartisan work established Iowa’s regional Mental Health and Disability Services (MHDS) system a few years back. Last week, the Iowa Senate approved the next step to providing the right services at the right time to those struggling with severe, complex mental health or substance abuse needs.

[HF 2456](#), based on recommendations from a [Complex Needs Workgroup](#), adds more “core services” that the Mental Health and Disability Services regions must provide, including:

- Immediate short-term assessments for people who do not need inpatient psychiatric treatment.

- Comprehensive, 24-hour facilities that coordinate care for those with serious mental illnesses.
- Treatment teams that provide flexible help for those leaving an inpatient program.

In addition, the MHDS regions can work with transportation companies to get patients where they need to go. Currently, law enforcement or ambulance services do the transporting, which hampers their ability to respond to emergencies and do other important work.

Finally, the bill will allow mental health professionals to share certain information with law enforcement that will help prevent tragedies that have become all too common when people can’t get the help they need.

This summer, a committee will study how Iowa can pay for these and other improvements to ensure our mental health system can meet Iowa’s needs for the long term.

MEDICAID PRIVATIZATION MESS, LACK OF LEADERSHIP CONTINUES

The privatized Medicaid system has brought headaches and problems to Medicaid recipients, health care providers and Iowa taxpayers. Since April 2016, when Iowa Medicaid was turned over to out-of-state companies, constituents have complained about the obstacles they face getting care and services.

Hospitals, nursing homes and other health care providers – especially in Iowa’s small towns and rural areas – agree that the privatized system is not working. They aren’t being properly reimbursed for the care they provide. They face red tape and bureaucratic nightmares. Many are in financial jeopardy, and some have even been forced to close their doors.

VIDEO: See what Senator Jochum of Dubuque, an advocate for vulnerable Iowans, had to say about the Medicaid mess.

I supported bipartisan legislation this year ([SF 2058](#)) to end privatized Medicaid and put Iowans back in control of a state-run system that provides affordable health care to more than 560,000 citizens. Unfortunately, Senate leaders did not bring up that legislation for consideration, and Governor Reynolds is not responding to many concerns being raised.

That’s why I voted against the confirmation of Jerry Foxhoven, who was Governor Reynolds’s nominee to be director of the Iowa Department of Human Services (DHS). DHS oversees the Medicaid program on behalf of the Governor.

There are too many unresolved problems with privatized Medicaid, and there's no evidence the Governor has a plan to address them.

IOWA CHARACTER AWARDS – NOMINATE A DESERVING IOWAN

The Ray Center at Drake University annually recognizes Iowans who show the Six Pillars of Character: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and good citizenship. Since 2005, the Character Counts awards have honored more than 100 Iowans.

Do you know someone who deserves recognition for their good character? [Nominate](#) them by May 1.

Award recipients will receive a trophy, tickets to the 2018 Iowa Character Awards, and a special hometown

visit from KDSM 17 for an interview, which will be played at the awards ceremony.

NOMINATE A TECH SAVVY STUDENT – WE NEED THEIR IDEAS!

Until May 4, Iowa Communications Network is accepting student applications for its [Statewide Youth Broadband Advisory Council \(SYBAC\)](#) for the 2018-2019 school year. This is a chance for tech-savvy young people to help us identify trends and strategies to improve broadband, wireless access, infrastructure and cybersecurity in Iowa.

Students entering 10th through 12th grades may apply. Meetings take place monthly from September 2018 through May 2019 via video conference, teleconference or in person.

Contact information

State Senator Jeff Danielson serves Hudson, Cedar Falls and Waterloo. He can be reached at 319-231-7192. E-mail him at jeffdanielson@gmail.com.

Senator Danielson is ranking member on the Education Budget. He also serves on the Appropriations, Education, State Government and Transportation committees.

For further information, go to www.senate.iowa.gov/senator/danielson and www.jeffdanielson.org.