



# Iowa CREP News

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**CREP Receives Gulf Guardian Award.** In October of 2008, the EPA Gulf of Mexico Program awarded a "Gulf Guardian Award" to the Iowa Department of Agriculture and the Iowa Farm Service Agency, for A Partnership of Iowa Agriculture for Reducing Nutrients to the Gulf. "The Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program, or CREP, was designed specifically to reduce the nutrients from leaving Iowa and having an impact down stream," Northey said. "Clearly there is more work to be done, but we are making progress. Iowa farmers are committed to protecting the air, soil and water that has made our state so productive."



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**CREP Field Specialists Expanded.** Seven new Field Specialists have been hired by the Iowa Drainage District Association (IDDA) to help deliver CREP across the 37 counties that are eligible.

CFS and County Area (Left to right)

- Lannie Miller - Buena Vista, Cherokee, Kossuth, Palo Alto
- Eddie Petersen - Carroll, Greene, Hamilton, Webster
- Jay Lynch - Calhoun, Humboldt, Pocahontas, Sac, Wright
- Mark Sandvik - Cerro Gordo, Hancock, Mitchell, Winnebago, Worth
- Ike Peterson - Clay, Dickinson, Emmet, O'Brien, Osceola
- Robert Powers - Boone, Dallas, Guthrie, Madison
- Charlie Kiepe - Butler, Floyd, Franklin, Grundy, Hardin
- Dennis Barrick (not pictured) - Jasper, Marshall, Polk, Story, Warren



Photo courtesy of IDDA

**Matt Lechtenberg Joins CREP Team.** Lechtenberg's primary duties will be working with the CREP Field Specialists and landowners to ensure that CREP processes are carried out in an efficient manner. "I'm excited for the opportunity to administer the CREP in Iowa." Lechtenberg stated, "This technology has the potential to vastly improve our water quality while ensuring Iowa stays a world leader in grain production." Lechtenberg previously worked for IDALS in Mitchell and Mahaska Counties as a water quality project coordinator.



**FSA Increases Soil Rental Rates in 2008.** Prompted by increasing land values, cash rental rates, and commodity prices, the Farm Service Agency increased Soil Rental Rates (SRR) effective October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2008. An average 10% increase in SRR values was seen across the 37 counties eligible for CREP.

**2008 Iowa Farmland Value Survey Released by ISU.** As expected, land values across Iowa increased in 2008 according to the new ISU Farmland Value Survey. Statewide the average increase in value was 14%. CREP eligible counties saw a 15.3% boost in land values on average.

**New Easement Incentive Rates.** State easement payment calculations are now site specific and based on soil rental rates, cash rental rates, and land values from the ISU Farmland Value Survey. This adjustment was made to ensure the program stays competitive with changing market forces.

**Permanent Easement Terms Relaxed.** In an effort to encourage permanent easement sign-ups, the maintenance term for the structure and buffer has been reduced to 30 years for permanent easements. The land will still remain under easement as a CREP wetland into perpetuity, but the landowners will no longer be responsible for maintenance of the buffer and structure beyond 30 years. Alternate frameworks for continued CREP site maintenance is currently being weighed by the CREP staff.

**Iowa Chapter of LICA Plans 2009 Construction of CREP Wetland.** The Iowa Chapter of the Land Improvement Contractors of America (LICA) are anticipating the construction of a CREP wetland on their farm in Marshall County. The farm is used as a demonstration site for LICA members. Construction will be completed in conjunction with LICA's National Field Day on July 15th-16th. Members will be able to participate in the construction of the wetland and see first hand the processes involved in CREP site construction.



**What's In Store for 2009?** 20+ sites are planned for construction in 2009. The majority of which will be built over the summer. This is the most aggressive construction season the program has seen since inception. These wetlands will treat over 25,000 acres of tile drained area and remove almost 13,000 tons of nitrate over their lifetime. Currently, all state CREP funds are obligated. Interested landowners will be put on a waiting list until additional funding becomes available. IDALS is seeking an increase in State appropriations to CREP for fiscal year 2010.