

## Iowa West Foundation



Jerry Mathiasen and Tom Miller from the Iowa West Foundation presented the program. They discussed a Pottawattamie County needs assessment which indicated the two top needs were to improve educational achievement and neighborhood transformation. In response the IWF has been supporting a preschool program for 4 year olds with some 8 million dollars. The dropout rate in the Council Bluffs school district was the highest in the state and financial support has been given for school building administrative managers in 7 buildings this past year so principals could spend more time with student contact and curriculum improvement work. A college

access program has also been started with the selection of 8th graders from families where a college education has not been the norm to work with mentors made available to help encourage future college participation by youngsters from these families.

A "STARS" program has been initiated to encourage adults to complete at least a 2 year college program since it helps improve employee availability and the likelihood that these young adults would stay in the community. Because of a lack of involvement, \$725,000 over a 5 year program has been started to help formation of neighborhood associations which, in turn, have made a number of local neighborhoods come closer together through community activities. IWF contributes to the Pottawattamie County Promise Partners program as well as the county's community foundation. Several cities in the county have received funds for water system improvements, main street improvements and public art. Mathiasen reported that David Harris has recently been hired to help with grants.