

Kent Sovern Named New State Director for AARP Iowa

Written by Ann Black
Thursday, 30 June 2011 12:13

Veteran Business, Industry and Educational Leader to Direct Association's Statewide Efforts

DES MOINES -- Kent Sovern, former president of the New Iowa Group and executive director of the Iowa Parks Foundation, is the new state director for AARP Iowa.

Sovern, who began his position with AARP Iowa on June 27, brings more than 30 years as a successful leader in government relations, employment and workforce policy, and education to his new role. Most recently he developed the Iowa Parks Foundation (IPF) from its inception in 2008 by Iowa Governor Terry Branstad, former Congressman Neal Smith, and Joe Crookham, president of Musco Lighting. Previously, Sovern was the Executive Director of the Des Moines Higher Education Collaborative, served as Senior Vice President of Government and International Relations at the Greater Des Moines Partnership and as Director of Public Policy for the League of Iowa Municipalities.

"Kent brings great leadership, vision and true commitment to addressing the priorities of 50-plus Iowans and their families to the AARP Iowa team," said AARP Iowa State President Tony Vola. "We have great expectations for future success with such an accomplished leader directing our efforts across the state."

As AARP Iowa state director, Sovern directs a state office staff of four employees and represents more than 375,000 members in Iowa. Sovern succeeds Bruce Koepl, who was promoted to AARP Midwest Regional Vice President for AARP state operations.

"With health and financial security issues on the national agenda and the 2012 elections right around the corner, I'm excited to be involved in AARP's dynamic initiatives as the association works to shape public policy to meet its members' needs," Sovern said. "AARP is a champion for all generations and I am proud to work with AARP Iowa's diverse and talented staff and volunteers as we strive to make life better for all Americans."

A native of Fort Madison and a decorated combat veteran of the Vietnam War, Sovern began his career in K-12 education, where he won regional and national recognition as an educational innovator before moving into government relations and public policy work.

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He earned a Bachelor of Science in elementary education and minor in political science from Culver-Stockton College in Canton, Mo., and a Master of Science in education administration from Iowa State University. He is married to Phyllis Mumford-Sovern and they are both active in the Des Moines theater community as actors and volunteers. He is a member of several professional associations and human service provider groups throughout the community. He also serves as a vice-chair on the Planning and Zoning Commission for the City of Des Moines.

AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization with a membership that helps people 50+ have independence, choice and control in ways that are beneficial and affordable to them and society as a whole. AARP does not endorse candidates for public office or make contributions to either political campaigns or candidates. We produce AARP The Magazine, the definitive voice for 50+ Americans and the world's largest-circulation magazine with over 35.1 million readers; AARP Bulletin, the go-to news source for AARP's millions of members and Americans 50+; AARP VIVA, the only bilingual U.S. publication dedicated exclusively to the 50+ Hispanic community; and our website, AARP.org. AARP Foundation is an affiliated charity that provides security, protection, and empowerment to older persons in need with support from thousands of volunteers, donors, and sponsors. We have staffed offices in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

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