In 2012, Des Moines made the decision to shut down the weather beacon. The classic weather prediction kitsch would no longer blink or change colors. The unifying tower with a familar poem all locals knew was too much of a maintenance hassle. The light bulbs were outdated and expensive. Ice falling off the tower was dangerous. Whatever the excuse, the community was losing its beacon.

Find the others.

That same year, a new artist in town was looking for other artists. They had moved to Des Moines in 2008 and had a hard time knowing when art shows were and who they could make art with. They started collecting every bit of information they could find and assembling it into an online resource. They called it Art Beacon. The initial idea was to write about the art shows. Respond to the art they would find. Artists put a lot of energy, thought, and spirit into their work. How could the Art Beacon acknowledge their efforts and share what was happening with others?

The reviews quickly turned to a weekly email which became a shorthand archive of players in the community. While focused on central Iowa, Art Beacon was prepared to network throughout the Midwest and make it easier to find the others.

As the years went on, the artist who created this resource started to join the community they sought. Their own work and collaboration opportunities multiplied. Many friends were made.The beacon had worked and now there were plenty of connections to develop.In 2020, Art Beacon halted their weekly emails as events globally took a break due to the covid pandemic.

The project did not completely turn off. Art Beacon's instagram now serves as digital residency for artists with a connection to Iowa. Every two weeks, a new artist takes over and introduces their work. Every time the voice changes on the account, the beacon flashes. Follow @artbeacondsm to discover new artists and respond to their work.