



Iowa Coalition for Innovation & Growth
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News Release

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Focused Commitment Moving Iowa's Economic Priorities Forward

Iowa Coalition for Innovation & Growth builds momentum to enhance Iowa's economy for global competition

Des Moines, Iowa – (March 22, 2005) – Collaborative efforts to successfully improve Iowa's economy have been highlighted by the Iowa Coalition for Innovation & Growth for 2005.

The purpose of the Iowa Coalition for Innovation & Growth (ICIG) is to establish a collaborative structure for coordinating the identification of economic priorities and the process for moving those priorities to reality. The Coalition, established in 2001 by the Iowa Business Council and co-administered by the Iowa Chamber Alliance, works to competitively position Iowa as a world leader in the new economy by encouraging research, technology, business innovation and growth throughout the state. Membership of the Coalition includes persons and organizations that desire and will work for a stronger economy in Iowa.

According to Alexa Heffernan, Executive Director of the Iowa Business Council, "The ICIG moves into 2005 with increasing success and participation of individuals from across the state at even higher levels. ICIG oversees various 'Hot Teams', which are devoted to addressing specific goals and outcomes, and function purposefully to bring about substantive change as they meet throughout the year." The Coalition currently has four Hot Teams that are making great strides on vital issues. Hot Teams include:

- Advanced Manufacturing Research & Collaboration Cluster (AMRCC)
Chair: David Corbin, Vermeer Manufacturing
- Entrepreneurial Formation
Chair: Kurt Heiar, Regena Corporation

(more)

- Business Development and Processes
Chair: Karin Peterson, Pella Corporation
- Health Care Lean
Chair: Vince Newendorp, Vermeer Manufacturing

The Advanced Manufacturing (AMRCC) Hot Team promotes the use of advanced technologies, engineering and processes to Iowa businesses. It conducts collaborative research and provides user sharing of technologies and best practices to make Iowa the leader in engineering and advanced manufacturing. Consisting of Iowa end-product manufacturers, their Iowa suppliers, and representatives from Iowa's Regent universities and community colleges, there are four working groups: biomass, product development tools and technology, virtual communities of practice, and Lean Enterprise. The AMRCC board and its working groups have developed actionable steps and established key measures of success. A website has been established to share their expertise, www.amrcc.com. Chair Dave Corbin said, "The Web site is increasingly popular, as we're currently experiencing about 2,000 visitors per month."

Creating a statewide network of entrepreneurs, potential investors and service providers is the function of the Entrepreneurial Formation Hot Team. "We want to connect people to foster business growth from start-up to the early stages," explained Chair Kurt Heiar of Regena Corporation. "This has been the reason behind our Iowa Entrepreneur Network Web Site, www.iowaentrepreneur.com." The site serves as a one-stop information and networking resource for both Iowa entrepreneurs and investors. Established in 2004, the site now hosts an average of 1,500 visitors per month. To increase visibility and awareness of existing resources in 2005, the Hot Team will be creating a Speakers Bureau, holding a statewide "Conference for Entrepreneurs" and traveling the state visiting with communities to encourage entrepreneurial formation.

The Business Development and Processes Hot Team currently is focused on introducing Lean Enterprise to state government agencies to improve the grants/licenses/permits application and approval processes, thereby removing barriers to developing and growing Iowa businesses. Initial results have been exceptional. Lean experts from team industry members have partnered with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, the Iowa Department of Economic Development, and are about to conduct pilot projects with Iowa Workforce Development.

A Health Care Lean Hot Team is focusing on introducing Lean Enterprise to health care organizations across the state and staying the course until Lean Enterprise is embedded in the culture of health care. With Lean as the tool to eliminate waste and free up resources for more value added functions, workforce shortages can be addressed as well as quality and cost reduction for delivery of services. Thus far, Lean Enterprise has been piloted by three Iowa hospitals with positive results and other health care organizations are considering pilot projects. The Hot Team will also be benchmarking Lean implementation in health care settings across the country and will continue to seek Iowa companies practicing Lean who would be willing to mentor and/or resource hospitals in their area.

Dave Roederer, Executive Director of the Iowa Chamber Alliance, added, "We're amazed by the results the Coalition and its Hot Teams of volunteers have achieved to date and excited by the direction moving forward. With the growth in ICIG interest and activity, it definitely won't be 'business as usual' for 2005."

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