



Iowa Business Council

Serving as a Catalyst for Economic Development

IOWA BUSINESS COUNCIL MEMBERS

represent the following:



IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY



JOHN DEERE



IOWA HEALTH SYSTEM
Working together. Making a difference.



ENHANCING IOWA'S ECONOMIC VITALITY

National publications often tout the quality of life in Iowa based on high rankings the state receives for its strong education system, productive workforce, affordable housing, low crime rate, accessible health care system, and many other criteria. The presence of a diverse and vital economy enhances a quality lifestyle and incites meaningful career opportunities.

Economic vitality is what enables our state to grow, allowing entrepreneurs to launch new companies and existing businesses to expand. Like any state, Iowa's physical infrastructure and human resources face challenges as growth and change occur. The Iowa Business Council (IBC) exists to address these issues and offer sustainable solutions.



ADDRESSING IOWA'S NEEDS

Founded in 1985, the Iowa Business Council is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, self-funded organization whose members include the top executives of 20 of the largest businesses in the state, the three Regent university presidents, and Iowa's largest banking association. Collectively, these companies and institutions employ more than 180,000 Iowans and have made more than \$25 billion worth of capital investments in the state. The Council's representation reaches from border to border, east to west, and north to south.

The purpose of the Iowa Business Council is to engage the personal commitment of the Council members in active leadership roles on initiatives that offer opportunities to enhance Iowa's overall economic vitality. The Council works to:

- ◆ Identify major issues that need to be addressed in order for Iowa to generate and sustain economic growth.
- ◆ Evaluate options for solutions or improvements to address the need.
- ◆ Create and cultivate public/private partnerships to achieve the desired results.

Since its inception, the Iowa Business Council has evolved from a research and advisory organization to a proactive advocacy group asserting leadership on major business policy initiatives. While other organizations effectively focus on individual issues, the Council maintains a "big picture" perspective. For example, the Council was an early endorser of the Iowa Values Fund and supported its reinstatement and funding to further build on Iowa's strengths in manufacturing, life sciences, and information technology. In 2001, an IBC white paper titled "A Case for Change" addressed the vitality of the business community in Iowa and set forth recommendations on how to move the state's economy forward. Over time, the Council has worked with many other similarly motivated groups and associations, all possessing the common goal of converting ideas into reality to stimulate economic growth. These collaborative efforts have resulted in significant strides and progress on issues vital to Iowa's future.



Serving as a Catalyst for Economic Development

CURRENT ISSUES & INITIATIVES

EDUCATION

Today's competitive world marketplace requires our workers to excel in math, reading, science, and other disciplines. The Council supports changes in the delivery of Iowa's Pre-K – 16 education system that will drive administrative efficiency, spur student and teacher development in key subject areas, and enhance a quality, lifelong learning experience. In turn, sustainable funding resources must be established for other value-added areas such as professional development, teacher compensation, reductions in student tuition, and certified early childhood education for all children. A strong higher education system is critical to Iowa business because our colleges and universities supply the intellectual capital and innovative capacity necessary for a vibrant knowledge-based economy.



- ◆ **Early Childhood Education** – Access to quality early childhood education should be available to parents of all Iowa children. Participation by 4- and 5-year-olds in these programs should be voluntary, with certifiable standards in place statewide for all publicly-funded and privately-based providers. Ultimately, a strong early childhood education system in Iowa will have a positive impact on workforce quality, reliability, and availability. The result is a more productive adult employee and dedicated citizen who misses work less frequently, gets involved with community and charitable activities, and supports the local tax base. The Council has recently sponsored early childhood conferences and a summit to spur dialogue and encourage action. Due in part to significant appropriations made by the Iowa General Assembly in recent years, a measurable improvement in early childhood education is under way.
- ◆ **Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM)** – Generating new interest and creating enthusiasm among teachers and students for STEM-oriented curricula and related careers in Iowa is a critically important issue. Well-educated graduates in these focus areas will be necessary if Iowa employers are to compete more effectively in the global marketplace. The ultimate goal is for Iowa to be recognized as the premier state in valuing and delivering a quality STEM education.



- ◆ **Teacher Education Loan Forgiveness** – The Council seeks to encourage students graduating from Iowa colleges and universities with education degrees to pursue teaching careers in the state by implementing a meaningful loan forgiveness program targeted at areas of need, e.g., early childhood education and STEM.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Sustaining Iowa's competitive posture in the global economy is an ongoing challenge. The effort requires implementing aggressive, proactive measures to address long-term issues recognized as fundamental to building and maintaining a strong and diverse business climate. One such initiative is the Iowa Coalition for Innovation and Growth (ICIG), a collaboration of public- and private-sector leaders jointly administered by

IBC and the Iowa Chamber Alliance that provides a forum to identify economic challenges the state should address and initiate action that leads to substantive change. ICI recognizes that if Iowa is to expand its human and financial resources, it must offer attractive career and lifestyle choices in both rural and urban settings. Doing so will enhance the economic vitality of the state and make Iowa a better place to live and work.

◆ **Workforce Development** – Council members are involved with initiatives developed to accelerate the cultivation, attraction, and retention of a qualified and diverse workforce to meet the expected needs of Iowa businesses. Diversity, in this instance, includes people not only of various cultures and geographic regions, but also older workers, individuals pursuing second careers, and those of all ages and abilities seeking lifestyle alternatives.

◆ **Entrepreneurial Formation** – The Council recognizes that in order for Iowa to vigorously participate in the dynamic global economy, a critical mass of entrepreneurial talent and venture capital investment must be nurtured to accelerate the growth of business and career opportunities.

— **Iowa Entrepreneurial Network** – At www.iowaentrepreneur.com, a virtual “community of practice” venue has been created online, where Iowa entrepreneurs can utilize a unique chat room format to access local and national business formation and venture capital expertise.

— **Venture Capital Attraction** – Bold new business ideas in areas such as the life sciences, information technology, and advanced manufacturing must find opportunity to develop and grow in Iowa, not elsewhere. This requires drawing the interest and attention of venture capitalists, which is why the Council has supported initiatives such as the innovative *Fund of Funds* created in the Iowa Capital Formation Act of 2002.

◆ **Advanced Manufacturing** – The Advanced Manufacturing Research and Collaboration Cluster (AMRCC) is a partnership of Iowa end-product manufacturers and their suppliers. The group promotes the use of advanced engineering processes and manufacturing technologies while conducting collaborative research and sharing best practices. The primary goal of AMRCC’s three *Working Groups* is to assure that Iowa companies remain at the forefront of business trends and innovations to maintain and improve their competitiveness.

— **Biomass Working Group (BWG)** – Of increasing importance to Iowa’s economic potential is effective deployment of renewable resources as viable, sustainable substitutes for petroleum-based products. The BWG is a consortium of academic and industrial innovators who apply raw and composite renewable, recyclable, and biodegradable materials in commercial products. The goal is to make Iowa a leader in bioproduct development – research, engineering, and advanced manufacturing – establishing the state as a preferred headquarters location for biorelated businesses.



— **Joint Product Development Working Group (JPDWG)** – Iowa is fortunate to have a tremendous resource of top-tier corporations and academic institutions engaged with advanced research and product development in many industry areas. Their individual efforts are often notable. AMRCC believes, however, that they stand to achieve even greater results in a collaborative atmosphere. The JPDWG brings together representatives from industry and higher education to share best practices and advance specific work areas, e.g., finite element analysis, thermal modeling, accelerated testing development, sealants and adhesives development, nanotechnology, material informatix, and virtual reality.

— **Workshops & Seminars Working Group (WSWG)** – Attendant to the efforts of the other Working Groups is the ongoing compilation of information and revelation of activity within Iowa industry and at state colleges regarding advanced manufacturing efforts and bioproduct development. The WSWG is tasked with developing an online database that will serve as a resource for research on topics of popular interest, provide insight to specific knowledge areas, and identify the stated objectives and deliverables of projects being funded. The Group is also responsible for support of workshops and seminars that help transfer knowledge on topics of interest to the Iowa manufacturing community.

◆ **Safeguard Iowa Partnership** – Council members are acutely aware of the critical need to be prepared for, respond to, and recover from natural and human caused disasters. Government cannot shoulder this burden alone. A public/private collaboration, such as the IBC-sponsored Safeguard Iowa Partnership, will effectively organize and develop mobilization procedures for the resources and expertise needed to help assure adequate continuity of business operations and safe, resilient communities in a crisis situation.

◆ **National Center for Food Safety and Security (NCFS&S)** – The Council supports the creation of the NCFS&S to act as the coordinating clearinghouse for all existing federal, state, local, academic, and private sector entities involved with protecting our nation's food supply. Building on current strengths and assets, this entity will make Iowa the epicenter for food safety and security, generating extraordinary new research and business opportunities.

CONTINUOUS PROCESS IMPROVEMENT

Iowa Business Council companies face intense marketplace competition, both domestically and overseas. The ever-present challenge is to find new ways to do more with increasingly precious resources while improving quality and service to customers. Successful businesses worldwide subscribe to the philosophy behind Lean Enterprise – the continuous critical evaluation and improvement of administrative and production methods. Lean allows for redeployment of scarce human and financial resources in the most efficient manner possible, eliminating steps in processes that add no value to the end product. This, in turn, leads to reduced costs, increased product quality, and happier employees.

The Council has been instrumental in transferring Lean business principles to sectors beyond manufacturing that include health care, state government, and academia.



◆ **Health Care Lean** – Business efficiency experts assert that up to 35 percent of the average employee’s time is wasted on inefficient procedures. In health care, that number jumps to 60 percent. The Council facilitated Lean “events” in several Iowa hospitals, leading to improvements in staff efficiency and patient wait times by 32-100 percent. So significant were these results that the health care industry has stepped forward to own the process and assume responsibility of further expanding Lean applications at health care facilities throughout Iowa.

◆ **Government Lean** – Recognizing that a competitive business environment means regulatory functions need to perform as efficiently as possible, the Council sought to institutionalize Lean in state government. Following Council-facilitated Lean events in targeted state agencies, delays in approval for various permits and certifications were reduced, often by 90 percent or more, without diminishing the actual time required for standard due-diligent review. Acknowledging these dramatic results, the Iowa Legislature has now appropriated funds to create a dedicated advocate who will coordinate future Lean activities within the executive branch.

◆ **Academia Lean** – Higher education stands to benefit from increased administrative and programmatic efficiencies in much the same way as have Iowa hospitals and state government agencies. Council member companies are assisting with the introduction of Lean on the campuses of the three Regent universities, expecting outcomes comparable to those realized with the Council’s efforts in Health Care Lean and Government Lean.



HEALTH CARE

Iowans have access to one of the finest health care delivery systems in the country. However, assuring employer-sponsored availability of quality health care is a challenge for Iowa businesses as increasing costs and global competition pose a threat to competitiveness. While the Council recognizes the need to control employee health benefit costs, it also seeks to maintain the stability and effectiveness of the health care industry’s infrastructure.



◆ **Employee Wellness** – Innovative and sustainable employee wellness programs that encourage broad-based participation are a critical factor in controlling escalating health care costs. Council members have agreed to share their companies’ best practices for wellness and health literacy programs.

◆ **Health Care Costs** – No one constituency should disproportionately bear the expense of providing health care. Many factors affect costs that threaten the current infrastructure of the Iowa health care delivery system: an aging population, harmful personal habit and lifestyle choices, inadequate and shrinking payments to providers from government programs, a growing number of uninsured, greater prevalence of chronic diseases, escalating prescription drug costs, timely deployment of technological advances, inadequate health literacy, expensive new drug therapies, greater medical malpractice liability, and acute shortages of health care professionals. The Council supports working collaboratively in the areas of Medicare equity, relief from rising malpractice costs, consumer education, continuous process improvement, and quality medical outcomes to reduce the cost of health care to Iowa residents.

**For more information about the Iowa Business Council
and its initiatives, visit www.iowabusinesscouncil.org.**



Iowa Business Council

**100 East Grand Avenue, Suite 160
Des Moines, Iowa 50309-1800
Tel: 515-246-1700
Fax: 515-246-1701**

E-mail: ibc@iowabusinesscouncil.org
Web site: www.iowabusinesscouncil.org