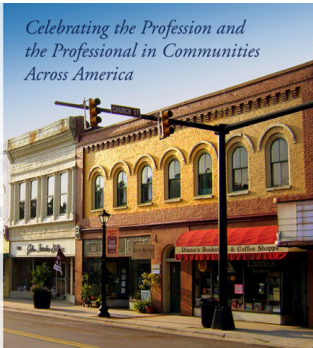


Western Iowa Advantage is a collaborative group of economic development officials in Adair, Audubon, Carroll, Crawford, Greene, Guthrie, Ida, and Sac Counties.



*Celebrating the Profession and
 the Professional in Communities
 Across America*



May 7-12 is National Economic Development Week, a week dedicated to increasing the awareness for local programs that create jobs, advance career development opportunities, and increase the quality of life. National Economic Development Week consists of in-person and online activities designed to highlight the importance of economic development taking place in the United States. More information can be found by clicking [here](#).

WIAD ANNUAL REPORT

WIAD's 2017 Employer Educator Summit was the most successful yet, with more than 300 attendees at the Stables at Copper Ridge in Denison. The first Workforce Warrior Awards were awarded to collaborate efforts between local educators and businesses. The winners were East Sac County High School, Carroll High School, IKM-Manning, Crawford County Hospital, Eventide Lutheran Home, WITCC & Denison Schools, and New Hope Village.

WIAD partners traveled north to the Twin Cities to engage 30 exciting companies at the Community Venture Network. These companies are looking to expand into new communities and WIAD Partners pitch local communities to these companies to try and entice them to further consider the WIAD Region.

Many new businesses opened in the region in 2017. Some of the area's recent projects include: Quality Food Processors in Denison, Waspy's in Templeton, Biokinometrics in Carroll, Trophies Plus in Breda, Crystal Freeze Dry in Panora, Remington Seed Expansion in Schaller, and Waspy's Truck Stop in Audubon.

Continued on page 3

Samha Foods Company Tour

Western Iowa Advantage partners toured Samha Foods in Schleswig in March. Samha Foods began its operations in Omaha, Nebraska in 2009 and later opened its processing plant in Schleswig, and currently has 20 employees. Samha Foods manufactures Korean, Asian and Japanese beef and pork products. The company recently expanded into the marinated meat product market. This expansion was awarded Region XII Development Corporation revolving loan funds to assist with this production expansion. As result of this business visit, WIAD partners connected Samha Foods to a local retailer that will enable them to sell their product local and grow their business.



WIAD partners visit with Samha Foods Staff. Clockwise from bottom left: Brandy Ripley (SETD), Ton Kelly (owner), Evan Blakley (CDC) Chan Ho Lee (Meat Scientist), Colin King (plant manager), Javier Arrendondo (production manager), and Rick Hunsaker (Region XII COG).

WIAD Holds Annual Banquet

Western Iowa Advantage came together to celebrate their accomplishments during their 2018 annual banquet. The banquet was held on April 10 at the Midwest Industries Hangar in Ida Grove. Angela Martinez, Regional Director U.S. Economic Development Administration was the keynote speaker for the evening. Martinez addressed the nearly 100 attendees and shared regional success stories from across the country. During Martinez’s time at EDA, she has helped shape and launch several multi-agency initiatives including the Jobs and Innovation Accelerator Challenge, the Investing in Manufacturing Communities Partnership and EDA’s new Regional Innovation Strategies Program. WIAD members made connections with EDA staff and networked among regional stakeholders.



Angie Martinez addresses the nearly 100 attendees at the WIAD Annual Banquet.



Evan Blakley provides attendees with a summary of WIAD’s activities over the past year.



Alex Smith (EDA), Michelle Bostinelos (SIMPCO), Rick Hunsaker (Region XII COG), and Angie Martinez gather before the banquet.



SAVE THE DATE OCTOBER 10, 2018

Mark your calendars for the 2018 Employer Educator Summit

Employers have openings across a variety of fields. The skills gap in the U.S. is particularly acute in the construction industry, with the U.S. Department of Labor estimating that nearly 7 million jobs will need to be filled by 2024. Be a part of the solution as we gather educators and employers in a one-day summit to discuss strategies to ensure our students have the skills they need to succeed in all types of careers in our region’s economy.

- WHAT** Employer Educator Summit
Sponsored by Western Iowa Advantage, IowaWorks, and Employers Council of Iowa
- WHEN** 9am to 3pm - Wednesday, October 10th
- WHERE** LPA Conference Center
5071 Clover Ridge Rd, Panora, IA 50216



Workforce Warrior Award Application

Western Iowa Advantage (WIAD) wishes to increase the visibility of the variety and availability of careers in western Iowa. This effort has included promotion of connections between our employers and our schools. Primary in that strategy is the annual Employer-Educator Summits, where workforce issues are discussed hand-in-hand with examples of successful partnerships in Iowa. WIAD believes that students do not fully understand how degrees, certificates, and apprenticeships can translate into jobs available today that are close to home with good salaries and benefits. As more schools and business work together to rectify this knowledge gap, WIAD began the Workforce Warrior Award to recognize businesses and schools that are successfully implementing a program or project that enhances a collaborative relationship with an educational institution or local business(es), providing opportunities to students that promote careers in our region. As part of the award, a small financial stipend is provided to help further the work being recognized.

Program Mission

Western Iowa needs workers. Communities strive to retain and attract persons who are native to the area or who have other ties (e.g. family or business). Students attending our schools are a natural way to achieve this goal, and is the primary driver behind the WIAD Employer-Educator Summit.

Eligibility

Any business, K-12 school, or postsecondary institution with physical operations within the counties of: Adair, Audubon, Carroll, Crawford, Greene, Guthrie, Ida, Sac County is eligible to apply. Additionally, awardees:

- Must have an existing or planned program that involves opportunities for students enrolled in a K-12 school or post-secondary education program. For educators, this program should allow students to gain knowledge of the local business or industry.
- The program or project being recognized must be replicable.
- Awardees must illustrate the relationship between business and the local education system.
- There must be a benefit that occurs/will occur outside of the program/project.
- Awardees should explain how the stipend (\$500) will help further the goals or results of the partnership.
- If selected as an award winner, a representative from your business or school must be present to receive the award at the Employer-Educator Summit on October 10, 2018 in Panora. You may be asked to provide a brief summary of the project.

Application Process

Submit a one to six page document that includes: 1) Name of Business or school; 2) Name of Program; 3) Contact Name, Phone, Address, and Email; 4) Name of Partner School(s); and, 5) text explaining your business's or school's current/planned program and how it is impacting students or providing opportunities for them to better gain knowledge of your business or industry (business) or to better gain knowledge of the careers in western Iowa (educators).

Applications must be submitted by September 7, 2018 to Rick Hunsaker rhunsaker@region12cog.org or by mail to Region XII COG Attn: Rick Hunsaker, PO Box 768, Carroll, IA 51401. Questions may be directed to Rick Hunsaker at 712-792-9914.

WIAD Annual Report Continued:

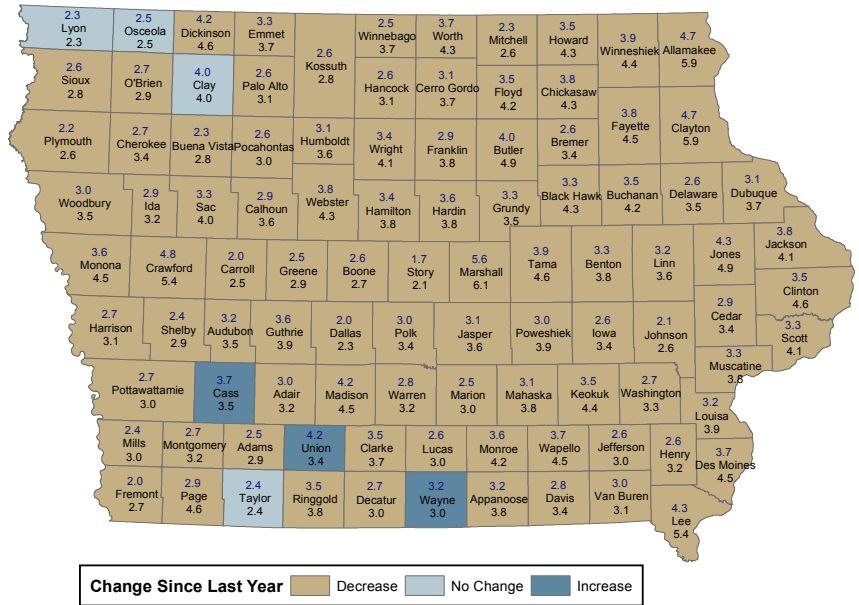
Other recent WIAD initiatives include: lead generation, western Iowa industry visits, and website improvements. WIAD has partnered with Research Consultants International out of Quebec to place our team in front of investors with tangible projects. Numerous times a year, WIAD partners take time to tour industrial facilities across the region to help make connections. WIAD partners recently signed with Golden Shovel Agency, to bring new and improved features to our ever-expanding website.

Iowa's Unemployment Rate Falls to 2.8% in March

The Western Iowa Advantage Region's monthly unemployment rate decreased to 3.1 percent in March 2018 from 3.5 percent in March 2017, according to figures released from Iowa Workforce Development. Iowa's unemployment rate was 2.8 percent in March 2018 from a revised 3.1 percent in March 2017. The U.S. unemployment rate was 4.1 percent in March 2018. Total employment in the region increased slightly to 44,110 in March 2018 from 37,556 in March 2017.

Unemployment Rates for Iowa Counties in March

March 2018 (Rate Above) and March 2017 (Rate Below)



Western Iowa Advantage tracks various economic indicators in Adair, Audubon, Carroll, Crawford, Guthrie, Greene and Sac Counties in Iowa, including employment trends.

County unemployment rates in the region for March 2018:

Adair	3.0 %
Audubon	3.2 %
Carroll	2.0 %
Crawford	4.8 %
Greene	2.5 %
Guthrie	3.6 %
Ida	2.9 %
Sac	3.3 %

WIAD PARTNERS:

Rick Hunsaker, Executive Director, Region XII Council of Governments/Region XII Development Corp.
 rhunsaker@region12cog.org ■ (712) 775-7800 ■ www.region12cog.org

Brandy Ripley, Executive Director, Sac Economic & Tourism Development
 bripley@saccountyiowa.com ■ (712) 664-2940 ■ www.saccountyiowa.com

Shannon Landauer, CEcD, Executive Director, Carroll Area Development Corporation
 s.landauer@carrolliowa.com ■ (712) 792-4383 ■ www.carrollareadev.com

Sarah Gomez, Executive Director, Midwest Partnership Corporation
 sgomez@midwestpartnership.com ■ (515) 523-1262 ■ www.midwestpartnership.com

Evan Blakley, Executive Director, Chamber & Development Council of Crawford County
 eblakley@cdcia.org ■ (712) 263-4789 ■ www.cdcia.org

Ken Paxton, Executive Director, Greene County Development Corporation
 ken@greenecountyiowa.com ■ (515) 386-8255 ■ www.greenecountyiowa.org

Rita Frahm, Executive Director, Ida County Economic Development
 rmfracm@gmail.com ■ (712) 364-3181 ■ www.idacounty.org

Chris Whitaker, Local Assistance Director, Region XII Council of Governments/Region XII Development Corp.
 cwhitaker@region12cog.org ■ (712) 775-7811 ■ www.region12cog.org