

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

Did You Know? Western Iowa Advantage is Your Business Resource for Growth!

Running a business? We get it. It's a challenge! Managing the paperwork, accounting, all the regulations, solving workforce challenges, figuring out how to obtain essential capital to keep the doors open... It's a daunting process for any entrepreneur.

So, where can a new or existing business owner turn to get their questions answered?

Look no further than the Western Iowa Advantage (WIAD)! We're your community resource for everything needed to establish, build and grow your business in Audubon, Calhoun, Carroll, Crawford, Greene, Ida and Sac Counties.

What is Economic Development, Exactly?

Simply put, economic development is designed to enhance the economic prosperity of a region by attracting new businesses, supporting existing ones and helping entrepreneurs get their operation up and running.

Business attracts new employees, and as these residents put down roots in the area, our school districts enjoy increased tax support, our healthcare system gets upgraded and infrastructure is modernized. Each functions as a brick that builds a solid foundation for the community and promotes a higher quality of life.

So, How Does WIAD Do It?

For the WIAD, developing a healthy economy means promoting all the advantages of doing business in each of our seven counties.

For example, did you know that:

- Iowa was named the 5th Best Run State in the Nation (24/7 Wall Street, 2018)
- Iowa has the 2nd lowest cost of doing business in the country (Business Facilities, 2017)
- Iowa is home to 80 insurance company headquarters (Iowa Insurance Division)
- Iowa's largest industry sector, advanced manufacturing, has contributed over \$30 billion to the economy (Bea, 2019)

We're also responsible for showcasing all of the other things that make Western Iowa an attractive place to live, work and play. We want to highlight what gives our region a competitive edge, enticing businesses both large and small to consider establishing their operations here vs. elsewhere.

There's a lot that Western Iowa has to offer! Things like:

Attractive Tax Advantages

- No sales and use tax on manufacturing machinery and business equipment purchases
- No property tax on new industrial machinery and business equipment
- No personal property tax, including corporate inventories of goods-in-process, raw materials and salable goods
- Local and state tax abatement programs
- Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

Did You Know? Continued from Page 1

- New Jobs Tax Credit
- Renewable Chemicals Production Tax Credit
- Research Activities Credit

Special Financing for Businesses

- Low interest revolving loan funds from \$5,000 to \$300,000
- High Quality Jobs Program designed to support innovation and job growth in Iowa

Improved Quality of Life

- Low cost of housing
- Low property taxes
- Safe communities
- An average commute time of 5-9 minutes
- The legendary Midwestern work ethic

We're Here to Help!

On any given day, you will find WIAD helping business and community leaders with economic development strategies, discussing workforce development and training options, talking about social media marketing tactics, sharing housing opportunities or just listening to business ideas and offering feedback.

Contact us today to tap into a wealth of information and resources to help your business dreams become a reality!

WIAD is ready to take on 2025, keeping an eye on education, support, and business tours while tackling workforce attraction and housing. We are committed to facilitating ongoing improvements in our region's economy, quality of life, and tourism. Contact us today at 712.792.9914 or info@westerniowaadvantage.com and see how easy it can be! Follow us on Facebook and LinkedIn.

Kate Benz, Writer, Golden Shovel Agency

Featured Land: Highway 59/20 Business Park in Holstein

Ida County Economic Development has a written option for 120 acres adjacent to the current subdivision. Lots ranging in size from 1.38 to 4.45 acres located at the intersection of north US Hwy 59 and US Hwy 20 on the southern edge of the community of Holstein, Iowa. Holstein is located in Ida County in northwest Iowa. The community has established an urban renewal area for this subdivision. New infrastructure: water, sewer, street, fiber based commercial grade business services including 10 Gb fiber circuits for Ethernet, Internet or Pseudo-wire needs and fault protected, redundant services. Environmental and DNR publications complete for the entire subdivision. This location is also eligible for the New Market Tax Credit program.



Western Iowa Tech's Career Academy Anticipates Grand Opening in August 2025

From Agriculture to Auto Technology, Western Iowa Tech Community College (WITCC) will be humming as a hub of Career and Technical Education (CTE) once its new, multi-million dollar Career Academy swings open its doors in the fall of 2025.



As the Western Iowa Advantage (WIAD) celebrates Career and Technical Education (CTE), it's also acknowledging the boom the academy will bring to the community, creating a viable pipeline of talented students to service workforce needs throughout the region and beyond.

"Seeing this vision go from dream to reality is reflective of the collaborative spirit shared between our industry leaders and the Denison, Boyer Valley, Maple Valley Anthon Oto-Charter Oak Ute, Odebolt Arthur-Battle Creek Ida Grove, and Woodbine school districts," said Paul Plumb, Executive Director, Chamber & Development Council of Crawford County. "We're excited to watch a new generation of CTE leaders emerge from the classrooms."

Funding for the facility got a boost in 2022 after Governor Kim Reynolds and the Iowa Department of Education awarded WITCC a \$1 million Career Academy Incentive Fund grant.

A Crucial Step

"Our students who are enrolled in WITCC courses are acquiring college credits and job skills. They will enter the next phase of their life, whether it be enrolling in a community college, a four-year college, or the workforce, with an advantage," said Denison Superintendent Dr. Kim Buryanek. "Denison High School graduates have college credits and job skills that other high school graduates may not have. The expansion of the regional career academy will provide this same advantage to other students from area high schools. We will be able to provide more high school graduates with job skills to enter CTE-inspired jobs in western Iowa."

According to a recent article by the Wall Street Journal, the shifting interest from white to blue-collar jobs is being attributed to disenchantment with the soaring cost of a traditional college education and lackluster starting salaries within traditional fields of business.

Education Data seconded the notion, pegging the national student loan debt to over \$1.7 trillion, with the average college graduate being saddled with \$106,850. And Sallie Mae predicts that students can expect to pay an average of \$36,436/year for college, almost double the \$17,600/year for attending trade school.

"The construction of this new facility is a crucial step in strengthening career and technical education in Western Iowa," said Sandy Velasquez, WITCC's Director of Denison Campus & Southern Service Area. "By expanding hands-on training opportunities, WITCC is preparing students for high-demand industries, including business, agriculture, autobody, and education. Additionally, thanks to a recent grant, students will be able to explore pathways in nursing, HVAC, and welding. The new space will allow students to train on industry-standard equipment, ensuring they are job-ready upon graduation. This investment will help close the regional workforce gap, support local businesses, and contribute to economic growth. By developing a skilled labor force, the facility will play a key role in sustaining and expanding CTE-related industries in Western Iowa."

The Future Looks Bright

Once completed, the facility, consisting of a new structure on the WITCC Denison campus, will offer programs in Agriculture, Education, Business and Auto Technology.

"The future looks bright for students in Iowa pursuing careers in the trades, especially with growing investments in CTE programs," said Velasquez. "This academy ensures that students have access to cutting-edge training in high-demand career fields. As industries evolve, students will benefit from hands-on learning, partnerships with local employers, and affordable college credits. These opportunities will allow them to transition smoothly into the workforce. With competitive wages, job stability, and career advancement opportunities, the trades provide a promising future for Iowa's next generation of skilled professionals."

For more information about the [Western Iowa Tech Community College's Career Academy, click here!](#)

Kate Benz, Writer, Golden Shovel Agency

Growing Together: National Agriculture Month Honors Iowa's 84,000 Farmers and Industry Leaders

Ranking first in the nation for corn and soybean production with over 30.7 million acres of rich farmland, Western Iowa Advantage (WIAD) is tipping its hat to the state's bumper crop of farmers, ranchers and industry participants during March's National Agriculture Month.

"Iowa's economy is grown in our soil," said WIAD Managing Partner Chris Whitaker. "Agriculture is something we celebrate year-round, but we're especially proud to recognize the tenacity of not only our farmers, but the businesses that support their operations."

The Agriculture Council of America, a nonprofit consisting of thought leaders in the agricultural, food and fiber community, has pegged March 18 as National Ag Day to further its efforts of heightening the public's awareness of how agriculture still plays a vital role in today's tech-obsessed world.



Mohr than Meets the Eye

Supporting the network of Iowan agronomists are an array of industry-supporting businesses that run the gamut from fertilizers to farm equipment.

Family owned Bedrock & Sons LLC is one of them.

Headquartered in Denison, the company offers a variety of wind-resistant shades that offer a cool spot for humans and livestock in need of some R&R. "The MohrShade was designed in 2019 with the idea of providing less hassle for its customers. All our products come set-up and require no assembly! Most of our competition requires you to assemble the product when it arrives and that could take up to a few hours to do. Not only are our products good in the agriculture sector, but they are also great to use in any public gathering place or more!" said owner Cody Mohr. "Shade is a huge part of reducing stress on livestock, so forming this relationship with farmers/ranchers in the area and beyond is of great importance!"

Mohr and the WIAD also recognize the vital role that agriculture continues to play in the American and global economy.

"Agriculture feeds the world. People need to remember that! Back to the basics. Without agriculture the world wouldn't go round," said Mohr. "Small town Iowa is all about the farmer. Everywhere you look are feedlots and farm land! With this being said, it creates jobs to support its residents and so much more!"

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