

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

Region XII Council of Governments Honored with 2025 Impact Award from the National Association of Development Organizations

Region XII Council of Governments has recently been recognized with a 2025 Aliceann Wohlbruck Impact Award from the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) for the Western Iowa Advantage Collaborative Marketing to Address a Housing Crisis.

Western Iowa Advantage (WIAD), developed a comprehensive marketing strategy to attract housing developers to the seven-county region of Western Iowa. As part of this effort, Region XII led the creation of the Housing Development Opportunities in Western Iowa brochure, finalized in summer 2024. The brochure highlights the region's economic strengths, ongoing business expansion, job opportunities, and includes compelling testimonials from developers who have already benefited from investing in the area. Since its release, WIAD has received four development inquiries, including three from outside the region, demonstrating early success in positioning Western Iowa as a prime destination for housing investment.

This year's cohort included 90 impactful projects led by 79 organizations across 24 states. These award-winning efforts were recognized during NADO's 2025 Annual Training Conference, held this past October in Salt Lake City, Utah. All selected projects are featured in an interactive StoryMap that showcases summaries, images, and key partners. The map is available at www.nado.org/2025impactawards/.

"The Impact Awards are an annual reminder of the creativity and commitment that regional development organizations bring to their communities," said 2024-2025 NADO President Rick Hunsaker, Executive Director of the Region XII Council of Governments in Iowa. "This year's awardees show how local and regional partnerships, driven by vision and collaboration, can lead to lasting positive change across our country."

The Impact Awards are presented in memory of Aliceann Wohlbruck, NADO's first executive director, who was a lifelong advocate for regional solutions and rural economic development.

About NADO

The National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) promotes public policies that strengthen local governments, communities, and economies through the regional strategies, coordination efforts, and program expertise of the nation's regional development organizations.

Learn more about NADO at www.nado.org.

The image shows a promotional graphic for a brochure. It features an aerial view of a town with a yellow banner at the top that says "It's easier here!". A circular inset shows a family (a woman, a child, and a man) looking at a house. Below the aerial view, the text reads "Housing Development Opportunities in Western Iowa". At the bottom, it says "Free and low-cost land, financial incentives, rebates and support make it financially advantageous to build in Western Iowa." and includes the Western Iowa Advantage logo and contact information: "712.792.9914 • info@westerniowaadvantage.com".

October - National Manufacturing Month!

Greene County

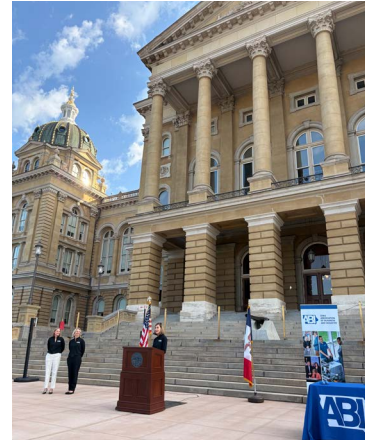
October was National Manufacturing Month and Greene County Development Corporation Executive Director, Greg Piklapp, had the opportunity to join 53 students along with teachers from the Greene County Community School District for tours of Power Lift and American Athletic, Inc. on October 3rd in Jefferson, Iowa.

Seeing the worldwide impacts of local companies in Greene County provided the unique chance for everyone to see innovative and high quality work happening right in their own backyard. Thank you to both companies!



State Capitol - Des Moines

A Manufacturing Day kick-off event was held with the Iowa Association of Business and Industry at the Capitol. The Governor also read a Proclamation and named October 3 Manufacturing Day in Iowa!!



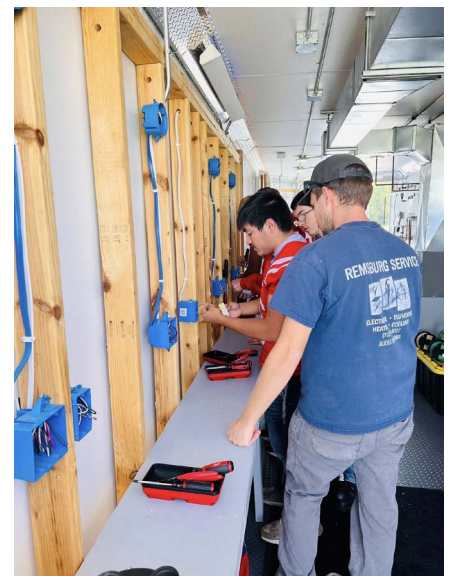
Audubon County Economic Development Holds Career Day

Audubon County Economic Development hosted their 4th Annual Career Day on October 3, 2025. Career Day highlights a variety of the career opportunities found in rural Iowa to our high school students who are trying to make plans for their futures.

Audubon High School, Exira-EHK High School, Coon Rapids-Bayard High School, and Glidden-Ralston High School participated this year, bringing almost 200 students.

Nineteen local and regional businesses participated showcasing careers in agriculture, healthcare, engineering, finance, real estate, advanced manufacturing, law enforcement, and skilled trades. Students learned about various career paths found in each of the businesses, identified needed skills and beneficial classes, and provided face to face time with a variety of employers.

Thank you to everyone that participated and made this event a success.



Above: Students have the opportunity to experience hands on learning about electrical outlet installation during career day.

Governor Kim Reynolds Appoints Theresa Hildreth to Empower Rural Iowa Initiative

Governor Kim Reynolds has appointed Theresa Hildreth, Executive Director and Board President of the Calhoun County Economic Development Corporation (CCEDC), to serve as a member of the Empower Rural Iowa (ERI) Initiative. Hildreth's term runs from September 5, 2025, through August 31, 2027.

The Empower Rural Iowa initiative was first established by executive order in 2018 as a partnership with the Iowa Rural Development Council (IRDC). Co-chaired by Lt. Governor Chris Cournoyer and IRDC representative Mark Reinig, ERI was initially organized into three task forces—Investing, Growing, and Connecting—to address housing shortages, business transition planning, entrepreneurship, leadership development, broadband expansion, and strategies for attracting and retaining residents.



Above: Theresa Hildreth (Left), and Lt. Governor Chris Cournoyer

In 2023, a new executive order updated ERI to function as a “start-up incubator for rural policy innovation.” This streamlined structure enables the group to develop and test new concepts, scale successful strategies, and transition them to other agencies or organizations for long-term sustainability. Membership was reduced from 66 to 25 appointees, consolidating its work into a single committee.

Day-to-day operations are managed by the Center for Rural Revitalization within the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA), which implements ERI recommendations, serves as a liaison to rural communities, and connects small towns with programs that enhance rural vitality.

Hildreth, who was also recently elected to the Iowa Rural Development Council Board of Directors, will co-chair the 2026 Rural Iowa Summit in Dubuque (April 9–10, 2026) alongside IRDC Executive Director Bill Menner.

“Theresa has been a great addition to the Iowa Rural Development Council board of directors, and she is a great selection for Empower,” said Menner. “She brings great knowledge and a keen understanding of rural communities. She’ll be an asset, and I know that’s why the Governor selected her for this appointment.”

“Being involved in the promotion, growth, and awareness of all that rural Iowa offers provides a great sense of pride,” Hildreth said. “I’m a rural Iowa girl—from my roots in O’Brien County to my longtime home in Calhoun County. Being appointed by Governor Reynolds is an honor, and it is my pleasure to represent Calhoun County and all of rural Iowa as we work with a diverse group of stakeholders to share our rural way of life and the unique opportunities across the state.”

Hildreth added, “I have attended my first Empower Rural Iowa Initiative meeting, which was a very positive experience. This opportunity to work directly with other rural leaders and with our chair, Lt. Governor Chris Cournoyer, will directly benefit Calhoun County.”

Downtown Energy Across Carroll County

Neighboring towns are investing in their cores — and strengthening the region together.

Carroll | Investing in a Vibrant Downtown Future

Carroll is taking bold steps to strengthen its downtown with the new Downtown Facade Grant Program, offering five \$20,000 grants each fiscal year to help building owners improve and refresh storefronts. The program grew out of recommendations from the IEDA Downtown Resource Team, which conducted a full downtown assessment and identified facade improvements as a key priority for revitalization. This investment builds on Carroll’s strong retail foundation and reinforces its role as the hub of regional commerce and community life.

Downtown Energy continues on next page (4)

Downtown Energy Across Carroll County

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Manning | Investment and Ingenuity Drive Downtown Success

Manning has transformed its historic downtown into a model for rural revitalization. Through Main Street Iowa and local partnerships, more than \$10 million in private investment has restored brick facades, improved sidewalks and lighting, and created welcoming storefronts. The result is a thriving, walkable core that supports new businesses and attracts visitors — proof that even a small town can lead impactful changes.

Coon Rapids | Revitalizing a Downtown with Momentum

Coon Rapids is channeling state and local resources into a full-block Downtown Revitalization Project, backed by a \$689,081 grant. Building fronts along Main Street are being repaired and modernized, while pedestrian improvements make the district safer and more inviting. Each visible improvement adds momentum, drawing residents downtown and reinforcing community pride. Another great example of what a small community can accomplish.

Glidden | Small Grants, Big Impact

Glidden recently launched a small-business façade grant program, offering local entrepreneurs support to repaint, repair, or refresh their storefronts. These modest investments are already sparking energy downtown — improving curb appeal, boosting confidence, and encouraging others to reinvest. For Glidden, it's the start of a cycle of visible progress that ties directly into the county-wide resurgence.

The Big Picture

When each community in Carroll County invests in its downtown, the entire county wins. Carroll's retail strength, combined with the momentum in Manning, Coon Rapids, and Glidden, are creating a network of thriving business districts. Together, they're sending a clear message: economic growth starts at the core — and it's happening right here in Carroll County.

WIAD Partners Tour Global Precision Parts in Audubon

In September, Western Iowa Advantage partners toured Global Precision Parts in Audubon. Global Precision Parts, Inc. was established in 2006 and recently acquired Quality Machine in Audubon.

Global Precision Parts, Inc. is made up of several manufacturing facilities in the US, totaling over 155,000 square feet. Across four facilities, GPP operates more than 200 state-of-the-art production machines, delivering highly efficient services at the quality our customers deserve. In addition to domestic facilities, GPP works closely with Asian joint ventures to provide unmatched quality and volume capacity that only a multi-site company can offer.

Global Precision Parts' Audubon facility supplies high-precision and complex machining services with tolerances ranging five-tenths to two thousandths. Using highly precise, multi-axis and horizontal machining, this facility works with metal alloys, nickel, Inconel, Titanium and a variety of exotic materials. The components manufactured in this facility can be found across the defense, medical, and automotive markets. Along with its ISO and ITAR certifications, the facility is SAM registered as well to produce parts for firearms and related products.



Above from Left to Right: Kendall Spies, Plant Manager; Rita Frahm, Executive Director, Ida County Economic Development; Kimberly Tiefenthaler, Executive Director, Carroll County Growth Partnership; Paul Plumb, Executive Director, Chamber & Development Council of Crawford County; Sara Slater, Business & Tourism Coordinator, Audubon County Economic Development Corporation; Chris Mason, Sac Economic & Tourism Development Board President; Chris Whitaker, Local Assistance Director, Region XII Council of Governments; Anne McMahan, Business Development Manager, Iowa Economic Development Authority

Western Iowa Advantage Region and State of Iowa See Slight Increase in Unemployment Rate in August 2025

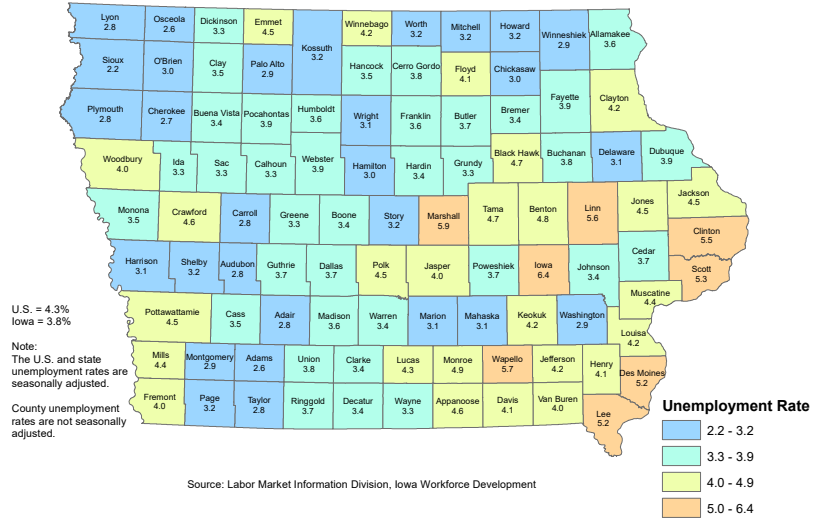
The Western Iowa Advantage Region's monthly unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted) was 3.4 percent in August 2025 up slightly from 3.2 percent in August 2024, according to figures released from Iowa Workforce Development. Iowa's unemployment rate was 3.8 percent in August 2025 up from 3.4 percent in August 2024. The U.S. unemployment rate was 4.3 percent in August 2025. Total employment in the region was stable at 38,730 in August 2025 from 38,750 in August 2024.

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

County unemployment rates in the region for August 2025:

- Audubon 2.8%
- Calhoun 3.3%
- Carroll 2.8%
- Crawford 4.6%
- Greene 3.3%
- Ida 3.3%
- Sac 3.3%

Iowa Unemployment Rates by County
August 2025



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