

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

WIAD Partners Host Keys to Small Business Success Summit

On October 11, 2023, Western Iowa Advantage hosted an exceptional event that brought together over 50 individuals seeking to unlock the secrets of business success. The Keys for Small Business Success Summit provided attendees with a comprehensive journey through every stage of the business life cycle.

From the initial spark of an idea to the exit stage, the summit covered the key aspects of entrepreneurship. For those just starting out, industry leaders shared insights on nurturing innovative ideas. Crafting a solid business plan was highlighted as a crucial step, and experts provided guidance on securing the necessary resources for growth.

The summit delved into financing options, scaling strategies, and the importance of adapting to market trends. For those contemplating the next phase of their entrepreneurial journey, invaluable insights into exit strategies were shared.

The diversity of topics covered ensured there was something for everyone, from budding entrepreneurs to seasoned business owners planning their exit strategy. The lunch panel featuring Jamie England from The Marketplace, Shelby Smith from Gym-N-Eat Crickets, and Amy Healy from Wise Monkey Quilting was particularly popular.

Beyond the informative sessions, the summit fostered a sense of community among Western Iowa entrepreneurs. Attendees had the chance to network with like-minded individuals, share experiences, and build valuable connections that could potentially lead to future collaborations.

As the event concluded, participants left armed with knowledge, inspiration, and a renewed sense of purpose for their entrepreneurial endeavors. The Western Iowa Advantage continues to be a beacon of support for the business community, paving the way for success in the heart of Iowa.

The Keys to Small Business Success Summit was sponsored by Alliant Energy, MidAmerican Energy, Raccoon Valley Electric Coop, and Region XII Council of Governments.



WIAD Partners (L to R): Rick Hunsaker, Region XII COG, Theresa Hildreth, CCEDC, Sara Slater, ACED, Kimberly Tiefenthaler, CCGP, Brandy Wilson, SETD, Paul Plumb, CDC, and Rita Frahm, ICED.

WIAD Partners Tour Tiefenthaler Quality Meats

John and Shelly Tiefenthaler are the current owners of Tiefenthaler Quality Meats which is located north of Holstein, Iowa on Highway 59. John began his sausage making and meat cutting career during his senior year of high school in 1981 when owner Bob Bagenstos gave him a job. John soon realized that he had a future in the meat processing business and became Bob's partner in 1983. John became sole owner in 1991. John's wife Shelly joined him in the business in 1996 and together they have seen many changes in the meat industry and in their business.

The meat processing plant had been in business since 1942 but with changes in meat inspection the Tiefenthaler's decided to look for a new location and expanded to their present location in 2004 with the opening of a new state inspected meat processing plant opening. Along with that came the addition of their many award-winning products sold in their retail store under the brand name of Tiefenthaler Quality Meats.



Left to Right: Rita Frahm, IEDC, Jordan Bremer, Shelly & John Tiefenthaler, Tiefenthaler Quality Meats, Sara Slater, ACED, Brandy Wilson, SETD, and Kimberly Tiefenthaler, CCGP

WIAD Partners Tour Wise Monkey Quilting

In November, WIAD Partners visited Wise Monkey Quilting in Denison. Wise Monkey Quilting opened April 2015 in uptown Denison in a 1,500 square building and grew quickly opening up a 4,500 square foot store and quilt retreat center in 2019. According to owner Amy Healy, "today, Wise Monkey Quilting is more than just a quilt store but a pillar in the community. What also makes us unique is we have a 10-person retreat center next to our store within the same building."

Most clientele tends to be females between 50-85, offering friendship and support as a hobby and their personal well-being. The company also has a large online presence with approximately 80 percent of sales online. Learn more about at [Wise Monkey Quilting](https://www.wisemonkeyquilting.com).



From Left to Right: Randy Healy, Wise Monkey Quilting, Paul Plumb, CDC, Sara Slater, ACED, Kirsten Case Fuller, North Central Iowa SBDC.



Front row (L-R): Wise Monkey Quilting owners Randy and Amy Healy, and Kimberly Tiefenthaler, CCGP. Second row (L-R): Paul Plumb, CDC, Rick Hunsaker, Region XII COG, Rita Frahm, IEDC, Kirsten Case Fuller, North Central Iowa SBDC, and Sara Slater, ACED.

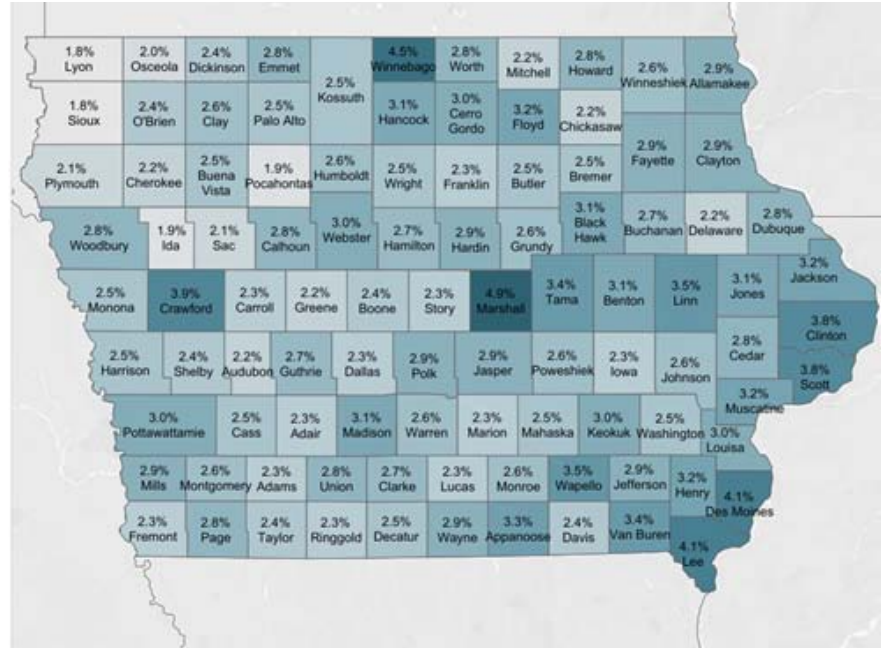
Western Iowa Advantage Region Sees Slight Increase in Unemployment Rate in September 2023

The Western Iowa Advantage Region's monthly unemployment rate (not seasonally adjusted) was 2.6 percent in September 2023 up from 2.1 percent in September 2022, according to figures released from Iowa Workforce Development. Iowa's unemployment rate was 2.9 percent in September 2023 up from 2.5 percent in September 2022. The U.S. unemployment rate was 3.6 percent in September 2023. Total employment in the region rose to 40,110 in September 2023 from 39,280 in September 2022.

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 September 2023:

Audubon 2.2%
Calhoun 2.8%
Carroll 2.3%
Crawford 3.9%
Greene 2.2%
Ida 1.9%
Sac 2.1%



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