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DRIVES  
IOWA'S RURAL  
ECONOMY**

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■ **MARY LANDHUIS**, fifth-generation co-owner, Lisle Corp., and president of EZ Way, a Lisle subsidiary





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VOLUME 4 | NUMBER 9



IOWA ASSOCIATION OF  
BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY

*The Voice of Iowa Business Since 1903.*

Iowa Association of Business and Industry. "The Voice of Iowa Business since 1903" is the largest business network in the state (serving as Iowa's state chamber) with a long legacy of advocating for a competitive business climate in Iowa. ABI offers its nearly 1,500 member companies and their employees opportunities to network, learn best practices in lean processes, workforce, workers' compensation, controlling health care costs, employee drug testing, environmental issues and leadership. ABI works "to foster a favorable business, economic, governmental and social climate within the State of Iowa so that our citizens have the opportunity to enjoy the highest possible quality of life."

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## A VIEW FROM THE TOP



**Paul Gregoire**

*ABI Chairman*

*Emerson/Fisher*

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## Rural companies are the lifeblood of Iowa communities

Every county in Iowa includes at least one ABI member. Most of those counties also include one or more manufacturers. In our state's more rural counties, those manufacturers are often the economic engine that sustains the entire region's economy.

The way manufacturing drives Iowa's rural economy is the focus of this edition of Business Record Iowa. While ABI members tend to understand the huge impact of manufacturing in this state, many Iowans will be surprised by some of the interesting information inside.

At Emerson/Fisher, the world's largest manufacturer of control valves and instrumentation, making quality, safe and reliable products is what we do. While our global company has plants all over the world, we are particularly proud of the impact we have in our headquarters community of Marshalltown and across Central Iowa.

It is like that throughout Iowa. ABI members and their employees make their communities better. They are the ones that coach the youth sports teams, serve on the school

board, sing in the church choir, run for city council and volunteer for the summer festival. All that, of course, is in addition to the financial impact they provide through wages, benefits and taxes paid in their community. Clearly, this drives home that fact that Iowa is an even more desirable place to live, work and play.

So, thank you to ABI employers and members!

Thanks, too, for your participation in the association's annual policy development process. When that process is completed at this month's board meeting, well over 1,000 members will have participated in one or more venues throughout the state. That kind of grassroots involvement is just one reason ABI has experienced its award-winning public policy success over the past several decades.

As I say each month, when the question is asked about who will lead the way in making Iowa an even better place to live and do business, "Why Not ABI?" Thank you for your support.

## EXPERT ADVICE

### Is your employee handbook worth the paper it's printed on?



**Elizabeth A. Coonan**

*Attorney, BrownWinick Law Firm*

[coonan@brownwinick.com](mailto:coonan@brownwinick.com)

Your employee handbook is often one of the first documents an employee is presented with at the inception of the employment relationship. This document — whether you intend for it to or not — reflects your company's values and sets the tone for the relationship. Do your policies place considerable emphasis on "disciplinary action," or do they emphasize open communication and cooperation? Is your audience a workforce of creative millennials desiring flexibility and autonomy, or is your workforce conservative and corporate? Are your policies consistent with the ever-changing laws and best practices?

Effective employment policies are like a warm jacket in a winter storm. If written carefully, they not only provide employees with security in knowing what the employer expects of them but in the context of litigation, they can serve as favorable evidence of your company's commitment to communicating clear expectations. Also like a warm jacket, your effective policies can be put in the closet and forgotten when the sun is shining and the weather is good. However, these policies are not valuable if they are not part of the culture at your company and if your lead-

ers are not trained in their application and enforcement. Moreover, if these policies don't reflect your company's actual practices, your employees will give them the same treatment as a warm jacket on a nice summer day.

Implementing effective employment policies can shield your company from potential liability, but applying even the best-written policy in an inconsistent manner undercuts your company's ability to defend itself in litigation. If your well-crafted policies match your actual practices, you are helping to foster a positive work environment while also protecting your business.







## ◀ EVENT REWIND

### Public Policy Events



#### FIORINA VISIT | AUGUST 14 | GARNER

Businesswoman and Republican presidential candidate Carly Fiorina visited Stellar Industries in Garner last month, where she toured the facility, and took questions from employees and local business leaders. The tour and business round table were a part of ABI's ongoing Presidential Candidate Series.

#### ABI PUBLIC POLICY COMMITTEE MEETINGS | AUGUST 11-20 | DES MOINES



Nicole Crain speaks during the Workplace and Public Safety Policy Committee meeting held on August 10 at ABI.



ABI's public policy committee meetings featured conversations with several state leaders, including Michael Bousset (left), who was recently appointed Gov. Terry Branstad's Chief of Staff; Courtney Kay-Decker (bottom left), director of the Iowa Department of Revenue; and Beth Townsend, director of Iowa Workforce Development.





## SANTORUM VISIT | AUGUST 27 | GARNER

Former U.S. Sen. Rick Santorum, of Pennsylvania, received a tour of Stellar Industries from company President Dave Zrostlik and other employees. Santorum, who is running for the Republican nomination for president, also met with and took questions from employees.

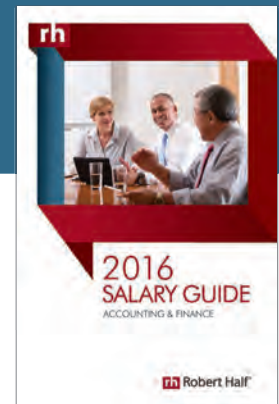


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## CAPITOL BUSINESS



## ENCOURAGE YOUR EMPLOYEES TO PARTICIPATE IN THE POLITICAL PROCESS

The 2016 presidential election may be nearly 14 months away, but it's never too early to start educating your employees on the importance of participating in the election process.

The first step in that process is registering to vote. At the time of the last presidential election in 2012, an estimated 51 million eligible U.S. citizens (one in four) were not registered to vote. More than 25 percent of the population sat on the sidelines as America selected a president and other members of the federal and state governments. Of course, that percentage increases even more when those who are registered but don't participate are taken into consideration.

America works better when Americans vote, and studies show that workers find their employers to be among the most trustworthy sources of information when it comes to issues like voting and elections.

That is why the Iowa Association of Business is partnering with the Business-Industry Political Action Committee (BIPAC) to promote Employee Voter Registration Week, Sept. 21-25, 2015. This is an effort to increase the



number of registered, eligible private sector voters across the country.

The initiative does not tell employees how to vote or whom to vote for. Instead, our goal is to promote overall civic engagement and register more than 100,000 new voters around the country.

Encourage your staff to participate and take part yourself by visiting [www.iavotes.org](http://www.iavotes.org).

Of course, there are many opportunities for Iowa employees to get involved in the political process between now and November 2016.

Presidential candidates will be crisscrossing the state over the next five months talking to Iowa voters in the run-up to the Iowa caucuses on Feb. 1, 2016.

This is an invaluable opportunity to meet candidates firsthand and ask them about the issues most important to you. Visit [www.iowacaucusproject.org](http://www.iowacaucusproject.org) to see when presidential hopefuls will be in your area.

Better yet, invite these candidates into your businesses to see how Iowa companies operate and speak with employees. ABI's policy team is happy to help schedule a visit with those seeking to be our next president.

Look for more information from ABI this month, including our Caucus Toolkit and valuable information on where presidential candidates stand on business issues.

All of these resources are meant to help business leaders and employees participate in the process and become well-educated voters.





MARY LANDHUIS, *fifth-generation co-owner, Lisle Corp., and president of EZ Way, a Lisle subsidiary*

PHOTO COURTESY OF DUPONT

IOWA ASSOCIATION OF BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY



## MANUFACTURING DRIVES IOWA'S RURAL ECONOMY

When C.A. Lisle purchased a metal foundry in Clarinda in 1903, he probably never imagined it would turn into the fifth-generation family-owned manufacturing company it is today.

At 112 years old, the company has grown to one of the largest employers in the region, with 310 employees in Clarinda, a town of about 5,500.

In many of Iowa's rural communities that face ongoing decreases in population, manufacturers like Lisle Corp. serve as an economic engine, supplying well-paying jobs, bolstering the tax base and providing civic leadership.

"From all aspects, manufacturing companies play an extremely important role in providing vibrancy to a community," said Steve Jacobs, president of BCC Advisers in Des Moines.

Jacobs assists companies in transitioning their business to the next generation of ownership. He and other experts agree that sustaining these businesses where they are located is critical to the livelihood of rural Iowa.

Iowa's manufacturing sector had 221,508 jobs in 2013 — about 11 percent of the state's total employment. More than half of those jobs were located in non-metropolitan areas, according to information compiled by the Iowa State University Center for Industrial Research and Service, or CIRAS, in its annual Manufacturing in Iowa report.

In non-metropolitan areas, manufacturing jobs accounted for 14.6 percent of jobs and 23.3 percent of total earnings.

Transition planning for businesses sustaining these jobs is particularly important as more business owners in the baby boomer generation look to retire.



**“We like to be able to deal with Iowa suppliers, not only for proximity of getting materials, but I think it’s good to support those companies in your own state who are good stewards of manufacturing as well.”**



**Mary Landhuis,**

president of EZ Way, a Lisle Corp. subsidiary.

“Over the next decade, there is likely to be a glut of businesses on the market,” Jacobs said. “States, counties and communities have to be as proactive as possible to retain manufacturing companies and all businesses to support economic growth, essential services and population.”

Lisle Corp. began as a foundry making seasonal, ag-related items and well drilling machines. In the mid-1920s, it started making components for Ford Model T vehicles. The company still manufactures specialty automotive tools and magnetic drain plugs.

It has also grown by purchasing other companies over the years that manufacture a variety of products, including medical devices and machining tools. When new businesses are acquired, they are moved to Clarinda.

“The goal is to bring that business to Clarinda and contribute to growth in our local economy as well as being able to have more jobs to offer here,” said Mary Landhuis, a fifth-generation owner and president of EZ Way, a Lisle subsidiary.

Landhuis understands the role her company plays in help-

ing the community thrive, and she knows that Lisle wouldn’t be successful without the support of the community and its employees, many whose family members have also worked for the company.

“It’s truly our employees who’ve made us what we are today,” Landhuis said. “Our success has come from that loyalty and dedication from the folks in our area.”

Lisle also makes a point to work with other Iowa-based companies.

“We like to be able to work with Iowa suppliers, not only for proximity of delivery, but also to support the companies in the state as good stewards of Iowa manufacturing,” Landhuis said.

The manufacturing sector offers some of the highest-paying jobs in the state, on average, according to the CIRAS report.

Iowa manufacturing workers earned an average of \$54,420 in wages and salaries last year, compared with an average of \$42,500 for all sectors. Only the financial activi-

## BE MORE COMPETITIVE.

What happened to the commitment you had to furthering your education, reading books and devouring learning that you eagerly embraced early in your career?

***Was it the busy-ness of business? The urgent trumping the important? The slip from mindfulness to mindlessness? For those who intend to remain competitive, the imperative for ongoing learning has never been greater.***

As you plan and budget for 2016 employee and leader education, recommit yourself to learning new skills to Outclass Your Competition, Speak Your Way To Success and Influence Winning Outcomes.

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Rowena Crosbie, President





ties sector offered higher average earnings.

Manufacturers also bring more dollars into the community. For every dollar spent in the manufacturing process, approximately \$1.50 is added to the economy, Jacobs said.

Jobs in the manufacturing industry have declined over the years, both nationally and in Iowa. However, many companies still struggle to find qualified employees to fill open positions, especially those trying to attract workers to rural Iowa.

The challenge is evident at all levels of a company, including leadership, said Tom Cavanagh, a director at BCC Advisers.

"Companies need to develop a strong bench, and the ability to recruit senior-level management into the community is critical but tough," Cavanagh said.

Manufacturers, and all business owners, should begin preparing their succession plan several years before it is to be implemented, but many put it off, he said.

That can cause turmoil for owners, employees and the entire community when the transition time comes.

Ownership is typically transferred one of three ways: to family, to employees or to a third party. Selling to a family member or to employees can help ensure the company will stay where it is, providing some security for local employees and the community.

State leaders have been progressive in providing education and financial support for companies interested in pursuing an employee stock ownership plan, or ESOP, as a way for employees to take over ownership of the company, said Jacobs.

It can be a particularly good solution when there are no family members to transition ownership to or the family members don't have the interest or wherewithal to purchase the business.

When Ritchie Industries owner Cliff Wilson was ready to retire about 11 years ago, Wilson and his family wanted to do all they could to ensure the business would stay in Conrad.

Ritchie Industries manufactures automatic livestock watering equipment and employs 80 people in the 1,100-person town.

"There are all kinds of equity groups trying to buy small manufacturers, but a company our size in a small town — it keeps it going," said Leon Yantis, Wilson's son-in-law who took over as CEO when Wilson retired.

"Our business is on Main Street, and now it's owned by members of the community, not owned by someone outside. That's good for our employees, our company and the community," Yantis said.

Wilson sold the company to his employees as an ESOP. Employees now own stock in the company as part of their retirement plan and have more say in how it is managed.

Selling a company to family or employees may be better for a community than selling to a third party, but it comes with risks that have to be fairly evaluated, Cavanagh said.

"The people who take over need to be qualified and have enough funds to make it work for a seller and create an

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aligned incentive between parties," he said.

Of course, there are also examples across Iowa of companies that were sold to third parties and continue to thrive.

When Hillphoenix, a large manufacturer of specialty display cases and refrigeration systems headquartered in Conyers, Ga., purchased Barker Specialty Products in 2009, it kept both of the company's Iowa facilities.

Now, Hillphoenix Specialty Products employs about 660 people at its location in Keosauqua and 230 at its Centerville facility.

"As an organization, Hillphoenix understands how important these jobs were to the communities and the region," said Nate Weaton, vice president and general manager at the Keosauqua location.

"It's important to us to be good corporate citizens of our community," Weaton said. "On top of that, Iowa is a great place for manufacturers. It made sense for us to stay put."

In addition to making the company a good corporate citizen, Weaton and other business leaders recognize the important leadership roles they can play in the community as well.

Weaton has set an example for others at his company and elsewhere with his involvement in local economic development, community and charitable efforts.

"It's all interconnected," he said. "Our success is due to our employees. We have a responsibility to them and to the employees we want to recruit to help ensure our communities are great places to live, work and raise a family."



## Nate Weaton,

vice president and general manager, Hillphoenix Specialty Products, Keosauqua.

**"It's all interconnected. Our success is due to our employees. We have a responsibility to them and to the employees we want to recruit to help ensure our communities are great places to live, work and raise a family."**

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AHEAD OF THE CURVE

Leadership Iowa University kicks off 2015-16 session



Class pictured above (left to right) first row: Gabrielle Woods, Diana Yamaletdinova, Schae Greenzweig, Jenna Nelson, Cavan Finn; second row: Madison Galloway, Ali Krogman, Emily Laudner, Allison Richter, Rudy Pineda; third row: Grace Tshimoa, Emily Gehlsen, Hanna Kerr, Dylan Nikkel, Megan Andersen, Ben Goaley, Trevor Finders; fourth row: JC Abrahamson, Erik Thorgaard, Adam Mueller, Jordan Huisman, Jake Bergman, Zach Veenstra.







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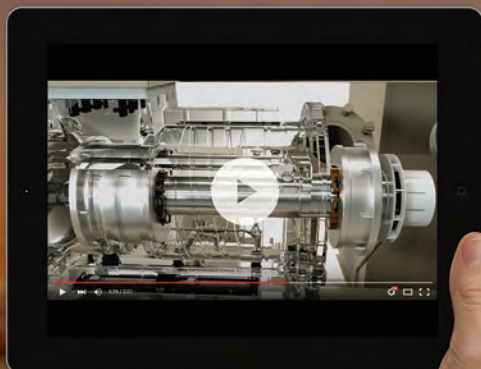
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## Help honor manufacturers at **Legends awards dinner**



**Michele Farrell**

*Elevate Advanced  
Manufacturing*

mfarrell@  
measuredintentions.com

On Sept. 29, Elevate Advanced Manufacturing, a program of the Iowa Association of Business and Industry (ABI), will host its first annual Legends in Manufacturing event at Prairie Meadows Conference Center in Altoona.

Five individuals, representing the best of Iowa manufacturing, will be honored. Award categories include individuals from companies with fewer than 100 employees, between 100 and 300 employees, more than 300 employees, an individual or organization greatly supporting

manufacturing and a posthumous award.

This is an opportunity to help us recognize Iowa business leaders who've been critical in helping advance Iowa's economy while sustaining their own areas of the state. In 2014, manufacturing contributed \$31.2 billion to Iowa's economy, representing 18.3 percent of the state's total gross domestic product.

The industry's 221,508 jobs accounted for 11 percent of Iowa's total employment in 2013, and more than half of those jobs are located in the state's non-metropolitan areas.

"These companies are the foundation of many Iowa communities, the source of not only employment, but charitable contributions and tax revenue," ABI President Mike Ralston said. "We are thrilled to have the opportunity to honor the founders and leaders of these amazing Iowa companies."

The event will include a cocktail reception, dinner, award announcement and program. Tickets are \$85 each and can be purchased at [bit.ly/ABILegends2015](http://bit.ly/ABILegends2015). For more information, contact Michele Farrell at 515-419-8357.



## EMBARRASSED EXECUTIVE

# CLOSING THE SKILLS GAP ONCE AND FOR ALL



**Karen Miller**

Executive Vice President,  
Manpower – Central Iowa

karen.miller@  
manpowerdm.com

**Q: I realize there is a skills shortage, but what can my hiring managers do to find the talent they need for their open positions?**

**A:** This is a common question that employers have, particularly throughout Iowa. The unfortunate reality is that in many cases organizational hiring practices over the past 20 years have contributed to the current skills gap, specifically: seeking skills perfection, nonexistent or ineffective onboarding, and elimination of ongoing training programs.

But don't fear, the answer lies in developing a clear and realistic understanding of the available talent

pool for your organization and adjusting your talent acquisition strategy accordingly.

Here's what you can do now:

- Re-evaluate organizational recruiting practices
- Companies can shift their recruiting strategies to “hire for attitude, train for skill” as a first step to close the skills gap. This approach prioritizes hiring talent who align closely with a company's culture, vision and attitude above finding the elusive hires with the “perfect set” of pre-existing skills.
- Create a comprehensive onboarding program to set new hires up for success.
- Hiring managers need to accept that most new hires won't have the hard skills required for a job on day one and therefore need to make the time investment in effective onboarding training. According to a 2014 study by BambooHR, 31 percent of people have quit a job within their first six months, noting a lack of onboarding preparation as the reason why.
- Providing ongoing training is the key to retention.
- Skills are depreciating at three times the rate they were a decade ago because of technological advancements, and therefore ongoing training is not only the key to keeping your staff current, the investment plays a key role in retention as well.

By correcting these three key behaviors, understanding available talent pools and making talent acquisition more strategic, your organization will experience faster hiring at lower cost and enjoy cost savings from greater employee retention.



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS



### SEPTEMBER 23

#### Board Meeting (Invite Only)

ABI Office | 400 E Court, Suite 100 | Des Moines  
10:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

### SEPTEMBER 29

#### Legends in Manufacturing Awards Dinner

Prairie Meadows Event Center | 1 Prairie Meadows Drive | Altoona  
6 p.m. – 9 p.m.

### SEPTEMBER 30

#### Iowa's Advanced Manufacturing Conference

Prairie Meadows Event Center | 1 Prairie Meadows Drive | Altoona  
9 a.m. – 3 p.m. (Registration will begin at 8 a.m.)

### OCTOBER 7-9

#### Leadership Iowa Opening Session

Perry

### NOVEMBER 5-6

#### Leadership Iowa Session

Washington

### NOVEMBER 12

#### Elevate Ambassador Training

ABI Office | 400 E. Court Ave., Suite 100 | Des Moines  
10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

### DECEMBER 10-11

#### Leadership Iowa Session

Waverly

### DECEMBER 10

#### Connecting Statewide Leaders

Waverly  
10:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.



Visit [www.iowaabi.org](http://www.iowaabi.org) and click the “Events” tab for details on upcoming events.







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Iowa Community Foundations is an initiative of the Iowa Council of Foundations

## Three reasons to attend the Advanced Manufacturing Conference, even if you're not a manufacturer

**Keynote speaker Matthew May:** May is an internationally recognized thought leader on strategy, culture and innovation whose book "In Pursuit of Elegance: Why the Best Ideas Have Something Missing" has helped a host of businesses learn to solve challenges in ways that achieve the maximum effect with minimum resources.

**Networking and business development:** Manufacturing is one of Iowa's largest industries, accounting for 18.3 percent of the state's GDP last year. If you're not conducting business with manufacturers, you are missing out on some major opportunities. Spend the day with more than 300 of the state's top manufacturing and business leaders.

**Insight on how to achieve optimal performance:** Regardless the industry, employers rate work ethic, integrity and professionalism as critically important characteristics in their employees. Dr. Matt Davidson will provide research-based, field-tested strategies for achieving optimal performance around these essential qualities - for both workforce and workplace development.

### 2015 Advanced Manufacturing Conference

A can't-miss professional development opportunity

**When:** September 30, 2015

**Where:** Prairie Meadow Events Center, Altoona

For more information or to register: Visit <http://bit.ly/AdManufacturing15>

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## BY THE NUMBERS

# \$54,420

The average amount in wages and salaries earned by Iowa's manufacturing workers in 2014, according to the latest Manufacturing in Iowa Report from the ISU Center for Industrial Research and Service (CIRAS). That is **28 percent** more than workers across all sectors of Iowa's economy, who earned an average of **\$42,530**.

Manufacturing ranks second among major sectors when it comes to wage and salary earnings. Only employees in the financial activities sector had higher average earnings.

Manufacturing wages vary across the state. In 2014, the top three counties by average manufacturing wages and salaries were **Linn** (\$82,716), **Black Hawk** (\$64,603) and **Fremont** (\$62,874).

Sources: CIRAS, U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics



## POWERFUL PARTNERSHIPS

## IADG Recognizes Three Decades of Growth

2015 marks Iowa Area Development Group's (IADG's) 30th anniversary. This milestone provides an excellent opportunity to take stock of three decades of accomplishment, as well as acknowledge the work yet to be done. A quote by the great entrepreneur and inventor Henry Ford provides the perfect framework to take a look at IADG:

"Coming together is a beginning. Staying together is progress. And working together is results."

**Coming Together**

The mid-1980s were a time when both our state and nation were in the grips of a terrible recession. In 1985, leaders from Iowa's cooperatives came together to establish IADG.

Their vision was an economic development organization to serve the business and community development needs of Iowa's cooperatives. In a way that had never been tried or done before, or since, Iowa cooperatives came together and established IADG, an organization to help lead business and community development.

Today, IADG remains a national model and a unique example of economic development collaboration and partnership. IADG salutes the nearly 250 rural electric cooperatives, municipal utilities and telecommunications companies that support and are actively engaged in economic development in Iowa and the IADG mission.

**Staying Together**

The tagline "Partners in Progress" speaks to IADG's culture. From that initial collaboration has sprung an economic development organization that today serves nearly 250 rural utilities, including nearly all of Iowa's rural electric cooperatives, independent telephone companies and a select group of municipal utilities. Beyond that is a network of organizations like ABI, Iowa Network Services (INS) and CIRAS, and development partners at the local, state and federal level. IADG is extremely appreciative of all the sponsors and partners who provide ongoing support, investment and involvement in statewide economic

development projects and initiatives.

**Working Together**

IADG offers staff and services to its sponsoring utilities to support economic development efforts and projects, large and small. Over the past three decades of work, IADG can trace its involvement to more than 2,000 major projects, capital investment of more than \$10 billion and more than 50,000 new and retained jobs.

As recognition of this great collaboration, IADG com-



Iowa Gov. Terry Branstad poses with representatives from the Iowa Area Development Group after signing a proclamation recognizing the organization's 30th anniversary.

missioned a piece of art to illustrate the progress and community vitality that exists because of this investment and involvement in economic development and IADG. Framed prints being presented to utility sponsors and partners are inscribed with the following: "On the occasion of our 30th anniversary, Iowa Area Development Group gratefully acknowledges and thanks you for your investment and support in our partnership for economic development." IADG was humbled on April 14 when Gov. Terry Branstad signed a proclamation recognizing IADG's 30th Anniversary.

The IADG team looks forward to working with statewide partners far into the future to support business growth and community vitality across Iowa.

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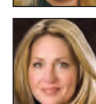
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## ARE YOU AN ABI MEMBER? CHANCES ARE THE ANSWER IS YES.

ABI is Iowa's oldest and largest business network, representing almost **1,500 businesses** of all types and sizes employing **over 310,000 Iowans** in all **99 counties**. If you are not sure if your organization is a member of ABI, contact **Dorothy Knowles** at 515-235-0568 or [dknowles@iowaabi.org](mailto:dknowles@iowaabi.org).





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