



# MORE THAN A COLLEGE TOWN:

*Ames boasts growth,  
entrepreneurial spirit in  
business community*

*CJ Warner, President and CEO, Renewable Energy Group*



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The Iowa Association of Business and Industry (ABI) is the voice of Iowa business. It is Iowa's oldest and largest business network, representing 1,500 businesses that employ more than 333,000 Iowans. ABI benefits members by advocating on their behalf at the statehouse, connecting them with decision-makers to share ideas and services, offering solutions and best practices for issues that affect their businesses and developing our state's business and civic leaders.

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A VIEW FROM THE TOP



**David Bywater**

*ABI Chair  
 Bankers Advertising/  
 Tru Art  
 Iowa City*

# An Inside Look at the Ames Business Community

One of our state's most important assets is the focus of this edition of Business Record Iowa. That asset is Ames and the incredible economic activity that is generated there and in the surrounding area.

Ames is also the location for the 2019 ABI Taking Care of Business Conference.

Make plans now to join your ABI colleagues June 4-6 for the conference. Fantastic venues, terrific nationally known speakers and the very best business networking anywhere will all be a part of ABI's 116th annual meeting. You do not want to miss it!

With regard to other ABI business, February marks the eighth month of the association's

fiscal year. Thanks to your support and leadership, our association is enjoying one of its strongest years ever.

Public policy, Foundation programs, and ABI member meetings and events are all surpassing metrics of past years. Last month's ABI Legislative Reception was the biggest and best yet, with more ABI members than ever before. In addition, more legislators of both parties and both chambers attended than ever before.

On behalf of the board of directors, thank you for your ongoing participation and support for ABI. ■

EXPERT ADVICE

## Signs of a Heart Attack are Different Between Men and Women

Chest pains, heart palpitations, shooting pain in the shoulders or arms — these are well-known signs of a heart attack. Both men and women experience these symptoms, along with nausea, vomiting, stomach discomfort and labored breathing, but in different ways.

Men are much more likely than women to show these tell-tale signs. And their symptoms are much more intense. This difference can make it harder for the opposite sex to recognize a heart attack, putting women at risk of overlooking a serious health issue.

**Women also have their own unique symptoms.**

Chest pain is the most commonly reported heart attack symptom. Yet most women who suffer heart attacks report no chest pain. Instead, they experience more subtle signs:

- Severe shortness of breath
- Unusual fatigue
- Sleep disturbance
- Flu-like discomfort
- Back or jaw pain

These symptoms come on slowly. Unlike men, whose heart attacks occur suddenly and without warning, women can have symptoms a month before a heart attack.

**Men experience heart attacks much earlier.**

For men, the risk of heart attack increases significantly after the age of 45. And the average age for a heart attack is 66.

Estrogen provides a little protection for women — at least until after menopause. The average age for a heart attack in women is 70.

Both men and women should understand the warning signs early in life — especially the more subtle symptoms. The longer you ignore a heart attack, the more damage it can do. If you experience any of the symptoms, call 9-1-1 immediately.

**These factors increase the risk for both men and women.**

The more risk factors you have, the more likely you are to have cardiac disease. Although, it is possible to have a heart attack without any prior risk factors. Risk factors for men and women include:

- Smoker or tobacco use
- Personal history of prior heart attack or stroke
- Diabetes
- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol
- Age
- Inactive lifestyle
- Family history of heart disease before age 45

Even removing one risk factor from this list can decrease your chances of suffering a heart attack. Talk to your primary care provider about your health history and steps you can take to reduce your risk factors. ■



**Dr. Christina Taylor**  
*Internal Medicine &  
 Executive Health  
 Departments  
 The Iowa Clinic*



EVENT REWIND

# ABI Legislative Briefing and Reception

January 16 | Community Choice Credit Union Convention Center | Des Moines

A record crowd of 600+ ABI members, state legislators and state officials gathered to network and discuss policies affecting Iowa employers. The reception is one of the best-attended events of the legislative session and ABI's second-largest annual event.



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## Scholarships Available for In-Demand Manufacturing Training

Elevate Advanced Manufacturing is spreading the word about career opportunities in manufacturing. Elevate is offering 15 \$500 scholarships to Iowa high school seniors interested in studying a manufacturing-related career at one of Iowa's 15 community colleges. One award will be made per college region.

"Manufacturing firms supply more than 221,000 jobs to Iowans," said Mike Ralston, president of the Iowa Association of Business and Industry. "These well-paying careers require education and training beyond high school, but don't require the cost of a bachelor's degree. Recent studies have shown that two-year degree and technical certificate holders, especially in high-demand manufacturing occupations, can earn salaries that surpass those of four-year college graduates."

Examples of training programs to which the scholarship can apply include welding, computer numerically controlled (CNC) machining, industrial automation, industrial maintenance, robotics, tool and die and transportation and logistics. For more information about manufacturing careers, visit [www.elevateiowa.com](http://www.elevateiowa.com).

Interested candidates should apply by completing the application found at [www.elevateiowa.com](http://www.elevateiowa.com) (under the "About"

column). Applications are due March 1, 2019. The scholarship awardees will be recognized at the Legends in Manufacturing Awards Dinner in Altoona on October 1, 2019.

Elevate Iowa is a statewide, integrated marketing campaign to promote careers and educational pathways in advanced manufacturing. The initiative is directed by a coalition of all 15 Iowa community colleges, the Iowa Association of Business and Industry, the private manufacturing sector and the State of Iowa.

The campaign offers resources to the public and educational institutions to educate unemployed/underemployed Iowans, U.S. veterans, and K-12 students and their families about the opportunities in advanced manufacturing. ■



**Michele Farrell**

*Elevate Advanced  
Manufacturing*  
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*CJ Warner, President and CEO, Renewable Energy Group*

# MORE THAN A COLLEGE TOWN:

## Ames boasts growth, entrepreneurial spirit in business community

CJ Warner has fond memories of Ames.

In the late 1970s, when her husband was attending Iowa State University, Warner, who is now the new chief executive officer of Renewable Energy Group Inc., would often frequent Ames. A Midwesterner herself, Warner enjoyed the quaint and quiet college town. She remembers some of the more historic and industrial parts of Ames, but she admits she was a little more focused on the boy than on the city.

"I'm very glad to be back in the Midwest because this is my home, and being in Ames is particularly exciting because I used to visit my husband when we were courting each other," said Warner, who worked in the San Diego area before moving to Ames. "It's really fun to be back and see all of the growth as well as all of the things that have stayed the same. It's fantastic."

Since Warner last came to Ames, the city's population has surged from about 47,000 in 1980 to nearly 70,000 people today. Paired with the growth seen at Iowa State University, both in enrollment and facilities, Ames has seen improvements across the board. That's particularly true in the business community, where various developments — specifically the ISU Research Park, Main Street and Somerset — have made the city more than an ordinary college town.

### **PARTNERS IN BUSINESS**

Iowa State and Ames are intricately connected. Iowa State's students live, work and shop in many Ames businesses, and those businesses also receive the benefit of a young, energetic and well-trained workforce.

"It's a really good relationship," said Mike Espeset, president of Story Construction.

"We honestly don't know any better. We just expect it will be cooperative. Talking to other universities and college towns, it's not nearly as cooperative as it is in Ames."

Perhaps the biggest tangible connection between Iowa State and Ames is the ISU Research Park, located in the southern part of town. The college benefits by engaging students and faculty with international, renowned businesses, like John Deere, Rockwell Collins, Vermeer, Boehringer Ingelheim and more. The community benefits with new commerce and businesses contributing to the local economy.

"It's had an enormous impact for Ames because many, not necessarily all, of the really rich, new employment opportunities we continue to attract end up locating there," said Dan Culhane, president of the Ames Chamber of Commerce. "Whether it's information technology, animal health, plant science — it runs that gamut. We are presented these opportunities as a market in large part because of the research park but even more significantly because of the presence of Iowa State University."

The ISU Research Park has seen growth of its own as well.

Just 10 years ago, the park, which was primarily occupied by startup and research companies, was a shell of what it is today. Today, more than 2,000 people are employed by businesses in the research park. That number is projected to nearly double by 2025. Perhaps even more importantly, companies that have expanded beyond the ISU Research Park continue to employ nearly 2,500 Iowans, providing value for the state beyond the city.

"We have seen tremendous growth at the research center," Iowa State President Wendy Wintersteen said. "We see more and more international businesses decide that they want to have a facility at the research park. What that does is provide opportunities for high-paying jobs, but also a variety of jobs."

The ISU Research Park is a point of focus for the future of Ames and Iowa State. The university is currently searching for a new director after Steve Carter retired at the end of 2018.

“How we continue the growth of the research park is critically important to the university as a whole,” Wintersteen said. “The research park can’t achieve any level of success without the engagement of faculty, staff and students from campus. That’s what businesses who decided to headquarter out there say to us.”

Enrollment at Iowa State has also been a large factor for Ames. Reaching a peak of nearly 37,000 students in 2016, the number has started to taper off a bit, dropping to just less than 35,000 in 2018. But such a large number of people has an effect on every part of town.

Ames has seen a large boom in living developments to accommodate students. That work has come from both local, private developers and national firms that specialize in student housing, Culhane said. Campustown, a downtown-like area just south of Iowa State’s campus, also saw a revitalization as the university’s enrollment grew, adding the sleek Kingland building and a few smaller, local restaurants and coffee shops.

All of this is a benefit to Ames, but it also puts some stress on the city’s infrastructure.

“People are buying groceries, renting apartments, buying gas, and that’s helping Ames,” Espeset said. “I think we’re much better off with the numbers we have today than the numbers we had a decade ago.”

Iowa State also introduces a large number of students into the workforce, whether that be through interns or graduates. And some of these students eventually choose to stay in Ames, benefiting the city for years to come.

“Ninety of our employees are alums of Iowa State,” said Warner of REG. “We have a wonderful internship program that enables us to both give back to the university as well as benefit from these wonderfully bright students.”

#### BRINGING MORE INDUSTRY

In 2000, Ames completed a long-term plan for the economic development of the city. It laid out future intentions to snatch up land east of Interstate 35 stretching all the way to Nevada. The purpose was to create a hub for manufacturing and industry.

While much work was going on behind the scenes, those plans were officially put into action two years ago. The Ames Economic Development Commission and Alliant Energy jointly announced the 730-acre plot of land, called the Prairie View Industrial Center. It has easy access to the interstate and railroad. There is also the connection to Iowa State, which supplies a steady stream of potential employees. The hope is that large-scale manufacturers will locate plants there.

“We’ve got this property that lends itself to being a location for someone who needs rail service,” Culhane said. “It’s a large-scale parcel of property, near the interstate, near the railroad, in the shadow of a tier-one research institution. Those don’t always come together like they do here. We think that’s pretty unique.”

There are still things in the works. Ames will deploy sewer and water service in 2019. Culhane said the Ames Economic Development Commission is advertising the space significantly, similar to how the city promotes the ISU Research Park. His sense is it will be about a 20-year build-out on that land, but one company could take a large chunk of the property if it was the right opportunity.

For Ames businesses, the new development is exciting as well. “It’s a huge win for Central Iowa,” Espeset said. “It’s been about a decade in the making to put the pieces in place, but there aren’t a ton of those sites in Iowa, so that’s unique. It’s meant for large-scale users, so people who will take significant pieces of land and put in major investments to do something there. It’s a big deal.”

#### THE STARTUP CULTURE

Between resources at Iowa State and within the city, Ames’ startup, innovation and investment culture has seen a surge in the past few decades.

In the last eight years alone, Culhane said the city of Ames has seen three local companies go public — Workiva, NewLink Genetics Corp. and Renewable Energy Group Inc. Ames National Corp. is also a publicly traded company in the city.

“That’s telling for a metropolitan area whose size is about 100,000 people,” Culhane said. “It’s really telling that you have that kind of corporate activity in a community this size. I really credit Iowa State University for being an accelerator in that culture, but I also credit our business community and a lot of our business leaders.”

Many of the city’s business leaders came together in the 1980s to create an organization focused on investing in local businesses in Ames. Today, it’s known as Ames Seed Capital LLC, and it has seen a revitalization of sorts in the past decade, Culhane said. The organization continues to raise millions of dollars from private companies to help fund entrepreneurship and expansion in Ames.

Iowa State also boasts a Pappajohn Center for Entrepreneurship, which helps budding entrepreneurs with lessons, space and access to more resources. The center is one of four across the state — the University of Iowa, the University of Northern Iowa and North Iowa Area Community College are the other ones — donated by Iowa businessman John Pappajohn.

In the spring of 2020, Iowa State will open a Student Innovation Center, a 140,000-square-foot facility with an auditorium, classrooms, collaboration spaces, a test kitchen and a cafe. There will also be fabrication areas for students in electronics, woodworking, textiles and more. Students can sell their products at a store that will be installed in the center.

“We’re not only going to have that facility, but we’re also making some changes to our curriculum to allow students to understand and learn what it means to be an innovator,” Wintersteen said. “When we can have students understand what it means to be an innovator and an entrepreneur, whether they start their own business or work for a business, they think differently. And that creates opportunities.”



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**THE CONFERENCE IS COMING**

Ames will have a chance to show off its growth and amenities at the Taking Care of Business Conference, which runs from June 4 to June 6. More than 1,000 Iowa business leaders are expected to attend, and some of the conference venues include Iowa State's Hilton Coliseum, Scheman Building and the Sukup End Zone Club.

Many local business leaders are excited to show off all of the good happening in Ames.

"We are so pleased to have the ABI Conference this year," Wintersteen said. "We love the opportunity to show off Ames to business owners and employers from across the state, so they can see what we have to offer here and perhaps see the opportunity to have a new collaboration or partnership."

"They can drive around and see the changes to Campustown or the growth of the research park. We know the participants will be impressed with Ames and be impressed with Iowa State University."

Culhane agrees, and he believes conference attendees will be surprised at how much has changed in Ames.

"The thing I'm most excited about is to bring them all back here to see all of the changes that have occurred if they haven't been here in a while," Culhane said. "We're excited to see partnership and collaboration. That's what we have here between Ames, Iowa State University and Story County."

"A lot of places can say that, and a lot of places function really well, too. But it's day-in and day-out how we operate here, and I think that's a large part of how we've had so much success in the past few years." ■

**AT A GLANCE: 2019 TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS CONFERENCE**

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JUNE 4-6, 2019 | AMES

**DATE:** June 4-6

**LOCATION:** Ames

**WHAT IS IT:** Iowa's premier business conference

**EXPECTED ATTENDANCE:** 1,000 Iowa business leaders

**KEYNOTE SPEAKER:**

Peggy Noonan, Pulitzer Prize-winning Wall Street Journal Columnist

**ADDITIONAL SPEAKERS:**

Paul Shirley, Author/Former NBA and Iowa State Basketball Player

Rowena Crosbie, Author/Top-rated Speaker and Trainer

**REGISTRATION OPENS:** Feb. 21 at [ABITakingCareOfBusiness.com](http://ABITakingCareOfBusiness.com)



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CAPITOL BUSINESS



## ABI Leads on Environmental Policy

The Iowa Association of Business and Industry (ABI) has been known for its policy, advocacy and political work for many decades. Most notably, ABI's advocacy for Iowa's Right to Work law, a fair workers' compensation system where employers direct and pay for all care, and a stable unemployment trust fund that is there for employees who lose their job through no fault of their own.



**Nicole Crain**  
Senior Vice President,  
Public Policy, ABI  
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If you are a new member of ABI, or haven't yet joined the association, you may not know ABI is also known for its environmental regulatory work. As you have read in past editions of this column, our organization has five public policy committees. While most of the committees do the bulk of their work during the policy development process in August each year, the Environment Committee meets year-round.

The Environment Committee has more than 175 members. Committee members focus their efforts on regulatory proposals and also reviewing what other states are doing that may work in Iowa. To stay up to date on what's happening, ABI public policy staff subscribes to the Department of Natural Resources newsletters. We are also members of the National Association of Manufacturers and receive regular updates from them on federal issues. ABI staff meets with professional and technical staff at the DNR, we attend Environmental Protection Commission (EPC) meetings and participate in meetings and calls with organizations that can help us increase our technical knowledge.

Although you may think of ABI as an organization that is at the Capitol 24/7 January-May, we hope you won't forget we are also here for members January-December 24/7 on regulatory issues. If you want to learn more about the Environment Committee and how to get involved, we have three ways for you to get engaged:

1. Join the Environment Committee by contacting Nicole Crain or Brad Hartkopf at ABI.
2. Read the Environment Newsletter, which committee members receive directly and others can read when published in the ABI e-news.
3. Let us know if you have positive or challenging issues about your relationship with the DNR to share with ABI staff. We want to be a resource to you and need your input to make a difference.

Whether it's the Department of Natural Resources, Department of Revenue, Iowa Workforce Development or any other state agency, we hope you will turn to ABI when you think of a resource to help on technical policy and administrative issues. To all ABI members, thanks for your support of ABI and your help to ensure ABI's environmental efforts are successful. ■

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TOP TIPS



**Steve Cassabaum,**  
MSPT, DPT

President and Founder,  
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## Ames/Nevada Corridor is a Great Choice

The Ames/Nevada corridor is where our family chose to relocate in 1995 after a nine-year 'out-of-Iowa experience' in St. Louis. Wow! What a great choice we made. A small rural town of about 7,000—combined with great local amenities, great schools, and great local and county leadership, all nestled so close to Ames and ISU—has been wonderful.

This past year another great decision by the leaders of Ames and Nevada was employed. After enjoying the leadership of LaVon Schiltz at the Nevada Economic Development Council (NEDC) for the past 25+ years, NEDC leadership had to find her successor. After lengthy deliberations and thinking outside the box, the decision was made to contract with the Ames Economic Development Commission (AEDC). That agreement, finalized on April 1, 2018, brought the expertise of John Hall, a Nevada resident and AEDC employee to serve as the new NEDC director.

Great things have happened in a short time. Adding AEDC resources for Nevada has included developing workforce retention and enhancement strategies, conducting an annual business retention and expansion survey, increased marketing services and additional administrative staff to serve our local businesses.

Ames and Nevada working together just makes sense for so many reasons with less than eight miles separating the two municipalities. Since April, two major Nevada business expansions have prospered tremendously from the relationship. Burke Corporation/Hormel and Mid-States Millwright and Builders/Mid-States Millwright Manufacturers decided to stay in Nevada and Story County because of the new NEDC/AEDC partnership, keeping jobs, expanding jobs and keeping great employers in the area.

In addition, in early November 2018, the DuPont Industrial Biosciences plant located in Nevada announced it had been sold to VERBIO North America Corporation—relieving the local economy and landscape of an idle infrastructure waiting for action. The partnership has proved to be highly effective, resourceful and a great decision for Ames/Nevada corridor businesses and residents. This year's ABI annual conference this June is in Ames. I look forward to sharing our part of heaven with you! ■



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CALENDAR OF EVENTS



**FEBRUARY 15**

**Legislative Conference Call – ABI Members Only**  
Teleconference | 8 AM

**MARCH 7-8**

**Leadership Iowa**  
Cedar Rapids | Topic: Public Safety/Security, Community Preparedness & Response

**MARCH 13**

**Iowa Business Day on the Hill**  
ABI Office | Des Moines | 8:30 AM

**MARCH 15**

**Legislative Conference Call – ABI Members Only**  
Teleconference | 8 AM

**MARCH 27**

**Workers' Compensation Seminar**  
ABI Office | Des Moines | 8:30 AM – 3 PM

**APRIL 4**

**Connecting Statewide Leaders**  
Cedar Falls/Waterloo | 10:30 AM – 1 PM

**APRIL 4**

**Building Business Value**  
Cedar Falls/Waterloo | 1 – 3 PM

**APRIL 4-5**

**Leadership Iowa**  
Cedar Falls/Waterloo | Topic: Education

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

GET TO KNOW

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ICE Technologies | [www.icetechnologies.com](http://www.icetechnologies.com)

Jasper County Economic Development | [www.centraliowa.net](http://www.centraliowa.net)

ProCircular | [www.procircular.com](http://www.procircular.com)

Learn more about how ABI membership could benefit your company by visiting

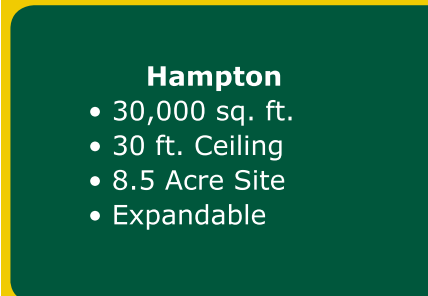
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AHEAD OF THE CURVE

# Lessons from Leadership Iowa

At a time when conversations about our most important issues can lead to polarization and disruption in the public arena, it is more vital than ever for individuals across our state to step up and lead with integrity, empathy and civility. Only halfway through their Leadership Iowa year, participants are seeing the state through a wider lens and sharing thoughts about how their perspective has changed over the last four months:



**Jessi Steward**  
Director, Programs,  
ABI Foundation  
jsteward@iowaabi.org

**PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT:**

I'm embarrassed to admit, the first time I had ever been on a farm was during our agriculture session. Growing up in Chicago and working in aerospace and defense doesn't lend itself much to agriculture. Talking to farmers on their land and learning their struggles and successes helped me better understand my country, my state and my fellow Iowans.

**WHAT IS ONE OPPORTUNITY YOU SEE FOR THE FUTURE OF IOWA?**

When I moved to Iowa, one of the key messages I received was "You will live within driving distance to big cities in other states with much more to do." This new wave of leaders need to continue to sell our state to our youth, and ensure all of the fabulous programming we have is communicated and successful.

**HOW HAS YOUR PARTICIPATION IN LEADERSHIP IOWA INSPIRED YOU?**

After learning more about our National Guard and all they do for our state and country during our session on government, I will be taking a much more active role in learning more about our military and how I can personally and professionally support our veterans.

**PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT:**

One of our first speakers, Kathleen Riessen, challenged me to dig deeply into what I wanted, needed and could do on a personal and professional level. She encouraged me to be vulnerable and to share that vulnerability, which is what your greatest leaders do.

**WHAT IS ONE OPPORTUNITY YOU SEE FOR THE FUTURE OF IOWA?**

We recently discussed "civility" and the importance of "being open to and respecting ideas, people and process." As leaders and in order to influence positive change, we need to be more curious, step out of our comfort zone, ask questions and listen more.

**HOW HAS YOUR PARTICIPATION IN LEADERSHIP IOWA INSPIRED YOU?**

Leadership Iowa has changed my life. Being surrounded by other supportive leaders in different careers, doing amazing things encouraged me to take a risk. Be open to fail. Learn from my failure. And grow. My goal is to trust myself more and find more room to pause, think, feel and be.

**PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT:**

Seeing the profound impact agriculture has on our state, nation and world during our agriculture session. Specifically, how decisions being made on an international level could impact our local economy and the extreme importance of protecting topsoil—arguably our most important natural resource.

**WHAT IS ONE OPPORTUNITY YOU SEE FOR THE FUTURE OF IOWA?**

Connecting our future workforce with the in-state career options and employers available to them. In a parallel path, helping ensure a quality of life exists that helps recruit and retain a world-class workforce. As I've walked the streets of the communities we've visited, I think, "If offered a job here in my early 20s, would I have moved to and remained in this community?"

**HOW HAS YOUR PARTICIPATION IN LEADERSHIP IOWA INSPIRED YOU?**

Nationally, Iowa continues to receive recognition in many areas, and while our state's success can be attributed to many factors, to maintain top rankings, we need the right people in the right seats to lead our state. Thus, I've recently reinvested time and effort to make educators and students aware of opportunities that will help prepare our future leaders.

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