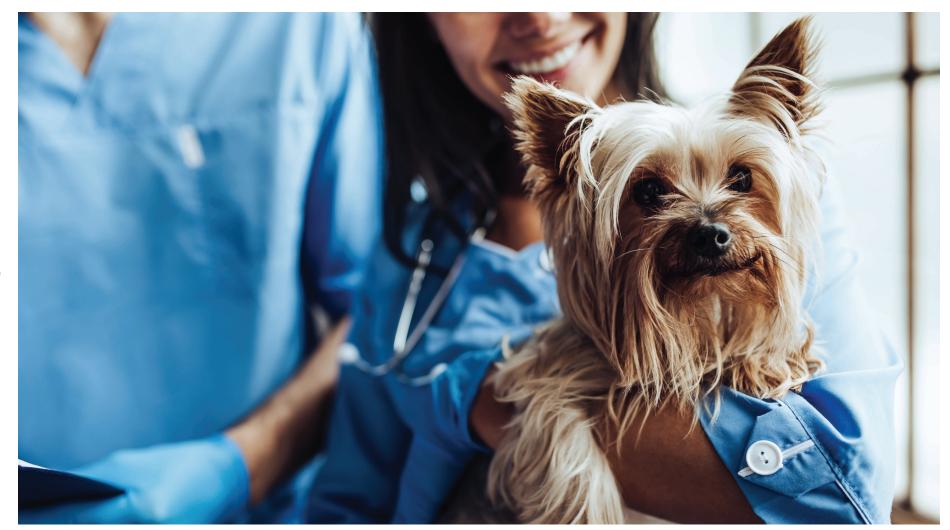


## **AN IOWA SUCCESS STORY:** AFTER HISTORIC FLOODS, CEDAR RAPIDS HAS IMPROVED, BOASTS PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

**CINDY DIETZ,** associate director of state government relations, Collins Aerospace and ABI Chair

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## Business and Industry

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

# See You in Cedar Rapids

When you read this, ABI will have led Iowa Business Day on the Hill 2020. We thank our partners, the Iowa Business Council, the Iowa Chapter of the National Federation of Independent Business, the Iowa Taxpayers Association, the Iowa Chamber Alliance and the National Association of Women Business Owners for their participation. We also thank you for participating in this important event. Legislators want to hear about what is important to you and your business.

This edition of Business Record Iowa carries a great cover story about Cedar Rapids. That city, of course, is the host city for ABI's 2020 Taking Care of Business Conference. It is the hometown of my employer, Collins Aerospace, and it's an important economic center for the state.

I can tell you that there is great excitement in Cedar Rapids about ABI coming to town in June. Count on the community to roll out the red carpet to help make your conference experience the best ever. I'm looking forward to the hospitality, speakers, venues and networking that you will experience at ABI's 117th annual meeting. If you have not already done so, finalize your plans now to join your ABI colleagues in Cedar Rapids June 9-11. You do not want to miss it! Registration is open at www. iowaabi.org. There is no better way to put your company's future in focus than by joining us for ABI's premier annual event.



**Cindy Dietz** ABI Chair Collins Aerospace Cedar Rapids

### SUCCESSION PLANNING

# The Technical Side of Succession Planning

The low unemployment rate in Iowa creates a greater need for succession planning as the likelihood increases that critical positions will transfer ownership when employees and leaders move to other organizations. Often overlooked in succession planning are the technical areas of the organization such as Chief Information Officers, Cybersecurity professionals, Business Intelligence, and others. If one or more of these positions transitions, it can disrupt the flow of business.

In addition to the transition of technical expertise within your organization, lifting leaders in other areas who understand the value of technology and its ability to create competitive advantages is key to the longevity of the business.

#### Tips for Technology-focused Succession Planning

- Identify key technical roles within the organization:
- Cross-train technical staff on critical infrastructure.
- Employ third-party technical experts who can ease times of transition due to their intimate knowledge of the organization's systems and business operations.

#### Determine areas where technology can aid in a smooth transition:

- · Capture and leverage data for business decisions to create well-defined guidelines and processes.
- Implement platforms that enhance critical roles and provide efficiencies or automation.
- Utilize knowledge bases to enhance information access throughout the transition process.

#### Identify future leaders who understand the value of technology:

- · Look for individuals who innovate within their roles and departments with the use of technology.
- Identify individuals who are technically savvy and can visualize how current and future technologies will help create competitive advantages.
- · Identify leaders who view technology as an investment rather than an expenditure.

Technology is embedded into every fiber of business and will continue to grow in importance. Understanding how technology brings value to your organization is key to creating an active and healthy succession plan.



Denny Fisher

Chief Client Experience Officer, ACS dfisher@acsltd.com

# ABI

In the midst of one of the worst natural disasters the city has ever seen, there were fleeting thoughts of Cedar Rapids never really recovering. It was a scary and devastating time for Iowa's second-most populated area. Ron Corbett certainly remembers the feelings of dread permeating throughout the community. As a state politician who went on to serve as mayor of Cedar Rapids in 2009, Corbett has stark memories of that time.

**AN IOWA SUCCESS STORY:** 

**FLOODS, CEDAR RAPIDS** 

**HAS IMPROVED, BOASTS** 

**PLAN FOR THE FUTURE** 

**AFTER HISTORIC** 

In June 2008, the Cedar River, which runs directly through downtown Cedar Rapids, crested at a record-high level of more than 31 feet — the previous record was 20 feet. Water caused substantial damage throughout the city. Estimates say the flood penetrated 14% of Cedar Rapids. More than 18,000 residents were dislocated and 310 city facilities were damaged. Miraculously, there were no deaths.

What came in the immediate aftermath of the disaster was certainly shock, but also unity. The community at large pulled together and looked to rebuild. Now, 12 years later, Cedar Rapids is an example of a city that not only recovered, but actually improved.

"You wonder if you're ever going to be able to recover," said Corbett, now the business retention and expansion strategist with the Cedar Rapids Metro Economic Alliance. "It took about 18 months before we could see the light at the end of the tunnel. Since then we've seen continued growth year after year. A lot of people say that momentum is hard to get. We've been careful not to lose that."

#### **IMPROVING, NOT REBUILDING**

The 2008 flood was certainly devastating, causing about \$6 billion in economic and physical damage in the Cedar Rapids area. Flooding throughout the Midwest that year was the worst natural disaster in United States history by total cost. What made it worse was the economic recession.

But Cedar Rapids also saw the flood as an opportunity. The city had a chance to find new and unique ways to rebuild, to improve on what was working and reimagine what wasn't.

"As awful as the flood of 2008 was for our community — and I was in

# **CINDY DIETZ,** associate director of state government relations, Collins Aerospace and ABI Chair



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IOWA ASSOCIATION OF BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY

AS AWFUL AS THE FLOOD OF 2008 WAS FOR OUR COMMUNITY — AND I WAS IN THE TRENCHES HELPING COORDINATE COLLINS' CORPORATE AND EMPLOYEE RESPONSE AND RECOVERY EFFORTS — I DON'T THINK WE WOULD BE WHERE WE ARE AS A COMMUNITY TODAY HAD THE DISASTER NOT HAPPENED."

Cindy Dietz, associate director of state government relations, Collins Aerospace

#### << CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

the trenches helping coordinate Collins' corporate and employee response and recovery efforts — I don't think we would be where we are as a community today had the disaster not happened," said Cindy Dietz, associate director of state government relations with Collins Aerospace, one of the largest employers in Cedar Rapids. "The flood literally wiped the slate clean — especially in the downtown area — and forced the community into action to revitalize the area."

Months after the flood hit and initial recovery efforts dwindled, city leadership was focused on its vision of improvement. In the years since, investment crossed into the billions of dollars. Big new projects include the new downtown Cedar Rapids Public Library (\$45 million), the federal courthouse in Cedar Rapids (\$162 million), and the expansion and move uphill for the National Czech and Slovak Museum and Library (\$28 million).

The new NewBo City Market, a riverside market district, is a huge draw for Cedar Rapids. New downtown housing and a college district with nearby Coe College provides more buzz around the city. And these projects only scratch the surface.

Improvements weren't just completed on a large scale. Corbett remembers talking to community members after the flood. He talked with a woman whose house was almost completely wiped out by water damage. During a tour of her new home, Corbett noticed a glow appearing on the woman's face as she showed him the kitchen. She had rebuilt it just the way she wanted.

"It was almost like starting over," Corbett said. "She had to make it better, so she did. That was really the viewpoint that the people of Cedar Rapids had over the last 10 years. Why build it the way it was when we have a chance to make it better? That momentum continues as we go forward."

#### **A VISION FOR THE FUTURE**

Today, Cedar Rapids continues to progress. Building upon the growth after the flood, the area is advancing at a breakneck pace. According to the

Cedar Rapids Metro Economic Alliance, more than \$1.9 billion of investments in 157 different projects have been made in the community from 2016 to 2020. In the last fiscal year alone, the city issued \$340 million in building permits, which was down from \$676 million the year before, an all-time record, said Mayor Brad Hart.

Hart added that the improvements overwhelmingly came from private dollars.

"It really is remarkable," he said. "It's been really exciting to see how far we've come. All this construction keeps happening, and we keep getting all these accolades. This wasn't a reincarnation by any means, but it was kind of this reinventing of ourselves."

Cedar Rapids' vision for the future is certainly reason for optimism as well. The Cedar Rapids Metro Economic Alliance has released its plan for the next decade of growth in the area. The focus is on new schools, infrastructure, water improvements and water utility projects. The hope is that investments will spur more job growth, workforce retention and local prosperity.

Flood protection is an integral part of the plan. To avoid a disaster like 2008 — and the near-repeat in 2016 — the report calls for \$550 million of investment in projects such as higher walls, roller gates, pump stations and more. Improving flood protection will not only give local business owners and residents peace of mind, but it will actually lower operating costs.

"This is not a small issue," Hart said. "It will allow these businesses to stop paying flood insurance. Some of them are paying upwards of \$50,000 per year, so if they can turn around and spend that money on expansion, to pay higher wages, hire more people or replace equipment, that's a huge economic impact."

Because of the extensive infrastructure buildouts, Hart said there will be about 100 acres around the river to develop into additional amenities. There are plans in the works to boost recreation opportunities in the area.

In addition to flood protection, the vision calls for \$1.1 billion on transpor-

tation projects, \$350 million in school construction projects, \$300 million in wastewater and sewer projects, and \$275 million in water utility projects.

Cedar Rapids has seen its biggest industry, manufacturing, thrive in the last decade as well. The sector employs about 20,000 people in the area — about 13% of jobs. That's compared with 5% for Des Moines and 12% in the Quad Cities. Manufacturing jobs also make up 25% of all income in Cedar Rapids. Perhaps most exciting is how many people stay in the sector. At 3.6%, manufacturing has the lowest turnover rate of any industry in Cedar Rapids.

"A lot of people don't realize the number of manufacturing jobs we have here," Corbett said. "These jobs are higher-paying jobs, and we're really proud of our manufacturing heritage."

That has also caused a need for workforce. Iowa's unemployment ticked just above 2.5% earlier this year — near record lows — and manufacturing has been one of the hardest sectors hit. Community leaders are looking at ways to attract and retain workers.

"Cedar Rapids will need to learn how to adapt to an increasingly diverse population in order to become a place people want to live and work," Dietz said. "Are we a welcoming place for all people? Do our city services support non-English speakers? I believe the communities who are thinking about these issues now will be best positioned for growth."

The path forward for Cedar Rapids seems clearer than ever. That's thanks to the many community leaders who stepped up after the devastating 2008 floods and helped create a thriving community.

Cedar Rapids is a true Iowa success story.

"Some people lost their family homes and they'll feel like they've never recovered," Hart said. "But anyone that didn't have that kind of experience would say that Cedar Rapids is a much stronger, much more diverse, much more exciting community than ever before because we just didn't build it back like it was before."

#### **READY TO IMPRESS**

Cedar Rapids will showcase its story when it welcomes business leaders from across the state for ABI's Taking Care of Business Conference on June 9-11. The last time the conference was held in Cedar Rapids was 2014, and things have clearly changed for the better.

Dietz, who is the current chair of the ABI board of directors, said the NewBo City Market was just beginning then. Today, that district is considered a must-see destination, with shops and vendors lining the streets.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8 >>



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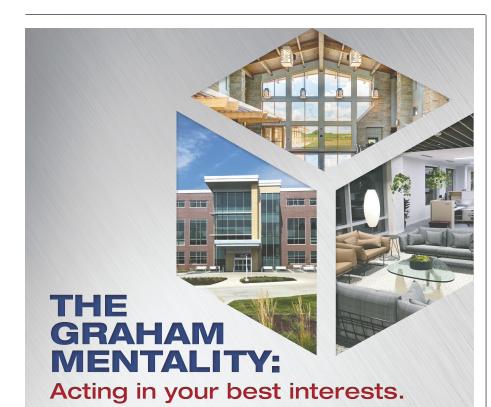
Downtown Cedar Rapids, where the convention center is located, has also been thriving, with many new restaurants and attractions. The McGrath Amphitheatre hosts a variety of entertainment options near the river.

"There is so much to see and do in the heart of Cedar Rapids and out into the neighborhoods, and I want people from other parts of Iowa to appreciate all that we have to offer," Dietz said.

Hart feels the same. He raved about the city's new public library, which was opened in 2013 after the previous structure was destroyed in the floods. It's a marvelous downtown building focused on sustainability. It's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) platinum certified and has won awards for its outreach into the community. For those who want to go off the beaten path a bit, the Cedar Rapids area also has miles of walking, hiking and biking trails.

Whatever attendees decide to do while in Cedar Rapids, its clear city leadership is excited to show off all the great amenities. It's a special place, and many of the attractions are relatively close together, making the experience all the more fruitful.

"I think there's a vibe people need to experience," Hart said. "I think people will come and enjoy all we have to offer, and, for the most part, all of it is within walking distance."



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# **2020 Taking Care of Business Conference to Showcase Cedar Rapids**



ABI will shine a spotlight on Cedar Rapids at its 2020 Taking Care of Business Conference on June 9-11. Conference registration is open at www.ABITakingCareOfBusiness.com.

"Cedar Rapids is full of energy, and we want to be a part of that excitement," said ABI President Mike Ralston. "This year's conference will be bigger and better than ever."

The Taking Care of Business Conference is Iowa's premiere statewide business conference. It brings together the state's most influential industry leaders to learn, network and share ideas on growing Iowa's business climate.

"We're proud to bring the Taking Care of Business Conference to Cedar Rapids," said ABI Board Chair Cindy Dietz, associate director, state government relations for Collins Aerospace. "Cedar Rapids is the second largest industrial and commercial center in Iowa and is vital to the state's economy. And the city's revitalization following the historic flood of 2008 is nothing short of amazing."

The conference will be at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Cedar Rapids Convention Complex with additional activities throughout the city.

The keynote speaker will be STEM superstar Dr. Tarika Barrett, COO at Girls Who Code, an international nonprofit working to close the gender gap in technology.

Additional speakers will include Phil Jasper, president of Mission Systems at Collins Aerospace based in Cedar Rapids, and retired NASA astronaut Joan Higginbotham, also with Collins Aerospace.

"Members told us they want to hear more about Iowa success stories," said Ralston. "Much of the high-quality programming is focused on that."

The conference will also feature workshops from Iowa business experts on leadership, business operations and succession, employee engagement, public policy, human resources and marketing.

One-of-a-kind industry tours will include Collins Aerospace, International Paper, Alliant Energy and Amtek.

Companies of all sizes are encouraged to bring their leadership teams. Learn more and register at www.ABITakingCareOfBusiness.com.

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#### **CAPITOL BUSINESS**

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# **ABI Workforce Priorities Advance at Iowa Statehouse**

The Iowa Legislature is narrowing the list of policy bills that may be considered for final approval during the 2020 legislative session. The second legislative funnel comes on Friday, March 20. By that date all policy bills must been voted out of one chamber and a committee in the opposite chamber to receive further consideration from the Legislature.

The governor and Legislature are building on two key workforce policy initiatives that gained strong bipartisan passage during the 2018 legislative session and have proven to be successful in meeting their goals.

Future Ready Iowa (HF2384/SSB3077) – This legislation will expand the Employer Innovation Fund, a matching grant program for local education and workforce development initiatives that matches worker training and education with the needs of employers filling high demand jobs. This proposal also creates the Child Care Challenge, allowing similar local innovation and partnership in the construction or renovation of facilities to become child care facilities. In a strong economy the lack of affordable or available childcare is a major barrier to expanding the workforce.

Empower Rural Iowa (SF2262/HSB657) – This legislation triples the amount of grant funding for the deployment of high speed internet service through the Broadband Grant program. As written, the legislation would provide greater support for projects with greater speeds. Rural businesses and precision agriculture are the beneficiaries of this program, and the additional funding

will speed deployment.

A third initiative also seeks to aid in getting workers to the workforce through Professional Licensing Reform (SSB3122/HSB647/SF2114). More Iowans are required to hold a professional license to practice their chosen professions than workers in 48 other states. Properly designed licensing promotes safety and standards in specific occupations. Poorly designed or burdensome licensing requirements are a barrier to workforce entry for new Iowans and low income residents. This legislative initiative seeks a new balance to aid in expanding workforce opportunities for both employees and employers.

If you are an ABI member, you receive more information on these initiatives and others via the weekly e-newsletter and conference calls held every other Friday during session. *Please contact Michelle Vollstedt at mvollstedt@iowaabi.org to make sure* 

you are on the list.



JD Davis Vice President, Public Policy, ABI jddavis@iowaabi.org

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Pre-employment Testing Process Seminar ABI Office | Des Moines

#### APRIL 2-3

Leadership Iowa Glenwood/Council Bluffs

#### MAY 7-8

Leadership Iowa Waverly

## JUNE 9-11

Taking Care of Business Conference Cedar Rapids Convention Complex | Cedar Rapids

### JUNE 11

Leadership Iowa Graduation

Cedar Rapids

#### JULY 19-23

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#### **AUGUST 9-13**

Leadership Iowa University Des Moines Area

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Learn more about how ABI membership could benefit your company by visiting www.iowaabi.org/membership/why-abi.

### CULTIVATING IOWA'S TALENT CONTINUUM





# 'Brain Gain' Rises with Introduction of Emerging Leaders to Iowa **Business Network**



**McKenzie Kielman** Marketing & Engagement Coordinator, ABI Foundation mkielman@iowaabi.org

Iowa is competitive in attracting and retaining the workforce needed for business and industry advancement, which challenges educators, employers and communities to cultivate our emerging leaders. While the work of many are turning the 'brain drain' perception of just a decade ago into the 'brain gain,' we need to continue these efforts to increase and fortify the advocates for our state, its people and its advancement.

Students have more accessible educational pathways than ever before to pursue careers meaningful to themselves and our state. Unfortunately, this may not be enough to keep our emerging professionals. Studies show talented and skilled workers are the most likely to move by far, affirmed by less than half of Iowa college students saying they're likely to stay in the state.

We know there are consequences if we do not connect the next generation-economically, as well as politically and culturally. We also must understand how rural, suburban and urban communities are disproportionately affected with continued collaborative efforts to rise together.

An opportunity available to all college students in the state, which can also be offered by Iowa companies as an internship capstone, is ABI Foundation's five-day program Leadership Iowa University.

Participants connect with a multitude of Iowa businesses and professionals through exceptional touring and networking opportunities, allowing the class to experience life as an Iowa entrepreneur, civic leader and other paths. Students proactively develop skills needed for an evolving workplace by strengthening self-awareness and self-confidence, then plan their next steps with the help of HR professionals.

Students return to their companies and colleges with an increased understanding of the importance of their work and a stronger vision for their future. You can be the difference for the emerging leaders in your life by recommending Leadership Iowa University.

Leadership Iowa University 2020 is August 9-13 in Des Moines. Applications will be accepted until the program is filled. Applications can be completed now at www.LeadershipIowaUniversity.com.

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