



## IMPROVING COMPETITIVENESS LEGISLATURE LOOKS TO TAX REFORM



*The ABI public policy team (L to R: Director, Public Policy, Brad Hartkopf; Vice President, Public Policy, JD Davis; Legislative and Communications Intern, Steffi Lee).*



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**Iowa Association of  
 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**

**A Look Ahead at 2022 and the Iowa Legislature**



**Jack Hasken**  
*ABI Chair*  
*Jackson Mfg., Inc.*  
*Maquoketa, Iowa*

The year 2021 was both busy and successful here at ABI, but as you already know, leading organizations are always looking ahead. One of the items to which ABI is looking towards is the 2022 session of the Iowa General Assembly. This edition of Business Record Iowa highlights the upcoming session and issues that will be considered by the Iowa Legislature this year.

At Jackson Mfg. (and at other ABI companies), our people make some of the highest quality products in the world. We share that story with elected officials at every opportunity. We know our legislators and we invite them into our plant often. We appreciate their public service and we follow their votes closely.

Not just during session, but all year long, one great resource for objective, nonpartisan information about the candidates and issues is found at IAVOTES.com. IAVOTES.com is ABI's award-winning voter resource and issues website. Go to IAVOTES.com to find information about candidates, see candidate videos, and learn about issues.

By the time you read this, ABI will have held its second largest annual event, the association's annual Legislative Briefing and Reception. Over 500 Iowa business people and elected officials will have participated. The largest annual event is the annual conference. The 2022 ABI Taking Care of Business Conference will be held in Dubuque June 14-16. See you there!

Finally, as the New Year begins, I would note that ABI enjoyed a strong 2021. Despite challenges faced by members and the association related to the COVID-19 pandemic and related issues, ABI ended the year stronger than ever. That is thanks to your support and we never take that support for granted. Thank you all very much! ■

■

**ELEVATE IOWA**

**ABI Foundation 40th Anniversary**

The Iowa Association of Business & Industry (ABI) Foundation is celebrating its 40th anniversary! The ABI Foundation is dedicated to developing Iowa's workforce and leaders through statewide educational programs, including Leadership Iowa, Leadership Iowa University, Business Horizons, and Elevate Iowa. Join us in supporting our statewide efforts and learn more about the ABI Foundation's programs below.

**Leadership Iowa** is the Foundation's flagship leadership program that launched in 1982. The program allows nominated participants to gain hands-on experience in cities across the state of Iowa, receiving training in topics like government, agriculture, education, healthcare, economic development, and more. After completing the Leadership Iowa program, graduates bring their knowledge and network back into their careers and grow their local communities.

Modeled after Leadership Iowa, **Leadership Iowa University (LIU)** is a fast-paced development program for college student leaders to learn about opportunities and challenges in Iowa's workforce. Participants engage with Iowa professionals through networking events, round-table discussions, and a mentorship with a professional in their desired career field. LIU is an excellent internship capstone that provides businesses an additional incentive for their best candidates while providing the intern a development opportunity.

**Business Horizons** is an action-packed opportunity for high school students to learn about the world of business through real-world experience. Led by a team of Iowa industry professionals, students participate in a week-long program with their peers, working together to write a business plan, create marketing materials, and pitch their idea to a team of investors. Students also network with local entrepreneurs and business owners to discover why Iowa is a great place to live and work.

**Elevate Iowa** is a statewide effort that shares the message of the unlimited potential available through a career in advanced manufacturing. Elevate promotes jobs and pathways in advanced manufacturing through financial and educational resources—including annual scholarships for high school students. In partnership with all of Iowa's 15 Community Colleges, Elevate drives awareness of career opportunities for K-12 students, educators, veterans, and individuals across the state of Iowa.

The ABI Foundation's 40th Anniversary goal is to promote and fundraise for these programs. We invite you to learn more about the ABI Foundation's 40th Anniversary fundraising efforts. Your support directly impacts the livelihood of Iowans across the state! All donations through September 2022 will be matched (up to \$40,000) thanks to a generous gift from the Dick & Judy Smith Family Foundation! The ABI Foundation is committed to providing statewide programs to develop community leaders and strengthen Iowa's workforce. ■



**Michele Farrell**  
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*Elevate Advanced*  
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CULTIVATING IOWA'S TALENT CONTINUUM

# Leadership Iowa: Celebrating Our Past While Cultivating Our Future



**Jessi McQuerrey**  
 Director of Programs  
 ABI Foundation  
 jmcquerrey@iowaabi.org

The ABI Foundation has undoubtedly benefited from the forethought of Iowa's leaders and our state's ability to be an early-adopter of initiatives. Our state was just the fourth in the country to launch a statewide leadership program; one that brings diverse leaders together to learn and generate solutions for Iowa. This resulted in the creation of Leadership Iowa in 1982.

Forty years and more than 1,200 program alumni later, we're proud to celebrate Leadership Iowa's ongoing success. However, it isn't the crafted combination of tours, speakers and experiences that makes the program special each year.

Leadership Iowa is impactful by what our participants choose to do with the information and opportunities they receive during the program. It's the alumni who felt inspired to run for local office, leveraged partnerships for a new service organization, or proactively prepared their company for a potential issue faced in other towns.

We invite you to consider who this might describe in your organization and nominate them for Leadership Iowa. Here are a few things to keep in mind for nominations:

- **Qualifications:** There are no title or resume requirements to participate in Leadership Iowa. We look for Iowans who have shown a commitment to their workplace and community, and demonstrate a desire to expand upon their leadership for the betterment of Iowa.
- **Commitment:** Eight two-day required sessions take place each month October through June (not held in February). These sessions are often the first week of the month, all day on Thursday and

Friday, though there is typically travel time needed on Wednesday afternoons. It takes commitment to "shut down" from work and home responsibilities for two days each month.

- **Company Process:** Many companies across Iowa have internal processes for selecting a candidate to nominate. Ask your director if one exists to ensure company support for your candidate. If you'd like to create a process for your company, please reach out!
- **Selection:** A committee reviews all applications and carefully selects a purposefully diverse group of qualified candidates. Many candidates apply more than once before being selected.
- **Consider yourself, too!:** Self-nominations are encouraged! Whether you are nominated by someone else or yourself, it makes no difference in the selection process.

**Candidates must be nominated by April 1, 2022 (NEW DATE!)** to be eligible to apply for the 2022-23 program. Nominations can be made online at [www.LeadershipIowa.com](http://www.LeadershipIowa.com). After April 1, nominees will be notified and provided application instructions.

A fitting quote by Margaret Mead sums up the Leadership Iowa spirit well: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." Leadership Iowa began and continues today on the principle that the power to sustain and grow our state relies on the collaboration and commitment of our greatest asset: our people. ■

## THE SMART (and fastest growing) MONEY IS ON IOWA, AND IT'S EASY TO SEE WHY.

Thanks to a low cost of doing business, a responsive regulatory environment and one of the lowest insurance premium tax rates in the country, Iowa stands as one of the nation's leading headquarters for finance and insurance. Strong industry leadership has yielded more than 50% growth in the state over the last decade, and even more innovations are on the horizon through Iowa's work in insurance technology and fintech. With abundant opportunities for growth and a highly skilled workforce, Iowa offers the perfect climate for success. Learn more at [IowaEDA.com](http://IowaEDA.com).



## CAPITOL BUSINESS



# What to Expect from ABI During the 2022 Legislative Session

The legislative session began on Jan. 10, 2022. As you have read in this column before, ABI serves as the Iowa business community's eyes and ears at the Capitol. The upcoming legislative session will be no different. It is fitting to once again share with you what to expect from ABI during the session, as well as how you can be engaged in the policymaking process.

## THREE THINGS TO EXPECT FROM ABI:

- 1. Round-the-clock coverage at the Capitol** – The ABI public policy team has followed this mantra for the last decade and will continue to do so: “As long as they are there, we are there.” If the Legislature is in session, you can count on the ABI team to provide you information about what's happening at the Capitol. ABI will be there for Iowa employers day and night. We will work to educate lawmakers about the impact various proposals will have on employees and employers statewide.
- 2. Weekly updates** – Each Friday Morning, ABI members will receive the Voice of Iowa Business newsletter. The newsletter will feature a summary of key issues ABI has engaged in on behalf of members during the week, emerging issues that warrant the attention of members and progress to the policy priorities of ABI. The newsletter will be timely and in your email inbox before the end of the week.
- 3. Twice-monthly conference calls** – ABI members also get up-to-date information on twice-monthly conference calls, which are made possible by ABI member company support of the organization. These calls give specific information on bill status and provide members with an insiders' look into the legislative process. The calls begin Friday, Jan. 21, 2022. Go to the Events Calendar page on the ABI website to register.

## THREE WAYS YOU CAN GET ENGAGED:

- 1. Meet your local elected officials** – Iowa legislators are accessible and hold occasional weekend forums during session. Most legislators are willing to come to businesses and meet with employees and other businesspeople from their districts. All legislators maintain state email accounts and are very interested in feedback from their districts. You can find your legislators here: [www.legis.iowa.gov/legislators/find](http://www.legis.iowa.gov/legislators/find). The best way to educate legislators is to help them understand what you do and why your business is important to the Iowa economy. Invite them to your office, plant or construction site. Get to know them. If you would like help with introductions or meeting setting, please reach out to JD Davis at [jddavis@iowaabi.org](mailto:jddavis@iowaabi.org) or Brad Hartkopf at [bhartkopf@iowaabi.org](mailto:bhartkopf@iowaabi.org).
- 2. Attend Iowa Business Day on the Hill** – In addition to the recent ABI Legislative Briefing that kicks off the legislative session, ABI also plans an Iowa Business Day on the Hill. This year, the event is scheduled for March 8, 2022 with a briefing at the ABI office before deploying to the Hill. Check out [www.iowaabi.org](http://www.iowaabi.org) for details.
- 3. Make sure you receive ABI emails** – I know you receive a lot of emails from organizations you're a part of. However, if you want to stay up-to-date on the legislative happenings at ABI, make sure you read the Voice of Iowa Business newsletter on Fridays. Also, when an email comes from Mike Ralston, Brad Hartkopf or myself, know it's related to a pending public policy issue and that we need your insight and support. Please help us and reach out to your legislators when requests come from ABI. We are honored to represent you and the hundreds of thousands of employees you employ throughout the state each and every day. You can expect us to work hard every day for you and for a better climate to be an Iowa employer. If you have a question about public policy, please email or call us. Our job is to represent you and be responsive to your questions and concerns. Thank you for your commitment to ABI and Iowa's business community! ■



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**THE LEGISLATIVE SESSION  
BEGAN ON JAN. 10, 2022**

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# IMPROVING COMPETITIVENESS LEGISLATURE LOOKS TO TAX REFORM

The ABI public policy team is at the capitol around the clock representing Iowa employers. *Photo by Duane Tinkey*

BY GIGI WOOD

## **For each of the last several years, Iowa policymakers have begun the work of improving the state's competitiveness.**

The Iowa Association of Business and Industry (ABI) applauds the efforts and shares the goal of continuous improvement, but more could be done to enhance our state's business climate. At one point, Iowa was ranked as low as 45th in overall business climate competitiveness. Now, depending on the list, Iowa comes in at 44th according to U.S. News & World Report, 38th on the 2022 State Business Tax Climate Index by the Tax Foundation, but is entirely absent from Site Selection Magazine's business climate rankings. It is time for Iowa to adopt policies that will dramatically improve our competitive standing.

In December, the Iowa Revenue Estimating Conference issued its prediction for future tax revenue, saying that revenue will increase by 3% in fiscal year 2022 and 1.7% in 2023. With extra money coming in, reducing Iowa income tax rates is going to be a top legislative priority of many lawmakers and advocacy groups. ABI plans to lobby for several issues that will reduce taxes and improve the state's business environment.

ABI's legislative priorities for 2022 include tax reform, changes to the unemployment system and regulatory reforms, as well as infrastructure funding oversight.

"In 2022, ABI will be seeking reforms to our unemployment system that help the unemployed return to the workforce and provide sustainability to the state's unemployment trust fund," said Brad Hartkopf, director of public policy at ABI.

The association's legislative agenda reflects the priorities of its members, he said.

"The 1,500 members of ABI offer goods and services around the globe – in manufacturing, financial services, food production and other industries," Hartkopf said. "A competitive business environment, with a stable and available workforce and a tax system, which does not ask more of businesses here in Iowa than employers in other states, will allow for economic growth and wealth creation."

ABI plans to advocate for a more competitive tax climate for employers, he said. One way to keep the business environment competitive is by reforming the unemployment taxes dedicated to the Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund (UITF), he said. The UITF is funded by taxes levied on Iowa employers. In an unprecedented move, several hundred millions dollars of coronavirus federal relief funds were deposited into the UITF to ensure the stability of the fund.

"The COVID-19 pandemic put a spotlight on just how fragile the balance and maintenance of the trust fund can be," Hartkopf said. "Thanks to Gov. Kim Reynolds' leadership in depositing federal monies into that trust fund, Iowa employers are set to remain in the same tax table for 2022 that they were in last year."

"Iowa employers pay taxes into the UITF for some purposes that employers in a number of our neighboring states do not," he said. "In order to remain competitive with our bordering states, it's vital that the Legislature enact reforms which modernize the UITF while also maintaining a system that can deliver benefits to Iowans who are unemployed through no fault of their own."

The association will also keep close tabs on how infrastructure funding is spent, ensuring broadband is prioritized. Improving internet and broadband accessibility at high speeds needed by Iowa manufacturers has

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8





# WHO NEEDS HOUSING?

**MANY HARD WORKING IOWANS IN POSITIONS LIKE THESE EARN LESS THAN WHAT IS REQUIRED TO AFFORD A MARKET RATE APARTMENT AND UTILITIES IN IOWA, WITHOUT BEING HOUSING COST BURDENED.**



**Ambulance Drivers and Attendants**



**Bartenders**



**Childcare Workers**



**Food Servers**



**EMTs and Paramedics**



**Grocery Workers**



**Home Health and Personal Care Aides**



**Laboratory Assistants**



**Nursing Assistants**



**Pharmacy Aides**



**Preschool Teachers**



**Retail Sales Workers**



**Teaching Assistants**



**Young Professionals**

**WHEN WE CAN ALL WORK AND LIVE IN OUR COMMUNITIES, WE ALL BENEFIT.**

# ALL OF US.



**IOWA FINANCE AUTHORITY**

[iowafinance.com](http://iowafinance.com)

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

been a top priority of many Iowa employers, including those located in rural areas and those with remote workers. The approved \$1.2 trillion federal infrastructure bill has \$65 billion earmarked for broadband. Through federal grants and state funding, Iowa has \$400 million set aside already for improving broadband access.

The ABI policy team will be at the Iowa Capitol throughout the session.

“ABI will be working with policymakers to ensure that the business community’s priorities are acted upon in 2022,” Hartkopf said. “The policy team will be at the capitol each and every day during the legislative session advancing the association’s interests. We’ll also be encouraging our membership to engage their locally elected officials as to why policymakers should implement these priorities.”

Since 2017, ABI has supported more than 40 bills that passed the Legislature and have been signed by Iowa governors, he said. Those issues include spearheading workers’ compensation reform, ensuring employers can maintain a zero-tolerance policy for drug and alcohol testing and helping lead the passage of the COVID-19 limited liability shield.

“ABI is motivated to take on challenging issues that significantly improve how employers are able to function in Iowa,” Hartkopf said. “Notably, none of the issues listed, or matters such as increasing Iowa’s workforce housing stock, expanding affordable childcare or making high-speed broadband more available could have been accomplished without a pro-business governor and Legislature. They understand that in order for businesses to thrive, the state must advance policies that address the needs of both employers and their employees alike, which is what we’ve seen occur over the last several years.” ■

**“ABI will be working with policymakers to ensure that the business community’s priorities are acted upon in 2022.”**

- **Brad Hartkopf**, director of public policy at ABI



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS - 2022

### MARCH 3

**Connecting Statewide Leaders**  
Council Bluffs

### MARCH 3-4

**Leadership Iowa**  
Council Bluffs

### MARCH 8

**Day on the Hill**  
Iowa Association of Business and Industry | Des Moines

### MARCH 30

**Pre-employment Testing Process Seminar**  
Iowa Association of Business and Industry | Des Moines

### APRIL 7-8

**Leadership Iowa**  
Decorah

### MAY 5-6

**Leadership Iowa**  
Iowa City

### JUNE 14-16

**Taking Care of Business Conference**  
Dubuque

### JULY 28-29

**Okoboji CEO Forum**  
Okoboji

Visit [www.iowaabi.org](http://www.iowaabi.org) and click the "Events" tab for details on upcoming events, including updates in response to COVID-19-related safety restrictions for public gatherings.

## GET TO KNOW

# Meet ABI's Newest Members

Visit our newest members' websites, and see how their products and services can benefit you:

Bing Bang | [www.itsbingbang.com](http://www.itsbingbang.com)

Care Initiatives | [www.careinitiatives.org](http://www.careinitiatives.org)

Private Wealth Asset Management | [www.privatewealth.com](http://www.privatewealth.com)

TC Energy | [www.tcenergy.com](http://www.tcenergy.com)

Learn more about how ABI membership could benefit your company by visiting [www.iowaabi.org/membership/why-abi](http://www.iowaabi.org/membership/why-abi).



## ADVISORY COUNCIL



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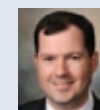
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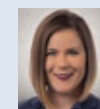
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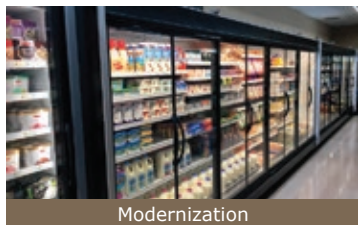


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## Low-Cost Financing for Business Energy Efficiency Projects



Modernization



Process Improvement

### Low Interest Revolving Loan Fund:

Finance energy efficiency and renewable energy projects through the IADG Energy Bank. With qualified energy improvement projects, facilities need no upfront or additional capital. Loan payments can be flexibly arranged to meet your energy savings.

### Energy Bank Parameters:

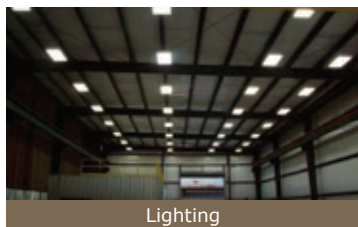
- Loans: \$50,000-\$300,000
- Rate: 1%
- Term: Up to 10 Years
- Origination Fee: 1%

### Services Provided:

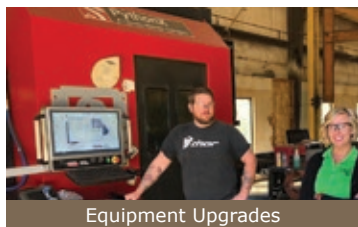
- Easy Application and Approval Process
- Independent and Unbiased Project Review
- Customized Financing Solutions
- Project Implementation Assistance
- Ongoing Project Monitoring and Support

### Eligible Borrowers:

The IADG Energy Bank is focused on making loans to businesses and industries for energy efficiency improvements and renewable energy projects. Preference will be given to manufacturers.



Lighting



Equipment Upgrades

### MORE DETAILS:

For program overview, related requirements, and ensure availability of funds, contact Bruce Nuzum or visit:

[IADG.com/EnergyBank](http://IADG.com/EnergyBank)

**Contact:**  
**Bruce Nuzum**  
**800-888-4743**



## EVENT REWIND

### ABI Connecting Statewide Leaders DECEMBER 2

More than 80 people gathered on December 2 for the ABI Connecting Statewide Leaders event. The networking luncheon, hosted in partnership with the December Leadership Iowa session, focused on manufacturing and was held at Central College. ABI President, Mike Ralston moderated the panel that included manufacturing executives in the Pella area from Pella Corporation, PPI and Vermeer. The panelists described manufacturing trends including workforce challenges, Industry 4.0 and other challenges and opportunities facing the industry in Iowa. ■

