



**IOWA
ASSOCIATION
OF BUSINESS
AND INDUSTRY**

BUSINESS

JUNE 2024 **MONTHLY**

Coollest THING MADE IN IOWA

STORY ON PAGE 18

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- JUNE 4-6**
Taking Care of Business
Conference
QUAD CITIES
- JUNE 4-6**
Leadership Iowa: Graduation
QUAD CITIES
- JUNE 20**
Automation Summit
FORT DODGE
- JULY 14-18**
Business Horizons
DES MOINES
- JULY 30**
Webinar: Pre-employment Testing
Process Series (Session 1)
VIRTUAL
- AUGUST 4-8**
Leadership Iowa University
DES MOINES
- AUGUST 8-9**
Executive Forum
MASON CITY
- AUGUST 26**
Executive Open Golf Outing
WEST DES MOINES
- SEPTEMBER 17**
Webinar: Pre-employment Testing
Process Series (Session 2)
VIRTUAL
- OCTOBER 2**
Iowa Manufacturing Conference
ANKENY

VISIT WWW.IOWAABI.ORG AND CLICK THE "EVENTS"
TAB FOR DETAILS ON ALL UPCOMING EVENTS.

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FROM THE CHAIR:

Celebrating Innovation and Community with ABI's 'Coolest Thing Made in Iowa' Initiative

Manufacturing is a key economic driver in Iowa. While your thoughts may go to a list of large global manufacturers in the state, the reality is that when it comes to manufacturing, Iowa has a rich and diverse manufacturing base consisting of companies of all sizes spread throughout the state.

To help bring awareness of the wide depth and variety of Iowa manufacturers and the very cool products they produce, ABI launched an initiative called "The Coolest Thing Made in Iowa." This program is designed to emphasize Iowa manufacturing by highlighting innovative Iowa-made products. Thank you to ABI member MidWestOne for their help

in bringing this program to life. You can read all about it in this edition of ABI Business Monthly.

As I write this, association members all over Iowa and beyond are gearing up for ABI's annual Taking Care of Business Conference, held this month in Davenport. I look forward to enjoying the programming and networking opportunities that are key to the event. Based on those programs, speakers and attendee registration, this is going to be one of the best ABI conferences ever.

On a final note, this column is the last one of our ABI fiscal year and it has gone much more quickly than I imagined. Working together and with strong

leadership provided by the board of directors, ABI accomplished a number of priorities. Significant achievements marked the year in the association's public policy work, in its foundation programs, and in its meetings and events. New projects were completed, new objectives accomplished, and new members welcomed to our association.

Please allow me to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Executive Committee and the Board of Directors as well as our members and staff. The ongoing legacy of ABI is its work to make Iowa a better place. It is all of you, which make that work and that goal a reality. Thank you. **ABI**



Chad Reece
ABI Vice Chair
Winnebago Industries

EXPERT ADVICE:

Keep your hearing sharp in noisy environments

Ever find yourself shouting to a coworker just to be heard over background noise? That's a clear sign that the noise is too loud, and it might be taking a toll on your hearing. Here are nine tips EMC Insurance recommends you can follow to protect your ears:

- 1. Be aware of your noise sources:** Pay attention to the equipment, tasks, or areas that produce high noise levels. Regular exposure to moderately loud equipment, like sanding or power tools, can damage your hearing over time. High-decibel equipment, such as chainsaws, impact wrenches, compressed air, and jackhammers, pose even greater risks.
- 2. Know employer responsibilities:** Under OSHA regulations, employers must provide a safe work environment which includes the prevention of hazardous noise exposures. Some responsibilities include measuring noise exposures, implement noise controls, administer a hearing conservation program, and offer suitable hearing protection options for your noise environment.
- 3. Take action:** Hearing damage is irreversible. So, limit exposure to noise by distancing yourself from loud noises as much as possible, reducing equipment

speeds and keeping up with routine maintenance. Using sound-absorbing materials in your space also can help.

- 4. Gear up:** Noise over 85 decibels is considered hazardous and can cause permanent hearing loss. Use earplugs or earmuffs, or both, if you're frequently in loud environments. They're essential for keeping hearing intact.
- 5. Use them right:** If using roll down earplugs, roll them into a tight cylinder, pull your ear up and out, then insert the plug and hold it in place until it expands. Flanged earplugs have a pre-molded material, so you can usually just stick them in your ear. But make sure they're inserted far enough to close your ear canal. Earmuffs should fit snugly yet comfortably over the ear, ensuring they seal well without pinching. Be sure to follow manufacturers' instructions to ensure you're properly wearing hearing protection.
- 6. Ear buds aren't enough:** Most ear buds or other listening devices don't have a noise reduction rating (NRR) and aren't hearing protection devices. Many also do not have noise limiting capability. These can actually increase the likelihood of hearing loss. Invest in proper earplugs or earmuffs to

ensure adequate shielding from harmful noise.

- 7. Know that chemicals can play a role in hearing loss:** Exposure to certain chemicals (called ototoxicants) can increase your hearing loss, especially when also exposed to elevated noise levels. Examples of ototoxicants include certain solvents, metals, carbon monoxide, pesticides, and certain pharmaceuticals. Assess your chemical exposures to determine if this can affect you.
- 8. Be mindful of your recreational exposures:** If you enjoy hunting, carpentry, metalworking, mechanics, concerts, or other loud venues, remember that your total noise exposure causes hearing loss. So wear appropriate hearing protection at home or at work.
- 9. There are no such thing as tough ears:** Your ears don't adjust to loud noise—they just get further damaged. Protect your hearing now to prevent irreversible harm later.

Stay alert to these tips, and keep those ears in tip-top shape, no matter how noisy it gets. Your future self will thank you! Find the latest news, insights, and actionable safety tips—all carefully curated by our team of experts—at emcinsurance.com/losscontrol. **ABI**



Kelsie Boorn
Senior Industrial Hygienist
EMC Insurance
Kelsie.A.Boorn@EMCIns.com

CAPITOL BUSINESS:

ABI Legislative Priorities Accomplished in 2024

It was another banner year at the Capitol for the business community as ABI successfully advanced legislation under the three priorities we had for the year including Workforce, Tax and Regulatory Reform. Governor Reynolds recently finished reviewing and signing legislation passed by the Legislature, which means it's time to take a look at what key bills will become law.



Brad Hartkopf

Senior Director, Public Policy
ABI
bhartkopf@iowaabi.org

Workforce

The governor put forward a comprehensive bill that makes changes to several programs aimed at training and upskilling Iowans. A few key features of SF 2411 relate to the establishment of a Workforce Opportunity Fund (WOF) and the transfer of funds from the Unemployment Compensation Reserve Fund (UCRF) and the ultimate elimination of the fund.

The WOF is created and funded with \$30 million from the UCRF. The fund, administered by Iowa Workforce Development, is to be designated for the purposes of training and infrastructure related to the growth and maintenance of the state's workforce programs. While ABI certainly supports the goal of the fund, we initially had issues with the source of funding, as ABI has had a long-standing policy and belief that any unemployment insurance payroll taxes made by employers should be used for unemployment benefits only. At the direction of the ABI Board of Directors, ABI staff worked with the governor and her team to develop a compromise that would satisfy all parties.

The final product included allocating \$30 million from the UCRF to the WOF. The rest of the money in the UCRF (\$120 million) is then transferred to the main Unemployment Insurance Trust Fund, which builds upon the solvency of the fund and ensures the money can only be used for unemployment benefits. Following the transfer, the UCRF is eliminated from the Iowa Code. This is a tremendous outcome for businesses.

Tax

Perhaps no other state in the country has undergone a more pro-growth transformation of their tax code in the last seven years than Iowa.

In 2018, Iowa had a progressive, clunky and complex tax code that was onerous for businesses and individuals. That year, we had top rates of 8.98% on the personal income side and 12.0% on the corporate income side. Over the last few years, poli-

cymakers have moved us in a pro-taxpayer direction by easing that burden.

This year, Governor Reynolds signed a bill that will move Iowa to a flat individual income rate of 3.8% for Tax Year 2025. Given that we're currently at 5.7% for Tax Year 2024, that's a 33% reduction in the rate and an additional \$1 billion in savings for taxpayers. We currently have a top corporate rate of 7.1%, but that is expected to hit a flat 5.5% in a few years.

In addition to income tax reductions, policymakers have recently signed off on legislation that exempts retirement income from taxation, phases out the inheritance tax and begins to reform our property tax system.

Regulatory Reform

Within the governor's executive branch rulemaking bill are provisions that address long-sought reforms to the way the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) handles air dispersion modeling. While the state must prove compliance with the Federal Clean Air Act, air dispersion modeling for minor sources, in most cases, is discretionary.

The legislation ensures that DNR doesn't have to impose air dispersion modeling for minor sources or minor modifications of major stationary sources to prove they are in compliance with the Clean Air Act. This is a significant deal for those who are affected as the costs for making a single modification can be in the tens of thousands of dollars for industry.

ABI staff would like to thank all our members for their support and pro-business policymakers who prioritized the passage of legislation that will make Iowa even more competitive moving forward. **ABI**

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COVER STORY FROM PAGE 15

'Coolest Thing' contest spotlights Iowa's diverse, creative manufacturing sector



DOBSON PIPE ORGAN BUILDERS

By Emery Styron

Even Chip Reeves, who heads Iowa's largest publicly traded bank and oversees deals every day that keep the state's industrial wheels turning, was wowed by the variety, creativity and global impact of companies and products nominated in ABI's first-ever "Coolest Thing Made in Iowa" competition.

"What stood out for me is the absolute range of products, the diversity of design and thought, leaders in their fields that you did not even know were Iowa-based companies," says Mr. Reeves, CEO of Iowa City-based MidWestOne Bank, presenting sponsor of the contest for at least its first two years.

Nominations came from manufacturers in all corners and business sectors of Iowa, for products as varied as bait tanks, race car wheels, smart fire hydrants and tiki bar boats, from internationally-known brands like Winnebago and KENT to makers you probably never heard of — like Insane Impact, builder of the MAX Mobile LED trailer, and PigEasy, producer of MealMeter2.0.

Online public voting, beginning with a popular vote round, narrowed the field to 16. Two rounds of bracket competition winnowed that number to four. The winner, to be announced June 5 at ABI's Taking Care of Business Conference, was determined by a final round of voting held May 20-29.

The Finalists:

- Dobson Pipe Organ Builders' custom-built pipe organs. The Lake City company crafts instruments for churches, schools, public venues and private owners.
- Musco Sports lighting's illumination products used globally at sports venues, including the Olympics. Musco is headquartered in Oskaloosa.
- Pella-based Vermeer's ZR5-1200 self-propelled baler, a product that marries zero-turn mower technology with the company's forage-handling expertise in round-baling.
- Sukup Manufacturing's Safe T Homes. The Sheffield-based grain bin maker has adapted its product to offer affordable, compact metal homes resistant to hurricanes and other extreme conditions in developing countries.

The competition, says ABI's Communications Marketing and Communications Director Kelsey O'Connor, is mostly about "bragging rights." Finalists have been invited to send representatives to attend the awards lunch at the conference and be present for the announcement of the winner. The top vote-getter from the final round will receive a trophy and each finalist will get a flag to display in their facility.



MUSCO

'Coolest' Idea Came From Wisconsin

Ms. O'Connor said Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce, ABI's counterpart in the Badger State, invented the "Coolest Thing" competition nine years ago and shared it with association peers. Twenty other states now run similar contests.

"Manufacturing is a big deal for the state of Iowa," says Ms. O'Connor. "ABI started as the Iowa Manufacturers Association when it was founded in 1903. Later on, we expanded to representing all industries. We found in recent years that manufacturers are still our core members that we tend to serve best and have been members the longest. We wanted to highlight them and celebrate them."

Bringing attention to manufacturing's economic impact was also a motivation for adopting the contest. "We also wanted to call attention to career opportunities available, so we keep Iowans in Iowa," Ms. O'Connor says.

The rules are simple. Products need to be manufactured in Iowa, although the manufacturer's headquarters may be out of state. If multiple products are nominated from the same company, a single product must be selected. Anyone can vote once per day, regardless of location, in each round of the contest.

"Our hope was to give the companies something to rally their employees around. We had lot of large manufacturers and their employees but a lot of small companies too," Ms. O'Connor says. Companies promoting to their employees have been the ones more successful in their competition."

Most surprising for Ms. O'Connor has been "the buy-in we've gotten from the community, the media attention the competition and the variety of products. We have received tens of thousands of votes. The response has been really great."

She's also been thrilled to hear from companies about the excitement the competition stirred among employees. One of those companies, Vermeer, polled its workforce to determine which product to submit. The employee involvement paid off. "They've received a lot of votes and hung in as a top competitor from Day 1," Ms. O'Connor says.

'Fun for me and my team'

"Vermeer is very proud of the products we manufacture. The team has really gotten on board," says Jason Andringa, CEO of the firm founded by his grandfather, who invented the round baler 53 years ago.

Mr. Andringa says senior engineering manager Kent Thompson and his Forage Innovations team combined two established technologies — round baling and zero-turn mowing — and found unique ways to add value to a new product. Innovative features include a 90-degree turn when ejecting the bale and releasing the bale on steep terrain in such a way it doesn't roll down the hill. The ZR5 was brought from concept to market in three years and sales have "really taken off," he says. "For the customer doing 5,000 or more bales a year, this machine has proven to be very popular."



VERMEER



SUKUP MANUFACTURING

"It's always fun to see the stuff you've done or thought of make it into production and get some recognition," says Mr. Thompson. "It's been a great run. We knew we had something and were fortunate enough to have resources and talents to continue to develop it."

Reeves: MidWestOne 'All In On Manufacturing'

"When ABI first approached me (about sponsoring The Coolest Thing contest) and I became a board member in 2023, I looked at it as a no-brainer," says MidWestOne's Mr. Reeves. "The reason why is that the manufacturing space in Iowa is so vibrant and provides so many jobs and so much revenue and economic activity throughout the state. MidWestOne is all in on manufacturing. It's incredibly important to who we are and the state of Iowa."

"The whole process" of the nominations and voting is just a heck of a lot of fun," from learning about the international reach of manufacturers like Musco to seeing local favorites like Big Grove's Easy Eddy craft beer win deserved recognition, he says. "I've been known to enjoy their product once in a while."

The competition will continue in

2025 and for as long after that as there is interest, says Ms. O'Connor.

"What I absolutely hope," adds Mr. Reeves, "is that recognition for the manufacturing space increases in the heartland and across the nation, that we build this inaugural event into an annual one that continues to grow from its first year." ABI

Congratulations to the Top 4 Finalists:
Vermeer ZR5-1200 Self-Propelled Baler
Musco Sports Lighting
Dobson Custom Built Pipe Organ
Sukup Safe T Home

WHAT'S TRENDING:

2024 Trends in Media and Analytics

Technology and advanced analytics are pivotal for B2B marketers. Reach your intended audience and maximize ROI by leveraging these trends.

Account Based Experience (ABX)

Account based marketing has evolved into experienced-based approaches, incorporating enhanced targeting, personalization, and engagement-driving elements. Artificial intelligence (AI)-powered technology can help marketers identify accounts with higher conversion potential. These solutions improve outcomes and drive down the average cost per conversion. Another aspect of the experienced-based approach is dynamic content personalization. Users have come to expect personalized, relevant content; automating this saves time and improves cost efficiency. Achieving these positive outcomes requires expertise, investment in the right technology and alignment between sales and marketing teams.

Streaming

B2B marketers can leverage the streaming channels that define how we shop and consume news and entertainment. Podcasts are an excellent way to share industry insights and education-

al content to position a brand as a thought leader. Streaming audio and video advertising offers various targeting options, including placing your message in contextually relevant programming or finding content with a high concentration of relevant viewers or listeners.

Search Engine Marketing (SEM)

AI has played a significant role in Google Ads for years. There are some recent trends worth paying attention to, including uses of AI and machine learning that are designed to maximize results. Now more than ever, it's important to ensure marketers are using quality assets (ad copy, images, etc.) and giving Google the right signals (quality conversions, keywords/keyword match types) to mitigate wasted spend on unqualified conversions. This is especially critical for B2B marketers since Google searches tend to skew heavily to consumer products and services.

Understanding solutions, identifying which technology is the right fit and working with the right partners for a successful media campaign. Having the right tools to track and analyze performance, and respond in real-time, are other essential components of a comprehensive digital marketing program. **ABI**



Andrew Gillman
 Director of Delivery
 Anthologic
 andrewg@anthologic.com

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FROM THE FOUNDATION:

Congratulations Leadership Iowa 2023-24 Class!



The Iowa Association of Business and Industry (ABI) Foundation would like to congratulate these terrific Iowa leaders for their completion of the 42nd year of Leadership Iowa. Beginning in October, participants have traveled to eight different host communities – each with its own session focus – to gain insight into the opportunities and challenges facing our state.

Thank you to these incredible Iowa communities for graciously hosting the program this year: Winterset, Carroll County, Fairfield, Des Moines, Dubuque, Grinnell, Forest City, and the Quad Cities. In addition, Leadership Iowa extends its sincerest appreciation to more than 40 session sponsors, the Leadership Iowa Board of Governors, and 175+ individuals who lent their time, talents, and expertise to help create another special Leadership Iowa year.

The 2023-24 Leadership Iowa program was made possible by presenting sponsors EMC Insurance and Grinnell Mutual. Additional annual sponsors include: CIPCO, Community State Bank, Emerson, the Iowa Soybean Association, BrownWinick, Iowa Farm Bureau Federation, MidAmerican Energy Company, Musco Lighting, Neumann, Pella Corporation, Principal, Winger Companies, and Winnebago Industries.

NAME	EMPLOYER	EMPLOYER CITY	HOME CITY				
Carly Anderson	Deaf Services Unlimited	Urbandale	Altoona	Chuck Klapatauskas	Ideal Energy	Fairfield	Ames
Lauren Augustin	Grinnell Mutual	Grinnell	Grinnell	Jeff Kluever	MidAmerican Energy	Adel	Norwalk
Kristie Bell	Wixted & Company	West Des Moines	Des Moines	Chris LaFerla	Council Bluffs Area Chamber of Commerce	Council Bluffs	Council Bluffs
Kailey Blazek Naranjo	Dentons Davis Brown	Des Moines	Des Moines	Ashlee Mullenbach	Nationwide Insurance	Story City	Story City
Emily Blomme	Foundation 2 Crisis Services	Cedar Rapids	Cedar Rapids	Chris Nelson	Nelson Electric Company	Ames	Ames
Austin Cappel	Kemin Industries	Des Moines	Des Moines	Matthew Nicol	HNI Corporation	Muscatine	Davenport
Machaela Clark	The Tandem Works	Council Bluffs	Council Bluffs	Michelle Owens	EOS Worldwide	Cedar Rapids	Cedar Rapids
Carrie Clogg	Businessolver	West Des Moines	Clive	Casey Pape	Deere & Company	Moline	Davenport
Monica Converse	ICON Water Trails	Des Moines	Polk City	Jereb Pape	Independence Premium Foods	Independence	Cedar Rapids
Sarah Curry	Iowans for Tax Relief Foundation	West Des Moines	Glenwood	Melissa Pepper	Russell	Davenport	Davenport
Matt Davis	Neumann Brothers, Inc.	Des Moines	Ankeny	Devon Sadler	City of Des Moines Fire Department	Des Moines	Cumming
Crystal Edwards	Community State Bank	Johnston	Ankeny	Elizabeth Silva	Strategic Elements LLC	West Des Moines	Windsor Heights
Kaly Etten	CRST	Cedar Rapids	Palo	Jenny Smith	MHCS	West Des Moines	Norwalk
Matthew Fiedler	Fiedler Machine Works	Scranton	Scranton	Marguerite Tomlin	Arconic	Riverdale	Bettendorf
Brandon Garrett	City of Council Bluffs	Council Bluffs	Council Bluffs	Jesse Ulrich	Iowa Central Community College	Fort Dodge	Fort Dodge
Owen Gerard	NCP, Inc.	Des Moines	Waukee	Brandy Wallar	New Visions Homeless Services	Council Bluffs	Neola
Shea Greiner	Greater Ottumwa Partners in Progress	Ottumwa	Bloomfield	Ryan Waller	City of Marion	Marion	Marion
Kevin Hall	Iowa Pork Producers Association	Clive	Ankeny	Jen Welton	Cedar Rapids Bank & Trust	Cedar Rapids	Palo
Andrea Hansen	Butler-Bremer Communications	Plainfield	Plainfield	Eric White	Estes Construction	Des Moines	Clive
Renee Jerman	Iowa DOT	Ames	Ames	Ryan Young	Iowa Economic Development Authority	Des Moines	West Des Moines
Jimmy Kent	Grain Processing Corporation	Muscatine	Muscatine				

FROM THE FOUNDATION:

Leadership for Iowa Award Honoree

**Joseph Jones**

Leadership Iowa Class of 2006-07
Des Moines University
Windsor Heights, IA

The Leadership for Iowa Award is presented annually to a past participant of the Leadership Iowa program who exemplifies outstanding leadership on both a local and statewide level. This year, Leadership Iowa is honored to present the award to Dr. Joseph Jones. Joseph is the chief of staff to the president at Des Moines University, a medicine and health sciences university in Des Moines, Iowa. Most recently he served as executive director for The Harkin Institute for Public Policy & Citizen Engagement.

Before joining The Harkin Institute in 2016, Joseph was Senior Vice President of Government Relations and Public Policy for the Greater Des Moines Partnership. Prior to moving back to Iowa, Joseph served as a Legislative Assistant to Senator Harkin in Washington, D.C. In addition to having worked in several capacities in the public sector including for Governor Tom Vilsack and Lt. Gov. Sall Pederson and the Iowa Finance Authority, he has also worked for not-for-profit organizations like Creative Visions. His election work has included serving as the Iowa political director for the 2008 Obama campaign for president and as a past political director for the Iowa Democratic Party.

Joseph has engaged in a career-long commitment to public service through volunteerism. He serves as the chairman of the board for both the American Council of Young Political Leaders and the Mid-Iowa Health Foundation. Joseph also serves on the board of the Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines, Community State Bank, and The Robert J. Dole Institute of Politics. In 2017, Joseph was

first elected to the city council of Windsor Heights, Iowa. He was chosen as the city's Citizen of the Year in 2020 and re-elected to office in 2021.

Joseph is a graduate of Leadership Iowa and was named to the Business Record's "Forty Under 40" Class of 2009. In 2019, Joseph was voted the most influential Forty Under 40 honoree from the 2009 class, noted as having the biggest positive effect on the community. He was subsequently named Alumnus of the Year for Forty Under 40 in 2022. In 2020, the Central Iowa Chapter of PRSA presented him with the Outstanding Iowa Advocate award and in 2021, he was presented with the Dr. Judith Conlin Welcoming the World Award from the Iowa International Center.

Joseph is a graduate of the United States Military Academy Preparatory School and earned his BBA in economics from Loyola University New Orleans. He earned a Master of Public Administration degree in public policy and a certificate in Non-Profit Leadership and Administration from Drake University. In 2014, he was presented Drake's Distinguished MPA Alumnus Award. He is a graduate of Air Command and Staff College and is also a Fellow of the Truman National Security Project. Joseph also received his Ph.D. from Drake where his research focused on the intersection of civics, experiential learning, and access. In 2018, he was the Executive in Residence at the University of Iowa's College of Public Health, and he also serves on the faculty of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce's Institute of Organization Management.

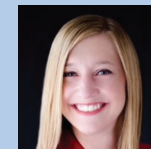
Joseph is a native of Shreveport, Louisiana. In his free time, he enjoys traveling, reading, cooking, skydiving, and engaging in international citizen diplomacy and governance. Although Joseph has visited dozens of countries and all 50 states, he is most proud of seeing all of Iowa's 99 counties. He follows national security issues closely and finds time to spend with his Newfie, Toula Marie, and his backyard chickens. **ABI**



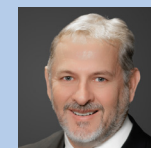
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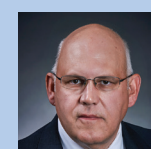
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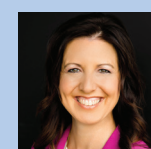
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**Business Horizons 2024**

Iowa's high school innovation summit provides hands-on college/career experience while fostering leadership, teamwork, and future-ready skills for any next step. (Plus, attendees can earn 3 college credits!) Students are invited to come see why past participants call Business Horizons the "best week of summer!"

WHO: Iowa high school students currently in grades 9-12

WHEN: July 14-18

WHERE: Drake University

Registrations will be accepted through July 5 or until the program is filled. To learn more and register, visit www.BusinessHorizonsIowa.com.



JUNE 2024 | VOL 14 | #6

The Iowa Association of Business and Industry (ABI) has been the voice of Iowa business since 1903. Its mission is to provide a strong, unified voice to business and industry on issues affecting Iowa employers. ABI is comprised of member companies representing all industries and sizes in Iowa's 99 counties. ABI members employ more than 330,000 Iowans.

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Iowa Association of Business and Industry
400 East Court Avenue,
Suite 100
Des Moines, IA 50309
515-280-8000
or 800-383-4224
abi@iowaabi.org
www.iowaabi.org