



10 Leaders To Know



MELISSA BAKER



JILL BIDWELL



AMI BURNS



TOM CAVANAGH



TOM COX



DICK DAVIDSON



CONNOR HARRINGTON



JEREMY MAJERES



KRIS MARTINS



JODI SCHWEIGER

You can read full profiles of ABI's 2025 Ten Leaders to Know at www.iowaabi.org.

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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

DECEMBER 17
LI Connect: Workforce and Economic Development
VIRTUAL

JANUARY 9
Advocacy 101 (Members Only)
VIRTUAL

JANUARY 14
Legislative Briefing and Reception
DES MOINES

JANUARY 14
Leadership Iowa Alumni Dinner
DES MOINES

JANUARY 23
Legislative Update (Members Only)
Continues every other Friday during session.
VIRTUAL

MARCH 12
Business Day in Des Moines
DES MOINES

Visit www.iowaabi.org and click the "Events" tab for details on upcoming events.

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## FROM THE CHAIR:

# Leadership That Moves Iowa Forward

This month's Business Monthly highlights something at the core of ABI's mission: leadership. Our "10 Leaders to Know" offers a glimpse into the people who are shaping Iowa's business landscape—not just through the success of their companies, but through their commitment to excellence, community, and service.

These profiles remind us that leadership looks different for everyone. Some lead by building world-class teams. Others lead by taking risks, embracing new ideas, or investing in their commu-

nities. And many lead quietly, through mentorship, encouragement, and the steady work that strengthens organizations over time.

What they all share is a belief in the future of Iowa — and a willingness to help build it.

At ABI, we see the power of leadership every day. It's present in our member companies, in the volunteers who drive our Foundation programs, and in the voices that engage in advocacy to make Iowa a competitive place to do business. Strong leadership is what

moves our state forward, and I'm grateful to be part of an organization where so many step up.

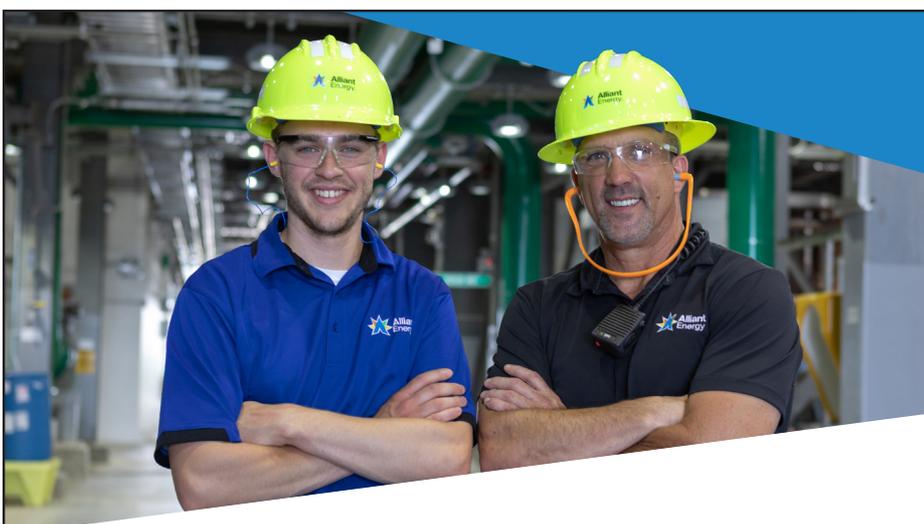
I encourage you to take time with this month's issue and learn more about these outstanding individuals. Their stories may spark new ideas, challenge assumptions, or inspire you to reflect on your own leadership journey.

Thank you for all you do to support your organizations, your employees, and our state. Iowa's business community is strong because of leaders like you. ABI



**Kellan Longenecker**

ABI Chair  
General Mills



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# Withstand Challenges with a Solid Marketing Foundation: A Strategic Marketing Q&A

When a business hits a wall — stalled growth, missed sales goals, talent shortages — marketing isn't the first instinct for most business leaders. But in many cases, the biggest business problems are actually marketing problems in disguise.

Marketing isn't just about ads or logos. It's about how well your company tells its story, positions itself in the market, aligns teams and builds systems to grow. That's what a strong, strategic marketing foundation does, and it may be your next best move.

**Q: Let's say the sales team is struggling and growth has slowed. Isn't that a sales or operations issue?**

**A:** It might look like a sales issue. But if reps are spending the first 10 minutes of every call explaining what your company does, or if your growth plan relies on yesterday's positioning, that's not a sales problem, it's a marketing problem.

Here are some more examples of how marketing problems hide in plain sight:

- **Lagging sales:** Often a symptom of unclear messaging, poor brand positioning or missing sales enablement tools.
- **Stalled growth:** Usually tied to outdated positioning or a lack of a clear, relevant go-to-market strategy.
- **Weak talent pipeline:** Not just an HR issue. This is an employer brand and messaging problem.

*The real question is: What marketing problem is hiding behind this business challenge?*

**Q: You talk about a "strategic foundation." What do you mean by that?**

**A:** Think of it as four interconnected parts that support growth:

1. **Purpose (Strategy):** Are your marketing goals aligned with business goals? Is your positioning clear and current?
2. **People (Skills & Structure):** Do you have the right team (internal or external) to execute what you need?
3. **Process (How Work Gets Done):** How do you plan, create, approve and align across departments?
4. **Platforms (Tech & Tools):** Are your tools — from your website to your CRM — working for you or against you?

*Falling short in these areas can hold you back, even if everything else is working.*

**Q: Can you give real-world examples of how this plays out?**

**A:** Absolutely:

- **Stuck growth = Purpose issue.** Your positioning no longer resonates. The fix? A focused brand refresh and better demand-generation plan.
- **Sales friction = Process and Purpose issue.** If sales and marketing aren't aligned on lead definitions or your story isn't clear, close rates suffer.
- **Underused tools = Platform and Process issue.** If your CRM feels like a burden instead of a tool, the process needs to be cleaned up or the tech needs replaced.
- **Burned-out team = People issue.** If your small team is stuck in tactical mode with no time to think strategically, you've got a capacity problem.

**Q: This sounds great, but can these principles work for smaller companies?**

**A:** Actually, it's more important for small and mid-sized companies because you don't have time or budget to waste. You can't afford six months of misaligned marketing. This isn't about doing more, it's about doing the right things in the right order.

A smaller business might ask: "We need 10 good leads this quarter. What's the one message that will cut through, and what's the one channel our audience trusts?" That's foundational thinking, and it scales.

**Q: So how can companies figure out where the gaps are?**

**A:** I'd suggest starting with a quick self-audit across the four pillars:

#### Purpose

- Do we have clear business goals, and does marketing support them?
- Can our team explain our value in one sentence?
- Is our brand positioning still accurate and competitive?

#### People

- Do we have the right skills to deliver what we need?
- Is our team stretched too thin to do meaningful work?
- Are we investing in training, partners or outside help to fill gaps?

#### Process

- Do sales and marketing meet regularly to align on goals and handoffs?
- How long does it take to get a campaign from idea to launch?



**Tiffany Hamil**

Director of Account Service  
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- Do we have a clear workflow for approvals, reviews and launches?

#### Platforms

- Are we using our tools — CRM, CMS, analytics — effectively?
- Are reports easy to access and focused on business impact?
- Which tools are slowing us down?

*Wherever the most "I don't know" answers show up, that's your opportunity.*

**Q: Once the weak spot is identified, what's next?**

**A:** Don't try to fix everything. Make one smart move:

- **If Purpose is missing:** Align with leadership and clarify your positioning.
- **If People are stretched:** Bring in a freelancer, partner or automation to relieve pressure.
- **If Process is messy:** Map one workflow and fix the biggest friction point.
- **If Platforms are clunky:** Audit what's working, stop using what's not and simplify reporting.

*Start small. Fix one friction point. Then another. That's how marketing becomes your problem-solver — not your expense line.*

#### Final Word

Marketing is often seen as the "make it look good" team, a cost center or a sidecar to sales. But it's not just decoration; it's how your business tells its story, earns trust and grows. When it's built on the right foundation, marketing stops being a cost and starts being the engine that helps you move forward. •

COVER STORY FROM PAGE 21

# Ten Leaders To Know



## Melissa Baker

Assistant Dean, Student Experience  
Tippie College of Business, The University of Iowa

**BIRTH CITY:** Creston

**CURRENT CITY:** Cedar Rapids

**Q: How did you get where you are today?**

**A:** That's a big question. I would say I'll give credit to growing up in small town, rural Iowa surrounded by incredibly supportive family and friends that continue to be my foundation even though I moved away when I went to college. My dad was a farmer and my sister and I were shown the value of hard work from a very early age. My family valued higher education and expected me to go to college. I continued to find that strong community at the University of Iowa as a student and now as an employee. I have also been blessed with amazing teachers from Mrs. Levine in first grade to Dr. Jodi Linley, my grad school advisor.

**Q: Where do you look for inspiration or to generate new ideas?**

**A:** I often look to current students and recent alumni. Asking

questions and getting new perspectives from these individuals help me to remember where the students are coming from and then I can hopefully help meet them where they are. It's so easy to make assumptions and asking questions is the best place to start.

**Q: What does effective leadership mean to you?**

**A:** Effective leaders are incredible listeners, tireless advocates for the people they work with, and they pitch in wherever needed, no matter what the task at hand.

**Q: What is your favorite thing about Iowa?**

**A:** RAGBRAI. It's where I met my husband 20+ years ago and continues to be an incredible event that showcases the beautiful people and places of Iowa.

**Q: Why are you a member of ABI?**

**A:** It's the great connector I was looking for. I learned so much through Leadership Iowa (#LI43) last year and was reminded just how much we have to offer here in Iowa. Personally, I want to try to find ways to help reduce brain drain by keeping our young people here (or attracting new ones) after graduation from college and I think this might actually be part of ABI's unspoken mission.



## Jill Bidwell

HR Director, Americas  
Emerson

**BIRTH CITY:** Pella

**CURRENT CITY:** Marshalltown

**Q: How did you get where you are today?**

**A:** I got to where I am today with the help of a great network of people! Former teachers, coaches, friends, family and past bosses and co-workers all shared knowledge and advice to help me grow my career. I found my current role at Emerson because a former colleague from a prior company who currently works at Emerson reached out to me and asked, "Are you interested?"

**Q: Where do you look for inspiration or to generate new ideas?**

**A:** My network inspires me, not just my connections on LinkedIn, but also my book club and church groups and understanding what my teenage son is watching on YouTube or following on Instagram.

Teenagers are some of the most creative people I know!

**Q: What does effective leadership mean to you?**

**A:** Effective leadership to me means that other people follow you not because they have to, but because they want to. Effective leadership is contagious because people want to be part of something great that matters to them, and they trust the leadership to do the right thing to make this possible.

**Q: What is your favorite thing about Iowa?**

**A:** I have the opportunity to travel frequently for work. I think Iowa is one of the best kept secrets in the world because we often forget how great we have it compared to other places. Our commutes are not impacted by traffic, our air is fresh, our crime is low, our food scene is amazing, our schools are the heart of community, and our housing is really affordable compared to other locations. I am not saying we don't have issues in Iowa, but we are low drama compared to other states. When we are not battling traffic or worried about leaving items in our car because it may get stolen, we can focus on other things that matter more, which is essentially the point of the phrase, "Quality of Life."



## Ami Burns

Talent Relationship Program Manager  
Vermeer Corporation

**BIRTH CITY:** Pella

**CURRENT CITY:** Monroe

**Q: How did you get where you are today?**

**A:** Saying yes to opportunities even when I was unsure and asking lots of questions.

**Q: What excites you the most about the business you work in?**

**A:** Manufacturing has a place for almost everyone, and I love connecting people to the many opportunities at Vermeer.

**Q: What do you see as the next big trend in your industry?**

**A:** Most will say AI which is true. I think keeping a caring culture and ensuring people feel valued is a trend I hope to see.

**Q: Where do you look for inspiration or to generate new ideas?**

**A:** I get new ideas from collaborating with my team and learning from podcasts and books.

**Q: Why are you a member of ABI?**

**A:** I appreciate the connections ABI has around the state.

**Q: What is your favorite thing about Iowa?**

**A:** The seasons.

**Q: As a business leader, what book would you recommend for personal or professional growth?**

**A:** The Energy Bus by Jon Gordon and Atomic Habits by James Clear.



## Tom Cavanagh

Vice President  
BCC Advisers

BIRTH CITY: Des Moines  
CURRENT CITY: Des Moines

### Q: How did you get where you are today?

A: I've gotten here by staying curious about how businesses work, saying yes to opportunities that stretched me, and learning from smart, generous mentors. I didn't go to UNI with the intention of pursuing a career in investment banking, but when the opportunity came up to explore it further, I took a chance on something different, and BCC certainly took the same chance on me. It has worked at well (at least for me), as I have now been with BCC for nearly two decades.

### Q: What excites you the most about the business you work in?

A: I'm most energized by work that brings together business, people and real turning points in an owner's life. On the surface, M&A is about valuation, deal structure and negotiations. Underneath, it's about owners who have invested years into their companies and are starting to think about what comes next. I enjoy learning how different businesses operate, what makes them successful, and helping owners understand their options in a clear, practical way. Every situation is a little different, which keeps the work interesting.

### Q: What do you see as the next big trend in your industry?

A: One of the biggest forces shaping our industry is the wave of baby boomer business owners moving toward retirement. Many of these companies were built over decades and represent a large share of privately held businesses in Iowa and the Midwest. A lot of owners are so focused on running the business day to day that succession, value and legacy planning get pushed off. As more owners look to step back, we'll see increased activity across the board, including sales to strategic and financial buyers, family transitions, management buyouts and ESOPs. That creates both opportunity and complexity. The businesses that invest early in financial reporting, leadership development and clear transition plans will be in the best position. I think the role of advisors will increasingly be to help owners start those conversations sooner, understand their options, and align a potential transaction with their personal, family and community goals.

### Q: As a business leader, what book would you recommend for personal or professional growth?

A: I often recommend Extreme Ownership by Jocko Willink and Leif Babin as I appreciate how it addresses accountability, communication and leading by example. My three young boys also enjoy Jocko's Way of the Warrior Kid series which shares similar messages related to accountability and taking control of your own outcomes but with better pictures.

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515-223-4817

**WWW.IADG.COM**



## Tom Cox

General Manager - SSAB Iowa  
SSAB

**BIRTH CITY:** Iowa City  
**CURRENT CITY:** Bettendorf

**Q: How did you get where you are today?**

**A:** I've been in the steel industry since graduating from Iowa State University in 1999 with a degree in Metallurgical Engineering. I started in the technical metallurgy side of the business before moving into plant operations in 2010. Since then, I've continued to progress through the operations side to my current position of General Manager of the SSAB Iowa steel mill, a role I've been in for five years.

**Q: What do you see as the next big trend in your industry?**

**A:** Steel production is a raw material and energy intensive process, and as such is a large generator of emissions. The industry as a whole recognizes this and is taking steps to make significant improvements, and I'm proud

to work for a company that is at the forefront of that effort.

**Q: Where do you look for inspiration or to generate new ideas?**

**A:** I look to all our team members for inspiration and ideas on what the next innovation will be. There is no better source of ideas than those that have their hands on the process every day.

**Q: What does effective leadership mean to you?**

**A:** Being an effective leader means inspiring trust, developing clarity around objectives, finding what motivates your team to achieve those objectives (which isn't always the same thing for everyone), and continually evaluating your team to see what is needed for them to reach their full potential.

**Q: Why are you a member of ABI?**

**A:** I just recently joined the ABI Board of Directors and already appreciate the networking aspect. Hearing other members discuss what they are working on, or what they are struggling with, from around the state is very valuable. ABI and its members truly want all of us and the state of Iowa to be successful.



## Dick Davidson

ABI Foundation Board Chair

**BIRTH CITY:** Ames  
**CURRENT CITY:** Pella

**Q: Where do you look for inspiration or to generate new ideas?**

**A:** I find new ideas from many sources. Books, current events, colleagues, failures, other business leaders, mentors and especially dreaming about what could be.

**Q: What does effective leadership mean to you?**

**A:** Good leadership is based on a foundation of humility, caring, integrity and courage. It involves developing a vision and laying out a pathway that enables people to accomplish worthy things greater than they imagined possible. Wayfinding is a major part of leadership. The way is often not clear. If you lead down the path that is obvious to everyone, that is not really leading. Sometimes the right path is

not smooth and has scary things on it. Inspiring people to trust and follow down that path is leadership. Leadership is not about the individual, but the cause, mission and enterprise. If those things don't come first, no one will follow.

**Q: What is your favorite thing about Iowa?**

**A:** There are so many things to love about Iowa, but for me it always comes down to the people who live here. Iowans tend to be honest, kind, hard-working people who care about others. That is not the norm everywhere.

**Q: What piece of advice would you give your younger self?**

**A:** Trust your gut. It took me many years to fully trust my gut and I wish I had learned that much earlier in my life.

**Q: Why are you a member of ABI?**

**A:** Because ABI is truly the voice of Iowa business and the most effective organization representing and advocating for Iowa business.



## Connor Harrington

CEO  
Kuder

**BIRTH CITY:** Des Moines  
**CURRENT CITY:** Clive

**Q: How did you get where you are today?**

**A:** I transitioned into the CEO role at Kuder in November 2023 after working with my father who founded and held the role for 25 years. Prior to joining Kuder, I progressed through several roles at a fast-growing education technology company in Minneapolis. My wife, Sam, was a key driver in the decision to move back to Iowa and join the family business and has been a key supporter for me along the way. The combination of witnessing my father navigate the responsibilities of business ownership paired with the experience working for an exciting growth-oriented technology company, gave me a positive foundation to lead Kuder. I was lucky to have many great mentors and people looking out for me along the way. As I reflect, many of the key opportunities in my life came from someone's willingness to spend time with me and share their insights.

**Q: What excites you the most about the business you work in?**

**A:** We are one of the very few privately held companies in the career

development technology space. This private status allows us to pursue a longer-term vision than most other companies. It can be challenging but it's incredibly rewarding to grow our business solely because of happy clients that value our partnership. Our team loves the entrepreneurial spirit we offer coupled with the safety and security of a well-established organization.

Our goal is to be the best partner to organizations looking to support youth and adults in their career journey. What makes our model unique is the blend of career development expertise and scalable technology solutions. I'm excited to be a part of a mission that is intended to stand the test of time rather than look for fast, and shallow returns.

**Q: What is your favorite thing about Iowa?**

**A:** Parking spots and whitetail deer. Joking aside, it's the people. Iowa has great people that don't take themselves too seriously but have incredible work ethic. My wife and I are excited and thankful to be raising our kids in a great community.

**Q: Why are you a member of ABI?**

**A:** ABI was an organization that committed to spending time with us, heard what we were trying to accomplish, and provided meaningful connections and insights that benefited our business. I saw from Nicole and others, a level of sincerity around ensuring our success that felt unique. The people at ABI are incredibly hard-working and put Iowa businesses at the center of their work.



## Jeremy Majeres

Plant Manager  
Conagra

**BIRTH CITY:** Le Mars  
**CURRENT CITY:** Council Bluffs

**Q: What do you see as the next big trend in your industry?**

**A:** I see the next big trend in food manufacturing being the integration of advanced automation and data analytics to improve efficiency and ensure consistent quality. Alongside that, sustainability — reducing waste, optimizing energy use, and sourcing responsibly — will continue to drive innovation. Consumers are demanding transparency and healthier options, so adapting quickly to these expectations will be key

**Q: Where do you look for inspiration or to generate new ideas?**

**A:** I look for inspiration by staying connected with industry trends and best practices through trade publications, food safety forums, and professional networks. I also draw ideas from collaborating with

my team on the plant floor — often the best innovations come from those closest to the process. Additionally, benchmarking against other facilities and exploring new technologies helps spark creative solutions.

**Q: What does effective leadership mean to you?**

**A:** To me, effective leadership means setting a clear vision, empowering the team, and leading by example. It's about creating an environment where people feel valued, supported, and motivated to perform at their best. Strong leadership also requires accountability, open communication, and the ability to adapt quickly to challenges while keeping the team aligned and focused on shared goals.

**Q: What is your favorite thing about Iowa?**

**A:** The Hawkeyes, of course!

**Q: What piece of advice would you give your younger self?**

**A:** I would tell my younger self to focus on building strong relationships and listening more. Success in this industry isn't just about technical skills — it's about leading people, adapting to change, and staying curious. Embrace challenges as learning opportunities and never underestimate the value of clear communication and teamwork.



## Kris Martins

Chief Operating Officer  
Atlantic Coca-Cola Bottling Company

**BIRTH CITY:** Cedar Rapids  
**CURRENT CITY:** Norwalk

**Q: How did you get where you are today?**

**A:** I started my career in Cedar Rapids with Coca-Cola Enterprises in 1993 as an Accounting Clerk. Over the course of the next 32 years, I took every opportunity to learn the industry and The Coca-Cola Company. I was able to move up from Accounting Clerk, to Office Manager, to Finance Manager, all with the The Coca-Cola Company. When TCCC began to rebrand to independent bottlers in 2016, I took the opportunity to move to Atlantic Bottling Company and assist in the transition which quadrupled the size of Atlantic Bottling Company. This expansion covered the majority of the State of Iowa and into four other states. I started my career with Atlantic Bottling Company leading strategy and revenue growth management. After a few years, I had the opportunity to take on the CFO role. Although I did not have the traditional CFO education, I had built the knowledge of the Coca-Cola system to help profitability grow our business. The first step in my CFO role was to

hire a very talented Controller to compliment my skills and manage financial reporting. After several years as CFO, I was asked to take on a Chief Operating Officer role with leadership over our 8MM case per year Production facility, IT, RGM, Supply Chain, logistics and facilities. I took every opportunity to learn, grow and change.

**Q: What excites you the most about the business you work in?**

**A:** The beverage industry is ever changing with innovation of products, digital and technology advancements, and consumer trends. It is exciting to keep up with changes and anticipate what is needed to continue to grow our business. In the manufacturing area, the advancement of equipment has been amazing and allows us to be better prepared for future production needs with a high level of efficiency and accuracy. Most notably we have made strategic investments in warehouse automation and significant equipment upgrades within our production facility. These investments put us in a great position for future growth.

**Q: What does effective leadership mean to you?**

**A:** Leadership is the ability to lead a team to a common goal. I take pride in leading with strong communication, including setting expectations and developing accountabilities. Trust is critical and can be developed by encouraging open communication and feedback. Our industry requires strong leaders to communicate goals, manage change, develop employees, and drive growth.



## Jodi Schweiger

Executive Director Business Development  
The Iowa Clinic

**BIRTH CITY:** Audubon  
**CURRENT CITY:** Adel

**Q: What excites you the most about the business you work in?**

**A:** What excites me most is the opportunity to make a real, lasting difference in people's lives. Healthcare is deeply personal, and at The Iowa Clinic, we're not just delivering services — we're creating experiences that change outcomes and often change lives. Every time I hear a patient's story about how our care helped catch something early, navigate a complex diagnosis, or simply feel seen and supported, it reminds me why this work matters. We're in a business where purpose and impact intersect every single day. Whether it's a patient who shares how our Executive Health program saved their life, or an employer who tells us their team is healthier and more engaged because of our partnership, those moments are incredibly meaningful. They're a testament to what's possible when you bring together clinical excellence, innovation, and a culture that truly puts people first.

**Q: Where do you look for inspiration or to generate new ideas?**

**A:** I find inspiration by looking beyond healthcare and exploring industries that are excelling in areas like customer experience, operational efficiency, or technology adoption. \Often, the most innovative ideas come from applying proven strategies from other sectors to healthcare in a way that improves outcomes and streamlines processes. I love solving complex problems, and for me, that means asking: Who's doing this well elsewhere? And then figuring out how to adapt those learning to create a meaningful impact in our space.

**Q: What does effective leadership mean to you?**

**A:** Effective leadership is about delivering meaningful results while inspiring others to grow, adapt, and lead with heart. I believe in creating an environment where people feel supported, valued, and empowered to bring their best selves to the work we do. Leadership is not just about direction — it's about connection, collaboration, and cultivating trust.

**Q: As a business leader, what book would you recommend for personal or professional growth?**

**A:** Dare to Lead by Brené Brown

## CAPITOL BUSINESS:

## Policymakers to Know Heading into 2026

We are approximately one month away until the second session of the 91st Iowa General Assembly convenes. The 2026 legislative session will begin on January 12 and is tentatively set to adjourn on April 21. Though it's an election year, policymakers are still set to focus on many substantive issues that will generate buzz including property tax cuts and reform, the Iowa Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) recommendations and more. Meet some of the leaders who will be driving that agenda.

**Governor Kim Reynolds** – The governor announced she would be not run for re-election in 2026 during the spring of this year. She's been an extraordinary champion for business and industry as she has spearheaded the pro-growth reform of our tax climate, transformed our unemployment insurance system into a reemployment system, signed multiple bills enhancing our legal climate, made state government much more efficient and more. At the top of her final legislative agenda as governor is property tax and the DOGE recommendations.

**House Speaker Pat Grassley** – Pat has been the Speaker since the 2020 legislative session. He was first elected to the House in 2006 and is one of the longest serving members of his caucus of 66. The Speaker sets the agenda for the lower chamber. He works as a farmer and represents House District 57, which is all of Butler and parts of Bremer Counties.

**House Majority Leader Bobby Kaufmann** – Bobby was elected by his GOP peers in August to serve as the new Majority Leader in the House. He replaced longtime Leader Matt Windschitl. He was previously the Ways & Means Chair and before that, the State Government Chair. The Majority Leader decides which bills get put on the calendar for debate on the floor. He represents

House District 82, which is all of Cedar and parts of Muscatine and Scott Counties. Kaufmann is a small business owner and livestock farmer.

**House Ways & Means Chair Carter Nordman** – Carter is the newly minted chair of the Tax Writing Committee in the lower chamber as former chair Bobby Kaufmann became Majority Leader. During the 2025 session, he was the Health and Human Services Chair and prior to that, he chaired the Education Budget Subcommittee. He was elected in 2020 and works as a financial advisor. He will be in the thick of the premier public policy item of the 2026 legislative session as property tax cuts and reform is under his committee's jurisdiction. He represents House District 47, which is all of Greene and Guthrie and parts of Dallas Counties.

**Senate Majority Leader Mike Klimesh** – Mike was just elected to the position of Majority Leader by his GOP colleagues in October. Mike, who previously chaired the Health and Human Services Committee, replaced longtime Leader Jack Whitver. He represents Senate District 32, which is all of Howard, Winneshiek, Allamakee, Clayton and parts of Fayette and Dubuque Counties. Mike was elected to the upper chamber in 2020 and has previously worked as a plant manager. He was the Mayor of Spillville for several years as well. Nothing comes to the floor of the Senate without the Majority Leader's approval.

**Senate President Amy Sinclair** – Amy is a longtime senator who was first elected in 2012. She became the president of the upper chamber at the end of 2022. She's a former county supervisor as well. Amy represents Senate District 12, which is all of Decatur, Wayne, Lucas, Clarke, Madison and Adair and parts of Union, Appanoose and Dallas Counties. The President

**Brad Hartkopf**

Senior Director, Public Policy  
ABI  
Bhartkopf@iowaabi.org

plays a very significant role in the chamber as she governs debate on the floor and rules on points of order and whether amendments are germane.

**Senate Ways & Means Chair Dan Dawson** – Dan was first elected to the upper chamber in 2016, which is the cycle where the GOP established their first trifecta across state government in 20 years. He represents Senate District 10, which is Council Bluffs. Dan has played a critical and leading role in reforming Iowa's tax climate over the last several years. With property tax cuts and reform being center stage next year, he will be driving a lot of those conversations.

To learn even more about what's in store for the 2026 legislative session, attend ABI's Legislative Briefing and Reception, which will take place on Wednesday, January 14. You will have the opportunity to interact with numerous legislators and officials. Governor Reynolds, all 150 legislators and several state agency directors will be invited. You will also receive a comprehensive preview of ABI's agenda for the session. Learn more by going to [www.iowaabi.org](http://www.iowaabi.org) or contact Brad Hartkopf at [bhartkopf@iowaabi.org](mailto:bhartkopf@iowaabi.org) if you have any questions. ABI



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*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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