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Hancock County EDC stresses cooperation

By PEGGY SENZARINO, Of The Globe Gazette

GARNER — Regional cooperation was the watchword of the day as the new Hancock County Economic Development Corp. Board of Directors met with local officials and business people from around Hancock County Monday.

The new Hancock County EDC, a public-private partnership, replaces the former publicly financed Hancock County Development Group.

"I think our old group got bogged down," said Jerry Tlach, Hancock County supervisor and chairman of the EDC board. "Sometimes, change just gets you going again. We just needed some change."

The EDC board has hired Dan Culhane, executive director of the Mason City Economic Development Corp., to handle inquiries from businesses looking to possibly locate in Hancock County. He also will recruit and train a full-time staff person for the Hancock County EDC.

The split contract will provide for six months of services from the Mason City EDC at a cost of \$15,000. The contract can be renewed for another six months if needed at a cost not to exceed \$10,000.

"We do see this as an opportunity to help you establish a good solid foundation," Culhane said.

Culhane said this was not an attempt by Mason City to "swallow" Hancock County.

"Our goal is to make sure this is an effective economic development corporation when we walk away from it," Culhane said.

He said a strong economic development effort in Hancock County benefits everyone in North Iowa.

"What's good for Garner is good for Corwith and hopefully what's good for Corwith is good for Garner and Britt," said Corwith Mayor Jay Gourley.

Gourley said the spirit of cooperation is a good thing.

"Hiring Dan Culhane was a good decision. I am really optimistic about Dan and his group," Gourley said.

The Hancock County EDC board meets this week to begin the planning process to determine the scope of the EDC's mission.