



ACTION PLAN

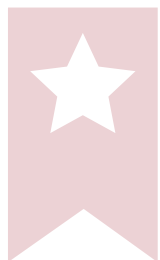
2019 - 2021

MISSION

Hancock County Economic Development LLC is a public-private 501 (c) (6) non-profit organization dedicated to facilitating economic development strategies that promote and secure opportunities for business retention, growth, and the attraction of new industries that create quality jobs for community residents.

VISION

Hancock County Economic Development is to be the lead economic development organization located in Hancock County that demonstrates leadership, collaboration, and ingenuity to enhance the business climate, business and employment base, while promoting the unique and identifiable assets of the Hancock County area, with the purpose of creating wealth and being the model of a results-driven organization.



Hancock County Economic Development is therefore **dedicated** to strategies that increase tax base, **create jobs**, and **support** existing business for Hancock County.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Hancock County Economic Development has accomplished the following in recent years...

- ✓ **Made** 110 investor visits with Hancock County businesses to understand and address their needs.
- ✓ **Facilitated** 2 successful Hancock County Career Fairs consisting of 4 school districts, 775 student participants and over 50 business representatives, to address the need to keep future employees in Hancock County.
- ✓ **Developed** an Internship program for Interns working for Hancock County investors. To date there have been 59 interns that have registered for the program over the past three years. Also provided 4 direct internships through HCEDC. This program provides networking opportunities for interns and exposes them to the high quality of life available in Hancock County.
- ✓ **Awarded** 8 grants - 3 grants were awarded by The Hanson Foundation and 2 grants were awarded by the Hancock County Foundation. These grant monies were vital to our marketing campaign promoting Hancock County as THE place to live, work, and play! Along with a grant from Alliant Energy, they were also used to complete a much needed HCEDC website update. The final 2 grants were event specific and supported the Hancock County Career Fair and Internship Program.
- ✓ **Developed** a gotjobs.work website in collaboration with Forest City Economic Development and Winnebago-Worth County Economic Development. This is a website to promote available jobs in the area and to attract new workers to the area. Provided Top 10% of larger employers direct links from site.
- ✓ **Redesigned** the Hancock County Economic Development Website. The previous site was very text heavy and difficult to navigate. The updated site is much more user-friendly and allows for exploration of our businesses, communities, and opportunities as well as making a connection with HCEDC. Visit the site at www.hancockcountyiowa.com.
- ✓ **Provided** resources to new and existing businesses that brought in over 5.78 million dollars in new capital investment to the county for building & real estate, machinery and equipment since 2016.
- ✓ **Collaborated** with North Central Iowa Marketing Alliance to implement a region-wide attraction & marketing initiative. HCEDC director served as President for NCIA Alliance.
- ✓ **Provided** 21 "Lunch and Learns", hosted eight Executive Breakfast Seminars, and 4 annual meetings covering several topics and resource requirements for local businesses, industry and entrepreneurs.
- ✓ **Coordinated** 3 legislative forums and 1 supervisor candidate forum in 6 communities and hosted 10 business tours with state officials to ensure that needs were being heard. Received two Governor Proclamations recognizing "25 Years in Business" for PlasTech Tooling and Stellar Industries.
- ✓ **Responded** to 7 proposal requests from the State of Iowa for Prospects looking at Hancock County as a place to start a new business or relocate/expand their current business. These prospects could potentially provide a mix of both low tech and high paying jobs for community members.
- ✓ **Awarded** 4 revolving loan applications and five Smart Start Scholarships and added \$14,000 in additional funds to revolving loan account from operating account to support small business startups and/or growth for current businesses.
- ✓ **Represented** North Central Iowa Marketing Alliance Board, the regional economic development and marketing organization for the seven-county North Iowa Region area.
- ✓ **Partnered** with Britt Industrial Development Group, Forest City Industrial Development Group, Hancock County Extension, Hancock County Farm Bureau and Area Chamber of Commerce to encourage countywide unity in business and government to achieve economic, community, and social development goals.
- ✓ **Ran** 33 Social Media Campaigns from June 2017 to October 2018 directed at workforce attraction. These ads reached 85,639 people and 175,095 impressions were displayed. The current HCEDC website has 690 users with a session duration rate of 1.26 minutes on average, and a bounce rate of 72.43%. New visitors represent 92.4 % of users.
- ✓ **Ran** 4637 Iowa Cable Advertising Network Television Ads promoting why to live and have a business in Hancock County.
- ✓ **Initiated** housing discussions and meetings. Provided housing resources to businesses and local leaders.

INITIATIVES

To continue its successful economic development efforts, Hancock County Economic Development and key community leaders have developed a three-year Action/Work plan. Although there are many strategies and action items, they all focus on reaching the following specific three-year initiatives:

- 1** Retain and expand the existing business base in Hancock County.
- 2** Assist with employee attraction and retention for companies and communities that are struggling to attract talented employees with the critical skills that are needed to fill workforce needs.
- 3** Establish and reinforce the image of Hancock County as a “pro-growth” location within the North Central Iowa Region.
- 4** Market the inventory of “shovel-ready” industrial and commercial sites/acres in Hancock County.
- 5** Increase the interest (measured by contacts, visitations, etc.) amongst strategic targeted companies in Hancock County.
- 6** Be a support network for Hancock County entrepreneurs.
- 7** Market and utilize the Hancock County Revolving Loan Fund in order to incentivize economic development projects in the county.

We envision Hancock County in 2021 as a community that makes things happen, where existing businesses grow, where corporations, entrepreneurs and small businesses flourish, and where new significant companies have found a new home.

In addition, we envision Hancock County's competitive position in 2021 as greatly enhanced, where we have become a “community of choice” for current and prospective residents, companies, investors, and where our workforce is gainfully employed.

We are convinced the best way to achieve these goals and our vision is to implement this new, bold plan of action.

TACTICS for SUCCESS ▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶▶

1 Retain, Support and Expand Existing Industries & Entrepreneurial Growth

Recognizing the clear, indisputable value of Hancock County's existing business base, Hancock County Economic Development will...

- Conduct over 30 company visitations/interviews per year with local employers to determine expansion opportunities and roadblocks to growth.
- Serve as the liaison between existing employers and public officials to resolve any barriers to growth and/or the creation of jobs.
- Maintain a confidential database to work with individual companies tracking business trends and intelligence utilizing "synchronist" software.
- Collaborate with SBDC for entrepreneurs to incubate business ideas.
- Increase support for entrepreneurs by providing incentives, removing barriers, and creating an atmosphere that nurtures entrepreneurs by developing a one-stop support system.
- Confidentially support businesses in succession/exit planning.

2 Business Attraction & Marketing

By continuing our successful utilization of new talent and proven tools, Hancock County will...

- Focus on targeted industries which include Agribusiness, Advanced Manufacturing, Warehouse/Distribution & Logistics and Food Processing Facilities, to complement our existing business and recently recruited companies.
- Identify and recruit emerging industries with the highest growth potential.
- Enhance national marketing and public relations through the implementation of our newly enhanced website and social media opportunities.
- Partner and collaborate with local, regional, state, and federal officials to improve our infrastructure.
- Collaborate with North Central Iowa Marketing Alliance on an attraction and regional marketing initiative.

3 Workforce Retention, Recruitment, and Development

A strong economy depends on a quality workforce. In this often ignored area of economic development, Hancock County Economic Development will...

- Continue our partnership with North Iowa Area Community College, Waldorf and other local colleges and the North Central Iowa Marketing Alliance in the promotion of education.
- Collaborate with local colleges and K-12 educators to expose elementary, middle and high school students to career paths available within the area, which is critical to our regional economic success. Facilitate the 2020 Hancock County Career Fair.
- Provide valuable training and networking opportunities through the Hancock County Internship program.
- Continue to collaborate with Iowa Workforce and enhance the performance of regional workforce partners and programs.
- Identify, develop and evaluate results of a Hancock County Labor-shed and Economic Overviews to determine the makeup of Hancock County's workforce and how we benchmark to other areas that we compete against for employees.

4 Deliver a High Quality, Results Driven Service System to Investors

Connecting and engaging investors and other stakeholders in our economic growth effort, Hancock County Economic Development will...

- Connect existing businesses with each other and with local and regional resources.
- Increase positive perceptions of Hancock County through meaningful and collaborative relationships with local, regional, state and national allies.
- Provide leadership for the coordination of local economic development services.
- Build public support and knowledge of economic growth activities and their impact on the community via press releases, news articles, social media, e-newsletters and the HCEDC website.
- Continue to maintain/update the Hancock County Economic Development Investor Directory.
- Provide valuable training and resources to investors along with offering an Intern Program for their company interns.
- Hancock County Economic Director or board member will meet with each investor immediately upon request.

OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNANCE

Hancock County Economic Development Board of Directors, in partnership with area business and community leaders, will guide the three-year initiative. The Director and Board of Directors will remain accountable for program implementation, management oversight and disbursement of funds.

Investors will receive timely communications, updates on program successes, and invitations to key program events and will be recognized as an important partner of HCEDC.

What others are saying about Hancock County Economic Development...

"It has been a pleasure working with the HCEDC staff to help attract business to the Touchstone Energy Park. We are anxious to begin the next phase to expand the park and attract additional business opportunities with Garner and Hancock County."

**Jim Vermeer, VP of Business Development
Corn Belt Power Cooperative**

"HCEDC continues to support business growth and development in North Iowa. By attending our events with the Iowa legislators, publicizing our job openings and organizing valuable training opportunities, the HCEDC continues to support Original Saw Company in meeting our needs to expand and grow our business."

**Jennifer Eden,
Original Saw Company - Britt, Iowa**

"Jill Kramer-Director and HCEDC are a valued partner in the effort to attract business and people to North Iowa. HCEDC's cooperative spirit and creativity are a huge asset to our efforts, and help us find new and better ways to promote our many collective strengths. It is a privilege to work together to serve the great North Iowa Communities."

**Chad Schreck, President & CEO
North Iowa Corridor EDC**

"The Hancock County Economic Development Committee was a great resource to me while establishing my business. I received valuable information about starting a business in Hancock County, specific to my profession. They directed me to available resources, including setting up meetings with professionals in lending and marketing, and provided various options available for financing. The people at HCEDC were very easy to work with. I would recommend anyone thinking about starting a new business or expanding an already existing business to work with them to make the process easier for yourself."

**Dr. Brady Wilson,
Victory Chiropractic - Britt, Iowa**

"Hancock County Economic Development was instrumental in assisting us in making rental housing available in the rural Iowa town of Crystal Lake. They served as a liaison with state offices to coordinate the completion of the project. Hancock County EDC also assisted with rental and compliance information we needed. It is good to know when we have these types of questions or concerns that HCEDC will do what they can to assist projects in Hancock County."

**Bruce Kluver,
Kluver School Apartments - Crystal Lake, Iowa**

"HCEDC has been very proactive with scheduling various housing related seminars. The real estate business, in general, continues to go through changes, and these meetings were useful in keeping new information top-of-mind."

**Gerald Thiedeman, VP Residential & Consumer
Lending, Clear Lake Bank & Trust, Garner Office**

"Everyday cities are challenged with maintaining positive factors that support business and industry, the foundation and life blood of every community. During the past year the City of Garner has reached out for assistance, guidance and support from HCEDC. We have found them very helpful and quick to respond. Today every city and county needs help to navigate the competitive waters of business and industry development. The City of Garner is pleased with the help that has been provided by HCEDC."

Mayor Ken Mick, City of Garner

"It has been our pleasure to work with the local businesses and people looking at starting businesses in Hancock County. HCEDC is a great partner with America's Small Business Development Center, the John Pappajohn Entrepreneur Center, North Iowa Area Community College and Hancock County Economic Development Corporations."

**Brook S. Boehmler, Director
NIACC Small Business Development Center,
John Pappajohn Entrepreneur Center**

"With Athletico Physical Therapy being a new business in Garner, Hancock County Economic Development keeps us connected with businesses, local training opportunities and other resources. I continue to meet great people and learn about what our County has to offer."

**Michelle Bamrick, PTA, ATC/L, CSCS
Facility Manager, Athletico Physical Therapy**

"Partnering with HCEDC has strengthened our relationships with businesses and partnerships in Hancock County and throughout the region. HCEDC is a great partner and we can always count on them to get the job done."

**Melinda McGregor, Business Service Representative,
Iowa Works North Iowa**



Why should you invest in HCEDC?



While economic performance is cause for many to worry, it is the shape and nature of communities and regions that will likely drive mobility and create opportunities for local economic development. Traditional business recruitment strategies are seen as less important than investing in local amenities and quality of life.

Communities that are successful in this climate are those who embrace an economic development strategy. **HCEDC needs your partnership to be successful!**

Investor Benefits:

- ✓ Invitation to Annual Dinner
- ✓ Invitation to Golf Outing
- ✓ Invitation to Investor only Events
- ✓ Invitation to Lunch and Learns
- ✓ Invitation to Executive Breakfasts
- ✓ Invitation to have your company interns participate in HCEDC Intern Program
- ✓ Invitation to special events with local, state and federal elected officials
- ✓ Invitation to Business Expansion & Retention meetings
- ✓ Referrals
- ✓ Sponsorship Opportunities
- ✓ Opportunity to host welcome receptions & other events
- ✓ Opportunity to list commercial/industrial properties & buildings on HCEDC website and LOIS
- ✓ Event sharing on HCEDC social media sites
- ✓ Invitation for HCEDC morning conversations on KLOW

Help us make this vision become reality!

Make an impact on your community...now is a time to make a difference!

Make your pledge today!

Making a pledge means you can become an Economic Change Agent for your Hancock County Communities.

Go to our *easy, online* donation pledge form:

<https://www.hancockcountyiowa.com/connect/become-an-investor/>



Your participation provides resources, creates jobs, builds infrastructure for growth and provides new opportunities for our Hancock County communities.