



Smart Choice

TO: Honorable Mayor Ann Campbell
Amber Corrieri, At-Large
Bronwyn Beatty-Hansen, At-Large
Gloria Betcher, Ward 1
Tim Gartin, Ward 2
Peter Orazem, Ward 3
Chris Nelson, Ward 4
Sam Schulte, Ex-Officio

CC: Steve Schainker, City Manager
Dave Benson, Chair, Ames Economic Development Commission

FROM: Dan Culhane, President & CEO
Ames Economic Development Commission

RE: Annual Report to the City of Ames

It is my pleasure to provide this written report, per our contractual agreement, to the City of Ames on behalf of the Ames Economic Development Commission (AEDC). The AEDC appreciates the longstanding partnership between our organizations and the mutually beneficial nature of our relationship. The following summary of activities is respectfully submitted and covers the efforts of the AEDC from July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016.

The AEDC strives to maintain a strong line of communication with the City of Ames, which is why City Manager Steve Schainker serves on both the AEDC board of directors and the AEDC executive committee. We are grateful for the appointment of two members of the Ames City Council that also serve on the board of directors. Both the City Manager and the two Mayoral appointed City Council members are tied to our contractual arrangement. We thank Councilwoman Gloria Betcher for her service this past year and welcome Councilwoman Amber Corrieri to the board as well as Councilman Chris Nelson who continues on the board per his appointed term.

Marketing

External marketing to site selection consultants and private sector companies on behalf of the Ames community is a key initiative of the AEDC. This is accomplished through trade shows, both domestic and international; sales calls to major U.S. markets, monthly electronic messaging to over 300 site selection consultants, and, at times, routine cold-calling. Major economic development partners like the Iowa Economic Development Authority, Alliant Energy, and Iowa State University all generate leads on prospective businesses with interest in the Ames marketplace. These leads are responded to subject to available sites, buildings, workforce data, and financial incentives that may be applicable to the prospect.

Attached to this report is a spreadsheet listing the trade events and marketing visits we are making either through our own efforts or via our close partnership with the Cultivation Corridor, which is a regional effort that focuses on the Ames Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) with the Des Moines/West Des Moines MSA. The scope of the Cultivation Corridor is to accelerate growth in the agbioscience, biorenewables, biotechnology and advanced manufacturing industries related to agriculture. The AEDC is an investor in this effort, as is Iowa State University, as this group works to develop additional prospects for the region. The main office of the Cultivation Corridor staff is based in the Iowa State University Research Park and we maintain a very high level of communication with the work of this entity. Currently we are working with at least two opportunities that are directly tied to the efforts of the Cultivation Corridor.

Prospect Management & Project Tracking

The AEDC closely monitors the prospects that express interest in the Ames market. We manage this important work with 5-6 personnel that are educated and have the know-how to work a potential project. This portion of our team meets regularly to keep one another apprised of various prospects and we track each of these electronically through a dedicated software program that numbers and catalogs key data points for possible opportunities.

Once a prospect has committed to locating here it becomes a project. The aforementioned personnel are equipped to manage projects and connect the company to key elements of the economic development process. This could include job training programming administered by Des Moines Area Community College; financial incentives through the Iowa Economic Development Authority, working with officials from the Iowa State University Research Park on a lease arrangement, or a landowner on a local building site. Most projects require all of the elements mentioned and considerable time as there is no typical timeline for a project. For example we are currently monitoring an opportunity that was initiated in 2009 and is still very active to date.

Currently we have a number of projects of varying sizes in terms of jobs and capital investment that are in our system. They cover a number of industries from plant sciences, animal health, information technology, retail, commercial developments like hotels, and manufacturing.

Communications

The AEDC has continued to invest considerable resources in communicating to both external and internal audiences. This is conducted via a new website for the organization that will be launched later this year as well as continuous monitoring and promotion of rankings and distinctions that place the Ames community on the national scene as a great place to do business, take a job, start a business, and more. The benefit of a vibrant community and a dynamic, major research institution like Iowa State University bring a number of accolades to the Ames community. We are proud of the wide array of lists our community finds itself on and we cast the message far and wide via media releases and various social media outlets.

Workforce Solutions

An available workforce is an issue that has risen significantly over the last five years as a major challenge across the U.S. and Ames is no different. In fact, the issue of workforce availability may be as difficult here in Ames as anywhere in the country. Consider that in December of 2015 Ames was distinguished in an article by *Forbes* as the top-ranked market in the country for the lowest unemployment rate by the Bureau of Labor & Statistics with a rate of 2.2%. While it is hard to be disappointed in such a figure it does present a challenge to the AEDC when working to attract more employers to the community.

With the workforce challenge as prominent as it is the AEDC continued to work its plan to augment the workforce of Ames. We will quickly point to the fact that local business must take the lead on their own workforce effort. The AEDC plays a supporting role to assist our employers with the following programs.

- 1) *WORKINAMES.COM* – This website was launched three years ago and is free to local businesses to post available jobs. At the time of this report there were 1,543 jobs available on the site here in Ames and Story County. The AEDC continues to promote this website to job-seekers and encourages both employers and job seekers to use the site. The site is currently being redeveloped and will be relaunched later this year with a new feature that we are very excited about. Job seekers will be able to post resumes to the site for employers to review. With thousands of students graduating from ISU and DMACC annually we think this upgrade will be a significant benefit and addition to the site.
- 2) *See Yourself In Ames Summer Internship Program* – Internships are a key part of the education process as students prepare for the workforce. The AEDC initiated the See Yourself in Ames Summer Internship Programs 5 years ago and we see this as a great way to introduce Ames to students interning in our community. They receive extensive tours and educational offerings over the course of 5-6 summer evening events where we provide them with dinner and a learning opportunity as well as an element of fun. A highlight of this past summer's events were Research Park Olympics where students had to visit a number of locations in the Park with the last stop being Workiva where they enjoyed dinner and a handful of speakers on career readiness. While it is challenging to track and monitor progress we do know that a number of the interns get employment offers upon graduation from the companies where they interned. This past year we were aware of over 500 student-interns in Ames and regularly had over 100 of them at our events.
- 3) *Connecting Education with Business* – We continue to pursue the connection between educators and local business and industry leaders. Currently, we are working on a program with the Superintendents of Story County and a number of employers on a project that would bring students into the workplace for high school credit. More details will be provided on this important program as it further develops and comes to fruition.

- 4) *Concierge Program* – This is a program we intend to launch in the fall of 2016. The intent of this part of the Workforce Solutions program is to engage prospective employees from the beginning of their search for a job in Ames. We are currently providing over 1,200 relocation books to people that call our office or make a request via our website at the Ames Chamber of Commerce. We want to increase the sophistication of this engagement by working alongside job seekers by assisting them as much as possible in their search by acclimating them to Ames if they secure employment here. This might include providing a personal community tour, introducing a person with children to local school district options, or providing assistance for a trailing spouse. Depending upon interest we are also holding internal discussions about a newcomer series of evening gatherings for people that are new to Ames. We believe if we can get new people engaged in our community there is a greater likeliness that they will stay, which helps their new employer, and our community.

- 5) *Home Base Iowa* – the AEDC manages the Home Base Iowa program for Story County through our Workforce Solutions program. An initiative of Governor Branstad the AEDC lead the certification program for Story County and secured the designation in the spring of 2015. The purpose of this program is to introduce employment opportunities to military personnel leaving active duty by showcasing Iowa, and in our case Ames/Story County, in hopes that they will consider taking employment here. Early in the process we can point to at least one person that has moved to Story County and taken a job here in Ames as a result of the program.

City of Ames/AEDC Joint Position

The position shared between the City of Ames and the AEDC has been hugely successful. Known as the City of Ames Business Development Coordinator and AEDC Director of Business Development & Marketing, this position had been a key addition to the economic development work we do on behalf of the Ames community.

The position is currently held by John Hall. The day to day activities of this position varies incredibly. John is a regular attendee of the Development Review Committee (DRC). This is valuable as he can connect with those working to invest in our community by providing timely assistance and walking them through the City of Ames development process, if necessary. Naturally, he is not working as much with those that routinely work with the City. Rather, he spends considerable time with external clients that may be new to the City of Ames process.

He also conducts follow up customer satisfaction surveys with those that worked through the development process here in Ames and reports findings back to the City Manager. This data is then assembled, in aggregate form annually, and reported to the Ames City Council.

The joint position does a wide variety of assignments to assist the AEDC. Serving as a lead project manager this position manages site and building inventory to ensure the AEDC is always ready with accurate data on available sites and buildings here in Ames. It also manages the marketing strategies for the AEDC with the President and CEO as well as the Director of Communications. The position works prospects and does some economic development related travel to trade shows and sales calls.

Finally, the position works with a number of start-up business efforts in the community and in the Iowa State University Research Park. This includes working with research park staff, members of the Iowa Small Business Development Centers, and the Iowa Economic Development Authority.

Other Items of Note

Ames Airport project – The AEDC has spent considerable time and financial resources of its own on the work to modernize the Ames Municipal Airport. We are proud to have lead the fundraising effort to construct a new short-term storage hangar that sits prominently at the airport, just recently completed. This new structure makes a considerable statement that Ames and the Ames Municipal Airport are open for business and that this infrastructure is important to the Ames and Story County business community. Story County is noted as companies from outside of Ames, as well as the Story County Board of Supervisors, the Nevada Economic Development Council and the Story City Economic Development Group all invested considerably in the new hangar. More than 25 companies, as well as Iowa State University have financially contributed to the construction of this important project.

The AEDC is grateful for the City of Ames making the Airport a priority and looks forward to the construction of the new terminal set to break ground later this year. Thank you for investing in this important amenity that sits adjacent to the Iowa State University Research Park making this possibly the only research park in the U.S. with an airport in such close proximity.

Industrial Annexation – The AEDC has invested considerable hours working with landowners in the planned East Industrial expansion area, the land between Barilla easterly to DuPont along Lincoln Highway. Over 1,300 acres are outlined in the area that has been pursued by the AEDC for voluntary annexation on behalf of the City of Ames. While there are a numbers of steps to be taken the AEDC is pleased to have secured just over 80% of the land mass assembled to move this forward. Industrial land in our market with adjacent rail service and the presence of Interstate 35 will place our community on the map for a number of significant opportunities and we are grateful to the City of Ames for its leadership in allocating the necessary financial resources to deploy the necessary infrastructure.

It is also worth noting that Alliant Energy, the electric and natural gas provider in this area, has made it clear they intend to be a strong partner to the AEDC in marketing and promoting this area as a place for investment and meaningful employment opportunities. The AEDC remains committed to being helpful to the City of Ames as this annexation process moves forward.

Inter-City Manhattan, Kansas – Another item of note was the Inter-City visit to Manhattan, KS earlier this year. Many communities conduct visits to peer communities to learn best practices and see firsthand how other places are tackling a variety of issues. Here in Ames we routinely are a host community for other locales. Needless to say we were thrilled to have over 30 people attend our first Inter-City visit and proud to have Mayor Campbell, Steve Schainker and a number of city council members with us representing Ames in this important learning experience. We hope to conduct other visits in the future and value your input on where our next visit may take us.

Strategic Planning – As you are keenly aware we are working on another 5-year strategic plan. As 2016 nears completion that ends our current 5-year plan. We had ambitious goals when we set that plan

forth. We focused on job creation, capital investment, seeing a rise in retail sales figures for Ames, increasing our revenues to support new programming, and bolstering partnerships with our economic development allies. We are very pleased to share that we attained every goal of this plan in the fourth year of the plan and believe we will greatly eclipse the originally stated figures when we close the books on this plan which concludes at the end of this calendar year. You will find a copy of our current plan attached to this report.

The new plan will be announced later this year and we look forward to sharing that with you and the community. Thank you to each of you that made time to meet with our plan facilitators.

As I close, I am hopeful this document adequately articulates the activities of the AEDC. We remain committed to being a strong partner and extension of the City of Ames in the economic development effort of our vibrant community. You are always welcome to visit with me on any projects we are working on and I encourage your feedback and input on how we are doing. On behalf of myself, the staff of the AEDC, and our board of directors, thank you for your investment in economic development in Ames and your ongoing support of the AEDC.

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2016 AEDC Marketing Schedule

Event	Dates	Location	Entity
Minneapolis Call Trip	February 9-10	Twin Cities, MN	AEDC
World Ag Expo	February 9-11	Tulare, CA	CC
Advanced Bio Fuels Leadership Conference	February 17-19	Washington, DC	CC
World Bio Markets Congress & Exhibition	Mar 14-17	Amsterdam	CC
South By Southwest - did not attend	Mar 13-22	Austin, TX	AEDC
World Congress on Industrial Biotechnology	April 16-20	San Diego, CA	CC
Int'l Council Shopping Centers (ICSC) Trade Event	May 22-25	Las Vegas, NV	AEDC
BIO International Convention	June 6-9	San Francisco, CA	CC
World Pork Expo	June 8-10	Des Moines, IA	CC
Inst. Food Technologists Food Expo	July 17-19	Chicago, IL	CC
Farm Progress Show	August 30-31	Boone, IA	CC/AEDC
Atlanta/Greenville Call Trip with IEDA	September 7-9	Atlanta, GA	AEDC
Ag Innovation Showcase	September 12-14	St. Louis, MO	CC
Agricultural Bioscience International Conference	September 18-21	Fargo, ND	CC
North Carolina Agriculture & Biotechnology Summit	September 27-28	Raleigh, NC	CC
Industrial Asset Mgmt Council - Fall Forum	October 8-12	Indianapolis, IN	AEDC
South By Southwest Eco - tentative	October 10-12	Austin, TX	CC/AEDC
ICSC Chicago Forum & Call Trip	October 18-19	Chicago, IL	AEDC
European Forum for Industrial Biotechnology	October 18-20	Glasgow, Scotland	CC
Mid American Economic Development - Consultant event	December 4-6	Chicago, IL	AEDC

Entity

AEDC - Ames Economic Development Commission
 CC - Cultivation Corridor

A Five-Year Economic Development Strategy: 2012-2016

Five Year Strategic Plan (2012-2016)



Vision

To advance the prosperity of the Ames area through the talents and strengths of people and businesses working together for the betterment of our community led by the Ames Economic Development Commission.

Mission

The Ames Economic Development Commission organizes and promotes sound economic growth in Ames and central Iowa by stimulating the expansion of existing industry, attracting new enterprises, and assuring a favorable community climate for new ideas and economic growth.

Strategic Objectives

OBJECTIVE #1: Develop opportunities resulting in \$200 million in taxable capital investment \$198,250 million through December 8, 2015

GOALS:

1. Identify the best possible site for the development of a new business/industrial park
2. Work with City of Ames to extend necessary infrastructure to the new site
3. Increase outreach to site consultants and key industry targets for higher awareness of the Ames area opportunities
4. Assist existing businesses with new capital investment opportunities in the Ames area

OBJECTIVE #2: Grow Ames area employment by a net increase of 1,000 jobs 1,263 jobs through December 8, 2015 from AEDC related projects

GOALS:

1. Support existing business employee growth opportunities within the greater Ames area
2. Attract and develop new businesses with job creation plans within the greater Ames area
3. Retain existing employment opportunities that may be at risk
4. Collaborate with the Iowa State University Research Park Corporation on park expansion
5. Continue to provide leadership in advocating for resources and policies that will maintain and enhance the local State and Federal facilities in the greater Ames area that have significant economic impact on the region

OBJECTIVE #3: Drive an increase in retail business sales year-over-year

FY 2012 (ending June 30, 2012) \$773,074,664 FY 2013 (ending June 30, 2013) \$787,248,731

FY 2014 (ending June 30, 2014) \$827,647,453 FY 2015 (ending June 30, 2015) \$884,223,348

GOALS:

1. Determine the retail needs of the Ames area and the best possible targets for recruitment
2. Develop and execute a multi-faceted marketing campaign to recruit new retail businesses from among the list of targets
3. Collaborate with the City of Ames and private developers to ensure that appropriate space and land exists to accommodate the needs of recruited businesses

OBJECTIVE #4: Increase the annual investment in the AEDC to \$750,000

2014 Revenues were \$860,000 and 2015 Revenue \$870,000

GOALS:

1. Ensure that appropriate financial assistance is available to existing and prospective businesses, which includes recapitalizing the Ames Economic Development Commission (AEDC) Community Investment Fund
2. Grow and promote the Ames Seed Capital Fund in leveraging the Community Investment Fund
3. Staff the AEDC appropriately to ensure successful implementation of the Five Year Economic Development Strategy

OBJECTIVE #5: Enhance partnership and communication amongst stakeholders, the community, and the region

Since 2012 the AEDC has further developed relationships with Huxley and Story County related to their specific economic development services. AEDC has also continued to foster relationships with the Greater Des Moines Partnership and was paramount to the creation of the Cultivation Corridor.

GOALS:

1. Increase the community's awareness of the economic development efforts in the Ames area and AEDC successes
2. Continue to promote regional economic development within the greater Ames area, which includes other partner communities of Huxley, Story City, and Story County
3. Assist Iowa State University and help position the institution to enhance economic growth in the greater Ames area
4. Work proactively with the Greater Des Moines Partnership via the Ames/Des Moines Corridor economic development marketing relationship
5. Effectively advocate for public policies and regulations that are conducive to business growth in the Ames area



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