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FROM: Dan Culhane
President & CEO
Ames Economic Development Commission

DATE: June 4, 2020

RE: **Annual Report to the City of Ames**

The Ames Economic Development Commission (AEDC) is pleased to provide this annual summary of activities per our agreement with the City of Ames. We have enjoyed another exceptional year of activity in a number of categories. The AEDC board of directors appreciates your steadfast support and recognizes the prominent partner the City of Ames is to the economic development process here in our community.

The last twelve months have provided strong opportunities that the AEDC is proud to have played a role within. Following is a summary of our activities:

- Prairie View Industrial Center, with over 1,300 acres and 700 of those acres under option, continues to generate major interest while we wait for the deployment of sanitary sewer and water utilities. AEDC has responded to 4 projects with four different parcels in Prairie View in the last six months that are still very active.
- EDA Grant Opportunity for Prairie View Industrial Center, AEDC is currently working with the City of Ames on an opportunity for U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) funding to partially fund the extension of municipal sewer and water.
- The AEDC recently assisted Amcor with their expansion project, assisted California-based Pivot-Bio locating at the ISU Research Park, helped Oregon-based Vytelle locate on South Bell Avenue, to name a few. We have two additional local expansions that are in the offing as well.
- With had nation's lowest unemployment, 1.7% in February, now 8.4% as a result of the pandemic. Still, our Workforce Solutions programming is doing exceptionally well and there are numerous metrics to validate that - web hits, intern attendance at events, job fairs hosted, etc. This statement is supported by the fact that over 20 local companies, including the City of Ames, are providing financial support to augment the program.
- The AEDC continues to support Start Up Ames, a peer group of local entrepreneurs, by facilitating their events, including One Million Cups that occurs every Wednesday mornings and will resume when it is safe to gather in person once again.
- At the May board meeting of the AEDC board of directors we reported 31 Active Projects - 5 new projects in last 30 days. A tremendous uptick in activity.
- COVID-19 Assisted businesses with IEDA - Small Business Relief Applications - \$2,333,663 awarded to 120 companies in Story County.

Ames Ranks Highly and the AEDC advocates and promotes the wide array of accolades the Ames Metropolitan Statistical Area continues to accumulate. Here are a few from 2019 and 2020.

- #6 - "AG Top 25: The Most Affordable College Towns for Renters" (ApartmentGuide.com, 2019)
- #9 - "The Top 10 Best U.S. States for Education" ([US News](http://USNews.com), 2019)
- #14 - "Overall Best States Rankings" ([US News](http://USNews.com), 2019)
- #7 - "Top 10 Cities for Career Opportunities in 2019" ([SmartAsset](http://SmartAsset.com), 2019)
- #4 - "Best Places for Millennials to Move" (Reviews.org, 2019)
- #39 – "Best Small Cities for Business" (Chamber of Commerce, 2019)
- #1 – "10 Best States in America for Jobs" ([Zippia](http://Zippia.com), 2019)
- #33 – "Top 100 Places to Live in 2019" ([Livability](http://Livability.com), 2019)

Our web presence and social media play a significant role in telling the story and getting the message in front of a variety of audiences. Below are recent statistics on our websites and social media platforms.

	July 1, 2018-June 1, 2019	July 1, 2019-June 1, 2020
Website AmesEDC.com	13,561 Visits	21,189 Visits
AEDC Facebook	567 Likes	614 Likes
AEDC Twitter	1,179 Followers	1,234 Followers
WorkinAmes Facebook	1,266 Likes	1,389 Likes
WorkinAmes Twitter	418 Followers	486 Followers
See Yourself in Ames Facebook	239 Likes	257 Likes
See Yourself in Ames Twitter	178 Followers	204 Followers
See Yourself in Ames Instagram	N/A - Created in July 2019	119 Followers
Current Jobs on WorkinAmes.com	1,451	1,297
WorkinAmes.com Job Searches	91,307	230,686

We appreciate the partnership with the City of Ames and the AEDC leverages the financial commitment of the City very well. The City of Ames \$165,000 (\$90,000 Marketing, \$60,000 Business Development position, \$15,000 Workforce Solutions) investment in the AEDC leverages another \$1.25 million in capital that is committed by other AEDC investors to underwrite the efforts of the organization. An additional \$50,000 in private investment has been added to the organizational budget in the last year.

What do these dollars underwrite?

- Business Retention & Expansion - we will conduct over 100 business visits this year.
- Business Recruitment and Prospect Development
- External Marketing Program - domestic and international
- Advocacy for new business park sites and speculative building development
- Workforce Solutions - See Yourself In Ames internship program, workinames.com - jobs website, Home Base Iowa programming, SCALE program connecting students from K-12 with local employers. We had 154 local interns at our first event (virtual) of 2020, two weeks ago.
- AEDC remains a sponsor of the Technology Association of Iowa's (TAI) Iowa Project - this is our effort to support current as well as future growth in the technology sector in Ames marketing job opportunities to 3500 Iowa expats that are participating in meet-up events held in Twin Cities and Denver. Ames as well as our technology companies are featured in the TAI bi-monthly newsletters.
- Currently sponsoring Career Services program through the ISU Alumni Association - this allows us to support and sponsor focused marketing on ISU alumni that are seeking job hunting resources from the Alumni Association on a monthly basis.
- The AEDC is actively participating in and out of State in virtual career fairs. We continue to market our job opportunities and quality of life to these leads on behalf of our local employers seeking employees.
- Working with the Start-Up community and supporting that in a number of ways, including the Ames Seed Capital Fund.



- Meeting and mentoring various small business opportunities that are not always eligible for traditional financial incentives or seed capital assistance.
- Working with the private development community on a wide range of projects across the community.

The AEDC performs this work, and more, as prescribed by our contractual obligation to the City of Ames on behalf of the Ames community. We enjoy the work we do for Ames and look forward to continuing our long-standing partnership.

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