



IOWA LAKES CORRIDOR
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

ANNUAL REPORT

TWENTY TWENTY-FIVE



VIEW
VIRTUALLY

**HOMEGROWN
TALENT GRANT
WINNERS**

PAGE 2

DEAR CORRIDOR FRIENDS,

The Iowa Lakes Corridor Development Corporation Board of Directors and staff are proud to present the 2025 Annual Report of Activities. This year brought new programming alongside ongoing priorities, including the addition of Office Coordinator Jenny Dykema, who has been a tremendous asset to the team.

We launched the Big IDEA Challenge to support regional entrepreneurs, with Cody Fuller of Fuller Radiance winning the final pitch competition. Cody, an alum of the Okoboji Entrepreneurial Institute, was also featured on our new Corridor Conversations Podcast, which debuted this fall.

The first two grant recipients of the Homegrown Talent Initiative—Taylor Krager and Callan Townsend—were selected in early 2025 and joined us at the 2nd Annual Homegrown Talent Golf Tournament to share why they chose to stay or return to the region.

Another major initiative this year focused on building workforce relationships with local schools. Joanne led GROWTH visits across the region to discuss student trends and workforce preparation. Looking ahead, we are excited to host the first local Build My Future event on April 23, 2026, offering Northwest Iowa students hands-on opportunities to explore local careers.

The Corridor team also conducted a Wage & Benefit Survey and supported the City of Spencer's Child Care Feasibility Study, Market Analysis, and Strategic Planning effort. Alongside these initiatives, we continued our core work: supporting small businesses, advancing housing and childcare projects, attracting new business, and fostering the GROWTH and retention of local companies.

To our investors—thank you for your unwavering support of economic growth in Buena Vista, Clay, Dickinson, and Emmet Counties. Your commitment makes our work possible, and we look forward to continuing our partnership as our region grows.



Nathan Wittmaack

BOARD CHAIRMAN
RANCO FERTISERVICE, INC.

PRIMARY
PROGRAMS +
PROJECTS

Workforce

Housing +
Childcare

Business
Retention +
Expansion

Entrepreneurship

Business
Attraction +
Succession

Telling
Our Story

Legislative
Advocacy

TABLE OF CONTENTS

01

NOTE FROM
THE CHAIRMAN

02

WORKFORCE & HOMEGROWN
TALENT INITIATIVE

03

BUSINESS
ATTRACTION

04

BUSINESS
SUCCESSION

05

BUSINESS
RETENTION &
EXPANSION

07

HOUSING &
CHILDCARE

08

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

09

LEGISLATIVE
ADVOCACY

10

PODCAST





AUGUST 1, 2025
**EMERALD HILLS
GOLF COURSE**

TOTAL TEAMS

26

↑ 10 teams FROM LAST YEAR



GOLFERS

104

↑ 40 golfers FROM LAST YEAR



MONEY RAISED

\$11K+

↑ \$4.5k FROM LAST YEAR



HOME GROWN TALENT INITIATIVE

The Corridor's Homegrown Talent Initiative encourages recent college graduates from the region to return, build their lives locally, and fill high-quality jobs. The program offers \$6,000 grants to eligible graduates, which may be used for student loans, housing, or childcare expenses.



2025 AWARDEES

CALLAN (HINN) TOWNSEND | Callan grew up in Spirit Lake and graduated from Spirit Lake High School before earning her Associate's Degree from Iowa Lakes Community College in 2017. She completed her B.S.N. through the University of Northern Iowa and Allen College, then gained experience as an RN at Avera McKennan Hospital in Sioux Falls. Callan later returned to the Iowa Lakes Corridor Region and now lives in rural Dickinson County. She works full-time as an OR/Surgery Nurse at Spencer Hospital and PRN at Lakes Regional and Avera McKennan Hospitals.

“Returning to my hometown has been one of the most rewarding choices I've made, and this grant has made it even more meaningful.”



TAYLOR KRAGER | Taylor Krager grew up in Peterson, Iowa and attended Sioux Central School District. She then pursued a Bachelor of Arts in Business Management from Buena Vista University. Upon graduation in 2024, Taylor began work as a Customer Experience Specialist at Farm Credit Services of America in Storm Lake, and she now lives in Lakeside.

“I'm excited to stay in the region and begin building my life and career close to home, surrounded by people and places that mean the most to me. I am very thankful for this opportunity and to be in such a wonderful community!”



HOME GROWN
TALENT
INITIATIVE



SPEC
BUILDING



SPEC BUILDING COMPLETION & RIBBON CUTTING

The Corridor, alongside partners City of Spencer, Clay County, Corn Belt Power Cooperative, Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative, Spencer Municipal Utilities, Iowa Economic Development Authority, and USDA, celebrated a ribbon cutting for the Spencer Speculative Building on July 1. This collaboration resulted in the **30,000-square-foot shell building, now available for companies looking to locate or expand in Spencer.**



ROBINSON FUNERAL HOME (EXPANSION)

Robinson Funeral Home of Spirit Lake continued its growth in 2025 by purchasing one of the first lots in the City of Spencer's North Y Development area. With construction planned to begin in Spring 2026, the project marks a major expansion of the business into both Dickinson and Clay counties. This new location highlights Robinson Funeral Home's long-term commitment to serving families throughout the region and adds to the growing development momentum within the Corridor.



FABTECH

CEO Curt Strouth joined partners from Iowa Area Development Group, Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative, and Corn Belt Power Cooperative in Chicago for the FABTECH conference this year.



COMMUNITY VENTURE NETWORK

The Corridor continues to engage with Community Venture Network and attends three events throughout the year to market available sites and buildings to businesses looking to expand into rural markets.

Godbersen Metal Works → GOMACO

GOMACO Corporation announced the purchase of all assets of Godbersen Metal Works (GMetal) in Spencer, Iowa in March 2025. The acquisition allowed GOMACO to add additional equipment, processes, and trained staffing to expand their production and manufacturing capacity to further meet the increased demand of the global market for slipform concrete construction equipment. GOMACO's Spencer operation currently employs 20 individuals, including 14 of the 15 original GMetal employees, and with plans to increase employment numbers as they transition more products and equipment to the new facility.



Newell Locker → Nieland Custom Meats

For over 40 years, the Newell Locker has been a cornerstone of the region, providing custom meat processing and specialty products to local farmers and families. The Newell Locker is now set to enter a new chapter under the ownership of Aron and Crystal Nieland and their family. The couple, alongside their children, purchased the business from Aron's parents, Bruce and Robin Nieland, with a bold vision to modernize and expand the business. The remodel, which began over Memorial Day weekend in 2025, is now nearing completion and is poised to bring exciting changes to the locker and the Newell community. To help fund the expansion, the Nielands were awarded a \$25,000 Choice Iowa Value Added Grant, which will be specifically used to improve the retail portion of the facility.

“This place has been in my family for two generations, and it's exciting to now be in the position to carry that legacy forward,” says Aron. “The business has always meant so much to the community, and we want to ensure that we're continuing the tradition while also adapting to the needs of today's consumers.”



2025 STATS

117 TOTAL
VISITS

+12 FROM 2024

87%
OF BUSINESSES

SAID TOTAL COMPANY SALES
ARE STABLE OR INCREASING

27%
WITH PLANS
TO EXPAND

IN THE NEXT 3 YEARS

30 PROJECTED
EXPANSIONS

IN THE NEXT 3 - 5 YEARS

218 NEW
JOBS
ESTIMATED

\$110+
MILLION

IN CAPITAL INVESTMENT

TOP SUSTAINABILITY PRIORITIES FOR BUSINESSES



Increase Housing
Opportunities For
Workforce



Childcare
Initiatives



Workforce
Upskilling
Initiatives



Talent
Attraction
Initiatives



Quality
Of Life



Recreation
Opportunities



Tax
Climate



Downtown
Revitalization

13% of Business Retention & Expansion visits in the State of Iowa in 2025 were completed by the Iowa Lakes Corridor.

MANUFACTURING 4.0 GRANTS

TECTON | SPENCER, IA

Tecton is utilizing the Manufacturing 4.0 grant to accelerate our digital transformation. Through investments in automation, data integration, and workforce development, we're enhancing efficiency and precision across our operations. These investments are significant drivers of our continuous improvement efforts, boosting efficiency, expanding capabilities, and strengthening how we support our customers in a highly competitive global market."

Tyler Tamisiea
President of Tecton Industries, Inc.

TG INDUSTRIES INC./ARMLIFT | ARMSTRONG, IA

"TG Industries Inc./Armlift is proud to receive the IEDA Manufacturing 4.0 grant—an investment in our future and in the importance of manufacturing in Iowa. This support allows us to purchase a state-of-the-art plasma cutting system, boosting precision, reducing lead times, and improving overall efficiency as we modernize our facility."

We're grateful to CIRAS's Derek Thompson and Ty Hill for their guidance throughout the application process—their expertise was invaluable. Programs like Manufacturing 4.0 help small and mid-sized manufacturers access advanced technology and stay competitive. Thank you to the State of Iowa for supporting innovation and the growth of Iowa manufacturers."

Brian C. Fuller
General Manager, TG Industries, Inc./Armlift

The Place for
GROWTH

GATHER • RELATIONSHIPS • OPPORTUNITIES • WINS • TRENDS • HOMETOWN



TYSON FOODS VISIT

2025 WAGE & BENEFIT SURVEY

This year, the Corridor partnered with the University of Northern Iowa Strategic Marketing Services and Institute for Decision Making to develop a Wage & Benefit Survey for Corridor-region businesses. **This study was funded by the Iowa Lakes Corridor in partnership with Alliant Energy, Corn Belt Power Cooperative, Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative, ITC Midwest, and MidAmerican Energy.**



WAGE & BENEFIT SURVEY



LABORSHED DATA



GROWTH

SURVEY STATS

96
RESPONDENTS

TOP OFFERED BENEFITS



HEALTH INSURANCE



LIFE INSURANCE

LAST 12 MONTHS
AVERAGE WAGE INCREASE

↑ **4.01%** HOURLY
EMPLOYEES
↑ **3.16%** SALARY
EMPLOYEES

SAVE
THE
DATE

Build My Future

APRIL 23, 2026
Clay County Regional Events Center

This hands-on career day event will bring in 750-1,000 high school students to experience local businesses and careers! In 2025, we made an intentional effort to include regional schools in our GROWTH program visits.



BUILD MY
FUTURE

MANUFACTURING MONTH



Brownmed, Spirit Lake



Demco Products, Spencer



Redwood Farms, Estherville



Platinum Crush, Alta

HOUSING



76 UNITS
STORM LAKE, IA

Sunset Point
Kading Properties



64 UNITS
ESTHERVILLE, IA

Deer Creek Phase II
Talon Development



146 UNITS
SPIRIT LAKE, IA

The Shores
Talon Development

Pointe of Pines

Third Add. By Re: Unlimited

37 UNITS
SPIRIT LAKE, IA

Sands Of Spencer
Talon Development

30 UNITS
SPENCER, IA

CHILDCARE

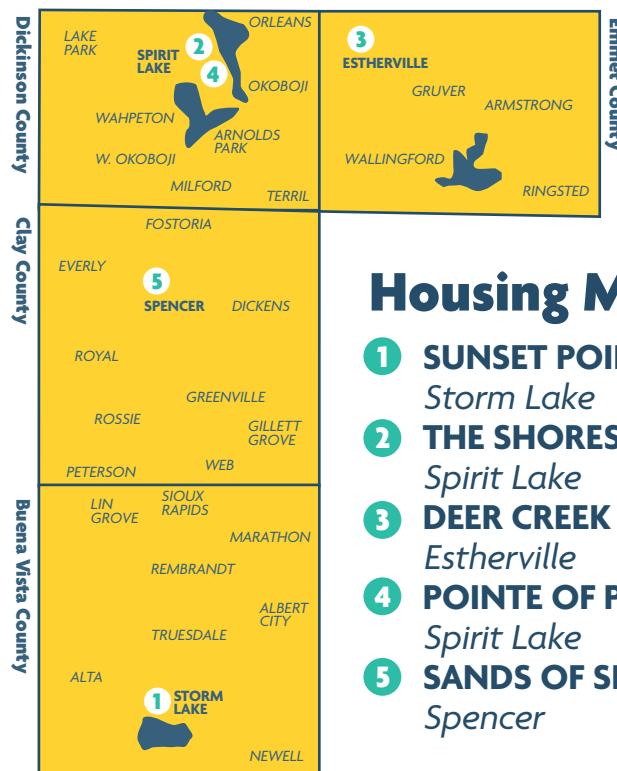
SPENCER CHILDCARE STUDY

In partnership with Spencer Economic Development Corporation, City of Spencer, Clay County, Spencer Chamber of Commerce, and Spencer Community School District, a childcare study was conducted by First Children's Finance. Projects supported by Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA), Iowa Rural Development Council (IRDC), and Iowa Area Development Group (IADG). **The Market Analysis**

shows a shortage of over 700 childcare slots in the community and provides context to the childcare needs and opportunities locally. A strategic planning group of over 30 community representatives participated in a Strategic Plan.



CHILDCARE
RESOURCE



Housing Map

- 1 SUNSET POINT**
Storm Lake
- 2 THE SHORES**
Spirit Lake
- 3 DEER CREEK PHASE II**
Estherville
- 4 POINTE OF PINES**
Spirit Lake
- 5 SANDS OF SPENCER**
Spencer



BIG IDEA

We hosted the inaugural Big IDEA Challenge this year, culminating in the final pitch competition on April 1, 2025. This entrepreneurial competition supports the Innovative Development of businesses through Empowering entrepreneurs and Accelerating business growth.



1ST | CODY FULLER
FULLER RADIANCE



2ND | CAYDEN FISCHER
OUTLAW KICKS



3RD | JACK BAUERMEISTER
GLACIER MADE

HONORABLE MENTIONS

Vanessa Moore, Vertical Marketing
Jeff Krage, Boji Bites



OEI

The 19th class of Okoboji Entrepreneurial Institute joined us for another great week August 10-15, 2025 in the lakes region to learn about entrepreneurship!



BIG IDEA

OEI



OEI
HOMECOMING
AUGUST 7-9, 2026

SAVE
THE
DATES

OEI
XX CLASS
AUGUST 9-14, 2026

IA SOURCE LINK AWARD

IASourceLink launched a new Resource Partner of the Year Award in 2025, and the Corridor is honored to be the first recipient of this award to recognize a partner who has gone above and beyond to support the Iowa entrepreneurial ecosystem and **IASourceLink** platform! Corridor CEO Curt Strouth was presented with the award at the Fall 2025 Professional Developers of Iowa Conference by IEDA Director, Debi Durham and UNI Executive Director of Business and Community Services, Drew Conrad.



LEGISLATIVE VISITS



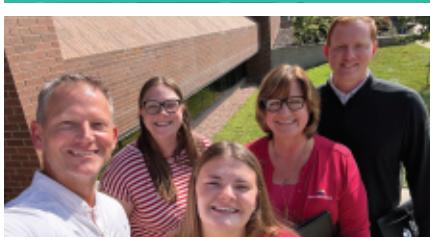
SEN. ERNST AT GREAT HALL OF ROYAL



SEN. GRASSLEY AT CLARY LAKE SERVICE



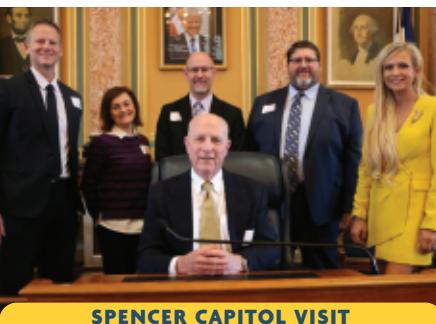
SEN. GRASSLEY AT MWI COMPONENTS



CORRIDOR AT CLAY COUNTY COURTHOUSE



SEN. GRASSLEY AT TG INDUSTRIES, INC.



SPENCER CAPITOL VISIT



REP. FEENSTRA AT MERRILL MFG.

DEV-ED DAY

On October 15, the Corridor hosted a Development Education Day in partnership with the Professional Developers of Iowa. **This all-day workshop included a PDI Legislative Forum for Northwest Iowa community leaders, developers, and legislators.** Following lunch, attendees heard a presentation from Dave Miller, Executive Director of Homes for Iowa, and to wrap up the day, Georgia VanGundy with Iowa Workforce Development presented on current resources.

Lee Dutfield
City of Storm LakeLexie Ruter
Estherville Chamber
of Commerce



PODCAST

In 2025, the Corridor team started the Corridor Conversations podcast to sit down with community leaders, business owners, partners, and more to **talk about what economic development really is, why it matters, and how growth in our communities happens**. The inaugural season started with 7 episodes released every other week from October through December featuring guests:

- 1 **Intro to the Corridor, with Curt Strouth & Trevor Smith**
- 2 **Big IDEA Winner Cody Fuller, Fuller Radiance**
- 3 **Callan Townsend & Taylor Krager, Homegrown Talent Initiative Grant Awardees**
- 4 **Tourism Partners Jon Pausley, Arnolds Park Amusement Park & Kiley Zankowski, Okoboji Tourism**
- 5 **Matt & Jessica Beaver, KILR Radio**
- 6 **Steve Bomgaars & Kevin Robinson, Spencer Leadership**
- 7 **Craig Patterson, Professional Developers of Iowa Lobbyist**



YOU CAN LISTEN TO THE PODCAST ON SPOTIFY AND/OR WATCH ON YOUTUBE.

WHO'S LISTENING

AS OF 12/31/25

TOTAL STREAMS

4,200+



OUR MISSION

"To foster, encourage, promote, aid or otherwise assist in the economic growth and development of the four-county region."

2026 BOARD MEMBERS

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