



JACKSON COUNTY ECONOMIC ALLIANCE

JCEA Newsletter
Fall 2014

Issue Date

Letter from the Director



David J. Heiar

Welcome to the inaugural newsletter of the Jackson County Economic Alliance. We will use this newsletter to inform investors, local businesses and industries, and other community partners of important opportunities, changes in legislation, as well as our office's recent activities. In the future this newsletter will be produced on a quarterly basis.

In the past year with the Jackson County Economic Alliance, I have begun to meet some of Jackson County's businesses and industries to establish a dialogue

and develop working relationships. I still have many to meet. In the next several months, I will continue to call on other industries in Jackson County. This direct line of communication is important as we work together toward economic growth, workforce development, and improving Jackson County's quality of life. A short overview of these industry visits can be found on page 5 of this newsletter.

Developing working relationships is a process. In the first year, I have just opened the door to begin this process. As our office moves into the second year of existence, I hope to become a resource that local businesses and industries will call upon when they run into obstacles, or when they just need to know where to turn for help.

I encourage you to take some time to review this newsletter to better understand the ways the JCEA has worked towards improving the economic environment in Jackson County.

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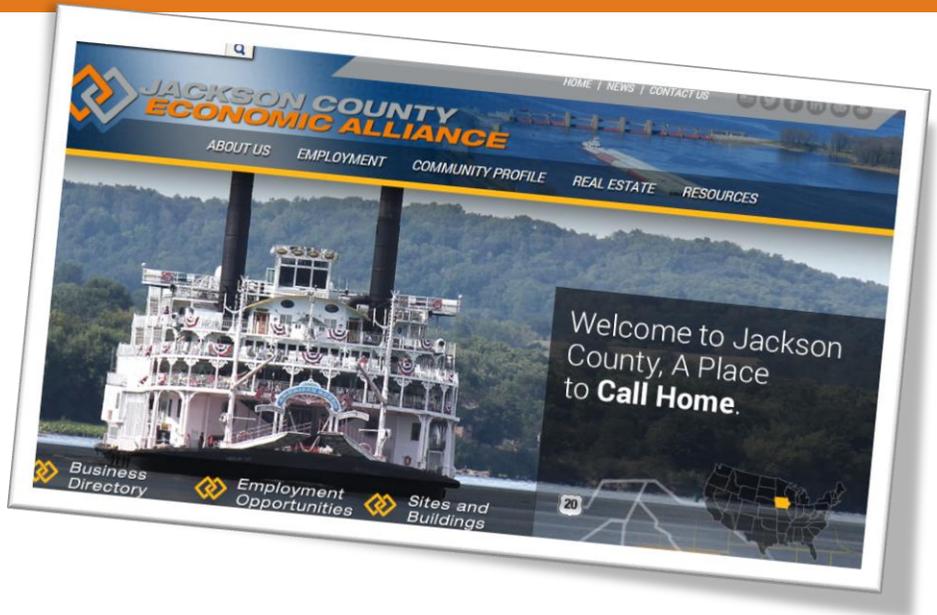
Our Website

by Nicolas Hockenberry

We've officially launched the Jackson County Economic Alliance website. This website will enable the JCEA to connect with local businesses and industries through another venue, and will work to better market Jackson County to a larger audience. The website will also be used to promote workforce development opportunities for residents and for others looking for employment opportunities in Jackson County.

Local employers can promote their openings by submitting a listing through our "Submit a Job" portal. Those looking for employment can use our "Submit a Resume" page to submit résumés for local businesses to review. They can also browse job postings in Jackson County, as well as those linked to other area job posting websites.

The website is focused on offering resources to businesses and industries in



Jackson County. Whether that is through listing a job opening, promoting news about a successful expansion, offering options for available sites and buildings, or information as to local incentives; the JCEA website will work to amplify our office's services.

Visit our website (thejcea.org) and let us know what you think.

THEJCEA.ORG

"The website is focused on offering resources to businesses and industries in Jackson County."



NICOLAS HOCKENBERRY, ED SPECIALIST

"Nicolas is a graduate of the University of Iowa, where he earned a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Anthropology with a focus on cultural systems studies and public policy."

An Addition to the Office

In early September Nicolas Hockenberry started his new position with the Jackson County Economic Alliance as an Economic Development Specialist. Prior to that, he worked as an Office Manager at Horizons a Family Service Alliance. At the JCEA, Nicolas' responsibilities include managing daily operations, website and social media content, and marketing support.

Nicolas is a graduate of the University of Iowa, where he earned a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Anthropology with a focus on cultural systems studies and public policy. He has experience engaging diverse communities.

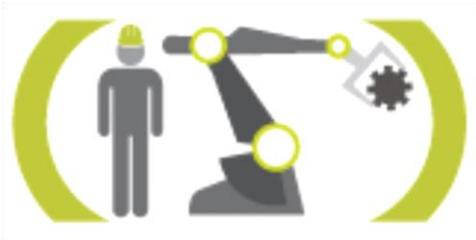
Nicolas is the founder of Climb On - an environmental education and rock climbing nonprofit serving the eastern Iowa community - and has served as a youth and community outreach co-chair to various civic groups.



Enterprise Zones Eliminated

by Nicolas Hockenberry

PROGRAMS IN PLACE OF "EZ" PROGRAM



High Quality Job program

Business owners may qualify for this program providing businesses tax credits and direct financial assistance to locate, expand, or modernize.



Workforce Housing Tax Credit

Developers building or rehabilitating housing in Iowa may be eligible to receive certain state tax incentives.

Earlier this year, HF 2448 repealed the Enterprise Zone (EZ) program. This bill shifted business incentives to the High Quality Jobs program and established the Workforce Housing Tax Credit program (WHTC).

The High Quality Jobs program provides businesses tax credits and direct financial assistance to off-set some of the costs incurred when locating, expanding, or modernizing an Iowa facility. The assistance package includes loans, forgivable loans, tax credits, exemptions and/or refunds. The requirements for this program can be found [here](#) (www.iowaeconomicdevelopment.com/Finance/HQJ). In Jackson County, the wage threshold requirement to qualify for the program is \$15.99/hr.

Although the WHTC program was established as of July 1st of this year, the administrative rules, operating procedures, and project application are in the review process and will not be approved until at least December 19, 2014. This approval process will involve a public comment period that has not been scheduled as of yet. The tax incentives in this program include: refunded state sales, service, or use taxes paid during construction; investment tax credit up to 10% of investment. The requirements for this program can be found [here](#) (www.iowaeconomicdevelopment.com/CommunityDevelopment/WHTC).

HOUSE FILE 2448

- Timeline:
 - Passed House (unanimously) March 26, 2014
 - Passed Senate (unanimously) April 25, 2014
 - Signed by Governor May 30, 2014
- Lobbyists in favor:
 - Reps for League of Cities
 - Reps for City of Des Moines
 - Reps for Hubbell Realty
 - Reps for Newbury Management Co.
 - Reps for Profession Developers of Iowa (PDI)
 - Reps for Governor's Office
 - Reps for Iowa Assoc. of Business & Industry (ABI)
 - Reps for Greater Des Moines Partnership
 - Reps for Iowa Chamber Alliance
 - Reps for Metropolitan Coalition

To read the bill click [here](#) (<http://coolice.legis.iowa.gov/Cool-ICE/default.asp?Category=BillInfo&Service=Billbook&hbill=H8313&ga=85>)

Parks to People

by Nicolas Hockenberry

On September 29th Governor Branstad announced that the Grant Wood Mississippi River Region was chosen as the location for the first strategic Parks to People pilot program for the State of Iowa. The Iowa Parks Foundation, Green Ribbon Commission, and the Governor's office were impressed by the site visit and presentations of the Jackson, Jones and Dubuque County region in late July.

Because of the incredible group of business and community leaders involved in this site visit, the Grant Wood Mississippi River Region will receive \$1.9 million to begin to implement a regional parks plan. The Governor's office is confident that Jackson, Jones and Dubuque counties will create the public-private partnerships necessary to complete this project.

The Governor's office underscored that one of the primary goals of the initiative is to

have Iowa offer a premier parks system that will attract and retain young people, which should also help stimulate the State's economy and help attract and retain businesses. This region will set the precedent and example for other regional groups in the State.

The process going forward is to identify the priority regional projects. The four State Parks, three county conservation offices, community and business leaders, and several municipalities are all working closely to create a lasting legacy for Northeast Iowa.



Synchronist Visits

The JCEA has conducted twenty three (23) on-site visits with business owners, plant managers, and CEOs across Jackson County. Synchronist is a tool used to collect local data and feedback from industries and businesses. This information is then used to address individual business's needs, as well as provide a larger picture of the Jackson County economic landscape.

To date our data highlights some bright spots in Jackson County's economy. The vast majority of businesses have a high opinion of Clinton Community College and in particular the Advanced Manufacturing Center located in Maquoketa. In general, most businesses also give high marks to public services within the various parts of Jackson County.

During the past year, the businesses surveyed created 56 new manufacturing jobs, and have an estimated \$9 million worth of projected new investments that are in various stages of planning. Many area companies are seeing their sales increasing, and as a result plan to expand their workforce and production.

The challenges outlined showed a common theme focused on the workforce. 73% of businesses pointed to recruitment challenges. The

data also reflects that 83% of the businesses surveyed are making investments in training programs.

With this information, the JCEA is helping these area businesses address their workforce challenges. Director Heiar has met with many school officials through Jackson County to share the list of skillsets that local employees have identified as critical needs. The high schools and community college have taken this input to heart and have already modified curriculum to address these needs.

The creation of the Jackson County Innovation Alliance (JCIA) – comprised of manufacturing industry representatives – is also the result of early meeting with local industries. The manufacturing industries are meeting as a group every other month. Some months, the group tours facilities of other local manufacturing companies. Other months, there is a guest speaker who can provide pertinent information on resources that are available to local businesses.

Thank You

Mission Statement

It is the mission of the Jackson County Economic Alliance (JCEA) to facilitate, lead and promote organized economic growth in order to improve the quality of life and to protect and create jobs through innovative and conventional programs within our community. The Jackson County Economic Alliance is responsible for developing and implementing an overall economic development plan for Jackson County. The objective of this plan is to permanently bolster economic climate through the county and fully utilize the county's assets to enhance economic growth.

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