A close-up of a logo

Description automatically generated

**Update Report – May 2024**



**Jackson County – Your HOME, Your FUTURE**

**Over 7,300 people will be retiring over the next 15 years. We have a little over 10,500 men and women in our workforce so losing 7,300 is pretty scary! If we look at it another way, that is 7,300 opportunities in the next 15 years for our youth and those who have moved away in search of other opportunities, to find the job that best meets their individual skills and abilities right here in Jackson County. We need to market ourselves. We need to highlight our employers showcasing the opportunities for successful futures right here. If Jackson County was your home and/or is your current home, YOUR FUTURE IS HERE!**

**How do we get here? We get in the schools at an early age and start planting the seeds and sharing the stories of the opportunities right here, in the place they already call HOME! We continue to reinforce the message in every grade level. We highlight and share the success stories of people in all kinds of positions, making it personal and relatable. We understand that it is good to get different experiences and perspectives by pursuing additional educational opportunities or living in other cities, but ultimately, we want to draw everyone back to JACKSON COUNTY!**

**Individual Excellence is an individual’s pursuit of excellence of their unique skills and abilities. Societal culture needs to change to recognize that success is not defined by a salary or a job title. Success is each and every person doing the very best they can with their individual skills and abilities. When we become more accepting of each other, we reduce stress, we reduce the need for our kids to go somewhere else where they can hide in the masses because they aren’t living up to someone else’s expectations. Instead, they can stand tall and proud knowing that they are being true to themselves. They are finding excellence in their own skills, talents and abilities. If we are going to reverse the population drain in Jackson County and replace those 7,300 men and women who will be retiring soon, we must change the mindset that a person isn’t successful unless they go somewhere else and be successful. SUCCESS is right here! You can be EXCELLENT here! Your FUTURE is here! Jackson County is your HOME, your FUTURE!**

**The 36 partners of the JCEA**

Thank you to our

PARTNERS

You are making a difference!

Jackson County

Your HOME

Your FUTURE



**Our next Wednesdays are possible will be June 5th at Innovate 120 in Maquoketa.**

**Dean Adrian from TADA Meats will be our special guest. Come hear his story.**

**June 5th at Innovate 120 – 120 S Main St in Maquoketa starting at 4:30. Liquid refreshments will be served.**

If you missed last month's Wednesdays are possible, our podcast of this interesting discussion with young entrepreneur and dreamer, **Payton Marshall** is now available via this link or on your favorite podcast provider.

[https://www.buzzsprout.com/2334128/episodes/15053452](https://www.buzzsprout.com/2334128/episodes/15053452?fbclid=IwZXh0bgNhZW0CMTAAAR2FPwTVLDWGXgfTIBsKSc0zTa1SM_kh-GC8WGbTaFoz0h1rBIfTAjFsIN8_aem_AQkd3C3nnVdd8d5w11V_VdAo3Zgd5aG7QmXscM-QbfVN0cQDpGnGFnDKlLH5B6LEJf6lltnVUJpS0vWN_o0C5CYP)

Simply search for "Wednesdays are possible". Enjoy!

We have 36 public and private partners who are committed to funding our initiatives. We all should be grateful for their generosity because although they fund the JCEA, they also are investing in the future of each and every citizen and business who are proud to call Jackson Co their home because everything we do, no matter how big or small, benefits someone or some business. And every individual success is a success for the County. Special thanks to:

**Jackson County Board of Supervisors City of Maquoketa**

**City of Bellevue City of Preston**

**City of Miles City of Sabula**

**Maquoketa Municipal Electric Bellevue Municipal Electric**

**Maquoketa Valley EC Black Hills Energy**

**Alliant Energy Maquoketa State Bank**

**Bellevue State Bank US Bank**

**Fidelity Bank Clinton National Bank**

**DuTrac Bellevue BETA**

**Eastern Iowa Community College Precision Metal Works**

**Plastics Unlimited Jackson County Regional Hospital**

**Osterhaus Pharmacy Kunau Implement**

**Origin Design WHKS Engineering**

**Sonac Blue-9**

**Imagine the Possibilities Off Shore**

**Innovate 120 Water Street Partners**

**Community Foundation of Jackson Co Bellevue Chamber of Commerce**

**Maquoketa Chamber of Commerce ECIA**



**Jackson County Child Care Study Announced**

Maquoketa, IA (May 1)- Lack of affordable child care, along with the lack of housing, are cited as the top two reasons why potential employees turn down job offers in Jackson County. With 7,300 workers retiring in Jackson County in the next 15 years, it is imperative that we address these concerns and put the employers in Jackson County in a position to be able to find qualified employees. The future of our county depends on us finding solutions to these challenges!

Jackson County Economic Alliance, in partnership with the Community Foundation of Jackson County, has contracted with First Children’s Finance (FCF) to complete a child care study. The two-part study will include a child care market analysis and a strategic plan for child care. The first part, the market study, will focus on research and analysis on: the needs of local families and children, the current supply of regulated child care, parents’ current and preferred child care choices, effects on employers caused by lack of child care, and child care providers’ challenges operating. The report will include the key findings of the research and analysis, including a child care gap analysis quantifying how many children likely need care versus the number of spaces available.

The research being conducted by FCF includes three surveys to gain insight from local employers, child care providers and parents. Employers will be asked questions related to how child care impacts employee performance and time loss, and what supports related to child care they would be willing to provide to their employees in the future. Child care providers are asked about challenges they face today and how the community could better support child care providers. The parent survey focuses on learning from working parents, as well as those who are not working due to child care challenges. Questions are focused on the challenges families face today and what will meet their future child care needs. The parent survey is designed for those that have children and are currently using or want to use child care in Jackson County, regardless of where they live. All three surveys will be accessible online starting in June.

The second part of the study is a strategic plan to address the challenges identified through the market study. The strategic plan will include a vision for the future of child care in Jackson County along with 5-year goals. Each goal will have detailed strategies and activities to provide a roadmap to achieve the desired outcomes.

Kevin Burns, Vice-Chair of the JCEA, “I am very excited about the Child Care study. Child care is a major issue not only locally but nationwide, and we are hopeful that the results of this survey will enable us to address the issue going forward.”

This study was made possible in part through a Rural Child Care Market Study grant received by Jackson County Economic Alliance through the Empower Rural Iowa initiative, a program administered by the Center for Rural Revitalization, a division of Iowa Economic Development Authority. The Community Foundation of Jackson County also generously provided support for this study.

To oversee the project, a child care steering committee was formed. The committee consists of JCEA staff; Kelley Brown and Ben Davison, two JCEA Board Members, Superintendents from all four schools in Jackson County, city representatives from Bellevue, Maquoketa, Preston, Sabula, and Andrew and three representatives from our largest employers. Other interested members will be added during the strategic planning process.

If you have questions or would like more information about this project, contact Kelley Brown, Director of the Jackson County Economic Alliance at [kelleybrown@thejcea.org](mailto:kelleybrown@thejcea.org).

**PLEASE SPREAD THE WORD!!!! We need every qualified person to take the child care survey!**

**Here are the links and QR CODES**

**Employer Survey**

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/JacksonCoEmployers>

A qr code with black squares

Description automatically generated

**Child Care Provider Survey**

All child care centers, preschools, and home-based providers operating in Jackson County, regardless of their status with the state.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/JacksonCoProviders>

A qr code with black squares

Description automatically generated

**Parent Survey**

Anyone currently using child care in Jackson County or that would like to use care in Jackson County, regardless of where they live.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/JacksonCoParents>

A qr code with many black squares

Description automatically generated

**DOWNTOWN BUSINESS SURVEY**

We would love to hear from you!

Any questions

Anything on your mind

Anything we can do for you

Just want to visit

Call or email us: Kelley Brown, 515-802-1516 or [kelleybrown@thejcea.org](mailto:kelleybrown@thejcea.org)

Ben Davison, 563-653-4549 or bendavison@thejcea.org

Jackson County Economic Alliance (JCEA) is looking for input from downtown properties and business owners!

We want to connect with you about your downtown property or business at «DT\_Property» in «DT\_City». There are several options for establishing and improving our downtown environment we want you to be aware of, but we need to know what you currently have and whether you are looking to establish or improve your space(s). We also recognize the need for housing, so we want to better understand the level of need and the capacity of possibilities to best target upper-story development in the downtown. Finally, we want to hear about your successes, challenges, and goals for your property or business, and what role we can have in supporting your successes. What you can share allows us to best direct future economic incentives and business resources to you, so we can continue the momentum in our community for improving and growing our amazing downtown.

Please visit the survey by using the URL or by scanning the QR code below:

<https://qfreeaccountssjc1.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9TyLs3MqkWbNMYm>

A qr code on a white background

Description automatically generated

**Iowa Prison industries**

JCEA had a meeting with a representative with the Iowa Prison Industries on their Manufacturing program. With this program they have the ability to set up a manufacturing process that will support and compliment current manufacturers. The idea is to train offenders in areas where they can increase their skills and knowledge in the trades or manufacturing process. In addition, these programs can compliment and support existing manufacturing processes. If a company is short manpower and can’t keep up with their demand, perhaps there are parts or all of your processing that can be done through the Iowa Prison Industries. It’s an interesting opportunity and has proven effective for other manufacturers. With workforce being at a premium, having this option may be of interest to you. For more information, please contact us.

Here is a link for more information: <https://www.iaprisonind.com/store/pg/174-Anamosa.aspx>

**Manufacturing**

**support**

**Iowa Prison**

Bellevue City Administrator, Teresa Weinschenk and I, along with other Prosperity Eastern Iowa representatives toured the Iowa Prison Industries Home Building Program in Newton, Iowa. They build homes for Homes For Iowa, Inc. This is a 501(c)(3) organization that builds affordable housing. In addition, this program also trains incarcerated men in skilled trades which also helps reduce recidivism.

Here is a link for more information.

<https://www.homesforia.com/about#:~:text=The%20homes%20are%20built%20near,sold%2C%20and%20moved%2069%20homes>.

**Industries**

**Affordable**

**Housing**

CDBG Water and Wastewater Services Grants are accepted quarterly. Especially with all of the stricter regulations for waste water effluent, more and more cities are faced with the financial hardship of improving and upgrading their plants. Cities with a LMI rate of at least 51% are eligible for submission or an income survey can be completed for those cities who aren’t currently considered eligible. It is definitely worth checking out.

The program is funded through the federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). The goal of this program is to provide economic opportunities for people, especially those of low- and moderate income.  
  
Maximum funding requests are based on community population:

* Less than 300 and unincorporated areas request up to $1,000 per capita
* Less than 1,000 request up to $300,000
* Between 1,000 and 2,500 request up to $500,000
* Between 2,500 and 15,000 request up to $600,000
* Greater than 15,000 request up to $800,000

**CDBG Water & Wastewater Plant Grants**

**EICC Opportunities**

Eastern Iowa Community College representatives and JCEA meet monthly to talk about collaborative opportunities. In addition, EICC sends educational programs and classes to JCEA to help spread the word. EICC has a campus in Maquoketa and works to offer relevant programs and classes to help upskill employees giving them more opportunities for advancement. The challenge is that if not enough enroll, the classes cannot be offered.

The Eastern Iowa Community College program consists of Clinton Community College, Muscatine Community College and Scott Community College. Collectively they have locations in Maquoketa, DeWitt, Clinton, West Liberty, Wilton, West Davenport, Columbus Junction and Muscatine. For more information on the Maquoketa Center:

https://eicc.edu/services-support/location/ccc/maquoketa-center.aspx

Communication and time is an ongoing challenge for us all. I marvel and am envious of the person who just seems to have it all together and readily checks the boxes off their to-do list. And then there are those people who bring up suggestions and I immediately am remorseful thinking that I should have thought of that and come up with it first! But it takes a village. None of us have enough time… just a fact of life! So how do we help each other? Well, we communicate. We ask for help. We share what is going on. We support one another. We gain wisdom from each other. Individually we can be amazing, but together we can be OUTSTANDING!!!

Unfortunately, we don’t have the time to reach out to each and every one of you and we know it is unfair to ask you to reach out to us. What would really help us; however, is if you would take the time to meet with us when we do reach out. We need to get to know you better so that when there are opportunities with grants or other programs, that we know what it is that you may need. If we know you, then we will know what information may help you whether you are a business, colleague, resident, or tourist.

And, if you are a downtown business, please complete our survey.

<https://qfreeaccountssjc1.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9TyLs3MqkWbNMYm>

**Thanks again!!!**

**Communication**

**And**

**Time**

The short version is that there have been several DRA grants awarded to support tourism for Dubuque and surrounding counties. The first grant was used to maximize the opportunities and impact that the Field of Dreams, and the over 400 teams that will play there each year, will have to our five-county area. Families and players travel from all over the country to play, they drive through our area to get there, they visit in between games, they come early and stay after so they have time to vacation a little. The benefits to area tourism is HUGE!!! IN order to identify the area attractions and opportunities, emails and correspondence was sent out to all the mayors and city clerks, chambers, economic development organizations for their input and suggestions. A massive list was compiled full of the best of the best. Anyone coming to the area has access to that information.

The next step was how can we best use this information to better market ourselves. We are now partnering with Travel Dubuque to use their already existing marketing opportunities to better market ourselves. Jackson County Tourism has recommended the attractions to be highlighted and the areas for selfie stands. It’s a work in progress but is exciting!

**Travel Dubuque**

**Tourism**

**Update with**

**Jackson**

**County**

ECIA manages the Region 8 transportation planning for the area. As part of that program each county received funding for their transportation needs. The Rural County Transportation Program (RCTP) was initiated to assist smaller cities with receiving funding for their transportation projects. The County supervisors generously allocate $75,000 of their funding for these smaller projects. Interested cities submit applications for their transportation programs. Their applications are scored and recommendations are made to the County BOS and engineers for approval of these projects. The scoring criteria does account for those cities who have recently received funding by giving a negative score to give others a chance. This year Jackson County had four applications submitted for consideration. Here is a link to additional information on this program.

<https://eciatrans.org/grants_rfps/rctp.php>

**RCTP applications**

**Preston**

This project includes the complete construction of two one-bedroom apartments on the upper story of 172 W Gillet Street in Preston, Iowa. The space is vacant and unlivable. The previous owner had demolished the walls in anticipation of restoring the space into apartments but abandoned the idea when she was unable to receive adequate funding. City records show that this space has not been inhabited for at least 20 years.

This project is vital to Preston for many reasons. As populations continue to decline in rural areas, housing developers are hesitant to invest in new developments. As existing infrastructure continues to deteriorate, existing housing becomes no longer viable. It is essential to rural counties that existing infrastructure is maintained and improved and that quality of life investments are made to incent current residents to stay and new residents to relocate Whether entices current residents to stay or new residents to make Preston their home, it is a win for Preston and Jackson County. We need our residents to support local services, be a part of the workforce to support our existing businesses and be a part of our community to support one another.

JCEA wrote and submitted the pre-app. ECIA write the final application for submittal. Will hear awards in a few months.

**Project Hedron RFI – Maquoketa Industrial Park**

Project Hedron is a semiconductor manufacturer who will invest $40M in a facility and employ 74. JCEA received the Request for Information (RFI) on March 7th asking for a response by the EOB on the 8th. One of the qualifications was to be within 10 miles of an interstate. We asked for clarification given the site is less than a mile of HWY 61 which is only 36 miles from I80. This allowed us to meet the preliminary qualifications. We then moved on to the next round which was a comprehensive RFI due by noon on March 14th. Special thanks to Leallen Ehlers and Katie Bopes with EICC, Miranda Swafford and Mandy Tripp of Mississippi Valley Workforce, Christie Remley and Nik Schulte of MREC, Josh Boldt of City of Maquoketa and Amber Rodgers of IEDA for responding to quickly with necessary information to proceed forward. This is a multi-state RFI so the competition is tough. That said, we have affordable, land, utilities, workforce, organizations to train new employees, competitive incentives, and, of course, the culture and natural resources to draw people here and give them a reason to live and work in Jackson County. – Schedule to hear who is still under consideration by the end of May

**Sabula Catalyst Grant pre-app**

General Plan

* 2.5 story building -all units with expansive river views, and a garage space included
* Total of 6 units
  + 4 modern upscale living units (think condo or “higher” end apartments
    - 3 top floor units -2bedrooms with open lofts
    - 1 lower floor unit -2bedroom
  + 1 commercial space
  + 1 option space -commercial/residential/ common usage

Initial contact was in 2022. JCEA exchanged many emails between the developer and the City to obtain City approval for the project, city match and coordination with ECIA for the grant application.

**Approved**

**Stamp**

BETA was established in 2009 to promote Tourism and Economic Development in Bellevue. In 2019 BETA entered into a development agreement with the City to purchase the Stamp Farm. The background was that there had been an industrial prospect who needed 30 acres of land, but there wasn’t any readily available. A proactive effort was made then to find and purchase land for availability in the future. Around 65 acres was purchased through a mutual agreement between the City, BETA and Bellevue Utilities. The plan was for the City to grant BETA the funds so the land could be purchased. BETA owns the property and can more easily sell parcels without going through the City’s vacation or property proceedings. Initially there was hope that a USDA grant could offset the cost for the utility extensions to the extent that it would make development more feasible. Unfortunately, the 2020 Census revealed that Bellevue no longer qualified for the USDA grant. That news along with COVID and the massive increase in costs, made the extension of utilities cost prohibitive. Options are now being considered for the sale of this land.

**Property – Bellevue Tourism and Economic Association**

**Future land development**

Discussions are continuing and contacts are being made with landowners in and around Bellevue who may be willing to sell their land for future development in Bellevue. Bellevue is in need of land for future residential, commercial and light-industrial.

**in Bellevue**

**JCEA website**

Ben has been working on our website getting the information updated. It is very long overdue and we appreciate everyone’s patience. We still have a way to go to get it updated but there still is a lot of good information on there. Most important info is our contact information!

Here is a link to the incentives. <https://www.thejcea.org/resources/incentives-directory>

**Jackson County Mayors Association, Crime Stoppers**

The Jackson County Mayor’s Association is the governing board for the Jackson County Emergency Management. Lyn Medinger is the Director for Emergency Management. These group of mayors meet bi-monthly. Lyn gives them updates, reviews the budget and the group discussed area updates of interest with emergency management. This budget also provided for the 25% match for the EOC. Kelley attends these meetings as well as a way to stay in communication with the mayors as well as support the county in the area of emergency management. Being prepared for emergencies is directly related and can greatly effect the economic viability of an area. ECIA facilitates these meetings, writes the agenda and minutes and coordinates the location. JCEA is the treasurer for the JCMA and Crime Stoppers.

**and**

**Emergency**

**Management**

**Maquoketa**

Ben chairs the Maquoketa Greenspace Planning Committee and is the Vice-Chair of the Maquoketa Betterment and Hometown Pride Committee. The plans have been finalized other than some smaller details and fundraising is progressing very nicely.

**Greenspace**

**Development**

 A group of people walking around a park

Description automatically generated

A map of a park

Description automatically generated

**Downtown Incentive Programs**

Bellevue, Maquoketa and Preston all have downtown incentive programs that will pay up to a shared amount for improvements in the following areas: Acquisition, Signage, Consultant Assistance, Façade, Commercial Interior, Upper Story Renovation, Conversion of 1st floor from residential to commercial. Cities finance these programs through the use of TIF dollars. TIF means tax increment financing. TIF is used to pay or rebate funds to developers and property owners for improvements and new development resulting in an increase in valuation. The increase in valuation means an increase in tax revenue for the City, County, School District, Community College, County Hospital and other misc items. An increase in valuations is needed for a City to stay financially healthy and to be able to provide the necessary services and cultural amenities people need to feel good about where they live. I encourage all cities to consider putting together an urban renewal plan for your city and developing a downtown incentive program. A healthy downtown promotes a healthy city! EVERYONE WINS!!!

Maquoketa has an urban revitalization program that encourages making those necessary maintenance repairs and improvements to your property. It also encourages the construction of new homes and multi-family dwellings. This plan covers all land that is currently annexed in the City. The improvements must increase the overall value of the property by 10%. The benefits for your investment include a 100% property tax exemption for the first $75,000 of valuation of your property. As stated above, this includes the construction of new homes as well. All new homes get 100% abatement on the first $75,000 of valuation of your home for 5 years!! A residential property with three or more separate dwelling units is eligible to receive property tax abatement for 10 years with the first year abating 80% of your value decreasing over the following 9 years.

**Maquoketa Urban Revitalization Program**

JCEA receives a few calls and visits each month regarding start-up businesses or business expansions and relocations. It’s always a delicate balance in situations where a national franchise is looking to locate in an area where there is already another national franchise competitor in the area. This also pertains to businesses on a smaller scale where there is already a business with that specialty in our area. We do our best to show opportunities where they are available at all levels and encourage open communication. In general, all of the COVID funding where cash was available for new businesses is gone. There are low interest loans and support and coaching programs available that assist small business owners in getting started and don’t forget – Wednesdays are possible.

**Small business development**

The award of $350,000 to Jackson County Emergency Management to establish an EOC was a huge success for the County. An EOC is an Emergency Operation Center established to be a communication and command center in the event of an emergency. Currently the equipment is being ordered. The EOC will be located in the new Jackson County jail which is anticipated to be completed yet this year.

**Jackson County EOC**

**Jackson County Hazard Mitigation Plan**

ECIA has been hired to update the Jackson County 5-year Hazard Mitigation Plan. Each plan is required to be updated every 5 years. Dawn Danielsen with ECIA is in charge of this project. So far there have been 2 public meetings. Each entity is required to have representatives and attend if they want to be a part of the plan and be eligible for funding. The final public meeting was held and a draft of the plan is being developed for review

**Grants and funding opportunities**

Every month ECIA sends out a list of available grants and funding opportunities. If you are not familiar with ECIA, please click on this link and see all that ECIA has to offer. <https://www.ecia.org/> ECIA is a wonderful partner to us. We coordinate a lot of projects and grant opportunities with ECIA. <https://www.ecia.org/about_ecia/sign_up.php> is the link you can use to sign up for grant opportunities or their bi-monthly newsletter.

I (Kelley) have more than 26 years of city government experience as a city administrator and a city clerk. I am also a government finance geek. I am ready and willing to assist in budget questions issues, TIF, employment interviewing, hiring, and just general support. I have been actively assisting Bellevue, Preston and Sabula. As you work through budget planning for the future as well, we are here to help. ( even learn and understand HF 718 – ha!)

**City Staff assistance**

The JCEA is actively involved in many organizations and attend and/or monitor council meetings as well. We attend most Bellevue and Maquoketa Council meetings and monitor Preston and Sabula. Have been in contact with other cities but harder to coordinate. Always available to attend if requested. Members of Prosperity Eastern Iowa, Grant Wood loop, Mississippi Valley Finance Committee, Mississippi Valley Business Committee, Dubuque Workforce Update Breakfasts, Green Space Planning Committee, Maquoketa Betterment and Hometown Pride Committee, Maquoketa Leadership Committee, Bellevue Leadership Committee, Maquoketa Dept Head meeting, Regional Planning Affiliation Board, Jackson County TAG member, CEDI Board, EICC monthly meeting, Energy District Board, and the Grant Wood Scenic Byway Board.

**Meetings and Organizations**

**The future**

**Your current position in life doesn’t define how far you can go, it only determines where you start. If you don’t like this chapter in your life, turn the page and start a new one.**

**The future is yours to create! We can help!**

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED PARTNERSHIPS**

**We sincerely appreciate your time, passion, and energy!**

**MAY THE BEAUTY OF JACKSON COUNTY WELCOME YOU HOME.**

**Director Kelley Brown** [**kelleybrown@thejcea.org**](mailto:kelleybrown@thejcea.org) **515-802-1516**

**Asst Director Ben Davison** [**Bendavison@thejcea.org**](mailto:Bendavison@thejcea.org) **563-357-5631**