

*SPECIAL EDITION*

# IN THE CORRIDOR

January  
2012

Newsletter of the North Iowa Corridor Economic Development Corporation



MASON CITY  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

# ONE.

# Economic development groups announce merger

Officials with three North Iowa economic development groups have announced a merger of the North Iowa Corridor Economic Development Corporation, Mason City Economic Development Corporation and Clear Lake Economic Development Corporation, assimilating economic development efforts of Mason City, Clear Lake and Cerro Gordo County into the Corridor, a public/private entity.

Heralding the results of an organizational alliance initiated nearly three years ago, economic development leaders from the area characterized the merger transaction as a final step in a more than decade-long effort to unite the economic development efforts of Mason City and Clear Lake.

"We are simply a better, more competitive product together than apart," said Corridor

President Randy Cram, who oversaw the merger as a member of a task force named to facilitate the effort. "The incredibly competitive global landscape upon which we vie for economic development projects means that a coordinated regional approach is the best way forward to succeed for North Iowa."

Mason City EDC President Dennis Reidel, also a member of the task force, added, "The days of parochialism in economic development are gone. To win in the business of job creation today for this region, the North Iowa Corridor is the right group to lead a unified effort, which is why the Mason City EDC board unanimously endorsed this merger."

As a result of the merger, the North Iowa Corridor EDC emerges as the largest economic development organization in the

region, representing a market of more than 45,000 people featuring diverse interstate commerce, agricultural and retail economies. Corridor Executive Director Brent Willett said that a new multi-year strategic plan for the Corridor will be released in the coming months and is expected to call for a dedicated effort to review and fully overhaul current industry targets and strategies.

"We've been instilled with a tremendous amount of responsibility through this merger by our public and private friends and partners in Mason City, Clear Lake and Cerro Gordo County," Willett said, "and we owe them as a first piece of business a blueprint for the way we intend to move this region forward."

Clear Lake Economic Development Corporation

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## Road to Merger

<u>DATE</u>	<u>ORGANIZATION</u>	<u>EVENT</u>
2003 – September	MCEDC / CLEDC	North Central Iowa Growth Partnership (NCIGP) created for joint marketing efforts
2006 – March	MCEDC	Director Dan Culhane resigns
2006 – May	MCEDC	Director Curtis Brown hired
2006 – May	CLEDC	Director David Collins resigns
2007 – May	MCEDC	Director Curtis Brown resigns
2008 – February	NCIGP / MCEDC / CLEDC	MCEDC & CLEDC merge operations into NCIGP (Angie Determan interim director)
2008 – August	NCIGP	Director Gregg Gillman hired
2009 – January	NICEDC	NCIGP re-branded to (dba) North Iowa Corridor Economic Development Corporation
2011 – January	NICEDC	Director Gregg Gillman resigns
2011 – February	NICEDC	Director Brent Willett hired
2012 – January	NICEDC / MCEDC / CLEDC	MCEDC & CLEDC legally merge into NICEDC and dissolve / NICEDC becomes legal name

# Presidents reflect on merger significance



**Randy Cram, President,  
North Iowa Corridor EDC**

**F**or over a decade, it has been the vision of many community leaders to develop a regional economic development effort. This year their efforts come to fruition with the merger of three separate economic development entities into one distinct organization. This union, I believe, will increase our ability to sustain and create growth in North Iowa.

I would like to personally thank the past and present members of the board of directors for the Mason City Economic Development Corporation, the Clear Lake Economic Development Corporation and the North Iowa Corridor Economic Development Corporation; the past and present elected officials and staff of the City of Clear Lake, the City of Mason City and Cerro Gordo County;

and all of the area organizations and business leaders who supported this effort. A special thanks goes to Corridor Executive Director Brent Willett and his staff for the excellent job they did making sure all the details were worked out in a timely manner. Thank you all very much.

This merger is one of many steps that will help us achieve success. Together we will accomplish great things!

**Dave Ricken, President, Clear Lake EDC:**

**I**t has been a goal of the Clear Lake EDC for many years to be part of a county-wide EDC to be able to leverage regional resources.

As has been said many times, the communities of Mason City and Clear Lake are such complements to each other with Clear Lake's tourism, recreation, and the lake itself and Mason City's strong healthcare presence, NIACC, and regional retail hub. Combine that with the transportation advantages of Interstate 35 and the Avenue of the Saints and anyone can see what a strong partnership this creates.

The CLEDC Board of Directors believes we will only reap great rewards from here forward, and we extend our thanks to everyone who has gotten us to this point.



## From the Director...

*By Brent Willett, NICEDC Executive Director*

It's done. The formal convergence of economic development efforts by and between the Mason City, Clear Lake and Cerro Gordo County groups stamps final a more than ten-year process comprised of incremental steps toward unification. The unanimous ratification of articles of merger by the boards of directors of the Mason City EDC, Clear Lake EDC and Corridor EDC marked what we believe history will prove to be a tremendously significant occasion of progress for North Iowa economic development efforts.

The bold action of these three groups has provided to Cerro Gordo County a seat at the proverbial table of contenders for the jobs projects of today. Regionalism in economic development like that evinced by this merger is the wave of the present, no longer of the future. In order to compete successfully on a global stage for jobs, we must speak with an inclusive regional voice and message because today's project clients demand it; they are simply unconcerned with municipal boundaries and parochialism. Instead,



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**Dennis Reidel, President, Mason City EDC:**

**T**he Mason City EDC has known for years that a win for Clear Lake was ultimately a win for Mason City and that competing against Clear Lake instead of with Clear Lake made the area weaker rather than stronger. Naturally, change is difficult, but having worked on the Merger Task Force I was happy to find likeminded individuals from each community that embraced change and worked diligently on a fast track schedule to not only welcome change but to implement it.

Additionally, the members of the Mason City EDC Board of Directors showed their leadership skills in moving forward with the merger that will strengthen our region's economic development, and we look forward to the success of the North Iowa Corridor EDC.



## *North Iowa Corridor EDC Board of Directors*

### 2012 Officers

**Randy Cram, President**

Bergland + Cram Architects

**Larry Elwood, Vice-President**

Larry Elwood Construction

**Marti Rodamaker, Treasurer**

First Citizens National Bank

**Jay Urdahl, Secretary**

Cerro Gordo County

**Vickie Snyder, Past-President**

Dean Snyder Construction

### 2012 Directors

**Tim Esbeck, Manufacturers Bank & Trust**

**Mike Herman, Lehigh Cement Company**

**Mark Hewitt, Clear Lake Bank & Trust**

**Travis Hickey, City of Mason City**

**Tom Jolas, Schoneman Realtors**

**Gary Lindgren, Community National Bank**

**Tom Lovell, CLTel**

**Chuck Schafer, North Iowa Cooperative**

**Gary Schmit, Henkel Construction**

**John Severtson, Opportunity Village**

**David Vikturek, Mason City Foundation**

### 2012 Ex-Officio Members

**Mayor Eric Bookmeyer, City of Mason City**

**Mayor Nelson Crabb, City of Clear Lake**

**Deb Derr, NIACC**

**Tom Drzycimski, Cerro Gordo County**

**Scott Flory, City of Clear Lake**

**Brent Trout, City of Mason City**

### *Merger announced—continued from page 2*

President Dave Ricken said, "When we interface with new or existing businesses considering growth in our region, municipal or other geographic boundaries are of little importance to their decision-making process.

"The Clear Lake EDC fully endorsed and executed this merger because we are, as has been said many times before, better together than apart."

Members of the existing Corridor Board of Directors will remain in their immediate roles and will begin transitions to a new appointment schedule in 2013, Cram said, adding that existing Corridor staff will also remain in place. Structural funding of the new Corridor will continue in its current form, which includes support from

private investors as well as from the City of Mason City, City of Clear Lake and Cerro Gordo County.

A regional, public/private economic development model has been in development for many years, first finding firm structure in the 2003 formation of the North Central Iowa Growth Partnership (NCIGP), which was created to jointly market the Mason City and Clear Lake economies for projects. In 2008, the Mason City EDC and Clear Lake EDC folded their organizational efforts into the NCIGP, but retained separate boards of directors and governance structures. The North Iowa Corridor, successor to the NCIGP, now represents the successor entity to the two other EDCs.

### *From the Director— continued from page 3*

they demand solutions. We are now positioned to deliver better than ever before.

Our staff is humbled by the opportunity to serve a streamlined and regional organization and is excited to deliver on a promise of effective, efficient and outcome-based economic development services to all of our public and private partners and investors, who we thank most of all for their patience with the merger process and, more importantly, their clear embrace of the outcome. Without them, we wouldn't be here.

It's done and we're one. Progress beckons.

**Brent Willett**

Executive Director

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