



IN THE Corridor

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2019 DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS INVEST \$250 MILLION IN NORTH IOWA

THESE ARE EXCITING TIMES FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, according to Chad Schreck, President and CEO of North Iowa Corridor Economic Development Corporation.

NIC works mostly behind the scenes with area cities, counties, developers, and businesses. "People don't always get to see all the work we do in working with businesses on expansion and location decisions. For example, we made our first contact with Bushel Boy 4 and a half years ago, and are just now preparing to break ground on their \$40+ million project. There are several other examples all coming to life right now as well, it's really exciting to see all of the recruitment, paperwork, negotiation, and other details coming to completion right now."

The economic impact of upcoming business and housing developments is staggering. "When you look at projects recently completed, in progress, and slated to begin soon, we are looking at over \$250 million of development in the county, spread through numerous projects," said Schreck.

One of the biggest projects is the \$63 million expansion of the Kraft-Heinz Company plant in Mason City,

expected to add 32 jobs. "Things are snowballing. When the River City Renaissance project moved forward, when the McKesson Distribution Center opened in Clear Lake, all these have led to more projects," he said. "Kwik-Star came in to this area, and I think McKesson played a strong role in that, with its new jobs and increased truck traffic. Now Kwik-Star is building a second store in Clear Lake and two or three more in Mason City." He noted that Kwik-Star is the second largest assessed valuation in Clear Lake.

"There is a multiplier effect," Schreck explained. "For every dollar invested in primary job creation like McKesson, Bushel Boy, and Kraft, you can expect to see other development projects follow in things like retail, healthcare, and hospitality."

Once the River City Multi-Purpose Arena got underway, then the hotel and convention center project near Southbridge Mall fell into place. "From that, we had Talon Development come to the community because they wanted to be a part of the exciting things happening here." Talon has broken ground for construction of 113 apartments and 20 townhomes in downtown Mason City. Clear Lake also has announced

plans for a new hotel and convention center by Interstate 35 that is the result of significant infrastructure investments by the City and property owner.

"We've got some really exciting momentum right now," he said. "We're seeing one good thing leading to the next good thing, then leading to the next good thing. People and businesses want to be in an area of opportunity."

Schreck noted that these things don't just happen. "A couple of years ago, we put together the Vision North Iowa plan. We worked through the process over the course of a year, and that helped set the priorities, and bring people together around common goals. That got local leaders engaged, and now we are seeing the results. We had to work through a lot of things together as a community and organizations. This is the fun part now, and we look forward to continuing to build on this foundation."

The biggest outcome will be opportunity. "People get a chance to advance their careers," he said. "Jobs are the lifeblood of our communities. If people can't find jobs, they can't maintain their quality of life and communities."

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