



IN THE Corridor

SEPTEMBER 2021

UPDATES IN THE VISION FOR NORTH IOWA

VISION NORTH IOWA IS A PARTNERSHIP between the North Iowa Corridor Economic Development Corporation, the Mason City Chamber of Commerce, and Clear Lake Chamber of Commerce, plus a host of local partner organizations and stakeholders. In 2018, the group unveiled the Vision North Iowa Regional Prosperity Strategy. Today in 2021, the Vision North Iowa partners continue forward with the plan's purpose statement: Working together to improve the lives of all North Iowans.

"That is the key ambition behind the whole thing," said Chad Schreck, North Iowa Corridor President and CEO. "Everything we've been talking about is all about making life better for the people who live here. It gets to the heart of what we're trying to do."

The Regional Prosperity Strategy is a five-year plan based on extensive research conducted on the data, opinions, and analysis about the current status of North Iowa's economy and quality of life, as well as residents' dreams for the future of the region. Based on these findings, the finished plan identifies four main goals, with detailed strategies to accomplish them:

Building a Regional Community - Establish a regional mindset that unifies North Iowans around a common vision.

People, Place, and Prosperity - Create an environment that retains, equips, and attracts a strong, diverse talent pipeline and increases prosperity for all North Iowans.

Innovation and Entrepreneurship - Advance the regional economy by retaining, expanding, and attracting high-growth companies. Leverage existing assets to strengthen the culture of entrepreneurship and expand the innovation ecosystem.

Business Development and Marketing - Ensure smart, sustainable, and shared economic growth by strategically promoting the region as a destination for business investment, relocation, and expansion.

"It's really all been about engagement and inclusion," Schreck said. "We had public participation, input workshops, and a survey process in order to put the Vision North Iowa strategy together. A key plan for moving forward is to continue this component of building community."

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, North Iowa saw visible economic gains - 2.2% increase in job growth (2017-18), a 1.3% increase in employment year over a year, a 20% increase in GDP to \$2.47 billion (between 2014-18), enrollment increases in the Clear Lake and Mason City High Schools, 83 new business starts and 357 new jobs created thanks to the NIACC Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Center, and over \$319 million dollars in capital investment being plugged into projects, like the River City Renaissance and its spin-off projects.

When the pandemic hit North Iowa, the partnerships and collaboration between organizations provided an existing framework to share resources and strategies to lessen the pandemic's economic impact. Now as we move through the economic impact, we see renewed economic and social momentum with numerous positive projects completed or underway: the completion of The River Apartments in Mason City; construction start-up for the Mason City Natatorium/Gym, Clear Lake School Wellness Center, Fairfield by Marriott hotel in Clear Lake, and NIACC solar array project; and expansions at Kraft Heinz, Bushel Boy Farms, and Golden Grain Energy, among others.

The goal of the Vision North Iowa partners moving forward is to build on this momentum, making adjustments to our strategies to meet the needs of our community and businesses in light of the changes brought on by the pandemic. New emphasis on the Digital Economy and building the talent pipeline to help our businesses meet their workforce needs both now and into the future as our work and personal lives rely more heavily on technology is essential to our region staying competitive in the regional, national, and global economy. We are committed to living up to our mission to improve the lives of all North Iowans.

INVESTOR FORUM

Friday, September 3rd, 8am-9am

This informal event will be held **via Zoom** and provides Investors and Partners of the North Iowa Corridor the opportunity to receive a brief update from Corridor President & CEO Chad Schreck and staff on Corridor activities throughout the region, recent projects and prospects for growth.

Following the brief presentation, Investors and Partners are invited to ask questions, make suggestions, and engage in dialogue about how to advance community and economic development in the North Iowa Corridor.

Register at <https://bit.ly/edc-forum> or contact admin@northiowacorridor.com for more information.

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