

## **Jones County Achieves Skilled Iowa Community Designation** *Program seen as benefit to workers, businesses, economic development efforts*

**DES MOINES** – Iowa Workforce Development Director, Teresa Wahlert, announced today that Jones County has achieved the Skilled Iowa Community status by meeting all of the metrics for both business commitment and workforce certification.

“Through Skilled Iowa, we are preparing workers of all ages and skill levels to fill open positions,” said Iowa Workforce Development Director Teresa Wahlert. “Participation at the community level from local workers, businesses, elected officials and educational institutions will benefit the state as a whole.”

The announcement took place at the Renaissance Center/Veterans Hall in Monticello on Wednesday.

Achieving the Skilled Iowa Community designation takes dedication and commitment from community leaders. Jones County Economic Development (JCED) Commission and Kirkwood Community College’s dedication to the program has driven the county’s success.

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The Skilled Iowa Initiative helps develop the workforce by encouraging workers to earn the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC). Through an assessment, the NCRC measures basic workplace skills. Skilled Iowa encourages employers throughout the state to recognize the certificate and recommend it to job applicants. The benefit for employers is that it can help them evaluate job candidates and find the right worker for their needs, as well as reduce turnover and training costs.

Skilled Iowa aims to have 10 percent of businesses in Skilled Iowa Communities support the program by hiring certified workers and recommending the NCRC to job applicants, accounting for 20 percent of total employment in the area. In those communities, Skilled Iowa sets a goal of 5 percent of the current workforce becoming certified through the NCRC and 20 percent of the “transitioning” workforce -- those receiving unemployment insurance or other specified IWD services – becoming certified.