

JCED BULLETIN

Jones County Economic Development Newsletter

January/February/March 2021

A Strange Year in Review; Hope on the Horizon

2020 was a landmark year for a lot of ways. Not only did we have the first global pandemic in 100 years, we also fell victim to the first derecho in that time as well. Adding to those horrors, we saw global economic meltdown, political and social unrest, and just a growing uncertainty on where things were going to go. As the dust settles from a tumultuous 2020, it's important to note going forward that all of the trials and tribulations we faced in 2020 will be with us in the new year as well. From mask wearing to social distancing to working from home and the rise of Zoom calls to the continued closures and restrictions on businesses, we are being confronted with change at an exponential rate compared to where we were the year before.



Jones County Economic Development (JCED) has weathered the changes as best as can be expected and was proud to partner with so many businesses and agencies over the past year. JCED made sure getting out quick and timely information regarding the pandemic numbers was a priority. In addition, we were on hand to assist with the varied economic incentives from both the state and federal governments for our local businesses and organizations. JCED also made sure to cross off a lot of goals on our to-do list as well. We managed to accomplish a great deal over the last year and are gearing up for another busy year in 2021 as well.

We managed a lot of successful ventures this past year, including developing a "Support Local Businesses Toolkit" with our partners at Jones County Tourism, Cascade Chamber of Commerce, and the Anamosa Chamber of Commerce; successfully received over \$255,000 in grant funding for the Wapsipinicon Trail Part 2; coordinated with the Creative Adventure Lab and the City of Monticello to assist in the 2021 opening of the Monticello Creative Adventure Lab satellite location; reinvigorated the Jones County Young Professionals organization (check page 5 for more information); applied for and received a \$500,000 Community Development Block Grant for the City of Anamosa to repair 10 historic downtown facades; and much more!



So while it can feel like 2020 was a lost year, make sure that you continue to keep your hope alive. As hope rolls out in the form of vaccines, economic stimulus, and other measures, JCED will continue to be a partner and supporter of our local businesses and industries.

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Generic wayfinding signage example.

JCED Receives Two Rural Recovery Grants

In 2020, the East Central Iowa Council of Governments (ECICOG) received funds from the Economic Development Administration via Cares Act legislation to assist communities with economic recovery due to the COVID-19 pandemic. ECICOG solicited project proposals associated with building resilience or aiding in recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Proposals had to come from a community, county or non-profit economic development organization located within the ECICOG region. Jones County Economic Development applied for and received two grants, both for \$5,000.

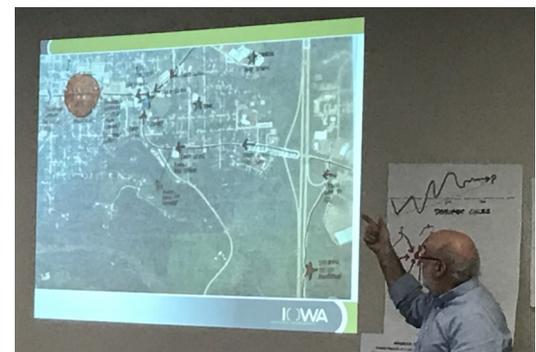
With the consistent rhetoric around the need for more quality and affordable childcare, the first project will be a countywide daycare feasibility study. Working with local and state partners, school districts, current in-home and center providers, and more; the goal is to find out the true numbers of need for childcare in Jones County and ways to help alleviate issues.

Schools and businesses want to get students out into the communities to highlight the varied career opportunities right here at home in the hopes that students will stay or return when they are looking to start working. In past years, these Community Career Tours were done in person. However, the pandemic has closed that avenue off for the time being. As a result, the second project will be to work with JCED members to do some virtual tours so we can still showcase the great opportunities in Jones County!

City of Anamosa Points the Way with Improved Wayfinding Signage!

Lack of wayfinding signage to get to the downtown was one of the findings of the recent Downtown Assessment done in Anamosa. While the community itself was easy to find thanks to signage along Highway 151, there was no direct or easy way to find the downtown once you turned off the main roadways.

During the fall of 2020, the City of Anamosa put out an RFP and eventually selected ASI Signage out of Grinnell, Iowa, to do the design work. ASI Signage will be doing a current signage audit of the community, including outdated signs, as well as working with local focus groups. ASI will be presenting findings to the Council in early 2021 with the hope of getting signs and fabricated and installed prior to RAGBRAI this summer.



Dennis Reynolds explains wayfinding signage during the recent Anamosa Downtown Assessment.

Why Should You Invest in Economic Development?

Economic Development has a long history of usage in the United States, but has changed drastically over the years. When communities first started talking about this “new” concept in the aftermath of World War II, it was believed that community development was a linear function. It started with communities bringing in businesses, followed by jobs, followed by housing, followed by families in the area, and that this process would continue indefinitely. Not only would the process outlined above continue, but the families that had moved to the area would stay in the area and become long-term and productive residents, contributing to a long cycle of everlasting growth.

While this procedure was repeated many times across the country for a few decades, it has proven to be not only unsustainable, but flawed in its theory. With the changing of the times and new generations facing new challenges, Economic Development professionals have had to undergo a serious reordering of the tenets of growth that had been passed down to them. Unfortunately, a lot of economic development professionals and organizations are still stuck in the past, the “traditional way” of doing things, and have stifled growth in many sectors of their communities as the times have changed around them.

As the wealth boom of World War II wore off, many communities saw a number of different factors impacting their ability to follow the traditional approach. From growth-driven housing suburbs to the oil and farm crises of the 1970s and 1980s, economic development was being stifled by both internal and external factors. Internal factors were things like the bottoming out of the farm market with the agriculture crisis as well as an exodus from community centers for businesses and residents alike. This depleted the tax base of cities that chose not to keep up a high quality of life and watched public amenities as well as vibrant downtowns start to disappear. External factors were things like moving jobs overseas due to cheaper wage rates in developing countries. This spiked unemployment and made it hard to earn living wages. This put younger generations, such as Generation X and the Millennial Generation, into college at higher rates, which had inflated the price and caused a severe debt crisis that would happen around the turn of the century.

Too often, communities see economic development as something that is unique to them or their surrounding region. They feel that their problems and challenges are unique and that they have this silver bullet that other communities do not have. In Iowa alone, many communities talk about longevity and dedication of workforce, great schools, low taxes, etc. But this is not unique to Iowa or those communities, so it's important to realize that the paradigm has shifted, that businesses and residents alike are not looking for the same old thing, the same cookie cutter approach that worked in the 1950s. They want something that can be productive, unique, enjoyable, and that allows them to be able to make a living.

The year 2020 has changed that conversation even more than it was already changing over the last couple of decades. People are still more geared towards quality of life amenities, good paying jobs, good schools, safe neighborhoods, flexibility, and more. However, jobs are changing in the face of the global pandemic. People

want to be able to work from home, they are demanding better connectivity, they require safe and affordable childcare, and so much more. Younger generations are more aware of social issues and concerns and how that impacts their quality of life as well as their economic status. Work-life balance is not just a buzzword for tech companies, but for a quality of life that many in the economic development sector have a hard time understanding because it flies in the face of the



traditional roles and beliefs that are still paramount from roughly 70 years ago. Economic Development has changed in its landscape and communities must learn to change with it or they will continue to be left behind.

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Hope on the Horizon (Continued from Page 1)

Our Board of Directors has laid out an action plan for 2021 as well as a strategic plan that will go through 2026. Some of the goals are continuations of what we have started in recent years, such as our legislative forums with our elected officials at the state level and our business roundtables. Other goals will focus more on accomplishing more wide-ranging objectives, such as working on the childcare issues faced. We know that some things we have planned might have to be pushed back due to the ongoing issues in our world, but that will not keep us from working hard to be a partner that you know and trust to help you meet your goals as well. Make sure that you keep updated with all that we are doing and partner with us in 2021 to make Jones County a great place to be!

Invest in Economic Development (Continued from Page 3)

Jones County Economic Development is a public/private partnership dedicated to strengthening the economic base in the region by assisting existing businesses, attracting new investment and jobs, and fostering a business climate favorable for economic growth. The organization was created to promote community-oriented purposes by actively working with Jones County residents and businesses.

Over the years in existence, Jones County Economic Development has been very successful in working with local businesses and industries, helping with recruitment, expansion, and workforce issues. The organization has started to work more in the quality of life amenities too, being involved with several regional organizations and writing grants to help fund initiatives like community trails, art events, downtown rehabilitations, and more. While there are still pockets of ideas rooted in the traditional economic development ideals, there is a growing recognition that change is needed and new ideas explored in order to continue to grow and develop communities.

Jones County Economic Development is committed to a comprehensive approach to community and economic development in Jones County. This commitment is shown through a dedication to business expansion and recruitment, housing development, agricultural relations, workforce development, small business assistance, quality of life initiatives, and professional development of the Board and staff for the organization.

Jones County Economic Development is hard at work on making Jones County a livable and prosperous place to live and work. But to do that, we need partners in our communities, both from the business and government sectors. A membership investment in Jones County Economic Development shows commitment to the future of Jones County as well as to the ideals that make a community develop and prosper.

2021 Legislative Forums

January 29th at 12pm in Monticello Council Chambers

February 26th at 12pm at the Anamosa Library

March 26th at 12pm TBD (If needed)

In-person attendance will be limited and require masks. RSVPs are required by Friday before to JCED Director via email. Zoom link will be posted and emailed out. There will be no lunch option this year due to pandemic.

Contact Us

Jones County Economic Development has two convenient offices:

107 S. Ford Street in
Anamosa inside City Hall

200 E. 1st Street in
Monticello inside City Hall

Our Executive Director, Derek Lumsden, can also be reached by Phone at 319-480-7446 or by [email](#).



JONES COUNTY YOUNG PROFESSIONALS

WHAT WE DO

Jones County Young Professionals (JCYP) is an organization focused on developing networks and friendships among community members. JCYP concentrates on fulfilling this through three main pillars:

- **Socials/Networking**
- **Education/Professional Development**
- **Volunteerism**

BECOME A SPONSOR

Partner Level (\$1,000)

- Get priority pick to be premier sponsor of one event, such as Movie in the Park.
- Reserved seating at professional development events.
- Unlimited JCYP memberships for eligible employees.
- 1 time annual use of movie equipment.
- All benefits below:

Platinum Level (\$750)

- 1 professional development speaker sponsor.
- 4 JCYP memberships for eligible employees.
- Business spotlight in JCYP section of the Jones County Economic Development newsletter.
- All benefits below:

Gold Level (\$500)

- 1 community event sponsor.
- 3 JCYP memberships for eligible employees.
- Business spotlight on JCYP Facebook page.
- All benefits below:

Silver Level (\$250)

- Business logo included in JCYP section of the Jones County Economic Development newsletter.
- 2 JCYP memberships for eligible employees.
- All benefits below:

Bronze Level (\$100)

- Business name listed on Facebook page and JCYP displays.
- 1 JCYP membership for eligible employee.

OUR STORY

JCYP has gone through a recent transition and is looking to build a strong and resilient group of members that is dedicated to bringing enthusiasm and thoughtful ideas to Jones County.

Our goal is to be a comprehensive organization focusing on both social and personal growth for every member, and for the communities in which we live and work.

We meet the second Thursday of every month. We will be varying the towns and meeting times to make JCYP accessible to ALL young professionals in Jones County!

Join today and get a say in how young professionals can help make Jones County a better place for living, working, and growth. You can either fill out the membership side of this brochure, or get your employer to become a sponsor of the organization. Memberships are included with each sponsorship level.

BECOME A MEMBER

Membership is \$25 per year and is good for one calendar year (Jan-Dec). Membership includes admission to all events and activities as well as updates through newsletters, social media, etc.

Questions about becoming a member?

Contact Trevor Hulett.
(319) 329-7291
thulett@fmbank.biz

GET IN TOUCH!

Follow us on Facebook!
Jones County Young Professionals

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