

IOWA LAKES CORRIDOR THE CORRIDOR OF OPPORTUNITY

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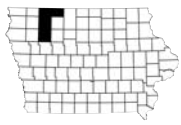
LIVE ... WORK ... PLAY ... IN THE IOWA LAKES CORRIDOR

THERE ARE ONLY THREE BLUE WATER LAKES IN THE WORLD—LAKE LOUISE IN CANADA, LAKE GENEVA IN SWITZERLAND, AND WEST LAKE OKOBOJI IN NORTHWEST IOWA. THIS GLACIAL GEM IS NESTLED AMONG IOWA'S LARGEST LAKES—26 IN ALL—OFFERING RESIDENTS AND VISITORS PLENTIFUL RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES DURING EVERY SEASON OF THE YEAR. BUT THERE IS SO MUCH MORE TO THE AREA OF BUENA VISTA, CLAY, DICKINSON, AND EMMET COUNTIES, WITH THEIR VIBRANT COMMUNITIES, GREAT SCHOOLS, AND THRIVING BUSINESSES.



IOWA LAKES CORRIDOR
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

BUENA VISTA, CLAY, DICKINSON & EMMET COUNTIES



Community Focus

A **AN ECLECTIC MIX OF PROFITABLE BUSINESSES, THEATERS, ART GALLERIES, TOP-NOTCH EDUCATION SYSTEMS, AND HEALTH CARE FACILITIES THAT RIVAL MAJOR METROPOLITAN AREAS CAN BE FOUND IN THE IOWA LAKES CORRIDOR.**

Communities are built around people and commerce. The region is blessed with both, including a willing and well-educated workforce of more than 70,000 people and over 2,300 businesses—ranging from sole proprietorships to some of the nation’s largest companies.

“We are blessed to have a diverse mix of business and industry providing quality jobs and significant contributions to the area’s communities and economy,” says Kathy Evert, president and CEO of The Iowa Lakes Corridor Development Corporation, the nonprofit group responsible for fostering economic development in the area. “Our region includes household names like Polaris, Eaton, Tyson, Sara Lee, Pure Fishing, Valero, and more.”

Manufacturing, agriculture, healthcare, wholesale/retail sales, and education are the largest employment sectors. A convenient location in the middle of the country and ready access to interstate and intrastate highways, rail lines, freight services, high speed internet, and regional airports facilitates the movement of goods and services.

Welcoming communities, plenty of infrastructure, and a business-friendly atmosphere make the Iowa Lakes Corridor a great place to do business.

FOSTERING ENTREPRENEURSHIP

There is a strong emphasis on entrepreneurship in the region, with a number of initiatives underway. These include Okoboji Entrepreneurial Institute, the Kauffman Foundation Fast Trac program offering practical hands-on training, industry-specific entrepreneurial training, a venture capital fund, market research assistance, and networking and mentoring programs.

This support, coupled with a variety of state and local financial incentives and an excellent quality of life, is fast making the Lakes Corridor one of the most attractive regions in the Midwest for entrepreneurs and new ventures, resulting in business relocations and homegrown initiatives. Four recent examples illustrate the diversity.

THE IOWA LAKES CORRIDOR PROVIDES A ROBUST BUSINESS INFRASTRUCTURE.

ALTA BUSINESS GROWING WITH WIND ENERGY

He started his first business at age 19, and had three different businesses by age 21. Rob Hach, company founder of Anemometry Specialists now considers himself a “serial entrepreneur.”

“I enjoy the challenge of starting companies,” says Hach, with 14 years experience in wind farming. “I always wanted to run my own business in the wind industry.”



Photo courtesy of Duracell.



The nationally recognized wind energy program at Iowa Lakes Community College is a resource for businesses like Anemometry Specialists.

Hach started Anemometry Specialists with his wife Tara six years ago. The husband-wife team had one other employee. Today, the company has 22 employees and is continuing to grow, with plans to add another 30 employees in the next two years.

“I really like starting companies and seeing them grow,” said Hach. “I enjoy bringing people together to run the business.”

Recently, the Hachs were named 2010 Iowa Small Business Persons of the Year. The couple receives a lot of satisfaction from owning their own business and providing a better lifestyle for their employees. “The amount of positive impact that our business and employees can have in a small town is greater than if our business was elsewhere,” says Hach.

Anemometry Specialists, based in Alta, Iowa, specializes in anemometry tower installation. Anemometry is the measurement of wind speed and direction. “We travel all over the world to test the wind,” says Hach. “The analysis that we do is to determine whether a wind farm is feasible.”

The company has recently installed 30-, 50- and 60-meter towers in very rough and hostile terrain, from mountain ranges in Southern California and New Hampshire to the Texas coastline, as well as 80-meter

towers throughout the rest of the United States.

“Anemometry Specialists is another entrepreneurial success story in the Iowa Lakes Corridor region,” says Evert. “The wind energy industry is growing over 30 percent per year in the United States and we’re proud to have this company, serving this industry, right in our back yard,” says Evert.

IOWA MAN MOVES BUSINESS FROM VERMONT

In 2007, in an effort to further expand his eight-year-old business, Dick Reed moved his growing company, Chebe Bread Products, back home to Iowa, to Spirit Lake.

“Vermont was beautiful, but difficult for distribution. Spirit Lake seemed like the perfect spot to relocate,” says Reed. “The Iowa Lakes area has the qualities of rural Iowa with the added benefit of a more vibrant tourist economy. It’s a different way of life and it’s been great to be back.”

Chebe products (pronounced chee-bee) are variations on Brazilian cheese bread, a staple in Brazilian culture made primarily of manioc flour, a derivative of the yucca root. The company markets two lines, one of oven-ready frozen dough such as pizza crust and rolls, and another of dry mixes. They are available in Hy-Vee food stores, other grocery and specialty stores around the country, and online.

Reed says there is growing international interest in his stock of dry bread mixes and frozen products. Now working on developing new gluten-free products, he expects to double his revenues and staff in the next three to four years.

A healthy by-product of Chebe’s products is that they are naturally gluten-free, a requirement for the growing numbers of people suffering from wheat allergies and celiac disease, a strong allergic reaction to any kind of gluten. The gluten-free market is growing rapidly and makes up 99 percent of Chebe’s market.

The company, founded out of Reed’s living room in 1999, originally relied on a New York-based company for its manufacturing. Chebe has since developed its own manufacturing facilities in Spirit Lake. Reed hopes Chebe will bring another dimension to the town’s service, tourist, and agriculture-based economy.

“Dick’s move from the East Coast back to Spirit Lake illustrates that our area has a lot to offer to businesses,” says Evert. “The Iowa Lakes region has a stable and predictable business climate and welcomes new business, industry, and entrepreneurs. We are thrilled to have Dick back.” For more information, go to www.chebe.com.



Incentives for Entrepreneurs & Existing Businesses

- Entrepreneurial training programs and support
- Iowa's New Jobs Training Program offers low-cost or free training for new employees of new and expanding companies
- Revolving loan funds & low-interest and forgivable loans available through local and regional resources
- Property tax abatement & tax-increment financing
- Industrial Park land with over 800 acres developed, 2 buildings (30,000 and 40,000 sq ft) available

LOCAL FOOD ENTREPRENEURS MAKE THEIR DREAM A REALITY

What do TAMS Glazed Bites and the year 1936 have in common? That is the year a unique sweet pickle was born into the Heuck Family from a small farm kitchen in Missouri. Mike and Tammi Heuck and their family have been enjoying this pickle for more than four generations.

After family and friends began requesting the pickles on a regular basis, Mike and Tammi decided to start the process of making them available commercially. The Iowa Lakes Corridor Development Corporation has contracted with the University of Nebraska to bring a national program to the area to assist and educate food business entrepreneurs.

Mike and Tammi attended the first Food Entrepreneur Seminar in 2007. Since then they have

been working to make their product a reality. The seminar gave the Heucks a clear idea about what they needed to do to move forward with their unique product.

“The whole experience we have had with both the university and the Iowa Lakes Corridor could not have gone any better,” says Tammi. “They’ve made our journey one that has gone very smoothly and has been enjoyable too. With their professional insight and assistance we credit them for where we are today.”

TAMS Glazed Bites are available at several Hy-Vee, Fareway, and other grocery stores in Iowa and are also available online.

“TAMS is delighted to now make it possible to share this new pick in pickles,” says Tammi. “Glazed Bites are not only sweet, satisfying and unique, but they make for a great conversation piece around the table. We hope everyone enjoys Glazed Bites as much as we have for more than four generations.”

Seeing the success of a local, homegrown business is rewarding to Evert. “This is a great opportunity to support a local food entrepreneur. Buying local products can be beneficial to our local entrepreneurs as well as the local economy,” she says. “According to Sustainable Table’s “Guide to Buying Local,” in the U.S. the average meal travels 1500 miles before it reaches your plate.

THERE IS EXTENSIVE SUPPORT FOR ENTREPRENEURS IN THE LAKES CORRIDOR.

This can affect freshness, cost of transportation and packaging, and the amount of nutrients in food. Local food systems can produce up to seventeen times less carbon dioxide; buying locally is one way to start to help improve our environment.” For information go to www.tamsglazedbites.com.



With support from the Iowa Lakes Corridor Development Corporation, local food entrepreneurs Mike and Tammi Heucks were able to bring TAMS Glazed Bites, based on an old family recipe, to market.

JUST IN TIME FOR SPRING

Pam Domek loves having hanging plant baskets on her Estherville, Iowa, porch. But the more landscaping she did in her yard, the less room she had to put her ladder up to water the plants. After a few tumbles off the ladder, Domek's husband said no more to the hanging plants.

Five years went by, and Domek kept thinking about how much she wanted her baskets back. She approached her friend and coworker Bob Carter about becoming partners to create a retractable plant hanger. The product would hold a hanging plant basket and could be pulled down for watering. Carter jumped on board, and after 1½ years, the design and patent were finished for the Spring Daisy.

The Spring Daisy weighs 3 pounds and holds a basket weighing up to 12 pounds. It has been wind tested up to 85 miles per hour. "We made sure the design was attractive and would add curb appeal," says Domek.

The product is made of green high-impact plastic and has two removable copper bands. It can be painted without primer to match any décor. A pull clip attaches to the bottom of the flowerpot so it can easily be pulled down. The extension is three-and-a-half feet long and locks into place for trouble-free watering. No more ladders.

Domek and Carter are very grateful to those who have helped them launch their company, Let's Grow Something.

"The Iowa Lakes Corridor Development Corporation has been very helpful," says Domek. The Corridor was fundamental in helping Domek and Carter get their business plan ready for financing. Emagine Marketing revamped the company's Web site to make it more user-friendly. Del's Garden Center in Spencer lent them space in its greenhouse for photo shoots, and Bank Midwest has supported them financially.

"We congratulate Pam and Bob on their first business enterprise and product, and admire their passion and entrepreneurial spirit," says Evert. "We appreciate the local support they received from lenders, business and community leaders, and service providers."

The Spring Daisy can be purchased from the company's Web site at www.letsgrowsomething.com.

IOWA LAKES CORRIDOR LIVING

With its abundance of beauty and recreational opportunities, charming communities, friendly people,

Iowa Great Lakes Corridor Development Corporation Buena Vista, Clay, Dickinson, and Emmet Counties

- Includes 1,920 square miles
- Cost of living is 15%–30% below U.S. average
- Home values range from under \$40,000 to \$250,000
- Located on or near U.S. Highways 71 & 18 and State Highway 9, and within 1 to 1½ hours of I-29 & I-90
- Easy access to rail and freight lines
- Regional airport handles high performance jets
- Commercial air cargo facilities within 90 miles or less
- Prime Midwest location in the heart of an 8-state market of 926,182 businesses and 35.3 million people with over \$901.7 billion in personal income

and excellent schools and medical facilities, the Iowa Lakes Corridor is a great place to live and work.

It's the perfect playground, with activities for the young, the not-so-young, and everyone in between. There are 26 lakes in the four-county region. The largest lakes in Iowa are located here, including one of only three blue water lakes in the world: West Lake Okoboji. A blue water lake is a lake in which the water supply comes from an underground spring or other source of fresh water, rather than the rainwater or runoff from surrounding land.

Whether you swim, fish, boat, or jet ski on the lakes, canoe down the West Fork Des Moines River, or lie on the beach reading, you'll find something to do on the water.

Off the water, you can hunt, hike, run, or bike 200-miles-plus of trails, watch the abundant and varied bird life, or play golf and tennis. With plenty of public lands—there are 11 state parks in the area, including Gull Point, Pikes Point, Fort Defiance, and Okamanpedan—access is never a problem.

If that isn't enough to draw businesses and visitors to the region, there's the historic Arnolds Park Amusement Park. Built in 1889, it is believed to be the oldest continually operating amusement park west of the Mississippi. Its wooden roller coaster, The Legend, is the 13th oldest woodie in the U.S. Adults and kids alike enjoy the Ferris wheel, bumper cars, tipsy house, log ride, and go-karts in this classic park.



Community Focus

Photos courtesy of David Thoreson, Blue Water Studio, Arnolds Park, Iowa and Okoboji Tourism.



Photos courtesy of Don Wong Photography and Foto Pros Studio.



Each summer the Lakes host a range of competitive sporting events, including the Okoboji Triathlon, Marathon, and Half Marathon, with local, regional and national participants (upper left, center & right). The recently completed Sami Bedell Center in Spirit Lake (lower left & center) features a 1,000-seat state-of-the-art auditorium. Buena Vista University's (lower right) 60-acre campus is located in Storm Lake.

The Little Swan Lake Winery in Superior provides a different type of experience. Opened in 2003, 18 wines are produced on-site. The tasting room is in a remodeled 1920s barn, and a herd of buffalo roams nearby.

Community spirit is high and everyone gets involved in local festivals such as the Okoboji Winter Games, Meteorite Night, Sweet Corn Days in Estherville, and Storm Lake Winter Days. Celebrate the abundance of events yearlong with friends, family, and visitors. Stop by the farmers markets, flea markets, and nature centers, or sit on the bleachers as you cheer on kids involved in youth sports.

In the fall, there is the World's Greatest County Fair, the Clay County Fair in Spencer. With a grandstand that has featured acts such as Lynyrd Skynyrd, Trace Adkins, Jars of Clay, Martina McBride, Clay Aiken, Heart, and Bill Engvall, and a racetrack with sprint car racing, demolition derbies, and tractor pulls, there's something for everyone. The agriculture programs include competitive livestock shows, and the stands are always full for the rodeo.

AN ABUNDANCE OF RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES MAKES THE AREA A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE AND WORK.

Where there are visitors, there are accommodations. The area offers plenty of cottages and resorts, including the new King's Pointe Waterpark Resort in Storm Lake.

The residents of this unique four-county region have access to a variety of affordable housing options, from lakefront property, condominiums, and rural homes away from the city lights to living their dreams in a top-notch golf community.

ARTS AND EDUCATION

When it comes to the performing and visual arts, the Lakes Corridor offers a rich array of experiences. The Sami Bedell Center for the Performing Arts in Spirit Lake, completed in 2008, features a state-of-the-art 1,000-seat auditorium and boasts number 17 of 30 red Yamaha pianos signed by Elton John.

Stevens College in Columbia, Missouri, has been providing the talent for the always-popular Okoboji Summer Theatre for over 50 years.

Spencer's community theater is so admired that it is expanding the facility. The Curiel Reynolds School of Visual Arts, a private art school, is also found in Spencer.

The area is packed with art galleries with an eclectic mix of styles, including Pearson Lakes Art Center, Witter Gallery, Arts on Grand, Art on 16th, and A Piece of Work.

Music is another important aspect of Iowa Great Lakes culture. There are concerts inside and out year round, in genres from rock 'n roll to classical. The Roof Garden and Preservation Plaza in Arnolds Park host concerts all summer long. Each Labor day, the Iowa Rock'n Roll Museum and Hall of Fame honors rock 'n roll greats by inducting them into the Hall of Fame.

With such a rich cultural life, it is no surprise to find that the region has a commitment to educational excellence, with top-notch libraries and public and private schools. The area boasts some of the highest high school graduation rates in Iowa and the nation, with a high percentage of students completing ACT

tests and posting scores above the national average. There are a variety of options for students seeking college degrees or advanced training.

Founded over 100 years ago in Storm Lake, Buena Vista University (BVU) is a fully accredited institution offering bachelors degrees in a wide range of subjects and masters degrees in education and school guidance and counseling. The 60-acre campus is nestled along the shores of the lake. The school has 15 locations across Iowa. BVU was among the first in the nation to become a wireless campus.

THE REGION HAS A STRONG EDUCATION INFRASTRUCTURE WITH EXCELLENT PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SCHOOLS.

Iowa Lakes Community College has five campuses in the region, enabling residents and area businesses to conveniently access post-secondary education and training. Their nationally recognized wind energy program was recently featured in a Duracell commercial.

Iowa Lakeside Laboratory in Okoboji is a unique field station, owned by the state of Iowa and operated through the Board of Regents "for the study of nature in nature." The 147-acre learning center, located on the banks of West Okoboji Lake, provides summer science classes and research opportunities to college students in "outdoor classrooms," and lifelong learning opportunities to area residents.



Photo courtesy of Foto Pros Studio.

Letting the wind fill their sails and as they enjoy the beauty of the day, sailors in the annual regatta held by the Okoboji Yacht Club, paint a picturesque scene on the blue waters of Lake Okoboji.

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

With two YMCAs and a Regional Wellness Center, made available through a unique partnership with the National Guard in Estherville, along with a multitude of opportunities for outdoor recreation, residents find it easy to embrace a healthy lifestyle.

They also have access to first-rate health care, including four state-of-the-art hospitals and a cancer center with the latest diagnostic equipment, staffed with highly qualified health professionals, doctors and surgeons.

EMBRACING THE FUTURE

Kathy Evert puts it all into perspective. “Communities in the Iowa Lakes Corridor are continuing to plan for their futures and making significant new investments to continuously improve the quality of life in the region.”

“Investments in parks and recreation facilities, fire and rescue facilities, main streets, residential neighborhoods, arts and cultural events, industrial and business parks and economic development programs, education facilities, hospitals, and protecting the beautiful natural resources of Iowa’s largest lakes found in the Corridor will help ensure the long-term vitality of this region.

“We invite visitors, entrepreneurs, and companies to experience all that this region has to offer and see why it truly is a great place to live, work and play.”

For more information, visit www.LiveWorkPlayHere.org; or contact the Iowa Lakes Corridor Development Corp at 712.264.3474 or 1.800.765.1428; or at 1900 Grand Avenue North, E12, Spencer, IA 51301

IOWA GREAT LAKES CORRIDOR WORKFORCE STATISTICS

- 70,000 WORKERS WITHIN REGIONAL LABORSHED
- WORKERS WILLING TO TRAVEL 21 MILES ONE WAY FOR THE RIGHT OPPORTUNITY
- 67% OF RESIDENTS HAVE EDUCATION OR TRAINING BEYOND HIGH SCHOOL
- 16.8% HAVE AN ASSOCIATE DEGREE
- 27.1% HAVE AN UNDERGRADUATE DEGREE
- 7.9% HAVE A POSTGRADUATE/PROFESSIONAL DEGREE
- 5.5% ARE TRADE-CERTIFIED