



**IOWA LAKES CORRIDOR**  
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

BUENA VISTA, CLAY, DICKINSON & EMMET COUNTIES

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Part one in a series of Strategic Planning articles about the Iowa Lakes Corridor region

**Socioeconomic snapshot of Corridor region**

SPENCER – Beginning this spring, the Iowa Lakes Corridor began the process of creating its next strategic plan for 2013-2016. Staff and board members reviewed recent research on best practices for economic development as well as trends to prepare for this in-depth process. The Corridor would like to share some of this information that helped shape the new strategic plan goals and objectives for the Corridor region.

The Iowa Lakes Corridor region is known for its recreational opportunities, a workforce with a strong work-ethic, and diversity of business. While the region has a number of assets and strengths, it also has challenges and weaknesses that the Corridor works to address.

The Corridor commissioned a profile of socioeconomic measures of the four-county region from RUPRI Center for Rural Entrepreneurship. The information included here comes from the profile.

From 1970 to 2009, the population of the region declined from 65,821 to 63,082, a 4 percent decrease. Employment during those same years grew from 31,277 to 44,186 jobs, a 41 percent increase; the number of proprietors (the self-employed) grew by 1,177, while wage and salary employment (people who work for someone else) grew by 11,732. Personal income grew from \$1,486.3 million to \$2,441.8 (in real terms), a 64 percent increase. The graph below shows the change in employment numbers from 1970-2000 in several industries.

<b>Industry</b>	<b>1970</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>Total Change</b>
Total Employment	31,277	45,428	14,151
Farm	5,540	2,991	-2,549
Agricultural services	353	743	390
Construction	1,524	2,259	735
Manufacturing	4,688	7,747	3,059
Transportation/public utilities	1,333	1,934	601
Wholesale trade	1,009	2,054	1,045
Retail trade	5,504	8,619	3,115
Finance, insurance and real estate	1,932	2,763	831
Services	5,109	8,837	3,728
Government	4,174	4,940	766

This chart emphasizes that certain industries in the Corridor region have made huge gains over the past 39 years, while other areas have made slower gains, and one industry, farming, had a significant decrease in employment. Residents and visitors may think of agriculture as the number one industry in the region, with corn and bean fields as far as the eye can see; however, manufacturing is the top industry with the most employment and revenue.

Labor earnings and non-labor income during the 39 years covered grew significantly. Labor earnings are those earnings by place of work. Non-labor income includes dividends, interest, money earned from investments and transfer payments, such as government retirement and disability insurance benefits. Since 1970, labor earnings increased by 36 percent, from \$1,086.6 million to \$1,477.9 million. Non-labor income grew from \$399.7 million to \$964 million. In 1970, non-labor income represented 27 percent of total personal income; by 2009, non-labor income represented 39 percent of total personal income.

From 2001 to 2009, the three industry sectors that added the most new jobs were government (306 new jobs), real estate, rental and leasing (228 new jobs), and accommodation and food services (212 new jobs). In 2009, the three industry sectors with the largest number of jobs were manufacturing, retail trade and government, with a combined total of 19,053 jobs.

Farming was one of the only non-service related industries whose personal income grew from 2001 to 2009. Income grew from \$141,817,000 to \$248,114,000, a change of \$106,327,000. Other industries included in non-service related include forestry, fishing and related activities, construction and manufacturing. Service related industries as a whole declined in personal income, from \$688,332,000 in 2001, to \$679,105,000 in 2009, a decrease of \$9,227,000. Two service-related industries made significant gains: professional and technical services and management of companies and enterprises.

From 1970 to 2009, average earnings per job, a measure of compensation of the average job, grew from \$35,563 to \$38,019. Per capita income during these same years, the measure of income per person, grew from \$22,580 to \$38,709.

In 2010, non-service related jobs paid an average of \$38,280, and employed 8,639 people. Service related jobs paid an average of \$27,419 and employed 17,760 people. Government jobs paid an average of \$36,389 and employed 5,364 people.

Unemployment rates have been an important topic over the past few years. Since 1990, the annual unemployment rate ranged from a low of 2.5 percent in 1999, to a high of 6 percent in 2010. As of May 2011, the unemployment rate was 5.3 percent. In the recovery period following the 1981-1982 recession, December 1982-June 1990, employment grew by 4,048 jobs, a .2 percent monthly increase.

#### Employment change during national recessions, 1976-2011

	January-July 1980	July 1981-Nov. 1982	July 1990-March 1991	March-Nov. 2001	Dec. 2007-June 2009
Employment Change (net jobs)	4,309	-3,990	-2,751	388	737
Employment Change (monthly % change)	14%	-11.6%	-8.3%	1.1%	2.2%

#### Employment change during recovery from national recessions - 1976 - 2011

	August 1980 - June 1981	Dec. 1982 - June 1990	April 1991 - Feb. 2001	Dec. 2001 - Nov. 2007	July 2009 - May 2011
Employment change (net jobs)	424	4,048	1,522	322	-169
Employment change (monthly % change)	1.2%	13.7%	4.7%	0.9%	-0.5%

In comparing the Iowa Lakes Corridor region to the United States, there are stark differences. From 1970-2009, population of the Corridor region shrank by -4 percent, while the population of the United States grew by 51 percent. Employment in the Corridor grew by 41 percent, and grew by 90 percent in the United States. Personal income in the Corridor grew by 64 percent, and grew by 164 percent in the United States.

Kathy Evert, president and CEO of the Iowa Lakes Corridor Development Corporation said “the region’s population demographics and personal income have a ripple effect throughout the economy – school enrollments, college enrollments, available supply of workers for existing as well as prospective employers, dollars spent at area retailers that generate sales tax revenues, demand for services, ticket sales to art and cultural events, and so on. Growing the population of this region is an area we all must focus and devote resources to ensure the vitality of this region for the long-term.”

In part two of this series we will discuss some of the challenges and opportunities regarding the region’s demographics and workforce in the region.

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The Iowa Lakes Corridor Development Corporation is the regional economic development agency for Buena Vista, Clay, Dickinson and Emmet counties. Its mission is to foster, encourage, aid, promote or otherwise assist in the economic growth and development of the region. For more information about the Iowa Lakes Corridor Development Corporation, call 712-264-3474 or visit [www.lakescorridor.com](http://www.lakescorridor.com).