

BEST OF IOWA IS A STATEWIDE, EXISTING BUSINESS COLLABORATIVE EFFORT LAUNCHED IN 2007. PARTNERS IN THE EFFORT INCLUDE: ALLIANT ENERGY – IPL, BLACK HILLS ENERGY, IOWA AREA DEVELOPMENT GROUP, MIDAMERICAN ENERGY COMPANY AND THE IOWA DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. THE FIRST OF ITS KIND, THE BEST OF IOWA IS A NATIONAL MODEL FOR USING EXISTING BUSINESS DATA COLLECTED THROUGH A BRE PROGRAM TO INITIATE SUBSTANTIVE CHANGE ON A STATE LEVEL. BEST OF IOWA UTILIZES THE SYNCHRONIST PRIME® SOFTWARE SYSTEM AND WORKS WITH LOCAL, COUNTY, AND REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS TO COLLECT INFORMATION ON EXISTING BUSINESS WHICH ALLOWS FOR ANALYSIS OF ISSUES AND TRENDS. INFORMATION IS USED TO PROVIDE COMMUNITY AND STATE LEADERSHIP INSIGHT FOR ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES AND CREATING PUBLIC POLICY.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

Sub-license subscriptions to Synchronist PRIME® are available to economic development organizations in Iowa at discounted rates. Input-only access to the system can be obtained at no cost through your utility partner.

CURRENT INITIATIVES

Opportunities and issues identified in recent analysis have led the team to focus on the following initiatives:

- Data coordination
- Innovation-Commercialization – sponsored research
- Education and training
- Legislative feedback

RESOURCE TEAMS

As economic developers identify local businesses with specific needs, the BEST of Iowa Coalition representative can dispatch specialized resources.

CONFIDENTIALITY OF DATA

Individual users of the Synchronist PRIME® system can only access data for their individual geography. Utility representatives on the BEST of Iowa management team members can likewise access only the records for customers in their service territory. Data reported and analyzed on the state level is in aggregate form. Individual company or community information is not available to coalition members or other readers of the annual report. BEST of Iowa management team members recognize the importance of confidentiality in the interview and data collection and works only through local economic developers in addressing local issues.



THE IMPORTANCE OF BUSINESS RETENTION

National statistics indicate approximately 80% of job creation comes from existing industry. In challenging economic times businesses focus on survival issues versus new job creation. Maintaining a continued emphasis on existing industry issues is critical. Local businesses and industry must be aware of resources available to assist their needs.

HOW IT WORKS

Local Economic Developers, in conjunction with BEST partners, conduct interviews with local industry and major employers. Data from the surveys are entered into the Synchronist PRIME® system. The data can then be analyzed by local and regional users, as well as the BEST of Iowa Management team. The data can be aggregated to determine statewide trends. Statewide data is then benchmarked with national data collected from users in 30 other states.

LOCAL, REGIONAL AND STATE BENEFITS

Data collected can be analyzed and reported by local users to help..

- Identify growth opportunities to support local industry
- Predict companies at risk of downsizing or closing
- Forecast economic investment
- Provide a vehicle to identify issues to incorporate into the local program of work
- Connect businesses with local and state resources to assist growth and address business needs
- Generate quantifiable facts to support business attraction marketing initiatives

As the BEST Team works with agencies, stakeholders and other resources to address issues and opportunities with policy and program changes, Iowa's overall economy will benefit.

BEST OF IOWA COALITION

In 2010, the BEST of Iowa team enlisted additional partners to form an expanded coalition. The team consists of representatives from

- Association of Business and Industry
- Iowa Association of Community Colleges
- Iowa Business Council
- Iowa Department of Economic Development
- Iowa Department of Education
- Iowa Innovation Council
- Iowa State University – CIRAS and Research/Economic Development
- University of Iowa – Vice Pres of Research
- University of Northern Iowa – Institute for Decision Making
- Iowa Workforce Development
- Professional Developers of Iowa
- Utility Partners

These additional partners provide more resources, a unified, statewide approach to explore solutions, and opportunities for issues identified in the annual Synchronist reports.



For information about BEST OF IOWA or to obtain a license, contact a management team member.

Alliant Energy – IPL

Scott Snider
641-437-5225
ScottSnider@alliantenergy.com

Black Hills Energy

Mike Fastenau
515-343-2012
Mike.fastenau@blackhillscorp.com

Iowa Area Development Group

Dan Anderson
515-223-4817
danderson@iadg.com

Iowa Department of Economic Development

Michael Gould
515-725-3115
michael.gould@iowa.gov

MidAmerican Energy Company

Deb Calvert
515-281-2595
dlcalvert@midamerican.com