



NORTHWEST IOWA DEVELOPMENT
Beyond Expectations.

NWID

ANNUAL REPORT

2019

**PROGRESS AND
SUCCESS IN 2019**

2019 Progress and Success in Northwest Iowa

The focus of the 2019 Northwest Iowa Development (NWID) Annual Report is Regional Progress and Success. The NWID regional strategy has focused each year on cooperative activities that will support the growth of the regional economy and assist local members with economic development tools that will help them make a difference in their area. The underlying foundation of a regional partnership is to do things together that may not be possible on your own. The core activities described in this report are considered essential to economic development progress and success in our region. Economic development has evolved over the years to encompass a much broader array of strategies and actions that need to be addressed to develop the economy. In the 2018 NWID Annual Report, we focused on the Building Blocks of Economic Development and how communities are being “built” in Northwest Iowa. This year, the Northwest Iowa Development Regional Partnership is presenting our core efforts to implement economic development strategies regionally that support local members. The core areas highlighted in this Report are:



BUSINESS RETENTION, EXPANSION AND ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT

Identifying and addressing the needs of existing businesses that will enable them to maintain and grow;



WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Workforce Development-Addressing the needs of growing businesses for workers with skills and, those willing to learn skills;



PARTNERSHIP AND ADVOCACY

Working together on regional legislative priorities has a stronger impact and enables regional partners to deliver a common message to legislative representatives. The ability to carry over those priorities to networking and technical assistance sharing sessions improves local efforts.



MARKETING AND PROMOTION

Regional cooperative marketing and promotion, utilizing state of the art marketing tools, is an efficient and cost –effective strategy to clearly and proudly communicate the benefits of living, working, and doing business in the area

This Annual Report includes descriptions of NWID efforts in each of the above strategic areas of focus with detail on the progress being made and the impact on NWID partners. It is through the cooperative efforts of our local members, Northwest Iowa Community College and Northwest Iowa Development that we can maximize regional growth for the benefit of all in the region.



EXISTING BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION

Business expansion and retention should be, and is, in Northwest Iowa, a primary economic development priority to support growth. Providing a proven, state-of-the-art business intelligence tool to local economic development partners enables them to acquire critical information that will form the basis of existing business expansion projects in NWID communities. NWID has invested in a regional license to provide **Synchronist PRIME**, the industry leading business expansion and retention interview software product, to all NWID member economic development partners. NWID offers a regional data management service to support local members and produces trend reports on business needs and issues.

Progress and Results – NWID strongly encourages the utilization of Synchronist by its’ members. NWID believes that there is a direct correlation between strong business contact and networking programs and business expansion and retention. Business retention, expansions, and growth in each Northwest Iowa County are fueling a strong economy.

NWID Member Savings - The cost of the software license (\$800-1,000 annually) and value of the regional data management service.

NWID recognizes that for existing businesses to grow, an element of that growth is growing and expanding markets. **Foreign Trade and export strategy assistance** is an increasingly important area of assistance that NWID offers our existing business community. NWID has established a regional Foreign Trade Zone (FTZ), which offer significant benefits to companies actively involved in foreign trade, and now offers free export trade consulting assistance to regional companies as part of a comprehensive approach to help regional companies explore export market strategies in an ever-changing global economy. Market growth for regional companies leads to business expansions and plans for growth in the future.

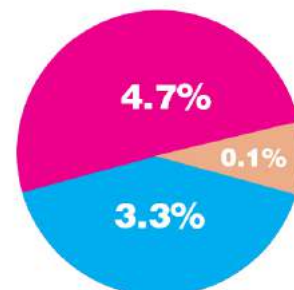
Progress and Results - NWID has worked hard to establish and maintain the operational structure of the FTZ and there are strong signs that this investment is beginning to pay off. First, the current global marketplace appears to be going through major changes related to trading relationships and potential new agreements. Coil Craft, with a major operation in Hawarden, is a major global trader of industrial products and is the first FTZ site approved for activation in the NWID region. Several other companies have met with NWID’s foreign trade consultant to discuss current and future strategy.

NWID Member Savings - NWID has invested a substantial amount of funds to gain approval from the Federal Government to establish the FTZ and to maintain operational status while working with companies to explore activation in the FTZ. The activation of a site in the FTZ, as Coil Craft has done, will ultimately provide significant cost savings for the company. Members also benefit from free expert foreign trade consultation provided via NWID.

MANUFACTURING JOB GROWTH '09-'19% - Change



Projected '19-'24 % - Change



Source: EMSI 2019

■ NW Iowa ■ State ■ Nation



ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT

As an important part of the NWID approach to working with existing businesses is a focus on **identifying and assisting small-er, emerging companies and entrepreneurs**. Small businesses and entrepreneurs are the lifeblood of the economy and bring creativity and new ideas to the marketplace. NWID has focused on highly successful efforts to identify emerging entrepreneurs such as the annual **Dream Big Grow Here** program. Dream Big annually attracts dozens of entrepreneurs to participate for cash prizes based on the presentation of their business plan and vision. Another effort to identify entrepreneurial opportunities for NWID communities is the participation in the **Community Venture Network (CVN)** forum. Quarterly, NWID members attend a presentation session in the Twin Cities and throughout the year, are introduced to over 30 development opportunities. In addition, as local partners identify small businesses in need of expert technical assistance, they can arrange onsite meetings with the **Small Business Development Center (SBDC)** due to the fact that NWID provides an annual subsidy to the regional SBDC that enables them to travel and meet directly with clients.

Progress and Results - As indicated earlier in this report, the Northwest Iowa economy is growing. In order to stay vibrant, some portion of NWID's strategic efforts will focus on supporting emerging small businesses and entrepreneurs. An investment in entrepreneurial development is an investment in the future.

NWID Member Savings - NWID pays all costs associated with participation in Dream Big, CVN and SBDC assistance, which allows for participation from any company or community in the region for free.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Workforce development is a crucial challenge for Northwest Iowa to realize strong and sustained economic development. Northwest Iowa Development (NWID) has addressed regional manufacturing workforce challenges through the creation of a **Regional Manufacturing Sector Partnership**. NWID is teaming up with 25 Northwest Iowa manufacturers and Northwest Iowa Community College to implement a unique action plan aimed directly at promoting career opportunities in manufacturing. Utilizing membership funding resources generated from the member companies, the Partnership's Manufacturing Sector **Career Coach**, with a strong background in manufacturing, has been meeting with all school districts in the region to establish relationships that will enable member companies to work directly with students, parents and educators to promote manufacturing careers in high demand occupations. The manufacturing career opportunities promotional campaign is being funded with NWID resources and the campaign supports a new customized Career Opportunities website and a targeted social media marketing campaign. A regional partnership approach to tackling workforce needs has been growing in support from regional companies. In 2019, the financial commitments from regional companies have grown from 11 companies, to now 25 member companies participating financially.

Progress and Results - The Sector Partnership is strong and growing. The partnership had 100% retention of members from the 1st year and over 100% growth in new members joining in Year 2. Relationships have been started with all regional school districts. Ultimately, success will be measured by more workers entering manufacturing occupations.

NWID Member Savings - NWID resources were utilized to organize the Partnership and NWID is primarily responsible for marketing support, including the development of the new Career Opportunities website.

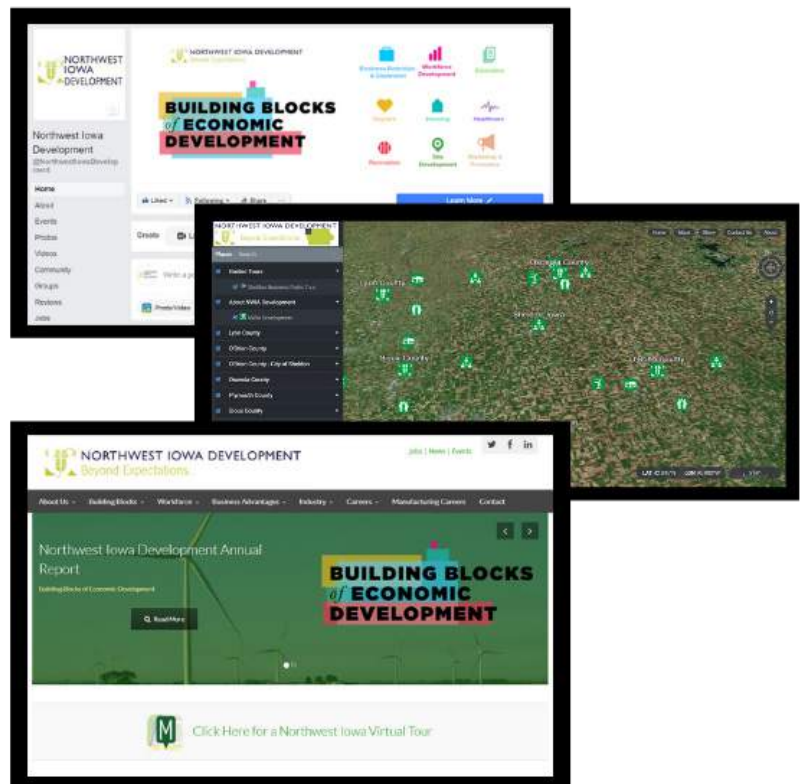


MARKETING AND PROMOTION

NWID was originally formed to be a **regional marketing partnership**. The concept underlying cooperative marketing is to pool resources to create a higher impact than any of the partners could generate on their own. Although new priorities have taken hold with NWID, regional marketing and promotion has always been a strong foundation of the NWID strategy. The focal point of regional promotions has always been a strong website that features information on job availability, news stories and has featured promotions such as the Building Blocks of Economic Development and the Northwest Iowa Virtual Tour. The Virtual Tour was recognized in 2018 with an Award of Excellence from the International Economic Development Council in the New Media category and has been a key element of the NWID outreach to site selectors. NWID has aggressively utilized targeted social media marketing to draw traffic to the website and highlight jobs, sites, buildings and member communities.

Progress and Results - NWID has consistently promoted the region and analytics have shown thousands of website visitors and strong engagement on social media. The goal is to maintain and gradually increase awareness of the Northwest Iowa region and strategies are being adjusted regularly to increase website traffic. A series of six e-mail promotions targeted towards site selectors and featuring the award-winning Virtual Tour was conducted in 2018-19.

NWID Member Savings - The rationale supporting cooperative marketing is focused on pooling resources to promote a common product....in this case, Northwest Iowa. The consistent promotion of the region builds awareness of the region and therefore brings value to the local members of the regional marketing partnership.





PARTNERSHIP AND ADVOCACY

Partnerships happen when organizations come together to cooperate in order to advance their mutual interests. The Annual Partners Meeting is a celebration of the NWID partnership. Throughout the year, NWID advances its' mutual interests through planned networking roundtables. Local economic development officials have come together to share tips, techniques, successes and issues related ongoing challenges such as housing, daycare, and workforce development. The relationships built and successes generated from these information exchanges are invaluable. The mutual interests of the NWID partners are also reflected in their increasingly strong efforts with legislative advocacy. Each year, NWID prepares a legislative agenda that is focused on clearly communicating the economic development legislative priorities. Annually, a briefing session is held with regional legislators and communication is consistently maintained throughout the legislative session. Last year, the briefing session was organized around a detailed presentation of successful tax increment financing (TIF) projects.

Progress and Results - NWID information roundtables have focused on successful and promising housing and day care efforts in various NWID member communities. This increased knowledge and the adoption of best practices are evident as projects are being developed. Annual Legislative Briefings have become a stand-alone event for NWID and involvement from NWID members has been increasing.

NWID Member Savings - The networking, idea, and information exchange among economic development professionals is highly valuable. The end result is improved, cost-effective projects. The impact of regional legislative advocacy is often greater from a cooperative partnership approach than individual member efforts.


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