

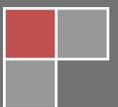
2016-17

Iowa Northland Regional Economic Development Commission

Annual Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy and Progress Report (#05-83-05378-02)

For the Period of:
July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2017

Prepared by the Iowa Northland Regional
Economic Development Commission (INREDC)
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Iowa Northland Regional Economic Development Commission Annual Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy and Progress Report

ADJUSTMENTS FOR CURRENT YEAR

The INREDC region has continued to experience the effects of a weakening agricultural market and its impacts on agricultural commodity producers as well as agricultural-related manufacturing.

In recent years, farm incomes have steadily been declining. In turn, with fewer resources for producers to invest, demand for farm-related manufacturing has slowed as well. This has resulted in layoffs for some major agriculture-related employers in the region in recent years. Employers continue to report that hiring of certain employees remains difficult, specifically skilled laborers including welders and computer numerically controlled (CNC) operators as well as healthcare professionals. Although this seems to be an issue in the Midwest, it remains a serious concern in the region as expansions and relocations are difficult when employees are unavailable. The region continues to explore workforce issues and options to assist with training and retraining of the employment pool, both internally and externally to the region.

That said, the region's overall economy remains relatively positive – consistently experiencing a regional unemployment rate near or below 5 percent. However, concern still lingers over the impacts of a stalled agriculture economy if it does not begin to change direction.

The region has continued to pursue economic development efforts outlined in the INREDC's 2012 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDs). We were involved in a number of development endeavors including economic development, planning, grant-writing, taking advantage of educational opportunities, and administering projects, all of which are consistent with our CEDs. As is stated in our 2012 CEDs, our goals are as follows:

- Goal #1: Aggressively Address the Workforce Needs of the Region
- Goal #2: Continue to Develop and Capitalize on the Following Regional Clusters: Advanced Manufacturing, Bio-fuels and Alternative Energy, Food Processing, Information Technology, Logistics and Distribution, and Wind Power
- Goal #3: Maintain and Improve the Economic Vitality of the Region
- Goal #4: Assist Businesses and Industries with Disaster Preparedness
- Goal #5: Foster Effective Transportation Service for Projects
- Goal #6: Protects and Enhances the Environment
- Goal #7: Local Projects Will Be Consistent with Federal and State Economic Development Plans and Programs

Goal #8: Recognize that Technology Will Play a Crucial Role in Economic Development

Goal #9: Work to Balance Resources in Economic Development Processes

Goal #10: Define the Available Economic Development Funding Sources

Goal #11: Maintain INREDC's Economic Development District Status

Scope of Work

As outlined in our planning grant's scope of work, we believe CEDS Goals 1, 2, 3, 10, and 11 illustrated the primary focus of the planning grant year. However, that does not mean the other goals identified in the current CEDS (2012 version) were not considered when carrying out the needs of our region. All eleven of these goals are important aspects of economic development in the region and were integrated into projects and the Scope of Work as was appropriate.

Specifically, the scope of work states INREDC will:

Maintain INREDC's Economic Development District Status (CEDS Goal #11, pages 6-9):

- Provide annual CEDS updates to EDA and prepare and file all required reports (GPRA and Financial Reports)
- Provide timely reports to EDA on plant closures and downsizings within the region
- Serve as the regional economic development umbrella agency for our members
- Offer a forum for economic development that not only includes local governments and economic development professionals, but also encourages private sector, non-profit and non-governmental, as well as general public input involvement
- Provide economic development assistance to businesses, industries, and local governments in our region
- Provide economic development assistance to local economic development groups in the region, individually and to the Cedar Valley Regional Partnership, which is their legal, marketing consortium organization
- Actively participate in meetings of the Iowa Association of Regional Councils (IARC), a statewide association for the Iowa Councils of Government
- Engage the INREDC in the CEDS planning process (annual updates and revisions). We are working with our Board to begin development of our next complete CEDS update. Currently, we have a working outline and timetable that we are refining. Said new CEDS will be consistent with the newly released EDA guidelines.

Maintain and Improve the Economic Vitality of the Region (CEDS Goal #3, pages 10-16):

- Assist existing businesses so that they might expand and flourish
- Encourage new business development, including development of entrepreneurial activity
- Work seamlessly with the US Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration and the Iowa Economic Development Authority to assist communities in our region

- Maintain our positive working relationships with the local economic development commissions, organizations, and staff members.
- Identify regional projects and visions for diversification of entire regional economy, specifically participation in health care; healthy community initiatives; and food planning organizations, including production, distribution, and consumption of locally grown products. All of which have local clusters in our region.
- Continue to use the Cedar Valley Regional Partnership as a vehicle to promote the region and cooperative activity.
- Assist communities in leveraging private investment dollars through local, state and federal incentives.
- Provide education in the development and use of tax increment financing for both industrial and housing projects.
- Provide technical assistance to help communities implement Comprehensive Plans concerning economic development activities, infrastructure improvements, and expansion of housing options, workforce development, and other economic development elements.
- Coordinate economic development planning and implementation with other economic development organizations affecting the area, especially EDA-funded grantees such as adjoining economic development districts and Indian Tribes, and University Centers.

Define the Available Economic Development Funding Sources (CEDS Goal #10, pages 17-19):

- Identify possible funding sources for governments and businesses, including public and private funding sources.
- Research private foundation grants for businesses, industries, and local governments.
- Apply for grant or loan programs, as is appropriate and requested
- Allocate, appropriate, and administer local funds, as is necessary or required by the program itself
- Continue to expand professional knowledge base and expertise in development issues, tools and programs to include: housing, revolving loan administration, business credit analysis and financial packaging, economic impact analysis, tax increment financing and tax abatement, workforce development, and grant writing.
- Work closely with USDA, Iowa Economic Development Authority and other organizations that can provide economic development assistance to member jurisdictions and businesses.
- Assist regional industrial/business retention and expansion teams in providing information on available state and federal programs offered to businesses as well as relevant state regulations and tax policies.

Assist Local Economic Development Groups and Governments to Continue to Develop and Capitalize on Existing Regional Clusters and Aggressively Address the Workforce Needs of the Region (CEDS Goals #1 & 2, pages 20-21):

- Assist in identifying the workforce needs of the Region
- Assist in efforts to provide training for new workers or retraining for existing or displaced workers
- Assist in cultivating existing identified regional clusters

We believe the above five CEDS Goals will constitute the primary focus of the Scope of Work for the 2014-2015 Planning Grant year. In the following section, these five goals are discussed first.

However, that does not mean the remaining goals identified in the current CEDS (2012 Revision) have not been addressed. These goals are important aspects of economic development in the region and will be accommodated into projects and the Scope of Work as appropriate.

These goals include (pages 22-25):

- **Assist Businesses and Industries with Disaster Preparedness** (CEDS Goal #4)
- **Foster Effective Transportation Service for Projects** (CEDS Goal #5)
- **Protects and Enhances the Environment** (CEDS Goal #6)
- **Local Projects Will Be Consistent with Federal and State Economic Development Plans and Programs** (CEDS Goal #7)
- **Recognize that Technology Will Play a Crucial Role in Economic Development** (CEDS Goal #8)
- **Work to Balance Resources in Economic Development Processes** (CEDS Goal #9)

The following section reports on those five goals explicitly states in the Scope of Work as well as the other six 2012 CEDS goals.

Maintain INREDC's Economic Development District Status (CEDS Goal #11):

- **Provide annual CEDS updates to EDA and prepare and file all required reports (GPRA and SF 425 Financial Reports)**
 - Accomplishments Achieved: All EDA Reports have been submitted on schedule. INREDC CEDS was updated and submitted to EDA on May 1, 2017. The 2012 CEDS expires September 30, 2017.
 - Quantifiable Deliverables: The prior year and current year's CEDS updates were provided in a timely fashion, as were the required Financial Reports (SF 425), and GPRA Reports. Said reports have all been accepted by EDA.
 - Difficulties Encountered: No difficulties were encountered

- **Provide timely reports to EDA on plant closures and downsizings within the region**
 - Accomplishments Achieved: Staff notified EDA regarding two major closures and downsizings in our region. Specifically, a reductions in workforce totaling approximately 175 jobs Terex Crane in Waverly in June of 2016 as well as the announcement of 115 job layoffs at John Deere in Waterloo in September 2016.
 - Quantifiable Deliverables: Information related to specific company changes, including company name and job losses were reported to EDA staff during this past year. Currently, we are working with EDA and local economic developers to address these losses, including the possible development of an Economic Adjustment Assistance application.
 - Difficulties Encountered: No difficulties were encountered.

- **Serve as the regional economic development umbrella agency for our members**
 - Accomplishments Achieved: Conducted and attended economic development activities, housing the Iowa Northland Regional Economic Development Group (INREDC) and serving as the fiscal agent for the Cedar Valley Regional Partnership. INRCOG has also taken a role in the development of a local food policy group. Though still in the developing stages, the plan is to become an umbrella group coordinating healthy food policy and communication among producers and consumers in the region.
 - Quantifiable Deliverables: INREDC conducted quarterly meetings of its Board and Technical Committees and offered educational opportunities for members this past year. Staff also attended monthly meetings of the Cedar Valley Regional Partnership (CVRP), which is a regional consortium of economic development professionals. Our agency also serves as the grant writer/administrator and fiscal agent for the CVRP. Specific to this past year, our staff wrote, submitted, were

awarded and now administer a regional economic development marketing grant, awarded by IEDA, for the continued operations of the CVRP.

- Difficulties Encountered: No major difficulties were associated with this action step.
- **Offer a forum for economic development that not only includes local governments and economic development professionals, but also encourages private sector, non-profit and non-governmental, as well as general public input involvement**
 - Accomplishments Achieved: During the past year, we have strived to maintain a diverse INREDC Board and Technical Committee membership. A list of board members, and their affiliations, is in the following section. Furthermore, through the 2017 CEDs update planning process, input on the current economic condition of the region and the vision moving forwards as gathered directly from members of local economic development boards
 - Quantifiable Deliverables: In recent years, the board has been restructured including filling vacancies on our Board by inviting specific members of their respective communities to participate in our activities. In addition, we have continued to have representation from our local Community College (Hawkeye Community College) and an EDA University Center (at the University of Northern Iowa) on the Board. Their experience and regional knowledge will offer our organization leadership and direction that has been lacking. As the 2017 CEDS planning is completed, we have met with local businesses leaders, via their local economic development board, in across the region's counties to identify and discuss ways to address what they see as the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to the regional economy. We have also utilized the INREDC, with private sector representation, in the CEDS planning.
 - Difficulties Encountered: No difficulties were encountered.
- **Provide economic development assistance to businesses, industries, and local governments in our region**
 - Accomplishments Achieved: INREDC and INRCOG, in cooperation with our partner Economic Development organizations, provided grant writing and administration assistance to all requesting businesses, organizations, and governments in our region. We also provided formal and informal technical assistance and consultation on a variety of projects and grant opportunities.
 - Quantifiable Deliverables: During the past year, we have written and administered several business-related grants, specifically under Community Development Block Grant, USDA Rural Development Business grant, EDA Regional Innovations and Strategies i6 Challenge Grant, and multiple grants for recreational/quality of life projects to help attract the needed workforce to the region. We also provided assistance regarding these programs to economic development professionals and our member cities and counties. We have also

continued to enhance our educational knowledge regarding TIF and follow legislative changes that may occur. Not to be understated, we also assisted our partner EDCs, as requested, by providing input on numerous economic development projects.

- Difficulties Encountered: We faced, and will continue to face, a few issues related to this action step. First, the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) has adjusted many of their programs, specifically the required wage levels, making their programs more challenging to access. Second, the State Legislature continues to consider making adjustments to TIF regulations, with the most recent significant changes occurring in 2012. Within these changes, the statute requires thorough project identification, budget, and timelines, which in turn, requires our local communities to adjust their urban renewal plans accordingly. This then creates an opportunity for INREDC to lead our local communities in making the necessary changes to their TIF programs. It is important to point out that while TIF legislation has been proposed in the 2017 Legislatures, but has failed to win approval, we have participated in the legislative input processes.

- **Provide economic development assistance to local economic development groups in the region**

- Accomplishments Achieved: We have offered assistance in several different ways to each of the local economic development organizations.
- Quantifiable Deliverables: We have attended and conducted numerous meetings with our local development organizations, including but not limited to, the INREDC Board and Technical Committee meetings; Cedar Valley Regional Partnership (CVRP) meetings; INRCOG Board meetings; local EDC planning and governmental affairs sessions; various city and county committees; and other INRCOG committee meetings where membership includes local EDC personnel. In the past year, we have also met directly with our region's various economic development boards to receive input, discuss, and provide information on the assistance we can provide as part of the CEDS planning process.
- Difficulties Encountered: No significant difficulties have been encountered.

- **Actively participate in meetings of the Iowa Association of Regional Councils (IARC), a statewide association for the Iowa Councils of Government**

- Accomplishments Achieved: Programmatic information and education have been garnered by INRCOG and INREDC through attending monthly IARC meetings.

In the past year, the Iowa Association of Regional Councils (IARC) changed their name to Iowa Association of Councils of Governments (ICOG). Furthermore, the INRCOG Executive Director was elected Chair of ICOG.

- Quantifiable Deliverables: Our Executive Director, or his designee, has attended all monthly IARC meetings during the timeframe of this report.

- Difficulties Encountered: No difficulties were encountered.
- **Engage the INREDC in the CEDS planning process (Annual updates and revisions)**
 - Accomplishments Achieved: As discussed, INREDC staff updated the CEDs over the entire 2016 calendar year and the first half of 2017. CEDS work sessions and reviews were incorporated into the regular INREDC meetings. This allowed the board to see the input and provide reaction/feedback as the information was gathered throughout the region and relevant economic data/projections were developed.
 - Quantifiable Deliverables: At each quarterly INREDC Board meeting we have integrated the CEDS, either formally on the agenda or informally in all of our discussions. We also assist each EDC with strategic planning and have included the overall CEDS goals into their planning session. Further, we continued to link our local economic development professionals' pertinent activities and efforts directly to our CEDS.
 - Difficulties Encountered: While we have not encountered any difficulties, we need to remain diligent about connecting all of our activities back to the CEDS and our agency economic development process.

Maintain and Improve the Economic Vitality of the Region (CEDS Goal #3):

- **Assist existing businesses so that they might expand and flourish**
 - Accomplishments Achieved: Our region's focus regarding economic development has been on assisting existing businesses or businesses that are part of our regional clusters, which is also consistent with the state of Iowa's philosophy.
 - Quantifiable Deliverables: As the following section illustrates, the economic development projects that INREDC worked on have been primarily with businesses and organizations currently located in our region during the past year. The CVRP focuses their site selection and corporate visits on existing companies to both retain and expand job opportunities.
 - Difficulties Encountered: Regional economic vitality is influenced by state, national, and global economic conditions the region has no control over. No significant difficulties were experienced.

- **Encourage new business development, including development of entrepreneurial activity**

- Accomplishments Achieved: When contacted by local economic development officials, the state of Iowa, or local government officials, we have provided guidance and direction to new business start-ups as has been requested.

INRCOG staff are executive committee members and have participated in the University of Northern Iowa's Regional Entrepreneurship Project which focuses on to better support and encourage entrepreneurship in the region through networking, access to capital, creating a support culture, and providing business and technical assistance. The Project is still underway.

In June 2017, INRCOG staff wrote and submitted a grant application for the EDA Regional Innovation strategies (RIS) program i6 Challenge Grant requesting funds to establish an Additive Manufacturing Center at the TechWorks Campus in Waterloo. Awards have not yet been announced. The proposed center would offer technical design and production expertise to area manufacturers as well as business support services – including incubation and accelerator programming – to support existing small-medium manufactures and entrepreneurs seeking to utilize additive manufacturing.

- Quantifiable Deliverables: The quantifiable deliverables provided under this action step including meetings, phone calls, emails, and other correspondence with either the company, an individual representing the company, local government, and/or the local economic development professional.

- Difficulties Encountered: We continue to face challenges identifying new businesses that may need assistance and that meet the state’s wage threshold requirements.
- **Work seamlessly with the US Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration and the Iowa Economic Development Authority to assist communities in our region**
 - Accomplishments Achieved: INREDC and INRCOG continue to work to achieve this task.
 - Quantifiable Deliverables: During the past year, INRCOG and INREDC have solidified scope of work requirements related to EDA including projects, reporting, employee assignments, and administration. We are maintaining our projects to the expectations of EDA, as well as to those of our local cities, counties, and economic development organizations. All planning and project reports have been, and will be, filed in a timely manner.

Over the past year, significant efforts were made by INREDC staff to update the region’s CEDS, which expires October 1, 2017. This has included several meetings with economic development professionals, elected officials to gather input via SWOT analyses, and planning sessions at INREDC quarterly meetings..

 - Difficulties Encountered: Work on all of our EDA projects and programs continue to be a priority.
- **Maintain our positive working relationships with the local economic development commissions, organizations, and staff members.**
 - Accomplishments Achieved: Our organization has continued to focus on and recognize the importance of a regional economic development approach through building positive relationships with our local development organizations, as well as with EDA and the state of Iowa.
 - Quantifiable Deliverables: We meet regularly with all of our economic development organizations and entities, specifically through the Cedar Valley Regional Partnership (CVRP), which is a consortium of local development professionals. The INREDC Board meets on a quarterly basis to discuss economic development initiatives and policy. Over the past year, we engaged with local development groups through requests for input on the CEDS and offering strategic planning services to their organizations. In turn, this allows us to request their assistance with implementing our CEDS. As previously stated, INREDC and INRCOG also provided grant writing/administration, procurement, and fiscal management services for the CVRP.
 - Difficulties Encountered: No noteworthy difficulties or problems were experienced.

- **Identify regional projects and visions for diversification of entire region.**
 - Accomplishments Achieved: We have chosen to utilize INREDC meeting time more effectively with regard to local project identification and discussion among members to allow for the coordination of planning. During the 2017 CEDs planning process, this point was reemphasized and continues to be a goal and priority for the region.
 - Quantifiable Deliverables: As was previously stated, we have integrated project overview discussion time on our INREDC Board and Technical Committee agendas. We also utilize educational component (presentations, tours, etc.) to all of our Board agendas. Finally, with the success of the Cedar Valley Regional Partnership (CVRP), project information is shared regularly among all of the local economic development organizations and with INREDC.
 - Difficulties Encountered: The development of the 2017 CEDs afforded our organization the opportunity to plan for the future of the region, including diversification of the economy. A goal of the 2017 CEDs is to continue to further diversify our region's economic base. That said, the reality is that the region and Iowa's economic success continues to be heavily influenced by Iowa's agriculture economy base (row crop and livestock production, manufacturing of ag equipment, etc.) given the dominate role our state plays in national and global agriculture production. Over the past three years, Iowa's ag economy has struggled do to record low commodity prices which has hurt regional business and government tax revenues.

- **Continue to use the Cedar Valley Regional Partnership as a vehicle to promote the region and cooperative activity.**
 - Accomplishments Achieved: This is an ongoing task to which our organization is committed. We helped create this consortium of local economic development professionals, which was legally formed under Iowa law nearly a decade ago, and while we are not technically a voting member of the partnership, we serve in a leadership role as facilitator, contributor, and financial manager for them.

The CVRP and their board members – who commit relevant elements of their work as in-kind match for the INREDC planning grant – continue to focus on developing and marketing the region as whole.

During the past fiscal year, the Cedar Valley Regional Partnership (CVRP) turned their focus to creating a greater online presence in order to market the region to employers and workforce. This has included the launching of a revamped website, creation of a regional job board, consolidation of economic development Facebook pages, and a new e-newsletter.
 - Quantifiable Deliverables: As noted above, INREDC and INRCOG provide all of the ongoing fiscal oversight, administration, and management for the CVRP at no cost to their organization. We continue to offer our facilities to their organization for

meetings and functions as well as write grants and procure professional services on behalf of the organization.

In 2016, INREDC staff closed the CVRP's 2015-2016 Regional Marketing Grant awarded by the Iowa Economic Development Authority. INREDC submitted a new regional marketing grant which was awarded, in the amount of \$38,500, to market the region the 2017 and 2018 calendar years. This is the fifth grant award INREDC has procured on behalf of the CVRP.

In 2016 the CVRP entered into a contract overhauled and relaunched a new website (www.cedarvalleyregion.com). The new sight went live in the Winter of 2017. The region has shifted its limited resources to focusing greater attention to their online presence will increase ease of access and information available to prospective clients/site selectors by serving as a comprehensive source for regional economic development source. The CVRP intends to use online marketing (e.g. Facebook ads) in the future to drive targeted traffic to the site.

In 2017 the CVRP also launched a new regional job board. Previously, there were a litany of regional job boards for each county or jurisdiction. The CVRP has launched one central clearing house for regional jobs.

In 2017 the CVRP launched a new e-newsletter program. The first newsletter was sent in April 2017. The Newsletter will be sent to a mailing list of business development and site selector contacts accumulated by the region. Each newsletter will include news updates (legislative changes, new sites, expansions, etc.), an update featuring the benefits of the Cedar Valley, a featured regional project, and a featured business/industrial site.

Finally, the CVRP has consolidated regional economic development/job board Facebook pages.

In addition, the Greater Cedar Valley Alliance (regional economic development group) continues to build-out and feature the Live the Valley webpage () as a recruitment tool for businesses and workforce.

- Difficulties Encountered: No significant difficulties were experienced. In the coming years, the CVRP will be fine-tuning their new approach and website/online marketing features.
- **Assist communities in leveraging private investment dollars through local, state and federal incentives.**
 - Accomplishments Achieved: Region continues to experience growth by utilizing state and federal programs with local and private investment dollars. As is illustrated in the following section of this update—Evaluation of Effectiveness—there have been several economic development successes in our region.

- Quantifiable Deliverables: The table in the next section of this update presents the regional economic development projects during the past year.
 - Difficulties Encountered: No significant difficulties encountered.
- **Provide education in the development and use of tax increment financing for both industrial and housing projects.**
 - Accomplishments Achieved: In recent years, we have re-established our organization as a provider for both TIF education and products (plans, ordinances, and technical assistance) for our member communities.
 - Quantifiable Deliverables: During the previous year, we have offered technical and planning assistance regarding TIF to our members. Further, we provide TIF planning projects pending in member communities specifically this year on using TIF for low- and moderate-income housing developments. This service has been made possible through staff education, training, and experience, as well as working more closely with municipal bond (legal) counsel and public financing companies (Speer Financial, Northland Financial, and Piper-Jaffrey).

Staff attended TIF training session at the Iowa SMART Conference this past year. In May 2017, INRCOG hosted a presentation on legislative/financial management updates in state law during our quarterly City Clerks/County Auditors Association. In June 2017, INRCOG entered into a contract to write an Urban Revitalization plan for one of our cities. We are currently working to secure an Urban Renewal plan contract in another city.
 - Difficulties Encountered: No significant problems or challenges were experienced.
- **Provide technical assistance to help communities implement Comprehensive Plans concerning economic development activities, infrastructure improvements, and expansion of housing options, workforce development, and other economic development elements.**
 - Accomplishments Achieved: One of INRCOG's primary services is working with communities to develop Comprehensive Land Use Plans. Within said plans are elements addressing community development, infrastructure, housing, workforce development, and transportation, all of which affect economic development. Because of the size of the undertaking and staff limitations, our agency generally completes two or three Comprehensive Plans per year. Incidentally, these Plans are a policy instrument that act as the foundation for a community's land use regulations, urban renewal plans and revitalization efforts, and capital improvements programs.
 - Quantifiable Deliverables: In addition to local government and planning staff, we ask economic development staff to participate in the comprehensive planning process when a community is developing or updating plans. This allows us to share programmatic information with the community while affording the staff

member a chance to obtain information regarding the community's growth plans and aspirations.

During this past year, our agency completed a Comprehensive Plans for the City of Elk Run Heights. We are currently in the process of updating the City of City of Evansdale's and City of Waterloo's Comprehensive Plans.

Related to land use and development, our Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) utilizes its current long range transportation plan, which sets priorities and identifies funding for programing transportation improvements within the Waterloo-Cedar Falls Metropolitan Area. In addition, the complementary Long-Range Transportation Plan for the remainder of our region is also well underway. These plans, and the projects they contain, are crucial to economic development efforts and land use policy in our region.

INRCOG completed a Zoning Ordinance update for the City of Shell Rock this past year. In addition, work continues on the Waterloo, Independence, and Grundy Center airport zoning updates.

Housing Needs Assessment studies are underway in Buchanan County (county-wide plan) and the City of Hudson. INRCOG is also in discussions with the cities of Waterloo and New Hampton on conducting housing studies.

In the past year, INRCOG successfully completed and closed a 2016 CDBG/Water Sewer awarded project for the sanitary sewer plant in Sumner. INRCOG wrote one CDBG Water/Sewer grant this past year that was funded in the amount of \$500,000 for the City of Allison to construct sanitary sewer collection system improvements.

We are currently administrating four Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) infrastructure (water/sewer; community facility/storm water; housing) in the cities of Allison (Sewer and housing), Lamont (storm water), and Elk Run Heights (housing).

In addition, INRCOG secured CDBG funding through IEDA's urgent need criteria for disaster related housing rehabilitation in the cities of Shell Rock, Clarksville, and Greene.

We have also continue to work with, and provided technical assistance to, a number of communities in preparation of future CDBG applications, including the cities of Wellsburg, Winthrop, Brandon, Parkersburg and Independence.

Other economic development and quality of life projects in which we participated include preparing and submitting recreational amenities grant applications such as the Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) Grant Program; Land, Air, and Water Conservation (LAWCON) Grant Program; Blue Zones (healthy living and economic sustainability) initiatives; hazard mitigation and watershed

management; and organizational development of a locally-grown/food policy council.

- Difficulties Encountered: Available grant funding is always a concern as there is never enough to meet the state's need. This past year, IEDA changed their CDBG application requirements which have forced cities to spend more time and money up front, before submitting an application, to meet the new requirements. New requirements include completion of the environmental review, securing local funding match and approval of facility plans for projects requiring a Department of Natural Resources (DNR) permit. These changes have forced some communities to delay submitting applications in order to allow time to meet the new readiness standards. With regard to comprehensive planning, limited staff and resources continue to constrain the number of plans which can be completed in a given year.
- **Coordinate economic development planning and implementation with other economic development organizations affecting the area, especially EDA-funded grantees such as adjoining economic development districts and Indian Tribes, and University Centers.**

- Accomplishments Achieved: During the past year, INRCOG/INREDC worked with our neighboring Councils of Governments and EDDs on projects as the opportunities presented themselves, most of which were cross-boundary service related issues or providing technical assistance. As previously stated, we have added the Director of the Institute of Decision Making at the University of Northern Iowa (UNI) (EDA University Center) and the Economic Development Director of Hawkeye Community College to the INREDC Board of Directors.

As previously mentioned, INREDC staff is executive committee members and have participated in the University of Northern Iowa's Regional Entrepreneurship Project (EDA funded project through the University Center) which focuses on to better support and encourage entrepreneurship in the region through networking, access to capital, creating a support culture, and providing business and technical assistance. The Project is still underway.

- Quantifiable Deliverables: In all instances, we worked well with all of the COGs and EDDs in our attempts to bolster our economies while assisting our member communities. Staff will continue to be active members in the Regional Entrepreneurship Project and plan being developed by UNI and, once completed, assist in implementation
- Difficulties Encountered: Inter-regional projects did create an opportunity for us to work with our counterpart agencies on endeavors with economic development ramifications. In the end, the experiences at the local level were positive and will be continued.

Define the Available Economic Development Funding Sources (CEDS Goal #10):

- **Identify possible funding sources for governments and businesses**
 - Accomplishments Achieved: As one of the primary charges of INRCOG, our agency works diligently to identify possible funding sources for our local member governments and their businesses and industries.
 - Quantifiable Deliverables: During the past year, we continued to provide a significant amount of technical assistance to our members regarding potential funding sources for many different types of projects. This information was provided via personal visits, phone conferences/conversations, emails, presentations, and through meetings.

INRCOG sends a quarterly newsletter to all member jurisdictions which, among other relevant information, provides a list of upcoming grant opportunities. Staff also notes potential funding sources and grant opportunities at the various meetings we host throughout the year. The INRCOG website also identifies local, state, and federal economic development sources.

- Difficulties Encountered: As we noted in previous years, the available dollars in our funding programs are decreasing while the program requirements have increased, which requires the local governments to participate more on the front-end of projects, both technically and financially, in order to make their applications more competitive. Our challenge has been to educate our member communities and businesses that they will likely have to contribute more at the beginning and will likely face more transparency review, examination, and scrutiny than similar projects completed in prior years. Obviously, this is an ongoing objective for our organization.
- **Apply for grant or loan programs, as is appropriate**
 - Accomplishments Achieved: This is an ongoing action step for our organization, utilizing a number of different local, state, and federal programs. This includes providing technical assistance to cities on potential grant applications as well as writing and administration.
 - Quantifiable Deliverables: Our measure of deliverables is if the project is completed as designed and requested on-time and within budget. In the past year, INRCOG applied for grants from CDBG water/sewer, CDBG housing rehabilitation, EDA Partnership Planning Grant, EDA Regional Innovations and Strategies i6 Challenge Grant,, Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) Fund,, Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP), Community Attraction and Tourism (CAT), statewide Transportation Alternative Program (TAP), State Recreational Trails, and Federal

Recreational Trails. In addition to the grants submitted, INRCOG also provides consultation with communities on potential grants for future projects.

- Difficulties Encountered: Identifying appropriate programs and tracking ever-changing program requirements have been two ongoing challenges for our agency. The need for funding continues to exceed the limited grant dollars available.
- **Allocate, appropriate, and administer local funds, as is necessary or required by the program itself**
 - Accomplishments Achieved: This action step is implemented on an “as needed” basis.
 - Quantifiable Deliverables: INRCOG continues to administer five RLF loans in the region with recently updated administration plan and new online application. In addition, we are currently administrating seven CDBG projects (two housing, one water/sewer; one community facilities; three urgent need/disaster recovery). INRCOG also provides the staff and is the fiscal agent for the Iowa Northland Regional Housing Council (INRHC) and the Waterloo Housing Trust Fund.
 - Difficulties Encountered: For the RLF, our challenges have been providing a service that complements financial institutions, identifies businesses in need, and obtains approvable, viable business applications. RLF program requirements make funding some potential projects more difficult. That being said, we continue to see interest and have updated all of the information related to our existing business loan date and files. The complexity of existing and changing CDBG regulations requires staff to keep an insistent eye on these programs and attending trainings.
- **Continue to expand professional knowledge base and expertise in development issues, tools and programs to include: new EDA and CEDS guidelines, housing programs, revolving loan administration, business credit analysis and financial packaging, economic impact analysis, tax increment financing and tax abatement, workforce development, and grant writing and administration.**
 - Accomplishments Achieved: INRCOG and INREDC support continuing education and training as an employee or program needs or requires. In short, this is an ongoing or continuing action step for our organization.
 - Quantifiable Deliverables: We have identified a continued need for additional training during the upcoming year. We continue to utilize available webinar trainings for efficient use of time. INRCOG staff has also attended a number of trainings in the past year including multiple CDBG trainings, environmental review trainings, hazard mitigation planning training, economic development, and others.
 - Difficulties Encountered: No unexpected difficulties were experienced.

- **Work closely with USDA, Iowa Economic Development Authority and other organizations that can provide economic development assistance to member jurisdictions and businesses.**
 - Accomplishments Achieved: This action step is a continuous or ongoing effort that may be considered as the opportunity and/or need presents itself. Specifically, we currently administering a USDA Rural Business Development Grant (RBDG) partially funding a county-wide Housing Needs Assessment in Buchanan County. As communities consider infrastructure projects, we provide information on USDA programs and funding opportunities and directly refer communities to the local USDA as appropriate. We continue to have a strong relationship with IEDA and frequently work with their staff regarding grant applications and administration, state businesses incentives, and on-going program training, such as for CDBG.
 - Quantifiable Deliverables: Through meetings, funding agency presentations, conversations, reports, and emails, we have maintained relationships with both USDA and IEDA regarding programs and current projects during the past year. INRCOG staff routinely communicates with USDA and IEDA staff on existing and potential projects.
 - Difficulties Encountered: Other than adjusting projects to fit ever-changing, decreasing funding sources, we have not faced any notable difficulties related to this action step during this last year. Many communities are hesitant to invest the time and resources required to become merely eligible for a grant, without an assurance of funding.

- **Assist regional industrial/business retention and expansion teams in providing information on available state and federal programs offered to businesses as well as relevant state regulations and tax policies.**
 - Accomplishments Achieved: This is also an ongoing, and as-needed, action step.
 - Quantifiable Deliverables: We meet with our regional economic development partners at least monthly as part of the Cedar Valley Regional Partnership (CVRP). In addition, we conduct regular meetings of our INREDC Technical Committee and Board, which allows us to maintain contact opportunities for sharing programmatic information. Likewise, all the partners share information through their websites, emails, and social media. INRCOG and CVRP websites maintain inventories of state and federal incentive programs.
 - Difficulties Encountered: Implemented and ongoing discussions of programming and funding cuts as well as tax reform at both the state and federal levels of government creates some uncertainty of what to expect/plan for in terms of state and federal programs.

Assist Local Economic Development Groups and Governments to Continue to Develop and Capitalize on Existing Regional Clusters and Aggressively Address the Workforce Needs of the Region (CEDS Goals #1 & 2):

- **Assist in identifying the workforce needs of the Region**
 - Accomplishments Achieved: The Cedar Valley Regional Partnership (CVRP), which emphasizes marketing of our region, also focuses on the business/industry clusters in the region (Advanced Manufacturing, Bio-fuels and Alternative Energy, Food Processing, Information Technology, Logistics and Distribution, and Wind Power) as well as workforce needs of the region. Our educational partners, University of Northern Iowa (UNI) and Hawkeye Community College (HCC), are also focused on both of these areas, as is evident in the programs they offer to their respective institutions, students, surrounding communities, and businesses.
 - Quantifiable Deliverables: The table in the following section shows the investments made within our region.

Hawkeye Community College (HCC) has is implementing an updated curriculum which focuses on providing training for specialized laborers (i.e. welders, CNC operators, etc.) In addition, HCC has developed Additive Manufacturing (3D printing) curriculum. These programs include a shorter, more intense, training timeline that will allow the students to enter the workforce quicker.

Further, regional economic development professionals in our region continue to make inroads into the secondary education institutions (high schools) in order to inform students about modern manufacturing processes. Their primary focus has been to provide information regarding the need for workers in certain skill professions, while showing students that these types of positions pay a decent living wage and offer a good work environment.

Last year, the Greater Cedar Valley Alliance and Chamber launched a new “Live the Valley” regional marketing campaign. This effort is focused on attracting new families and workforce to the area by focusing on our strong quality of life.
 - Difficulties Encountered: Our region continues to struggle with workforce challenges, both in the overall quantity of available workers and enough skilled workers to fill certain skill positions.
- **Assist in efforts to provide training for new workers or retraining for existing or displaced workers**
 - Accomplishments Achieved: This is ongoing and on an as-needed basis. In recent years, our region has experienced agriculture-manufacturing layoffs. These layoffs are in response to slowing sales due to drop in commodity prices as well as business relocation. In 2016, Terex Crane of Waverly laid off 175 employees and

John Deere of Waterloo laid off an additional 115 employees (which has had to lay-off over 1,000 employees in the Waterloo area in the past three years).

- Quantifiable Deliverables: Within our region, displaced workers appear to be able to find employment, as many existing companies are seeking qualified individuals. The region's low unemployment rate, consistently at or below 5 percent, also supports this. The demand for skilled labor remains high. With that said, in some instances these downsizings are requiring retraining in the required skill sets of the affected persons, worker relocation, and unfortunately, possibly some underemployment.

In regard to the layoffs mentioned above, Hawkeye Community College, in coordination with Iowa Workforce Development, provided a "rapid response" team to help workers get training and find new employment.

- Difficulties Encountered: No significant difficulties were experienced.

- **Assist in cultivating existing identified regional clusters**

- Accomplishments Achieved: This is a continuous action step for our region. The clusters previously identified have been maintained.
- Quantifiable Deliverables: Again, economic development professionals continue to focus on the clusters we have identified in our CEDS, in their marketing, retention, and attraction efforts. Specifically, as they attend trade shows and make corporate visits under the auspices of the Cedar Valley Regional Partnership, our local economic development professionals target companies that fit within our identified regional clusters.
- Difficulties Encountered: No significant difficulties were encountered.

OTHER CEDS GOALS NOT IN SCOPE OF WORK (Goals 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, & 9)

CEDS Goal #4: Assist Businesses and Industries with Disaster Preparedness

- Accomplishments Achieved: This is an ongoing goal implemented as needed.
- Quantifiable Deliverables: The 2017 CEDS update included a new section dedicated to Economic Resiliency – specifically how to absorb and response from economic shocks and disaster/natural shocks. The plan identifies the threats, what actions the region has taken, and what should be done moving forward. We have also accomplished the following disaster-related planning efforts this past year.

Our organization worked a number of Hazard Mitigation Plans in our region. Of note, 2017 Bremer County and 2017 Buchanan County Multi-Jurisdictional (MJ) Hazard Mitigation Plans (HMP) were approved by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) within the past year. The plans include the county, cities, and school districts.

We are also in the process of updating the Grundy County MJ-HMP. The Grundy County plan has been adopted by the County Board of Supervisors and has been submitted to FEMA for review.

Five of our six county's MJ-HMPs have been updated within the previous three years. Chickasaw County is due to update their plan in the coming year. INRCOG is in negotiations with Chickasaw County for a contract to update their MJ-HMP which is set to expire in 2019. INRCOG staff also participated in the Cedar Falls Whole Community Planning process, a project led by Safeguard Iowa Partnership and the Iowa Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management to identify vulnerabilities and threats and prioritize mitigation actions.

In 2015, INRCOG wrote a successful CDBG grant and we are now administering the resulting community facility project to mitigate flooding and storm water runoff in the City of Lamont. In addition, INRCOG submitted two HMGP applications that were awarded, and are now being administered by INRCOG, for warning sirens in Winthrop and Lamont in the past year.

We also continue to implement disaster-related housing projects including structural acquisitions and redevelopment initiatives. Most recently, flood buyouts (FEMA) are underway in the cities of Clarksville and Greene. Post disaster housing rehab (CDBG) are underway in Clarksville, Greene, and Shell Rock as a result of 2017 flooding.

- Difficulties Encountered: Our most significant difficulty encountered was identifying consistent funding availability to implement projects and initiatives identified in the plans.

CEDS Goal #5: Foster Effective Transportation Service for Projects

- **Accomplishments Achieved:** INRCOG is in the process of implementing its recently-completed Long Range Transportation Plan for the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). INRCOG also installed over 150 way-finding signs plus bicycle route navigational signs throughout the MPO. Staff continues work on a pedestrian master plan for the MPO and are now to the implementation stage of the organization's first, completed last year, Long Range Transportation Plan for the Regional Transportation Authority (RTA). The RTA includes all of areas in our EDD region not located in the MPO. Ongoing support is provided to cities and counties through monthly public policy and technical committees for both the MPO and RTA.
- **Quantifiable Deliverables:** Completion of the transportation plans justifies the allocation and programming of transportation funds (capital and planning) which is accomplished through the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), Transportation Alternative Program (TAP), and Transportation Work Programs (TPWP). INRCOG is responsible not only for the plans, but the TIPs, TAPs, and TPWPs for the MPO and RTA. Regarding the TIP, TAP and TPWPs for both entities, the annual drafts of both documents, with funding allocated through 2021, are out for public comment and the finished products will be presented to their respective boards for approval by this summer.

Specific transportation projects with strong economic development impacts addressed this past year include: continued reconstruction of an approximate two mile stretch of a business corridor on University Avenue in Cedar Falls which connects to Waterloo; continued design of a highway access and overpass project at IA Hwy 58 and Viking Road in Cedar Falls; continued design of IA Hwy 57 in Cedar Falls; continued reconstruction of US-63 in Waterloo from Jefferson St to Franklin St

In addition, a study of the northeastern industrial transportation network the Waterloo/Cedar Falls metropolitan area is also now underway. The goal of this study is to identify an alternative solution to increase efficiency of freight travel. The study will examine existing roadway usage and routes connecting the Northeast Industrial Area to highways US 63, US 218, US 20, and I-380. The study will generate recommendations to increase efficiency for freight transport, which will reduce traffic congestion at major junctions, cut down semi traffic on county roads and within communities, and accommodate future growth in the Northeast Industrial Area

Our staff also continues to participate in the Complete Streets efforts in Waterloo and Cedar Falls. In the end, we hope that the Complete Streets projects we review will positively affect quality of life, enhance local/central business districts, solidify neighborhood preservation efforts, encourage multiple transportation modes, and as a result maintain and improve economic vitality whenever possible.

- **Difficulties Encountered:** The demand for state and federal funds continues to exceed the availability of funding. Furthermore, the uncertainty of future federal transportation infrastructure spending the State of Iowa's method for sub allocating federal funds to MPOs and RTAs creates uncertainty in the planning process. Other

than having to continuously seek funding for such large transportation and Complete Streets projects we identify, no significant difficulties were experienced.

CEDS Goal #6: Protects and Enhances the Environment

- Accomplishments Achieved: In the past year, we completed county-wide Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) plans for Grundy County. The plan identifies goals and projects to further enhance and protect the county’s environmental, recreational, and historical resources.

INRCOG also continues to be an active participant in several watershed planning initiatives to reduce nitrate and phosphates runoff as well as mitigation flooding. These multi-jurisdictional efforts include the Cedar River Basin area, including the Upper Cedar Watershed and the Middle Cedar Watershed, stretching from southeastern Minnesota to Cedar Rapids, Iowa. These three watersheds will be recipients of a portion of the \$97 million Housing and Urban Development (HUD) grant, awarded in 2016, to implement flood mitigation and nutrient reduction programs.

INRCOG also conducts environmental reviews for Community Development Block Grant projects for housing and public infrastructure and identifies mitigation actions as appropriate. We also provide technical assistance to communities when they need additional resources or expertise while completing their own environmental reviews for projects.

For the first time, INRCOG completed two Source Water Protection plans for the cities of Gilbertville and Jesup. Source Water Protection (SWP) is the act of preventing contaminants from entering public drinking water sources. SWP includes both ground water (wellhead) protection and surface water protection. In partnership with the Iowa Department of Natural Resource’s Source Water Protection Program, the plans assess the threat of contaminants from source and non-point source and practices to decrease risk to drinking water supplies and wells.

- Quantifiable Deliverables: All economic development projects must adhere to environmental regulations, as is required by program, in order to receive assistance.
- Difficulties Encountered: Some difficulty is experienced in local jurisdictions identifying funding sources for planning initiatives.

CEDS Goal #7: Local Projects Will Be Consistent with Federal and State Economic Development Plans and Programs

- Accomplishments Achieved: This is an ongoing action step that continues to be implemented.
- Quantifiable Deliverables: Required by program; projects have remained consistent.

- Difficulties Encountered: None were noted or identified.

CEDS Goal #8: Recognize that Technology Will Play a Crucial Role in Economic Development

- Accomplishments Achieved: This is also an ongoing goal. Local ED groups and the Cedar Valley Regional Partnership (CVRP) continue to promote the need for accessible high-speed internet throughout the region. Many locally owned utilities continue install and expand fiber networks.
- Quantifiable Deliverables: All economic development projects are being impacted by technology. We should note that the CVRP, with our staff participation, is working with internet service providers and municipal utilities to enhance service to our businesses and industries including encouraging installation of infrastructure that will place our region at an economic advantage when it comes to web connectivity. In addition, this effort provides an educational opportunity for CVRP members.

Also, the CVRP launched a new website which will allow them to reach clients more effectively while providing more current information to prospective business clients. The website development included a strategic planning process to optimize the website functionality and appearance from internet search engines. The CVRP has also launched a new online regional job board.

- Difficulties Encountered: No significant difficulties were noted during the past year.

CEDS Goal #9: Work to Balance Resources in Economic Development Processes

- Accomplishments Achieved: This is also an ongoing goal.
- Quantifiable Deliverables: All economic development projects require a balancing of resources, not to mention the utilization of multiple funding sources. See the table presented in the next section, Evaluation of Effectiveness.
- Difficulties Encountered: No difficulties were noted during the past year.

EVALUATION OF EFFECTIVENESS

We have continued to see projects develop this past year in our region, and we are pleased with the economic development activities that were accomplished. The number of jobs retained and created as well as the amount of private investment in the area, as reported by our partners, was noticeably lower than in previous years. However, we are still optimistic about the region's prospects.

As is evident in the prior section of this update, this past year has required significant and regular contact with our local economic development officials and member governments. Those contacts have fostered excellent working relationships that we believe will continue into the future. Nonetheless, the following table contains a list of projects, reported to INREDC, that have developed during the past year. We should point out that some of these projects are still in the design and construction phases, but they do represent significant regional investment and job growth potential.

#	Initiative (Company/Location)	Local	Public	Category	Jobs Created or Retained	Public Investment			Private Investment
		Funding Source(s)	Agency (Federal, State, Local)			Local	State	Federal	
1	D. LaPorte, N.A. (Cedar Falls)	City/Private	City of Cedar Falls	R	13	\$175,000	\$0	\$0	\$1,200,000
2	Mudd Flex/Office (Cedar Falls)	City/Private	City of Cedar Falls	R	25	\$400,000	\$0	\$0	\$1,500,000
3	200 State Street (Cedar Falls)	City/Private	City of Cedar Falls	R	20	\$300,000	\$0	\$0	\$6,000,000
4	Iowa Sports Supply (Cedar Falls)	City/Private	City of Cedar Falls	R	5	\$60,000	\$0	\$0	\$303,000
5	Urban Flats (Cedar Falls)	City/Private	City of Cedar Falls	R	7	\$150,000	\$0	\$0	\$1,500,000
6	Braceability (Cedar Falls)	City/Private	City of Cedar Falls	R	11	\$45,000	\$0	\$0	\$400,000
7	Martin Bros. (Cedar Falls)	Private	Not Applicable	R	4	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$305,000
8	Wapsie Valley Creamery (Independence)	Private	Not Applicable	R	8	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$7,640,000
9	Dollar Tree (Independence)	Private	Not Applicable	R	18	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$574,880
10	Dollar General (Jesup)	Private	Not Applicable	R	18	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$525,063
11	NE Security Bank (Fairbank)	Private	Not Applicable	R	1	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$708,984
12	FJ Krob & Co (Rowley)	Private	Not Applicable	R	3	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$485,000
13	New Vision Woodworking (New Hampton)	City/Private	City of New Hampton	R	2	\$9,000	\$0	\$0	\$68,000
14	Studio 66/Dance (New Hampton)	City/Private	City of New Hampton	R	2	\$3,300	\$0	\$0	\$9,000
15	Studio 66/Dance (New Hampton)	City/Private	City of New Hampton	R	2	\$3,300	\$0	\$0	\$9,000
16	Bowlaway Lanes (New Hampton)	City/Private	City of New Hampton	R	3	\$20,000	\$0	\$0	\$165,290
17	McGrath Transportation Service (New Hampton)	City/Private	City of New Hampton	R	2	\$32,000	\$0	\$0	\$150,000
18	Kwik Star (Waverly)	Private	Not Applicable	R	25	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,300,000
Total					169	\$1,197,600	\$0	\$0	\$22,843,217
						\$1,197,600		\$22,843,217	

Category Type Key: I-Infrastructure; R-Facility; T-Technical Assistance; and P-Planning

State Agency Key: IEDA-Iowa Economic Development Authority; IDOT-Iowa Department of Transportation

SCHEDULE AND IMPLEMENTATION

In 2017, INREDC region was awarded a new three-year planning grant. At the time the planning grant application was submitted, April of 2016, the 2017 CEDs was not yet finalized and the submitted scope of work mirrored that of the 2012 CEDs.

However, now that the 2017 CEDs has been adopted by the INREDC Board and INRCOG Executive Committee, the scope of work for the 2017-2018 fiscal year will follow the goals, objectives, and tasks outlined in the 2017 CEDs. The CEDs update was submitted to EDA May 1, 2017 for review. The 2012 expires September 30, 2017.

Per the 2017 CEDs, the INREDC goals and objectives for the upcoming year are:

1) Maintain and Improve the Economic Vitality of the Region

- A. Attract, Retain and Expand Businesses in the Region
- B. Maintain and Further Develop Identified Regional Industry Clusters
 - a. Advanced Manufacturing
 - b. Food Processing
 - c. Distribution and Logistics
 - d. Information Technology
 - e. Agra-based Biotechnology and Bioscience
- C. Expand Entrepreneur Development
- D. Diversify the Region's Economic Base
- E. Facilitate Sustainable Economic Growth

2) Address Regional Workforce Needs

- A. Increase number of persons in workforce
- B. Up-skill and increase education levels of existing workforce
- C. Develop local pipeline of general and skilled laborers
- D. Improve the quality of life experience and attractiveness of region in order to retain and recruit workforce

3) Provide Adequate Housing Options

- A. Increase availability of workforce and affordable housing
- B. Provide a variety of housing types and options to support diverse and ever-changing lifestyles

4) Provide Utility and Public Infrastructure to Support Economic Growth

- A. Maintain, update, and invest in new infrastructure improvements for sanitary sewer, storm water, drinking water, waste facilities, broadband, as well as energy development and transmission
- B. Maintain and upgrade community facilities

5) Foster an Effective and Efficient Transportation Network

- A. Pursue transportation initiatives that strategically support economic development and movement of freight
- B. Provide safe, reliable, and efficient transportation network for the movement of persons and goods
- C. Provide transportation infrastructure that supports the high-use of trucks and farm equipment
- D. Increase availability of funds and revenue options to maintain and modernize regional transportation infrastructure.
- E. Improve public health and quality of life experience through transportation networks

6) Build Disaster and Economic Resilience

- A. Mitigate the risk natural and human-caused disasters pose to the region's population
- B. Reduce risk to and protect public (roads, utilities, structures, etc.) and private (businesses, etc.) infrastructure

7) Protect and Enhance our Natural Resources and Environment

- A. Protect and Enhance the Region's Land (farm ground, natural areas, etc.) and Water (rivers, aquifer, etc.) Resources

8) Maintain INREDC's Economic Development District Status

- A. Review and update CEDS plan on an annual basis
- B. Develop new CEDS every five years
- C. Maintain partnerships with US Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration and the Iowa Economic Development Authority to assist communities in our region
- D. Continue positive working relationships with the local economic development commissions, organization, and other partners
- E. Provide economic development assistance to businesses, industries, and local governments within the region

It is anticipated actions undertaken to achieve these goals will generate at least 200 new/retained jobs across the region during the next fiscal year, July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018. The above noted goals and objectives will be accomplished through implementation of the following strategies:

Figure C.1: Goal One Strategies

Priority	Action	Key Partners	Timeline	Cost Estimate
H	1. Maintain and facilitate growth of existing businesses and industries	ED Groups; Private Industry; Communities	Active	Moderate
H	2. Leverage the strength of the region's existing industry clusters to seek out and attract like-business and service providers	ED groups, CVRP	Long-Term	Medium
H	3. Recruit and Support development of a diverse set of businesses and industry	ED groups; CVRP	Long-Term	Low
H	4. Attract business investments by marketing the region as a whole through the Cedar Valley Regional Partnership	EDA; IEDA; CVRP; INRCOG	Active; Long-Term	Medium
H	5. Create and use a variety of incentive and financing options to support expansion and new development (TIF, Urban Renewal, Enterprise Zones, etc.)	ED groups; private industry; communities	Active	Low (technical assistance) to High (implementation)
H	6. Participate in development of and implement the Regional Entrepreneurship Project Plan, currently being developed by UNI (EDA Center)	UNI; EDA, Entrepreneurs	Medium	Low
M	7. Provide technical assistance, resources, incentives, and support a culture that encourages local entrepreneurship and makes the region an attractive location for potential entrepreneurs	UNI; EDA; Local ED Groups; Entrepreneurs	Active	Medium
M	8. Identify and market underutilized and/or abandoned commercial and industrial sites	INRCOG; CVRP; Communities	Medium-Term	Medium
M	9. Support communities by providing technical assistance in regard to development and revitalization programs	INRCOG; UNI-IDM; Communities	Active	Low
M	10. Promote and aid businesses in the development of succession plans	ED groups; GCVA; UNI-Advance Iowa; Private Sector	Long-Term	Medium
L	11. Develop inventory of best practices, regulations, ordinances, incentives, and other tools local jurisdictions can implement to encourage economic development	INRCOG	Medium-Term	Low

Figure C.2: Goal Two Strategies

Priority	Action	Key Partners	Timeline	Cost Estimate
H	1. Develop and implement regional marketing campaign to recruit general and skilled workers to the region	CVRP; GCVA	Medium Term	Low
H	2. Support projects and initiatives aimed at improving the quality of life experience in an effort to attract and retain employers and employees	CVRP; GCVA	Active; Long-Term	Low
H	3. Maintain and expand, as needed, training and apprenticeship programs with community colleges and workforce partners to meet skill demands	ED groups; K-12; UNI; HCC	Medium-Term	Medium
H	4. Up-skill existing labor force by providing training and education for non-traditional students	IWD; HCC; Private Industry	Medium-Term	High
H	5. Further develop training partnerships between Higher Education Institutions and individual businesses	IWD; UNI; HCC; Elevate Iowa	Medium-Term	Low
H	6. Maintain and expand partnerships between primary, secondary, and post-secondary schools and businesses to introduce students to career opportunities in the region (job shadowing, training programs, business tours, etc.)	K-12; HCC; Private Industry; Elevate Iowa	Short/ Medium-Term	Low
M	7. Retain area college graduates to aid in meeting workforce demands (UNI, Wartburg, Upper Iowa, HCC, etc.)	UNI; HCC; ED groups	Medium-Term	Low

Figure C.3: Goal Three Strategies

Priority	Action	Key Partners	Timeline	Cost Estimate
H	1. Develop projects, pursue grants, and implement Low-to-Moderate Income Housing Programs (CDBG, HOME, etc.)	HUD;IEDA; INRCOG; Cities;	Active to Long-Term	Moderate
H	2. Promote efforts to expand availability of workforce/affordable housing options in close proximity to where persons work	ED groups; Developers; INRHC; Communities	Long-Term	Low (technical) to high (construction)
H	3. Pursue state tax incentive, and other programs as identified, to provide incentives for developers	IEDA; IFA; Communities	Medium-Term	Low (technical) to high (construction)
H	4. Design incentives that encourage infill development of vacant lots and blighted areas	INRCOG; Communities	Short-Term	Low
M	5. Implement owner-occupied rehabilitation programs to aid low and moderate-income homeowners and improve community housing stock	IEDA; INRCOG; Communities	Active	Low
M	6. Conduct city and county housing assessments to fully understand local and regional housing needs	Communities; INRCOG	Short-Term	Low
M	7. Identify programs, funding sources, and incentives to be used as tools for nuisance abatement and redevelopment	IEDA; Communities	Active; Long-Term	Low
M	8. Provide a mix of residential development types and across a variety of price ranges	Communities; Developers	Long-Term	Low (technical) to high (construction)
M	9. Encourage Development to support living environments for aging demographic (universally designed homes; assisted living; group care facilities; retirement age communities; and access to services)	Communities; Developers	Long-Term	Moderate
L	10. Recruit and Support Partnerships between Communities and Developers	Communities; Developers	Medium-Term	Low

Figure C.4: Goal Four Strategies

Priority	Action	Key Partners	Timeline	Cost Estimate
H	1. Assist municipalities in planning for and obtaining financial resources (local; bonding; SRF; CDBG; USDA-RD) to fund needed infrastructure improvements	HUD; IEDA; USDA; USDOT; MPO; RTA	Active	Low (technical assistance) to High (construction)
H	2. Maintain and invest in community facilities which provide important services and beneficial quality of life aspects (city halls, libraries, community centers, emergency services buildings, daycares, parks, museums, hospitals, clinics, schools and other-like facilities)	Communities; IEDA	Active/ Medium-Term	High
H	3. Expand broadband telecommunications (internet) infrastructure systems throughout the region through public/private partnerships	Municipal/ Private Utilities; Communities	Active	High
M	4. Invest in local renewable energy production to promote sustainability and reduce long-term energy costs	Utility Companies	Long-Term	High
M	5. Study and build infrastructure water management systems to mitigate flooding and protect water quality	Cities; Region; WMAs	Long-Term	Moderate (studies) to high (construction)

Figure C.5: Goal Five Strategies

Priority	Action	Key Partners	Timeline	Cost Estimate
H	1. Prioritize transportation projects and system improvements that facilitate local job creation and retention	USDOT; IDOT; MPO; RTA; Rail Industry; Communities	Active	High
H	2. Develop linkages between existing, new, and re-developments as well as other economic drivers	IDOT; MPO; RTA; ED groups; Private Industry	Long-Term	High
H	3. Maintain and develop systems that support regional economic cluster – specifically distribution/logistics and movement of manufactured goods	IDOT; MPO; RTA; Private Industry	Active; Long-Term	Moderate to High
M	4. Capitalize on existing market access routes via Highway 20, US 218, Interstate 380 for Industrial Development	ED groups; Communities; Private Industry	Long-Term	High
M	5. Increase ridership and frequency of passenger flights to/from Waterloo Regional Airport (ALO)	GCVa; ALO	Medium-Term	Moderate
M	6. Improve freight transportation network via rail and air	Rail Companies; Industrial Parks	Long-Term	High
M	7. Promote use of environmentally sustainable modes of transportation, including public transit, trails, walking, and bicycling	MPO; RTA; Communities	Short/Long Term	Low
M	8. Pursue additional federal and state funding resources to provide for infrastructure demands	USDOT; IDOT; MPO; RTA; Communities	Active	Low
M	9. Work with individual communities and as a region to develop creative means to fund transportation needs	USDOT; IDOT; MPO; RTA; Communities	Active	Low (technical assistance) to High (construction)
L	10. Develop and maintain short-range and long-range MPO and RTA plans	MPO; RTA	Long-Term	Low
L	11. Conduct transportation and corridor studies	MPO; RTA; Private Sector Partners	Medium-Term	Low

Figure C.6: Goal Six Strategies

Priority	Action	Key Partners	Timeline	Cost Estimate
H	1. Maintain, update, and implement countywide Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plans	FEMA; IHSEMD; INRCOG; Counties	Medium-Term	Moderate
H	2. Coordinate regionally with Watershed Management Authorities to plan and implement flood mitigation efforts	DNR; IEDA; WMAs	Short/Long-Term	Low (technical assistance) to High (implementation)
M	3. Assist Businesses and Economic Development Organizations with Continuity and Disaster Planning Efforts	FEMA; IHSEMD; INRCOG; Eon. Dev.	Short-Term	Low-Moderate
M	4. Develop continuity plans for local governments and businesses as well as sponsor workshops aiding organizations in disaster preparation	IHSEMD; Communities	Short-Term	Moderate
M	5. Conduct preventative studies to identify mitigation actions and strategies	Communities; Private/Public Engineers	Long-Term	Moderate
M	6. Engage private sector in development of disaster plans	IHSEMD; INRCOG; Private Sector	Long-Term	Low
M	7. Invest in public safety and emergency services equipment to build capacity to prevent and/or respond to a disaster	Cities; County Emergency Managers	Long-Term	Moderate to High
L	8. Develop resource library to be able to refer businesses and communities to	INRCOG	Short-Term	Low

Figure C.7: Goal Seven Strategies

Priority	Action	Key Partners	Timeline	Cost Estimate
H	1. Prioritize Businesses and Industrial Development should that fit within the existing utility and transportation infrastructure	Cities, MPO; RTA; Rail; Utilities	Long-Term	High (development)
H	2. Work with local governments and other groups to identify and use or repurpose underutilized resources (empty buildings/lots, blighted areas, grey/brownfields, new development opportunities, etc.)	CVRP; Cities	Active	Low (technical) to High (implement)
H	3. Plan and implement water quality projects locally and at the watershed level that reduce runoff and pollutants	SWCD; WMA; Region	Short/Long-Term	Moderate (planning) to High (implementation)
M	4. Support initiatives focused on use of local foods in order to support regional produces and reduce need to transport food in and out of the region	K-12; Restaurant Industry; ED groups; UNI-CEEE; INRCOG	Medium-Term	Low
M	5. Implement land use policies which preserve valuable farmland as well as natural areas	Communities	Active	Low
M	6. Protect remaining natural areas for ecological benefits and promoting quality of life aspects	Communities; DNR	Active	Low
M	7. Plan and implement initiatives for drinking and source water protection	IDNR; INRCOG; Communities	Active/ Long-Term	Moderate (planning) to High (implement)
M	8. Conduct and adhere to environmental assessments and review processes established by economic development programs	USFWS; IDNR	Active	Low

Figure C.8: Goal Eight Strategies

Priority	Action	Key Partners	Timeline	Cost Estimate
H	1. Provide annual CEDS update and other necessary reports to EDA	EDA	Annually	Low
H	2. Provide planning and project development assistance for economic and community development	Communities; CVRP	Active	Low
H	3. Provide timely reports to EDA on plant closures and downsizings within the region	EDA; ED groups	As needed basis	Low
H	4. Maintain viability and continue to support CVRP	IEDA; CVRP	Active	Low
M	5. Attend trainings and continue working relationship with state and federal agencies	EDA; IEDA	Active; as available	Low
M	6. Maintain working relationships with local, state, and federal ED groups	EDA; IEDA; CVRP; counties; cities;	Active	Low
M	7. Conduct out-reach to jurisdictions to aid in development and funding of local ED planning and projects	CVRP; counties; cities; business leaders	Active	Low
L	8. Develop and maintain database of potential funding sources	EDA; IEDA; INREDC	Long-Term	Low

IOWA NORTHLAND REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

Board of Directors – Updated Composition (for 2016/2017)

1. GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES (51-65%)

Name	Government	Position
Frank Magsamen	Black Hawk County	Supervisor
Ken Kammeyer	Bremer County	Supervisor
Clayton Ohrt	Buchanan County	Supervisor
Jeff Kolb	City of Clarksville	City Council
Steve Geerts	Chickasaw County	Supervisor
Brian Buhrow	Grundy Center	Mayor
Quentin Hart	Waterloo	Mayor
Bill Werger	City of Waverly	Economic Development

2. NON-GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVES (35-49%)

A. Private Sector Representatives: *Any senior management official or executive holding a key decision-making position, with respect to any for-profit enterprise. (At least one required)*

Name	Company / Enterprise	Position
George Lake	Buchanan County EDC	Executive Director
Tammy Robinson	New Hampton EDC	Executive Director
Gale Brinkman	Greene Insurance	Owner/CEO
Rick Whalen	Butler County REC	Econ Dev. Director

B. Stakeholder Organization Representatives: *Executive directors of chambers of commerce or representatives of institutions of post-secondary education, workforce development groups or labor groups. (At least one required)*

Name	Organization	Position
Andrew Conrad	University of Northern Iowa	IDM Director
Aaron Sauerbrei	Hawkeye Community College	ED Director

3. AT-LARGE REPRESENTATIVES (0-14%)

Other individuals who represent the principal economic interests of the region. (No minimum required)

Name	Area of Interests/Background
Linda Laylin	Economic Development; Former Director of the Cedar Valley Growth Fund; member of Black Hawk County Board of Supervisors

CALCULATIONS

	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
1. Government Representatives (51-65%)	<u>8</u>	53%
2. Non- Government Representatives (35-49%)	<u>6</u>	40%
A. Private Sector Representatives (at least 1)	4	
B. Stakeholder Organization Representatives (at least 1)	2	
3. At-Large Representatives (0-14%)	<u>1</u>	<u>7%</u>
Total Board Membership	15	100%