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AMES BUSINESS

QUARTERLY

Spring 2010

Building on innovation

From ideas to successful businesses



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ON THE COVER

Gordon Link, the chief financial officer for NewLink Genetics, stands in front of the addition to the new Building 5 at the Iowa State University Research Park. NewLink has moved into the larger space from Building 3. Photo by Ronnie Miller, The Tribune.

CONTACT US

Ames Business Quarterly is a publication of The Tribune, 317 Fifth St., Ames, IA, 50010; (515) 232-2160.

WELCOME TO THE ISSUE

Ames: Beyond innovation

By its basic definition, the word “innovation” simply means “something new or different introduced,” which may be why the word may seem overused. After all, that would qualify a redesigned magazine cover or an uncovered shortcut to the office as being innovative.

So what word would you use to describe a community that fosters entrepreneurial start-up businesses that are digitizing systems to connect the veterinary world, finding cures for cancer, or even revolutionizing how a college town thinks about pizza? “Innovative” seems like just the beginning.

This spring we invite you to read through the following pages to discover a few Ames businesses that are truly beyond innovative. We are thrilled to introduce you to NewLink Genetics, GlobalVetLink, Vesuvius Pizza and others that are introducing the “new or different” to Ames and the world. Learn about these success stories that have grown from simple ideas and one-man-shops into companies employing dozens of people that affect the city, state and world.

And while these highlighted



DAN CULHANE
president and CEO, Ames Chamber of Commerce and Ames Economic Development Commission

businesses are introducing new things in their own right, entrepreneurship in Ames is not a new trend. These companies follow a tradition of creative successes, and, as a result, Ames has been transformed into a community whose culture is to readily invest, personally and corporately, in new industries in order to see new jobs and opportunities increase.

The benefits of living in an entrepreneurially minded community are numerous.

First, even during the nation’s troubled economy over the last 18 months, Ames has consistently been ranked as one of the top three communities in the nation for having the lowest unemployment rates. While this statistic is also largely based on a stable government workforce, innovative companies consistently creating new jobs adds to a solid workforce.

Second, creativity begets creativity. A culture that is open to new ideas in industry will also be open to new ideas in other arenas, so it’s not surprising that there has been renewed interest in investing in façade improvements or statewide marketing initiatives for Ames’ Main Street Cultural District, especially since it was awarded the Main Street Iowa designation in 2009.

Third, an innovative community that invests in its own keeps businesses engaged on several levels. Perhaps this is why our Chamber membership continues to increase, interest continues to grow in legislative business issues, and real estate activity has been constant.

Life is good when “innovative” is just the beginning. Welcome to Ames.



■ MID-IOWA ECONOMIC DATA

Jobless rate creeps up; home sales stable

By BOB ZIENTARA
Staff Writer

The residual effects of a reportedly ebbing recession are showing up in Story County unemployment figures, but encouraging signs are apparent in recent employment developments and the local housing market, according to statistics from state and federal agencies.

Between the end of September 2009 and Jan. 31 of this year, the county's unemployment rate crept upward by 1.3 percent, according to the Iowa Department of Workforce Development. The department's assessment of the county's employed workforce showed that some 1,500 jobs were lost between the counts taken at the end of November 2009 and January 2010.

Counteracting that trend was word that a major employer in Ames, Sauer-Danfoss, had taken on 120 new employees since the beginning of the year. That positive sign came after the worldwide recession forced the hydraulics equipment manufacturer to shed between 80 and 100 workers in January 2009, followed by 100 more at the end of February and 145 additional workers the following June.

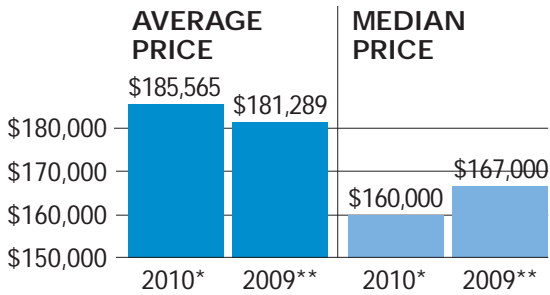
Some 20 new jobs were added to the county economy with the opening in December 2009 of a new plant in Story City that reconditions and repairs wind turbine gearboxes.

Generation Repair is owned and operated by Florida-based NextEra Energy, which has two 100-turbine wind farms in Mid-Iowa: one in northeastern Story County, near Zearing, and the other in nearby Hardin County.

The Mid-Iowa housing market, while still affected by the recession, also showed signs of resilience. According to data from the Ames Multiple Listing Service, it takes about a week longer to sell a home in Ames nowadays than it did a year ago, and the median price of that home is \$6,000 less than it was in 2009.

HOUSING MARKET

12-month home sales for Ames and adjoining rural subdivisions



HOMES SOLD

2010*	2009**
557	573

Sales are down 2.7%.

AVERAGE DAYS ON MARKET

2010*	2009**
97	93

SALE PRICE TO LIST PRICE RATIO

2010*	2009**
94.9%	94.6%

*12 months ending Feb. 28, 2010
**12 months ending Feb. 28, 2009

Ames listings and pending sales

Date	Active	New listings*	Sale pending*
January 2010	196	57	29
January 2009	242	38	22
February 2010	196	57	29
February 2009	257	50	26
March 2010	242	99	47
March 2009	265	57	44

*From previous month
Source: Ames Multiple Listing Service, compiled by Hunziker & Associates Realtors

RETAIL

Iowa sales tax receipts

- Third quarter 2009: \$382,942,000
- Second quarter 2009: \$512,570,000

Ames hotel/motel room tax quarterly receipts

- September 2009: \$301,452.69
- Fiscal 2009 (July 1, 2008-June 30, 2009): \$1,839,443
- Fiscal 2008: \$1,105,363

Source: Iowa Department of Revenue

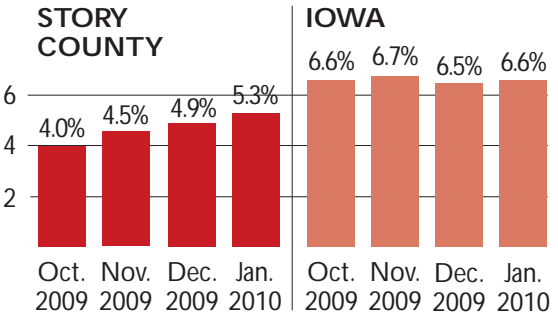
However, the average sale price is up by some \$5,000, and home sellers are getting nearly

95 percent of their asking price at closing, according to the survey of MLS-member Realtors

who market homes in the city of Ames and adjacent rural subdivisions.

WORKFORCE

Unemployment



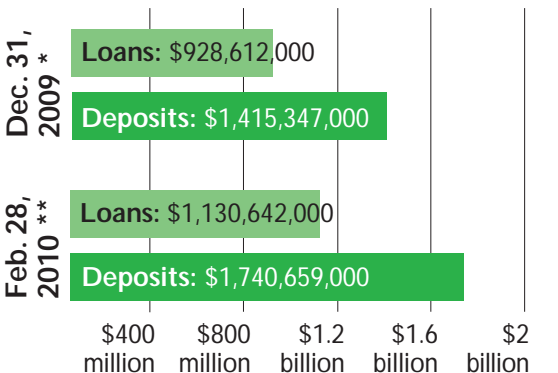
Labor force/employment

	January 2010	November 2009
Ames	32,100/30,700	32,700/31,400
Story Co.	48,700/46,100	49,900/47,600

Source: Iowa Workforce Development, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

FINANCE

Ames lenders, deposits and loans



Source:
*Participating lenders (10): ACE Community Credit Union, Ames Community Bank, Bankers Trust, F&M Bank, First American Bank, First National Bank, Greater Iowa Credit Union, Midwest Heritage Bank, River Valley Credit Union and Valley Bank.
**Participating lenders (11): ACE Community Credit Union, Ames Community Bank, Bankers Trust, F&M Bank, First American Bank, First Federal Savings Bank, First National Bank, Greater Iowa Credit Union, Midwest Heritage Bank, River Valley Credit Union and Valley Bank.

Bankruptcies

- Story County as of Feb. 8, 2010: 43 or approximately 20 per month.
- 2009 calendar year total: 209 or approximately 17 per month.

Source: U.S. Bankruptcy Court, Des Moines

■ SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION LOANS

Ames companies large and small innovate with SBA loans

By BOB ZIENTARA
Staff Writer

A recent transplant from the Twin Cities area, Scott Coldiron wanted to make pizza in an old-world wood-fired oven in Ames.

Meanwhile, longtime local residents Kevin and Yvonne Kinzler, founders of Kinzler Companies, a large business with some 90 employees, had just struck a deal to stock rentable insulation blowers in hundreds of big-box stores throughout the continental United States.

Coldiron's restaurant, Vesuvius Wood-Fired Pizza, obtained a \$210,000 loan from the U.S. Small Business Administration last year and is now serving up Italian creations to customers at its south-Ames location.

At Kinzler Companies, on the west edge of the city, scores of shrink-wrapped insulation machines are stored in a warehouse, awaiting shipment to client stores, due, in part, to assistance from a \$1.25 million SBA loan.

Large or small, businesses in the Ames market are using SBA-backed loans to grow their bottom line, hire more workers and change the shape of the local business landscape.

Chasing market niches

Kevin and Yvonne Kinzler started Kinzler Companies out of their home in 1984. It has grown to the point where "we employ about 90 people out of this facility, 25 in our location in Cedar Falls and 10 more at a location in Ankeny," Kevin Kinzler said.

"We have two internal, sister companies. We're probably the only company that installs insulation (and involves itself with) building science, the



PHOTOS BY RONNIE MILLER/THE TRIBUNE

Mitch Longtin, the blower shop manager at Kinzler Construction Services, unwraps an insulation blowing machine in for repairs at the business in west Ames.



Kevin and Yvonne Kinzler are the founders and owners of Kinzler Construction Services located in west Ames. The company was founded in 1984.

innovative work that we do with general contractors, architects and individuals to (install

"With the federal stimulus bill, they lowered the up-front fees."

Kevin Kinzler,
Kinzler Construction Services owner

insulation in) new structures or retrofit existing buildings."

Kinzler's SBA loan "was tied to another division in our company that builds, manufactures and leases insulation equipment," he said.

"It's primarily for do-it-yourselfers at stores like Lowe's and Menards," Kinzler said. "If you want to insulate your own attic and you go to those stores, you'll find a blower to rent that we own and lease (to the stores)."

Kinzler is a Glidden native

who came to Ames to attend Iowa State University and was once a local firefighter before striking out on his own.

He said his company started out in drywall and insulation, but began branching out.

"As your business develops, you chase certain niches," he said. "I have that entrepreneurial spirit, and that was the fun side of (growing) the business."

The more he investigated the possibilities for insulation and energy conservation, the more that aspect appealed to Kinzler,

to the point where “today, we have some patented products and processes that we do.”

Company growth has enabled Kinzler to move into everything from “downtown high rises in West Des Moines to retrofitting for individual homes.”

“They all have their place,” he said. “We are doing an airplane hangar in Phoenix, and we just closed up a blown cellulose attic for a hog barn in Bozeman, Mont.”

Kinzler said several factors made the SBA loan attractive even though his company had never used one before.

“With the federal stimulus bill, they lowered the up-front fees, and the banks are getting a higher guarantee by the SBA,” he said.

Feeding Italian appetites

For Vesuvius Pizza owner Scott Coldiron, the loan helped him develop an idea he got when he helped install a wood-fired oven while he worked as

a chef at a golf course in Bloomington, Minn.

Those experiences helped provide the inspiration that became Vesuvius Wood-Fired Pizza restaurant, which opened in January at 1620 S. Kellogg Ave. The restaurant covers 2,100 square feet, seats about 65 customers and employs 14 full- and part-time workers, Coldiron said.

Joe Folsom, director for the Des Moines district office for the Small Business Administration, said the lowered loan costs make a significant difference to both borrowers and lenders.

“We wouldn’t have had the response from borrowers without (the stimulus bill),” Folsom said. “The up-front fee was waived, and that made a big difference for borrowers.”

Banks and other lenders were reassured because the stimulus money allowed the government to guarantee up to 90 percent of the loan amount, Folsom said.

Previous loan guarantee levels were at 85 to 75 percent, Folsom said.

Story County Small Business Administration loans*

Company**	Amount
Zachary F. Ward, chiropractor	\$44,000
WestCyde Wings	\$147,000
Kinzler Construction Services	\$1,250,000
R&C Landscape and Lawn Care Inc.	\$1,100,000
Success Gymnastics Academy	\$100,000
Vesuvius Wood-Fired Pizza	\$210,000
MG Biologics Inc.	\$810,000
Origin LLC	\$187,500
Quilting Connection Inc.	\$275,000
Nutrishop	\$80,000
Lass LLC	\$8,000
Phinial Inc.	\$5,000
Clear Creek Orchard Inc., Collins	\$50,000
CNB Transportation, Gilbert	\$15,000
LylyPad Learning Center LLC, Huxley	\$273,000
Central Iowa Televising LLC, Story City	\$200,000

*Loans announced fall 2009

**All recipients from Ames unless otherwise shown

Source: U.S. Small Business Administration, Des Moines office

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Main Street Ames benefits from state program



By RONNIE MILLER/THE TRIBUNE

Sonya Stoltze Newstrom does a checkup on Jacob Egeland, 5, of Boone, on March 15 at Stoltze & Stoltze Family Dentistry in Ames. Stoltze Newstrom is serving as chair of the Main Street Cultural District central committee.

BY BOB ZIENTARA
Staff Writer

As a girl growing up in Ames, Sonya Stoltze Newstrom loved shopping for shoes at the Lazy M store on Main Street and attending summer classes at the Octagon Center for the Arts.

Now, as a dentist working in the family business, which is also located in downtown Ames, she's adding new experiences to the childhood memories by serving as chair of the Main Street Cultural District central committee.

"Every downtown has its own, unique characteristics," Stoltze Newstrom said. "Having the experiences that I did made Ames special to me."

With an ambitious Main Street program, which is linked to the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the state of Iowa is helping downtowns such as Ames retool, reinvest and become attractive destinations for tourists and shoppers.

Downtown Ames earned official Main Street Iowa certification in May 2009, starting a process in which years of expertise and training know-how worth well over \$100,000 will be offered free of charge to downtown Ames business and building owners.

Those services will be available to some 200 businesses within an area bounded by Duff and Grand avenues on the east and west, and Sixth Street and Lincoln Way on the north and south. Collectively, those businesses employ about 1,500 people according to data gathered during the application process.

Along with it will come

"Every downtown has its own, unique characteristics. Having the experiences that I did made Ames special to me."

Sonya Stoltze Newstrom, chair of Main Street Cultural District central committee

hundreds of thousands of additional dollars in the form of grants, loans or tax incentives to help downtown owners spruce up their buildings.

To get this far, it took more than a year of work by former Cultural District director Jayne McGuire and downtown volunteers, plus the support of the city of Ames.

Mayor Ann Campbell was among those advocating for Main Street status last year, outlining such possible developments as an enlarged and renovated Ames Public Library and proposals for the Sheldon-Munn Hotel and Towne Centre, two of Main Street's largest individual buildings.

"There are so many balls in the air on Main Street, the state's assets can be helpful to us," Campbell said.

In return for all that ground work, participating business owners need to attend conferences and seminars, organize themselves into committees and complete a host of accountability reports for the state.

For many of the small business owners, this kind of cooperation is a new experience.

"Yes, they're independent thinkers," Stoltze Newstrom said. "But the people who are

highly involved realize that a group effort to improve the whole will absolutely benefit the parts. I've heard several business owners say just that."

One of the goals is to recruit building and business owners who don't yet belong to the Cultural District, she said.

"We'd love to have them, not just because we want their input, but in making an investment in the district, it helps and benefits the whole," Stoltze Newstrom said.

After participating in Cultural District meetings for two years, Stoltze Newstrom, 29, agreed in 2008 to become board vice president "with the knowledge that it would be a three-year commitment."

During that time, she and her fellow committee members want to persuade downtown business owners that they're not only Main Street members, but investors in a successful downtown. To do that, Main Street Ames has to show those owners what's in it for them.

"We want to continue to improve the benefits for our investors," Stoltze Newstrom said, "so we can continue to grow our investor base.

"The more business owners who invest in the district, the more we can do for down-

town, and for the city of Ames, for that matter, because people from all over town come to downtown."

The process has been a good for Ames, according to Jane Seaton, state coordinator of Main Street Iowa.

To qualify for funding, the city engaged in an inventory so thorough it was almost like a census document, profiling each downtown building and each business housed in it, along with details such as names and contact information for building owners, square footage, available parking and business hours.

Seaton called the inventory "a great exercise in 'know thyself,'" when she appeared at a meeting to encourage Cultural District business owners and landlords to finish their work.

Visible benefits have already accrued.

In fall 2009, three state design consultants worked at no charge with downtown business owners to help them with everything from display windows to floor plans. The city is also pitching in with a program offering cash grants for business owners who improve and/or renovate their building façades.

Scott Richardson, owner of State Farm Insurance, 101 Main St., for example, obtained a \$15,000 grant from the city of Ames in 2009, to renovate and beautify the façade on his downtown building. The grant leveraged an additional \$27,000 in private funds, and Richardson invested another \$60,000 on an interior remodeling of the building.

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■ MAIN STREET AMES

City considers ways to preserve historic façades on Main Street

By JENNIFER MEYER
Staff Writer

The city of Ames is looking into ways to preserve more historic-looking façades such as those that public-funded grants help recreate downtown.

“We might spend money on one building,” City Planner Jeff Benson said, “and the building next door might just tear all (the historic elements) out. Or one owner might fix up a building with our funds, and then they might sell the building a year later and the new owner might tear all that stuff out.

“So the question is, ‘Are we really accomplishing anything if we let these things happen?’”

The city’s façade improvement program has assisted about 15 downtown businesses since it was introduced as a loan program in 2000, Benson said. Since 2003, the city has matched business investment with grants up to \$15,000.

The Ames City Council expanded eligibility boundaries for the program in November 2008, and directed staff to research options for protecting public investment in the “classic middle of the century storefront” appearance of downtown.

At a meeting attended by about 20 people on March 15, city staff proposed more-restrictive zoning regulations as one option. However, Benson said, participants at the meeting were reluctant to support zoning that codified what business and property owners could or could not do with their property.

“They were more interested in if someone was going to do the project and use our grant funds, they could maybe sign an agreement to not demolish the work for a certain number of years,” Benson said.

Staff also will meet with members of the Main Street Cultural District in the next month to discuss potential program changes before making a presentation to the city council.

“The grant program for the city is really a great tool to help owners and store tenants to upgrade the fronts when they need them and keep the Main Street looking sharp, and that’s what we want to have,” said John Doyle, a Cultural District member who attended the March 15 meeting.



By RONNIE MILLER/TRIBUNE FILE PHOTO

Nyssa Levy, left, and Jaymi LeBrun, both of Ames, walk down Main Street in Ames in 2009. The city of Ames is looking into ways to preserve more historic-looking façades downtown.



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■ NEWLINK

Building on innovation

NewLink sustains cutting-edge biotechnology in Mid-Iowa

BY BOB ZIENTARA
Staff Writer

Scientist-entrepreneur Nick Vahanian, who co-founded NewLink Genetics with partner (and company CEO) Charles Link Jr., took a brief break in the hallway outside his office at the Iowa State University Research Park one recent afternoon.

"I'm sorry. I haven't been around lately. I've been doing a lot of traveling," he said.

According to company Chief Financial Officer Gordon Link (no relation to his boss), that's putting it lightly.



Vahanian

Link said Vahanian has been criss-crossing the United States in recent months on two basic missions.

First, Vahanian is looking for doctors and patients to be part of tests required by the Food and Drug Administration before NewLink can put its four genetically engineered cancer cures on the market, he said.

Second, he's gathering venture capital and connecting with the individual and institutional investors who are backing the company.

"The biotech business model is unlike most businesses," Link said. "The time horizons



PHOTOS BY RONNIE MILLER/THE TRIBUNE

Lindsay Weber and Brandon Birk, above, both research assistants at NewLink Genetics, work in a pharmaceutical clean room in January. NewLink is moving from its current location to a new building being completed in the ISU Research Park, right, shown on March 11.

before you commercialize the drug are very long."

From discovery to commercialization, a biotech invention takes eight to 10 years to bring to market, he said.

"You have to be able to fund all the research and development with investor equity, such as private placements of preferred stock," he said. "Some companies do it with big venture capi-

tal firms. NewLink raised most of its money from small funds and high net-worth individuals in Iowa and Chicago."

Learning new skills

The founding partners started out with some promising ideas they developed as researchers. But according to Gordon Link, both have had to reinvent themselves as market

specialists, venture capital seekers and hand-holders.

Exactly how did that happen? "First, there's a deep understanding of the underlying technology," Link said. "The other is a passion for the business. With their pitches to potential investors, you can see the passion come through."

NEWLINK please see page 12



NewLink

Continued from page 10

Persuading doctors, patients and investors has been a way of life for the company co-founders in the 11 years since they developed HyperAcute, a trademarked vaccine designed to help harness the human body's "rejection response" to locate, identify and eliminate cancer cells.

The vaccines are in various stages of FDA-authorized testing on patients with advanced cases of lung, prostate and pancreatic cancer, as well as malignant melanoma.

In a presentation to Iowa Lt. Gov. Patty Judge in January, NewLink clinical and regulatory compliance officer Jay Ramsey said the pancreatic cancer vaccine is about to begin a Phase III clinical trial.

According to the National Cancer Institute, where, coincidentally, Ramsey, Charles Link and Vahanian have all worked, the Phase III trial "compare(s) the results of people taking a new treatment with the results of people taking the standard treatment ... and ... may include hundreds of people."

New building

The more people who will test the vaccine, the more will need to be made, which is why NewLink is expanding into an additional 25,000 square feet of space at the Iowa State University Research Park, Ramsey said. Of that total, 14,000 square feet is for manufacturing HyperAcute vaccine products.

Charged with overseeing the move from NewLink's existing offices to a new building now being completed in the Research Park, Ramsey said the additional space will help NewLink ramp up vaccine production for the Phase III trials.

"Much of the true, basic research is behind us," he said. "We're now exploiting the potential for the products we've already developed."

ISU Research Park Building 5 will offer more space for the 65 people who work for the company, including 12 new



PHOTOS BY RONNIE MILLER/THE TRIBUNE

Above: Steve Bacon, a technician with Systems Management and Balancing in Des Moines, looks over paperwork in one of the nearly completed new rooms of Building 5 at the Iowa State University Research Park on Thursday, March 11.



Left: Brian Edwards, a painter with Heartland Finishes in Des Moines, works on the inside of a room in the new building.

positions filled in the last four months of 2009, Ramsey said.

NewLink expects to hire up to 20 additional people to work in research and clinical projects in 2010, he said.

Company leaders are familiar with one another and conversant in the science of curing cancer, Gordon Link said.

"Most of the rest of the senior people in the company were recruited from the National Cancer Institute," he said. "Nick and Chuck met there, and they, in turn, recruited some more people from NCI to help form the scientific core of the company. Jay Ramsey is one of them."

State, city, AEDC step up

If it's the science that brought the company leaders together, it's the jobs, along

with the promise of cutting-edge technology, that have attracted so much attention to NewLink from private and public investors. That includes the venture capitalists who put up millions to fund the research, right down to the state of Iowa and the city of Ames.

During her appearance in Ames, Judge noted that in 2004, the Grow Iowa Values Fund committed \$6 million to keeping NewLink in Iowa. And in December 2009, the Ames City Council agreed to a \$200,000 forgivable loan to help NewLink with its relocation, an amount matched by the Ames Economic Development Commission's Seed Capital fund.

In exchange, NewLink agreed to:

- Commit to a five-year

lease with an option for extension to 10 years for the new building.

- Create and/or retain 150 new jobs with an average salary of \$40,000 per year over five years.

"We'd looked into moving into different manufacturing space," Link said.

"We have a close relationship with FDA, and they were convinced we could manufacture drugs for clinical trials here, but we needed a commercial volume facility."

With its new headquarters and some promising ideas about to bring to market, NewLink has that opportunity — in Ames.

Bob Zientara can be reached at (515) 663-6961 or rzientara@amestrib.com.



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By RONNIE MILLER/THE TRIBUNE

Gordon Link, the chief financial officer for NewLink Genetics, stands in front of the addition to the new Building 5 at the Iowa State Research Park. NewLink has moved into the larger space from Building 3.



■ GORDON LINK

NewLink exec looks after growing company finances

BY BOB ZIENTARA
Staff Writer

Gordon Link is a relative newcomer to Ames, and his presence here is a signal it's time for the NewLink Genetics company to "innovate itself" into something different than it once was.

"It's ironic that this discussion is about innovation," said Link, who is not related to NewLink Genetics co-founder Chuck Link. "I was just down in Des Moines to sit in on discussion at the Iowa Department of Economic Development, about the Iowa Innovation Council.

"They are looking at several business sectors, one of which is life sciences and advanced manufacturing, both of which we're involved in."

Link started his new job in August 2008, coming to Ames from Tapestry Pharmaceuticals, in Boulder, Colo.

"I did the same thing for a similar kind of biotech company," he said. "The only difference is they were public, and this one is private."

NewLink didn't have a CFO before Gordon Link's job was created, "but they were growing and they needed to access more capital than they'd done in the past," he said.

"The company was maturing organizationally," Link said. "Some of that maturation is apparent. We are moving toward our first big manufacturing facility (now under construction near Airport Road and South Loop Drive)."

Beneath the surface are more signs of growth, including word that the federal Food and Drug Administration "has approved our application for



BY RONNIE MILLER/THE TRIBUNE

Work continues on the expansion of Building 5 at the Iowa State University Research Park on March 11 in Ames. NewLink Genetics is moving into the new building.

'special protocol assessment,' which lets us move into the last testing phase of our lead drug," Link said.

Under the brand name of HyperAcute, NewLink is developing biologic (irradiated and otherwise modified cellular-based) cures for four types of cancer: lung, pancreatic, melanoma and prostate.

"All these steps are major corporate milestones for biotech companies, and it led to NewLink hiring two senior executives, myself and Ken Lynn, who is our vice president of business development," Link said.

The presence of Gordon Link and Lynn provide company co-founders Charles Link Jr. and Nick Vahanian with a precious commodity, time.

"Chuck (Link) is still an adjunct faculty member at Iowa State University and still treats patients at the largest cancer therapy partnership in the state," Link said. "Besides seeing patients, he is CEO here.

"Nick's official title is either president or chief operating officer, and he also serves as chief medical officer. That's one of his biggest jobs in the company as we prepare for the final phases of testing."

It's Vahanian's job to work with investigators at clinical sites and recruit cancer patients

willing to participate in NewLink's high-level tests, Gordon Link said.

The company's growth "frees Nick up to talk to doctors," he said. "We're getting ready to start a clinical study where we need to recruit 700 patients at 50 medical centers all over the U.S., and he's the go-to guy for that."

Personal preference and relationships with the state of Iowa and ISU account for

NewLink's continuing presence in Ames, Link said.

"Chuck was a Midwesterner, born and raised in Ohio," he said. "He wanted to raise his kids in the Midwest. Nick is the scientist. Like Chuck, he came from the National Cancer Institute. He's an MD but hasn't been a doctor as long as Chuck has."

Iowa Health Systems recruited Link to run a cancer research foundation in Des Moines. And after he and Vahanian co-founded the company, they moved to Ames "in part because, being a young startup, they knew that access to capital is important, and they had good support from the Department of Economic Development.

"We also have a good relationship with the university," Link said. "We use their resources, we work with the faculty, and we've been able to access ISU graduates to help build our workforce."

It's unusual for a biotech company to be in central Iowa, Link said.

"This isn't San Francisco, or

Boston, where you might find 50 to 100 biotech companies with a lot of trained staff," he said. "Here, we recruit, train and build our organization, largely internally.

"But we have a good relationship with the Research Park, and Iowa has treated us well. We're prepared to stay."

"Iowa has treated us well. We're prepared to stay."

Bob Zientara can be reached at (515) 663-6961 or rzientara@amestrib.com.

■ MEASURE INC.

Design innovation earns company award

By BOB ZIENTARA
Staff Writer

Measure Inc., a communication design company in Ames, does not have a long history in the community, having started here just more than a year ago.

But the company has already earned recognition from an important industry publication. International Design magazine has presented it with an award for its work on behalf of Bayer CropScience.

Bayer markets herbicides, insecticides, fungicides and seeds (among other products). Measure Inc. developed the project for Bayer in advance of the 2008 Farm Progress Show in Boone.

Bayer hired Measure Inc. to create an interactive DVD to display its products. The disc was meant for sales representatives and representatives of Bayer sales outlets throughout the region.

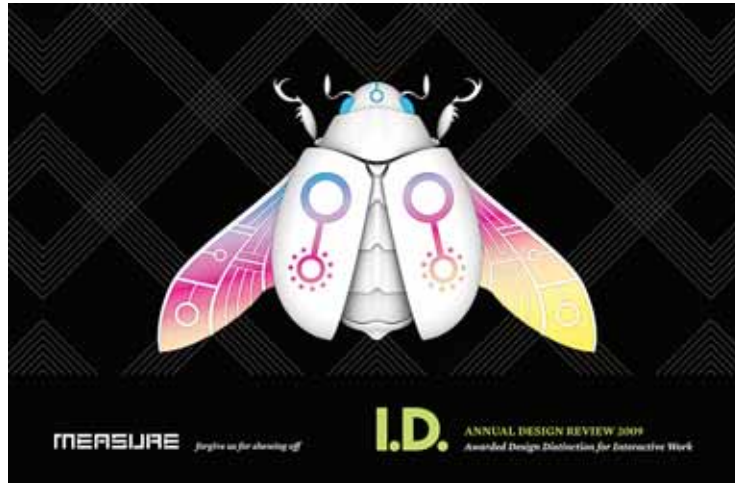
Company owner and creative director Chad Johnston said the connection with Bayer began two years ago, when a local sales representative saw Measure Inc.'s work on the Web.

Chris Malven, senior art director, was responsible for much of the project. It took about six weeks to create the program, he said.

Springing out of the ground

Malven said the DVD lets users explore a large collection of Bayer products, grouped in either corn or soybean categories.

The user starts by clicking a kernel-shaped symbol ("c" for corn, "s" for soy). The user is then taken for a "ride in the sky," which ends with a computer-designed view of a cornfield or soybean field.



CONTRIBUTED IMAGE

Measure Inc. used its 2009 International Design magazine award as a platform for a direct mail campaign that features intricate, geometric designs set against a black background.

Measure Inc. staff members

- Chad Johnston, owner/creative director
- Chris Malven, senior art director
- Austin Van Laar, art director
- David Stone, office manager
- Jeff Savage, technology manager

From there, links take the user to various product lines, which "spring out of the ground" like stalks of corn or branches of soy plants.

"The biggest reason for this CD is to let the Bayer sales folks sit down with clients and go through the product lines in a user-friendly way," Malven said.

"It lets Bayer do their marketing without a lot of brochures," Johnston said.

Two jurors for International Design magazine were impressed, too.

"Never in a zillion years would I expect something like

this," juror John VonDracek said.

The magazine noted that the demonstration "opened with an ambient soundtrack and blue Midwestern sky, and sprouts appeared in the dirt surrounded by markers showing categories of Bayer products, like fungicides and herbicides."

Juror Neri Oxman said the demonstration "tells the story of the crops, and it takes you through the experience."

Silvery symbols created

Measure Inc. submitted its work to the magazine's 2009 "Design Review" contest after the 2008 Farm Progress Show.

Johnston and Malven said the magazine is well regarded in the graphic design and communication industry.

"It circulates to a group mainly involved in industrial, product and fashion design," Johnston said.

"If I'm in an airport, it's what I read while I'm waiting or on the flight," Malven said.

Measure Inc. used the award as a platform for a direct mail campaign that features intricate, geometric

designs in the form of silvery beetles and flying insects, set against a black background.

Johnston said the mailings were meant to heighten interest in Measure's Web site, www.designmeasure.com.

"We are all interested in science and artistic design, and how they meet in the work we do," Malven said. "We liked the fact that the bugs could contribute to that blending of those two ideas."

Gaining new clients

Measure Inc. is now working for a former Iowan, Tom Bedell, and his wife, Molly, formerly of Spencer. They now live in Aspen, Colo., and sell guitars and apparel under the whimsical brand name of Two Old Hippiess.

"We continue to do a lot of work for Bayer CropScience," Johnston said. "And we have also designed materials (during 2009) for the Des Moines Art Center, Iowa State Bank, Holm Graphic Services (and Meredith Corporation.)"

Last year, the company designed and launched three new Web sites for Bayer's Selective Corn Herbicide products. (See www.bayercornherbicides.com.)

Johnston, a 1995 graduate of Iowa State University and the owner of Des Moines-based On Purpose Inc., dissolved his company and founded Measure Inc., just less than a year ago at 2321 N. Loop Drive, the same building that houses the ISU Cyber Innovation Institute's technical nerve center.

In addition to Johnston and Malven, the company's other employees are David Stone, office manager, Jeff Savage, technology manager, and Austin Van Laar, art director.

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■ GLOBALVETLINK

Paperless system aids in animal transfers

By BOB ZIENTARA
Staff Writer

Somewhere on an Iowa feedlot, sometime in the near future, a veterinarian will pull out her smart phone and write a prescription for antibiotics.

She will log on to a system created by Ames-based GlobalVetLink. As she progresses through the program, the veterinarian will be able to look over information about her client's livestock and find out what other kinds of medications the animals may be taking.

She will also be able to upload the prescription to one of 450 feed mills around the country that are connected to GlobalVetLink's database.

All this is the intellectual product of a company that didn't exist 10 years ago and which started out with one entrepreneur working out of his basement.

GlobalVetLink's day-to-day operations are run by founder Kevin Maher and veterinarian Conrad Schmidt, who serves as board chairman and partner. It creates and markets online documents for animals, which are accepted by state governments and veterinarians in 49 states.

"And we're just signing up the 50th state, Rhode Island," Maher said.

Before digitized documents, it was necessary for a raft of paperwork to accompany animals as they moved across state lines. With state approval on the sending and receiving ends, it's now possible for livestock, pets and show animals to be transferred or sold in a paperless and secure environment.

Servers and desktop computers support the system as it is, but the next step is up to the GlobalVetLink information technology experts, including technical services manager Bob Shuka and programmer Aaron Eischeid.



By RONNIE MILLER/TRIBUNE FILE PHOTO

Iowa State University student intern Wes Brummer works in the sales department at GlobalVetLink, an Ames-based company that creates online documents for livestock and show animals in June 2009.

They said they hope to go live with GlobalVetLink's new program by early 2011.

Shuka said the goal is "to connect people in the field and let them enter data on handheld devices."

Eischeid said GlobalVetLink's Web developers will need to be adaptable.

"The challenge is that the systems to do all this are still emerging, and there still no 'best way' to have the process work," he said.

The finished application "won't look the same as a homepage for our system, but it essentially will do the same thing," Shuka said.

"You can't just shrink the screen down. The details would be too small to see."

Maher agreed. "Veterinarians move around all the time," he said. "We have to allow them the flexibility to do that and access our system, especially when they're in the field. That's our future."

Starting out small

Maher launched GlobalVetLink in 2001 in his basement.

An Iowa State University graduate who grew up on an Iowa dairy farm, Maher lived in Colorado for 14 years before returning to the state in 1993 to work in the agricultural industry.

"I have a background in animal information systems, specifically swine breeding stock, and I had done a lot of work on getting animals across state lines, accompanied by a lot of paperwork," he said.

It occurred to Maher that digitized documents might appeal to veterinarians and others in the business of treating and/or transporting animals. But because the online documents had to earn government certification, that meant selling the concept to state agencies.

"I had hoped to begin building the business in Iowa," Maher said.

"But Florida was my original connection. They're surrounded on three sides by water, so their interest in animal movements proved to be higher than here."

Florida has animal inspection facilities at all of the weighing stations along their highways, Maher said.

"Plus, there is a lot more movement of animals into and out of the state, especially the horse industry," he said. "The climate is good for horse breeding, and they have a lot more outdoor events there."

In the nine years since then, the company has grown as more states have endorsed and started to use the online documents. The company derives income from veterinarians, who subscribe to get access to its database and who pay each time they upload new data on particular animals.

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