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### Economic Development Organizations Receive Awards for Business Retention and Expansion Efforts



**Des Moines, IA – May 3, 2018:** The Professional Developers of Iowa (PDI) honored economic development organizations from Ames, Ottumwa, Iowa Lakes Corridor, and West Central Iowa during the SMART Economic Development Conference held in Des Moines on May 2.

The PDI Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) Awards Program recognizes the outstanding efforts of local and regional economic development initiatives in supporting growth and expansion of existing Iowa companies. Receiving an award for **Overall BRE Program – Community/County is Ames Economic Development Commission.**

The Ames Economic Development Commission recognized a growing need for assistance with workforce development by business and industry. These concerns are valid; for the last two years Ames/Story County has had the lowest unemployment rate in the United States.

To address these needs, the Ames Economic Development Commission created a multi-faceted workforce solutions program beginning in 2013 through today. Included in this effort was development of an interactive website and job board [WorkInAmes.com](http://WorkInAmes.com) and the Story County Job Board; summer internship programming “See yourself in Ames” averaging 134 interns at each event; sponsoring [MyIowaFuture.com](http://MyIowaFuture.com) where leads are shared with their workforce solutions investors; becoming a Home Base Iowa county with over 120 Story County Businesses participating; working with Iowa Works to bring back career fairs to Story County and attending many other career fairs; co-marketing with Iowa State University Alumni Association in reaching out to alumni; K-12 engagement and engaging students through interaction with 6 schools systems in Story County to facilitate real-life project-based learning; and reaching out to new residents of Story County with business community concierge services.

Most importantly results are tracked and they report progress toward the above goals monthly at the Ames Economic Development Commission (AEDC) Board meeting. The results are reported quarterly to the Story County Board of Supervisors. Year end results are included as part of our AEDC Annual Report

“Supporting Iowa’s existing industry is a key priority for PDI’s membership,” stated Carla Eysink, PDI President. “The BRE Awards are intended to increase the focus on fostering Iowa business growth by economic development organizations and spotlight BRE programs and projects that have made a significant impact on Iowa communities.”

Founded in 1973, with current membership of over 320, PDI is an organization dedicated to advancing the professionalism of its members through a wide range of programs and services. As an association, PDI provides professional training that helps its members do a better job for their community. PDI creates an atmosphere of support and offers an instant network of seasoned experts for local professionals to seek advice and support.

Learn more about PDI at [www.pdiowa.com](http://www.pdiowa.com), [www.facebook.com/ProfessionalDevelopersOfIowa](https://www.facebook.com/ProfessionalDevelopersOfIowa) and [www.twitter.com/pdiowa](https://www.twitter.com/pdiowa) .

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*Photograph: Representing Ames are Dan Culhane, President & CEO, AEDC; Drew Kamp, Director of Business Retention/Expansion & Public Policy, AEDC; Lauris Olson, Story County Board of Supervisors; Debi Durham, Director, Iowa Economic Development Authority; Craig Henry, Mayor, City of Huxley; Brenda Dwyer, Director of Workforce Solutions, AEDC; Steve Shupp, Alliant Energy; Ron Hallenbeck, Senior Vice President, AEDC; and Mark Reinig, CIRAS.*

