



NORTHWEST IOWA DEVELOPMENT
Beyond Expectations.

Northwest Iowa Development Partners Meeting

January 23, 2013





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Beyond Expectations.

A BRIEF NORTHWEST IOWA DEVELOPMENT HISTORY

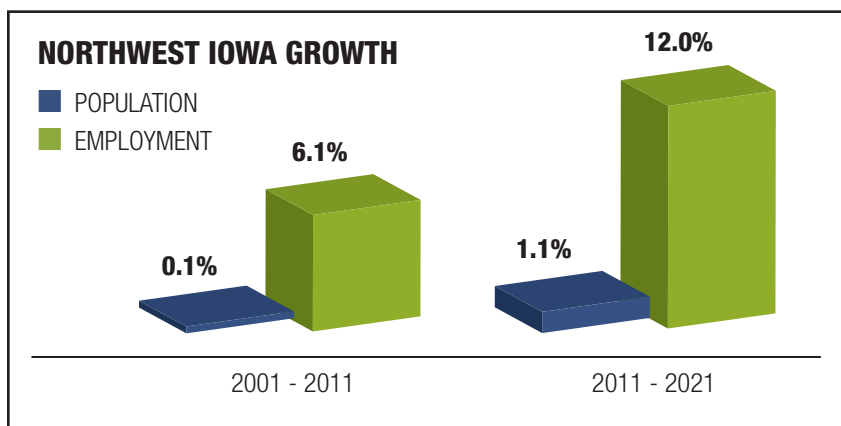
NWID, as a regional organization, has been in existence, informally and formally, for over twenty-five years. A continually growing team of partner organizations have been collaborating on a regional basis on a myriad of activities over this same time period. This collaboration has consisted of maintaining and strengthening the existing business base, recruiting businesses, promoting and marketing the Region to businesses and potential workers, economic development research, education/training for economic development leadership and an array of other activities to enhance the economic vitality of Northwest Iowa. From 2005 to 2009, NWID took a step towards formalizing the organizational structure and began operating under the auspices of a Memorandum of Understanding amongst themselves to advance their interests. In the middle part of 2010, NWID took the next step towards formalizing the group and established itself as a separate non-profit corporate entity. As such, it filed and received approval from the Iowa Secretary of State Office as an Iowa non-profit organization. NWID applied for, and became a Federally recognized 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization in 2010. NWID is now capable of seeking and applying for state and federal resources. NWID adopted By-Laws and Articles of Incorporation in 2009 and is governed by a 7 person Board of Directors and the overall General Membership, each meet monthly.

NWID has continually focused on this guiding principle in carrying out their strategic action plan:

NWID will aggressively implement efforts to increase the awareness of the Northwest Iowa regional product and business growth opportunities and will proactively generate increased interest among targeted businesses and potential workers to locate in the region.

NORTHWEST IOWA POPULATION AND EMPLOYMENT TRENDS

The charts below show the Northwest Iowa region to be characterized by an overall stable population trend and a growing employment picture. Also, as the data below shows, employment is projected to continue to grow over the next decade due to a solid economic base. NWID will be focused on maintaining a strong economy and meeting the economic challenges of the future.



CURRENT NWID MEMBERS

Cherokee County

Cherokee County and all units of local government
Cherokee Area Development Corporation

Lyon County

Lyon County and all units of local government
Lyon County Economic Development
City of Rock Rapids
Rock Rapids Development Corporation

O'Brien County

O'Brien County Economic Development Corporation

Osceola County

Osceola County and all units of local government
Osceola County Economic Development Commission
City of Sibley

Plymouth County

Plymouth County and all units of local government
LeMars Economic Development/ Chamber of Commerce

Sioux County

Sioux County and all units of local government
Alton Economic Development Corporation
City of Boyden/Boyden Economic Development Corporation
Hawarden Area Partnership for Progress/City of Hawarden
Hull Industrial Development Board/City of Hull
Orange City Economic Development Corporation/City of Orange City
Rock Valley Economic Development Corporation/City of Rock Valley
Sioux Center Land Development Inc./City of Sioux Center
Northwest Iowa Community College
Iowa Workforce Development, Region 4 Center
Mid American Energy Company
North West Rural Electric Cooperative
Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative
Lyon County Rural Electric Cooperative
Osceola Electric Cooperative Incorporated
Northwest Iowa Planning and Development Commission
Northwest Iowa Small Business Development Center
Alliant Energy Company
Clean Line Energy Partners
USDA Rural Development



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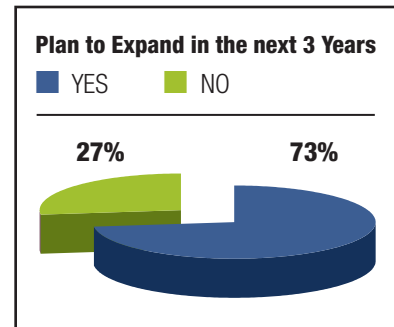
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THE NWID STRATEGY – STRIVING FOR CONSISTENCY AND ONGOING REGIONAL PROGRESS

Over the past 3 years, NWID has attempted to maintain a focus on 3 core strategies to build awareness of the Northwest Iowa Region and to support the efforts of NWID Members to maintain stable economies.

Synchronist-Existing Business Contact Program

Regular contact with existing businesses is the most efficient and effective tool to stabilize and nurture a growing economy. NWID has maintained a consistent focus on supporting and encouraging regular visits and follow-up with existing employers. NWID assists Members with gathering data from the Synchronist interview tool and creating regional reports. These regional reports provide important trend information on key issues and challenges facing the engines of economic growth for Northwest Iowa, our existing businesses. The chart below shows the trend identified by existing business related to their plans to expand. This data is based on Synchronist-Existing Business interviews over the last 18 months.



Identifying Prospects through Cooperative Marketing

By pooling regional resources and leveraging State marketing funds, NWID has been able to offer numerous targeted business prospecting opportunities to local economic developers. Northwest Iowa has been a long time member of the Community Venture Network (CVN) which allows NWID Members to hear presentations and meet personally with Midwest entrepreneurs on a quarterly basis. Annually, NWID has access to between 35-40 entrepreneurial firms.

Each year, NWID has participated in target business trade shows and Executive Summits to meet with business prospects and market Northwest Iowa. The accompanying photo shows a NWID sales team that represented the region in Chicago at a 2011 Manufacturing Summit and Site Location Consultant sales trip.



Over the last 3 years, through NWID cooperative marketing we have been able to make direct contact with approximately 200 businesses.

Building Regional Awareness through Marketing and Promotion

The NWID website is the key tool for communicating effective targeted messages to all of our audiences. Over the last 2 years, NWID has implemented significant upgrades to the website, in terms of capability and content. NWID is regularly adding content targeted at site selectors, entrepreneurs, existing business, job seekers and Northwest Iowa current and future residents. NorthwestIowa.com also allows opportunities for local Members to promote their positive features. Building regional awareness is a core NWID strategy.





2012 REVIEW OF NWID PROGRESS

In 2012, NWID continued to make strides on multiple fronts by focusing on:

- Supporting regional businesses and addressing their critical need for skilled workers;
- Providing promotional and informational tools to support NWID Members;
- Building awareness of Northwest Iowa by adding social media to the marketing mix;
- Continuing to advocate for Northwest Iowa on important economic development issues.

Skills Ready County Profiles and Online Models

The ability to adequately explain and illustrate the skills that exist in the workforce is a continuing challenge for economic developers. NWID is convinced that the regional workforce is characterized by strong, diverse skill sets that have made our existing businesses vibrant, and will make future businesses highly competitive. The Skills Ready Online Model and County Profiles were developed in 2012 by NWID to provide instant access to the most current and comprehensive workforce skills data. Existing businesses, expanding businesses and new businesses, as well as workforce and economic developers, will all benefit from this highly accessible source of workforce data. The Models and Profiles were designed to be available through regional and local websites and will be promoted as part of the ongoing NWID promotional effort.

O'Brien County - Manufacturing Manufacturing Test (Smart Solutions Group)						
Occupation	SOC Code	Project Employment	Labor Market Employment	Workers in Labor Market with Compatible Skills	Median Wage	Total Median Wages
First-Line Supervisors of Production & Structural Metal Fabricators & Fitters	51-1011	12	597	1,966	\$20.48	\$511,181
Team Assemblers	51-2041	6	101	5,549	\$13.86	\$172,973
Computer Numerically Controlled Machine Tool Programmers Metal & Cutting Punching & Press Machine Setters Operators & Tenders Metal & Lathe & Turn Operators & Machinists	51-2092	27	1,025		\$13.48	\$757,037
Helpers--Production Occupations	51-4012	2	11	22	\$24.96	\$103,834
	51-4031	6	199	5,451	\$13.94	\$173,971
TOTAL						\$95,534

Proposal for Foreign Trade Zone Designation in Northwest Iowa

Although the concept of establishing a Foreign Trade Zone (FTZ) in Northwest Iowa has been discussed for a few years, 2012 was the year for formal action. NWID conducted a feasibility study with the assistance of FTZ expert consultant, Trade Strategies, and interviewed businesses in all six NWID counties. The study showed that FTZ designation had the potential to have strong financial impacts on Northwest Iowa businesses with current and future export potential.

In October, 2012, NWID formally submitted an application for FTZ status to the Foreign Trade Zone Board, U.S. Department of Commerce. Formal approval is anticipated in early 2013.

Smart Site and Virtual Building Program

In 2012, NWID implemented an innovative marketing effort that involved all six counties and featured an actual available industrial site with an attractive virtual building design and made the package available as a visual promotional package. **Smart Sites** were identified in all six counties and full "shovel ready" due diligence reports were prepared for each site. A **Virtual Building** design was engineered for each Smart Site and graphics and video animation were developed for each Smart Site and Virtual Building. NWID will be promoting the regional Smart Site and Virtual Building package on local and regional websites, through social media, on YouTube as well as other targeted marketing channels in 2013.

Orange City Smart Site and Virtual Building

The Orange City Smart Site and Virtual Building is located in Sioux County in the northwest corner of the state of Iowa.

The site is 18.35 acres located north of 68th Street and east of County Road K6A. A new road, Praxford Place SE, borders the site to the east. This gently rolling site is within three miles of State Highways 65 and 61, 5.5 miles from Interstate 29. Zoned heavy industrial, the Orange City Smart Site offers full infrastructure including natural gas, fiber optical, water, and sewer.

The Virtual Building is designed for manufacturing operations, but can be adapted for a distribution facility as well. It is designed as a 50,000 square foot facility with 24 to 34 foot ceiling heights, four loading docks, and 6,000 square feet of office space. The Orange City Virtual Building, as proposed, can be constructed in 6 months based on a timeline that has been developed by Project Architects. It can also be expanded to 100,000 square feet.

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Northwest Iowa Market Research Library

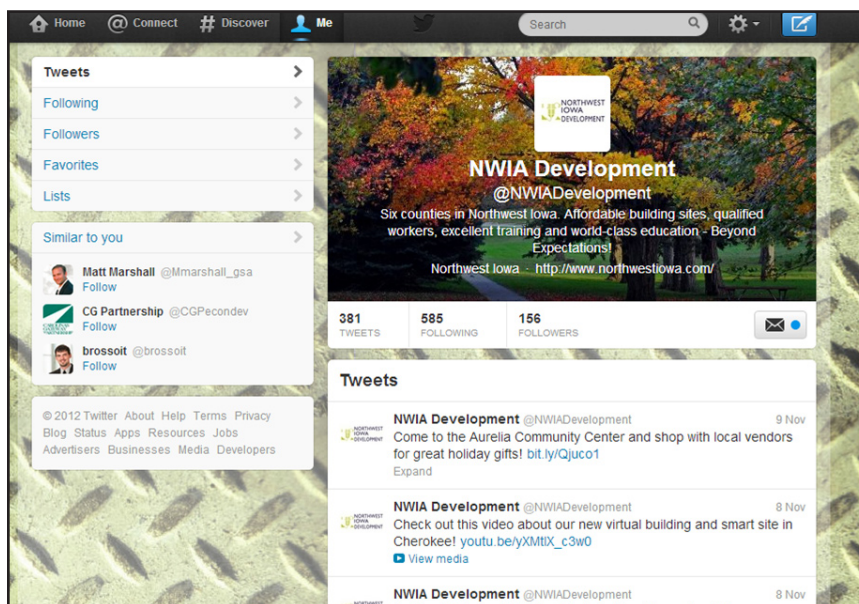
NWID recognizes the importance of supporting the growth of small business and entrepreneurs and realizes how vital that growth is to sustaining a vibrant economy. Small businesses and entrepreneurs have many needs as they struggle to prosper, and sometimes just to survive, in an always competitive environment. One of those needs is current information, specifically, market research information. NWID has been developing plans to establish a “virtual market research center” online and this new service that will support small business is now live on the NWID website. The Market Research Library is expanding with data through early 2013 and plans to promote the service to small businesses will be kicked off in 2013.

Area	Report	Keywords
NW Iowa Region	Economy Overview	Population; Age; Jobs; Earnings; Unemployed; Gross Regional Product; GRP; Imports; Exports; Educational Attainment
	Demographic Data	Population; Age
	Jobs by Industry	Jobs; Industries
	Jobs by Occupation	Jobs; Occupations; Wages
City	Demographic & Income Profile	Population; Housing; Household Size; Age; Income; Race & Ethnicity
	Detailed Income Report	Population; Households; Income
	Disposable Income Report	Population; Households; Income; Age
	Age by Income Profile	Age; Income
	Business Summary	Number of Businesses; Employment; Industries
	Market Profile	Population; Households; Housing; Home Value; Income; Median Age
	Retail Marketplace Potential	Population; Households; Income; Retail Industry; Leakage; Surplus
	Housing Profile	Population; Housing; Housing Value
	Traffic Profile	Traffic Count;
	Traffic Profile Map	Highways; Map
	Graphic Profile	Population; Race; Income; Households; Housing; Housing Value; Age; Employment

Expand Awareness of Northwest Iowa with Social Media Marketing

In early 2012, NWID decided to expand the promotion of the region through the aggressive utilization of social media. The major objective was to drive more traffic to the ever-expanding, content rich NWID website. Since early 2012, NWID has begun utilizing Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube in the communication mix. NWID monitors trends in website traffic on a monthly basis, not only to identify usage trends but also to identify prospect and marketing trends. Thus far, web traffic trends have been encouraging:

- NWID is reaching nearly 700 visitors per month through website and social media and that number has been growing;
- Unique visitors and page views have been growing at about 25% per month.



Legislative and Public Policy Advocacy

In 2012, NWID made a strategic decision to be more visible and active in advocating for public policy and legislation that have the potential to impact the Northwest Iowa economy. The NWID Legislative Committee utilizes a mix of Members who have expertise and connections on priority topics to carry out strategy. Two areas of focus for NWID in 2012, and beyond, were:

- Rural Post Office Closings and;
- The preservation of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) as an effective economic development tool.

In early 2012, NWID prepared an **Economic Impact Analysis for Post Office Closures**. NWID prepared the analysis, met with State and Federal legislators and staff, and distributed the study to the media. Rural Post Office closures will continue to be an issue to monitor in the future.

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In Iowa, Tax Increment Financing is the most important economic development tool available. In the past, TIF has been utilized in a highly effective manner in Northwest Iowa because the program is flexible and focused on meeting unique local needs. In the 2012 Iowa Legislative session some changes were made to the TIF program. NWID would like to see no further changes to this highly effective economic growth tool. In order to support and advocate for the program, NWID has begun to gather case studies of how the TIF program has been utilized in Northwest Iowa and to illustrate the diversity of positive impacts gained from TIF. Here are a few:



- In Sheldon, the community utilized TIF to extend street, water, and sewer to an area where an assisted living facility was planning an expansion. The infrastructure assistance not only opened up the area for the expansion but also opened up an area that made it possible to develop up to 16 new housing lots.
- In Lyon County, the 200 plus acre Grand Falls Casino Resort development was utilized for TIF assistance to build roads and bridges throughout the County and enabled the County to accelerate improvements to support increased needs. No TIF dollars were provided to Grand Falls.
- In LeMars, TIF has been utilized to develop the infrastructure in two industrial parks. These two parks are now home to a combined ten facilities which employ over 400 workers.
- In Rock Valley, TIF funds were utilized to assist A&I Products build their original 50,000 square foot building. Due to the company's success, they were purchased by John Deere and have doubled the size of their facility and now employ nearly 150 workers. The company has had two expansions since the original TIF assistance and neither expansion utilized TIF assistance. NWID will continue to advocate for the stability of the TIF program.

NWID: 2013 AND BEYOND

As this Annual report details, we have made progress but the success of a cooperative regional effort requires a consistent, sustained effort. Our work in 2013 will focus on continued implementation of efforts discussed in this Report and will certainly involve exciting new projects to meet the challenges we will all face. You can be assured that we will continue to be guided by the principle that when we work together we will continue to make progress in Northwest Iowa... **Beyond Expectations!**

NWID Board

Kirk Grau, Osceola County, Chair
Neal Adler, Plymouth County, Vice-Chair
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Kiana Johnson, O'Brien County
Lori Wolkow, Sioux County
Frank DeMilia, Northwest Iowa Community College
Dan Janssen, Sibley, Treasurer
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