



News Release

Iowa Business Council Releases First Competitiveness Index

Four of Five Issue Areas Indicate 'No Significant Progress' in Overall Competitiveness Trends

Des Moines, IOWA – July 13, 2011. The Iowa Business Council (IBC) today released its first *IBC Competitiveness Index* during a news conference held at Mercy Health Network in Des Moines. The *Iowa Competitiveness Index (ICI)* is presented by the leaders of the state's largest employers and its public universities as an assessment of historical and current economic prosperity and growth.

"The ICI identifies Iowa's current strengths and challenges, providing our government and private sector leaders with the opportunity to examine the different aspects of Iowa's regional and national competitiveness," said Tom Aller, IBC Chair and President, Interstate Power and Light Company, an Alliant Energy company.

In January 2011, IBC released "*A Competitiveness Blueprint: Iowa 2025*" (Blueprint). This report identified five "call to action" issue areas to improve Iowa's economy: economic growth, education and workforce readiness, governance and fiscal matters, health and well-being, and workforce demographics and diversity. From the Blueprint evolved the ICI, developed as a "report card" to identify benchmarks, analyze trends, and distinguish positive or negative economic activity. The Business Council will regularly revisit and review relevant data and information that measure Iowa's business environment and, at the same time, identify areas that need attention.

Initial findings of the 2011 ICI include:

- Relative to other states, over the last decade Iowa has not achieved a competitive advantage in four of the five areas measured: economic growth, education and workforce readiness, governance and fiscal matters, or workforce demographics and diversity.
- Iowa consistently ranks in the third, fourth, or fifth quintile of many public- and private-sector rankings, surveys, and measures.
- Iowa has made considerable strides in the area of health and well-being, improving in three of the five metrics identified.

"The challenge is leveraging Iowa's competitive advantages and mitigating its identified weaknesses to build a strong, vibrant, and welcoming business climate that attracts a skilled and diverse workforce," continued Aller. "Iowa should target economic development efforts on a regional basis to remain competitive with other parts of the country that are moving forward with more dynamic economic growth models, education reform initiatives, government efficiency practices, and workforce attraction outcomes."

To view the Blueprint report or ICI in its entirety, please visit the IBC Web site at www.iowabusinesscouncil.org.

ABOUT THE IOWA BUSINESS COUNCIL

The Iowa Business Council (IBC) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit, self-funded organization whose 24 members are the top executives of 20 of the largest businesses in the state, the three Regent university presidents, and Iowa's largest banking association. Founded in 1985, the Council's purpose is to focus the personal commitment of its members in active leadership roles on major initiatives that offer opportunity to enhance Iowa's economic vitality and improve the lives of Iowans. Council members identify economic issues, evaluate options, and assist in implementing solutions through collaborative public/private partnerships. **Collectively**, these companies and institutions employ nearly a quarter million Iowans and have committed billions of dollars in capital investment to the state. **On an annual basis**, several hundred million dollars in financial contributions and thousands of volunteer hours are directed to numerous charitable causes around Iowa. IBC members also lead in technology innovation with billions of dollars spent and grants procured for research and development. The Business Council focuses its efforts primarily in areas related to advanced technology, continuous process improvement, economic and workforce development, education excellence, health care and wellness, and operations continuity and security. Its representation reaches statewide – from borders north and south to rivers east and west. For more information, please visit the IBC Web site at www.iowabusinesscouncil.org.

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