



Iowa Coalition for Innovation & Growth
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News Release

Service Delivery, Entrepreneurial Networking, Bio-Manufacturing Highlight Economic Progress

Iowa Coalition for Innovation and Growth cites achievements and goals

Des Moines, Iowa – (February 7, 2006) – The semi-annual meeting of the Iowa Coalition for Innovation and Growth (ICIG), co-administered by the Iowa Business Council and the Iowa Chamber Alliance, was held this week at the Renaissance Savery Hotel in Des Moines. The meeting highlighted action team reports of substantial progress toward advancing Iowa's economy. Significant improvements in the delivery of state government and healthcare services, better connecting Iowa entrepreneurs and investors, and identifying bio-based alternatives for petroleum products were discussed.

According to Elliott Smith, Executive Director of the Iowa Business Council, "The Coalition teams of public sector and ICIG corporate partners have undertaken some major challenges to economic growth in our state. ICIG teams are formed to take action on issues important to Iowa's economy, ultimately either solving the problem or handing off responsibility to an appropriate organization. Team progress to date has sparked the interest of people and organizations statewide, giving even more momentum to implementing solutions."

The *Business Development & Processes Team* has been working to introduce the efficiencies of Lean Enterprise practices to state government agencies. Team Chair Karin Peterson of Pella Corporation reported, "The overall vision is to institutionalize Lean in state government, to bring about sustainable cultural change in the public sector." Established as the result of a survey of business that indicated a need to improve turnaround time of regulatory processes, the team has focused on reducing times to obtain various permits. "Lean events" have been staged in 12 state agencies with great success. In 2005 alone, 22 events led to dramatic improvements – with various delays and approval times in some instances being reduced by 90% or more.

The Team offered support for a 2007 budget request of the Iowa Department of Management to fund an Officer of Lean Enterprise within the state's executive branch. In 2006, the Team will continue to identify opportunities to conduct Lean events within state government, and provide additional training and sustainability measures where improvements have already been made.

Closely related to the *Business Development & Processes Team* is the *Lean Healthcare Team*. The original goal of this team was to introduce Lean Enterprise into Iowa's healthcare community. Team Chair Vince Newendorp of Vermeer Manufacturing led the discussion citing past Lean applications at Iowa hospitals and Lean outreach to the broader Iowa healthcare community in 2005. Newendorp stated the "results would increase awareness and interest within the healthcare community to pursue Lean Enterprise as a methodology to improve throughput, and the quality of patient care."

The significant results achieved by the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics (UHIC) during the three Lean events it conducted last fall has accelerated statewide interest in healthcare applications. The UHIC Heart Center increased capacity for echocardiograms by 50%, reduced cycle time by 50%, and improved next appointment availability by 100%. Its Emergency Treatment Center improved patient wait times by 32%, reduced total visit times 26%, and increased patient satisfaction by 19%. Finally, the Cancer Center reduced patient waits by 69%, increased number of patients treated by 38%, and reduced distance traveled within the Center by staff while serving patients up to 100%.

Newendorp concluded that the Team has accomplished its goals, and said its functions will now be assumed by the Iowa Healthcare Collaborative (IHC), a joint effort of the Iowa Hospital Association and the Iowa Medical Society. The IHC will further expand Lean healthcare applications throughout Iowa.

Kurt Heiar, Chair of the *Entrepreneurial Formation Team* reported on expansion of the Iowa Entrepreneurial Network Web site at www.IowaEntrepreneur.com, linking Iowa entrepreneurs with investors. He noted significant traffic to the site and stated that "a key to our success is homegrown entrepreneurs...it's easier to grow businesses here than attract people from beyond our borders." The Team has also established a speakers network for presentations around the state.

Heiar announced the establishment of a "community of practice" where Iowa entrepreneurs involved in life and information sciences will be able to access expertise online. The live "chat room" format will engage counselors experienced in service, corporate, academic, governmental, and support businesses with those seeking virtual face-to-face assistance. The team believes this resource will provide for a "free exchange of ideas," more real time networking, and ultimately greater degrees of small business success.

The *Advanced Manufacturing & Research Collaboration Cluster* (AMRCC) chaired by Dave Corbin of Vermeer Manufacturing promotes the use of advanced technologies, engineering, and processes. The Team conducts collaborative research and shares best practices. Corbin invited business, education, and government leaders to attend the 2006 Advanced Manufacturing Conference, to be hosted by AMRCC and held at Kirkwood Community College in Cedar Rapids on May 16-17. Nationally recognized speakers will discuss workforce challenges, business trends, and technology application issues in the global economy.

A Bio Working Group of AMRCC reported on how the economics of petroleum-based materials technology is changing. Iowa-produced, bio-related materials show promise as substitutes for petroleum-based products with added advantages of being biodegradable and recyclable. The group has begun work on information sharing and idea generation.

The Iowa Coalition for Innovation & Growth will continue to identify economic priorities and move those priorities to reality. The ICIG, established in 2001 by the Iowa Business Council and co-administered by the Iowa Chamber Alliance, works to competitively position Iowa as a leader in the global economy by encouraging research, technology, business innovation, and growth throughout the state. Membership of the Coalition includes both individuals and organizations interested in growing Iowa's economy by taking ideas to action. For more information about the ICIG, go to www.iowabusinesscouncil.org.

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