



AGENDA
CITY OF CEDAR FALLS, IOWA
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING
MONDAY, JUNE 03, 2024
6:25 PM AT CITY HALL, 220 CLAY STREET

Call to Order

Roll Call

- [1.](#) Grow Cedar Valley Update.
(20 Minutes)

Adjournment



Cedar Falls City Council Work Session – June 3, 2024

Katy Susong
CEO

Mike Mallaro
Grow Cedar Valley Board Chair

Stephanie Detweiler
Director of Workforce & Talent

Nicole Sallis
Director of Communications

Lisa Skubal
Vice President, Economic Development

Agenda

- | | |
|---|--------------|
| 1. Opening Remarks | M. Mallaro |
| 2. External Marketing & Business Growth | L. Skubal |
| 3. Talent Initiatives | S. Detweiler |
| 4. Communications/Marketing Initiatives | N. Sallis |
| 5. Closing Remarks | K. Susong |

CEDAR FALLS

CITY COUNCIL UPDATE

DECEMBER 2023 - MAY 2024



GROW
CedarValley
Business. Community. Opportunity

Grow Cedar Valley

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CEDAR FALLS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RESULTS

A fundamental part of economic development work is to attract new businesses and support existing businesses to diversify the economy and reduce the region's vulnerability. Grow Cedar Valley (GCV) works very closely with the City's economic development staff and many other public and private partners with these collaborative efforts.

MARKETING + LEAD GENERATION

Greater Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN Lead Generation Marketing Initiative

A lead generation campaign meeting(s) took place March 2024, marking the first trip to Minnesota for such purposes since the pandemic began. A total of 1,160 companies were identified and contacted via phone and email to identify expansion plans and locational interest in northeast Iowa, with an average of six or more attempts to identify interest.

Grow Cedar Valley collaborates with a company specializing in lead generation and related economic development services. Companies are selected based on their growth trends, industry publications, and online sources. GCV initially screens the list to eliminate companies with branch locations in the Cedar Valley and eastern Iowa.

CEDAR FALLS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RESULTS

Targeted Industries Assigned to List: Durable Goods Manufacturing, Food Processing, Renewable Energy, Distribution/Logistics.

Below are the results of the lead generation calls by the numbers:

Number of companies: 1,160

Number of outreach attempts (phone and email): 5,337

Number of resolved records: 614

“Resolved Records” Defined: Qualified Leads, In Reschedule, Possible Follow-Ups, Acquired/Bankrupt, Branch/Subsidiary, Downsizing, Excess Capacity, Expanding Elsewhere, Longer-Term Follow-Up, Looking for Acquisitions, No expansion plan, Regional/Single Location/Too Small, Bad Data

Number of identified leads: 9

Number of qualified leads: 5

Cancelled/Disqualified leads: 3

Number of reschedules: 1

Number of follow-ups: 9

A more detailed summary and scope of leads has been provided to the City of Cedar Falls Economic Development Staff.

Illinois Lead Generation Marketing Initiative

is currently underway. One company was visited in Chicago and a second virtually as of May 21, 2024. There are another 4 companies with some interest are trying to be scheduled for in-person or virtual. Approximately 1,246 companies are currently being contacted regarding expansion plans and consideration of communities outside of Illinois.

Select USA

Requests for appointment setting will begin occurring in early June. The Select USA Conference is in the last week of June. The event is hosted by the U.S. Department of Commerce to encourage foreign direct investment into the United States.

Grow Cedar Valley has co-sponsored the State of Iowa’s Economic Development Booth along with three other Iowa metro communities.

CEDAR FALLS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RESULTS

OPPORTUNITIES + PROJECTS

	Capital Investment	Job Potential	External Projects	Existing Business Projects
New*	\$342.5 M	274	8	1
Total Active	\$355.8 M	666	22	2

*Includes new projects occurring between the months of December 1, 2023 through May 10, 2024; some projects occurring during this timeline minus those that may have eliminated Cedar Falls during that same period.

Note: Job Potential and Capital Investment won't correlate; some projects don't provide both or either figure. Information available depends on the project's stage; some projects are more advanced than others.

9 New Projects

24 Total Active Projects

7 Prospect Proposals/Info sent to leads
(does not represent multiple communications)

IBruns/LaForge Capital Investment

LAFORGE, LLC manufactures precision ag equipment and provides machining and fabrication services to a variety of industries. It also serves as the parent company to businesses that manufacture overhead cranes and metal conveyer buckets. The company plans to make upgrades to its facility in Cedar Falls and purchase major tooling equipment, which will allow for greater efficiency in the crane and structure fabrication market. The project is expected to create six jobs incented at a qualifying wage of \$22.01 per hour. LaForge will make an additional capital investment of \$2.5 million dollars.



In April, Grow Cedar Valley supported the city and advocated for capital investment aimed at enhancements and the creation of quality jobs, successfully utilizing the Iowa Economic Development Authority's High Quality Jobs Program.

CEDAR FALLS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RESULTS

EXISTING BUSINESS SERVICES TO CEDAR FALLS COMPANIES

6

Business Services

Information/services provided included discussion on expansion/retention and/or barriers such as workforce; including issues related to managing supply chain.

EXTERNAL PROSPECT ENGAGEMENT - CEDAR FALLS

1

External Prospect Visits

5

Prospect Meetings in MN & IL

2

Virtual Prospect Meetings

(can include multiple visits/meetings for the same project)

ADDED BENEFITS

Other Services to the City of Cedar Falls

10

Jobs posted by the City of Cedar Falls on the Grow Cedar Valley job board over the last 12 months

6

Ribbon Cuttings for Cedar Falls businesses

1173

Job Views for the City of Cedar Falls on the Grow Cedar Valley website over the last 12 months

WORKFORCE + TALENT

There are about 17 companies that make up the Cedar Valley Manufacturer's Association, along with several support partners in the Cedar Valley including Grow Cedar Valley. Dennis Schilling from Power Engineering and Manufacturing is the current President. CVMA meets quarterly to support the below priorities that manufacturers in the Cedar Valley have identified.



Priority Areas Identified by Manufacturers

- Support the alignment of the IGNITE program between lower and higher education.
- Provide educational support for upcoming workforce starting at grade school to ensure the demographics of the manufacturing workforce match the demographics of the community.

The workforce shortage isn't expected to improve over the next several years and is even worse for manufacturers as it is estimated 20% of manufacturing workforce will retire over the next 5-10 years while incoming workforce is short to fill the demand unless CVMA does something about it. CVMA's leadership has developed a plan and will be executing with support from Grow Cedar Valley, Hawkeye Community College, Waterloo Career Center, and University of Northern Iowa.

Workforce Resource & Expert

One of the main goals of Workforce & Talent at Grow Cedar Valley is to be an expert in the workforce space and a resource and connector to HR professionals and business owners throughout the Cedar Valley for all things that have to do with workforce. Here are some ways we have continued to make this a focus in 2023/2024:

- We have positioned ourselves as an expert in workforce data in a couple of different ways.
 1. In 2023, we began a subscription to Lightcast, which is a data source that is a global leader in labor market analytics. We have been able to use this data for many different things, but one of the most important ways has been defining our 4 key industries for workforce (Manufacturing, Distribution & Transportation, Finance & Insurance and Healthcare) in the Cedar Valley and determining the highest-in demand occupations within the next 10 years (Industrial/Mechanical Engineers and Nurse Practitioners). We will be utilizing this information to support programs doing work in this space and to support talent pipelines into those industries and roles.
 2. We have now partnered with UNI's Strategic Marketing Services and the Cedar Valley Regional Partnership for a third year to conduct a Cedar Valley Wage & Benefit survey. The goal of this survey is for Cedar Valley employers to complete the survey for their company and then have the ability to see the results/report. The results will help employers better attract and retain talent to their company by being more competitive when it comes to wages and benefits.

WORKFORCE + TALENT CONTINUED

- Another way we accomplish the goal of being an expert in workforce is to continue to utilize the Workforce Advisory Council that was created in December 2022. The goal of the council is to give feedback and input to the Director of Workforce & Talent on ideas and initiatives in regards to attracting and retaining workforce. Currently there are 11 businesses represented on the Workforce Advisory Council, with 5 of the 11 businesses newly added in mid to late 2023. The current companies represented on the council are Advanced Heat Treat, John Deere, Kryton, K & W Electric, Lincoln Savings Bank, PDCM, Target Food Distribution Center, The Accel Group, UnityPoint Health, VGM and Western Home Communities.
- To ensure alignment and reduce redundancy with other entities/organizations that are centered around workforce, the Director of Workforce & Talent now sits on several boards/committees in the community and region including: Leader Valley Council, Iowa Workforce Board’s Northeast Iowa Planning & Operations Committee, Advancing Equity in the Cedar Valley and the Cedar Valley SHRM (Society of Human Resource Management) Board as the Work Readiness Chair. She also put together a peer group of workforce professionals from all around the state of Iowa who meet on a quarterly basis to share ideas and align where necessary- this group is called the Iowa Workforce Alliance Group.
- In 2024, the Director of Workforce & Talent started conducting HR Listening Sessions by key industry. The purpose of each listening session is to share key data about the Cedar Valley to HR professionals, but more importantly, to hear from HR professionals about their biggest challenges with workforce in that industry. The summary of information shared in the listening session will help GCV know how to best support workforce efforts in that industry.

Talent Attraction & Retention

Attracting and retaining talent in our community has become one of our top priorities, both in terms of helping employers directly with talent attract efforts as well as looking ahead to the quality-of-life amenities we’re investing in as a community over the next 5 to 10 years. Current programs & resources are:

- Live the Valley magazine
 - We are currently in our 2nd year of a 3-year contract with Livability media for our Cedar Valley quality of life publication “Live the Valley”. The purpose of the magazine is for businesses to use it in talent attraction efforts and for newcomers to the area to learn about all the great things we have to offer in the Cedar Valley.
- Cedar Valley Intern Connect Program
 - We have a new program for summer interns this year: Cedar Valley Intern Connect. Its aim is simple yet impactful – to foster connections among interns and immerse them in the vibrant community of the Cedar Valley, enticing them to consider it as their future home post-college. The summer interns will participate in two sessions this summer, scheduled for Tuesday, June 18th and Tuesday, July 16th, both



Talent Attraction & Retention Continued

- running from 11:30 am to 5 pm. During these sessions, they'll engage in networking activities, forge meaningful relationships with fellow interns, and connect with other young professionals in the Cedar Valley. Additionally, they'll learn a little bit about the history of the area, discover exciting local attractions, and gain valuable insights into housing options for their post-college transition.



AYSHA
Weekley
Supply Chain Operations Manager
Target Distribution



KYLE
Brown
Human Resources
VGM Group



NILVIA
Reyes-Rodriguez
Director of Community Impact and
Engagement at United Way



RAY
Norman
Instrumentation Engineer
John Deere U.S. Navy - Veteran



EDITA
Begic
Owner of Vine Valley
Real Estate



GINA
Weekley
Director of Equity, Inclusion & Belonging
Waterloo Community Schools



JONATHAN
Jones
Owner of Jonespix
photography/videography



KATELYN
Jungland
Regional Director
Junior Achievement of Eastern Iowa



SCOTTY
Russell
Creative Business Coach,
NFT Artist and Designer

The Live the Valley Influencer campaign is designed to highlight the experience of growing, working, and living in Cedar Valley through authentic and engaging influencer narratives. The primary purpose of this campaign is to attract and retain quality talent, thereby strengthening the local workforce and fostering community growth.

We have created profiles on the Live the Valley website that link to a unique opportunity for influencers to take recruits on tours of Cedar Valley. In 2024, multiple businesses have already scheduled Cedar Valley tours for their top recruits to experience the community from a personal perspective.

We have been interviewing our influencers to hear about their favorite things to do and why they love the Cedar Valley. Our goal is to use storytelling as a powerful recruitment tool. By leveraging influencer narratives, Live the Valley builds a compelling and positive image of Cedar Valley, attracting new residents and engaging current residents.

DIGITAL GROWTH

Grow Cedar Valley's digital growth directly impacts our ability to connect with the community and extend our reach, connecting more businesses, talent, and stakeholders to our resources and initiatives. This heightened visibility not only enhances community awareness but also drives participation and investment in local projects, strengthening our region's economic vitality.

GROW CEDAR VALLEY WEBSITE

The following Google Analytics (GA4) data compares the first 30 days of December to the period from April 20 to May 19.



Website Views



Website Event Count



New Users

New User Interaction

Organic Search: 2,596 **40.2%**
Organic Social: 295 **70.5%**

Direct: 1,299 **168.9%**
Referral: 122 **93.7%**

GROW CEDAR VALLEY SOCIAL MEDIA

The data below tracks the Grow Cedar Valley social channels' performance from December 1, 2023, to May 19, 2024, and compares it to the previous period.



Facebook Reach



Instagram Reach



LinkedIn Reach

NETWORKING, EDUCATION & CELEBRATION

400

Investors attended two Good Morning Cedar Valley events

300

Investors networked in two Business After Hours events

100

Investors and community members attended GCV's Lunch & Learn – AI & the Business Community

610

Investors and community members attended GCV's Annual Celebration

217

Investors and community members attended GCV's Annual Leadercast

99

Investors and community members attended GCV's New Investor Reception

5

GCV Legislative Friday Forum Events

CEDAR VALLEY LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE



The CVLI Class of 2023-2024 was made up of 45 emerging leaders, representing 31 Cedar Valley businesses and organizations listed below. This class met monthly from October- May for leadership and community development. The 2023-24 class provided community service projects for several organizations throughout the Cedar Valley.

- Align Architecture & Planning
- BankIowa
- Beecher, Field, Walker, Morris, Hoffman & Johnson, P.C.
- Cardinal Construction, Inc.
- CBE Companies, Inc.
- Cedar Falls Community Schools
- Community Bank & Trust
- CPM Holdings, Inc.
- Dupaco Community Credit Union
- Envision Wealth
- Farmers State Bank
- First Interstate Bank
- Goodwill Industries of Northeast Iowa, Inc.
- INVISION Architecture
- ISG
- John Deere Waterloo Operations
- Junior Achievement of Eastern Iowa
- Northeast Iowa Food Bank
- Pedersen, Dowie, Clabby & McCausland Insurance
- POS Professional Office Services, Inc.
- Tri-County Child & Family Development Council, Inc.
- TruStage
- United Equipment Accessories, Inc.
- UnityPoint Health - Allen Hospital
- University of Northern Iowa
- Veridian Credit Union
- VGM Forbin
- VGM Group, Inc.
- Western Home Communities
- Woodruff Construction, Inc.

GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS & ADVOCACY



Grow Cedar Valley staff attend City Council Meetings, as needed, to speak on projects relevant to the growth and development of the City of Cedar Falls. The Grow Cedar Valley Government Affairs Committee established and our Board of Directors approved our Board of Directors



approved our 2024 Legislative Policy Agenda that we pursued throughout the recently completed 2024 Legislative Session. Our legislative priorities were focused on talent attraction, recruitment, and retention; economic development; education; as well as several priorities that were complementary to the goal of seeing growth in the economy of our region and the state.

During the session, Grow Cedar Valley hosted monthly Friday Forum conversations with legislators or other officials that were involved with the legislative process. In January, Speaker of the House Pat Grassley gave our investors and other interested parties a preview of the session. In February, it was Rep. Timi Brown-Powers that joined our conversation and in March, Sen. Eric Giddens was our guest. The April Friday Forum featured Karl Kurt, Assistant Chief Administrator at the Central Rivers AEA, because AEA reform was such focal issue throughout the session. Our Friday Forums concluded with a session recap presented by Dustin Miller, executive Director of the Iowa Chamber Alliance, a GCV advocacy partner organization. Friday Forums had a fairly consistent attendance of 20-25 each month.

MEET THE GROW CEDAR VALLEY TEAM



Katy Susong
CEO & President



Bonita Cunningham
Director of Events &
Sponsorships



Stephanie Detweiler
Director of Workforce
& Talent



Steve Firman
Director of
Government Affairs



Jamie Orr
Marketing
Specialist



Nicole Sallis
Director of Marketing
& Communications



Jim Schaefer
Director of Investor
Relations



Lisa Rivera Skubal
VP of Economic
Development



Sandi Sommerfelt
VP of Operations