ANNUAL COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY (CEDS) AND PROGRESS REPORT 2025-2026

upper explorerland regional planning commission

PREPARED AND SUBMITTED BY:
Upper Explorerland Regional Planning Commission

Grantee:

Upper Explorerland Regional Planning Commission
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Project Number:

ED25DEN0G0191

Period Covered by the Report:

July 1, 2025 – March 30, 2026

Cover image of Palisades Park in Decorah, Iowa by Ashley Christensen.

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Total Expenditures:
Cumulative Through End of Reporting Period

Table 1. Total Expenditures: Cumulative through end of reporting period

Line Item	Total Budgeted (from SF424)	Federal Funds Expended	Match Funds Expended	Total Expended	Remaining Balance
Personnel	201,017	34,356.60	38,478.85	72,835.45	128,181.55
Fringe Benefits	55,611	13,887.34	4,369.87	18,257.21	37,353.79
Travel	17,400	5,060.53	1,592.38	6,652.91	10,747.09
Equipment					
Supplies					
Contractual/ Subaward					
Other	6,120	273.07	85.02	358.99	5,761.01
Indirect Costs	69,852	16,422.46	5,166.16	21,588.62	48,263.38
Total	**350,000**	**70,000**	**49,693.18**	**119,693.18**	**230,306.82**

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT:
UERPC CEDS Committee Board List

The Upper Explorerland Regional Planning Commission (UERPC) CEDS committee consisted of a diverse set of stakeholders involved in all aspects of the public sector, private interests, non-profits, educational institutions, and community organizations. The CEDS committee consisted of the following members listed below in Table 2.

Table 2. UERPC CEDS COMMITTEE

Name	*Sector*	*Position*
Dennis Keatley	Public Sector	Allamakee Co. Supervisor
Barb Collins	Public Sector	Monona City Administrator
Ray Peterson	Public Sector	Clayton Co. Supervisor
Brett DeVore	Public Sector	City of Oelwein Mayor
Bruce Lehmann	Public Sector	Fayette Co. Supervisor
Mark Vick	Public Sector	Winneshiek Co. Supervisor
Pat Murray	Public Sector	Howard Co. Supervisor
Brandi Crozier	Public Sector	City of McGregor
Shirley Vermace	Public Sector	Winneshiek Co. Supervisor
Leon Griebenow	Private Interest	Hawkeye Stages
Jack Knight	Non-Profit	Northeast Iowa RC&D
Darla Recker	Private Interest	Financial Vision
Nina Taylor	Non-Profit	Business Counselor
Tim Burrack	Private Interest	Producer/Farmer
Peggy Lensing	Educational Institution	Luther College
Fern Rissman	Private Interest	Individual
Darla Kelchen	Non-Profit	Clayton County Economic Development
Alison Holten	Educational Institution	Northeast Iowa Community College
Cheryl Wieseler	Private Interest	Individual

The CEDS Scope of Work has remained consistent since the start of Year 1. It continues to address the regional resiliency meetings that took place in 2022. In addition, further meetings have been conducted throughout the region with economic development directors, emergency management coordinators, higher education representatives, the Northeast Iowa Business Network, the UERPC Board, city clerks, and city administrators. As UERPC facilitates meetings focused on comprehensive planning, hazard mitigation, walkability, and child care needs, it collects data and feedback from each session. Through these ongoing CEDS planning efforts, UERPC continues to strengthen its partnerships with private, nonprofit, public, and educational sectors.

ADJUSTMENTS:

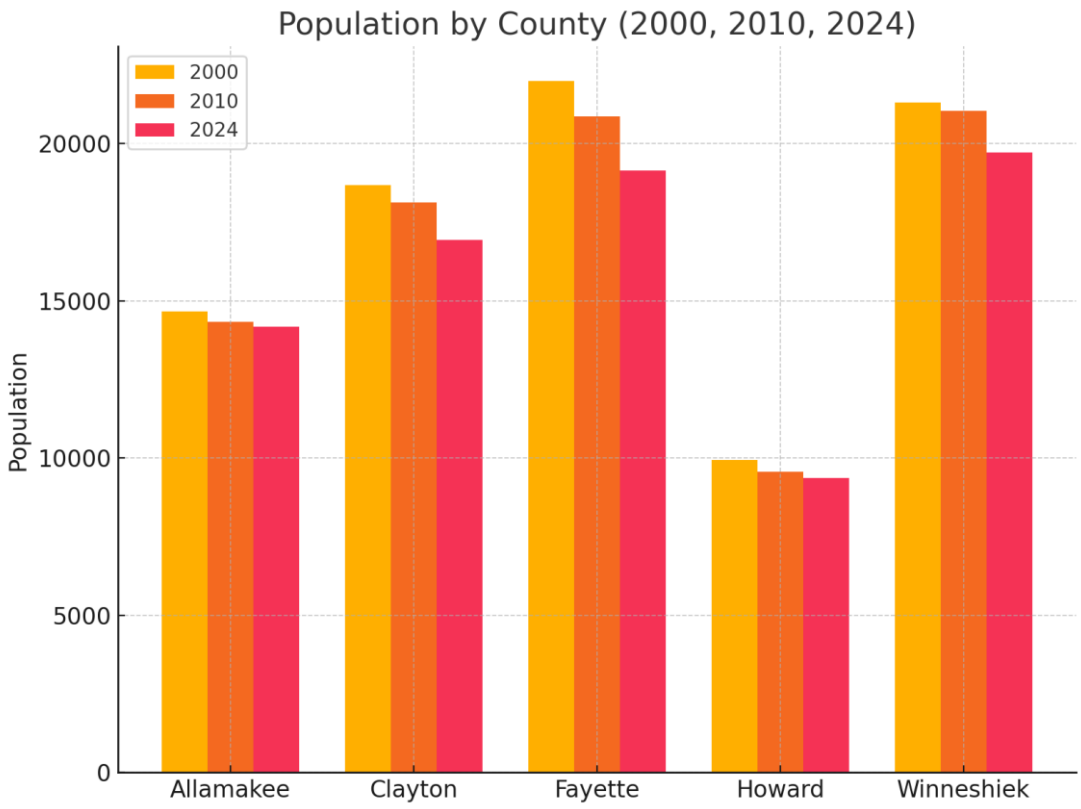
Report on Changing Economic Conditions and Adjustments

Regional Background and Trends

Demographic Overview

Northeast Iowa's five-county region (Allamakee, Clayton, Fayette, Howard, and Winneshiek) has experienced a gradual population decline in recent decades, even as the state of Iowa's population grows. Iowa's total population grew from about 2.93 million in 2000 to 3.24 million in 2024, roughly a 10.8% increase. In contrast, the region's combined population has decreased over the same period. Allamakee County had 14,675 residents in 2000 and an estimated 14,184 in 2024, nearly unchanged after a slight dip in the 2010s. Clayton County shrank from 18,678 in 2000 to about 16,931 in 2024, a drop of ~9%. Fayette County fell from 22,008 to 19,152 (−13%). Howard County saw a smaller decline (9,932 to 9,360, about −6%). Winneshiek County, the largest in the group, went from 21,310 to 19,723 (−7%). Overall, the region's population is roughly 79,000 in 2024, down ~5% from 2010, reflecting rural out-migration and lower birth rates.

Below: Population of the five counties in 2000, 2010, and 2024. All counties have lost population since 2000, in contrast to Iowa's overall growth. Clayton and Fayette Counties saw the sharpest declines, while Allamakee remained relatively stable.



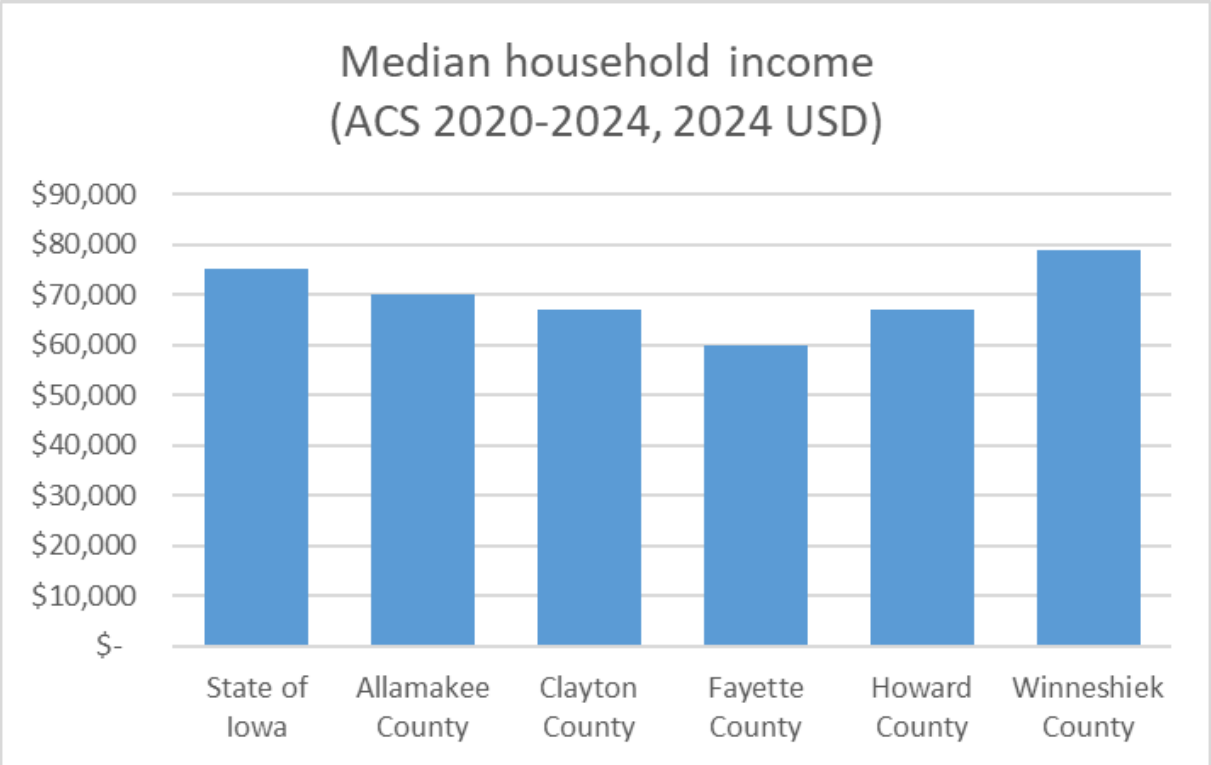
The population decline has been accompanied by an aging demographic profile. All five counties have a median age well above the Iowa median of about 38.6 years. For example, Clayton County's median age is 46.4, roughly 20% higher than the state median. Allamakee and Fayette Counties have median ages of 43.1 and 43.7 respectively, and even the "youngest" county, Howard, has a median age of 39.3. By comparison, Iowa's population is younger (median ~38.6) and the U.S. median is ~38.7. The region also has a higher share of seniors: in Allamakee County 23.3% of residents are 65 or older, compared to 17.7% statewide. Fewer young adults and more retirees contribute to a smaller labor force and shifting service needs in these counties.

Despite the small absolute numbers, the region's racial and ethnic diversity has increased modestly. The population remains predominantly White non-Hispanic (over 90% in each county), but the Hispanic/Latino population has grown, especially in communities like Postville (Allamakee County). Allamakee County is about 8.7% Hispanic (as of 2023), higher than Iowa's 6.7% Hispanic share. Other counties range from ~2% to 4% Hispanic. Racial minorities (Black, Asian, Indigenous, multiracial) each constitute only a small fraction (generally <3% each). For instance, Clayton County is 95.2% White, with the next largest group being Hispanic (2.2%). Overall, the region is less diverse than the state (which is ~84% non-Hispanic White), but these counties have seen increases in immigrant and minority residents in the last two decades due to local employment opportunities (e.g. food processing). Nearly all residents are U.S. citizens (96–99%) and English is the primary language in the vast majority of households.

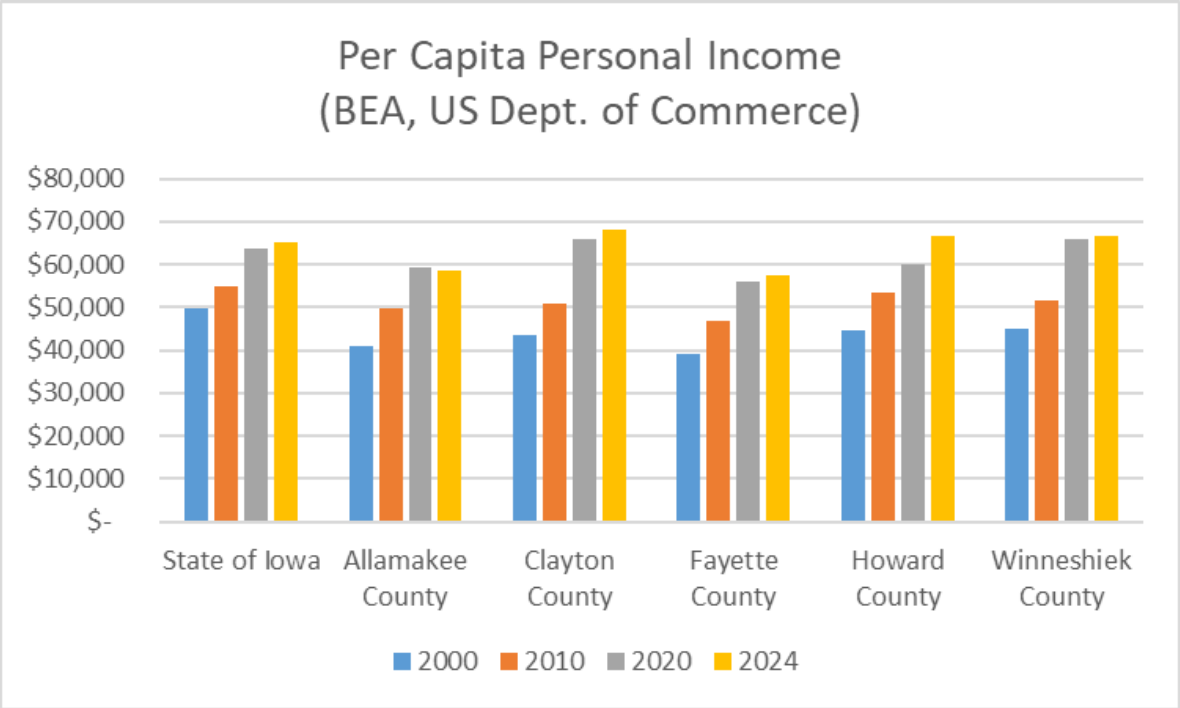
Income

The five-county region is largely rural and income levels generally trail state averages, though there is variation among the counties. According to the latest American Community Survey data (2020–2024), median household incomes in the region range from about $60,000 in Fayette County to $79,000 in Winneshiek County, which includes the city of Decorah and large employers and institutions like Luther College. Howard and Clayton Counties are about the same at about $67,000 while Allamakee County is about $70,000. These are all below the state median of approximately $75,000. These figures are all adjusted to 2024 dollars for comparability. Notably, Winneshiek's median income now slightly exceeds affluent Johnson County's (Iowa City) median of about $74,000, reflecting relatively strong earnings in Decorah, whereas Fayette's is among the lower tier in Iowa.

Below: Median household income by county (5-year ACS 2020–2024)



Below: Per capita personal income by county and state of Iowa. Clayton County leads the region at approx. $68,000, above the state as a whole (~$65,000) in 2024. Howard and Winneshiek Counties are also both above the state at approx. $67,000.



Poverty levels in the region are close to or just below Iowa averages. According to the latest American Community Survey data (2020–2024), about 11% of Clayton County residents live below the poverty line, roughly the same as the state poverty rate (11%). Allamakee, Howard, and Winneshiek all have lower poverty rates than the state as a whole, at 10%, 9%, and 8% respectively. These low poverty counties contrast with the more challenged parts of the region. Overall, poverty in Northeast Iowa is not extreme, but pockets of need persist, especially in certain towns and among vulnerable groups (children and elderly).

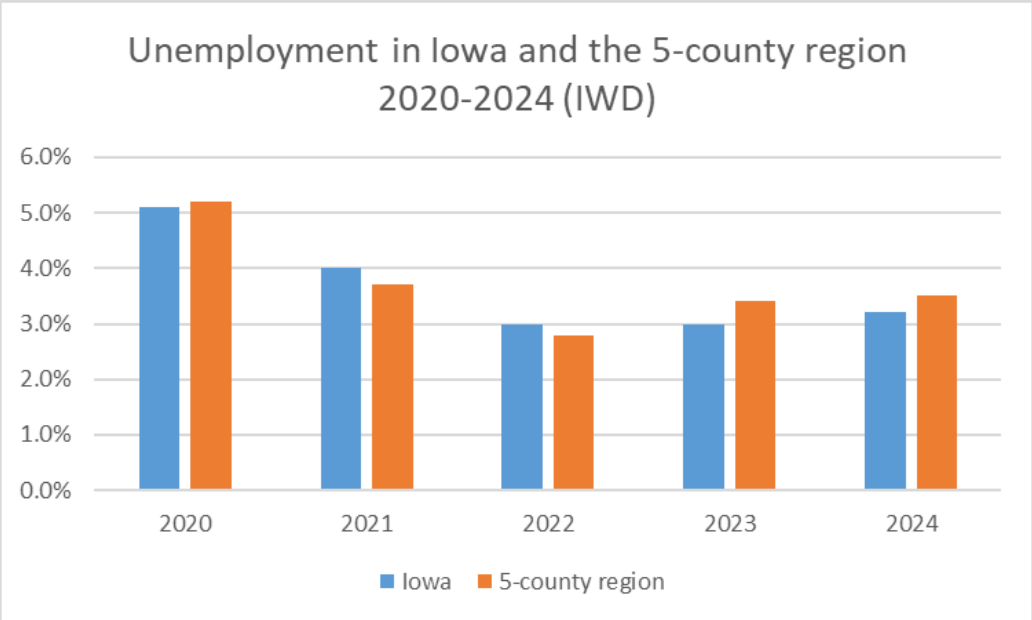
Labor Force and Employment

The region's labor force reflects its aging population and rural economy. With population decline and aging demographics, the total number of workers has generally trended downward or remained stagnant in recent years. For example, Allamakee County had approximately 6,800 employed residents in 2024, remaining slightly below pre-pandemic levels. Similar small declines or stagnation in employment are seen across the counties. Overall labor force growth in the region has remained limited, reflecting a gradually shrinking workforce. Labor force participation rates are slightly lower than Iowa's overall (~67%–68%) because of the older age structure – many retirees are no longer in the workforce, and younger workers often leave for urban centers.

Unemployment

Unemployment rates in Northeast Iowa have remained low in recent years, in line with broader state and national trends. By 2023 and 2024, unemployment was generally hovering around 3%–4% in most of these counties, near historic lows. In 2024, annual unemployment rates in Allamakee, Clayton, Fayette, Howard, and Winneshiek Counties generally ranged from the low-3% to mid-3% range, comparable to Iowa's statewide average of approximately 3.2%. These figures mark a significant improvement from a decade prior – for context, in 2010 (after the recession) Fayette County's unemployment was about 7.5% and Allamakee's was 6.7%.

Below: Unemployment rates for the five-county region in contrast to the state of Iowa. During the 2020–2024 period, unemployment rates in the five-county region closely tracked statewide trends. The region's unemployment rate was slightly higher than the state in 2020, 2023, and 2024, while Iowa's statewide unemployment rate was modestly higher in 2021 and 2022. Overall, both the region and the state experienced a sharp increase in unemployment during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, followed by several years of comparatively low and stable unemployment rates.



It's important to note the seasonal fluctuations in rural employment. During winter months, unemployment rates typically increase due to seasonal slowdowns in construction, landscaping,

tourism, and other weather-dependent work. In early 2025, unemployment rates in counties such as Allamakee and Fayette rose into the mid-4% to low-5% range during the winter months before declining again during the spring and summer as seasonal employment resumed. Similar seasonal swings occur in Clayton and Fayette Counties, reflecting their mix of agricultural, tourism-related, and seasonal industries. Overall, however, the region has maintained comparatively strong employment conditions in recent years. As of 2025, unemployment remains relatively low overall (generally near 3–4% annually), despite modest seasonal winter increases.

One workforce challenge in the region is simply scale. With small labor pools, employers can struggle to find specialized skills. Many residents commute within the region or to nearby cities for work. For example, workers in these counties may drive to Decorah, Oelwein, or across the Mississippi River to Wisconsin or Minnesota for employment. Conversely, some larger employers (such as manufacturing plants, health care systems, or colleges) draw workers from multiple counties. The region's labor market thus operates in an interconnected way. Local officials have also raised concerns about labor force participation. With a growing share of residents over age 55, replacement of retiring workers is a pressing issue. Efforts are underway to attract young families and retain recent graduates to help strengthen the future workforce.

Demographics

Over the past decade, the five-county Northeast Iowa region has continued to experience population decline, while the state of Iowa as a whole has seen moderate growth. Between 2014 and 2024, the region's total population decreased by approximately 5,000–6,000 people, a decline of roughly 6%–7%, bringing the population from about 84,000 down to approximately 78,000–79,000 residents. In contrast, Iowa's overall population grew by more than 150,000 people during the same period, representing roughly 5% growth, rising from approximately 3.1 million to more than 3.25 million residents.

One of the most significant demographic shifts in the region has been the aging of its population. The number of residents aged 65 and older continued to increase over the past decade, and seniors now make up roughly 22%–23% of the region's total population, significantly higher than the statewide share. This trend is mirrored at the state level, where the population aged 65 and older has also grown steadily and now comprises approximately 18% of Iowa's total population.

At the same time, the region's working-age population — those aged 16 and older — has declined. Over the past decade, this segment of the population fell modestly as younger residents continued to leave rural areas for larger metropolitan labor markets and educational opportunities. Meanwhile, Iowa's working-age population experienced modest overall growth during the same period.

Labor force participation has also declined in the region. Participation rates remain lower than statewide averages, due in part to the region's older age structure and smaller labor pool. Iowa's labor force participation rate has generally remained in the upper-60% range in recent years, while participation rates within the five-county region have remained several percentage points lower.

In summary, the five-county region faces the dual challenges of a shrinking and aging population, along with a declining labor force participation rate. These trends stand in contrast to broader

statewide patterns, where Iowa continues to experience modest population growth and maintains a comparatively higher level of workforce engagement.

Below: The region faces a shrinking and aging population, with fewer working-age adults and a slightly declining labor force participation rate. Meanwhile, Iowa overall continues to grow modestly in population and maintains a higher workforce engagement.

	Five-County Region (2014)	Region (2024)	10-year Change	Iowa (2014)	Iowa (2024)	10-year Change
Total Population	~84,000	~78,500	−5,500 (−6%–7%)	~3,100,000	~3,260,000	+160,000 (+5%)
Population Age 65+	~15,000 (~18%)	~17,500 (~22%)	+2,500 (+17%)	~500,000 (~16%)	~590,000 (~18%)	+90,000 (+18%)
Population Age 16+	~66,000	~62,000	−4,000 (−6%)	~2,570,000	~2,720,000	+150,000 (+6%)
Labor Force Participation Rate	~64%	~61%	−4.7%	~68%	~67%–68%	-1.5%

Employers and Business Establishments

Between 2013 and 2023, the five-county Northeast Iowa region experienced declines in both business establishments and employment across all counties, according to data from the U.S. Census Bureau County Business Patterns (CBP) program. Allamakee County saw the number of business establishments decrease from approximately 390 establishments in 2013 to 365 in 2023, a decline of roughly 6%. During the same period, total employment declined from approximately 4,100 employees to about 3,775, a decrease of roughly 8%.

In Clayton County, the number of business establishments declined from approximately 515 in 2013 to 487 in 2023, a decrease of about 5%. Employment losses in Clayton County were also significant, with total employment declining from approximately 5,500 employees to roughly 5,000, a decrease of about 9%.

Fayette County followed a similar trend, with business establishments declining from approximately 555 in 2013 to 524 in 2023, a decrease of roughly 6%. Employment declined from approximately 6,200 employees to about 5,700, representing a decrease of approximately 8%.

Howard County experienced a somewhat steeper decline in business establishments, decreasing from approximately 310 establishments in 2013 to about 270 in 2023, a decline of roughly 13%. Employment in Howard County declined from approximately 3,700 employees to around 3,350, a decrease of about 9%.

Winneshiek County, the largest in the region in terms of business activity, saw business establishments decline from approximately 660 in 2013 to about 604 in 2023, a decrease of roughly 8%. Employment there declined from approximately 9,900 employees to roughly 9,100, representing a decrease of approximately 8%.

Overall, the five-county region lost approximately 11% of its business establishments over the decade, declining from roughly 2,430 establishments in 2013 to about 2,250 in 2023. Total employment in the region declined by approximately 8%, falling from roughly 29,400 employees to about 26,900. These trends are consistent with broader demographic and workforce challenges affecting many rural regions throughout Iowa and the Midwest.

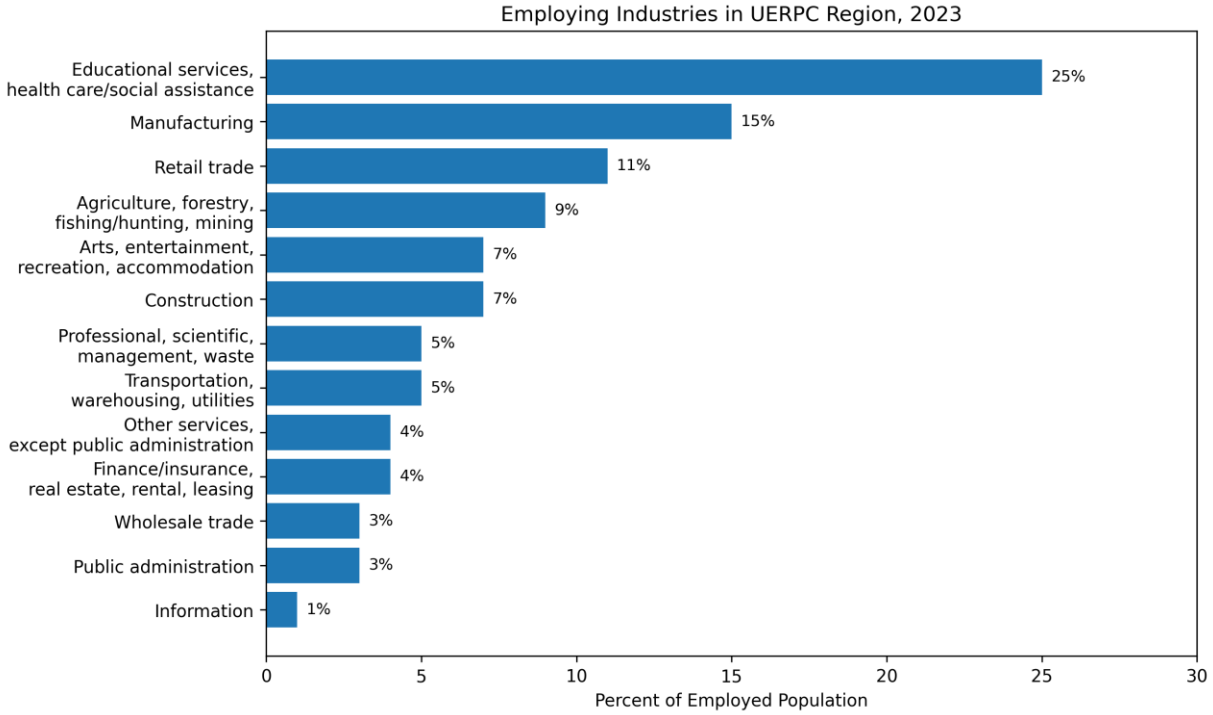
Below: The region has seen a steady contraction in both business presence and employment over the past decade, reflecting broader economic and demographic challenges facing rural communities in maintaining and growing their business base. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, County Business Patterns (CBP), 2013–2023.

	Establishments (2013)	Establishments (2023)	% Change	Employees (2013)	Employees (2023)	% Change
Allamakee County	~390	365	−6%	~4,100	3,775	−8%
Clayton County	~515	487	−5%	~5,500	4,999	−9%
Fayette County	~555	524	−6%	~6,200	5,706	−8%
Howard County	~310	270	−13%	~3,700	3,350	−9%
Winneshiek County	~660	604	−8%	~9,900	9,065	−8%
Five-County Total	2,430	2,250	−11%	29,400	26,895	−8%

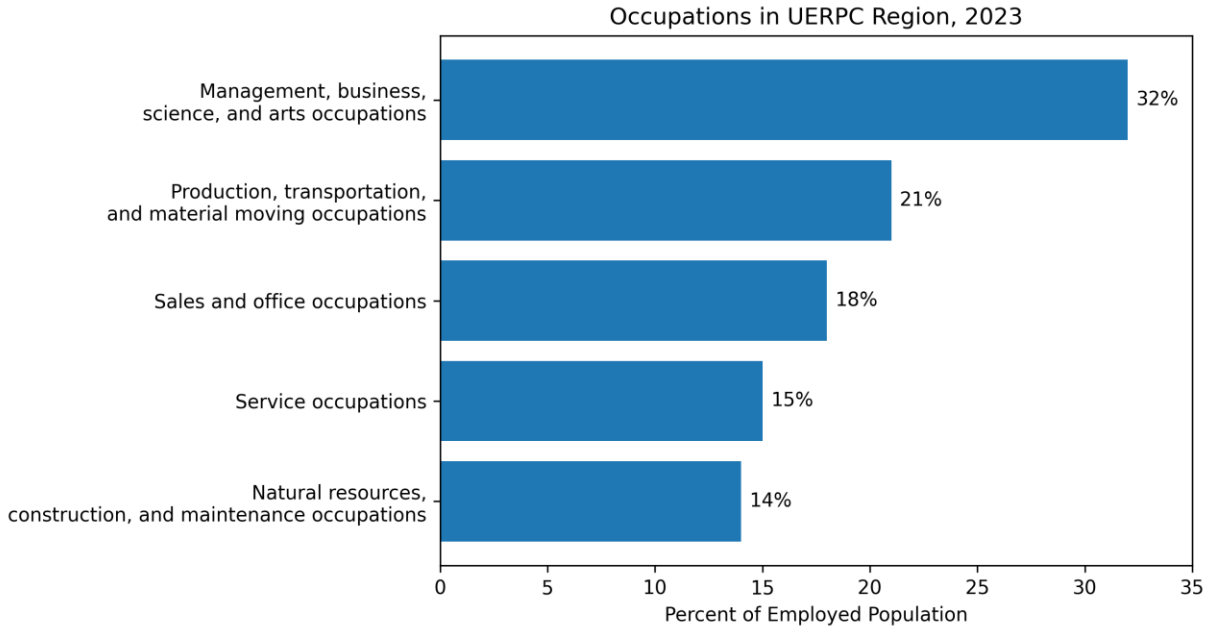
Industries

Key industries and employment in the region reflect its rural character and small towns. The largest employment sectors include health care, retail, manufacturing, and education, along with agriculture and food processing. For example, updated census data show Allamakee County's three largest sectors are Health Care & Social Assistance (~953 jobs in 2024), Retail Trade (~902 jobs), and Manufacturing (~851 jobs). A similar mix is seen in the other counties – hospitals/clinics and school districts are often among the top employers, as are food manufacturing plants, farm services, and retail hubs in county seats. Traditional agriculture (family farming) remains economically significant in terms of land use and cultural identity, but it directly employs a relatively small share of the workforce. Many farmers are self-employed or have off-farm jobs, and farm consolidation means fewer farm operators than in past decades. The region's per capita income tends to be lower than urban areas (e.g., Howard County's per capita income is around $33,190, about 80% of the Iowa average), reflecting both the lower cost of living and the prevalence of lower-wage industries.

Below: Employing industries in the five-county region (2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates). Educational services, healthcare, and social assistance remain the region's largest employment sector at approximately 25% of total employment. Manufacturing continues to represent a major component of the regional economy at roughly 15%, followed by retail trade at approximately 11%. Agriculture, construction, and tourism-related industries also continue to play important roles in the regional workforce.



Below: Occupations in the five-county region (2023 ACS 5-Year Estimates). Management, business, science, and arts occupations remain the region's largest occupational category at approximately 32% of total employment. The next two largest occupation groups are production, transportation, and material moving occupations (21%) and sales and office occupations (18%). Service occupations and natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations also continue to represent substantial portions of the regional workforce.



Despite modest incomes, the cost of living is also lower than the U.S. average, and housing costs remain relatively affordable. Median home values are around $150K–$180K in these counties, and homeownership rates are high (often ~80%). This helps mitigate some economic challenges. Still, attracting and retaining a skilled workforce is an ongoing concern for local economic developers, given the combination of lower wages and limited amenities in very rural communities.

Other Issues Impacting the Region's Residents

Other key issues impacting workers in the region are child care, housing, transportation, access to broadband/fiber, and energy burden. The costs of these variables can have sizable impacts on lower paying positions, and access to child care and housing in particular are important for attracting and retaining the needed workforce to rural Northeast Iowa.

Child Care

The availability of child care is having a profound impact on the local workforce. According to the Iowa Women's Foundation (IWF), Iowa's economy loses approximately $935 million each year due to child care-related challenges. These issues often force parents to quit their jobs, decline employment opportunities, switch jobs, avoid full-time positions, take additional time off, or arrive late and leave work early. The ripple effects include reduced earnings, decreased productivity, and lost revenue—consequences that affect not only working families but also employers and taxpayers.

The cost of employee turnover tied to child care problems is staggering, with Iowa employers losing an estimated $781 million annually. On the flip side, access to reliable daycare can have a powerful positive effect: employee absences can drop by up to 30%, and job turnover may decline by as much as 60%.

Local families continue to voice concerns about inadequate child care options. In the Northeast Iowa Business Network's (NIBN) 2020 Workforce Attraction & Housing Needs Report, a survey of 303 workers revealed that 80% viewed quality child care as a vital community service. However, half of the respondents felt that current child care availability was "lacking," compared to those who said there was "enough" or "more than enough."

The urgency of the issue was emphasized during a presentation by the Iowa Women's Foundation (IWF) at a UERPC regional clerks' meeting on May 25, 2023. The IWF outlined critical needs: improved access to affordable, high-quality child care statewide, expanded nontraditional child care options for parents working irregular hours, and—above all—a larger child care workforce.

At the heart of the provider shortage is the challenge of uncompetitive wages. Child care workers earn some of the lowest starting wages across all industries in nearly every county. As a result, 40% of child care workers in Iowa rely on at least one form of public assistance, and 30% use Medicaid. An IWF survey found that more than 21% of workers earning only $12.50 per hour leave their positions within a year—and many earn even less than that to start.

This wage disparity creates a vicious cycle: providers struggle to recruit and retain qualified staff, limiting the number of children they can care for—even when they are licensed to serve more. While the specific barriers vary from community to community, the shortage of child care workers and the shortage of available child care slots are deeply connected. Both issues must be addressed together to build a more stable and sustainable child care system.

Housing

Many communities across Northeast Iowa are actively evaluating their housing situations to identify pressing issues, assess needs, and develop targeted strategies for improvement. While housing challenges and solutions can differ from one community to another, several common trends are evident across the region.

According to the Northeast Iowa Business Network's (NIBN) Workforce Attraction Study, the region's housing stock tends to be older and generally more affordable compared to a 60-county reference area. In fact, 37% of homes in Northeast Iowa were built before 1940, significantly higher than the statewide average of about 25%. Similarly, 28% of homes in the region are valued under $100,000, though this marks an improvement from nearly 50% in 2010—suggesting that home values have been rising (Source: U.S. Census, 2022 ACS 5-Year Estimates).

Despite these relatively lower housing values and rents, affordability remains a major concern for many residents. Approximately 22% of homeowners and 38% of renters in the region spend more than 30% of their household income on housing—the standard benchmark for affordability. This burden is especially challenging for those living in older homes that often require repairs or updates, adding another layer of financial strain.

A lack of housing diversity is another key issue. Currently, 88% of homes in the region are single-unit structures, with only 10% consisting of buildings with two or more units and 2% being mobile homes or other dwelling types. About three-quarters of these homes are owner-occupied, while one-quarter are renter-occupied. Although homeownership remains a widespread goal in the region, there is an increasing need for a broader range of high-quality rental options. Expanding these options would better serve people of different ages, abilities, and life circumstances.

In addition, many communities have expressed a need for more senior housing options. Providing additional housing for older residents could help them transition out of single-family homes, freeing up these residences for younger families and local workers.

Overall, affordable housing—for both owners and renters— is a clear need throughout the region. However, the specific gaps in housing availability and affordability differ from one community to the next, influenced by factors such as household income levels and purchasing or renting capacity. Over the past decade, the UERPC has worked with Allamakee, Clayton, Fayette, Howard, and Winneshiek Counties, as well as the two largest communities in Fayette County (West Union and Oelwein), to conduct detailed housing assessments.

These assessments have consistently highlighted a shortage of affordable housing for certain income groups—most notably, households earning less than $50,000 per year. Across the UERPC region, there is an estimated shortfall of 1,466 homes affordable to this income range, underscoring a significant gap in the housing market.

This shortage of affordable housing for middle- to lower-income groups has been further exacerbated in recent years by the growing trend of homes being sold for use as short-term rentals or seasonal residences. In the five-county market area, approximately 482 housing units are vacant and available for sale. However, more than five times that number—around 2,703

units—are vacant but designated for seasonal, recreational, or occasional use, meaning they are not contributing to the availability of year-round housing for new homeowners.

This imbalance between supply and demand contributes to a highly competitive housing market, often driving up asking prices and making it increasingly difficult for prospective buyers to secure affordable homes.

Transportation

According to the UERPC / Regional Planning Affiliation-1 Long Range Transportation Plan ("Safe Mobility for Everyone"), workers in Northeast Iowa commute an average of approximately 20 minutes to work, with about one-third of commuters traveling less than 10 minutes to their place of employment. While commute times in the region remain relatively short compared to many urban areas, the region's rural geography and dispersed development patterns mean that most residents remain heavily dependent on personal vehicles for daily transportation needs.

For many households — particularly low-income households and households with multiple workers commuting separately — transportation costs can represent a significant financial burden. Vehicle ownership, fuel, maintenance, insurance, and long-distance travel between communities and employment centers all contribute to rising transportation expenses. These challenges are compounded by limited transportation alternatives in many rural areas and by increasing vehicle and fuel costs in recent years.

The region's transportation system also reflects broader demographic and economic trends identified in the Long-Range Transportation Plan. An aging population, workforce shortages, and shifting employment patterns continue to affect travel behavior and transportation needs throughout the region. At the same time, many communities face challenges related to housing availability and the separation of housing from employment centers, which can increase vehicle dependency and commuting distances.

Addressing these transportation challenges requires a multifaceted and multimodal approach. The Long-Range Transportation Plan emphasizes the importance of improving safety, accessibility, and mobility options for residents of all ages and abilities. Strategies identified in the plan include expanding and maintaining safe pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, improving roadway safety, supporting public and passenger transportation services, and encouraging more connected land use and transportation planning patterns within existing communities.

Improving access to walking, bicycling, and passenger transportation options can help reduce transportation costs while also supporting public health, economic vitality, and quality of life. The plan also identifies opportunities to support emerging transportation technologies and modes, including electric vehicles, e-bikes, and other forms of micro-mobility, particularly as communities seek more affordable, sustainable, and flexible transportation options.

Together, these strategies create opportunities for residents throughout the region to improve mobility, reduce transportation barriers, and support safer and more efficient movement of people and goods across Northeast Iowa.

Broadband/Fiber Access

According to the U.S. Census My Community Explorer, approximately 83% of households in the region now have access to broadband internet—an increase of about 8% in recent years. While this represents progress, it still leaves nearly 20% of households without broadband access, highlighting a persistent digital divide.

Beyond access alone, internet speed remains a significant challenge across the region. Many areas—including some community facilities—still lack the 12 to 25 Megabits per second (Mbps) recommended by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) for a household of three with moderate internet use. This gap in speed and reliability can limit the ability of families and businesses to fully participate in today's increasingly digital world.

The importance of reliable internet access was made even more apparent during the COVID-19 pandemic. The shift toward online platforms helped businesses, workers, and families become more resilient and less vulnerable to economic disruptions. Fast and dependable internet service enabled flexible delivery of goods and services, supported remote work and distance learning, and provided vital tools for communication and marketing.

The UERPC COVID-19 Government Impact Survey reflected these realities, with 48% of respondents identifying high-speed, reliable internet as a critical community need that was exacerbated by the pandemic. Similarly, a University of Northern Iowa Pandemic Impact Survey found that 25% of business respondents had either added or transitioned to digital and online operations, or implemented new systems and technologies to support remote collaboration as a direct result of pandemic-related challenges.

These insights underscore the vital role that broadband access plays in economic resilience, community well-being, and the future growth of the region.

Energy Burden

Families in the region face higher energy burdens, both in their homes and through transportation costs, compared to state averages. Based on Area Median Income (AMI), households in the region spend an average of 5% of their income on home energy expenses—a 25% increase above the state average of 4%. The burden is especially heavy for the lowest-income households. For families earning between 0-30% of the AMI, energy costs can consume up to 12% of their income in the UERPC region, compared to an average of 10% statewide. On average, households in the region pay $2,754 annually for energy, which is nearly 30% higher than the state average (Source: U.S. Office of Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy, Low-Income Energy Affordability Data Tool).

Transportation energy burden — the share of household income spent on fuel for vehicles—adds another layer of financial strain. This burden is influenced by vehicle miles traveled (VMT), fuel prices, and vehicle fuel efficiency. In rural areas like Northeast Iowa, VMT tends to be higher, and as household incomes decrease, fuel costs become increasingly burdensome.

In the region, 27% more families experience at least a 3%-of-income energy burden for transportation compared to the state average. However, this data is based on a statewide average fuel price of just $2.35 per gallon in 2020. Given the significant rise in fuel prices since

then, it is likely that the actual transportation energy burden for households in the region has increased substantially (Source: U.S. Office of Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy, State & Local Energy Profiles: Transportation Energy Affordability).

These heightened energy burdens—both in the home and on the road—highlight the unique financial challenges faced by rural families, especially those with lower incomes.

Environmental Risks and Impacts

A review of Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) National Risk Index data from March 2023 highlights that certain hazards have a notably higher impact on counties in the region when measured by Estimated Annual Losses (EAL). The table below summarizes the most significant hazards, showing total EAL by county and for the region as a whole, along with their associated risk ratings. FEMA's risk ratings are categorized as very low, relatively low, relatively moderate, relatively high, or very high — with very high representing the greatest impact.

Based on EAL, the hazards with the largest financial impact on the region include tornadoes and riverine flooding, which are the top two hazards in terms of losses. These are followed by strong winds and hail. These hazards, representing the highest estimated losses, are highlighted in green in the table.

It's important to note, however, that the flood-related losses reflected in this data pertain specifically to riverine flooding and do not account for flash flooding — a frequent occurrence throughout the region. Flash flooding often carries significant financial consequences, suggesting that the overall financial impact of all types of flooding may be even greater than the current estimates reflect. This makes flooding, in its various forms, arguably the most financially impactful hazard in the region.

When considering FEMA's risk ratings (which take into account not just financial loss, but also exposure, vulnerability, and resilience), the hazards posing the greatest overall risk for the region include cold waves, hail, landslides, riverine flooding, and strong winds. These are identified as relatively high or very high risk for the area and are highlighted in yellow in the table. Interestingly, tornadoes — despite their high estimated financial losses — are rated as relatively low risk for the region.

Among the hazards, hail, flooding, and strong winds stand out as having both high estimated losses and higher risk ratings. This combination underscores their significance as key threats to the region, both in terms of financial impact and overall risk.

Hazard Risk Index – Estimated Annual Losses (EAL) & Risk 2023						
	Allamakee	**Clayton**	**Fayette**	**Howard**	**Winneshiek**	**REGION TOTAL**
Cold Waves						
EAL - Total ($)	$124,942	$175,529	$228,547	$204,962	$255,862	$989,843
EAL Rating	Relatively Moderate	Relatively Moderate	Relatively Moderate	Relatively Moderate	Relatively Moderate	
Drought						
EAL - Total ($)	$2,099	$1,948	$97,116	$316,411	$270,450	$688,024
EAL Rating	Very Low	Very Low	Relatively Low	Relatively Low	Relatively Low	
Hail						
EAL - Total ($)	$225,879	$667,900	$1,438,235	$261,386	$1,603,982	$4,197,381
EAL Rating	Relatively Low	Relatively Moderate	Relatively Moderate	Relatively Low	Relatively Moderate	
Heat Wave						
EAL - Total ($)	$102,581	$2,319	$5,509	$35,624	$79,802	$225,834
EAL Rating	Relatively Low	Very Low	Very Low	Relatively Low	Relatively Low	
Ice Storm						
EAL - Total ($)	$21,338	$3,544	$36,430	$76,932	$111,100	$249,345
EAL Rating	Relatively Low	Very Low	Relatively Low	Relatively Low	Relatively Low	
Landslide						
EAL - Total ($)	$78,764	$49,591	$21,900	$21,900	$21,900	$194,055
EAL Rating	Relatively Moderate	Relatively Low	Relatively Low	Relatively Low	Relatively Low	
Lightning						
EAL - Total ($)	$16,302	$19,237	$26,910	$35,176	$30,651	$128,277
EAL Rating	Very Low	Very Low	Very Low	Very Low	Very Low	
Riverine Flooding						
EAL - Total ($)	$656,209	$3,344,515	$1,636,148	$481,922	$1,110,567	$7,229,361
EAL Rating	Relatively Low	Relatively Moderate	Relatively Moderate	Relatively Low	Relatively Low	
Strong Wind						
EAL - Total ($)	$400,747	$564,456	$1,708,106	$1,268,431	$310,301	$4,252,041
EAL Rating	Relatively Low	Relatively Moderate	Relatively High	Relatively Moderate	Relatively Low	
Tornado						
EAL - Total ($)	$1,171,581	$1,374,743	$2,100,028	$1,192,597	$2,161,219	$8,000,167
EAL Rating	Relatively Low	Relatively Low	Relatively Low	Relatively Low	Relatively Low	
Wildfire						
EAL - Total ($)	$7,690	$9,130	$8,018	$7,242	$13,827	$45,908
EAL Rating	Very Low	Very Low	Very Low	Very Low	Very Low	
Winter Weather						
EAL - Total ($)	$39,778	$59,848	$203,618	$74,201	$179,945	$557,390
EAL Rating	Relatively Low	Relatively Low	Relatively Mod	Relatively Low	Relatively Mod	

Report Summary

Workforce Challenges

- *Aging Workforce & Talent Shortages*
    - The region continues to lose population, especially among younger adults, while the share of older residents grows. Seniors now make up roughly 22–23% of the population, and the working-age population has fallen by about 4,000 people over the past decade.

      "Seniors now make up roughly 22%–23% of the region's total population."
    - Labor force participation has declined from about 64% to 61%, driven by out-migration and retirements.

      "Labor force participation…remained several percentage points lower than Iowa."
    - Employment has contracted across all five counties, with an 8% regional decline from 2013 to 2023.

      "Total employment…declined from roughly 29,400 employees to about 26,900."
- *Transportation as a Workforce Priority*
    - Rural distances and vehicle dependence create significant financial strain for workers, especially low-income households.

      "Transportation costs can represent a significant financial burden."
    - Improving multimodal options—walking, biking, transit—and expanding EV infrastructure are key strategies for reducing transportation barriers.

Small Business Focus

- *Non-Employer Firms*
    - A large share of the region's economic activity comes from sole proprietors and independent contractors, especially in agriculture and trades.
- *Small Business Composition*
    - Businesses with fewer than 10 employees make up three-quarters of all establishments in the region.
- *Sector Opportunities*
    - The largest number of non-employer firms are concentrated in Retail, Construction, and Other Services, making these sectors prime areas for targeted support and growth.

Housing Needs

- *Older Housing Stock & Maintenance Issues*
    - Housing is significantly older than statewide averages, with 37% of homes built before 1940.

      "37% of homes in Northeast Iowa were built before 1940."
    - Older homes often require repairs or updates, creating affordability challenges for current owners.
- *Need for Housing Diversity*
    - The region lacks varied housing types: 88% of homes are single-unit structures, and rental options are limited.

      "There is an increasing need for a broader range of high-quality rental options."
- *Affordable Housing Shortages*
    - Affordable housing is needed across the region, for both owners and renters.
    - Most notably, there is a shortage of 1,466 homes affordable to households earning less than $50,000 per year.
    - Seasonal and recreational housing reduces the supply of year-round homes, intensifying competition.

Child Care Challenges

- *Economic Impact*
    - Limited access to child care hurts businesses, the economy, workers, and families.
    - The pandemic worsened this issue as many centers closed or reduced operations.
- *Workforce & Capacity Issues*
    - Child care wage and compensation problems directly affect worker retention and child care capacity.
    - Without addressing low wages, the region cannot increase child care worker numbers, and capacity remains critically low.

Broadband & Internet Access

- *High-Speed Internet as a Necessity*
    - Broadband access has improved to 83% of households, but nearly 20% remain unserved.

      "Approximately 83% of households…have access to broadband."

- Many areas still lack adequate speeds (12–25 Mbps), limiting remote work, education, and business operations.

Energy Burden

- *Household Energy Costs*
  - Households in the region spend 5% of their income on energy, 25% higher than the state average of 4%.
  - Families in poverty are hit hardest, spending up to 12% of their income on energy, compared to 10% statewide.
- *Transportation Energy Burden*
  - Rural distances and rising fuel costs increase transportation energy burdens, affecting 27% more families than the state average.

Overall

The region faces interconnected challenges: population decline, an aging workforce, shrinking labor force participation, small-business contraction, child care shortages, limited housing diversity, broadband gaps, and higher energy burdens. These issues collectively shape the region's economic resilience and long-term sustainability.

Adjustments Summary

- Expand energy planning and programs to reduce household energy burdens.
- Continue research, data analysis, and technical assistance.
- Maintain housing assessments and support housing programs.
- Implement the NIBN Work Plan (child care, housing, leadership, business workshops).
- Prioritize workforce transportation planning and EV corridor strategies.
- Increase CDBG funding for water, sewer, and stormwater projects.
- Support technology needs including fiber, AI training, leadership development, financial training, and workforce retention.
- Strengthen grant writing and partnerships for child care, housing, transportation, energy, and small business needs.
- Pursue long-range planning (comprehensive, resiliency, hazard mitigation).
- Increase outreach to cities and counties to promote UERPC services.

UPPER EXPLORERLAND REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION SCOPE OF WORK REPORT

Work Elements Performed

A. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

1. Assist Local Economic Development Agencies, Partners, and Existing and Expanding Businesses

i. *Assist with the planning for the expansion and creation of business lots and industrial parks*

ii. *Assist local businesses in retention and expansion, marketing, financial assistance and resiliency planning*

Accomplishments Achieved

Within the UERPC region, there are 20 industrial and commercial parks and development sites, several of which are featured in the Location One Information System (LOIS). The Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) uses LOIS to market available development properties throughout the state. However, some regional sites are not currently listed in LOIS because they do not meet the platform's eligibility requirements.

The region's industrial and commercial development sites include:

- Postville Business Park
- Calmar Commercial/Business Park
- Decorah Business Park
- Luana Schultz Site
- Bickel Industrial/Commercial Site (McGregor, IA)
- Waukon Industrial Park
- Edgewood Industrial Park
- Johnson Park of Elkader
- Strawberry Point Industrial Park 1
- Swales Industrial Park (Strawberry Point, IA)
- Monona Site One
- Guttenberg Industrial Park
- Garnavillo Industrial Park
- Cresco Industrial Park
- Upper Iowa Rail Port (New Albin, IA)
- Lime Springs Industrial Park
- West Union Southwest Industrial Park
- Oelwein Industrial Development Park
- Hawkeye Henderson Industrial Park
- Clermont Industrial Park

Quantifiable Deliverable(s)

Each county development office updates their inventory of industrial and commercial sites. UERPC staff assist with the marketing of these sites by placing the site information onto the LOIS system with IEDA (www.iowaeda.com/locations/).

Furthermore, as part of Northeast Iowa Business Network's (NIBN) work, each county's economic developer staff visits their manufacturing businesses and inputs data for each business onto the Synchronist system as part of IEDA's system.

More specific deliverables regarding business expansion and retention within the region include:

Winneshiek County

- Winneshiek County continues to see strong momentum in business growth, housing development, workforce investment, and quality of life. Communities across the county are working together to support thoughtful growth while maintaining the character and amenities that make this area a desirable place to live and work.

- *Decorah Business Park Expansion*- The Decorah Business Park continues to see strong interest and activity. Most recently, approximately 11.5 acres of highway frontage sold, creating new opportunities for commercial growth and future business expansion. Continued investment in infrastructure and available land positions the business park as an important asset for both existing businesses and companies looking to locate in the region.

- *Child Care & Early Learning Investment*- Access to quality child care remains one of the community's most important workforce and economic development priorities. In 2024, Decorah and Winneshiek County celebrated the completion of a new 27,000+ square foot child care and family-focused facility that added capacity for more than 125 additional children. The project also included the Sunflower Discovery Center, creating a unique destination for young families and visitors while supporting early learning opportunities in the region. Located near WinnMed, the facility helps meet a critical need for working families and supports long-term workforce recruitment and retention efforts.

- *Residential Development & Housing Growth*- Housing growth continues across Winneshiek County as communities work to address increasing demand for both rental and owner-occupied housing. In Decorah, the next phase of residential development is expected to add additional rental units and single-family housing options to the local housing stock. Other communities throughout the county, including Ossian and Calmar, are also seeing new residential growth and investment, reflecting continued demand and confidence in the region.

- *Economic Vitality & Workforce Growth*- Winneshiek County's economy continues to benefit from a strong mix of manufacturing, health care, tourism, small business, and entrepreneurship. Employers throughout the region continue to invest in facilities, workforce expansion, and long-term growth. Companies such as Collins Aerospace continue to contribute to local workforce opportunities, while Toppling Goliath Brewing Co. remains a major tourism draw and economic driver for the region.

- *Quality of Life*- Winneshiek County continues to attract residents, visitors, and businesses because of its strong quality of life, natural beauty, and community amenities. From outdoor recreation and scenic trails to arts, culture, and locally owned businesses, the region offers a unique balance of opportunity and lifestyle. Destinations such as Vesterheim Norwegian-American Museum, along with the area's extensive outdoor recreation opportunities, continue to bring visitors to the region and contribute to the county's vibrant and connected communities.

Allamakee County

- Built 36 market-rate apartments in Waukon after completing housing assessment, rural housing assessment, and then obtaining the $1M workforce housing tax credit. 14 of 18 in the first building are rented. First building opened January 1, 2026. 5 of 18 in the second building are rented. Second building opened on May 1, 2026. There is a plan to build another 36 apartments.

- Built 2 duplexes in Waukon. 2 units are sold as of May 1, 2026. 4 more duplexes are scheduled to be built.

- Ziegler CAT built a new building in Postville. The company moved on May 1, 2026.

- Pladsen Chevrolet built a new dealership location in Waukon and opened in April 2026.

- Veterans Memorial Clinic in Postville is expanding. Renovations have begun. A walkthrough of the progress will be on May 20, 2026.

- Learning Tree Child Care Center in Lansing has raised $400,000 of the $500,000 project to renovate the old school's 2nd floor in Lansing. Part of the building will be up and running in 2026. This will expand the service to 80 kids.

- White Haus Social, a wedding/special event venue in Waukon, opened in Spring 2025 and is hosting events.

- The Lansing Bridge is being replaced and is scheduled to be completed by the end of 2027. Meanwhile, the State Highway 9 project will begin in 2028, and the Alliant Battery Storage facility is being built in 2026 and scheduled to be up and running in 2027.

- Postville has purchased land for a residential development.

Fayette County

- Fayette County Economic Development & Tourism (FCEDT) maintained strong momentum throughout 2025 and into 2026, advancing a coordinated approach to business retention, workforce development, and long-term community growth. Under the leadership of Director Mallory Hanson, the organization remained actively engaged in local, regional, and statewide initiatives that support economic vitality and quality of life across Fayette County.

- FCEDT continued to prioritize business retention and expansion by working directly with entrepreneurs and existing businesses across multiple communities. Efforts included providing financing guidance and startup resources to new and expanding businesses in Clermont, West Union, and Wadena, as well as supporting building rehabilitation and succession planning. Outreach to major employers in Oelwein and West Union helped lay the groundwork for a more formalized Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) survey process in partnership with the Iowa Economic Development Authority. Additionally, FCEDT gathered and promoted available commercial properties through the LOIS site selection system to strengthen recruitment efforts and increase visibility for development-ready sites.

- Workforce development remained a central focus throughout the year. FCEDT collaborated with educational institutions, including West Central Community School District and Upper Iowa University, to support career awareness and work-based learning opportunities. Engagement with Iowa Workforce Development, participation in regional career fairs, and connections with programs such as iJAG helped align workforce pipelines with employer needs. Recognizing transportation and child care as critical workforce barriers, FCEDT supported a NEICAC vanpool grant application and connected local child care providers with funding and technical assistance resources to expand capacity.

- Housing development and planning also played a key role in supporting workforce attraction and retention. FCEDT contributed to regional and statewide housing conversations through participation in the Housing Iowa Conference and Iowa Housing Partnership forums, while also assisting private developers exploring new housing opportunities within the county. The organization supported grant applications and planning efforts aimed at developing rural housing clusters and expanding housing options tied to workforce needs.

- At the regional level, FCEDT strengthened partnerships and collaborative initiatives through active leadership in the Northeast Iowa Business Network (NIBN). As chair, Hanson led the development of multiple grant proposals focused on workforce, housing, and quality-of-life initiatives, including a successful effort to secure funding for a regional 2026 workforce attraction and marketing video campaign.

- Industrial and community development efforts progressed through ongoing planning, project support, and strategic outreach. FCEDT contributed to the Fayette County Comprehensive Plan update, supported trail and park improvements in West Union, and assisted with downtown revitalization efforts through support for programs such as the Main Street Iowa Challenge Grant. Early-stage industrial recruitment efforts included engagement with national site selectors, helping position Fayette County for future industrial park development opportunities.

- FCEDT also focused on building local capacity and strengthening access to resources. The organization co-hosted a regional Grant Writing 101 workshop to equip communities and organizations with tools to pursue external funding. Throughout the year, FCEDT consistently gathered, analyzed, and shared data related to housing, workforce, and

tourism trends across Iowa and the Midwest, ensuring that local decision-making remains informed and forward-looking.

- Looking ahead, FCEDT remains committed to advancing strategies that support sustainable growth, with continued emphasis on housing development, workforce attraction and retention, and business expansion. Through strong partnerships, proactive planning, and ongoing community engagement, FCEDT is well-positioned to support long-term economic resilience and opportunity throughout Fayette County.

Howard County

- During 2025, Howard County Business & Tourism (HCBT)/Community and Economic Development Associates (CEDA) staff met with thirty-five entrepreneurs and business owners to provide technical assistance, financing guidance, and business development support throughout Howard County. As a result of these efforts, $445,000 in new Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) financing was distributed, contributing to the creation and retention of approximately 150 jobs. These investments increased the total amount of revolving loan funds currently in circulation with Howard County businesses to $1,528,500, demonstrating continued commitment to local business growth and economic development.

- Housing development and rehabilitation remained a major priority throughout the year. Through the Howard County Housing Revolving Loan Fund, $160,000 was loaned to support the construction of two new spec homes, helping address local housing shortages and workforce housing needs. In addition, the CUSB Bank Historic Downtown Cresco Revolving Loan Fund provided a $40,000 loan that resulted in the development of a new upper-story housing unit, further supporting downtown revitalization and expanded housing opportunities.

- Howard County also continued to benefit from investments through the Northeast Iowa Regional Housing Trust Fund. During the past year alone, the county received $469,457 in direct housing assistance benefiting twenty low-to-moderate income owner-occupied homes through rehabilitation and improvement projects. Over the past fifteen years, Howard County has received approximately $1.4 million in housing-related assistance through the program, significantly improving housing quality and stability for residents throughout the county.

- Several strategic development projects and business investments were completed or advanced during the year, contributing to continued economic growth within Howard County. These projects included the opening of a new retail store for Plantpeddler, completion of the Mahr Ag building expansion, ten rental housing rehabilitation projects including upper-story housing units, continued expansion efforts at Upper Iowa Beef in Lime Springs, and facility expansion for Alum-Line. Additional business transitions and investments included new ownership of the Elma Car Wash, Rick's Repair, LS Tap, and Riceville Trailers and Auto Body.

- HCBT/CEDA staff also continued administration of the innovative Child Care Solutions Program, which focuses on workforce retention and recruitment through support for

local child care providers. During the year, $109,496 in funding was awarded to three Howard County child care facilities through grant funding and contributions from local businesses and organizations. This initiative continues to play an important role in supporting working families and addressing workforce challenges throughout the county.

- Tourism also remained an important economic driver for Howard County. The most recent tourism data indicates that Howard County generated approximately $7.36 million in travel expenditures and more than $1.6 million in state and local tax receipts. Statewide, visitor spending in Iowa totaled $7.5 billion and generated an overall economic impact of $11.2 billion. Since the pandemic, Howard County has experienced a 25 percent increase in visitor spending over the past four years, reflecting continued growth in tourism activity and regional visitation.

Clayton County

- During 2025–2026, the Clayton County Development Group has continued to support local businesses, housing development, and economic growth throughout the county despite ongoing economic challenges.

- To date, we have assisted 10 businesses with small business planning in partnership with SBA Consulting services. In addition, five Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) business loans have been provided over the past year to help support local business growth, retention, and investment.

- Housing development and affordability remain key priorities within the county. We have met with more than nine homeowners interested in participating in the Housing RLF Program. Of those inquiries, four applications were submitted. One project has already been approved and is currently under construction, while another application was recently approved. Two potential applicants ultimately withdrew from the process due to project timing and construction-related constraints.

- The organization has also remained engaged with local industry and workforce issues. During the past year, three industry visits were conducted, and we assisted in coordinating meetings between local industries and state legislators to discuss business needs, workforce concerns, and economic conditions within the region.

- Current economic conditions continue to create challenges for businesses throughout Clayton County. Hiring activity has slowed considerably, and some employers have reduced staff levels due to decreased economic activity and uncertainty. Retail businesses have reported approximately a 20 percent decline in home goods sales, while rising food costs continue to impact restaurants and cafés.

- Several important business closures have also affected local communities within the county, including:
    - The closure of the Monona Pharmacy approximately one year ago
    - The closure of the Monona Grocery Store within the past several months
    - The closure of the Strawberry Point Grocery Store approximately six months ago

- The closure of the Franklin Hotel & Café in Strawberry Point approximately seven months ago

- In addition, many business owners throughout the county are approaching retirement age. Business succession planning and business transfers have become increasingly difficult as rising operational costs, workforce shortages, and economic uncertainty make it challenging to develop sustainable and profitable transition plans.

- Despite these challenges, the Clayton County Development Group continues to work closely with businesses, homeowners, community leaders, and regional partners to support economic resiliency, housing development, workforce retention, and long-term community sustainability throughout Clayton County.

Difficulties Encountered

In light of the region's recent adjustments and the statistics outlined above, ongoing efforts continue to focus on expanding housing and child care availability while also addressing transportation costs. These priorities are critical to attracting and retaining both businesses and workers, particularly amid today's challenging and uncertain economic climate.

iii. Actively participate in the meetings of the Iowa Association of Councils of Government (ICOG), a state-wide association for the Iowa Councils of Government

Accomplishments Achieved

The Iowa Association of Regional Councils (ICOG) was established in February 1988 as a statewide organization representing Iowa's Councils of Governments, reflecting its continued commitment to regional collaboration and statewide advocacy.

Today, ICOG is comprised of 17 member organizations from across Iowa. The executive director from each member organization serves on the ICOG Board of Directors, which convenes monthly to discuss legislative priorities, statewide initiatives, funding opportunities, and collaborative efforts that support economic and community development throughout Iowa.

Quantifiable Deliverable(s)

ICOG Continues Statewide Marketing Efforts Through Its Impact Map

The Iowa Association of Councils of Government (ICOG) continues to expand and enhance its statewide Impact Map by regularly adding new projects, program data, and regional success stories. The interactive map has become ICOG's primary marketing and outreach tool, effectively demonstrating the value and impact of Iowa's Councils of Governments across the state.

Designed for legislators, community leaders, stakeholders, and the public, the Impact Map showcases projects, programs, investments, and measurable returns occurring throughout Iowa's regions. The platform highlights the broad range of initiatives led and supported by COGs, including economic development, housing, infrastructure improvements, community planning, disaster recovery, and quality-of-life enhancements.

The tool is particularly important for Iowa's rural communities, where local staff capacity and economic development resources are often limited. By visually illustrating regional accomplishments and collaborative efforts, the Impact Map helps communicate the essential role COGs play in strengthening communities, supporting local governments, and advancing economic growth throughout Iowa.

Annual Legislative Breakfast & Budget Advocacy Efforts

On February 23, 2026, the Iowa Association of Councils of Government (ICOG) hosted its annual Legislative Breakfast at the State Capitol in Des Moines. The event provided an important opportunity for dialogue with state legislators and policymakers regarding the critical services and regional impacts delivered by Iowa's Councils of Governments. Discussions focused on economic development, housing, infrastructure, community planning, and the continued importance of regional collaboration throughout the state.

In addition to the Legislative Breakfast, ICOG directors met with legislators on December 12, 2025, and again on March 13, 2026, to further advocate for the role and value of Councils of Governments in supporting Iowa communities. These meetings emphasized the broad range of services COGs provide, particularly in rural areas where local capacity and staffing resources are often limited.

Despite these advocacy efforts, ICOG funding was ultimately removed from the state budget for the fiscal year. ICOG members continue to work collaboratively with state leaders to communicate the long-term value and statewide impact of regional planning organizations and to pursue future funding opportunities.

Director's Retreat

ICOG held its annual Directors' Retreat on October 23 and 24, 2025 at Honey Creek Resort in Moravia, Iowa. Directors from all 17 councils of governments (COGs) across the state gathered to share ideas, strengthen partnerships, and engage in professional development.

The retreat included a Directors' Meeting and featured a presentation on Human Resource Training by representatives from Dorsey & Whitney LLP of Des Moines. Participants also took part in a member engagement strategic planning session, designed to foster collaboration and align organizational goals for the coming year.

Ongoing Training & Professional Development

To support continuous learning and collaboration, ICOG holds two Directors Training Sessions annually—one in the spring and one in the fall. Additionally, mini-trainings and guest speakers have been incorporated into the monthly meetings. These sessions offer valuable insights and foster shared learning across the organization.

Difficulties Encountered

A significant challenge during the fiscal year was the continued uncertainty surrounding both state and federal funding. While ICOG and regional Councils of Governments continue to educate

legislators and policymakers on the essential services provided to communities across Iowa, securing consistent financial support remains difficult.

Despite increased awareness and recognition of the important role COGs play in economic development, housing, infrastructure, grant administration, and regional planning, state funding for ICOG was ultimately removed from the budget this year. In addition, uncertainty surrounding future federal funding allocations has created challenges for long-term planning, staffing, and program implementation.

These funding limitations place added pressure on regional organizations that are already operating with limited resources, particularly in rural communities where COGs often serve as the primary source of technical assistance and development support.

iv. Review CEDS five-year plan for any updates and CEDS checklist (next required update will be in September of 2028, include environmental section)

Accomplishments Achieved

UERPC staff recently completed the current CEDS five-year plan in 2022, which was approved by EDA. UERPC will be monitoring progress within the region to prepare for the next required update in 2028.

The outcome of regional economic resiliency research and engagement efforts—supported by the CARES Act Planning grant—resulted in an economic resiliency plan component within the current 5-year CEDS update.

Quantifiable Deliverable(s)

UERPC is working to carry out the scope of work within the five-year plan.

Difficulties Encountered

No difficulties found.

2. Improve Regional Workforce Skills and Increase Employment Base

i. *Utilize Workforce Plan, elements include: Community, Housing, Daycare and Workforce*

Accomplishments Achieved

The Northeast Iowa Business Network (NIBN) experienced a productive and impactful Fiscal Year 2026, highlighted by several initiatives focused on strengthening regional collaboration, supporting economic development, and promoting Northeast Iowa as a vibrant place to live, work, and visit.

One of the year's major accomplishments was the award of grant funding through the Northeast Iowa Funders Network and Dairyland Power Cooperative to support the development of a regional promotional video campaign. The project will consist of six professionally produced short

videos created in partnership with Northeast Iowa Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D). Each video will focus on a unique theme that showcases the economic development strengths, workforce opportunities, quality of life, tourism assets, and community amenities found throughout Northeast Iowa.

The campaign is designed to market the region to prospective residents, businesses, workforce talent, and visitors while also highlighting the many advantages of living and working in rural Northeast Iowa communities. In addition to promoting economic and tourism opportunities, the videos will emphasize community wellness, active lifestyles, regional engagement, and the long-term benefits of remaining in or relocating to the area.

This collaborative marketing initiative will help position Northeast Iowa as a welcoming, resilient, and supportive region for businesses, families, young professionals, and older adults alike. The completed video series is anticipated to be finalized and launched in 2027.

Continued Partnerships with Regional Economic Development Organizations

NIBN Executive Board, which is the six-county economic developers and UERPC staff, met monthly during the fiscal year to plan and organize the events held. The full board includes educational institutions, small business centers, partnering agencies continue to meet quarterly.

Quantifiable Deliverables

Throughout FY 2026, the Northeast Iowa Business Network (NIBN) hosted and supported numerous events and collaborative initiatives that strengthened partnerships across the region and connected community leaders, businesses, and stakeholders committed to the future of rural Iowa. The continued collaboration among Northeast Iowa's six counties has proven to be both effective and impactful in advancing shared economic and community development goals.

Regional Roundup

The Regional Workshop was designed to support city and county officials, staff, and community stakeholders. The event provided participants with expert guidance on critical governance, financing, and economic development tools available to Iowa communities.

The workshop was made possible through the support of the Northeast Iowa Funder's Network and UERPC, whose ongoing commitment strengthens local capacity-building efforts throughout the region.

Attendees engaged in a full slate of presentations and discussions, including:

- Iowa Open Meeting Laws
- Economic development tools for cities and counties
- Empower Iowa Programs
- Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) Programs
- Tax Increment Financing (TIF)
- Property Tax Abatements
- General Obligation Credit Deals

A special highlight of the day included the opportunity to gain valuable insights from bond attorney John Danos, Partner at Dorsey & Whitney LLP and Co-Leader of Public Finance—at no cost to participants. Other presenters included Michael Gould, Business Development Manager with Iowa Economic Development Authority, and Sacha Wise, Director for Empower Rural Iowa.

This event provided attendees with valuable insights and actionable strategies to strengthen their local economies and foster sustainable growth.

Housing Summit

Community leaders, housing professionals, developers, lenders, and economic development partners from across Northeast Iowa gathered on Thursday, January 29, 2026, for the Regional Housing Summit at the NICC Wilder Building in Calmar, Iowa. The event was designed to address housing challenges, explore development opportunities, and highlight programs available to support housing growth throughout the region.

The summit agenda included presentations from regional leaders and housing experts, including discussions on:

- Local zoning ordinances and development considerations
- Recent housing developments and regional success stories
- The Homes for Iowa initiative
- Workforce housing tax credits and housing trust fund programs
- Federal Home Loan Bank housing resources
- Revolving loan fund opportunities and homebuyer programs

Attendees also had opportunities to network with housing stakeholders, community officials, developers, lenders, and nonprofit organizations working to expand housing opportunities across Northeast Iowa.

Sponsorship of the RESET Conference

NIBN proudly sponsored the *2026 RESET Business Conference* in Decorah, held April 20-21, 2026. This conference is created with rural communities in mind. The focus was on personal and professional growth, streamlining systems and processes, marketing tactics and more. The conference created an instant network of people who are like-minded in keeping Iowa's small towns thriving, proving our worth of being a destination for tourists, and a place to establish roots for individuals and families alike.

Leadership Trainings

Four of the region's six counties are planning to host leadership training programs during the fall of 2026 and spring of 2027. These initiatives are designed to strengthen and revitalize local leadership development efforts by helping communities establish sustainable leadership programs supported by strong local partnerships and engagement.

The trainings will focus on building community capacity through strategic planning, collaboration, and practical leadership development. Participants will gain valuable skills and tools that can be immediately applied within their communities to address local challenges, support community initiatives, and foster long-term growth and resiliency. Strong local leadership remains a critical

component of thriving communities, and these programs are intended to cultivate engaged leaders who can create meaningful and lasting impact.

The multi-session program is designed to help participants better understand their communities, identify opportunities for growth and improvement, strengthen relationships and collaboration, and mobilize resources to move projects and initiatives forward.

Each session incorporates hands-on learning opportunities, facilitated discussions, and practical exercises that encourage active participation and community engagement. Through these efforts, the program aims to empower residents, strengthen local leadership networks, and support the continued success and vitality of Northeast Iowa communities.

In addition, counties and regional partners worked collectively to address emerging community and housing needs that benefit the broader region. Key accomplishments included:

- Promoted housing and rehabilitation resources through the Iowa Finance Authority (IFA) Repair Program, Federal Home Loan Bank (FHLB) programs, Housing Trust Funds, and USDA housing programs;
- Assisted in the award of Iowa Finance Authority Homebuyer Program funding supporting 15 homes;
- Assisted in securing Federal Home Loan Bank Rehabilitation Program funding for 29 homes;
- Applied for Federal Home Loan Bank First-Time Homebuyer Program funding benefiting 10 homes;
- Assisted 107 homeowners with rehabilitation projects totaling more than $2.2 million in housing improvements throughout the region; and
- Developed a new regional feeder website for Northeast Iowa Business Network, www.northeastiowabusiness.com, designed to connect and support the economic development efforts of the region's county economic development organizations.

Difficulties Encountered

None at this time.

B. MARKET UPPER EXPLORERLAND SERVICES – EXPAND PUBLIC AWARENESS OF UPPER EXPLORERLAND PROGRAMS

i. *Continue with the monthly e-newsletter to businesses and communities*

Accomplishments Achieved

Education and outreach are essential to building strong community involvement and advancing UERPC's mission. UERPC recognizes that successful regional planning and economic development depend on strong relationships, effective communication, and ongoing collaboration with local governments, organizations, businesses, and residents. By fostering awareness and engagement, UERPC serves as a valuable regional resource and partner in supporting community and county success throughout the region.

UERPC continues to distribute monthly electronic newsletters through the MailChimp platform to a contact database of approximately 1,497 recipients. These newsletters provide updates on

projects, funding opportunities, regional initiatives, success stories, and organizational activities. Completed newsletters are also shared through the UERPC website, uerpc.org, and social media platforms including Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), Instagram, and LinkedIn to expand outreach, maintain consistent communication, and share agency news, project highlights, grant opportunities, success stories, and community resources. These platforms help increase visibility of UERPC programs while strengthening connections with local governments, businesses, organizations, and residents throughout the region. Community members and partners who are not currently subscribed are encouraged to join the mailing list through the UERPC website, while current subscribers are encouraged to share the newsletter with others who may benefit from the information.

Quantifiable Deliverable(s)

Building Connections Through Communication

UERPC remains committed to strengthening regional partnerships and increasing public awareness through consistent and meaningful communication efforts. The organization's monthly e-newsletters currently maintain an average open rate of approximately 24% and an average click-through rate near 2%, demonstrating strong audience engagement and continued interest in regional activities and opportunities.

The contact database continues to grow through referrals, outreach efforts, and requests from economic development partners and community stakeholders throughout the region. In addition, UERPC has incorporated employee spotlight features within the newsletter to create a more personal connection with readers and strengthen relationships with local officials, partners, and community members.

UERPC Newsletter

In addition to traditional media outreach, UERPC distributes a monthly electronic newsletter, uerpc.org/newsletters/, to counties, cities, businesses, partner organizations, and community stakeholders. The newsletter provides updates on current projects, funding opportunities, organizational activities, regional success stories, project visuals, testimonials, and direct links to partner agencies, workforce resources, housing programs, planning documents, grant opportunities, and other valuable regional services. It also periodically features UERPC staff and board members to strengthen relationships with local partners and increase awareness of the agency's services and regional impact.

ICOG Newsletter

UERPC also collaborates with the Iowa Association of Councils of Government (ICOG) on quarterly feature stories that highlight specific program areas and showcase successful regional initiatives and outcomes for the ICOG newsletter, www.iowacog.com/newsletter. These collaborative communications help educate legislators, stakeholders, and the public on the importance of regional planning, economic development, housing, infrastructure, and community development efforts taking place throughout Northeast Iowa. Additional information and statewide success stories are shared through the ICOG newsletter and related outreach materials.

Fund Alert

UERPC continues with their Fund Alert e-newsletter. This alert notifies cities, businesses, and counties of various available grant opportunities covering a variety of project areas. UERPC has an

average success rate of over 33% of emailed Fund Alerts being opened. An average click rate on each Fund Alert was over 9%.

Difficulties Encountered

Maintaining accurate communication networks remains an ongoing challenge due to frequent turnover among public officials, local staff, and organizational contacts. As leadership and staffing changes occur throughout the region, UERPC must continually update contact information and email databases to ensure outreach efforts remain current and effective. Additionally, the evolving nature of public information, funding opportunities, and educational resources requires continual communication and engagement with regional partners.

ii. Improve our internet, website, and Facebook information

Accomplishments Achieved

Expanding Communication Through Digital Outreach

UERPC continues to strengthen public engagement and regional awareness through enhanced digital communication efforts. The organization actively utilizes its website and social media platforms to share timely information, promote regional initiatives, and educate the public on emerging issues affecting communities throughout the region. UERPC remains focused on providing forward-thinking, solution-based information related to important topics such as energy programs, mental health resources, disaster preparedness, child care accessibility, environmental changes, housing initiatives, workforce development, and technological advancements.

UERPC's monthly newsletter and Fund Alert also continue to serve as important communication tools by providing updates on agency activities, board meetings, agendas, minutes, project developments, and regional initiatives. In addition, UERPC continues its partnership with the IOCG newsletter to promote regional accomplishments and program successes through statewide outreach efforts

Quantifiable Deliverable(s)

UERPC utilized its digital platforms to share timely and emerging information on a wide range of topics, including small business assistance, family services, human trafficking awareness, business loans and training opportunities, nuisance building codes, Homes for Iowa initiatives, health and wellness resources, community development, energy and environmental issues, grant writing and research, and other regional initiatives. Through these outreach efforts, UERPC continues to strengthen its role as a trusted regional leader and resource for businesses, families, local governments, and community organizations.

As a result of these communication efforts, UERPC received more than 68 new inquiries and contacts over the past year from individuals and organizations seeking assistance, information, or partnership opportunities.

Difficulties Encountered

One ongoing challenge is balancing staff time between project responsibilities and public outreach efforts. Continually researching emerging issues, developing educational content, and promoting organizational successes requires significant staff capacity. Despite these challenges,

UERPC staff remain committed to regularly sharing project updates, meeting information, and regional accomplishments through social media and other communication channels to maintain public engagement and awareness.

iii. Celebrate the region's successes by sending notifications and photos to area media

Accomplishments Achieved

As part of UERPC's expanded marketing and outreach efforts, the organization took a proactive approach in pursuing statewide and national recognition for regional initiatives and collaborative successes.

UERPC has taken a bold position on marketing our work. UERPC has applied and received many awards this fiscal year. We are proud to announce UERPC Regional Economic Development Specialist Ashley Christensen as the 2025 Rising Stars Under 40 Program with the 7 Rivers Alliance organization. Ms. Christensen was one of 24 honorees selected for 2025 and is the second UERPC staff member to be honored as a Rising Star over the years. She joins UERPC Regional Planner Michelle Barness, who was honored in 2018. This year's honorees were recognized at an award reception on October 20, 2025 in La Crescent, MN.

Ashley was nominated by UERPC Assistant Director Diana Johnson. In her nomination submission, Diana wrote:

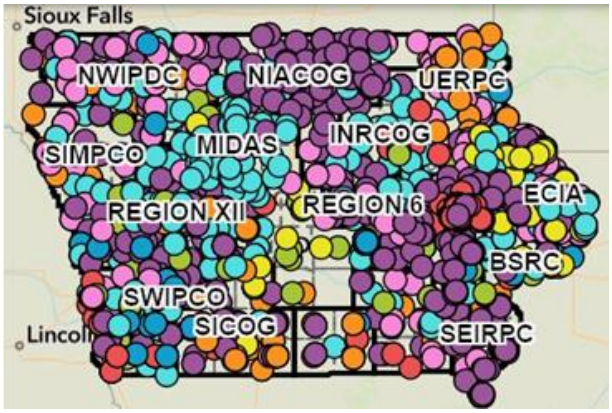
Ashley deserves recognition for being the quiet force behind so much of our organization's success. For 13 years, she has been the dependable, behind-the-scenes presence that helps keep everything running smoothly. Her positive attitude is unwavering—I genuinely can't recall a time when she wasn't in good spirits. Always ready to lend a hand, Ashley never says no when someone needs support, and she brings a true "can-do" spirit to every task she takes on.

Furthermore, UERPC was honored with National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) 2025 Aliceann Wohlbruck NADO Impact Award for its role in the Allamakee County Child Care Solutions Fund. This fund was a collaborative initiative designed to address critical community needs and drive local solutions for child care across the county and region.

This recognition highlights the importance of regional partnerships and strategic problem-solving, particularly in rural Iowa communities where limited staffing and resources for economic and community development continue to present ongoing challenges.

UERPC continues to prioritize communication, public outreach, and regional engagement through a comprehensive marketing and media strategy that promotes the organization's programs, projects, and initiatives across Northeast Iowa. News releases are routinely distributed to regional newspapers, local radio stations, and other media outlets, resulting in frequent coverage of community visits, development activities, funding awards, and organizational initiatives. Between July 1, 2025, and April 30, 2026, UERPC published more than 360 news releases highlighting ongoing regional projects and accomplishments. These communications are also shared across

social media platforms to expand public awareness and maintain consistent engagement with communities and stakeholders throughout the region.



Quantifiable Deliverable(s)

Impact Map

UERPC works with ICOG to develop and input thousands of projects throughout the state within the Impact Map. Explore the impressive map and see the impact for yourself: www.iowacog.com/impact-map

Media Posts

UERPC posts on average 33 news headlines monthly on the UERPC website. UERPC has been mentioned or involved in over 360 listed newspaper articles or public notices within various news media outlets over the past fiscal year (see the list of newspaper clippings in Attachment A).

UERPC significantly expanded its speaking engagements throughout the fiscal year as part of a broader effort to increase awareness of regional programs, highlight project successes, and share best practices across Iowa. Staff presented at a variety of state, regional, and local events focused on housing, economic development, leadership, and community development initiatives.

Engagements included presentations at the following:

- Iowa Housing Conference
- "Power of 10" Northeast Iowa Community College Leadership Training
- City Clerk Association meeting/presentation
- Presentation at the Northeast Iowa Bankers Association
- Edgewood Chamber and Economic Development Annual Banquet
- National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) Conference – presentation on innovative approaches by Economic Development Districts (EDDs) to addressing social determinants of health, highlighting UERPC's Child Care Solutions Fund as a regional best practice
- Additional local housing and community development group presentations (details to be confirmed)

These outreach efforts have strengthened UERPC's visibility across the state, reinforced partnerships with local and regional stakeholders, and provided opportunities to showcase successful programs and collaborative initiatives that support housing, workforce development, and economic growth throughout Northeast Iowa.

Difficulties Encountered

None at this time.

iv. Visit various cities and counties to assist with project needs (grant writing, infrastructure, business development, etc.)

Accomplishments Achieved

Strengthening Communities Through Technical Assistance

To build capacity within local governments, businesses, and organizations, UERPC remains focused on providing technical assistance across the region. As a trusted partner to cities and counties, UERPC offers specialized services and expert guidance to help communities identify solutions and achieve their goals.

Quantifiable Deliverable(s)

During the fiscal year, UERPC directly engaged with more than 22 cities and 5 counties involved in community development, economic development, housing, infrastructure, and business-related initiatives throughout the region. Through meetings, project coordination, and technical assistance efforts, UERPC provided support across a broad range of program and development areas, including:

- Administration and support of Revolving Loan Fund programs in Elgin, West Union, Allamakee County, and Oelwein;
- Storm sewer and drainage infrastructure improvements;
- Community support initiatives, including food pantry projects and medical equipment assistance;
- Housing development initiatives, including low-to-moderate income housing projects, housing studies, and housing assessments;
- Child care solution funding and wage support initiatives;
- Technical assistance and research related to state and federal housing programs;
- Business financing, loan packaging, and economic development programs;
- Strategic planning, organizational development, and goal-setting assistance for economic development organizations;
- Leadership development and training opportunities;
- Energy district coordination and implementation activities related to Inflation Reduction Act initiatives;
- Transportation planning and sidewalk assessments; and
- Water, wastewater, and sewer infrastructure improvement projects.

UERPC continues to serve as a trusted regional resource and technical assistance provider for communities, organizations, businesses, and local governments throughout Northeast Iowa. Sustaining this role requires continuous collaboration, responsiveness, and adaptability to address evolving community needs and emerging opportunities. UERPC remains committed to supporting communities through strategic planning, project development, funding assistance, and regional partnerships that strengthen local capacity and improve quality of life across the region.

During the fiscal year, UERPC engaged in representing community development, housing, economic development, and business initiatives throughout the region. These engagements included coordination meetings, project discussions, and technical assistance provided to local officials, business owners, developers, nonprofit organizations, community groups, and residents involved in both active and prospective projects.

UERPC's outreach and technical assistance efforts extended across numerous communities in Northeast Iowa, including St. Olaf, Strawberry Point, Farmersburg, Chester, Jackson Junction, Dubuque, Des Moines, Ames, Waucoma, Calmar, West Union, Oelwein, Lansing, Decorah, New Albin, Monona, Fort Atkinson, Elkader, Waukon, Marquette, Garber, Elgin, Waterville, Arlington, Fayette, Garnavillo, McGregor, Elma, Volga, Hawkeye, Postville, Cresco, Luana, Ossian, Lime Springs, and Harpers Ferry. Many of these communities received multiple site visits and continued support throughout the year to assist with the planning, development, and implementation of local and regional initiatives.

Out of the above listed visits within the technical assistance work, the following projects were completed or worked on during this fiscal year:

Regional Resilience Planning

Regional resiliency planning is essential in helping communities prepare for, respond to, and recover from natural disasters, infrastructure challenges, economic disruptions, and other unforeseen events that may impact public safety, local economies, and quality of life. By proactively identifying risks and vulnerabilities, resiliency planning enables communities to reduce potential damages, strengthen infrastructure systems, improve emergency preparedness, and position themselves for long-term sustainability and recovery.

During the fiscal year, UERPC completed three (3) Hazard Mitigation Plans focused on resiliency and long-term community preparedness for Fayette County, Clayton County, and Winneshiek County. These plans were developed in collaboration with county officials, emergency management personnel, local governments, utility providers, and community stakeholders to identify regional hazards, assess vulnerabilities, and establish mitigation strategies aimed at reducing future risks and improving disaster response capabilities.

The plans addressed a variety of potential hazards impacting Northeast Iowa communities, including flooding, severe storms, tornadoes, drought conditions, infrastructure vulnerabilities, and other natural or environmental threats. In addition to identifying mitigation priorities, the planning process also emphasized strategies to strengthen community resiliency through infrastructure improvements, emergency coordination, public education, land-use considerations, and long-term recovery planning.

Comprehensive or Strategic Planning

Comprehensive planning and strategic goalsetting are important tools that help cities and counties prepare for future growth, address community needs, and establish priorities for long-term development. These plans provide guidance for decision-making related to housing, infrastructure, transportation, economic development, land use, and community services. They also help communities identify funding opportunities, coordinate projects, and create a shared vision for the future.

During the fiscal year, UERPC assisted with several planning initiatives throughout the region, including:

- Cresco Comprehensive Plan
- Fayette County Comprehensive Plan
- Decorah Goalsetting Facilitation and Plan

- Waukon Goalsetting Facilitation and Plan
- Winneshiek County Goalsetting Facilitation and Plan
- 5-County Long-Range Transportation Plan
- 5-County Transportation Improvement Program

These planning efforts help communities prioritize projects, strengthen communication among local leaders and stakeholders, and position cities and counties for future growth and resiliency. Transportation planning efforts are also critical in helping communities identify infrastructure needs, improve safety and connectivity, and maintain eligibility for state and federal transportation funding opportunities.

Through these initiatives, UERPC continues to provide technical assistance and planning support that helps communities make informed decisions and prepare for future opportunities and challenges.

Codes and Ordinances

During the fiscal year, UERPC continued to assist communities with the development, review, and modernization of local codes and ordinances to support effective governance, community planning, and long-term development goals. UERPC completed comprehensive code updates for the City of Volga and the City of Chester, as well as updated regulatory ordinances and development regulations for Fayette County. These efforts included reviewing outdated ordinances, ensuring consistency with current state requirements, improving clarity and usability, and incorporating provisions that better address current community needs and future growth opportunities.

Codes and ordinances play a critical role in guiding local decision-making and establishing standards related to zoning, land use, housing, public safety, infrastructure, nuisance enforcement, subdivision regulations, and overall community development. Updated and well-structured ordinances help communities manage growth responsibly, protect public health and safety, support economic development, and maintain the character and quality of life within their communities.

For many rural communities and counties, maintaining current ordinances can be challenging due to limited staffing capacity and evolving state and federal requirements. UERPC's technical assistance helps local governments navigate these challenges by providing planning expertise, ordinance drafting support, public engagement assistance, and guidance on implementation. These updates also position communities to better address future development opportunities, infrastructure investments, housing initiatives, and regulatory compliance needs while creating a stronger foundation for long-term resiliency and sustainable growth.

Regional Environmental Work

UERPC is partnering with the Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque to support and strengthen environmental initiatives and sustainability efforts throughout the region. During this fiscal year, UERPC completed environmental reviews for multiple water and wastewater infrastructure projects, as well as one (1) environmental review for a community facility project.

In addition, UERPC conducted 20 environmental reviews related to first-time homebuyer assistance projects, including 19 Tier II environmental assessments and one (1) Tier I

assessment. These reviews are essential not only for meeting state and federal grant compliance requirements, but also for ensuring responsible environmental stewardship and promoting the long-term sustainability and resiliency of communities across the region.

Environmental review work continues to play an important role in supporting regional infrastructure improvements, housing development, and community growth efforts. By carefully evaluating environmental impacts and regulatory considerations early in the planning process, UERPC helps communities reduce project risks, maintain compliance, protect environmental resources, and position projects for successful funding and implementation. These efforts are especially important in rural communities where local capacity and environmental expertise may be limited.

Regional Energy Planning

The region benefits from the presence of four established energy districts in Winneshiek, Allamakee, Clayton, and Howard Counties. These districts play a key role in advancing local energy efficiency, renewable energy initiatives, and long-term sustainability efforts throughout Northeast Iowa.

UERPC provides ongoing support to these energy districts through technical assistance, grant writing, grant administration, and coordination of regional initiatives. This includes assistance with program development, project implementation, and educational outreach efforts such as electric vehicle workshops and other energy-related training and engagement activities.

During the fiscal year, several key initiatives were completed, including the Decorah Low-Income Energy Savings Initiative. This project supported energy efficiency improvements and sustainability efforts for income-qualified households, while also advancing local energy conservation goals. In addition, UERPC supported ongoing Decorah Sustainability Commission meetings and provided energy coaching services to help residents and stakeholders better understand and implement energy-saving strategies.

Through these efforts, UERPC continues to strengthen regional energy planning by supporting collaboration, expanding access to funding opportunities, and promoting practical solutions that improve energy efficiency, reduce costs, and enhance long-term environmental sustainability across the region.

Additional Technical Assistance

Various other technical assistance was provided, see below:

- Provided financial management for Burr Oak Sewer Commission
- Provided financial management for Frankville Rural Water District
- Provided administrative services for Winneshiek County Community Foundation
- Wrote and awarded Iowa Economic Development Authority's Workforce Tax Credit of $393,000 for developers in Edgewood, building 6 stick built homes;
- Wrote Iowa Economic Development Authority's Workforce Tax Credit of $200,000 for developers in Guttenberg, building 2 duplexes;
- Administer Allamakee County Child Care Solutions Fund
- Wrote Federal Home Loan Bank grant for 29 rehabbed homes;
- Wrote Federal Home Loan Bank grant for first time homebuyer – 10 homes;

- Wrote Economic Development Administration Grant for city of Lansing Main Street Reconstruction;
- Wrote Iowa Economic Development Authority's Roof Replacement CDBG grant for Howard County;
- Awarded Congresswoman Ashley Hinson's Community Funds for Veterans Memorial Hospital's MRI machine;
- Awarded Congresswoman Ashley Hinson's Community Funds for City of Luana's Wastewater Treatment Facility;
- Wrote Iowa Economic Development Authority's Public Services Food Pantry CDBG grant for Guttenberg
- Wrote and awarded for CDBG water/sewer projects: Elgin
- Wrote and awarded three (3) cities for CDBG water/sewer projects: Oelwein, and Luana
- Wrote and submitted for IFA's Homebuyer program, 15 homes

Difficulties Encountered

Providing technical assistance continues to be a significant component of UERPC staff responsibilities. The volume and breadth of requests for support across housing, economic development, infrastructure, planning, and grant administration regularly exceed available staff capacity. As a result, UERPC is not able to fully address every project or request brought forward by local partners and communities.

The demand for services throughout the region remains extensive, and even with additional staffing, it would be challenging to fully meet all identified needs. This ongoing capacity limitation requires staff to prioritize projects based on funding requirements, urgency, and regional impact while continuing to provide high-quality assistance across multiple program areas.

C. INCREASE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY IN PARTNERSHIP WITH UERPC

1. Host Five-County City Clerk's Association quarterly

Accomplishments Achieved

UERPC continues to host and provide educational sessions for city clerks and administrators to receive their Iowa Municipal Finance Officers Association (IFMOA) certification credits. UERPC staff set up these meetings and also coordinate the speakers. It is a great way to understand the needs of our cities and update them on UERPC services and projects.

Quantifiable Deliverable(s)

The Northeast Iowa Clerk's Association met with 15-25 city clerks and/or administrators attending each meeting. The following were dates and topics at the meetings:

April 30, 2026 – HR Issues City Clerks Face Every Day: Practical Guidance on People Problems, Pay, and Compliance"

City and County Clerks often find themselves managing complex HR issues without formal HR authority or training—while juggling payroll, compliance, elected officials, and public expectations. This session is designed to provide practical, plain-language guidance on the HR topics City Clerks most commonly struggle with.

- Participants will explore:
- Core HR responsibilities Clerks frequently oversee
- Strategies for handling difficult employees, officials, and residents
- Discussion on overtime, comp time, and payroll taxation—particularly for law enforcement and public employees
- How to avoid common compliance pitfalls and know when to escalate issues

January 29, 2026 – Housing Summit

- ZONING ORDINANCES *Brian Schoon & Isaiah Corbin*, INRCOG
- INSIGHT ON LATEST DEVELOPMENT IN THE REGION Panelists: *Dexter Quandahl, Ben Garrett & Wes Schulte*
- HOUSING PROGRAMS OVERVIEW *Nick Sorensen,* Iowa Workforce Tax Credit *Spiff Slifka,* Northeast Iowa Regional Housing Trust Fund *Chris Troendle,* Federal Home Loan Bank, Northeast Iowa Homebuyer *Jason Passmore and Darla Kelchen,* Housing RLF

November 12, 2025 –New Open Meetings Laws and IEDA's programs Iowa Economic Development Programs

- Financing and Economic Development Tools for Cities and Counties
- The workshop will provide an interactive discussion on tools available to Iowa cities and counties for infrastructure, public facilities, and economic development/redevelopment projects. Topics will include Tax Increment Financing (TIF), property tax abatements, and General Obligation credit deals—essentially, a chance to get valuable insights from a bond attorney at no cost!
- Speakers John Danos with Dorsey's Whitney Law office presented on Open Meeting laws and Sacha Wise and Michael Gould presented on IEDA's programs

June 26, 2025 - Iowa's Auditor of State's office

Cole Hocker and Katherine Rupp with the Iowa's Auditor of State's Office (AOS) held a session on city funding/donating to nonprofits and frequent findings AOS has in City exams and audits.

Also, UERPC hosts six-county supervisors and engineer's meetings each quarter. The county engineers and supervisors from the 5-county UERPC region plus Chickasaw County collaborate and discuss similar issues/concerns. Discussed issues have included: Open meeting laws, Energy Source Siting Laws & Ordinances, mental health expenses, human resources, Secondary Roads - Level B Roads & level of services, Election rulings; personnel issues; Property/Equipment insurance, etc.

Difficulties Encountered

Difficulties encountered are gathering more participation from city clerks and administrators. With small city staffing, it is difficult for clerks and administrators to leave their post at city hall. UERPC works with cities to find topics and speakers that benefit each city.

2. *Host Annual Legislative Forum*

Accomplishments Achieved

UERPC hosts an Annual Legislative Forum, and regional leaders report that UERPC's legislative event is the best legislative event they attend each year. The Annual Legislative Forum provides the legislators of Northeast Iowa an opportunity to learn about the priorities most concerning to the region's counties and communities. The gathering is also a great time to maintain a relationship with legislators.

Quantifiable Deliverable(s)

The Legislative Forum was held on December 18, 2025 in Calmar. Many state and federal legislators were in attendance to answer various questions and concerns from the 73 individuals in attendance. Attendees were from many facets: agricultural sector, city government, county government, commercial and manufacturing sector, non-profit organizations, and service agencies.

The 2026 Iowa legislative session, which wrapped up on May 3, 2026, was dominated by efforts to reduce property taxes, restructure the state budget, and address key agricultural and social policies.

As part of the Iowa Association of Councils of Governments (ICOG), the Executive Director from UERPC attends the ICOG Legislative Day at the Capitol, held this year on February 5, 2026. Various other visits were made to the capital to specifically speak with our legislators regarding Council of Government funding. ICOG hires a lobbyist group, Cope Murphy & Co., to assist them with their conversations and continue the efforts with legislators.

Difficulties Encountered

Funding is always a difficulty. COG funding was cut this year.

EVALUATION

Utilizing UERPC's Scope of Work (SOW) and viewing the trends, adjustments, and data for the region, UERPC can easily say the work completed has been a success. With the numbers of technical assistance work, grants administered, businesses served, and communities engaged, UERPC affirms the evaluation of the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 SOW as high achieving.

As part of UERPC's evaluation, UERPC looks at the number of jobs and types of investments. This fiscal year, UERPC completed many technical assistance investments. Without UERPC's marketing efforts or UERPC's technical assistance service, the numbers would not indicate such a large impact. UERPC has noted an increase of city and county visits. Providing technical assistance and planning can ensure ongoing attention and consideration to safety and social objectives; it can also enhance the ability of citizens to empower themselves and their communities and/or businesses.

1. *Number of jobs created after implementation of the CEDS*

Within the Government Performance Results Act, UERPC has noted 252 direct jobs created due to UERPC's SOW.

2. *Number and types of investments undertaken in the region*

Various investments involving public, state, and federal funding were undertaken in the UERPC region this past fiscal year, including:

- Facility Construction – 2
- Technical Assistance – 2
- Infrastructure – 3
- Planning – 6
- Other – 0

TOTAL- 13 investments

These 13 investments produced over $8,138,479 total funds for the region. The breakdowns include:

- Local funding – $2,842,602
- State funding – $2,280,516
- Private funding – $127,112
- Other federal monies – $2,888,239
- Economic Development Administration – $70,000

3. *Number of jobs retained in the region*

There are 252 jobs related to the activities leading to the public, private, and local dollars associated with UERPC's SOW.

4. *Amount of private sector investment in the region after implementation of the CEDS*

The 13 investments did produce funding from the private sector in the amount of $127,112.

5. *Changes in the economic environment of the region*

The region continues to face a number of interconnected challenges, including population decline, an aging workforce, shrinking labor force participation, small-business contraction, child care shortages, limited housing diversity, broadband gaps, and rising energy burdens. Together, these issues influence the region's economic resilience, quality of life, and long-term sustainability.

In response, regional priorities and adjustments will focus on strengthening community infrastructure, workforce development, and economic opportunity. Efforts will include expanding energy planning initiatives and programs aimed at reducing household energy costs, while continuing research, data analysis, and technical assistance to support informed decision-making across the region.

Housing and workforce needs will remain a central focus through continued housing assessments, support for housing development programs, and implementation of the NIBN Work Plan, including initiatives related to child care, housing, leadership development, and business workshops. Transportation planning will also be prioritized, particularly strategies that improve workforce mobility and support future EV corridor development.

Additional regional changes will include increased investment in water, sewer, and stormwater infrastructure through expanded CDBG funding opportunities. Communities will also continue addressing technology and workforce needs through investments in fiber infrastructure, AI and technology training, leadership development, financial education, and workforce retention strategies.

To strengthen long-term regional capacity, efforts will continue to focus on grant writing, regional partnerships, and collaborative projects addressing child care, housing, transportation, energy, and small-business development needs. Long-range planning activities—including comprehensive plans, resiliency planning, and hazard mitigation planning—will also remain important priorities.

Finally, outreach to cities and counties will increase in order to strengthen awareness and utilization of UERPC services and regional development resources.

SCHEDULE

CEDS Strategy	Goal	Objective	Priority	Lead Organization	Resources	Timeline	Jobs	Evaluation
Economic Development	Assist local economic development agency, partners and existing and expanding businesses	Assist with the planning for the expansion and creation of business lots and industrial parks.	Low	UERPC, NIBN and County Economic Development	EDA, local, state and federal funds	On-going	1	# of loans and jobs created/ retained/private and local investment; number of technical assistance calls/visits
		Assist local businesses in retention and expansion	Medium	UERPC, NIBN and County Economic Development	EDA, local, state and federal funds	On-going	5	# of jobs created/retained/Local investment
		Actively participate in the meetings of the Iowa Association of Councils of Governments (ICOG), a statewide association for the Iowa Councils of Government	Medium	UERPC, NIBN and County Economic Development	EDA and COG funds	On-going	5	# of loans and jobs created/ retained/local investment
		Review CEDS for update next five-year plan is due Sept. 2028	Low	UERPC, NIBN and County Economic Development	EDA, Local Funds	2027	1	Track # of inquiries about UERPC work; collect data

CEDS Strategy	Goal	Objective	Priority	Lead Organization	Resources	Timeline	Jobs	Evaluation
	Improve regional workforce skills and increase employment base	Utilize Workplan, elements including: Community, Housing, Daycare and Workforce	High	Lead Organization	Local Funds and private funds	On-going	0	Track attendees at workshops, inquiries

CEDS Strategy	Goal	Objective	Priority	Lead Organization	Resources	Timeline	Jobs	Evaluation
Market Upper Explorerland Services - Expand public awareness of Upper Explorerland Programs		Continue with the e-newsletter to businesses and communities	Medium	Lead Organization	EDA, Local Funds	On-going	1	Produce newsletter quarterly
		Improve our internet, website and Facebook information	Low	Lead Organization	EDA, Local Funds	On-going	1	Produce newsletter quarterly
		Celebrate the region's successes by sending notifications and photos to area media	Medium	Lead Organization	EDA, Local Funds	On-going	1	Produce social media blasts when necessary
		Visit various cities and counties to assist with project needs	High	Lead Organization	EDA, Local Funds	On-going	1	Visit cities and counties via zoom, phone, email or in-person

CEDS Strategy	Goal	Objective	Priority	Lead Organization	Resources	Timeline	Jobs	Evaluation
	Increase public and private institutional capacity in partnership with UERPC	Host Five-County City Clerk's Association quarterly	High	Lead Organization	EDA, Local Funds	Quarterly	.5	Host training sessions quarterly
		Host Annual Legislative Forum	High	Lead Organization	EDA, Local Funds	Annually	.5	Host annually

ATTACHMENT A

Date	Newspaper Article	Source
4/9/2025	Waukon City Council appoints Tim Smedsrud to vacant At-La council seat…	Waukon Standard
4/15/2025	Decorah Community Forum Highlights New Luther President, Child Care Concerns	Decorah News
5/8/2025	ABCs of Biking: Bicycle Care, Collection, and Cookies Event Took Place3 May 1	Decorah News
5/6/2025	ABCs of Biking: Bicycle Care, Collection, and Cookies Event Took Place3 May 1	Decorah News
5/15/2025	UERPC Transportation planning work program	Decorah Leader
5/15/2025	UERPC TIP	Decorah Leader
5/28/2025	Bicycle Care, collection and cookies all part of a Family Bicycle Event at Driftless…	Waukon Standard
7/2/2025	Howard Co. Board of Supervisors	Cresco TPD
6/25/2025	Northeast Iowa rallies for Bike Month	North Iowa Times-Register
6/25/2025	City of Waukon Regular City Council Meeting	Waukon Standard
6/25/2025	Minutes of The Allamakee County Board of Supervisors	Waukon Standard
7/9/2025	Elgin Ambulance Service to become city department	The Union
7/8/2025	UERPC Transportation Improvement Program	Oelwein Daily Register
7/8/2025	NEIRHTF Regular Meeting Minutes	Oelwein Daily Register
7/9/2025	Waukon City Council discusses Iowa Thriving Communities designation, approves…	Waukon Standard
6/27/2025	UERHA Board Minutes	Oelwein Daily Register
6/18/2025	Howard Co. Board of Supervisors	Cresco TPD
6/18/2025	Cresco City Council Special Meeting	Cresco TPD
6/18/2025	City Council has fiery debate over housing, Breezy Summit Resolution	North Iowa Times-Register
6/18/2025	Volga City Council Meeting Minutes	North Iowa Times-Register
6/18/2025	Recycle Your Bicycle is a regional success	The Union
6/18/2025	Supervisors approve dump truck purchase	Waukon Standard
6/18/2025	Waukon City Council approves ordinance	Waukon Standard
6/18/2025	Northeast Iowa rallies for Bike Month	Waukon Standard
6/11/2025	Cresco City Council Special Meeting	Cresco TPD
6/11/2025	Council reverts WWC fees back to 30%	Oelwein Daily Register
6/11/2025	Minutes of The Allamakee County Board of Supervisors	Waukon Standard
6/13/2025	Northeast Iowa rallies for Bike Month	Oelwein Daily Register
6/4/2025	Howard Co. Board of Supervisors	Cresco TPD
6/4/2025	Supervisors approve steam trap replacement	Waukon Standard
5/30/2025	Public Notice UERPC executive board minutes	Oelwein Daily Register
5/30/2025	Public Notice UERPC board minutes	Oelwein Daily Register
5/29/2025	Upper Explorerland's SRTS coming to Oelwein	Oelwein Daily Register
5/21/2025	Bicycle Care, collection and cookies	Waukon Standard
5/21/2025	Waukon City Council approves moving forward	Waukon Standard
5/21/2025	Supervisors delay decision	Waukon Standard
5/21/2025	UERPC is hiring an assistant finance manager	Waukon Standard

5/21/2025	UERPC is hiring an assistant finance manager	Cresco TPD
5/21/2025	Bicycle program Thursday	The Union
5/21/2025	Fayette property and federal/state library cuts	The Union
5/28/2025	UERPC is hiring an assistant finance manager	Waukon Standard
5/28/2025	Minutes of The Allamakee County Board of Supervisors	Waukon Standard
5/28/2025	City of Lansing regular city council meeting	Waukon Standard
5/28/2025	Bicycle Care, collection and cookies	Waukon Standard
7/30/2025	Elma City Council	Cresco TPD
7/30/2025	Elgin Council Approves UERPC Contract	The Union
7/30/2025	Elgin Council Minutes	The Union
7/16/2025	Elgin Council Minutes	The Union
7/17/2025	Fayette co. goal setting	Oelwein Daily Register
7/23/2025	Supervisors approve withdrawal	Waukon Standard
7/23/2025	Elma City Council	Cresco TPD
7/23/2025	Public Notice	Oelwein Daily Register
5/28/2025	Howard Co. Board of Supervisors	Cresco TPD
5/28/2025	Help Wanted	Cresco TPD
5/20/2025	UERPC is hiring an assistant finance manager	Driftless
5/14/2025	Attend bike safety event	North Iowa Times-Register
5/14/2025	Bicycle Safety	The Union
5/13/2025	public notice	Oelwein Daily Register
5/13/2025	public notice	Oelwein Daily Register
5/14/2025	Groundbreaking ceremony held	Waukon Standard
5/14/2025	Area nonprofit organizations awarded nearly $130,000 as Allamakee County…	Waukon Standard
5/14/2025	Minutes of The Allamakee County Board of Supervisors	Waukon Standard
5/7/2025	bicycle care, safety and recycling event	The Union
5/7/2025	supervisors proclaim this Friday, May 9 as child care provider appreciation day	Waukon Standard
5/7/2025	supervisors proclaim this Friday, May 9 as child care provider appreciation day, hear update from Veterans Memorial Hospital	Waukon Standard
5/7/2025	Minutes of The Allamakee County Board of Supervisors	Waukon Standard
4/30/2025	Supervisors set pay for township officials..	Waukon Standard
4/23/2025	Elgin Council accepts fiscal year budget	The Union
4/16/2025	Hawkeye Council minutes	The Union
4/30/2025	Elgin Council Minutes	The Union
4/22/2025	Earth Day Festival April 26	Driftless
4/22/2025	Organizations partnering for bicycle safety, maintenance event	Driftless
4/17/2025	Organizations partnering for bicycle safety, maintenance event	Decorah Leader
4/17/2025	Board Minutes	Decorah Leader
4/10/2025	Supervisors to seek public health contract with area hospitals	Decorah Leader
3/27/2025	County finalizing hazardous mitigation plans, seeking public comment	Decorah Leader
4/16/2025	Lansing City Council reviews sewer and water bonds…	Waukon Standard
4/16/2025	Supervisors pass Fiscal Year 2026 budget at same levy	Waukon Standard

	rate…	
4/16/2025	NE Iowa family STEM festival April 24	Waukon Standard
4/16/2025	Minutes of The Allamakee County Board of Supervisors	Waukon Standard
4/23/2025	Minutes of The Allamakee County Board of Supervisors	Waukon Standard
4/9/2025	Minutes of The Allamakee County Board of Supervisors	Waukon Standard
4/2/2025	Board of supervisor approves bid for concrete low water crossing….	Waukon Standard
4/2/2025	Minutes of The Allamakee County Board of Supervisors	Waukon Standard
4/8/2025	Public invited to Decorah community forum	Driftless
4/2/2025	McGregor City Council Regular council meeting minutes	North Iowa Times-Register
4/2/2025	McGregor City Council Regular council meeting minutes	North Iowa Times-Register
4/2/2025	Lime Springs City Council	Cresco TPD
4/9/2025	Protivin City Council	Cresco TPD
7/30/2025	Supervisors hold public hearing no amendments to Zoning ordinance…	Waukon Standard
8/12/2025	Five Counties, 250 helmets: Summer Initiative Keeps Kids Riding Safe	decorahnews.com
8/6/2025	Congresswoman Ashley Hinson, State Representative Jason Gearhart visit Lansing….	Waukon Standard
8/6/2025	Supervisors hear Veterans Memorial Hospital update, further discuss county farm pasture lease….	Waukon Standard
8/6/2025	City of Waukon designated as Iowa Thriving Community by IFA and IEDA	Waukon Standard
8/6/2025	Minutes of The Allamakee County Board of Supervisors	Waukon Standard
7/10/2025	Notice of public hearing, UERPC RPA 1	Decorah Leader
8/14/2025	Five Counties, 250 helmets: Summer Initiative Keeps Kids Riding Safe	Decorah News
8/14/2025	Safe Route to Schools distributes 250 helmets across Northeast Iowa	Community Newspaper Group
8/22/2025	Waukon City Council approves resolution, issues public statement in regard to…	Waukon Standard
8/22/2025	Supervisors hear input from area veterans, receive petition in regard to…	Waukon Standard
8/28/2025	UERPC Announces $2.8 Million in Federal Transportation Grants for NE Iowa	Decorah News
8/28/2025	UERPC Announces $2.8 Million in Federal Transportation Grants for NE Iowa	Community Newspaper Group
9/11/2025	Safe Routes to School hosts pizza party as school begins	Decorah Leader
9/16/2025	Local Housing Trust Fund Roundtable at the Housing Iowa Conference in Cedar Rapids	Polk County Housing Trust Fund's Post
10/2/2025	Winneshiek County Housing Programs Generate Millions in Investment	Decorah News
10/8/2025	Updated Location and Time Announced for "Wheels in Motion Workshop" at Luther College	Decorah News
10/14/2025	The KCTN Morning Chat-Interview about "Wheels in Motion Workshop" with April Bril	KCTN Radio
10/21/2025	Low-interest construction loans available to help build homes in Clayton County…	KCRG
10/16/2025	Rising Star Ashley Christensen	LaCrosse Tribune
10/23/2025	Oelwein family receives life-changing renovation…	Community Newspaper Group

11/3/2025	Amazing Rising Stars	7 River Alliance
11/4/2025	7 Rivers Alliance Rising Stars	Allamakee County Economic Development Newsletter
11/13/2025	Four NE Iowa ladies honored as Rising Stars Under 40 by Rivers Alliance	Waukon Standard
11/14/2025	Winneshiek County Seeks Applicants for Boards and Commissions	Decorah News
11/17/2025	Supervisors accepting board applications - Enterprise Media	Decorah Leader
11/20/2025	Wheels in Motion Workshop Brings Northeast Iowa Together for Safer Bicycling	Decorah News
11/21/2025	UERPC, compensation commission for eminent domain, and others as needed…	Decorah Leader
11/5/2025	Public Notice	Oelwein Daily Register
11/5/2025	Public Notice	Oelwein Daily Register
11/5/2025	Public Notice	North Iowa Times-Register
11/5/2025	Supervisors hold public hearing on zoning ordinance amendment relating to wind…	Waukon Standard
10/28/2025	Public Notice	Oelwein Daily Register
10/29/2025	Engineering Firm Selection for Main St. Project	Waukon Standard
10/29/2025	Minutes of The Allamakee County Board of Supervisors	Waukon Standard
10/29/2025	City of New Albin Reg. City Council Meeting	Waukon Standard
10/9/2025	Board Minutes	Decorah Leader
10/29/2025	Planning for disasters in Clayton County	North Iowa Times-Register
10/7/2025	Public invited to free cycling safety discussion	Driftless
10/22/2025	Supervisors hear updates on Black Hawk Bridge..	Waukon Standard
10/15/2025	Council shuts down OUAP, approves Budget Reduction Act	Oelwein Daily Register
10/15/2025	Participate in Clayton County Hazard Mitigation Plan Update	North Iowa Times-Register
11/29/2025	Decorah officials generate possible goals for city	Decorah Leader
11/25/2025	Decorah City Council, Staff Set Goals for Next Two Years	decorahnews.com
12/3/2025	Wheels in Motion workshop addresses safer bicycling; More public input sought…	Waukon Standard
12/4/2025	Meeting the Child Care Challenge Opportunities for Economic Development Districts	Child Care Report
12/4/2025	Wheels in Motion workshop addresses safer bicycling; More public input sought…	Waukon Standard
11/20/2025	county accepting board, commission applications	Decorah Leader
11/20/2025	Public Notice	Decorah Leader
11/19/2025	Howard Co. Board of Supervisors	Cresco TPD
11/25/2025	County accepting board, commission applications	Driftless
11/22/2025	Public Notice	Oelwein Daily Register
11/21/2025	Northeast Iowa riders come together for safe biking	Oelwein Daily Register
11/19/2025	Winneshiek Co. Seeking boards applications	The Union
11/26/2025	Wheels in Motion Workshop bring people together for safer bicycling	North Iowa Times-Register
11/12/2025	Cresco City Council	Cresco TPD
12/10/2025	Supervisors Seek Goal-Setting, Planning Assistance	Decorah News
12/11/2025	Supervisors Seek Goal-Setting, Planning Assistance	Decorah News
12/17/2025	Supervisors hear updates on Hazard Mitigation Plan and	Waukon Standard

	from UER…	
12/17/2025	Upper Explorerland urges Broader Awareness of Housing Aid Program in Decorah	Decorah News
12/18/2025	Johanna for Decorah-Attended a Legislative Forum in Calmar…	Facebook
12/18/2025	Supervisors hear updates on Hazard Mitigation Plan and from UER…	Waukon Standard
12/18/2025	Regional Transportation Plan Adopted: Find It at Local Libraries or Online	Decorah News
12/24/2025	Regional Transportation Plan Adopted	North Iowa Times-Register
12/24/2025	Supervisor hear update and funding request from NEICAC…	Waukon Standard
12/24/2025	Minutes of The Allamakee County Board of Supervisors	Waukon Standard
12/24/2025	Regional Transportation Plan Adopted: Find It at Local Libraries or Online	Waukon Standard
12/24/2025	Elgin Council Minutes	The Union
12/24/2025	West Union Council Minutes	The Union
12/24/2025	Council hears ongoing projects Monday	Oelwein Daily Register
12/10/2025	Public Notice	The Union
12/10/2025	IEDA awards Winneshiek Energy District $160,000 for small business energy monitoring	Waukon Standard
12/10/2025	Public Notices	Waukon Standard
12/17/2025	Supervisors hear updates on Hazard Mitigation Plan and from UER…	Waukon Standard
12/17/2025	Waukon City Council recognizes…	Waukon Standard
12/17/2025	Public Notice	North Iowa Times-Register
12/17/2025	Howard Co. Board of Supervisors	Cresco TPD
12/17/2025	WU seeking grant funding for airport improvements	The Union
12/21/2025	Oath	Oelwein Daily Register
12/11/2025	IEDA awards Winneshiek Energy District $160,000 for small business energy monitoring	Decorah Leader
12/18/2025	Regional transportation plan available at local libraries, online	Decorah Leader
12/18/2025	Public Notices	Decorah Leader
8/28/2025	Public Notice-NEIHTF	Oelwein Daily Register
8/28/2025	Public Notice-UERHA	Oelwein Daily Register
8/13/2025	Lansing City Council hears updates…	Waukon Standard
8/20/2025	Upper Explorerland's SRTS distributes bike helmets	North Iowa Times-Register
1/6/2026	Fayette County Supervisors approve appointments	Community Newspaper Group
1/8/2026	Fayette County Supervisors approve appointments	Community Newspaper Group
12/31/2025	City of McGregor Regular City Council Meeting Minutes	North Iowa Times-Register
12/30/2025	Public Notice Minutes City Council Meeting	Oelwein Daily Register
12/31/2025	Groundbreaking ceremony held	Waukon Standard
12/31/2025	Regional Transportation Plan Adopted	Waukon Standard
12/30/2025	Public Notice-City Council Meeting	Decorah Leader
12/30/2025	Public Notice-Board of Supervisors	Decorah Leader
1/13/2025	Safe Routes to School Distributes 250 Helmets Across NE Iowa	Oelwein Daily Register

9/3/2025	The Works and Allamakee County Economic Development Set to Host fifth annual Entrepreneurship Week	Waukon Standard
9/3/2025	Elon Dr. resurfacing project part of $2.8 Million in federal grant funding received by UERPC	Waukon Standard
9/24/2025	Workshop will focus on advancing safe bicycling	North Iowa Times-Register
9/10/2025	Howard Co. Board of Supervisors	Cresco TPD
9/6/2025	Public Notice UERPC board minutes	Oelwein Daily Register
9/6/2025	Public Notice UERPC FY25 Quarterly Disbursement Listing	Oelwein Daily Register
9/9/2025	SRTS kicks off school year	Driftless
9/2/2025	SRTS hosts pizza party as school begins	Decorah Leader
10/1/2025	Celebrate Bike and 'Walk-tober' this month	North Iowa Times-Register
10/1/2025	Bike and Walk-tober Celebration	The Union
10/1/2025	West Union Main Street/Chamber cuts ribbon formally opening the gateway to Recreation trail (Ashley in photo but UERPC not mentioned)	The Union
9/30/2025	Public Notice Minutes City Council Meeting	Oelwein Daily Register
10/15/2025	Howard Co. Board of Supervisors	Cresco TPD
10/15/2025	Hawkeye Council minutes	The Union
10/11/2025	Council to decide budget cuts, OUAP	Oelwein Daily Register
11/19/2025	Volga City Council Meeting Minutes	North Iowa Times-Register
12/4/2025	Wheels in Motion Workshop highlights safer cycling	Decorah Leader
12/4/2025	Public Notice City of Decorah Council	Decorah Leader
12/4/2025	Public Notice-notice seeking phase 1 Archaeological survey proposals	Oelwein Daily Register
1/20/2025	Supporting communities where it's needed most	NE IA Funders Network Annual Report
1/8/2002	Public Notice	Oelwein Daily Register
1/21/2026	Public Notice	North Iowa Times-Register
1/21/2026	Audit to Action project can benefit small businesses	Waukon Standard
1/21/2026	City of Lansing regular city council meeting	Waukon Standard
1/21/2026	City of New Albin Reg. City Council Meeting	Waukon Standard
1/22/2026	WU Council approves fire department roster	The Union
1/22/2026	Supervisors hear secondary roads department updates	The Union
1/22/2026	Fayette County Supervisors Minutes	The Union
1/17/2026	More budget requests for supervisors Monday	Oelwein Daily Register
1/17/2026	Public Notice	Oelwein Daily Register
1/14/2026	Clayton County Board of Supervisors Minutes	North Iowa Times-Register
1/14/2026	Supervisors approve National Mentoring Month Proclamation, hear funding requests..	Waukon Standard
1/14/2026	Lansing City Council weighs continued funding for Allamakee County Economic Development...	Waukon Standard
1/14/2026	Regional Transportation Plan adopted-Find it at local libraries or view online	Waukon Standard
1/14/2026	IEDA awards Winneshiek Energy District $160,000 for small business energy monitoring	Waukon Standard
1/14/2026	Minutes of The Allamakee County Board of Supervisors	Waukon Standard
1/14/2026	City of Waukon Regular City Council Meeting	Waukon Standard
1/14/2026	Cresco City Council	Cresco TPD
1/14/2026	Lime Springs City Council	Cresco TPD

1/3/2026	Supervisors make annual appointments	Oelwein Daily Register
1/7/2026	Howard Co. Board of Supervisors	Cresco TPD
1/6/2025	Public Notice-NEIRHTF	Oelwein Daily Register
1/6/2025	Public Notice-Fayette Co.	Oelwein Daily Register
1/6/2025	Public Notice-City Council	Oelwein Daily Register
1/7/2026	Fayette County Supervisors approve appointments	The Union
1/7/2026	Public Notice -Board of Supervisors	The Union
1/7/2026	Fayette County Supervisors approve appointments	Oelwein Daily Register
1/7/2026	Board of Supervisors approves variety of appointments…	Waukon Standard
1/7/2026	Waukon City Council approves one year of funding for Allamakee Child Care…	Waukon Standard
1/8/2026	Board Minutes	Decorah Leader
12/3/2025	Waukon City Council approves goalsetting contract with UERPC..	Waukon Standard
12/3/2025	Allamakee County Board/Commission Openings	Waukon Standard
12/3/2025	Cresco City Council	Cresco TPD
12/3/2025	Fayette annual financial report submitted	The Union
8/21/2025	SRTS Distributes 250 bike helmets across region	Decorah Leader
8/21/2025	Ridgeway City Council Minutes	Decorah Leader
8/27/2025	The works and Allamakee County Economic Development announce line-up…	Waukon Standard
8/27/2025	VMH announces plans for new Postville Clinic location	Waukon Standard
8/27/2025	Minutes of The Allamakee County Board of Supervisors	Waukon Standard
8/27/2025	City of Waukon Regular City Council Meeting	Waukon Standard
8/20/2025	Supervisors hear input from area veterans, receive petition in regard to ….	Waukon Standard
8/20/2025	Waukon City Council approves resolution, issues public statement in regard to…	Waukon Standard
8/20/2025	UERPC's Safe Routes to School distributes bike helmets in NE Iowa this summer	Waukon Standard
8/20/2025	Minutes of The Allamakee County Board of Supervisors	Waukon Standard
2/4/2026	County Postpones UERPC Workshop After Low Turnout	Decorah News
2/6/2026	FDIC, HUD, and USDA Host a Webinar on Developing Community Development	FDIC
2/25/2026	Supervisors approve resolution authorizing VMH Community Project Fund…	Waukon Standard
2/18/2026	Participate in local hazard mitigation planning	North Iowa Times-Register
2/17/2026	Public Notice-NEIRHTF Regular Meeting Minutes	Oelwein Daily Register
2/11/2026	Fayette council minutes	The Union
2/11/2026	Hawkeye Council minutes	The Union
2/11/2026	Hiring	The Union
2/11/2026	Supervisors consider bridge project bids..	Waukon Standard
2/11/2026	City of Waukon Regular City Council Meeting	Waukon Standard
2/11/2026	UERPC Hiring Housing Coordinator	Waukon Standard
2/11/2026	Organizations invited to exhibit at Family STEM Festival	North Iowa Times-Register
2/4/2026	Fayette Councils hears citizens comments and presentations	The Union
2/4/2026	FC Supervisors Minutes	The Union
2/5/2026	Housing Coordinator	Decorah Leader

2/4/2026	Apply for Waterville Community Foundation Grant through March 1	Waukon Standard
2/4/2026	UERPC Hiring Housing Coordinator	Waukon Standard
2/4/2026	HoCo Board of Supervisors	Cresco TPD
1/29/2026	County to erect bollards to protect courthouse property from 'wayward' drivers	Decorah Leader
1/28/2026	Public Notice- UERPC Board Minutes	Oelwein Daily Register
1/29/2026	Renovation provides RISE Ltd. fresh start, bright future	Oelwein Daily Register
1/31/2026	Public Notice-Board of Supervisors	Oelwein Daily Register
1/28/2026	City of Harpers Ferry Regular City Council Meeting	Waukon Standard
9/3/2025	UERPC Distributes 250 Bike Helmets	The Union
9/3/2025	UERPC Announces $2.8 Million in Grants Awarded	The Union
9/24/2025	Gateway to Recreation Trail grand opening Thursday	The Union
9/24/2025	Elgin council approves emergency services-related agreements	The Union
9/24/2025	Elgin Council Minutes	The Union
9/24/2025	Veteran Memorial Hospital and clinics to hold public info..	Waukon Standard
9/24/2025	Waukon City Council sets public hearing…	Waukon Standard
9/24/2025	City clerk report	Waukon Standard
3/11/2026	Supervisors disagree on county's approach to deciding long-term strategic goals	Decorah Leader
2/18/2026	Supervisors schedule public hearing for Fiscal Year 2027	Waukon Standard
2/18/2026	Minutes of The Allamakee County Board of Supervisors	Waukon Standard
2/18/2026	City of New Albin Reg. City Council Meeting	Waukon Standard
2/25/2026	Supervisors approve resolution authorizing VMH Community Project Fund…	Waukon Standard
2/25/2026	Minutes of The Allamakee County Board of Supervisors	Waukon Standard
2/25/2026	UERPC Hiring Housing Coordinator	Waukon Standard
3/4/2026	Supervisors approve Alliant Energy battery energy storage system	Waukon Standard
3/4/2026	Organizations invited to exhibit at Family STEM Festival	Waukon Standard
3/4/2026	Meetings collecting feedback for updated hazard mitigation plan	North Iowa Times-Register
3/3/2026	Public Notice-RPA-1 TIP	Oelwein Daily Register
2/24/2026	Housing Coordinator	Driftless
2/25/2026	Elgin Council Minutes	The Union
2/25/2026	Fayette County Supervisors Minutes	The Union
2/25/2026	UERPC Hiring Housing Coordinator	The Union
2/18/2026	Organizations invited to exhibit at Family STEM Festival	The Union
3/5/2026	Notice of public hearing, UERPC RPA 1	Decorah Leader
3/5/2026	Board Minutes	Decorah Leader
2/26/2026	Public Notice	Decorah Leader
2/26/2026	UERPC Hiring Housing Coordinator	Decorah Leader
2/12/2026	UERPC Hiring Housing Coordinator	Decorah Leader
2/12/2026	Board Minutes	Decorah Leader
3/11/2026	Organizations invited to exhibit at Family STEM Festival	Waukon Standard
3/11/2026	Minutes of The Allamakee County Board of Supervisors	Waukon Standard
9/17/2025	Community leaders present and represent for City of Waukon at 2025 Housing Iowa Conference	Waukon Standard

9/17/2025	Supervisors hear updates from city and school officials…	Waukon Standard
9/17/2025	Minutes of The Allamakee County Board of Supervisors	Waukon Standard
9/17/2025	City of Waukon Regular City Council Meeting	Waukon Standard
9/10/2025	Waukon City Council approves accepting proposal from Kwik Trip, Inc…	Waukon Standard
9/10/2025	Supervisors approve signing opioid litigation settlement agreement, hear wide variety of updates…	Waukon Standard
9/10/2025	The Works and Allamakee County Economic Development set to host fifth annual Entrepreneurship Week..	Waukon Standard
3/18/2026	Sledgehammer event kicks off construction of new VMH Postville Medical Clinic	Waukon Standard
10/1/2025	Wheels in Motion Workshop: Advancing Safe Bicycling Together	Waukon Standard
10/1/2025	City of Waukon City Council Meeting	Waukon Standard
10/2/2025	Hinson helps Clayton County Celebrate Affordable Housing Revolving Loan Fund	North Iowa Times-Register
10/15/2025	Wheels in Motion: Advancing Safe Bicycling Together is October 23 in Decorah	Waukon Standard
10/15/2025	Minutes of The Allamakee County Board of Supervisors	Waukon Standard
10/8/2025	Supervisors approve bids for work on Allamakee County Public Safety Center water project	Waukon Standard
10/8/2025	Following public hearing, Waukon City Council postpones decision on sale of city parking lot..	Waukon Standard
10/8/2025	Wheels in Motion: Advancing Safe Bicycling Together is October 23	Waukon Standard
11/26/2025	Supervisors approve zoning ordinance amendment relating to wind energy conversion systems…	Waukon Standard
11/26/2025	Minutes of The Allamakee County Board of Supervisors	Waukon Standard
11/26/2025	City of New Albin Reg. City Council Meeting	Waukon Standard
11/12/2025	Four NE Iowa ladies honored as Rising Stars Under 40 by Rivers Alliance	Waukon Standard
11/12/2025	Lansing City Council holds trio of public hearing regarding finances…	Waukon Standard
11/12/2025	City of Lansing regular city council meeting	Waukon Standard
11/19/2025	Supervisors approve hiring of new deputy…	Waukon Standard
11/19/2025	Minutes of The Allamakee County Board of Supervisors Nov. 3	Waukon Standard
11/19/2025	Minutes of The Allamakee County Board of Supervisors Nov. 10th	Waukon Standard
11/27/2025	County's emergency management coordinator warns of increasing 911 costs	Decorah Leader
11/27/2025	Public Notice	Decorah Leader
11/27/2025	Decorah Officials generate possible goals for city	Decorah Leader
5/8/2026	Team Hinson in IA-02	On The Record: Congresswoman Ashley Hinson
5/1/2026	IRDC Friday Update: 5/1/26	Iowa Rural Development Council
4/24/2026	"Recycle Your Bicycle" Program Offered at Earth Day Festival and Throughout May - Decorah News	Decorah News
4/8/2026	Attend Northeast Iowa Family STEM Festival on April 9	North Iowa Times-Register

4/8/2026	Public Notice for proposed update to Regional Planning Affiliation 1	North Iowa Times-Register
3/31/2026	Public Notice UERHA Board Minutes	Oelwein Daily Register
3/31/2026	Public Notice Board of Supervisors	Oelwein Daily Register
4/1/2026	Fayette County Supervisors Minutes	The Union
4/1/2026	Public Notice for proposed update to Regional Planning Affiliation 1	Oelwein Daily Register
4/8/2026	Public Notice for proposed update to Regional Planning Affiliation 1	Cresco TPD
4/1/2026	Northeast Iowa Family STEM Festival will take place April 9 at Waukon High School	Waukon Standard
4/22/2026	Howard Co. Board of Supervisors	Cresco TPD
4/22/2026	Elma City Council	Cresco TPD
4/25/2026	The ABCs of biking	Oelwein Daily Register
4/2/2026	Public Notice for proposed update to Regional Planning Affiliation 1	Decorah Leader
4/15/2026	Allamakee County birding guide released	North Iowa Times-Register
4/15/2026	Supervisors pass budget amendment and zoning ordinance amendment regarding data centers	Waukon Standard
4/15/2026	City of Lansing Regular City Council Meeting	Waukon Standard
4/15/2026	Minutes of The Allamakee County Board of Supervisors	Waukon Standard
4/22/2026	Lansing City Council hears updates on funding steps for Main Street…	Waukon Standard
4/22/2026	City of New Albin City Council-Public Hearing	Waukon Standard
4/23/2026	Recycle Your Bicycle Program to begin Saturday	Decorah Leader
4/8/2026	Supervisors complete proclamations for Week of the Young Child and..	Waukon Standard
4/8/2026	Northeast Iowa Family STEM Festival will take place Thursday at Waukon High School	Waukon Standard
4/8/2026	Public Notice for proposed update to Regional Planning Affiliation 1	Waukon Standard
3/12/2026	Supervisors disagree on county’s approach to deciding long-term strategic goals	Decorah Leader
3/19/2026	Board Minutes	Decorah Leader
3/18/2026	Public Notice Volga Council Meeting Minutes	North Iowa Times-Register
3/18/2026	Sledgehammer event kicks off construction of new VMH Postville Medical Clinic	Waukon Standard
3/24/2026	Sledgehammer event kicks off construction of new VMH Postville Medical Clinic	The Driftless