

2024 Annual Report



Calhoun County
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



The Calhoun County Economic Development Corporation (CCEDC) Board of Directors is excited to deliver an informative report of our 2024 activities and provide an insight into our organizational purpose.

We are on a mission to grow Calhoun County. In order to accomplish growth, we recognized the need to develop a comprehensive strategic plan that would identify the desires of our stakeholders and elevate the economic development landscape in Calhoun County.

In pursuit of this vision, CCEDC engaged leaders across the county to collaboratively develop the 2024-26 CCEDC Strategic Plan. This strategic blueprint is poised to enact positive transformations, aligning the organization with its core priorities and fostering sustainable economic development in Calhoun County.

The three identified pillars of success: **collaboration, communication and capacity building** establish a strong foundation for Calhoun County. No matter which priority is identified or prioritized, these core components, working together, will help CCEDC fulfill its mission effectively.

It is important for CCEDC to communicate to our stakeholders, the residents and businesses of Calhoun County. We share with you the first Calhoun County Economic Development Annual Report.

We hope you read and follow the efforts of CCEDC as we strive to encourage everyone to *Grow Here.*

Keaton Hildreth, CCEDC Board President

MISSION

The mission of the CCEDC is to enhance business retention, start-up and growth, so as to increase both employment opportunities and the tax base. The organization also devotes resources to improve quality of life and to promote the county as a desirable place to live, work and grow.

VISION

Connecting businesses and communities with resources for success.

COLLABORATION



We will build synergistic partnerships for collective success.

COMMUNICATION



We will engage in effective two-way communication with stakeholders.

CAPACITY BUILDING



We will invest in our people, resulting in a robust community and workforce.

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Strategically Leading Calhoun County

Following the development of a 3-year Strategic Plan, Calhoun County Economic Development is embarking on a new look, new logo and updated website to complement the strategic priorities guiding the future activities of the corporation. Poised to develop new businesses and sustain long-standing business in Calhoun County, the CCEDC Board of Directors has analyzed their role. With their four-priority strategy, the course has been identified.

Leading the viability of economic progress and success of the Iowa county with the 6th lowest cost of living among all Iowa counties, Calhoun County leaders are harnessing a few new ideas to drive success.

Priorities identified, with multiple objectives, are strategic in nature and supported by a commitment of leaders, elected officials, business owners and emerging entrepreneurs.

Strategic Priorities:

- ▶ Priority #1 – Existing Business Support
- ▶ Priority #2 – Workforce Preparedness
- ▶ Priority #3 – Community Development & Capacity Building
- ▶ Priority #4 – Business Attraction & Recruitment

A full list of the objectives of each priority is available on the Calhoun County Economic Development website: www.calhouncountyiowa.com.

BRAND IDENTITY

Development of the new logo for Calhoun County Economic Development reflects the county agricultural heritage, while showing movement in the lines of the design.

Ranked in the top one-third of Iowa counties producing agricultural products sold, Calhoun County is vital to the gross domestic product (GDP) of Iowa.

The refresh of the website inspired a new URL address: www.calhouncountyiowa.com



CCEDC Board of Directors

Keaton Hildreth - President

CEO, Calhoun County Electric Cooperative Association

Brandon Lynch - Vice President

MidAmerican Energy Company

Ann Gemberling - Secretary

Lohrville Representative

Linda Schmitt - Treasurer

Superintendent Brad Anderson

SCC Schools

Brad Assman

Vice President, First Community Bank

Linn Block

CEO, Stewart Memorial Community Hospital

David Kistenmacher

Manager, Fareway Meat & Grocery

Carl Legore

Calhoun County Board of Supervisors Representative

Mayor Cindy Loots

Pomeroy Representative

Samantha McFarland

City Clerk, Rockwell City Representative

Pat Moore

Jolley/Twin Lakes Representative

Mayor Mike Schleisman

Lake City Representative

Macie Schoon

Manson Economic Development Coordinator

Executive Director

Theresa Hildreth





The Calhoun County Economic Development Corporation (CCEDC) Board of Directors is a collaborative team of the corporations invested partners. The Executive Director leads the day-to-day operations of the Development Office at the oversight of the Board of Directors Executive Team.

The Historic Preservation Liaison assists the Executive Director by managing the activities of the Historic Preservation Commission.

The CCEDC Board is currently 14 local members strong, governed by written Bylaws. The Bylaws state 15 members can be seated, which indicates one seat is open.

To enact positive transformations, CCEDC needs the right business entrepreneurs, new and seasoned, to assist in bringing the vision to reality. The CCEDC Board of Directors requires participation from across the county. Are you the next member of the CCEDC Board?

WHAT DOES CCEDC DO?

- Collaboration with state and national leaders promoting rural Iowa businesses, serves as the point of contact for new business development with State officials
- Aid business owners with business creation and succession plans
- Collaborate with Iowa Small Business Development Center & Hub 712
- Work with local communities and county on zoning issues
- Communicate grant opportunities to businesses and communities
- Author grant applications in support of county opportunities
- Develop and manage marketing materials
- Manages the website: calhouncountyiowa.com
- Lead & design Leadership Calhoun program
- Serves as point of contact for the Calhoun County Business Park

PARTNERS

CCEDC operates in a collaborative effort with the Calhoun County Board of Supervisors, member Calhoun County communities and local business partners. Together we build synergistic partnerships for collective success.

- City of Farnhamville
- City of Jolley
- City of Knierim
- City of Lake City
- City of Lohrville
- City of Manson
- City of Pomeroy
- City of Rockwell City
- City of Yetter
- Calhoun County Electric Cooperative Association
- Dobson Pipe Organ Builders
- Fareway Meat & Grocery
- First Community Bank
- Heartland Bank
- Iowa Savings Bank
- MidAmerican Energy
- Security Savings Bank
- Stewart Memorial Community Hospital
- United Bank of Iowa
- Webster-Calhoun Cooperative Telephone Association



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2024 Business Growth in Calhoun County

In 2024, Calhoun County welcomed new businesses to the landscape.

Entrepreneurial spirit is alive and well as Calhoun County grows with new businesses and business succession.

Tragedy with a factory fire at Dobson Pipe Organ Builders in Lake City has resulted in a new commitment to the community of Lake City demonstrated with the rebuild of this hometown industry.

Congratulations to these businesses.

Blondies - Rockwell City

Dobson Pipe Organ Builders - Lake City

Double D Ice Cream - Manson

Lauver Farm Solutions - Rockwell City

Raccoon River Coffeehouse - Lake City

Store on 4 - Rockwell City

The Nook Shake & Energy Bar - Lake City



Calhoun County Historic Preservation Commission

Lynne Gentry - Chair — **Darcy Maulsby** - Vice-Chair

Mark Beckman - Secretary — **Kim Kopecky** — **Reggie Kopecky**

The Calhoun County Historic Preservation Commission was established in 1991 to promote the educational, cultural, economic and general welfare of the public through the recognition, enhancement, and perpetuation of sites and districts of historical and cultural significance.

The commission focuses to safeguard the County's historic, aesthetic, and cultural heritage by preserving sites and districts of historic and cultural significance. They promote the use of sites and districts of historic and cultural significance as places for education, pleasure, and welfare of the people of Calhoun County. The commission fosters pride in the legacy of beauty and achievements of the past as they protect and enhance the County's attractions to tourists and visitors.

Individuals with an interest in serving on the commission, can reach out to a current commission member to join the group.

Email: preservation@calhouncountyiowa.com

Barn to Be Wild



In the early stages of planning, Barn to Be Wild will bring a self-guided driving tour of the historical barns across Calhoun County to Springtime 2025.

STAFF LIAISON
RILEY BLEAM



Governor Reynolds visits Calhoun County

On August 22, Governor Kim Reynolds visited Calhoun County on her 2024, 99-county tour. Many times, on these 99-county visits, the Governor visits businesses, special events or public events, so when the call for a small-group meeting was requested it presented the perfect opportunity to share all that has been developing in Calhoun County.

The three-year Calhoun County Economic Development Strategic Plan was the center of discussion for the two-hour meeting. Leaders from across Calhoun County shared the aspects of the plan and addressed some of the many challenges facing rural communities.

Housing and childcare are critical needs across Iowa, and Calhoun County is at the center of this topic. “Manson is a community which needs both more housing and childcare options and providers,” Macie Schoon, Manson

Economic Development Coordinator elaborated. “We asked the Governor to help us find solutions and I am so excited for her attention to our requests and some of the action plans to help us find solutions to our issues.”

Barb Riley, Calhoun County Public Health Director, shared how the Calhoun County Health Improvement Plan mirrors the State of Iowa Health Improvement

Plan. Conversation regarding how the local public health presence is essential to keep our county surviving and thriving and the undetermined future HHS alignments are a concern of the Calhoun County Board of Health. The Governor indicated she agrees local services are valuable and necessary, especially in rural areas. Those in attendance left the meeting encouraged by the conversation, concern and attention of Governor Reynolds.

As one of few critical access hospitals who provide obstetrical care in Iowa, Ann Lengeling, Stewart Memorial Community Hospital Chief Nursing Officer, shared the investment this Calhoun county hospital is committing to their patients. Governor Reynolds applauded SMCH for their investment as well as recognizing the struggles of healthcare professional staffing at this time across Iowa.

“A copy of the Calhoun County Economic Development Strategic Plan was sent to the Governor’s Office shortly after scheduling the meeting,” explains CCEDC Executive Director Theresa Hildreth. “I was impressed when the Governor pulled out her marked up copy of the plan. It was encouraging to see she had taken time to see what we have planned and identified as strategic measures for Calhoun County. In all points of discussion, she supported our local planning and goals.”



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Leadership Calhoun

Calhoun County Economic Development has received two grant awards totaling \$3,500 in support of the CCEDC Strategic Plan – Collaborating for the Future, for the design and implementation of a new program “Leadership Calhoun.”

Grants from Iowa Area Development Group Foundation and Empower Rural Iowa signify their support of the strategic goal to develop this rural Iowa leadership program.

Identified as a local issues-awareness program, Leadership Calhoun, is being modeled after the successful, 42-year, statewide “Leadership Iowa” program.

This program is for aspiring and emerging Calhoun County Iowa leaders.

Design of the program will bring together 10-12 participants for eight, once-monthly sessions across Calhoun County to focus on the important topics of leadership, economic development, healthcare, education, government, agriculture, professional development and more.

Facilitators of Leadership Calhoun will be composed of a mix of local, regional and statewide leaders and professionals focused on strength based leadership.

Individuals interested in participating in Leadership Calhoun can reach out to the CCEDC Board members or CCEDC Executive Director to learn more.

Enrollment begins Summer 2025. Program start date is Fall 2025.



Leadership Calhoun Goals

- Enhance personal leadership skills and education
- Inspire motivated citizens to accept leadership roles in their communities
- Build a network of informed leaders from the area and across the state of Iowa
- Encourage involvement in projects, communities, events
- Develop our regional community

Foundation for Entrepreneurs

Calhoun County Economic Development is developing a tax-deductible foundation for the specific interest of encouraging entrepreneurs to establish, join or succeed a business in Calhoun County. Students are awarded scholarships upon high school graduation or when opportunities present for scholarship grant awards, but many times these students do not return to Calhoun County.

The new Calhoun County Economic Development Foundation is designed to award scholarships to individuals interested in skilled trade training and apprenticeship programs who commit to return to Calhoun County following their training. Recruiting our own Calhoun County community members to work and own businesses in Calhoun County encourages the CCEDC “Grow Here” philosophy.

CCEDC is looking for partners to contribute to the CCEDC Foundation as the fund is established and implemented.

As the CCEDC Foundation is currently in development, we encourage donors to contact the CCEDC Office to discuss the donation process. The gift of an endowment to this new foundation would ensure a legacy as we continue to support business development and business succession in Calhoun County.



CCEDC Revolving Loan Fund (RLF)

Calhoun county business owners and aspiring business owners may be eligible for a loan through the CCEDC RLF for new or expanding private businesses. Eligible uses of funds include land purchases, machinery, equipment, fixed assets, operating capital, and buildings.

Applicants of the RLF are required to meet their financial needs from their own resources and commercial financial institutions whenever possible. The RLF is intended to finance applicant gap needs. The minimum RLF is \$5,000, the maximum RLF loan will not exceed 50% of the approved project.

RLF loans can be amortized over 7 years. Loan interest rates typically range from 1-5%. Security shall consist of the best lien available. The RLF application requires a written business plan. In certain businesses additional market studies, feasibility studies and other documents may be requested.

The CCEDC RLF committee recommends working with the Iowa Small Business Development Center (SBDC) which can provide no-cost business advice and resources when growing or starting a business in Iowa. CCEDC RLF applications are confidential and submitted through the Calhoun County Economic Development Office.



Contact Hub712 at
hello@hub712.com

Hub712 is a business resource center serving Audubon, Calhoun, Carroll, Crawford, Greene, Guthrie, Ida and Sac counties in western Iowa. Located at 603 N Adams Street in Carroll, Hub712 offers direct access to Small Business Development Center (SBDC) professionals, co-working plans, and a business lab.

Specifically important to Calhoun County is the Ag Innovation Center within Hub712.

The Ag Innovation Center supports ag business sector entrepreneurs and innovators to bring inventions and ideas to fruition.

Thanks to committed partners, who fund this important work, services at Hub712 are no-cost. Partners include Iowa Economic Development Authority, Rural Ideas Network, U.S. Economic Development Administration, Advance Iowa, the Economic Recovery Corps, the International Economic Development Council, Carroll County Growth Partnership, Region XII Development Corporation and Iowa SBDC.

Calhoun County Community Foundation Grant 2025

Applications for the Calhoun County Community Foundation Grant are being accepted through January 7, 2025.

These grants are available to support 501(c)3 non-profit organizations or government entities.

Through this competitive application process, grants can be used for projects focused on community betterment, environment beautification, economic development, health & recreation, education, arts & culture, historic preservation and human services. Funds are intended for new projects, or for the enhancement or expansion of existing services, programs, or facilities.

The CCCF Grant is administered by the Fort Dodge Foundation at the request of Calhoun County.

To submit a Letter of Intent followed by the grant application contact: Joe Kuhlman at joe@fd-foundation.org . Call: 515-573-3176



Calhoun County ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

501 Court Street
Rockwell City, IA 50579

Calhoun County Business Park

The Calhoun County Business Park project reflects the power of partnerships to bring new economic development to rural Iowa.

The Business Park project is spearheaded by a development team including the Calhoun County Economic Development Corporation (CCEDC), the Calhoun County board of supervisors, the Calhoun County Electric Cooperative Association (CCECA), and Corn Belt Power Cooperative (CBPC).

Since the completion of the four-lane U.S. Hwy 20 project in late 2018, traffic counts at the Calhoun County Business Park have risen nearly 55% to an average daily traffic count of approximately 9,000 vehicles.

Located in a federally-designated Opportunity Zone, which is designed to spur economic growth while providing tax benefits to investors, the area is also locally designated as an urban renewal area, offering potential financial incentives for development.

Today there are 13.2 sellable, shovel ready (water, sewer, electric services on-site) acres made up of four lots ranging from 1.5 acres to 4.7 acres. The ability to accommodate much larger land requests is also available.

Focused on creating opportunity, if you're ready to build a warehouse/distribution facility, value-added agriculture business, hotel or restaurant, everything you need to succeed is available.

Grow here. Grow with us.



Want to know more about Calhoun County Economic Development activities?

Join our E-Newsletter

Sign up at

www.calhouncountyiowa.com

Check out the CCEDC Blog while visiting the website.

Need more information about the Calhoun County Business Park?



Highway 20 Corridor Marketing Grant

Iowa Area Development Group has received an award from the USDA RD Rural Business Development Grant program to conduct site assessment and marketing study for business parks and sites along U.S. Highway 20 which includes the Calhoun County Business Park.

The focus of the project will be to develop a Marketing Strategy for the US 20 sites that will consist of a Research, Planning, and Marketing strategy. The overall goal of this Strategy is to develop a consistent plan along the US Hwy 20 Corridor to market existing sites and promote opportunities for new or emerging business within the locations identified and researched. This effort will allow development professionals' critical information and tools to promote the active sites. Initial meetings are underway with an expected completion date of the assessment mid-year 2025.

Grow Here in Calhoun County.