Our Greatest Role is Behind the Scenes

The daily efforts of Economic Development aren’t always noticeable to everyone. Ours is quiet, steady work to drive positive change. Day in and day out, our team at Greater Dubuque Development Corporation connects government, business, education, and nonprofit partners to create a lasting, positive impact on the regional economy and our quality of life. We’re proudest of our work when we get to shine the spotlight on the victories of our community and business partners—when success is the fruit of collaboration.

There is never a shortage of challenges but every community in the nation is facing them. Our multifaceted approach in Business Retention and Expansion, Workforce Solutions, National Marketing, StartUp Dubuque, Sustainable Innovations, and Finding Dubuque’s True North is a proactive effort to make ours a community of choice. The quiet, steady work of building connections in our community is never over and we’re proud to serve the Greater Dubuque area.
Greater Dubuque 2022
Goals & Progress

We launched our Greater Dubuque 2022 campaign with aggressive goals for Job Growth, Construction Spending, Median Household Income, and Increased Population. We’re one year in and in the face of nationwide challenges, are adjusting our strategy to meet these goals.

Labor Force Goal: 64,000
Construction Spending Goal: $800,000,000
Population Growth Goal: 100,000
Median Household Income Goal: $60,000

From our Board Chair

As a member of the business community and chair of Greater Dubuque Development, I’ve had the benefit of experiencing first-hand the connection between employers, government, education, nonprofits, and the community. That collaborative climate has been the driving force behind economic growth in the Greater Dubuque area.

In 2017–2018, our community faced the same challenges that are being experienced nationwide. Yet despite those challenges, our regional economy is still seeing positive change:

- Dubuque’s True North was added to the pillars of Greater Dubuque, launching the effort to revitalize the North End through brownfield redevelopment and the conversion of slum and blight to affordable, single-family homes.
- In the face of a national workforce shortage, area businesses are taking advantage of the Workforce Solutions program and its proactive strategies for attracting, retaining, and creating talent.
- Despite the national shortages, Greater Dubuque employers continue to expand their workforce and locations, with support from our Existing Business team at Greater Dubuque Development.

Because of the commitment of our board of directors, investors, partners, and the Greater Dubuque Development team, we will continue to advance our community and the businesses that sustain it. Thanks to you, Greater Dubuque is connecting it all.

Mike Donohue, Board Chair
Regional President
U.S. Bank

The Dubuque Metropolitan Statistical Area ended 2017 with a workforce of approximately 65,600. Since then, we’ve been relatively flat, seeing 65,500 in May 2018.

The Dubuque County and the City of Dubuque had a strong 2017 construction season and have continued that success into 2018. As of May 2018, we are at $222,751,935, putting our goal within reach by 2022.

Median Household Income for 2017 was $56,154, a 2.8% increase over 2016. Our goal of $60,000 by 2022 is attainable.

According to the latest U.S. Census Bureau data, the Greater Dubuque population is at 97,041, putting our growth over 2016 at approximately 0.4%. Like many communities our size nationwide, population growth has slowed. With adaptive strategies and a community-wide effort, we will meet your 2022 goal of 100,000.
Business Retention & Expansion

The most efficient way to grow our area economy is to grow our existing businesses. Supporting regional business growth is the driving focus of our work at Greater Dubuque Development. Our Existing Business team works with area employers to understand their challenges and needs.

Despite an ever-changing business landscape, the Existing Business team is helping our partners navigate through it all. In the resolution of over 260 assistance requests in 2017–2018, they gathered and shared data, advocated at the city and state level, and made connections to maximize on opportunities and address concerns.

Our team also proactively met each month with government officials and service providers in order to hit the ground running to assist employers when needed.

Identifying and addressing challenges and opportunities, not only for individual businesses but the community business climate, drives the Info Action program.

Our Existing Business staff meets one-on-one with over 340 CEOs, top managers, and business owners to conduct confidential interviews to assess the health of our economy from employers large and small, across all sectors. This unfiltered perspective helps us maximize opportunities for growth and improvement in our regional economy.

Greater Dubuque Development provides quarterly and annual summaries of the information gained through the Info Action interviews. This is part of our commitment to provide tangible data to our business partners. The reports can be found at greaterdubuque.org.

“The success we have experienced over the past nearly 20 years is a direct result of the hard work and devotion that our team has to Medline and the Dubuque community. We are blessed to have the opportunity to grow our thriving, employee-centered culture and have tremendous gratitude for the support we have received from Greater Dubuque Development and the City of Dubuque.

We have a service, our customers, our community and each other. We have always believed that the work we do for Medline is the “saving lives business” and the way in which we lead and take care of our team is the “changing lives business.”

This new project will once again allow us to dream about the possibilities of another 20 years of calling Dubuque home to our Medline family and affecting even more lives in how vastly important ways.”

Renee Poppe
Vice President, Sales Service Center
Medline Industries, Inc.

MEDLINE INDUSTRIES

In March 2018, Medline Industries announced plans to invest in a new 120,000-square-foot facility in the Dubuque Industrial Center West. Located at the end of Innovation Drive, the new customer service facility will add more than 100 jobs to the medical supply company’s workforce. As with their expansion in 2008, Greater Dubuque Development assisted Medline Industries throughout the process.

The future site of Medline Industries, located at the end of Innovation Drive in the Dubuque Industrial Center West.
Workforce Solutions

Greater Dubuque Development Corporation
2017–2018 ANNUAL REPORT

Everyone needs to recruit more talent to the area and if you’re not taking advantage of the solutions Greater Dubuque Development offers, you may have a problem. In a challenging workforce climate, rolling out the red carpet and making the best first impression is more than a courtesy, it’s a requirement.

Our Workforce Solutions team offers complimentary assistance to employers and job seekers—from our Newcomer Services that help job candidates and their families feel welcome, to college outreach designed to retain our 64,309 students in the area, to upskilling our residents to high-wage, high-demand careers and more. Our team also meets with Human Resources professionals, employers, educational partners, and nonprofits to help everyone work smarter and harder in talent attraction and retention.

A proactive approach to fill high-demand, high-wage careers, Opportunity Dubuque is a training program developed in partnership with Northeast Iowa Community College and funded through Dubuque Works. The collaborative industry-driven, job training program upskills individuals who achieve short-term certificates in over 18 disciplines. Since the program’s start in 2012, over 527 students have completed training and gone on to employment or continuing their education. It’s a win-win as it builds and expands career paths for traditional and non-traditional students while meeting the employer need for qualified talent.

The number-one resource for connecting area employers with talent, AccessDubuqueJobs.com is the top career posting site in the region, outranking national competitors according to our 2017 Laborshed Study. Greater Dubuque Development partners with the Telegraph Herald to provide this essential tool for recruiting in our area. In 2017–2018, over 180 investors posted 11,792 careers to the site, visited by 179,485 job seekers. Investors also received the bi-weekly Finders of Keepers e-blast with updates on our regional labor force, college career fairs, human resources training, and more.

Newcomer Services & Distinctively Dubuque

Community Tours, one-on-one assistance, and the Distinctively Dubuque classes help welcome newcomers to our community. These free services are a valuable toolkit to help employers onboard and make everyone feel connected to our community.

In 2017–2018, through Distinctively Dubuque, we introduced 114 individuals representing 42 employers to our community. Over 100 job candidates took our free community tours. Our staff met with 147 individuals for career assistance and connection to resources at new residents.

Opportunity Dubuque

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Our Workforce Solutions team conducts on-site interviews with area Human Resources professionals to identify and resolve workforce challenges. We conducted 69 HR Action visits and 20 workforce assistance visits to provide additional support to our area employers. These one-on-one meetings provide the opportunity to identify not only challenges specific to an individual employer or sector but to see overall trends for our area.

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May 2018

3.8%

United States

2.7%

Iowa

2.1%

Dubuque MSA

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Date as of June 2018
National Marketing

National site locators are looking for one crucial asset for their clients—talent. Industry grows where there’s workforce to run it. Efforts to attract newcomers, retain college students, and upskill our workforce directly impact how we stay nationally competitive.

The other half of National Marketing is a data-driven, team effort. As always, we work with service providers and state and local government to provide site locators with the customized reasons we’re prime for new industry. The Greater Dubuque area has the infrastructure, properties, and incentives to attract new employers and grow our regional economy.

StartUp Dubuque

Each year, hundreds of up-and-coming business owners meet with StartUp Dubuque counselors to get their ideas off the ground. By providing resources and expert insights, the team is helping build the growing entrepreneurial climate in our community. This year, coaches met with 319 clients, investing over 1,381 counseling hours, and participated in and hosted dozens of events to foster the small business community.

StartUp Dubuque, made possible through the generosity of Dick and Carrie Schmid, is a collaborative partnership between Greater Dubuque Development, Northeast Iowa Community College, the Small Business Development Center, and regional small business providers.
Sustainable Innovations

Broadband: Connectivity is the lifeblood of modern business—if we’re not expanding our capabilities and infrastructure, we will die on the vine. Our Sustainable Innovations team is working with government and energy partners to expand the reach, capacity, and carriers for broadband access. In the last two years, the community has used a unique public/private collaboration on broadband to double conduit, quadruple fiber, and triple the number of active internet providers in the Greater Dubuque area.

Our team is also continuing to work on the increased usage of BioCNG being produced at the City of Dubuque Water Resource and Recovery Center and supporting early efforts for a similar project at the Dubuque Metropolitan Area Solid Waste Agency. Converting excess methane emissions into value-added biogas is generating revenue, reducing city energy costs, improving air quality, and minimizing our environmental impact. The efforts are a win-win for the Greater Dubuque area’s economy and its environment.

Small Cell Expansion

Broadband isn’t the only project with a focus on the future. We’re working with the City of Dubuque and industry leaders, including Verizon Wireless, to expand cellular and mobile capacity in Dubuque. Using combinations of “small cell” technology and broadband backhaul, our Sustainable Innovations team will make sure that no matter where you are or what device you are using, you’ll be connected in Dubuque.

Renewable Natural Gas

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Dubuque’s True North

Adding to our puzzle of action in 2017–2018, Finding Dubuque’s True North is bringing a fresh focus to the revitalization of our North End neighborhoods. The initiative is embraced by both the public and private sectors collaborating on objectives and strategies to achieve them. Thoughtful consideration has been given to each step as this program unfolds, maintaining an awareness that decisions should be driven by data without reducing the real lives of people to numbers. In time, this initiative will benefit both our citizens and our economy while preserving our sense of community.

DATA COLLECTION

We’re collecting data to better understand two populations in our community—those who live in the North End and those who don’t but have perceptions about the area. We’re combining annual polling, national data, and city-based resources to create better-informed strategies and track progress.

REDUCTION OF SLUM & BLIGHT

Simply having workforce housing isn’t enough. That housing needs to be affordable and safe for habitation. We’ve set the goal with the City of Dubuque to purchase and rehabilitate up to 50 properties over the next five years in the North End, converting them to single-family homes. We’re also working with financial institutions to help first-time home buyers navigate the process, setting a firm foundation for their economic future.

COMMERCIAL REDEVELOPMENT

Commercial and industrial property has great potential through redevelopment. Bringing new industry to these sites will breathe new life into the community as a whole. The revitalization of industrial space brings with it the redevelopment of Flexsteel Industries’ former manufacturing facility. The site will be revitalized, adding an attractive new location for industrial and commercial use in the North End.

Greater Dubuque Development established the Dubuque’s True North Board to oversee the objectives of the initiative. The 21-member board is comprised of thought leaders that include presidents of higher education, principals of financial institutions, and invested citizens.

Kate Pinola, Chair, Dubuque Bank & Trust
Steve Baumbarger, Fidelity Bank & Trust
Philip Boose, Emmaus Bible College
Jeff Bullock, University of Dubuque
Joanne Burrows, Clarke University
Jim Collins, Loras College
Mike Donohue, U.S. Bank
Kate Farber, Quincy Bag
Darren Fischer, American Trust & Savings Bank
Lynn H. “Tuff” Fuller, M.D., Dubuque Bank & Trust
Joe Hearn, Dupaco Community Credit Union
Ernest Jackson, John Deere Dubuque Works
Ron Kincaid, DuTrac Community Credit Union
Kate Larson, City of Dubuque Council
Dan LoBianco, Dubuque Main Street
Emily McCready, 563 Design
Jeff Mozena, Pomeran Bank
Tara O’Neill, East Central Iowa Association of REALTORS
Tara Verdia, Dubuque’s True North Resident
Dr. Liang Chee Wee, Northeast Iowa Community College
Christina Wilson-Harrison, Dubuque’s True North Resident

Dubuque’s True North Development Corporation Board Members

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Greater Dubuque Team

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Vice President of Workforce Solutions

Dan McDonald  
Vice President of Existing Business

Karen Kluesner  
Vice President of Operations

Emily Graves  
Director of Communications

Anna Rilling  
Workforce Solutions Coordinator

Ed Ruber  
Director of Dubuque’s True North

Jynea Ervolino  
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Rick Dickson  
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Chris Apel  
Community Tour Guide

Dave Lyons  
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Bill Baum  
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Renee Meyer  
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* Contractor or Part-time Staff

Board of Directors

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Mike Dorschun, Chair

Tom Woodward, Vice Chair

Wendy Runde, Treasurer

Kurt Strand, Past Chair

Jessica M. Avila, Director

David Becker, Cottamham & Butler

Ed Raber, City of Dubuque

Chad Chandelis, Kendall Point Publishing

Tim Carlos, Conlin Construction Co.

Mark Dickson, John Deere Dubuque Works

Lynn H. “Tut” Fuller, M.D., Dubuque Bank & Trust

Tim Hodge, HCYG

Nicholas J. Schrup III, American Trust & Savings Bank

Terry Krause, Iubiquity Energy

Greg McCoy, The McCoy Group, Inc.

Rob McDonald, A.Y. McDonald Mfg. Co.

Mike Portzen, Portzen Construction, Inc.

Jay Wickham, Dubuque County

In December 2017, Greater Dubuque Development hosted its first meeting of the Future Leadership Team. This 31-member group of current and emerging Dubuque-area leaders is advisory in nature and tasked with providing feedback to the board of directors and management team on annual and long-range strategies and objectives. Greater Dubuque Development believes that organizations work most effectively when led by teams that are diverse, inclusive, and equity-focused. The makeup for the Future Leadership Team reflects that belief. View the list of members at greaterdubuque.org.

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BOARD MEMBERS

Ted Bowman, Iowa Legislature

Jeff Bullock, University of Dubuque

Sr. Joanne Burrows, Clarke University

Jim Collins, Loras College

Karel Czanderna, Flexsteel Industries, Inc.

Terry Krause, Iubiquity Energy

Greg McCoy, The McCoy Group, Inc.

Renee Meyer, Community Tour Guide

Nelson Klawitter, Community Tour Guide

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