



# Iowa Workforce NEWS

December 2013 • Issue 31

## Branstad launched Home Base Iowa in national effort to match veterans with available Iowa Jobs

Gov. Branstad launched an innovative new public-private partnership called Home Base Iowa, an effort that will match military veterans with jobs available across Iowa.

Home Base Iowa will raise private funds to support national targeted marketing efforts to veterans, including in-person outreach, a social media campaign and outreach through military publications.

Former Congressman Leonard Boswell and Casey's General Stores CEO Bob Myers will co-chair the effort.

"Through their service, veterans have already proven they share the values we hold dear as Iowans - hard work, leadership, and patriotism, among others," said Branstad. "We'll be calling upon the business community to partner with Home Base Iowa to help us meet our goals of increasing employment in this state, decreasing veterans' unemployment, and recruiting high quality individuals to Iowa." Several hundred thousand veterans will

leave the service over the next few years, while having a higher unemployment rate nationally.

Gov. Branstad notes that in his travel to Iowa's 99 counties, he's heard from companies that are ready to hire, but struggle to find workers with the right skills.

"We repeatedly hear from employers that they are ready to hire," said Branstad. "We've made significant investments in developing the skills of Iowa's workforce - through education reform, increased support for community colleges, the STEM initiative, and Skilled Iowa. However, this skills gap still exists. Home Base Iowa is a public-private partnership which will recruit veterans to come to Iowa to work, to become part of our communities - to be Iowans."

Branstad made the announcement held at the Iowa Gold Star Museum at Camp Dodge in Johnston.



# Message from the Director

The Skilled Iowa Initiative had a successful year in 2013. The initiative was heavily focused on ensuring Iowa students have access to Skilled Iowa tools, kicking off the internship component of the program and targeted NCRC testing events across the state.



**Teresa Wahlert**  
IWD Director

Iowa businesses have embraced the Skilled Iowa Initiative throughout 2013. Over 8,800 businesses have committed to the initiative. The Skilled Iowa Community concept was developed to allow self-defined geographic areas within the state to meet the metrics. By becoming a Skilled Iowa Community, an area can market a highly skilled workforce backed up by meaningful data. Des Moines County was the first area within the state to achieve the Skilled Iowa Community designation. They were soon followed by

Union County, Ringgold County, Adams County and Jones County. Several other areas have met three of the four metrics and will secure the Skilled Iowa Community designation shortly.

34,662 Iowans currently hold National Career Readiness Certificates in Iowa. This demonstrates a critical mass of the workforce with certified skill sets in Applied Mathematics, Reading for Information, and Locating Information. As we move into 2014, it will be important to continue the momentum of the Skilled Iowa Initiative. 2014 includes plans for an additional targeted media/advertising campaign to bring in more supporting businesses, increase the number of Skilled Iowa Communities and continue to grow the skilled workforce within Iowa.



## Centerville Job Fair

On September 25<sup>th</sup>, IowaWORKS Southern Iowa held a job fair at the Drake Public Library in Centerville.

The employers present had more than 100 positions available. The eager job seekers began showing up before the employers were all set-up. Approximately 150 job seekers attended along with students from Centerville High School, Centerville Alternative School and Ottumwa JOB CORPS.

Centerville Mayor Jane Spurgeon attended and was impressed with all the employers and job seekers that had filled the room. She also expressed her excitement about the job fair and what it will do for the community and county. Centerville High School is interested in hosting the next job fair.

## Iowa Unemployment Rate Drops to 4.4 Percent

Iowa's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate dropped to 4.4 percent in November from 4.6 percent in October, the lowest rate recorded since 2008. The comparable rate for November 2012 was 4.9 percent. The U.S. jobless rate dropped to a five-year low of 7.0 percent in November from 7.3 percent in October.

"The Iowa job market appears to be on a path of steady and sustainable improvement," said Teresa Wahlert, director of Workforce Development. "Combined job gains for October and November totaled 5,000, and the state's

unemployment rate is currently at its lowest point in five years."

The statewide estimate of unemployed persons dropped to a current-year low of 72,500 in November from 75,700 in October. The number of unemployed stood at 79,600 in November 2012.

The total number of working Iowans continued on an upward course in November, climbing to 1,593,200 from 1,583,600 in October. The current figure is 44,900 higher than the November 2012 level of 1,548,300.

## Get Social with IWD and Skilled Iowa



### Facebook:

Iowa Workforce Development  
Skilled Iowa

### Twitter:

@iowaworkforce  
@skillediowa

### YouTube:

Iowa Workforce Development

## IowaWORKS Southeast Iowa Honors Veterans with Annual Veterans Day Luncheon

On Tuesday, November 12<sup>th</sup>, IowaWORKS Southeast Iowa staff in Burlington sponsored their annual Veteran's Luncheon, a full lunch including main dishes, sides and desserts.

This year's luncheon was the most successful one yet! More than 50 veterans attended, with some family members in addition. Tim Snyder spoke, thanking the veteran's for their

service and for their attendance at the event. It was truly a memorable day.

Each year, staff volunteer to make or buy items to contribute to this event. Staff also bring memorabilia and decorations, and volunteer their time to set up a couple displays to honor veterans for their service.



## Construction Workers Pause to "Stand Down for Safety"

*Iowa OSHA encourages contractors, labors and associations to address fall issues on job sites.*

On September 3<sup>rd</sup>, Iowa OSHA (in conjunction with OSHA Region VII) encouraged contractors, labor and other associations took some time to "Stand Down for Falls." Contractors were asked to designate 11:30 am as a time to address fall issues on their job sites.

The focus of the stand down was to raise awareness among employers and workers about the hazards of falls, which are the leading cause of job site death in the construction industry.

In 2011, Iowa has more than 260 fall fatalities out of 738 total fatalities in the construction industry nationally.

Among others, all Iowa partnership job sites participated by either conducting fall protection training or tool box talks to discuss the fall hazards at their job sites.

Additional fall protection information can be found at <http://www.osha.gov/stopfalls/factsheet.html>.

## Veterans Day Parade at Clay County Fair in September

IowaWORKS Northwest Iowa Veterans Advisor Heather Warren participated in the Clay County Fair Veterans parade in September. She rode in the parade with her brother, Dan, who is a veteran of Afghanistan and is still serving. They rode with the American Legion Riders.



# Donuts for Walt

## Remembering Retired Deputy Workers' Compensation Commissioner



Retired-Deputy Workers' Compensation Commissioner Walter (Walt) McManus passed away Thursday,

November 14, 2013. Those of us at IWD who had the privilege to know and work with Walt for many years realize what a kind and fine gentleman lawyer he was. He always had a smile on his face and a cheerful word for those who appeared before him. Walt spent many years as a Deputy Commissioner prior to his retirement in 2003 at the age of 75.

As a deputy, Walt was an excellent

mediator with his patience and ability to listen to each party who appeared before him. Walt always made sure the parties had plenty of food and drink when they mediated a case before the division. There were those special lawyers he would ask to bring pastries to the mediation to keep "everyone in a sweet mood." One could not refuse Walt when he asked for donuts or coffee cake in the morning, even if it meant a trip out of one's way to 1000 East Grand Avenue. No one wanted to disappoint Walt. On the date of Walt's funeral, a local attorney who had frequently brought donuts for mediations brought donuts for Walt ... one last time.



## IowaWORKS PROMISE JOBS Success Story

Self-Reflection written by *Nicole Gustafson*

The day I signed up for PROMISE JOBS, I had no idea what to expect. I had never been in this type of situation before. I was unemployed, a high school dropout, and a single mother. I felt like my world was falling apart, and there was nothing I could do to stop it. I felt hopeless.

When I went to the orientation, I sat there listening to Hershel discuss the program and everything that was expected from me. After that, I met with my worker Diane, and she explained what our plan was, and how I was going to achieve it. She signed me up for Key Train and told me all about it. With everything set up, I left the building with goals set and a plan to achieve them. I was scared, but it felt amazing. I knew this was something that needed to be accomplished, not only for myself, but also for my son.

During the next couple of months, I followed through with my plan. Every day I went to my GED class, did my job search, and worked on Key Train. The (I Works) staff helped me with resume writing and even some basic computer knowledge.

I eventually decided it was time. I had the self-confidence and plenty of studying to take the National Career Readiness Assessment. This was a big deal to me. I couldn't tell you the last time I took a test. I went in fully prepared. There was no time for nervousness, self-doubt, or

any other type of negative feelings. Almost three hours later, I was finished. I gave it my best. It was everything I studied.

When I received my test scores, I was very surprised I did so well. For the first time, in a long time, I felt that feeling of success, and I liked it! Paula went over my scores. She was very thorough. I told her I was currently working on earning my GED, and I think that working on those two things were very beneficial in helping me succeed. She proceeded to tell me that she was impressed with my scores, considering I never graduated high school. This made me feel a great deal of accomplishment. It made me feel like I actually do have something to offer a future employer. Since that day, I have received my GED and have enrolled in college.

I honestly believe taking the National Career Readiness test and working with Diane and PROMISE JOBS helped me accomplish that. They have given me confidence, self-worth, and the drive to be successful. Without the support, I don't think I would have done it on my own.

It has made me a better person. I will never allow anything to stand in my way again. I have been placed on the right path, and for that I will forever be grateful.

# Noteworthy Employee Acknowledgements and Accomplishments

We appreciate the feedback we get from our customers. Here are a few noteworthy comments we've received:

- Teresa Hillary sent an email thanking the **IWD IT Department** for their help in implementing a new project. "These new codes will cut down on time spent processing appeals," said Hillary. She also thanked thanks to **Deb Wise, Lynette Donner and Myra Baughman** for their work to get the language just right.

- Corey Bulluck, Federal Department of Labor, wrote to thank **Chris Nilles, Des Moines**, for attending a recent Summit and presenting information regarding Iowa's Virtual Access Point system. "She did a great job and the session was received very well. It was much appreciated."

- Vickie Sheeley sent a note to thank Michael Henrich and the Sioux City Iowa**WORKS** office. "I want to let you know how much I appreciate everybody's kindness,

uplifting encouragement, patience and helpful information you all shared with me during my job searches." Sheeley was given two offers of employment and began a new position on August 12<sup>th</sup>.

- Mary Shineflew with the Employment Appeal Board sent a note thanking the **UI Appeals Division** for prompt delivery of appeal files.
- Pat Cupples emailed a note of thanks to Jason Landess, Council Bluffs, for his work with the Workforce Re-Entry Program. "The skills I learned made it very fast and easy to get a great job. I am so happy I took the time to do the classes - they do help. I have 23 years

in prison and it did not hold me back one bit. If I can do it anybody can."

- Debra Meyer with 4M Trucking called in to thank Kim Davis for her professional, helpful, kind and very patient service. Meyer called MylowaUI customer service to find out what steps she could take to avoid having to file electronically. Meyer said "I did not think anyone would change my mind and if not for Kim being so helpful I would have stood my ground. Kim gave me the best customer service I have ever received!"

If you would like to send us your noteworthy comment, send it to: [kathryn.hommer@iwd.iowa.gov](mailto:kathryn.hommer@iwd.iowa.gov) or 515-281-5407.

## Employee News

### September – December Anniversaries

#### 5 Years

Rena Lundberg  
Kurt Hansen  
Jeremy Ritchie  
Sherry Buchheit  
Elliott Fitch  
Sandra Baker  
Ryan Anderson  
Peggy Murray  
James Siakhasone  
Christina Steen  
Kirsten Wood  
Krystal Ruby

#### 10 Years

Marla Loecke  
Lori Seibold  
Justin Willier  
Stephanie Stoltz  
Cathy Schafer  
Sheryl Lewis  
Jodi Douglas  
Anne Hernandez  
Jim Christenson

#### 15 Years

Janna Martin  
Barbara Hyke

#### 20 Years

Joan Koffler  
Dwayne Heckman  
Nina Gotta  
Connie Dykstra  
Yvonne Ginther  
Sue Barton

20 Years  
Pho Chounlamountry  
Ruth Gilgen  
Ylonda Shook  
Mary Traywick  
Nick Giannetto  
Joan Lehner  
Joyce Russell

#### 25 Years

Dolores Lisk  
Gail Sheridan–Lucht

#### Argentina

Moncivais  
Deborah Moscaro  
David Hartman  
Charles Hoss  
Mary Piagentini  
Lynne Brokaw  
Evelyn Ruby  
Kimberly Wilhelm

#### 30 Years

HelenJean Wallesey  
Kathy Hamersley  
Kristi Judkins  
Carol Tanner  
Dianne Dawson  
David Rasey  
Gladys Runner  
Lawrence Faber

#### 35 Years

Vicky Sande  
Lillie Simpson

#### 40 Years

Patti Sidoner

### New Hires

Amy Harms  
Shelly Moore  
Bradley Bolluyt  
Amy Maurer  
Annette Dawson

### Transfers/ Recalls

Yvonne Ginther

### Retirements

Charlotte Miller  
John Carr  
Theodore Hall  
Judith Wobbema  
Lucinda Calvert  
Frances Carpenter  
Diane Oak Goode  
Ruth Westergard  
Rose Hadley-Kell  
Charles Hoss  
Daryl Roberts  
Everlue Harris

## Iowa Workforce NEWS

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For Deaf or Hard of Hearing, call Relay 711

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Governor

**Teresa Wahlert**  
Director

**Kerry Koonce**  
Communications Director

**Kathryn Hommer**  
Marketing/Communications Coordinator

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