

Iowa Workforce NEWS

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IWD Director Wahlert Elected to NASWA Board of Directors

Wahlert will serve as the regional director representing Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas and Missouri on the fifteen-member board.

Iowa Workforce Development Director Teresa Wahlert was elected to the National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA) Board of Directors at the group's annual meeting in Burlington, Vermont.

Wahlert will serve as the regional director representing Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas and Missouri on the fifteen-member board.

"NASWA is honored to have Teresa Wahlert as a regional director. Her expertise and leadership in workforce development will be a great asset to NASWA as we begin our new association year," said Bob Simoneau, NASWA Deputy Executive Director.

Wahlert has served as the director of Iowa Workforce Development since January 2011. She had previously worked in leadership positions with Qwest, the Greater Des Moines Partnership, and Mid-America Group. A native of Dubuque, she holds a Master's of Science in Business degree as a Sloan Fellow from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), as well as a Masters

in Business Administration from Creighton University and a Bachelors of Science from St. Mary's College at Notre Dame.

About NASWA

The National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA) was founded in the depths of the Great Depression, in the early years of unemployment insurance and employment service programs. It is an organization of state administrators of unemployment insurance laws, employment services, training programs, employment statistics and labor market information. Throughout its more than 78-year history, NASWA has strengthened the workforce system through information exchange, liaison, and advocacy.

The guiding principles of NASWA are:

- Advance the state role in the workforce system;
- Invest in training and professional development; and
- Lead in coordinating local, state, and federal roles.

Iowa Unemployment Rate Drops to 4.5 Percent

Iowa's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate dropped to 4.5 percent in October from 4.6 percent in September. The state's jobless rate was 4.4 percent one year ago. The U.S. unemployment rate dropped to 5.8 percent in October compared to 5.9 percent in September.

"Iowa's job market continues to steadily pick up pace," said Teresa Wahlert, director of Iowa Workforce Development. "The state's labor force is currently at an all-time high of 1,711,600, and the total number of working Iowans is 34,800 higher than one year ago."

The number of unemployed Iowans decreased to 76,800 in October from 77,700 in September. The current estimate is 2,700 higher than the year ago level of 74,100.

The total number of working Iowans reached a current-year peak of 1,634,800 in October. This figure is 5,100 higher than September and 34,800 higher than one year ago.

Message from the Director

The U.S. Department of Labor awarded Iowa Workforce Development over \$1.78 million dollars to enhance the performance and integrity of the Unemployment Insurance system through technology.

“This grant will allow Iowa to continue implementing technology solutions that lead to faster claims processing and enhanced prevention of overpayments,” stated Iowa Workforce Development Director Teresa Wahlert. “The department is dedicated to protecting the integrity of the Unemployment Insurance system while implementing enhancements that benefit both individuals and employers.”

Iowa Workforce Development received 100 percent of the funding requested



Teresa Wahlert
IWD Director

in the grant process. The additional resources will incorporate enhanced programs to process claims where wages exist in multiple states; enhance the verification of dependents listed on an unemployment claim; and automate the process for employers

to submit supplemental information on wages paid to former employees, decreasing the possibility of benefit overpayments.

Additionally, Iowa Workforce Development is implementing a participant profile to allow claimants real-time electronic access to their unemployment information and the department is enhancing the data integrity components to meet new guidelines recently established.

Iowa OSHA, Master Builders of Iowa Celebrate 100th WORKSAFE Location

Iowa OSHA and Master Builders of Iowa (MBI) celebrated the 100th WORKSAFE location on October 10, 2014 at the EMC Buildings window replacement project.

The WORKSAFE program is a partnership between MBI, Iowa OSHA and the building contractor to increase safety awareness and reduce injuries at construction sites.

Governor Terry Branstad, Lt. Governor Kim Reynolds, Director Teresa Wahlert, Labor Commissioner Michael Mauro, and EMC executives presented on the importance of workplace safety and thanked the community for embracing WORKSAFE.

Iowa Voluntary Protection Program Adds Three Resident Contractors

Iowa OSHA is proud to announce that three resident contracting companies achieved Voluntary Protection Program (VPP) Star Status recently:

- O. Thompson Construction, Inc.
- Clausen Supply Company
- J. W. Koehler Electric, Inc.

Each of the three companies is a resident contractor at LyondellBasell, a PSM covered chemical plant, in Clinton Iowa, which has been a Star Status site since 2002.

A celebration was held on October 14, 2014, which included all three contracting companies, their employees and the



LyondellBasell Partners. The Iowa Labor Commissioner, Michael Mauro, presented each company with a plaque and a flag to recognize how each company went above and beyond OSHA minimum requirements to achieve VPP Star Status.

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[Iowa Workforce Development](#)

Iowa's Employer Unemployment Insurance Tax Tables Continue Improvement in 2015

Tax Tables Move in a Positive Direction, 4th Year in a Row

Iowa Workforce Development announced that employers will see approximately \$108 million dollars in tax savings by moving from tax table six to table seven. The last time unemployment insurance taxes were this low was 2002. The average rate will fall from 1.6 percent to 1.2 percent for 2015.

"Due to Iowa's strong economic condition, Iowa employers will see significant tax savings," said Iowa Governor Terry Branstad. "Today's announcement is yet another indication that Iowa is working."

This marks the fourth year in a row of employer tax reductions. Since the announcement of Tax Table 4 for calendar year 2012, businesses have saved over \$409 million in tax payments.

"Iowa continues to demonstrate stability within the Unemployment Insurance Trust Funds and has moved the tax rates in a positive direction for businesses four years in a row," stated Iowa Workforce

Development Director Teresa Wahlert.

Under Tax Table 7, the new employer non-construction rate will be 1.0 percent in 2015, the lowest permitted rate by federal law.

"The people of Iowa have our commitment to carefully manage the trust fund in the coming year to continue this beneficial trend for Iowa businesses. Iowa has one of the lowest UI tax rates in the nation," stated Wahlert.

Iowa Workforce Development is the state agency charged with collecting Unemployment Insurance (UI) taxes from employers and operating Iowa's unemployment insurance payment programs for workers. Annually, Iowa Workforce Development identifies the appropriate table for the following year. UI tax rates are based on wages and recent UI benefit payments.

"Governor Branstad and I are pleased to announce that the unemployment insurance tax for employers has dropped to a 12-year

low," said Iowa Lt. Gov. Kim Reynolds. "The progress we're making in growing Iowa's economy has meant a reduction in the tax tables for four straight years. This news, along with the fact that over 146,000 jobs have been created since 2011, shows the Iowa continues to move forward."

Due to the design of Iowa's UI tax system developed under Governor Branstad's administration in the 1980's and Iowa Workforce Development's diligent oversight of the UI Trust Fund throughout the national recession and recovery, Iowa businesses will benefit with an average decrease in taxes.

Throughout the state, Iowa Workforce Development provides critical services and resources to support the prosperity, productivity, health and safety of Iowans and their communities. Services are available in 15 regional centers, four satellite offices and hundreds of Virtual Access Points.

43rd Annual Governor's Safety Conference Held in October

The 43rd Annual Governor's Safety Conference was held at The Meadows Conference Center in Altoona, IA. More than 300 attendees and 25 vendors participated in this year's event.



Tim Moore from Generational Insights delivered two keynote presentations on how four generations are motivated and what drives them to perform their best. Brandon Schroeder's shared his workplace electrical arc flash incident, recovery, and lessons learned to the group. In addition, Gary Higbee from Higbee and Associated closed the conference with "Using Influence and Compliance to Create World Class Safety Performance."

Since 1977, the Governors Safety Conference has awarded \$136,000.00 in scholarships to students studying occupational safety and

health. Two students from the University of Iowa and one student from Iowa State University were recipients of scholarships totaling \$7,500.00 in 2014. Marlys Nelson, RN, COHN-S, UnityPoint Allen Hospital, Waterloo, IA was our first Occupational Health Nurse to receive the Gary Hawk Award. The Gary Hawk Award is presented to an individual who has made a significant contribution to workplace safety and health in Iowa. She has dedicated her career of 43 years to the safety and health of workers.

The 44th Annual Governors Safety Conference is scheduled for November 5 and 6, 2015 at "The Meadows" in Altoona, Iowa.



Sioux City High School Students take National Career Readiness Certificate Assessment

A large group of freshman students completed the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) at East High School in Sioux City.



Two groups participated in the assessment during the first week of November.

With Skilled Iowa, students can take the NCRC to prove they have job readiness skills. The NCRC is a work-related skills credential. Whether looking for a job or want to enhance a diploma or résumé, NCRC provides job skills proof for employers nationwide.

IowaWORKS Western Iowa Holds Education Educator Summit in September

The following was submitted by IowaWORKS Western Iowa Operations Manager Elizabeth Waigand. The region recently held an Education Educator Summit which was very well received in the community. Below is her summary of the event.

IowaWORKS Western Iowa partnered with Western Iowa Advantage to hold an Employer Educator Summit to discuss the shortage of middle skilled workers. The event was held on September 17 from 8:00 am-1:00 pm. Speakers ranged from businesses, economic development, K-12 education system and also included a round table discussion led by IowaWORKS. The individuals who attended the summit were seated at tables that would include one person from the K-12 education system, college, workforce professional and business professional to ensure the discussions had perspectives from each background. Western Iowa Advantage was able to secure a \$10,000 grant to cover speaker,

food and material costs. More than 150 people attended the summit, including representation from 18 school districts, five community colleges and three universities. Mark Segebart – Iowa Senate District 6 and Jason Schultz – House Representative District 18 also attended the summit.

There were surveys given at the summit and 90 individuals (88.44%) completed the surveys. Overall the attendees rated the summit in the following manner:

- 71% – Excellent (64)
- 20% – Good (26)
- 0% – Fair
- 0% – Poor

The attendees rated the round table the most helpful which was conducted after the presentations were given. All of the surveys stated that the conversation needed to continue regarding the lack of skilled workers. There were 60 people who signed up to join a committee to

address the middle skills shortage in the IowaWORKS Western Iowa region. Following the summit, a K-12 school system called and asked to set up an appointment with a staff person as soon as possible.

Staff did an excellent job at organizing the event and ensuring that each person who attended could walk away with information on the skilled labor shortage. Several people in the audience shared their positive experience with IowaWORKS such as targeted job fairs and NCRC. The IowaWORKS Western Iowa office in Carroll continues to demonstrate they make an impact in their community and go above and beyond expectations. They were complimented by several of the attendees on their professionalism and attention to detail. I am very proud that IowaWORKS Western Iowa allows me to be part of their team.



Noteworthy Employee Acknowledgements and Accomplishments

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

- US Department of Labor Assistant Secretary Keith Kelly sent a note thanking the Des Moines office. "Really commend you for giving a 1st Class overview of the Job Center. I do believe it really opened some eyes with our partners in USDA and SBAs. I know Tony Smithhart

will be reaching out to them to coordinate where we can. Again, great job you all are doing in Iowa. P.S. Love your beautiful Capitol."

- Kenda Jochimsen sent in an email thanking Scott Mather, Cedar Rapids. "Scott added value and demonstrated collaboration in the meetings today. I wanted to let you know the Cedar Rapids meetings were the best we've have had."

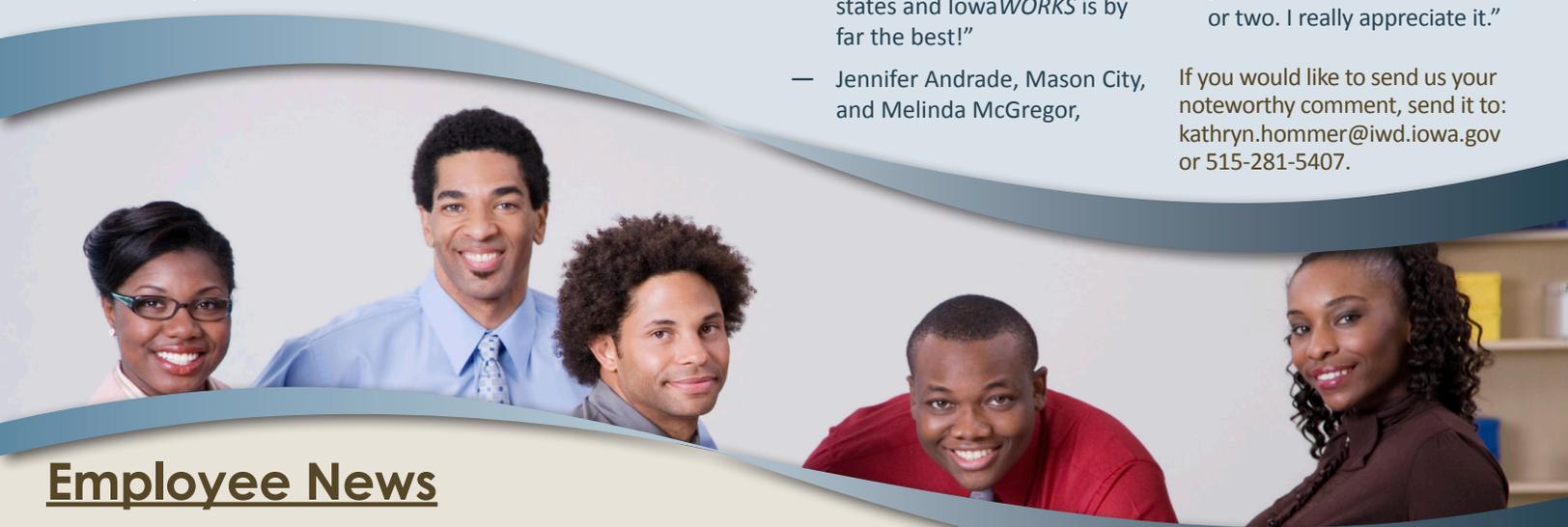
- Cameron Gibson wrote a thank you to Jennifer Reha, Des Moines. "I wanted to take the time to ensure you thank your entire staff at IowaWORKS for the hospitality and unbelievable support throughout our stay. I can honestly say I have never seen a more welcoming, professional and dedicated group of individuals. I have worked with various other Workforce Centers in different states and IowaWORKS is by far the best!"

Mason City, received a thank you email from Tim Fox. "Thank you for your time and service to Charles City. We appreciate your commitment in helping us achieve more than we otherwise would."

- Vanessa Ziegler, Des Moines, received an email from Pam Yoakum thanking her for all her hard work. "It just blows me away that we get files so fast. When I first started in this position, it could be a month or two. I really appreciate it."

- Jennifer Andrade, Mason City, and Melinda McGregor,

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



Employee News

September – December Anniversaries

5 Years

Joni Benson
Rebecca Ramirez
Angela Hill
Aparna Davuluri
Roxanne Smith
Rebecca Marshall
Tracey Goodrich
Johneen Carr
Steven Heinle
James Madden
Alan Lewis
Heather Warren
Luis Arellanes
Lainda Drake

Jean Holbrook

Sara Deanda
Elizabeth Balcha
Mary Lippold
Gabriel Benson
Debra Hodges-Harmon
Hershel Reed
Alan Murphy
Denise Schippers
Srdjan Golub
Melinda McGregor
Grant Elliott
Brian Neeley
Erin Irvine
Amy Reed

10 Years

Dean East
Kelly Loftus
Brenda Pappas
Charles Rummery

15 Years

Susan Ackerman
Jennifer Vogt
Steven Hansen
Michael Msuya
Brenda Robinson

20 Years

Linda Saxton Kent
Kathleen Uehling
Karen Francis
Todd McGee

Ann Jorgenson
Laura Prettyman
Nora Jackson

25 Years

Mila Baier
Lori Arandus
Tina Juarez
Lisa Farley

30 Years

Christina Roush
Gary Beer
Larry Walshire
Lynette Donner
Elizabeth Conner

35 Years

Kim Rieger

40 Years

Ruth Gilgen

Promotions/ Retirements/ Transfers/ Recalls

Richard Anderson
Vicki Hoppe
Sharold Shepherd
Ylonda Shool
Megan Jensen
Jennifer Reha
Luis Arellanes
Sherri Vaughn
Ryan West
Sara Deanda

Ron Brady
Lonnie Majerus
Randall Stephenson
Bill Austin
Theodore Robinson
Linda Terry
Helen Moses
Joan Lehner

New Hires

Mark Braun
Justin Alliss
Jacqueline Castillo
Christopher Downs
Tracy Even

Iowa Workforce NEWS

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For Deaf or Hard of Hearing, call Relay 711

Terry Branstad
Governor

Teresa Wahlert
Director

Kerry Koonce
Communications Director

Kathryn Hommer
Marketing/Communications Manager

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