



Beat Burnout

DISCOVER STRATEGIES TO COMBAT AND PREVENT BURNOUT, REVITALIZING YOUR LIFE

JOIN US!
10.8.25
11AM - 1PM
Heartland Acres Event Center
Independence, IA
\$30 Entry - Knowledge & Lunch Included

PRESENTED BY
MOLLY MACKAY



FREE PUBLIC GRANT WRITING WORKSHOP

3/4/25 6-7PM
HEARTLAND ACRES - INDEPENDENCE
REGISTER TODAY!

PRESENTED BY
BUCHANAN COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
GROW BUCHANAN
INDEPENDENCE

THE BUCHANAN COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION IS HOSTING A PUBLIC GRANT WRITING WORKSHOP TO DISCUSS ITS 2025 GRANT CYCLE. THEY WILL REVIEW GUIDELINES, BUDGET TEMPLATE AND APPLICATION AND PROVIDE WRITING TIPS WITH TIME FOR Q&A.

GROW BUCHANAN
PLATINUM
PARTNER IN PROSPERITY

TRUST YOU CAN BANK ON

BANK IOWA
230 1ST ST E / INDEPENDENCE, IA / 319.336.7181
800.433.0285 / BANKIOWA.COM

GROW BUCHANAN

ECON @ DEV

25



PARTNERS IN PROSPERITY



Advancing Prosperity With Strategic Partners

The Buchanan County Economic Development Commission (BCEDC) works to promote prosperity across Buchanan County through strategic collaboration, targeted investment, and long-term economic growth.

Our work supports business growth, downtown vitality, workforce development, housing, and tourism, recognizing that strong communities and a resilient economy are built through coordinated effort and shared vision. BCEDC is committed to creating a positive economic environment for new and existing industry and small businesses.

In 2025, BCEDC continued to move initiatives from planning into implementation while closing out several multi-year projects. The year reflects both measurable outcomes and sustained momentum, reinforced by strong partnerships at the local, regional, and state levels.

Economic development is a team effort. Progress happens when communities, businesses, financial partners, utilities, and organizations align around a shared vision for Buchanan County’s future.



The Power of Partnership

At the core of Buchanan County’s economic progress is collaboration. BCEDC’s work is only possible through strong, trusted partnerships with communities, businesses and industries, financial institutions, utilities, education partners, and regional and state organizations. Economic development does not happen in isolation. It succeeds when partners work together toward common goals.

We serve as a convener and connector, aligning resources, strengthening coordination, and maximizing impact. This collaborative approach is the foundation behind every successful project and initiative highlighted in this report.

Connection
We link people and groups to resources for shared goals

Collaboration
We engage our partners in dynamic ways that support success

Vision
We drive momentum for the future by seeding and cultivating progress

Sustainability
We maximize potential for our partners now and the future

★ *Northeast Security Bank's commission of Hatala Illustration's striking public art mural further beautified the Independence historic downtown district*

WHAT WE'VE **BEEN UP TO**

01 | **Downtown Investment and Community Revitalization**

02 | **Business Development and Financial Support**

03 | **Leadership & Workforce Development**

04 | **Housing as Economic Infrastructure**

05 | **Regional and Statewide Engagement**

06 | **Tourism and Quality of Life**



In 2025, we launched an updated website designed to better serve businesses, site selectors, and community partners. The refreshed platform improves access to available resources, programs, properties, and data, strengthening BCEDC's ability to connect businesses with opportunities and streamline key economic development content and vital support.

Revitalizing Our Downtowns

Downtown investment remained an important focus of BCEDC's work in 2025, with an emphasis on advancing projects, strengthening local planning efforts, and ensuring long-term community impact. Both the Independence and Fairbank Community Catalyst Building Remediation projects were formally closed out by the State of Iowa in 2025, marking the successful completion of multi-year redevelopment efforts led by BCEDC.

State recognition followed when Iowa Economic Development Authority Director Debi Durham visited Buchanan County to tour completed Catalyst sites, reinforcing the value of reinvesting in historic downtown buildings and highlighting Buchanan County's effective use of state resources.

In Independence, redevelopment efforts resulted in the thriving Gedney Bakery and Coffeehouse and the addition of new upper-story housing units, strengthening downtown activity and residential opportunity. In Fairbank, the restoration of the historic Welsh Building culminated in the opening of The Farmer's Kitchen, creating a new community destination and reinforcing Main Street vitality.

In Jesup, revitalization momentum continued through the formation of a Downtown Revitalization Committee.

This locally led group is working collaboratively with BCEDC to explore strategies, identify opportunities, and advance planning



efforts aimed at enhancing Jesup's downtown core.

These efforts focus on strengthening business vibrancy, improving building utilization, and positioning downtown Jesup for long-term success.

02

Business Development and Financial Support



Investing in Progress

BCEDC continued to use its Revolving Loan Fund to support entrepreneurship, business expansion, and tourism-related development. The BCEDC's Revolving Loan Fund program had a strong year in 2025, approving four loans that supported new business activity, local entrepreneurship, and Buchanan County tourism-related development:

The Farmer's Kitchen – Fairbank: New restaurant located in the restored Catalyst building, contributing to downtown activity and local employment.

The Green Roast Café – Jesup: New coffee and lunch destination strengthening Jesup's business mix.

The Farmer's Wife – Jesup: A young entrepreneurial team purchasing an existing business, supporting succession planning and next-generation ownership.

River Palace Holdings – Independence: Development of three upper-story short-term rental units, expanding lodging options and enhancing tourism capacity within the community.

In addition, BCEDC approved two Key Business Grants in 2025 for Lamont SIPS in Lamont and The Green Roast Cafe in Jesup. The Key Business Grant program is used to spur growth throughout Buchanan County by supporting businesses that are unique to the economic and social well-being of their communities.

Funding for this program originated from donated property that was sold, providing a unique opportunity to reinvest those proceeds directly back into Buchanan County businesses and communities. This reinvestment reflects BCEDC's commitment to responsible stewardship and long-term local impact.

The RLF program serves as a flexible, gap-financing tool that helps local businesses launch, expand, and succeed.



Iowa Economic Development Authority Director Debi Durham's tour of Independence Premium Foods highlighted early growth and reinforced state confidence in Buchanan County's latest major industry.



LEAD Buchanan Academy '25

2025 marked the successful completion of the inaugural LEAD Buchanan Academy, a collaborative leadership development initiative designed to strengthen community engagement and practical leadership skills. Participants explored Buchanan County's assets, including local organizations, civic involvement, and diverse volunteer opportunities. The program's impact was reinforced by the award of a 2026 SPARK Grant, written jointly by Buchanan County Tourism (BCT) and BCEDC, ensuring continued growth and expanded opportunities for future participants. Partner organizers include BCT, Independence Chamber of Commerce, ISU Extension & Outreach and Hawkeye Community College.



"The LEAD Buchanan Academy has taken me out of my comfort zone in so many ways and doing the volunteer opportunity was one of the biggest but at the same time has been great to reconnect with my hometown and hopefully be able to give back and provide more opportunities than we have in the past." - SARAH BOYD / 2025 LEAD GRADUATE



BUILDING BETTER LEADERS

4 PREMIERE SPEAKERS - 6 PRIME SESSIONS!
Each Session has two optional class times: 9AM - 12PM or 1PM - 4PM

 Dr. Celina Peerman	 Brenda Meeker	 Sandra Flikkema	 Marcie Van Note
---	--	--	--

9/9 Leading for Impact Dr. Celina Peerman	9/30 Elevating Work Brenda Meeker
9/16 Leaders Listen Marcie Van Note	10/7 Time to Talk Sandra Flikkema
9/23 Time Management Sandra Flikkema	10/14 Power of Positivity Marcie Van Note

Business Leadership Series '25

Developing people remains a cornerstone of economic development. In 2025, BCEDC and Hawkeye Community

College celebrated the fourth year of the Business Leadership Program Series. Serving 22 participants countywide, the program delivered professional development focused on leadership, communication, productivity, and team performance, strengthening local leadership capacity and supporting workforce retention through more effective, resilient workplace teams.

The 2026 Session is set to kick off on September 15th!



04 | Housing as Economic Infrastructure

Home Sweet Home

Housing availability remains a key factor in attracting and retaining workforce talent. In 2025, BCEDC participated in the Regional Housing Task Force led by Butler County REC, supporting collaborative, multi-county housing solutions. This work will culminate in a Regional Housing Symposium. Additionally, Executive Director Lisa Kremer served on the Habitat for Humanity Steering Committee, reinforcing housing's role in workforce stability and long-term economic growth.

05 | Regional + Statewide Support



Amplifying Our Reach

BCEDC expanded its presence in 2025 through enhanced statewide and regional leadership. The appointment of Lisa Kremer, BCEDC Executive Director to the Iowa Rural Development Council amplified Buchanan County's voice in rural economic development. Ongoing engagement with Cedar Valley Regional Partnership site selector efforts, regional job fairs, and Leadership Iowa panels strengthened connections between employers, workforce, and opportunity.

06 | Tourism & Quality of Life



Welcome to Buchanan County!

Tourism remains a vital contributor to Buchanan County's economy, strengthening the tax base, supporting small businesses, and enhancing quality of life. These amenities help attract workforce, retain residents, and reinforce community identity. In 2025, BCEDC continued close collaboration with Buchanan County Tourism, supporting initiatives such as the First Impressions Grant, RAGBRAI-related efforts, and other community-focused projects. **Visitor spending held steady at \$17.6 million in 2024, outperforming surrounding counties.** Since 2021, strategic marketing and engagement have driven a 35.8% increase in visitor spending, 28.8% growth in business sales, and a 14% rise in visitor-generated taxes, easing the local tax burden while supporting long-term economic development.



As BCEDC marked its 30th year, the accomplishments of 2025 reflect both steady progress and strong momentum.

This impact is built on the dedication and leadership of the BCEDC Board of Directors, along with the vision and commitment of past and present directors and staff who have helped shape the organization over the last three decades.

Their collective efforts have played a significant role in attracting new businesses, supporting the growth and expansion of existing industries, and positioning Buchanan County as a competitive place to invest and grow.

Through this sustained work, BCEDC has helped strengthen Buchanan County's tax base, support job creation across multiple sectors, and enhance overall quality of life for residents. By aligning business development, workforce, housing, tourism, downtown investment, and regional collaboration, we remain focused on building a resilient, competitive, and thriving Buchanan County, now and into the future.

Gerald Dennie, BCEDC Board Chairman

Lisa Kremer, BCEDC Executive Director

THE BCEDC BOARD 2025

Gerald Dennie / Chairman / Mayor - Winthrop

Darin Hayzlett / Vice Chairman / Mayor - Hazleton

Terry Toale / Treasurer / Banklowa

Chris Even / Secretary / Mayor - Jesup



Dave Young / Mayor - Aurora

Guy Stacy / Mayor - Brandon

Jason Kayser / Mayor - Fairbank

Brad Bleichner / Mayor - Independence

Mike Cook / Mayor - Lamont

Joe Miller / Mayor - Quasqueton

Sue Webster / Mayor - Rowley

Rob Irvine / Mayor - Stanley

Dawn Vogel / Buchanan County Supervisor

Dean Hamblin / Livestock Association

Isabel Thurn / Buchanan County Tourism

Teresa Floyd / East Central IA REC

Landon Geater / Geater Machining & Manufacturing

Celia Even / Hawkeye Community College

Lisa Kremer / BCEDC Executive Director

Shawn Bainbridge / BCEDC Marketing+Comms Mgr



25



BUCHANAN COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION | ANNUAL REVIEW | 2025