

Envision Iowa: *The Good Life Gets Better*



Rendition of future Wells Fargo Arena at the Iowa Events Center.

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Governor Tom Vilsack

Acting on a vision of Iowa in which the good life becomes even better, the Iowa Legislature established three funding streams to support an initiative proposed by Governor Tom Vilsack: the development of recreational, educational, entertainment and cultural projects in Iowa. This financial assistance program, popularly known as Vision Iowa, means **more major attractions, more community places to play, and better school infrastructure.**

For Iowans — now and in the future — such commitment says **Iowa is serious about having fun and smart about maintaining great schools.** The program has three components: Vision Iowa, Community Attraction and Tourism (CAT), and School Infrastructure.

Vision Iowa provides financial assistance for the development of major attractions — places with regional or national draw. This program has a pledge of \$15 million per year over the next 20 years.

Community Attraction and Tourism (CAT) provides financial assistance for smaller projects. Through June 2004, \$12.5 million per year is available to fund community attractions and tourism.

School Infrastructure, administered by the Iowa Department of Education, has \$50 million available for school infrastructure improvements.

Language from the mission of the Vision Iowa and CAT programs promises an exciting return on investment for Iowa. For example, “The board will encourage and **support creative projects that enhance the lives of Iowans** throughout the state, will encourage and **support visionary thinking** in cities and towns and counties of all sizes and in all areas, and will ... support projects that **build on Iowa’s unique assets and values.**”

Governor Vilsack said, “The beauty of the Vision Iowa program is that it is able to assist projects both large and small in the state’s rural and urban areas. In order to grow the state’s population and increase the number of visitors who come here, we must consider the needs of each Iowa community, regardless of its size.”

Platinum Member Profiles



AEGON Insurance Group/ Life Investors

One of the top five insurance groups in the United States, AEGON USA, Inc., has one of its largest locations in one of the top quality-of-life cities in the nation: Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Dedicated to helping people find the future they want and the security they need, AEGON develops diverse financial products that range from traditional family insurance to innovative institutional solutions for risk management. AEGON offers insurance and pension market solutions to nearly every market segment. With close to 1,200 Iowa employees, AEGON houses its Corporate, Financial Markets, Individual and Investment divisions in Cedar Rapids. Accordingly, career opportunities exist for insurance professionals, financial consultants, risk analysts and computer programmers.



Iowa Health System

Created in 1993, Iowa Health System (IHS) is the state's first and largest integrated healthcare system. IHS is a community-based organization of physicians, hospitals, civic leaders and volunteers who are open to new approaches and share a vision of affordable, accessible healthcare. Iowa Health System is built on a mutual understanding that the time is right to translate our shared knowledge and experience into a system that works to deliver healthcare services of the highest possible quality and the lowest possible cost. IHS is one of the state's largest employers as well as its largest healthcare provider, employing nearly 11,500 people statewide.

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Some of the projects approved for funding provide a preview of **good times and family fun in Iowa**. Recent approvals include:



River's Edge, Sioux City

Sioux City's \$72.7 million project on Iowa's western border — also known as the Missouri River — received \$21 million from the Vision Iowa program to fund a new 10,000-seat events center and an interpretive Lewis and Clark facility.

River Renaissance on the Mississippi, Davenport

On the opposite side of the state, Davenport's \$113 million project has three major components. The River City Corridor component includes expansion of the historic Adler Theatre, renovation of the Redstone Building, and development of a river courtyard and Rhythm City skywalk bridge. The Arts Corridor includes construction of the Figge Arts Center and development of an "arts walk." The New Economy Corridor includes construction of an ag-tech venture-capital center. Vision Iowa awarded \$20 million toward the project.

America's River at the Port of Dubuque

This \$188 million project beside the river made famous by Mark Twain will feature a Mississippi River Discovery Center, Mississippi River national education and conference center, riverfront hotel, indoor water park, and river walk. The Port of Dubuque project has received a \$40 million grant from Vision Iowa.



Iowa Events Center, Des Moines

The state will invest \$70 million in Polk County's Capital City Vision project, bolstering more than \$1.5 billion of new development in central Iowa. The award includes a \$55 million grant and a \$15 million forgivable loan to assist in the development of an Iowa Events Center. The center will include an arena, convention and meeting facilities, and a riverfront restaurant. Another \$15 million is allocated for construction of new facilities for the Science Center of Iowa, and \$5 million is earmarked to help develop an Iowa Hall of Pride, which will honor high school athletes and performers.

McGregor/Marquette Area Legacy Project

Vision Iowa is funding \$5 million of this northeast Iowa project near the Mississippi River. Costing more than \$25 million, the Legacy project includes a Trail of Two Cities recreational trail, downtown beautification of three Clayton County towns, a riverfront walkway, and a destination hotel and 18-hole golf course.

As of October 2001, **\$175 million in Vision Iowa funds had been awarded** to qualifying projects. Nearly \$11 million had been awarded through the Community Attraction and Tourism program.

Supported projects have included **aquatic facilities, equestrian centers, multipurpose gymnasiums, performing arts theaters, YMCA additions, and lodging and conference complexes**. Awards have been granted from border to border, including many small towns and major cities. Wherever a Vision Iowa project is located, **everyone benefits**.



Iowa Scores High in Information Technology Careers

Iowa offers many career opportunities in the field of information technologies. Among them, two high-tech Iowa companies are setting the standards — and measuring them — for students, educators and employers around the world. Many other Iowa technology employers help connect the world through information and communication. A few are showcased here.

ACT, Inc.

Iowa-based ACT, Inc., is an independent nonprofit organization guided by its mission to provide information that **helps people make education and career decisions** at key points in their lives. **Best known for its ACT Assessment college admissions testing program**, ACT also provides more than 100 assessment, research, information and program management services for education and career planning and workforce development.

ACT also provides support for employers and Human Resources professionals. Through its customizable *Workforce Advantage™*, ACT offers a **comprehensive range of business solutions**, including profiling, assessment, training, motivating, retaining, certification, and legal issues. This spectrum of services is delivered through a **national network of ACT CentersSM** or at a company's place of business.

ACT's **national headquarters is located in Iowa City, Iowa**, where steady growth in its programs and services is evidenced by expansion of its campus. Groundbreaking for its sixth facility — a new 171,000-square-foot building complex — took place this fall. Commenting on the expansion, Pat Guard, president of the Iowa City Area Chamber of Commerce, remarked, **"ACT is a prominent national company that provides great benefits and high-profile jobs."**

NCS Pearson

NCS Pearson is a global provider of applications, services and technologies for education, testing, assessment and complex data management. NCS Pearson is the **nation's largest single provider of K–12**

education enterprise tools. The company is also the only provider of a full suite of administrative software to help teachers and administrators.

As the **nation's largest commercial test processor** and the largest commercial processor of student assessment tests for K–12 schools, NCS Pearson will score more than 37 million tests this year. In the adult testing market, NCS Pearson is a fast-growing service provider. The company delivers thousands of **Internet-based certification and licensure tests** per week for the IT industry and national professional associations.

Numerous **high-technology careers** with NCS Pearson focus on the key knowledge-based economy fields of **assessments and data management**. Assessments include solutions for workforce development, career guidance, and diagnostic psychological tools. In data management, **NCS Pearson transforms data into mission-critical information** that helps companies improve their operations, their performance and their competitive edge.

Iowa Telecom

A full-service telecommunications provider, Iowa Telecom offers local telephone, long distance and Internet services to 500,000 people in more than 400 communities in Iowa. The company, which is based in Newton, began providing telephone service in July 2000 and employs more than 600 professionals across the state, including nearly 200 at its headquarters.

Iowa Telecom frequently has positions available in information technology, finance, billing, operations and engineering. President and Chief Operating Officer Alan L. Wells said, "Working for Iowa Telecom offers you many advantages. We're forging a new, innovative work environment based on integrity, fun and personal involvement."

Meredith Corporation

With corporate headquarters in Des Moines, Iowa, Meredith Corporation is **one of America's leading media and marketing companies** operating businesses centered on

magazine and book publishing, television broadcasting, and interactive and integrated marketing. In each of these areas, trusted knowledge of the **home and family market** is the cornerstone of content.

Meredith publishes more than 100 special-interest publications, more than 300 home and family special-interest consumer books, and a variety of **well-known magazines**, including *Better Homes and Gardens*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, *Midwest Living* and *Successful Farming*.

Engaged in broadcasting since 1948, Meredith now **owns 12 television stations** that reach 10 percent of all television households. In March 2000, the company **committed \$100 million for investments in its Internet and e-commerce activities**. Its interactive strategies include **creating the premier home and family Web site** through the development of vertical portals around the core content areas of home improvement, decorating, food and remodeling.

Meredith employs more than 2,800 people throughout the nation and offers **career opportunities in publishing, broadcast, and new-media technologies**.



Iowa Human Resource Recruitment Consortium

The Iowa Human Resource Recruitment Consortium is a partnership of companies, communities and organizations dedicated to promoting Iowa's quality of life and career opportunities. Its members — including the Iowa Department of Economic Development and Iowa Workforce Development — are some of Iowa's leading resources in helping people make the smart career move. Visit www.smartcareermove.com for a sample of the career opportunities available in Iowa, then link to the Web sites of members listed here.

Companies

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SmartCareerMove.com features nearly 1,500 professional and technical career opportunities at a salary level of \$30,000 or more.

It also serves as a gateway to **additional career opportunities** in Iowa. To access the links, click on the "Related Links" button on the home page.

Siouxland Area
Webster County
Win-Worth Counties
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Organizations

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