

➤ DID YOU KNOW? IOWA COMPANIES IN THE NEWS.

ISU RESEARCHERS FOCUS ON GLAUCOMA TREATMENT.



Iowa State researchers Dr. Sinisa Grozdanic, Donald Sakaguchi and Matt Harper are spearheading a project to develop a new technique that could ultimately aid those who suffer vision loss caused by glaucoma. An estimated three million people in the United States are affected by glaucoma and it's the second-leading cause of blindness in the developed world.

The genesis of the new technique began with the discovery that animals with glaucoma increase production of proteins with neuron-protective capabilities (neurotrophins) in an attempt to shield against blindness. Once this was determined, the researchers sought to imitate that process in the laboratory by modifying bone marrow-derived stem cells and then transplanting the cells into the eyes. Thus far, the new technique has been used only on laboratory rats, but it has successfully improved the rats' visual functions after the procedure.

"One of the really unique aspects of this approach is that we can isolate these stem cells from the same individual being treated, which eliminates the ethical issues associated with embryonic stem cells and the immunological problems of graft rejection," points out Sakaguchi.

The groundbreaking work was presented recently at the Association for Research in Vision and Ophthalmology Conference. The research team hopes to expand the experimental treatment to canine patients in the next year. If successful, it is then expected to move to human trials.



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AVIATION FACILITY SOON TO LAND IN DES MOINES.



Northwest Airlines® subsidiary Mesaba Airlines has chosen Des Moines as the site of a new \$11.8 million maintenance facility that will house four aircraft bays and handle scheduled maintenance for the carrier's fleet of 50-seat Bombardier CRJ200 and 76-seat CRJ900 aircraft. The facility will be located at Des Moines International Airport and will add more than 30 jobs to the local economy.

Several locations were considered for the maintenance facility, but in the end, Des Moines won out on the strength of its centralized proximity to Mesaba operations in Minneapolis/St. Paul, Detroit and Memphis as well as the airport infrastructure in place at Des Moines International. Construction on the new facility is expected to begin later this year and be completed by the summer of 2008.

Northwest and its Northwest Airlink partners, including Mesaba, provide nonstop service from Des Moines to Detroit, Memphis, Minneapolis/St. Paul and Washington, D.C.

➤ FOR MORE INFORMATION ON CAREER OPPORTUNITIES IN IOWA'S ADVANCED MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY, GO TO WWW.SMARTCAREERMOVE.COM.

AEGON BUYS MERRILL LYNCH LIFE INSURANCE UNITS.



Insurance and investment products provider Aegon has agreed to acquire Merrill Lynch Life Insurance Co. and ML Life Insurance Co. of New York for \$1.3 billion. The deal will propel Aegon into the top 10 sellers of variable annuities through wirehouses and brokers/dealers, a growing sales channel for the popular retirement products.

The acquisition is expected to impact operations at Aegon's largest U.S. office in Cedar Rapids, home to six divisions of the Dutch company. The company's Cedar Rapids operations include AEGON USA Investment Management, LLC.; AFP Division; Corporate Division; Diversified Investment Advisors, Inc.; Financial Markets Group; and Transamerica Retirement Services Division.

Aegon is just one of the growing numbers of insurance and financial services companies that are expanding operations in the state of Iowa. Currently, nearly 81,000 people are engaged in Iowa's insurance and financial services sectors.

➤ FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT CAREER OPPORTUNITIES IN IOWA'S FINANCIAL AND IT INDUSTRIES, GO TO WWW.SMARTCAREERMOVE.COM.

LIFE SCIENCES

FEATURE ARTICLE

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➤ PRINCIPAL TO EXPAND BY 1,500 JOBS.



Already one of Iowa's largest employers, Principal Financial Group, Inc. is set to add an additional 1,500 jobs to its Des Moines operations within the next five years. The news comes as a result of continued growth in the company's primary asset management group, known as Principal Global Investors. According to projections, the company will need to create 20 percent more jobs, ranging from entry-level administrative assistants to senior-level managers with base salaries as high as \$135,000 annually. Principal says 840 of the new jobs will pay an average of \$23.45 per hour. The company has grown its staff by about 3 percent annually and currently employs 7,900 people in Des Moines.

➤ IOWA'S MOVIE STAR IS RISING.

A recently enacted state tax incentive plan is about to make shooting movies on location in Iowa more attractive than ever. House File 892, signed into law by Iowa Governor Chet Culver, includes tax incentives that give producers a state tax credit equal to 25 percent of the cost of items they purchase or rent in Iowa, such as cars, equipment for the movie set and the wages of people hired as extras. The tax breaks are intended to help Iowa compete with states such as Illinois and Louisiana that have attracted movie projects away from Hollywood in recent years. Already three movie productions are set to begin shooting in Iowa soon, including features to be filmed in Marshalltown, Des Moines and an undisclosed location in eastern Iowa. To learn more, visit www.traveliowa.com/film.

➤ IOWA STARTUP HITS COMPUTER GAMING JACKPOT.



Phantom EFX, the brainchild of Aaron Schurman, has bucked the odds according to the top gaming companies who rejected his plans for a slots and video poker game several years ago. Today his game titles, such as *Reel Deal Slots: Mystic Forest*, are the top-selling games in the PC card and casino game category. Now sold in 12,000 retail outlets, Phantom EFX games are developed from start to finish at the company's Cedar Falls headquarters, where Schurman employs 32 animators working alongside math whizzes to create three new games a year. In addition to the PC video games, the company also hosts an online subscription community where hundreds of players can play slots, place bets (though no money is wagered) and receive a live-feed sports book direct from Las Vegas.

MEMBER HIGHLIGHTS.



The AEGON USA companies offer life insurance, pensions and related investment products, as well as supplemental health insurance products through operating divisions of member insurance companies. Member insurance companies in Iowa include Life Investors Insurance Company of America, Transamerica Occidental Life Insurance Company, Transamerica Life Insurance Company and Peoples Benefit Life Insurance Company. The companies also have non-insurance members such as AEGON USA Realty Advisors, Inc.

The companies' motto, "Respect People, Make Money, Have Fun," reflects on the corporate culture for the approximately 3,500 Cedar Rapids-based employees. Career opportunities exist in the areas of accounting and finance, customer service, information technology, human resources, project management, leadership and marketing. The companies also provide opportunities to learn and grow skills through both formal and informal training and mentor programs.

➤ TO LEARN MORE ABOUT CAREER OPPORTUNITIES WITH AEGON USA, VISIT WWW.AEGON.COM.



MidAmerican Energy Company is the largest utility in Iowa and is strategically located in the middle of several major markets in the Midwest. They provide service to more than 698,000 electric customers and more than 680,000 natural gas customers in a 10,600 square-mile area from Sioux Falls, S.D., to the Quad Cities area of Iowa and Illinois. The largest communities served by MidAmerican are Des Moines, Cedar Rapids, Sioux City, Waterloo, Iowa City and Council Bluffs, Iowa; the Quad Cities area of Iowa and Illinois; and Sioux Falls, S.D.

Bringing people and power together is what it's all about. MidAmerican provides competitive compensation packages, progressive technology and training, advancement opportunities and excellent benefits.

Benefits may include comprehensive medical, dental and vision insurance, life insurance, short-term and long-term disability, pension plan, 401(k) with a company match, profit sharing, tuition reimbursement and adoption assistance.

➤ TO LEARN MORE ABOUT CAREER OPPORTUNITIES WITH MIDAMERICAN ENERGY, VISIT WWW.MIDAMERICANENERGY.COM.

COMING SOON TO AN ARENA OR STAGE IN IOWA.

As the weather turns from fall to winter, Iowans begin to turn indoors for their sports and entertainment. The stage is set for a great holiday season when a number of special theatrical engagements open across the state. Sports enthusiasts can choose between professional and developmental league hockey and a new professional basketball team.

- **October** marks the start of another exciting season for four Iowa teams in the United States Hockey League (USHL), the nation's premier junior league. Games continue through April for the Des Moines Buccaneers, Sioux City Musketeers, Cedar Rapids Roughriders and Waterloo Black Hawks. Other cities with member teams include Chicago, Indianapolis, Omaha and Green Bay.
- **October 12** is the home opener for the Iowa Stars of the American Hockey League (AHL). In just their third season, central Iowa hockey fans are taking to the high-speed action of Iowa Stars hockey. The team is the top affiliate of the National Hockey League's (NHL) Dallas Stars and plays its home games in the new Wells Fargo Arena.
- **November 13 – 18** Theater-goers will flock to the Civic Center in Des Moines for the hilarious Avenue Q. The Broadway smash hit about making it big in New York City on a tiny bank account garnered three Tony Awards® in 2004.
- **November 26** kicks off the home schedule of the newest entry to the NBA Development League — the Iowa Energy. The Energy will be affiliated with the Chicago Bulls and the Miami Heat and coached by former University of Northern Iowa basketball player Nick Nurse. The team will play home games in Des Moines' Wells Fargo Arena.
- **December 6 – 30** The *Radio City Christmas Spectacular* makes its stirring debut at the Civic Center in Des Moines. Famous for its costumes, high kicks and incredible choreography, this production by New York's famed Rockettes is sure to thrill audiences young and old. The special engagement will feature 46 dazzling performances.
- **December 23 – 24** The all-time holiday classic *Miracle on 34th Street* comes to the Orpheum Theater in Sioux City. The beautifully restored Orpheum is the perfect backdrop for this enchanting tale about the magic of Christmas.

➤ FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THESE AND OTHER EVENTS AND ATTRACTIONS, VISIT WWW.TRAVELIOWA.COM.

IOWA STARS



ORPHEUM THEATER, SIOUX CITY



IOWA'S ADVANTAGES ARE ADDING UP.

Iowa City is one of the top small towns to live and play.

National Geographic, 2007

Iowa's economy ranks as one of the strongest in the Midwest.

Creighton University, 2006

Iowa vacations are 3rd-cheapest in the nation.

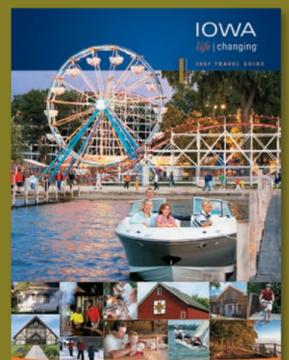
AAA, 2007

Des Moines suburb, Urbandale, ranks 39th among America's Best Places to Live.

Money, 2007

Iowa has the nation's 2nd-lowest cost of doing business.

Milken Institute, 2007



PLAN YOUR
2007 IOWA VACATION.

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IOWA NOTES.



Iowa Governor Chet Culver has appointed 15 Iowans to serve on the newly created Generation Iowa Commission, which is charged with helping attract and retain a young and educated workforce. The 15-member commission was selected from more than 250 candidates who submitted applications and is drawn from both urban and rural areas throughout Iowa. "These outstanding young people represent innovation, energy and enthusiasm. I look forward to the great things they will accomplish through their work on the commission," said Culver. The commission is designed to help the state of Iowa deal with projections that an estimated 150,000 surplus jobs will be created in the state by 2012.



America's next female gymnastics phenom and Olympic gold medal hopeful is none other than West Des Moines, Iowa's own Shawn Johnson. In September, Johnson continued her impressive climb through the ranks of the world's top gymnasts by winning three gold medals at the World Gymnastics Championships in Stuttgart, Germany. Her gold medal honors included titles in the all-around competition, floor exercise and balance beam. Johnson's success at the world championships was preceded by her winning effort in the all-around competition at the Visa National Championships in San Jose, Calif., this August.

As 2008 nears and with it another presidential election, the national spotlight will again shine upon the Iowa caucuses. Always considered a jumpstart to a presidential nomination, Iowa caucuses draw intense political party interest and media attention. On caucus night, Iowans gather by party preference to elect delegates to the 99 county conventions. Republicans and Democrats vary in the method by which they elect their delegates. Republicans conduct "straw votes," while Democrats vote until delegates receive 15 percent of the vote and are allowed to move on to the county convention. Delegates are not lawfully bound to vote in accordance with caucus voters, but they nearly always do. Since 1972, Iowa's caucus has been first in the nation. To learn more, visit WWW.IOWACAUCUS.ORG.



STRAW POLL, HILTON COLISEUM