

Free IT Training for Iowa workers

Vouchers are being distributed to Iowa workers for free computer training to help them learn the higher skills necessary to compete in today's technology-driven economy. Governor Chet Culver announced the partnership between Microsoft and the state of Iowa to extend free Information Technology (IT) training and certification to up to 5,700 Iowans.

Microsoft®

"As Governor, my focus has been on creating good jobs for people across our state," said Governor Culver. "Public-private partnerships, such as Microsoft Elevate America, play a key role by helping people get the training and develop the skills needed for today's new jobs."

Iowa is the fourth state, along with Illinois, Virginia and Washington, to join Microsoft's Elevate American program. Vouchers for the training in Iowa are distributed by Iowa Workforce Development (IWD).

IWD Director Elisabeth Buck said, "With nearly 100,000 Iowans feeling significant effects of the current economy, the e-learning program provides a much needed tool for up skilling to meet the demands of Iowa employers."

Iowa Workers may request a voucher online at www.iowaworkforce.org/elevateamerica and take the courses using any computer with Internet access.

National ranking puts Iowa 4th in business climate

Iowa has finished fourth highest in the nation among America's Top States for Business '09, the third annual review issued by the CNBC news channel. Iowa's scoring in the ten categories used to review the states is led by first place in cost of doing business, fourth in strongest economy, 11th in business friendliness, and 14th in education.

"When it comes to doing business, Iowa works," said Governor Chet Culver. "From our low cost of doing business, to the strength of our economy, to our great people, Iowa has rightly earned a spot among the best places in the nation to both live and work."

"Iowa must have the right messages out there because also factored into the CNBC ranking is the way a state promotes itself to business," said Mike Tramontina, director of the Iowa Department of Economic Development.

"First place with the most competitive cost of doing business is just huge for Iowa. How a location affects bottom line returns is such a critical factor in business expansions. It's a great message to share," said Tramontina.

Iowa easily qualifies as the most improved state by doing better each year of the CNBC reviews. Iowa ranked fourth in 2009 after ranking ninth in 2008 and eleventh in 2007 among America's Top States for Business.



CNBC's annual study uses 40 measures of competitiveness from publicly available data. The information is separated into ten categories: cost of doing business, workforce, quality of life, economy, transportation, technology and innovation, education, business friendliness, access to capital and cost of living.

All of Iowa's scores in CNBC's ranking can be found online at:

<http://www.cnbc.com/id/31765926>



NEW TECHNOLOGY JOBS IN WEST DES MOINES

Buccaneer Computer Systems & Service, Inc., is an Information Technology firm providing a wide variety of services to government and corporate clients across the nation. To extend new services and support to the healthcare sector, Buccaneer is adding 53 technology jobs and leasing 9,648 sq. ft. of additional space at the West Des Moines office.

After the additional hiring, Vice President Mike Rozendaal said West Des Moines will be the largest office in terms of employment that Buccaneer has in one location. The company operates in seven states.

The Economic Development Board awarded \$200,000 in Grow Iowa Values Financial Assistance Program (GIVFAP) funds and High Quality Jobs tax benefits for 35 of the new jobs from the expansion.

Global tech company expands in Marshalltown

Fast-growing MechDyne needs to expand Marshalltown facilities where it creates visualization and virtual reality systems for product designers, researchers, energy firms and other companies around the world. The Economic Development Board approved a \$200,000 Grow Iowa Values Financial Assistance Program (GIVFAP) investment and Enterprise Zone tax benefits for the creation of ten jobs and the retention of 30 jobs. MechDyne plans a capital investment of about \$1.5 million to expand production, staging and research & development facilities by 19,000 sq. ft.



(GIVFAP) has replaced several previous financial programs at the Iowa Department of Economic Development. GIVFAP retains the ability to finance expanding businesses, early stage companies, infrastructure, value-added agriculture and business recovery from natural disasters.

Assisting Fairfield software developer

Let's Order Online, Inc., has spent over two years developing and testing an Internet-based ordering service for independent restaurants. The software development company based in Fairfield now needs to build a sales force, increase marketing activities and integrate point of sales systems to pursue the opportunity it has identified.

To move the company ahead, the Economic Development Board has awarded \$125,000 from the GIVFAP entrepreneurial component, which will be repaid by a royalty agreement on future sales. Let's



Order Online believes its system offers more features and connectivity to independent restaurants than the big chains are offering to their franchises.

DISTILLERY EXPANSION IN SWISHER



Cedar Ridge Winery & Distillery, Iowa's first legal distillery since Prohibition, is constructing this 7,050 sq. ft. building designed by Solum Lang Architects on the same land as its vineyards near Swisher, Iowa. A larger plant is needed to keep pace with growing demand for Cedar Ridge wine and distilled spirits. The Economic Development Board awarded the project \$100,000 from the Value-Added Agricultural Products and Processes Financial Assistance Program (VAAPFAP) to retain one and create three jobs. Cedar Ridge Vineyards was also awarded tax benefits from the High Quality Jobs Creation (HQJC) program.



Hormel's showplace in Dubuque

Seen above is the artist's rendering of the new Hormel Foods plant which is under construction in Dubuque, Iowa. The \$89 million, 327,000 sq. ft. facility is expected to be completed by the end of this year, eventually employing 200 people. The Iowa Department of Economic Development participated in the new location by awarding Hormel tax benefits from the High Quality Jobs Creation (HQJC) program for part of the jobs.

Visible on the roof are some of the 200 skylights to allow natural daylight into the plant. Green credentials will be sought for the facility which will be a model of energy and environmental sustainability; one of the most unique food plants in the United States.

Originally planned to produce Hormel® Compleats® microwaveable meals, Hormel is now adding canning lines at the new plant as well because of high demand for foods such as Hormel® Chili and Dinty Moore® stew.

Recently Hormel Foods was recognized as "Most Innovative Company of the Year" at the 2009 American Business Awards because of ongoing dedication to innovation.

Boone bioprocessing expansion

Owned by Nitto Boseki Co. Inc. of Japan, Midland BioProducts Corporation (MBC) sells the majority of its medical testing products to international customers.

MBC is planning to increase production of bulk substances for human and veterinary diagnostics from goat source antisera. The expansion will create three jobs and retain 23 jobs, plus adding 7,500 sq. ft. to the offices and laboratory facilities in Boone, IA. MBC fabricates its own processing instrumentation.



To get the project going, the Economic Development Board awarded MBC a \$600,000 float loan (short-term) from the Community Economic Betterment Account (CEBA). The expansion is planned for completion by the end of 2011.

With the expansion, MBC's annual payroll in Iowa is expected to be \$3.2 million in 2012 with an average salary of \$55,000 a year. Only two plants in the USA—the one in Boone, Iowa and another in California also owned by Nitto Boseki—are able to produce large volumes of these diagnostic products.

More dough in West Bend

Country Maid, Inc., is planning new manufacturing, business offices and training facilities in West Bend, Iowa, for growing nationwide operations in frozen pastry and cookie dough products. The \$2 million project scheduled to take place during 2010 will create 19 jobs and retain 10 jobs.

The Economic Development Board awarded \$100,000 from the Grow Iowa Values Financial Assistance Program (GIVFAP) and Enterprise Zone tax benefits for seven of the created jobs and nine of the retained jobs.

Country Maid distributes its Butter Braid pastry through dealerships nationwide, manufactures in two states, and provides recruitment services and dealership training from West Bend, where the company got its start in 1991.

Iowa City medical device moving to market

John Slump and Jared Garfield are two young entrepreneurs from the University of Iowa who started J & J Solutions, a medical device manufacturing company in Iowa City, Iowa. Their first product is a drug handling device that keeps hazardous medications from coming in contact with unintended people while drugs are being prepared, administered and disposed.

The Economic Development Board awarded J & J Solutions \$150,000 from the Iowa Demonstration Fund. The award will be used for production tooling to manufacture the device, FDA testing and documentation for market clearance, continuing patent activities and implementing a marketing plan.

The Iowa Demonstration Fund provides grants and loans to accelerate commercialization of products by companies in bioscience, advanced manufacturing and information technology. For more information, contact Doug Lewis at the Iowa Department of Economic Development, 515.725.3195.

CALENDAR

- Sept. 16 2009 Environmental Conference
for business & industry
Foxboro Conference Center
Johnston
- Sept. 24-25 Iowa Black Business Summit
Des Moines Marriott Downtown
- Oct. 6-7 Iowa Venture Capital & Entrepreneur
Conference, Iowa Events Center
Des Moines
- Oct. 19-21 VIV China Trade Show



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Updating a Fort Dodge success

C&S Products Company, manufactures and sells wild bird and wild-life feed through more than 80,000 retail stores from coast to coast. To modernize production of suet based products and remain competitive in a market it now dominates, C&S will pursue a three-year upgrade of facilities and equipment in Fort Dodge.

“As a family-owned corporation in Iowa, which is where our roots are and will remain, the modernization upgrades allow us to move the company into the next phase of its life and will create greater opportunity to future expansions of innovative products in our wild bird product market as well as other pet-related industries,” said Vice President of Operations Tom O’Tool.

The Economic Development Board awarded the plans \$200,000 from the Value-Added Agricultural Products & Processes Financial Assistance Program (VAAPFAP).

Fat & oil based products from C&S are used to feed songbirds, squirrels, and other wildlife in the U.S. as well as growing markets in Canada, Mexico, France and the United Kingdom.

Coralville firm tests cancer treatment

An Iowa Demonstration Fund award of \$150,000 was approved by the Economic Development Board for Terpenoid Therapeutics Inc., a drug discovery and development company at the University of Iowa Research Park that focuses on cancer treatments. The university spinout originated from faculty collaboration. It will use the award to synthesize two grams of a new brain cancer drug for testing. Studies financed by the award will analyze the overall impact of the compound and analyze its ability to inhibit the growth of cancer cells.

The Iowa Demonstration Fund provides grants and loans to accelerate commercialization of products by companies in three targeted industry clusters — Bioscience, Advanced Manufacturing and Information Technology. The purpose of the fund is to encourage commercialization of innovation thereby fostering competitive, profitable companies that create high paying jobs and wealth in Iowa. Awards are available up to \$150,000. For more information, contact Doug Lewis at the Iowa Department of Economic Development, Innovation & Commercialization Division, 515.725.3195.