

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Tina Hoffman 515-242-4805 or cell 515-240-5357**IDED funds collaborative marketing efforts and
business start-up accelerator for southwest Iowa**

ATLANTIC – Today, the Iowa Department of Economic Development (IDED) partnered with southwest Iowa on two initiatives – collaborative marketing and business accelerator services – to support economic growth for the area. Mike Blouin, director of the IDED, was in Atlantic to announce a \$152,500 grant to the Southwest Iowa Coalition for the purposes of collaborative marketing in Shelby, Cass, Montgomery, Page, Adams, Taylor, Union, Ringgold, Clarke and Decatur counties. In addition, a \$175,000 grant was awarded to Grow Iowa Foundation Inc. for the creation of a business accelerator to serve 22 Iowa counties.

“Today, between state and local contributions, southwest Iowa will benefit from a \$600,000 investment over three years,” said Blouin. “A collaborative approach to economic development marketing and creating a support system to grow start-up companies will create a stronger Iowa economy,” he explained.

In their collaborative marketing efforts, the 10 counties plan to fully integrate their available properties and spaces on the statewide buildings and sites website, conduct a regional laborshed study, and increase their direct marketing efforts. These efforts will include the creation of new regional collateral materials, increased regional presence at trade shows and Sell Iowa trips, as well as increased direct mail to corporate decision makers.

Under their accelerator application, the Grow Iowa Foundation, Inc. will coordinate the primary partners in the startup of a new entrepreneurial center. Partners include Southwestern community College, Iowa Western Community College, the Community Vitality Center, the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, and 17 county economic development organizations and area chambers of commerce who have membership in the Southwest Iowa Coalition. The center will provide direct services, programming and tools which are regionally appropriate and delivered on demand. The Southwest Iowa Business Accelerator will take referrals from the Iowa Department of Economic Development as well as encourage local startups for high growth companies.

Steve Adams, a community development specialist and spokesperson for the groups thanked the state for its investment. "Southwest Iowa has had strong leadership that has had the vision to work in a regional, collaborative manner for over a decade. The investment the state has made today will increase our ability to serve our area with a crafted strategic marketing plan and increase business starts throughout the region. We appreciate the support from the state to assist in this work."

With much community input, IDED issued Requests for Proposals (RFP) last December for both the collaborative marketing and business accelerator efforts. Recipients of awards will receive funding for the next two years with money for the third year dependent on legislative action.

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