

# Powering tomorrow

In your community



## 2019 ends with strong industrial growth in Iowa and Wisconsin

Helping our communities grow is an important part of what we do. Successful economic development encourages job growth, which helps Alliant Energy manage costs for all customers. It is our vision to inform, inspire and support our economic development partners and the communities we serve.

2019 marked significant industrial growth across Alliant Energy's Iowa and Wisconsin service area. We successfully assisted in major expansions and recruited several new companies throughout our market. There were 38 industrial projects across our service area with over \$1.075 billion in new capital investment. These investments created 2,182 new jobs in our communities.

We are extremely excited by the momentum we are building together for future industrial growth. Please know that our partnership and the excellent job your teams have done over this year is greatly appreciated. Thanks to your leadership, dedication and energy, we all enjoy the benefits of your work. We should all take great pride in what we have accomplished together.

## 30-year veteran in economic development joins Alliant Energy team



We are excited to introduce the newest member of our team, **Jim Bowman**. Jim started as a Senior Business Attraction Manager and will partner with Mark Seckman to market our Iowa service area. The team will attend industry-specific trade shows and conferences and meet with site location consultants and executives of target industry sectors.

Jim will be based in Des Moines and work closely with key account managers located in the western section of our service area, including Ames, Mason City, Marshalltown and Ottumwa. Mark, who is based in Cedar Rapids, will support the key account managers across our eastern markets, including Dubuque, Clinton and Burlington.

Jim is a 30-year veteran in the field of economic development.

He has worked in business, community, workforce and real estate development for both the public and private sectors. He is a proven leader who has successfully implemented collaboration strategies, particularly in regional environments. Jim has worked in nearly all aspects of economic development including business recruitment, retention and expansion and start-ups, along with many community development initiatives. He is a people person who values effective communications, creative thinking, partnerships and executing vision strategies.

Jim most recently served as the Executive Director for the Driftless Development INC in Crawford County (Prairie du Chien), Wis. He assisted businesses large and small with their growth and launch opportunities. He also led the effort to merge two local economic development organizations into one cohesive and collaborative entity to provide more meaningful programs and services for businesses and local communities.

Prior to that role, he was the Regional Account Manager for the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) serving the Southwestern region with an office in La Crosse, Wis. During this time, Jim directly assisted businesses to access state and other job-creation funding and expansion resources.



The following are the highlights of Janet Ady's presentation at the December Mid-America Economic Development Council's Conference & Site Selectors Forum.

## Implications for rural economic development

**TREND: People are becoming more particular about the kinds of places they want to live.**

Rural communities are realizing that:

- They need people first to grow their economies.
- Some people are interested in the rural lifestyle, lower cost of living, decreased commuting times, increased "authenticity" and so forth

Implications for rural economic developers:

- Rural communities are increasingly marketing their advantages to address misconceptions and welcome new residents.
- State and regional organizations are increasingly creating websites and campaigns to attract talent.

**TREND: Housing is a pervasive barrier to talent relocation.**

- In many, if not most communities, workforce housing and entry-level homes are few and far between.
- Rural communities have additional challenges because they don't have the scale that attracts the attention of most developers.

Implications for rural economic developers:

- Housing is now in the economic development wheelhouse (again).
- A housing study can help demonstrate the urgency and extent of the problem and identify where to start.
- Some regional groups are trying to "bundle" their housing needs to make their region's scale compete better for developers' interest.

**TREND: Workers of all ages are more interested in working remotely.**

- Increasingly, people have latitude over where they work.
- Many jobs are suitable for remote working.

Implications for rural economic developers:

- Rural communities are beginning to turn their attention to recruiting people, not just companies.

**TREND: Companies are beginning to realize that talent shortages – actually, productivity challenges – are here to stay and they need to do something different.**

- Employee engagement, retention and development strategies are trickling down from Fortune 100 companies to smaller, rural companies.
- Companies are strategically deploying automation and artificial intelligence.

Implications for rural economic developers:

- Examples of the kinds of initiatives rural economic developers are doing:
- Talent strategy summits showcasing best practices among local or regional employer
- Community branding for employment
- Include number of robots and number of employees in Business Retention Expansion interviews and ask about overall productivity changes.

**TREND: Economic development is expanding from traditional business development to include talent development and placemaking.**

- Increasingly, tourism, CVB and Main Street are being called upon to inform quality of life issues early in the site selection process
- Implications for rural economic developers:
- Economic developers need to be prepared earlier in the process to address quality of life issues.

## Partner resources

### [Iowa Economic Development Authority](#)

- [Business Assistance](#)
- [Community Assistance](#)

### [Wisconsin Development Corporation](#)

- [Business Assistance](#)
- [Community Assistance](#)

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