

# Iowa Area Development Group Overview

Iowa Area Development Group (IADG), was created in 1985 and serves as the economic development organization for **over 150 rural electric cooperatives, municipal utilities, and independent telecommunications companies** throughout Iowa. This organization overview shares important information on IADG history, mission, services, partnerships, and accomplishments. This overview was crafted to serve as an orientation to new directors, staff and partners wishing to know more about IADG.



## Why was IADG Formed?

The mid-1980s was a time when both Iowa and the nation were in a terrible recession. The toll was particularly heavy on Iowa, where the agriculture and manufacturing sectors of the economy were severely impacted. Electric cooperatives, also negatively affected, decided their best approach moving forward was to invest in strategic sales and load growth and build more robust and economically diverse territories through a united economic development partnership.

The Iowa Area Development Group was formed in 1985 and was based on two cooperative principles, which remain the foundation of the organization. "Concern for Community and Cooperation among Cooperatives" spurred the rural electric cooperatives of Iowa, in the pioneering of a new approach to economic development.

## Who Formed and Governs IADG?

The mission and work of IADG are made possible through the generous support of its rural utility members and sponsors. Leaders of Iowa's electric cooperatives came together to shape an economic development organization to serve the business and community development needs of Iowa's cooperatives. Their dedication and personal involvement quickly spread to the boards of directors and management teams of the distribution cooperatives and participating municipal utilities. IADG, to this day, remains governed by the generation and transmission power cooperatives that provide wholesale power to Iowa's distribution cooperatives.

## The 2025 IADG Board Consists of:

### Corn Belt Power Cooperative

Jacob Olberding – Corn Belt Power Cooperative  
David Onken - Raccoon Valley Electric Cooperative

### Northeast Missouri Power Cooperative (NEP)

Doug Aelits, NEP  
Richard Welsh, Chariton Valley Electric Cooperative, Inc.

### Northwest Iowa Power Cooperative (NIPCO)

Matt Washburn – NIPCO  
Ron Steinhoff – Woodbury County Rural Electric Cooperative

## What was IADG Created to Accomplish?

To shape this new initiative, IADG sponsors used cutting edge research and analysis. They studied the state's economy, analyzed the strengths and assets of their utility territories, and invested in training and education. Armed with this information, the marketing effort began. IADG equipped its sponsors with advertising campaigns and marketing materials, and soon its members were traveling to trade shows and inviting companies to come to Iowa. Just as important, IADG member utility partners were calling on existing businesses and industries and encouraging their investment and expansion. IADG members were keenly interested in boosting their energy sales and revenues, but their mission was much broader and unselfish. IADG leaders were committed to creating jobs, fostering investment, and building wealth for members and communities they serve. Today, IADG remains a national model and a unique example of economic development collaboration and partnership.



## RESULTS

Here are key accomplishments of IADG

- Projects - Over **2,750**
- Investment - Over **\$14 Billion**
- Jobs (new and retained) - Over **65,000**
- Spec. Buildings - **76** with **2.2 million** sq. ft. building space
- Industrial Parks - **95** with **7,239 acres** of industrial land

## IADG SERVICES

IADG is committed to providing consultation and assistance to help businesses and communities achieve their project development goals. The team of nine economic development professionals is knowledgeable, supportive, and accessible. The IADG staff takes pride in delivering timely and accurate assistance to support economic development, including:

- Financial Incentive Packaging
- Site and Building Selection
- Marketing Support
- Data Resources and Technical Assistance
- Community Resources and Services
- Business Recognition and Appreciation Programs



## FINANCIAL INCENTIVE PACKAGING

IADG works directly with local, state, and federal officials to facilitate support for projects. IADG assists in reviewing and analyzing business plans, helping to arrange conventional financing, venture capital, and aiding with state and federal financial assistance applications. Below is a representation of programs that can be considered:



- Ripple Effect Program Grants and Loans
- IADG Energy Bank Revolving Loan Fund
- USDA Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant Program (REDL&G)
- USDA Business & Industry (B&I) Loan Program
- SBA 504 & 7A Guarantee
- New Markets Tax Credits
- Revolving Loan Funds (RLFs)
- Community Foundations
- Other State and Local Programs (loans, tax credits, job training, Tax Increment Financing, etc.)

## IADG FINANCIAL PROGRAMS

### Ripple Effect

– Partnership with Aureon Ripple Effect works with Iowa's Independent Telecommunication Companies (ITC), by providing direct financial assistance to emerging and expanding companies and ITC business and industry customers through low-interest loans matched by the ITC. Aureon is a key partner in Ripple Effect.



### IADG Energy Bank Revolving Loan Fund

The **IADG Energy Bank** Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) provides low-interest financing for energy efficiency projects for commercial businesses, including equipment replacement, energy efficiency upgrades through facility modernization, and renewable energy initiatives.

## Revolving Loan Funds

Locally administered revolving loan funds (RLFs) are available to support business expansions and other community development projects. IADG members operate 65 individual revolving loan funds across Iowa, capitalized at nearly \$78 million.



## Other State and Local Programs

The state of Iowa offers assistance in the form of loans and/or forgivable loans, as well as tax credits, based in part on job creation, capital investment, the ability to meet specific wage standards, quality of employment, and economic benefits for the state and local community. IADG has also assisted in securing funds through the Revitalize Iowa's Sound Economy (RISE) program and Workforce Housing Tax Credit program. Locally, Tax Increment Financing (TIF) may be used to support new development projects.

## FIND (Fulfilling Iowa's Need for Dentists)

FIND was created to combat Iowa's shortage of dentists. The program provides dental education financial assistance to new dentists dedicated to practicing in under-served areas of Iowa. To date, 64 dentists have been placed in underserved counties in Iowa. Partners in FIND include Delta Dental, Iowa Department of Public Health, The University of Iowa College of Dentistry, Ripple Effect, and IADG.

## SITE AND BUILDING SELECTION

IADG works closely with business, community, and site selection representatives and provides project guidance and assistance, as needed, in the areas of:



- Identification of available sites and buildings IADG showcases a statewide inventory of sites, buildings, and community information on the Location One Information System (LOIS). The properties will also be listed on LoopNet.com. IADG assists its partners to help ensure proper representation.
- Prospect proposals, site visits, and follow-up IADG staff are here to help assemble the components necessary for project consideration. This includes available site and building information, photography; mapping of available assets; and creation of a team of local, state, and federal partners to support the overall project.
- Asset development IADG member utilities have developed over **95 industrial parks** and **76 speculative buildings**. IADG and our partners can provide valuable assistance with site and building development. We can help your community make smart decisions regarding size, design, infrastructure, funding sources, and marketing.

## MARKETING

IADG's marketing initiatives are focused on generating business development and recruitment. Business-to-business marketing strategies include trade shows, special events, digital marketing, social media, advertising, and direct mail. IADG is also actively involved in state-sponsored marketing activities representing our members and sponsors. One of IADG's most successful marketing strategies has been industry trade shows. Our participation is designed to raise awareness of the competitive advantages of doing business in Iowa. In 2020, IADG enhanced their prospecting efforts, partnering with ROI (Research on Investment.) IADG is also available to provide support in many other areas, including graphic design, market analysis and planning, target marketing, website, social media, and media relations.



## DATA RESOURCES & TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE



### IMPLAN

IADG can assist in evaluating the impact of new development projects. We have access to economic impact analysis tools and the IMPLAN program to help decision-makers understand the economic impact of development projects.

### Labor Market Analysis

IADG can assist communities with identifying, collecting, analyzing, and presenting labor market information for presentations to business location prospects.

### Aerial Photography

Annually, IADG coordinates with its members to update the industrial park and available building aerial photos in their service territories through the IADG Aerial Photography Program.

### Utility Solutions

Energy and cost-saving solutions are often overlooked, like the industrial processing energy tax exemption. In collaboration with its member utilities, IADG can provide consultation services on energy and telecommunication solutions for business and industry.

### Regulatory & Permitting Assistance

Our extensive project work has enabled the IADG staff to work closely with state government departments and agencies that require permits for facility construction and new business operation. We can provide valuable contacts and help guide businesses through the regulatory and permitting process.

## COMMUNITY RESOURCES AND SERVICE

IADG understands the unique challenges of local economic development organizations, their staff, and directors. Our team of specialists can provide consultation and guidance with:



- Education and Guidance with City Council and Local Development Boards
- Staffing and Budgeting Issues
- Succession Planning and Interim Services
- Strategic Planning
- Special Needs and Projects

IADG conducts seminars and workshops for local developers, volunteers, boards, and elected officials to enhance their economic development knowledge and skills. Topics Include:

- Community Development and Leadership Training
- Best Practices in Marketing and Prospect Development
- Financial Incentive Packaging
- Value-Added Agriculture

## BUSINESS RECOGNITION AND APPRECIATION



### Iowa Venture Award

On behalf of its member utilities, IADG honors distinguished Iowa companies and entrepreneurs with the Iowa Venture Award. This award recognizes outstanding businesses for providing leadership, capital investment, and employment opportunities for rural Iowa. IADG utility partners nominate businesses for an Iowa Venture Award. Visit the

### Iowa Venture Award Hall of Fame

(IADG.com/HallOfFame) to view the **297 businesses** that have been recognized with an Iowa Venture Award.

## CONTACT

The IADG Team is available to assist our partners. Please contact us anytime!



[IADG.com](http://IADG.com)



800-888-4743



[Facebook.com/IADG.IA](http://Facebook.com/IADG.IA)



# Partnerships and Programs Lead the Way

Much economic development success is made possible through collaboration. IADG has a strong track record of building strategic partnerships to support development success. Below is a timeline of some of the significant partnerships and initiatives IADG introduced over the past 40 years in operation.



## Recognition



IADG has received recognition at the local, state, and national levels. Below are a few examples.

	United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Recognition Award from U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, Tom Vilsack
	Small Business Administration (SBA) Award for Outstanding Economic Leadership
	Iowa USDA Rural Development Partnership Award for Outstanding Achievement
	Mid American Economic Development Council Awards for Marketing Initiatives, including Events, Newsletters, and Website
	Iowa General Assembly - Resolution Honoring our Organization and Sponsors
	Foundation for Rural Service/National Telecommunications Cooperative Association named the Ripple Effect Program 2012 Community Development Initiative of the Year

