



2024-2025

**ANNUAL REPORT**  
**AND MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION**

# From Chair Brian Manatt

Poweshiek Development began a new chapter for 2024 & 2025. The guidance of a strong and active board made up of leaders from across the county enabled us to relaunch with a renewed commitment to collaboration and action. Our past year focused on building a strong foundation and we engaged with our many stakeholders across the county. Together, we are working to position Poweshiek County for long-term prosperity by supporting businesses, strengthening communities, and building capacity for future growth.

In the fall of 2024, Smart Solutions was hired to develop a strategic plan for the organization. The plan identified five key areas of focus:

- Large Business, Manufacturing & Industry: strengthening partnerships and supporting expansion.
- Small Business & Entrepreneurs: building networks and providing tools for start-ups and local firms.
- Tourism & Marketing: showcasing the advantages and unique qualities of our county.
- Workforce & Housing: aligning employers, educators, and housing partners to address critical needs.
- Site Development: preparing competitive sites for future investment.

Additionally, throughout the past year, two targeted grants supported business expansion right here in Poweshiek County—helping an established local coffee company grow and assisting a meat processing business in Malcom to explore new marketing channels. These successes reflect our broader mission: to ensure businesses of all sizes have the resources they need to thrive.

Currently, countywide workgroups are forming to move the key priorities forward. Whether your business is rooted in agriculture, manufacturing, retail, or service, your voice matters in shaping this collective effort. Poweshiek County is one connected economy—and our success depends on the collaboration of businesses, community leaders, and residents across every community.

We invite you to become a stakeholder: join a workgroup, get involved in your local community, and add your expertise to the shared vision of a stronger, more resilient Poweshiek County. Together, we can expand opportunity, strengthen our economy, and create a vibrant future.

Sincerely,



## **2024–2025 Poweshiek Development Board of Directors:**

Chair Brian Manatt, Vice Chair Becky Petig, Treasurer Chris Hansen, Secretary Melissa Strovers  
Board Members Jason Roudabush, Delphina Baumann, Julie Davis, Ashtyn Beek, Andy Erselius, Tyler Geiger, and Diana Dawley



### **From Incoming Executive Director Melissa Strovers**

"I'm incredibly grateful for Dan Nieland's guidance and vision in reimagining Poweshiek Development and building a strong foundation. With my experience serving on the board and support from the board members, stepping into the Executive Director role has been a seamless transition. I look forward to spring boarding from here and working together to create a positive and lasting impact in our community."

# 2024–2025 Achievements

## CyBiz LAB Partnership

Supported by the City of Grinnell, Claude W. and Dolly Ahrens Foundation, Greater Poweshiek Community Foundation, Grinnell College, Grinnell Mutual, and a Power of Connection Grant from ITC Midwest, a comprehensive study of the county's entrepreneurial ecosystem was conducted in partnership with CyBIZ Lab at Iowa State University to examine economic trends, survey residents and businesses, and benchmark comparable rural communities.

## Downtown Assessments

Through support from local organizations, the Iowa Economic Development Authority conducted downtown assessments for Brooklyn, Grinnell, and Montezuma to report short-and long-range recommendations to support downtown improvements.

## Rural Innovation Grants

Collaborating with Poweshiek Development, Sips Coffee Company in Grinnell and Dayton Meat Products in Malcom secured \$5,000 Rural Innovation Grants to support equipment purchases and specialized research.

## Strategic Business Plan

In early 2025, Poweshiek Development finalized a Strategic Business Plan designed to guide countywide economic development and move ideas into action. Built from extensive leadership input, community surveys, and a shared vision, the plan reflects a united approach to building Poweshiek County's future.

### The Strategic Business Plan outlines primary focus areas:

1. Maintain a focus on county-wide job growth and retention.
2. Design a comprehensive business outreach effort that focuses on entrepreneurial start-ups, small businesses, and primary sector employers.
3. Lead a county-wide effort to identify, analyze, secure, and develop new industrial and commercial sites.
4. Lead a branding, promotion, and marketing effort.
5. Work with local partners to form a workforce and housing needs analysis team.
6. Focus on putting programs and strategies in place for the sustainability of the organization.







## Ready to be part of Poweshiek County's next chapter?

Poweshiek Development counts on dedicated supporters like you to fuel our work in strengthening and growing our county. As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, your membership helps fund initiatives that create opportunity, attract new investment, and support local businesses, workforce development, and community projects that benefit everyone. By joining, you become part of a network of leaders shaping the future of our county and helping ensure Poweshiek County remains a thriving place to live, work, and grow.

### Choose the level that's right for you:

Friends: \$100–\$249

Shareholders: \$250–\$2,499

Investors: \$2,500–\$4,999

Leaders: \$5,000–\$74,999

Anchors: \$75,000+

**Your investment today powers the progress of tomorrow.**

Visit [poweshiekdevelopment.com](https://poweshiekdevelopment.com) or snap the code below to become a member online and help shape the future of Poweshiek County.

