

## **Greene County Development Corporation joins Ames Regional Economic Alliance**

### **Q&A**

#### **1. Q: What significant move did the Greene County Development Corporation (GCDC) make recently?**

A: The Greene County Development Corporation (GCDC) elected to join the Ames Regional Economic Alliance (AREA), effective August 4th.

#### **2. Q: Why is alignment with AREA in the best interest of Greene County residents?**

A: CEO Dan Culhane and AREA organization have a proven track record of success. Per Deb Durham, Director of IEDA, "Dan Culhane and his team improve every community they enter."

#### **3. Q: What services will AREA provide to GCDC?**

A: AREA will provide GCDC with organizational administration, business retention and expansion, and housing expertise, as well as communication, website, and media support. GCDC will benefit from the 17 subject matter experts on staff at AREA.

#### **4. Q: Will GCDC have an executive director?**

A: AREA will provide organizational leadership including a dedicated liaison, Greg Piklapp, who will fill the leadership role formerly held by GCDC's executive director. Greg may or may not reside in Greene County, but Dan has pledged Greg's engagement and presence in Greene County economic and community matters.

**5. Q: What is the duration of the contract?**

A: The initial contract period is three years. The relationship will be reviewed regularly with adjustments as needed. Communication between GCDC and AREA will be fluid and ongoing.

**6. Q: When is the transition to AREA scheduled to begin?**

A: Transition planning will begin immediately, with an effective date of August 4<sup>th</sup> pending approval from the AREA board on July 25<sup>th</sup>.

**7. Q: What is happening with Vision 2030 Plan?**

A: The Vision 2030 Plan was paused earlier this spring to allow time and focus to determine the GCDC path forward. Work on the community-wide Vision 2030 Plan, including mission and vision setting, will restart later this year under the direction of AREA strategic planning experts.

**8. Q: How many members does AREA currently have?**

A: AREA currently has over 850 chamber members and economic development investors. Beyond their Ames relationships they hold economic development service contracts with the City of Boone, Boone County Economic Growth Corporation, Hamilton County, City of Huxley, Nevada Economic Development, Story City Economic Development, and the City of Webster City. Each contract for service is uniquely different and customized to meet the needs of each community and/or organization.

**9. Q: What is the total amount of capital investments AREA supported in 2024?**

A: Last year AREA assisted in economic development projects that will result in \$913,385,000 in capital investment across their region.

**10. Q: How many community events does AREA host?**

A: Each year AREA hosts more than 100 community events across the region they serve. They will host several events for the Greene County community and GCDC membership to build awareness and boost engagement.

**11. Q: Who leads AREA and what is notable about their track record?**

A: The CEO of AREA is Dan Culhane, who has a proven track record of success. Dan is an ISU grad, who started his economic development career in Franklin County, before moving to Mason City and then on to Ames, where he has led development efforts in Ames and Story County for 19 years. Dan is a Certified Chamber Executive and Certified Economic Developer.

Brenda Dryer, Senior Vice President is also an ISU grad who has achieved extensive economic development success in her time with Iowa Great Lakes Corridor of Opportunity, Buchanan County, Mitchell County, before moving to the Ames organization in 2017.

Together, Dan Culhane Brenda Dryer have over 60 years of economic development experience.

**12. Q: What areas does the Ames Regional Economic Alliance (AREA) focus on?**

A: The Ames Regional Economic Alliance (AREA) focuses on promoting economic growth and community development across Boone, Hamilton, and Story counties in Iowa. Soon to add Greene County to this powerful coalition.

**13. Q: Is this deal final?**

A: The final contract will go before the AREA board in July for approval.

**14. Q: Does GCDC continue to exist?**

A: Yes, absolutely. The membership and leadership from this group are more important today than ever before.

**15. Q: What will happen with the Multi-Cultural Family Resource Center?**

A: MFRC will begin to function more as a stand-alone non-profit with a board which is independent from GCDC. New directors will join the board later this year with cross-over from GCDC and Jefferson Matters. Sara Huddleston will continue as the executive director.

**16. Q: How does the partnership with AREA affect Jefferson Matters?**

A: This decision has no impact on Jefferson Matters; it will continue to function as it has in the past. Collaboration between Jefferson Matters, GCDC, and MFRC is critical to the success of economic and community development efforts in Greene County.

**17. Q: What happens with Michelle Book's involvement?**

A: Michelle will continue to provide support thru the transition period. We anticipate her consulting role will conclude toward the end of August.

**18. Q: How will the AREA/GCDC collaboration be announced?**

A: There was a press release issued for local radio and newspaper. AREA will issue a press release for statewide news outlets once their board approves the agreement. AREA will sponsor a local celebration event /ribbon cutting event soon.

**19. Q: What happens if there is a cash flow shortage due to the new organizational model?**

A: The executive committee considered that possibility and have pledged the use of reserve funds. GCDC currently has \$300,000+ in cash and investments with another \$300,000 likely from the sale of the Midwest Mission building soon.

**20. Q: How will GCDC cover the cost of the AREA contract?**

A: All options to enhance GCDC operations were explored, and all required an equivalent additional investment. Creating a more competitive economic and community development presence for Greene County will require additional revenue and GCDC will need to ramp up our local efforts in that regard.