

Organization

- Hired Deann De Groot as the Mahaska Chamber & Development Group Director on April 1, 2020.
- Hired Oskaloosa Main Street Director, Jessica Reuter. She started her position on July 7.
- Continue to change over marketing and communications pieces to reflect the merged name, Mahaska Chamber & Development Group.
- Conducted 8 Diplomat ribbon cuttings in Mahaska County.
- Completed our Annual Banquet Commerce Awards through a Virtual video. There were 13 award winners who received a certificate, photo and video footage of their location.
- Created an Associate Chamber membership flyer to showcase the benefit of individuals becoming members of the Chamber of Commerce.
- A total of \$17,500 in Chamber Scholarships was awarded to 14 Mahaska County students for higher education.
- Cooperated with sponsors to host the 2020 4th of July Fireworks.



Quality of Life/Tourism

- Placed the new photo-wrapped downtown planters around the town square.
- Worked through the planning and restructuring of community events: Sweet Corn Serenade, Friday After Five and Scholarship Golf Tournament to continue in late July - August, to reflect social distancing and safety in regards to COVID-19.
- Selected Sherry Vavra to be the chair of the Tourism committee. Set standard date and time for the committee to begin meeting monthly.
- Started the Painting with Lights Raffle. Purchase your tickets now - October!

Workforce

- Working in partnership with Mahaska Communication Group, the committee has outlined and drafted ideas for the script for the community video. This video will include footage from Mahaska County as well as testimonials from the community.
- Committed to working with Livability and IEDA on the "This is Iowa" publication coming out later this year. The Opportunity2 -Iowa South region in partnership with Indian Hills Community College have purchased the 8 page featured section in this Economic Development magazine (print and online). Target audience for the magazine includes corporate decision-makers, relocating talent and fast-growth companies.
- Committee reviewed work plans and drafted goals for the future.

Housing

- Gathered information to conduct a Senior Housing study in Mahaska County. This includes partnerships with the City of Oskaloosa, Mahaska County, and Mahaska Chamber & Development Group.
- Continue to review the Housing Initiative Forgivable Grant Fund. This fund, if launched, would be an incentive or stimulus to those that were developing the area.

Economic Development

- Drafting an Industrial Billboard on Hwy 23. This billboard will welcome traffic into Oskaloosa and showcase that we have industrial lots available for business.
- Continue to input business development leads into the ED Lead Tracker.
- Marketing local sites & buildings on the Location One Information System.
- Completed the Synchronist Report for 2019. Calls for 2020 are being scheduled and will be completed by October 1.
- The City of Oskaloosa, Mahaska County and the Mahaska Chamber partnered together for the BUILD Grant application. The planning effort includes the evaluation of one or more roadway options to the southeast and northeast of the City of Oskaloosa to improve regional access to better accommodate freight needs, spur additional economic development in the existing Industrial Park, improve quality of life for the residents of Oskaloosa by relocating heavy freight movement out of residential areas, and expand the agricultural production of East Central Iowa. With this concept, the public / private partnership created the vision for the grant application of Mahaska / Oskaloosa Driving Economic Success (MODES). www.modesiowa.com
- The Mahaska Chamber submitted the grant application for the MidAmerican Local Partners Grant and received approval of \$5000 towards the MODES project.

COVID-19 Community Assistance

- Created unique advertising campaigns including 'Tying Our Community Back Together' with the Diplomats visiting 60 businesses as well as the Oskaloosa Main Street 'Support Small Shop Smart' campaign to encourage the community to buy local.
- We added a COVID-19 Resources and Updates bar to the home page of our website.
- We joined with our partners at the state and U.S. Chambers, Iowa Economic Development Authority and Main Street Iowa to keep up to date on legislation changes, opportunities for businesses and resources.
- Personal phone calls to each member to discuss their needs during this time.
- We have increased our social media posts to encourage local business and to keep our members informed. The information is ever changing, and we are keeping our social media page as updated as possible.
- We are networking with other members to help find and provide PPE, signage, and other items critical to re-opening.
- Applied for and distributed \$3000 in Fareway gift cards to businesses and individuals in need.
- Created a Small Business Relief Grant that helped 35 small businesses in need of financial support in Mahaska County. Total amount of funds distributed was \$60,250.