

# GROW CLINTON

CAMANCHE • CLINTON • FULTON

## STRATEGIC PLAN



 563.242.5702

 ASOKOLOVICH@GROWCLINTON.COM

 721 S 2ND ST, CLINTON, IA 52732

 WWW.GROWCLINTON.COM



## INTRODUCTION

An area rich in manufacturing, the Greater Clinton Region is home to large employers that continue to invest in their growth, creating an injection of wealth and new money into the local economy.

The Greater Clinton Region is also known for its advanced infrastructure supporting the transportation of manufactured goods and raw materials via a robust highway system, three Class I railroads, and immediate access to the Mississippi River.

This Strategic Plan is intended to guide Grow Clinton's efforts while maintaining the spirit of the region's rich history and perseverance.

Grow Clinton is more than an organization; it's a mindset. While working to strengthen the economic development ecosystem and enhance startup growth through a network of support services, Grow Clinton will serve as a cornerstone.

## MISSION AND CORE VALUES

*The mission of Grow Clinton is to promote business growth, build community, and advocate for the sustainable economic success of the Greater Clinton Region.*

We support our mission by focusing on the following four core values:

**Promote brand credibility through excellence:** Grow Clinton is a brand. The brand shall be recognized as a respected visionary organization that supports and grows businesses and organizations throughout the region.

**Take action to meet business needs:** Regardless of the size of the business, Grow Clinton shall take action to meet immediate and future business needs by leveraging partnerships with problem solvers and subject matter experts.

**Present positivity at all times:** Negativity breeds negative results. All Grow Clinton staff and volunteers will present a positive image when engaging members of the organization and associated communities.

**Collaborate for the betterment of the region:** Success is shaped through partnerships. Grow Clinton will partner with private, public, and nonprofit organizations at the local, regional, state, and national levels to foster economic and community development.

# A MISSION LED BY METRICS

Metrics are essential for understanding the region's business climate and the impact of the Grow Clinton programs and initiatives. We propose metrics organized around the areas:

- **Business Retention & Expansion**
- **Business Attraction & Recruitment**
- **Workforce Development**
- **Talent & Workforce Attraction and Retention**
- **Government & Community Relations**
- **Tourism & Events**
- **Branding & Marketing**
- **Entrepreneurship & Small Business Development**

Metrics assigned to each focus area will track the outputs of the division, partners, and committees.

Grow Clinton is committed to making metrics an integral part of this plan and a key component of its ongoing work. Regular reports to supporting members such as counties and municipalities will be implemented to promote accountability and improve decision-making.



# GROW CLINTON STAFF



**Andy Sokolovich**  
President & CEO  
*asokolovich@growclinton.com*



**Matt Parbs**  
Vice President of Community &  
Development  
*mparbs@growclinton.com*

## Position to be filled in 2025

Director of Placemaking  
& Tourism



**Stacy Borgeson**  
Director of Workforce Development  
& Talent Attraction  
*sborgeson@growclinton.com*



**Karen Friis**  
Office Coordinator  
*karen.friis@growclinton.com*



**Jenny Holm**  
Director of Member  
& Community Relations  
*jholm@growclinton.com*



**Ashley Hatteberg** Director  
of Marketing  
& Event Planning  
*ahatteberg@growclinton.com*

## FY 24/25 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Jason Wheat** - Chair, Clinton National Bank

**Drew Mangler** - Vice Chair, The Insurance Group

**Melissa Eversmeyer** - Treasurer, LyondellBasell

**Gabi Torres** - Secretary, Artist & Community Developer

**Mellissa Wood** - Director, MercyOne

**Joe Hoinkis** - Director, LyondellBasell

**Lou Ray** - Director, Deja Vu Furniture & Accessories

**Brig Tubbs** - Director, First Central State Bank

**Paula C. Steward** - Alliant Energy, Director

**Sean Connell** - Director, Air Control Inc.

**Scott Boehde** - Director, Miles Communications LLC.

**Erin George** - Director, Clinton County Board of Supervisors

**TBD** - Director, Whiteside County, IL

**Scott Maddasion** - Director, City of Clinton, Mayor

**Mindy Burggraaf** - Director, City of Fulton, Councilwoman

**Austin Pruett** - Director, City of Camanche, Mayor

## FY 24/25 BOARD EX-OFFICIOS

**Andy Sokolovich** - Grow Clinton, President & CEO

**Darryl Hogue** - River Bend CSD, Superintendent

**Justin Shaffer** - Camanche CSD, Superintendent

**Wes Golden** - Clinton CSD, Superintendent

**Brian Kelly** - Clinton Community College, President

**Stephen Clements** - Past Chair, Citizens First Bank

# BUSINESS RETENTION & EXPANSION (BRE)



Engaging and assisting businesses within the region will continue to be Grow Clinton's top priority and primary function. Business retention is a well-recognized best practice that yields measurable results and provides a high return on investment. Effective retention programs require building relationships and providing superior customer service to existing businesses.

The Grow Clinton BR&E Program shall be titled VALUE. VALUE is an acronym, and the information below highlights the program's actions in five categories.

## Visit

A robust visitation plan is the cornerstone of our Business Retention & Expansion program.

The objectives include:

- Understand local business viewpoints on the economy
- Understand business relationships with the local economy
- Identify business concerns related to economic development
- Provide local businesses with information about current development programs
- Establish or maintain a channel of communication between business and local leaders
- Identify workforce demands and opportunities for increased training/specialty instruction

## Acknowledge

We will enhance public awareness and acknowledge existing businesses' significant achievements and contributions.

There are several programs in place we will leverage to help spread the word:

- Business Spotlight Awards
- Ribbon Cuttings
- Newsletter Showcase
- Special Recognition via social and local media sources

## Listen

As we meet with business leaders within our region, we listen carefully for statements and responses that reveal Grow Clinton's opportunities to provide solutions. We are well-equipped to address issues related to workforce, utility support, transportation, expansion, technical assistance, and many other concerns that may be viewed as an impediment to growth.

We have developed relationships with strategic partners such as:

- Eastern Iowa Community College
- Iowa State Extension & Outreach/Center for Industrial Research and Service
- Iowa Economic Development Authority
- Whiteside County Economic Development
- Northwest Illinois Economic Development
- City of Fulton
- City of Camanche
- City of Clinton

## Utilize

Data and information captured during business visits shall be utilized to develop programs and improvements where areas of common need have been identified. These programs directly increase the competitive advantage of our existing businesses and enhance regional retention efforts.

Such benefits developed as a result of our continued communication are:

- Financial Programs
- Grant Opportunities
- Local/State Incentives
- Educational Workshops
- Hiring Veterans
- Employee Retention
- Technology Implementation

## Engage

We understand that the world of business is constantly evolving. For that reason, we actively engage in research to reveal emerging challenges or opportunities for growth within your business sector.

Examples of the research tactics we implement:

- Facilitate Roundtable Discussions
- Review & Lobby For/Against State Legislation
- Develop Customized Regional Research Reports

## Annual Outcomes

100 New Jobs Created

50 Total Number of Company Visits

\$50M in New Capital Investment



## Key External Partners

- Clinton Community College
- IowaWORKS
- Iowa Economic Development Authority
- City of Clinton
- City of Camanche
- City of Fulton
- Clinton County
- Whiteside County

# BUSINESS ATTRACTION & RECRUITMENT

A dynamic community must continuously add new companies and jobs to the local economy. Business attraction and recruitment must complement our business retention and expansion efforts.

Our focus will attract businesses that provide high-quality jobs with competitive wages. Partnerships will bring leverage to this initiative, as the pipeline of prospective leads originates from a diverse group of organizations and individuals.

- Attend local, state, national, and international events to promote the region's assets.
- Work with partners to proactively target and coordinate responses to companies interested in the Greater Clinton Region.
- Utilize the Grow Clinton website to generate leads, drive traffic, and track and analyze website traffic.
- Leverage social media and digital marketing to generate awareness.
- Coordinate marketing efforts with state and regional partners to maximize funding and achieve greater impact.
- Support the growth of entrepreneurship in the region by identifying startups and connecting future business leaders with resources such as the SBA, SCORE, SBDC, and local lenders.
- Foster relationships with Site Selection firms.

## Annual Outcomes

- 100 New Jobs Created
- \$100M in New Capital Investment
- 5 Location Site Visits
- 3 Site Selection Events Attended

## Key External Partners

- Iowa Economic Development Authority
- Quad Cities Chamber of Commerce
- Intersect Illinois
- Eastern Iowa Community Colleges



## GOVERNMENT & COMMUNITY RELATIONS

In today's environment, the Grow Clinton organization must have strong representation before policymakers whose decisions can affect whether or not a city, county, region, or state can attract and retain talent and create an environment that fosters growth and opportunity for business and industry.

Having face-to-face contact with City Councils, County Boards, the Legislature, and Federal officials plays a key role in proactively achieving Grow Clinton's interests. Lawmakers rely on constituents for information, education, and counsel regarding policy proposals affecting their constituents and the state.

Grow Clinton will engage in a variety of government relations activities, including:

- Construct the Government Relations Committee.
- Develop techniques and strategies for addressing legislative issues.
- Manage political outreach initiatives and lobbying efforts.
- Build relationships with federal, state, and local officials.
- Understand how public policy affects the local economy, existing businesses, and future establishments.
- Enable Grow Clinton to pursue policies that promote a strong business climate and encourage business growth.
- Communicate policy issues to the Grow Clinton Member Investors at all levels.



## Annual Outcomes

- 6 Legislative events hosted
- 10 Bills responded to on behalf of business
- \$1M Direct Financial Government Support

# WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

As is the case for most smaller communities, workforce shortages can be a concern. Some local companies struggle to find and hire talent, specifically skilled workers. Workforce development training courses must match local company needs.

Grow Clinton plans to address these challenges by recruiting more workers into the region, partnering with local schools and colleges to ensure that training courses match company needs, and using state and federal resources to expand local workforce development programming, such as registered apprenticeships.

- Support the continued success of the Career Advancement Center
- Work with local companies and Clinton Community College to address the training needs of companies, ranging from short-term certificate programs to hands-on technical training and apprenticeships



## Annual Outcomes

- Facilitate \$100,000 in Iowa Jobs training grants
- 200 Students Connected with Career Awareness Opportunities
- Increase workforce participation rate by 2%

## Key External Partners

- Clinton Community College
- Eastern Iowa Community Colleges
- IowaWORKS
- Illinois BEST
- Equus
- Clinton Community School District
- Camanche Community School District
- River Bend Community School District
- Mississippi Valley Workforce Development



**Career Access Program**  
A service of Grow Clinton



## TALENT ATTRACTION AND RETENTION

By creating a strategic focus on Talent & Workforce attraction and retention, we will provide our communities with the growth necessary to expand the tax base, support existing companies, generate additional retail sales, and allow for a more robust housing market.

Talent and workforce attraction is primarily outbound focused. Meaning every potential visitor, student, delivery truck driver, etc., is also a possible future resident of the region.

Grow Clinton will take action to ensure that those businesses frequented by visitors are aware of community development updates, projects, events, and opportunities to promote the region as a place to both work and live. We will create community ambassadors within Human Resources, hospitality, retail sales, and tourism attractions.

The Grow Clinton Leadership Institute will continue to serve the region by fostering the professional growth of emerging leaders and educating individuals on the history and economic development opportunities. This program will catalyze future programming such as Leadership Iowa hosted by the Iowa Association of Business & Industry (ABI).

Grow Clinton will promote and actively recruit workforce by leveraging the Home Base Iowa and Clinton County Community Student Loan Programs. These programs are funded through partnerships with Clinton County, school districts, and municipalities. Grow Clinton will serve as the marketing and outreach lead.

- Programming to Engage Future Talent (Young Professionals Committee, Iowa Jobs for America's Graduates (IJAG), Synergy, Junior Achievement, etc.)
- Locally Hosted Career/Job Fairs
- Identifying & Engaging Newcomers (Welcome Committee)
- Offer Community Bus Tours
- Promote Available Housing & New Developments
- Promote Home Base Iowa & Clinton County Community Student Loan Assistance Programs



### Annual Outcomes

- Host 2 Career Fairs
- 5 Individuals Attracted through Home Base Iowa
- 10 Individuals Attracted/Enrolled in the Clinton County Community Student Loan Assistance Program
- 100 Individuals served through career assistance
- 100 Newcomers engaged

# TOURISM & EVENTS

Tourism boosts the revenue of the regional economy, creates jobs, and plants a sense of cultural exchange between visitors and citizens. Tourism also impacts labor by attracting skilled individuals to support the growth of our regional workforce.

One of the most dynamic roles of Grow Clinton is to serve as a local link between visitors and the amenities that make up our communities.

- Sawmill Museum
- Clinton Historical Society
- Showboat Theater
- LumberKings
- Retail establishments
- Gifts/Souvenirs/Antiques
- Durable Goods
- Restaurants
- Gas & auto repairs
- Grocery/Pharmacy
- Other Services



**NOTE:** Hotel/Motel monies will be restricted and used ONLY for tourism.

## Annual Outcomes

- 5% increase in Hotel/Motel Tax Revenue
- 2% annual growth rate year to year via tourism related sales tax
- Facilitate 6 group travel tours

## Key External Partners

- City of Clinton
- City of Camanche
- City of Fulton
- Iowa Tourism Industry Partners (iTIP)
- Blackhawk Waterways Convention & Visitors Bureau



# BRANDING & MARKETING

Branding & Marketing are vital functions of our strategic plan, as they provide critical information about the communities we serve to policymakers, partners, businesses, and their employees. A strong brand conveys the essence of an organization and contributes to companies' successful recruitment and retention. Effective marketing ensures that the key messages reach the appropriate audience and influence their location decisions.

- Leverage the Grow Clinton branding and marketing plan to build awareness and target businesses, investors, and future talent to the Greater Clinton Region
- Celebrate business achievements through the VALUE Spotlight Awards Program
- Use social media and other media outlets to remain top of mind
- Collaborate with community and regional partners to reach strategic audiences and promote the Greater Clinton Region's brand, advantages, and offerings

## Annual Outcomes

300 Earned Media Coverage (Press releases, news articles, radio, social media shares, etc.)  
50% Increased Awareness of Programs and Initiatives – tracked through web link clicks and number of requests for additional information

## Key External Partners

Clinton Herald  
DeWitt Observer  
Quad Cities Business Journal  
94.7 MaC FM  
KROS  
QC Times  
Facebook  
LinkedIn  
Email/Newsletter



# ENTREPRENEURSHIP & SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Entrepreneurship promotes social change and drives innovation. Entrepreneurs are assets to cultivate, motivate, and remunerate to the greatest possible extent in any community. Entrepreneurs can change how we live and work on a local and national basis. If successful, their innovations may improve living standards and create wealth with entrepreneurial ventures.

Entrepreneurship & Small Business Development efforts will be guided by a program titled EntreFuel. The EntreFuel program will inspire creativity and passion for business startups through targeted networking opportunities with established entrepreneurs, resources, and financial programs including grants and pitch competitions.

- Support collaboration by hosting meet and greets, networking lunches, and mixers for existing and aspiring entrepreneurs
- Connect business owners with vital resources, including the Small Business Administration (SBA), Small Business Development Center (SBDC), SCORE, and regional lenders
- Create an entrepreneur mentorship program, connecting experienced business leaders with startups to ensure that they received small business development training, have a written business plan, and access capital
- Distribute small business resources in formats that effectively reach target audiences

## Annual Outcomes

4 Entrepreneur Huddles/Networking Events  
10 Small Businesses Launched  
50 Small Businesses/Startups Served

## Key External Partners

SCORE  
Small Business Development Center (SBDC)  
Small Business Administration  
Eastern Iowa Community Colleges  
Makers on 5th (Wilson Building)  
Local Lenders  
Downtown Clinton Alliance  
Lyons Business & Professional Association



U.S. Small Business Administration

# STRATEGY & ENGAGEMENT

As detailed below, the Grow Clinton development strategy is based on recommendations of the Grow Clinton Merger Committee, employer and stakeholder interviews, and a review of existing relevant plans and documents.

To ensure that the strategy created remains flexible, the Grow Clinton team will consistently evaluate community and economic development priorities. The Board of Directors will remain influential in the decision-making process, allowing the Strategic Plan to meet the demands of the business community.

**Stakeholder Interviews** – to ensure that the Strategic Plan remains influenced by on-the-ground insights, Grow Clinton will conduct annual interviews with the regional business community, Clinton County, Whiteside County, the City of Clinton, the City of Camanche, and the City of Fulton. In addition to these interviews, information and data captured from Business Retention & Expansion interviews will be incorporated in the Grow Clinton annual reporting.

**Grow Clinton Strategy Summit** – To validate future findings and recommendations, the Grow Clinton staff and Board of Directors will conduct an annual Strategy Summit. The design will be small enough to facilitate productive conversation but large enough to capture a diverse array of perspectives.

**Plans & Documents to be considered** – In addition to stakeholder interviews, other documents will be reviewed to influence future strategic initiatives.

Plans/projects to be reviewed include:

- Municipal Capital Improvement Plans
- Municipal Urban Renewal Plans
- Community Visions & Downtown Development Strategies
- Retail Development Strategies
- Strategic Plans from Partnering Organizations
- Housing Studies
- Iowa and Illinois Economic Development Priorities
- Targeted Industry Studies