



Iowa Area Development Group presents local businesses with awards

The Iowa Area Development Group (IADG), in collaboration with its Rural Electric Cooperative partners, including Corn Belt Power Cooperative, honored six growing Iowa companies with the Iowa Venture Award at a luncheon held in conjunction with the Iowa Association of Electric Cooperatives' annual meeting.

Two of the honorees of this legacy award are Centro, Incorporated, nominated by Franklin Rural Electric Cooperative and HiPer Ceramics, nominated by Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative.

Centro continued its strategic expansion by acquiring a 30,000 sq. ft. building in the Hampton Air Industrial Park. The facility now houses two rotational molding machines and employs 40 new associates. This expansion aims to bolster production capacity across the Midwest, catering to surging demand and accommodating future business growth. Hampton is the 11th location in an ever-growing footprint now encompassing locations across the United States and international sites in Northern Ireland and Brazil.

Centro, headquartered in North Liberty, Iowa, specializes in custom rotational molding for various industries. This recent expansion marks a milestone in the company's growth strategy, serving leading OEMs in the agriculture, construction, and lawn & garden sectors. With a workforce of nearly 1,200 associates and multiple domestic and international facilities, Centro's growth trajectory demonstrates its market leadership and commitment to meet evolving customer needs.

Franklin Rural Electric Cooperative provides power to the Hampton Air



Centro, Inc. wins award

Above | Franklin REC's key account, Centro, Incorporated won one of this year's IADG Venture Awards. Photographed from left are Garrett Thompson, general manager, Franklin REC; Mike Naig, Iowa Sec. of Agriculture; Bruce Nuzum, president/CEO, IADG; and from Centro, Inc., Nick Hansen, Craig Radnich, Mike Steffens, Brian Olesen, Rhonda Griffin, Alvin Spence, and Mark Robinson.

Industrial Park and was instrumental in the construction of the speculative building, now home to Centro, Incorporated.

"Centro exemplifies the spirit of the Iowa Venture Award by strategically expanding its operations and contributing to job creation and economic development in Hampton and Cascade as well as its headquarters in North Liberty and other locations," stated IADG President/CEO Bruce Nuzum. "We commend Centro for its visionary approach to business growth and commitment to meeting the evolving needs of its customers and industries served."

The other honoree from Corn Belt Power's system is HiPer Ceramics, nominated by Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative.

In 2018, Ann Kathryn Hoffmeister

launched HiPer Ceramics, a strategic addition to the Hoffmeister family's array of businesses, including HiPer Ceramics GmbH, HiPer Medical AG, and Zellwerk GmbH, owned by her husband, Dr. Hans Hoffmeister. Operating since 2019 from a state-of-the-art 16,800 sq ft facility in Spirit Lake, the company specializes in crafting high-performance ceramic material for advanced industrial components and endoprosthetic hip implants.

With Iowa's conducive business environment and electric power reliability, HiPer Ceramics employs high automation in material manufacturing. Recently integrating a state-of-the-art shuttle kiln, the company produces the high-quality, reliable product necessary to support its precision medical and industrial applications. Teaming up with the German **Continued on page 2...**

Co-ops receive IADG Venture awards

Continued from page 1... HiPer-Group partners, their focus is on cost-effective products that deliver exceptional clinical performance and safety.

Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative has been an instrumental partner for HiPer Ceramics, as reliable and affordable power is imperative in the high-performance ceramic manufacturing process.

“HiPer Ceramics’ commitment to innovation, coupled with Iowa’s supportive business environment, has created a successful synergy,” said IADG President/CEO Bruce Nuzum. “The integration of cutting-edge technology, like the state-of-the-art shuttle kiln, showcases their dedication to producing high-quality, reliable products and highlights their significant contributions to precision medical and industrial advancements.”

About Iowa Area Development Group (IADG):

IADG is the business and community development leader for Iowa’s rural electric cooperatives, municipal utilities, and independent telecommunication companies. Since 1985, the partnerships and economic

development efforts of IADG and their sponsors have assisted with more than 2,450 projects, generating over \$13.9 billion of capital investment and over 57,500 new or retained jobs for Iowa.

About the Iowa Venture Award:

This year marks the 35th year that IADG has presented Iowa Venture Awards to

individuals and organizations, both large and small, in recognition of their significant contributions to Iowa’s economy through entrepreneurial leadership, innovation, and the creation of job opportunities.

The Iowa Venture Award Hall of Fame, showcasing these 293 companies, can be found at www.IADG.com/HallOfFame. ■



Hi-Per Ceramics honored with Venture Award

Above | Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative’s key account HiPer Ceramics won one of this year’s IADG Venture Awards. Photographed from left, Brittany Dickey, vice president, business development, Corn Belt Power Cooperative; Jen Sievert, Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative; Jerry Beck, Board Chair, Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative; Mike Naig, Iowa Sec. of Agriculture; Bruce Nuzum, president/CEO, IADG; Torben Baumann, production manager, HiPer Ceramics; Ryan Craig, president/CEO, Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative; Jed Skogerboe, Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative; Jeremy Madden, Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative; and Curt Strouth, Iowa Lakes Corridor Dev. Corporation.

Communications system receives upgrade

Corn Belt Power’s communications technicians are busy working to upgrade the cooperative’s microwave and fiber communication systems.

The crew is working with contractors to install new Nokia radio and network equipment. The new network and radio equipment will replace equipment that is nearing its end of life cycle.

“These devices will give us the capability to set up quality of service to ensure the required performance of individual applications and can be managed remotely with the new network platform,” said Brad Hill, communications superintendent, Corn Belt Power Cooperative.

The communication system carries supervisory control and data acquisition traffic back to the cooperative’s control center. It also traffics the cooperative’s two-way radio system, card access, automated meter reading equipment and relay protection.

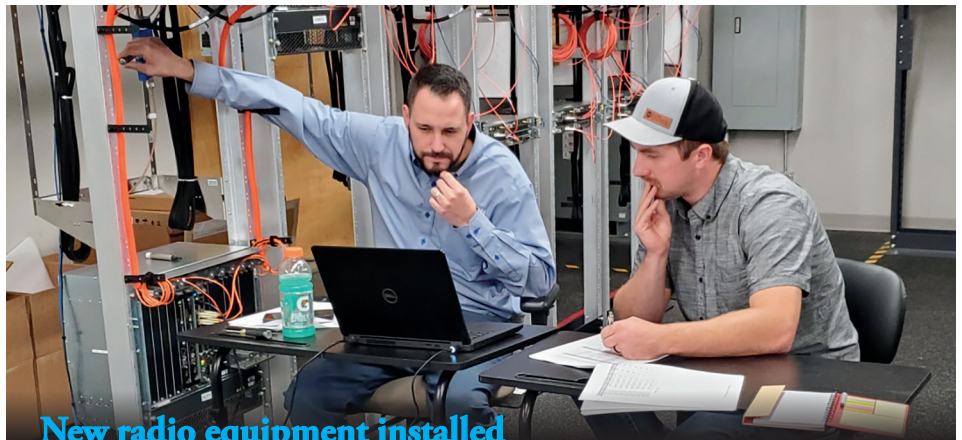
“The Nokia equipment can transport data up to 1 gigabits with fiber,” Hill said.

“It transports less over the radio system, however with this new equipment we will enhance transport speeds.”

The project is set to be complete in quarter one of 2024. ■



Above | Improving communication system



New radio equipment installed

Above | Jacob Howey, communication technician, Corn Belt Power Cooperative, right, works with Allen Shaylor, Infinity, to lab test new radio equipment on Corn Belt Power’s microwave system. The upgrades will improve system reliability.

Schulz new network administrator

Corn Belt Power welcomed Adam Schulz to the team on November 27 as an IT network administrator.

Schulz is a graduate of Iowa Central Community College. He previously worked in information technology at Cargill, USG and Iowa Central Community College.

“I’m excited to start at Corn Belt Power,” Schulz said. “It’s been great to get going and dig in to see where I can help the team out. Everyone has been very welcoming.”

Schulz fills the position after Dennis Anderson’s passing in September. ■



Adam Schulz



Security consultants tour G&T

Above | Jon Myer, IT director, Corn Belt Power Cooperative, gives security consultants an introductory tour of G&T facilities Dec. 4.

G&T conducts cybersecurity penetration test

As part of its ongoing commitment to the Rural Cooperative Cybersecurity Capabilities (RC3) program, Corn Belt Power conducted an extensive audit of its information and operational technology systems during the week of Dec. 4.

The NCC Group conducted a cybersecurity penetration test. The company’s mission is to assess, develop and manage cyber threats across our increasingly connected society. The NCC Group advises global technology, manufacturers, financial institutions, critical national infrastructure providers, retailers and governments on the best way to keep businesses, software and personal data safe.

Jon Myer, IT director, Corn Belt Power Cooperative, said it was a good exercise.

“Our goal is to identify unknown attack vectors and advisories who could potentially initiate a cyber attack on our system,” he said. “We want to see our network from the eyes of an attacker to see what they could possibly use to compromise our security. The good news is, we performed well. Any potential issues brought to our attention will be addressed immediately.”

Myer says it’s about staying ahead of the attackers.

“Cybersecurity incidents take place every day in all forms of business,” he said. “We have to continually improve and update our systems to attempt to stay ahead of these nefarious actors.” ■

Getting into the Christmas Spirit

One of Corn Belt Power’s founding principles is Concern for the Community. Employees lived that during the month of December.

The cooperative’s employees and directors donated thousands of dollars worth of gifts, toys and monetary donations to the Humboldt County Ministerial Christmas Adopt-a-Family program.

A big thanks to all of the employees and directors who took part in this year’s program. ■



Wrapping

Above | Jennifer Arndorfer wraps employee and director-donated Adopt-A-Family gifts.



Loading up

Above | Sarah Dornath packs the vehicle with gifts to deliver.



Gifts delivered for Adopt-A-Family program

Above | Sarah Dornath, administrative assistant and Jennifer Arndorfer, human resources specialist, Corn Belt Power Cooperative, deliver Adopt-A-Family gifts Dec. 4.



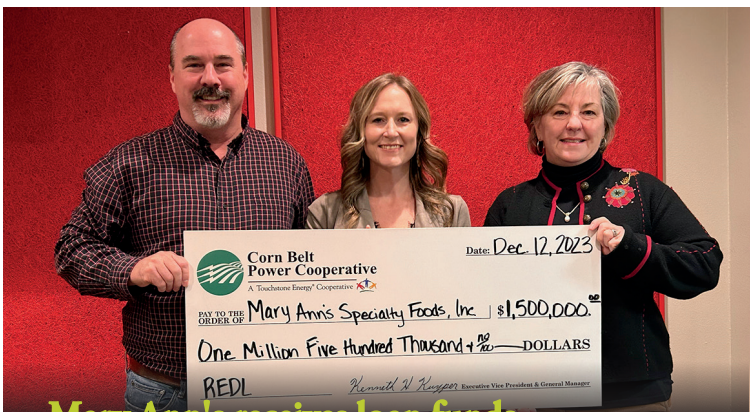
December Touchstone Energy Volunteer Challenge winner | Steve Loken, operations services coordinator, Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative, donated his \$100 prize to the First Lutheran Church in Milford.

Mary Ann's Specialty Foods awarded Rural Economic Development Loan

Corn Belt Power Cooperative closed a Rural Economic Development Loan (REDL) with Mary Ann's Specialty Foods, Inc. in Webster City Dec. 12. The funds will be used for business

expansion construction expenses and the purchase of new equipment.

Mary Ann's is a family-owned business. Kelly and Pamela are brother and sister. Their dad, William Korleski, founded the business over 50 years ago. In 1993, Kelly and Pamela purchased the business and relocated the company to their current location in Webster City. ■



Mary Ann's receives loan funds

Above | Stacy Cirks, development finance director, Corn Belt Power Cooperative, center, presents a \$1,500,000 revolving loan fund check to Kelly Korleski, left and Pamela Netzel, right, sibling owners of Mary Ann's Specialty Foods, Inc. of Webster City at the Dec. 12 loan closing.

Corn Belt Power Cooperative **Watts Watt**

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 - Ryan Cornelius, Editor; Vice President, Corporate Relations; CCC
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