



# Audubon County Economic Development Corporation

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## ACED TIDBITS

January 2008

Western Iowa Advantage (WIAD), we are a partner, has developed postcards with a message encouraging people to move back to Western Iowa. We would like to reach anyone looking for a career and lifestyle change. Our message is that Western Iowa has outstanding career opportunities, affordable homes, excellent schools, and leisure activities to offer.

If you have children or grandchildren, nieces, nephews, a neighbor, or acquaintance that may consider moving back, please send them a card. All you need to do is to address the card, the message is already there. The cards are available at the ACED office or on the lobby counters at Audubon State Bank and Landmands National Bank. We will be getting additional quantities and will have them available at various additional locations. Your help will be appreciated as economic development takes everyone's participation. The main goals of this campaign are to grow our population and assist employers with a larger workforce pool.

A huge challenge in economic development, for both new business and business expansion is to have a Spec Building available, one that fits the business' needs. Spec Buildings are a good hook to get new business, but they need to be large enough and set up to work for the business. To build one can cost several hundred thousand dollars and then there is little flexibility for altering dimensions and design without a great deal of addition cost and time. Recognizing this, has led to the alternative Virtual Spec Building plan which was initiated by ACED and its WIAD partners. This project has received a \$50,000 Grant from IDED plus match money pledged from the WIAD partners.

The benefit of a Virtual Building is that it can be placed on any site that is "shovel ready". A shovel ready site designation will be used to certify sites as having met certain criteria such as title, utility, environmental, archeological, and other characteristic requirements. Another huge benefit of this program is that a virtual building can be used and re-used anywhere in the WIAD region. WIAD is in the process of development of RFPs to potential building and computer modelers for this project.

Here are a few interesting responses that I pulled from our recent Audubon County Industrial Sector visitations.

- There are 1022 employees (this includes out of state employees)
- Annual payroll is 28.1 million
- All stated that they had growth in the last 3 years
- Primary market is National & International, one is Regional
- All indicated sales are increasing
- All indicated plans to expand in the next 3 years
- Primary international competitors are China, India, Hong Kong, Canada, and Mexico
- Projected employment needs are increasing, one is stable

- The community strengths as a place to do business are a good quality workforce, a good ethical workforce, available workforce, low cost of living for workers, and small town values
- The community weaknesses as a place to do business are lack of social events, vocational training, small labor pool, daycare, and road maintenance
- All reported they are experiencing recruitment problems
- Collectively there are an estimated 62 unfilled positions to be filled within 12 months
- 1/3 said the primary recruitment problems are limited to the community, 1/3 said to the industry, and 1/3 said both.
- All reported that the company investment in employee training is increasing except one reply was stable
- All said that the community infrastructure is adequate for their company growth with half of them indicating future need for T1 line use.
- All gave good ratings for their satisfaction of utility providers, however cell dead spots gave cell service a low mark and half the companies indicated that internet speed is too slow.
- All gave good ratings for the quality of community services. There were numerous questions and the only low rated items are vocational training was mentioned by all; also mentioned was need for motel, dining, and social establishments; need for better air cargo service, streets and road quality, and child care; property tax is unfair, and community services are not a value for the cost.

The interview questions got into details in many areas of interest. We have a great group of Industrial Businesses that create a lot of jobs and local economy that like to do business in Audubon County. They gave us a very good report card. I am sure we can improve most of the weak spots over time.

At the annual Audubon Chamber of Commerce banquet, ACED presented an Appreciation Award to Richard and Lela Gleason for being such great supporters of both the city of Audubon and Audubon County economic development as well as being active participants in their community. ACED also presented an Appreciation Award to Quality Machine of Iowa, Inc. for being in Audubon and providing the jobs and other numerous economic benefits to our community. Find attached, the presentation given to both of our Community Pillars. They are appreciated.

2008 ACED Memberships are coming in great and we are picking up some new members. I can't say THANK YOU often enough, as you are the ones that make all of our economic development efforts possible. I plan to have our 2008 Membership list ready for distribution in March.

Also in March I would like to switch to an E-Newsletter. We will have to go through a transition period, but if you get your e-mail address to us it won't be much of a deal to get done.

I remind you that the Audubon County Endowment Fund has \$61,000 ready for distribution. Remember this is for Audubon County non-profits and application needs to be submitted no later than February 1, 2008. Applications can be found by going to [www.omaha-foundation.org](http://www.omaha-foundation.org) or contact any board member or Dennis Nissen at [dennis@omahafoundation.org](mailto:dennis@omahafoundation.org). I am a board member and I can be contacted at [aced@iowatelecom.net](mailto:aced@iowatelecom.net) or at 563-2742.

Our Audubon County website [www.auduboncounty.com](http://www.auduboncounty.com) has some new information that I encourage you to check out. The Economic Development section has new features and information. Be sure to use the Business Directory and the Careers sections. Some items have been added to the various government offices listed under County Information.



Thomas R. Nielsen  
Executive Director

## **QUALITY MACHINE OF IOWA, INC**

### **2008 Appreciation Award**

We appreciate that in 1996 Quality Machine of Iowa chose Audubon to locate their production plant. The company headquarters has been located in Audubon the past several years. They also have a division in Minneapolis, MN. which is primarily Research and Development and testing. Quality Machine is a privately owned corporation.

Quality Machine, an Advanced Manufacturing business does precision machining of metal parts. Their products are components for OEM parts, Medical conversion devises, military munitions (both planes and tanks), hydraulic valves, service tools used for new model year equipment in both agriculture and automotive industries, and more. Quality Machine exports indirectly as many of the finished products are sold over seas.

Some familiar brands that have parts made at Quality Machine are Artic Cat, Polaris, Bobcat, Toro, American Crane, Ballantine, and Owatonna Tool Co. They also make power steering and hydraulic pump parts for Eaton, which make their way to most all major brands of new farm tractors and combines.

Tim has added nearly one million dollars worth of equipment in the Audubon plant and has redesigned his production layout to gain efficiencies to compete in the world market. I have heard Tim say and I quote "China and India are our two biggest competitors. Vote accordingly, buy accordingly". He has future plans to add space and jobs. Quality Machine has high use of technology and skilled labor.

Quality Machine has a huge investment here in Audubon amounting to \$ 7 Million in machining equipment, \$1 million in material inventory, and \$500,000 in cutting tool inventory. An individual machine is worth up to \$300,000. Approximately 25 major production machines and many smaller machines make up the Audubon production line.

Quality Machine processes 80,000 lbs of steel per month at the Audubon Plant which is mostly alloy bar stock and castings. They also process precision plastic parts.

Quality Machine currently employs 75 people with an annual payroll of 2.5 million dollars, plus benefits. Quality Machine offers jobs with great job and skills advancement opportunities.

The 50 local employees have approximately 29 kids that attend the area schools. About half of them attend the Audubon and Exira Schools. That is nearly a \$160,000 benefit for all the area schools. Local payroll dollars benefit the whole community as money is spent for groceries, plumbing, electrical, carpenters, health care, professional needs, banking, restaurants, hardware stores, auto businesses, real estate, clothing, many service oriented businesses, payment of various taxes, and much more. In addition Quality Machine pays approximately \$24,000 annually in local property taxes. Tim also owns an acreage residence in Audubon County.

Quality Machine of Iowa has a diverse list of job types including CPA's, bookkeepers, managers, clerical, skilled production, engineers, comptrollers, and several other important positions. They currently have job openings available including a Quality Manager and Process Engineer.

It is my privilege to present this Appreciation Award to Quality Machine of Iowa, Inc.

## **RICHARD & LELA GLEASON 2008 Appreciation Award**

We appreciate the Gleason family being great supporters and willing partners in several Audubon and Audubon County development projects. In 1962 Rich's parents, George and Lois, were willing to sell land to build the Audubon High School building. In 1967 again the Gleason's were willing partners in making land available to add the Audubon School bus garage and ball park areas to the school property.

In 2000 another project was needed to allow for a new housing area in Audubon. Rich and Lela again became willing partners to allow moving a hill on their land north of the Audubon High School to city development property.

Two years ago there was need to expand the Audubon Industrial Park and Gleason's again were willing partners. Rich agreed to give Audubon County Economic Development Corporation a two year option on approximately 27 acres adjacent to the current Audubon Industrial Park. This two year period gave both ACED and the City of Audubon time to get a feasibility study, an archaeological survey, preliminary plat work, and surveying underway.

George Gleason was an original Operation T-bone shipper and Rich was his young partner at this time. Rich has shipped every year since. Rich, Doug, and Dustin are current active members of the T-Bone Committee. Gleason's now have four generations living on the farm—three generations are farming and the fourth (Grant) is farming in the house yard and riding along when possible. The current farm operation raises hogs, cattle, and grain.

Lela is involved with Caring and Sharing, OSLC Quilting group, Audubon Garden Club, and is a member of the Atlantic Art Guild. Lela has shown her Art work at various art shows and community events for many years.

Doug is active with the Audubon County Cattlemen's Assoc and is a past ACED board member.

Gleason's never gave resistance to any project and participated with fairness. Rich and Lela have been generous financial supporters of Audubon County Economic Development and Audubon County Tourism for years, have had an active part in many community activities, and have a real love and concern for their community.

I am privileged to present this Appreciation Award to Richard and Lela Gleason.

Accepting the award is Doug Gleason.

YOUR INPUT IS NEEDED

## Bowling Alley Survey

Go to the home page for Audubon County  
[www.auduboncounty.com](http://www.auduboncounty.com) & click on the bowling ball

### Food for Thought.....

- **“We must become the change we want to see in the world”**  
Mahatma Gandhi
- **“There are two ways of exerting one’s strength; one is pushing down, the other is pulling up”**  
Booker T Washington

