



NIACC Invests in an Innovative Workspace

North Iowa will have its first community makerspace, the Innovation Workspace, opening in late 2021. In February, the NIACC Board of Directors approved a three-year planned investment, which will provide \$50,000 each year for equipment and operating funds.

A makerspace is a place where college and community members of all kinds can share specialized equipment, such as 3D printers and laser cutters. Even further, this is where they can explore the practical, hands-on skills that empower the entrepreneurial spirit. Across the country, makerspaces have appeared at colleges and in communities, and are designed to foster creativity, teach design thinking skills, and to build relationships between students, educators, and businesses. Equipment available in the makerspace will include a carbon dioxide laser cutter, liquid resin 3D printer, and a desktop CNC mill. These will be further supplemented by several extruded polymer 3D printers, a vinyl cutter, as well as computers, storage, and materials to equip users of the space to bring their creative ideas into reality.

This summer, the Innovation Workspace will collaborate with the Verizon Innovative Learning STEM Camp for middle school girls and the Minds On! Hands On! Industrial Camp for high school girls. Additionally, the Innovation Workspace will be offering two robotics summer camps in partnership with Continuing Education for the NIACC Summer Academy and students in the Pappajohn Center's Youth Entrepreneurial Academy will have access to the workspace to develop the minimum viable product for their startup businesses.

The workspace will also be available to participants in the Iowa Venture School program at NIACC, allowing them to access rapid prototyping tools and techniques. With space and funding designated, and cutting-edge equipment on the way, North Iowa students and entrepreneurs will soon have the tools they need to make their dreams a reality.

To become involved or learn more about the Innovative Workspace, please contact Anthony Riesen at anthony.riesen@niacc.edu.

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Director's Notes

North Iowa Economy 4.0

This past year we witnessed up close the economic strife experienced by many small businesses in North Iowa. Knowing rural economies are facing the largest opportunity gap in history, we started asking some key questions: How can we better position ourselves post-pandemic? How do we better position ourselves for 2030? What will a North Iowa Economy 4.0 look like?

To help North Iowa navigate these challenges and create an innovative approach to rural Economic Development, the Vision North Iowa executive team reached out to the Center on Rural Innovation (CORI) (ruralinnovation.us). We are currently developing the core strategies for advancing economic prosperity in North Iowa through the creation of a digital economy ecosystem to support scalable new ventures and increase technology job creation.

The Kauffman Foundation describes the entrepreneurial ecosystem as the people and the culture of trust and collaboration that allows entrepreneurs to interact successfully. To build this digital economy ecosystem in North Iowa we worked with CORI to look at our local infrastructure, systems, and leadership, as well as direct drivers of the digital economy, like digital jobs, capital, and support for entrepreneurs.

5 Direct Drivers & Course Strategies

1. Digital Workforce Development

Convene educators, employers, and other stakeholders in an advisory group on future digital skilling efforts for K-12, NIACC and adults, creating more skilling opportunities for all

2. Access to Digital Jobs

Foster deeper partnerships with local tech and manufacturing employers while creating new pathways for local talent to access digital jobs and remote work, attracting and creating digital job opportunities

3. Inclusive Tech Culture Building

Partner with groups serving minority and under-resourced community members to ensure programming is accessible and on-target

4. Scalable Tech Entrepreneurship Support & Acceleration

Increase tech venture creation with experienced, trained mentors and a complete digital entrepreneurship pathway, from ideation to acceleration. We look to launch the MIT Venture Mentoring Program by this summer

5. Access to Capital

Reduce the barriers for access to capital by strengthening the community's capital stack, from SBIR to Angel Funds and state-wide venture capital funds

The desired outcomes of these direct drivers are to create a skilled digital workforce, quality digital employment opportunities, and creation of scalable startups in North Iowa.

To put all these ideas and strategies into motion we will be submitting an application through a Federal Economic Development Administration Build2Scale Venture Challenge grant as well as begin raising local matching funds.

The core strategy teams have been working alongside CORI since the beginning of January to create a bold plan that challenges the status quo with the end goal to create more opportunities and make North Iowa's economy stronger and more resilient than it has ever been.



Tim Putnam, Director
John Pappajohn
Entrepreneurial Center



**Center
on Rural
Innovation**

"Advancing inclusive rural prosperity through digital economy ecosystems that support scalable entrepreneurship and tech job creation."



Small Business Paycheck Protection Program is Open Until March 31, 2021

The Paycheck Protection Program established by the CARES Act, is implemented by the Small Business Administration with support from the Department of the Treasury. This program provides small businesses with funds to pay up to 8 weeks of payroll costs including benefits. Funds can also be used to pay interest on mortgages, rent, and utilities.

Small businesses and eligible nonprofit organizations, Veterans' organizations, and Tribal businesses described in the Small Business Act, as well as individuals who are self-employed or are independent contractors, are eligible if they also meet program size standards.

To qualify for the **First Draw Paycheck Protection Program Loan**, consider whether you are a sole proprietor, independent contractor, or a self-employed individual. Further qualification comes from meeting the SBA's size standards, being either industry size or alternative. Possible assistance is granted to any business, 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, 501(c)(19) Veterans' organization, or tribal business concern (sec. 31(b)(2)(C) of the Small Business Act) with less than 500 employees. If there are more than 500 employees, meeting the

SBA industry size standard will suffice. Lastly, the loan program will accept any business with a North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) code that begins with "72" and has more than one physical location holding less than 500 employees per location.

To qualify for the **Second Draw Paycheck Protection Program Loan**, you must have previously received the First Draw PPP Loan. It is also acceptable if you plan to use the full amount or already have, and it was only for authorized uses. Another level to qualifying is whether the business has no more than 300 employees. Further requirements have businesses demonstrate at least a 25% reduction in gross receipts between comparable quarters in 2019 and 2020.

For more detailed information go to:

<https://home.treasury.gov/policy-issues/cares/assistance-for-small-businesses> or

<https://www.sba.gov/funding-programs/loans/coronavirus-relief-options/paycheck-protection-program>



Venture School Mentor Spotlight

Candi Karsjens, Director of Innovation & Acceleration, would like to introduce **Beth Bilyeu**. She is one of our mentors for the 8-week University of Iowa Venture School program. Beth has graciously volunteered as a mentor for the program since 2019 participating in all the sessions hosted at the NIACC Pappajohn Center. Beth has been a valuable asset to the Venture School program and to the entrepreneurs she has mentored. Her guidance and support has greatly contributed to their success.

Beth has been Executive Director of the Economic Development Center in Forest City for the past 20 years. She holds an Associate of Arts degree in Marketing from North Iowa Area Community College and attended Buena Vista University for a Bachelor of Arts in Business and Finance. In addition, Beth has achieved certification by the National Development

Council in Economic Development Financing as well as Housing Development Financing.

Beth currently serves on the Pappajohn SBDC Advisory Board and the State SBDC Advisory Board.

At the Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Center, we follow the same mentor manifesto put forth by David Cohen and Brad Feld of Techstars®. *Techstars has developed and tested a successful model for creating a culture of entrepreneurs and innovation and building a mentor network to support them.

Contact Candi Karsjens if you would like to volunteer for this program at candi.karsjens@niacc.edu.





John Pappajohn Iowa Entrepreneurial Venture Competition to Award \$100,000 in Cash Prizes

Applications for the 2021 John Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Venture Competition will open soon. This year's statewide competition will again be awarding \$100,000 in cash prizes.

Iowa businesses that have been in operation for four years or less, or are not yet cash flow positive are eligible to apply. This competition is open to businesses including, but not limited to, technology, bio-technology, green technologies, medical, advanced manufacturing, agriculture, engineering, and education industries.

Participants will present their business plan including steps to verify and execute a viable business model. Participants will be judged on written submissions, and, if they advance to the final round of

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economic development

the competition, they will present to a panel of judges. First place will be awarded \$40,000, second place \$25,000, and third place \$15,000. Awards for other categories will total \$20,000.

Applications for the John Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Venture Competition go live on March 15 and closes May 17. Awardees will be introduced at the Pappajohn 25th Anniversary event on September 23, 2021.

2021 Competition Dates

March 15	Applications Open
May 17	Application Deadline
July 19	Semi-Final Round Deadline
August 9	Top Presenters Notified
August 27	Final Presentations (at ISU)
September 23	Awardees introduced at the Pappajohn 25th Anniversary Event

For more detailed information or to apply, visit www.pappajohncompetition.com.

The 2021 John Pappajohn Iowa Entrepreneurial Venture Competition is co-hosted by the John Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Centers and the Iowa Economic Development Authority.

Upcoming Events

Start Smart

Mar. 10	6:00–8:00 pm	Online via Zoom
Mar. 24	6:00–8:00 pm	Online via Zoom
Apr. 14	6:00–8:00 pm	Online via Zoom
Apr. 28	6:00–8:00 pm	Online via Zoom
May 5	6:00–8:00 pm	Online via Zoom
May 26	6:00–8:00 pm	Online via Zoom

TechTalk

Mar. 23	5:00–6:30 pm	Online via Zoom
Mar. 25	5:00–6:30 pm	Online via Zoom

This free two-hour Zoom workshop is designed for anyone who is considering starting a business or expanding his or her current company. Participants will learn how to create a business plan, conduct market research, review different types of business ownership, and learn how to register a business. There is no cost to attend. **Registration is required, go to our new website at pappajohncenter.com/programs-start-smart/ to receive the zoom link.**

March 23: Join us for our next Virtual TechTalk on Tuesday, March 23, 5:00-6:30 pm; the topic is “The Pros and Cons of Cloud Computing,” sponsored by Heartland Asphalt & First Citizens Bank.

May 25: Join us for our next Virtual TechTalk on Tuesday, May 25, 5:00-6:30 pm; the topic and sponsor to be determined.

TechTalks are the Fourth Tuesday of every other month and will be done virtually due to COVID-19. These are networking events designed to bring together entrepreneurs, technologists, business people, and investors. The events are led by a partnership of the North Iowa Corridor EDC, Clear Lake Chamber, and the NIACC Pappajohn Center. To register, go to Facebook and ask to join the TechBrew North Iowa page, click the current month, and register on the Eventbrite Zoom link.



RESERVE YOUR SPOT TODAY!

AN EXCITING OPPORTUNITY FOR ANY STUDENT!

2021 Youth Entrepreneurial Academy

Receive a \$500 NIACC Scholarship and compete for \$500 in seed money

WHAT Free Week-Long Summer Entrepreneurship Event
Fun, interesting opportunity to learn about starting your own business

WHEN Monday, June 14 – Friday, June 18

TIME 8:30 am – 4:00 pm

WHERE North Iowa Area Community College

WHO Current high school students

DETAILS In this free, weeklong summer camp, North Iowa high school students will participate in activities to develop their own business model, hear from local guest speakers, and visit local entrepreneurs. Students will receive gas gift cards for transportation costs. **Cerro Gordo Public Health COVID-19 Guidelines will be followed throughout the week.**

APPLY Applications are available from your guidance counselor or the NIACC John Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Center website. **Applications are due by May 25 or until the academy is full.**

The Youth Entrepreneurial Academy is FREE!!!

Students who choose NIACC First will receive an automatic \$500 YEA scholarship. Plus, a \$2,500 scholarship is possible to students enrolling in the Entrepreneurship & Small Business Management AAS degree program at NIACC!



REGISTER NOW TO SELL ON SHOP IOWA!

www.Shoplowa.com

We are in 91 counties and counting!

NEW - Iowa small businesses with a commercial location or made in Iowa products can sell on Shop Iowa!

Approved Business Types for Shop Iowa:

- ✓ Retail brick and mortar small businesses within a commercial zoning classification.
- ✓ Bars/restaurants, entertainment venues, and b2c service provider small businesses within a commercial zoning classification.
- ✓ Made in Iowa product-based small businesses with items that are made or transformed in Iowa by the applying business.

Requirements to sell on Shop Iowa:

- ✓ You must have physical products or gift cards that can be easily shipped.
- ✓ You are interested in receiving online orders through the Shop Iowa platform.
- ✓ You will be responsive to the Shop Iowa Team and customers on setting up your shop and fulfilling customer orders.

Now more than ever, people across our great state are looking for more ways to support their local businesses. In an effort to help Iowans shop local without even leaving their homes, the Shop Iowa site is bringing together small businesses from across the state into one online marketplace.

As a customer, you can browse and buy online from many local businesses from all across the state. Choose local pickup from a nearby business, or have items shipped directly to your doorstep from a business you haven't yet had the chance to visit. Either way, you can feel good knowing that every purchase you make on **Shop Iowa** goes directly to a local business in Iowa.

Shop Iowa is funded by the Iowa Economic Development Authority, enabling small retailers to have a shop on the platform for FREE.



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