



# Grow Cedar Valley MID-YEAR INVESTOR REPORT

July 1 - December 31, 2023



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WEBSITE, SCAN  
THE QR CODE!



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To learn more about Grow Cedar Valley and the Cedar Valley, visit [growcedarvalley.com](https://www.growcedarvalley.com)

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# Economic Development Results

A fundamental part of economic development work is to attract new businesses and support existing businesses to diversify the economy and reduce the region's vulnerability. Grow Cedar Valley (GCV) works very closely with the city and state economic development staff and many other public and private partners with these collaborative efforts.

## Project Opportunities

	CAPITAL INVESTMENT	JOB POTENTIAL	EXTERNAL PROJECTS	EXISTING PROJECTS
Total Active	\$1.829 B	2,258	21	4

*\*Includes new projects occurring between the months of July 1, 2023 through December 31, 2023; some projects occurring during this timeline minus those that may have eliminated the Cedar Valley during that same period.*

*Note: Job Potential and Capital Investment won't correlate; some projects don't provide both or either figure. Information available depends on the project's stage; some projects are more advanced than others.*

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FAST FACTS (Time Frame: 7/1/2023 - 12/31/2023)

### By Project

 **3**  
New Projects

**25**  
Total Active Projects 

### Existing Business Services to Cedar Valley Companies

 **18**  
Business Services

Information/services provided included discussion on expansion/retention and/or barriers such as workforce; including issues related to managing supply chain.

### External Prospect Engagement

 **2**  
External Project Visits

 **7**  
Virtual Table Talks with Site Selection Consultants

 **3**  
Virtual Prospect Meetings

*(can include multiple visits/meetings for the same project)*

## Cedar Valley Manufacturing Association

There are sixteen companies that make up the Cedar Valley Manufacturing Association, along with several support partners in the Cedar Valley including Grow Cedar Valley. Dennis Schilling from Power Engineering and Manufacturing is the current President. CVMA meets quarterly to support the below priorities that manufacturers in the Cedar Valley have identified.

### Priority Areas Identified by Manufacturers

- Support the alignment of the IGNITE program between lower and higher education.
- Provide educational support for upcoming workforce starting at grade school to ensure the demographics of the manufacturing workforce match the demographics of the community.

The workforce shortage isn't expected to improve over the next several years and is even worse for manufacturers as it is estimated 20% of manufacturing workforce will retire over the next 5-10 years while incoming workforce is short to fill the demand unless CVMA does something about it. CVMA's leadership has developed a plan and will be executing with support from Grow Cedar Valley, Hawkeye Community College, Waterloo Career Center, and University of Northern Iowa. Hawkeye Community College, Waterloo Career Center, University of Northern Iowa, and Iowa State University's Center for Industrial Research and Service.

## DEI Summit

Over 200 professionals attended the Seventh Annual Economic Diversity and Inclusion Summit hosted by Grow Cedar Valley and the University of Northern Iowa on October 20, 2023, at the Waterloo Convention Center. The summit aimed to provide insights and strategies for promoting diversity and inclusion in the Cedar Valley region, fostering an economically vibrant community. It served as a networking platform, emphasizing the importance of tapping into the consumer and workforce potential of the region's diverse population.

Waterloo Mayor Quentin Hart, Cedar Falls City Administrator Ron Gaines, Grow Cedar Valley President/CEO Cary Darrah, and UNI Assistant to the President/Chief Diversity Officer Gwenne Berry delivered welcome speeches. ONE Cedar Valley Executive Director Joy Briscoe highlighted the progress in diversity, equity, and inclusion since the 24/7 Wall Street report in 2018.

Keynote speakers Dr. LaDrina Wilson and Dr. Arvid Osterberg shared insights on inclusive leadership and the Americans with Disabilities Act accessible design standards, respectively.

The summit included a series of informative breakout sessions covering various aspects of diversity, equity, and inclusion. **These sessions were led by knowledgeable professionals and experts:**

**Allyship: How to be a Strong Ally** - Shelley Price-Williams, Ph.D. (UNI) provided valuable insights into the concept of allyship and offered practical advice on how individuals can be strong allies in promoting diversity and inclusion.

*Image: Kevin Burt performing at the DEI Summit Social Hour*



### DEI Summit Continued

**Current Political Landscape of DEI** - Jayme Renfro (UNI) discussed the ever-evolving political landscape related to diversity, equity, and inclusion, highlighting the significance of understanding its impact on various initiatives.

**Expanding DEI Within Your Company: Improving Company Engagement** - Amanda Nugent (VFM) and Darian Schmit (VGM) shared strategies for enhancing diversity, equity, and inclusion within corporate settings, emphasizing the importance of engaging employees and stakeholders.

**Mental and Physical Health: Holistic Wellness** - Beauty Fitts (HealthPartners), Nicole Sallis (Grow Cedar Valley), and Shantila Caston (MercyOne) delved into the essential connection between holistic wellness, mental and physical health, and diversity and inclusion, offering guidance on promoting well-being in diverse communities.

To conclude the event, Kevin Burt, an International Blues Challenge provided musical entertainment during the social hour, adding a cultural and entertaining dimension to the summit.

# Networking, Education, and Celebration

*Time Frame: 7/1/2023 - 12/31/2023*

**400** 

Investors attended two **Good Morning Cedar Valley** events

**300** 

Investors networked in two **Business After Hours** events

**180** 

Investors and community members attended **GCV's Annual Leadercast**

**180** 

Investors & their guests participated in **GCV's Annual Golf Classic**

**550** 

Investors & community members attended **GCV's Annual Strictly Business Expo**

**220** 

People attended **GCV's Annual Economic, Diversity & Inclusion Summit**

**1** 

**GCV Legislative Friday Forum (virtual)**

To learn more about GCV Events, visit [growcedarvalley.com/events](http://growcedarvalley.com/events)

# Cedar Valley Leadership Institute



The CVLI Class of 2023-2024 is made up of 45 emerging leaders that represent 31 Cedar Valley businesses and organizations listed below. This class meets monthly from October- May for leadership and community development. The 2023-24 class will provide community service projects for several organizations throughout the Cedar Valley.

- Align Architecture & Planning
- Banklowa
- Beecher, Field, Walker, Morris, Hoffman & Johnson, P.C.
- Cardinal Construction, Inc.
- CBE Companies, Inc.
- Cedar Falls Community Schools
- Community Bank & Trust
- CPM Holdings, Inc.
- Dupaco Community Credit Union
- Farmers State Bank
- Financial Architects Financial Strategy Specialist
- First Interstate Bank
- Goodwill Industries of Northeast Iowa, Inc.
- INVISION Architecture
- ISG
- John Deere Waterloo Operations
- Junior Achievement of Eastern Iowa
- Northeast Iowa Food Bank
- Pedersen, Dowie, Clabby & McCausland Insurance
- POS Professional Office Services, Inc.
- Tri-County Child & Family Development Council, Inc.
- TruStage
- United Equipment Accessories, Inc.
- UnityPoint Health - Allen Hospital
- University of Northern Iowa
- Veridian Credit Union
- VGM Forbin
- VGM Group, Inc.
- Western Home Communities
- Woodruff Construction, Inc.

## Additional Investor Benefits

16 

**Ribbon Cuttings** for Cedar Valley businesses

369 

**Jobs posted** by GCV Investors

25,265 

**Total job views** from jobs posted

*Time Frame: 7/1/2023 - 12/31/2023*



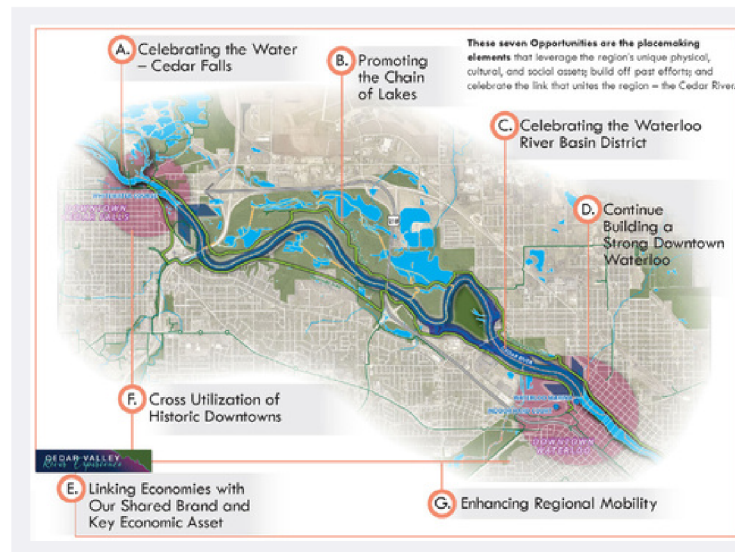


# Government Affairs and Advocacy

Grow Cedar Valley staff attend City Council Meetings, as needed, to speak on projects relevant to the growth and development of the City of Waterloo and Cedar Falls. The Grow Cedar Valley Government Affairs Committee was convened in early November to identify and discuss the proposed legislative priorities for 2024. The proposed priorities made up the 2024 Legislative Policy Agenda recommended to the GCV Board of Directors for its approval and adoption. The 2024 policy agenda can be found on GCV's website.

## Placemaking and Image

One of the priority areas from GCV's strategic planning is enhancing the Image of the Cedar Valley, making it a place of choice for individuals/workforce and businesses.



In 2022 Grow Cedar Valley partnered with INRCOG and John Deere Waterloo operations to create a scope of work to address vision of enhancing the Cedar River – connecting downtown Cedar Falls and downtown Waterloo. Vandewalle & Associates were hired to assemble Phase One scope of work sponsored by John Deere and INRCOG for this visioning effort. Phase Two is underwritten by Grow Cedar Valley and approved by the GCV board of directors and is underway. This scope will continue to expand the plan to enhance the Cedar River as a natural resource to use and celebrate. "Placemaking" is designed and needed to distinguish our communities and celebrate their unique features to businesses as well as current and future residents.

What we know is the communities that invest in recreational and experience opportunities for the workforce and their families are going to be the communities that are successful in attracting and retaining talent.

# Workforce Solutions

One of the main goals of Workforce & Talent at Grow Cedar Valley is to be an expert in the workforce space and a resource and connector to HR professionals and business owners throughout the Cedar Valley for all things that have to do with workforce. Here are some ways we have continued to make this a focus in 2023:

- We have positioned ourselves as an expert in workforce data in 2023 by subscribing to Lightcast, which is a data source that is a global leader in labor market analytics. We have been able to use this data for many different things, but one of the most important ways has been defining our 4 key industries in the Cedar Valley and determining the highest-in demand occupations within the next 10 years. We will be utilizing this information to support programs doing work in this space and to support talent pipelines into those industries and roles. We also will ensure ecosystems in the key industries are connecting resources to HR professionals and vice versa.
- Another way we accomplish the goal of being an expert in workforce is to continue to utilize the Workforce Advisory Committee that was created in December 2022. The goal of the committee is to give feedback and input to the Director of Workforce & Talent on ideas and initiatives in regards to attracting and retaining workforce. Currently there are 10 businesses represented on the Workforce Advisory Committee, with 4 of the 10 businesses newly added in mid to late 2023. The current companies represented on the committee are Advanced Heat Treat (NEW), John Deere (NEW), Kryton (NEW), Lincoln Savings Bank, PDCM, Target Food Distribution Center, The Accel Group (NEW), UnityPoint Health, VGM and Western Home Communities.
- To ensure alignment and reduce redundancy with other entities/organizations that are centered around workforce, the Director of Workforce & Talent now sits on several boards/committees in the community and region including: Leader Valley Council, Iowa Workforce Board's Northeast Iowa Planning & Operations Committee and the Cedar Valley SHRM (Society of Human Resource Management) Board as the Work Readiness Chair (beginning in 2024). She also put together a peer group of workforce professionals from all around the state of Iowa who meet on a quarterly basis to share ideas and align where necessary.





# Initiatives

## Live the Valley, Powered by Grow Cedar Valley

Live the Valley, powered by Grow Cedar Valley and the Cedar Valley Regional Partnership, is more than an initiative—it's a commitment to creating resources, fostering collaboration, and establishing a regionally branded website. This platform is dedicated to showcasing the intersection of workforce attraction information and the exceptional quality of life, aiming to draw more individuals to the Cedar Valley and strengthen our workforce.

## Why Support Live the Valley?

- **Attracting Talent:** Live the Valley serves as a powerful tool to draw in skilled and diverse professionals by highlighting our incredible quality of life, vibrant cultural scene, and diverse opportunities for personal and professional growth.
- **Retaining Talent:** For businesses and organizations, a thriving workforce is essential for success. Live the Valley helps retain existing talent by showcasing our community's amenities, family-friendly environment, and abundant opportunities for personal and professional development.
- **Economic Growth:** As community leaders and business owners, you recognize the significance of sustained economic growth. Supporting the region actively contributes to our collective effort in Economic Development to attract new businesses that can recognize the potential in our vibrant region.



## Livability Magazine Collaboration

Live the Valley: Waterloo-Cedar Falls Metro Region, IA, is an annual print magazine and digital content marketing program dedicated to fostering business investment, talent recruitment, and relocation to our region. Designed to captivate entrepreneurs, site selectors, executives, and other talented individuals and families, our initiative showcases the outstanding quality of life that Cedar Valley has to offer.

This is Grow Cedar Valley and the Cedar Valley Regional Partnership's primary quality-of-life marketing program. We have partnered with Livability Media to produce a top-quality print magazine, an engaging digital magazine, and informational content featured on livability.com.

This is all made possible by the support of our advertising sponsors. We want to extend a warm thank you for their generous support!

live  
THE VALLEY

# Influencer Campaign

### Goals

- Generate awareness of Live the Valley/Grow Cedar Valley.
- Showcase the quality of life in the Cedar Valley to drive engagement.
- Provide a connection for people looking to move to/work in the area.



**AYSHA**  
*Weekley*  
Supply Chain Operations Manager  
Target Distribution



**KYLE**  
*Brown*  
Human Resources  
VGM Group



**NILVIA**  
*Reyes-Rodriguez*  
Director of Community Impact and  
Engagement at United Way



**RAY**  
*Norman*  
Instrumentation Engineer  
John Deere U.S. Navy - Veteran



**EDITA**  
*Begic*  
Owner of Vine Valley  
Real Estate



**GINA**  
*Weekley*  
Director of Equity, Inclusion & Belonging  
Waterloo Community Schools



**JONATHAN**  
*Jones*  
Owner of Jonespix  
photography/videography



**KATELYN**  
*Jungland*  
Regional Director  
Junior Achievement of Eastern Iowa



**SCOTTY**  
*Russell*  
Creative Business Coach,  
NFT Artist and Designer

## KEY METRICS (Last 30 Days)

# 1,000%

**Increase in post engagement.**

This number means that the content is being engaged with at a much higher rate

# 55.7%

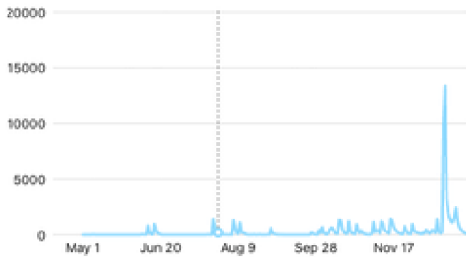
**of video minutes viewed are from shares.**

This shows that our posts are benefiting from influencers and other followers' social networks.

### Reach/Awareness Metrics



45.4K ↑ 2.3K%



2.3K ↑ 1.5K%



If you have any questions or would like to talk content ideas,  
email [nicole@growcedarvalley.com](mailto:nicole@growcedarvalley.com)



# Meet the Team



**Cary Darrah**  
*President & CEO*



**Bonita Cunningham**  
*Director of Events and Sponsorships*



**Stephanie Detweiler, PHR**  
*Director of Workforce and Talent*



**Steve Firman**  
*Director of Government Affairs*



**Nicole Sallis, CDMP**  
*Director of Marketing and Communications*



**Jim Schaefer, IOM**  
*Director of Investor Relations*



**Lisa Rivera Skubal, CEeD**  
*Vice President of Economic Development*



**Sandi Sommerfelt**  
*Vice President of Operations*



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