

# ***SIMPCO***

## ***Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy 2020-2024***



Cherokee County, IA • Dakota County, NE • Ida County, IA •  
Monona County, IA • Plymouth County, IA • Woodbury County, IA

## ***Acknowledgements & Contributors***

Siouxland Interstate Metropolitan Planning Council (SIMPCO) would like to extend our sincerest thank you to the following stakeholders involved with this Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) 2020-2024. This plan was funded by the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA). The following stakeholders attended meetings to inform and review the plan. SIMPCO staff developed the plan with advisory assistance from the CEDS Committee. Thank you for your support and participation in this Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy 2020-2024.

### ***SIMPCO Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Committee*** (Full list available in Appendix A)

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Dakota County, Nebraska  
Ida County, Iowa  
Monona County, Iowa  
Plymouth County, Iowa  
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## Executive Summary

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The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) is a plan used to guide economic development and build regional resiliency. The CEDS for the SIMPCO Region has been updated to direct economic development efforts for the next five years, beginning July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2024. This plan updates the CEDS 2015-2019 Plan to determine the forces, trends, and issues that will have the greatest economic impact upon the Region and position leaders to take advantage of economic opportunities and to avoid or mitigate potential threats. As the next five years progress, this document will be relied upon as a benchmark to help prioritize action and evaluate outcomes for the entire Region.

The purpose of the CEDS 2020-2024 Plan is to develop a strategic action plan that will accomplish the following:

1. Identify and build on the strengths of the Region, as well as identify gaps in resources or expertise that need to be addressed.
2. Expand supply chains. Grow and support new industry clusters.
3. Qualify the six counties within the SIMPCO CEDS Region for U.S. EDA program funding. Secure the Region as an EDD, in turn making the Region more likely to attract federal funds and technical assistance by demonstrating that resources are used efficiently and effectively.
4. Develop measurable strategies to improve the regional economy, and make the Region more resilient to natural disasters and economic shocks.
5. Facilitate regional collaboration, identify economic partners, and provide an engaging platform that generates region-wide discussions and actions.

Per the U.S. Economic Development Administration requirements, the CEDS document contains the following four elements:

1. **Summary Background:** A summary background of the economic development conditions of the Region; including demographic data and regional context discussion.
2. **SWOT Analysis:** An in-depth analysis of regional strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.
3. **Strategic Direction and Action Plan:** Strategic direction and an action plan (flowing from the SWOT analysis which should be consistent with other relevant state/regional/local plans).
4. **Evaluation Framework:** Performance measures used to evaluate the organization's implementation of the CEDS and its impact on the regional economy



The CEDS also incorporates the concept of economic resilience, or the ability of the Region to avoid, withstand, and recover from economic shifts, natural disasters, impacts of climate change, and more.

### ***The SIMPCO CEDS Region***

The SIMPCO CEDS Region is composed of six counties: Cherokee, Ida, Monona, Plymouth, and Woodbury Counties in Iowa and Dakota County in Nebraska. The Region is centrally located in the United States, providing convenient national access for commerce and economic development. Major highways within the Region include: U.S. Highway 75, U.S. Highway 20, U.S. Highway 59, and Interstate 29. The Region also features the Loess Hills land form.

Today the economy is firmly tied to the Region's industrial past. Looking to the future, stakeholders and economic development professionals recognize that a tension exists with how to best support economic growth. Should the Region build upon its strong industrial past and present, or should focus be on diversification of the economy?

### ***CEDS Goals and Objectives***

The following goals were generated by the CEDS Committee to guide policy and action for the next five years:

***Economic Development Goal:*** To create high-skill, higher-wage jobs within innovative clusters as a means to diversify the regional economy and improve economic conditions in the area for years to come.

***Workforce Development Goal:*** To develop and retain a highly-trained, competitive and entrepreneurial workforce that addresses and compliments the growing needs of the regional business community.

***Infrastructure Improvement Goal:*** To invest in infrastructure improvements such as roads, bridges, sewers, water facilities, broadband, and multi-modal transportation systems that will strengthen and diversify the regional economy.

***Housing Goal:*** To develop diverse housing options for all income levels to ensure the availability of housing supply for workers brought in by expanding businesses and new firms in the Region.

***Quality of Life Goal:*** To encourage resident retention and to develop cost-effective, regional solutions to local problems that better serve residents while providing a high quality of life.

## ***The CEDS Document***

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The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) is a plan used to guide economic development and build regional resiliency. A CEDS is required by the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) to receive designation as an Economic Development District (EDD). This plan must be updated every 5 years, and is produced by Siouxland Interstate Metropolitan Planning Council (SIMPCO) in order to meet the EDA requirements. Furthermore, the CEDS is designed to guide the Region's economic growth by strengthening and stabilizing the regional economy, and improving the overall living conditions for residents of the Region.

The CEDS for the SIMPCO Region has been updated to direct economic development efforts for the next five years, beginning July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2024. This plan updates the CEDS 2015-2019 Plan to determine the forces, trends, and issues that will have the greatest economic impact upon the Region and position leaders to take advantage of economic opportunities and to avoid or mitigate potential threats. As the next five years progress, this document will be relied upon as a benchmark to help prioritize action and evaluate outcomes for the entire Region.

The purpose of the SIMPCO CEDS is to develop a strategic action plan that will accomplish the following:

1. Identify and build on the strengths of the Region, as well as identify gaps in resources or expertise that need to be addressed.
2. Expand supply chains. Grow and support new industry clusters.
3. Qualify the six counties within the SIMPCO CEDS Region for U.S. EDA program funding. Secure the Region as an EDD, in turn making the Region more likely to attract federal funds and technical assistance by demonstrating that resources are used efficiently and effectively.
4. Develop measurable strategies to improve the regional economy, and make the Region more resilient to natural disasters and economic shocks.
5. Facilitate regional collaboration, identify economic partners, and provide an engaging platform that generates region-wide discussions and actions.

## ***Process and Participation***

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SIMPCO will fulfill the role of the six-county, two-state Economic Development District (EDD). The U.S. EDA defines EDDs as multi-jurisdictional entities that help lead the locally-based, regionally driven economic development planning process that leverages the involvement of the public, private and non-profit sectors to establish a strategic blueprint (i.e., an economic development roadmap) for regional collaboration. The SIMPCO CEDS Region (the EDD) is composed of six counties: Cherokee, Ida, Monona, Plymouth, and Woodbury Counties in Iowa and Dakota County in Nebraska.

### ***CEDS Committee and Regional Collaboration***

The CEDS Committee consists of representatives of the public and private sectors, including local businesses, educational institutions, and surrounding communities. The group worked diligently to identify the Region's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Those were then translated into goals, objectives and action items to improve the Region. The CEDS Committee continues to meet quarterly to evaluate progress and offer suggestions for improving future CEDS plans. See Appendix A for a full list of CEDS Committee members.

Beyond the CEDS committee, SIMPCO collaborates with numerous economic development partners in the Region that are listed in Appendix B. The list of partners includes federal, state, regional, county, city organizations and major employers in the Region.

### ***Community Participation***

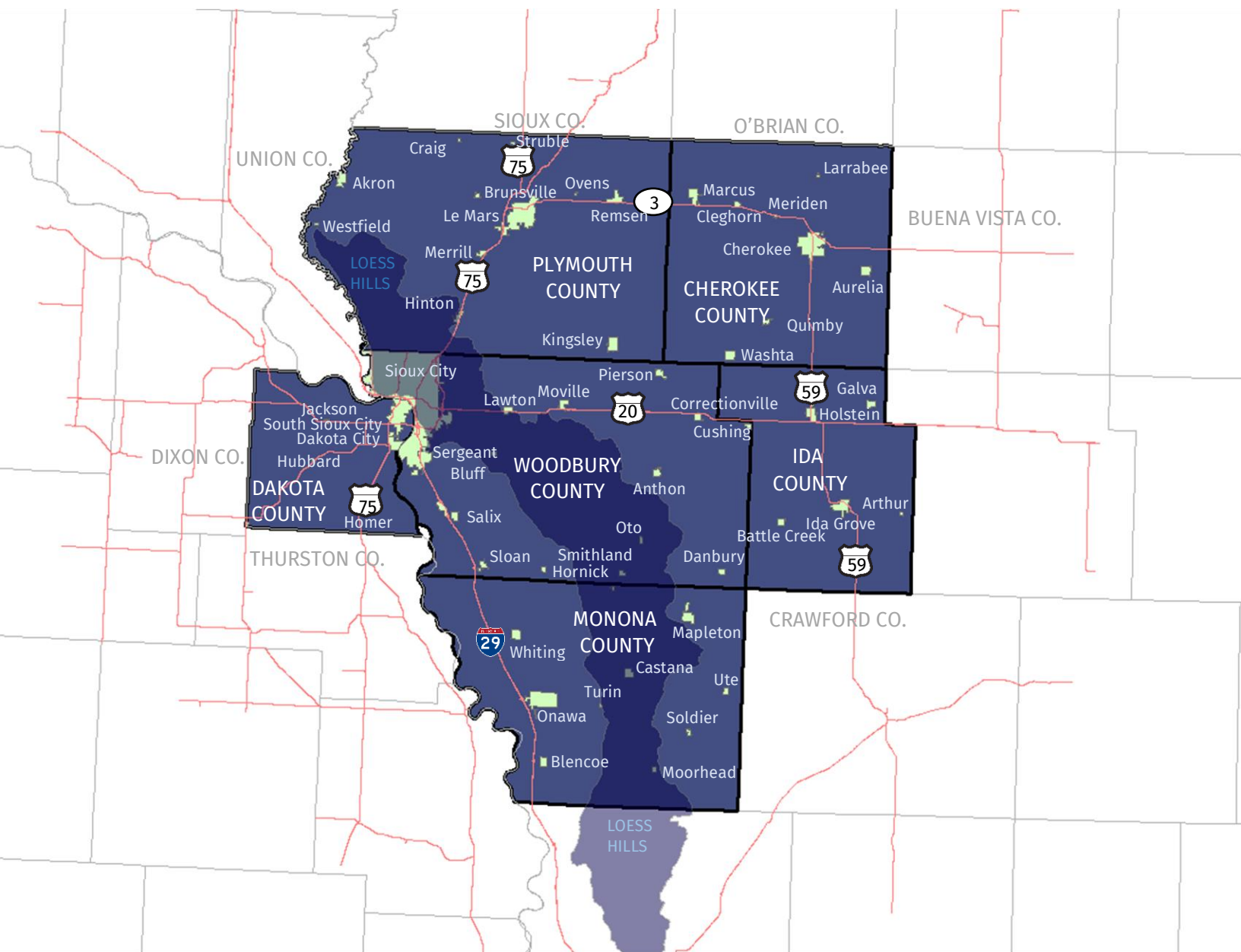
Community input was gathered by way of a survey that was administered by SIMPCO staff. The results of this survey were used to guide discussions of the CEDS Committee. The survey contained 16 questions developed around the SWOT analysis. Participants could either complete a paper format or online survey. These responses were gathered from November 1, 2018 to January 11, 2019. A total of 132 participants responded. The results of the survey are displayed in Appendix C.

## Summary Background

### Location

The SIMPCO CEDS Region is composed of six counties: Cherokee, Ida, Monona, Plymouth, and Woodbury Counties in Iowa and Dakota County in Nebraska. The Region is centrally located in the United States, providing convenient national access for commerce and economic development. Major highways within the Region include: U.S. Highway 75, U.S. Highway 20, U.S. Highway 59, and Interstate 29. The Region also features the Loess Hills land form which is delineated with a dark shading.

Figure 1. SIMPCO CEDS Region Vicinity Map



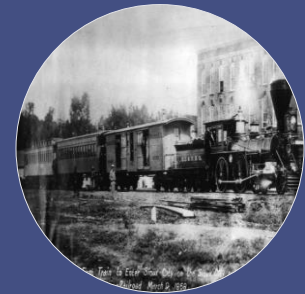


## **Local History**

Archeological evidence places Native American culture in the Region as early as 1200 CE. Rivers served as an important trade route, and the area was consistently inhabited by various Native American tribes. The Yankton Sioux were present in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century according to reports from Spanish and French fur trappers. In 1803, the land was acquired by the United States as part of the Louisiana Purchase, and a year later members of the Lewis and Clark expedition were met by the Omaha tribe.

Meat-packing and stockyard industries began to take shape in the 1850s and 1860s, laying the foundation for the manufacturing industry, which would become the cornerstone of the local economy. In 1870 the railroad was completed in Sioux City, not only bolstering that city's economy, but also supporting rural communities throughout the Region. Following the completion of the railroad, the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century saw rapid development, locally referred to as the "building boom".

By the 1970s, local leaders realized the need to diversify the economy, after labor unrest revealed vulnerabilities related to being primarily reliant on the manufacturing industry.



## **Recent Economic Overview**

Today the economy is still firmly tied to the Region's industrial past. Leading employers for the Region include Tyson Foods, Seaboard Triumph Foods, and Wells Enterprises. Healthcare institutions and school districts also employ many people in the Region.

Looking to the future, stakeholders and economic development professionals recognize that a tension exists with how to best support economic growth. Should the Region build upon its strong industrial past and present, or should the focus be on diversification of the economy? The remainder of this CEDS 2020-2024 Plan will look more deeply at this topic, as well as identify assets and challenges related to economic growth more generally.

## Regional Demographics

### 1. Population

Since 1940, the SIMPCO CEDS Region has experienced a 5.2% population loss. Economic development initiatives in the Region have focused on retention and expansion of the Region's population. Recent data indicates that this population decline is slowing with less than 1% population loss between 2010 and 2017. While this speaks to overall regional stability, within the SIMPCO CEDS Region, specific communities are experiencing the realities of growth and decline. Four cities (Arthur, Soldier, Whiting, and Hornick) have all grown by over 20%. In contrast, three cities (Washta, Jackson, and Hubbard) have more than 20% population decline. See Appendix D for more demographic data.

Table 1. Regional Population Trends

	2000 Pop.	2010 Pop.	2017 Pop.	2000-2010 Change	2010-2017 Change
Cherokee County	13,035	12,072	11,577	-7.39%	-4.10%
Dakota County	20,253	21,006	20,529	3.72%	-2.27%
Ida County	7,837	7,089	6,965	-9.54%	-1.75%
Monona County	10,020	9,245	8,865	-7.73%	-4.11%
Plymouth County	24,849	24,986	25,027	0.55%	0.16%
Woodbury County	103,877	102,172	102,397	-1.64%	0.22%
<b>SIMPCO CEDS Region</b>	<b>179,871</b>	<b>176,570</b>	<b>175,360</b>	<b>-1.84%</b>	<b>-0.69%</b>
<b>Iowa</b>	<b>2,926,324</b>	<b>3,046,355</b>	<b>3,118,102</b>	<b>4.10%</b>	<b>2.36%</b>
<b>Nebraska</b>	<b>1,711,263</b>	<b>1,826,341</b>	<b>1,893,921</b>	<b>6.72%</b>	<b>3.70%</b>

Source: U.S. Decennial Census Data, 2000, 2010; American Community Survey 2017 5-Year Estimates

Figure 2. Demographic Overview

Median age in 2017 was

# 41.

Compared to 38.3 in 2010

The population between  
ages of 25 and 65  
**decreased** by 2.36%  
from 2010 to 2017.

**Racial  
Composition**  
of the SIMPCO CEDS Region

Black / African  
American, American  
Indian and Alaska  
Native, Asian,  
Native Hawaiian  
and other Pacific  
Islander, Some  
other race, Two or  
more races (14%).

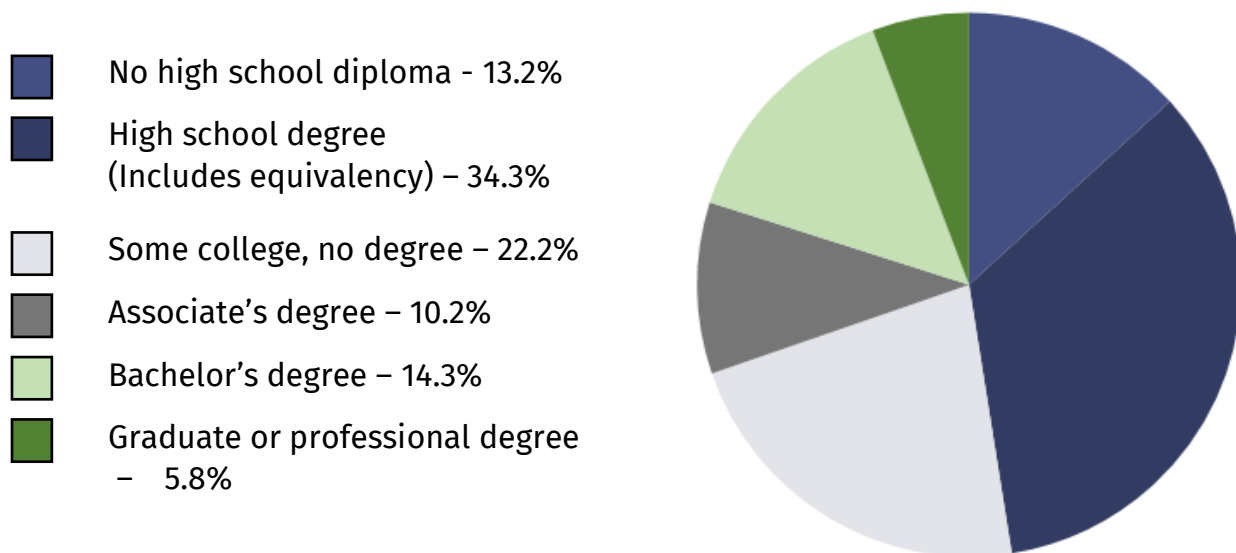
White (86%).

## 2. Education

In 2017, approximately 20% of the population within the SIMPCO CEDS Region held a bachelor's degree or higher. This is over 10% less than the national average, which is 30.9%. However the Region is in line with national averages when it comes to attaining a high school degree (or equivalency) and higher, at approximately 87%.

General population trends show that the percent of individuals at each level of educational attainment has remained relatively constant. The exceptions to this are the categories of associates degree and bachelor's degree. Both categories have seen a slight increase since 2000.

Figure 3. Educational Attainment for individuals 25 years and older in the SIMPCO CEDS Region



Source: U.S. Census 2017 5-Year Estimates

The SIMPCO CEDS Region has six higher educational institutions. Cumulatively these educate over 6,000 students every year. These institutions are:

- Briar Cliff University
- College Center (Northeast Community College & Wayne State College)
- Morningside College
- Nebraska Indian Community College
- St. Luke's College
- Western Iowa Tech Community College

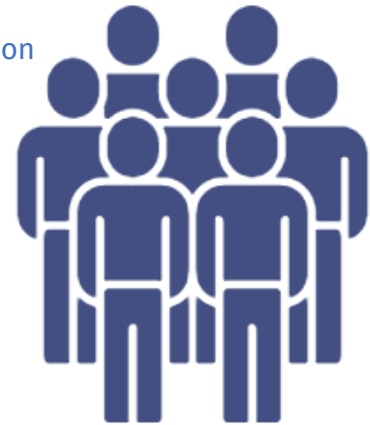
### 3. Labor Force and Industry

In 2017, the civilian labor force consisted of 92,816 individuals. Of these, 88,579 were employed resulting in a 4.12% unemployment rate. This unemployment rate is generally similar compared to the states of Iowa and Nebraska, which have unemployment rates of 4.1% and 3.8% respectively. Median earnings of employed individuals in the Region was \$30,434. This number is lower than the national median earnings, and lower than both Iowa and Nebraska. Low wages may contribute to a stagnant economy, and limit the Region's ability to compete for workers.

Table 2. 2017 Labor Force Characteristics of the SIMPCO CEDS Region

Total Population	175,360
16+ Population	135,408
Not in Labor Force	42,441
Labor Force (Civilian)	92,816
Employed	88,579
Unemployed	4,137
Unemployment Rate	4.12%
Median Earnings	\$30,434

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics



In 2017, there were 89,613 jobs in the SIMPCO CEDS Region. This is a 5.19% increase compared to 2010, which had 88,579 jobs. The Region's job growth rate is over two full percentage points greater than the state of Iowa, which saw 2.97% growth in the same time frame. However, both the Region and State fell behind the national growth rate of 6.18%. One possible explanation for this is that the manufacturing industry was heavily hit in the recession of 2008, and has slowly been bouncing back from that ever since. Additionally, these types of jobs are increasingly being replaced with automation, hindering job recovery and growth. However, recent national economic trends have shown steady growth, as evident by the positive change in each geography.

The following table communicates the number of jobs per industry in 2010 and 2017. The following column contains the calculated percent change between those years, and the final column shows median earnings for the various industries. The top three industries in the SIMPCO CEDS Region are:

1. Educational services, and healthcare and social assistance
2. Manufacturing
3. Retail trade

While the Region has seen a general increase in jobs, five industries report a decline. These industries are Construction (-14%), Manufacturing (-2%), Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services (-6%), Other services, except public administration (-4%), and Public Administration (-10%).

Perhaps most concerning about this trend is that the Construction, Manufacturing, and Public Administration industries have high median earnings. It will be challenging to preserve and grow median earnings region wide, if higher-wage jobs are disappearing.

**Table 3. Industry Statistics of the SIMPCO CEDS Region**

*Source: U.S. Decennial Census Data, 2010; American Community Survey 2017 5-Year Estimates*

<b>Industry</b>	<b>2010 Jobs</b>	<b>2017 Jobs</b>	<b>Change</b>	<b>Median Earnings</b>
Civilian employed population 16 years and over	88,579	89,613	1%	\$ 31,962
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	3,606	3,936	9%	\$ 32,760
Construction	6,443	5,559	-14%	\$ 38,602
Manufacturing	16,701	16,386	-2%	\$ 37,225
Wholesale trade	2,753	3,176	15%	\$ 45,196
Retail trade	10,715	11,363	6%	\$ 20,600
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities:	4,331	4,603	6%	\$ 43,990
Information	1,164	1,721	48%	\$ 28,391
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	3,993	4,792	20%	\$ 40,760
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	5,078	5,222	3%	\$ 32,849
Educational services, and healthcare and social assistance	19,188	19,183	0%	\$ 28,692
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services:	7,535	7,079	-6%	\$ 11,987
Other services, except public administration	4,034	3,853	-4%	\$ 25,561
Public administration	3,038	2,740	-10%	\$ 45,259



#### 4. Industry Clusters and Innovation Index

The U.S. EDA's Cluster Mapping Project identifies and defines cluster categories for all regions across the nation. A cluster is a regional concentration of related industries that arises out of the various types of linkages that span across industries in a particular location including technology, skills, and information. Identifying similar companies and institutions as a cluster provides opportunities for coordination and mutual improvement, yields better market insights, more refined research agendas, larger pools of specialized talent and faster deployment of new knowledge. Naturally, clusters emerge through the market process; enhancing companies productivity as they grow in size. Over time companies looking for a new location are attracted to the established industry cluster and grow through the performance of the already established companies in the area.

The following SIMPCO CEDS Region cluster portfolio was derived from the U.S. Cluster Mapping design region tool. In creating these cluster categories, the research team of the U.S. Cluster Mapping Project developed an algorithm to group together narrowly defined U.S. industry codes that show significant inter-industry linkages based on input-output measures, labor occupations, and the co-location patterns of employment and establishments.

Traded clusters refer to the groups of industries that serve markets beyond the region in which they are located. These are vital to strong regional economies because these industries and jobs generally account for higher wages and greater levels of innovation. The top six traded clusters in descending order are: Livestock, Food Processing, Production Technology, Agriculture, Trailer & Appliances, and Upstream Chemicals. Traded clusters account for 38% of the all clusters in the Region, while 62% are local clusters. Local clusters are those that serve the region, rather than extending beyond it. While the SIMPCO CEDS Region does not have any local clusters ranked above 142 (national ranking). Leading local clusters by employment include Local Health Services, Local Hospitality Establishments, and Local Real Estate, Construction, and Development.

Figure 4. Traded Clusters with Number Employed for the SIMPCO CEDS Region

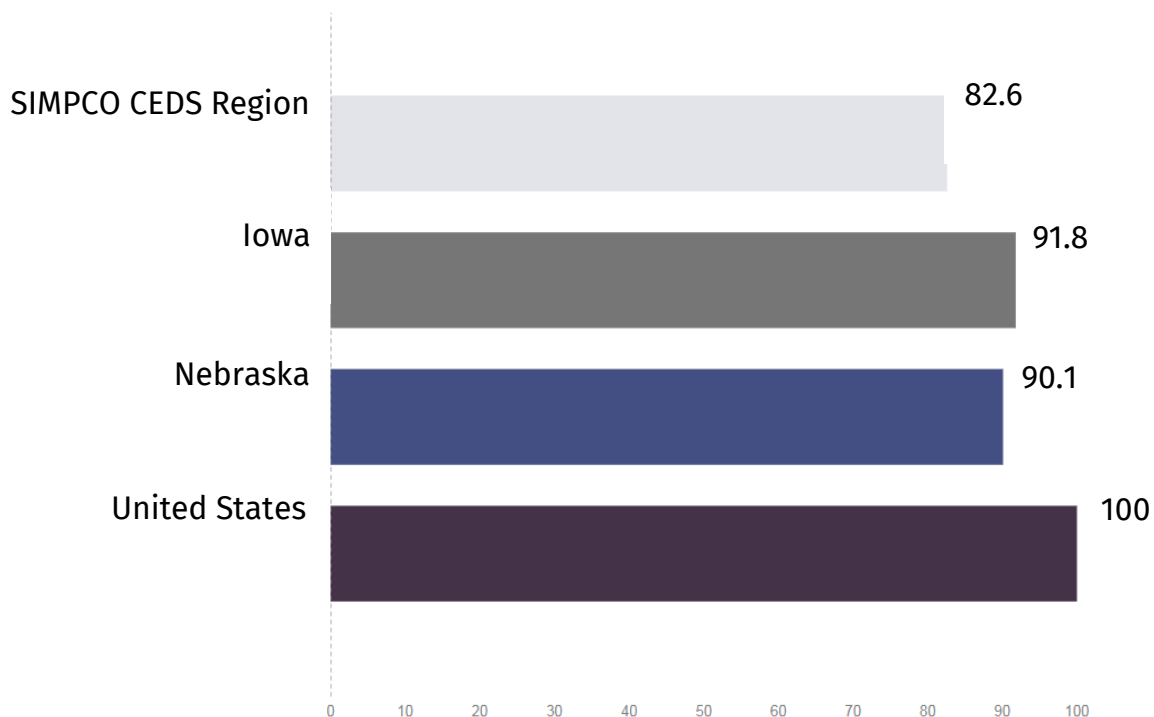


The U.S. EDA's Innovation Index provides a set of tools and data that can be used by regional leaders to understand how their region compares to other areas of the country. This tool can highlight strengths and weaknesses of a region, and guide economic development strategies. The SIMPCO CEDS Region has an Innovation Index score of 82.6. This score consists of five components, each with their own sub-score:

- Human Capital: 76.4
- Economic Dynamics: 85.3
- Productivity and Employment: 81
- Economic Well-Being: 98.1
- State Context (for reference only): 101.3 – IA; 108 – NE.

The Innovation Index score shows the SIMPCO CEDS Region at slightly below the national average and the Iowa and Nebraska scores.

Figure 5. Innovation Index Scores



This score indicates that the Region will need to address four factors in order to grow the economy and grow their score. These factors are:

1. Educational Attainment
2. Young-adult population growth
3. High-tech employment growth
4. Number of patents per 1,000 workers

## 5. Income

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the SIMPCO CEDS Region's median household income in 2017 was \$52,107. This was a 14% increase from 2010. Despite the increase, the median income is still below that of Iowa and Nebraska, at \$56,570 and \$56,675 respectively in 2017. Furthermore, while the median income rose, the percent of people living below the poverty level also rose in the same time frame. This can be indicative of increasing income disparity.

Table 4. SIMPCO CEDS Region Income and Poverty Comparison

	2010	2017	Percent Change
Median household income	\$45,834	\$52,107	14%
Percent of people living below the poverty level	10.2%	12.8%	2.6%

Source: U.S. Decennial Census Data, 2000; American Community Survey 2017 5-Year Estimates

## 6. Housing

Having adequate, affordable housing is an important component for attracting and retaining workers. The median home value in the SIMPCO CEDS Region is \$107,117. This is significantly lower compared to state median home values which are \$137,200 in Iowa and \$142,400 in Nebraska. The Region's rent is also relatively low at \$568, compared to Iowa and Nebraska at \$740 and \$773, respectively. Low cost of housing supports the economy by acting as a compelling reason for new residents and workers to move to the Region.

However, the current state of the housing stock can be detrimental to economic growth. The Region's housing stock is aging. Currently 61.5% of the total housing stock is over 50 years old. Comparatively, the proportion of houses 50 or more year old is 41.7% in Iowa, 47.5% in Nebraska, and 39.3% nationwide. Along this line, only 8.5% of the housing stock has been constructed in the since 2000, nearly half that of the States and national percentages.

Table 5. Housing Characteristics of the SIMPCO CEDS Region

Housing Stock Characteristics		Age		
Median home value	\$107,117	After 1999	6,306	8.5%
Median rent	\$568	1970-1999	22,345	30.0%
Total housing units	74,402	Before 1970	45,751	61.5%
Occupied	68,489			
Owner occupied	47,875			
Renter occupied	20,914			
Vacant	5,613 (7.5%)			

Source: U.S. Census Data, American Community Survey 2017 5-Year Estimates

## 7. *Transportation*

The SIMPCO CEDS Region is served primarily by four transportation systems. These include the road network, air travel, railroad, and river transport. Interstate 29 runs generally north to south near the western portion of the Region, and serves as a significant route for transporting goods and people. It also connects the Region to other significant transportation routes such as Interstate 80, situated south of the Region. The Region is also served by several U.S. highways which include Highways 20, 59 and 75.

The Sioux Gateway Airport is the largest airport in the Region. There a number of smaller air fields as well. Residents can travel slightly outside the Region to the Sioux Falls Regional Airport, in Sioux Falls, SD, or to the Omaha Eppley Airfield in Omaha, NE, in order to reach more destinations.

The Missouri River separates Nebraska from Iowa, serving as the western border for Plymouth, Woodbury, and Monona Counties and the eastern border of Dakota County. This river provides more than just recreational opportunities; barges along the river allow the transportation of goods without having to use land based transportation methods.

A final option for the transportation of goods and services is the railroads. There are three Class 1 railroads and one Shortline railroad.

More information on transportation in the Region can be found on the [SIMPCO website](https://simpco.org/divisions/transportation-planning). (<https://simpco.org/divisions/transportation-planning>)

### ***Environmental Context***

Below is a brief overview of the environmental context of the SIMPCO CEDS Region. More information regarding the environmental context can be found in Appendix E.

#### ***1. Climate***

The climate of the SIMPCO CEDS Region is characterized by large changes in temperature throughout the year and moderate precipitation. Generally, the Region is colder and experiences more snowfall compared to national averages.

Table 6. SIMPCO CEDS Region Climate Comparison

	SIMPCO CEDS Region	United States
High temperature in July	84.9°	85.8°
Low temperature in January	9.1°	21.7°
Annual rainfall	30.6"	38.1"

Annual snowfall	32.0"	27.8"
Days with sunshine	208.5	205

Source: NOAA National Centers for Environmental Information, Climate at a Glance

## 2. **Natural Resources**

From an economic perspective, arguably the Region's most valuable natural resources are the soil and climate that enable farming and ranching. The Missouri River is another important natural resource. Water is important for agriculture, manufacturing, and utilities. There are also transportation options that utilize the River. In addition, the River acts as the setting for other natural resources to thrive, such as vegetation, fish and wildlife. This can contribute to recreational and tourism based economic activities. Due to the expansion of agricultural and urban areas, the Region's biodiversity and plant and animal habitats have declined over time.

## 3. **Rivers and Watersheds**

The Region includes seven major rivers including: Missouri River, Big Sioux River, Floyd River, West Fork Little Sioux River, Little Sioux River, Maple River, and Soldier River. There are numerous streams and creeks that feed into these.

Active watershed districts and plans in the Region include: SIMPCO Missouri River Recovery Implementation Committee, SIMPCO Water Resources Committee, Lewis and Clark Natural Resources District (NRD), Papio-Missouri River NRD, Big Sioux River Water Quality Improvement Plan Iowa-South Dakota, Blue Lake Water Quality Improvement Plan Monona County, and Floyd River Water Quality Improvement Plan.

## 4. **Environmental Concerns**

The SIMPCO CEDS Region has recently experienced many significant flood events. In response to the March 2019 flooding event, SIMPCO gathered resources and links to funding programs for member counties and communities, which can be found on the SIMPCO website. SIMPCO is currently updating the Hazard Mitigation Plan for the five counties located within Iowa. The Dakota County Hazard Mitigation Plan was adopted in January 2017.

Like elsewhere, the Region must also prepare for the effects of climate change. The Region anticipates changes to precipitation and temperature which may affect the agricultural industry. Additionally, more extreme and frequent hazardous events are likely to occur, disrupting daily economic activities.





## SWOT Analysis

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A SWOT Analysis is an exercise used to reflect on the current state of the regional economy by identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The [U.S. EDA](#) defines the SWOT components in the following way:

**Strengths** are a region's relative competitive advantages (e.g., industry supply chains and clusters, extensive port, rail, and broadband assets, specialized workforce skills, higher education levels, collaboration among stakeholders) and are often internal in nature.

**Weaknesses** are a region's relative competitive disadvantages (e.g., a risk-averse or change-resistant regional culture); these are also generally internal in nature.

**Opportunities** are chances or occasions for regional improvement or progress (e.g., expansion of a biosciences research lab in the region), and are often external in nature.

**Threats** are chances or occasions for negative impacts on the region or regional decline (e.g., several companies in the region considering moving to lower-cost areas of the state), also often are external in nature.

A region may be able to capitalize on strengths and opportunities, as well as better understand factors that may contribute to a region's economic growth. Likewise, identification of weaknesses and threats can inform sources of possible economic decline and guide strategies for overcoming those factors.



## Methods

In order to complete the SWOT Analysis, SIMPCO staff first looked at the results of the SWOT Analysis completed in 2014 that was used to write the CEDS 2015-2019 Plan. This analysis provided a foundation from which to complete the update. SIMPCO staff and the CEDS Committee looked at each item within the four categories. The items were evaluated for current relevancy and determined to be either still relevant, no longer relevant, or relevant but belonging to a different category (such as an opportunity turning into a strength).

In addition to this, the SIMPCO staff and CEDS Committee members evaluated the results of a survey that was distributed to communities within the SIMPCO CEDS Region. This 16 question survey was developed around the SWOT Analysis. The results of this survey can be found in Appendix B. While the survey responses were not directly integrated within the SWOT Analysis results, these responses were used to inform and guide the CEDS Committee discussions. Themes and individual responses were discussed at a committee meeting and either added to the SWOT Analysis or determined to be incorrect or not relevant.

Finally the committee looked to external resources. These included the U.S. EDA Innovation Index, regional demographics, industry clusters, environmental context, and current events.

Table 7. SWOT Components

<b>Sub-Section</b>	<b>Contents</b>
<b>Location</b>	Six-county (Cherokee, Dakota, Ida, Monona, Plymouth, Woodbury), two-state region (Iowa and Nebraska)
<b>SWOT List</b>	Evaluation of 2015-2019 existing SWOT list and additions based on survey and external resources.
<b>SWOT Survey</b>	132 responses to 16 survey questions centered on SWOT related themes
<b>U.S. EDA Innovation Index</b>	SIMPCO Region Innovation Index score and recommendations
<b>Region Demographics</b>	Census demographics: population, employment and labor force, industries, unemployment, wage – income, poverty, education
<b>Industry Clusters</b>	US cluster mapping data
<b>Environmental Context</b>	Land use, transportation, watersheds, soils, floodplains and natural hazards, site contamination, air and water quality, endangered and threatened species, historic, cultural and archeological resources
<b>Economic Resilience and Global Competitiveness</b>	Economic shifts and regional stakeholder collaboration in post-disruption stage, foreign direct investments (FDI) & exports

## ***Strengths***

Strong agricultural economy • Interconnected transportation network (rail, interstate, river, air) • Culture of strong work ethic • Low energy costs; dependable energy • Leadership committed to economic growth • Strong educational system (including public, private, and non-degree programs) • Strong technical education for trade skills • Workforce development agency • Low unemployment rate • Readily available water • High air quality • Low commute time • Low cost of living for a high quality of life • Low housing costs • Cultural diversity • Proximity to markets due to central location • Legacy of manufacturing and embracing latest manufacturing technology • Recent growth of skilled workforce with apprenticeships, internships, and career development center • Career Academy recently developed with local school districts • Crime rate is decreasing

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## ***Weaknesses***

Lack of housing (both in terms of quantity and variety) • Housing stock is aging • Decline in working-age population • Lack of entrepreneurial opportunities • Inability to attract and retain young workers • Aging infrastructure (pipes, sewers, electrical) • Lack of apprenticeship opportunities • Declining overall regional population • Lack of adequate air transportation service • Lack of distance learning plan (in regards to consolidated school districts) • Lack of a land grant university • Inadequate broadband coverage • Lack of childcare facilities (both in terms of quantity and distribution)

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## ***Opportunities***

Aggressive workforce development • Regional business retention • Infrastructure Improvements (roads, bridges, broadband, rail, airport, etc.) • Promote low cost of living • Attract art and entertainment options • Create a consolidated, high-quality job website • Market our regional successes more aggressively • Become more kid-friendly • Attract new residents, while also retaining current population • Embrace technological advances such as automation, particularly in the manufacturing industry • Attract young workers • Immigrants and international workers can bolster economic outputs

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## ***Threats***

Void left from the temporary employees of large-scale projects • Worker retention • Effective training in local colleges and trade schools to keep up with industry needs and demands • Lack of business succession planning • Loss of available funds as population declines • Loss of political influence due to declining population • Adverse natural and environmental impacts • Lack of qualified and eligible workers • Young people moving out of region • Declining population can result in loss of available funds.

## Strengths

The SIMPCO CEDS Region has numerous assets that drive economic development and contribute to a high quality of life. The primarily rural region has a long agricultural history. Today, that history translates to a modern and **strong agricultural economy**. In addition to agriculture, the local economy is driven by manufacturing. The manufacturing industry has been the cornerstone for many communities within the Region including Sioux City, South Sioux City, and Le Mars dating back over one-hundred years. This **legacy of manufacturing** also encompasses the Region's culture of **embracing the latest manufacturing technology**. As the Region looks ahead, this means continued support of trade and technical education, as well as positioning itself at the forefront of workplace automation and robotics. By having two strong industries, the Region has been able to count on the stability that arises from that economic diversity. Not only is this diversity an advantage, but the two distinct industries are able to complement each other. Many manufacturing companies in the Region use local, agricultural products.



Early distribution method used by Wells Enterprises, Inc.  
located in Le Mars, Iowa

Additionally, an important economic advantage for the SIMPCO CEDS Region is the **central location**, relative to the larger region and country. This central location eases access to a range of markets. Cities such as Sioux Falls, Omaha, Des Moines, and Minneapolis are all quickly accessible from most communities within the Region. Beyond that, the **highly connected transportation network** (composed of highways, interstates, rail, river, and air travel) connect the Region to national and international markets.

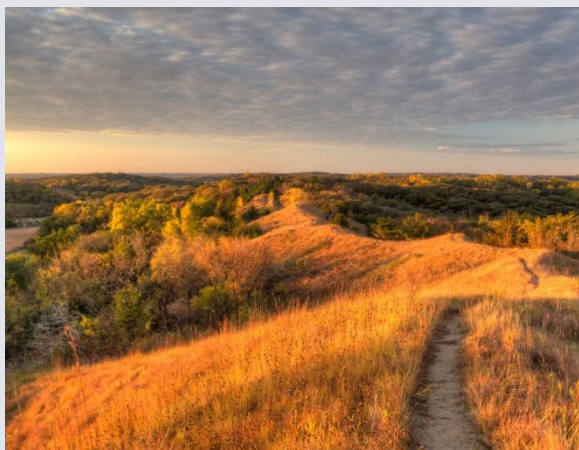
**2,300**

Career Academy  
enrollment for the  
2018-19 school year

Another strength of the Region is the **variety and quality of available education** and tools devoted to workforce development. Communities are served by strong private and public school districts, as well as less traditional educational resources such as the **Career Academy** in Sioux City. Adults can continue their education at a local college or university, or pursue **trade and technical education** at one of the many trade schools, community colleges, and technical programs. More recently, efforts by

community and industry leaders have focused on bringing more **apprenticeships and internships** to the Region.

Furthermore, a strong economy contributes to the quality of life that residents and workers experience. Along this line, several characteristics contribute to the Region's



Loess Hills

**high quality of life**, which supports the current workforce and encourages future growth. Residents within western Iowa and eastern Nebraska are fortunate to be able to **easily access clean water and air**. With this, proximity to the **Loess Hills** landform is unique to the Region. Additional positive characteristics include **low commute times, low housing costs, and a decreasing crime rate**. Ultimately these contribute to a high quality life, which can be used to entice new businesses and residents to the area.

Finally, the culture of this Region is an asset to the economy. The **"Midwestern work ethic"** can be seen in the hard working individuals and resilient businesses throughout the Region. In addition to this, the Region has a **legacy of embracing diversity**. The Region values diversity of residents and perspectives, and believes that this creates a more stable and sustainable economy. Furthermore, immigration from other states and countries is vital for the Region's growth goals. Finally, local **government, business, and community leaders** have proven through decisions and actions that they are dedicated to issues related to economic development.

## Weaknesses

Despite the many strengths of the SIMPCO CEDS Region, there are several factors that limit economic development and potential growth. A weakness that is discussed frequently by regional leaders, stakeholders, and residents relates to housing. While low housing costs are a valued characteristic for the Region, a main contributing factor to the low cost, is the age of many structures. The **aging housing stock** acts as a barrier to the Region's ability to look and function at a high level that is standard in other parts of the country. One reason is that older homes require financial investment in terms of remodeling and renovation, not only to keep up with modern trends, but more importantly to prevent visible signs of disrepair and maintain structural

61.5%

of the housing stock is  
**50 or more** years old



integrity. Additionally, older homes are less energy-efficient than new construction. Furthermore, as a result of little new construction, the Region is experiencing a **lack of housing in terms of quantity and variety**. Several communities express the sentiment that open jobs cannot be filled due to lack of viable housing for potential workers.

Another point of weakness experienced by residents is inadequate infrastructure. **Aging infrastructure**, including water and sewer pipes, electrical systems, and roads, plague the Region. Substantial investment will be required to repair, replace, and maintain these systems. While aging infrastructure may be common to many regions in the country, more unique to rural areas is the **inadequate broadband coverage and quality**. Recently, communities and leaders have pushed to expand the broadband coverage in the Region, and seen successes. However, the quality of that coverage is low compared to many other area of the country.

**Broadband helps create jobs. It also helps rural areas offer the programs and services that strengthen economies and encourage growth.**

- Timothy Helmbrecht, USDA Rural Development Acting State Director in Iowa

Lack of community services and opportunities are also commonly cited weaknesses. Educational opportunities can be a strong reason for young people to stay or move to a location. While the existing educational institutions are strong, the SIMPCO CEDS Region falls behind in other potential opportunities that could be incorporated in the overall educational network. For example, a **lack of apprenticeship opportunities** and **no land grant university** potentially limit individuals who seek higher levels of education. Furthermore, the **lack of a distance learning plan**, in regards to consolidated school districts, can act as a barrier for rural students to receive a quality education. In addition to education, work opportunities are hugely influential in a person's ability or willingness to live in a region. One component of this that is lacking in the Region is the **lack of entrepreneurial opportunities** and supports. Entrepreneurs can be used as a measurement for economic health and a catalyst for development. Additionally, childcare is vital to any employed individual with children. The Region **lacks childcare facilities** both in terms of quantity and distribution, and this can directly prevent individuals from joining the workforce. Each of these factors affect residents' daily lives and long term decisions, and can contribute to a lower quality of life. This can also hinder potential new residents and workers from moving to the Region.

Finally, the SIMPCO CEDS Region's **population is both declining and aging**. Overall the Region is seeing population loss, however this is exacerbated in rural areas and smaller communities. Furthermore, the population decline is not consistent in all ages. The working-age population is declining at a faster rate than retirees. This trend is particularly troubling when thinking about the decline in potential families and children that result from a declining young adult population. This can have long-term ramifications in terms of who will compose the future workforce. The crux of this issue, is the Region's **inability to attract and retain young workers**.

## Opportunities

The biggest opportunity to foster economic development is to prioritize the attraction of new residents and workers to the Region. While general population growth would help the local economy, stakeholders identify two populations to target: young workers and immigrants. Due to the aging population, **young workers** are important to revitalize and bolster the workforce. Furthermore, in order for the population to grow, **immigrants are important community members**. Communities have the opportunity to welcome new residents and workers from other states and countries. Not only will this allow the population to grow, but these incoming residents can fill necessary jobs and bolster regional stability through diversity.

The SIMPCO CEDS Region also sees opportunity in **promoting existing quality of life components**. For example, the low housing costs are a huge advantage that would be attractive to potential young residents looking to settle down and buy a first home. However, this needs to be promoted and marketed in order for other parts of the country to know about it. In addition, the Region can work to make other facets of the community more attractive in terms of quality of life. Recent efforts to attract **arts and entertainment** options have been successful, but there is opportunity to expand on this. Furthermore, the Region sees the need to cater to children and **become more kid-friendly** in order to attract and retain young families.



Sioux City Art Center attracts visitors of all ages and backgrounds.

Ultimately jobs are the most important factor in building and retaining any region's workforce. There are opportunities to better support both businesses and workers.

Components of this include **aggressive workforce development** and **regional business retention**. Further investment and focus higher education, especially in developing trade school programs specific to the Region's needs, can help support further business development and retention. Investment in workers and businesses can also be a valuable marketing tool. **Regional successes can be marketed more aggressively** in order to attract attention and awareness to the Region. Finally, the Region sees an opportunity in creating a **consolidated, high-quality job website**. Current job openings are posted by individual businesses and organizations. While some communities may have a somewhat central location for their postings, a regional website enables a more collaborative effort to attract and retain workers, and these jobs are more likely to be seen by a larger audience.

## Threats

While promoting population growth may be an important opportunity for the SIMPCO CEDS Region, the inverse, population decline is also possible and, according to many data sources, more likely.

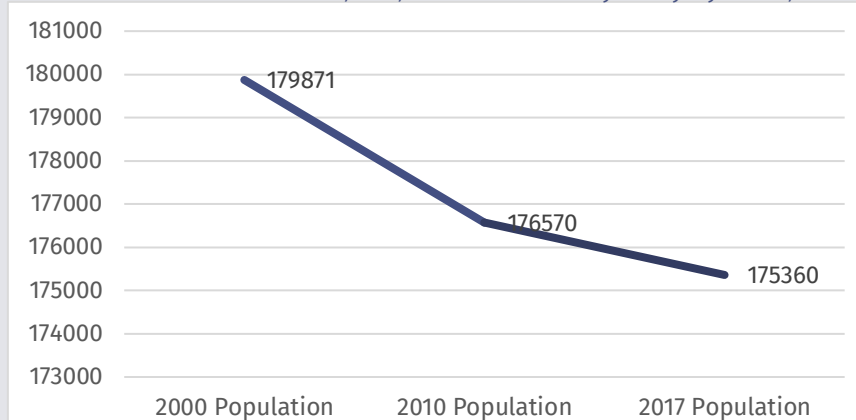
The **consequences of population decline**

threaten the Region's economic development. Population is directly tied to federal funds that are available to a community, which means that as the population declines, so do **available funds**. Additionally, fewer workers may result in **lower tax revenue** in terms of property tax, income tax, and sales tax. There is an unfortunate cycle that appears here – less revenue results in less capacity to complete projects that address community weaknesses (such as improving infrastructure). This may result in residents deciding to move to another region or community, which results in less revenue, and so the cycle continues. In addition to this loss of revenue, a lower or declining population can result in a **loss of political influence**.

Along these lines, a threat identified by the CEDS Committee is the potential **void left from the temporary employees of large-scale projects**, such as road or infrastructure projects. These workers will either be absorbed into other regional jobs, or be required to move elsewhere for work. Depending on the scale of that project, it can be a painful transition to lose homeowners, renters, and consumers of goods and services.

### Population of the SIMPCO CEDS Region

Source: U.S. Decennial Census 2000, 2010; American Community Survey 5-year Est., 2017



An additional threat faced by the Region is the adequacy of training of new and current workers. The ***training provided by local colleges and trade schools does not always align with industry needs and desires***. Not only can this be detrimental to students seeking employment, but this can be a challenge for businesses trying to find workers with necessary skill sets. Furthermore, as the population and workforce continue to age, many businesses and organizations are faced with trying to fill upper level jobs that workers may not have been trained for. ***Lack of succession planning*** can deeply hurt any organization, as transitions are often when a business is most vulnerable.

Finally, adverse ***natural and environmental impacts can threaten the regional economy***. This point has been clearly illustrated by the flooding of 2019. Many communities in western Iowa and throughout Nebraska have been affected by flood water on multiple occasions throughout the year. While natural hazards, such as summer and winter storms, flooding, tornadoes, etc., have always been present in the Region, climate change is likely to result in more frequent and intense hazardous events. These events can halt routine economic activities, create challenges for employees to commute to work or consumers to travel to businesses. Furthermore, recovery efforts can divert funds intended for other community enhancement projects.



Floodwaters in Hornick in Woodbury County, 2019



## ***Strategic Direction and Action Plan***

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The CEDS vision statement was developed using the previous statement as a foundation. Input was gathered from CEDS Committee members and residents of the Region who participated in the survey. This vision statement reflects the Region's ultimate aspirations related to economic development. In generating this CEDS update, it was used to guide the committee and develop more specific goals.

### *CEDS Vision Statement:*

***The SIMPCO region is a preferred location for innovative businesses and entrepreneurs who desire a skilled workforce, quality infrastructure, high quality of life for residents, and a positive business environment in order to contribute to continual regional economic success.***

This vision is supported by several overarching goals and specific action items, which are described in the remainder of this chapter. The Strategic Direction and Action Plan was created to address the components of SWOT Analysis. Goals and actions items capitalize on the Region's strengths and attempt to harness various opportunities. Likewise, this chapter reflects upon the weaknesses and threats to the Region, and attempts to address these.

Through the SWOT Analysis process, five significant categories were identified. These are:

- Economic Development
- Work Force Development
- Infrastructure Improvement
- Housing
- Quality of life

Each category is discussed as a distinct sub-section within this Action Plan. A larger goal with more detailed objectives were generated. Then detailed actions with project descriptions were developed to achieve these objects. The projects and actions discussed within each section will become the primary functions of the CEDS Committee moving forward and all regional stakeholders who wish to bolster the local economy.



## **Economic Development**

**Goal:** To create high-skill, higher-wage jobs within innovative clusters as a means to diversify the regional economy and improve economic conditions in the area for years to come.

### **Objectives:**

1. Develop a diverse industrial and commercial base that is competitive in the global economy.
2. Continue supporting the creation of a successful environment for local business creation and business retention.
3. Target innovation clusters, such as “green” technology and value-added agriculture industries.
4. Foster the growth of the job support network necessary to maintain the high-skill positions and cluster developments.

### **Actions:**

Project Description	Invested Parties	Timeline	Priority
Continue existing business expansion programs and annually meet with local employers to discuss business needs and concerns.	SIMPCO, Chambers of Commerce, business associations, economic development directors	Long-Term	High
Improve business retention by creating programs that encourage businesses to stay through creative incentives.	City, County, and economic development organizations	Long-term	High
Recruit new businesses from targeted industries that complement the Region’s economic base.	City, County, and regional economic development organizations	Long-term	High
Offer technical assistance to local communities when developing economic development programs and applying to EDA and other grant options.	SIMPCO	Long-term	Medium
Collaborate with regional economic development efforts and initiatives to encourage and support entrepreneurship and business start-up programs.	City, County, and regional economic development organizations, local entrepreneurship groups	Short-term	Medium
Work with organizations to provide a business start-up	Local education institutions, local	Long-term	High

toolkit for new entrepreneurs and encourage experienced entrepreneurs to mentor local leaders, local investors, and potential entrepreneurs in how to navigate the entrepreneurial process.

entrepreneurs, Chambers of Commerce, business associations

Develop a network of lenders and investors to provide start-up capital for new businesses and entrepreneurs.	Local lenders, SEDC, local entrepreneurship groups, regional economic groups	Short-term	Low
Support efforts to mechanize certain services as needed.	Regional economic development organizations	Long-term	low
Assist businesses with succession planning.	Chambers of commerce, economic development directors, private businesses; local SBDC	Long-term	High

## **Workforce Development**

**Goal:** To develop and retain a highly-trained, competitive and entrepreneurial workforce that addresses and compliments the growing needs of the regional business community.

### **Objectives:**

1. Facilitate collaboration among economic development stakeholders to address the current and future employment and skill needs of the regional business community.
2. Improve workforce retention for local businesses.
3. Foster a workforce that can identify and execute on entrepreneurial opportunities.
4. Support further education opportunities for current and potential workers.
5. Encourage local trades businesses to offer apprenticeship opportunities.

### **Actions:**

Project Description	Invested Parties	Timeline	Priority
Establish a direct conduit between industries and potential workers by marketing internships and apprenticeships at local education institutions and job fairs.	Private businesses, local education institutions, workforce development, Chambers of Commerce, economic development directors	Long-term	High
Monitor employers and worker training programs to ensure they provide the skill sets needed for available employment.	Private businesses, local education institutions, workforce development	Long-term	High
Support entrepreneurial training through direct mentorship, networking, and educational institutions.	Private businesses, local education institutions, workforce development	Long-term	High
Encourage area school districts to integrate science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) into educational programs.	Educational institutions	Short-term	Medium
Support career academies.	Educational institutions, Chambers of commerce, local entrepreneurship groups, Cities, Counties	Short-term	Medium
Create a regional working group to market current business	SIMPCO, Chambers of Commerce, economic development directors,	Long-term	Medium

needs and desired target industries for future expansion.	private business leaders		
Work with existing programs to market potential employees for regional businesses.	Regional economic and workforce development groups, state agencies and initiatives	Long-term	High
Create a unified economic development marketing message.	SIMPCO, SEDC	Long-term	Low
Establish a regional database of trade-based positions.	Workforce development, Chambers of Commerce, economic development directors, private businesses, SIMPCO	Short-term	Low
Encourage and support rural school districts in the creation of a distance learning plan.	Educational institutions, cities, counties	Long-term	Medium
Create a consolidated, regional website to promote and market regional assets and jobs, which can be used to connect employers with jobseekers from inside and outside the Region.	Chambers of Commerce, economic development directors, workforce development, private businesses, local newspapers, cities, counties, SIMPCO	Long-term	High
Support programs that provide education and training to immigrants.	Private businesses, educational institutions, workforce development	Long-term	High
Support the development and construction of educational programs and facilities that contribute to workforce development.	SIMPCO, cities, counties, economic development directors, educational institutions	Long-term	High

## Infrastructure Improvement

**Goal:** To invest in infrastructure improvements such as roads, bridges, sewers, water facilities, broadband, and multi-modal transportation systems that will strengthen and diversify the regional economy.

### Objectives:

1. Maintain and expand the Region's infrastructure to address the needs of existing businesses and residences, as well as accommodate the needs of new and expanding businesses.
2. Target infrastructure improvements to areas in the Region with the greatest need.
3. Pursue the development and maintenance of regional multi-modal transportation networks as a critical resource for economic growth.

### Actions:

Project Description	Invested Parties	Timeline	Priority
Continue to support construction and expansion of all transportation modes through regional transportation efforts, applications for state and federal funding, and coordination of local planning needs.	SIMPCO, Chambers of Commerce, economic development directors	Long-term	High
Study the feasibility of incorporating additional airlines to serve the SIMPCO CEDS Region	Chambers of Commerce, economic development directors, private businesses	Long-term	Medium
Improve and expand the current rail system, incorporating an additional rail storage site.	Chambers of Commerce, economic development directors, private business leaders, SIMPCO	Long-term	Medium
Assist and support municipalities with construction, replacement, and maintenance of infrastructure related to water and sewer. These items may include: water towers, water and waste water treatment facilities.	SIMPCO, local municipalities	Long-term	High
Seek fiber optic improvements for rural areas.	SIMPCO, local municipality and county staff, Economic development directors	Long-term	Medium

Continue pressing IA, NE, and SD legislators to provide adequate funding for regional infrastructure.	Chambers of Commerce, local legislators and elected officials, local business community, SIMPCO	Long-term	High
Support efforts to renew barge traffic along the Missouri River as an alternative mode of transporting goods.	SIMPCO, private business, Chambers of Commerce, economic development directors	Long-term	low
Assist municipalities and counties with storm water and natural hazard mitigation infrastructure.	SIMPCO, economic development directors, Cities, Counties, private businesses and developers	Long-term	High



## Housing

**Goal:** To develop diverse housing options for all income levels to ensure the availability of housing supply for workers brought in by expanding businesses and new firms in the Region.

### Objectives:

1. Work with employers, state and local housing and development agencies, banks, and private developer to encourage the development of affordable housing on a regional basis.
2. Balance workforce needs and elderly needs with housing needs as a means to identify the extent of need for diverse housing types in the Region.

### Actions:

Project Description	Invested Parties	Timeline	Priority
Seek funding for housing rehabilitation, housing CDBG programming, homebuyer purchase programs, and housing assessments and plans.	SIMPCO, local municipalities, economic development directors	Long-term	High
Encourage the development of multi-family housing to support young families, elderly populations, and low-income families, so that residents have options for purchase or rent.	Local municipalities, SIMPCO, IA Workforce Development	Long-term	High
Ensure Federal, State, and Municipal codes allow for and encourage attainable housing options.	Local municipalities, SIMPCO, Workforce Development	Long-term	Medium
Establish short-term housing options for new workers and residents.	Local municipalities, SIMPCO, Workforce Development	Long-term	Medium
Develop a resource to collect and distribute information about federal and state funds available for housing and workforce housing. Assist communities with having information ready for developers.	Cities, Counties, Workforce Development, economic development directors, SIMPCO	Long-term	High

## Quality of Life

**Goal:** To encourage resident retention and to develop cost-effective, regional solutions to local problems that better serve residents while providing a high quality of life.

### Objectives:

1. Encourage the development of a vibrant consumer environment including amenities such as personal services, eateries, child care, grocery stores and co-ops.
2. Support projects that enhance and sustain the quality of life in the Region, such as smart growth, walkable communities, and mixed-use development.
3. Increase awareness among the Region of the recreational and cultural resources, public services, and consumer alternatives available in every county of the Region.

### Actions:

Project Description	Invested Parties	Timeline	Priority
Support and organize family-oriented cultural events, housing options, businesses, and institutions that are instrumental in maintaining the Region's high quality of life.	SIMPCO, chambers of Commerce, business associations, economic development directors, cultural groups, local education institutions	Long-term	Medium
Improving transportation access and connectivity to parks and natural resources.	SIMPCO, Counties, IDOT, DNR	Long-term	High
Ensure that targeted businesses match the goals and objectives of the community.	Economic development directors, Chambers of Commerce	Long-term	Medium
Encourage development near transportation hubs and along public transit corridors.	Chambers of Commerce, economic development directors, business associations	Long-term	High
Continue to address the crime rate through proactive enforcement.	City/County local officials and law enforcement	Long-term	High
Encourage communities to pursue downtown and Main Street revitalization.	State/Federal economic development agencies, local government, regional economic development organizations	Long-term	Low

Support regional initiatives that positively impact the environment.	SIMPCO, County and City governments, DNR, local organizations	Long-term	High
Support existing regional and local initiatives aimed at welcoming new immigrants and support expansion to rural areas.	Cultural groups, Cities, Counties, One Siouxland	Long-term	High

## Evaluation Framework

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The CEDS 2020-2024 Plan is a thorough analysis of the current condition and perception of the Region's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, and offers goals, objectives, and actions to support growth from its current conditions. Measurable performance metrics are essential to the document in order to ensure actions are being initiated, projects are being documented, and subsequent results are quantified. The purpose of this section is to state evaluation methods of the CEDS document and assure the successful implementation of the plan.

The concept of regional wealth is weighed heavily when evaluating the effectiveness of the CEDS goals and objectives. To measure progress related to overall job growth and investments in the Region, several measures will be evaluated on an ongoing basis. While some measures directly measure job growth and wealth in the Region, there are several indirect measures that contribute to regional wealth by concentrating on the built environment, social issues, cultural assets, educational offerings, and natural resources.

- Develop and utilize a regional reporting system that includes data for each county
- Regional synchronistic survey
- Number of jobs created after the implementation of the CEDS 2020-2024 Plan
- Number and types of investments taken in the Region
- Number of jobs retained in the Region
- Employment and unemployment figures
- Changes in the economic environment of the Region
- Educational attainment
- Poverty rates
- Median household income
- Organizations forged to build partnerships among invested partners to increase economic resiliency within the Region
- Monitor crime rates
- Monitor water/air quality
- Housing statistics
- Walkability score
- Demographics
- Monitor county business patterns to commute business formation rate/declines
- Implementation of specified projects
- Monitor the quality, quantity, and dispersal of childcare facilities
- Immigration statistics

The CEDS Committee will reconvene on a quarterly basis to evaluate the effectiveness of the goals and objectives as written, in addition to pursuing future resiliency efforts. Individual projects throughout the Region will be examined for congruency to the goals and objectives, and will be documented as such. In addition to evaluation of current actions within the year, the committee will also discuss whether the CEDS 2020-2024 Plan is effective, and if current implementation and action items are meeting the expectation of the Region. Finally, the committee will suggest changes to the document for future updates that may make it more effective for the Region's use.

Refer to Appendix F for the Evaluation Framework Scorecard.

## ***Economic Resiliency***

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Regional economic prosperity is linked to an area's ability to withstand, prevent, or quickly recover from major disruptions to its underlying economic base. The SIMPCO CEDS Region relies upon several economic development partnerships to build and sustain its ability to avoid, withstand, and recover from economic shifts. The Region has actively prepared to mitigate economic impacts from weather, employment, and natural disasters with pro-active planning, ongoing partnerships and groups, and responsive initiatives listed below.

### **SIMPCO Region Economic Resilience Groups and Initiatives:**

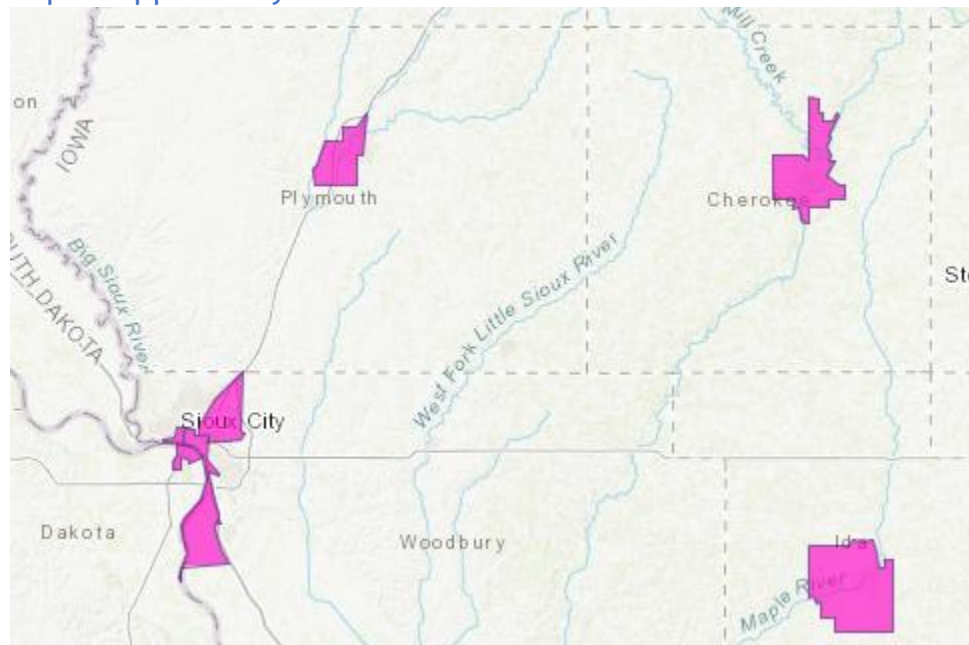
- CEDS Committee – quarterly meetings and CEDS 5-year plan updates
- Grow Siouxland Task Force – established in 2014 to respond to employment issues and continues to meet to respond and mitigate economic shocks
- US EDA Report and Programs – ongoing reporting of major employer loss, economic issues, and exploring program opportunities
- 2018 U.S. Highway 20 Corridor Economic Development Study
- 2019 SIMPCO Regional Economic Diversification Summit (REDS)
- Continued Economic Development Partnerships – list in Appendix B
- County Multi-jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plans – currently updating all counties
- Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) – critical Training Exercises for all first responders
- Tri-State Incident Management Team
- County Emergency Operations Plans
- County Recovery Plans
- Community Evacuation Planning – Sioux City
- Pandemic Flu Committee (Woodbury County, Dakota County, Sioux City)



## Opportunity Zones

The nationwide Opportunity Zone program, created by the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017, was initiated foster job creation and attract long-term, private investment in distressed, low-income areas by harvesting unrealized gains and injecting capital in those designated areas. The State of Iowa hosts 62 Opportunity Zones and the State of Nebraska hosts 44. The SIMPCO CEDS Region contains seven Census tracts designated in five of its counties; four counties in Iowa and one in Nebraska. Counties include Cherokee, Dakota, Ida, Plymouth, and Woodbury.

Figure 6. Map of Opportunity Zones in the SIMPCO CEDS District



Source: <https://opportunityzones.hud.gov/resources/map>

Demographic information that influenced Census tract eligibility for the Opportunity Zones program is shown in the table below.

Table 7. SIMPCO CEDS Region Opportunity Zone Demographic Information

Census Tract ID	State	County	City	Total Census Tract Population	Median Family Income	Poverty Rate	Non-White Population	Bachelors Degree+ Holders	Total Jobs	Total Businesses
1	IA	Woodbury	Sioux City	4,062	\$42,500	13%	31%	10%	3,966	272
15	IA	Woodbury	Sioux City	2,174	\$33,144	37%	65%	4%	1,889	170
36	IA	Woodbury	Sioux City	3,379	\$41,189	29%	55%	9%	17,839	1,000
101	NE	Dakota	South Sioux City	6,697	\$32,928	30%	68%	8%	2,254	194
903	IA	Ida	Ida Grove	2,270	\$66,111	13%	2%	21%	2,276	204
801	IA	Cherokee	Cherokee	5,229	\$58,403	17%	7%	19%	3,870	340
9702	IA	Plymouth	Le Mars	3,677	\$52,917	14%	15%	17%	4,404	411

Source: Economic Innovation Group, Opportunity Zones Map; ESRI; American Community Survey, 2014-2018; Iowa Economic Development Authority

Key to the implementation of qualified projects in the Region's Opportunity Zones is the Region's Chambers of Commerce, City and County Economic Development Departments and Directors, State and Federal Departments, and many community-level partners. These include:

- U.S. Economic Development Administration
- Iowa Economic Development Authority
- Nebraska Department of Economic Development
- SIMPCO
- Siouxland Chamber of Commerce and the Siouxland Initiative
- Siouxland Economic Development Corporation (SEDC)
- Small Business Development Center (SBDC)
- Dakota County Community Development Agency
- Chambers of Commerce: Cherokee, Ida Grove, Le Mars, South Sioux City
- County and City Economic Development Directors

A comprehensive list of key stakeholders and stakeholder groups that would be instrumental in implementing projects in Opportunity Zones can be found in Appendix B.

While no communities have local incentives specifically tied to development in Opportunity Zones, the Region and its respective communities have multiple grant, loan, and incentive options that can be used as tools to bolster development within the Zones. There are nationwide and state-based Opportunity Funds to help spur investment into these areas, as well as certain tax incentives. Several applicable federal programs have made adjustments to their application requirements to add priority points to projects in Opportunity Zones. The White House Opportunity and Revitalization Council has identified over 160 Federal programs where preference or additional support can be granted to Opportunity zones. Examples of programs include Economic Development Assistance programs that allow applications in Opportunity Zones to be eligible for funding if the area would have otherwise failed to meet economic distress criteria, Rural Business Development grants and Capacity Building grants, Brownfields and Land Revitalization grants, and grants for buses and bus facilities. There is potential in almost all opportunities listed in the White House Opportunity and Revitalization Council's program list that may apply to potential projects in the SIMPCO Region's Opportunity Zones.

The SIMPCO Region is very fortunate to contain 7 Opportunity Zones within its boundary. While each community has its unique character and community profile, some priorities remain consistent throughout. Universal factors include the need to develop and maintain a robust workforce, more diverse housing options and the need to address aging housing inventories, further diversification of the regional economy,

further investment in infrastructure, and overall improvements to quality of life to recruit and retain businesses and residents. Incentives available to Opportunity Zones specifically to improve any of the regional priorities above helps our Region address the consequences of an aging population, gaps between the needs of business and the trained workforce available, housing options at all income levels, and obstacles in retaining existing businesses and recruiting new.



Photo: <https://mergeurbandevelopment.com/projects/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/urbane-210-hero.jpg>

The Region currently has one project utilizing a funding opportunity directly tied to being located within an Opportunity Zone and is located in Sioux City (Census tract 36). The Urbane 1220 housing project is a mixed-use infill development will transform a vacant lot on the periphery of downtown Sioux City into 56 residential rental housing units and roughly 6,600 SF of commercial space.

The SWOT process and resulting Strategic Direction and Action Plan provides a good framework to those communities with Opportunity Zones as they promote and prioritize potential Opportunity Zone projects in their cities. While not an all-encompassing list, the action items below have a direct connection to the potential projects within the Region's Opportunity Zones.

#### Economic Development

1. Improve business retention by creating programs that encourage businesses to stay through creative means.
2. Recruit new businesses from targeting industries that complement the Region's economic base.
3. Collaborate with regional economic development efforts and initiatives to encourage and support entrepreneurship and business start-up programs.

#### Workforce Development

1. Monitor employers and worker training programs to ensure they provide the skill sets needed for available employment.
2. Work with existing programs to market potential employees for regional businesses.
3. Support the development and construction of educational programs and facilities that contribute to workforce development.

#### Infrastructure Improvement

1. Continue to support construction and expansion of all transportation modes through regional transportation efforts, applications for state and federal funding, and coordination of local planning needs.
2. Study the feasibility of incorporating additional airlines to serve the SIMPCO CEDS Region.
3. Improve and expand the current rail system, incorporating an additional rail storage site.
4. Assist and support municipalities with construction, replacement, and maintenance of infrastructure related to water and sewer.
5. Seek fiber optic improvements for rural areas.
6. Support efforts to renew barge traffic along the Missouri River as an alternative mode of transporting goods.
7. Assist municipalities and counties with storm water and natural hazard mitigation infrastructure.

### Housing

1. Seek funding for housing rehabilitation, housing CDBG programming, homebuyer purchase programs, and housing assessments and plans.
2. Encourage the development of multi-family housing to support young families, elderly populations, and low-income families to ensure that residents have options for purchase or rent.
3. Establish short-term housing options for new workers and residents.

### Quality of Life

1. Improve transportation access and connectivity to parks and natural resources.
2. Ensure that targeted businesses match the goals and objectives of the community.
3. Encourage development near transportation hubs and along public transit corridors.
4. Encourage communities to pursue downtown and Main Street revitalization.
5. Support existing regional and local initiatives aimed at welcoming new immigrants and support expansion to rural areas.

The CEDS Committee will meet quarterly to discuss and evaluate the goals, objectives, and action items contained in this document and will incorporate a status report and evaluation of current and prospective development in the Region's Opportunity Zones.

## Appendix A: CEDS Committee Members

The CEDS 2020-2024 Plan is the result of a regional capacity-building process designed to provide regional leaders, businesses, counties, and cities with a framework for driving regional economic growth. The CEDS Committee, comprised of informed leaders and representatives of the counties and cities, worked diligently to identify the Region's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats and then translate the results into goals, objectives and potential action items to improve this Region. The strategy committee continues to meet 3-4 times per year to evaluate progress and offer suggestions for improving future CEDS plans.

Al Aymar	Fibercom
Alan Lucken	Plymouth County Economic Development
Alex Smith	Economic Development Administration
Alyssa Silhacek	City of Dakota City
Barbara Sloniker	Siouxland Chamber of Commerce
Bill Anderson	Cherokee County Area Economic Development Council
Brad Newton	Siouxland Chamber of Commerce
Chris McGowan	Siouxland Chamber of Commerce
Christine Zellmer-Zant	United Realty
Clinton Weaver	Onawa Economic Development
Cynthia Hanson	Northeast Community College South Sioux City Extended Campus
Dan Moore	City of Sioux City
David Gleiser	Woodbury County Rural Economic development
Diane Hargens	Western Iowa Tech Community College
Harlan Hanse	City of Marcus – Cherokee County Economic Development
Jessica Carrier	Monona County Economic Development
Jon Winkel	City of Sergeant Bluff
Keith Bohle	Keith Bohle Financial
Keith Radig	Woodbury County Board of Supervisors
Ken Beekley	Siouxland Economic Development Corporation
Kolby DeWitt	Congressman Steve King
Lance Hedquist	City of South Sioux City – City Administrator
Lillyan Rodriguez	Delta Hotels by Marriott
Mark Monson	Sergeant Bluff Planning and Zoning
Marty Dougherty	City of Sioux City – Economic development
Matthew Ung	Woodbury County Supervisor
Mike Collet	City of Sioux City – Airport
Neal Adler	Le Mars Chamber of Commerce
Oscar Gomez	City of South Sioux City – Assistant City Manager
Pat Somsky	South Sioux City Grant Administrator
Perla Alacron-Flory	Sioux City School Board/Court Interpreter
Rita Frahm	Ida County Economic Development
Sam Wagner	MidAmerican Energy
Scott Brekke	Great Southern Bank
Tammy Bramley	Monona County Supervisor
Tom Bacan	Remsen Economic Development
William Gaukel	Long Lines



## Appendix B: SIMPCO CEDS Region Economic Development Partners

The following list contains economic development partners and potential partners. These partnerships will assist in implementing the goals and action items outlined in the CEDS 2020-2024 Plan.

### Federal Partners

- United States Economic Development Administration
- United States Department of Agriculture
- United States Department of Education
- United States Department of Commerce
- United States Department of Transportation
- United States Environmental Protection Agency
- United States Housing and Urban Development
- United States Department of the Interior Indian Affairs

### State Partners

#### Iowa

- Iowa Area Development
- Iowa Agriculture and Land Stewardship Department
- Iowa Department of Education
- Iowa Department of Transportation
- Iowa Economic Development Authority
- Iowa Energy Office
- Iowa Environmental Protection Commission
- Iowa Finance Authority
- Iowa Natural Resource Commission
- Iowa Travel & Tourism
- Iowa Workforce Development
- State Historical Society of Iowa

#### Iowa Higher Education

- Briar Cliff University
- Iowa State University
- Iowa State University Extension
- Morningside College
- St. Luke's College – Unity Point Health
- University of Iowa
- University of Northern Iowa
- Western Iowa Tech Community College

#### Nebraska

- Nebraska Center for Rural Affairs
- Nebraska Department of Agriculture
- Nebraska Department of Economic Development
- Nebraska Department of Game and Parks
- Nebraska Department of Labor and Workforce Development
- Nebraska Department of Natural Resources
- Nebraska Department of Transportation
- Nebraska Energy Office
- Nebraska Environmental Trust
- Nebraska Historical Society
- Nebraska Housing and Community Development
- Nebraska Investment Finance Authority
- Nebraska Public Power District
- Nebraska Tourism Commission

#### Nebraska Higher Education

- Nebraska Indian Community College
- Northeast Community College
- University of Nebraska Extension
- Wayne State College

### Regional Partners

- Center for Industrial Research and Services
- Grow Siouxland Taskforce
- Iowa West Coast Initiative
- Iowa Workforce Development of Siouxland
- Keep Northeast Nebraska Beautiful
- MidAmerican Energy
- North West Rural Electric Cooperative
- Northwest Iowa Development
- Northwest Iowa Power Cooperative
- Small Business Development Center
- Siouxland Chamber of Commerce
- Siouxland Economic Development Corporation
- Siouxland Interstate Metropolitan Planning Council
- The Siouxland Initiative
- US Highway 20 Corridor Association
- Western Iowa Advantage

**Cherokee County Partners**

- Aurelia Economic Development Corporation
- Cherokee Area Economy Development Corporation
- Cherokee Chamber of Commerce
- Cherokee County
- Cherokee Industrial Corporation
- Cherokee Regional Medical Center
- Cherokee School District
- Hy-Vee Distribution
- Hy-Vee Food Store
- Marcus Economic Development Corporation
- Mental Health Institute

**Cherokee County Cities**

- Aurelia
- Aurelia Economic Development Corporation
- Cherokee
- Cherokee Area Economic Development
- Cherokee Chamber of Commerce
- Cleghorn
- Larrabee
- Marcus
- Marcus Chamber of Commerce
- Marcus Economic Development corporation
- Meriden
- Quimby
- Washta

**Cherokee County School Districts**

- Alta-Aurelia Community Schools
- Cherokee Community School District
- Marcus-Meriden-Cleghorn Community School District
- River Valley Community School District

**Cherokee County Hospitals**

- Cherokee Regional Medical Center
- Cherokee Mental Health Institute

**Dakota County Partners**

- BPI
- Dakota County
- Dakota County Connections
- Great West Casualty
- Leadership Dakota County
- South Sioux City School District
- Tyson Fresh Meats
- Walmart

**Dakota County Cities**

- City of Dakota City
- City of South Sioux City
- Homer P.R.I.D.E.
- South Sioux City Area Chamber of Commerce & Tourism
- South Sioux City Economic Development
- Village of Emerson
- Village of Homer
- Village of Hubbard
- Village of Jackson

**Dakota County School Districts**

- Allen Consolidated School District
- Emerson-Hubbard School District
- Homer Community Schools
- Ponca Schools
- South Sioux City School District
- St. Michaels School

**Ida County Partners**

- Galva Economic Development Corporation
- GOMACO Corp Inc.
- Horn Memorial Hospital
- Ida County
- Ida County Economic Development Corporation
- Ida Grove Economic Development Corporation
- Midwest Industries Inc.
- OA-BCIG Community School District
- VT Industries Inc.

**Ida County Cities**

- Arthur
- Battle Creek
- Galva
- Galva Economic Development Corporation
- Holstein
- Ida Grove
- Ida Grove Chamber of Commerce

**Ida County School Districts**

- Galva-Holstein Community School District
- Odebolt-Arthur & Battle Creek-Ida Grove Community School District

**Ida County Hospitals**

-Horn Memorial Hospital

**Monona County Partners**

- |  |                                      |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| - Burgess Health Center                      | - Monona County                      |
| - Elmwood Care Center                        | - Monona County Economic Development |
| - Maple Heights                              | - Onawa/Mapleton Schools             |
| - Mapleton Community Development Corporation | -Pleasant View Care Center           |

**Monona County Cities**

- |                    |                   |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| - City of Blencoe  | - City of Rodney  |
| - City of Castana  | - City of Soldier |
| - City of Mapleton | - City of Turin   |
| - City of Moorhead | - City of Ute     |
| - City of Onawa    | - City of Whiting |

**Monona County School Districts**

- |                               |   |
|-------------------------------|---|
| - Whiting School District     | - Maple Valley – Anthon Oto Community School District |
| - West Monona School District |   |

**Monona County Hospitals**

- Burgess Health Center

**Plymouth County Partners**

- |                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| - BoDeans Baking Co.    | - Schuster Co LLC                       |
| - Floyd Valley Hospital | - Wells Blue Bunny                      |
| - Heyl Truck Lines Inc. | - Plymouth County Conservation District |
| - Plymouth County       |   |

**Plymouth County Cities**

- |                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| - Akron Chamber of Commerce     | - City of Oyens                           |
| - Akron Development Corporation | - City of Remsen                          |
| - City of Akron                 | - City of Struble                         |
| - City of Brunsville            | - City of Westfield                       |
| - City of Craig                 | - Le Mars Business Initiative Corporation |
| - City of Hinton                | - Le Mars Chamber of Commerce             |
| - City of Kingsley              | - Remsen Chamber of commerce              |
| - City of Le Mars               | - Remsen Economic Development Group       |
| - City of Merrill               |   |

**Plymouth County School Districts**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| - Akron-Westfield Community School District  | - Le Mars Community School District                 |
| - Hinton community School District           | - Marcus-Meriden-Cleghorn Community School District |
| - Kingsley Pierson Community School District |   |

**Plymouth County Hospitals**

- Floyd Valley Hospital

**Woodbury County**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| - 185 <sup>th</sup> Air National Guard    | - Sioux City Growth Organization             |
| - Downtown Partners Sioux City            | - Sioux City School District                 |
| - Iowa Workforce Development of Siouxland | - Unity Point Health – St. Luke's            |
| - Leadership Siouxland                    | - Woodbury County                            |
| - Mercy Medical Center – Sioux City       | - Woodbury County Rural Economic Development |
| - Seaboard Triumph                        |  |

### ***Woodbury County Cities***

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| - Anthon Community Development Corporation | - City of Sergeant Bluff                           |
| - City of Anthon                           | - City of Sioux City                               |
| - City of Bronson                          | - City of Sloan                                    |
| - City of Correctionville                  | - City of Smithland                                |
| - City of Cushing                          | - Correctionville Chamber of Commerce              |
| - City of Danbury                          | - Merville Chamber of Commerce                     |
| - City of Hornick                          | - Merville Community Development Association, Inc. |
| - City of Lawton                           | - Merville Community Foundation                    |
| - City of Merville                         | - Sergeant Bluff Community Development Corporation |
| - City of Oto                              |  |
| - City of Pierson                          |  |
| - City of Salix                            |  |

### ***Woodbury County School Districts***

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| - Lawton-Bronson Community School District          | - Sioux City Community School District       |
| - Maple Valley Anthon-Oto Community School District | - Westwood Community School District         |
| - Sergeant Bluff-Luton Community Schools            | - Woodbury Central Community School District |

### ***Woodbury County Hospital***

- |   |                                   |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| - Associates for Psychiatric Services, P.C. | - Unity Point Health – St. Luke's |
| - Mercy Medical Center – Sioux City         |                                   |

## Appendix C: Survey Results

### CEDS 2020-2024 Survey

SIMPCO staff administered a survey to community stakeholders to inform the CEDS update. The survey contained 16 questions developed around the SWOT analysis. One-hundred and thirty-two (132) participants responded to the survey gathered online and paper copies from November 1, 2018 – January 11, 2019. Survey respondent demographics are shown in the graphs below.

#### Q1. What county within the SIMPCO CEDS Region do you live in?

Cherokee County	Dakota County	Ida County	Monona County	Plymouth County	Woodbury County	Other (please specify)
14	4	35	25	13	36	3
10.8%	3.1%	26.9%	19.2%	10.0%	27.7%	2.3%

Other: Harrison, Dakota Dunes, Buena Vista

#### Q2. What age group are you in?

10-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-69	70-79	80+
0	7	23	31	36	21	11	1
0.0%	5.4%	17.7%	23.9%	27.7%	16.2%	8.5%	0.8%

#### Q3. What factors led to your decision to reside in the SIMPCO CEDS Region (select all that apply)?

Family	Quality of life	Recreational opportunities	Employment opportunities	Schools / education	Other (please specify)
84	49	14	58	22	8
64.6%	37.7%	10.8%	44.6%	16.9%	6.2%

Other: Born here, Raised here, ability to have my own small business, Evangelical Free Church

#### Q4. How would you describe yourself in your community (select all that apply)?

A consumer of regional goods and services	95	73.1%
A residential property owner	111	85.4%
Owner or operator of a business	47	36.2%
An employee of a business	43	33.1%
Government employee (local, state, federal)	46	35.4%
An investor or commercial property owner	23	17.7%
Serve as a board member or volunteer for one or more civic or non-profit organizations	74	56.9%
An elected local, state, or federal official	22	16.9%
Other (please specify)	3	2.3%

Other: minority, city clerk, retired executive of locally owned business



Q5. In your opinion, what is the SIMPCO Region's contribution to the nation?

Ag

Ag and industrial

Ag, Manufacturing

Ag/Industry/

Agricultural and Renewable Energy

Agricultural commodities & processed foods, example - evisceration of quadrupeds.

Agricultural goods processing

Agriculture

Agriculture

Agriculture

Agriculture

Agriculture

Agriculture and food processing

Agriculture and Manufacturing

Agriculture and manufacturing industries

Agriculture and value added agricultural

Agriculture, Goods and services

Conscientious people working for common goals

Consumer foods manufacturing and agricultural production

Food basket

Food production and processing - both animal and human foods

Food supplier to the world

Food, feed

Food, Strong work ethic & values

Hard working honest residents

Helping provide a strong Midwest region that, in turn, provides a backbone of support nationally.

Mostly agricultural, some industrial

Personal Computers (Gateway)

Quality of life to raise family, quality education and moral background.

Reliable work force

Renewable energy resources. quality of life

Singular environmental/geography in the Loess Hills, the only place in the US this feature occurs.

This area is heavy in crop and livestock production and processing.

We are another cog in the wheel. No great contribution, just doing our part.

We have big employers within the region that bring economic growth and sustainability to our region. For the most part, many of our government leaders are open to renewable energy sources and alternative medicine, which gives us an edge within the economy.

\*\* Several responses were left out, because they did not answer the posed question.

Q6. In your opinion, what are the region's top three internal strengths and competitive advantages?

1) work ethic of populace, 2) low cost of living 3) quality of life 4) multi state location allows businesses to pick tax environment best for its situation

1)lower cost of living 2)Easy access (transportation) 3)People

Access to buy/sell products. Community growth attraction

Affordable Cost of Living, Technical Training, Job Availability

Agriculture, cost of living, not overpopulated

Agriculture, industry, and strong work ethic

Agriculture, transportation, work ethic

Agriculture, workforce, quality of life

Availability, willingness to work with communities, very up to date on their information

Central Location

Central location, skilled workers, great natural resources

Close-knit communities/small towns, agriculture, manufacturing

Cost of living/ safe/ schools

Crime rate, non-hectic life style, cost of living

Desire to stay and therefore improve the area, innovation, collaborative mentality

Education opportunities - top rate medical facilities - agriculture

Education, employment, community involvement

Employers, Small business growth, and recreational activity growth

Employment, quality of life, access to services

Family living, business opportunity, school system

Farming

Farming, manufacturing and education

Good road access, including rail; lower cost of living; good schools

Good schools, Safe communities, Competitive employment opportunities

Good transportation network, steady economy, good schools

Good work ethic, good transportation network, ag. economy

Great communities, great schools, low cost of living

Great place to live, Access to more populated surrounding markets, Great job opportunities for those who want to work

Industry, Manufacturing, Agricultural

Job availability Rail availability, Airport convenience,

Location and transportation network, competitive energy costs, work ethic (weakening)

Location, accessibility to land, and willingness to grow

Location, Leadership and diversity

Loess Hills. Public Land. Ecotourism.

Low cost of living, good educational system, low crime rates

Low cost of living, low crime, ag based

Low cost of living, low unemployment, community volunteerism

Low cost of living, many job opportunities, friendly and safe towns

Low Unemployment, Affordable Housing, Entertainment
Manufacturing, Quality of Life, Low unemployment
Many ag related and manufacturing jobs. Good schools. Great family place to live.
None
Populations, good educations,
Provides food, industrious, emotionally stable
Quality labor force, high quality farm land, community minded strong value added agriculture industries
Quality of life, education, job opportunities
Quality of Life, Education, Strong demand for workers
Quality of life. Family owned businesses. Strong work ethic.
Quality of workers, Quality of Life, Cost of living
Quality of workforce, employment opportunities and quality schools
Railroads, highways, and river - we have good transportation assets here.
Reasonable cost of living, multi-modes of transportation, quality of residents - education, values, work ethic.
Rural areas are within an easy drive of the resources offered by an urban center. The combination of a low cost of living and a high work ethic should make this region very attractive to business, not only to locate here but also to recruit from-home workers. The tri-state location, with the states separated by rivers, provides a combination of opportunities and choices.
Safe, clean, personable
Strong agricultural standpoint, good network of highways,
Strong workforce, great recreation and strong economy
Transportation System, Work Ethic, Business Climate
Tri-State Area, great place to bring up a family, public safety
Tri-state region, job pool, & hardworking
Work ethic
Work ethic, low cost of living, proximity to raw materials
Work ethic, quality of life, housing costs
Work ethics, education system, quality of life
** Several responses were left out because they did not answer the posed question.

**Q7. In your opinion, what are the region's top internal strengths and competitive advantages (select 1, 2, 3 and so on from the drop down menu next to each idea, "1" most important)?**

The table below shows the quantity of each ranking for the various strength options.

	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>
Strong agricultural economy	32	10	5	8	2	4	2	1	1	1	1	1	1
Good transportation network (roads, rail, air, waterway)	7	15	11	3	4	7	3	3	4	7	0	0	1
Strong work ethic	12	14	16	5	4	2	4	2	1	2	3	1	1
Low energy costs, dependable energy	0	2	4	15	8	8	7	3	7	2	3	3	2
Commitment to economic growth by leadership	2	3	6	5	17	6	3	10	5	5	3	0	0
Strong public/private education, strong technical education for trade skills	3	4	11	9	4	13	13	7	3	0	0	0	0
Have workforce development agency	0	1	1	1	1	5	10	7	8	10	15	6	2
Low unemployment rate	1	4	3	6	11	1	4	6	6	7	6	7	5
Readily and easily available water and high-quality air	1	3	2	3	8	4	5	10	13	8	6	1	1
Low commute time, good schools and low cost of living (high quality of life)	10	8	10	3	4	5	7	5	7	7	3	1	0
Legacy of manufacturing and strong manufacturing base	4	8	3	5	2	7	4	8	6	9	11	0	3
Missouri River and tributaries including Big Sioux, Floyd, Little Sioux, Maple and Soldier	0	4	1	1	2	2	1	1	3	4	8	36	5
Loess Hills landform	6	0	3	3	1	3	2	1	0	2	3	8	41

Q8. In your opinion, what are the region's top three internal weaknesses, needs or faults?

1) lack of high pay jobs 2) competition cities in region have made greater commitment to quality of life amenities which attract workers and jobs 3) high property and income taxes

Affordable housing. Public transportation. Child care

Affordable housing/rental properties

Affordable housing; no succession plan for area businesses (primarily retail); lack of non-skilled workers for manufacturing jobs

Attract Business, Low Unemployment,

Available housing, competitive wages, mental health services

Available workforce, negative self-image, lack of career progression

Available, qualified workforce, housing, high quality jobs

Border state competition, away from center of state (Des Moines metro), few young professionals

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION, LEADERSHIP,

Cost of living and low wages

Crime, Housing Costs, Infrastructure priorities

Distance between schools, small town businesses, drugs

Educational level of work force; low paying jobs

Efficiencies of agriculture require "larger" contributes to loss of population which forces declines in other areas of economy

Entertainment options, Food options, lower paying jobs

Getting membership of communities; getting members to attend meetings

High cost of living, local economic development, support of small businesses

Housing costs, elected officials, & accountability

Housing, child care and workforce availability

Housing, Diversity, Economics

Housing, lack of laborers, farm economy

Housing, local leadership, high taxes

Housing, Workforce, Attract industry or business on By Pass

Information Connectivity/Internet telecom, Available work force, Infrastructure maintenance

Jobs

Lack of affordable housing, lack of younger work force, lack of diversified industries.

Lack of availability of labor, need more skilled workers, need housing

Lack of available workforce

Lack of diversity and fear of diversity, as evidenced by electing people like Steve King. It makes us look uneducated and backward.

Lack of high speed internet in areas, lack of diverse employment opportunities

Lack of higher paying jobs (income inequality), weak increase in population, weather

Lack of moderate cost housing, lack of affordable daycare, poor internet access in rural areas

---

Lack of qualified workers, Lack of amenities, Low population politically

---

Lack of skilled employees, crime rate and not a good interaction between the tri-state area

---

Lack of technology related jobs; infrastructure (roads/highways); Steve King and his lackeys

---

Lack of workforce, lack of education,

---

Local employment - rental units - daycare

---

Location of educational facilities. Districts should not be spread so far apart. This does not attract middle class people to our communities

---

Low education; lack of workforce,

---

Low household incomes/wages, tri-state area, low skill workers

---

Low unemployment, perception of quality of life opportunities, workforce supply

---

More business, better cooperation with each other

---

More jobs than people to fill them

---

More recreation opportunities, low unemployment, lack of young/educated people to lead our communities

---

No regents institution, air service, cooperation

---

Not enough labor source at the moment, some communities have poor leadership, taxes

---

Our media in general needs a lot of work. Though one TV station does well getting the facts right, the others hold a much lower standard of quality, both in writing, visuals, and finding/reporting what is newsworthy. These reflect poorly on our region. Coordinating efforts among counties/states is always a challenge that's difficult to overcome. The divide between those paid very, very well and those who must work hard for very little is wide.

---

Pollution, infrastructure, population decline

---

Poor pay scale, little for people in their 20s to do, too far to drive to metropolitan areas

---

Population decline, child care, internal attitudes

---

Property taxes

---

Roads

---

Roads, housing, recreation

---

Shortage of work force, housing shortages, shrinking population

---

Small town sustainability, high poverty rate, minimal access to quality of life enhancements

---

Steady to slightly declining population. Aging population. Very tight labor market.

---

Systemic racism, substance abuse and addiction, a few influential citizens blocking community progress

---

The political factor - out with the old, in with the new. We need more progressive ideas to be explored to maintain any economic advantage or growth. Older politicians need voted out of office and we need better candidates to come

forward. The I29 construction project is a huge setback for the area. I can't even imagine the kind of money being thrown away at that project.

---

Too low unemployment, lack of housing, expansion opportunities

---

We lose kids after graduation/ not enough housing and low wages

---

We need skilled workers, need housing, need the farm economy to turn around

---

Workforce/ air service/ losing youth

---

Working together, Selfish leadership and Streets



**Q9. In your opinion, what are the top unaddressed needs or internal weakness in the region, the needs which most stand in the way of productive economic development (select 1, 2, 3 and so on from the drop down menu next to each idea, “1” most important)?**

The table below shows the quantity of each ranking for the various weaknesses options.

	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>
Employment opportunities, jobs creation	12	7	5	5	5	2	1	1	7	3	3	4	3	1	3
Local (Region, County, City) government, leadership, economic development	2	9	2	2	3	4	4	6	7	3	5	6	4	2	3
Local regulations, taxes	2	0	6	4	4	4	5	6	4	0	7	5	5	6	2
Workforce (skilled, trained, ready, effective education to meet demands)	15	6	10	11	3	0	5	4	1	4	1	2	1	0	1
Infrastructure (utility: fiber, water, sewer, electric)	3	6	1	9	8	8	6	5	0	4	6	2	5	2	0
Infrastructure (transportation: roads, transit, air, rail, waterway)	3	5	1	2	5	8	6	7	4	5	3	2	6	2	2
Brain drain, population decline (loss of young, educated)	11	11	9	3	2	4	8	3	4	3	1	1	2	2	0
Housing	12	8	13	8	2	3	4	11	1	3	1	1	2	0	0
Internal attitudes, image	6	3	4	4	10	7	6	5	9	0	2	3	2	2	0
Increasing crime rate	0	2	2	0	0	1	1	1	8	7	3	7	3	7	19
Consolidated school districts and lack of distance learning plan	1	2	1	1	3	3	4	7	3	8	12	3	4	8	3
Support for small/entrepreneur business (financing, invest)	1	3	2	6	4	6	7	2	5	8	4	10	2	4	1
Lack of business succession planning	2	2	2	5	6	6	0	2	5	7	5	5	11	5	5
Quality of life (access to recreational and cultural opportunities, access to nutrition food, sense of security, liberty)	1	2	4	4	3	5	4	1	2	5	4	5	6	12	9
Childcare	4	6	10	5	8	1	2	1	1	2	4	5	4	4	10

Q10. In your opinion, what are the region's top three internal opportunities?

1) promote affordability 2) greater region wide marketing 3) business recruiting

Agricultural related business, quality of environment, quality of life.

Alternative energy, food processing, information technology

Business Recruitment, Tech Ed Advancement, Housing Expansion

cyber security, value added ag, ag research

Distant skill-based learning. Low to moderate income housing. Child care availability

educated and trained employees, waste management, housing cost

education, employment, growth

education, people, and jobs

grow skilled workforce, promote low cost of living, support for families such as child care

Grow the population, increase educational opportunities, promote quality of life

housing growth, business growth, tourism

Housing, economic growth and education

housing, infrastructure, long range planning

Housing, tech education,

immigration/diversity, technologically skilled young people, manufacturing, wind energy

improve housing opportunities; improve quality of life opportunities; child care

Industry

Infrastructure, job creation

Investment in talent retention, Development of local quality of life initiatives

Job growth, Agriculture, small business opportunities

Jobs, School System, Family Living

Land to develop, proactive government response to development, access to good transportation

location, job pool, & good schools

Location, work ethic

Location. Progressive advancements. Recreational choices.

Lower cost of living, easy living, Art and employment

Newly completed Hwy 20 should ease transportation concerns of manufacturers. Unique landscape of the Loess Hills, prairies, and rivers can be further developed for recreation while being preserved.

plant/industrial worker, small population, weather

processing of ag products, wind energy, manufacturing

Quality of life, diversity of industries, skilled workforce

renewable energy, food processing, warehousing/light manufacturing

Retain youth for high quality work force, attract population growth through quality of life,

SCHOOLS, INDUSTRY, WORKFORCE

Small classes at school, knowing your neighbors, values

Stable Economy, places to build, lots of lacking businesses

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tech jobs especially related to agriculture; skilled trade education/training;  
improve highways/roads

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Tourism, infrastructure improvements and population growth

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value added ag; ag testing area

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value-added agriculture, manufacturing, goods distribution

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We have a huge opportunity to promote tourism in the Loess Hills. We are close to major metropolitan areas and could draw hikers, birders, nature writers, artists, ecological volunteers. People are hungry for outdoor activities in wild places.

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Western Iowa Tech.

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Wi-Fi access, cell phone coverage, new business opportunities

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Workforce development, retain existing businesses, recruit new businesses

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**Q11. In your opinion, what are the top opportunities for productive economic development (select 1, 2, 3 and so on from the drop down menu next to each idea, “1” most important)?**

The table below shows the quantity of each ranking for the various opportunity options.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Aggressive workforce development (matching education to employer needs)	11	3	2	6	6	6	0	4	1	2	1	1	3	1	3	2	0
Retain businesses currently within the region	9	6	3	7	6	4	2	3	5	1	1	1	0	3	2	1	0
Grow a local, skilled workforce with apprenticeships, internships, and career development centers	5	12	6	5	4	4	3	1	1	0	1	1	0	5	1	2	1
Develop career academies with local school districts	2	2	6	4	4	6	6	2	2	2	4	1	5	1	1	2	1
Improve infrastructure (utility: fiber, water, sewer electric)	3	4	7	3	3	0	3	3	2	2	4	4	2	4	3	2	3
Improve infrastructure (transportation: roads, transit, air, rail, waterway)	3	3	1	3	3	2	1	1	3	6	2	6	4	4	2	2	4
Promote the low cost of living compared to other parts of the country	3	4	6	4	8	2	6	4	1	3	1	2	3	2	2	3	0
Attract arts and entertainment options	0	2	2	1	4	1	5	5	5	2	5	2	0	2	4	3	7
Create a consolidated, high-quality job website	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	6	2	4	6	7	2	4	6	7
Market our regional successes more aggressively	0	4	0	1	2	5	2	5	8	6	2	4	2	1	3	3	3
Become more ‘kid-friendly’ place	0	1	5	4	0	0	2	2	2	0	5	1	3	7	9	4	7
Grow population	8	4	4	2	2	2	4	3	0	2	4	3	4	5	2	1	4
Tourism (recreation, history, destination)	3	1	2	0	0	5	2	1	3	6	4	2	7	3	5	4	4
Employment opportunities, job creation (tech, remote)	6	4	3	3	4	3	5	5	3	3	2	2	1	3	1	3	1
Improve education (K-12, higher education, tech, expansion, trades)	2	3	2	3	4	6	2	5	2	3	3	7	0	1	6	3	2
Employer recruitment, incentives	1	1	4	2	1	3	4	2	5	4	4	2	6	4	1	8	3
Affordable real estate (developable land & housing)	6	4	5	4	3	1	4	4	2	7	2	5	3	1	1	1	3

Q12. In your opinion, what are the region's top three external (state, national, international) threats or dangers to the region?

1) failure of education and retraining to prepare populace for future job needs 2) quality of life erosion due to factors like growing number of homeless and other substance abusers 3) not keeping up with offerings of our regional competitors which makes it more difficult to add good jobs and contributes to brain drain

Absentee landowners and vertical integration of agriculture

Ag dependence, excessive regulation, trade war

Brain drain, low unemployment, national regulation, taxes

Citizen hubris at local level, ignorance and close-mindedness toward change at the local level, limited citizen participation

Climate, Access (airlines), Entertainment

Conservative/Republican political & economic philosophies, lack of high tech industries & infrastructures, aged population.

Country's commitment to renewable energy, lack of national/governmental investment in the Midwest, lack of international trade for products produced in Midwest

Declining population

Drugs, crime,

Economy crash, booms close enough to draw people away, school funding

Federal and state policy certainty is needed

Flooding, bombing

Focused educational opportunities through internships - local and abroad. We have a very diverse population in this area - which is the best part about our area - but local political climate gives the impression that that is a danger or threat to government and business.

Funding, Tri-state area, leadership

Gang violence, increasing crime, immigrants

Global market fluctuations. Over regulation. Attitudes and presumptions of our region.

International, national, state

Invisibility. Even people in Omaha don't know about us and our natural resources.

Lack of affordable housing, daycare, lack of vocational education

Lack of leadership at local and state levels

lack of local leadership/initiative, population decline, negative image

Lack of state support on the west side of the state, disability rate in our community,

Larger metro areas drawing away population; governmental impacts; impacts on agricultural market influences

Less trade, Population loss, climate

Loss of population, increased incentives in other states and cities, increased importance of quality of life

Meth

Missouri River floods, lack of skilled labor, area image
National regulations taxes tariffs, competition for skilled work force,
Population decline (aging), agricultural pollution to our waterways, substance abuse
Population decline, lack of vision/plan, external image of our region
Reliance on ag; low educational levels
State is eastern Iowa focused, trade wars, how western Iowa fits into national goals
State Taxes, External Opinion, Windmills
Substance abuse/availability, crime, image
Tariff regulations, not letting people from other countries come in to work.
Tariffs, low grain prices, lack of persons who do "hands on jobs" such as plumbing, electrical, wastewater plants
Tax structure, brain drain, substance abuse
Taxes, Substance Abuse, Tariffs
Too much reliance on ag
Volatile political effects on local industry/economy. Lack of adequate funding/attention from Des Moines/Lincoln/Pierre. Lack of protection of environmental assets.
Weather, Funding cuts, loss of population
Wind energy, coal distribution & trade war
Young & educated people not staying in the region; lack of variety of jobs (need more tech related); climate change

**Q13. In your opinion, what are the top external threats or dangers to the region (select 1, 2, 3 and so on from the drop down menu next to each idea, “1” most important)?**

The table below shows the quantity of each ranking for the various threat options.

	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>
State/National leadership, government	10	7	11	5	8	6	4	0
State/National regulations, taxes	6	8	6	6	10	8	6	4
State/National lack of vision/plan (best use of resources)	5	9	6	14	7	7	4	0
External attitudes, image of our region	12	5	12	7	11	1	4	1
Brain drain, population decline (loss of young, educated)	14	13	5	5	4	8	1	3
Natural disasters, climate change	4	3	4	4	4	6	12	18
Substance abuse, drug epidemic (opioid use)	5	11	6	6	3	5	12	7
Global/International influences	4	2	7	6	4	9	6	16

**Q14. Do you have suggested changes or additions to the existing CEDS vision statement?**

Existing Vision: The SIMPCO region will be a preferred location for innovative businesses and entrepreneurs who desire a skilled workforce, quality infrastructure, high quality of life for residents, and a positive business environment in order to contribute to continual regional economy success.

Did not see anything about public safety

Emphasize stunning and unique Loess Hills landform

I would work harder on helping the current businesses sustain their business in lieu of worrying about bringing in more. Most of our business owners reside in the community and are a positive part of the community. They deserve our support.

It is okay, but sometimes short vision statements are easier to remember

Show us, don't tell us.

The SIMPCO region is a preferred location for innovative businesses and entrepreneurs who desire a skilled workforce, quality infrastructure, high quality of life, and a positive business environment in order to contribute to continual regional economic success.



Q15. Where do you envision the region's economy in 10-20 years?

A growing divide due to income inequality which will lessen the feel of cooperation and "home town pride".

About the same in relation to other regions in the Midwest,

About the same, still treading water.

Booming if we can get some additional housing

Continued strong agricultural base with increased manufacturing

Depleted

Double productivity/ increased population

Envision - growing and strong

Expanding to more varied industries

Flat

Good but not growing

Growing

Growing

Growing

Growing in manufacturing, trades, healthcare, and technology

Growth in all areas

HIGHER

Highway 20 will increase opportunity for growth

Hopefully improved w/ grain and livestock prices much improved from today. Also businesses creating more employment opportunities.

Hopefully much improved

Hopefully strong industrial/agriculture economy

Hopefully there are great progresses

I came to NW Iowa in 1989 leaving NE four-lane eastern Iowa for two lane traffic; it took the 30 years I've been here for Highway 20 to be four lane on this side of the state. In 20 years, King will still be in office and we will do nothing but support agriculture. Important but our youth will flock elsewhere as agriculture no longer needs kids to survive.

I honestly don't know. If we can catch as far as connectivity, available workforce, and infrastructure maintenance, the sky's the limit for almost all industries.

I hope that it will grow even more than we could envision. It has the potential to!

I hope the regional economy grows 50%

I hope to see growth in employment, education, to be able to keep our young people here in the western side of Iowa. Create new opportunities for people so they may want to move here.

I hope we will have improved in all areas.

If there are not serious changes I envision it not doing well in the future. Our local leaders in small communities need training and people need to be willing to put effort into their communities. People need to realize just one person can't do it all and pitch in to help for the greater good of the big picture.

I'm hoping to see our whole region expanding
Improve the agriculture economy by investing in technology advances and innovations.
In agriculture technology related jobs
Moderate growth.
More consolidate in agriculture.
Same
Same
Similar but the smaller town business will migrate to larger towns
Similar to today
Slowing or retracting if work force isn't expanded
Stagnant - no positive growth or diversification.
Still catching up with competition
Stronger than currently
Stronger than it is today
There will be a strong economy in NW Iowa if we quit exporting our educated children, invest in our communities, and learn to not to exploit our natural resources
This is too broad for a survey like this/ need more context
Too many variables. If demographics don't change, it will be far more health/senior service dependent.
With current trends not reversed - not good
With web based job opportunities and quality of life advantages in the Midwest there is no reason that tourism, job expansion and educational advances wouldn't be possible.

#### Q16. Additional Comments

Focus on retaining and attracting good people
One negative factor over the years is the reduction in locally owned major businesses which generally are better contributors than branches with headquarters elsewhere - therefore helping local growing businesses is very important
Thanks for the opportunity to voice my opinion.
This was a very thought provoking survey!
We have an invisible treasure here. We should preserve and honor it, and promote responsible recreational use. Loess Hills are supremely marketable to outdoor enthusiasts.
We mustn't be blind to the effect of current farming practices, especially herbicide/pesticide use. Harming our health and wildlife will affect the quality of life and economic status of our region.

## Appendix D: Demographic Data

Table 1. Regional Population Trends

	2000 Population	2010 Population	2017 Population	2000-2010 Percent Change	2010-2017 Percent Change
<b>Cherokee County</b>	13,035	12,072	11,577	-7.39%	-4.10%
Aurelia	1,062	1,036	993	-2.45%	-4.15%
Cherokee	5,369	5,253	5,018	-2.16%	-4.47%
Cleghorn	250	240	214	-4.00%	-10.83%
Larrabee	149	132	178	-11.41%	34.85%
Marcus	1,139	1,117	1,062	-1.93%	-4.92%
Meriden	184	159	187	-13.59%	17.61%
Quimby	368	319	381	-13.32%	19.44%
Washta	282	248	186	-12.06%	-25.00%
<b>Dakota County</b>	20,253	21,006	20,529	3.72%	-2.27%
Dakota City	1,821	1,919	2,053	5.83%	6.78%
Emerson	817	840	947	2.82%	12.74%
Homer	590	542	562	-8.14%	3.69%
Hubbard	234	236	175	0.85%	-25.85%
Jackson	205	223	157	8.78%	-29.60%
South Sioux City	11,925	13,353	13,145	11.97%	-1.56%
<b>Ida County</b>	7,837	7,089	6,965	-9.54%	-1.75%
Arthur	245	206	258	-15.92%	25.24%
Battle Creek	743	713	746	-4.04%	4.63%
Galva	368	434	381	17.93%	-12.21%
Holstein	1,470	1,396	1,381	-5.03%	-1.07%
Ida Grove	2,350	2,142	2,160	-8.85%	0.84%
<b>Monona County</b>	10,020	9,245	8,865	-7.73%	-4.11%
Blencoe	231	224	243	-3.03%	8.48%
Castana	178	147	93	-17.42	-36.73%
Mapleton	1,416	1,224	1,229	-13.56%	0.41%
Moorhead	232	226	211	-2.59%	-6.64%
Onawa	3,091	2,998	2,849	-3.01%	-4.97%
Rodney	74	60	50	-18.92%	-16.67%
Soldier	207	174	219	-15.94%	25.86%
Turin	75	68	84	-9.33%	23.53%
Whiting	707	762	918	7.78%	20.47%
Ute	378	374	392	-1.06%	4.81%
<b>Plymouth County</b>	24,849	24,986	25,027	0.55%	0.16%
Akron	1,489	1,486	1,532	-0.20%	3.10%

Brunsville	146	151	96	3.42%	-36.42%
Craig	102	89	85	-12.75%	-4.49%
Hinton	808	928	776	14.85%	-16.38%
Kingsley	1,245	1,411	1,464	13.33%	3.76%
Le Mars	9,237	9,826	9,861	6.38%	0.36%
Oyens	132	103	95	-21.97%	-7.77%
Remsen	1,762	1,663	1,725	-5.62%	3.73%
Struble	85	78	111	-8.24%	42.31%
Westfield	189	132	128	-30.16%	-3.03%
<b>Woodbury County</b>	103,877	102,172	102,397	-1.64%	0.22%
Anthon	649	565	651	-12.94%	15.22%
Bronson	269	322	295	19.70%	-8.39%
Correctionville	851	821	832	-3.53%	1.34%
Cushing	246	220	208	-10.57%	-5.45%
Danbury	384	348	382	-9.38%	9.77%
Hornick	253	225	276	-11.07%	22.67%
Lawton	697	908	935	30.27%	2.97%
Moville	1,583	1,618	1,682	2.21%	3.96%
Oto	145	108	94	-25.52%	-12.96%
Pierson	371	366	397	-1.35%	8.47%
Salix	370	363	349	-1.89%	-3.86%
Sergeant Bluff	3,321	4,227	4,556	27.28%	7.78%
Sioux City	85,013	82,684	82,568	-2.74%	-0.14%
Sloan	1,032	973	1,118	-5.72%	14.90%
Smithland	221	224	143	-1.36%	-36.16
<b>SIMPCO CEDS Region</b>	179,871	176,570	175,360	-1.84%	-0.69%
<b>Iowa</b>	2,926,324	3,046,355	3,118,102	4.10%	2.36%
<b>Nebraska</b>	1,711,263	1,826,341	1,893,921	6.72%	3.70%

Source: U.S. Decennial Census Data, 2000, 2010; American Community Survey 2017 5-Year Estimates

Table 2. Regional Age Distribution

		<b>14 and younger</b>	<b>15-29</b>	<b>30-44</b>	<b>45-59</b>	<b>60-74</b>	<b>75 and older</b>
<b>Cherokee County</b>	Count	2,072	1,865	1,779	2,993	1,892	1,471
	Percent	17.2%	15.4%	14.7%	24.8%	15.7%	12.2%
<b>Dakota County</b>	Count	5,270	4,501	3,832	4,015	2,334	1,054
	Percent	25.1%	21.4%	18.2%	19.1%	11.1%	5.0%
<b>Ida County</b>	Count	1,399	1,101	1,067	1,604	1,077	841
	Percent	19.7%	15.5%	15.1%	22.6%	15.2%	11.9%
<b>Monona County</b>	Count	1,651	1,343	1,330	2,164	1,571	1,184
	Percent	17.9%	14.5%	14.4%	23.4%	17.0%	12.8%
<b>Plymouth County</b>	Count	5,274	4,073	4,341	5,791	3,310	2,197
	Percent	21.1%	19.7%	17.7%	20.9%	12.5%	7.5%
<b>Woodbury County</b>	Count	22,690	21,864	18,818	2,0419	11,899	6,482
	Percent	22.2%	21.4%	18.4%	20.0%	11.6%	6.3%
<b>SIMPCO CEDS Region</b>	Count	38,356	34,747	31,167	36,986	22,083	13,229
	Percent	21.7%	19.7%	17.7%	20.9%	12.5%	7.5%
<b>Iowa</b>	Count	603,673	628,030	549,288	644,119	393,013	228,232
	Percent	19.8%	20.6%	18.0%	21.1%	12.9%	7.5%
<b>Nebraska</b>	Count	383,542	387,282	336,938	376,412	218,616	123,551
	Percent	21.0%	21.2%	18.4%	20.6%	12.0%	7.5%

Source: U.S. Census Data, American Community Survey 2017 5-Year Estimates

Table 3. Regional Racial Distribution

		<b>White</b>	<b>Black / African American</b>	<b>American Indian and Alaska Native</b>	<b>Asian</b>	<b>Native Hawaiian &amp; other Pacific Islander</b>	<b>Some other race</b>	<b>Two or more races</b>
<b>Cherokee County</b>	Count	11,667	66	32	62	9	131	105
	Percent	96.6%	0.5%	0.3%	0.5%	0.1%	1.1%	0.9%
<b>Dakota County</b>	Count	14,810	660	566	631	44	3,812	483
	Percent	70.5%	3.1%	2.7%	3.0%	0.2%	18.1%	2.3%
<b>Ida County</b>	Count	6,957	17	12	19	1	42	41
	Percent	98.1%	0.2%	0.2%	0.1%	<0.1%	0.6%	0.6%
<b>Monona County</b>	Count	8,972	33	97	20	4	27	90
	Percent	97.1%	0.4%	1.0%	0.2%	<0.1%	0.3%	1.0%
<b>Plymouth County</b>	Count	24,086	76	71	117	16	370	250
	Percent	96.4%	0.3%	0.3%	0.5%	0.1%	1.5%	1.0%
<b>Woodbury County</b>	Count	85,387	2,456	2,254	2,423	106	6,240	3,306
	Percent	83.6%	2.4%	2.2%	2.4%	0.1%	6.1%	3.2%
<b>SIMPCO CEDS Region</b>	Count	151,879	3,308	3,032	3,272	180	10,622	4,275
	Percent	86.0%	1.9%	1.7%	1.9%	0.1%	6.0%	2.4%
<b>Iowa</b>	Count	2,781,561	89,148	11,084	53,094	2,003	56,132	53,333
	Percent	91.3%	2.9%	0.4%	1.7%	0.1%	1.8%	1.8%
<b>Nebraska</b>	Count	1,572,838	82,885	18,427	32,293	1,279	79,109	39,510
	Percent	86.1%	4.5%	1.0%	1.8%	0.1%	4.3%	2.2%

Source: U.S. Census Data, American Community Survey 2017 5-Year Estimates

Table 4. Regional Educational Attainment Distribution for Population 25 years and over

		<b>Less than 9<sup>th</sup> Grade</b>	<b>9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grade, no diploma</b>	<b>High school graduate (includes equivalency)</b>	<b>Some college, no degree</b>	<b>Associate's degree</b>	<b>Bachelor's degree</b>	<b>Graduate or professional degree</b>
<b>Cherokee County</b>	Count	177	593	2,978	1,814	1,136	1,199	420
	Percent	2.1%	7.1%	35.8%	21.8%	12.7%	14.4%	5.0%
<b>Dakota County</b>	Count	2,290	1,050	4,405	2,383	874	1,048	538
	Percent	18.2%	8.3%	35.0%	18.9%	6.9%	8.3%	4.3%
<b>Ida County</b>	Count	102	211	1,898	1,127	573	794	167
	Percent	2.1%	4.3%	39.0%	23.1%	11.8%	16.3%	3.4%
<b>Monona County</b>	Count	2,334	343	2,530	1,590	740	705	345
	Percent	3.6%	5.3%	39.0%	24.5%	11.4%	10.9%	5.3%
<b>Plymouth County</b>	Count	558	682	5,729	4,191	2,091	2,696	769
	Percent	3.3%	4.1%	34.3%	25.1%	12.5%	16.1%	4.6%
<b>Woodbury County</b>	Count	4,048	5,163	21,429	13,915	5,997	10,188	4,423
	Percent	6.3%	7.9%	32.9%	21.3%	9.2%	15.6%	6.8%
<b>SIMPCO CEDS Region</b>	Count	7,723	8,502	42,040	27,262	12,508	17,586	7,074
	Percent	6.3%	6.9%	34.3%	22.2%	10.2%	14.3%	5.8%
<b>Iowa</b>	Count	66,190	102,455	651,750	440,583	234,511	386,963	185,462
	Percent	3.2%	5.0%	31.5%	21.3%	11.3%	18.7%	9.0%
<b>Nebraska</b>	Count	50,097	62,269	329,232	288,681	126,111	251,182	126,270
	Percent	4.1%	5.0%	26.7%	23.4%	10.2%	20.4%	10.2%

Source: U.S. Census Data, American Community Survey 2017 5-Year Estimates



Table 5. Regional Industry Employment and Median Earnings

		<b>Cherokee County</b>	<b>Dakota County</b>	<b>Ida County</b>	<b>Monona County</b>	<b>Plymouth County</b>	<b>Woodbury County</b>	<b>SIMPCO CEDS Region</b>
<b>Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining</b>	<i>Employees</i>	601	248	321	380	914	1,142	3,606
	<i>Earnings</i>	\$35,489	\$27,500	\$31,950	\$37,364	\$32,238	\$32,018	\$32,760
<b>Construction</b>	<i>Employees</i>	493	946	195	393	752	3,664	6,443
	<i>Earnings</i>	\$37,204	\$32,074	\$40,938	\$37,319	\$42,885	\$41,190	\$38,602
<b>Manufacturing</b>	<i>Employees</i>	908	3,076	878	334	2,391	9,114	16,701
	<i>Earnings</i>	\$38,106	\$30,027	\$40,081	\$32,266	\$48,382	\$34,487	\$37,225
<b>Wholesale trade</b>	<i>Employees</i>	246	276	111	105	377	1,638	2,753
	<i>Earnings</i>	\$43,000	\$37,237	\$41,838	\$52,148	\$53,843	\$43,109	\$45,196
<b>Retail trade</b>	<i>Employees</i>	1,032	772	301	559	1,572	6,479	10,715
	<i>Earnings</i>	\$25,056	\$17,455	\$14,871	\$17,625	\$27,000	\$21,592	\$20,600
<b>Transportation and warehousing, ad utilities</b>	<i>Employees</i>	275	354	169	257	885	2,391	4,331
	<i>Earnings</i>	\$50,655	\$27,333	\$41,691	\$47,798	\$52,003	\$44,461	\$43,990
<b>Information</b>	<i>Employees</i>	44	75	32	72	177	764	1,164
	<i>Earnings</i>	\$16,250	\$50,694	\$22,083	\$25,833	\$26,875	\$28,611	\$28,391
<b>Finance and Insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing</b>	<i>Employees</i>	187	541	215	207	580	2,263	3,993
	<i>Earnings</i>	\$45,536	\$46,185	\$47,321	\$31,202	\$39,565	\$34,752	\$40,760

<b>Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services</b>	Employees	147	576	84	183	602	3,486	5,078
	Earnings	\$34,583	\$27,917	\$24,375	\$43,750	\$37,300	\$29,167	\$32,849
<b>Educational services, and healthcare and social assistance</b>	Employees	1,407	1,485	859	1,094	2,859	11,484	19,188
	Earnings	\$31,584	\$29,135	\$25,869	\$28,000	\$26,719	\$30,842	\$28,692
<b>Art, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services</b>	Employees	208	1,012	125	446	854	4,890	7,535
	Earnings	\$9,167	\$10,114	\$16,875	\$11,071	\$10,729	\$13,966	\$11,987
<b>Other services, except public administration</b>	Employees	232	478	171	165	618	2,370	4,034
	Earnings	\$30,926	\$26,167	\$26,250	\$17,198	\$31,000	\$21,824	\$25,561
<b>Public administration</b>	Employees	210	324	72	12	519	1,801	3,038
	Earnings	\$41,250	\$38,125	\$43,000	\$41,346	\$58,878	\$48,954	\$45,259

Source: U.S. Census Data, American Community Survey 2017 5-Year Estimates

Table 6. Labor Force Characteristics

	<b>Cherokee County</b>	<b>Dakota County</b>	<b>Ida County</b>	<b>Monona County</b>	<b>Plymouth County</b>	<b>Woodbury County</b>	<b>SIMPCO CEDS Region</b>
<b>Total Population</b>	11,577	20,529	6,965	8,865	25,027	102,397	175,360
<b>16 years and older population</b>	9,59	15,164	5,536	7,283	19,555	78,511	135,408
<b>Not in labor force</b>	3,159	4,163	1,887	2,830	6,048	24,354	42,441
<b>Labor force (civilian)</b>	6,197	10,963	3,649	4,450	13,489	54,068	92,816
<b>Employed</b>	5,990	10,163	3,533	4,307	13,100	51,486	88,579
<b>Unemployed</b>	207	800	116	143	389	2,582	4,137
<b>Unemployment rate</b>	3.3%	7.3%	3.2%	3.2%	2.9%	4.8%	4.12%
<b>Average earnings</b>	31,367	26,794	31,098	28,234	35,938	29,173	30,434
<b>Median household income</b>	53,998	52,401	51,978	41,598	61,316	51,350	44,593
<b>Percent of people living below the poverty level</b>	11.9%	16.8%	10.3%	14.9%	9.1%	14.0%	12.8%

Source: U.S. Census Data, American Community Survey 2017 5-Year Estimates

## Appendix E: Environmental Context

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### Soils

The SIMPCO CEDS Region is primarily covered (53.5%) by the following five soil types: Galva, Ida, Monona, Napier, and Colo. These are further described below. The map following the descriptions shows these soils and an additional soil type, Crofton, primarily found in Dakota County. Data gaps, represented in white, indicate the presence of another soil type, river, or tributary creek bed.

#### Soil Descriptions

The following soil descriptions of the SIMPCO CEDS Region top soils were gathered from the USDA online soil series. Approximately 53.5% of the SIMPCO CEDS Region is covered by the following five soils shown in the map above. Floodplain information can be found in the Hazard Mitigation Plan.

#### **Galva (23.7%)**

The Galva series consists of very deep, well drained soils on uplands and loess covered stream terraces. These soils formed in loess. Slopes range from 0 to 15 percent. Mean annual air temperature is about 8 degrees C (47 degrees F). Mean annual precipitation is about 685 millimeters (27 inches).

TAXONOMIC CLASS:	Fine-silty, mixed, superactive, mesic Typic Hapludolls
TYPICAL PEDON:	Galva silty clay loam, on a convex slope of 4 percent, in a cultivated field.

#### **Ida (11.8%)**

The Ida series consists of very deep, well drained soils formed in calcareous loess. These soils are on side slopes and crests on dissected till plains and on risers on stream terraces. Slopes range from 2 to 60 percent. Mean annual air temperature is about 9 degrees C (49 degrees F). Mean Annual precipitation is about 74 centimeters (29 inches).

TAXONOMIC CLASS:	Fine-silty, mixed, superactive, calcareous, mesic Typic Udorthents
TYPICAL PEDON:	Ida silt loam, on a 5 percent slope, in a cultivated field, at an elevation of 425 meters (1,395 feet) above sea level.

**Monona (8.6%)**

The Monona series consists of very deep, well drained soils formed in loess. These soils are on interfluvies and side slopes on loess hills and on risers and treads on stream terraces in river valleys. Slope ranges from 0 to 40 percent. Mean annual air temperature is about 10 degrees C (51 degrees F). Mean annual precipitation is about 710 millimeters (29 inches).

TAXONOMIC CLASS:	Fine-silty, mixed, superactive, mesic Typic Hapludolls
TYPICAL PEDON:	Monona silt loam, on a slope of 1 percent, in a cultivated field, at an elevation of 418 meters (1,370 feet) above sea level.

**Napier (5.2%)**

The Napier series consists of very deep, well drained soils on foot slopes, upland drainage ways, and alluvial fans. These soils formed in local colluvium and alluvium derived from loess. Slopes range from 0 to 20 percent. Mean annual air temperature is about 11 degrees C. Mean annual precipitation is about 790 millimeters.

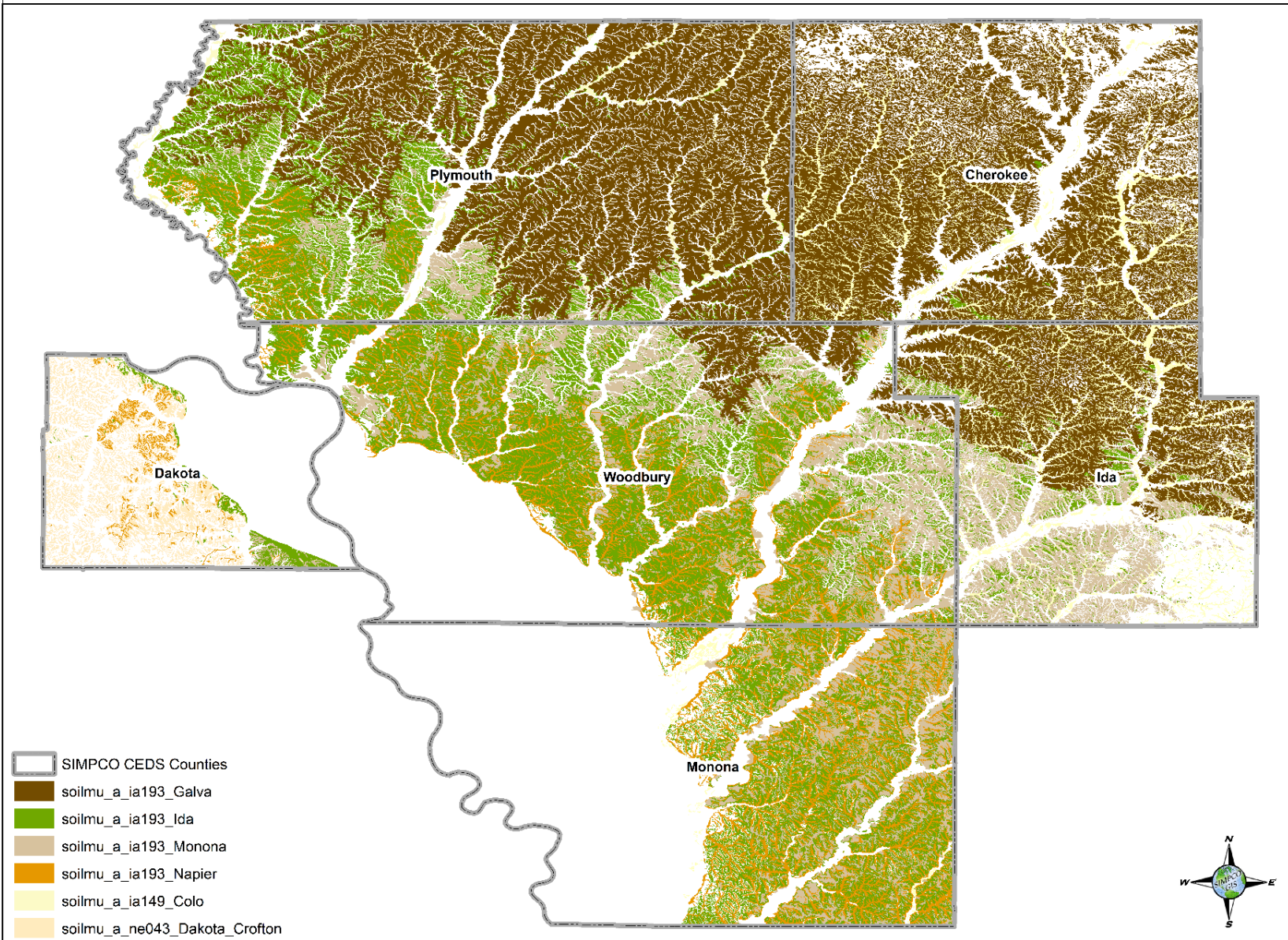
TAXONOMIC CLASS:	Fine-silty, mixed, superactive, mesic Cumulic Hapludolls
TYPICAL PEDON:	Napier silt loam, on a 3 percent slope, in a cultivated field, at an elevation of 312 meters (1,025 feet) above sea level.

**Colo (4.2%)**

The Colo series consists of very deep, poorly drained soils formed in alluvium. These soils are on floodplains, low stream terraces, alluvial fans, and upland drainage ways. Slope ranges from 0 to 5 percent. Mean annual air temperature is about 10 degrees C. Mean annual precipitation is about 775 millimeters.

TAXONOMIC CLASS:	Fine-silty, mixed, superactive, mesic Cumulic Endoaquolls
TYPICAL PEDON:	Colo silty clay loam, on a slope of less than 1 percent, in a cultivated field, at an elevation of about 275 meters above sea level.

## SIMPCO CEDS Soils





## **Site Contamination**

There are numerous hazardous waste and toxic contamination sites in the Region. Economic development complications can arise from the presence or potential presence of hazardous waste. State and Federal resources are relied upon for the identification and monitoring of contaminated sites in the Region. SIMPCO Tri-State Incident Management Team and Region IV Iowa Hazardous Materials Response Commission, both provide local emergency response and hazardous waste guidance. The following definitions of site contamination levels and site descriptions were gathered from Iowa and Nebraska Departments of Environmental Quality or Natural Resources and US Environmental Protection Agency.

**Brownfields** are abandoned, idled, or under-used industrial and commercial facilities where expansion or redevelopment is complicated by real or perceived environmental contamination (IA DNR). There are 27 recognized brownfield sites in the two-state SIMPCO CEDS Region. State and Federal resources for regional assistance are listed below.

**Superfund** sites are contaminated sites that underwent hazardous waste being dumped, left out in the open, or otherwise improperly managed. These sites include manufacturing facilities, processing plants, landfills and mining sites (US EPA). No superfund sites exist in the SIMPCO CEDS Region. The last superfund site on the national priorities list was a former tanning company that operated from 1970 to 1989. It was removed from the list by the EPA after undergoing a series of cleanup, maintenance, and monitoring measures. Federal and State resources for assistance are listed below.

### **Federal Resources**

- [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency](#)
- [Brownfields Assistance](#)
- [Superfund Assistance](#)

### **Iowa Resources**

- [Iowa Department of Natural Resources – Brownfields Program](#)
- [Iowa Federal Brownfield Site Locations](#)
- [Redevelopment Tax Credits Program for Brownfield & Grayfield Sites](#)

### **Nebraska Resources**

- [Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality – Brownfields Assistance Section 128\(a\) Assessment](#)
- [Superfund Site Assessment Program](#)
- [Superfund National Priority List Site Management Assistance Program](#)



## ***Air and Water Quality***

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency establishes standards for air and water quality that must be upheld in the two-state SIMPCO CEDS Region. State, Federal and local agencies are relied upon to identify and monitor air and water quality in the Region. Both Iowa and Nebraska have the required air quality State Implementation Plan (SIP) and Federal Implementation Plan (FIP) in place and approved by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The US Environmental Protection Agency maintains a list of impaired water in Region 7 which includes the SIMPCO CEDS Region. As of 2016, there are two lakes, five wetlands, and a series of river sections within SIMPCO's EDD that are designated as impaired waters shown on the map on the next page. Federal, State and local resources for air and water quality in the Region are listed below.

### **Federal Resources**

- [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Air Quality](#)
- [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Water Quality](#)
- [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency list of impaired waters in region 7 \(Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas, Missouri\)](#)

### **Iowa Resources**

- [Iowa Department of Natural Resources Air Quality](#)
- [Iowa Department of Natural Resources Water Quality](#)

### **Nebraska Resources**

- [Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality Air Quality](#)
- [Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality Water Quality](#)

## Endangered and Threatened Species

The following endangered or threatened species exist in the SIMPCO CEDS Region.

Species	Threatened /Endangered	Habitat	Food	Threats
Northern Long-eared Bat (Mammal)	Threatened	Winter: caves and mines, called hibernacula. Summer: singly or in colonies underneath bark, in cavities or in crevices of both living and dead trees.	Insects	White-Nose syndrome (a fungal disease commonly known to affect bats)
Least Tern (Bird)	Endangered	Sea coasts, beaches, bays, estuaries, lagoons, lakes, and rivers.	Small fish and some invertebrates	Habitat loss or degradation and nest disturbance, changes to dams, reservoirs, and river systems, as well as recreational activities taking place on rivers and sandbars.
Western Prairie Fringed Orchid (Flowering Plant)	Threatened	Wet prairies & sedge meadows	Not applicable	Conversion of habitat to cropland and poorly conducted burning, grazing, and mowing.
Prairie Bush-Clover (Flowering Plant)	Threatened	Dry to mesic prairies with gravelly soils	Not applicable	Conversion of pasture into cropland, overgrazing, and expansion of agricultural operations and urban development.
Pallid Sturgeon (Fish)	Endangered	Bottom dwelling in the Missouri and Mississippi Rivers and some tributaries from Montana to Louisiana.	Bottom feeders; small fish	Habitat destruction, modification, and overutilization.
Piping Plover (Bird)	Endangered	Ocean shores in the Northeast and along lakeshores and alkali wetlands in the northern Great Plains and Great Lakes.	Aquatic invertebrates	Habitat loss or degradation, nest disturbance, and predation.

## Climate Summary

	Cherokee County	Dakota County	Ida County	Monona County	Plymouth County	Woodbury County	SIMPCO CEDS Region	United States
High temperature in July	84°	86°	83.3°	85.5°	84.4°	85.3°	84.9°	85.8°
Low temperature in January	8.8°	10.1°	9.1°	9.3°	8.1°	9.4°	9.1°	21.7°
Annual rainfall	31.3"	29.3"	32.1"	31.2"	29.5"	30.0"	30.6"	28.1"
Annual snowfall	34.1"	32.2"	33.7"	28.0"	32.3"	31.9"	32.0"	27.8"
Number of sunny day	208	208	209	210	208	208	208	205

## Appendix F: Evaluation Framework Scorecard

The scorecard below is intended to be used by the CEDS Committee and other invested parties on an annual or ongoing basis to evaluate the effectiveness of the Strategic Direction and Action Plan. Evaluators should use the tools for measuring performance to understand each project's level of success and opportunities for improvement. Goals for the following year should be established and reevaluated.

Project Description	Invested Parties	Tools for measuring performance*	Achievement level				Goals for next year	Notes
			None	Low	Med.	High		
Economic Development								
Continue existing business expansion programs and annually meet with local employers to discuss business needs and concerns.	SIMPCO, Chambers of Commerce, business associations, economic development directors	-Meetings with local employers in last year  -Meetings with business associations						
Improve business retention by creating programs that encourage businesses to stay through creative incentives.	City, County, and economic development organizations	-Number of programs  -Inventory of businesses who left the Region						
Recruit new businesses from targeted industries that complement the Region's economic base.	City, County, and regional economic development organizations	-Inventory of new businesses categorized by industry						
Offer technical assistance to local communities when developing economic development programs and applying to EDA and other grant options.	SIMPCO	-Inventory of grants applied for and awarded  -Inventory of economic development programs						

Collaborate with regional economic development efforts and initiatives to encourage and support entrepreneurship and business start-up programs.	City, County, and regional economic development organizations, local entrepreneurship groups	-Inventory of startups  -Meetings with entrepreneurs						
Work with organizations to provide a business start-up toolkit for new entrepreneurs and encourage experienced entrepreneurs to mentor local leaders, local investors, and potential entrepreneurs in how to navigate the entrepreneurial process.	Local education institutions, local entrepreneurs, Chambers of Commerce, business associations	-Existence and quality of toolkit  -Meetings with entrepreneurs						
Develop a network of lenders and investors to provide start-up capital for new businesses and entrepreneurs.	Local lenders, SEDC, local entrepreneurship groups, regional economic groups	-Inventory of startups with local funding sources						
Support efforts to mechanize certain services as needed.	Regional economic development organizations	-Inventory of mechanized services compared to past years						
Assist businesses with succession planning.	Chambers of commerce, economic development directors, private businesses; local SBDC	-Meetings with local businesses  -Inventory of businesses with succession plans						
<b>Workforce Development</b>								
Establish a direct conduit between industries and	Private businesses, local education	-Inventory of apprenticeships and						

potential workers by marketing internships and apprenticeships at local education institutions and job fairs.	institutions, workforce development, Chambers of Commerce, economic development directors	internships filled with local candidates						
Monitor employers and worker training programs to ensure they provide the skill sets needed for available employment.	Private businesses, local education institutions, workforce development	-Training program evaluations						
Support entrepreneurial training through direct mentorship, networking, and educational institutions.	Private businesses, local education institutions, workforce development	-Inventory of startups -Meetings with entrepreneurs						
Encourage area school districts to integrate science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) into educational programs.	Educational institutions	-Evaluation of local curriculums						
Support career academies.	Educational institutions, Chambers of commerce, local entrepreneurship groups, Cities, Counties	-Meetings with career academies -Survey of past students an employers of past students						
Create a regional working group to market current business needs and desired target industries for future expansion.	SIMPCO, Chambers of Commerce, economic development directors, private business leaders	-Report from regional working group with key market data to be determined by group						

Work with existing programs to market potential employees for regional businesses.	Regional economic and workforce development groups, state agencies and initiatives	-Inventory of jobs filled by local candidates  -Inventory of workers leaving the Region						
Create a unified economic development marketing message.	SIMPCO, SEDC	-Marketing message awareness and effectiveness (survey)						
Establish a regional database of trade-based positions.	Workforce development, Chambers of Commerce, economic development directors, private businesses, SIMPCO	-Establishment of database  -Positions filled by database						
Encourage and support rural school districts in the creation of a distance learning plan.	Educational institutions, cities, counties	-Inventory of distance learning plan(s)  -Educational attainment and data for rural school districts						
Create a consolidated, regional website to promote and market regional assets and jobs, which can be used to connect employers with jobseekers from inside and outside the Region.	Chambers of Commerce, economic development directors, workforce development, private businesses, local newspapers, cities, counties, SIMPCO	-Creation of website  -Inventory of jobs filled through website  -Evaluation of marketing effectiveness						
Support programs that provide education and training to immigrants.	Private businesses, educational institutions, workforce development	-Inventory and survey of Immigrants to include various demographic statistics						

Support the development and construction of educational programs and facilities that contribute to workforce development.	SIMPCO, cities, counties, economic development directors, educational institutions	-Inventory of educational programs and facilities						
<b>Infrastructure Improvement</b>								
Continue to support construction and expansion of all transportation modes through regional transportation efforts, applications for state and federal funding, and coordination of local planning needs.	SIMPCO, Chambers of Commerce, economic development directors	-Inventory of infrastructure for all transportation modes  -Transportation grants applied for and awarded						
Study the feasibility of incorporating additional airlines to serve the SIMPCO CEDS Region	Chambers of Commerce, economic development directors, private businesses, local airports	-Meetings with airport						
Improve and expand the current rail system, incorporating an additional rail storage site.	Chambers of Commerce, economic development directors, private business leaders, SIMPCO	-Feasibility study of incorporating an additional rail storage site.						
Assist and support municipalities with construction, replacement, and maintenance of infrastructure related to	SIMPCO, local municipalities	-Inventory of water and sewer infrastructure  -Inventory of new projects						



water and sewer. These items may include: water towers, water and waste water treatment facilities.								
Seek fiber optic improvements for rural areas.	SIMPCO, local municipality and county staff, Economic development directors	-Meetings with fiber optic providers  -inventory of fiber optic infrastructure						
Continue pressing IA, NE, and SD legislators to provide adequate funding for regional infrastructure.	Chambers of Commerce, local legislators and elected officials, local business community, SIMPCO	-Evaluation of changes to funding						
Support efforts to renew barge traffic along the Missouri River as an alternative mode of transporting goods.	SIMPCO, private business, Chambers of Commerce, economic development directors	-Inventory of barge traffic and goods transported						
Assist municipalities and counties with storm water and natural hazard mitigation infrastructure.	SIMPCO, economic development directors, Cities, Counties, private businesses and developers	-Survey of storm water damages and comparison to previous hazard events						
<b>Housing</b>								
Seek funding for housing rehabilitation, housing CDBG programming, homebuyer purchase programs, and housing assessments and plans.	SIMPCO, local municipalities, economic development directors	-Periodic housing studies  -Annual evaluation of funding for housing programs						

Encourage the development of multi-family housing to support young families, elderly populations, and low-income families, and so that residents have options for purchase or rent.	Local municipalities, SIMPCO, IA Workforce Development	-Inventory of housing types and ownership						
Ensure Federal, State, and Municipal codes allow for and encourage attainable housing options.	Local municipalities, SIMPCO, Workforce Development	-Ongoing evaluation of municipal codes  -Meetings with legislatures to discuss state and federal rules.						
Establish short-term housing options for new workers and residents.	Local municipalities, SIMPCO, Workforce Development	-Evaluation to ensure compatibility with municipals codes  -New resident survey or HR survey or new employees						
Develop a resource to collect and distribute information about federal and state funds available for housing and workforce housing. Assist communities with having information ready for developers.	Cities, Counties, Workforce Development, economic development directors, SIMPCO	-Meetings with developers  -Inventory of new development and funding sources						
<b>Quality of Life</b>								
Support and organize family-oriented cultural events, housing options,	SIMPCO, chambers of Commerce, business associations,	-Inventory of families and family satisfaction						

businesses, and institutions that are instrumental in maintaining the Region's high quality of life.	economic development directors, cultural groups, local education institutions	-Quality of life and community attitude survey  -Demographic and migration data  -Program evaluations						
Improving transportation access and connectivity to parks and natural resources.	SIMPCO, Counties, IDOT, DNR	-Utilization of parks and natural resources						
Ensure that targeted businesses match the goals and objectives of the community.	Economic development directors, Chambers of Commerce	-Meetings and evaluations of local businesses						
Encourage development near transportation hubs and along public transit corridors.	Chambers of Commerce, economic development directors, business associations	-Evaluation of municipal codes and incentive programs  -Inventory of location for new development						
Continue to address the crime rate through proactive enforcement.	City/County local officials and law enforcement	-crime rate statistics  -Discussions with local law enforcement						
Encourage communities to pursue downtown and Main Street revitalization.	State/Federal economic development agencies, local government, regional economic development organizations	-Inventory of businesses and business expansion in downtown areas						

Support regional initiatives that positively impact the environment.	SIMPCO, County and City governments, DNR, local organizations	-Environmental health evaluation  -Inventory of environmentally positive initiatives and incentives						
Support existing regional and local initiatives aimed at welcoming new immigrants and support expansion to rural areas.	Cultural groups, Cities, Counties, One Siouxland	-Immigrant surveys  -Immigrant retention data						

\*The list of tools for measuring performance is not exhaustive, and action items should be evaluated annually in a way that is deemed pertinence by the acting members of the CEDS Committee.