

Contact: Ann McCarthy

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PRESENTATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA:
“ADVANCE IOWA – SUPPORTING GROWTH COMPANIES IN IOWA”**

Action Requested: Receive the presentation.

Executive Summary: The University of Northern Iowa's Advance Iowa provides economic gardening services to second-stage (10-99 employees) growth companies across Iowa. Economic gardening is an innovative economic growth strategy that focuses on providing information and tools to grow existing businesses. Often referred to "grow your own" strategy for economic development, economic gardening represents a new way of supporting growth companies that are important to their local economies. Teams of skilled researchers mine sophisticated databases and use high-end tools related to improve search engine optimization, provide support, assess markets, and integrate social media marketing.

The University of Northern Iowa has been named the Economic Gardening Hub for the state of Iowa by the Edward Lowe Foundation. A pilot year was completed in FY 2013 and the full program was launched in FY 2014 with the goal of serving 50 second-stage Iowa companies.

Presenter Dan Beenken manages Advance Iowa and is the director of University of Northern Iowa's Small Business Development Center. Dan also manages University of Northern Iowa's Innovation Incubator. Dan has been with the University for 5 years and has a background in investment banking and business consulting.