



THE IOWA / NEBRASKA CHAPTER OF THE ESOP ASSOCIATION

JUNE 2020 NEWSLETTER



In This Newsletter:

Letter From the President
Pages 1 and 2

Membership
Page 2

Programming
Page 3

Awards
Pages 3 through 7

Communications
Page 8

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

The ESOP community is truly a family: when one succeeds, we all celebrate. And when one hurts, we all feel the pain. On behalf of the chapter leadership, we want to extend our sincerest concern and sympathies to the individuals, businesses and communities that have been affected by COVID-19. We wish you, your teams and your loved ones all the very best.

It feels like a lifetime ago that we gathered in Cedar Rapids at the beautiful Hotel Kirkwood for our annual Winter Conference. Nearly 180 company-members and professionals gathered for one full day of learning and networking and celebrating! During the two-track conference, we heard fantastic ideas for education and communication, and expertise on sustainability and other best practices in plan design. Our keynote speakers gave a riveting presentation on cybersecurity and why employee-owners owe it to themselves and their Companies to be diligent and prepared. And we honored and celebrated our Employee-Owner and Company of the Year for 2020. It was an invigorating and wonderful day.

While we have regrettably decided not to hold our summer event in person, we are hosting virtual roundtables on June 17, and exploring innovative programming ideas for the fall. In the meantime, please stay connected through the [National website](#) and take advantage of the new FREE services like the extraordinary webinar series and conversations happening on the NEW Hub community tool.

We hope to see you all again soon when the economic and health conditions allow. In the meantime, enjoy this newsletter and stay safe and healthy.

Becky

Becky Streff, Employee Owner at ESP International, Inc.
President, Iowa-Nebraska Chapter of the ESOP Association



MEMBERSHIP

The ESOP Association spent a lot of time in 2019 and into 2020 updating the technology that drives the Association. One of those upgrades is to the Membership Database. If you have not already, you are encouraged to log into the new website and update your information. You can add a photo, update your communication preferences, see past orders, renew your membership and much more! More importantly, each member's primary contact should log in and update their Company Roster. This ensures the right people at your company are receiving the right information from the Association. It is also important to enter a title for each person in your roster so targeted communications can be utilized by job function.



In addition, there has been a change to how membership renewals are processed. You will now receive an invoice 90 days prior to the end of your membership year, with a reminder or two after that. However, once your invoice is 30 days past due, your membership will be "expired," and it will take a few extra steps to get you reinstated. To avoid this, members are encouraged to process your invoice in a timely manner to spare yourself a little extra work!



PROGRAMMING

CEO, CFO, HR and ESOP Communications Virtual Roundtables on June 17

As was communicated via email on June 1, our Chapter is hosting a new virtual conversation with your fellow ESOP company leaders to discuss the topics that are top of mind for you, including adapting to the current COVID-19 health and economic crisis.

This exclusive new online experience is offered to top business leaders, executives and ESOP communications teams in The ESOP Association’s Iowa Nebraska Chapter. Bring your questions, concerns, and ideas and be ready to engage with others in tackling the key problems facing your ESOP company today.

The conversations will take place on Wednesday, June 17 from 10:30 a.m. to Noon. Registration is \$35 and each roundtable is limited to just 25 registrants. For more information and to register, [click here](#) .

AWARDS

2020 IA/NE Chapter Award Winners

During the Winter Conference each year, the Chapter has the opportunity to recognize outstanding contributions to the ESOP community with two awards: Employee-Owner of the Year and Employee-Owned Company of the Year. All members are invited to submit nominations and the winners are selected by a group of Chapter officers and executive committee members who do not have a conflict of interest with the nominees. This year, we also presented a company with the “Rising Star Award.” Details about these recipients are highlighted on the following pages.

2020 IA/NE Chapter “Employee-Owner of the Year” – Todd Bransky, Folience

Todd Bransky defines what it means to be passionate about working for an employee owned company and is often referred to as a “forever member” of Folience’s Communications Committee. Over the years, this passion has taken many forms, including:

- Creating and facilitating the company’s ESOP 101 training;
- Creating a monthly newsletter;
- Participating in and presenting at chapter and national conferences; and
- Engaging in government advocacy.

To dive deeper, in the past two years, Todd has been instrumental in creating a few unique communication tools for Folience, including:

- A video, which described each internal business unit and how they all fit together; and
- A text communication system and process, which enabled the company to communicate with all employee-owners, including those who work in their manufacturing environment and do not use email or other traditional forms of communication.

Being described by his co-workers as someone who “models employee ownership everyday by his contagious enthusiasm and helps everyone stay positive and motivated to continue the work ahead,” it’s no wonder his team calls him “Mr. ESOP.” Congratulations, Todd!



2020 IA/NE Chapter "Employee-Owned Company of the Year" Travel and Transport



Travel and Transport is a 100% employee-owned company headquartered in Omaha, Neb., with a number of other brick and mortar locations, as well as home-based employees, spread throughout the world. They provide corporate travel solutions, meeting/event planning services and unforgettable vacations. Here are a few reasons why T&T was selected for this award:

- When it comes to education and serving other ESOPs, T&T is nearly unparalleled. Not only do they consistently serve in chapter and national leadership ESOP Association roles, they also present multiple sessions each year at the chapter, regional, and national level. Their executives serve on the Board of Directors for other ESOP companies and they frequently seek out opportunities to be mentors/advisors for new ESOPs. They also genuinely believe that ESOPs are stronger together, and to say they are generous with their time and talents is an understatement.
- T&T is relentless in advocating for ESOPs with their elected officials. Thanks to their efforts, all elected officials from Nebraska have signed onto the ESOP legislation pending in the house and Senate.
- In 2019, T&T demonstrated that every ESOP must revive and renew itself from time to time. Not content to rest on their laurels, they reinvented and reinvigorated their communication and education programs in a variety of ways:
 - During the 2019 Roadshow, one of their officers visited every location around the globe to give a face-to-face presentation on a variety of topics, including company performance and strategy, wellness and wellbeing, and of course, the ESOP and employee-ownership. By the numbers that's 20 cities, 17 officers, seven weeks, and two continents.
 - They remodeled their "ESOP 101 Program" and offered it via webinar and in-person.
 - They created an "ESOP 601 Program" designed for those who are fully vested and thinking more about the specifics of retirement.
 - They updated their ESOP Intranet site and updated and launched new core values by using videos from officers and a trivia contest.

Congratulations to Travel and Transport, a company that has truly established itself as an "ESOP Legend!"

2020 Rising Star Award – Commonwealth Electric Company of the Midwest

The Rising Star Award is an award that is given from time to time when a “new” employee-owned company has proven that they have set a high trajectory and are pursuing it with absolute gusto. This year, the Chapter was pleased to present this award to Commonwealth Electric Company of the Midwest!

This organization became an ESOP just over three years ago and have been moving full steam ahead ever since. In short, they have:

- Formed their Employee Ownership Committee across all seven of their locations and appear to manage it like a well-oiled machine.
- Attended several chapter, regional, and national conferences.
- Created a variety of education tools, including a video and brief talking points called “Smidges.”
- Celebrated every Employee Ownership Month with themes, contests, and food.
- Organized several community outreach activities.
- Joined chapter leadership.
- And held their first Virtual Summit where their President gave a “State of the Company” address and then participant statements were distributed – so all employees heard the same message at the same time.

Congratulations to Commonwealth Electric Company of the Midwest. You truly demonstrate what being an employee-owned company means and we can’t wait to see what you do in the future!



COMMUNICATIONS



The HUB: The NEW Center of Online ESOP Interaction

In early April, The ESOP Association rolled out The HUB, which is The ESOP Association’s new series of networks that will become the center of online activity for ESOP companies and employee owners. The HUB offers tools for chatting, sharing resources, asking questions, and gathering insights and ideas – all in a safe online environment offered exclusively to ESOP Association members. The HUB also is where recordings of popular webinars are stored.

Fully integrated into TEA’s website, when you sign into the website you are automatically signed into The HUB and all the networks within it. Commenting on TEA resources and sharing them in your discussions is quick and easy because you are still connected to the website.

Some of the networks that have been launched include:

- **COVID-19 Network** – This network supplements the COVID-19 Action Center and provides a way for members to share ideas and ask pertinent questions about today’s health and business challenges.
- **Chapter Networks** – These networks offer a way to stay in touch with your fellow members in your chapter and share questions and concerns about local topics.
- **Work Groups** – These platforms provide chapter Officers and Advisory Committee members a secure place to carry on the work they do on behalf of the ESOP community.

If you haven’t already, members are encouraged to check out The HUB today by following these steps:

1. Log in to [The ESOP Association website](#) to access The HUB.
2. Click “My HUB Settings” in the navigation menu.
3. Enter a professional bio and photo for yourself.
4. Connect any social channels you want your fellow members to see, such as LinkedIn.

Should you have any questions about this new resource, send an email to ESOP@ESOPAssociation.org.