



THE IOWA / NEBRASKA CHAPTER OF THE ESOP ASSOCIATION

Q4 2019 NEWSLETTER



In This Newsletter:

Letter From the President

Pages 1, 2 and 3

Programming and Upcoming
Events

Page 4

Membership

Page 5

Awards and
Communications

Pages 6 and 7

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Wow, what a year we've had! When we entered 2019, one of our greatest challenges was to sustain the momentum we gained in 2018. In the true spirit of employee-ownership, the officers and executive committee members of the Iowa-Nebraska Chapter embrace total ownership of our chapter and thrive on serving our members. We continually push ourselves to do more, be better, and to spread the passion for employee-ownership farther. And our rewards are the positive feedback we receive from new and existing members after a conference, a meeting with an elected official, or the distribution of a new communication piece.

Therefore, to be honored by The ESOP Association as its Chapter of the Year for 2019 was a surreal moment. Accepting the award in front of the other 17 hard-working and dedicated chapters was a moment I will never forget. It was thrilling and humbling because it was truly a reflection of the phenomenal work being done by all our members every day in their companies and communities; we just happened to be on stage.

Our programming year began in February with the annual Winter Conference in Omaha. This conference has been a showcase of our Chapter programming for many years, and this year's event was no exception. On the afternoon before the conference, 31 participants joined CEO/CFO/HR roundtables and spent three hours networking and learning from each other. The next morning, 146 attendees gathered for a full day of education that featured dual-track sessions for Technical and Communication topics, as well as a joint presentation on government relations that received rave reviews. We also celebrated and recognized ESP International (Cedar Rapids, Iowa) as our 2019 Company of the Year, and Jeff Mounts (ESP International) as our 2019 Employee-Owner of the Year.

In May, we had very strong attendance by our Chapter members and officers at the National Conference in Washington, D.C. Several members presented on a wide variety of topics during the conference, and we broke records again with the size of the delegation assembled to visit all the elected officials from Iowa and Nebraska on Capitol Hill. In addition to being recognized as Chapter of the Year, our very own Jeff Mounts from ESP International (Cedar Rapids, Iowa) was selected as the National Employee Owner of the Year – fantastic! There are no words to describe the pride and excitement generated by that event.

In July, we gathered at Otter Creek Golf Course in Ankeny, Iowa, for our annual summer event. More than 120 corporate and professional members participated in the day-long event, which consisted of CEO/CFO/HR and Communications roundtables in the morning. And even though we were briefly rained on, participants enjoyed the course and comradery while raising \$1,150 for the Employee Ownership Foundation through some great fundraisers

In September, we joined our peers from the MN/Dakotas, Wisconsin and Illinois Chapters at the Midwest Conference in Bloomington, Minn. and set a chapter-event record at over 730 attendees! Participants joined new CEO/CFO/HR roundtable sessions before the opening reception on Wednesday and chose between dozens of presentations spread across five different tracks on Thursday and Friday. In addition to being very involved in the planning of the event, our Chapter officers and members were well-represented in the list of speakers.

In order to service our westernmost members, we returned to familiar ground in October with our one-day conference in Grand Island, Neb. Three sessions were offered in both Technical and Communications tracks, and the 25 participants were able to make new connections and get inspired and educated from a wide variety of employee-owners and professionals.

We ended our programming year with our annual Fall Summit hosted by Wright Service Corp. in West Des Moines, Iowa. Over 60 attendees joined their peers at CEO/CFO/HR roundtables in the morning. In the afternoon, the CEOs, CFOs, and their outside Board of Directors gathered for additional presentations and conversation on a variety of governance topics. The HR professionals participated in an interactive workshop facilitated by Dan Marcue from The ESOP Association.

We are currently exploring taking this event to even higher levels in 2020 by partnering with the Heart of America Chapter and broadening the content and opportunity to network – stay tuned!

Speaking of 2020, we are already well underway in our planning for the new year. Save the date for the Annual Conference on Feb. 27, in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and the Summer Event will return to Omaha on June 24. If you haven't visited the new ESOP Association website lately, I encourage you to find more information on these and other chapter events scheduled for the upcoming year. You can also follow us on Twitter at [ESOPIANE1](#).

We hope you find tremendous value in your membership and will consider engaging with the Chapter at an even higher level in 2020. There are so many opportunities: corporate or professional sponsorships, sharing your passion and expertise by presenting at one of our events, attending a local or national conference, hosting a congressional visit, or joining the Chapter leadership through the executive committee. Engagement and participation are the lifeblood of our Chapter – and we welcome you all!

Finally, I want to extend a heart-felt thank you to all the members and officers of the Iowa-Nebraska Chapter. I am returning as your Chapter president in 2020 and am pleased to introduce Jim Ridder with Travel & Transport as President-Elect; his term will begin January 2021. In addition, Scot Storjohann with GreatBanc Trust Company, and Melany Stonewall with Kreg Tool Company are joining the officers as VP of Government Relations and VP of Communications, respectively. And Becky Wiegel with Woodward Communications will continue to lead our Membership activities. We send our warmest wishes and gratitude to Ryan Ball for his years of service as VP of Government Relations, and look forward to his continued involvement as a member of the Chapter's executive committee. And please help me in sending an overwhelming THANK YOU to our incomparable Chapter Administrator, Alicia Diekow, who will be transitioning from this role to a new endeavor in her service to the ESOP community next year.

2019 was truly a hallmark year for the Iowa-Nebraska Chapter and I count my involvement as one of my many blessings. The ESOP community is filled with talented, passionate, generous, and dedicated employee-owners and professionals with a shared mission of furthering employee-ownership. And it is an honor to be a member of this elite group.

Happy Holidays!



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





PROGRAMMING

Fall Roundtable and Executive/Board of Directors Summit Recap

The Iowa-Nebraska Chapter finished off 2019 with a Roundtable and Executive/Board of Directors Summit on Dec. 11. The full-day event was held at ESOP Owned Company, Wright Service Corp in West Des Moines, Iowa. Over 60 ESOP Company Executives, Board members and Human Resources professionals gathered for a morning of roundtable discussions on ESOP-related topics specific to their company position. Executives and Board of Directors spent the afternoon attending a series of open forum sessions on Advocacy, ESOP Sustainability, Board Roles and the hot topic of “expanding employee ownership” with Mergers and Acquisitions.

The Human Resources group was led through an afternoon workshop on building communications, annual planning for ESOP events and employee mentorships at ESOP Owned Companies. Lastly, attendees enjoyed some “ESOP Banter” at a nearby venue to continue their discussions from the day.

2020 Sponsorship Opportunities

In order to help make all of our events successful, sponsors are needed. Sponsorship opportunities and contribution levels for both Professional and Corporate Members are now available in “all event” levels, as well as individual “a la cart” levels.

More information on sponsorship levels and contribution details will soon be available on the ESOP Association’s website.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Mark your calendar for these 2020 Iowa Nebraska Chapter of the ESOP Association events:

February 27, 2020

IANE Annual Winter Conference in Cedar Rapids, Iowa at the Hotel at Kirkwood (Registration details coming soon!)

May 20 to 22, 2020

43rd National Conference in Washington, D.C.

June 24, 2020

IANE Summer Celebration Meeting and Golf Event in Omaha, Neb. at Tiburon Golf Course

Sept. 16 to 18, 2020

Midwest Regional Conference in Milwaukee, Wis. at the Hyatt Regency

A photograph showing the word "MEMBERSHIP" spelled out using ten wooden blocks with black lettering. The blocks are arranged in a single row on a sheet of white graph paper. The background is slightly blurred, showing a wooden desk and some office supplies.

MEMBERSHIP

MEMBERSHIP

Welcome New Members!

We're pleased to welcome two new members to our Chapter – [DLR Group](#) and [Baker Group](#)!

[DLR Group](#) is an integrated design firm providing architecture, engineering, planning and interior design from offices around the globe. The firm is an advocate for sustainable design and was an early adopter of the Architecture 2030 Challenge, and an initial signatory to the AIA 2030 Commitment and the China Accord. DLR Group is headquartered in Omaha, Neb. and is 100% employee owned!

[Baker Group](#) is the Midwest's leading provider of critical building infrastructure systems. They help commercial, industrial and institutional clients by providing expert solutions in the design, installation and servicing of things, such as: HVAC, plumbing, electrical systems, security systems, fire alarm systems, compressed air, and much more. Headquartered near Des Moines, Iowa, Baker Group has four locations across Iowa, and the experience and resources needed to excel in an evolving business climate.



AWARDS

Communications Excellence and Employee Ownership Month Poster Competition Annual Awards

The 2019 AACE and EOM Poster Competitions are now open. Entries must be received at The ESOP Association by Feb. 1, 2020.

The Annual Awards for Communications Excellence (AACE) are sponsored by The ESOP Association to recognize the outstanding communications programs of its members. AACE winners are chosen by a panel of five judges made up of both management and non-management employee owners, each of whom has demonstrated active experience and interest in the field of ESOP communications. Winners will be honored during the Awards Banquet at The ESOP Association's Annual Conference in May in Washington, D.C. All entries will be on display as well during the conference.

For more information on AACE Aware and EOM poster rules, new tips, past winners, photo displays of previous submissions, or to download the Entry Form, please click [here](#).



Call for "Employee Owner of the Year" and "Company of the Year" Chapter Award Entries

Nominations are being accepted for Employee Owner of the Year and Company of the Year. Entries must be submitted by Feb. 1, 2020 and can be sent to IANE-Chapter@esopassociation.org.

Taking the time to submit for these awards is a great way to reflect and recognize all of the great events and people within your ESOP company in the past year. Winning one of these awards can be valuable to your company in terms of media mentions and customer awareness when properly publicized, but the boost in pride and positivity within your company is immeasurable. The winner of our chapter award will be eligible to win the national award, which will be announced on May 21 at the Awards Gala in Washington, D.C. during the National Conference.

For more information on Employee Owner of the Year and Company of the Year criteria, or to download the Nomination Form, please click [here](#).

The Chapter winners will be announced at the Winter Conference on Feb. 27 in Cedar Rapids.

COMMUNICATIONS

Employee Ownership Month Celebrations

In October, many companies celebrated Employee Ownership Month by putting on fun events for their employees to help remind them about the benefits of being an employee owner. The following highlights what two ESOP companies did for their employees:

Woodward Communications, Inc. (WCI)

WCI's theme this year was "Rocktober: Employee Ownership Rocks!" Through this theme, they did the following:

- Educated owners with weekly Rock'n ESOP facts;
- Played ESOP Bingo for a chance to win a \$200 Ticketmaster gift card to attend their favorite concert;
- Played "Find the Guitar" in the quarterly newsletter, encouraging owners to stay up-to-date on what was happening across WCI with a chance to win \$25;
- Of course, there was Rock-n-Roll themed food, such as Smashing Pumpkin Soup, Cranberries, Meatloaf, Fionna Apple(s), etc; and
- Encouraged people to dress up or wear their favorite rock band T-shirt and show off their ESOP tattoo!

Kreg Tool Company

Kreg Tool conducted an ESOP Fall Carnival for all employees to enjoy. The outdoor carnival consisted of a number of fun games in which employees could earn the chance to play and win by answering ESOP-related questions. In return, they received raffle tickets that could be entered in drawings to win a number of great prizes. To accompany the carnival games, employees enjoyed fresh popcorn, funnel cakes and hot cider. It ended up being a beautiful October day that was enjoyed by all who attended!

