



THE IOWA / NEBRASKA CHAPTER OF THE ESOP ASSOCIATION

DECEMBER 2020 NEWSLETTER



LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Happy Holidays to you and yours!

While this letter may be shorter than prior years, it remains full of gratitude and celebration. 2020 put us all to the test – personally and professionally. It tested our companies, it tested our teams, and it tested our resilience. For some companies in our chapter, COVID-19 was a force they couldn't overcome and very difficult decisions had to be made. For others, the pandemic changed many things, including when and where work was done and they've weathered through. No matter what challenges you faced, we hope you found value in the education, support, and community provided by your membership in the Chapter.

We were fortunate to host our Winter Conference before COVID-19 came to rule our lives. On Feb. 26, The ESCO Group in Marion hosted 61 participants for CEO/CFO/HR/Communications roundtables for three hours of networking and learning from each other. The next morning, 175 attendees gathered at the beautiful Hotel Kirkwood in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, for a full day of education featuring dual-track sessions for Technical and Communications topics. During lunch, we were both

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educated and alarmed by a presentation on cybersecurity that reinforced the importance of engaging employee-owners. We also celebrated our Chapter award winners: Todd Bransky with Folience as our Employee Owner of the Year, and Travel & Transport as our Employee-Owned Company of the Year. Commonwealth Electric Company of the Midwest also received the first ever chapter Rising Star award for new ESOPs that have made significant achievements in building an ownership culture in a short period of time.

Our hearts broke when the annual Conference in D.C. was cancelled, but we recovered with our first virtual roundtable in June. Even though Zoom is no substitute for in-person, we were grateful to see familiar faces again and nearly 50 participants joined for 90 minutes across the four disciplines.

Our next foray in virtual programming came in September when we partnered with the MN/Dakotas, Wisconsin, Illinois, and Heart of America chapters for a two-day multi-track conference. Over 400 participants logged in and it was refreshing to enjoy local content again. It was the largest virtual regional conference to date and feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Iowa/Nebraska outpaced the other chapters in both number of speakers and attendees – way to represent!

While we do not anticipate returning to in-person meetings until the summer of 2021, we are starting to develop our calendar of events. Please see more information on the January roundtables and March Spring conference later in the newsletter.

For programming, 2020 taught us to be nimble and trust that “if you build it, they will come.” It also taught us the power of advocacy at the state and national level. The ESOP community had a tremendous win early in the year when Daniel Goldstein from Folience headquartered in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, was able to testify in front of Congress. And National staff were extremely busy ensuring that ESOPs were eligible for the federal COVID-19 stimulus programs. It was challenging to connect with our elected officials, but many companies engaged in virtual townhalls and letter campaigns. It was never more important to tell the story of employee-ownership.

We hope you find tremendous value in your membership and will consider engaging with the Chapter at an even higher level in 2021. There so many opportunities: Corporate or Professional sponsorship, 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. Over the past several years, and especially in 2020, the Iowa/Nebraska Chapter and its members continue to set a very high standard of performance and service to our employee-owners and the larger ESOP community. And that was never more apparent than when Iowa/Nebraska members far exceeded our fundraising targets for the Employee Ownership Foundation campaign and won nearly one-third of all AACE and other national awards given in 2020. This is a tremendous organization filled with incredibly talented and passionate members and I couldn't be prouder to serve as Chapter president.

I am very pleased to introduce the 2021 Chapter officers:

President	Scot Storjohann, Great Banc
VP Communications	Melany Stonewall, Kreg Tool Company
VP Membership	Becky Wiegel, Woodward Communications
VP Programs	Angie Hoover, Rayser Holdings
VP Govt Advocacy	Ryan Ball, VGM Group

This is a fantastic group who will lead our chapter to even higher levels of performance. I can't wait to see what's to come!

Please help me extend special thanks to Hillary Hughes with Prairie for her years of service as a chapter officer; the expertise and strategic thinking she applied to our chapter operations are the foundation of our success. And to Jim Winterscheid, Jim Ridder, and the rest of our friends at Travel & Transport: thank you for your generosity and never-ending service to our community; we can never thank you enough.

Our hopes and prayers are that 2021 brings an end to the pandemic and the return of our favorite traditions and celebrations - together.

Happy holidays!



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



ADVOCACY

Advocacy Page on TEA Website

Have you had a chance to look at the [Advocacy page](#) of The ESOP Association (TEA) website? If you haven't, please take a few minutes to go in and review it. If you have seen it, you are encouraged to review it again because the information is constantly evolving and being updated.

The change in administrations also means there will be changes to the ESOP world and the TEA team will be working hard to update us on the latest issues, proposals and commentary. Some of the content you will find on the [Advocacy page](#) includes helpful and interesting information on topics, such as the Top Advocacy Issues, Guide for Successful Advocacy, Engage Your Elected Officials, Our ESOP Champions in Congress and much more.

Elected Official and Candidate Visits

Did an elected official or candidate visit your place of work, hold a virtual meeting, or interact in another way with your company? If so, please send any pictures of the event and a brief summary of the meeting to Melany Stonewall (Melany.Stonewall@kregtool.com), our Chapter VP of Communications, or Jodi Lamb (jlamb@esopassociation.com), our Chapter Executive.



SPONSORSHIPS

2021 Chapter Sponsorships are Now Available!

Chapter sponsorships now have consistent levels of benefits and naming. What's more, all sponsorships are for the entire year, saving time and effort and making it easy to ensure your message is consistently visible to members of the chapter or chapters you choose. These sponsorships will apply to events that are virtual, in person, or a hybrid. [Click here](#) to see the Chapter's sponsorship levels, deliverables, and pricing. (A table showing the side-by-side comparison of the deliverables can be found on the [Chapter's website](#).)

AWARDS

Congratulations to Our Chapter's 2020 National Award Winners!

For those who may have missed it, our Chapter performed extremely well in the 2020 National Awards and 2020 Annual Awards for Communications Excellence competitions! Congratulations to the following individuals and companies for your award wins!



National Award Winners from our Chapter:

- 2020 Employee Owner of the Year: **Todd Bransky, Folience**
- 2020 Outstanding Chapter Officer of the Year: **Becky Streff, ESP International**
- 2020 Outstanding Member of Board of Governors: **Daniel Goldstein, Folience**

AACE Winners from our Chapter:

- Video Category: Runner Up – **The VGM Group**
- Printed Materials Category: Winner – **Van Meter Inc.**
- One Special Event Category: Runner Up – **ITA Group**
- Series of Events Category: Winner – **Woodward Communications**
- Total Communications Category: Runner Up – **Travel and Transport**

Iowa/Nebraska 2021 Chapter Awards

Each year, companies can apply for two different Chapter awards – ESOP Company of the Year and Employee Owner of the Year. All nominees are honored at a chapter event and winners are automatically entered in the national competition. The deadline for applying for these awards is **Feb. 17, 2021**. For more information and how to apply, visit our [Chapter website](#). In addition, tip sheets are available that provide helpful advice on applying for the [Employee Owner of the Year award](#) and [ESOP Company of the Year award](#).

MEMBERSHIP

Help Us Grow the Chapter!

Do you know of a company in Iowa or Nebraska that recently became an ESOP or is considering becoming one? If yes, someone from the Membership Committee would love to reach out to them to see if maybe a membership to The ESOP Association might help them with their journey. Feel free to send any leads to Becky Wiegel (bweigel@wcinet.com), VP of Membership.

PROGRAMMING

Register NOW for the CEO, CFO, HR and ESOP Communications Virtual Roundtables: January 26, 2021

The IA/NE and Wisconsin Chapters are joining together for a virtual roundtable event that will offer the opportunity to network and engage with an even larger group of ESOP company leaders. This event has been designed and developed for corporate members of The ESOP Association or those looking to create an Employee Ownership program.

The conversations will take place on Tuesday, Jan. 26 from 10 to 11:30 a.m. CST.

The roundtables will be moderated by members of both Chapters and will discuss a variety of topics including 2021 risk assessments. Every aspect of every business was stress-tested in 2020. How can we use the lessons of 2020 to prepare for 2021?

Confer with peers about risk management with discussion questions:

- What COVID consequences surprised your industry in 2020?
- What are the general types of risks you're worried about for 2021?
- What's the best way to communicate serious risks within your ESOP?

The roundtables will utilize zoom hosting services and provide for an interactive virtual experience. In order to provide a participatory experience, registrations will be limited.

[Click here](#) to register and view the agenda.

Save the Date for the IA/NE
Spring Conference:
March 25, 2021

The Programming Committee is busy planning the Chapter's Spring Conference, which is scheduled for Thursday, March 25, 2021. This conference will be held virtually. More details will be shared soon! Until then, make sure to get this date added to your calendar!



Chapter Officers and Executive Committee Members

To ensure all members are aware of who is serving on the IA/NE Executive Committee and leading our Chapter, the following is a list of these individuals and the companies they represent.

Chapter Officers:

- Scot Storjohann, President, Great Banc
- Becky Streff, Past President, ESP International
- Ryan Ball, VP of Advocacy, VGM
- Angie Hoover, VP of Programs, Rayser Holdings
- Becky Wiegel, VP of Membership, Woodward Communications
- Melany Stonewall, VP of Communications, Kreg Tool Company

Chapter Executive Committee Members:

- Brian Berry, The Palmer Group
- Charlie Daughtery, Precision
- Alicia Diekow, Acumen Advisory Services, LLC
- Tom Durian, Van Meter
- Sarah Hansen, Drake-Williams Steel
- Lindy Ireland, BCC Advisers
- Shane Jensen, Drake-Williams Steel
- Derek Johnson, ISG
- Mark Kraft, ESCO
- Brian Lund, Commonwealth
- Jeff McGuire, Kutak Rock
- Samantha Mintle, Wright Tree Service
- Greg Patterson, HDH Advisors
- Craig Schroeder, Timberline
- Jarod Shell, Kreg Tool Company
- Kellie Stastny, Van Meter
- Cathy Terukina, Folience
- Bob Theisen, DISTek
- Debbie Williams, GreatBanc



We Want to Hear From You!

Do you have a comment, question, or any other feedback you'd like to share with the IA/NE Chapter? If so, please feel free to share it at any time by sending an email to Jodi Lamb (jlamb@esopassociation.com), our Chapter Executive. She will ensure your email is routed to the appropriate individual and a response will be provided as quickly as possible.