

## AT A GLANCE

### The Dimensional Group

FOUNDED: 1987

EMPLOYEES: 75

**OVERVIEW:** The company creates custom packaging and commercial printing, ranging from binders and diploma covers to custom boxes and restaurant menu holders.

**IMPACT:** \$1.8 million from CIRAS projects over three years.

**LEARN MORE:**

<https://dimensionalgroup.com>



## Pandemic Prompts Collaborative Response from Iowa Manufacturers

*The call came toward the end of March. The state of Iowa was projecting that it would come up at least 500,000 face shields short of what was needed to provide front-line medical workers with personal protective equipment in the battle against COVID-19.*

Would Adam Gold be willing to help?

Gold, president of The Dimensional Group, a Mason City custom packaging company, soon found himself in a flurry of CIRAS-arranged calls, emails, and meetings. A plan quickly formed to pair Gold's company, which had no previous experience producing medical equipment, with Ottumwa-based Angstrom Precision Molding. Within two

months, the team would produce more than 1.3 million medical face shields.

"To go from nothing to shipping product in eight or ten days, that is something that never happens," Gold said. "There were a lot of late-night phone calls and everybody coming at it with the right attitude. . . . I don't think you can understate the importance of CIRAS on the front end of this."

"CIRAS started this whole process," said Jim Johnson, Angstrom's chief operating officer. "You pushed us in the right direction."

Throughout the initial outbreak of COVID-19, the role CIRAS played in addressing Iowa's PPE crisis focused largely on moving obstacles out of manufacturers' ways. Acting on behalf of Iowa State University, CIRAS experts

*Continued on page 2*

- 1 Pandemic Prompts Collaborative Response from Iowa Manufacturers
- 3 ILC Updates Membership Structure to Provide New Choices
- 4 Scanner Helps Improve Firefighting Tools
- 5 Pandemic Pushing Campus Job Fairs Online
- 5 Staff News
- 6 Ag Leader Seeks Out CIRAS to Solve Problems, Help New Ideas Grow
- 7 New Normal: Dickson Industries Growing with Gowns
- 8 Agreement Means Meat Processors can Grow
- 8 Cordray Retires as Director of Iowa State Meat Lab
- 9 GovTalk–B2G Sales
- 9 Post Pandemic, Iowa City Company Cleaning Up in Government Contracting
- 10 Internet Marketing Boot Camp Moves Online
- 10 Upcoming Events
- 11 Martin Receives Economic Development Award
- 11 Contact Information
- 12 Growing Your Business

## AT A GLANCE

### Angstrom Precision Molding

**FOUNDED:** 1997

**EMPLOYEES:** 16

**OVERVIEW:** Plastic-injection molding.

**IMPACT:** More than \$4.7 million from CIRAS projects over the past five years.

**LEARN MORE:**

[www.angstromprecisionmolding.com](http://www.angstromprecisionmolding.com)



spent much of March and April reaching out to factories in an attempt to bridge gaps, streamline processes, and support companies' efforts to use their capabilities in new ways.

As the pandemic's economic disruption took hold, CIRAS built lists of who was able to make what and shared that information with organizations needing new suppliers.

Chris Hill, director of the CIRAS Technology Assistance Program, worked with several companies to provide design assistance and smooth the path into face shield production.

One outgrowth of those calls was the new venture involving The Dimensional Group, which had experience cutting plastic, and Angstrom Precision Molding, a plastic-injection molder who agreed to make the halo headpieces to which clear face shields attach. In other instances, CIRAS helped companies purchase raw material or used technologies from the Digital Manufacturing Lab powered by Alliant Energy to help firms create the tooling they would need to gear up large-scale production quickly.

"I think everyone understood there was a need," Hill said. "But when you're a business in the middle of a downturn, making an investment to do something new can be difficult. CIRAS worked to reduce that risk."

While factories were gearing up, CIRAS joined Iowa State University's mechanical engineering department in using campus 3D printers to produce nearly 1,000 face shields for local hospitals and care facilities. Those shields later would be distributed to nursing homes, emergency management officials, and the Veterans Administration hospital in Des Moines.

Allen Meyer, of Iowa's Department of Administrative Services, said the emergence of Iowa PPE producers helped the state fill shortages more quickly and more cost effectively than other options.

"And of course," Meyer said, "I always like putting Iowans back to work."

Homegrown PPE production came at just the right time for Linda Doyle, CEO of Northcrest Community retirement center in Ames. CIRAS dropped 100 university-printed halos and 250 clear shields at the nursing home in mid-April, when infections were mounting across the country and PPE supplies were scarce.

"Having those shields available was just a real comfort," Doyle said. "It was great to know that somebody out there cared about us."

Sue Draper, director of supply chain management for Mary Greeley Medical Center in Ames, praised CIRAS as a source of quality information during the pandemic. The hospital received donated

"I think everyone understood there was a need. But when you're a business in the middle of a downturn, making an investment to do something new can be difficult. CIRAS worked to reduce that risk."  
— Chris Hill

**On the Cover:** Shannon and Adam Gold at a press used to cut face shields. Above right: Face shield production in Iowa State's Mechanical Engineering department.

**CIRAS Mission:** *Every day we will enhance the performance of industry through applied research, education, and technical assistance.*

CIRAS is supported in part by the DoC/NIST Manufacturing Extension Partnership, the DoD/DLA Procurement Technical Assistance Program, the DoC/EDA University Center Program, and the State of Iowa Economic Growth Committee appropriation for the CIRAS Technology Assistance Program.

**CIRAS News** is published quarterly by the Center for Industrial Research and Service and edited by the CIRAS publications team. Design and production is by Hobbs Designs, LLC. Please send questions, comments, or address changes to [ciras.news@iastate.edu](mailto:ciras.news@iastate.edu).—August 2020 HD20084

Articles may be reprinted with the following credit line: "Reprinted from *CIRAS News*, Vol. 55, No. 4, a publication of Iowa State University Center for Industrial Research and Service." Please send a copy of the reprint to *CIRAS News*, 1805 Collaboration Place, Suite 2300, Ames, Iowa 50010-9166.

Iowa State University is an Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action employer. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, age, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, national origin, marital status, disability, or protected Veteran status and will not be discriminated against. Inquiries can be directed to the Office of Equal Opportunity, 3410 Beardshear Hall, 515 Morrill Road, 515-294-7612, email [eooffice@iastate.edu](mailto:eooffice@iastate.edu).



Staff at Mary Greeley Medical Center.

face shields from the campus production effort and purchased additional shields from some of the companies that worked with CIRAS. Draper said she later alerted a regional hospital association to the CIRAS list of potential emergency suppliers.

“This has been really collaborative, and we’re very grateful,” Draper said. “It’s good to know your website is there. We don’t know what the fall is going to bring.”

For Iowa manufacturers, other questions remain.

After helping Iowa meet the state’s original face shield needs, The Dimensional Group and Angstrom spent May and June evaluating their long-term prospects in the medical supply business. CIRAS has plans to work with the companies on possible future design iterations, and Gold already has begun working with distributors to determine whether their product will remain viable over time.

Johnson, of Angstrom, said both companies got into the PPE business largely to be helpful. But the new normal may end up meaning they have a new business.

“I know we’re cheaper than China,” Johnson said of his competitors. “So, it might be possible that we could help keep some of this stuff being made in the United States.

“Hopefully, two years from now, it’ll turn out that you’ll be doing a bigger story on us.”

➤ **For more information, contact Chris Hill at [chhill@iastate.edu](mailto:chhill@iastate.edu) or 515-313-8251.**

## ILC Updates Membership Structure to Provide New Choices

The Iowa Lean Consortium (ILC) is launching a new membership model in 2021, revamping its dues structure to give member organizations more options and provide room for them to grow with the ILC as they expand their continuous improvement culture.

The new plan, which is slated to go into effect for renewals beginning January 1, 2021, will shrink seven possible tiers of membership down to four. Instead of being charged dues based on their total number of employees, ILC member organizations now will pay a membership fee based on the services they desire and how many employees intend to participate in ILC events or take advantage of other benefits.

“This new model gives organizations more choice as to how they want to be involved in the ILC,” said Tracy Schuster, program director of the ILC. “We believe this will both allow more organizations to join and give them more benefit for their money.”

ILC members currently pay a variety of different membership fees based on the total number of employees in an organization. Beginning in 2021, that will become a four-part system, Schuster said—with a bronze tier for organizations with a single participating employee, a silver one for groups with 1–3 participating employees, and a gold level for those with 1–10 participating employees. An additional platinum level will allow an unlimited number of employees to access ILC training.

CIRAS envisions the new structure as part of a continuum ranging from those who are just getting started to larger organizations with a deeply ingrained continuous improvement culture. More details will be announced in the coming weeks.

“We expect to see organizations advancing through the tiers over time,” Schuster said. “We want this to make it easier for you to get started, then we want you to stay with the ILC and grow for the long term.”

➤ **For more information, contact Tracy Schuster at [tschust@iastate.edu](mailto:tschust@iastate.edu) or 515-715-0164.**



ILC Annual Conference, 2019



Fred Malven, holding fire tool, and CIRAS project manager Jake Behrens, holding 3D scanner. (Below: Malven demonstrates tools at fire department in Federick County, Md.)

## Scanner Helps Improve Firefighting Tools

*A Nevada, Iowa, maker of firefighter hand tools is growing in stature after CIRAS helped the company modernize and improve the designs for its tools.*

Fred Malven, a longtime volunteer firefighter, founded Malven Fire Tool Works four years ago when he retired as an associate professor in Iowa State University's College of Design.

Malven has been modifying fire tools for decades—creating wooden models partly so that manufacturers would loan him real tools for a firefighting tactics class. Upon retirement, Malven sought to revisit some of his earlier designs and update them. The problem: there were no actual prints or 3D CAD (computer-aided design) files.

The company turned to Iowa State's Digital Manufacturing Lab powered by Alliant Energy. CIRAS project manager Jake Behrens and Chris Hill, director of the CIRAS Technology Assistance Program, used a 3D scanner to create digital CAD models of Malven's tools. Those models then were modified to make improvements such as adding sharper edges and ridges to keep a blade from getting stuck in the door it's

meant to chop down. CIRAS then used 3D printers to create physical samples of the modified tools for Malven to review.

Firefighting implements—a term that encompasses both forcible entry bars and "overhaul" tools used to search for fire in walls—traditionally have been made without high-tech processes.

"The standard Halligan bar, you could buy a half dozen of them, and no two were exactly alike," Malven said. "The bars that we're producing now, they're within thousands of an inch of being the same. This has really enabled me to get an identity in the marketplace that is one of precision and uniformity."

Malven said inquiries from fire departments around the country doubled in four months after word spread of his new designs. He credits the CIRAS project with a roughly \$40,000 increase in his company's sales.

Additional improvements are on the way. An ongoing CIRAS project involves using the computerized models to test different

### AT A GLANCE

#### Malven Fire Tool Works

**FOUNDED:** 2016

**OVERVIEW:** Produces a variety of hand tools for firefighters.

**EMPLOYEES:** 1

**IMPACT:** The company believes it gained a better reputation for quality and \$40,000 in new sales.

**FOR MORE:** [www.malvenworks.com](http://www.malvenworks.com)



metals and thicknesses and make the tools even stronger.

"Now that he has CAD models, he can evaluate potential changes much faster and at a lower cost," Hill said. "He has the foundation to reach his goal of being an innovator in firefighting tools."

➤ For more information, contact Jake Behrens at [jbehrens@iastate.edu](mailto:jbehrens@iastate.edu) or 515-815-5003.

# Pandemic Pushing Campus Job Fairs Online

Career fairs at Iowa State University are going digital this fall.

University officials say the change is a response to the COVID-19 pandemic and provides an option that still will allow employers to network with many students and alumni during the events. It also eliminates the time and expense of travel.

Kellie Mullaney, with Engineering Career Services, said the College of Engineering will continue its recent years' practice of offering career fairs on two separate days—September 15 and 16.

The only difference is that employers will be able to use the CyHire computer system to provide information about their organizations and employment opportunities. Companies will manage an electronic queue of job seekers, who then will be asked to present their qualifications during a short video conference.

"ISU has a reputation for high quality and effective career fairs and we intend to do all that we can to make this temporary shift to virtual networking a good experience," Mullaney said.

## Fall Career Fairs

### ■ Agriculture and Life Sciences Ag Career Day

**Tuesday, October 13, 2020 and Wednesday, October 14, 2020 • 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.**

Virtual (short, online video meetings); CONTACT: [mikegaul@iastate.edu](mailto:mikegaul@iastate.edu)

### ■ Engineering Career Fair

**Tuesday, September 15, 2020, and Wednesday, September 16, 2020 • 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.**

Virtual; CONTACT: [ecs@iastate.edu](mailto:ecs@iastate.edu)

### ■ Business, Industry, and Technology Career Fair

**Wednesday, September 30, 2020 • 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.**

Virtual; CONTACT: [bcs@iastate.edu](mailto:bcs@iastate.edu)

### ■ People to People Career Fair

**Tuesday, September 29, 2020 • 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.**

Virtual (focuses on human/social services, education, health/wellness, government, and hospitality; hosted by the Colleges of Human Sciences and Liberal Arts and Sciences); CONTACT: [hscareers@iastate.edu](mailto:hscareers@iastate.edu)

## STAFF NEWS



### Schuster to lead ILC; McMahon to new workforce effort

Tracy Schuster took over as program director of the Iowa Lean Consortium in May.

Schuster, who previously served as assistant ILC director, is replacing Teresa Hay McMahon, who has taken on a new assignment to expand CIRAS workforce-related programming under the U.S. Economic Development Administration's University Center program.

"It is never easy to leave a labor of love, but I am confident in the ILC's mission and in its continued success under Tracy's leadership," McMahon said.

Schuster likewise praised the "solid foundation" McMahon created and said she looks forward to "building on what Teresa started."



### Haaland joins Industry 4.0

Kirk Haaland has joined CIRAS as a project manager.

Kirk graduated from Iowa State in 2006 with a bachelor's degree in industrial technology and previously worked for CIRAS as an intern from 2005 to 2006.

He followed that with 14 years of fulfilling multiple roles for Iowa manufacturers. At Iowa Spring in Adel, Kirk's work focused on process improvement implementations. Later, at American Athletic in Jefferson, he also became deeply involved with safety programming. Most recently, Kirk was project manager, quality engineer, and quality supervisor at Innovative Injection Technologies (i2-tech) in West Des Moines. Additionally, he has worked in sports analytics and was the co-founder of College Football Analytics website.

Kirk's role at CIRAS will be working with the Industry 4.0 team, focusing on plant layout simulations, big data, automation, and process design.



Left and center, production at Ag Leader. At right, technology in use in a tractor.

## Ag Leader Seeks Out CIRAS to Solve Problems, Help New Ideas Grow

*The best part about the CIRAS innovation process, Mike Myers believes, is that it makes it easier for his company to quickly find the ideas that help customers most.*

Myers is marketing development manager at Ag Leader Technology, an Ames company created 28 years ago to help farmers better monitor their fields. Today, precision agriculture is a wide-ranging industry with competition fueled by venture capitalists and start-ups looking to profit from helping farmers manage data.

Now, more than ever, Ag Leader needs to be focused on the right ideas.

That's why the company asked CIRAS to help with the creation of a more formalized innovation process in mid-2018. Results from that process include several promising new products in development, more than 10 pending patents, and large amounts of time and money saved by recognizing shortcomings early.

"Sometimes, it's best to stop," Myers said. "You can look out and say, 'Man,

that's a great idea, but the technology doesn't exist.' Or, 'The technology exists, but we're not going to make enough money.'"

"It's nice to have somebody you can call who's either dealt with it before or has the connections to say, 'We don't know, but we can get you an answer.'"

— Mike Myers

"If we stop now, we're not pouring resources into refining things for six months and then saying, 'No, we're not going to do that.'"

CIRAS project manager Paul Gormley said research shows that a formal innovation

process can help companies turn an entire staff into innovators. "If you somehow can develop ways to harness the power of everyone's minds to think that way..., then that becomes part of a system," he said.

Innovation is just one piece of the strong support system linking Ag Leader and Iowa State University. CIRAS in recent years has helped the company test metals, analyze seized motors, and explore materials for potential new

products. CIRAS also is working with Ag Leader to help the company understand the regulations and the requirements for selling in foreign markets.

More broadly, Ag Leader regularly uses Iowa State College of Engineering seniors to tackle problems via capstone design projects and hires students as interns and employees.

Myers views CIRAS as a valuable resource.

"Sometimes you encounter really hard problems," Myers said. "It's nice to have somebody you can call who's either dealt with it before or has the connections to say, 'We don't know, but we can get you an answer.'"

### AT A GLANCE

#### Ag Leader

**FOUNDED:** 1992

**OVERVIEW:** Makes a wide variety of equipment for the precision agriculture market.

**EMPLOYEES:** 265

**IMPACT:** An estimated \$6.8 million last year.

**FOR MORE:** [www.agleader.com](http://www.agleader.com)

➤ For more information, contact Derek Thompson at [thompson@iastate.edu](mailto:thompson@iastate.edu) or 515-419-2163.

# New Normal: Dickson Industries Growing with Gowns

A Des Moines company with an eight-decade history of working with fabrics in the food and medical industries is returning to its roots following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Founded in 1946, Dickson Industries made its name making medical fabrics and garments before venturing into various lines of food-industry clothing and preconsumer products, such as specialized netting used to enhance the flavor of meat during smoking. When the coronavirus decimated demand for food-industry products, Dickson officials realized that they were ideally situated to help fill part of Iowa's need for personal protective equipment (PPE).

The company began producing hospital isolation gowns to fill emergency shortages this spring and since has decided to continue.

David Dickson, Dickson Industries president, said the business now plans to produce some reusable gowns for COVID-19 patients in Iowa and import others from the company's longstanding suppliers in Asia.

The combination of an existing supply chain and local manufacturing capability means the company can be incredibly flexible and able to pivot quickly, he said. Dickson also had existing relationships with medical supply distributors, making it easy for hospitals to purchase from the company.

"We're thinking this could become a permanent line item for us under the medical division," Dickson said. "The comments we've received have been overwhelmingly positive."

Dickson made the gown decision after extensive conversations with CIRAS about what it would take to meet governmental safety standards going forward. CIRAS previously had helped the company obtain Safe Quality Food certification in 2018.

CIRAS project manager Kim Anderson said federal regulators issued Emergency Use Authorizations (EUAs) in the early days of the pandemic to help meet an overwhelming PPE demand. Those EUAs eventually will expire, but Dickson already understands the type of safety-conscious process that medical-grade manufacturing requires, she said. "The uniqueness to them is that they have so many options."

"We have a very diverse manufacturing pool in Iowa. A lot of states don't have that. We really could play a key role in getting some of this manufacturing shifted back to America."

— Kim Anderson



## AT A GLANCE

### Dickson Industries

**FOUNDED:** 1946

**OVERVIEW:** The company makes quality fabrics for multiple markets, ranging from food processing garments to sporting goods.

**EMPLOYEES:** 48

**IMPACT:** A projected \$500,000 in new sales.

**FOR MORE:**

<https://www.dicksonindustries.com>

Other Iowa businesses might have similar chances to bend their existing capabilities into new markets, Anderson said. Companies that recognize those opportunities will find that barriers to entry are historically low.

"It's new territory," Anderson said. "We have a very diverse manufacturing pool in Iowa. A lot of states don't have that. We really could play a key role in getting some of this manufacturing shifted back to America."

➤ For more information, contact Kim Anderson at [kanderson@iastate.edu](mailto:kanderson@iastate.edu) or 515-686-9032.



Tiefenthaler Quality Meats in Holstein.

## Cordray Retires as Director of Iowa State Meat Lab

Joseph Cordray retired in January after 25 years as an extension meat specialist at Iowa State University—most of them as professor-in-charge of the Iowa State Meat Laboratory.

Cordray “is the main reason the program has been so successful here,” said CIRAS account manager Brenda Martin. “If there was a Pied Piper for meat science, he’s been it.”

Under Cordray’s leadership, Iowa meat manufacturers reported an economic impact of more than \$400 million stemming from projects completed through the CIRAS/Meat Science partnership.

His successor is Dr. Terry Houser, an Iowa State-educated former administrator at Kansas State University and the University of Florida who calls Cordray a mentor. Houser said Iowa State’s Meat Laboratory will only become more important.

“As we move forward, we’re going to have more and more opportunities to educate our industry,” he said.

Joseph Cordray



## Agreement Means Meat Processors can Grow

*Joe Cordray put it simply when asked to explain the impact of new inspection rules that went into place for small Iowa meat processors this spring.*

“It’s really a pretty big deal,” said Cordray, a longtime meat science professor at Iowa State University. “The smaller plants, they’re essentially located in rural Iowa. And a lot of our rural Iowa towns could use a little revitalization.”

In May, Iowa became only the seventh state to get USDA approval for a Cooperative Inspection Shipment (CIS) agreement. The arrangements allow food regulators in Indiana, Maine, Missouri, North Dakota, Ohio, Wisconsin, and now Iowa to inspect small meat plants using federal standards.

The change means that Iowa’s smaller plants, which are inspected solely by state officials and therefore banned from selling across state lines, soon will be able to sell meat anywhere in the country – once they are admitted to the CIS program. This change is expected to quickly open new markets for small producers and provide new flexibility in supply chains strained by COVID-19.

“It’s really a pretty big deal. The smaller plants, they’re essentially located in rural Iowa. And a lot of our rural Iowa towns could use a little revitalization.”  
— Joe Cordray

Iowa State economics professor Dave Swenson estimates that every \$1 million in new sales by small Iowa meat processors will create more than \$480,000 in additional economic impact, including the spending created by 15 new jobs.

CIRAS account manager Brenda Martin, who spent a year working with Cordray and the Iowa Meat Processors Association to help Iowa inspection officials explore potential benefits of the change, believes it will have an immediate impact.

“There’s going to be a small number who are going to jump on it right away, because they already know that the market is there,” Martin said. “These are people who can do e-commerce. They have a brand, people can order on a website, and they can ship it.”

Ty Gustafson, owner of the Story City Meat Locker, said the change also will help livestock owners who raise specialty meats and currently are forced to take it out of state for processing.

“This will allow them to grow,” he said.

➤ For more information, contact Brenda Martin at [bkmartin@iastate.edu](mailto:bkmartin@iastate.edu) or 515-570-5282.



## ToolKeepers Finds Its Fit in Government Contracting

*Understanding your business doesn't mean you don't need help understanding government contracting.*

ToolKeepers is a Fairfield company that uses high-density foam to make custom inserts that organize and protect tools (or other valuable objects) used in military and industrial settings. Clark Plummer, ToolKeepers' director of strategic accounts, said the company long ago "recognized its ability to provide solutions to military and government organizations, but . . . needed help making connections with government purchasers and adapting products specifically to the needs of government organizations."

Plummer credits the CIRAS Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC) with helping ToolKeepers win business from government clients by "growing our knowledge of how to engage this important market."

ToolKeepers creates 3D digital models for client approval, then uses specialized waterjet machines to precision cut high-density industrial foam.

Over the years, the company has gotten more adept at understanding government procurement, Plummer said, but ToolKeepers still contacts CIRAS regularly. Last fall, CIRAS government contracting specialist Samantha Ferm helped the company prepare for an important trade show by researching potential partners—companies with existing government contracts that ToolKeepers could approach about teaming with on future work.

Plummer summed up the relationship like this: "By partnering with CIRAS, we've helped solve some complex problems for our government customers, and we've been able to grow our business in the process."

**For more information, contact Samantha Ferm at [siferm@iastate.edu](mailto:siferm@iastate.edu) or 319-333-9558.**

### AT A GLANCE

#### ToolKeepers

**FOUNDED:** 2011

**OVERVIEW:** Maker of custom foam inserts to protect tools or other objects.

**EMPLOYEES:** 40

**IMPACT:** More than \$3 million of government contracts over the past five years.

**FOR MORE:** [www.toolkeepers.com](http://www.toolkeepers.com)

## Post Pandemic, Iowa City Company Cleaning Up in Government Contracting

*An Iowa City cleaning business is receiving new attention from federal agencies because of work the company put into government contracting before the COVID-19 pandemic hit.*

Michele Presley, business development manager at SERVPRO of Iowa City, said her business landed more than \$15,000 worth of government cleaning and sanitation contracts this spring because of work done registering with federal agencies and attending CIRAS events.

Presley said SERVPRO already had a contract with the state of Iowa when she began working with CIRAS in 2019 on potential

new opportunities with federal agencies. Samantha Ferm, a government contracting specialist with the CIRAS Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC), also helped SERVPRO create a capabilities statement and get registered with the federal government's award management system. SERVPRO also began attending PTAC networking events.

"It was all part of helping them move from the state level into getting prepared for the federal level," Ferm said.

The efforts culminated earlier this year when SERVPRO began working for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and federal Department of Housing and Urban Development.

"It was knowing those people before a disaster happens, before they needed our services, that made it so easy to make stuff happen later," Presley said.

Presley said the company will continue to pursue government contracts, as well as pandemic-related commercial work, such as the overnight sanitation of restaurant dining rooms. She is grateful to CIRAS for helping her lay the necessary groundwork.

"You don't know what tomorrow's going to bring, so it's best to invest the time now," Presley said. "You never know when it's going to pay off later."

➤ **For more information, contact Samantha Ferm at [siferm@iastate.edu](mailto:siferm@iastate.edu) or 319-333-9558.**

### AT A GLANCE

#### SERVPRO® of Iowa City/Coralville

**FOUNDED:** 2010

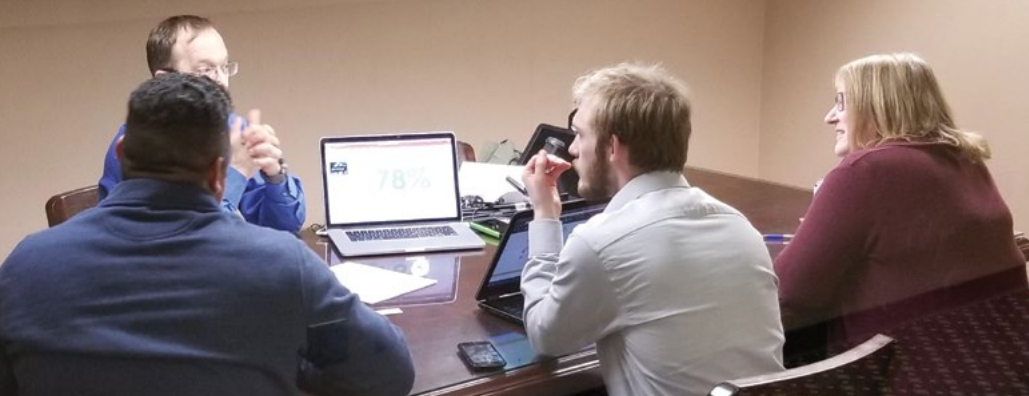
**OVERVIEW:** An independently owned and operated franchise of SERVPRO Industries LLC. Residential and commercial restoration and cleaning services.

**EMPLOYEES:** 98

**IMPACT:** An estimated \$15,000 in new government contracts over the past year.

**FOR MORE:**

[servproiowacitycoralville.com](http://servproiowacitycoralville.com)



Rebecca Quesnell, far right, at a boot camp in 2018.

## Internet Marketing Boot Camp Moves Online

*A major CIRAS tool for helping Iowa companies get the most out of their internet marketing efforts is moving permanently online.*

The Internet Marketing Strategy Boot Camp, a popular CIRAS event that has existed for roughly eight years as a two-day deep dive into topics such as search engine optimization and web analytics, was repackaged for the first time in May as a series of webinars and follow-up consultations.

CIRAS project manager Paul Gormley said the change had been in the planning stages for months but was accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic. CIRAS moved all of its spring and summer events online to facilitate social distancing.

Gormley said the new format has proven popular and will continue beyond the pandemic, including multiple events planned for this fall. Participants are finding it easier to attend the event, easier to absorb the information, and easier to share it across a company.

“Before, it could be difficult to clear two entire days on your schedule, and then it would feel a bit like you were drinking from a firehose,” Gormley said. “It’s not that way quite as much if you can spread it out over a longer period of time, and you can go back and look at the recordings.”

Instead of two days of lectures and one-on-one expert assistance, participants now get 10 live webinars spread over a week and available for viewing later. CIRAS experts then follow up during a subsequent week with one-on-one online sessions to answer questions and apply techniques to individual companies.

Rebecca Quesnell, research and product development director for TransAgra International in Storm Lake, has attended boot camps in both formats. The difference, Quesnell said, is that online makes it easier to spark enthusiasm among the people you’ll need to make change happen.

“Last time, we were all excited and ready to do all these things, and then we came back to the organization and hit a wall,” she said. “This time, I’ve been able to show everybody the videos and what we need to do, and I think we’re going to be able to move forward” with some changes.

“This time, I’ve been able to show everybody the videos and what we need to do, and I think we’re going to be able to move forward” with some changes.

— Rebecca Quesnell

➤ **For more information, contact Paul Gormley at [gormley@iastate.edu](mailto:gormley@iastate.edu) or 319-721-5357, or visit <https://www.ciras.iastate.edu/events-workshops/>.**

Due to COVID-19, CIRAS has moved to online-only events through the end of 2020. Our upcoming offerings include:

- **Weekly COVID-19 Roundtable Discussions for Manufacturers Tuesdays**  
7:30 a.m.  
Presentations on a weekly topic followed by questions and answers.
- **Weekly COVID-19 Roundtable Discussions for Food Manufacturers Thursdays**  
7:30 a.m.  
Presentations on a weekly topic followed by questions and answers.
- **Virtual Lean Coffees Twice per month**  
2nd Thursdays, 11:00 a.m.  
3rd Fridays, 9:00 a.m.
- **Strategic Marketing Boot Camp September 14–18**  
Online presentations followed up by in-person assistance.
- **Search Engine Optimization Boot Camp October 19–25**  
Online presentations followed up by in-person assistance.
- **Iowa Lean Consortium Virtual Annual Conference October 28, 8:00 a.m.**  
Keynote speakers, breakout sessions.

**For details on these and other events, visit**

**[www.ciras.iastate.edu/eventsworkshops](http://www.ciras.iastate.edu/eventsworkshops).**

### A REMINDER

The spring 2020 edition of CIRAS News (Volume 55, Number 3) was distributed solely online—without mailing printed copies—in the hopes that this would make it easier for readers to download it on their own schedules and share COVID-19 content with others.

**If you missed that edition, you can still find it available at:**

**[www.ciras.iastate.edu/2020Spring.pdf](http://www.ciras.iastate.edu/2020Spring.pdf).**

## Martin Receives Economic Development Award

CIRAS account manager Brenda Martin will receive Iowa State University's Award for Achievement in Economic Development during a ceremony in September.

Martin has been serving Iowa manufacturers since 2003, when she began working with CIRAS through a partnership with her previous employer, Iowa Central Community College. Since 2016, Martin has been employed as a CIRAS account manager focusing on the food industry and building relationships throughout the state. She also serves on the board of the Iowa Meat Processors Association and is active in the Iowa Sustainable Business Forum.



Brenda Martin

The Iowa State University economic development award is intended to recognize faculty and staff members for "outstanding ISU-based achievements in advancing the economic development of the state of Iowa."

Mike O'Donnell, program director for the CIRAS Manufacturing Extension Partnership, said Martin has facilitated more than 300 projects with Iowa companies over the past four years. That included 11 contract research projects with Iowa manufacturers and more than 100 faculty-led projects providing technical assistance to companies.

"During her four years leading food manufacturing efforts at CIRAS, her clients have reported more than \$250 million in financial benefits along with more than 1,000 added and retained jobs," O'Donnell said. "Her ability to put clients first, understand their real needs, and facilitate projects across the university has made a significant impact on Iowa's economy."

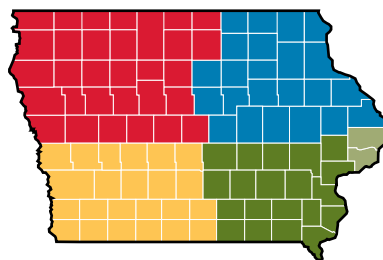
Congratulations, Brenda!

## CIRAS Engage. Educate. Embed.

Since 1963, we have delivered proven services to enhance the performance of industry. Our approach—Engage. Educate. Embed.—creates specific solutions that allow each business and its community to prosper and grow. Coupled with a satisfaction guarantee, our typical client has achieved a 200% ROI. Clients have reported an economic impact of more than \$2.5 billion over the past five years.

### Locate your county to find your best introduction to CIRAS.

In addition to four regional account managers, CIRAS has seven regional government contracting specialists,\* a statewide account manager for the food industry, and one for economic development. More staff information can be found at [www.ciras.iastate.edu/staff.asp](http://www.ciras.iastate.edu/staff.asp).



#### NORTHWEST

- **Derek Thompson**  
[thompson@iastate.edu](mailto:thompson@iastate.edu) • 515-419-2163
- **Mary Zimmerman\***  
[maryz@iastate.edu](mailto:maryz@iastate.edu) • 515-450-1278

#### NORTHEAST

- **Steve Wilson**  
[wilsons@iastate.edu](mailto:wilsons@iastate.edu) • 515-620-6036
- **Julie Fagle\***  
[jafagle@iastate.edu](mailto:jafagle@iastate.edu) • 319-310-8612

#### SOUTHWEST

- **Paul Dunnwald**  
[dunnwald@iastate.edu](mailto:dunnwald@iastate.edu) • 515-509-1377
- **Jodi Essex\***  
[jodir@iastate.edu](mailto:jodir@iastate.edu) • 515-509-0769
- **Justin Niceswanger\***  
[jnice@iastate.edu](mailto:jnice@iastate.edu) • 515-509-9565

#### SOUTHEAST

- **Glenn Volkman**  
[gvolkman@iastate.edu](mailto:gvolkman@iastate.edu) • 515-205-3786
- **Melissa Burant\***  
[mmburant@iastate.edu](mailto:mmburant@iastate.edu) • 563-726-9958
- **Samantha Ferm\***  
[siferm@iastate.edu](mailto:siferm@iastate.edu) • 319-333-9558

#### STATEWIDE

- **Brenda Martin (Food Industry)**  
[bkmartin@iastate.edu](mailto:bkmartin@iastate.edu) • 515-570-5282
- **Mark Reinig (Economic Development)**  
[mreinig@iastate.edu](mailto:mreinig@iastate.edu) • 515-231-4150

#### CIRAS PARTNERS

- Iowa State University
- Center for Crops Utilization Research
- Center for Nondestructive Evaluation
- College of Engineering
- Department of Economics
- Department of Environmental Health and Safety
- Engineering Career Services
- Extension and Outreach
- Iowa Grain Quality Initiative
- Meat Science Extension
- Polymer and Food Protection Consortium
- Structural Engineering Research Laboratory
- Alliant Energy
- Iowa Area Development Group
- Iowa Association of Business and Industry
- Iowa Economic Development Authority
- Iowa Farm Bureau
- Iowa Sustainable Business Forum
- North Iowa Area Community College
- Northeast Iowa Community College

1805 Collaboration Place, Suite 2300, Ames, Iowa 50010-9166

Phone: 515-294-3420 • [ciras.info@iastate.edu](mailto:ciras.info@iastate.edu) • [www.ciras.iastate.edu](http://www.ciras.iastate.edu)



Printed on  
Recycled Paper



## *GROWING YOUR BUSINESS*

### Tips for Sales Leaders During COVID

*By Raj Agnihotri, Iowa State University marketing professor*

*Many businesses in Iowa and around the world are struggling to make sense of the new normal. A global pandemic has altered the marketplace, forcing sales leaders to explore new ways to generate leads and sustain revenue.*

Some of those ways could be digital. A recent McKinsey survey of businesses across 11 counties found that many businesses view digital sales interactions—the use of digital sales assets to execute sales processes and address customer needs more precisely—as being twice as important as traditional sales interactions.

So the question that sales leaders need to answer is how they move the needle from ‘Going Digital’ to ‘Being Digital’? The answer has three critical parts:

Digital tools should be treated as a means to enhance local capabilities (e.g., digital selling effectiveness). Challenges occur when managers expect a sales unit to use digital selling initiatives merely to refine customer outcomes in existing sales processes. Instead, companies should integrate digital technologies throughout existing sales process as a way to enhance competencies and rethink the value proposition.

Coordination among relevant functional units should be ensured (e.g., sales and marketing alignment). Digital marketing involves content creation and brand awareness at a mass level, whereas digital selling is about prospecting and nurturing leads to create sales opportunities at a salesperson level.

Digital selling should be centered around people and their behaviors instead of technology (e.g., behavioral changes adopted by salespeople). Adapting to digital selling and doing things differently is not a simple task. Sales leaders must provide a vision of the benefits that will come from digital selling. Sales leaders should remember that, in the context of technology adaption, focusing on favorable outcomes where people have reasonable control yields better results than negative reinforcement.

It is no secret that sales organizations operating in business markets aim at value chain intermediaries and develop value propositions focused on economic value. In such a context, a strategic approach involves nurturing leads, delivering content, and engaging subscribers. Hence, enabling and sustaining customer engagement through digital selling is relevant and vital to secure sales.

**For more information, contact C.J. Osborn at [cjosborn@iastate.edu](mailto:cjosborn@iastate.edu) or 641-840-0505.**