

2025 SUMMER INTERN PROGRAM NEWSLETTER



Intern Breakfast

Ava Kemna, K/PACEDC



"ARE YOU BOLD ENOUGH?"

The annual Kossuth/Palo Alto County Economic Development Corporation Intern Breakfast marked the beginning of another exciting year of the internship program, hosted by K/PACEDC on Wednesday, May 28th. This year's keynote speaker, Kyle Norris, Executive Dean of Iowa Lakes Community College, centered his message on the theme of being BOLD.

Norris challenged attendees with the thought-provoking question, "Are you a noun or a verb", encouraging interns to actively seek out opportunities rather than remain fixed in their professional journey. He emphasized the importance of embracing risks by saying 'YES' first and figuring things out along the way.

In closing, Norris shared three BOLD risks for professional growth, including don't count yourself out before you start, accept a setback, and embrace discomfort. Overall, his message to the interns was clear, to make the most out of opportunities that come their way.

After the presentation concluded, Career Intern Committee member and ILCC Board of Trustee, Bob Jennings, attested to Norris' message, verifying the value of seizing every opportunity by saying 'YES'. Brianna Marso, HR Director at Iowa State Bank and committee member, elaborated the professional advantages of the Intern Program. She described the upcoming events and skill-building sessions designed for the benefit of the interns. Brianna further explained how these activities provide interns with helpful advice, teach them valuable skills, and create meaningful networking experiences.

The 26th Year of the Intern Program marks the first year of the new Executive Director of the K/PACEDC, Tod Faris.



Norris shares his experience with interns.

Secrets to Success

On June 10th, 2025, the Kossuth/Palo Alto County interns welcomed International Speaker Brenda Clark-Hamilton, MA Ed, for her "Look the Part, Be the Part: Success Through Your Professionalism" Program. Clark-Hamilton is a keynote speaker and workplace trainer on various topics including Motivational Keynotes, Leadership Development, Professional Development, Women's Conferences/Events, and Young Adult Conferences/Events. In her Secrets to Success Presentation, she showcased the importance of business etiquette. Three key aspects Clark-Hamilton talked through included professional appearance, behaviors, and attitude. Brenda Clark-Hamilton stressed the importance of projecting an image that is positive and welcoming to individuals in the workplace

She also emphasized what you wear affects the type of impression an individual makes on an employer. Wearing the appropriate attire to work as well as respectable grooming and posture shows employers that you as an individual are confident and competent. In addition, Clark-Hamilton discussed professional behaviors with the interns. Such professional behaviors include having strong communication skills, whether it is returning phone calls and emails promptly or listening and following through with tasks given. Likewise, professional behaviors include not being involved with gossip in the work area or checking personal social media platforms. It is important to always represent yourself with good character and manners at work and in the community.

-Meredith Illg, Pharmacists Mutual

Lastly, Clark-Hamilton discussed the significance of having a professional attitude. Being energetic and having a positive outlook enhances your professional image and encourages a positive reaction from people in a proper way. Clark-Hamilton ended the presentation with a very important quote from Susan Morem, "Professionalism isn't being something you're not ... It's being the best of who you are."



Social Media Presence

-Harsh Modi, Erpelding Voigt & Co.

Social media can play a major role in whether a candidate is chosen for a job or rejected. The Kossuth/Palo Alto interns had a unique opportunity to attend a professional development meeting focused on social media training on June 17 organized by Pharmacists Mutual. The session emphasized the importance of maintaining a thoughtful and professional online presence as attendees prepare to enter the workforce. Throughout the skill building session, interns learned how employers often review social media profiles during the hiring process and why we should be mindful of the content we share. Alex Duong, Marketing Communications Specialist at Pharmacists Mutual, highlighted how the role of digital footprints in shaping first impressions and emphasized the importance of professionalism in our online interactions.

A significant portion of the meeting was dedicated to using LinkedIn effectively. Interns explored ways to optimize their profiles to reflect skills, experiences, and goals in a compelling and professional way. As interns continue through college, attend career fairs, and prepare for future opportunities, having a strong LinkedIn presence can be a powerful tool in building a personal brand and making connections. Overall, the training served as a helpful reminder that professional success isn't just about the skills we possess, but also how we present ourselves – both in person and online.



Emotional Intelligence/Personality Training

-Shelby Brosh, StateLine Cooperative

In a world that is driven by quick decisions and connections with others, true success does not just depend on what you know, but on how well you understand and manage emotions. Emotional intelligence has recently become a large element of leadership and influence. On Tuesday, June 24th, Alison VanOtterloo of Pharmacists Mutual spoke to interns about its growing importance, offering insights into how emotional intelligence can be applied in real-life situations and future careers. Together, she and the interns explored how to recognize, regulate, and respond to emotions. Understanding how to navigate themselves and other individuals' emotions is key to building strong relationships, navigating social dynamics, and making sound decisions under pressure. Individuals with high emotional intelligence often excel as communicators, collaborators, and adaptable professionals. It's a skill that can elevate performance in both personal and professional areas.

To bring these concepts to life, VanOtterloo led the interns through a hands-on presentation with a guided worksheet focused on reframing mindsets and reinterpreting everyday interactions. For many, this was their first deep dive into emotional intelligence, and K/PACEDC interns left equipped with practical strategies to apply.

This session gave attendees valuable insight into how they can apply emotional intelligence in their current internships and in future careers. Emotional awareness is crucial not only for recognizing stress or biases but for making well thought out decisions in high-stake situations. Overall, the tools and insights shared during the skill building session will help guide interns not only during their internships, but throughout their careers ahead.



Manage Your Money

On the morning of July 8th, interns took the opportunity to learn from Iowa State Bank about the importance of managing a personal credit card and financials correctly. Shannon Goche, Meredith Huber, and Brianna Marso represented Iowa State Bank at the Kossuth/Palo Alto County Economic Development office, ready to inform and answer questions. It was a very educational event, with the clearest takeaway being to always think about your future financial situation. Every financial action taken affects your big life decisions. If provided with the right knowledge, young professionals have the power to set themselves up as reliable and responsible debtors.

Interns learned that a high credit score is incredibly valuable with lasting impacts. It shows responsibility, accountability, and organization. When making large purchases, searching for loans, or sometimes even applying for jobs, a credit score will be a major determining factor. Iowa State Bank stressed the importance of being aware of that impact so that one can continuously be working to put themselves in a positive light on paper.

It was also highly recommended that as young people start their careers, they should discuss the future of their finances with their bankers, mainly to ensure that they are taking all the right steps to be successful. Everyone experiences different financial situations, and our local bankers are ready to help create personalized plans to make that happen. Thank you to Iowa State Bank for openly sharing with the interns, they will be sure to carry this valuable session with them into their futures.

-Violet Bode, Pharmacists Mutual



Intern Service Project: Food Drive

-Ava Kemna, K/PACEDC

The Intern Food Drive is a community-focused initiative designed to engage interns that participated in the Kossuth/Palo Alto County Economic Development Corporation Intern Program. By balancing meaningful impact with allowing the interns to network with one another, the program is designed to ensure that every intern can contribute to a greater cause while still focusing on their career development.

By placing the donation boxes at their places of employment, interns encouraged co-workers and employers to contribute non-perishable food items. After the two-week period, the collected items were returned to K/PACEDC and then distributed to local food pantries serving Kossuth and Palo Alto counties. Through service, connection, and a little friendly competition, the food drive was a defining part of the interns' experience in Kossuth and Palo Alto counties!



Beyond community impact, the food drive helped foster valuable connections and personal growth. Interns improved their communication and leadership skills as they promoted the project and encouraged participation within their workplace. The initiative also created opportunities for networking with fellow interns, and employers. With the added motivation of a possible prize for the most donations collected, the program became both a fun and rewarding experience. Overall, the Intern Food Drive served as an ideal blend of professional development, company engagement, and assisted in channeling a deeper sense of community.

2025 Summer Interns

CITY OF ALGONA:

Blake Grandgenett
Callum Meyer

ERPELDING VOIGT AND CO:

Cailey Carroll
Moriah Knapp
Harsh Modi
Hannah Point

FARMERS STATE BANK:

Maggie Vaske

KOSSUTH COUNTY

ENGINEER'S OFFICE:

Treston Severson

K/PACEDC:

Ava Kemna

PHARMACISTS MUTUAL:

Violet Bode
Meredith Illg
Alex Isebrand
Anna-Kay Risk

POW Museum:

Sydney Casey

PRO COOPERATIVE:

Bailey Barker
Allsion Lynch
Josi Reiman
Jadey Salton

SMITHFIELD HOG

PRODUCTION:

Hannah Cotterman
Brody Nemecek

SNAP-ON TOOLS:

Jenna Weiland

STATELINE COOPERATIVE:

Shelby Brosh

SUDOL TAX AND

ACCOUNTING:

Samantha Framcach
Ella Lawson

2025 Intern Program Sponsors

Algona Aquatic Center

Algona Family YMCA

Caddy Shack Mini Golf

Country Maid

Ellie's on Main - West Bend

Fareway - Algona

Feedmill Coffee Company

Fridley State 5 Theaters - Algona

Homestead Country Store

HyVee - Algona

Iowa Lakes Community College

Iowa Lakes Electric

Iowa State Bank

Kemna Auto Center

Kossuth Regional Health Center

Palo Alto County Health Systems

Smithfield Hog Production

Pitchers - Whittemore

The Water Connection

Three Doors Down

From all of the Kossuth/ Palo Alto
2025 Summer Interns, thank you to
the Kossuth & Palo Alto Businesses for
sponsoring this Summer
Intern Program!

www.kpacedc.com