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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:

Iowa Community Colleges and Iowa State University CIRAS Collaborate for Manufacturing Consortium

As business and industry evolve at an ever-increasing pace, the next wave of change in the form of digitalization and automation, known as “Industry 4.0,” will require new processes for businesses and new skills for employees. Today, Iowa’s Community Colleges and the Iowa State University’s Center for Industrial Research and Service (CIRAS) announced a new consortium to support the manufacturing sector in adapting to these changes. The training and awareness initiative includes partners from across the state.

“Iowa has the right mix of relationships and resources to help our manufacturers remain competitive through a global technology revolution that is transforming factory floors and jobs,” said Gov. Reynolds. “This important partnership addresses a critical need identified in the state’s Manufacturing 4.0 strategic plan by uniting key education and industry stakeholders in a comprehensive effort to prepare workers with the skills they need in an increasingly digital economy.”

A January report from the Iowa Economic Development Authority “Seizing the Manufacturing 4.0 Opportunity: A Strategic Plan for Iowa’s Manufacturing Industry” called for advancing the knowledge base, expertise, and collaboration among businesses in the state. This partnership will respond to workforce, training/education and integration needs to help manufacturers strategically address technology investments, workforce pipeline, and workforce talent challenges. The Consortium will support Iowa’s manufacturers efforts to seize opportunities and remain competitive by providing consultation, education, implementation, and access to resources.

“Iowa’s 15 Community Colleges continue to lead the way in innovative and forward-thinking curriculum and training to meet the state’s workforce needs,” said Emily Shields, Executive Director of the Iowa Association of Community College Trustees. “This initiative will allow us to collaborate with experts and other partners to benefit Iowa’s economy.”

“Manufacturers are facing a wave of technology that creates significant uncertainty in how to run your business,” said Mike O’Donnell, Associate Director of CIRAS. “This partnership will help ensure that the manufacturing ecosystem in Iowa is creating clarity on how to develop your existing workforce to thrive.”

The Consortium includes key state associations and agencies who have agreed to partner for the best interest of manufacturing businesses. This unique collaboration will implement an education, awareness strategy statewide and that will lead to development of curriculum to meet training needs of all sizes of manufacturing businesses throughout Iowa. In addition to customized training for the existing workforce, the group will develop and enhance certificate, diploma, and degree programs to ensure employers have access to advanced skills training and career pathways now and in the future.

Additional Consortium Partners include:

- Association of Business and Industry
- Iowa Department of Education
- Iowa Economic Development Authority
- Iowa Workforce Development
- Professional Developers of Iowa
- Institute for Decision-Making, University of Northern Iowa

The Consortium began meeting in April to set goals and timelines. Watch iacct.com for updates on this ongoing initiative.

About the Iowa Association of Community College Trustees

IACCT is a nonprofit corporation serving Iowa's 15 Community Colleges and their locally elected Boards by providing educational opportunities for trustees, students, presidents and staff through conferences, webinars and regional meetings; and by coordinating the Iowa Community Colleges' One Voice advocacy program that respects the preservation of each Community College's unique strengths, local governance, and educational programs to meet their communities and business partners' worker training and economic development needs.

About Iowa State University CIRAS

Iowa State University's Center for Industrial Research and Service (CIRAS) was created in 1963 to improve the quality of life in Iowa by helping businesses and their communities prosper and grow. As the Manufacturing Extension Partnership National Network representative for Iowa, CIRAS focuses on providing small- and medium-sized manufacturers with the help they need to succeed. Over the past five years, CIRAS and its partners have helped more than 4,100 businesses in every Iowa county, creating an economic impact of more than \$2.8 billion. For additional information, visit www.ciras.iastate.edu.