

## **Working Together Spurs Results**

We've all heard the clichés: Two heads are better than one; teamwork makes winners; Together Everyone Achieves More.

Given the obvious importance of cooperation, it should come as no surprise that the various county economic development groups of the Great River Region have worked collaboratively for more than half a decade.

Grow Greater Burlington, Lee County Economic Development Group, Louisa Development Group, and the Mount Pleasant Area Development Commission pool financial resources and technical expertise to ensure the region gets the most possible attention from business and industrial prospects.

In the last two years, the partnership has dispatched professional representatives to Chicago, Texas, California, Minnesota and even overseas. These efforts have resulted in countless leads; including manufacturers in the plastics, wind power and food industries.

The advantage goes beyond just efficiency. Individually, the four counties often lack the workforce and other resources necessary to attract high-growth business. Collectively, however, the region's laborshed boasts more than 150,000 potential workers, according to Iowa Workforce Development. The region also has a strong mix of transportation logistics, with highways, rail, airports and the Mississippi River.

Despite these attributes, it was difficult until recently for members of the Great River Region Partnership to show any results from their cooperation. That all changed with the announcement last month that Biomedical Synergies, Inc. would locate its operational headquarters in Mount Pleasant.

A health care consulting and software development firm focused on the human tissue industry, Biomedical Synergies, Inc. formed in 2005. The founders had worked together previously at the Red Cross. According to a company press release, they have made it their goal "to establish the worldwide standard of care for patient safety regarding biologic and non-biologic implants used in life-enhancing and life-saving procedures."

What this means for the people of the Great River Region are 50 or more jobs at wages that are well above the regional average. Biomedical Synergies leaders selected the region because of the commitment of local governments, economic development organizations and the business community to create a welcoming and ultimately profitable environment.

"It really was a match made in heaven," President Paul Kozloski says.

The match was only possible, though, because of the joint marketing efforts of the four Great River Region counties. Local economic development professionals first encountered the

company at an event in Minneapolis hosted by the Community Venture Network, a private organization that helps link rural communities with growing businesses seeking new locations.

The Great River Region purchased a two-year membership in the Community Venture Network using the pooled marketing funds mentioned above. Shared funds were also used for the trip to Minneapolis. And the invitation to Mr. Kozloski and his team was sent on behalf of all four counties. It was fitting, then, that representatives from throughout the region attended the welcome reception when Biomedical Synergies officially announced its plans to move to Mount Pleasant.

Apparently teamwork really does work.