

IPI'S INSIDE INSIGHTS

A MONTHLY INTERNAL NEWS SOURCE

AUGUST 2026

VOLUME 35



IN THIS ISSUE:

01 MANAGER'S MESSAGE
Kick things off with a piece about proactively approaching safety

02 STAFF SPOTLIGHT
Congratulations to Ann Noska on being the latest IPI Champion!

03 RIVERSIDE BRIDGE PARK
See photos from the ribbon cutting of a new park featuring IPI furniture

04 STAFF TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES
Sign up for some of these valuable upcoming staff training opportunities

05 IPI CORE TEAM UPDATES
Take a look at the highlights of this month's quarterly CORE team meeting

06 GLOBAL UPDATES
Keep up with what's going on in the world of Global

07 IPI MARKETING - SEPTEMBER
Stay informed on the marketing efforts coming down the pipeline in September

08 LT. GOV'S HFI FAIR VISIT
Lt. Governor Cournoyer paid a visit to the HFI crew at the State Fair this year!

01

MANAGER'S MESSAGE

Justin Opfer | Plant Manager



This month's message was written by Fort Dodge Supervisor James Van Langen:

Safety is the condition of being protected from danger, risk, injury, or loss. It encompasses physical protection, psychological security, and procedural measures designed to prevent harm across daily life, the workplace, or sports.

Justin asked me to contribute to this month's Manager's Message topic of safety, probably less for my ability to work safely and more because of my experiences being injured. At Fort Dodge, we have just surpassed six years without a recordable injury. While we are not a metal shop with dangerous equipment, we have our own unique challenges.

Several years ago, during a board review, Dan Clark asked us how we would improve on zero recordables. We stood around and stared at him. We had the mindset that being at zero was good enough. How do you improve on zero? He told us we needed to be proactive.

At Fort Dodge, we discuss safety first during morning and afternoon meetings. We use machine guards and wear PPE for physical protection, and we rely on Standard Work Sheets (SWS) at workstations to guide operators on safe practices. But we were missing the psychological aspect of safety.

To become proactive, we started discussing daily safety topics, ranging from arc flash and confined spaces to mentoring—that apply both at work and in daily life. We also play short safety videos on a monitor in the breakroom, which engage workers far better than a monotone speaker.

We had taken safety for granted and become complacent. Psychological safety means workers can ask questions, voice concerns, and admit mistakes without fear of humiliation or rejection. We treat safety like manufacturing: dynamically. If something isn't working, we try a new approach.

While visiting another shop recently to discuss an injured operator, one operator claimed, "It was an accident. It's not preventable." I told them that was an excuse. Accidents can be prevented with the right mindset. Leads must take ownership, lead by example, and train new employees in proper practices until the entire shop shares the same standard.

Zero recordable injuries won't last forever—or maybe that's just an excuse we use when we become complacent.

02 IPI STAFF SPOTLIGHT



This month, we were proud to present **Ann Noska** with the prestigious IPI Champion Award!

Ann has been a steady force for IPI and our Business Office for over 30 years. During her tenure, she has continuously exemplified what it truly means to be a champion for IPI. Her can-do attitude and commitment to excellence shows in everything she does, and her positive outlook affects those around her.

Congratulations Ann, and thank you for everything you've done and continue to do daily for our organization and mission!

IPI Staff Work Anniversaries - September 2026

(Note: Each date marks an individual's State of Iowa start date)

SEPT
1 Al Stecher - 26 Years

SEPT
11 Mike Philby - 11 Years

SEPT
8 Keith Paulson - 16 Years

SEPT
13 Jason Behel - 13 Years

SEPT
10 Ben Conover - 14 Years

SEPT
17 Jason Stewart - 16 Years

03 RIVERSIDE BRIDGE PARK

This month, Des Moines Parks and Recreation held a ribbon cutting ceremony for the brand new Riverside Bridge Park. The park is located at the former South West 1st Street Bridge, combining the urban character of Downtown Des Moines with the natural setting of the river and surrounding greenway.

The park features brand-new outdoor park fixtures produced by IPI's Rockwell City metal shop, including trash receptacles, circle bike racks, and distinctly shaped and colored benches! We're very proud to have had the opportunity to be a part of this special project!



04

STAFF TRAINING OPP.

Clint Schmidt | General Operations Manager



To improve our culture and provide more training opportunities for growth, we have compiled a list of available classes.

Attached is a list of classes ranging from entry-level to management-level courses offered through DAS, ILC, CIRAS, NCIA, Global, and more. All IPI staff are asked to complete the four required classes indicated with an (R) within 36 months of their start date.

Please discuss scheduling any classes you may be interested in with your manager or supervisor.

 Staff Training Opportunities				
Level 1 Training \$0 Continuous Improvement Introduction to Continuous Improvement (Required) Personal Efficiencies in the Workplace (Required) Personal Improvement (Required) Standard Work (Required) Kaizen Process Mapping Value Stream Mapping	Level 2 Training \$1200 Personal Development Civility Training For Employees (TDC) Customer Experience Dimensions of Behavior (TDC) Excellence in Public Service (TDC) Generational Diversity (TDC) Inclusive Leadership and Belonging in the Workplace (TDC) Listening Skills (TDC) Preventing Sexual Harassment Training for Employees (TDC) Professional Impact (TDC) Project Management Fundamentals (TDC) State Government Foundations (TDC) Workplace Ethics (TDC)	Level 3 Training \$3955 Leadership Advanced Principles of Communication Part 1 - Authenticity (ATDC) Advanced Principles of Communication Part 2 - Coaching (ATDC) Creating a Violence-Free Workplace (ATDC) Enhancing Team Membership (ATDC) Role of the Lead Worker (ATDC) The Power of Habit (ATDC) Certified Public Manager Cohort	Level 4 Training \$1521 Supervisor Crucial Conversations (LCBDC) (Required) Dimensions of Leadership (LCBDC) Ethics of Leadership & Influence (LCBDC) Foundations of Public Sector Budgeting (LCBDC) Fundamentals of Supervision (LCBDC) Managing Effective Meetings (LCBDC) Performance Evaluations (LCBDC) Shaping Effective & Engaged Teams (LCBDC) The Servant Leader (LCBDC) Vacancy to Hire (LCBDC) Workplace Harassment (LCBDC)	Level 5 Training \$1357 Manager Advanced Thinking for Problem Solving (MDC) Americans with Disabilities Act (MDC) Civility Training for Managers & Supervisors (MDC) Crucial Accountability (MDC) Developing Employees (MDC) Discipline, Grievance & Merit System (MDC) Emotional Intelligence 2.0 (MDC) Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action & Anti-Discrimination (MDC) Investigating Employee Misconduct (MDC) Leading Through Change (MDC) Managing Conflict & Resistance in the Workplace (MDC) Preventing Sexual Harassment for Supervisors (MDC) Project Management Seminar (MDC) Substance Abuse Policy (MDC)



IPI CORE TEAM UPDATES

Clint Schmidt | General Operations Manager



IPI CORE TEAM Quarterly Newsletter

In this month's segment, I'll be sharing the highlights from our quarterly CORE Team meeting held in August. But first, **what is the IPI CORE Team and what is its purpose?** The IPI CORE Team is a group of IPI staff from different aspects of our company. This group is made up of one person from the following: Business office, plant, PIE, management, and operations. This team works with the operations manager to identify areas of improvement, helping to identify a path going forward, all which generates deep debates on what is best for IPI.

Depending on the topic, the results of this CORE Team may become instant action items, ideas to be researched further, or subjects passed onto the management team for input/action.

Members of the CORE Team are: Ann Noska, Tony Ellison, Luke Fowler, Tammy Nielsen, Sara Schnotala, and Clint Schmidt. Here are the topics from our meeting in August:

Communications

- Town Hall Kickoff Video
- eLearning Update
- Plant Metric Board Status Updates

Training

- Lean Clerks - I/I Standard Training
- Shop Training Computers
- Staff Training Opportunities

Lean

- PIMMs Materials - Website, videos, etc.
- Standardizing & Managing CI Incentives

Global

- Inventory Clerk/Material Handler
- Shop Projects

Other Business

- I/I Service Dates
- Core Team/IPI Newsletter

If you would like to know more about the CORE Team, please reach out to the members of the team.



GLOBAL UPDATES

Sara Schnotala | ERP Specialist



Global Gather & Grow Webinar: Old Screens vs. New Screens

Wednesday, September 16th @ 9:00am-9:30am

Time Zone: America/Chicago

Google Meet Joining Info:

Video Call Link:

Or dial: (US) +1 636-362-6516 PIN: 486 734 463#



We are creating training videos for Global training. If you have suggestions for which training videos you would like to see first, please let me know.

Updates

After today, the following legacy screens will no longer be available:

- Item History > Item History NEW
- Part by Rev and Loc > Location & Rev Status NEW

07

IPI MARKETING UPDATES

Chris Becker | Marketing Specialist



After weeks of planning and meeting with the shops behind the scenes, I'm glad to report that our marketing plan for FY27 is officially finished! Not to say that additional efforts can't/won't be added as the year unfolds, but we now have an organized, clear plan of attack.

Here's everything that's coming down the pipeline for September:

Marketing Emails:

- Q1 CBC Email - Client Clothing, Bed & Bath
- Statewide Chairs Email - ALL Markets
- Inmate Textiles Email - County Jails
- IA Streets & Roads Follow-Up Email



Tradeshows:

- ISSDA Fall Jail School - 9/16 - 9/17
- IA Streets & Roads Conference - 9/23
- League of Cities Conference - 9/23 - 9/24
- ISU Licensed Vendor Fair - 9/30



Special Events:

- Labor Day - 9/7
- National Truck Driver Appreciation Week - 9/13 - 9/19



08 LT. GOV'S HFI FAIR VISIT



Homes for Iowa was pleased to welcome Lt. Governor Chris Cournoyer to the 2026 HFI-IPI State Fair Exhibit, a visit that carried special meaning given her long history with the program. Lt. Governor Cournoyer has been a champion of the program, even before the first house was ever built.

In addition to being a member of the original exploratory group that went to learn from South Dakota's program, she has championed key legislative efforts and been a vocal advocate as the partnership has grown.

We'd like to thank Lt. Governor Cournoyer for her relentless support of our program throughout the years. And congratulations to the HFI team on another successful year at the Iowa State Fair!

THANKS FOR READING!

Please direct any newsletter ideas, employee recognitions, new developments, and Star Shop of the Month requests to chris.becker@iowa.gov