



# Inside IPI

## *The PIE Program – there’s a piece for everyone, and a new flavor too!*

Iowa’s economy is strong, with unemployment at just 2.4 percent. There are now more job openings (60,604) than unemployed Iowans (41,200)! “Due to increases in our manufacturing and construction sectors, Iowa has not seen an unemployment rate this low since March, 2000,” said Director Beth Townsend. “The strengths of these sectors are the backbone of Iowa’s continued economic growth. This low unemployment rate makes it imperative for us to focus on building the skilled workforce necessary to power Iowa’s continued economic growth.”

This is good news for men and women re-entering our communities – many employers that previously wouldn’t consider hiring ex-felons are now more open to the idea. Employment and higher wages are positive factors in the success rate for returning citizens, and every successful re-entry means one less victim and one less person to re-incarcerate.

Some Iowa employers are struggling so much with filling their employment needs that they are asking to join the Prison Industry Enhancement (PIE) program, which allows incarcerated men and women to work for private employers that cannot find enough qualified civilian employees. You might be familiar with the PIE program, which mostly entails minimum security offenders traveling to an outside job site, and then returning to prison after their shift – much like “work release”. More than 200 Iowa offenders participate in these programs.

The PIE program makes for safer Iowa communities, and PIE participants pay millions of dollars in taxes, restitution, victim compensation and even partially cover the cost of their own incarceration. It’s a win-win for victims and for us as citizens.

For employers, the PIE program helps them meet their customer demand by providing a talented and motivated

workforce. It’s a good deal for Iowa’s economic development.

There’s a big slice of PIE for incarcerated men and women too, since the program allows them to earn civilian wages and pay down their restitution, while gaining valuable work experience. PIE program participants earn civilian-level wages, but by law are entitled to keep 20% of their gross wages, with the balance going to taxes, restitution, child support, victim compensation and the state.

The new flavor? We’re going to allow PIE programs inside IPI shops. In this “subcontract model”, IPI can subcontract for a private company that cannot find enough civilian employees. Instead of offenders traveling to the employer, employers subcontract the work with IPI. These companies have to go through the same application process involving the state and federal government, in order to show that no civilian employees will be displaced when they subcontract with IPI.

The subcontract model will allow many more incarcerated individuals to participate in the PIE program, and in turn IPI can assist more employers that are in dire straits. The subcontract PIE program can operate in any of our shops. The first program was just approved, but with the state’s strong economy, we can expect more of these opportunities in the future.

The PIE program serves up a big slice for everyone – Iowa citizens, Iowa employers, and Iowa offenders.

*-Dan*



# Recent Projects

Iowa Valley School, Marengo



Pottawattamie County Sheriff's Office



City of Marion



Clarke University



Innovator's Academy, Ankeny



# Lean Highlights

## The Journey

As I have traveled across the state, around the country, or even around the world on a couple occasions, I can't help but wonder what it must have been like for the 1880 pioneers to venture out across the early United States. Many times it was to start a journey in hopes to make a better life for themselves and their families. But for whatever reason, it must have been a difficult decision to take that first step! Today, even with the modern conveniences of smart phones, GPS, roadside assistance and improved automobile technology, we can still sometimes question if going somewhere as simple as the next town down the road is worth the trouble. In my role, being immersed in the world of lean and continuous improvement, I often forget about how difficult it can be to accept the challenge of taking that first step to go on a lean journey! Sometimes it makes it easier to comprehend if I compare the two and their similarities. Can you imagine being in a covered wagon pulled by horses, on a trail for weeks? A trail you are not sure where it goes and that you have never been on. And remember you are in the 1880s, heading to California from somewhere on the east coast? You have to have the trust in your abilities and the faith in the stories you have heard from others that if you do the work, the expected reward will be there! You get started and start to develop a routine and then all the sudden you reach the top of a hill and roll up on a bluff overlooking the Mississippi river near Dubuque and feel completely defeated



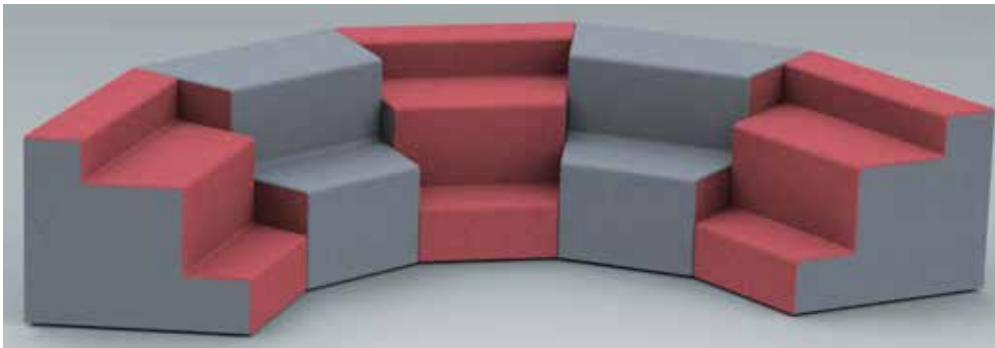
and wonder now what?! How will you cross with your wagon and everything that you own?

That would seem like a huge obstacle for some! Some might think even insurmountable! Impossible! A few probably thought, "we better just settle here in Wisconsin or slide down into northern Illinois", (although why anybody would want to do the latter I couldn't understand... well ok maybe go to Galena and hang out with Grant and his friends and family) but why settle for NW Illinois when the goal was California???! Just imagine how difficult that would have been after all that hard work, and having a goal set and then you are stopped by this big obstacle or problem. Obviously, the problem is not impossible because there is a city over on the other side of this massive river. Others have figured

out a way to cross it. But just think about all the problems that you had to address daily already. Staying warm on cold nights. Gathering wood for a camp fire and to cook. Hunting for that supper. Making sure you had water for the family and the horses. I would guess that as these issues happened every day, the pioneers developed "standard work" if you will, to address these things at every stop. Occasionally they would have a breakdown or problem that they might have to get other help or outside resources to help them solve like a wagon wheel breaking or your horse needing new shoes. All the sudden it occurred to me, there are a lot of similarities from this type of journey to the ones facing each of you in your journey to make it to Orange belt level by Dec 31st! Along our trail, we have some groups that have worked hard and arrived safely at their destination. Congratulations to those! We have others that are still out on the trail. We have one or two that had some issues and decided to camp where they are a little longer than others... But we do not have any wagons that I am aware of that have abandoned the journey and given up. Nor am I aware of any that have decided to turn around and go back. We are making some good progress. Those groups that have examples of successes that improved their work seem to continue to work every day at going the next mile to achieve their goals. It might be an improvement to the safety of their area, or maybe they have been able to eliminate a painful reoccurring quality issue for the process. Some others might have figured out the "short cut through the pass" which in our work is equal to greatly reducing the lead time or increasing productivity of their team. All these are great reasons to keep going! Some of these improvement ideas are new but some are things we knew about for a long time and just never tried to change because that was just the way it is. My point is, that for various reasons, each team can be in a little different place on the path. But I encourage you to keep the focus on the destination or goal. Learn from the experience of others that have gone before you! If you find yourself in trouble, help is never very far away! Send smoke signals, launch a pony express rider, send a telegram! Help is just a cry away! I do know for a fact that IF we find those still on the trail not quite to the land of Orange belt level come Dec 31st, you won't be abandoned out there on the trail and be forgotten forever! We will be sending out a search party and one way or another we will help to get you to the goal!

Thank you and congratulations on a better year than before. And reach out if you need help. I'm always happy to help!  
*Happy New Year, Steve Forbes*

# New Products



## Tetra-Blox Series

A new tiered seating line, the Tetra-Blox Series, will be produced in Fort Madison Furniture. The line features an assortment of 2-tier and 3-tier shapes for nearly limitless layout options. We expect this line to be popular in schools and libraries.



## In Motion Line

The In Motion Line, manufactured by Fort Madison Furniture, has been expanded to offer square shapes in addition to the round, hexagon and crescent shapes previously offered. Additionally,

new metal and wood leg options are now available.



## Occupy Task

The Occupy Task is IPI's newest ergonomic task chair. With either a black or grey mesh back, this chair makes a statement in any office at a competitive price.



## Ethos Series

As schools continue to seek more flexible and mobile classroom furniture, IPI has added the Ethos Series to our school furniture lines. The line is available in a variety of colors and with or without tablet arms. The Ethos Series will be assembled in Mitchellville Panels & Seating.

# Employee Highlights

## New Employees



### Garrett Landuyt

Garrett Landuyt is Anamosa's newest employee. Garrett joined IPI as a Technician in the Metal Furniture shop.



### Matt Scranton

Matt Scranton joined the Anamosa Warehouse in July as a Senior Technician and is responsible for installations. Matt previously worked in Buildings & Grounds at the Cedar Rapids School District.



### Lucas Timpe

Anamosa Custom Wood welcomed Lucas Timpe as a Technician this fall. Lucas previously worked as a Correctional Officer at ASP.



### Michele Anderson

Michele Anderson joined the Des Moines office on August 4, 2018, as a Customer Service Representative. Michele has been in customer service for many years and loves working with people. She enjoys camping, boating, being with

family and friends and loves animals. She looks forward to being with IPI for a very long time.



### Julie Holtorf

Julie Holtorf joined IPI's team as a State Industries Technician in November. She brings with her twelve years of correctional experience. Julie will be supervising offenders in Fort Dodge who are folding and packaging balloons for Anagram

as well as those working on the textile lines. She is very excited to join the IPI team.



### Jeff Peterson

The Des Moines office welcomed Jeff Peterson to IPI as a Sales Representative for the County, State, Federal and Non-Profit markets on July 23, 2018. Jeff has over 20 years of sales experience and has worked with everything from

small businesses to some of the largest corporations around the state. Jeff and his wife Barbara have 4 grown children living around the country and one grandchild. In his spare time he enjoys working out, riding his Harley Davidson, and spending time with friends and family.

# Employee Highlights

## Retirements



### Mark Hollenback

Mark Hollenback retired in August after over 20 years with IPI in Anamosa. Most recently, Mark was Production Coordinator for the Sign Division, but worked in several of the Anamosa shops during his tenure. Good luck Mark!



### Dennis Barry

Sales Representative Dennis Barry retired on June 1, 2018, after nearly 20 years assisting IPI customers around the state with their furniture needs. We wish the best of luck to him in his future endeavors!

## Promotions

### Luke Fowler

Luke Fowler was promoted to Production Coordinator of the Sign Shop in Anamosa. Previously, Luke was the Senior Technician in the License Plate Shop.



### Jacob Bonert

Jacob Bonert was promoted to Senior Technician in Anamosa's License Plates Division. He worked in the Metal Furniture shop prior to the promotion.



### Rod Kramer

Rod Kramer transferred from Anamosa's warehouse into the Metal Furniture shop as a Senior Technician.



*Luke Fowler, Production Coordinator in Anamosa, received the number one marksman award in the 2018 Correctional Emergency Response Team (CERT) challenge held at the Fort Dodge Correctional Facility in September. Great job Luke & team!*

