



## Iowa And Nebraska Chapter

*Dear Members and Friends of the  
Iowa-Nebraska Chapter of The ESOP Association:*

As twenty seventeen is coming to a close, I'm very proud and delighted to report to you that employee ownership and the mission of educating and engaging members of employee owned companies, and our fellow constituents, in Iowa and Nebraska remains strong.

Coming into 2017, the Chapter had recruited and welcomed 5 new corporate and affiliate members. Our winter conference meeting, featuring a day of dual tracked sessions for technical and communication education, was held in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. The 175 attendees of the winter conference started the day with Chuck Peters, Chairman of Folience, Inc. a 100% ESOP-owned Company that is reinventing and reinvesting in its business after 135 years. The Chapter recognized Drake Williams Steel (Omaha, NE) as the 2017 Company of the Year and Brian Cary of TEAM Software (Omaha, NE) as the Employee Owner of the Year.



In May, four Chapter Officers attended the Chapter Council meeting in D.C. After the Chapter Council meeting, officers joined Chapter members in meeting with members of our States' congressional delegation. Again this year, we met with all Senators and Representatives (or their staff).

Admittedly, one of the challenges we faced in 2017 was engaging our corporate members in hosting Egg & ESOP educational and networking events. For over 10 years, the Chapter has typically held two to three of events per year. A big 'thank-you' to Drake Williams Steel for hosting our only event in 2017. While PPI volunteered to host at their new facility in Algona, we were not able to make this event a success. For 2018, the Chapter officers are exploring ways to change and alleviate the perceived burden of planning and hosting an event. Our goal is to hold at least two networking events in 2018 that engage members in meaningful discussions about ESOPs and network with other employee owners.

In July, we held our annual summer fun golf outing at the Tiburon Golf Course outside of Omaha. Eighty-eight corporate and professional members participated in the daylong event. The morning consisted of breakout roundtables followed by a keynote speaker on engaged culture. The afternoon was spent enjoying the course and ESOP fun.

While all of these events would have culminated in a successful year, our two largest accomplishments were hosting the Midwest ESOP Conference and recruiting five new members to join The ESOP Association.

The Midwest ESOP Conference is co-hosted among the Minnesota/Dakotas, Wisconsin, Illinois, and Iowa-Nebraska ESOP Chapters.

Once every four years our Chapter has the opportunity to serve as the host Chapter. While our fellow co-





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hosts didn't initially cheer at the selection of Omaha as the conference venue, they can now appreciate the vision our Chapter had in selecting Omaha.

If you were able to attend the Midwest Conference or served as one of our generous sponsors, THANK YOU!!! By every measurable metric, the Midwest ESOP Conference was an overwhelming success. The venue was well-situated in the Old Market, providing a glimpse into the culture and fun the city has to offer, and also provided comfortable and engaging meeting space. We welcomed over 520 attendees, set a record for Employee Ownership Foundation fundraising for the conference, and hosted the most memorable after-hours event on Thursday evening at the Henry Doorly Zoo's Aquarium. The keynote speaker of the conference was Kevin O'Malley, CEO of Travel & Transport (a silver ESOP headquartered in Omaha!). Kevin's engaging opening comments encouraged all participants to *Carpe Diem* and to seize employee ownership. We'd also like to think we seized our opportunity to host and showcase our great members of the Iowa-Nebraska ESOP Chapter!



As the year closes, I will be transitioning to Past-President of the Iowa-Nebraska Chapter. Becky Streff, employee owner at ESP International, Inc., will be the new President. We also will welcome new members to the Chapter's Board. If you haven't visited our website lately, I encourage you to find more information of the many events already planned for 2018. I also encourage each member to find ways to invest in the Chapter in the New Year. Whether that is through Corporate or Professional sponsorship or volunteering time, ideas, or meeting content we welcome your contributions. Together we will continue to seize the day!



My bests,

Hillary Hughes  
Employee Owner at Prairie Capital Advisors, Inc.  
President, Iowa-Nebraska ESOP Chapter