



Iowa And Nebraska Chapter

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

I hope this letter finds you well and enjoying the holiday season with family and friends!

As December draws to a close, it's a natural time to reflect upon the successes and challenges of 2018, and fix our eyes and hopes on the year and opportunities ahead.

I am so proud to say that 2018 was an outstanding year for the Iowa/Nebraska Chapter! We gathered in record numbers to learn and network, added eight new corporate and affiliate members to our community, returned to familiar locations, engaged at new levels with elected officials in both states, and pushed the boundaries of programming with exciting new events.



In February, we opened our year with the annual Winter Conference in Des Moines. This conference has been a showcase of our Chapter programming for many years, and this year's event was no exception. On the afternoon before the conference, 38 participants joined CEO/CFO/HR roundtables and spent 3 hours networking and learning from each other. The next morning, 183 attendees gathered at the Downtown Marriott for a full day of education that featured dual-track sessions for Technical and Communication topics, as well as a joint

presentation on "Marketing your ESOP" that received rave reviews. We also celebrated and recognized Care Pro (Cedar Rapids, IA) as our 2018 Company of the Year, and Jim Ridder (Travel & Transport, Omaha, NE) as our 2018 Employee-Owner of the Year.



In May, we had a very large delegation of our Chapter members and officers attend the National Conference in Washington, D.C. Several members presented on a wide variety of topics during the conference, and we assembled our largest-ever delegation to visit all of the elected officials from Iowa and Nebraska on Capitol Hill. In addition, we had so much to celebrate! Our Chapter received a membership award, two current and former officers received awards for their efforts in recruiting and on the Board

of Governors, and three companies received a coveted AACE Award for their creative work in communication excellence. The energy and excitement at that Conference is truly hard to describe!



In July, we returned to the fantastic Tiburon Golf Course outside Omaha for our annual summer event. Ninety-seven corporate and professional members participated in the day-long event which consisted of CEO/CFO/HR and Communications roundtables in the morning.



After a keynote speech by Jay Stewart, CEO of Drake Williams Steel (our 2017 Company of the Year), participants enjoyed the course and comradery while raising \$1,500 for the Employee Ownership Foundation.

And we were just getting started!

In September, we joined our Midwest fellows from the MN/Dakotas, Wisconsin and Illinois Chapters at the Midwest Conference in Chicagoland. This two-day conference has grown to rival the national conferences in terms of quality programming and the 500+ attendees at this year's event echoed that sentiment. In addition to being very involved in the planning of the event, and our Chapter officers and members were well-represented in the list of speakers. In between sporadic sightings of Bill Murray, participants chose between dozens of presentations spread across five different tracks. It was a tremendous learning opportunity for the attendees (not to mention a chance to show off our awesome Chapter to our neighbors).

In order to service our westernmost members, we returned to familiar ground in October with our one-day conference in Grand Island, Nebraska. Three sessions were offered in both Technical and Communications tracks, and the 40+ participants were able to make new connections and get inspired and educated from a wide variety of employee-owners and professionals.

And last (but not least!) we ended our programming year with a brand-new event. The first annual Fall Summit was hosted by VGM in Waterloo, Iowa. Just over 50 attendees joined their peers at CEO/CFO/HR roundtables in the morning. In the afternoon, the CEOs, CFOs, and their outside Board of Directors gathered for additional presentations and conversation on a variety of governance topics. And the HR professionals participated in an interactive workshop facilitated by Dan Marcue from The ESOP Association. It was our first Chapter event to feature a specific Board of Directors track, and the overwhelming feedback received has determined it will not be our last.



We are already well underway in our planning for 2019. If you haven't visited our website lately, I encourage you to find more information on the many events already scheduled for the upcoming year. You can also follow us on Twitter at ESOPANE1 and connect with us on a new communications platform called ESOP Network that will be introduced in January.

We hope you find tremendous value in your membership and will consider engaging with the Chapter at an even higher level in the New Year. There so many opportunities: Corporate or Professional sponsorship, sharing your

passion and expertise by presenting at one of our events, attending a local or national Conference, hosting a congressional visit, or joining the Chapter leadership through the Executive Committee. Engagement and participation are the lifeblood of our Chapter – and we welcome you all!

Finally, I want to extend a heart-felt thank you to all of the members and officers of the Iowa/Nebraska Chapter, and our Chapter Administrator, Alicia Diekow. I have the good fortune to return as your Chapter president in 2019. I am pleased to share that Jim Ridder with Travel & Transport will be joining the officers, and want to send our warmest wishes and gratitude to a few friends who will be leaving the Chapter leadership: Lori Bauer and Valeri McMahon with Travel & Transport, and Brian Cary with TEAM Software. They have all given countless hours and immeasurable service to the Chapter and its members; they will be missed (but never far away).

As I look back upon the year, I absolutely count my involvement with the Iowa/Nebraska Chapter as one of my many blessings. As a dear friend said recently, the ESOP community has become a 'second home' of sorts. A community of talented, passionate, generous, and dedicated employee-owners and professionals with a shared mission of furthering employee-ownership. A very special community indeed.

Happy holidays!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Becky".

Becky Streff
Employee Owner at ESP International, Inc.
President, Iowa/Nebraska ESOP Chapter