

APPLYING THE RESOURCES IN COUNCIL BLUFFS

Bob Mundt, President and CEO of the Council Bluffs Chamber of Commerce, explained that when he agreed to come to Council Bluffs from Sioux City fifteen years ago there wasn't much happening and the Chamber had little resources. During the time since then there have been tremendous changes due in large part to the unique agreement formed between the city and the casinos. Mundt noted that today Council Bluffs has more diversified business and industry including agricultural processing and information technology. Also there is an increase of retail stores. Annual residential housing construction has increased 10 fold the past 15 years. Proximity to Omaha has some influence on this growth and development. According to Mundt Council Bluffs was chosen as a top tourism town in Iowa for 2007.

Mundt explained the Chamber has about 850 members to support its operations with a staff of 13. The Chamber is a catalyst in getting people together to develop plans leading to community progress and development. The Chamber has four divisions of activities: Pottawattamie County Growth Alliance, Convention and Visitors Bureau, Public Policy and Leadership, and Membership Development and Services. Mundt said the Chamber has been involved with the Google company expansion to Council Bluffs for several years and their plans were finally announced this past June. Google is developing a \$600 million expansion of its computer network server facilities that requires 200 employees (phases 1 and 2). The first phase of building a 200 thousand square foot facility is underway. Mundt noted that abundant electrical power, water, and land were major location decision factors for Google. Also the proximity to the national internet grid and good transportation were important as well. The growth and development in Council Bluffs is expected to stimulate growth of local communities such as Treynor.