



Historical Overview 1903 - 2003

Iowa Manufacturers Association (IMA) 1903-1983
Iowa Association of Business and Industry (ABI) 1984-2003

In August 1903, a group of Iowa manufacturers assembled in Des Moines to develop an exhibit representing Iowa industry for the St. Louis World's Fair. This meeting formed the framework for the Iowa Manufacturer's Association (IMA).

From the first meeting to the present day, IMA's/ABI's goal has been to give a strong unified voice to business and industry for those issues impacting Iowa employers with specific emphasis on legislative and regulatory matters.

During IMA's first decade, legislative efforts focused on fire insurance, improved transportation services and freight rates.

In 1910, IMA adopted a logo with the head of a hawk on a gear wheel. This logo was approved by the 35th Iowa General Assembly as the legal emblem for goods manufactured in Iowa.

In 1911, Iowa manufacturers became concerned about the need for an inexpensive insurance plan benefiting employers and employees. Largely because of IMA's efforts, the first Iowa Worker's Compensation law was passed. Key provisions in the law have been nationally recognized for making Iowa's Workers' Compensation one of the nation's most cost-effective and efficient laws.

With the passage of the Workers' Compensation (WC) legislation, employers soon recognized the unavailability of WC insurance coverage in Iowa. IMA leaders formed an insurance company to provide this coverage. The company, Employers Mutual Casualty Company, Des Moines, IA is still going strong today.

During the Roaring 20's, labor legislation and wage and hour laws were important issues. The principle of private sector collective bargaining also was approved during the era.

In the 1930's, legislative efforts led to the passage of a state Unemployment Compensation law.

The Association led the battle in 1947 to enact Iowa's Right-to-Work Law. This issue gained national exposure after IMA leaders informed U.S. Senator Robert Taft and Congressman Fred Hartley that the pending Taft-Hartley Act jeopardized the continuation of state right-to-work laws. From efforts that followed, Section 14(b) of the Taft-Hartley Act was inserted to allow states to write and maintain state right-to-work laws without preemption.

In the 1950's, IMA was instrumental in the establishment of the Iowa Development Commission, the forerunner of today's Iowa Department of Economic Development. Not only did IMA support this legislation, but some of its volunteer leaders and past presidents served on the commission giving it guidance and stability in its early years.

In the 1970's, IMA successfully lobbied the Iowa Legislature to adopt the federal nationwide standards promulgated by the federal Occupational Health and Safety Administration. On the losing side of the issue were those who wanted the Iowa Labor Commission to determine Iowa's safety and health regulations. In 1972 and 1973, IMA/ABI received safety awards from the National Council on Safety for "distinguished service in promoting the efficiency and effectiveness of safety programs."

IMA/ABI has always been vigilant and aggressive in its efforts to improve the Iowa business climate and to make it more competitive with other states. In the 1980's, IMA/ABI was successful in repealing the Sales, Use and Property Tax on Machinery and Equipment. In 1996, ABI's efforts helped the passage of the Sales & Use Tax Exemption on Machinery, Equipment & Computers.

During 1984, the association broadened its membership scope to include all business types and changed its name from the Iowa Manufacturer's Association (IMA) to the Iowa Association of Business and Industry (ABI).

The ABI Foundation was also established in 1984. Today, the foundation helps develop Iowa's workforce and leaders through statewide programs such as Business Horizons, Excellence in Teaching Institute and School-to-Work. Leadership Iowa, now in its 20th year, has graduated nearly 600 leaders from this prestigious program.

During the past 100 years, IMA/ABI has enjoyed many legislative victories, but just as important, has successfully overcome persistent and repeated attempts to legislate changes against IMA/ABI landmark laws.

Today ABI's 1,500 members represent more than 300,000 Iowa employees, one-fourth of Iowa's employees. ABI's focus is to work for business on government reform, economic development, workforce and leadership development, education, environment, health care, human resources, liability reform, safety & health, taxes, transportation, unemployment compensation and workers' compensation issues.

IMA/ABI Historical Legislative Accomplishments

Employers' Choice of Doctor	1913
Federal Deductibility	1934
Single-Factor Formula Corporate Income Tax	1934
Right To Work	1947
Clean Air Act	1980
Hazardous Waste Facility Siting	1981
Hazardous Waste Management Act	1981
Taxpayer's Bill of Rights	1994
Sales & Use Tax Exemption on Machinery, Equipment & Computers	1996
Brownfields	1997
Employer Reference	1997
Fraud Bureau	1997
Product Liability / Tort Reform	1997
Drug Testing	1998
Environmental Self Audit	1998
Voluntary Quits	1998
Occupational Hearing Loss	1998
Airplane Registration Fees	1998
Internet Access Tax	1999
Argon Gas Tax	1999
Iowa Air Quality Program Funding	1999
Unclaimed Property Audits	2000
Research & Development Tax Credit	2000
Accelerated Career Education	2000
Electric Utility Plant Siting	2001
Unclaimed Property Business to Business Exemption	2001
Venture Capital	2002
Subchapter S Reform	2002
Insurance Premium Tax Reform	2002