



**IOWA
ASSOCIATION
OF BUSINESS
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ABI Foundation Builds on Innovators Quest Success with Union Pacific Grant

DES MOINES, Iowa – The Iowa Association of Business and Industry (ABI) Foundation is the proud recipient of a Union Pacific Railroad Community Ties Giving Program grant, which will support the expansion of Innovators Quest: The Quest for the Crystal of Innovation—a dynamic initiative designed to inspire the next generation of manufacturing talent.

With manufacturers projected to need 3.8 million workers by 2033—nearly half of which may go unfilled—ABI is addressing the skills gap by starting early. Today's fifth graders will graduate in 2033, making early exposure to manufacturing careers critical to building the future workforce.

Innovators Quest, developed by The Manufacturing Institute, is a turnkey, gamified solution that connects students to modern manufacturing careers through interactive characters, hands-on activities, and real-world problem solving. The program introduces students to in-demand skills and career pathways in a way that is engaging, age-appropriate, and aligned with the realities of today's high-tech manufacturing environment.

"Manufacturing today is innovative, technology-driven, and long-term career focused, yet many students are not aware of the opportunities," said Nicole Crain, ABI President. "Innovators Quest helps introduce students to these career paths early while providing Iowa manufacturers with a meaningful way to engage with and inspire their future workforce."

Union Pacific's Community Ties Giving Program supports initiatives in safety, workforce development, community vitality and environmental sustainability through small- and medium-sized grants to organizations across its 23-state network.

"Union Pacific is proud to support organizations working to strengthen the communities we serve," said Liisa Lawson Stark, vice president – Public Affairs, Union Pacific Railroad. "Investments in high-quality nonprofits help drive growth, prosperity and well-being across our network."

Through this partnership, ABI will work with Iowa manufacturers to expand access to Innovators Quest statewide, providing more students with exposure to careers critical to Iowa's economic future.

Manufacturers, educators, and community partners are encouraged to get involved and bring Innovators Quest to their communities. Learn more and join the effort at www.iowaabi.org/elevate.

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The Iowa Association of Business and Industry (ABI) Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to making a difference in the lives of Iowans by providing personal and professional development programs for students and adults. The ABI Foundation's leadership and educational initiatives foster growth and innovation in Iowa, promote quality leadership, and inspire the current and future workforce in our state. Learn more at www.IowaABIFoundation.org.

The Iowa Association of Business and Industry (ABI) has been the voice of Iowa business since 1903. Its mission is to provide a strong, unified voice to business and industry on issues affecting Iowa employers. ABI is comprised of member companies representing all industries and sizes in Iowa's 99 counties. ABI members employ more than 330,000 Iowans.