

NEWSLETTER

2026 SUMMER INTERN PROGRAM



Secrets to Success Ava Roethler, KAEDC

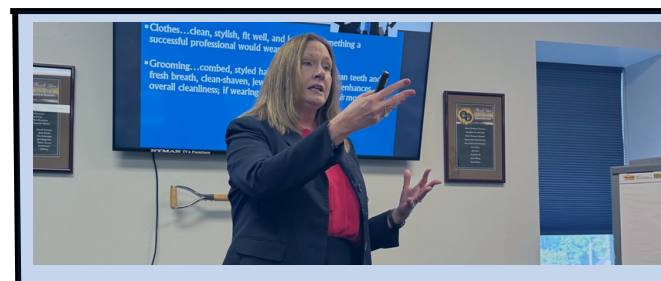
The Kossuth Area Economic Development Corporation (KAEDC) officially kicked off its internship program year with the annual Intern Breakfast, held on Wednesday, June 9, 2026. The event welcomed new Interns and the keynote speaker, Brenda Clark Hamilton, Fresh Coffee; Professional Growth Programs, emphasizing her message on the do's and don'ts in the world of professionalism.



Brenda encouraged the audience to think about different aspects of professionalism within the workplace. Three key points Clark – Hamilton talked through included professional appearance, behaviors, and attitude. Challenging individuals to push themselves to be the best employee possible while focusing on their business and professional etiquette. Brenda's in depth knowledge and group talks helped attendees to practice effective communication skills, maintain positive and respectful attitude, and emphasize what you wear and the impression an individual makes on an employer. Lastly, developing the skills necessary to thrive in a professional environment. Overall, participating in networking events and skill-building sessions, Interns gain a better understanding of professional expectations.

Following Brenda's address, Bob Jennings, an ILCC Board Trustee and Career Intern Committee member, spoke about the value of workplace professionalism and making the best out of the internship program. Brianna Marso, Human Resource Director at Iowa State Bank and Career Intern Committee member, then introduced the Intern program's upcoming events and development opportunities. She then explained how these activities are created to help Interns branch out and build professional skills, gain practical knowledge, and create beneficial connections within the community.

This year also represents an important milestone for the program as it enters the 27th year for the program and also welcomes the second year of leadership with Tod Faris serving as KAEDC's Executive Director.





Emotional Intelligence Training

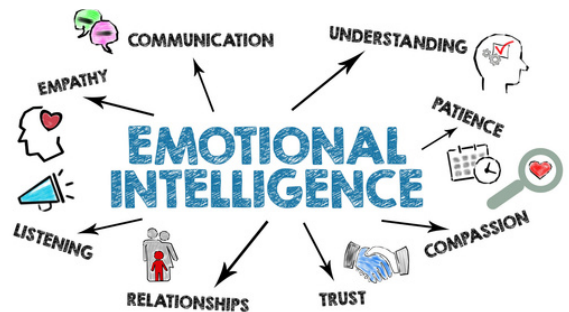
By: Alison VanOtterloo

MARISSA ACKERMAN, KRHC

In today's workplace, success requires more than technical knowledge, it also depends on the ability to understand and work effectively with others. On June 23rd, the KAEDC Interns had the opportunity to learn more about the importance of emotional intelligence from Alison VanOtterloo of Pharmacists Mutual. Through discussion and real-world examples, the Interns gained knowledge on how emotional intelligence influences communication, leadership, and decision-making in both personal and professional settings.

The presentation emphasized the growing importance of emotional intelligence and how it can help individuals become more effective communicators and leaders within the workforce and beyond. In today's workplace, success requires more than technical knowledge, it also depends on the ability to understand and work effectively with others.

Overall, this presentation highlighted the value of emotional awareness in building strong relationships, overcoming challenges, and responding effectively under pressure. The Interns left the session with a better understanding of how emotional intelligence contributes to professional success and with strategies they can continue to apply throughout their internships and future careers.



Mock Interviews & Resume Training

By: Brianna Marso

AVA ROETHLER, KAEDC

On July 7th, 2026, KAEDC welcomed Brianna Marso, the HR Manager at Iowa State Bank to conduct mock interviews for Interns this summer. This training was designed to strengthen interviewing skills and prepare Interns for future career opportunities. Each Intern had a chance to answer common interview questions, receive constructive feedback, and practice representing themselves in a professional setting.

Before the interview, Brianna reinstated important notes that were beneficial to remember like, nerves are okay and the more relaxed you are the better the interview will go. Through the interview the importance of self-confidence, preparation, and clear communication was highlighted. Interns also learned the value of strong eye contact, active listening, and thoughtful responses.

Receiving feedback helped recognize strengths and while identifying areas for growth.

After the mock interviews Brianna gave each Intern a score based on a multitude of factors. The Interns learned valuable lessons from this training that will help with future opportunities. The Interns then participated in professional headshots by Eden Collective that were provided by KAEDC. This helped highlight how professionalism has a major impact on job success. Leaving each person more prepared as they take a step into professional journeys.

Social Media Presence - Pharmacist Mutual Insurance

By: Alex Doung and Mandy Shepherd

AVA ROETHLER, KAEDC

A person's online presence can influence their chances of securing a job. Employers often review social media accounts to gain insight into an applicant's character, judgement, and professionalism before making hiring decisions. On July 14th, Pharmacist Mutual hosted a professional development session in which Interns from KAEDC participated in. It focused on building a positive digital reputation and preparing for future careers. Throughout the zoom call, Interns learned that employers often

review applicants' online profiles when evaluating candidates. Alex Doung, Marketing Communications specialist at Pharmacists Mutal, discussed the importance of using apps like LinkedIn. Interns received guidance on highlighting their education, experience, and career goals in a way that highlights strengths while creating meaningful professional connections through LinkedIn. According to Alex, "This app is comparable to social media apps" and can give you the helpful interaction needed. Reassuring the Interns that you do not have to be perfect when it comes to this area of your career.

While reinstating the idea that starting early and developing a polished online presence can help them stand out in today's competitive job market.

Mandy Shephard also gave the Interns useful information regarding a job interview. She told the Interns information which helps an interview excel. When interviewed, asking questions and maintaining respect is key to staying connected and active with the interviewer. Understanding what you are gaining while also being open to questions was reinstated during the zoom call.

Manage Your Money - Iowa State Bank



SHELBY BROSH - STATELINE CO.

In today's fast-moving world, financial literacy is one of the most empowering and necessary tools a young professional can have. Iowa State Bank recognized this and welcomed Interns for a session designed to make personal finance clearer, more approachable, and more connected to real-life decisions.

On Tuesday, July 7th, 2026, Iowa State Bank held a financial literacy session for local Interns, offering a practical and engaging look into the fundamentals of personal finance. The session featured insights from several Iowa State Bank team members: Brianna Marso, Human Resources Officer; Meredith Huber, Mortgage Loan Officer, and Amy Wolter, Personal Banker & Consumer Lender. Interns also heard from guest speaker Nick Hammitt, Fiduciary at Ameriprise.

Each contributed their expertise to create a well-rounded learning experience. The team shared real-world examples and explained how everyday financial decisions can shape long-term opportunities, and they were eager to answer questions throughout the session. A major focus of the discussion was credit; how it works, why it matters, and how to build it responsibly. Presenters highlighted the key factors that influence a credit score and explained how credit affects important milestones such as purchasing a car, securing a home loan, or qualifying for a new job. Interns were encouraged to pay bills on time and keep debt at manageable levels to maintain strong financial health. The session also covered saving and investing, emphasizing the importance of preparing for both short-term needs and long-term goals.

While saving provides stability for emergencies and upcoming expenses, investing offers a path to growing wealth over time. One of the most impactful parts of the session was hearing real examples from experienced bankers. Their stories helped connect big financial concepts to everyday situations and underscored the importance of making informed decisions. These conversations encouraged Interns to think more intentionally about their own financial futures. Speakers also noted the value of building relationships with bankers and financial advisors early on, as these connections can help Interns take meaningful steps toward long-term financial success. Overall, the Manage Your Money session was highly educational and relevant. Interns left with a stronger understanding of credit, banking, saving, and investing, along with a deeper appreciation for the role financial institutions play in helping individuals reach their goals.

Intern Service Project: Food Drive

AVA ROETHLER, KAEDC



This summer, Interns participating in the Kossuth Area Economic Development Center (KAEDC) Internship Program joined together for a community food drive focused on supporting local families while developing professional skills. The project encourages Interns to make a positive difference and give their time for a greater purpose.

Collection boxes were placed at each Intern's workplaces inviting employees and community members to donate non-perishable food items over a three-week period. Once the drive concluded, all donations were gathered and delivered to a food pantry serving Kossuth County. This project pushed Interns to make a strong impact within their communities and strengthen communication, teamwork, and leadership.

Combining community service and the Food Drive became a memorable part of the internship program. It highlighted the importance of collaboration and left a positive impact on both Interns and the communities they serve.

2026 SUMMMER INTERNS

Erpelding Voigt & Co:

Macy Berte
Lily Elsbecker
Hannah Point

Kossuth County Engineer's Office:

Alex Olson

Kossuth Area Economic Development:

Ava Roethler

Camp Algona POW Museum:

Faith Zeller

Algona Publishing Co:

Flynn McCann

Kossuth Regional Health Center:

Marissa Ackerman

StateLine Cooperative:

Shelby Brosh
Cael Miller

Sudol Tax & Accounting:

Paige Schmitt

2026 INTERN PROGRAM SPONSORS

Algona Aquatic Center

Algona Family YMCA

Country Maid

Ellie's on Main

Fareway - Algona

Fridley State 5 Theaters - Algona

Hy-Vee - Algona

Kemna Auto Center

Kossuth Regional Health Center

From all of the 2026 KAEDC Summer Interns, thank you to the Kossuth businesses for sponsoring the Summer Intern Program!