

Rock Valley, Iowa

Community-Wide Economic Development Strategic Plan

2020–2026

Vision for Economic Development by 2026

The Rock Valley business community is growing, thriving and successful. The community takes pride in its amenities, schools, available housing and childcare, as well as diverse job opportunities and population. Combined, these attributes along with a caring, spiritual culture, is resulting in a forward-thinking, community that is attracting new businesses and people to Rock Valley.



Priorities for Strategic Change

This strategic plan for economic development is organized around three major priorities:

Community Amenities

Improving and expanding community amenities was identified through the input as a top priority for the community. Residents want to take pride in a well-kept community, where they can recreate and raise families in a safe environment. Community amenities are seen as very important to attracting and keeping people and businesses in the community – critical to the growth and sustainability of Rock Valley’s businesses, schools and organizations.

Resident Attraction & Retention

As important as amenities to attracting and keeping people and businesses in Rock Valley is ensuring that housing and childcare are available and affordable for those who seek it. In addition, engaging residents in community activities, fellowship opportunities, and as community champions will serve to create a welcoming and supportive home for new and existing residents.

Business Attraction & Retention

No economic development strategic plan is complete without placing priority on retaining and expanding business and industry. Businesses large and small are necessary to provide good jobs and offer the services, goods and experiences that create a high quality of life for people.

Combined, the goals and strategies developed in each of these priority areas will serve to prepare the community for long term sustainable growth and strengthen and expand Rock Valley’s business base.

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Priority Area: Community Amenities

To be competitive in attracting and retaining both people and businesses, Rock Valley will focus on improving, maintaining, and promoting its quality of life features.

Goal 1: Rock Valley’s gateways, main thoroughfares, parks, buildings and neighborhoods are made aesthetically pleasing through improvement projects.

Strategies:

- 1.1: Improve appearance of community entrances and neighborhoods.
- 1.2: Encourage downtown facade improvements.
- 1.3: Develop and implement a streetscape design improvement plan.
- 1.4: A plan is developed and implemented to ensure Rock Valley’s parks are improved, well-maintained and continuously updated.

Goal 2: Rock Valley is attracting increased visitors and growing its reputation by implementing numerous marketing strategies that reach new audiences.

Strategies:

- 2.1: Develop and Implement a Community Marketing Plan for Tourism.
- 2.2: Engage in a focused Talent Attraction program that is aligned with the priorities and assets important to the talent needed in Rock Valley.

Goal 3: Rock Valley’s trail system is experiencing increased usage due to upgrades and expansions that promote safety and connectivity.

Strategies:

- 3.1: Continue the development of a connected trail system through Rock Valley with multiple trailhead access points.

Goal 4: Rock Valley has developed new community assets and is noting increased usage by residents.

Strategies:

- 4.1: Design and construct a new community swimming pool.
- 4.2: Engage in the process to develop a recreation center.

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Priority Area: Resident Attraction & Retention

To support new and existing residents, Rock Valley will focus on ensuring sufficient housing, childcare, and amenities necessary to live and work in the community, as well as resident engagement to encourage a sense of belonging in the community.

Goal 5: Rock Valley’s residents and workforce have a variety of choices for available and affordable childcare options.

Strategies:

5.1: Assess and address ongoing community needs for childcare.

Goal 6: Rock Valley’s residents are increasingly involved in community activities and leadership, and serve as community champions and advocates to attract, welcome and retain community members.

Strategies:

6.1: Design and implement a public relations effort to inform and educate residents about Rock Valley’s assets and opportunities.

6.2: Develop events and activities to engage a wide range of new and existing residents.

Goal 7: Rock Valley’s housing stock is increased and improved to offer affordable and/or appropriate options that meet the needs of new and existing residents.

Strategies:

7.1: Assess housing needs to design and promote targeted incentives that spur development and rehabilitation.

7.2: Assess need and explore options for land acquisition and development of affordable housing.

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Priority Area: Business Attraction & Retention

To provide good jobs and a strong retail and service environment, Rock Valley will focus on strengthening and growing existing businesses and attracting and/or developing new businesses that complement the existing available sites, buildings and industry mix.

Goal 8: Rock Valley is experiencing an increased tax base, job growth and new investment from new and existing primary sector businesses.

Strategies

- 8.1: Continue the implementation of formal business retention & expansion (BR&E) programming.
- 8.2: Continue to implement targeted business attraction efforts.

Goal 9: Rock Valley's entrepreneurs and new start-ups are identified, supported, and encouraged through networks and programs that increase the likelihood of success.

Strategies:

- 9.1: Organize and offer entrepreneurial and business start-up programming that meets the needs of individuals and fits the business targets of Rock Valley.

Goal 10: Rock Valley's retail and service space is at near capacity and businesses are thriving, attracting visitors and supporting the needs of residents.

Strategies:

- 10.1: Develop and implement a "small business retention & expansion (BRE)" program to assess and address needs.
- 10.2: Develop and implement a targeted small business attraction effort to fill existing space (sites/buildings).