

OVERVIEW

A strong economy is critical to building a desirable community. The quantity and quality of jobs and access to goods is intertwined with overall quality of life and attractiveness to potential residents. Economic development planning is a process where a community organizes, analyzes, creates plans, and then acts to improve its economic well-being.

Economic development is a broad term that encompasses anything that can improve economic quality in a community. The policies in this comprehensive plan will directly or indirectly influence the nature of economic development and how it impacts a community.

This chapter will go over economic indicators such as employment, income, commuting and workforce statistics, tourism, entrepreneurship, economic development partners and programs to make recommendations that guide the future development of DeWitt.

ECONOMIC INDICATORS

This section provides an overview of key economic indicators for DeWitt.

Employment

Figure 4-1 shows the total employment for Clinton County from 2014 to 2023. Between 2016 and 2019 county employment levels fluctuated from month to month, but the overall employment trend was fairly stable. In 2020 employment dropped during the COVID-19 pandemic. Since the pandemic employment has rebounded and nearly recovered to pre-pandemic numbers.

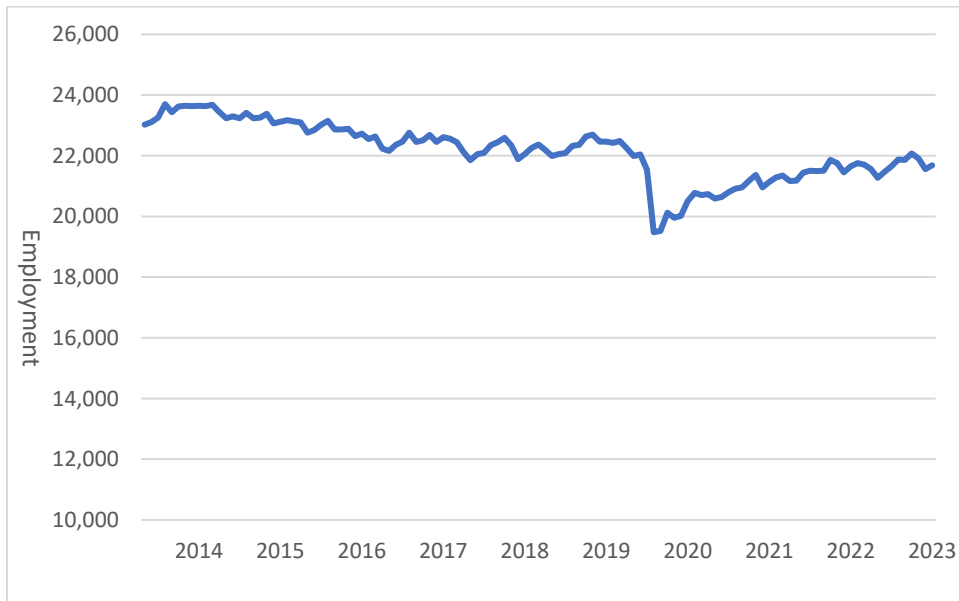


Figure 4-1. Employment in Clinton County, Iowa, 2014-2023

Source: Iowa Workforce Development, 2023

Unemployment

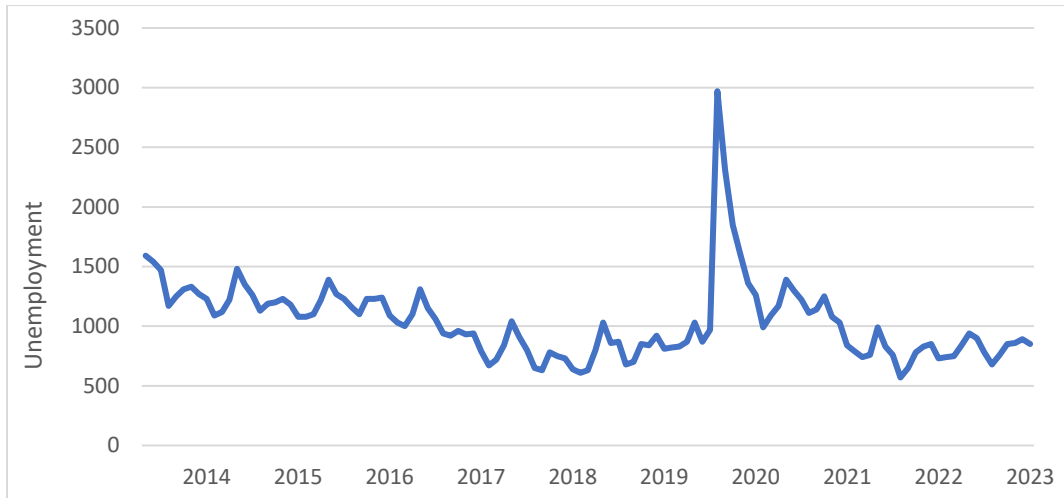


Figure 4-2. Unemployment in Clinton County, Iowa, 2014-2023

Source: Iowa Workforce Development, 2023

Figure 4-2 shows unemployment for Clinton County from 2014 to 2023. Unemployment had been on a slow decrease before peaking in 2020 and then recovering to pre-pandemic levels around 2021.

Figure 4-3 shows unemployment in Clinton County compared to unemployment in the state of Iowa and the entire country (Clinton County in blue, Iowa in orange, United States in gray). Clinton County has a consistently higher unemployment rate to the rest of the state and is comparable to unemployment in the rest of the country.

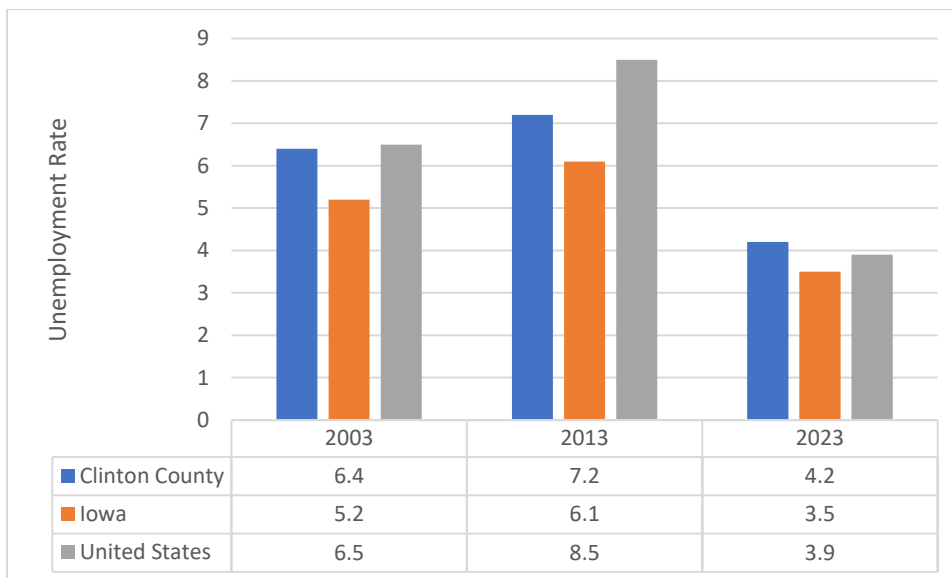


Figure 4-3. Comparison of Annual Unemployment Rate, Clinton County, State of Iowa and U.S.

Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2023

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While county statistics are typically reliable, DeWitt is in a particular situation as it is not the primary city within its county. Therefore, county-level statistics may not give an accurate view of what is happening in DeWitt in particular. Figure 4-4. shows estimated unemployment rates in DeWitt and other peer communities. Peer communities are chosen based on nearby cities who affect DeWitt’s laborshed. City-level data is specific to cities themselves, however it has much higher margins of error than county-level data.

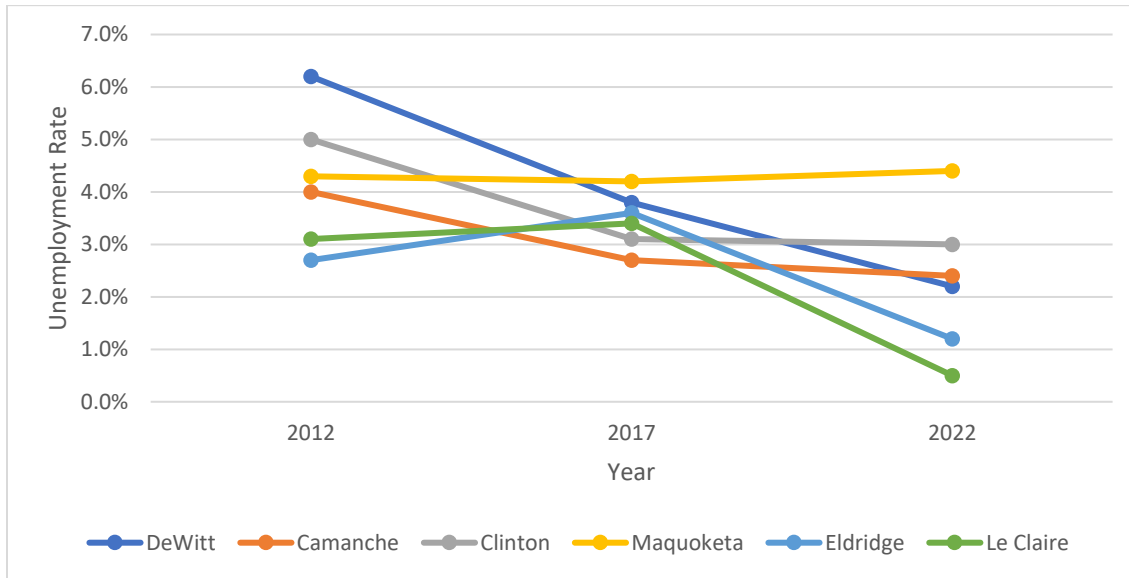


Figure 4-4. Comparison of Unemployment Rates in DeWitt, Iowa and Peer Communities
Source: US Census Bureau, 5-Year American Community Survey Estimates

Income

Table 4-1. Median Household Income in DeWitt and Peer Communities

Jurisdiction	2012	2017	2022
Le Claire	\$71,225.00	\$88,045.00	\$95,206.00
Eldridge	\$62,173.00	\$66,544.00	\$89,946.00
State of Iowa	\$51,129.00	\$56,570.00	\$70,571.00
DeWitt	\$51,641.00	\$60,107.00	\$66,653.00
Camanche	\$54,852.00	\$48,567.00	\$65,090.00
Clinton County	\$49,010.00	\$50,295.00	\$61,080.00
Clinton city	\$42,441.00	\$42,702.00	\$55,196.00
Maquoketa	\$30,745.00	\$46,173.00	\$53,462.00

Source: US Census Bureau, 5-Year American Community Survey estimates

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Table 4-1 shows a comparison of median household income between households in DeWitt, the city of Camanche, the city of Clinton, and Clinton County. Household incomes are important to examine as populations with higher median incomes would have more money to spend within their community, bringing development to the area. DeWitt households have earned more than households in other area jurisdictions.

Commuting

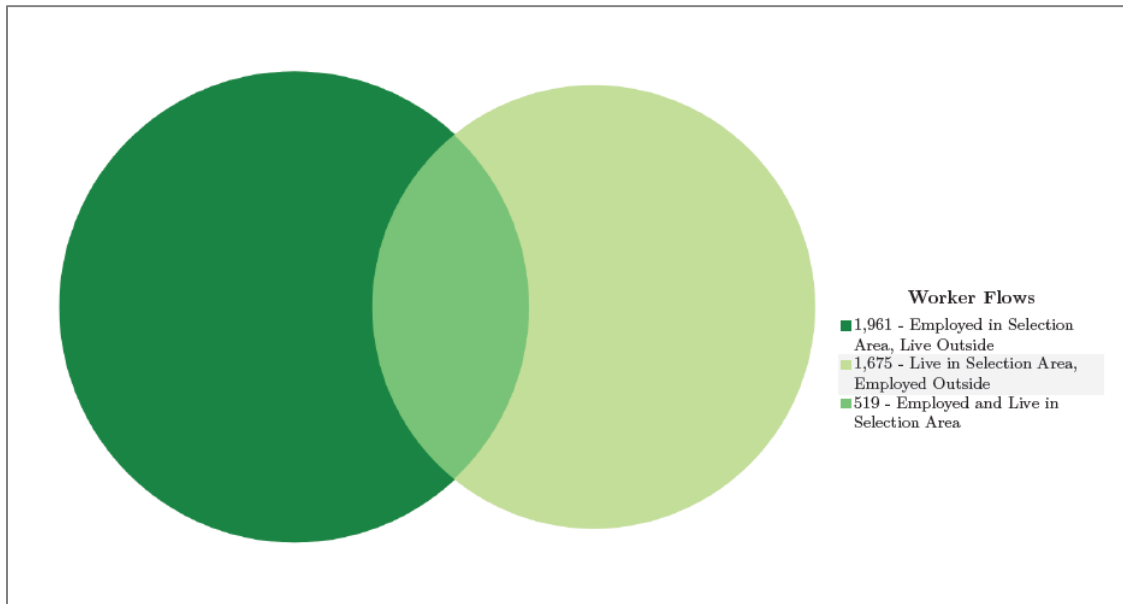


Figure 4-5. Worker Flows in DeWitt, Iowa

Source: US Census Bureau On the Map

The relationship between where people live and work is an important indicator for several aspects of city development such as economic development, housing, and transportation. The location of jobs and the transportation to jobs is an important factor for workers in choosing a community to live in. Therefore, examining this relationship is necessary to help guide future land use policy. Similarly, to other communities of DeWitt’s size many residents in DeWitt work outside the community, however there are more workers commute to DeWitt for their job than residents of the city that work in other communities as shown in Figure 4-5. Figure 4-5 shows the flow of primary private jobs into DeWitt. Many people come into DeWitt for work, indicating a strong employer base and opportunity for workforce housing.

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Table 4-2. Commuting Destinations for DeWitt, IA Residents and Workers

Living in DeWitt, Iowa			Working in DeWitt, Iowa		
Works In	Count	Share	Lives In	Count	Share
Davenport, IA	398	18.9%	Clinton, IA	223	9.2%
Clinton, IA	156	7.4%	Davenport, IA	200	8.3%
Bettendorf, IA	101	4.8%	Bettendorf, IA	68	2.8%
Cedar Rapids, IA	66	3.1%	Camanche, IA	68	2.8%
Dubuque, IA	58	2.8%	Maquoketa, IA	65	2.7%
Eldridge, IA	55	2.6%	Eldridge, IA	47	1.9%
Rock Island, IL	49	2.3%	Grand Mound, IA	30	1.2%
Camanche, IA	46	2.2%	Wheatland, IA	29	1.2%
Maquoketa, IA	41	1.9%	Fulton, IL	28	1.2%
Moline, IL	32	1.5%	Dubuque, IA	23	1.0%

Source: US Census Bureau OnTheMap

Many people who work in DeWitt live in communities adjacent to it. As seen in Figure 4-5 the communities where most people commute into DeWitt from are Clinton, Davenport and Bettendorf.

Employers and Industries

Having a good number of quality jobs is important for the prosperity of communities such as DeWitt. DeWitt is focused on growing the number of well-paying jobs, attracting new employers, and improving the attractiveness of the community to workers.

Occupational diversity also helps drive economic sustainability. Communities that feature a mixture of industries and types of jobs are less vulnerable to economic volatility and are more likely to experience growth. Achieving these economic goals will require a comprehensive and unique approach.

Employer	Industry/Products	Current Employment
Central Community School District	Education	347
Custom-Pak	Blow Molding	230
MercyOne-Genesis	Healthcare	214
Guardian Industries	Float glass	210
Car-Freshner	Air Fresheners	175
City of DeWitt	Public Service	79 to 180 (summer)
Wendling Inc.	Mining	75
Black Cat Wear Parts	Manufacturing	61

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ITW Magnaflux	Non-destructive testing equipment, chemicals	45
ITW Fluids North America	Machines lubricant, fluid products	40
Latham Pools	Pools	34
Ennis Business Forms	Business, medical forms	27
Maschio Gaspardo	Agricultural equipment	14

Table 4-2. Top Employers in DeWitt, Iowa

Source: DeWitt Chamber and Development Company

Table 4-2 is a list of the top employers in DeWitt. Many of the top employers, including Guardian Industries, Custom-Pak and Car-Freshner are within the manufacturing industry.

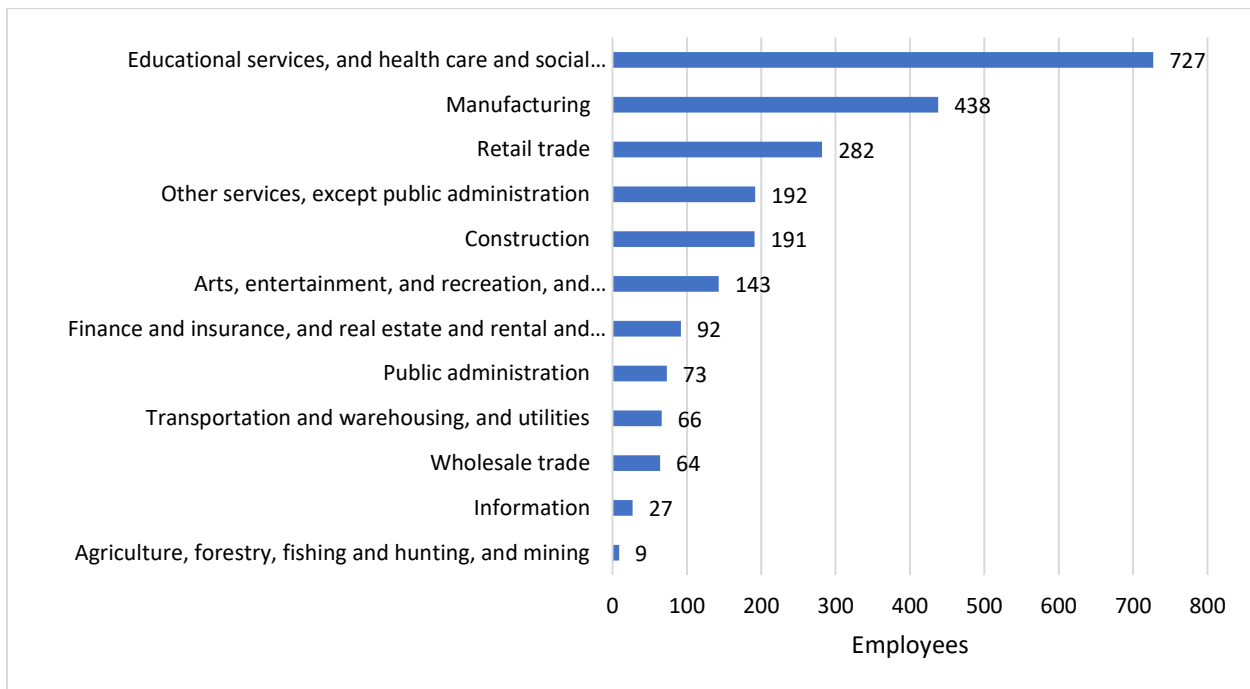


Figure 4-6. Employment by Sector in DeWitt, Iowa, 2023

Source: US Census Bureau, 5-Year American Community Survey estimates

Figure 4-6 shows employment by sector in DeWitt. Educational/healthcare/social services, manufacturing and retail trade are the top 3 sectors in the city. These sectors compose about 62.8% of employment in the city.

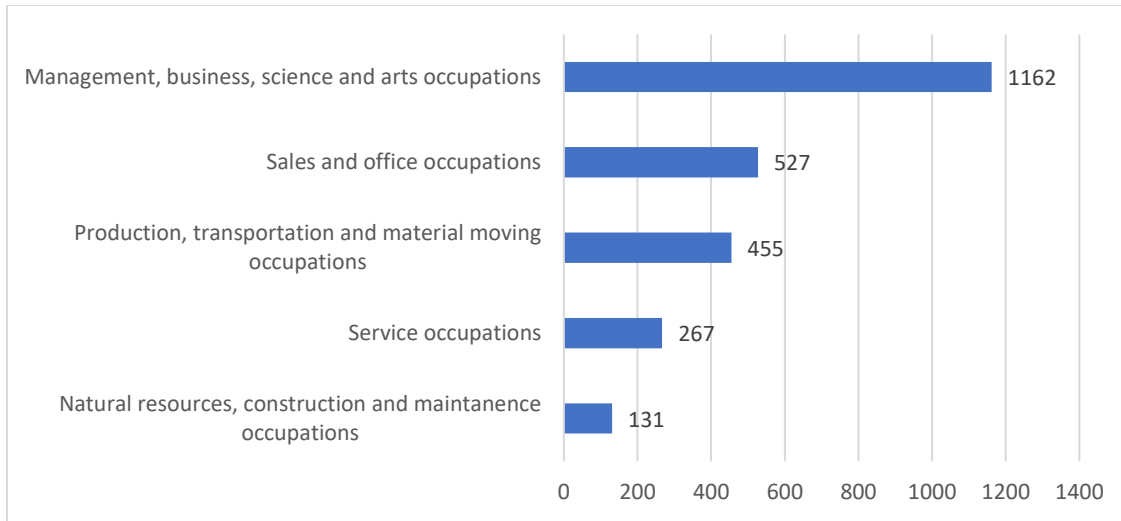


Figure 4-7. Employment by Occupation in DeWitt, Iowa, 2023

Source: US Census Bureau, 5-Year American Community Survey estimates

It is also important to understand the distribution of occupations that exist within DeWitt. Figure 4-7 shows employment by occupation from the ACS, with the top occupation being management, business, science and arts occupations.

KEY ECONOMIC COMPONENTS

The following section highlights some of the key aspects of DeWitt’s local economy.

Tourism

Tourism can be a huge driver of economic growth within a community. According to a 2022 report from Travel Iowa on the Economic Impact of Travel on Iowa Counties, tourism spending totaled \$69.5 million in Clinton County in 2022. Tourism also directly contributed to 527 jobs and provided \$10.3 million in State and Local taxes and \$12.7 million in tourism-generated income per household.

Downtown

A strong downtown district is a benefit to a community as it can create a sense of place that attracts people and businesses to a city. DeWitt’s downtown is situated along 6th Avenue from 11th Street to 7th Street. The downtown district is home to many businesses, including shops and restaurants. Many community attractions are located around downtown as well, such as Lincoln Park, the DeWitt Community Center, the DeWitt Community Library and the DeWitt Hausbarn Museum. More information on these attractions can be found in Chapter 7. Infrastructure, Services and Facilities.

There are also a plethora of community events that attract individuals to the downtown area, including farmers markets, Tunes in Town, the Monthly Car Show, and Autumn Fest. For more information on these events see Chapter 3. Community Character.

Small Businesses

Entrepreneurship is a catalyst for economic growth for a city. According to a 2022 report from the Small Business Administration, 46.6% of Iowa employees are employed by a small business. DeWitt makes it a priority to support its small businesses. Their Look Local First initiative helps highlight the importance of fostering a thriving small business community. The DeWitt Chamber and Development Company (DCDC) gives 5 reasons in support of its Look Local First initiative, those being:

- Local businesses create character and make our community unique.
- Local businesses donate more to local charities.
- Local businesses create job opportunities for our residents.
- Local businesses support other local businesses that are owned by our neighbors and community members.
- Local business owners live in the community and have a vested interest in the future of DeWitt.

Retail Sales

Seeing how DeWitt compares to other cities in its region can be an indicator of where the city stands as a local hub for business growth. The Retail Analysis report from Iowa State University Extension and Outreach is a report that contains many statistics based on local retail and trade for all Iowa communities. According to Figure 4.8, DeWitt has had a growing number of business establishments since the 2012 fiscal year and is below Maquoketa and above Camanche and Tipton in terms of total number of establishments.

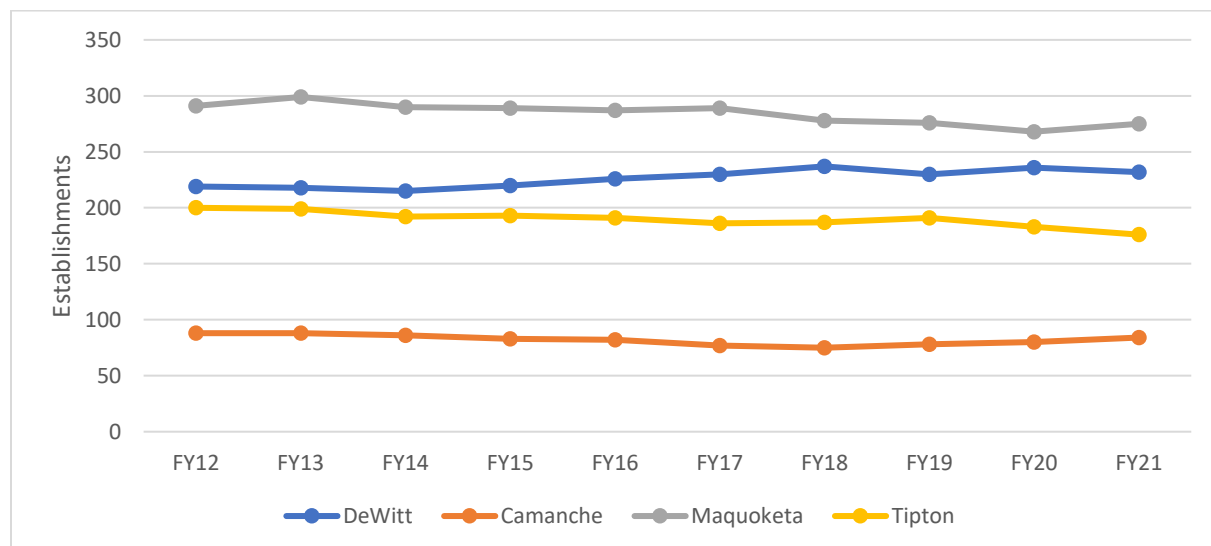


Figure 4-8. Number of Establishments in DeWitt, Camanche, Maquoketa and Tipton

Source: Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, Community and Economic Development, Retail Analysis Report

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Per capita sales are another way to measure the strength of local businesses in DeWitt. Per capita sales are calculated by measuring the total taxable sales in a community and adjusting them for inflation, then measuring them on a per capita basis. Figure 4-9. compares DeWitt’s taxable sales with that of its peer cities and the state of Iowa. DeWitt’s taxable sales have remained steady with a sharp increase in the 2021 fiscal year, keeping it in line with state of Iowa numbers.

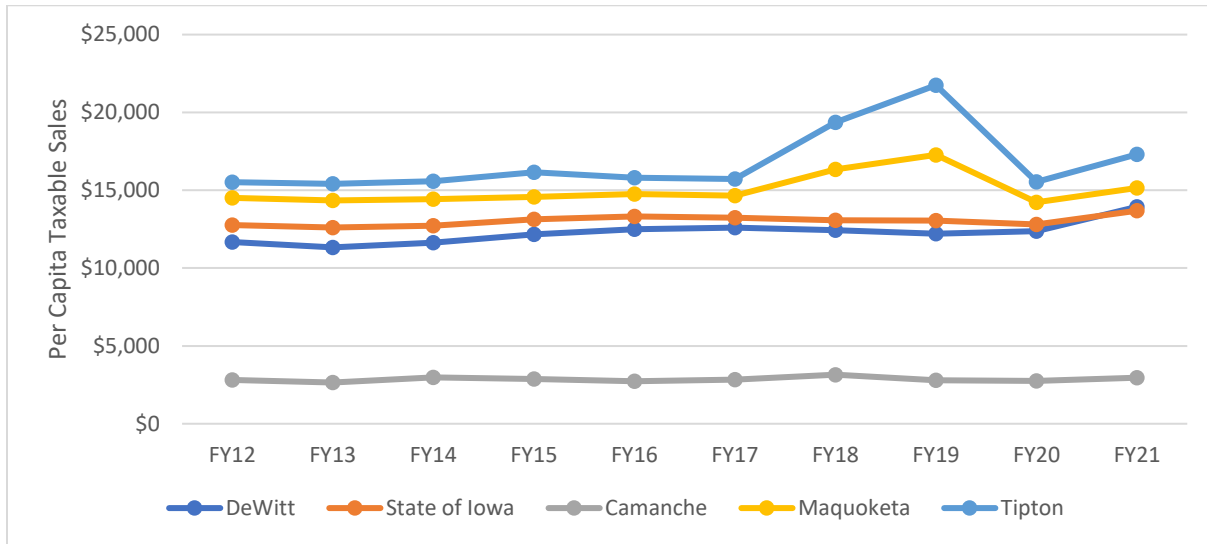


Figure 4.9. Per Capita Taxable Sales in DeWitt, Camanche, Maquoketa, Tipton and the State of Iowa
Source: Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, Community and Economic Development, Retail Analysis Report

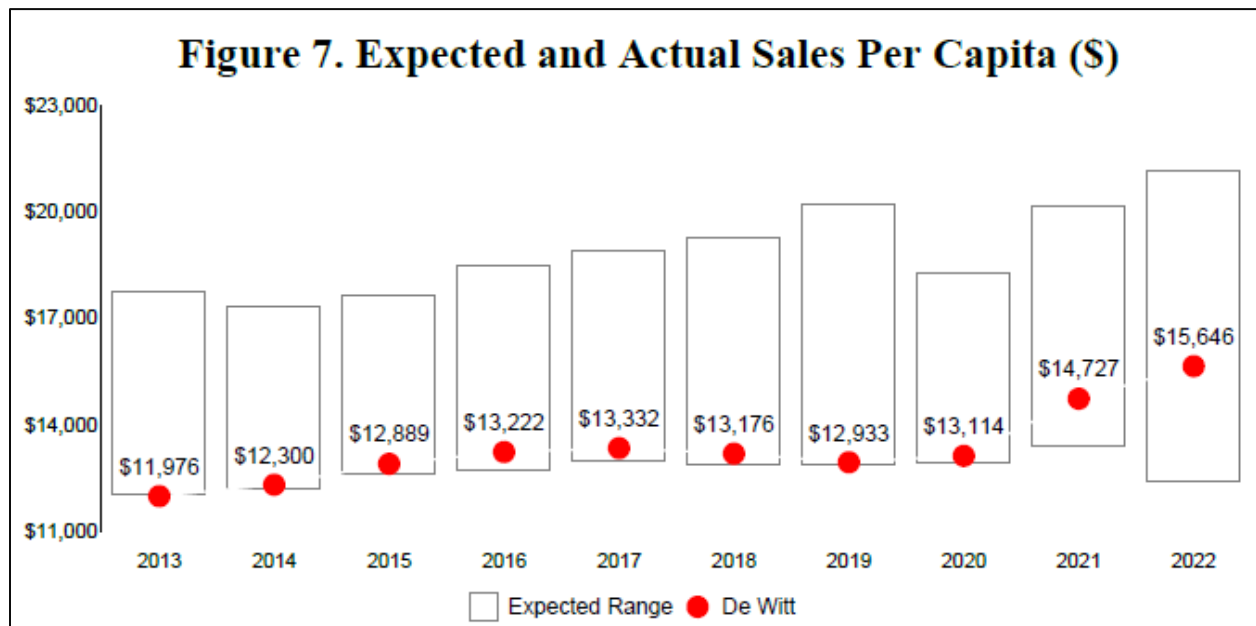


Figure 4.10. DeWitt Sales per Capita Compared to Peer Cities

Source: Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, Community and Economic Development, Retail Analysis Report

Figure 4.10. also shows the sales per capita compared with the expected range for peer cities. DeWitt's sales are comparable to that of peer cities, albeit on the lower end. The sales in DeWitt have led to a trade surplus of \$2.5 million from sales targets based on population, which indicates that DeWitt's business sector is able to completely serve the community.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

The DeWitt community has undertaken several economic development initiatives to support local businesses and encourage economic growth.

Crossroads Business Park

Crossroads Business Park is DeWitt's primary business park situated near Highway 30 and the Union Pacific Railroad. The district is zoned primarily for industrial uses and most of the businesses located there are manufacturers. Some of the businesses located in the area include Guardian Industries, Car-Freshner, ITW- Magnaflux and ITW- Fluids North America.

In the 2022 Strategic Plan, the City Council made expanding the business park a priority for the city. Seeking opportunities for development will be crucial going forward to creating a strong industrial community in DeWitt.

Business Retention and Development

Keeping a strong business community intact is important for economic resilience. According to the 2022-2027 Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), a regional document that monitors and evaluates long-term economic goals in the five-county ECIA region, the economic uncertainty of the post COVID-19 era, marked by high inflation and fuel costs, has changed or slowed the plans for growth among many employers in the ECIA region. The top three barriers to growth, according to a survey of regional employers, were economic uncertainty, finding employees and regaining customers. Likewise, a lack of capital and entrepreneurial support in some areas has led to a slowing in the creation of new businesses. Economic development partners should step in and build resources for businesses to sustain themselves and create capacity for future development and expansion.

Marketing

Marketing is a key component of creating a community that is attractive to potential residents and businesses. DeWitt uses partnerships with statewide economic development agencies such as Iowa Economic Development Authority and Travel Iowa to promote community placemaking events that show the uniqueness that DeWitt provides as a community.

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Urban Renewal Plan

DeWitt adopted and Urban Renewal Plan in 1990 and amended it in 1993, 1997, 2008, 2015, 2018, 2022 and 2024 to expand the Economic Development District and to support specific projects. The original Economic Development District and all amendments were designated as economic development areas appropriate for the promotion of commercial, industrial, and housing developments. Iowa Code allows the City of DeWitt to collect incremental property tax revenues in the economic development district for no more than 20 years. If that period has expired, the City may reinstate the property to enable incremental property tax collection for another 20 years.

Table 4.3. City of DeWitt, Iowa Urban Renewal Plan

Urban Renewal Area/Project	Purpose/Need
Municipal Fire Department Expansion	Enhanced municipal facilities
Public Works Building	Enhanced public works facilities
East Industrial Street Extension	Growth and retention of commercial and industrial enterprise
Steeplegate Single-Family Housing	New residential housing
Workforce Housing Development (North Arrow)	New affordable housing
Encova Redevelopment	Blight alleviation
6 th Avenue/Northridge Road Improvements	Growth and retention of commercial and industrial enterprise
Alas Development LLC Workforce Housing Development	New affordable housing
Pickleball Courts	Provision of recreational amenities
Paul Skeffington Memorial Trail Extension	Provision of recreational amenities
Urban Renewal Inflow and Infiltration Project	Blight alleviation
MRW Properties LLC Expansion	Economic development
Radiance, Inc. Development	Economic development
Steeplegate Trail Extension Project	Provision of recreational amenities
12 th Street Trail Extension Project	Provision of recreational amenities
Pickleball Utilities and Sidewalk Extension	Provision of recreational amenities

Source: City of DeWitt, Iowa

Workforce Development

According to the 2022-2027 CEDS, employers in the ECIA region (Cedar, Clinton, Delaware, Dubuque and Jackson counties) have experienced a skilled labor shortage with an aging workforce. Iowa is projecting a -3.2% decline in its working age population of 15 to 69 and the region is expecting a -6.5% decline. Wages are also lower than in the rest of the region. Therefore, it is important for DeWitt to be a leader in retaining workforce by providing competitive wages, working closely with area institutions to provide skills training in high demand jobs, and expand diversity and equity capacity to assist in local recruitment.

The provision of housing is also important for the development of a quality workforce. DeWitt should increase and diversify its workforce housing stock to make DeWitt more affordable for existing residents and more attractive for prospective residents. For more information on workforce housing, see Chapter 4. Housing.

Education and Training

Education is another important piece of workforce development. Education begins with basic skills acquired in elementary and middle school and then progresses to “hard” technical and analytical skills needed for specific jobs and “soft” interpersonal skills needed for navigating a workplace. According to the 2023 Iowa Workforce Needs Assessment 20% of employers in the region perceive a lack of basic skills, 63.2% perceive a lack of “hard” skills and 95.1% perceive a lack of “soft” skills. Addressing these issues will require partnerships between the Central DeWitt Community School District, St. Joseph Catholic School, Clinton Community College and local economic development groups. The development of the DeWitt Career Advancement Center is also a huge benefit to workforce education and training, for more information see Chapter 7. Infrastructure, Services and Facilities.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS

There are many public and private organizations that collaborate with the City of DeWitt to assist in economic development. These organizations help the development of small businesses, administer state programs, and create and implement effective local policies that foster economic growth and development.

DeWitt Chamber and Development Company

The DeWitt Chamber and Development Company (DCDC) is a private non-profit organization representing over 240 businesses and individuals in the DeWitt area. Their mission statement is “to lead, inform, advocate and advance business interests and promote community growth. Our core focus is to support existing businesses, attract new businesses, and assist in enhancing the quality of life for our community”. The DCDC’s primary economic development activities consist of business retention and recruitment, workforce development and attraction, and community development and promotion activities. The DCDC also builds relationships with other economic development agencies and elected officials to help the growth of the region. They also contribute to residents of the community through networking and professional development programs and by putting on community events that enhance the character of DeWitt.

LincolnWay Community Foundation

The LincolnWay Community Foundation is an affiliate of the Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque with a mission of connecting the dots between community needs and those working to make a difference in rural Clinton County. The foundation runs an endowment fund that paid out \$124,000 and gave \$40,700 to 17 nonprofits in 2023.

East Central Intergovernmental Association

The East Central Intergovernmental Association (ECIA) manages several economic development programs. ECIA Business Growth was founded in 1982 and covers Clinton County for revolving loan funds including Small Business Association (SBA) 504 programs and the Clinton County Revolving Loan Fund. They also develop and update the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS), utilized to monitor and evaluate long term economic goals and strategies to coordinate economic development activities in the region.

Prosperity Eastern Iowa

Another ECIA program, Prosperity Eastern Iowa is a partnership of economic development stakeholders that leverage financial and human resources to achieve efficiencies, utilizing assets to attain economic prosperity for its region, including DeWitt.

Iowa Economic Development Authority

The Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) is the State of Iowa's main economic development agency. IEDA's mission is "to strengthen economic and community vitality by building partnerships and leveraging resources to make Iowa the choice for people and business". IEDA uses its business development and community development divisions to administer state and federal programs that assist individuals, communities and businesses.

Travel Iowa

Travel Iowa is the official tourism agency of the state of Iowa. The agency is able to promote attractions and events within the state that are able to bring in people to new communities. DeWitt has partnered with Travel Iowa to help market its community events within the state that show the vibrancy of the city.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TOOLS

As DeWitt attempts to encourage business growth in their communities, they often can utilize local, state, and federal programs to assist in economic development activities. Some examples of programs that communities can use include the following:

Tax-Increment Financing (TIF)

An incentive program that captures increased property taxes a business pays for improving their property. The incentive can be used for infrastructure improvements or to provide grants/rebates to the business. To receive the funding, the businesses must commit to job creation in the community or must have an extraordinary positive impact.

State of Iowa Programs

High Quality Jobs, Certified Sites, Revitalize Iowa's Sound Economy (RISE), and the Economic Development Set-Aside (EDSA) programs are available from the State of Iowa for qualifying projects.

Jobs Training

The State of Iowa's 260E and 260F programs provide employee training through Iowa's 15 community colleges. 260E is available for businesses looking to expand their Iowa workforces, while 260F is available for existing Iowa businesses.

DDID Downtown Improvement Program

The City of DeWitt administers the DDID Downtown Improvement Program, which is designed to provide financial incentives to beautify and improve commercial buildings located within defined areas. Business and property owners in the downtown area are eligible for the program with a maximum grant of \$5,000.

RECCOMENDATIONS

Business Attraction, Retention, and Expansion

- Work with economic development partners to promote available land in Crossroads Business Park
- Pursue studies and funding mechanisms that can help expand Crossroads Business Park
- Support the DCDC's activities of business retention and expansion

Workforce

- Partner with economic development agencies to track and analyze workforce data
- Research best practices for recruiting high demand workers
- Expand the partnership with Clinton Community College for job training classes
- Develop programs to help train non-traditional and under-employed individuals for high demand jobs
- Support the construction of new homes needed to accommodate a growing workforce
- Support the continuation of networking and professional development programs through the DCDC

Marketing

- Continue working with IEDA and Travel Iowa to market the community.
- Continue investing in events and attractions for residents and tourists alike.

Downtown

- Work with economic development partners to pursue revitalization programs that strengthen the downtown
- Utilize short and long-term downtown planning
- Research and pursue funding mechanisms that can assist in downtown revitalization efforts
- Encourage and support entrepreneurial opportunities in downtown

Entrepreneurship

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- Cooperate with other agencies and educational institutions to identify programs and services to assist in the creation of new small businesses.
- Assess and analyze which entrepreneurial resources are lacking and collaborate with economic development partners to solve.