

# ADD VALUE & BUILD UP YOUR MEMBERSHIP

According to Becky McCray of Small Biz Survival, you can provide valuable support to local businesses when you:

- Bring together businesses and locals in new ways
- Provide training and support that is unavailable from other sources in town
- Bring in outside resources to address key problems faced by businesses in your town
- Conduct useful research that no single business could do on their own
- Bring back useful information from regional events and networks

## FIND OUT MORE!

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The IRI Training:  
Visualize a Robust Retail District in  
your Community



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IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY  
Extension and Outreach  
Community and Economic Development



In Iowa, there are 270,484 small businesses employing 651,635 individuals. Nearly 50% of all workers in the state are employed by a small business. (U.S. Small Business Administration)

## IRI CHAMPIONS

IRI Champions (Part One) starts where communities are now and offers tools and resources to help strengthen your retail base. Covers topics from social media and retail district amenities to understanding your town's retail data analysis. Participants will learn to:

- Assess existing and future retail needs
- Evaluate retail district amenities
- Maximize community social media
- Cultivate community connections

## IOWA RETAIL INITIATIVE

Small businesses are essential to a rural community's quality of life, and they need community leaders and decision-makers working with them to generate a healthy retail environment. Iowa State University invites communities to take part in the Iowa Retail Initiative (IRI) and build the support network that local retail needs to thrive. The Iowa Retail Initiative, a part of ISU Extension and Outreach, is a program designed to strengthen independent retail in Iowa communities. Community and Economic Development Extension specialists provide training and resources.

Part one of the IRI training, [IRI Champions](#), produces a foundation of support for your retail district. This session is intended for planners and leaders in business development, and for anyone whose work supports small businesses.

In this next step of the IRI training, [IRI Snapshot](#), produces informed decision makers. People who make decisions that affect small businesses should be part of this session, including anyone who attended the [IRI Champions](#).

## IRI SNAPSHOT

The IRI Snapshot (Next Step) trains local leaders to create a snapshot of their retail district. The snapshot they create will answer these kinds of questions:

- What is the condition of the storefronts in my retail district?
- How many vacant storefronts are there?
- What is the condition of the sidewalks in my retail district?

