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# Lt. Gov. Judge visits Maquoketa

By DOUGLAS MELVOLD

Iowa Lt. Gov. Patty Judge wants to see more job-creating success stories across the state such as HUSCO International's Maquoketa plant.

That's what she told a gathering of about 25 Maquoketa area government and economic development leaders and HUSCO officials recently.

Judge made a 40-minute stop on Feb. 12 at the HUSCO International plant at the south edge of Maquoketa as part of her "Moving Iowa Forward" tour of communities across the state.

She highlighted the need for further job-creation programs and recognized a Maquoketa industry that has thrived with assistance of industrial development and job-training funds despite the economic recession.

She addressed the group, then toured the production facilities at the plant, which has been in Maquoketa almost two years.

Judge noted that the state, under



MSP photo by Douglas Melvold

Iowa Lt. Gov. Patty Judge addresses a group of approximately 25 Maquoketa area community leaders and HUSCO International officials during a recent stop at the Maquoketa company's plant as part of her "Moving Iowa Forward" statewide tour. Judge promoted job growth and praised the Maquoketa plant for its growth and for creating jobs during the economic recession.



MSP photos by Douglas Melvold

Iowa Lt. Gov. Patty Judge poses with some members of the group who welcomed her to Maquoketa during a recent visit at the HUSCO International plant. From left are state Sen. Roger Stewart, D-Preston; Austin Ramirez, president and chief executive officer of Incova Technologies, a HUSCO subsidiary; Judge; Maquoketa Mayor Jason Hute and Jackson County Supervisor Larry "Buck" Koos of LaMotte.

## HUSCO credits state and local support for growth

By DOUGLAS MELVOLD

Support from the local and state levels played a key role in the decision by officials of HUSCO International to locate its newest factory in Maquoketa.

Austin Ramirez of HUSCO reviewed the company's growth in Maquoketa since it located the plant in 2008.

The privately-held company produces hydraulic and electrohydraulic controls for automotive and off-road applications.

Ramirez is president and chief executive officer of Incova Technologies, a wholly-owned subsidiary of HUSCO International.

He noted that the Maquoketa plant now has more than 85 full-time employees.

That number represents an increase of more than threefold over the staff of 27 that were employed at the facility when the company hosted community leaders at an open house in late May of last year.

Space in the former Generac Power Systems facility that was not being used a year ago now is taken up by

more production "cells" that produce the valve assemblies that go in a variety of heavy-duty machines.

In addition to its Maquoketa plant, the Waukesha, Wis.-based company has two plants in Wisconsin and three abroad, one each in the United Kingdom, China and India.

Ramirez recalled that the Maquoketa site was chosen for the quality of the local workforce, its proximity to some of its major customers, including John Deere and Caterpillar, the availability of the facility it is in and support from the city and state.

"I can't really overemphasize how important the state and local support was in our decision to both establish and grow our facility here in Iowa," Ramirez said.

"The business climate that we found in Iowa has been superior to what we see in our home state of Wisconsin.

That has really been a key factor in allowing us to be successful despite the distance that we have to our

Gov. Chet Culver's administration, provided more than \$800,000 in financial and technical assistance to HUSCO International to help them locate in Maquoketa and eventually provide about 170 jobs.

"Those are new jobs," Judge said. "That's great news in this economy and my hat's off to you."

"You really are an example of what we can do when we take a great company, invest in the company and help them expand and create jobs despite the circumstances we find ourselves in right now."

"We have to keep our businesses strong and we have to create jobs," Judge said.

"We've got to find jobs for Iowa's workforce and that work is going to begin in Iowa by investing in businesses, in our great Iowa businesses like this business here at HUSCO."

"That is why we are asking the Legislature to fund job-creation programs in spite of the tough times we are in."

One example is the Iowa Power Fund, a \$100 million, four-year commitment to develop the state's renewable energy industry and create green jobs.

Judge touted the state's I-JOBS program, an \$830 million initiative to create jobs and improve the state's infrastructure.

She said there has been much misinformation about the I-JOBS program. She explained that it is a bonding program in which the state uses its triple-A bond rating to sell bonds at favorable interest rates.

The bond sales create a pool of money that is being used to improve the state's infrastructure in such areas as highways, bridges, sewer systems and public buildings.

Jackson County is receiving \$600,000 from the I-JOBS program.

Despite the economic downturn, Judge said she and Culver also are asking the Legislature to fully fund the community colleges' job-training programs.

"As new opportunities arise and old opportunities go away, we have to be sure that when a worker makes a transition, they have the skills they need to make that transition smoothly and be productive as a part of our Iowa workforce."

She also noted that Culver is asking the Legislature to fund a 2 percent allowable growth for the state's school districts and an additional \$100 million to be taken from state reserves and applied to the kindergarten through high school system.

"That's a total of \$330 million in new money that would be pumped into the K-12 system, which should certainly be helpful in getting schools stabilized," Judge said.

"We know that many schools, because of the cuts made last year, find themselves in a very difficult position," she said.

■ HUSCO,  
Please turn to page 3

■ JUDGE,  
Please turn to page 3