

WEST DES MOINES RECEIVES FIRST EVER GOOGLE eCITY AWARD FOR IOWA

Independent research firm IPSOS and Google recognize the strongest online business community in each state

WEST DES MOINES - Today, Google announced **West Des Moines** has been named the 2013 eCity of Iowa. The eCity Awards recognize the strongest online business community in each state - **the digital capitals of America**. These cities' businesses are embracing the web to find new customers, connect with existing clients and fuel their local economies.

"Our 'e-City Awards' recognize the new 'digital capitals' of America," said Scott Levitan, Google's director of small-business engagement. "We're proud to recognize this growing entrepreneurial-spirit—and the role that it plays in both creating jobs and sustaining local economies. With 97-percent of Internet-users looking for products and services online, it's clear that success is about being connected."

"We are excited that West Des Moines is the recipient of the very first eCity Award," stated West Des Moines Mayor Steven Gaer. "A strong business community is vital to the health of West Des Moines and this award is evidence that our business community's strength extends to the world of eCommerce as well."

Rachel Eubank, President of Sticks, added, "As a family owned business located in the heart of the Midwest, connectivity via e-commerce and e-marketing is critical for us to reach our consumers with our vision and our products. We are continually developing new strategies to enhance our retail possibilities through digital marketing and social media. There are many great businesses, large and small, making great products and by harnessing e-commerce and e-media, we're able to compete on a global scale."

Google worked with an independent research firm IPSOS to analyze the online strength of local small businesses in cities in all fifty states and the Google and West Des Moines is among the ranks of America's leading cities in the digital economy.

Iowa businesses already know that Americans are turning to the Internet to look for local goods and services and businesses need to be where their customers are, and in 2013, that's online. Yet, more than half of all U.S. small businesses do not have a website. Over the next 3 years, businesses that make use of the web are expected to grow 40% faster and are twice as likely to create jobs. With small businesses creating two-thirds of all new jobs, the potential impact of getting these businesses online is enormous. Google hopes that these "digital capitals" will become an inspiration to other areas—throughout the nation—of what can be accomplished by spearheading business development on the Web.

Chris Voggeser, President of the West Des Moines Chamber, added, "We are thrilled that Google has presented the City of West Des Moines with the 2013 eCity of Iowa award. This honor represents all of our hard work partnering with local businesses and reinforces that West Des Moines and Iowa are...as we proudly state: 'Positioned. *Perfectly*' ... for online business growth."

"Connectivity means our businesses can have global relevance anywhere in the world," said Gene Meyer, President, Greater Des Moines Partnership. "Our ability to serve customers is no longer determined by how big we are or how big our budgets are, only that we have a great idea that meets our customer's need – no matter where that customer lives. Today's technology has served West Des Moines well – and it will continue to be the key to economic growth for the Capital Crossroads region."

For more information on the eCity initiative, please visit our website at www.google.com/ecities.