

Senator Ernst's Entrepreneur Expo:

Made in Iowa: Ready for the Mission
Iowa State University, Scheman Building
1805 Center Drive, Ames, IA 50011
June 30, 2026

- 8:00-9:00AM **Attendee and Exhibitor Registration**
(Ground Floor Lobby)
- 9:00-9:20AM **Welcome & Opening Addresses**
(First Floor, Auditorium)
Carrie Koelker, Iowa Senator, District 33
David Cook, President, Iowa State University
Senator Joni Ernst, Chair, U.S. Senate Committee on Small Business & Entrepreneurship
- 9:20-10:00AM **Fireside Chat**
Competing to Win: Entrepreneurship and America's Security Future
(First Floor, Auditorium)
Josh Carter, Associate Administrator, Office of Investment and Innovation, U.S. Small Business Administration
Drew Oetting, Co-Founder and President, 8VC
Senator Joni Ernst
- 10:00-11:00AM **Networking Opportunity with Exhibitors**
(Second Floor Atrium)
- 11:00-11:45AM **Breakout Sessions #1**
Navigating Capital Access: Tools for Small Business Growth
(Second Floor, Room 250)
Lisa Maas, Director of Government Guaranty Lending, Northwest Bank
Austin Strawhacker, State Director, America's SBDC - Iowa
- Understanding CMMC: Cybersecurity Requirements for Federal Contractors
(Second Floor, Room 262)
Melissa Burant, Supply Chain Project Manager, Cybersecurity Lead, CIRAS
- 11:50AM-12:35 PM **Breakout Sessions #2**
Small Business Pathways in the Defense Innovation Ecosystem
(Second Floor, Room 250)
Cdr. Chip Laingen (Ret.), Executive Director, Defense Alliance
Col. Yvonne Miller (Ret.), Ecosystem Engagement Lead, Defense Innovation
OnRamp Hub: Minnesota
- Subcontracting Success: Building Partnerships in the Federal Market
(Second Floor, Room 262)
Melissa Burant
Julie Fagle, APEX Accelerator Government Contracting Specialist, Iowa State University, CIRAS
Amber Hanlon, Senior Manager, Social Responsibility Programs, Collins Aerospace
Beth White, Acting Director of Small Business Programs, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers