

January 2, 2019

To Whom It May Concern:

I wholeheartedly support Emily Damman's recommendation for 2019 Forty Under 40. I met Emily through the Vision Iowa/Enhance Iowa program. I was the program manager at the Iowa Economic Development Authority and Emily was a board member, appointed by Governor Branstad in 2016. Emily was a great addition to the Board, she's smart and attentive. She always had thoughtful and constructive comments for applicants and is a great cheerleader for the smaller projects in the rural part of the state. When the program transitioned from Vision Iowa to Enhance Iowa, staff was quick to have Emily appointed chair of the Community Attraction and Tourism Review Committee. The CAT Committee, as it is referred to, requires extra time of its members. Not only do CAT Committee members review applications but they also must score each application that is submitted to the program. As CAT Chair, Emily provided thoughtful comments and suggestions on applicant scoresheets.

Emily missed very few of our monthly public meetings, and was always enthusiastic about traveling to the far corners of the state to tour projects and hold meetings. When I left IEDA in November, it was my hope that Emily would be appointed Chair of the Enhance Iowa Board. Not only is she the board member with most seniority, but she also does such a great job summarizing expectations to applicants and recipients seeking contract amendments.

Being a member of a volunteer board isn't easy, especially a state board whose funding, and therefore existence, is always in question each year. Emily approaches each meeting and the various obstacles with a level-head and easy manner, which makes things painless for staff and simple for applicants. Her service and dedication to the Enhance Iowa program and the State of Iowa is admirable.

Sincerely,

Nicole Shalla

Vision Iowa/Enhance Iowa Program Manager, May 2014 – November 2018