

Regional FTZ 288 Introduction

Northwest Iowa Development – Catherine Durda Award

Event Submission

Event Summary:

On April 1, 2026, NW Iowa Development hosted a regional Foreign-Trade Zone Workshop designed to reintroduce FTZ 288 to manufacturers, logistics providers, and community partners across Northwest Iowa. The event served as a major step in revitalizing a dormant FTZ program and expanding awareness of FTZ benefits in rural communities that often lack access to specialized international trade expertise. Objectives Reestablish FTZ 288 as an active regional economic development tool Educate rural manufacturers on FTZ advantages, compliance, and activation pathways Strengthen regional collaboration among NWID counties and industry partners Increase FTZ visibility within Iowa's broader economic development ecosystem Lay the groundwork for statewide FTZ coordination among Iowa's four grantees

Who was invited?

The workshop invitation was extended broadly across Northwest Iowa to reach manufacturers, logistics providers, and regional partners who could benefit from Foreign Trade Zone education. Invitees included:

- Manufacturers in all NW Iowa Development counties, especially those using imported components or facing tariff exposure
- Logistics and warehousing companies serving regional supply chains
- Economic development organizations across NW Iowa
- Chambers of commerce and business associations
- City and county officials involved in business retention and expansion
- Utility partners who support industrial development
- Existing FTZ users and companies exploring FTZ activation
- Regional workforce and training partners connected to manufacturing competitiveness

The outreach was intentionally regional, ensuring that businesses and partners across Northwest Iowa had access to FTZ education and resources.

Presenters:

Coilcraft (operator in FTZ 288), Danielle Converse, Sean Lydon, and ISU Export Specialist Mark Schneider

What was the result of this event? Include how many people attended.

Approximately 24 people attended the workshop, representing manufacturers, logistics partners, and regional economic development organizations across Northwest Iowa. The event generated significant momentum for FTZ 288 and sparked new interest throughout the region. Several businesses requested additional information, which led NWID to schedule a follow-up FTZ Webinar with consultant Sean Lydon and expand outreach to adjacent communities. As a direct result of the workshop, NWID developed a plan to conduct individual business visits with participating companies, provide referrals to FTZ consultants we met through NAFTA, and support manufacturers exploring FTZ activation. The workshop also became the catalyst for broader statewide collaboration. Following the event, NWID initiated the creation of an Iowa FTZ Grantee Network to coordinate outreach, share resources, and promote FTZ awareness to the Iowa Economic Development Authority and Professional Developers of Iowa. This

network is now working to elevate FTZs as a statewide economic development tool and strengthen Iowa's competitiveness in global trade.





NORTHWEST IOWA DEVELOPMENT
Beyond Expectations.

FTZ 288 Workshop Agenda

April 1, 2026 • 11:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.

Northwest Iowa Community College – Building C, The Pit

WELCOME

11:00 – 11:10 — Arrival, Lunch, and Networking

11:10 – 11:20 — Welcome & Introductions

Carol Hoogestraat & Ryan McEwen

- Overview of FTZ 288
- Purpose of the workshop
- How FTZ tools support Northwest Iowa businesses

PRESENTATIONS

11:20 – 12:05 — Featured Presentation (Introduced by Kiana Johnson)

Marc Schneider, CIRAS – Iowa State University

Marc brings more than 25 years of global operations and supply chain leadership across North America, Australia, Southeast Asia, Korea, and Greater China. His background spans high tech, industrial goods, aerospace, automotive, consumer goods, and more. He specializes in supply chain management, import/export growth, Lean processes, and project implementation—and today supports Iowa manufacturers in driving performance and resilience.

Presentation Topics:

- Practical strategies for leveraging FTZs
- Import/export efficiencies and cost-reduction opportunities
- Real-world examples relevant to Northwest Iowa manufacturers
- Q&A with attendees

12:05 – 12:25 — Remote Presentation (Introduced by Carol Hoogestraat)

Danielle Converse, AZS, Foreign Trade Zone Manager, Port of Corpus Christi

Danielle Converse is the Foreign Trade Zone (FTZ) Manager and an Accredited Zone Specialist at the Port of Corpus Christi, FTZ 122. A graduate of Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi, Danielle has over 20 years of experience navigating federal, state, and local regulations. She is an active member of the National Association of Foreign-Trade Zones (NAFTZ), contributing to the Grantee, Operator, Sponsorship, Mentorship, and Advocacy Committees; the Social Media Taskforce; and currently serves as Chair of the Awareness Working Group of the Advocacy Committee.

As President of the Texas Association of Foreign Trade Zones, Danielle continues her commitment to promoting, expanding, and strengthening the U.S. FTZ program in Texas. Her strong relationships with operators, community leaders, and U.S. Customs officials have been instrumental in the successful implementation and ongoing success of the FTZ program in the Texas Coastal Bend.

Presentation Topics:

- How ports interact with FTZs
- Benefits for shippers and manufacturers
- Key considerations for businesses using FTZ 288

12:25 – 12:50 — Local Business Panel: FTZ 288 in Action (Introduced by Mark Gaul)

Coilcraft – Hawarden, Iowa

- Why they use FTZ 288
- Operational benefits and cost savings
- Lessons learned and advice for other businesses
- Audience Q&A

Panelist: Shelly Driesen, Plant Manager, and Chelsie Ballard, Customs & Logistics Specialist Coilcraft – Hawarden

Moderator: Marc Schneider

Shelly Driesen is the plant manager at Coilcraft, Inc. in Hawarden, Iowa, bringing 20 years of experience in the warehouse and distribution industry. She played a key role in developing Coilcraft's FTZ, and through her leadership role she has expanded her expertise into manufacturing and automation. Outside of work, Shelly is devoted to her family—she is married with two children and two grandchildren who mean the world to her. She also serves on her church's production team and enjoys tending to her flower gardens and spending time reading.

Chelsie Ballard, Customs & Logistics Specialist, Coilcraft – Hawarden

Chelsie Ballard brings 16 years of experience at Coilcraft, most recently in international trade and compliance as a Customs and Logistics Specialist. With six years as an FTZ Administrator, she has developed a strong reputation for navigating complex regulations and driving operational efficiency. Chelsie is deeply committed to continuous improvement, consistently seeking smarter, streamlined ways to support global business operations. Outside of work, she enjoys reading, puzzles, and spending time outdoors with her family—especially boating and camping.

CLOSING

12:50 – 1:00 — Closing Remarks & Next Steps

Carol Hoogestraat & Ryan McEwen

- How to explore FTZ eligibility
- Available support from NWID
- Contact information and follow-up resources



THANK YOU FOR JOINING US!

