—— CITYVIEW'S ———

# BUSINESS JOURNAL







Patrick Stall is a licensed taxi driver, and, as such, has undergone a background check, drug testing and training.

After a 12-hour shift, Yellow Cab charges Stall and the rest of their drivers \$100 for leasing the vehicle. The drivers are also responsible for their own gas and a car wash. But after the \$130 investment, they earn each penny made off the rides themselves. It costs passengers \$10.70 after sales tax to hire a driver. Then, the company charges \$2.40 a mile. On a good day, Stall makes about \$300 per shift.

"The money here is pretty good, and it's honest work," Stall said. "I knew this gig. I still had a bunch of personal customers, so I came back to it."

Independent drivers "are absolutely loving it here because everything I've done is basically for them," said Scott Johnson, president and CEO of Yellow Cab. "They can make a decent wage and own their own business."

# The company today

Johnson took over as president and CEO of Yellow Cab after the untimely death of his boss, Randy Sackett, in February 2023. He oversees the operation including 50 to 60 independent drivers, a full-service tire and auto shop, a 24/7 dispatch center based in the Philippines, a four-person accounting team, a shop manager and an operations manager.

The success of the company is evident. Yellow Cab completes anywhere from 10,000-14,000 trips per month, depending on a variety of factors. Johnson's proudest practice is donating \$1 for every ride during Breast Cancer Awareness Month last October. In the end, the company was able to present \$12,000 to the John Stoddard Cancer Center.

So, what is the key to success? How has Yellow Cab survived as Des Moines' last major cab company? How do they continue to grow despite challenges from techy rideshare apps?

"It's just going back to the basics of building



Yellow Cab President/CEO Scott Johnson and Operations Manager Josh Jackson

relationships with all of our existing customers," Johnson said. "We're not reinventing the wheel or anything."

Johnson works closely with Operations Manager Josh Jackson to meet the needs of two customer bases. Their internal customers — the drivers — want to operate nice, clean equipment and use a dispatch service that works well for them. Their external customers — the passengers — want timely, convenient customer service that gets them from point A to point B.

When Johnson joined the company three years ago, Yellow Cab had a fleet of 16 cars. Now, the fleet is closer to 60 with much nicer and newer vehicles. Most of the growth occurred in the last year after Johnson took over as CEO.

"I'm here every morning. The drivers know exactly who I am," Johnson said. "Being an operations guy with my hands on everything makes a huge difference."

To best meet the needs of both drivers and passengers, the company outfitted all their vehicles with tablets to run a taxi dispatch system called iCabbi. The software splits the Des Moines metro into 70 zones. When a cab is ordered through the phone or mobile app, the dispatch system first asks any available driver in that zone. If nobody is there,

the system scans the surrounding zones — all of which are in a five-minute radius. If not, it opens to what they call bidding, and any driver can claim the trin

While direct rides make up a good portion of the business, Johnson estimated that 75% of Yellow Cab's trips come from their accounts.

"Anybody who has got a bigger business than probably 50 people, they've either ran through us or still do run through us," he said.

The list of account holders includes Medicare, Medicaid, DART, Polk County Senior Services, and Des Moines Public Schools. These organizations often provide transportation for waiver recipients and those who otherwise could not transport themselves to appointments, school or work. Or, in the case of DART, they will call Yellow Cab in case a bus breaks down and riders have places to be. After Yellow Cab completes the trips, they bill the account holders. For the drivers, these trips typically operate the same way as any other.

In the best interest of the company's reputation and passenger safety, Yellow Cab continues to perform background checks, screen, drug test and train their drivers. That is one of the things they believe sets their company apart from rideshare apps like Uber and Lyft.



Yellow Cab company has grown its fleet in recent years and is looking to expand even more in the near future.

# Competing against rideshare apps

"When Uber and Lyft came in 2015...they brought in a very expensive lobbyist, a lawyer from California to come in and argue to the city council that they don't actually need regulations on cab driving at all," explained Stall. "And it worked... not only Uber and Lyft could come in but just any dude can slap some vinyl on the side of his car and call himself a taxi operation. You don't know how many DUIs he's had, whether he has insurance, anything."

In March 2015, the Des Moines City Council voted to reduce much of Chapter 126 in the Code of Ordinances. Before the repeal, the city of Des Moines issued individual taxi licenses and conducted background checks on all potential drivers. Now it is in the hands of the companies to do it themselves. Not to mention, the city removed its cap on how much taxis could charge.

But nothing changed for Yellow Cab. They continued to hold their drivers to the same

standards once held by the city. They also charge a flat rate for fares whereas Uber and Lyft use surge pricing when demand is high.

Yellow Cab continues to face the consequences of Uber and Lyft entering the Des Moines market. According to Stall, a big chunk of 20-to-30-somethings made the switch over to the apps. They also began to take over most of the business on Court Avenue. But the biggest impact might be the effect on the local economy.

Companies like Uber and Lyft take a certain percentage off their fares for themselves. Stall said this takes money out of the hands of drivers and instead places it in the hands of the technology companies.

"What do we know about low-wage workers? They spend something like 80% of what they get within the next month and spend it around here," said Stall. "Rather than extracting capital out to Silicon Valley, (riding with Yellow Cab) does keep money local."

## The company's future

"I don't have big marketing dollars. I don't have a very big bank account. I make this work by being very methodical and choosing my battles," Johnson said.

When Johnson took over many of Sackett's responsibilities, he had to make hard decisions to keep the company afloat.

"If you knew what I had to go through this last year, it'd be even more of a story," he said. "I had to do things quickly because I saw financially what it would do to us... We're in a good spot because of my quick decision-making, and it surprises even me."

Johnson has plans to grow the operation. Within the next couple of years, he hopes to have a fleet of 80 cars. He wants to expand to Ames and work closely with the airport there. He also thinks he could begin working with communities like Grimes, which no longer have DART service.

For now, the focus remains on taking care of Yellow Cab's existing customers. But it does not hurt to spread the word to potential riders.

"How more visual can you get than a big yellow car driving by?" said Jackson. ■



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#### COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE TRANSACTIONS IN POLK COUNTY FROM DEC. 18, 2023 TO JAN. 12, 2024.

#### 800 N.E. 64TH ST., PLEASANT HILL

SALE DATE: 2023-12-19 SALE PRICE: \$1,450,000

SELLER: PATTERSON, BEVERLY BUYER: CITY OF PLEASANT HILL

ACRES: 15.006 SQUARE FEET: 1,927

# 92 PAINE CIRCLE, S.E., BONDURANT

SALE DATE: 2023-12-20 SALE PRICE: \$271,210

SELLER: DNG PROPERTIES LLC

BUYER: KLINE, SHANE

ACRES: 1.245 SQUARE FEET: 0

#### 3355 S.E. MIEHE DRIVE, GRIMES

SALE DATE: 2023-12-20 SALE PRICE: \$113,000

SELLER: BAUER, PHYLLIS ANN

BUYER: DURACHEM LLC

ACRES: 0.062 SQUARE FEET: 1,080

#### 1221 EIGHTH ST., WEST DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2023-12-20 SALE PRICE: \$500,000 SELLER: SERIES 6 OF JGC

HOLDINGS LLC

**BUYER: ASTRA HOLDING GROUP** 

LLC

ACRES: 0.537 SQUARE FEET: 3,000



#### 1200 LOCUST ST., DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2023-12-20 SALE PRICE: \$30,000,000 SELLER: NATIONWIDE MUTUAL INSURANCE COMPANY BUYER: CITY OF DES MOINES

ACRES: 2.016

SQUARE FEET: 371,920

#### **DES MOINES**

SALE DATE: 2023-12-21 SALE PRICE: \$10,000

SELLER: 2004 ASSET FUND 16 LLC BUYER: LAWSON III, WILLIAM C

ACRES: 0.230 SQUARE FEET: 0



#### 11040 HICKMAN ROAD, CLIVE

SALE DATE: 2023-12-21 SALE PRICE: \$5,890,735 SELLER: BATRA HOSPITALITY

**GROUP INC** 

BUYER: THE MCCOY AT 8035 LLC

ACRES: 2.456

SQUARE FEET: 73,419



#### 204 W. FIRST ST., GRIMES

SALE DATE: 2023-12-21 SALE PRICE: \$1,200,000 SELLER: KEMPKER, DAWN M BUYER: C&D COMMERCIAL LLC

ACRES: 1.827 SQUARE FEET: 17,312

#### 7625 HICKMAN ROAD, URBANDALE

SALE DATE: 2023-12-22 SALE PRICE: \$1,900,000 SELLER: MOTEL RELAX LLC BUYER: MWF INVESTING LLC

ACRES: 2.569 SQUARE FEET: 22,189



#### 8801 UNIVERSITY AVE., CLIVE

SALE DATE: 2023-12-22 SALE PRICE: \$7,469,722

SELLER: WSO UNIVERSITY PARK

IOWA LLC

BUYER: UNIVERSITY PARK

PROPERTIES LLC ACRES: 17.100

SQUARE FEET: 110,625

# 3401 UNIVERSITY AVE., DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2023-12-26 SALE PRICE: \$540,000 SELLER: M INVESTMENTS LLC BUYER: LAZ LAUNDRY LLC

ACRES: 0.321 SQIARE FEET: 2,154

#### **3601 109TH ST., URBANDALE**

SALE DATE: 2023-12-26 SALE PRICE: \$1,730,000 SELLER: LANDMARK REALTY

**GROUP LLC** 

**BUYER: ANDERSON FOUR LLC** 

ACRES: 5.390

SQUARE FEET: 27,636

#### 2544 DEAN AVE., DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2023-12-27 SALE PRICE: \$40,000

SELLER: FOULK, DIANA LYNN BUYER: ARREOLA, MARTIN

ACRES: 0.169 SQUARE FEET: 3,200



# 2400 S.E. ENTERPRISE DRIVE, GRIMES

SALE DATE: 2023-12-27 SALE PRICE: \$9,708,000 SELLER: PENTA PARTNERS LLC

BUYER: SIMONS, PETE

ACRES: 6.315

SQUARE FEET: 80,780

#### 3749 E. UNIVERSITY AVE., SUITE 100-101, DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2023-12-27 SALE PRICE: \$253,000

SELLER: JARED AND JODI SMITH

WHITEWATER REV TR BUYER: WALTER A JOHNSON

TRUST ACRES: 0.986 SQUARE FEET: 8,466

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#### 3510 N.W. ABILENE ROAD, ANKENY

SALE DATE: 2023-12-28 SALE PRICE: \$11,432,512

SELLER: THE BRIDGES AT ANKENY

LLC

BUYER: REALCO ANKENY IA LLC

ACRES: 13.041

SQUARE FEET: 78,758

#### 418 E. GRAND AVE., DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2023-12-28 SALE PRICE: \$1,100,000

SELLER: NELSON DEVELOPMENT

1 LLC

BUYER: EV MIXED USE LLC

ACRES: 0.681

# 2201 RITTENHOUSE ST., DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2023-12-29 SALE PRICE: \$2,400,000 SELLER: ACCENT HOLDING

COMPANY LC

**BUYER: GRAND PRIX PROPERTIES** 

LLC

ACRES: 3.334

SQUARE FEET: 27,150



#### 3615 SIXTH AVE., DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2023-12-29 SALE PRICE: \$450,000

SELLER: ADAMSON PROPERTIES II

LLC

BUYER: NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT CORP

ACRES: 0.149

SQUARE FEET: 3,500



#### 4347 MERLE HAY ROAD, DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2023-12-29 SALE PRICE: \$16,576,456

SELLER: BRIXMOR GA HAYMARKET

SQUARE LLC

BUYER: HAYMARKET INVESTORS LLC

ACRES: 28.022

SQUARE FEET: 286,745

#### **4200 E. 14TH ST., DES MOINES**

SALE DATE: 2024-01-03 SALE PRICE: \$345,000

SELLER: MELVIN & DEBRA THOMAS

**FAMILY TRUST** 

BUYER: KINGDOM HOMES LLC

ACRES: 0.291

SQUARE FEET: 1,576

#### 302 S.E. SECOND ST., GRIMES

SALE DATE: 2024-01-05 SALE PRICE: \$550,000 SELLER: COOPER, ROBERT L BUYER: MB ELECTRICAL LLC

ACRES: 0.286 SQUARE FEET: 5,442

#### 101 S.E. THIRD ST., DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2024-01-05 SALE PRICE: \$1,600,000 SELLER: MARKET ONE LLC **BUYER: 216 E COURT LLC** 

ACRES: 1.006 SQUARE FEET: 0

#### 8800 N.W. 62ND AVE., JOHNSTON

SALE DATE: 2024-01-08 SALE PRICE: \$3,650,000

SELLER: THE GRAHAM GROUP INC **BUYER: FAREWAY STORES INC** 

ACRES: 5.026

SQUARE FEET: 42,000

#### 484 S. 19TH ST., WEST DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2024-01-08 SALE PRICE: \$710,000

SELLER: LANGPAUL HOLDINGS 484

LLC

BUYER: 484 LLC ACRES: 0.530 SQUARE FEET: 8,312

#### 717 N. ANKENY BLVD., ANKENY

SALE DATE: 2024-01-08 SALE PRICE: \$1,725,000

SELLER: WAVE CAPITAL GROUP LLC SQUARE FEET:18,320 ■

BUYER: KKR LLC ACRES: 0.966

SQUARE FEET: 11,370

#### 1201 E. FIRST ST., GRIMES

SALE DATE: 2024-01-09 SALE PRICE: \$1,800,000 SELLER: STRIFEX LLC BUYER: CHRISTENSEN, DON

ACRES: 1.001

SQUARE FEET: 2,584

#### 2502 ROBINSON AVE., N.E., **BONDURANT**

SALE DATE: 2024-01-11 SALE PRICE: \$360,415

SELLER: BONDURANT BUSINESS

PARK LLC

BUYER: FRASER, ADAM SQUARE FEET: 1.182

#### **4090 WESTOWN PARKWAY. UNIT A-1, WEST DES MOINES**

SALE DATE: 2024-01-11 SALE PRICE: \$180,000 SELLER: SMALL HOLDING

COMPANY LLC

BUYER: WESTOWN GALLERIA LLC

ACRES: 0.172 SQUARE FEET: 1.520

#### **1110 29TH ST., DES MOINES**

SALE DATE: 2024-01-11 SALE PRICE: \$206,250 SELLER: JMAE LLC

BUYER: 2901 COTTAGE GROVE AVE

LLC

ACRES: 0.079 SQUARE FEET: 4,500

#### 2901 COTTAGE GROVE AVE., **DES MOINES**

SALE DATE: 2024-01-11 SALE PRICE: \$418,750 SELLER: JMAE LLC

**BUYER: 2901 COTTAGE GROVE AVE** 

HC

ACRES: 0.150 SQUARE FEET: 7,008

#### **6144 N.E. 22ND ST., DES MOINES**

SALE DATE: 2024-01-12 SALE PRICE: \$11,100,000 SELLER: USF HOLLAND LLC **BUYER: ARCBEST PROPERTY** 

MANAGEMENT LLC ACRES: 16.930

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Borrower Name	City	County	Cong. District	\$ Amount	Jobs Created	Jobs Retained	Existing Jobs	New Vs. Existing	Business Type
JC Ag Financial Services, LLC	HUDSON	BLACK HAWK	02	\$250,000	0	3	3	EXISTING	All Other Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services
Back Alley Printers, Inc.	WATERLOO	BLACK HAWK	02	\$1,228,000	70	0	112	EXISTING	Commercial Screen Printing
Heartland Plumbing, LLC	WEST BRANCH	CEDAR	01	\$84,000	0	3	4	New	Plumbing, Heating, and Air-Conditioning Contractors
Heartland Plumbing, LLC	WEST BRANCH	CEDAR	01	\$10,000	1	3	4	NEW	Plumbing, Heating, and Air-Conditioning Contractors
Bamba Restaurant, LLC	CLEAR LAKE	CERRO GORDO		\$80,000	7	0	0	NEW	Full-Service Restaurants
New Hampton Cabinetry LLC	NEW HAMPTON	CHICKASAW	02	\$32,900	1	5	5	EXISTING	Wood Kitchen Cabinet and Countertop Manufacturing
CIC Enterprises, LLC	MONONA	CLAYTON	02	\$495,000	0	1	1	EXISTING	Site Preparation Contractors
SPIKED IV INFUSION BAR LLC	Adel	DALLAS	03	\$101,000	0	0	4	NEW	Other Miscellaneous Nondurable Goods Merchant Wholesalers
Above Par Tech of Iowa, LLC	WAUKEE	DALLAS	03	\$395,000	2	4	4	EXISTING	All Other Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services
Matthew S Kimberley	Waukee	DALLAS	03	\$250,000	0	3	3	EXISTING	N/A
Des Moines Blinds and Shutters LLC	WAUKEE	DALLAS	03	\$47,500	1	1	1	NEW	N/A
Boji Boss LLC	OKOBOJI	DICKINSON	04	\$275,000	5	10	1	NEW	Full-Service Restaurants
PHASE THREE ENTERPRISES, LLC	DUBUQUE	DUBUQUE	02	\$20,500	5	4	4	EXISTING	Drinking Places (Alcoholic Beverages)
Heartland Cybersecurity Consulting, LLC	ESTHERVILLE	EMMET	04	\$60,000	0	3	4	NEW	N/A
Thunder & Lightning Productions LLC	Danville	HENRY	01	\$495,000	0	1	1	EXISTING	Independent Artists, Writers, and Performers
La Unica Grocery and Restaurant Inc.	IOWA CITY	JOHNSON	01	\$190,000	5	0	0	NEW	Supermarkets and Other Grocery (except Convenience) Stores
All Seasons Automotive, LLC	North Liberty	JOHNSON	01	\$300,000	5	1	1	NEW	All Other Automotive Repair and Maintenance
InCourage Counseling PLLC	ALGONA	KOSSUTH	04	\$15,000	2	1	1	NEW	Offices of Mental Health Practitioners (except
LAKIN HOLDINGS, LLC	Codor Popido	LINN	02	\$150,000	4	1	1	NEW	Physicians) Finish Carpentry Contractors
PAA, LLC	Cedar Rapids MOUNT VERNON	LINN	02	\$869,600	4 0	40	40	NEW	Automobile and Other Motor Vehicle Merchant
PAA, LLC				\$609,600					Wholesalers
PAA, LLC	MOUNT VERNON	LINN	02	\$350,000	0	40	40	NEW	Automobile and Other Motor Vehicle Merchant Wholesalers
FULL BLOOM BREWHOUSE LLC	OSKALOOSA	MAHASKA	01	\$143,300	4	0	0	NEW	Drinking Places (Alcoholic Beverages)
SINCERA HEALTH, PLLC	PELLA	MARION	01	\$1,509,700	15	0	1	NEW	Offices of Physicians (except Mental Health Specialists)
HAMMES MANAGEMENT LLC	EDDYVILLE	MONROE	03	\$25,000	1	0	1	NEW	Other Management Consulting Services
Elevation Chiropractic LLC	ANKENY	POLK	03	\$80,000	1	1	1	NEW	Offices of Chiropractors
Native Real Estate, L.L.C.	Des Moines	POLK	03	\$1,310,400	4	8	8	EXISTING	Wholesale Trade Agents and Brokers
Orchid Fitness LLC	Des Moines	POLK	03	\$282,000	3	1	1	NEW	Fitness and Recreational Sports Centers
Mufasa Enterprises, LLC	Des Moines	POLK	03	\$187,000	3	20	23	EXISTING	Baked Goods Stores
Surface Improvements of Iowa LLC	Des Moines	POLK	03	\$150,000	3	1	1	NEW	N/A
Cha Cha's Hiland Bakery LLC	Des Moines	POLK	03	\$135,000	0	23	23	NEW	Baked Goods Stores
DEEZ PLUMBING SERVICES LLC	WEST DES MOINES	POLK	03	\$20,500	1	0	3	NEW	Plumbing, Heating, and Air-Conditioning Contractors
DEEZ PLUMBING SERVICES LLC	WEST DES MOINES	POLK	03	\$20,000	1	0	3	NEW	Plumbing, Heating, and Air-Conditioning Contractors
RJ's Indoor Golf and Bar, LLC	Sioux Center	SIOUX	04	\$1,145,000	10	0	0	NEW	Full-Service Restaurants
Es Tas Bar and Grill	AMES	STORY	04	\$150,000	4	25	47	EXISTING	Full-Service Restaurants
The Kindred House of Ottumwa, LLC	OTTUMWA	WAPELLO	03	\$500,000	19	2	2	NEW	Continuing Care Retirement Communities
STAPES CONCRETE AND GRADING LLC	SAINT CHARLES	WARREN	03	\$150,000	0	0	4	EXISTING	Site Preparation Contractors
Sioux City Taekwondo Academy, L.C.	SIOUX CITY	WOODBURY	04	\$76,000	2	4	4	EXISTING	All Other Amusement and Recreation Industries



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# Gent named president of Iowa Pork Producers Association

Washington County hog farmer Matt Gent is the new president of the Iowa Pork Producers Association (IPPA). He took over the role during the organization's annual meeting in Des Moines on Jan. 23. Gent and his family own a farrow-to-finish swine enterprise called Prairie Pork near Wellman. They also grow corn and soybeans.



## Staffing announcements at DMACC

Jessica Cole has been named the DMACC associate dean of public and community services. Shelby Hildreth has been named the new DMACC district-wide director of admissions and recruitment. Derrick Walker has been named director of METT (Manufacturing, Engineering, Trades and Transportation). Dr. Andrew Neuendorf has been named associate dean of METT. Dustyn Dickhaut has been named associate dean of health sciences.

## Meyocks names Kelly as operations leader

Meyocks, a branding and marketing agency, announced the promotion of Kendra Kelly to operations leader. Kelly, who has been with the agency since 2016, is now overseeing human resources, information technology, risk management and facilities, as well as continuing her agency branding and marketing responsibilities.



# West Des Moines Chamber promotes Florian to VP of membership, strategic marketing

The West Des Moines Chamber of Commerce announced the promotion of Tom Florian to vice president of membership and strategic marketing. Florian will expand his responsibilities in member acquisition and retention, developing sales strategies for the organization, and directing the West Des Moines Chamber's strategic marketing initiatives.

## Gagne retires from Bank Iowa

Bank Iowa Chief Lending Officer Bob Gagne retired from Bank Iowa on Feb. 2. Gagne led the \$2 billion community bank's lending team from the West Des Moines headquarters for more than six years.



# Mullenix named executive director of Des Moines Area MPO

Dylan Mullenix has been named executive director of the Des Moines Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). The MPO Policy Committee voted unanimously to extend a written offer to Mullenix, which he accepted. He started in the position Feb. 19. The employment contract will be executed at a special Policy Committee meeting scheduled for Thursday, March 7.



# Fareway announces \$100,000 grant for DMACC's transportation institute

Fareway Stores, Inc. presented a \$100,000 check to Rob Denson, DMACC's president, and Tara Connolly, executive director of the DMACC Foundation. The funds will be used to help build DMACC's new transportation institute that is currently under construction.

# Pace317 to open in Des Moines' East Village in spring

The Heart of America Group announced the upcoming launch of Pace317, a 4,000-square-foot boutique gym and fitness club in Des Moines' East Village. Located at 317 E. Sixth St., this new venture is slated to open its doors in the spring with what the company calls "modern design and equipment paired with a welcoming community."

## Twin Cedars Bank opens office in Des Moines

Twin Cedars Bank announced the opening of a new office in Des Moines, located at 2222 Grand Ave., Suite 200, on Feb 20. The Des Moines location is the fourth for Twin Cedars Bank with other offices in Bussey, Lovilia and Oskaloosa. ■

Send information on new hires, promotions, expansions, openings and other business news to editor@dmcityview.com.