

BUY YOUR TICKETS TODAY — CITYVIEW'S DOWNTOWN SUMMER STIR IS BACK!



JUNE 2026

CITYVIEW

Your city. Your style. Your news. We are Des Moines!

Through Iowa's lens

Keep Iowa Beautiful photography contest winners capture the beauty of the Hawkeye State.

FEATURE STORY
Fireworks, family
and farm memories

BUSINESS STORY
Commercial real
estate rebounds

BELLY UP TO...
The Atlas Room, WDM's
new speakeasy

Splash
seafood
bar & grill

FRESH FISH & FUN!



**Jethro's
BBQ**

Your Iowa Neighborhood Sports Bar

**EXPERIENCE JETHRO'S
WORLD FAMOUS BBQ**



Book your next event with us!

- Private Rooms
- Custom Menus
- Catering Services

IOWA'S PREMIER
SEAFOOD DESTINATION



50 Wings or 5 pounds of
Boneless Wings for \$50.
Available for a limited time.



THE WORLD FAMOUS
ADAM EMMENECKER!

TAKE THE CHALLENGE! WIN \$10,000!
*terms apply



SCAN THE QR CODE TO RECEIVE A FREE APPETIZER



303 Locust St, Downtown
Des Moines
515-244-5686
www.splash-seafood.com

SCAN THE QR CODE FOR FREE BONELESS WINGS

EIGHT LOCATIONS!

Jethro's BBQ Lakehouse
1425 SW Vintage Pkwy • Ankeny

Jethro's BBQ Smokehouse Steaks
2601 Adventureland Dr • Altoona

Jethro's BBQ All Stars Downtown
721 3rd St • Des Moines

Jethro's BBQ South Side
4337 Park Ave • Des Moines

Jethro's BBQ Jambalaya
9350 University Ave West Des Moines

Jethro's BBQ Bacon Bacon
1480 22nd St • West Des Moines

Jethro's BBQ Ames
1301 Buckeye Ave • Ames

Jethro's BBQ Iowa City
75 2nd St • Coralville

FROM THE PUBLISHER

Iowa in motion

Beauty is easy to find in Iowa, if you know where to look, and if you take the time to really see it.

That idea sits at the heart of the 16th Annual Keep Iowa Beautiful Photography Contest, where more than 500 entries once again captured the state in all its variety: sweeping landscapes, quiet wildlife moments, vibrant communities and the everyday details that often go unnoticed. The contest is, at its core, an invitation to slow down, look closer and tell Iowa's story through a lens.

This year's winning images reflect just how many versions of "Iowa beauty" exist. With support from Keep Iowa Beautiful and participating photographers, we are proud to share a selection of standout work in these pages.

Fireworks tradition and trouble

In another feature story, writer John Busbee takes us back to a very different kind of Iowa scene: a three-generation family farm where Fourth of July fireworks were both tradition and trouble. What begins as a childhood memory quickly becomes something richer — an exploration of risk, nostalgia and the way time reshapes what once felt wild and immediate. Sparklers, rockets, Black Cats, and improvised experiments all find their place in a story that is equal parts mischief and meaning, grounded in the kind of rural experience that lingers long after the smoke clears.

Commercial real estate shows signs of recovery

And looking at the present day, contributor Gracie Kayko walks us through a commercial real estate market in transition in this month's business journal feature. In Des Moines and beyond, the sector is settling into a "steady but not spectacular" rhythm. Lower interest rates are beginning to loosen activity, industrial space remains strong, and retail continues to surprise on the upside, particularly in growing western suburbs. Office space, meanwhile, is still searching for balance, creating both challenges and opportunity for those willing to reimagine older buildings. It's not a boom cycle, but it is movement. After recent volatility, that alone signals that stability is returning, piece by piece.

Taken together, these stories share a common thread: Iowa in motion. Sometimes that motion is captured in a single photograph. Sometimes it is remembered in the crackle of fireworks on a summer night. And sometimes it is measured in the slow, steady recalibration of a market finding its footing again.

Different lenses. Same place. Still unfolding. Still worth watching. As always, I thank you for reading. ■

Shane Goodman

Editor and Publisher
CITYVIEW

shane@dmcityview.com
515-953-4822, ext. 305
www.dmcityview.com



VALLEY JUNCTION
Farmers Market
Thursdays 4-8pm
through September
PRESENTED BY GFiber

MUSIC IN THE JUNCTION
Every Thursday 5-8:30pm
See our website for full list!

6/4 The People's Band	8/6 Gallivant
6/11 Decoy Trio	8/13 Faculty Lounge
6/18 Kinda Petty Band	8/20 English
6/25 TBD	8/27 Randy Burk & the Prisoners
7/2 Recoil	9/3 Bittersweet Nation
7/9 Sons of Gladys Kravitz	9/10 Cedar Falls Rock & Roll Revue
7/16 Dick Danger	9/17 Gut Feeling
7/23 The Barrelhouse Rockets	9/24 Jason Wells Band
7/30 The Get Down	

PRESENTED BY West Bank

UPCOMING SPECIAL EVENTS

Valley Junction Pride

Thursday, June 28 | 10am – 4pm

Valley Junction Vintage, Thrifted & Handmade

Sunday, Sept. 9 | 10am – 4pm



HISTORIC VALLEY JUNCTION FOUNDATION

137 5th Street, West Des Moines, IA 50265 (515) 222-3642
valleyjunction.com HistoricValleyJunction @valleyjunction

JAZZ IN JULY

FREE
ADMISSION

AT HOYT SHERMAN PLACE

JULY
7

5:30 PM: Creative Music Studio
6:30 PM: NOLA Jazz Band

JULY
14

5:30 PM: CJC Youth Group
6:30 PM: The Mangione Collective

JULY
21

5:30 PM: Valley High School Jazz Combo
6:30 PM: Carson Parker Quartet

JULY
28

5:30 PM: Phillips, Towne, and
D'Angelo Organ Trio
7:30 PM: The Robert Espe Big Band



1501 WOODLAND AVE, DES MOINES
hoyshterman.org • 515-244-0507

Principal® Foundation

CITYVIEW

Your city. Your style. Your news. We are Des Moines!

EDITOR / PUBLISHER

Shane Goodman

ADVERTISING SALES MANAGER

Aaron Burns

ADVERTISING DIRECTOR

Jolene Goodman

ACCOUNT EXECUTIVES

Mary Fowler
Allyssa Ertz

STAFF WRITER

Cyote Williams

DESIGN MANAGER

Celeste Tilton

EDITORIAL CONTRIBUTORS

Douglas Burns
John Busbee
Kristian Day
Jim Duncan
Randy Evans
Rachel Harrington
Gracie Kayko
Tammy Pearson
David Rowley
Ashley Rullestad
Joe Weeg
Jackie Wilson

ADVERTISING DESIGNERS

Jayde Vogeler
Nick Ruiz

DIGITAL MANAGER

Beckham Miller

BUSINESS OFFICE MANAGER

Brent Antisdell

DISTRIBUTION MANAGER

Jim Jacobsen



Big Green Umbrella Media
8101 Birchwood Court, Suite D, Johnston, Iowa 50131
PHONE: 515-953-4822 **FAX:** 515-953-1394
www.dmcityview.com • editor@dmcityview.com

CITYVIEW is delivered throughout central Iowa to more than 600 locations every month. To request delivery of CITYVIEW to your business, or to inquire about our distribution services, call 515-953-4822, ext. 304. Annual mailed subscriptions are available by mail at a rate of 12 issues for \$29. CITYVIEW is a monthly magazine published by Big Green Umbrella Media Inc., an Iowa corporation. Contents 2026 Big Green Umbrella Media, Inc. All rights reserved. Nothing may be reprinted in whole or in part without permission of the publisher. First copy of CITYVIEW is free at the newsstand. Subsequent copies are \$5 each. Copies of past issues, as available, may be purchased for \$5 each (plus shipping if required) from the CITYVIEW offices. One copy per reader, please. It is unlawful to remove copies in bulk; violators will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. Editorial Policies: Contact the publisher for permission to reprint articles, cartoons or any other portions of the paper. CITYVIEW is not responsible for unsolicited manuscripts. All letters received become the property of the publisher. We reserve the right to print letters in condensed form and to edit them for libel.



TO SUBSCRIBE:

SCAN HERE



**\$29 per year
for 12 issues
mailed**

Scan the QR code, mail in this form, call (515) 953-4822 x316, or online at www.dmcityview.com.

YES!

Send me an annual subscription (12 issues) for \$29. My payment is as follows:

Check enclosed or Credit card

Full name _____

Address _____ City/State/Zip _____

Card # _____ Exp. 3 digit code _____

Phone # _____ Email _____

Signature _____

CITYVIEW

8101 Birchwood Court, Suite D
Johnston, Iowa 50131

How Sweet

it is to be loved by you

Complete the
dessert table with
a donut wall



Let us help make your day special.

515.282.4059

www.ChaChasHilandBakery.com
3615 6th Avenue | Des Moines

MON - WED: 5AM - 3PM | THUR - FRI: 5AM - 9PM | SAT: 6AM - 9PM | SUN: 7AM - 3PM



IOWA CUBS JUNE 2026



PROMOTIONAL CALENDAR

PURCHASE TICKETS TO PRINCIPAL PARK AT IOWACUBS.COM!



JUNE 2
ALS NIGHT



JUNE 4
JONATHON LONG
T-SHIRT GIVEAWAY



JUNE 5
STAR WARS NIGHT



JUNE 6
DRONE SHOW



JUNE 7
SENSORY
FRIENDLY DAY



JUNE 18
ASL NIGHT + FIRST
RESPONDERS NIGHT



JUNE 19
PRIDE NIGHT +
JUNETEENTH



JUNE 21
FATHER'S DAY
+ HERO DAY



JUNE 23
DOG DAY



JUNE 25
CITIZENSHIP CEREMONY
+ IOWA OAKS



JUNE 26
MARGARITAVILLE NIGHT
+ STRAW HAT GIVEAWAY



JUNE 27
2016 WORLD SERIES 10TH
ANNIVERSARY + TROPHY GIVEAWAY

CONTENTS

CITYVIEW

JUNE 2026

Through Iowa's lens

Keep Iowa Beautiful photography contest winners capture the beauty of the Hawkeye State.



FEATURE

26

THROUGH IOWA'S LENS

Keep Iowa Beautiful photography contest winners capture the beauty of the Hawkeye State.

ON THE COVER: "Heaven With a Zip Code"
by Scott Hoag of DeWitt.

LET'S CONNECT

CITYVIEW

DIGITALLY DELIVERED
TO YOUR INBOX.



SUBSCRIBE FOR FREE!

FEATURES

- 18 COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE REBOUNDS**
Industrial demand remains strong, office properties see renewed value-add investment, and retail growth continues in western suburbs as developers and buyers regain confidence.
- 26 THROUGH IOWA'S LENS**
Keep Iowa Beautiful photography contest winners capture the beauty of the Hawkeye State.
- 48 FIREWORKS, FAMILY AND FARM MEMORIES**
Annual trip to Missouri for illegal fireworks became a cherished Independence Day tradition filled with explosions, laughter and nostalgia.

NEWS & COMMENTARY

- 10 STRAY THOUGHTS**
This occurs when officials fail to use their eyes and ears
- 12 CIVIC SKINNY**
Register woes. Congressional stock trades. AI legislation. Iowa's most common criminal offenses. And Ankeny is a top-5 place to live.
- 14 POLITICAL MERCURY**
WDM educators rally against Hinson ahead of Iowa Senate race

EAT & DRINK

- 44 BELLY UP TO:**
Hidden in plain sight
- 46 FOOD DUDE**
Gateway Market Café — a diner for the 21st century
- 47 LUNCH WITH...**
Siricasso at Baja Cocina

SPECIAL SECTIONS

- 34 PET GUIDE**
- 38 CITYVIEW'S DOWNTOWN SUMMER STIR BAR CRAWL**
Buy your tickets today!
- 54 FATHER'S DAY GIFT GUIDE**

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

- 37 BOOK REVIEWS**
"The Girl With A Thousand Faces" and "The Story of Birds: A New History from Their Dinosaur Origins to the Present"
- 58 FILM REVIEWS**
"Mortal Kombat II" delivers button-mashing delight that will leave movie-goers feeling "toasty!"
- 59 CENTER STAGE**
Let your Spidey sense tingle
- 60 ART NEWS**
Litigations and festivities
- 61 IOWA ARTIST**
Headed for tone, built for sound
- 71 CARS IN THE CITY**
2026 Volvo XC90 plug-in hybrid delivers luxury, power and fuel savings

MUSIC

- 62 SOUND CIRCUIT**
Fastball finds a second wind as nostalgia fuels new popularity
- 62 SOUND ADVICE**
Jupiter String Quartet, Brooke Eden, Butt Toot King and more

PERSONALITIES

- 53 JOE'S NEIGHBORHOOD**
One true non-AI sentence for Father's Day
- 64 PEOPLE & PETS**
Second careers
- 65 DES MOINES FORGOTTEN**
Before the Saddle, there was Country Cove
- 70 YOUR NEIGHBORS**
Iowa Genealogical Society silently serves generational knowledge
- 72 COLLECTIONS & HOBBIES**
Fuentes is Smashing the competition
- 73 WALKS OF LIFE**
Fresh finds



Petals Pistons

June 24, 2026 • 6 PM

Start at Luther Park Community
End at Captain Roy's for an Evening Event

For Any Questions or to RSVP Contact:

515-645-2091

mfritz@lutherparkcommunity.org



SCAN ME



**MOVE IN
SPECIAL**

Pay your deposit and enjoy your

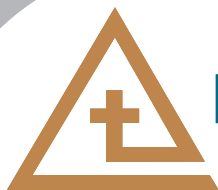
**FIRST MONTH
RENT FREE**

with no community buy-in fee.

Find your **HOME.**
Love your **COMMUNITY.**

55+ INDEPENDENT LIVING

Luther Park Apartments offer independent living for adults 55 and older who want comfort, connection, and a maintenance-free lifestyle. We provide security, convenience, and a variety of social and recreational opportunities.



**LUTHER PARK
COMMUNITY**

lutherparkcommunity.org

IT'S THE JOURNEY, NOT THE DESTINATION.

READY FOR A TOUR?

HAVE QUESTIONS?

Contact us today! 515-229-6469

Luther Park Apartments | 2824 E. 16th St., Des Moines

YOU DIDN'T JUST SEE IT.



YOU WENT AND GOT IT.

**95% of CITYVIEW magazines
are picked up every single month.**

Not delivered through the mail. Not left on your doorstep.
Readers are seeking us out.



Your business belongs exactly
where you're reading this.

LET'S GET IN CONTACT.

CITYVIEW

Your city. Your style. Your news. We are Des Moines!

www.dmcityview.com 515-953-4822

ASK CITYVIEW

By CITYVIEW staff

Ask CITYVIEW anything by emailing editor@dmcityview.com.

Q. I am 100% certain I attended a Freddie King concert in the summer of 1976 in a small bar near Drake University. Can any CITYVIEW reader confirm King's 1976 Des Moines appearance?

A. We are not sure if our readers can confirm it, but we sent ourselves down the rabbit hole looking for evidence of the late blues guitarist's Des Moines appearance. King notably played at the Iowa State Fairgrounds on June 17, 1972, alongside the Leon Russell Group and J.J. Cale. But that is neither 1976 nor near Drake University.

Concertarchives.org shows King was playing concerts in March at Huntington Beach, California, and the next concert he played was in Mansfield Center, Connecticut, in July. So,

it would make sense that King was traveling through the middle of the country during the summer to get from one side to the other.

We then went to newspapers.com, another archive, and searched King's name alongside Des Moines during the summer months of 1976. It pulled up an advertisement placed in The Des Moines Register on May 28, 1976, for a concert at Jolly's Place on 32nd Street and Forest Avenue, placing it squarely in Dogtown. Jolly's closed sometime in the 1970s, shortly thereafter, and, potentially, for good reason, as Register writer Robert Kolarik wrote when talking about the opening of its replacement, the Copper Dollar:

"Whenever the conversation turned to 'What's your favorite bar?' a stated preference for Jolly's was sure to provoke shocked looks and cries of 'You go there?' Popular wisdom said that by going into Jolly's, you took your life in your hands."

We also asked Scott Allen from the Central Iowa Blues Society if he knew of any King performances in Des Moines. Our original hunch was that he played at So's Your Mother, a well-known music venue, also in the Drake Area, which was popular in the 1970s and 1980s. Allen says he recalls King playing there as well. We could not find any evidence to corroborate the claims, but it would make sense that if King stopped to play a night at Jolly's, he likely made an appearance at So's Your Mother as well. If you have any record of the concert, feel free to share it with us at editor@dmcityview.com. ■



YOUR VIEW

Join the conversation!

Do you have a comment or photo you'd like to share with readers of CITYVIEW through this page? Use the hashtag #dmcityview on Facebook, Instagram or Twitter — or email editor@dmcityview.com.

FACEBOOK COMMENTS



cityview magazine
(comments unedited)

CITYVIEW magazine: Who was the best coach, of any sport, in the history of Iowa State University?

Dennis Frank: Matt Campbell and TJ Otzelberger. Johnny Orr honorable mention

Chuck Utech: Starts with Bill Bergan. What he did was amazing

Ken Landgrebe: Probably Matt Campbell

Eric Craver: Vivian Stringer put Iowa women's BB on the map and paved the way for coaches like Bluder and players like Clark. The same could be said for Hayden Fry after the 60s and 70s left the football program decimated.

Anthony San: Bobby Douglas

Michael Nesbit: Larry Eustachy

Betsy Freese: Harold Nichols, wrestling

Michael Roberts: Tim Floyd could of won Championships at Iowa State had he stayed.

Tim Goodrich: Johnny Orr

Diane Gillespie Nicholson: Johnny Orr

Jill Klinkefus Clapper: Johnny Orr, men's basketball

Tanner Saltzman: Apartment, loft, restaurants, gift shops, event centers. One of the biggest issues is location. But if people lived there it could generate a guaranteed income and having business could be a self cycling convenience.

Dan Frye: Turn it into a giant bank, one bank to rule them all!

Karsten Lunde: Just let nature reclaim it?

Kris Greenslit: First thing we do is absolutely shut off the Internet. Second, rent out the spaces to retailers that sell products to consumers and make those "shops" so that everyone can gather at one location and shop for the things they need/want. We could call this place a "shopping mall." It would be like Amazon online but in real life. Crazy concept, I know.

Vivian Masters: Homeless shelter

Charlie Formaro: Turn it into an extreme indoor sports park!

Michael Nesbit: Sell it to DMACC or Des Moines Christian High School or give it ti Valley High School. Nothing fails as much as Government. Total unchecked failure

Stephanie Cleaver: Homeless housing

Trudy Easley: We need an ice hockey rink these kids who want and are playing needs more ice rinks since they closed another rink down .. let's help them out !!

Jim Zupan: Put a trailer court in there

Alisha Kale: it has a redevelopment plan - i would stick with the plan since it's in motion.

Christine Maske: A full-time, year round Halloween Express

Jimbo Copic: A marijuana dispensary would be great

Kris Richard: Indoor water park with big slides, hotel attached. A couple restaurants with nice outdoor patios. There is no place in central iowa to swim and enjoy summer like activities in the winter. Winter can be long in Iowa. Add indoor soccer field, a large indoor play area. Make it a destination! For both kids and adults

Steve Ratt Ratcliff: I own Ratt's Underground Record's in Merle hay mall. don't destroy Valley West Mall. It's the coolest mall in Des Moines.

Jeff Ohrtman: It would make a great soccer stadium

Becci Sodemann Hall: Retirement community... it's a perfect location

Van Holmgren: Let actually talented and unique artists take it over and turn it into a visual & sensory experience. Like Meow Wolf.

Sara Langholz Rivas: Move all the smoke shops there

CITYVIEW magazine: What do you think should be done to redevelop Valley West Mall?

Lance Brandt: The redevelopment plan per Mayor Russ Trimble

Dave Mable: Replace it with what replaced it... an Amazon warehouse.

Jesse Aldridge: Anything not involving public funds, tax breaks, and grants etc.

Doug Bucklin: Affordable housing and a homeless shelter.

Brian Pitt McCleary: Turn it into another storage facility.

The Abandoned Iowa Project: Abandon it.

Hal Jasa: Retirement community with shops, restaurants etc.

Yolanda Jackson: On the younkens side it would be indoor all year round swimming and float pool restaurant space, the upper floors would be town houses, the bottom would be shops, library, fitness center, event space. On the van maur side I would turn it into an indoor all year around park for kids that featured parent section for adult games like pickle ball. It does not need to be torn down to be great. I would also leave Jc pennys there!

Paddie La Bruyere': Bulldoze it. Build over priced "condos" (aka apartments).

Kendall Owen: Amazon data server inside, car lot outside—already has power and water and such

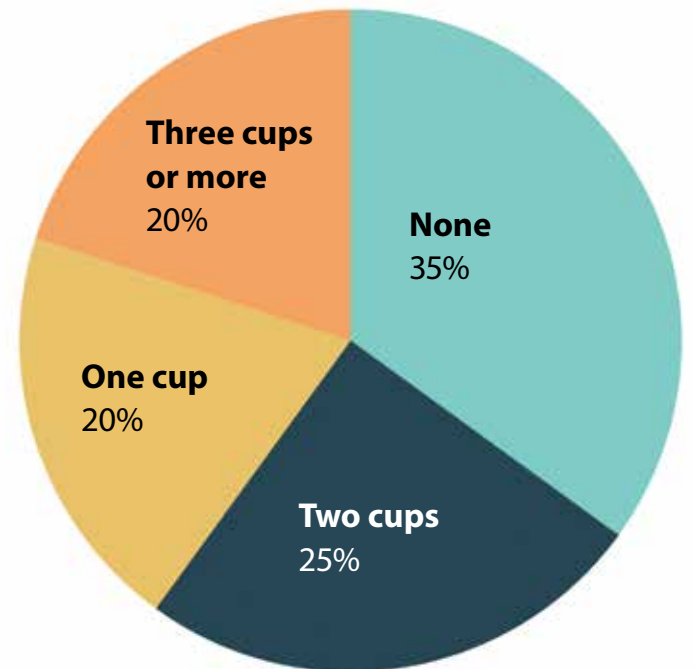
Wendy Marckmann: Something similar to prairie trail in ankeny.

POLL POSITION

Results from last month's poll at www.dmcityview.com



How much coffee do you drink daily?



RETWEETS

(comments unedited)

@ThrillaRilla369: I bet y'all ain't laughing at the Amish anymore.. They clickity clackin right past the gas station.

@nchls_b: "If all your friends jump off a cliff would you do it too" if they did it without me I'd actually be really upset, like how did you plan this? Is there a group chat without me? I could have brought snacks for the experience or something idk

@iroasmas: playing hide-and-seek with 3yo son. just the two of us. he wants to hide together. we are hiding together. we are in the closet. it's perfectly dark. we're very cramped. there is no one looking for us. i am trying to explain this. he is laughing uncontrollably.

@SmasherIsEma: sugar daddy: I'm gonna spoil you salt daddy: I'm gonna preserve you

@jdpickell: Just now watching Project Hail Mary. About 40 minutes in. Haven't seen a forward pass yet.

@Fredward3948576: The only reason I use my turn signal is because I like the sound it makes

@seattleiminyou: Making the Olive Garden waiter shred the cheese into my purse so I can have some for later

@VibesBummer: The cashier was like "is this a sweet onion?" and I was like well yeah I picked it out, I'm pretty happy with it. ■

STRAY THOUGHTS

BY RANDY EVANS

This occurs when officials fail to use their eyes and ears

At the risk of blurring the increasingly fuzzy line between church and state, here is a Gospel reading for public employees and elected officials, according to Matthew:

“But blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear.”

Unfortunately, it does not take much looking these days to see government leaders bedeviled by lousy optics and burdened by tone deafness. Perhaps it is a lack vision or just a refusal to listen.

Either way, these officials are doing and saying things that leave the taxpayers who pay their salaries perplexed.

These episodes extend beyond mere public-relations blunders as government leaders exhibit astonishing miscalculations.

One what-in-the-world-were-they-thinking example involves the 515 Run Club, a loosely organized Des Moines group that gathers to jog, socialize and enjoy the outdoors.

Its organizers told The Des Moines Register that city officials demanded they pay \$4,300 in permit fees to use the Gray’s Lake and adjoining recreational trails. Not content with their demand that the 515 runners pay a use tax, city officials warned that police could get involved if the club refuses to pay.

Unlike the Des Moines Farmers Market, the Iowa State Fair parade or RAGBRAI, events that close streets and require police at key intersections, the 515 runners do not disrupt drivers or impede emergency vehicles.

And the club is not some commercial endeavor. Anyone can join. There are no dues, no sponsors, no application process or membership roster. The group’s two founders simply post social-media notices announcing when and where they plan to run next. Anyone interested can show up and participate.

But Ian Knutson, recreation supervisor for the city parks department, said officials classify the club as an organized event that affects normal park use. Therefore, runners must prepay the city’s “Trail Event Use Fee.”

Pay no attention that Des Moines has invested millions building recreational trails that divert cyclists, skaters, runners and walkers to safe places

away from traffic, or that the city invests millions more in loans and grants to developers building hotels, businesses, housing and athletic facilities as part of a broader strategy to make Des Moines more appealing.

The parks and trails are open to anyone, free of charge. That is where the bad optics come into view.

If several dozen of your friends and neighbors gather at Gray’s Lake after spreading the word through text messages or social media, they are doing exactly what the trails and parks were designed for.

But if several dozen 515 faithful show up at a preannounced time, they risk running afoul of the parks department, and possibly the police. (Forgive the cheap play on words.)

No matter how city leaders may wish to frame it, the city’s view looks neither welcoming nor wise.

Here is another example of political tone deafness.

Recently, Gov. Kim Reynolds announced that the chief executive of the Iowa Public Employees’ Retirement System, the massive pension fund known as IPERS, resigned one month after he was placed on paid administrative leave.

Reynolds also disclosed that the chief benefits officer for IPERS had been fired following a month-long investigation.

Keep in mind that it was Reynolds who hired CEO Gregory Samorajski in 2020. Then benefits officer Steven Herbert joined the agency in March 2025, having been hired by Samorajski.

The governor offered no explanation of the investigation’s findings or why Samorajski quit and Herbert was fired.

Days earlier, however, The Des Moines Register reported the Kentucky Public Pensions Authority had fired Herbert from his job as its chief investments officer in 2022. According to the news report, Herbert faced allegations that he was difficult to work with, failed to follow instructions and repeatedly clashed with the pension authority’s attorney.

Herbert later sued Kentucky, claiming he was fired for trying to expose financial improprieties. A judge dismissed that lawsuit four months before Herbert was hired by IPERS.

Here again, the optics are hard for most of us to miss.

Gov. Reynolds and other Republican leaders rightly criticized the Des Moines school board last year for inadequately investigating Ian Roberts before hiring him as superintendent of Des Moines Public Schools.

After Roberts was arrested on federal immigration charges and questions surfaced about his falsified academic credentials, Reynolds said the school board’s lack of due diligence amounted to negligence and showed why stronger background checks are needed.

This spring, those concerns prompted the Iowa Legislature to change government hiring laws. New public employees must be screened through the federal E-Verify system to confirm prospective workers’ immigration status.

That history matters because of the workplace concerns surrounding Herbert’s employment by Kentucky state government and his relationship as a former colleague of Samorajski’s.

IPERS officials did not need E-Verify to uncover those concerns. A simple Google search would have raised red flags about Herbert — red flags Iowa officials apparently failed to see.

Maybe the two episodes discussed here really are nothing more than bureaucratic blind spots and clumsy judgment calls. One hopes so.

If public officials can plainly see warning signs, hear legitimate concerns and still press ahead as though neither exists, the problem becomes something more troubling — a government culture that mistakes accountability for inconvenience and public skepticism for nuisance.

In moments like these, taxpayers may recall Matthew’s words from long ago and may cling to a remarkably simple expectation: that the people entrusted with public authority will keep their eyes open, their ears attentive and their judgment grounded in common sense. ■

Randy Evans can be reached at DMRevs2810@gmail.com.





REPEATEDLY RECOGNIZED FOR A
SUPERIOR SALES AND SERVICE EXPERIENCE
**AMERICAN VALUE.
FOR AMERICAN VALUES.**



STIVERS EMPLOYEE PRICING PLUS
New 2025 & 2026 Ford Bronco
Up to **\$8,000.00 OFF**



**70
AVAILABLE**

*Discount from MSRP. B54618.
All rebates to dealer. Expires 7-6-26.

We'll beat your best price
on a set of four tires,

**PLUS GET A \$130 REBATE
ON SELECT BRANDS.**

Submit rebate online or by mail.



See a Quick Lane advisor for complete offer details. Offer valid 5/1/26-7/6/26.

STIVERS EMPLOYEE PRICING PLUS
New 2026 Ford Explorer
Up to **\$7,000.00 OFF**



**50
AVAILABLE**

*Discount from MSRP. I62804.
All rebates to dealer. Expires 7-6-26.

STIVERS EMPLOYEE PRICING PLUS
New 2026 Ford Expedition
Up to **\$10,000.00 OFF**



**30
IN-STOCK**

*Discount from MSRP. N63116.
All rebates to dealer. Expires 7-6-26.

STIVERS EMPLOYEE PRICING PLUS
New 2025 & 2026 Ford F-150
Up to **\$20,000.00 OFF**



**152
AVAILABLE**

*Maximum discount from top MSRP before
all discounts. K53857.
All rebates to dealer. Expires 7-6-26.



ON THE WAUKEE SIDE OF WEST DES MOINES



Scott Politte, President
Stivers Ford Lincoln of Iowa

Iowa's #1 Ford LINCOLN Dealer*
STIVERSFORDIA.COM 515 987 3697



CIVIC SKINNY

BY CITYVIEW STAFF

Register woes. Congressional stock trades. AI legislation. Iowa's most common criminal offenses. And Ankeny is a top-5 place to live.

The Des Moines Register's latest subscription numbers are in, and they are not pretty. The bad news is not just for the printed editions, but let's start there.

According to a report from Alliance for Audited Media, for the six months ending March 31, 2026, the **Sunday Register** now has 19,571 subscribers, which includes single copy sales and hotel room/lobby copies. The Monday-Friday average for the daily **Des Moines Register** now totals 12,755 copies and also includes single copy sales and hotel room/lobby copies.

But it is all going to their digital copies, right? Not exactly.

Total average circulation for the digital replica is 6,664 copies for Sunday and 7,284 copies on average Monday through Friday. All total, that adds up to 26,235 for the Sunday Register and 20,039 for the Monday through Friday average. That's a far cry — with lots of tears from readers, advertisers and Register employees — from the days of 500,000 subscribers.

Of note, if you were to buy a single copy of the Register at newsstands during the week, it would run you \$3.49, and a weekend copy would cost \$4.49. ...

Calls for Congressional stock trading bans have grown within recent months, and

with **President Trump** in the news for his recently revealed 3,600 stock trades in the first quarter of this year, averaging nearly 58 trades for every U.S. trading day, we decided to look into the stock portfolios of Iowa's federally elected officials to see if they were acting similarly to the President and other members of Congress.

We looked at unusualwhales.com, a real-time stock market data tool for this information. Iowans will be pleased to hear that, for the most part, their federally elected representatives were not involved in the stock market. No trades were found for **Chuck Grassley, Joni Ernst, Mariannette Miller Meeks, Zach Nunn** or **Randy Feenstra**. That does leave one of our representatives: **Ashley Hinson**.

Hinson, who is running to replace **Joni Ernst** in the U.S. Senate, posted an article to her official campaign website on May 20, stating that no member of congress should be trading on prediction markets. "That's why I am pushing to stop Members of Congress from trading individual stocks (my husband and I sold our publicly traded individual stocks shortly after I began serving in Congress and do not trade stocks) and why I'm working to end all forms of corrupt insider trading in Washington, D.C."

It's true that shortly after Hinson was elected in 2021, she sold off her stocks in

BUSINESS FINANCIALS MADE SIMPLE

Stay organized, save time, and keep your business running smoothly with reliable financial support from a local team you can trust.

- Payroll services
- Financial reporting
- Monthly and Cleanup Bookkeeping
- Small business support & more

*Let's grow your business together
Schedule a free consultation today!*

 **Ann M. Hartz CPA**
AND ASSOCIATES
CPADesMoines.com

7109 Hickman Rd., Urbandale (515) 259-7779



Ann M. Hartz
34 years experience



CIVIC SKINNY CONT...

March of 2021, but not without making a pretty penny in the process. Records on Unusual Whales show that Hinson made 15 trades in March of 2021, including on companies Amazon, Tesla and Alibaba. Quiverquant.com, another stock trading website, shows that Hinson's net worth increased from \$1.33 million in 2020 to \$5.06 million in 2025. Quiver Quantitative says Hinson has approximately \$396,400 invested in publicly traded assets, that appear to be tied to various IRAs and retirement funds.

Other net worths of Iowa's elected officials, according to the site, are \$6.21 million for **Chuck Grassley**, \$1.78 million for **Mariannette Miller-Meeks**, \$1.4 million for **Zach Nunn**, \$827,000 for **Joni Ernst** and \$89,000 for **Randy Feenstra**. ...

This time last year, we looked at some of the **artificial intelligence-related bills** that were moving through the Iowa Legislature. AI continues to become a hot button topic, and with central Iowa continuing to become a hotbed for the data centers that power AI, we decided to take another look as lawmakers finished the 91st general assembly.

We found 24 bills that included "artificial intelligence" within them. Here are some of the more interesting ones:

HF 2150 states that material generated with AI designed for or against political campaigns, or, for or against ballot measures, must contain a disclosure that it was generated with AI, proposed by **Aime Wichtendahl** (D).

HF 2204 proposes requirements for chatbot deployers, including protocols, limitations on data collection, requirements for minors interacting with AI companions and therapeutic chatbots, and provides civil and punitive penalties for violating the requirements, also proposed by Wichtendahl (D).

Similar to HF 2204, **HF2507** establishes requirements and guidelines for conversational AI services and provides civil penalties for them. Among some of the requirements, it would require conversational AI to disclose to minors that it is artificial intelligence once every three hours of continuous conversation, prevent AI from depicting sexually explicit material, sexually objectifying minors, and that conversational AI would not be allowed to claim it's sentient or human or simulate emotional dependence on minors. Violators would be subject to a maximum of a \$500,000 penalty. This was proposed by the committee for health and human services.

HF2469 would prohibit the use of an automated decision-making system to alter the price of a product or service for a specific individual based on surveillance data. This is what has become known as surveillance pricing. It was proposed by **Larry McBurney** (D).

SF2414 is an act relating to automated decision systems used by employers. Employers need to provide a written notice that an automated decision system is in use for employment-related decisions, or if an employee will foreseeably be directly affected by it. It also requires employers to notify applicants for jobs if it is using automation when making hiring decisions, and it requires humans to review automated decisions based on discipline or termination, among other requirements. This was proposed by **Liz Bennett** (D). ...

According to the Iowa Legislatures website, these AI related bills only went as far as

being introduced. Unrelated, there are currently 11 more planned data centers in Iowa in addition to the 10 that are currently operating. ...

U.S. News and World Report released its rankings for the 250 best cities to live in the U.S., and six Iowa cities made the cut with one landing in the top five. **Ankeny** was ranked the fourth-best city to live in, receiving a 7.1 overall score, just behind first-place Carmel, Indiana, which received a 7.2. Ankeny was also ranked the second-best small city to live in. Factors that go into the ranking are cost of living, commute times, age distribution/marital status and the job market.

The other five Iowa cities to make the list were **West Des Moines**, 40th, **Cedar Rapids** (136th), **Council Bluffs** (160th), **Dubuque** (208th) and **Sioux City** (219th). ...

Ever wonder what Iowa's criminals specialize in? Thanks to an analysis of 2024 FBI data by the Injury Lawyer Team (using the Bureau of Justice Statistics' crime tracker), we now have the greatest hits list. And the winner is... **simple assault**, topping the charts with 17,395 incidents. Coming in strong at No. 2: drug or narcotics violations (15,209), followed by property destruction and vandalism (13,339).

The rest of the lineup:

- **Shoplifting:** 11,273
- **Other larceny:** 9,552
- **Drug equipment violations:** 8,667
- **Burglary/breaking and entering:** 6,101
- **Intimidation:** 5,729
- **Aggravated assault:** 5,266
- **Theft from motor vehicles:** 4,584

Nationally, simple assault also takes the crown, and it's the same story in Illinois, Missouri, and South Dakota. The one bit of sunshine? Crime in Iowa actually dropped 7.3% from 2023 to 2024. ■

Your Port for Food, Fun & Friends!

Stop in today to try a new favorite!



Taco Flatbread



Chicken Salad Wrap



Anchors Away

Eatery and Pub

FULL BAR AVAILABLE!
Enjoy a craft beer or cocktail



Scan to view our menu and specials

106 SW State St., Suite 100, Ankeny • 515-513-0391

SPECIAL! PREVENTATIVE QUARTERLY SPRAY

NO CONTRACTS

\$49⁹⁹



NO SALES

+tax
Normally \$70

NO UPSELLING



JK BUG SPRAY

PEST MANAGEMENT

www.jkbugspray.com

CALL OR TEXT TODAY!

515-344-5919

Buy one 1/4 pound BACON CHEESE DELUXE and medium soft drink and get one 1/4 pound BACON CHEESE DELUXE FREE!





BURGERS • FRIES • COLA

855 E. Hickman Road, Waukee • 6135 Mills Civic Pkwy, West Des Moines • 3815 14th Street, Des Moines
4820 SE 14th Street, Des Moines • 4500 Fleur Drive, Des Moines • 251 NE Cypress Drive, Grimes
2205 SE Delaware Avenue, Ankeny • 3635 8th Street SW, Altoona • 4565 86th Street, Urbandale
1105 73rd Street, Windsor Heights • 5340 Buffalo Ridge Drive NE, Cedar Rapids



Limit one per person. Not valid with any other offer. Expires 6/30/26

WWW.B-BOPS.COM

WDM educators rally against Hinson ahead of Iowa Senate race

New advocacy group Iowans for Decency criticizes the congresswoman's record and mobilizes opposition before the general election.

Dozens of West Des Moines educators delivered a pointed rebuke of U.S. Rep. Ashley Hinson, a Valley High School alumna, during a May 16 rally that served as both a public condemnation of her record and a call to action ahead of Iowa's closely watched U.S. Senate race.

The event, organized by the newly formed advocacy group Iowans for Decency, drew nearly 250 people to the Iowa State Capitol rotunda. Speakers criticized Hinson's voting record and public comments while promoting a letter to the eastern Iowa congresswoman published as a paid advertisement in *The Des Moines Register*. Organizers also signed up supporters and raised money ahead of the November general election.

Hinson is the heavy favorite to win the Republican nomination for the U.S. Senate on June 2. State Rep. Josh Turek of Council Bluffs and State Sen. Zach Wahls of Coralville are competing in the Democratic primary. Incumbent U.S. Sen. Joni Ernst is not seeking a third term.

Iowans for Decency has not endorsed a candidate in either primary and instead is focusing its efforts on opposing Hinson in the general election.

"We are saddened and disappointed by your votes, loyalties and words as a U.S. congresswoman," retired Valley High School teacher Nick Nelsen said while reading from the group's letter. "You are failing your state and country. Your actions are antithetical to good and just decency."

Most attendees at the group's public launch identified as Democrats, though Political Mercury also spoke with independents and Republicans at the event.

Speakers criticized Hinson for supporting what they described as President Donald Trump's "reckless" tariffs, backing a "costly and unprovoked" war with Iran, aligning herself with ICE during deadly encounters involving citizens, and failing to address what they called corruption within the Trump administration.

Dr. Erika Cook, a former West Des Moines administrator and former state chief academic officer, focused her remarks on cuts to USAID and the Trump administration's approach to immigration enforcement.

"As a registered independent who has voted for



West Des Moines educators take to the steps inside the State Capitol to deliver messages to Congresswoman Ashley Hinson, a Valley High School alum. Photo courtesy of Iowans For Decency

both parties, and as someone who has worked on both sides of the political aisle, now isn't about liberal or conservative policies, but about right or wrong," Cook said.

After reading portions of the letter and delivering remarks, teachers displayed signs criticizing Hinson, including: "Why don't you want to be kind and just?" "Why aren't you fiscally responsible?" and "Why are you afraid of the truth?"

One of the group's founding organizers, filmmaker and author Peter Hedges, a 1980 Valley High School graduate who now lives in Brooklyn, New York, said the event marked an unusual public break between educators and a former student.

"One of the beauties of the name of our group is it insists that we be worthy of the name," Hedges said in an interview. "When it became clear that we had this groundswell of teachers join our group — and that they, to a person, felt so deeply offended by the policies

and efforts of Ashley Hinson — the first thing they said was, 'But we don't want to attack her personally.'"

Hedges said the group aims to build a statewide coalition to block Hinson's election.

"It's wide open," Hedges said. "We have new members who come from Carroll, Decorah. Other smaller towns are starting to join our group."

Hedges added: "I am just moved by how many people in Iowa really care about the future and are ready to fight for a better one."

Hinson graduated from Valley High School in 2001 before attending the University of Southern California. She later worked as a journalist in Cedar Rapids, served in the Iowa Legislature and was elected to Congress. Hinson, 42, lives in Marion. ■

Douglas Burns of Carroll is fourth-generation journalist and founder of Mercury Boost, a marketing and public relations company.





THIS IS HARD.

BEING A MOM IS TOUGH— BUT SO ARE YOU.

If you're coping by using alcohol or drugs to cope with stress, you're not alone. Support is available so you can be the strongest mom possible.

Addiction is a disease—not a weakness—and it takes courage to ask for help.

Get 24/7 free, confidential support from Your Life Iowa.

CALL TEXT OR LIVE CHAT



STRONGER THAN ADDICTION



Iowa HHS

CALL 855-581-8111
TEXT 855-985-8398
CHAT yourlifeiowa.org

COMING UP

SUBMIT ENTRIES AND PHOTOS TO EDITOR@DMCITYVIEW.COM

NOTE: The following events and attractions are subject to cancellation or changes. Before attending, be sure to check with each event individually to verify details.

THINGS TO DO

RENDEVOUZ ON RIVERVIEW

Prairie Meadows Riviera Stage, Riverview Park, 710 Corning Ave., Des Moines

www.riverviewevents.org

- June 5: Faculty Lounge
- June 12: Sons of Gladys Kravitz
- June 19: Standing Hampton
- June 26: Bittersweet Nation

CASEY'S CENTER

Casey's Center,
223 Center St., Des Moines
www.iowaeventscenter.com

- June 19: Luke Bryan at 7 p.m.

DES MOINES BOTANICAL GARDEN

909 Robert D. Ray Drive, Des Moines
www.dmbotanicalgarden.com

Music in the Garden Series from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

- June 4: Diplomats of Solid Sound
- June 11: Weary Ramblers
- June 18: The Textures
- June 25: Mango Soul



Photo by Dylan Heuer

IOWA CUBS

Principal Park, 1 Line Drive, Des Moines

www.iowacubs.com

Home games in June:

- June 4 vs. Toledo at 6:38 p.m.
- June 5 vs. Toledo at 7:08 p.m. | "Star Wars" Night | Friday Night Fireworks
- June 6 vs. Toledo at 6:08 p.m. | BBQ Bootcamp
- June 7 vs. Toledo at 1:08 p.m. | Sensory Friendly Day
- June 16 vs. Indianapolis at 6:38 p.m.
- June 17 vs. Indianapolis at 12:08 p.m.
- June 18 vs. Indianapolis at 6:38 p.m. | American Sign Language Night | First Responders Night
- June 19 vs. Indianapolis at 7:08 p.m. | Pride Night | Friday Night Fireworks
- June 20 vs. Indianapolis at 6:08 p.m. | Catch On The Field
- June 21 vs. Indianapolis at 1:08 p.m. | Father's Day
- June 23 vs. Buffalo at 6:38 p.m. | Dog Day
- June 24 vs. Buffalo at 12:08 p.m.
- June 25 vs. Buffalo at 6:38 p.m. | Citizenship Ceremony
- June 26 vs. Buffalo at 7:08 p.m. | Hawaiian Night | Friday Night Fireworks
- June 27 vs. Buffalo at 6:08 p.m. | 10 Year Chicago Cubs World Series Anniversary Celebration
- June 28 vs. Buffalo at 1:08 p.m. | Kids Run The Bases

CENTRAL IOWA TRANS LIVES FESTIVAL

1800 Bell Ave., Des Moines
www.ucdsm.org/trans-lives-festival

June 6

This is the sixth annual event held in honor of International Transgender Day of Visibility.

GREEK FOOD FAIR FESTIVAL

1110 35th St., Des Moines

www.facebook.com/StGeorgeDSM

June 5-7

Enjoy the sights, sounds and, most importantly, tastes of Greek culture.



Photo courtesy of the Iowa Barnstormers

IOWA BARNSTORMERS

Wells Fargo Arena, 730 Third St., Des Moines

www.theiowabarnstormers.com

Home games:

- June 12 vs. Quad City Steamwheelers at 7 p.m.
- June 27 vs. Tulsa Oilers at 7 p.m.

COMING UP

SUBMIT ENTRIES AND PHOTOS TO EDITOR@DMCITYVIEW.COM



Ty Duax. Photo courtesy of the Des Moines Menace

DES MOINES MENACE

Mediacom Stadium, 1427-1483
25th St., Des Moines
www.menacesoccer.com

One of the nation's best semi-professional soccer organizations.

Home games:

- June 13 vs. Springfield FC at 7 p.m.
- June 20 vs. ICL All Stars (Friendly) at 7 p.m.
- June 27 vs. Peoria City at 7 p.m.

IOWA CRAFT BREW FESTIVAL

Water Works Park, 2201 George Flagg Parkway, Des Moines
www.iowacraftbrewfestival.com
June 6

Iowans love a cold one, and you will be hard-pressed to find another event this summer with more brews of all hops and sizes.

NEIGHBOR'S DAY CELEBRATION

Western Gateway Park,
1000 Grand Ave., Des Moines
www.iowajuneteenth.org
June 20

Hosted by the Iowa Juneteenth Organization with live entertainment, kids activities, food and small business vendors and more.



Photo by Joelle Blanchard

PRIDEFEST 2026

Des Moines Historic East Village
www.capitalcitypride.org/pridefest
June 12-14

Celebrate PrideFest for the 47th time in its history. The event draws national acts. Plenty of food and other vendors line the streets of the East Village for a weekend of Pride.

DES MOINES ARTS FESTIVAL

Western Gateway Park,
1205 Locust St., Des Moines
www.desmoinesartsfestival.org
June 26-28

Nearly 200 artists from Iowa and around the country fill Western Gateway Park into an urban gallery. Des Moines' own artistic marvel, the Mary Pappajohn Sculpture Park, serves as an ideal backdrop for the award-winning event that celebrates art, music and film.

CAJUN FEST

7001 Westtown Parkway,
Suite 100, West Des Moines
www.cajunfestiowa.com
June 20

The south finds its way into West Des Moines with all of the requisite flavors and celebrations.



BIG GROVE VINYL MARKET

555 17th St., Des Moines
www.biggrove.com
June 28

The Big Grove Vinyl Market will be held Sunday, June 28 from 1-4 p.m. at Big Grove Brewery in Des Moines. Several record vendors from central Iowa will be on hand selling hundreds of vinyl records, CDs, cassettes and more. Grab one of the many craft beer options Big Grove offers and peruse the vast array of records.



CITYVIEW'S DOWNTOWN SUMMER STIR

Court Avenue District, Des Moines
summerstirs.dmcityview.com
June 26

Our traveling cocktail party is back in downtown Des Moines. Sample many of summer's finest drinks at some of the area's best bars and restaurants. Try 10 different drinks for only \$25 with your online order (\$35 at the door).



COMMUNITY FESTIVALS

- **June 4-6: Grimes Governors Days.** Grimes South Sports Complex, 750 S. James St., Grimes; www.governorsdays.com
- **June 6: Johnston's Family Fest.** The Yard, 6221 Merle Hay Road, Johnston; www.johnstontowncenter.com
- **June 6: Waukee Palooza.** 1005 East Hickman Road, Waukee; www.waukeepalooza.com
- **June 11-13: Johnston Green Days 2026.** Terra Park, 6400 Pioneer Parkway, Johnston; www.johnstongreendays.com

Johnston Green Days 2026 brings fun for the whole family. Photo by Stewart Thomas Photography

A free resource for the central Iowa business community

CITYVIEW'S

BUSINESS JOURNAL



Commercial real estate REBOUNDS

Industrial demand remains strong, office properties see renewed value-add investment, and retail growth continues in western suburbs as developers and buyers regain confidence.

By Gracie Kayko

As of early 2026, commercial real estate in Des Moines is experiencing a rebound after recent drops in the market. While there are certainly ups and downs, CBRE Broker Ben Probst said the overall market is relatively strong with interest rates beginning to decline after rising in recent years.

The Downtown Des Moines skyline looking west from the Iowa State Capitol on Sunday, May 17.

FEATURE

Demand fluctuates depending on the asset class, as properties with similar characteristics, investment risks and market behaviors influence different sectors of commercial real estate.

Buyers are again looking to make deals in the investment market by buying, selling and leasing properties and in the development market by improving commercial space for higher-value assets. Overall, people are looking to reinvest in Des Moines.

“Des Moines itself seems to be outside of the big exit flows of what other markets see,” Probst said, referring to how investors plan to end their investments through sales, renovations or refinancing. “But, overall, Des Moines has been pretty steady.”

The industrial market experienced a hot-streak with significant development and interest from developers looking to grow the market and still remains the strongest sector of commercial real estate in Des Moines. The industrial market “remains concentrated in small-to-mid-sized requirements, with tenants favoring second-generation space that allows for quicker occupancy and lower upfront costs,” according to Colliers’ first-quarter 2026 report.

The industrial vacancy rate fell to 8.5% in the first quarter of 2026. That is down 10 basis points (the measure used to calculate interest rates, capitalization rates, loan fees and investment yields) from the previous quarter but 430 basis points higher than 2023, according to CBRE’s first-quarter 2026 industrial market report.

Net absorption was positive during the quarter. Construction deliveries, properties under construction and direct lease rates all increased from the previous quarter. More space was leased in Des Moines than vacated, creating positive net absorption of 188,788 square feet.

According to CBRE’s first-quarter 2026 industrial report, “The amount of industrial space under construction in the Des Moines market is now over 1.3 million sq. ft., which is the highest level since Q4 2022.” Sixteen projects contributed to the total.

“With the current state of the Des Moines industrial market, the minimal amount of new construction is a strong indicator of the oversupply of industrial product delivered to the market through 2021-2024,” CBRE broker Francesca Smith said. “With minimal supply being delivered to the market, existing vacant industrial inventory can be absorbed. When the supply of industrial products is outpacing demand, our vacancy rate goes up and buildings sit



The former Bottle and Bottega space, located at 1301 Locust St. in Downtown Des Moines, is for lease by CBRE.

“It’s not booming, but it’s not struggling either. It just keeps moving forward at a healthy pace.”

— Kurt Mumm, president and CEO of Cushman & Wakefield

with no income for extended periods of time.”

Smith said Des Moines is currently a tenant-favored market because higher vacancy rates are pushing landlords to lower lease rates.

According to CBRE’s first-quarter 2026 industrial report, the average asking rent was \$6.73 per square foot, with the highest asking rent by submarket coming from the Northwest at \$7.11 per square foot and the lowest at \$4.30 per square foot in the South. Properties measuring 100,000 square feet or smaller average \$8.56 per square foot, while properties 300,000 - 499,999 square feet average \$4.50 per square foot.

Des Moines is also seeing a lot of value-add opportunities in the office space market, allowing people to buy office space at a lower basis than they would have in the past, Probst said. Buyers are investing in high vacancy, outdated units and renovating the spaces to increase value.

Lease rates are steady, with downtown office

spaces generally less expensive than properties in the western suburbs, which remains consistent with trends in the past. Though the office vacancy rate fell to 13.9% in the first quarter of 2026 — down 170 basis points from the fourth quarter of 2025 — vacancy rates remain elevated, rising 330 basis points over the past three years. Average rent reached \$20.52 per square foot, a 0.6% increase from the previous quarter.

Office properties had a positive net absorption for Q1 2026 of 346,892 square feet. The Central Business District and Western suburbs “experienced the greatest amount of absorption with 189,000 sq. ft. and 161,000 sq. ft., respectively,” according to CBRE’s first-quarter 2026 office report,

Construction on office space is at an all-time low, with only one property under construction.

Buyers are targeting higher-quality buildings as companies continue to send their employees back into the office, post COVID.



Thoroughly Modern

Taco Bar

Perfect for Office Lunches!

- Available for pickup or delivery
- Serves Eight People

Starting at
\$185
 + sales tax

MENU

Starter:

Corn tortilla chips [80oz.] with pico de gallo [24oz.], guacamole [24oz.], queso [1/2 pan.], and fire-roasted salsa [24oz.]

Cyd's Fiesta Layered Bean Dip [24oz.]

Flour tortilla shells and corn taco shells

Choice of protein [1/2 Pan]

- Cyd's applewood-smoked pulled pork
- Puebla spiced-and-diced chicken
- Chili walnut vegan "meat" [served chilled]
- Southwest chopped beef
- Texas seasoned flank steak

Toppings: [24oz. Each]

Diced Peppers, Tomatoes, Shredded Cheese, Shredded Lettuce, Hot Sauce, Cyd's Bourbon BBQ sauce, and Sour Cream

Dessert: Mexican vanilla sugar crisp [80oz.] with vanilla bean whipped cream [48oz.], salted caramel sauce [8oz.], and espresso chocolate sauce [8oz.]

**CYD'S
CATERING**

Order Online at:
cateringbycyd.com

The pandemic affected office demand as companies reconsidered how much space they needed.

"But that shift has mostly played out at this point," Kurt Mumm, president and CEO of Cushman & Wakefield, said. "Now it's less about reducing space and more about getting into better-quality buildings that help bring people back."

The retail market is seeing high asking prices with rent ranging from the mid-\$30s to \$40 per square foot, which is high for the Des Moines market, Probst said. Still, Mumm said the retail market is doing better than expected.

"It's been more local and regional growth versus big national rollouts, but it's been pretty steady," he said.

Commercial space in western Des Moines suburbs such as West Des Moines and Waukee is generally more expensive than acquiring space downtown. The main drivers are the housing market, along with the West's entertainment industry, including Waukee's Live Nation and West Des Moines Grand Experience.

"Out West is having a ton of growth, housing, a lot of entertainment and retail out there, so there has been a natural push out in the western suburbs," Probst said.

But Probst highlights how downtown is being revitalized with the redevelopment of office buildings and the construction of the new \$95 million Pro Iowa Stadium and Global Plaza project, which is set to break ground in late 2026 or early 2027.

"There is certainly going to be a lot more coming back to Des Moines as well," he said.

As the digital economy evolves, so does its infrastructure needs. Many commercial office spaces are being converted to data centers. Probst said Des Moines is seeing increased interest in converting office and retail properties into data centers, including a recent office-to-data-center remodel in the city's financial district.

"It's the first one I've seen where an existing office building has been converted to a data center in the actual building rather than out in county grounds or out in rural parts of Des Moines," he said.

The conversion and construction of new data centers will not affect the housing market as it continues to grow. New and out-of-market home builders continue to come to Des Moines to create opportunity, but, "data centers are going to have their place, and we're probably going to see a little bit less homes around it, but there will be other things that fill in next to them," Probst said.

Beyond the rise of data centers, new development overall has slowed down compared to previous years.

"Higher construction costs and interest rates have made developers more cautious," Mumm said. "But, that's actually helping the market absorb some of the existing vacancy."

Overall, market opportunities in Des Moines remain steady, Probst said, pointing to WB Realty Co. President Ryan Wiederstein's recent purchase of the Wells Fargo Mortgage Center in West Des Moines as an example.

"[He] bought it at a very good price per square foot, has been able to re-tenant it and stabilize it and invest in the project. It's getting top-of-market office rent," Probst said. "It's been really fun to see that one come to fruition."

Probst believes there are always pockets of opportunity in the market, especially when it comes to value-add deals.

"At some point, I think retail buildings will have opportunities where you can buy them at a lower price per square foot, retrofit and stabilize them," he said.

As the first quarter closes and the second quarter begins, the Des Moines commercial real estate market remains relatively stable.

"It's not booming, but it's not struggling either. It just keeps moving forward at a healthy pace," Mumm said. ■

1 GIG BUSINESS INTERNET FULL SPEED. ZERO SURPRISES.

Your business runs on speed.
With 1-Gig Business Internet, you
get the fast, reliable performance your
teams and customers depend on – from
point-of-sale to video calls to cloud apps.

And with our **2-YEAR PRICE LOCK**, your
budget stays just as steady as your connection.

MEDIACOM™ BUSINESS

CALL TODAY 800-479-2091



Get fast, reliable
Business Internet at a
price you can count on.

COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE

COMMERCIAL REAL ESTATE TRANSACTIONS IN POLK COUNTY FROM DEC. 8, 2025, TO DEC. 17, 2025

310 N.W. CHAPEL DRIVE, ANKENY

SALE DATE: 2025-12-08
 SALE PRICE: \$1,360,000
 SELLER: SPG INC
 BUYER: TTLC COOPERATIVE HOUSING
 ACRES: 0.742
 SQUARE FEET: 11,616

NO ADDRESS LISTED

SALE DATE: 2025-12-08
 SALE PRICE: \$2,152,165
 SELLER: DRA PROPERTIES LC
 BUYER: TSPTN25 LLC
 ACRES: 9.881
 SQUARE FEET: 0

214 N.W. COLLEGE AVE., ANKENY

SALE DATE: 2025-12-09
 SALE PRICE: \$584,000
 SELLER: C&S 214 RESIDENTIAL HOUSING COOPERATIVE
 BUYER: 206-214 N.W. COLLEGE Ave. LLC
 ACRES: 0.484
 SQUARE FEET: 4,416

210 N.W. COLLEGE AVE., ANKENY

SALE DATE: 2025-12-09
 SALE PRICE: \$1,166,000
 SELLER: C&S 206 RESIDENTIAL HOUSING COOPERATIVE
 BUYER: 206-214 N.W. COLLEGE Ave. LLC
 ACRES: 0.974
 SQUARE FEET: 8,704

1914 E. EUCLID AVE., DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2025-12-09
 SALE PRICE: \$1,500,000
 SELLER: CARNEY, MARY E
 BUYER: MAUST PROPERTY MANAGEMENT COMPANY LP
 ACRES: 15.648
 SQUARE FEET: 32,368

4330 WESTOWN PARKWAY, WEST DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2025-12-09
 SALE PRICE: \$275,000
 SELLER: 4300 WESTOWN LLC
 BUYER: WINFIELD ENTERPRISES LLC
 ACRES: 1.074
 SQUARE FEET: 0

NO ADDRESS LISTED

SALE DATE: 2025-12-09
 SALE PRICE: \$6,949,755
 SELLER: MARCO PROPERTIES LLC
 BUYER: I-80 BUSINESS PARK II LLC
 ACRES: 54.712
 SQUARE FEET: 0

3535 WESTOWN PARKWAY, WEST DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2025-12-10
 SALE PRICE: \$574,000
 SELLER: VALLEY WEST INN LLC
 BUYER: PENNY A BASSMAN REVOCABLE TRUST
 ACRES: 2.670
 SQUARE FEET: 0

5620 N.E. 12TH AVE., PLEASANT HILL

SALE DATE: 2025-12-10
 SALE PRICE: \$675,000
 SELLER: BILL & JANE WONDERLICH FAMILY TRUST
 BUYER: P-HILL PARTNERS LLC
 ACRES: 6.109
 SQUARE FEET: 888

3700 PRAIRIE FIRE N.W., ALTOONA

SALE DATE: 2025-12-11
 SALE PRICE: \$5,825,000
 SELLER: HURD MCW ALTOONA LLC
 BUYER: 3700 PRAIRIE FIRE Drive LLC
 ACRES: 1.501
 SQUARE FEET: 6,488

1908 7TH ST., DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2025-12-11
 SALE PRICE: \$255,000
 SELLER: KI PROPERTIES LLC
 BUYER: ON POINT PROPERTIES UNITED LLC
 ACRES: 0.273
 SQUARE FEET: 2,914

3900 11TH ST., DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2025-12-11
 SALE PRICE: \$199,410
 SELLER: KI PROPERTIES LLC
 BUYER: ON POINT PROPERTIES UNITED LLC
 ACRES: 0.162
 SQUARE FEET: 2,851

1514 HARRISON AVE., DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2025-12-11
 SALE PRICE: \$194,000
 SELLER: KI PROPERTIES LLC
 BUYER: ON POINT PROPERTIES UNITED LLC
 ACRES: 0.224
 SQUARE FEET: 2,491

3800 DIXON ST., DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2025-12-11
 SALE PRICE: \$3,750,000
 SELLER: 3800 DIXON LLC
 BUYER: NPJTC LLC
 ACRES: 4.972
 SQUARE FEET: 62,800

NO ADDRESS LISTED

SALE DATE: 2025-12-12
 SALE PRICE: \$11,201,061
 SELLER: I-80 BUSINESS PARK II LLC
 BUYER: ALTOONA BTS LLC
 ACRES: 72.500
 SQUARE FEET: 0

3053 EIGHTH ST. S.W., ALTOONA

SALE DATE: 2025-12-12
 SALE PRICE: \$2,700,000
 SELLER: WAYSIDE ACRES LLC
 BUYER: ALTOONA PARTNERS LLC
 ACRES: 1.103
 SQUARE FEET: 9,800

4730 86TH ST., URBAN DALE

SALE DATE: 2025-12-12
 SALE PRICE: \$1,100,000
 SELLER: PMR REALTY GROUP LLC
 BUYER: CITY OF URBAN DALE
 ACRES: 1.455
 SQUARE FEET: 0

3600 E. 14TH ST., DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2025-12-12
 SALE PRICE: \$960,000
 SELLER: JDS REAL ESTATE INVESTMENTS LLC
 BUYER: MAGALLANES, MANUEL
 ACRES: 0.682
 SQUARE FEET: 4,925

3355 S.E. MIEHE DRIVE, GRIMES

SALE DATE: 2025-12-12
 SALE PRICE: \$180,000
 SELLER: TRACY, CAROL ANNE
 BUYER: ALTEMEIER, KENT
 ACRES: 0.062
 SQUARE FEET: 1,080

4600 PARK AVE., DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2025-12-15
 SALE PRICE: \$3,129,711
 SELLER: FIRST NATIONAL BANK
 BUYER: NPJTC LLC
 ACRES: 6.408
 SQUARE FEET: 44,930

1200 N.W. 36TH ST., ANKENY

SALE DATE: 2025-12-15
 SALE PRICE: \$3,750,000
 SELLER: MJPD VENTURES LLC

BUYER: TP84 LLC
 ACRES: 1.582
 SQUARE FEET: 10,800

754 19TH ST., DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2025-12-15
 SALE PRICE: \$475,000
 SELLER: 754 19TH ST LLC
 BUYER: GRAVES, BRIAN PATRICK
 ACRES: 0.201
 SQUARE FEET: 3,172

2135 N.E. 36TH ST., ANKENY

SALE DATE: 2025-12-15
 SALE PRICE: \$1,800,000
 SELLER: DRA PROPERTIES LC
 BUYER: CASEY'S MARKETING COMPANY
 ACRES: 1.759
 SQUARE FEET: 0

2517 HUBBELL AVE., DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2025-12-15
 SALE PRICE: \$400,000
 SELLER: K&E LLC
 BUYER: LOPEZ-CARRILLO, RAMON
 ACRES: 0.950
 SQUARE FEET: 3,881

300 WALNUT ST. UNIT 52, DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2025-12-16
 SALE PRICE: \$5,000
 SELLER: PLAZA COMMERCIAL OWNER'S ASSOCIATION
 BUYER: MLK RIVER PARK LLC
 ACRES: 0.000
 SQUARE FEET: 0

933 18TH ST., DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2025-12-16
 SALE PRICE: \$1,255,000
 SELLER: LONG HOMES LLC
 BUYER: MILLER, SHANNON
 ACRES: 0.217
 SQUARE FEET: 7,788

NO ADDRESS LISTED

SALE DATE: 2025-12-16
 SALE PRICE: \$1,300,000
 SELLER: ANKENY UDNOMINATIONAL CHURCH OF CHRIST
 BUYER: HOLT SALES & SERVICE LLC
 ACRES: 9.590
 SQUARE FEET: 0

5510 S.E. 14TH ST., DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2025-12-16
 SALE PRICE: \$575,000
 SELLER: KENNEY LINHART MINISTRIES INC
 BUYER: NELSON CONSTRUCTION SERVICES LLC
 ACRES: 8.345
 SQUARE FEET: 0

1475 N.E. RUETER DRIVE, ANKENY

SALE DATE: 2025-12-16
 SALE PRICE: \$2,276,061
 SELLER: RUETER, ALEX
 BUYER: TWO COMPANIES LLC
 ACRES: 7.133
 SQUARE FEET: 0

1617 N.E. 51ST AVE., DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2025-12-16
 SALE PRICE: \$2,000,000
 SELLER: 6450 LLC
 BUYER: NPJTC LLC
 ACRES: 1.730
 SQUARE FEET: 32,700

4485 N.E. 22ND ST., DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2025-12-16
 SALE PRICE: \$1,800,000
 SELLER: DES MOINES TPE LLC
 BUYER: BPT DSM PROPCO LLC
 ACRES: 4.652

SQUARE FEET: 10,500

2024 N.W. 92ND COURT, CLIVE

SALE DATE: 2025-12-17
 SALE PRICE: \$680,000
 SELLER: P&M DUPEY LLC
 BUYER: PARRISH HOLDINGS LLC
 ACRES: 0.668
 SQUARE FEET: 7,070

1083 22ND ST., DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2025-12-17
 SALE PRICE: \$289,000
 SELLER: KI PROPERTIES LLC
 BUYER: DRAKE PARK CORNER LLC
 ACRES: 0.200
 SQUARE FEET: 4,244

2130 DRAKE PARK AVE., DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2025-12-17
 SALE PRICE: \$159,000
 SELLER: KI PROPERTIES LLC
 BUYER: DRAKE PARK CORNER LLC
 ACRES: 0.124
 SQUARE FEET: 3,132

2402 21ST ST. N.W., ALTOONA

SALE DATE: 2025-12-17
 SALE PRICE: \$30,000,000
 SELLER: HAWKEYE INVESTMENT PARTNERS I LLC
 BUYER: 180 BC OWNER LLC
 ACRES: 16.308
 SQUARE FEET: 259,056

1079 22ND ST., DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2025-12-17
 SALE PRICE: \$210,000
 SELLER: KI PROPERTIES LLC
 BUYER: DRAKE PARK CORNER LLC
 ACRES: 0.208
 SQUARE FEET: 3,812

1071 22ND ST., DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2025-12-17
 SALE PRICE: \$132,000
 SELLER: KI PROPERTIES LLC
 BUYER: DRAKE PARK CORNER LLC
 ACRES: 0.158
 SQUARE FEET: 2,738

3611 S.E. 14TH ST., DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2025-12-17
 SALE PRICE: \$750,000
 SELLER: RICHMOND PROPERTIES LLC
 BUYER: VAQUERO IOWA DES MOINES PARTNERS LP
 ACRES: 0.891
 SQUARE FEET: 2,168

1305 S.E. 25TH ST., GRIMES

SALE DATE: 2025-12-17
 SALE PRICE: \$638,500
 SELLER: HOLD ON HOLDINGS LLC
 BUYER: GS PROPERTIES HOLDINGS LLC
 ACRES: 2.051
 SQUARE FEET: 0

4200 PARK AVE., DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2025-12-17
 SALE PRICE: \$29,150,000
 SELLER: WESTON PARK OWNER LLC
 BUYER: ALIGNED HOLDINGS OF DES MOINES LLC
 ACRES: 18.360
 SQUARE FEET: 336,496

714 S.E. 15TH ST., DES MOINES

SALE DATE: 2025-12-17
 SALE PRICE: \$300,000
 SELLER: GBM PROPERTIES LLC
 BUYER: BNDA PROPERTIES LLC
 ACRES: 0.230
 SQUARE FEET: 3,791 ■

Borrower Name	City	County	Cong. District	\$ Amount	Jobs Created	Jobs Retained	Existing Jobs	New Vs. Existing	Business Type
PLUMB CO PLUMBING LLC	VINTON	BENTON	02	\$10,000	1	1	EXISTING	Plumbing, Heating, and Air-Conditioning Contractors	
EQUANIMITY HOLDINGS LLC	CEDAR FALLS	BLACK HAWK	02	\$475,000	6	0	EXISTING	Offices of Mental Health Practitioners (except Physicians)	
STS Broadband LLC	HUDSON	BLACK HAWK	02	\$285,000	2	0	NEW	Data Processing, Hosting, and Related Services	
Goodwin Insurance, Inc.	WATERLOO	BLACK HAWK	02	\$81,800	0	4	NEW	Insurance Agencies and Brokerages	
Bryce Ackerman	Sumner	BREMER	02	\$90,000	0	1	EXISTING	Car Washes	
ROYAL DYNASTY DOBERMAN KENNEL	APLINGTON	BUTLER	02	\$567,000	2	2	NEW	Pet Care (except Veterinary) Services	
Mason City PR Inc.	Mason City	CERRO GORDO	02	\$875,000	0	30	EXISTING	Limited-Service Restaurants	
Inspired Kids Academy	Van Meter	DALLAS	03	\$1,128,000	6	23	EXISTING	Child and Youth Services	
Diamond Trail Capital Management	WAUKEE	DALLAS	03	\$125,000	0	2	EXISTING	Portfolio Management and Investment Advice	
ROGERS OUTDOOR SERVICES, LLC	WAUKEE	DALLAS	03	\$26,500	1	10	EXISTING	Landscape Architectural Services	
Skin Iowa, PC	WEST DES MOINES	DALLAS	03	\$600,000	1	7	EXISTING	Offices of All Other Miscellaneous Health Practitioners	
Skin Iowa, PC	WEST DES MOINES	DALLAS	03	\$50,000	1	7	EXISTING	Offices of All Other Miscellaneous Health Practitioners	
1 ELITE ELECTRIC, LLC	BURLINGTON	DES MOINES	01	\$50,000	0	3	NEW	Electrical Contractors	
BREAD WORTHY LLC	IOWA CITY	JOHNSON	01	\$210,000	4	4	EXISTING	Baked Goods Stores	
BAYLEAF LLC	IOWA CITY	JOHNSON	01	\$25,000	0	7	EXISTING	Television Broadcasting	
JACREC LLC	ANAMOSA	JONES	01	\$190,400	0	4	NEW	Machine Shops	
JACREC LLC	ANAMOSA	JONES	01	\$70,000	0	4	NEW	Machine Shops	
Nyumba of Hope LLC	Cedar Rapids	LINN	02	\$253,000	1	15	NEW	Child Day Care Services	
AJAX MEDIA LLC	CEDAR RAPIDS	LINN	02	\$50,000	1	0	EXISTING	Motion Picture and Video Production	
Corridor Commercial Properties LLC	Marion	LINN	02	\$1,630,600	5	25	NEW	Used Household and Office Goods Moving	
Hotel O	OSKALOOSA	MAHASKA	01	\$573,000	4	4	NEW	Hotels (except Casino Hotels) and Motels	
DNP Group, LLC	Pella	MARION	01	\$345,000	3	0	NEW	Hotels (except Casino Hotels) and Motels	
SIGNS2WIN LLC	ANKENY	POLK	03	\$671,300	1	5	NEW	All Other Specialty Trade Contractors	
SIGNS2WIN LLC	ANKENY	POLK	03	\$671,300	1	5	NEW	All Other Specialty Trade Contractors	
Building Efficiencies Resources LLC	DES MOINES	POLK	03	\$2,490,000	2	18	NEW	All Other Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	
Mitkof Holdings, Inc.	DES MOINES	POLK	03	\$2,400,000	5	5	NEW	General Warehousing and Storage	
Mitkof Holdings, Inc.	DES MOINES	POLK	03	\$500,000	5	5	NEW	General Warehousing and Storage	
HoQ Restaurant	Des Moines	POLK	03	\$496,000	1	12	EXISTING	Full-Service Restaurants	
535 EAP LLC	Des Moines	POLK	03	\$335,000	2	0	EXISTING	Offices of Lawyers	
KOLODJI CARPENTRY & CONSTRUCTION LLC	DES MOINES	POLK	03	\$35,000	1	1	EXISTING	Finish Carpentry Contractors	
FIVE PILLARS HOSPITALITY, L.L.C.	GRIMES	POLK	03	\$803,000	26	26	NEW	Full-Service Restaurants	
FIVE PILLARS HOSPITALITY, L.L.C.	GRIMES	POLK	03	\$50,000	26	26	NEW	Full-Service Restaurants	
NUTRI-WEST CENTRAL	JOHNSTON	POLK	03	\$350,000	1	3	EXISTING	Offices of All Other Miscellaneous Health Practitioners	
Nutri-West Central Inc.	Johnston	POLK	03	\$350,000	1	3	EXISTING	Medical, Dental, and Hospital Equipment and Supplies Merchant Wholesalers	
DELOENCE IT SOLUTION INC	JOHNSTON	POLK	03	\$48,000	1	4	EXISTING	Custom Computer Programming Services	
Pinnacle Property Care LLC	Madrid	POLK	03	\$250,000	2	3	NEW	Landscaping Services	
American Technology Consulting LLC	West Des Moines	POLK	03	\$1,250,000	3	74	EXISTING	Administrative Management and General Management Consulting Services	
LAKESIDE AUTO RECYCLERS INC.	CARTER LAKE	POTTAWATTAMIE	04	\$1,830,500	0	70	EXISTING	Recyclable Material Merchant Wholesalers	
DYNAMIC GRADING LLC	MOUNT AYR	RINGGOLD	03	\$25,000	0	0	EXISTING	Site Preparation Contractors	
C&E Ultimate Fitness, LLC	Bettendorf	SCOTT	01	\$1,113,700	2	10	NEW	Fitness and Recreational Sports Centers	
838 Boutique LLC	Bettendorf	SCOTT	01	\$50,000	0	3	EXISTING	Clothing and Clothing Accessoris Retailers	
M&L Zynski Holdings LLC	Davenport	SCOTT	01	\$333,000	19	1	NEW	Drinking Places (Alcoholic Beverages)	
CGI Property Management, LLC	Davenport	SCOTT	01	\$260,000	3	0	NEW	Residential Property Managers	
LV NAIL BAR & SPA LLC	DAVENPORT	SCOTT	01	\$50,000	0	0	NEW	Nail Salons	
Heritage Coffehouse + Venue	Huxley	STORY	03	\$200,000	11	1	NEW	Snack and Nonalcoholic Beverage Bars	

TRANSACTIONS FROM APRIL 2026

CREATE SPACES THAT COMMUNICATE SEAMLESSLY

Delivering centralized, scalable AV solutions that enhance communication and collaboration across your environment.

Powered by **People.**
Driven by **Results.**



- Security Systems
- Audio/Video Integration
- Physical Infrastructures
- Outside Plant (OSP)
- Hosted Phone Systems
- Global Accounts Management

YOUR BUSINESS, FULLY CONNECTED. GET STARTED TODAY.

COMMUNICATION INNOVATORS

Pleasant Hill, Iowa · www.gotoci.com



DON'T MISS URBANDALE'S 4TH OF JULY PARADE

SATURDAY, JULY 4TH | 10AM

Celebrate the 250th Anniversary of America

VIEW FULL SCHEDULE



We provide comprehensive insurance solutions, paired with outstanding customer service. Our team is committed to our goal of becoming your first choice for all your insurance needs.

- ✓ Business
- ✓ Professional Liability
- ✓ Auto
- ✓ Renters
- ✓ Disability
- ✓ Workers Comp
- ✓ Employee Benefits
- ✓ Home
- ✓ Life
- ✓ Health



BUENZOW INSURANCE GROUP
3273 100TH STREET, URBANDALE
INFO@BUENZOWINSURANCE.COM | 515-270-8870

ON THE MOVE

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

DART Commission names Hockman CEO

The Board of Commissioners of the Des Moines Area Regional Transit Authority (DART) announced the selection of Erin Hockman as chief executive officer. A respected and familiar leader with both the organization and the Greater Des Moines community, Hockman brings a decade of experience at DART, most recently as chief administrative and strategy officer. Hockman officially assumed the role on May 7. Past CEO Amanda Wanke departed to take a leadership position with Metro Transit in the Twin Cities.



Erin Hockman

Common Sense Institute Iowa announces Liz Keehner to board of directors

Common Sense Institute (CSI) announced the addition of Liz Keehner to its board of directors, bringing deep experience in venture capital and economic development to the organization. Keehner currently serves as president of the Iowa Venture Capital Association (IVCA), where she leads efforts to strengthen Iowa's innovation economy and expand access to capital for entrepreneurs across the state. In this role, she works closely with investors, policymakers and business leaders to advance initiatives that support startup growth, investment and job creation.

Bank Iowa names Herrboldt president/CEO

Bank Iowa announced that Jason Herrboldt will become president and chief executive officer, as longtime leader Jim Plagge plans to retire after more than a decade in the role. The leadership transition comes as the family-owned bank marks its 50th year. Plagge, who has served as president/CEO since 2012, will remain in a leadership role with the bank's holding company during a short transition period to support Herrboldt and ensure continuity.



Jason Herrboldt



Jim Plagge

Kueker named field specialist for Coalition to Support Iowa's Farmers

Megan Kueker has been named field specialist for the Coalition to Support Iowa's Farmers (CSIF). Kueker had previously served as the communications specialist for CSIF since 2024. Kueker will provide one-on-one assistance to farm families wanting to grow their livestock farms responsibly and successfully. She will assist livestock and poultry farmers in following all rules and regulations, choosing good locations for new livestock barns and feedlots, enhancing relations with neighbors and implementing best management practices that improve air, soil and water quality.

DMU names Roesler chief HR officer

Des Moines University Medicine and Health Sciences has appointed Eric Roesler, PhD, MBA, as chief human resources officer after a nationwide search. Roesler brings more than 20 years of senior leadership experience in human resources, organizational development and compliance across higher education,

health services and complex, multi-site organizations. He most recently served as associate vice chancellor and chief human resources officer at the University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point, where he led comprehensive human resources strategy and operations supporting academic, clinical, research and administrative units. He also served on the chancellor's cabinet.



Eric Roesler

Strohbehn named Iowa Pork Producers association producer education director

The Iowa Pork Producers Association has named Jesi Strohbehn as its new producer education director. Strohbehn began her role in April and will lead efforts focused on engaging with pork producers, supporting industry initiatives and strengthening connections across Iowa's swine community.

In this role, Strohbehn will be responsible for developing informational materials for Iowa pig farmers, administering pork quality improvement programs and working with key stakeholder groups such as Iowa Farm Animal Care and the Iowa Pork Industry Center. She will also work directly with producers to provide resources and support, while contributing to programs centered on swine health, research and innovation within the pork industry.



Jesi Strohbehn

Patrick Boberg appointed as advisor to IMPA

The Iowa Motion Picture Association (IMPA) announced that Emmy Award-winning filmmaker Patrick Boberg has joined the organization as an advisor to the board of directors.

Based in central Iowa, Boberg is widely recognized for his contributions to Iowa's filmmaking and storytelling community. In addition to producing narrative films, he serves as a producer/director for Iowa PBS, where he creates documentaries and feature stories highlighting the people, places and culture of Iowa.



Patrick Boberg

Lewis named director of communications, marketing and public affairs

Amanda Lewis will succeed Phil Roeder, who is retiring at the end of June. Roeder has spent two decades with Des Moines Public Schools, including a term on the school board and more than 16 years as director of communications. Lewis will begin her new role effective July 1.

Lewis has served in the district's communications office since 2014, helping to lead strategy and engagement for Iowa's largest school district and its connection with students, families, staff and the broader community. She has played a central role in major initiatives, including Reimagining Education, the district's \$265 million bond initiative that will guide construction, signature school development, and expand immersive learning opportunities over the next five years. ■



Amanda Lewis

RESIDENTIAL CARE

At Ramsey Village, residents receive Residential Care with certified caregivers and closer monitoring, giving families peace of mind and residents continued independence.

- Flat monthly rate – no hidden charges or levels
- RN Manager 5 days per week/ nurse on call 24/7
- Certified Caregiving assistance 24/7
- Certified Medication administration 24/7
- Life Enrichment Activities 7 Days per week
- 3 nutritious meals per day
- Scheduled transportation available
- Physician, Dental, Vision, Podiatry, Psychiatry and psychological services available on site
- Housekeeping and laundry services included
- Salon Services on site.



TAKE ADVANTAGE OF OUR INNOVATIVE IN-HOUSE THERAPY SERVICES

Physical • Occupational • Speech •  lifeloop Technology



Ramsey Village Continuing Care Retirement Community offers more than a place to live—it's a place to thrive. Enjoy a supportive, welcoming environment with daily meals, transportation, engaging activities, and access to amenities like peaceful courtyards, fitness and game rooms, and an on-site salon, all designed to help you make the most of every day and build meaningful connections.



RAMSEY VILLAGE

Continuing Care Retirement Community

**SCHEDULE
A TOUR
TODAY!**



515.344.3507 • 1611 27th St, Des Moines • Follow us on 

INDEPENDENT LIVING • RESIDENTIAL CARE • MEMORY CARE • LONG-TERM CARE • SHORT-TERM REHAB

Through Iowa's lens

FEATURE STORY

Keep Iowa Beautiful photography contest winners capture the beauty of the Hawkeye State.

Robert D. Ray Best of Show first place and Hometown Pride first place: "Heaven With a Zip Code" by Scott Hoag of DeWitt.

Reprinted with permission



SCAN THIS QR CODE TO VIEW CURRENT AND PAST PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS



By Tammy Pearson

Beauty can be found among the landscape, wildlife, people, events and communities of Iowa. If anyone has doubts about that, they simply need to peruse the winning photographs of the 16th Annual Keep Iowa Beautiful photography contest, which invites photographers to showcase Iowa's natural and environmental beauty through their lenses and capture the essence of their favorite seasons in a creative and engaging way.

With the blessing of Keep Iowa Beautiful and the permission of photographers, CITYVIEW again features the works of the talent behind the cameras.

"Keep Iowa Beautiful's annual photo contest is a great opportunity for photographers to capture and

share the essence of Iowa's story," Keep Iowa Beautiful Executive Director Andy Frantz said. "We were truly impressed by the incredible quality and creativity of this year's submissions. This contest highlights the immense talent of photographers across our state."

More than 500 photos were entered in six categories in this year's photo contest, with first, second and third-place recipients in each category receiving \$100, \$75 and \$50, respectively. Additionally, the prestigious Robert D. Ray Best of Show awards honor top photographers with prizes of \$500 for first place, \$250 for second place, and \$100 for third place. The Public Favorite award winner also received a \$100 prize. New this year, Keep Iowa Beautiful highlighted a Youth

Winner, selected from submissions by photographers who are 18 and younger.

"As an avid photographer, my dad, Bob Ray, rarely went anywhere without his camera. Through his lens, he captured the faces and stories of Iowans he cared so deeply about. His passion for keeping Iowa beautiful extended far beyond its natural scenery; it was rooted in his love for the people who made this state so special," Randi Ray, Robert D. Ray's daughter and a panelist in the photo contest, said.

To ensure fairness and objectivity, all entries were judged blindly without the names of the submitters visible to the judges, emphasizing the quality and creativity of the photos themselves.

Iowa Cities



1ST PLACE

First place: "Glitter City," by Scott Hoag of DeWitt.
Photo reprinted with permission



3RD PLACE

Third place: "Madison County Courthouse," by Morgan Weaver of Afton.
Photo reprinted with permission



HONORABLE MENTION

Honorable mention: "Children Watch Fireworks in the Snow in Ankeny," by Lee Navin of Ankeny.
Photo reprinted with permission

PHOTO NOT AVAILABLE:
Second place: "Davenport, Iowa,"
by Brian Abeling of West Des Moines



Iowa's Finest Chefs Start at DMACC

From local kitchens to global stages, graduates from DMACC's Iowa Culinary Institute® bring Iowa's values of hard work, creativity, and care to every plate. Our students train with expert instructors, travel abroad for culinary study, and serve our community through flavor and craft.





Here, accomplished restaurateur George Formaro, who studied and returned to DMACC as a guest lecturer, shares some of his culinary insights with students in DMACC's working lab classroom. Formaro is behind some of Des Moines' most successful eateries, including Centro, Django, Malo, South Union Bread Café and Zombie Burger, just to name a few.

Whether you dream of owning your own restaurant or leading a team in a five-star kitchen, your journey starts here—where Iowa's best chefs begin.

Take the first step and apply today at ici.dmacc.edu.
BON APPÉTIT!

CLASSES ARE STARTING SOON!

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:
Jeremy Austin, Culinary Academic Advisor | jcaustin@dmacc.edu | 515-964-6556

DMACC shall not engage in nor allow discrimination covered by law against any person, group or organization. This includes in its programs, activities, employment practices, hiring practices or the provision of services. The full DMACC Nondiscrimination policy is available online at nd.dmacc.edu. MKF-3963-2-26-A

Summer TASTES LIKE TULLPA

FRESH GEVICHE • GRILLED SEAFOOD • BOLD PERUVIAN FLAVOR



GEVICHE



BOLD FLAVORS



GRILLED FAVORITES

Bold Peruvian & Latin flavors in Des Moines.



TULLPA

NOVO ANDINA FUSION CUISINE



SCAN TO ORDER ONLINE!

VISIT US

3708 Merle Hay Rd
Des Moines, IA

CALL US

515-214-2327

HOURS

Tue–Thu: 11am – 9pm
Fri – Sun: 8am – 9pm

FIND US

Saturdays at the
Downtown
Farmer's Market

RESERVATIONS RECOMMENDED, BUT NOT REQUIRED.

Iowa Landscape

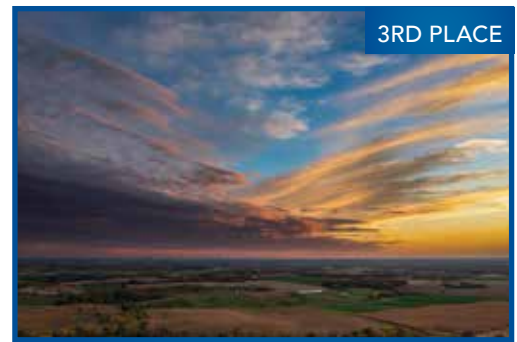
FEATURE STORY



First place: "Juniper Tree Overlooking Fall Colors along the Mississippi," by Suhaib Khan of Glendale, Illinois. Photo reprinted with permission

PHOTO NOT AVAILABLE — Second place: "The Best Campsite in Iowa," by Cody Davis of Grinnell

1ST PLACE



3RD PLACE

"Sunset over Farmland," by Sharon Scarff of Wayland. Photo reprinted with permission



HONORABLE MENTION

"Wired for an Iowa Winter," by Harlen Persinger of Grundy Center. Photo reprinted with permission



HONORABLE MENTION

"Gassing Up," by Scott Hoag of DeWitt. Photo reprinted with permission

UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY AVAILABLE
NEW OWNERSHIP SOUGHT FOR CASEY, IA RESTAURANT



We're not just selling a restaurant, but a piece of Casey's history.
Located about 45 minutes west of Des Moines, a perfect opportunity to start your new business adventure.

Those interested call 515-491-2772 or message conradisugal96@gmail.com

618 McPherson St, Casey

WANDERING THE WATERS OF THE FINGER LAKES

August 15-22, 2026

Experience the beauty and charm of New York's Finger Lakes on a tour that blends scenic landscapes, culture, and unforgettable experiences. This thoughtfully curated getaway takes you through rolling vineyards, sparkling lakes, and charming towns as we enjoy guided sightseeing, leisurely cruises on the water, and visits to celebrated wineries and local attractions. Discover fascinating stories at renowned museums, enjoy tastings at picturesque vineyards, and take in breathtaking views from lakeside overlooks and historic landmarks. With a wonderful balance of guided experiences and relaxed free time, this tour invites you to savor the flavors, scenery, and easygoing pace that make the Finger Lakes such a beloved destination. It's a refreshing escape filled with natural beauty, laughter, and memorable moments from start to finish.



Only \$3200 pp Double | \$3900 Single | Non-Members add \$30

SMOKY MOUNTAIN SPLENDOR & THE BILTMORE

September 5-12, 2026

Step into a journey where Appalachian charm meets Gilded Age elegance. From the lively energy of Pigeon Forge to the timeless grandeur of Biltmore Estate, this thoughtfully curated escape blends scenic mountain beauty, rich history, unforgettable entertainment, and elevated experiences at every turn. Guests will enjoy deluxe motorcoach transportation, seven nights of accommodations including **four nights on the grounds of the Biltmore Estate**, exceptional dining experiences, and memorable attractions throughout the Great Smoky Mountains.

Highlights include Dolly Parton's Stampede, the Titanic Museum Attraction, free time at The Island in Pigeon Forge, a guided tour of Asheville, and the breathtaking beauty of Biltmore Luminère, creating an unforgettable Smoky Mountains getaway filled with elegance and discovery.



Only \$3850pp Double | \$4700 Single | Non-Members add \$30



Book Now! Call Us at (319) 212-5508
3211 Division St. Suite 1 • Burlington, IA 52601
Browse all of our tours at www.GoWindstar.com/Tours

FREE BREADSTICKS

with any large pizza order during lunch

COME IN FOR LUNCH!

OPEN UNTIL 1 AM | Sun - Thurs
OPEN UNTIL 2 AM | Fri - Sat



ORDER ONLINE TODAY!

3201 Indianola Ave, Des Moines
515.244.9256
paulreverespizzadm.com

OPEN DAILY AT 10:30AM



JAY'S
CD & Hobby

FUN DRAISING
SUPER SALE!

BENEFITTING: **Make-A-Wish**

IOWA



SHOP.

SAVE.

**Help Make
Wishes
Come True!**

JUNE 1-18

**DONATE \$25, GET A
\$10 JAY'S GIFT CARD!**

**FATHER'S DAY WEEKEND
JUNE 19-21**

10% OFF EVERYTHING!

PLUS

**DONATE \$25 OR MORE
AND SAVE AN
ADDITIONAL 10% OFF!**

JAYSCDANDHOBBY.COM

• **SOUTH SIDE** •
3315 SE 14TH STREET
DES MOINES, IA 50320

• **WEST SIDE** •
1421 22ND STREET
W. DES MOINES, IA 50266

• **ANKENY** •
613 S ANKENY BLVD
ANKENY, IA 50023

Iowa Water

FEATURE STORY



1ST PLACE

First place: "Ice Fishing," by Silas Clough of Zwingle. Photo reprinted with permission

2ND PLACE



Second place: "Lake Dreams," by William Beardsley of Spirit Lake. Photo reprinted with permission

3RD PLACE



Third place: "Dock to Serenity," by William Beardsley of Spirit Lake. Photo reprinted with permission

PHOTO NOT AVAILABLE — Honorable mention: "Pikes Peak State Park overlooking the Mississippi River," by Brian Abeling of West Des Moines



SEVERAL LOCATIONS TO CHOOSE FROM!

4024 Grand Ave.
1131 35th St.
4814 Woodland Ave.
3616 University Ave.
4522 University Ave.

More information available in front of each property or visit us at michaelrenovations.com

Penthouse, 1 & 1+ Bedrooms Available

APARTMENTS FOR RENT



GOMOBILE TIRES
We Bring the Tire Shop to You!

SUMMER STARTS HERE

Road trips. Weekend plans. Every mile in between. We'll keep you rolling.

- FAMILY ADVENTURES:** We make sure your vehicle is road-trip ready.
- SUMMER HEAT CHECKS:** High temps put stress on tires. We check what matters most.
- WE COME TO YOU:** At home, work or play we come to you so you can stay on schedule.

GET \$25 OFF YOUR NEXT SUMMER SERVICE
When you mention this ad!
LIMITED TIME FOR JUNE APPOINTMENTS!

SAVE TIME | DRIVE SAFE | STRESS FREE

BOOK YOUR APPOINTMENT TODAY!
515-606-4255
gomobile.com/dm

BECAUSE LIFE KEEPS MOVING.
WE KEEP YOU ROLLING.

★ A WOMAN VETERAN-OWNED BUSINESS ★

SKIP THE GRILL. KEEP THE FLAVOR!



EL POLLO RANCHERO
COMIDA MEXICANA

ORDER TODAY!

\$5 OFF
Your \$30 Purchase! Expires 6/30/26

1301 East Watrous Ave, Ste B, Des Moines
elpollo-ranchero-iowa.com • 515-214-1527

Iowa Wildlife



1ST PLACE

First place: "Great Blue Heron Shakes off the Morning Dew," by Peyton Renning of Des Moines. Photo reprinted with permission

PHOTO NOT AVAILABLE — Honorable mention: "The World of the Northern Saw-whet," by Cody Davis of Grinnell



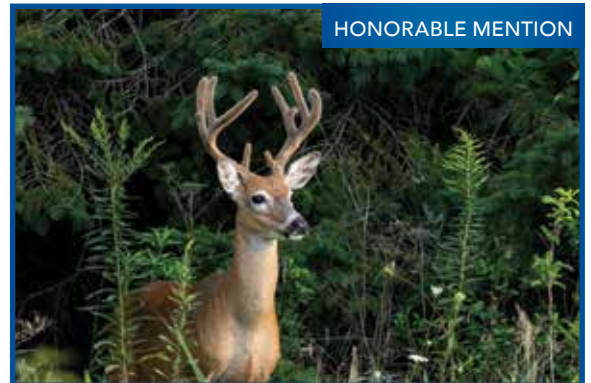
3RD PLACE

Third place: "Screech," by Sharon Scarff of Wayland. Photo reprinted with permission



2ND PLACE

Second place: "Red Fox Kit Backlit," by Jim Rose of Mason City. Photo reprinted with permission



HONORABLE MENTION

Honorable mention: Young Buck, Late Summer," by Justin Cox of Iowa City. Photo reprinted with permission



Why does it burn when I pee?

From UTIs to STIs, we've got you covered.

Schedule an appointment for testing and treatment today.



Specializing in you.

[PPNCS.org](https://ppnncs.org)

Iowans in Action

FEATURE STORY

1ST PLACE



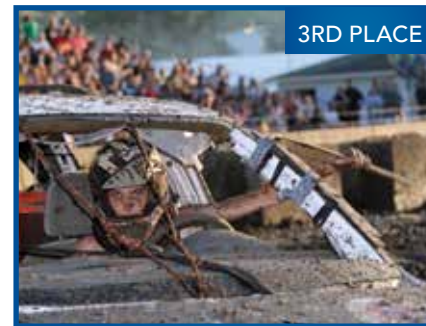
First place: "Crawling through the Corn," by Dave LaBelle of Dyersville. Photo reprinted with permission

2ND PLACE



Second place: "On the Move!," by Sharon Scarff of Wayland. Photo reprinted with permission

3RD PLACE



Third place: "The Agony of Defeat," by Scott Hoag of DeWitt. Photo reprinted with permission

HONORABLE MENTION



Honorable mention: "Hoover Blacksmith," by Jesse Streinz of West Branch. Photo reprinted with permission

HONORABLE MENTION



Honorable mention: "Smoky Job," by Will Hilsabeck of Peterson. Photo reprinted with permission

DOWNLOAD OUR APP FOR REWARDS

1235 Thomas Beck Rd, Des Moines
(515) 285-9005 • www.confluencebrewing.com

PATIO OPEN!

FREE ART EVENTS EVERY DAY!

JUNE 21-26

the avenues
INGERSOLL & GRAND

**MURAL UNVEILINGS • FAMILY-FRIENDLY CRAFTS
FOOD + DRINK SPECIALS • SIDEWALK CONCERT
& MORE CREATIVE COLLABORATIONS!**

FULL SCHEDULE → THEAVENUESDSM.COM

ROLLING WOK
ASIAN CUISINE

LOCALLY OWNED

**SKIP THE HEAT.
ROLL WITH FLAVOR!**

3600 SE CROSSROADS DR., STE F • GRIMES
www.RollingWokGrimes.com

**ORDER ONLINE!
TAKE OUT OR DELIVERY!**

The Robert D. Ray Best of Show winners:

FIRST PLACE: "Heaven With a Zip Code," Scott Hoag of DeWitt

SECOND PLACE: "Juniper Tree overlooking Fall Colors Along the Mississippi," Suhaib Khan of Glendale, Illinois

THIRD PLACE: "Great Blue Heron Shakes off the Morning Dew," Peyton Renning of Des Moines

YOUTH WINNER: "Driftless Falls," Zane Raza of West Des Moines

PUBLIC FAVORITE: "Glitter City," Scott Hoag of DeWitt



YOUTH WINNER: "Driftless Falls," Zane Raza of West Des Moines. Photo reprinted with permission

Hometown Pride

All taken in Hometown Pride program participant communities.



1ST PLACE

First place: "Heaven with a Zip Code," Scott Hoag of DeWitt (taken in Lost Nation). Photo reprinted with permission

PHOTO NOT AVAILABLE — Third place: "Nite Glow in Indianola, Iowa," Brian Abeling of West Des Moines (taken in Indianola)



2ND PLACE

Second place: "Life at Your Own Pace," by Scott Hoag of DeWitt (taken in Shellsburg). Photo reprinted with permission



HONORABLE MENTION

Honorable mention: "Holly Learning how to Plow with a Team of Horses," by Deb O'Brien of Jewell (taken in Albert City). Photo reprinted with permission

FEATURE STORY



High School Seniors | Maternity | Couples/Engagements | Small Family



Tracy Marie
PHOTOGRAPHY

Voted one of the BEST local photographers!

Specialized in natural light photography. 515-240-3648

WWW.TRACYMARIEPHOTOGRAPHY.ORG

Member of Professional Photography of Iowa and Professional Photography of America

Planning Your Next Move?

- Furniture Moving
- Boxes & Supplies
- Climate-Controlled Storage
- Packing Services
- Local & Long Distance
- Office Moving



MERITORIOUS MOVERS OF UNMITIGATED MOXIE

ADAMANTINE SPINE MOVING

515-207-2727

VOTED ONE OF THE BEST LOCAL MOVERS IN 2026



info@spinemoving.com
spinemoving.com

FAMILY/VETERAN-OWNED BUSINESS

Request your FREE moving quote now!



FREE TEQUILA SHOTS

During Karaoke Fridays & Saturdays 6PM-12AM!

Purchase a \$35 Tower Margarita or \$21.99 Margarita Pitcher,

GET FREE NACHOS!

La Bonita
Mexican Grill & Cantina

6611 University Ave, Windsor Heights ♦ labonitaiowa.com ♦ 515-255-411

Pet Guide



Inside

Hot weather safety tips

Paws on the road



STRESS-FREE PET CARE

RIGHT IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD!

Dog Walking | Cat Sitting | Overnight Care
Vacation Care | Private Boarding

Available throughout the Des Moines Metro!

JOIN THE *Club!*



BOOK YOUR PET'S NEXT APPOINTMENT TODAY!

CALL OR TEXT 515-981-3443

thepetcare.club

LOCALLY OWNED & OPERATED • INSURED & BONDED



Hot weather safety tips

We all love spending the long, sunny days of summer outdoors with our furry companions, but it's important to remember that like any season, summer comes with its hazards. To make sure you're prepared for whatever comes your way this summer, check out this list of summer safety tips from our experts at ASPCA Poison Control.

Visit the vet for an early-summer checkup. Make sure your pets get tested for heartworm if they aren't on year-round preventative medication.

Give pets plenty of fresh, clean water when it's hot or humid outdoors as pets can get dehydrated quickly. Make sure your pets have a shady place to get out of the sun, be careful not to over-exercise them and keep them indoors when it's extremely hot.

Know the symptoms of overheating in pets, which include excessive panting or difficulty breathing, increased heart and respiratory rate, drooling, mild weakness, stupor or even collapse. Symptoms can also include seizures, bloody diarrhea and vomit along with an elevated body temperature of over 104 degrees.

Never leave your animals alone in a parked vehicle. Not only can it lead to fatal heat stroke, but it's illegal in several states!

Know that animals with flat faces, like Pugs and Persian cats, are more susceptible to heat stroke since they cannot pant as effectively. These pets, along with the elderly, the overweight and those with heart or lung diseases, should be kept cool in air-conditioned rooms as much as possible.

Do not leave pets unsupervised around a pool. If you plan on spending time near a pool, lake or beach with your pet, make sure you give them fresh water and avoid letting them drink from the pool, or ingest ocean or lake water. When swimming, introduce your pets to water gradually and make sure they wear flotation devices when on boats. Rinse your dog off after swimming to remove chlorine or salt from their fur.

Keep all unscreened windows or doors in your home closed and make sure adjustable screens are tightly secured. Open unscreened windows pose a real danger to pets, who often fall out of them.

Feel free to trim longer hair on your dog, but never shave your dog. The layers of dogs' coats protect them from overheating and sunburn. Brushing cats more often than usual can prevent problems caused by excessive heat. And be sure that any sunscreen or insect repellent product you use on your pets is labeled specifically for use on animals.

Don't let dogs linger on hot asphalt when the temperature is very high. Being so close to the ground, your pooch's body can heat up quickly, and sensitive paw pads can burn. Keep walks during these times to a minimum.

Use caution when using herbicides and insecticides. When applying these products to your yard it is best to keep your pet away from the area being treated, follow directions on the packaging and prevent your pet from accessing the area until it is dry or has been appropriately watered. Fertilizer exposures are also more common in the summer, and while typically not serious, they can cause some stomach upset and should still be treated seriously. Keep fertilizers out of reach and your pet out of the treated area until it is dry. Additionally, keep citronella candles, tiki torch products and insect coils out of pets' reach as well.

Be mindful of what you are planting in your garden. Being outdoors means more exposure to different types of plants — both ornamental and garden plants.



It's important to familiarize yourself with the plants in your yard or garden and the potential hazard they may pose to your pets. Identifying possibly harmful plants ahead of time may prevent unwanted exposures. Always keep an eye on your pet when they are outside as even non-toxic plants can cause stomach upset if ingested.

Remember that food and drink can pose one of the biggest threats to pets. To keep them from having food that is too high in fat, or ingesting a food item that may be toxic, it's best that your pet sticks to their normal diet and treats. Be sure to also keep the garbage out of reach, as snooping noses can find their way to hazardous items. If you're enjoying alcoholic beverages at your festivities, be sure to keep your drinks up and away from pets and clean up any spills before they have a chance to take a taste.

Never use fireworks around pets. Exposure to lit fireworks can potentially result in severe burns or trauma, and even unused fireworks can contain hazardous materials. Many pets are also fearful of loud noises and can become lost, scared or disoriented, so it's best to keep your little guys safe from the noise in a quiet, sheltered and escape-proof area of your home.

Follow these expert tips to have a happy, healthy and fun summer with your furry friends!

If you suspect that your pet ingested something potentially toxic, please call your veterinarian or ASPCA Poison Control at (888) 426-4435 immediately. 🐾

Source: www.asPCA.org/pet-care/general-pet-care/hot-weather-safety-tips

At Ashworth Road Animal Hospital,

PETS ARE family!

COMPASSIONATE CARE FOR SMALL ANIMALS & EXOTICS

including preventative medicine, laser surgery, ultrasound, dentistry, internal medicine and more.

ASHWORTH ROAD ANIMAL + HOSPITAL

515-225-1807
5902 Ashworth Road, WDM
www.AshworthPet.com




Paws on the road

Tips for a dog-friendly vacation

(BPT) Whether you're seeking sandy beaches or fresh mountain air, you can make your road trip even better with a furry co-pilot.

Traveling with your pup does require some preparation. To ensure a successful and stress-free journey with your four-legged friend, check out these five helpful tips.

1. Safety first!

If you haven't already, invest in a pet seat belt, car seat or travel crate so your dog can travel comfortably and safely. Not only will these safety products keep your pup safe, but they also prevent your pet from distracting you while driving. Find dog seat belts and more at Chewy.com. You can also use these Chewy dog seat belts, car seats and crates for everyday trips around town after your vacation.

2. Pack a travel kit

Put together a travel kit with your pet's essentials. A travel kit should include items to help keep your furry companion comfortable, happy and safe while on vacation.

Besides water, food, treats, bowls and waste bags, make sure to include your dog's favorite toys, bedding and grooming supplies. Don't forget a leash and collar with ID tags just in case you get separated during your adventures.

3. Plan pet-friendly stops

As you choose your route, research pet-friendly stops, such as rest areas and parks that welcome pets. Plan to stop every 2-4 hours. However, you may have to stop more frequently if your pup has travel anxiety or becomes motion sick.

4. Prioritize exercise and playtime

Stops aren't just for meals and potty breaks. Just like you, your four-legged friend needs to stretch their legs and burn off some energy. During rest stops, take time to exercise and play with your pet.

If you stop at a park with trails, plan to go hiking. At a pet-friendly rest area, play fetch or simply run around. Whatever physical activities you decide to do, exercise and playtime during a long road trip will keep your dog engaged and entertained. You'll get a workout, too!

5. Keep cool and hydrated

Depending on where you plan to travel, your destination may get even hotter than what your furry family member is used to back at home. Keep your pup cool and hydrated by offering plenty of fresh water during rest stops. Consider purchasing a cooling mat or vest for your pet to help them stay comfortable. Most importantly, never leave your dog in a parked car on a hot day. 🐾

Are you the FACE OF 515?

The backbone of any business is its people, and every industry has a leader. FACES OF (515) is an annual special advertising feature in the July issue of CITYVIEW. Your company is one of the most trusted names and faces in your industry. You are at the top of your game, keeping your customers happy and moving our region forward. Brand yourself as one of the FACES in the most read magazine in the metro.

HURRY! DEADLINE IS JUNE 8!



Aaron Burns
515-953-4822 x330
aaron@dmcityview.com



Mary Fowler
515-953-4822 x311
mary@dmcityview.com



Allyssa Ertz
515-953-4822 x312
allyssa@dmcityview.com



**COMING
IN JULY!**

CITYVIEW
WWW.DMCITYVIEW.COM

BOOK REVIEWS

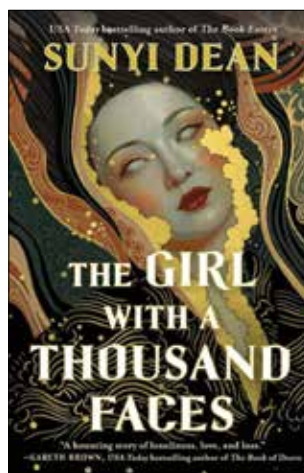
COURTESY OF BEAVERDALE BOOKS

'The Girl With A Thousand Faces'

Sunyi Dean already had me locked into her twisted narratives with "The Book Eaters" and her endlessly inventive sentences, but this one hit differently. It is set in Kowloon in 1970s Hong Kong, one of the most fascinating places in human history, and she absolutely uses that setting. Every back alley and stacked-high corridor feels alive, grimy and slightly threatening.

Mercy Chan is a ghost talker working for the local triad. Having pieced together a life from a blank slate, she washed up on shore with no past and no memories. Still, she built something out of nothing until a malevolent spirit starts to make everything difficult. What follows is part gothic mystery, part war story, part meditation on grief and generational trauma told in a dizzying series of narratives and nightmares.

Ghosts, spirit cats and monsters are one thing, but what really sealed this for me was the human horror underpinning it all. The Japanese occupation, the things families carry and bury and pass down without meaning to. This is a story about women who will not forgive and women who remember everything, whether they want to or not. ■ — *Review by Julie Goodrich*



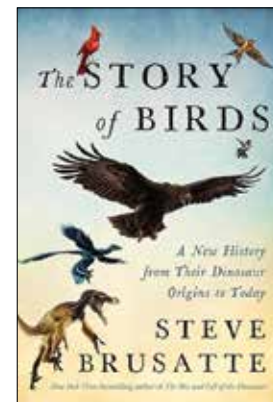
By Sunyi Dean
5/5/26
320 pages
\$29.99
Tor Publishing

'The Story of Birds: A New History from Their Dinosaur Origins to the Present'

Stephen Brusatte is the paleontologist behind several brilliant popular science books that I have adored over the last decade. He has this gift for making deep time feel visceral and immediate and absolutely enthralling. He traces birds across 150 million years of history, from small feathered theropods all the way to hummingbirds hovering at your feeder, and somehow it never once feels like a textbook. It feels like a friend who just got back from the Cretaceous and cannot wait to tell you everything.

And the creatures. Oh, the creatures. Penguin-sized gorillas. Elephant birds with eggs the size of watermelons. Demon ducks that are heavier than cows. Science is so strange and so wonderful, and Brusatte just leans all the way in. I love that his enthusiasm just leaps off the page.

My favorite part of books that teach facts and wonder in equal measure is how they inevitably force me to see the world differently. There is always an extra glow for me when I know more about something, and these days the robins and the finches are even more special. I highly recommend this for anyone looking for some awe. ■ — *Review by Julie Goodrich*



By Stephen Brusatte
4/28/26
448 pages
\$35
Mariner Books

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

FREE

SENIOR EDUCATION

Educate
Equip
Empower



STRAIGHT TALK
Senior Living Series

NEVER A SALES PITCH . . . JUST STRAIGHT TALK!

STRAIGHT TALK ABOUT

HEARING LOSS & DEMENTIA:
THE OVERLOOKED CONNECTION

JUNE SEMINAR

Thursday | June 18, 2026
10:00 - 11:30 AM
DOORS OPEN AT 9:30 AM

Location
West 48 Conference Center
1601 48th Street,
West Des Moines IA

RSVP Online or Call
SEATING IS LIMITED
StraightTalkSeniorLivingSeries.com
515-321-7059

Co-Moderators
Lisa Yegge
Mary Eikenberry, Founder

Hearing loss is **not just an ear issue—it's a brain issue.** Ignoring it does not make it harmless. Treating hearing loss is a form of **self-advocacy and independence.**

- Why untreated hearing loss increases dementia risk
- How the brain struggles when sound is missing
- Early warning signs most families overlook
- The real impact of isolation on memory and thinking
- What's the truth about all these hearing aids?

No sugar-coating. Just the facts you need to make informed choices.









AWARD-WINNING
SEAFOOD, SOUP AND
SUSHI FOR 42 YEARS.

Come see why we are Iowa's
Premier Seafood Source.

WaterfrontSeafoodMarket.com

2900 University Ave, West Des Moines | 515-223-5106
2414 SE Tones Dr, Ankeny | 515-963-1940



OUR TRAVELING COCKTAIL PARTY IS BACK!

CITYVIEW'S

2026 DOWNTOWN Summer STIR



10 SAMPLE
DRINKS
\$25*

FRIDAY, JUNE 26 • 5-9 P.M.
DOWNTOWN DES MOINES

PARTICIPATING LOCATIONS:



TICKETS AND INFORMATION AVAILABLE AT
SUMMERSTIRS.DMCITYVIEW.COM



*\$25 PRE-PURCHASE ONLINE PRICE. \$35 AT THE DOOR.

INSIDE
RENAISSANCE
SAVERY HOTEL
REVELRY
ROOM



LOCUST STREET

COWLES COMMONS

WALNUT STREET

4TH STREET

3RD STREET

COURT AVENUE

SCAN FOR
INTERACTIVE
MAP!



JOHNNY'S
HALL OF FAME



★ THE
STUFFED
OLIVE

CHECK-IN
TENT

TIPSY
CROW

HESSEN HAUS



Hessen Haus

101 Fourth St.



HESSEN PUNCH

Malibu Rum, pineapple juice and
Fruit Juicy Red Hawaiian Punch



BLUEBERRY LEMONADE

Western Son Blueberry Vodka,
Simply Lemonade, Haus-made
blueberry simple syrup and
fresh mint

A GERMAN-STYLE BIER HALL

HAPPY HOUR Monday-Friday: 3-6pm

\$5 HALF LITERS \$10 LITERS \$20 BOOTS 1/2 PRICE ON SELECT APPETIZERS



HESSEN HAUS

— — —
BRAUEN PUB

101 4th St, Downtown Des Moines

Mon, Tue, Wed, Thur 11:00 AM - 11:00 PM
Fri, Sat 11:00 AM - 2:00 AM | Sun 11:00 AM - 10:00 PM



Find these
featured
products at

CITYVIEW'S

FRIDAY, JUNE 26
5-9PM

2026
DOWNTOWN
Summer
STIR



10X
DISTILLED

**WESTERN
SON**
PINEY WOODS
BLUEBERRY
FLAVORED VODKA
30% ALC/VOL 750mL (60 Proof)

WESTERN SON
Makers & Merchants of Fine Texas Spirits
DISTILLERY
EST. 2011

10X
DISTILLED

**WESTERN
SON**
CENTRAL PRAIRIE
STRAWBERRY
FLAVORED VODKA
30% ALC/VOL 750mL (60 Proof)

WESTERN SON
Makers & Merchants of Fine Texas Spirits
DISTILLERY
EST. 2011

10X
DISTILLED

**WESTERN
SON**
BIG STRIPE
WATERMELON
FLAVORED VODKA
30% ALC/VOL 750mL (60 Proof)

WESTERN SON
Makers & Merchants of Fine Texas Spirits
DISTILLERY
EST. 2011

10X
DISTILLED

**WESTERN
SON**
SOUTH TEXAS
PRICKLY PEAR
FLAVORED VODKA
30% ALC/VOL 750mL (60 Proof)

WESTERN SON
Makers & Merchants of Fine Texas Spirits
DISTILLERY
EST. 2011

10X
DISTILLED

**WESTERN
SON**
SOUTH PLAINS
CUCUMBER
FLAVORED VODKA
30% ALC/VOL 750mL (60 Proof)

WESTERN SON
Makers & Merchants of Fine Texas Spirits
DISTILLERY
EST. 2011

10X
DISTILLED

**WESTERN
SON**
HIGH PLAINS
RASPBERRY
FLAVORED VODKA
30% ALC/VOL 750mL (60 Proof)

WESTERN SON
Makers & Merchants of Fine Texas Spirits
DISTILLERY
EST. 2011



401 Locust St. Inside Renaissance Des Moines Savery Hotel



STRAWBERRY SHORTCAKE

Western Son Strawberry Vodka, coconut rum and heavy whipping cream



SAVERY MULE

Western Son Strawberry Vodka, ginger beer, basil and lime

REVELRY ROOM BAR & KITCHEN
SCOPRI PRIVATE DINING

DINE & DRINK IN STYLE
 PERFECT FOR MICRO WEDDINGS OR CORPORATE DINNERS.

Discover exceptional dining and craft cocktails at the Renaissance Des Moines Savery Hotel, where historic elegance meets modern culinary excellence.

RESERVE YOUR PRIVATE SPACE TODAY
 515-365-7241

401 Locust, Des Moines, IA 50309



103 Third St.



WESTERN BLUEBERRY MULE

Western Son Vodka, ginger beer lime juice, garnished with a lime and blueberries



WESTERN BLUE HAWAIIAN

Western Son Vodka original, grenadine, lemonade, pineapple juice, topped with blue curaçao, lemon, strawberry and blueberries

DOWNTOWN'S LARGEST PATIO BAR

OPEN AT 9AM SATURDAYS DURING FARMERS MARKET

BLOODY MARY & MIMOSA BAR

Tipsy Crow

102 SW 3rd STREET DOWNTOWN DM
 STEPS FROM PRINCIPAL PARK • 243-9338
 MON-THU 3PM-CLOSE | FRI-SAT 11AM-CLOSE



302 Court Ave.



CUCUMBER CRUSH

Western Son Cucumber Vodka, pineapple juice and lime



WATERMELON WAVE

Western Son Watermelon Vodka, Sprite and grenadine



216 Court Ave.



LEMON DROP

Vodka, Limoncello and sweet and sour



LYCHEE BLOSSOM

Vodka, St. Germain, lemon juice and lychee puree

HAPPY HOUR
4PM – 6PM
Every Weekday!



Email us at bookmyparty@johnnyshalloffame.com to book private party and events!

515-280-6679 • 302 Court Ave., Des Moines
www.johnnyshalloffame.com



DES MOINES' LARGEST
MARTINI & TAPAS MENUS



216 COURT AVE, SUITE 100, DES MOINES • (515) 243-4456

The Stuffed Olive Des Moines stuffedoliveDM @StuffedDM @stuffed_olive_dsm

AROUND TOWN

PHOTOS BY ALLYSSA ERTZ



Bella Arpy and Ashlynn Rose



Jackie Larick and Steven Moore



Julie Johnson and Karen Daniel



Megan and Lucas Green



Lilian Schultheis and Sadye Scott-Hainchek

FARMERS MARKET

in Historic Valley Junction,
West Des Moines, on May 14.



Karley Davis and Zack Miller



Jamie Winston, Kris Teig and Megan Brooks



Nalan and Brice Musgrove and Echo and Ed Slauson

BELLY UP TO:

EAT & DRINK

THE ATLAS ROOM

7001 Westown Parkway, Suite 120,
West Des Moines
www.atlasroomwdm.com
Tuesday through Saturday, 4 -11 p.m.
Closed Sunday and Monday.

Hidden in plain sight

The Atlas Room brings speakeasy glamour to West Des Moines.

BY JACKIE WILSON

If you are looking for an expertly handcrafted cocktail in West Des Moines, don't search for the word "bar" on the outdoor signage. Instead, look for a beauty salon and spa.

Hidden inside Serenity Couture Salon & Spa in the former Wells Fargo building is West Des Moines' newest speakeasy, The Atlas Room. No password is required, but guests will need a creative mind to discover how to enter. That's part of the appeal.

Once past the barber chair (hint, hint) and through the massive door, visitors are welcomed by a dark hallway leading into a space that feels refined, intriguing and approachable all at once. Comfortable chairs and plush sofas topped with oversized throw pillows create the atmosphere of a stylishly decorated living room.

A warm glow reflects off the décor from backlighting throughout the lounge. Videos of world maps and geography nod to the origins of cocktail flavors, while jazz, big band and upbeat music play through a hi-fi stereo system. Curious about the soundtrack? The iPad menu displays both the song title and artist.

The same iPad menu showcases the latest cocktails, complete with colorful photos and detailed ingredient lists. Drinks are organized into categories including air, land, sea and destination-inspired classics.

Among the standouts is The Green Line, made with 400 Conejos Mezcal, Warner's Harrington Gin, celery syrup, lemon and pineapple, then garnished with a celery sprig (\$18). The ingredients blend into a balanced, approachable cocktail.

The Espresso Martini features Madagascan vanilla

bean-infused Belvedere vodka, espresso and cane syrup (\$22). A thick, creamy foam tops the drink, elevating it beyond the typical coffeehouse version.

The VP's Old Fashioned (\$24) arrives with an Atlas-logo ice cube. More than a half-dozen custom ice designs appear throughout the menu. Guests looking to splurge can order from the Luxury Collection, including a one-ounce pour of Rémy Martin Louis XIII cognac for \$300.

The full bar also offers wine by the glass or bottle, along with several local beers starting at \$8.

Owners Doug and Jana Van Polen recruited Henry Avila as director of beverage and operations. Drawing from experience with high-end cocktail programs, Avila brings influences from Miami's South Beach and New York to create a polished, hospitality-driven experience.

The Atlas Room also offers three membership tiers, each including access to select cocktails, tasting invitations and other perks. A wooden wall lined with locked compartments stores reserved liquor bottles for members.

Food is not currently available, though the owners hope to eventually offer charcuterie trays or partner with a restaurant in the building.

Whether it is a special occasion, a splurge-worthy night out or simply an escape from the ordinary, The Atlas Room delivers a speakeasy experience unlike anything else in the suburbs. ■

Jackie Wilson has written hundreds of articles for CITYVIEW and the Iowa Living magazines. She has covered many ordinary people living extraordinary lives.



WINNER OF CITYVIEW'S MARGARITA WARS



THANK YOU FOR VOTING US THE WINNER OF MARGARITA WARS

HAPPY HOUR CALLED,
AND YOU'RE INVITED!



JOIN US FOR MARGARITAS
MONDAY - FRIDAY 11AM-5PM & ALL DAY WEDNESDAY

1250 8th Street • 515-221-7981
5465 Mills Civic Pkwy #101 • 515-221-7981
SE corner across from Target



Gateway Market Café — a diner for the 21st century

Hipper and trendier than its predecessors in the genre



GATEWAY MARKET CAFÉ
2002 Woodland Ave.
515-243-1754
www.gatewaymarket.com
Monday through Thursday:
10:30 a.m. to 9 p.m.
Friday through Sunday:
8 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Knowing that George Formaro's love of horror stories inspired Zombie Burger + Drink Lab, I used to assume that Gateway Market and Café was named after a bloody piece of American cultural history. The LaBianca family, murdered by Charles Manson's followers, owned an identically named chain of stores. After all, Gateway here sits kiddy corner from Des Moines' most venerable cemetery.

Formaro, the creative force behind both restaurants plus others, said he was unaware of the connection "at least on any conscious level." Gateway Market and its café are still compelling stories with much happier endings than their infamous namesakes.

Formaro's career as a restaurateur began when he hand-built South Union bakery next to Graziano's centenarian grocery store on the southside. When Gateway was being conceived, nearly 20 years ago, it became necessary to move the entire bakery operation into the lower level of the then new store. As bread is the staff of life, great bread is staff that allowed Des Moines to raise a great food culture.

South Union and the precursor of La Mie arose in Des Moines about the same time. Before those bakeries, food travelers such as I would carry bread home from both coasts and Chicago. Now it makes the difference between good diners and great ones.

The symbiosis between Gateway's retail store and café conjures charms not found elsewhere. Buy a bottle of wine in the store and drink it without

corkage fees in the café. Cheeses from the cheese shop are fine in the café. Aspects (meat, cheese, wine, fish) of the supermarket rank with Whole Foods in quality but at lesser prices. The bakery is totally superior. For instance, where else can you find both French and Italian baguettes?

Gateway's brightest attraction, though, is its café. Many of its best parts are invisible. Poultry is brined. Ramen is made with bone stock, or sesame soy miso in the vegetarian edition. Noodles are scratch made, too. The burgers are constructed with six-ounce patties of "George's grind," a mix that includes brisket and short ribs in its secret formula. Before AI was common, Formaro paid translators to make sense of Japanese recipes for ramen broth and noodles.

Gateway's best-in-town fish and chips are the result of Formaro's dedication to the dish; he is a card-carrying member of the United Kingdom's National Federation of Fish Fryers. I am not making that up. Hummus (red pepper), guacamole and artichoke dip are so popular that they are stocked in the grocery section. Best-in-town mac and cheese is made with different recipes for different occasions.

Dinners include a choice of side dishes that include some things rarely seen in diner style cafés — roasted beets, jalapeno creamed corn, Caprese tomatoes, quinoa salad, tabouli, potatoes O'Brien, etc. Vegan burgers are available in two forms — Beyond Burger and Formaro's own black bean patties. Tofu comes

from different recipes in breakfast and dinner options. Vegan chicken is made with seitan.

Some things changed out of necessity since opening. First of all, it only became profitable after four years. Bone-in fried chicken was retired because it was too difficult to make it consistently in a kitchen that constantly experiences the same turnover that haunts all restaurants.

Breakfast was also retired on weekdays for lack of demand. On weekends, it's probably the busiest time of the week in the café. Of course, South Union's exquisite pecan rolls, muffins, cinnamon rolls, cookies, kolaches, biscuits and toasts star. Waiting for a table, rarely a problem, is not so annoying when one can get his shopping done or sip beer or wine in the interim. Biscuits are exceptional, the result of scores of Formaro trials. French toast is made with challah, roasted pecans, fresh strawberries and real maple syrup.

Bottom line

Gateway offers an affordable excellence, which appeals to its neighborhood. It's a new-century diner that's hipper and trendier than its predecessors in the genre. ■

Jim Duncan is a food and art writer who has been covering the central Iowa scene for more than five decades.



Siricasso at Baja Cocina

Over street tacos, beans, rice, eggs, Jarritos, Mexican Coke, and both corn and flour tortillas, we talked about his 30 years voyage of self-discovery.

Siriaco Garcia is a prolific Chicano artist who has installed more than 60 commissioned murals in central Iowa and Minnesota under his nom de plume Siricasso. To our mind, he is redefining 21st century Iowa more than anyone else. Siricasso has covered walls mostly with scenes of hope and assimilation. He also paints more personal scenes that are ripped from his own evolving life story.

We asked him to lunch, and he chose Pedro and Claudia Cruz' La Baja Cocina Mexicana, just plain "Baja Cocina" to most fans. Over street tacos, beans, rice, eggs, Jarritos, Mexican Coke, and both corn and flour tortillas, we talked about his 30 years voyage of self-discovery.

First, what does he like about Baja Cocina?

"My mural here was my first in Des Moines itself not Ames or Marshalltown. This patio was where I held my first 'Sip n Paint' activation in Des Moines rather than in Ames. We had a grant, so I made it free. I brought 100 canvasses for kids and others to paint on. We ran out and had to go buy more. Then Wells Fargo commissioned the mural, and Wells Fargo employees came for four days to help paint it. That led to another activation at Columbus Park. I love the community aspect of my art. I really feel that here."

The mural in Baja Cocina depicts typical Day of the Dead iconography — skeletons in mariachi suits, sunflowers, musical instruments. And then, there's the Iowa State Capitol? Talk about mergence.

"I identify with that — Iowa and ancient rituals, Aztec dancers and the Virgin Mary, Kickapoo and Apache, Chicano and mainstream. That's my life."

In a recent show at Moberg Galley, more personal, painful stories were told. What is Siricasso's life story in 10 minutes?

"I was born in Faribault, Minnesota. I moved 12 or 13 times between elementary and high school. Sometimes we moved three times in a single school year. Mostly we moved between Minnesota and Eagle Pass, Texas. My family has roots in South Texas that go back generations.

"My father was in and out of prison and drug rehab, and my mom did her best to take care of me and four younger siblings, plus three older brothers by different fathers. But that (stress) got to her. She started hanging out with the wrong people, and she was arrested, her papers were 'lost' by authorities and she was sent to retention for deportation in Omaha. My aunt Rita in Ames took us in.

"In seventh grade in Texas, I got in trouble painting graffiti and having an Exacto knife in school. I was sent to an alternative school, but I was the only Latino kid there and didn't fit in. I was sent to live with my aunt in Iowa. I had one Walmart bag with all my clothes in it. We didn't wear shoes much in south Texas. I remember getting a \$60 pair of shoes for my birthday and an iPad. That opened up dreams of art and music.

"But I got in fights, and my aunt gave me a last chance. I found a job at McDonald's and a great art teacher at Ames High, Shelli Hassebrock. I had an art show in high school, and the Ames Tribune wrote about it. I got a scholarship offer from Marshalltown Community College (MCC). That made me the first member of my family ever to go to college. MCC changed my life, maybe saved it. It showed me that my dream of living as an artist was possible. I also met my wife there."

That story has to be a romance worth telling?

"I was always looking for scholarships to afford to stay in college. I worked with a counselor who helped me find them. I had seen her daughter Stephanie a couple times there and thought, 'She's so beautiful.' Then I gave a speech to 1,000 students in my second year there. Stephanie sent me a Facebook message afterwards, and that message was all I could think about until I introduced myself to her. She was sitting in the bleachers, and our eyes locked. We talked for three hours until they turned the lights off. Since I was a student ambassador, I offered her a tour of the campus. Then we went to McDonald's and talked another hour. What can I say? We have three kids — Siena, Santiago and Siriaco — and have been married 11 years."

While most of Siricasso's murals are happy scenes of assimilation and gaiety, his smaller paintings are more biographical. One, "The Coolest People in the World Hide Out in Iowa," includes 36 separate painted panels, with subjects ranging from Caitlyn Clark to a firefighter dressed like a luchador. Another depicts one of the worst moments of Siricasso's life.

"That one is from my mom's deportation hearing in Omaha. The proceedings were surreal. The judge was present only through a TV monitor. Mom was in a striped jump suit, like an animal. The painting is of the moment after he pronounced sentence and she pleaded with him to allow her to hug her son."

Most paintings and murals are full of vibrant colors. Were they always his choice of media?



"No, the opposite. I only used pencil and colored pencil for years. Black and white were my colors, maybe because that was how I saw life. I hated paints. I lacked the patience to use paints, all the layering. I hated traditional subjects, especially still life fruit. I changed before my media of choice became colorful."

Who are artists he admires?

"Lyle Miller. He's a great Lakota artist, and our stories are very similar. We did a residency together in Mitchell, South Dakota. His art talks the talk of real life. Mr. Cartoon and David Gonzales. They are Chicano artists. I got my 'Smile and Cry Later' theme with clowns from them."

Siricasso paints on just about anything that is handy.

"I have painted shoes, jackets, light cases, jeans, masks — especially during COVID — socks, jeans, car hoods, ceilings, floors, chairs."

Where can one find Siricasso merch?

It is <https://siricasso.bigcartel.com>. Somehow, I lost my domain name after five years. One day I clicked on it, and it had become a Chinese gambling site. So now I go through bigcartel.com." ■

Jim Duncan is a food and art writer who has been covering the central Iowa scene for more than five decades.



FIREWORKS, FAMILY and FARM MEMORIES

Annual trip to Missouri for illegal fireworks became a cherished Independence Day tradition filled with explosions, laughter and nostalgia.

By John Busbee

Fireworks were an annual point of contention on our three-generation family farm. Grandma was agin' em. Grandpa was for' em, as were the four grandkids. Mom was Switzerland on this black powder issue. It was a standoff. Grandma's vote weighed heavily against all others, but the deciding factor was beyond question: This was all in honor of the celebration of our nation's independence, our freedom from an oppressive monarchy. Since all the explosive, ear-ringing pyrotechnic extravaganza was to honor our country, Grandma begrudgingly became an abstaining member of the voting forum. Fireworks did happen, albeit on a small scale, on that little farmstead 'tween Winfield and Mount Union, Iowa.

Shews, games, sports, guns, bells, bonfires and illuminations

Before recalling our family's firecracker adventures, let us take a quick dive into America's history. The Continental Congress voted in favor of independence on July 2, 1776, and two days later the delegates from the 13 colonies adopted the Declaration of Independence. John Adams' letter to his wife, Abigail, proclaimed, "[This day] ought to be solemnized with Pomp and Parade, with Shews, Games, Sports, Guns, Bells, Bonfires and Illuminations from one End of this Continent to the other from this Time forward forever more." The tradition of setting off fireworks on the Fourth of July began in Philadelphia on July 4, 1777, during the first organized celebration of Independence Day. Ships' cannons fired a 13-gun salute to honor the 13 colonies. Since then, America has released a barrage of pyrotechnic spectacles, usually the culmination of parades, celebrations, history, barbecues, ball games and more.

It should be noted that America did not invent the use of fireworks for such celebratory patriotism. This was a longstanding tradition in European countries and beyond. We simply "Americanized" the centuries-old tradition. Our forefathers loved the pageantry displayed in shucking the yoke of tyranny.



Kneen family farmhouse circa 1950s

SUMMER LESSONS STARTING SOON!

REGISTER TODAY!

Email, call or stop in.

A WATER-CENTRIC HEALTH RETREAT

- Yoga
- Survival Skills Swim Clinic
- Advanced Swimming Skills
- Pre-Competitive Swim Clinic
- In-water Pilates
- Chair Yoga
- Trauma Informed Yoga
- Pelvic Floor Yoga
- Aquatic Aerobics
- Aqua Meditari®
- Water Safety
- Water Walking
- Lap Swimming
- ASD Swimming Lessons
- Adult Swimming Lessons
- Children's Swimming Lessons

ALL AGES AND ABILITIES WELCOME!

NATAVI
A swim school for all ages...

NataviSwim.com
(515) 300-3282
275 SW Brookside Dr, Grimes

EMAIL, CALL OR STOP BY TO REGISTER.

SOAK UP THE SUN!

SNACK ON THE RUN!

- Street Food
- Refreshing Beverages
- Snack Area

Find us on EatFuti

SNACKANDGOIA.COM • 515-987-8066 • 15700 HICKMAN RD, SUITE 110, CLIVE

SPRING CLEANING FOR A SUPERIOR LOOK

Offering Residential and Commercial Services to Des Moines and Surrounding Areas

CONTACT US TODAY FOR A FREE QUOTE

515-782-9727 | Des Moines, IA | www.elitecleaningdm.com



WEDDING COLLECTIVE VENDOR LIST

From attire to venues, these talented wedding pros are here to help bring your dream day to life. Support them and let them make your celebration unforgettable.

ATTIRE & ACCESSORIES

IOWA DIAMOND

515-246-8070 | www.iowadiamond.com

SKEFFINGTON'S FORMAL WEAR

515-283-0453 | www.skeffingtons.com

CAKE & DESSERT

CHACHA'S HILAND BAKERY

515-282-4059 | www.chachashilandbakery.com

MUSIC, DJS & ENTERTAINMENT

COMPLETE WEDDINGS + EVENTS

515-266-1355 | www.completewedo.com

PHOTO & VIDEO

COMPLETE WEDDINGS + EVENTS

515-266-1355 | www.completewedo.com

PLANNING, DECOR & RENTALS

CLASSIC EVENTS & PARTIES

515-266-3223 | www.cep-ia.com

DES MOINES EVENT RENTALS

515-377-0999 | www.dsmevents.com

TRAVEL & TRANSPORTATION

ROYAL RIDES

515-803-0671 | www.royalridesdm.com

VENUES

CURATE EAST VILLAGE EVENT VENUE

515-523-0147 | www.curatedsm.com

WEDDING SHOWS & EXPOS

FOREVER IN LOVE LLC

515-943-8564 | www.foreverinlovelc.com

Across the border

Fast forward to the 1960s southeast Iowa Kneen family farm. Almost all forms of fireworks had been banned in Iowa since 1931, when a young boy dropped a sparkler into a fireworks display, setting off a conflagration that destroyed 20 buildings in downtown Spencer. The law did not stop Iowans from driving to Missouri, where fireworks could be purchased. That, plus cheap cigarettes and cheap gasoline, often had Iowans driving across the border to save a few bucks.

Every highway traversing the border into the Show Me State had at least one fireworks stand waiting on t'other side, as cash registers rang up a steady inrush of Iowa dollars. Iowa law enforcement seemingly looked the other way, although hauling a load of forbidden booty tickled our innards with a bootlegger's rush. Even in recent years, Iowa-based family gatherings around July Fourth involved fireworks, especially with The Timber's pond providing a reflective enhancement of the airborne displays.

Grandpa was our mule, since he was the only "for'em" voter with a driver's license. As we were ready to depart for another clandestine trip for ill-gotten Missouri explosive plunder, Grandma fired a final judgmental dig.

"Well," she would sniff. "If you're going to get those firecrackers, why don't I save you a trip. Just give me your money and I'll burn it now!"

We were not phased. We burst through her condemnation, which still hung in the air, and excitedly clambered into the car. After a mile and a half of gravel road, we hit the county hardtop and headed west to Highway 218, then south. Just past Donnellson, we took the Iowa Highway 394 cutoff through Argyle before it crossed the Des Moines River into Missouri.

The final passage before reaching our mecca of explosive mayhem was a cantilever truss bridge. This 1937-era span ushered us into St. Francisville, our black powder paradise. After traversing the 763-foot length to the Missouri end of the bridge, a restrictive barrier arm blocked our progress. Had the cops caught us? Who had ratted us out — Grandma?

No, it was the toll booth operator, a crusty codger who extended his gnarly hand for the two bits required to complete the journey across his bridge. Our held breath released. We made it. The old Pontiac rumbled into Missouri and we were greeted by a bevy of seductive banners promising Iowans a mind-boggling variety of ways to exchange cash for things literally designed to go up in smoke.

Grandpa pulled into one of the roadside vendors. We stepped inside the tent, and a bedazzling array of captivating graphics beckoned. Shelves upon shelves, stacked to the top of the tent. Black Cats, spinners, cherry bombs, bottle rockets, Roman candles, fountains, whizzers and more — they were all there, waiting for our discerning evaluation before we dipped into the meager depths of our pocket cash.

The disproportioned graphics on the fireworks packaging showed Lilliputian humanoids launching massive fireworks. The Black Cat image was especially foreboding, a source of future nightmares.

We walked past gigantic Roman candles and rockets, far out of our price range. We could dream, though. Grandpa escorted us, as he was the one who had to make the final purchases. Exiting with the bounce of well-armed explosive artists, we raced back to the car.

The return to the farm was uneventful, albeit with a gut-deep twinge of looking over our shoulders for police to stop and arrest us, or at least confiscate our illegal contraband. We continued to assess and reassess our carefully plotted purchases. We discussed how we would ignite them and imagined how they would perform.

The acrid smell of spent black powder

We arrived home just before suppertime. Grandma's reception was silent and cold, body language that shouted her thoughts about our recent acquisitions. We were Christmas Eve-fidgety, knowing that after supper we would be trying some of our newfound wonders.

Our meal was a rushed affair, but the cleanup process remained the same. Grandma's icy stare indicated no tolerance for skipping out on our duties of post-meal cleanup. Tasks completed, we dashed through the sun porch, grabbed our treasures and headed outside.

Grandpa was already comfortably ensconced in his classic tubular steel cantilever lawn chair. He was not required to partake in any of the post-meal chores. He casually rocked a bit in the giving tension of the chair, with perhaps a glint of expectation of what was to come. A spark of boyhood joy still flickered inside his weathered body.

We carefully displayed our modest assortment of fireworks: sparklers, Black Cats, bottle rockets, spinners and whizzers. Our impatience negated waiting until dark. We needed the adrenaline rush from explosions, crackles, pops and bursts of sound. The acrid smell of spent black powder was an intoxicating elixir.

The first order of business was to maximize the expenditure of resources. In other words, we wanted the joy of our own bombs bursting in air to last as long as possible. Task one was to take the packs of Black Cats, all braided together, and separate them into individual firecrackers. The vendor wanted buyers to light an entire pack and experience the series of explosions as the fuses sequentially lit so they would purchase vast quantities of the firecracker. We felt that was a terrible waste.

An entire pack of Black Cats, blown to smithereens, in less than 10 seconds. Bombastic sacrilege.

The Lord of Ignition

Grandpa surveyed the situation from his garden throne, helping rein in any overly enthusiastic ignitions of fireworks. He was the official Lord of Ignition, as he had a lighter. In the early days on the farm, he smoked cigarettes, often lighting firecrackers from them. He later gave cigarettes up for his pipe, and the cherry smoke-scented olfactory memory remains cherished. He would light the punks for us, those ubiquitous pressed sawdust wands. Once lit, punks would glow with a fuse-igniting ember, needing occasional encouragement to continue burning by blowing on them.

Grandpa also took snarky pleasure in tricking the farm cats. If a cat strayed near our activities, he would light a firecracker and toss it close to them. Their curiosity drew them close, and the subsequent explosion triggered an impressive feline leap into the air. When their feet touched earth again, I swear each cat gave Grandpa a glaring look. If that look were interpreted, the language would be much too coarse for our young ears.

The cats would make a quick dash away from the scene of their unpleasant experience, probably less one of their lives. Grandpa's low-rumble belly laugh always followed this bit of chicanery, and the cats quickly learned to avoid any seeming edibles this elderly lord of the farm tossed their way.



The author's first visit to his grandparents' farm. They claimed his mother didn't want to travel in the early 1950s with a baby, so shipped him via rural free delivery. The author claims being too young to remember, but had a feeling that fireworks would be in his future.



HIGH YIELD SAVINGS ACCOUNT

3.70% APY*

Grow your savings All Summer Long



Open your account today!
Scan this code, contact a banker at iowatrustbank.com or call 515-225-6229.

*Annual Percentage Yield (APY) effective as of 1/18/2026. No minimum balance to obtain APY. \$100 minimum balance required to open account. The rate may change after the account is opened. Deposits are FDIC insured up to applicable limits. Other terms and conditions may apply.

MEMBER FDIC

Kid brother genius

We kids found imaginative applications for our fireworks. Some needed no additional thought, such as the whizzers and spinners. These had a special coolness factor as we carefully set them on the concrete slab — the general reference for a large area of concrete outside the back door where the car was parked for loading and unloading — and lit their fuses.

Upon ignition, the whizzers would quickly gain altitude, with their signature ascending musical crescendo. The spinners were a little less flashy, as they did not have the musical element of the whizzers, but they seemed to have a little more elevation in their upward, short-lived journey.

My brother and I created scenes with our toy soldiers, setting them up in military array, then setting firecracker charges close by. Successful explosions leveled all the soldiers; unsuccessful ones left some standing. A variation was to toss a firecracker in the midst of a military formation, striving for full platoon annihilation.

Please note that no military soldiers were injured during this juvenile male aggressive activity.

The bottle rockets were launched from 16-ounce Royal Crown pop bottles. I am sure that when we turned them into the grocery store for their 2-cent deposit, the grocer knew exactly why these bottles had blackened lips.

We discovered a more exciting way to use bottle rockets. Our farm had the usual array of old scrap metal, including pipes. After finding a couple of short lengths of 3/4-inch galvanized pipes, my brother and I would seal off one end, then quickly drop a lit rocket into its open end. This let us direct the rocket's trajectory up and over the barn or soaring across the gravel road.

The next logical use was kid brother genius. We stood at least 20 paces from each other in a large area between the garage and the barn. That was our OK Corral and we would aim our rockets at each other, doing some fancy footwork to avoid being hit by each incoming salvo.

Yes, we undoubtedly heard “it’s all fun until someone gets their eye blown up.” That did not stop us, of course, and we laughed heartily with every launched missile.

Heartwarming glow of nostalgia

We survived those early years on the farm. The Fourth of July remains a special place in my heart. I truly appreciate the grand pyrotechnic displays that major events now produce.

My boyhood imagination undoubtedly conjured grand images that elevated our minuscule fireworks into a scale of glorious, sky-filling explosive spectacle, as daydreamed by a pyrotechnic Walter Mitty. Time softens the hard edges of memories' realities and they become infused with the heartwarming glow of nostalgia.

If you were to ask my siblings to relate this same series of events, I promise their tales would be different. Enjoy this interpretation, and may it trigger memories of your own.

Since I told this tale first, mine is the standard by which all of our family's July Fourth memories will be measured.

Pass the punk — I have got a whizzer to ignite. ■



John Busbee grew up as a transplanted Army Brat into a farm kid on a century family farm in southeast Iowa. His youthful years in the country remain a vital part of his upbringing. He is the author of CITYVIEW's Center Stage



Our CITYVIEW family of publications

GROWS AGAIN!



CITYVIEW • RELISH DM • HOME VIEW • EXPLORE DM • SENIOR VIEW

CITYVIEW publications continue to be a leader in readers.

We start with more than 100,000 print and digital readers of **CITYVIEW** magazine each month, and then we more than double that with **RELISH DM**, our food and dining publication; **EXPLORE DM**, our guide for activities and things to do; **SENIOR VIEW**, our 55-plus lifestyle magazine; and **HOME VIEW**, our home improvement and real estate magazine.

Each publishes in print and online, and **all are available for free.**

Aaron Burns • Sales Manager • aaron@dmcityview.com • 515-953-4822 x. 330 • www.dmcityview.com



One true non-AI sentence for Father's Day

Listen, it's going to look like I'm talking about Artificial Intelligence (AI), but don't run for the hills, don't wring your hands, don't fret. Father's Day is coming up. So I'm really going to talk about my dad. Trust me.

Let's start with my dad.

"Mankind has seen only a few occurrences which have been so momentous as to change the direction of civilization."

My dad wrote these words back in 1974 for the *International Journal of Mathematical Education in Science and Technology*. Yup, this apple fell far from that tree.

My dad, Gerard Weeg, then lists three civilization changers: the written word, the printing press, and the Industrial Revolution.

And then he gets to his point: "To this list I suspect we must one day add the creation of the digital computer and all that entails."

Well, of course he would add that. Computers were his baby back when there was only mathematics and engineering to undergird this new thing called computer science. And he was the director of the fledgling computer center at the University of Iowa in the 1960s and eventually the chair of the brand new University of Iowa Department of Computer Science.

And let's not forget that he was the father to eight kids, which made him mildly crazy. Or was he crazy beforehand? Pay your money and take your choice.



In any case, my dad goes on to say in the article: "The overwhelming conclusion is that the human being is left with the creative tasks, the challenging work, the inspiring work, while the computer can handle the drudgery, tedium and repetition."

Hmmm... Hey, Siri, how did that turn out?

Yup, today the computer can both do a task and learn on the fly — just ask Siri. And we have Generative AI that goes the next step and allows the computer to actually create original content. So where does that leave us humans who, as my dad said, are supposed to do the "creative tasks, the challenging work, the inspiring work"?

My former colleague at the Polk County Attorney's Office, Paul Houston, was always a good photographer, but he has become even better in retirement.

Paul wrote me recently about the use of AI in photography. He gives the example of photos he took of two police K-9s and their handlers — Police Officers Martell and Bolin. He took the photos of the officers separately, but, with the help of AI, he was able to combine the two photos and place everyone together in front of a squad car — and then Paul threw in a sunset as background. Amazing.



Admitting mixed feelings about the use of AI, Paul says that it does allow "photographers to experiment with backgrounds, lighting and concepts that would otherwise be difficult, expensively or flat-out impossible to achieve."

As an example, Paul writes of the difficulty of trying to get these two German Shepherds together for the photo. Imagine that mess.

"I know this kind of technology makes many traditional photographers uneasy. The camera still captures the truth of a moment — but AI allows us to reinterpret how that truth is presented. For those willing to embrace it, it becomes just another tool in the kit — one that expands both vision and possibility."

I like that.

But I wonder how AI is going to be used in fact — as a tool or will we humans be tooled? In my experience, when we are left with an easy way to do something or a hard way, we choose easy. Every time.

Which gets us to Earnest Hemingway.

In "A Moveable Feast," Hemingway describes

having difficulty with writing a story and how he would reassure himself not to panic — "All you have to do is write one true sentence."

Well, hells bells, how can a sentence ever be true if it is generated by AI?

So I complained to my wife about people using AI to write legal briefs and magazine articles and even Father's Day cards. I said it was cheating. My wife, always the lawyer, asked whether her editing of my work was cheating. Or when I look up a phrase on the computer, am I cheating? Or when I'm researching on Google and it leads me to change my entire article, is that cheating?

I hate slippery slopes.

OK, if AI helps you write your one true sentence, bravo. But if AI generates that one true sentence, it is no longer a true sentence. Period. But how the heck is the reader ever to know whether they are getting a data dump or a sentence from a beating heart? And does it matter?

It matters for the writer because AI cuts off all the joy and all the pain and all the catharsis of creativity. And it matters to the reader if it is a barrier to connection.

Or, as my dad frequently loved to say to those folks who were frightened that computers would strip away humanity, "Remember, with a computer it is always about what you put into it. If you put garbage in, garbage comes out."

Of course it is getting more and more difficult to distinguish rotten vegetables from fresh produce. But the writer always knows. And the reader? Perhaps they can smell it.

And my dad? He liked to joke. A lot. And only corny jokes.

"Inch Me and Pinch Me went down to the lake. Inch Me fell in, who was left?"

And all eight of us kids scattered to the winds before he could get to the end of this well-worn joke.

Could he spice up this lame joke with the help of AI?

Of course. But he died on Easter Sunday, 49 years ago, long before we all had computers in our pockets.

By the way, those eight kids he left behind say little to their grandkids about computers — but they do say, "Inch Me and Pinch me went down to the lake..."

Now there's one true sentence for Father's Day. ■

Joe Weeg spent 31 years bumping around this town as a prosecutor for the Polk County Attorney's Office. Now retired, he writes about the frequently overlooked people, places and events in Des Moines on his blog: www.joesneighborhood.com.



HAPPY FATHER'S DAY

PLANTERS
FOR ALL SEASONS
By:
IRON WORKS



Our solid steel construction stands the test of time, and makes a **beautiful addition to any porch or patio for years to come.**

Choose from three heights of base available in five decorative designs, and top with any of our seven sizes of pyramid to **create your perfect landscaping statement.**



With durable powder coat finish, our planters are designed to remain on display as **elegant décor for your outdoor space all year round.**

Plant your annuals or create artificial arrangements with ease. **Save your knees with an elevated planter.**



CITYVIEW's

HAPPY FATHER'S DAY

Gift Guide!

PLANTERS
FOR ALL SEASONS
By:
IRON WORKS

A Perfect gift
for Dad!

The original Des Moines Pyramid Planters

Visit our Showroom to see our planters in person.
Shop our website any time day or night!
Pick up and Shipping options available!
Phone orders also welcome!

Gift Certificates
Also Available!

(515) 288-8981 • 1924 SW 2nd Street, Des Moines IA 50315

www.plantersforallseasons.com

HAPPY FATHER'S DAY



Gopher-shaped Golf Tees \$11.95
Bring a little humor and charm to every round on the course.



Daddio of the Patio Hat \$21.95
A baseball hat made for grill masters, backyard legends, and dads who rule the patio season.



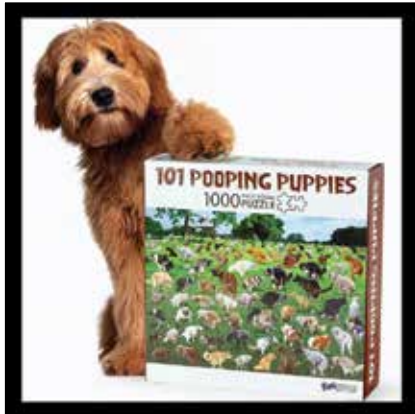
Funny Socks Starting at \$10.95
Tons of funny socks for Dad to wear in style!



Night Scope LED Headlamp \$19.95
A rechargeable night-vision style headlamp to keep your hands free for projects, grilling, adventures, and everything in between.



College Sports Books \$18.95
Fun books packed with must-know history, traditions, and fun facts every Cyclones and Hawkeye fan will love.



101 Pooping Puppies Puzzle \$22.95
A hilariously chaotic puzzle that turns assembling adorable pups into a laugh-out-loud challenge from start to finish.



"Pull My Finger" \$12.95
This miniature tells 15 different dad jokes paired with a cheeky humor book, delivering classic gag comedy in a pocket-sized package.



Dumpster Fire Mug \$17.95
A dumpster fire mug that perfectly captures the chaos of life!

SHOPPUP PENNY

SELLING THINGS THAT MAKE PEOPLE HAPPY

213 5th Street, Valley Junction
bingdsm.com • 515-279-3141

Mon-Fri 10am-6pm • Sat 10am-5pm • Sun 12pm-4pm

Follow us on Instagram & Facebook: @bingdesmoines

WINNER!

HAPPY FATHER'S DAY

SUNMED™ | Your CBD Store®



Seshnz Chocolates deliver gourmet milk chocolate infused with a potent proprietary mushroom blend to satisfy cravings and support overall well-being.



Clean Simple Eats We offer their FULL line of Protein Powders, CLEAR protein drinks and powders, Collagen, Greens and so much more!



Trim is clinically proven to fight addiction issues and drop pounds! All participants of this clinical dropped an average of 18 lbs in 90 days!



Happy Can Tri Blend Gummies use targeted cannabinoids to support pain relief, better sleep, and overall well-being and happiness.



MAX Strength Pain Relief Cream
Just a pea-sized amount quickly relieves even the toughest pains! Do NOT wait to try this!



The Happy Can delivers cannabis-infused soda with THC and CBD, offering a refreshing, flavorful way to relax and elevate your mood.



Jolly packs feature 8mg gummies designed to boost elevation, motivation, and mood in a convenient two pack.



CLINICALLY PROVEN sleep gummies and oils are available! Trust the plants to get fulfilling sleep without the "hangover" feeling.

Central Iowa's number one hemp & health store!



Offering Iowa's best CBD & THC Supplements

Tinctures | Gummies | Edibles | Topicals

2732 SE Delaware Ave, Ste 160, Ankeny · 515.964.9862
125 5th St, West Des Moines · 515.279.0150

DON'T KNOW WHAT TO GIVE?
Gift Certificates Available!

20% OFF

Your Purchase!

Discover your path to wellness.

Must mention this ad. Offer valid through 06/30/2026.

SUNMED™ | Your CBD Store®



HAPPY
FATHER'S
DAY

tandem brick
gallery
des moines



Original small Iowa landscapes by Kirk Hovenga



Handmade Kookoo clocks from Germany



Jack Black products for men only!



How about a fine new cap for dad?



Cool nightlight for cool people!



Personalize a new water bottle with stickers.



Backpacks and sling bags in a variety of colors.



Silly socks. So many to choose from!

tandem brick gallery des moines

FATHER'S DAY
JUNE 21

Men's personal care products • Bauder's Ice Cream • Cards • Funny Socks
Books • Billfolds • Candles • Backpacks and more!

2722 ingersoll avenue • tandembrickgallery.com • mon-fri 10am-6pm, sat 10am-4pm • Instagram @tandembrick • 515-282-1031

FILM REVIEW

BY DAVID ROWLEY

'Mortal Kombat II' delivers button-mashing delight that will leave movie-goers feeling 'toasty!'

Loud, aggressive and wonderfully unpretentious, "Mortal Kombat II" clearly entered the blood code for this one.

When the "Mortal Kombat" big-screen reboot bludgeoned its way into the mainstream back in 2021, it carried the weight of a pandemic-weary audience looking for pure, unadulterated escapism. While it offered flashy choreography and a highly anticipated dose of R-rated gore, it ultimately stumbled over its own self-serious tone, an overly long origin story, and the controversial choice to center the narrative on an entirely original, somewhat bland protagonist.

Fast forward to 2026, and director Simon McQuoid has returned alongside screenwriter Jeremy Slater for "Mortal Kombat II." Impressively, and almost apologetically, this sequel is deadset on correcting the course of its predecessor. Loud, aggressively bloody and wonderfully unpretentious, "Mortal Kombat II" makes no claims to be high art. Instead, it fully embraces the chaotic, violent and inherently absurd spirit of the Midway/NetherRealm arcade fighting franchise, delivering a crowd-pleasing roller coaster that operates at a relentless pace.

The film does well dropping the heavy exposition, bypassing the need to justify a cross-dimensional martial arts tournament. Earth's realm is in peril, the stakes are cosmic, and the script wastes no time getting to the action. For audiences who haven't seen the 1995 original or the 2021 reboot, don't worry, you're still ready for it; only an appetite for carnage is needed. The story opens with a brutal, breakneck clash between the warlord Shao Kahn (Martyn Ford) and King Jerrod (Desmond Chiam), instantly signaling that the bone-snapping, eye-gouging and spine-ripping excess has been dialed.

Someone clearly entered the blood code for this one.

With the arrival of Johnny Cage (Karl Urban) the franchise seems to have found its comedic "good guy" version of Kano (Josh Lawson). Rather than being a pristine, A-list Hollywood megastar, he is introduced as a washed-up, slightly bitter 1990s martial arts actor surviving on nostalgia and the comic convention circuit.

Cage completely steals the show, firing off razor-sharp one-liners, leaning heavily into campy, self-aware humor, and tossing out brazen pop-culture references ranging from "John Wick" to "The Lord of the Rings" and Voldemort. Though his native Kiwi accent occasionally slips through the cracks of his cocky American persona, it is forgivable given the sheer amount of charisma he brings to the screen. A fictional archive clip from Cage's past film, "Uncaged Fury," shows exactly who the character is without any unnecessary exposition for those who may be looking down at their phone.

As mentioned, Cage's comedic energy is matched



"Mortal Kombat II"

R | 1 hour, 56 minutes

Director: Simon McQuoid

Writers: Jeremy Slater, Ed Boon, John Tobias

Stars: Karl Urban, Ludi Lin, Jessica McNamee

brilliantly by the resurrection of Kano. Pivoting to a quick control z on death, the movie brings back their strongest comedic asset. The onscreen chemistry and shared frames between Kano and, really, any of the characters provide an essential structural ballast, offering hilarious, irreverent breathers from the film's apocalyptic stakes.

Conversely, the rest of the has more diminishing returns. Kitana (Adeline Rudolph) emerges as the genuine emotional anchor of the film showing her personal journey as a secret rebel aiming to overthrow Shao Kahn. Rudolph plays the role with an elegant, razor-sharp precision, carrying the plot forward when the performances around her falter. Her companion Jade (Tati Gabrielle) however, is less compelling, as the character is saddled with a flat performance and an unlikable, clunky betrayal-and-redemption arc that struggles to land.

Where Mortal Kombat II triumphs, however, is in its arena spectacles. While the 1995 version possessed an endearing, ensemble camaraderie and occasionally charismatic performances that papered over its limitations, it lacked the game's true mechanics. The 2026 sequel reverses this dynamic entirely. The storytelling glue is thin, but the combat sequences are an absolute masterclass in fan service.

"Mortal Kombat II" functions as an apology for the sluggish pacing of the 2021 entry, trading somber world-building for hyper-violent, self-aware fun. It leaves the door wide open for future installments, strategically keeping its necromantic plot-movers like Quan Chi (Damon Herriman) alive to facilitate inevitable resurrections. While it lacks the heart and genuine character chemistry of the 1995 classic, it compensates with peerless, blood-drenched spectacle and a spectacular turn by Karl Urban. ■

PREVIEWS

BY DAVID ROWLEY

"Backrooms"

R | 1 hour, 50 minutes

Director: Kane Parsons

Writers: Will Soodik,

Kane Parsons

Stars: Chiwetel Ejiofor,

Renate Reinsve, Mark Duplass

The Backrooms exist outside of space and time, functioning as a kind of modern purgatory that anyone can accidentally fall into by "no-clipping" through the unstable, glitchy corners of our reality. Once trapped inside this endless, inescapable maze, visitors are met with a soulless labyrinth of empty office and storage spaces, all illuminated by harsh fluorescent lights and draped in a sickly yellow hue. While entirely devoid of human life, the space is inhabited by unseen entities that leave people with the unsettling conviction that they are being watched or followed. After a therapist's patient disappears into a dimension beyond reality, she must venture into the unknown to save him.



"The Breadwinner"

PG | 1 hour, 35 minutes

Director: Eric Appel

Writers: Nate Bargatze,

Dan Lagana

Stars: Nate Bargatze,

Mandy Moore, Colin

Jost

"The Breadwinner" stars Bargatze as salesman Nate Wilcox and Mandy Moore as his wife, Katie. To Nate and their three children, Katie is the ultimate mom. She manages their comically chaotic household with equal parts efficiency and love, and everything runs perfectly. But when Katie's household invention leads to a once-in-a-lifetime deal on "Shark Tank" and takes her on a prolonged business trip, Nate has to figure out how to keep the house from (literally) falling apart. He and his kids soon learn that while he may not do it like mom, he can figure out how to do it his way. Welcome to the dad era.



"Power Ballad"

R | 1 hour, 38 minutes

Director: John Carney

Writers: John Carney,

Peter McDonald

Stars: Paul Rudd, Nick

Jonas, Peter McDonald

When Rick (Paul Rudd), a past-his-prime wedding singer, meets fading boy-band star Danny (Nick Jonas) during a gig, the two bond over music and a late-night jam session. But when Danny turns one of Rick's songs into the hit that reignites his career, Rick sets out to reclaim the recognition he believes he deserves, even if it means risking everything he cares about. From writer-director John Carney ("Sing Street," "Once"), "Power Ballad" is a feel-good story about music, self-respect, friendship and the price of ambition. ■



Let your Spidey sense tingle

Marvel at a deeper glimpse into Samantha Hurley's "I'm Gonna Marry You Tobey Maguire."

Iowa Stage Theatre Company has a penchant for bringing unique programming through its play selections, and this thoughtfully developed niche of theirs gives Iowa audiences a deep dive into wonderful theatre. Samantha Hurley's undeniably dark, comedic, brilliant script, "I'm Gonna Marry You Tobey Maguire," is their next journey into great live theatre.

Marvel at a deeper glimpse into this show.

CS: What made "I'm Gonna Marry You Tobey Maguire" such an appealing show for central Iowa audiences?

ISTC: We wanted to stay true to our commitment to provide audiences with relevant stories that enlighten, entertain and inspire. This play fit the bill. It is written by Samantha Hurley, a new playwright making her name in the comedy world who originally wrote this show as a one-act and committed to its potential. Since its first production in 2023, it has been making a direct appeal to those who lived in and through the Y2K years. We are committed to classic and contemporary productions. This is one of our contemporary plays this season, which we believe will appeal to the weirder, riskier and more adventurous theater goer. This production is unlike any other this city has seen.

CS: What is synopsis?

ISTC: To cope with the absence of her father, neglect from her mother and ridicule by her classmates, eighth-grader Shelby Hinkley has put all of her time and energy into the only thing that matters in 2004: Spiderman. When leading a devout online fan club proves insufficient to her needs, Shelby decides to risk it all for love, kidnap famous actor Tobey Maguire, and marry him in her basement. Her fantasies of happily ever after start to crumble as she realizes Tobey may not be the charismatic heartthrob she thinks she knows. A Y2K farce, this is a full-throttle explosion of our para-social relationships and the obsessions that detonate them.

CS: What themes does the story share?

ISTC: It touches on that time in our lives where we start to fall out of adolescence and into the unknown nature of adulthood. Masked beneath the nostalgia and poking between the lines of the script, we are met with themes of para-social relationships, obsession and the ways in which we cope with hard times.

CS: Talk about presenting this show in the intimate Stoner Theater space.

ISTC: Author Samantha Hurley writes: "This is for the girlies who were writing One Direction fan fiction and also for One Direction, hiding in the back of restaurants, sprinting to the car to avoid the aforementioned girlies. This is for anyone who has ever kissed a glossy Tiger Beat poster in their room — and



Alyson O'Hara as Shelby Hinkley and Michael LaDell Harris as Tobey Maguire in the Iowa Stage production of "I'm Gonna Marry You Tobey Maguire." Photo credit: Iowa Stage Theatre Company

also for Zac Efron, who undoubtedly has to put up with many people saying that they used to kiss posters of him."

Farce and music abound

Tallgrass Theatre Company's Summer Concert Musical at the bucolic Jamie Hurd Amphitheater has become a summer staple for central Iowa performing arts' scene. This year presents a rare opportunity to experience a seldom-produced gem, "Side Show." Based on the true story of conjoined twins Violet and Daisy Hilton, who become stars during the Depression, this musical has the Des Moines Community Orchestra underscoring the performance with a full 20-piece orchestra. Tallgrass has developed a vibrant producing entity, built on an all-volunteer, mission focused talent base. "Side Show" is sponsored by The West Des Moines Community Foundation, a reflection of their unofficial status as West Des Moines' community theatre.

"Noise Off!" promises to rock the John Viars Theatre at the Des Moines Playhouse with uproarious laughter. "It's a funny, funny show. It's very physical," Catie

BARE BOARDS CHATTER

CAP Theatre. "Alice in Wonderland Jr." June 5-14.

Des Moines Playhouse. "Noise Off!" June 5-21.

Iowa Stage Theatre Company. "I'm Gonna Marry You Tobey Maguire." June 5-14.

Des Moines Performing Arts Free Summer Family Fun. Storytime Under the Green Umbrella at Cowles Commons. June 10, June 24.

Tallgrass Theatre Summer Concert Show at Jamie Hurd Amphitheater. "Side Show." June 11-13.

Des Moines Performing Arts Free Summer Family Fun. Flip Fabrique at various metro parks. June 13, 14, 15.

Des Moines Playhouse Final Act Ensemble. "Broadcasting to the Troops, 1943." June 16.

About Time Theatre Company at Des Moines Playhouse. "Gutenberg! The Musical," June 19-28.

Des Moines Young Artists' Theatre. "Rent: School Edition." June 24 through Aug. 2.

The Ingersoll. MJ The Illusion: A Tribute to Michael Jackson. June 25-26.

Runaway Twain at the Playhouse. Long form improv. June 28.

Miller, the Dotty Otley of the show, said.

Joe Smith (who portrays Selsdon Mowbray), adds, "It's a two-story set that has to have a little movement. It's not something every company can produce. It's what I call the err-farce, the farce by which all other farces in the world are measured. It keeps throwing things at the audience through all three of its acts. It's just so funny.

"An early play, 'The Two of Us,' (veteran UK playwright Michael Frayn) was watching them backstage and was watching them go through all the machinations backstage and he thought, 'This is more fun than the actual play.' He wrote a short draft in 1977 of this called 'Exits,' and his partner said that he should make this into a full play, which happened in 1982."

We get to see this brilliant script in the hands of one of America's best community theaters, and it should be a marvelous experience. ■

John Busbee produces The Culture Buzz, a weekly arts and culture radio show on www.kfmg.org, covering Iowa's arts scene with an inclusive sweep of the cultural brush. He received the Iowa Governor's Arts Award for Collaboration and Partnership in the Arts. He has performed in more than 100 musicals, including many leading roles.



Litigations and festivities

Springtime in the arts world

The art world went to court this spring, a lot. In San Francisco the family of Armand Vaillancourt lost its legal fight to prevent The City from disassembling and moving his brutalist Vaillancourt Fountain from Embarcadero Plaza. San Francisco will spend \$4 million to move the neglected political sculpture, labeled “one of urban America’s truly bizarre works of public art and a reminder of midcentury mistakes” by architectural critic John King.

In New York City it was leaked that Mayor Mamdani scolded King Charles of England to return the Koh-i-Noor diamond to India. The King’s office refused comment about the private meeting. Activists filed a lawsuit with the International Court of Justice demanding its return. Also in England, a Botticelli painting was placed under an export ban in an effort to keep it from going back to Italy.

In lawyer-free news, Taina H. Cruz broke out as the hottest artist of the moment. Worldly curators reportedly are “falling over each other to work with her.” Just graduated from Yale, she specializes in “female figures with a moody, woozy, sometimes unsettled or unsettling atmosphere” and “intimations of horror and fantasy,” according to critics Sonia Manalili and Ben Davis. Her themes sound a lot like Des Moines’ Anna Gaskill, another Yale art school prodigy.

Cruz is the youngest artist, by far, in the Whitney Biennial where her huge mural of a disturbing young woman was installed on the museum’s outdoor walls to the distress of neighbors.

In Des Moines, another star-blazing prodigy wowed us. Amaryn Olmeda returned to the Des Moines Symphony last month for the first time since her debut here two years ago. She’s 18 now. We only learned that because the Dallas Symphony surprised her in March playing “Happy Birthday” after her performance with them.

Olmeda has been shrouded in mystery since her sensational Carnegie Hall solo debut at age 14. Born in Australia, she is an American citizen now. San Francisco, New England and New York all claim her. Her ancestry has been described as Armenian, but usually just as LatinX. Her parents are unknown and her birthday was too until Dallas. Her Des Moines performance of Mendelssohn’s “Violin Concerto in E minor” was wildly applauded, the biggest ovation we have seen here in years.



Des Moines Metro Opera returns in late June.

June touts

Until the end of the month when Des Moines Metro Opera kicks off its challenging season of Polish, American and Puccini operas, summer arts here are mostly in aestivation. Thus, our June touts are road trips. “Violins of Hope” is a collection of 70 restored instruments played by Jewish musicians during the Holocaust. They are in the Minneapolis and St. Paul area on a two-month residency. Exhibitions, concerts, worship services, films and lectures go on through June 29.

In Kansas City, “Timeless Mucha” celebrates the visionary work of Czech artist Alphonse Mucha (1860–1939), whose elegant figures and whiplash lines defined the Art Nouveau movement and covered Janis Joplin albums. Featuring more than 100 works, this exhibition plays Nelson-Atkins through Aug. 26.

Another Nelson-Atkins show, through Aug. 23, explores “Water Embodied: Flow and Meaning of

Water in Japanese Art.” It premiered after our press time but I wish we could send the Iowa legislature to see it on a mission of learning and respect.

In Chicago, a major exhibition at Art Institute of Chicago explores the aesthetics of another Iowa essential — corn. “Edgar Calel: Corn Mountain of Life (Ixim Juyu K’aslem)” is of, by and about corn. Calel presents a hut called K’ojay in Kaqchikel, the artist’s first language, which translates to “we have a house” and/or “we have a future.” In Maya cosmology, corn not only symbolizes the element from which humanity was formed but also is the central sustaining force of life. I wish we could send the curators of Des Moines Art Center on a mission of learning exactly what Iowa is, before they rename it The Caribbean Museum of Social Justice in Des Moines. ■

Jim Duncan is a food and art writer who has been covering the central Iowa scene for more than five decades.



IOWA ARTIST

BY JACKIE WILSON

Headed for tone, built for sound

Des Moines luthier Mike Marcovis crafts custom guitars that blend artistry, precision and function.

A piece of artwork is versatile and not always displayed on a wall. For Mike Marcovis, his artwork is finely crafted, as well as functional. His artwork supports another artistic venture: creating music.

Marcovis is a luthier — a craftsman who makes handmade guitars. He cuts, sands and fashions wood into a guitar body. After the body is complete, he adds strings, frets, inlays and more for both acoustic and electric guitars. He uses jeweler's tools to hand cut the inlay, logo and emblem.

He chooses woods such as mahogany, rosewood and other exotic imported woods. Laws limit certain imported woods, which are difficult to obtain.

“Unfortunately, I only use a few woods that are native to Iowa. I’m picky about what wood I use,” he reflects.

Once a guitar is built, it is a work of art, meant to be played or admired for a lifetime. He has made

custom guitars for professional musicians and guitar collectors.

Marcovis says he has always been infatuated with guitars. As a child, he used a tennis racket as his pretend guitar. He began playing a real guitar later and wanted to own more expensive guitars.

After high school, he knew college was not in the cards. He met with Dave Plummer, a master guitar builder based in Des Moines, who suggested he attend luthier school. In 2001, he graduated from the Roberto-Venn School of Luthiery in Phoenix, where he learned how to build and repair both acoustic and electric guitars.

When he returned home to Des Moines, he built guitars as a hobby and worked for his family business, G&L Clothing. However, when G&L was sold to a larger corporation, he did not want to work for the new owners and instead devoted full-time to Marcovis Guitars.



In addition to building custom-ordered guitars, he also repairs, restores and appraises vintage guitars and performs other guitar-related maintenance.

A quality guitar stands out from store-bought guitars.

“You strum it, and it vibrates. It feels good in your hands. You can feel the shape of the neck,” he explains. “You don’t get that with mass-produced guitars. This is something that will be around 50 years and can be an heirloom that holds up, plays and sounds beautifully.”

Marcovis uses his own guitar to play in a local Des Moines band, Gut Feeling.

He likes the creative process yet prefers to be behind the scenes.

“I enjoy building more than playing,” he reflects. “I like watching music created from the art that I have created.”

Marcovis is meticulous about his work, making fewer than 10 guitars a year. This year he will be displaying his artwork at the Des Moines Arts Festival June 26-28. He is one of the only — if not the first — to showcase guitars at the festival. He encourages folks to touch his guitars at the festival.

“I think most players appreciate knowing how their guitar was made from start to finish,” he reflects. “For players who buy custom guitars, it is not a need. It is a want.” ■

Jackie Wilson has written hundreds of articles for CITYVIEW and the Iowa Living magazines. She has covered many ordinary people living extraordinary lives.



Fastball finds a second wind as nostalgia fuels new popularity

Alt-rock trio embraces renewed attention ahead of Des Moines Arts Festival performance.

Fastball, the alt-rock trio that helped define late-1990s radio, is enjoying an unexpected comeback, and co-founder Tony Scalzo says the band is embracing every minute of it.

“We are excited about getting this new vibe. It’s like we’re in a renaissance, more than we were 15 years ago when nobody wanted anything to do with us,” he admits. “Our tour with Barenaked Ladies and Sugar Ray changed that.”

Fastball formed in 1994 with Scalzo, Miles Zuniga and Joey Shuffield. By 1998, the band’s popularity had exploded with hits including “Out of My Head” and “This Way.” The group earned a Grammy nomination and a No. 1 song on Billboard’s Modern Rock Tracks chart.

Over the past 30 years, Fastball has released nine studio albums while continuing to tour on and off — a rare feat for a band that has weathered the ups and downs of the music industry.

“A lot of bands break up. But the primary reason we have stayed together is that we love each other,” he explains. “We got together when all three of us were seasoned. We were in our late 20s and had been around the block a few times when we met.”

Fastball’s hit records elevated the band’s popularity.

“It was challenging, but we made it through alive,” he reflects. “We never got into drug addiction or anything, so we are lucky with that aspect.”

Even when the spotlight dimmed, Fastball kept recording music and touring, choosing longevity over chasing trends.

“Maybe we never really got too big to fail,” he reflects. “When you get really famous, that is a problem for a lot of people.”

Scalzo said he had wanted to be a rock star since he was a teenager, and he is still amazed his plan worked out.

“It’s a surprise because we know the odds are stacked against anyone. You have to have the element of timing, talent, maturity and perseverance. If you do not have all those elements in place, you are probably not going to make it very far.”

Several of the band’s songs have been featured in movies and television shows. Scalzo recalled hearing one of his songs in a grocery store when his children were young.

“They yelled, ‘Daddy, yeah it’s you!’ It’s surreal when you hear your song playing on the radio,” he recalls. “I was in the gym recently, and my song played. Everyone turned to look at me.”

When he is not touring, Scalzo spends time writing songs that are meaningful to him.

“I have a stockpile of songs. Not every piece will see the light of day. I have no other motive and only make songs I like, not just because someone else wants it. It probably sounds corny, but I do it for the joy of music.”



Fastball recognizes the music industry’s shift toward singles rather than full-length albums. The band recently released a cover of Justin Bieber’s “Let Me Love You” on its YouTube channel.

This summer, the band is touring on its own and with Barenaked Ladies and Sugar Ray. Members are also discussing opening for Lawrence.

“They said we are one of their favorite bands, and they want their favorite band to open for them,” Scalzo says. “It makes sense for us, since they are a young, good band.”

Scalzo believes concerts and live music remain strong despite growing conversations about artificial intelligence.

“I think a lot of people will try to tell everyone that AI is going to take over,” he reflects. “It is all just a bunch of lame, pointless propaganda for no one. For all of the great master musicians that we idolized to this day, there are upcoming kids who can blow them away.”

He is appreciative of the wide range of fans who attend the band’s concerts.

“Thank you very much for coming out. We hope to see some new people,” Scalzo says. “We have got new stuff coming out, too, as well as song that might make it into the supermarket or gym.”

Fastball will perform a free concert at the Des Moines Arts Festival on June 27 at 7 p.m. on the main stage. Other concerts are scheduled during the festival from June 26-28. More information is available at Des Moines Arts Festival. ■

SOUND ADVICE

BY JACKIE WILSON

Des Moines’ own **Scot Sutherland** received the Blues Music Award in the Instrumentalist-Bass category in Memphis in May. The Blues Awards is a national honor, often dubbed the “Grammys of the Blues.” Sutherland has played bass with other musicians who have won Blues Awards in the past, including Tommy Castro, Mike Zito and Albert Castiglia. He has recently toured with Bill Murray and the Blood Brothers. If you are lucky, you might catch him playing bass in one of the Des Moines area bands.

The internationally acclaimed **Jupiter String Quartet**, a tightly knit chamber ensemble brought together by family bonds and musical passion, will present two special performances at the Zenith Chamber Music Festival on June 12 and 13. Jupiter won numerous chamber awards and has performed at Carnegie Hall,

Lincoln Center and other prestigious musical halls. June 12 is held at Grace United Methodist Church and June 13 at Drake’s Sheslow Auditorium. Both concerts are free. For more information, visit zenithchambermusicfestival.org.

Capital City Pride Fest is June 12-14. Live music, a parade and other events take place in Des Moines’ Historic East Village. June 12 concert is **Brooke Eden**, 8 p.m. and **David Archuleta**, 9 p.m. June 13 concert: **Butt Toot King**, 9 p.m. and **Ty Sunderland** 10 p.m. For more info, capitalcitypride.org. ■

Jackie Wilson has written hundreds of articles for CITYVIEW and the Iowa Living magazines. She has covered many ordinary people living extraordinary lives.



BRING HOME A **NEW**

Tattoo

THIS SUMMER



TATTOOS * PIERCINGS
LASER REMOVAL * PARAMEDICAL TATTOOS

— Walk-Ins Welcome —



Website

DES MOINES
3104 SW 9TH ST

ANKENY
1550 N ANKENY BLVD

CLIVE
1800 NW 86TH ST

WAUKEE
505 E HICKMAN RD

★ LUCKYGALTATTOO.COM • 515-257-7940 ★

Second careers

Trainer Caty Elgin helps retired racehorses and riders find new purpose through competition and care.

As Caty Elgin rides her horse, Smokescreen, during a jumping competition, she leans in, guiding the horse over a fence. As the horse clears it and other obstacles in record time, Elgin wins another riding competition.

In addition to competing, Elgin teaches riding lessons and trains riders for competitions. She also retrains racehorses that have retired from racing, teaching them new roles outside the track. Most of the horses she owns are retired thoroughbred racehorses.

When searching for the ideal horse, she looks for animals that are disciplined, quiet and well-mannered.

“You can tell when a horse looks happy doing its job, such as jumping,” she explains.

She chose retired racehorses early in her training career.

“I fell in love with the breed ever since then,” she says. “It’s important to have them so they can have second careers and value after the racetrack. It helps so they don’t go to the kill pens.”

Currently, she teaches lessons to about 50 students, ranging from 5 to 70 years old. Some want to hone competition skills through dressage or jumping, while others simply enjoy riding horses.

“Most start lessons because of their interest in the animal,” she says. “They appreciate them.”

Elgin became interested in horses at age 13 and began competing in dressage and jumping. Dressage often is described as “horse ballet,” in which horse and rider perform precise movements. Horses are judged on their trotting and rhythm, as well as the rider’s technique.

In college, her riding team advanced to the national tournament. Elgin earned a degree in elementary education, which she has applied to teaching lessons. She established her own training service, CJE Training, 15 years ago.

She says the most difficult part of beginning lessons is helping riders overcome their fears.

“A lot of people are nervous. I try to teach them to be comfortable. Just because a horse is big, it doesn’t mean they will hurt you,” she reflects.

Currently, she attends two to three competitions each month. Most recently, she brought 12 students to compete.

She says, “We focus on Kentucky. There’s a lot of showcase competitions for young thoroughbreds.”

Elgin is at the horse barn at Hunters Glen Farms by 7 a.m. It takes most of the morning to clean and feed the horses, a labor of love.

“They all have different personalities that are unique. I enjoy figuring out the horse and what they need. Some are silly and playful, while others are stoic. One rescue horse was shut down when arriving here. After a while, they could express themselves and blossom,” she says. “To see their personality come out is rewarding.”

If people are interested in horses, she suggests taking a lesson or going on a ride.

“It’s a lot of fun,” she reflects. “Instructors want to see you succeed as a rider.” ■

Jackie Wilson has written hundreds of articles for CITYVIEW and the Iowa Living magazines. She has covered many ordinary people living extraordinary lives.



DES MOINES FORGOTTEN

BY KRISTIAN DAY

Before the Saddle, there was Country Cove

The forgotten gay bar that helped shape Des Moines.

Exactly two years ago, I was eagerly waiting for the premiere of “The Last American Gay Bar” at the Varsity Cinema here in Des Moines. My closest friends joined me in making this series that told the history of the gay community of this city, along with the untold story of the state’s oldest queer bar, The Blazing Saddle.

For my 39th birthday, my friend and frequent collaborator, Nick Ford, found me a copy of Drummer magazine from 1978. It was an “all men” adult magazine that had a cover story on filmmaker Wakefield Poole. Poole was a pioneer in both queer and straight XXX films, often pushing the fantasy tone more than he did the sex.

While flipping through pages, I found a full-page spread that was just a list of bars and what states they were located in. The title at the top of the page read, “Men’s Bar/Bath Scene ’79.” I immediately let my eyes scan the columns of the page to look for Iowa. One bar was listed: Country Cove, located at 321 Court Ave. in Des Moines.

A gay bar/bathhouse in Des Moines.

I learned later that the bathhouse part was either short-lived or never fully realized. Some say it never was a bathhouse; others have said it might have opened a couple of the apartments on the second floor for use. There might have just been a bathtub, a mattress and a couple of towels.

The Country Cove was located where Pints is now. It sat between two adult bookstores. One of them was called Page IV and was also a frequent hangout for men in the gay community. The one on the Court Avenue side was called Court Street News Adult Bookstore.

The bar was owned by Chuck Brooks, brother of Des Moines City Council member Archie Brooks.

Chuck was an entrepreneur in the gay bar world of Des Moines. His most famous operation was City Disco, which ran from 1975 to 1979 and gradually evolved from a gay bar to a place where everyone was welcome, as it had the biggest dance floor in the state. It was located at 541 Sixth Ave. across the street from Saint Ambrose Cathedral.

His other ventures included the Corn Parlor at 928 Sixth Ave. and the short-lived Boardwalk that replaced City Disco in 1979. He also co-owned The PS Lounge with Peggy Sample.

The Country Cove was a Levi/leather bar not unlike the early days of The Blazing Saddle but with a slight Western undertone.

That term should be somewhat self-explanatory, but for those who don’t know, I can elaborate.

The early gay bars were for men only and no straights. The dress code was Levi jeans, leather vests and boots, and shirts were optional. No pictures were allowed, and you let people know what you were “into” by placing colored bandanas in your back pocket — blue, red or yellow in either the left or right pocket of your jeans.

Gays and lesbians were separated and remained that way until AIDS hit Iowa hard in the late 1980s. Only then did some unity happen, and the women served as nurses in the underground hospices that were set up in homes in residential neighborhoods around the city. There were some women who were bar owners, but even those bars were men only.

The bar itself wasn’t anything special. The vibe inside wasn’t much different than Greenwood Lounge is now. A hand-cut bar with a cigarette shelf at one end with bull horns hanging from the wall directly above. Black plastic ashtrays every couple of feet spread across the bar.

Unfortunately, the Country Cove came to an end in 1979 when the building



Bob “Mongo” Eikleberry at the Country Cove in 1979. Mongo would eventually open up The Blazing Saddle in 1983 and owns it to this day with Bryan “Stinky” Smith. Photo by Gary Moore

caught fire on the second floor.

This was also a strange recurring theme in the bars that were owned by Chuck Brooks. City Disco and The PS Lounge eventually caught fire as well.

The last bar Brooks operated was the Barbell Athletic Club, which operated from 1987 to 1989 and was co-owned with Connie Roper. The Barbell Athletic Club did not go up in flames; however, it closed due to an ongoing drug problem involving the hip new trend of crystal meth.

Des Moines has never been able to sustain more than two or three gay bars at a time. The most I ever saw was four, and that only lasted a few years.

But gay bars have existed in Des Moines since the early 1960s when Marlys Watson and her husband, Marty, owned the Pink Poodle on Court Avenue and the Blue Goose at 206 Third St.

There is an even earlier note about a gay bar from the late 1950s called Sunnyside that was located where the downtown Mercy Holiday Inn is now.

Places like the Country Cove rarely survive in photographs, official records or public memory. They lived mostly in whispers, rumors and stories passed from one generation to the next. But they mattered. These bars gave queer Iowans a place to exist openly — or at least as openly as the times allowed. Long before Pride festivals, corporate sponsorships or rainbow crosswalks, there were hidden doorways on Court Avenue, cigarette smoke hanging over crowded bars and people quietly building a community in the shadows. Des Moines’ queer history did not begin with acceptance. It began with risk, secrecy and the stubborn determination to create spaces where people could finally feel less alone. ■

Kristian Day is a filmmaker and writer based in Des Moines. He also hosts the syndicated Iowa Basement Tapes radio program on 98.9 FM KFMG. Instagram: @kristianday | Twitter: @kristianmday



AROUND TOWN

PHOTOS BY MARY FOWLER



A ribbon cutting was held for AR Workshop Ankeny, 1515 S.W. Main St., Suite 107, on May 19.



Tony PeterSmith and Tara Tomlinson



Shevanghn Moore and Heather Phillips



Dr. Shanie Dasrath and Sue Hudson

RIBBON CUTTING

AR Workshop Ankeny, 1515 S.W. Main St.,
Suite 107, ribbon cutting May 19.



Matt Hudson and Stephen Skinner



Ashlee Neer, Brittini Bassi and Amber Milliken



Ava Tomlinson, Ryan Tomlinson, Paige Spoelstra and Avery Enright

TOPOGRAPHIES

MAPPING BEING AND BELONGING

ON VIEW

JUNE 13 – SEPTEMBER 20, 2026 | ANNA K. MEREDITH GALLERY

OPENING CELEBRATION

THURSDAY, JUNE 25 | 5 – 7 PM

DOCUMENTARY FILM SCREENING

SATURDAY, JULY 11 | 12 PM | LEVITT AUDITORIUM
POWWOW PEOPLE, 2025 | DIRECTOR: SKY HOPINKA

GALLERY TALK

WITH ASSOCIATE CURATOR ELIZABETH GOLLNICK
SUNDAY, JULY 19 | 1:30 PM | ANNA K. MEREDITH GALLERY

FREE GUIDED TOURS

SATURDAYS | 1 PM | AUGUST 15 AND SEPTEMBER 19

ALL EVENTS ARE FREE AND OPEN TO ALL

FREE ADMISSION FOR ALL

DES
MOINES
ART
CENTER

DESMOINESARTCENTER.ORG

SUPPORT FOR TOPOGRAPHIES IS PROVIDED BY

THE
HARRIET S. AND J. LOCKE
MACOMBER
ART CENTER FUND

JACQUELINE AND MYRON BLANK
EXHIBITION FUND

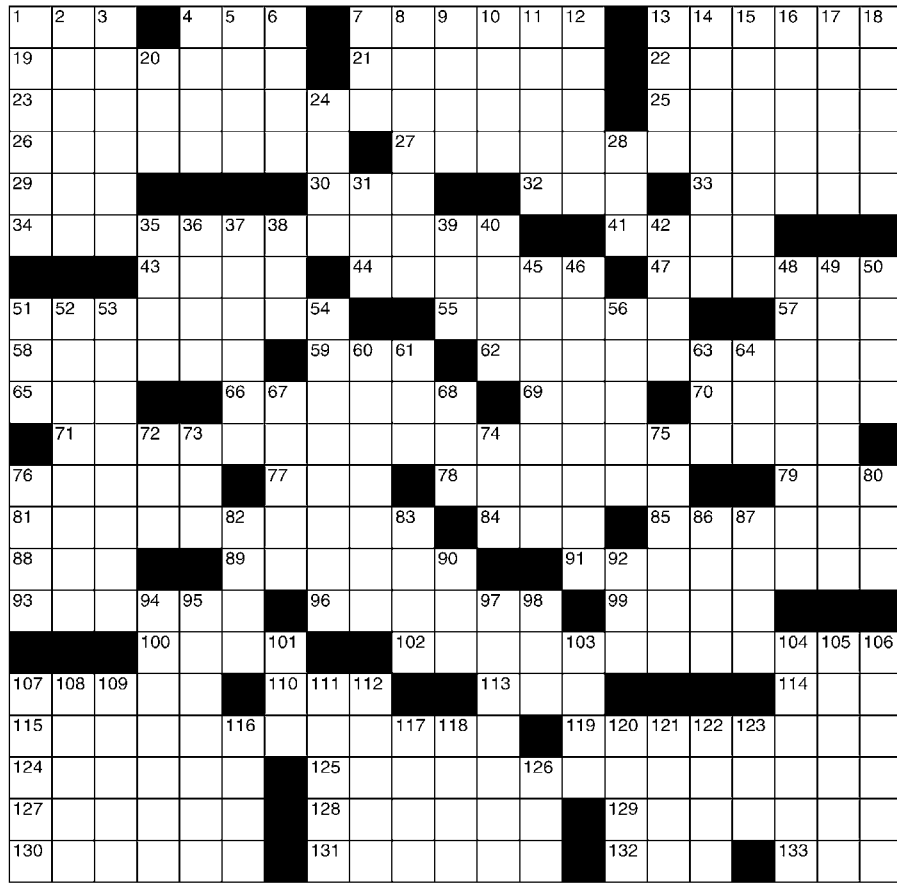


SUSTAINING SUPPORT MADE POSSIBLE BY THE ANNA K. MEREDITH ENDOWMENT TRUST

PUZZLES

Find answers at www.dmcityview.com/the-games

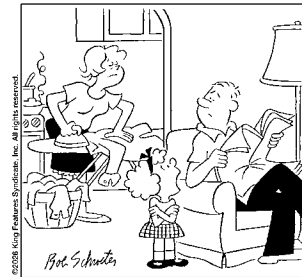
D-PARTING



- ACROSS**
- 1 PlayStation 3 competitor
 - 4 Prefix for "bird"
 - 7 Man-to-man term of endearment
 - 13 Luau skirt
 - 19 Native (to)
 - 21 Modern way to shop
 - 22 Neckwear clasp
 - 23 Noteworthy septet of piers?
 - 25 Spanish fleet
 - 26 Worship
 - 27 Publicly revealing Edison's secret?
 - 29 Bottom-row PC key
 - 30 Recipe qty.
 - 32 Overly
 - 33 Eggs' shapes
 - 34 Successfully trap a moray?
 - 41 Shrek is one
 - 43 "There oughta be --!"
 - 44 Dozing
 - 47 Spellbound
 - 51 "This works like a charm!"
 - 55 Up-to-the-minute
 - 57 Director Ang
 - 58 Like family-friendly films
 - 59 Pres. after FDR
 - 62 Bring a Ferris wheel to a complete stop?
 - 65 Scrape (by)
 - 66 Charlotte --, Virgin Islands
 - 69 Internet ID
 - 70 TV host Philbin
 - 71 Like a king who has wild mood swings?
 - 76 Burns a little
 - 77 Army NCO
 - 78 Teensy bit
 - 79 Noted period
 - 81 Ruling eagle sitting in her high nest?
 - 84 Org. giving tows
 - 85 Iridescent button materials
 - 88 Architect I.M. from China
 - 89 "Avengers: Age of --" (2015 Marvel film)
 - 91 Government revenue sources
 - 93 Ukraine port
 - 96 Basketry willows
 - 99 Shout
 - 100 Mask
 - 102 Wish you had never met the star of "Firestarter"?
 - 107 Curved
 - 110 -- Fridays (restaurant)
 - 113 Bank acct. amount
 - 114 Uncooked
 - 115 Response to a question about "Swan Lake"?
 - 119 1996 #1 hit for Los del Rio
 - 124 Funnel-shaped bloom
 - 125 People with unorthodox opinions about a girl in Wonderland?
 - 127 Quick raids
 - 128 Cringed
 - 129 Sugar alcohol used as a sweetener
 - 130 Tiny amounts
 - 131 Goes hastily
 - 132 From -- Z
 - 133 Pop/soul singer Des'--
 - DOWN**
 - 1 Floor cleaner for liquid spills, in brief
 - 2 Suffering, figuratively
 - 3 -- Kit (police face-maker)
 - 4 Part of ACLU: Abbr.
 - 5 -- voce
 - 6 "High Rollers" rapper
 - 7 See 109-Down
 - 8 With the wish (of)
 - 9 Actress Summer of "Serenity"
 - 10 Encircled with a band
 - 11 Not suitable
 - 12 Like many simple questions
 - 13 TDs or RBI
 - 14 Loud warning device
 - 15 Eliminator
 - 16 Former first lady Michelle
 - 17 Rafael of tennis
 - 18 Lawn surface
 - 20 Suffix of nationalities
 - 24 Amsterdam is its cap.
 - 28 Sticky gunk
 - 31 Island setting
 - 35 Appellation
 - 36 Dressed
 - 37 Bible book before Zechariah
 - 38 Prefix with light
 - 39 Pipe joint
 - 40 Foliage unit
 - 42 Stan of jazz
 - 45 Region of pre-Roman Italy
 - 46 Viewed intently
 - 48 Some wheel adjusters
 - 49 Animal's "family tree"
 - 50 Golf pegs
 - 51 Deep anger
 - 52 Pay attention
 - 53 Sault --, Mich.
 - 54 Replace with
 - 56 Bud of Cooperstown
 - 60 Some roofing specialists
 - 61 Up to, in brief
 - 63 Suffix with southwest
 - 64 Outdoor gear retailer
 - 67 Large city in Iraq
 - 68 Raised RR's
 - 72 "Either he goes -- go!"
 - 73 Mao -- -tung
 - 74 Diva Sumac
 - 75 Boomer's kid
 - 76 Mafia chief
 - 80 Horse cousin
 - 82 Campus area
 - 83 Film genre
 - 86 Skillfully
 - 87 Tranquil
 - 90 Modern, in Munich
 - 92 Scottish port
 - 94 Varnish resin
 - 95 Judgy glance
 - 98 Govt. loan agency
 - 101 LAX guess
 - 103 -- mater
 - 104 Collier's tram
 - 105 Really bug
 - 106 Discarded PCs or TVs
 - 107 At the stern
 - 108 Barber's tool
 - 109 With 7-Down, the original "It" girl
 - 111 Chews on
 - 112 Town on Long Island's South Shore
 - 116 Russian news agency
 - 117 Chablis, e.g.
 - 118 Ovid's "Lo!"
 - 120 Brand of athletic shoes
 - 121 "-- la vie"
 - 122 Slangy suffix with buck
 - 123 Cup edge
 - 126 ER staffers

SCRAMBLERS

Unscramble the letters within each rectangle to form four ordinary words. Then rearrange the boxed letters to form the mystery word, which will complete the gag!



"Tell me, Daddy, how much an hour does a _____ get?"

- Honest: ROMAL [] [] _ _ _ _
- Reduced: KNURSH [] [] [] [] [] []
- Village: LATHEM [] [] [] [] [] []
- Groan: ACKER [] [] [] [] [] []

TODAY'S WORD

SUDOKU

			9			8	2	4
2						7	9	3
	4		2					
8		3			1		6	7
	6			4			1	
1	2		8			9	3	
4	3		7	6	2		8	9
		8		9		3		
5	2		8		1		6	

Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

DIFFICULTY: ◆

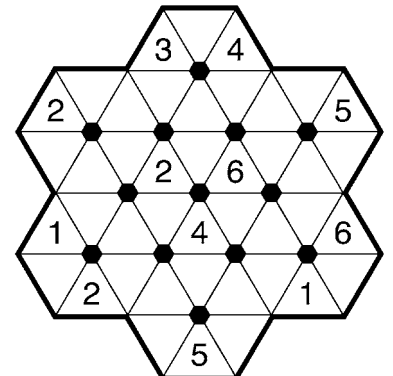
- ◆ Moderate
- ◆◆ Challenging
- ◆◆◆ HOO BOY!

© 2026 King Features Synd., Inc.

SNOWFLAKES

by Japheth Light

There are 13 black hexagons in the puzzle. Place the numbers 1 - 6 around each of them. No number can be repeated in any partial hexagon shape along the border of the puzzle.



DIFFICULTY: ◆◆◆

- ◆ Easy
- ◆◆ Medium
- ◆◆◆ Difficult

© 2026 King Features Synd., Inc.

GO FIGURE!

The idea of Go Figure is to arrive at the figures given at the bottom and right-hand columns of the diagram by following the arithmetic signs in the order they are given (that is, from left to right and top to bottom). Use only the numbers below the diagram to complete its blank squares and use each of the nine numbers only once.

	+		-		=	4		
-		+		-				
	+		÷		=	2		
÷		-		+				
	+		×		=	27		
=		=		=				
2		5		11				
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

© 2026 King Features Syndicate, Inc.

WHAT THE...

Think you're funny?

Send us your best caption...

Email to celeste@dmcityview.com — **BE SURE TO INCLUDE YOUR NAME**

Next month's photo:



IMAGE BY GRATISOGRAPHY

This month's winner

"My attorney advised me to appeal to a higher authority."

— Sunny Liston



IMAGE BY GRATISOGRAPHY

Runners-up

"Banksy's dyslexic grandson." — David J.

"Young Banksy begins his clandestine career with the only graffiti he knows how to spell." — Suzanne Robinson

"Little James Dean loved his Mommy but eventually became a rebel without a cause." — Mary Wedewer

"Timmy was too young for a tattoo, so he did the next best thing!" — Loretta Greiner

"All and all it's just a.... another MOM on the WALL!" — Steve Stotts

Send your "What The...?" caption and image entries to celeste@dmcityview.com.
BE SURE TO INCLUDE YOUR NAME.

Los Alegres
SABOR MEXICANO

20% OFF
YOUR TOTAL BILL
Dine in Only. Not valid with any other offer. Expires 6/30/26

PATIO NOW OPEN!

losalegressabor.com 515-850-0803
8950 University Ave, #105 West Des Moines

SunSetter
America's #1 Awning

SAVE \$350
when you transform
your patio into an
outdoor oasis.

Call 1-855-462-2330 now to
SAVE \$350 TODAY!

- Instant shade at the touch of a button.
- Enjoy more quality time with family and friends.
- Up to 10-Year Limited Warranty.

Popcorn Belongs in a Bowl, Not on Your Ceiling!

Providing high-quality wall finishing services throughout Central Iowa.

- ✓ Drywall installation
- ✓ Wall coatings
Smooth or textured walls for any budget
- ✓ Popcorn ceiling removal & re-texture
- ✓ Residential or commercial projects

DES MOINES WALL SYSTEMS

CONTACT US TODAY!
515-208-0780
chris@desmoineswallsystems.com
8450 Hickman Road, Clive

Iowa Genealogical Society silently serves generational knowledge

President Joe Solem takes us through the entirely volunteer-run organization.

The Iowa Genealogical Society is one of the more underappreciated and less-known groups in Des Moines. Despite it being located in the bustling East Village, full of nightlife, shopping, restaurants and music venues, the society sits there quietly, running smoothly, hosting a wealth of knowledge within.

To find out more, we interviewed Joe Solem, the society's president. Solem, who is also a volunteer firefighter, says the society and his duties with the fire department keep him busy in his retirement — if you could call the amount of work he does a retirement.

"I love doing genealogy research. I got started in it maybe 20, 25 years ago," Solem said.

When Solem became president of the society, he had two goals: clearing up the clutter and making the organization bigger and better than it had ever been.

Solem helped clean up the conference room and turn it into a space that can be used for their fundraisers, rented for events, or even used by lobbyists who need a space to work when visiting the capitol nearby.

The society lost its librarian, who did a large amount of work. Figuring out what to do without one was a challenge of its own, but one that Solem and the rest of the society figured out.

"We decided to run the organization by volunteers. Let's not hire another librarian and put that money aside and save it. We've done very well with it. We had a lot of people say, 'You can't do it. You can't run an operation of this size with just volunteers.' Well, two and a half years later, we have, and it's been very successful," Solem said. "The volunteers here are absolutely fantastic. They've stepped up when we've needed people at the front desk, or we need help with this or that. That's what's made us a success for the last two and a half years."

One would be surprised at the sheer number of resources that society has at its disposal.

"We have approximately 20 to 25,000 books in our library. We have some specialty things that are for members only. On our website, we have what they call a library edition of ancestry.com. So, instead of paying several \$100 a year for their membership, you, as a member, can come here and log on to Ancestry's

website," Solem said. "We also have another application called MyHeritage. You can access it from home as long as you're a member. We have newspaper archives."

Those all put together can run a pretty penny. At the heritage society, the normal membership fee is \$40. In total, Solem says the society has around 1,000 members who access the website at iowagenealogy.org.

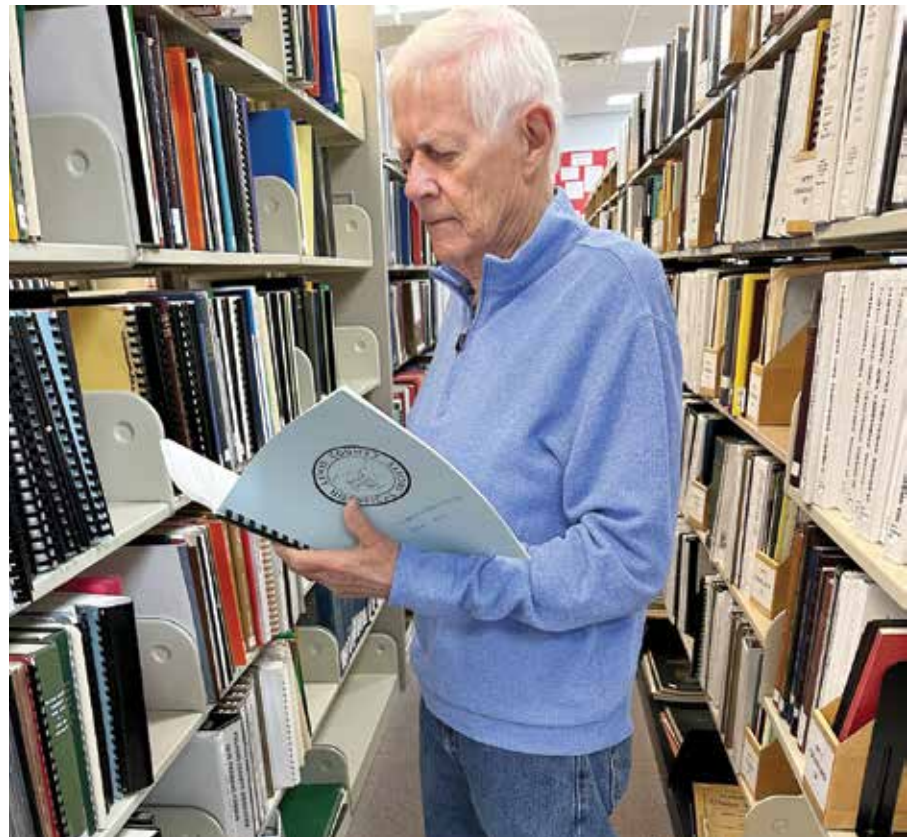
"A lot of people think, well, I could do all my research online. I was a believer in that. I did that for a long time. But you come down here, and we'll give you free tours and explain some of these things to you, and you'll see the benefits of why you should become a member," Solem said.

Solem's own interest in genealogy and history started with his family. With a family as big as his, it makes sense he would want to look into it.

"My family's mainly Norwegian, and growing up, there were 18 children in the family. Twenty to 25 years ago, I ran through some paperwork that my mother had started on some genealogy work, and it fascinated me. I used that as the building block to build my genealogy charts. It's one of those things that when you do some research, and some of the things you find out, some of them can be a little disheartening. Some of them make you say, 'Wow, this is pretty cool.' It kind of feeds on itself. The more you know, the more you want to know," Solem said.

With Solem enjoying digging into his own family history as much as he does, he gets an equal amount of joy helping others who come into the society looking for answers.

"When you help somebody, they're like, 'Wow, I've been looking for that for a long time,' and it just gives



"Everybody here will just bend over backwards to help people," Joe Solem said.

you the warm and fuzzy feeling. It's hard to explain," Solem said.

The research team at the society found something he even struggled with finding.

"We have a team of three researchers. One of the things that I found in the documents for my mother was that my great uncle died aboard a ship coming from Norway. I've been trying to prove or disprove that and trying to find ship records, but I just hit a brick wall," Solem said.

Solem's time in charge is coming to an end, but his efforts have served the society well and set it up greatly for those who come after him. He says he plans on putting his new free time back into researching his own family history. ■

Cyote Williams was born and raised on the south side of Des Moines and writes about entertainment, sports and personalities across the Des Moines metro for CITYVIEW. Phone: 515-953-4822 x333.



CARS IN THE CITY



2026 Volvo XC90 plug-in hybrid delivers luxury, power and fuel savings

Scandinavian design, premium features and impressive fuel economy make the XC90 a standout luxury SUV.

BY JACKIE WILSON

With current gas prices soaring, car manufacturers continue to promote their fuel-efficient electric or hybrid models.

This month's Cars in the City features the 2026 Volvo XC90 plug-in hybrid. The Volvo hybrid gets about 58 mpg equivalent when using both electricity and gas for short trips. Once the electric charge is used up, it gets around 27 mpg, so keep plugging it in after each use.

Volvo's luxury brand consistently ranks in the top 10 lists of luxury vehicles with its unique features. This model offers a 2-liter turbocharged four-cylinder engine and an eight-speed automatic transmission, combined for 455 horsepower. It can tow up to 5,000 pounds, enough to pull a jet ski, fishing boat or small camper.

The Volvo offers third-row seating, although it is a bit snug in the far back row. Passengers are treated to Nappa leather and side vents in the back-row seats.

The front seats, with four-way lumbar support, seat extension and other adjustments, are designed around Scandinavian ergonomic principles and endorsed by the College of Chiropractors. The sink-in seats were comfortable yet supportive.

After a push-button start, camera views pop up on the rearview mirror. I find it dizzying, as the camera view is like an amusement park ride, with cars speeding up from behind. I disabled it and switched to a normal rearview mirror.

When looking in the rearview mirror, sometimes the backseat headrest blocks your view. To improve

visibility, just push the headrest button, and it instantly folds forward. Although I did not test it with a passenger sitting there, I hope the feature is disabled when occupied.

The center console shifter is made of real crystal. It is called the "Crystal Eye" and is made by Orrefors, a famous Swedish glass and crystal company known for fine crystal art and glassware. The jewel-like shifter is hand-finished by artisans and illuminated from below.

Volvo's front grille is curved and sleek in appearance. Look more closely at the headlight design to discover Thor's Hammer. The horizontal T-shaped LED light inside the headlight resembles the legendary hammer of Thor, the Norse god of thunder from Scandinavian mythology. I guess having a Norwegian god protecting the vehicle is a bonus.

The Bowers & Wilkins stereo sound was top-notch. As I rubbed my hand against the speaker grilles, the texture was rough, similar to a singer's microphone. The brushed-metal finish includes perforations that allow for better sound. Knowing my luck, I would snag my favorite blouse on it, but at least I would enjoy the thumping bass sound.

Reading the price sticker on a new vehicle often reveals extras that add to the total cost. For the Volvo, a rear camera washer costs \$385. Can you not just use your T-shirt to wipe off water spots?

Priced at \$92,125, the Volvo is definitely a splurge luxury vehicle. The money saved on today's gas prices



could be significant. Plus, you can rest your hand on a piece of crystal. ■

Jackie Wilson has written hundreds of articles for CITYVIEW and the Iowa Living magazines. She has covered many ordinary people living extraordinary lives.



Fuentes is Smashing the competition

Local "Super Smash Bros." player is ranked in the top 50 worldwide.

"Super Smash Bros." is a platform fighting game that first hit CRT (tube) TV screens via the Nintendo 64 in 1999. Since then, it has had a total of five iterations across multiple gaming platforms and spurred one of the most active competitive gaming scenes in the world.

Local player David Fuentes, who goes by Slowking, got his first taste of the game at 5 years old while playing with family.

"My uncle got us 'Smash Bros. 64', I would have been like 5, and we just played it from there. It got bigger than I'm sure Nintendo thought it was gonna be. The first time I played 'Melee' was actually in Mexico with my cousins," Fuentes said.

The franchise pits some of Nintendo's most popular characters, like Mario and Donkey Kong, against other famous characters from different IP's like Steve from 'Minecraft' and 'Pac-Man.'

Fuentes, whose main character is Falco from the 'Star Fox' series, first got his taste of what competitive gaming could be like by speedrunning, where gamers try to finish games as fast as possible by taking advantage of glitches and exploits.

"That's how I found out about competitive 'Smash.' There was a game store in Sioux City that hosted a 'Melee' tournament. So, my friends and I went down there, and that's how it all started," Fuentes said.

After having success at the tournaments at Game Lair in Sioux City in 2015, Fuentes started traveling to Iowa City and Des Moines to compete. Becoming more engrossed in the Iowa scene, Fuentes was ranked fifth in Iowa despite living in South Dakota, something he notes as one of his first big accomplishments.

"They were like, 'OK, he's here. He's getting these wins, we have to put him on it.' That was really satisfying for me, to have that drive and be able to establish myself, even though I'm living way out here in Sioux City. It might have been a driving factor for me. I'm going to do this. I've got to prove a point," Fuentes said.

Outside of the weekly events the local group holds, he won a regional event in Indiana in March against 81 entrants, and in 2024 he won the Cream City Convergence in Wisconsin, one he called his breakout event.

"There are a lot of people who are on the cusp and could win these events, but it's so much harder to go and win these tournaments and be the best player there. It's really cool to be that person. Now, I'm not winning like a 1,000-person tournament or anything



"Super Smash Bros." is such a large part of Fuentes' life, he played it on his wedding day. Pictured here (different day) facing Cody Schwab, the No. 1 "Melee" player in the world.

like that quite yet, but I'm still doing super well," Fuentes said.

The thing he mainly focuses on doing at tournaments is outperforming his seed. At a recent tournament in Boulder, Colorado, he was projected to place 13th and ended up placing ninth.

"That's the goal. You want to exceed expectations, not only for yourself but also the expectations the other people have put on you by how they seeded you in the bracket," Fuentes said.

World rankings come out once a year, and Fuentes is currently ranked 50th in the world for Melee. He received his first world ranking in 2022 and has only risen since.

"It is incredibly hard to do. The game as a whole gets pushed further every single year. So every year it's harder to get to that level and stay at that level. That's one of my biggest accomplishments in my head, getting there and not only staying at the level, but also improving every single year," Fuentes said.

One might think that in such a competitive environment, friendships would be difficult to come by, but not within the Iowa "Smash" community. The group hosts weekly tournaments and regularly travels to tournaments all over the U.S.

"We're so tight-knit. We have all these extra things that we're doing together and hanging out and helping people move, or whatever it may be. Some scenes don't have that. People come to Iowa from Minnesota or from Kansas City, and they're like, 'You guys are all



Most of the Iowa "Melee" community.

friends, it's super homey," Fuentes said.

"To kind of be the figurehead of the community, and then have everybody be super friendly with each other, to the point where people are noticing when they come out of the region, how homey everyone is, is a very prideful thing for me."

Fuentes was sure to say the friendliness and overall welcoming community is not down to him but the overall kindness of the Iowa Smash scene.

Fuentes also puts his event organizing skills to work not only at the West Des Moines Marriott, but for the Iowa tournament as well. He says that on June 20, they will host the biggest Iowa Melee tournament to date. The Run, Don't Walk 2026 tournament will have more than 170 players from Iowa and around the country and will surely put Slowking to the test. ■

Cyote Williams was born and raised on the south side of Des Moines and writes about entertainment, sports and personalities across the Des Moines metro for CITYVIEW.



WALKS OF LIFE

Fresh finds

Local vendors bring flavor, passion and community to farmers markets.

Longer days and warmer nights can only mean one thing — farmers market season is back. With fresh-picked produce, handcrafted goods and sweet treats, the market is a weekly gathering place for both vendors and visitors.

COMPILED FROM THE IOWA LIVING MAGAZINES



Jacob Gomke

Homemade flavors and big dreams

Jacob Gomke loves ice cream. When he was 5 years old, he and his family were visiting Billy's Ice Cream Store in Adel when he asked why they didn't have a Captain America flavor.

"Captain America was his favorite character," his mother, Jess Gomke, says. "My husband told him that he should come up with a Captain America flavor. Jacob took him literally and seriously and did just that."

Jacob asked if he could sell his new ice cream flavor at the Adel Farmers Market.

"I started to talk to my parents about it the summer before I went into kindergarten but waited until the summer before I went into first grade to start setting up a booth and selling my homemade ice cream at the farmers market," he says. "The first summer, I offered my Captain America homemade ice cream, which is a blueberry and raspberry combination, by the scoop. This got my business started and is still the most popular flavor my customers ask for. I started with Captain America because I am a big fan of his, and I could only find Superman ice cream at Billy's, which I still love going to."

Source: Adel Living, May 2026;
by Rachel Harrington

Read the full story here:



Autumn Wolter

"Dabbling" in breads and sweets

Autumn Wolter has been baking since she was a little girl in the kitchen with her mom.

"About five years ago, I started dabbling in bread-making as a way to pass the time in college. Not long after, I inherited a sourdough starter, and the rest is history. From there, I began experimenting with and perfecting a variety of breads and sweets."

In January 2024, Wolter decided to take the leap and begin selling her products. Becoming a vendor was the next step in growing her business and expanding her reach.

Wolter likes that people come to markets specifically to shop local and support small businesses, creating a special environment for both vendors and customers. She had visited the Johnston Farmers Market before and enjoyed the atmosphere. After researching other markets, she decided Johnston was the perfect fit, especially since it is the community where she is based.

"Being a vendor at the Johnston Farmers Market is truly special. Many of the same customers come back week after week, which allows me to build genuine connections. The market is the perfect size — not so large that I can't spend time talking with people, but busy enough to have a great turnout and steady support."

Source: Johnston Living, May 2026;
by Ashley Rullestad

Read the full story here:



Joyce Fisher

Fisher's Flowers and Produce

Joyce Fisher has sold at the Valley Junction and Ames Main Street farmers markets for eight years.

At Fisher's Flowers and Produce, she offers bedding plants, herbs and cut flowers. During harvest season, she sells asparagus, green beans, tomatoes, peppers and other produce. Her tomato seedlings include Cherokee Purple and Brandywine varieties.

Cut flowers, including zinnias and sunflowers, are available in mid-June.

Their produce is grown organically. "We'd like to be certified organic, but it's a lot of paperwork and government regulations," she says. "Our farming practices are as natural as possible."

Fisher first "dabbled" in markets years ago while raising her children. After retiring, she returned to selling. Her husband, Jody, also retired and now helps; he is a beekeeper and sells honey.

"We've made so many friends over the years," she says. "We provide good, wholesome food. We love people who come back year after year."

Source: West Des Moines/Jordan Creek Living, May 2026; by Jackie Wilson

Read the full story here:



Jennifer Callahan

Freshly popped

As a fan of fresh kettle corn, Jennifer Callahan was searching for the ideal popped crunch. She eventually perfected it through her Callie (short for Callahan) Corn popcorn business.

Callahan purchased the business from the owners of Pop Pop's Kettle Corn, John and Mary Claire, in 2023.

"They taught us how to make the kettle corn," Callahan says. "We want to stay true to the same recipe."

Initially, Jennifer and her husband, Ken, did not plan to make popcorn full time. Instead, they planned to retire first, but the opportunity came earlier than expected. The business is veteran-owned. Their son, Zach, a veteran, is co-owner. Their other sons, Christian and Logan — a veteran and an active servicemember — also help.

The kettle corn is a mix of butterfly and mushroom popcorn. It has just four ingredients: corn, corn oil, sugar and salt. The signature flavor comes from the balance of sugar and salt.

"We really worked hard to get it perfect," Callahan says. "It sells because of the flavor."

They purchase popcorn locally from central Iowa farmers. They cook in small batches at markets and adjust quantities as needed. ■

Source: Waukee Living, May 2026;
by Jackie Wilson

Read the full story here:



NATIONAL MARKETPLACE

DISCLAIMER: This publication does not knowingly accept advertising that is deceptive, fraudulent, or which might otherwise violate the law or accepted standards of taste. However, this publication does not warrant or guarantee the accuracy of any advertisement, or the quality of the goods or services advertised. Readers are cautioned to thoroughly investigate all claims made in any advertisement and to use good judgment and reasonable care, particularly when dealing with persons unknown to you who ask for money in advance of delivery of the goods or services advertised.

WANT TO BUY

WANT TO BUY your manufactured or mobile home 1990 and newer CENTURY HOMES of OSKALOOSA 641-672-2344 (mcn)

AUTOMOBILES

GOT AN UNWANTED CAR??? DONATE IT TO PATRIOTIC HEARTS. Fast free pick up. Patriotic Hearts' programs help veterans find work or start their own business. Call 24/7: 1-833-485-1046. (mcn)

Get a break on your taxes! Donate your car, truck, or SUV to assist the blind and visually impaired. Arrange a swift, no-cost vehicle pickup and secure a generous tax credit for 2025. Call Heritage for the Blind Today at 1-855-977-7030 today! (mcn)

Donate your car, truck, boat, RV and more to support our veterans! Schedule a FAST, FREE vehicle pickup and receive a top tax deduction! Call Veteran Car Donations at 1-888-429-2331 today! (mcn)

CABLE/INTERNET

AFFORDABLE TV & INTERNET. If you are overpaying for your service, call now for a free quote and see how much you can save! 1-833-472-7954. (mcn)

DIRECTV- All your entertainment. Nothing on your roof! Sign up for Directv and get your first three months of Max, Paramount+, Showtime, Starz, MGM+ and Cinemax included. Choice package \$84.99/mo. Some restrictions apply. Call DIRECTV 1-866-296-1409. (mcn)

FINANCIAL

END YOUR TAX WORRIES TODAY. Let us make your tax problem our priority. Scared, stuck with high tax amounts? Our A+ tax professionals can help. Call for a FREE consultation. Call Priority Tax now 1-877-353-1295 (mcn)

Inflation is at 40 year highs. Interest rates are way up. Credit Cards. Medical Bills. Car Loans. Do you have \$10k or more in debt? Call NATIONAL DEBT RELIEF and find out how to pay off your debt for significantly less than what you owe! FREE quote: Call 1-866-552-0649. (mcn)

HEALTH & MEDICAL

DENTAL INSURANCE from Physicians Mutual Insurance Company. Coverage for 400 plus procedures. Real dental insurance - NOT just a discount plan. Do not wait! Call now! Get your FREE Dental Information Kit with all the details! 1-855-973-9175 www.dental50plus.com/midwest #6258 (mcn)

PORTABLE OXYGEN CONCENTRATOR May Be Covered by Medicare! Reclaim independence and mobility with the compact design and long-lasting battery of Inogen One. Free information kit! Call 844-716-2411. (mcn)

STOP OVERPAYING FOR HEALTH INSURANCE! A recent study shows that a majority of people struggle to pay for health coverage. Let us show you how much you can save. Call Now for a no-obligation quote: 1-888-772-8454. You will need to have your zip code to connect to the right provider. (mcn)

ATTENTION OXYGEN THERAPY USERS! Discover Oxygen Therapy That Moves with You with Inogen Portable Oxygen Concentrators. FREE information kit. Call 1-833-650-5916. (mcn)

AUDIEN HEARING. The world's first hearing aid with touchscreen controls. No tiny buttons, apps or prescriptions. 45-day risk free trial. Free shipping. Lifetime support. More than 1.5 million happy customers. Call Audien 1-866-698-3418 (mcn)

HOME SERVICES

Don't Pay For Covered Home Repairs Again! Our home warranty covers ALL MAJOR SYSTEMS AND APPLIANCES. We stand by our service and if we can't fix it, we'll replace it! Pick the plan that fits your budget! Call: 1-833-816-2128. (mcn)

WATER & FIRE DAMAGE RESTORATION. Our trusted professionals will restore your home to protect your family and your home's value! Call 24/7: 1-833-879-1480. Mold Remediation services are also available! (mcn)

JACUZZI BATH REMODEL can install a new, custom bath or shower in as little as one day. For a limited time, waiving ALL installation costs! (Additional terms apply. Subject to change and vary by dealer. (Offer ends 12/27/26.) Call 1-855-414-0768 (mcn)

MISCELLANEOUS

Reach over 1.4 million homes for just \$249! Advertise your business or item with a classified ad in the Midwest Free Community Papers. Simple, cost-effective, and powerful. One call, and you're done! Boost your visibility now! 888-899-6327. (mcn)

NEED NEW FLOORING? Call today to schedule a FREE in-home estimate on Carpeting & Flooring. Call Today! 1-833-641-6323. (mcn)

INJURED IN AN ACCIDENT? Don't Accept the insurance company's first offer. Many injured parties are entitled to cash settlements in the \$1000's. Get a free evaluation to see what your case is really worth. 100% Free Evaluation. Call Now: 1-833-879-1534. (mcn)

Prepare for power outages today with a Generac Home Standby Generator. Act now to receive a FREE 5-Year warranty with qualifying purchase. Call 1-877-228-5789 today to schedule a free quote. It's not just a generator. It's a power move. (mcn)

THE BATHROOM OF YOUR DREAMS in as little as 1 day. Limited Time Offer - \$1000 off or No Payments and No Interest for 18 months for customers who qual-

ify. BCI Bath & Shower. Many options available. Quality materials & professional installation. Senior & Military Discounts Available. Call Today! 1-833-618-1178. (mcn)

NO MORE CLEANING out gutters. Guaranteed! LeafFilter is backed by a no-clog guarantee and lifetime transferrable warranty. Call today 1-855-577-1268 to schedule a FREE inspection and no obligation estimate. Get 15% off your entire order. Plus, Military & Seniors get an additional 10% off. Limited time only. Restrictions apply, see representative for warranty and offer details. (mcn)

SUNSETTER. AMERICA'S NUMBER ONE AWNING! Instant shade at the touch of a button. Transform your deck or patio into an outdoor oasis. Up to 10-year limited warranty. Call now and SAVE \$350 today! 1-855-462-2330

REAL ESTATE

WE BUY HOUSES for Cash AS-IS! No repairs. No fuss. Any condition. Easy process: Call, get cash offer and get paid. Call today for your fair cash offer: 1-888-715-0513. (mcn)

WANT TO BUY

BUYING AND SELLING silver and gold coins, bars, silver dollars, rare coins. Same retail location 44 years. Compare prices before you buy/sell. Own 1,625 acres of land near Ormsby, MN. Can be open seven days. 507-235-3886 / 507-399-9982. Kuehl's Coins. (mcn)

CASH PAID FOR HIGH-END MEN'S SPORT WATCHES! Rolex, Breitling, Omega, Patek Philippe, Heuer, Daytona, GMT, Submariner and Speedmaster. Call 1-833-641-6646. (mcn)

WE BUY VINTAGE GUITARS! Looking for 1920-1980 Gibson, Martin, Fender, Gretsch, Epiphone, Guild, Mosrite, Rickenbacker, Prairie State, D'Angelico, Stromberg. And Gibson Mandolins / Banjos. 1-833-641-7028. (mcn)



Peace of Mind or Early Detection

Now, More than ever, it's important to get screened for Stroke and Cardiovascular Disease Risk

It's simple and painless.

833-970-4172



Need Cash Quickly?

Get a cash offer for your house within 24 hours.

833-359-4707



Jacuzzi Bath Remodel

Safety. Style. Stress-Free Installation.

SPECIAL OFFER
Waiving All Installation Costs!

CALL NOW
1.866.753.9521

Add'l terms apply. Offer subject to change and vary by dealer. Expires 12/27/26.



Transform Your Bathroom and Change Your Life.

FREE TOILET + \$1,500 OFF*

For your FREE information kit and our Senior Discounts, Call Today Toll-Free
1-855-417-1306

safestep

*Free toilet with purchase and installation of a walk-in tub or walk-in shower only. Offer available while supplies last. No cash value. Must present offer at time of purchase. Cannot be combined with any other offer. Market restrictions may apply. Offer available in select markets only. CSLB 1082165 NSCB 0082999 0083445 13UH1096000




GENERAC

#1 standby generator worldwide.

Get whole-home power, automatically.

Call 866-643-0438 to schedule your free quote today!

*Terms & conditions apply



Tested and proven gutter protection.

LeafFilter GUTTER PROTECTION

LeafFilter® Common hood style

We install year-round - Exp. 6/30/26

Schedule your free inspection and estimate today!
1-855-595-2102 Promo Code: 285

Special offer - Save up to*
25% off
LeafFilter Gutter Protection

*Promotional offer includes 15% off plus an additional 10% off for qualified veterans and/or seniors. Cannot be combined with any other offers. One coupon per household. No obligation estimate valid for 1 year. See representative for full warranty details. AR 366920925, AZ ROC 344027, CA 1035795, CT HIC.0671520, DC 4.20223E+11, FL CBC056678, IA C127230, ID RCE-51604, LA 559544, MA 213292, MD MHIC11225, HIC164488, MI 262300331, 262300330, 262300329, 262300328, 262300318, 262300173, MN IR810524, MT 2661922, ND 47304, NE 50145-24, 50145-23, NJ 13VH13285000, NM 408693, NV 86990, OR 218294, PA PA179643, RI GC-41354, TN 10981, UT 10783658-5501, VA 2705169445, VT T74.0000371, WA LEAFFLH-763PG, WI No. 537-DCFRR WV WV0656912

Breakfast,
Deli and
Vegan
Sandwiches



**Fresh, locally
roasted coffees
and espresso**

Ice cream

Live events

**Carefully curated
selection of new
& used books**



Monday-Saturday 7am - 7pm, Sunday 7am - 4pm

**602 E. Grand Ave.
Des Moines, IA**

**515.243.0815
plaintalkbooksandcoffee.com**

**WE BUY & SELL ANTIQUES, ESTATES,
VINYL RECORDS, FINE ART & MORE!**



Located in the Historic East Village

**RACCOON FORKS
TRADING COMPANY**

Open 7 Days a Week

Sunday 9am-4pm | Monday 9am-5pm | Tues-Sat 9am-6pm

**621 Des Moines St., Des Moines | raccoonforks.com
515-809-1715 | raccoonforks@gmail.com**



**RIVER TO RIVER
BAKERY & PIZZA**

**HAND-MADE
THIN-CRUST PIZZA**

*Sandwiches, Salads,
Appetizers & Breads*



**\$2
SLICES**



Just a few pedals from the Raccoon River Valley Trail

**Patio
seating &
bike parking
available**

109 N. 9th Street, Adel | rivertoriverpizza.com

Located on the west side of the courthouse square

515-478-1187 Open Every Day 11am - 8pm

**RAILROAD BILL'S
DINING CAR**

A CLASSIC DINER EXPERIENCE

All-Day Breakfast • Lunch • Vegan Menu



Open Everyday 7am - 2pm



**621 Des Moines St, DSM
In the NE corner of the East Village**

**515 . 243 . 0247
railroadbillsdsm.com**

2026
FESTIVAL SEASON
JUNE 26 - JULY 19

PUCCINI
TOSCA



FLOYD
OF MICE
AND MEN

SZYMANOWSKI
KING
ROGER



“Des Moines Metro Opera has become one of the country’s most successful smaller companies doing adventurous repertory in a 467-seat space.” *The New York Times* (2025)

Experience world-class opera in a theatre that brings you within arm’s reach of the action onstage.

For tickets, visit DMMO.ORG or call (515) 209-3257