

TR A C T I O N

A MAGAZINE FROM THE AMES CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Spring 2023
Issue 02

STORY COUNTY

RETRAINING PROGRAM





**THE THREE PILLARS
THAT WILL LEAD OUR
WORK WILL BE:**

LEADERSHIP
ENGAGEMENT
ADVOCACY



Dan Culhane
President & CEO,
Ames Chamber of Commerce

We think about leadership a lot at the Ames Chamber of Commerce, both within our organization and how we serve our community. Developing the next generation of leaders is a responsibility that we all must carry. Some people are natural leaders and possess the required skills needed to run an organization, manage projects, or cultivate relationships. But in my experience, those skills need to be paired with adequate experience. I do not necessarily mean years of service, but rather having access to the world of leadership; how decisions are made and the thought process behind them.

Cultivating leaders can happen both formally and informally. I strive to provide updates to my team on the work that is happening that lies beyond their scope of influence, while explaining my thinking behind it. I do this in meetings or within an impromptu one-on-one conversation with a cup of coffee in hand. I hope these interactions inspire innovation and a new level of thinking for those in our organization.

We recently announced the 36th class of Leadership Ames. The program gives both experienced and emerging leaders a broader view of civic leadership responsibilities and opportunities through direct contact with a wide range of institutions and people who shape the community where we live and work.

One additional affiliate program that we are investing more resources into this year is the young professional organization, FUEL. You can learn more on the FUEL website, but I encourage you to consider being a member for the professional networking, programming, and social opportunities that it provides. Many of the next leaders of our community are already here, so let's facilitate their success.

What is Traction?

The **Ames Chamber of Commerce** and affiliate organizations help create traction in our community. We drive business and community vitality in the Ames MSA by being connectors. We lead, engage, and advocate for the betterment of our communities. We help get projects off the ground or help move them forward, and we are undeterred in our purpose, cause, and passion. A great idea often needs a little bit of progress and momentum, and we help provide that **traction** to move it forward.

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On the Cover

The Story County Retraining Program is free to all residents in Story County who are 18 years or older and have obtained a diploma or GED. It is a partnership between Story County, the Ames Chamber of Commerce, and the Des Moines Area Community College (DMACC), who hosts the classes at their Ames and Boone campuses. Learn more about the program in the feature article of *Traction*.

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TRACTI•N INVESTORS



Centrally and conveniently located in the heart of the Midwest and Iowa, Ames is known for its healthy, stable economy, flourishing cultural environment, and the world-renowned Iowa State University. With over 700 members, the Ames Chamber of Commerce strives to make Ames a better place to live, work, and do business by strengthening the economic vitality and the quality of life in the Ames community.

STORY COUNTY

RETRAINING PROGRAM



Free to all residents in Story County 18+ with a diploma or GED.

The American Welding Society predicts the nation will have a shortage of 400,000 welders by 2024. In Iowa, more than 58 percent of health care facilities reported a shortage of qualified applicants for nursing positions according to a 2020 workforce demand survey by Iowa Workforce Development and the Iowa Board of Nursing.

Career changes are complicated and too often are never pursued because of built-in obstacles. For many professions, certificates or degrees are needed to prove proficiency in a craft. Starting over requires establishing a new professional network, which is daunting. And above all, pursuing a career change costs money, often the first and most obvious non-starter of them all.

The Story County Retraining Program eliminates those barriers and is free to all residents in Story County who are 18 years or older and have obtained a diploma or GED. It is a partnership between Story County, the Ames Chamber of Commerce, and the Des Moines Area Community College (DMACC), who hosts the classes at their Ames and Boone campuses.

“There is a growing need for trained and skilled workers in Story County,” said Latifah Faisal, Chair of the Story County Board of Supervisors. “It removes some of the barriers that can lock people into a job that they may not enjoy.”

This free Retraining Program provides an opportunity to master new skills and technology that can lead to a new career opportunity in a very short amount of time. The program is currently available in ten different career tracks, but the most popular are the welding and certified nursing assistant (CNA) tracks.

The idea of the program began in 2020 as a result of the Future Ready Iowa Grant program, but fundamentally evolved in Story County when the Story County Board of Supervisors approved the program and assigned the operations to the Ames Chamber

of Commerce. It was a strategy that was utilized in the wake of the pandemic when employment for many people was impacted.

Nikki Fischer, Director of Workforce Development for the Ames Chamber of Commerce, oversees the program. “The underlying theme of the Retraining Program is that it provides opportunities to learn a new skill, immediately have an opportunity for advanced employment, and to earn more money. And it’s completely free!”

The process to apply is simple: prospective students fill out the Workforce Training Academy application online. Afterward, DMACC representatives contact the applicant to provide more information. Tuition and books are all paid through the program. Additional benefits include transportation assistance through gas cards each week that a student attends classes. Childcare assistance is determined on a case-by-case basis, and a cash stipend helps fill in the financial gaps of this transition period. In all, \$600 is given to each student who finishes the coursework and works in a job in Story County for 30 days.

“The goal is to take the barriers away and make it easy for people to advance or upscale their career,” said Fischer. The classes are 5-15 weeks long depending on the course.

The Retraining Program is focused on providing opportunities for individual career advancement, and it is exciting to see employers of Story County increasingly utilize the program.

Mid-States Companies

Mid-States Companies is a leader in agricultural construction. Much of their 20+ year reputation is in providing a full range of design-to-build contracting services, notably for grain and feed storage construction. The company is multi-generational and family-owned with their roots in Nevada dating back to 1965. They are proud to call Nevada and Story County home and invest in not only the community, but their people as well.

Dustin Johns is a Production Manager at Mid-States Companies. As a supervisor, he has encouraged several people to participate in the Retraining Program and sees it as an opportunity

“Often times, we have employees come in at an entry-level position and absolutely love working at Mid-States because of the culture we have built,” said Johns. “They want to do more with our company and want to make more money. This is where we used the Retraining Program to help make that happen.” One of those people was James Stewart who completed the welding program in March 2022.



Dustin Johns (left) and James Stewart (right) on the floor at Mid-States Companies in Nevada, Iowa.

Stewart admits that he had no metals background when he started at Mid-States, but he had always been interested in learning a new skill. He started taking the evening classes and quickly realized that he had a natural ability to weld. He started in shipping at Mid-States, and today does welding full-time and hasn’t looked back. “It changed the way I look at things, not only for my career, but what Mid-States does.”

High on a wall on the production floor reads “Hard Work Beats Talent When Talent Doesn’t Work Hard”. It’s a mantra that the company lives by, but it can also serve as a reminder of the seriousness of the products they are building.

Welding is a process where two pieces of metal are fused together by heat and pressure. At Mid-States, the quality of weld supports buildings and cat-walk structures that people walk on, sometimes 200 feet in the air. There is not an opportunity for errors or producing a weak product.

Stewart notes that the program has helped him out financially (having this skill earns him a higher wage), but that he is also more excited to come to work every day.

“We have to leverage the talent that we already have in the building,” says Johns. “We want to push people to grow, advance their career, and ultimately stay here at Mid-States. If we can

» **The Story County Retraining Program is presented by:**



The Story County Retraining Program provides FREE courses in the following areas:

- Manufacturing
- Welding
- CNA/Basic and Advanced
- Construction
- Healthcare Patient Services
- Maintenance Tech / Electrician
- Commercial Driver’s License (CDL)
- Phlebotomy
- IT Help Desk
- Advanced Programmable Logic Controller



TR:CTI•N EMPLOYER

MARY GREELEY MEDICAL CENTER

was built by former Civil War officer, Capt. Wallace Greeley, and given to the city of Ames, Iowa, in memory of his late wife, Mary Greeley. The 220-bed medical center stands on the original location and is a regional medical center that provides care to residents in 14 counties in central Iowa. Mary Greeley offers inpatient and outpatient services, including cancer care, cardiac care, mental health services, obstetrics, orthopedics, home health services, hospice care, emergency services, surgical services, respiratory care, stroke care, and diabetic care. In 2019, Mary Greeley was named a recipient of the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award, which is the nation's leading recognition of quality and innovation.



Photos submitted by Mary Greeley Medical Center

support that through this program, we will continue to do that.”

Developing high-quality welders is a passion that Johns has not only at Mid-States Companies, but beyond. He learned on-the-job while employed at ALMACO, another Nevada-based manufacturing company, and today is a welding instructor at DMACC and teaches high school students at Nevada High School. He fully recognizes that not every student he works with will pursue welding as a career, but high school is a time of career exploration, and he loves sparking that interest in students.

The Retraining Program continues to be a viable option for Mid-States Companies. Never one to sit idle, Johns is taking coursework this spring to get his Commercial Driver's License (CDL).

Mary Greeley Medical Center

Like Mid-States Companies, Mary Greeley Medical Center (MGMC), is an organization that actively promotes the Retraining Program with staff and experiences a direct, positive result.

“We are always in need of qualified patient care techs,” said Tammy Stegman, Workforce Engagement Program Manager at MGMC. “This is a really good growth opportunity for employees, especially those who are currently working in a non-clinical setting but are interested in advancing their career in healthcare and within our organization.”

For Mary Greeley Medical Center, the certified nursing assistant (CNA) track is the most popular for their organization. They often see staff in other departments such as purchasing take advantage of this opportunity. “It sets them on the first step of a career path for advanced pay and promotion without the financial barriers attached with going back to school,” said Stegman.

Jacqueline Hollingshead, Learning and Development Manager at MGMC, also noted the impact from the patient care perspective. “Completion of the course provides our staff with skills to improve the quality of care and overall experience for our patients.”

From a workforce development standpoint, the Retraining Program continues to be an important strategy to build skilled employees. “This is a program that can grow our skilled labor force by removing barriers to opportunity and connecting people with the resources they can use to lift themselves into a better financial future,” said Board of Supervisors Latifah Faisal. “This is just one way we grow Story County strong.”

At the end of the program, the Ames Chamber of Commerce

organizes meet and greet opportunities for graduates. Employers are able to talk with the students and at times extend job offers immediately. “Companies absolutely love this because they have access to potential employees who they know have gone through a program that has equipped them for the workforce,” said Nikki Fischer, Director of Workforce Development for the Ames Chamber of Commerce.

Since the beginning of the program, 51 individuals have utilized the program with the average age being 34. In all, 31 individuals have earned their CNA and 7 their welding certificate through the retraining program.

It is never too late to begin thinking about a new career and the Story County Retraining Program could be the best fit. It is free to all Story County resident who are 18 years or older and have obtained a diploma or GED.

➤ **For more information about the Story County Retraining Program, contact the Ames Chamber of Commerce**

Contact: Nikki Fischer
Director of Workforce & Diversity

✉ nikki@ameschamber.com

☎ 515.232.2310



Alesia and Robert Knight
Owners, In God's Hands Cleaning, LLC

In God's Hands Cleaning, LLC
is located at 114 Crystal St.

Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Business Program

In partnership with each of Iowa's 15 community colleges, including Des Moines Area Community College, the Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Business Program provides business owners the tools to develop a customized business plan for growth with topics covering financial statements negotiation, marketing, employee management, and more. The 12-week curriculum is delivered in person and online – all at no cost to Iowa business owners.

Listening to an inner career calling can be uncertain and difficult, but the feeling can also be undeniable. For Robert and Alesia Knight, their steadfast commitment to faith steered them on their entrepreneurial and faith-based journey over a decade ago.

The couple began In God's Hands (IGH) Cleaning, LLC, in January 2011. The company provides commercial janitorial services, window cleaning, carpet cleaning, floor care, and currently employs 13 individuals.

Prior to starting IGH, both Robert and Alesia were employed at Iowa State University, living comfortably with a salary, health insurance, and retirement. But it was not enough for them. They knew that their calling was to minister to people directly. Robert stepped away from his job at the University in July 2010 without a clear career direction, but they had faith that one would be presented to them.

In November 2010, a business owner asked Robert to buy a pickup truck and a snow blade. After speaking with Alesia, he agreed and In God's Hands Outdoor Services was born. The company transitioned into commercial cleaning after one winter and they have been a staple in Ames since that time.

As the name represents, the Knights are clear about their faith and their commitment to their employees and clients. A pastor at his core, Robert begins each shift meeting with prayer and team building before they disperse to the job sites.

“We love the Ames community!” said Robert. “We raised two kids here who both have obtained degrees from Iowa State University. The best thing about the Ames community is the people, and the opportunity to serve.” Robert has a degree in Hotel Restaurant and Institution Management; Alesia in Chemistry, both from Iowa State University.

As much as ministry is at the core of their business, so is their desire to grow. The Knights were recently accepted to the Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Business Program. Through the program, participants gain practical skills in topics such as negotiation, marketing, and employee management that can immediately be put into action. In addition, they receive the tools and professional support to develop a strategic and customized growth plan that will take their business to the next level.

“The opportunity to be a part of 10,000 Goldman Sachs was recommended through the Ames Chamber of Commerce. We completed the application and interview process and were accepted as participants,” said Robert. “Alesia and I are praying that our experience with 10,000 Goldman Sachs will allow our business to move to another level of service to care for people, our customers, and our team.”



Legislative Kickoff Breakfast

DATE: January 4, 2023

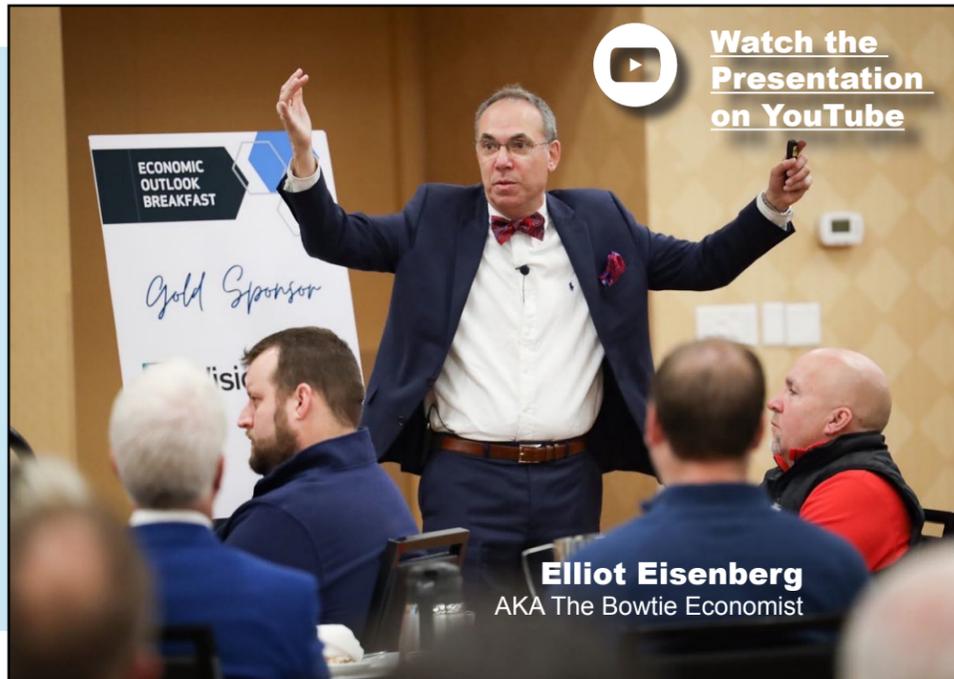
Prior to the legislative season beginning, the Ames Chamber of Commerce hosted state legislators at the 2023 Legislative Kickoff Breakfast. Local legislators in attendance included Senators Jesse Green, Herman Quirmach, and Jeff Edler, along with Representatives Beth Wessel-Kroeschell, Ross Wilburn, and David Deyoe. Attendees were able to ask questions and share thoughts on a range of topics that included education, mental health funding, and property taxes, among others.

The Ames Chamber of Commerce serves as the area's advocate for business at the local, state, and federal levels.

Economic Outlook Breakfast

DATE: January 18, 2023

Elliot Eisenberg, AKA the Bowtie Economist, was the keynote speaker at the Ames Chamber of Commerce Economic Outlook Breakfast, presented by Sigler Companies. Elliot Eisenberg, Ph.D. is an internationally acclaimed economist and public speaker who specializes in making economics fun, relevant, and educational. The presentation was full of graphs and plenty of laughs. You can view his full presentation for a limited time on the Ames Chamber of Commerce YouTube Channel.



Elliot Eisenberg
AKA The Bowtie Economist

Ribbon Cutting Events

- [ADi Group](#)
- [Ames Community Preschool Center](#)
- [Sam's Place](#)
- [Sell It Well Home Staging](#)
- [Flight Bar + Grille](#)
- [Sturm Cosmetic Surgery](#)
- [CTC Barber Academy](#)
- [Cobblestone Inn & Suites](#)
- [CFO Systems LLC](#)
- [Dentistry at Somerset](#)
- [Pelican's Boutique](#)
- [Kinetic Edge](#)
- [Haverkamp Group](#)



Upcoming Events

The **Ames Chamber of Commerce** hosts events year-round that appeal to both members and non-members alike. Interested in attending an event? Check out the calendar and register online at [AmesChamber.com](https://www.AmesChamber.com)

Annual Event

DATE: December 14, 2022

Geopolitical strategist and author, Peter Zeihan, was the keynote speaker at the Ames Chamber of Commerce 2022 Annual Event. Held at the Sukup End Zone Club at Jack Trace Stadium, Zeihan linked his expert understanding of demography, economics, energy, politics, technology, and security to the event. He explained the global conflict in Ukraine and talked about the future of China, all while providing insights into what Iowa's role is in today's global economy. You can watch his entire presentation on the Ames Chamber of Commerce YouTube Channel.

Peter Zeihan
Geopolitical Strategist and Author
Keynote address at the 2022 Annual Event

Watch the Presentation on YouTube



ONLINE MEMBER DIRECTORY



Looking for a local business? Consider one of our over 700 Ames Chamber of Commerce members through our online directory. Visit our website at:

[AmesChamber.com](https://www.AmesChamber.com)

Scan the QR code to access our online directory to search for some of the businesses gaining traction.

New Members

- [Transworld](#)
- [Farm Story Meats](#)
- [Sell It Well Home Staging](#)
- [The Slater Station](#)
- [Cobblestone Inn & Suites](#)
- [YESCO Sign & Lighting Service](#)
- [Beisser Lumber Company](#)
- [Iowa Home Crafters, Inc](#)
- [State Farm – Mark Doyle](#)
- [CTC Barber Academy](#)
- Chase Abner
- [Big O Tires](#)
- [Midas](#)
- [Pelican's Nest Boutique](#)
- [Kruck Plumbing & Heating](#)
- [Makers Custom Blinds](#)
- [Live Hydration Spa](#)
- [Family Healing Chiropractic](#)
- [Carlos Quesadillas](#)
- [CyRide](#)
- [Flooring America](#)
- [Sage 68](#)
- [1+1 Restaurant and Tea](#)

AWARDS

Since 1987, the Ames Chamber of Commerce has recognized individuals and businesses who have shown exemplary service and commitment in their profession or in the community. This year's Annual Awards ceremony took place on January 26, 2023, at Prairie Moon Winery in Ames.



▶ THE AMES FOUNDATION VOLUNTEER BUSINESS OF THE YEAR

CHEVRON RENEWABLE ENERGY GROUP

This Ames business has been instrumental in partnering with The Ames Foundation for continued volunteer and financial support to replenish trees in various neighborhoods throughout Ames. [Chevron Renewable Energy Group](#) has a dedicated Philanthropy Committee, and they've helped during The Ames Foundation Spring and Fall tree planning events the last two years. By providing over 40 employees and nearly 160 hours of assistance, The Ames Foundation was able to plant nearly 400 trees the last two years in parks and neighborhoods at Inis Grove Park, Northridge Heights Park, and Tahira and Labh Hira Park.

▶ AMES MAIN STREET VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR



STEVE GOODHUE is the President and owner of [Knapp Tedesco Insurance Agency](#), and currently serves as the Past Chair of the Ames Main Street Board of Directors. Steve brought innovative thinking and pushed the organization to think outside the box. Steve was instrumental in creating and pushing forward a strategic plan and vision for the "Next Big Thing" for Downtown Ames.

▶ ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR



TYLER FREDERIKSEN has served as president of the [Story City Economic Development Corporation](#) since 2019, and has had an essential role in developing housing solutions, negotiating land deals, marketing available property, and preparing incentives packages. Economic development is often a time-consuming process that requires focused attention, and Tyler has worked tirelessly on catalytic projects that will add essential amenities to the Story City community.



▶ BUSINESS OF THE YEAR

DANFOSS POWER SOLUTIONS

In 2022, this company celebrated Fifty "One"derful years in the Ames community. As our communities' largest private sector employer, the impact that this Ames business makes ripples through all levels of our regional economy. They actively partner with Iowa State University, hire large numbers of interns each year, attract business and client visitors to our community, and continue to make decisions to reinvest in their people and their facilities. Over the last couple of years, we have seen many innovative enhancements made to their Ames operations including the addition of a new production line, investments in R & D space and equipment, and people added to their workforce.

▶ ECONOMIC IMPACT AWARDS



AGCERTAIN

In 2019, AgCertain purchased KemX Global in Boone and began work to transform this company. Headquartered in Ames with refining operations in Boone, AgCertain is one of the most adaptable edible oil refiners in the industry producing non-gmo, organic, high performance, and conventional oils. The adaptability and flexibility of their refining facility enhances their ability to support traceability for a wide variety of products that become ingredients for larger manufacturers, consumer packaged goods companies, and food producers. In October 2022, AgCertain celebrated their expansion in the Boone Industrial Park.

BERDEX USA

Berdex, a global manufacturer of livestock trailers, announced the expansion of Berdex manufacturing capabilities from the Netherlands to the United States, and specifically to Ames in March of 2022. Ames now serves as Berdex USA's U.S. headquarters. Berdex USA is located just east of Interstate 35 on Highway 30. This economic development project is expected to bring approximately 20 new jobs to the Ames region. Berdex USA will manufacture three different types of livestock trailers in Ames; conventionally ventilated trailers, cross-ventilated trailers, and climatized trailers. These trailers will be targeted for top swine producers, cattle producers, and other types of livestock producers.



▶ DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION AWARD

HAWKEYE MOLDING COMPANY, INC.

Since 2021, Hawkeye Molding Company has partnered with Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services and the local high school's work experience program to provide work placement opportunities for individuals with disabilities. The Roland, Iowa-based company welcomes new employees with open arms.

They actively engage in conversations about employee opportunities and experiences, with many of their staff having a strong background in working with individuals who have significant barriers. This amazing partnership has created meaningful employment opportunities and a successful experience for both the employees and Hawkeye Molding.



KRUCK PLUMBING & HEATING

KrucK Plumbing & Heating has served the needs of the region since 1941. In the Fall of 2022, they opened a new facility along Highway 30 in Boone. The brand new, 37,000 square foot facility is home to KrucK Plumbing & Heating's prefabrication shop and warehouse. This facility addition has allowed the company to consolidate from multiple buildings into one location. One of the vacated facilities has allowed two businesses in Boone to further their growth as well. KrucK Plumbing & Heating is an award-winning commercial contracting company that has successfully completed a variety of commercial projects in Central Iowa.

VERBIO

2022 marked the commercial production of renewable natural gas and ethanol at Verbio, the \$115 million Story County refinery. This renewable natural gas is made from corn cobs, husks, and other crop residue purchased from central Iowa farmers. When fully operational, Verbio will produce renewable natural gas that contains the energy equivalent of 19 million gallons of ethanol each year. No other company in the U.S. is making renewable natural gas using farm residue at an industrial scale. The renewable natural gas generated at this Nevada facility is pumped directly into an Alliant Energy pipeline, which distributes the product to their customers in Iowa and across the country.



▶ ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR

EVIE PETERSON, COPPER SPACES

As a “never say never” entrepreneur, Evie Peterson is relentlessly passionate about smart business growth and expanding the economic development and revitalization in the community in which she lives!

Beginning with FarmHouse Catering, Evie has built a portfolio of businesses that have transformed Main Street Nevada. Those include the FarmGrounds coffee shop, Gatherings event space, one of the premier event spaces in the Ames MSA, the thoughtfully curated Cozy Home & Table store, and now Copper Spaces, the beautiful coworking space.



▶ TRAILBLAZER OF THE YEAR

SUSAN FRANTZ, FENCELINE BEER LAB

This nanobrewery in Huxley has been influential in the revitalization of economic growth in the downtown area. A graphics and web designer by trade, trailblazer Susan Frantz, along with her Ag Science-minded, co-brewing husband Jonathan, continue to experiment with various brew recipes to bring a truly unique business to the community. You can find 12 of their beers on tap at Fenceline Beer Lab at any given time ranging from agreeable ale’s to irresistible IPAs! They’ve found a way to flourish since 2019 by adding light menu items, specials, and promotions for added flare.



▶ FUEL 4 UNDER 40



KAYLA BERMAN

works for the Center of Rural Affairs and advocates for the environment within agriculture across the country. She is the chairperson for the Story County Soil & Water Conservation District, received the New Voices in Water Quality Award in 2022, and was named the Women Helping Others Woman of the Year award in 2020.



SARINA FLATHERS

has been a leader in the non-profit industry for over 7 years and is involved in many aspects in the community, both personally and through her career as a Community Engagement Coordinator at YSS. Sarina is part of the Ames Business Solutions Group and has been selected as part of the Leadership Ames Class of 2023.



KRISTIN PATES

is an energetic and engaging leader who regularly dedicates her time and efforts into making Ames the most welcoming place it can be. She has shown her passion for connecting community members by getting involved in community events, including the Young Leaders Society at United Way.



ALLIE PRUSA

has been an integral part of FUEL for several years, serving on various committees and helping with numerous events. Her passion and commitment has shaped the program to include extended philanthropic opportunities for members to give back to the community and development opportunities for young professionals to thrive.



▶ BUSINESS & STUDENT ENGAGEMENT AWARD

LANE TRAILER MANUFACTURING CO. / BOONE COMMUNITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Since 2003, the family-owned Lane Trailer Manufacturing Co. has served the Ames MSA with incredible products. They have consistently found ways to give back to the community, most recently through the EDGE program within the Boone Community School District. The Boone EDGE program prepares students for post-secondary success and collaborates with area businesses to provide opportunities to students. This past year, Lane Trailer provided welding internships over the summer for high school students within the Boone EDGE program. One intern from previous years recently accepted a full-time position and was able to help summer interns this year with his expertise.

▶ AMBASSADOR OF THE YEAR



DAN SIEGFRIED

made celebrating chamber members a priority, consistently attending ribbon cuttings that welcomed new members or highlighted milestones throughout the year. He is a regular at 1 Million Cups, Chamber Coffee Mingles, and Business After Hours, and he also sponsored our morning networking session.



▶ COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT OF THE YEAR

AMES HOME BUILDERS ASSOCIATION

Thanks to the collaboration of the Ames Home Builders Association, Gilbert High School Shop Class, Prairieland Homes, and many other businesses throughout Ames, this Make-A-Wish “She Shed” project was granted in 2022! The Ames Home Builders Association made this wish come true for Amy, a Gilbert High School student, who had the dream, the vision, and the renderings for her own space. With over 20 students at Gilbert High School, and with the support of the Ames Home Builders Association, this reality was built!



▶ HOUSING PROJECT OF THE YEAR

THE VILLAS AT FOX POINTE

Pioneer Property Management and the City of Boone celebrated the groundbreaking of The Villas at Fox Pointe in October 2022. The ceremony marked the beginning of a two-phase, \$19 million investment in Boone. The first phase is a \$11 million, 40-unit new construction project. The second phase is a \$7.6 million new construction senior housing project that includes 30 total units, all two-bedroom, for community members 55+ years of age.



▶ CULTURE CURATOR OF THE YEAR

SIGLER COMPANIES INC.

Go on a tour or walk through the Sigler facilities in Ames and you will get a sense of the fun and pride that the employees feel for this company. In 2022, Sigler Companies broadened their business in Ames with the acquisition of Alpha Copies and Express Signs and in the process, extended their impactful culture even further. You can find Sigler employees volunteering in our community and making donations to worthy projects. Internally, their team organizes events that include summer grill outs, ugly sweater contests, and other team building efforts. If there is a special day, the team at Sigler is celebrating it! National Hydration Day, Women Who Print Day, Manufacturing Day, and sometimes they create their own days, like “Cake Day”!



Dr. Brent Shanks
Co-Founder, Pyrone Systems, Inc.

AMES SEED CAP INVESTS IN

PYRONE

SYSTEMS INC.

On November 9th, 2022, the Ames Seed Capital Board of Managers approved a \$100,000 investment for a new business named Pyrone Systems, Inc, which is developing a bio-pesticide that uses pogostone as the key ingredient.

Mosquitoes, ticks, and other insects have become resistant to pesticides and insecticides currently on the shelves. Pyrone Systems is positioned to offer a unique solution to this problem by developing a new way to produce pogostone, which is a naturally occurring molecule produced by the patchouli plant.

For centuries, the patchouli plant leaves have been known to have a repellent property and were commonly used when shipping textiles from Southeast Asia to Europe. The patchouli plant, however, produces pogostone in such low quantities that an area eight times the size of Texas would be required to produce the amount of insecticides used in the U.S.

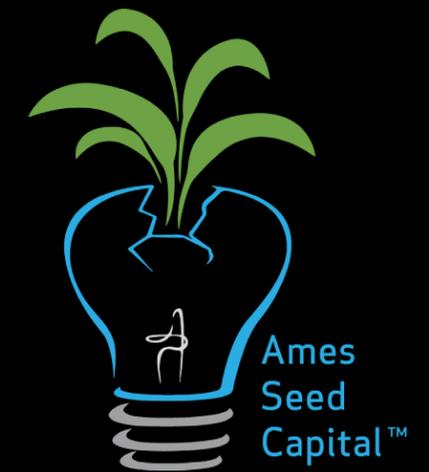
Pyrone Systems has solved this problem through the development of Pyrone-1, which they make using genetically modified yeast. They take the yeast and mix it with the byproducts from making vegetable oil. The initial lab results have shown an increase in Pyrone-1 production, which is exciting for Pyrone Systems as they approach commercialization. Preliminary data suggests that pogostone is non-toxic to humans, birds, bees, and the environment.

Pyrone Systems was founded in October 2021. Dr. Brent Shanks, a co-founder of Pyrone Systems, currently serves as Chief Technical Officer. He is also a Distinguished Professor and the Director of the Iowa State University Center for Biorenewable Chemicals (CBiRC) at Iowa State University. He sees the potential of Pyrone-1 going beyond insect control.

"What takes Pyrone-1 to the next level is our proprietary chemistry and know-how that was originally developed in CBiRC," said Shanks. He noted that their technology has unlocked potential in seven new markets, including a \$7 billion corrosion inhibitor market that is facing regulatory pressure and the \$120 billion lubricant market that wants to decarbonize. "We're moving fast as the Pyrone Systems team has extensive expertise in developing biology and chemistry, scaling up operations, navigating regulatory requirements and creating key sales and marketing collaborations."

The rest of the Pyrone Systems leadership team includes Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Alex Hutagalung, Chief Business Officer, Steve Bessette, and Chief Financial Officer, Brian Conn. The company is planning to first produce pesticides for commercial and residential uses, and then believes it can produce, cost efficiently, enough to serve agricultural markets.

Mike Upah, Director of Ames Seed Capital (ASC) for the Ames Chamber of Commerce, said that the ASC executive committee saw the potential in what Pyrone Systems was doing. "When positive referrals come from multiple, respected sources, it accelerates interest and helps prioritize one project over others." He noted that it is a great time to invest in bio-based products and that the company founders have an understanding of the industry with a sound commercialization strategy.



Founded in 1987, **Ames Seed Capital** is a venture fund based in Ames, Iowa, and operated by the Ames Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development Commission. The firm invests a pool of funds committed by private sources (entities and individuals) for the purpose of providing equity-based financing for business start-ups and/or expansions. These investments primarily focus on companies in the biotechnology, software, energy, and financial service sectors located in Central Iowa, but they are not limited to these parameters.

The Fund is an Iowa company created to implement a program of the Ames Economic Development Commission (AEDC) and initially established by the AEDC to fund start-up companies developed at Iowa State University with commercial potential. Ames Seed Capital is managed by an elected volunteer Board of Managers.

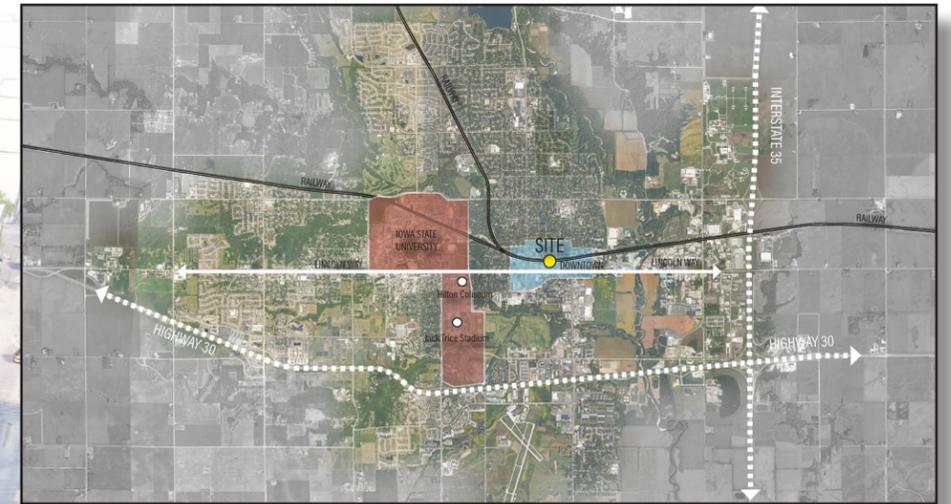
To date, Ames Seed Capital has raised 7 funds with the first taking place in 1997 with \$451,000. Fund 3 was \$449,5000 and had 55 investors who invested in five companies. This created a high rate of return and each investor received nearly \$5 back for every one dollar invested.

Fund 4 invested in 13 companies, Fund 6 totaled \$1.7 million and included 63 investors, and Fund 7 saw the firm's largest investment total of \$4.25 million with 101 investors.

Currently, the fund has invested a total of **\$4.9 million in 29 businesses** and has an additional \$3.4 million in Fund 7 to invest. The current portfolio includes **14 companies**.

Here are a few notable investments from Ames Seed Capital:

- **Rocketchips** – now part of Advanced Micro Devices
- **Advanced Analytical Technologies** – Now part of Agilent Technologies, Inc.
- **New Link Genetics** – completed a public offering on the NASDAQ exchange and is now part of Lumos Pharma
- **Harrisvaccines** – acquired by Merck Animal Health
- **Workiva** – completed a public offering on the NASDAQ and now operates from its global headquarters in Ames, Iowa in the Iowa State University Research Park.



The Linc



If you have driven along Lincoln Way in downtown Ames between Clark and Kellogg avenues, you likely noticed the big open (and empty) lot. That is the future home of The Linc, a \$150 million development that will feature retail and commercial spaces, residential living units, and a hotel and conference center.

First proposed in 2019, The Linc is moving forward after years of collaboration between the City of Ames, Hunziker & Associates of Ames, and private developer Christensen Development of Des Moines. In October 2022, the Ames City Council voted unanimously to move forward with the concept for the proposed development, with additional approvals required in the coming months.

“A transformational project of this scale requires years of collaboration between public and private sectors,” said Chuck Winkleblack of Hunziker & Associates. “It requires vision and a willingness to commit. With considerable work yet to do, we are fortunate to have wonderful partners working alongside us to help make this happen.”

The planning is not yet done for The Linc, but each step provides a clearer vision of what it will eventually become. As agreements are finalized and signed, more information will be released regarding which companies are committed to the project, including hoteliers, restaurants, and retail outlets. Underground utility construction is anticipated to take place in the latter part of 2023.



WHAT IS

Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

Redevelopment is expensive. As a way to bridge the financial gap in a project of this magnitude the City of Ames will be asked to provide tax increment financing (TIF) for the project. According to the Iowa Department of Management, TIF is a financing mechanism primarily used for urban renewal. “It involves freezing the tax base (property values) within a designated area.” TIF districts divert property taxes created from increased property values in an area to subsidize development.

TIF allows local governments to invest in public infrastructure up-front and it incentivizes private investment. Local governments can then pay later for those investments by capturing the anticipated increase in tax revenues generated by the project. This is often seen in large-scale projects, such as The Linc.

The project is expected to bring in an estimated \$52.4 million in property tax revenue over 20 years. As reported in the Ames Tribune in October 2022, the City of Ames is offering tax increment financing and would waive \$42 million of that income from the developers’ property taxes and keep \$10 million to build a public parking structure on the north side of the railroad tracks. This type of investment is a perfect example of public and private partnerships coming together to create a generational project that will serve the community for decades.

CELEBRATING

10 YEARS IN AMES



Nick Johnson
Owner, Ames Ford Lincoln

In the fall of 2022, the family-owned Ames Ford Lincoln celebrated 10 years in Ames. Casey Johnson first purchased a Ford dealership in 1996 in Fort Dodge. In 2012, the Johnson's saw an opportunity in Ames and expanded to their second location. Today, the operations of the Ames location are overseen by Casey and Nick Johnson.

"Looking back at the 10 years, the thing that has stuck out to me the most is how warmly we were received by the community," said Nick reflecting on the past decade. "Our philosophy is that if we take care of our team members and guests, and provide an excellent experience, everything else will take care of itself."

One of the hallmark programs that Ames Ford Lincoln actively partners with is the Wheels for Work Program through the United Way of Story County. Ames Ford accepts donated vehicles into the program, performs a safety inspection and repairs, before the vehicle is given to a family in need. To date, the program has provided transportation to over 80 families.

"We hear stories that kids are now able to join a sport or activity because they now have reliable transportation," said Nick. "The program has allowed individuals to advance their careers by accepting a different job or promotion."

The Johnson family donates with their time as well, having sat on a number of boards including The Ames Foundation, Story County Medical Center, and the Ames Chamber of Commerce, while also actively investing in other organizations such as the Boys & Girls Clubs of Story County.

Ames Ford Lincoln currently employs about 75 people, up from 16 in 2012. Part of this growth is a result of doubling their service department about three years ago. They are committed to Ford's new electric vehicle program and next year will be installing 3-4 fast charging stations and will be a certified Model-E dealer. The Johnson family has always reinvested in their business, and this provides a positive economic impact on our community.



Marianne and Matt Pacha
Owners, Flight Bar + Grill

Matt and Marianne Pacha opened Flight Bar + Grille in Huxley, Iowa, in 2022. In the process, they built a business that has community at the heart of its operations.

The Pacha's moved to Huxley in 2017 and saw a need for the type of restaurant that they were hoping to build. "Huxley deserves a bar and grill like the one that we were envisioning," said Matt, reflecting on the early conversations that he and Marianne were having with family and friends. "After about six months, the conversations turned from how this could work to how we are going to make this work."

Ideas turned into action and in March 2022, Flight opened. "All of the signs were there for us to do this," said Marianne. They secured the location in north Huxley on Highway 69 and had the ability to customize the interior to match the look and feel that they wanted. "I'm passionate about ambiance and experience, so it was important for us to get the look and brand right."

The Flight name is community inspired and plays off the local Ballard Community School District's mascot, the Bombers B-52 airplane. It is also woven into their menu selections: beer and dip flights. Most importantly for the Pacha's was how nearly every aspect of their business weaves the notion of community into it.

One of the unique amenities that Flight brings to Huxley is the addition of a golf simulator. It is a great off-season option for the golf community, even if they cannot arrive in their golf carts during the winter.

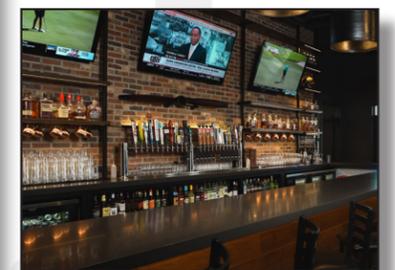
Just as Flight Bar + Grill leans into the community school brand, they are also personal contributors to the high school's athletic club. The high school golf team uses the golf simulator in the off-season, and they also employ several high school students part time.

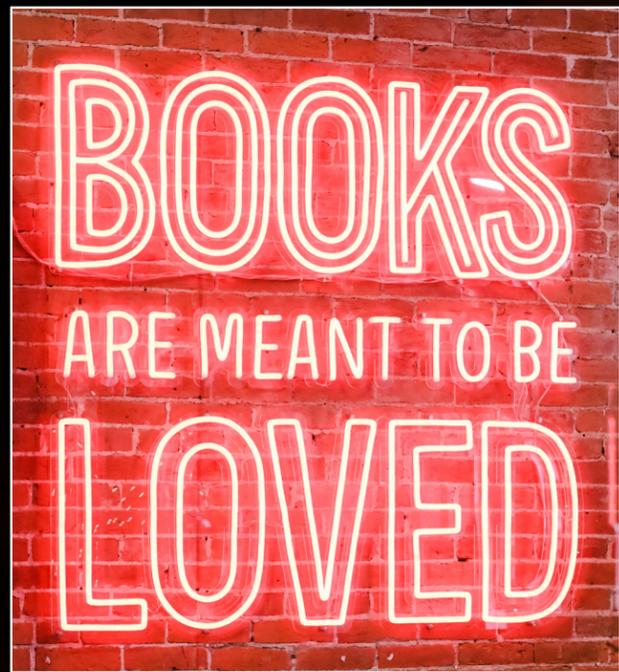
Upon opening, the Pacha's announced their membership program called the Flight Crew. In a nod to the sitcom Cheers, which was known as the local establishment for locals to meet, relax, and socialize, the Flight Crew offers discounts on food and drinks, but also provides members with their own beer stein mug with their name on it. When Flight Crew members come in, they grab their personalized mug for the night.

When you visit Flight Bar + Grill and are looking for a recommendation, consider the Foundation Burger. The double burger includes cheddar cheese, caramelized onions, and a mustard aioli. Consistent with their brand, \$1 of each burger goes to the Ballard Education Foundation that supports teachers and students in the Ballard Community School District.



Flight Bar + Grille is located at
931 N US HWY 69 in Huxley.





dog·eared BOOKS

"Books are meant to be loved." This is the guiding philosophy, as displayed in a bright neon sign inside the Downtown Ames, independent bookstore, Dog-Eared Books.

Since opening in March of 2021, Dog-Eared Books has become the go-to store for book lovers thanks to the "enthusiastic and generous support of our community," said co-owner Amanda Lepper.

Lepper and co-owner Ellyn Grimm graduated from Ames High together in 2001. Grimm studied English literature and taught secondary English after graduating from Iowa State University. Lepper earned a Master of Journalism degree from the University of Missouri and worked at a small-town paper in Kansas before moving back to Ames. The two reconnected years after graduating high school when their kids were in the same preschool class.

Conversations in the pick-up line evolved over time to include the topics of the day, politics, and their love of books. "I would talk about my dream of someday opening a children's bookstore in Ames," recalls Lepper who also saw it as "a total pipe dream." But whenever the topic came up, Grimm would always say, "if you do it, I'll do it with you!"

In April 2019, the two eventual co-owners investigated the possibility of opening the store together. "We agreed to begin a research process to determine if we thought the town could support an 'indie' bookstore," said Lepper. That year of research included talking with their mentor bookstore in Columbia, Missouri, and creating a long list of questions. They attended the American Bookseller Association's Winter

Institute, an industry wide educational conference for independent booksellers, that included a one-day bootcamp focused on opening a new store. According to the seminar leaders, Ames proved to be an ideal environment for an indie bookstore with its high education level, strong support of a local library, and a community with a strong local shopping district.

The two researched and planned through the pandemic. Shelving, graphic design and web needs, point of sale systems, and books – "lots and lots of research on books and publishers," said Grimm. Their dog-eared dream opened in the spring of 2021.

"One of the things that we did not fully anticipate was the community and friendships that we developed as a result of the store," said Lepper. "The people who have made Dog-Eared Books their place is really amazing. They see it as part of their world."

Built on a love of books, Lepper and Grimm are embracing the book community that they are at the center of, but their programming goes beyond traditional book clubs, which now total 8. "Cozy puzzle night" includes drinks and pajamas where ten teams rush to complete a 1,000-piece puzzle. Monthly trivia nights are always full. And poetry slams are taking off in popularity. Dog-Eared Books has collaborated with local writing groups, including the Ames Writer's Collective, to provide an outlet for their work. "People are grateful for a place to have community," said Lepper.

When you walk into Dog-Eared Books, you immediately recognize the value that the owners place on brand and aesthetics. That brand extends to their book curation process as well. "We buy based on our own taste, but also what our community wants," said Lepper.

The Ames community has a big National Public Radio following and wants to read about current events, nature, and history. Social media trends such as BookTok also play a role in their curation process. BookTok is part of a TikTok subculture where "influencers" share short-form videos about their favorite book. If a book is trending on TikTok, it is likely that you can find it at Dog-Eared Books. "We immediately order the book because it drives sales," said Grimm.

At any given time, the store has over 13,000 books with 9,000 unique titles. What you won't find are books based on hateful topics. Rather, the Dog-Eared owners have placed an emphasis on finding titles that promote inclusivity and representation. This approach has served them well, not only in building community, but in employing staff to operate the store. They currently employ 18 staff, mostly part-time employees, who all love books. On the off occasion when they do have an opening, they are often flooded with applicants.

Lepper and Grimm are always looking for ways to expand their business, both financially, and as a way to build community. New this year, the store is offering a monthly book subscription, with options for either a new release adult fiction selection or a children's picture book selection, with a middle grade chapter book offering to be added this summer. They are also partnering with area school districts to supply classroom and library literature and will be hosting a book fair at Ames Middle School this spring.

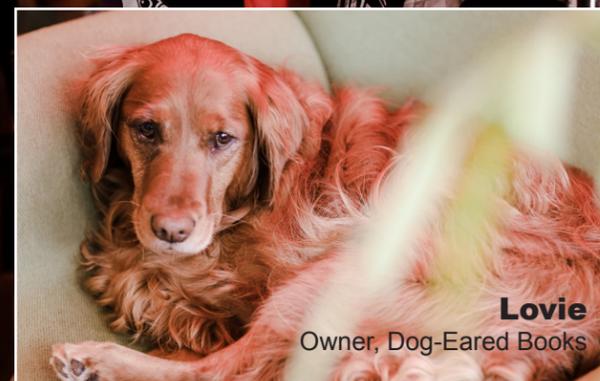
Next time you stop in, be sure to say hello to Lovie, the Dog-Eared Books resident golden retriever.



Amanda Lepper
Owner, Dog-Eared Books

Ellyn Grimm
Owner, Dog-Eared Books

**Dog-Eared Books is located
at 203 Main Street.**



Lovie
Owner, Dog-Eared Books

Behind the Name

"A dog-eared book is a loved book," say the owners of the Downtown Ames bookstore. The name draws inspiration from its two owners, Amanda Lepper and Ellyn Grimm, and is a combination of habit and passion. Ellyn has a habit of dog-earring her books, otherwise known as folding the page corners to mark her spot. Amanda has a passion in dog training. Together, Dog-Eared Books is formed on their love of books.

TRACTI•N NEWS

Fareway Opens New Store in Ogden (November 15, 2022)

Fareway Stores, Inc. hosted a ribbon cutting ceremony in November for a new store located in Ogden, Iowa. The 8,700 square foot store provides for only the best in fresh, highest quality meat and a second-to-none, full-service butcher counter. Additionally, the location will offer farm-fresh produce; low, competitive prices; and the highest level of customer service, including to-your-car carryout. "We are excited to open this new, downtown Ogden store and want to thank local officials and the State of Iowa who helped make this project possible," said Fareway CEO Reynolds W. Cramer. "Communities depend on a local grocer to offer high quality products and unmatched service and help keep Iowa communities vibrant."



New Hardware Store in Madrid (December 5, 2022)

A new hardware store in Madrid, True Value, is expected to open this spring. Stacey and Jesse Bannor have been business owners for over a decade, launching Bannor Toys in Des Moines back in 2011. After moving their business to Madrid in 2016, the Bannor Family has not only recognized a personal need for a hardware store nearby, but they understand the value of a local option for those in the community. In addition to basic hardware needs such as painting materials, electrical products, and tools, True Value will offer rental equipment, an outdoor living section, and a sporting goods section that will be stocked with fishing, hunting, camping, and swimming products. The project officially broke ground in November 2022 and is set to open by April 2023.



Ames Announced as Overnight Stop for RAGBRAI (February 2, 2023)

On January 28, it was announced that Ames would be an overnight stop for the week-long Register's Annual Great Bicycle Ride Across Iowa (RAGBRAI). Ames was an overnight stop on the original 1973 RAGBRAI route, and the city served as an overnight town in 1983, 2008, and most recently in 2018. The 2023 Ames stop will be on Tuesday, July 25. On February 3, Discover Ames unveiled the theme and logo of the overnight stay at a reveal party, held at the ISU Alumni Center. Organization of the overnight stay will be a community-wide endeavor. Discover Ames will collaborate with a local organizing committee consisting of leaders from the City of Ames, Ames Chamber of Commerce and Downtown Ames, Story County, and Iowa State University.



TRACTI•N INVESTORS

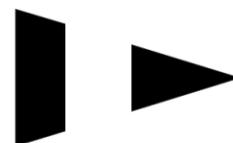


FAREWAY
MEAT & GROCERY

FAREWAY STORES, INC

Fareway Stores, Inc. is a family-owned business, and a top 10 employer in Iowa, with over 12,000 employees in a seven-state region. It is our mission to provide the highest quality, freshest product available, while treating our customers like family and valuing our dedicated employees beyond measure.

www.fareway.com



TRACTI•N Contributions

Additional Contributions

Dustin Johns	Brent Shanks
Latifah Faisal	Matt Pacha
Tammy Stegman	Marianne Pacha
Jacqueline Hollingshead	Nick Johnson
Steve Sullivan	Amanda Lepper
Robert Knight	Ellyn Grimm
Alesia Knight	Stacey Bannor
Stacy Woodward	Jesse Bannor
Brian Tucker	Susan Gwiasda
Lana Leander	Emily Toribio
Evie Petersen	Carole Gieseke

Story Photography

KandE Productions

Printing:

Sigler Companies

Final Comments from the Editor:



Eric Smidt
Vice President,
Marketing & Communications
eric@ameschamber.com

In this issue of *Traction*, we recapped our Annual Awards where we honored businesses and individuals from across the Ames MSA. On that December evening, we celebrate business, economic development, innovation, and volunteerism. Perhaps most importantly, we celebrated community. Each part of our metropolitan statistical area was represented in these awards. Boone to the west, Nevada to the east, Story City to the north, Huxley to the south, and of course, here in Ames. I encourage you to read through the award winners another time to fully grasp their impact.

As an organization, we work with businesses and community leaders across Boone and Story County, not just in Ames. On any given week, we have staff attending city council meetings in Colo, assisting with strategic planning in Ogden, or hosting a career fair in Boone. Economic impact is not limited to the boundaries of a city limits. In fact, as each of our surrounding communities succeeds, so does the Ames MSA. If you have not been to Main Street Nevada or eaten in Huxley lately, consider the short trip and experience all that the Ames MSA has to offer.

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WORK
in **AMES.com**

WorkinAmes.com is the job board for the entire Ames Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA), servicing Ames, Boone, and Story County. Our community is fortunate to offer a wide range of career opportunities. The website features a search function to specify job openings where you can find full-time, part-time, and internship positions.

The website generates over 100,000 job searches annually. As an employer, you can post jobs to the website, and if you are looking for employment, we are certain you will find it here and become part of our vibrant workforce!



**304 Main St.
Ames, Iowa 50010**

*Follow the Ames Chamber of Commerce
on social media*

