

TRACTI • N

A MAGAZINE FROM THE AMES CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Summer 2023
Issue 03



FARMHOUSE CATERING • GATHERINGS • COZY HOME & TABLE • COPPER SPACES



THE WOMAN WHO REQUIRES LITTLE SLEEP AND PLENTY OF CAFFEINE

THE MANY ROLES OF EVIE PETERSON

ENTREPRENEUR EXTRAORDINAIRE





THE THREE PILLARS THAT WILL LEAD OUR WORK WILL BE:

LEADERSHIP
ENGAGEMENT
ADVOCACY



Dan Culhane
President & CEO,
Ames Chamber of Commerce

For those of us here at the Ames Chamber of Commerce, it is no surprise that we celebrate business, industry, and economic development. For some, that concept can sound a bit dry, but for us, economic development is a celebration of our community.

Economic development includes programs, policies, and activities that improve the economic well-being and quality of life for a community. There are a lot of ways to measure economic development, but here are a few primary areas that we often think about as an organization:

- Business attraction and articulating why our region is the right place to locate
- Workforce development initiatives to keep and attract talent
- Finding ways to support entrepreneurship
- Support community development and amenities that encourage people to live here
- Business retention and expansion - 80% of a community's job growth comes from the businesses that are already here

When I look at that list, each one has a role in contributing to our community, but all require talented and driven people to lead the work. Supporting entrepreneurship means taking risks, because often that leads to innovation. Evie Peterson, the Entrepreneur Extraordinaire featured on the cover this quarter, is a classic example of how a business leader can help transform a community. Her quintet of businesses are a staple in Nevada and an inspiration to other business owners in our region.

As I close, I want to encourage all of us to play a role in the economic development of our community. For business owners, each day that you open your doors, that is economic development to us. If you are reading this, know that each time you spend money in our region, or recommend a business to a friend or family member, you are supporting economic development.

It takes everyone. If we are pulling in the same direction for economic and community betterment to maintain and develop vibrant and livable communities, the success of the Ames MSA (Story & Boone County) is assured.

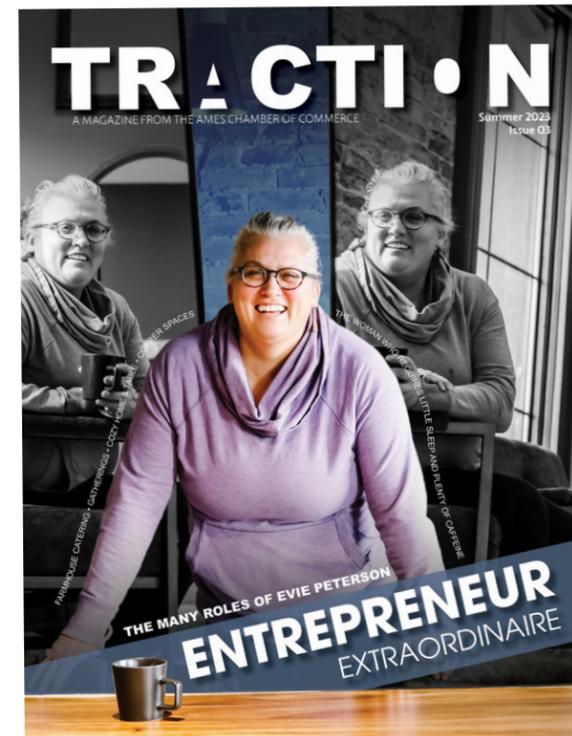
What is Traction?

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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Farmers' Market
- MIKE UPAH**
Director, Ames Seed Capital



On the Cover

Over the past 17 years, Evie Peterson has grown a successful catering business into a quintet of companies that has transformed Main Street Nevada. She is relentless and passionate about smart business growth, and in doing so, has been integral in the revitalization of her community. Learn more about this entrepreneur extraordinaire in this feature article of *Traction*.

**304 Main St.
Ames, Iowa 50010
Phone: (515) 232-2310
AmesChamber.com**



TRAC TI • 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.



THE MANY ROLES OF EVIE PETERSON

ENTREPRENEUR EXTRAORDINAIRE

Evie Peterson is a roll-up-her-sleeves type of entrepreneur who requires little sleep, a lot of coffee, and is not afraid to tackle the next big thing. Over the past 17 years, she has grown a successful catering business into a quintet of companies that has transformed Main Street Nevada. She is relentless and passionate about smart business growth, and in doing so, has been integral in the revitalization of her community.

Her portfolio of businesses now includes *FarmHouse Catering*, *FarmGrounds* coffee shop, *Gatherings* venue (one of the premier event spaces in the Ames MSA), the thoughtfully curated *Cozy Home & Table* store, and most recently, *Copper Spaces*, the beautiful coworking and flex space.

Peterson sat down with *Traction* to discuss the origins of her various companies, how she keeps it all straight, and her opinions on what it takes to be a successful entrepreneur.

How it all began

"[FarmHouse Catering] started on the side and evolved. With three kids, I needed to do more than just a few events a year to make a little extra money for my family. I had previous experience in large-batch cooking, and some experience at a conference center. So it was a natural fit to grab onto and it eventually grew."

FARMGROUNDS

Established in 2016, *FarmGrounds* coffee shop has a little bit of everything - from our delicious, hand-crafted lattes, bakery items, and quick lunch options. Our cozy little shop is the perfect place to grab on-the-go items or stay a while to work or connect with friends. We also have weekly offerings of casserole-style meals for you to take & bake. www.farmgroundsnevada.com



FARMHOUSE CATERING

Our flagship business, originating in 2006, *Farmhouse Catering* is a family owned catering company committed to serving fresh food with a comforting home style twist. Whether it be a wedding, reunion, corporate meeting or any special event, *Farmhouse Catering* is here to serve. We love being a part of the memorable moments in life!



www.farmhousecaters.com

Cozy, you will immediately know that it is connected with Gatherings."

Gatherings, and the co-working space above it, *Copper Spaces*, include a wow factor that is immediately noticeable. It is this standard of excellence that Peterson and her team are not willing to compromise on. That philosophy applies to other aspects of the business as well.

"We have a philosophy of just because we can do something doesn't mean we should. If the product or the process is not enjoyable, beneficial, and life-giving to our company, then we are not going to do it. That is where the buck stops. If it does not meet those criteria, then we just shut it down."

Although the decision-making ultimately rests with Peterson, she knows that her decisions impact other people, including many who have invested time and energy into making each business successful. She wants the team to weigh in and it is part of her responsibility to initiate those conversations.

"That is part of any process that we make. Any decision that I make or thing that we add to our company must answer the following questions: does this make sense? Does this fit with anything else that we are doing? And does this benefit any of our other businesses? It has to check off some boxes as far as how it correlates to our core beliefs."

During this interview, this conversation was timely with Peterson and her team as they were currently engaged in this decision-making process.

"I wanted to know around the table what their dream for it would be. If some of them said, 'we should shut it down,' then we would have considered that. But not one person said that. They all had a great perspective which meant that they were invested. So that tells me that this is something that we can improve upon so we will continue with it."

In 2006, the work of *FarmHouse Catering* served the need that many early businesses do: it was created out of necessity to provide for her family, but quickly became a dream come true.

Peterson rented the kitchen at Indian Creek Country Club and catered their events while also making connections across the community. The word-of-mouth grew the business and when life circumstances required it, she was able to capitalize on the momentum and produce at a larger scale.

"Those early days really got me into this town and built some really good relationships with people that utilize catering on a regular basis."

Today, Peterson is known across the region not only for her catering, but also her range of recently new businesses that have transformed Main Street Nevada. *Gatherings* event venue opened in 2014, *FarmGrounds* coffee shop in 2016, *Cozy Home & Table* in 2021, and the co-working *Copper Spaces* opened most recently in 2022. But it is the original *FarmHouse Catering* that supports it all in many ways.

"For us, one thing led to another, and each business opportunity was created on the momentum that preceded it. Gatherings was developed because I needed a kitchen for the catering business. I figured that if I am going to invest in a kitchen, why not invest into a venue so that I can get to a point where I am not having to move food all over the place."

As a business owner, what will you never compromise on?

Today, *Gatherings* is a destination event space that is used for a range of events from wedding to corporate. If you explore their website or social media channels, you will immediately notice the design, décor, and overall aesthetics that have been purposefully curated.

"We created a marketing standard across the company that impacts each individual business. Kristy, our Marketing Director, developed color schemes that all coordinate together. Aesthetically, if you see items at

The evolution of space and addition of Copper Spaces

"It was a dream when we bought this building to do something up here. We were creating a lot of traction downstairs (at Gatherings) for smaller events, as well as corporate events, and we were not able to accommodate them. I realized that we could utilize the upstairs more and that became Copper Spaces."

Although they had a lot of ideas for the space, including the option of renovating it and using it for their own residential living, the catalyst to move forward came when they received a grant from the State of Iowa.

"As workplace dynamics were shifting during the pandemic, we started thinking of turning that into a co-working space. I was familiar with that concept through travel and thought that if we



GATHERINGS

Opened in 2014 and located in the downtown historic district of Nevada, Iowa; *Gatherings* is a full-service event venue. Our 1880s event space boasts original brick walls, elegant chandeliers, and string lights for a quaint atmosphere for your event. Our roots are in caring for people - weddings, parties, corporate events, coffee and comfort food. We know how to host and foster a good time - it's who we are.



www.gatheringsnevada.com



COZY HOME & TABLE

Cozy Home & Table opened its doors in 2021 as a thoughtfully curated store with eclectic items old and new selected to make your house a home. Cozy offers seasonal and ever rotating goods for your kitchen, bath and living areas.

could get the grant, then we will do it."

The opportunity presented itself when they were awarded a \$75,000 matching grant from the Iowa Development Authority (IEDA), along with a \$15,000 grant from the City of Nevada, to support their renovation. The Community Catalyst Building Remediation Program through IEDA "assists communities with the redevelopment or rehabilitation of buildings to stimulate economic growth or reinvestment in the community." They received the maximum amount at the time.

The *Copper Spaces* project fit the grant opportunity perfectly and kicked off further revitalization efforts on Main Street Nevada. To date, five additional Nevada businesses have received city-issued grants.

When you reflect on starting something new, what advice would you give a new entrepreneur?

"Advice would be to get guts and have a plan. It can be scary when you take the first jump. But I have always had confidence in my abilities because that had been bred into me from an early age. I always knew that I could fall back on my abilities. And for me, that came down to hard work."

Peterson grew up at Hidden Acres Christian Center, now one of the largest camp and conference centers in Iowa. Her father helped catapult its growth when he was hired in 1985, and as any family-operated business knows, everyone pitched in, including kids.

"My dad built it from a little shack to a resort-style camp. In many ways, I have been in the hospitality business from a young age. I started doing dishes at age 10. I had to stand on a crate to push the button on the dishwasher. Cleaning toilets and all of those things to be hospitable is completely second nature to me. Those abilities have taken me places in every job I've ever had."

Only recently has Peterson come to the realization that she grew up in an entrepreneurial household.

"I had no idea. I didn't realize it until I started my own business. Just in the last few years, I find myself doing exactly the same stuff that my dad was doing. He always had to be building, but he never did it for himself, but for others. It was 100% service for him. He never got rich off the things that he was doing, but it was purely for fun. As I've been going down this path of one thing leading to another, I am not necessarily doing all of this for money. I'm really doing this for fun and to make the community around me better."

Entrepreneur Extraordinaire

Any entrepreneurial journey is measured, in part, through financial success. Peterson knows this as well as anyone. But running a business is more than finances, it is a way of life and must be just as life-giving and bucket-filling in order to continue. Being flexible, creative, and having the ability to let go is also important.

"I've had to let go of some ideals. I think as an entrepreneur, it is important to understand that perfectionism is not attainable. It will impact profits and it will cause you to lose sight of your real goals."

As Peterson's enterprises have expanded over the past 17 years, she has had to grow as well. With five separate, yet inter-connected businesses, she has been forced to assess where she spends her time. Two years ago, she added a Business Manager, Ryan Larson, who oversees all of the companies: contracts, company policies, website development, and accounts payable to name a few items on his list. He was also the Project Manager for the *Copper Spaces* redevelopment. Larson's position and personality has transformed the business and opened up opportunities for Peterson to focus on others.

Today, the quintet of businesses employs 6 full-time staff that help manage the event and retail spaces, along with human resource and marketing related projects. This is in addition to the 40+ part-time staff.

"Each business is a labor of love, but the team makes it absolutely amazing! They give their all and this community has supported us the entire way."



COPPER SPACES

Founded in 2022, *Copper Spaces* exists to offer guests outstanding service with their various space & venue needs. This Coworking & Flex Space has comfortable and well-appointed facilities, a supportive community and hospitality - bar none. We've merged exposed brick and original tin ceilings with modern fixtures and design. High quality materials and detailed accents invite you to enjoy your time at *Copper Spaces*.

www.copperspaces.com



Michelle Vogel
CEO, Sigler Companies, Inc.

SIGLER COMPANIES ANNOUNCES NEW CEO / CELEBRATES 65 YEARS

Sigler Companies recently announced the appointment of Michelle Vogel as its new Chief Executive Officer. Vogel has worked with Sigler for over 20 years, serving in several different roles throughout its many departments before being named President in 2019. Through her experience, she has been an integral part of developing Sigler's processes and operations leading to the company's overall success.

Vogel succeeded Ron McMillen, the owner of Sigler and former CEO. McMillen will continue to oversee the business by serving as Chairman of the Board.

"Michelle has practically grown up with this company and has made an incredible impact in her time here so far," said McMillen. "I have no doubt she will maintain that momentum and continue achieving the vision my family had for Sigler."

Vogel will continue building Sigler's company culture and planning strategies for all its capabilities, finances, and brand development while fostering relationships with client partners, vendors, and community leaders.

"I could not be more honored by the opportunity to lead this company," said Vogel. "I've had the privilege of working alongside such an awesome team of talented people for many years. Together we will continue to prioritize our mission, live our values and strategically grow this great company built by the Sigler family."

The company culture at Sigler was recently recognized when they received the 2022 Culture Curator of the Year from the Ames Chamber of Commerce. Going on a tour of the Sigler facilities with Vogel, it is easy to get a sense of the pride that employees have for the company. She has played a big role in that by making work personal. She knows every co-worker's name, encourages everyone to get involved in the community, and finds value in supporting fun company events like National Hydration Day, or an event they created for themselves: the annual "Hearts on Fire Chili Cook-off" where the winner is awarded with the Golden Chili Award.

The announcement of these leadership changes comes as Sigler celebrates its 65th anniversary this year. Sigler officially opened its doors in 1958 at the home of Mel and Edna Sigler who began operations with a small collection of rubber stamps to provide print services to the local Ames community. McMillen, their grandson, took over as CEO in 1972 and grew Sigler into the fully-integrated commercial printing facility it is today - serving clients nationwide.





Watch the Presentation on YouTube

Bill Northey
CEO, Agribusiness Association of Iowa

Agriculture Breakfast

DATE: April 7, 2023

Bill Northey, CEO of the Agribusiness Association of Iowa, and former Iowa Secretary of Agriculture, was the keynote presenter at the 2023 Ames Chamber of Commerce Agriculture Breakfast. As a fourth-generation farmer, Northey's experience and depth of knowledge was evident as he spoke to a full room about the history of Iowa agriculture. The event was held at the Gateway Hotel and Conference Center and his entire presentation can be viewed on the Ames Chamber of Commerce YouTube Channel.

GATEWAY HOTEL & CONFERENCE CENTER



PLATINUM SPONSORS



State of Healthcare

DATE: March 7, 2023

This year's State of Healthcare panel featured local experts on the topic of mental health, including Roxanne Petersen, NAMI Central Iowa, and Daniel Bench, Central Iowa Psychological Services. Our panel discussion touched on the rise of mental health related cases and what our experts are seeing locally. The impact that (social) media has on our youth, mental health first aid, and the rise of available drugs were topics discussed among many others.

Ribbon Cutting Events

- [Kinetic Edge Physical Therapy](#)
- [Main Street Dental](#)
- [Big O Tires](#)
- [IV Therapy Services](#)
- [Family Healing Chiropractic](#)
- [Buff City Soap](#)
- [No Escape Iowa](#)
- [JCPenney Beauty](#)
- [Life Choices at Bethany](#)
- [Kruck Plumbing & Heating](#)
- [House of Colour](#)
- [Live Hydration Spa](#)
- [REM IA Community Services / Sevita](#)



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)

FUEL

FUELING & UNITING

ENGAGED LEADERS



Formed in 2002 and affiliated with the Ames Chamber of Commerce, FUEL is the young professionals organization for Boone and Story County. FUEL seeks to provide a forum for networking & professional development, community outreach & partnerships, and to engage leaders through social events.

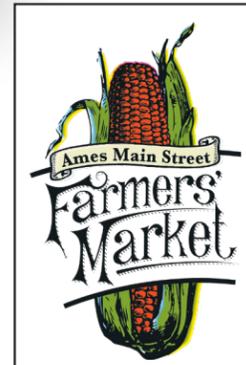


The March Lunch & Learn event was held at the Iowa State Athletics Bergstrom Indoor Practice Facility. Athletic staff spoke to the group and provided a tour of the incredible facility. Additional events included Beers & Brainstorming at Torrent Brewing, and a social at Flight Bar + Grille in Huxley.

Young professionals are the heartbeat of the community and FUEL is an opportunity to build professional friendships that can last your entire career. If you are a young professional, or an employer, encourage membership in FUEL. More information can be found online at:

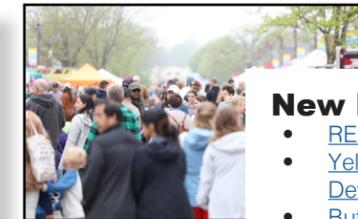
FUELSTORYCOUNTY.COM

An affiliate organization of the



EVERY SATURDAY FROM **MAY 6 - OCTOBER 14**

8:00 AM - 12:30 PM



New Members

- [REM IA Community Services / Sevita](#)
- [Yellow Brick Road Early Childhood Development Center](#)
- [Buff City Soap](#)
- [Ge-Angelo's](#)
- [The Knittery Nook & Fibre Co.](#)
- [Quality Matters Roofing](#)
- [Keeling Wealth Advisors](#)
- [ActionCOACH Vanguard Business Coaching](#)
- [Café Beaudelaire](#)
- [Refined Power](#)
- [Olde Style Masonry](#)
- [House of Colour](#)
- [Papa John's](#)
- [McKee, Voorhees & Sease, PLC](#)
- [Costco - Ankeny](#)
- [Live Aligned Chiropractic](#)
- [Partners For Productions Agriculture](#)
- [Country Financial - Joe Leto](#)
- [We Will Collective](#)
- [Fitness Sports](#)
- [RAYGUN](#)
- [Renewed Wellness, LLC](#)
- [ASI Contracting, LLC](#)
- [Lincolnway Energyzzz](#)
- [Pella of Des Moines](#)
- [This Magic Moment Photo Booths](#)

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

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

The Ames Chamber of Commerce Public Policy Program focuses on educating and engaging members on key legislative issues and initiatives impacting the Ames MSA. Maintaining strong relationships with federal, state, and locally elected officials is a key tenet of the Ames Chamber of Commerce, and a service we are proud to provide to our entire membership.

This component of our services is most prevalent during the spring when the state legislature is in session, but the efforts continue year-round at the state and federal levels. In all advocacy efforts, the Ames Chamber of Commerce remains nonpartisan and does not endorse candidates or support political action committees but provides opportunities for candidates and constituents to connect and share information.

In the fall of 2022, we facilitated a “Meet the Candidate” video series where local and state candidates running for office were invited to answer questions. This included county supervisors in Boone and Story County, as well as state representative candidates.

In January 2023, with the start of the Iowa Legislative session, the Ames Chamber of Commerce hosted local policy events including two Legislative Updates. All state elected officials representing Boone and Story County were invited to attend the events to answer questions on the legislative topics for the 2023 session and provide their policy perspectives.

As the state legislative session progresses, bills often change, and it can be difficult to stay up to date on current bills. In March, Dustin Miller and Brad Epperly from Nyemaster Goode Law Firm outlined the current status of legislation and provided insights on how likely they were to make it through the legislative funnel or be passed into law.

Finally, in April 2023, the Ames Chamber of Commerce organized the annual Washington D.C. Fly-In where a delegation of business and community leaders from across the Ames MSA traveled to our nation’s capital to meet with elected officials, government department officials, and nonpartisan foreign policy experts. During the three-day visit, our team was able to meet directly with our elected officials including Congressman Randy Feenstra, Senator Joni Ernst and Senator Charles Grassley. A packet of policy considerations was presented, and the delegation was able to talk candidly with policymakers about upcoming legislation directly. Also, continuing the Ames Chamber of Commerce efforts to gain a more national policy perspective, Representative Lori Chavez-DeRemer from Oregon joined us for a discussion on policy efforts in her committees relating to Agriculture, Transportation/Infrastructure, and Education/Workforce.

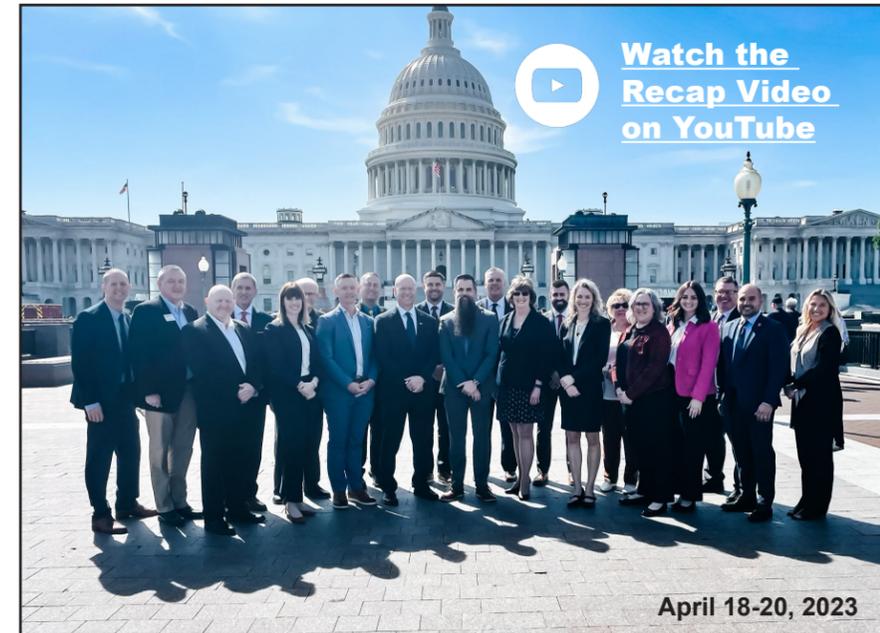
Each representative graciously spent time with our delegation, answering questions and listening to the key priorities that impact Iowa and the Ames MSA. Additional topics related to our region included how supply chain is impacting manufacturing, the importance of supporting family farming, the mining of precious metals here in the U.S. for new green technology and international trade. The pace within the Capitol building is robust, yet many of our federally elected officials prioritized time to meet with our delegation from Boone and Story County between committee meetings and votes.



Senator Charles Grassley



Senator Joni Ernst



WASHINGTON D.C. FLY-IN

This year’s delegation included representation from the City of Boone, City of Nevada, Story County Board of Supervisors, YSS, Iowa State University, Des Moines Area Community College, and many private business partners across Boone and Story County.

SPRING EVENTS:



The April 14 Legislative Update featured a panel of local legislators including Senator Jesse Green, Senator Herman Quirnbach, and Representative Beth Wessel-Kroeschell. All state elected officials that represent Boone and Story County were invited to the event.



This spring, Representative Randy Feenstra visited the Ames MSA and toured AgCertain in Boone and Danfoss Power Solutions in Ames. Workforce, international trade, and tax policy were all part of the discussion during his visit.

WHAT ARE

Research & Development Tax Credits

The Research & Development (R&D) Tax Credit is a federal benefit that provides companies dollar-for-dollar cash savings for performing activities related to the development, design, or improvement of products, processes, formulas, or software.

During our Washington D.C. Fly-In in April, this topic was one of the major subjects of discussion with our elected officials. The Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 outlined changes on how companies treat R&D expenses. Those changes were delayed until January 2023 to provide Congress time to provide long term fixes without stifling this resource for companies big and small in the meantime.

However, that did not happen over the past several years and international competition remains fierce. For example, China offers a super deduction for manufacturers performing R&D by allowing them to deduct 200% of their R&D expenses. This policy makes it more attractive for manufacturers in China to invest in innovation—and to out-compete manufacturers in the Ames MSA.

Congressman Feenstra stated his support for the bipartisan *American Innovation and R&D Competitiveness Act* filed while the Ames Chamber of Commerce was in D.C. “I am proud to work with my colleagues on the House Ways and Means Committee. Without this simple fix, our manufacturers face over \$32 billion in new taxes this year alone, American agriculture would be saddled with \$400 million in increased tax liabilities, and China will continue to outpace our investment in innovation.”

Senator Grassley has also long advocated for such strong investments, and it was also discussed with Senator Ernst and Congresswoman Hinson’s Legislative Policy staff to work towards a bipartisan solution as well to support all our members impacted.



For 115 years, Nelson Electric Company has been providing electrical services to the Ames area. Today, the company is led by Chris and Matt Nelson, the fourth-generation brothers to operate the business.

At the turn of the century and the dawn of the electrical grid, the City of Ames Municipal Light Plant staff provided all of the electrical work across Ames. As the utility grew, the city realized the task was larger than they could handle and allowed private contractors to do the work.

C. B. (Ben) Nelson began contracting for electrical work in 1908 after having worked at the Ames Light Plant for several years as an electrician. He left his job at the power plant when he saw an opportunity to expand this new technology and bring its convenience to Ames' residents.

An October 1909 announcement in the Ames Tribune noted that "Ben Nelson and Earl Moore will open a new plumbing and lighting shop," that would come to be known as Nelson Electric Company. The business was originally located at 304 Main Street. Ben and a few employees traveled up and down Main Street moving their equipment in carts and wagons.

During the 1930's depression era, the company moved to the garage behind Ben's house on Clark Avenue as a cost savings measure. Ben and his son Chuck worked together until Ben's passing in 1961. Around that same time, Chuck's sons, Jerry and Paul, became involved in the business. Those two brothers took over the business in 1989.

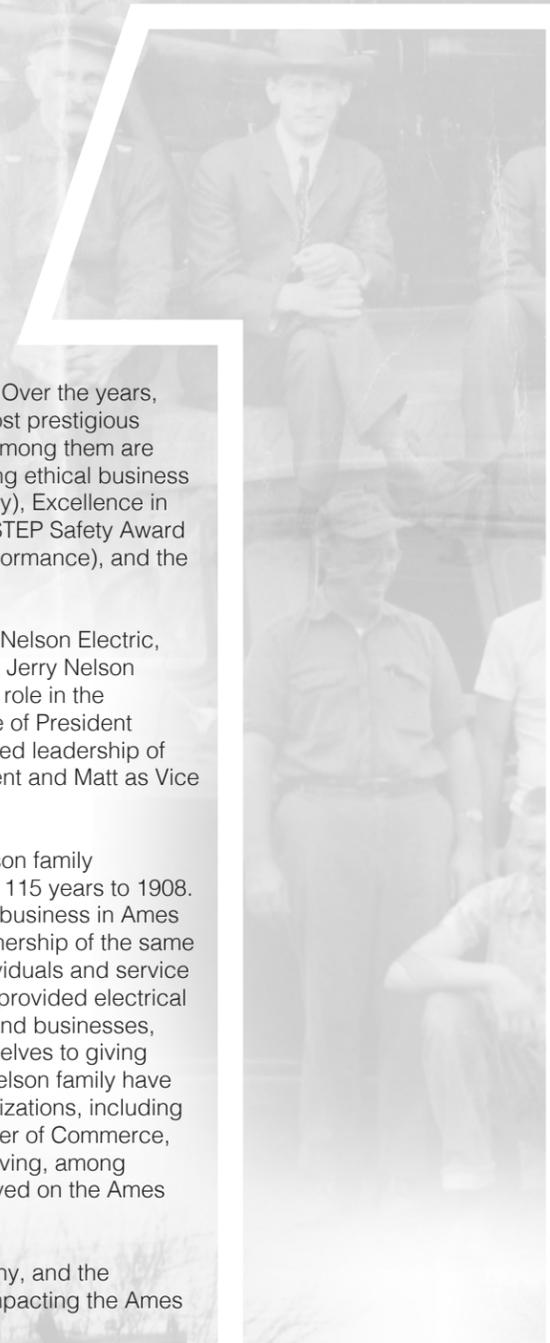
In 1995, the company moved into their current

12,000 square foot building on South Bell. Over the years, the company has received some of the most prestigious awards in the electrical service industry. Among them are the Better Business Integrity Award (utilizing ethical business practices ahead of profitability or popularity), Excellence in Merit Shop Construction Award, National STEP Safety Award (commitment to safety leadership and performance), and the Angie's List Super Service Award.

After more than five decades of service to Nelson Electric, including serving as President since 1989, Jerry Nelson stepped back from his full-time leadership role in the company this spring and assumed the role of President Emeritus. His sons, Chris and Matt, assumed leadership of the company with Chris serving as President and Matt as Vice President.

The moves continue in the tradition of Nelson family ownership and leadership that dates back 115 years to 1908. Nelson Electric is thought to be the oldest business in Ames to be continuously operated under the ownership of the same family. They currently employ over 60 individuals and service over 1,400 work orders a year. They have provided electrical services to thousands of Ames residents and businesses, and along the way, have committed themselves to giving back to the community. Members of the Nelson family have engaged with numerous community organizations, including Lions Club, Kiwanis, Rotary, Ames Chamber of Commerce, Ames History Museum, and Mainstream Living, among others. From 2014-2020, Chris Nelson served on the Ames City Council.

Congratulations to Nelson Electric Company, and the Nelson family, for serving and positively impacting the Ames community for 115 years.



Images and information for this page was produced in collaboration with the Ames History Museum (AHM). Located just one block off Main Street, at 416 Douglas Avenue, the Ames History Museum expands Ames' history through online resources, exhibits, and event programming. Learn more on their website.

www.ameshistory.org

3D

AFFORDABLE INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGIES HOUSING PROJECT

Innovation happens slowly, meticulously, through trial and error, and a great amount of research. That early work often goes unseen by the majority of people, but when it is shared with the world, it can be revolutionary and change the trajectory of the industry that it aims to impact.

The future of housing construction may very well be taking place on the campus of Iowa State University. Under the leadership of Assistant Professor Pete Evans, AIA, IDSA, Julie Robison, Interim Director, IDRO, and Kevin Kane, Director, GIS Facility, in the College of Design, the team is researching the feasibility of 3D concrete printing, in the 3D Affordable Innovative Technologies Housing Project.

Why 3D printing? Initial industry analysis suggests that a 3D concrete printed home can be built faster, with less labor costs, and with a reduction in material costs. When developed, the application for such technology can impact affordable housing initiatives and when housing needs to be built in emergency situations, such as in the fallout of natural disasters.

The goal of Evans and his team is to “create a collaborative in-state ecosystem for high performing affordable housing through innovative and emerging 21st century technologies and strategies.” Other specific goals include streamlining the process for quicker to market affordable homes, and to collaborate with state and local officials to help develop housing codes for this new technology.

But simply speaking, their goal is research. “We are a research institution,” said Evans. “We are not in the business of printing 3D homes for purchase, but rather, to uncover and provide information to housing contractors and developers who may be interested in using this technology.” Evans talks about how all of their research and key understandings will be available to the design and building industry in order to eventually unlock this technology.

Funding has come from the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA). Director Debi Durham admits that the “industry is not there yet,” but adds that “in five years, I guarantee that we are going to be ready for this and it’s going to make a huge difference.” The IEDA has committed \$2.14 million dollars to the project.

Evans and his team began their research in early 2022 with the acquisition of printers and related technologies. Since then, they have been incrementally conducting research, working with smaller versions of the 3D printer, developing the right mix and process. This spring, the team moved toward the printing of reasonably sized shed prototypes to test their understandings.

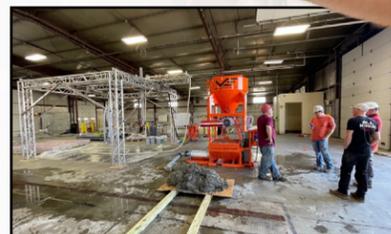
In addition to their 3D concrete printer on campus, they are collaborating with Iowa Central Community College, where an even larger printer resides. All of this momentum is building toward a large collaboration in Hamburg, Iowa, in the far southwest part of the state, later this summer. Brunow Contracting has committed to utilizing the 3D printing technology for one home in their development. The house will be occupied by Brunow contracting staff, and will be used for further research.

Iowa State University
College of Design

The Iowa Economic Development Authority has committed

\$2.14M

to the 3D printing project



Pete Evans
AIA, IDSA
Assistant Professor
Department of Industrial Design
Iowa State University



Debi Durham
Director, Iowa Economic
Development Authority



The Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) and Director Debi Durham have been long-standing supporters of the Ames MSA, often appearing to speak at community economic events when invited. In March, Director Durham spoke at the Ogden Legacy Annual Meeting, and in April, she toured facilities in Nevada and visited Downtown Ames.

This spring, the IEDA Enhance Iowa Board awarded 18 Community Attraction and Tourism (CAT) grants and two Sports Tourism grants totaling \$17,750,000 million. Three of those grants were awarded within the Ames MSA region:

- **Iowa Arboretum & Gardens** in Madrid was awarded \$260,000 toward an all-inclusive playground area, elevated walkways and trails. Total project cost is \$1.6 million.
- The **City of Story City** was awarded \$460,000 toward a library expansion project. Total project cost is \$3.1 million.
- The **Ames History Museum** was awarded \$400,000 toward a \$2.9 million expansion project.

In April, **Nebullam Inc.** received a \$250,000 Innovation Acceleration Launch Fund loan for key personnel. Nebullam offers a subscription service selling produce directly to consumers. Their vertically integrated indoor farms grow a variety of produce for sale via their online platform with fresh local delivery.

The mission of IEDA is to strengthen economic and community vitality by building partnerships and leveraging resources to make Iowa the choice for people and business.



In April, Debi Durham, Director of the Iowa Economic Development Authority, visited the Ames MSA, including Downtown Ames. City of Ames officials shared updates and plans for the Steven L. Shinker Plaza. They then visited 5th and Burnett where renovations are underway for two businesses, as well as the old Ames Tribune building, before concluding on Main Street at Life Distilled.

60 FORWARD

Heartland of Story County is changing the vision of aging with the Sixty Forward initiative. In today's culture, age is truly just a number, and the aging process is unique to everyone. The reality is that as people enter their 60s, 70s, and 80s, they want to stay active and engaged with others. They want a wider variety of options to help them stay healthy and feel their best. They want easy access and supportive services when health issues arise.

The driving mission of Heartland has always been to enrich and support the health and quality-of-life as people age. In recognizing the need to shift how we think and talk about aging well, they have identified the need to reimagine the programs, services, and activities offered.

Sixty Forward is a collaboration with Heartland of Story County, Mary Greeley Medical Center (MGMC), and the City of Ames Department of Parks and Recreation. Together, it is a community-wide programmatic model that connects those 60+ to opportunities that include physical activities, social networks, and wellness offerings. The program will launch in early 2024, aligning with the opening of a new 15,000 square foot facility.

Through a new unified Sixty Forward website, the partnership will allow participants to seamlessly access programs and services for those 60+ that utilize existing recreational facilities in Ames and through Story County. For example, there will be a Sixty Forward golf league at Homewood Golf Course, aqua exercise classes at the Furman Aquatic Center, and pickleball leagues offered through Ames Parks & Recreation.

By utilizing community facilities and the expertise of each entities' staff to lead programs, Sixty Forward will support those 60+ on their journey to aging well. Collectively, programs,

Sixty Forward is a collaboration with...

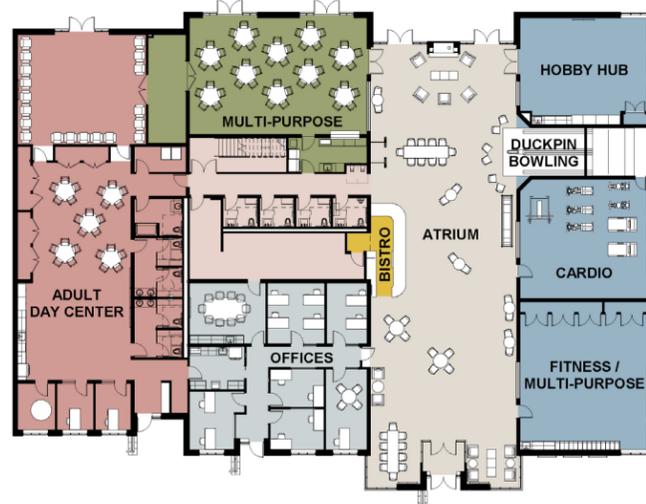


activities, and services will be provided in the areas of physical activity, social networks, health and nutrition.

At the Sixty Forward Center, MGMC staff will offer nutrition, wellness, and health classes. Parks and Recreation will offer aerobics, yoga, Silver Sneakers, Tai Chi, and more, while Heartland will continue to provide meaningful educational offerings, Adult Day services and social activities.

In January 2022, Heartland partnered with 10Fold Architecture + Engineering to develop the state-of-the-art Sixty Forward Center facility. Harold Pike Construction of Ames began earthwork in September 2022 with construction beginning in the spring of 2023.

The Sixty Forward Center has been made possible through private gifts that total over \$9.5 million. The Story County Board of Supervisors awarded Heartland \$300,000 toward this project from Federal ARPA funding. The City of Ames is leasing the land to Heartland for \$1 per year.



The Sixty Forward Center is scheduled to open in early 2024 at 205 S. Walnut Avenue in Ames.



Architecture, construction, and civil engineering by



NATIONAL GUARD

BOONE, IOWA
CAMPUS
OPEN HOUSE

On May 5, the Iowa National Guard, in collaboration with the Ames Chamber of Commerce, held an open house at the Boone Armory, and Aviation Support Facility where local business leaders and employers could learn about the talents and experiences of Iowa Servicemen and women.

The Iowa National Guard is a state agency and receives significant funding from the federal government. It is a reserve component of both the U.S. Army and U.S. Air Force, has dual federal and state missions and can operate under the direction of the Governor of Iowa.

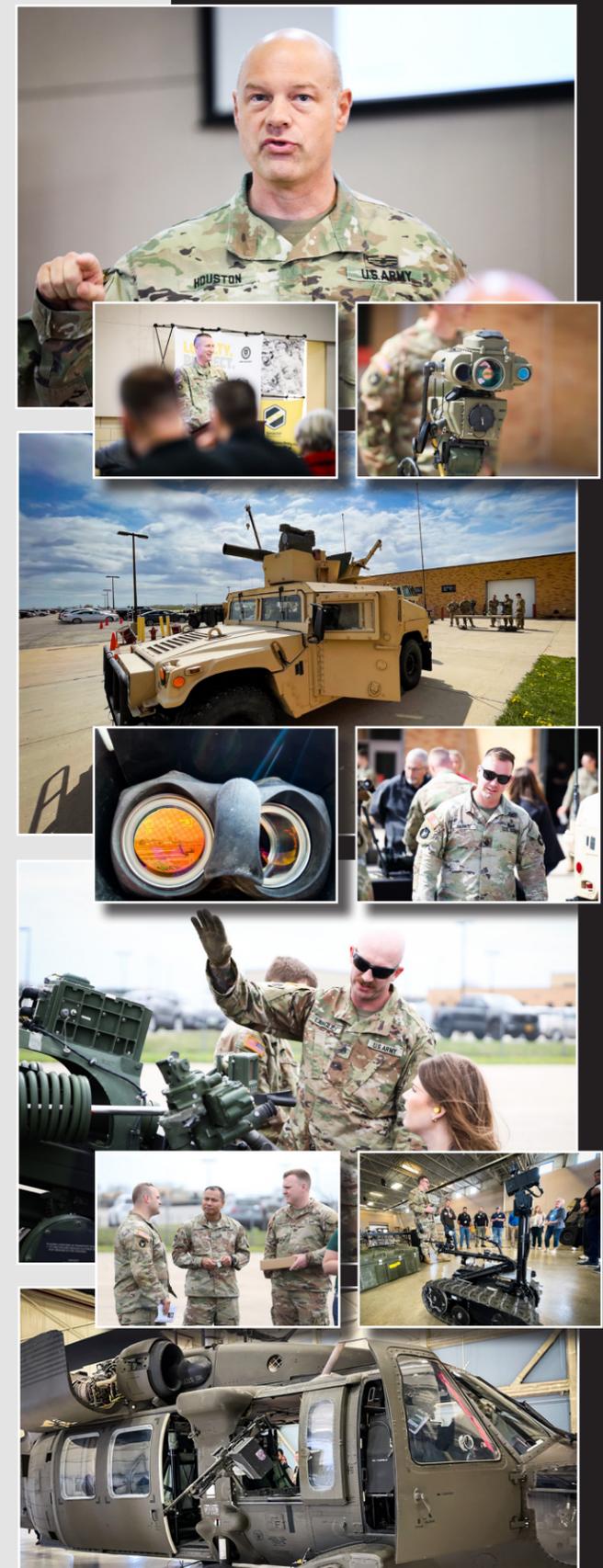
The day consisted of morning presentations, followed by open house exhibits that featured hands-on opportunities for attendees to safely handle combat equipment. During that time, those in attendance were able to talk with Soldiers and ask questions about the equipment and their experience in the Iowa National Guard.

The open house event also gave employers an opportunity to receive information and resources on employing veterans and part-time National Guard soldiers. Although there are many full-time federal employees at the Boone campus, most soldiers in the Iowa National Guard hold full-time civilian jobs between drills and training periods.

An overall theme of the event outlined the benefits of employing a currently serving soldier veteran. Often, the artillery aspect of the National Guard is the image that most people think about. What goes unseen is the wide range of skill sets that soldiers have. Many work as electricians, engineers and mechanics. Domestic operations for the Iowa National Guard include experiences in search and rescue, being flight paramedics or assisting in water purification efforts.

Those who actively work in Black Hawk helicopter missions plan routes down to the minute, often integrating software into the mission. Although the ability to sling load a Humvee on a Black Hawk that has a 9,000-pound carrying capacity may not have direct correlation to civilian businesses, the logistical and leadership skills required for such a mission certainly do. The Iowa National Guard has 67 military occupational specialties. The event helped employers consider the full scope of the training they have received and how that could positively impact their business.

The Iowa National Guard is interested in collaborating with businesses across the region. A soldier who served several years in the active-duty Army had a chance to talk about his experience. After completing active duty, he joined the Iowa National Guard as a part-time soldier. He's now training to be a human resources specialist in the Guard while working as an IT specialist on the civilian side. The Guard is providing a second career path that can play a direct role in Iowa workforce development.



Watch the
Recap Video
on YouTube



Anne and Terry Stark
Owners, Chocolaterie Stam

For the past 16 years, Chocolaterie Stam has been a staple in Downtown Ames and a go-to location for holiday, or any-day, chocolate sweets. Owned by Terry and Anne Stark, the couple was the first non-Stam family to own a store. All of the chocolates are made in Des Moines under the direction of Erik Stam, production manager and great-grandson of the founder, Jacobus Stam. The best dates for sales are those surrounding Christmas, Valentine's Day, and Easter.

In addition to chocolate, they offer real Italian gelato, have a full coffee bar, and wine to go. Or stay awhile on Saturday's when the piano is played inside by a local musician. In addition to owning Chocolaterie Stam, Terry has been a long-time member of the Score Table for Iowa State University basketball programs.

Chocolaterie Stam is located at 230 Main Street



The co-owners of Marmalade Moon, Ann-Marie Widdowson and Graham Watkins opened their Downtown Ames shop in December 2021 after 9 months of renovations. All of their ice cream is created in-house, including their Marmalade Moon flavor, a creamy, light citrus ice cream with candied orange peel chunks. Both Graham and Ann-Marie are natives of Great Britain, and they bring this European flare to their sales offerings. In addition to ice cream, they offer a range of snacks, retail shop, and full coffee bar. If you're looking for a suggestion, consider an affogato: a scoop of ice cream "drowned" in espresso.

Marmalade Moon is located at 207 Main Street



Ann-Marie Widdowson and Graham Watkins
Owners, Marmalade Moon



• Matt Pyfferoen, DDS •
• Denise Evans, DDS •



Dr. Matthew Pyfferoen, Gracie Hammer and Kennedy Lewis
Pyfferoen Pediatric Dentistry

Gracie Hammer, a senior at Boone High School, spends her afternoons in Downtown Ames at Pyfferoen Pediatric Dentistry where she is job training to become a licensed dental assistant.

This is part of a State of Iowa dental assistant trainee program overseen by the Iowa Dental Board. Working under the supervision of a licensed dentist, Gracie engaged in on-the-job training that includes chairside assisting, infection control, and dental radiography. The goal is after 6-12 months, she will be able to complete a series of assessments and apply to be a Registered Dental Assistant.

This opportunity is available because of the collaboration between the Boone EDGE Program and Dr. Matthew Pyfferoen. Boone EDGE is the work-based learning program through the Boone Community School District where students get to "experience real-world work through authentic projects, internships, tours, and speakers." This is one of many opportunities afforded to students in the Boone EDGE program.

"It is important that we provide high school students a wide variety of career awareness and training opportunities while in high school," said Lindsey Hyman, Boone EDGE Coordinator. "Fortunately for us, we have amazing partners across the region who are willing to help high school students gain experience related to their field through Boone EDGE. These partnerships

truly are a win-win for not only the students but also the employer."

Students earn high school credit through the Boone EDGE program, while learning on-the-job skills. For employers, establishing partnerships can help fill the job market gap that exists right now. "A huge benefit for the employer is the fact that they get a student who has proven themselves to us in school and has been hired and trained per the dentist specifications," said Hyman. "The employer gets a multistep vetting process for employees by partnering with the school because we know these students and can help train and support them prior to applying and entering the workforce."

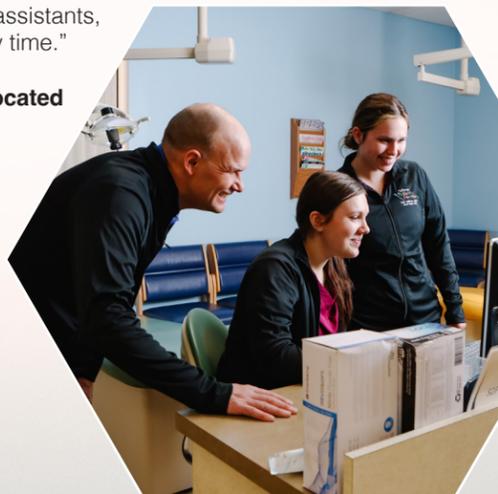
When approached with this idea, Dr. Pyfferoen quickly saw an opportunity for his practice to train and hire. Gracie is the second student that Pyfferoen has brought in for on-the-job training from Boone EDGE. The first was Kennedy Lewis in 2022. At the time, Kennedy was a senior at Boone High School and completed the program. She now works full-time in the pediatric dentistry office.

"The labor market is very tight right now, especially in the service and trade industries. This is a great program and a win-win for the students and for our office," said Dr. Pyfferoen. "If we can train and then hire talented dental assistants, we will utilize that opportunity every time."

Pyfferoen Pediatric Dentistry is located at 301 Fifth Street

Learn more about Downtown Ames events and follow us on social media

AmesDowntown.org



1,000,000,000

GALLONS OF ETHANOL PRODUCED

Lincolnway Energy, located between Ames and Nevada, celebrated the milestone of 1 billion gallons of ethanol produced in January 2023. Originally formed in May 2004, the plant started as a 50 million gallon per year dry mill ethanol plant. Today, it produces close to 95 million gallons of ethanol a year and is a driver of economic activity across the region.

According to the Iowa Corn Growers Association, Iowa produces 2.5 billion bushels of corn each year, with over half of that going to ethanol production. Iowa leads the nation in ethanol production, with 57 percent (1.5 billion bushels) of the corn grown in Iowa going to create nearly 27 percent of all American ethanol. Lincolnway Energy is one of 42 ethanol plants in Iowa and a key player in helping assure a strong future for clean, renewable, and domestically produced fuels.

Nearly 20 years ago, Lincolnway Energy was one of only 4 coal-fired plants in the nation. At the time, coal was inexpensive to use, and the plant paid for itself in a short period of time. They produced 50 million gallons a year and operated partner ethanol plants in Minnesota and North Dakota. In 2014, the company moved to natural gas through Alliant Energy, and this move, along with a staff restructuring and efficiency audit, triggered an acceleration in production. The company started producing 50, 60, 70 million gallons of ethanol a year, and by 2023, they were up to 95 million gallons.

The daily operations of an ethanol plant are robust, but with automation, much of it can be controlled by a small crew working around the clock. There are days when Lincolnway receives 40,000 bushels of corn an hour. At 56 pounds a bushel, this can be up to 200 truckloads a day. Through their dry mill production, they are grinding 90,000 bushels a day, creating corn mash, and ultimately producing 260,000 gallons of ethanol a day. All of this is done with 42 employees on staff.

Plant Manager Chris Cleveland, who has been with Lincolnway Energy since 2008, recognizes the importance of developing a strong staff culture for the plant to operate effectively. "For us, it's not just 42 employees, it's 42 families that are part of our organization. What makes Lincolnway Energy special is that everyone has a voice, a hierarchy is almost non-existent because we each need to understand jobs across the plant." He talked about long hours at the plant with many working 12-hour shifts. "Sometimes we see each other more than our families and because of that sacrifice, we have to take care of our employees."

Lincolnway employs staff from across a four-county region including Boone, Marshall, Polk, and Story County. A few have relocated their families to the region from as far as Texas and Georgia. The economic impact of this ethanol plant extends beyond the Ames MSA. This plant touches nearly 300 Iowa farmers and works closely with economic partners such as Key Cooperative, located east of the plant. With a direct line on the Union Pacific Railroad, the alcohol is shipped as far as Arizona where it is blended to be used as gasoline.

Cleveland sees Lincolnway Energy as the "jewel" of Iowa ethanol plants. In many ways, they are a destination to learn about the ethanol production. In 2007, the cast and crew from American Chopper, the reality television series from the Discovery Channel, visited the plant and later revealed America's first renewable energy chopper. More recently, three different documentary crews who are covering the ethanol industry toured and conducted interviews at the plant.



Jeremy Sandven, Nic Rhinehart, Bradley Lee, and Denis Gibson (above) are in the lab running day-to-day samples across the plant. Brett Ratashak (right) is a shift supervisor running the plant in the control room.

HOW ETHANOL IS MADE

Ethanol is an alcohol that is produced through fermentation, chemical processing and distillation. In the United States, ethanol is primarily made from corn. During the dry milling process, the entire corn kernel is ground into a meal. Water is added to the meal turning it into mash (removing the liquid during this time creates inedible corn oil). Enzymes are added to the mash to convert the starch into sugar. The mixture is processed at high temperatures with yeast and then cooled in fermenters where the conversion from sugar to ethanol takes place. During this process, carbon dioxide is created.

The entire process, from corn to ethanol, takes between 40-50 hours. After the process is complete, the alcohol is moved into distillation columns where the "stillage" is removed. The ethanol is then dehydrated to approximately 200 proof. From there, a denaturant is added, such as gasoline, to make the ethanol undrinkable. The stillage can remain wet, or be dried to create a co-product called distiller grains, a highly nutritious animal feed.



Chris Cleveland
Plant Manager, Lincolnway Energy



Flight Bar + Grille in Huxley Named 2023 Iowa's Best Burger Winner (May 1, 2023)

Iowa's Best Burger has returned to the Ames MSA! Congratulations to Flight Bar + Grille in Huxley for earning this well-deserved honor from the Iowa Beef Council and Iowa Cattlemen's Association. Their Foundation Burger is a double-smash burger with cheddar cheese and includes mustard aioli, lettuce, tomato, caramelized onions and is topped with thick-cut bacon served between a beautiful and buttery brioche bun.



Fareway CEO Reynolds Cramer Inducted into Iowa Business Hall of Fame (April 26, 2023)

The Greater Des Moines Committee recognized Fareway CEO Reynolds Cramer as a 2022 inductee to the Iowa Business Hall of Fame. Reynolds was honored during the Greater Des Moines Committee's Annual Induction Event on Wednesday, April 26, 2023, at The Meadows Events and Conference Center. The Iowa Business Hall of Fame honors the achievements of Iowans who have made outstanding contributions to the development and enhancement of Iowa's business climate. "I am humbled and blessed to have been selected to join the prestigious Iowa Business Hall of Fame," said CEO Reynolds W. Cramer. "I also want to thank my family and my Fareway family for their immeasurable contributions toward this achievement."

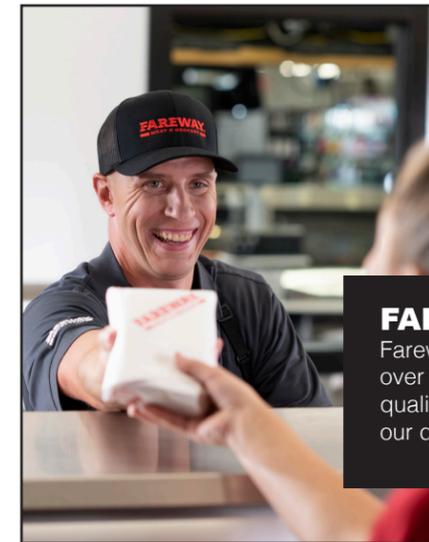


Modern Dress in Boone Earns Wedding Choice Awards (May 9, 2023)

Modern Dress, located in Boone, Iowa, was recognized at the 2023 Wedding Choice Awards. They earned Gold awards for "Best Wedding Gowns," "Best Bridal Accessories" and a Silver award for "Best Bridesmaid Dresses" in the state of Iowa. Couples all over Iowa voted for Modern Dress in acknowledgement of demonstrating excellence in quality, service, and professionalism in the wedding industry. Additionally, Modern Dress won the 2023 Best of Weddings from The Knot. They have won this award every year since 2012 and they are in The Knot Hall of Fame.



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| Alex Fejfar | Graham Watkins |
| Pete Evans | Dr. Matthew Pyfferoen |
| Julie Robinson | Lindsey Hyman |
| Nancy Carroll | Chris Cleveland |
| Kelsey Buenz | |
| Samantha Grove | ... and the entire |
| Sgt. Rachel I. White | Ames Chamber of |
| LTC Matthew Parrino | Commerce team! |

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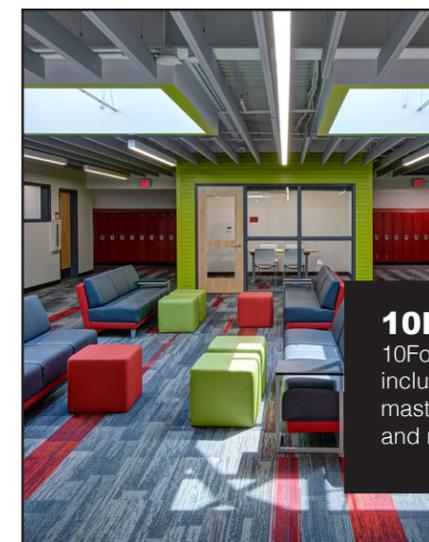


Eric Smidt
Vice President,
Marketing & Communications
eric@ameschamber.com

Earlier this spring, my family and I walked Downtown Ames during the opening weekend of the Ames Main Street Farmers' Market. A few weeks prior to that, we did something similar during the annual Music Walk where we enjoyed the beauty of downtown. Whether it was the vibrations of sound, the energy that hundreds of community-minded people generate when in one location, or simply the weather, it felt cool to live in Ames.

This type of (cool) stuff happens all of the time across our communities and there are a lot of people who take advantage of the opportunities. In fact, I marveled at how many people I ran into at these and other events.

It is just as easy for me to find reasons to not go out (busy schedule, tired, etc), but when I take advantage of these community-building activities, it recharges our batteries and grounds our commitment to the region. This is home to us. So whether you attend events in Downtown Ames, take advantage of some of the things that Iowa State University brings to our community, or get some drinks with friends, build community this summer.



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