

TRACTION

A MAGAZINE FROM THE AMES CENTER FOR

Summer 2024
Issue 07



The FUTURE of AGRICULTURE

according to Roger C. Underwood



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

**LEADERSHIP
ENGAGEMENT
ADVOCACY**



Dan Culhane
President & CEO,
Ames Chamber of Commerce

In April, it was announced that Daisy Brand, a Dallas, Texas-based company, is planning to build a new state-of-the-art, 750,000 square foot facility in Boone in 2024. The makers of cottage cheese and sour cream, Daisy is a national brand that had the choice to land anywhere across the United States. They chose Boone because we sold them on the value of our region and our state.

The announcement was the culmination of months of work by our team and a host of partners, including the City of Boone, Boone County Economic Growth Corporation, Des Moines Area Community College, Iowa State University, Alliant Energy and the Iowa Economic Development Authority. Meetings and presentations led to an unaccounted number of follow-up phone calls, a fun, short video we produced, and even a day trip to Dallas, to finalize the deal. The Boone County Economic Growth Corporation played a vital role in acquiring land that will be sold to Daisy, and we went deep in understanding milk production in our region. Did you know that Daisy estimates needing 3.3 million pounds of milk a day? That's the equivalent of 43,000 cows, milked three times a day.

Financial incentives were certainly part of their decision to land in Boone, but that was not the only variable. When we were part of the final two sites under consideration, I was told that one site had the available milk production, but it may be challenging to get people to move to that location. If we could help figure out the milk production, Daisy knew that their employers would love to live here. A great testament to the livability of our region.

Economic development projects of this scale and magnitude do not come around that often. In fact, this is one of the largest projects in my career and I could not be more proud of my team and our community partners. The leaders in Boone supported this project from the beginning and were generous with their time and ability to pivot in order to say yes. Thank you to Daisy Brand for their \$700 million investment in our region and be sure to get to your favorite grocery store and do a dollop of Daisy!

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

Roger C. Underwood is a recent inductee to the Iowa Business Hall of Fame and takes a global perspective to an agriculture industry that is ever evolving. The agriculture of tomorrow is already here in many ways and Underwood points to several examples across the region. Learn more about the future of agriculture in this feature article of Traction.



**304 Main St.
Ames, Iowa 50010
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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.

AmesChamber.com

TRACTI•N INVESTORS



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 **FUTURE** of **AGRICULTURE**

according to Roger C. Underwood

“The future of Agriculture is not about blindly throwing increasingly expensive inputs and precious resources at our food, fiber, and now fuel production,” said Roger Underwood during this keynote presentation at the 2024 Agriculture Breakfast event. “The future of agriculture is borderless and global,” as he provided a worldly perspective to an industry that is ever evolving.

Roger C. Underwood is a native of Atlantic, Iowa, and lives in Ames. He earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Agricultural Business from Iowa State University in November of 1980. Two years later, Roger and high school classmate, Jeff Becker, co-founded Becker Underwood in Ames to develop a specialty colorant to mix with Round Up herbicide to “mark” where the Round Up was sprayed. Company sales during its first year were \$45,000, but the company grew steadily from there, developing new products.

Organic growth and several key acquisitions later, the company quickly became diversified and was working with key agricultural markets globally. Becker Underwood produced specialty seed colorants, seed coatings, yield enhancing biological inoculants, and multiple biological crop protection products. The company served many markets, including row crop seeds,

general agriculture, horticultural, forestry, and aquatics, through companies such as Pioneer/DuPont, Monsanto, Syngenta, Dow, Land O Lakes, Van Diest Supply, and many others. The company eventually grew to \$265 million in sales by 2012, from its ten offices across seven countries on five continents with 420 employees.

“Agriculture and food production is changing as I speak.”

In 1980, when Roger received his diploma, the world of agriculture was quite different than today. “Back then, agriculture production was more about how much of everything you could throw at producing it. Precision agriculture did not exist, and crop inputs were used much more inexactly than today.” He acknowledges that farms were expanding at the time, but the economics of farming were different.

“A tractor with a cab and radio was a luxury. A farmer owned his pickup eleven years before trading for a new one. That is what

“As part of the transition into tomorrow’s ag world, watch for novel words a agriculture, seawater farming, crisper technology, genetic modification, m insertions, computational plant breeding, microbe-based fertility, drone ap inventory, home use genetic engineering kits, data analytics, cultured mea

farmers knew then, so that is how they farmed and raised food then.”

Today, capital-intensive livestock production is highly specialized and concentrated to fewer and fewer farms. Livestock have moved from unpredictable and harsh outdoor conditions to controlled environments inside. He noted that although farm equipment transitioned from actual horses to machine horsepower over a hundred years ago, the growing size of farm equipment continues to function on rural farm roads and wooden bridges built for a different era.

“There was no internet, no web, no GPS satellites, no drones, and no software.” All of that has changed in a remarkably short amount of time.

Iowa continues to be a national and global leader in agriculture, ranking number one in production of hogs, corn, eggs, and soybeans. As a state and country, the impact of agriculture needs to include a global perspective, says Underwood. “By 2050, some futurists say we will need to feed nine billion people, not the seven billion we do today. Some predict twenty five percent of those nine billion will be under thirty years of age and many living in third- world countries with falling GDP’s.”

Underwood countered that statement with others claiming that, “we will only need to feed six and a half billion people in 2050 due to a falling global population trend, a lower global birth rate, and an increase in global poverty.”

Whether it’s nine or six and a half billion, Underwood emphasizes the need to effectively re-tool agriculture into an economically efficient system with new and emerging technologies that can impact a widespread target market. He believes that American-style capitalism, innovation, and ingenuity is apt to tackle the changing landscape.

Underwood studies agriculture globally and his perspective is formed by what he has seen first-hand outside of the United States. In his keynote, he pointed to his experiences in Africa and how food shortages continue to require people to live in a constant state of hunger. Today, 800 million people worldwide suffer daily from serious levels of hunger. “I saw some of that hunger recently in the slums of Soweto on the edges of Johannesburg and in the small rural villages across Namibia,” said Underwood. “Even when we grow more food, and even if governments subsidize food and agriculture dramatically, by 2030, there will still be 650 million undernourished people in the world. Globally, 21,000 people die daily from hunger or hunger-related causes.”

“Agriculture must be re-tooled, re-invented, re-capitalized, and re-engineered no matter if we have six and a half billion or nine billion mouths to feed.” The changes and disruptions, Underwood notes, will impact the way we raise our crops, grow our

food, and the required infrastructure to support the change. Entrepreneurial and innovative minds can address this problem.

Underwood points to the positive impact that genetically modified foods can have on world hunger. “Do you know how many people get sick or die daily from eating genetically modified foods?” asks Underwood. “Zero. Not one single person. But almost 1,000 people an hour are dying from lack of food.”

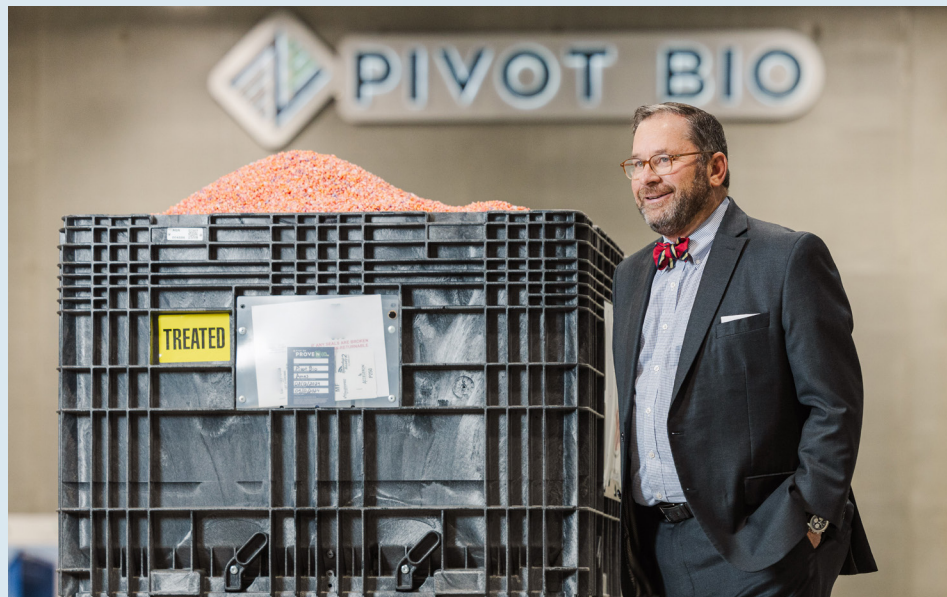
Genetically modified foods, known as GMOs, have risen in prominence, but have also received increasing public interest regarding their safety, specifically to human health. There are now many research studies comparing the effects of traditional food to genetically modified food across industry-leading journals. However, the power of long-term impact studies is not there yet.

GMO foods are banned in Europe, a continent that benefits from an agricultural ecosystem that can support their population. For the countries of Africa, whose main agricultural export is to Europe, the situation is more dire. GMO crops are banned by default in a continent that is starving and thirsty.

“Science, innovation, and innovative technology can solve hunger,” said Underwood, again noting that much of the continent of Africa would benefit from a proven, agricultural technology investment. “Agriculture needs sound science, focused research, investment in land grant research universities such as Iowa State, private public partnerships, and yes, capitalism to solve the vexing problems of efficiently producing more food and optimizing our agriculture system.”

What will these technology changes look like? Underwood offers some examples.

“There will be sophisticated tree fruit and vegetable picking



and phrases that will creep into our ag and food vocabulary. Look for things like algae feedstocks, desert multi-flex gene editing, gene promoters, bio dome farms, cascading domino events, ultra-sonification gene application, nanotechnology, micro table top bio reactors, artificial intelligence, precision ag, soil microbial ts, laboratory food, precision crops, vertical farming, bee vectoring, aeroponics, and hydroponics.”



robots that work 24 hours a day using artificial intelligence color and size recognition technology guided by monitoring drones flying overhead managing the process.” Autonomous tractors, herd management drones on ranches that monitor animal sickness, and solar powered moisture-monitored irrigation systems are just the start. Artificial intelligence will be the norm. “Self-peeling potatoes whose skins just dissolve away when cooked,” are already available.

The agriculture of tomorrow is already here in many ways and Underwood points to several examples across the region, including the work at Iowa State University, Iowa State University Research Park, and several private companies.

In 2012, Becker Underwood was sold to BASF Chemical Company of Germany for \$1.02 billion dollars. By then, the two co-founders, Jeff and Roger, had moved into private equity investing in agriculture. More recently for Underwood, one of those companies was Pivot Bio, a Berkeley, California company that now has space in the Iowa State University Research Park.

“Everyone knows that nitrogen is a necessary component of our global food system,” said Underwood. “Nitrogen fuels photosynthesis, which makes it the basis of the DNA and proteins. Plants cannot grow without Nitrogen.” But when Nitrogen is used incorrectly or wastefully, it can be a pollutant in our air. Pivot Bio has solved that problem for farmers.

Pivot Bio came to Ames and established its second largest operation, far away from the company headquarters on the west coast. The \$190 billion global nitrogen industry will be disrupted in a positive way with fingerprints from Ames, Iowa. Why Ames for Pivot Bio? The answer is easy for Underwood to answer. “Ames is the center of grain production in North America, central to so many growers and potential customers and employees.”

Pivot Bio is just one example of how the many coming changes to agriculture create perfect openings for regional businesses. Our area is bustling with talent thanks to the innovative work at Iowa State University.

Iowa State University Research Park tenants continue to drive value to the region. Underwood points to Sukup Manufacturing developing and manufacturing new and more energy efficient ways to dry and store grain for the global market. Kent Corporation is developing healthier foods, seasonings, deserts, animal feeds, and proteins from its deeply collaborative labs in Ames. John Deere has its global sprayer research center in Ames. Dryland Genetics has developed new varieties of the most water efficient grain in the world.

“All right here from Ames, Iowa,” reinforcing the global impact of Iowa State University.

“Man, armed with science and technology, will fuss with plant and animal genetics, DNA, and engineer a workable outcome for a changing world. Tomorrow is already happening right here in Ames, today.” This is the future of agriculture according to Roger C. Underwood.

TRANSLATIONAL AI CENTER

at Iowa State University

The Translational AI Center (TrAC) at Iowa State University is seeking to “break down disciplinary silos to bring together core Iowa State artificial intelligence researchers and subject matter experts interested in applying new technologies to their work.” The Center currently has 64 affiliated faculty members across 7 academic colleges of Iowa State.

“Artificial intelligence has enormous potential and is already impacting every major sector, ranging from healthcare, transportation, energy, manufacturing to food production and agriculture,” said TrAC Director Soumik Sarkar. “We, at the Translational AI Center, Iowa State University are building safe and trustworthy AI solutions for such real-world applications and serving as an industry-academia nexus for translating AI research into practice.”

In addition to serving as a scientific hub for translational artificial intelligence, the center organizes research seminars, hosts workshops, training, and on-boarding programs, offers seed funding for research projects, and serves as an intermediary between private industry partners seeking research services and appropriate university faculty. To date, industry partners include John Deere, Bayer Crop Sciences, Principal Financial Group, and Corteva, along with a host of governmental agencies such as the National Science Foundation, US Department of Agriculture, and the Department of Defense.

TrAC offers a means for organizations to explore how practical AI applications can impact their work through their FAST-TrAC programs including Smart Annotation, Proof-of-Concept projects, Industry Bootcamps and Hands-on Internship for university students. TrAC is also dedicated to creating safe and trustworthy artificial intelligence, and was selected as a member and contributor to the U.S. AI Safety Institute Consortium created by National Institute (NIST).

In April, they held their inaugural TrAC Day at the Student Innovation Center. “This event was important as it provided an opportunity to raise awareness about the work we are doing,” said Sarkar.

The event provided attendees an opportunity to discover some of the latest developments from researchers shaping the future of AI at Iowa State University through flash talks, presentations, and networking opportunities. Presentations included a range of topics such as 3D modeling of plants, and AI applications that can instantly detect different species of insects, among many others.

TrAC is nationally recognized and has a strong presence in Summit for AI Leadership Conference and Academic Alliance for AI Policy. The Center is positioned to be a key ongoing component of innovation at Iowa State, serving on the steering committee of an Applied AI minor at Iowa State. TrAC is introducing two new AI courses in Fall 2024.



Soumik Sarkar
Director, Translational AI Center
Iowa State University

Learn more about the Translational AI Center on their website:
trac-ai.iastate.edu



WASHINGTON D.C. FLY-IN

April 16-18, 2024

The Ames Chamber of Commerce Public Policy Program focuses on educating and engaging members on key legislative issues and initiatives impacting the Ames area. 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.

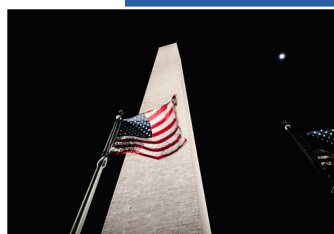
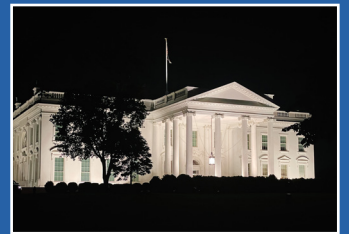
This component of our services is most prevalent during the spring when the state legislature is in session, but the efforts continue year-round at the state and federal levels. In all advocacy efforts, the Ames Chamber of Commerce remains nonpartisan and does not endorse candidates or support political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

In January 2024, 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 2024 session and provide their policy perspectives.

In April 2024, 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.

Each representative graciously spent time with our delegation, answering questions and listening to the key priorities that impact Iowa and the Ames region. Additional topics related to our region included the importance of regionalism, small business support, funding opportunities, tourism, transportation, childcare, housing, and more. The pace within the Capitol building is robust, yet many of our federally elected officials prioritized time to meet with our delegation from Boone, Hamilton, and Story County between committee meetings and votes.

As this election year progresses, the Ames Chamber of Commerce will continue to provide opportunities to engage with and learn more about local candidates.



This year's delegation included representation from the City of Ames, City of Boone, City of Nevada, City of Webster City, Boone County, Hamilton County, Story County, Iowa State University, Des Moines Area Community College, and many private business partners across Boone and Story County.



ONLINE MEMBER DIRECTORY



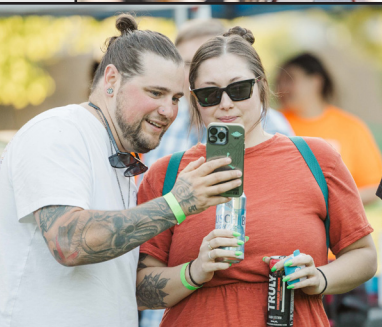
Looking for a local business? Consider one of our over 750 Ames Chamber of Commerce members through our online directory. Visit our website at:

[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

- [Modern](#)
- [Mop Boys LLC](#)
- [Photon Laser Engraving](#)
- [Rico's Tacos](#)
- [Emmons & Olivier Resources, Inc.](#)
- [Wasabi Ames, North](#)
- [Homegrown](#)
- [Gerber Collision & Glass](#)
- [K.N. Custom Sewing](#)
- [School of Rock](#)
- [Borrachos Mexican Tacos Food Truck](#)
- [Central Iowa Pain & Wellness](#)
- [Royal Rental Co.](#)
- [Stevens Memorial Chapel](#)
- [Mrs.Slobberworth's](#)
- [Brockman Excavating](#)
- [Farm Credit Services of America – Webster City](#)
- [Weather or Naut Catering](#)
- [Weber Accounting Services](#)
- [Mid-States Companies](#)
- [Indian Creek Golf Club](#)
- [Kimberly Lane Boutique](#)
- [Made in the Shade](#)
- [ALMACO](#)
- [Overtime Gym](#)
- [Farm Bureau Financial Services – Stephan York](#)
- [Tosca](#)
- [Potter's Shoppe & Eatery](#)
- [Burgies Coffee \(North Location\)](#)
- [Heartland Payroll](#)



May 15-17, 2024

COMMUNITY SUPPORT



1ST FIRST NATIONAL BANK

Nicole Rasmussen
Senior Vice President,
First National Bank, Ames



“Being involved in the community is not only part of the DNA of a community bank, it is one of First National Bank’s core values. Supporting nonprofit organizations with volunteers, donations, and sponsorships and participating in local events improves the well-being of our communities. When we improve the quality of our community, we all win.”

Scott Bauer
President, First National Bank, Ames

Engagement and giving back to the community are part of the fabric of First National Bank, located in Downtown Ames. They were the presenting sponsor of this year’s 515 Days, a three-day event that included a nighttime farmers’ market with food trucks, vendors, and live music, kid and family activities, and concluded with a Big Bash at Bandshell Park.

In 2023, First National Bank sponsored or donated to 111 community organizations, with the most significant annual contribution to the United Way of Story County. “Contributions to these organizations play a crucial role in our communities by addressing immediate needs and finding long-term solutions to challenging issues,” said branch president Scott Bauer.

The support for the community, and Downtown Ames specially, goes much deeper than event sponsorship. Senior Vice President Nicole Rasmussen is the current Board Chair of the Ames Main Street organization and finds engagement, volunteerism, and corporate sponsorship as essential to the success of a community.

Rasmussen has worked at First National Bank’s office in Downtown Ames for over 27 years. “We have always been a community-focused bank, located Downtown in the heart of Ames for over 120 years,” said Rasmussen. “It’s not something we talk about, it’s something we live, and I am proud to work for an organization that lives its core values.”

Immediately out of college, Rasmussen recalls being encouraged to get involved. “I witnessed leaders at every level living volunteerism.” She helped organize Young Professionals of Ames (now FUEL) and was active in community programming. Those experiences established lifelong friendships and business connections that continue today. “Now, as a leader at First National Bank, it’s important to me that I share that same encouragement with our team,” said Rasmussen. “It’s not just about volunteering; it’s about contributing in ways that are personally meaningful and impactful to you.”

As a presenting sponsor, First National Bank not only partnered with the Downtown Ames organization but formed their own internal 515 Days committee to reinforce their commitment to the bank’s core values. Rasmussen noted that these committees contribute positively to company culture and create a sense of purpose and fulfillment beyond their banking role.

Rasmussen began her role as Ames Main Street board chair in January and is excited about the year ahead. “It couldn’t be a more exciting time to serve as we kick off the Downtown Ames Master Planning process and collaboration will be essential! There is an excitement in the air. You can feel it when you talk to business owners and observe the energy and atmosphere during events as well as during a regular Saturday afternoon Downtown.”

APPRENTICE TO EMPLOYMENT



The Boone Community School District and Mary Greeley Medical Center (MGMC) established a partnership to provide students with opportunities to explore healthcare careers during the 2020-2021 school year. Gracie Boon, a 2024 graduate of Boone High School, is one of the beneficiaries of that partnership. Thanks to her experience through the Boone EDGE program, Gracie has completed the state-approved training program and competency exam to be a Certified Nursing Assistant and is now employed full-time at Mary Greeley in the Oncology Department.

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.

Full certification and employment is a notable jump from the origins of the partnership. Just a few years ago, the goal was to provide students with tours and other learning opportunities from various departments.

“It’s exciting to see what Gracie has accomplished this past year,” said Lindsey Hyman, Boone EDGE Coordinator. “And it’s the result of partnerships with a common interest of helping students.”

The State of Iowa has recognized the need for healthcare professionals. Through Iowa Workforce Development, the Boone Community School District was awarded an Iowa Health Career Apprenticeship grant in spring of 2022. The grant intends to increase pipelines for high school students to earn industry credentials and begin learning on the job while earning wages as an apprentice.

“We knew we had 15-20 students each school year earning a CNA credential,” said Hyman. “But often these students would continue their education and experience outside of Boone and Story County. While this may contribute to the industry, we didn’t feel we were making enough of an impact in our local region.”



After being awarded the grant, the two partners worked together to create an apprenticeship pathway, including the development of a training plan that best fit MGMC and a high school student. “We created a tiered approach that supports student learning as they acquire their CNA and gain experience while giving a road map for increased pay along the way,” said Tammy Stegman, Talent and Engagement Manager at MGMC. “Our goal was to provide an apprenticeship experience that helped students to see their initial employment as more than a job and the start to a career.” The program is now an official high school registered apprenticeship with the Department of Labor.

Thanks to financial support from MGMC, Gracie is not done with her education. She plans to continue her coursework and become a fully licensed registered nurse.

CENTRAL IOWA MIDDLE SCHOOL EXPO

The Central Iowa Middle School Expo took place on April 30 and was organized in collaboration with the Boone EDGE program and Central Iowa Expo. The day-long event provided seventh grade students from Boone, Nevada, and other area schools, work-based learning opportunities in agriculture, exterior construction, with stations that highlighted equipment and showcasing tools. Participating companies included Alliant Energy, Baker Group, DMACC, Fareway Stores, Kruck Plumbing and Heating, Landus Cooperative, Midland Power Cooperative, Ogden Telephone, Sukup Manufacturing, Story Construction, and many more.



Mary Greeley
MEDICAL CENTER



TRACTI • 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.

WORK in AMES.com

WorkinAmes.com is the job board for the entire Ames region, servicing 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!



ROD BODHOLDT & JEFF GRUMMER, OWNERS

BODHOLDT & GRUMMER PRODUCTIONS

"We got to know each other back in the late 1980's when we both worked as Iowa State students in the Sports Department at WOI-TV. After graduation, we both worked full-time at the station as sportscasters. In 1996, we decided to leave that profession and use our video skills and connections to start our own video production company. For the past 28 years, B&G Productions, Inc. has been blessed to be based in the Ames community and to produce marketing and promotional videos for a variety of businesses and organizations, and we've also enjoyed a great working relationship with Iowa State University Athletics.

With a background in television sports, we've been in the business of making dreams come true since 1996. We love to help people tell their stories. Our purpose is to listen, and then assist you in either starting, renovating, or completing your dream. We believe everyone has a great story... we love to help people tell their story well!"

B&G Productions, Inc. produces marketing and promotional videos for businesses and organizations, offering video recording services for programs and events. BG Productions also works with individuals to transfer and preserve home videos and other family treasures.

www.bgvideoproductions.com

"I came to Iowa State with no expectation to leave as an entrepreneur. However, due to the resources, support, and innovative culture at Iowa State University, I was able to graduate and go into my company full time. The path to entrepreneurship is challenging. Embracing failure is crucial—it's the best teacher, enabling us to learn, grow, and excel. Here are my top three encouragements to aspiring entrepreneurs:

- 1. Get started today. You will never be ready, but once you start you will be able to learn your industry, pivot, and grow into something you never could have envisioned.*
- 2. Leverage your connections. Join local organization and frequently attend events.*
- 3. Embrace failure. It is an opportunity to learn faster than you would without it. Use it, learn from it, grow from it."*

Schonert's Corporate Catering is located in Ames and provides breakfast, lunch, and dessert catering with reliable, relational, and intentional service!



SCHONERT'S CORPORATE CATERING

www.schonertsc.com

ADAM SCHONERT, OWNER



MRS.

JULIANNA STARLING, OWNER

SLOBBERWORTH'S

"My entrepreneurial journey started outside at a public park training dogs. With business picking up, I then decided to invest our personal money into our garage to remodel it. This allowed me to obtain my state license certification as a commercial kennel. I have enjoyed continuing to build and expand while, at the same time, staying small and down to earth. I continue to look to the future to build, grow, and nurture our mission in all we do. It's important to me that we keep the quality and expectations of my current clients and offer an inviting hand for new clients into a new positive fear free experience.

I never considered myself an entrepreneur, but I am business minded. I've always dreamed of running my own business. I started with an idea a year ago and grew it to where we are today. With our next expansion into brick-and-mortar in downtown Boone, I am excited for what the future brings. We will be offering grooming, doggie daycare, and a pup boutique.

My motivation comes from watching the dogs and their humans connect by making that positive association and

growing together. I enjoy teaching adults and watching them learn how to understand their dog(s). With that said, our new services are much needed in our local community. Boone does not currently have a walk-in dog grooming salon, doggie daycare or pup shop. I figured that if I'm already in the industry with training and boarding, then why not round it out?

Having been in business for one year, I am so thankful to all my current clients for their support. I am also grateful for my new staff that I've onboarded for the new launch. Lastly, I can't wait to meet all our new incoming clients and their pups. I could not do any of this without them!"

Mrs. Slobberworth's is a fear free, positive reinforcement dog service and supply company. We specialize in all positive things for dogs. From training, boarding, doggie daycare, canine massage, and grooming. Our mission is helping build positive relationships between dogs and their humans through training and support.

www.mrsslobberworths.com

OVERFLOW

Thrift Store

Every day at Overflow Thrift Stores, savvy shoppers find great deals and vintage treasures. But for the past ten years, Overflow's mission has been more than simply providing an economical and unique shopping option in Story County. "The heartbeat of the Overflow team is a desire to transform the abundance in our community into care for those in need and for our environment," says Overflow Board President Tami Hicks.

Since Overflow began almost ten years ago, they have given over \$830,000 to organizations serving locally and abroad and to individuals in central Iowa in need of a helping hand. In 2023, Overflow made cash donations of almost \$135,000 to twenty-two organizations - including The Bridge Home, Wings of Refuge, YSS, Romero House, Martha's House of Hope, Matthew 25 House, Boys & Girls Clubs of Story County, ACCESS, Ames Interfaith Refugee Alliance, and Community & Family Resources. Hicks says Overflow was pleased to give an additional \$38,000 in 2023 to individuals and families so they could purchase merchandise - items like shoes, winter coats, furniture, and household items families need to survive and thrive.

Overflow's mission also includes a focus on creating a healthier environment. Each year, Overflow resells or recycles over 600,000 pounds of material that otherwise would end up in a landfill. With programs for recycling textiles, glass, metal,

plastic and paper, Overflow is a great option for those who want to help eliminate waste. Overflow will even help dispose of textiles that can't be resold - things like old bedding, torn or stained clothing, and worn towels. Donors are welcome to bring those items to Overflow for responsible recycling.

Overflow recently opened a new store at 919 E. Lincoln Way which will provide new opportunities to increase giving to the community and recycling efforts. Overflow embarked on a \$1.5 million capital fundraising campaign to support the purchase of the new building. A successful campaign leading to ownership of the new building will allow Overflow to double its giving to the community every year.

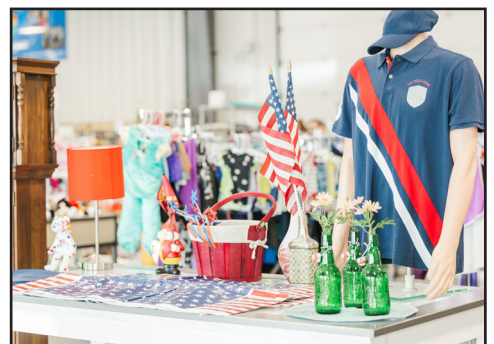
As Overflow grows, what motivates its staff and volunteers most is the opportunity to help individuals. Every day, the Overflow team meets people like a young woman who recently visited the store for a new outfit. She was thrilled to discover her entire purchase - dress, shoes, jewelry - was less than \$10. Nearly in tears, she told the cashier she was coming from a local shelter, was "30 days clean" and needed a new outfit for job interviews. The opportunity to serve the community in this way is the blessing of the Overflow ministry.

Overflow Thrift Store is located at two locations in Ames:
• 202 S Duff Avenue
• 919 E. Lincoln Way (new store)

www.OverflowThriftStore.org



Sandy Swanson
Managing Director, Overflow Thrift Store





Overflow Stories of Impact

In 2023, Overflow's support for Matthew 25 House was enough to pay for groceries for House residents - three meals a day, every day, for five men. "...without that guys would be on their own and either be malnourished or not be able to save money to take care of other debts, or both. Having this luxury helps them to get back on their feet quicker as well as provide a family type atmosphere."
(Nicholas Dralle, House Manager)

"All donations given to UCI Haiti are used for university scholarships. Investing in the development of leaders is vital to improving the situation in Haiti. Overflow has supported over 20 students in Haiti. Many of those have graduated and are working in their communities throughout Haiti. Overflow has supported future pastors, nurses, agronomists, and doctors. What a gift this is! Thank you for your support!"

In 2023, Overflow provided over \$38,000 to Story County ministries so those they serve could purchase merchandise - items like shoes, winter coats, furniture and household items that families need to survive and thrive.

"Overflow's generosity allowed us to cover 9 months worth of rent expenses for our maternity home. They have gone above and beyond by offering volunteering opportunities to three of our mothers, enabling them to enhance their skills and prepare for future employment opportunities."
(Tara Brown, Executive Director)

*Thrifting is our connection.
Helping people is our purpose.*

WHAT IS

TAX ABATEMENT?

This spring, the City of Ames prepared an Urban Revitalization Area (URA) designation to include a plan for incentivizing construction of new housing. The Council action form stated that “expanding housing options with the community is both desirable and necessary for the economic health of the city,” and that qualified real estate could be “eligible for a partial property tax abatement incentive.”

Many of the recommendations in the report originated from a Short-Term Housing Taskforce that included community leaders and private developers, in partnership with the City of Ames. The Taskforce identified opportunities and barriers in creating new housing of all types in the Ames community at prices that are attainable for a wide demographic. The goal was to create recommendations that will serve as a catalyst to more housing starts in a short-term window of time and will assist in meeting the housing goals targeted in the Ames 2040 Plan.

Jason Jennings, a real estate agent on the Friedrich Iowa Realty team, was part of that taskforce. “New construction housing is important because it will help fill the need for the growth demands we face in Ames. Many times, our community loses residents to other communities because we do not have enough housing available.”

Tax abatement is a temporary reduction in property taxes on the portion of assessed value added by new construction or improvements to an existing structure. Programs like these are used to stimulate community revitalization, improve existing housing stock, retain and attract residents and homeowners, and reduce development costs for high-quality commercial and industrial projects.

The Ames tax abatement program is applicable to all new construction homes or townhomes that are owner occupied. The program will continue for 3.5 years and includes a 5-year, graduated scale abatement; 100% for the first year, then 80%, 60%, 40%, 20%. After the fifth year, it returns to full payment.

Jennings said, “With more available new construction, there are more options for owners to move from a smaller, usually less expensive home to a larger home. When this happens, the home the buyer is leaving becomes inventory that is at a lower cost than new construction, creating a more affordable housing option.” The costs to build a new home have increased over the years, making resale homes a more affordable option for many. “This is a win for the Ames community, and I appreciate the City of Ames recognizing this opportunity as well.”

Jason Jennings
Real Estate Agent

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▶ BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS

The Boys & Girls Clubs of Story County broke ground in April on their \$7 million project that will add 7,500 square feet to the south of their existing building. According to CEO Ryan Santi, the addition will also provide needed updates throughout the building including HVAC, lighting, fire, and security systems, along with enhancements to the kitchen and classroom spaces. Thanks to a \$2.7 million grant from the State of Iowa, and their own contributions, and a generous donation from the Burke family and other private donations, they have already raised \$4.9 million, two-thirds of their goal, as of May 2024. The Clubs will continue services at the Ames Center during construction period thanks to their partnership with Ames Community School District.



▶ GILBERT LTD

Gilbert LTD/RES Development was formed in 2022 with the objective of stimulating the economic development of Story County with an emphasis on the community of Gilbert. In March, they made considerable progress towards that goal with a groundbreaking event of a multi-million-dollar investment. The ten-acre project will be developed into a finished light industry and service business park with multiple new buildings.

The site sits north of Gilbert High School and will be a mixed-use development that could include retail, commercial, service and light industrial. Luke Jensen, managing director of RES Development, one of the partners on the project, envisions this being a space that could include a coffee shop or bakery as a gathering spot for the community.



DAISY BRAND TO BUILD NEW FACILITY IN BOONE

The Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) announced in April the approval of an incentives package for Daisy Brand to bring a new state-of-the-art production facility to Boone, Iowa. The approved state funding followed recent approval from the city of Boone. Daisy Brand's decision to build in Boone comes after an extensive search of sites across the upper Midwest covering multiple states.

Daisy plans to invest \$626.5 million in a 750,000 square foot facility, creating 106 new jobs to start, a number anticipated to grow up to 255 as demand increases. The IEDA board approved \$7 million in direct financial assistance as well as tax benefits for the company. The Ames Chamber of Commerce and Economic Development Commission, in collaboration with the City of Boone, Boone County Economic Growth Corporation, and Iowa Economic Development Authority, finalized the deal with Daisy Brands. For over 100 years, Daisy Brand has been a family-owned and operated company committed to providing the freshest, highest quality dairy products. The company is headquartered in Dallas, Texas, with three state-of-the-art manufacturing facilities in Garland, Texas, Casa Grande, Arizona, and Wooster, Ohio.

GOING ELECTRIC AND CELEBRATING 50 YEARS

BURKE



**Gary Luppen, Brandon Koehler,
Steve Swaim, Shawn Bitters**



1967

Mr. & Mrs. Bill Burke, Sr. purchased Pronto Foods, a frozen pizza manufacturer in Ames, Iowa

2007

Strengthened leadership by uniting with Hormel Foods

1974

Bill & Alice Burke form Burke Marketing Corp.

2018

350 employees, shipping coast to coast and internationally over 140 million pounds of product

1984

Moved production to Nevada and began two decades of expansion.

“We had such a great experience with the first truck, and we were able to see cost savings in other ways. So getting that second truck, even though it cost more, was the right decision for us,” Koehler said.

The Orange EV trucks require little maintenance, and when they do, due to remote diagnostics, repairs can be pinpointed quickly. Additionally, Burke already had the infrastructure to charge the vehicles, which was another cost savings.

Koehler started his career in the food industry as a dry sausage production supervisor for Hormel Foods in 2007. He progressed through various supervisory positions at the Austin, Minnesota, plant, and in 2022, Koehler joined the Burke team in his current position, overseeing plant production at the Nevada facility. He relocated his family to Ames and is actively part of the business community in the region.

Koehler grew up in a diesel truck-driving family, making the move to an electric vehicle noteworthy. “We did the research and now we have the experience to suggest this decision to other manufacturing companies,” he said. Several companies in the region have approached the Burke team to gain insights about this move to electric.

Burke produces over 1,200 different meat and non-meat crumbles that are used across the United States and all over the world. The company ships nearly 100 truckloads of product every week out of Nevada, and Burke products can be found in over 10 countries in both foodservice and retail outlets. Burke currently has 1,248 active SKUs. As it relates to the new electric vehicles, these trucks handle over 200 million pounds of supplies and finished goods annually. Typically, there are 85 or more trailers on site at any given time.

This year, Burke Corporation in Nevada, Iowa, is celebrating 50 years as one of the leading manufacturers of customized crumbles and meatballs in the pizza industry. In 1973, Bill Burke, Sr., had a vision that has evolved into one of the premier economic development success stories of the region.

The company started with three employees and 3,000 square feet in a Quonset hut in Ames and now has over 500,000 square feet and more than the 550 team members in Nevada. In 2020, Burke opened its \$150 million expansion, which extended its existing facility in Nevada.

As a growing company with a national sales base, Burke has always been on the front end of logistics technology in the manufacturing space. The company’s latest technological decision was the adoption of electric shag trucks, used locally to move trailers quickly and safely for loading and unloading goods.

“When we made the decision to purchase our first electric truck, there were several grants and rebates making the cost to go this route similar to diesel,” said Brandon Koehler, Vice President of Operations for Burke. Koehler also cites electric as a cleaner alternative as a factor in their initial decision to explore this option. “Our traditional diesel shag trucks spend a lot of time idling and burning diesel when not actually working, especially during the cold winter months and hot summer months,” he said. “The electric option eliminates that waste.”

It’s a shift in thinking for an industry that continues to rely on traditional fuel sources. Through a grant, Burke acquired its first Orange EV truck in 2020 and was able to install the needed infrastructure to support electric vehicles. In 2023, the company purchased a second truck, but this time without any grant support. The cost of the second truck was nearly double the cost of a diesel truck for the same purpose.



Ames Schools Names Scott Grimes as New Superintendent

(April 19, 2024)

The Ames School Board of Directors named Scott Grimes as the next Superintendent of Ames Community School District. Grimes is currently the Recovery Support Administrator at Perry Community School District where he works with Perry's administrative team, state, and national administrative teams to create a plan for school re-entry and healing after a school shooting. Prior to that, he served 12 years as Superintendent at Dallas Center-Grimes (DCG). Grimes will be the 29th superintendent of Ames Public Schools in its 153-year history when he begins on July 1, 2024.



Fareway Stores Breaks Ground in Story City

(April 29, 2024)

Fareway Stores, Inc. hosted a groundbreaking ceremony in April for a new Fareway store in Story City. The new approximately 10,800 square foot store will be located at the southwest corner of Broad Street and Factory Outlet Drive in Story City, Iowa. "The most frequently asked question I get is "when is Fareway coming?" said Mayor Mike Jensen. "I am so glad to say it is now. Fareway is a perfect fit for Story City and we look forward to welcoming Fareway into our town to serve our community." Details on the anticipated opening date are forthcoming.



Iowa Business Hall of Fame

(May 1, 2024)

The Greater Des Moines Committee recognized DMACC President Rob Denson and Ag Entrepreneur Roger Underwood as 2023 inductees to the Iowa Business Hall of Fame. Both were honored, along with Ray Cole, during the Greater Des Moines Committee's Annual Induction Event on Wednesday, May 1, 2024, 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.



▶ TRACTI • N Contributions

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Tammy Stegman

Lindsey Hyman

Rod Bodholdt

Adam Schonert

Julianna Starling

Nicole Rasmussen

Dena Gray-Fisher

Jason Jennings

Judge Johnston

Brandon Koehler

Tammy Sposeto

... and the entire

Ames Chamber of

Commerce team

Those who I work most closely with know that "excellence" is my word of the year. It is something that I strive for in my work, this publication, and in my private life with my family and the music that I play. It is also something that I want to see and experience in others. I recently asked rhetorically whether excellence was too much to expect and got the response that it "might be." But I'm not so sure.

Defined as "the quality of being outstanding or extremely good," excellence should not be confused with perfection. Far from it. Excellence is something that you can sense right away. When someone is attentive, enjoys what they are doing, has joy, smiles, and doesn't settle for average; that is excellence.

Whether excellence is too high of a bar to achieve or not, it is the bar that I hope we all continue to strive for.

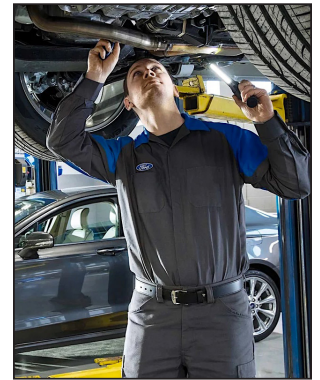
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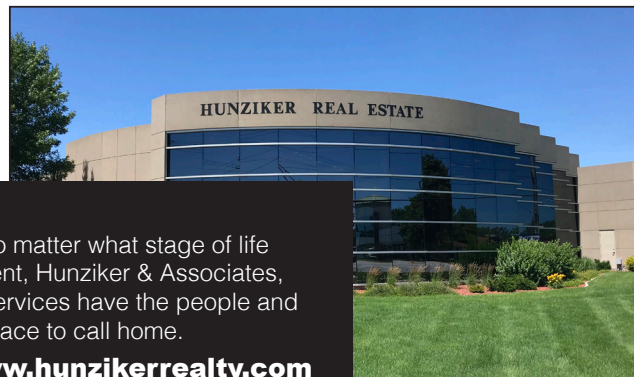
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STORY CONSTRUCTION

Story Construction is a 100% employee-owned commercial construction firm celebrating 90 years in business in 2024. Story Construction's legacy can be seen through landmark buildings all over Ames and central Iowa, and the company prides itself as a reliable and predictable building partner living its core values.

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