

# TRACTI · N

A MAGAZINE FROM THE AMES REGIONAL ECONOMIC ALLIANCE

Fall 2024  
Issue 08

*Building the*

**ALLIANCE**



**THE THREE PILLARS  
THAT WILL LEAD OUR  
WORK WILL BE:  
LEADERSHIP  
ENGAGEMENT  
ADVOCACY**



**Jan Williams**

Vice President, Investor Relations  
Ames Regional Economic Alliance

In June, our organization officially rebranded to the Ames Regional Economic Alliance. The process continues to be an evolution and an ode to the smart growth we've experienced over the decades related to business and industry development in our community. There continues to be ample room for growth and opportunity, as you will read more about in this publication.

Yes, we are an organization that supports economic development. We promote workforce, have a public policy component, operate a farmers' market, and actively engage in communities across three counties. However, the ongoing resources, promotions and events continue to be an underlying, value-add of traditional chamber of commerce programming we offer right here in our community.

Over the past several years, I have seen business engagement rise within our organization with more companies choosing to invest in the Alliance. Making connections, increased visibility across the community, heightened awareness for your brand, and leadership opportunities, continue to draw individuals and businesses to our organization. The reality is that the majority of our member investors continue to be small to mid-sized businesses and organizations.

If you're an entrepreneur, we want to see and encourage your attendance at One Million Cups each and every Wednesday morning and talk with you about your plans for the future. As a small business owner, we can help promote your company within our Alliance family. If you're looking to expand, our business development team has a proven record of success supporting projects in the region. If you want to engage further, our leadership programs have equipped, talented professionals to foster change throughout the community. All of this is to say that we have a spot for you to make connections and be part of a network of business owners, community leaders, and job creators that positively impact our area.

**What is Traction?**

The **Ames Regional Economic Alliance** and affiliate organizations help create traction in our community. We drive business and community vitality in the Ames region 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

When the Ames Regional Economic Alliance formally rebranded in June 2024, it was the culmination of years of work under the leadership of President and CEO, Dan Culhane. Learn more about the evolution of the rebrand and the building of an alliance in this feature article of Traction magazine.

AMES REGIONAL ECONOMIC  
**Alliance**

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**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.

[AmesAlliance.com](http://AmesAlliance.com)

# TRACTI•N INVESTORS



With over 750 members, the Ames Regional Economic Alliance 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.

With this expansion, our approach to economic development has evolved to include community development and other assets that enrich the livability of our communities. We have always been quick to embrace change and innovation, adapting to new challenges and opportunities. Today, we stand united, as an alliance, ready to forge ahead into a future filled with making good on the promise of thriving businesses and highly livable communities with diverse housing options, healthy downtowns and cool, public spaces.

**Dan Culhane**

President & CEO,  
Ames Regional Economic Alliance



# Building the

# ALLIANCE

Building an alliance is a strategic move that can significantly amplify an organization's reach, resources, and impact. When the Ames Regional Economic Alliance formally rebranded from the Ames Chamber of Commerce in June 2024, it was the culmination of years of work under the leadership of President and CEO, Dan Culhane. Today, the Alliance is a regional organization that promotes economic growth and community development across Boone, Hamilton, and Story counties in Central Iowa.

Since 2006, Culhane has led the Ames Chamber of Commerce, a community organization that dates back to 1944. However, over the past 15 years, the organization has significantly evolved, expanding its services, programs, and team members. This growth has allowed the organization to play a much more comprehensive role in the region. It is what also ultimately led to the rebrand.

"We actively work across multiple counties, supporting economic and community development opportunities," said Culhane. "Our team is plugged into what is happening in Boone, Nevada, Huxley, and many other smaller communities. Of course, Ames is our homebase and it's the center of our region and our work."

The new brand is not just about a name and a logo, it is about a collective commitment to growth, collaboration, and prosperity across the three-county area. The process of forming a successful alliance involves identifying potential partners who share similar goals, values, and visions. That process started in 2012 with an agreement with the City of Huxley, and it has steadily grown since then: Story County (2013), Nevada Economic

Development Council (2018), City of Story City (2019), City of Boone (2020), Boone County Economic Growth Corporation (2022), and the most recent addition is Hamilton County and the City of Webster City (2024).

"Each of these additions has made us think more regionally and led us to our current brand," said Culhane. "For years, our jurisdiction ended at the city limits of Ames. But over time, it has become clear that we need to work together as a region to attract talent and companies. What is good for Boone positively impacts Ames. The same can be said for all of the communities we work in."

### **A Look at the Leader**

Culhane grew up in St. Charles, Minnesota, and first arrived in Ames as a student at Iowa State University. "Ames has a way of drawing you in. Since my undergraduate days, I always appreciated the community. Little did I know at the time that it would be the future home for my family." He graduated from Iowa State in 1993 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Community & Regional Planning.

His first job out of college provided him an opportunity to lead the economic development organization in Franklin County. "During that time, I was fortunate to have community leaders who were willing to take a twenty-something under their wing," said Culhane, reflecting on his early career. "They let me make mistakes, but they also let me fix them. I learned a lot during that time because I had great mentors."

Culhane moved on from Franklin County and spent seven years leading the

Mason City Economic Development Corporation. "I enjoyed my time in Mason City. I worked with great leaders that were committed to attracting industry." Culhane worked with companies like Cargill, Kraft Foods, and Assa Abloy, to name a few, on projects that either expanded or located within the Mason City area. "That was a great time to be in North Iowa and it helped me develop a greater appreciation for collaboration and regionalism as we did not do it alone. The best example of that is the Alliant Energy power plant we helped locate outside of Mason City. If the Clear Lake community had not stepped up to provide water to the project, it may not have landed there. It took everyone pulling in the same direction to get that done."

Along the way, he graduated from the University of Oklahoma's Economic Development Institute in 1998, earned his CEcD (Certified Economic Developer) in 2000, and the Chamber industry's highest designation, the Certified Chamber Executive (CCE), in 2011. During that time, his career path led him back to Ames with an emphasis on economic and community development.

Culhane admittedly has a traditional respect for leadership and has a tendency to say "yes" to a lot of things. "I think it's important to be visible and involved because that's how relationships are formed, and progress is made."

He has served on numerous boards including the YSS Foundation and United Way of Story County. He chaired the 2017 fundraising, which,



at the time, was the largest in campaign history. He has chaired several professional organizations over the years including the Iowa Chamber Alliance – a coalition of Iowa’s largest community’s Chambers of Commerce, the Professional Developers of Iowa, and the Mid-America Economic Development Council – a multi-state peer group from Ohio to the Dakota’s.

### **A Case Study in Economic Development**

Economic development is often work that takes place behind-the-scenes of a community. Helping existing business and industry with opportunities for expansion, marketing the region, and developing workforce initiatives are examples of this work. It’s also responding to prospects who are interested in making investments in the region. That’s what happened in late 2023 when Daisy Brand, the makers of sour cream and cottage cheese, was exploring options across the country for a new manufacturing facility.

“As is often the case with prospective opportunities we see, the lead comes from the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA),” said Culhane.

The Alliance team assembled a presentation for Daisy leadership, outlining the benefits of the region, including potential site opportunities where they could build. “Because we’ve worked with the City of Boone and led the Boone County Economic Growth Corporation for years, we had a two-county region to work from.”

As the process moved forward, Daisy narrowed the list of available destinations from a dozen to six, then to four, and eventually two; the Boone site and another out of state. Meetings and presentations led to an unaccounted number of follow-up phone calls, and even a day trip to Dallas where Daisy is headquartered, contributed to finalizing the deal. The Boone County Economic Growth Corporation played a vital role in acquiring land that was eventually sold to Daisy, and the Alliance team went deep in understanding milk production in the 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.

“The Daisy project landed here because everyone was on the same page, immediately,” said Culhane. The City of Boone, both staff and elected officials, the Boone County Economic Growth Corporation board, the Iowa Economic Development Authority, DMACC, Alliant Energy – everyone did their part, which matter in high stakes opportunities like this. Leadership matters, every day.”

### **AREA Impact**

The Daisy case-study is an example of like-minded organizations aligning together to pool expertise and resources and leverage each other’s networks for regional success. “This collaboration has been taking place for years leading up to the Daisy project,” said Culhane. “And it paid off in a big way for the region in this case.”

An alliance requires a thorough assessment of each partner’s strengths and unique contributions that they can bring to the table. “It looks different in each community because we respond to what is needed,” said Culhane. “What makes our organization different is that we are invested deeply in each community we work with. We actively meet with local community and business leaders, attend city council meetings, and do the leg work to provide value.” That work now extends into Hamilton County, which occurred because of the developed reputation for “following through,” said Culhane.

The new Alliance brand is catching up to the work that has already taken place. Unpacking the name: Ames is the geographical center while Regional extends the range. Economic defines the work and

Alliance highlights the partnerships held across the organization; together forming the acronym AREA.

Today, the Ames Regional Economic Alliance is a team of 18 and growing, working across the three-county Ames area. Over the past 15 years, not only has it grown regionally, but the organization has expanded its programming as well. The Alliance umbrella not only includes economic development work and traditional chamber of commerce programming, but it also operates a number of affiliate organizations.

“Each of our affiliate organizations has a specific purpose,” said Culhane, “that help round out much of the work that we do across communities.”

Downtown Ames is a Main Street Iowa organization committed to revitalizing downtown. The Ames Main Street Farmers’ Market is one of the best in the state that draws thousands of guests every Saturday from May to October. Founded in 1987, Ames Seed Capital is a venture fund that provides equity-based financing for business start-ups. Additionally, the Alliance operates the young professional’s organization in the region that supports the next generation of leaders in the community.

The business landscape is constantly evolving, and alliances must be flexible enough to respond to new challenges and opportunities. The Ames Regional Economic Alliance, under the leadership of President & CEO Dan Culhane, has embraced the spirit of regional collaboration. While they introduced a new brand, the mission has remained unchanged.

“I was fortunate to find this work at an early stage in my career and I have been blessed ever since with a supportive team, engaged board members, and community,” said Culhane. “My role has most certainly changed within our organization. There is a natural cadence of progress over time, but one constant is that I have continually found joy in the work that we do.”



## ▶ SIGN PRO

Sign Pro specializes in crafting high-quality signage solutions tailored to business branding needs. From storefront signs to vehicle wraps and custom displays, Sign Pro delivers impactful visual communication tools that enhance brand visibility and customer engagement. Sign Pro has been locally and independently owned and operated by Stephanie Nigh and Betty Baudler Horras for 30 years with no “signs” of slowing down. They helped brainstorm and install new interior and exterior Alliance signage in July 2024.



## ▶ BUFF CITY SOAP

Buff City Soap is dedicated to handcrafting fresh, all-natural soaps and skincare products that are free from harsh chemicals and preservatives. Their wide range of products includes bath bombs, shower scrubs, and facial cleansers, each formulated with premium ingredients. The quality of products they develop can be spoken for by the growth of the company in a short time span, 11 years. The Ames location made custom Alliance soaps for the rebrand unveil event in June 2024.



## ▶ GLENDANDY MARKETING

Glendandy Marketing is a full-service digital marketing agency that also partners with Bankers Advertising to provide print asset support to companies to reach their goals. The Ames Regional Economic Alliance worked with Glendandy Marketing to purchase a variety of give-away items with the new brand mark. Additional services include in-house paper-and-ink printing, embroidery, along with their custom screen-printed product division of decals, vinyl, magnetics, and labels, among many other items.



## ▶ PHOTON LASER ENGRAVING

Photon Laser Engraving offers precision laser engraving services on a variety of materials including metal, wood, acrylic, and more. Based in Boone, they cater to personalized and industrial engraving needs, providing custom designs for promotional items, awards, and signage. Photon Laser Engraving is locally owned and operated by Clay Purtle, an engraver and artist with over 25 years of experience in the business of signs, decals, awards, printing, designing custom logos, and more.

# Alliance

AMES REGIONAL ECONOMIC



## Primary Logo

The primary logo consists of two elements: the wordmark and the pin mark.

The wordmark has been designed and refined in a very precise and thoughtful manner, and should never be typeset, recreated, or altered. The wordmark should always appear with the pin mark.

The pin mark is symbolic of the communities that we serve - and of our commitment to helping grow those communities into prosperous destinations for business.

**The Ames Regional Economic Alliance, known as the Alliance, works to promote economic growth and community development across Boone, Hamilton, and Story counties in Central Iowa.**

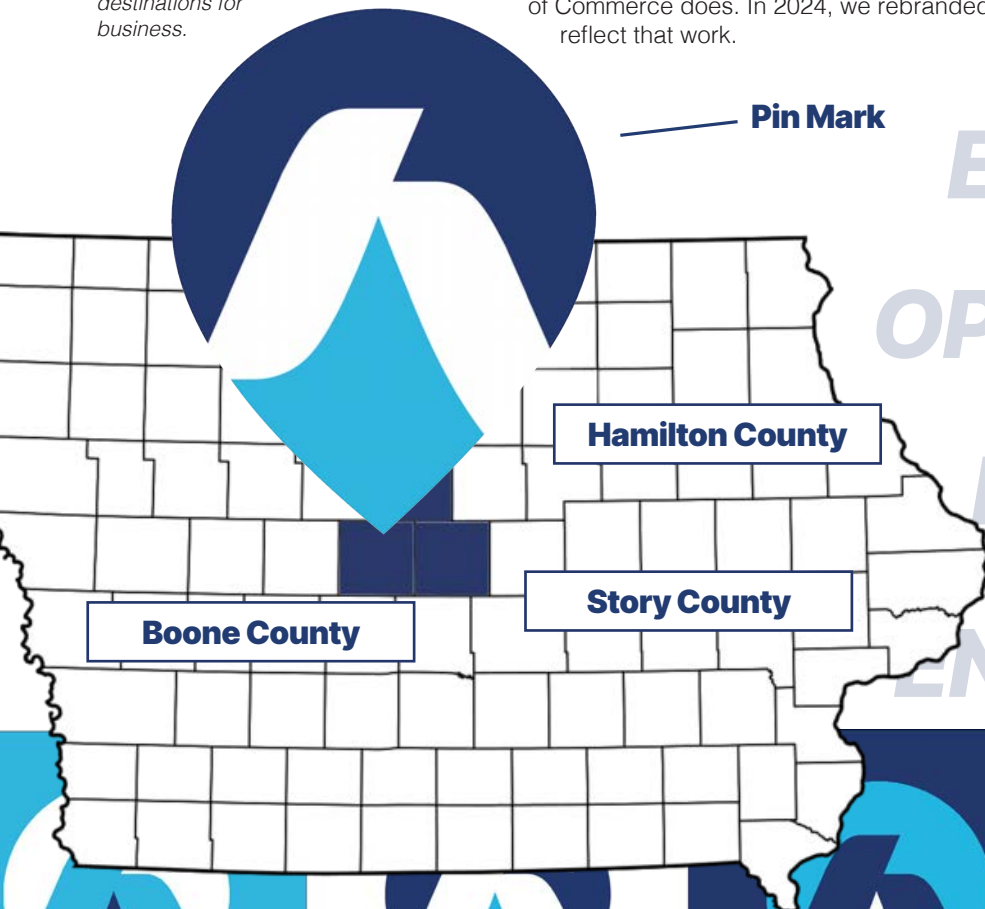
## What is the Ames Regional Economic Alliance?

The Ames Regional Economic Alliance, known as the Alliance, works to promote the economic growth and community development across Boone, Hamilton, and Story counties. We are an alliance of people and businesses, partnering for economic growth to make this area one of excellence, innovation, and a leading area for success in the state and the region.

## Were you previously known as the Ames Chamber of Commerce?

Yes, and we still are. While we have been called the Ames Chamber of Commerce since 1944, the reality is that our organization has outgrown that brand. Over the past 15 years, we have expanded our services, programming, and number of team members within our organization. As a result, our organization now plays a much broader role in our community than what a typical Chamber of Commerce does. In 2024, we rebranded to the Ames Regional Economic Alliance to reflect that work.

## Pin Mark



Hamilton County

Boone County

Story County

AREA of  
**EXCELLENCE**

AREA of  
**OPPORTUNITY**

AREA of  
**INNOVATION**

AREA of  
**ENGAGEMENT**

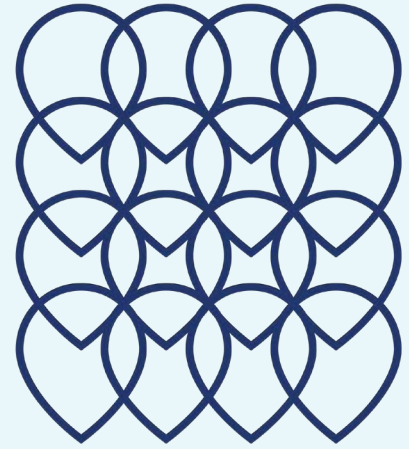




## What communities does the Alliance serve?

The Alliance serves communities across the Ames region in Central Iowa. This includes communities in Boone, Hamilton, and Story counties. Even though Ames is the center of our organization, with Iowa State University being a central catalyst for activity, our team is constantly engaged in neighboring communities. We thoroughly enjoy serving the entire area from Boone to the west, Nevada to the east, Story City and Webster City up north, Huxley to the south, and many smaller communities across three-county region.

## Graphic Element



## Are small business part of the Alliance?

Yes! The vast majority of our membership is small to mid-sized businesses and organizations. The Alliance strives to provide diverse programming and services to meet the business needs for organizations of all sizes.

## Why should my company join the Alliance?

As a member of the Alliance, you're part of a network of business owners, community leaders, and job creators that positively impact our area. When you join the Alliance, you'll enjoy more opportunities to advance your business and our community. Some of the top reasons to join include making connections, increased visibility across the community, leadership opportunities, and more.

## What programming opportunities are available to members?

The Ames Regional Economic Alliance holds more than 100 events and programming opportunities per year. Offerings include networking events, professional development workshops, speaker programs, policy forums, and annual membership events.

## How can I get more involved in the Alliance?

It is important to remember that all of your employees are considered Alliance members and can fully participate in our full range of activities. Whether it's attending any of our speaker events, volunteering for community activities through Ames Main Street, or the young professionals in your organization engaging in FUEL, we have a number of opportunities to get involved.

## What guides our work?

- **Our Purpose/Cause/Passion:** Driving business and community vitality in the Ames region.
- **Our Niche:** Being connectors for our customers to positively impact regional vitality.
- **Core Values:** Customer Driven, Integrity, Team Player, Good For It, Innovative, Greater Good
- **The three key pillars that will drive our will be:** Leadership, Engagement, and Advocacy

## Colors

### Navy Blue

HEX 23376D  
 RGB 35 55 109  
 CMYK 99 89 29 16

### Light Blue

HEX 2FB5DE  
 RGB 47 181 222  
 CMYK 68 7 6 0

### Light Blue 10%

HEX E6F4FA  
 RGB 230 244 250  
 CMYK 10% Light Blue

## Does Membership Make Sense for You?

**I am an entrepreneur:** Yes! We want to connect you with our One Million Cups program, talk with you about your plans for the future and invite you to our networking events. You will have our direct line of contact and always know you have a life line.

**I am a small business owner:** Yes! The majority of our members are small business owners who value being part of a network of support. From event attendance to sponsorships, the Alliance helps you promote your company and share your brand message with 750+ member companies and potential new customers.

**I am looking for land to build a facility:** Yes! Our Business Development team has a proven record of success supporting economic development projects in the region.

**I am looking to understand legislation that impacts business in Iowa:** Yes! The Alliance provides opportunities to keep members informed on federal, state, and local policy issues that can impact business in the region.

**I value community growth:** Fantastic! From workforce solutions to housing initiatives, downtown master planning to community events like the farmers' market, we are involved in many components to building community.





# Verbio launches

## ethanol production at its biorefinery plant in Nevada

Verbio has commenced the commercial production of corn-based ethanol at its biorefinery facility in Nevada. The plant, a subsidiary of Europe's leading biofuels and bioenergy producer Verbio SE, underwent a thorough commissioning process over the past six months resulting in the successful start of bioethanol production.

The completion of this second phase of the Nevada plant's strategy in the US market is the next milestone for the company. Operating as a full biorefinery, Verbio has installed a total capacity to produce 60 million gallons of corn-based ethanol per year and 2.3 million MMBtu of renewable natural gas (RNG).

"The start of ethanol production, in addition to our industrial-scale RNG operations since December 2021, means a landmark moment for us at Verbio," stated Verbio CEO Claus Sauter. "Bioenergy as a growing global market plays a fundamental role in the transition toward sustainable mobility by providing RNG for transportation fuels, as well as for industrial and commercial uses."

### **New Revenue Stream for Growers and Added Value for the Region**

The production in Nevada added eight additional fermentation tanks, new equipment, a corn unloading facility and silo storage, as well as close to 50 full-time jobs. To secure feedstock for RNG and ethanol production, Verbio collaborates with local growers in the region. "By buying not only their ag residues, but as of now, also their corn, we are able to provide growers with additional revenue streams for their businesses. Our goal is to bring added value to the region. The sustainable production cycle we use at Verbio allows us to sell back high-quality co-products from our production, such as humus, two different soil amendments and corn oil," explains Greg Faith, Verbio Nevada plant President and General Manager.

Verbio Nevada is the first industrial-scale plant in North America coupling RNG and bioethanol production. The Nevada, Iowa plant has been converting corn stover to RNG since 2021. By using an innovative biorefinery concept, Verbio is now able to expand its operations to the next level. This additional process combines both bioethanol and associated biomethane production from corn stillage, a by-product from the ethanol production. The interaction of RNG and ethanol production, unique to the Verbio brand, incorporates advanced technology developed and successfully used for more than a decade at the company's facilities in Germany. Globally, Verbio now operates three biorefinery plants based on the bioethanol-RNG concept and four stover-based RNG plants.

***"By buying not only their ag residues, but as of now, also their corn, we are able to provide growers with additional revenue streams for their businesses. Our goal is to bring added value to the region. The sustainable production cycle we use at Verbio allows us to sell back high-quality co-products from our production, such as humus, two different soil amendments and corn oil."***

### **Greg Faith**

Nevada plant President and General Manager



## ONLINE MEMBER DIRECTORY



*Looking for a local business? Consider one of our over 750 Ames Regional Economic Alliance members through our online directory. Visit our website at:*

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

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

### New Members

- [Ames British Foods & Gifts](#)
- [Solar FX](#)
- [Walnut Creek Psychiatry](#)
- [Daniel Moore Studios](#)
- [Central Iowa Health Certifications](#)
- [Ullmann Construction](#)
- [Bellbottom Mobile Café](#)
- [Link'd Jewelry](#)
- [Creative Counseling Solutions](#)
- [Hauling Horseman](#)
- [Lucky Wife Wine Slushies](#)
- [Terracon](#)
- [Verizon](#)
- [Riddles Jewelry](#)
- [Obria](#)
- [Elite Construction](#)
- [ABC Supply](#)
- [Wright Coaching & Training](#)
- [Integrity Grove](#)
- [Stagecoach Stables](#)
- [RentAmes](#)
- [Electronic Engineering Co](#)
- [Stahl](#)
- [Jensen Builders, Ltd](#)
- [Bella Homes](#)
- [CWL Group](#)



In many ways, the origin story of Saltech Systems, a full-service technology agency located in Ames, began in Pakistan when Salman Maqsood was 13 years old.

"Hailing from a family of physicians while growing up in Pakistan, it was understood that I will follow the family tradition," said Maqsood. "But it all changed at age 13 when I purchased my first Intel x486 computer which had contracted a virus the very second day." The process of fixing that Windows 3.1 operating system opened his eyes to the new world of computers and their immense capabilities, and forever altered his career path.

Maqsood continued his passion for computers by attending Iowa State University and pursued a degree in computer science. He started working at a small web startup company and joined their team as an intern and third employee.

In 2003, while he was finishing his degree at Iowa State, Salman and his wife Madiha, initiated the idea of starting a business and Saltech Systems was born. "We both fell in love with the town of Ames, its people, its hospitality, and the warmth of the community, especially given the Iowa winters," said Maqsood. "We both knew this is the town where we want to live and raise a family together."

The Saltech family has steadily grown over the years from Salman and Madiha to now 25 employees working in Management, IT, Design, Development, and Marketing. Since that modest beginning, Saltech Systems has continually expanded and refined its expertise to provide cutting-edge solutions that keep pace with the ever-evolving technological landscape. Their services encompass a comprehensive range of digital and IT solutions designed to enhance a company's online presence and streamline operations.

Saltech specializes in custom website design and development, creating visually and highly functional websites that builds on a brand's unique identity. Their search engine optimization (SEO) services ensure that websites rank high on search engines, driving organic traffic and increasing visibility. Additionally, their digital marketing strategies are tailored to reach target audience effectively, for many companies converting leads into loyal customers.

For business operations, Saltech offers managed IT services that ensure that technology infrastructure runs smoothly and efficiently. Cybersecurity solutions protect businesses from evolving threats, safeguarding data and assets. They also provide cloud hosting services, reliable solutions that support

business growth and flexibility.

What sets Saltech Systems apart is an unwavering commitment to exceptional customer service. "We always wanted to make sure that our #1 focus is our clients," said Maqsood. "What we do at Saltech Systems is not rocket science as many companies can do what we do. At Saltech, we focus on providing an unmatched customer service experience, every single time."

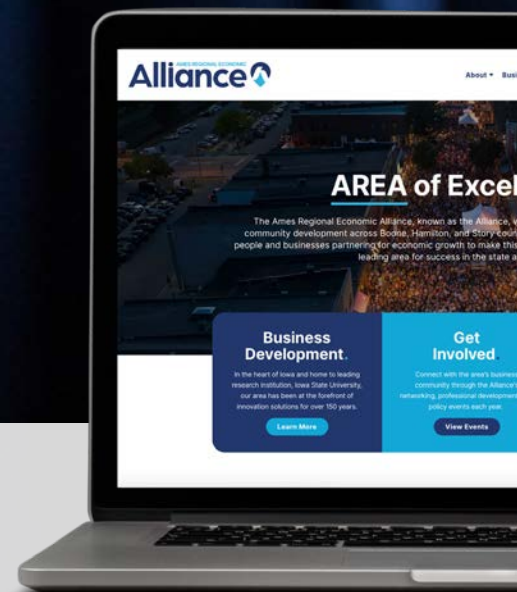
The Saltech team takes pride in viewing clients as partners with a genuine interest in their goals. "Our team goes above and beyond to understand specific company needs in order to deliver solutions that exceed expectations," said Maqsood. "We are dedicated to fostering long-term relationships built on trust, collaboration, and mutual success. We truly believe that without the relationships we make within the community, our company would not be here today."

As the technology landscape evolves, so does the Saltech team. "Generally speaking, the needs of our clients and their respective industries have defined our growth trajectory," said Maqsood. This started in 2007 when they developed their first CMS software to build websites. IT Services launched in 2008 with the acquisition of another company. Digital marketing services started in 2012 and app development in 2014. Recently, IT Security has been Saltech's most sought after service and has attributed to much of their recent growth. "With AI skyrocketing and taking center stage, we've been investing and developing resources in artificial intelligence to provide AI-based solutions for SMEs in the near future."

"While Iowa keeps providing the opportunities, we want to take advantage of growing markets and that is where the idea of having offices in budding metropolitans was developed," said Maqsood. They have recently launched a satellite office in Dallas, Texas to pursue new opportunities. "Our vision is to do business development in the greater Dallas area and have our wonderful 'Iowa nice' workforce provide exceptional services to clients all over the United States."

**Saltech Systems developed the new Ames Regional Economic Alliance website. More information about their work and services can be found online at:**

[www.SaltechSystems.com](http://www.SaltechSystems.com)



**Salman Maqsood**  
President, Saltech Systems





In 1975, the Ames City Council appointed more than 30 citizens to the Ames American Revolution Bicentennial Commission to plan for the city's participation in the 200th anniversary of our country. Individuals on this commission were given the opportunity to serve in one of three areas: Heritage, Festival, or Horizon. Heritage volunteers dealt with history, the Festival group planned for the actual celebration, and the Horizon team focused on the future of the city.

The Horizon group thus became the ongoing section of the Ames American Revolution Bicentennial Commission, which was incorporated in 1975 as The Ames Foundation (TAF). Today, TAF serves as the catalyst for the identification and execution of projects that enhance the quality of life and create a greater sense of community among citizens. Now affiliated with the Ames Regional Economic Alliance, The Ames Foundation has sought out and raised money for both large and small projects to enhance the city including the creation of the Ames Miracle League Park, Ames Dog Park, Downtown Ames beautification, and more!



## THE AMES FOUNDATION PROJECTS

### Ames Miracle Playground & Field

It is estimated that more than 3,500 children with special needs between ages 5 and 15 live in Boone, Dallas, Polk, and Story counties and more than 500 attend Ames and Gilbert schools. Opened in the fall of 2020, the Ames Miracle Playground and Field includes a 100% accessible playground on a rubberized surface that caters to children with physical, cognitive, and sensory disabilities. The custom field is made of cushioned, rubberized turf, and is accessible by wheelchair and other assistive devices.



### Ames Community Tree Program

In the spring of 2015, The Ames Foundation entered a multi-year partnership with the City of Ames to fund and plant trees to replace the ash that will be lost to the emerald ash borer. The Foundation's primary role is to raise funds needed to help defray the cost of new trees and to organize interested citizens who will help plant and maintain these trees in our community parks, green spaces, and rights-of-way. The ultimate goal is to secure private funding and volunteer support to plant an additional 200-250 trees per year above what the City is committing to.



### Ames Signage

As part of ongoing initiatives to welcome visitors to Ames and beautify our entryways, The Ames Foundation arranged for the construction of a large sign at the southwest corner of the Interstate 35 and 13th Street intersection, north of the Danfoss facility. The sign is constructed of limestone columns, with stainless steel letters, and is lit at night. Since the original sign, two additional signs constructed on the East and West ends of Highway 30. Today, the sign can be found in the newly designed TAF logo.

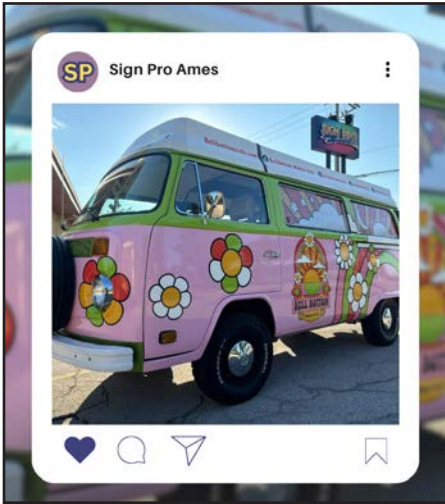
**NEW**

### Ames Murals: An Open Air Gallery

The Ames Foundation supports the community with quality of life initiatives by enhancing vitality, and is currently launching their next project. Ames Murals: An Open Air Gallery is a project to make outdoor spaces more exciting, inviting, and energetic. TAF will connect artists and business property owners to create outdoor murals. Passionate artists can showcase their talents and small businesses will create more attractive spaces that drive traffic to strengthen economic vitality.

Learn more about The Ames Foundation on their website:

[www.amesfoundation.org](http://www.amesfoundation.org)



### ▶ BELLBOTTOM MOBILE CAFE

**Bellbottom Mobile Cafe** is a cafe on wheels that sells drinks out of a 1978 Volkswagen bus. Passionate about great coffee and a groovy experience, Bellbottom supports local roasters and local businesses. They recently partnered with **Sign Pro** for their vintage look, full vinyl wrap.

[www.bellbottomcafe.com](http://www.bellbottomcafe.com)



### ▶ AMERO BAKERY

**Amero Bakery** is dedicated to bringing customers the freshest and most delicious baked goods straight to your doorstep. Katelyn Lenz started her business out of her apartment while pursuing her degree at Iowa State University. In June, she provided custom cookies for the **Ames Regional Economic Alliance** rebrand event.

[www.amerobakery.com](http://www.amerobakery.com)



[www.mcclanahanstudio.net](http://www.mcclanahanstudio.net)



[www.iowahomecrafters.com](http://www.iowahomecrafters.com)

### ▶ McCLANAHAN STUDIO

Dan McClanahan of **McClanahan Studio** recently completed a light painting of an airplane, a project that he donated to the **Boys & Girls Clubs of Story County** gala event. The image was shot at the James Herman Banning Ames Municipal Airport and consists of over 100 layers that were combined together in Photoshop.

### ▶ IOWA HOME CRAFTERS

**Iowa Home Crafters** is giving new life to down trees through their Urban Milling efforts. This one-of-a-kind table, located in the second story conference room at 304 Main Street, is made of oak, walnut, ash, and sycamore, all sourced from Ames. Iowa Home Crafters is not only your local source for remodeling and new home builds, but also for custom furniture pieces, doors and cabinetry.



[www.woodruff.build](http://www.woodruff.build)

### ▶ WOODRUFF CONSTRUCTION

**Woodruff Construction** is embarking on a new 12,000 square foot project that will include offices, conference rooms, collaboration spaces, and an outdoor patio with kitchen and social spaces. The design of the project was done by **10Fold Architecture + Engineering** and is set to begin construction in the fall of 2024. The use of exposed concrete and steel coupled with well-crafted wood components and carpentry serve as the primary considerations for materials and construction methodology. Woodruff Construction is a full-service General Contractor and Construction Management firm serving central Iowa and their spheres of influence and staff are growing!



**FOURTH OF JULY PARADE**



**CAMPUSTOWN AFTER SUNDOWN**



**FARM TO TABLE**



**NORTH GRAND AFTER SUNDOWN**



**FARM TO TABLE**



**FOURTH OF JULY PARADE**



**AMES FARMERS'**



**FOURTH OF JULY PARADE**



**AMES FARMERS' MARKET**



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**FOURTH OF JULY PARADE**



**FOURTH OF JULY PARADE**



**FOURTH OF JULY PARADE**



**FARM TO TABLE**



**NORTH GRAND AFTER SUNDOWN**



**Mark Speck**  
Owner, Speck Plumbing, Inc.

# SPECK PLUMBING

Mark Speck, owner of Speck Plumbing, Inc., has been an active part of the development of Ames for over 50 years. "I grew up in Ames north of 24th Street and Highway 69," said Speck. "Our family farmed the area that is now occupied by North Grand Mall and Northwood Preschool Center during a time that predates Inis Grove Park as we know it today."

During his senior year of high school, the land they farmed west of Grand Avenue was turning residential and land to the north commercial. "When my dad said that if I was interested in continuing to farm, we would need to purchase land elsewhere," said Speck. "I made the decision at that time to not go into farming and started the process of what else I might do."

Through the Ames High School VICA program, Speck was given an opportunity to work half days with local plumbing company. VICA is a national organization that serves high school and college students to help them prepare for careers in technical, skilled, and service occupation. "In just a few weeks, I knew that was what I wanted to do. After graduation, I transitioned to a full-time apprenticeship program."

At the time, it was difficult to break into the plumbing businesses in Ames. After a four-year apprenticeship in residential and commercial plumbing applications, Speck passed the written and hands-on test to receive a

Journeyman and later a Master Plumber license. "We began Speck Plumbing in 1971 with an office in Gilbert, a truck, tools, and a backhoe to install septic systems and plumbing for new homes." In the early 1980's, Speck Plumbing relocated to its current location on E. Lincoln Way.

Today, Speck Plumbing specializes in design build residential and commercial projects, site utilities, remodels, septic systems, water heaters, water softeners, and all other types of plumbing.



Over the past fifty years, Speck has seen not only the landscape of Ames change, but the plumbing industry and how he can best serve clients. He points to how photo texting has allowed for efficiency in assessing solutions. Video recording cameras can now accurately pinpoint drainpipe breaks and blockages. Copper and cast-iron piping have been replaced by PVC and Pex water lines.

"And after fifty plus years, I still enjoy the challenges and working with our clients," said Speck. "We have 50+ years of heartfelt thanks and great appreciation for our many loyal clients

and skilled, faithful, caring employees who have and continue to put clients' needs and satisfaction first."

**Speck Plumbing, Inc. is located at 1805 E Lincoln Way in Ames**  
[www.speckplumbing.com](http://www.speckplumbing.com)



# AREA

## HOUSING MARKET NUMBERS

PROVIDED BY



JULY 2024

AMES	2024	2023
Active Listings	99	87
Homes SOLD YTD	264	229
Average Sale Price	\$340,942	\$344,276
Avg. Days on Market	39	31

NEVADA	2024	2023
Active Listings	26	19
Homes SOLD YTD	66	56
Average Sale Price	\$227,028	\$228,907
Avg. Days on Market	40	20



STORY COUNTY (Ames not included)	2024	2023
Active Listings	43	67
Homes SOLD YTD	154	47
Average Sale Price	\$284,712	\$260,237
Avg. Days on Market	37	33

BOONE COUNTY	2024	2023
Active Listings	40	35
Homes SOLD YTD	137	114
Average Sale Price	\$231,742	\$204,680
Avg. Days on Market	40	29

*Aerial images of August 2024 construction at Hunziker's Sunset Ridge development in West Ames. Photos courtesy Gray Beard Drones LLC.*

# 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. Check out this newly redesigned website today!



A SIKA COMPANY



**Kent Rotert**  
Vice President, Colorbiotics

Colorbiotics, a Sika Company, headquartered in Ames, Iowa, has been innovating products that enhance the beauty of homes, businesses, parks, and athletic facilities for more than 30 years. In short, they are the industry leader in the science behind landscape and concrete colorant and equipment.

Kent Rotert serves as Vice President for Colorbiotics and has been with the company from the beginning. In February 2006, he was hired as the first marketing manager for Becker Underwood (now Colorbiotics) and has since held positions that related to new business development, sales, and marketing.

Today, Rotert manages operations, research and development, sales, purchasing, technical services and other functions necessary in moving the Colorbiotics business forward. Under Rotert's direction, Colorbiotics has grown consistently with over 70% in top line growth since 2017. All of this while being sold and restructured 5 times. The brand recognition has increased, and the customer satisfaction numbers are the highest in the industry.

While serving in the role of director of marketing and new business development, Rotert managed and implemented the design, construction and move logistics of Colorbiotics new 140,000 square-foot state-of-the-art world headquarters and production facility in Ames. This year, they opened a new 25,000 square foot warehouse and training center, their second location in the community.

Through these facilities, Colorbiotics has the capacity to produce 1 million pounds of colorant per day that supports their over 900 customers across 12 countries.

In May 2023, Colorbiotics was acquired by Sika, an international company that is aligned in seven target markets including concrete, waterproofing, roofing, flooring, sealing & bonding, refurbishment and industry. Sika has offices in 103 countries with over 400 manufacturing facilities and more than 33,000 employees worldwide, and annual sales of over \$13 billion in 2023.

As part of Sika, Colorbiotics continues to transform concrete production and construction with environmentally friendly additives that extend service life, while also operating independently.

At their Ames location, Colorbiotics conducts research using simulated light and climate to understand long term effects of their products. They recycle over 400,000 pounds of plastic on a yearly basis, and they process and treat water before sending it back to the City of Ames. Colorbiotics, a Sika Company, is a global brand committed to quality, innovation, and the environment.



**Recycled over 400,000 pounds of plastic in 2023**



**Recycled over 45,000 pounds of steel in 2023**



**Managed over 7,000 semi trucks at the Ames facility**



**Capacity to produce 1 million pounds of colorant per day**



**Average of 5 import containers arriving at Colorbiotics every day**



**Colorbiotics has grown over 70% since 2017**

### Boone Joins Prestigious Main Street Iowa Program

(August 6, 2024)

The Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) named Boone as one of the newest Main Street Iowa communities. Main Street is a proven strategy for downtown revitalization, a network of communities and a national support program. The elite designation follows a rigorous application process. Boone and Indianola joined only 51 other Main Street Iowa communities across the state. IEDA and Iowa Finance Authority Director Debi Durham introduced the two communities at the Iowa Downtown Conference in Cedar Rapids.



### Discovery Channel Show "RV There Yet?" to Record Episode in Ames and Boone

(August 16, 2024)

The hosts of the Discovery Channel's popular show, "RV There Yet?" will visit the Ames area in early October as part of a production session for a show that will feature local sights in Boone and Story County and include tailgating at an Iowa State University football game. The show is being organized locally between the Ames Regional Economic Alliance, Discover Ames, and Visit Boone County, and will air in the spring of 2025 as part of their Season 4 programming.



### Boone and Story County Housing Projects Awarded Workforce Housing Tax Credits

(August 20, 2024)

Gov. Reynolds and the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) announced more than \$37 million in workforce housing tax credits to develop housing across the state, including 5 projects in the Ames region. Three housing projects in Boone, along with one in Ogden and one in Nevada have been awarded workforce housing tax credits that will bring a combined 189 new housing units to the region.



# ▶ TRACTI • N Contributions

## Final Comments from the Editor:



**Eric Smidt**

Vice President,  
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### Story Photography

KandE Productions

### Printing:

Sigler Companies

### Additional Contributions

- |                 |                         |
|-----------------|-------------------------|
| Paul Schlueter  | Dan McClanahan          |
| Courtney Culp   | Jamie Courtney          |
| Liz Garvey      | Kelsey Lint             |
| Rich McCay-Read | Mark Speck              |
| Marlys Barker   | Rebecca Barclay         |
| Morgan Dalbeck  | Kent Rotert             |
| Salman Maqsood  | ... and the entire Ames |
| Joni Kellen     | Regional Economic       |
| Chris Anderson  | Alliance team           |

With almost two decades as a content creator and communications professional, I've been fortunate to work on a lot of great projects. What I have come to realize about myself is that I am not an idle person. I'm rarely bored and I always seem to be looking for the next project that will "move the needle" to help me or the organization that I represent grow.

As much as I initiate many of the projects that I work on, I have also been fortunate to be supported by leaders and organizations who embrace creativity in storytelling. Innovation is one of the core values at the Ames Regional Economic Alliance and we often talk about thinking big and being unafraid. With that philosophy, we also realize that there may be times when we swing and miss. If you're a leader in an organization, I encourage you to be a catalyst for innovation. Forget the misses and enjoy the freedom that your team will experience with their next big idea.

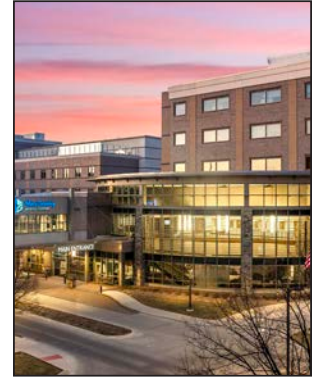
# TRACTI • N INVESTORS



## DES MOINES AREA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Your close-to-home resource for career advancement and the college experience. Affordable classes. Flexible scheduling. Competitive sports and clubs. Transfer pathways, including to Iowa State. Career, technical, and college-credit classes for high school students through Career Advantage.

[www.dmacc.edu](http://www.dmacc.edu)



## MARY GREELEY MEDICAL CENTER

Mary Greeley Medical Center is a 220-bed medical center that offers care to residents in 14 counties in central Iowa. Services include 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.

[www.mgmc.org](http://www.mgmc.org)



## IOWA STATE ATHLETICS

Cyclone student-athletes continue to shine academically and athletically. ISU has produced Big 12-leading and school-record Graduation Success Rate scores the past two years. Athletically, Iowa State finished 35th in the 2023-24 Learfield Directors' Cup standings, its second-highest placement ever and third Top 45 finish in four years.

[www.cyclones.com](http://www.cyclones.com)



## CHEVRON RENEWABLE ENERGY GROUP

Headquartered in Ames, IA, Chevron Renewable Energy Group is helping lead the way toward a lower carbon future through the production of biodiesel and renewable diesel fuel. We are proud to support not only our customers in their lower carbon journey, but also the communities where we live and work.

[www.chevron.com](http://www.chevron.com)

*Follow the Ames Regional Economic Alliance on social media*

