

# 2024 ANNUAL REPORT

AMES REGIONAL ECONOMIC  
**Alliance** 



# AMES REGIONAL ECONOMIC Alliance

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



## 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

## AFFILIATE ORGANIZATIONS

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# MEET THE TEAM



**DAN CULHANE**  
President & CEO



**BRENDA DRYER**  
Senior Vice President



**AMY HOWARD**  
Vice President, Finance & Administration



**ERIC SMIDT**  
Vice President, Marketing & Communications



**TRAVIS TOLIVER**  
Vice President, Downtown Development



**JAN WILLIAMS**  
Vice President, Investor Relations



**ELIZABETH BERG**  
Coordinator, Economic Development



**BRIAN HORN**  
Director, Economic Development



**SARAH HURLEY**  
Director, Events



**DYLAN KLINE**  
Director, Business Development



**STEVEN LAWRENCE**  
Director, Marketing



**OTTIE MAXEY**  
Director, Economic Development



**KATLYN MOCK**  
Coordinator, Client Services



**RONNIE OLSON**  
Coordinator, Investor Relations



**GREG PIKLAPP**  
Director, Economic Development Outreach & Government Relations



**LOJEAN PETERSEN**  
Manager, Ames Main Street Farmers' Market



**SHANNON THIELE**  
Director, Workforce Development



**MIKE UPAH**  
Director, Ames Seed Capital



# AREA HIGHLIGHT

June 2024

## Alliance Rebrand Launch

Since 1939, we have proudly operated as the Ames Chamber of Commerce. However, over the past 15 years, our organization has significantly evolved, expanding our services, programs, and team members. Rebranding to the Ames Regional Economic Alliance, also known as the Alliance, is our brand catching up to the work that is already taking place.

### What changed? Only the brand.

While we introduced a new brand, our mission remains unchanged. We will continue to serve as a catalyst for economic growth and community development across Boone, Hamilton, and Story counties.

All members of the Ames Chamber of Commerce immediately became members of the Ames Regional Economic Alliance, enjoying the same membership benefits and opportunities under our new name.

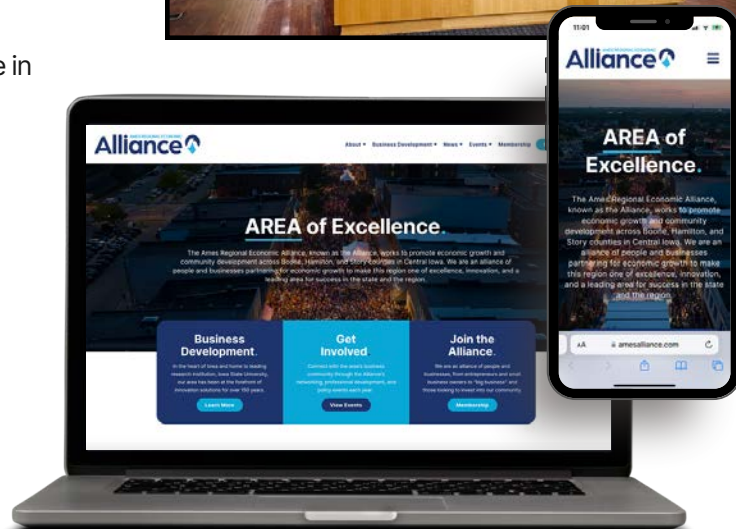
Whether it's economic development projects, networking events, workforce development workshops, speaker programs, policy forums, or a variety of other initiatives, our work will continue.

### New Website

Alongside our new name and logo, we unveiled a new website in June that truly represents our organization's work.

On our new site, you can learn more about our community partners, regional economic development projects, affiliate organizations, and membership benefits.

Visit us at [www.AmesAlliance.com](http://www.AmesAlliance.com) to learn more.



# MEMBERSHIP

**745** Total Members

**+123** New Members

**86%** Retention Rate



## TOTAL SPONSORSHIP INVESTMENT

**\$500K+** From member businesses to support events and programming

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Alliance has incredible support from its various Boards of Directors. They are community and industry leaders who help lead our organizations. Below are the 2024 Board Chairs for all of our organizations. Each one of them has had a vested interest in our success and provided valuable input on the direction of our organization.

**Ames Regional Economic Alliance:** Chris Nelson

**Ames Chamber of Commerce:** Jeff Janes

**Ames Main Street Board Chair:** Nicole Rasmussen

**AREA Young Professionals:** Mitch Anderson

**The Ames Foundation:** Chris Anderson

**Boone County Economic Growth Corporation:** Andy Hunziker

**Nevada Economic Development Council:** Scott Henry

# LEADERSHIP AMES

**19** Class of 37 Leadership Ames Graduates

In November, we celebrated the Leadership Ames Class 37 as they graduated from their year-long commitment. It was an inspirational night as this year's class consists of community leaders from today and tomorrow. Was this the "best class ever?"

# INTER-CITY VISIT

This year's Inter-City delegation to Fargo, North Dakota, included representation from the City of Ames, City of Boone, City of Nevada, City of Webster City, Story County, Iowa State University, and many private business partners across Boone, Hamilton, and Story County. This was the seventh Inter-City visit that the Ames Regional Economic Alliance has hosted.

# ANNUAL AWARDS

**13** Unique Annual Award categories that honored business and individuals



# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



## EXTERNAL FUNDING YTD

# \$56,250,820

The amount of funding the Alliance assisted in bringing to the region. This includes **30** total awards including workforce housing tax credits, IEDA awards, EDA grants, etc.

## CAPITAL INVESTMENT YTD

# \$913,385,000

The amount invested by projects that the Alliance has worked on, including Daisy Brand, MgBiologics, AgLeader, GRS / NextEra, and others.

## BUSINESS RETENTION & EXPANSION

# 81 visits

Expanded BRE planning set for 2025

## PROJECTED JOB CREATION

# 311 jobs



## AREA HIGHLIGHT

April 2024

### Daisy Brand to Build New Facility in Boone

The Iowa Economic Development Authority announced the approval of an incentives package in April that will bring a new state-of-the-art production facility to Boone, Iowa. Daisy Brand 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.



# HOUSING

## Kading Properties Groundbreaking in Boone

As we invest more resources into supporting housing across the region, it's always fun to celebrate a groundbreaking event. In October, we were in Boone as Kading Properties officially broke ground on Kate's Landing, a 128-unit development that is projected to be a \$15 million investment in Boone. The first tenants are expected to take occupancy by July 1, 2025.

## WORKFORCE HOUSING TAX CREDITS

In August, several housing projects were awarded Workforce Housing Tax Credits from the Iowa Economic Development Authority.

- **Page Flats, Prairie Place Housing Development (Hunziker Development Group), Kate's Landing (Kading Properties, LLC)** will bring a combined 179 new housing units to the Boone community.
- **Schlenker Construction** in Ogden has also been awarded funds for their housing project that will bring six units to the community.
- **Diamond F Properties** and their Trailside Nevada housing development will have four new units.



A new \$1.2 million childcare facility project is underway in Slater, Iowa, with funding support provided by the City of Slater, Story County Board of Supervisors, Consumers Energy, and the private facility owner. The new facility will expand services across the region and increase number of childcare slots with a target opening date of May 2025.

## OFFICIALLY OPEN IN 2024



After years of planning and 15 months of construction, **Wyffels Hybrids** officially opened their Iowa site on July 10, 2024 in the Prairie View Industrial Center. In December, they shipped out their first seed corn load.



Construction of the \$32 million Fitch Family Indoor Aquatic Center is underway in Ames. Thanks to private fundraising, an investment by the City of Ames, and a Community Attraction and Tourism (CAT) grant from the Enhance Iowa Board, a groundbreaking event took place in April 2024.

When complete, the project will provide year-round recreational swimming opportunities in the community. It will support aquatic education classes and include a lap pool, recreational pool with play structure, have a current channel, and an indoor/outdoor water slide.



Nevada Field House



Pivot Bio



Iowa Arboretum & Gardens Treehouse Village



Ames History Museum



60Forward Center



Alliant Energy Digital Ag Innovation Lab

# REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

The Ames Regional Economic Alliance has a range of regional partners and focuses on economic development across Boone, Hamilton, and Story County. Staff serve as Executive Director of both the Boone County Economic Growth Corporation, Nevada Economic Development Council, and the newly formed Hamilton County Growth Partnership.



## Hamilton County Signing Event

In May, we celebrated our new partnership with **Hamilton County** and the **City of Webster City**, at a signing ceremony at Briggs Woods Golf Course. This agreement extended our economic development efforts from Boone County and Story County to now include Hamilton County.

## AREA HIGHLIGHT

May 2024



In addition to playing a vital role in attracting **Daisy Brand** to the region, the Boone County Economic Growth Corporation assisted in Community Catalyst Building Remediation grants for Downtown Boone and **housing development** across the region.



It has been a high priority for the City of Nevada and the Nevada Economic Development Council to attract a new hotel, bringing greater lodging opportunities to the community. This year, NEDC conducted a **hotel study** that reinforced this need. An additional highlight of the year was helping bring The Well, a new **brewery** to Downtown Nevada.

## WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES:

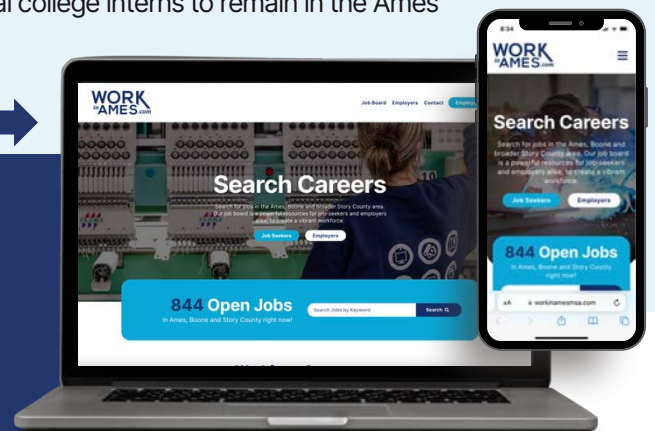
- **The Rising Leaders Academy** is an 8-month program that empowers high school students to become effective leaders in their schools and communities. Ten students from Ames, Boone, Colo-Nesco, and Nevada school districts participated.
- **Ukrainian Refugee Small Business Seminar Series** included two seminars to help Ukrainian refugees start a small business in the U.S., featuring 4 business presentations.
- **See Yourself in Ames** hosted six summer events to encourage local college interns to remain in the Ames area, culminating in a graduation and professional headshots.

New Work in Ames website launched in August 2024 →

## RETRAINING PROGRAM

**55** Program Participants

**8** Programs Offered





# AREAYP

FUEL Story County, the young professionals organization and an affiliate organization of the Ames Regional Economic Alliance, officially **rebranded as AREA Young Professionals (AREA YP)** in September 2024. Originally formed in 2002, AREA YP provides a forum for networking, professional development, and community partnerships. The organization seeks to promote the businesses, attractions, and events that showcases the Ames region as a great place to live, work, and play. AREA YP is committed to creating an environment that attracts and retains young professionals in our area.

**172** Total Members

**+65** New Members



**10** Leadership & Professional Development Events

**11** Philanthropic Events and Volunteering Efforts

**6** Social Events



**Campustown Pillar Artwork** - worked with the City of Ames and Public Arts Commission, secured artist, and completed art installations



The Ames Foundation (TAF) supports the community with quality of life initiatives and launched their latest project in 2024. **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. The organization also unveiled their new logo and website in 2024.



# PUBLIC POLICY

The Ames Regional Economic Alliance Public Policy Program educates and engages members on key federal, state, and local political issues and initiatives.

**13** Public Policy related events including local legislative updates and the Washington D.C. Fly-in.



The 2024 Legislative Session kicked off in January with our first event of the year featuring a panel of local legislators.



Representative Randy Feenstra visited Webster City in August as part of his 36-County Tour. We facilitated a conversation between him and leaders in Webster City and toured the downtown.



The 2024 Washington D.C. Fly-In was an outstanding trip and a great opportunity to get in front of our elected officials, present regional priorities, and hear directly about federal legislation that will impact our region.

Senator Joni Ernst was in Roland to recognize Hawkeye Molding Company as the Senate Small Business of the Week during National Small Business Week. Hawkeye Molding maintains a 58,000 square-foot manufacturing facility in Roland with 40 injection molding machines.



## AMES SEED CAPITAL FUND RECAP

**15 investments across four active funds**

**\$5.5M** invested in portfolio and \$2.1 million of capital available

**2** Investments in 2024:

- **Genvax Technologies** (Livestock Vaccines)
- **Distynct** (Digitizing of livestock barns for alarms and management)

## 2024 Event Snapshot

Legislative Kick Off Breakfast  
Economic Outlook Breakfast  
Annual Awards  
Heart of Ames  
Capitol, Connect & Converse  
Untapped Workforce: Justice Involved Individuals  
Story and Boone County Veterans Network  
Ames MSA Local Legislative Reception  
Women in Leadership: International Women's Day  
Ukraine Refugee Workforce Workshop  
State of Healthcare  
Agriculture Breakfast  
Legislative Update with Nyemaster  
BCEGC Business Breakfast  
NEDC Business Breakfast  
515 Days  
SYIA Kick-Off Event  
Art Walk  
Untapped Workforce: Individuals with Disabilities  
SYIA: Young Professionals Panel  
Ames Chamber of Commerce Golf Day  
SYIA: Ames MSA Project Showcase  
4th of July Parade  
SYIA: Lunch & Learn with FUEL  
SYIA Graduation  
Summer Sidewalk Sales  
Women in Leadership - Women in Sports  
State of Education  
Farm To Table Event  
Steak Fry  
Music Walk  
BCEGC Annual Event  
Women in Leadership - Finding Joy and Networking  
Witches Walk  
Manufacturing Breakfast  
Downtown Trick or Treat  
Leadership Ames Graduation  
Huxley Business Breakfast  
NEDC Annual Event  
Light Painter Documentary Showing  
Small Business Weekend  
Snow Magic  
Annual Luncheon  
Building Inclusion Breakfast

New York Times bestselling author, John O'Leary, at the Alliance Annual Luncheon

# EVENTS

# 230

TOTAL NUMBER OF EVENTS  
ACROSS THE ALLIANCE AND  
AFFILIATE ORGANIZATIONS

# 4,040

Individuals signed up for 39  
registered events in 2024

# 63

Ribbon Cutting  
Events



# 11

Business After  
Hours Events

# 41

1 Million Cups  
hosted at the  
Ames Alliance



## EVENT HIGHLIGHTS



Three **Women in Leadership** events were held in 2024, each sold out. Joy connoisseur, Lisa Even, provided the keynote at the October event and helped those in attendance dive into the joy mindset.



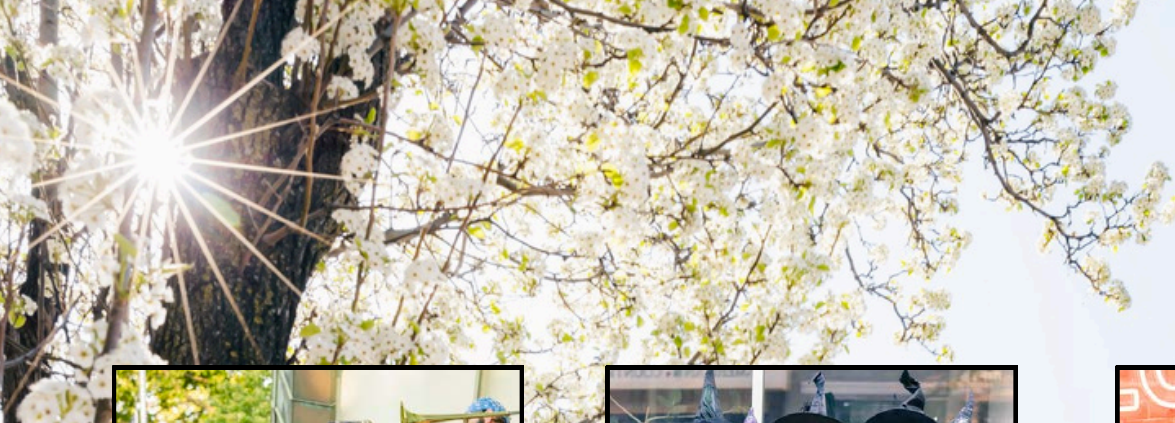
Jason Andringa, President and CEO of Vermeer Corporation, was the keynote speaker at the **Manufacturing Breakfast** event in October. Andringa offered a brief history of his company and insights on the state of manufacturing.



Des Moines Area Community College President Rob Denson provided the keynote at both the Boone County Economic Growth Corporation and Nevada Economic Development Council **Business Breakfast** events.



A Main Street Iowa Community



**515 DAYS**



**WITCHES WALK**



**SNOW MAGIC**



**ART WALK**



**MUSIC WALK**



**SIDEWALK SALES**

## NEW TO 2024



**FOURTH OF JULY PARADE**



**HEART OF AMES**

Celebrating what we all love about doing life in the heart of Ames. For this new event, businesses offered specials and the highlight of the event was hosting \$50 Community Cash giveaways throughout the event leading up to Valentine's Day.



**DOWNTOWN AFTER SUNDOWN**

You asked for it. More food trucks, more vendors, more music! The "After Sundown" series, featuring a night time farmers' market and food truck showdown, beer garden, and live music on the streets of Downtown Ames.



**TRICK-OR-TREAT**

# INVESTING IN THE FUTURE OF DOWNTOWN AMES

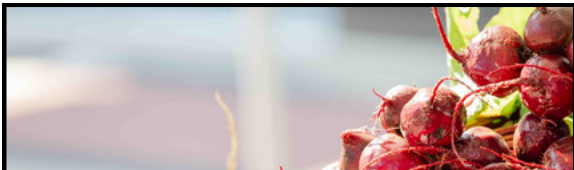


## MASTER PLANNING

The City of Ames, Ames Main Street, and the Ames Regional Economic Alliance are collaborating to develop a Master Plan for the future of downtown. The Master Plan will serve as a compass by setting forth a vision and creating a set of prioritized recommendations that will guide future growth and development of Downtown Ames. The plan will provide a guide for improving the area over the next 15 plus years, understanding that the area will continue to adapt to market changes and needs.

Based on feedback from the public survey that garnered over 1,000 responses, members of the Master Plan Steering Committee, in collaboration with Bolton & Menk, developed the plan.

**The Ames Main Street Master Plan** is expected to be released publicly in early 2025.



## AMES MAIN STREET FARMERS' MARKET



**27** Special Events

**140** Different Vendors

**4,000+** peak weekend attendance

The Ames Main Street Farmers' Market had a full year, filling Main Street each Saturday from May through October, with a record number of vendors participating. The market also went on the road this year, expanding into **Campustown** and **North Grand Mall** for the Sundown Series events, in addition to hosting two **Holiday Markets** in the fall.

The **Farm to Table** dinner once again featured award-winning chef, Aaron Holt, as he prepared a 7-course meal for guests. This year's event took place on Kellogg Avenue in Downtown Ames.



# AREA HIGHLIGHT

October 2024

## RV There Yet?

This fall, the hosts of the Discovery Channel's show, "RV There Yet?" visited our region to record an episode for season four of their popular show. From Ledges State Park and the Rail Explorers experience in Boone, to shopping in Downtown Ames, Reiman Gardens, and tailgating at Jack Trice Stadium, the crew saw it all. The episode is scheduled to air in April 2025.



## TRACTION Magazine

Traction is a quarterly publication from the Ames Regional Economic Alliance. It provides an opportunity to tell our story not only about our organization, but to inform our community about what is happening across the Ames region. It includes stories and information to our community to help drive business and provide a deliverable to members.

**20K**  
Quarterly circulation



## Light Painter Documentary Film

Produced by the Ames Regional Economic Alliance and directed by Eric Smidt, **Light Painter** is a short documentary film that offers a behind-the-scenes look at how Ames photographer, Dan McClanahan, creates some of his most Epic images. The premiere showing of the 38-minute film took place in November at the Iowa State University Memorial Union.



## New Brands in 2024:



## SOCIAL MEDIA



- 844 posts
- 1,113,104 people reach
- +799 new followers
- 6,004 total followers



- 427,720 people reach
- +728 new followers
- 2,188 total followers



- 356 posts
- 491,588 people reach
- +724 new followers
- 9,500 total followers



- 245 posts
- 146,113 impressions
- +550 new followers
- 3,635 total followers



- 548 posts
- 891,453 people reach
- +1,048 new followers
- 13,677 total followers






### Website

- 69,914 total page views
- 30,000 users

(since June 2024)

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



### Weekly E-Newsletter

- 40.8% average open rate (21.33% industry avg.)
- 2,096 avg. # of recipients

# AMES REGIONAL ECONOMIC Alliance



## Serving the communities in Boone, Hamilton, and Story County

Ames • Beaver • Berkley • Blairsburg • Boone • Boxholm • Cambridge • Collins • Colo • Ellsworth • Fraser • Gilbert • Huxley  
Jewell • Kamrar • Kelley • Luther • Madrid • Maxwell • McCallsburg • Nevada • Ogden • Pilot Mound • Randall • Roland  
Sheldahl • Slater • Stanhope • Stratford • Story City • Webster City • Williams • Woodward • Zearing