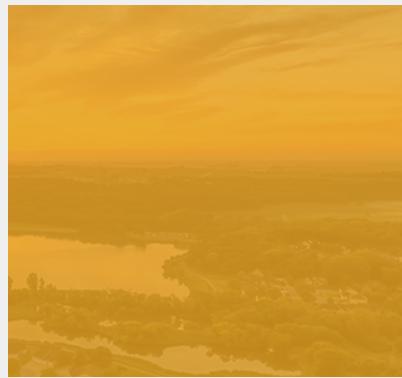
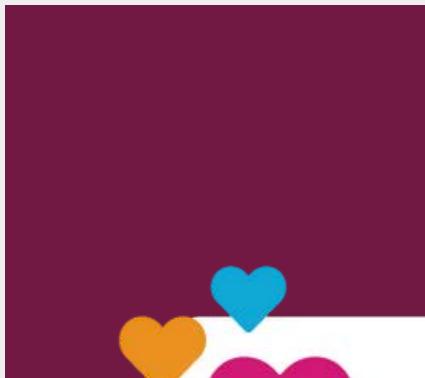
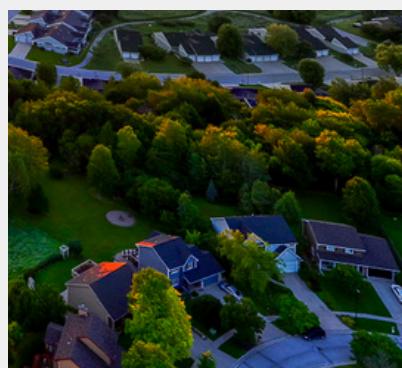




2025 ANNUAL REPORT



**YOU'RE GOING TO
LOVE LIVING HERE**



AMES REGIONAL ECONOMIC Alliance



The Ames Regional Economic Alliance, known as the Alliance, works to promote economic growth and community development across Boone, Greene, 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



MEET THE TEAM



DAN CULHANE
President & CEO



BRENDA DRYER
Senior Vice President



AMY HOWARD
Vice President, Finance &
Administration



ERIC SMIDT
Vice President, Marketing &
Communications



SHANNON THIELE
Vice President, Affiliate Programming



JAN WILLIAMS
Vice President, Investor Relations



ELIZABETH BERG
Coordinator, Economic
Development



SIDNEY HANSEN
Digital Marketing Specialist



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 &
Business Advocacy



LOJEAN PETERSEN
Manager, Ames Main Street
Farmers' Market



KAREN SMIDT
Contracted Marketing Support

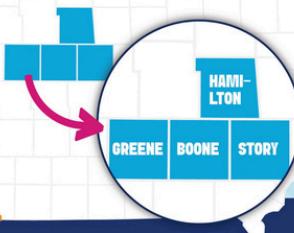


TRAVIS TOLIVER
Vice President, Downtown
Development



MIKE UPAH
Director, Ames Seed Capital

LIVE >>> WORK^{IN} PLAY^{IN}AMES



www.LiveinAmes.com • www.WorkinAmes.com • www.PlayinAmes.com

AREA HIGHLIGHT

June 2025

Live Work Play in Ames Brand Launch

This summer, the Ames Regional Economic Alliance announced the launch of the **Live Work Play in Ames** website and social media channels that are designed as a digital platform to showcase the myriad opportunities that make Ames and its surrounding communities vibrant places to reside, pursue careers, and enjoy leisure activities. The new website serves as a centralized hub for residents, prospective movers, job seekers, and visitors, offering detailed insights into the unique aspects of living, working, and playing in the Ames region. Each section provides valuable resources for the region.

Live: This section provides an in-depth look at residential life that aims to assist individuals and families considering relocation by offering valuable resources and information about the quality of life in the region.

Work: Dedicated to professionals and job seekers, this section offers access to a robust job board featuring listings from Boone, Hamilton, and Story County areas.

Play: Highlighting the rich cultural and recreational offerings of the area, this section, in partnership with Discover Ames, guides users through local attractions, events, dining, shopping, and outdoor activities.

The Live Work Play in Ames digital platforms reflect the collaborative efforts within the AREA to promote economic growth and community development across the region.



FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL



FOR THE EXPLORERS



MEMBERSHIP

748 Total Members

+141 New Members

78 RIBBON CUTTING EVENTS



GET CONNECTED >

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 2025 Board Chairs for all of our organizations:

Ames Regional Economic Alliance: Sam Stagg

Ames Chamber of Commerce: Jason Jennings

Ames Main Street: Ellyn Grimm

Ames Seed Capital: Dave Tucker

AREA Young Professionals: Amanda Petersen

Boone County Economic Growth Corporation: Mike Tungesvik

Greene County Development Corporation: Scott Weber

Hamilton County Growth Partnership: Jake Van Diest

Nevada Economic Development Council: Jeff Harris

The Ames Foundation: Chris Anderson



LEADERSHIP AMES

23 Class of 38 Leadership Ames Graduates

In November, we celebrated the Leadership Ames Class 38 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?"

ANNUAL AWARDS

20 Unique Annual Award categories that honored business and individuals

TOTAL SPONSORSHIP INVESTMENT

\$630K+

From member businesses to support events and programming

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



EXTERNAL FUNDING

\$35,667,349

Funding the Alliance has assisted in bringing to the region.



CAPITAL INVESTMENT

\$666,768,000

The amount invested by projects that the Alliance has worked on.

BUSINESS RETENTION & EXPANSION

86 visits

PROJECTED JOB CREATION

226 jobs

The internet broke a little when it was announced on March 31 that **Olive Garden** and their never-ending amounts of soup, salad, and breadsticks, were officially coming to Ames.



AREA HIGHLIGHT

May 2025

Daisy Brand Groundbreaking in Boone

Daisy Brand held a groundbreaking ceremony for their \$1.2 billion, 1 million square foot dairy processing facility — their most ambitious project yet, according to President Ben Sokolsky. Additional speakers included Iowa Governor Kim Reynolds, City of Boone Mayor Elijah Stines, and Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Mike Naig. Construction continued through 2025.





HOUSING

Prairie Place Opening in Boone

The grand opening of **Prairie Place** took place on December 9, marking the arrival of a new mixed-use residential and commercial development bringing 23 new homes to the Boone community, including 7 townhomes and 16 modern apartments designed to support workforce retention, neighborhood growth, and long-term community vitality.

WORKFORCE HOUSING TAX CREDITS

In the fall, the Iowa Economic Development Authority announced workforce housing tax credits to support development across the state. Eight housing projects within the region were awarded, combining for a total of

317 units and \$4.4 million in funding.

The Anthem Project in Huxley is a 120-acre mixed-use development on the southern edge of Huxley. Led by Chris Gardner of Bella Commercial, the \$120 million project includes senior living, retail, apartments, and industrial space across three 40-acre parcels.

HOUSING SNAPSHOT ACROSS THE REGION

Below is a 2025 combined snapshot of housing across Boone, Hamilton, and Story County:

- **Median Sales Price:** \$265,000 (up 4.7% over 2024)
- **Sales:** 1,574 (up 9.4% over 2024)
- **New Listings:** 2,238 (up 26.7% over 2024)



The **Fitch Family Indoor Aquatic Center**, under construction in 2025, will provide year-round recreational swimming opportunities in the community when it opens in 2026. The facility will feature a 25-yard, six-lane lap pool, a zero-depth splash pool and current channel, along with party rooms, multi-purpose spaces and a walking area. Construction of the 38,900-square-foot facility began in spring 2024, and the center is expected to substantially finish by January 2026, with a grand opening in March 2026.

GROUNDBREAKING EVENTS IN 2025



BioMADE

Iowa Governor Kim Reynolds, Iowa State University, and BioMADE broke ground on a \$40 million biomanufacturing facility on November 14. The new facility at the **BioCentury Research Farm** will provide critical biomanufacturing infrastructure in the United States as part of BioMADE's Pilot Plant Network.

Danfoss Childcare Facility

Construction is underway at **Danfoss Power Solutions** for their new childcare facility. The manufacturing plant is collaborating with Everbrook Academy on the project. Once complete, it will have space for 160 students. The facility will be open to children of Danfoss employees and other local employers.

JT Logistics

JT Logistics hosted a groundbreaking in September for their new 300,000-square-foot facility east of Ames. As a family-owned, Iowa-based company, **JT Logistics** provides innovative warehousing, transportation, and fulfillment solutions across the Midwest, with the new facility expanding their regional footprint and creating employment opportunities in Story County.

REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

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



AREA HIGHLIGHT

August 2025



HAMILTON COUNTY GROWTH PARTNERSHIP

United Equipment Accessories

A ribbon-cutting event for United Equipment Accessories, Inc. (UEA) took place in October to celebrate their recent expansion and new Ames location. Their facility sits along HWY 30 in rural Boone County, occupying the former Sports Iowa building. UEA is a family-owned business and one of the largest global manufacturers of slip rings, rotary unions, and hose/cable reels.



Generation Repair & Service

Generation Repair & Service moved forward with a \$17 million expansion and partial remodel of its Story City facility. Supported by a \$481,500 IEDA tax incentive, the steel structure was in place, with occupancy targeted for late September and full completion expected by January 2026.



Greene County Signing Event

The Ames Regional Economic Alliance and Greene County Development Corporation formed a strategic partnership to boost collaboration and growth. By combining resources and expertise, they aim to attract investment, support businesses, and enhance vitality across county lines. The partnership reflects a shared commitment to fostering economic opportunity and prosperity in Central Iowa.

AREAYP

190

Total Members

+75

New Members



AREA Young Professionals provides a forum for networking, professional development, and community partnerships while promoting the Ames region as a great place to live, work, and play. AREAYP is committed to attracting and retaining young professionals, and in 2025 launched a **new mentor program** pairing 15 YP mentees with 15 business leader mentors.

7 Leadership & Professional Development Events

6 Philanthropic Events and Volunteering Efforts

6 Social Events



AREA Young Professionals raised \$5,000 with a Bags Tournament fundraiser for the **Boys & Girls Clubs of Story County**.



In 2025, The Ames Foundation marked its 50th anniversary with a year of community-centered celebration and impact. The Foundation honored this milestone through lasting gifts and projects, including the Ames Miracle Playground & Field, the Community Tree Program, and new Ames signage, while also engaging residents through a 50th Anniversary Scavenger Hunt that invited the community to explore Ames. Partnerships with the City of Ames and the Ames Pickleball Club supported a spring tree planting and a pickleball tournament that **raised \$3,000 for the City of Ames Animal Shelter**. The year also added new public art with the installation of a mural on Burnett Avenue as part of the Ames Murals: An Open Air Gallery project.

BUSINESS ADVOCACY

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



Critical Materials Recycling welcomed Senator Joni Ernst in August during her visit to the region for her annual Entrepreneur Expo. She toured the facility and met with team members to talk about the importance to reclaiming rare earth elements in the United States.



The 2025 Legislative Session kicked off in January with our first event of the year featuring a panel of local legislators.



The 2025 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.



In October, the Ames Alliance and the Boone County Economic Growth Corporation joined **Governor Kim Reynolds**, area legislators, and community leaders for a roundtable discussion on local and statewide economic development at **Midland Power Cooperative's** Boone office.



AMES SEED CAPITAL FUND RECAP

17 investments across four active funds



| **\$4.7M**
| **12**

Investments in 2025:

- **Bound** – Sports Event Management and Ticketing
- **MACH** – Equipment Automation

invested in portfolio
and \$1.5 million of
capital available



2025 Event Snapshot

Legislative Kick Off Breakfast
Economic Outlook Breakfast
Annual Awards
Heart of Ames
Capitol, Connect & Converse
Women in Leadership: International Women's Day
State of Wellness
Agriculture Breakfast
Legislative Update with CWL Group
BCEGC Business Breakfast
NEDC Business Breakfast
RV There Yet? National Premiere on Discovery
515 Days
AREA Interns Kick-Off Event
Art Walk
Ames Alliance Golf Day
4th of July Parade
AREA Interns Graduation
Summer Sidewalk Sales
Women in Leadership - Women in the Trades
State of Education
Farm To Table Event
Steak Fry
Music Walk
Greene County / Ames Alliance Signing Event
BCEGC Annual Event
State of the AREA
Witches Walk
Manufacturing Breakfast
Downtown Trick or Treat
Leadership Ames Graduation
Huxley Business Breakfast
Campustown Fall Classic
NEDC Annual Event
Hamilton County Growth Partnership Annual Event
Building Community Breakfast
Small Business Weekend
Holiday Farmers' Market
Snow Magic
Annual Event(s)

This year's Manufacturing Breakfast featured a panel discussion with leaders from across the AREA.



222

TOTAL NUMBER OF EVENTS ACROSS THE ALLIANCE AND AFFILIATE ORGANIZATIONS

3,457

Individuals signed up for 34 registered events in 2025

12

Business After Hours Events

39

1 Million Cups hosted at the Ames Alliance



EVENT HIGHLIGHTS



The **State of the AREA** event held in October featured mayors from Alliance communities sharing updates on local projects, opportunities, and challenges. Mayor John Haila (Ames), Mayor Elijah Stines (Boone), and Mayor John Hawkins (Webster City) represented their communities and contributed to a strong discussion.

The **Annual Event(s)** featured nationally recognized leadership expert Valerie Grubb as the keynote speaker, with a focus on elevating leadership across generations. Her insights on the evolving workplace offered practical takeaways for strengthening businesses and communities.

The **Building Community Breakfast** at Reiman Gardens drew a strong turnout of community and business leaders. Keynote speaker Dariana Glasco-Boyd, co-founder of M&D BEST, delivered an engaging and impactful presentation that sparked meaningful conversation and reflection.

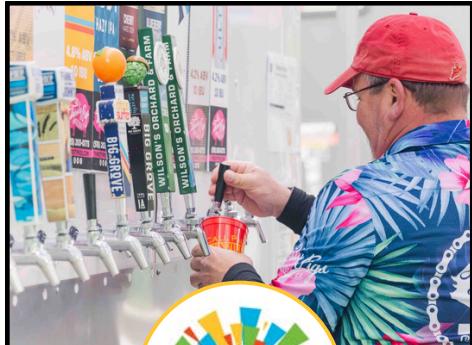


Powered by Ames Main Street

12 EVENTS AND PROMOTIONS

Winter Sidewalk Sales • Heart of Ames • Luck of the Irish
Art Walk • 515 Days • Summer Sidewalk Sales • Fourth of July Parade
Music Walk • Witches Walk • Downtown Trick or Treat
Small Business Weekend • Snow Magic

New to 2025: Two Small Business Education Programs



111 TOTAL VOLUNTEERS

30 cubic yards of dark walnut mulch was donated by **Colorbiotics** and over 20 volunteers helped to install it in all the flowerbeds throughout Downtown Ames.



Ames City Council accepted the **Downtown Ames: A Guiding Vision** plan which will span over the next 10 to 15 years and enhance Downtown Ames to become a "must-visit" destination in Central Iowa.

| \$1.7M Private investment in Downtown Ames

| 6 New businesses started or relocated to Downtown Ames





Connecting college interns through 4 intentional professional development events and community engagement.



K-12 PROGRAMMING

- **The Rising Leaders Academy** is an 8-month program that empowers high school students to become effective leaders in their schools and communities. 16 students from 6 school districts participated.
- **Innovate U** is a student entrepreneurship challenge for high school students where they create and pitch business ideas to judges. In April, 35 students across 4 school districts participated.
- **Crop Quest**, in collaboration with the Iowa State University Research Park, is an experience made up of eight hands-on stations hosted by ISURP tenants, giving them the chance to explore various fields and challenge their thinking.
- **Teaching for the Workforce** provides opportunities for educators to spend time learning from local employers and making connections across the community.
- **National Civics Bee** competition for middle schoolers in partnership with U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation.

Work in Ames was incorporated in the new **Live Work Play in Ames brand** that launched in June 2025.

RETRAINING PROGRAM

| 48 Program Participants | 10 Programs Offered



AMES MAIN STREET FARMERS' MARKET



| 24 Amazing weeks in Downtown Ames

| 130 Different Vendors

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 hosted two **Holiday Markets** in the fall.

The **Farm to Table** dinner once again featured handcrafted courses by Chef Aaron Holt of Catering by Doolittle Farms and Chef Grant Gillon, Season 13 MasterChef winner. This year's event took place at Prairie Moon Winery and Vineyards.



| 18,000+ peak weekend attendance

A podcast from the Ames Regional Economic Alliance

AREA POD

PERSONAL STORIES, PROFESSIONAL JOURNEYS.

Presented by



AREAPOD

EPISODE

#015

WITH
WENDY WINTERSTEEN

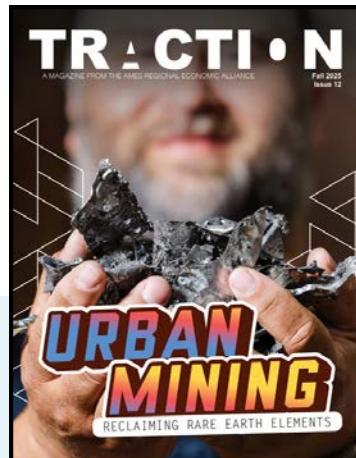


4,101

Streams and downloads



SUBSCRIBE WHERE YOU LISTEN TO PODCASTS



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.

21K
Quarterly circulation

AREA HIGHLIGHT

March 2025

The AREA Podcast launched in March and features in-depth conversations with business leaders, entrepreneurs, and community stakeholders, covering topics such as leadership, innovation, and economic development initiatives shaping the future of Ames and the surrounding region. Season 1 included 16 individual episodes.

SEASON 1

4,101

Streams and downloads



SOCIAL MEDIA



- 1,107 posts
- 3,227,166 total views
- +1,283 new followers
- 7,287 total followers



- 401,753 total views
- +730 new followers
- 2,918 total followers



- 507 posts
- 1,937,759 total views
- +1,297 new followers
- 10,797 total followers



- 401 posts
- 404,275 total views
- +890 new followers
- 4,525 total followers



- 803 posts
- 1,643,920 total views
- +1,011 new followers
- 14,688 total followers



- 366 posts
- 154,071 total views
- 582 total followers



- 233 posts
- 17,650 people reach
- 37,805 total views
- 245 total followers

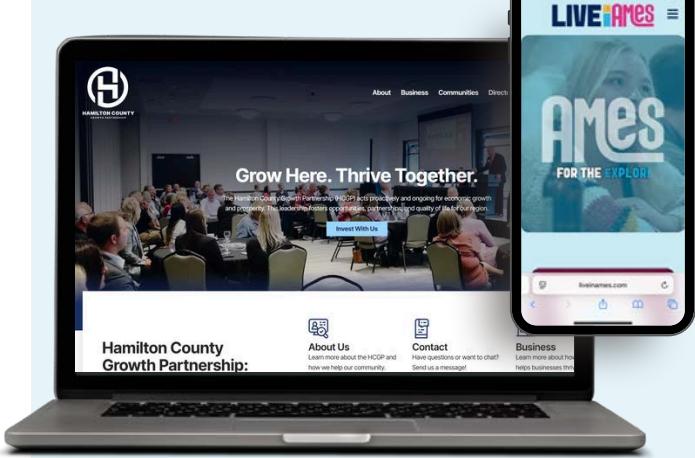


(since June 2025)

John McGivern's Main Street

John McGivern's Main Streets visited Ames in the fall to film an episode for its upcoming fifth season on PBS. The crew spent time exploring Downtown Ames, visiting local favorites like Della Viti, Piece & Freedom Bakery, the Ames History Museum, and Danfoss Power Solutions. Coordinated with the Ames Regional Economic Alliance and Discover Ames, the visit highlighted the community's blend of innovation, local business, and Midwestern charm. The Ames episode will air as part of Main Streets Season 5 on PBS in early 2026.

New Websites



The Hamilton County Growth Partnership launched its new website in October 2025, highlighting efforts to support economic development and expand opportunities for businesses across the region, while making it easier to connect with resources, updates, and community initiatives. This followed the launch of the Live Work Play in Ames website in June 2025.

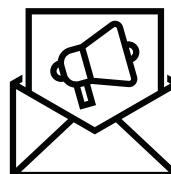


Website

- 153,685 total page views
- 75,483 users

(2025 Analytics)

www.AmesAlliance.com



Weekly E-Newsletter

- 43% average open rate (21.33% industry avg.)
- 2,262 avg. # of recipients



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

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

