

ALTOONA

JANUARY 2025

# Living

MAGAZINE

# RESIDENTS' CHOICE AWARDS

Eastern Polk County residents share their favorites



**Meet Michelle Hukvari**

EDUCATION

**Loaded chicken bake**

RECIPE

**Brammers find sense of community and more**

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# A COMMERCE-CREATING machine

Residents' Choice. Those two simple words have a lot of meaning to those who are recognized and those who seek out the people, businesses, places and events that are honored.

Yes, we have once again compiled the results of our local Residents' Choice poll, the only one of its kind. It is truly unique in two significant ways.

First, our poll is mailed to every residential household in the pages of this magazine with a link to an open website. That makes the poll available to every single resident. No exclusions.

Second, our poll has open-ended questions, which means we don't load the ballots with pre-determined answers to try to sway it in a certain way. The results are what they are. You will likely agree with some of them, and you will disagree with others — kind of like political elections. But, in this poll, all who are recognized are winners, and the end result is a great positive for all involved.

Readers of this publication have proven to seek out the winners and spend their time, energy and money with them. The poll results have become a customized search engine of sorts, providing valuable information on the choices of local residents in a variety of categories that are important to them.

Those who have been chosen tell me how much of an impact this directly has on them, their businesses and their organizations. Being recognized for positive contributions is seemingly always great, but when it helps create commerce, it is even better — and this Residents' Choice poll is a commerce-creating machine.

I explain this next point each year, but it is worth noting again. Those recognized in this poll are the choices of our readers — local residents. Although we agree with many of you on your choices, we do not pick them, and we have no impact on the results. I wouldn't have it any other way.

Other organizations are continuing to try to implement polls like ours, but none have the reach and credibility that ours has. You can't blame others for trying to imitate what we do, but you can question how they implement their polls and how many people actually vote in them.

Meanwhile, I thank all of you who took the time to vote in this year's Residents' Choice poll. Your votes do make an incredible difference. And, if you didn't vote, well, there is always next year.

Thanks for reading. ■

### SHANE GOODMAN

President and Publisher  
Big Green Umbrella Media  
shane@dmcityview.com  
515-953-4822, ext. 305



**Tammy Pearson**  
Editor  
515-953-4822 ext. 302  
tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com

**Angela Ossian**  
Advertising Account Executive  
515-953-4822 x307  
angela@iowalivingmagazines.com



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# RESIDENTS' CHOICE AWARDS

Eastern Polk County residents share their favorites

IOWA Living MAGAZINE  
RESIDENTS' CHOICE AWARD

EASTERN POLK COUNTY



Residents of eastern Polk County have again weighed in on their favorite businesses, people, events and places in the latest Residents' Choice poll. The poll results share residents' top three choices in dozens of categories, many of which are extremely competitive with a handful of votes separating the winner from the runners up. Consequently, we view them all as winners. They have captured the favor of people who live in eastern Polk County and who know the businesses, people, events and places of the area best.

Some winners are now going on three or more years at the top of their categories. Their supporters have proven to be a loyal bunch. Others are new to the awards list, showing they have made a good impression over the last year and are building up a strong following as well.

Altoona residents won't have far to go to enjoy many of the winners. Enjoy a meal at favorites such as The Big Steer Restaurant and Lounge, Fireside Grille and Scornovacca's; an espresso or latte at Best Day Coffee; shopping at Suzy's Kitchen & Gifts; and a workout at Altoona Campus. These are only a few of the Altoona winners. Read on for others.

If you aren't familiar with any of the top three, give those businesses, events and places a visit and find out why they are residents' favorites. And if you didn't vote this year, be sure to next time. It may be your vote that makes a difference and lifts one of your favorites into the top tier of the Residents' Choice poll.

Kara Ohorilko of Best Day Coffee, which was voted residents' favorite coffee shop.

# Eastern Polk County residents share their favorites...

*(Runners up in alphabetical order; \*indicates repeat winner.)*

## Restaurant

### \* **The Big Steer Restaurant and Lounge**

**Runners up:** Guadalajara Mexican Restaurant; Texas Roadhouse

## Restaurant for breakfast

### **Flip'N Jacks Pancake House & Eatery**

**Runners up:** Perkins Restaurant and Bakery; Somewhere in the Middle Coffee Shop

## Restaurant for lunch

### **Fireside Grille**

**Runners up:** Guadalajara Mexican Restaurant; Sugar Shack Diner

## Restaurant for dinner

### \* **The Big Steer Restaurant and Lounge**

**Runners up:** Johnny's Italian Steakhouse; Texas Roadhouse

## Restaurant for dessert

### **Over the Top**

**Runners up:** Home Slice Handmade Pies; Perkins Restaurant and Bakery

## Place for ice cream

### \* **Over the Top**

**Runners up:** The creamery.bondurant; Granny's Sweet Freeze Shoppe

## Pizza establishment

### **Scornovacca's Altoona**

**Runners up:** Abbie's; Casey's

## Bar

### \* **Reclaimed Rails Brewing Company**

**Runners up:** Fireside Grille; Sam's Sports Bar and Grill

## Coffee shop

### **Best Day Coffee**

**Runners up:** Scooter's Coffee; Somewhere in the Middle Coffee Shop

## Catering company

### \* **Great Caterers of Iowa**

**Runners up:** Fireside Grille; Hy-Vee

## Server/bartender

### **Cole Heitman, The Big Steer Restaurant & Lounge**

**Runners up:** Heath Sollars, Reclaimed Rails Brewing Company; Stef Brown, Founders Irish Pub

## Auto service

### \* **McManus Automotive**

**Runners up:** Kanselaar Automotive; Truman's Automotive & ADAS Calibrations

## Auto body shop

### **Ted's Body Shop**

**Runners up:** Altoona Auto Body; Bondurant Auto Body

## Car dealership

### \* **A3 Auto**

**Runners up:** Honda of Altoona; Martinson's Used Cars

## Preschool/daycare

### **Church of the Cross Preschool**

**Runners up:** The Bird's Nest; Yellow Brick Road Early Childhood Development Center

## Nonprofit

### \* **Caring Hands**

**Runners up:** Altoona Campus; Bondurant Community Foundation

## School

### \***Southeast Polk High School**

**Runners up:** Morris Elementary; Willowbrook Elementary

## Park

### **Haines Park**

**Runners up:** Lake Petocka; Thomas Mitchell Park

## Community festival or event

### **Bondurant Summerfest**

**Runners up:** Altoona Chamber of Commerce Wine & Craft Beer Fest; Bondurant Sidewalk Chalk Festival

## Church

### \* **Lutheran Church of the Cross**

**Runners up:** Federated Church; NewLife Church

## Pastor

### **Nathan Anenson**

**Runners up:** Andy Miller; Trevor Pinegar

## Chamber of commerce

### **Altoona Area Chamber of Commerce**

**Runners up:** Bondurant Chamber of Commerce; Pleasant Hill Chamber of Commerce

## Library

### \* **Altoona Public Library**

**Runners up:** Bondurant Community Library; Pleasant Hill Public Library

## Camping spot

### **Thomas Mitchell Park**

**Runners up:** Adventureland Campground; Yellow Banks Park

## Grocery store

### \* **Fareway Meat & Grocery**

**Runners up:** Aldi; Hy-Vee

## Boutique

### **Little House on Main**

**Runners up:** Hidden Treasures Gifts; Style by Desiree Salon + Boutique

## Retail store

### **Suzu's Kitchen & Gifts**

**Runners up:** Hidden Treasures Gifts; Off the Rails Quilting

## Thrift store

### \* **Caring Hands**

**Runners up:** DAV Thrift Store; Goodwill

## Home improvement retail store

### **Menards**

**Runners up:** Lowe's; Porter Do it Best Hardware & Rental

# FEATURE

## Nursery or garden center

\* **Lucille's Garden Center**

**Runners up:** Goode Greenhouses; Lowe's

## Place to purchase a gift for a man

\* **Bass Pro Shops**

**Runners up:** Menards; Target

## Place to purchase a gift for a woman

**SkinFusion FX**

**Runners up:** Little House on Main; Suzy's Kitchen & Gifts

## Consignment shop

\* **Caring Hands**

**Runners up:** New 2U Treasures; Stuff Etc

## Dad/child date spot

**Cinemark Altoona and XD**

**Runners up:** Great Escape; Over the Top

## Mom/child date spot

**Cinemark Altoona and XD**

**Runners up:** CAP Theatre; Great Escape

## Place to take your mom and dad

**Johnny's Italian Steakhouse**

**Runners up:** Enabling Garden; Prairie Meadows Casino, Racetrack & Hotel

## Place to take your kids or grandkids

**Adventureland Resort**

**Runners up:** CAP Theatre; Great Escape

## Children's birthday party spot

**Altoona Campus**

**Runners up:** BrickHouse Fitness; Great Escape

## Golf course

\* **Terrace Hills Golf Course**

**Runners up:** Copper Creek Golf Club; Toad Valley Golf Course

## Hair salon

**Signatures Salon & Day Spa**

**Runners up:** Hair FX Salon & Spa; Hyspie Salon

## Physician's Clinic

**UnityPoint Clinic Family Medicine**

**Runners up:** The Iowa Clinic; MercyOne East

## Dental Office

\* **Bondurant Family Dentistry**

**Runners up:** Altoona Smiles Family & Cosmetic Dentistry; Hinke Family Dentistry

## Orthodontist Office

**Central Iowa Orthodontics**

**Runner up:** Altoona Smiles Family & Cosmetic Dentistry; Bondurant Family Dentistry

## Mental health services

\* **Connected Life Counseling**

**Runners up:** Healing Rock Counseling; Mend Integrative Wellness

## Chiropractic office

\* **Dawson Chiropractic**

**Runners up:** Bondurant Family Chiropractic; Swain Chiropractic

## Vision care

\* **Prairie Vision Center of Bondurant**

**Runners up:** Metro EyeCare; Whylie Eye Care Center

## Health club or gym

**Altoona Campus**

**Runners up:** BrickHouse Fitness; Farrell's eXtreme Bodyshaping

## Alternative health care

**Wholistic Health Center**

**Runners up:** Innovate My Weight; Mend Integrative Wellness

## Pharmacy

**Hy-Vee**

**Runners up:** Medicap; NuCara Pharmacy

## Physical therapy

**21st Century Rehab**

**Runners up:** Anchor Physical Therapy; Rock Valley Physical Therapy

## Dance studio

\* **Pat Barton Dance Studio**

**Runners up:** Becky's Dance & Tumbling Studio; Kasey Leigh Dance Studio

## Gymnastics/tumbling studio

**Pat Barton Dance Studio**

**Runners up:** Becky's Dance & Tumbling Studio; Homeschool Tumbling



Nikki Barkhaus of Wholistic Health Center, which was voted residents' favorite alternative health care.

## Audiologist/hearing center

**HearingLife**

**Runner up:** MercyOne Pleasant Hill ENT Care; The Iowa Clinic Audiology & Hearing Technology Department

## Financial planner

\* **Adam Kline, Edward Jones**

**Runners up:** Bryan W. Johnson, Edward Jones; Luke Peterson Financial

## Law firm

**Smith Law Firm**

**Runners up:** Lamberti, Murphy & Strong, PC; Skinner Law Offices

## Accounting firm

**TrustPoint**

**Runners up:** ATS Tax and Financial Services; Welgaard CPAs & Advisors

## Veterinarian

**Bondurant Animal Clinic**

**Runners up:** Altoona Veterinary Hospital; Eastown Animal Hospital

## Dog groomer

**Barks & Wags**

**Runners up:** Pampered Pooch Bakery & Salon; Petsakes Pet Supplies and Grooming

# FEATURE

## Lawn care business

### Major Tom's Lawn Care

**Runners up:** Kelly George Turf & Irrigation; Snyder Landscaping & Lawn Care

## Nursery or landscaping company

### Snyder Landscaping & Lawn Care

**Runners up:** Frontline Lawn & Landscape; Kelly George Turf & Irrigation

## Heating and cooling business

### Todd's Plumbing, Heating & Cooling

**Runners up:** Bell Brothers Heating and Air Conditioning; Metro Heating and Cooling

## Electrical business

### Baker Electric

**Runners up:** Integrity Electric; Lazer Home Services Plumbing, HVAC & Electrical

## Plumbing company

### R&D Plumbing

**Runners up:** Advanced Problem Solutions; Todd's Plumbing, Heating & Cooling

## Senior living establishment

### Prairie Vista Village

**Runners up:** Courtyard Estates; Copper Shores Village

## Insurance agent

### Luke Peterson Insurance

**Runners up:** Kacer Insurance and Financial Services; Tim Forbes, State Farm Insurance

## Realtor

### Angela Meek

**Runners up:** Pennie Carroll; Sheena Cochran-Foster

## Bank/credit union

### \* GreenState Credit Union

**Runners up:** Bank Iowa; Community Choice Credit Union

## Photographer

### Photos by Ben

**Runners up:** Brandi Lloyd Photography; Brent Isenberger Photography

## Place for guests to stay

### Hampton Inn & Suites Altoona-Des Moines

**Runners up:** Fairfield Inn & Suites Des Moines Altoona; Holiday Inn Express & Suites

## Home builder/remodeling contractor

### \* Eagle Homes

**Runners up:** Berkey Home Builders; Parks Custom Homes

## Outdoor lawn equipment store

### Porter Do it Best Hardware and Rental

**Runners up:** Lowe's; P&P Small Engines

## Pest control company

### Mosquito Authority - Des Moines

**Runners up:** Kelly George Turf & Irrigation; Springer Professional Home Services

## General contractor or remodeler

### Berkey Home Builders

**Runners up:** Bakeris Roofing; Duerson Corporation ■

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# BENEFITS of being financially fit

Is financial fitness on your list of priorities this year? If not, you should consider it. Just like physical health, your financial wellness plays a big role in your overall well-being. Managing your finances can help you achieve



balance, freedom and peace of mind.

Below are a few benefits of being financially fit, as well as steps you can take today to improve your financial fitness.

### Why financial fitness is beneficial for everyone

• **Increased freedom:** Financial fitness can help you make the most with what you have and open the door to greater opportunities. Not only does it provide the flexibility to be creative with your investments, but it also offers greater freedom and security as you plan for retirement. It can empower you to support causes that matter to you and even provide for loved ones in meaningful ways. Additionally,

you can make more financial choices that align with your personal values and goals, whether it's traveling, changing careers or pursuing lifelong passions.

• **Preparedness for emergencies:** Financial fitness can give you the confidence and stability to handle unexpected expenses without going into debt. You'll have the resources and ability to cover unexpected costs and navigate the unknown with less stress.

• **Reduced stress:** Being financially fit can significantly reduce the daily stressors that often weigh on individuals and bleed into their work and relationships. By reducing stress, you can create peace of mind and stability that benefits you and those around you.

### Steps to take to improve your financial fitness

- Create an annual budget and find areas to cut overspending.
  - Prioritize regular maintenance on your home and vehicles along with preventative healthcare to reduce potential future costs.
  - Start building an emergency fund to save

for unexpected costs and understand when it's appropriate to spend it.

- Review your retirement plans with a financial professional or advisor to find out if you're on track to meet your goals. If you're not on track, discuss steps you can take to do so.
- Consider ways to earn extra income, such as a weekend job or turning a hobby into a small business.
- If you're able, consider investing any discretionary funds.
- Maintain a strong credit score by making regular payments, only taking on debt you can afford, and keeping your balances low.
- Reduce your debt, especially high-interest debt.

No matter where you are on your financial fitness journey, taking small steps today can help ensure greater financial freedom and security tomorrow. ■

Information provided by Mary Simon, VP, Altoona Branch Manager, 3820 Eighth St. S.W., Altoona, 515-245-5480, MSimon@BankersTrust.com. Bankers Trust NMLS ID: 440379.



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# COZY, comforting recipes to take on the cold

*(Family Features)* If blustery conditions are giving you the blues, come inside from the cold for a winter warmup in the comfort of your own kitchen. Cold-weather favorites that are baked, roasted or slow cooked are usually equal parts easy, delicious and filling, making them perfect solutions for chilly, snowy days.

Add a bit of comfort to your weeknight menu with this Loaded Chicken Bake that's ready in about half an hour. A short list of ingredients and allowing your oven to do most of the work for you mean it's ideal for saving time (and money at the grocery store) while still satisfying winter appetites.

Serving as the hearty base is READ German Potato Salad, made with thinly sliced potatoes and bacon in a traditional sweet-piquant dressing. While it's delicious when served chilled, heated or at room temperature on its own, it can also be the star of the show in family meals.

Find more favorite wintertime recipes by visiting [READSalads.com](http://READSalads.com) and [AuntNellies.com](http://AuntNellies.com). ■

## Loaded chicken bake

Recipe courtesy of Hungry In LA

**Prep time:** 20 minutes | **Cook time:** 15 minutes

**Servings:** 8

- Nonstick cooking spray
- 2 cans (15 ounces each) READ German Potato Salad
- 4 cups shredded rotisserie chicken or other cooked chicken
- 1/2 cup heavy cream
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon finely ground black pepper
- 3/4 cup shredded sharp cheddar cheese
- 1/4 cup crumbled, cooked bacon
- French fried onions (optional), plus additional for serving (optional), divided

### DIRECTIONS

- Preheat oven to 375 F.
- Lightly coat 9-by-13-inch baking dish with nonstick cooking spray.
- Spread German potato salad evenly in dish. Top evenly with chicken.
- In small bowl, stir heavy cream, salt and pepper. Pour mixture over chicken.
- Sprinkle with cheese, bacon and onions, if desired.
- Bake 15 minutes, or until casserole is bubbly. Let stand 10 minutes.
- Top with additional onions, if desired.



## Oven-roasted sweet potatoes and beets

Servings: 4

- 1 jar (16 ounces) Aunt Nellie's Whole Pickled Beets
- 2 large sweet potatoes (about 1 pound) peeled and cubed (1/2-3/4-inch cubes)
- 2-3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper
- 1 red onion, sliced about 1/4-inch thick
- 2 fresh rosemary sprigs, plus additional for garnish

### DIRECTIONS

- Preheat oven to 400 F. Drain beets. Discard liquid or save for another use.
- In large bowl, toss sweet potatoes, olive oil, salt, pepper and onion until coated.
- Place silicone mat on baking sheet or line with aluminum foil.
- Pour contents of bowl onto baking sheet in single layer. Remove rosemary from stems; sprinkle over vegetables. Bake 30 minutes until potatoes are almost tender.
- Add beets to baking sheet. Return to oven 10-15 minutes, or until potatoes are fork-tender and beginning to brown. Garnish with additional rosemary, if desired.



## OBTAINABLE goals to consider for the new year

New Year's resolutions began more than 4,000 years ago with the Babylonians asking for a successful crop. It has since transitioned into a tradition of thinking of one's past mistakes and planning to do better moving forward. It's a tradition that many of us still keep to this day.

Each year is a gift to reflect on our lives and try to be and do better. A lot of people turn to weight loss and health endeavors that aren't always realistic and easy to stick with. There are so many other obtainable goals to consider going into the new year. Here are a few to think about.

- **Review your documents:** Do you have a living will or an advanced directive? When is the last time it was reviewed or the last time you talked to your family/attorney about it? Do they know where these documents are located? Are you or your spouse a veteran? If so, there may be times you need to provide a copy of discharge papers. Do you know where this document is or how to get a copy? Resolve to review all important paperwork and keep it in a safe location. Then let a trusted loved one know where that is.

- **Try something new:** Our mental health is just as important as our physical health. Try something new. Sign up for a class at the library, learn to use a new electronic device, try a new recipe you've never made before, learn a new instrument, make a new friend, see a movie, or read a book you know nothing about. "Something new" doesn't have to be life altering or a large time commitment, just a step outside of your norm to challenge your brain.

- **De-Clutter:** Oh boy, do we accumulate a lot of stuff over the years. There are things that are important to keep, such as family heirlooms and sentimental items, but there are also a lot of things you may no longer need. This is a perfect time to sort through your things. If something has meaning to you, keep it, if it doesn't, donate it to someone who may really find its value. Make a list of the items that you wish to stay in the family and who you want them to go to. Write a story/memory about those items to keep with it. Sometimes families don't know the sentiment behind an item. This is not only a great way to reminisce and pass on a family tradition, but it's a great way to downsize and share those memories with your loved ones. Don't be a victim of a crisis move. Often times, during a panic move, things seemingly disappear or get thrown away that held great value to you. Start today, just one box at a time. You will be glad you did.

Remember that you can make any changes you want at any time. If January didn't go as planned, keep moving forward. You can make changes for improvement any day of the year. ■

Information provided by Stephanie Proper, executive director, Valley View Village, 2571 Guthrie Ave., Des Moines, 515-265-2571.



## Protect Your Loved Ones from RSV

**RSV is a common respiratory virus,** which peaks in the winter months.

RSV can be dangerous for infants and older adults. These age groups are more likely to be hospitalized from RSV.

**Talk to your family's healthcare providers about RSV prevention.**



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# BRAMMERS find sense of community and more

## A place to connect and grow

After spending 25 years in New Zealand, Deb Brammer and her husband, Art, made a life-changing decision last year: to retire in Altoona, where they could live close to family. Though it meant leaving behind a familiar life, they quickly discovered that Altoona offered a nice blend of community, convenience and connection.

The couple found the perfect house in town — a place with a big open area to host groups, which they do often.

For Deb Brammer, Altoona’s charm lies in its balance of small-town friendliness and modern amenities.

“I especially love living in Altoona because we are close to many good stores and businesses, and the main roads are wide, but don’t have a lot of traffic,” she says.

On nice days, she enjoys taking walks around her neighborhood, stopping to chat with neighbors as they walk their dogs.

“Playing ping pong with my grandsons at Altoona Campus is one of the highlights of my week,” she adds.

Beyond the conveniences of daily life, Brammer and her husband were searching for something deeper in the place they would settle down: a sense of community. After visiting several local churches, they found a welcoming home at Altoona Regular Baptist Church.

“We enjoyed the friendly atmosphere there and were pleased to find people of every age working together to serve God,” Brammer says.



Moving from New Zealand to Altoona was a big step for Deb and Art Brammer, but they found they had made the right decision.

“Attending this church helps us feel connected and gives us a chance to serve others. We’re now able to work with college students, something we’d always wanted to do.”


In addition to finding a new community, Brammer has rekindled her lifelong passion for writing, especially since retirement has given her more time to dedicate to it. So far, she’s authored 12 books, primarily Christian fiction for a variety of ages.

One of her most meaningful works has a deep Iowa connection. In “Edges of Truth: The Mary Weaver Story,” Brammer tells the true story of a Marshalltown woman wrongfully convicted of murder. In the 1990s, Mary Weaver, a wife and mother, was caring for an infant who suffered a seizure and tragically died later that day. Despite her efforts to save the baby, Mary was charged with first-degree murder and sentenced to life in prison without parole.

“But while she served time in prison in Mitchellville, God worked in amazing ways to turn that sentence around,” Brammer says. “As I spent two years writing this book, I was inspired by this true story that happened so close to where I now live.”


After a year of living in Altoona, Brammer feels confident they made the right choice to move here.

“I feel blessed to live in a vibrant community with many opportunities to grow and serve,” she says. ■





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# ALTOONA

## JANUARY 2025

**City of Altoona • 900 Venbury Drive • Altoona, IA 50009 • 515-967-5136**

### CITY HALL

900 Venbury Drive

Altoona, IA 50009

Phone: 515-967-5136

FAX: 515-967-0842

Open 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Monday – Friday

Mayor Dean O'Connor  
515-967-5136

#### City Council Members

Jeremy Boka 515-965-0951

Scott Duer 515-418-2227

Josh Dunwoody 515-720-8891

Jerry Evans 515-967-5136

Julie Stewart 515-967-5136

City Administrator  
515-967-5136

City Clerk  
515-967-5136

Police Chief  
515-967-5132

Fire Chief  
515-967-2216

Library Director  
515-967-3881  
Fax: 515-967-6934

Water Billing  
515-967-5136

Building Department/  
Code Enforcement  
515-967-5138

Building Official  
515-967-5138

Planning & Zoning  
Department  
515-967-5136

Public Works Director  
515-967-5136

### ICE RINK OPEN

The City of Altoona's Ice Rink which was donated by the Iowa Wild, in partnership with Wells Fargo, is now open (pending freezing temperatures). This donation is a continuation of their Community Rinks program.

Altoona's Ice Rink is in Ironwood Park, 2222 3rd Ave. SW. It will remain open as weather permits this winter season.



### CITY TRAILS IN WINTER

The City of Altoona does clear the snow from the trails during winter. However, we do not treat the trails with salt or sand. The trails are cleared last, following the city facilities' sidewalks and parking lots. Please enjoy the trails but be cautious of the weather conditions.

### EMERGENCY ACCESS

Maintain your sidewalks and driveway of snow and ice. If you do require an emergency response, a clear approach to your door is the safest route for the emergency responders and you. Maintain your outdoor lights to illuminate your numerical house numbers. If you call "911" for an emergency response, turn on your lights to make it easier and faster for responders to find your home.



### WINTER TRASH & RECYCLING CART PLACEMENT

Please remember that your garbage and recycling totes must be accessible 18 inches from the curb, even after a snow fall. Please do NOT place your carts on city streets. City snowplows cannot clear snow properly when these are placed on streets. This is especially true in cul-de-sacs which are impossible to plow if carts are placed in the road. In times of heavy snow, your driveway approach is likely the best spot to place your carts.

### FLOOD INSURANCE

Floods are the most frequent and costliest disaster in the United States, but the number of homeowners opting to have a National Flood Insurance Policy continues to decline. Learn more about these types of policies and find links to evaluate if your property is a good candidate for this type of insurance at [www.altoona-iowa.com](http://www.altoona-iowa.com).



## ALTOONA Public Library events

**Altoona Public Library**

700 Eighth St. S.W., Altoona

515-967-3881

www.altoonalibrary.com

Monday - Thursday: 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.

Friday - Saturday: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Sunday: 2-5 p.m.

**ADULT PROGRAMMING – ages 18 and older****Splat Studio****Wednesday, Feb. 5, from 6-8 p.m.**

It's back on a new night. If you have a desire to dabble in acrylics, we've got an adult art studio for you. We'll bring the supplies, you bring the inner artist. No cost to attend. Registration required.

**Intro to Crochet****Thursday, Feb. 6, from 6-8 p.m.****OR Saturday, Feb. 22, from 1-3 p.m.**

Time to pick up a cozy craft. Come learn basic crochet techniques and leave with the skills to create your own granny squares. Materials provided. Registration required. This class will be offered twice; please only register for one session.

**Adult Coloring at Brightside Aleworks****Thursdays, Feb. 27 and March 27, from 6:30-8:30 p.m.**

Join us at Brightside Aleworks (480 Center Place in Altoona) for a fun night of coloring. We'll bring the art supplies, you bring your friends and money for drinks. No registration required.

**CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMING****Popcorn and Perler Beads****Wednesday, Feb. 5, from 3:30-4:30 p.m.**

Stop by the library for a popcorn snack and design a perler bead creation. Grades K-6. No registration required.

**Art Lab****Wednesday, Feb. 19, from 3:30-4:30 p.m.**

Come explore and create with different art materials. Grades K-6. Registration required.

**LEGO Club****Tuesday, Feb. 11, from 5:30-6:30 p.m.****AND Wednesday, Feb. 26, from 3:30-4:30 p.m.**

Join us to build a LEGO masterpiece. We'll supply the LEGOs, you bring the creativity. Grades K-6. Registration required.

**TEEN PROGRAMMING (grades 6-12)****Teen Taste Test: Taste Bud Trickery****Monday, Feb. 3, from 6-7 p.m.**

Come take a flavor trip where sour foods become sweet. We're trying "Miracle Fruit," a taste-altering berry that causes sour foods to taste sweet. See if your taste buds can be deceived. No registration required.

**VR Afternoon****Sunday, Feb. 16, from 3-4 p.m.**

Virtual reality, actual awesomeness. Try painting in VR, solve puzzles in The Room, relax with Power Wash Simulator, or try games like Job Simulator and Beat Saber. No registration required.

**Pokemon PowerPoint Night****Thursday, Feb. 27, from 6-7 p.m.**

Have some strong feelings about Pokemon you'd like to share this National Pokemon Day? Come create a 3-minute presentation on Pokemon topics (like your favorite, your least favorite, or which one you could beat in a fight) and share with the group. No registration required.

To find a complete list of events and to register, visit our website at [altoonalibrary.com](http://altoonalibrary.com). Click on the Upcoming Events tab. ■

# FAMILY car to first car

Drummer likes the look of his Ford Fairlane.

Randy Drummer's parents bought a new 1967 Ford Fairlane 500 on July 25, 1967, for the family, but it also became Randy's first car. In November 1976, with his driver's license in tow and freedom with his friends, Randy bought the Fairlane for \$500 and went cruising. He loves this car, and he protected it.

"I had to drive it my first year of high school. After that, I bought \$100 junkers and drove them so I wouldn't have to drive it in the winter."



Randy Drummer's first car, which he still has, is a lime gold 1967 Ford Fairlane 500.

Randy still owns the Fairlane but with a few changes. The Fairlane is now equipped with a hot rod engine built by D&R Engines in Marion. It is a 347 stroker with aluminum heads and a custom roller cam. Compared to the original 210 horsepower, this hot rod engine is 480 horsepower. Randy had help keeping this car going all these years and updating it throughout.

"The interior is pretty much original except I did replace the carpeting. I did do a full restoration on it, and, body-wise had all the glass and everything out of it," he says. "I had a body shop in Anamosa (Country Auto) do it, but I helped when we put the car back together."

Randy likes the uniqueness of this Ford.

"I like the look of it. You see a bunch of Chevilles and that kind of stuff, but you don't see too many Fairlanes," Randy says. "Everybody always talks to me about it. You strike up these conversations at car shows. Everybody always says, 'I love the look at those things.' I like the

body style on them.' "

He enjoys other features, too.

"It's got that classic '60s look. It's got the stacked headlights, and it's got the nice body lines with the roof," he says. "It's kind of a unique color. It's close to what the original color was. A lot of them were red or black. The title calls it lime gold, but that's close to what the color is now."

When Randy got his first car, he took it around his hometown of Marshalltown.

"In Marshalltown, like every town, they call it scoop the loop. Drive around Main Street in Marshalltown, down Third Avenue N., and then come back up State. You just cruise around and park in a gas station parking lot and talk with your buddies and look at the cool cars."

This Fairlane holds meaning to Randy and others.

"It's a family heirloom," he says. "I always get compliments even if I'm just out driving it. Young kids will look at me from their parents' car or standing alone on the corner. They'll give me a thumbs up. I always get a lot of nice compliments whenever I have it out."

It is not only about satisfying the onlookers. Randy passes down his love for his car to younger family generations.

"My grandkids love it, and they think it looks cool, too," Randy says. "They've all gone in a ride in it, and they think it's pretty neat." ■

Be sure to check for cancelations.



## Upcoming in Altoona Living magazine:

**Grandparents who enjoy living near their grandchildren:** Share why you enjoy living near your grandchildren and how you spend time together. Email [tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com](mailto:tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com) by Feb. 1 to be included in the February issue.



## Bondu Chowder Ride

Feb. 22, 10:30 a.m.  
101 Main St. S.E., Bondurant

Enjoy a free, easy winter ride from Bondurant to Berwick and back on the Chichaqua Valley Trail (approximately 10 miles). Check in at 10:30 a.m. at Reclaimed Rails Brewing Company before the ride starts at 11 a.m. Berwick Congregational Church is hosting a warming station/midway/turn-around point. There will be light refreshments at this stop. When you get back to Bondurant, stop by Reclaimed Rails for chili and Founders for chowder. Look for Bondu Chowder Ride on Facebook for more information.

## Healing Hearts Grief Support

Edencrest at Tuscany, 1600 Eighth St. S.E., Altoona, lower east entrance

A supportive gathering for residents and community members to share their experiences, connect with others, and find comfort during their grief journey. Meets every second and fourth Tuesday of each month. Light snacks and beverages are offered. This event will create a safe space for healing and connection within the community.

## Altoona Run Club Thursday Night Run

Jan. 30, 7 p.m.  
Brightside Aleworks, 480 Center Place, Altoona

Come join Altoona Run Club on an all-paces group run of 3 miles or 6 miles. Everyone is welcome and will not be dropped from the run. If you would like to walk the ponds, let us know, and we will have someone available to walk with you, too. See the club's Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/AltoonaRunning](http://www.facebook.com/AltoonaRunning) for the schedule of runs.



## Cookbook Swap

Jan. 25, 1 p.m.  
Altoona Public Library,  
700 Eighth St. S.W.

Looking for some new recipes to start the new year? Bring your old cookbooks in and start fresh. For each item you bring to swap by Jan. 24, receive a voucher to choose one new-to-you item. Please make sure that books are bound in some way — no loose pages and no magazines. Yearly periodicals are limited to three per person. Drop off is during regular library hours. Swaps for voucher holders will be on Jan. 25 from 1-2 p.m. From 2-3 p.m., the general public can stop by and choose cookbooks.

## Live music

- **Rural Route**, Jan. 25, 6:30-9:30 p.m., Brightside Aleworks, 480 Center Place, Altoona
- **Roseland With Open Drew Fry**, Jan. 25, 9 p.m., Brick & Ivy Rooftop, 400 34th Ave. S.W., Altoona
- **Shock Collar**, Jan. 25, 9 p.m., Hawk Heaven Tavern, 805 17th Ave. S.W., Altoona
- **Clarksville Station**, Jan. 28, 11 a.m., Prairie Meadows Casino, Racetrack and Hotel, 1 Prairie Meadows Drive, Altoona
- **Grind**, Jan. 31, 8 p.m., Prairie Meadows Casino, Racetrack and Hotel, 1 Prairie Meadows Drive, Altoona
- **Jordan Beem**, Jan. 31, 9 p.m., Brick & Ivy Rooftop, 400 34th Ave. S.W., Altoona
- **Heart & Soul - Faith Hill and Tim McGraw Tribute**, Feb. 11, 7 p.m., Prairie Meadows Casino, Racetrack and Hotel. Tickets on sale in the Prairie Meadows Gift Shop.

## Revive, Restore, Renew East Polk County Wellness Expo

Feb. 8, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.  
Terrace Hills Golf & Events Pavilion,  
8700 N.E. 46th Ave., Altoona

Meet local businesses that align with the values of holistic health care at this free event. Experience Flowpresso — the only three-in-one therapeutic device in central Iowa that supports lymphatic movement. Meet local farmers and try their products. Learn how to have cleaner air and water for your home and office. Wake up your body with a morning pilates session. Register to win prizes. The first 50 in the door receive a bag full of goodies from the vendors and sponsors. Sponsored by Wholistic Health Center.



# EVENTS IN THE AREA

To submit calendar items for consideration, send to [tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com](mailto:tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com)

Be sure to check for cancelations.

## DMPA Concert Series

Various dates, 7 p.m.

Temple Theater, 1011 Locust St., Des Moines

Des Moines Performing Arts (DMPA) is excited to announce a new concert series. "Made in the Midwest" highlights the artistry of local musicians in the intimate Temple Theater. Celebrating the talents of independent artists from across our region, guests will enjoy a unique experience where the musicians take center stage in a venue known for its unparalleled acoustic quality.

The series will kick off with five artists just announced.

- Feb. 14: Brad & Kate, pop/folk
- Feb. 15: The Finesse, soul/pop
- March 21: Matt Woods, roots/blues
- April 25: Allegra Hernandez, rock
- May 9: Abbie Sawyer, folk/Americana

The Finesse and Abbie Sawyer will be performing songs from their latest album releases, giving audiences the chance to hear their new music live for the first time. Tickets are on sale now starting at \$20/show. You can purchase tickets by visiting [DMPA.org](http://DMPA.org), calling 515-246-2300, or stopping by the Civic Center Ticket Office at 221 Walnut St. You can also purchase tickets night of at the Temple Theater Ticket Office, 1011 Locust St., starting two hours before a performance.

## 2025 DIG Symposium

March 1

FFA Enrichment Center on the DMACC campus in Ankeny

The 2025 Dig Into Gardening (DIG) Symposium is coming up. Cost is \$85 per person. The symposium will provide attendees research-based gardening and horticulture techniques and best practices, all centered on the theme of "Gardening for Change." This day-long event is open to the public and presented in partnership with the Polk County Master Gardeners and Iowa State University (ISU) Extension and Outreach in Polk County. The DIG Symposium will feature keynote addresses, breakout sessions, and an expansive exhibitor hall. A broad range of experts including local Master Gardener volunteers, ISU specialists and educators, and other local professionals, will be on hand to offer insight and expertise. Lunch is provided. To learn more about the symposium or to become an exhibitor, visit <https://polkcountymastergardeners.org/DIG-Symposium>.



## Vendor Markets

Feb. 15, March 15, April 19, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Outlets of Des Moines, 801 Bass Pro Drive N.W., Suite 315, Altoona

Each show has a variety of vendors from Avon, Living Oils, Small Town Laser, Unicorn Clouds, MJ's Hometown Honey, 3D by LouAnn, Tupperware, Tastefully Simple, Good Vibrations Gems & Crystals, plus others. Come check out the vendors and buy local. If interested in being a vendor, email [k2marketplacemagic@gmail.com](mailto:k2marketplacemagic@gmail.com) for information. ■

## Playhouse classes offered

Various dates

The Des Moines Playhouse, 831 42nd St., Des Moines

The Des Moines Playhouse offers classes year-round for ages 4 through adult. New this winter is an audition workshop for teens and adults. Registration is now open for spring break and spring classes and summer camps. Scholarships are available through the Jeanne Hopson Angel Fund. For class descriptions, registrations and more information, visit [dmplayhouse.com/education/classes-and-camps](http://dmplayhouse.com/education/classes-and-camps).

The Audition Workshop Series for ages 14 through adult will be led by Playhouse Artistic Director Katy Merriman. Held each Saturday in February, sessions will focus on song selection, cold reads, dance auditions with "Waitress" choreographer Kent Zimmerman, and a master class with area directors. Students can sign up for one, two, three or all four sessions.

Spring classes, starting March 2, are focused on musical theatre for pre-K through grade 7.

Spring break finds students in grades 5-8 learning "Seussical Kids," a 35-minute version of the popular Broadway musical, with performances at the end of the week. Students in grades 3-4 will rehearse and perform a play while younger students will use favorite books to create scenes to share.

For more information on Playhouse educational offerings, contact Robin Spahr, Playhouse education director, at [rspahr@dmplayhouse.com](mailto:rspahr@dmplayhouse.com), 515-974-5365.



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## WELLNESS

By Teresa Sieck

# HEALTHY weight-loss journey

## GLP-1 medications for weight loss

GLP-1 is a naturally occurring hormone in the body that plays an important role in metabolism. GLP-1 medications, such as Semaglutide and Tirzepatide, mimic the effects of naturally occurring GLP-1.

### How GLP-1 medications aid weight loss

- GLP-1 agonists reduce hunger by acting on the brain's appetite regulation.
- These medications slow down the rate at which the stomach empties food into the intestines, which helps people feel full for longer periods.
- GLP-1 helps regulate blood sugar levels, which can have indirect benefits on weight management.
- Helps prevent the liver from producing too much glucose.
- GLP-1 medications are most effective when used with a healthy diet and regular physical activity.
- Clinical trials have shown that GLP-1 medications can lead to substantial weight loss. In the case of Semaglutide, patients have experienced an average weight loss of 15%-20% of their body weight over the course of 6-12 months.

When considering GLP-1 medication for weight loss, be sure to talk to your healthcare provider to understand the benefits and risks. ■

Information provided by Teresa Sieck MPAS, PA-C, PhD, Luxe Medical Spa and Aesthetics, 88 Paine Circle S.E., Suite 7, Bondurant, 515-630-8637, [www.luxemedicalspa.net](http://www.luxemedicalspa.net).



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## HEALTH

By Ashley Powell

# KICK off the year stress free

Start the new year by prioritizing your peace of mind. Stress and anxiety are two of the most common struggles we face today, but natural remedies like CBD and functional mushrooms offer powerful relief without the harmful side effects of pharmaceuticals.

CBD (cannabidiol) interacts with the body's endocannabinoid system to promote calmness, reduce anxiety and improve overall mood. It can help manage everyday stress, from work pressures to family responsibilities, providing a sense of balance and relaxation. Functional mushrooms like Reishi, often called the "mushroom of immortality," are adaptogens that help the body better handle stress while boosting immune function and promoting a calmer nervous system.

Adding functional mushrooms to your daily routine has never been easier. Whether you choose mushroom hot cocoa for a cozy start to your day, convenient mushroom capsules or gummies, or refreshing mushroom beverages, you can enjoy their stress-reducing benefits in a way that fits your lifestyle. Pairing these with a consistent CBD regimen will help you stay calm, centered and ready to take on the year ahead.

Stop by your locally owned CBD store to learn more about CBD, THC, functional mushrooms, and how they can help you stress less and live more. Certified hemp consultants are ready to guide you to the best options for your wellness goals. ■

Information provided by Ashley Powell, CBD American Shaman, 800 S. 50th St., No. 106, West Des Moines, 515-380-5251, and 3418 Eighth St. S.W., No. 3, Altoona, 515-967-4036. References: Project CBD, <https://projectcbd.org/what-is-cbd/cbd-vs-thc/>. Healthline: Medicinal Mushrooms, <https://www.healthline.com/health/food-nutrition/best-medicinal-mushrooms-to-try>



## INCREASE your health potential

A new year brings new possibilities and new opportunities. Take advantage of this fresh start to evaluate your current state of health — physically and emotionally.

What is working, and what needs some work? What were positive changes from the past year, and what needs to be refined moving into the new one? What is the highest priority at this time?

Set an intention for how you can increase your health potential this year. Need some ideas for where to start? These are some categories to evaluate and ideas for habits to incorporate.

- **Movement:** Take a 20-minute walk every day, stretching daily.
  - **Nourishment:** Increase whole food protein intake, add more vegetables to your diet, eliminate added sugar, cut out the soda and energy drinks, drink half your body weight in ounces of water daily, use supplements tailored to your individual needs.
  - **Sleep:** Create a sleep routine, get seven to eight hours each night, no screen time an hour before bed.
  - **Stress management:** Say no to activities and commitments that don't light you up, choose a weekly family activity that doesn't involve electronics, do deep breathing exercises, get outside in nature.
  - **Regulate your nervous system:** Schedule a chiropractic exam with a neurologically focused chiropractor to create a treatment plan to move you from fight or flight to rest and digest so your body and brain can function optimally.
- Think small and sustainable when choosing an intention. Build one habit, and, once you integrate it, choose another. One per month is a great goal to strive for. Depending on your focus, choose a friend or healthcare provider who can walk with you on your health journey for support and accountability. ■

Information provided by Dr. Kari Swain and Dr. Elizabeth Ellrich, Swain Chiropractic, 410 Center Place S.W., Altoona, 515-967-9300.

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## TIPS for rosacea

Rosacea is a common skin condition characterized by redness, visible blood vessels and, sometimes, acne-like breakouts, often triggered by environmental factors, stress or certain skincare products. When managing rosacea, choosing gentle, calming ingredients and treatments is key.



### Skincare ingredients for rosacea:

- **Niacinamide:** This anti-inflammatory ingredient helps soothe skin, reduce redness and improve the skin's barrier function.
- **Azelaic Acid:** Known for its antibacterial and anti-inflammatory properties, azelaic acid helps reduce redness, bumps and the appearance of broken blood vessels, making it a popular choice for rosacea sufferers.
- **Green Tea Extract:** Rich in antioxidants, green tea extract can calm the skin, reduce redness and protect against irritation.
- **Ceramides and Hyaluronic Acid:** These ingredients hydrate and strengthen the skin's natural moisture barrier.

### Treatment with IPL and light therapy:

For more advanced cases, Intense Pulsed Light (IPL) therapy can be highly effective. IPL works by targeting blood vessels beneath the skin's surface, reducing redness and flushing over time. It also helps with acne-like rosacea by targeting the bacteria responsible for flareups. Similarly, red light therapy helps stimulate collagen production, improve skin texture and reduce inflammation. Blue light therapy, on the other hand, targets acne-causing bacteria.

These treatments, combined with the right skincare ingredients, can significantly improve rosacea symptoms and enhance skin health. ■

Information provided by Nikki Morgan, DNP, ARNP, SkinFusion FX, 410 Eighth St. S.W., Altoona, 515-967-0587, www.skinfusionfx.com, nikki.skinfusionfx@gmail.com

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# MEET Michelle Hukvari

Teacher librarian enjoys variety of tasks.

After graduating from West Lyon High School, Michelle Hukvari attended the University of Iowa where she earned a degree in music and secondary education and a master's degree in library and information science. Hukvari came to the Southeast Polk Community School District fresh out of her library program. She has just entered her 12th year with the district and currently is a teacher librarian for the Southeast Polk Junior High and High School.



Michelle Hukvari works in the junior high and high school, with students across the grade levels.

"I really like that Southeast Polk is a big enough district to support a wide variety of courses, activities and clubs but still maintains a very strong sense of community," Hukvari says.

As a librarian at the secondary level, Hukvari has a flexible schedule. Although she doesn't have a set rotation of classes, she is able to work with students and teachers when it works best for them. One of her favorite student activities are the weekly book clubs at the junior high. Last year, she was also able to have a library assistant group at the junior high. Students in the group learned how to shelve materials, suggested materials for the library, and helped process and deliver book requests to other students in the building.

"I love the variety of activities that come with my job. Especially being in two buildings, no two days look the same. I might have book clubs, library lessons, book checkout, research classes and staff collaborations all happening in any given week. I love the growth in ability, maturity and independence that I get to see as students move through our junior high and high school buildings," Hukvari says.

One of the biggest challenges Hukvari faces as a librarian is that there are so many options for students to spend their free time, and reading for pleasure can be lower on their to-do list. However, her biggest reward is when her students find a book that really gets them excited about reading. She enjoys the cycle of the school year and watching her students grow and change during the year.

"My own children, Ben and Jana, are Southeast Polk graduates, and they had great teachers who really got to know them, challenging classes that prepared them for their next steps, and friendships they still maintain. I'm grateful to be a part of a district that provides that kind of educational experience," Hukvari says. ■

## Say, "Yes!" to Drinking Less

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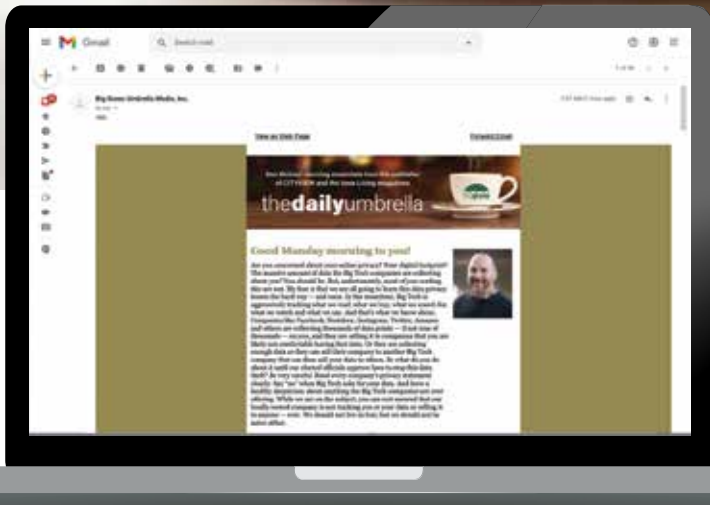
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of CITYVIEW and the Iowa Living magazines.

# HABITS



Most of us want the same things in life. If you asked 100 people in our community what their goals were, you would generally hear the same things: good relationships, good health, good finances, success for my kids. If you are a follower of Jesus, you would add that you want to be close to God. Most of us have the same goals, and yet we have such different results. Why is that?

The difference in results may have less to do with the goals we set and more to do with the habits we embrace. In his book, "Atomic Habits," James Clear writes, "Goals don't determine success. Systems determine success. You don't rise to the level of your goals. You fall to the level of your systems." In other words, without the right systems or habits in our lives, goals are rarely accomplished.

So, what do you want in life? And do you have a set of habits to get there?

When you look at Jesus, his goal was to accomplish the purposes of God. Behind that you find a set of habits that empowered that goal. A physician named Luke wrote this about Jesus: "The news about him spread all the more, so that crowds of people came to hear him and to be healed of their sicknesses. But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed" (Luke 5:15-16). Jesus was bombarded with demands on his time and energy, yet there were habits he prioritized (like praying in solitude) that empowered the work he was called to. Never underestimate the power of a small habit to make a big impact. What is one habit that will empower you in the right direction?

Jesus is not only a great example of good habits, he is also the source of power to make those changes in our lives. If you are like me, you can relate to the Apostle Paul's frustration in trying to live well. He wrote, "I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do" (Romans 7:15). Can you relate? So often we have the best intentions and yet fail so miserably.

Paul goes on to ask, "Who will rescue me from this body of death?" (Romans 7:24). Who will rescue you and me from all our failed attempts at a better life? "Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (Romans 7:25) writes Paul. It is Jesus who has come to rescue us and to set us free. He loves us and accepts us even in our failures. Therefore, as we seek to create new habits that make a difference, we do so not to be loved, but because we are loved so much. ■

Information provided by Pastor Nathan Anenson, Lutheran Church of the Cross, 1701 Eighth St. S.W., Altoona, 515-967-4818.

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# KICKING off 2025

A new year of opportunity for small businesses and the chamber community

As we step into 2025, the start of a new year brings fresh opportunities for growth, collaboration and success for small businesses and our local chamber.

The beginning of the year is the perfect time for reflection and planning. As small business owners, take the time to evaluate your goals, fine-tune your strategies and identify areas for improvement. Whether it's expanding your customer base, refining your marketing efforts or diversifying your services, 2025 offers a clean slate to grow and evolve. Consider embracing new technologies, exploring innovative partnerships and engaging more with your local community to stay ahead of the curve.

The chamber remains a vital resource for small businesses in fostering growth and creating valuable connections. This year, take full advantage of the many services the chamber offers: Networking events, Business 101 classes, community events and Perk Before Work are just a few examples. The chamber also has committees you can join to be more involved as we are always looking for great ideas that will continue to strengthen our community. The power of collaboration cannot be overstated. By supporting one another, we create a stronger, more vibrant economy for everyone.

Looking ahead, there are endless possibilities for growth, collaboration and success. The chamber is here to help you navigate the year ahead and unlock your business' full potential. Together, we can make this year one of innovation, connection and prosperity.

Let's embrace the new year with determination, optimism and a renewed sense of purpose. Here's to a successful 2025 for all our small businesses and the community that supports them.

Happy New Year! ■

Information provided by Amy Ferguson, 2025 President of the Altoona Area Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors.




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# OUT & ABOUT



Mike Hamilton at Perk Before Work, which was hosted by East Polk Rotary on Jan. 7 at Lutheran Church of the Cross.



Marie Pipes and Curt Gause at Perk Before Work, which was hosted by East Polk Rotary on Jan. 7 at Lutheran Church of the Cross.



Rick Kroeger, Kyle Lee and Craig Buma at Perk Before Work, which was hosted by East Polk Rotary on Jan. 7 at Lutheran Church of the Cross.



Jon Yesulis and Kaylie Fields at Perk Before Work, which was hosted by East Polk Rotary on Jan. 7 at Lutheran Church of the Cross.



Norma Bettis and Rick Kroeger at Perk Before Work, which was hosted by East Polk Rotary on Jan. 7 at Lutheran Church of the Cross.



James Tounsley wishes everyone a happy New Year from the Outlets of Des Moines.



Melissa Harnan wishes everyone a happy New Year from the Outlets of Des Moines.



Mandy and Hudson Ounlokham wish everyone a happy New Year from the Outlets of Des Moines.



Jared Mueller wishes everyone a happy New Year from the Outlets of Des Moines.



Lily Ladehoff, Mariyah Johnson, Brodee Swank and Lucas Johnson wish everyone a happy New Year from the Outlets of Des Moines.



Becky Brehm wishes everyone a happy New Year from the Outlets of Des Moines.



Eliza, Hazel and Linda Vinchattle wish everyone a happy New Year from the Outlets of Des Moines.



# OUT & ABOUT



Front row: Laurel Swanson, Tammie Dixon, Shelley Herrin, Joyce Ingram, and, back row: Nathan Anenson, Eli Suddarth, Luke Berry, Brad Hallberg and Chris Vorrie accept the Residents' Choice certificates for Nathan Anenson, voted favorite eastern Polk County pastor; Lutheran Church of the Cross, voted favorite eastern Polk County church; and Church of the Cross Preschool, voted favorite eastern Polk County preschool/daycare.



Azra Kolz, Nikki Barkhaus, Johanna Hayes and Suzanne Friedrichson accept the Residents' Choice certificate for Wholistic Health Center, voted favorite eastern Polk County place for alternative medicine.



Jason Crooks and Lindsay McMullen accept the Residents' Choice certificate for Ted's Body Shop, voted favorite eastern Polk County auto body shop.



Dr. Marcus Dawson accepts the Residents' Choice certificate for Dawson Chiropractic, voted favorite eastern Polk County chiropractic office.



Richard Arndt and Joseph Gillie accept the Residents' Choice certificate for Truman's Automotive & ADAS Calibrations, voted one of the favorite Eastern Polk County places for auto service.



Julia Stevens wishes everyone a happy New Year from the Outlets of Des Moines.



Catherine Nelson wishes everyone a happy New Year from the Outlets of Des Moines.



Lou and Don Krueger wish everyone a happy New Year from the Outlets of Des Moines.



Akouvi Noglo wishes everyone a happy New Year from the Outlets of Des Moines.



Lisa Elrod wishes everyone a happy New Year from the Outlets of Des Moines.



Brandon Sanchez wishes everyone a happy New Year from the Outlets of Des Moines.



Jacob Estrella wishes everyone a happy New Year from the Outlets of Des Moines.

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