

NORTH POLK

AUGUST 2025

Living

MAGAZINE

CAMPING FUN

Residents share the joy
of traveling with RVs.

Meet Laura Sarchet

EDUCATION

Mom's chicken salad

RECIPE

Friends fundraise for Miller Park

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Back to School

back to house hunting

We're soaking up those last summer nights in Polk City, but the school year is already peeking around the corner. For many families, that means one thing, it's time to get settled before the first day of school.

If you're selling, this is your moment to shine. Show off what makes your home perfect for school-year living, maybe it's the quick walk to the playground, a great space for homework, or being in a district families love. If you're buying, now's the time to focus on neighborhoods with the right mix of strong schools, easy commutes, and a sense of community.

August is special here. It's a mix of summer memories and fresh starts and it just might be the month you find your next home.



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Small steps can make it big impact for a smooth start the school year:

- ✓ Visit your child's school ahead of time
- ✓ Start the school sleep routine now
- ✓ Talk about the fun parts of school
- ✓ Plan quiet after-school time — tutoring, library storytime, or crafts

WELCOME

ADVENTURES in camping

"Sorry, folks. Park's closed. The moose out front should have told you."

Those lines from actor John Candy in the 1983 hit movie "National Lampoon's Vacation" were echoing in my brain as we pulled away from Mahoney State Park in Nebraska a few decades ago. Jolene and I drove about an hour to this campsite with our three young daughters, all packed in a minivan with a large tent, sleeping bags and more camping gear than any family could ever need.

But, I didn't make reservations, and the campsite was full. It was after 7 p.m. on a Friday night, and, one way or another, we were going camping. I asked the friendly guard at the gate if he could recommend another campground. He suggested one just down the road, and we immediately trucked the minivan to it.

We were in luck, as this campground had a few open spots. We all smiled as we pulled up to our site, only to open the doors and hear the deafening roar of stock car engines coming from a nearby race track. It wasn't the peaceful evening around the campfire we envisioned, but we made the best of it and pitched our tent, filled our air mattresses and rolled out the sleeping bags.

Eventually, the races ended — just in time for the rain to start. We huddled together as the wind whipped our tent around and the rain seeped inside. In time, we fell asleep, only to be awakened by the cold rain that flowed over our now-deflated air mattresses and into our sleeping bags. So, at midnight, I hastily packed up the family and our soaking-wet belongings and took the drive back home.

That was the end of our tent-camping adventures. Not too much later, we bought a pop-up camper. Then, we sold that and upgraded to a travel trailer. Then, we sold that and purchased a different travel trailer. Then, we sold that and dished out for a class C motorhome, which we still have today — along with that same aforementioned tent. With all the kids out of the house today, neither one gets used much now, but we still have many wonderful memories of RV camping and one not-so-wonderful memory in a tent.

In this month's magazine, we share the stories of local residents who are enjoying life in their RVs and creating camping adventures. You can bet that they make campground reservations in advance.

Thanks for reading. ■

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CAMPING FUN

By Lindsey Giardino

Sitting around a campfire, toasting s'mores, telling stories and visiting with friends and family after a day of enjoying nature and exploring the big outdoors. Ah, the joys of camping! And you don't have to hike into the woods — covered in bug spray — and pitch a tent to partake in the fun. Those who prefer to make the trip with a camper share why they like to have some of the conveniences of home — bed, bathroom, air conditioner and more — on the trip with them.

Residents share the joy of traveling with RVs.

The Stringer family seeks time outdoors and regularly takes camping trips.

A camper, a playlist and a picnic

"I grew up camping and loved it," Mickie Stringer shares. "I knew I always wanted to do the same with my family, but my childhood stories are what inspired my husband."

Getting a camper wasn't something Adam ever considered, but hearing his wife's childhood memories convinced him otherwise.

The Stringers started by tent camping together, but once they had their son, they decided a camper would be a better option. In 2018, they officially made their purchase.

Since then, the family typically takes trips two to three weekends a month, most often to spots within an hour of Polk City.

The Stringers' favorite, more distant place they have visited is the Black Hills in South Dakota.

"The landscape was just so beautiful there, and we hit up some fun touristy spots along the way," she shares.

For each trip in their camper, Stringer usually books months in advance. Occasionally, if they find themselves with a free weekend, they will be spontaneous and go tent camping instead.

"We like lazy mornings when camping," Stringer shares. "We like to pack a picnic lunch and take it on a hike or bike ride."

Afternoons and evenings usually include yard games, grilling, listening to their camping playlist, and ending the night with a movie by the fire.

Over the years, the Stringers have become pros at weather prep, packing list creation, coming up with inventive food ideas, and organizing fun activities like scavenger hunts or science projects for their son. For those new to camping with a camper, Stringer encourages not worrying about what you don't know.

"If you're struggling, there are so many nice people willing to help you out," she says. "Starting out, the scariest thing is winterizing/de-winterizing. YouTube is your friend."

Stringer notes that their must-haves when they take the camper out include an outdoor rug, LED lights, chairs, some firewood and a speaker.

While the best part of camping is simply being together as a family — or with friends who join them — Stringer has also appreciated the connections they have made with other



The Stringer family includes their cat, Alfie, in their camping fun.

families at campsites.

"We have friends we make a point to get together with every year," she says. "Everyone is friendly camping, though. It's a great community that we love."



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Exploring in Serenity

When Ben Prohl and his wife bought their pop-up camper during the COVID-19 pandemic, they did it to spend more time in nature and make memories together as a family.

Since then, the Prohls and their three children have pulled their camper, affectionately named Serenity, across thousands of miles and seven states.

“We like to explore,” Prohl says.

And explore they have — from local favorites like Acorn Valley Campground at Saylorville Lake and Jester Park near Granger to more distant places like the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, the Boundary Waters, the Rockies and the Ozarks, where their then-4-year-old son dubbed the destination “Lake of Noah’s Ark.”

Camping was part of Prohl’s childhood, but not his wife’s. When they started their family, the couple met in the middle with a camper, which offered immersion in nature but also allowed for creature comforts.

“It’s really a middle ground of camping,” Prohl says.

Their pop-up offers the best of both worlds; it’s off the ground but not walled off. They can



The Prohls and their three children have pulled their camper, affectionately named Serenity, across thousands of miles and seven states.

plug it in if they desire, stay dry, and sleep on memory foam mattresses, but the canvas slides provide a tent atmosphere.

Even when they are not plugged in, the Prohls enjoy simple comforts: flashlights, fresh air, and the sound of crickets through screened sides. The camper even has its own toilet, meaning no late-night hikes to a campground bathroom.

More than anything, the camper has become a constant in their children’s lives.

“Our oldest was 2 when we got Serenity,” Prohl says. “Now they’re 7, 5 and 3, and they

love to go camping.”

They have started a tradition of collecting bumper stickers from each place they visit and sticking them inside the camper.

“They’re memorials of where we camped,” Prohl says.

The camper itself came from a seller in Runnells who was upgrading his setup. The Prohls found it on Facebook Marketplace and got a great deal — and it was in good condition. Since then, they have done a bit of renovation to make it feel even more like their own.

When people ask for advice about buying



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a camper, Prohl encourages families to think carefully. What are your goals? What do you want out of it?

"We appreciate nature and want to be as close to nature as we can," he says. "I know there are other people who appreciate the hotel-on-wheels feel of larger RVs or fifth wheels."

For the Prohls, the right balance was somewhere in between.

"Some people want to be near nature and still have the comforts of indoor plumbing and a full kitchenette," he says. "So, make a list of goals and what you want from your trip."

He also recommends borrowing a camper or doing a trial run before committing.

"Have your eyes wide open to what works best for you and your family," Prohl shares.

For Prohl and his family, camping is about disconnection and presence.

"We're always near screens or gadgets," he says. "Nature gives us so many things to experience and explore if you just look outside for it."

And, for the Prohls, the next adventure is never far away.

"Our favorite place is wherever we're going next."

Campfire cooking outside the RV

For Micky Houseman and her husband, Jeff, camping is a part of life.

"It's just something we've done all our lives," Houseman says.

Both of them were raised taking summer



The Housemans now have a 35-foot Thor Palazzo diesel pusher motorhome, which provides the comforts they want on their camping trips.

camping trips with their families. When they had children of their own, they kept the tradition going, starting with tent camping, then upgrading to a travel trailer, a fifth wheel and, now, a 35-foot Thor Palazzo diesel pusher motorhome.

With their kids now grown and out of the house, the Housemans are enjoying a new chapter of adventure together. The motorhome gives them the freedom to take longer trips and brings with it a level of comfort and self-sufficiency they didn't have before.

"I'm still in my own environment,"

Houseman says.

With a king-size bed, private shower, and washer/dryer, she doesn't have to rely on hotel rooms or campground facilities.

The couple typically stays local around the Saylorville Lake area, but they take one or two longer trips each year. This summer, they headed to the Black Hills in South Dakota. Last year, it was Estes Park, Colorado. The year before that, New Orleans.

"It's fun to take that drive," Houseman says.



"Part of a vacation is getting there — having fun and all the things you can see along the way."

One of her favorite memories? Waking up to elk right outside their camper each morning while parked near the entrance to Rocky Mountain National Park.

"That was pretty fantastic," she recalls.

Houseman also enjoys the simple pleasures of RV life, especially cooking outdoors over a campfire. It's something that relaxes her, she says, noting how the smell and setting help her truly unwind.

Preparation is part of the fun, too. In the summer months, Houseman keeps hygiene products, clothing, towels and other necessities stocked in the camper. Before each trip, she creates a food menu, makes sure to pack bug spray, and loads up the fridge and pantry.

"We love nature, so any time we can be out in it, we love it and respect it," she says.

For Houseman, RV life isn't just about where they go, but about the memories they make getting there. ■

TYPES OF RVs

Class A motorhomes: Largest drivable RVs, often associated with luxury and comfort. Their large bus frames are built on a truck chassis, providing RV manufacturers with the flexibility to make heavier and more spacious RVs.

Class B motorhomes: Smallest drivable RVs on the market. Also called campervans, they are nimble enough to fit in standard parking spaces yet big enough to have small kitchens, a flexible living and sleeping area, and sometimes even toilets and showers.

Class C motorhomes: Built on a van chassis with the living space constructed around the cab. Usually, the signature cab-over bed serves as a secondary sleeping space. These small motorhomes transform into comfortable living spaces when parked at the campground — especially those that come with one or more slide outs.

Fifth wheels: The largest towable RVs. A fifth wheel connects a pin-box from the

front of the trailer to a u-shaped coupling mounted in a truck bed. Amenities like multiple slide outs, an outdoor kitchen, extendable patio, reclining chairs, office space and a kitchen island help make fifth wheels some of the most comfortable and luxurious trailers.

Toy haulers: An RV type all their own because of their garages. Toy haulers have living areas and a multi-purpose utility space designed to carry motorcycles, off-road utility vehicles, kayaks, dirt bikes, or other toys inside of the RV.

Travel trailers: The most popular RVs on the market because they are versatile and come in many different lengths and weights. Larger travel trailers may have slide outs and separate living and sleeping quarters and amenities like a bunkhouse or outdoor kitchen. To tow a travel trailer, you must have a tow vehicle with a sufficient tow rating and a hitch installed to connect

the trailer.

Pop-up campers: Hybrid RV tents. When the pop-up camper is in camping mode, the tent section of the trailer extends to provide more headroom, sleeping space and zippable sides and windows. People often choose pop-up campers because they are lightweight and easy to tow.

Tiny travel trailers: Sometimes called micro trailers, these have small and flexible living spaces. Tiny travel trailers include teardrop, fiberglass, clamshell and some smaller pop-ups. They are lightweight, and smaller SUVs and trucks can tow them.

Truck campers: Sit in the bed of a pickup truck, and, because of weight, they almost always require a one-ton or a dually (dual rear-wheel) truck. They range from lightweight with pop-up roof to more luxurious models with slide outs.

Find additional information at www.rvezy.com/blog/rv-types.

WHAT IS enough?

Rethinking success in the last chapter

We spend most of our lives striving for a career, a family, a home, financial security, or the approval of others. Somewhere along the way, success starts to look like a moving target. The goals shift, and so does our definition of what matters. As the pace of life slows, and we begin to reflect more than we reach, a deeper question begins to surface: What is enough?

It is a question many older adults quietly carry, especially when roles shift, health fades, or the loss of someone close brings life into sharper focus. In those moments, it can be easy to wonder, What is my purpose now? The world tends to reward productivity and accomplishment, but our worth was never meant to be measured by titles or achievements. We were created for something deeper.

There's a kind of peace that settles in when



we stop chasing the old definitions of success. You start to notice it in simple things such as sharing a story over lunch, showing up for your family, or remembering someone's name when no one else does. Those little moments might not come with praise, but they matter. They last.

I often meet people who worry that they no longer have anything to offer. But I see it differently. I see a generation shaped by trials and time, carrying a kind of wisdom that cannot be rushed. Their lives speak of quiet faithfulness, patient endurance, and the kind of care that shows up even when no one is watching. These qualities may not make headlines, but they bear the kind of fruit that lasts.

Sometimes enough isn't found in what we do, but rather in who we're becoming along the way. You start to see it in contentment, in learning to be OK with where things are currently at. You feel it in gratitude for what you have been through. You hear it when you offer a word of encouragement to someone younger who is still finding their footing.

So, maybe the invitation is not to do more, but to pause long enough to notice what already holds value. Whether you are in the thick of building your life or just beginning to reflect on what you've built, take a moment to ask yourself what truly lasts. The answer may not change your pace, but it might just change your direction.

We were not made to chase endlessly. We were made to live meaningfully by enriching the lives of others. Our purpose calls us to recognize where we have been and use that experience to make the most of where we are. What matters most is not mourning the loss of what was but choosing to let our past shape how we care for those around us, even in small ways. Sometimes, the richest kind of success shows up right where we are. ■

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HOSPICE care focuses on quality of time spent together

For James' family, early fall had always meant tradition — a time to slow down, take in the changing colors, and gather for their annual apple orchard trip.

But last year was different. James's health was declining after a long journey with heart failure and COPD. Though he still looked forward to time with his family, he and his wife, Denise, weren't sure how he could fully take part in the outings they had always enjoyed.

Support from an in-home hospice team helped shift the focus from what James couldn't do to what he still could, giving the family space to create meaningful moments in a season they all cherished.

"Hospice began caring for James in late August," Denise recalls. "They helped manage his symptoms, and he was able to join us at the orchard one last time. That afternoon was



something special — peaceful, joyful. A real memory."

When you're exploring hospice care for someone you love, it may feel difficult to associate it with the idea of living. But that's exactly what hospice is meant to support: living well, with dignity and comfort, even as health declines.

Hospice care isn't one-size-fits-all. It can be provided at home, on a dedicated hospice campus, or as part of a blended approach — and the right option depends on your family's unique situation.

Whatever model you consider, an important question to ask is: "How can the care I'm looking for help my loved one live more fully during this time?"

Many people are surprised to learn that hospice can begin earlier than they think — as soon as a person is diagnosed with a life-limiting illness. Studies show that individuals who receive hospice care early experience greater comfort and improved quality of life. In fact, 80% of Americans say they would prefer to die at home, yet only about 30% do — and hospice can help

close that gap.

If you're supporting a loved one through serious illness, think about how you want the two of you to spend time together. Hospice providers often deliver care right in the home, helping preserve daily routines while supporting the person and their family.

Reaching out to a hospice team can feel daunting, but please keep in mind that compassionate, expert care can ease the burden and help families create moments of connection — especially during cherished seasonal traditions.

"Once hospice was involved, we could focus on the time we had," Denise says. "We didn't know how much we were holding until we could let go of the stress. That fall was a gift." ■

Aaron Wheeler is Vice President of Home and Community-Based Services for WesleyLife, which provides health and well-being services, including WellAhead — A WesleyLife Well-Being Experience, a CC@H offering. To learn more, visit wesleylife.org/wellahead.

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EASY curb appeal ideas

When you're putting your home on the market, first impressions aren't optional — they're critical. A buyer might scroll past your listing or drive away if your exterior lacks appeal. The good news? Boosting curb appeal doesn't require a major renovation.

1. Start with a clean slate: Before adding anything new, remove what doesn't belong. Power-wash the driveway, sidewalks, siding and porch. Clean windows until they sparkle. Trim back overgrown shrubs and trees and edge the lawn.

2. Upgrade the front door: Your front door is a focal point — treat it that way. Repaint it in a bold, welcoming color like deep red, navy or classic black. Swap out worn hardware with something stylish.

3. Layer in fresh greenery: Curb appeal is about life and vibrancy. Add symmetrical planters to your entry, refresh flower beds with mulch.

4. Modernize the details: Update your house numbers, exterior lights and mailbox. These are small touches that create a cohesive, updated look buyers notice — even if subconsciously.

5. Add a personal, inviting touch: Think new welcome mat, seasonal wreath, or a cozy chair on the porch. These small, intentional details make your home feel warm, lived-in, and loved.

A weekend's worth of work could make the difference between a showing and a sale. ■

Information provided by Jacquelyn Duke REALTOR®, CRS, e-PRO, Realty One Group Impact, 617 S.W. Third St., Ankeny, IA 50023, 515-240-7483, jacquelyn@sellingcentraliowa.com, www.SellingCentralIowa.com.



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DOES THE 4% rule still make sense?

You may have heard of the "4% rule" when it comes to retirement. After you retire, you withdraw 4% of your retirement savings each year.

The truth is, the 4% rule should be viewed as a guide — not as a strict rule. For example, the rule is based on retiring at age 65. If you retire earlier, you may want a lower withdrawal rate. Your lifestyle also matters. Are you planning to travel the world or spend more time at home?

Consider inflation as well. A well-built strategy usually includes small annual increases in withdrawals. But you don't need to take a raise just because the calendar says so.

So, stay flexible and revisit your plan of withdrawals regularly. That will give you the best shot at a secure, fulfilling retirement. ■

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FRIENDS fundraise for Miller Park

New tennis and pickleball courts completed.



Donors who helped fund the renovation of the Miller Park tennis and pickleball courts gathered after the project was completed.

When a park in Polk City needs updated amenities, the Parks Department reaches out to friends. The Polk City Friends of the Parks, that is.

Recently, the Polk City Friends of the Parks assisted with funding a resurfacing project at Miller Park Courts, which included two tennis courts and pickleball court.

In July, they completed the project, raising \$40,000 for the renovation. The park now includes two tennis courts and four pickleball courts.

Jessica Faue, Friends board president, says the upgrade was needed. The original court was built in the 1980s, with two tennis courts and one pickleball court.

"There were dead spots on the court, and the surfaces were cracking over the years. It wasn't a great playing surface," she explains.

With the popularity of pickleball, the board

chose to refurbish the courts. The city also pitched in, along with other local and corporate donors.

The Friends group is a non-profit established in 2022. Its mission is to support the parks and park amenities.

"The city money and budget doesn't go far for the parks," Faue says. "We help to bridge the gap and try to get something for all of the parks in Polk City."

The board of 12 meets monthly to discuss projects. The first year, the group raised \$10,000 for a shade structure in Leonard Park. Other park projects included a bike rack, Kiwanis Park ice rink, tree planting, scoreboards and more.

Faue has lived in Polk City since 2017. She formerly worked with the Friends of Des Moines Parks and wanted to do something closer to home. She reached out to the parks and rec director to see how she could assist with parks.

She explains her passion for greenspaces.

"I have two kids, and we spend a lot of time in parks and on trails. I know how much the parks are being used," she says.

The group's fundraising efforts consist of an Earth Day 5k, Oktoberfest bike ride, Brews in the Barn and others.

Faue encourages people with park ideas to reach out to the organization.

"We're always gathering information about what people want. We're working with the parks and rec director to keep up with our Polk City parks," she says.

Polk City Friends of the Parks is hosting a Brews in the Barn on Sept. 18 at the Moeckly Barn in Polk City. For more information on tickets, fundraising events, park ideas or to donate, visit the group's Facebook page or the website at www.polkcityfriendsoftheparks.com/home. ■

ESTATE planning: inheritance tax changes

Are you worried about your family paying taxes when you die? There is some good news that can affect your estate planning.

Every estate is liable for a few different kinds of tax. Whether it is federal estate tax, income tax, inheritance tax or capital gains tax, your heirs may be writing checks to the government. Iowa was one of six states that had inheritance tax. But Iowa has now phased out its inheritance tax law with a complete exemption effective Jan. 1, 2025.

In general, inheritance isn't taxed as income; you won't pay income tax on a bequest. But when you inherit money or property from someone, you potentially owe tax to the state of Iowa. Some beneficiaries have always been exempt: a spouse, children,



stepchildren, grandchildren and parents all have a 100% exemption from inheritance tax.

Other beneficiaries previously had no exemption, like siblings, sons- or daughters-in-law, nieces and nephews, and friends. The tax rate could be as much as 15%. For this reason, some clients avoided leaving money to individuals because of the negative tax implications.

Legislation changed this in 2021 by phasing out the inheritance tax. For deaths occurring in 2021, the tax rate was reduced by 20%. The rate continued to be reduced by 20% each subsequent year until Jan. 1, 2025, when the exclusion became 100%.

Now, no inheritance tax will be owed for individuals dying after Jan. 1, 2025, regardless of the relationship of the beneficiary.

Inheritance tax is still in effect — at the reduced rates — for deaths prior to 2025. The phase-out was not retroactive.

This change to the law presents an estate-planning opportunity for many clients. Clients can include a sibling or beloved son-in-law or daughter-in-law in their will or trust without worrying that the state of Iowa will take some of the inheritance. Nieces and nephews are now viable beneficiaries, without the risk of having tax imposed.

Your legacy to your loved ones can now be more inclusive. Many clients are now looking at their options for revising and updating their estate planning documents. If you have a last will and testament or a revocable trust and would like to include new beneficiaries, make sure that you contact an attorney who specializes in estate planning and who understands the new tax laws. ■

Information provided by Ross Barnett, Abendroth Russell Barnett Law Firm, 2560 73rd St., Urbandale, 515-278-0623, www.ARPCLaw.com.

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WELLNESS plans

A smart way to care for pets — and your wallet

As pet owners, we all want to give our furry kiddos the best life possible — good food, lots of love, and high-quality veterinary care. But with rising costs and no end in sight, balancing what our pets need with a monthly budget can feel a little tricky. Fortunately, there is an increasingly available option that helps take the sting out of routine expenses: veterinary wellness plans.



Wellness plans bundle discounted preventive services — like exams, vaccines, lab work, and more — into one predictable monthly payment. They're designed to make it easier to budget for the care your pet needs throughout the year, rather than facing a big bill all at once during annual visits. Types of plans, customization and cancellation policies vary by clinic, so it's important to look closely

at what's included (and what's not) to be sure it fits your pet's needs.

“Is this like pet insurance?”

Not quite—but they work well together.

Wellness plans cover routine and preventive care, helping you stay on top of things like vaccines, parasite prevention and checkups. Pet insurance, by contrast, is designed for unexpected things like illnesses, injuries, emergency surgeries or sudden diagnostics. With insurance, you typically pay the full vet bill up front then submit a claim for reimbursement, while, with wellness plans, you pay the same amount each month over a year rather than one big bill and use the services when the pet is due. So, while wellness plans and insurance serve different purposes, together they can give you a fuller safety net — covering both the “everyday essentials” and the “just-in-case” moments.

One of the biggest advantages of wellness

plans is that they encourage regular checkups and preventive care — things that are easy to put off when life gets busy or budgets are tight. But staying on top of those routine visits often means catching little issues before they become big (and more expensive) ones. That kind of consistent care can lead to better outcomes, healthier pets, and fewer surprises down the road.

As costs continue to rise and the economy remains unpredictable, wellness plans can be a smart way to manage your pet's care — whether you are new to pet parenthood or have years of experience under your belt. If you are curious about how they work, your veterinary team can walk you through the details and help you decide if a plan fits your pet's needs and your budget. ■

Information provided by Dr. Amanda Gigler, Ankeny Animal & Avian Clinic, 742 S. Ankeny Blvd., Ankeny, 515-964-7387, amandagigler@ankenyanimal.com

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YOUR LOCAL VET

Dr. Jess Kelly

1. Do you have a special area of interest?

I'm passionate about working with exotic animals — whether it's parrots, rabbits, guinea pigs, or beyond. Helping expand care for these often-overlooked species is something I deeply value.

2. What's one tip you wish every pet owner knew?

I wish every pet owner knew the importance of monthly flea, tick, and heartworm prevention! Prevention is an easy, safe and effective way to protect your pet's health and quality of life — and your own peace of mind.

3. What do you love most about the bond between pets and their people?

I love how deeply genuine and unconditional the bond is. Pets aren't just animals — they are family, companions, and emotional support. I see firsthand how they bring comfort, routine, and joy into their owner's lives, often during their most vulnerable moments. It's a privilege to help people care for those who mean the world to them.



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MORE than a secretary

Sarchet builds connections at North Polk High.

Laura Sarchet has a “teacher’s heart” and wanted to work with kids. She went to college for elementary education with a special education endorsement, but, after graduating, she began a career in finance until she and her husband, Rob, decided she would stay home while their three girls were young.



Laura Sarchet with her husband and daughters.

When her daughters started school at North Polk, Sarchet volunteered in their classrooms and began subbing as a paraeducator at the elementary level.

“I just loved being with the kids but also having the freedom and opportunity to be with my girls during those early years of development,” she explains.

After nine years as a stay-at-home mom, Sarchet was ready to reenter the workforce. She spent three years as office coordinator at North Polk Family Medicine before taking a position at North Polk High School as an administrative assistant — a role that initially appealed to her because it allowed her to work in the same schools her children attended.

“I am starting my third school year this fall and love interacting with all the staff, students and families,” Sarchet shares. “I love that my days are never the same. This role is fast-paced with a variety of responsibilities, and I get to use my problem-solving and communication skills daily to, hopefully, make a meaningful impact with our students and staff.”

As administrative assistant, Sarchet manages attendance, fields phone calls, greets and assists students, and prepares and distributes school-wide communications. In addition to these responsibilities, she supports administrators and teachers with scheduling, communication and documentation.

“Although not specifically in my job description, I love to step in and help with our activities department and support school events, special programs and extracurricular activities,” she adds.

And while Sarchet enjoys keeping things organized and running smoothly, what she truly appreciates are the social interactions.

“I love seeing the kids come through each morning, being able to congratulate them on accomplishments they have had through school activities or connecting on a more personal level and being able to follow up on a family member in the hospital or being the first to notice their new haircut or color,” she says. “I look at this job as my mission field — a way to share God’s love to the community through personal connections.”

Sarchet often finds herself looking at the high school students through a mother’s lens.

“I am not their mother, I am just a secretary in their eyes, but I want them to know that I truly care for each and every one of them,” she says.

Outside of work, Sarchet stays busy running her daughters to their various activities. If they aren’t at the ballfields or on the pitch, they are usually at home or spending time with friends and family. ■

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MOM'S Chicken Salad

Lately, I've been hooked on chicken salad — making a fresh batch every week for quick, satisfying lunches and the occasional no-fuss dinner. It is incredibly convenient to have a flavorful, ready-to-eat meal waiting in the fridge. I love its versatility, too, as it is perfect to pile on toast, toss over greens, or simply enjoy by the spoonful.



This version (I can't really call it a recipe) is more of a method passed down from my mother. She never measured anything, but just added a bit of this and a scoop of that, adjusting as she tasted. I have kept that spirit but added a few of my own touches along the way. I sometimes swap out the mayo for Greek yogurt, skip the onions (some family members are not fans), and change up the nuts depending on what I have on hand. I also ditched the sugar in favor of honey or a splash of lemon juice for brightness. Personally, I leave out mustard — but if you love that tangy kick, try stirring in a tablespoon of Dijon for a bold, earthy note.

It's a flexible formula that can be adjusted to your tastes — and your family's. Enjoy! ■

Information provided by Jolene Goodman, vice president of Big Green Umbrella Media.

Lois' Chicken Salad

Ingredients:

- 3 cups chicken, diced
- ½-1 cup celery, diced
- ¼-½ cup onion, minced (optional)
- ½-1 cup of red grapes, cut in half (or use mandarin oranges)
- ¼-¾ cup pecans, chopped (or use walnuts or almonds)
- 2 tablespoons honey (or a splash of lemon juice)
- 1-1/4 cup mayonnaise (or low-fat Greek yogurt), add more if needed
- ¼ teaspoon garlic powder
- ¼ teaspoon pepper
- ½ teaspoon salt

Directions

- Add first five ingredients to a medium-sized bowl. In a smaller bowl, combine the last 5 ingredients and add to the first bowl. Mix. Chill for one to two hours so flavors blend. Enjoy on bread, toast, bed of greens or on its own. Makes six to eight servings.



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NORTH POLK COMETS

FALL SCHEDULE 2025

VARSITY CROSS COUNTY - GIRLS

DATE	OPPONENT	TIME	LOCATION
8/28/25	Multiple	4:30 PM	Marshalltown Comm College
9/4/25	Multiple	6:00 PM	Pine Lake Country Club
9/11/25	Multiple	5:25 PM	ISU XC Course
9/15/25	Multiple	5:10 PM	Ballard Golf & Country Club
9/25/25	Multiple	5:10 PM	River Bend Golf Course
10/6/25	Multiple	5:00 PM	North Polk HS
10/13/25	Multiple	5:00 PM	Bondurant-Farrar HS

VARSITY CROSS COUNTY - BOYS

DATE	OPPONENT	TIME	LOCATION
8/28/25	Multiple	4:30 PM	Marshalltown Comm College
9/4/25	Multiple	6:45 PM	Pine Lake Country Club
9/11/25	Multiple	5:00 PM	ISU XC Course
9/15/25	Multiple	6:05 PM	Ballard Golf & Country Club
9/25/25	Multiple	5:50 PM	River Bend Golf Course
10/6/25	Multiple	5:30 PM	North Polk HS
10/13/25	Multiple	5:00 PM	Bondurant-Farrar HS

VARSITY FOOTBALL

DATE	OPPONENT	TIME	LOCATION
8/29/25	@ Lewis Central	7:00 PM	Lewis Central HS
9/5/25	vs Newton	7:00 PM	North Polk HS
9/12/25	vs ADM	7:00 PM	North Polk HS
9/19/25	@ Pella	7:00 PM	Pella HS
9/26/25	vs Ballard	7:00 PM	North Polk HS
10/3/25	@ Bondurant-Farrar	7:00 PM	Bondurant-Farrar HS
10/10/25	vs Des Moines North	7:00 PM	North Polk HS
10/17/25	vs Carlisle	7:00 PM	North Polk HS
10/24/25	@ Gilbert	7:00 PM	Gilbert HS

VARSITY VOLLEYBALL

DATE	OPPONENT	TIME	LOCATION
8/26/25	Multiple	5:00 PM	Ankeny HS
8/30/25	Multiple	8:00 AM	Bondurant-Farrar HS
9/2/25	@ Boone	7:15 PM	Boone HS
9/4/25	Multiple	5:00 PM	Grand View Christian
9/9/25	vs Winterset	7:15 PM	North Polk HS
9/13/25	Multiple	8:00 AM	Southeast Polk HS
9/16/25	@ ADM	7:15 PM	ADM HS North Gym
9/20/25	Multiple	8:30 AM	Ballard HS
9/23/25	vs Carroll	7:15 PM	North Polk HS HS Gym
10/4/25	Multiple	8:00 AM	Urbandale HS South Gym
10/7/25	@ Ballard	7:15 PM	Ballard HS Gym
10/9/25	vs Gilbert	7:15 PM	North Polk HS
10/14/25	@ Bondurant-Farrar	7:15 PM	Bondurant-Farrar HS
10/16/25	vs Carlisle	7:00 PM	North Polk HS

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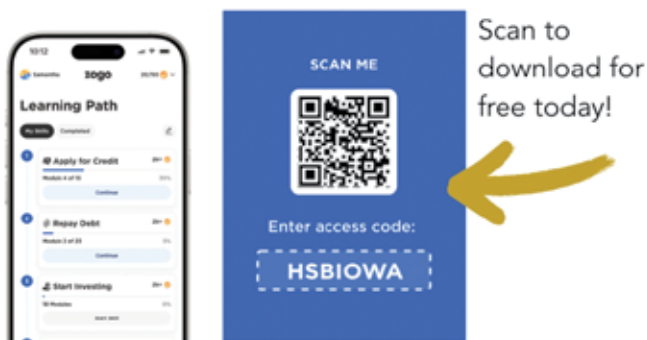
As a part of our commitment to supporting our communities and the members within, we are excited to share our recent donation to the North Polk Community School District. This \$150,000 donation will support our North Polk Comets now, and for many years to come. Go Comets!



GET A HEAD START ON THE SCHOOL YEAR

We wish all our North Polk Comet students, teachers, and staff the best as we approach a new school year!

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Closed: Monday, September 1 for Labor Day

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FINANCE

By Clayton Harreld

BUILDING credit at any age

Building credit is an important part of personal financial management. While it takes time, it is never too late to build good credit so you can have more financial opportunities, like taking out loans, credit cards, or receiving lower interest rates.

There is more than one type of credit, just as there is more than one type of way you can build credit. Understanding both the types and ways you can build credit will make it easier to determine how you should go about increasing your credit score.



Types of credit

- Revolving credit has a specific amount, a minimum monthly payment, and can include interest on any balance leftover. Credit cards are the most common form of revolving credit.
- Student loans, mortgages, car loans, etc., are what we call installment credit. This credit is given in a lump sum and paid back in fixed monthly installments.
- Service credit is credit built when you have an account and pay for monthly services, such as your household utilities and cell phones.

How credit score is determined

Your credit score is determined by five different factors.

- Payment history: The most influential credit factor, lenders want to know if you will pay your debts on time.
- Amounts owed: This factor lets lenders know how much you are relying on debt for your spending.
- Length of credit history: This factor not only considers your oldest to newest credit accounts, but also the length of time for each account.
- Credit mix: While not as important, having a credit mix with different credit types (revolving or installment) can help build your credit up.
- New credit: This factor applies to how often you open new lines of credit.

Building good credit

There are many ways you can start building your credit today. The most common is to open a credit card. Using a credit card to make small, everyday purchases is a good way for everyone to start building credit. There are now a variety of credit cards you can select from, including hybrid, student and secured credit cards that make it easier to both open and manage.

For younger individuals, especially high school and college students, becoming an authorized user on an existing account (such as a parent's account) could be the right answer to start building credit. Just note that, since the payment responsibility lies with the owner of the account, the credit history for the authorized user won't accrue as quickly as it would with their own credit card.

Don't want or can't get a credit card? You can still build credit using loans. Student loans and auto loans are two common options for building credit. In addition, you can use a cosigner to help acquire the loan. Just make sure you can pay it off and not put your co-signer in a bad credit situation.

When it comes to building credit, there's more than one way to achieve a good credit score. But no matter which route(s) you take, it's important to make responsible decisions to stay out of credit trouble. This means spending only what you can pay back, paying balances in full and on time, and keeping your debt in check.

For more information on how you can build or improve your credit score, give your banker a call today to walk you through all your options. ■

Information provided by Clayton Harreld, AVP/Business Banker, 515-329-0810, HomeState Bank, 101 E. Bridge Road, Polk City.

POLK CITY Community Library news

Announcements: The library will be closed Monday, Sept. 1, in observance of Labor Day.

Junior Librarian

Opportunity: Every month throughout the academic year, Miss Nicole will pick one student to be a Junior Librarian. If selected, you can shadow a librarian for an afternoon and assist with tasks such as choosing new books, arranging displays, or recommending books. Applications are available at the circulation desk. Application due Sept. 20. Available for students in grades 3-8.

The Lit Bag: A free monthly subscription for PCCL teens in grades 7-12. Each themed bag includes two handpicked YA library books plus fun treats, crafts or swag — personalized to your reading interests. Register online each month and complete the form to secure your spot. Bags are ready the first Thursday of the month. Keep the goodies, return the rest.

T.A.S.T.E. – Teen Advisory Squad & Tasty Eats. Make your voice heard, help plan teen events, earn Silver Cord hours, and snack on treats from around the world at every meeting. Open to grades 6-12. Contact Nicole to join.

Geri-Fit® Strength Training Workouts, Mondays, 9 a.m., for all ages and fitness levels. Geri-Fit is challenging, effective, and safe to do. Most exercises will be done from a sturdy chair. A set of light dumbbell weights and a stretch band required. Ages 50 and older. Zoom link is available upon request.

STEM Storytime, Mondays, 10:15 a.m. beginning Sept. 8. Attend Miss Nicole's session for a STEM-themed story along with an engaging STEM activity or experiment. Registration encouraged, but not required. Designed for ages 3-5.

Chair Yoga, Tuesdays, 9 a.m. Join Rachel via Zoom. We will be broadcasting the class on the big screen in the library, or you can join us from home. Yoga is for everyone and every body. Yoga is not for flexible people but for people who want to become more flexible. This chair yoga practice will include breathwork, mindfulness and simple, easy movements to release tension, reduce pain and restore your body to optimum movement. Props needed are an armless chair, like a kitchen chair, and a small hand towel or kitchen dish towel. Join the Zoom meeting from our website calendar at polkcitylibrary.org.

Baby & Me Storytime, Tuesdays at 10:15 a.m., beginning Sept. 8. This storytime is made for little ones ages 0-2 and their favorite grown-ups, with songs, rhymes and stories that get everyone moving and bonding. While this program is created with our youngest patrons and their grown-ups in mind, all are welcome to join in. Registration encouraged, but not required. Designed for ages 0-2.

Ladies' Wednesday Coffee, Wednesdays, 10 a.m. to noon.

Tai Chi, Wednesdays, 9 a.m. Tai Chi is a Chinese martial art that emphasizes slow, deliberate movements that are gentle on the joints, making it accessible to people of all ages and fitness levels. It integrates physical postures, breathing techniques and mental focus to promote

Polk City Community Library

1500 W. Broadway St., Polk City
515-984-6119

www.polkcitylibrary.org

Monday - Wednesday: 9 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Thursday: 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.

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

Saturday: 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Sunday: closed



relaxation and mindfulness. Regular practice can improve balance, flexibility, muscle strength and cardiovascular health. Follow along with us as we explore a series of online Tai Chi workouts tailored to ages 50 and older; however, ages 19 and older are welcome.

Sit N Stitch, Thursdays, 6-8 p.m. Bring your current project and join us for stitching and conversation.

Zumba, Fridays 9 a.m. Zumba is a dance-based fitness program that combines Latin dance styles with aerobic exercises. This particular series of Zumba video workouts are tailored for ages 50 and older; however, ages 19 and older are welcome.

Men's Friday Coffee, 10 a.m. to noon. Gentlemen, drop in for coffee and conversation.

Adult Coloring, Wednesday, Sept. 3, 1-3 p.m., and Tuesday, Sept. 16, 5-7 p.m. Colored pencils and gel pens will be provided. Ages 17 and older.

Wednesday Book Club, Sept. 3, 7 p.m., "Sold," by Patricia McCormick. When she is tricked by her stepfather and sold into prostitution, 13-year-old Lakshmi becomes submerged in a nightmare where her only comfort is the friendship she forms with the other girls, which helps her survive — and eventually escape. Ages 19 and older. Stop by the library for a free-to-keep copy of the book while supplies last

Your Grandpa & Grandma's Farm with Rich Tyler, Thursday, Sept. 4 at 11 a.m. Join Rich Tyler as he shares the story of Joshua Secrest, an Iowa farmer who established a successful livestock farm and constructed a remarkable octagonal barn in 1883 — a barn that Rich later restored himself. Attendees will have the opportunity to test their knowledge about various old farm tools that will be on hand. Free luncheon to follow. Registration is required. Please register online or let the library know you plan to attend by stopping by the front desk or calling 515-984-6119.

RVTV-The Dealt Hand, Friday, Sept. 5, 5:30-8:30 p.m. Come enjoy playing a large selection of board games. You can even bring your dinner. We are hoping to have the North Polk game on beginning at 7 p.m.

BLOCK PARTY - LEGO Club, Sept. 8, 3:45-4:45 p.m. Engage in learning through stacking and building with these deceptively simple bricks, and you can enhance your problem-solving skills and teamwork. Meets monthly. Suitable for ages 8-16. Registration required, register online at polkcitylibrary.org.

Wiggles and Giggles: Music and Movement for Tots and their caregivers. Thursday, Sept. 11, 10 a.m. This joyful, hands-on experience is perfect for both of you to move, sing and laugh together in a safe and welcoming environment. Let's make memories with every beat. ■

EVENTS IN THE AREA

To submit calendar items for consideration, send to tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com

Be sure to check for cancellations.

Upcoming in North Polk Living magazine:

Home Improvement: Our annual Home Improvement issue in which we share residents' stories about their remodeling projects is coming up. Please share your stories about the work you have done on your home and how it has changed your use of the space and enjoyment of your home. Email tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com with your stories.

Costume Creations: Halloween fun is quickly approaching! If you forgo the off-the-rack costumes for something more creative, we want to hear from you. Tell us about your costume creations and the fun you had making them. Email tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com with your stories.

RVTV

Friday, Sept. 5, 3:30-6:30 p.m.

Polk City Town Square, 107 S. Third St.

Celebrate the big game a day early with live broadcasts, tailgating fun, and a night full of community spirit. Party with Channel 13 before they broadcast the North Polk Football Game live on NBC. There will be a beer garden and big screen for viewing of the game and live music from Gut Feeling. Register your tailgate at https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdRyn_S3VKhU1fbtvfwCyUdCkyNXZTrrxfpet58Gj7J1erA/viewform.



Polk City Farmers Market

Thursdays through Sept. 25,
4:30-8 p.m.

Town Square

The weekly Farmers Market brings local produce, handmade goods, food trucks and live music to the heart of Polk City. Come stroll the square, meet vendors and enjoy a relaxed, welcoming vibe each Thursday evening.

August Chamber Luncheon

Wednesday, Aug. 27, 11:30 a.m.
Community Room at Polk City City Hall, 116 S. Third St.

Join the chamber for a powerful and important August Chamber Luncheon featuring Iowa Secretary of State Paul Pate and Teresa Davidson from Chains Interrupted. This month shines a spotlight on Iowa Businesses Against Trafficking (IBAT) and the Safe at Home initiative — two vital programs helping protect and support survivors of human trafficking and domestic violence in our state. Guest speakers will share real stories, staggering statistics, and ways you and your business can be part of the solution. You'll leave this luncheon informed, inspired, and equipped to take action. Attendees will also participate in a meaningful Red Sand Project activity — a hands-on demonstration to raise awareness for victims who often fall through the cracks. Let's stand together against human trafficking. Register at <https://members.gopolkc.com/ap/Events/Register/dxFJYzwuoC0Cv>.

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EVENTS IN THE AREA

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Be sure to check for cancellations.



Ice Cream Smorgasbord

Sunday, Sept. 7, 4:30 p.m. ice cream,
5 p.m. auction
Sheldahl United Methodist Church,
Sixth and Hubbell, Sheldahl

Homemade ice cream, toppings and goodies, followed by the annual auction. Cost is \$8 for adults or two for \$15. The three-legged stool, baked goods, homemade pickles, garden produce, handmade articles, and much more will be featured. Bring your lawn chairs.

Martini Fest

Friday, Sept. 19, 5-9 p.m.
West Glen Town Center

CITYVIEW is bringing MartiniFest back to West Glen Town Center. For a ticket price of \$25 (tickets will be \$35 at the event), attendees will receive 10 tickets that can be redeemed at each participating stop for a sample-size martini. Reserve your tickets at www.eventbrite.com/e/cityview-martini-fest-2025-tickets-1291852588869 now so you can avoid registration lines at the event.

Brews in the Barn

Sept. 18, 5:30-8:30 p.m.

Moeckly Barn, 4395 N.W. 118th Ave., Polk City

Polk City Friends of the Parks is hosting Brews in the Barn, one of its annual fundraisers. The public is invited for a fun-filled night of live music with Ben Puttman, delicious dinner by Whatcha Smokin' BBQ, beer from Fenders Brewing, wine from the Cellar Winery and a silent auction. The group is raising money to replace the playground on the square. Cost is \$50 per person. Tickets are available at www.polkcitypassoftheparks.com/brews-in-the-barn.

Halfway to St. Pat's Charity Car Show

Sunday, Sept. 14

Charlie's Filling Station,
305 Grand Ave., West Des Moines

www.friendlysonsiowa.com

The Friendly Sons of St. Patrick are holding a fundraising car show to benefit the St. Patrick's Day Parade. Bring your classic or unique vehicle. Registration is 11 a.m. until 1 p.m. Trophies will be awarded at 3 p.m. Vendors and food will be available.



Oktoberfest in The District

Friday, Sept. 26, and Saturday, Sept. 27

The District at Prairie Trail, S.W. District Drive, Ankeny

Raise your steins and don your lederhosen for two unforgettable days of festive fun at the 21st Annual Oktoberfest, now at The District at Prairie Trail in Ankeny. Experience the heart of Bavarian tradition with authentic German food, lively polka music, traditional beer hall games, and, of course, plenty of beer to go around. For tickets, visit www.eventbrite.com/e/21st-annual-des-moines-oktoberfest-tickets-1488793063129?aff=oddtcreator.

'Blithe Spirit'

Oct. 3-12

Ankeny Community Theatre, 1932 S.W. Third St., Ankeny

"Blithe Spirit," by Noël Coward, will be presented by Ankeny Community Theatre. This comedy is perfect for the Halloween season. When a group of friends hosts a seance that goes wrong, Charles' first wife comes back to haunt him and his new wife with hysterical results. Tickets available at ankenycommunitytheatre.com.

Ingersoll Live

Saturday, Aug. 23, 3-10 p.m.

2300 Ingersoll Ave.

Ingersoll's block party is back with live entertainment, family-friendly fun, local vendors, food, drink and more. Two stages of live entertainment will feature music from Suede, The Other Brothers, Weary Ramblers, Run Dog, and The Swampland Jewels. Street performers will also be featured. For more information, visit www.theavenuesdsm.com/ingersoll-live-2025.

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EVENTS IN THE AREA

To submit calendar items for consideration, send to tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com

Be sure to check for cancellations.

Des Moines Art Center Events

Des Moines Art Center, 4700 Grand Ave., Des Moines

• **Museum Highlights Tour:** Every Saturday from 1-2 p.m., discover the vast variety in the Des Moines Art Center's permanent collections. This tour offers a unique journey through the galleries, featuring a selection of timeless paintings, sculptures and more. Join the knowledgeable guides to uncover the stories, techniques and inspirations behind the art on view and experience the highlights of the Art Center in a fresh and engaging way. This guided tour is perfect for art enthusiasts of all ages. Free. No registration required.

• **"Firelei Báez" Exhibition Tour:** Every Saturday from 1-2 p.m. through Sept. 21, step into the intricate and thought-provoking world of "Firelei Báez" with a guided tour of the exhibition. Organized by the Institute of Contemporary Art/ Boston, this exhibition is the first North American survey dedicated to the richly layered work of artist Firelei Báez. Over the past 20 years, she has made work that explores the multilayered legacy of colonial histories and the African diaspora in the Caribbean and beyond. Free. No registration required.

• **Community Access Teaching Artist**

Exhibition and Opening Reception: Friday, Aug. 22, 4:30-6:30 p.m. in the Adrienne and Charles Herbert Galleries, Education Wing. Enjoy artwork, original poetry, music and complimentary refreshments. Gather in the Macomber Lobby as teaching artists will be in attendance to discuss their work. Free. No registration required.

• **Gallery Talk with 2025 Iowa Artist Ben Millett and Des Moines Art Center Senior Curator Laura Burkhalter:** Saturday, Aug. 23, 1 p.m. Join this gallery talk about Millett's solo exhibition on view in the lower Richard Meier galleries. Learn more about the exhibition and hear from Millett about his process and practice. Free. No registration required.

• **"Life Mask: A Celebration of Gifts from the Dale Jansen Estate" Exhibition Tour:** Every Saturday from 1-2 p.m. until Aug. 31 in the John Brady Print Gallery. This exhibition pays tribute to the late philanthropist, collector and longtime Des Moines Art Center supporter Dale Jansen. Its title is borrowed from Bruce Nauman's 1981 lithograph "Life Mask," one of 65 artworks that were donated to the Art Center by Jansen through his estate.

The World Food & Music Festival

Friday, Aug. 22, to Sunday, Aug. 24

Western Gateway Park,
1205 Locust St., Des Moines

The World Food & Music Festival has announced its 2025 programming. Festival attendees can look forward to more than 50 food vendors representing 25 countries and culinary regions. In addition, enjoy a wide range of live music, activities, cooking demonstrations, unique merchants, nonprofit organizations and more. The Main Stage, sponsored by Prairie Meadows, will feature headlining acts Dirty Rotten Scoundrels on Friday night and Son Peruchos on Saturday night. For more information, visit www.dsmpartnership.com/worldfoodandmusicfestival. ■

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'WHY SHOULD I join the chamber?'

Let's talk

"OMG... why would I join the chamber?"

I hear it all the time — usually from people who haven't actually tried it or who joined once, never showed up, and then wondered why their phone didn't magically start ringing.

Here is the deal: a chamber membership is not some mythical vending machine where you put in \$225 and out pops 100 new customers. If that is what you are expecting, you're going to be disappointed. BUT... if you actually show up, get involved, and take advantage of what is included, you will be surprised how quickly that investment pays off.



At our base membership of \$225 a year, you get:

- Advertising in chamber publications and on our website (hello, free marketing).
- Networking opportunities to connect with other business owners (a.k.a. potential partners, clients and referral sources).
- Sponsorship offers to put your brand front and center in the community.
- And let's not forget our luncheons. They are a chance to hear from influential speakers, learn about what's happening in our city and in the broader region, and get insider info you won't find scrolling through social media. You also gain access to the Greater Des Moines Partnership's massive library of resources, training, advocacy, marketing tools and connections that go way beyond city limits.

Oh, and this isn't just for business owners. We offer a Community Member membership, too. That means even if you don't own a business, you can still plug in, stay informed, and get pointed toward all things community — events, volunteer opportunities and ways to be involved in shaping where you live.

The real magic happens when you show up. Talk to people. Be part of the events, the conversations, the committees. This is where you build trust, swap referrals and get your name in the mix when opportunities pop up.

It is the law of reciprocity: You help others, they help you. The people who lean in — volunteer, sponsor, attend — are the ones who walk away with the most business, the most connections, and the most significant return on investment.

So, if you join and never participate, you probably won't see much. But if you are ready to be part of your local business community, your \$225 could be the best marketing money you spend all year.

Because here's the truth: The chamber opens doors for you. You've just got to walk through them. ■

Information provided by Staci Allen, Executive Director, Go Polk City Chamber, P.O. Box 226, Polk City IA 50226, 515-984-3098, admin@polkcitychamber.com.

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September 5th, 2025

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North Polk CSD held a ribbon cutting with members of the baseball program for the new baseball and softball complex on June 12.



North Polk CSD held a ribbon cutting with members of the softball program for the new baseball and softball complex on June 12.



North Polk Community School District is welcoming 17 new teachers for the 2025-26 school year.



For the 47th year, North Polk FFA is proudly hosting the Avenue of Breeds at the Iowa State Fair. Students are up before sunrise to care for the animals and keep the exhibit running smoothly.



North Polk Schools Superintendent Michael Kline and President and CEO Home State Bank Bob Allen. Home State Bank made a large donation to the North Polk activities department, earning recognition on the high school gym floor.

VARSITY softball

The North Polk varsity softball semifinals game was against North Scott on July 23.



Members of the North Polk varsity softball team react after the win over North Scott at the state semifinal game on July 23.



Katelyn Klever



Ava Husak



Ava Fjelland



Alexandra Mohlke



Larissa Koth



Audrey Lucas



THE COMETS CORNER

NEWS FROM NORTH POLK CSD

AUGUST 2025



WELCOME TO A NEW SCHOOL YEAR

Dear North Polk Families and Residents,

A new school year is almost here, and we couldn't be more excited. Our team has worked diligently all summer to prepare for the first day and welcome our 2,407 learners back on August 25th.

Thanks to the community's strong support of the 2023 bond referendum, we've completed several important projects over the summer, including the brand-new baseball and softball complex and our state-of-the-art Career Tech Addition at North Polk High School. This exciting new facility will give students hands-on opportunities in high-demand fields like agriculture, welding, construction, drone technology, and more. The district recently celebrated its grand opening, and we're excited to welcome students on day one!

Each month, we use this space to connect with all district stakeholders, share updates and celebrations, and highlight the incredible stories unfolding in our schools. Whether you're a returning family or new to North Polk, we're excited to partner with you for a great upcoming school year!

Thank you, and Go Comets!

Michael Kline

Superintendent, North Polk Community School District



North Polk FFA: Proudly Serving the Avenue of Breeds for Nearly 50 Years

For nearly five decades, North Polk FFA students have been the dedicated caretakers of the animals at the Avenue of Breeds, a popular free attraction at the Iowa State Fair.

Up each day before sunrise, students take on important tasks like walking, washing, feeding, and cleaning the animals and their stalls. North Polk FFA members also play a

key role in organizing and managing the exhibit.

Did you know the Avenue of Breeds showcases over 70 different breeds and around 100 animals? We're proud of our students' hard work and commitment in representing North Polk at this iconic event!

Back-to-School Family Checklist



With the first day approaching, back-to-school season is both exciting and busy. Whether you're a returning family or new to the district, this checklist will help you prepare everything you need before classes start.

Be sure to check out our full back-to-school family checklist at the QR code below.



Stay Connected with North Polk!



Follow us on social media to see all the great things happening around the district, from classroom moments to important updates and celebrations.

Scan the QR code to follow us on social media and stay in the loop.



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