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SEPTEMBER 2025

Living

MAGAZINE

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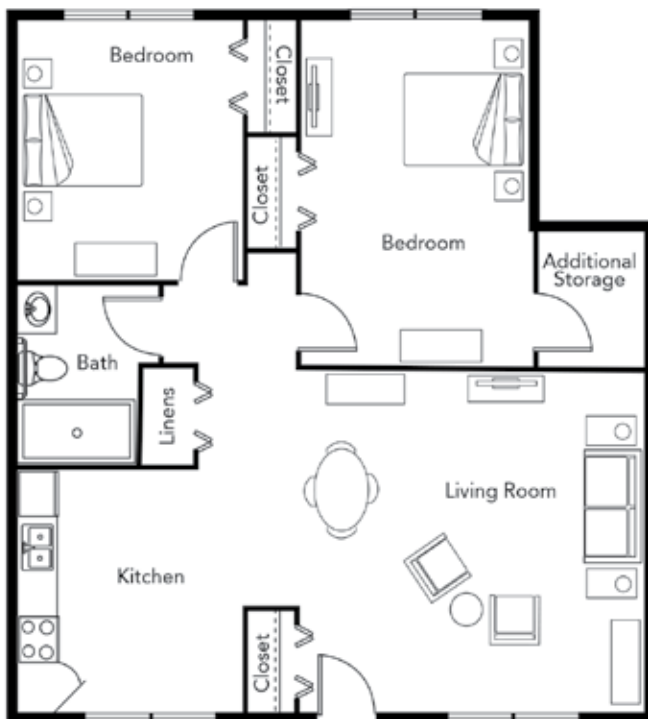
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WELCOME

WE GET what we pay for

Sometimes, I drive by a remodeling project on a house and say to myself, "Wow, that is beautiful. Those folks really know what they are doing."

Other times, I drive by a project that is seemingly in the works for months (or years) and say to myself, "Wow, they are taking forever, and what they have done looks awful."

The difference usually has to do with having professionals do the work or relying on a handful of weekend amateurs.

Yes, some of you are quite skilled and can do quality DIY work. Others, like me, put forward a good effort but often end up with a less-than-satisfactory result. At some point, though, we all realize when we need to call in the experts.

This month's cover story will appeal to all sides, as we once again interview homeowners who have worked through the remodeling or construction process. They share their experiences, the lessons they learned, and how they might have done things differently.

Meanwhile, one of the common complaints we all hear is the challenge in lining up people to do the work. On occasion, that truly is a problem. More often, though, we simply don't want to pay the costs for quality workmanship — until, of course, we learn that we get what we pay for.

And then the people driving by say, "Wow, they are taking forever, and what they have done looks awful." We hope our efforts in this issue will help you avoid those comments.

Happy remodeling, and thanks for reading. ■



SHANE GOODMAN

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Shane

CORRECTION: In the Where We Live story on page 12 of the August issue of Altoona Living, Taylor Davenport was referenced as "her" and "she" in the article. Taylor is the husband and father of the family. We apologize for the error.



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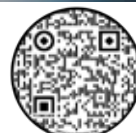
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Brought to you by the publisher of CITYVIEW and the Iowa Living magazines.

Joe and Lydia Truman have completed several projects in their home, the largest being the kitchen.

ROOM FOR *improvement*

Residents share their home renovation experiences

By Sean Dengler

Live in a home for a while, and one is likely to start thinking, "If only...." If only the bathroom had a walk-in shower.... If only the kitchen had new cabinets.... If only the old flooring could be replaced.... If only the basement was finished.... If only a room could be added.... If only that longed-for home improvement project could be completed ... then the house would be just right. Residents who have taken the leap from thinking about it to tackling their dream projects share their experiences.



When Jeri and Steve Cain built a new deck on the back of their home, they added a retractable pergola.

A new deck and front porch

When it came to improving their home, Jeri and Steve Cain knew what needed to be done.

“The deck was in poor condition, and we wanted a different color of siding,” Steve mentions. “The front porch was narrow and unusable.”

The work the Cains did significantly improved their home’s exterior.

“We replaced our old deck in the back of house, adding lights and a retractable pergola,” Jeri says. “We extended and updated our front porch, replaced siding, soffit and gutters and added gutter protection.”

To complete the project, it came down to happenstance when choosing a contractor.

“A salesman came out and went over our needs and wants,” Steve says. “In a few days, we went to their office to go over the plans. They put a picture of our house on a big screen so we were able to see what different colors and options on siding would look like. We got to see different deck options, railings and lights. We saw what they would use installing siding and deck. They were able to adjust pricing in real time according to our choices.”

The Cains were happy with the process.

Since their home improvement, they have a part they like the most, according to Steve.

“We probably love the deck the most, but the siding really transformed the appearance,” he says.

Going through the home improvement process has given the Cains a new perspective.

“We have learned that price is not the most



Jeri and Steve Cain updated their home with new siding and front porch, replacing one that was narrow and unusable.

important factor, the quality of work must also be taken in consideration,” Jeri says. “We have had a good deal of experience with contractors with three different houses and many bad experiences.”

Wind prompts improvement

Adding a three-season room made sense to Deb and Warren Grimes. Mother Nature necessitated it. The couple enclosed their deck after finding the weather often prevented them from enjoying it.

“The deck sits up high, and it’s a new home. We’ve just been here a couple of years, and we’re up high enough that we’re in a massive wind tunnel,” Deb says.

After a year of enduring the wind while using the deck, the couple decided to fix the problem.

“It was awful,” Deb says. “As a matter of fact, we did have a little bit of furniture. The wind was so strong it blew it off the deck.”



Deb Grimes and her husband, Warren, decided to enclose their deck to create a three-season room that could be used most of the year.

Deb says she cannot wait until her new furniture arrives.

“It is the most incredible enclosure,” Deb says. “It is wonderful. We can open it a little, a lot, not at all. When our furniture gets here, we’re going to be able to enjoy this all the time. I just love it. It has 100% changed the way we will use this space.

“Our vision was to be able to sit out here, enjoy the grandkids and our family and enjoy

BEFORE



The Trumans tore out old flooring as part of their renovations.

the view,” she adds.

Deb has advice for those looking at doing a home improvement project.

“Research the companies,” she says. “Make sure they have a product or multiple products that you can pick from. I think that was true in our case. I thought I wanted one thing. They didn’t make me, but they leaned me toward another product, and so they had multiple products for multiple environments.”

Remodeled kitchen and more

While their biggest improvement project focused on one part of their house, Joe Truman and his wife, Lydia, have also done projects across the entire house.

“We have done several major improvements to our home, primarily in the kitchen,” Joe says. “We removed the wall between the kitchen and the living room to make the layout more open and added additional counter space. We replaced the cabinets and appliances and added a dishwasher.”

In the rest of the home, they replaced the front door, interior doors, flooring and lighting.

“We also added some new closets and put a fresh coat of paint on the home. We still have some trim work to finish up and other smaller projects,” Joe says.

The motivation behind tackling the home improvement project was simple.

“This is our first home,” Lydia says. “And we wanted to make it warm and inviting so we would serve people comfortably.”

“We enjoy a challenge, and this project proved to be stretching,” Joe says.

“We bought the home with renovation in mind,” he adds. “We started in on it within a couple of months after purchasing the home. We found it helped us to make a plan for improvement before starting by talking with others to see if our ideas were possible and estimating costs and time.”

The Trumans’ community helped with the project.

“We did the improvement ourselves with the help of friends from Altoona Regular Baptist Church, where I am an associate pastor,” Joe says. “A couple in our church family helped us initially find the home. After we bought it, many people from our church gave of their time, energy, and skill to help us renovate and move in. Our families from Minnesota also came down and helped us. We couldn’t have done it without any of them.”

While Joe mentions the importance of budgeting extra time and money when undertaking a home improvement project, he says the best part of the final result is not a material object.

“Although the process has been long at times, we enjoyed making memories as we worked together on this home improvement,” he says. “It’s also satisfying to finish a project, seeing that you were able to make something better than when you first got it. Ultimately, it’s really a joy to see other people enjoy your home and be blessed by it.”

While this experience has been a long journey, it has been worth it, Joe adds.

“This project truly has been an adventure for us,” he says. “We moved in after partly



A new front door improved the curb appeal of Joe and Lydia Truman’s home.

renovating the house, with only two bedrooms somewhat finished. We even cooked with a temporary kitchen setup in our half bathroom.”

Last summer, the couple was able to finish the major projects before their first child was born.

“It has been an adventure, but we wouldn’t trade it for anything,” Joe says. “We’re glad to be a part of our neighborhood and the Altoona community.” ■

HOW TO CHOOSE AN INTERIOR DESIGNER

You've decided to update your home or business and have lots of ideas but are overwhelmed with where to begin. A good interior designer will help bring those ideas to life by clarifying your vision and providing you with a detailed design plan that transforms your space and functions well for you.

Investing in an interior designer adds valuable experience and expertise to your project. As industry experts, they can connect you with the resources needed for your project and provide you with plans to communicate the details. They are specialists in design trends and knowledgeable of the products, building process and codes. They will help streamline the process and alleviate the pressure of making design decisions. Here are a few things to consider when searching for an interior designer to refresh your space.

DEFINE YOUR PROJECT GOALS AND STYLE

Think about your specific project goals and do some research gathering imagery in advance of meeting with an interior designer.

Think about what styles or concepts you are drawn to and collect images that appeal to you or spark interest and that you would like to see in your space. Doing this can save time and will help to initiate discussion.

SELECTING AN INTERIOR DESIGNER

Narrow your search to interior designers who have done work similar to your project. Choose two to three interior designers with a similar design aesthetic to what you are drawn to and meet with them to see if they would be a good fit for your project. The design needs and scope of a residential project will vary greatly from that of a commercial project; it's important to find an interior designer that is familiar with your project type and the process.

COST

The fee to hire an interior designer will vary depending on the project type, project scope and designer's experience. Some designers charge an hourly rate or flat fee

for a project, some work on a cost-plus basis by purchasing items for the project then adding a percentage, and some designers do a combination.

CERTIFICATION

Certain states, including Iowa, require those utilizing the title "Registered Interior Designer" to meet the formal interior design education requirements, experience and passage of the NCIDQ (National Council for Interior Design Qualification) exam. Continuing education requirements also apply, ensuring interior designers are aware of industry updates — from finishes, fixtures and furniture to the health, safety and welfare of the public. A list of registered interior designers in Iowa can be found on Iowa's Professional Licensing Bureau website. Professional interior design organizations include, among others: IIDA (International Interior Design Association) and ASID (American Society of Interior Designers). ■





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HOW TO CHOOSE GARAGE DOORS

Garage doors are often an afterthought to homeowners — but they shouldn't be. Garage doors are the first thing most notice about a home, so when it comes to choosing them for a new home or replacing them, significant thought and research should take place. If your garage faces the front of the house, a new door could dramatically improve your curb appeal and change the overall look of your home. If you're selling, worn, dated doors tend to say a lot about the condition of the rest of the home. A garage door is also an excellent security asset for your home, allowing you to secure your vehicle inside. If you're thinking about installing a new garage door, you may be surprised

at just how many options are on the market — and how affordably they can be installed.

THE LOOK

Garage doors have seen an explosion in styles, materials and colors that are designed to match the architecture of any home, from rural barns to craftsman bungalows or sleek urban getaways. So if you thought your choices were limited to simple sheet metal styles, think again. You should also pay close attention to the materials. Today's garage doors can be made from expensive hardwoods, textured vinyl, fiberglass or basic aluminum, all of which will have a big impact on the look

and longevity of your doors. Pay close attention to the maintenance needs of whatever material you choose. Some will hold their color longer than others, and real wood doors can require regular staining and sealing every few years to keep them looking spectacular.

INSULATION

Depending on climate, the insulation of your garage door can be an important factor to help reduce your energy bills. This is especially important in heated garages. But even an insulated door on unheated garages can make a positive impact on your energy usage if it can keep the hot and cold weather away from the interior of your house. ■

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HOW TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT CHIROPRACTOR

Finding the right chiropractor goes beyond addressing pain or symptoms. True chiropractic care focuses on optimizing your body's natural ability to heal by removing nervous system interference.

Understand chiropractic's true purpose. Chiropractic is not about chasing symptoms. It is about removing stress to the nervous system, allowing it to operate at its full potential. A principled chiropractor will clearly communicate this distinction and focus on your body's natural healing potential and restoring function and movement.

Seek a nervous system approach. Chiropractic's unique contribution lies in detecting, analyzing and correcting misalignments. Look for someone who prioritizes chiropractic adjustments as the cornerstone of care, understanding that misalignments interfere with vital brain-body communication. They should explain how adjustments help your nervous

system regulate and balance stress.

Look for a comprehensive evaluation. A quality chiropractor conducts a thorough examination before treatment. This evaluation should identify nervous system stress, assess spinal alignment and movement patterns, and determine how misalignments block brain-body communication. A thorough exam includes nervous system scans, orthopedic tests and X-rays if clinically indicated.

Seek out specialized training. Chiropractors can obtain specialty certifications through post-graduate coursework and additional clinical training. For babies and children, look for board certification in pediatric chiropractic care. For prenatal or preconception care, seek prenatal and Webster's technique certifications. Continuing education is essential for bringing latest health information and adjusting techniques to your care.

Individualized care and education.

Your chiropractor should understand your health goals and lifestyle challenges. Whether dealing with chronic stress or enhancing family wellness, they should develop individualized care plans addressing your nervous system needs. An initial exam should be followed by a report of findings to share assessment results and outline recommended care plans.

Chiropractic care is a "done with you" system, so look for someone providing individualized recommendations to support adjustments, including at-home movement and stretches, stress management techniques and healthy habits for hydration, nutrition, supplementation and sleep.

Chiropractic care is an investment in your body's innate potential for health and healing. Find someone who truly understands that optimal health comes from within when your nervous system functions without interference. ■

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HOW TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT PODIATRIST

When foot or ankle pain begins to impact your quality of life, choosing the right podiatrist is one of the most important steps in your recovery. Whether you are facing a bunion, heel pain, sports injury or chronic discomfort, the expertise and approach of your provider will significantly influence your outcome.

CREDENTIALS AND CLINICAL EXPERTISE

Start by verifying board certification through the American Board of Foot and Ankle Surgery (ABFAS). This distinction signals that your podiatric surgeon has met nationally recognized standards for education, surgical training and professional performance. Doctors of Podiatric Medicine (DPMs) complete four years of medical school focused on the full body — with a strong emphasis on lower extremity anatomy — followed by at several years of intensive residency training in foot and ankle medicine and surgery. In fact, they typically perform

more foot and ankle procedures during training than any other medical specialty.

GO BEYOND WORD OF MOUTH

Recommendations from friends, family or your primary care doctor are a great starting point, but do not stop there. Take time to explore the podiatrist's website. You can learn a great deal about their background, areas of specialization, and the clinic's overall philosophy of care. Are they publishing research or contributing to medical education? If so, it often indicates a commitment to innovation and advancing the field. Patient reviews are also valuable — they offer real insight into what it is like to be under that provider's care.

MODERN TREATMENTS AND MEANINGFUL COMMUNICATION

The best podiatrists stay current with evidence-based, state-of-the-art treatments like Lapiplasty® for bunions

or laser therapy for soft tissue injuries. If a provider is still doing things the same way they did 20 years ago, it may be time to explore newer, more effective options.

Equally important is how well your provider communicates. You should leave each appointment feeling educated and confident — not confused or dismissed. Expect a thorough explanation of your diagnosis, treatment options and recovery plan. If that is missing, it is a red flag.

YOUR CARE, YOUR CHOICE

Most insurance plans do not require a referral to see a podiatrist, though you should confirm with your provider. Even if you are referred within a larger health system, you are free to choose the specialist who best aligns with your needs, values and goals. And do not overlook the clinic's culture — a personable, knowledgeable and compassionate team speaks volumes about the care you'll receive throughout your journey. ■

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HOW TO CHOOSE A THERAPIST

Life doesn't come with a manual — and, even if it did, we would probably misplace it. Whether you are dealing with stress, anxiety, relationship challenges or just feeling off balance, talking to a professional counselor can help you sort things out and feel more grounded. There is no shame in seeking help. In fact, reaching out is one of the healthiest things you can do when life gets overwhelming. But, with so many types of counselors — therapists, psychologists and psychiatrists — how do you choose the right one?

Finding the right fit. If you are facing medical concerns or need medication, a psychiatrist may be the right choice. They are medical doctors who can prescribe treatment, though they typically do not offer long-term talk therapy.

For most counseling needs, a licensed therapist is a great option. Look for

someone with experience in your specific concerns — whether it is family dynamics, depression, trauma or parenting. Ask about their education, credentials and areas of specialization. It is perfectly normal to meet with a few before finding the one who feels like a good match.

Feeling comfortable. Your first session should give you a sense of safety and trust. You should feel comfortable asking questions about their approach, fees and what progress might look like. A good counselor creates a space where you feel heard — not judged — and maybe even breathe a little easier.

Credentials and values. Make sure your therapist is licensed and certified by a recognized professional board. These credentials ensure they have met ethical and educational standards. If shared values — such as faith or worldview — are important to you, don't hesitate to

ask. Feeling aligned can strengthen the therapeutic relationship.

Questions to ask

- Do I need a referral to schedule an appointment?
- What types of therapy do you offer?
- Are therapy sessions confidential?
- Do you accept insurance, and what will my out-of-pocket cost be?
- How long are sessions, and how often should I attend?
- What are the qualifications and experience of your therapists?
- Do you offer virtual or telehealth sessions?
- How do I get started or schedule my first appointment?
- What should I expect during my first session?
- Can therapy help with my specific concern or goal? ■



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CRACK corn dip

There's something special about recipes that come from family, and my daughter, Samantha, has a corn dip that fits the bill, especially when made with fresh Iowa sweet corn. There is nothing quite like the flavor of corn picked at its peak — crisp, juicy and naturally sweet.



Every summer, when the corn stands start popping up around town, we know it is time to whip up a big bowl of her famous dip. It is creamy and a little cheesy with just the right amount of spice, and that fresh sweet corn takes it to the next level. Whether we are hosting friends, heading to a potluck or just craving a snack on a hot afternoon, this dip is a hit. Served with tortilla chips or fresh veggies, it disappears quickly. I like that it has become part of our summer tradition, and now we're sharing it with you, straight from our kitchen and Iowa's golden fields. ■

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

Crack corn dip

Ingredients:

- 5.25 cups of fresh corn plus 1/2 each red and green pepper, finely diced (for the off-season use 3-15 oz cans fiesta corn or Mexicorn, drained)
- 1 can Rotel, 10 oz (reg or hot), drained
- 1 can jalapenos, 6 oz, drained and diced
- 1/2 cup green onions, sliced (5 stalks), optional
- 2 cups cheddar, shredded
- 1 cup sour cream
- 1 cup mayonnaise
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Pinch of sugar
- Handful fresh cilantro leaves, chopped

Directions

- Mix all the ingredients excluding bell peppers in a bowl. Refrigerator for 3-4 hours before serving. The dip will thicken as it sits in the fridge. Add peppers right before serving. Enjoy!



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Menopause Misunderstood: Finding the Support You Deserve



Christine O'Hern

Are you navigating perimenopause or menopause? It's crucial to recognize that symptoms like depression, weight gain, brain fog, mood changes, heart palpitations, digestive issues, and acne are just a few of the signs associated with menopause, alongside hot flashes. In fact, there are over 30 symptoms linked to this stage of life.

Regrettably, many medical providers from the previous generation lack the necessary training to effectively address these symptoms, largely due to the flawed findings of the Women's Health Initiative study, which inaccurately claimed that estrogen causes breast cancer. This is a significant issue that I will address in a follow-up article, as it deserves to be thoroughly examined.

If you're experiencing any of these symptoms or have other concerns related to perimenopause or menopause, it's time to take action. Contact us today. You deserve to feel fantastic and to live your best life. There are many effective solutions available, and we are here to help you find the right ones.

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UNDERSTANDING aging and its impact on daily life

A guide for seniors and caregivers

Aging is a natural part of life, bringing with it a variety of physical, emotional and cognitive changes. For seniors and their caregivers, understanding these changes is key to maintaining quality of life and promoting independence.

As we age, our bodies undergo gradual shifts. Muscle strength may decrease, joints can become stiffer, and balance might not be as steady as it once was. These changes can affect mobility and increase the risk of falls. Vision and hearing may also decline, making communication and navigation more challenging. Recognizing these shifts allows caregivers to make thoughtful adjustments, such as installing grab bars, installing brighter lighting or using assistive devices to promote safety.

Cognitive changes are also common. While many older adults remain mentally sharp, some may experience slower processing speeds or mild memory lapses. These changes do not necessarily signal dementia but do require patience and understanding. Encouraging mental stimulation through puzzles, reading or social interaction can help maintain cognitive health.

Emotional well-being is another important aspect of aging. Seniors may face feelings of isolation, especially if they have lost loved ones or live alone. Caregivers play a vital role in fostering connection, whether through regular visits, community activities or technology. Open communication and empathy go a long way in supporting emotional health.

Nutrition and medication management also become more critical with age. Appetite may change, and certain foods might not be tolerated as well as they once were. Caregivers should ensure balanced meals and monitor for any side effects from medications, which can interact differently in older bodies.

Sleep patterns may also shift, with older adults experiencing lighter sleep or waking up more frequently during the night. Creating a calming bedtime routine can help improve rest and overall wellness.

Understanding aging means embracing it with compassion and adaptability. It is not just about managing limitations, it is about celebrating the wisdom, resilience and experiences that come with growing older. By staying informed and proactive, caregivers and seniors can work together to create a daily life that is safe, fulfilling and dignified.

Whether you are a senior navigating these changes or a caregiver offering support, remember: Aging is a journey best traveled with knowledge, kindness and a sense of purpose. Aging well involves more than care. It thrives on informed choices, compassionate connections and purposeful living.

“Age is an issue of mind over matter. If you don’t mind, it doesn’t matter.” - Mark Twain ■

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



ALTOONA Public Library news

Celebrate spooky season all month long with events at the library, from scary sweet treats to an actual ghost hunt. Find all these events and more at altoonalibrary.com.

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

• Leather Bookmarks, Thursday, Oct. 9 at 6 p.m. Design and create a custom bookmark using the Glowforge. Registration required.

• Herbal Heating Pads, Wednesday, Oct. 15 at 6 p.m. Time to get cozy. Learn to make your own DIY heating pad with herbs, essential oils and scrap fabric. Registration required.

• Ghost Hunt at APL! Friday, Oct. 24 at 6 p.m. Ever wondered if the library is haunted? So have we. Join us as we welcome TNA Paranormal Society to the library to talk about their ghost investigations, the equipment they use, and what they’ve found. Registration required.

Children’s programming

• Fun Size Kitchen, Monday, Oct. 6 from 12:30-1:30 p.m. Bring your tiny chef to the library to make a delicious snack based on a book. This month we will be making mummy pizzas. Ages 5 and younger. Registration required.

• Stop Motion Mania, Sunday, Oct. 19 from 3-4 p.m. Join us to learn about stop motion animation and how to make your very own stop motion movies. Grades 4-6. Registration required.

• Spooky STEM Challenge, Tuesday, Oct. 21 from 5:30-6:30 p.m. Test your bravery and wits at our Spooky STEM Challenge. Grades 4-6. Registration required.

Teen programming – Grades 6-12

• Teen Swiftie Party, Thursday, Oct. 2 from 6-7 p.m. Celebrate Taylor’s new album release. Join fellow Swifties to create Taylor-inspired crafts such as a lyrics bookmark, a “Lavendar Haze” bath soak, and friendship bracelets. Grades 6-12. No registration required.

• Spooky Sweet Treats, Monday, Oct. 27 from 6-7 p.m. Indulge in some spooky sugary treats and make your own cake jars and edible cookie dough mixes. Grades 6-12. No registration required.

• Ghost Hunt at APL! Friday, Oct. 31 from 6-8 p.m. Ever wondered if the library is haunted? So have we. Join us on Halloween as we welcome TNA Paranormal Society at the library to talk about their ghost investigations, the equipment they use, and what they have found. Then the moment we are all waiting for — a real-life ghost hunt here at APL. Grades 6-12. Registration and signed permission form required.

To find a complete list of events and to register, visit our website at altoonalibrary.com. Click on the Upcoming Events tab. ■

MEET Bree Phillips

Third grade is a time of much learning and growth.

Bree Phillips grew up in Cedar Rapids and graduated from Kennedy High School in 2006. Both of her parents were involved in education. Her father was a high school principal, and her mother was the head volleyball coach at her high school.

When Phillips graduated from Grand View University in 2010, she began her teaching career in Newton followed by nine years teaching in Des Moines. She currently teaches third grade at Altoona Elementary School, and it is her 13th year teaching overall and her second with the Southeast Polk Community School District.

"I was so excited to join the staff at Altoona Elementary. My two daughters both attend or attended school there, and they have always loved school. As a parent, I saw how caring and talented the staff were with my own kids, and I knew that working in a building of dedicated and caring staff would be a great career move," Phillips says.

Phillips has spent the majority of her career teaching second and third grades. She says she enjoys working with this age group because there is so much learning and growth.

Last year, her students completed a book study on the Titanic. Together, they read "The Magic Treehouse Tonight on The Titanic" and listened to the audiobook "I Survived the Sinking of the Titanic, 1912." She says her students enjoyed comparing the information presented in both books and created book review brochures for both. This year, her class has a new ELA curriculum, and Phillips is excited for upcoming units on ancient Rome and space.

"Students start to discover who they are and who they want to become during these years. Seven- to 9-year-olds really feel like an in-between age. They are transitioning from young learners to independent students, which makes third grade so rewarding to teach," Phillips says.

During the summer, Phillips spent a lot of time with her daughters. Together, they enjoy visiting Adventureland, and both of her girls have summer birthdays. Phillips also attended her first WNBA game with her husband in June and finished 37 out of her goal of 150 books to read this year.

"Working with kids is full of challenges and rewards. Meeting the needs of 20-25 unique students is always a balancing act, but watching kids grow and the 'lightbulb' moments are so amazing. Some of my favorite moments in teaching are when students surprise themselves with their knowledge and abilities," Phillips says. ■



Bree Phillips joined Altoona Elementary this year to teach third grade.

GET your funeral arrangements done now

The fair is over, and the kids and grandkids are back to school. Life is back on schedule, and it feels good. Now that things are "back to normal," it is time to get those things done that you have put off these past few months. One of those things might be addressing your final arrangements.

We hear it all the time: "I am so glad to have this taken care of." I can certainly tell you that no one ever regrets that their loved one planned ahead when the time comes that the services of a funeral home are needed.

Planning your final arrangements begins with a simple conversation and can be a pleasant process. Planning ahead also allows you time to give the thoughtful consideration that these important decisions deserve.

There are many options to think about when addressing your final arrangements, and there are even prepayment options available to those who wish to have their final financial obligations handled in advance.

An advanced planning consultant can walk you through these choices and options.

Make it a goal to get this off your "to-do" list before the snow flies... or you fly south for the winter. Reach out to your funeral home of choice and schedule a meeting to get your prearrangements in place. You will be glad you did. ■



Information provided by Scott Eriksen, Director of Hamilton's Advanced Planning, Hamilton's Funeral Home, 605 Lyon St., Des Moines, 515-697-3670, www.HamiltonsFuneralHome.com.

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FIFTH generation starts at Altoona school

Family's roots are deep in community and district.



Kelsey Hurd's son, Griffin, has started attending Altoona Elementary school. He is the fifth generation of his family to attend school at the building.

The beginning of this school year marks a significant milestone for one Altoona family. They have sent members of five generations to the same Altoona school building. This achievement started with Robert Thompson.

"He was born and raised here in Altoona," his daughter, Janet Glass says. "For many years, he was the town historian. He was very active in the centennial of Altoona, and he was one of the authors of the book that they had. He graduated from Altoona High School in 1934."

Janet Glass, who was also born and raised in Altoona, went to the same school building. Her senior year marked a change for the school district and the city of Altoona.

"I graduated from Altoona High School in 1964, and 1964 was the last class to graduate from Altoona High School," Janet mentions. "They moved to Southeast Polk the next year."

While the high school was no longer at the school building, her children went to the school now known as Altoona Elementary. Her daughter, Julie Cullinan, who graduated in 1987, and husband raised Janet's grandchildren in Altoona. Now Kelsey Hurd, Janet's granddaughter, who graduated in 2008, has her oldest child, Griffin, going to preschool at Altoona Elementary.

"That's five generations that have gone there," Janet proudly says.

The school has seen renovations since when

Robert first stepped foot in the school.

"The gym is original," Janet says. "The wing that's to the north and the east was kind of new when I sent to school there."

Before there were five generations, they celebrated four.

"When my granddaughter, Kelsey, started school at Altoona Elementary, that would've been four generations," Janet says. "They (Southeast Polk Unifier) took a picture of all four generations, and it was on the front page of that flyer."

With possibly being the only family to have five generations go through this Altoona school building, Janet recognizes the significance.

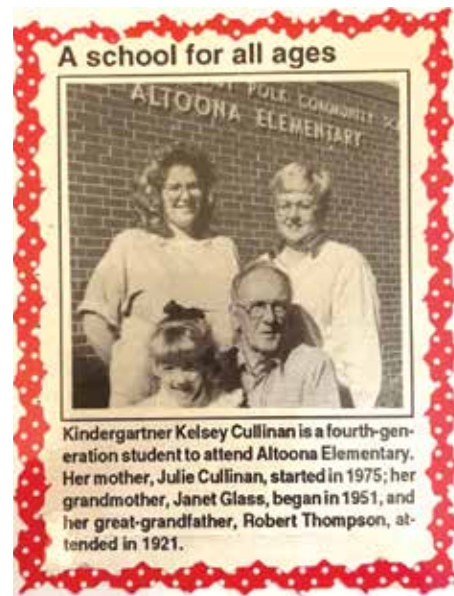
"We just value the tradition. Griffin could have gone to Willowbrook," Janet adds, "but Kelsey liked the tradition that he went where she went. We're a very traditional, tight-knit family, and we like to carry on certain traditions."

This history at this school is important to this family.

"We just think it's a cool thing to value," Janet says. "It's just something special."

The class sizes at Southeast Polk have grown exponentially since Janet's 88 fellow classmates graduated.

"When I was little, you didn't go to preschool," Janet says. "You started in kindergarten. You like to think that it's bigger



The Southeast Polk Unifier recognized four generations attending the same school. Robert Thompson; his daughter, Janet Glass; Janet's daughter, Julie Cullinan; and Julie's daughter, Kelsey Hurd, were recognized.

but also better. There's more resources and more diversity."

No matter how the school district has changed over the years, this school building holds a special place in Janet's family legacy.

"It's just where home is," she says. ■

A SALUTE TO OUR ALTOONA FIREFIGHTERS



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Back Row Left-Right: Mark Guyatt, Trever Robinson, Eddie Saidat, Quade Keenan, Xander Potter, Nic Hutchinson, Alec Hemann, Dylan Pestotnik, Hunter Anderson, Gabe Rivera

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EVENTS IN THE AREA

Be sure to check for cancellations.

Note about calendar events: This magazine is delivered the fourth Thursday of each month. Calendar items included are events happening after the delivery date and extend into the following month. If you receive and read your magazine upon delivery, you will not miss out on any calendar items.

Coming up in the Altoona Living magazine:

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.



Prairie Meadows Casino Free Shows

- 1 Prairie Meadows Drive, Altoona
- Jordan Beem and John Griffiths: Friday, Sept. 26, 10 p.m. to midnight
 - Jake McVey: Saturday, Sept. 27, 5:30 p.m.
 - The Weasels: Saturday, Sept. 27, 10 p.m. to midnight
 - Tommy Browder & The Country River Band: Tuesday, Sept. 30, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
 - Chuck Briseno Band: Saturday, Oct. 4, 8-11 p.m.
 - Richie Lee & the Fabulous 50s: Tuesday, Oct. 7, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
 - Mark Doty & The Cause: Friday, Oct. 10, 8-11 p.m.
 - Southern Rail Band: Saturday, Oct. 11, 8-11 p.m.
 - Clarksville Station: Tuesday, Oct. 14, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
 - Lola Blu: Friday, Oct. 17, 8-11 p.m.
 - Adam Whitehead: Saturday, Oct. 18, 8-11 p.m.
 - Gaylin Sudik & Friends: Tuesday, Oct. 21, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
 - The Unfortunate Sons: Saturday, Oct. 25, 8-11 p.m.
 - Kenny Frette & the Country Classics: Tuesday, Oct. 28, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.
 - Back to Vinyl: Friday, Oct. 31, 8-11 p.m.

No Slackin' - Yoga in the Plaza

Saturday, Sept. 27, 9-10 a.m.
Civic Plaza, 360 Center Place, Altoona

Free for all. Bring your yoga mats or blankets.
Hosted by Sarah Slack, REALTOR®.



Vendor Market at Outlets of DSM in Altoona

Saturday, Oct. 18, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Suite 315 at 801 Bass Pro Drive N.W.

Each show has a variety of vendors from honey, to a variety of freeze-dried items, skin care, makeup, bath and body, 3D items, essential oils, and a variety of crafters. Each event has different vendors.

Monthly Movement and Wellness Series

Oct. 6, Nov. 20, Dec. 18, 1:30 p.m.
Edencrest at The Tuscany, 1690 Eighth St. S.E., Altoona, lower east entrance at bottom of the hill

The public is invited to join a Monthly Movement & Wellness Series with Dr. Jonah Knous – Elevation Chiropractic. Explore ways to move better, feel better and live better — one month at a time. Each month brings a new topic, practical tips and a little inspiration to keep you moving all year long. RSVP by calling 515-850-6119.

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. This two-day celebration offers something for everyone, from classic stein-holding contests and live music to delicious bratwursts and pretzels straight from the grill. For tickets, visit www.eventbrite.com/e/21st-annual-des-moines-oktoberfest-tickets-1488793063129?aff=oddttdtcreator. ■



Leprechaun Bags Tournament

Saturday, Oct. 11, 11 a.m.
Sully's Irish Pub, 860 First St., West Des Moines

The Friendly Sons of St. Patrick of Central Iowa present the Leprechaun Bags Tournament. Registration begins at 11 a.m. Play starts at noon. \$30 per two-person team. Cash payouts for top three teams. Visit www.friendlysonsiowa.com for details.



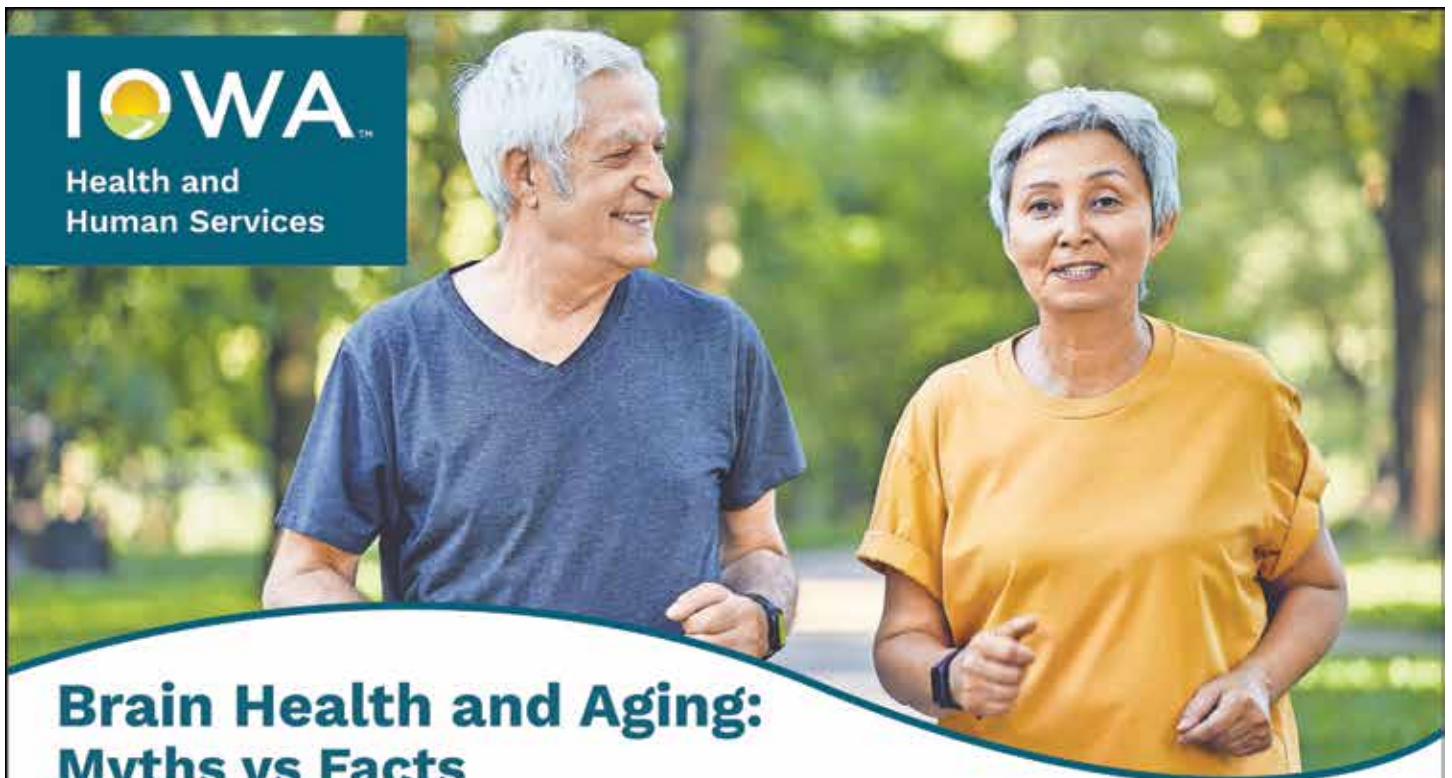
Archives Across America: Unlocking Genealogy Resources

Saturday, Oct. 18, 9 a.m.
Iowa Genealogical Society Library, 628 E. Grand Ave., Des Moines

The Iowa Genealogical Society will host this one-day conference at the IGS Library and via Zoom. Featured speaker Tina Beaird will present on the Library of Congress, the National Personnel Records Center, the U.S. National Archives, and Midwest repositories. Registration is \$70 for members and \$90 for non-members. Details at www.iowagenealogy.org.



Health and
Human Services



Brain Health and Aging: Myths vs Facts

MYTH

I have to see a specialist to
get diagnosed with Alzheimer's

FACT

Most primary care doctors can assess whether a person might have Alzheimer's disease or related dementias (ADRD). They can do cognitive screenings, some even offer biomarker testing. They may refer you to a specialist or a diagnostic clinic, but starting with your family doctor is always a great first step. You can also get a screening done at your free Annual Medicare Wellness Visit.

MYTH

I can't prevent or treat Alzheimer's

FACT

Research shows that up to 45% of dementia cases can be avoided by making positive lifestyle changes. These include managing your blood pressure, exercising, eating right, keeping your brain active and staying social. And now there are new medications that can slow Alzheimer's disease if caught in the early stages.

MYTH

There are no resources near me to
help with dementia caregiving

FACT

The Iowa HHS ADRD Program has a wealth of resources online from partner organizations all around Iowa. There is a thorough Dementia Resource Guide, a State Strategic Plan, options for caregiver support, the latest on research, local programs, training for professional workers and more.

If you or a loved one has been diagnosed with Alzheimer's or other dementias, you are not alone. The ADRD Program at Iowa HHS wants to help get you connected to the resources you need.

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WELLNESS

By Tricia Heberer

LASER season has commenced

Laser season is officially here, and there is no better time to start your treatments. Cooler months mean less sun exposure, making it the perfect season for safe and effective laser sessions. Whether you are looking for smooth skin, to reduce sun damage, or finally say goodbye to unwanted hair, starting now ensures your skin has plenty of time to heal and reveal beautiful results before spring and summer. Investing in treatments this time of year sets you up for glowing, confident skin when the warm weather returns.



Non-ablative lasers: A non-ablative laser is a gentle laser treatment that works beneath the surface of your skin without damaging the top layer. Instead of removing skin, it heats the deeper layers to stimulate your body's natural collagen and elastin production. Over time, this helps improve skin tone, smooth fine lines, fade sun damage and create a firmer, healthier-looking complexion — all with little to no downtime.

You should consider this treatment if you want visible skin rejuvenation without the recovery time of more aggressive procedures. It is ideal for busy lifestyles, provides gradual and natural-looking results, and is for anyone who wants to invest in healthier, more youthful skin over time. Have questions regarding your skin and what treatments may be best suited for you? Seek out a medical professional who specializes in laser treatments.

Treat your skin today, glow by spring, and don't forget: When the sun comes back out, so should your sunscreen. ■

Information provided by Tricia Heberer, Owner/LE, Luxe Medical Spa and Aesthetics, 88 Paine Circle, Suite 7, Bondurant, theberer@luxemedicalspa.net, 515-630-8637.



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HEALTH

By Dr. Kari Swain and Dr. Elizabeth Ellrich

IMPROVING the brain-body connection

Your body is innately designed to feel happy, healthy and strong. The body has an amazing capacity to heal when we take action steps and utilize the tools available to us to restore health and well-being. Chiropractic offers a drug-free, holistic approach to whole body health and wellness for life.

Choosing a chiropractor that can be your partner on your health journey will transform your life. A nervous system-focused wellness chiropractor will do a thorough consultation and examination to get a full picture of your health, identify nervous system stress and assess posture, motor strength and biomechanical movement patterns. Chemical, physical and emotional stressors take our body and nervous system out of alignment. Specific chiropractic adjustments improve the neurological connection between the brain and the body and improve the firing of the motor nerves. Adjustments restore balance in the body by interrupting a constant state of stress and allowing it to return to the necessary mode of rest and restoration. Consistent chiropractic care can increase your energy and cultivate a rested, more alive you who is thriving and not just surviving.

Chiropractors know that the body is designed to self-heal and self-regulate. Chiropractic adjustments remove stress to the nervous system so that your brain and body function better. By combining clinical findings with your personal health goals, a chiropractor can create an individualized care plan to restore and optimize health and improve the quality of your life. ■

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

HEALTH

By Ashley Powell

BEYOND CBD

Beyond CBD, hemp is emerging as a plant that supports both personal wellness and sustainable living. From farming and fashion to construction and household goods, hemp is quickly becoming a plant of the future.

One of hemp's biggest strengths is how easily it grows. It matures in just three to four months, uses minimal water, and requires almost no pesticides. It also improves soil health and absorbs high amounts of carbon dioxide, making it one of the most eco-friendly crops available.

In the building world, hemp is making waves with "hempcrete," a natural insulation material that's fire- and mold-resistant. The fashion industry is also turning to hemp, using its strong, breathable and biodegradable fibers to create comfortable fabrics.

Beyond these uses, hemp continues to shine in wellness. From oils and gummies to topical creams, hemp-based products are helping people manage stress, improve sleep, ease pain and find everyday balance. Its natural compounds work with the body's own systems, offering support in ways that many traditional options cannot.

If you're curious about how hemp may support your lifestyle, stop by your locally owned CBD store and talk with a certified hemp consultant. They can and guide you toward the products that best fit your needs. ■

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. Reference: Hemp as a Sustainable Carbon Negative Plant (Victoria University, 2024)



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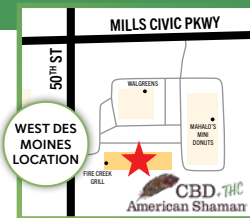
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WELLNESS

By Nikki Morgan

CHEMICAL peels: safe, customizable, effective

Chemical peels have long been one of the most effective treatments for addressing a wide variety of skin concerns, from sun damage and dullness to melasma, uneven texture, and even acne. By gently exfoliating the outermost layers of skin, peels encourage cell turnover, revealing a smoother, brighter and healthier complexion underneath.

One of the biggest misconceptions about chemical peels is that they are harsh or intimidating. The truth is, today's chemical peels are highly customizable, making them a safe and versatile solution for nearly every skin type and concern. For those who simply want a quick refresh before an event, light peels can be performed with little to no visible peeling or downtime, delivering a radiant glow without disruption to your routine. On the other hand, deeper or more advanced peels are available for clients seeking dramatic improvements in pigmentation, texture or acne scarring, offering more transformative results over time.

This flexibility allows skincare professionals to design peel treatments tailored specifically to your goals, lifestyle and skin condition. Whether you are looking to smooth fine lines, brighten discoloration, clear breakouts, or simply rejuvenate tired skin, chemical peels offer a proven path toward noticeable improvement. ■



Information provided by Nikki Morgan, DNP, ARNP, SkinFusion, 200 Second St. S.E., Altoona, 515-967-0587, www.skinfusionfx.com, nikki.skinfusionfx@gmail.com

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WHEN to spend your emergency fund

An emergency fund is a savings account that serves as a financial safety net for emergencies. But what qualifies as an emergency can vary from person to person. To help determine whether it is appropriate to dip into your

emergency savings, ask yourself three questions: Is the expense necessary? Is it unexpected? Is it urgent? If the answer is “yes” to all three, it is likely a valid reason to use your emergency fund.

Necessary expenses

Necessary expenses are the essentials: housing, utilities, food and transportation. If you have lost your job or experienced a sudden drop in



income, your emergency fund can help cover these basic needs.

That said, it is wise to reduce these expenses where possible. Consider cutting out discretionary spending like eating out, entertainment, etc. This approach can help stretch your emergency fund, especially if your financial hardship may last a while.

Unexpected expenses

Even with a solid budget, life throws curveballs. Common unexpected expenses include: major car repairs or accidents, medical emergencies, urgent home repairs, unplanned but essential travel. These are exactly the types of situations your emergency fund is meant to cover.

Urgent expenses

If an expense cannot be delayed without serious

consequences — and it is also necessary and unexpected — it is likely a good reason to use your emergency fund. Examples include a furnace breaking down in the middle of winter or a plumbing issue causing damage to your home.

Rebuild your emergency fund

Once you have used your emergency fund, make a plan to rebuild it. A good rule of thumb is to save enough to cover six months of take-home pay. Start small if needed, but saving consistently is key. Need help getting started? Speak with a banker for more details. ■

Information provided by Lori Slings, Bankers Trust, NMLS ID: 406021, 3820 Eighth St. S.W., Altoona, 515-245-5624, lslings@bankerstrust.com, BankersTrust.com/LSlings, Bankers Trust NMLS ID: 440379.

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1) 25 debit transactions. A "debit transaction" for the purpose of this section means a debit to your Bonus Account that originated from an ACH, Bankers Trust bill payment, drafting checks, or use of your debit card as a method of payment or purchase. A "debit transaction" does not include debits to your Bonus Account that originated from ATM withdrawals or other debits to your Bonus Account; and,

2) 2 direct deposits (ACH credits) or Express Deposits (aka mobile deposits) of at least \$200 each. A "deposit" for the purposes of this section does not include ATM deposits, deposits made in person, account-to-account transfers, or other deposits to your Bonus Account.

In addition, bonus eligibility will be verified 60 days after the Bonus Account's opening. Bonus will only be credited if the account is currently in an open status with a positive balance. Should you have met all eligibility requirements and are not subject to the limitations and exclusions contained herein, the bonus will be credited to the Bonus Account within 75 days of its opening. Limit one bonus per household. Offer not available to existing Bankers Trust checking customers or those that have had a checking account with Bankers Trust within six months of Bonus Account opening. Employees of Bankers Trust and/or its affiliates are not eligible for bonus. Offer available through October 31, 2025. Early closing fee of \$400 will be charged if your Bonus Account is closed within 12 months of opening. Annual Percentage Yield (APY) on BreakFree Checking Plus is 0.60% for balances less than \$5,000.00 and 0.55% for balances \$5,000.00 and over, effective September 1, 2025, and subject to change without notice. Fees may reduce earnings. Rate may change after the account is opened.



Bankers Trust
Member FDIC

The **ONLY** poll mailed to residential households. **VOTE NOW!**

IT'S BACK!

Who will be voted favorite in Eastern Polk County?

We all have our favorite local people, places and things. And now it's time to share your choices and honor those who deserve the recognition.



Make your voice be heard and cast your votes in the 2025 Eastern Polk County Residents' Choice Poll. This contest is being hosted by Iowa Living magazines, and the results will publish January Altoona and Bondurant editions. You can vote in one or every category, or anywhere in between.

HURRY! POLL CLOSES DEC. 5, 2025

See rules and vote at www.iowalivingmagazines.com/residentspoll. One vote per resident, please.

SCAN HERE TO
VOTE TODAY!



FOOD AND DRINK

- Restaurant
- Restaurant for Breakfast
- Restaurant for Lunch
- Restaurant for Dinner
- Restaurant for Dessert
- Place for Ice Cream
- Pizza Establishment
- Bar
- Coffee Shop
- Catering Company
- Server/Bartender

AUTOMOTIVE

- Auto Service
- Auto Body Shop
- Car Dealership

COMMUNITY

- Preschool/Daycare
- Nonprofit
- School (name of building)
- Park
- Community Festival or Event
- Church
- Pastor
- Chamber of Commerce
- Library
- Camping Spot

SHOPPING

- Grocery Store
- Boutique
- Retail Store
- Thrift Store
- Home Improvement Retail Store
- Nursery or Garden Center
- Place to Purchase a Gift for a Man
- Place to Purchase a Gift for a Woman
- Consignment Store
- CBD Store

ENTERTAINMENT

- Dad/Child Date Spot
- Mom/Child Date Spot
- Place to Take Your Mom and Dad
- Place to Take Your Kids or Grandkids
- Place for Child's Birthday Party
- Golf Course

HEALTH/BEAUTY


- Hair Salon
- Physicians Clinic
- Dental Office
- Orthodontist Office
- Mental Health Service
- Chiropractic Office
- Audiologist/Hearing Clinic
- Vision Care
- Health Club or Gym
- Alternative Health Care

HEALTH/BEAUTY

- Pharmacy
- Physical Therapy
- Dance Studio
- Gymnastics/Tumbling Studio

OTHER PROFESSIONAL SERVICES


- Financial Planner
- Law Firm
- Accounting Firm
- Veterinarian
- Dog Groomer
- Lawn Care Business
- Nursery or Landscaping Company
- Heating and Cooling Business
- Electrical Business
- Plumbing Company
- Senior Living Establishment
- Insurance Agency
- Realtor
- Bank/Credit Union
- Photographer
- Place for Guests to Stay
- Home Builder
- Outdoor Lawn Equipment Store
- Pest Control
- General Contractor/Remodeling



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FAITH By Nathan Anenson

STRONGER together: Don't go it alone

Imagine trying to play football all by yourself. You throw the ball, run to catch it, and do your own blocking. Impossible, right? Even the most talented athlete can't win without a team.

Life works the same way. We weren't designed to go it alone.

From the moment we're born, we long for connection. Community isn't just something extra — it's built into who we are. And yet, many of us resist it. We pack our schedules full, scroll endlessly on our phones, or walk through crowded places with our earbuds in. Surrounded by people, we can still feel isolated.

That loneliness takes a toll. Experts note, while people today crave independence ("I don't want to need anyone, and I don't want anyone to need me"), it's actually making us more anxious, less fulfilled and increasingly disconnected. The result? A life that looks busy but feels empty.

Ancient wisdom speaks directly to this problem. Nearly 3,000 years ago, Solomon, one of the wisest people to ever live, wrote about the danger of isolation. He observed that a man who spent his life chasing success but neglected relationships ended up miserable. His conclusion? "Two are better than one...if either of them falls down, one can help the other up" (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10).

In other words, we are stronger together.

Life is hard. We all face burdens: stress at work, family struggles, financial pressures, health scares. Trying to carry them alone only makes the weight heavier. But, when we share our struggles with trusted friends, we find strength, encouragement and hope. In other words, as an old proverb states: "A shared joy is a double joy; a shared sorrow is half a sorrow."

That's one of the beautiful things about church. It's not a place for perfect people. It's a place for real people. People who celebrate together, grieve together and walk through life together. It's a place where you don't have to wear a mask or pretend you have it all figured out.

Church isn't just about attending a service on Sunday. It's about joining a community where you are known, supported and loved. Church is where people pray for you, encourage you, and remind you of the hope we share in Jesus.

The bottom line is this: You were never meant to do life alone. True community may be messy, inconvenient and vulnerable, but it's also where the best parts of life are found.

So, if you've been looking for deeper connection, consider this your invitation. Check out a church community. Take a step into relationship. Because, whether on the football field or in everyday life, one truth remains the same: We're stronger together. ■




IOWA Living MAGAZINES

2025 SALUTE TO OUR VETERANS

PUBLISHES: NOVEMBER

A grateful nation thanks its veterans for their service and sacrifices each **NOVEMBER** in honor of Veterans Day. We would like to recognize some of these local heroes in the November issue of Altoona Living magazine. **Your business can be a part of this special salute pages with the purchase of a supporting ad.**

HONORING OUR LOCAL VETERANS

VETERANS DAY IS MONDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 2024

ANTHONY FLORA Address: [Redacted] Service: [Redacted] Branch: [Redacted] Dates: [Redacted] How can Altoona Living magazine help you honor your veteran?	STEVE KELLER Address: [Redacted] Service: [Redacted] Branch: [Redacted] Dates: [Redacted] How can Altoona Living magazine help you honor your veteran?
MIKE GILES Address: [Redacted] Service: [Redacted] Branch: [Redacted] Dates: [Redacted] How can Altoona Living magazine help you honor your veteran?	JERRY BOND Address: [Redacted] Service: [Redacted] Branch: [Redacted] Dates: [Redacted] How can Altoona Living magazine help you honor your veteran?
JIMMY J. McDONELL Address: [Redacted] Service: [Redacted] Branch: [Redacted] Dates: [Redacted] How can Altoona Living magazine help you honor your veteran?	THOMAS WALTZ Address: [Redacted] Service: [Redacted] Branch: [Redacted] Dates: [Redacted] How can Altoona Living magazine help you honor your veteran?
KENT MCADON Address: [Redacted] Service: [Redacted] Branch: [Redacted] Dates: [Redacted] How can Altoona Living magazine help you honor your veteran?	RAYFORD STANES Address: [Redacted] Service: [Redacted] Branch: [Redacted] Dates: [Redacted] How can Altoona Living magazine help you honor your veteran?

HURRY! Reserve your space by Nov. 12!

TO RESERVE YOUR SPACE, CALL ANGELA OSSIAN at 515-953-4822 x307 or angela@iowalivingmagazines.com



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

FALL is the season of change

As the leaves begin to turn and routines shift, fall brings a renewed sense of energy and focus. It's a busy and exciting time at the Chamber. Students are back in school, families are settling into new rhythms, and our community is alive with activity. We celebrated school pride by partnering with Southeast Polk CSD on the ever-popular homecoming parade. It is no secret that we think this is most likely the largest parade of its kind in the state. Ram Pride is wild!

October is a month to recognize and celebrate local heroes — our first responders — and we do this annually with a special luncheon highlighting the important roles they play in this community and by giving thanks for their very essence. We have a special community that recognizes how lucky we are to have community-centric leadership within these departments.

October is also the last hoorah for the Chamber and local businesses to connect with residents and their littles in a big way. The annual Business Trick or Treat event on Wednesday, Oct. 22 is sure to please even the spookiest of ghouls. Join us at Civic Plaza to meet your business community, get loads of candy in a safe environment, enjoy fun music from local DJ Jazzy Jeff, grab a bite to eat (yep, that's new) and check out the spooky Halloween bounce house. Let's keep working together to make this fall one of growth, connection and community spirit.

In this same moment, we recognize that our world and many hearts feel heavy right now. In times like these, it is more important than ever to lean on one another. Whether we are reaching out for support, taking a quiet moment of reflection, or navigating uncertain paths, we're doing it together. It is within our power to make positive change, to engage in civil discussions about our concerns as a community and bring us all together in unity.

For ourselves, our children and our businesses, the road ahead may not always be clear. But through community, compassion and resilience, we will continue to move forward.

Let's keep showing up for each other and for the future we're working to build. ■



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



OUT & ABOUT



Mary Simon, Carrie Blackburn and Pennie Carroll at the Altoona Area Chamber of Commerce Women of Vision event on Aug. 27 at The Carriage House.



Loral Barratt, Dr. Kari Swain, Carrie Blackburn, Jessica Lee and Kristen Potter at the Altoona Area Chamber of Commerce Women of Vision event on Aug. 27 at The Carriage House.



Christine Clark and Tammy Main at the Altoona Area Chamber of Commerce Women of Vision event on Aug. 27 at The Carriage House.



Jennifer McCoy and Madison Burke at the Altoona Area Chamber of Commerce Women of Vision event on Aug. 27 at The Carriage House.



Rusty McCuen and Heather Sievers at the Altoona Area Chamber of Commerce monthly Noon Networking event on Aug. 19 at Guadalajara.



Nikki Barkhaus, Angela Jones and Amy Jensen at the Altoona Area Chamber of Commerce Women of Vision event on Aug. 27 at The Carriage House.



Luke Peterson, Jackson Harper-Griffith and Rick Kroeger at the Altoona Area Chamber of Commerce monthly Noon Networking event on Aug. 19 at Guadalajara.



Liv Wendt and Angela Jones at the Altoona Area Chamber of Commerce monthly Noon Networking event on Aug. 19 at Guadalajara.



Tammy Main and Linda Lawson at the Altoona Area Chamber of Commerce monthly Noon Networking event on Aug. 19 at Guadalajara.

ALTOONA

SEPTEMBER 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

Kyle Mertz 515-954-8470

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

SPECIAL CENSUS

Altoona's Special Census will be coming this November. Towards the end of September, residents should expect to receive the first mailings from the federal government that contain a unique 12-digit code and information that can be used to complete the Census online. We encourage you to participate in our Special Census. Responding is important, easy, and safe, and only takes 10 minutes! Respond online when you receive your invitation in the mail. If you did not receive an invitation or are unable to respond online—don't worry—you can still respond when a U.S. Census Bureau employee knocks on your door.

https://www.altoona-iowa.com/community/news/special_census_2025.php



SOUTHEAST POLK HOMECOMING PARADE

The Southeast Polk High School homecoming parade will be held on Thursday, Sept. 25 at 6 p.m. Because of parade lineup, Venbury Drive will be closed around 5 p.m. from 8th St SW to near 5th Ave SW. The route travels from near City Hall to Centennial Elementary, traveling primarily along 13th Street.

FINAL BRUSH DROP-OFF

The City of Altoona will have a final Brush Drop-Off event happening from 8:00am-Noon on October 4th.

You can access the drop-off site using the Utilities service road from 8th Street SW. Continue south on the road, past the Utilities Department buildings, and continue up the hill. The brush drop-off will be on your left.

Only branches and small diameter (12" or less) trunks are allowed. No bundles of leaves or bushes allowed. Branches with leaves attached will be accepted. Residents should bring proof of address in the city to utilize this service.

For additional questions, contact City Hall at (515) 967-5136.



FALL YARD WORK REMINDERS

The City of Altoona appreciates your cooperation in keeping Altoona beautiful and maintaining the storm drains by raking and mulching your leaves on your own property. If you have lots of leaves or you choose not to mulch, please remember not to blow the leaves into the street where they can clog the storm sewers (City Ordinance 135.05). Also, burning leaves is not allowed within city limits (City Ordinance 105.05).

Yard waste can be placed in Compost It! bags or store-brand bags with a green Compost It! sticker attached. Or, throw everything in your 96-gallon Compost It! cart and take it to the curb on your regular collection day. Cart service for yard waste is renewed annually.

Learn more about Metro Waste's Compost It! program and what's accepted by visiting www.WhereItShouldGo.com/YardWaste, or by calling 515.244.0021.

LOOKING!? FOR YOUR NEXT HOME?

