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NOVEMBER 2025

Living

MAGAZINE

RESIDENTS' CHOICE AWARDS

Madison County residents
share their favorites

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WELCOME

A COMMERCE-creating machine

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Thanks for reading. ■

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RESIDENTS' CHOICE AWARDS

**Madison County residents
share their favorites**

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

Some winners are repeating at the top

of their categories. Their supporters have proven to be a loyal bunch. Others are new to the awards list, showing they have made a good impression over the last year and are building up a strong following as well.

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



Connor Findlay at Winterset Cidery, Residents' Choice for favorite brewery/distillery/winery. Not pictured are his parents, Nate and Jen Findlay, and his sister, Kaylee Iversen.

Residents' Choices for Favorite Madison County...

(Runners up in alphabetical order)

Restaurant

Urban Taproom and Grille

Runners up: Sports Page Grill; Urban on the Square

Restaurant for breakfast

Montross Pharmacy Cafe

Runners up: Petite Café; The Bakery Unlimited

Restaurant for lunch

Urban on the Square

Runners up: Sports Page Grill; Urban Taproom and Grille

Restaurant for dinner

Urban Taproom and Grille

Runners up: Sports Page Grill; The Drift

Restaurant for dessert

Frostee's

Runners up: Urban on the Square; Urban Taproom and Grille

Place for ice cream

Frostee's

Runners up: Montross Pharmacy; Tiki Treats Iowa

Pizza establishment

Casey's

Runners up: Pizza Hut; Urban Taproom and Grille

Bar

The Drift

Runners up: Sports Page Grill; Urban Taproom and Grille

Brewery / distillery / winery

Winterset Cidery

Runners up: Big Rack Brew Haus; Covered Bridges Winery

Server / bartender

Tracy Tarlton, Urban Taproom and Grille

Runners up: Candi Lehman, Sports Page Grill; Presley Brown, Urban Taproom and Grille

Auto service

Quality Car Care

Runners up: Bell Transmission & Auto Repair; R&B Tire and Auto

Auto body shop

Roush Collision & Restoration

Runners up: Al's Body and Customs; Bowman Body Shop

Preschool / daycare

Stepping Stones Child Care Center

Runners up: Little Huskies Preschool; The Children's Jungle

Park

Winterset City Park

Runners up: Earlham City Park; Pammel State Park

Community festival or event

The Covered Bridge Festival

Runners up: Festival of Lights; Madison County Fall Crawl

Church

Redeemer Church

Runners up: Winterset Community Church; Word of Life Family Church

Pastor

Jaysson Gurwell, Redeemer Church

Runners up: Bruce Wangler, Word of Life Family Church; Scott O'Conner, Winterset Community Church

Place for a field trip

Pammel State Park

Runners up: Howell's Greenhouse and Pumpkin Patch; Madison County Historical Complex

Spot for a picnic

Winterset City Park

Runners up: Cedar Lake; Pammel State Park

Grocery store

Fareway

Runners up: Hometown Market in Earlham; Hy-Vee

Boutique

Angel Wings and CT

Runners up: Spoons Full of Sugar Boutique; Whompy Bear Boutique



Alyssa Evans and Jenn Drake of Evergreen and Lily Floral Studio and Gifts, which was voted Residents' Choice for favorite florist.

Retail store

Angel Wings and CT

Runners up: Bomgaars; Madison County Mercantile

Florist

Evergreen and Lily Floral Studio & Gifts

Runners up: Boards and Blooms; The Botanical Bodega

Home improvement retail store

Brothers Ace

Runners up: Bomgaars; Re:Home

Place to purchase a gift for a man

Bomgaars

Runners up: Brothers Ace; Evergreen and Lily Floral Studio & Gifts

Place to purchase a gift for a woman

Angel Wings and CT

Runners up: Evergreen and Lily Floral Studio & Gifts; Spoons Full of Sugar Boutique

Dad / child date spot

The Iowa Theater

Runners up: Frostee's; Winterset City Park

Mom / child date spot

Winterset City Park

Runners up: Amber's Place; The Iowa Theater

Place to take your mom and dad

Urban Taproom and Grille

Runners up: The Drift; The Iowa Theater

Place to take your kids or grandkids

Winterset City Park

Runners up: Frostee's; Pammel State Park

Place for children's birthday parties

Winterset City Park

Runners up: Graham's Game Cafe; Sk8n Station

Summer camp

Wildwood Hills Ranch

Runners up: Bricker Price Summer Camp; Pammel State Park

Camping spot

Pammel State Park

Runners up: Criss Cove Campground; Winterset City Park Campground

Hair salon

Salon 107

Runners up: Country Cutters; Modern Reflections

Dental office

Winterset Dental

Runners up: Earlham Family Dentistry; Summit Dental

Chiropractor

Flourish Chiropractic & Wellness

Runners up: Infinite Chiropractic & Wellness Clinic; Meyer Chiropractic Clinic

Health club or gym

Kardio Kick Gym

Runner up: Winterset Fitness Express

Doctor

Dr. Amy Kimball

Runners up: Clarice Blanchard, PA-C; Dr. Joseph Kimball

Pharmacy

Montross Pharmacy

Runners up: Hy-Vee; Medicap

Financial planner

Whitney Messerschmitt, Edward Jones

Runners up: Jason Kleemeier, One Wealth; Karin Holder, Ameriprise Financial Services

Law firm

Jordan, Oliver, Walters & Smith

Runners up: Flander Casper & Rosien; Hanson Law Firm

Lawn care business

Midwest Services

Runners up: 5 Sons, Landscape and Design; CD's Lawn Care

Nursery or landscaping company

Midwest Services

Runners up: 5 Sons, Landscape and Design; CD's Lawn Care

Heating and cooling business

Bill Jensen Heating and Cooling

Runners up: Lillie Plumbing, Heating and Electrical; Miner Heating and Cooling

Electrician (business)

Hirsch Electric

Runners up: Concept Electric; Umbaugh Electric

Plumbing company

Herr Plumbing

Runners up: Lillie Plumbing, Heating and Electrical; Switech Plumbing

Senior living facility

Azria Health Winterset

Insurance agency

Scot Clark, Farm Bureau

Runners up: Charlotte Speer, State Farm; Pro Team Insurance

Realtor

Rachel Eller, Summerset Realty

Runners up: Jennifer Stover, Madison County Realty Co.; Sarah Cowman, Homefront Real Estate

Bank / credit union

Union State Bank

Runners up: American State Bank; Farmers & Merchants State Bank



Marianne Fons, an Iowa Theater board member, assisted in the rehabilitation of the theater, which was voted Residents' Choice for favorite spot for dads to take their children.

Photographer

Katie Cooke

Runners up: LeAnne Tucker; Teddi Yaeger

Place for guests to stay

Cobblestone Inn & Suites

Runners up: Aerie Loft; Cottage on Court

Home builder

Complete Construction

Runners up: Newcastle Home Builders; Sawyers Custom Homes

Home improvement contractor

Falke Construction

Runners up: Complete Construction; Superior Home Improvements

Accounting firm

Shahan Walsh

Runners up: Applegate Tax and Accounting; Bridges Financial Inc.

Painting company

Cleghorn Painting

Runners up: Lucas Painting; Van Pelt Painting ■

HOLIDAY Hop tradition going strong

Enjoy shopping, drawings, and benefitting programs

On Nov. 22, local churches, the Winterset Public Library, the Art Center, and other merchants will once again host the 30-plus-year-old Holiday Hop tradition. This annual, pre-holiday shopping opportunity features handmade treats, crafts, artwork and food; vendors; and a drawing for gift cards. Proceeds also help to support programs.

Starting at 8:30 a.m. and running until 1:30 p.m., customers can enjoy cinnamon rolls, jams and jellies, oh my! Quilts with goldfish, dogs and rockets that fly! Come for the soups, sloppy Joes, the paintings, the jewelry that glitters; move on to the soaps and scents and punch cards.

Shoppers can request a punch card at the first location they visit, have it punched at each site, then turn in their completed cards by 1:30 p.m. at any of the 11 venues. The drawing will be held at 2 p.m. Winners do not have to be present to win as the gift cards are mailed to the winners.

PARTICIPATING VENUES:

First Christian Church, 103 W. Green St. Walking tacos, homemade cookies, brownies, pies and drinks will be available, along with handmade crafts, baked goods and vintage Christmas decorations.

First United Methodist Church, 309 E. Jefferson St. Vegetable beef soup, sloppy Joes, chips, cookies, drinks will be served from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. for a freewill donation. Handmade Christmas crafts, pieced baby quilts and multiple vendors will be featured. Funds raised help fund the church's 2025 youth mission trip.

First United Presbyterian Church, 210 W. Green St. Cinnamon rolls will be offered for breakfast and chicken salad on croissant for lunch. Visitors will find homemade baked goods and candies, centerpieces, books, hand-crafted jewelry and gently used vintage Christmas items for sale.

Foursquare Church, 224 E. Court Ave. A light breakfast, coffee and hot chocolate will be offered, and, for lunch, sloppy Joes, chips and drinks. Multiple vendors (including Scentsy, Tastefully Simple and others), homemade crafts, baked goods, artwork and handmade jewelry will be available. Funds raised benefit the church's youth programs.

New Bridge Church, 1305 W. Jefferson St. Enjoy free hot coffee and cookies. In addition, the first 50 people will receive a free treat bag. A cookie walk, homemade candy, gift baskets, handmade crafts and vintage Christmas decorations will be featured. Enjoy seeing a display of unique nativity sets in the foyer.

St. Joseph Catholic Church, 1026 N. Eighth Ave. Breakfast breads, scones, hot cider and coffee will be offered as well as a lunch of hot chicken salad, rolls and pumpkin bars for a freewill offering. Shop the bake sale with homemade pies, cookies, breads, candies and yummy treats. A wide variety of unique, hand-crafted items and vintage treasures will be for sale. Funds raised benefit community and other parish needs (education program, family events and weekly food pantry).

St. Paul Lutheran Church, 1120 N. Eighth Ave. Cinnamon rolls, sticky buns and flavored coffees will be offered for breakfast. Shop for homemade crafts, baked goods, vintage Christmas décor and cookies. Proceeds will benefit C.R.I.S.P., Matura, Paw Pantry and God's Squad Kids.

Spotlight Dance Legacy, 116 E. Court Ave. Holiday themed baked goods will be for sale. A Makers' Market with multiple craft vendors will be featured. Funds raised go toward the competition team's expenses.

Stop and Shop Craft Fair, 1146 W. Summit St., Madison County Fairgrounds (Varied Industries Building) Coffee, hot chocolate and apple cider cookies will be served from 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. Vendors include Tupperware. Tastefully Simple, Jewelry by Denise, Perfectly Posh, wood crafts by Ed Chapman, Jeanne Martz (author), plus many others.

Winterset Art Center, 224 S. John Wayne Drive Pottery and local artwork will be for sale with proceeds going toward children's art class scholarships.

Winterset Public Library, 123 N. Second St. Shop a Makers Market with local artisan vendors of organic goat milk soaps and body products; handmade crafts and jewelry; mystery books; unique tumblers; jams and jellies; and She Bakes baked goods. ■



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EDUCATION

By Lindsey Giardino

BUILDING connections through history

Larison brings the subject to life.

For high school social studies teacher Jess Larison, teaching is all about the students.

"You never know what you are going to get from high school students," he says. "Sometimes they make you laugh, and sometimes they make you want to pull your hair out, but, at the end of the day, I am always left knowing that I am building positive relationships with students, and that makes my heart smile."



Jess Larison

This year marks Larison's third year teaching history at Winterset High School and his seventh year teaching overall. He's currently pursuing a master's degree in history teaching from Northwestern College, which takes up much of his time outside the classroom.

"I am excited about what I am learning and what it will — and already has — added to my teaching," he shares. "It may also mean some exciting new history course offerings at Winterset High School, which I am looking forward to."

Larison was drawn to teaching by his mother, who taught for more than 40 years, and his sister, who is eight years older.

"They both inspired me to go into teaching as I got to see firsthand how their hard work translated into a positive influence in the world and personal satisfaction in knowing they were making a difference," Larison says. "I knew that I wanted to have an impact in the community I lived in, and teaching opens so many opportunities to do that."

He sees that potential shine in Winterset specifically. Initially, Larison was attracted to the district because of its size and location, but he was truly sold by its dedication to developing teachers and fearlessness in trying new initiatives that benefit students.

"Seeing Winterset schools dedicate themselves to Capturing Kids Hearts, Portrait of a Graduate and Authentic Learning demonstrated to me that the district had a student-first orientation and had their minds set on the right things," he says. "I feel like being in this district and working on these initiatives has helped make me a better teacher, and I have personally seen how they help students to grow."

As the school year continues, Larison looks forward to applying some of what he's learning in his master's courses to the Portrait of a Graduate initiative.

"In my research methods course, we discussed 'public history' and how to apply it in the classroom, and I think there are some strong overlaps with the skills we teach with Portrait of a Graduate," Larison explains. "I am excited to look for new ways to engage students with history in their lives and community and find ways to get them out in the community researching and presenting what they are learning about the past and how it informs our present." ■

REAL ESTATE

By Madison LaFrenz

AUTUMN advantage

Why fall is still a great time to sell

When the leaves fall, many homeowners assume the real estate market slows down — but that's not always true. In fact, selling in the cooler months can bring unique advantages.

Fewer listings mean less competition. With fewer homes on the market, your property stands out to serious buyers who are ready to move before the holidays or start the new year fresh. Plus, buyers who are house-hunting in November tend to be motivated — no one browses open houses in 30-degree weather just for fun.

This season is also your chance to make your home feel warm and inviting. Simple touches like a cozy throw blanket, a simmer pot on the stove, or soft lighting can transform your space into one buyers instantly connect with. Think “comfort meets curb appeal.”

And, while outdoor photos shine in summer, fall's natural backdrop — golden trees, pumpkins on the porch and crisp light — makes for some of the most beautiful listing photography of the year.

So, if you have been thinking about selling, don't wait for spring. The fall market might be the hidden opportunity your home has been waiting for. ■

Information provided by Madison LaFrenz, 515-739-0336, Madison County Realty, 65 W. Jefferson St., Winterset, madison.lafrenz@gmail.com. Licensed in Iowa.



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AUTOMOTIVE

By Dawn Lauer

TIRE basics

Tires aren't something you frequently purchase, so it's understandable if you are confused by the array of brands, sizes and tire types to choose from. However, a little knowledge and a trusted advisor can make the process a breeze. First, you must identify the proper size tire for your vehicle.

Check your owner's manual or the Tire and Loading Information Label located on the driver's side door edge or post. Once you have the correct size, you need to choose which type of tire best suits your needs. There are three main types of tires used in our area: all-season, winter and all-terrain.

All-season tires are the most common and can handle a variety of road conditions. Winter tires are more effective than all-season tires in deep snow. All-terrain tires are mainly used on four-wheel-drive vehicles. They provide a good compromise.

After you know the size and type, you must decide which brand of tire to purchase. With a wide variety of brands to choose from, we recommend discussing the options with your repair shop. Once you have the perfect tires, keep in mind that proper tire maintenance, such as rotation, balance and alignment, is essential to your tires lasting longer and making you as safe as possible. ■

Information provided by Dawn Lauer, marketing specialist, Quality Car Care, 1012 N. 10th St., Winterset, 515-462-1035. Sources: www.nhtsa.gov/sites/nhtsa.dot.gov/files/documents/11084a_tirehome_102918_vs_tag_O.pdf.



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BEAUTY

By Annie Wiseman

HAIR and nutrition

Shiny, strong hair isn't just about the products you use — it starts with what you eat every day. Your hair grows from the inside out, so giving your body the right nutrients can make a noticeable difference in how your strands look and feel.

Protein is key. Since hair is mostly made of protein, adding foods like eggs, chicken, beans or Greek yogurt helps keep it strong and less prone to breakage. If you're a vegetarian, lentils, quinoa and tofu are great options.

Healthy fats are another must-have. Omega-3s from salmon, walnuts and chia seeds nourish your scalp, helping to prevent dryness and dullness. Even a drizzle of olive oil on your salad can give your hair a hydration boost.

Vitamins and minerals also play a big role. Iron from spinach or lean red meat helps prevent shedding, while zinc in nuts and seeds supports new growth. Foods rich in vitamin E — like almonds and sunflower seeds — act like natural protection for your hair, keeping it shiny and resilient.

Don't forget hydration. Drinking enough water helps nutrients reach your scalp, so your hair can actually use all that goodness you're eating.

If your hair feels brittle, looks flat, or seems to shed more than usual, it might be a sign your diet needs a little love. By focusing on simple, balanced meals with colorful veggies, lean proteins and healthy fats, you'll be nourishing your body — and your hair — from the inside out. ■

Information provided by Annie Wiseman, owner of Salon 107 and a licensed cosmetologist with 25 years of experience. 107 John Wayne Drive, Winterset, 515-462-4247, salon107style@gmail.com.



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HEALTH

By Dr. Amanda Queck

SIMPLE eating hacks to reach health goals

'Tis the season for family, friends and food. This is the time of the year when the "diet" gets kicked to the curb as we prepare for our favorite recipes and load up on sweet treats because, after all... it's that time of the year. Before you pull out your sweats for the rest of the month and brace yourself to gain 10 pounds that you swear you will lose in January, be encouraged that there are a few "hacks" you can consider as you prepare for the festivities that this season brings.

Hack 1: Eat your foods in the right order. Fiber first, then protein and starch/sugary food last. You don't have to completely cut carbs from your diet. But a simple hack to avoid a sugar spike is to frontload your carbs with fiber (aka veggies). Want to go above and beyond? Start your meal with a salad topped with a vinegarette dressing.

Hack #2: Pair your carbs with protein (and be sure to eat your protein first). Before you load up on the mashed potatoes, stuffing and dessert, eat your protein. And, if you're really serious, eat a vegetable or a salad before you even eat your protein. Consider eating an egg or two 20 minutes before eating your big meal. By the time you get to dessert, a couple bites will be all it takes to satisfy that sugar craving... and you won't experience the yucky side effects later. ■

Information provided by Dr. Amanda Queck, D.C. Flourish Chiropractic & Wellness, 108 W. Court Ave., Winterset, 515-384-0360, www.flourishchiro.life. Source: Glucose Revolution by Jessie Inchauspé



CANDY and cavities: Minimize the risk

For most kids, Halloween is the high point of the year for collecting candy. It also can be a scary time for teeth and gums. Sweet, sour and sticky candies can damage your child's oral health. Study results have shown that eating candy more than once per week can increase the risk of developing cavities. Snacking on candy between meals and before bedtime greatly increases the development of cavities.

It is not just eating candy that raises the risk of developing cavities. The amount of time teeth are exposed to sugar can also affect development of cavities. Sticky candies and candies your child suck on for long periods can cause problems. Because they are high in acid, sour candies can soften enamel. Just like cavities, the risk of developing tooth erosion is increased through long exposure to sour candies. Researchers found that 5-year-old children with tooth erosion were five times more likely to have erosion in their permanent teeth. The packaging on some of these candies can be misleading. A survey of candies labeled as "tooth



friendly," "sugar-free for healthy teeth," or "kind to teeth" may have less sugar, but they still may be acidic.

Gums sweetened with xylitol or sorbitol can help reduce the risk of developing cavities. Chewing sugar-free gum increases saliva. Saliva helps stop acid attacks on the teeth. Researchers have found that chewing gum sweetened with xylitol reduced plaque by 15%. In many cases, saliva also contains fluoride, which helps harden enamel.

Everyone should brush their teeth twice per day for two minutes each time with a soft-bristled toothbrush and a toothpaste that contains fluoride. Children 3 years and younger should use a smear of toothpaste the size of a grain of rice. Children older than 3 years can use a pea-sized amount.

Sugary, sour and sticky candies all are bad for your child's teeth. Watch when and how much candy they eat and make sure they brush their teeth properly and see their dentist regularly. ■

Information provided by Dr. Jason Phelps, Winterset Dental, 225 Wambold Drive, Winterset, 515-462-5755, Instagram: dr._jason_phelps. Source: Journal of the American Dental Association.

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INSURANCE

By Eric Johnson

THE COSTS of distracted driving

Distracted driving is one of the leading causes of accidents on Iowa roads and a major factor behind rising auto insurance claims. Whether it is a quick text, a navigation adjustment, or a phone call, even a moment of inattention can lead to costly — and sometimes tragic — consequences. Recognizing this risk, Iowa has enacted a new “hands-free” driving law designed to keep drivers focused on the road ahead.



Effective July 1, 2025, it's now illegal for Iowa drivers to hold or manually operate a cell phone or other electronic device while driving. Calls, texts and navigation can still be used, but only if the device is in a mounted position and operated through voice command or Bluetooth. Warnings will be issued initially, but, beginning Jan. 1, 2026, violators will face fines starting around \$100. More serious penalties apply if distracted driving results in injury or death.

From an insurance standpoint, this law couldn't come at a better time. Auto insurers have seen a sharp increase in claims related to distracted driving over the past decade. Even a minor fender bender caused by glancing at a phone can drive up claim frequency and, in turn, statewide insurance rates. When drivers pay attention, everyone benefits — fewer accidents mean fewer claims and more stable premiums.

Beyond avoiding fines and higher rates, safe driving protects your financial well-being in other ways. Accidents tied to phone use can lead to at-fault designations on your record, surcharges or even non-renewal from your insurance carrier. It is worth remembering that your policy doesn't just protect your car — it protects your liability if someone else is injured. One moment of distraction can put both your safety and your assets at risk.

According to national studies, drivers using cell phones are four times more likely to be involved in a crash serious enough to cause injury. The average cost of a distracted driving claim now exceeds \$20,000, and major injury accidents can quickly climb past \$100,000 once medical and legal costs are included. These figures underline how vital it is to stay alert and undistracted behind the wheel.

Here are a few practical tips:

- Mount your phone at eye level and use hands-free or voice-activated features.
- Set your route and playlist before driving.
- Use your phone's “Do Not Disturb While Driving” mode.
- Encourage family members — especially teens — to lead by example.

Staying focused on the road doesn't just keep you safe — it helps protect everyone's financial future and ensures that Iowa's roads are safer for all. ■

Information provided by Eric Johnson, IFG Insurance, 224 E. Highway 92, Suite B, Winterset, 515-462-4553.



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A BREATH of fresh air

Downes finds home in Winterset.

Katy Downes fell in love with Winterset after regularly visiting her father, who moved to the community in 2008.

"My native Chicago felt old and dirty, and Winterset was like a needed breath of fresh air," Downes explains.

So, in 2011, she officially made the move to town, with the added bonus of being closer to her dad.

What drew her to her home was its proximity to the square and all the festivals, as well as the classic homes that surround her.

"My house was built in 1940, and I'm one of the newbies on the block," Downes says.

Other selling points included the cost ("My mortgage would get you no better than a rundown studio in Chicago"), its simple elegance, the hardwood floors and the charming neighborhood in general.

"My neighbors are all very warm and easygoing," Downes says. "We have each other's numbers and look out for one another. If any one of us needs anything, we don't hesitate to call or even just knock on the door."

Often, in winter, Downes will find her sidewalk already shoveled, usually by a neighbor returning a favor.

"Plus, the homes are older and very charming," she adds of her neighborhood.

As for Winterset itself, Downes finds it peaceful.

"You can walk around town at literally any time of night and not fear for your safety ... this is unheard of in Chicago," she says. "The town also has a lot of pride in itself, and I love how natives and newcomers are constantly collaborating to make this town shine. Winterset is the perfect combination of a tourist town and authentic rural Iowa community."

Downes appreciates all the people who are pouring their time and energy into helping Winterset and Madison County thrive.

She adds, she is grateful to have made the move to town all those years ago.

"Even though I spent most of my life in Chicago, I'm amazed at how quickly Winterset started to feel like home when I first came here," she shares. "I'm very grateful to call Winterset 'my town.' " ■



Katy Downes became acquainted with Winterset when she visited her dad and later decided to make it her home, too.

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Celebrate the news of your business in the **JANUARY** issue of Winterset Living magazine! Share your history, expansions, achievements, charity, new staff, new services or products and more. Choose from half or full page. This will be a once a year feature, so reserve your space by **DECEMBER 17!**

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HOMEFRONT REAL ESTATE

OWNER: Sarah Cowman
ADDRESS: 57 E. Jefferson St, Winterset
PHONE: 515-468-0409
WEBSITE: www.homefront-realestate.com

Originally from Maumet, IA, our family moved to Winterset in 2015. I immediately fell in love with Madison County and feel grateful to be able to raise our family here. I've been working in Real Estate since 2008 and am a member of Des Moines Area Association of Realtors, the Iowa Association of Realtors and the National Association of Realtors. I specialize in residential, land and commercial buying and selling. I am the owner of Homefront Real Estate which was established in 2012.

Early on in my career, I recognized quickly that I gained great satisfaction in knowing I helped people with one of the biggest decisions of their lives. Whether it's a couple buying their first home, a family purchasing a vacation home, or the empty nester looking to downsize, I get the opportunity to help people through each stage in their lives and truly be a part of a community. I recognize and value the trust my clients place in me, and I strive every day to demonstrate the highest level of integrity and commitment to exceeding their expectations and to bring a little fun into every real estate transaction. I am committed to listening to my

client's needs and utilizing my negotiating skills to ensure a successful transaction. I never get bored in my profession as change is a crucial part of it, especially in this fast paced market.

I take pride in giving back to my community and have served on the Madison County Chamber Board, Winterset Zoning Commission, Education Foundation Board, and St. Joseph Church Finance Council. I volunteer for St. Joseph Church, have assisted with the Veterans Ball for the American Legion Post 184 and coached Little League Baseball.

In 2020, 2021 and 2022 I was awarded Favorite Madison County Realtor chosen by the people of this community themselves. My real estate team is amazing and consists of Wendy Frost, Len Sparks, Emily Duford, Tyler Helm, and Kelly Lorenzen. All are very professional and caring Realtors! We invariably pitch in for each other, share a team spirit, and our primary focus is customer education and satisfaction. Let one of our team members assist you with your next property purchase or sale!

This year, the shop introduced 24-hour towing and rental car services, providing customers with a unique, all-in-one solution. In the event of an accident, a customer can call the shop for immediate towing, receive a rental car delivered directly to them on the side of the road, and then have their damaged vehicle transported back to the shop for repair.

The shop specializes in collision repair, working with all major insurance companies to handle all makes and models of vehicles.

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s during repairs,

In addition to repairs, they offer Ranch Hand bumper sales and installations. With a team of seven skilled employees, the shop ensures every customer is treated with care and respect, delivering high-quality repairs every time.

As lifelong residents of Winterset, the owners have a personal connection to the community. They cherish the relationships they've built with customers over the years—many of whom are old friends, teachers, and family members. These deep ties to the community set this business apart, giving customers the trust and reassurance that they are working with people who genuinely care.

A common misconception the shop seeks to correct is the idea that multiple estimates are necessary. In Iowa, customers don't need to get several estimates. Simply drop off your car at your shop of choice, and the insurance company can handle the rest. The team also emphasizes that cheaper estimates are not always the best option. While price is a factor, it's more important to choose a shop that offers thorough, high-quality repairs.

Looking forward, the shop plans to continue growing and finding new ways to improve the services they offer. "Thank you for voting us Best Body Shop in Madison County two years in a row! We wouldn't be here without the support of our community, and we take pride in continuing to serve you with the best quality and service possible," says the owner. Whether you need collision repair, towing, or a rental car, this Winterset shop is ready to help, offering personalized service and expertise you won't find anywhere else.



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Russell Dillinger

Peru

Military branch: U.S. Marine Corps

Rank: Sergeant E-5

Served: June 13, 1965, to Sept. 10, 1971

What would you like others to know about serving your country?

"I went into the Marine Corps right out of high school. After watching all of the coverage about President Kennedy and what he said, 'Ask not what your country can do for you but what you can do for your country?' I felt that it was my duty to serve. I later found out that my great-great grandfather, James Dillinger, had served during the Civil War. I also had uncles and cousins that had served. During my 7.5 years in the Marine Corps, I was privileged to have two brothers and an uncle serving... I am of the belief that anyone graduating from high school who does not know what they will do with their life would greatly benefit from some time in the military. From my time in the service, I met countless strangers who have become lifelong friends."



Bill Dane

Winterset

Military branch: Iowa Army National Guard

Rank: First Sergeant

Served: 1975 to 1999

What would you like others to know about serving your country?

"When you know you are talking to a Veteran, thank them."



Denny Thompson

Peru

Military branch: U.S. Air Force

Rank: Tech Sergeant

Served: July 1994 - 2014

What would you like others to know about serving your country?

"It was a great experience and opportunity, lots of good memories, lots of good people, and seeing so many different places."

Lawayne DeForest

Winterset

Military branch: U.S. Army at Fort Riley, Kansas, in the Chemical Corp.

Rank: Specialist

Served: 1983-1990

What would you like others to know about serving your country?

"I'm proud of my service."



Thank you for your service!

Roy L. Smith

Winterset

Military branch: U.S. Army

Rank: Sergeant First Class

Served: 1968-1983

What would you like others to know about serving your country?

"Serving my country was the greatest honor of my life. Regardless of whether our country is at peace or war, we must have a strong and committed military. Peace through strength is the best deterrent to anyone who would do harm to our country. Serving my country for 13 years was my choice and my honor. God bless America."



Dale Thompson

Winterset

Military branch: U.S. Army

Rank: Corporal

Served: 1966 - 1968

What would you like others to know about serving your country?

"I had a wife and a kid on the way, and I couldn't be there. My son loved his service time, but I never did."





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A LOOK at diversification

Ancient Chinese merchants were said to have developed a unique way to manage their risk. They would divide their shipments among several different vessels. That way, if one ship were to sink or be attacked by pirates, the rest stood a good chance of getting through. Thus, the majority of the shipment could be saved. Your investment portfolio may benefit from that same logic.



Diversification is an investment principle designed to manage risk. However, diversification does not guarantee against a loss. The key to diversification is to identify investments that may perform differently under various market conditions.

On one level, a diversified portfolio should be diversified between asset classes, such as stocks, bonds and cash alternatives. On another level, a diversified portfolio also should be diversified within asset classes, such as a diverse basket of stocks.

A diversified approach

For example, let's say a stock portfolio included a computer company, a software developer and an internet service provider. Although the portfolio has spread its risk among three companies, it may not be considered well diversified, as all the firms are connected to the technology industry. A portfolio that includes a computer company, a drug manufacturer, and an oil service firm, however, may be considered more diversified.

Similarly, a bond portfolio that invests exclusively in long-term U.S. Treasuries may have limited diversification. A bond fund that invests in short-term and long-term U.S. Treasuries, plus a variety of corporate bonds, may offer more diversification.

Mutual Funds and ETFs

Mutual funds and exchange-traded funds are sold only by prospectus. Please consider the charges, risks, expenses, and investment objectives carefully before investing. A prospectus containing this and other information about the investment company can be obtained from your financial professional. Read it carefully before you invest or send money. Shares, when redeemed, may be worth more or less than their original cost. ■

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Be sure to check for cancelations

Upcoming in Winterset Living magazine:

Handmade gifts: If you have made or received a cherished handmade gift, we would like to share your story for the December issue. Email tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com.

Super Bowl parties: Do you have a tradition of holding a Super Bowl party? Share your party plans, recipes and other ideas! Email tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com to share your story!

21+ Jingle Jammie Jam Saturday, Nov. 29, 7 p.m. The Honey Lounge, 111 S. First Ave., Winterset

Enjoy a festive evening at this underground meadery. This 21-plus Christmas event invites you to embrace the holiday spirit in your cozy pajamas or festive sweater. Indulge in an array of signature meads, holiday-themed cocktails, wine and beer. Ticket includes first glass of mead, beer or wine. Expect a delightful surprise.



Des Moines Community Orchestra Concerts

- **Sing Messiah!**: Sunday, Dec. 7, 2 p.m., Grace United Methodist Church, 3700 Cottage Grove Ave., Des Moines. Guest Conductor: Dr. Marion Scott
- **Winter Concert**: Sunday, Feb. 22, 2 p.m., Staplin Performing Arts Center, 3650 Woodland Ave., West Des Moines. Guest Conductor: Joshua Barlage, Featured Soloist: Curtis Barr, Cello
- **Spring Concert**: Sunday, May 10, 2 p.m., Drake University Sheslow Auditorium, 2507 University Ave., Des Moines. Guest Conductor: Kara Mather Des Moines Community Orchestra, Featured Soloist: Dr. Kevin Allemagne, Clarinet

Farmer's Market

Saturday, Nov. 15, 8 a.m. to noon

The Warehouse, 231 N. Second Ave., Winterset

Come to the November Farmers Market for fall vibes, produce and crafts. For more information, visit madisoncofarmersmarket.com.



Cocoa Walk

Nov. 15, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Winterset businesses

Join local businesses off and on the square in historic Winterset. You can grab your Advent Calendar Guide to all of the fun at any participating business. Then travel around to participate in the fun activities and enjoy cocoa-themed drinks or treats. This is a great family or friend outing to start your holiday shopping while supporting small businesses. Hosted by Evergreen & Lily Floral Studio.

Des Moines Art Center Museum Highlights Tour Saturdays, 1-2 p.m.

Des Moines Art Center, 4700 Grand Ave, Des Moines

Discover the vast variety of the Des Moines Art Center's permanent collections during the Museum Highlights Tour. This tour offers a unique journey through the galleries, featuring a selection of timeless paintings, sculptures and more. Join 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 to all, no registration required.



Women's Giving Circle Holiday Party

Tuesday, Nov. 18, 6-7 p.m.

Union State Bank Community Room, 611 W. Highway 92, Winterset

The Madison County Women's Giving Circle is hosting its fourth-quarter Holiday Potluck/Party starting at 6 p.m. You may come at 5:30 p.m. for additional socializing. There will not be a business meeting. Bring your check for your annual donation to the Community Foundation Account. You are also encouraged to bring a snack, side, dessert, etc. to share at the potluck. Feel free to invite potential members to join us to learn more about the organization.

ART EXHIBITS

Mainframe Studios First Fridays

900 Keosauqua Way, Des Moines

www.mainframestudios.org

Mainframe Studios hosts First Fridays every first Friday of the month, featuring a changing theme, with the artist's works on display alongside live music and food.

- Nov. 7: State of the Arts: Iowa's Artist Fellows
- Dec. 5: Daulities

Olson-Larsen Galleries

542 Fifth St., West Des Moines

- Through Nov. 29: The Female Gaze
- Dec. 4 to Jan. 31: The Animal Show 2025

Polk County Heritage Gallery

Nov. 20 - Dec. 31

Polk County Administration Building, 111 Court Ave., Des Moines

www.polkcountyheritagegallery.org

• Featured exhibit is The Invitational: Curated Show.

Ankeny Art Center

1520 S.W. Ordinance Road, Ankeny

www.ankenyardcenter.org

- Through Nov. 26: Iowa Watercolor Society - Susan Moore
- Dec. 3 to Jan. 14: Members Show ■

HIRTA introduces Vanpool Program

Expands commuting options and supports sustainable travel

As commuters look for convenient, affordable and sustainable transportation options, the Heart of Iowa Regional Transit Agency (HIRTA) is extending a valuable service in partnership with Commute with Enterprise. The HIRTA Vanpool Program offers an efficient and cost-effective commuting solution designed to connect workers to jobs while reducing congestion and environmental impact.

To further reduce costs, HIRTA offers a subsidy that makes this commuting option even more accessible. With the added financial assistance, participants can save significantly compared to driving alone, while still enjoying the convenience of flexible commuting. Riding in a vanpool saves

money and reduces wear and tear on personal vehicles while helping the environment by cutting emissions. It also lets riders relax, catch up on work, or take care of personal tasks while someone else handles the driving.

“Vanpools help employers by ensuring workers have a reliable way to get to their jobs, even if they don’t have access to a car or are unable to drive,” said HIRTA’s CEO, Julia Castillo. “They reduce tardiness and absenteeism, make it easier for businesses to recruit and retain talent, and strengthen the local economy by connecting people to employment opportunities. By solving transportation barriers, vanpools also foster a stronger, more resilient community workforce.”

Each vanpool rider pays a portion of

the total cost, which covers all expenses such as gas, insurance, maintenance and repairs. 24-hour roadside assistance is also provided.

“Vanpooling gives commuters time back in their day and helps them save on transportation costs,” said Sirius Karimi, vice president of commute with Enterprise. “We work closely with our partner employers and public transit agencies to offer convenient vanpool programs that support more sustainable commuting, help fill transit service gaps, and reduce congestion while helping employers offer a competitive benefit that can attract and retain talent.”

Commuters in HIRTA’s region interested in joining the program, can visit www.ridehirta.com/vanpool. ■

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V GIRLS BASKETBALL

DATE	TIME	OPPONENT	LOCATION
Nov 21	7:15PM	Des Moines Christian	Winterset High School
Dec 1	6:00PM	Creston Community	Creston High School
Dec 5	6:00PM	Gilbert	Winterset High School
Dec 9	6:00PM	Bondurant-Farrar	Winterset High School
Dec 12	6:00PM	ADM CSD	ADM High School
Dec 16	6:00PM	North Polk	North Polk High School
Dec 19	6:00PM	Carroll	Winterset High School
Jan 2	6:00PM	Boone	Winterset High School
Jan 6	6:00PM	Clarke	Winterset
Jan 9	6:00PM	Carlisle	Carlisle High School
Jan 13	6:00PM	Ballard	Ballard High School
Jan 16	6:00PM	Gilbert	Gilbert High School
Jan 19	6:00PM	Van Meter	Winterset High School
Jan 20	6:00PM	Bondurant-Farrar	Bondurant-Farrar High School
Jan 23	6:00PM	ADM CSD	Winterset High School
Jan 27	6:00PM	North Polk	Winterset High School
Jan 30	6:00PM	Carroll	Carroll High School
Feb 2	6:00PM	Harlan Community	Winterset High School
Feb 3	6:00PM	Boone	Boone High School
Feb 10	6:00PM	Carlisle	Winterset High School
Feb 13	6:00PM	Ballard	Winterset High School

V BOYS BASKETBALL

DATE	TIME	OPPONENT	LOCATION
Dec 1	7:30PM	Creston Community	Creston High School
Dec 5	7:30PM	Gilbert	Winterset High School
Dec 9	7:30PM	Bondurant-Farrar	Winterset High School
Dec 12	7:30PM	ADM CSD	ADM High School
Dec 13	3:15PM	Atlantic	Atlantic High School
Dec 16	7:30PM	North Polk	North Polk High School
Dec 19	7:30PM	Carroll	Winterset High School
Jan 2	7:30PM	Boone	Winterset High School
Jan 6	7:30PM	Clarke	Winterset
Jan 9	7:30PM	Carlisle	Carlisle High School
Jan 13	7:30PM	Ballard	Ballard High School
Jan 16	7:30PM	Gilbert	Gilbert High School
Jan 19	7:30PM	Van Meter	Winterset High School
Jan 20	7:30PM	Bondurant-Farrar	Bondurant-Farrar High School
Jan 23	7:30PM	ADM CSD	Winterset High School
Jan 27	7:30PM	North Polk	Winterset High School
Jan 30	7:30PM	Carroll	Carroll High School
Feb 2	7:30PM	Harlan Community	Winterset High School
Feb 3	7:30PM	Boone	Boone High School
Feb 10	7:30PM	Carlisle	Winterset High School
Feb 13	7:30PM	Ballard	Winterset High School
Feb 17	7:15PM	Des Moines Christian	Winterset High School

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V GIRLS WRESTLING

DATE	TIME	OPPONENT	LOCATION
Nov 20	5:00PM	Multiple Schools	Ballard High School
Nov 22	10:00AM	Nevada	Nevada High School
Dec 6	10:00AM	Multiple Schools	Ames High School
Dec 11	5:30PM	Gilbert	Gilbert High School
Dec 12	4:00PM	Saydel	Saydel High School
Dec 13	9:00AM	Southeast Polk	Southeast Polk High School
Dec 18	5:30PM	Multiple Schools	Winterset
Dec 20	10:00AM	ADM CSD	A-D-M, Adel
Jan 3	10:00AM	Clarinda	Clarinda High School
Jan 5	4:30PM	Kuemper Catholic	Kuemper Catholic High School
Jan 8	5:30PM	Nevada	Nevada High School
Jan 15	5:30PM	Multiple Schools	Winterset High School.
Jan 16	TBD	Creston Community	Creston High School
Jan 20	5:00PM	Multiple Schools	Boone High School
Jan 22	5:00PM	Multiple Schools	Boone High School

V BOYS WRESTLING

DATE	TIME	OPPONENT	LOCATION
Dec 4	5:30PM	Multiple Schools	Carlisle High School
Dec 6	10:00AM	Harlan Community	Harlan High School
Dec 11	5:30PM	Gilbert	Winterset High School.
Dec 12	1:30PM	Central Decatur	Central Decatur High School
Dec 18	5:30PM	Ballard	Winterset High School.
Dec 20	10:00AM	Roland Story	Roland-Story High School
Jan 8	5:30PM	Bondurant-Farrar	Bondurant-Farrar High School
Jan 10	9:30AM	Multiple Schools	Winterset High School
Jan 15	5:30PM	Multiple Schools	Winterset
Jan 17	9:00AM	Kuemper Catholic	Kuemper Catholic High School
Jan 22	5:30PM	Multiple Schools	Boone High School
Jan 23	4:00PM	SW Valley - Corning	Corning High School
Jan 24	10:00AM	SW Valley - Corning	Corning High School



Photos by BK Creations



FOR ALL HUSKIES SCHEDULES

Schedules are subject to change. Scan for most up-to-date schedules.



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PARMESAN garlic focaccia bread is a slice of comfort

This month, I share another recipe from my daughter, Samantha. She loves to make all kinds of bread. Few things make a kitchen feel more welcoming than the aroma of freshly baked bread, and parmesan garlic focaccia delivers that comfort in every bite. Golden and crisp on the outside yet soft and airy inside, this Italian favorite is elevated with the irresistible pairing of roasted garlic and nutty parmesan cheese. It is the kind of bread that feels special but is surprisingly simple to make at home. Serve as a side with soups and pastas, cut into squares for an appetizer board, or enjoy warm right out of the pan. Focaccia is versatile and crowd pleasing. The drizzle of olive oil, a sprinkling of herbs and the cheesy finish give it that bakery-style touch you will love sharing — or keeping all to yourself. Enjoy! ■



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

Parmesan Garlic Focaccia Bread

Ingredients:

- 1½ cups warm water (about 110°F)
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 2¼ teaspoons instant yeast (1 packet)
- 4 cups flour
- 1½ teaspoons salt
- 1/3 cup extra virgin olive oil, plus more for greasing
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 2/3 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 teaspoon dried Italian herbs or chopped rosemary
- Flaky sea salt

Directions

- Combine warm water, sugar and yeast. Let sit for 5 minutes until foamy. Add flour and salt. Mix until dough forms. (It will be sticky.) With a mixer, kneed for 5-7 minutes or by hand for 8-10 minutes until smooth. Brush dough with olive oil and cover.
- Let rise 1-1.5 hours in a warm spot until dough has doubled.
- Heat 2 tablespoons olive oil with minced garlic until fragrant (about 1 minute) in a

- pan. Keep for later.
- Place dough in greased 9-inch by 13-inch pan. Gently press to corners. Let rest 10 minutes, then stretch. Cover and rise 30-45 minutes.
- Preheat oven to 425 F. With your fingers, dimple the dough all over. Brush with garlic oil. Then sprinkle parmesan cheese, herbs and sea salt on top of dough.
- Bake 20-25 minutes until golden brown. Cool 10 minutes in pan, then transfer to wire rack.
- Slice and serve warm. Store bread for two days at room temperature or freeze up to three months.
- **For the best results, follow these additional steps:** Make sure your water is warm (110 F), not hot. For the best texture, let the dough rise completely. Use plenty of oil in your pan, as this will give your bread a crisp crust.



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CHILI Cook Off

The Chili Cook Off was held Sept. 20 on the square.



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David Woods and Tony Wenck



Maggie Manternach and Tobi Sharon



Jo Losh

OUT & ABOUT



Barb Heckman and Corina Cardwell at the Farmers Market Sept. 20.



Joslan Ferguson and Ostun Vizcarra at the Farmers Market Sept. 20.



Lori Fulcher at the Farmers Market Sept. 20.



Jacque Mohs at the Fall Crawl on Sept. 28.



Jenny Manny, Kristy Hoefing, Channing Jack and Jen Althoff at the homecoming parade Oct. 3.



Lisa Porter and Josie Sorensen at the Fall Crawl on Sept. 28.



Lauri Duff, Kristine McDonald, Janelle Goemaat and Jennifer Kraai at the Fall Crawl on Sept. 28.



Brittany Feeny and Dillon Bruett at the homecoming parade Oct. 3.



Monica, Arthur (dog), Eric, Brady, Kieran, Joseph and Becca Pugh at the homecoming parade Oct. 3.



Royce Schulz, Raegan and Jamie Coobs at the homecoming parade Oct. 3.



Ronda, Willow and DJ Hatch at the homecoming parade Oct. 3.



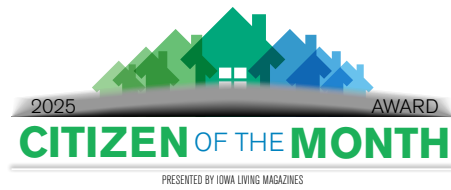
Jessica Ferber, Mindy Cochran and Michele Hendricks at the homecoming parade Oct. 3.



Sarah Gould and Kevin Gould at the homecoming parade Oct. 3.

HOENIG says, 'Welcome to Winterset'

Community greeter provides useful information and more.



Moving to a new community is challenging. Not only are there financial and logistical challenges, such as moving expenses, utility deposits and connection fees, there are also social challenges, such as trying to make new friends, meeting the neighbors, and finding out what the community's resources are.

That is where Sandy Hoenig comes in. In her role with Community Greetings, Hoenig reaches out to those who are new to the community. She and her husband, Rick, experienced being new to Winterset not many years ago.

"Rick and I lived in Ames for 25 years, then we moved to Winterset about 12 or 13 years ago," Hoenig says. "We moved here because we have a son and his family in town."

That experience showed Hoenig the value in having a friendly welcome to a new community. As a retired teacher and school counselor, Hoenig has experience in helping people.

Hoenig and her husband believe in being active in the community in a variety of ways.

"We volunteer at the museum and at CRISP and things like that," she says.

Regarding her role as a community greeter, Hoenig says she strives to connect with people promptly.

"I try to call on people who are new to Winterset — both buyers and renters. I tell them about Winterset and Madison County to help them feel welcome," Hoenig says. "I have a bag of information to share."

The materials Hoenig gives out include coupons and offers from local businesses, general information from the Chamber of



Kristina Benshoof and Felicia Weeks of Scot Clark Farm Bureau present the Citizen of the Month certificate to Sandy Hoenig, Community Greeters.

Commerce, and other items as available.

Hoenig mentions some of the most popular freebies.

"Free bread from the bakery and free popcorn at the movie theater," she says. "But the most important thing is information from the Chamber of Commerce."

Hoenig's role is only part-time, but she would like to be a little busier.

"It kind of fluctuates due to the time of the year. The most I've ever had in a month is about 12 or 14," Hoenig says.

One of the biggest challenges Hoenig faces is simply learning who is new to town. With that in mind, she welcomes anyone to pass along contact information about new residents to her at skhoenig@hotmail.com.

Hoenig is a strong advocate for Winterset and says there are two main reasons why people relocate here. The first, she says, are people who have family connections in Winterset, such as the situation when she and Rick moved to town.

The second main reason for moving to Winterset, according to Hoenig, is that people like what Winterset offers, such as a quality school system and a friendly, small-town community. Winterset is near enough to the Des Moines metro area to be a "bedroom community" for some, but Hoenig knows the town is much more than just that.

Hoenig stresses that, when someone new moves to town, there's real value in sharing information on local resources.

"We want to let them know what's available for entertainment, music, theater and different things like that," she says. "If they know what's available here, they can stay here and spend their time and money in Winterset."

Hoenig also challenges the entire community to offer a warm welcome to all.

"Winterset has a reputation for being very friendly, and I want to make sure we're more inclusive," she says. "What more can we do to reach out to make sure all feel welcome?" ■

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