

Lining

Big game, **BIG PARTY**

Capping off the football season
with a watch party to remember

Meet Julie Rummans
EDUCATION

**From dog-sitting post
to friendship**
NEIGHBORS

**Loaded Philly
cheesesteak baked potato**
RECIPE



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WELCOME

A SUPER Sunday

What will you be doing on Sunday, Feb. 8? If you are like 127.7 million other people, you will be watching the Super Bowl on TV. That's a lot of people, many of whom don't know the difference between a touch-down and a home run. And, they don't care. Why? Because the Super Bowl is about much more than football. In fact, for many, it has become an entire Sunday tradition.

Some viewers don't catch a single football play, as they are watching only to be entertained by the advertisements. In most any other TV viewing situation, those watching TV will turn channels, lower the volume or run to the bathroom or to the refrigerator during breaks. But not during the Super Bowl. This viewing audience tunes in to the ads, and companies ante up \$8 million or more for just 30 seconds of promotion to reach them.

Yes, the Super Bowl is one of the most-watched television events in the United States. The record was set last year with the aforementioned 127.7 million, but the highest-rated Super Bowl remains Super Bowl XVI in 1982 with a 49.1 household rating. That means 49.1% of TV-owning households were tuned into the Super Bowl during its broadcast. Viewership of the Super Bowl has remained stable over the years, even as ratings for other events have declined.

My parents were in the half who didn't tune in to the Super Bowl. Football simply wasn't their thing. When I was in college, I began watching the games more seriously. And, when I made my way into the working world as a young man, I got into the Super Bowl scene even more. The food. The festivities. The fun. Oh, and the football, too.

The Super Bowl parties were aplenty, and my friends and I did our best to attend many, making Mondays a challenge. The problem continues today. "Super Sick Monday" is a real thing, as an estimated 22.6 million U.S. employees are expected to miss work due to post-game fatigue, hang-overs, and the cultural significance of the event. Some have even suggested that the Monday following the Super Bowl should become a national holiday, possibly even moving Election Day to that date to help encourage more people to get to the polls. It is an interesting idea, although I am not sure it would help with voter turnout, especially for those mourning after their team lost.

I am now more comfortable lounging in my living room and watching the game with family or a few friends. But don't let me drag you down. Check out this month's cover story to see how others are celebrating Super Bowl Sunday — and be sure to get to work on Monday. ■

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Big game, **BIG PARTY**

Capping off the football season
with a watch party to remember

By Ashley Rullestad

It's time for the big game, and that's the perfect reason to gather with your fellow fans around the big screen to see which team finishes the year with a championship ring. And you won't be alone. Record-breaking viewership has been reported the last two years, with 127.7 million U.S. viewers last year, according to ESPN.

Ben Henkels with his son, Brock, showing off their Vikings fan gear.

FEATURE

Football fan for life

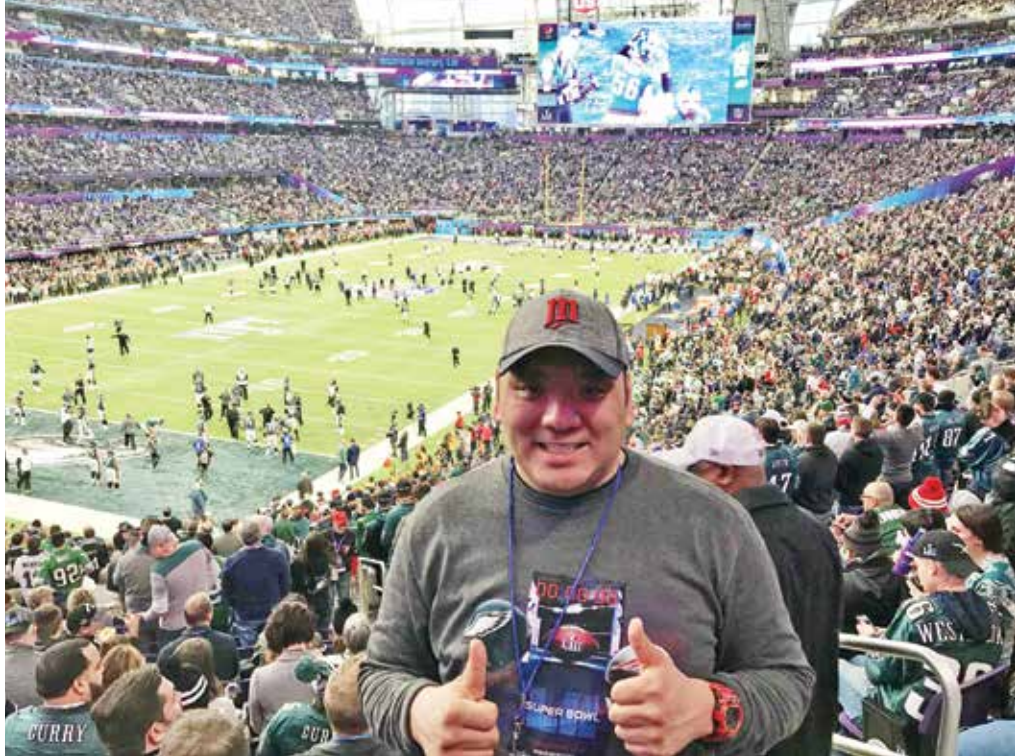
Aaron Morrison became a football fan when he started watching the Iowa Hawkeyes and the San Francisco 49ers in the mid 1990s. Tim Dwight and Sedrick Shaw played for Iowa when Hayden Fry was the head coach. Steve Young and Jerry Rice played for the 49ers.

Right now, his favorite teams are the Iowa Hawkeyes and Kansas City Chiefs. He attends at least two Iowa games a year and has had Chiefs season tickets since the 2019 season.

"I like all of the Iowa players. I enjoy watching the offensive- and defensive-line players. I love to watch Brian Allen and Logan Jones play. For the Chiefs, I love to watch Patrick Mahomes, Travis Kelce and Chris Jones play."

One of the highlights of his football fandom was attending Super Bowl LII in Minneapolis. The Philadelphia Eagles beat the New England Patriots, 41-33. There were a lot of offensive yards and not much defense, he reports.

"I also was at the 2022 AFC Championship Game. The Chiefs beat the Bengals, 23-20. I participated in the pre-game flag ceremony. I held the giant flag for the national anthem.



Aaron Morrison at Super Bowl LII.

As for Iowa, I was there for when Iowa beat Michigan in 2016. I was also at Kinnick Stadium for when the Hawkeyes beat Ohio State."

He recently took a trip to watch Iowa in their

bowl game in Tampa Bay, stopping in Nashville to watch the New Orleans Saints at Tennessee Titans.

Morrison usually watches the Super Bowl with his girlfriend, Jessica, and their Husky dog,

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SUPER BOWL LX

Teams: TBD

When: Sunday, Feb. 8

Where: Levi's Stadium in Santa Clara, California, the home of the San Francisco 49ers

Ways to watch: NBC will broadcast the Super Bowl with Spanish-language coverage on Telemundo and streaming on Peacock

Halftime show: Bad Bunny

Super Bowl commercials: 30-second spots cost about \$8 million



Aaron Morrison and his friend, Mike Goodell, at the 2019 AFC Championship Game.



Josh Yelland enjoyed seeing the Chiefs' trophy when it was in town.

Alpine.

"I don't always like to attend Super Bowl parties. I like to focus on the game. In 2019, I was in Atlanta. I did not attend the Super Bowl, but I watched the game at a block party. There were a lot of Patriots fans at the party, and it was a lot of fun."

Chiefs forever

Josh Yelland has been an official KC Chiefs fan since 2010, but he has respected the team for much longer. At that time, he was dating a woman whose brother had season tickets, which cemented his affection for the team.

In fact, one of his favorite memories was

the first time the Chiefs fans at Arrowhead Stadium broke the Guinness World Record for the loudest crowd roar at a sports stadium on Sept. 29, 2014, reaching a peak of 142.2 decibels during a game against the New England Patriots. This noise level surpassed the previous record held by Seattle Seahawks fans, marking

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Simple Salami Sliders

Recipe courtesy of "Cookin' Savvy"

Servings: 4-6

INGREDIENTS

- 1 package slider buns
- 8 slices Swiss cheese
- 8 slices salami
- 8 slices ham or other deli meat
- 1 stick butter, melted
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 teaspoon onion powder
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- everything bagel seasoning (optional)



DIRECTIONS

- Heat oven to 350 F.
- Halve slider buns, creating top and bottom portions. Set top portion aside, leaving bottom portion in original container. Place bottom portion and container in baking dish to prevent sticking.
- Layer Swiss cheese, salami and ham then cover with top buns.
- Mix melted butter, Worcestershire sauce, brown sugar, Parmesan cheese, onion powder and garlic powder. Pour over sliders.
- Cover with foil and bake 15 minutes then remove foil, sprinkle with everything bagel seasoning, if desired, and bake, uncovered, 10 minutes.



The Henkels are big Cyclone football fans.

Arrowhead Stadium as the loudest outdoor venue at the time — something fans have actively tried to maintain since.

One of Yelland's favorite players is Ed Podolak, an Iowa native who played for the Hawkeyes before playing running back for the Chiefs for nine seasons. Of course, Yelland has a jersey.

Though he liked attending games in person, lately, the cost has been prohibitive. That doesn't stop him from enjoying the Chiefs at home or at a local hangout. For the last Kansas City Super Bowl win, he went to Central Standard in Waukee with friends.

"When it comes to football, it's something that has been around forever and gets passed down. Most people have their heart and soul in their NFL team. It's the team their dads cheered for. This year, I hope to root for the Bears, like my friends."

Family ball

Ben Henkels became a football fan when he was 8 years old and his dad took him to his first Vikings game.

"From there, I was a Vikings fan for life. In middle school, when I was able to start playing football, I was able to gain a deeper understanding and appreciation for the sport. Furthermore, at Iowa State University, I had the opportunity to work on the equipment staff under Dan McCarney, thus becoming a Cyclones fan for life."

Henkels was also able to take advantage of a summer internship

with the Cleveland Browns. All those levels of experience have shaped his fandom today.

Of course, his first allegiance in the NFL is to the Vikings, but with Iowa State's recent success in getting talented players into the NFL, he now regularly follows multiple teams across the league, rooting for former Cyclones like Brock Purdy with the 49'ers and Breece Hall with the Jets.

"My wife and I love going to Iowa State games; however, in recent years, with youth sports, we've been taking in most games from home. We do have plans on taking our boys up to some Vikings games in the coming years."

Henkels has many great memories, not only watching professional sports but from his time playing in high school, too, especially when his alma mater, DCG, beat rival Waukee 42-0 his senior year.

"I created many strong life-long bonds while working for Iowa State, and I can't forget about my internship with the Browns. However, my greatest memories I have today are being able to introduce football to my two boys and gaining the opportunity to coach both of them in flag football."

This year, like many others, Henkels will likely get together with friends to watch the game. He doesn't have plans for this year nailed down yet, but, as with any year, he "hopes that buffalo chicken dip will be included." ■

Join Us at Assumption

Starting January 12 for 9 weeks: Mondays at 6:30pm "She Shall Be Called Women"
Starting January 13 for 12 weeks: Tuesdays at 5pm or 8pm "That Man Is You"

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January 18: Baptismal Prep Class for new parents at 1pm

January 20: Adoration/Benediction at 6pm in the Church followed with Rosary at 7:30pm for the sick of our Parish

January 24: Assumption Appreciation Dinner after 6pm Mass in the gym

January 31: WG Foundation (Adult Prom Fundraiser) from 7-11pm

February 18: Ash Wednesday Masses (Lent begins) at 8am & 7pm

February 20: Stations of the Cross at 5pm followed with Mass every Friday during Lent

February 22: Lenten Evening Prayer at 4:30pm (all Sundays during Lent)

February 22: Happy Hours after 5pm Mass (all Sundays during Lent)

March 4: Parish Reconciliation starting at 6:30pm

March 11: RE Reconciliation starting at 7pm

March 15-21: Spring Break

March 29: Palm Sunday

April 2: Holy Thursday Mass at 7pm

April 3: Good Friday Service at 7pm

April 3: Divine Mercy Chaplet at 7:30am daily for 10 days

April 4: Easter Vigil at sundown

April 5: Easter Sunday Masses at 8am & 10am (NO 5pm Mass this evening)

1st Saturday of the Month morning Mass at 8am

MASS TIMES: Mon-Fri: 8am | Sat: 5pm | Sun: 9am & 5pm **LENT MASS:** Fridays at 5:30pm

RECONCILIATION: Saturdays at 4pm



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FINANCE

By Bryce Block

NEW 2026 IRA and retirement plan limits

Many IRA and retirement plan limits are indexed for inflation each year. Several of these key numbers have increased once again for 2026.

How much can you save in an IRA? The maximum amount you can contribute to a traditional IRA or a Roth IRA in 2026 will be \$7,500, up from \$7,000 in 2025. The catch-up contribution for those age 50 or older is \$1,100, increased from \$1,000 in 2025. You can contribute to both a traditional IRA and a Roth IRA in 2026, but your total contributions cannot exceed these annual limits.

Can you deduct your traditional IRA contributions? If you are not covered by a work-based retirement plan, your contributions to a traditional IRA are generally fully tax deductible.

If you're married filing jointly and not covered by an employer plan but your spouse is, you may generally claim a full deduction if your modified adjusted gross income (MAGI) is \$242,000 or less. Your deduction is limited if your MAGI is between \$242,000 and \$252,000 and eliminated if your MAGI is \$252,000 or more.

For those who are covered by an employer plan, deductibility depends on income and filing status. If your filing status is single or head of household, you can fully deduct your IRA contribution in 2026 if your MAGI is \$81,000 or less. If you're married and filing a joint return, you can fully deduct your contribution if your MAGI is \$129,000 or less. Taxpayers earning more than these thresholds, phaseout limits will apply.

Can you contribute to a Roth IRA? The income limits for determining whether you can contribute to a Roth IRA will also increase in 2026. If your filing status is single or head of household, you can contribute the full \$7,500 (\$8,600 if you are age 50 or older) if your MAGI is less than \$153,000. And if you're married and filing a joint return, you can make the full contribution if your MAGI is less than \$242,000. Taxpayers earning more than these thresholds, phaseout limits will apply.

What's new in 2026 for retirement plans? If your employer sponsors a retirement plan, you can save even more in 2026. The 401(k), 403(b) and 457 federal annual maximums have increased: If you will be under the age of 50 for all of 2026: \$24,500. If you will be turning age 50 to 59 or age 64 or older by Dec. 31, 2026: \$32,500. If you will be turning age 60 to 63 by Dec. 31, 2026: \$35,750. ■

For more information, please contact Bryce Block or Wade Lawrence with City State Bank Trust & Investments at 515-986-2265. Not FDIC insured. Not deposits or other obligations of the bank and are not guaranteed by the bank. Are subject to investment risk, including possible loss of principal. City State Bank does not provide legal advice. Each taxpayer should seek independent advice from a tax and/or legal professional. These materials are based upon publicly available information that may change at any time without notice.



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Upcoming in Grimes/Dallas Center Living magazine

"I do!" Stories about marriage proposals: Share the story of how your courtship culminated in a proposal to remember. Email tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com to share your story!

Rescue animals: Do you have a beloved rescue animal in your family? Share your story of how you came to find your pet — or it came to find you! Email tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com.

Battery and Electronics Recycling

Did you know that it only takes one battery to spark a fire? Batteries are dangerous in your garbage or recycling. That's why the city has partnered with Metro Waste Authority to introduce a free and convenient battery drop-off in the Grimes community. These drop-offs accept alkaline batteries, button batteries, electronics with rechargeable batteries, other electronics, and cords. The drop-off box is at Grimes City Hall, 101 N.E. Harvey St., and is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.



CITYVIEW's Fire and Ice Saturday, Jan. 24, 1-4 p.m. Valley Junction

CITYVIEW brings back its legendary Valley Junction area pub crawl. Fire and Ice is a hockey-themed liquor sampling event that will be sure to warm up your winter blues. With your event ticket, you will receive 10 individual drink tickets to sample some of the best winter cocktails from establishments in the Valley Junction area. Tickets are \$25 in advance and \$35 at the door. Follow the QR code for tickets.



Fishing in Grimes

Fishing is allowed in the public ponds in Grimes. The DNR frequently restocks the public ponds with largemouth bass, bluegills, and channel catfish. Before you grab your pole and head out, make sure you brush up on these rules.

Anyone over the age of 16 needs a fishing license. These are available at iowa.dnr.gov. These ponds follow the statewide harvest regulations. That means you can keep up to three largemouth bass (must be 15 inches), 25 bluegills, and eight channel catfish. To find a public pond, including the type of fish stocked, visit iowa.dnr.gov.



Des Moines Community Orchestra Concerts

• **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

Iowa Bike Expo and Banquet

Saturday, Jan. 24, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. Iowa Events Center, 730 Third St., Des Moines

The Iowa Bike Expo & Banquet serves as the annual celebration for the Iowa Bicycle Coalition, bringing together cyclists and trail lovers, advocates, vendors, donors, supporters and partner organizations to advance the Iowa Bicycle Coalition's mission to promote safe, accessible and enjoyable cycling for everyone in Iowa. The Iowa Bicycle Coalition is excited to announce both Ayesha McGowan and Connor Fields as the dynamic dual keynote speakers for the event. The Iowa Bike Expo is free and open to the public, featuring 120-plus vendors. For information, visit www.iowabikeexpo.com.

Rhythms of Grace volunteer orientation

First Monday of each month, 5:30 p.m. Rhythms of Grace, 23625 River Heights Drive, Dallas Center

As a reminder, Rhythms of Grace offers a one-hour orientation each month for all who would like to learn more about the organization before committing to a volunteer application, background check and training. Become barn buddies or sidewalkers and gain new horsemanship skills as horse leaders and help change the lives of those with special needs.

"Pride @ Prejudice"

Feb. 13-22. Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays at 7:30 p.m., Sundays at 2 p.m.

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

Watch Elizabeth Bennet and Mr. Darcy fall in love all over again — this time filtered through the world of the internet. Modern voices interject and build on this classic love story in the form of blog posts, chat room discussions, quotes from film adaptations, and even letters from Ms. Austen herself, to create a delightfully postmodern view of 19th century England. "Pride @ Prejudice" is a hilarious and moving homage to Jane Austen's most beloved novel, as well as our love affair with reading. Order tickets online at <https://tickets.midwestix.com/events/22086/tag/website>.

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. ■

Grimes Public Library events

200 N.E. Beaverbrooke Blvd.

Registration is required only when noted. Register at grimeslibrary.org/calendar or by calling the library at 515-986-3551.

TEENS (AGES 9-17)

• **Pizza Taste Test Challenge:** Rank your favorite pizza-flavored snacks. No registration required. Tuesday, Feb. 10, 4-5 p.m.

ADULTS (AGES 18 AND OLDER)

• **Adult Book Club** is held the first Tuesday of the month, 5:30-6:30 p.m. This book club reads and discusses a variety of genres. The scheduled books are listed with their respective dates, but are subject to change. Feb. 3: "My Name is Emilia Del Valle" by Isabel Allende.

• **What's Cooking at the Library** is held the third Tuesday of the month at 6 p.m. Join us for this interactive cooking series where we will highlight delicious recipes from cookbooks in our collection. A library staff member will demonstrate how to make the dishes with patron participation. Supplies are provided. Registration is required. Jan. 20: Pasta. Feb. 17: Beans. March 17: Fermentation. April 21: Mushrooms.

• **GPL Poetry Nights**, Tuesday, Jan. 27, and Tuesday, March 24, 6 p.m. Join us for wonderful nights focused on enjoying poetry in all of its many forms. The program will vary from session to session and will include different activities, including guest poets, poetry workshops, informational presentations and more. Whether you are a poet yourself or just like to learn, this program will be perfect for you. No registration required.

SPECIAL EVENTS

• **"On the Basis of Sex" watch party and discussion.** In celebration of Women's History Month, we will be hosting a viewing of the Ruth Bader Ginsberg biopic "On the Basis of Sex" followed by a discussion. Registration required. March 14, 1-4 p.m.

• **Rain Barrel Workshop**, Thursday, March 6, 5 p.m. Back by popular demand, this workshop is available for Grimes citizens to build and take home a rain barrel. All supplies are provided by the city of Grimes Stormwater Grant. Because of the popularity of this program, we ask for no repeat attendees from the last workshop to allow other residents the chance to build one. One rain barrel per household. Grimes residents 18 and older only.

• **Hobby Day**, Jan. 24, 2-4 p.m. Join us this January for a fun and inspiring day as local hobbyists and enthusiast groups share their passions. From arts and crafts to gaming, nature, science and more, you'll get the chance to explore a wide variety of hobbies through hands-on demos, displays, and interactive booths. Whether you're looking to start a new hobby or just curious to see what's out there, Hobby Day has something for everyone. All ages welcome. Come get inspired

• **Women and Money**, March 28, 10:30-11:30 a.m. Gain confidence in your finances through education and personalized guidance, empowering you to make informed decisions and achieve your goals with clarity and purpose. Presented by Shalini Babu, a licensed financial planner with Prudential Advisors. ■

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FROM dog-sitting post to friendship

Neighbors become like extended family.

Katie Krug and her family formed a lifelong friendship with a fellow community member in a way that's becoming more common than ever — through Facebook.

Krug and Jeanie Stickman first connected when Krug saw a post from Jeanie on the Grimes Community Facebook page offering dog-sitting services.

"I reached out and learned that she and her husband had recently lost their beloved dogs and weren't quite ready to get another one yet but still wanted the joy of having dogs in their lives," Krug explains. "We set up a time to meet, and our dogs fell in love with her immediately, and we instantly clicked as people, too."

What began as simply finding someone to help care for the Krug family's dogs quickly turned into something far more meaningful.

"We live just two blocks away, so it was easy to stay connected, and with how often I travel for work, she became a great support for us," Krug shares.

Today, the family's relationship with Jeanie feels like a natural part of their lives. She still helps with their dogs when they're traveling or away, and she spoils them with affection.

Beyond the dogs, Jeanie has become a steady presence in the Krug family's day-to-day life. She has helped care for their 9-year-old son, Dawson, who enjoys spending time with her baking cookies, chatting and simply hanging out. She often surprises the family with homemade treats and other small acts of kindness.

"What started as a simple helping hand has truly become a sweet, ongoing friendship woven into our daily lives," Krug says.

Dawson even calls Jeanie "Gigi," a reflection of the grandparent-like role she has come to play in his life.

"Since he doesn't have grandparents nearby, Jeanie has filled a special space for him," Krug says. "He told me early on that she just felt like a grandma to him and asked if he could call her Gigi. I told him he had to ask her permission first, and she said, of course. She gives him that extra layer of comfort and love only someone with a grandma heart can."

Krug believes the relationship has also helped fill a space in Jeanie and her husband's hearts after losing their dogs.

"Being able to love on ours gave them a sense of joy, companionship and something to look forward to," Krug says. "But beyond the dogs, it has grown into a meaningful friendship. We've shared life moments, stayed connected and built a bond that feels more like extended family than neighbors. I think it's been healing, uplifting and a reminder of how special connections in small communities can be."

For Krug, the relationship is proof that Grimes is more than just a town where people live near one another — it's a community where people truly show up for each other.

"It shows how neighbors here are willing to step in, open their homes and share their lives," Krug says. "In a world where it can sometimes feel like everyone is disconnected, Grimes reminds us that kindness, connection and community still thrive. This town has a way of turning strangers into neighbors and neighbors into family." ■



Jeanie Stickman enjoys spending time with the Krug family's son, Dawson, and their dogs.



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TRAVELING Highway 44

One quotation at a time

"A good traveler has no fixed plans and is not intent on arriving." - Lao Tzu

I pull off Highway 44 on a chance, turn off the car on a whim, step into a farmyard of swarming chickens with trepidation, and listen to an old man weave his stories.

"Meryl Streep rode that bicycle right there."

The weathered, sober-looking man, straight out of a Grant Wood painting, points into the distant dark corner.

I look around the massive pole barn — past the buckets and tins and tools and lamps and trunks and tractors and ladders and sleds and tires and even past the obliging owner, Jimmy Boll. Where is that bike? And is that rooster that followed us into the barn going to attack me?

Sure enough, there is a bike where Jimmy is pointing. And there is a swing he says was also used by Warner Brothers in making the same movie, "The Bridges of Madison County," starring Meryl Streep and Clint Eastwood (and written by Iowa boy Robert Waller).

"I rented 200 items to Warner Brothers when they made the movie. And I restored a windmill at the movie site."

For 78 years — Jimmy Boll's entire life — he has lived in the family home along Highway 44.

"I'm the oldest person living on the highway between Grimes and Dallas Center." Jimmy stops to think for a moment. "A woman just down the road had me beat. She was in her 90s, but she passed away."

Jimmy is a man who is clear-eyed about the facts.

Several chickens, a rooster and four baby ducks run past me.

"There's 150 chickens here. I sell eggs every day."

Well, that explains why I am surrounded by these two-legged noisemakers.

Don't they get hit by the cars on Highway 44?

"There's nothing out there to eat."

Jimmy then continues his guided tour of windmills, sleighs, tractors and anything else you can imagine a person could collect. And, yes, several times he comes close to smiling.



Jimmy Boll

Let's pause for a minute and think how we arrived here on Jimmy's property next to Iowa Highway 44.

I love a journey.

And, apparently, I'm not alone. There's Willie Nelson traveling between concerts singing "On the Road Again." And Jack Kerouac with his thumb out hitchhiking across America so he can write "On the Road." And there's the farmer/poet Robert Frost, breaking the spring ground and reciting: "Two roads diverged in a wood, and I — I took the one less traveled by."

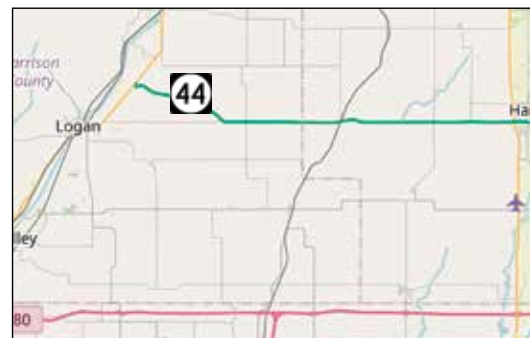
News flash — America is the land of the free and home of the brave and also a country of more than 4 million miles of roads, according to the Federal Highway Administration. That is a lot of concrete and blacktop and gravel and dirt. But what if we travel just 44 miles of road? And only on Highway 44?

Iowa Highway 44 stretches west from Grimes, past Guthrie Center, and on to nearly the Missouri River — 104 miles in total. It was born out of the ashes of two different highways back in 1969 when the State of Iowa was trying to clean up all the highway numbers. So, let's start at Grimes and go west.

But first, do you have the car ready? Coffee in your insulated cup? A big jug of water? One more run to the bathroom? Highway 44, here we come.

"The extent to which you can walk in someone else's shoes or at least eat their food, it's a plus for everybody."

- Anthony Bourdain



Jason and JoAnn Beeman

STOP!

Is that a pie shop? Yup. "Once Upon an Apple Pie" to be specific, snuggled up next to Highway 44 at 312 East First St., Grimes. The shop was recently opened after several years of JoAnn Beeman and her husband, Jason, selling pies at farmers markets around the Des Moines metro. Their first storefront.

Listen, pie may be my first love. Any kind of pie — apple pie, blueberry pie, mincemeat pie. I blame my mom. She baked around the clock for our family of eight kids. It created certain rules for the good life — 1) always save room for dessert, and 2) everything is better with butter and sugar. Duh.

JoAnn also blames her mom.

"Well, my mom was actually the pie baker. She lives in South Carolina, and every time she would visit, I'd ask her to make me an apple pie."

Great, but why are YOU making pies?

"Over time, her visits became fewer, and so I started trying to make it myself. And I wanted to do something a little different, use an all butter crust, but that took a long time to nail down."

And...

"And once I did, I couldn't make enough pies."

I look at the counters overflowing with pies soon to be gone when the store opens. My stomach grumbles.



"It is my passion," JoAnn says with a laugh. So it is.

I buy four small pies. Thank JoAnn and Jason for their time. And promptly eat two pies in my car. Yum! When you are going on a road trip, you must be well fortified.

Highway 44 stretches west out of Grimes to Dallas Center, a little more than 9 miles away. After driving past the new houses and apartments and condos and Dallas Center-Grimes High School, it quickly turns into Iowa farm country — fields just planted smelling of rich black dirt, creeks running fast from a recent rain, and pastures with baby calves hanging close to their grass-munching moms.

"People travel to faraway places to watch, in fascination, the kind of people they ignore at home."

- Dagobert D. Runes

I travel into Dallas Center where Highway 44 cuts through a narrow edge of the town. And sitting nearly on the highway is a white two-story house with a wrap-around porch looking out on the road. A beauty of a porch, with decorative spindles and lattices and posts and a wainscoted ceiling. A porch out of another time — a time of rocking chairs and long cotton dresses and suspenders and bowler hats and the sweet smell of a pipe cupped in a callused hand.

"The house was built in 1890, and my husband and I have lived here 45 years. I was pregnant when we looked at the house." Sandy Clinkinbeard smiles at me as she apologizes for her wet hands from power washing. "We were living in a mobile home, so it was quite a change to move."

Sandy talks of her home with love and pride. She even runs inside to show me an old photograph of the house taken long before she and her husband, Al, owned it. And the photo shows the beautiful porch just as it looks now.

Almost.

The old photo shows a hammock strung up in the bend of the porch. A cool place to sleep on a hot summer night. But, today, the roar



The Clinkinbeard home in Dallas Center

from the road makes even talking impossible.

"There is just a lot more traffic and a lot more people."

But the porch still stands proudly while Sandy welcomes me to visit again.

Back on the road and driving through Dallas Center, I cross a paved bike path running diagonally from south to north. It's the northern route of the Raccoon River Valley Trail that goes from Waukee to Perry and then all the way to Jefferson.

I love bike trails — you can work out, enjoy nature, and think, all at the same time. Of course, after a few profound thoughts, I'm worn out and decide to check out The HandleBar next to the trail to see if fries and adult beverages are on their menu. They are.

"Tourists don't know where they've been, travelers don't know where they're going."

- Paul Theroux

Highway 44 continues west descending to the Raccoon River. And there, I find Bob fishing under the highway. Bob is a true fisherman. He is friendly and smiles. But he doesn't really want to talk. He is fishing.

Bob, what are you fishing for?
"Anything that bites."



The bicycle trail through Dallas Center

And he looks away toward his line. That's enough talk for now.

I get it. Although he did let me take a picture, and he did tell me his favorite place to fish. Sorry, you're only getting the picture. Some secrets are sacred.

Climbing out of the valley, corn and beans checkerboard the landscape. But don't be fooled by the pastoral fields because this is a particularly violent section of Highway 44. See, over there, is Panther Creek Church of The Brethren. Behind the church is the cemetery. And, according to The Panther Creek Church of the Brethren Cemetery History, the cemetery is "the resting place of the first murders committed in Dallas County." Yup, the tombstone reads: "John N. Bold was shot by J.E. Elliott Aug 23, 1872 died Aug 25, 1872." Shot, according to the Brethren History, because "they became angry after an argument over a cow."



Bob the fisherman



The resting place of the first murders committed in Dallas County

The lesson from this, folks? Keep your eyes peeled for cows on this stretch of Highway 44. And perhaps you should eat one more pie before an untimely death. I do.

"Travel is glamorous only in retrospect." - Paul Theroux

The land flattens as we get closer to the hill and pond and lake area surrounding the town of Panora. Past the East Branch of Panther Creek and then the West Branch of Panther Creek and Mosquito Creek and Bays Branch and... Ditch Number 4?

Ditch Number 4 may not be a name from a romance novel, but it does tell the story of Iowa agriculture and the draining of the land. "The U.S. Census Bureau estimated that as early as 1920 approximately nine million acres of Iowa farm land had been artificially drained or needed to be." Iowa Drainage Law Manual. Thus were



Molly Allen

born all sorts of drainage ditches to do this job — including our very own Ditch Number 4. Thank you for your service.

The highway continues west and goes through the heart of Panora. Of course I have to stop at the Pedal-In for a burger because it is on the southern branch of the Raccoon River Valley Trail. And then for a coffee at Crafty's Coffee & Gifts. A beautiful coffee shop that invites you to linger, eat a second lunch, try the pastries, and feed my relentless coffee addiction.

"A journey is best measured in friends, rather than miles."
- Tim Cahill

And, look, on the green, across the highway from the coffee shop, is the Panora Public Library. I have a weakness for libraries. They are quiet and peaceful and shaded from the summer sun. They smell of books and adventure.

I can't resist.

When I enter the library, I see a woman hustling around getting things organized, straightening chairs, watching the kids. Molly Allen is the recently appointed director at the Panora Public Library.

Molly gives me a warm welcome.

So, what do you love about this job?

"I love the kids' programs. And I love books. And I just love reading. We did story time outside the other day. We had a parachute to go along with the story. It was just fun."

Molly says this with contagious excitement. I'm sold. I want to stay and sit in a kid chair and read stories and see the parachute. But, sadly, I'm 4 feet too tall and more than 100 pounds too much for those chairs. Shoot.

Outside the library is Percussion Park with, you guessed it, multiple percussion instruments that ring and clang and boom with deep rich sounds. And over there is a concrete ping pong table where, yesterday, Molly saw several older



Ping pong smackdown

women in a spirited match. Who knew? Panora — home of ping pong smackdown. It had to start somewhere.

Climbing out of Panora past the woods on the left and Panorama High School on the right, the terrain turns less agricultural and more wooded. We are on our way to Guthrie Center, the county seat for Guthrie County. And I'm looking for treats.

On the north side of the highway at the edge of town is Guthrie County Quality Meats. Grant Sheeder was born and raised in Guthrie Center and was a part of the Sheeder Dairy family. After a lot of work and a lot of research, Grant opened this meat locker to fill a gap he saw in the market for meat products. And it has worked.

Shirt tucked, easy smile, big ideas, Grant reminds me of every Iowa farm kid who has been responsible for land and animals and large equipment since being a youngster. It's why employers around the U.S. hire these kids — they know how to work.

So, Grant, how is work?

"The home delivery side is a huge thing for us along with farmers bringing in beef or pork to be processed. We deliver meat to over 400 homes a month right now. We're expanding into restaurants and to the Hy Vee stores also."

And your staff?

"We have a great team. We have very little turnover. Quality is in our name, and they care about that, too. They treat it as if that farmer was looking over their shoulder as they process that meat."

But back to the treats. Actually, Grant has a storefront of treats — every type and flavor of beef stick you could ever want, dairy goods, any cut of meat up to a quarter of a cow, ham salad, egg salad, sauces, vinegars, jams, eggs. Oh, my.

I don't get a quarter of a cow, but can I really pass up a garlic parmesan beef stick? And how will this impact kissing my sweet wife? I'm willing to take the risk.



Grant Sheeder

"The whole object of travel is not to set foot on foreign land; it is at last to set foot on one's own country as foreign land."

- G.K. Chesterton

I'm back on Highway 44 through Guthrie Center. I am looking for the M & M Divide. It is supposed to be approximately seven miles west of Guthrie Center on Highway 44.

You might be wondering what the heck is the M & M Divide? The Missouri and Mississippi Divide is the line between two watersheds. On the east side of that line, every creek, every river, every raindrop flows to the Mississippi River. On the west side of that line, even your spilled glass of water flows to the Missouri River. There is no in-between. You have to go one way or the other.

Naturally, I am expecting some gigantic demarcation for the M & M Divide. Perhaps a wide canyon. Or maybe a mammoth rock that juts toward the sky. Or at least some type of fireworks and a parade.

Nope.

It is an uninspired sign, in the middle of nowhere, that looks onto nothing. Not even one drum majorette. Bummer.

On the other hand, the quiet of it all does make you look closely at the fields on either side of the road and the creek down the way. Paying attention might be a traveler's superpower.

As for me, I eat the last pie.



"Coming back to where you started is not the same as never leaving." - Terry Pratchett

Oh, no, we are at the end of our trip. We have gone 44 miles on Highway 44. It's time to turn around and go home. And, as I head east, I am reminded of the great Yogi Berra, who said, "If you come to a fork in the road, take it."

Amen to that. ■

This story previously published in CITYVIEW, September 2025. Joe Weeg spent 31 years bumping around Des Moines as a prosecutor for the Polk County Attorney's Office. Now retired, he writes about the frequently overlooked people, places and events in Des Moines on his blog: www.joesneighborhood.com.



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RECIPE

By Jolene Goodman

WHERE I find inspiration — and a new comfort-food favorite

Today's home cooks have no shortage of inspiration. With a quick search online, we can access thousands of recipes from trusted test kitchens, community-driven platforms and individual food bloggers. While I appreciate that convenience, I still find myself reaching for cookbooks, browsing new releases at the bookstore and checking out titles from the library — a perfect way to “test drive” a recipe before committing to it.

Another favorite source of inspiration is Family Features, a free recipe site filled with reliable dishes and beautiful photography that never fails to spark my creativity in the kitchen. This month's recipe, loaded Philly cheesesteak baked potatoes, brings together two of my favorite comfort foods: steak and potatoes — both of which also happen to be Shane's favorites. It takes the familiar flavors of a classic Philly cheesesteak sandwich and transforms them into a warm, satisfying baked potato meal. It's hearty, comforting and perfect to enjoy for dinner, with plenty left over for lunches throughout the week. ■

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



Loaded Philly cheesesteak baked potato

Recipe courtesy of Real California Milk

Prep time: 10 minutes

Cook time: 1 hour, 11 minutes

Servings: 4

Ingredients

- 4 large russet potatoes, washed
- 1 cup Real California sour cream
- 1-2 tablespoons Real California whole milk
- 1/4 cup Real California unsalted butter, divided
- 1 small green bell pepper, thinly sliced
- 1/2 small yellow onion, thinly sliced
- kosher salt, to taste
- freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 1 pound fresh shaved sirloin steak
- 2 cups shredded Real California provolone cheese

Directions

- Preheat oven to 425 degrees F and line baking sheet with aluminum foil.
- Prick potatoes all over with fork. Bake until potatoes are tender and fork

inserted easily comes out, 45 minutes to 1 hour. Split tops of potatoes open with knife and fluff potato flesh with fork. Set aside.

- In small bowl, combine sour cream and milk, adding more milk as needed, until sour cream is pourable. Set aside.
- In large skillet or on griddle over medium-high heat, heat 1 tablespoon butter. Add peppers and onions; cook until tender, 3-4 minutes. Season with salt and pepper, to taste. Transfer to plate and set aside.
- Clean skillet then melt remaining butter. Add steak and cook until fully cooked and lightly browned, 3-4 minutes. Season with salt and pepper, to taste. Return vegetables to skillet and toss to combine.
- Evenly top each potato with 1 tablespoon butter, steak mixture and cheese. Transfer to oven and bake until cheese is melted, 2-3 minutes. Drizzle with sour cream and serve.



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3 STEPS to put your affairs in order for 2026

It's a new year and time to take care of those pesky New Year's resolutions before they get buried under the pile of life's everyday chores and burdens.

Step 1: Review your powers of attorney or get them if you do not already have them.

Do you know where they are? You should have two documents. One is a general durable power of attorney. The other is a health care power of attorney, which may include a living will, also known as an advance medical directive. If you do not have both powers of attorney and are at least 18 years old, make an appointment to get them. If they are more than two years old, consider updating them.



Step 2: Review your estate planning documents.

These are your last will and testament and/or your revocable living trust. If you own real estate, and your beneficiaries are adults, the planning document you most likely need is a revocable living trust. Its main purpose is to avoid probate: Yes, you want to avoid probate. If you have minor children, married or not, a trust will also work well for you, but you may be able to accomplish your goals — yes, you have goals; you just might not realize it without getting some advice on what you should be thinking about — with a Last Will and Testament that includes a contingent beneficiary trust for your children, which is likely the appropriate planning tool.

Step 3: Review your insurance policies (residential, auto and life).

What are your deductibles and maximum coverage? Is it enough or too much? Do you have extra coverage for rental while you are displaced from your home or vehicle? How far will it pay to be towed? What if the party responsible for damage has no insurance? Do you have flood insurance or need extra coverage for hard-to-replace or valuable items, such as jewelry or your extensive Christmas decoration collection? Do your life insurance beneficiaries need to be changed? Note: Do not name minors as beneficiaries or name a third party, like a family member, as a beneficiary with the idea that they will use the money for the kids. They may have every good intention of doing this, but there are significant risks with this type of planning. (see No. 2, above). See an estate planning attorney for better alternatives. ■

Information provided by Cynthia P. Letsch, JD, CMP, Letsch Law Firm, 112 N.E. Ewing St., Suite D, Grimes, 515-986-2810, www.LetschLawFirm.com.



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INVESTMENT By Daniel Rundahl

A SMART start to 2026



The start of a new year is one of the best times to reset, refresh and make intentional decisions about your money and finances. Rather than setting unrealistic "resolutions," the most successful financial strategies are built on clear goals, consistent habits and thoughtful planning.

Begin with reflection: Before you look ahead, look behind. Assess how 2025 finished. Examine your income, expenses, savings and investments. Identify where your money went, what worked well and what didn't. Were there unexpected expenses or missed saving opportunities? This provides valuable insight and helps you avoid repeating the same mistakes.

Set clear, purpose-driven goals: Financial goals should be specific and meaningful. Define concrete objectives such as building a six-month emergency fund, paying off a credit card balance, or increasing retirement contributions by a certain percentage. Clear goals give your money direction and make progress measurable. Keep your goals in front of you. For years, I have kept three goals of varying importance taped to the corner of our bathroom mirror.

Pay yourself first through automation: Automation is one of the most effective tools in saving and planning. Set up automatic transfers to savings and investment accounts as soon as you receive your paycheck. This approach removes emotion from saving decisions and builds consistency. Over time, small, automated contributions can lead to significant results.

Strengthen your emergency fund: An emergency fund is the foundation of financial security. Aim to save three to six months of essential living expenses in a liquid, low-risk account. This cushion protects you from job changes, medical expenses or unexpected repairs and helps prevent reliance on high-interest debt.

Review investments and manage risk: The new year is an ideal time to review your investment portfolio. Ensure your asset allocation still aligns with your goals, time horizon and risk tolerance. Life changes — like marriage, children or career shifts — often require adjustments. Rebalancing keeps your strategy aligned rather than reactive to market noise.

Create a thoughtful debt strategy: Not all debts are built equal. High-interest consumer debt, like credit cards, should be addressed aggressively, while lower-interest debt may be managed more strategically. List balances, interest rates and payoff targets to create a clear and realistic plan.

Plan for known expenses: Planning for upcoming costs such as vacations, education expenses, insurance renewals, or major purchases in advance reduces financial stress and helps you stay within budget.

Keep it simple and sustainable: The most effective financial plans are simple and repeatable. Focus on habits you can maintain throughout the year. Review your progress periodically, adjust as needed, and celebrate milestones along the way.

A strong financial start to the new year is built on intention and consistency. With steady effort and a clear plan, you can create a financial foundation that supports both your short-term needs and long-term goals. ■

Information provided by Daniel Rundahl, Financial Advisor, Rundahl Financial Consultants, 8230 Hickman Road, Suite 300, Clive, 515-727-1701, drundahl@rundahlfinancial.com, www.rundahlfinancialconsultants.com.

MEET Julie Rummans

Teaching special students

Julie Rummans graduated from Grand View University after majoring in elementary education and receiving her Instructional Strategist II learning disabilities and behavioral disorders endorsement. This is her fourth year teaching, all of them with the Dallas Center Grimes district. She's currently a special education teacher at South Prairie Elementary School with a focus on students who have behavior goals on their individualized education plans.



Julie Rummans, pictured with her husband, Joel, and daughter, Nellie, teaches at South Prairie Elementary School.

"I've always had a passion for behavior. It's like a constant puzzle I'm trying to solve. I love celebrating every little victory with my students."

As a newer DCG teacher, Rummans has nothing but great things to say about the incredible experience she's had at the district.

"I have always felt supported by my principal and my coworkers. I love building relationships with students and seeing them every day. I share a classroom with another special education teacher, Jenny Rants, who has been teaching for more than 30 years, and it has been amazing getting to learn from her each and every day."

Of course, special education comes with challenges, and one of the biggest ones is trying to support students going through a rough patch. Rummans and her team are constantly working to try to find a change in their behavior plan that will help them be successful at school.

The biggest reward is when one of her students succeeds at something they have been working on for a long time. That might be something as simple as taking a break safely for the first time or beating their high score on their reading goal.

She also likes that her students make her laugh daily with their quirky comments and stories.

"Some of the best lines I can think of from students are 'I'm not arguing, I'm just showing you I'm right and you're wrong,' and 'I was safe today! Except for just five little bumps.'"

Rummans got married over the summer to her husband, Joel. They are busy chasing after their almost 2-year-old daughter, Nellie, who keeps them on their toes all the time. When she isn't with students, you might find Rummans finding fun things to do with her daughter, spending time with family, and doing jigsaw puzzles. ■

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Those who have never visited or heard about a local Elks Lodge may think it is simply a social club. But the Elks Lodge in Clive (West Des Moines Lodge No. 2752), like all Elks Lodges, does much for the community. Although the lodge building is in Clive (2060 N.W. 94th St.) the lodge serves a much larger area.

Lodge Secretary Toby Charloe and Trustee and Chair of the Board of Directors Greg Weinschenk provide insight into what their lodge does.

"There are 29 Elks lodges around Iowa," Weinschenk says. "Our building is in Clive, but Urbandale falls under our jurisdiction, and Johnston, West Des Moines, Waukee, Windsor Heights and Grimes. Lodge 2752 has been in existence since 1990, and we've been in our building in Clive for the past 12 years."

Weinschenk and Charloe note that, because the lodge encompasses many suburbs, membership has grown steadily and currently sits at 557. Anyone, male or female, is welcome to apply for membership. There is no membership requirement to be a military member or veteran.

The Elks is a fraternal order promoting the four cardinal virtues of charity, justice, brotherly love and fidelity," Weinschenk says.



Tim Short of Edward Jones presents the Good Neighbor certificate to Chrissy Ellis for the Elks Lodge.

Those virtues are easily seen in the actions of the local lodge.

"Our big focus is on veterans," Weinschenk says. "We collect deer hides during the hunting season. We send them to a place that tans them, and then part of the leather goes to a company that makes gloves for veterans that use wheelchairs. And then some of the leather goes to Marshalltown to the veterans home there for crafts and projects."

The lodge has many partnerships in the community.

"Another thing we've been doing for the past five or six years is working with the CRRC (Community Resource and Referral Center). They help homeless veterans find apartments, and we help supply them with beds, kitchen utensils and household items," Weinschenk says.

Besides veterans' issues, the lodge does much for others, as well.


"We're a big contributor to the food pantry and Crestview Elementary School, so the teachers don't have to go out and buy school supplies for kids that don't have them. And we sponsored an infrared drone that the fire department can use to see hotspots in a fire," Weinschenk says. "They also use that to help find a person who may be lost. We're very focused on our community."

Throughout the year, the lodge has fundraisers to help fund their giving. This year's golf tournament raised more than \$17,000. Charloe notes that, in the past year, the lodge gave \$6,000 in local scholarships, \$6,000 to special needs, \$43,000 in non-cash donations to veterans issues and \$6,000 in actual cash for veterans.

The lodge aims to be responsive to needs in the area. Charloe points to a few recent donations to help those struggling with hunger or other needs.

"We give to local food banks in Urbandale, Grimes and Clive," Charloe says. "And we just took a \$5,000 check out to Easterseals for their respite care and Camp Sunnyside." ■

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CHAMBER

By Brian Buethe

MARK your calendars

As we step into 2026, Grimes Chamber & Economic Development has just finished its 30th year of serving this great community. That is a milestone worth noting, but it is also a reminder that time keeps moving forward. With it comes new opportunities, new challenges, and plenty of reasons to stay optimistic about the future of Grimes. And since we are heading into the longest stretch of winter, which can feel a bit heavy for some of us, it seems like a good time to look ahead at a few brighter dates on the calendar.



One of the first signs that warmer days are coming is Feb. 10, when Major League Baseball pitchers and catchers report. Even if you are not much of a baseball fan, that announcement always feels like a small but welcome shift toward spring. It is proof that sunshine, green grass and evenings at the ballpark are getting closer.

March brings even more momentum. The first Friday in March is National Employee Appreciation Day. That is a great opportunity to thank the people who help keep our businesses and organizations going. A simple kind word or gesture can make a real difference.

We also gain a little light back when Daylight Saving Time begins on the second Sunday in March. Those extra minutes of evening daylight seem to lift everyone's spirits. Then, on March 20, spring officially begins. Even if the weather does not always cooperate right away, the calendar gives us permission to start thinking about warmer days and outdoor plans.

Before the month wraps up, we celebrate National Mom and Pop Business Owners Day on March 29. Here in Grimes, our locally owned businesses play a huge role in shaping our community. They employ our neighbors, sponsor our activities, and contribute quietly behind the scenes more often than most people realize. Showing them support matters.

And, before you know it, we will be talking about Grimes Governors Days, scheduled for June 4-6. This is our community celebration and one that Grimes Chamber & Economic Development is proud to organize each year. It is about gathering together, having some fun and celebrating the place we call home. You can find updates at www.governorsdays.com.

So, yes, winter is here. But the calendar reminds us that good things are coming. Let's keep supporting one another, cheering on our local businesses, and staying connected as a community. Grimes is a special place to live and work, and 2026 gives us plenty of reasons to look forward.

Here's to a great year ahead. ■

Information provided by Brian Buethe, President | CEO,
www.GrimesIowa.com

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Maggie Hawthorne, Akeelah Washington, Mya Southwick, Ava Grout and Alayna Livingston at the DCG varsity basketball game on Jan. 6.



Maggie Hawthorne at the DCG varsity basketball game on Jan. 6.



Mya Southwick at the DCG varsity basketball game on Jan. 6.



Akeelah Washington at the DCG varsity basketball game on Jan. 6.



Alayna Livingston at the DCG varsity basketball game on Jan. 6.



Ava Grout at the DCG varsity basketball game on Jan. 6.



Cooper Huston at the DCG vs. Norwalk varsity basketball game on Jan. 6.



Brody Logan at the DCG vs. Norwalk varsity basketball game on Jan. 6.



Hudson Heidgerken at the DCG vs. Norwalk varsity basketball game on Jan. 6.



Wyatt Valenta at the DCG vs. Norwalk varsity basketball game on Jan. 6.



Chase Perrin at the DCG vs. Norwalk varsity basketball game on Jan. 6.



Brody Burke at the DCG vs. Norwalk varsity basketball game on Jan. 6.

GIRLS Basketball

DCG Girls varsity basketball vs.
Norwalk on Jan. 6



Addie Abens



Leah Brauch



Aniyah Boens



Paisley Heidgerken



Tenley Heidgerken



Tessa Jones



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