

# Living

# Preserving

## Urbandale's story

Historical society celebrates 50 years of ensuring city's past has a place in its future.

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WELCOME

# GUARDIANS of memory

Historical societies don't exactly scream for attention. They are not flashy. Just quiet buildings filled with old stuff. Don't let that fool you. These places are doing some of the most important work in any community by keeping its memory intact so the rest of us don't collectively forget who we are.

That's where places like the Olmsted-Urban House in Urbandale, home to the Urbandale Historical Society, come in. This year marks the historical society's 50th anniversary, which means, for half a century, a dedicated group of volunteers has been carefully holding on to Urbandale's past — one photograph, newspaper clipping and handwritten note at a time.

Without their collections, history doesn't disappear — it just gets fuzzy. Details fade. Stories get exaggerated. Suddenly, Urbandale's origin story sounds less like fact and more like something your uncle swears is true but can't quite prove. The wonderful volunteers at the Urbandale Historical Society prevent that slow slide into myth by keeping actual evidence — real documents, real voices, real moments.

They also do something that is surprisingly difficult these days: They help people feel rooted. In a world where people move often and communities change quickly, it is easy to feel like you are just passing through. But when you learn the story behind your street or the history of your neighborhood, something shifts. You are not just living there — you are part of something that has been unfolding for decades. That sense of connection matters. It builds pride. It builds identity. It gives people a reason to care.

You don't have to become a full-time archivist to help. Visit. Donate. Volunteer. Even just showing up and taking an interest goes further than you might think. These places survive because people decide they are worth keeping around. And they are.

Historical societies aren't just about old papers and dusty rooms. They are about memory — our collective memory. They make sure the stories that built Urbandale don't quietly disappear. They remind us that ordinary moments matter, that everyday people shape history, and that, if we don't preserve those stories, no one else will.

Have a great month and thanks for reading. ■

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# Preserving Urbandale's story

Historical society celebrates 50 years of ensuring city's past has a place in its future.



By Joe Baumgarten

Some communities preserve history in books. Urbandale preserves it in a house.

Inside the Olmsted-Urban House, the past doesn't feel distant. It lives in old yearbooks and kitchen cabinets, in vintage toys and family photographs, in the creak of floorboards and the stories shared by the people who have dedicated themselves to keeping local history alive.

This year, the Urbandale Historical Society is celebrating its 50th anniversary

— a milestone that says as much about the city as it does about the organization. For half a century, volunteers have collected, preserved and shared the people, places and moments that shaped Urbandale into the community it is today.

For board members Pat Finnerty and Meribeth Haynes, that mission is about far more than old objects. It is about identity.

"If they didn't start preserving our history, it'd be gone," Haynes says.

Members of the Urbandale Historical Society board include Cynthia Dabrieo, Ginny Campbell, Norm Huitt, Meribeth Haynes, Carol Lee Riekenberg, and, not pictured, Pat Finnerty. Photo by Joe Baumgarten



A step into the Olmsted-Urban House is like a step into Urbandale's past. Photo by Michael Callison

### A community built by people who cared

The Historical Society traces its beginnings to the mid-1970s, when local residents interested in Urbandale's past began meeting through an adult education class. Their curiosity soon turned into commitment — and eventually into an official organization devoted to saving the city's story.

The timing was fitting. As the country approached its bicentennial, many communities were reflecting on their own roots. In Urbandale, that reflection revealed something distinctive: This was a place shaped by people who saw a need and simply decided to do something about it.

"A handful of interested people were willing to roll up their sleeves and do something," Finnerty says. "And that's what those people did."

That spirit runs deep in Urbandale's history.

In fact, one of the city's most unusual origin stories is that Urbandale was essentially founded so local families could create a school district and keep their children educated close to home. Residents wanted a school of their own — and they found a way to make it happen.

That same mindset helped build parks, gathering places and civic traditions in the years that followed.

"It was the people," Finnerty says. "The people built it."

Longtime board member Virginia Gee points out one of the society's greatest achievements: getting the Olmsted-Urban House on the National Register of Historic Places.

Along with Finnerty and Haynes, fellow board member Norm Hunt shares pride in adding a large barn behind the house to showcase historical items, working with Advantage Archives to digitize Urbandale community and school newspapers, and remodeling a room at the historical house to display memorabilia from Urbandale city and schools.

### Why local history still matters

For longtime residents, a visit to the Historical Society can feel personal. They spot familiar names in old yearbooks, recognize household items from a grandparent's kitchen, or remember what school and neighborhood life used to look like.

For younger visitors, it can be something else entirely: a glimpse into a version of everyday life that feels both unfamiliar and strangely relatable.

The toys upstairs don't buzz or glow. The kitchen looks nothing like a modern one. The house itself carries the feel of another time.

And that's exactly why it resonates.

"Our identity is here in this house," Haynes says. "Of who we've been and what we've done — and hopefully where we're going in the future."

That sense of identity can be easy to overlook — until it disappears.

When older buildings come down and memories go unrecorded, communities can lose more than landmarks. They can lose the places and stories that help people understand where they live and how it became home.

The Historical Society exists to keep that from happening. And not just for longtime residents.

For families who moved to Urbandale more recently, local history can be a way into the community — a chance to connect with something deeper than streets, subdivisions and school boundaries.

It offers context. Character. Continuity.

And, sometimes, it simply offers surprise.

Like the fact that Urbandale once had a mannequin hospital, where mannequins from around the country were shipped to be repaired — the kind of quirky local detail that might have vanished entirely if no one had bothered to save it.

That's part of what makes local history worth preserving. It reminds people that every community has stories most residents have never heard.

# FEATURE



A variety of historical items give a glimpse into what life was once like. Photos by Michael Callison

## The people behind the preservation

For the exhibits and artifacts inside the house, the real engine behind the Historical Society is its volunteers.

They sort donations, preserve records, research old names and dates, organize displays, and answer questions from visitors curious about the

city they know.

That work is often quiet and behind the scenes, but it matters. Because once something is lost, it's usually lost for good.

For Finnerty, staying involved comes down to something simple. "It's something bigger than me," he says.

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This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Urbandale Historical Society. Photo by Michael Callison

He sees the work as a way to invest in the place he calls home and leave it a little better for the people who come next.

Haynes says it is also about respect. Respect for the people who built the community. Respect for the lives they lived. Respect for the idea that ordinary people and everyday places are worth remembering.

“We need to preserve their memories and way of life,” she says.

That may be the clearest explanation of all. History doesn’t only belong to famous names or major events. It belongs to neighborhoods, schools, churches, family businesses, local traditions and the people who quietly helped shape a town into a community.

**Celebrating the past — and welcoming the public**

The Historical Society’s 50th anniversary will be celebrated throughout the year, beginning with one of its most beloved traditions: the annual Ice Cream Social, held this year on June 28 from 1-4 p.m. at the Olmsted-Urban House, 4010 70th St.

Part fundraiser, part community gathering, the event has long been a way to bring people together around the same spirit that built Urbandale in the first place.

And that is really what this anniversary is about. Not just looking back, but inviting the community to experience it.

For longtime residents, it is a chance to remember. For newer residents, it is a chance to discover. For families, it is a reminder that history doesn’t have to feel distant or dusty. Sometimes it looks like an old farmhouse. Sometimes it sounds like a story passed from one generation to the next.

And, sometimes, it is simply the feeling of realizing that the place you live has a story worth knowing.

That is what the Urbandale Historical Society has protected for 50 years. Not just the past, but a sense of belonging. ■

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## HEALTH By Annette Smith

### WHY DOES my back hurt when I sit too long?

If you have ever stood up from your desk, your car or the couch and felt stiff, achy or like you suddenly aged 20 years, you're not alone. Back pain with prolonged sitting is extremely common.

Many people assume sitting is restful for the body, but staying in one position too long can actually increase stress on the lower back. Muscles begin to tighten, joints become less mobile, and your body starts to feel "stuck." It is often less about having "bad posture" and more about not moving enough.

The good news is that your body usually responds well to small changes. Standing up every 30 to 60 minutes, taking short walks, changing positions often, and gently stretching your hips and back can make a big difference. Your chair setup matters too, but even the best chair in the world cannot replace regular movement.

It is also important to remember that pain does not always mean damage. Sometimes it simply means your body needs a new position, more support or more strength.

If your back hurts every day, gets worse over time, or starts limiting your ability to work, sleep or enjoy activities, it may be worth taking a closer look instead of just pushing through it. ■

Information provided by Annette Smith, Mountain Laurel Physical Therapy, 974 73rd St., Suite 33, West Des Moines, IA 50265, 515-520-8037, www.mountainlaurelpt.com.



## WELLNESS By Dr. Jody England

### LONG haul COVID

Many people have had residual effects from COVID for many years. Things like lost taste or smell, fatigue, shortness of breath, brain fog, joint and muscle pain, chest pain, heart palpitations, headaches and/or sleep disturbances. These symptoms can be due to a nutritional deficiency within the body that inhibits the immune function. Nutritional biofeedback is able to find deficiencies.

When given proper nutrition, bodies are designed to ward off things we are exposed to. Over time, our food supply has become depleted of nutrients via agricultural practices, genetic modification, toxins in our soil, etc. Our digestive systems can also become compromised by things like chemicals on and in our food, toxins in the air, medications and tick pathogens that can affect the digestive processes, etc. Therefore, even when we eat enough protein, fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds and berries we don't digest, absorb or utilize the nutrients. Identifying these deficiencies is unique to each individual and is not a one-size-fits-all solution.

Many patients have had their smell return. One patient struggled to feel his hands and another patient came in with a frozen shoulder, but the symptoms disappeared by strengthening the immune system.

Make the one body you get a priority by choosing wellness. ■

Information provided by Dr. Jody England, DC, Urbandale Chiropractic, 10437 Hickman Road, 515-278-4594, www.urbandalechiro.com.



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# URBANDALE COUNCIL RECAP



Mayor Andrew Weg holds Fair Housing Month proclamation at April 7 meeting.

## April 7, 2026 - Council Meeting

The Mayor and City Council met on Tuesday, April 7, and the meeting began with a proclamation recognizing April as Fair Housing Month, reaffirming the city's commitment to equal access to housing and a community that is welcoming and inclusive for all residents.

The City Council approved moving forward with a grant application for the Community Catalyst Building Remediation Program. The city is seeking up to \$100,000 to help renovate 7025 Douglas Avenue, the former Dairy Queen building in Urbandale's downtown. Planned upgrades include exterior repairs, a new HVAC system,

interior reconfiguration, restroom improvements, a grease interceptor, and better outdoor seating and site connections. The goal is to turn the vacant building into a market-ready commercial space, likely for a small eatery such as a coffee or ice cream shop, while also sending a visible signal that Urbandale's downtown is ready for reinvestment.

The City Council also approved an amendment to its agreement with Flock Group, the company that provides automatic license plate reader cameras and software in Urbandale. The proposed changes come after Councilmember concerns about privacy, confidentiality, and how footage could be shared with other city, state, and federal agencies. The amendment tightens language around customer data, strengthens confidentiality rules, and require advance written notice before footage is disclosed in most situations.

At the end of the meeting the City Council approved a \$180,000 contract for trail improvements along 86th Street. The project would add a 10-foot-wide trail along the west side of 86th Street from Douglas Avenue to Colby Woods Parkway, plus a new 8-foot-wide trail connection along Colby Parkway to Charles Gabus Memorial Tree Park. The work is expected to wrap up by mid-September and supports the city's long-term goals for safer, more connected multimodal transportation.

## March 17, 2026 - Council Meeting

The Mayor and City Council met on March 17, 2026, and the meeting began with three mayoral proclamations recognizing and reinforcing Urbandale's commitment to inclusivity and well-being. The Mayor proclaimed March 31, 2026, as Transgender Day of Visibility; March 27, 2026, was recognized as Developmental Disabilities Awareness Day; and March as National Social Worker Month.

The Council also approved parks and recreation upgrades totaling about \$870,000, including new playground equipment for various neighborhood parks, splash pad equipment for Walnut Creek Regional Park, and improvements at the Recreation Station in western Urbandale (the City's recently acquired recreation complex) as staff prepares the facility for expanded use by residents.

*This is a custom publication from the City of Urbandale. The Council Recap is not the official minutes of the Council meeting, it's an easy-to-read and easy-to-understand digest of the Council Meetings specifically designed for residents.*

*You can watch all the City Council meetings on YouTube and download Council agendas on the City's website.*

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# GRADUATION starts new financial chapter



In Iowa, April brings a sense of renewal. Tractors line the edges of farm fields, greenhouses fill with eager weekend gardeners, and families begin planning summer vacations and long-awaited getaways. It is also a season of milestones — spring formals, prom dances and, of course, upcoming graduations.

Graduation is an exciting achievement, but it also marks the beginning of a new financial chapter. Whether your graduate is heading to college, entering the workforce, or still exploring their next step, now is the ideal time to build strong financial habits that can last a lifetime.

One of the first steps is creating a simple, realistic budget. For many graduates, this is their first time managing money independently, and understanding where it goes is critical. Start by identifying income sources, such as part-time work, family support or scholarships. Then, outline expected expenses like housing, food, transportation and entertainment. This should be viewed as a teaching opportunity rather than a “control” conversation.

Another priority is building an emergency fund. Life is unpredictable, especially during transitions. Setting aside even \$500 to \$1,000 can provide a cushion for unexpected expenses like car repairs, medical bills or last-minute travel. Starting small is what matters most and builds confidence over time.

Credit is another important area to discuss early. Establishing a credit history can be beneficial, but it must be handled responsibly. Opening a starter credit card or becoming an authorized user on a parent’s account can help. Emphasize paying balances in full and on time each month. A practical approach is using the card for one consistent expense, like gas or groceries, and paying it off every cycle.

For those heading to college, understanding education costs is essential. Review tuition, housing, meal plans and additional expenses like books and supplies. If student loans are necessary, take time to understand interest rates and repayment expectations. Encourage students to borrow only what they need and track total debt throughout their academic journey.

Graduates entering the workforce should take full advantage of employer benefits. If a company offers a retirement plan like a 401(k), contributing early — even a small amount — can make a significant difference over time due to compound growth. If there is an employer match, be sure to contribute enough to receive the free money.

Setting short- and long-term financial goals is another key step. Short-term goals might include saving for a car, building an emergency fund or paying off small debts. Long-term goals could involve homeownership or retirement. Writing goals down and revisiting them regularly helps maintain focus and motivation.

Finally, keep the conversation about money open. Financial literacy isn’t often taught in school, so guidance from parents, mentors or advisors can make a big difference. Keeping the process engaging helps build confidence and long-term success.

Graduation is more than a ceremony — it’s a launching point. With thoughtful planning and a few smart financial steps, new grads can move forward with confidence and begin building a strong foundation for their future. ■

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

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# MEET Dr. Deborah Bordenaro

From childhood classroom to principal's office

Picture a young girl in her bedroom, surrounded by stuffed dolls and animals. With a chalkboard on her wall, she “teaches” them everything she knows — one of her favorite things to do.

That was Dr. Deborah Bordenaro’s childhood. Now in her second year as principal at Olmsted Elementary School, she still carries that love for children and learning and considers herself a lifelong learner.

Bordenaro is in her 29th year as an educator. She taught for 24 years, primarily at the kindergarten and first-grade levels, beginning her career on the west side of Chicago. When she and her husband started their family, they moved back to the Des Moines area. She taught in Des Moines Public Schools for 14 years while pursuing her master’s and doctorate degrees, focusing on administration. She later served two years as an assistant principal at Carlisle Elementary School before beginning her role as principal at Olmsted two years ago.

A typical day at Olmsted finds Bordenaro immersed with students, staff and stakeholders.

“You will rarely see me in my office,” she says. “I have a desk on wheels, so to speak. I love to be present, offer help, oversee and monitor daily activities.”

Bordenaro says Olmsted is a student-centered building where collaboration is encouraged.

“Recently, I met with a few students who have a vision for a garden at the school,” she says. “Together, we met with administration and grounds staff so the students could share their vision. I consider myself a facilitator of students and their dreams and goals.”

She says Olmsted benefits from a strong staff and systems.

“Coming from other district experiences, I can confidently say that Urbandale excels with protocols and systems,” she says.

Still, challenges remain.

“One big challenge is that our student enrollment has dropped in recent years,” she says. “We are looking for opportunities to encourage families to attend Urbandale schools.”

She adds that the school continues working to better serve its multilingual population.

“We are problem-solving ways to improve communication so families can feel connected



Dr. Deborah Bordenaro, principal at Olmsted, says building relationships is key in education.

and well-informed.”

Despite those challenges, Bordenaro finds great joy in her role.

“The students are wonderful, creative, grateful and intelligent,” she says. “The staff is top-notch.”

She says Olmsted is becoming known as a learning school and partners with several universities to provide aspiring educators with hands-on experience. She also expresses appreciation for shared leadership, supportive parents and stakeholders, and a “magnificent PTO.”

Bordenaro describes Olmsted as a place filled with laughter and dancing in the halls.

“I’m a relational leader, and I want staff and students to feel a sense of ease so they can grow, learn and work well,” she says.

Her advice to aspiring educators is simple: Find joy in the little things, grow daily and lead with care and concern.

“You need to be able to wear a lot of hats, but the true measure of success is the ability to build strong relationships,” she says. “If you can do that in a school setting, education is a great career choice.” ■

# AT-HOME CARE helps people stay in their homes longer

For many people, home represents stability, comfort and a lifetime of memories. Surveys consistently show most older adults prefer to remain in their homes as they age rather than move to a new living environment.



Yet remaining at home can present challenges for individuals and their families. Caregiving responsibilities often fall to family members who must balance work, household duties and personal commitments. This can create stress, exhaustion and, sometimes, discord.

At-home care services are increasingly used to help address those challenges. By assisting with daily activities and companionship, these services can help individuals maintain independence while lightening the load for family caregivers.

**Supporting independence.** Families sometimes hesitate to seek outside help because they worry it may adversely impact a loved one's independence. In many cases, the opposite can be true. When individuals receive assistance

with everyday tasks, such as household chores, personal care, or transportation, they may be able to remain safely in their homes for a longer time. Professional caregivers can also provide support in a way that allows individuals to maintain privacy and autonomy while still receiving help when needed. Regular assistance also can add structure and predictability to daily life, helping both individuals and their families establish more manageable routines.

**Reducing the risk of injuries.** Health concerns such as mobility limitations, chronic pain, vision issues and osteoporosis can increase the risk of falls among aging adults. Falls remain one of the leading causes of injury and disability for older individuals. At-home care providers often help decrease that risk by assisting with activities that might otherwise be physically demanding, such as bathing, cleaning or navigating stairs. Some organizations also offer home safety assessments that identify potential hazards and recommend changes that can improve safety.

**Encouraging physical and social activity.** Remaining active both physically and socially

is an important factor in overall well-being. Individuals who rely heavily on family members for transportation or care may become isolated over time. At-home support can help address this by providing companionship and helping individuals stay engaged in everyday activities. Caregivers may assist with outings, walks, hobbies, or other routines that encourage movement and social interaction. Even small activities such as walking a dog or spending time outdoors can help individuals maintain a sense of normalcy and independence.

**Supporting family caregivers.** Providing care for a loved one can be emotionally meaningful but also physically and mentally demanding. Introducing professional support can help restore balance. With some caregiving responsibilities shared, family members may experience less stress and have more time for work, personal health and meaningful time with their loved one. ■

Stacey Miller is executive director of WesleyLife at Home, which offers a broad network of services, including medical and non-medical at-home care. Visit [wesleylife.org](http://wesleylife.org) or call 515-978-2777.

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The April 2011 Urbandale Living magazine featured the story, “My first car: Residents share their stories, advice.” The cover photo featured Cassie Crose, 17. Also interviewed were Jerry Bill, sales manager for Stew Hansen Dodge, and Ben Buenzow, State Farm, who fondly recalled memories of his first car, “The Grocery Getter,” and offered advice. ■

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**Jacket weather** ..... 6%



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**Contact for Questions:** Director of Family Faith Formation:  
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# FAITH **By Steve Smith**

## RESURRECTION response



Upon hearing that our daughter-in-law was pregnant, my wife and I were elated. Our joy and prayerful concern for this new life in the womb continues to this day.

This past Easter, Christians celebrated Christ's resurrection as the conclusive evidence that He conquered sin and its inevitable consequence of death. Christ sacrificed His life and suffered the just punishment for human rebellion so that all who believe in Him will experience new, spiritual and eternal life (John 3:16).

Jesus' claim, "I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me will live even if he dies. And everyone who lives and believes in me will never die" (John 11:25-26), was confirmed not only when He raised Lazarus from the dead (John 11:43), but ultimately and supremely when He Himself rose from the dead (Matthew 28:6).

The remarkable and undeniable reality of Jesus' resurrection compels us to action.

Do we reject Jesus' resurrection as fact and refuse faith in Him as the only solution to your moral corruption, lack of meaningful direction and personal dissatisfaction? God's word is clear that disbelief leads to condemnation. "He who does not believe the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on Him" (John 3:36b). It's not too late to respond to Jesus' invitation, "Come to Me all you who are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). The whole point of Jesus' death and resurrection is that, if we turn from our self-directed life and trust in Christ, we will receive new life.

Do we accept Jesus' resurrection as fact and put our faith in Him as the only source of salvation from God's just condemnation of our moral corruption? If we are personally trusting that Christ's death paid the penalty for our unrighteousness and that He rose again to secure our salvation (Romans 4:25), then our belief will impact our behavior.

First of all, like grandparents expecting another grandchild, believers in Jesus continually celebrate His resurrection because we appreciate the new life we enjoy because of it (Colossians 2:12-14).

Secondly, just as spring evidences new life — budding trees, blossoming flowers, and birds singing — we who believe in the resurrected Christ demonstrate our new life in Him by behaving like Jesus — exhibiting compassion, humility, patience and forgiveness (Romans 6:4).

Thirdly, Christ followers boldly articulate Jesus' resurrection as proof that God accepted His sacrifice for sin since a person must believe both truths to become a Christian (1 Corinthians 15:3-4).

Finally, believers joyfully anticipate our own bodily resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:20-22).

Christ is risen. What's our response? ■

Information provided by Steve Smith, Creekside Church, 2743 82nd Place, Urbandale, 515-279-3919.

# RESIDENTS turn to native plants to protect waterways

Homeowners and local programs embrace rain gardens and sustainable landscaping.

Central Iowa's water supply is severely compromised. A 2025 Iowa water quality report found nitrate levels in the Des Moines and Raccoon rivers often exceeded national safety limits before being treated by water plants. More than 70% of contaminants are linked to agriculture, though runoff from residential properties can also contribute.

Amid these concerns, Kelly Jacobs, owner of Pocket Prairies, a native plant retailer, notes a rise in interest following last year's water quality study.

"Native species are the top food source and habitat for local pollinators and animals compared with non-natives," she says.

Urbandale resident and native species advocate Andrew Drenth transformed his yard into a haven for native plants. He says native flora such as milkweed and coneflower not only attract beneficial insects but are also more resilient than non-native species.

"Seeing eight butterflies on one plant in the fall is amazing," he adds.

Despite these advantages, some worry that native plantings may look unkempt compared with traditional yards. To address this, Drenth is more intentional with his front-yard plantings, leaving some areas of traditional grass. In the backyard, however, he allows a greater mix of native plants to grow more freely.

Polk County Water Resources Manager Cassandra Druhl oversees the Rain Campaign website <https://raincampaign.org/>, which provides information on native species, stormwater management and available funding options.

"We offer resources for everyone, from rain barrels and rain gardens to soil quality restoration," Druhl says.

Funded by stormwater utility fees, Urbandale reimburses residents up to 50% for projects like these. Kristen Brostrom, assistant director of engineering, says the projects help advance the city's broader sustainability goals.

"A single project may not seem like much, but, if more residents get involved, the result can have a real impact on our watershed," she says.

More information is available at <https://www.urbandale.org/563/Storm-Water-Grant-Program>.

Bery Engebretsen installed rain gardens in



One of two rain gardens overlooking a dry creek bed at the home of Bery Engebretsen. Photo by Jeff Reiland, Abundant Design



Before and after soil quality restoration treatment. Photo by Polk County Public Works

his Urbandale backyard with the city's financial support. These shallow basins, planted with native species, filter runoff and reduce erosion from residential properties.

"The rain garden has greatly reduced runoff onto the next property. It is quite amazing," he says.

Looking ahead, Engebretsen hopes to eliminate his traditional lawn. He is experimenting with sustainable landscaper Jeff Reiland on planting a "flawn," a mix of lawn and flowering plants. The yard can be mowed like a traditional lawn while still providing the

benefits of native plants.

"We do this because of our larger concerns about the environment. We just do what we can to make our land healthy," he says.

For more information about sustainability efforts in Urbandale, check out the Urbandale Sustainability Fair on May 7 near the Urbandale library. For more information, visit <https://urbandale.librarycalendar.com/event/sustainability-fair-15569>. ■

Wayne Bruns is a resident of Urbandale and a volunteer with [www.sustainableurbandale.org](http://www.sustainableurbandale.org).

## WHY SHOULD I write my obituary?

We all look at them. They help honor the memory of the person who died, and they serve as a notice of the death itself. Writing an obituary is essentially writing a life narrative. You have lived a lot of life, and there is no better way to get a zoomed-out view of yourself and your life than to write your own obituary. It is a life review.

It is an opportunity to identify details that make you proud, and you may even uncover areas of your life that you realize are unfinished. This can offer you an opportunity to reroute paths that may have led you astray from those accomplishments.

Some questions that can help you as you get started with this activity include:

- Are there specific things I want my family and friends to remember about me?
- What are the most important roles I have played in life?
- Is there any advice or guidance I want to pass along to others?
- What are my most important accomplishments, and what am I most proud of?

Advanced funeral planning is ultimately about making things easier for those you love. Writing your own obituary is a simple, but meaningful way to help accomplish this. ■

Information provided by Robert Christensen, Advanced Planning Counselor, Hamilton's Funeral Home, 515-697-3671



## URBANDALE Public Library news

**Note:** Dates, times and details may be subject to change. Check our online calendar to register and receive reminders about events you are interested in attending.

### Urbandale Public Library

3520 86th St., Urbandale

515-278-3945

[www.urbandalelibrary.org](http://www.urbandalelibrary.org)

Monday – Thursday: 9 a.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Friday – Saturday: 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Sunday: noon to 6 p.m.

### Space redesign update

Work has begun at the library to prepare for upcoming construction and reconfiguration of the space. A significant amount of construction will be completed prior to opening, but visitors can expect work to continue throughout the afternoon, with some restricted access to ensure public safety. More details, including a map of the redesign, can be found on our website and at the front desk. We appreciate your patience as we navigate this exciting chapter to improve the library's functionality.

### Teen Takeover Book Club

The library is excited to launch a teen book club for graphic novel readers on the first Wednesday of each month at 6 p.m. Teens ages 12-17 are encouraged to attend, whether they are longtime comics fans or just curious about the format. This book club will feature the library's digital resource, Comics Plus, from which members will select titles for future discussions.

### "The Librarians" film screening and discussion

In celebration of National Library Week, join us for a thought-provoking exploration of censorship, democracy and intellectual freedom at 6 p.m. Tuesday, April 21. Indie Lens Pop-Up, presented by ITVS, Independent Lens and the Urbandale Public Library, will host a special screening of "The Librarians," followed by a community discussion. The film follows a network of librarians as they unite to examine how book restriction policies are shaping library collections.

### Sensory spaces

The library will host a sensory-friendly experience from 5-6 p.m. Sunday, April 26. All ages are welcome to explore the library, activities and resources, including Storytime and ARL TheraPets.

### Third Annual Sustainability Fair

Join us for the third annual Sustainability Fair from 5-7 p.m. on Thursday, May 7, at Charles Gabus Memorial Tree Park. The library has partnered with Polk County Conservation to host the Walnut Creek Watershed Festival and will feature even more vendors this year. While visiting with vendors to learn about community resources and services, attendees can enjoy popcorn from the Urbandale Lions Club and music from Vibes and Vows. The first 100 attendees will receive either a packet of native flower seeds from Pocket Prairies of Des Moines or an exclusive Donna Kessler Seed Library tote bag. ■

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# COPING with diminished financial capacity

We think about our financial capabilities as an important measure of independence, similar to our ability to drive or live alone. The thought of losing the ability to manage your finances is terrifying. Planning ahead will help you stay in control of your finances.

“Diminished financial capacity” is the decline in a person’s ability to manage money. When people of any age lose the capability to manage their finances, they may also become more vulnerable to fraud and other forms of financial abuse.

Taking the steps listed below will help avoid or minimize problems for you and your family:

First, organize and store important documents in a secure, easily-accessible location. That way, they are readily available in an emergency. Give copies to trusted family members or let them know where to find the documents.

Second, make sure you have a valid financial power of attorney. A financial power of attorney gives someone the legal authority to make financial decisions for you if you cannot. The document is “durable” because it remains in effect even if you become incapacitated. You retain



the ability to change it or cancel it as long as you are still able to make decisions.

After signing a durable financial power of attorney, you can still manage your money as long as you have the ability to make decisions. Also, you always have the option to change who you want to act as your appointed representative and the individuals you allow to access your financial information.

Third, keep things up to date. Be sure that, if something changes, you keep your information as current as possible. Your trusted contacts may change over time. Keep your attorney and investment advisor informed of changes regarding who has authority to review your account or whom they should contact in case of an emergency.

Finally, speak up if something goes wrong. If you ever think someone is taking advantage of you, or that you’ve been the victim of a fraud, tell someone. The sooner you let someone know about it, the better chance there is of putting an end to it.

An experienced estate-planning attorney can help you put a power of attorney into place to plan for future incapacity and to safeguard your money. ■

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

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**ATTORNEYS WHO SPECIALIZE IN YOU**

# HAYNES dedicates decades to keeping the city's past alive

Volunteers for Urbandale Historical Society



When it comes to preserving the history of Urbandale, few have given as much of themselves as Meribeth Haynes. A proud Urbandale resident for 57 years, Meribeth has watched this community grow and change — and has worked tirelessly to make sure its story is never forgotten.

“Growing up and living in Urbandale for the past 57 years has been special with all the people I have grown up with and with all of the other people that I have gotten to know through community organizations and activities,” she says.

As a dedicated board member of the Urbandale Historical Society,



Ryan Mehalovich presents the Neighbor Spotlight certificate to Meribeth Haynes.

Meribeth has been a driving force behind some of the organization’s most meaningful achievements in recent years. She was instrumental in getting a grant to remodel one of the upstairs rooms in the Olmsted-Urban house. Once the grant was in hand, she organized a team to fill the new room with memorabilia and articles about the city of Urbandale and Urbandale schools. The room is now known as the “Urbandale Historical Room.”

She also spearheaded a collaboration between the Historical Society and the Urbandale Alumni Association to refurbish the 100-year-old flagpole that stood for many years at the school. A brick plaza was built in the house’s backyard with the flagpole proudly in the center.

For Meribeth, this work is personal. Having called Urbandale home for nearly six decades, she understands firsthand the value of knowing where your community came from.

“It has been a fantastic experience to be on the board,” she says. “I continue to learn additional information about the history of Urbandale and help with its preservation.”

The next time you stop by the Olmstead Urban House or flip through a digitized copy of an old Urbandale newspaper, take a moment to appreciate the neighbors like Meribeth Haynes who made it possible. ■

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**Do you know a neighbor who deserves recognition?**  
 Nominate by emailing [tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com](mailto:tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com).

# 90 YEARS of home and community

Warden has witnessed decades of change while cherishing friendships and traditions.

Nona Warden was born and raised in Urbandale, in a home on Douglas Avenue where the eye care clinic and fire station now stand. She attended kindergarten through 12th grade in the building that once stood at 70th and Douglas and proudly graduated with the Class of 1954.

Warden still lives in the Urbandale home she and her husband bought in 1963, when he began working for the city.

Clearly, when Warden finds a place she loves, she sticks with it.

“I have lived in my home for 63 years, and, with some updates, it’s been very comfortable for me,” she says. “My home is in the older part of Urbandale, and it’s close to most of the things I need. I enjoy my yard, flowers and my patio, where my neighbors and friends gather to sit and visit.”

Living in an established neighborhood, Warden has seen neighbors come and go.

“Other neighbors have been here for quite a while, and we are there for each other,” she says. “One of my neighbors and I have lived in this neighborhood for more than 60 years and have done many things together over the years. Back in the day, our neighborhood kids were always out playing in the yards. To this day, they still come back to see where they used to live and stop to visit with me, which is very special.”

Warden also cherishes the city itself. She has witnessed many changes over the years but says the spirit of the community stands out. She appreciates that Urbandale remains easy to navigate despite its growth, with stores nearby.

The Fourth of July celebration and the Urbandale Historical Society Ice Cream Social hold special meaning for her. They are events that, for decades, have brought the community together.

Her long history in town has made Warden a valued member of the Urbandale Historical Society and the Urbandale Alumni Foundation. She has volunteered at their events for many years and was recognized last year at the Ice Cream Social alongside another Urbandale graduate, as they had graduated 70 years apart.

Ultimately, it’s the people and sense of community that have made Urbandale home for Warden for nearly her entire life.

“Urbandale has always been my home since I was born, and that’s been a few years — 90 years to be exact,” she says. ■



Nona Warden, Urbandale High School Class of 1954, was honored along with a graduate from 2024 at the alumni foundation’s dedication of the flagpole that had once stood on top of the school at 70th and Douglas.

**Suggest a teacher**  
for an *Iowa Living* education column!

Send an email to [tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com](mailto:tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com)

Puzzle answers from page 22

1	L	I	E	U		5	T	I	S					
8	U	S	S	R		9	S	H	A	P	E	S		
12	R	E	P	L	A	C	E	M	E	N	T			
14	K	E	Y		15	T	A	P		16	A	D	O	
					17	S	T	R	U	C	K	I	N	
19	S	T	A	T	E		22	B	A	S	T	E		
23	W	I	N	D	M	I	L	L						
25	I	M	A		26	P	S	I		27	F	I	T	
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33	E	R	O	D	E	S			34	M	Y	R	A	
					35	G	O	D		38	P	E	E	R

Be sure to check for cancellations

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

## Upcoming in Urbandale Living magazine:

**Farmers market vendors:** Do you enjoy selling your products at local farmers markets? Tell us your experiences and what tips you can share with others wanting to get involved. Email [tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com](mailto:tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com).

### Polk County Master Gardeners annual plant sale

Saturday, May 2  
Demonstration Garden across from Valerius Elementary School, 3305 92nd St., Urbandale

The Polk County Master Gardeners' annual plant sale returns. The event helps support the garden while offering a wide variety of plants and garden items.

### Ankeny Art Center Arts Festival

Saturday, May 16, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.  
1520 S.W. Ordinance Road, Ankeny

The festival will transform several streets of Ankeny's Historic Uptown into a vibrant celebration of creativity and artistic expression. More than 50 artist booths, live music, artist demonstrations, food trucks, and entertainment for adults and children will keep attendees engaged all day.



### Can Play Fore All Golf Outing

Friday, April 24, 3-7 p.m.  
RecPlex 6500 Grand Ave., West Des Moines

Join Can Play and the 2026 West Des Moines Leadership Academy for a fun, small-format golf outing supporting accessible outdoor recreation and youth programming. Golfers will play through a creative course designed by community members and local businesses, built entirely from non-perishable food items to benefit Can Play's programming. All proceeds will benefit Can Play, whose mission is to bring adapted and no cost recreational programs to our communities by removing barriers to play. Register and donate online at <https://givebutter.com/WDMLA>.

### UHS Spring Play, 'Lost Girl'

Urbandale High School, 7111 Aurora Ave.

Urbandale High School will present its spring play, "Lost Girl" by Kimberly Belflower. Performances will be held Friday, April 24, 7 p.m.; Saturday, April 25, 2 p.m. and 7 p.m.; and Sunday, April 26, 2 p.m. Tickets can be purchased at: [www.gobound.com/ia/schools/urbandale/tickets](http://www.gobound.com/ia/schools/urbandale/tickets).

### 'Hoover on the Road' Exhibit Through May 31

Living History Farms, 11121 Hickman Road, Urbandale

Designed to introduce audiences across Iowa to the life and legacy of President Herbert Hoover, the exhibit highlights Hoover's remarkable journey from his humble beginnings in Iowa to the presidency, along with his lasting humanitarian impact around the world. As part of the exhibition's programming, the Hoover Presidential Foundation will host a special presentation on Thursday, April 23 at 6:30 p.m. featuring Sarah Fling of the White House Historical Association. Her presentation, "The Hoovers in the White House," will explore the time Herbert and Lou Henry Hoover spent in the executive mansion and the influence they had on the institution of the presidency and life in the White House.

### Des Moines Art Center Museum Highlights Tour

Saturdays, 1-2 p.m.  
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.



### Urbandale Historical Society Plant Sale

Saturday, May 9, 9 a.m. to noon  
Olmsted-Urban House, 4010 70th St.

The Urbandale Historical Society's plant sale is Saturday, May 9 from 9 a.m. to noon, featuring a variety of annuals, perennials, hanging baskets and more. Support the event by attending and by donating divided perennials (no ferns, please). Drop off your potted plants Friday, May 8, from 2-6 p.m. at the Olmsted-Urban House, 4010 70th St. For more information, email [2026HistoricalSocietyPlantSale@gmail.com](mailto:2026HistoricalSocietyPlantSale@gmail.com).

### Bill Owens: Work and Leisure

Through April 19  
John Brady Print Gallery, Des Moines Art Center, 4700 Grand Ave., Des Moines

Bill Owens documented the suburbs in the 1970s, capturing the lives of prosperous, predominantly white Americans at a moment after the cultural shifts of the 1960s but before the dawn of the digital age of computers and video games in the 1980s. His photographs were compiled in the best-selling coffee table books "Leisure" (1972), "Our Kind of People" (1975), and "Working: I Do It For the Money" (1977). The images in this exhibition, taken from all three of these series and shot mainly in California and the Midwest, reveal Owens' unique comedic eye as he seems to lightly poke fun at his subjects while clearly enjoying their company, finding both the genuine and the absurd in everyday life.

## EVENTS IN THE AREA

Be sure to check for cancellations

### The Evening African Violet Club Sale and Show

Friday and Saturday, April 24-25  
Plumbers & Steamfitters Local  
Union 33, 2501 Bell Ave.,  
Des Moines



The Evening African Violet Club of Des Moines invites the public to its 2026 African Violet Show and Sale, "Music in Bloom." Members of area garden clubs and plant societies are especially welcome as club members share so many interests in indoor and outdoor gardening with them. This is a nationally sanctioned show and sale that will have judges from the African Violet Society of America. Hours are Friday, April 24, noon to 6 p.m., and Saturday, April 25, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The Judging of Violets, Gesneriads and Floral Design will take place on Saturday, April 25 from 10 a.m. to noon. Hours follow from noon to 5 p.m. for Sales. Only members of EAVC are eligible to enter plants and designs in the show.

### Made In The Midwest: The Lubben Brothers

Saturday, April 25, 7 p.m.  
Temple Theater, 1011 Locust St., Des Moines

Des Moines Performing Arts announces the return of Made in the Midwest at the Temple Theater for an exciting new season. The Lubben Brothers perform traditional/contemporary folk music. Opener is Courtney Krause. To purchase tickets, visit [DMPA.org](http://DMPA.org), call 515-246-2300, or stop by the Civic Center Ticket Office at 221 Walnut Street. Night-of tickets will be available for purchase at the Temple Theater Ticket Office two hours before the performance.

### Tori's Angels 2026

Thursday, April 26, 5:30-8:30 p.m.  
Glen Oaks Country Club, 1401 Glen Oaks Drive,  
West Des Moines

Celebrate 15 years of hope, helping Iowa children with life threatening illnesses by funding vital medical and travel expenses that are not covered by insurance, allowing them to pursue life-saving treatments and cures. For more information contact Patty Reeve at 515-238-3829 or [patty@torisangels.org](mailto:patty@torisangels.org). [www.TorisAngels.org](http://www.TorisAngels.org)

### Fauna 10K

April 1-30 (Donate Life Month)

Reagan Maher, a Des Moines kidney transplant recipient, is launching the Fauna 10K — a powerful initiative throughout the month of April aimed at registering 10,000 new organ, tissue and eye donors across Iowa and beyond. This is not a race. There is no finish line. There is no competition. This is a movement.

Held during Donate Life Month in April, the Fauna 10K invites everyone who is not registered as an organ donor to take part from anywhere, making this a statewide and nationwide movement, not confined to a single location. April 1-30, you can register on Fauna Transplant Support's Facebook Page or through Iowa Donor Network at [www.iowadonornetwork.org/register](http://www.iowadonornetwork.org/register). ■



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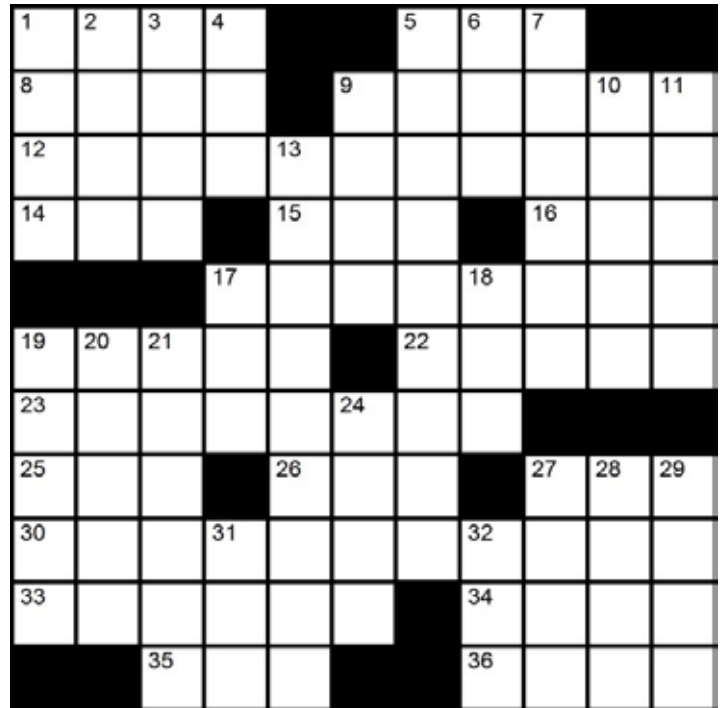
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## CROSSWORD



### Across

- 1 Substitution word
- 5 Opposite of 'tain't
- 8 One of the WWII Allies
- 9 Circles and such
- 12 Stand-in
- 14 Lock opener
- 15 Ask for a loan
- 16 Fuss
- 17 Interrupted
- 19 Diplomat's department
- 22 Tend the roast
- 23 Quixote's opponent
- 25 Well, --- monkey's uncle!
- 26 Air-pressure measure
- 27 Meet
- 30 They get elected
- 33 Wears slowly
- 34 Hess or Breckinridge
- 35 Deity
- 36 Noble

### Down

- 1 Wait in ambush
- 2 Now it makes sense!
- 3 Catch sight of
- 4 Online address
- 5 An event might be open to it
- 6 "--- the Walrus" (Beatles tune)
- 7 Talks
- 9 Mark left by a healed wound
- 10 Initiate the break-up
- 11 Rock
- 13 Went for
- 17 Usual amt.
- 18 Record-holder --- Ripken
- 19 Hit
- 20 Indonesian island
- 21 Not digital
- 24 Horn-wearing goddess
- 27 Jack's "Chinatown" co-star
- 28 Concerning, in legal memos
- 29 Former Russian ruler
- 31 Words to wed
- 32 Mischievous child

**ANSWERS ON PAGE 19**

# THE COMFORT of a savory lasagna

There are few things in life more comforting than a warm kitchen filled with the savory aroma of lasagna baking in the oven — any time of the year. It is the kind of smell that draws everyone in, pulling family members from each corner of the house to ask, “Is it ready yet?”

This hearty lasagna has become a true family favorite in our home. With rich layers of seasoned meat, creamy ricotta, tender pasta and plenty of melted cheese (I suggest adding more than what this recipe calls for), it is the ultimate comfort food. Lasagna is more than just dinner — it is a tradition. This dish has even been selected as our dinner for Christmas and Thanksgiving many years, as it truly is a treasured recipe — and the leftovers taste even better the next day. This recipe represents the simple joy in sharing something homemade and delicious with the people you love. I need to warn you, though, the sauce takes some time to cook, but it is well worth the wait. Enjoy! ■



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

## Lasagna

### INGREDIENTS:

- 1 pound ground hamburger
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh parsley, divided
- 1 28-ounce can whole tomatoes, undrained and chopped
- 1 14.5-ounce can Italian-styled stewed tomatoes, undrained and chopped
- 1 six-ounce tomato paste
- 1 eight-ounce can tomato sauce
- 2 teaspoons dried oregano
- 1 teaspoon dried basil
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper
- Water to boil noodles
- 12 uncooked lasagna noodles
- 1 large egg white, beaten
- 2 cups cottage cheese
- 1/2 cup shredded parmesan cheese
- 1 15-ounce carton fat-free ricotta
- 2 cups shredded mozzarella cheese



### DIRECTIONS:

- Brown hamburger and drain grease. Set aside. In the same pan, coat with cooking spray, sauté onion and garlic for 5 minutes. Add beef back in. Add 2 tablespoons parsley, chopped whole tomatoes and next six ingredients. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat, cover and simmer for 20 minutes. Uncover and simmer for 15 minutes. Set aside.
- Boil water and cook noodles for 12 minutes or until “al dente.” Drain and set aside.
- Preheat oven to 350 F. In another bowl, combine 2 tablespoons parsley, egg white, cottage cheese, parmesan cheese and ricotta cheese.
- Spray a 9-inch by 13-inch pan with cooking spray and spread 1 cup tomato/beef mixture on the bottom of the pan. Place 3 noodles on tomato/beef mixture, top with half of cottage cheese mix, then 2 cups of tomato/beef mixture, and 2/3 cup of mozzarella. Repeat. Place another layer of noodles on top, then spread with remaining tomato/beef mixture.
- Cover with aluminum foil and bake for 1 hour. Then, sprinkle with 2/3 cup of provolone and bake uncovered for another 10 minutes. Take out of oven and let rest for 10 minutes. ■

# OUT & ABOUT



Urbandale Chamber held a ribbon cutting April 2 at Dinner Dispatch, Windsor Heights.



Abby Ludwig, TJ Rushing and Kari Taylor at the Urbandale Chamber ribbon cutting April 2 at Dinner Dispatch, Windsor Heights.



Megan Garvin and Madeline Krantz at the Urbandale Chamber ribbon cutting April 2 at Dinner Dispatch, Windsor Heights.



Ashley Carapella, Gina Wright and Meg Knapper at the Urbandale Chamber ribbon cutting April 2 at Dinner Dispatch, Windsor Heights.



Sydney Jackson and Ed Trudeau at the Urbandale Chamber ribbon cutting April 2 at Dinner Dispatch, Windsor Heights.



Urbandale Chamber held a ribbon cutting March 24 for Heart Space Massage, Windsor Heights.



Kelly Troxel and Alicia King at the Urbandale Chamber ribbon cutting March 24 for Heart Space Massage, Windsor Heights.



Gordon Reeder and Leila Reeder at the Urbandale Chamber ribbon cutting March 24 for Heart Space Massage, Windsor Heights.



Tim Gootee and Jay Mathes at the Urbandale Chamber ribbon cutting March 24 for Heart Space Massage, Windsor Heights.

# OUT & ABOUT



Fletcher Barry and Eric Klein at the Urbandale Chamber AM Exchange March 31 at Paychex HR, West Des Moines.



Chloe Fox and Lucas Nerhus at the Urbandale Chamber AM Exchange March 31 at Paychex HR, West Des Moines.



Joleen Mahaffey and Matt Nuetzman at the Urbandale Chamber AM Exchange March 31 at Paychex HR, West Des Moines.



Kris Howard and Nicole Berger at the Urbandale Chamber AM Exchange March 31 at Paychex HR, West Des Moines.



Joshua Carman and Dr. Trystin Stille at the Urbandale Chamber AM Exchange March 31 at Paychex HR, West Des Moines.



Dr. Shane Hoffman and Aaron Colyer at the Urbandale Chamber AM Exchange March 31 at Paychex HR, West Des Moines.



Sonja Elcic and Von Steck at the Urbandale Chamber ribbon cutting March 24 for Heart Space Massage, Windsor Heights.



Terry Taylor and Becca Johnson at the Urbandale Chamber ribbon cutting March 24 for Heart Space Massage, Windsor Heights.



Sam Meyer and Kyle Lee at the Urbandale Chamber AM Exchange March 31 at Paychex HR, West Des Moines.



Tina Smothers, Tricia Rivas and Katie Bennett at the Urbandale Chamber ribbon cutting March 24 for Heart Space Massage, Windsor Heights.



Megan Johnson, Joseph Johnson and Susan Skeries at the Urbandale Chamber AM Exchange March 31 at Paychex HR, West Des Moines.

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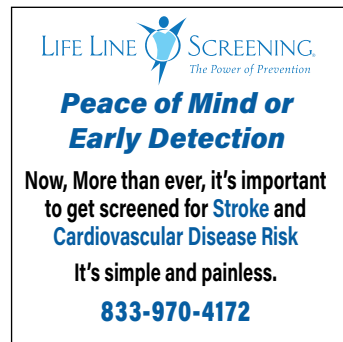
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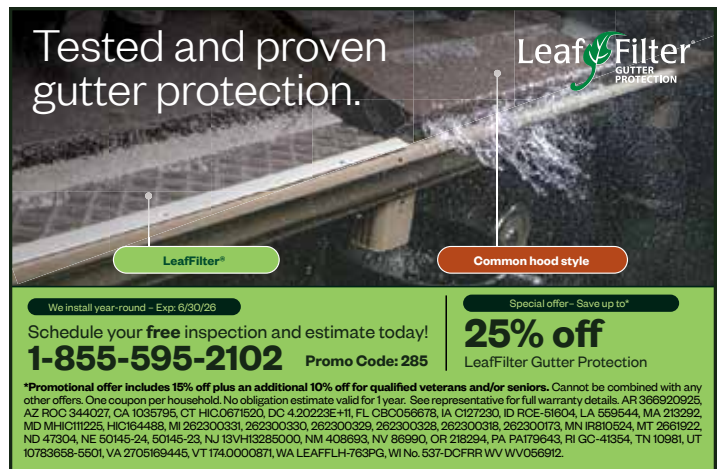
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