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MAGAZINE

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Local vendors bring flavor, passion and community to farmers markets

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WELCOME

A FRESH take on farmers markets

For years, I dismissed farmers markets as little more than roadside produce stands — tables of fruits and vegetables, nothing more. I didn't cook. I didn't grocery shop. I didn't care.

Then, a few years ago, I wandered into a local farmers market — and my view changed. There was honey, still sweet from the hive. Bread, warm and crusty. Homemade jelly. Even wine. But the real surprise wasn't what was for sale. It was the atmosphere.

Farmers markets aren't just about food. They are about people. Music drifts through the aisles. Vendors chat with regulars. Shoppers linger instead of rushing. It is part market, part gathering — and entirely its own experience.

At its heart, a farmers market is a place where producers sell directly to consumers. But "farmer" is a broad label, and that is the point. Alongside fresh produce, you will find plants, baked goods, prepared foods and more.

Some markets are small and unassuming. Others take over entire city blocks. They are not permanent. They don't last all year. And that's exactly why they matter. Much like the Shamrock Shake I seem to seek out each spring, their short season makes them something to look forward to.

Farmers markets have been around for centuries, long before modern grocery stores reshaped how we shop. But, in recent decades, demand for fresh, local food has brought them back.

For the grammar-minded: It is "farmers market," not farmer's or farmers'. The Associated Press keeps it clean — no possessive — so we do, too.

In this month's cover story, we take you inside your local farmers market and introduce you to the people who make them worth the trip. ■



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Fresh FINDS

Local vendors bring flavor, passion and community to farmers markets

By Rachel Harrington

Longer days and warmer nights can only mean one thing — farmers market season is back. With fresh-picked produce, handcrafted goods and sweet treats, the market is a weekly gathering place for both vendors and visitors.

Jacob Gomke's booth features merchandise and his custom flavors of homemade ice cream.

Homemade flavors and big dreams

Jacob Gomke loves ice cream. When he was 5 years old, he and his family were visiting Billy's Ice Cream Store in Adel when he asked why they didn't have a Captain America flavor.

"Captain America was his favorite character," his mother, Jess Gomke, says. "My husband told him that he should come up with a Captain America flavor. Jacob took him literally and seriously and did just that."

Jacob asked if he could sell his new ice cream flavor at the Adel Farmers Market.

"I started to talk to my parents about it the summer before I went into kindergarten but waited until the summer before I went into first grade to start setting up a booth and selling my homemade ice cream at the farmers market," he says. "The first summer, I offered my Captain America homemade ice cream, which is a blueberry and raspberry combination, by the scoop. This got my business started and is still the most popular flavor my customers ask for. I started with Captain America because I am a big fan of his, and I could only find Superman ice cream at Billy's, which I still love going to."

"We gave him \$50 to start and told him he had to take his proceeds and put them back into the business," Jess adds. "We thought it would be a two-week adventure, but here we are this year on summer No. 6."

"I only do it in the summer while school is out, but people order pints from me at other times," Jacob says. "As long as I can get fresh fruit, I can make it. It's been a good experience, and I think it has taught me a lot about responsibility. I have gotten to meet a lot of new people and learn what other people like."

Jacob has continued to grow and develop his business over the years.

"I still offer homemade ice cream, and I now have a few more flavors," he says. "The new flavors are Cherry Blowout, Coconut Surprise, The Crisp (apple crisp), Wild Wonder Woman (dairy-free strawberry) and Black Panther (dairy-free blackberry), and, of course, Captain America. I now sell it by the scoop and by the pint. I try to have two to three flavors each night I am at the farmers market. I make it fresh each week. I also sell T-shirts, water bottle stickers with my logo and bracelets with 'Jacob's Chill Shop' on them."

Jacob not only enjoys selling his ice cream but also giving back.

"I do a fundraiser each year. One year was for childhood cancer, and last year was for Type



Jacob Gomke and Adel Farmers Market Manager Gretchen Wilson.

1 diabetes. A lot of the vendors and Casey's at the four-way stop participated by donating items to make a basket to raffle off, and one lucky person won," he says.

Jess says she has enjoyed watching Jacob grow.

"Jacob has created a 'commercial' on his Instagram and Facebook accounts, and he has created a jingle. He is always looking at ice cream trucks because one day he'd love to have one," she says. "As young as he is, that plan and dream are for some time in the future, but I have no doubt that one day he will have one."

"Now, come on down to the sweetest spot in town ... Jacob's Chill Shop," Jacob adds.

Growing produce — and opportunity

Raccoon Forks Farm is gearing up for the 2026 local farmers markets and its CSA program. Sarah Pearson took over management of the farm a couple of years ago.

"I've been part of the farmers markets for a year or two now," she says.

The farm, however, is in its 20th year of operation. It is unique because it is a supported-employment farm.

"Our farm employs individuals who are mentally challenged farmers who often cannot get employment elsewhere," Pearson explains.

"Our farmers really enjoy going to market to show off what they do. They love to talk and engage with the community," Geneva Hupp, assistant manager of the farm, adds.

Raccoon Forks Farm grows a wide variety of fruits and vegetables. It has 17 fields on nine

ADEL FARMERS MARKET

Come enjoy fresh produce, baked goods, homemade ice cream, handmade items and plants and flowers, along with Kids Corner, featuring an assortment of items made by kids. Also enjoy a food truck along with live music.

WHEN: Tuesdays starting June 2, 4-7 p.m.

WHERE: Green space near Raccoon Valley Bank

acres.

"We rotate our crops, so we only use about five or six acres at a time," Pearson says. "We grow a variety of vegetables. If you can think of it, we probably grow it."

The farm collects about 700 eggs a day from 1,500 to 1,600 chickens. Their goal for CSA this year is 25 vegetable shares and 30 egg shares.

The Raccoon Forks farmers will participate in several farmers markets this year, including Winterset, Waukee and Adel. This will be their first year setting up at the Adel Farmers Market.

Adel's market will be held Tuesday nights, with roughly four farmers from Raccoon Forks Farm present. The Waukee market is on Wednesdays, and they will be in Winterset on Saturdays.

"I look forward to the experience in Adel,"



Paige Martin tends the Raccoon Forks Farm booth at the farmers market.

Pearson says. “Though we already set up in several locations, I wanted to branch out a little, and Adel is so close to the farm, it just made sense to start selling our produce there, too.”

In addition to running a CSA and participating in multiple markets, Raccoon Forks Farm is part of Choose Iowa and uses Choose Iowa produce stickers. The farm is also WIC-certified.

“We just got a new market tent and will have new displays this year,” Pearson says. “We

look forward to providing a wide variety of produce, including artichokes, strawberries, peanuts and popcorn. One of our top sellers is spinach, although that is only available in early spring and late fall.”

Pearson says one of her favorite aspects of farmers markets is the sense of community.

“The atmosphere is really therapeutic, and it is nice to know where your produce comes from and what you are putting in your body,” she says. “We practice organic growing. Our

eggs are from free-range, pastured chickens. We are not certified organic, but we follow those practices.”

Though it is difficult to choose a favorite product, Pearson says she enjoys bringing melons, strawberries, gourds and luffas. Hupp says she likes the variety of radishes they offer.

Fresh produce and a passion for education

Dan Wilson spent his career as an educator, teaching agriculture classes in Stuart. After retiring, he was hired by DMACC to teach agronomy classes.

Now, Wilson has turned his attention to farming. He has operated Wilson Farm Produce for seven years, the last five with the help of his daughter, Gretchen Wilson.

This year will be Wilson Farm Produce’s fourth year participating in the Adel Farmers Market.

“It made sense to be a part of the market since our farm is only about 7 miles from Adel,” Wilson says. “We originally started at Harmony Hall. However, there were only six or seven vendors regularly, and it wasn’t well attended.”

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FEATURE

Gretchen approached the woman running the market about taking it over, and she gladly handed over its management as she did not have the time needed for it anymore. This will be Gretchen's fourth year running it. She manages the web page, contracts, setting up food trucks, lining up musicians and layouts. She has been meeting with Erin at the Chamber of Commerce about the market.

As Wilson Farm Produce and the Adel Farmers Market look forward to the future, they also look forward to a change in scenery.

"We are changing the location of the farmers market," Wilson says. "We were most recently at the Dallas County Fairgrounds, but the community has said they would like it downtown. Starting this year, we will set up in the green space near Raccoon Valley Bank in Adel."

Wilson Farm Produce makes a priority of listening to what the community wants and then tries to grow those things accordingly.

"One thing we have increased is kohlrabi," Wilson says. "I didn't realize before how strongly it was desired, so we grew more. The demand for garlic also surprised us. We also

can't seem to grow enough green onions to keep up."

Wilson is especially proud of his tomatoes, particularly the Red Deuce variety.

"It is my favorite to grow and sell," he says. "Many folks haven't heard of it. Burpee Seeds doesn't sell it, so we get our seed from Harris Seed and Seedway. I grow it because it is a large, firm tomato that works great for BLTs and has a long shelf life. Some customers have told me it is the best tomato variety in the Des Moines area."

Wilson says that Gretchen does a great job with their display each season.

"She has created a unique layout and made the stand very attractive," he says. "When we first started, we were just the 'little guy.' If we made \$50, it was a good day. Now our setup requires a 10- by 20-foot space to accommodate everything, including the van that houses surplus produce."

When they have excess produce, they sell directly from the farm.

"Usually, if a customer asks, we can supply what is needed," Wilson says.

Though Wilson is no longer in the



Dan Wilson and daughter Gretchen bring their Wilson Farm Produce to the farmers market in Adel, which Gretchen manages. The market moves to the green space by Raccoon Valley Bank this year.

classroom, his passion for education remains.

"I love interacting with people and educating the public about the produce we sell," he says. "Gretchen writes descriptions of the products we offer and shares how they can be used. It seems the public is increasingly realizing the value of fresh produce." ■

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Play sets, play houses and tree houses: Share the stories of your memorable play sets, play houses and tree houses. Perhaps your family has play structures that entertain your kids for hours. Or maybe you have memories of the play house you enjoyed as a child. Big or small, if it creates happy times, let us know. Email tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com.

Alzheimer's Education Series

621 302nd Place, Adel

Edencrest at Adel announces its 2026 Alzheimer's Education Series of informative conversations intended to help members of the greater-Adel community understand and recognize the signs of Alzheimer's and how to best care for loved ones living with it. Each presentation in the series takes place on the last Tuesday of each month from 6-7 p.m. between February and September. This series is free and open to the public. The series lineup includes:

- May 26: 10 Warning Signs of Alzheimer's
- June 30: Building Foundations of Caregiving
- July 28: Supporting Independence
- Aug. 25: Managing Money
- Sept. 29: Exploring Care and Support Services



50s Plus meetings and events

First and third Tuesdays of the month, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Adel Public Library, 303 S. 10th St.

Enjoy board games, conversation, coffee and food at the 50s Plus gatherings. They invite anyone in Adel and the surrounding area to join. If you have just moved to the area and would like to meet new people, this is a great way to do it. The group now has programs included in its activities. Programs are open to anyone, not just seniors.

Applications due for Small Business Grant Fund

The 2026 round of the Small Business Grant Fund is now open for applications. Small businesses located in Dallas County that are looking to invest in furniture and fixtures, marketing, technology or professional development are encouraged to apply. Organizers hope to see strong participation across the county, with representation from each Dallas County community before the May 31 deadline. This grant was designed for growth, easy access and equal opportunity. For more information and application, visit <https://dallascounty-ia.org/small-business-grant-fund/>.

Wednesday Night Meal

Wednesdays, 5-6:30 p.m.

Adel United Methodist Church, 115 S. 10th St.

The Adel United Methodist Church is hosting a weekly meal in the fellowship hall downstairs. Serving is 5-6:30 p.m. This is a freewill donation meal. All are welcome.

Gary's Ride

Saturday, May 16, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Starting at Waukee Raccoon River Valley Trailhead, Waukee

This ride is a fundraiser to increase awareness of glioblastoma and support Richard Deming Cancer Center's terminal brain cancer patients through their Integrative Medicine program, Iowa Oncology Research Association for Glioblastoma Clinical Trials, MercyOne Des Moines Foundation for gift cards for terminal brain cancer patients and their families, and Gary's Compassion Fund for financial assistance for terminal brain cancer patients and their families. Ride ends at Dallas Center downtown Main Street. Registration and information available at garysrideiowa.org.

5th Annual DalCo Cup

June 18, 8 a.m.

River Valley Golf Course, 22927 Valley View Trail, Adel

Mark your calendars for the fifth annual Greater Dallas County Development Alliance's DalCo Cup, presented by Adel Partners Chamber of Commerce. Register at <https://events.humanitix.com/dalco-cup-26>.



Cops Love Dogs

Saturday, May 16, 9 a.m. to noon

The Pavilion, 10th and Main St., Adel

Bring your dogs and enjoy meeting and interacting with the Adel Police Department officers and their dogs. The event features free microchips (inserted and recorded), free coffee and drinks from The Morning Grind, a drawing to win a free grooming from Groovy Grooms, pictures with your furry friend, paw prints and local dog treats.

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Dallas County Conservation Spring Public Programs

All these programs are free to the public. They are open to all ages. For information, visit www.dallascountyia.gov/313/Public-Programs.

- **Intro to Snake Board Monitoring:** Friday, May 29, 10-11 a.m., Voas Nature Area, 19286 Lexington Road, Minburn.
- **Full Moon Float:** Friday, May 29, 8:30-10 p.m., North Raccoon River Wildlife Area - Snyder Tract, 21468 Minburn Road, Minburn.
- **Paddle Camp:** Monday, June 2 to Tuesday, June 3, 9 a.m. to noon, Glissman Conservation Area, 32185 Panther Creek Road, Adel.
- **Creek Walk:** Wednesday, June 3, 10-11 a.m., Kuehn Conservation Area, 32828 Houston Trail, Earlham.
- **Free Fishing Weekend:** Saturday, June 6, 2-5 p.m., Glissman Conservation Area, 32185 Panther Creek Road, Adel.
- **Family Fun with Bees:** Friday, June 12, 10-11 a.m., Voas Nature Area, 19286 Lexington Road, Minburn.
- **Iowa Critters:** Thursday, June 18, 9 a.m. to noon, Kuehn Conservation Area, 32828 Houston Trail, Earlham.
- **Healing of the Mounds Story and Visit:** Sunday, June 21, 5:30-7 p.m., Kuehn Conservation Area, 32828 Houston Trail, Earlham.
- **Summer Solstice:** Sunday, June 21, 8:30-9:30 p.m., Hanging Rock, 416 Redfield St., Redfield.
- **Bee Survey Field Day:** Friday, June 26, 10-11:30 a.m., Voas Nature Area, 19286 Lexington Road, Minburn.

CITYVIEW Midday Mixer

Saturday, May 30, 1-4 p.m.
The District at Prairie Trail,
S.W. District Drive, Ankeny

Enjoy summer cocktails to kick off the season. Check in is at El Presidente. Cost is \$25 for advance tickets, \$35 at the door. For tickets, scan the QR code.



Mother's Day Breakfast Buffet and Bake Sale

Sunday, May 10, 8 a.m. to noon
West Des Moines Elks Lodge, 2060 N.W. 94th St., Clive

Enjoy a delicious Mother's Day breakfast which includes: biscuits and gravy, French toast, scrambled eggs, bacon, sausage patties, cheesy potatoes, all-you-can-eat pancakes (including blueberry and chocolate chip), orange juice, milk and coffee. Cost is \$11 and \$5 for children younger than 10. Enjoy a bloody mary or mimosa for \$3.50. Proceeds support the Elks Hoop Shoot Program, other youth activities and veteran activities.

Des Moines Downtown Farmers Market

Saturday, May 2 to Oct. 31, 7 a.m. to noon,
8 a.m. to noon in October

Historic Court District, Downtown Des Moines

The 2026 season will feature 305 vendors, including 43 new participants, with 75 produce and agriculture vendors highlighting the region's strong farming community. Vendors represent 74 cities across 42 Iowa counties, spanning 12 city blocks from Water Street to Fifth Street. For more information visit www.dsmpartnership.com/desmoinesfarmersmarket. ■



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In fact, Rebecca Hillmer and her husband, David, spent a year searching for a home in the community before finding the right fit in October 2011.

Hillmer's job often kept her in Des Moines, and her husband's health was deteriorating, so they wanted to be closer to their son and a larger health care system. As grandparents, they also wanted to attend their grandchildren's school and sports activities.

When they finally found the perfect home, it checked all the right boxes — accessible features for Dave and a location close enough to downtown for him to walk to get coffee.

Hillmer, meanwhile, enjoys her back deck and manages to sit outside and read nearly every day with nice weather. She also appreciates being near the start of the Sweet Corn Parade, the walkability to the trail and downtown, and the mix of housing styles and neighbors of varying ages.

"I love living in a smaller town with a quaint downtown area and the ease of going to the metro for



Rebecca and David Hillmer spent a year searching before they found the right home in Adel.

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special events," she says. "Also, the patty melt at Patrick's and the pizza burger at the bowling alley can't be beat."

Over time, Hillmer says, those everyday comforts have grown into a deeper sense of belonging. Whether running into familiar faces at local events or enjoying a slower pace of life, Adel has given the Hillmers a lifestyle that feels both connected and relaxed — a place where community is not just talked about but lived daily.

Hillmer gives back to the community by serving on the Adel Partners Chamber board, leading the chamber's arts and trail committee, and volunteering at the library. She also plays Mah Jongg with a group of competitive women.

"I have always believed in being involved in my community and am proud of all the service clubs and city committees in town and the activities they sponsor," she says. "I encourage others to take advantage of any opportunity to get involved." ■

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BIBLICAL responses to distress

Imagine trying to explain life in Adel today to someone from biblical times. They might assume we're all living the crazy life surviving on iced coffee and push notifications.



The Bible is full of people having what we would now call mental health struggles. Elijah, fresh off a major victory, promptly collapsed under a tree and said (1 Kings 19), "I've had enough, Lord." That's not so different from someone today finishing a big project and then immediately grabbing their phone to doomscroll until 2 a.m., wondering why success feels like exhaustion with better branding.

Or take David, who wrote psalms that swing wildly between "God is my rock" and "Why have you abandoned me?" If he lived today, his journal might be labeled "Mood Tracking App," and half the Psalms would come with a therapist gently asking, "What evidence supports that thought?"

The difference isn't that people during biblical times didn't struggle — it's that today, we've added a uniquely American twist: the pressure to appear fine while falling apart. The Bible, on the other hand, has very little interest in pretending everything is OK. People lamented publicly. They argued with God. They hid in caves, ran away, got swallowed by large fish — honestly, Jonah's three-day timeout sounds suspiciously like the world's most extreme "do not disturb" setting.

Meanwhile, modern culture often treats rest like a suspicious activity. Even though the concept of Sabbath is clear in the Bible and follows common sense, we have collectively decided that constant busyness is a personality trait worthy of being celebrated. If Moses came down from the mountain today with the Ten Commandments, someone would immediately ask if there is a productivity hack version.

What's striking is that many biblical responses to distress are surprisingly practical: eat something, take a nap, talk honestly, remember you're not alone. When Elijah was overwhelmed, God didn't start with a lecture

but with food and rest. It's less "fix your entire life immediately" and more "have a snack and let's talk."

Imagine if we applied that today. Instead of spiraling because you didn't answer an email perfectly, you pause, breathe, maybe drink water like a responsible human being. Revolutionary.

Humor aside, the overlap is clear: humans have always wrestled with fear, sadness and uncertainty. The setting changes — from deserts to deadlines — but the inner experience is remarkably consistent.

So maybe the lesson isn't that we're uniquely broken. Maybe it is that we are surprisingly normal — just with Wi-Fi. If you are looking for encouragement, resources and practical help with life challenges you are facing, know the New Hope Care Community exists for you. Check out what they have to offer at NewHopeCares.org. ■

Information provided by Dr. Ryan Whitson, Lead Pastor, New Hope Church, 25712 U.S. Highway 6, Adel, 515-993-5325, www.newhopeadel.org.



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WARNER directs estate to small town resources

Trust from Des Moines woman supports libraries, senior centers and local programs statewide.

When the time comes to draft a revocable trust, most clients want to ensure their families are cared for, Ross Barnett, managing partner at Abendroth Russell Barnett Law Firm, says. But Norma Jean Warner's trust looked a little different.



Norma Jean Warner

Warner, of Des Moines, left 15% of her significant financial assets to 485 Iowa public libraries and 15% to 128 senior community centers in towns with fewer than 7,000 residents. She instructed her attorney to make the gifts to individual libraries and community centers, rather than to an executive board, giving each establishment the freedom to use the money as it wishes. Adel Public Library was among those receiving funds.

The rest of her assets were given to other medical and educational charities, as well as West Des Moines Christian Church.

Warner died May 12, 2023, at age 85, about 12 years after her husband, Waldo Warner, died of Alzheimer's disease. They had no children. She and her husband lived frugally and saved their money.

Barnett described Warner as a uniquely generous woman and an example of a client with a passion for giving back to the community.

Warner and her attorney reviewed the 2020 census and compiled a comprehensive list of Iowa towns with fewer than 7,000 residents, cross-referencing those with senior centers and public libraries. Barnett is now working to contact the establishments to inform them that "somebody they did not know has left them a gift," he says.

"It's just been remarkable — the feedback, the sense of appreciation, and the universal gratitude and surprise," Barnett says.

When Library Director Jerri Hawkins of the Mary J. Barnett Memorial Library in Guthrie Center learned of Warner's donation, she was excited.

"It's not very often that we receive donations or are thought of in such a capacity," she says. "Especially from someone with so many resources to help smaller libraries throughout the state, it's very exciting to be recognized and to be thought of."

Warner's donation will give the Mary J. Barnett Memorial Library the ability to fund new and existing programs, support the summer reading program and generally strengthen the library's efforts to energize and educate the community.

"In small communities, libraries are kind of the community cornerstone. It's a place where kids can go that is safe. It's a friendly environment. For adults, it's a social environment," Hawkins says, reflecting Warner's focus on the dignity of aging with support and connection, as emphasized in letters sent to beneficiaries of her gift.

The sentiment is as valuable as the dollars, Barnett says. Warner's firm belief in the power of education will continue to impact small towns across Iowa.

"It was so unexpected," Hawkins says.

"We were not expecting this donation," said Pastor Randy Ehrhardt of West Des Moines Christian Church.

Warner had many conversations with Ehrhardt after her husband's death.

"She was always looking for opportunities to help people, and she appreciated what our church did for helping families and youth," he says.

West Des Moines Christian Church is exploring programming it can create to support Warner's passion for helping families and youth.

"It just shows you that she was a very humble woman, very kind — and her husband was that way — and they wanted to make a difference," Ehrhardt says. "That's why all of the libraries are getting help. She was just a very gentle, humble woman."

The sense of appreciation has been remarkable, Barnett says. Since sending out letters notifying each establishment of its upcoming donation, he has received multiple calls from library directors expressing gratitude for being able to plan activities and programs they previously could not fund.

"It highlights the fact that libraries are vital," Barnett says.

"Norma was known for her quiet strength, sharp intellect and deep compassion for others. Throughout her life, she believed firmly in the power of education and the dignity of aging with support and connection. These values guided her personal life and her remarkable acts of giving," the letter to establishments read.

Warner's donations may be modest when divided among 613 beneficiaries, but they emphasize the need for community, connection and education across Iowa. ■

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RECIPE

By Jolene Goodman

SAUSAGE and cheese breakfast bake is easy, filling and practical

Mornings get busy, which is why I love having a breakfast recipe I can rely on. This one checks every box for me. It is incredibly easy to make — just mix, pour and bake — with simple ingredients I usually already have in the fridge. No complicated steps. No mess. No standing over the stove while trying to get ready for the day. I love the idea of cooking once and enjoying for days.



What I appreciate most is how protein-packed this recipe is. Between the eggs, sausage and cheeses, it is the kind of breakfast that actually keeps you full and focused all morning. I am not reaching for a snack an hour later, which makes a big difference on busy days.

It is also perfectly sized for real life. The recipe makes enough for two people to enjoy breakfast for a couple of days, which means less cooking and more convenience. Or, double the batch and freeze some for future quick meals. I can warm up a slice and have a hot, satisfying meal in minutes. Easy, filling and practical — exactly how breakfast should be. ■

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

Savory sausage and cheese breakfast bake

INGREDIENTS:

- 8 large eggs
- 1/4 cup water
- 2/3 cup cottage cheese
- 1/2 cup shredded mozzarella cheese
- 1/2 package of Jimmy Dean breakfast sausage cooked, crumbled
- 1 teaspoon Nature's Seasoning



DIRECTIONS:

- Preheat oven to 350 F. Lightly grease a small baking dish (8-inch by 8-inch works well).
- Blend eggs, water and cottage cheese for 10-15 seconds in a blender.
- Combine with mozzarella and sausage and pour into the prepared baking dish. Spread evenly.
- Bake for 30-35 minutes or until the center is set and the top is lightly golden. Rest for 5 minutes, then slice and serve.
- Vary this recipe by adding sauteed onions, peppers or mushrooms. Pictured is the original recipe plus a version with peppers and mushrooms. ■

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SMALL town, big traditions

Minburn's community spirit shines.

Directly north of Adel, just off Highway 169, sits the small town of Minburn.

Despite its size, Minburn offers plenty to discover, from a public library to a rich local history. At the center of that history is the beloved Singing Wheels of Minburn.

The tradition began in 1950, when local teacher John Sanders organized a roller-skating show with high school students. A few years later, when Sanders moved on, then-Mayor Harold Hunter recruited Jackie Snyder, a young mother of three and accomplished skater, to take over. She agreed on one condition: It had to be a true community production.

Snyder partnered with local farmer Dee Thompson, whose artistic talents helped shape the show's sets and design. Together, they selected themes, choreographed routines and opened auditions to everyone, from young children to senior citizens.

By 1956, the production had grown to a cast of 125 people and more than 240 costumes. Funded by the Minburn Community Club, the three-day

event drew crowds of up to 10,000 people, with visitors traveling from across the country. Though admission was free, donations supported the show, while concessions benefited local clubs and churches.

The Singing Wheels continued each August with themed productions such as "Vacationland USA," "Salute to Music" and "Anything Goes" before concluding in 1963. Today, its legacy lives on through local landmarks, including a metal skate sculpture along the bike trail and memorabilia displayed in the historic depot.

Minburn's sense of pride extends beyond its skating history. The town is home to the Dallas County Freedom Rock, painted by Ray "Bubba" Sorensen II on commission and dedicated in 2019. Part of a statewide effort to place a Freedom Rock in all 99 Iowa counties, the mural honors local veterans and history.

The Dallas County rock features figures such as Nile Kinnick and Bob Feller, both of whom served during World War II, as well as the five Wilson brothers, three of whom died in service. Nearby,



The Singing Wheels were an important part of Minburn's past.

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Minburn's Mosaic Mural is composed of 2,500 individual tiles, including contributions from local residents and participants around the world.



The Dallas County Freedom Rock is located in Minburn.

the Dallas County Veterans Memorial Wall, dedicated in 2023, features hundreds of engraved bricks honoring veterans from the Civil War to today.

Another recent addition is Minburn's Mosaic Mural, part of the 2025 Global Roots Nature series led by artist Lewis Lavoie. The 24- by 12-foot mural is composed of 2,500 individual tiles, including contributions from local residents and participants around the world.

Fittingly, the mural overlooks the Minburn Big Heart Stage and skating rink — the original home of the Singing Wheels. The space continues to bring the community together through events such as the Meet Me in Minburn concert series, which offers three free concerts each summer. Organized by the Minburn Community Betterment Group, the events also include meals provided by local organizations for freewill donations.

The skating tradition lives on as well. Weekly Skate Nights, hosted by the Minburn skating rink and public library, invite residents to gather for open skating throughout the summer.

Minburn's biggest annual event, however, remains its Fourth of July celebration, a tradition spanning more than 50 years. The day begins with a morning parade and continues with games, music, food and community activities in local parks, bringing together generations of residents and visitors alike.

In Minburn, small-town spirit continues to shine through shared traditions and a strong sense of community, proving even the smallest places can leave a lasting impression. ■

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LOOKING BACK



The May 2011 Adel Living magazine featured the story, “Love thy neighbor: Adel churches reach out to the community.” The cover photo featured Joline Logan, a member of the New Hope Evangelical Church, and Tracy Ostendorf, teacher and director of Rainbow Connections Preschool at the United Methodist Church, who devoted much of their time to volunteering at the Good Samaritan Food Pantry. ■

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MAGAZINES

ADEL cafes 1938 and 1939

As the Depression continued, many restaurants closed shop or changed hands. The Elm Park Café became another casualty of the depression, and its fixtures and furniture were sold at auction by the sheriff's office. Bertha Spillers purchased them and reopened the cafe. She lasted only until November when she sold it to C.M. Boyer, who renamed the enterprise The New Highway Café.

Meanwhile, Smith's Snack Shop, at the Corner DX Station on Highway 6 and 169, now offered pies, rolls, donuts, etc.

Wimpy's Place on West Main was purchased by Mr. and Mrs. Delbert Clarke in February and became Sally's Eat Shop. By October, it was sold to George Jorgenson who renamed it George's. That lasted until February of 1939 when George sold out to Harold Squires. Squires lasted until May when he sold out to Ray Gifford. Gifford, in a reflection of his optimism, renamed it the Sunnyside Café.

Leo Belgarde's ambition to run for sheriff led him to sell his Just-Right Café to a man from Estherville.

Mrs. Fitzgerald leased rooms in the Whitcomb building that formerly housed the Kozy Korner and, along with her daughter, started Mary Pat's Café in September 1938. They lasted until June of 1939 when the café was sold.

The Scott building continued its revolving door policy with dining establishments. The New Way Cafe in that building was sold to Clarence Spray of Waukee who renamed it Spray's Short Order and Coffee Shop.

The year 1939 saw many more changes in the restaurant business. After many years, the McClearys sold their Dick and Mack's Café. The new owners used a bit of imagination and renamed it Dick and Bob's.

The old Elm Park, or New Highway Café, wasn't done changing hands yet either. This time it was renamed Burd's Café by its next new owner, Mrs. C.A. Burd.

J.E. McCleary, of Mack's Café, ran afoul of the law and was charged with maintaining a liquor nuisance. He was fined \$300 and lost his permit to sell beer. The popular restaurant was closed for a time and then leased to Wayne Reynolds, who ran it with the assistance of Mrs. McCleary. Meanwhile, Mack took over management of the Hollywood Club in Des Moines.

In April of 1939, it was announced that George McGinnis, operator of the Standard station at Highway 6 and 169 planned to expand his cabin court by building four more cabins, enlarging the bath house and adding showers. A man named Elliott also planned to build a café on the site.

Also along busy Highway 6, The Try-Angle-Inn, two miles west of Adel, offered, in addition to a complete Conoco service station, a fine restaurant run by Mrs. Jake Yeager.

The 1939 Adel Fireman's Ball would be held at what was now known as the "White Elephant."

As the decade of the 1940s approached, war raged in many places around the world. Big changes were in store for the little town of Adel. ■

WOOD-LOOK flooring

Choosing a wood-look floor comes down to how you live in your space, not just how you want it to look. Here's a guide to four popular flooring options for your home.



Laminate: Laminate is a fiberboard core with a photographic wood layer and a durable topcoat. It's a solid, budget-friendly choice that handles everyday wear well. It's not waterproof, so not typically recommended for bathrooms, basements, or other moisture-prone areas.

Luxury vinyl plank (LVP): LVP is one of the most widely used materials for remodels and additions. Made from durable synthetic materials, it stands up to heavy traffic, doesn't scratch, and is waterproof. That makes it very family and pet friendly and is a go-to for kitchens, bathrooms and basements. It's available in multiple price points and many styles including tile looks.

Hardwood: Nothing matches the character of real wood. Hardwood offers long-term value and can be sanded and refinished. It comes at a higher price point, but, for many homeowners, the payoff is worth it.

Engineered hardwood: Engineered hardwood offers the look of real wood with added stability. Built in layers with a hardwood veneer on top, it's a more durable option than real hardwood. It's also more affordable, but, typically, it cannot be refinished. ■

Information provided by Trish Radke, Owner, RCI Builders, 28059 Fairgrounds Road, Adel, 515-490-3791, www.RCIBuildersInc.com.



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HEALTH

By Leslie Herron

SUNGLASSES and eye health

Sunglasses do far more than complete an outfit; they're a simple, everyday tool that protects long-term eye health. The most important benefit is shielding your eyes from ultraviolet (UV) radiation. Over time, UV exposure contributes to cataracts, macular degeneration and growths on the eye's surface. Quality sunglasses block 99-100% of UVA and UVB rays, reducing that cumulative damage in a way sunscreen alone can't.



They also help preserve visual comfort. Bright sunlight forces your eyes to work harder, leading to squinting, eye strain and headaches. Polarized lenses cut glare from water, pavement and snow, making driving and outdoor activities safer and more comfortable.

For children, sunglasses are especially important because their eyes absorb more UV light than adults.

Protection extends beyond sunny days. UV rays penetrate clouds, reflect off surfaces and remain present year-round. Even in winter, sunglasses help prevent snow blindness and reduce glare that can impair depth perception.

There's also a safety element: Clear, relaxed vision improves reaction time whether you're behind the wheel, on a bike or simply walking outdoors. And while style isn't the main reason to wear them, feeling confident in a pair you love makes it easier to build the habit. ■

Information provided by Leslie Herron, Sumpter Pharmacy, 628 Nile Kinnick Drive, Suite 1, Adel, 515-993-1119.

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HEALTH

By Mia Olson, PT, DPT

Q: Why does my back hurt after gardening?

A: Gardening often feels like a light activity, but it can place repeated stress on your body in ways you may not notice right away. Tasks like weeding, planting, lifting soil bags and reaching into flower beds involve frequent bending and twisting. The issue is usually not the activity itself, but the positions you stay in and how often they are repeated. Prolonged bending, especially without breaks or support, can quickly overload the low back and lead to soreness later in the day.



Here are a few strategies to make gardening more comfortable:

- Avoid rounding your spine. Instead, hinge at your hips or use a stool, bucket or kneeling pad to bring the work closer while keeping a more neutral spine. Using long-handled tools and raised beds can also significantly reduce repeated bending.
- When lifting, keep items close to your body and avoid twisting. If you need to turn, pivot your feet and move your whole body together.
- Change positions regularly. Staying in one posture too long can increase stiffness and fatigue, so aim to switch tasks or positions every 20 to 30 minutes.

With a few small adjustments, gardening can remain both enjoyable and low strain, helping prevent the lingering back discomfort that often shows up afterward. ■

Information provided by Mia Olson, PT, DPT, Core Physical Therapy Inc., 803 Cottage St., Adel, 515-993-5599, mia@coreptiowa.com.

PHARMACISTS can help support mental health

Mental health is an essential part of overall wellness, yet it is often overlooked or misunderstood. During Mental Health Awareness Month in May, it is a good time to recognize how pharmacists can play a meaningful role in supporting patients managing conditions like depression and anxiety.



Medications are a common and effective part of treatment for many mental health conditions. However, starting or adjusting these medications can come with questions and concerns. Patients may experience side effects such as nausea, sleep changes or fatigue, especially in the first few weeks. It is important to know that some medications, like antidepressants, can take several weeks before their full benefits are felt. Stopping treatment too early may prevent the medication from working as intended.

This is where your pharmacist becomes a valuable resource. Pharmacists are highly accessible healthcare professionals who can help explain how medications work, what side effects to expect, and how to manage them. They can also review your full medication list to identify potential interactions, ensuring your treatment is both safe and effective.

Consistency is key when it comes to mental health medications. Taking doses at the same time each day and not missing doses can significantly impact how well the medication works. If you do miss a dose or are unsure what to do, we can guide you on the next steps. We may also suggest tools like pill organizers or medication synchronization to help simplify your routine.

Open communication is just as important as medication itself. If you notice worsening symptoms, unusual mood changes or thoughts of self-harm, it is critical to seek help immediately. We can help connect you with additional resources or encourage you to reach out to your healthcare provider.

Mental health treatment is not one size fits all. What works well for one person may not work for another, and adjustments are sometimes necessary. Having a trusted pharmacist as part of your care team can make navigating these changes easier and less overwhelming. Taking care of your mental health is just as important as managing physical conditions. This May, consider reaching out to your pharmacist with any questions. You don't have to manage it alone. ■

Information provided by Jane Clausen, Adel HealthMart, 113 N. Ninth St., Adel, 515-993-3644.

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MEET Jodie Adams

Recess, routines and a second career

Jodie Adams has an interesting background for someone working in education.

She earned a Doctor of Physical Therapy degree from Des Moines University and spent nearly 20 years working in Portland, Oregon, focusing on chronic pain in adults.

Then came a major life shift.

“With a combination of moving back to Iowa and wanting to spend more time with my family, I began exploring other interests,” Adams says.

An associate position opened at Meadowview Elementary, close to home, and Adams decided to apply.

“I had no idea what I was getting into, and I just fell in love with the work,” she says.

Adams has been at Meadowview since February 2023 and has found a strong sense of purpose. The biggest reason, she says, is the students.

“But also the staff and the routines — along with the variety,” she says. “Each day changes just enough to keep it interesting and fun. This job has definitely shaped me in many ways. You can learn a lot from kids.”

Adams enjoys working one-on-one with students, helping with their studies, motivating and encouraging them, allowing space for big emotions and watching their progress over time.

“It’s beautiful to see kids persevere through challenges,” Adams says. “I love witnessing their growth.”

Her favorite part of the workday, however, is one many students might agree with: recess.

“It’s crazy,” Adams says. “It’s chaotic — sometimes a little too chaotic — but so much goodness happens on the playground, and I get to be part of it.”

She also likes the hugs, high fives, smiles, special handshakes and endless games of “Cheese Touch.”

“I particularly love the height comparisons,” she jokes. “I’m only 5-foot-1. If I had a nickel for every student who said, ‘I’m almost as tall as you,’ I would have a lot of nickels.”

When students surpass her in height, they take a photo for proof and share it with the school during Friday announcements.

For Adams, her role at Meadowview is rooted in joy. ■



Jodie Adams says she enjoys her role as an associate at Meadowview Elementary.

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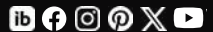
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CHOOSING the right executor

In thinking about estate planning, people often fret over who gets what. However, one of the most important decisions to make has nothing to do with distributing your property and everything to do with who is carrying out your last wishes.



The person (or business entity) in charge of managing your last wishes is called an executor. Choosing the right executor can make the probate process much smoother and less stressful for your loved ones.

In choosing the right executor, it is critical to think about their responsibilities. An executor collaborates with an attorney to open the probate file in court, pay off debts and taxes, file the necessary paperwork with the court, and distribute assets in accordance with the will. The probate process through the court

system takes a minimum of six months but can take well over a year to complete if the estate is more complicated.

Depending on how complicated the estate is, the time devoted to being an executor can vary greatly. A simple estate with limited assets, or limited diversity of assets, may only require a few hours of the executor's time. A more involved estate with diverse types of assets and/or higher asset values will require more effort.

You can name anyone of legal age as your executor. You may also name multiple people as your co-executors. Naming co-executors can get a little tricky as the default rule in Iowa is both co-executors must agree on decisions together and both must sign documents. People tend to name family members as their executors, but, in certain circumstances, it may make sense for you to list a trusted non-family member, local bank, CPA firm, or law firm as your executor, particularly if your assets may be complicated or your beneficiaries do not get along. Third

party executors are helpful because they provide a neutral perspective and may be more qualified to manage estate matters efficiently. A third-party executor may also be of interest to you if you feel that the role of executor would be unduly burdensome for your family.

The person(s) you name as executor should be someone you believe to be responsible, trustworthy, ethical, a good communicator and organized. They need not have prior experience in the financial or legal realm, but that is always a bonus. The estate attorney will assist the executor in all aspects of their role, and they should feel comfortable asking the attorney any questions they may have. A few minutes spent reviewing your choice of executor can alleviate stress for your family and provide you with peace of mind knowing that your affairs will be handled. ■

Information provided by Ellie R. Mendlik, Hopkins & Huebner P.C., 1009 Main St., Adel, 515-993-4545

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MEMBERS connect

Exchanged information leads to shared business.

Attending a community event with unfamiliar faces can stretch some people beyond their comfort zones, while others embrace the opportunity to meet new people. Sometimes a relationship just clicks, like it did when Adel Chamber members Bart Banwart and Andrew McGuire first met.

Banwart established Banwart Tax & Accounting in Adel in 2023. After 17 years with a financial firm in West Des Moines, he wanted to be his own boss. He chose Adel, as it has been his hometown for nearly 50 years. He is a CPA with experience in financial planning, business accounting and tax returns.

Banwart joined the Adel Partners Chamber of Commerce shortly after launching his business. "It was one of the first things I did. I've lived in Adel my whole life, and I was curious to see what's going on," he says. "I get insider information and connect with other business owners."

McGuire established his home-based business, McGuire Video Production (MVP), in 2018. He began his professional video career as a video and photojournalist for the Iowa Cubs and KCCI-TV.

After gaining valuable experience in video production and broadcast work, he took a "leap of faith" and established his own business. He offers video production and drone services for businesses and individuals.

When McGuire moved to the area in 2022, he became involved with the Adel Chamber. "The chamber has been a phenomenal resource for me since day one," he says. "It offered ideas for my business in the Adel community."

Banwart and McGuire both attended a CHOW meeting (Chamber Happenings, Opportunities and Wisdom). They sat next to one another, sharing their business stories.

As McGuire expressed the need for CPA services for his business, the two exchanged business cards.

"It felt like it was meant to happen," McGuire says. "I was on the lookout for a new CPA. We exchanged information right then and there, and, before you know it, we're meeting face to face."

Banwart adds, "When the stars align, you meet the right person. I've worked with him since then. I like helping people."

McGuire says it is important to use local businesses. "You quickly find out how they can actually help you achieve both your business and personal goals. Bart has done exactly that — and more — for my family and me," he says. "Bart has gone the extra mile. It means the world to us, and I'm extremely thankful we sat down at that same luncheon table years ago."

Banwart appreciates how the Adel Chamber connects local businesses to the community and recommends others join. "By showing up and introducing ourselves, it was a win-win," he says. "Being a chamber member is a great way to connect with the community." ■



Bart Banwart



Andrew McGuire

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Information provided by Adel Partners Chamber of Commerce, 301 S. 10th St., Adel, 515-993-5472.

OUT & ABOUT

EASTER

Egg Hunt

The Adel Kiwanis Club held its Easter Egg Hunt, complete with an appearance by the Easter Bunny, at Kinnick Feller Park on March 29.



Adel Kiwanis members with the Easter Bunny.



Ryan, Justin, Victoria and Alaina Edwards



Tom, Lindsay, Sheppard and Hank Hegel



Eloise Johnston, Rick Johnston, Lara Johnston, Zachary Hartberg and Courtney Hartberg



Rachel, Mitchel and Beckham Tehel



Melanie, Samson and Ben Campbell



Evelyn and Mindy Sullivan-Lo



Henley, Saylor and Sybil Finnegan



Will Danielson, Kristie Gavin, Ryan Danielson, Noah Danielson, Ben Danielson and Madison Danielson



Briella Murray and Amanda Gustafson

OUT & ABOUT

RIBBON Cutting

A ribbon cutting was held for the Good Samaritan Food Pantry's new van on March 27.



Food Pantry Executive Director Brandie Willson thanks Kristi Fuller and Tim Canney from Lincoln Savings Bank.



Food Pantry Executive Director Brandie Willson thanks Minburn Communications and Panora Fiber.



Jodi Draisey and Julianna Cullen



Casey Wheeler and Brian Fager



Brandie Willson, Erin Milroy and Trish Radke



Food Pantry Executive Director Brandie Willson thanks John Harada from Farm Bureau Insurance in Adel.



Dave and Nanci Sande



Food Pantry Executive Director Brandie Willson thanks Linda Fuller from Fuller Petroleum Service.

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