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JANUARY 2022

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Living

MAGAZINE

RESIDENTS' CHOICE AWARDS

Dallas County residents share
their favorites

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WELCOME

OPINIONS galore

Most of us have been told to keep our opinions to ourselves at one point or another in our lives, but this issue of your Living magazine is full of opinions. That is the premise of our annual "Residents' Choice" poll where voters name their favorite choices in a number of categories. Inside this issue, you will find the full results from the Dallas County Residents' Choice poll.

An important item to note is that the people, places, events and other winners in this "Residents' Choice" poll are not our choices but rather the choices of each of you — our readers and the residents of this community. You might think that the name "Residents' Choice" should make that clear, but we do have people each year who reach out to us and say, "I can't believe you named..." We didn't. You did. Some publishers call their polls like this "Readers' Choice" polls, but we choose to call ours "Residents' Choice," as, for us, they are one and the same. Every household in this community receives a copy of this Living magazine each month, and the magazines are read in nearly eight out of 10 households. We placed the ballot here in multiple issues prior to tallying the results. We also made the ballot available online for those who prefer to vote that way — and most of you do.

You may wonder how we keep people from voting multiple times. It's quite simple, actually. The poll software prevents it from happening, but some clever folks discovered that they could delete their "cookies" on their computers and vote again. That would work, except that we export the results and sort them by IP address, tossing out ones that are clearly from cheaters. It doesn't happen very often, but there are a few swindlers out there.

You should also know that the difference in the top choice and the runners-up is often only a handful of votes. With that in mind, being in the top three is an incredible honor.

So, if you took the time to vote in this year's poll, thank you. Your voice has been heard. If you didn't vote, enjoy reading what the favorites are from your fellow residents — and be sure to vote next year.

Thanks for reading. ■



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FEATURE

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RESIDENTS' CHOICE AWARDS

Dallas County residents share
their favorites

By Tammy Pearson

Stivers Ford Lincoln is residents' choice for favorite car dealership. From left are: Todd Holland, Rick Hoffman, Kit Thongsouk, Dave Dowie, Kevin Kisting, Norm Van Meeteren and Matt Lahr. Photo by Jackie Wilson

Once again, local residents have let their favorites be known. The results of the Dallas County Residents' Choice Poll have been tallied, and congratulations are in order. Those who made the top three can truly be proud, for they have earned the respect and loyalty of those who matter most — customers! From favorite restaurant to favorite hair salon, bank, coach, health club, park and more, the people who know — because they

live here — have shared their opinions.

You may notice some new favorites this year, as well as many repeats. We've also added some new categories. Whether you agree or not, these are the views of your friends and neighbors. If you didn't cast your votes, be sure to do so next year. And, if you hope to make the list next year, you have time to win over the hearts of residents. Until then, drum roll...

FEATURE

Dallas County Residents' Choice for Favorite...

(Runners-up in alphabetical order)

1. Bakery

River to River Bakery & Pizza

Runners up: The Baker's Pantry;
Echo's Cookies

2. Pizza establishment

Patrick's Restaurant

Runners up: 7 Stone Pizzeria;
River to River Bakery & Pizza

3. Dad/child date spot

Adel Family Fun Center

Runners up: The Brenton
Arboretum; The Palms Theatre &
IMAX

4. Mom/child date spot

Adel Family Fun Center

Runners up: The Morning Grind;
The Palms Theatre & IMAX

5. Bank

Raccoon Valley Bank

Runners up: Lincoln Savings Bank;
Peoples Bank

6. Restaurant

The Handlebar

Runners up: Ambro's Roadhouse
Bar & Grill; Big Al's BBQ

7. Hair salon

Studio 10

Runners up: Texture Salon;
Van Meter Salon TEC by Ro

8. Gymnastics studio

Adel Tumbling & Dance Club

Runners up: Jacobs Gymnastics;
Studio Bea Dance

9. Doctor

Dr. Susan Donahue

Runners up: Dr. Kim
Countryman; Dr. Jenna Kemp

10. Dentist

Dr. Kelly Sedars

Runners up: Dr. Eric Anderson,
Dr. Michael Louscher

11. Chiropractor

Dr. Jodi Kuhse

Runners up: Dr. Logan Davis;
Dr. Wes Nyberg

12. Eye doctor

Dr. Charles Varcoe

Runners up: Dr. Lucas Bell;
Dr. Ethan Huisman

13. Veterinarian

Dr. Elizabeth Holland

Runners up: Dr. John Broderick;
Dr. Jennifer Hoffmeyer

14. Pastor

Mike Householder

Runners up: Matt Krause;
Ryan Whitson

15. Health club or gym

Forever Strong Training Center

Runners up: Anytime Fitness Adel;
Waukee Family YMCA



16. Boutique

Azalea Lane Boutique

Runners up: Mainstream Boutique;
Real Deals

17. Retail store

Azalea Lane Boutique

Runners up: Adel HealthMart;
Board & Batten

18. School

MeadowView Elementary School

Runners up: ADM High School;
Eason Elementary School

19. Park

Evans Park

Runners up: Kinnick-Feller
Riverside Park; Mound Park

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FEATURE

20. Place for a field trip

The Brenton Arboretum

Runners up: Kuehn Conservation Area; Voas Nature Center

21. Community festival

Adel Sweet Corn Festival

Runners up: Dallas Center Fall Festival; Raccoon River Days

22. Teacher

Corey Myers

Runners up: Lori Boston; Erica Suckow

23. Church

Faith Lutheran Church, Adel

Runners up: Lutheran Church of Hope, Waukee; St. John's Catholic Church, Adel

24. Restaurant for dessert

Billy's Ice Cream Store

Runners up: Home Sweet Cone Ice Cream; Patrick's Restaurant

25. Restaurant for breakfast

Patrick's Restaurant

Runners up: Ambro's Roadhouse Bar & Grill; BrickYard Burgers & Brews

26. Restaurant for lunch

Ambro's Roadhouse Bar & Grill

Runners up: Lemon Grass; Patrick's Restaurant

27. Restaurant for dinner

Fiesta Mexican Restaurant

Runners up: Ambro's Roadhouse Bar & Grill; The Handlebar

28. Car dealership

Stivers Ford Lincoln

Runners up: Deery Brothers Chrysler Dodge Jeep Ram Waukee; Shottenkirk Chevrolet

29. Place for ice cream

Billy's Ice Cream Store

Runners up: Home Sweet Cone Ice Cream; Korner Kone

30. Event

Dallas County Fair

Runners up: Adel Sweet Corn Festival; Dallas Center Fall Festival

31. Daycare

Kids Korner

Runners up: Little Tigers Learning Center; University Kids

32. Children's birthday party spot

Adel Family Fun Center

Runners up: The Brenton Arboretum; Warrior Lanes

33. Preschool

Faith's Flock Preschool

Runners up: Brick Street Kids Preschool; New Hope Beginnings Preschool

34. Library

Adel Public Library

Runners up: Roy R. Estle Memorial Library; Waukee Public Library

35. Chamber of commerce

Adel Partners Chamber of Commerce

Runners up: Dallas Center Betterment Foundation; Waukee Chamber of Commerce

36. Camping spot

Island Park & Campground

Runners up: Dallas County Fairgrounds; KOA

37. Photographer

Chelsy Zimmerman - Poppy Photography by Chelsy

Runners up: Cj McClatchey - Fine Art Photography; Heather Schroeder Photography

38. Dance studio

Let's Dance

Runners up: Adel Tumbling & Dance Club; Westside Dance Academy

39. Place to take your mom and dad

The Brenton Arboretum

Runners up: Ambro's Roadhouse Bar & Grill; Patrick's Restaurant

40. Place to take your kids or grandkids

The Brenton Arboretum

Runners up: Adel Family Fun Center; The Palms Theatre & IMAX



Echo Boland, with Echo's Cookie Shop, has happy customers who voted the shop as one of their favorite bakeries in Dallas County. Photo by Jackie Wilson

41. Place for auto service

Alley Auto Sales

Runners up: Adel Tire & Service; Tiger Tires

42. Place to purchase a gift for a woman

Azalea Lane Boutique

Runners up: Adel HealthMart; Board & Batten

43. Place to purchase a gift for a man

Baldon Hardware

Runners up: Board & Batten; Iconic Apparel

44. Realtor

Julianna Cullen

Runners up: Kevin Howe; Amy Lucht

45. Bar

Ambro's Roadhouse Bar & Grill

Runners up: BrickYard Burgers & Brews; Corner Tap

46. Place for guests to stay

Big Blue Bed & Breakfast

Runners up: Restored Presbyterian Church Airbnb; Hotel Pattee

47. Coffee shop

The Morning Grind

Runners up: The Coffeesmith; Sugar Grove Goods

48. Florist

Adel Flowers & Gifts

Runners up: Hazel Mae Floral Events; Walnut St. Flowers

49. Landscaping company

Luke's Lawn & Landscaping

Runners up: Red Fern Landscape Design; Wiges Outdoor Services

50. CPA

Chris Oberreuter

Runners up: John Short; Denise Walter

FEATURE

51. Insurance Agent

Eric Schepers

Runners up: Scott Gustafson;
Philip Stueve

52. Pharmacy

Sumpter Pharmacy

Runners up: Adel HealthMart;
Medicap - Dallas Center

53. Grocery store

Fareway - Adel

Runners up: Aldi; Hy-Vee - Waukee

54. Nursery or garden center

Harvey's Greenhouse

Runners up: Earl May Garden
Center; Perry Greenhouse & Supply

55. Senior living facility

Spurgeon Manor

Runners up: Adel Acres; Perry
Lutheran Homes

56. Home builder

Behr Construction

Runners up: RCI Builders;
Summit Homes

57. Home improvement retail store

Baldon Hardware

Runners up: Archer Home Center;
Waukee Hardware & Rent-It
Center

58. Home improvement contractor

Heartland Handcrafted

Runners up: Hokel Contracting;
RCI Builders

59. Plumber/plumbing company

Baldon Plumbing Heating &
Cooling

Runners up: Lenhart Plumbing;
Rhiner Plumbing & Heating

60. Electrician

Elite Electric & Utilities

Runners up: Honorable Electric;
Luellen Enterprises

61. Heating and cooling business

Baldon Plumbing Heating &
Cooling

Runners up: Adel & Winterset TV
& Appliance; Dorrian Heating &
Cooling

62. Lawn care business

Grassy Knoll Lawn Care

Runners up: Innovative Lawn
Solutions; Luke's Lawn &
Landscaping

63. Attorney or law firm

Bergkamp, Hemphill & McClure,
P.C.

Runners up: Brown, Fagen &
Rouse; Amy Skogerson - The Law
Shop

64. Dog groomer

Handsome Hounds

Runners up: Precious Paws Pet
Grooming; Stylin' Paws Salon



Residents cast their votes for favorite pastor, and Mike Householder was the top pick. Photo by Jackie Wilson

65. Physical therapist

Alicia Fisher

Runners up: Timothy Crannell;
Timothy Mack

66. Financial planner

Steve Conard

Runners up: Danny Beyer;
Travis Gaule ■



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IS THIS the year you retire?

We are experiencing a “Retirement Revolution.” You may have heard it being called “The Great Resignation.” That term refers to all the people leaving the workforce due to the pandemic.

According to Goldman Sachs research, about two-thirds of those leaving the workforce are retiring; that’s why I think “Retirement Revolution” is a more accurate description. Whether they are concerned about getting the virus, have found that work is no longer a big part of their identity, or the pandemic has changed their job in ways they don’t like, many are retiring earlier than they expected.

We find that a few things can prevent people from pressing “go” on retirement. One of the significant concerns is income. It can be challenging to think about no longer receiving a paycheck from your employer and paying yourself from your retirement savings. If you are thinking about retiring before answering the income question, you have to consider this: What do you want to do in retirement? How you spend your time will help determine how you spend your money. It will also help you determine if you have enough money to live out your retirement vision.

Health care is another one of those things that can help you



determine if you are retirement-ready. Many people want to wait until they are eligible for Medicare to retire. There’s nothing wrong with that. I just wouldn’t let it be the sole determinant of your retirement date. In the last 20 years, I’ve seen hundreds of people successfully retire before they are Medicare eligible. We’ve just had to get a little creative with their plan. It might be as simple as utilizing their spouse’s health care plan or taking advantage of COBRA. This law allows employees to continue their health care coverage even after leaving employment.

There are other things besides a pandemic that can determine your retirement date. If your health changes or your employer offers an early retirement package, that could push you into retirement or make it seem much more attractive than before. We also see scenarios where one person retires, loves it, and convinces their spouse to join them.

If you are not ready to retire, maybe this is the year you capitalize on other retirement strategies like a Roth conversion, catch-up contributions, or updating your legacy plan. Whether you join the “Retirement Revolution” or not, heading to and through retirement with a comprehensive, written retirement plan will help make it easier. ■

Information provided by Loren Merkle, CFP®, Merkle Retirement Planning, 1860 S.E. Princeton Drive, Grimes, IA 50111, 515-278-1006. Source: Casselman, Ben (Nov. 12, 2021) “The Number of U.S. Workers Quitting Their Jobs in September was the Highest on Record” www.nytimes.com.

Retiring in today’s world can be complex and complicated. Each week, Certified Financial Planner™ Loren Merkle and co-host Molly Nelson will tackle trending financial topics and apply them to your retirement.

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WAUKEE Public Library news

The majority of events require advanced registration. Visit waukeepubliclibrary.org/calendar for more information and to register.

Introvert Book Club, all month long. If you want to join a book club but aren't sure you're up for the time commitment or people-ing, this is the book club for you. Each month there's a new book selection, but there's never a meeting. February's book is "Bonk: The Curious Coupling of Science and Sex" by Mary Roach.

Lunar New Year Celebration, Saturday, Feb. 5, 10 a.m. Ambassador Phoebe Liang D'Alessandro will share traditions surrounding the celebration of Lunar New Year in China, including food, colors, traditional clothing, and other aspects of Chinese culture. For children in grades K-5. Registration is required.

History of the Hershey Chocolate Company (online), Saturday, Feb. 5, 1 p.m. Learn more about the fascinating history of Milton S. Hershey and his chocolate company in this online presentation by historical impersonator, lecturer, and librarian Laura Keyes. To sweeten the deal, 35 lucky people on the registration list will be chosen at random to receive a party favor of Hershey's Valentine chocolate. Registration is required.

Teen Advisory Board, Monday, Feb. 7, 14, 28, 3:30 p.m. Students in grades 7-12 are invited to plan teen programs, sign up for Library volunteer opportunities, build leadership skills, and suggest teen books to be purchased by the Library. Email kweston-stoll@waukee.org to register or for more info.

Bricks and Beads, Wednesday, Feb. 9, 2 p.m. Register to drop in any time during this event to get creative with the Library's Lego collection or to make a Perler bead design. Registration is required.

Movie Matinee, Thursday, Feb. 10, 10 a.m. No registration is required.

First in Flight: The Tuskegee Airmen (online), Saturday, Feb. 12, 1 p.m. The Tuskegee Airmen were the Black heroes of the skies during World War II, and, in this online presentation, Jenny Barnett of the African American Museum of Iowa will explore the stories of the Airmen, including 13 Iowans. Learn about how these brave soldiers fought for freedom abroad and equality at home. No registration is required.

Valentine's DIY Self-Care Workshop (online), Sunday, Feb. 13, 1:30 p.m. In this live Zoom workshop, mother/daughter holistic wellness duo Ehris Urban and Velya Jancz-Urban will teach you how to make two DIY holistic "love potions." The first 25 people on the registration list will be able to pick up a free supply kit that will contain some of the harder-to-find ingredients used in the class. Registration is required for this adult 21 and older event.

Books on Tap, Tuesday, Feb. 15, 6 p.m. Meet at Mickey's Irish Pub to enjoy food, drinks and a discussion of Bryan Stevenson's book, "Just Mercy."

Teen Career Fair, Saturday, Feb. 19, 10 a.m. Teens are invited to drop in to meet individuals representing a wide variety of careers. They can visit with the guests to discover valuable classes, trainings and certifications to pursue. Some companies may also have information about internship or volunteer opportunities. Registration is requested.

Library Closed, Monday, Feb. 21, due to President's Day.

Elementary Early Out, Wednesday, Feb. 23, 2:30 p.m. Youth in grades K-5 are invited to explore a variety of Winter Olympic-themed STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art and math) hands-on activities. Registration is required.

Beginner's Knitting, Sunday, Feb. 27, 1:30 p.m. Amy Sawyers from Heartland Fiber Co. will teach you how to cast on, knit, and bind off in this in-person class. Cost for supplies is \$10 per person and includes knitting needles and a full skein of yarn. Registration is required. ■

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HEALTH

By Dr. Jason Brown

THE CONNECTION between oral and overall health

A new year brings out new years' resolutions regarding our health and wellbeing. Fitness centers typically get an influx of new clients who are trying to get back into shape after holiday meals and treats. Another resolution to ponder is consistency in good oral care, as this easily can affect overall health. The mouth is the gateway to the rest of the body in terms of pathways providing our body with fuel and oxygen to function. The general health or illness of our teeth and gums could potentially be a sign of something else occurring in the rest of the body.



Mostly beneficial, good bacteria, harbors in our mouths. We remove a lot of the harmful bacteria when we brush and floss our teeth. Our saliva helps fight bacteria in our mouth by buffering the acid attack that occurs when they turn the food we eat into acid, which would otherwise lead to tooth decay. There are many medications taken for chronic health conditions such as high blood pressure, anxiety/depression, pain, and allergies that can cause dry mouth and lead to cavities.

Certain diseases in the body have been linked with health of the mouth. These include: endocarditis, cardiovascular disease, complications post pregnancy and pneumonia. When bacteria from another area of the body attaches to the inner lining of the heart, causing inflammation, this is called endocarditis. The oral cavity is one source of bacteria which is able to enter the bloodstream, causing this type of condition. Oral bacteria have been linked to stroke as well as potentially causing clogged arteries leading to cardiovascular disease. Bacteria that ultimately causes periodontal disease, or the destruction of bone, and gum disease during pregnancy has been linked to premature births and low birth weight. Oral bacteria have the potential to enter the lungs and cause pneumonia as well.

There are adverse conditions in the body that can, in turn, affect conditions in the mouth. Uncontrolled diabetes or an increase in blood sugar levels can manifest in poor gum health or poor healing from certain dental procedures. HIV/AIDS patients and other immunocompromised patients are at risk of painful oral lesions due to a lower immune system response. Those with osteoporosis can have increased risk of periodontal disease, losing bone in the jaw and risk of losing teeth. Another disease which shows declining oral care as a result of declining health is Alzheimer's disease. Generally, as this disease worsens, so does someone's oral health.

The best way to combat certain conditions, or worsening in chronic health conditions, is to see your doctor and dentist regularly, practice good oral hygiene, and eat a healthy diet. Understanding that your oral and overall health are well connected and caring for both of these adequately will ensure you are keeping yourself healthy and would be a great start to your new year. ■

Information provided by Dr. Jason Brown DDS, Timberline Family Dental, 515-644-2264, 2153 S.E. LA Grant Parkway, Waukee, IA 50263. Information gathered from Mayo Clinic; Oral Health: A Window to Your Overall Health 1998-2022

NEW YEAR, new affirmations

With the new year come resolutions — quickly followed by guilt for breaking the resolution. Guilt and negative self-talk can go together in a vicious cycle. Maybe the best New Year's resolution is not to make one, but if you are going to, make two instead. The second being not to allow feelings of guilt or negative self-talk sneak into your mind. If it does get in your brain, then challenge those thoughts and feelings.



To challenge negative thoughts and guilty feelings, think back into your life and ask, "Have I experienced guilt or negative thoughts before about a similar experience?" For instance, when former resolutions were broken, did guilt or negative talk help or come true? Chances are the answer is no, so challenge the negative guilty thoughts with the fact they are unhelpful. Think of yourself as a prosecutor collecting all the facts and arguments against the negative guilty thought to prosecute it.

Another way to challenge negative guilty thoughts is listening to or reading affirmations. Affirmations are often the opposite of negative thoughts. Create affirmations using the opposite. Such as, "I can't do it" becomes "I might be able to do it because I have not tried." Look for affirmation apps and books. Write favorites on sticky notes to put around the house where you will see them. ■

Information provided by Janet Rieckhoff, LMHC of SS Therapy and Consulting, Ltd., 4725 Merle Hay Road, Suite 205, Des Moines, IA 50322, 515-528-8135, www.sstherapyandconsulting.com, rieckhoff@sstherapyandconsulting.com.

WHY dangerous drugs are not the answer to your neuropathy

Neuropathy can be a challenging condition. It isn't a disease. Rather, it is the result of a disease, illness or injury. Getting to a diagnosis of neuropathy can also be a challenge and oftentimes results in a prescription for pain medication.



People who suffer with neuropathy may not even know they have neuropathy. They may go to their primary physician and tell them about their symptoms, which may include tingling or numbness in their legs, hands or feet. Perhaps they are having balance problems or the pain in their feet is so bad that even walking is a challenge. The typical diagnostic exams and tests are not necessarily conclusive enough to determine that a patient has neuropathy. The physician may just scratch their head and send the patient home with a prescription for something to ease the pain. These drugs, while not considered opioids, can become problematic if misused, and some patients can become physically dependent on them if not taken as prescribed. A true neuropathy diagnosis requires several neurological tests to determine if nerves are damaged and, if so, to what extent.

If you suffer from neuropathy, don't just take a pill to relieve the symptoms. Seek out a healthcare professional who is board certified in neuropathy to diagnose and treat neuropathy. Today's state-of-the-art treatments are safe, non-invasive, painless and FDA-cleared. ■

Information by Dr. Josiah Fitzsimmons, Vero Chiropractic, 5525 Mills Civic Parkway, #120, West Des Moines, IA 50266.

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IMPORTANCE of cervical health

In 2021, about 14,000 women in the United States were diagnosed with cervical cancer, and about 4,000 women died of the disease. Cervical cancer is almost always caused by the human papillomavirus (HPV), and this cancer can be largely prevented with screening and vaccination.



Q: What is cervical cancer?

A: Cervical cancer is a malignant tumor of the cervix, which is the lowest part of the uterus. Sometimes, precancerous changes to the cervix (dysplasia) are diagnosed and steps can be taken to prevent cancer from developing.

Q: Can cervical cancer be prevented?

A: Screening is a key component in the effort to eliminate cervical cancer. Pap testing involves collecting cells from the cervix for examination under a microscope to look for abnormal cells. Since most of these abnormal changes are caused by HPV, screening also includes testing for the presence of the virus. Regular Pap and HPV testing improves detection of precancerous changes to the cervix.

HPV vaccination is recommended for everyone around age 11 or 12. It can be given later if necessary, up to the age of 45. Since most cases of cervical cancer are caused by HPV, vaccines that protect against this virus can dramatically reduce the number of cases per year.

Q: What are the signs or symptoms of cervical cancer?

A: Cervical cancer in its early stages generally produces no signs or symptoms. However, with more advanced cervical cancer, a woman may experience:

- Bleeding during intercourse
- Vaginal bleeding between periods or after menopause
- Watery, bloody vaginal discharge that may be heavy and have a foul odor

Make an appointment with your health care provider if you have any signs or symptoms that worry you. If you're thought to have cervical cancer, you may be referred to a gynecologic oncologist, a doctor who specializes in treating cancers that affect the female reproductive system. ■

Information provided by Dr. Abby Gonik, gynecologic oncologist with MercyOne Des Moines Surgical Group, 411 Laurel St., Suite 2100, Des Moines, 515-247-3266, MercyOne.org/desmoines

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EVENTS IN THE AREA

To submit calendar items for consideration, send to tammy@iowalivingmagazines.com

Be sure to check for cancellations.

2022 Waukee Area Chamber of Commerce Annual Banquet

Tuesday, Feb. 1, 5-8 p.m.
Hilton Des Moines Downtown

The public is invited to the Chamber's Annual Banquet. The Chamber will highlight the accomplishments of 2021, announce plans for 2022 and recognize the Member of the Year, Volunteer of the Year and Citizen of the Year. Guests will also hear from special guest Terry Rich, former president and CEO of the Iowa Lottery. Tickets for the banquet can be purchased online at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/2022-waukee-area-chamber-of-commerce-annual-banquet-tickets-242936207737>.

Iowa Jewish Historical Society Museum Tour

Friday, Feb. 25, 1:30 p.m.
Waukee Public Library field trips are back. Register to join a private tour of the Iowa Jewish Historical Society's Museum and learn about Iowa's Jewish heritage. During the visit, a museum staff member will give a brief talk about the museum and will share a few of the oral history interviews in the museum's collection. Registration is required. Visit <https://www.waukeepubliclibrary.org/upcoming-events>, click on the event for which you want to register then click on the registration link.

Lunar New Year Celebration

Saturday, Feb. 5, 10 a.m.
Waukee Public Library
Ambassador Phoebe Liang D'Alessandro will share traditions surrounding the celebration of Lunar New Year in China, including food, colors, traditional clothing, and other aspects of Chinese culture. For children in grades K-5. Registration is required. Visit <https://www.waukeepubliclibrary.org/upcoming-events>, click on the event for which you want to register then click on the registration link.

2022 Annual Auction - Imagine the Possibilities

Saturday, Feb. 26
Waukee Innovation & Learning Center

The public is invited to an innovation-filled evening at the Waukee Community Schools Foundation 2022 Annual Auction. This fundraiser raises money for grants, scholarships, professional development experiences, and more. The event will be in-person; however, those who can't attend the event can still participate in the silent auction. Register for auction updates and to attend at <https://e.givesmart.com/events/p0h/>. The silent auction goes live Feb. 19 and runs through the event on the 26th.

Teen Career Fair

Saturday, Feb. 19, 10 a.m.
Waukee Public Library

Teens are invited to drop in during the Teen Career Fair to meet individuals representing a wide variety of careers. They can visit with the guests to discover valuable classes, trainings, and certifications to pursue. Some companies may also have information about internship or volunteer opportunities. Registration is requested. Visit <https://www.waukeepubliclibrary.org/upcoming-events>, click on the event for which you want to register then click on the registration link.



Registration open for girls spring softball

Online registration ends Feb. 17

Registration for the Waukee Parks & Recreation Department's Girls Softball League is now open. The season will run from mid-April through early June. Register participants for the grade they are in for the 2021-2022 school year. The cost is \$70 for grades K-2, and the cost is \$92 for grades 3-7. Grades K-1 will play with both a tee and coach pitching. Tees will not be used for grades 2-7. Players are required to provide their own helmets and ball gloves. Register at https://waukee.activityreg.com/ClientPage_t2.wcs, under the Youth Sports category.





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JANUARY 2022

THINGS TO DO

- **Regular City Council Meetings**
Feb. 7 and 22 at 5:30 p.m.
Waukee City Hall and Zoom
- **Dinner Delights Meal Prep Party**
Sun., Feb. 13 from 2-4 p.m.
Registration required:
Waukee.org/registration
- **Waukee State of the City**
Thurs., March 10 at 6 p.m.
Waukee Innovation & Learning Center
- **WASP Senior Luncheon**
Wed., March 30 at 9 a.m.
Waukee Community Center

THINGS TO KNOW

- **Presidents Day – All City Offices Closed**
Mon., Feb. 21
Normal trash collection

Waukee Issued Record 1,761 Building Permits in 2021

The City of Waukee's Community Development Department issued a record 1,761 building permits in 2021. The valuation of those building permits totals \$330.6 million, topping Waukee's previous record-setting 2020 (\$245.7 million). It's eight times higher than 2011's number of \$42 million, set just one decade ago.



Of the 1,761 permits issued, a record 672 were for single-family housing, 153 were for townhomes, six were for multi-family developments and 19 were for commercial developments. The remaining permits fall into the "Other" category, including projects such as additions, alterations, decks, etc.

The construction of 672 single-family homes in 2021 marks the highest single-family permit number in Waukee's history, by far. The previous year's record was 411. The 2021 single-family permit valuations totaled \$219.2 million, which accounts for nearly double last year's total of \$116.6 million.

"We expected 2021 to be a big year for single-family permits; as the housing market boomed nationally, we knew it would have implications here in Waukee," said Mayor Courtney Clarke. "City officials and staff are thrilled that more people are choosing to call this community home, and we continue to work through budgeting and strategic planning to provide residents with more amenities and safe, connected neighborhoods."

Commercial growth also remained strong in 2021 with projects such as KeeTown Loop, Shine Shop Carwash, Hyper Energy Bar, Elite Eye Care, SafeSplash Swim School and many more. A full listing of the City of Waukee's current development projects can be found at [Waukee.org/developmentprojects](https://www.waukee.org/developmentprojects).



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City Hiring Seasonal Employees

The City of Waukee will hire more than 120 seasonal staff members this year - more than ever before! Seasonal employees can expect to work anywhere from 10 to 40+ hours weekly, based on the position. Wages are competitive. Positions are posted now for Parks & Recreation, Triumph Park, Public Works, Sugar Creek Municipal Golf Course and more. Apply today at Waukee.org/jobs.

State of the City Address Set for March 10

Join Waukee Mayor Courtney Clarke on Thursday, March 10 for the State of the City Address. The presentation will begin at 6 p.m. at the Waukee Innovation & Learning Center (295 SE Ashworth Rd). Hear from the Mayor and community leaders as they recap recent Waukee successes and share details regarding City priorities, projects and partnerships. RSVPs are appreciated at Waukee.org/stateofthecity.

WASP Returns in March

After a long hiatus, the Waukee Police Department's WASP (Waukee Area Seniors & Police) program will resume on Wednesday, March 30 at 9 a.m. Officers encourage seniors to stop by the Community Center for coffee and breakfast. The program will continue to take place on the last Wednesday of every month at 9 a.m. This program is designed to help reduce criminal victimization of the elderly.



Kass Named Community Development Director

Following an extensive search and interview process, Andy Kass was named the new City of Waukee Community Development Director. Kass has been with the City since December 2013, having served as Planner II, Senior Planner and Planning Coordinator. He holds a bachelor's degree in Political Science and a master's degree in Urban & Regional Planning, both from the University of Iowa. Congrats, Andy!



Report City Concerns Online

The City's Report a Concern module allows residents to report non-emergency concerns related to snow removal, solicitors, illegal burning, potholes, graffiti and more. Submissions are routed to appropriate staff. The module is monitored on weekdays between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. For emergencies, users should still call 911! Visit Waukee.org/reportaconcern to submit non-emergency concerns.

Citywide Garage Sale and Spring Clean-Up Details

The 2022 Citywide Garage Sale is set for Saturday, Apr. 30. This is not a City of Waukee-sponsored event. Curbside Spring Clean-Up Week for City/ASI customers will take place May 2-6 on residents' regularly scheduled Monday-Friday garbage collection days. On Saturday, May 7, hazardous waste, appliances and tires can be dropped off at sites from 8 a.m. to noon. See more at Waukee.org/cleanup.

MEET THE STAFF



OFFICER HALEY BECKNER, *Patrol Officer*

Police Officer Haley Beckner joined the Waukee Police Department on July 6, 2021 and graduated from Iowa Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA) on Dec. 17. At ILEA, she took home the Top Scholastic Award, was named to the ILEA Director's List and was nominated as the class Sergeant. She took her oath with the City/Waukee PD that same day, and is now engaged

in field training. Officer Beckner has a bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice with a minor in Child, Adult and Family Services, and a master's degree in Criminal Justice from Iowa State University. She enjoys reading, working out, crafts, swimming, and spending time with her fiancé and pets.

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COMICS AND CARDS

NEIGHBOR By Jackie Wilson

LYON'S pet chickens

Producing colorful egg baskets

When Lori Lyon's husband, Larry, brought home baby chickens from a farm store, she at first kept them in a large Rubbermaid container. As they got older, they jumped out, and the couple realized they needed a different living arrangement if they were going to keep them.

Larry built a small chicken coop, and, since then, Lori's enthusiasm of raising chickens has intensified. She began obtaining a variety of chicken breeds for the different colored eggs.

"I like a colorful egg basket. My goal is to have every egg color," she says. "I like all the frou-frou type chicks."

She also has begun hatching eggs in school classrooms where she is an instructional coach and reading recovery teacher.

"The kids love it. Every once in a while, a chick doesn't hatch, so the kids like to peel the shell off," she says.

She's learned about chickens and laying patterns. Chickens usually lay an egg every other day, depending on the amount of sunlight. Laying slows down in the wintertime.

She doesn't refrigerate eggs right away after the hen lays them. The hen puts a "bloom" on it — a membrane that keeps the egg free of bacteria. Once you wash the eggs, then you need to refrigerate them.

In the coop, chickens can become territorial. One chicken will get mad if it is in the wrong nesting box.

"She'll raise a fuss and cackle at them. There's a different pecking order, and the first one in the coop at night is at the top of the pecking order. She also eats first," explains Lori.

Occasionally, wild animals will take down a chicken. Most are contained in the chicken run, but, on occasion, one might fly over the fence.

"A fox has gotten some before. Some people will clip the wings to keep them from flying," she says.

It is more acceptable to have chickens today because of the benefits of growing your own food and being sustainable, says Lori. Waukee passed an ordinance that city dwellers can have up to six chickens but no rooster. Home dwellers outside city limits can have 30 chickens.

Their chickens are entertaining, and Lori and Larry often pull up a chair by the coop.

"We'll grab a beverage and sit and watch them. They are fascinating creatures. It's fun to watch them catch bugs," says Lori. "They are like pets — a pet that can bring you breakfast." ■



Lori Lyon enjoys owning a variety of chickens, with the aim of having a variety of egg colors.

JUST WHEN you thought the commercials would end....

If you were not aware, there is yet another Medicare enrollment period. Yes, that's right, JJ and Joe are not done yet.

Jan. 1 through March 31 is the Open Election Period for Medicare Advantage. I have also heard it referred to as just plain Open Enrollment or Medicare Advantage Open Enrollment. The enrollment period we just went through, Oct. 15 to Dec. 7, is sometimes called Open Enrollment. The more accurate name is Medicare Annual Enrollment.

The four main enrollment periods according to the Centers for Medicare are:

- Initial Enrollment Period for Original Medicare, Part A and Part B
- General Enrollment Period for Original Medicare
- Annual Enrollment Period for Medicare Advantage and Medicare Part D
- Open Election Period for Medicare Advantage

The current enrollment period allows those who are currently enrolled in a Medicare Advantage plan to either change plans or return to original Medicare. Original Medicare would typically mean returning to a Medicare supplement. Be careful, you may not get back on a Medicare supplement based on your health.

My personal experience is, very few people find it necessary to use the Medicare Advantage Open Enrollment period. However, it's a great option for those who may feel they have made a mistake. My recommendation is, if you have questions, call your licensed agent. ■

Information provided by Jon Kelderman, Kelderman Insurance, American Republic, 665 S.E. Madrone Lane, Waukee, Iowa 50263, 515-554-7087.



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EDUCATION

By Darren Tromblay

MEET Jessica Wells

Teaching since she was a child

Jessica Wells is a language arts teacher at Northwest High School in Waukee.

What is your No. 1 challenge as a language arts instructor?

"Time. Quite honestly, time is the biggest challenge in teaching today. I feel like students and teachers are always looking for more time to accomplish everything that is required to teach and learn as we are preparing for an increasingly diverse world."

At what point in your life did it dawn on you that teaching was the route you wanted to take, and why?

"I knew at a very young age that I would become a teacher. My mom tells stories when I first started going to school about how I would come home and set up 'my classroom' where I would teach my younger sister. I would gather all of my old school supplies and make her sit (at 3 years old) while I taught her everything I had learned that day. I am proud to say that my first ever student grew up to be an ELP (talented and gifted) student!"

So what exactly is language arts?

"Very basically, language arts is the study of communication. When students take an English class (or begin literacy in early elementary), the goal is to teach students how to write, speak, listen and read effectively to meet their goals. As students grow and mature, their skills should grow and mature with them. I always tell my students that I want their reading, writing, speaking and listening skills to match their maturing minds. I don't ever want their communication to be hindered by a lack of skills."

What would people be surprised to learn about you?

"I actually began teaching in elementary school. My very first class was a group of second graders."

What do you recall about your first day of having your own class?

"I remember on my very first day of teaching I was petrified. I was certain that my second graders could tell how I was feeling. So, instead of holding it in, I read a book about the first day of school. I asked each of the students to talk about how they felt. Not only did I learn that some of them were nervous, too, but it relaxed and connected everyone. I noticed after that discussion that we all felt more comfortable."

What is the greatest misconception about language arts instructors?

"That we are perfect grammarians. Just because language arts teachers study English does not mean that we are perfect at grammar — or any other subtopic of English. Teachers are people, too, and make mistakes. In fact, some of my favorite teachers modeled what to do when mistakes happen because we all make them."

If you could have one superpower that only applied to your occupation, what would it be and why?

"I would have the power to suspend time. As I said in question No. 1, sometimes teaching and learning takes more time than what is allotted. I think time suspension would allow me and other teachers to suspend those 'aha teaching moments' and celebrations." ■



Jessica Wells teaches high school language arts but has also taught at the elementary level.

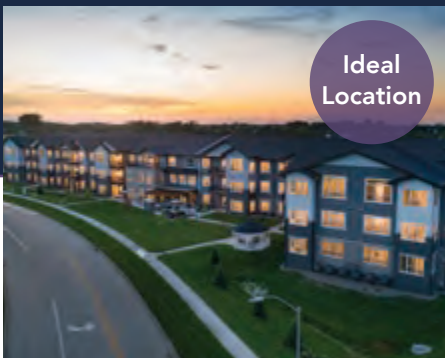


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SPORTS is in their blood

Passionate about collecting memorabilia

The French Connection. That's the name Gary and Tyler French go by on their Facebook Live streaming channel called Pardon My French Media. PMF Media, as they sometimes call it, streams local sporting events, specifically for the Northwest Wolves and the Waukee Warriors. The father-son duo began their live streaming operation in 2020 when options became limited for sports spectators in Waukee.

The Frenches made the move to Des Moines from Arizona in 1997. They fell in love with Des Moines after a visit to the metro. Only recently did they move to Waukee two years ago. Gary and his wife, Mary, live in a quaint townhome while his son Tyler and his wife, Catherine, live nearby outside of Waukee. At first glance, the French townhome blends in with the rest of the neighborhood, but their basement stands out from the crowd. Their collection of sports memorabilia spans across each wall and fills the space with memories from the hundreds of games and sporting events the family has

attended.

"I still have two bins of stuff that I can't put up. I don't have a big enough basement for them all," Gary laughs.

The collection includes memorabilia of everything from the NFL, NBA and MLB to drag racing and the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles. The Frenches' love of sports goes back to when both of them were young. Gary recalls memories of growing up on a farm with his dad. When the crops came in, they would catch the Minnesota Twins series. He remembers sitting outside of the clubhouse after games to get autographs. Of course, Gary wanted to continue these traditions with his own son and instill the same love of sports he has.

"The sports adventures he and I have been on together — he's been to hundreds of games in his life and has brought me along for a considerable amount as well," Tyler explains.

Both Gary and Tyler have their own favorite pieces in the collection. Gary's most prized possession is his framed poster from



Gary and Tyler French enjoy collecting sports memorabilia — and have gathered enough to fill shelves in Gary's basement.

the then Phoenix Cardinal's first-ever home game at Sun Devil Stadium. It was Monday Night Football on Sep. 12, 1988. The poster features an aerial photo of the stadium and the Goodyear blimp flying above. He recalls shaking hands with Dallas Cowboy Coach Tom Landry as he came out of the tunnel.

Tyler's favorite piece at his dad's is the banner he received during his sophomore year at Wartburg. The banner was used at the Sweet Sixteen games during the NCAA Women's March Madness tournament in 2016. That year, the women's basketball team made it all the way to the Final Four, and he announced all five games the women played. ■

RECIPE

WARM UP winter with comforting classics

(Family Features) Whipping up family favorites all winter long is a perfect activity to keep loved ones warm in the kitchen while avoiding the bitter chill outdoors. Delicious, heartwarming snacks offer a simple and savory way to bring everyone in from the cold while enjoying comforting flavors together.

Lean on beloved ingredients like go-to RAGÚ sauces when it's time to come together for quick bites. The possibilities are nearly endless with delicious recipes using classics like the RAGÚ Old World Style Traditional or RAGÚ Simply Traditional options.

Hearty flavors can take away the chill of winter in recipes like Baked Tomato Goat Cheese Dip. Easy to make and fun to create, this simple snack is perfect for a cold afternoon spent together in the kitchen or watching a family-movie marathon.

Find more recipes perfect for warming up this winter at Ragu.com. ■

Baked tomato goat cheese dip

Recipe courtesy of Marzia Aziz of "Little Spice Jar"

Prep time: 10 minutes

Cook time: 20 minutes

Servings: 4-6

Ingredients

- Nonstick cooking spray
- 2 cups RAGÚ Simply Traditional Sauce
- 3 cloves garlic, divided
- 1/4 cup fresh basil, chopped, divided
- 1/8-1/4 teaspoon red pepper flakes
- 1 log (10-12 1/2 ounces) goat cheese, softened at room temperature
- 2 teaspoons olive oil, plus additional for brushing, divided
- 1/4 teaspoon fresh thyme
- kosher salt, divided
- pepper
- 1 large baguette, sliced on bias
- blistered tomatoes, for serving (optional)

Directions

- Position one rack in upper third of oven and one in lower third. Preheat oven to 375 F. Spray small, round baking dish with nonstick cooking spray; set aside.
- Add sauce to small bowl. Grate in two garlic cloves then add 1/8 cup basil and red pepper flakes. Stir to combine then pour sauce into baking dish.
- Smash goat cheese log into ball. Place ball between two sheets plastic wrap. Using hands, flatten cheese into thick, round disc about 1 inch smaller in diameter than baking dish. Remove goat cheese from plastic wrap and place in center of sauce. Drizzle cheese with 2 teaspoons olive oil. Sprinkle with fresh thyme, kosher salt and pepper.
- Bake on lower rack, uncovered, 20-25 minutes, or until sauce is bubbly and cheese is warmed through.
- Place baguette slices on baking sheet. Drizzle or brush with olive oil and



sprinkle with kosher salt. Bake crostini on upper rack 10-12 minutes, flipping halfway through. When bread is done, remove from oven, cut last garlic clove in half and rub cut side on bread.

- Top dip with remaining basil and blistered tomatoes, if desired, and serve with crostini.
- **Note:** To make blistered tomatoes: Heat skillet over medium-high heat until almost smoking. Add 1 pint cherry tomatoes to dry skillet and let sit 1 minute. Lower heat to low, toss tomatoes with 2 teaspoons olive oil and cook 2-3 minutes, or until tomatoes are about to burst. Remove from heat; sprinkle with pinch of salt and pepper.



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ESTATE planning and stages of life

Estate planning is not only about directing the distribution of your assets when you pass away. Effective planning helps you manage each stage of your life, depending on your specific needs.



Young parents need to protect and provide for their minor children. Older couples need to plan for their financial and healthcare quality of life. Following the death of a spouse, the survivor needs to address important legal issues. Retired couples want to protect their assets in the face of long-term care costs.

The process of estate planning raises difficult emotional and personal issues. Your loved ones will be affected by the plans you make now. If you fail to make plans, your spouse or family will be left to handle those

issues without guidance. For many people, the most difficult step in the estate planning process is deciding to do it.

Estate planning comprises three major areas: planning for incapacity, directing your wealth and preserving your assets.

The first component to estate planning is often overlooked. It is likely that, before you die, something will happen to you that will render you unable to assist in your financial or medical decisions. You should have in place contingent documents — financial power of attorney, health care power of attorney, and living will — that nominate somebody to help you make decisions.

The second step in estate planning is to direct your wealth. Your will or trust will designate your beneficiaries. Most people naturally think of planning for spouses, children, and relatives first. But you also have to take into account the possibility that your

spouse may be in poor mental or physical health or that your children may be minors. Effective planning will consider these contingencies.

The third part of estate planning works to minimize taxes and preserve assets. Careful estate planning minimizes inheritance tax and preserves the recipient's basis for calculating capital gains taxes. Long-term care costs can be devastating to a couples' savings. Both spouses should establish estate plans that will maximize asset transfers to your heirs and minimize estate taxation.

You are never too young to think about estate planning. It is vital for every person to be responsible enough to create a plan for themselves and their family. ■

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

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By Kendel Richlen

RESOLUTIONS? Don't forget to add your HVAC

It's that time again... New Year's resolutions. Before making any big commitments or giving up your favorite guilty pleasure snack, we have four New Year's resolutions that aren't only easy to follow and implement now but will improve your everyday health and comfort.



Need a fresh start to your year? A great resolution is to change the filter on your HVAC on a regular basis. Forgetting to change your HVAC filter results in dust and debris build-up that makes your furnace work harder than it needs to. The same dust and debris are getting into the air you're breathing, too. This results in poor air quality, making it harder to breathe. If you suffer from allergies, asthma, or have pets, this can have a greater effect on you.

If you want to take indoor air quality to the next level, stick to a regular cleaning schedule. Vacuuming and cleaning your vents can go a long way in improving air quality. Taking the proper steps to maintain good air quality in your home will make you feel better and help your HVAC work more efficiently.

Is consistency at the top of your list this year? A smart thermostat is just what you need, and it will save you money, too. Smart thermostats have appealing features that can make quite the difference with just a simple click of a button. Are you a planner? You will fall in love with the scheduling feature that allows you to set the temperature of your house based on the time of day. Smart thermostats also allow you to see how much energy your HVAC system is using, tell you the pollen levels in your area and easily connect to your home's current virtual assistant, allowing you to command with your voice.

Are certain parts of your house cooler or warmer than others? Do you use certain rooms only once or twice a year? Zoning systems can bring that missing balance back into your home. A zoning system allows you to control the temperature of each room in your house. This is another great way to save money on heating and cooling bills.

We all think about being healthier in the new year and forget there's more to it than exercising and saying no to those leftover Christmas cookies. Just following one of the simple resolutions previously mentioned can start your year off on the right track. ■

Information provided by Kendel Richlen, Owner, 72 Degrees Comfort Company, 811 S.W. Ordinance Road, Ankeny, 515-200-2728.

OUT & ABOUT



Terry Synder and Melanie Suljic at Waukee Wake Up LIVE at Bing Bang on Dec. 8.



Rhonda Mock and Chris Crone at Waukee Wake Up LIVE at Bing Bang on Dec. 8.



DJ Soultis and Chris Juhl at Waukee Wake Up LIVE at Bing Bang on Dec. 8.



Erin Hullermann and Don Frazer at Waukee Wake Up LIVE at Bing Bang on Dec. 8.



Travis Gaule and Michaela Plough at Waukee Wake Up LIVE at Bing Bang on Dec. 8.



Chris Crone and Norm Boaz at Waukee Wake Up LIVE at Bing Bang on Dec. 8.



Dr. Wes Nyberg is among the favorite chiropractors in the Dallas County Residents' Choice Poll.



Nate Kempers at the Coffesmith, one of the favorite coffee shops in the Dallas County Residents' Choice Poll.



Travis Gaule and Madison Starman at Edward Jones. Gaule was among the favorite financial planners in the Dallas County Residents' Choice Poll.



Amy Lucht at RE/MAX Precision was among the favorite real estate agents in the Dallas County Residents' Choice Poll.



Colleen Strohmaier at Home Sweet Cone, which was among the favorite places to get ice cream in the Dallas County Residents' Choice Poll.



Bret Thompson at 7 Stone Pizzeria, which was one of the favorite pizza establishments in the Dallas County Residents' Choice Poll.

OUT & ABOUT

RIBBON Cutting

A ribbon cutting was held at the Shine Shop Car Wash, 1400 S.E. University Ave. in Waukeez on Dec. 16.



A ribbon cutting was held at the Shine Shop Car Wash, 1400 S.E. University Ave. in Waukeez on Dec. 16.



Laketon Long



Chris Crone and Mario Cruz



Todd Schneider



Brett Braafhart and Gina Campos



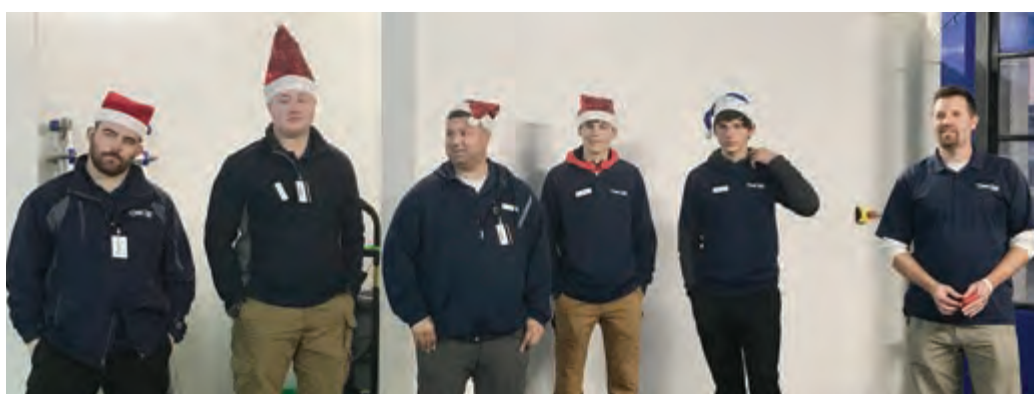
Travis Gaule, Ben Sinclair and Rob Grove



Drew Lewis and Mike Bartos



Chris Crone and Don Frazer



Zac Custard, Laketon Lang, Mario Cruz, Bodie Wagoner, Drew Oleshko and Justin Reed

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