



ANNOUNCING

THE TOP BUSINESSES

2026 — EMPLOYERS OF —
CHOICE

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2026 — EMPLOYERS OF CHOICE

Welcome to the 2026 Employers of Choice

Special Annual Edition | Celebrating Workplace Excellence Across Northern Iowa

Welcome to the 2026 edition of *Employers of Choice*. Each year, we pause to celebrate the organizations throughout Northern Iowa that go above and beyond to build vibrant, engaging, and resilient workplaces. What makes this recognition genuinely meaningful is its source: every business featured in these pages was nominated directly by the people who know them best—their own employees.

The New Recruiting Reality: Culture as the Ultimate Magnet

Across Iowa and the broader Midwest, the modern labor market continues to present unprecedented challenges. Organizations of every scale face tight candidate pools, shifting generational expectations, and heightened competition for skilled talent.

Yet, amid these headwinds, one clear truth has emerged: while conventional hiring tactics

frequently stall, employers with exceptional workplace cultures consistently find and keep the talent they need to succeed.

Recruiting in today's environment is no longer just an HR function; it is a direct reflection of organizational character. When employees feel valued, supported, and challenged, they naturally become the most authentic brand ambassadors a company could ever ask for. In an era where prospective hires research prospective employers thoroughly before submitting an application, authentic employee advocacy speaks louder than any job posting or recruitment campaign ever could.

The Competitive Advantage of Employee Voice

When an organization is recognized as an Employer of Choice, hiring shifts from an uphill battle to a welcoming relationship. High-retention organizations report lower onboarding friction, higher candidate acceptance rates, and deeper community trust. Investing in people remains the single most reliable strategy for long-term organizational growth.

Empowerment, Retention, and Community Impact

The businesses highlighted in this publication represent a cross-section of our regional economy—from advanced manufacturing and construction to healthcare, financial services, education, and innovative retail. While their day-to-day operations vary widely, their core philosophies share essential pillars:

- **First**, they prioritize intentional leadership and transparent communication.
- **Second**, they invest deeply in professional growth, wellness, and work-life balance.
- **Finally**, they cultivate a sense of shared purpose, ensuring team members understand how their individual contributions drive collective impact across our Northern Iowa communities.



Tracy Freese
Regional Director
Lee Enterprises

2026 — EMPLOYERS OF CHOICE

Honoring the 2026 Employers of Choice

We are immensely proud to recognize the 22 exceptional organizations selected by their workforce as 2026 Employers of Choice:

- 43 North Iowa
- Bank Iowa
- CENT Credit Union
- Central Park Dentistry
- Century 21
- Clear Lake Bank & Trust
- Clear Lake Chamber of Commerce
- CLtel
- Country Meadow Place
- Hancock County Health Systems
- Hosmer Cars
- IA Specialty Hospitals & Clinics
- IMT
- IOOF Home
- Laird Law Firm
- Nettleton Dental Group
- North Iowa Area Community College
- Prairie Ridge Integrated Behavioral Healthcare
- Pritchard Companies
- Stellar Industries
- Waste Management
- Woodford Lumber Co.



Looking Ahead

As we navigate the evolving economic landscape, the benchmarks set by these 22 honorees offer a proven roadmap for organizational health and sustained success. By fostering environments where employees are empowered to do their best work, these employers are not only solving their own talent equations - but they are also elevating our entire Northern Iowa economy.

We invite you to read through the profiles in this special section, celebrate their achievements, and take inspiration from the leaders and teams shaping the future of work in Northern Iowa.

With gratitude and congratulations to all our honorees,

Tracy Freese

Regional Director – Lee Enterprises

Every CENT Counts - A Workplace Where People Matter

Mason City, Iowa – At CENT Credit Union, Every CENT Counts is more than a phrase used with members. It reflects a people-first approach that starts with the team behind the credit union.

That makes being named an Employer of Choice especially meaningful. With more than 35+ employees across locations in Mason City, Emmetsburg, Clear Lake and Le Mars, CENT strives to create a workplace where employees feel valued, supported, and excited about the work they do.

CENT's team of member service professionals, lenders, and support staff work each day to help members make the most of their savings and find financial solutions that fit their needs. At CENT, providing that level of member service starts with creating a positive workplace for the employees providing it.

"Our people are competitive advantage," said CENT President & CEO Matthew R. Chizek. "We've created a workplace culture where our team feels valued and supported in their growth."

That culture is something employees notice, too.

Sara Hoy, Lead Teller, said, "I look forward to showing up for work every day because of my amazing team that feels like family. One thing

I was most impressed by with CENT when I first started over four years ago was the attitude of the employees. I could always see a sense of motivation, passion, and loyalty throughout the entire staff."

GROWING TOGETHER

Creating a workplace where people want to stay also means giving them opportunities to grow. CENT's goal is to promote from within whenever possible and give employees experience in different areas of the credit union.

"We strive to train our team in ways they can grow and experience multiple avenues within the credit union so when the time comes, they are able to sit in the seat that best suits them," Chizek said.

Leadership development and cross-training opportunities help prepare employees to take on expanded roles while giving them the chance to experience different areas of the credit union. As CENT continues to grow, the goal is for employees to have opportunities to grow along with it.

Taylor Kruger, AVP Universal Banker, has experienced that firsthand during her nine years with CENT.

"Throughout my time here, I've been given opportunities to learn, grow, and take on new responsibilities, which I truly appreciate,"



THANK YOU!

CENT

CREDIT UNION

IS PROUD TO BE SELECTED AS AN EMPLOYER OF CHOICE.



CENT

CREDIT UNION

2026 EMPLOYERS OF
CHOICE



Interested in joining the team?
Visit www.centcu.org/careers to learn more!





Kruger said. “I genuinely feel that this is a great company to work for.”

That feeling is shared by Cody Martin, AVP Mortgage Lender, who appreciates “the opportunities to grow and the way in which management values each of its employees.” Martin also stated, “I’m proud to be a piece of this growing institution!”

Employees are also supported through a benefits package that includes generous health care benefits and retirement matching, along with flexible scheduling and an emphasis on work-life balance. Together, those benefits and opportunities for advancement help create an environment where employees can build long-term careers.

A TEAM THAT SHOWS

CENT’s culture is also built around employees supporting one another.

“What I love most about working at CENT Credit Union is everyone’s willingness to help each other in a time of need,” said Shelby Bird, Member Service Representative. “Everyone is always willing to step in, support, and celebrate everyone’s individual wins no matter how big or small.”

That teamwork ultimately carries over to member experience. Employees work across locations to solve problems, communicate, and provide the personalized service CENT members have come to expect.

CENT serves more than 11,000 members, and while the way our members bank has continued to evolve through new technology and online services, personal relationships remain at the heart of the credit union. Members rely on CENT employees for everything from everyday transactions and

savings to auto loans, home loans, and other important financial decisions.

That connection between employee experience and member experience is important to CENT. When employees feel supported by their coworkers and leaders, they are better equipped to provide the same level of care for the members they serve.

The organization has evolved significantly over the years, from paper savings account books to today’s mobile and online banking options, but the focus on people and personal service has remained.

PEOPLE HELPING PEOPLE

The credit union philosophy is “people helping people” and at CENT, that applies both inside the workplace and throughout the communities the credit union serves.

One-way employees get to put that philosophy to use is through CENT Cares. Each quarter, a group of team members are selected to choose an organization, cause or community needs they are passionate about. They then decide how they would like to make an impact, whether it is volunteering, a donation, or a combination of both.

The program is employee driven, allowing team members to identify organizations and nonprofits where they believe CENT can make a meaningful impact. Employees are then encouraged to take part in the outreach, making the experience more than simply presenting a donation.

CENT’s commitment to its communities extends beyond CENT Cares. Throughout the year, the team looks for ways to recognize and support the people who make their communities stronger. From putting together goodie bags for local law enforcement



during National Police Week and showing appreciation for teachers to supporting local organizations, events, and fundraisers.

Jana Erickson, VP of Retail Operations, stated, “The People Helping People philosophy of credit unions is one of the biggest reasons I decided to join the CENT team almost 8 years ago. Born and raised in Mason City and noticing the amount of community involvement CENT was showcasing, and I knew then this was a company I wanted to be a part of. CENT’s generosity is rooted so deeply not just within the community, but within our team. It’s hands down what sets us apart from the rest.”

For employees, giving back isn’t simply something their employer sponsors. It is

something they get to be part of.

That commitment reflects how CENT measures success: not only through financial performance, but through the impact the credit union and its employees can have on the communities they call home.

EVERY PERSON COUNTS

CENT employees have tenures ranging from those just beginning their careers to team members who have been within the credit union for decades.

“Our goal is for everyone to be happy and enjoy their time here,” Chizek said. “With employees tenure dating back as far as 1986, I’d say we’ve achieved just that.”

That longevity has become one of the clearest reflections of CENT’s workplace culture. Employees have built careers, grown into new positions and continued serving members alongside coworkers who have become an important part of their everyday lives.

Having earned Employer of Choice recognition multiple times, this latest honor continues to reflect a culture centered around its people.

When speaking with Traci Muhlenbruch, CENT Chief Operating Officer and ten-year teammate, “For CENT, the recognition is more than an award. It is a reminder of the importance of continuing to invest in employees, creating opportunities for advancement, and building a workplace where people feel valued. As the credit union continues to evolve, its employees remain at the heart of its success.”

At CENT, Every CENT Counts, and so does every person behind it.

Built by the People Who Work Here

Woodford Lumber has been named one of Northern Iowa's Employers of Choice for 2026.

We could tell you why we think Woodford is a great place to work. The people. The Opportunities. The relationships and culture. But there's something much more meaningful about this recognition.

Our employees nominated us.

The people who come to work here every day, who know Woodford beyond the sign on the building, are the ones who said this is a place worth recognizing.

That makes this award feel different.

More Than a Place to Work

Spend enough time around Woodford and you quickly discover that lumber is only part of the business.

Walk through the store on an ordinary day and you'll find people solving problems. A contractor needs to figure out the materials for an unusual project. A homeowner walks in with a rough idea of what they want

their kitchen to become. A delivery needs to arrive at exactly the right point in a construction schedule.

The answer lives in the experience of the people who work here.

That's one of the things that makes Woodford special. People have the opportunity to become exceptionally good at what they do.

They learn products. They learn construction. They learn design. They learn their customers. And over time, they develop the kind of knowledge that can't be downloaded from a training manual.

Eventually, customers begin asking for them by name.

That's when a job starts becoming something more.

There's Something Satisfying About Seeing What You Helped Build

One of the unusual things about working at Woodford is that the results of the work are all around us.

Drive through communities across North Iowa and you'll pass houses Woodford helped build. You'll find kitchens our designers helped imagine, decks where families spend summer evenings, windows and siding protecting homes from another Iowa winter, and businesses built with materials that once sat in our yard.

Our employees might not swing every hammer, but their fingerprints are on thousands of projects throughout the region. A pile of lumber becomes someone's home. Behind each one are dozens of small acts of expertise most people will never see, but the people doing it know.

A Workplace Built on Trust

Culture is one of those words companies use so often that it can start to lose its meaning.

At Woodford, culture is how people treat one another when nobody is making a presentation about company values.

It's whether someone helps a coworker who's buried on a busy morning. It's whether an experienced employee takes the time to

teach someone who's still learning. And it's whether employees are trusted to use their judgment.

Woodford has been around long enough to know that you can't write a procedure for every situation that walks through the door. Customers, projects, and problems are different. You need good people.

Then you need to give them the opportunity to be good at their jobs.

When people feel responsible for the outcome, the question changes from "What am I supposed to do?" to "What needs to be done?"

It's a small distinction with a very large effect.

Experience Worth Passing Along

Another thing happens when people build careers instead of simply holding jobs.

Knowledge gets passed down.

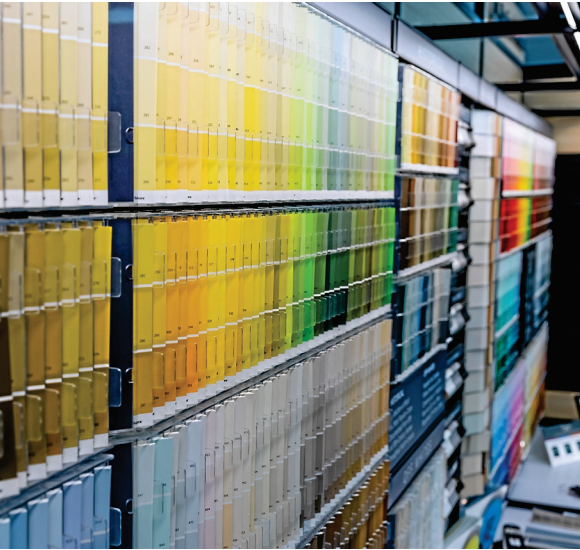
Someone who has spent years working with contractors recognizes a problem before it becomes an expensive mistake. An

THANK YOU TO OUR TEAM!

Thank you to all the Woodford employees that make this place what it is. Answering phones, designing kitchens, helping customers, loading trucks, and everything in between. Your dedication is the reason customers keep walking through our doors.

WE ARE PROUD TO BE YOUR EMPLOYER OF CHOICE!





experienced designer knows which questions to ask before a customer has thought to ask them. Someone can look at an order and notice that something seems off.

That knowledge accumulates one customer, one project, and one problem at a time.

And when experienced employees share what they know with newer employees, something important happens. The knowledge stays here.

It's also how careers are built.

Nobody arrives at Woodford knowing everything about lumber, building materials, kitchens, windows, hardware or construction. People learn. They ask questions. They make decisions. They take on more responsibility. Eventually, they're the person someone else comes to with a question.

That's a progression we're proud of.

Local Means Knowing Who You're Helping

There's another dimension to working at Woodford that can be easy to overlook. The people we serve aren't anonymous. They're our neighbors.

Our employees see customers at the grocery store, at ball games, at restaurants and community events. Contractors we work with today may be people we've known for years. A homeowner who walks through the door may return several years later with another project.

That makes relationships matter.

The same principle applies to the people who work here. A good workplace isn't created through a recruiting campaign. It's built over time through thousands of everyday experiences.

How people are treated matters.

- Whether their ideas are heard matters.
- Whether they're given opportunities to grow matters.
- Whether they enjoy the people beside them matters.

You can put almost anything on a careers page. The harder test is what employees say about the company when the company isn't writing the words for them.

The Recognition That Means the Most

That's why being named an Employer of Choice means so much to us.

The award is appreciated, but the nomination is what we'll remember.

Because it came from the people who know Woodford from the inside.

They're the people answering phones, designing kitchens, helping customers, loading trucks, making deliveries, solving problems, managing projects, and doing the hundred other things required to keep a business like this moving.

They're also the reason customers continue walking through our doors.

Woodford has spent decades helping people build things throughout North Iowa, but perhaps the most important thing we've built is where people choose to come and work.

Being called an Employer of Choice is an honor.

Knowing our employees were the ones who chose us?

That's the part we're proudest of.

Drive Your Career Forward with WM: Employer of Choice 2026 in North Iowa

ABOUT WM

WM is North America's leading provider of comprehensive environmental solutions. WM is driven by commitments to put people first and achieve success with integrity.

The company, through its subsidiaries, provides collection, recycling and disposal services to millions of residential, commercial, industrial, medical and municipal customers throughout the U.S. and Canada.

With innovative infrastructure and capabilities in recycling, organics and renewable energy, WM provides environmental solutions to and collaborates with its customers in helping them pursue their sustainability goals.

In North America, WM has the largest disposal network and collection fleet, is the largest recycler and is a leader in beneficial use of landfill gas, with a growing network of renewable natural gas plants and the most landfill gas-to-electricity plants, as well as the largest heavy-duty natural gas truck fleet in the industry.

WM Healthcare Solutions provides collection and disposal services of regulated medical waste and secure information destruction services in the U.S., Canada and Western Europe.

To learn more about WM and the company's sustainability progress and solutions, visit Sustainability.WM.com.

Why should you apply? We invest in you!

- Be home every night and weekend
- Industry-leading health insurance
- 3 Weeks Paid Time Off
- 401k + Company Match
- Degree Coverage for 175+ education programs
- Discounted Stock Options
- Yearly boot allowance, uniforms, safety vests and protective eye wear
- An opportunity to work with an empowering workforce and career advancement

Benefits

At WM, each eligible employee receives a competitive total compensation package including Medical, Dental, Vision, Life Insurance and Short Term Disability. As well as a Stock Purchase Plan, Company match on 401K, and more! Our employees also receive Paid Vacation, Holidays, and Personal Days. Please note that benefits may vary by site.

Why Choose WM?

Our crews are the best. Highly trained, safety focused, with career opportunities and stability. We invest in you by providing industry-leading benefits: tuition paid for employees and eligible dependents for 135+ high school, college, and Certificate programs, health coverage, lucrative 401k, stock purchase plan, and more. We're neighbors, friends, and family members and partners working to serve the communities where we live. Join us, and together, we'll work proud for our communities.

Ready to start your tomorrow, today?
Apply now at wm.com/Careers



Safety Technology on WM Trucks

WM Smart Truck® Technology

With the help of a proprietary system of cameras and sensors, WM Smart Truck® technology can document every service, every day to provide customers with direct, targeted feedback to drive behavior change and reduce contamination. This technology reduces the number of times drivers must leave the cabs of their trucks.

Better Brake Lights

The more visible our trucks are on the roads, the safer we are. To help reduce rear-end collisions, we are upgrading to the new brake lights that flash repeatedly to catch the attention of other drivers.



DriveCam®

DriveCam® camera is a video recorder that is automatically activated by sudden movements, allowing managers to see drivers' behavior and, if necessary, coach them on safer driving techniques.

Automatic Front Loading

Automatic front loaders service containers with two forks on the front of the truck that lift and tip contents into the body of the truck - operated by the driver with controls inside the cab.

Advanced Driver Assistance System (ADAS)

Advanced driver systems include features like collision mitigation, active braking technology and vehicle telematics that communicate any needed repairs to our shops. Beyond the safety benefits, these enhancements lead to greater driver satisfaction and retention.



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that connects.**

Local ads that work.

The stories Mason City trusts, and the audience your business wants to reach.

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Owning the Future: How Stellar's Employee-Owners Are Investing in More Than Their Work

As a 100% employee-owned company, Stellar operates with a philosophy that aligns employee success directly with company performance. Through the Employee Stock Ownership Plan (ESOP), employees receive an annual stake in the company, directly related to company earnings as well as other factors. Because of this, each employee-owner has a vested interest in Stellar's long-term success, fostering a culture of collaboration, innovation and shared accountability.

According to The ESOP Association, there are only 172 companies in all of Iowa that have an ESOP. In Garner, the impact of an ESOP doesn't go unnoticed.

"What Stellar was doing in creating hundreds of employee-owners really started to resonate in Northern Iowa," said Travis Glidden, long-time employee at Stellar. "People don't just work here, but instead they think 'This is my company. I own this, we own this together. If I'm successful, you're successful, all of our coworkers are successful and the company itself is successful.'"

Glidden has worked for Stellar since 1993 and will retire in the fall of 2026. Over more than three decades with the company, he saw firsthand how employee ownership could shape not only a workplace, but the lives of the people who make up that workplace.

"It's impossible to overstate what that means for me and my family," said Glidden. "I'm building wealth that extends not just to me, but to my kids and grandkids. I never went to college, but my ESOP account means I can retire on my terms when I'm ready. When the time to retire came in 2026 it was because I was ready for the change of pace. There is comfort in knowing I don't have to continue to work for financial reasons."

For Glidden and so many other employee-owners, working for Stellar has meant having the ability to build a future for themselves and their families while still having the opportunity and drive to invest and serve in the communities around them.

The financial benefits of an ESOP can provide employees with greater confidence in their long-term financial future. For Glidden, that confidence has also created opportunities to give back. He has supported and continues to support local charities

and organizations and is even serving as a board member for the Garner Chamber of Commerce.

For other Stellar employee-owners, that same sense of ownership takes different forms outside of the workplace. Some volunteer as first responders while others coach youth sports, serve on community boards or pursue their own entrepreneurial ventures.

While their individual passions may be unique, the motivation behind them is often remarkably similar. It comes down to a desire to positively contribute and improve the things they are personally invested in, like their communities. A mindset that is upheld in their full-time jobs at Stellar.

Employee ownership gives people a reason to think beyond their individual roles. When employees understand that the success of the company contributes to their own future, everyday decisions can take on a greater sense of purpose. Improving a process, solving a customer's problem or finding a better solution is something that each individual has a personal stake in.

For Stellar, the results of that culture can be seen in the company's continued growth and success. But they can also be seen outside of the company walls, in the organizations and local businesses supported by its employee-owners.

That's the broader potential of employee ownership. When people have a personal stake in the future of the company, they are empowered to think long term. And when that sense of ownership and continuous improvement carries into life outside of work, the impact can reach far beyond the workplace.

For Stellar's employee-owners, owning their future means building something worth investing in both at work and in the communities they call home. It's about more than building quality products— it's about truly taking pride in the work that is being done. Through open communication, continuous improvement, accountability and the idea of shared success, Stellar employee-owners are able to provide better products and services for their customers while also improving the communities they are a part of.

"When you're personally invested in the



company, you show up differently," said Dave Zrostlik, President of Stellar. "We're united by a shared goal, and it is evident in

the work we are doing every day."

For more information on becoming an employee-owner, visit stellarindustries.com.



TAKE STOCK IN YOUR FUTURE

Build a Stellar career and thrive. As a 100% employee-owned company, everyone shares in the company's success. Many career paths are available, so see how to own your future at stellarindustries.com/careers.



A Culture of Care: IOOF Home and Community Therapy Center

At the IOOF Home and Community Therapy Center, caring for others is more than a daily operation, it is the heart of our identity. We are deeply honored to be recognized as an Employer of Choice in North Iowa. This recognition reflects the dedicated efforts of our staff, the strength of our leadership, and the shared values that guide our work across every department every day.

For decades, our community has relied on the IOOF Home to provide compassionate, high-quality care to seniors and individuals in need of rehabilitation and long-term support. Receiving this recognition reinforces what we strive to cultivate internally: an environment where healthcare professionals feel supported, valued, and empowered to deliver their best work.

At the core of our success is a simple truth: you cannot build an exceptional healthcare community without first taking care of the people who provide that care. We firmly believe that the key to sustaining a high-performing team is building genuine rapport with our staff and expressing meaningful appreciation whenever the opportunity arises.

In long-term care, every role is critical to resident well-being. Whether it is direct nursing care, dietary preparation, housekeeping, activities coordination, or administrative support, every team member contributes directly to our residents' quality of life. Recognizing this interconnectedness means ensuring our staff members know their individual contributions are seen and valued.

We actively foster an open-door environment where staff voices are heard, feedback is welcomed, and achievements both big and small are celebrated. From routine team recognitions to simple, daily words of gratitude, building a supportive workplace is an ongoing priority. When employees feel respected and acknowledged, that positive energy directly translates to higher morale and exceptional resident care.

While leadership provides direction and structure, the true backbone of the IOOF Home is our incredible team of caregivers and support personnel. We are remarkably fortunate to employ such a hardworking, resilient, and caring group of individuals who truly believe in our core mission: to provide dignified, compassionate care to those in need.

Working in long-term care demands both clinical expertise and deep personal



empathy. Our staff consistently goes above and beyond standard duties to form meaningful connections with our residents, turning our facility into a true home. They bring patience, kindness, and professionalism to every shift, ensuring that each resident feels safe, comfortable, and respected.

This shared dedication creates a distinct workplace atmosphere where colleagues support one another during challenging moments and celebrate successes together. It is this commitment to our mission that makes the IOOF Home not just a great place to receive care, but a great place to build a career.

Another major contributor to our selection as an Employer of Choice is the philosophy that drives our interdisciplinary leadership team. Composed of dedicated individuals bringing diverse, knowledgeable backgrounds in clinical care, administration, human resources, operations, and facility management, our leadership team operates on a unified principle: never assign a task to a team member that you aren't willing to step up and do yourself.

Being recognized as an Employer of Choice in North Iowa is both a proud milestone and a reminder to keep improving. We remain committed to investing in our workforce through ongoing professional development, competitive benefits, robust safety protocols, and continuous efforts to maintain a healthy work-life balance for our employees.

To our incredible staff: this honor belongs to you. Your hard work, compassion, and commitment to excellence make the IOOF Home an Employer of Choice today and every day. As we look to the future, we

remain dedicated to upholding these values, supporting one another, and continuing our vital work in service of those who need us most.



A Truly Wonderful Place to Live and Work

I.O.O.F. HOME & COMMUNITY THERAPY CENTER

If you're looking for a rewarding position, working alongside some of the loveliest people you'll ever meet, then a job at I.O.O.F. Home & Community Therapy Center could be perfect for you! We are as dedicated to our staff as we are to our community members.

Get in touch and find out more about available opportunities to work at IOOF Home.

Visit us at
www.ioofhome.com/careers

The Experience Starts on the Inside

CLtel was named an Employer of Choice for 2026.

We're proud of the recognition. Our employees nominated us. They know what happens when the meeting ends and whether the values written on the wall actually make it into an ordinary Thursday.

Customers Experience

Your Culture

CLtel provides Internet, phone and technology services throughout North Iowa. Those services depend on fiber, electronics, software and some remarkably complicated technology.

But customers experience CLtel through the people.

It's the person who answers the phone when something isn't working. The technician who walks into a home. The employee who notices something unusual and asks another question. The person who promises to call back and actually does.

Those interactions may last only a few minutes, but they tell a customer almost everything they need to know about a company.

Which means creating a great customer experience has to begin long before a customer calls.

It starts with creating an environment where employees are trusted to care.

Give Good People

Room to Be Good

There's an interesting temptation in business to create a process for everything. Processes matter. Standards matter. Training matters.

But eventually, an employee will encounter a situation nobody anticipated.

That's where culture takes over.

At CLtel, we want employees to have the confidence to ask, "What would I want someone to do if this were happening to me?"

Sometimes the answer is taking another five minutes to help someone understand their technology. Maybe it's catching a problem before the customer knows there is one. Sometimes it's bringing in another employee who knows the answer.

And sometimes it's simply slowing down and listening.

We want people to solve the problem in front of them, not merely complete the task

assigned to them.

That requires trust.

Give good people room to make good decisions and something interesting happens. They begin taking ownership of experiences rather than transactions.

The Little Things Aren't Little

Some of our favorite stories at CLtel would probably never appear on a spreadsheet.

They're small.

An employee notices something that doesn't look right and fixes it. A technician spends a few extra minutes making sure everything works before leaving a home. A CSR writes a note to a customer because they're still thinking about a conversation from earlier in the day.

No single moment is particularly dramatic.

For multiple consecutive years, people across North Iowa have voted CLtel Best Internet/Cable. We've always considered that recognition an enormous compliment because it comes from the people we serve.

Now our employees have helped name CLtel an Employer of Choice.

Maybe those two things aren't unrelated.

The experience a customer has with a company is often a reflection of the experience employees have within it.

People who feel trusted are more willing to take ownership. People who know their work matters are more likely to notice the details. People who care about one another tend to extend that same care to customers.

Culture travels.

Working Where You Live

Being a local company adds another dimension to that responsibility. The communities we serve are also the communities where many of us live.

Our customers aren't account numbers from somewhere across the country. They're people we see at the grocery store, school events, and restaurants around town.

When something goes wrong, we understand that it isn't simply a service issue.

The Internet connection that isn't working might belong to someone trying to work from home. The downtown business having phone trouble might be trying to take care of its own customers. The person calling with a question may simply be overwhelmed

by technology and need someone willing to help.

Knowing the community makes those moments personal.

And it gives the work purpose beyond providing a service.

Chosen by the People

Who Know Us Best

Every company gets to describe its own culture.

Employees get to decide whether that description is true.

That's what makes being named an Employer of Choice particularly meaningful to us.

It doesn't mean we're perfect. Good workplaces aren't finished products. They keep changing because the people inside them keep finding ways to make them better.

But this recognition tells us the people who know CLtel beyond the advertisements, technology, and logo believe this is a place worth choosing.



We're grateful for the award.

Because if there's one thing we've learned, it's that the experience customers have with CLtel starts long before we answer the phone or knock on the door.

It starts with the people on the other side.

CHOSEN BY THE PEOPLE WHO KNOW US BEST



2026 EMPLOYERS OF CHOICE

Looks like our employees love it here. And that means more to us than just about any award could. Good people. Meaningful work. A company that cares about the communities we call home. Don't take our word for it. Ask them. Come work with us. CLtel.com/careers



PRITCHARD COMPANIES



“For more than a century, Pritchard Companies has been built on the belief that taking care of people comes first. Being named an Employer of Choice reinforces our commitment to creating a workplace where employees are respected, supported, and empowered to grow. We're proud of this recognition, but even more proud of the people who earned it.”

- JOE PRITCHARD

A HISTORY OF EXCELLENCE

For more than 110 years, Pritchard Companies has built its reputation on trust, family values, and a steadfast commitment to people. What began in 1913 as a single Ford dealership has grown into a diversified transportation company with more than 350 employees serving customers across multiple states.

While our business has evolved over five generations, one thing has remained constant: our people are at the heart of everything we do. As a fifth-generation family-owned business, we lead with the values of faith, family, and community, fostering a culture where employees feel valued, supported, and empowered to grow.

Being named an Employer of Choice reflects that commitment and the dedicated team members who bring our values to life every day. Our legacy of excellence extends far beyond vehicles and transportation. It is built on strengthening communities, investing in our people, and ensuring future generations have the opportunities and support they need to succeed.

Pritchard Companies is proud to be an Employer of Choice, continuing a tradition of excellence that has spanned more than a century.



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An Employer Of Choice—A Workplace Where People Thrive

CLEAR LAKE, IA – Being recognized as one of Northern Iowa’s Employers of Choice is an honor that reflects what has mattered most to Clear Lake Bank & Trust since 1934—our people.

For more than 90 years, Clear Lake Bank & Trust has been a locally owned family business built on strong relationships, exceptional service and a commitment to the communities we call home. That same commitment extends to our employees, creating a culture where people are supported, valued and encouraged to grow throughout their careers.

Our workplace culture has also earned statewide recognition. We are proud to have been named a Des Moines Register Top Workplace for 16 consecutive years—an achievement based on employee feedback that speaks to the environment we’ve worked hard to create.

With four locations serving Clear Lake, Garner and Mason City, we believe our success is measured not only by the financial services we provide, but by the positive impact we have had in North Iowa. We encourage our employees to be active in their communities through local chambers of commerce, schools, nonprofit organizations and civic groups because we know strong communities are built by engaged people.

We also invest in our employees by offering competitive benefits designed to support both their personal and professional well-being. Team members enjoy generous paid vacation, holidays, sick leave and volunteer time, a comprehensive wellness program with health club membership reimbursement, and a 6% employer match on our 401(k) plan. Employees are also invited to help shape the future of the bank by serving on committees focused on technology, marketing, wellness, training,



compliance and other strategic initiatives. We’re always looking for people who bring positive energy, professionalism, integrity and a commitment to lifelong learning. While experience is valuable, we believe attitude, character and a genuine passion for serving others are what truly make a difference.

“Our people are the reason we’ve been able to earn recognitions like Employer of Choice and Top Workplace year after year,” said Paul Stevenson, President of Clear Lake Bank & Trust. “We’re intentional about creating a culture where employees feel supported, empowered and appreciated. When we invest in our people, they invest in our customers and our communities—and that’s what makes Clear Lake Bank & Trust such a special place to build a career.”

As we continue to grow, we invite individuals who share our values to join our team. If you’re looking for a career where your work

matters, your ideas are welcomed and your community involvement is encouraged, we’d love to meet you.

We’re honored to be recognized as one of Northern Iowa’s Employers of Choice— a recognition that reflects the dedication of

our employees and the culture we’ve built together.

Founded in 1934, Clear Lake Bank and Trust Company is a locally owned, full-service bank with four offices in Clear Lake, Garner, and Mason City.



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clearlakebank.bank

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