# BUSINESSJOURNa

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December 2020



Wells Enterprises CEO Mike Wells All of us at L & L Builders would like to thank our many clients and subcontracting partners for the relationships and support in 2020 and we want to wish you and your families a

Happy & Healthy New Year!

Merry Christmas and



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# **BusinessJournal**

Chad Pauling, publisher Dave Dreeszen, editor

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Index

Cover Story .....

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**ON THE** COVER

**Tim Hynds, Sioux City Journal** 

Mike Wells, the newly named chair of The Siouxland Initiative, speaks during an interview on Nov. 12 in the offices of the Siouxland Chamber of Commerce. Wells is the president and CEO of Wells Enterprises in Le Mars. The Siouxland Initiative is the Chamber's economic development arm.



Rush Hour Connect ......page 5

.....page 4

2523 Dakota Avenue, SSC Prime corner property on Dakota Ave with high traffic count. There are 3 buildings on the property. The front building is 2,436 sf, tool shed is 392 sf & the detached garage is 960 sf. Can be purely investment or your business can use all or part of the building & rent the rest.



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Ribbon Cuttings ...... pages 5-8

Chamber News.....page 9

Siouxland Initiative Board .....page 10

#### 422 Pierce Street

An exciting downtown opportunity to lease this excellent well-built historical 2-story commercial building. Main floor offers 3,719 sf w/ access from 5th St & Pierce St. Space may be demised. 2nd floor has 3,719 sf as well. Basement vault & dumb waiter connects the floors. Landlord is offering an aggressive & generous tenant improvement allowance w/acceptable lease

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600 Stevens Port Dr. Dakota Dunes One River Place is a 3-story, 31,000 sf, Class A office building for sale in the Dakota Dunes Business Park. Includes 15 executive suites on the first floor as well as some larger spaces. There have been many building updates plus it is in a great location just off of I-29

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## **CEO** expresses optimism in region as he leads Siouxland Initiative board

#### **MASON DOCKTER**

Business Journal staff writer SIOUX CITY - From Mike Wells' perspective, perhaps the hardest part of an awful 2020 was the mood of the public after month after month of hardships.

"The overall sadness that people have – if there's a phrase that I hear used more often than not right now, if you ask people how they're doing, they're just like, 'I'm just sad," Wells said.

"That feeling sadness - I wouldn't say hopelessness yet but just not knowing what to do biggest crisis we're dealing with, both locally as well as nationally," he added.

Wells, 61, is the president and CEO of Wells Enterprises, the Le Mars-based maker of Blue Bunny brand ice cream and frozen treats. as well as other brands. With over 3,000 employees in Le Mars, the privately-held company is the second-largest employer in the region.

In November, Mike Wells became the board chair of The Siouxland Initiative, succeeding D.

Douglas Rice of Security National Bank. Wells was previously the vice-chair of TSI, the economic development arm of the Siouxland Chamber of Commerce.

In previous years, TSI's primary focus has been to encourage a set of related goals: To encourage new businesses to come to the region, to support existing businesses, to encourage workers to move here and keep young people happy so they won't move away, and to encourage the development of housing for those workers.

Earlier this year, the COVID-19 to change it, I would say is the pandemic turned metro Sioux City metro's prior workforce issues on its head. The unemployment rate, which had been as low as 2 percent during Rice's tenure, spiked to as high as 9.5 percent in April before settling back down. The region has since bounced back, with the jobless rate for October falling to 2.8 percent, down from 3.7 percent in September. The current levels are considered full employment, according to workforce officials.

PLEASE SEE MIKE WELLS, PAGE 11

Tim Hynds, Business Journal Mike Wells, the newly named chair of The Siouxland board, stands Nov, 12 in front of a display of photographs of past chairs in the offices of the Siouxland Chamber of Commerce. Wells is the president and CEO of Wells

GRATEFUL FOR YOUR BUSINESS

Dairy in Le Mars. The Siouxland Initiative is the chamber's economic development arm.



#### 712-276-2104 info@sbtsiouxcity.com signsbytomorrow.com/siouxcity

# **RushHourConnect**



The Hilton Garden Inn, Crave, Jolly's On The River, and the Sioux City Marina jointly hosted the Siouxland Chamber's October's Rush Hour connect. Attendees were able to see the sleek renovations done in the Hilton Garden Inn's guest rooms and meeting spaces. They also can look forward to changes to the lobby spaces in the near future. Crave catered the event with an amazing sushi boat and other appetizers and beverages. The team at Hilton with beautiful river views, 123 rooms and 8,000 square feet of conference space, is prepared to accommodate all business and leisure needs.

# **RibbonCutting**



A green ribbon was cut to welcome the inaugural Sky West flight from Denver to Sioux City and to send off the first return flight. Pictured cutting the ribbon are Mike Collett, airport director and assistant city manager; Wes Norrocks, Sky West, manager of corporate communications; Andy Miller, Sky West fleet optimization supervisor; Barbara Sloniker, Siouxland Chamber of Commerce executive vice president, and Dave Bernstein, Sioux Gateway Airport Board of Trustees president. Sky West offers one daily round-trip flight to and from Sioux Gateway Airport and Denver International Airport.



Mike Clausen

**HBA** President

Contractors Supply

#### REMODELING YOUR HOME SAFELY DURING COVID-19

The pandemic has upended many activities; however, contractors are continuing to work to modernize homes across the country. Professional

remodelers are taking on extra safety precautions to help meet the needs of home owners during the pandemic. If you're interested in remodeling your home, consider the following steps to help put your mind at ease, so you can comfortably start your next home remodeling project.

#### Find a Professional Remodeler that Prioritizes Safety

If you're ready to start your remodeling project, you'll want to work with a professional committed to keeping you and your family safe during a remodel. The best place to start is by utilizing a directory of professional remodelers. The Home Builders Association of Greater Siouxland has a directory of professional remodelers dedicated to the highest professional and safety standards during the pandemic.

#### Ask Questions About Safety Precautions

After you've narrowed down your list of potential professional remodelers, ask questions related to safety. A qualified remodeler will be forthright and answer any questions you may have about personal protective equipment, social distancing while in your home and other concerns about sanitation or other potential hazards.

#### **Establish an Online Communication Channel**

When you're working with a professional remodeler, you'll have to discuss details about your project from evaluating your design ideas to agreeing to the scope of work. Talk to your remodeler about what areas of the planning process can be discussed online instead of meeting in person. Some remodelers may even request a virtual tour of your home through a video call. Photos, design ideas, measurements and estimates can also be shared electronically. If you must meet with your contractor in person, practice social distancing and wear a face covering.

#### Discuss Your Living Arrangements During Construction

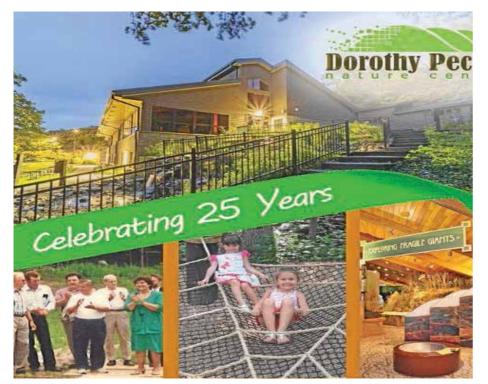
If you're working from home or if you have kids who are distance learning, tell your contractor. A professional will provide guidance on how to minimize significant disruptions, including those related to plumbing or electrical work. If you have small children, most professionals will be willing to remove tools at the end of each work day or be placed out of reach as an extra safety precaution. A contractor can also erect temporary walls to minimize dust in your primary living areas.

The most important thing to remember if you're moving forward with a remodeling project during the pandemic is to keep an open line of communication with your contractor via video conference or phone call and be flexible. Your remodeler may take extra time to ensure extensive cleaning while undergoing your project. Due to the nature of the pandemic, other unexpected delays may occur. A dose of extra patience may be required during this time, but a professional remodeler will remain committed to safety without jeopardizing quality workmanship.

To find a remodeler in the Siouxland area, visit www. siouxlandhba.com/members.

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# **Ribbon**Cuttings



The Dorothy Pecaut Nature Center celebrated its 25th anniversary by releasing three rehabilitated birds of prey back to the wild in Woodbury County.



The Siouxland Chamber of Commerce was one of more than 35 Siouxland businesses who handed out candy at the Tyson Event Center's night of trick or treating fun. Businesses were socially distanced around two levels of the Tyson Events Center and more than a thousand people, children, and parents took part in the costumed event by strolling the one-way path to each business to collect their treats and do some tricks.





# **Ribbon**Cuttings



Maude's Pizza and Ice Cream Parlor is now open in the Southern Hills Mall at 4400 Sergeant Road. Pictured cutting the ribbon are owner Jason Shiffer and manager Jeremy Nicolls. Stop in and check out their 80s themed arcade, inflatables, and award winning pizza and ice cream. All day passes are available for the arcade.



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Screen 'N Go bundle consists of: Temperature Scanning Clock with Mounting Box Touch Screen Tablet with Mounting Case Stylus Pen

Keep Track of Important Information... Keep your Employees Safe!





It was a Green and Red Coat welcome for new Siouxland Chamber member, Acu-Plus Chiropractic. Pictured are Teresa Jans, clinic director, Dr. Tyler Peterson, owner and chiropractor, and Dr. Sarah Peterson, owner, chiropractor, and acupuncturist. The Acu-Plus Chiropractic clinic is located at 1901 Cornhusker Drive, Suite 205 (by Gamestop) in South Sioux City. Through chiropractic, acupuncture, and more, the practice will help you navigate through pain relief and on to a life of active prevention and wellness.

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# **RibbonCuttings**



The Hilton Garden Inn, 1132 Larsen Park Road, celebrated its sleek renovations completed in the Sioux City hotel's guest rooms and meeting spaces with a recent ribbon cutting. Pictured cutting the ribbon are General Manager Alan Clark and Director of Sales Carrie Elsbecker.



A recent ribbon-cutting celebrated the grand opening of new Siouxland Chamber member, High Ground Café and Espresso Bar, 202 N. Derby Lane in North Sioux City. Pictured are Allie Wohlert, Taylor Clarey, Rodaya Cottrell, owner Corey Larkin, Shelby Essig and Jared Martin. High Ground offers the highest quality, in-store roasted coffee, acai bowls, puffles, flatbread, quiche, soups and salads. Come for Sunday breakfast or bring your laptop and drink some wine and local craft beer.



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## **ChamberAnniversaries**

**30 YEARS - 1990** 

**HENJES CONNER & WILLIAMS PC** Jason Bockelmann, Dakota Dunes

25 YEARS - 1995

**BEN FISH TIRE CO.** Sarilye Atlas, Sioux City

**COLDWELL BANKER** Julie Skaff-Gregg, Sioux City

**SCREEN BUILDERS** Brenda Perrin, Cherokee, Iowa

15 YEARS - 2005

**IOWA POISON CONTROL CENTER** Linda Kalin, Sioux City

10 YEARS - 2010 BAIRD Mark Stuck, Sioux City

5 VEARS - 2015 **NICHOLS RISE & COMPANY LLP** 

**PIONEER BANK - PIERCE ST.** Vic Hendriks, Sioux City

**PRAIRIE PEDIATRICS & ADOLESCENT CLINIC** - GLENN AVE. Sioux Citv

SECURITY NATIONAL BANK - MORNINGSIDE WOODRIVER ENERGY, LLC Laura Pratt, Sioux City

**SECURITY NATIONAL BANK - MOTOR BANK** Jean Hauger, Sioux City

**SECURITY NATIONAL BANK - NORTHSIDE** Jennifer Pennings, Sioux City

> SIOUXLAND COALITION AGAINST HUMAN TRAFFICKING Linda Holub, Sioux City

SIOUXLAND MENTAL HEALTH

WELLS FARGO BANK NA - SOUTHERN HILLS Caroline White, Sioux City

WELLS FARGO BANK NA - WESTSIDE

Craig Gertsch, Lincoln, Nebraska

Rick Maxfield, Sergeant Bluff

**MIDSTATES BANK** Dean Lafrentz, Sergeant Bluff **MUTUAL OF AMERICA FINANCIAL GROUP** 

Scott Bieber, South Sioux City Sheila Martin, Sioux City

The following businesses and organizations are celebrating milestone anniversaries as Siouxland Chamber of Commerce investors.

Laura McIntire, Sioux City

**NewChamberInvestors J & J COINS & COLLECTIBLES** 

ACE PROPERTY PROFESSIONALS LLC Faith Hopp, South Sioux City

**MAUDE'S PIZZA & ICE CREAM PARLOR** Jason Shiffer, Sioux City

HOLIDAY CHEER LIGHTING Austin Tonner, Sioux City

FIESTA 97.1 FM Joaquin Garza El Chulo, Sioux City

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**KARS DETAIL CENTER** 

MAJOR'S Jesus Sanchez, Sioux City

Justin Grimm, Omaha



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#### **Siouxland Business Journal, December 2020** 9

# **Siouxland Initiative names 2020-21 board of directors**

The Siouxland Initiative has announced its board of directors for the 2020-

Inc., is

board chair.

ing board

Return-



Wells

members are John Gleeson of Klinger Companies; Jim Jensen of Great West Casualty Company; Kathryn Kunert of MidAmerican Energy; Kevin McManamy of United Real Estate Solutions Inc.; Lance rity National Bank; Regina Morgan of Ho-Chunk Inc.; Terry Murrell of and Charese Yanney of Western Iowa Tech Com- Guarantee Roofing & Sidmunity College; Doug ing.



terprises Morgan Murrell

**McManamy** Palmer

Palmer of Tegra Corporation; Doug Rice of Secu-**Roth** of empirical foods;





Kunert



Jensen Gleeson

### **Catholic Charities** partners with psychiatrist

SIOUX CITY - Catholic combined resi- Ata Charities of the Diocese of Sioux City has announced a atry and family partnership with psychiatrist Dr. Nesrin Abu Ata. Dr. Abu Ata is available for medication consults for Catholic Charities clients by telehealth at all locations across the diocese.

Dr. Abu Ata is a boardcertified psychiatrist. She is also a board-certified family medicine physician and holds further certificates of training from the Harvard Program in Refugee Trauma and the American Association for Community Psychiatry. She has done further training with the Center for Mind Body Medicine.

Dr. Abu Ata completed her medical school training at the Medical School for International Health in Israel, and then went on to complete a dency in psychi-

medicine at the Univer- and in partnership with sity of Iowa Hospitals and Catholic Charities and Clinics. She is currently Rosecrance Jackson Center.

completing her fellowship training in integrative psychiatry at the Integrative Psychiatry Institute.

Currently, Dr. Abu Ata provides psychiatric care through her own practice, Mind; Alchemy, PLLC



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# **BE KIND & GENEROUS. Be a Goodfellow!**

Rice

Journal Goodfellow Charities, Inc. is a 106 year old local tradition that provides gifts and books to thousands of underprivileged Siouxland children during the Christmas season every year.

This local non-profit is led by Sioux City Journal employees, supported by volunteers and completely funded by generous businesses, organizations, and individuals with strong ties to our community.

Show your support for Siouxland and become a Goodfellow by choosing to support in any way you can.



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#### **DONATIONS ARE APPRECIATED!**

Volunteer opportunities are available. Contact us to learn how you can get involved with Journal Goodfellow Charities, Inc.

SAVE THE DATE: 85th Annual Little Yellow Dog Auction • Saturday, December 12, 2020 • The Warrior Hotel in Downtown Sioux City • 12:00 PM Noon

## **Mike Wells** FROM 4

There are a few reason that Sioux City metro has been spared the worst of the COVID-19 recession and the accompanying unemployment spike, Wells said. One is that food manufacturers are a major employer and tend to be more resilient consumers still eat even when times are tough. The metro area also has a diversity of manufacturers and businesses beyond the food sector.

"The challenge that a lot of communities our size have, and I think Sioux City is very fortunate that we don't suffer from this, a lot of communities our size, and maybe a little smaller, suffer from, they only really have one sector that is represented from an employment opportunity," Wells said. "Sioux City has a really strong base of heavy manufacturing."

With the unemployment rate easing, the old issue of a too-small labor pool (skilled workers in particular) and stagnant population numbers seemingly remains as relevant as ever, and the overall thrust of TSI's goals remains largely unchanged.

housing front, with some new apartment complexes and housing developments emerging in Sioux City and in surrounding communities.

TSI continues to support "quality of life" improvements in the metro – things like walking trails, the Chris Larsen Park Riverfront project, Cone Park, the Expo Center that hopefully will make the Sioux City metro more attractive to workers. "I don't think you can ever go wrong in focusing on enhancing peoples' quality of life," Wells said.

Rice, Well's predecessor, denounced the "Debbie Downer" attitude toward Siouxland – the idea that the Sioux City metro is unpleasant, boring or devoid of opportunities and thus difficult to market as a some people feel like they're in a cave right 70 percent of their capacity.

LUMBING & HEATING



Mike Wells, the newly named chair of The Siouxland Initiative, speaks Nov. 12 at the offices of the Siouxland Chamber of Commerce. Wells is the president and CEO of Wells Enterprises in Le Mars.

and said the grass isn't really any greener in other places.

"Yeah, we don't have mountains and we don't have beaches, but man we have great education, we've got good infrastructure, we've got affordable housing," Wells said.

On the subject of 2020, Wells expressed a good deal of confidence that things will get better.

"A tunnel and a cave can feel a lot the same. The difference is, when you get to the end of a cave, there's nowhere to go, and when you're in a tunnel, if you just keep moving through, there's light at the other end," he said. "I get the feeling that

Some progress has been made on the place to live – when he began his tenure two now, but truly, we're in a tunnel. We'll get years ago. Wells spoke of his own travels, through this, we'll be stronger as a nation and as individuals."

#### **WELLS IN THE TIME OF COVID**

Wells Enterprises had its troubles during the pandemic, much as other companies did. But the company was in a strong position to weather this particular storm, and Mike Wells said the ice-cream maker in a stronger position now than they were at the beginning of the year.

During April and May, when the pandemic's stranglehold on the country was

Despite the struggles on the production end, demand was strong for Wells products, as ice cream and related comfort foods have historically been favored during times of hardship and uncertainty.

"The ice cream category during this pandemic has seen as much as a 30 percent uptick in demand," Wells said.

The company, which expanded its production capacity and footprint with a series of acquisitions last year, responded by implementing new, intensive safety protocols for its more than 4,000 workers. By November the virus was spreading as aggressively, if not more so, than it had in the spring, both locally and nationally -"And we're staffed almost to full staffing," Wells said.

"I can unequivocally say that our work environment is not a place that people are contracting COVID," he added.

On the whole, Wells said he embraces all of the challenges the pandemic has brought about. Last year, was a "really comfortable year" for the company, Wells said. This year, with all its disruptions, proved to be "a good reset button."

The events of 2020 proved to be an opportunity to test a saying Wells likes to use - "Never miss the opportunity to take ad-

vantage of a crisis." Put another way, a crisis can be used as a catalyst for positive change. "There's so many people that look at

2020 and they can't help but just look at what they've lost, what they've missed. And I just can't help but look at what we've experienced - we are more educated, we're more aware, as an organization, we've created a resilience, we've relied upon ourselves, we've enhanced our business systems and processes and kept people safe along the way," Wells said. "I just - wouldn't wish it on anybody, but I'm a firm believer that you've got to embrace at its early height, absenteeism at Wells every circumstance you find yourself in. reached record highs, Wells said, and the I'm personally and professionally so much company struggled to produce even 60 or better for what we've gone through this year."



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