Housing starts
After 2021 slowdown, construction heats up

INSIDE THIS MONTH’S ISSUE:

Developer to breathe new life into hotel
Two flight schools open in metro area
L & L Builders are thrilled that the Kingsley/Pierson community are captivated by the new school gymnasium and fitness center addition!

“The Kingsley-Pierson CSD & it’s board of directors are extremely pleased with the quality of work completed by L & L Builders and their construction team. The whole timing of this major construction project, with the pandemic & supply chain issues, was challenging in itself. However, even though there were challenges during construction, L & L Builders did quality work, listened to our input, and were a pleasure to work with. They certainly exceeded our expectations & now our school & community has a high quality fitness center & gymnasium that will be put to good use for years to come. I would highly recommend L & L Builders for your next construction project.” Scott Bailey, Superintendent/High School Principal
UNIVERSAL DESIGN FEATURES POPULAR AMONG HOME BUYERS

The number of baby boomers, people ages 65 and older, in the United States has increased steadily during the past century. Many baby boomers are in the process of deciding if they want to stay in their homes and remodel to accommodate their changing abilities. A recent National Association of Home Builders (NAHB) survey found that recent and prospective home buyers desire several accessibility features that are part of universal design.

Universal design is the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design. People who have different needs can all enjoy the same home, even when their needs change. Many concepts of universal design support ‘aging in place’ home modifications.

According to the survey, a strong majority (80%) of buyers wanted a full bath on the main level of their home, 42% of whom consider it so essential they would be highly unlikely to buy a home without it. A full bath on the main level has been the most wanted accessibility feature in every iteration of the NAHB survey going back to 2003.

The second and third most popular accessibility features are doorways at least 3 feet wide and hallways at least 4 feet wide, wanted by 77% and 73%, respectively, of home buyers.

Other accessibility features that ranked essential or desirable for a majority (more than 60%) of buyers are: non-slip floor surfaces (65%), an entrance without steps (64%), and bathroom aids, such as grab bars or seating in the shower (61%). The only accessibility feature wanted by less than a majority of buyers is lower countertops (43%).

Universal design is related to aging-in-place remodeling, and a Certified Aging-in-Place Specialist (CAPS) can help you remodel your home using universal design concepts. The NAHB Remodelers — in collaboration with Home Innovation Research Labs, NAHB 55+ Housing Council and AARP — developed the CAPS program to address the growing number of consumers who require these modifications.

Although most CAPS professionals are remodelers, an increasing number are general contractors, designers, architects, and health care consultants. To find a CAPS professional who can help you, visit www.siouxlandhba.com/members.
From hotel to senior housing

Georgia firm plans $20M investment in downtown former-Sioux City hotel

MASON DOCKTER
mdockter@siouxcityjournal.com

SIOUX CITY – A Georgia-based developer has announced plans to transform the former Sioux City Hotel & Conference Center into an upscale downtown senior living facility. Fortune MD, headquartered in Atlanta, acquired the 12-story building at 707 Fourth St., through an LLC called Amera SL of Sioux City, for $5.35 million in late October. The former owner of the hotel, CSC Hospitality LLC, had paid $4.5 million for it less than three years earlier.

Fortune MD COO Hampton Obier said the former hotel, which had about 200 rooms, will be converted into a 160-room senior living facility, with independent living, assisted living and memory care. The facility will be called Amera Gardens.

Obier said his firm is planning to spend around $20 million on substantial renovations at the once-popular hotel, which had suffered declining fortunes for years.

“It's going to be a major overhaul. The interior of the building will not look like it once was. It will be outfitted to really bring in the old and the new,” he said. “It's going to have a nice, modern touch. Cleanliness is very, very important, so all the surfaces will be remade, because cleanliness is one of the most important things that we need to provide our residents.”

By the mid-to-latter part of this year, Obier said, the facility should have a showroom open for prospective residents to tour. Construction should be finished by either late this year or early 2023, with a grand opening that spring.

The former hotel was ideally suited for upscale senior living, Obier said – it's in the heart of Sioux City's busy downtown, very near (and connected via the skywalk to) MercyOne Siouxland Medical Center and the Sioux City Convention Center.

“It’s just a beautiful spot to allow seniors to engage with their community and just remain active,” he said. For seniors, the opportunity to reside in downtown Sioux City is “a tremendous value proposition,” he said.

Amera Gardens, which will be a private-pay facility, will offer studios, one-bedroom and two-bedroom units at priced at what Obier described as the “market rate.” Existing rooms in the hotel will be reconfigured or adjoined, with living spaces becoming larger in the process.

The owners are envisioning various amenities, including a salon, a barber-shop, a theater, a library, lounges, a memory garden, places for activities, a large dining room and a private dining room for visitors and families. There will also be exam rooms where outside doctors (not employed by Amera Gardens) can care for residents.

No publicly accessible commercial spaces are planned.

“Even though the building itself does have a public-facing sense to it, it will just for the residents there, because we have to protect the safety of our residents,” Obier said.

Mayor Bob Scott said he’s pleased with the new owners’ plans for the building.

“I think it's a great deal, if it all pans out. I think it'll be great. It's better than having it just sit there doing nothing,” he said. “I hope they can get it pulled off, I really do.”

The mayor agreed with the developers’ assessment that senior housing is a productive use for the property.

“I think it’s probably better than a hotel right there, to tell you the truth, simply because there's a need for more housing,” Scott said.

City Economic Development Director Marty Dougherty stressed that the city’s involvement in the project has been minimal, limited to parking and skywalk-related matters.

The Sioux City Hotel & Conference Center, whose owners once had grand plans of their own for the property, ceased operations last year, shortly before the sale was finalized. The new owners learned about the property well before the hotel closed down and had toured it as early as November 2020. The 12-story hotel opened in early 1975 as the Hilton Inn on the Plaza. When it was new, the hotel had a reputation for plush elegance, with chic interiors and cocktail waitresses in velour dresses at the 12th floor Showroom Lounge; the property attracted major meetings, conventions, galas and other events. In the spring of 1975 it had meetings booked as far in advance as March, 1978.

In more recent years the hotel had operated as a Howard Johnson. At the end of 2018, an entity called CSC Hospitality purchased the former Howard Johnson and renamed it the Sioux City Hotel & Conference Center, which was the same
name the hotel had carried for a time before it was the Howard Johnson.

Built as part of a downtown urban renewal campaign in the 1970s, the hotel was once one of the premier hotels in Sioux City, but the property had fallen on hard times long before CSC purchased it. City leaders blamed the hotel’s decrepitude and poorly-run operations for a loss of business at the city-owned Convention Center, which is across the street and connected by the skywalk.

The hotel had been the only one connected to the Convention Center, until the opening of the Courtyard by Marriott hotel immediately adjacent to the Convention Center in 2019.

The former Hilton has changed hands repeatedly in recent years. After one transfer in ownership, it was called the Sioux City Hotel & Conference Center, the same name as it was later given after the 2019 sale.

In 2014, the hotel went through foreclosure and a sheriff’s sale. A year later, the hotel became affiliated with the chain that owns the Howard Johnson brand.

A succession of owners attempted various upgrades and renovations, including new beds, flat-screen TVs, mini-refrigerators and microwave ovens in guest rooms and extensive pool repairs.

“Many people tried over the years, but it just hadn’t worked out,” Scott said.

Bob Zachariah, the former hotel’s managing director and a longtime veteran of the hotel industry, said in 2019 that the hotel’s then-new owners had big plans to restore its yesteryear glamour, including extensive, 14-month renovations that would cost “quite a few million dollars.”

Zachariah said he hoped someday the hotel would again fly the flag of a national chain – after it lost the Howard Johnson brand, it became one of the few hotels in Sioux City not affiliated with a national brand.

The COVID-19 pandemic struck the following year, and occupancy rates of hotels across the country were hit hard.

The 12-story building at 707 Fourth St., which opened in early 1975 as a Hilton hotel and has more recently flown a series of hotel flags, is now envisioned as a senior living facility by a Georgia-based developer.

Kohler Kitchens
Renovating your kitchen or bathroom is one of the smartest ways to increase the value of your home, as well as your day-to-day enjoyment of it. Visit our online gallery today to explore the possibilities for yourself, and chat with a design expert about the right remodeling fit for your needs and budget.
MASON DOCKTER
Business Journal staff writer

SIoux CITY – Mero Sioux City economic leaders expressed optimism that new housing development will heat up this year after a pandemic-fueled slowdown in 2021.

Last year, the number of new housing units added in Sioux City fell more than 80 percent, with 103 permits taken out for new single-family or multi-family units, compared to a record 521 in 2020.

The year-over-year decline in South Sioux City was far starker, although also somewhat misleading, due to the massive, anomalous number of new housing units added in 2020. Twenty dwelling units were added in South Sioux City in 2021, compared to 355 in 2020. The latter figure was unrivalled in data going back to 1980, due mainly to the addition of 334 multi-residential units.

North Sioux City, meanwhile, saw a modest uptick in new housing in 2021, with 31 units added, compared to 21 in the year prior.

Sioux City Economic Development Director Marty Dougherty attributed the slump in Sioux City to a slowdown in the residential housing construction market, itself the result of an enormous increase in the price of building materials.

“We really think that the demand is there and the interest is there. What happened in 2021, basically the entire residential housing construction industry slowed down during the pandemic, due to several factors,” Dougherty said after the numbers came out last month. “Construction materials are just really high. Everybody’s looking for them to come down, and I don’t think they’ve really...
come down too much, just yet.”

Part of the reason Sioux City's 2020 numbers were so good by contrast, Dougherty said, was that many projects in that year were already in the works by the time the pandemic hit, with materials ordered and contracts signed before prices soared. The new housing tallies of recent years, including the high-water mark of 2020, included a significant proportion of multi-family units.

But even with all the new units added in 2020, housing availability in Sioux City has declined markedly.

“If you look at today's market, like what’s on the market for sale, existing housing units in Sioux City, single family – it’s a third to a half less than is typical,” Dougherty said.

Oscar Gomez, assistant city manager in South Sioux City, said demand for housing in South Sioux also is hot and, in some cases, going unmet. There just aren’t enough houses to go around, and the wait list for apartments can be long. Beyond the frustrated home-seekers, the shortage puts a strain on employers.

“Even just with the employers here, like Tyson – if they hire 10 people, if they want to move to South Sioux, there’s nothing available,” Gomez said. “We’re drawing some people that are working at Wells Blue Bunny in Le Mars that, they’re looking for a place to live, and they can't find anything.”

“So there is a demand for housing, it’s just nothing’s available. So whenever something builds, they get sold right away, or whenever something sells, even before it’s on the market, they already have an offer on it,” he added.

Housing construction in North Sioux City in the last six years has consisted of a far higher proportion of single-family dwellings than its neighbors to the southeast – counting duplexes and townhomes, the number of new multi-residential units exceeded single-family homes only once, in 2016, with most of the surplus being in the duplex/townhome category. As of last month, the community was working on a housing study to determine what type of housing is most in demand.

Andrew Nilges, executive director of the North Sioux City Economic Development Corporation, said South Dakota's favorable tax climate has lured residents and businesses to the community in the state’s farthest southeastern tip. All that’s missing is a ready supply of homes and apartments.

“We’ve seen a pretty significant increase in demand to be in North Sioux City, and in the state of South Dakota, so we definitely want to make sure that demand is getting met,” Nilges said. “One of the things that our business community especially tells us is, they have employees from outside of North Sioux City who would love to live in the community, but there’s just not as much housing available, especially that workforce/career housing. There’s just not enough of it available.”

Gomez, Dougherty and Nilges all said that, with housing construction ongoing at this very moment or slated to begin in the future in their respective communities, a parade of new homes and apartments are coming down the pipeline.

A 78-unit single-family housing development is in its second phase in South Sioux, and the city is using state funding to help pay for residential infrastructure to help pave the way for about 48 new homes, in addition to an apartment complex that should come on the market soon. In Sioux City, redevelopment of older buildings into apartments should add about 170 units in the first few months of this year. And North Sioux City has purchased 100 acres of land set aside for workforce housing, with space for approximately 500 new residences, plus apartments.

“This is the type of housing that people who work at our local businesses in North Sioux City, that they can afford,” Nilges said. “We think with this land acquisition, we’ll be able to make a pretty significant impact, in terms of addressing workforce housing.”

“We’re actually already seeing a really strong year in 2022, even though we’re only a month into it,” Dougherty said in early February.
Pilot training options grow
Two new programs open in metro Sioux City

DOLLY A. BUTZ
Business Journal staff writer

SIoux City – Looking to meet the growing demand for pilots, two new aviation training programs have opened in metro Sioux City.

Carver Aero, which has a Council Bluffs flight school aligned with the University of Nebraska Omaha’s aviation program, announced in early February it had opened flight training operations at Sioux Gateway Airport.

That same day, Graham Airport said it plans to begin offering pilot training courses in March with the newly reorganized Graham Flying Service.

On top of those two programs, Oracle Aviation, LLC, an Omaha aviation company, has announced it will join Carver Aero’s at Sioux Gateway. Last July, the City Council voted to move forward with the Oracle Aviation Center project and reject an alternative proposal from Hawthorne Global Aviation Services, the current fixed based operator at the airport.

The Oracle Aviation Center project includes a 39,400-square-foot facility, with a minimum of 29,400 square feet of hangar space and a two-level office/training space with 5,000 square feet on two floors. The city has committed to investing $7 million in the construction of the new hangar facility. A $1 million grant from the U.S. Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration will assist with the construction of the hangar facility, offices and other site improvements.

Jerome Howard, chief flight instructor for Carver Aero, is shown with one of the company’s Cessna 182 Skylane airplanes at Sioux Gateway Airport in Sioux City. The company is offering flight instruction from a previously vacant hangar and office suite south of the airport’s commercial terminal.

In North Sioux City, Graham Flying Services is offering pilot training as Graham Field prepares for a major expansion of the privately-owned airport that includes construction of commercial and residential properties with runway access.

Graham, which offers full courses in ground school, currently has 15 students enrolled to fly with the program, according to the statement from Graham Flying Service. Airport manager Stephen Jones said students can expect to train in a Cessna 172 aircraft with a full glass panel and the latest flight technology for avionics. Licensed and certified instructors Scott Taylor and Richard Quandt will be teaching the students.

“Our community is bringing life back to the Graham Airport. This flight training and our development project is so exciting for North Sioux City,” Jones said. “It is an honor to continue the wonderful history of this airport and the Graham family with the opening of Graham Flying Service and the Graham Development. I can’t wait to see new pilots training here at Graham.”

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Chamber Anniversaries

The following are observing anniversaries as Siouxland Chamber of Commerce investors.

40 Years
IVAN K SALMONS DDS
Ivan Salmons
Sioux City

35 Years
F&M BANK
Aaron Gehling
South Sioux City
OFFICE ELEMENTS
Linda Fickbohm
Sioux City

30 Years
SIoux City Gospel Mission
Paul Mahaffie
Sioux City
WESTWOOD NURSING & REHABILITATION CENTER
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New Chamber Investors

GRAZE - A CHARCUTERIE COMPANY
Christina Edwardson
Sioux City

MINK DESIRE BY JAHMO BABY
Antoinette Swan
Sioux City

LIEBER CONSTRUCTION INC.
Rodney Lieber
North Sioux City

SIoux City

COMMUNITY THEATRE
Julie Ferris
Sioux City
LIMITLESS MALE MEDICAL CLINIC
Victor Beamen
Dakota Dunes, S.D.
CNOS PC-SOUTH SIOUX
Suzi Gauzman
South Sioux City

P’S PIZZA HOUSE
Joe Sitzmann

Dakota Dunes, S.D.
CNOS PC-NORTHSIDE
Suzi Gauzman
Sioux City

1ST CHOICE TINTING LLC
Carlos Barajas
Sioux City

CNOS PC/JUSTIN DEANS, DO
Suzi Gauzman
Sioux City

BRAD’S DETAIL
Brad Christiansen

10 Years
J & L STAFFING AND RECRUITING
Kevin Wolff
Sioux City

THOMPSON INTERIOR DESIGN INC.
Nicole Hopers
Sioux City

5 Years
CFO NEXT, INC.
Timm Funk
Sioux City

VILLAGE COOPERATIVE OF SIOUX CITY
Charli Grover
Sioux City

United Way of Siouxland raises $3.2M

SIoux CITY – United Way of Siouxland’s annual campaign raised $3,215,000 with the help of thousands of supporters.

“For a century United Way of Siouxland has created solutions to build a stronger Siouxland. Every year, we see the overwhelming support of people from across our area to allow these vital programs to continue,” Heather Hennings, United Way of Siouxland President, said in a statement.

Please see UNITED, Page 11
MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATES

Since 1998, Mental Health Associates, 2212 Pierce St., has been dedicated to providing excellent care that focuses on mental health and awareness throughout all stages of life. Pictured are Michelle Buhman-Livermore, LISW; Denise Marandola, PhD; Gladys Smith, LISW; and Susanna Shell Phillips, LISW. The practice provides research-based therapeutic services for numerous conditions by highly trained and independently licensed professionals to a variety of age groups.

HILLARY DUNCAN DESIGN

Hillary Duncan started creating jewelry to keep busy during COVID and quickly turned it into a business. Pictured is Hillary’s husband, Daniel Duncan Jr., and mother, Deanne Gibson. Hillary Duncan Design offers handmade polymer clay earrings and necklaces to fit any look. She specializes in custom and unique styles from every day to formal occasions. Her jewelry is currently available at three local boutiques: Rebah Leigh’s Boutique, Sunflower Boutique, and Gypsy Soul Boutique. Visit her new website: https://www.hillaryduncan.com

Winnebago • South Sioux • Emerson
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Call Ethan Lear to have your business card featured here: 712-293-4324
Kroll named president of Pioneer Bank

SERGEANT BLUFF – The Pioneer Bank Board of Directors has named Brian Kroll the 12th president of the bank.

Kroll has served in leadership positions at Pioneer bank for more than 15 years and has been a member of the bank’s board of directors since 2012. His most recent position was executive vice president. “Brian Kroll is well-prepared to serve as Pioneer Bank’s 12th bank president in the bank’s 115-year history. Brian has been a strong leader in our organization for some time now, and this new step will allow for him to use his talents in the continued growth of our company,” CEO Kelly Florke said in a statement.

Florke will remain CEO and will continue serving as the active chairman of the bank’s board of directors.

Kroll serves on various boards throughout Siouxland.

White makes partner at Klass

SIoux City – The Klass Law Firm in Sioux City has announced that Chris C. White became a partner at the firm Jan. 1. Previously he was an associate. Prior to working at Klass, White had worked as an attorney at a civil litigation firm in Aberdeen, South Dakota. In 2013 he became a deputy state’s attorney in Brown County, South Dakota, and in 2016 he was elected the Brown County state’s attorney.

White joined the Klass Law Firm in 2020. He is licensed to practice law in Iowa, South Dakota and Nebraska and is licensed to practice in the U.S. District Court, District of South Dakota and the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Iowa. He maintains a civil litigation practice with a focus on insurance defense, employment law and governmental entity representation.

United

From Page 9

“This year for our 100th anniversary, we asked for everyone to ‘Get on the Bus!’ We asked for people to help us drive the change toward a brighter future. We are so thankful for the generosity of the individuals and businesses who support our community.”

Chad Jensen, Kellee Kresse, and Paul Connor, Tyson Fresh Meats served as the 2021-2022 campaign chairs.

In addition to the annual campaign, Bruce and Linda Kalin made an endowment gift of $100,000 in honor of Kalin’s Indoor Comfort 100-year anniversary. By placing this gift with the Siouxland Community Foundation it will support the needs of others for many, many years to come, according to the statement.

Hennings said that Siouxlanders benefit every day from over 64 local programs supported by United Way. In the last 100 years, Siouxlanders have donated more than $135 million to United Way of Siouxland.

A team of 30-plus volunteers review program effectiveness to invest United Way funds among programs that are having the greatest impact on advancing the health, education, and financial stability of every person in our community, according to the statement.
TOP DEALS OF 2021

**BUSINESS**
Northwest Iowa Portfolio
$7,000,000
13 Convenience Stores
Brokered by Nic Madsen

**LAND**
Graham Airpark Development, NSC
$6,374,768
271 Acres @ $23,537 Per Acre
Brokered by Beau Braunger

**OFFICE**
Riverview Surgical Center, SSC
$3,248,945
8,840 SF @ $367.53 PSF
Brokered by Beau Braunger

**RETAIL**
Floyd Hills Centre, SC
$2,350,000
19,881 SF @ $118.20 PSF
Brokered by Erin Rooney

**MULTI-FAMILY**
Luma Apartments, SC
$2,250,000
87 Units @ $25,862 Per Unit
Brokered by Erin Rooney

**HOSPITALITY**
Cottonwood Inn, SSC
$2,000,000
60 Rooms @ $33,333 Per Room
Brokered by Erin Rooney

**INDUSTRIAL**
429 W 39th St, SSC
$1,511,872
37,500 SF @ $40.31 PSF
Brokered by Nathan Connelly

All five NAI United agents were among the Top 20 Producers out of 383 agents in the Northwest Iowa Regional Board of Realtors. Beau Braunger was #1.