

The Southwest Iowa Shopper

North Zone

Tuesday
April 28th, 2026

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Serving: Audubon, Brayton, Elk Horn, Exira, Gray, Guthrie Center, Hamlin, Kimballton, Panora • Reaching over 6,100 Homes Weekly. Readership 20,250

AUDUBON COUNTY MEMORIAL HOSPITAL & CLINICS

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY MONTH

Who Can Benefit from OT?



Kristi Pottebaum, COTA

ACMH Rehab Services
712-563-5294
www.acmhosp.org

- Neurological Disorders (CVA, TBI, Alzheimer's)
- Degenerative Disorders (Parkinson's, MS, ALS)
- Musculoskeletal Disorders
- Upper Extremity Injuries
- Developmental Delays
- Difficulties with Daily Activities

the ROSE
Fri. and Sat.: 7 p.m. • Sun. 2 p.m.
\$4 Cash only admission

May 1, 2, 3 Project Hail Mary (PG-13)

COMING ATTRACTIONS
May 8 - 10: The Drama (R)
May 15-17: Super Mario Galaxy Movie (PG)
May 22-24: Holy Days (Not Rated)
May 29-31: You, Me & Tuscany (PG-13)

Movies subject to change
✓ Facebook and Instagram

318 Broadway, Audubon
712-563-2008
Facebook: Rose Theater
Online: Rosemovietheater.com

It's Time To Plant!

POTATOES, ONIONS ARE IN.

Bulk garden seeds, mulch; cypress, cedar, red, gold, black, brown
\$6.75 a bag.

Large selection of new pottery, windchimes, hand painted ceramic bird baths.

Red Maple Greenhouse

Home Grown Annuals & Vegetables

3511 White Pole Road | Monday - Friday 9am-6pm
Dexter, IA | Saturday 9am-4pm
515-789-4580 | Sunday 10:30am-4pm

Customer Appreciation Event

Wednesday thru Saturday, May 6, 7, 8 & 9

Sales, Snacks & Coffee Trailer Friday and Saturday



Thank You for Supporting This Small Business!

1875 Pheasant Ave., Audubon, IA • 712-563-2269 • 7 mi. east on 190th, north on Pheasant Ave.
Wednesday - Friday: 10 a.m. - 6 p.m. • Sat. - 10 a.m. - 4 p.m. • Closed Sundays, Mondays & Tuesdays
"Like" us on Facebook and Instagram

molly's
★ home decor
★ clothing
★ & more

Your Ad Could Be Here!

SW Iowa Shopper Advertising Deadline

Deadline for advertising in any of the SW Iowa Shoppers is 5pm Thursday with a camera ready ad. Ads that need created must be submitted by 5pm Wednesday

All SW Iowa Shoppers are published every Tuesday.

Atlantic:
712-243-2624
atlcomposing@gmail.com

Audubon:
712-563-2741
jeannemacn@gmail.com

The Exira-EHK After-Prom committee and Junior Class want to THANK our generous sponsors who helped make the 2026 prom a huge success!

Gold Sponsors \$250+
Atlantic Bottling
Danish Mill Corp.
Elk Horn Kimballton Optimist Club
Exira Pblg., Htg. & Elect.
Kenfield Automotive
Precision Concrete Services
The Iron Shop

Silver Sponsors \$150-\$249
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Drennan Insurance
Exira Care Center
Exira Service & Tire
Extreme Repair
La' James Intl. College
Nishna Valley REC
Olsen's Fuel Supply
Rasmussen, Nelson & Wonio
Twisted Scissors Salon

From 2026

Bronze Sponsors \$50 - \$149
Audubon Co. Memorial Hospital
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Exira Auto Sales
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Larsen Ag
Larsen's Pub
Marne Elk Horn Telephone
Mills Tree Service
Nelson Farm Supply
Shelby County State Bank
Spartan Insurance
Stick It PLLC
Terri's Daycare
The Bakery on Broadway
The Kringle Man Pastries
The Stalk Chiropractic
Troy's Auto Works
Vetter Equipment
Wayne Hansen Real Estate

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- PTO rollover

JOIN OUR QUALITY GROWING COMPANY & BECOME PART OF OUR FAMILY OWNED BUSINESS!

CURRENT OPENINGS

- DAY ROUTE DRIVER
- EVENING LINE HAUL DRIVER (CDL Required - willing to train the right applicant)

Class A - full or part time

OUR SERVICE SAYS IT ALL

800-489-2088, ext. 224
600 LaSalle Ave. • Panama, IA

Community Calendar

The Auditor's Office is now taking absentee ballot request forms for the upcoming June 2, 2026 Primary Election and May 13, 2026 is the first date the ballots can be mailed out.

MONDAY, MAY 4
Creating Hope Together, Mental Health Support Group, ACMH Community Health Center. 6 - 7 p.m.

SATURDAY, MAY 9
Audubon Hobbies Scale Model-Building Contest" 11:30 a.m. - 3 p.m. No entry fee. 321 Broadway St. See ad for details.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 13
Mobile Food Pantry, Our Saviour's Lutheran Church. Doors open at 4 p.m. for registration. 4:30 - 5:30 p.m. Use north door off Leroy St., for access.

MONDAY, MAY 18
Creating Hope Together, Mental Health Support Group, ACMH Community Health Center. 6 - 7 p.m.

FRIDAY, JUNE 12
MRHC hosts Legacy Golf Tournament, Manning-Manilla Golf Course. Check-in begins at 9 a.m. 10 a.m. shotgun start. Lunch provided \$400/registration 4-person team.

WEDNESDAY, July 8
Mobile Food Pantry, Our Saviour's Lutheran Church. Doors open at 4 p.m. for registration. 4:30 - 5:30 p.m. Use north door off Leroy St., for access.

FIRST MONDAY OF THE MONTH
Audubon County Tourism meeting 1:15, ACED Meeting Room.

FIRST TUESDAY OF EACH MONTH
Memorial Building Committee Meeting, 5:30 p.m. at the Memorial Building, Open to the Public.

FIRST AND THIRD MONDAY OF EACH MONTH
Creating Hope Together, Mental Health Support Group. If interested contact Peter Youngren, Facilitator: llrsprrt@gmail.com. Walk-ins welcome! 1st & 3rd Monday of each month, 5-6 p.m. ACMH Community Health Center, 1st floor.

FIRST AND THIRD TUESDAY OF THE MONTH
Caring and Sharing, 413 Tracy St., Audubon, 3 - 5 p.m.

EVERY TUESDAY OF THE MONTH
BINGO - Coon Rapids Legion Building. Doors open at 5:30 p.m., Bingo starts at 6:30 p.m.

SECOND MONDAY OF THE MONTH
Alzheimer Caregiver Support Group meets, AMVC Management Office Training room. 5:30 p.m. Use north parking lot and enter in the NE door. Questions, call Tammy Sauers 712-304-0506.

FIRST SATURDAY OF EACH MONTH THROUGH OCTOBER
Open House Tours of Historic Garst Home Farm with Whiterock Conservancy. Coon Rapids, IA. 712-790-8221 or email: guesinfo@whiterockconservancy.org for more information or questions.

SECOND WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH
H.E.A.L. (Hope Empathy Acceptance Love) Exira Library Meeting room, 10 a.m. to Noon. To support those living with incurable chronic medical conditions that impact quality of life. Contact 712-304-5779 with questions.

FOURTH MONDAY OF THE MONTH
Exira Community Club meeting, Exira Public Library, 6:30 p.m.

FOURTH TUESDAY OF EACH MONTH
Audubon Lions Club Meets, Memorial Building at 6 p.m.

THIRD MONDAY OF EACH MONTH
Parkinson's Support Group meeting, Heritage House Rec Room, Atlantic, 2 p.m.

FOURTH THURSDAY OF EACH MONTH
Audubon County Memorial Hospital Board of Trustees Meeting, Hospital Board Room, Noon.

IOWA NEUROPATHY & PAIN CLINIC

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NOW OFFERING SHOCKWAVE THERAPY

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Owner: Dr. Jason Pudenz, DC

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712.563.4288

For Sale

New Listing: 2059 215th St. 3 BR, 1.5 BA, Opportunity for home or potential business, sitting on 1.27 acres. **\$185,000**

1109 Ridgeway Dr. 3 BR, 2 BA, 1-car attached garage, 0.8-acre lot on a quiet street... **\$140,000**

TOWNHOMES ON THIRD: 718 & 722 Third Ave., 3 BR, 2 BA, 2-car attached garage. One-level living. **\$335,000**

706 N. Arlington St., 2 BR, 3 BA, 2-car attached garage. Fully finished basement. **Price Reduced.....\$235,000**

907 Broadway St., 2 BR, 1 BA, 2-car detached garage. Enjoy brand new construction **Price Reduced.....\$214,900**

We Have Buyers!
Residential Homes • Acreages
Commercial Properties • Farmland
Call today to list your property with us!

HAPPY 90th BIRTHDAY

Evelyn Nelson will celebrate her 90th Birthday on May 3rd, 2026. Her family is honoring her with a card shower.

Help us celebrate Evelyn by sending cards to:
P.O. Box 194, Exira, Iowa 50076

HARLAN COMMUNITY THEATRE PRESENTS:

STEEL MAGNOLIAS

WIAA.LUDUS.COM/200512920

MAY 1 AT 7PM | MAY 2 AT 7PM | MAY 3 AT 2PM
HARLAN COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM

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4216 Main St., Elk Horn, IA 51531 and 110 W. Washington St., Exira, IA 50076
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Abby Rasmussen, Broker Associate
Cell: 712-249-1311
Email: abbyrasmussen@gmail.com
14 Years Experience

Kathi Kilworth, Salesperson
Cell: 712-249-5233
Email: kk1965@metc.net
26 Years Experience

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109 Crystal Springs Rd. Kimballton - \$245,000

Acreage located right off of the highway. 4 bedroom, 2 bath home, vintage character. Completely renovated w/ drywall, insulation, windows, exterior doors, kitchen, stackable main floor laundry, enclosed sunroom, geothermal furnace, central air and more. All appliances will stay with the home. Many more features too numerous to mention.
Contact Kathi Kilworth at 712-249-5233.

1560 140th St. Audubon - \$650,000
Acreage is ready for its new family. Built in 2009. Spacious kitchen w/two ovens and endless countertop space, laundry room with extra bath nice and close. Dining area flows into the living room with sliders to the maintenance free covered deck with views for miles. Office/play room, full bath, and two bedrooms including ensuite in the primary. Downstairs Large family room, spacious bath with another washer/dryer set and 3 more conforming bedrooms with ample closets. Heated 2-car Geothermal heating/air system. Plus many more features, too numerous to mention.
Contact Abby Rasmussen at 712-249-1311.

4100 Madison St. Elk Horn - \$148,500
4 bedroom home, with original hardwood floors and trim. Corner lot, close to the school, walking distance to downtown and the park. Much, Much More! Don't miss this affordable home.
Contact Kathi Kilworth at 712-249-5233.

ACREAGES

- SEVERAL ACREAGES COMING THIS SPRING!
- COMING SOON: 1560 140th St., Audubon
- 109 Crystal Springs Rd, Kimballton **NEW \$245,000**

COMMERCIAL

- 308 Broadway St., Audubon **NEW SALE PENDING**
- 2026 Washington St., Elk Horn **NEW \$150,000!**
- 2105 Broadway, Elk Horn **SOLD**
- 2011 High St., Elk Horn **\$325,000!**
- 124 S. 4th Ave., Dedham **OPTION TO LEASE**
- REDUCED \$82,000**

FARMLAND

- 120 Acres, Audubon Twp., Sec. 2 **SOLD**
- 120 Acres, Sec. 7, Lincoln Twp., Pott Co. CSR2 71 **SOLD**
- 60 Acres +/- 7-71N-35W, Adams Co.

FARMLAND LISTINGS NEEDED - We have buyers.

HOMES

- 314 Church St., 4-Unit Apartment, **\$245,000**
- 1404 E. 20th St., 0.24 to 0.39 acre building lots **\$34K-38K/LOT**
- 107 W. South St., **NEW - SALE PENDING**
- 606 Thielert **PRICE REDUCED \$239,900**
- 102 Eastside Dr., .7 ac m/l lot to build **PRICE REDUCED \$12,500**
- Viking Addition Lots **4 LOTS REMAIN**
- 2021 High St., **NEW - SALE PENDING**
- 2128 Washington **\$165,000**
- 2023 Broadway **PRICE REDUCED \$140,000**
- 2014 Washington St. **\$105,000!**
- 2002 Washington St. **PRICE REDUCED \$149,000**
- 4426 Main St. **PRICE REDUCED \$239,000**
- 209 N. Main St., **NEW - SALE PENDING**
- 343 Madison St., **SALE PENDING**

AIDEN MACK FLATHERS!

Country & Classic Rock

@aidenmackflathers
Contact: 712-304-5516 For Booking

Panama Picnic June 12th, 5:30-7:30 pm, Panama, IA
Brayton Big Days - June 13th, 5-8 pm, Brayton, IA
Alden Days - June 20th, 6-8 pm, Alden, IA
Buoys Bar and Grill - July 2nd, 8-11 pm, Montezuma, IA
Shootout Saloon - July 3rd, 8-11 pm, Dexter, IA
Tap'd - July 9th, 8-11 pm, Clear Lake, IA
Rustic Tap - July 10th, 9pm-12am, Fontanelle, IA
The Porch - July 11th, 7-10 pm, Council Bluffs, IA
Soak'd - July 16th, 6-9 pm, Lake View, IA
Audubon County Fair - July 17th, 4-7 pm, Audubon, IA
July 18th Private Event
Guthrie Center RAGBRAI - July 20th, 3-6 pm, Guthrie Center, IA
Merl's Pub and Patio - July 30th, 6-9 pm, Waukee, IA
Anita Whale of a Town Steakfry Celebration - July 31st, 7-10 pm, Anita, IA
Vic's (T-Bone Days) - August 1st, 9pm-12am, Audubon, IA
Shotgun Betty's - August 5th, 9pm-12am, West Des Moines, IA
Atlantic Country Club Golf Tournament - August 8th, 7:30-10:30 pm, Atlantic, IA
Iowa Craft Beer Tent - 5:30-7:30 pm August 22nd, (Iowa State Fairgrounds) Des Moines, IA

Shotgun Betty's - May 1st, 6-9 pm, West Des Moines, IA
Southern Style "Writers Round" - May 2nd, 9:30 pm, Fremont, NE
City of Avoca Street Dance - May 9th, 7-10 pm, Avoca, IA
May 16th Private Event
Buoys Bar & Grill - May 22nd, 8-11 pm, Montezuma, IA
May 24th Private Event
Westside Lounge - May 30th, 4-7 pm, Harlan, IA
Shotgun Betty's - June 3rd, 9pm-12am, West Des Moines, IA
Tin Lizzies - June 5th, 8-11 pm, Casey, IA
The Regal Beagle - June 6th, 8-11 pm, West Des Moines, IA
Merl's Pub and Patio - June 11th, 6-9 pm, Waukee, IA

ATLANTIC AUTO SALES 1310 East 7th Street Atlantic, Iowa 50022 712-250-8640

RIGHT CAR • RIGHT PRICE RIGHT PLACE

Easy Terms * Easy Payment Plans

2006 Ford Focus SES 115K miles \$4,895
3 Month/4,500 Mile Powertrain plus Warranty

2009 Ford Focus SE 105K miles \$5,995

2012 Ford Fusion SE 113K miles \$6,695

2008 Ford F150 XLT 136K miles \$8,995

2013 Jeep Grand Cherokee Limited 118K miles \$10,495

2017 Chevy Equinox LS 89K miles \$11,995
3 Month/4,500 Mile Powertrain plus Warranty

2017 Honda Pilot EX-L 166K miles \$12,895

2011 Ford F150 Lariat 143K miles \$15,495

2017 Chrysler Pacifica 108K miles \$16,495

2017 Ram 1500 4x4 139K miles \$19,995

2020 Chevy Traverse LT 133K miles \$18,995

2017 Ford F150 Platinum 170K miles \$22,495

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More Freedom. Less Maintenance.

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Let's start the conversation. Coffee is on us.

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elmcrest.net
2104 12th St Harlan, IA 51537

SCAN ME

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Shop Local!

Audubon Real Estate, LLC

Farms, Land, Residential & Commercial Sales
304 Market St., Hwy. 71 - Audubon, IA • 712-563-2407
Dennis Olesen, Broker Associate, Farm Management;
Tracey Armentrout, Sales; Molly Christensen, Broker

If you are thinking of listing your home, give us a call! 712-563-2407



912 Broadway St. Audubon, 5 bed, 3 bath, 2 car attached garage, 0.39 acre lot. **SALE PENDING** main level with a full finished basement. Beautiful wood floors and accents, new carpet upstairs this year.



New Listing: 406 1st Ave Audubon, 1 bedroom, plus a 2nd non-conforming, 1 bathroom, 1 car detached garage, 844 SF of easy to maintain living space! New roof, exterior & interior painting, bathroom remodel, new flooring and electrical fixture upgrades.\$97,500



New Listing: 601 Washington St., 1.5 story home with 3 bedrooms and 1 1/4 bathrooms on a large corner lot! New drywall, interior paint, flooring, kitchen & bathrooms, exterior doors, windows and a newer water heater and furnace.\$145,000



5050 Jay Ave Audubon (Ross), 3 bed, 2 bath, 1 car garage. **PRICE IMPROVEMENT!** additional 1.38 acres available. Complete exterior and main level renovation since April 2024\$219,900

CURRENT LISTINGS

- New Listing: 901 Ridge Road, Anita\$259,900
- New Listing: Apartment building: 17 W. 4th St., Atlantic...\$540,000
- New Listing: Storage Unit building: 735 Main St., Anita\$385,000
- 1116 S. Division St., Audubon\$370,000
- 1766 200th St., Audubon Price Improvement \$590,000
- 3261 F Ave., Vail, IA\$160,000
- 613 Tracy St. AudubonSALE PENDING
- Vacant lots in GraySALE PENDING
- 5045 3rd St., AudubonSALE PENDING
- 708 1st AveSOLD

Buyers — Give us a CALL —
We have the perfect listing for you!
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Now Open for our 23rd Season!

Hours:
Mon-Fri: 9a-6p
Sat: 9a-5p
Sun: 1p-4p

Thank you all for being part of our journey—we've poured so much heart into this season and can't wait to welcome you back!

SPRING CAR CARE



Spring is Here, time to get that car fixed up!

Call or stop in to get on the schedule! Autobody, Collision, Hail and Paint Corrections

Call Wyatt at 712-304-2474

711 Highway St. Coon Rapids

Audubon Ag and Auto, llc

511 Market St., Audubon, IA 50025
712-563-2146

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Hours:
Mon. - Fri. 7:30-5:30 p.m.
Sat. 7:30-12:30 p.m.

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Auto, Truck and Tractor Repair

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712-268-2600

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- Oil Change • Brakes
- Tune-ups, etc.
- Lawn Mower Services
- Interstate Batteries

• WeatherTech Dealer / Rough Country Dealer

CAR KRAZY

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Was winter hard on your ride? Stop in and let us check out your vehicles

Jesse Olson Klay/Ramsey
100 N. Market St., Audubon, IA
712-563-2530

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Stop in To Meet Our Staff & Techs and Schedule your service needs!

Multi-Point Vehicle Inspection

20% OFF Parts & Labor with this ad

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Offer Ends May 31, 2025

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✂ ✂ Clip and Save ✂ ✂

2026 Audubon Pool Season - Opening day is May 30 at 1:00 p.m.!!! Get Your Pool Season Passes Early!

Early Special expires May 15, 2026

This year we are participating in a "Pool-Share Program" that includes area pools in Coon Rapids, Manning, Carroll, Breda, and Glidden. The additional \$25 gets you and your family into each pool twice. (See Below)

Passes may be picked up at the Pool after Opening day or at the Clerk's office (315 Broadway).

Save \$20⁰⁰
per Pass if
paid by
May 15,
2026

ATTENTION - PLEASE OBEY THESE RULES:

A responsible person, who is age 14 or older, must accompany children 8 years old and younger. Any child using diapers **MUST** wear swim pants in the pool. To use the slide one must be 48" tall OR pass the deep-water test. THESE RULES ARE FOR THE SAFETY OF YOU AND YOUR FAMILY.

POOL HOURS:

Sunday 1:00 - 8:00 p.m.
Monday 1:00 - 8:00 p.m. Adult swim 5:00 - 6:00 p.m.
Tuesday 1:00 - 8:00 p.m. Adult swim 5:00 - 6:00 p.m.
Wednesday 1:00 - 8:00 p.m. Adult swim 5:00 - 6:00 p.m.
Thursday 1:00 - 8:00 p.m. Adult swim 5:00 - 6:00 p.m.
Friday 1:00 - 8:00 p.m. Adult swim 5:00 - 6:00 p.m.
Saturday 1:00 - 8:00 p.m.

POOL PHONE
712-563-3710

PRICES:

\$80 Single Pass
\$105 Single Pass w/Area Pool Pass
\$155 Family Pass
\$180 Family Pass w/Area Pool Pass
\$80 Grandparent Pass
\$105 Grandparent Pass w/Area Pool Pass
(Grandparents and grandchildren that reside outside Audubon County)
Family Definition: A legal guardian and spouse and legally supported (Claim on Federal Tax Return) children in that household.
All passes are reviewed by the Audubon Park and Recreation Board.
Please stop in or go to our website to complete the form.

GROUP SWIMMING LESSONS:

FEE: \$20.00 with season pass/\$25 without season pass
Must pay on the first day or in advance
TIMES: To be announced
Child must be 5 years old or able to touch in shallow area

The pool will be closed at the manager's discretion at these times:

- When lightning or threatening weather occurs.
- When temperature is 65 degrees F or below.
- When there is a mechanical malfunction.
- When swimming is not safe for other unforeseen reasons.

REMINDER

Viola School and Community Reunion,
Sunday, September 13 at
Old Park Hotel, Audubon, IA
Catered Meal at 12:30 p.m.
Reservations needed by September 7th.
Email address:
violareunion@aol.com or phone number
712-250-5159 • Jane Weber

NOW OPEN



The Greenhouse is full of beautiful annuals, perennials, tropicals, patio pots and hanging baskets!

Mon. - Fri. • 9 am - 6 pm
Sat. • 9 am - 4 pm
Sun. • 11 am - 3 pm

5 miles north of Harlan on Hwy. 59; West 1/4 mile on 1600 St
712-627-4613 • email: mynest@fmctc.com

Patti and Don Bogler
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OPENING DAY

Saturday, April 25, 2026
10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

The Market GREENHOUSE

Regular Hours
Mon-Fri 10-6 | Sat 10-4 | Sun 1-4

Jodi Wilson
712.268.2112

105 S. Broadway
Exira, Iowa

INTRODUCING THE ALL NEW EMERALD CHEVROLET

(Previously Christiansen Motors)

NOW OPEN FOR NEW & PREOWNED SALES, SERVICE, & PARTS



New 2025 Traverse LT

MSRP = \$48,980

Dealer Discount = (\$1,500)

Sale Price = \$47,480



Stock #: T2941

New 2026 Silverado 1500

MSRP = \$58,130

Rebate = (\$4,750)
Dealer Discount = (\$2,278)

Sale Price = \$51,102



Stock #: T2980

New 2025 Silverado 2500 Custom 4x4

MSRP = \$58,905

Rebate = (\$1,000)
Dealer Discount = (\$2,000)

Sale Price = \$55,905



Stock #: T2954

We Specialize in Financing All Types of Credit

New 2026 Trail Blazer RS

MSRP = \$33,675

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2026 Spring Bridal

Should you say, 'I do' to a first look?

The wedding tradition in which couples do not see each other on their wedding day prior to the ceremony has endured. This tradition stems from the era of arranged marriages, when couples were separated to prevent the couple from calling off the wedding if either party was found unattractive or unworthy. Some also felt it was simply bad luck to see each other beforehand.



Modern couples may not be as superstitious, but still appreciate the element of surprise that waiting to see one's future spouse allows at the ceremony.

together before having to shake hands, hug, pose for photos, and field whatever else comes their way. If the couple wants some intimate photos of just themselves, the first look also can afford them that option.

In spite of the endurance of that tradition, many couples now opt for a first look. A first look is a private, scheduled moment before the wedding ceremony when the couple sees one another fully dressed for the first time, says the wedding authority The Knot. It can be a time to pause and reflect during a busy day. Couples can share emotions, reduce nervous feelings and even grab a few portraits before guests arrive. The Knot 2023 Real Weddings Study found that 56 percent of all couples who wed that year decided to go with a first look. However, other couples may be on the fence. Here are some reasons to say, "I do" to this evolving tradition, and some reasons why some couples adhere to the more traditional approach.

Cons
The first look certainly will break with the tradition of seeing one another at the altar. Mentioning the idea to parents or other family members may leave the couple facing opposition or it may create some animosity or unease. There's also something extra special about turning to see one's partner for the first time at the ceremony, surrounded by the collective love of family and friends. A first look will require the couple to get ready a little earlier to build in extra time for this private moment. If schedules already are jam-packed, this could cause a bit of added stress. There's also the extra pressure of sharing emotions on camera if a photographer will be present. If tears are shed, then make-up touch-ups could be necessary, further delaying the ceremony.

Pros
The first look can certainly ease pre-wedding nerves. The first look also can be a grounding moment for both people, helping to release any emotions and tears before the ceremony. Since the wedding will be a whirlwind of activity, this quiet moment enables the couple to spend a few uninterrupted minutes

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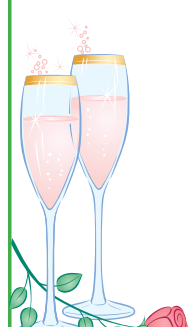
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It's Wedding Season

A checklist to help narrow down reception venue options

up in the vibe of a space, but the most successful choices emerge when couples balance aesthetics with logistics.

According to The Knot, the average wedding in the United States cost \$33,000 in 2025.

It's estimated that as many as 2.5 million couples get married in the U.S. each year. As couples scour potential reception spaces, here is a checklist of what to consider in a wedding venue.

- Availability: It is important to check if the venue has your preferred date open. If not, you may have to consider changing the date if a particular venue checks all your boxes.

- Capacity: Check to ensure a less conventional space is large enough when considering the dance floor, DJ or band area, buffet tables, and other elements in the room.

- Proximity: How close is the venue to home (or home base for destination weddings)? Think about whether it is easily accessible to all of the guests you plan to invite to the wedding. Also consider whether the venue is convenient to the ceremony location.

- All-inclusive: Think about the costs to use the space. Some charge a site fee that is just for the space; others include tables, chairs, linens, food, and more in the cost. Think about whether you'll

want a scenic reception space where you bring in your own food and decor, or if you want everything handled for you.

- Accessible: If older guests or those with mobility issues will be attending, it's important to confirm there are functional accessible restrooms, ramps and elevators. Some historic or older venues may be lacking in these areas.

- Transit and parking: City venues may be convenient from a public transit point of view, but lack parking for those who drive to the wedding. Think about these fac-

tors, as ample on-site parking can be a convenience for all.

- Bar policy: Ask the venue if they have a liquor license and, if so, the details of their beverage packages. Some casual venues may allow a BYOB agreement so you can save on costs. Inquire about corkage fees for bringing your own wine.

- Power needs: You'll need to know what kind of audio-visual connectivity the venue has and whether the circuits can handle a DJ or band equipment. This can be an issue in rural or older venues.

- Sustainability: If you're concerned with the environ-

ment and want a wedding venue to reflect your values, look for spots that have sustainability built into their models. Ask about composting, use of renewable energy or donation of excess food to the needy.

A handy checklist can help couples compare wedding venue options across the same variables.

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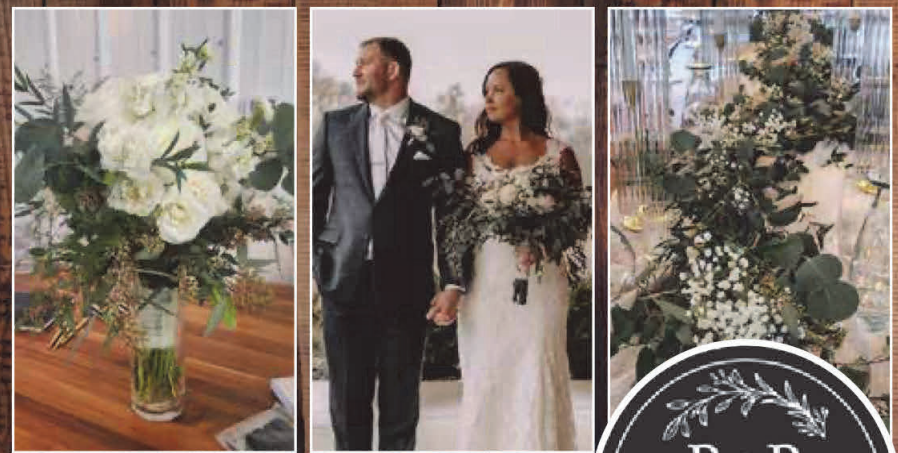
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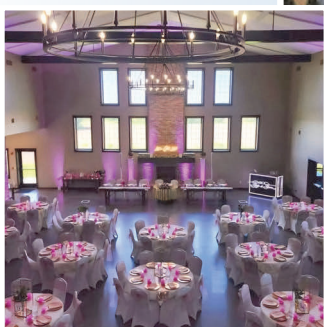
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2026 Spring Bridal

The attraction of older wedding venues

Although modern venues can offer blank canvases on which couples can put unique spins on their wedding ceremonies and receptions, older, more historic establishments offer their own unique and rich character as well.

The appeal of older venues may lie in the sense of history these structures and properties offer, which is difficult to replicate elsewhere. The following are some elements of older venues that can attract history buffs, storytellers or old souls.

• **Character and craftsmanship:** Older venues often feature architectural details from a bygone era, says Northwest Square, an historic event venue in Florida. Stained-glass windows, hand-carved panel-

ing, crown moldings, and sweeping staircases may be some of the details that draw couples in.

• **Meaningful materials:** The materials used in older properties may no longer be readily available to modern builders, helping to set these places apart even further. Distressed brick, original hardwood floors, limestone walls, or marble columns have history living within them and can establish a warm and inviting tone.

• **Built-in ambiance:** Because older venues may be full of aesthetic details, couples will not have to try so hard with floral and rental needs. That can be a considerable cost savings. Venues that give off feelings of being back in history, with vaulted ceilings and cavernous spaces, also provide an added element of entertainment. Guests can en-



joy the wedding, but also the collections displayed within these spaces, particularly for weddings held in museums or libraries.

• **Timeless photo options:** Modern wedding venue designs can date photos quickly as decorative styles change through the years.

But the elements of historic properties and classical architecture remain timeless.

Older venues can set a uniquely romantic vibe and help to establish a strong

foundation for a new marriage. When couples celebrate in a building that has stood the test of time, they may feel stronger that their own marriage will endure.

Fun and festive wedding favors



Wedding favors are commonplace at modern weddings. Although guests plan to offer gifts to the happy couple to get them started on their life together, the newly betrothed also can say thank you to all in attendance with small tokens of appreciation.

Typically, wedding favors are not very expensive and lean toward trinkets that guests can keep as mementos. The Knot says couples spend between \$2 and \$5 per favor. That may require budgeting around \$500 to \$700 for wedding favors. It is recommended to order one favor per guest or one per couple if larger items are chosen.

There is no limit to the creativity that can go into choosing wedding favors. Couples who have good senses of humor may want to bestow fun favors on their guests. Here are several fun wedding favor ideas that merit consideration.

• **Edible favors:** Guests may appreciate edible favors because they will not add to any clutter in a guest's home after the wedding. Favors can be local treats from a particu-

lar region (think saltwater taffy if the couple is from a coastal town) or custom-made cocoa or tea kits. Edible favors also may be sugar cookies iced with custom messages, like "We're sweet on you."

• **Custom cards:** Custom playing cards with the wedding date or image of the couple printed on them can be a fun and classic favor. Guests can pull them out for their game night rotation.

• **Caricatures:** There is a growing trend toward incorporating art into wedding receptions, with some couples hiring an artist to paint portraits during the festivities. It's possible to turn the tables on guests and make them the spotlight. A caricature artist can sketch clever pictures of guests, who can take the depictions home as favors.

• **Shot glasses:** Shot glasses are small vessels designed to hold or measure liquor. They hold between one to two ounces. Couples who want to show their playful sides can opt to gift guests who are 21 and over with custom shot glasses they can feature at their bars back home.

• **Favor bar:** Rather than choose the favor for the guest, couples may want to let wedding attendees choose something from a selection of options. By creating a favor bar, guests can build their own favors from the items provided, which can include food or candy, beads and jewelry elements, or some home decor options.

• **Hangover kits:** Hangover kits can be a clever touch for wedding favors. Whether guests overindulged at the wedding or tend to party hard at other times, a bag featuring an ibuprofen tablet, electrolyte powder or liquid, mini water bottle, and eye mask can be a quirky favor.

Wedding favors are a nice touch to offer guests. While not very expensive, they are meaningful and can be fun at the same time.

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Spring Home Improvement

Common questions about reverse mortgages

Homeownership is a dream for millions of people across the globe. The National Association of Realtors indicates real estate has historically exhibited long-term, stable growth in value. Money spent on rent is money that a person will never see again. However, paying a traditional mortgage every month enables homeowners to build equity and can be a means to securing one's financial future.

Homeowners typically can lean on the value of their homes should they need money for improvement projects or other

plans. Reverse mortgages are one way to do just that.

Who is eligible for a reverse mortgage?

People near retirement age are eligible for a specific type of loan they can borrow against. Known as a "reverse mortgage," this type of loan can be great for people 62 or older who perhaps can no longer make payments on their home, or require a sum of money to use right now, without wanting to sell their home.

In addition to meeting the age requirement, a borrower must live

at the property as a primary residence and certify occupancy annually to be eligible for a reverse mortgage. Also, the property must be maintained in the same condition as when the reverse mortgage was obtained, says Fannie Mae.

How does a reverse mortgage work?

The Consumer Finance Protection Bureau says a reverse mortgage, commonly a Home Equity Conversion Mortgage, which is the most popular type of reverse mortgage loan, is different from a traditional mortgage. Instead

of making monthly payments to bring down the amount owed on the loan, a reverse mortgage features no monthly payments. Rather, interest and fees are added to the loan balance each month and the balance grows. The loan is repaid when the borrower no longer lives in the home.

What else should I know?

With a reverse mortgage, even

though borrowers are not making monthly mortgage payments, they are still responsible for paying property-related expenses on time, including, real estate and property taxes, insurance premiums, HOA fees, and utilities. Reverse mortgages also come with additional costs, including origination fees and mortgage insurance up to 2.5 percent of the

home's appraised value, says Forbes. It's important to note that most interest rates on these loans are variable, meaning they can rise over time and thus increase the cost of borrowing. In addition, unlike traditional mortgage payments, interest payments on reverse mortgages aren't tax-deductible.

How is a reverse mortgage paid back?

A reverse mortgage is not free money. The homeowners or their heirs will eventually have to pay back the loan when the borrowers no longer live at the property. This is usually achieved by selling the home.

The CFPB notes if a reverse mortgage loan balance is less than the amount the home is sold for, then the borrower keeps the difference. If the loan balance is more than the amount the home sells for at the appraised value, one can pay off the loan by selling the home for at least 95 percent of the home's appraised value, known as the 95 percent rule. The money from the sale will go toward the outstanding loan balance and any remaining balance on the loan is paid for by mortgage insurance, which the borrower has been paying for the duration of the loan.

Reverse mortgages can be a consideration for older adults. However, it is essential to get all of the facts to make an informed decision.

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SPRING Home Improvement

How homeowners can turn attics into livable spaces

Houses typically feature various areas that are traditionally designed for storage, such as garages, basements and attics. However, with some renovation, these spaces can be transformed into livable areas.

Homeowners who would like to convert attics into livable spaces need to take certain things into consideration before starting an improvement project. While the attic may seem like it has plenty of room and is structurally sound enough to walk in, that's not necessarily so. To be converted into usable living space, an attic must be brought up to the standards of modern building codes, according to the design experts at Board & Vellum. Retrofitting beams and insulation can eat up available space in an attic. Thus, it is best to consult an expert to see if an attic can be converted.

Furthermore, an attic that was not initially designed as a room when the house was built can

add extra "load" upstairs if it is converted. That could present certain structural problems. That means a structural engineer also must be consulted to see if adding beams, flooring and drywall will necessitate other changes elsewhere in the home to accommodate the extra load.

In order to have a functional attic room, building codes will dictate that it needs to be accessible by a

full-size staircase. Also, it will need to have another exit in case of an emergency so that will likely be an accessible window, according to the home information site The Fill. Homeowners' budgets and renovation plans will need to factor into these considerations. Homeowners also are advised to check local permits to determine what else may be required to go forward. It is best to follow the rules.

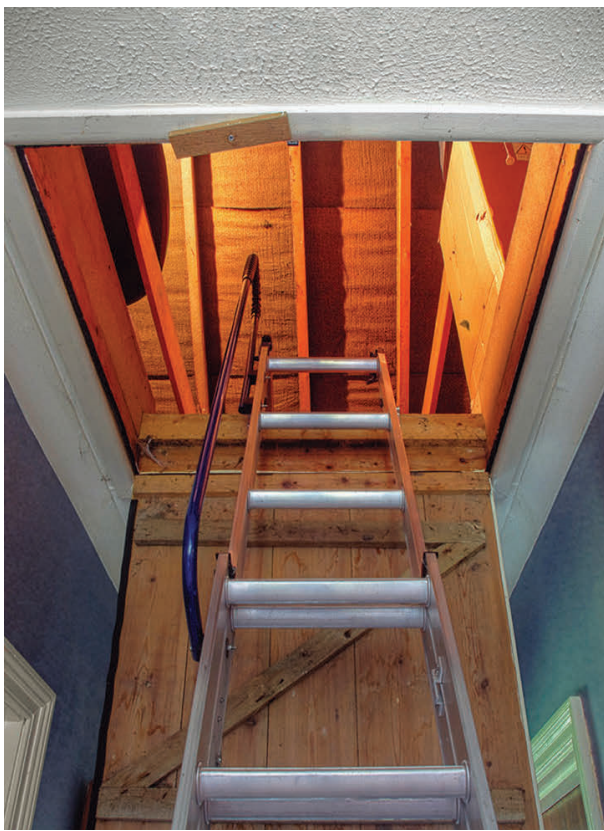
Lack of a permit for work can affect the ability to sell a home down the line.

Individuals also should plan for heating and cooling upgrades as the home will need to have ductwork installed in the attic, or at the least, a stand-alone heating and cooling unit. As heat rises, it can get quite warm in an attic, so ventilation and comfort should be considered. The attic will need to be wired for electricity for lighting and other needs. Air sealing and additional insulation can the attic space more comfortable as well. Consult with a qualified electrician and an HVAC technician and have an energy audit done to discuss needs.

Attic renovations can give homeowners more

space in their homes, which can be used as offices, bedrooms or cozy corners. This is no small undertaking and

all of the right steps need to be followed to ensure a legal, safe and successful renovation.



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Spruce up your home and yard for Spring

Repurpose rooms and breathe new life into a home

Homeowners do not need to get hung up on room labels as they explore ways to reinvent their spaces. Just because a floor plan labels a space as a formal dining room doesn't mean the area has to remain that way.

Repurposing rooms in a home comes down to aligning the space a person has with their lifestyle needs. Here are a few ways to rethink interior spaces and make a switch to improve utility.

- Identify unused or un-

der-used rooms. Take note of spaces that are cleaned but rarely used. For many people, this is a dining room or a guest suite. Either of these rooms can be transformed into something new.

- Invest in multipurpose

furniture. Even people short on space can transform their homes. Replacing a traditional bed with a murphy bed or a daybed can make a room more suitable for a home office or yoga studio, but still provide a space for the occasional



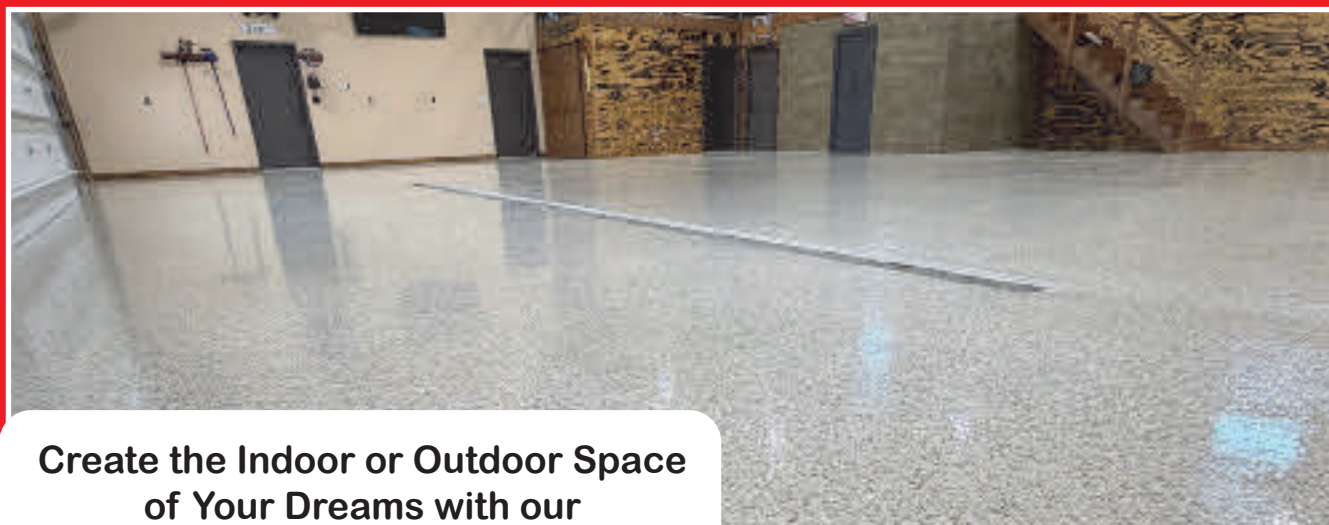
houseguest to sleep. A pull-down shelf desk in a bedroom or even a walk-in closet can turn an area into a compact home workstation.

- Claim dead space. The area under the stairs or another small spot often is used to collect junk. Instead, it can be turned into a built-in wine rack, a reading nook for kids or even a pet sanctuary with just a few modifications. Analyze areas around the home that seem like they don't serve a purpose, and then figure out a way to make them more functional.

- Establish room zones. Some people simply cannot transform an entire room into something else. Visual partitioning makes it possible to create rooms within rooms. An area rug can be used to define a border of a space. Open bookshelves can serve as a wall to separate a sleeping area from a lounging spot. Lighting can add dimension to areas in a space. A pendant light over a crafting or work table can be used to define the space.

- Look at utility areas. Unless you are a do-it-yourselfer or have a hobby that takes up much of the garage or basement, utility areas are major spots in a home to consider repurposing. A garage can be turned into a home gym, kids' play area or even a hobby shop. Modular flooring and insulated walls can make the room comfortable. Attic lofts are the ultimate quiet zones, and can be serene spots for reading, meditating or doing homework. An unfinished basement can be converted into a finished space to serve many different purposes. From media rooms to a teen lounge to a hobby cave, the opportunities are endless.

A good rule of thumb before converting any room is to give it a test run. Move in a piece of furniture and test how it works with its intended function. Assess lighting, noise and foot traffic for a week, and then move ahead with changes if the result is positive.

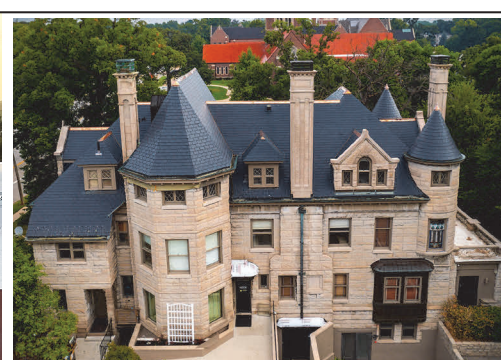


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