

NOVEMBER IS **DIABETES**  
AWARENESS MONTH

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MCMH Laboratory

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**WEDNESDAY**

Nov. 30, 2022

Red Oak, IA

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# THE RED OAK Express

**DEDICATED TO FREEDOM SINCE 1868**

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## Sense of belonging is key to heart & soul program

**Nick Johansen**  
The Red Oak Express

A local grassroots effort in Red Oak is looking to forge plans that will better the city. The group is part of "Community Heart & Soul," which seeks to help people to shape the future of their communities by actively seeking the collective wisdom of all residents, improving local decision-making, creating a shared sense of belonging, and ultimately strengthening the social, cultural, and economic vibrancy of each place.

The group had its first public meeting on Nov. 12. A total of 25 participants attended. Cynthia Bangston and Beau Boeye are two of the members helping kick off efforts in Red Oak. Bangston said ultimately, they are seeking advice and input of Red Oak residents by reaching out.

"We're looking for them to tell us what they see, how we can grow Red Oak, and what the future of Red Oak could be. Mayor Shawna Silvius first found out about the organization while she was executive director of Montgomery County Development Corporation," Bangston said.

Boeye said in 2020, Community Heart & Soul coach Michelle Franks spoke during the Red Oak Chamber and Industry Association's annual meeting. However, further progress was delayed.

"At the time, we were really excited about it, and really wanted Red Oak to be involved in it, but then the pandemic happened, and so it's nice to see that we're starting on this journey this year," commented Boeye.

Franks spoke before the Red Oak City Council in February of this year, and received a resolution of support for the project. Since then, organizers have been working to collect a group of volunteers and collect \$10,000 to match a \$10,000 seed grant from Community Heart & Soul. Bangston said those funds have been received.

"We received a \$10,000 Seed Grant from the Orton Family Foundation (dba Community Heart & Soul). The letter from Community Heart & Soul states, "On behalf of the Orton Family Foundation, I would like to congratulate you on receiving a \$10,000 Seed Grant and officially welcome the Red Oak Community Heart & Soul Team as our newest Heart & Soul community," Bangston said. "I will notify the businesses and individuals who have pledged funds toward our \$10,000 match as to how and where they can send their donation to Red Oak Community Heart & Soul in the coming days."

Bangston, who lived in Washington state prior to moving to Red Oak, said she became a member of the team because she saw a lot of value in the project.

"I've been an outsider in Red Oak for quite some time, and I've been quiet. I've heard from a lot of people who feel their voices are not heard. There are a lot of people I'd like to reach, to get advice and input from to see what Red Oak can be. I think there's a lot of potential here," Bangston explained.

Boeye said he's been looking to become involved in

*"There are a lot of people I'd like to reach, as an entity, and get advice and input from to see what Red Oak can be. I think there's a lot of potential here."*

Cynthia Bangston  
Community Heart & Soul

the project for quite some time, as far back as when the organization was first introduced.

"I've seen the success that other communities have had with this program, and at a lot of these meetings, we see a lot of similar faces making decisions for the community. We want to try and turn that around and get more people involved, more voices heard, different demographics, and get them all at the table and give everyone a voice. This is a program that can bring everyone together," Boeye said.

Currently, they are in phase one of the project, which involves bringing a core team together to start functioning more as a board. The next phase involves connecting with residents and gathering stories from throughout the community. The third phase involves creating a strategy for widely sharing adopted heart and soul statements gathering and prioritizing action ideas. The final stage will include a Heart & Soul stewardship plan, establishment of a stewardship team, and an implementation strategy for the developed action plan. However, Bangston said things will be determined as they proceed.

"I don't yet have a clear view of what this is going to look like, because it's all so dynamic, and depends on how the community of Red Oak comes together to do this. And while we'll establish a board, I feel it's going to be a lot more free-flowing and flexible, and everyone will have an equal voice," stated Bangston.

During the phase one period, Boeye said the biggest thing they'll be working on is the network analysis.

"We'll be creating a database of the names of different people of the community, and trying to reach the segments that aren't represented well, and then determining who is the best person to tap into each of those groups. The question is how to reach people who don't regularly attend meetings that have a different perspective, and get feedback from them, which leads us into phase two, where we capture people's stories," explained Boeye.

Bangston added she's looking forward to interviewing residents of Red Oak and having those stories saved.

"We're going to hear the stories of why they live here, how they came to be here, what Red Oak used to be, and what it can be. Those interviews will be record-

**HEART, Page 2A**



Attendees listen at the first Community Heart & Soul meeting Nov. 12 at the Five One 8 in Red Oak. (Photo provided)



## Holiday kick off

The magic of the holidays was felt in Red Oak Saturday, Nov. 25, as the Red Oak Chamber and Industry Association kicked off the holidays. The community Christmas tree was lit, there were free horse-drawn carriage rides and hot cocoa with Santa. Pictured is Oliver Gillespie, Arryn Gillespie, and Kelsey Peterson in a miniature sleigh. (Nick Johansen/Red Oak Express)



Members of the John and Deb Blomstedt family head up the 'Pack the Sack' holiday program. Items for a holiday meal are in each sack.

## Blomstedts give back during the holidays with 'Pack the Sack'

**Tess Nelson**  
The Red Oak Express

A few years ago, John and Deb Blomstedt were thinking about ways to use holiday funds on something other than presents for family members. Deb explained, at Christmas time there was really nothing they needed.

"What we wanted, we could go out and buy for ourselves; the same was for our children. We knew there had to be a way to use the money we used to spend on presents in a better way," said Deb.

The first year, Deb said they hosted a holiday dinner at the Montgomery County Family YMCA, where all were welcome.

"We had about 80 people that participated," Deb recalled. "Some were small family groups; others were in town visiting family who were in the hospital."

There were plans for a second holiday dinner, until COVID-19 hit and changed the project.

"There was no way we could do a sit-down event."

Instead, Deb and her husband, John, reached out to schools, churches and the local food pantry and asked for names of families that could use assistance over the holidays.

What the Blomstedts would do is bring an unprepared holiday meal to those in the community that are in need. The program name thus changed to Pack the Sack.

"Our goal initially was to make 25 bags of food items for a holiday meal for those who need it. Each year we've reached 36 bags by the time we finish."

With the program growing each year, Deb said the goal this year is 36 sacks.

"So far we have been fortunate enough to receive donations from Live Well Montgomery County, the Red Oak Kiwanis Club and the Red Oak Ambassadors," said Deb.

She added the only requirement,

**BLOMSTEDT, Page 2A**



If any of the following are true:

**TALK TO YOUR PROVIDER  
ABOUT A REFERRAL TODAY!**



Montgomery County Memorial  
Hospital + Clinics

- GREATER THAN 20-PACK-YEAR HISTORY (ONE PACK-YEAR = SMOKING ONE PACK PER DAY FOR ONE YEAR, 1 PACK = 20 CIGARETTES)
- ASYMPTOMATIC (NO SIGNS OR SYMPTOMS OF LUNG CANCER)
- ADULT 50-77 YEARS OLD
- CURRENT SMOKER, OR HAVE QUIT WITHIN THE PAST 15 YEARS

IS A LUNG CANCER SCREENING  
**Low Dose CT Scan**  
right for you?

NOVEMBER IS  
**LUNG CANCER**  
AWARENESS MONTH



# Board of supervisors to update county employee handbook

**Nick Johansen**  
The Red Oak Express

The Montgomery County Board of Supervisors will review potential changes to the employee handbook for the county employees. At the regular Board of Supervisors meeting Nov. 22, the supervisor Donna Robinson suggested the possibility of deciding changes through a work session.

"That would allow us to sit down, really dig into this, and include other department heads if necessary," Robinson said.

County auditor Jill Ozuna said she wasn't sure how updates had been done in the past, but she had a number of changes noted for review.

"We've encountered situations where we go to the handbook for answers, and the answer isn't covered in the handbook. There's also things in the handbook that are vague and unclear that we need to clear up. I've also been in contact with Renee Von Bokern with VonBokern & Associates, our HR firm," Ozuna said. "I've also had some suggestions from IT director Sonia Morrison, to refine the turnaround time for the process, the turnout time for IT, the turn-

around time for HR and the auditor's office, just have it clean and easy to understand, so that there's no confusion."

Another issue noted by Ozuna was determination of comp time between departments that worked 37.5 hours, and those that worked 40 hours.

"It has been extremely confusing, and perhaps not calculated property in the past for comp time for 37.5 hour workweek employees. There's nowhere in the handbook that specifically lists one group as 40 hours, and the other as 37.5 hours. People know it, but it's not broken down in black and white," commented Ozuna.

Supervisor Mike Olson suggested an email be sent out to all of the county department heads for input.

"Generally, it's just verbiage on paragraphs or items in the handbook. In my experience, the process to make changes has involved one or two supervisors, as well as whatever department heads want to meet, and sit down, and go through those, and those would have to be reviewed by HR, and our legal counsel, before they came back this way, and sit down in session and discuss what changes needed to be made," Olson explained.

Rather than have a meeting with only two supervisors, Robinson preferred a special agenda work session that everyone was a part of.

"Jill Ozuna has a corporate background, as well as Charla Schmid. Randy Cooper works for a company. Everyone has some knowledge that I think would be important to add to the conversation," stated Robinson.

The supervisors agreed to have Ozuna email all the department heads about handbook revisions, and set the deadline for responses to be Dec. 2, to allow for the courthouse being closed Nov. 24-25.

The supervisors also discussed the potential dates for a work session, preferably with HR representative Von Bokern present. The supervisors chose Dec. 5 and Dec. 9 as potential dates, and advised Ozuna to contact Von Bokern to see what day worked for her schedule.



Montgomery County Supervisors Chairman Mark Peterson, pictured left, swears in new Montgomery County Auditor Jill Ozuna during the Nov. 22 supervisors meeting. (Nick Johansen/The Red Oak Express)



The John and Deb Blomstedt family, from left: J.C., Elisabeth, Deb, John, Grace, Aaryn (Blomstedt) Gillespie, Oliver Gillespie and Jake Gillespie. (Photo provided)

## BLOMSTEDT

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A

besides being in need, is being able to come pick up the sack.

"After I receive a list of names, I personally contact each family to see if they want to participate," Deb said.

Helping the Blomstedts pack the sacks each year are friends and extended family.

"We feel blessed we can do this in the community and that we get such wonderful support."

Contact Deb at deb5233@gmail.com if you are in need of a holiday meal sack. If interested in donating, there are drop boxes at the Montgomery County Family YMCA and the public library.

## HEART

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A

ed, and it will be fun to hear the stories of these residents, and create the archive, and reflect it back to people. There's a lot more here than people are aware of, I think," Bangston stated.

Bangston and Boeye said neither are trying to have any preconceived ideas in mind once the group reaches phase four of the project.

"This is a community thing. I don't want to lead this in one direction or another. I'm holding a place for the community and [will] be very stubborn about that. There are so many people in the community that go about their business, and now they will no longer have to shrug their shoulders and feel like no one is going to listen to them. We want to reach those people," Bangston advised.

Boeye was in agreement that he wanted to see people come together, have a voice, and be happy about the process and make it work.

"A lot of times when the community has done these visioning processes, they bring in an outside entity, get some feedback, put together a plan, and ultimately the plan sits on a shelf and collects dust. I've come across a lot of these different plans, which have had great ideas, but many weren't acted upon. With Community Heart & Soul, the importance is creating a grassroots effort, so more people can get invested in the process and see these plans played out. A lot of communities that have gone through this process share a similar story, but they've come to see how this plays out dramatically different than what they

have done in the past," Boeye explained.

Bangston agreed, and said the people she's talked to who have been involved with those prior plans have been frustrated it came to no purpose.

"We can't put this plan on a shelf. I don't feel we can do that anymore. People talk about wanting Red Oak to be what it used to be. I don't think we can go back, per se, but I feel like we can create a new version of that with this Community Heart & Soul process," Bangston commented.

Bangston and Boeye encourage everyone to come out and give whatever time or ideas they can. As the project gets moving, efforts will be made to give people numerous opportunities to voice their opinions, be that by attending meetings or filling out surveys from the convenience of their homes.

"We want people to voice their opinions, and know that their opinions matter, and that we're listening," Boeye said.

Anyone who missed the first meeting but wants to become a volunteer with Community Heart & Soul in any capacity is encouraged to call Bangston at 360-239-1109, or email bangston@whidbey.com., or they can call or email Boeye at 712-370-2371, or email beau@boeyetd.com.

For more information about the Community Heart & Soul program, visit community-heartandsoul.org/, youtube.com/c/CommunityHeartSoul, or facebook.com/CommunityHeartandSoul/.



Beau Boeye and Cynthia Bangston, who are assisting with the Community Heart & Soul program. (Nick Johansen/Red Oak Express)

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**CHRISTMAS ARTS & Crafts SHOW**  
Over 150 Exhibitors  
DECEMBER 3-4  
MID-AMERICA CENTER  
COUNCIL BLUFFS, IOWA  
Sat. 9-5 & Sun. 10-4  
ADM. Just \$6.00 (10 & under free)  
2-day re-entry stamp  
Huge Aisles! FREE PARKING  
Where you can buy that quality handmade product at an affordable price.  
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A quick boost for your savings.  
It's our gift to you!  
9-month CD  
**4.00% APY\***  
\$1,000 MIN. BALANCE  
Open a CD today.  
veridiancu.org/deposit  
**Veridian** credit union

\*APY = Annual Percentage Yield. APY is accurate as of 11/30/2022. Interest on CD is compounded quarterly. APY is subject to change after account is opened. Interest rate locked when account is opened. See CD agreement for complete terms and conditions. Funds may be required for early withdrawal and fees could reduce earnings on account. Other rates and terms available. Withdrawal of earnings could result in a penalty. Membership required to open a CD and is subject to qualifications and a minimum \$5,000 share deposit. Public funds and financial institutions are not eligible. Federally insured by FDIC.

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CHARLES "DICK" THOMPSON, 88

Charles Richard "Dick" Thompson, 88, Red Oak, passed away Monday, Nov. 21, 2022, at the Montgomery County Memorial Hospital.

Dick was born Dec. 29, 1933, in Pilot Grove Township of Montgomery County, the son of Clarence and Leona (Haley) Thompson. Dick lived all of his life in Montgomery County. He graduated from Elliott High School in 1952 and served in the U.S. Army from 1954 until 1956.

He was united in marriage to Carolyn Ritmour on Nov. 9, 1958, in Red Oak. Two children were born to this union, Stanley and Sherry. Dick worked as a Ford auto mechanic all of his life. He started his career with Banker Motors, then Ayres-Berggren Motors, and retired from Hawkeye Ford.

Dick was an avid Green Bay Packers and St. Louis Cardinals fan. He enjoyed spending time with his family and was a very kind and giving man, especially in his later years.

Preceding him in death were his parents; sister, Peggy Van Buskirk; and brother-in-law, Max Van Buskirk.

Survivors include his children, Stanley Thompson and wife Nancy of Clive, and Sherry Powers and husband Drue of Red Oak; six grandchildren, Andrew Thompson and wife Mary Katherine of Vail, Colo.; Matthew Thompson of Des Moines; Samuel Thompson and wife Rachel of Medina, Minn.; Benjamin Thompson and fiancée Rayza of Denver, Colo.; Ethan Powers of Omaha, Neb.; and Logan Powers and wife Aubre of Council Bluffs; two great-grandchildren, Tatum and Lynden; sister, Betty McConnell and husband Wes of Canton S.D.; and many nieces, nephews, and other relatives and friends.

Funeral services will be held at 10 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 3, 2022, at Faith Community Church. Burial will be in the Evergreen Cemetery. Visitation will be held from 5 to 7 p.m. Friday, Dec. 2, 2022, at Nelson-Boylan-LeRette Funeral Chapel.

Nelson-Boylan-LeRette Funeral Chapel is in charge of arrangements.



BRIAN BOWMAN, 57

Brian J. Bowman, 57, rural Red Oak, passed away on Monday, Oct. 31, 2022, at Nebraska Medicine, Omaha, Neb.

Brian James Bowman, the son of Robert Lee Bowman and Susan (Kelker) Stegenga, was born April 7, 1965, in Red Oak. Brian was raised on the family farm in the Nyman area and spent his summers in Okoboji, where he developed his love for water skiing and sailing. He graduated from Essex High School and then studied at Iowa State University. Brian was married to his beloved wife, Melinda Kay (Marks), for 31 years. Over a number of years, they traveled and settled in many different places, experiencing the riches each place had to offer.

Brian took on several different careers, excelling at each of them. He was truly a jack-of-all-trades and a "master of the sale," as he would say. One of his personal achievements he was most proud of was a remodeling of the Deco Hotel in Omaha that won several awards and was featured in several publications. In 2017, Brian and Melinda moved back to the family farm at Nyman to help take care of his ailing grandmother, Rena.

Brian was diagnosed with lung cancer in 2017 that he fought bravely and with a sense of peace and harmony and positivity that not only helped him to beat the lung cancer but to go into remission. His fight and the way in which he did so inspired so many people that he encountered during and after that time. In 2021, Brian and Melinda purchased a 44-foot sailboat named Chanticleer, fulfilling a lifelong dream of being able to sail the open ocean. Brian and Melinda as well as family sailed up the east coast from Vero Beach, Florida, to Maine and back. He loved music, cooking, farm life, traveling, sailing, but most of all his family and friends and the adventures they shared.

Brian was preceded in death by his father, Robert Lee Bowman; son, Cullen Drake Bowman; and both sets of grandparents.

Brian is survived by his wife, Melinda Bowman of rural Red Oak; son, Eric (Michelle) Higgins of Grand Junction; daughters, Jessica Bowman of Omaha, Neb.; and Brianna Bowman of Red Oak; three grandchildren, Megan, Martin and Robert; mother, Susan (Stu) Stegenga of Vero Beach, Fla.; sister, Jennifer Reavis of Vero Beach, Fla.; cousins, other relatives, along with many friends.

May God bless his memory and give strength to those who mourn.

Celebration of Life Service will be held Saturday, Dec. 3, 2022, at 10:30 a.m. at Fremont Lutheran Church at Nyman. Burial of cremains will be in the Mt. Hope Cemetery.

Memorials are suggested to the American Cancer Society. Remembrances and condolences may be shared with the family at sldfuneralhome.com.

Sellergren-Lindell-DeMarce Funeral Home is in charge of Brian's arrangements.



JANICE NEAL, 81

Janice Neal, 81, Malvern, formerly of Red Oak, passed away Monday, Nov. 28, 2022, in Malvern at her home.

Funeral services are pending at Nelson-Boylan-LeRette Funeral Chapel, Red Oak.

Law and Order

The following events were filed with the Red Oak, Montgomery County, State of Iowa, or other government offices. In regard to law enforcement and judicial activities, all parties are presumed innocent until proven guilty, and other details may be available at iowacourts.state.ia.us.

REAL ESTATE

WARRANTY DEED

• Taylor and Kassandra Mellott to Alexis White, Red Oak Maplewood SD Lts 30-31.

TRUSTEE'S DEED

• Leon Volkmer, Trustee, Leon Volkmer Family Trust, and Edus Volkmer Family Trust to Jacob and Mindy Wookey, 1-71-39.

QUIT CLAIM DEED

• City of Red Oak to Robin Smith, Red Oak Railroad Addi-

tion Blk 25, Lts 15-16.

CONTRACT

• Deanna Denny to M. Con-sier, Trustee, and Goodwill Industries International #306 MO Land Trust, Red Oak Original Plat Blk 69 Lts 2-3.

MORTGAGE

• Alexis White, Alexis White, Attorney in Fact, and Brittany White to Mortgage Electronic Registration Systems Inc, MERS, Mortgage Research Center LLC, and Veterans United Home Loans, Red Oak Maplewood SD Lts 30-31.

• Kathleen Goines to Iowa Housing Trust Fund, Villisca West Side Addition Lt 25.

SMALL CLAIMS

• Portfolio Recovery Associates, LLC vs. Rick Weaver, Villisca, judgment default in favor of the plaintiff, \$1,347.90 with 0% interest from Nov. 22, plus costs.

• LNVN Funding LLC vs. Kathy Myers, Villisca, dismissed with prejudice.

• Montgomery County Sheriff vs. Trevor Johnson, Red Oak, dismissed with prejudice.

• Montgomery County Sheriff

vs. Scottie Cetnar, dismissed with prejudice.

DISMISSED

• Aggravated, State of Iowa vs. Raejean Steele, 30, Red Oak, probation violation, dismissed.

• Felony, State of Iowa vs. Daisy Walker, 26, Red Oak, unauthorized use of credit card over \$1,500 under \$10,000, 57 counts, dismissed.

ARRESTS

• Filed Nov. 21, Demarcus King, 35, Elliott, domestic assault second offense, criminal mischief, fourth degree, held on no bond.

• Filed Nov. 22, Kristen Hughes, 52, Red Oak, Mills County warrant for contempt - other act or omission of district court, held on no bond.

• Filed Nov. 24, Kiley Caron, 32, Red Oak, warrant for failure to appear, driving while license suspended, \$1,000 cash only bond.

CRIMINAL

• Aggravated, State of Iowa vs. Brandon Logan, Jr., 23, Red Oak, driving while license denied, suspended, cancelled, or revoked, \$375 fine.

• Aggravated, State of Iowa

vs. Daisy Walker, 26, Red Oak, theft third degree, deferred judgment, if revoked, serve two years prison consecutive with other charge, three years probation, DNA requirement.

• Aggravated, State of Iowa vs. Demarcus King, 36, Elliott, domestic abuse assault, first offense, criminal mischief fourth degree.

• Felony, State of Iowa vs. Daisy Walker, 26, Red Oak, unauthorized use of credit card over \$1,500 under \$10,000, deferred judgment, if revoked, serve five years prison consecutive with other charge, \$1,025 fine, three years probation, DNA requirement.

• Felony, State of Iowa vs. Joshua Mullen, 43, Corning, possession of controlled substance - third or subsequent offense.

• Simple Misdemeanor, State of Iowa vs. Phoebe Johnson, 20, Shenandoah, possession of drug paraphernalia, pled guilty, \$105 fine.

• Simple Misdemeanor, State of Iowa vs. Joshua Mullen, 43, Corning, interference with official acts.

• Serious Misdemeanor, State of Iowa vs. Clyde Zeigler, 45, Red Oak, eluding, three days jail, time

served, \$830 fine.

OWI

• State of Iowa vs. Lucas Swanson, 20, Stanton, contempt - resist order or process of district court, two days jail, time served.

• State of Iowa vs. Keegun Hoyt, 39, Red Oak, first offense, deferred judgment, one year, \$1,250 fine, half waived if produces valid driver's license within 30 days, nine months informal probation.

TRAFFIC

• Kobe Cobb, Red Oak, person under 21 using tobacco/vapor product, second offense.

• Dalton Whitcher, Villisca, operation without registration card or plate.

• Scharley Reynolds, Stanton, registration violation.

• Kemal Muselic, Des Moines, fail to change lane upon approach to emergency vehicle.

• Tina Rieber, Griswold, regis-

tration violation.

• Thomas Fox, Calvert City, Ky., failure to comply with safety regulations.

• Thomas Fox, Calvert City, Ky., failure to comply with safety regulations.

• Axel McCuen, Villisca, speeding.

• Lorin Davis, Red Oak, speeding.

• Justin Walker, Plattsmouth, Neb., registration violation.

• Anthony Simmons, Bedford, speeding.

• Kimberly Maschmann, Firth, Neb., speeding.

• Matthew Williams, Red Oak, failure to maintain or use safety belts.

• Diane Shipley, Nodaway, speeding.

• Vanessa Belt, Red Oak, speeding.

• Dana Ramirez, Red Oak, failure to yield half of roadway.

• Cynthia Hatley, Corning, speeding.

Registration Open for Free Nutcracker Ballet + STEM Performance for K-12 Youth

From ISU Extension

On Friday, Dec. 9, at 12:30 p.m. youth can watch a free mini-performance of the Nutcracker Ballet and independently participate in related STEM challenges. The event will be held in person at Stephens Auditorium on the Iowa State University campus and also livestreamed across Iowa. Registration for the event is required for both the in person and online options; register online with Stephens to reserve your spot at extension.iastate.edu/news/registration-free-nutcracker-ballet-stem-performance-k-12.

The performance celebrates the magic of STEAM - which means science, technology, engineering, arts and math. This event

will be roughly 45 minutes in length with no intermission. The overall program is designed for elementary aged youth in grades 2-5 but could easily be modified for older or younger youth. All activities work to support a variety of literacy and STEM standards. Related STEM challenges include the mousetrap challenge and costume challenge. A circuit challenge and choreography challenge are coming soon. A free download will be available for all of the STEAM challenges.

"This amazing event is a wonderful way to showcase the joy of the arts and all of the STEM that can be found in the theater," said Sara Nelson, 4-H STEM program specialist with Iowa State University Extension and Outreach. "We also wanted

to highlight the many careers that combine STEM and the arts in innovative and creative ways. We are thrilled to be partnering with Stephens on this special youth performance."

The Nutcracker Ballet tells the story of a young girl, a heroic prince and the fantastic dream they share. Professional dancers Tanya Lynn Trombly and Mauricio Vera will join local Iowa dancers to perform in a Reader's Theatre style performance. Trombly and Vera will perform the roles of the Sugar Plum Fairy and Cavalier, respectively. This is the 41st year of the Nutcracker Ballet on the Iowa State University campus. This mini performance and the annual production feature choreography by Robert Thomas and Miyoko

Kato Thomas of the Iowa Youth Ballet.

Along with a collaboration by Stephens Auditorium and ISU Extension and Outreach 4-H Youth Development, a variety of groups at Iowa State University have been involved, including undergraduate dancers, faculty dancers from various colleges and an undergraduate storyteller from the theatre department. The ISU School of Education, Iowa Space Grant Consortium and the Science Center of Iowa are also key partners.

For more information on Iowa 4-H Youth Development STEM programming, contact your ISU Extension and Outreach county office or visit the STEM webpage at extension.iastate.edu/4h/stem.

**SUDOKU**

3					1	4	
	9					5	
5			7			2	
7	9		8				
	2	4				7	
	5		2				1
			6	3	4		9
			4	9		8	
					7		

Level: Intermediate

**Fun By The Numbers**

Like puzzles? Then you'll love sudoku. This mind-bending puzzle will have you hooked from the moment you square off, so sharpen your pencil and put your sudoku savvy to the test!

**Here's How It Works:**  
Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

6	3	7	2	1	5	4	8	9
2	8	5	4	9	6	3	7	1
9	1	4	3	8	9	6	2	5
1	6	8	7	2	4	3	5	9
5	7	6	9	8	1	2	4	3
4	2	6	4	5	1	8	3	7
7	9	1	1	7	8	3	6	2
8	5	8	2	6	3	4	7	1
3	2	9	6	5	1	4	7	8

**ANSWER:**

DO YOU REMEMBER WHEN...?

Archived from 2017, 2012, 1997, and 1972 editions of The Red Oak Express

5 Years Ago

Janet Brammer, the wife of Raymond Brammer, both of Malvern, was hopeful that a member of the community would be able to give her husband something to be thankful for: the gift of a new kidney. Raymond had successful surgery to remove a carcinoid tumor from his kidney but was later diagnosed with nephrotic syndrome and was undergoing dialysis. Over 4,500 people died each year on the waiting list for kidney transplants, and there were 93,000 people on the waiting list. Janet was hopeful someone would be willing to step forward and save a life.

The Stanton Viqueens opened up the basketball season with a painful one-point loss to the Bedford Bulldogs, 32-31. The Bulldogs won on a free throw. Hope Ogletree, Tara Peterson, and Kami Tibbon led scoring for Stanton, each earning eight points each. Savanna Moffet earned five points for Stanton.

10 Years Ago

The Montgomery County Extension office celebrated its 100th anniversary with a Red Oak Chamber and Industry coffee at the Gold Fair Building. The guest speaker was John Lawrence, Vice President for Extension Agriculture at Iowa State University. Also featured were scrapbooks and annual reports from throughout the Montgomery County Extension's history. The first extension course in Montgomery County was held in 1905, and 250 local farmers were in attendance for the special course.

The Villisca Blue Jays moved to a 3-0 winning streak on the season following a 54-45 win over the Essex Trojans, holding off Essex after the Trojans brought the lead down to single digits. Villisca's Amanda Focht finished the game with 10 points, including four for five from the free throw line, and 15 rebounds.

25 Years Ago

Most local merchants were reporting a good day of sales on Black Friday, traditionally the busiest shopping day of the year throughout the country. Some lines were reported at the shops along the Red Oak downtown square, but customers were in a festive mood. The stores visited by customers all reported steady traffic with sales at, or exceeding, expectations. Many merchants also offered free gift wrapping along with purchases. A number of stores also planned to have extended regular hours and openings on Sunday afternoons up until Christmas.

Red Oak High School softball player Angie Echternach was selected for Class 2A four-team all-state for her work as a pitcher by the Iowa High School Girls Athletic Union.

A desktop computer and monitor with keyboard, mouse, and 24 speed CD Rom was \$3,779 at the Office Supply Closet in Red Oak.

50 Years Ago

Contributions to the Rodney Fields Fund totalled \$450, a fund sponsored by Houghton State Bank. Rodney suffered internal injuries, a fractured right leg, and fractured ribs following a traffic accident. After major surgery at Nebraska Methodist Hospital, he returned home for a convalescent period, estimated to take approximately three months. Fields was in a body cast and was required to remain on his back during the healing process, but he was in good spirits.

Mark Benda of Red Oak was among the Class All-Southwest Iowa football honorees of the Omaha World Herald. Benda had played as a linebacker and fullback before being moved to tackle in his senior year.

A boy's boxed dress shirt and tie set was on sale for \$4.98 at the JC Penney location in Red Oak.



Students from Southwest Valley middle school constructed picnic tables to benefit residents of Valley East. The tables were made possible from a grant from the Montgomery County Foundation. (Photo submitted)

## Feed the Pack helping those in need

Feed the Pack is a local group of volunteers that strive to help children and families in need. The group officially began in the summer of 2018 after receiving a \$5,000 grant from the Lilly Foundation.

The backpack program, which consists of child-friendly, nutritious food items for the weekend, was implemented at the beginning of the 2018-2019 academic school year. Unfortunately, many children experience food insecurity.

If their basic needs are not met, children will be unable to realize their full potential in the future. The program began at the Enarson Elementary School and soon expanded to include Southwest Valley Middle School students. There are currently 63 students benefitting from this program.

As another community outreach project, in April 2019, volunteers from Feed the Pack and many other organizations started providing Sunday evening meals twice monthly to Villisca Housing Authority residents. The "Community Table" has been well received and enjoyed by many. COVID did not stop volunteers. "Grab & Go" meals were (and still are) provided. If a group or extended family would like to be involved, please contact Pat Shipley: patshipley@myfmc.com.

Pizza, sub sandwiches, soup, lasagna, whatever volunteers choose is greatly appreciated.

In addition to community groups, students from Girl Scouts, 4-H groups, middle school, and high school students from various organizations have all participated. All expenses incurred can be reimbursed by Feed the Pack.

Montgomery County Memorial Hospital and Feed the Pack have continued food box deliveries to families in surrounding areas. This generous program is offered every other month through the hospital's "Live Well Montgomery County" program. Volunteers pick up and deliver 80+ boxes in our Villisca and Nodaway communities.

After a successful application to the Montgomery County Foundation, a \$3,000 grant was awarded to provide pouring of a cement slab and picnic tables for Valley East residents and others. SWV students from FFA and middle school, along with their sponsors, assisted in getting everything in place.

Hunger is real, and it does exist, even in our small communities and rural areas. You or your organization can help make a difference for children or families in our immediate area.

Participation is appreciated and essential to continue this important endeavor. Donations may be sent to P.O. Box 191, Villisca, Iowa 50864, or they may contact wefeedithepack@gmail.com.

## Stanton FFA holds degree raising ceremony



Chapter degree recipients were, from left: Marissa Strough, Andrew Johnson, Caden Sallach, James McDonald, Alice Duckett, Clark Spencer, Ella Peterson, and Kyle Pastore. (Photos submitted by Alan Spencer)

On Tuesday, November 15, the Stanton FFA Chapter held their Jacket Unboxing and Degree Raising Ceremonies. Congratulations to the seven members receiving their Greenhand Degree and to the thirteen members receiving their Chapter Degree.

Seven students received their Greenhand Degree; Clayton Culver, Cale Haley, Adrian Haynie, Ethyn Jordan, Eric Kutzli, Brianna Mitchell and Wyatt Roberts. Thirteen students received their Chapter Degree these members were Zoocy Allen, Stephanie Bair, Hunter Bishop, Alice Duckett, Andrew

Johnson, Jameson McDonald, Logan McQueen, Kyle Pastore, Ella Peterson, Caden Sallach, Jayden Schwery, Clark Spencer, and Marissa Strough.

Greenhand Degree recipients have planned their Supervised Agricultural Experience (work-based experience); learned and explained the FFA Creed, motto, and mission statement; described and explained the meaning of the FFA emblem and colors; demonstrated knowledge of the FFA Code of Ethics and the proper use of the FFA jacket; and demonstrated a knowledge of the history of the organization, the chapter constitution and

bylaws and the Chapter Program of Activities.

Chapter Degree recipients have earned their Greenhand FFA Degree, developed plans for continued growth and improvement in their Supervised Agricultural Experience, have effectively led a group discussion for 15 minutes, have demonstrated five procedures of parliamentary law, shown progress toward individual achievement in the FFA award programs, have a satisfactory scholastic record, and have participated in at least 10 hours of community service activities.



Greenhand degree recipients were, from left: Brianna Mitchell, Eric Kutzli, Ethyn Jordan, Wyatt Roberts, Adrian Haynie, and Clay Culver.

## VIEWPOINTS

### Stronger the Press, Stronger the People

THE TIME CAPSULE | ROY MARSHALL

### A Sears tombstone and \$5 eggs

Wife and I drove through a local cemetery last week looking for Sears & Roebuck tombstones.

Some readers may recall that several months ago this column made reference to a Sears kit home, speculating there might be others in this area. A surprising reply came from a reader who said her grandparents not only lived in a home built and furnished from a Sears catalog, they acquired their tombstone the same way.

I had no idea Sears & Roebuck sold grave markers, but looked into it and found that they did. Components of a Victorian, Cape Cod or Craftsman house weighed a few tons more than the post office handled, so shipping was by rail.

This was also the case with tombstones. Getting a house kit from the depot to a building site or stone to a cemetery was the buyer's problem.

Sears began distributing a tombstone catalog in the late 1890s and continued for about half a century. The catalog can be found on-line and offers interesting browsing.

There are several ways to identify a Sears kit home. A Sears tombstone is a bit more difficult and, in some cases, not possible.

Experts in the field, who may or may not



know what they're talking about, tell us they've studied the "Tombstones and Memorials" catalog illustrations.

Some designs are basic and commonly available, but there are said to be several that were exclusive to Sears.

Cross-referencing illustrations with actual headstones in a local cemetery, we located a couple of unusual ones that match the catalog.

Whether these are of Sears origin or not, everything I've read indicates their mail-order grave markers offered quality at an attractive price and, without doubt, the Sears team understood marketing.

A story was told that during the 1920s a lady called Sears saying she had several bottles of patent medicine ordered from them by her husband.

The beloved gentleman had passed away and she wondered if the unopened bottles could be returned.

The Sears representative's reply was vintage:

"Certainly, madam. And may we send you our "Tombstones and Memorials" catalog?"

On an unrelated matter, when eggs hit \$5 per dozen in a local grocery our back-yard chickens became celebrities.

Although less than rock star status, they're referred to by a neighbor as "Cackleberry Queens," gifted ladies who work for chicken feed and produce results.

Four hens can be relied on for three eggs a day—more than wife and I use but with not many to share.

Additional chicks are on order, but require five months before they begin to lay. By then eggs will probably drop in price and we won't be able to give them away.

Actually, we're giving them away now. Back when wife had a sizeable flock and eggs were 50 cents a dozen, she took the time to figure production costs, deciding to cut losses thereafter by keeping only enough hens for our own use. She exchanges extra eggs (if any) for good will.

The current cost of grocery store eggs is even higher than what's reflected by the purchase price. The latest figures I find tell us that in Iowa during 2022 over 15 million birds in commercial and

back yard flocks have died or been killed because of avian flu. USDA inspectors have identified the virus in 44 states, and a nationwide total of over 50 million birds have been destroyed.

Whether an egg-user or not, if you pay taxes you helped pay for those dead chickens because the USDA reimburses owners at what I'm told is market value.

Our chickens are fine and there's no exposure to wild birds while in their winter quarters, but if USDA inspectors come knocking I'll tell them the hens have been wheezing and currently identify as geese. The idea is to be reimbursed for geese, which are considerably more valuable than chickens.

This seems reasonable. My argument will be that both the USDA and FDA approve of Tyson, Pilgrim's Pride and other mega-producers identifying (by label) ordinary but immature hybrid broiler chickens as "Cornish Game Hens," even though they're not "game," only partly Cornish, and half of them aren't even hens.

Roy Marshall is a local historian and columnist for the Red Oak Express. He can be contacted at news@redoakexpress.com.

### Letters to the Editor

The Red Oak Express supports healthy community discourse and encourages readers to submit a letter to the editor. Letters must be signed and include a phone number for verification purposes. They can be submitted by mail or dropped off at 2012 Commerce Drive, Red Oak, Iowa, 51566, or emailed to news@redoakexpress.com, or entered through our website at redoakexpress.com. Letters should be concise and centered on a single topic. All letters are subject to editing for length, taste, accuracy, liability, or other reasons. The Express is under no obligation to print any letter. If you have questions, contact the Express office at 712-623-2566 or news@redoakexpress.com.

#### DEADLINES

Newspaper Inserts: Noon Wednesdays.  
Submitted News Items and Letters: 4 p.m. Thursdays.  
Public Notices: 4 p.m. Thursdays.  
Display & Classified Display Advertising: 4 p.m. Wednesdays.  
Classified Line Ads/Garage Sale Ads: 10 a.m. Thursdays.  
Obituaries: 9 a.m. Mondays.

#### CONTACT US

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## THE RED OAK Express

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#### WHO WE ARE

Employees in order of continuous service: Trish Deitchler, Graphic Design; Peggy Boeye, Office Manager, News; Ann Watt, Mail; Nick Johansen, News Reporter; Charm Carpenter, Sports Reporter; Tracy Schooling, Driver; Tess Nelson, General Manager/Editor; Shawn Parker, Advertising/Sales; Nanny Crowe, Circulation; Joshua Byers, Regional Publisher.

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#### BUY A SINGLE COPY

Single copies are \$1.00 each and available at (in Red Oak unless specified): Red Oak Express; Casey's (Red Oak, Stanton,

Villisca, Griswold); Cubby's; Dollar General; E-Stop (Emerson); Fareway; Hy-Vee; Hy-Vee Wine & Spirits; United Farmers Cooperative; Walmart (Shenandoah). Single copy sales are

also available from a coin rack in front of the Red Oak Express.

Community Calendar

1 December

12:30 p.m., Bingo, Red Oak Senior Center, 2700 N. 4th St. Call 712-623-3497 or Carolyn at 402-926-8683 for more information.

4 p.m., Community Prayer Time, Fountain Square Park. Call Bonnie at 623-4759.

5-7 p.m., Fall E Sports, Montgomery County Family YMCA, 101 E. Cherry St.

7 p.m., Alcoholics Anonymous, Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 1101 Summit St.

2 December

5-7 p.m., Fish and chicken fundraiser, Emerson American Legion, 402 Manchester St.

5-7 p.m., Toys for Tots Toy drive at Fareway, 811 Broadway. Unwrapped toys Ages 0-14. Sign-up also available, bring child's birth certificate or medical card.

5:30 p.m., Alcoholics Anonymous, Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 1101 Summit St.

7 p.m., "Four Christmases," theatre #1; "Till," theatre #2; Red Oak Grand Theatre.

3 December

1:30-3 p.m., Holiday Party at the Red Oak Public Library, 400 N. 2nd St., See story on page for further details.

7 p.m., "Four Christmases," theatre #1; "Till," theatre #2; Red Oak Grand Theatre.

8-11 p.m., Afterparty at the Stanton Old Lumberyard, 227 Thorn St., Stanton, featuring Tyler Folkerts.

4 December

11 a.m.-2 p.m. Jeremy Snipes benefit. See snippet to the right for more information.

2 and 7 p.m., "Four Christmases," theatre #1; "Till," theatre #2; Red Oak Grand Theatre.

5:30 p.m., Alcoholics Anonymous, Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 1101 Summit St.

5 December

12:30 p.m. Bingo, Red Oak Senior Center, 2700 N. 4th St. Call 712-623-3497 or Carolyn

402-926-8683 for more information.

5:30 p.m., Red Oak City Council meeting, Red Oak Fire Station, or via Zoom.

5-7 p.m., Fall E Sports, Montgomery County Family YMCA, 101 E. Cherry St.

7 p.m., Alcoholics Anonymous, Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 1101 Summit St.

6 December

8:30 a.m., Montgomery County Supervisors, North Meeting Room in courthouse basement, open to public.

Noon, Rotary Club meeting. For location, go to <https://rotarydistrict5650.org/clubinfo/red-oak>.

1 p.m., Card games (pitch and/or cribbage) Red Oak Senior Center, 2700 N. 4th St. Call 712-623-3497 or Carolyn 402-926-8683 for more information.

2 p.m., Make your own Christmas ornament, Red Oak Public Library, 400 N. 2nd St. Call 623-6516 for further information.

5-7 p.m., Fall E Sports, Montgomery County Family YMCA, 101 E. Cherry St.

7 December

1:30-5 p.m., Christ's Cupboard Food Pantry and Clothing Cupboard, 206 E. Coolbaugh St. Donations accepted 1-5 p.m. at back door.

4, 5, or 6 p.m., Pottery class ornament workshop at the Montgomery County Family YMCA Youth Enrichment Center, 101 E. Cherry St. Sessions from 4-5 p.m., 5-6 p.m., and 6-7 p.m. Cost to participate, \$20.

4:30-7 p.m. Ladies Night out. Participating businesses in the event are: The Carpet Store & So Much More, Mark Jackson's Red Oak Hardware Hank and Hallmark Gold Crown Store, The Pudgy Pumpkin Patch Gift Shop, Valley Antiques & Gifts, J Mercantile, and White Sparrow

5-7 p.m., Fall E Sports, Montgomery County Family YMCA, 101 E. Cherry St.

Donations made to Optimist sign project



The Red Oak FFA Alumni, Red Oak Athletic Boosters, Red Oak Foundation, and Red Oak Music Boosters banded together to show support and donate funds towards the Red Oak Optimists sign project for the front of the Red Oak Jr./Sr. High School promoting all of the amazing things happening at the schools. Pictured are, from left: Scott Bruce from the Red Oak FFA Alumni, Richard Fisher from the Red Oak School Foundation and Red Oak Athletic Boosters, and Amy Strebe from the Red Oak Music Boosters, and Dan Crouse with the Red Oak Optimists. (Photo submitted)



Christmas spirit in Villisca

The Villisca Community is getting into the spirit of the season. During the Thanksgiving weekend, the Villisca sign and Willard the pig were adorned in Christmas lights by the Freeman family. (Photo submitted)

**Happy Anniversary!**

Celebrating their anniversaries this week are:

Rod Nowels and Nancy Howlette – Dec. 5

Congratulations and happy anniversary to you!

*To become a member of the free "Anniversary Club," e-mail your anniversary (and those of your friends and family) to [news@redoakexpress.com](mailto:news@redoakexpress.com), mail to P.O. Box 377, Red Oak, IA 51566, or drop by our office at 2012 Commerce Dr.*

Jeremy Snipes benefit Sunday

A spaghetti fundraiser will be held from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Red Oak Senior Center, 2700 N. 4th St. The meal will be a free will donation. A silent auction will also be held.

All proceeds will support medical expenses for Jeremy Snipes, following his kidney transplant.

Anyone who wishes to donate but who is unable to attend the meal can do so on Venmo @ Brandie-Lucky.

Anyone with questions can call Carolyn Lombard at 402-926-8683.

Emerson American Legion fundraiser

The Emerson American Legion at 402 Manchester St., Emerson, is hosting an all you can eat fish and chicken dinner from 5 to 7 p.m. Dec. 2. Cost is \$15 for adults and \$7 for children.

Holiday events at Red Oak Library

The Red Oak Public Library at 400 N. 2nd St. will host a special holiday event from 1:30 to 3 p.m. Dec. 3, in partnership with the Red Oak Chamber and Industry Association.

Attendees will be able to take part in snowball games, magic tricks, do it yourself snow globe crafts, and cookies will be available to decorate.

Everyone is welcome to participate. Call 623-6516 for further details.

On Dec. 5 at 2 p.m., adults are invited to the library to make their own Christmas ornament.

**Happy Birthday!**

Celebrating birthdays are:

Ronnie Dolph – Dec. 2  
Linda Westover – Dec. 5  
Judith Kalkas – Dec. 5  
Adam Hietbrink – Dec. 6  
Jess McKee – Dec. 6

*To be included on the free "Happy Birthday" list, e-mail your birthday (and those of your friends and family) to [news@redoakexpress.com](mailto:news@redoakexpress.com), mail to P.O. Box 377, Red Oak, IA 51566, or drop by our office at 2012 Commerce Dr.*

CHURCH DIRECTORY

<p><b>Advent Christian</b> 300 S. 2nd Ave., Villisca, Rev. Jeff Eason, Sunday School, 9:30 a.m., Worship, 10:30 a.m., Celebrate Recovery, Tuesday, 6:30 p.m.</p> <p><b>Assembly Of God</b> 1005 Senate, Red Oak, 623-2174, Services, 10:30 a.m.</p> <p><b>Baptist</b> The Bridge (First Baptist Church), 406 N. 3rd St., Red Oak, Rev. Len Taylor, Worship, 11 a.m. Grace Baptist, 1510 N. 6th St., Red Oak, Gary D. Walters, Bible class, 10 a.m., Worship, 11 a.m., Worship, 6 p.m.; Wednesday, Prayer, 7 p.m. Grace Baptist, 525 Main St., Griswold, Victor Maxson, Bible study, 10 a.m., Worship, 11 a.m. <b>Online:</b> 11 a.m. livestream.</p> <p><b>Southern Baptist</b> Crossroads Community Church, 303 E. Oak St., use the alley entrance, Rev. Ricky Rohrig, Sr., Celebration Services with Kids' Church, 9:23 a.m., Wednesdays in the Word, live on Facebook, 6:30 p.m. 712-357-1060, <a href="http://crossroadsredoak.com">crossroadsredoak.com</a>. <b>Online:</b> 9:45 a.m. approx. live on Facebook.</p> <p><b>Catholic</b> St. Joseph's, 131 W. High, Villisca, Father Sylvester Okoh, Sunday</p>	<p>Mass, 8:30 a.m. St. Mary's, 1510 Highland Ave., Red Oak, Father Lazarus Kirigia, Saturdays, 5 p.m. (1st, 3rd, 5th Saturday); Sunday, 10:30 a.m., in Spanish, 1 p.m.</p> <p><b>Christian</b> First Christian, 1909 Summit St., Red Oak, Pastor AJ Baratta, PreKindergarten - Sunday School, 9:30-10:15 a.m., Fellowship, 10 a.m., Worship, 10:30 a.m. <b>Online:</b> 10:30 a.m. live on Facebook.</p> <p><b>Christian &amp; Missionary Alliance</b> Citylight Southwest Iowa, 705 Bradford, Emerson. Co-lead pastors Matt Keller, Tyler Mass. Worship with children's church, 10 a.m. in-person gathering. <b>Online:</b> 10 a.m. live on Facebook. Faith Community, 2701 N. 8th St., Red Oak, Pastor Dan Wetzel, Associate Pastor Stephen Beaulier, Worship, 9:30 a.m. Connection Classes for pre-kindergarten-adults, 11 a.m., Wednesday activities: Faith Kids, Pre-K grade 4, 6-7:30 p.m. Faith Midpoint, grades 5-6, 6-7:30 p.m. Faith Youth, grades 7-12, 7-8:30 p.m. <b>Online:</b> 9:30 a.m. on KCSI, 9:30 a.m. on Facebook.</p>	<p><b>Church Of Christ</b> Church Of Christ, Elliott, Sunday Bible School, 9 a.m., Worship, 10 a.m., Men's and Women's Bible study and breakfast, first Sunday of the month at 7:30 a.m. River of Life Church, Hwy. 48 North, Red Oak, Interim Minister Kevin Berry, Sunday School 9 a.m., Worship, 10 a.m.</p> <p><b>Church Of The Nazarene</b> Red Oak, 401 E. Prospect St., Rev. Lori Lathrop. Radio ministry, 8:30 a.m., worship with children's church at 10:30 a.m.</p> <p><b>Covenant</b> Evangelical, Rev. Matt King, 308 Eastern, Stanton, Sunday School 9:30 a.m., Worship, 10:45 a.m. <b>Online:</b> 10:45 a.m. live on Facebook and later on Youtube. Faith Covenant Church, 212 Alice St., Essex, Pastor Gordon Scott, Pastor Staci Shearer, Worship, 8:30 a.m. First Covenant, Rev. Alan Dean, pastor, 3rd &amp; Hammond, Red Oak, Worship, 9:30 a.m.</p> <p><b>Jehovah's Witness</b> 210 Argus Road, Shenandoah, Thursday, 7:30 p.m.; Sunday, 10 a.m., public Bible discourse.</p>	<p><b>Lutheran</b> Bethesda Lutheran, Rural Clarinda. Worship 9:30 a.m. Worship, Sunday School 10:30 a.m. Bethlehem Lutheran, 1101 Summit St., Red Oak, Rev. Jennifer Yeske-Drown, Sunday worship, 11 a.m. Strand Evangelical, Rural Villisca, Rev. Marietta Nelson-Bittle, Worship, 9:45 a.m. Fremont Lutheran (Nyman), 1147 Ironwood Ave, Red Oak, Pastor Ann Albert, Worship, 9:30 a.m., Sunday School, 10:30 a.m. Mamrelund Lutheran, 410 Eastern Ave., Stanton. Worship, 10:30 a.m. Sunday School, 9:15 a.m. <b>Online:</b> 10:30 a.m. FMTC Cable Channel 1, also live on Facebook. Mt. Calvary, 107 S. 5th, Villisca, Jerome Wagoner, Worship, 9:00 a.m. Tabor Lutheran, 1711 Q Ave., Stanton, Worship, 8:15 a.m., Sunday School, 9:15 a.m. Peace Lutheran, (A WELS Congregation), 411 Church St., Shenandoah, Saturday Worship, 5:30 p.m.; Bible and Sunday School, 6:30 p.m.</p> <p><b>Non-Denominational</b> Oaks Community Church, 41310 Ellington Rd., Emerson, Rev. Ron Perry, 712-824-7218, Sunday School, 10 a.m., Worship, 11 a.m.</p>	<p><b>Presbyterian</b> Center Ridge, 1546 N. 110th St., Red Oak, Caryn Pedersen, Worship 1 p.m., two times a month. Call 623-9023 for more information. First Presbyterian, 109 S. 3rd Ave., Villisca, Rev. Sandra Wainwright, Sunday School, 9:30 a.m., Worship, 10:30 a.m. Red Oak Presbyterian, 511 E. Coolbaugh, PO Box 402, Red Oak, Caryn Pedersen, <a href="http://redoakpresbyterianchurch.com">redoakpresbyterianchurch.com</a>, Service, 10:30 a.m. <b>Online:</b> 10:30 a.m. live on Facebook/Red Oak Presbyterian Church</p> <p><b>Reformed Evangelical</b> Heartland Sovereign Grace Church, new church plant. Bible study Sunday, 5 p.m., <a href="http://www.swiacrec.com">www.swiacrec.com</a>, <a href="mailto:contact@swiacrec.com">contact@swiacrec.com</a>.</p> <p><b>United Methodist</b> First United Methodist, 600 E. Hammond, Red Oak, Rev. Dr. Eric Sayonkon, Worship, Sunday, 10:30 a.m.; Youth group Wednesday 6:30-8 p.m., grades 6-12, snack is served. <b>Online:</b> 10:30 a.m. <a href="http://fumcro.org">fumcro.org</a>; click on the media tab to see previously recorded services. Wesley Chapel UMC, Rev. Carl Phillips, Worship, 8:45 a.m., Sunday School, 9:45 a.m. Red Oak Circuit, Linda Westerhold; Hawthorne, 1248 210th St., Red</p>	<p>Oak, Worship, 10 a.m.; Stratton, 1695 150th St., Red Oak, Worship, 11:15 a.m. <b>Online:</b> 11:15 a.m. live on Facebook. Elliott United Methodist, Rev. Terry McClain, Sunday School, 9 a.m., Worship, 10 a.m. <b>Online:</b> 10 a.m. live on Facebook. Emerson United Methodist Church, Rev. Denise Stevens, 801 Bradford Ave., Emerson, (712) 824-7368, Sunday School, 9:30 a.m., Worship, 10:30 a.m. Grant United Methodist, Rev. Jenn Van Nostrand, Worship services, 9 a.m. <b>Online:</b> 9 a.m. live on Facebook United Methodist, 203 S. 3rd Ave., Villisca, Pastor Jennifer Van Nostrand, Sunday School 9:30 a.m., Worship, 10:30 a.m. <b>Online:</b> 10:30 a.m. live on Facebook. Strahan United Methodist, Hastings, Rev. David Kwangki Kim, Worship, 9:30 a.m., Sunday School, 10:30 a.m.</p> <p><b>United Church Of Christ</b> First Congregational, 608 Reed St., Red Oak, Sunday Worship, 11:30 a.m. in the sanctuary with fellowship prior to the service at 10:30 a.m. Rev. Holly Scherff, interim pastor.</p>
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**Sponsored by:**

Belt Auto Center & Trailer Sales 623-2538	Nelson-Boylan-LeRette Funeral Chapel - 623-2525	Houghton State Bank 623-4823	Sellergren•Lindell•DeMarce Funeral Home - 623-2796
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## Thankful all year round



Elaine Carlson  
Director of Membership & Finance

I hope you all were able to enjoy family, friends, good food, and made some new memories at Thanksgiving this year!

As I reflect on this past year at the Chamber, I am very thankful for Kesandra, Adri, our Board of Directors, our members, committee participants, and so many generous volunteers.

### It's Beginning to Look A lot Like Christmas!

The weather was perfect for our elves to spread some Christmas joy in our beautiful downtown! Thanks to those hardworking elves who decorated the large planters and the smaller ones in Fountain Square Park.

Thanks to Momentum Exterior Services for decorating the Community Christmas Tree. Thanks also to the city crew of Red Oak for hanging lights in Fountain Square Park and for hanging the traditional wreaths on the light poles downtown. Now if we just had a little snow ...

### Cold Cash Sale Success

It was a nice morning for the Cold Cash Sale which was why we had people lined up past Mark Jackson's Hardware Hank before the doors officially opened at 8 a.m.

We were sold out in less than an hour that morning. Thanks so much to our volunteers Sharon Bradley, Jeannie Bruning, Ann Carder, Elaine Hollen, Sandra Weber, and Nancy Zimmer who helped us with a successful and efficient event! Just a reminder for those who purchased Cold Cash, they do expire on Jan. 31, 2023. It is different from Red Oak Bucks which do not have an expiration date.

For a complete list of Chamber Members who accept Cold Cash and Red Oak Bucks, check out our website or stop by the office for a copy of the list. For more information about our members, promotions, and events within and around our community, please visit our website, redoakiowa.com. If you are interested in volunteering opportunities or would like to subscribe to the Communicator weekly email, please contact our office at (712) 623-4821 or email info@redoakiowa.com.

Red Oak Chamber & Industry Association Mission Statement –

“Our mission is to promote Red Oak’s economy, improve the quality of life, and represent our business community.”

Wishing you a joyful holiday season!  
Elaine Carlson



Helping with the ROCIA's Cold Cash sale were, from left: Elaine Hollen, Sandra Weber, Sharon Bradley, Jeannie Bruning and Ann Carder. Not pictured is Nancy Zimmer (Photo provided)

## HOLIDAY Giveaway

In Downtown Red Oak

FREE Movie 1:30PM  
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The ROCIA would like to thank the Red Oak junior class and their parents, who helped with set up and tear down of the Holiday Extravaganza. (Photo provided)

## Champagne & Pearls, a smashing success



Kesandra Pullen  
Events and Marketing Coordinator

The “Champagne & Pearls” themed Holiday Extravaganza was a smashing success!

When you combine great food, vendors, people, and prizes all together it's difficult not to have a fantastic evening. We sold out of tickets three weeks in advance, so be sure to add to your calendar for next year.

The Holiday Extravaganza is always hosted on the second Monday of November, which will be Nov. 13, 2023.

Hosting big events like this takes a lot of hard work and countless hours of planning. The ROCIA would like to recognize and thank the Extravaganza Committee: Diana Hietbrink, Melinda Snipes, Adriana St. Lezin, and Kelly Bucy. Sponsors like Dental Care PC, Mindful Beauty Day Spa, H&R Block, and Nishna Productions make an event like this financially possible, along with the more than 100 local businesses that generously donated items to the Piccadilly Auction.

the Piccadilly Auction.

Lastly, thank you to those who volunteered that night, our many vendors, and those who attended the extravaganza. We here at the Chamber love hosting events for the community to enjoy, and not only was this ladies' night out a blast, we also raised money for all our coming free holiday events.

### Feel the Magic of the Holidays in Red Oak

The Holiday Kickoff on Friday, Nov. 25. By the time you all are reading this Santa Claus will already have made a special visit to come light the tree with the community. Afterwards, Santa took pictures with kids and families at Val's Sugar Shack. Free downtown horse-drawn carriage rides were available again this year.

### Small Business Saturday, Nov. 26

Over the weekend we had downtown holiday fire truck rides with special guests from the Southwest Iowa Squadron of Heroes. Santa also brought down his real-life reindeer again this year.

Later in the afternoon we had our free holiday movie matinee of “The Nutcracker & the Four Realms” at the Red Oak Grand Theatre.

### Holiday Giveaway Event, Dec. 17

To make buying local an even easier decision the ROCIA is having a giveaway event at 11 a.m. in the downtown square.

Prizes include a 60” Smart TV, and Solo Stove, a jewelry set from Goldsmith Gallery, as well as a Home Based Business Gift Basket and a Local Retailers Gift Certificate Basket.

To earn tickets for your chance to win, just shop at participating retailers between Dec. 2 and Dec. 16. There's so much more going on throughout the holiday season. To see the complete schedule of events, please visit redoakiowa.com or stop by the Chamber office to pick up a printed schedule. And remember, do your part to be loyal and buy local this holiday season.

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## Treat recognized

Red Oak firefighter/medic Danielle Treat was recognized at the Monday, Nov. 21 Red Oak City Council meeting for completing her paramedic certification. Pictured, from left: Red Oak Mayor Shawna Silvius, Treat, council member Pete Wemhoff and Red Oak Fire Chief John Bruce. (Nick Johansen/Red Oak Express)

## DUR board approves lost funds transfer for stage project

Nick Johansen  
The Red Oak Express

The Red Oak Park and Tree Board met for its regular meeting on Nov. 10.

Park and Tree Board chairman Bill Drey shared an update on the Fountain Square Park stage with the board members.

"The concrete portion of the stage project was completed, and park superintendent Adam Van Der Vliet and I also discussed the specifications of the electrical hook-up with Miles Russell of Russell Electric," Drey commented.

The board then discussed a resolution for determination of local option sales tax monies used toward the Fountain Square Park Stage. The board approved a resolution to transfer \$150,000 from LOST funds to the stage project fund. The motion passed.

Drey also shared the details of the efforts to keep the city's parks clean and manageable.

"Van Der Vliet continues to pick up trash and check the parks

daily. Two benches were installed at the dog park. Playground borders were fixed at Dutton and Kelly parks. Additionally, leaves in the parks were mulched as needed. Van Der Vliet has been fixing and replacing light bulbs on the Christmas lights at the Chautauqua Park Pavilion," explained Drey.

- In other business, the board:
- Approved a recommendation for the park and swimming pool budgets, as presented to the board.
- A rough draft of the Park Plan was shared for 2023. Members will review the plan and bring ideas for revisions to the plan to the December meeting. A list of completed projects for the year was also shared with members.
- Drey advised the board he will be applying for the Trees Please grant through Mid-American Energy, and completed the evaluation for hotel/motel grants.
- The board discussed the possibility of starting a Facebook page to represent the Park and Tree Board. Further discussion is expected at a future meeting.

# Better Financial Living

## The milestones of our financial lives

Dan Miller  
CFP



Miller

Throughout our life we all face many challenges, opportunities, and milestones. Some come naturally as we age, some by choice, and some are beyond our control. For example, as teenagers we can't wait till we turn 16 and get a chance to learn to drive.

But like any new milestone, this also comes with its own challenges and responsibilities.

The responsibility of being a courteous driver and obeying traffic laws.

The challenge of passing our driver's test and figuring out how to pay for gas? What about maintenance and insurance for the car? What will that cost, and will I have to pay for it? Yikes! Mom, Dad, help!

As we go through life, we all face new obstacles, challenges, and decisions we must face along our financial journey as well.

Regardless of the stage we are at, there will always be questions to be answered, such as "Am I saving enough for my kids' education? What health insurance plan is best for my family? Am I saving enough in my 401k? Should I be utilizing an HSA? When should I retire? Can I afford to retire? What accounts should I draw from first? When should I take my Social Security? Should I change my beneficiaries? Are my accounts titled properly? Do I need long term disability coverage? Again, yikes!

Miller Financial Group has been helping clients address the questions that arise at each

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that have celebrated many "Milestones" as part of the MFG family. It takes commitment from a strong team to make that happen. This name change helps reflect that continued commitment to the families they serve.

The firm was founded in Montgomery County, Iowa by Mildred Parker in 1963 as Parker Insurance Agency. In 1994, James and Jan Norris purchased the firm, at which time they joined with Mildred to form Parker Norris Financial, Inc.

It was at this time the firm expanded into a full-service Investment and Financial Services firm. In 2004, Dan Miller joined the firm as an Investment Advisor Representative. In 2008, Dan furthered his professional training and joined the ranks of CFP® James Norris and CFP® Donna Carlson by also obtaining his certified financial planner professional designation.

In 2013, Dan and Denise Miller purchased the firm from James and Jan Norris, at which

time the firm was renamed Parker Norris Miller, Inc. At this time, Dan became the President and senior advisor for the firm. Denise was appointed as Vice President and later joined the firm full-time in 2014 after a successful 26-year career with the Federal Government. In 2015, the firm name was changed to Miller Financial Group, Inc.

The MFG team is very proud of their heritage and the many "Milestones" they have helped their clients address, celebrate, and achieve over the years.

Dan Miller, Kaleb Robuck and Marcus Taylor are investment adviser representatives of, and securities and advisory services are offered through, USA Financial Securities Corp. Member FINRA/SIPC. A Registered Investment Advisor located at 6020 E Fulton St., Ada, MI 49301. Neither Miller Financial Group nor Milestone Financial Group are affiliated with USA Financial Securities.

## 5 elected to serve on county council

Five Montgomery County residents were elected to the Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Montgomery County Council in the Nov. 8 general election. They are Gayle Allensworth (Red Oak), Macey Ellis (Stanton), Marta Clark-Moffett (Stanton), Ryan Sundermann (Red Oak), and Tammi VanMeter (Red Oak).

The current county extension council member who was re-elected to a 4-year term is Marta Clark-Moffett. New members who will join the council in January 2023 are Allensworth, Ellis, Sundermann, and VanMeter.

The new members will replace Lori DeKay (Stanton), Scott Bruce (Emerson), Shelly Preston (Stanton), and Susan Bergren (Elliott).

Extension council members whose terms expire at the end of 2024 are Chad Jacobs (Villisca), Kassandra Houdek (Red Oak), Lucas Oster (Red Oak), and Mike Thomas (Red Oak). Council members elect-

ed in November will begin their terms in January 2023. The extension council meets in January to elect officers.

Extension council members make programming and budget decisions for Iowa State University Extension and Outreach in Montgomery County. They work with decision-makers, build relationships, and address local issues. Extension council members are advocates, stewards, and everyday citizens who link people with life-changing programs from Iowa State University. Through partnerships, they bring significant programs that help people solve critical issues affecting their lives, said Mike Thomas, ISU Extension and Outreach Montgomery County council chair.

The Iowa State University Extension and Outreach office in Montgomery County is located at 400 Bridge St. #2 Red Oak. Learn more at extension.iastate.edu/montgomery.

## Local law enforcement takes annual I-Pledge

The Red Oak Police Department and Montgomery County Sheriff's Office have taken a pledge to keep tobacco, alternative nicotine, and vapor products out of the hands of underage persons.

Known as "I-Pledge," the program is a partnership with the Iowa Alcoholic Beverage Division to educate local retailers and enforce Iowa's tobacco, alternative nicotine, and vapor product laws.

Since the program's inception in 2000, the statewide tobacco compliance rate has grown to 91%. By participating in the program, the police department and sheriff's office has committed to do its part to increase the compliance rate even more this year.

The "I-Pledge" program places emphasis on retailer training. Clerks who successfully complete an online training course and pass an exam will become "I-Pledge" certified. This allows a retail establishment to use an affirmative defense against a civil penalty if the clerk makes an illegal sale.

The training is also a great way for clerks to prepare themselves to refuse illegal tobacco, alternative nicotine and vapor product sales. Montgomery County Sheriff Jon Spunaugle said it also

boosts compliance.

"The training will assist retailers to ensure they maintain a compliant and responsible establishment," commented Spunaugle.

Officers and deputies will also be conducting compliance checks on local establishments as part of the program. Underage customers, under the supervision of law enforcement officials, will enter establishments and attempt to buy tobacco, alternative nicotine, and vapor products. Clerks who make an illegal sale will be cited on the spot.

Criminal penalties for selling the products to a minor include a \$135 fine for the first offense, a \$325 fine for the second offense, and a \$645 fine for the third and subsequent offenses. However, Red Oak Police Chief Justin Rhamy made it clear that handing out citations was not the intent of the program.

"By partnering with the Iowa Alcoholic Beverage Division, we hope to educate clerks and maintain a compliant retail environment in our community. Moreover, we pledge to help keep tobacco, alternative nicotine and vapor products out of the hands of underage persons in the community."

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# Board hears update from FFA students, elects new officers



Members of the Red Oak FFA were present at the Nov. 28 Red Oak School Board meeting to share highlights from a recent trip to the 95th Annual FFA Convention in Indianapolis, Ind., Oct. 26-29. Pictured are, from left: Tyler Beeson, Connor Britten, Hailey Rydberg, Cloie Bruce, Madi Doyle, Addey Lydon, Ella Johnson, Stef Medina, Bella Glassel, and Lainey DeVries. (Nick Johansen/Red Oak Express)

## Nick Johansen The Red Oak Express

The Red Oak School Board met in regular session Nov. 28.

The board started the meeting with an update from members of the Red Oak FFA Chapter, who attended the National FFA Convention in Indianapolis, Ind., Oct. 26-29. FFA members took tours at Hummel Livestock, Fair Oaks Farms, and the Ozark Fishery.

FFA member Lainey DeVries said Hummel Livestock raised exotic cats, and marketed the cats online.

"The cats can range in price from \$1,000 to \$30,000, and in fact, they even sold a couple of the cats to Justin Bieber," DeVries said. "They range in size from the size of a dog to the size of a normal house cat."

Another stop was Ozark Fisheries. Connor Britten said the fisheries produce koi, goldfish, crawdads, and tadpoles.

"At the facility we visited, they had over 200 ponds, about an acre in size each, and there was a lot of hands-on experience. You could reach into the tanks and try and catch fish, or try to catch crawdads," commented Britten.

Roughly 67,000 FFA students attended the conference. Superintendent Ron Lorenz asked the students who attended last year if it was a new experience. Cloie Bruce said it was.

"We went on a lot of different tours. We went to Ozark Fisheries last year, but we didn't go to Hummel Livestock. There are always new keynote speakers at the convention, and I thought it was a lot different. There's always sessions, career fairs, and shopping, but a lot of the extra stuff that we did, like the tours, were fun and different experiences," Bruce said.

Board member Roger Carlson asked if they thought more students would be interested in enrolling in FFA next year. Bruce felt there would be.

"My ag business class met with the middle school classes last week, and we showed them a video and talked about our experiences and how to join, and we had four students sign

up that day," stated Bruce.

The board then discussed approval of a School Budget Review Committee application for open enrollment in the current year, that were not included in the certified enrollment in the prior year in the amount of \$144,540. Lorenz said the state allowed districts to seek additional spending authority for kids that moved into the district after the Oct. 1 child count date and open enrolled to another district.

"Since those kids aren't counted, they don't generate any funding. We are allowed to do this because we are required to pay tuition to the receiving district," explained Lorenz. "By requesting the supplemental amount, we're asking for an increase in spending authority to pay the open enrollment and compensate for the unfunded expenditures."

The board approved the SCRC application.

The board also approved an SBRC application for limited English proficient students beyond five years.

"The kids are funded for up to five years but if the kids aren't

yet proficient, we are required to continue serving them, so districts can petition the SBRC to cover the excess costs, in the amount of \$15,567," Lorenz said.

Also up for discussion was a local government risk pool natural gas program participation agreement, in the amount of \$100,304. Lorenz advised the board that the district has participated in the program for the last couple of years, and has been a positive thing for the district.

"It allows us to contract our natural gas for the entire year with a third party vendor, so all the risks that are associated with market volatility are put on them. We have a fixed cost which gives us greater budget certainty and peace of mind, and it's been really successful for us," Advised Lorenz.

In the past, the agreement was usually renewed in the spring, after the winter has passed, but this year, the renewal was being moved up.

"There have been things going on globally, and we are being allowed to lock in prices earlier. There's a huge demand overseas; natural gas prices are

skyrocketing. The price is down now, but they're anticipating it will go up, so we're taking the opportunity to lock in a price now," Lorenz commented. "It is higher than what we've paid in the past, last year we paid just under \$60,000 for all of our natural gas, but the \$100,000 that we're currently asking for is probably the best deal we're going to get. The commodity brokers are pretty certain that amount is going to go up even further.

While the cost was higher, Lorenz said having budget certainty and not dealing with fluctuations was the biggest benefit.

The board approved the agreement as presented.

### In other business, the board:

- Approved the resignations of Heather Johnson and Brittney Green as paraprofessionals at the junior/senior high school, effective Nov. 25.

- Approved the resignation of Colin Bruce as senior high school assistant wrestling coach, effective immediately.

- Approved the resignation of Anthony Jones as Inman dean of students and junior high head

football coach, effective at the end of the school year.

- Accepted the application of Dana Ramirez as junior/senior high school girls assistant basketball coach for the 2022-23 school year.

- Approved the hire of Felisha Wingfield as junior/senior high school building secretary, effective the week of Dec. 5.

- Approved a fourth grade field trip to the Rose Theater on Feb. 3.

- Approved School Beyond Museum to travel to the Durham Museum on Dec. 10.

- Approved special education agreements with East Mills for the 2022-23 school year.

- Selected Bret Blackman as board president and Jackie DeVries as board vice president for the FY 2022-23 Board of Directors.

- Moved the regular school board meeting from the second and fourth Monday to the third Wednesday of each month, beginning Jan. 18, and reduced the number of meetings from two to one. The change in meeting dates and frequency will be reviewed in April.

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