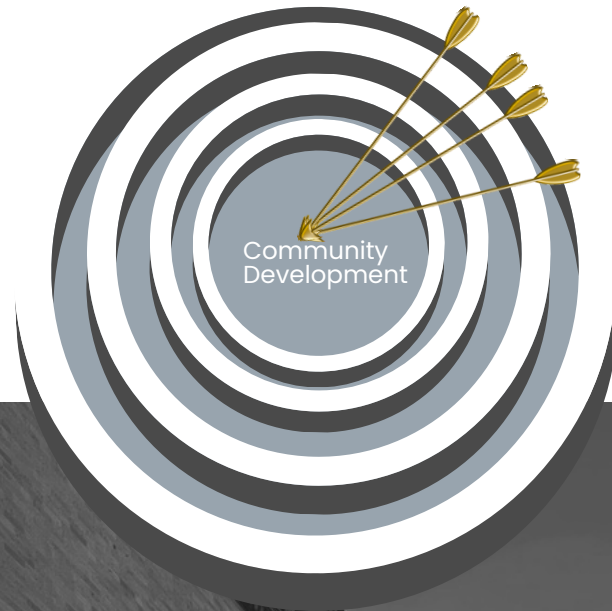


# 2023 Annual Report



**UCDA**  
Union County Development Association

**On Target**  
FOR COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT

# From the President

As we reflect on 2023, I'm excited about the progress and partnerships we've made in Union County. Together we've navigated unique challenges with the economic uncertainty, inflation, and high interest rates which impacted all our communities.

Mindy and Chloe work with great passion and dedication towards Union County. I'm humbled by the collaborative efforts from our staff, volunteers, board members, financial supporters, and community partners. Together, we've made great strides forward. Please take a moment to read about the accomplishments and plans listed throughout the annual report.

While we celebrate our accomplishments, we remain focused on the future. The success of our mission wouldn't be possible without your continued support. We are confident that together we can make an even greater impact in the years to come.

Kevin Stewart  
UCDA Board President



## Executive Board

Kevin Stewart  
*President*  
*Iowa State Savings Bank*

Devon Tyler-Leith  
*Vice President*  
*Tyler Insurance Services*

Chad Rieck  
*Vice President*  
*KSIB Radio*

Matt McCutchan  
*Co-Treasurer*  
*Greater Regional Health*

Dan Waigand  
*Co-Treasurer*  
*First National Bank*

Francine Ide  
*Secretary*  
*Ide Farms*

Paul Fuller  
*Past President*  
*PCSB Bank*

**To view the full Board of Trustees, visit:**  
**[UnionCountyIowa.com](http://UnionCountyIowa.com)**





As I wrap up the first year as Executive Director and my 7th year with UCDA, I continue to be reminded of the amazing partnerships that we have in Union County. The support of our public partners, investors and board members has been such a blessing as I navigate new adventures in economic and community development. I look forward to furthering my education next year!

UCDA will continue to advocate for and assist with business retention and expansion, housing rehabilitation and development, strengthening workforce education partnerships and encouraging creative placemaking efforts to make Union County stand out as the southwest Iowa destination.

Staying connected is a vital component to our organization. Please reach out with any thoughts, questions or ideas so that we can continue being the progressive organization that we are. We will continue to be diligent in our communication efforts as well.

All The Best - Mindy Stalker, Executive Director

This past year has shown me how rewarding it is to be a part of a hardworking community dedicated to continual growth and development! On the client services & Roundhouse operations side of things, we have had quite the successful year with a number of workshops and new coworking members. We are excited to continue to expand on our business support services through engaging workshops and networking events. In terms of marketing, I have been kept busy with our quarterly newsletter, the Union County Connection, as well as our Choose UC campaign and other communication efforts through our website and social media.



On the Union County Young Professionals Planning Committee, we will continue to host monthly events in our communities. Most recently, I have joined the Southwest Iowa Coalition which consists of select Southwest Iowa communities to increase efforts to attract families to live in Southwest Iowa.

With some changes coming in 2024, I look forward to focusing my efforts on marketing and events. I appreciate all of the support I have received in my position from Mindy and the Executive Board, and I look forward to all that is to come in Union County!

With Gratitude - Chloe Thompson, Client Services & Marketing Coordinator

UCDA had a successful fifth year at The Roundhouse! Below are some highlights and statistics of services provided through The Roundhouse and Bldg 301.

There is a large range of professionals that are coworking members.

Two Just Start: Introduction to Entrepreneurship workshops were held this year as well as many other professional development workshops and events. The Intern It UP program had 6 participants this summer.

The Continued Investment by The City of Creston towards the Revitalization Of Uptown Creston is recognized and appreciated.

### **Apartments**

# 100%

Occupancy.

### **Garage Space Tenants**

# 2

Coworker, Nicole Determan Photography, rents the garage for photo shoots. American Home Design Center has rented the garage for temporary storage needs.



# The Roundhouse

### **Coworking Members**

# 17

### **Just Start Graduates**

# 8

### **Workshops**

# 13

### **Interns**

# 6

### **Conference Room Reservations**

Booked weekly by our members & outside sources as well.

### **Businesses Served**

*over 3 year period*

*New*

# 40

*Existing*

# 20



# Business Success Stories

## **Roundhouse Coworker Hull Monument Services reaches new “milestone”**



Roundhouse Coworking member Tessa Hull with Hull Monument Services has opened up a brick & mortar location at 101 West Kansas Street in Afton. Tess began coworking at The Roundhouse in the fall of 2023 prior to purchasing a storefront. Her ribbon cutting took place on November 15th. Hull Monument Services is a family owned and operated new monument sales and restoration company serving UC and beyond.

## **Roundhouse Coworker Reagan White launches Homegrown Creative Co.**

Starting as a Roundhouse coworking member back in 2020, Reagan White launched her digital marketing business, Homegrown Creative Co.. With a ribbon cutting on June 5th and a number of marketing workshops hosted at The Roundhouse, Reagan has hit the ground running and serves a number business owners in Southwest Iowa.



## **Just Start Graduate opens a med spa in Creston**

2023 Just Start Graduate, Josie Burgmaier, opened up a med spa, Vitality Aesthetics & Wellness, at 1720 Commerce Road in Creston. This full-service med-spa offers facial treatments, waxing, spray tans, lash & brow services, injections, and weightloss therapy.

Photo Credit: Nicole Determan Photography



# Workforce Recruitment

## *Intern It UP*

This past summer, UCDA brought back the Intern It UP program with 6 interns participating from BUNN, Champion Steaks, Greater Regional Health & Wellman Dynamics. The interns got to explore UC by participating in a scavenger hunt as well as attending a professional development workshop. To end the program, they all had professional head shots taken by Chloe Thompson.



# Professional Development

## *Roundhouse Workshops*

The Roundhouse hosted a total of 13 workshops in 2023 including two Just start and five wellness workshops with Michelle Wilson, four marketing workshops with Reagan White, a succession planning workshop with business and finance experts Mike Moffitt, Jamie David, Chad Rieck, and Andrew Zimmerman, and an Adobe graphic design workshop with Kelsey Buck.





# Leadership Looks Good On You

The Work UC Committee is dedicated to providing leadership development for area professionals and future professionals. This program is called Lead UC and Lead UC Youth respectively.

Studies continue to show that when employers invest in personal and professional development for their employees, they are far more likely to stay with that company. When area youth make meaningful connections while they are growing up - the more likely they are to consider a future where those connections are made. Lead UC (founded in 2010) and Lead UC Youth (founded in 2012) is a vital pathway to help fill the pipeline of skilled and future workforce. The Lead UC and Lead UC Youth Programs are made possible with business support, as well as, through strong partnerships with the Creston and East Union School Districts.

This year, there are 16 youth participants between the two schools and 14 adults. The adult leaders all work in Union County but live in Afton (3), Corning (2), Creston (6), Greenfield, Murray and Shannon City.

*For more information and to see graduates from the program, visit our website.*



## Building A Legacy



Just outside of Afton in Union County, Paul and Becky Kelley's 155-acre property features large white oaks, a restored wetland and a section of Twelve Mile Creek, all offering ample wildlife habitat and outdoor recreation opportunities. Following his passing in 2021, Becky knew that donating their land

to create a new park for Union County would be the perfect way to honor Paul as he loved the outdoors and was an avid conservationist. Union County Conservation and Becky Kelley have agreed to let the Lead UC and Lead UC Youth groups help establish the design and some of the features of this area as visitors start to explore. This is a great opportunity for Lead UC!





# Housing

## **Housing Development**

Union County continues to focus on housing needs. The 4 town homes along Adams Street have been completed with the help of the City of Creston, UCDA and Premier Construction. UCDA also made an investment by purchasing the former Lincoln School with plans to create an opportunity for multi-residential housing development. The Housing Committee continues to support the development of Agnew Lofts, Beacon Hills Estates, North Ridge Development, infill and rehab opportunities and even more projects on the horizon.

In September, the City of Creston was awarded the designation of a Thriving Community. The Iowa Finance Authority (IFA) and Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) introduced the Iowa Thriving Communities Designation opportunity in April at the Rural Iowa Housing Summit in Ames. This initiative is meant to elevate best practices from communities that are going above and beyond to leverage innovative methods to attract housing opportunities for their workforce.

This Thriving Communities designation comes with lucrative scoring points for the Federal Housing Tax Credit programs, meaning that developers will be highly incentivized to select an Iowa Thriving Community for a proposed development through the 2024 programs.

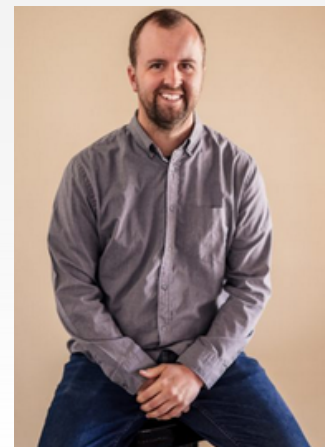
Pictured Below is the team that presented to IFA and IEDA as a part of the Thriving Communities application process.



### **Housing Director - Ethan Standard**

With the support of community partners, the City of Creston hired a housing director to focus on all aspects of meeting the housing needs of Creston. Ethan will serve as the liaison for the Housing Committee and City of Creston. Ethan brings experience, resources and knowledge to the community and will no doubt make a significant impact on Creston's housing situation.

Photo Credit: Nicole Determan Photography





# Union County Young Professionals

UCYP host monthly social and networking events in the community. They have partnered with organizations such as the Creston Activities Booster Club as well as many other local businesses to host their events. UCYP looks forward to partnering with new businesses in 2024 to keep the community connected!

Fridays After Five completed their 5th summer concert series in September. FAF continues to be a great way to relax with live music, connect with folks in the community, and provide a relaxed fundraising opportunity for a different organization in UC each week. FAF takes place every Friday during the summer months at the Elks Lodge on the west courtyard from 5:08-7:08pm with a business sponsor to help cover expenses for live music. In 2023 alone, over \$8,000 was raised for our local nonprofits.



Stay up to date!



## 2023 events at a glance

**January** Panther Pride Watch Party

**February** Portraits + Professionals: Head Shots by Nicole Determan Photography

**March** St. Patrick's Day Weekend Bar Crawl

**May** Fridays After Five begins

**June** Yoga For Beginners, Fridays After Five

**July** Fridays After 5

**August** Fridays After 5

**September** Fridays After Five ends

**October** Panther Wing Fling BBQ Cookoff

**November** Creston Cranberry Craze

**December** Cookies + Cocoa: Cookie Decorating with Amorcito Baked Goods & Sweet Treats



# Website & Social Media

## Website Visitors

2,383

94% new visitors

## Top 5 Page Visits in 2023

Homepage

About

The Roundhouse

Market on Maple

Area Business Coffee

## Traffic Sources by Sessions

44% Google

## Facebook Followers

1,813

## Social Media Presence

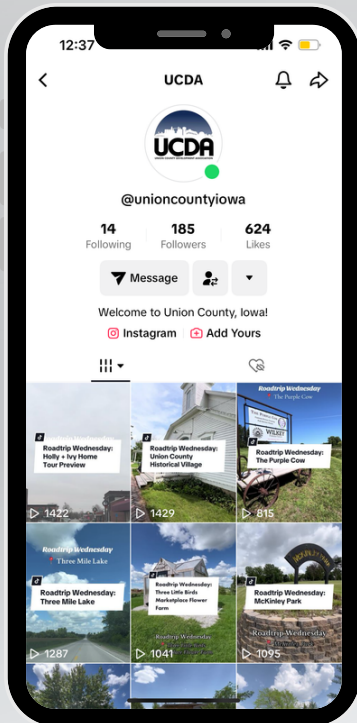
- Facebook Pages - Union County Development Association & Union County Young Professionals
- Facebook groups: Lead UC Alumni & The Round About
- LinkedIn - Union County Development Association
- Instagram - @UnionCountyIowa
- TikTok - @UnionCountyIowa

UnionCountyIowa.com



# Community Outreach

## Roadtrip Wednesdays



Follow @UnionCountyIowa on TikTok to see tours of the following destinations visited for Roadtrip Wednesdays:

- Uptown Murals *Creston*
- Square & Pocket Park *Afton*
- Thayer Lake *Thayer*
- Cromwell, Iowa
- Berly & Blake Lavender Farm *Afton*
- Green Valley State Park *Creston*
- American Golfic Miniature Golf Course *Afton*
- Arispe, Iowa
- McKinley Park *Creston*
- Three Little Birds Marketplace Flower Farm *Creston*
- Three Mile Lake *Afton*
- The Purple Cow *Afton*
- Union County Historical Village *Creston*
- Holly + Ivy Home Tour *Creston*

## The Union County Connection

The Union County Connection is a quarterly newsletter published by UCDA that keeps the community connected with professional development opportunities, community updates & events, career opportunities, spotlights featuring families, businesses & industries, investors, coworkers and young professionals, and more. See spotlights from past 2023 newsletters below: David Marroquin & family, UCDA investor B Rooted & Roundhouse Coworker Nicole Determan Photography.

### Subscribers

126

Average open  
rate

70%



# Discover More



The Discover UC Committee continues to promote community clean up opportunities and beautification projects. This fall, 13 additional trees were planted thanks to a Trees Forever grant and volunteers from various businesses, Creston FFA students, Alliant Energy and more!

## Getting a BOOST & Uptown Revitalization Opportunities

Partnering with UCDA, the City of Creston was awarded a BOOST Grant and Urban Revitalization Grant. Both grants target specific areas and goals, particularly Uptown Creston, and have identified opportunities for significant improvements. To help navigate both grants, the sub-committee, Update Uptown, has been reengaged to determine the next steps and possible projects to tackle. These tactics will be implemented in 2024.



## The First Annual Union County Yule Log Hunt

On Friday, December 22nd, Gwen Buck stopped into the UCDA office and shared a fun holiday activity that takes place in Steamboat, Colorado. This led to the first annual Yule Log Hunt for Union County! Dave Buck crafted the log and UCDA provided a clue each day of the hidden log's location before it was moved to the next. Each week participants sent in their selfies to be entered into a contest. Pictured here are the two winners: Leah Day and Linda Collins.

The log was placed at: McKinley Park, Weaver Meats, Far West, Three Little Birds Marketplace, and Cromwell Church.







# UC 7

In October, UCDA hosted the first meeting of all seven counties in Union County. Each community was represented with the exception of Lorimor, as they were unable to attend. The meeting celebrated the successes of each area as well as challenges, many of which were shared challenges across each community. Below is an outline of what UCDA hopes to accomplish with these meetings.



## Vision:

- Unite the seven unique communities of Union County through a collaborative development plan that fosters shared prosperity, strengthens infrastructure, and preserves our distinct identities, also focusing on establishing open dialogue and fostering trust among community leaders and residents.
- Identifying common priorities and unique challenges across all communities in areas.
- Developing a shared vision and roadmap for countywide development, addressing shared priorities while respecting the individual character of each community.
  - Explore countywide housing needs
  - Attracting new businesses, expanding existing industries and fostering entrepreneurship.
  - Consider a shared design for wayfinding.



## Benefits:

- Stronger regional identity: Unified voice and attracting investment and tourism.
- Preserved community character: Respect for individual identities and traditions within the framework of a shared vision.



Bringing seven communities together for countywide development is an ambitious yet achievable endeavor. By prioritizing collaboration, respecting individual identities, and investing in shared priorities, we can build a stronger, more prosperous future for all residents of Union County.



## Next Steps:

The Committee will continue to meet quarterly, rotating the location throughout the 7 communities. Next stop: Afton!



## Attendees:

- Dan Waigand - Afton
- Kayla Lacina - Afton
- Dennis Wimmer - Arispe
- Gabe Carroll - Creston

- Stefani Finley - Cromwell
- Francine Ide - Shannon City
- Cory Mitchell - Thayer
- Rick Friday - UC Supervisors
- Mindy Stalker - UCDA





# Union County 2023 Events

There are so many reasons to gather in Union County and its communities throughout the year! Each community brings unique ideas and events to life with their volunteers that truly love where they live! UCDA continues to support the community members that celebrate *Choosing UC!*

## May

- **Market on Maple** May 13th



## June

- **Creston Farmers' Market** June 5th - September 15th every Monday at McKinley Park
- **Tuesday Nights in the Park** June 6th - August 15th every Tuesday at Afton Square
- **Afton Pre 4th Celebration** June 26th

## July

- **Greater 8 and 5K** July 1st
- **10,000 Crestonians 4th of July Parade & Firework Show** July 4th
- **Union County Fair** July 20th-26th

## August

- **Library Legacy Committee Wine Walk & More** August 4th

## September

- **Farm to Fork** September 3rd
- **Cromwell Harvest Fest** September 8th-10th
- **Lorimor Lions 60th Year Watermelon Day** September 9th
- **45th Annual Creston Balloon Days** September 15th-17th

## October

- **Fiesta on Maple** October 7th
- **Afton Autumn Days** October 7th



## November

- **Creston Lighted Christmas Parade & Community Tree Lighting** November 30th

## December

- **Merry Marketplace & Holly + Ivy Home Tour** December 1st
- **Afton Extravaganza & Holiday in the Park** December 1st



# Area Business Coffee 2024

## January

- Jan. 5:** The Latest Edition Bookstore
- Jan. 12:** Southern Prairie Family Fitness Center
- Jan. 19:** Vitality Aesthetics & Wellness
- Jan. 26:** East Union High School

## February

- Feb. 2:** R Beauty
- Feb. 9:** First Interstate Bank
- Feb. 16:** Our Town Realty
- Feb. 23:** East Union High School

## March

- Mar. 1:** Greater Regional Health
- Mar. 8:** First National Bank
- Mar. 15:** TBD
- Mar. 22:** East Union High School
- Mar. 29th:** Rocking T Western Store

## April

- Apr. 5:** Beggin' for an Eggin'
- Apr. 12:** Radiant Wellness Solutions
- Apr. 19:** SWCC
- Apr. 26:** East Union High School

## May

- May 3:** KSIB Radio
- May 10:** Connections Area Agency on Aging
- May 17:** Three Little Birds Marketplace
- May 24:** Weaver Meats
- May 31:** Hometown Insurance & Realty

## June

- Jun. 7:** Union County Extension Office
- Jun. 14:** Crill Real Estate
- Jun. 21:** Greens 'N Things
- Jun. 28:** Crossroads Behavioral Health

## July

- Jul. 5:** Carroll Family Chiropractic
- Jul. 12:** Union County Fairgrounds
- Jul. 19:** TBD
- Jul. 26:** Iowa State Savings Bank

## August

- Aug. 2:** TBD
- Aug. 9:** House of Pain
- Aug. 16:** TBD
- Aug. 23:** East Union High School
- Aug. 30:** TBD

## September

- Sep. 6:** American Family Insurance
- Sep. 13:** Union County Development Association
- Sep. 20:** Todd Crill Auctions
- Sep. 27:** East Union High School

## October

- Oct. 4:** MATURA Headstart
- Oct. 11:** Chris Lane Agency
- Oct. 18:** Gibson Memorial Library
- Oct. 25:** East Union High School

## November

- Nov. 1:** Champion Steaks
- Nov. 8:** Edwards Jones: Justin R. Cole
- Nov. 15:** Southern Iowa RC&D

## December

- Dec. 6:** Stalker Auto Group
- Dec. 13:** Factory Direct Eyewear

Add to your calendar:



# 2023 Investors

Here is an updated list of UCDA's 2023 investors.  
We are thankful for our private and public partnerships that support our efforts.

We look forward to continue working with you all.  
Thank you for your investment.

## Platinum

Creston Publishing Company - J & A Flooring, Inc. - RE Lewis Refrigeration

## Gold

Agrivision Equipment Group - Carroll Family Chiropractic - James Law Office - KSIB Radio - Wurster Farms, Inc.

## Silver

Dr. Michael D. Buck, D.D.S. - First Interstate Bank - Garden & Associates - Vitera - ITC Midwest - Powers Funeral Home - Stalker Auto Group

## Bronze

Akin Building Center - American Homes by Grant Long, LLC - American Family Insurance - Katie Turner Agent - Community 1st Credit Union - Creston Automotive - Dr. Daniel M. Coen, DDS - De Hamer Accounting - Echo Electric Supply - Hometown Insurance - Pearson Family Funeral Service - Premier Commercial Services - Southwest Iowa REC - State Savings Bank - Turner Insurance Agency - Vanmark Equipment - Warner Plumbing - Willets, Baird & Co, PLC

## Leadership

B Rooted - Callahan Real Estate - Create Creston - Edward Jones - Justin Cole - Green Accounting & Tax - Hull Monument Service - Iowa Tool & Manufacturing, Inc. - Kelly's Flowers & Greene Landscaping - OmniTel Communication - Precast Concrete - The Real Estate Store - Reflections Beauty - Sonntag Development, LLC - Stewart Realty - Topnotch Fireworks

## Community Partner

Creston Chamber of Commerce

## Public Partners

The City of Creston  
The Union County Board Of Supervisors  
Afton, Arispe, Cromwell, Lorimor, Shannon City and Thayer

## Benefactor

First National Bank - Greater Regional Health - Iowa State Savings Bank - PCSB Bank - Tyler Insurance Services

## Presidential Investors

Alliant Energy - Cornerstone Financial Group

