

## PRAIRIE CITY

City Hall  
203 E. Jefferson Street  
P.O. Box 607  
Prairie City, Iowa 50228

515-994-2649 (P)  
515-994-2376 (F)

[prairiecityiowa.us](http://prairiecityiowa.us)  
[facebook.com/prairiecity](https://facebook.com/prairiecity)



# PRAIRIE CITY

LIVE | WORK | PLAY





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Learn about the services and resources available within Prairie City.

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Build a thriving business with support from the City.

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Discover ways to live a happy, healthy life in our vibrant community.

# WELCOME TO PRAIRIE CITY

In many ways, Prairie City is similar to the tallgrass prairie surrounding it.

Like the prairie, our community has deep roots. Since its establishment in 1856, Prairie City has held firmly to its community-oriented values. Our residents are hard working and quick to lend their neighbors a helping hand, an assuring smile, or a friendly “hello.”

Prairie City is also constantly growing and reaching toward the future. Our city is one of the fastest growing communities in Jasper County. Since 2000, the population has increased 23 percent to 1,680 residents.

Many newcomers are young professionals who find Prairie City appealing for its small-town charm, low-cost living, and convenient proximity to Des Moines and other large communities. Besides energy and youth, this influx of young families has brought with it a new customer base to stimulate economic and residential development.

Use this publication as your guide to living, working, and playing in Prairie City. Among many things, residents and businesses can appreciate the work we have done to become a full-service city: Investing in infrastructure (page 4), offering tools for economic development (page 12), and emphasizing the importance of health and a healthy environment (page 22).

Finally, like the prairie, Prairie City is peaceful but bustling with activity as we constantly strive to provide amenities that help the community continue to grow and thrive.

## PRAIRIE CITY

Mayor: Paul Bolles

City Council: Gary Johnson,  
Dan Kuecker, Terri Rosonke,  
Larry Ross, Larry Wenthe

City Administrator: Evelyn Johnson

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# LIVE

Prairie City's extensive resources and commitment to growth provide citizens with a safe, clean, and comfortable environment that fosters residential and economic expansion.



# FORWARD THINKING

## Prairie City is poised for continued successful growth with a proactive approach to expansion.

As Prairie City's population continues to increase, the City takes important steps to update our infrastructure to accommodate new—and future—residents and businesses.

### NEW DEVELOPMENTS

The construction of a new \$4.3 million wastewater treatment facility illustrates one measure Prairie City has taken to improve its services. "By building this treatment plant, we've increased treatment capacity so we can grow as a city," says Evelyn Johnson, city administrator. When complete, the facility will be able to treat up to 2.28 million gallons of water per day, and will be able to handle future population growth to 2031.

The new treatment plant also ensures that Prairie City continues to comply with the environmental standards set in place by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. As wastewater travels through the plant, the water will be cleaned and disinfected with ultraviolet lights. By the time the water is discharged into Calhoun Creek, any ammonia and E. coli bacteria will have been eliminated.

### ADDITIONAL EFFORTS

Besides larger projects such as the new wastewater treatment facility, Prairie City makes frequent improvements to its existing infrastructure and regularly brainstorms future enhancements.

Prairie City maintains the integrity of its properties with preventative maintenance such as road repairs. Another project includes updates to the water tower's high service pumps. This improvement prepares Prairie City for growth by allowing the water tower to produce and store more water for community use.

Prairie City works with MidAmerican Energy to ensure that businesses such as local manufacturing and industrial outlets have the capacity to handle larger electrical loads. The Hugh Williams Industrial Park provides this important three-phase power.

The City also has been actively developing a downtown rehabilitation project plan to improve the functionality and aesthetics of Prairie City's downtown square. Though the project is conceptual, the City hopes to one day adopt the plan in order to continue to beautify the community and further improve the downtown district.

"We want to see Prairie City continue to grow and be a place our residents are proud to call home."

- Terri Rosonke, Resident and City Council Member

## PRAIRIE CITY PROFILE

These compelling stats help explain why Prairie City appeals to its many new residents.

Cost of living is **4.2%** less than the Iowa average<sup>1</sup>

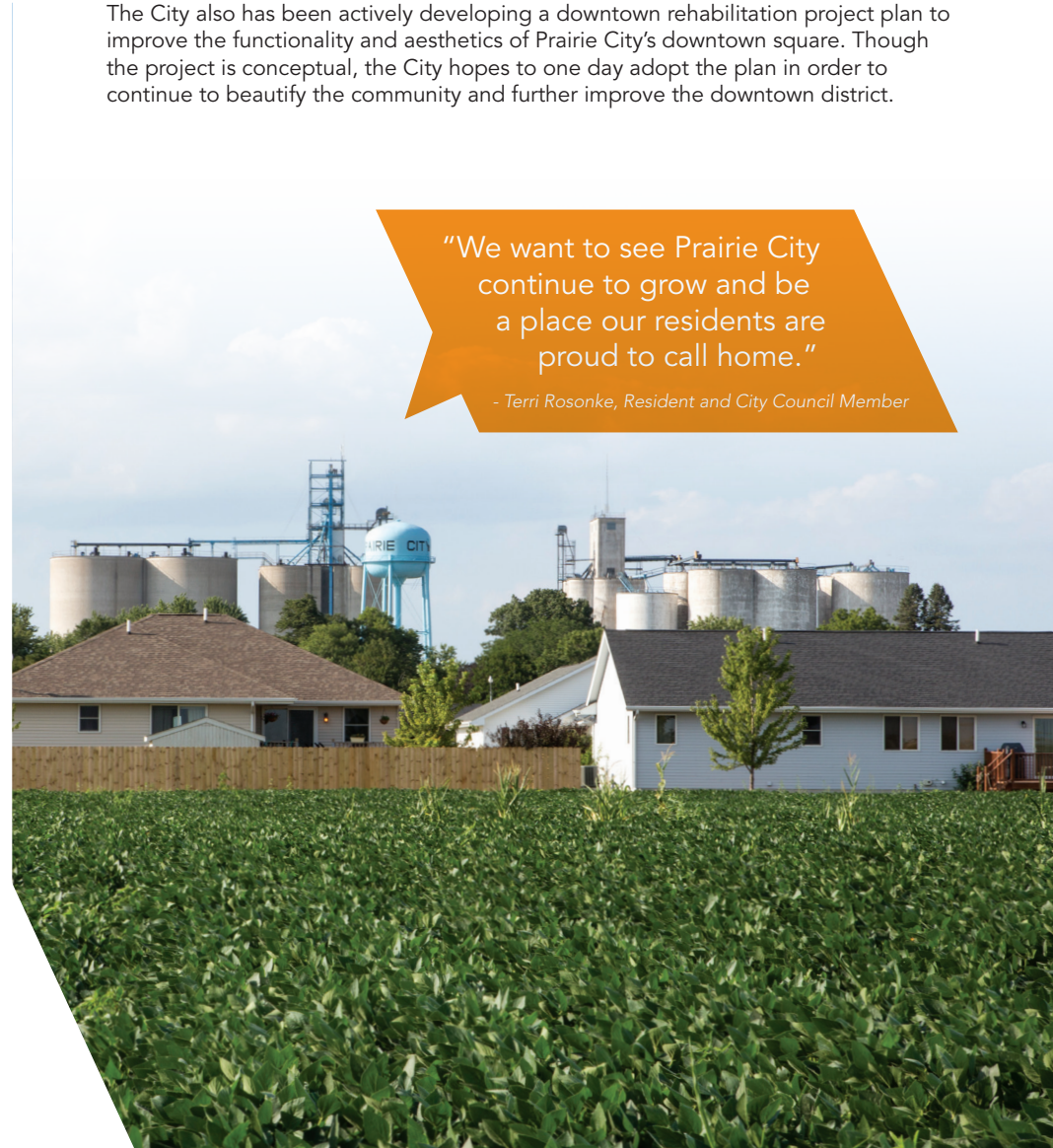
Estimated median home price: **\$128,000**<sup>2</sup>

The average age of residents in Prairie City is **33.7** years old<sup>3</sup>

Approximately **30** minutes from Des Moines, Newton, Knoxville, and Pella

**4** public parks and over **3** miles of multi-use trails in town

<sup>1</sup>U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census, <sup>2</sup>2006-2010 American Community Survey, <sup>3</sup>U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census





## PROTECT AND SERVE

Prairie City ensures its citizens' safety with police, fire, and ambulance departments that take a personal approach to professional emergency care.

### POLICE

The Prairie City Police Department includes three full-time officers, four part-time officers, and a five-member reserve team of trained volunteers.

Police Chief Louis Modlin believes Prairie City benefits from its local police force. "I think any community with its own police department gets a better quality of service because you have city employees who have a connection with the community," he says.

### FIRE

The Walnut Creek Benefited Fire District is made up of approximately 20 trained and CPR-certified volunteers. These firefighters are on-call 24/7 to respond to emergencies free of charge.

Fire department volunteers are unpaid, but many consider the community service to be fulfilling compensation. What Fire Chief Ryan Van Der Kamp enjoys most about being a firefighter is "the thanks you get from people after you're all done," he says.

### AMBULANCE

Prairie City's ambulance team consists of an estimated 25 volunteers who provide around-the-clock basic life support services. Some crewmembers are certified Emergency Medical Technicians; every crewmember is trained in CPR, defensive driving, and incident command.

Ambulance Chief Karl Van Der Kamp says having this service in town reduces response time and adds a personal touch to every run. "When you call an ambulance, it's like your neighbor comes to help you instead," he says.



## EXCEEDING STANDARDS



Prairie City boasts some of the cleanest water in the country. According to City Administrator Evelyn Johnson, the reservoir that serves Prairie City provides high-quality water naturally.

"We have minimal treatment because the water comes out so clean," Johnson says.

This benefits the community because it keeps treatment costs low, provides naturally soft water, and results in safe, delicious water straight from the tap.

Prairie City tests its water and wastewater daily, and also publishes an annual drinking water quality report, which consistently meets or surpasses Federal and State standards.



## ABOVE AND BEYOND

Each department provides community outreach along with its regular duties.

- The ambulance team hosts CPR training and offers free blood pressure tests.
- The fire department educates area youth about fire safety.
- The police department holds a Summer Youth Academy, works closely with the local school district, and provides vacation watch for residents' homes.

## CURB IT!

Some small communities require residents to haul recyclables to drop-off locations. Prairie City provides biweekly curbside collection included in the cost of garbage service.

With the Metro Waste Authority Curb It! Recycle and Roll® program, residents place recyclables in their cart and wheel it to the curb for pickup. No need to sort.

For a fee, qualifying area businesses can step up sustainability efforts, too. Businesses may be eligible to recycle through Curb It! for Business.





## SMALL SCHOOL, BIG OPPORTUNITIES

Many small Iowa schools have seen enrollments decline, but the Prairie City-Monroe (PCM) school district has experienced steady numbers.

Superintendent Jane Babcock gives some credit for this to the City of Prairie City, whose population growth has brought many young families to town. "I believe it's that growth spurt that has contributed to keeping our population consistent," Babcock says.

Many new residents value PCM's smaller, more attentive size. PCM is a 2A school serving Prairie City, Monroe, and Reasnor. Enrollment totals around 1,000 students divided into class sizes of 20 to 25. The district has four schools. An elementary school and middle school are in Prairie City; another elementary school and the high school are in Monroe.



PCM's size hasn't limited the availability of resources to students, who receive laptop computers, visit the Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge Visitors' Center, and have access to an outdoor classroom. The school also provides a nice blend of athletic, fine arts, and academic extracurricular activities.

"The size allows kids to be involved in as much as they want," says Jill Anderson, Prairie City resident. "To see children be able to play sports and be involved in clubs without being pressured to choose one is great."

Go to [pcmonroe.k12.ia.us](http://pcmonroe.k12.ia.us) to learn more about PCM.



## ENRICHING THE COMMUNITY

The Prairie City Public Library is committed to providing residents with access to important resources for everyday living and life-long learning.

"A library is an equalizer in a community," says Sue Ponder, library director. The library's 1,500 registered patrons can check out any of its approximately 12,000 items. These include books, ebooks, books on tape and CD, downloadable audio books, magazines, and newspapers. Helpful services include free computer and wireless Internet access, and copying and faxing for a fee. A free notary service is available to patrons as well.

"Libraries also promote early literacy in children," Ponder says. For example: The Prairie City library offers curriculum kits for checkout and puts together totes filled with 25 books for use at local daycares.

Prairie City's library is also a place for community members to engage in fun, enriching activities. Among many things, the library has organized computer courses, couponing classes, and adult and teen book clubs. Younger patrons enjoy events such as movie days and the summer reading program.

For more information, visit [prairiecitiy.lib.ia.us](http://prairiecitiy.lib.ia.us).



## GATHERING PLACE

Stop by Community Park on a Saturday, and you might find it bustling with activity as residents drop in the Community Building for a Lions Club pancake breakfast. Service organizations and community members are welcome to rent this facility. Equipped with a kitchen, tables, chairs, and restrooms, the Community Building is a convenient place to host personal gatherings and organized events.

Learn more at [prairiecitiyiowa.us](http://prairiecitiyiowa.us).



# WORK

Prairie City's convenient location, available land, and willingness to support owners and developers are enticing incentives to grow a business in our blossoming community.





## HELPING BUILD SUCCESSFUL BUSINESSES

There are many reasons to establish a business in Prairie City: lower taxes, a growing population, and a convenient geographic location. Plus, Prairie City also offers a variety of development tools to owners and developers. These, combined with customized incentive plans, are available to help businesses become productive, profitable, and permanent fixtures in the community.

### PRAIRIE CITY REVITALIZATION PLAN

Prairie City may allow owners or developers to forgo paying some or all property taxes for valuable improvements made to qualifying properties for a limited amount of time. This tax abatement can be achieved through the construction or rehabilitation of industrial, commercial, and residential sites and structures.

### TAX INCREMENT FINANCING (TIF)

With TIF, Prairie City may take an increment of projected property taxes earned through improvements made by a developer, and rebate all or a portion of the money back to the business or organization. The money can be used in a number of ways. For example, Prairie City can offer it as a direct loan or grant, or can invest the funds in infrastructure to better serve the company.

### VOLUNTARY DEMOLITION PROGRAM

Prairie City provides a \$3,000 grant to eligible owners who wish to improve the appearance of their property—and the neighborhood—by demolishing qualifying structures considered substandard, deteriorated, or dilapidated. If approved, the grant covers costs for demolition, debris removal, and site grading.

### DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION INCENTIVE PROGRAM

The Downtown Revitalization Incentive Program helps businesses upgrade structures in Prairie City's Downtown Square. The program offers up to \$15,000 for making eligible interior and/or exterior improvements and repairs.

### INDIVIDUALIZED INCENTIVES

Prairie City will work with a business or organization to create a custom incentive plan to suit its individual needs. This may involve coordinating a builder, arranging a shared leasing cost, or even offering land. "We don't approach new businesses with a one-size-fits-all plan," says Evelyn Johnson, city administrator. "We look to businesses with what they really need, and then we help them achieve it."

## PRIME PROPERTY

Recognizing the new Highway 163 bypass southwest of Prairie City as an opportunity for economic development, the City and the Jasper County Economic Development Corporation bought 20 acres of property for a highway business park.

"Located next to the Highway 163 interchanges, the property has great exposure, easy accessibility for travelers, and excellent transportation benefits for manufacturers," says Evelyn Johnson, city administrator.

These and other incentives make this property prime real estate for either industrial or commercial developers.

- **LOCATION.** The property sits along a convenient avenue for transporting goods, and is a short distance from major roadways and business hubs. Plus: With lower taxes, the cost of living and doing business is more affordable.
- **VISIBILITY.** Located at the intersection of two state highways (163 and 117), around 10,000 vehicles travel past the land every day.
- **ACCESSIBILITY.** Positioned directly off the highway, the property is a convenient pull-off point for drivers.
- **VERSATILITY.** The 20 acres can be sold as a whole or parceled off. Prairie City also has first option to purchase an additional 60 acres of adjacent land.

Visit [prairiecitiowa.us](http://prairiecitiowa.us) for more details about this property and others available.

"... great exposure,  
easy accessibility for  
travelers, and excellent  
transportation benefits  
for manufacturers."

- Evelyn Johnson, City Administrator



# PRAIRIE CITY BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

The growing number of businesses and organizations within the Prairie City Business Association\* work together to support one another and provide important services to residents.

## ANIMAL CARE

### Walker Veterinary Clinic

Dr. J.W. Walker  
10779 S. 76th Ave. W.  
T: 515-994-2430  
E: jwcowdoc@aol.com

## CITY SERVICES

### City of Prairie City

Paul Bolles, Mayor  
203 E. Jefferson St.  
T: 515-994-2649  
W: prairiecityiowa.us  
E: info@prairiecityiowa.us

## CHURCHES

### First Reformed Church

300 E. 5th St.  
T: 515-994-2250  
W: frcpairiecity.com  
E: frcpairiecity@aol.com

### Grace Alive

Jeremy Shepherd  
703 W. 2nd St.  
T: 515-994-2135  
E: shep64tiger@yahoo.com

### Prairie City Christian Church

Pastor John Eilers  
207 W. 5th St.  
T: 515-994-2561  
E: eilersjl@hometown.com

### Prairie City Christian Reformed Church

Rev. Matthew McClure  
608 E. 6th St.  
T: 515-994-2184  
E: pccrc@dwx.com

### Prairie City United Methodist Church

Pastor Sue Thomas  
706 W. McMurray St.  
T: 515-994-2354  
W: pcumc.us  
E: pcumc@q.com

## CONSTRUCTION

### Bio Blast Mobile Media Blasting

Andy or Dale Strum  
P.O. Box 345  
T: 515-975-3996  
W: bioblastonline.com  
E: bioblastinc@yahoo.com

### Dan Myers Construction, Inc.

Dan Myers  
12477 S. 60th Ave. W.  
T: 515-994-3084

### Firm Foundations

Brent VandeWall  
7356 W. 132nd St. S.  
T: 515-205-0818

### McKlveen Lumber

Dick & Tom McKlveen  
330 E. 17th St. S.  
Newton, IA 50208  
T: 641-792-4409  
W: mcklveenlumber.com

### OnYourConcrete.com

Lyle & Karen Burkett  
100 S. Marshall St.  
T: 515-250-1632  
W: onyourconcrete.com

### Sneller Plumbing & Heating, Inc.

Arvin Sneller & Tony Mosher  
110 N. Marshall St.  
T: 515-994-2283

### Timber Creek Homes

John Walker  
4975 Andrews Pl.  
Pleasant Hill, IA 50327  
T: 515-210-6809  
W: timbercreekhomesiowa.com  
E: john@imbercreekhomesiowa.com

## Farm Supply

Heartland CO-OP  
Jeff Jones, Manager  
117 S. Main St.  
T: 515-994-2651  
W: heartlandcoop.com  
E: jjones@heartlandcoop.com

## Prairie Ag Supply

Gene & Kevin Snetselaar  
12372 Hwy. 163 W.  
T: 515-994-3200  
W: prairieagsupply.com  
E: sales@prairieagsupply.com

## FINANCIAL

### Great Western Bank

Sheryl Plate, Manager  
304 S. Commerce Dr.  
T: 515-994-7030  
W: greatwesternbank.com  
E: sheryl.plate@greatwesternbank.com

## WORKING THE NUMBERS

Imagine your organization's name on the list of Prairie City Business Association members. Here are 7 reasons to bring your business to Prairie City.

Growth: **23%** population growth since 2000<sup>1</sup>

Cost of living: **9%** less than the national average<sup>2</sup>

Location: **20** miles from Des Moines

Location: **7** miles to Interstate 80

Location! **12** miles to U.S. Highway 65

Options: **4** business districts

Buying power: Estimated average household income of **\$60,179**<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census, <sup>2</sup>U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census, <sup>3</sup>2006-2010 American Community Survey

## Charles Wink Accountant

Charles Wink  
101 W. Jefferson St.  
T: 515-994-2100  
E: winklpa@juno.com

## Konek, PC Certified Public Accounting Firm

Kurt Konek  
404 S. Commerce Dr., Ste. 1  
T: 515-994-2822  
W: konekpc.com  
E: kurt.konek@konekpc.com

## HEALTH SERVICES

### Prairie City Dental Services

Dr. Brad Hagarty, DDS  
Dr. Matt Hagarty, DDS  
Dr. Timothy Hagarty, DDS  
111 N. Main St.  
T: 515-994-2210  
Colfax Location:  
475 N. Walnut St.  
Colfax, IA 50054  
T: 515-674-4466  
W: colfaxdentalservices.com

### Prairie City Family Clinic

Dr. Greg Ingle, DO  
100 E. Jefferson St.  
T: 515-994-2617

### Weirick & Patterson Pharmacy

Brenda Weirick, R.Ph.  
101 N. Walnut St.  
Colfax, IA 50054  
T: 515-674-3503  
E: weirickrx@gmail.com

## INSURANCE

### Farm Bureau Financial Services

Carrie Burns, Sales Associate  
for Scott Keenan  
9106 S. 80th Ave. W.  
T: 515-577-7042  
E: carrie.burns@fbfs.com

### Great Western Insurance

Mike Buitenwerf  
304 S. Commerce Dr.  
T: 515-994-7036  
W: greatwesternbank.com  
E: michael.buitenwerf@greatwesternbank.com



**Tri-County Insurance**

Melanie Umble  
402 W. 2nd St.  
T: 515-994-2446  
E: mumble@tri-county-insurance.com

**Van Gorp Insurors, LLC**

Beth Williams  
723 Main St.  
Pella, IA 50219  
T: 641-628-4100  
E: bwilliams@vangorpins.com

**MUSEUM****Prairie City Historical Society**

Arnie Sohn  
109 S. Main St.  
T: 515-994-2743  
W: iowamuseums.org

**RECREATION****Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge Visitors Center**

Christy Smith, Refuge Manager  
9981 Pacific St.  
T: 515-994-3400  
W: tallgrass.org

**FOOD/RESTAURANTS****Goldie's Ice Cream Shoppe & Restaurant**

Brad Magg  
304 W. 2nd St.  
T: 515-994-3190  
W: goldiesicecreamshoppe.com  
E: brad@maggfamilycatering.com

**Happy Endings Restaurant and Lounge**

Jeff Brouwer  
112 E. Jefferson St.  
T: 515-994-3100  
E: boysatplay3@hotmail.com

**Prairie City Foods**

Kelly Schneider  
120 E. Jefferson St.  
T: 515-994-2436

**RETAIL AND SERVICES****A Team Apparel**

Bruce & Cheryl Burkland  
6643 Hwy. 117  
T: 515-994-9244  
W: ateamapparel.com  
E: sales@ateamapparel.com

**Casey's General Store**

Gordon Foreman, Manager  
1002 W. 2nd St.  
T: 515-994-2546

**Charls TV Electronics & Service**

Tim Charls  
106 E. Jefferson St.  
T: 515-994-2259  
E: charls@earthlink.net

**Chery's Mat & Frame Studio**

Chery Schmidt  
112 E. Washington St.  
Monroe, IA 50170  
T: 641-259-2364  
W: cherysmatframestudio.s5.com

**Christine's Family Hair Care**

David and Christine Williams  
101 W. Jefferson St., Ste. A  
T: 515-994-3000

**Coburn Funeral Homes**

Chuck Henkenius  
201 S. Marshall St.  
T: 515-994-2727  
W: corburnfuneralhomes.com  
E: coburnfh@aol.com

**Family Tree Hair Styling**

Lora Kain  
102 W. 6th St.  
T: 515-994-9270

**Jan's Tours**

Janice Elrod  
7275 Hwy. 117 S.  
T: 515-994-2141  
W: pictureprairiecity.com  
E: dhjelrod@gmail.com

**Katherine McClure Photography**

Katherine McClure  
604 E. 6th St.  
T: 515-994-2383  
W: katherinemclure.com  
E: km@katherinemclure.com

**LeFebvre Companies, Inc**

Brian Kane  
609 Hugh Williams St.  
T: 515-994-2674  
W: leftruck.com  
E: brian.kane@leftruck.com

**Mindham Barber Shop**

Melissa Mindham  
114 E. Jefferson St.  
T: 515-994-9038

**Prairie City Carpet Cleaning**

Dan McAdams  
200 E. North St.  
T: 515-994-2310  
T: 515-971-0478  
E: danimcada@aol.com

**Prairie City News**

Peter & Criste Scarnati  
104 W. 5th St.  
T: 515-994-2349  
W: pcmnews.photorelect.com  
E: prairiecitynews@aol.com

**Prairie City News Scrapbooking Supplies**

Peter & Criste Scarnati  
104 W. 5th St.  
T: 515-994-2349

**Prairie Point Bookstore**

Neal Smith National Wildlife  
Refuge Visitors Center  
9981 Pacific St.  
T: 515-994-3400  
W: tallgrass.org

**Real Fitness**

Mollie Keitges  
404 S. Commerce Dr., Ste. 2  
T: 515-250-6287  
W: realfitnessprairiecity.blogspot.com  
E: realfitness.ia@gmail.com

**Rent-A-Space**

Janet Reeter  
600 Hugh Williams St.  
T: 515-249-5751  
T: 515-994-2748

**Roberts True Value Hardware**

Mike & Ginny Dalton  
203 Madison St.  
T: 515-994-2681  
E: rbtvprairiecity@yahoo.com

**The Hot Spot**

Kara Kelso & Shane Carstens  
118 E. Jefferson St.  
T: 515-994-0050  
W: thehotspotpc.com  
E: sales@thehotspotpc.com

**ZUMBA by Katherine McClure Fitness**

Katherine McClure  
T: 515-994-2383  
W: katherinemclure.com  
E: km@katherinemclure.com

**SCHOOLS****PCM School District**

Jane Babcock, Superintendent  
400 N. Jasper St.  
Monroe, IA 50170  
T: 641-259-2752  
W: pcmmonroe.k12.ia.us

\*Unless otherwise noted, all businesses are located in Prairie City, Iowa 50228





# PLAY

Prairie City's young, active citizens value opportunities for recreation and entertainment in and around the community.





## A NATURAL DESTINATION

### Five miles outside Prairie City is an internationally known tribute to Iowa's natural history.

The Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge Visitors' Center is one of Prairie City's biggest attractions. Since its establishment under the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the 1990s, the Refuge has reconstructed or restored around 5,580 acres of land into the native tallgrass prairie, oak savannah, and sedge meadow that dominated Iowa's landscape before its earliest settlers.

Today, approximately 140,000 visitors come to the Prairie City area each year to observe the Refuge's plant and animal inhabitants. Many visitors are local Iowans; others are from out-of-state; some are from outside the U.S. "On a daily basis, we always have someone coming from a foreign country," says Christy Smith, refuge manager. "The natural heritage of the United States fascinates people from around the globe."

Tourists and Prairie City residents also frequent the Refuge to participate in volunteer opportunities and enjoy its educational and recreational offerings.

### EDUCATION

Visitors can find as many offerings inside the Visitors' Center as there are outdoors. The 13,000-square-foot exhibit area educates visitors about the Refuge and the prairie ecosystem. Within the Center there also is a bookstore and gift shop, a theater, meeting rooms, and classrooms.

Ranger-led programs and special events give visitors of all ages a chance to enjoy the prairie. The Refuge hosts youth and family programs as well as events throughout the year that allow people to enjoy nature, volunteer in conservation efforts, and learn along the way. During one popular event, Monarch Madness Day, volunteers catch, tag, and release migrating Monarchs. Visitors at Bison Days enjoy festivities while collecting seeds for planting.

Educational efforts extend to youth organizations and partner schools, including the Prairie City-Monroe (PCM) school district. "We've worked collaboratively with Neal Smith on numerous projects," says Jane Babcock, PCM superintendent. "It's a wonderful learning resource."

The Refuge works with educators to incorporate the prairie into their classrooms, and students visit the Refuge every year. "We are more than a field trip," Smith says. "We become a part of their curriculum."

### RECREATION

Whether you're a curious naturalist or an avid outdoor enthusiast, the refuge offers a variety of activities year-round. Prairie City resident and Council Member Dan Kuecker enjoys the available activities. "We do the trails at the Refuge," Kuecker says. "It's peaceful and quiet."

In warmer weather, visitors trek through more than three miles of hiking trails or enjoy a stroll along 49 miles of grass paths. By fall, the landscape takes on golden tones as the sawtooth sunflower blooms, grasses dry, and Monarch butterflies migrate through. The prairie quiets during winter, but visitors often try to spot a short-eared owl while snowshoeing or cross-country skiing. As the weather warms, a drive through the 700-acre bison and elk enclosure to see the first spring calves is a must.

Visit [fws.gov/refuge/Neal\\_Smith/](https://fws.gov/refuge/Neal_Smith/) for more information about the Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge Visitors' Center.

"The natural heritage of the United States fascinates people from around the globe."

- Christy Smith, Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge Manager



# POSITIVE PLAY

## Prairie City and its residents show a penchant for parks and recreation.

Parks are important to a community's overall health and wellness. Green spaces improve property values and benefit the environment, as well as provide adults and children with a place to relax, exercise, play, and interact. Prairie City's extensive parks and recreational opportunities help residents lead healthy, happy, active lives.

Prairie City has four public parks (opposite) plus basketball courts, lighted tennis courts, baseball fields, and multi-use trails, including the 3-mile-long Plainsman Trail that weaves through town. Enhancing the parks to satisfy residents' needs is a priority for the City. The Citywide Playground Rehabilitation Program helps ensure that funds are available to update equipment regularly to meet safety standards and accessibility requirements, and provide play opportunities that support children's physical, cognitive, and social development.

City leaders have kept this in mind while planning a new playground for Community Park, which will be finished within the year. "The City is making sure we have a playground that is acceptable for all ages," says Evelyn Johnson, city administrator.

Residents return Prairie City's enthusiasm for parks and recreation. A group of community members, the Citizens in Action for Recreational Area Development (CIA/RAD), raised funds for the new Prairie City Recreational Complex. "We have a lot of pride in our CIA/RAD project," says Paul Bolles, Prairie City's mayor. "It's nice to see it up and going and kids playing on it."

The Recreational Complex currently features a playground, athletic fields, batting cages, a trail, and a fishing pond. "Overall, there is a vision that we have for the recreational complex," Johnson says. With 10 additional acres for development, future offerings could include an indoor facility or an aquatic center.

The City puts these spaces to good use with its many recreational offerings. These include a Summer Recreation Program for local children, sports leagues, a swim bus to transport kids to and from Colfax, Iowa's public pool, and family-friendly activities hosted at the Recreational Complex.



### COMMUNITY PARK

Amenities: Playground, disc golf, Community Building, open shelters



### ENTRYWAY PARK

Amenities: Bison sculpture, native prairie, rain garden, walking path, picnic tables, restrooms



### GARDEN SQUARE

Amenities: Bandstand, veteran's memorial, picnic tables, benches



### PRAIRIE CITY RECREATIONAL COMPLEX

Amenities: Playground, baseball diamonds, soccer fields, one-mile multi-use path, fishing pond





## 30 WITHIN 30

Prairie City's convenient location, combined with a cost of living that's around four percent less than the Iowa average, allows residents to enjoy city amenities without the expense of living in a larger community.

"Prairie City offers the best of both worlds in Iowa," says Terri Rosonke, a Prairie City resident and city council member. "It has that wonderful small-town Iowa feel to it, but at the same time it's within 20 minutes of Des Moines, Pella, Newton and other larger communities and all that they have to offer."

No matter your tastes, there are plenty of close-by attractions to enjoy.

### FESTIVALS, FAIRS, AND EVENTS

Des Moines Arts Festival; Des Moines Downtown Farmers' Market; Des Moines Iowa State Fair; Des Moines Pella Tulip Time; Pella U.S. Cellular World Food Festival; Des Moines

### ENJOYING THE ARTS

Civic Center of Greater Des Moines; Des Moines Des Moines Art Center; Des Moines Hoyt Sherman Place; Des Moines John and Mary Pappajohn Sculpture Park; Des Moines The Pella Opera House; Pella

### A LEARNING EXPERIENCE

Living History Farms; Urbandale Maytag Dairy Farms; Newton Pella Historical Village; Pella Science Center of Iowa and the Blank IMAX Dome Theater; Des Moines State of Iowa Historical Museum; Des Moines

### TAKING IN NATURE

Brenton Skating Plaza; Des Moines Des Moines Botanical and Environmental Center; Des Moines Lake Red Rock; Knoxville Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge Visitors' Center; Prairie City Saylorville Lake; Johnston

### CATCHING A GAME

Des Moines Buccaneers Hockey; Urbandale Des Moines Menace Soccer; West Des Moines Iowa Barnstormers at Wells Fargo Arena; Des Moines Iowa Cubs Baseball at Principal Park; Des Moines Iowa Energy at Wells Fargo Arena; Des Moines

### FOR THE THRILL OF IT

Adventureland Amusement Park; Altoona Blank Park Zoo; Des Moines Iowa Speedway; Newton Knoxville Raceway; Knoxville Valle Drive-In; Newton

## LET'S GET TOGETHER



Prairie City's Community Celebration Commission hosts numerous events to support local businesses and promote community togetherness.

One of the City's most popular festivities is its annual Prairie Days celebration in June. From Friday night until Sunday morning, Garden Square fills with people enjoying the carnival, contests, and entertainment.

The weekend is packed with fun, family-friendly activities. Residents gather for the Lion's Club pork supper, a parade, and fireworks. Other favorite hometown events include the Fun Run, softball tournament, chocolate chip cookie contest, and pie-eating contest.

Besides Prairie Days, the Community Celebration Commission organizes many other events throughout the year. These include:

- Spring and Fall Garage Sales—May and September
- Fall Festival—October
- Winter Festival—December
- Children's Christmas Shopping Spree—December
- Father-Daughter Dance—February
- Spring Carnival—March or April



## MARKET DAY

Prairie City hosts a farmer's market every Thursday, May through October. From 3:30 p.m. until 7:00 p.m., residents mill around downtown enjoying live entertainment and shopping for produce, crafts, baked goods, and other treats.