

2021 ANNUAL REPORT

Fayette County Economic Development & Tourism

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Fayette County Economic Development & Tourism works to foster and implement tourism and business development and expansion in Fayette County. The Board and Director strive to work with stakeholders, business owners, community residents, downtown organizations, and regional and statewide partners to develop and identify projects and initiatives that strengthen the existing businesses and resources within the County and foster new business and resource development within each community.



DIRECTOR'S SUMMARY

2021 has been a whirlwind of activity for Fayette County Economic Development and Tourism! We had the opportunity to partner with each other and multiple organizations to work towards continued improvement and expansion for Fayette County! We have 31 different cities, financial institutions, utilities, and partnering organizations working together as a 501c6 nonprofit to foster economic development and tourism within Fayette County.

The Executive Committee meets monthly to review the organization's budget and activities including development of marketing and advertising materials, sponsorships and memberships, data gathering initiatives, small business assistance, and financial leveraging opportunities. I meet regularly with 20+ partnering organizations and committees as well to help share information and leverage resources.

I have worked over the past year to enhance and update the www.visitfayettecountyiowa.com website and Visit Fayette County Facebook page to improve online promotion of our County for both tourism and economic development. One of the most popular initiatives in 2021 was the development of our Calendar of Events! We saw an increase in web visitation and social media engagement throughout the year.

Business support is always a priority and has been throughout 2021. Support included work with business owners and entrepreneurs to provide business planning assistance and share best practices and guidelines for starting a business. I was able to assist and support 15 existing, new, and potential businesses directly in 2021!

I had the opportunity to staff a booth at both the Fayette County and Iowa State Fairs this year. At the Iowa State Fair, over 5,000 individuals received information about Fayette County and Northeast Iowa!

A highlight of 2021 were the Leading Communities workshops we had the opportunity to sponsor in partnership with Fayette County ISU Extension and Outreach. 25 passionate individuals participated to learn, listen, and brainstorm about how to support their communities and organizations. The group plans to continue meeting!

I'm excited to share the exciting projects and priorities for 2022 and beyond include development of Fayette County as a Home Base Iowa Community, support of Fayette County Farmers Markets, regional tourism promotion, Electric Vehicle tourism studies, regional bike trail map development, housing assessment completion, and development of a new Fayette County Travel guide!

I look forward to continued success and enthusiasm as we move into 2022!

Mallory Hanson, Director Fayette County Economic Development & Tourism



Fayette County Economic Development & Tourism contracted the Northeast Iowa RC&D to develop a promotional video to be utilized on the website and social media. The video features sites and activities that can be done year-round in Fayette County!

ACCOMPLISHMENTS



Organizational Incorporation

Final filing requirements were completed for Fayette County Economic Development and Tourism's 501c6 Nonprofit status.



Board/Executive Committee Meetings

Hanson met regularly with the Fayette County Economic Development & Tourism Executive Committee. Meetings took place monthly to discuss Hanson's progress on priorities and projects. The full board met in June of 2021.



Fayette County Community Foundation

Hanson is contracted through the Northeast Iowa RC&D to serve as the Administrative Assistant for the Fayette County Community Foundation Governing Committee. Hanson also assists non-profit organizations and other eligible entities with questions regarding the annual grant cycle and applications. Hanson helped with meeting logistics and grant reviews and also facilitated a Fayette County Community Foundation grant workshop on September 21, 2021 at Upper Iowa University.



Partner Meetings and Professional Development

Hanson attended Fayette County Board of Supervisor meetings regularly to provide updates and information regarding current priorities. Hanson also attended various meetings for the following partner organizations:

Partnering Organization	# of Meetings Attended
Alliant Energy Regional Group	3
Eastern Iowa Tourism Association	3
Fayette Co. COVID-19 Disaster Response Committee	3
Fayette County Conservation Board	1
Fayette County Inter-Agency Group	2
Hwy 150 Coalition	1
Iowa Group Travel Association	1
Iowa Rural Development Council	1
Northeast Iowa Business Network	3
Northeast Iowa Electric Vehicle Workgroup	6
Northeast Iowa Housing Trust Fund	5
Northeast Iowa Tourism Association	11
Oelwein Chamber and Development	7
River Bluffs Scenic Byway Board	4
UERPC RPA 1 Enhancement Committee	2
West Union Chamber/Main Street	18
West Union Economic Vitality	2
West Union TIF Committee	1

Hanson also participated in 24 professional development conferences, webinars, discussions, and meetings.



Local and Regional Boards and Committees

Hanson currently serves on several boards and committees, representing Fayette County Economic Development and Tourism. In addition to these boards and committees, Hanson also works as the Director for the Turkey River Recreational Corridor and as the administrative assistant for the Fayette County Community Foundation Local Advisory Committee through the Northeast Iowa RC&D.

Time Served	Board/Committee	Position
2020-Present	Small Business Development Corporation Advisory Board	Member
2020-Present	Fayette County COVID-19 Disaster Response Committee	Member/Lead
2020-Present	NICC Regional Sector Board	Member
2019-Present	Northeast Iowa Business Network	Member
2019-Present	Northeast Iowa Housing Trust Fund	Member
2019-Present	Northeast Iowa Tourism Association	Member
2019-Present	River Bluffs Scenic Byway	Member
2019-Present	Northeast Iowa Funders Network	FCCF Representative
2019-Present	West Union TIF Committee	Advisor
2019-Present	West Union Chamber/Main Street Board	Liaison/Partner
2019-Present	Fayette County Community Foundation	Administrative Assistant
2019-Present	UERPC (RPA 1) Enhancement Committee	Liaison
2019-Present	Hwy 150 Coalition	Liaison
2019-Present	Eastern Iowa Tourism Association	Member
2019-Present	Iowa Group Travel Association	Member
2019-Present	Oelwein Chamber and Area Development	Liaison/Partner
2019-Present	Professional Developers of Iowa	Member
2019-Present	Iowa Rural Development Council	Member
2019-Present	Turkey River Recreational Corridor	Liaison

In addition to these boards and committees, Hanson also works as the Director for the Turkey River Recreational Corridor and as the administrative assistant for the Fayette County Community Foundation Local Advisory Committee through the Northeast Iowa RC&D.



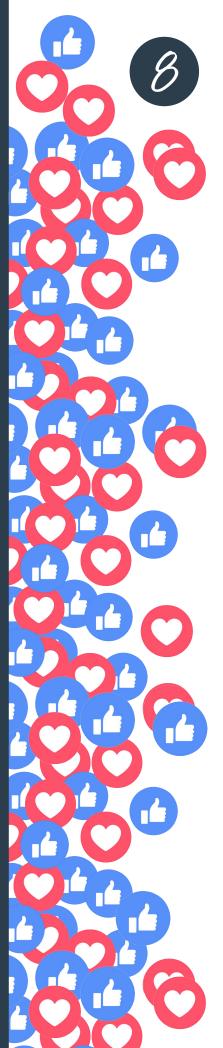
Fayette County Branding

Hanson continued to update the www.visitfayettecountyiowa.com website and Visit Fayette County Facebook Page. Hanson applied for a Fayette County Community Foundation to help leverage funding to contract Northeast lowa RC&D staff for development of a logo and branding for the organization and for development and printing of a Fayette County travel guide.



COVID-19 Response

Hanson continue to aid business owners and organizations amid the COVID-19 crisis. Specifically, Hanson assisted with applications and reporting for Tap't Out in West Union and the Williams Center for the Arts in Oelwein. Hanson also continued working with the Fayette County COVID-19 Disaster Response Committee, which has now morphed into the Community Response Committee, made up of representatives from the Fayette County Board of Supervisors, Fayette County Board of Health, Northeast Iowa Community Action, Fayette County Emergency Management, Fayette County Community Foundation, Fayette County Economic Development & Tourism, and the Community Foundation of Northeast Iowa. This committee will assemble as needed for any form of disaster in the future.



Social Media and Web Management and Metrics

Hanson updated the Visit Fayette County Facebook Page and promoted the www.visitfayettecountyiowa.com website regularly.

The 2021 (Jan. 2021-Dec. 2021) metrics for each are below:

Visit Fayette County Website

Most Popular Pages: 1) Calendar of Events 2) Public Health 3) Farmers Markets

Total Web Visitors: 2,770 Total Page Views: 5,862

Bounce Rate: 41.74% (Optimal is 26%-40%, Average is 41%-55%) **Web Visitor Countries of Origin:** 1) United States 2) China 3) India

Web Visitor Cities of Origin: 1) Cedar Rapids, IA 2) Beijing, China 3) Boardman, OR

Acquisition: 1) Direct 2) Organic Search 3) Referral 4) Social **Web Sessions by Device:** 1) Desktop 2) Mobile 3) Tablet

Visit Fayette County Facebook Page

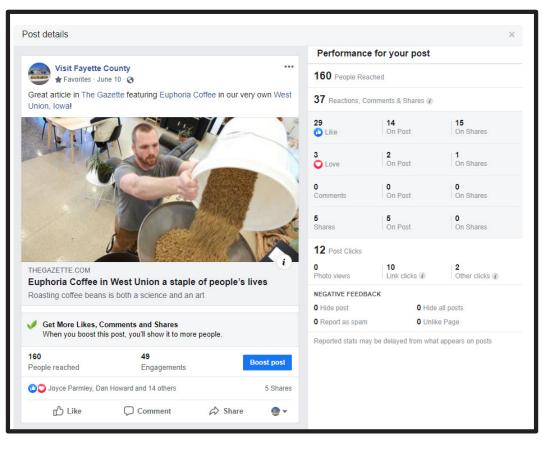
Total Page Likes: 584 (28% increase from 2020)

Total Page Views: 5,862 Average Reach: 162

Page Visitor Countries of Origin: 1) United States 2) Puerto Rico 3) Israel

Page Visitor Cities of Origin: 1) West Union 2) Elgin 3) Fayette

Most "Engaged" Post:



Note: The Fayette County (Iowa) Community Support Group has been an extremely successful tool for sharing information and reaching Fayette County residents.



Business Planning, Support, and Recruitment

Hanson worked with several business owners and entrepreneurs to provide business planning assistance and to share best practices and guidelines for starting a business. Assistance included guidance for succession planning and online presence improvement.:

- 5 Existing Businesses Country View Dairy, Van Elderen, The Green Door, Crawford Creations
- 4 New Businesses Renew Beauty & Wax Studio, Sydney's Bridal, The Therapy Station
- 6 Potential Businesses

Hanson congratulated 5 new businesses on their openings in 2021:

- Renew Beauty & Wax Studio-Clermont
- Sydney's Bridal-West Union
- Sugar Bowl-Fayette
- Opal & Grey Boutique-Oelwein
- Crawford Creations-Fayette

Hanson also worked with developers on recruitment strategies and responded to various inquiries regarding available space.



Events and Tradeshows

Hanson attended and coordinated various events and tradeshows throughout the year:

- Staffed a booth at the Fayette County Fair (July 20-24, 2021)
- Staffed a booth at the Iowa State Fair (August 12-14, 2021)
- Spoke at the Fayette County 4-H Clover Café Ribbon Cutting (July 20, 2021)
- Co-Hosted Fayette County Freedom Rock Dedication in Fayette with the City of
- Fayette and Fayette County ISU Extension & Outreach (September 11, 2021)
- Attended a field visit with the lowa Flood Center, Northeast lowa RC&D, and
- Congresswoman Ashley Hinson (August 26, 2021)
- Participated in a tour of Oelwein with Alliant Energy (September 14, 2021)
- Assisted with the River Bluffs Scenic Byway Fall Bus Tour (September 29, 2021)
- Invited Congresswoman Hinson to visit the NFV Spark space (February 18, 2021)





Partnerships

Hanson worked with various partners throughout the year and also provided support to partners throughout the county. Support included letters of endorsement for funding applications, commitment of time for workgroups and committees, fundraising strategy sessions, and assistance with grant preparation.

Northeast Iowa Tourism Association

The Northeast Iowa Tourism Association is a 7-county group working to leverage dollars for promotion of Northeast Iowa. 2021 accomplishments include:

- www.visitiowa.org and Visit Iowa Social Media Promotion
- Northeast Iowa Greenhouse Tour (Spring 2021)
- Iowa State Fair Booth (August 2021)
- Northeast Iowa Farm Crawl (Fall 2021)
- Northeast Iowa Holiday Hoopla (Winter 2021/2022)

Northeast Iowa Business Network

The Northeast Iowa Business Network is a 6-county group working to tackle housing, workforce, and business development the region. Collaborations in 2021 include:

- Northeast Iowa Community College COVID-19 Recovery Virtual Training Series
- Northeast Iowa Virtual Housing Summit (Spring 2021)
- Small Business Development Guide (Template developed by Fayette County)

Partnership Project Highlights

Hanson assisted with several projects in 2021 throughout the county:

- West Union to Echo Valley State Park Recreational Trail City of West Union (Funding Identification and Support)
- Gilbertson Park Interpretive Hub- Fayette County Conservation (Funding Identification & Support)
- Freedom Rock Interpretive Kiosk City of Fayette/Fayette Residents (Grant Writing and Facilitation)
- Fayette County StoryWalk™ Project (Funding and Planning Support)
- Oelwein Trail Committee (Funding and Planning Support)

Endorsement Letters

Hanson provided letters of support for the following organizations/projects:

- Winneshiek County Development & Tourism: Rural Business Development Grant application
- Montauk Historic Site: Silos & Smokestacks National Heritage Area Grant for Interpretive Materials
- Upper Explorerland Regional Planning Commission: Economic Development Agency Partnership
- Northeast Iowa RC&D: Farmers Market Promotion Program Grant to assist Oelwein Farmers Market
- Upper Explorerland Regional Planning Commission: lowa Energy Center-Electric in Rural lowa Planning
- · Hawkeye Telephone: Empower Rural Iowa Broadband Grant for Fayette, West Union, & Surrounding area
- City of West Union: REAP Grant for West Union to Echo Valley State Park trail project
- City of Oelwein: REAP Grant for Oelwein Community Trail System Phase 2 Expansion

Fayette County Economic Development & Tourism assisted 15 existing, new, and potential businesses with planning, development implementation, marketing, and licencing requirements in 2021!



Housing

Fayette County Economic Development & Tourism is working with Upper Explorerland Regional Planning Commission to complete a housing assessment/study for Fayette County that will include the following scope:

- Research and review of current data, conditions, and previous plan(s)/study(ies)
- Convene steering committee and facilitate meetings
- Create and distribute virtual community housing survey
- · Host community meetings
- Compile and analyze community input and data
- Prepare draft document
- Host community open house
- Prepare and print final document

The final document will help to inform future decisions regarding housing development, improvement, and incentives in Fayette County.

Hanson promoted housing surveys to gather data for the housing assessment.

Hanson also provided information to communities regarding Northeast Iowa Regional Housing Trust Fund Residential Housing Removal Program.



School and Student Support

Hanson worked on various projects as a part of the Future Ready lowa Clearinghouse and NFV Sparks program:

- Picture Perfect: Turkey Valley Senior taking promotional photos in Fayette County
- West Union Promotion NFV Spark students developing recruitment materials.
- Valley Fresh Market: NVF students designing, planning, and fabricating signage
- Picture Perfect: NFV students taking promotional photos in Fayette County



Leading Communities

Hanson worked with Fayette County ISU Extension & Outreach to coordinate and guide Fayette County's Leading Communities program.

Fayette County Extension and Outreach worked with the Fayette County Economic Development & Tourism Executive Committee to lead a training program for 25 Fayette County stakeholders. The program covered six key competencies for promoting community leadership and engagement:

- Understanding your community
- Identifying local issues and opportunities
- Making community decisions
- Building social capital for community development
- Working together effectively
- Making it happen—mobilizing resources for community action

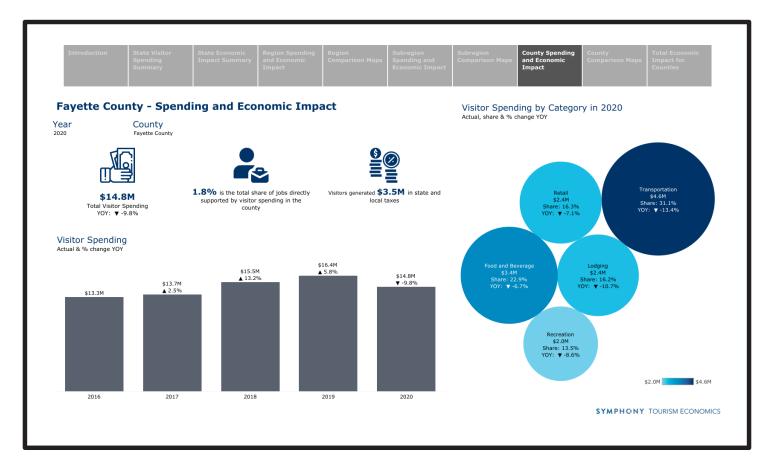
The participants decided to continue working together to meet about potential projects and programs to benefit Fayette County and its communities.

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY Extension and Outreach



Data Analytics and Tracking

Hanson compiled information and data from the Iowa Economic Development Authority. Information below is for 2020. Please note that 2020 data was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.





Home Base Iowa

Fayette County Economic Development & Tourism is working with the Fayette County Veterans Affairs office to designate Fayette County as a Home Base Iowa Community.

Home Base Iowa connects more than 2,000 military-friendly companies statewide with qualified veterans, transitioning service members and their spouses who are in search of career opportunities.

The designation, which covers the entire county, will involve several Fayette County partners including the Fayette County Board of Supervisors, Fayette County Economic Development & Tourism, Fayette County Veterans Affairs, and area employers. Fayette County will join more than 100 other lowa communities in the state network.

Veterans and spouses who move into Fayette County will be given the opportunity to access relocation incentives. A local steering committee is currently working to develop those details and complete the designation application.

The primary incentive that Fayette County Economic Development & Tourism would like to offer is a complimentary overnight stay at a Fayette County hotel/motel for veterans and spouses participating in job interviews and/or visiting to consider a move to the county.

FUTURE PROJECTS





Home Base Iowa

Hanson will work with the Fayette County Economic Development & Tourism Executive Committee and Home Base Iowa Steering Committee to develop incentives and complete the application for the program.



Farmers Market Promotion

Northeast Iowa RC&D received a grant to facilitate the support of paid market managers in 6 markets across Northeast Iowa to operate their market and build community engagement with an overall goal to make the paid position sustainable for the long-term. Market managers will serve as a point of contact in each participating community, working directly with local producers, city, economic development, chambers, and downtown businesses to develop community relations and partnerships.

The RC&D will partner with Fayette County Economic Development & Tourism and Oelwein Chamber and Area Development to support this project.



Northeast Iowa Tourism Association

Hanson will continue to work in partnership with the Northeast Iowa Tourism Association, a 7-county group working to leverage dollars for promotion of Northeast Iowa. Projects planned for 2022 include:

- Northeast Iowa Travel Guide Update and Printing
- www.visitiowa.org Promotion
- Visit Iowa Social Media Promotion Facebook and Instagram
- Northeast Iowa Greenhouse Tour (Spring 2022)
- Iowa State Fair Booth (August 2022)
- Northeast Iowa Farm Crawl (Fall 2022)
- Northeast Iowa Holiday Hoopla (Winter 2022/2023)





Electric Vehicle Tourism Impact Study

Northeast Iowa RC&D is working to complete an Electric Vehicle Tourism Study. Hanson will support research for the study that will benefit Fayette County:

- · Research other EV tourism initiatives in rural America
- Assess the economic impacts of EV infrastructure related to increased tourism
- Gather input from regional tourism stakeholders and data regarding regional tourism in Northeast Iowa
- Analyze and summarize collected data for incorporating EV charging in local
- economic development planning
- Disseminate completed EV Tourism Study to regional stakeholders



Partnership Project Highlights

Fayette County Economic Development & Tourism is a partner for several projects taking place in 2022 throughout the county.

- West Union to Echo Valley State Park Recreational Trail City of West Union (Funding Identification and Support)
- Northeast Iowa Bike Trail Map Northeast Iowa RC&D (Content Development and Support)





Housing Study and Action

Fayette County Economic Development & Tourism will work with Upper Explorerland Regional Planning Commission to complete a housing assessment/study for Fayette County that will include the following scope:

- Research and review of current data, conditions, and
- previous plan(s)/study(ies)
- Convene steering committee and facilitate meetings
- Create and distribute virtual community housing survey
- Host community meetings
- Compile and analyze community input and data
- Prepare draft document
- Host community open house
- Prepare and print final document

The final document will help to inform future decisions regarding housing development, improvement, and incentives.

Fayette County also plans to participate in an effort by the Northeast Iowa Housing Trust Fund to create a county-level housing revolving Ioan fund.



Marketing and Promotion

Fayette County Economic Development & Tourism will facilitate development of marketing tools to promote the county and it's business and resources locally, regionally, statewide, and nationwide:

- Support and guidance to communities to expand and improve upon community programming/events
- Development of a business/resource database
- Development of a Fayette County Travel Guide and logo/ branding with Northeast Iowa RC&D
- Enhancement of website and social media
- Participation in events and tradeshows



Community and Business Support

Fayette County Economic Development & Tourism will participate in various community and county-wide meetings and initiatives focused on long-range planning, project support, and community development. The Board will also work to support existing, expanding, and potential small businesses.



Home Base Iowa Designation

Hanson will work with the Fayette County Economic Development & Tourism Executive Committee and Home Base lowa Steering Committee to develop incentives and complete the application for the program.



Annual Fayette County Economic Development & Tourism Member Contributions

Туре	Entity	Annual Contribution
	City of Arlington	\$400.00
	City of Clermont	\$601.44
	City of Elgin	\$732.56
City Contributions*	City of Fayette	\$1,514.55
* Note: FY '23 Contributions will change to reflect new 2020 Census Data (\$1 per capita)	City of Maynard	\$517.00
	City of Oelwein	\$7,466.95
	City of St. Lucas	\$143.00
	City of Wadena	\$231.40
	City of West Union	\$2,863.52
	Bank 1st (West Union)	\$500.00
	Bank Iowa (Waucoma)	\$500.00
	Community Bank of Oelwein	\$2,500.00
	Elgin State Bank	\$150.00
Financial Institution Contributions	Fidelity Bank of Oelwein	\$1,500.00
	First State Bank (Fayette)	\$500.00
	Kerndt Brothers Savings Bank (West Union)	\$500.00
	Maynard Savings Bank	\$870.00
	Veridian Credit Union	\$1,000.00
	Allamakee-Clayton Electric Coop.	\$750.00
	Alliant Energy	\$1,500.00
Utility Partner Contributions	Alpine Communications	\$100.00
	Black Hills Energy	\$1,500.00
	East-Central Iowa REC	\$1,000.00

Total: \$27,340.42



Annually, the Fayette County Economic Development Board approves an overall budget the includes expenditures such as:

- Marketing and Advertising
- Tradeshow Expenses
- Sponsorship Items
- Conferences and Workshops
- Annual Partner Membership Dues
- Studies and Data Gathering
- Financial Leveraging/Grant Matching Dollars
- Publication Development and Printing
- Photography/Videography
- Small Business Incentive Programs

The Fayette County Board of Supervisors procures Mallory Hanson's coordination services through an annual contract with Northeast Iowa RC&D

FAYETTE COUNTY

NORTHEAST IOWA





www.fayettecounty.iowa.gov

www.northeastiowarcd.org