

2021

# ANNUAL REPORT



**Waverly**  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

*A Main Street Community*

[www.waverlychamber.com](http://www.waverlychamber.com)

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# MISSION STATEMENT

*The Waverly Chamber of Commerce and Main Street Program develops and sustains dynamic, progressive programs supporting the economic and business environment to provide a quality experience for residents and visitors to our community and historic downtown district.*

## VISION STATEMENT

Waverly, a college river town with rich heritage and a historic downtown district is a steadily expanding city, characterized by united community spirit. The Waverly Chamber of Commerce and Main Street Program shares the common vision for the City of Waverly to become a destination town. The next levels of transition from a “good reputation town” to a “destination community” depend on first evolving, and second, articulating an attractive identity, along with elevating our own rich culture. This beckons simultaneous effort, with the Waverly Chamber of Commerce to address and/or market:

- Making Waverly a welcoming place for new businesses and visitors, as well as building the feeling of pride, appreciation and unity of existing businesses and individuals.
- Recruiting and retaining business and individual Waverly investors, seeking engagement and total buy-in of our community-wide efforts.
- Enhancing retail opportunities and needs in all thriving business districts, including one with the distinction of being recognized by Main Street Iowa since 1989.
- Economic development with efforts to retain and recruit business & industry.
- New and creative housing alternatives by redevelopment in our business districts.
- A continued development of quality of life and tourism, including community celebration of the Waverly/Wartburg bond that elevates everyone.

*These goals are built on the solid foundation of the Waverly Chamber of Commerce’s six committees which are:*

- Ambassadors
- Retail Promotions
- Design & Beautification
- Membership Development
- Business Development
- Tourism

# ONWARD WAVERLY

## *A Summary of 2021*

Chamber Members and Main Street Businesses:

Your Waverly Chamber of Commerce and Main Street Program began the year still consumed with the uncertainty of the pandemic and the many challenges that were thrust upon us in 2020. Not knowing how the year would unfold made it difficult to plan all of our community-centered events we were forced to cancel during the previous year. We simply planned for the worst-case scenarios but hoped for the best. Thankfully, 2021 turned out to be a banner year for our organization in many ways, as this report will show.

Besides the list of goals our board laid out for us, this organization continued to focus on being a resource for all Waverly businesses when it came to state and federal funding/grant programs and the latest masking and vaccination information. Once vaccinations began, we turned our focus to in-person meetings and events once again. Highlights began with Art Walk in May, continuing with Concerts in Kohlmann throughout June and July, Downtown Trick-or-Treat Night in October, and Christmas Greetings on Main to successfully end the year. At all of these community events, we saw record numbers of people in attendance enjoying the best Waverly has to offer... a rich quality of life.

In addition, we enhanced our efforts to better communicate with the City of Waverly leadership, from one-on-one discussions with council members and the mayor to starting a tradition of sharing organizational updates with the council during quarterly study sessions throughout 2021. The Chamber/Main Street Program remains committed to enjoying a strong professional relationship with city leadership and staff. By our two organizations working together for the greater good, we help retain Waverly's reputation as one of the ideal growing and progressive communities in the State of Iowa.

Finally, we want to thank all of our business members and individual investors for your support and trust in our organization through your membership and sponsorship investments. As we now celebrate 85 years in the Waverly community, we continue the work of pushing our organization's mission forward to "keep developing and sustaining dynamic, progressive programs supporting the economic and business environment which provides a quality experience for residents and visitors to our community and historic downtown district". Onward, Waverly!



A handwritten signature in green ink that reads "Travis Toliver".

**Travis Toliver, IOM**  
Executive Director



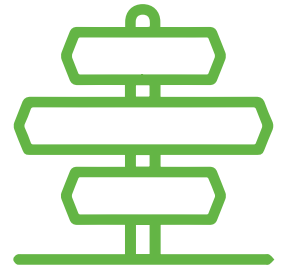
A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Don Meyer".

**Don Meyer**  
2020 & 2021 Board Chair

# 2021 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

## *Wayfinding Signage Continues*

The Waverly Chamber and Main Street Program began the process of creating and designing wayfinding signage. 2020 and 2021 board chair, Don Meyer, formed a committee consisting of Chamber board members Paula Stevenson, Kristin Vowell and City staff members Connie Tolan, Bill Werger, and James Bronner to get the process started and to give input. After the committee vetted several proposals sent in by local and out-of-state firms, it chose to hire Iowa-based consultants, MSA, to help determine signage designs, landmarks to be identified and ideal locations of the signs throughout the community. MSA also received public input during Oktoberfest and was able to incorporate feedback they received from citizens in their version of the master plan.



Since that time, the committee has been expanded to include Chamber staff members Travis Toliver and Tiffany Schrage, and Leisure Services Director Garrett Riordan. The master plan is now undergoing edits by both the committee and MSA and we expect to officially turn it over to Council and City staff in 2022 for future buildout and installation.

## *Design Guidelines for Historic Downtown Underway*

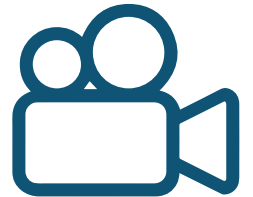
Our Design Committee, led by local volunteer Paula Stevenson, has nearly completed a robust and resourceful design guidelines document to help building owners in our downtown retail district. This resource offers several examples of best practices when maintaining or improving the exteriors of historic buildings; and is meant to be a source of inspiration as to what our historic downtown could and should look like. The document is currently being reviewed by City Zoning Administrator, Isaac Pezley and the Main Street Iowa design staff. Formal adoption of these guidelines will be presented to our Chamber/Main Street board soon and an approved copy will be presented to Council during one of our quarterly study session reports in 2022.





### *Capturing the Spirit of Waverly*

In 2021, the Chamber/Main Street Program hired local professional photographer and videographer, Roland Ferrie, to capture images and video footage of almost every in-person event. This has given our organization a new library of creative content to incorporate in new publications, tourism advertisements, and social media posts. These images and footage are also being made available to the City staff for use with Waverly Welcome Home efforts.



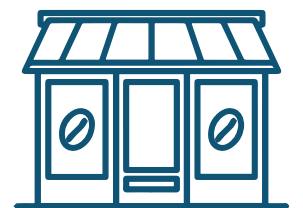
### *Social Media Growth*

The Chamber/Main Street Program expanded their social media footprint by launching accounts on Instagram and LinkedIn and updating our YouTube channel. These platforms, in addition to our already popular Facebook page, have increased the organization’s audience and demographics. We are excited to continue feeding these pages Waverly content and resources for our businesses, residents, and travelers alike.



### *Marketing Allocated for Businesses During Bridge Shutdown*

Finally, the board of directors approved earmarking \$30,000 from our reserves to be spent on event, marketing and signage efforts during the Bremer Bridge shutdown. The organization will continue to have discussion and finalize a plan of initiatives and events to help attract people to downtown businesses during the closure.



# LOOKING FORWARD

## *Looking Forward to 2022*

1. **Helping to prepare businesses for the 2023-24 Bremer Bridge closure** includes detour signage, marketing, business-education programs, and summer event planning. These efforts will help attract commerce to Waverly's downtown during the bridge reconstruction. The Chamber/Main Street Program has already set aside reserve funds in order to help support these efforts.
2. **Telling our organization's story better** to enhance meaningful community understanding of the Chamber/Main Street Program and engage strategic audiences to further economic vitality in Waverly. Continue to enhance marketing efforts through multiple platforms and industry-specific audiences.
3. **Further tourism efforts** to continue promoting our community and historic downtown district as a destination in Northeast Iowa by increasing the number of visitors and economic impact from outside the community.
4. **Facilitate more strategic partnerships** by creating a taskforce for industry-specific needs, and tracking the number of new sponsors, volunteer hours, and new industry-based engagement opportunities.
5. **Ensuring more financial stability** by reviewing and updating financial policies and procedures.

*Waverly Utilities is proud to be an investor in the Waverly Chamber of Commerce. As an ex-officio member of their board, I get to see the vast difference they make on Waverly's businesses, from storefront grants, city-wide tourism events, and networking opportunities for members. The Chamber was an immeasurable partner with Waverly Utilities when we launched our telecom company, making Waverly a Gigabit city!"*

*– Jen Bloker, Director, Marketing & Public Information,  
Waverly Utilities*




# OUTREACH & SUPPORT

**283** 


members currently  
invested in the chamber

 **30**

new members  
(90% retention rate)

**13k** 

membership directories  
printed and distributed

**\$4k** 

invested in façade improvement  
grants, awarded yearly since 2018

 **545**

subscribers to  
our e-newsletter

 **26**

ribbon cuttings and  
ambassador visits

## TOP 3 BUSINESS CHALLENGES OF 2021:

1. ADEQUATE WORKFORCE
2. PRODUCT MANUFACTURING/  
SUPPLY CHAIN LOGISTICS
3. AFFORDABLE HOUSING & CHILDCARE

**10**

community leaders participating  
in Project Lead 2021-22

# EVENTS & TOURISM

OVER **1.8 MILLION AD REACH**



INCLUDING SOCIAL MEDIA, RADIO, WAVERLY WELCOME CENTER, VISITOR GUIDES, AND OTHER PRINT PUBLICATIONS

**517**

VISITOR RELOCATION PACKETS sent out annually to people interested in visiting or relocating to the area (43 on average sent out per month)

**131** NUMBER OF EVENT SPONSORS

**150k** FACEBOOK EVENT REACH IN 2021

**24k**

VISITOR GUIDES, MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORIES AND OTHER BROCHURES DISTRIBUTED TO PROMOTE WAVERLY AND BREMER COUNTY

Over 1.8 million people had the opportunity to hear or view our advertisements and consider visiting Waverly to shop, dine, recreate and stimulate the economy. On average, we receive 251 direct requests for information from our annual Visitor Guide ads, along with other marketing publications.

**39** EVENTS HOSTED IN 2021

**2** FUNDRAISING EVENTS

**6** RETAIL EVENTS

**13** MEMBERSHIP AND NETWORKING EVENTS

**18** COMMUNITY EVENTS



These events increase quality of life and bring people into Waverly. Some of our major community events include:



Art Walk



Concerts in Kohlmann



Jack-O-Lantern Night



Moonlight Movie Night



Christmas Greetings on Main



Santa Visits



# MAIN STREET FAST FACTS

## SINCE 1989:

WAVERLY HAS BEEN A  
**MAIN STREET IOWA COMMUNITY**

WAVERLY HAS BEEN  
**NATIONALLY ACCREDITED**  
BY MAIN STREET AMERICA

**\$31.7 MILLION**  
PRIVATE DOLLARS INVESTED IN DOWNTOWN PROJECTS

**93 BUILDINGS** SOLD AND **\$10.7 MILLION**  
PRIVATE DOLLARS INVESTED IN DOWNTOWN ACQUISITIONS

**93,211** VOLUNTEER HOURS

## IN 2021:

**148 BUSINESSES**  
CALL THE WAVERLY MAIN STREET DISTRICT **"HOME"**

**263 FULL-TIME JOBS + 335 PART-TIME JOBS =**  
**598 JOBS**

MAKING WAVERLY'S MAIN STREET DISTRICT THE  
**COMMUNITY'S LARGEST EMPLOYER**

**500+ PEOPLE**  
LIVE IN THE MAIN STREET DISTRICT

**\$30.3 MILLION:**  
FULL ASSESSED VALUE OF DOWNTOWN PROPERTIES

*Being a member of the Waverly Chamber of Commerce and Main Street Program is one of the best investments our business makes each year. The Chamber provides a supportive, professional environment for businesses of all types and sizes, while their dedication to the members they serve is outstanding. Retail promotions, educational and networking opportunities, and community entertainment events are the obvious things they do but that only scratches the surface. Need help with something... just ask! An investment in a Chamber membership is an investment in yourself, your business, and your community."*

– Bo Ellison, Owner, Bo Studio.121





YEARS  
SERVING the  
COMMUNITY

# COMMUNITY SUPPORT

**4** STAFF

**6** COMMITTEES

**81** VOLUNTEERS

**30** of which are  
committee members

**15** of which are  
board members

**\$26.9k**  
in volunteer value

**990**  
volunteer hours

**3,988** Facebook  
page followers



**\$39,395**  
WAVERLY DOLLARS SOLD

which in turn promotes local spending  
and stimulates our economy

**260** Instagram followers  
(first year)

**83** LinkedIn followers  
(first year)

Most liked Instagram  
post of 2021:



The Chamber/Main Street Program hired local photographer, Roland Ferrie, to capture many of our in-person events throughout 2021.



# 2021 BOARD OF DIRECTORS & STAFF:

## BOARD OFFICERS:

Board Chair: Don Meyer

Chair Elect: Chris Knudson

Past Chair: Phil Jones

Treasurer: Chris Miller

Wartburg College/  
W-SR Community Schools Foundation

Wartburg College  
Rada Manufacturing

First Bank

## COMMITTEE CHAIRS:

Business Development Chair:  
Bob Buckingham

Individual Investor

Design and Beautification Chair:  
Paula Stevenson

Individual Investor

Membership & Marketing Chair:  
Jordan Shanks

Locknet

Retail Promotions Co-Chairs:  
Amber Nicholes & Landon Johnson

Thompson Shoes

Tourism Chair:  
Kristin Vowell

Fidelity Bank & Trust

## AT-LARGE MEMBERS:

Andrew Bell

Align Architecture & Planning

Dwane Waterbury

Edward Jones

## EX OFFICIO MEMBERS:

Jen Bloker

Waverly Utilities

James Bronner

City of Waverly

Ken Kammeyer

Bremer County

Connie Tolan

Waverly Economic Development

## STAFF:

Travis Toliver, IOM

Executive Director

Tiffany Schrage

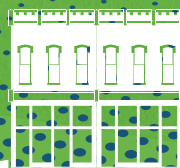
Special Events & Tourism Director

Sarah Miller

Communications & Marketing Assistant

Vicky Fonley

Administrative Assistant



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