



First Friday

News & Views



Iowa's LGBTQ+ Newsletter of the First Friday Breakfast Club

November 2025 | Volume 30 | Issue 11

Next Meeting

**Friday,
November 7
7:00 a.m.**



Location

**Hoyt Sherman
15th & Woodland
Des Moines**



Speaker

Matt Blake

**Iowa State
Senator**



Website

ffbc Iowa.org



Challenges for Iowa's Future

by Byron Huff, Board President

I hope you can join us Friday, November 7, to hear our State Senator, **Matt Blake**, discuss how he will meet the pressing challenges facing Iowa. I hope this article helps spark questions you might consider.

Several key challenges face the state of Iowa looking toward the future, each with major implications for policy makers, businesses, and communities across the state. How Iowa navigates these will shape its future prosperity and quality of life. Strategic investments, policy reforms and collaboration between state, local, and private sectors will be key.



Demographic & Workforce Decline

- Iowa's birth rate has fallen sharply (net births fell to under 4,000 in 2024 compared to 8,863 in 2019).
- Iowa has been losing residents to other states via domestic migration every year since 2013 (except 2021).
- If international migration were to halt, Iowa could lose thousands of labor-force participants and hundreds of millions in GDP.
- Employers cite uncertainty (rather than just workforce shortage) as their greatest business challenge.

Implications:

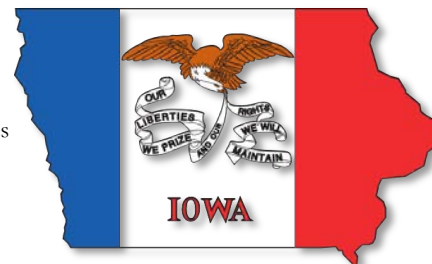
- Fewer young workers will mean fewer taxpayers, less economic growth, and harder-to-fill jobs.
- Rural communities may be hit hardest by out-migration and aging populations.
- Iowa must attract and keep talent, and consider how to adapt education, training, and immigration policy.

Fiscal & Budgetary Pressures

- Iowa is relying on one-time funds (reserves, surpluses) to cover continuing expenses; a model described by some as unsustainable.
- Local governments face mounting financial pressure as revenues shrink, property values stagnate, and service demands rise.
- Iowa's competitiveness index in terms of government spending and debt service has worsened in recent years.

Implications:

- Over time, fiscal stress can reduce infrastructure investment, increase borrowing costs, or force service cutbacks.
- Policymakers will need to find sustainable revenue sources, control costs, and prioritize spending.
- Local governments may face tough decisions unless the state backs them up.



Infrastructure, Housing & Connectivity

- Iowa projects a need for about 60,000 new affordable, quality homes by 2030.
- Broadband access, childcare, and worker housing are cited as barriers to workforce growth.
- Aging roads, bridges, and local infrastructure are under pressure given funding constraints.

Implications:

- Without housing and connectivity improvements, Iowa may lose its competitive edge in attracting workers and businesses.
- Rural areas could be hardest hit due to poor broadband or infrastructure decay.
- Coordinated efforts across state and local levels will be needed.



[continued on page 2]



["Challenges for Iowa's Future" continued from page 1]

Environmental & Water Quality Challenges

- Farming and livestock operations in Iowa contribute to serious water-pollution and soil-erosion issues.
- Some monitoring programs have been cut, reducing transparency and oversight.
- Supporting sustainable agriculture while protecting ecosystems is a balancing act.

Implications:

- Poor water quality can affect public health, recreation, agriculture, and economic development.
- Environmental obligations may increase (or resistance may grow) depending on policy shifts.
- Iowa's agricultural identity may need to adapt to new environmental constraints.

Economic Diversification & Competitiveness

- Manufacturing and agriculture remain large components of Iowa's economy (manufacturing is approximately 17.5 % of GDP).
- But the state's government spending and employment metrics have been slipping relative to other states.
- Businesses cite external uncertainty (global markets, policy) as a top concern.

Implications:

- Iowa must innovate to stay competitive.
- Over-reliance on traditional sectors (corn, pork, manufacturing) may leave the state vulnerable to disruptions.
- Attracting high-growth industries may hinge on the state improving workforce, infrastructure, and business climate.

Education, Health & Rural Service Access

- Rural school districts confront declining enrollment, capital-improvement needs, and funding constraints.
- Healthcare access in rural areas continues to be a challenge: fewer providers, hospital closures, and longer travel times.

Implications:

- Education quality and health services influence ability to retain families and workers.
- Addressing rural-urban divides will be important for equitable growth.
- Investments will be needed in tele-medicine, rural schools, teacher recruitment, etc.

Iowa stands at a crossroads. Iowa has many strengths - a strong agricultural base, established manufacturing, and a relatively stable economy. On the other hand, our state faces structural long-term challenges in demographics, fiscal sustainability, infrastructure, environment, and competitiveness.

Thanksgiving Conversation Starters



- What's your favorite Thanksgiving memory or tradition from your childhood?
- If you could invite three celebrities to your Thanksgiving dinner, who would you choose and why?
- What are three things you're most grateful for this year?
- What's the Thanksgiving food you could eat every day for the rest of your life? or most disliked food?
- What is one thing about your (chosen) family that makes you proud or grateful?
- Black Friday shopping...yes or no?
- Do you have a Thanksgiving disaster story?
- What is your favorite way to eat Thanksgiving leftovers?
- What's a new tradition you would like to start this year?
 - What are you thankful for today?

Briefs & Shorts



Thanks to **Phil Williams** for introducing our October speaker, **Ryan Smith**, Executive Director of the Iowa Wildlife Federation. As always, thanks to **David Wilfahrt** for doing an incredible job in managing FFBC's finances. We are also grateful to **Nicholas Williams** for managing FFBC's Microsoft IT infrastructure. Finally, thanks to **Wade Petersen** for his work as our newsletter and website editor. *Thank you to all our newsletter contributors!*

The **deadline** for the **December newsletter** will be **November 24**.



If you have something that you would like to share, type it up and email it to Wade (wadecpetersen@gmail.com) by the deadline.

Fundraising efforts are ongoing to fund our 2026 scholarship program. Since 1997, we have awarded **\$555,000** for **223** scholarships to Iowa



high school seniors who have done remarkable, courageous things to reduce homophobia and teach about LGBTQ+ issues in their schools and local communities. Please consider a tax-deductible **contribution** online or by sending a check.

A special **thank-you** to those FFBC members and donors who have chosen to designate First Friday Breakfast Club through the **Donor Direct** program of **United Way**. Contributions made through United Way are tax deductible. Those who have chosen this means of supporting FFBC have taken time to complete their United Way campaign worksheet by designating FFBC as the beneficiary of their generosity. FFBC is an eligible recipient of such funding designations.



United Way





Matt Blake



A South Dakota native, **Matt Blake** attended Drake University Law School and fell in love with Iowa. Matt and his wife chose Urbandale to start and raise their family. Growing up in a small, rural town, Matt knows the importance of a tight-knit community built on supporting others.

After law school, Matt joined the Iowa Army National Guard and serves as a Judge Advocate (JAG). Matt, by then promoted to Captain, deployed to the Middle East with Operation Inherent Resolve where he served in both Kuwait and Iraq.

In 2019, Matt decided to take his service in Urbandale to the next level. He won a seat on the City Council, earning first place in a seven-way race. On the Council, Matt has focused on lifting up all members of the community and making Urbandale a premier location to live in the metro. Matt, his wife Alaina, and their two children live in Urbandale. Alaina is a Waukee-based optometrist.

Matt Blake was elected to his first term in the Iowa Senate in 2024. He represents Senate District 22, which includes portions of Johnston, Urbandale, Saylor Township, Crocker Township, and Des Moines.

November Speaker

A Prayer of Queer Thanksgiving “Family”

by Micah Bucey

I sing praises to this family
That claims me for who I am and gently shoves me into who I can become.
I sing praises to the saints who don't want to be saints,
To the martyrs and the heroes who ask for none of the notoriety.
I sing praises to the bloodless ties that keep us afloat until the blood ties catch up.
I sing praises to the clouds that cry out, “Families belong together,”
And know that it means so much more than what some want it to mean.

I sing praises to this fleeting moment on the street,
A moment that begins between two nail-polished people,
And then prisms out, extending the rainbow, creating the cloud.
We are twins and we are nothing alike.
We are seeking a tribe and we are extending the tribe.
We have so much to teach and we have so much to learn.
We have eternal praises to sing and we have eternal thanks to give.



Friendsgiving & TRIVIA Night

Join us for a classic, catered turkey dinner
& trivia night with chosen family!
Sign up as a team or as a free agent.

November 15 at 5pm
{ Kirkendall Public Library }

Ankeny
PRIDE

FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK AND
INSTAGRAM AND VISIT
ANKENYPRIDE.ORG/EVENTS TO
REGISTER YOUR TEAM TODAY!



**“Give thanks as if you are
living just to appreciate life.
Live as if your life depends
on love, kindness, gratitude,
and thanksgiving.”**

Debasish Mridha





Medicare Revisited

by Jonathan Wilson

This article is time sensitive. The open enrollment period for changes to your Medicare coverage plan ends on December 7, 2025, absent certain extenuating circumstances.

I am a member of AARP (American Association of Retired Persons, although membership is actually available to anyone over the age of 50, whether or not retired). For a nominal annual membership fee, members can enroll a second member at no additional charge.

Members are entitled to a variety of discounts in dining, travel, insurance, and other goods/services that, collectively, can easily offset the membership fee. Membership includes health/financial planning resources, the AARP magazine and newsletter, and other benefits.

My ONLY disappointment with AARP is its endorsement of Medicare Advantage insurance plans. Medicare Advantage plans are offered by various, for-profit insurance companies. If you don't think about it, your response might well be, "so what?" You should for sure think about it before signing up for a Medicare Advantage plan.

Remember, the companies are operated for a profit. Profit is, basically, what's left over after deducting all expenses from all income. Premiums are on the income side of the ledger. Claims to be paid are on the expense side of the ledger, along with the costs of advertising (I can't watch television for an hour without at least one advertisement trying to sell a Medicare Advantage plan). Those ads also suggest that you can get other benefits like dental and vision with little or no added cost. Have you ever heard the expression, "If it sounds too good to be true, it probably isn't true." This is not an exception. These are for-profit companies. You'd need to read the proverbial "fine print" regarding coverages, something that the insurance company



First Friday Breakfast Club
Founder **Jonathan Wilson**

claims managers have a fiduciary duty to do. And they have the employment obligation to deny claims wherever legally possible. They have definitely read the fine print.

It gets worse. Presumably the companies' business models show a profit after all projected premium income and after deducting marketing expenses and all legally deniable claims. According to the U.S. Office of Inspector General, however, 13% of Medicare Advantage denied claims should have been paid, and would have been paid under traditional Medicare. While 75% of appealed denials are overturned, only about 1% of beneficiaries appeal a denial.

You needn't take these facts or my word for it; it was recently announced that the Mary Greeley Medical Center in Ames (a premier healthcare provider) will not accept Aetna Medicare Advantage insurance plans starting next year. Mary Greeley said it reviewed the plan and found that it demonstrated unacceptable reimbursement rates, frequent coverage denials, lengthy appeal processes, and excessive administrative costs. It has also been announced by Mayo Clinic that they would, similarly to Mary Greeley, not accept Medicare Advantage coverage as of January 1, 2026.

If you have original Medicare, keep it. Do not be persuaded by the AARP endorsement. AARP has around 38,000,000 members. AARP does receive a "kick back" to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollar per year – that's an additional expense to be deducted before the for-profit companies get to their profit.

LGBTQ+ Library Cataloging Day
Sunday, November 9 and 23.
1:00 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

- Help preserve queer history
- Connect with community
- Enjoy snacks with friends

PRIDE CENTER
Des Moines
All are welcome.
Come as you are.

RSVP on our website desmoinespridecenter.org or email us at desmoinespridecenter.board@gmail.com to join the fun!

**Common Love
Clothing
Pop-Up**

**November 8 / 1-3 PM
Park Fair Mall**

Join us for a joyful community space offering free clothing (donated by the community) and gender affirming care. If you don't find the gender affirming product you're looking for, we can purchase something for you! If you've got access to money and would like to donate, all financial donations go back into purchasing items for folks.

**CATCH FEELS?
NOPE. IT'S TIME TO
CATCH BALLS.**

FALL DODGEBALL

WEDNESDAYS @ WILLKIE HOUSE INC.
900 17TH ST
DES MOINES, IA 50314

[NOV 5 through DEC 17] **6-8 PM**
\$30 per person

SOCIAL & COMPETITIVE DIVISIONS
[FREE AGENTS AND TEAMS WELCOME]
REGISTER AT LINK IN BIO





Step back into the **Roaring Twenties** for a night of opulence, elegance, and unapologetic self-expression at our Great Gatsby-themed LGBTQ+ Prom! Expect jazz, glittery vibes, and a sparkling atmosphere where everyone is free to be bold, proud, and fabulous!

Dress to impress in your Gatsby best: Think flapper dresses with fringe and sequins, velvet tuxedos, feathered headpieces, sparkling accessories, suspenders, silk gloves, bold makeup, or anything that screams vintage glam with a modern, pride-filled twist. Whether you go full 1920s or add a queer, contemporary flair—this is your night to shine!

Get your tickets to the Gayla Adult Prom today! Every ticket includes admission, dinner, 2 drink tickets, and more! Last year hundreds of folks came out and danced the night away! This event is 18+ only. You don't want to miss this!

PRIDE BOOK CLUB

Wednesday,
Nov. 12, 6 p.m.

The Little Book
BIG SWISS
by Jen Beagin

CAPITAL CITY PRIDE

Big Swiss
A Novel
Jen Beagin
NATIONAL BESTSELLER

FALL 2025 SERIES
WEDNESDAYS | 6-7 p.m.

SUPPORTING SPONSORS:
HOLMES MURPHY, NFM

National LGBTQ+ Calendar

- **1st Sunday in November:**
Transgender Parent Day
- **November 13-19:**
Transgender Awareness Week
- **November 20:**
Transgender Day of Remembrance



FFBC Membership

FFBC membership is open to all members of the LGBTQ+ community and their allies.

We welcome EVERYONE, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

Meetings are held the first Friday of every month at Hoyt Sherman Place in Des Moines.

Membership Rates

The following rates help us to cover food and facility costs:

Annual Rate: \$180
(12 consecutive meetings)

Quarterly Rate: \$48
(3 consecutive meetings)

Month-by-Month: \$18

First-Time or One-Time Attendee: \$15

Full-Time Student: \$8

No charge to attend via Zoom

Payment Options

We accept cash, checks, or **credit cards** at the meeting.



Meeting Schedule

6:30 a.m. - Doors open
6:45 a.m. - Breakfast service begins
7:00 a.m. - Meeting begins



Friendsgiving

*gobble
gobble*

Excerpted from an article by Rachel Covello

LGBTQ+ Advocate / CEO and Publisher, OutCoast.com



Get ready to host the most epic LGBTQ+ friendly **Friendsgiving** feast! Friendsgiving is a time-honored tradition where friends come together to celebrate gratitude, friendship, and of course, delicious food. Whether you're a seasoned Friendsgiving host or a first-timer, this guide will help you plan the perfect feast that will leave your guests raving for weeks.

Friendsgiving is not just about food; it's about creating lasting memories with your **chosen family**. Friendsgiving is a modern twist on the traditional Thanksgiving celebration. It's a gathering of friends who come together to celebrate the holiday, typically held on a date close to the actual Thanksgiving. **The idea behind Friendsgiving is to create a warm and inclusive environment where friends can enjoy a delicious meal and express their gratitude for each other.**

Friendsgiving has gained popularity in recent years because it offers a more casual and intimate alternative to the often formal and extended family-focused Thanksgiving celebrations. It allows friends who may not have the opportunity to spend Thanksgiving together to come together and create their own traditions.

Friendsgiving has been on the rise in popularity, and this inclusive celebration holds particular significance for LGBTQ+ individuals. There are several key reasons behind its growing appeal within this community.

First, Friendsgiving offers LGBTQ+ individuals an opportunity to gather with chosen family and friends, especially when family dynamics might be complex or unsupportive. The LGBTQ+ community often faces unique challenges related to acceptance, and not everyone may feel comfortable or welcome at their family's Thanksgiving table. Friendsgiving serves as an affirming alternative, allowing LGBTQ+ individuals to create a safe and welcoming space where they can be their authentic selves.

Second, Friendsgiving promotes a spirit of acceptance and diversity. LGBTQ+ individuals often appreciate the inclusive nature of this celebration, where

different backgrounds, identities, and orientations are embraced and celebrated. It provides a platform for friends to share their unique stories and experiences, fostering greater understanding and empathy among attendees.

Finally, Friendsgiving is an opportunity for LGBTQ+ friends to express gratitude for the supportive friendships they've built. In a world where discrimination and isolation can still persist, this holiday reinforces the sense of community and belonging. It allows LGBTQ+ individuals to celebrate their chosen family and the deep connections they've forged, which can be particularly meaningful in overcoming adversity and celebrating diversity.

While Friendsgiving and Thanksgiving share similarities, there are some key differences between the two celebrations. Thanksgiving is a national holiday in the United States that has historical and cultural significance. It's a time for families to come together and give thanks for the blessings in their lives.

Friendsgiving, on the other hand, is a more casual and contemporary celebration that focuses on the gathering of friends. It often takes place on a different day than Thanksgiving and provides an opportunity for friends to create their own traditions and customs. Unlike Thanksgiving, Friendsgiving doesn't carry the weight of tradition and expectations, allowing for a more relaxed and fun atmosphere.

The first step in planning your Friendsgiving feast is to create a guest list. Think about the friends you want to invite and consider the dynamics of the group. It's important to strike a balance between different personalities and ensure that everyone will get along and have a good time.

It's especially important to be sensitive to the needs and emotional safety of your LGBTQ+ guests. Avoid inviting friends who won't fully support each individual guest showing up to the Friendsgiving table authentically.

One of the highlights of any Friendsgiving feast is the delicious food.

When planning your menu, consider the dietary restrictions and preferences of your guests. It's a good idea to have a mix of traditional Thanksgiving dishes and some unique and creative recipes.

Creating a festive and welcoming ambiance is key to a successful Friendsgiving feast. Start by setting the table with a beautiful tablecloth or runner and add some seasonal touches like pumpkins, gourds, and fall foliage. Candles and fairy lights can add a warm and cozy atmosphere. Consider creating a seating arrangement that encourages conversation and interaction among your guests. Mix and match different seating options like chairs, benches, and floor cushions to create a relaxed and comfortable environment.

While the focus of Friendsgiving is the food, incorporating games and activities can add an extra layer of fun and entertainment to the celebration. Consider setting up a DIY photo booth with props and a backdrop where guests can take memorable photos together. Another popular activity is a gratitude jar, where guests can write down what they are grateful for and share it with the group. This not only encourages reflection and gratitude but also creates a sense of connection and positivity among your guests.

While Friendsgiving is a more relaxed and casual celebration, it's still important to observe certain etiquette and traditions. Make sure to communicate any specific instructions or requests to your guests beforehand, such as bringing a dish to share or arriving at a specific time. As the host, it's your responsibility to ensure that everyone feels included and comfortable. Take the time to introduce guests to each other and facilitate conversations.

Friendsgiving is a special occasion that allows friends to come together and celebrate gratitude, friendship, and delicious food. So gather your friends, put on your apron, and get ready to create lasting memories with your chosen family. With our guide by your side, your Friendsgiving feast will be the talk of the town for years to come.

Happy Friendsgiving!





The Iowa Trans Mutual Aid Fund financially supports Trans, Nonbinary, and Gender Diverse Iowans as they access gender-affirming care.

November Dates:

November 2 – 9: Applications Open

November 9 – 16: Phone Calls

November 16 – 23: Application Review

November 23 – 30: Dispersal



Help make a bigger difference! Donate at:

www.iowatransmutualaidfund.org

What happens when the DSMPC joins forces with your favorite local bookstore?

Come explore queer history with us

A fabulous celebration of queer stories — past and present!

Explore rare historical LGBTQ+ materials

Celebrate our community's legacy

*Historical Archive
Pop Up at*



THE
LITTLE
BOOK

November 19 @ 6PM

520 Euclid Avenue / Suite 102
Des Moines



TRANS TALK ROUND TABLE

 The Garden | November 17th | 7PM



Noah



Amanita



Dickey



Alexandra

Panelists

Hosted By: Iowa Bear 2026 DJ Dom



Future Speakers



December 5:

Sarah Trone Garriott

Iowa State Senator

January *9*:

Matt Russell

Executive Director

Iowa Farmer's Union

February 6:

Tom Vilsack

Former Secretary of Agriculture

Former Governor of Iowa

March 6:

Dr. Kelly Baum

Director, Des Moines Art Center

April 3:

Kimberly Graham

Polk County Attorney

**"The thinnest yellow
light of November
is more warming
and exhilarating than
any wine they tell of."**

- Henry David Thoreau



Supporting Wildlife

by Gary Moore

Ryan Smith was introduced to the First Friday Breakfast Club by long-time family friend and FFBC Board member Phil Williams. Ryan has an impressive list of education credentials as well as a varied work background that has made him well-suited to serve in his present position as Executive Director of the Iowa Wildlife Federation (IWF), certified by the many awards and recognitions he has received.

Ryan Smith spoke about the organization's mission to inspire Iowans to protect wildlife and wildlife habitats. He highlighted the importance of conservation practices, such as wetland restoration, prairie restoration, and the use of native plants to support wildlife and improve water quality. He discussed programs like the Certified Wildlife Habitat Program, which encourages individuals to create wildlife-friendly spaces, even in small areas like yards or balconies, by providing food, water, shelter, and sustainable practices.

The National Wildlife Federation (NWF) was founded in 1936 by Jay Norwood "Ding" Darling, a conservationist and *Des Moines Register* cartoonist, who convened a conference of 2,000 conservationists, sportsmen, farmers, and outdoor enthusiasts. Frustrated by declining wildlife populations and lack of federal funding, Darling sought to unite diverse groups to create a powerful, unified voice for conservation. The organization's first major achievement was helping to pass the 1937 Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act, which created a dedicated funding stream for state wildlife programs.

Jay Norwood Darling, better known as Ding Darling, was an American cartoonist who won two Pulitzer Prizes as a cartoonist for the *Des Moines Register*. He was an important figure in the 20th century conservation movement and founded the National Wildlife Federation. In addition, he was known to be close friends with Walt Disney.

Ryan also introduced the "School of the Wild" program, which takes students outdoors to learn about Iowa's natural habitats, such as prairies, wetlands, and forests, while integrating academic subjects like math, science, and English. He emphasized the importance of engaging children with nature to foster a lifelong appreciation for conservation using ideas like Ranger Rick. Ranger Rick first came to life in *The Adventures of Rick Raccoon*, a book published by the National Wildlife Federation in 1959.

Additionally, Ryan addressed challenges such as water pollution in Iowa, the need for better agricultural and urban practices to protect water quality, and the significance of supporting farmers who implement conservation measures like prairie strips and cover crops. He encouraged attendees to get involved with IWF, which offers free membership and resources to help individuals make a positive environmental impact.



October
Speaker

Ryan Smith
Executive Director
Iowa Wildlife Federation



October Meeting Photo Gallery



Byron Huff,
FFBC President,
hosts the October
FFBC meeting.



Rick Miller,
shares upcoming
events from the Des
Moines Pride Center.



Phil Williams,
introduces Ryan
Smith, the October
speaker.



Iowa Safe Schools Spirit Awards

iowa
safe
schools

Several FFBC Board Members attended the Iowa Safe Schools Spirit Awards on Friday, October 3.
Over \$65,000 was raised!



The mission of Iowa Safe Schools is to provide safe, supportive, and nurturing learning environments and communities for LGBTQ and allied youth through education, outreach, advocacy efforts, and direct services.

Des Moines Gay Men's Chorus 25th Anniversary Season



dmgmc.org



SILVER BELLS

The Glitz, Glitter, and Glam of the Holiday Season

December 5 & 6
St. John's Lutheran Church



SILVER LININGS

Moments of Hope and Joy in Otherwise Dark Times

March 20 & 21
Urbandale High School



THE SILVER PARTY

Celebrating 25 Years of Music that Matters

June 26 & 27
Sheslow Auditorium



CAPITAL CITY PRIDE

STORYTELLERS

PRESENTED BY

AMERICAN EQUITY

THURSDAY,
NOV. 13, 6 PM

TEMPLE THEATRE

"QUEER
DIARIES"

SUPPORTED BY

PRAIRIE MEADOWS

Queer Diaries: True Stories, True Selves is a free event that will feature 5–8 LGBTQ+ individuals from right here in Des Moines, each sharing a personal story that reflects the diverse experiences, challenges, and triumphs within our community. This event is an opportunity to listen, connect, and celebrate the beauty of living openly and authentically. Whether you come to be inspired, to learn, or simply to support your community, you'll leave with stories that stay with you.

We hope you'll join us for this special evening of storytelling and community connection.

[Reserve Your Free Tickets Here](#)

FFBC Donates to Hoyt Sherman Place Kitchen Remodeling

The FFBC Board of Directors voted in September to donate **\$3,000** to the Hoyt Sherman Place Foundation. Hoyt Sherman is undergoing a kitchen remodeling project that will upgrade the current kitchen that sits directly east of the art gallery (FFBC's breakfast meeting location) and add a new restroom adjacent to the art gallery's north room. Hoyt Sherman Place Foundation supporters Chris and Denise Vernon have stepped forward with a matching gift of \$3,000. Hoyt Sherman seeks to raise \$650,000 for this renovation. Design work was done by Mike Simonson & Associates Architects and work should be completed by November 2025. Read more about this project here: <https://hoytsherman.org/support/kitchen/>.

Hoyt Sherman has been home and host to FFBC's monthly breakfasts for over 20 years. The FFBC Board of Directors is delighted to support **Robert Warren**, Hoyt Sherman Place CEO, and his team in this endeavor as they strive to create an even more welcoming venue for FFBC and other cultural and arts organizations.

Check It Out

PRIDE CENTER

Des Moines

The Des Moines Pride Center houses the largest Queer-only library in the state. The Pride Center is fighting to maintain a vibrant Queer future by connecting people to LGBTQIA+ literature, information, and creativity.

Book of the Month

Featuring more than 300 images from more than 70 photographers and 20 archives, this inclusive and intersectional book enables us to truly see queer history unlike anything before.

Through the lenses of protest, power, and pride, *We Are Everywhere* is an essential and empowering introduction to the history of the fight for queer liberation. It shows readers how they can—and must—honor the queer past in order to shape our liberated future.

1620 Pleasant Street, Des Moines
(515) 518-0530
www.desmoinespridecenter.org

Full Searchable Catalog:
www.librarycat.org/lib/DSMPC

The Pride Center Library Collection is constantly changing, if you would like to donate material or provide support, they are always looking for community connections and support.

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Spotlight on National LGBTQ+ Organizations

866-488-7386



The Trevor Project is an American nonprofit organization founded in 1998. Focused on suicide prevention efforts for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning (LGBTQ) youth, they offer a toll-free telephone number where confidential assistance is provided by trained counselors.

MISSION

The mission of the Trevor Project is to end suicide among LGBTQ youth. They provide crisis intervention and suicide prevention services for youth (defined by the organization as people under 25), as well as to offer guidance and resources to parents and educators in order to foster safe, accepting, and inclusive environments for all youth, at home, schools and colleges.

LGBTQ+ Connection Recovery Support Group

NAMI Iowa LGBTQ+ Connection Recovery Support Group is a free, peer-led support group for any LGBTQ+ adult (18+) who has experienced symptoms of a mental health condition.



Benefit from other's experiences, discover your inner strength and empower yourself by sharing your own experiences in a non-judgmental space.

Groups each Wednesday, 6-7:30pm at
Mickle Center, 1620 Pleasant Street
Des Moines, Iowa 50314
For more information on the next group, visit
<https://namiowa.org/calendar/>.

QUESTIONS? EMAIL PROGRAMS@NAMIOWA.ORG.

LGBTQ WORKPLACE CULTURE SUMMIT



Thursday, November 13

12:00 PM - 1:30 PM - Virtual Event
Trans-Inclusive Workplace



We are witnessing an increase in attacks on transgender folks throughout society and in the workplace. This session, in honor of Transgender Awareness Month, will discuss how to create a welcoming environment for trans folks not only in the workplace but also in our ever-changing society. We will also highlight the significance of Transgender Awareness Month and Transgender Day of Visibility, which falls on November 20th.

New this year: The Summit has evolved into a year-long series of events aligned with key LGBTQ+ anniversaries and celebrations. This approach keeps LGBTQ+ issues at the forefront of workplace conversations.

oneiowa.org/events/

Concert Season
COMING SOON





Eddington

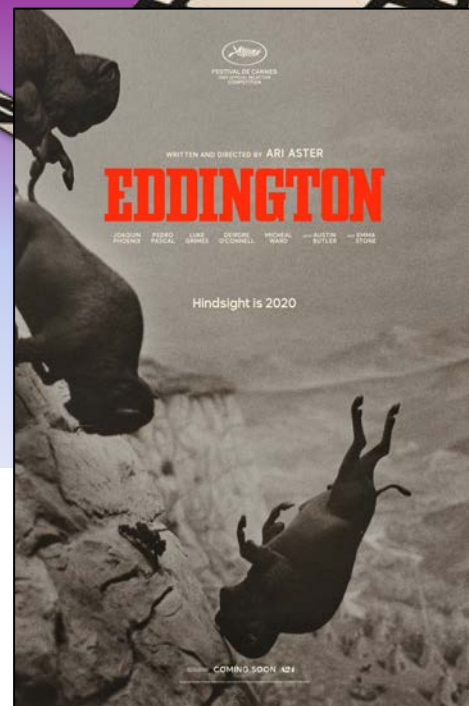
A Movie Review by Mark Turnage

By definition, the Western film is unavoidably a commentary on America and its good, bad, and ugly history. Director Ari Aster's film career has broadened from an intense horror-auteur ("Hereditary," "Midsommar") into more familiar surrealist social horrors like managing both chronic anxiety and a powerful, toxic family member ("Beau Is Afraid"). His latest film, "Eddington," attempts to unpack the Western by placing it into a more modern but equally tense American frontier—the political landscape of May 2020, and how its shadows stretch long into 2025. Its pacing and subject matter might be a slow gallop, but the portrait it paints of the country's impending "manifest destiny" stays with you, like the last few frames of a classic Western.

May 2020, Eddington, New Mexico: Sheriff Joe Cross (a persistently flummoxed Joaquin Phoenix) is struggling to manage his citizens and his family, but publicly puts up a front of bravado. At home, his wife Louise (a mercurial Emma Stone) vacillates between compulsive crafting, a nascent admiration of a viral social media demagogue (Austin Butler) and indulging internet conspiracies parroted

by her rambling live-in mother Dawn (Deirdre O'Connell). Cross tolerates Dawn and cares for Louise deeply; the Sheriff thinks public masking is an overreaction for his town and is vocally protective of his gun rights, breaking up Black Lives Matter protests in the wake of George Floyd "to preserve order." When a social distancing lockdown is enforced by the suave, Democratic, and big-tech data-center funded mayor Ted Garcia (Pedro Pascal), Cross decides to run against Garcia in the upcoming election on an anti-masking, conspiracy-spouting platform. Meanwhile, a good portion of Eddington residents (notably, elderly persons of color) mask up diligently despite Cross refusing to mask himself. Yet privately, Cross is more fearful of COVID infection than his citizens. When Cross's rising fame feeds his longtime desire for community relevance and respect, the lengths he goes to keep it—and the lies he must tell—become as dangerous and deadly to Eddington as the fictional threats he espouses.

Most Westerns are set in an American frontier—a dangerous, desolate, and desperate place populated by gunslingers. Eddington keeps this atmosphere, shifts the time period to the present, modernizes its social anxieties (COVID, cult leaders, conspiracies), and bestows a darkly satirical comedic element to the gunslinger characters that's also social commentary: bravado hiding ineptitude.



It also updates its version of "manifest destiny" / imperialist American expansion into a sublime metaphor about the power of big tech influencing elections for those watching closely. However, "Eddington's" grandiose and compelling themes are somewhat hindered by its slower pace and flat Gen-Z characters.

It might be a tough sell watching a "political" movie about 2020 in 2025—why escape to the familiar, a moviegoer might ask. But Aster's "Eddington" makes a compelling case for not just why America is behaving the way it is, but what led this country to this point like a data center to water. "Eddington" is available for streaming on HBO Max November 14th.



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2025 YEAR IN REVIEW

Top 5 initiatives highlighting this year's successes



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Budget Hub Online

For the first time, all budget agendas, presentations, livestreams, and recordings are available on one webpage to provide more transparency & access to Polk County's budgeting processes.



01

Full Board Agendas Online

02



For the first time, Polk County includes all supporting documents, such as contracts & agreements, in the Board of Supervisors Agenda accessible online.

Medical Examiner Partnership

The Polk County Medical Examiner's Office has partnered with the State Medical Examiner's Office in a service agreement that will save Polk County taxpayers \$1 million annually in personnel-related costs and forgo having to spend \$26-\$47 million to build a new facility and instead work with the state's \$36 million expansion of their facility.



03

CISWRA Report & Water Quality Monitoring

04



On July 1, 2025, the Polk County Board of Supervisors released the Central Iowa Source Water Research Assessment (CISWRA), the most comprehensive, unbiased analysis of water quality in the Des Moines and Raccoon Rivers. In addition, Polk County invested \$200K to assist in keeping 60 water monitoring sensors active & online to ensure no lapse in data collection. This received unanimous board approval on October 21 and hopes Linn & Johnson Counties follow suit to fund the \$600K initiative beyond June 2026 for an additional year.

10¢ Levy Rate Reduction

Property taxpayers will see a 10¢ reduction in their Polk County Property Tax Levy providing relief to burdensome taxes while also balancing the budget.



05



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