

# Fairfield, Iowa

People Working Together for a Better Tomorrow

Today is Thursday, Sept. 13



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## What's Great about Fairfield and Iowa

The lifestyle that America needs and wants — 21st century model of rural living

Fairfield is a city of 9,600 and the county seat of Jefferson County in southeast Iowa. Fairfield offers the lifestyle that everyone needs and wants - no traffic jams; a stable, growing economy; some of the most academically distinguished schools in the state; lots of ethnic restaurants, theater companies and great recreational opportunities including the Jefferson County Trail that circles the city.

Fairfield is known as the "entrepreneurial capital of Iowa" and "Silcorn Valley" because of the number of start up companies that have flourished here over the last twenty years. Fairfield has grown with the Internet and has proved that it is only a few milliseconds away from Silicon Valley, New York, London or New Delhi. Fairfield is home to Hawthorne Direct, one of the pioneers in infomercial production and direct-media marketing. Books are Fun, which employs 225 people, was started in Fairfield was acquired by Reader's Digest - their biggest acquisition in history. Chappell Studios is one of the largest photography companies worldwide specializing in graduation and marathon race photos. Cambridge Investment Research has grown one hundred and forty-fold since moving to Fairfield ten years ago. Over forty software and marketing companies are headquartered in Fairfield including Vision Improvement Technologies, Sky Factory, HR Soft, Creative Edge, Bovard Studios, ArtSelect, Brain Finger Printing and Human Factors. Old line manufacturing companies including Harper Brush, Dexter, Agri-Plastics and a dozen others provide a steady base of jobs and producing everything from washing machines to brooms and from hay-handling equipment to gloves.

In 2003 the National Council of Small Communities named Fairfield the top entrepreneurial small city in America by awarding the inaugural Grass Root Entrepreneurship Award. The Community Vitality Center, based in Ames, Iowa named Fairfield the first recipient of its Entrepreneurial Community of the Year in 2004. The Center for Rural Entrepreneurship recently named Fairfield as one of its Top Ten Entrepreneurial Communities and, in conjunction with the Rural Policy Research Institute (RUPRI), will continue to research and monitor Fairfield for years to come.

Nearly \$250 million has been invested in Fairfield start-up companies in the past fifteen years. The result has been thousands of new jobs, tripling of per-capita income and an average of \$8 million in residential and commercial real estate development per year. The Chronicle of Philanthropy reported in 2003 that Jefferson County ranked in the top five counties in the country in per-capita giving.

Fairfield is sixty miles from the nearest Interstate and 120 miles from a major metro, Des Moines. Fairfield's deep entrepreneurial roots date back to the late 19th Century when William Loudon invented the modern dairy barn, the manure spreader and the single track monorail system used in nearly every factory in the world. Fairfield had the first Carnegie Library and established one of the first municipal utilities in the country. It boasts the oldest golf club, not only in Iowa. but west of the Mississippi River as well.

Fairfield is the home (past and present) of both Parsons College and Maharishi University of Management. (MUM). In 1974, MUM moved from California and took over the old campus of Parsons

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College. The campus covers 262 acres in Fairfield, is accredited at the bachelor's, masters and doctoral levels by the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools, and provides the highest caliber of higher education to its diverse international student body representing over sixty countries. MUM has been an important catalyst in attracting bright, young professionals to the Fairfield community. Fairfield's success can be attributed to a dramatic change in culture in the last twenty years. This has been a shift from stodgy conservative business values to recognizing an entrepreneurial endeavor, whether successful or not, is a stepping-stone to future innovation, growth and prosperity. Social entrepreneurs who are committed to developing a new \$7 million downtown civic and convention center or creating a new foundation, (this town has thirteen), enjoy the same enthusiasm and support the business entrepreneurs do.

The Eastern Iowa Airport in Cedar Rapids is a little over an hour away. There is a choice of three other regional airports less than two hours drive. Amtrak's California Zephyr zips through Fairfield daily.

Lifestyle choices include what live music, theater or athletic event to attend; buy a house in the city or an affordable country estate. Many historic homes date to pre-Civil War era. Mortgage payments are often less than car payments. That equals affordable. There are fifty-five restaurants to choose from. That is more, per-capita, than San Francisco. If you liked the musical Music Man, you'd love Fairfield. There are 130 kids in the High School marching band. Local schools are considered some of the best in the state and have received numerous awards for academic, creative and athletic prowess.

Mid-American small town values are blended with enough big-city sophistication to make it constantly appealing and interesting. Fairfield's 1st Friday's Art Walk draws over two thousand participants every month. Fairfield's Farmer's Market is one of the largest organic markets in the Mid West. Fairfield is home to the Air Fest, Dodge Power Wagon Rally, Jefferson County Fair and Kiwanis Kid's Day. Nearby attractions include the Villages of Van Buren County, Tulip Festival in Pella, Rathbun, the biggest lake in Iowa, Amish Communities in Kalona and Drakesville and Old Thresher's Festival in Mount Pleasant. Just a little farther away are Iowa's most famous treasures: The Field of Dreams, the Bridges of Madison County and Lake Okoboji.

## **SOME IMPORTANT STATISTICS ABOUT IOWA:**

### **Entrepreneurial and Innovation**

- 2nd in business retention (Brandow)
- 5th lowest in business costs(Regional Financial Associates)
- 5th Best State for E-Commerce (Progressive Policy Institute)
- Top 10 in "Technology Sophistication" (Market Data Retrieval)
- Iowa Tax Credits for Startup Company Investment

### **Knowledge Workers**

- 1st in SAT composite scores (Morgan Quitno)
- 2nd in education (Progressive Policy Institute)
- 4th highest high school graduation rate (Morgan Quitno)
- 78% of graduates pursue post-secondary education (Progressive Policy Institute)

### **Lifestyle**

- 4th Safest State in the Nation(Nat'l Criminal Justice Commission)
- 2nd most livable state (Morgan Quitno, 2002)

- 4th in well-being of children (A. E. Casey Fdn.)
- 6th in home ownership
- 1st in golf courses per capita (Golf Digest)

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Fairfield Area Chamber of Commerce

204 West Broadway

Fairfield, IA 52556

Telephone: 641-472-2111

Fax: 641-472-6510

E-mail: [chamber@fairfieldiowa.com](mailto:chamber@fairfieldiowa.com)



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## Entrepreneur Relocation Program Entrepreneurial Capital of Iowa - 2003 Winner: Grassroots Entrepreneurship Award by National Council of Small Cities

Offering:

- Start-up Friendly Environment
- High Quality of Life with Big City Amenities
- Free Rent and Telecommunication Subsidies
- Skilled and Trained Employees
- Low Cost of Doing Business
- Access to Venture Capital
- Support Services from Fairfield Entrepreneurs Association

Access to Venture Capital and Business Climate

- 20% State Tax Credits for Iowa Investments
- \$60 million available locally; \$1.3 billion statewide
- State of Iowa and City of Fairfield - Pro-Economic Development
- Over \$200 Million Invested in Fairfield Companies since 1990
- Headquarters City for 50 Companies

Culture and Amenities

- Lively Music, Dance and Art Scene
- First Friday Art Walk Featuring 16 galleries
- More Restaurants per-capita than San Francisco
- Five Theater Companies
- Recreation on Jefferson County Trail Systems - Recreation, Water, Heritage and Art
- Nationally known Health Center and Spa

Quality of Life

- Fairfield Schools Rank among the Best in Iowa
- Ranked #3 County in the Nation in per-capita Giving
- Traditional Town Square with Specialty Shops
- New Civic Center under Development
- Executive and Continuing Education through Maharishi University of Management
- Airport Expansion in Progress

For more information, call 641-472-2111

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## Fairfield Revitalization Loan Program Expanded

The Fairfield Revitalization Fund for retail businesses has been expanded by the Fairfield Chamber of Commerce and cooperating financial institutions.

Bob Phipps, the Chamber's Executive Vice President, announced that the program has essentially doubled the size of its loans to a maximum amount of \$100,000. The program is worth \$2 million in all.

Phipps says that after meeting with officials at the participating financial institutions, it was agreed that the program would be expanded. Participating in the program are Central Valley Bank, First National Bank, Iowa State Bank & Trust, and Libertyville Savings Bank.

Phipps says retail businesses within three blocks of the Square can first apply for the loans at the Chamber. After initial approval, the business can then go a participating bank to present their plans for the funds.

The loans can be used for major capital purchases such as real estate, remodeling, equipment, and expansions. Businesses interested in the program must meet eligibility requirements set by the Fairfield Revitalization Fund Committee.

Phipps says that several shops have benefited from the revitalization funds. Applications are available at the Chamber offices at 204 West Broadway. 641-472-2111

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## Fairfield Economic Development Association

[View available property brochure](#)

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### Officers

Brent M. Willett - Executive Director - [bwillett@fairfieldiowa.com](mailto:bwillett@fairfieldiowa.com)

Pat Doyle - President, Director

Pat Albregts - Vice President, Director

Craig Foss - Treasurer

John A. Morrissey - Legal Counsel

### Directors

David S. Reiff

Royse J. Huff

Ross G. Walker, Jr.

Dick Smith

### Ex-Officio

John F. Brown - City Administrative

Ed Malloy - Mayor

Chris Kabat- Chamber President-Elect

Since 1977, the Fairfield Economic Development Association (FEDA) has been a cornerstone in our community's building process.

FEDA is governed by a seven-member Board of Directors that works closely with local community development organizations, financial institutions, businesses, industries, as well as agencies and elected officials in local, county, state and federal government.

Here are some of the activities and programs that make FEDA the foundation of development in Fairfield:

- Facilitating financing for business and community projects
- Maintaining an inventory of zoned land for business development
- Securing incentive grants for new housing construction
- Developing business and industry parks
- Bringing unused manufacturing facilities back into productivity

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## Financing Help

In 1992, FEDA set up a tax increment financing (TIF) district and piloted a 63-lot subdivision called Park Place. The lots were designated for single-family dwellings and duplexes; they sold for below-market rates, from just under \$3,000 to just over \$5,000, to individual owners with the provision that construction begin within a year of closing and be completed within two years. The subdivision sold out within a day, and today its \$100,000-\$200,000 homes contribute between \$5 million and \$6 million to the local tax base -- helping the city to finance projects like a new recreation center, a new public library and a new indoor swimming pool.

Park Place subdivision is just one example of how FEDA brings parties together for the good of the community. Three area banks -- First National, Iowa State and Libertyville Savings -- created a \$1.65 million real estate loan pool to offer attractive mortgage rates and terms to Park Place buyers.

FEDA has also spearheaded a second subdivision called Woodside Circle, which is being developed using the same approach. Of its eleven lots, over half are now sold, and several \$60,000-\$150,000 homes have already been built.

## Business Retention & Expansion

FEDA devotes a great deal of time to business retention and expansion. For example, the Association assisted long-time corporate citizen Harper Brush Works in its relocation to the former Granitech Building, located in the 100-acre Fairfield Business and Industrial Park.

Speaking of the Business and Industrial Park, FEDA worked to develop this area, located on Fairfield's West side, as a convenient site for manufacturing and service business facilities. The Park still has a number of developed and undeveloped 1.8- to 17.4-acre sites available.

The Association is currently working on another business park, having acquired a tract of land on the South side of town.

## Bringing Properties Back Online

A high priority for FEDA is to bring back into productivity those properties and facilities that are not in commercial use because of environmental issues. Right now the Association is working to clean up the former Iowa Malleable site, which was vacated when the foundry went bankrupt.

In addition, FEDA has recently taken on another role, to take a more proactive approach to community development: to enhance Jefferson County's solid agricultural base, the Association is working with the Iowa Governor's "Ag Initiative 2000" to explore value-added agricultural development with the State Rural Enterprise Program.

With all the programs and activities of the Fairfield Economic Development Association, its mission is entirely appropriate: Building Fairfield Into the Future.

*For more information on FEDA, contact the Fairfield Area Chamber of Commerce, 204 West Broadway, Fairfield, IA 52556. Phone (641) 472-2111. E-mail Brent M. Willett - Executive Director - [bwillett@fairfieldiowa.com](mailto:bwillett@fairfieldiowa.com)*



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