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*Development Guide*



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# POLK CITY



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MAGAZINES/CUSTOM PUBLISHING Kris Maggard

## Editorial

COPY EDITOR Kurt Helland

## Art & Production

PHOTO DIRECTOR Duane Tinkey

ART DIRECTOR Dug Campbell

GRAPHIC/WEB DESIGNER Shaun Riekens

## Advertising

SENIOR ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE Yolanda Chrystal

SENIOR ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE Rebecca Zoet

ADVERTISING REPRESENTATIVE Jordan Croft

MARKETING COORDINATOR Catherine Skepnek

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OFFICE MANAGER Laura Stegemann

INSIDE SALES SPECIALIST Alison Damon

## Business Office

BUSINESS MANAGER Eileen Jackson

ACCOUNTING SPECIALIST

Becky Hotchkiss

## Administration

CHAIRMAN Connie Wimer

PUBLISHER Janette Larkin

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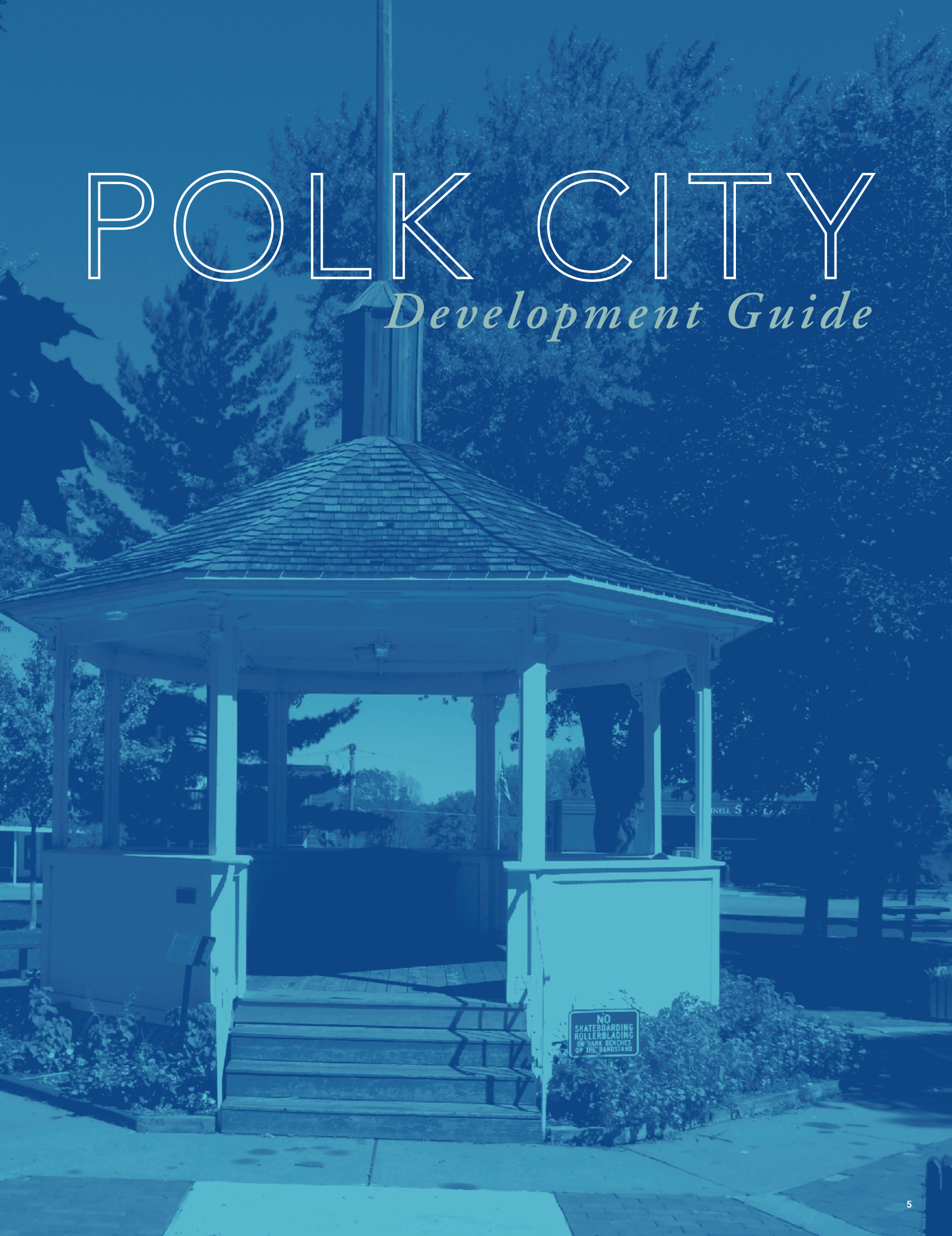
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# POLK CITY

## *Development Guide*



# *The Secret's Out –* Polk City is a Great Place to Live, Play and Work

A MESSAGE FROM POLK CITY MAYOR JASON MORSE

**W**hen I was a kid growing up, I remember my parents saying, “Someday the secret’s going to be out about Polk City.”

We’ve always had our great people, Big Creek and Saylorville lakes right in our backyard, and our historic town square. We’ve always had a small-town feel, but close enough to the metro to have big-town conveniences. And today we still have those same great qualities that have kept me in Polk City and made want me to raise my family here.

But there’s no question the secret is out, and new people and businesses are coming to Polk City. You can’t drive through town the last couple years without seeing construction somewhere. Our little community is growing — from 2,344 people in 2000 to about 5,000 in 2016.

It’s also exciting to see the business growth in Polk City. Businesses are drawn here for the lower commercial real estate costs, easy access to resources from the larger metro area, strong support from the community and compelling success stories from other local businesses.

Polk City offers value to the metro as a whole. We’re not trying to compete, but Polk City fills its own special niche in the Des Moines area. When you want to get away from the hustle and bustle of Des Moines, we invite you to take a drive to our lakes for the afternoon and then stop for a meal or ice cream in Polk City.

Come visit us, and I know you’ll agree — Polk City is a great place to live, play and work.









# *Why Choose Polk City?*

## Six Reasons Why Polk City Offers Distinct Advantages

### *1. Location*

Nestled in the center of Iowa's Lake Country, Polk City combines the best of small-town living, outdoor activities and big-city convenience.

Polk City is just 20 minutes north of Des Moines and 10 minutes from communities like Ankeny, Johnston and Grimes. This convenient location offers easy access to business, cultural, educational, entertainment and transportation centers. Polk City residents easily commute to jobs in

nearby cities, while business owners and employees from around the region also commute daily to a growing number of Polk City businesses.

Universities like Drake and Iowa State, Fortune 500 companies, a major airport, malls and movie theaters are all close enough for Polk City residents and business owners to take advantage of — but far enough away to leave the noise and congestion behind.









## 2. *Rich Quality of Life*

Polk City has always offered the advantages of small-town living with easy access to big-city amenities. In recent years the community has experienced a population boom — increasing from 2,344 people in 2000 to about 5,000 in 2016. Housing, schools and businesses have grown to keep pace with the expanding community. This expansion includes an average of about 70 housing starts per year between 2010 and 2015 to accommodate the town's growing population of young families.

“We’re not trying to be a West Des Moines or Ankeny,” said John Calhoun, director of the Polk City

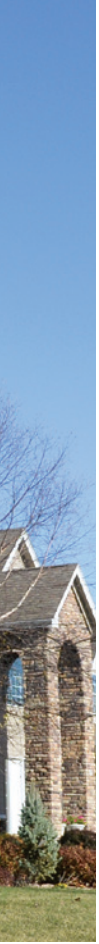
Development Corporation. “We offer our own distinct advantages that make Polk City unique.”

As Polk City encourages growth and change, the community also remains committed to honoring its small-town roots. Nowhere is this more visible than in the town square, where the community’s original bandstand was built in 1883. Today, the refurbished bandstand at the heart of the town square has become the center of the city’s business community and is the focal point for countless community events — festivals, the farmers market, fun runs, outdoor movie nights and a summer concert series.

“I moved to Polk City from West Des Moines with my family eight years ago,” said Jake Lundgren, president of the Polk City Development Corporation. “It’s the kind of community where everyone walks around the neighborhood at night with their strollers and their dogs, where traffic is light enough that you don’t need a stoplight, where the local police will check your house for you when you go on vacation.

“But it’s still an easy drive to my office in West Des Moines and everything else the metro has to offer,” Lundgren said. “It’s really the best of both worlds.”





"It's the kind of community where everyone walks around the neighborhood at night with their strollers and their dogs, where traffic is light enough that you don't need a stoplight, where the local police will check your house for you when you go on vacation."

JAKE LUNDGREN

### *3. The Prime Place to Play in Central Iowa*

Polk City lies in the heart of Central Iowa's outdoor playground including amazing recreational opportunities for families and key advantages for local businesses. In and around Polk City you'll find:

- **Tournament Club of Iowa**, which features a championship signature Arnold Palmer golf course that's open to the public — the only Arnold Palmer course in Iowa — as well as a hotel and restaurant.
- **Saylorville Lake**. With 6,000 acres of water and 20,000 acres of public land, this outdoor adventure destination offers camping, biking, boating, fishing, wildlife viewing and more.
- **Bike trail access** to two exceptional regional trails:
- **The Neal Smith trail** goes right through Polk City connecting riders north to Big Creek State Park or south to catch other trails to Des Moines and surrounding communities.
- **Big Creek State Park**. The focal point of 3,550-acre Big Creek State Park is an 866-acre lake that's perfect for swimming, canoeing and boating. Recreation facilities include a spacious beach, a playground, disc golf, a model airplane control field, picnic areas and a snowmobile trail.
- **The 25-mile High Trestle Trail** is 1.5 miles from town and connects riders to Ankeny and beyond to the High Trestle Trail bridge and its magnificent views.
- **Jester Park**. This county-owned park is just minutes from Polk City and offers a unique setting for hiking, fishing, golfing and horseback riding.











## 4. *Businesses, Services and Prime Real Estate*

City leaders are proud of Polk City's strong infrastructure supporting the business and residential communities. Key amenities include:

- Affordable housing with existing housing stock and land for new development.
- Several affordable locations available for new business development.
- Top-rated school system serving preschool through 12th grade and quality day care options.
- Quality water and sewer services.
- Library with free Wi-Fi and many community activities.
- Police, fire department, rescue personnel and a post office.
- Medical center, chiropractor, physical therapy clinic, dental office, pharmacy.
- Fitness center.
- Low-cost senior housing and nursing home.
- Fareway grocery store.
- A hotel at Tournament Club of Iowa.
- Gas stations.
- Playgrounds.
- Churches.
- Banks, real estate agents, insurance agencies, architectural and design firms, screen printer, dance studios, law firms, photo studios, investment firms, banks, kennel, hair salons.
- Restaurants including Copper Oak Restaurant at Tournament Club of Iowa, Papa's Pizzeria, Reising Sun Cafe, Polk City Pub, and Water's Edge Bar and Grill.





## 5. *Strong Community Support for Businesses*

“Your customers are the people you see (while) walking your dog in the neighborhood and shopping in the aisles at Fareway,” said Shawn Comer, owner of Papa’s Pizzeria in Polk City. “You know many of your customers personally in a town like Polk City, so it encourages you to give them your best service. And they go out of their way to bring you their business.”

Polk City has an active business community with key volunteer organizations like the Polk City Chamber of Commerce and the Polk City Development Corporation.

“Businesses support each other here and want to see each other thrive,” Calhoun said.



“Businesses support each other here and want to see each other thrive.”

JOHN CALHOUN











## 6. *Affordable Living and Business Ownership*

Polk City has a lower cost of living than other communities in the area, according to Calhoun. And Polk City business owners cite the low cost of commercial real estate as a crucial factor in their decision to locate in Polk City.

### As of 2016 Polk City has:

- Low taxes, with the lowest city tax of any community over 2,500 in Iowa and the 18th-lowest consolidated tax in the state.
- Low commercial real estate costs at \$10 to \$18 per square foot, compared with the national average of more than \$23 per square foot.

“With the loyal community, the lakes and easy access to nearby communities, businesses tend to do really well,” Calhoun said. “Polk City just offers a great value for businesses.”



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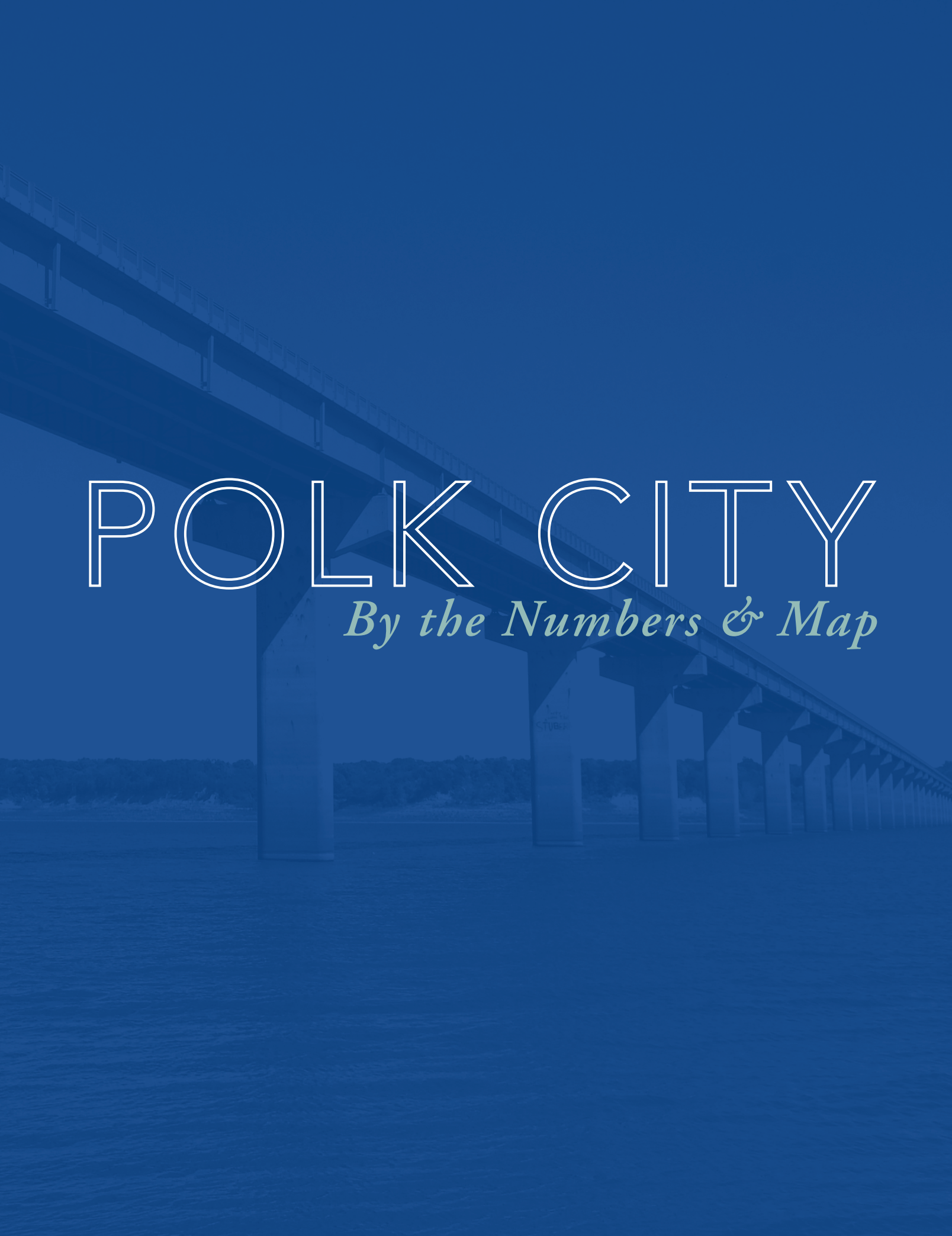
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# POLK CITY

*By the Numbers & Map*

# POLK CITY

*Great place to live, work, and play*



#1

Safest Suburb in the Metro 2016

#2 Best Suburb to Raise a Family 2016

#4 Best Suburb to Buy a House 2016

- Saylorville Lake
- Big Creek State Park/Big Creek Lake
  - Tournament Club of Iowa
- Only Arnold Palmer golf course in Iowa



• Thriving small-business community

#8 of 39 2016 Best Suburbs with the Best Public Schools in Des Moines

#10 of 39 2016 Best Suburbs to Live in Des Moines Metro



## ANKENY

- 10-MINUTE DRIVE —  
MOVIE THEATERS, BIG-BOX STORES

## DES MOINES

- 20-MINUTE DRIVE — ARTS, CULTURE,  
MALLS, FORTUNE 500 EMPLOYERS

## JOHNSTON

- 10-MINUTE DRIVE

## GRIMES

- 10-MINUTE DRIVE
- JESTER PARK
- HIGH TREXLE TRAIL
- NEAL SMITH TRAIL







# *Big Creek Technology Campus*

Polk City is poised to accommodate future business and residential growth:

- **Residential availability includes 500 residential lots platted and/or pending.**

- **Commercial and/or retail availability includes:**

- 32 acre Big Creek Technology Campus
- Beautifully renovated Broken Arrow commercial/retail building
- The new Bridge Pointe Development
- The new Crossroads at the Lakes Development
- Additional pending 14-acre site on 3rd Street

## **Need More Information?**

If you're interested in starting a business in Polk City or just want to learn more, visit the Polk City Development Corporation website at [www.polkcitydevelopment.com](http://www.polkcitydevelopment.com).

"The Polk City Development Corporation acts as a liaison between prospective business owners and the city," said John Calhoun, director of the PCDC. "I recently ran into a couple on the square who told me they were thinking of starting a business in town. Within 10 minutes I was

showing them properties. Later that day I connected them with a Realtor, a city inspector and appropriate city officials. Within days they had signed a lease and are now happy to be living their dream by starting a business of their own.

"We work with businesses like that all the time to connect them with the right people and break down any barriers," Calhoun continued. "If a new business wants to come to town and needs guidance through the process, we can help."





## THE STOP AT BROADWAY

- COMMERCIAL OFFICE SPACE
- GALLERY SHOWROOM
- OUTDOOR LEISURE PLAZA





## *Papa's Pizzeria Thrives in Polk City*

It's a warm Friday night in early August, and Papa's Pizzeria is packed. Several families are picking up to-go orders to take to their campsites or to enjoy on the ride home after a day boating on Big Creek Lake. The booths are filled with locals from Polk City as well as folks from nearby communities like Ankeny, Grimes and Johnston. A steady stream of servers brings out menu favorites like spicy jalapeno cheese bread, chicken ranch and taco pizzas, burgers, tenderloins and craft beers on tap.

Papa's owner Shawn Comer goes from table to table, greeting customers and making sure they're happy. Then he circulates through the restaurant helping his staff as needed — answering phone calls, taking a few orders, even rolling up his sleeves to wash dishes.

After 35 years working at chains like Hardee's, Pizza Hut and Godfather's Pizza, Comer is comfortable in all facets of the restaurant business. He started flipping burgers at Hardee's when he was 14 and was the youngest general manager of a Pizza Hut when he was 16.

Then in 2012, after Comer's three sons were grown, he wanted to go into business for himself. He researched several restaurants for sale in the Des Moines area including Papa's, which had been in business since 1998, and

determined Polk City was the best fit for him.

"I knew that Polk City was growing," Comer said. "I toured the town, met a few people, and got excited about the community. With the lake visitors in summer and the bigger towns nearby, there's a bigger population to draw from than people might think. My wife and I live in Grimes, and it's such an easy drive to Polk City."

The affordable cost of running a business in a small town was also a deciding factor for Comer. "Rent is the No. 1 killer when you're starting a business, so it definitely played a role when I wanted to buy my own place," he said. "When I looked at businesses in Des Moines, the rents were double what I'd be paying in Polk City."

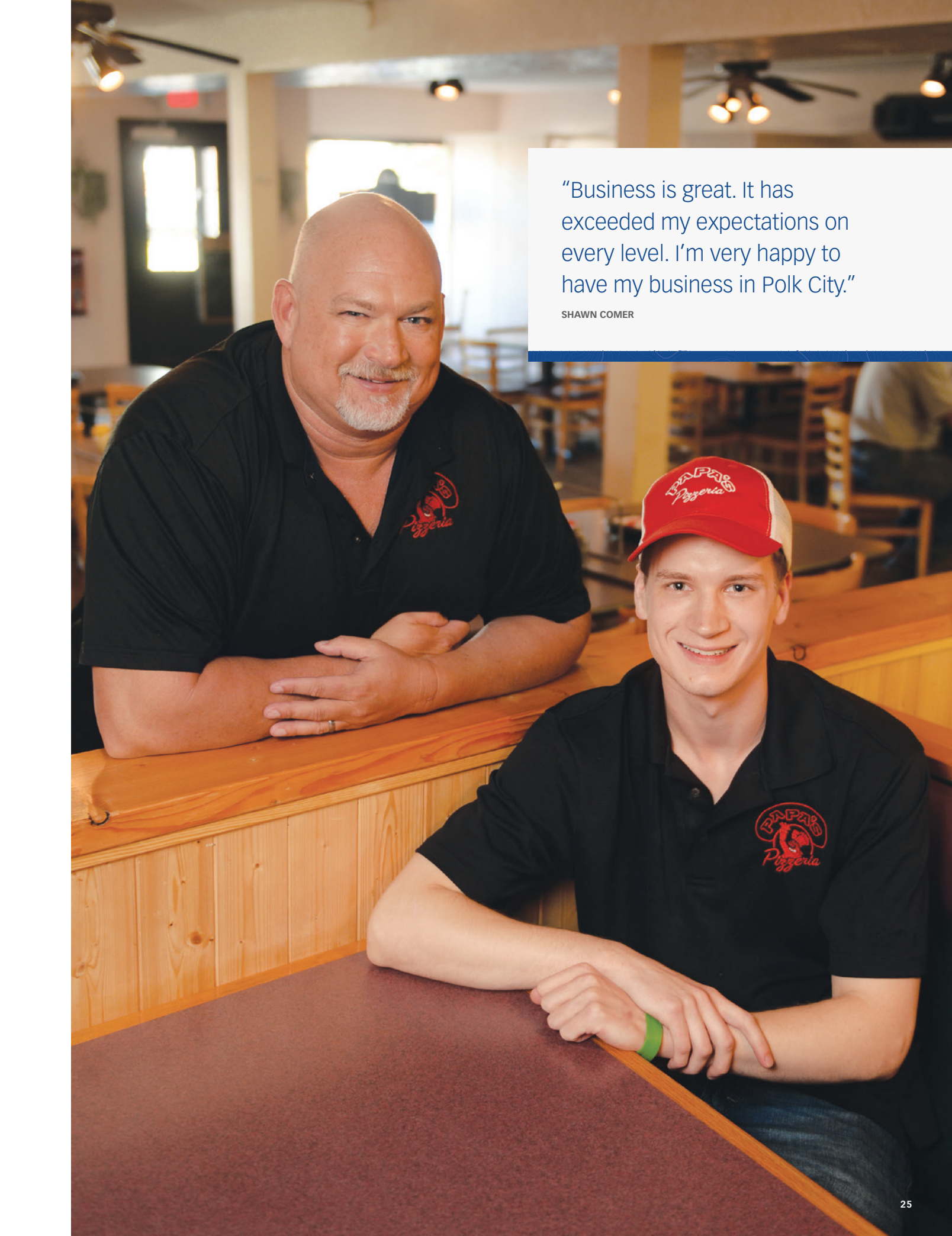
A year into owning Papa's, Comer bought the building the

restaurant shares with half a dozen other businesses. His tenants include an insurance agency, a law firm, a hair salon and the Polk City Chamber of Commerce. As with the restaurant itself, buying a commercial property was more financially feasible in Polk City than in a larger community.

"I'm so glad I made the choice to buy a restaurant in Polk City," Comer said. "The businesses in town support each other. Other businesses use me when they need catering, and I use other businesses when I need something."

"Overall, the support from the community has been amazing," he continued. "Business is great. It has exceeded my expectations on every level. I'm very happy to have my business in Polk City."





"Business is great. It has exceeded my expectations on every level. I'm very happy to have my business in Polk City."

SHAWN COMER







## *P&M Apparel:*

For this Family Business,  
Polk City is a Great Fit

Thirty years ago, Phyllis and Melvin Richardson started P&M Apparel as a custom embroidery shop in their Webster City basement. As the business grew, their daughter Kay Ferin commuted from her Ankeny home to help out. When Ferin started playing a larger role in the business in 1998, she wanted to eliminate her long daily drive to Webster City. So she investigated locations in the Ankeny area.







“Lots of people in town tell us P&M is the first place they go to do their Christmas shopping, and they’ve helped make the boutique a huge success. They know the community will only flourish if you support local business.”

MEGAN GRIFFITH

Ferin’s research led her to Polk City, where she found a business need, a supportive community, affordable real estate, and an easy drive to Ankeny and other towns.

Polk City’s accessibility to Des Moines-area communities is important because six of the business’ seven full-time employees drive in daily from out of town. This count includes Ferin’s daughter Megan Griffith, 32, who lives in Des Moines, and son Ryan Toney, 26, who lives in Ankeny.

“When I was younger I had no intention of being part of the family business,” Griffith said. “I went to Grand View for graphic design and then worked for big organizations in Des Moines like Meredith and Drake. But then my mom’s business was growing and she needed a graphic designer, so four years ago I came to work here. P&M is a

perfect fit for me. Even though my mother is my boss, there’s a lot more freedom to be creative and to know I’m meeting the needs of our customers. It’s been great.”

When Griffith was on maternity leave, Toney came to P&M temporarily to fill in for her. But when she came back to work, she realized they still needed him, and he’s been with them ever since. Ferin officially took over the business from her parents five years ago — although her dad still drives down from Webster City to fix the embroidery machines when they break. The plan is for Griffith and Toney to take P&M over from Ferin someday.

The initial embroidery business has expanded to include graphic design, branding and custom screen printing for customers throughout central Iowa. A few

years ago they opened an adjacent boutique selling North Polk High School apparel.

“If there’s an opportunity to put their dollars into local businesses, people in Polk City will do that,” Griffith said. “Lots of people in town tell us P&M is the first place they go to do their Christmas shopping, and they’ve helped make the boutique a huge success. They know the community will only flourish if you support local business.”

Griffith would encourage other entrepreneurs to build their businesses in Polk City. “It’s a community you can feel safe to raise your kids in,” she said. “Police officers walk around the square every night to make sure the doors are locked and the businesses are safe. You don’t get that everywhere. I think this town is great.”



*Forward Thinking To Enhance  
The Places We Live, Learn and Play*



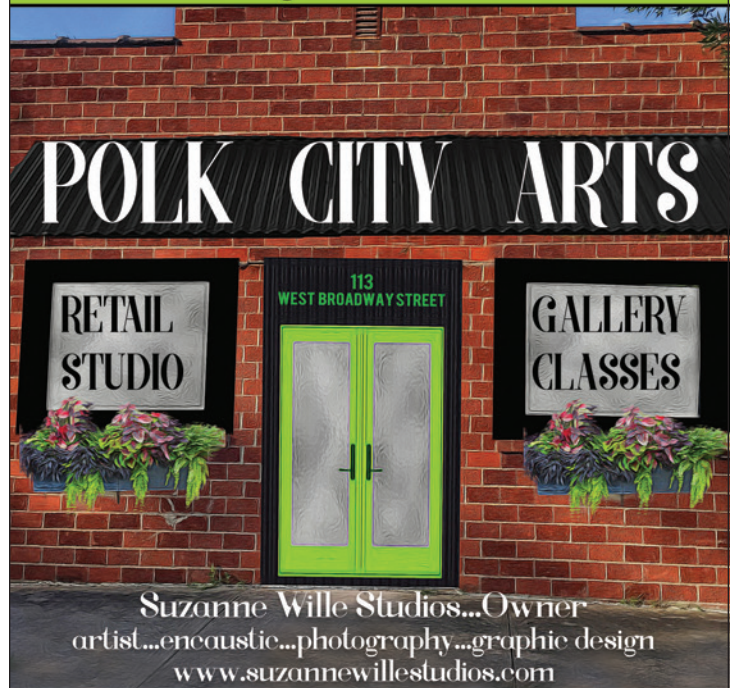
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## *Reising Sun Café Connects the Community*

From scotcheroos to cinnamon rolls, Judy Reising serves up a taste of home cooking daily at the Reising Sun Café in Polk City.

“This is a family-oriented, friendly town, and I want the café to be a place that helps keep the community connected,” said Reising, 46, who opened the café in March 2009.

In addition to the morning coffee crowd that starts arriving by 7 a.m., crowds flock to the Reising Sun for lunch on weekdays and breakfast on Saturday mornings.

Customers can’t get enough of the chicken salad, Reuben sandwiches, patty melts and homemade treats like lemon cookies, which were a favorite of Reising’s grandmother. “I’ve always liked to cook and use a lot of family recipes,” said Reising, who grew up in Humboldt.

Loyal customers help café thrive. Family is important to Reising, who has lived in Polk

City for nearly 22 years. She and her husband were attracted to Polk City by the town’s affordable homes and small school district, where their three children thrived.

“I love the community and the people here,” said Reising, a former preschool teacher who entered the restaurant business at the suggestion of her friend and future business partner, Denise Bradfield. “The community has supported us since we opened the café, and the business has grown a lot bigger than I imagined it would.”

Many regulars and a steady stream of new customers patronize the café, which is open seven days a week in the summer and six days a week in the winter. “If we can get people in the door, they come back,” said Reising, whose team includes 15 part-time employees.

Whether the customers stop by for a full meal or just an ice cream treat, Reising enjoys getting better acquainted with them. “In the 22 years since I moved here, the community has continued to grow,” she said. “People come to Polk City for the small-town atmosphere and the close proximity to the Des Moines area. It’s the best of both worlds.”

Reising is glad that the café offers a comfortable place where people can come together. “This has been a rewarding career choice, and I’m very proud that we’ve been able to grow this business in Polk City,” she said.



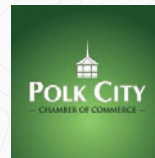
# *Polk City*

is a *truly unique* community  
that offers an  
unparalleled *quality of life.*

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The **POLK CITY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE** is proud to be a partner with Polk City and Polk City Development Corporation in fostering business growth in Polk City and improving the quality of life in northern Polk County. The Polk City Chamber is an affiliate member of the Greater Des Moines Partnership.

Polk City is just minutes from interstate access, downtown Des Moines, and the Ankeny airport. Ames and Iowa State University are only 18 miles North of Polk City.



[www.polkcity.org](http://www.polkcity.org)   [www.polkcitychamber.com](http://www.polkcitychamber.com)

*working together.*



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

**POLK CITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (PCDC)** was created 1995 by the Polk City Council and a group of local business and community leaders. PCDC functions as a separate private corporation but works very closely with the City Council.

PCDC has a mission to promote Polk City, recruit new businesses and help those businesses be successful. It is our job to market our community to potential businesses by exposing them to the many benefits of doing business here. Our goal is to develop Polk City in a responsible manner that provides residents the amenities they need while maintaining the identity of a small town.





**On the Square**

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BE the GOOD.  
BE the CHANGE.**

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