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What to see and do in Davis County

Weaver House

Designated as a National Landmark, this home was built by General James B. Weaver in 1866. General Weaver was twice a presidential candidate. The home's most distinctive feature is the one-over-one, center-pointed sash windows topped by denticulated brick hoodmolds. The home is now operated as The Weaver House Bed and Breakfast, 102 Weaver Road, Bloomfield

Parks

Whether you're a fisherman, hiker, camper, boating enthusiast or if you want to enjoy a ballgame, the many parks here will delight you. You can lie in the shade or get a tan, attend a celebration or relax in quiet solitude. There is also great fishing in our lakes and farm ponds.

Bloomfield City Park is the perfect place to hold a family reunion picnic and let the kids swing and slide. The park has recently seen the addition of two new playground structures. Visitors can splash in the adjacent swimming pool, work out on the basketball courts, or relax and watch squirrels play in the oak trees.

Drakesville Park is the site of several celebrations, including the Old-Fashioned Ice Cream Social, the Davis County Old Soldiers' and Settlers' Reunion and several horse shows.

Floris Park is located on Main Street and is where Floris Flag Day is held.

Lake Fisher Park borders a 100-acre lake west of Bloomfield where fishing is at its best. The state record bass was caught here in 1984. Shelter houses, a newly constructed campground, wildlife and beautiful scenery make this a place for all to enjoy.

McGowen Recreation Area offers hunting,

fishing, picnicking, hiking opportunities, rental cabins and a campground. In the near future a new bath/shower house will be added to the area near the cabins and campground.

Mutchler Community Center: Located in Bloomfield, the center provides numerous recreational and fitness opportunities. There is a modern weight room, racquetball, a gymnasium with two basketball courts, a batting cage, a 1/16th mile walking and jogging track, and large meeting room.

Pulaski Park features the old Pulaski railroad depot, an old freight wagon and vintage telephone switchboard equipment. It is also the site of the annual Pulaski Corn Show.

Troy Park is ideal for a picnic when you're visiting the Troy Academy or the nearby Stringtown House.

West Grove Park offers visitors plenty of shade, outdoor grills, playground and picnicking.

Lake Wapello State Park is located in a picturesque setting with a 287-acre lake and 1,150 acres of land laced with hiking trails, camping sites, cabins and picnic areas. The lake has a swimming beach, boat ramps, docks and boat rentals with up to six h.p. motors allowed. For information, contact the Park Officer at 641-722-3371.

Iowa Welcome Center

The Welcome Center is a 1910 Sears and Roebuck home that was moved to its current location. The center is located on Highway 63, three blocks north of the Bloomfield Square. Volunteers did the majority of the restoration. The center opened on March 28, 1988, as the

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

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Camping at Lake Wapello

first Pilot Project Welcome Center in Iowa. Staffed by volunteers, the center is a source for specific information for tourists. Locally hand-crafted arts and crafts are offered for sale on a consignment basis.

Sightseeing

Davis County is a patchwork of grain fields, wooded streams, rolling hills and lush, green pastures. When driving on curvy, country roads here, you'll probably find yourself on Wheeler's Ridge, where a panoramic view is breathtaking. Northeast Davis County is also a paradise for bird watchers and nature lovers of all ages.

Mormon Trail

Between 1846 and 1860, more than 80,000 Mormons traveled through Davis County on their westward trek to Utah. During those years, 3,000 wagons and 30,000 head of livestock passed through this area. Today the ruts left by their wagons are still visible at certain points along the trail.

At Mormon campsites, some stayed long enough to plant gardens for the next group to harvest. Others dug wells and built log cabins for local farmers.

Mormon records show babies were born and the dead were buried along the trail here. Retrace the Mormons' historic journey through Davis County. The Mormon Trail is marked with placards.

Amish

The Amish people who live in Davis County farm with horses and travel in buggies. Oats and corn shocks are familiar sights in Amish farm fields. A glimpse of their powerful Belgian workhorses is sure to delight visitors. The traditional religious beliefs of the Amish people stress a strong family life. Often they share their skills and organize "frolics" to work together on projects such as barn raisings.

More than 800 Amish live in Davis County in several church districts. There are 11 Amish schools, which students attend through the eighth grade.

The Amish operate many country stores and businesses throughout the county, including a harness shop, sawmills and furniture shops. Home-baked goods, traditional Amish quilts, handmade dolls and wood items are just a few of the treats in store for visitors. A map of the Amish shops is available at the Welcome Center.

The Amish do not believe in being photographed, but most allow pictures of their animals and buggies. Please ask permission.

Davis County Courthouse

This unique courthouse of French Renaissance architecture catches the eye of all

who travel through Bloomfield. Many stop to take pictures of it to remember its distinctive look with mansard roof and graceful cupola. With four-foot thick foundation and 16-inch walls, the 42-room structure cost less than \$50,000 to build in 1877. In the basement, the former jail has been turned into an assessor's office featuring bars. Upstairs, original seats and benches are still being used in the spacious courtroom. Visitors are welcome.

Main Street Community

Bloomfield has been designated a Main Street Community since 1995. The Main Street designation covers 13 square blocks of Bloomfield's business district in an around the Bloomfield square which has the Davis County Courthouse as its centerpiece. Many of the buildings on the square have been renovated in the last two years..

Stringtown Stagecoach House

Stringtown House is an 1832 New England double Salt Box Style building, which was a stagecoach stop in early days. The unique floor plan provided solid-wall separation for lodging men and women passengers. Stringtown was the first town in Davis County.

Mars Hill Church

Built in 1857, Mars Hill was the oldest log church still in use in the nation until arsonists burned it to the ground in recent years. Located northwest of Floris on the Wapello-Davis County line, it was constructed of hand-hewn logs fitted together with wooden pegs. The church was a stop on the underground railroad during the Civil War. The church has been rebuilt to its former state using the same construction techniques used when the church was originally built.

Historical Museum Complex

Built in the 1860s, the Dr. William Findley House is the site of the Davis County Historical Museum and a place where many unusual and interesting items from the past can be viewed by appointment. Also on the grounds is a cabin, which the Mormons built of hand-hewn logs in 1848. Of special interest to children is an old-fashioned, one-room school. It has been restored and equipped with the furnishings, right down to a dunce's stool of the era. A livery barn on the grounds houses many artifacts and sports a huge mural depicting the 1864 guerilla raid on Davis County. A beautiful rural church built in 1902 rests stately among the complex which now completes a representation of the

three institutions which have helped to make Davis County great—the home, the school and church.

The Troy Academy

This "seminary of learning" was the first school of higher learning west of the Mississippi River. Construction of the wood-sided building was completed in 1854. Tuition rates for the first students at the primary level were \$2.50 for the school year. The building has been restored to its original schoolroom style. Tours are given.

Barn Quilts

Barn quilts are beginning to become very popular in Davis County. The Davis County Tourism Corporation's Development and Promotion Committee has overseen the creation and erection of six historical barn quilts in the last year with funding provided by the Davis County Community Foundation.

Numerous individuals are also installing quilts on barns, garages, houses, and other buildings.



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Calendar of Davis County events

Seasonal Attractions

Mid-April through Aug.—Car races, Davis County Fairgrounds, Saturday evenings.
 May 18 through Oct. 19— Farmers' Market, Courthouse lawn, Tuesdays 3-6 pm & Saturdays 8:30 -11:30 a.m.

May 31-Aug. 30—Davis County Historical Museum Complex open Monday through Friday, 9 a.m.-noon; Saturdays, 1-4 p.m. Also open by appointment

September-May—Fri., Sat., Sun. night movies, 7 p.m., Iowa Theatre.

June

June 1—Floris Flag Day

June 7-8—Citywide Garage Sales

June 8— Kids All-American Fishing Derby at McGowen Area (10 am-1 pm)

June 22—Family Rodeo at Davis County Fairgrounds

July

July 4-6—Fort Bloomfield Rodeo*

July 4—Bloomfield Rotary Parade/Pancake Breakfast*

July 10-14—Davis County Fair*

July 20—Family Rodeo at Davis County Fairgrounds

July 25-27—Davis County Old Soldiers & Settlers Reunion (Drakesville)*

August

August 3—Family Rodeo at Davis County Fairgrounds

August 18—Iowa Missouri Ford Powered Car Show at Davis County Fairgrounds*

TBA—Meet the Mustangs

August 24-25—Iowa Donkey & Mule Show at Davis County Fairgrounds

September

September 2—Bass Tournament at Lake

Fisher*

September 19-21—Pulaski Corn Show

September 19-22—Davis County Old Time Music Festival (Fairgrounds)*

September 21-22—T.T.T. Quilt Show

October

October 12—Fall Festival, Courthouse lawn

October 11-12—Civil War Re-enactment*

October 26—Annual Craft Show (Fairgrounds)

TBA—Trick-or-Treat Night

November

November 7-10—"Peter Pan," presented by Davis County Players, Iowa Theatre.

November 11—Veteran's Day Avenue of Flags, Bloomfield IOOF Cemetery*

November 27—Thanksgiving Holiday

November 28—Christmas Lighting Ceremony @ 6:00 PM, Courthouse lawn.

December

Dec. 6 & 7—Taste of Christmas Recipe Walk

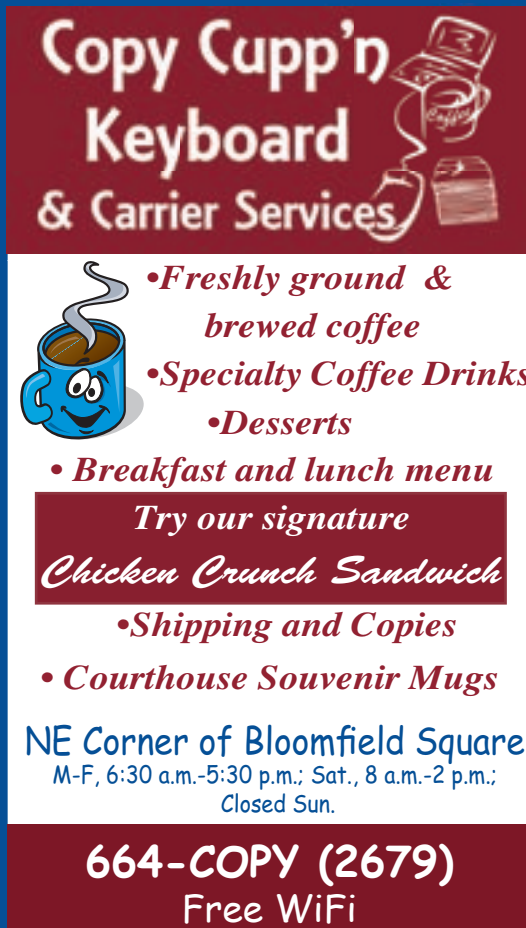
Dec. 7—Holiday Festival



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Ray's Longbranch Bar and Grill in Drakesville provides tourists with great food and cool refreshments on a hot, summer day.

You might expect Triple D crew to burst through the door

By Gary Spurgeon
Publisher

As you try to figure out how to eat the dinner-plate-sized tenderloin placed before you, you look around and wonder if Guy Fieri and his crew from the Food Network's "Diners, Drive-Ins and Dives" will soon burst through the door.

Ray's Longbranch Bar and Grill in Drakesville would fit the theme of the popular TV show. While the food remains on the less complicated side, it is "Triple D" quality and the establishment has become one of Davis County's most popular eating places.

Owned and operated by Ray Cook, with an occasional assist from his wife, Lisa, a Davis County Middle School teacher, Ray's Longbranch attracts diners from a three-county area.

Cook said he gets some tourist business as Drakesville is located in the heart of Davis County's western Amish community, which has a wide variety of businesses—many catering to tourists.



Ray Cook



Easy does it in egg toss game during the Davis County Old Soldiers' and Old Settlers' Reunion in Drakesville, which is held in late July each year.

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Many tourists may drive on by the nondescript building on the northeast corner of the Drakesville oval. Any fears that this might be a rowdy, little town tavern should be put to rest.

Cook said about 75 percent of the establishment's business comes from food sales as changing trends prompted him to move toward selling more food than beer and liquor.

These trends prompted Cook to build an addition to house his dining room with adjoining, modern restrooms. Three years ago, he added a deck with a Tiki bar for outdoor parties and receptions during the summer months. He has also remodeled the kitchen.

When one first enters Ray's, one steps into a typical tavern with a small bar, some high tables and chairs and a coin-operated pool table. The well-lit, clean and inviting dining area is located off the bar area where there are tables for two or four as well as larger groups.

Cook said breaded tenderloins and hamburgers are the most popular items on a sizeable menu that consists of several kinds of sandwiches, sides and varied appetizers including fried green beans.

Every Wednesday night during the winter and every other Wednesday in the summer, Cook serves a special entrée. Most of the time it is a hot roast beef sandwich featuring a more than ample portion of roast beef on bread with mashed potatoes and gravy. Diners rave about it.

He also fixes a variety of special dinners mostly on Friday night, which he said is the business' biggest day of the week.

Cook handles most of the cooking and food preparation. He said he is a self-taught cook.

Open from 11 a.m. to 11:30 p.m. or midnight Monday through Saturday, Cook usually arrives about 10:30 a.m. and is around most nights when the business closes.

"I'm here a minimum of 70 hours per week," he said.

Ray's Longbranch was a popular stop the three times that RAGBRAI, the Des Moines Register's annual bike ride, came through Drakesville. He suspended food sales on that day to sell only beer and liquor. The Davis County Cattlemen's Association served food nearby. He said he's ready for RAGBRAI to make another trip through town.

"It's been a living going on 34 years," Cook said looking back.

He said visiting with people is his favorite thing about operating the business.

Cook is a New Jersey transplant having moved to Davis County in 1975 when he was 17. He had been employed in the marine business in New Jersey, but was laid off when his parents bought a Davis County farm. With nothing else to do, he came with them.

He went back to New Jersey for three years, but eventually returned to Davis County where he found employment at Boone Body Works in Bloomfield. He also took a two-nights-a-week job at the Drakesville bar, owned by Dale Whisler Jr.

It was then mostly a bar that served a few sandwiches.

Whisler decided to sell the business and Cook bought it from him.



During a greenhouse tour, Allan Helmuth discusses his tomatoes. (Photo by Katy Anderson, Pathfinders RC&D)

Davis County hosting bus tours

With two bus tours to provide historical perspective, members of the Davis County Tourism Development and Promotion Committee think the economic impact of six more tours will be significant this summer,

Davis County hosted its second bus tour in two weeks on May 1 and 2.

"Today's travelers are looking for unique experiences and Davis County is ready to offer these," said Judy Combs, a member of the committee and tour leader. She said Davis County may be set to experience substantial economic impact as a total of eight bus tours to Davis County have been scheduled so far for the 2013 summer tourist season.

"I have long believed that Davis County has tremendous potential for tourism development," Combs continued, reflecting on the two tours hosted within a week's time. "For years, marketing and development specialists have told us tourism is a highly underutilized economic development tool in the county. We now have adequate lodging in the community to attract overnight tours and still provide lodging for other business travelers. Certainly the two tours during the past two weeks clearly indicate that we have restaurants that can provide the space, easy access, and high quality meals that tourists enjoy and group tours require."

The Davis County Tourism Development

and Promotion Committee in conjunction with the Davis County Tourism Corporation and Pathfinders Resource Conservation and Development in Fairfield have worked hard for the last two or three years to develop group tours to the area.

Funds from the Davis County Community Foundation and the Bloomfield Hotel-Motel Tax have been used to advertise Davis County's tourism resources and sponsor committee attendance at group tour workshops, meetings, and the Iowa Group Travel Showcase in 2012 as plans have been laid and preparations made to host group tours.

"Clearly, Davis County has what these groups are looking for," said Katy Anderson, byways coordinator of Pathfinders RC&D. "Judy Combs and Beverly Woolard worked very hard to put together some amazing and attractive tours, and I am excited to see their hard work pay off. It's a real pleasure to work with Davis County Tourism and I'm thrilled to help promote Davis County.

"Both groups of tourists (the April 25 tour and the May 1 and 2 tour) received a warm welcome and were toured around the county by Judy Combs. With stops all across the county,

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many businesses are to thank for providing a warm and welcoming stop for the travelers," said Anderson.

Visitors on the May 1 and 2 tour did not know their destination when they embarked on the Mystery Tour arranged by Neihart Tours and Travel of Braddyville. Upon arrival in Bloomfield, the group toured the buildings of the Davis County Historical Complex. As they toured the Center Country School on the site, class was in session as former teacher Isabel Boatman was conducting reading, writing, and arithmetic classes with Jill Nelson's second graders—an annual tradition for Nelson's class.

Guests were then taken to the Iowa Theatre for a short one-act play, "Grand Slam," and a poetry reading by John Pisarik. Cathy Roberts, Davis County Fine Arts Council president, shared the history of the Iowa Theatre.

Supervisor Dale Taylor led a courthouse tour followed by visiting businesses around the square and the Welcome Center.

Thursday morning, the visitors took a short bus tour to several of Bloomfield's historic homes before heading west to the Amish com-

munity. After a stop at Yoder's Kountry Korner, Amos Yoder explained to the visitors how he trains Morgan and Percheron horses at his farm and stables. Arvid Goettsche served as tour leader as the travelers were introduced to many Amish businesses in the Drakesville area. The final stop for the visitors was Dutch Country Market.

Meals were served to the group at the Bloomfield Mennonite Church (which also provided entertainment), Southfork Grill, Rancho Centinela, and Lake Wapello Restaurant.



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Historical Assets

- National register Bloomfield Square and Davis County Courthouse
- Davis County Historical Museum
 - U-Barn
- Amish community with around 90 Amish businesses
 - Bus tours

Outdoor Recreation/Scenery

- Hunting Opportunities
- McGowen Recreation Area
- Lake Wapello State Park
 - Lake Fisher
- Historic Hills Scenic ByWay



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DC is part of Historic Hills byway

By Katy Anderson
Byway Coordinator/ Office Manager
Pathfinders RC&D

The Historic Hills Scenic Byway is one of 11 designated byways in the state of Iowa. This byway rolls through five counties in southeast Iowa and includes 11 byway communities and over 20 corridor communities. Davis County is right in the center of this 105-mile-long route that showcases state parks, farmsteads, and abundant history.

In 2011 and 2012 a statewide initiative took place that resulted in easy- to-see byway signage for 10 of Iowa’s byways. You will have no doubt that you are traveling the Historic Hills Scenic Byway when you see the vibrantly colored signs that feature the bloom of a redbud tree. Along this route you are sure to enjoy beautiful scenery.

On the west end of the Davis County section, you can enjoy a day at Lake Wapello State Park. Fishing, hiking, camping, boating, swimming, hunting and many other outdoor activities await you. Even a serene afternoon of listening to the birds sing and the crickets chirp. As you travel along the Byway towards Bloomfield be sure to drive carefully and share the road

with Amish buggies. While passing through Drakesville be sure to stop at the little central park to take in some history or head out to the city park on the edge of town to see one of the Mormon Trail cabins along the Byway. You can also grab a bite to eat while you are there! Bloomfield offers hours of entertainment and fun. Tour the courthouse, eat at one of many delicious restaurants, take the historic driving tour, stop at the museum or enjoy the peace and quiet at McGowen Recreation Area. Whatever you choose to do while you are in town, you’re sure to be met with a friendly smile and a welcoming hand shake.

Historic Hills Scenic Byway has worked with many organizations over the past years to improve the traveler experience. The Byway has helped gravel trails at Wapello State Park, helped purchase playground equipment as well, and is working closely with Davis County Tourism to develop and market a barn quilt tour. Additionally, the Iowa DOT has worked diligently to provide a travel tool with all the bells and whistles. Visit the new byway website at www.iowabyways.org. While in town, be sure to stop at the Welcome Center to pick up the new Iowa Byways travel guide.

CITY OF DRAKESVILLE

Davis County Old Soldiers and Settlers Reunion



July 25-26-27

(Always last Thursday, Friday and Saturday in July)

- Professional & Local Entertainment
 - Adult & Kids Games
- Motorcycle Fun Run
- Adult Tractor Pull
- Pedal Tractor Pull
- Canoe Carnival
- Baby Contests
- Bingo
- Parade
- Frog Jump
- Mule Show
- Flea Market
- Horse Show
- Tractor Show



John A. Drake House

John Adams Drake, born in 1802, founded the town of Drakeville in 1846. An “s” was later added to make it Drakesville.

John established a general store, milling business and a packing plant.

Mormon Cabin



This cabin was built on land given to George Lester in 1846 by Mormons. Roscoe Goldizen was a third generation descendent born in the cabin and later donated it to the Drakesville Reunion in 1963.



Bluegrass band performs during the Davis County Old Time and Country Music Festival

It's a good time for music

More than 10,000 people pour into Davis County the third Friday of every September to enjoy the Davis County Old Time Music Festival at the Davis County Fairgrounds.

Those people come for the weekend event, bringing with them campers that fill the Davis County Fairgrounds fence to fence. Campers can also be found in other areas of the county during the weekend.

All of these people come for a festival featuring many bands that perform various styles of music from old-time country to bluegrass.

The festival was started in Drakesville 41 years ago and moved to Bloomfield in 1996. It is now under the sponsorship of the Davis County Fair Board. There is no charge at the gate or for camping, but donations are accepted.

Any money collected at the festival goes towards improving the fairgrounds for the next year's festival.

Campers are allowed to come in the Sunday before the event at daylight. There are around 700 electrical hook-ups for campers, which are on a first-come, first-serve basis. There are also spots for camper parking for the handicapped.

Concessions are sold on the grounds, and there are activities during the week before the show.

Activities actually begin on Wednesday night

with the "Stump the Band" fun night. This is an activity that involves both musicians and spectators.

The "Stump the Band" competition allows the spectators to run the show and pick the music. They provide requests of musical selections for the band to play. The band is made up of volunteer musicians who assemble to play the requested songs.

If someone in the band knows the song, the band is in charge of playing it for the crowd. If the band is stumped, the spectator making the song request earned the right to get up on stage. If they have stumped the band, they must perform the lyrics for the rest of the crowd to enjoy.

The "Stump the Band" event has become a favorite of those attending the festival every year.

On Thursday night before the show, there is a band jamble. The stage show starts Friday at 7 p.m. Saturday the show starts at 10 a.m. and continues throughout the day. On Sunday, the show begins at 9:30 a.m.

The event is family oriented and is held in a covered pavilion in case of inclement weather.

The 2013 Davis County Old Time Music Festival will take place September 20-22.

The weekend also features a large number of garage sales across the county.

Courthouse clock removed as restoration continues

The Davis County Courthouse is the focal point of the community and draws the most attention from motorists and tourists who come through Bloomfield. The building has recently undergone some major updates to the bell tower and is currently in the middle of a restoration project to restore the Seth Thomas Clock, which was installed in the building.

The clock faces on the bell tower have been restored. The clock itself was removed in the spring of 2013 in an effort to restore the clock back to its original condition.

Rory DeMesy and two of his employees from Mechanical Watch Supply of Minneapolis, Minnesota were in Bloomfield in late February. They disassembled the clock and took it back to Minnesota to be restored. The clock will be gone approximately six months.

The building itself is the most photographed building in Davis County. Tourists can be seen multiple times a day photographing the 131-year-old building.

Those photographs will now feature a totally renovated bell tower on the courthouse, which was completed in June of 2012. The county spent several hundreds of thousands of dollars on the renovation because the tower itself was in danger of falling in.

A completely new support structure was put in place. Façade work was done on the tower and the statue, the Blind Goddess of Justice, which stands atop the tower. The exterior received a new coat of paint and roofing work was also done to help stop water leakage.

Built of Bedford stone in 1877 for \$45,201, the courthouse is now 131-years-old. The architect, T.J. Tolan, styled it in French Renaissance, sometimes called Second Empire, with a mansard roof from which third-story dormer windows project. The building's foundation is four-feet thick, and its walls are



Courthouse clock is removed from bell tower to be transported to restoration shop.

16 inches thick. It has 42 rooms, counting the vault, and 115 windows. There are stone steps up to the east and west entries, and a few years ago an elevator was added on the southwest side.

Most Davis County offices are located on the first floor of the courthouse. The Davis County Board of Supervisors' office is on the second floor, as well as jury rooms and the 45' x 65' courtroom that can seat 300 people. The courtroom's seats and benches are all walnut originals. The jail was in the basement until the fall of 1973 when a new law-enforcement center was built. Now, the assessor's office is behind bars in the former jail's area.

At one time, the courthouse was surrounded by a wrought iron fence at the edge of the courtyard with a sidewalk outside the fence and hitching posts along the sidewalk. Currently, there are many flowerbeds and memorial trees in the courtyard.

The courthouse was preceded by a log courthouse, built in the summer of 1844. The Iowa Territorial Legislature declared Davis a county on March 1, 1844. In 1846, land was deeded to Davis County by the territorial legislature. Davis County was named for Garrett Davis, a congressman and chairman of the Claims Committee of Congress.

Fairgrounds is location for county's biggest events



The Fort Bloomfield Rodeo is one of Iowa's best and is held around the July 4 holiday each year.

The Davis County Fairgrounds plays host to a number of the biggest events held in Davis County throughout the year.

July marks the busiest month at the fairgrounds with the Ft. Bloomfield Rodeo and the Davis County Fair. The facility gets a short rest in August, then gears up for the Davis County Country and Old Time Music Festival in September.

The Fort Bloomfield Rodeo will hold the rodeo July 4, 5 and 6. The event is held annually around the July 4 holiday and is one of the top rodeos in Iowa and the Midwest. Fort Bloomfield Rodeo has been named Iowa's top rodeo several time.

A Family Rodeo event has become

CONTINUED ON PAGE 20



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Davis County Fair: 50-year pageant set this year

From Page 18

very popular with the young rodeo fans. They now have Family Rodeos throughout the summer months that provide events for children of all ages. The Family Rodeos this year are June 22, July 20, and Aug. 3.

Regular performances of the Ft. Bloomfield Rodeo will be held July 4-6 in the pavilion at the fairgrounds. Performances begin at 7:30 p.m. Along with the normal rodeo events, several contests will be held for kids each night to keep them involved in the fun.

The rodeo will kickoff on July 4 with the Bloomfield Rotary Club Breakfast in the Courtyard from 7 a.m. to 11 a.m.

Slack rodeo performances will be Thursday and Friday after the rodeo. There will also be Mutton Bustin' Finals each night and a dance.

After a short turnaround time, the fairgrounds will transform from the rodeo into fair mode. Fair board members work at a feverish

pace to make final improvements and do a final clean up before the start of the Davis County Fair.

This year's fair will be the 150th annual running of the fair. The event runs from July 10-14.

There will be registrations and the reception of some entries July 10 and 11. The fair begins on July 11 with the judging of the 4-H entries in the 4-H hall, Bingo, the harness races, the carnival, the queen competition along with the antique tractor pull and the Twin States Truck and Tractor Pull.

The Fair Supporter of the Year and the Darrell McClure Tribute will be held Wednesday evening.

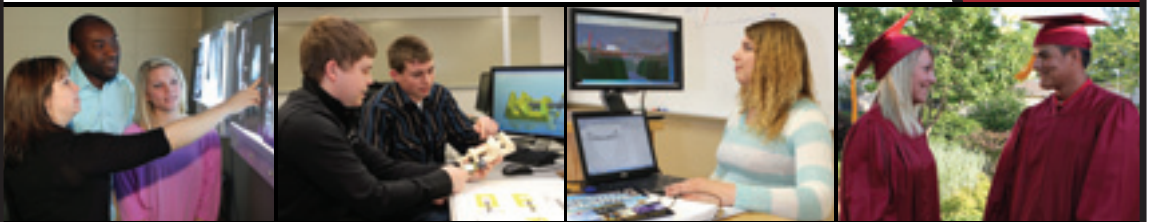
Thursday will feature livestock judging, pie and cake-baking contest, and chicken bingo.

Some of the featured entertainment will be the return of the Joey Chitwood Thrill Show



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Classes also offered at the Davis County Service Center at 501 E. Locust St. in Bloomfield

and a concert by performing country artist Casey James. The Twin States Truck and Tractor Pull and weekly auto races will also be featured.

The demolition derby will be held Sunday evening.

This year's fair will feature all types of activities and performances celebrating the 150th anniversary of the Davis County Fair. Saturday night will feature a special 50-year pageant pre-

sentation by the Davis County Fair and facilitated by the Davis County Fine Arts Council. This 50-year historical pageant will feature performances based on past Davis County Fairs. The pageant will feature musical selections from local entertainers and a theatrical rendition of events. The pageant will be held in the pavilion and will be done free of charge for spectators.

The Davis County Country and Old Time Music Festival provides the fairgrounds and the community with many out-of-town visitors.



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Our educational heritage began with the Troy Academy

You can't talk about tourism in Davis County without mentioning the Troy Academy. The building sits nestled among some beautiful trees in the small town of Troy on the eastern side of Davis County.

The Troy Academy building has been around for more than 150 years and will always be one of Davis County's hidden treasures. The facility stands as a reminder of what educational facilities were like many years ago.

A local group of volunteers continue to maintain the facility and make sure it's preserved for future generations.

The Troy Academy was a school of higher learning for young men and women who wished to be teachers, lawyers or doctors. It was known as a "Normal School." Along with that, it had a commercial department for those wishing to



Troy Academy

CONINUEDF ON PAGE 24

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Davis County Fair

July 10-14
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Iowa Donkey & Mule Society State Show & Futurity

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Troy Academy : 19th century classroom on lower level

From Page 22

learn bookkeeping, commercial law and commercial arithmetic.

The school began in 1853. A group of Troy Citizens met on New Year's Day to begin the process of planning the academy. The idea was to build a facility to provide the school for higher education. They saw the need for teachers to educate the children of the families that had settled in the area.

The facility was built and educated prospective teachers for several years. The academy later closed in 1888 and stood empty for several years. In 1904, the Troy Independent School District purchased the building. It was remodeled into an elementary school consisting of a lower room and an upper room. When the area became the Troy Consolidated School District, the building was used for teaching manual training. It later closed in 1917.

The building sat empty until the 1970s when a group of local Troy Alumni purchased the building. The building was moved a short distance to the east and south of its original location. The process of restoring the building also commenced. The idea was to restore the facility

back to its original structure back in 1853.

The purpose of the Troy Academy and the Troy Academy Historical Society is to restore and maintain the building for the pleasure and the education of the present generation. The idea is also to educate future generations as to what life and education were like in 1853.

The lower level of the building is set up like a 19th century classroom. The blackboards and desks are of the era, and there's even an old pot-bellied stove in the building.

The original gas-powered lights have been converted to electric lights. Also featured on the main level are pictures of alumni of the Academy and a library. The upstairs of the Academy is a museum with many artifacts. The facility has also been made handicapped accessible so that all can enjoy it's storied history.

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Davis County Welcome Center in Bloomfield

Welcome Center helps guide you

When finding your way around Davis County and the rest of Iowa, your first stop needs to be the Davis County Welcome Center. The center is located on Highway 63 just three blocks north of the Bloomfield Square.

The facility is Iowa's first official welcome center and has been located in Bloomfield for the past 24 years. In the center, you will find information and brochures about various attractions around Iowa and especially all of the fun things to see and do in Davis County.

The center is staffed entirely by volunteer labor. The staff is eager to help you find the information you are looking for and is very

willing to answer any questions you might have about Davis County attractions or activities.

The center first opened in 1988 and has directed thousands of visitors to points of interest, lodging locations, restaurants and other attractions.

The center is staffed seven days a week and is open April through October from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday and from 1-5 p.m. Sunday. You can call the center at 664-1104.

The center is a 1910 Sears & Roebuck mail

CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE



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CONTINUED FROM THE PREVIOUS PAGE

order house that was moved to its present site. Most of the visitors stopping at the center are headed for Iowa or Missouri destinations. Interests of those visitors include historic landmarks, sightseeing, visiting friends and family, traveling scenic by-ways, visiting museums and camping.

The facility is used as a restroom stop, a place to gain information, or a place to simply

take a break from traveling.

One room of the center is completely devoted to travel information. Racks and racks of brochures list state and local attractions, lodging destinations, medical services, food services vehicle services and other general information. Restroom facilities are handicapped accessible.

Three rooms of the center display homemade arts and crafts by local residents. The arts and crafts are offered for sale on a consignment basis and help fund the center's expenses. Crafts include items such as souvenirs, cook-books, books by local authors, quilted items, crocheted items, birdhouses, woodwork, and jams and jellies from the Amish

If you enjoy the Christmas season, you can enjoy the season year round in the center's Christmas crafts room. New crafts come in almost weekly. The crafts are sold with the crafters earning a share and the center getting a commission to help defray operating expenses.

A picnic area is available and a pet walking area is also part of the center's attraction for travelers. The center also boasts some of the best-looking flowerbeds in town each year.

The volunteer staff is responsible for cleaning, serving as hosts when travelers arrive, and keeping up the lawn and flowerbed maintenance.

Membership dues, commissions on crafts, and donations fund the center's operating expenses, including maintenance of the building and grounds.

The Davis County Tourism Corporation Board manages the center with oversight from the Davis County Board of Supervisors.

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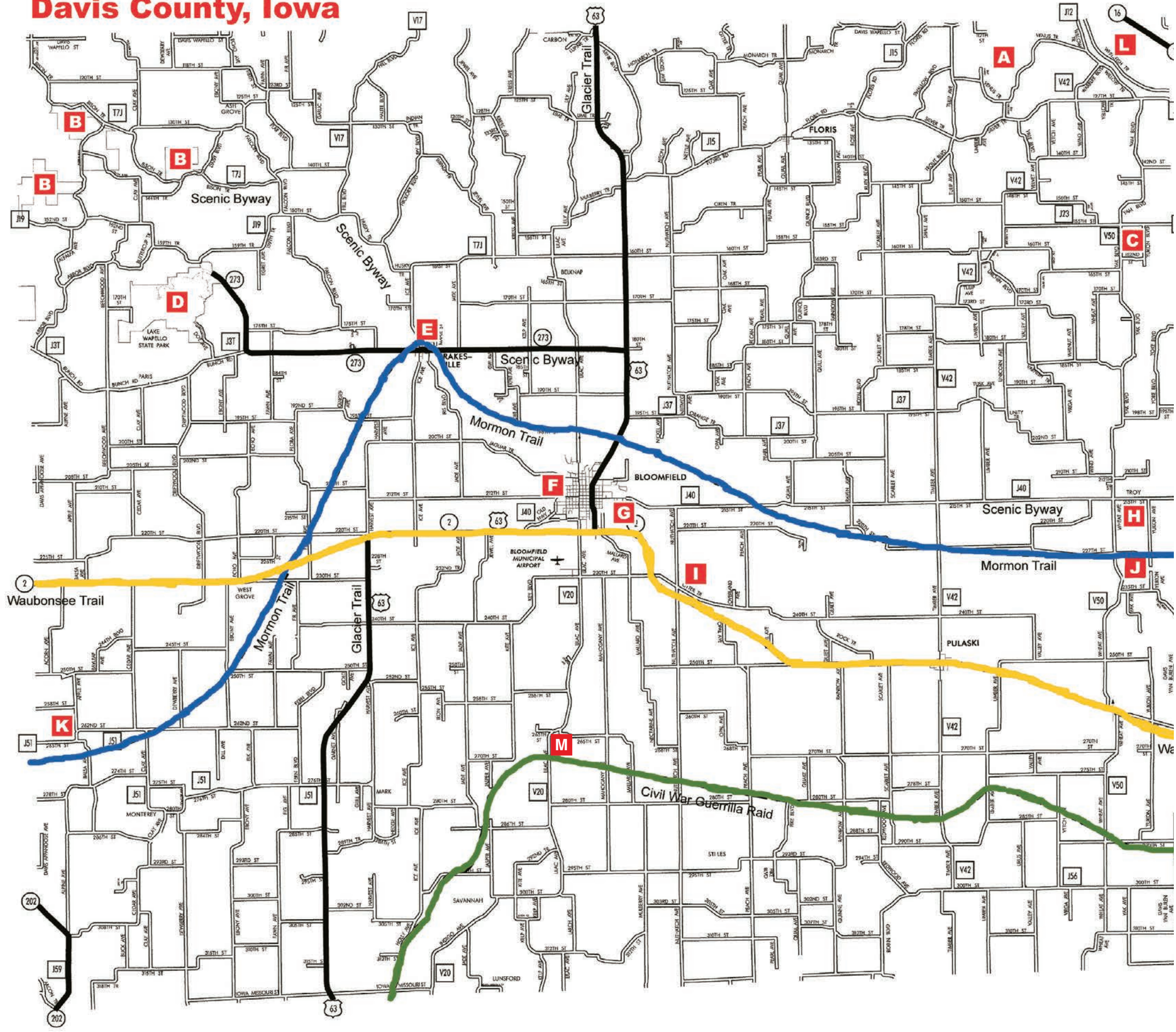


Contact Jason Skaggs
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Davis County, Iowa

Map Key



- A. Eldon Game Area – public hunting
- B. Stephens State Forest / Soap Creek Public Hunting Area— Hiking, hunting,
- C. Carroll Rock – historic marker commemorating first native Iowa governor
- D. Lake Wapello State Park – camping, fishing, swimming, hiking, cabins
- E. Mormon Log Cabin / Drakesville City Park – historic site, original Mormon log cabin
- F. Lake Fisher – areas for picnicking & fishing (state record largemouth bass)
- G. McGowen Recreation Area – outdoor recreation, fishing & hunting
- H. Troy Academy – historic site, first institute of higher learning west of Mississippi
- I. Trimble / Parker Historic District – historic site, heritage barn
- J. Stringtown Stagecoach Inn – historic site, original stagecoach stop
- K. Stober Springs – Natural landmark
- L. Site of original burial of Chief Black Hawk
- M. Marker designating north-ern-most advance by Confederates during the Civil War.

Barn quilt tour brochure available soon

A Barn Quilt Tour Brochure will soon be available courtesy of the Davis County Tourism Development and Promotion Committee. The brochures will be available at the Davis County Welcome Center and other local businesses frequented by tourists. Many of the quilts listed in the brochure were created through the efforts of the committee with financial support from the Davis County Community Foundation and hotel/motel tax money from the City of Bloomfield.

Following are the quilts featured on the tour:

On Highway 2:

“Log Cabin,” Dutch Country General Store, Jct. Hwy 2 and 63, 17192 Hwy. 2 (west end)

In 1903 when she was just 17, Leffie Clark, who lived on a farm south of Bloomfield, meticulously pieced 4,116 tiny strips together to create “Log Cabin” blocks. She then set

CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE



Quilt pattern adorns Livery Barn at the Davis County Historical Museum complex

HISTORICAL MUSEUM COMPLEX



Built in the mid-1800's, the Dr. William Findley House is the site of the Davis County Historical Museum and a place where many unusual and interesting items from the past can be viewed. Also on the grounds is a cabin which the Mormons built of hand-hewn logs in 1848. Of special interest to children is an old-fashioned, one-room school. It has been restored and equipped with the furnishings, right down to a dunce's stool of the era. A beautiful rural church built in 1902 rests stately among the complex, which now completes a representation of the three institutions which have helped to make Davis County great...the home, the school and the church.

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Ray Fort, 641-459-3330

Sammy Ford, 641-664-2279

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

the blocks together to form a quilt known as “Barnraising”.

“Friendship,” Baughman Barn, Hwy 2; two miles east of Bloomfield (south side)

The blocks for a “Friendship Quilt” were made by friends of Gladys Meredith when she married Harold Baughman in 1929. Harold and Gladys farmed and raised their children on this farmstead that is now on the National Register of Historic Places. Although Gladys quilted at the Pulaski Mennonite Church for decades, these blocks were not set together and quilted until 2007 when daughter-in-law, Ann Marie, enlisted the assistance of a quilting friend.

“Carolina Lily,” 29970 Hwy 2, about two miles east of Pulaski (north side)

A “Carolina Lily” quilt was a prized possession brought to Davis County from Indiana in 1898 by the wife of the Rev. W.W. Miller when he was called to the ministry at the Pulaski Mennonite Church. The quilt has passed through five or six generations of the family. The barn is owned by the Millers’ great grandson, Byron Augspurger.

In Bloomfield

“Rose Wreath and Lone Star,” 601 N. West Street/402 Goode Street

“Lone Star” and “Rose Wreath” (c. 1930s) are two of the many quilts Rosy Goode stitched during her long life. Rosy and L.E.Goode, a prominent businessman, built the house beside this barn in 1910. It was home to their many children, all of whose names began with “D”.

“Rose of Sharon,” 205 South Dodge, D.C. Historical Society Livery Barn

“Rose of Sharon” was created by Martha Ann Church Harbour who lived in the Mormon-built log cabin in northwest Davis County long

before it was moved to this location. Martha married Joel Harbour in 1840. She died in 1864 so the quilt was stitched, most likely in the log cabin, between those years when appliqué quilts in red and green were very popular.

On J-40; Historic Hills Scenic Byway

“Cactus Flower,” 24271 215th Street, 1-½ miles east of Bloomfield (south side of road)

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CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

Appliqué quilts in many patterns such as this "Cactus Flower" in red and green with touches of mustard yellow were popular during the 1840s-1860s when the nimble fingers of Nancy Dilliner Brewster created a quilt in her sod home about ¾ miles northeast of this barn (as the crow flies). The quilt, created in 1852-53, has been handed down through five generations to Charles Scott of Bloomfield.

"Double Nine Patch," 27696 215th, Between Scarlett and Timber, about four miles east of Bloomfield (south side)

When Zella Cossell was 16, she befriended her aunt, America Glasglow, who lived in rural Pulaski. America, with Zella's assistance, made a "Double Nine Patch" quilt for Zella's hope chest circa 1895. The quilt now graces the home of descendent Sue Huggins in rural Davis County.

"Four Patch on Point," continue on about ¾ mile on 215th, barn stands alone (south side)

"Four Patch on Point" was created by Hazel Proctor Piper in the 1940s. Charles and Hazel Piper built Piper's Conoco Station on Highway 63 at the north edge of Bloomfield in 1950

and operated it until 1978. The barn is owned by their grandson, Chris Piper and wife Marla. Marla raises and shows wether-type Dorset sheep on their farm nearby.

White/Thomas Family Crests, 28947 215th Street (south side); then turn south to Pulaski for barn quilts on Hwy. 2

Sharon White Thomas commissioned a local artist to create the White family crest in the form of a barn quilt. The White family immigrated to America from Ireland. This farm, purchased in 1892 by James White, is currently owned by the fifth and sixth generations of the White family. The crossroads corner is known locally as "White's Corner".

"White Cross" 27152 220th; gravel road, not on Byway

"White Cross" was the winning quilt pattern submitted by Mary Belle Davis to be rendered in tile on the new Richard O. Jacobson Exhibition Center on the Iowa State Fair grounds. A quilt pattern from each county was selected to incorporate Iowa's heritage of quilting. As a Christmas gift in 2010, Mary Belle's daughter-in-law, Jessica Davis, utilized the pattern to create a barn quilt.




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Bloomfied driving tour brings history of city to your car radio

The Davis County Tourism Development and Promotion Committee has developed a "Self-guided Driving Tour of Historic Buildings in Bloomfield." The tour allows participants to follow the map in a published brochure, which guides visitors to seven historic Bloomfield buildings.

The public can view and print the guide from the Davis County Tourism website, visitdavis-county.com, or pick up a copy of the brochure and map at the Davis County Welcome Center at 301 N. Washington Street. Once visitors reach each building on the route, they can listen to a two- to five-minute narration about each site by tuning to the designated frequency on their car radios. Radio transmissions operate continuously.

Glenn Baughman, chairman of the committee, noted that the tour would be very informative for current residents of Davis County as well as visitors.

Buildings on the tour include the Weaver House at 102 Weaver Road, a National Historic Landmark; Greenleaf Place, 425 N. Madison Street, now a local bed and breakfast; the Steckel House, 415 N. Madison Street, now the residence of John and Susan Martin; the Goode House, 402 Goode Street, currently owned by Justin and Diana Hill; the Wishard House, 408 W. Jefferson Street, the residence of Rich

and Nancy Squire; the Findley House, 201 S. Dodge Street, now a part of the Davis County Historical Museum Complex; and the Davis County Courthouse.

The Tourism Development and Promotion Committee applied for a Central Iowa Tourism Region (CITR) grant to purchase the technology required for the radio transmissions. While Doug Dixon and Gary Mishler installed the technological equipment, Judy Combs, Glenn Baughman, and other committee members were instrumental in compiling and writing the information for the narrations, brochure and map.

The brochure was made possible by a second grant from CITR as well as a grant from the Davis County Community Foundation and is available at various Iowa Welcome Centers and tourism attractions around the state in addition to the Davis County Welcome Center.

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Fishing is great, too, with Lake Fisher and Lake Wapello. In addition, the county has thousands of farm ponds stocked with the most popular fish.

Here is a rundown of local hunting and fishing opportunities as seen through the eyes of some of Davis County's most avid sportsmen.

Hunting

The main attraction is probably the white-tailed deer, but there is also good pheasant, quail, turkey, rabbit and squirrel hunting in the county. There are even those who hunt for

coyote.

Davis County has good hunting ground with its many crop fields and timber areas. The county's many CRP acres also provide good hunting opportunity with tall grass, which makes for excellent cover.

The different seasons for deer hunting usually open in late September and go until early January. For turkey, the season starts in mid-October and goes until early January. Turkey hunting is restricted to residents only in the fall but open to all during the spring. Pheasant and quail seasons start in late October and end in January. Rabbit season runs from the first of September through February. Squirrel season is from early September through late January. Coyote can be hunted any time.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 38

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HUNTING FISHING

From Page 36

Bow hunting

For people who like to bow hunt, just about any part of Davis County is a good place to hunt.

The main draw for bow hunters is white-tailed deer. Bow hunters also enjoy hunting turkey and small game like rabbits and squirrels.

Turkey hunting

Turkeys tend to stay in wooded areas and open fields. They roost in trees at night, so the best hunting time tends to be early morning.

The turkey-hunting season starts in mid-April and goes up through May. There are four seasons that vary in the number of days you can hunt. It varies from year-to-year, which season is the best. Most of Davis County is ground for turkey hunting.

Davis County has great habitat areas for turkey, making it a good place to hunt.

Fishing

Davis County can provide fishing for just about any species of fish and angler is looking to harvest.

Farm ponds and lakes offer largemouth bass, channel catfish, bullheads, bluegill, red ear sunfish and crappie. In addition to species already listed, carp can also be found in rivers and creeks in Davis County. Anglers may also find white perch, buffalo, bowfin and the occasional sturgeon.

Local anglers favor fishing in any farm pond as well as Lake Wapello and Lake Fisher. Soap Creek and Fox River on the eastern side of Davis County may also supply carp for anglers looking to haul those in.

The only two lakes in Davis County are Lake Wapello and Lake Fisher. Both lakes contain populations of largemouth bass, crappies, bluegill, channel catfish and bullheads.

River fishing in Davis County is restricted to the Des Moines River and the lower end of Soap Creek in the northeast part of the county. A wide variety of fish can be caught in these waterways. Some anglers like to pursue Iowa's giants, huge flathead catfish or yellow catfish.

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City offers recreational opportunities

The City of Bloomfield offers many recreational opportunities for all ages. At the heart of the recreational opportunities in Bloomfield are the municipal swimming pool and the Lake Fisher reservoir.

The pool features a sloped walk-in entrance on the east end, which facilitates use by younger children as well as others who just wish

to sit along the water's edge. The pool slopes down to a lap swimming area and then features a deep end with two diving boards.

One of the most popular attractions at the pool is the slide. It was added to the facility in 1991.

The bathhouse features shower facilities for men and women, a concession area, and also features restroom facilities for those outside the premises.

The pool is open Monday-Saturday, noon-6 p.m., and Sunday, 1-6 p.m., between Memorial Day weekend and Labor Day each year. The pool is available for rent for special occasions. Designated times to rent the pool are from 6-8 p.m.

The fee to rent the pool is \$200 for a two-hour party and five guards. The pool's slide will be open and swimming toys such as basketball hoops will be made available for use. Pool staff will sponsor some nighttime fundraisers

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Davis County Conservation Board

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

during. Swim to slim classes are also offered for adults looking to stay fit

The city owns and maintains several parks and ball diamonds for recreational opportunities. The Bloomfield City Park features all types of playground equipment. The park includes a sand volleyball court and three covered shelter houses that can be reserved for use.

Other parks include Weaver Park, located across from the Weaver House, and Southfork Park, which consists of a small shelter.

The city also owns and maintains Lake Fisher, which serves many purposes for the City of Bloomfield. The lake provides Bloomfield with its water supply and is used for fishing. The area around the lake features two shelter houses. A campground and a ball diamond are on the west side.

The campground was opened in 2007 on the west side of Lake Fisher. The campground features pads for six RVs with full electric and water hook-ups. Anyone wishing to camp needs to contact Bloomfield City Hall at 641-664-2260 prior to doing so.

Lake Fisher is known statewide for producing the state record bass. The fish weighed in at 10 pounds, 11 ounces and was caught by a woman.

Those fishing for bass must toss them back unless they are 15 inches in length. Anyone wishing to do any walleye fishing in the lake must just catch and release those fish. Catfish should also be abundant in the lake. The Iowa DNR stocks it yearly. The lake plays host to Memorial Day and Labor Day bass fishing tournaments each year.

The Lake Fisher area also features a disc golf course on the west side of the lake. The course originally featured nine holes but more have been added since 2012

The city maintains six different ball diamonds used for summer recreation. They include two near the city park for the Davis County Little League, two south of town for the Davis County Girls' Little League, one at Lake Fisher, and one located on the Davis County Fairgrounds for the Davis County Babe Ruth. The high school also plays on this field during its summer season.

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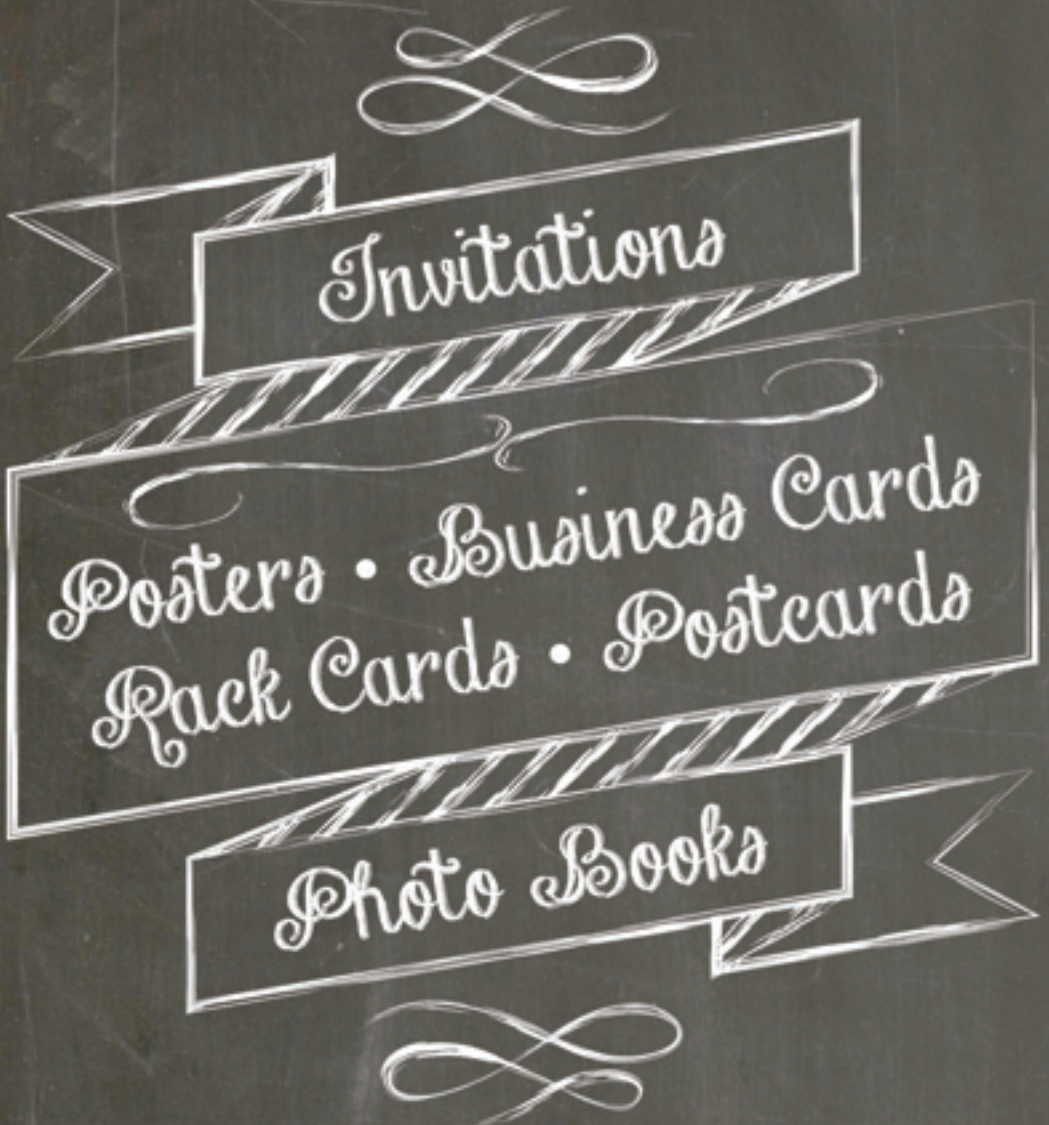
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Historical Museum complex one of county's top tourist attractions

The Davis County Historical Complex is one of Davis County's oldest tourist attractions. Located in the heart of Bloomfield just a block off the east side of the square, the facility is full of Davis County history and can take anyone back to a time when things were much simpler.

The facility is a place where local volunteers work to preserve Davis County's past for future generations to come.

The Davis County Historical Society was first incorporated in 1962. Staffed fully by volunteer labor, the local entity has thrived on that labor and

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



Davis County Historical Society Museum

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the generous donations of those who want to see the history preserved. Donations don't just come in the form of money, although monetary donations are always appreciated and needed to help the facility survive. Most every item within the five buildings on the grounds has been donated. That includes everything from doctor's equipment, farming tools, machinery, clothing, furniture, military uniforms and


much, much more.

There is a representation of the main institutions that have made the county a special place in regards to the Dr. William Findley home, the Center No. 5 School, and the former Savannah Christian Church, which was moved to the complex in 1998.

The centerpiece of the complex is the

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two-story brick Findley home built in 1844. The first building acquired by the Society, it has undergone extensive renovation, both inside and out including recent brick work on the chimney and foundation repairs. One of the museum's highlights—a handmade piano built around 1849 that's been completely restored and donated by Howard and Daisy Selix—can be found in the music room. A piano of the same vintage given by the McGowen family is also on display. This was the first piano in the county, traveling up the Mississippi River to Keokuk, the Des Moines River to Keosauqua, and finally by mule team to Davis County.

Also on the main floor are the parlor, a “doctor's room” featuring medical equipment, and a kitchen.

Three bedrooms are located at the top of the extensively restored staircase. One room contains military memorabilia, including a World War I blanket made by Martha Garrett, a nurse stationed in France who acquired insignias from all allied branches of service. Another bedroom showcases ladies' dress goods, sewing equipment and other local artifacts. The house features 12-foot ceilings and period wallpaper in all the rooms.

The second addition to the complex was the Mormon log cabin donated by Mr. and Mrs. Tom Harbour and moved to the grounds in 1971. The Mormons hand-hewed walnut logs for this one-room cabin built around 1848. A



Mormon log cabin at the Davis County Historical Society Museum Complex



Center School on the grounds of the Davis County Historical Society Museum.

new asphalt shingle roof was installed in 1998.

The next addition came in 1972 when the Livery Barn, built in 1920, was purchased and remodeled to house the growing array of historical gifts. Notable items include a “horse machine” used to power a mill, the original Courthouse clock hands, and a mural depicting the 1864 guerrilla raid in Davis County, which was the northernmost point in the States reached by Confederate raiders. The mural, painted by local artist Debbie Baughman, took 900 hours to complete.

In 1974, Center No. 5 schoolhouse from Wheeler Ridge in northwest Davis County was moved on site. The one-room school is filled with tools of the trade, including a schoolmaster's desk.

The most recent—and perhaps most ambitious—addition is the former Savannah Christian Church, built in 1902 and used until a few years ago. After extensive cooperation by various agencies and volunteers, the building was moved 10 miles onto its new foundation at the corner of Dodge and Walnut. It's in excellent shape and required only minor repairs plus rebuilding of the steeple, which had to be cut down to make the move.

The church is often used for meetings and special events including weddings.

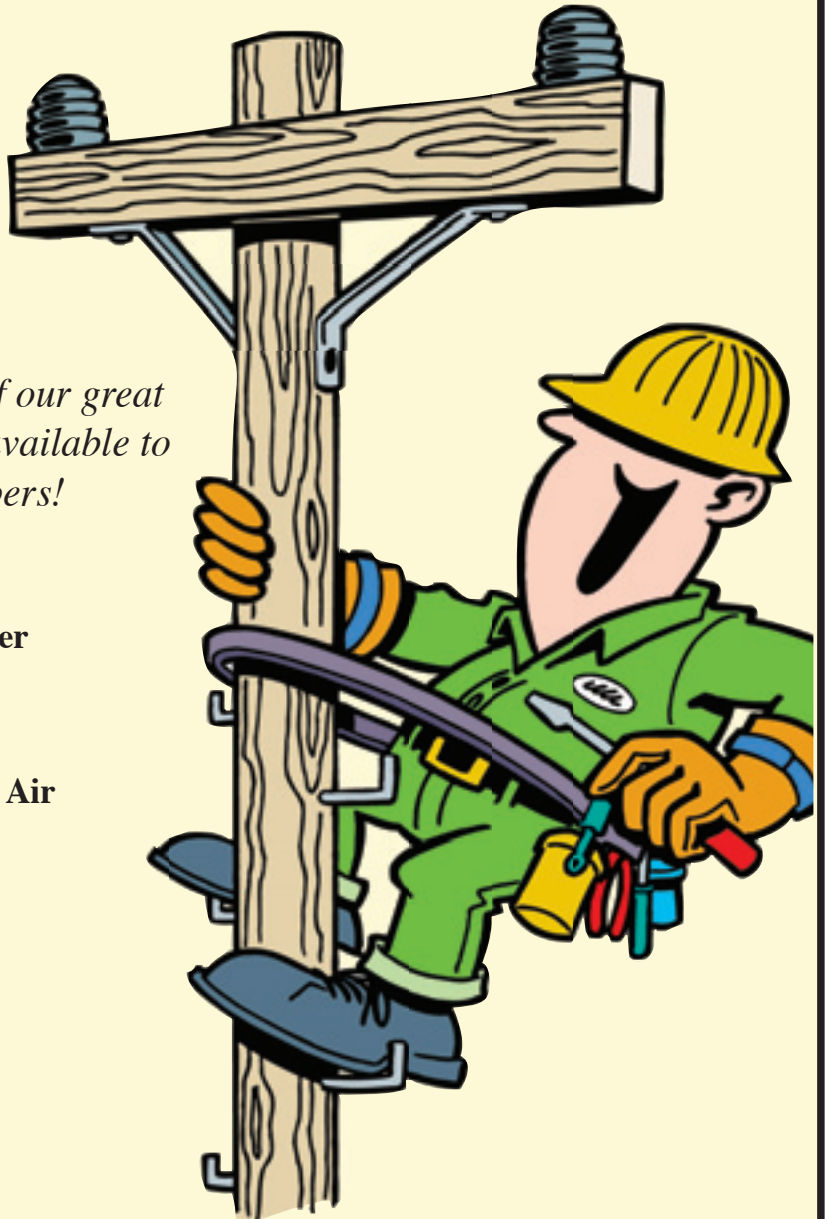
The facility is open from Memorial Day through the first Saturday in September. They are open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. until noon and on Saturday afternoons from 1-4 p.m..

Anyone wanting more information about the complex is asked to contact Leon Wilkinson at 664-3565, Ray Fort at 459-3330, or Sammy Ford at 664-2279.

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Mutchler Community Center is place for recreation, events

The Mutchler Community Center has grown into one of the community's finest assets in the short time that it has been in existence. The facility plays host to countless events and meetings and the staff works hard to promote health and wellness in Davis County.

Included in the building's features are a double gymnasium, walking track, weight room, racquetball court, kitchen, large meeting room, small meeting room and locker rooms with shower facilities.

The Mutchler Center also converted a large storage area into a second weight room facility. Several additional treadmills were added, along with various types of weight training machines to add to the free weights that the facility already had.

Along with the daily use of the facility, MCC

also rents out various parts of the facility. The gym area has been rented out for very large meetings or other gatherings. The large meeting room has housed numerous receptions and meetings.

The Mutchler Community Center provides many programs for youth soccer, flag football, basketball, and the T-ball program for the younger kids. Adult programs include workout classes, softball, volleyball and basketball leagues, fitness classes and many other activities.

The facility is open seven days a week, except being closed on Sundays through the summer months. Memberships range from a \$5 daily pass up to a 12-month \$174.00 membership

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There is plenty of beauty in Davis County during the fall

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for a single adult. Family memberships are also available and run around \$409.00 for a family of four for a 12-month period. Memberships are sold by the month, three months, six months or by the year. A punch card mem-

bership system is also available for a price of \$35.00.

Room rentals range from \$50 per hour for the large meeting room for the first three hours to \$20 per hour for the small meeting room. You can also rent half the gym, the whole gymnasium for \$80 per hour or the entire facility.

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McGowen area provides outdoor recreation

Enjoying the outdoors is easy and just a short drive outside of Bloomfield. About a mile east of town is the McGowen Recreation and Wildlife Area. It's a place where you can find everything you are looking for in outdoor recreation.

The McGowen Recreation and Wildlife Area is located on 215th Street just east of Bloomfield. The area provides camping facilities, a shower house and cabins for those who are looking for

a place to stay. If you enjoy fishing, watching wildlife, hunting, trail walking and just being outdoors, the McGowen Recreation and Wildlife area is the place to be.

The area used to be a privately owned farm of the McGowen family, which is the park's namesake. The 323-acre farm was purchased

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by Davis County in 1995 and developed into its present day outdoor recreation facility. Today the facility provides camping, fishing, hunting, and recreational opportunities for almost everyone.

The area features nine fully stocked fishing ponds. All are fully stocked and ready for anglers to find that big catch. If catching bluegill, crappie, bass, catfish or red-eared sunfish are what you are looking for, this is definitely the place for you to dip your lures into the water.

A good share of the farm remains in crop ground and is rented out to local farmers every year. This is a good source of income for the facility to help make improvements.

Once the crops are out, the facility is open to hunting with the exception of the main park



The McGowen Recreation and Wildlife Area has become a popular spot for family and large group outings at this shelter house.

areas, including the park headquarters, gazebo area and the camping areas.

The park features a walking trail system for nature lovers wanting to walk among nature's beauty and to exercise at the same time. Trails

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are located on both the north and south sides of the park, which is split by 215th Street.

“We are continuing to improve our trail system,” said Josh Batterson who is the Davis County Conservationist. “Someday we hope to build a trail system that will connect to the City of Bloomfield’s recreational facilities.”

The gazebo is a huge shelter house built right outside the barn, which is the only building remaining from the original McGowen Farm. The shelter house is built in a circular shape and was fabricated to be built on the circular foundation where the McGowen family previously had a grain bin. The shelter house features several picnic tables and can be reserved for family gatherings or parties.

Near that shelter house is one of the nine fishing ponds, playground equipment for the children and a newly constructed public restroom facility. The restroom facility is one of the newest improvements in the park.

As you go south past the main barn (office) of the park, you will travel south toward some of the finest fishing ponds in the county. You can drive directly to some. Others are accessible, but not by vehicle, so get out your hiking

boots and have a little fun!

The camping facilities and the cabins are located on the north side of the facility, which is located north of 215th Street across the road from the main entrance to the park. There are 12 camping spots for campers. Water and electric hook-ups are available at all 12 camping spots.

Eleven of the 12 spots feature drive-through capabilities, which makes parking that camper and setting it up very easy.

If you enjoy roughing it away from the comforts of a camper, the McGowen Recreation Area can accommodate that as well. An area near the campsite is also set up for primitive camping where tents can be set up. A picnic table and fire ring are located nearby for use for those that wish to sleep in the outdoors.

A fully functional shower house is available just east of the campgrounds. The facility features restroom facilities and several showers for use by those in the campground.

Two cabins are available for rent. The cabins feature kitchen appliances, a television with a built in DVD player, fire rings, a screened in front porch and more. Two fishing ponds are

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also within walking distance of the cabins and campgrounds and can be accessed easily.

The cabins are available for rent and are a popular attraction. New playground equipment was added near the camping area. A wildlife viewing blind was also built. The structure was placed near the ponds on the north side of the park and provides opportunities for park users to get inside and out of sight of wildlife while providing a safe covered place for the wildlife to be viewed. The park acquired an additional 23 acres of timber ground in 2013. The additional acres adjoin the park on the north side and will help enhance the wildlife habitat for hunters and wildlife enthusiasts. Batterson said trails are being added to the new land purchase. Primitive camping spots are also planned with the addition of fire rings.

Other park improvements for 2013 include a community garden, which will also be available as a learning center for school children

Hunters can use most of the park for hunting during regular hunting seasons. Hunting on the north side of the park is available north of the ponds and cabins. On the south side, hunting is prohibited near the park office and facilities

in the main park area. Check with Batterson at 664-2572 for more information about hunting availability at the park.

Several activities are held in the park each year. A spring fishing derby is held in early June and is a favorite for the youth. Youth are encouraged to come and spend time fishing in a pond. Adult assistance is available to help the kids with their fishing needs.

The facility also plays host to an annual ice fishing clinic, which is held in late January or early February, depending on the condition of the ice on the ponds. Kids and adults are encouraged to come and learn about ice fishing and give the wintertime activity a try.

Batterson also announced that a fun run is being developed and will probably be organized and ready for runners sometime in September. The run will utilize the park and its trail system. To learn more about the fun run, runners are encouraged to contact Batterson at 664-2572 or by logging onto www.daviscounty-conservation.org for more information.

“One thing we continue to do annually is plant trees. Hikers can also enjoy a variety of colorful native wildflowers found out here, which bloom throughout the summer.”

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A wagon load of flowers is delivered to the Southern Iowa Produce auction west of Bloomfield. Many Amish grow flowers and vegetables in greenhouses scattered around the county to be auctioned for distribution across

Iowa and Missouri. Southern Iowa Produce holds weekly auctions providing Amish growers and others an outlet for produce grown on their farms.

Amish businesses welcome tourists

Among Davis County's tourist attractions is a large community of Amish, mainly west and northwest of Bloomfield, particularly concentrated in the Drakesville area.

This community interests tourists because of a large number and a wide variety of businesses selling items to those outside the community.

Tourists often call those in the Amish community quaint, but the Amish are not actors on a stage wearing costumes from Grandma's closet. Their homes are not museums into which you can intrude. Their schools are to educate their children, not a demonstration of how things once were. Their farms and business work areas are private property and you need an invitation. Their children may be cute, like all other children, but their purpose is not to entertain the tourists. Most Amish would prefer not to have their pictures taken.

Amish is a religion just like Baptist, Methodist, Lutheran, etc. Members of the community belong to and attend Amish religious services in one of nine church districts in western Davis County.

Ervin Gingerich, a woodworker and craftsman who lives northeast of Drakesville, put it in focus during an interview.

Gingerich said it's not that the Amish consider electricity, telephones or cars sinful, they don't use these modern conveniences because they would adversely affect, the Amish believe,

their way of life.

The move from mostly a farming community to one with many businesses, catering to those outside the Amish community, has pressured the Amish into having to use and rely upon the telephone. Nearly all of the businesses have voice mail and some have used cell phones.

"We all wear the same clothes because it eliminates the need to continually buy clothes to impress others," Gingerich said.

While the Amish value their personal privacy, they welcome people from anywhere to shop and buy in their businesses. Obviously, those in the Amish community shop in these businesses as do many others from the immediate area.



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Laek Wapello Lodge includes a restaurant, concessions and rentals.

Relax with stop at scenic Lake Wapello

Nestled in one of the most scenic areas of Davis County is Lake Wapello State Park. The 271-acre man-made lake is one of Davis County's long-standing tourist hot spots northwest of Drakesville.

Some might say it's a bit secluded, but it's worth the time to check out the beautiful scenery and wildlife that can be viewed in the park daily.

The Iowa DNR has dubbed the park "The Country Club of Iowa's State Parks." It features beautiful wooded hillsides; many shaded picnic areas, a large beach and boat dock area, cabins

and a large campground area.

Deer run aplenty throughout the park and can be seen individually or even in herds during certain times of the day.

The lodge area has been leased to Sue Zook and Rick Hopkins again in 2013. They also operate the concessions and bait shop. Live bait is for sale and boat rentals are also available for anyone who doesn't have their own boat.

"We are extremely happy to have someone back in the restaurant this year. It is a great service to patrons of the lake to have the concessions and bait shop open. Having the restaurant open is just an added bonus and should help bring people out here," said DNR official Ron Moore.

The beach is open for swimming and boat docks are available for boating needs. Moore says a new playground should be completed in June 2013 and will be located near the restaurant.

All 14 cabins are available for rent and include new heating and air conditioning units allowing for year-round rental and usage. Cabins can be rented by going to www.iowadnr.gov. The cabins are one-bedroom and two-bedroom models, which sleep from four to eight people comfortably.

The campground features a newer shower house facility. DNR improvements have provided electrical hookups and other amenities for campers to use. The campground also features a handicapped fishing pier.

Parking is available for people who would like to utilize the lakeshore trail. A group campsite is available for use as well.

Lake officials recently completed a two-year renovation project. As part of that renova-



Fishing is great at Lake Wapello State Park



Monument marks the northern-most advance of Confederate soldiers during the Civil War

When the Civil War came to Davis County

Davis County's history was changed forever on Oct. 12, 1864.

It was toward the end of the Civil War. Despite being on the Iowa-Missouri Border, Davis County had pretty much escaped being a part of the Civil War battles, but on that fateful day, several ruthless riders crossed the Missouri border into Davis County to terrorize, plunder and kill as they searched for money, horses, and vengeance in the name of the Confederacy.

The one-day raid by those men changed the course of history in Davis County forever. That one-day raid now has given Davis County a famous place in Civil War history. That raid marks Davis County as the northern most point of the Civil War.

The memory of the one-day raid is being kept alive by the Davis County Civil War Guerilla Raid Society.

As part of that effort, a historical marker has been placed near the northern most point of the raid. Along with that monument, the entire trail of the raid through Davis County has now been marked for the benefit of Civil War history buffs.

In all, there are 34 points where the raiders stopped during their daylong raid in Davis County. Each point marks a different event that took place in the raid. Confederate raiders took money, horses, killed some men, and took others as hostages during the escapade.

The Davis County Civil War Guerilla Raid Society was formed in 2004. Their mission was to promote knowledge of the raid and Davis County's involvement in the Civil War.

In 2005, the monument now located at the intersection of Lilac Avenue and 265th St. in southern Davis County, was erected. The trail markers were added in 2009 and 2010.

Every October, the group hosts a reenactment on the second weekend in October to commemorate that Oct. 12, 1864 date in Davis County History.

The event, Davis County Civil War Days, is held at a location called Shooter's Roost, which is about one mile east of the Marker on 265th Street and five miles south of Bloomfield. The location is also on the route taken by the Raiders as they traveled through Davis County.

The event features Civil War reenactment battles, shooting competitions with Civil War era weaponry, and many other activities. The 2013 reenactment will also include a true to life reenactment of the Guerilla raid, which actually came through Davis County on Oct. 12, 1864.

Civil War era campsites, shops and Civil War era musical entertainment is included. A special part of the event is the addition of President Abraham Lincoln, portrayed by an individual, who is invited to come and be a part of the weekend event.



A pair of Confederate soldiers try to escape Union soldiers during a Civil War re-enactment during Davis County Civil War Days.

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

Other activities, which take place during the event, include spinning and quilting, soldiers' drill practice and a Lincoln speech. A ladies' social event with the women dressed in period costumes, a dress competition, a campsite question and answer period, period dance, and

much more is held during the October event.

The Davis County Civil War Guerilla Raid Society is gearing up for the 150th anniversary of the Civil War Guerilla Raid, which took place on Oct. 12, 1864. Special activities are already being planned for the 2014 Davis County Civil War Days.

LAKE WAPELLO

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tion, shoreline deepening and riprapping was installed. Spawning beds were built in many areas, including near fishing docks, and newly built fishing jetties are strategically located around the lake.

Fishing is good and anglers will find the lake is returning to its former glory as a hot spot for fishing in Davis County and southeast Iowa. The lake is stocked with large-mouthed bass, bluegill, channel catfish, and crappie and bullheads. Anglers can harvest what they catch except for the large-mouthed bass. The bass are restricted to catch-and-release only.

The trail system was also upgraded. With the help of the Friends of Lake Wapello Group, work is being done to put gravel and rock down on those trails to enhance their accessibility

and use. The 1,100 acres surrounding the lake received a facelift in terms of watershed protection structures. Ponds and sediment control basins were added to the lake to help reduce sedimentation and clean up the water.

New restroom facilities have been added in various areas of the park. One is located in the picnic area, east of the lake's spillway. A second is located near the boat-docks and a third is in the campground area.

Improvements to the park for the 2013 season include newly resurfaced roads throughout the park to enhance park access to all areas.

Friends of Lake Wapello group secured grant funds to update and improve lighting around the front entrance, restaurant, boat ramp, and shoreline areas of the campground and provided added security and safety for park patrons.

The Friends of Lake Wapello also host the Shore-to-Shore 5K and 10K run/walk each June, which helps raise funds for park improvements.

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