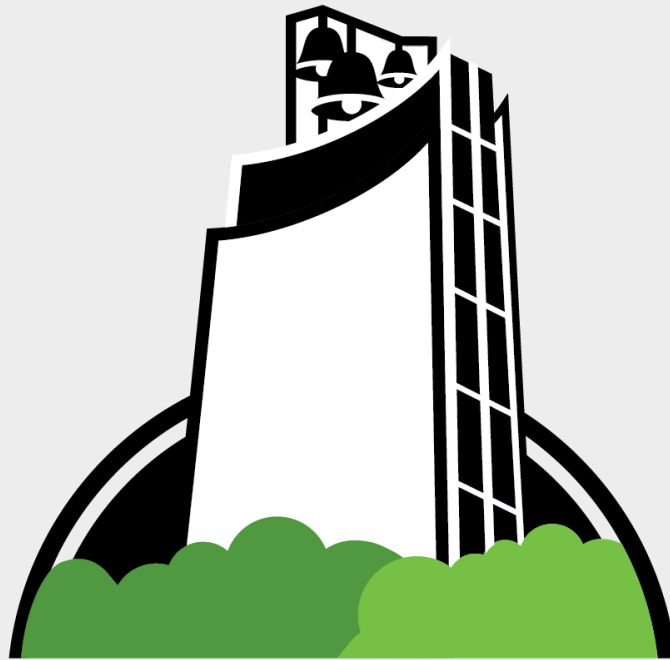


# RURAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

JEFFERSON, IOWA



*experience*  
**JEFFERSON**

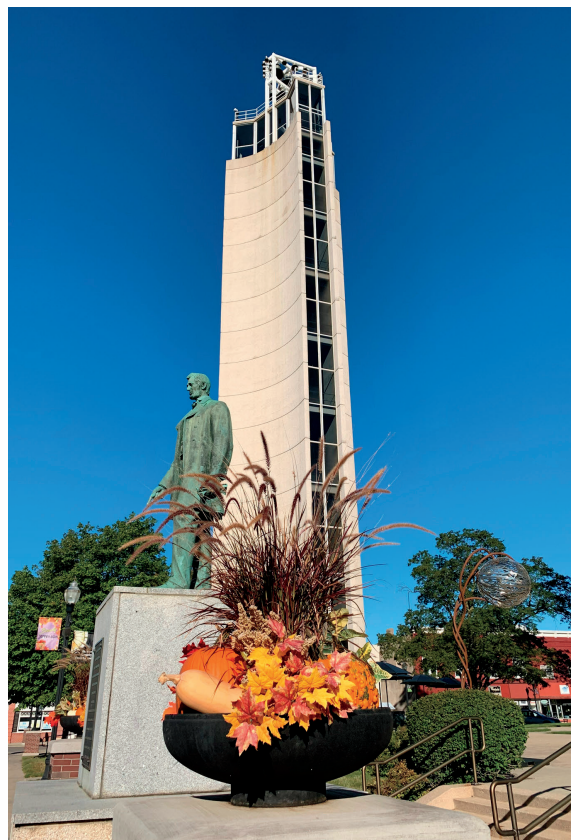


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# WELCOME

Jefferson, Iowa has become a hub in the "silicone prairie", planting itself firmly on the landscape for both technology lovers and entrepreneurial dreamers. A Gig-capable Smart Rural Community, Jefferson is primed for both telecommuters, entrepreneurs, and families to take root.

*Jefferson, Iowa*



WHERE RURAL LIVING IS

# REDISCOVERED



In recent years, the proof has been in the entrepreneurial pudding: Fourteen new businesses opened in Jefferson in 2022, and eight have opened or are soon to open so far in 2023. A few examples of the wide variety of these entrepreneurial endeavors include an art gallery and recording studio, a family-owned meat locker, an event planning and rental business, a DJ service, a radio control hobby retailer, a drive-thru coffee shop, and a new restaurant (with two more hoping to open in 2023). Many business owners cite Jefferson's supportive energy and track record of getting things done as their reason for starting anew here. From the city's and Jefferson Matters's funding incentives to the collaborative spirit of the community, prospective business owners continue to show up in Jefferson, hungry to be a part of the exciting momentum that continues to grow. Local businesses have come together to form a supportive mindset to promote one another and compete with internet sales and out-of-town businesses, rather than against themselves. Whether it's businesses, tourism entities, or non-profits, everyone has come to realize that when everyone supports each other, everyone does better.

"It fills us with pride to own a business in Jefferson. We believe it's all about the people. From our CHiRP Team members to our wonderful community who have supported us on this journey, we are thrilled to be here!!" Rona Challen, Shannon Hansen, Terri Renwanz, Carrie Peters – CHiRP Owners, a local drive-thru coffee shop that opened in May 2023!

## LOCAL ENTREPRENEURIAL EXAMPLE

# THE CENTENNIAL

"When you make your skill set known to others and create a great network base, opportunities present themselves in ways you could never imagine!" states Sara Ostrander, Chef, and Owner of The Centennial in Jefferson, IA.

Sara was contacted by a local group of community leaders, called Why Not Us who joined together to make a huge impact in the community. This diverse group of women with Jefferson ties, 72 of whom contributed \$5,000, funded the renovation of the Centennial Block building with the plan to replace an existing restaurant that was closed due to building decay. Knowing Sara's background and passion for culinary arts they reached out to her, a local person in the community who grew up in Jefferson, and asked if she would be interested in opening The Centennial and being the Chef. Sara was excited about bringing her passion to life and being able to fully dive into her community. This opportunity allowed her to leave her commuting job.

### THE CENTENNIAL BEFORE



### THE CENTENNIAL AFTER



## STRENGTH IN UNIQUE BUSINESS IDEAS

The Centennial makes a unique presence in Jefferson because they change their menu every week! As a small community that has limited restaurant options, Sara found a solution to provide locals with a variety of different dishes all in one place. Giving a new menu each week allows the ability to attract new customers as well.

Elegant desserts like the "Better Than Bell Tower Cake" pay tribute to Jefferson's iconic Mahanay Bell Tower, a local attraction to many.

The strength of woman entrepreneurship is strong through and through in this business! From the group who made it possible to the owner and chef running the show, they are a true statement that a group of people can make a difference in any community.

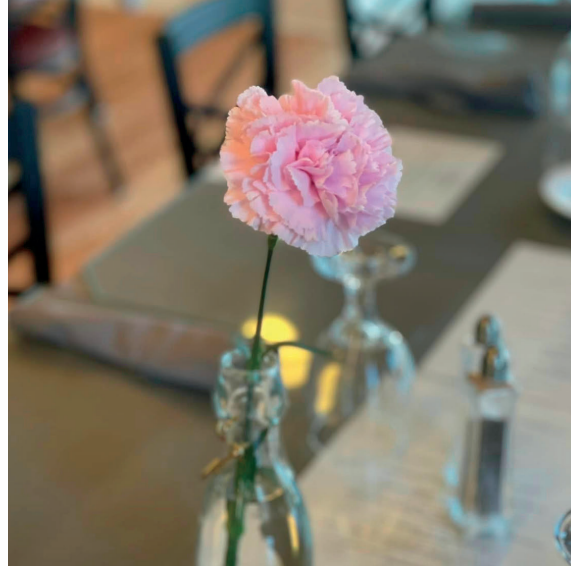


# *The Centennial's*

## LOCAL EFFORTS

"Networking with community members and other businesses is so important. As a small rural restaurant, the ability to utilize other businesses to elevate our business is an all-around win! Getting local produce, coffee, florals, decor, and more to fill our restaurant provides the local promotion of other businesses through a simple conversation that elevates the whole community." - Sara

Pictured to the right are fresh local flowers for table centerpieces, lettuce grown at a local greenhouse for salads and sandwiches, and employee shirts made by a local t-shirt design business.



## LOCAL ENTREPRENEURIAL EXAMPLE

# FUDGE'S FLOWERS & GIFTS

"I get asked a lot why I chose to come back to my small hometown. But what most people don't understand is that I don't feel like I ever moved away. I left to get an education but always saw opportunity right here and planned to come back."- Bonnie Silbaugh, Owner of Fudge's Flowers & Gifts



Bonnie is the 5th owner of a local floral shop that was opened in 1941. As a high school student, she worked at the flower shop not intending to own it one day but enjoyed her time working there. As time went on, she found herself down a different career path but always believed that there was opportunity in her rural community.

As Bonnie looked for opportunity she decided to build up the courage to ask the previous owner if she would be interested in selling her store at some point. Bonnie was surprised to find out that she was actively looking for someone to buy it but hadn't made the news public yet. Had Bonnie not asked that day she might have never known the opportunity available.

Through a variety of local resources such as local banks, government organizations, the Small Business Association, and other local resources, Bonnie was able to become the new owner of Fudge's.



*Bonnie's*

## SMALL BUSINESS INSIGHT

"Many times small businesses do not have a succession plan and don't want to advertise that they are looking to sell their business. It is so important to be willing to put yourself out there and ask for things because you never know what might happen."- Bonnie

Pictured to the left are Charles Fudge (son of original owners) and Bonnie, a group of students participating in a local flower arranging class, and an arrangement put together from Fudge's Flowers & Gifts.



SARA & BONNIE'S

# ENTREPRENEURIAL TIPS



## TIP 1 - ALWAYS BE OPEN TO LEARNING

Things happen every day good and bad in your business. Be open to learning from them and growing. Industry trainings, conventions, etc. are great opportunities to learn something new and apply it to your business consistently.



## TIP 2 - SEEK OUT RESOURCES

From civic groups, local organizations, community banks, government agencies, networking with people, and industry groups there are a variety of resources to use for anything you might need help with.



## TIP 3 - SURROUND YOURSELF WITH THE RIGHT PEOPLE

Having the right people by your side is vital to success! It is okay not to know everything that is why there are professionals available to hire like lawyers, accountants, etc. to help make sure you are on the right track with your business. Be sure when choosing these people that they also share your vision.



## TIP 4 - MULTIPLE MEDIA AVENUES

Technology changes all the time and will continue to do so. Be sure you have strong media presence in a variety of forms. Using multiple social media outlets, print media, software, etc. allows you to never be reliant on one to provide what you need.

## LOCAL RESOURCES

# "JEFFERSON WANTS YOU!"

### LOCAL ENTREPRENEURIAL SUPPORT

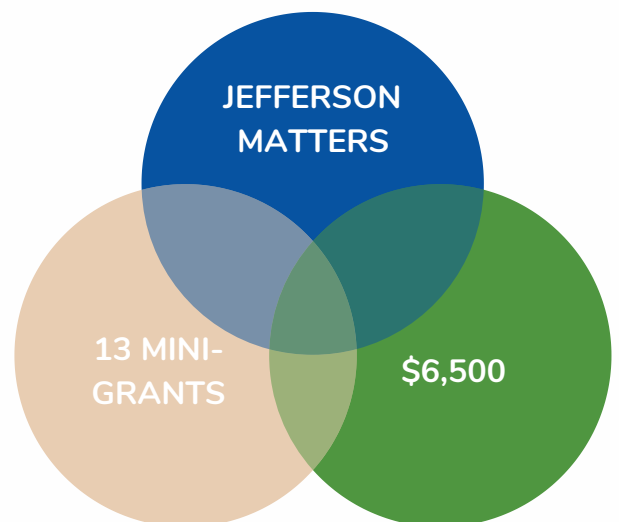
In 2022, the "Jefferson Wants You" Incentive Fund Program was launched by Jefferson Matters: A Main Street & Chamber Community, alongside local banking institutions, utility companies, and Grow Greene County. The program allows new businesses the opportunity to apply for up to \$5,000 to use for start-up costs.

Jefferson Matters has helped a number of new businesses get their feet on the ground in the last couple of years. From mini-grants for façade improvements and new signage to an existing business mini-grant allowing new products to be added to stores, there are a variety of opportunities to get a leg up in Jefferson. Businesses within the Main Street District are also eligible for other resources like free façade design assistance, advertising resources, search engine optimization tools, and many other financial programs. The City of Jefferson and Greene County Development Corporation also continues to be strong partners with local businesses.

IN 2022 \$68,650 WAS GIVEN TO THE  
**"JEFFERSON WANTS YOU"**  
INCENTIVE FUND

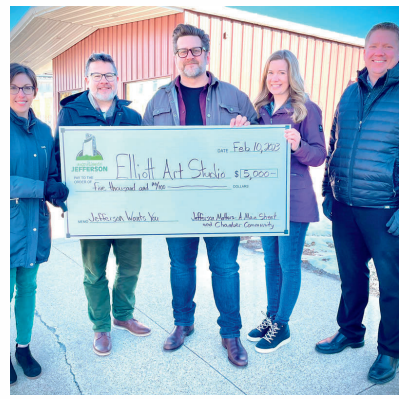


FROM 2022 TO JUNE 2023 \$48,000  
HAS BEEN GIVEN TO 11 NEW  
BUSINESSES!



OVER THE LAST FEW YEARS \$6,500 HAS  
BEEN GIVEN TO 13 NEW AND EXISTING  
BUSINESSES IN THE FORM OF MINI-GRANTS  
TO HELP BRING IN NEW PRODUCTS,  
FAÇADE IMPROVEMENTS, AND SIGNAGE

# "JEFFERSON WANTS YOU!" RECIPIENTS



The Centennial- Restuarant- \$5,000  
 The Shuffle Couple- DJ Service- \$3,000  
 Good Stuff- Antique Store- \$2,500  
 Elliott Art Studio- Art & Recording Studio- \$5,000

Warm Wishes- Stationery Store- \$5,000  
 Legacy Events- Event Rental/Management and Party Supply Store- \$5,000  
 Re/Max Legacy- Realtor- \$5,000  
 RC Shack- Radio Control Hobby Retail Store- \$2,500

Midwest Behavioral Health- Life Skill Rehabilitation- \$5,000  
 CHiRP Coffee- Drive-Thru Coffee Shop- \$5,000  
 Murphy Farm Meats- Meat Locker- \$5,000