



Business Connection

INVEST AND ENGAGE IN URBANDALE

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THE ART OF THE CITY

Installation along Urbandale Trail Provides New Access to Public Art

Installations at the City Art Park moved to permanent locations around Urbandale in March. One of those sculptures is "Jardin de la Paz" by Gail Chavenelle (pictured here). The sculpture, constructed with sheet metal, measures eight feet tall and weighs nearly 200 pounds. The form of the sculpture suggests two people enjoying time outside in a garden. On display since April 2014, its permanent home is on the newly reconstructed Urbandale trail in Colby Woods Park behind the Reserve on Walnut Creek. Replacement of the asphalt

and installation of concrete on this trail was finished in fall of 2014; the improvements extend from 78th Street to 86th Street and west of Walnut Creek on 82nd Place south to Hickman Road. Three new pieces of art, selected by the Public Art Committee, will be installed in the Urbandale Art Park later this month for display through April of 2016. For more information about access to Urbandale's expansive trail network and other opportunities for outdoor fun, visit www.urbandale.org/parksandrec.cfm.

CONTINENTAL WESTERN GROUP OFFERS PEACE OF MIND

From main street businesses to corporations with multiple locations, Continental Western Group (CWG) provides commercial property and casualty insurance for peace of mind. Need insurance for antique cars or vintage tractors? How about coverage for a grain elevator complex? Contact CWG in Urbandale, which provides a wide range of innovative, commercial and specialty insurance products for clients in 13 Midwestern states.

"We have big plans for this company," said Mike Connor, president. "We're focused on staying close to our customers, serving as a trusted advisor and making the community stronger."

CWG is well positioned to meet these goals. The company's roots date back to 1886. The business has flourished in Urbandale since it relocated its headquarters from downtown Des Moines in the 1960s. Today, CWG is an operating unit of W. R. Berkley Corporation, one of the nation's leading property and casualty insurance groups.

CWG specializes in insurance coverage for agriculture, construction, hospitality/leisure, real estate, transportation and more. CWG consistently receives an A+ rating from the A.M. Best Company. "In fact, only 26 insurance companies in the nation have had this rating for 75 years or more," Connor said. "We're in this business for the long haul."

URBANDALE EQUALS ACCESSIBILITY

Urbandale's accessibility has helped CWG grow. The company's prime location near Interstates 35/80 keeps team members close to clients and connected with CWG's five regional offices.

More than 500 employees of CWG and W. R. Berkley Corporation work at the Urbandale headquarters. The community's amenities enhance employee recruiting and retention, said Connor, who noted that more than half of the company's employees have been with CWG more than 10 years.

"Urbandale has a lot to offer. The cost of living is outstanding,

“WE HAVE BIG PLANS FOR THIS COMPANY. WE’RE FOCUSED ON **STAYING CLOSE TO OUR CUSTOMERS**, SERVING AS A TRUSTED ADVISOR AND MAKING THE COMMUNITY STRONGER.”

MIKE CONNOR
President of Continental Western Group

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the area has experienced robust growth and there are lots of interesting things to do.”

The area’s many excellent colleges and universities, including Drake University and Iowa State University, also make it simpler for CWG to access specialized talent, including actuarial science graduates. “CWG employees are known for being accomplished professionals in their field,” Connor said. “This offers our clients security and peace of mind.”

The company’s employees also believe in giving back. CWG supports charitable organizations related to youth development, education, health and human services, arts and culture and community betterment. All this strengthens the local economy and enhances the quality of life.

“I believe the Des Moines area is going to catch Hartford, Connecticut as the insurance capital of the United States,” Connor said. “We’re bullish on CWG, Urbandale and Iowa.”

Mike Connor, President of Continental Western Group

Q&A: URBANDALE’S MAYOR DISCUSSES BUSINESS SUPPORT

Bob Andeweg has been Urbandale’s Mayor since 2005. He talks with us this month about the principles that guide Urbandale’s budget process and the City’s engagement with business.

»» What principles guide Urbandale’s elected officials in the budget process?

The City Council has identified economic development as a top priority. We’ve endorsed and embraced the Economic Development Plan which sets forth five key outcomes: existing business success; investment attraction; workforce development; competitive policies for infrastructure, incentives and development options; and a high performing economic development organization. These goals and outcomes guide the City’s decision making.

I am especially proud that the City Council has produced a budget which allows Urbandale to offer the lowest city tax levy in the Des Moines

metropolitan area, and the lowest of any city in Iowa with population in excess of 6,000.

»» Urbandale’s leaders are consistently at ribbon cuttings and other business events. What drives this level of business community access to you and the City Council?

Economic development, as a key strategic priority, means that the City celebrates and embraces the large and small successes of our local business community. This means interaction with our businesses at every level.

»» As Mayor, what would you like the business community to know about investing in Urbandale?

The City Council is engaged in providing the best climate and environment for our business

community. This means investment in key infrastructure, providing a competitive property tax climate and offering significant incentives for investment in Urbandale.

»» As a leader in the Capital Crossroads Governance Capital, what opportunities does it provide to bring more value to business?

We are actively working to make local government more responsive to our residents and businesses at a more competitive cost. This means finding eliminating barriers and turf wars, finding innovative ways to deliver government services and being responsive to the needs of our constituents.



BOB ANDEWEG
MAYOR

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UPCOMING EVENTS

Please register to attend through www.uniquelyurbandale.com or by calling the Urbandale Chamber of Commerce at 515-331-6855. More information on each event may be found on the website.

APRIL 22

Business Owners Luncheon | Embassy Club West | 11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.
Cost: \$25

APRIL 25

Talk with Officials | Connect with elected officials at the State, County, City and School Board levels. | Urbandale Chamber office | 2830 100th St., Suite 110, Urbandale | 10:30 a.m. – noon | Open to the public and free to attend.

APRIL 28

AM Exchange | Sponsored by Ben Buenzow State Farm Insurance, Hosted by Life Time Athletic Des Moines | 7:30 – 8:30 a.m. | Cost: Free

Meet the Chamber | Learn more about Urbandale Chamber of Commerce benefits. | Urbandale Chamber office | 2830 100th St., Suite 110, Urbandale | 9 – 10 a.m. | Open to the public and free to attend.

MAY 7

Picture Day for genYP | Schedule a professional photo shoot for only \$15 members/\$20 non-members.

MAY 10-12

Washington D.C. Trip in conjunction with the Greater Des Moines Partnership | See www.desmoinesmetro.com for registration details.

MAY 13

Uncorked for a Cause | HyVee | to benefit the genYP Let's Read Program | 4:30 – 6:30 p.m. | Cost: \$20

MAY 14

Morning Mingle Mixer | Shade Tree Auto | 7:30 – 8:30 a.m. | Cost: Free

MAY 19

AM Exchange | Urbandale Golf & Country Club | 7:30 – 8:30 a.m. | Cost: Free

{life outdoors}

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83%* OF EMPLOYEES SAY THEY ARE UNDER FINANCIAL STRESS.

According to a survey conducted by the Society of Human Resource Management, financial stress causes:

- Inability for employees to focus on work
- Increased employee absenteeism
- Increased employee tardiness
- Negative impact on productivity

Contact Holly Bernal to **schedule a FREE employee workshop** on tips to reduce personal financial stress.



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*PriceWaterhouseCoopers' 2013 financial wellness survey for SHRM

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TOP LEFT: (L-R) Karen Goldsworth, Charlie Wittmack, Jeana Schultz and Tiffany Menke from the Regional Leadership Breakfast featuring Charlie Wittmack.

TOP RIGHT: (L-R) Rose Sloven, Clemen Wilcox and York Tanzer attending the March AM Exchange

LEFT: Team of volunteers for the Urbandale Chamber's Total Resource Campaign.

RIGHT: (L-R) Monica Dolezal, Linda Franker connecting at the March 2015 membership luncheon.



CHAMBER BUSINESS VALUE



Tiffany Menke
President, Urbandale Chamber of Commerce

(515) 331-6855
tmenke@urbandalechamber.com

The Urbandale Chamber of Commerce developed specific programming for business owners to provide education and connecting opportunities with other owners. On Wednesday, April 22nd, we are holding our Business Owners Luncheon from 11:30 – Noon at Embassy Club West. This event is only open to Owners and Presidents. It is designed to allow owners to work on their business through connection with other Owners/Presidents. Cost is \$25 per person. Contact the Chamber to register at 515-331-6855.

CITY OF URBANDALE

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CONTACTS



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