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SLUG: You Just Can’t Ignore Osceola, Iowa

(OSCEOLA, IA - OCTOBER 20, 2021) It’s well known that rural Iowa takes the brunt of many economic downturns. From business closures due to staff shortages to unpredictable battles like a pandemic, rural areas seem to suffer worse than their metro counterparts. Over the past decade, though, the city of Osceola, Iowa has triumphed in the face of wide spread rural decline. Surrounded by rural communities who experienced sharp drops in the last U.S. Census, Osceola grew an impressive 6.40%, more than even the state average of 6.39%{link to article}. These are statistics you just can’t ignore.

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*“Strong, strategic development plans and a focus on community is what drives future growth,” said Bill Trickey, Executive Director of the Clarke County Development Corporation (CCDC). “For more than a decade Osceola and Clarke County as a whole have been aggressive with growth plans, and it shows.”*

The Development Corporation has been an integral part of the success seen throughout the community. By providing grants and donating to organizations looking to grow or improve the community, they help the county avoid stagnation often seen in other areas.

One of the ways the CCDC has been impactful in is enhancing the quality of life for the community. Working with the City as well as collaborating closely with the Clarke School District, the Safe Routes to School program kicked off a flourishing trail system that now extends for miles, stretching from the high school / middle school campus on the northwest side of the city to East Lake Park on the southeast side.

An additional collaboration with the Schools has been the growth of an industrial technology advisory board as well as a focus on building support for the schools through local manufacturers like Altec{link}, Hormel / Osceola Foods{link}, SIMCO Drilling Equipment, Inc.{link}, Miller Products Company{link} and more.

*“Getting our manufacturers involved in the future of our students just makes sense,” said Trickey. “The skills they take away from these advisory board experiences mean a stronger workforce and more economic stability for the entire area.”*

With a strong workforce comes the need for affordable housing. Osceola has worked hard to meet the housing demand of the manufacturing sector over the past decade. With the CCDC’s building incentive program{link to article}, a number of new homes have been built throughout the city. With plans in the works for housing developments on the south and northwest sides of the city, more than 100 units, from apartments to single family homes, will be available within the next 12 to 18 months.

With a growing community comes a need for services to provide health and wellness. In a massive 63,000 square foot renovation in 2016 and additional updates including the extension of the clinic and addition of Telehealth services, it’s no wonder Clarke County Hospital{link} continues to win awards for patient and critical access care services.

The success Osceola has experienced is the culmination of many hands doing the hardest work to make the community better. With the Osceola Chamber Main Street {link} presence, businesses throughout the city benefit from organization and event planning to build community pride that other communities lack. And as the city plans updates for city square revitalization, the development on the new water supply and wastewater treatment plant moves on to meet future growth demand.

Of course, with the continued support from Osceola’s Lakeside Hotel and Casino{link}, future growth plans and development continue to thrive, attracting millions of visitors each year and driving interest in business growth around the area. With success stories like the launch of Revelton Distillery{link} in 2020 as well as the growth of local retail and service industries, contrary to other rural trends, this city continues to prove you just can’t ignore Osceola.

If you have questions or would like more information about the developments around Clarke County and Osceola, Iowa, please contact Bill Trickey, Executive Director, Phone:641-342-2944, email: [info@clarkecountyiowa.com](mailto:info@clarkecountyiowa.com).

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