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Shopping for Treasures in Fergus Falls

By Heather Rule

Fergus Falls offers shopping options where clothing and other items are given a second chance as their next owners’ treasure. The hunt is half the fun!

Cora’s Closet

Dawn Saxton owns Cora’s Closet, an upscale consignment boutique women’s clothing store in downtown Fergus Falls. Cora’s Closet offers a wide selection of formal dresses for special occasions and higher-end designer items. Saxton also sells vintage clothing, purses and shoes. Women in their teens to their 90s can find treasures, and Cora’s Closet carries sizes from extra-small to plus.

Saxton also accepts good condition items that are in-season, taking summer clothes during summer months, for example. Saxton calls consignment a “win-win.” “I always say some people shop consignment because it’s economical, and I think it is,” Saxton said. “But I think a lot of people shop consignment because they can find things that you wouldn’t normally find around the area, something unique.”

Krupke’s Konsignments

Shoppers can find more than clothing at Krupke’s Konsignments. Along with seasonal consignment collections, the Krupke’s collection includes scrubs, jewelry, accessories, purses, furniture, children’s toys, games and children’s clothing. Women’s clothing and accessories are the top sellers at the shop, along with

children’s clothing, though they also offer men’s items, home décor and furniture. “It’s a little bit of everything,” said owner Haley Krupke. Consigners may bring in two bags per week, with clothing based on the season. Items will be on the floor for up to four months and sellers earn 40 percent of whatever they sell. Along with its location on North Mill Street in Fergus Falls, Krupke’s Konsignments has shops in Alexandria and Wahpeton.



Maybe you are looking for the perfect unique gift, or an outfit that no one else has? Fergus Falls has great options.

Antiques

If it’s antiques you’re after, Fergus Falls offers several to explore. Stop by Exit 55 Antiques, located right

off I-94 at exit 55. It’s open daily year-round with plenty of antiques, cottage décor, glassware, toys and overall fabulous finds for collectors. Items are displayed throughout 1,390 square feet of space. Dealers like Donna Toso rent out their own private space; Exit 55 had 12 dealers in summer 2020. Some of the most popular items are “anything that goes into a man cave,” Toso said. Petroleum products, decoys, license plates, toy tractors, military items and chicken nesting boxes are some of the items browsers might find. There are also vintage quilts, linens, kitchen wares, cottage décor and funky junk.

Other antique treasure can be found in several downtown shops. Collectors Corner and Lincoln Avenue Antiques are within a block of each other on Lincoln Avenue. Make a day of it and check them all out.

EXPLORE & EXPERIENCE FERGUS FALLS

Here are some activities you might enjoy.

1. Explore the trails at the Prairie Wetlands Learning Center.
2. Go for a bike ride on the Central Lakes Trail.
3. Enjoy skating on Lake Alice.



Cover Photo: Heather Miller • Photos: Micah & Jenna Kvidt, provided



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Country Inn & Suites <i>CountryInns.com/Fergus-Falls-MN</i>	925 Western Ave.	218-739-2211	800-333-3333	96	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Jewel Motel	1602 Pebble Lake Rd.	218-739-5430		14									•
Motel 7	616 Frontier Dr.	218-736-2554		17	•								•
Rodeway Inn <i>ChoiceHotels.com</i>	610 Western Ave.	218-739-3311		54	•								•
Super 8 by Wyndham <i>WyndhamHotels.com/Super-8</i>	2454 College Way	218-739-3261	800-800-8000	32	•								•

From "ma and pa" motels to favorite hotel brands, it gets down to comfort and great service – and they all deliver. The hotel grid above details the properties and their amenities.

And with 1,048 lakes in Otter Tail County, resorts are popular too. The Otter Tail Lakes Country Association web site at OtterTailLakesCountry.com lets you search resort properties based on many amenities.

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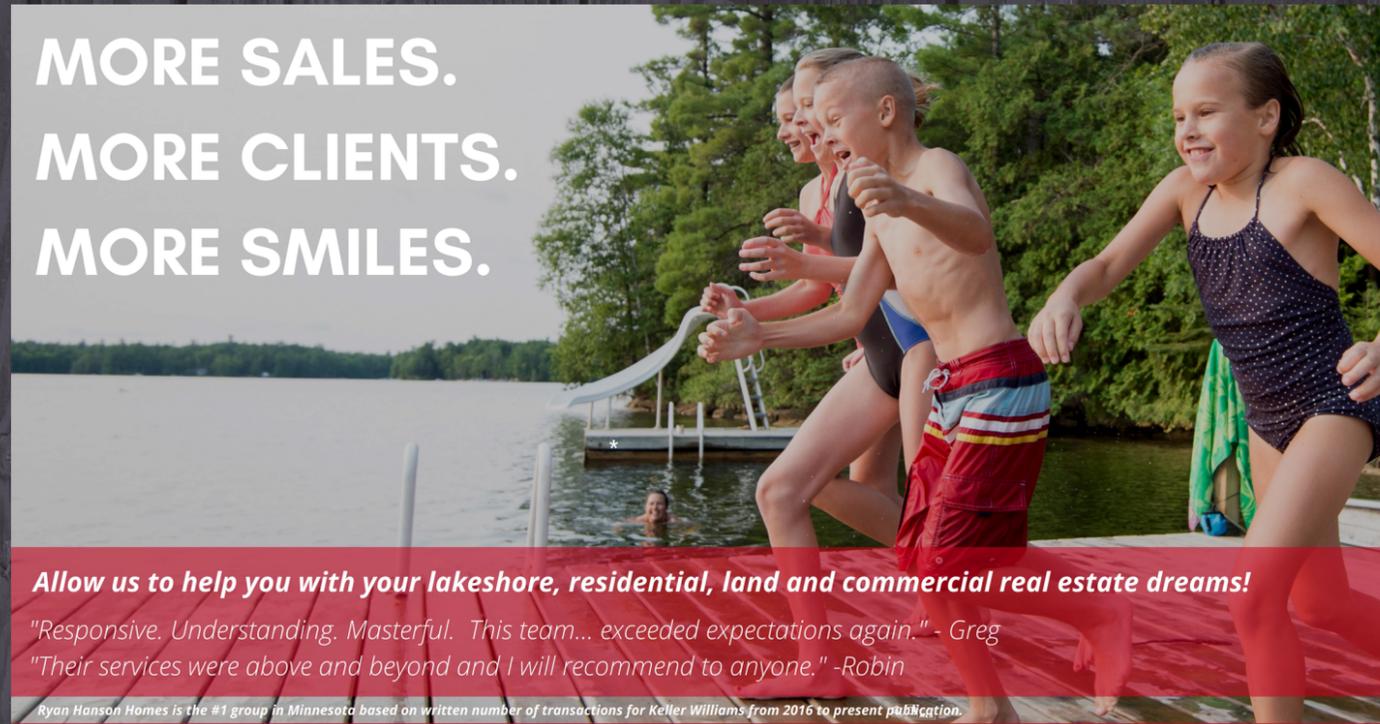
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Play, Learn, Create at Otter Cove

By Heather Rule

Otter Cove is a new 6,000-square-foot indoor playground that's modeled after the Otter Tail River and the falls of Fergus Falls. The playground includes a miniature downtown Fergus Falls, complete with businesses: a sandwich shop, veterinarian, dentist, grocery store and a stage. As part of its creation, local artists "created really unique moments and exhibits," said Tasha Rohlfs, president of the Otter Cove board. Features like a cattail fence, plus seven critters who "live" in Otter Cove add to the wonder and delight of this play space. There's also an art and makershop with rotating activities, including an interactive glass paint wall where kids can paint and squeegee. The makershop also houses a giant Lite-Brite®, and all of the crafts and activity tables rotate weekly. Building blocks might be featured one week with a specific craft activity the next. The interactive "change-it-up room" is different each week, too, with one activity being large, blue foam building blocks.

"It is such a unique space where children can run and play and explore and imagine in no other way," Rohlfs said. "(It is) very different from any other experience that we have in Fergus Falls and Otter Tail County." Otter Cove visitors can explore for a \$6 daily rate per person (adults and children over 12 months). Families can also purchase a family membership for the year for \$95 (four people). Daycare memberships (one named adult and up to five children) are \$125 per year. Information on events and admission is available at OtterCoveFF.org.

Rohlfs helped lead the project to bring a children's museum to downtown Fergus Falls. She and her children drove to Detroit Lakes for indoor play time. She said many families from Fergus Falls travel to Fargo to visit the children's museum and indoor playgrounds, plus Alexandria has a relatively new indoor play space.

Sure, there were some in surrounding areas, but that's a lot of time in the car for a family. In 2019 as plans were underway for Otter Cove, a young boy attending SummerFest stopped at the Otter Cove table and looked at photos of what the indoor playground might look like. His mother told him this museum and playground was coming to Fergus Falls. "You mean, we don't have to ride in the car for an hour to get to one?" It was the best moment ever," said Rohlfs.

The Otter Cove board raised more than \$700,000 for the museum and hired Peter Olson, an Erhard, MN native, as the museum consultant and Jeff Brown, a museum builder who grew up in Elizabeth, MN. Unfortunately, the timing of Otter Cove's grand opening lined up with the shutdowns due to COVID-19. The virus halted the museum's grand opening, originally scheduled for April 2020. The museum has been partially open and expects to gradually get to its original 100 percent capacity in the spring and have that long-anticipated grand opening.

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‘Not a Bad Seat in the House’ at Fergus Falls Speedway

By Heather Rule

Don Shaw raced late model cars on dirt tracks for 30 years. He still races some, but his career came full-circle when he purchased the I-94 Speedway in Fergus Falls in 2020.

It’s a track where he always enjoyed racing and had some success there as well. “I’ve seen a lot of good about the place,” Shaw said. “I just wanted to see if we could up the ante in the whole place and make it even better yet.” Shaw took over ownership of the speedway May 1, 2020, an opportunity that still gives him a chance to be at the race track, even if he’s not racing. One of the more notable changes was re-naming the track – I-94 Sure Step Speedway – in a sponsorship partnership with Sure Step.

As far as other changes at the track, Shaw updated the kitchen, painted the bleachers and remodeled all of the suites. The building and roof underwent some maintenance, and they added billboards around the 3/8-mile, medium-to-high-bank dirt track for sponsor advertising.

He’s also going to work on making camping “bigger and better” at the track, adding more electrical hookups, for instance, so fans can stay for the weekend. Other than that, changes are minimal and guests can expect the same great racing they’ve come to know, Shaw said.

The racing season starts in early May and runs every Friday through Labor Day Weekend. Seven classes of race

cars run at the track: Short Tracker, Street Stock, Midwest Mods, Limited Late Models, Super Stocks, Modifieds and Late Models. A race track should have one or two special events a year to be known as a premiere track, according to Shaw. At I-94 Sure Step Speedway, one such event is The Dick Johanneck King of Dirt Special. That event, featuring seven classes, was held in mid-September 2020 as the final event of the season.

Fans can take in the race from various spots, from tailgating to watching on either the backstretch or front stretch of the track. The north and south grandstands can hold 6,800 spectators, plus the tailgate area has room for up to 100 vehicles. Additionally, around 100 people will also bring their own lawn chairs and enjoy the action from the grassy hillside on the east end of the grandstands. Altogether, the track can accommodate about 8,000 spectators. “It’s absolute perfect visibility everywhere,” Shaw said. “There’s not a bad seat in the house.” The races at I-94 Sure Step Speedway pack lots of action into the three-or-four-hour period on Friday nights. Fans are close to the action, and can see every car on every lap, if they want to. “Well, if you’ve never been to a dirt-track race before, be prepared to get addicted,” Shaw said. “Because once you go to one and see it, you want to go again.”

The WISSOTA 100 is scheduled for September 15-19, 2021. This will be the third year Fergus Falls has hosted the race, and it is always a fan favorite.

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Staying Active in Fergus Falls

By Heather Rule

From walking around Lake Alice to lifting weights at the gym, Fergus Falls has plenty of options when it comes to health and wellness.

Parks and Rec

The Fergus Falls Parks and Recreation Department offers playgrounds, tennis and pickleball courts, outdoor fitness equipment, a skate park, an indoor ice arena plus two outdoor skating rinks in the winter.

Walkers, runners and bicyclists have plenty of paths and trails, including mountain bike trails, bike-only lanes and shared lanes in town.

Walking trails throughout Fergus Falls have gained popularity, said Mick Johnson, Fergus Falls Parks and Recreation Parks Supervisor. There's a brick Riverwalk that's a few blocks long through downtown Fergus Falls. Paved walking paths extend both east and west of town, and many of the trails are maintained year-round.

DeLagoon Park, on the south side of Fergus Falls, provides a variety of activities. There's a 27-hole disc-golf course, four full-size soccer fields, five softball fields, two baseball fields, Pebble Lake Golf Course, a sand volleyball pit. Access the Central Lakes Trail, a paved trail that starts in Fergus Falls, connects to the Lake Wobegon Trail and totals 120 miles to St. Cloud.

Health and Wellness Hub

The Health and Wellness Hub at Lake Region Healthcare offers something for people of all ages and all stages. Located in the Mehl Center, people can choose from personal training, small-group training or fitness classes.

The main mission is focusing on quality of life, according to Natalie Knutson, Director of Wellness. They're affiliated with CrossFit Fergus Falls and focus on mental and

emotional wellbeing and nutrition. "We typically tell our clients, if you're coming in for a weight-loss goal or to get stronger, those things are really great," Knutson said. She added that a lot of times those goals are a secondary result of getting to whatever someone is dealing with. "We do a lot of work with mental and emotional wellbeing and just how that ties into meeting your goals," Knutson said.

The fee-for-service format makes sure everyone is guided in their journey by an instructor or coach, Knutson said. Trainers all have bachelor's degrees in some form of exercise field. The connections and accountability factors with patrons make the hub stand out as well, Knutson added.

YMCA

The Fergus Falls Area Family YMCA includes a walking track, cardio machines, resistance equipment, racquetball courts, strength training equipment, exercise and cycling studios, gymnasiums, and a pool.

Early-morning spinning classes, aquatics-fitness classes, body pump, Insanity® and yoga classes are extremely popular, according to Eric Price, Executive Director of the Fergus Falls Area YMCA. They also offer Pilates®, and senior yoga and fit classes.

YMCA members can work out on their own or take part in various services and structured activities. There's personal training, youth sports, adult sports (volleyball, basketball, etc.). It also offers child care and summer day camps for kids. "I think one of the important things to remember is that YMCAs are more unique than just a health and wellness center," said Price.

The YMCA is membership-based, but for visitors to the area, day-passes are also available. The Y also offers free classes including a healthy eating class, diabetes prevention and Tai Ji Quan: Moving for better balance.

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From Manicured to Naturally-Wild, City Parks Delight

By Jean Bowman

With 29 official city parks in Fergus Falls there are a variety of spaces to enjoy and places to explore. Built in 1908, Broken Down Dam collapsed in September 1909 and is now a ruin in the Otter Tail River, east of Fergus Falls. Improved trails and parking make access to the site an easy hike from the top. From the water, fishing, swimming and kayaking are popular.

The new disc golf course (27 holes) at DeLagoon Park continues to be upgraded, and now includes rubber tee boxes. Tournaments last summer grew from their initial season in 2019 and resulted in positive feedback about the variety of the course and difficulty of some of the holes. Panoramic prairie and languid lakeside shots aren't just for looks. The challenge of the sport (not to mention fluctuating wind, precipitation and temperatures) makes each round unique. Follow "DeLagoon Disc Golf Course" on the UDisc Golf app for updates.

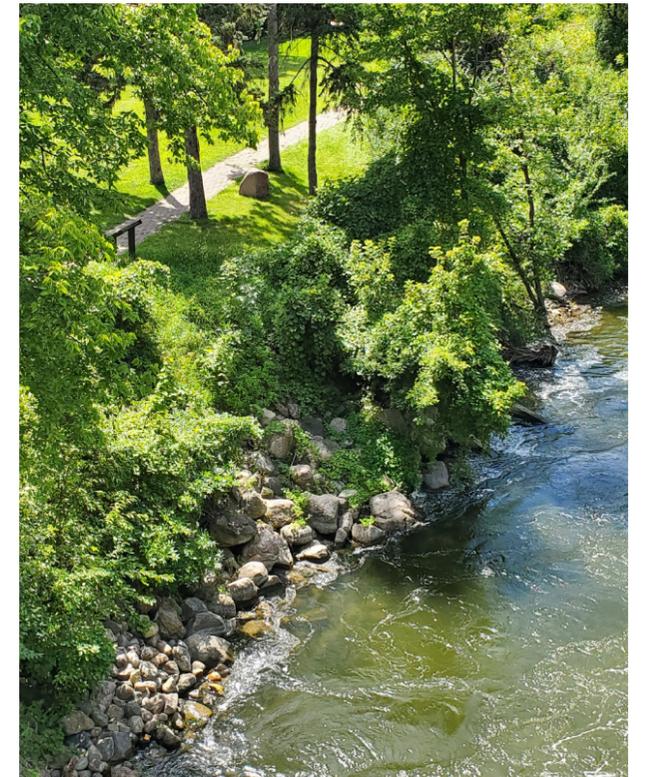
Ready to take to the trails? Ferber Park offers mountain bike trails, a section of the North Country National Scenic Hiking Trail, eight acres of prairie grass and pollinators, and attracts bikers, hikers, bees, birds and butterflies!

It is a primitive park though with a few parking spots, a bike rack and information kiosk. Please pack in and pack out, helping to keep the park beautiful and healthy. In 2019 long-boarders discovered the Central Lakes Trail between Fergus Falls and St. Cloud as Fergus Falls hosted the Skate Central Lakes Endurance Festival. They're planning to tackle the trail again in 2021. A bike ride or walk is the most popular way to enjoy this paved trail. Speaking of biking, Fergus Falls is now a silver level Bicycle Friendly Community as designated by the League of American Bicyclists. It is one of only two communities outside of the Twin Cities to achieve this level of designation. You'll also find several Bicycle Friendly Businesses and M-State Fergus Falls, the first two-year college in Minnesota to achieve Bicycle Friendly University status.

Kids will squeal with delight as they climb, tunnel, hop and swing on new outdoor equipment in Noyes Park. It's a great way to be active for adults too. Playgrounds in Adams Park, NP Park, DeLagoon Park, Red Sox Park, Athletic Park and Broadway Park are gems for all ages. Pack a picnic lunch, watch a softball game or play tennis. Green spaces are intentional throughout Fergus Falls. The conversion of some

parkland to natural and prairie grasses helps protect the environment, reduces costs, and filters water as it makes its way to the Otter Tail River. Walkers around Lake Alice will notice new native plantings, flowers and even a dog water-fountain, all newly installed in 2019. Speaking of dogs, a dog park is being built near Channing Avenue, along the south side of Grotto Lake. With plans to be open in 2021, Fido now has his own park to explore. Veterans Park and Wright Parks along the Otter Tail River provide benches for respite and reflection. And the beauty of Kirkbride Park near the Regional Treatment Center is a year-round delight – bring your cross country skis or snowshoes in the winter and make your own path. Festivals, concerts and movies draw crowds all year long.

Green gives way to white during the winter months. Outdoor skating rinks offer lighted night-skating and warming houses until 8 p.m. on Lake Alice. For hockey fans, sticks are allowed on the Channing and Cleveland rinks. Escape the elements and skate indoors at the community arena. Free open skating is generally on Sunday evening with additional hours posted on the city web site: Ci.Fergus-Falls.mn.us. That's also a great web site for a complete overview of parks, amenities and addresses. Make time to enjoy these treasured spaces during your visit.



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Fish Factor 108 Offers Fresh Options

By Heather Rule

In June 2019, Leonardo and Martha Segura decided to open their own food business, so they created a food truck, Fish Factor 108, to offer Mexican seafood. The Seguras weren't new to the restaurant business; they both worked as cooks at Bello Cucina in Fergus Falls for many years before it closed in 2018. They wanted "to give the town a little more variety," said Jessica Segura, Leonardo and Martha's daughter, who works with her parents at Fish Factor 108. "They wanted to bring new flavors and something else for people to enjoy that can't be found anywhere else in Fergus Falls. And everything is homemade, really fresh and made in the moment," Jessica said. "Everything we do is from scratch, and the veggies are fresh. Everything's fresh."

liked that," Jessica said. "So we kept it on the menu." They also offer plenty of familiar favorites like walleye fingers, shrimp burgers, and fish and chips. Tacos and walleye fingers are the most popular items, Jessica said. Beyond the standard fare, Fish Factor 108 has gluten-free options for its customers. The marinated fish tacos on the menu aren't fried, and it's a gluten-free and lighter option compared to the typical fried fish, Jessica said. They also offer salmon tacos.

Fish Factor 108 is usually set up at East Lincoln Avenue and Cascade Street. They're typically open for lunch on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. Customers can also frequently find Fish Factor 108 at Outstate Brewing in Fergus Falls. "We've been living in Fergus (Falls) since 2008, and that's where the 108 comes from," Jessica said. Fish Factor 108 offers mostly Mexican seafood with items like fish tacos, shrimp tacos and ceviche (fish and shrimp mixed with veggies, served cold, like a salad). Ceviche usually calls for raw fish, but Fish Factor 108 cooks the fish and shrimp for safety purposes. Ceviche has been a hit with customers, according to Jessica. "It's something that we wanted to introduce, and people have really

While many other businesses and restaurants shut down briefly or had to alter their operations when the COVID-19 pandemic hit in March 2020, Fish Factor 108 didn't have too many changes since people don't dine inside. It has always been a great grab-and-go option, as a stand-alone food truck. Business slowed down for a bit, but it picked up again as summer approached. Fish Factor 108 had very few changes, Jessica said, other than some additional safety measures to avoid risks associated with the pandemic. They noticed more customers came around when other restaurants had to close or temporarily shut down. Customers purchase their food and either take it home, back to work or eat in their parked cars nearby, Jessica said. People follow Fish Factor 108 on Facebook to find out where their food truck is serving each day. Even that surprise adds a sense of adventure to lunch time. "We offer something... that's different from the other places," Jessica said.



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