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2020 DESTINATION GUIDE
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Events

- Jan. 18 James Sewell Ballet
- Feb. 7 "Legendary Ladies of Country Music" Concert
- Feb. 8 FF Fish & Game Club
100 Years exhibit opens
- Feb. 28 Razzle Dazzle Revue
- March 13 "A Midsummer Night's Dream"
- March 21 Craft Brew Tour
- April 25 "Christian Howes" Concert
- May 7-10 Minnesota Governor's
Fishing Opener
- May 29 Mt. Pleasant Cemetery Tour
- June 6 Lake Region Run
- June 12-13 Summerfest
- June 19 Downtown Mystery Tour
- June 22-27 Children's Theatre Musical
- July 9 Shop, Move 'n Groove
- July 10 Stories from the State Hospital
- July 14 Courthouse Lunch/Band Concert
- July 24 Pebble Lake Youth Triathlon
- July 25 Hoot Lake Triathlon
- Aug. 21-22 Art on Lincoln;
"Farewell Angelina"
- Sept. 15-19 Speedway Motors WISSOTA 100
- Oct. 9 Brewers Festival
- Oct. 30 Haunted Museum
- Dec. 5 Over the River Holiday Festival

Visit our website for 2020 event details
VisitFergusFalls.com

Cover Photo: Arielle Krohn
Photos: Rick Schara, Jesse Thorstad

Find Us, Lose Yourself in Fergus Falls

Don't expect this county seat to be a hustle and bustle of activity. Instead "Find Us, Lose Yourself" means we want you to relax, unwind and leave feeling refreshed and invigorated. Located in west central Minnesota, Fergus Falls is a beautiful and vibrant community. Healthy in the arts, history and offering an abundance of recreational activities, our location on I-94 makes Fergus Falls easily accessible. And if you're coming by bicycle, the Central Lakes Bike Trail is an excellent cross-country route. The Otter Tail River meanders through downtown and is a beautiful backdrop for the nearby shops and restaurants. Residents and employers select Fergus Falls for the excellent education, healthcare, infrastructure and sense of community.



The people are our best asset – we know our neighbors, welcome visitors and work together to make Fergus Falls our home. We're glad you're here.

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Connect with us!

Variety of Learning Thrives in Fergus Falls

by Steve Heriot

Learning has been defined as "time spent in school for the purpose of acquiring knowledge and skills that can be applied in a future workplace." In the last 30 years, the educational concept of "lifelong learning" has been coined to describe a more self-motivated, voluntary, and ongoing pursuit of knowledge. Lifelong learning can be based in curiosity, competitiveness, personal growth, or professional improvement. It can happen during daily interactions with others or with the world around us.

Also important is the understanding that people have a variety of preferred learning styles in order to be engaged and retain information. People learn from on-the-job-training, adult and continuing education, or internet-based learning environments. Many local schools and organizations in Fergus Falls have included the goal of "lifelong learning."

A great example is the Prairie Wetlands Learning Center (PWLC), which launched a partnership with the school district in 2003 "to engage students in science, math, and writing through real-world, field-based learning experiences." Over the years, the Prairie Science Class was formed and formally offered to fourth and fifth graders in the public schools. Curriculum was designed to match state standards, but the learning activities were more engaging than simply sitting at a desk being lectured to. Math might involve measuring the depth or temperature of snow, banding birds and measuring their wingspan, or writing while bundled up in a snowsuit, sitting in a prairie field, observing and reflecting. Molly Stoddard at the PWLC notes that "visiting the center becomes an enjoyable part of a child's growing up years. They become lifelong learners, but also lifelong stewards of the environment."

The Fergus Falls School District is very aware of how the theory and practice of education are changing. Superintendent Jeff Drake says that "an important consideration in program development is identifying the profile of a graduate. What are the qualities, skillsets, habits, and personal characteristics of



Learning "in the field" at the Prairie Wetlands Learning Center.

our successful graduates? How can we prepare them to be happy, thriving citizens in tomorrow's society? We are going to provide an environment that will deliver these kinds of proficiencies. The volume of information and rapid change in the world demands that we prepare students to do things that aren't even invented yet. We need to help produce adaptable young people with core competencies like teamwork, problem solving, writing and critical thinking. This generation will have to be highly adaptable lifelong learners who know how to acquire new talents and stay relevant with changing technology."

Other lifelong learning opportunities in Fergus Falls include a robust private school spectrum and a plethora of programs, clubs, events, classes, and educational material. In addition, M-State Fergus Falls offers more than 20 degrees and programs. Last, but certainly not least, Fergus Falls Community Education provides opportunities for lifelong learning for citizens of all ages. Classes include Early Childhood Education programs for young children and their parents, adult enrichment classes, youth programs, volunteer opportunities, classes for adults with disabilities, and adult basic education. Some of the most popular are food preparation, pottery, digital photography, and welding.

FOCUS ON THE "OPENERS"

Everyone loves a good opener and we take pride in the opportunity. The state openers honor sports that hold great tradition, respect and provide economic impact in Minnesota. In 2019, Fergus Falls hosted the **MN Governor's Deer Opener** and Otter Tail County hosts the **Governor's Fishing Opener** in 2020. We intend to bid on the **2021 Governor's Pheasant Opener!** Wouldn't that trifecta be a trophy catch?



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From “ma and pa” motels to impressive conference hotel properties, 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 Tourism Association web site at OtterTailLakesCountry.com lets you search resort properties based on many amenities.




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Finding Outdoor Fun in Fergus Falls

by Steve Heriot

Are you an outside person looking for something new to do in the great outdoors? Let's take a quick look at a few of the many outdoor recreational opportunities available in the Fergus Falls area.

Perhaps you are fascinated by birds? Have you ever wanted to know more about their habits or range, or what their songs might mean? 'Birding' is sort of like a scavenger hunt! All you need are a pair of binoculars, a field guide, and a little time to spend outdoors. Fortunately, you've come to the right place for bird watching; Fergus Falls is the anchor for the 200-mile Pine to Prairie Birding Trail. The trail stretches north to Warroad, traveling through diverse terrain and habitat. The trail extends another 300 miles north of Minnesota into Manitoba. A trail guide is available at the Chamber of Commerce and can be downloaded online at MNBirdTrail.com.

Fans of mountain biking will be happy to know that Ferber Park offers mountain bike trails, a section of the North Country Scenic Hiking Trail, eight acres of prairie grass and pollinators, and attracts bikers, hikers, bees, birds and butterflies! The trails are open from sunup to sundown, and are located in the northeast corner of the city. It is a primitive park with a few parking spots, a bike rack and information kiosk. More trails are planned for the future.

Have you ever wanted to try disc golf? For a minimum investment in a couple of discs, you can enjoy one of the fastest-growing sports in the United States. According to the Professional Disc Golf Association (PDGA) there are more

than 5,000 courses and more than 3,000 PDGA sanctioned tournaments in the U.S. annually. Delagoon Park in Fergus Falls features a scenic, 27-hole course that is moderately hilly and wooded. There are signs at each tee, new rubber tee pads, and sturdy baskets. The course is family-friendly and features long and short tees on every hole. Wetland hazards create a challenging experience on the course, which also meets PDGA standards for sanctioned tournaments. Follow "Delagoon Disc Golf Course" on the UDisc Golf app for tournament information and course updates.

Traditional golf enthusiasts can play the Pebble Lake Golf Course, which offers 18 holes and 6,780 yards of championship golf with rolling terrain, tree-lined fairways, and fast greens. The layout offers multiple challenges, yet has five sets of tees to suit every level of golfer. In addition, the course features a full-service practice facility, pro shop, nostalgic clubhouse with deck, event space and bar.

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 on the Otter Tail River, east of town. Improved trails and parking make access to the site an easy hike from the top. Fishing, swimming and kayaking are popular from the water.

Whether your interests are in fishing, hunting, swimming, boating, hiking, biking, birding, golfing or just relaxing and enjoying the scenery, the Fergus Falls area has countless activities to enjoy in our great outdoors.



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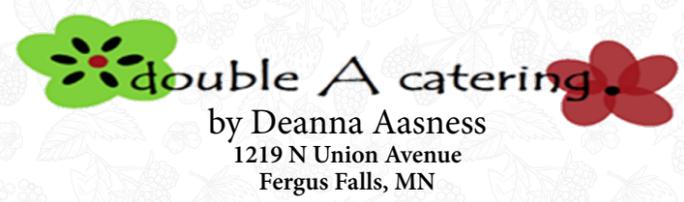


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Art and Culture Is Important for Kids Too

by Steve Heriot

People in Fergus Falls know how important organized art and culture are to a community, and especially to its youngest members. Local art and culture develop community identity, collective pride and sometimes result in neighborhood revitalization and the beautification of public spaces. Art can educate, bring to light social issues, build connections, and help attract both visitors and new residents to a region.

Of utmost importance to a community are the children who will be the adults and decision-makers of the future. Engaging children in creativity at an early age helps inspire them to life's possibilities, stimulate their imaginations, and equip them to be lifelong learners. To that end, local museums, libraries and arts organizations in Fergus Falls have created programs that develop an appreciation for art and culture in young people.

The goal of the new Otter Cove Children's Museum is to use open-play and hands-on educational exhibits to nurture creativity, physical activity, creative exploration, and a lifelong love of learning in children 10 and under. Their mission is to support the optimal development of the region's children by intentionally creating the environment for abundant play opportunities that launch children's imaginations, stimulate skill development, and instill a sense of place and purpose that will last a lifetime. The facility features an indoor playground, infant sensory/crawling area, large motor area, miniature downtown exhibits, craft area, toddler playground, and water sensory space.

The Otter Tail County Historical Society (OTCHS) is a private, non-profit organization whose purpose is the

collection, preservation, and interpretation of Otter Tail County's history, culture, and heritage. They offer an exhibit gallery, guest artists, educational outreach program, special public programs, archival and object collections, and a genealogical and local history research library. The museum also has a wide variety of educational outreach activities including several dozen museum lesson kits with resources such as photographs, artifacts, historical documents and live demonstrations. New this year are lesson kits tailored to kids on the autism spectrum.

They say you can't judge a book by its cover. It might also be said that you can't judge a library by its books, because a library's value to its community is greater than one would first imagine. The new Fergus Falls Public Library includes an expanded children's area with an enclosed early learning activity and programming room. Other features include flexible meeting and study rooms, more computer workstations, and a technology instruction area. New sculptural bike racks were locally designed, produced and installed on the library plaza last summer.

Finally, the 412-seat performance theater, A Center for the Arts, provides Fergus Falls with a year-round variety of excellent programming such as touring performers, live concerts, community theatre, dance, and visual arts programs. Touring ensembles, as well as a local community theater and dance productions, fill the building with energy and entertainment. Outdoor summer concerts fill the streets with that same energy in partnership with several downtown arts organizations including the Kaddatz Galleries, Springboard for the Arts, Fergus Falls School of Dance and Lake Region Arts Council.

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Craft Brew Pubs Pop Up Along the River

by Jean Bowman, photo by Kaleb Rotering

It doesn't take the lazy, hazy days of summer to make an ice-cold, craft beer taste good. And with two new brew pubs along the banks of the Otter Tail River in Fergus Falls, the owners of all three breweries share a sense of community that draws people together.

The current "experienced" owners are Ben and Tessa Schierer of Union Pizza & Brewing Co.; they've been open nearly five years. Fergus Brewing and Outstate Brewing both opened last year. In talking with the owners, it's clear that the dreaming, planning and testing started years ago.

Andy Beck is proud of the Scandinavian feel of the taproom at Fergus Brewing. "Contemporary, clean and warm makes our guests feel comfortable – like they are in someone's home." Perched on a hill overlooking the Otter Tail River, this cow rendering plant turned artist studio turned taproom, seats about 60 people and is open Wednesdays through Sundays. The beer garden is bedecked with twinkle lights and outdoor games and will be connected to a wrap-around-deck this summer

You're right to want to know more about the beer, right? Tommy Velasco, taproom and distribution manager at Fergus Brewing said Beck's degree in laboratory science and love for flavor, texture and appearance have resulted in a variety of delicious seasonal beers. "We have 10 beers on tap at a time," said Velasco. "Our smaller capacity means we can change out a tap with a new flavor or style weekly." Two of the local favorites are the Viking Picnic Lunch (which won first place in the 2019 Craft Beer Tour) and Postman's Breakfast Oatmeal Stout, so-named in honor of Beck's dad, Brad Beck, the local postmaster, who passed away last summer.

Outstate Brewing honors Minnesota's heritage, the culture and lifestyle that is unique to outstate Minnesota. Co-founder

Dan Mohagen describes that culture: "recreation fits into daily life; the pace is relaxed and restful; stars blanket the sky unencumbered by ambient light and a genuine caring for community is evident." A much larger brewery, Outstate's taproom, or great room as they call it, is open daily and often features live entertainment. Brewmaster Patrick Lundberg began brewing in 2011 and has honed his talent with each batch. They can produce six flavors at a time and offer 12 beers on tap

in the great room. Favorites are Northern Light, Bucket Pale Ale and Star Island IPA.

The beers of Outstate and Fergus Brewing are both found in a few restaurants in Fergus Falls, including Union Pizza & Brewing (UPB). "Our brewery includes a restaurant, so we also serve featured beers from all three local breweries," said Schierer. "My wife, Tessa, and I pride ourselves on traditional brick-oven pizza. It goes great with beer!" The menu changes weekly.

All house beers are named after Civil War horses – with Jeff Davis (owned by General Ulysses S. Grant) being a local favorite. With 12 taps, UPB also features varieties from other regional breweries.

All three pub owners stress the importance of being part of the community, of giving back, paying it forward and serving as a gathering place for new and old friends to gather. The Schierer family (Ben, Tessa and five kids) all have a role to play in the success of the business. "We model hard work, a sense of responsibility to community...and make time for fun," notes Schierer. Since Schierer is also the Mayor of Fergus Falls, constituents know where to find him to share ideas and feedback!

We hope you'll do a local beer hop and check out all three breweries during your next visit. Or if you'd like to experience many local and regional beers all at once, join us March 21 for the Craft Beer Tour at the Bigwood Event Center. Tickets are available online at CraftBeerTours.com/Get-Tickets/Fergus-Falls-Craft-Beer-Tour.



Fergus Falls craft brew owners Ben Schierer left, Patrick Lundberg and Andy Beck.

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Aviation Helps Fergus Falls Soar

by Steve Heriot

There's plenty of buzz about airplanes, air traffic and community events at the Fergus Falls Municipal Airport. Access to air transportation can help communities retain and attract businesses and provide jobs. It is also a major factor in the relocation decisions of many businesses.

The U.S. aviation industry creates economic growth, supports 62 million jobs, and creates nearly three trillion dollars of economic impact. In addition, thousands of businesses in our nation rely on general aviation aircraft and airports to reach and compete in the global market.

Fergus Falls Municipal Airport (Einar Mickelson Field) is one of over 5,000 general aviation airports in the U.S. It handles personal and business transportation, agricultural operations, support for medical transport, transportation of freight, law enforcement, firefighting activities, and recreational flying.

The primary runway is 100 feet by 5,640 feet and the crosswind runway measures 75 feet by 3,300 feet. The airport has a variety of instrument approaches and offers fuel service for Jet-A and 100LL, A&PIA Maintenance Service, and aircraft storage.

The airport serves the community in a variety of ways, according to Andrew Yaggie, an airport board member. "Our airport is the gateway to the lakes. People use the airport for different purposes such as tourism, business, and cargo. On an average summer weekend, you might see a variety of aircraft, from a Super Cub to a Cessna Citation 12-seat business jet. Early last December Santa even flew in to our airport as part of the Over-the-River Holiday Festival!"

Yaggie says that he and others in the community enjoy introducing people to aviation. One such organization that accomplishes just that is the Fergus Falls Area EAA (Experimental Aircraft Association) Chapter, a group of local aviation enthusiasts who fly, build, restore or simply enjoy airplanes and aviation. Their main project is the Young Eagles Program which brings volunteers into the schools. Each year over 500 local students get to enjoy flying, many for their first time. The chapter also hosts the Annual Fly In, which is held in conjunction with the Fergus Falls Summerfest. Yaggie invites visitors to join them for the 2020 Fly In on June 14 and enjoy the Belgium Waffle Breakfast during the event. More information can be found on their website: 1174.EAAChapter.org.



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