

Winter 2024

# NEWS from AMERICAN TRUST & SAVINGS BANK



## New Year Letter

As we anticipate the New Year, we look forward to the many opportunities it can bring. Hopefully you enjoyed the holidays with family and friends and created many warm memories.

At American Trust and Savings Bank, we value the relationships we have shared with you and your family over the years. We are proud of the safety and innovation we have provided to meet customer needs. Whether you bank in person, from your desktop computer, or your smartphone, you have convenient access to your personal or business account.

We work hard to support Lowden and the surrounding area with loans and donations and our employees are active volunteers in our community.

Make it your New Year's resolution to tell your friends and neighbors about American Trust. We sincerely appreciate your past patronage and offer you our best wishes for a prosperous New Year!

*Miss* *That* *Rich*  
*Sandy* *Joi* *Ann Marie*

## Karma Kruckenberg retires after 47 years

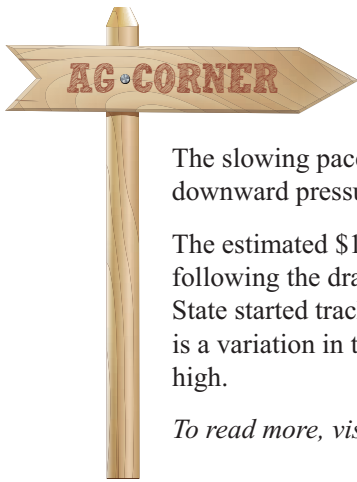


Karma Kruckenberg retired from American Trust & Savings Bank on October 27 after 47 years of service to the bank. She is a long-time resident of Lowden and joined the bank after graduation from Clarence-Lowden High School. Karma resides in the home she grew up in and is looking forward to traveling in retirement.

From the staff and directors at ATSB:  
Karma, we want to thank you for your 47 years of hard work and dedication to not only the bank but also to the customers that have come to rely on you. Your knowledge will not be replaced easily and will be truly missed. Thank you for your hard work and dedication to your job! We are very sad to see you go but wish you the best for the future! Congratulations on your retirement!

## A Bit of History

In November 1976, the annual family night for the Lowden Laddies and Lassies 4-H clubs was held at the Middle School in Lowden. The Lowden Sun-News reported that William Stout, CEO of American Trust & Savings Bank, awarded silver dollars to each 4-H member who had completed a record book. Among the young ladies who received an award was Karma Kruckenberg. 1976 was the year that Karma began her 47-year career at American Trust.



## Outlook for land values in 2024 and beyond

The slowing pace of the growth in Iowa farmland values is not really a surprise for some. This is explained by the downward pressures by rising interest rates, lower commodity prices, and higher input costs.

The estimated \$11,835 per acre statewide average for all qualities of land in Iowa represents a modest increase, following the dramatic 17% surge last year. That means that Iowa farmland values, still at an all-time high since Iowa State started tracking the land value information in the 1940s, have started to cool off. Despite the slowing pace, there is a variation in the change and inflation-adjusted land values in 42 out of 99 counties in Iowa are still at an all-time high.

To read more, visit: <https://www.extension.iastate.edu/agdm/articles/chandio/ChaDec23.html>

### Guess the photo and you could win!



Can you guess where in Lowden this photo was taken? If so, submit your entry, including your name, address, phone and email address. Drop it by or send it to the bank at:

**309 McKinley Avenue  
PO Box 129  
Lowden, IA 52255.**

Correct entries will be entered in a drawing for four (4) \$25 gift certificates to local merchants. Entries must be received by February 29, 2024.

*Watch our next newsletter for the ATSB Quiz.*

### We have winners!

Bill and Barb Ihns correctly guessed that the photo in our Fall newsletter was taken at 612 Main Street in Lowden. They will receive a \$25 gift certificate for Lowden merchants.



Employees, directors and their immediate families are not eligible.

### Scammers hide harmful links in QR codes to steal your information

QR codes seem to be everywhere. You may have scanned one to see the menu at a restaurant or pay for public parking. And you may have used one on your phone to get into a concert or sporting event, or to board a flight. There are countless other ways to use them, which explains their popularity. Unfortunately, scammers hide harmful links in QR codes to steal personal information. Here's what to know.

There are reports of scammers covering up QR codes on parking meters with a QR code of their own. And some crafty scammers might send you a QR code by text message or email and make up a reason for you to scan it. These are some of the ways they try to con you:

- they lie and say they couldn't deliver your package and you need to contact them to reschedule
- they pretend like there's a problem with your account and you need to confirm your information
- they lie, saying they noticed suspicious activity on your account, and you need to change your password

These are all lies they tell you to create a sense of urgency. They want you to scan the QR code and open the URL without thinking about it.

A scammer's QR code could take you to a spoofed site that looks real but isn't. And if you log in to the spoofed site, the scammers could steal any information you enter. Or the QR code could install malware that steals your information before you realize it.

So how can you protect yourself?

- **If you see a QR code in an unexpected place, inspect the URL before you open it.** If it looks like a URL you recognize, make sure it's not spoofed — look for misspellings or a switched letter.
- **Don't scan a QR code in an email or text message you weren't expecting — especially if it urges you to act immediately.** If you think the message is legitimate, use a phone number or website you know is real to contact the company.
- **Protect your phone and accounts.** Update your phone's OS to protect against hackers and protect your online accounts with strong passwords and multi-factor authentication.

# Need a Loan for Your New Small Business?

New small business owners typically need to borrow money to buy equipment and supplies, pay employees, and otherwise finance their operations. To help you get a loan that fits your needs, these are some basics to consider on your road to success.

## **Improve your chances of getting a good loan**

Start by having a well-prepared business plan. Showing proposed earnings can reassure lenders that a loan will be repaid.

## **Maintain a good business and personal credit history**

Manage your business and personal credit well to increase the likelihood of being approved for a loan when you need it. A good credit score and history suggests to banks and other financial institutions that you have handled your finances well, and it can help you qualify for better loan terms, which helps save you money.

## **Monitor your credit report for accuracy**

An accurate credit history is important to building and maintaining good credit. Many criteria go into a credit score, including your payment history and the number and type of loans that you have. Monitoring your credit report can help you ensure that the information is accurate, and if not, then you can take steps to correct it in a timely manner. Monitoring your credit report will also help you guard against identity theft, scams, and avoid unexpected credit issues when you go to apply for a loan.

## **Understand the different types of financing**

For most small businesses, operations are financed in three key ways (not including investments or loans from family and friends):

1. Personal lines of credit
2. Business lines of credit provide a convenient way for a business to borrow up to a certain dollar amount and repay it in installments with interest over several years. Business owners should consider how and when the business will generate revenue to repay the loan. Short-term financing tools should not finance costly, long-term investments.
3. Business term loans, which establish a set dollar amount repaid in installments over three or more years, are recommended for purposes such as financing the purchase of equipment or a vehicle. Often, the asset that is purchased secures these loans. Term loans mean predictable payments for businesses, but unlike lines of credit, a business may have to make a new application if it needs to borrow additional funds.

Questions? Visit with a loan officer at American Trust & Savings Bank who will be happy to help.



Source: FDIC Consumer News

## Remember your 2023 IRA Contribution

Individual retirement accounts, or IRAs, are personal savings plans that offer tax advantages as you save for retirement. The amounts in these accounts generally are not taxed until you take a distribution starting as early as age 59½ but not later than age 72.

For 2023, you generally can contribute up to \$6,500 to a traditional IRA. This limit can be split between a traditional and a Roth IRA but the combined limit is \$6,500. If you are 50 years of age or older before the end of 2023, the maximum contribution that can be made to a traditional or Roth IRA is \$7,500.

If you're changing jobs or about to retire, rolling over your retirement account to a secure investment is also very important.

American Trust also offers Roth and SEP accounts. A SEP (simplified employee pension) plan provides employers with a simplified method to make contributions toward their employees' retirement and, if self-employed, their own retirement.







## Mark Your Calendar

*If you would like us to publish upcoming community events, be sure to contact us at the bank. We'll include it in our quarterly newsletter.*

### Lowden Lions Soup Luncheon

**Sunday January 28, 2024**

**Location: American Legion**

**Time: 10:30 am – 1 pm**

Goodwill donation.

### Fish Fry

Visit the Lowden American Legion on these dates for the All-You-Can-Eat Fish Fry:

**Friday, February 2**

**Friday, March 1**

**Friday, April 5**

Serving from 5:30 to 7:30 pm.

Only \$18 for adults and \$5.00 for children 5 to 12. Carry outs are available.

### Bank Holidays

The bank will be closed on **Monday, January 15** for Martin Luther King Day;

**Monday, February 19** for Presidents' Day;

and will close at 3 pm on Good Friday, **March 29, 2024.**

## A Digital Banking Experience Created Just for You

American Trust provides Online and Mobile Banking free of charge to our customers who want 24/7 access to their funds and other bank-related services. Whether you choose to bank using your smartphone or online, you'll be amazed at the array of features and functions available.

The Bill Pay feature can be added to your Online Banking account. With Bill Pay you can:

- Pay bills anytime, from any computer.

- Pay anyone you can write a check to, which eliminates checks and stamps
- Specify the payment date of your choice.
- Schedule monthly bills to pay automatically, like your mortgage, utility bill, car payment and more.
- View your transaction history.

So, enroll now to see how easy it is to deposit checks, transfer funds, check account balances, set up account alerts, or pay bills—all at your fingertips.

**Did You Know?**

**Our ATM and debit cards are now real-time**

To better serve our customers, American Trust is now processing ATM and debit card transactions in real-time. Real-time processing allows customer's balance information to simultaneously be updated in both the bank, debit card, and the ATM databases following a transaction.

## The Class of 2036

This Fall the bank donated 41 t-shirts to the Kindergarten classes in Lowden and Mechanicsville. The Class of 2036 is pictured here in their new American Trust t-shirts. We look forward to watching their progress in the years to come!

**LOWDEN**



**MECHANICSVILLE**



From Our Friends At

**AMERICAN**  
TRUST & SAVINGS BANK  
Lowden, IA

*front*

**GO KNIGHTS!**  
class of  
**2036**

*back*



**AMERICAN**  
TRUST & SAVINGS BANK

[www.atsb-lowden.com](http://www.atsb-lowden.com)

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