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2022 COMMUNITY GUIDE
WEBSTER
COUNTY

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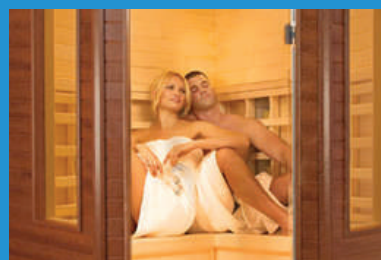
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WELCOME TO THE COUNTY OF

WEBSTER

I O W A

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At a glance

WEBSTER

County IOWA

WEBSTER COUNTY 35,904

CITY	POPULATION
Fort Dodge	24,278
Gowrie	952
Dayton	772
Coalville	722
Badger	522
Otho	429
Lehigh	395
Duncombe	381
Callender	368
Harcourt	264

WEBSTER COUNTY, IA is county in the U.S. state of Iowa. As of the 2010 census, the population was 38,013, but decreased to 35,904 according to the 2020 census. The county seat is Fort Dodge. The county was established in January 1851, one of 43 counties established by a legislative package. This county was named after Daniel Webster, an American statesman noted for his moving oratory.

Webster County comprises the Fort Dodge, IA Micropolitan Statistical Area. With an area of 718 square miles, of which 716 square miles is land and 2.8 square miles or 0.4% is water.



Webster County, formally known as Yell County, was created by act of the General Assembly in 1851. It was named for the second Governor of Arkansas, Colonel Archibald Yell, who was killed at the Battle of Buena Vista in the Mexican War. It embraced all of the present territory of Webster except the north tier of congressional townships. The county had never been organized up to 1853, when by act of the Legislature it was incorporated with the new county of Webster.

This county was formed by uniting the former county of Webster, which had first been named Risley, Risley was created in 1851 and embraced the territory now consisting of Hamilton County,

with Yell County; making thirty-two congressional townships. The name of Webster was given by this act and the county of Yell ceased to exist.

In recent presidential elections, Webster County had a strong Democratic lean, voting for the party's candidate in every election from 1984 to 2012. In 2016 however, the county swung hard to vote for Republican Donald Trump by a wide margin, a nearly 27 point swing compared to 2012.

Robert Schliske, member of the Wyoming House of Representatives, 1971-1975, born in Webster County.

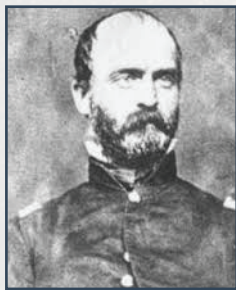
FORT DODGE

The area where Fort Dodge would be built had long been called home to the Sioux, Winnebago, and Sac and Fox before Iowa became a part of the Louisiana Purchase in 1803. Up until the time that Lewis and Clark came through in 1805, the region was only known to the American Indian tribes and French fur traders.

In 1835, one of the first explorations of the area was made by three companies of the 1st U.S. Dragoons led by Lieutenant Colonel Stephen Kearny. The objective was to identify future sites for military posts. The men traveled up the Des Moines River, through southern Minnesota before heading south to the Fort Dodge area. When they came upon Lizard Creek, they noted how the site would be suitable for a potential fort along the Des Moines River.

A few years later a stage line would follow the same path the soldiers had taken, which would become known among the early settlers as the “Dragoons’ Trail.”

Brevet Major Lewis Armistead, who had scouted the area earlier, chose the very site that was recommended by the Dragoons 15 years earlier. Overlooking the junction of the Des Moines River and Lizard Creek, the site offered good water, timber and stone for building. Armistead led in the construction of the post and brought in a steam sawmill to speed up the work. Fort Dodge was named in honor of Colonel



Henry Dodge, the U.S. Senator of Wisconsin Territory (which included Iowa at the time) and the founder of the Dragoons.

The next spring, nine more buildings were constructed. The population at the post consisted of three commissioned officers, 10 non-commissioned officers, about 75 enlisted men and 40 civilians, many of whom were family members of the soldiers.

Unfortunately, three years after it was established the post was decommissioned and the soldiers were ordered to Minnesota to establish Fort Ridgley. It would be years before the “town” was officially established.

Today, the reconstructed Fort Museum and Frontier Village is located on the southwest edge of Fort Dodge. It is a full-scale recreation of a military outpost on the prairie from the 19th century and also features a reconstructed village from the same time period.

Buildings and corresponding collections include a family cabin, church, one room school house, cabinet shop, land office, general store, drug store, jail, print shop, blacksmith shop, livery stable, pottery building and tinsmith shop. Other collections included are prehistoric, military, Native American, Civil War, period furniture and early Fort Dodge artifacts.

The only remaining cabin from the fort which established Fort Dodge is dedicated to Lewis A. Armistead, a confederate general killed at Pickett’s Charge during

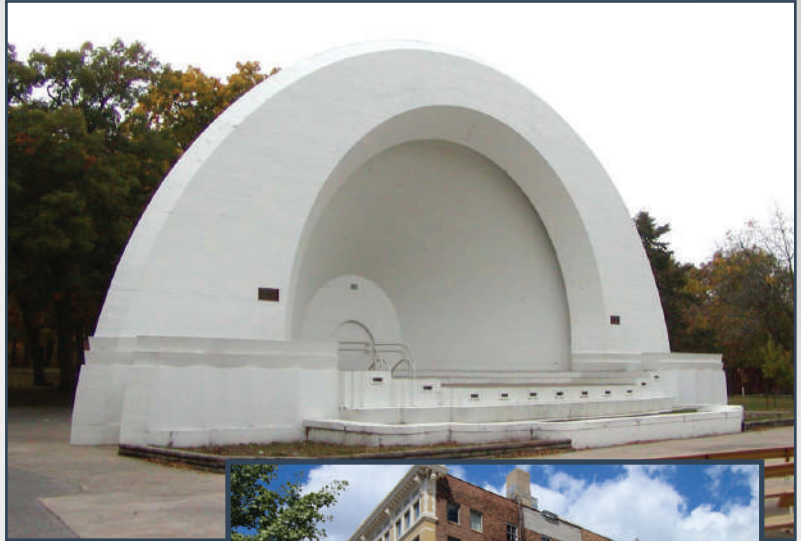
For more information please visit: www.legendsofamerica.com/ia-fortdodge/

IOWA

Webster County

the Battle of Gettysburg. Prior to joining the confederacy, Armistead served as Quartermaster at Fort Dodge. Another special exhibit building tells the story of the Cardiff Giant, one of the most famous hoaxes from the 19th century which was carved from gypsum mined near Fort Dodge.

The annual event of “Frontier Days” is held on the Fort Museum grounds. It features a parade, beauty pageant, historical reenactments, a buckskinner camp, and live entertainment.



PLACES OF

Gowrie

The city was named after Gowrie, in Scotland.

Each year, the town hosts the Gowrie 4th of July Celebration, which draws thousands of people from around the state for the parade, fireworks, carnival, and bandshell performances. The parade is the longest running consecutive parade in Iowa, beginning in 1873 and continuing each year since.

Several churches stand in testament to a strong faith community, including both Methodist and Lutheran churches. Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church, a magnificent open-arched structure, was built by hometown business, Johnson Lumber Company, owned by Axel and Carl Johnson, and was completed in March, 1931.



Dayton

The city was named after Dayton, Ohio.

Since 1937, Dayton has been the site of a rodeo on Labor Day weekend. It began with a pair of local cowboys and has grown to a National Championship Rodeo, sanctioned by the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association. The rodeo features bareback riding, saddle bronc riding, bull riding, calf roping, team roping, steer wrestling, barrel racing, and the wild horse race.



IOWA

Webster County

Coalville

Coalville takes its name from the coal mines of the area. It began as one of the northernmost coal mining towns in Iowa. Early settlers were mining coal from outcrops along the Des Moines River by 1860, and in 1870, a mine was opened on Holiday Creek, about a mile east of Coalville, with a 3-mile tramway to the Dubuque and Sioux City Railroad (later the Illinois Central).



Badger



Located eight miles northeast of Fort Dodge, Iowa in Webster County covering about 680 acres. Population is 522.

Badger Township was organized on October 10, 1865, and the town of Badger was laid out and plotted by Charles Knudson in 1882. Knudson is known as the “Founder of Badger”.

Badger had been recognized as a town since 1882, but it was not until February 8, 1900, that the town was incorporated.

PLACES OF

Otho

Is a city in Webster County, Iowa, with a population of 429.

According to the United States Census Bureau, the city has a total area of 0.46 square miles (1.19 km²), all of it land.

The median age in the city was 42.6 years.



Lehigh

Located in a valley, Lehigh is divided in two by the Des Moines River, unusual for such a small town. Originally the two halves of Lehigh were two separate towns. While the town on the west side of the River was always called Lehigh, the east town was called Slabtown, and a piece of history marks the east side's roots—a sign that hangs over the playground with the words "Slabtown Traders," perhaps alluding to the flea market that occurs there every summer during Lehigh River Days.

IOWA

Webster County

Duncombe

Is a city in Webster County, Iowa, in the United States. The population is 381.

Duncombe is named for Hon. J. F. Duncombe.

According to the United States Census Bureau, the city has a total area of 1.97 square miles (5.10 km²), all of it land.

The median age in the city was 40.5 years.



Callender



Between 1866 and 1870 the Des Moines Valley Railroad Company constructed tracks between Des Moines and Fort Dodge. The other end of the line originated at Keokuk, Iowa (at the confluence of the Des Moines and Mississippi rivers). At 7 to 10 mi intervals were 38 stops between Keokuk and Fort Dodge. Kesho, town that would become Callender, was the 36th stop.

In 1875, the town was renamed Callender in honor of Agnes and James Callender of Brooklyn Heights, New York City, New York who owned all of the land on the west side of the railroad tracks and much of the surrounding area—Webster's Prairies.

Places to visit

and things to do

Dolliver Memorial State Park

A state park of Iowa, US, featuring high bluffs and deep ravines on the Des Moines River. The park is located 10 miles south of Fort Dodge and 3 miles northwest of Lehigh.

2757 Dolliver Park Ave, Otho, IA 50569
(515) 359-2539

Brushy Creek State Recreation Area

A State Recreation Area is a state park in Webster County, Iowa in the United States. With an area encompassing over 6,000 acres, the facility is one of Iowa's largest public outdoor recreation areas.

Lehigh, IA 50557
(515) 543-8298

Gypsum City OHV Park

Is located on the southeast corner of Fort Dodge. The park is approximately 800 acres in size and includes 60 miles of trails for use by ATV's, side by sides and off-road motorcycles.

2390 Mill Rd, Fort Dodge, IA 50501
(515) 576-4258

The Fort Museum and Frontier Village

Replica 19th-century fort featuring period-furnished structures, including a jail & drugstore.

1 Museum Rd, Fort Dodge, IA 50501
(515) 573-4231

Blanden Memorial Art Museum

Located in the Historic Oak Hill District of Fort Dodge, a city on the Des Moines River settled in the 1850s and developed as a mining, agricultural and commercial center of Webster County.

920 3rd Ave S, Fort Dodge, IA 50501
(515) 573-2316

Kennedy Park

Camping is popular at this 400-acre natural area with hiking trails & a lake for fishing & swimming.

1415 Nelson Ave, Fort Dodge, IA 50501
(515) 576-4258

Lizard Creek

Lizard Creek is a stream located near Des Moines, Fort Dodge, Iowa in the United States. The streambed is almost all rock and sand with many large boulders. It is west of Fort Dodge, Iowa. Also the water is known to be unusually clear for midwestern streams.

Rosedale Rapids Aquatic Center

1111 N 32nd St, Fort Dodge, IA 50501
(515) 955-4284

First National Bank Building

The First National Bank Building, now known as the Central Place Apartments, is an historic building located in Fort Dodge, Iowa, United States. The First National Bank was established in 1866 and grew to become the city's principal financial institution

629 Central Ave, Fort Dodge, IA 50501

Woodman Hollow State Preserve

Woodman Hollow State Preserve is located in Webster County, Iowa, 7 miles southeast of Fort Dodge and 6 miles northwest of Lehigh. The preserve is a satellite area of Dolliver Memorial State Park, located 2 miles to the south. 2501

Woodman's Hollow Rd, Otho, IA 50569

IOWA

Webster County

Webster County Museum

We have a selection of items from Webster County. This memorabilia comes from churches, schools, businesses, etc. We also have some items from the Gypsum Mills including, pictures, tiles, and bricks.

515 School Street
Otho, IA 50569

Fort Dodge Public Library

Completed in 2001 the Fort Dodge Public Library encompasses 32,000 square feet. The building, located at 424 Central Avenue, houses the Fort Dodge Public Library, the Karl L. King Band, the Webster County Historical Society, the Webster County Genealogical Society and the Friends Bookshop on the Square.

424 Central Ave.
Fort Dodge, IA 50501
515-573-8167
fdplinfo@fortdodge.lib.ia.us

Community Orchard

50 acre apple orchard located in North Central Iowa. Home decor, fall decor, bakery and the Apple Orchard Cafe round out this venue. Open August 1st til December 23rd. It features a large jumping pillow, farm tile slide, farm tile rollers, goats, llamas and two pot bellied pigs.... Try the pedal karts, play in the corn box and participate in the duck races.

New Corn Maze every year.
2237 160th St, Fort Dodge, IA 50501-8547
515-573-8212

Soldier Creek Winery

Taste any or all of the wines, complimentary. During your tasting, if you have questions, just ask. Our hosts can tell you about our grape selection, production methods, and what makes each wine special.

1584 Paragon Ave, Fort Dodge, IA 50501-8532
515-216-0987

Shiny Top Brewing

Nice small scale craft brewery in downtown Fort Dodge. Comfortable relaxing bar-tap room area. Lots of tasty beer varieties. Get a growler to go and check out their Facebook page for current beer offerings.

520 Central Ave, Fort Dodge, IA 50501-3810
515-302-8055

Studio Fusion

DIY Art Studio specializing in fused glass. Also offering pottery and canvas painting. No studio fee. Cost based on piece selected. Cost includes materials, studio time, instruction, clean-up and kiln firing if required.

21 S 12th St, Fort Dodge, IA 50501-4831
515-570-4442

Fort Frenzy

Complete with attractions, pizza buffet, and arcade, there is something fun for all members of the family. Year round attractions include; Spin Zone, laser tag, mini bowling. Season attraction: Go-karts, mini golf, bumper boats, and skating.

3232 1st Ave S, Fort Dodge, IA 50501-6424
515-576-2226

www.tripadvisor.com



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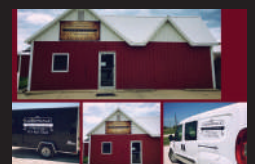


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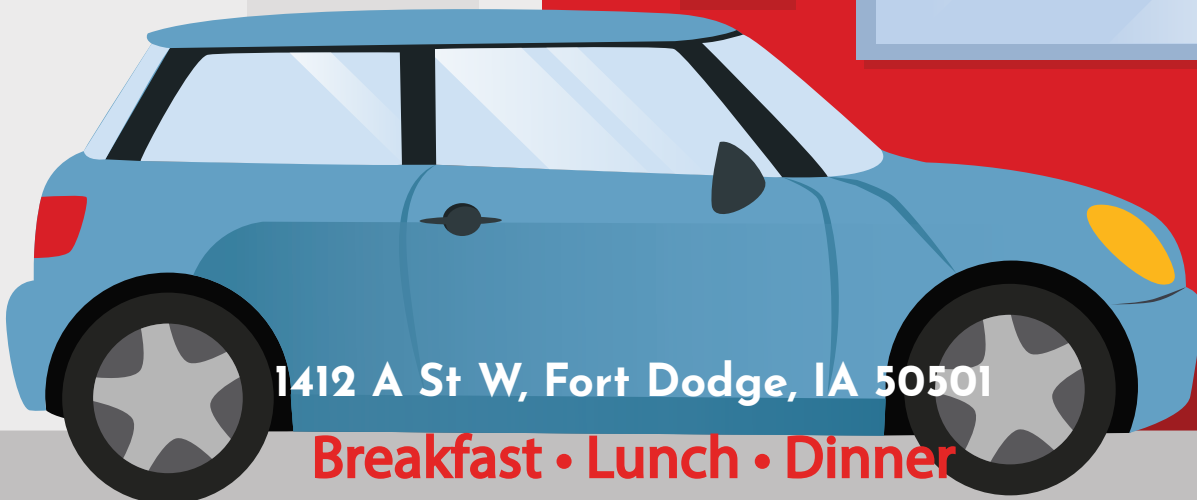


(515) 955-4051

TOM THUMB

Drive
— IN —

HAMBURGERS



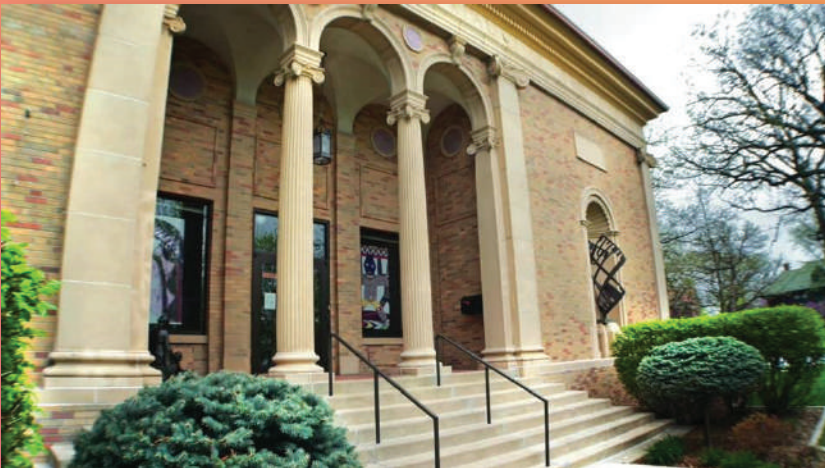
1412 A St W, Fort Dodge, IA 50501

Breakfast • Lunch • Dinner

BLANDEN ART MUSEUM

The mission of the Blanden Art Museum and the Blanden Charitable Foundation is to provide engaging learning opportunities that center on creative exhibits and programming. Integrating visual arts into everyday life.

The Blanden Art Museum is located in the Historic Oak District of Fort Dodge, a city on the Des Moines River settled in the 1850's and developed as a mining, agricultural and commercial center of Webster County.



(515) 573-2316

www.blanden.org

920 3rd Avenue South
Fort Dodge, Iowa 50501



Tue-Sat: 11:00-5:00 PM

CLOSED: Sun. & Mon.

CLOSED Holidays

*Eric Anderson,
Blanden Museum Director*



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(515)-573-1452

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(515)-574-3762

Community Services

(515)-573-1476

Conservation

(515)-576-4258

Court Administration

(515)-574-3751

Emergency Management

(515)-573-1403

Engineer/ Roads

(515)-576-3281

Health

(515)-574-3833

Human Resources

(515)-573-1148

Human Resources

(515) 955-8343

Planning and Zoning

(515)-574-3761

MIS

(515)-574-3733

Recorder

(515)-574-3722

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(515)-576-2453

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