



# spirit of pella



## 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

The Spirit of Pella is a non-profit organization dedicated to connecting people through collaborative community-based projects centered around interactive art, public gathering spaces, a magical holiday season, and special events to preserve our heritage and support an abundant future.

### Here's what we've been up to in 2025!

**Fab Foodie Fridays Free Live Music Series** — Nineteen free concerts made the Klokkenspel the place to be on Friday nights, with eleven of Iowa's best local artists taking the stage in styles ranging from hard rock and bluegrass to pop covers, showtunes, country, and laid-back acoustic.

You spoke, we listened—and added beer. We teamed up with The Cellar Peanut Pub and the Wijn House to roll out a beer garden near the end of the season. **The 2026 season begins Friday, May 22.** If you are a musician or know someone who is, drop us a line at [friends@spiritofpella.org](mailto:friends@spiritofpella.org). **See you there!**



PHOTO BY: DOUGLAS TUPPER PHOTOGRAPHY

**Taking a break never looked so good** — Last summer and fall, you all turned the Klokkenspel into the spot, sipping coffee, sneaking in lunch dates, and enjoying **Fab Foodie Fridays**. We saw the party and thought, why not turn it up? So we worked with the City of Pella and Janssen Fabrication to add four more table-and-chair sets to the six we had already donated. Supporting our community and working with a local business to make it happen? Yeah, we get pretty excited about stuff like that.



**And for something completely different** — We launched Oktoberfest with a bang! Over 500 people enjoyed traditional German eats, sipped traditional brews, and dived into games, all while Alpine Thunder, Chicago's favorite polka band, played. Clover Leaf Kitchen, the Winj House, and The Cellar Peanut Pub were with us from day one, helping turn this idea into a full-on community celebration. So don't even think of putting away your lederhosen or dirndl — **we're doing it again on Saturday, October 10!**



PHOTO BY: DOUGLAS TUPPER PHOTOGRAPHY

**Caldwell Park on ice** — Community members told us that the winter season at Caldwell Park was too short, so we did something about it. The plan? Bring in a serious ice rink chiller and turn the shelter house into everyone's new favorite cold-weather hangout. Thanks to local foundations, community groups, businesses, and a whole lot of seriously generous neighbors, we took on our biggest project yet. We broke ground in October, the Chiller rolled in and was installed by mid-December, and by Christmas Eve, kids (*and more than a few full-grown "kids"*) were out there living their best ice life. We are forever grateful to the City of Pella and to Pella's Ice Sports Association. Without them, it would be rough skating.

We're close — but not done. To finish this phase of the project, we still need to raise \$50,000. **If you love seeing Caldwell Park on ice, jump in with a donation or a [backer board purchase](#).**



PHOTO BY: DOUGLAS TUPPER PHOTOGRAPHY

**Holiday Memories made — and then some.** Over a mile of lights, hundreds of zip ties, and ten sections long, the Tunnel of Lights once again lit up Central Park. Thank you to the City and Janssen Fabrication for helping us make this dream continue to shine!

Working with Pella Fiber and the ever-talented Monte Goodyk, we once again offered free family photos. Dozens of proposals, countless Christmas cards, and a movie cameo later—it still dazzles. We loved everyone who braved the cold, and we absolutely can't wait to do it all again next year on **Thanksgiving weekend**.



PHOTO BY: MONTE GOODYK

**Elevate Pella** — our community is full of dreamers and passionate go-getters who don't just talk about ideas, they make them happen! You've probably noticed a theme in this report—almost nothing happens without a lot of collaboration. That's why we host a huddle three times a year to learn what the other dreamers and doers in our community are working on, and to spark new ways to team up and celebrate Pella's one-of-a-kind character and success. Thank you to the **Pella Opera House** for being our host! If your organization would like to join, [let us know](#).



**Hopes and Dreams** — we've got plenty. ***Did you know we collect community feedback year-round?*** Since we kicked things off, more than 300 people have shared their input through our [survey](#).

Each year, we share the results and trends at Elevate Pella as well as with our city leaders. **Haven't taken the survey yet? What are you waiting for?** Jump in—and nudge your friends and family to do it, too. All ages welcome (and honestly, strongly encouraged!)

**tell us your  
hopes and dreams  
for Pella...**

WE WANT TO KNOW!



**Take the online survey to share  
your BIG ideas!**



**And now, a little about us** — none of this magic happens without an absolutely amazing crew of volunteers. In year five, the Spirit of Pella Board of Directors has grown to thirteen wildly talented people who champion and serve on one or more of our seven working committees: Elevate Pella, Events, Fundraising, Lighting, Marketing, Mural and Arts, and Placemaking.

Each committee welcomes people who are ready to bring their gifts, hopes, and big dreams to the table in support of our mission. If you'd like to jump in and [volunteer](#) for one of our committees in 2026, we'd love to hear from you!

In 2025, we welcomed Stuart Miller to the board of directors. He serves as chair of the Event Committee. Karen Cashen has joined the board, supporting Marketing, and will serve as Vice President. Gene Williamson has joined the board as Treasurer. Brady Dieleman is a new board member and will chair the Lighting committee, stepping in for Jason Bandstra, who is leaving us after five years of service.

Beginning in 2026 we are excited to welcome Kendra Van Wyk on Events and Christy Dykstra on Placemaking.

With 2025 wrapped up, we want to thank all of you who have been our co-conspirators, collaborators, funders, and cheerleaders. We can't wait to dream even bigger in 2026. **Join us and Catch the Spirit!**

### Thank you

Andrew Schneider, KNIA/KRLS  
Bill White  
Carson Wealth  
Central College  
Creative Inspirations  
Douglas Tupper Photography  
Event volunteers: Ciara Ward, Jake Van Essen,  
Janiya Oliver, Samm Breck, and Susan Canfield  
Geetings, Inc.

Giving Tuesday campaign participants:  
Ann Frost, Kim Mulch, Milly Vande Kieft,  
Stuart Miller, and Zoe Runyon  
Gritters Electric  
Janssen Fabrication  
Jim Gosselink, Tulip City Agency  
Kasswagen  
Kim Mulch  
Marion County Bank  
Mike Richards, Pella Technology Services

Pella Engraving  
Pella Hosting  
Pella Real Estate Services  
Pella Rental  
Promotions by Design  
Rick Williamson  
Sweet Henrys  
The Bread Board  
Town Crier  
Wes Chaplin

### 2026 Spirit of Pella Board Members

Christi Vander Voort - President, Marketing  
Karen Cashen - Vice President & Marketing Chair  
Eric Sickler - Secretary, Marketing  
Gene Williamson - Treasurer  
Brady Dieleman - Lighting Chair  
Christy Dykstra - Placemaking  
Stuart Miller - Events Chair  
Kyle Nelson - Fundraising Chair  
Aaron Smith - Placemaking  
Kendra Van Wyk - Events  
Teri Vos - Elevate Pella Co-chair  
Bob Zylstra - Placemaking Chair  
Lisa Zylstra - Elevate Pella Co-chair, Mural & Arts Chair

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