



ARMSTRONG, IOWA

RELOCATION INFORMATION

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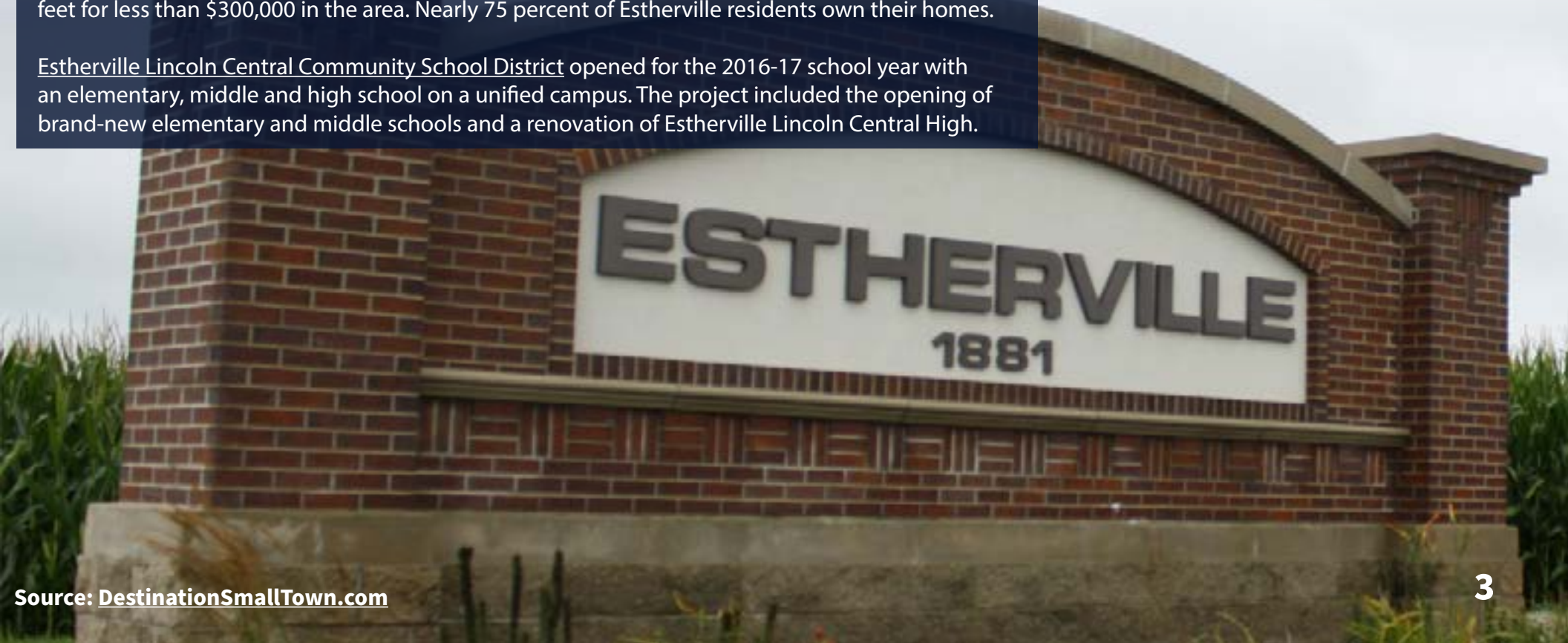
ESTHERVILLE LIVING

Serving as the seat of Emmet County, Estherville is the county's largest city and home to more than 5,900 residents. The town was officially incorporated in 1881 and proudly houses the main campus of Iowa Lakes Community College.

The town has a host of amenities which fans of the outdoors are sure to love — including a wealth of parks and recreational activities. Thoreson Park features 14 acres of fun ranging from playground equipment and volleyball and basketball courts to baseball and softball fields. The city's primary park also has a variety of covered shelters and pavilions to rent during special events. Estherville's outdoor pool and rock garden can be found in Mickelson Park and is a popular summer destination for those in Emmet County. In the winter months, residents can lace up their skates and visit Riverside Park's outdoor skating rink.

Estherville's cost of living ranks nearly 20 percent below the national average, with the median home price hovering near \$87,000. Buyers can find multiroom homes of more than 2,500 square feet for less than \$300,000 in the area. Nearly 75 percent of Estherville residents own their homes.

Estherville Lincoln Central Community School District opened for the 2016-17 school year with an elementary, middle and high school on a unified campus. The project included the opening of brand-new elementary and middle schools and a renovation of Estherville Lincoln Central High.



ESTHERVILLE
1881

OKOBOJI & SPIRIT LAKE LIVING

Located within an hour's commute of Armstrong are the lakefront communities of Okoboji and Spirit Lake. Anchored by four distinct bodies of water (West Okoboji Lake, East Okoboji Lake, Center Lake and Spirit Lake), water enthusiasts will feel right at home in the area. The combined communities are home to more than 5,000 residents.

Home values sit near \$250,000 with nearly three-quarters of residents owning their homes. Both waterfront and landlocked communities can be found scattered around the region. Spirit Lake ranks as the best place to live in Dickinson County, according to Niche.com, and ranks in the top half of Iowa cities in the following categories: retirement, schooling, young professionals and, most importantly, places to live.

Both communities feature strong school systems which rank among the top 25 percent across the state. Spirit Lake Community School District ranks as the 10th best in Iowa for student-athletes and sits in the top 25 percent for best teachers. The district serves more than 1,200 students grades K-12. The Okoboji Community School District educates more than 1,000 students and ranks near the top 10 percent for school safety and in the top 20 percent for best places to teach in the state.

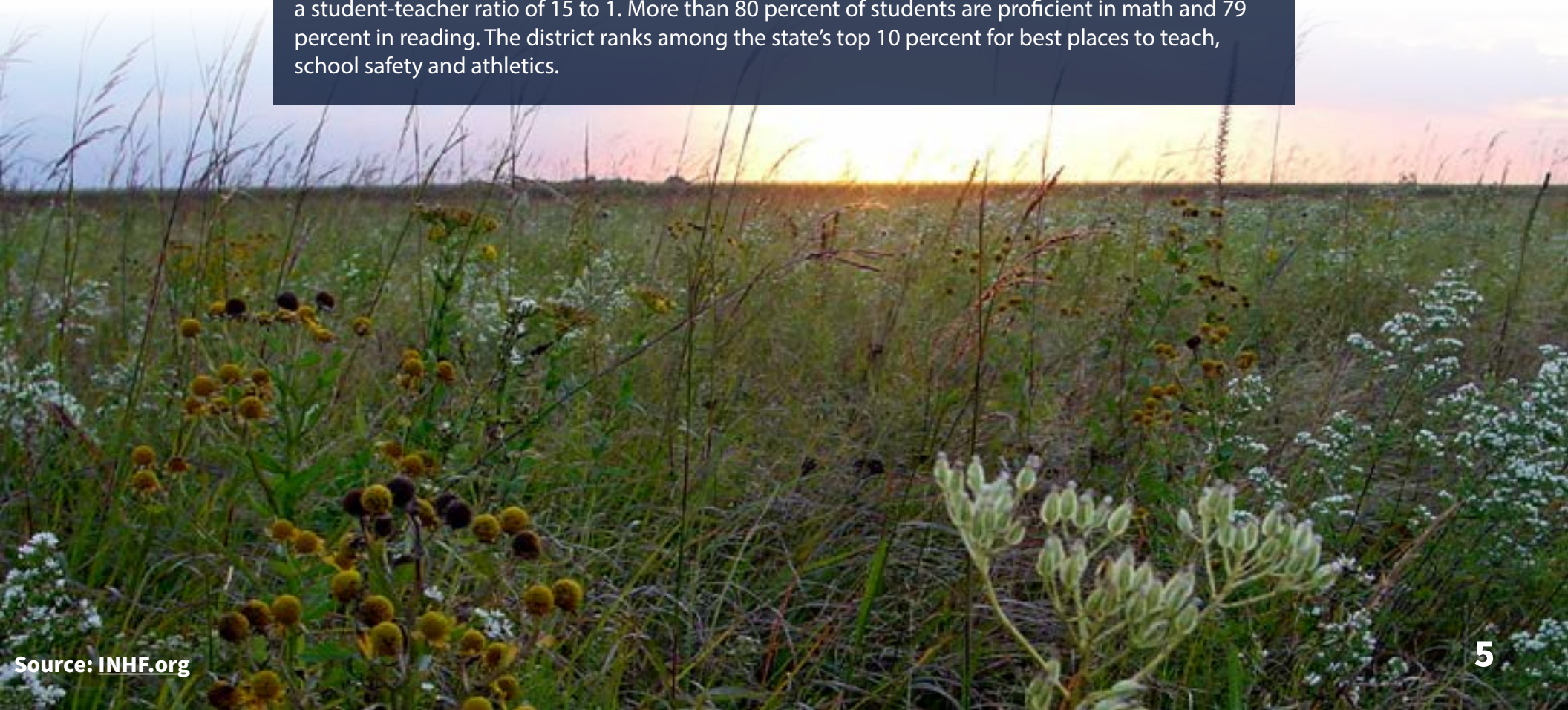
Across the Spirit Lake and Okoboji communities, you'll find an array of public parks and public-use facilities, golf courses, recreational trails, skate parks and, during the winter months, cross-country skiing facilities. That doesn't include the array of water-based activities which can be enjoyed during the beautiful Iowa summers!

KOSSUTH COUNTY LIVING

Less than a half-hour drive from Armstrong is Kossuth County, which ranks in the state's top 25 counties for home buying, cost of living and "best to live in" across Iowa, according to Niche.com. It's home to more than 15,000 residents, one-third of which live in the popular town of Algona.

Algona is located in the southern part of the county and is home to roughly 5,500 community members. The town earned a grade of A- from Niche with high marks for housing, families, cost of living and commutability. Nearly three-quarters of residents own their homes, while median home value hovers just above \$130,000.

The Algona Community School District is comprised of two elementary schools feeding into one middle school and one high school. The district serves a cumulative total of 1,400 students with a student-teacher ratio of 15 to 1. More than 80 percent of students are proficient in math and 79 percent in reading. The district ranks among the state's top 10 percent for best places to teach, school safety and athletics.



Armstrong is the second largest community in Emmet County and is home to nearly 1,000 residents. Those who call Armstrong home enjoy a residential, rural environment with an easy commute to the town's manufacturing organizations. Its location makes it less than an hour's drive to popular towns such as Spirit Lake and Estherville in Iowa and Fairmont across the border in Minnesota.

North Union Community School District serves the area's roughly 450 students who feed into North Union High School. North Union Community ranks among the top third of districts in the state and features reading and math proficiency metrics of 72 and 82 percent, respectively.

Armstrong is just south of Okamanpeedan Lake and Iowa Lake, both of which sit on the Iowa-Minnesota state line. Fans of the water will appreciate the quick trip north to hit the lake shore, where you can enjoy a variety of water-based activities for several months out of the year.



If you're looking to take the family out for a meal, Armstrong — and the area surrounding it — has a variety of options. Yelp recognizes the top six dining options in the area as: Johanson's Café & Pizzeria; Dreyer's Diner; Loafer's Corner; Larow's Café; Harold's Café.

Johanson's Café & Pizzeria: This Armstrong favorite is known for its homestyle cooking with options like a grilled chicken sandwich, French dip, pizza, grilled cheese and even cinnamon rolls if you're up for something on the sweeter side.

Beyond the immediate Armstrong area, the Iowa Lakes Corridor has a number of additional dining options. These include but aren't limited to the Secret Garden Tea Room in Alta; Okoboji Brewing Company in Okoboji; Brewster's Lounge in Storm Lake; Benders in Lake Park; and Pizza Ranch in Spirit Lake.



ARMSTRONG ARTS & CULTURE

Armstrong has a rich history that dates to the 1890s, and much of the town's past is on display at the [Armstrong Heritage Museum](#). Thousands of items from the early days are on display!

Another way that Armstrong highlights its history as well as its appreciation for the armed forces is through the [Freedom Rock Project](#), started by artist Ray "Bubba" Sorenson III in an effort to recognize U.S. military veterans in a unique way. Sorenson wanted to spread the message by instilling Freedom Rocks in small communities throughout Iowa. Armstrong recently added its own and is now a part of the Iowa Freedom Rock Tour. Challenge yourself to find every Freedom Rock in Iowa!

In addition to the Freedom Rock, the arts are on the rise in the Iowa Lakes Corridor. There are a variety of artists, studios, galleries and performances throughout the region. Community theaters such as the [Okoboji Summer Theatre](#) put on classic plays, musicals and contemporary performances. While in Okoboji, tour the six galleries available for viewing at the [Pearson Lakes Art Center](#). Enjoy their permanent Russian impressionist collection or take one of their art classes, which are geared for all ages and skill levels.

Many local artists participate in the [Artisans Road Trip \(ART\)](#) every October. A.R.T. is a free, self-guided studio and gallery tour that highlights work of local artists in a variety of mediums. If you are a novice or experienced artist, check out the art classes that are offered local art centers like [Arts on Grand](#) or [Estherville Arts Center](#).



THEATRE

ARMSTRONG EVENTS & FESTIVALS



Armstrong is known for its Independence Day Celebration. The community's first Fourth of July commemoration in 1872 marked the beginning of the town's yearly event, and since then it has drawn thousands of people from all over the region. The celebration offers a variety of activities for all to enjoy, from a car show, horse rides and parades to sports tournaments, a petting zoo and live music.

Near Armstrong, you can attend the Emmet County Fair and the O'Brien County Fair. The Emmet County Fair is in Estherville and is an ag-based affair with live music, talent shows and contests. The O'Brien County Fair, held in Primghar, sponsors the county's youth in their 4-H and FFA livestock exhibits as well as non-livestock projects; entertainment with "Share the Fun" acts; and educational demonstrations. Both fairs are perfect family-fun events which also offer nightly entertainment.

The Okoboji community hosts the Lakes Area Game Fest, an annual "open gaming" convention for new and experienced gamers, families, and individuals of all ages to learn and play contemporary board and card games. The event proudly donates 25% of all event proceeds to local charities and you can enjoy playing alongside the Okoboji Lake. If you're looking to do more sightseeing, try out the annual Oktoberfest Bike Ride and enjoy the scenic trails and lakeside roads of the Iowa Great Lakes area.

ARMSTRONG OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Armstrong, Iowa offers an abundance of outdoor activities for folks of all ages. The Country Greens Golf Course is a nine-hole, par-38 course in operation since 1975.

Pilot Knob State Park lies approximately an hour from Armstrong and was named the top campground in the area by TheDyrt.com. You can find individuals camping, fishing, hiking and bird watching at Pilot Knob, which is featured in the Iowa Wildlife Viewing Guide. Dead Man's Lake, a 4-acre floating bog, can be found here. This body of water is known as the home of a number of unusual species, including the carnivorous sundew plant.

The Emerson Bay State Recreation Area is only 42 miles from Armstrong — and a mere mile from the Barney Peterson Nature Trail and Gull Point State Park. Emerson Bay is home to West Okoboji, a crystal-clear body of water where Iowans of all ages can spend time. West Okoboji is known as one of the best fishing spots in Iowa, replete with walleye, northern pike, largemouth bass, smallmouth bass, white bass, yellow bass, perch, bluegills, crappies, catfish and bullheads.

During the cold winter months, head to Mount Kato Ski Hill. Just an hour and fifteen minute drive, this winter sports facility is a great spot for skiing, snowboarding and snow tubing. For the ski and snowboard lovers out there, Mount Kato offers 19 trails, three terrain parks, eight chair lifts, two conveyor surface lifts, one tubing park and 5 miles of single-track mountain bike trails — all across 55 skiable acres.

Spring, summer, fall or winter ... no matter the season, you're sure to find an outdoor activity you love!

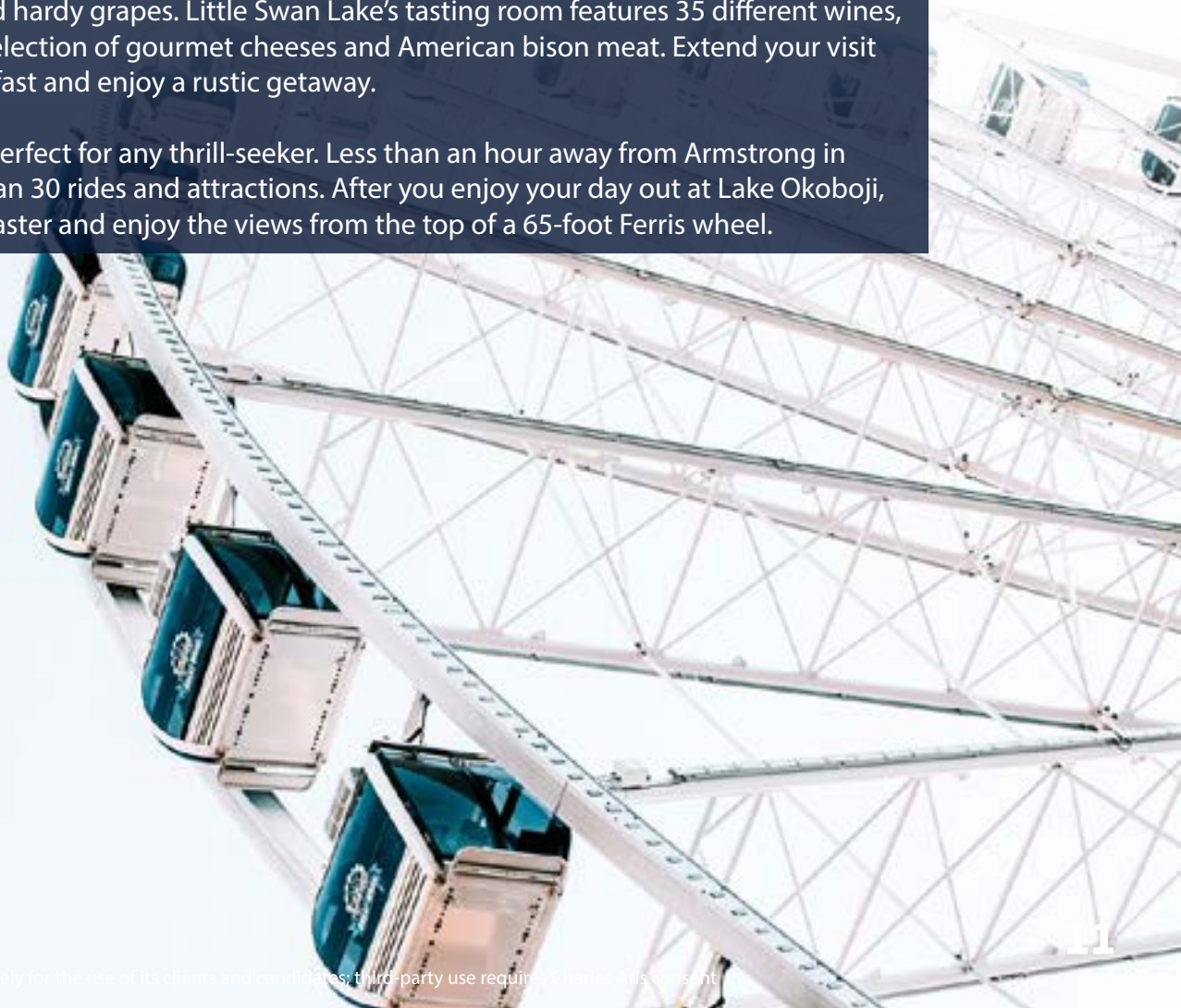


ARMSTRONG SPORTS & ENTERTAINMENT

There are a slew of entertainment options to enjoy in Armstrong. You can get a couple of swings in at Country Greens, a nine-hole public course that can be played by pros and novices alike. Take the family out to Superior 71 Drive-In Cinema, a classic drive-in theater where you can catch two movies for one affordable price. Strike now for fun at Imperial Bowling Lanes, an 80-lane facility with a bar, restaurant and game center. If you're looking to play competitively, join a bowling league! There's one for every group from youth to seniors, men's to women's, or mixed to couples.

If you're a wine enthusiast, check out Little Swan Lake Winery, a family-owned-and-operated business with more than 2 acres of northern cold hardy grapes. Little Swan Lake's tasting room features 35 different wines, all produced on site, as well as a selection of gourmet cheeses and American bison meat. Extend your visit at the accompanying Bed & Breakfast and enjoy a rustic getaway.

Arnolds Park Amusement Park is perfect for any thrill-seeker. Less than an hour away from Armstrong in Okoboji, the venue offers more than 30 rides and attractions. After you enjoy your day out at Lake Okoboji, ride the Legend wooden roller-coaster and enjoy the views from the top of a 65-foot Ferris wheel.



ARMSTRONG MAJOR EMPLOYERS

Major Employers in Greater Armstrong

Art's Way Manufacturing
GKN Armstrong Wheels
TG Industries
Valley Vue Care Center and Spring Creek Assisted Living
North Union School District
GALCO
Rosenberg Electric

With 200 employees across seven facilities, Art's Way Manufacturing Agricultural Equipment is one of the largest employers in Armstrong. The company primarily focuses on the design, development and manufacturing of ag equipment.

Armstrong is supported by the Iowa Lakes Corridor Development Corporation. The Corridor's mission is to aid the economic growth of Iowa's northeast region. The Iowa Lakes Corridor Board of Directors is comprised of four representatives of each of the four counties in the region including Buena Vista, Clay, Dickinson and Emmet counties.

Higher Education

Iowa Central Community College
Iowa Lakes Community College
Buena Vista University

Buena Vista University ranks among the top 20 Midwestern Comprehensive Colleges, according to U.S. News & World Report. It's seen as one of the nation's leading schools in terms of encouraging student leadership, as lauded in The Templeton Guide: Colleges that Encourage Character Development.

Armstrong is centrally located in proximity to six major airports which provide domestic and international services, making travel to and from the area seamless:

- **Rochester International Airport (RST / KRST)** – 131 miles from Armstrong, Iowa
- **Sioux Falls Regional Airport (FSD / KFSD)** – 139 miles
- **Sioux Gateway Airport (SUX / KSUX)** – 152 miles
- **Waterloo Regional Airport (ALO / KALO)** – 165 miles
- **Minneapolis-Saint Paul International Airport** – 167 miles
- **Des Moines International Airport (DSM / KDSM)** – 179 miles



GETAWAY TWIN CITIES

One hundred fifty miles north of Armstrong (approximately two and a half hours of drive time), you'll find the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul. With a population surpassing 3.25 million, this combo community ranks as the 14th largest in the United States. You'll find no shortage of things to do in the area, whether visiting for the day or exploring on a weekend getaway.

From nature walks to shopping, family fun to fine dining and everything in between, there are limitless options. Music fans can stop by the club that made Prince famous — First Avenue — or swing by the Dakota Jazz Club to see the world's most famous jazz musicians. Enjoy touring Broadway shows, art museums and tours across the city, and end your day with a shopping spree at the Mall of America. There are simply too many activities to cover, so we invite you to check out 150 of the best things to do provided by Minneapolis.org.

The Twin Cities are packed with restaurants ranging from executive chef Daniel del Prado's two cornerstones — Colita (Tex-Mex) and Martina (Argentinian-Italian fusion) — to the ever-changing offerings at the Bachelor Farmer. Be sure to hit other popular staples such as the Bar La Grassa or Tilia for a wide range of award-winning dishes. For a more casual experience, grab a slice at Pig Ate My Pizza Kitchen + Brewery or grab one of the area's best burgers at Parlour St. Paul.

Sports fans can enjoy plenty of action, from the diamond to the hardwood, in the Twin Cities. Enjoy springtime in Minnesota as the Twins lace up their cleats 81 times a year in downtown Minneapolis. The NBA's Timberwolves and the NFL's Vikings serve as mainstays during the fall and winter months. College sports enthusiasts can see any of the University of Minnesota's 23 varsity sports around the calendar year. The Golden Gophers compete in the Big 10 Conference at the NCAA Division I level.

GETAWAY SIOUX FALLS

Take a trip to Sioux Falls, South Dakota, warmly known as the Heart of America. It's about a two-hour drive from Armstrong, Iowa, and you'll be amazed by all the things you can do.

Be sure to see its famous falls on the Big Sioux River, near downtown Sioux Falls, in Falls Park. The Park has a café, observation tower and the remains of an old mill. Sioux Falls also offers a 19-mile bike loop with views of downtown, the outskirts of the city, and waterfalls. If you're feeling ambitious, you can also run, jog or walk your dog along the trail.

Take in more of nature's beauty with Sioux Falls' newest outdoor scene: Good Earth State Park. This important cultural and historical site is a natural retreat featuring an array of hiking and birding opportunities.

If you want to see more animals, stop by the Great Plains Zoo, a 45-acre park with more than 1,000 animals from around the world. Or head over to the Butterfly House & Aquarium to enjoy the sight of more than 800 free-flying butterflies as well as sharks, stingrays and other marine species.



Looking for a weekend getaway? Head little more than two hours northeast and you'll find yourself in Rochester, Minnesota. Known as America's City of Care & Innovation, Rochester is home to more than 100,000 residents.

The Quarry Hill Nature Center there is a great place for outdoor lovers, who can observe a number of live animals, birds and fish — and even an impressive taxidermy collection. The center is also home to an indoor hive housing a honeybee colony.

For a slice of Rochester history, head to the Mayowood Mansion, built by Mayo Clinic cofounder Dr. Charles H. Mayo in 1911. With more than 40 rooms, gardens, a decorative arts collection and antiques galore, this is a great stop for those looking to dive deep into the area's history.

On the food scene, Rochester has you covered. TripAdvisor names Pasquale's Neighborhood Pizzeria and Chester's Kitchen & Bar as the area's best.

Pasquale's Neighborhood Pizzeria prides itself on serving up authentic New York-style pizza, right in Minnesota. Chef Pasquale Presa is serving up menu items like La Fresca — an open-face square pie with zucchini, onions, fresh tomatoes, fresh mushroom and mozzarella — or La Americana, a stuffed pie with ham, pepperoni, sausage and mozzarella. There are also calzones, strombolis, sandwiches, soups, salads and desserts.

Chester's Kitchen & Bar, located right on South Broadway Street, has a weekly brunch buffet equipped with all-you-can-eat fare, bottomless mimosas and a number of Chester's specialties. If you come for lunch or dinner, you can expect to find items such as Cajun stuffed mushrooms, pumpkin bread pudding, Cajun swordfish, beef and amablu fondue, brie cheese curds and chicken gouda chopped salad.

To plan your weekend getaway to Rochester, visit ExperienceRochesterMN.com.



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