

# Business Investment Guide

## MARION IOWA

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SMOKY BLE  
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[UptownMarion.com](http://UptownMarion.com) | [CityofMarion.org](http://CityofMarion.org) | [MarionCC.org](http://MarionCC.org) | [Medcolowa.org](http://Medcolowa.org)

# MARION



**Welcome** to one of the Midwest's fastest growing and most dynamic cities.

Marion is a place where people work smarter, set lofty goals and strive to achieve the very best for their families and their community.

We pride ourselves on being the best place in Iowa to raise a family and grow a business. Here, we reach higher in everything we do!

Marion is known for its historic charm and community appeal as well as its progressive, forward-thinking ambitions. Our city is consistently one of the state's safest communities and offers excellent schools, more than 600 acres of parks and trails and an expanding list of award-winning public amenities that help residents experience an unequalled quality of life.

An increasing number of business owners and investors are realizing the potential of Marion and joining our supportive, collaborative business community. On behalf of all who live, work and do business here, we invite you to be part of our city's growth and progress. You'll soon discover that in Marion the sky is not the limit!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nicolas AbouAssaly". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Nicolas AbouAssaly  
Mayor of the City of Marion



A Main Street Iowa District

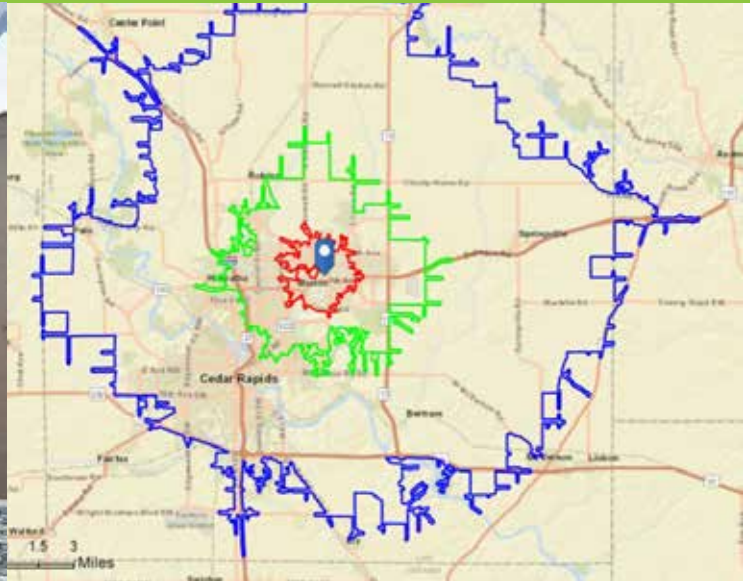


# 8 Reasons To Do Business in Marion



- # 1** **Market Viability & Opportunities** **3-4**  
Explore Marion's demographics and find the market gaps and opportunities
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- # 3** **Financing & Incentives** **7-8**  
Find the right financial incentives to fit your project or business
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Meet your Marion team to walk you through the process
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Engage in fun events and cultural opportunities in Marion
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Experience what it means to be the 'Marion Type'

# The Marion Market



This Market Snapshot highlights and summarizes demographic, lifestyle and retail data, characteristics and trends in the market.

## Growing. Young. Educated. Employed.

Marion is one of the Midwest's fastest growing cities – and one of the youngest per capita at around a population of 40K. With the convenience of nearby Cedar Rapids and the comfort and security of a smaller community, Marion residents enjoy an unrivaled quality of life.

A skilled workforce is essential to business operation, and our workforce is one reason why quality companies invest in our community. The ICR region, which includes Marion, has access to an educated labor-force of over 880,000 workers. Marion's highly educated and skilled workforce enjoys nationally recognized health care, entertainment and business opportunities.

Access to higher education also sets Marion and Iowa's Creative Corridor apart with a premier community college, elite private colleges and a world-renowned public research university all located within driving distance.



### Marion is a Main Street Iowa community.

*The mission of the Main Street Iowa Program is to improve the social and economic well-being of Iowa's communities by assisting selected communities to capitalize on the unique identity, assets and character of their historic commercial district.*



POPULATION

**77,227**

10 MINUTE DRIVE TIME | 2021  
2021—26 GROWTH: .92%

Population	5 Min	10 Min	20 Min
2021 Estimate	21,914	77,227	197,588
Growth (2021-26)	.73%	.92%	.84%

*i* Est. State Pop Growth (2021-26) .52%



DAYTIME POP

**75,836**

10 MINUTE DRIVE TIME | 2021

Daytime Population	5 Min	10 Min	20 Min
Total Daytime Pop	19,519	61,118	141,860
Workers	9,195	38,433	109,655



HOUSEHOLDS

**32,178**

10 MINUTE DRIVE TIME | 2021  
2021—26 GROWTH: 0.88%

Households	5 Min	10 Min	20 Min
2021 Estimate	9,294	32,178	81,407
HH Growth (2021-26)	0.71%	0.88%	0.85%

*i* Est. State HH Growth (2021-26) .55%



MEDIAN HH INCOME

**\$65,776**

10 MINUTE DRIVE TIME | 2021  
2020—25 GROWTH: 0.83%

Median HH Income	5 Min	10 Min	20 Min
2021 Estimate	\$64,419	\$65,776	\$61,393
Growth (2021-26)	0.99%	1.41%	1.24%

*i* 2021 State: \$60,413 | 2021-26 Growth: 1.57%



## HOUSING UNITS

### 2021 HOUSING UNITS SUMMARY

Housing Units	5 Min	10 Min	20 Min
2021 Estimate	10,029	34,511	88,048
- Owner Occupied	69.8%	67.6%	67.3%
- Renter Occupied	22.9%	25.6%	25.1%
- Vacant	7.3%	6.8%	7.5%

Estimated State Percent Vacant (2021) | 9.9%

### HOUSEHOLDS BY TENURE AND MORTGAGE STATUS

2010 Tenure/Status	5 Min	10 Min	20 Min
Owner Occupied	74.6%	70.9%	71.9%
— With Mortgage	54.2%	52.0%	51.4%
— Free and Clear	20.3%	18.9%	20.5%
Renter Occupied	25.4%	29.1%	28.1%



## TENURE AND MORTGAGE



## DIVERSITY

### 2021 DIVERSITY INDEX

Drive Time Households	5 Min	10 Min	20 Min
2021 Diversity Index	25.8	31.4	33.1

*The Diversity Index summarizes racial and ethnic diversity. The index shows the likelihood that two persons, chosen at random from the same area, belong to different race or ethnic groups. The index ranges from 0 (no diversity) to 100 (complete diversity).*



**\$34,744**

PER CAPITA INCOME  
5 MINUTES | 2021

10 Minutes \$35,810

20 Minutes \$33,285

State \$32,417



**39.1**

MEDIAN AGE  
5 MINUTES | 2021

10 Minutes 37.9

20 Minutes 38.8

State 39.4



**95.2%**

2021 EMPLOYED  
5 MIN. CIVILIAN POP 16+

10 Minutes 96.4%

20 Minutes 95.4%

State 95.7%

### 2021 EMPLOYMENT BY OCCUPATION

2021 Employed 16+	5 Min	10 Min	20 Min
Total Estimate	11,642	40,110	101,674
- White Collar	69.2%	71.6%	66.1%
- Services	11.6%	11.8%	12.6%
- Blue Collar	19.2%	16.6%	21.3%



**TAPESTRY  
SEGMENTATION**  
[esri.com/tapestry](https://esri.com/tapestry)

Tapestry segmentation provides an accurate, detailed description of America's neighborhoods—U.S. residential areas are divided into 67 distinctive segments based on their socioeconomic and demographic composition.

Top Tapestry Segment: Rustbelt Traditions (26%)

These residents are a mix of married-couple families and singles living in older developments of single family homes. The workforce is primarily white collar, with a higher concentration of skilled workers in manufacturing, retail trade, and health care. Most have lived, worked and played in the same area for years. Family oriented, they value time spent at home.

- Average household size is 2.47
- Most residents live in modest, single-family homes
- Nearly three quarters own their homes; nearly half of households have mortgages
- A large and growing market, residents are located in the dense urban fringe of metropolitan areas throughout the Midwest and South
- Most households have 1 to 2 vehicles available
- Most have graduated from high school or spent some time at a college or university
- While most income is derived from wages and salaries, nearly 31% of households collect Social Security and nearly 20% draw income from retirement accounts
- Family-oriented consumers who value time spent at home
- Most have lived, worked, and played in the same area for years
- Budget aware shoppers that favor American-made products
- Read newspapers, especially the Sunday editions

# Reaching Higher



## Private Development

### East Town Crossing

On the corner of HWY 151 and HWY13, East Town Crossing is a large mixed-use development with over 20 acres of retail, hospitality, commercial, and residential uses. Current tenants include Dupaco, Kwik Star, Pizza Ranch, Pancheros, and an apartment complex. Commercial and lot spaces are still available.

### Tower Terrace Development

The Tower Terrace Road Corridor bisects Marion's high-growth residential neighborhoods, providing fresh opportunities for neighborhood retail, commercial, and office development. This emerging arterial connects neighborhoods and four high-growth communities. Commercial and lot spaces are still available.

### Broad & Main

Broad & Main is a full-block redevelopment in the center of the Uptown District that will include two multi-story buildings. The north building will contain first-floor commercial and two floors of residential. The south building will include residential, adding multiple housing options and styles to the Uptown District. Commercial and residential spaces available.

### Prospect Meadows

Prospect Meadows is a baseball and softball complex northeast of Marion. In May 2019, the facility celebrated a ribbon cutting and grand opening for the nine fields in the first phase of the project. The complex hosts local league play and weekend tournaments, drawing teams from across the Midwest. Located just south of County Home Road and east of Highway 13, the over 120-acre complex will feature 17 fields - including one Miracle Field, specially built for people with disabilities - at full build out. The project is unique to Marion and positions the community and metro area as a destination for sports tourism. It also demonstrates regional collaboration - with involvement from multiple cities, Linn County, Linn County Conservation District and Perfect Game USA. More than 120,000 people are expected to visit the complex annually.

### Marion Iron Site

In 2015, developer GLD Properties LLC secured \$1 million in brownfield/grayfield tax credits to support the cleanup and redevelopment of the site that was once home to industry and several abandoned railroad lines. The redeveloped site includes a Marriott TownePlace Suites, Starbucks, Your Pie Restaurant, and First Federal Bank. It also includes a roundabout connecting the two merging thoroughfares through the corridor. (See photos on page 7). Commercial and lot spaces are still available.

# Community Projects

## Uptown Master Plan

The Uptown Master Plan is currently in the works and includes multiple phased projects to improve the Uptown District. The plan includes a streetscape redesign for 7th Avenue and select adjoining streets between 7th Street and 26th Street. The plan also calls for a pedestrian plaza within Marion Square Park and along 11th Street. Streetscape renovations are expected to kick-off in the spring of 2021.

## New Marion YMCA

Completed in 2021, the New Marion YMCA serves as a community gathering space and houses select City of Marion Parks & Recreation programming. The new 75,000 square foot facility features expansive fitness and multi-use space for programming and classes for all ages. The building has a six-lane lap pool, a warm water pool for water aerobics and swimming lessons, two racquetball courts, three full-size basketball courts, community gathering space and more. The new Marion YMCA serves thousands of Marion residents and surrounding communities with its convenient location on the Tower Terrace commercial corridor making it regionally accessible.

## New Marion Public Library

The new library, slated to open summer 2022, is a community gathering space that is universally accessible and patrons are free to congregate, communicate, learn and socialize. The project includes the construction of a new 50,000 square foot building in the heart of Uptown Marion. It features a flexible, open floor plan with collaborative learning spaces and specialty areas such as a demonstration kitchen and recording studio.

## New Fire Station

Located in a rapidly growing area of Marion along Tower Terrace Road, the City's third fire station and new headquarters was built with the firefighters' physical and mental health in mind. Completed in 2021, decontamination areas and a stress-lowering design were top of mind. The 20,000 sqft station includes the Fire Department's administrative offices, housing for 12 firefighters and three engines. Also on the land, is a retention pond that doubles as a place for ice-rescue training. The new fire station improves response times and reduces the number of times all units are out on call.

## Uptown Artway

The ImaginArt in the Alley project, now referred to as Uptown Artway, has given an under-utilized alley in the Uptown district new life. The space features nine, permanent public art installations and serves as the perfect pedestrian destination with new restaurants, pubs, gathering spaces, and lighting to illuminate the night scene. This project was completed in 2017.



# Financing & Incentives



While these are the most often used resources, this list just scratches the surface for what is available through local, state & federal programs.



## LOCAL Financing Resources

### Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

Tax Increment Financing is available to qualifying businesses that generate new property taxes through either new construction or substantial renovation of their current facility. New property taxes created through capital investment are rebated back to your company over an agreed upon period of time.

### Small Business Revolving Loan Fund

The purpose of the City of Marion and Marion Chamber of Commerce Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) is to provide business creation and expansion assistance for small businesses located within the City of Marion boundaries. The RLF supports a diversified economy including small locally owned businesses in the retail, office, services, nonprofit, and food markets.

### SBA Loans

504 Program - The SBA 504 loan program provides growing businesses with long-term, fixed-rate financing for major fixed assets, such as land and buildings.

Microloan - The Microloan Program provides small, short-term loans to small business concerns and certain types of not-for-profit child-care centers. The maximum loan amount is \$50,000, but the average microloan is about \$13,000.

### State & Federal Programs

High Quality Jobs (HQJ) program - This program provides qualifying businesses assistance to off-set some of the costs incurred to locate, expand or modernize an Iowa facility. This flexible program includes loans, forgivable loans, tax credits, exemptions and/or refunds. The Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) offers this program to promote growth in businesses, which employ Iowans in jobs defined as high-quality by state statute.

Brownfield / Grayfield Tax Credit Programs - Brownfield sites are abandoned, idled or underutilized industrial, or commercial properties where real or perceived environmental contamination prevents redevelopment. Grayfield sites are abandoned public buildings, industrial or commercial properties that are vacant, blighted, obsolete, or otherwise underutilized.

Workforce Housing Tax Credits - This program provides tax benefits to developers to provide housing in Iowa communities, focusing especially on projects using abandoned, empty, or dilapidated properties.

Historic Tax Credits - The State Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program provides a state income tax credit for the sensitive, substantial rehabilitation of historic buildings. It ensures character-defining features and spaces of buildings are retained and helps revitalize surrounding neighborhoods.

## Uptown Resources

These Resources are specific to development and businesses located within the Uptown Marion Main Street District (see page 10).

### Challenge Grant

Through the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) a competitive construction grant is available for projects nominated by an accredited Iowa Main Street District. This grant is for the rehabilitation and build out of businesses within the district and has been a transformative tool for some of the most prominent buildings to date. Past projects include the renovations for the Uptown Snug, Brick Alley, Frydae, and upper story housing in the historic Marion hotel.

### Sign & Awning Grant

Owners and/or tenants of existing commercial buildings within the Uptown Marion District are eligible for a sign or awning grant. Signage is often the final piece of the puzzle for businesses before opening and can be a costly expense. This grant is in place to encourage elevated signage to add to the vitality and uniqueness of Uptown.

### Open 4 Business Competition

Open 4 Business was developed by Main Street Iowa and the Iowa Economic Development Authority, to help provide local financial and technical support for business retention and expansion efforts within each Main Street district. The Open 4 Business competition is an opportunity for businesses to receive free seed financing and business support to grow business in Uptown Marion.

### Community Catalyst Building Remediation

The Community Catalyst Building Remediation Program assists communities with the redevelopment, rehabilitation, or deconstruction of buildings to stimulate economic growth or reinvestment in the community. Projects must demonstrate a catalytic affect on the area that stimulates additional investment and growth.

## Here to help.

This is a small list of the many resources available to developers and small businesses! Local, state, and federal incentives can be confusing and finding what your project/business qualifies for can be a challenge. We're here to help navigate that process and work with you through those applications.

Marion has a number of local financial institutions dedicated to building community and supporting local small businesses. The Marion Chamber of Commerce can connect you with the local financial institutions that fit your needs.

From financing to choosing the right location, we're here to walk you through the process.



# All About Location



## Marion, Iowa

Marion's location offers easy access to some of the biggest cities in the Midwest. A four-hour drive will take you from Marion to Minneapolis, Chicago, Omaha, or Saint Louis. We're right next door to Cedar Rapids, the second-largest city in Iowa with a population of over 130,000. Marion residents enjoy the relaxed atmosphere (and short commutes) of a small town with convenient access to big city amenities.

### Historic Uptown Marion

Marion has beautifully designed neighborhoods, but we're no longer a bedroom community. We have a vibrant and culturally rich downtown that's home to small businesses offering unique services, gifts, food, drinks, and entertainment.



### Marion Enterprise Center

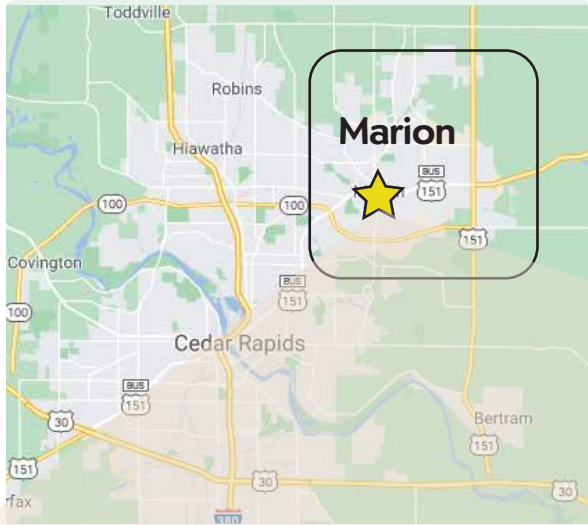
The Marion Enterprise Center (MEC) is a certified 184-acre business park located near north-south state HWY13 and along east-west HWY151. Each site within the park has sanitary sewer, water, and storm sewer in place. In addition, the park has gas, electric, and fiber optics installed and ready to meet your demands.

The Marion Enterprise Center provides direct fiber connectivity to a world-class data center that offers an environment for the highest speed and most demanding data users. Our Marion Enterprise Network delivers a competitive advantage to companies needing high-volume and high-speed connectivity.

### Marion Airport

The Marion Municipal Airport opened in 1963 as a privately owned airport. Over the years, the runways have been paved and lengthened with hangars regularly added to accommodate growing demand. In the spring of 2015, the City of Marion purchased the airport as it transitioned to a hybrid public-private ownership model. The City of Marion now oversees the administration, planning, and major capital improvements. The operations and maintenance of the airport is managed by LuxAir Aviation. LuxAir also operates and oversees aircraft maintenance, private hangar rental/sales, fuel sales, and other operational functions. P&N Flight & Charter School at the Marion Airport offers instruction for Private Pilot License, Instrument Rating, Commercial License and Certified Flight Instructor designations.





## Did You Know?

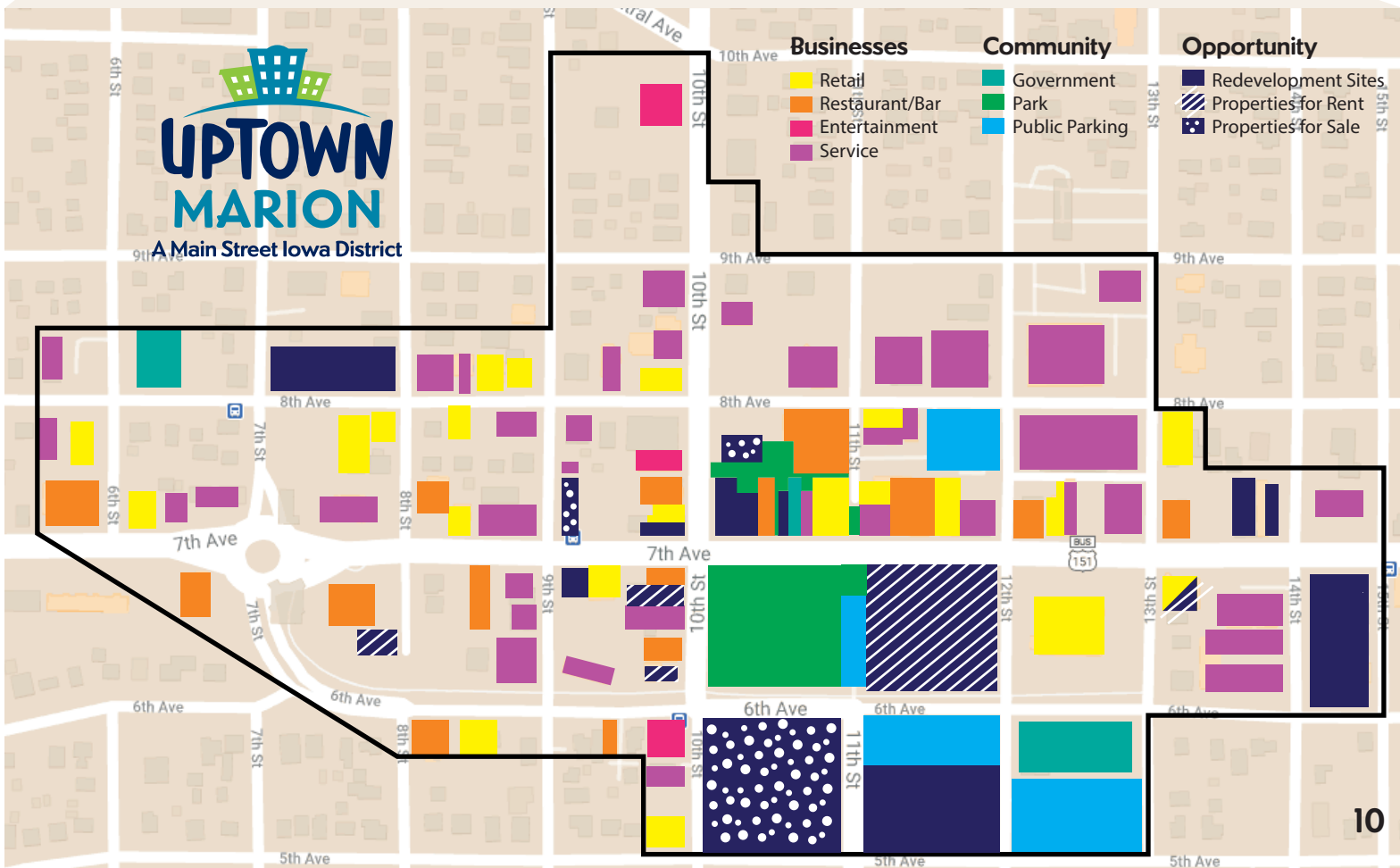
Marion manufactured products can be found in 70 countries around the globe.

Compared to other states, Iowa ranks high for businesses on utilities pricing, corporate income tax, low crime rate, and home values. We think you'll find Iowa quite attractive!

Our cost of living is below the national average. That keeps costs low and helps your business be more profitable.

Our community and region are leaders in innovation across the industries of: Insurance & Finance, Food & Bio Processing, Biotech & Medical Technologies, and Engineering & Automation

The region provides you with a highly trained workforce at a competitive cost compared to other nationwide locations. Plus, our population has increased by over 7% in just the last six years.



# Your Marion TEAM



## LOCAL Business Support

### **Marion Economic Development Corporation (MEDCO)**

Marion Economic Development Corporation (MEDCO) is the community's development corporation that supports primary employers and developers focused on all types of multi-family, commercial, and industrial development. MEDCO is an investor supported organization with a team of professionals working every day to make Marion, Iowa the best place to grow your business.

Contact: Nick Glew | 319-743-4724 | [nick@medcoiowa.org](mailto:nick@medcoiowa.org)

### **Marion Chamber of Commerce**

The Marion Chamber of Commerce works hard for your business and for the community we serve. The Chamber supports policy laser focused on creating the BEST business climate and the BEST quality of life. The Marion Chamber strives to provide its members value through strong communication, exceptional member benefits, and community leadership.

Contact: Jill Ackerman | 319-743-4721 | [jill@marioncc.org](mailto:jill@marioncc.org)

### **Uptown Marion Main Street**

Uptown Marion Main Street's mission is to drive continued revitalization, growth, and preservation of historic character through appropriate design, promotion, and economic strategies that improve our community. The Uptown Organization is a subsidiary of the Marion Chamber of Commerce and spans over 20 square blocks of Marion's historic commercial core.

Contact: Brooke Prouty | 319-743-4726 | [brooke@marioncc.org](mailto:brooke@marioncc.org)

### **Small Business Development Center (SBDC)**

The Kirkwood Center collaborates with federal, state, local, and private resources to ensure maximum benefit to its clients. Its expert, confidential, and free business counseling is available in Benton, Jones, and Linn counties and includes business planning, financing options, market research, loan proposal assistance, business growth strategies, new business guidance, business succession strategies, and business disaster counseling.

Contact: Julie Lammers | 319-377-8256 | [julie.lammers@kirkwood.edu](mailto:julie.lammers@kirkwood.edu)

### **City of Marion**

The goal of our city council, our city administrators, and our economic development partners is to continue to develop Marion as a business-friendly community while working with our school districts (two of the finest in the state), churches, service organizations, and citizens to ensure we continue to offer our residents the quality of life they value.

Contact: Ryan Waller | 319-743-6301 | [rwaller@cityofmarion.org](mailto:rwaller@cityofmarion.org)

## Regional Business Support

### Cedar Rapids Metro Economic Alliance

The Economic Alliance collaborates with the business community and other stakeholders and partners, including local municipalities and entities, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and Iowa Chamber Alliance to develop a local, state and federal policy agenda. We then provide a unified voice to advocate for pro-business and pro-growth issues key to our members and the region.

### ICR IOWA

ICR IOWA is a nonprofit organization launched in 2017 by the Cedar Rapids Metro Economic Alliance and the Iowa City Area Development Group. This joint venture was developed to ensure the Iowa City-Cedar Rapids (ICR) region prospers through community-aligned business attraction and workforce development. Partners include the seven counties of Benton, Cedar, Iowa, Johnson, Jones, Linn, and Washington.



## State Business Support

### Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA)

The Iowa Economic Development Authority's (IEDA) mission is to strengthen economic and community vitality by building partnerships and leveraging resources to make Iowa the choice for people and business. Through two main divisions – business development and community development – IEDA administers several state and federal programs to meet its goals of assisting individuals, communities, and businesses.



### Main Street Iowa/Main Street America

A division of IEDA, the Main Street Iowa program works with a select group of communities committed to exceptionally high standards for downtown economic development. As a Main Street America Coordinating Program, over 50 communities in Iowa are connected to a network of 40 programs across the country representing over 1,200 communities. Uptown Marion remains an accredited Main Street Iowa and Main Street America program.



### U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA)

The Iowa District of the Small Business Administration is responsible for the delivery of the SBA's many entrepreneurial support programs and services to the 99 counties in Iowa, consisting of 2.9 million Iowans and some 240,000 small businesses.



### SCORE East Central Iowa

SCORE is America's economic development engine, with a focus to create, grow, save and assist small business at no cost. SCORE East Central Iowa has 50+ counselors, representing 2,000 years of successful business experience in all disciplines.



# The City of Marion



The City of Marion plans for the future by conducting studies and planning exercises. Find more at [CityofMarion.com](http://CityofMarion.com)

See below for an example of the Central Corridor Plan.

## City Of Marion

City of Marion ..... (319) 743-6300 ..... [www.cityofmarion.org](http://www.cityofmarion.org)  
 Community Development ..... (319) 743-6320  
 Public Services ..... (319) 377-6367  
 Water Department ..... (319) 743-6310  
 Police Department – non-emergency ... (319) 377-1511  
 Fire Department – non-emergency ..... (319) 377-8237  
 Marion Public Library ..... (319)377-3412 ..... [marionpubliclibrary.org](http://marionpubliclibrary.org)

## Community Partners

Marion Chamber of Commerce ..... (319) 377-6316 ..... [www.marioncc.org](http://www.marioncc.org)  
 Uptown Marion Main Street District ..... (319) 743-4726 .. [www.uptownmarion.com](http://www.uptownmarion.com)  
 MEDCO ..... (319) 743-4724 ..... [www.medcoiowa.org](http://www.medcoiowa.org)

## Utilities

### Cable/Internet/Phone

Mediacom ..... 1-866-550-8636  
 CenturyLink ..... 1-888-618-0678  
 ImOn Communications ..... 1-319-298-6484  
 Windstream Holdings ..... 1-866-445-5880

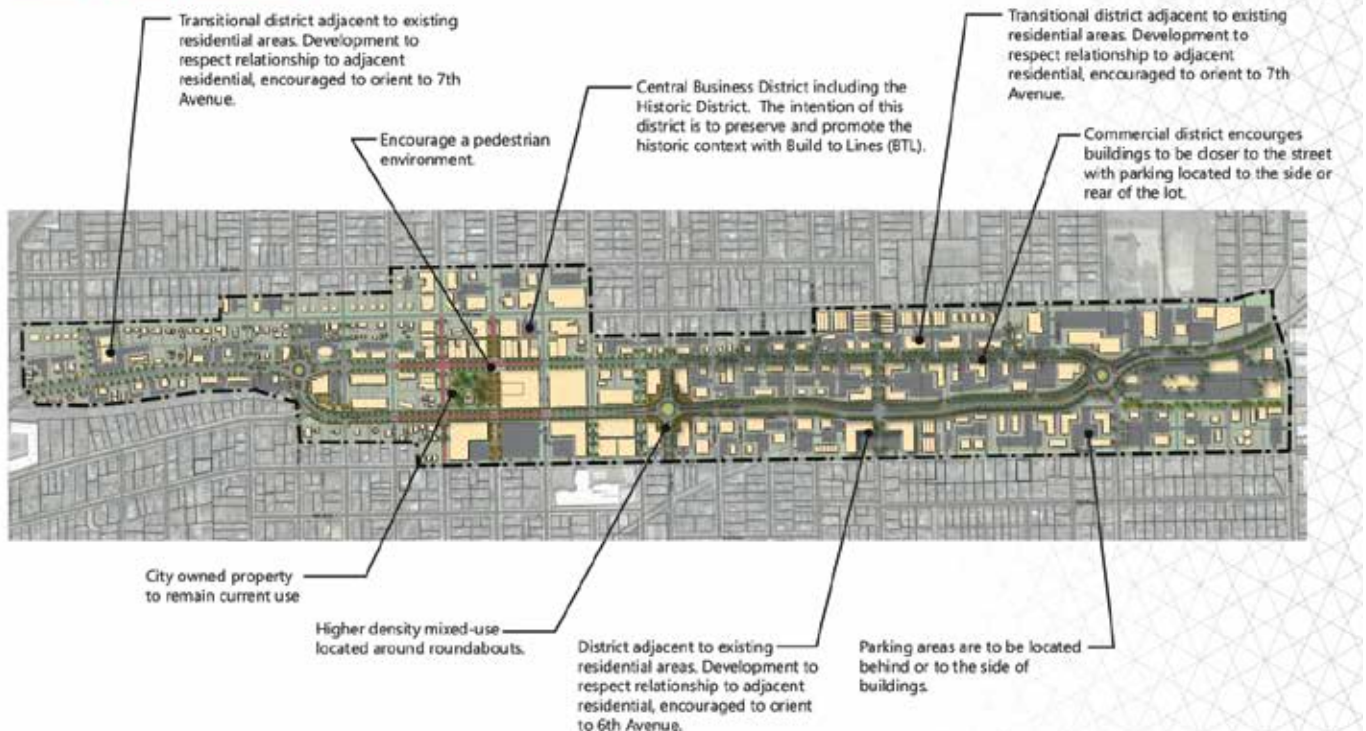
### Electric

Alliant Energy ..... 1-800-255-4268  
 Linn County REC ..... 1-800-332-5420

### Natural Gas

MidAmerican Energy ..... 1-888-427-5632

## CENTRAL CORRIDOR ILLUSTRATIVE



# City of Marion Vision for the Future

## Our Vision

Marion is a forward-thinking city with vibrant neighborhoods and abundant opportunities for all residents, businesses and industries.

## Our Promise

Marion is the best place in Iowa to raise a family and grow a business. Here, we reach higher!

Amid unprecedented growth and change, our city government, schools, the business community, non-profit organizations, and residents are collaborating to identify the right opportunities to build the community we all desire. In the coming years you'll hear more and see a renewed focus on:

**Creating a Vibrant Community** > a community that is accessible, attractive and open to all community members and visitors; one that aligns to having a high quality of life in Marion.

**Efficient and Effective Government** > a fiscally responsible city government, makes investments in employees, and is accountable and transparent in its practices.

**Economic Opportunity** > a community that provides for excellent job opportunities, attracts and retains quality businesses, and engages in partnerships and services that allow for ongoing growth in Marion.

**Sustainable Infrastructure** > a community that invests in roads, water, and sewer facilities and creates a long-term approach to maintaining the physical infrastructure for residents and visitors.

**Safe Community** > a city that is considered safe for residents and visitors to the community.

To view the complete Strategic Plan including goals, strategies, and completion dates visit [CityofMarion.org](http://CityofMarion.org)

## Award-Winning Schools

Marion is home to two of the premier public school districts in the State of Iowa. With an average graduation rate of 95%, our schools equip students with an education allowing them to continue on to postsecondary education or enter the workplace with skills to meet the 21st century economy.

For more information on Linn-Mar Community Schools, visit [linnmar.k12.ia.us](http://linnmar.k12.ia.us).

For more information on Marion Independent School District, visit [marion-isd.org](http://marion-isd.org).



Community Promise is a talent retention program based in Marion that is led by Marion Economic Development Corporation (MEDCO). The program connects students to careers in the community. Throughout the school year, MEDCO staff visits with middle and high school students to share opportunities and next steps towards career pursuit. Learn more at [communitypromise.org](http://communitypromise.org).



# Community Events

## Spring

### **Marion Farmers Market**

@ Taube Park

Visit your neighborhood farmers market each Saturday. find produce, baked goods, meats, crafts and more.

### **City-Wide Garage Sales**

@ Marion

Find great bargains at over 200 garage sales across town! A map and details are available at the City of Marion website

### **Great American Kites** presented by Summit Pointe Senior Living

@ Lowe Park Baseball Diamonds

See the most astonishing and colorful outdoor giant kite displays at Lowe Park.

### **City Showcase**

@ Marion YMCA

Big trucks, fun activities, and helpful information to showcase City services.

### **Marion Arts Festival**

@ City Square Park

The Marion Arts Festival presents 50 artists, offering fine art and fine crafts. Join friends old and new in City Square Park for the free, family-friendly event.

## Summer

### **Movies on the Move**

@ Marion Parks

These smaller but equally as entertaining events break down geographic barriers by bringing cinematic adventures right to your neighborhoods.

### **Moonlit Movie Series**

@ Klopfenstein Amphitheater at Lowe Park

Join the Marion Parks and Recreation Department for free outdoor family fun. Bring your blanket or lawn chair and enjoy kids activities.

### **Marion by Moonlight** presented by Farmers State Bank

@ Lowe Park

Gather your people, a cooler and some lawn chairs and kick back in City Square Park to enjoy live music compliments of Farmers State Bank.

### **Sunrise Yoga**

@ Klopfenstein Amphitheater at Lowe Park

Enjoy free outdoor yoga each Saturday morning. Participants should bring a yoga mat or towel and water.

### **Marion BBQ Rendezvous**

@ Lowe Park

Enjoy food and fun hosted by the Marion Metro Kiwanis Club.

### **Marion Community Band Concerts**

@ City Square Park

Bring a lawn chair or blanket and enjoy a nice summer evening listening to our great community band!

### **Uptown Marion Market**

@ City Square Park

This festival-style market features more than 50 vendors of fresh produce, baked goods, and artisan items.

### **Music Under the Moon** presented by Veridian Credit Union

@ Klopfenstein Amphitheater at Lowe Park

Enjoy live music at the beautiful Lowe Park amphitheater. Bring a blanket, cooler, and lawn chair.

### **Picnic on the Prairie** presented by Marion Arts Council

@ Klopfenstein Amphitheater at Lowe Park

Come be inspired by music, art, and the beautiful outdoors. Bring your picnic basket, blanket and lawn chair.



### **Dueling Pianos**

@ Klopfenstein Amphitheater at Lowe Park  
Join us for a night of outdoor family fun as dueling pianists from Midwest Dueling Pianos take you on an interactive whirlwind tour of music across different decades and genres.

**Fireworks & Fireflies** presented by Hanna Plumbing & Heating  
@ Klopfenstein Amphitheater at Lowe Park  
Marion's new patriotic celebration featuring live music, food trucks, and fireworks. Bring a lawn chair, blanket and cooler.

**Eat. Drink. & Be Marion. Food & Pub Crawl Fundraiser**  
@ Uptown Marion  
Enjoy a night out on the town sampling drinks, food, and local entertainment all across the Uptown District. Ticket and auction proceeds benefit the ongoing revitalization and beautification of Uptown Marion.

**Marion Big Band Concerts**  
@ City Square Park  
Bring a lawn chair or blanket and enjoy classic 30's & 40's Big Band hits!

**National Night Out**  
@ Thomas Park  
Join in this annual community-building campaign that promotes police-community partnerships and neighborhood camaraderie.

**Uptown Getdown**  
@ City Square Park  
The best way to wind down the dog days of summer! Grab your chairs and coolers and meet your neighbors for music and food in the park.

**Pop-Up Acts in the Artway**  
@ Uptown Artway  
Enjoy a night out on the town listening to live music. Sit on the patio of a nearby bar and hear local musicians perform on the Uptown Artway stage.



## Fall & Winter

### **Uptown Fall Fest & Dog Fashion Show**

@ Uptown Marion  
What could be better than shopping and dressed-up dogs? Don't miss the Dog Fashion Show in the Uptown Artway.

### **Oktoberfest**

@ Uptown Marion  
The event will feature over 30 breweries sampling their craft along 7th Avenue. Spend the afternoon sampling, listening to German music, and playing traditional German games.

### **Chocolate Walk**

@ Uptown Marion  
Enjoy strolling historic Uptown Marion at this after-hours shopping event. Visit your favorite stores, discover what's new just around the corner and savor sweet treats along the way.

### **Small Business Saturday**

@ Uptown Marion  
The Uptown Marion District invites you to kick-off the holiday shopping season by shopping small!

### **Christmas in the Park & Peppermint Walk**

@ Uptown Marion  
Enjoy horse drawn carriage rides, hot cocoa and popcorn, holiday music, and the lighting of the Peace Tree.

1225 6th Avenue | Marion, Iowa 52302 | 319.743.4726 | [Brooke@MarionCC.org](mailto:Brooke@MarionCC.org)  
[UptownMarion.com](http://UptownMarion.com) | [CityofMarion.org](http://CityofMarion.org) | [MarionCC.org](http://MarionCC.org) | [Medcolowa.org](http://Medcolowa.org)



**REACH HIGHER  
WITH US!**

# Why Marion?



**In addition to the thriving business economy, development opportunities, great schools, vibrant historic district, and events, Marion has even more to offer.**

## **Rich in Arts and Culture**

Marion is creating a legacy for the future founded in high-quality, relevant and engaging public spaces. Look no further than the Uptown Artway, featuring nine permanent public art installations in a revitalized alley, or the Klopfenstein Amphitheater at Lowe Park, a functional work of art itself. The City and its community partners host dozens of free concerts and events each year.

## **Prioritizes Healthy Living**

The City of Marion maintains 600 beautiful acres of public green space, with plenty of manicured parks, trails, and athletic complexes to make it easy to get out and get active. Marion also has programming such as yoga in the park and other activities planned throughout the year to get you moving!

## **Activities for All**

From youth to seniors, Marion has something for everyone. Marion has 21 parks, 81 pieces of playground equipment, three splash pads, and an inclusive playground. The Lowe Park Arts and Environment Center is home to free senior activities on a daily basis where senior residents have access to community programming that fits their needs. The Encore Café, a senior meals program, is a one-stop shop for nutrition, health education and socialization time with friends. In addition, the new Marion YMCA features electric assisted tricycles for seniors to enjoy the many bike trails in Marion.

## **Opportunities to Get Involved**

From boards and commissions to leadership training and volunteering with the City of Marion, Chamber and MEDCO, Marion has countless opportunities to get involved, develop new skills, and make your voice heard. Soliciting community feedback and input is vital in shaping the future of the City of Marion.



## **ImagiNEXT**

In 2007, Marion embarked on a community-wide visioning project that developed eight ideas to enhance the quality of life and create a strong identity for Marion. All eight projects have been completed as of 2022.

In 2017, Marion started a new visioning project, called ImagiNEXT. Out of 3,000 submitted ideas, a resident selection committee chose the Future 4 projects:

- **Just Keep Swimming** - New aquatic options and amenities
- **The Heart of It All** - Enhancements to Marion's historic district
- **Creekside Pride** - Recreation and educational enhancements to Indian Creek
- **It's the Little Things** - Policies and ideas that have a big impact

# Marion is Award-Winning

## All-Star Community

Marion is a back-to-back All-Star Community! Boasting one of only three Iowa communities recognized by the Iowa League of Cities for its innovative efforts in urban renewal, collaboration or quality of life improvements in 2017, 2018, 2020, and 2021. Recognized projects include the Klopfenstein Amphitheater for the Performing Arts at Lowe Park, Uptown Artway, Prospect Meadows Sports Complex, and the Marion YMCA & Community Rec Center.

## One of the Best Small Cities in America

Marion landed in the top 10 percent of Best Small Cities in America according to WalletHub in the fall of 2017 and 2018, and in the top 12 percent in 2019. WalletHub's analysts compared more than 1,200 U.S. cities with populations between 25,000 and 100,000 based on 40 key indicators of livability. They range from housing costs to school-system quality to restaurants per capita. Marion secured the number two spot among all 1,200 communities for lowest housing costs.

## An Iowa Great Place

In July 2018, an effort led by the Marion Chamber of Commerce resulted in our community being re-designated as one of Iowa's Great Places. The program celebrates communities with a bold vision for the future and supports the development of new and existing infrastructure.

## A Livability Award-winning community

In June 2018, Marion was one of 20 cities to be honored at the City Livability Awards Program. The award recognizes programs that improve the quality of life in America's cities. Mayor Nicolas AbouAssaly accepted the award for the Uptown Artway place-making project.

## A Healthy Hometown

In November 2016, Marion was presented with a Healthy Hometown powered by Wellmark Award by the Iowa Healthiest State Initiative. The award recognizes Marion for its dedication and accomplishments toward meaningful health improvement initiatives.

## A Resilient Community

The City of Marion sustained widespread damage as a result of the severe storms and strong winds, known as a Derecho, that moved through Eastern Iowa on August 10, 2020. Winds were clocked at up to 140 mph causing damage to nearly every structure and tree in Marion and the entire metro area. Community leaders swiftly assessed the damage and orchestrated a response while neighbors banded together to do what they could to help the community recover. The destruction left behind by the Derecho was unfathomable but the true face of Marion shone brightly as the community united around a common purpose and shared humanity. Marion has made significant progress in cleaning up the debris and beginning repairs to structures. Learn more about the response at [CityofMarion.org](http://CityofMarion.org).



# At-a-Glance

## 2020 TOP PROSPECTS SURVEY RESULTS

**700**  
Survey Sample

Marion resident	88.7%
Live within 20 miles of Marion	9.4%
Live 20+ miles from Marion	1.9%

**74%**  
Female

**11%**  
Work Uptown

### Traffic Generators

**Businesses and Places Visited Most Often**

1. Uptown Snug	11.7%
2. Zoey's Pizza	11.5%
3. Ramsey's Wine Bistro	7.0%
4. Urban Pie	6.7%
5. Short's Burger and Shine	5.7%

**66%**

Described pre-COVID trends in Uptown Marion as, "Improving or making progress."

### TRENDS

Describe pre-COVID-19 trends in Uptown:

Improving or making progress	66.2%
Steady or holding its own	22.1%
Declining or losing ground	11.7%

## Opportunities Ahead | Eating and Drinking

Top prospects for expansion and recruitment as selected by more than 600 respondents to the 2020 Uptown Marion Top Prospects Survey.

Brewpub	Fast Casual Dining	Fresh Food Café	Ice Cream Shop	International	Game Bar
Top Pick: <b>20.2%</b>	Top Pick: <b>16.3%</b>	Top Pick: <b>16.2%</b>	Top Pick: <b>14.1%</b>	Top Pick: <b>13.6%</b>	Top Pick: <b>13.4%</b>
Top Three: <b>40.8%</b>	Top Three: <b>39.2%</b>	Top Three: <b>42.9%</b>	Top Three: <b>48.3%</b>	Top Three: <b>34.5%</b>	Top Three: <b>29.5%</b>
<b>Top Features:</b>	<b>Top Features:</b>	<b>Top Features:</b>	<b>Top Features:</b>	<b>Top Features:</b>	<b>Top Features:</b>
Outdoor seating	Breakfast menu	Sandwiches and paninis	Hand-dipped ice cream	Thai cuisine	Alcoholic beverages
Regional craft beers	Lunch menu	Salads	Outdoor seating	Outdoor dining	Arcade games
Pub-style food	Full-service (at table)	Outdoor seating	Cupcakes, cookies...	Italian cuisine	3-lane bowling alley
Appetizers menu	Outdoor dining	Locally sourced foods	Gelato	Chinese cuisine	Axe throwing
Brews its own beers	All-American cuisine	Special diet options	Specialty desserts	Indian cuisine	Skee-ball
<b>Survey Demo: Age</b>	<b>Survey Demo: Age</b>	<b>Survey Demo: Age</b>	<b>Survey Demo: Age</b>	<b>Survey Demo: Age</b>	<b>Survey Demo: Age</b>
25 to 44: <b>40%</b>	25 to 44: <b>63%</b>	25 to 44: <b>60%</b>	25 to 44: <b>41%</b>	25 to 44: <b>54%</b>	25 to 44: <b>61%</b>
45 to 64: <b>41%</b>	45 to 64: <b>27%</b>	45 to 64: <b>28%</b>	45 to 64: <b>40%</b>	45 to 64: <b>22%</b>	45 to 64: <b>19%</b>
<b>Survey Demo: HH \$\$</b>	<b>Survey Demo: HH \$\$</b>	<b>Survey Demo: HH \$\$</b>	<b>Survey Demo: HH \$\$</b>	<b>Survey Demo: HH \$\$</b>	<b>Survey Demo: HH \$\$</b>
\$50K to \$100K: <b>35%</b>	\$50K to \$100K: <b>40%</b>	\$50K to \$100K: <b>45%</b>	\$50K to \$100K: <b>44%</b>	\$50K to \$100K: <b>42%</b>	\$50K to \$100K: <b>47%</b>
\$100K+: <b>41%</b>	\$100K+: <b>36%</b>	\$100K+: <b>42%</b>	\$100K+: <b>31%</b>	\$100K+: <b>26%</b>	\$100K+: <b>22%</b>

# Opportunities Ahead | Retail

Top prospects for expansion and recruitment as selected by more than 600 respondents to the 2020 Uptown Marion Top Prospects Survey.

Meat & Cheese	Bookstore	Arts and Hobbies	Outdoor Rec	Gifts & Souvenirs	Men's Clothing
Top Pick: <b>37.7%</b>	Top Pick: <b>17.1%</b>	Top Pick: <b>15.4%</b>	Top Pick: <b>13.2%</b>	Top Pick: <b>10.8%</b>	Top Pick: <b>2.2%</b>
Top Three: <b>66.7%</b>	Top Three: <b>42.5%</b>	Top Three: <b>44.2%</b>	Top Three: <b>35.8%</b>	Top Three: <b>35.8%</b>	Top Three: <b>11.6%</b>
<b>Top Features:</b>	<b>Top Features:</b>	<b>Top Features:</b>	<b>Top Features:</b>	<b>Top Features:</b>	<b>Top Features:</b>
Cut-to-order meats	New books	General crafts/supplies	Canoes and kayaks	Made in Eastern Iowa	Casual/Dressy apparel
Locally sourced cheeses	Used books	Craft/Hobby classes	Bicycle repairs	Locally sources foods	Outerwear
Deli and charcuterie	Lounge	Home décor items	Bike sales and rentals	Gifts and knick-knacks	Tailoring & alterations
Smoked meats	Book clubs	Yarns, patterns, supplies	Group kayaking classes	Marion apparel/novelty	Casual—jeans, T's, etc.
Deli side items	Book signings	Hobby and craft tools	Bicycling apparel	T-shirts and novelties	Men's accessories
<b>Survey Demo: Age</b>	<b>Survey Demo: Age</b>	<b>Survey Demo: Age</b>	<b>Survey Demo: Age</b>	<b>Survey Demo: Age</b>	<b>Survey Demo: Age</b>
25 to 44: <b>54%</b>	25 to 44: <b>35%</b>	25 to 44: <b>50%</b>	25 to 44: <b>67%</b>	25 to 44: <b>53%</b>	25 to 44: <b>40%</b>
45 to 64: <b>32%</b>	45 to 64: <b>42%</b>	45 to 64: <b>39%</b>	45 to 64: <b>25%</b>	45 to 64: <b>26%</b>	45 to 64: <b>39%</b>
<b>Survey Demo: HH \$\$</b>	<b>Survey Demo: HH \$\$</b>	<b>Survey Demo: HH \$\$</b>	<b>Survey Demo: HH \$\$</b>	<b>Survey Demo: HH \$\$</b>	<b>Survey Demo: HH \$\$</b>
\$50K to \$100K: <b>35%</b>	\$50K to \$100K: <b>39%</b>	\$50K to \$100K: <b>39%</b>	\$50K to \$100K: <b>46%</b>	\$50K to \$100K: <b>50%</b>	\$50K to \$100K: <b>34%</b>
\$100K+: <b>45%</b>	\$100K+: <b>34%</b>	\$100K+: <b>33%</b>	\$100K+: <b>35%</b>	\$100K+: <b>24%</b>	\$100K+: <b>46%</b>

## Potential Market Traction



**Question:** How likely would you be to visit the following types of expanding or new Uptown Marion business on a consistent basis?

Eating and Drinking Places	Weight	Retail Establishments	Weight
1. Ice Cream Shop/Dessert Bar	3.97	1. Meat & Cheese Market	4.05
2. Fresh Food Café	3.88	2. Bookstore	3.58
3. Fast Casual Dining	3.87	3. Arts and Hobbies Shop	3.54
4. Brewpub	3.62	4. Gifts & Souvenirs/Visitors Store	3.31
5. International Cuisine Restaurant	3.55	5. Outdoor Recreation & Rentals	3.30
6. Game Bar	3.07	6. Men's Clothing and Accessories	2.68

Weighted Average Ranking | 1 = Definitely would not / 5 = Definitely would

## Are you a prospect?

Are you interested in moving your business to, or opening a new business in, Uptown Marion?

# 18

Potential Prospects

## Are you interested in moving your business to, or opening a new business in, Uptown Marion?

Interested in moving a business to Uptown	4
Interested in opening a new business in Uptown	14

3% of Responding Survey Sample