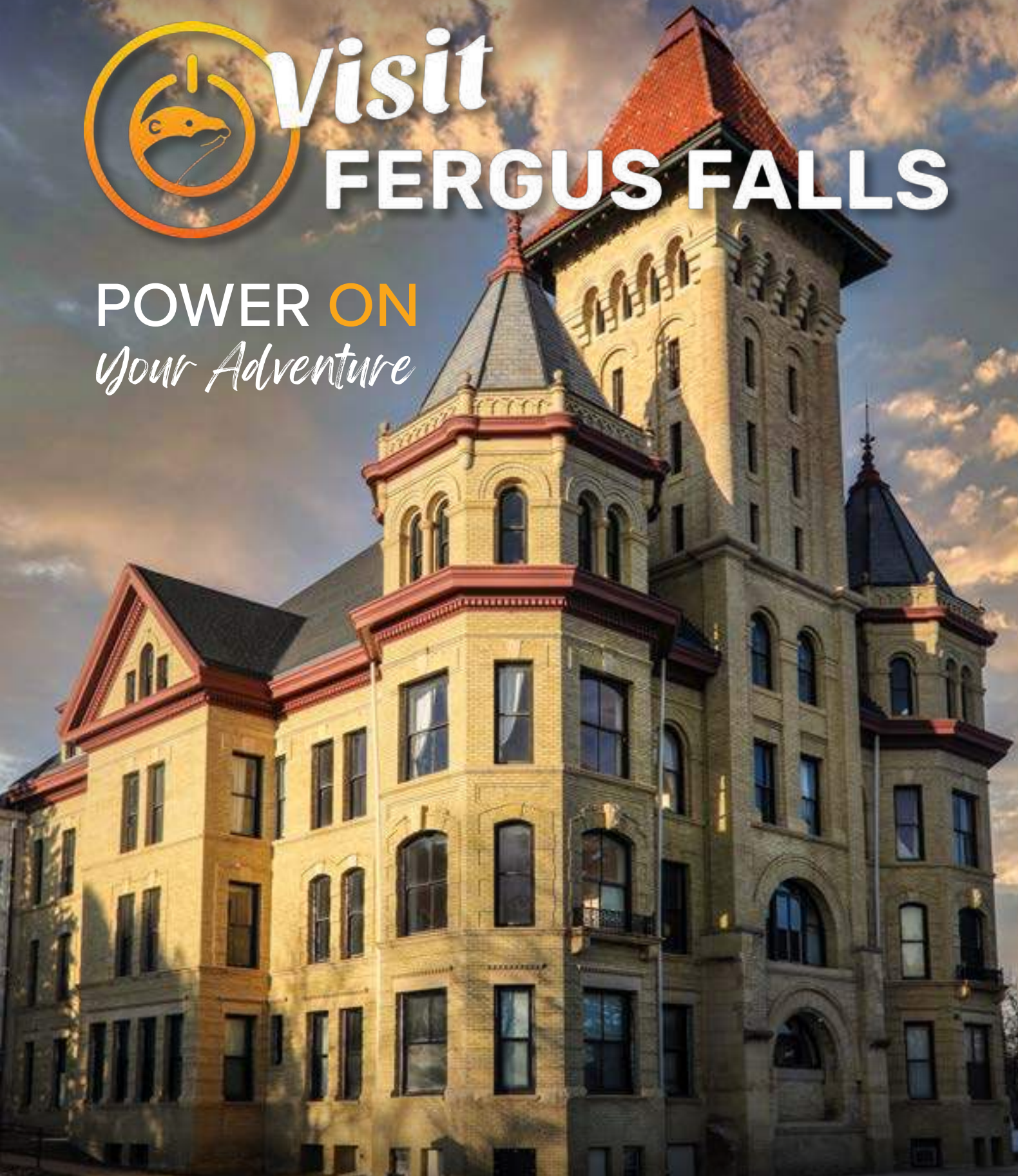


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2025 EVENTS

- March 8** Six One Five Collective.
A Center for The Arts
- March 18** Charvis Harrell -Kaddatz Galleries
- to April 26** Kate Swenson - Kaddatz Galleries
- March 19** Sixtiesmania. A Center for The Arts
- April 6** Glenn Miller Orchestra.
A Center for The Arts
- April 11** Terrance Simien & The Sideco
Experience. A Center for The Arts
- May 4** Fergus Falls Civic Orchestra.
A Center for The Arts
- May 13** Artreach Students + Teachers
- to June 21** Kaddatz Galleries
- June 7** Lake Region Run
- July 8** Naomi Ramona Schliesman/
Regional Ba Students
- to Aug. 16** Kaddatz Galleries
- June 13-14** Summerfest Fergus Falls
Kirkbride Park
- July 13** Born to Run: Music of
Bruce Springsteen- Kirkbride Park
- July 20** Elvis! Kirkbride Park
- July 27** 29th Annual Hoot Lake Triathlon
- July 27** Oh Black Water/ Space Cowboy
Kirkbride Park
- Aug. 10** Steely Dan/ Blood Sweat & Tears/
Chicago -Kirkbride Park
- Aug. 17** Lover: A Taylor Swift Tribute
Kirkbride Park
- Aug. 24** The Music of The Band
Kirkbride Park
- Sept 2** Charles Christianson / Kiley Busco
- to Oct 18** Kaddatz Galleries
- Nov. 4** Kandance Creel Falcon/ Ilaamen
- to Dec. 31** Pelshaw/ Kim Embretson- Kaddatz
- Dec. 13** Over the River Holiday Festival
Fergus Falls Downtown
- Dec. TBD** Otter Cove Festival of Lights
Kirkbride Park

Cover Photo: The Kirkbride by Rolando Felizola



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Pack your bags for an unforgettable adventure in Fergus Falls. With its convenient location, diverse attractions, and warm hospitality, Fergus Falls is the perfect gateway to discovering the magic of Otter Tail County and beyond.

FUN ALONG THE BYWAY!

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Snap a Selfie with Otto the Otter

By Heather Rule, Photos provided

Fergus Falls Otters isn't just a school nickname. The larger-than-life otter statue is a can't-miss attraction in Adams Park near Grotto Lake in Fergus Falls. Stop by and snap a selfie with Otto the Otter!

Otto is the world's largest otter sculpture, standing at 15 feet tall and 40 feet long. It's a perfect roadside attraction. The idea and creation of the project started in a high school classroom, and now it's stood in the local park for more than 50 years.

Otto, made of concrete-covered metal, was created by high school students in 1972 to celebrate the Fergus Falls centennial. It was a high school shop project, led by teacher Tom Willett. The first attempt at building Otto was a bit of a disaster and didn't turn out quite right. Metal artist Steve Jaenisch put the finishing touches on the final otter, making sure Otto would last for many generations.



The otter statue stands on all four legs, with its tail sweeping around the back. The smiling otter overlooking the lake is a symbol of the city's creativity and love for its mascot. Whether you're a resident, visiting the area, or simply passing through town, seeing a "world's largest" attraction should be a must-see on your travel list. Fergus Falls residents

and visitors have a soft spot for the giant and lovable Otto the Otter.

Come to the park to snap a selfie with Otto, and stay to enjoy the playground, scenic view of Grotto Lake and picnic tables near the large otter statue. A picnic table is often placed near Otto, which some people might

use as a makeshift ladder. But it's a difficult feat - and dangerous - to climb onto the otter! Please look, but don't touch.

Don't forget to tag your selfies on social media with #OttoTheOtter!



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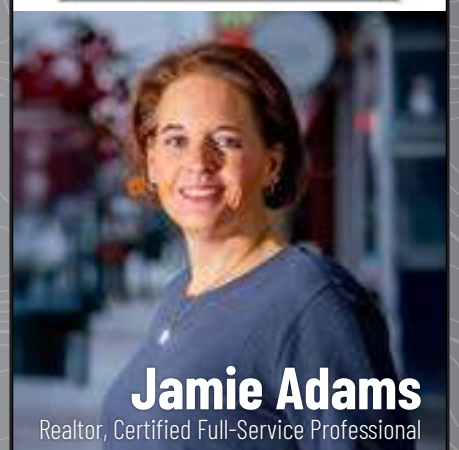
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A Brand-New Look for DeLagoon Park Campground

By Heather Rule, Photos provided

Check out the new and improved campground at DeLagoon Park! The entire DeLagoon Park Campground area was leveled to make way for a whole new campground with a variety of improvements to the campsites and amenities for campers. While the old campground had no electric or plumbing, those utilities were added over the summer of 2024. A new bathhouse contains running water, showers and flushing toilets.

The new campground will open in the middle of this summer. Look to the city's website for exact opening dates. The new campground has space for 42 RV sites and eight tent sites. There will be a dump station and RV hookups, providing more convenience for RV campers. Sites will also have picnic tables and fire rings. There's still a lot of shade access, especially for those at tent sites.

Though more of the upgrades are to the campground, the \$5.2 million project includes upgrades to the soccer, baseball and softball fields and concessions, too.

There's a new and separate parking area for the fishing pier and longer pull-throughs for vehicles with trailers loading boats into the lake. The park also offers access to the Central Lakes Trail, running along the east side of the campground.

Along with having a place to stay and camp, there's plenty for visitors to do at DeLagoon Park when they arrive. From soccer, baseball and softball fields, to a BMX track, disc golf and archery range. Plus, there's the beach at Pebble Lake.

"Bring your family and your kids and create your home base," said Jean Bowman. "Participate in all those fun activities."

As in the past, the campground will be seasonal. One big change is campers can reserve their sites via online reservations, rather than the first come, first served basis and honor system of old. Reservations can be made on the city's website: www.FergusFallsmn.gov. This should give campers peace of mind, so they won't have to show up at the campground and wonder if there's space or if it's full. The reservations guarantee their spot.

Beyond DeLagoon Park, the nearest campgrounds to Fergus Falls are Maplewood and Glendalough state parks. But those fill up quickly, Bowman noted.

"This, I think, will be a new little treasure that people will discover and hopefully find a great option to do a lot of things in our community," Bowman said.

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Uncle Eddie's: 40 Reasons to Smile, 100 Feet to Happiness

By Heather Rule, Photos provided

Walk into Uncle Eddie's ice cream shop in Fergus Falls, and you'll soon see that ice cream is not the only attraction. Before you check out the taste-bud-tickling ice cream flavors, look up to see what's believed to be the world's longest gumball machine track!

Once a customer gets the ball rolling with a quarter in the machine downstairs near the front door, the gumball releases from the back of the shop up near the ceiling and it rolls in the middle of the aluminum rods and travels on a track that's about 110 feet long. The colorful, chewy treat appears at the machine near the front.

Lucky customers who receive a yellow gumball (about one-in-eight odds) receive a free kid-sized ice cream treat. "The odds are pretty good," said co-owner Anne Frustol, with a laugh. "We give away a lot of free ice cream."

Memorial Day weekend marks the five-year anniversary of Uncle Eddie's, but the gumball machine has delivered colorful gumballs to excited customers for the past two seasons. Uncle Eddie's is open April through September.

So, how did this unconventional gumball machine come to be? "My husband always likes unique things," Anne said. Co-owner Kurt Frustol agreed, "It was just one of those things. It just came to mind, and it grew and grew and grew in my head."

While the idea came from the Frustols, they give a lot of credit to students at Hillcrest Lutheran Academy for making the special gumball track come to fruition, as they worked on it for a class project.

The Frustols purchased two gumball machines and the materials while the students made the brackets that hold the gumballs. The open track is two long rods held together by clips that were made using a 3D printer. The track is hung from the 12-foot-high ceiling with heavy-duty wire.

People enjoy watching the gumball travels, or seeing how the track is put together. It's quite the attraction. "The young kids, especially little ones, they just run right to the gumball machine," Kurt said. Anne added that the kids get really excited when they hear the gumball release onto the track, "they go run to the end to see what color comes out."

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New Aquatic Center Set to Open in Fergus Falls

By Heather Rule, Photos provided

Fergus Falls residents can cool off this summer in an outdoor public pool at the brand new Fergus Falls Aquatic Center. “The objective is really to provide summer recreation opportunities for the region, not just Fergus Falls, but for people who visit,” said Jean Bowman.

The Fergus Falls Aquatic Center is located in Roosevelt Park, right across from Fergus Falls High School. It will join a picnic shelter and skateboard park already at Roosevelt Park. Historical elements of the park were protected, with the complex built around those elements, according to Bowman. Construction started with a groundbreaking May 28, 2024, and the aquatic center is scheduled to open early this summer. The outdoor pool will be open seasonally during the warm summer months.

The center will include a zero-depth entry pool, water slide, four-lane lap swimming, bathhouse, changing rooms, showers, lockers and concessions. There will be plenty of parking for vehicles, along

with 10 bike racks. Bowman said resident wanted the facility to be placed in a neighborhood where people could ride their bikes or walk to the pool if they wanted to.

There will be an admission cost to enter the facility. Season passes will be available for the aquatic center. Lifeguards will also be on duty at the pool.

The aquatic center is the second water-activities feature to open in Fergus Falls in as many years, with the downtown splash pad that opened in the summer of 2024. Fergus Falls has indoor pools at the YMCA and the high school, though those aren’t really for recreational use. Otter Tail County is filled with and known for its lakes, but not everyone has access to lakes or resorts, so the pool will be a nice option.

“This will provide a fun way to get out and something for kids and families to do together in the summer,” Bowman said. “You can’t have too many water things to do in the summer, right?”

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Colorful Floral & Glass Art in Downtown Fergus Falls

By Heather Rule, Photos provided

The Flower Mill in downtown Fergus Falls specializes in a variety of fresh flowers, plants and unique gift ideas. Flowers change with the seasons and holidays, with deep oranges, reds and burgundy colors in the fall, Christmas pine and then tulips and iris in the spring. They also have local tulips grown in Minnesota which the shop receives weekly in-season.

"It's never a boring job because it's always changing," said Leanne Meis, who's owned The Flower Mill with her husband for 17 years.

Along with fresh flowers and plants, The Flower Mill carries a lot of local gifts like chocolates, essential oils and candles. Meis encourages customers to stop in and view everything they have to offer.

"We are predominantly a floral shop," Meis said. "But we have so much more to offer in the store as far as giftware and different things as well."

The Flower Mill is located at 205 W. Lincoln Ave. in Fergus Falls. Customers can place floral orders by phone, in person or online. The Flower Mill delivers flowers in Fergus Falls and some surrounding cities.

Stained is located on the lower level of the building at 205 W. Lincoln Ave. The work includes stained glass art and fused glass art, which is created using a glass kiln. Stained glass art is a similar process to fused glass art. The artist creates a pattern and cuts shapes out of glass, grinds down the pieces to fit them in a pattern. Then pieces are foiled and burnished around the edges and then soldered together.

Stained coordinates with The Flower Mill to include everlasting pieces with various floral arrangements to give them "more personal touches," said Brittanni Smith, manager of Stained for the past four years. Stained sells retail glass pieces and custom pieces. They also hold glass art classes. A suncatcher class is great for beginners, with pre-cut pieces.

It's awesome to have this stained-glass art right in Fergus Falls, Smith said. Stained has welcomed groups of friends and families who share in the classes as special outings. A book suncatcher workshop is also extremely popular with customers.

"I know a lot of people think of stained glass as kind of a dying art," Smith said. "In my opinion, it seems like it's starting to resurface again and kind of thrive."

For more information:

www.FergusFallsFlorist.com | www.StainedAGlassArtStudio.com



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ACATA activities are made possible by the voters of Minnesota through grants from the Minnesota State Arts Board, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the Arts and Cultural Heritage fund.

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Fergus Falls, a Thriving Arts Community

By Heather Rule, Photos provided

The arts are a big part of Fergus Falls, and residents and visitors can take part in a variety of activities to support the arts community.

The **M State campus** in Fergus Falls has an annual schedule of fine and visual arts events. There are fall and spring plays at the Waage Theater. The spring play will show at the theater in early March this year. There's also an invitational art exhibit at Beck Gallery from March 19 through May 11. Legacy Hall will host a vocal concert on May 1. Also that week, the jazz group Post-Traumatic Funk Syndrome will perform for the spring instrumental concert on May 3 in Legacy Hall. Event tickets are available at the door before each performance, or in advance at the Fergus Falls Campus Store and M State Tickets website www.Mstate.UniversityTickets.com.

The **Lake Region Arts Council** is also a part of the Fergus Falls arts community, providing access to quality arts opportunities and programming. LRAC offers nine grant programs, a monthly newsletter, an online arts calendar, two art galleries, workshops and networking meetings, an artist registry, and technical assistance to arts organizations and artists.

LRAC is open 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Mondays through Thursdays.

Kaddatz Galleries in downtown Fergus Falls also has a rich history of more than 15 years in the Kaddatz Hotel building. The mission of Kaddatz Galleries, a non-profit fine arts gallery, is to showcase the local artistic talent in Fergus Falls, Otter Tail County and the greater region. It also focuses on bringing artist Charles Beck's work to the forefront; Beck originally painted many signs downtown, leaving a legacy.

Kaddatz Galleries also rotates artist exhibitions about every six weeks, hosts art classes for adults and children. They have an outreach program pairing local artists with underserved communities to provide high-quality art classes building skills and a sense of community.

On the musical side, **A Center For the Arts**, in addition to its schedule of shows and programs at the downtown theater, organizes summer concerts on an outdoor stage at the Kirkbride/Fergus Falls Regional Treatment Center building. Concerts attract about 2,000 people, said Rolando Felizola, Executive Director of Visit Fergus Falls.

"It's an ingenious way to take advantage of that structure of a building because it's a horseshoe shape," Felizola said. "It's great for acoustics and all that kind of stuff."

For more information:

www.Minnesota.edu/fine-arts-events | www.LRAC4.org | www.FergusArts.org | www.KaddatzGalleries.org



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