



## *The City of Adel*



# Chapter 1 - History and Vision

Prepared February 2009 by:





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## CHAPTER 1

### 1.1 City of Adel History and Vision

Adel, Iowa, is a community with a population of 3,435 recorded in 2000. It is a community whose history has been defined by designation as a county seat, a local brick manufacturing industry, central Iowa's agricultural industry, and the city's natural setting in the rolling hills alongside the westerly bank of the North Raccoon River. Adel's future will be *influenced* by the continuation of those historical forces, as well as by population and business growth driven by Adel's proximity to the Des Moines metro area. Adel's future will be *defined* by how its citizens and leaders respond to these influences, while embracing the strong sense of community, family values, and appreciation of historic resources, all of which guide the city now.

Adel is situated in the rich agricultural area of central Iowa, in the middle of Dallas County. It is located about 20 miles west of Des Moines, the state capital, and five miles north of Interstate 80. Adel has primary access to Iowa Highways 6 and 169, both of which pass through the city. Dallas County is situated within the watersheds of the North Raccoon River, the South Raccoon River, and the Des Moines River, which flow diagonally northwest to southeast across the county.

Although not currently the biggest city in the county, Adel's status as the county seat significantly contributed to its early growth. The political boundaries of Dallas County were established in 1847. The earliest settlement clustered in the southeast portions of the county. (Andreas: 475). It consisted of individuals and families migrating into Iowa in search of good farming land.

Adel's population has grown at around 1.5% per year through the recent past. Recent development trends in the city and surrounding area suggest that this growth rate may increase through the foreseeable future. Forecasts from Regional Economic Models Inc (REMI) suggest that Adel's population for the year 2030 may be expected to reach more than 5,000 people. The REMI forecast for the year 2060 is for approximately 9,000 people in the city.

Recent growth trends in other adjacent communities in the westerly area of the Des Moines metro area have grown faster than the REMI models, possibly indicating a scenario where Adel's population could grow more quickly.

Residents take pride in the quality of life offered in Adel, and the Adel-DeSoto-Minburn School District also shares these core values.



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## 1.2 Adel Public Square Historic District

The natural setting and physical layout of Adel as a community have played an important role in the significance and development of the Adel Public Square Historic District. The following discussion describes these characteristics. It includes a portrait of the city's setting and topography, its employment of traditional American town building schemes, and the historic district's architectural heritage.

The Adel Public Square Historic District is a collection of buildings designed and built between circa 1868 and 1959 to provide retail, professional, and governmental services to local residents of Adel and Dallas County, Iowa. Adel was platted in 1847 as the seat of government for Dallas County, Iowa, and the Dallas County Courthouse and its public square form the centerpiece of the historic district. Commercial buildings line the four streets that abut the square. As Adel's population grew in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, commercial expansion spilled over into the further reaches of some of these streets. By circa 1917, the historic district had reached its greatest extent. Following World War II, some commercial redevelopment occurred on the east side of the square. The scale of these buildings conformed to earlier designs. Further redevelopment occurred on the north side of the square at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century; and, although it falls outside the historic district's period of significance, the scale of this new construction is compatible with it.

## 1.3 Public Square

The Public Square formed the center of the Original Town plat. The four streets that abut the Square define it: Court Street on the north, Nile Kinnick Drive on the east, Main Street on the south, and North 9<sup>th</sup> Street on the west. The Dallas County Courthouse is a 3.5-story, limestone building, covered with a hipped roof, and surmounted with a clock and bell tower. It sits in the middle of the Square with its main entrance facing the north. This edifice is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Square is landscaped with pedestrian walks, lawn, trees, benches, floral plantings, and monuments to the nation's armed forces.

Architecture and business decisions reflect history and heritage. Adel values its rich history and heritage by making core attributes a priority. Classic architecture and building materials are utilized in new construction efforts and a "Downtown" feel are important to growth and development initiatives.



**1.4 Our Vision for the future**

We value the sense of community and family values that are fostered by our small town. We commit to preserving these values as our community grows.

We value the economic opportunities that support our standards of living, and allow a majority of our population to work here, where they live. We commit to encouraging and supporting economic vitality in and around our city in balance with our other values.

We value our people. We commit to encouraging and supporting quality of life for the residents of our community, and fostering diversity in our population.

We value the recreational opportunities that add to our quality of life in our community. We commit to protecting and enhancing the parks, recreational trails, open space, natural areas, and developed recreation facilities that our community has and needs.

We acknowledge the need to provide vital public services to our community. We commit to developing and maintaining effective services and facilities as needed to support our local needs.

We acknowledge the need to provide and maintain public infrastructure for transportation, potable water and fire protection, sanitary sewerage, storm drainage, and other vital services.

We acknowledge that growth of our community is both valuable and inevitable. We commit to managing that growth in ways that achieve and protect the other components of our vision for our community.

**1.5 Demographics**

Population:  
 3,435 residents in 2000 (census)  
 4,098 residents in 2007  
 (estimated with interim data)

Adel Median age: 36.0 years  
 Iowa Median age: 36.6 years  
 47.6% male / 52.4% female

