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SERVING THE COMMUNITIES OF ALVORD, LARCHWOOD, WEST LYON, AND WEST WYOMING

## Much to celebrate after life forever changed

West Lyon graduate looks back at recovery after car accident

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West Lyon graduate and Alvord resident, Kory Kock, has had to overcome challenges no 20-year-old could ever imagine. On April 25, 2022, his life was forever changed. Kory headed to work at the Vet Clinic in Rock Valley and finished a normal day.

"The last thing I remember was going to the gas station after work to get a drink, fill up with gas, and texting my dad I was on my way home," he said.

When Kory was about a mile from his house, he was involved in a head-on collision.

"I lost consciousness and had some seizures from the time of the accident to my arrival at the hospital," recalled Kock. He suffered a traumatic brain injury

and had a small tear in his spleen.

The day after the accident, doctors made the decision to remove a piece of his skull in the shape of a question mark and Kock underwent a craniotomy. This was to relieve the swelling in his brain that occurred from the impact of the accident. "I was in the ICU (Intensive Care Unit) at Sanford in Sioux Falls and placed in a medically-induced coma for about three weeks," he said.

When Kock was allowed to wake up, he started a long road of physical, occupational and speech therapy. Due to the fact that Kock was in the ICU, his therapy was very minimal in the beginning because he wasn't talking and still had breathing and feeding tubes in place. When he left the ICU, he faced another



### FAMILY SUPPORT

Korey Kock, pictured second from right, is grateful for the support of his family and his community during his recovery from a traumatic brain injury which was the result of the a car accident in April. Pictured are his dad, Bill, mom, Deb, and sister, Alyssa. (Photo/Submitted)

week of intense therapy at Sanford.

During this time, he was able to stand and begin walking with a walker. His speech slowly came back, and he was transitioned to eat and drink a normal diet

again. On May 26, 2022, Kock was transferred to Madonna Rehabilitation Center in Omaha, Nebraska, which is a facility that specializes in brain and spinal cord injuries. Here, Kock was in therapy almost every sin-

gle day with more physical, occupational and speech therapy sessions. He was also involved in TBI (traumatic brain injury) classes to help him transition to life after his accident.

This was also one of the

hardest parts of the whole experience for Kock. "It was hard having to take baby steps to re-learn all of the day in and day out activities that I felt like I already knew how to do, but my body had to re-connect with my

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## Passion for helping veterans leads to new way of serving

After 25 years of military service, Larchwood resident is new director of Lyon County Veterans' Affairs office



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Not many can relate to the experiences of military service people and veterans the same as other military service people and veterans can. For Ned Hodgson of Larchwood, his 25 years of military service, personal experiences and passion for helping others has led him to the role of director of Lyon County Veterans' Affairs.

Having only been in the position a few short months, Hodgson says he is still learning, but is ready to help any veteran who comes in. "It's really a passion of mine," he said.

Hodgson originally enlisted in the Sheldon Army National Guard unit when he was 17 years old. After graduating from West Lyon High School, he went to col-

lege at Wayne State University in Nebraska, transferring to the unit there. "I did my initial enlistment, I got out and got into my law enforcement career," Hodgson explained.

After working in law enforcement a few years, Hodgson learned that the unit of some of his former service mates was standing up and going to Iraq. "So, what did I do? I enlisted back in, in 2003," he said.

Hodgson was deployed to Iraq in 2007. "We did convoy escorts up and down the roads of Iraq for almost a year. I saw a lot of the world and a lot of the country," he said.

After returning to the United States, Hodgson's unit out of Omaha disbanded and Hodgson returned to Iowa and made the hop to the Air National Guard unit in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. "I went through

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### NEWS BRIEFS

#### Food Bank Hours

New hours at The Healing Room food bank in Inwood are: Monday 1-6 p.m. and Thursday 2-6 p.m. Appointments after hours can be made by calling Jenn at 402-980-0917. The food bank is located at 315 S. Main Street in Inwood.

#### 4-H/FFA Beef Weigh Ins

All Lyon County 4-H or FFA members who plan to exhibit certain beef projects at the Lyon County Fair are required to weigh in their animals Saturday, Jan. 14 from 8:30-10 a.m. at Wynia Cattle Farm, 2960 160th St., Rock Rapids.

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## Iowa farmland values hit all-time high despite inflation, interest concerns

One year after skyrocketing 29 percent, the average value of an acre of Iowa farmland jumped another 17 percent, or \$1,660, to \$11,411 per acre. The nominal value of an acre of farmland is again higher this year than at any point since Iowa State University began surveying values in 1941. When adjusting for inflation, the 2022 average value surpasses the previous inflation-adjusted record value set in 2013 for the first time.

Farmland values in Iowa have increased more than 15 percent in a year a handful of times since 1941, most notably in 2011, when values rose 32.5 percent, and last year, when values rose 29 percent.

While inflation was a major factor that drove the increase last year, Wendong Zhang, an associate professor of economics and faculty affiliate of Center for Agricultural and Rural Development at Iowa State University, said that it did not play as much of a factor as commodity prices, limited land supply, and low interest rates through summer 2022 did this year.

Zhang, who is responsible for conducting the annual survey, said that inflation rates this year are similar to those from last year, but the Federal Reserve has used aggressive rate hikes since this summer to curb the problem. "The Federal Reserve seems to be determined to keep raising interest rates until they get a firm control on inflation. This is a tricky balance because larger and quicker interest rate hikes run the risk of slowing down the economy, potentially to a recession," Zhang said. While he noted that higher interest rates put downward pressure on the land market, the effects typically don't show up in land prices for one or two years.

While the Federal Reserve has been raising interest rates, Zhang said that 81% of Iowa farmland is fully paid for, so the higher interest rates don't always affect farmers' land purchasing decisions. This is especially true when high inflation makes the real interest rates negative or low, which tends to incentivize more borrowing and investment. Furthermore, a significant portion of respondents said that cash on hand was a positive factor influencing land values. "Farmers have a lot more cash on hand and supply chain issues led to a shortage of equipment, so the money that farmers normally spend on equipment is now devoted to land," he said.

As for commodity prices, Zhang said they have been strong this year and yields have been higher than expected, despite the weather challenges. "Not only are crop prices much higher, livestock and poultry prices are also significantly higher, translating into higher farm income and profits," he said.

For the first time, this year's survey asked respondents' views of current farmland values. Zhang said that 70 percent of respondents feel that current land values are too high or way too high.

"The higher land values do create an even higher entry barrier for beginning farmers, and the following increase in cash rents along with higher input costs could negatively affect producers, especially those with a lot of rented ground," he said.

Zhang said that 48 percent of respondents forecasted an increase in farmland values one year from now, while 24 percent forecasted no change and 28 percent expected lower values.

He said that most respondents expect the one-year value to either be the same or increase roughly 5-10 percent.

Looking five years ahead, Zhang said that 60 percent of respondents believe land values will increase 10-20 percent from current values, while about 24 percent forecast a decline in prices.

#### Land Values by County

For the second year in a row, all 99 of Iowa's counties showed an increase in land values.

However, for the first time in almost a decade, Scott County did not report the highest overall value. O'Brien County topped the list this year, reporting a 20.6 percent increase, or \$2,818 per acre, to \$16,531. Decatur County again reported the lowest value, though land values there increased 10 percent, or \$505 per acre, to \$5,566.

Mills, Fremont, Page and Montgomery counties reported the largest percentage increase, 21.6 percent, while O'Brien County saw the largest dollar increase, \$2,818 per acre. Wayne, Lucas, Appanoose, and Decatur counties saw the smallest percentage increase, 10 percent, while Decatur County saw the smallest dollar increase, \$505 per acre.

#### Land Values by District

Land values increased across all crop reporting districts. The Northwest district reported the highest overall value, \$14,878 per acre, the largest percentage increase, 22.3 percent, and the largest dollar increase, \$2,714 per acre.

The South Central district reported the low-

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