



**SHOW NEIGHBORS:** The Isaacson family farm is just east of the show site. From left, seated, are June and Judy, and in the back row are Andy, Dick and Ben.



**FIFTH-GENERATION FARMERS:** Alan Schoff (left) and wife Jennifer hope their sons eventually have an interest in taking over the family farm. From left is Jentry, Jacob and Jaxon.

# It takes a village

**T**HE rise of the 2008 Farm Progress Show site out of a cornfield is a dream come true for many in the Boone and Ames ag communities in Iowa. It might be likened to the "Field of Dreams" in Dyersville, with a slight twist: Offer to build it and they will come. Boone was chosen over three other communities that submitted proposals for the long-term facility.

The Farm Progress Show will rotate between the Boone site, known as the Central Iowa Expo, and the other permanent biennial site in Decatur, Ill. — Progress City. Farm Progress and the two communities have committed to a 20-year contract.

## How Boone was chosen

"When Steve Bisenius, the previous executive director for the Boone Area Chamber and Convention & Visitors Bureau, learned that Farm Progress was looking for a permanent site in Iowa, he approached the then acting city administrator for the city of Boone, Darrel Rensink [now Boone's economic developer and president of Central Iowa Expo]," explains Richard Baker, executive director of the Boone Chamber of Commerce. "The two of them convinced the Ames Convention

& Visitors Bureau and Boone County to come on board," he continues.

Rensink, Steve Bisenius and representatives from the Ames CVB and Boone County flew to the Decatur, Ill., site of the other permanent biennial Farm Progress Show.

After returning to Boone, they identified a site that would work and brought the potential host landowners in on the project. From this nucleus grew the Central Iowa Expo Board. "The city of Boone has one seat, Boone's Future has one seat, the Ames CVB has two seats and Boone County has three seats on the board," notes Baker. The host farmers are non-voting members.

On Baker's first day on the job, Aug. 27, 2007, he drove to Decatur. The next day was the first day of the 2007 Farm Progress Show. "I worked the Central Iowa Expo Welcome Booth with the Ames Convention & Visitors Bureau, inviting people to Iowa in 2008," he says. "We have continued to collaborate with the Ames CVB

on a joint welcome booth for the 2008 Farm Progress Show, hosting the Exhibitors Welcome on Tuesday night and several other venues.

"As an ag community, it is an honor to be one of the host sites for the nation's leading outdoor farm show. Rotating between Boone and Decatur, Ill., over the next 20 years means the Farm Progress Show becomes the anchor event for a site which will be able to host many other events during the 21 months not in use by Farm Progress."

Baker says the economic boon from Farm Progress Shows, as well as other events, will be very positive for the Boone area and central Iowa. "Not only will the area benefit from increased tourism and the jobs created during the construction phase, but hopefully some of the exhibitors will consider the Boone area as a great place to open a division of their company.

"You can not beat our central location and great access to the interstate highways, rail and airline services."

## EXPO LEADERSHIP:

Members of the Central Iowa Expo board of directors include (front from left) Craig Christensen, Heidi Kokemiller and Bob Fisher. Standing are Eric Ziel, Ken Anderson, Mike O'Brien and Darrel Rensink. Not pictured is Julie Weeks.



## A strong history of protecting Midwest families

Since 1909, Grinnell Mutual has provided quality insurance protection and local service to families and businesses throughout the Midwest. We will be there for you when you need us most. Call your local Grinnell Mutual agent to learn more.

**We look forward to another century of service to our customers!**



**GRINNELL MUTUAL**  
REINSURANCE SINCE 1909  
gmrc.com

**Proud Platinum Sponsor of  
the 2008 Farm Progress Show**