

*Chris Soules, Peoples Company's
New Land Investment Specialist*

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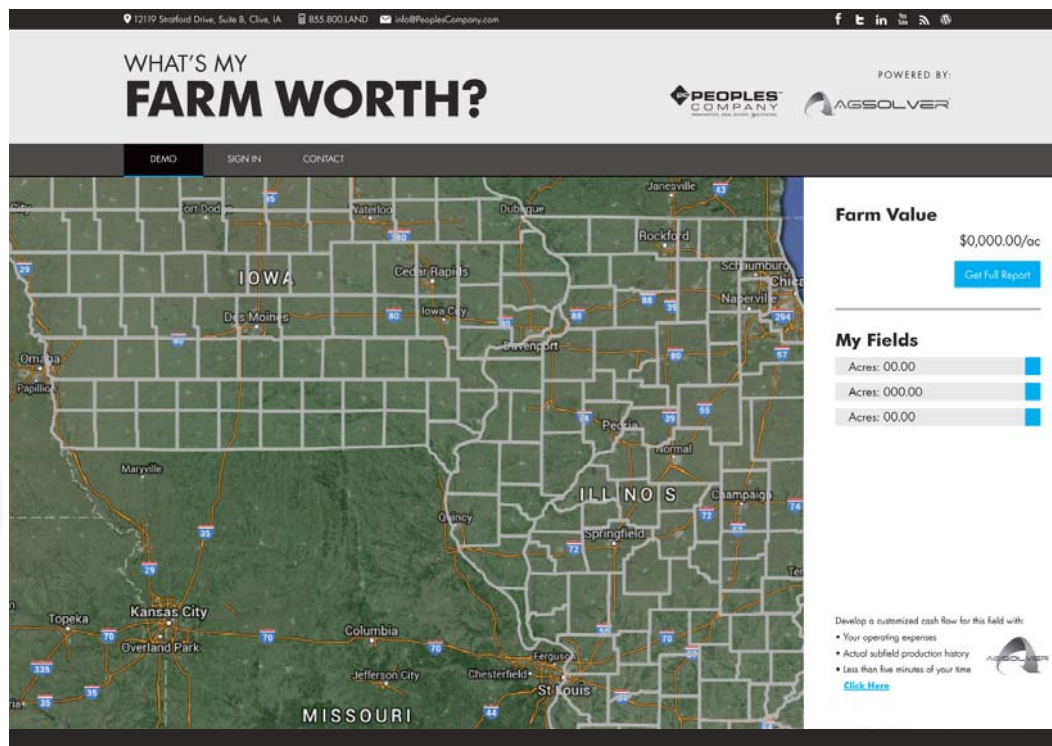
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PEOPLES COMPANY, AGSOLVER PARTNERSHIP TAKES FARMLAND ESTIMATES DIGITAL WITH LAUNCH OF **WhatsMyFarmWorth.com**

The map-based valuation tool leverages public information and innovative technology to provide farmers, landowners with near real-time assessment of baseline land values and rental rates.

Farmland values in Iowa and other states can now be easily estimated at **WhatsMyFarmWorth.com**, a map-based valuation tool powered by Peoples Company and AgSolver. The mobile-friendly website draws on public data while utilizing the latest innovations in digital technology to provide farmers and landowners with a baseline estimate for land values or rental income.

WhatsMyFarmWorth.com provides a unique and adaptive approach to determining land values. Commodity markets and operating margins have created an environment where market based and financially viable land values are not always connected.

WhatsMyFarmWorth.com provides a cash flow based valuation that uses rich data resources and algorithms to determine land values based actual historical productivity, market based revenue opportunities, and standard operating cost profiles.

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WhatsMyFarmWorth.com

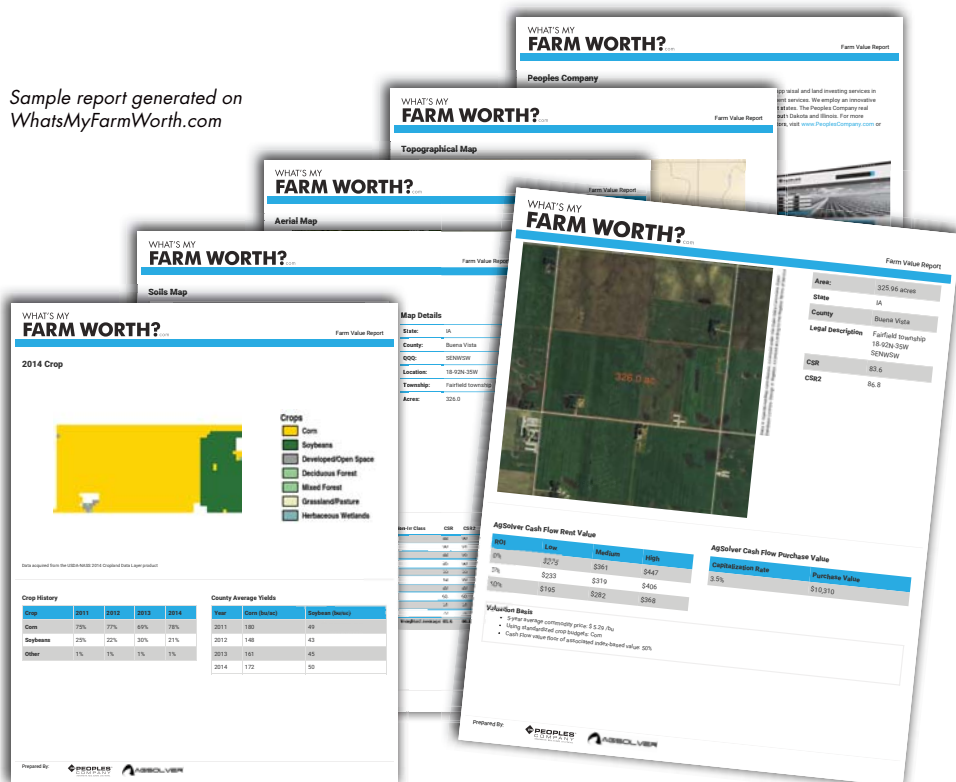
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WhatsMyFarmWorth.com takes into account location, soil types and other statistics from public sources while allowing users to zoom in on a farm, identify field boundaries and download reports within minutes to a computer, tablet or smartphone. The free service is now available in each of the 14 states that Peoples Company holds a real estate license.

“There are absentee owners all over the country with no simple way of researching land values or rental rates online,” said Steve Bruere, president of Peoples Company. “By taking farmland estimates digital, we are giving them another way to determine baseline values prior to considering a professional appraisal or the sale of their land.”

Bruere said that the online resource is intended not to replace, but rather reinforce a comprehensive line of brokerage, land management and appraisal services, including the generation of comparable sales data, as the Peoples Company team evaluates changing demographics, new technologies and alternative variables in a global land market.

Sample report generated on
WhatsMyFarmWorth.com



Results of a recent survey by the USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service show that approximately 10 percent of all U.S. farmland is expected to have new ownership by late 2020. The Iowa market alone comprises approximately 30 million crop acres and a \$230 billion asset class.

According to the USDA's survey, an estimated nine percent of farmland in Iowa other parts of the Midwest could change hands within five years. The value of land rented out in the United States last year was \$1.1 trillion, including buildings on the land.

“The technology is there for farmers and landowners from around the nation to hop on the Internet and find out what their farm is worth or what it will rent for,” Bruere said. “There is a huge demand for this service, and we are offering it free of charge. It’s about harnessing the power of public data and advancing technology, with our boots-on-the-ground while effectively collaborating to add value to our customers.”

REALITIES PROVIDE PATH FORWARD ON IMPORTANT ISSUE OF WATER QUALITY

By Steve Bruere, President Peoples Company

Editor's note: this column, authored by Steve Bruere, was first published by the Des Moines Register Dec. 25, 2015.



In August, I accepted an invitation to co-chair the Iowa's Water Future Task Force to find solutions to address Iowa's water quality issue. This occurred about the same time that caucus season hit full stride in Iowa.

At first glance, passionate debate about how best to improve water quality, inflamed by a Des Moines Water Works lawsuit against three counties in northwest Iowa, might seem to have little in common with Iowa's role in choosing our next president. But look deeper and there's a connection: call it human nature at work.

As is often the case with politics, the lawsuit and discussions about water generally have two sides: those who strongly support the litigation, believing it's the best way to spur water quality improvements and those who see it as a reckless strategy dividing Iowa and offering no practical pathway toward better water.

Since being appointed to the task force, I've attended nearly 100 water-focused meetings. I hear sincere concern from environmental folks about the impact of farming on the environment. And I hear credible pleas from agriculture to truly appreciate and understand the complexity of the issues and be smart and methodical in our approach to making progress.

These conversations, along with land management experience and better understanding the range of issue, concerns and solutions in play, lead me to identify several realities and recommendations for moving forward.

First, the realities:

- While both rural and urban parties impact water quality, farming and environmental factors contribute significantly to the movement of nutrients through the landscape. Our drainage tile system, which has made our land very productive to the benefit of many, also allows nutrients to move.
- We must admit the real complexity of this issue and recognize the scope of the fix. Solutions offered so far – either regulatory or to simply throw public money at the problem without any clear understanding of what the fix is – do not move us forward.
- Some years, DMWW's nitrate removal system does not operate. In others, it must run more frequently. Even if operated daily for an entire year, the cost per customer would total about \$5 annually (or about the cost of a six-inch sub sandwich). Moving forward, DMWW will continue to need effective and affordable infrastructure to treat and deliver water that meets quality standards. This must occur simultaneously with refinements in cropping systems and improved land and water management, helping reduce nutrient movement through the landscape.
- Which brings me to the Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy. Voluntary and largely unfunded as it may be, the strategy is less than three years in the making. To say it's a failure at this juncture is wildly premature. This is generational work. That said, we know much more about water quality and factors that affect it than we did prior to its launch. The strategy has also rallied dozens of stakeholders to collaborate so we can effectively deploy projects in watersheds that actually have a quantifiable impact on water quality.

DMWW and Iowa's farmers have two things in common. Both the DMWW facility and our tiling system were designed and largely constructed nearly 150 years ago. And both would have been designed and constructed differently knowing what we now know about how water and nutrients move. That's hindsight and a call to action.

First, many groups should be recognized for the investment they're making to reduce excess nutrient movement while increasing farmer involvement in solutions. The Iowa Soybean Association, for example, is helping collect and measure water quality samples and identifying, deploying and assessing modern

techniques to reduce soil and nutrient loss. It's been doing this work for 15 years and the results continue to grow.

Second, farming practices continue to improve, and these improvements must accelerate. Local, state and federal programs are educating and empowering more farmers to act. Rapid acceleration in the use of practices that improve soil health and a dramatic increase in the investment of cost-share and private resources to implement conservation and nutrient and water management practices, such as the installation of bioreactors and constructed wetlands, are two examples.

Third, DMWW has an aging infrastructure at a time when its customer base is increasing dramatically. Regardless of any new program, DMWW will need to install new infrastructure to meet future demands. Let's get started on its construction.

Finally, we must rally and help farmers, landowners and city utilities redesign our water infrastructure and position Iowa for the next century of progress. We've done it before and we can do so again.

Let's not be distracted by lawsuits and blustery platitudes. Let's unite as problem solvers, acknowledge reality and get to work on solutions that will make Iowa a leader in both food production and environmental quality.



PEOPLES COMPANY TO DEPLOY LAND MANAGEMENT SERVICES IN AGREEMENT WITH HOME STATE BANK



Peoples Company has entered into an agreement with Home State Bank, Jefferson, that will allow Peoples Company as an ag real estate services provider to assist Home State Bank with meeting its trust department customers' land management needs.

Home State Bank has hired Gerry Stein, who will utilize the Peoples Company platform to perform land management services on behalf of the bank's trust department customers.

The referral partnership places Peoples Company's systems, knowledge and personnel at the disposal of Home State Bank with a focus on improving both the environmental and financial performance of farms managed by its trust department.

In addition to handling the day-to-day details of land management, Peoples Company employs an innovative use of ag technology, including the collection and analyzation of "big data" to help overcome operational challenges associated with farming, promoting stewardship and increasing production. The model centers on maximizing income and appreciation while taking into account links that exist between the financial and environmental performance of the land.

"A key fiduciary responsibility of a trust department is to protect the value of the asset, which means managing the soil and water health of the asset," said Steve Bruere, president of Peoples Company. "Given the sustainability movement in agriculture, Home State Bank recognized the need to partner with a land management company whose aim is to maximize potential for the most productive acres, and protect the most environmentally sensitive areas of a farm."

Stein, who will become licensed with Peoples Company in the state of Iowa, will work alongside Roger Custer, a Home State Bank representative with more than 25 years of ag lending and farm management experience, to maximize the impact of land management decisions on bank customers' future goals.

Home State Bank, which acts in a fiduciary capacity as trustee, executor and administrator for trusts and estates in West Central Iowa, will refer its trust department customers to Peoples Company for land sales, real estate appraisal, land management and real estate investment services.

The partnership also allows for the extension of Peoples Company's land management services to other Garst family owned banks.

"This is an opportunity for other banks and trust departments who are concerned about their fiduciary responsibility of managing farmland to partner with Peoples Company and Home State Bank as industry leaders in land management," Bruere said, "and still be the face to the client while utilizing the land management tools and systems we deploy."

INTRODUCING LAND INVESTMENT SPECIALIST CHRIS SOULES

With the addition of Chris Soules, Peoples Company is forging ahead with the expansion of our Land Investment Programs division.

Widely known for his starring roles on ABC's "The Bachelor" and "Dancing with the Stars," Soules also has more than a decade's worth of experience acquiring and managing farmland – an ideal fit for his role with Peoples Company.

Soules, who was raised on a farm outside of Lamont, Iowa, co-owns his family's third generation farming operation – Soules Farms – in partnership with parents, Gary and Linda. Together, they farm more than 5,500 acres of land.

At Peoples Company, Soules works to help identify investment-grade acquisitions for high-profile clients while serving as spokesman in the ag real estate industry. In addition to speaking at national seminars, conferences and in private meetings, he attends major sporting and entertainment events, host tours and trips, and works directly with actors, musicians, athletes and business leaders to help them buy, sell and manage farmland.

The successful investor and advisor, over the past 10 years, has purchased and sold on behalf of clients more than \$200 million in farmland assets. He is passionate about educating people about investing in farmland, and at the same time highlighting innovations and technologies that are advancing the story of the American farmer.

Soules combines his experiences in agriculture and land brokerage, with recent experiences in the entertainment industry, to help clients reach their investing goals.

He and the entire Land Investment Programs team proactively networks with hedge funds, pension plans, family offices, private land funds and others in the industry of ag real estate while keeping a finger on the pulse of market activity.



DRONES: WHERE IN THE WORLD ARE THEY TAKING US?

By Jared R. Chambers, Professional Auctioneer & Land Specialist

What is that thing in the sky? Is that a drone?

Drones are becoming more and more popular. From professional sports and law enforcement to news reporters and real estate, it doesn't take long for one of these to attract a crowd.

At Peoples Company, the sky is the limit with the use of drones in our innovative real estate solutions. With the popularity growing, these Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) are going to continue to be in the spotlight.

Almost daily, one can find new reports questioning the safety and use of drones. The true question is "Are drones legal?" The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is proposing big changes in the near future for registering all drones and those who fly them.

If you are flying a drone for recreational purposes and picture taking, then yes, you are utilizing the drone within the current laws (with limitations and conditions).

COMMERCIAL USE

Proper training and licensing is necessary for those that are utilizing drones in commercial uses. Commercial drone users can apply for an exemption under the FAA's Section 333. This process can take many months to complete and, if granted, will allow a user to fly a drone commercially.

With all of the new regulations beginning to be enforced, our current drone pilots are going through the licensing process with the FAA. If granted the exemption, operators must comply with the limitations and conditions set forth by the FAA. Some of these limitations include:

- The UAV must be operated at an altitude of no more than 400 feet above ground level (AGL). Altitude must be reported in feet AGL.
- The UAV must be operated within visual line of sight (VLOS) of the person in control at all times.
- The UAV may not operate within five nautical miles of any airport.
- There are several other limitations and conditions from the FAA in the exemption.

SELECT VIEWS

In the farmland brokerage world, images and videos from drones are giving buyers a whole new perspective on land for sale, versus being limited to the traditional "drive-by" method.

Ground photos capture only what is in front of the camera. During the summer months, corn and beans limit access into farm fields and one may need to hike back into the farm for more photos or to view the land. The fact is you can only see so much from the road.

Mapping systems and satellite images have provided us, for many years, with a great look at the land from above. With UAVs, however, we can provide a much more detailed and up-to-date perspective of the land.

When crops are growing and access is limited into these farm fields, a view from up above is critical to a buyer that is not familiar with a particular piece of farmland offered for sale.

Our UAVs shoot 4K video and capture 12 megapixel photos, allowing us to make videos and pictures look crisper and cleaner than ever. These professional cameras are mounted on a three-axis gimbal, making complex shots and hovering for long exposure photos and videos relatively easy.

At Peoples Company, we are leading the industry with our professionally edited videos and pictures of farmland. By combining this with the power of social media, we are targeting buying audiences – despite their physical location – and getting proven results.

In addition to farmland brokerage and land auctions, our Land Management division is also tapping into the benefits of drones. With the views from up above, our professionals can ensure that the critical elements of your farm operation, as well as the critical issues of soil conservation and farm sustainability, are being overseen by the trained professionals.

Curious how the use of a drone could benefit you and your farm? For more information, contact one of our Land Agents or Land Managers today. Meanwhile, visit [YouTube.com/PeoplesCo](https://www.youtube.com/PeoplesCo) or the PeoplesCompany.com website for a view from "up above," alongside our professional marketing videos and more.



Whether you are flying a drone for commercial use or for recreational use, fly smart and fly safe.

IOWA LAND VALUES

By Brad Hayes, Associate General Appraiser

The Iowa land market has been active in recent months with a couple hundred land sales occurring since July 1, 2015. Of these numerous land transactions, slightly more than 100 are row-crop production farms with 85 percent tillable or more.

This specific set of sales was extracted from the Peoples Company Appraisal database to get a better understanding of current market trends of the highly tillable farms in the state.

In this data set, the dollar per CSR2 point (\$/CSR2) calculation on the tillable acres ranges from \$57 to \$184, with an average of \$115 and median of \$110. It appears that \$105-\$125/CSR2 point captures the majority of the market.

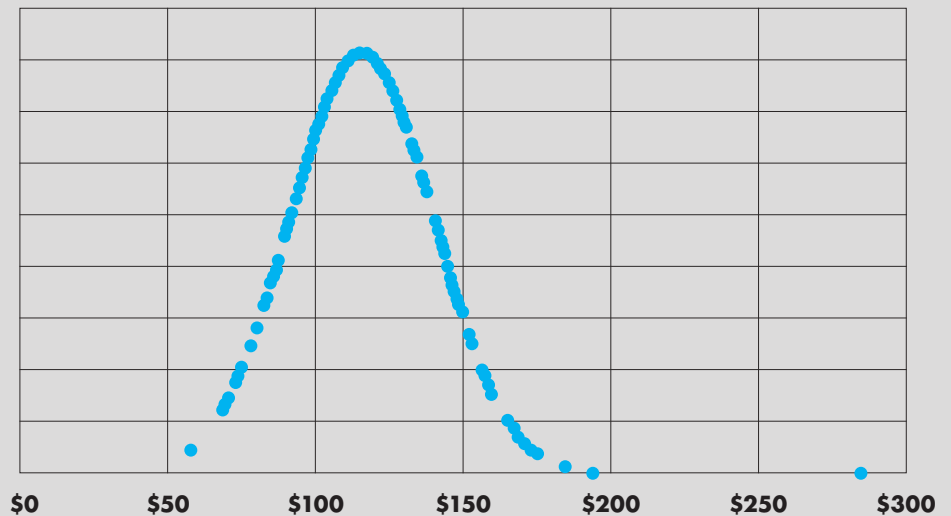
Land values throughout Iowa have trended lower since their peak in 2013/2014, when it was not uncommon to see an average of \$130-\$150/CSR2 point.

The decline in value is a result of lower commodity prices, tighter balance sheets, and buyers becoming more cautious and looking to purchase property that will generate a profit or positive return.

During this phase, there has been an increase in the occurrence of “no sales” during auctions, which has led to a higher volume of private treaty listings versus the traditional auction that has been popular over the previous three to five years. Starting in spring 2014, and continuing through summer 2015, land prices have declined 20 percent to 25 percent for all land types from the 2013/2014 peak.

With that said, today's values as shown in recent land value surveys are still nearly 184 percent higher than they were, according to similar surveys conducted in the fall of 2007, when commodity prices were very similar to current prices.

DOLLAR (\$) / TILLABLE CSR2 POINT



This proves that contributing factors to land values go well beyond the obvious bearish influences, such as the decrease in commodity prices and farm income decline. The bullish influences on the market include record low interest rates, a large supply of investor and operator capital, numerous 1031 exchange buyers, aggressive neighbor purchases, and a limited supply of land available for sale compared with previous years.

This has created a situation where there is more capital pursuing farmland than the current available inventory will support.

The market appears to be strongest in regions of the Iowa that have large volumes of livestock production. In these areas, local operators are purchasing land so that they have a place to spread manure.

Furthermore, the market value of pasture acres has increased in recent years and has remained steady over the previous year. The amount of pasture that is available for purchase is limited, and prospective buyers are expanding their footprint when looking for land to buy or rent.

Overall, properties consisting of marginal crop acres have not held up as well as the higher quality tracts of land. Marginal crop farms have been selling on average for \$80-\$90/CSR2 point. These properties tend to bring a premium if you have an aggressive neighbor, but alternatively can sell for a slight discount, which is appealing to the investor capital in the market.

The land market for recreational buyers continues to be very active. Timber and recreational land values have remained consistent throughout 2014 and 2015.

In areas within close proximity to the Des Moines-metro, there have been sales of pure timberland that have brought upwards of \$3,500/acre. In areas in the southern region of the state and further away from the metro area, recreational properties typically bring \$2,000/acre to \$3,000/acre, depending on available income streams through areas of crop production or CRP contracts.

Leading up to and through the fall harvest, the amount of auctions scheduled did increase, and one could have suspected the land market to react with a further dip in value. However, as of mid-November, a negative reaction had yet to be seen. There were a handful of “no sales” this fall. However, nearly all of the “no sales” were successfully negotiated after the auction and sold at or near market value.

Although there has been a reduction in commodity prices and overall decline in land values, the downward trend appears to be slowing.

If you'd like to discuss current land values with a member of our Appraisal team or a Peoples Company Agent, please call us at 855-800-5263.

APPRAISAL TEAM TRACKS AG REAL ESTATE SALES

By Brad Hayes, Associate General Appraiser

The Peoples Company Appraisal team continues to see rapid growth in the number of services provided. Our Appraisal database has been a key factor to this success.

Shelby Spratte, an Associate General Appraiser with Peoples Company, tracks more than 150 websites to help build out our statewide database of agricultural real estate sales in Iowa.

With the support of Peoples Company Land Agents and Land Investment team, Shelby and the Appraisal team are able to add agricultural real estate listings and auctions to our database as they come on the market, allowing us to keep tabs on the listings and auctions through the sale of the asset.

As a service to our clients, we wish to keep you up-to-date on the current land market, and will be providing a snapshot of auction results on a monthly basis through the Peoples Company blog page and social media channels.

Additionally, Certified General Appraiser Jim Rothermich is writing a weekly blog update: "The Dirt on Iowa Land Auction Prices." The Appraisal and Land Investment teams will also provide a quarterly update and additional analytics on the land market throughout Iowa.

Our Appraisal team provides real estate appraisal services throughout the state of Iowa and upper Midwest while utilizing the most up-to-date technology available to manage quick turn-around times.

In addition to tracking all land transactions throughout the state of Iowa, Jim and Certified General Appraiser Rick Shafer of Peoples Company have been very active in conducting valuations on agribusiness and commercial-agricultural properties. These include grain elevators, dairy cattle facilities, swine and cattle confinements, agronomy facilities, and other specialized agricultural facilities.

Contact one of our team members to further discuss our appraisal service offerings and how we can add value to you and your clients today!

If you would like to receive our monthly auction report via email, please contact Brad Hayes at Bradley@PeoplesCompany.com. For additional information on a specific real estate transaction, contact the Peoples Company Appraisal team.

SALE DATE	COUNTY	LAND TYPE	\$ PER ACRE	CSR2
12/01/15	Montgomery	Tillable	\$6,573	72
12/01/15	Mitchell	Tillable	\$8,800	91
12/01/15	Mitchell	Tillable	\$4,825	67
12/01/15	Taylor	Pasture	\$4,250	--
12/01/15	Taylor	Tillable/Pasture	\$4,250	73
12/01/15	Poweshiek	Tillable	\$10,600	80
12/02/15	Sac	Tillable/CRP	\$9,200	91
12/03/15	Greene	Tillable	\$9,400	87
12/03/15	Greene	Tillable	\$8,800	82
12/03/15	Greene	Tillable	\$8,150	77
12/03/15	Jefferson	Tillable/Timber	\$7,600	81
12/03/15	Johnson	Tillable	\$8,700	88
12/04/15	Poweshiek	Tillable	\$9,050	86
12/05/15	Hardin	Tillable	\$8,500	81
12/05/15	Boone	Tillable	\$9,300	80
12/08/15	Benton	Tillable	\$11,200	92
12/08/15	Benton	Tillable	\$9,400	90
12/08/15	Greene	Tillable/CRP	\$6,500	77

PROPERTY TYPES APPRAISED:

- Agricultural Land
- Recreational Land
- Transitional/Development Land
- Feed Mills & Grain Storage Facilities
- Cattle Facilities & Feed Yards
- Dairy Facilities
- Swine Facilities
- Poultry Facilities
- Equestrian Facilities
- Seed Treatment Facilities
- Conservation & Preservation Easements (CRP/WRP)
- Federal & State Land Acquisitions & Dispositions
- Eminent Domain Condemnation Properties
- Easements
- Other Agribusiness & Commercial-Agricultural Properties

ADDITIONAL SERVICES OFFERED:

- Appraisal Review
- Agricultural Machinery & Equipment Appraisal
- Expert Witness Testimony
- Partial Interest Valuation
- Area-Wide Market Analysis
- Economic Consulting

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INNOVATION AT THE FARM GATE: USING TECHNOLOGY TO MAXIMIZE INCOME AND APPRECIATION

By Mollie Aronowitz,
Land Manager

While landowners and operators across the Midwest have been spending the past few months discussing 2016 rental rates, Peoples Company has been challenging both parties to shift their focus. We are challenging landowners and operators to find a middle ground where both parties can align to maximize present income, as well as the farm's long-term value.

Rapidly advancing technology is bringing into focus the longer game of farming and investment at the field level. Innovative tools now available allow us to incorporate comprehensive strategies and today's best practices with the intention of improving yield, reducing operating costs and increasing the farm's value.

Using today's technology, we can make a win-win situation for both the landowner and operator.

Though still an important piece, matrixes such as Iowa's corn suitability rating (CSR) are no longer enough to evaluate a farm. The information we now want includes yield maps, soil sample data, fertilizer application data and more. Capturing and communicating this data will allow us to predict future productivity, as well as help make informed conservation decisions.

Peoples Company has partnered with three cutting-edge technology companies to accomplish your land management goals. Taking the best from each, we have aggregated a comprehensive set of tools to transform raw data into relevant information and analytics.

The first is Agren's SoilCalculator, which is used to measure soil loss by sheet and rill erosion. Maps generated show color-coded erosion where we can plug in different tillage practices, crop rotations and conservation measures, while at the same time measuring erosion change for different options. The SoilCalculator allows us to quickly pinpoint areas of the field where the significant soil loss is occurring so we can address management practices in a timely manner.

Peoples Company has also partnered with AgSolver to create results-driven management plans that touch upon every aspect of the farming operation. To maximize present income, we are using AgSolver's Prospector tool, which allows users to accurately determine the potential of farmland through a combination of public data sources and user-defined crop budgets.

Cereal rye in November on a
Peoples Company managed farm



We can quickly and accurately determine a rental rate on a farm based on soil types and county averages. Sharing actual income and expenses with the landowner fosters an equitable relationship moving forward, and one in which both parties benefit on the upswing – and vice versa. Using Prospector to its fullest potential may require a new level of trust between the landowner and operator. In this new landowner-operator working dynamic, we propose that transparency is critical.

To maximize long-term value, we are using AgSolver's Profit Zone Manager tool. This technology allows us to understand financial risk and identify opportunities for increasing profit through management at the subfield scale.

Using the raw data from our operator's tractor cabs, Profit Zone Manager helps us identify the different areas of a farm to maximize productive acres while protecting the most sensitive acres. This may require changing tillage and application practices, taking acres out of production, and adding conservation practices.

We can also use this actual production data to create planting and fertility prescriptions that align with each farm's ability to produce. While no practice or farming system is universal, Profit Zone Manager allows us to manipulate many variables on the field level to find the best use of each acre. Items such as removing acres from production will come at a cost to the landowner, but there may also be federal programs available that will pay to put these acres into pollinator/habitat protection, or other permanent seeding programs.

Profit Zone Manager can build profitability maps that include federal program payments on some acres. At the same time, it can identify higher rent on more productive acres where, in fact, overall return could potentially be higher while farming fewer acres.

Finally, we are using the web-based platform Agri-Data Solution to collect, protect and transform agriculture data into decision-making tools and reports. Agri-Data allows us to pull up all information on each farm while in the fields working with operators.

From the farm operator's perspective, new technology in the equipment – as well as the seed – has dramatically increased production. Successful operators will use these new tools to manage margin through smart grain marketing and efficiency in cost of production.

From the landowner's perspective, there is a great opportunity to ensure income potential and maximize value appreciation by participating in the management conversation. Successful landowners will thrive in industrial cycles through smart budgeting and capitalizing on opportunity.

Peoples Company's partnership with each of these companies will continue to evolve as they build out their platforms and launch new tools. We look forward to the opportunity to explore the potential for innovative technologies intended to protect the soil and water.

For more information on working with Peoples Company to achieve your land management goals, contact us at 855-800-5263 or visit PeoplesCompany.com/Land_Management today.

TYLER KRUG, KYLE WALKER NEW ADDITIONS TO PEOPLES COMPANY LAND MANAGEMENT TEAM



Tyler Krug



Kyle Walker

Peoples Company has announced the additions of Tyler Krug and Kyle Walker to its growing land management division.

These professional Land Managers have diverse backgrounds and an array of experiences in the ag real estate industry. They are working to foster a conservation-minded approach to managing farmland for an annual income, sustainability and long-term appreciation.

Krug, who focuses on delivering solutions to empower growers via the use of “big data” in management decisions, joined Peoples Company in January, following prior field experience that included a summer internship and two years working as an Account Manager with Premier Crop Systems, LLC. From variable rate seeding and nutrient recommendations – to the incorporation of tablet and smartphone technologies into farming operations – he has worked with ag retailers across the Midwest.

Walker, who joined Peoples Company as a Land Agent in 2014, is adept in all facets of land management. His areas of expertise center on the improvement of tillable acres through terracing, tiling and waterways, alongside tactics associated with negotiating cash rents and settling contract disputes. The avid

hunter and outdoorsman earned a bachelor’s degree in Sports Management from Iowa State University.

The additions of Kyle and Tyler reflect Peoples Company’s forward-thinking hiring practices, and the type of innovators we seek to join our results-oriented teams. Besides acting as a liaison among owners, tenants and other agricultural organizations, they strive to create value for clients by collecting, documenting and analyzing data that can be used to boost production – and safeguard the most environmentally sensitive areas of a farm.

Krug earned a bachelor’s degree with a major in Agricultural Systems Technology from Iowa State. He grew up staying active with 4-H, the National FFA Organization and his family’s corn-and-soybean farm in rural Benton County. Walker, who has more than 10 years of farm management experience, is a native of and licensed real estate sales associate in the state of Iowa.

Please join us in welcoming Krug and Walker to the team. To learn about Peoples Company and our menu of ag real estate services, including land brokerage and auctions, land management, land appraisal and land investing, go to PeoplesCompany.com.

PEOPLES COMPANY ACQUIRES GREENLINE ASSET MANAGEMENT, WELCOMES LAND MANAGER JIM KEDLEY

Peoples Company is pleased to announce its acquisition of Greenline Asset Management LLC, and the retention of industry veteran Jim Kedley as a new addition to our growing land management services team.

Jim is a licensed broker with a career in real estate spanning more than 20 years throughout Eastern Iowa and Western Illinois. He is strategically located out of Peoples Company’s Total Realty Co. office in DeWitt.

In addition to handling day-to-day matters associated with improving productivity, sustainability and profitability of the land, Jim’s emphasis is on producing an annual income for clients while situating their farms for superior long-term appreciation.

He specializes in the brokerage and management of farmland, acreages and recreational ground. Jim grew up working with his family on an Eastern Iowa ag and livestock farm. He earned an MBA from Lake Forest Graduate School of Management, and was presented with a President’s Award in recognition of his relationship-driven marketing skills.

GREENLINE ASSET MANAGEMENT

The acquisition of Greenline Asset Management reflects Peoples Company’s commitment to growth in Eastern Iowa and Western Illinois. We are excited for new opportunities to expand our presence in this area.

Jim utilizes strong, interpersonal communication to serve landowners in a highly professional manner. His knowledge and perspective are an ideal fit for clients of the Peoples Company organization. We are happy to have a land professional of Jim’s caliber on-board as a valued addition to our team.

HOW TO DEAL DIRT: LAND AUCTION OR PRIVATE TREATY?

By Jeffrey T. Obrecht, Auctioneer & Realtor®

For the past seven years, the decision on how to liquidate the farm was relatively easy. Look in the papers and on the websites. The newspapers were flooded with land auctions and had few traditional listings.

The majority of the farms were going to auction. For many real estate companies, 70 to 80 percent of the properties were being sold at auction with the other small percentage listed private treaty.

Most sellers came to the conversation about selling the farm, with one thing on their mind. Auction. They all heard of the unbelievable prices that auctions were attaining and wanted a piece of the action. They hoped their farm would be the one that sold at sensational prices and make history.

The thrill was there and, many times, the drama was also. During 2013, I performed 169 auctions in a 12-month period of time. It was a sensational time with hopes of the next auction being better than the last. Many times, it was better, as premiums were being paid.

The story was that the farm may come up for sale only once in your lifetime. Many buyers had the cash to put down a nice down payment, with the help of \$7 per bushel corn, along with a line of credit from a lender.

Well, folks, as a famous quote says, “The times they are a changing.” This is not easy for a well-seasoned veteran of the past five years of more than 500 auctions. As a professional representing the seller’s best interests, we need to take a hard look at what we are recommending to the sellers as the best way of marketing their property.

When the market was strong, and neighbors competed with each other to own the adjoining property, auctions provided a terrific mechanism for people to receive exceptional sales prices. In today’s environment, there are fewer buyers and not as much inventory. The art of our business, however, is selecting the most appropriate sale method that will result in the best price for our clients.

In some cases, auctions can still achieve this, especially where we have highly competitive situations. In any case, knowing the market and most suitable sale method is critical. Without a strong neighbor or farmer competition, for instance, an auction could leave the seller exposed. In other instances, access to a buyer pool may be limited so we need to get out there and find more.

Some sellers don’t want the neighborhood to know their property is for sale. Furthermore, when an auction is performed, you also give up the ability of controlling who buys the land.

The collaborative environment we have created at Peoples Company allows us to share information about potential buyers and sellers, and gives our team an opportunity to put together deals where a seller may prefer not to have signs up or mass market the property.

With tighter margins, we are now seeing farmers who are interested in sale-leaseback types of transactions. These require not only the negotiation of a sale price, but also lease terms. Our team is equipped to put together these types of deals.

In 2013, auctions were predominant and the sale method mattered little because buyers were everywhere. Auctions still work, but you need to understand which deals to take to auction, and which deals you should list private treaty.

With our entire team collaborating closely on a weekly basis, we have the ability to consider the most appropriate sales method for a farm. Though some properties may not be a candidate for auction, that doesn’t mean there isn’t an aggressive buyer out there.

We just have to find them.

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I also hope you enjoy Jared Chambers’ article on drones, the impressive technology that is making it easier than ever for our clients to obtain a bird’s eye view of the land. Jared has been working hard to capture aerial imagery of Peoples Company listings and managed farms, with videos available for viewing at [YouTube.com/PeoplesCo](https://www.youtube.com/PeoplesCo).

Given societal issues such as the Des Moines Water Works lawsuit against three Iowa counties potentially impacting how we manage land, it is necessary for our landowner clients to more closely monitor sustainability with regards to both the environmental and financial performance of their farms.

The ongoing investment in innovative technology that is positioning us at the forefront of the land management business is paying big dividends.

First, Peoples Company is excited to announce a new joint venture with Home State Bank, which will utilize the Peoples Company Land Management platform to manage farms within their trust department.

Besides this partnership, our land management business continues to grow with the acquisition of Greenline Asset Management, as well as the additions of Tyler Krug and Kyle Walker as our newest Land Managers.

We are also announcing Chris Soules as the newest addition of our Land Investment team. He will work with farmers who may need an investor, as well as investors looking for opportunities to place capital in a farmland investment.

As part of our commitment to adding value to our clients in a more challenging market, our board of directors made a bold decision to keep our services independent – meaning our brokers focus solely on the brokerage business with the requirement of being a member of the REALTORS® Land Institute.

Our land managers, with a sole focus on managing farms, will be members of the American Society of Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers (ASFMRA). Our appraisers will limit their professional activities to the appraisal side of the business while maintaining memberships in both the ASFMRA and the Appraisal Institute. By eliminating overlap, our clients can be assured they are working with a well-qualified professional who is 100 percent committed to helping them get the job done.

While it is hard to be certain, and I don’t know exactly where the land market is headed, I do think we are prepared for future volatility. I am very proud of the team of professionals Peoples Company has assembled, and we look forward to being a resource to clients – in good times and bad.

NEW PEOPLES COMPANY WEBSITE STREAMLINES USER EXPERIENCE, EMPHASIZES USE OF TECHNOLOGY

Peoples Company is ringing in the new year with the launch of a new-and-improved website. It is now easier than ever to locate land listings, find upcoming auctions, consume market data, obtain estimates of land values, learn more about our approach, and get in touch with us.

The newly remodeled **PeoplesCompany.com** is reflective of our organization's innovative approach to sharing information without obligation, and alongside the use of leading edge technologies. Designed to streamline the user experience, it positions even greater streams of timely and relevant farmland-related content at the fingertips of our clients and future customers.

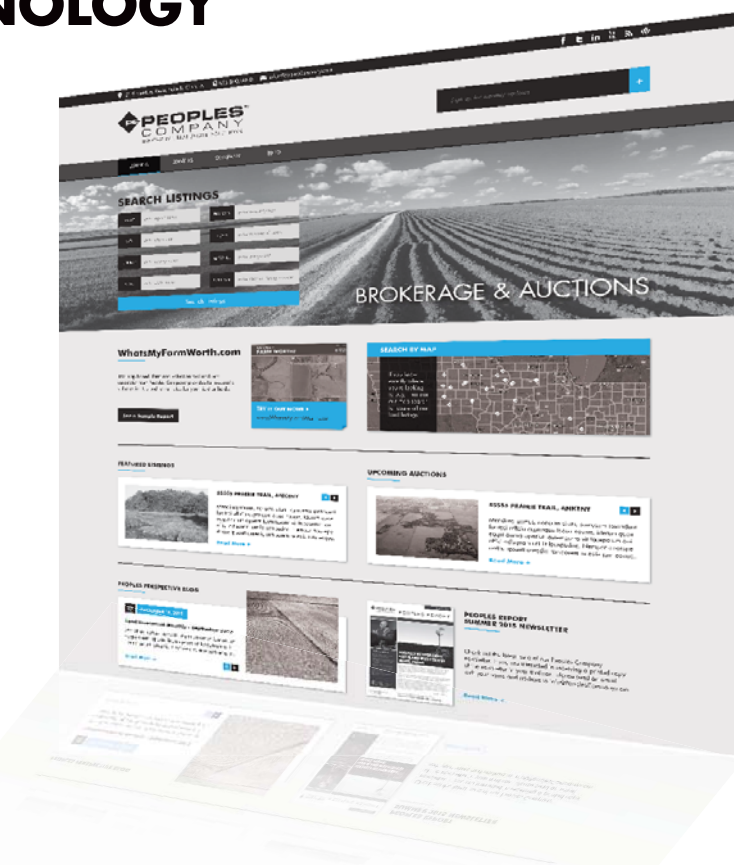
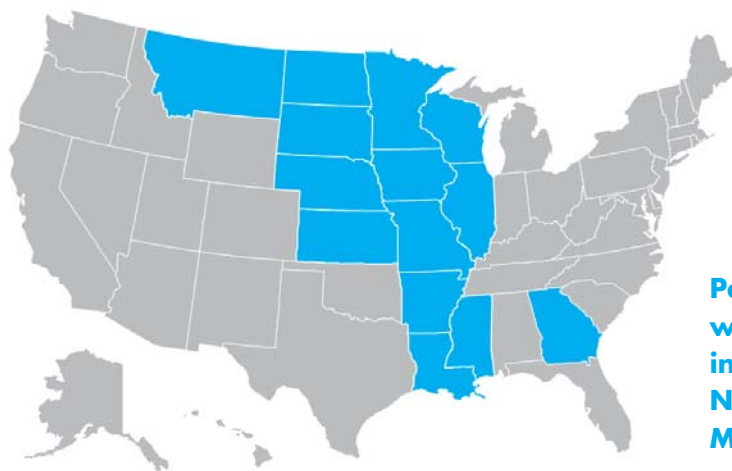
The new site empowers buyers to perform a fast and accurate search of farmland auctions and ag real estate listings via a user-friendly interface and interactive mapping tool. We are driving traffic to interior portals of the site featuring plat maps, soil maps, FSA maps, aerial photography and more.

These unique landing pages allow buyers to easily digest and download current listing information while gaining a unique perspective of the land from anywhere in the world.

PeoplesCompany.com also provides a gateway to powerful affiliate sites such as **WhatsMyFarmWorth.com** and **LandInvestmentExpo.com**, while at the same time tying in with our growing presence and growing reach on Facebook, Twitter, Google, YouTube and LinkedIn.

Everything has been wrapped in a neat, mobile-friendly package centered on helping to inform the decision-making process. One use of this innovative tool will be used to help enhance efficiency, communication and productivity among our agents, staff and industry partners on behalf of landowners across the Midwest and around the globe.

Peoples Company is raising the bar with regards to the appearance, functionality and usability of contemporary ag real estate services websites as we forge ahead in the digital marketing frontiers.



In 2016, Peoples Company adopted a policy requiring that Brokers broker, Appraisers appraise, and Land Managers manage. As a part of this strategy, the company requires that Brokers belong to the Realtors® Land Institute (RLI), Land Managers are members of the American Society of Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers (ASFMRA), and Appraisers belong to the Appraisal Institute as well as ASFMRA. Peoples Company believes each team member will be most efficient and effective by focusing on their respective roles and strengths. By leveraging each other's areas of expertise, the company has created a culture of professionalism and collaboration amongst our Brokers, Appraisers, and Land Managers.

Peoples Company continues to expand our footprint with brokerage licenses in 14 states. These states include Iowa, Illinois, Missouri, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Nebraska, Kansas, North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, Mississippi, Arkansas, Louisiana and Georgia.



TIMING IS EVERYTHING

By Steve Bruere, President Peoples Company

I am often asked about the history of Peoples Company by folks who have seen it develop from a small farm management portfolio and a few real estate listings in Central Iowa – into an ag real estate services organization now offering appraisal, brokerage, management and land investing services in 14 states.

My standard response is that we have experienced a wonderful period of growth, thanks in large to the profitability of agriculture. But the true test will come when we see tough times appear. It now looks as if the tough times are staring us in the eyes, and we may very well be tested in the years ahead.

As Jeff Obrecht points out in this issue's "Land Auction or Private Treaty?" article – assessing which sale method we should use moving forward – the world in which we have operated as a brokerage, appraisal and management company will likely evolve as we move forward.

The days of booking farm auctions, scheduling the sale 45 days later, and collecting commission checks 30 days following the auction are going to be less frequent. Though it was a terrific period for auctioneers, the model for many was broken, as it had a tendency to take the ingenuity out of our business. I have often commented that a monkey could have sold a farm over the past five years as neighbors, investors and farmers competed with one another to own land.

We must now find ways to add real value, getting creative in how we structure deals while working even harder to connect buyers and sellers in the land market.

In the appraisal business, when the market was moving up on a monthly basis, there were plenty of sales to support the next appraisal. There were also very

few deals that we wouldn't appraise. We are now going to be challenged with finding comp sales from a lower number of transactions and, instead of riding the market up, may have to worry about farms not appraising or our appraisal values killing deals.

On the land management side, if you offered a farm for rent during this period, you would have had a line outside the door filled with people looking to rent it. In today's lower-commodity-price environment, we need to work with our landowner clients to find ways to maximize the return of their asset, while also performing on behalf of farm operators to position them for success.

With increased volatility and societal issues facing our landowner clients, we have been focused on improving on the wide range of services that Peoples Company offers.

Today, our appraisal team continues to monitor more than 150 real estate websites on a weekly basis to track sales and keep our clients informed of land auction results and sales activity. You can find Jim Rothermich's recap of previous weeks' sales results, titled "The Dirt on Weekly Land Auction Prices," on our blog.

Speaking of websites, we will soon be rolling out a new version of ours at **PeoplesCompany.com**, streamlining the user experience and emphasizing our use of technology. We are equally as excited to announce the launch of **WhatsMyFarmWorth.com**, a map-based valuation tool that Peoples Company developed in partnership with AgSolver to provide landowners with an online assessment of land values and rental rates.

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