

LOCAL NEWS

Graffiti Corner marks 10 years as 'gathering place'

By **Brooke Wohlrabe** June 5, 2026 5 min read



ABOVE: John Kasper stands outside Graffiti Corner at 1500 S. State Street in Fairmont. The business is celebrating 10 years.

FAIRMONT-- It was always meant to be more than a coffee and frozen yogurt shop. When John Kasper opened Graffiti Corner in Fairmont a decade ago, he knew he wanted it to be a place for community members to get together.

While he was born and raised in Fairmont, Kasper spent many of his adult years in the metro area. He and his wife, Patti, returned to their hometown in 2015 to be near to and help with their aging parents.

"I knew I had to do something. This came about as part of trying to figure out what to do in the next stage of life," Kasper said. "If you recall, Mike Humpal (former city administrator) and Randy Quiring (former mayor) had just done a study on what the Fairmont community was looking for. One was a coffee shop and one was a froyo (frozen yogurt) shop. Knowing Fairmont is always looking for a place to hang out, I put the concepts together."

Lo and behold, he said, Graffiti Corner was born. At the time, there wasn't a designated coffee shop in the community, except for Caribou within HyVee.

In looking for a location, Kasper said he was originally looking at the space where Bolton and Menk now sits but when he inquired about it, he was informed that the triangle property had just sold. However, Kasper was encouraged to look at the space across the street, where the old graffiti shed sat.

"It was a lumberyard way back when and was a storage space," Kasper said. "There was no saving it. It was a disaster."

The old shed was torn down, however some elements of it were saved and are now displayed inside and around Graffiti Corner.

It took about nine to 10 months to construct the new building as it is now and they officially opened in May of 2016.

"I always had a vision of this as a place for people to hang out. You need to sell things, but people are needing a place to get together. Gather, that's really what the heart of it is. That's what this was designed to be," Kasper said.

Over 10 years, the menu at its core has stayed the same as a variety of coffee drinks and frozen yogurt flavors have always been offered, but the menu has evolved, too.

"We did the proverbially walk before we ran. We started with coffee and baked goods and froyo and that was it. Then we added lunch and then we added breakfast after that," Kasper said.

The coffee and frozen yogurt flavors, and some of the sandwiches, often change with the season and Kasper said they offer combo deals and some other specials.

"We have our mainstays and our specials so we switch it up," he said.

The location has served him well as Kasper said they're close to the Aquatic Park, the schools and the Mayo Clinic.

"This really is at the crossroads. It's just a great place," he said.

Being a coffee shop, they get a lot of regulars. But in addition to people coming to sit and read or study while sipping coffee, Kasper is aware that people hold longstanding meetings and get-togethers in the space, too.

"There's ladies who come in every Tuesday and Thursday and there are people who have business meetings here on a regular basis. That's what's neat about this place. It's meetings, getting together. There's a gentleman who comes almost everyday just to sit and read by the fire," Kasper said.

He has also opened the space up for some community events such as annual meetings with Santa in December. Kasper has also partnered with the Fairmont Opera House to have some traveling artists perform a community event at Graffiti Corner.

"We're glad to support them," Kasper said.

Looking at what's to come next, Kasper acknowledged that the building has been listed as for sale for a few months. He said that his 10 year business plan was always to put the place up for sale.

"It's a bittersweet thing. We love this place but Patti and I would rather take this next stage in life and be together more. That's where we're at," he said.

Kasper said he would like for someone to come in and take over the place as it is but is open to selling it to any buyer with a plan as he said the space holds a tremendous amount of opportunity.

"Whether they want to put in a pizza oven or serve craft beer or turn it into a wine bar... the opportunities are endless to take this to wherever," Kasper said.

To celebrate 10 years, some special events are planned for this Saturday, June 6 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. There will be discounts throughout the day and some drawings for prizes. There will also be a froyo eating contest beginning at 2 p.m.