

# Gallagher: Sac County shows popcorn pluck

By [Tim Gallagher](#), Sioux City Journal | Posted: Thursday, February 26, 2009



What goes with 750 gallons of Coke? How about a 3,100-pound popcorn ball. Both were created years ago in Sac City to set world records and to bring visitors to the Sac City Museum. Sac County residents will be at it again Saturday morning as they attempt to make a 5,000-pound popcorn ball to re-establish the world record in the place where popcorn is king. (Photo submitted)

SAC CITY, Iowa -- The stomach rumbles as I write. But here goes.

The folks who once asked their volunteer fire department fill a 750-gallon can with Coca-Cola plan to produce a 5,000-pound popcorn ball Saturday.

The aim isn't indigestion. It's tourism.

Welcome to Sac County: Home of dancing tractors, quilts on barns and sweet treats that could wash away or crush tiny villages.

After your morning coffee Saturday, head to Noble Popcorn on 13th Street in Sac City and join dozens showing their popcorn pluck in beating a world record. Seems an ambitious crew in Lake Forest, Ill., built a popcorn ball that weighs 3,423 pounds. It eclipsed Sac County's 2004 lip-smacking monstrosity that weighed 3,100 pounds and claimed the Guinness World Record at the time.

Don't tell people around this "Popcorn Capital of the World" you've got 'em beat. They'll come up with a plan to win. And they'll...eh eh...stick to it!

"Months ago we were talking about how a group from Illinois beat us with their popcorn ball," said Shirley Phillips, executive director of the Sac Economic & Tourism Development group. (Is there a Guinness record for longest title?)

"We were also talking about Highway 20 bypassing Sac City shortly and the fact thousands still come to see that old popcorn ball in our Sac City Museum," Phillips said.

Phillips and other Sac County leaders want to maintain a draw to lure motorists off the four-lane U.S. Hwy. 20, which might be complete to nearby Early, in 2013. It's great to have a giant ball of popcorn. Even better if you can promote The World Record Popcorn Ball.

So that's the focus Saturday.

Dozens will gather at Noble Popcorn and begin cooking 1,500 pounds of popcorn in 80-pound batches. They'll don rubber gloves and stick it all together while sharing a few laughs. Five years ago, the 3,100-pound ball took 7 hours, 13 minutes to make. Saturday's attempt might take all day.

"We have alumni and all kinds of people coming in to help," said Phillips. "We have 48 pairs of rubber gloves, so we can have that many people working on it."

Dan Martin, plant manager for Noble Popcorn, which employs 11, will oversee this sticky proposition.

City councilman Bill Brenny, an optometrist in Sac City, said he'll likely pitch in. He's fond of the old ball o' corn. It's where his daughter Bridget had wedding party photos snapped when she married Nick Hansen in 2007.

The Hansens now reside in the Twin Cities. "Why not have a wedding photo taken in front of the world's largest popcorn ball?" Bridget Hansen asked. "My family and I love Noble Popcorn! We had goody bags in the hotel rooms for all of our guests. A bag of Noble Popcorn was included in each gift bag to represent something from my hometown."

Noble's corn, packaged as Cedar Creek Popcorn, is grown in and around Sac County. The adaptable soil here gave rise to the industry shortly after farmers began growing it in 1885.

Sac County boosters are now hoping to turn up the heat in tourism trade. The newest ball of popcorn will join the old metal bin of Coke and nearly 60 colorful Sac County barn quilts now branching into other Northwest Iowa counties.

All that's needed is to have the recently retired Nemaha Farmall Promenade (the dancing tractors) get back in gear. Who wouldn't want to see eight antique tractors do-si-do around the Coke to end all Cokes AND the world's biggest popcorn ball?

"We need to keep Iowa on the map," said Phillips. "We want our state to have this title."

If you go

What: Help build a 5,000-pound, world-record popcorn ball.

When: 7 a.m. Saturday.

Where: 401 North 13th St., Sac City, Iowa.

Information: Go to [www.saccountyiowa.com](http://www.saccountyiowa.com) and click on the popping ear of corn. Seriously.