

Fifth Meridian Realty Launches in Downtown Dunlap

A familiar face in western Iowa real estate is beginning a new chapter with the launch of Fifth Meridian Realty in downtown Dunlap.

Elizabeth Heistand, a realtor with nearly 15 years of experience, officially launched the independent brokerage Aug. 7. Located at 124 ½ Iowa Ave., Fifth Meridian Realty includes Heistand as broker/owner along with Realtors Holly Heistand Hanigan and Isabell Crook.

Heistand spent her real estate career with Schaben Real Estate before establishing Fifth Meridian Realty. She earned her broker's license four years ago and has closed more than \$35 million in real estate transactions involving homes, acreages and land throughout western Iowa and Nebraska.

Heistand said the new brokerage came about as Schaben Real Estate began shifting the direction of its business.

"We made the transition on very good terms, and I'm grateful for my years with Schaben and the experience I gained there," Heistand said. "While we are now separate businesses, we have a great working relationship and may still collaborate when it makes sense."

For Heistand, choosing a name for the new business offered an opportunity to connect her interest in real estate with the history of the land itself.

Fifth Meridian Realty takes its name from the Fifth Principal Meridian, or "5th PM," one of the principal survey lines used in the Public Land Survey System. Established in 1815 to survey land acquired through the Louisiana Purchase, the Fifth Principal Meridian became a reference point for surveying land across six states, including Iowa.

Heistand remembers learning about the system while taking real estate classes and being fascinated by the history behind the legal descriptions still used today.

"To this day, I love receiving an old land abstract with a legal description referring to the '5th P.M.,'" she said.

When the time came to name her own brokerage, the connection seemed fitting.

"It connects the history of the land with what I do every day, while also representing direction and guidance for our clients," Heistand said.

Joining Heistand at Fifth Meridian Realty are her daughter, Holly Heistand Hanigan, and Isabell Crook.

Hanigan is an Iowa State University graduate with a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Interior Design. Heistand said her daughter's design background is a natural complement to residential real estate, particularly when helping buyers recognize a home's potential. Crook, a freshman at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, is beginning her real estate career with the brokerage.

"The three of us bring different perspectives and are at different stages in our careers, making for a great team," Heistand said.

While Fifth Meridian Realty is based in Dunlap, the brokerage serves a much broader area. Its services include residential homes, acreages, land and real estate auctions throughout Iowa and Nebraska, with a strong local focus on Dunlap, Dow City, Denison, Woodbine, Logan, Harlan, Soldier, Charter Oak and surrounding communities.

The brokerage represents both buyers and sellers, with Heistand emphasizing a combination of personal service and local knowledge with modern marketing, technology and exposure for listings.

For Heistand, keeping the business headquartered in Dunlap was an easy decision. “Dunlap is my home and where I wanted Fifth Meridian Realty to be based, but my real estate career has always extended throughout western Iowa and Nebraska,” she said. “I believe all our small towns have so much to offer: a strong sense of community, good schools and local businesses. There’s a quality of life in our communities that’s hard to replicate elsewhere.”

Nearly 15 years in the industry have given Heistand the opportunity to work with everything from first-time homebuyers to large and unusual properties.

She has represented clients purchasing property at Lake Okoboji and a 1,900-acre ranch in western Nebraska. She also represented buyers in the purchase of the former Museum of Religious Arts west of Logan, which has since become Calvary Falls, a wedding chapel and event center.

Another memorable transaction involved representing the buyer at auction for the former Federal Courthouse and Post Office in Council Bluffs. The historic property has since been transformed into The Archive apartments.

Heistand has a particular appreciation for historic homes and buildings and the stories behind them.

“I love the character, craftsmanship and history behind them,” she said, adding with a laugh, “If you happen to own a Sears, Roebuck catalog home, please call me — I’d love to see it.”

Despite the variety of properties she has handled, Heistand said helping someone purchase their first home remains one of the most rewarding parts of the profession. “I still get genuinely excited about helping a first-time buyer purchase a home and being part of that milestone,” she said.

Fifth Meridian Realty will not maintain traditional office hours because agents are frequently away for showings, appointments and closings. The team will be available by phone and appointment, and Heistand said the office door will be open whenever someone is there.

As she looks toward the future of the brokerage, Heistand said her focus remains much the same as it has throughout her real estate career: serving clients and the communities she calls home.

“A brokerage isn’t defined by its name or logo; it’s defined by the job you do for your clients, one closing at a time,” she said. “The name on the sign may be new, but the experience and commitment behind it aren’t.”

Fifth Meridian Realty is located at 124 ½ Iowa Ave. in downtown Dunlap. The office can be reached at (712) 643-7245 or through fifth-meridian.com.