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# JEEPS GROUP CREATES FRIENDSHIPS, SUPPORTS LOCAL BUSINESSES

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By Heather Rule

Jamie Adams had her first Jeep about 10 years ago and got her second one a few years after that. She was in search of others around town who also had Jeeps, hoping to connect with others with similar interest. She couldn't find one.

So, Adams, of Fergus Falls, started a Facebook group, and the West Central Minnesota Jeeps group was born. People requested to join the Facebook group, and then folks met in person at Dairyland in Fergus Falls in the summer of 2017. The group snowballed from there, meeting with their Jeeps, driving around Otter Tail County on roads and off-road trails, and also stopping in the quaint towns of Otter Tail County – like Pelican Rapids – for gas and food as a way to support local businesses.

The Jeeps and their drivers also spend time at Maplewood State Park, which is about seven miles from



Photo by Marie Noplos

Pelican

Rapids. They've driven in Appleton, Spider Lake and took two camping trips to Gilbert in the summer of 2021. They also visited the many restaurants on Sundays, including Zorbaz, Big John's Pelican Pizza, Beach Bums, Rusty Nail and more.

Autumn is a beautiful time for a road trip in Otter Tail County. When the group caravanned through Maplewood State Park last fall, they stopped in Pelican Rapids to eat at Big John's Pelican Pizza. While following each other on the road (and especially off-road), some drivers communicate with CB radios, Adams said. "We usually pick a destination, eat and visit, and then drive back," Adams said. "We drive, we'll make a whole evening of it and if somebody needs to cut out early, they certainly can. We're just glad to have their company when it works for them."

They've also made excursions to Alexandria, Detroit Lakes, Brainerd and Gull Lake a couple of time.

The Jeeps group usually meets weekly in the summers. They also get together and talk about their Jeeps – from various models and years – and spend some garage time

together, too. This summer, Adams opened up her garage for any Jeeps members who wanted to come over to spend a Saturday fixing up their vehicles.

The Facebook group is up to nearly 440 members as of fall 2021. Members are from all over Minnesota and some even come from out-of-state. Everyone is welcome – even if they don't have a Jeep. Adams said a couple of members first joined the group and then ended up getting a Jeep afterwards.

"We've had a ton of growth," Adams said. There were about six people at their first meet-up, and now there's usually anywhere from a dozen to 18 active members, Adams added. She said she's met so many people from different areas and different jobs that she wouldn't have otherwise connected with if it wasn't for the Jeeps group.

"We're pretty much a family now. We call each other a family. We're a Jeep family. Because no matter what, you could turn to any one of those people, and they'll be there for you."

If you're visiting the area and interested in some company for a Jeep trip, join their [Facebook group](#) and find out where and when the next ride is scheduled.

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