Playground Improvements at Daley and Hutchison Parks

Playground improvements to two west Ames parks are attracting the attention of young residents eager for the opportunity to explore new equipment.

At Daley Park, 340 Wilder Blvd., a new play structure, teeter totter, and swings provide plenty of options for fun. The new equipment features slides, climbing bars, bridges, ladders, two swings, two toddler swings, and plenty of room for children to play. Prior to being installed, the neighborhood was invited to review playground equipment options and help select the structure installed in the park. Daley Park and Greenbelt includes a shelter, restroom, basketball court, paved bike path, picnic area, and off-street parking.

Located at 4517 Hutchison St., Hutchison Park is a neighborhood park serving residents near Sawyer Elementary School. The swings are ready to use, and the brightly colored play structure features slides, bridges, and climbing bars. This park was created in the 1960s and includes a picnic area, basketball courts, and green space. Ames is a community filled with acres of natural areas and outdoor recreation opportunities. Spend this summer exploring all 36 Ames parks!

National Night Out Planned for Aug. 1

The Ames Police Department invites residents to celebrate community crime prevention efforts. National Night Out is a community-building campaign designed to strengthen neighborhood spirit and police-community partnerships. The event will be held from 5 to 8 p.m. on Tuesday, Aug. 1 at Bandshell Park, Sixth Street and Duff Avenue.

Games from the Street ‘N’ Greet Block Party Trailer, tours of a police car, fire truck, and ambulance, and much more will be featured. The event is a great place to share crime prevention success stories, discuss different ways of implementing safety programs in your neighborhood, or just join in the fun.
City Council Meetings
The following meetings will be held in the Council Chambers, 515 Clark Avenue:

- 6 p.m. on Tuesday, Aug. 8
- 6 p.m. on Tuesday, Aug. 22

A Council workshop will be held at 6 p.m. on Tuesday, Aug. 15. For the most current information, go to: www.CityOfAmes.org.

Share Thoughts on Welch Avenue
A pilot project to make Welch Avenue south of Lincoln Way safer for pedestrians and bicyclists began last year when parking spaces along the east side of the street were closed and the sidewalk was extended into the street. More than 30 planters, outside furniture, bike racks, benches, and café seating fill eight parking spaces on the 100 block of Welch Avenue and six parking spaces on the 200 block of Welch Avenue.

The planters were aligned with the existing streetlight bump-outs to leave a vehicle lane wide enough for cars, buses, and other large vehicles. The planters are spaced to allow pedestrians to move between them, but prevent vehicles from entering the closed lane.

The 100 block of Welch Avenue is scheduled to be reconstructed in 2020. Extending the east sidewalks into the parking spaces is a pilot project, so information will be collected on how bicyclists, pedestrians, and motorists react to and use this newly created public space. When Welch Avenue is reconstructed, the City of Ames will include this data when exploring possible permanent changes to the streetscape. Those who prefer email can send comments to City of Ames Fleet Services Director Corey Mellies at cmellies@city.ames.ia.us.

What do you think of the extended sidewalk along Welch Avenue? Send your thoughts through City of Ames social media (Facebook, Twitter or Instagram) and hashtag your comments with #WelchAve.

Putting Up a Sign? Know the Rules!
Many Ames residents like to voice an opinion, support a candidate, announce a yard sale, or cheer on the home team with a temporary yard sign. However, there are rules that address sign placement. When locating the right spot for your yard signs, please keep in mind:

**Signs should be placed behind the property line and are prohibited in the public right of way**, which is the area located between the curb and the back of the sidewalk. For properties without sidewalks, the right of way width varies, but is usually the first 14.5 feet behind the curb in residential neighborhoods.

Residents may not place signs on public property such as medians, near intersections, in parks, or on utility poles.

Signs should never block the view of oncoming traffic or create a hazard. Signs that affect visibility are subject to removal.

Temporary signs may not be displayed for more than 90 consecutive days without removal or replacement.

The sign ordinance is included in Chapter 21 of the City of Ames Municipal Code and available on the City’s website at www.CityOfAmes.org. For questions, contact Sara Van Meeteren with the Inspections Division at svanmeeter@city.ames.ia.us or 515.239.5154.
SunSmart Ames: Community Solar Project Update

At the direction of the Ames City Council, Ames Electric Services is moving forward with a plan to bring solar energy to Ames. With the help of a consultant, the request for proposal (RFP) for the design and installation of our SunSmart Ames solar farm has been completed. Documents were sent to more than 100 companies interested in building the solar array. The project calls for Ames Electric Services to purchase all the power produced, and Ames Electric Services customers would buy into the project through “power pack” purchases. Once a company has been selected, it is anticipated construction will begin the first half of October. The expected completion date is by early 2018. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is studying the City’s request to construct the solar farm at a 10-acre site west of Sam’s Club on Airport Road. This process will take a couple of months.

Ames Electric Services is working hard to ensure SunSmart Ames project is affordable for anyone wanting to participate. The anticipated investment in a “power pack” (a percentage of the production) is $500. However, this number could come down when a contractor is hired and specific costs associated with the project are known.

Ames Electric Services customers will soon have the opportunity to sign a “document of intent to participate” in SunSmart Ames. Once 80 percent of the available solar array units have been sold, the project will move ahead. When the decision is made to begin construction on the solar farm, those customers who have expressed an interest will be asked to make a one-time payment for their investment and sign a 20-year contract to receive credit on their bill for the solar power. Watch for announcements in City Side, on the City’s website (www.CityOfAmes.org), and local media. For questions, contact Steve Wilson, “The Energy Guy,” at 515.239.5177 or swilson@city.ames.ia.us.

Weather Radios Provide Warnings

Emergency notification of severe weather is important for our protection. Outdoor warning sirens are intended for those outside, so how do we stay informed of severe weather when inside buildings? Purchasing a weather radio can help. Radios are available at most electronics retailers for as little as $30.

Weather radios are tied to the National Weather Service and coordinated by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Once the owner activates the radio, he or she will be able to monitor emergency weather events. The system is tested every Wednesday at 11 a.m. and 7 p.m. For more information, visit the National Weather Service online at www.crh.noaa.gov/dmx.

Cool People Use Ceiling Fans!

Ceiling fans allow you to turn up your thermostat a few degrees and still feel comfortable. Running a fan can cost about 15 cents a day, and it could save you 65 cents a day if you turn down your air conditioner. In fact, using a fan together with reducing air conditioner use can decrease your air conditioning bills by as much as 40%. However, if you don’t turn up the thermostat, the fan will simply add to the cost.

Fans cool people, not rooms. Ceiling fans improve comfort at a given room temperature by creating a wind chill effect on the skin. But because the furniture and the thermostat are already at roughly the same temperature as the room air, they can’t “feel” the wind chill. To save energy, switch the fan off when you leave the room.
Ask the Energy Guy

Q: What is the City doing to save energy and be green?
A: Glad you asked! Ames is actively involved in encouraging citizens to be energy conscious, to reduce waste and become more sustainable, and to be green. As the Energy Guy, I speak and write about these subjects. I give folks information and advice in many areas via monthly and bi-monthly articles, distribution of free energy conservation packets, making group presentations, recording TV and radio messages, administering the Smart Energy program, maintaining the Energy Guy website, and answering customer questions over the phone.

Our Smart Energy program offers residential customers rebates for efficient lighting, air conditioning, heat pumps, thermostats, appliances, and new home construction. For commercial customers, there are rebates for anything that reduces summer electricity use. Alongside these rebate programs, Prime Time Power offers air conditioner load control; Power Watch provides education; Green Choices promotes renewable energy development; and residential and commercial energy audits reduce consumption. Our annual spring Eco Fair reached hundreds of people who learned more about energy conservation.

As a utility, Ames Electric Services purchases wind energy. The Resource Recovery Plant has processed garbage into fuel for more than 40 years. In Ames, 15 to 20 percent of our energy comes from a renewable resource. Under the EcoSmart umbrella, the City of Ames has programs for water conservation, stormwater protection, transportation energy conservation, as well as energy efficiency. Our power plant has been converted from burning coal to natural gas, a cleaner fuel.

Finally, Ames has undertaken an effort to install a community solar farm. SunSmart Ames will result in the installation of a 2 megawatt (MW) array that will produce clean and green energy, and Ames Electric Services customers will be able to participate by investing in the solar farm. Watch for updates!

Prime Time Power

The Prime Time Power program is available to all homeowners and small businesses with central air conditioners. You do not need to reapply for Prime Time Power if you’ve signed up before. The $5 credit during each of the four summer months is automatically applied to your account.

To sign up or receive additional information about the program, call Utility Customer Service at 515.239.5120 or Steve Wilson at 515.239.5177.

City Side is a publication of the City of Ames, Iowa

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Renewable Energy
For May 2017
15.6% of electricity used this month was generated from wind.
2.8% of electricity this month was generated by refuse derived fuel (RDF) from the Resource Recovery Plant.
131 Ames customers have invested in solar voltaic systems.
48 LED street lights were installed for a total of 1,108.

Degree Day information available at www.CityOfAmes.org/Electric

Numbers to Know
Power out ..................515.239.5240
Street light out ....515.239.5500
Utility bills .............515.239.5120
Energy questions .515.239.5177
Tree growing too close to an electric line ..........515.239.5500
Going to be digging?
Iowa One Call: .........................811
Storm Water
Concern ..................515.239.5160

Steve Wilson
“The Energy Guy”
Energy Services Coordinator
515.239.5177

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