

# - April Project Highlights - 2018

## Library

### Spring means...Battle of the Books!

Every year, area students start preparing in the fall to read through the book list and memorize as many details as possible in hopes of winning the Library's popular annual book trivia contest. The 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Battle of the Books was held at the Library March 22, with 32 teams from Ames, Ogden, North Polk, United, Madrid, and Ballard East in contention for top honors.



The fifth-graders' hard work really paid off this year! During the final round, there was a two-way tie with a perfect score of 200 and a four-way tie at 190. By the end of the evening, the winning team was **Hermione's Army from Kate Mitchell School!**



The 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Battles are scheduled for Thursday, April 5. No doubt all six library meeting rooms will be overflowing with friends and family members of the 31 teams that have registered thus far.

### **Bridging Cultures**

On Tuesday evening, April 17, India Cultural Association will present the last event of a three-part series called *Bridging Cultures: A Musical Journey Bridging Traditions*. This will be a fun, interactive event featuring sounds and instruments from India. It starts at 7pm.



The second event, *Bridging Cultures: A Gastronomical Journey through the Regions of India* was held on March 18. Guests enjoyed authentic foods from different regions of India, learned about Indian cooking tools, and got cooking tips. One visitor posted an enthusiastic endorsement on Facebook that day: "...there's authentic Indian food at the library, including my favorite, dhokla. As good as my mom's, even! (There are zero higher compliments than that.)... I wish I could go back and relive that eating experience."

The *Bridging Cultures* programs also included a February presentation, *A Cultural Journey Through Personal Stories*. The series represents a partnership between Ames Public Library and the India Cultural Association of Central Iowa. In keeping with our mission statement: "We Connect You to the World of Ideas," the Library encourages everyone to read, learn, and enjoy experiences that strengthen our dynamic, multicultural community and promote understanding.

## Water & Pollution Control

### Water

On Saturday, March 24, the Water Plant hosted a public tour event. Despite the miserable winter weather, 434 people attended.



*Visitors had an opportunity to see inside the treatment plant as they took a self-guided tour, asking questions of Water Plant staff along the way. Displays showcasing the work of the Water Meter, Laboratory, and Public Works Operations Divisions were very popular. Visitors also had a chance to view the documentary of the Water Plant's construction prepared by the Channel 12 staff while enjoying a snack and a glass of award-winning Ames Water!*

Efforts to finalize construction for the new Water Plant continue at a frustratingly slow pace. Staff is continuing to meet regularly with the contractor and a handful of key subcontractors to ensure that progress continues. The City Attorney's Office is providing on-going assistance as the contractual details of project close-out become a priority.

New bids are expected in April for the safety modifications and other planned improvements to the low head dam in North River Valley Park and for fencing modifications around the lime and ash ponds.

Staff received three outstanding proposals from consulting firms offering to assist with the Water Pollution Control Facility's Nutrient Reduction Feasibility Study. At the end of March, staff was conducting follow-up interviews with the three firms and conducting reference checks. Award of a professional services contract is anticipated to be brought to the City Council in late April.

An ordinance adjusting water rates by 3.5% and sewer rates by 3% will be brought to the Council for first reading on April 10. The third and final reading will take place on May 8 for consumption during the month of June that will be billed starting July 1.

Staff will continue moving forward with the acquisition of the 2.81 acres identified for the planned North River Valley Well Field project. The current timeline has the work being ready for bids later this summer.

A fencing project along the lime ponds/ash pond property will also be initiated. The work will be jointly funded between the Water and Electric utilities

Council will be asked in March to initiate a Notice to Bidders for a new 5-year Lime **sludge disposal** contract.

The general contractor for the new Water Plant continues to make progress on the remaining punch list items. However, the Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) tasks still appear to have several weeks of work remaining.

## **Planning and Housing**

### **Planning**

Reiman West is a new Neighborhood Association (NA). It includes all of the houses on Greenbriar Circle west of Beach Avenue. This group is a close knit community as they have been consistently meeting for many years. They have recently decided to become an official NA recognized by the City.

### **Housing & Community Development**

The 30-day public comment period for the 2018-19 Annual Action Plan will begin on April 3 and end on May 3.

The FY18 Consolidated Appropriations Act, which funds federal program through September 30, 2018 has been signed by the president. The CDBG program funding was funded at an increase and allocations should be announced within the next 60 days. Additionally, the bill included language to expand and strengthen the Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) Program for four years (2018-2021). This will also allow higher income households (up to 80%) offset by targeting in other units to maintain average affordability in the developments at 60% of area median income (AMI).

### **Public Works**

The 2016-17 Storm Water Erosion Control Program Project is taking place along the Skunk River near Carr Park. This project includes placement of new storm sewer, a small relocation of the existing shared use path, clearing of trees, and the shaping and armoring of existing slopes and banks in critical locations. Some of the new storm sewer has been installed but the remaining portions near the Skunk River are on hold until mussel relocation can be done. RFP's have just come in for the mussel relocation and a company should be selected in the coming week. This relocation cannot begin until the water temperature is above 50 degrees.

Flood Mitigation - River Flooding – Public Works staff was notified on March 23 that we were not successful in receiving nationally-competitive FEMA grant funds for the Flood Mitigation - River Flooding project. In talking with Iowa Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management staff, they suggest evaluating the project further for project phasing options and offered to aid the City staff in pursuing other grant funding for the project, if interested. They have also asked FEMA for feedback about our submitted grant application to aid in considering whether re-application in fall 2018 is an option. However, they were not optimistic that this feedback would be received. Staff will ultimately bring this project item back to a future City Council meeting so other options for project funding can be discussed.

For construction project updates, go to [www.cityofames.org/construction](http://www.cityofames.org/construction). This page will be updated after each bid letting and weekly once construction season is fully underway.

See Click Fix is now under contract to develop a citizen reporting tool that will be used in the Public Works Department with expansion into other departments in the future. With development, testing, staff training, and public roll out, we plan to have the mobile app available by end of June 2018. The application will also be embedded on the City of Ames website and available to all users. Ames Public Works Department is seeking help from residents to develop a fun, creative name for the City's new custom mobile reporting application.

## **Police**

Researchers from Saint Ambrose University have been deployed throughout the community gathering information about driver demographics and a first step in their evaluation of minority contact on police traffic stops.

Staff recently completed a review of access and communication within the Police lobby area with a particular emphasis on disability services. Community members visited the area, examined accessibility and made suggestions for improved service. Results will be integrated into service, wayfinding, and signage improvements in the 24 hour service area.

The new, full-time Parking Enforcement Coordinator has been hired and is undergoing orientation and training. This should provide continuity and responsiveness in parking enforcement actions.