

# - June Project Highlights - 2018

## Fire

May 5, 2018 at 2:42 a.m., crews responded to a reported structure fire at Brookside Park, located at 1605 – 6<sup>th</sup> Street. When crews arrived on the scene they found heavy fire coming from the restrooms. The crews were able to quickly extinguish the fire; however, the building had already sustained heavy fire damage. The estimation of the loss was \$50,000.



May 9, 2018, shortly after midnight, crews responded to a garage fire at 226 South Hazel. The crews were able to contain the fire to only half of the two-stall garage. A nearby home sustained some minor heat damage, as well as a vehicle parked in the driveway. No one was injured, but the fire caused over \$30,000 worth of damages.

## City Manager's Office

Staff from Public Works, Water & Pollution Control and the Manager's Office has been actively involved with discussions related to expansion of our **Watershed Management Authorities (WMAs)**.

Several years ago the City Council gave authorization for Ames to be an active member of the Squaw Creek WMA. During that time a comprehensive watershed assessment was completed and several grants for watershed protection and education were received. Prairie Rivers of Iowa, which serves as the administrator of the Squaw Creek WMA, continues to make progress with upstream landowners and our other partners in implementing practices to improve the water quality and impact the floodwater quantities that impact Ames and other communities downstream.

Last year the City Council and Story County's Board of Supervisors approved a new 28E intergovernmental agreement to create a new "Keigley Branch WMA" in the South Skunk River watershed north of Ames. That WMA would have covered the southern half of the Skunk River watershed upstream from Ames. Based upon Prairie Rivers' outreach to jurisdictions upstream, and after consultation with Story County and other

stakeholders, a revised WMA will soon be proposed. In July or early August staff will bring Council a recommendation that the earlier 28E be cancelled and that a new, larger WMA be created. That WMA will include the entire headwaters of Skunk River upstream of Ames.

This expanded watershed will allow us to build on the success of the Squaw Creek WMA and have a greater long-term impact on the entire watershed upstream of Ames.

## **Water and Pollution Control**

### **Water Plant**

As of the end of May, the contract for construction of the **new Water Plant** was still not completed. There were 15 items remaining on the punch list, most of which appear to be tasks that can be completed within the next few weeks. Staff from W&PC and Legal held a meeting with the general contractor, the electrical subcontractor, and the controls integration sub-subcontractor along with each party's respective legal counsel to discuss the \$1 million plus withholding the City has made as an offset to the mounting interest charges on the unclosed SRF construction loan. The matter is currently scheduled for mediation on June 26.

### **Water Pollution Control**

The **Nutrient Reduction Feasibility Study** is picking up pace. In May staff met twice with representatives from ISU to brainstorm possible alternatives to achieve a net reduction in the nutrient loading into the watershed. One result of that discussion is that the City will be partnering with ISU researchers to submit a **grant proposal to the National Science Foundation**. The grant solicitation is seeking "...research that will lead to innovative and integrated social, engineering, physical, and natural systems solutions to critical food-energy-water systems problems..." The research will seek to document the nexus of energy demand and nutrient removal, with the intention of demonstrating that agricultural land management can be less costly and less energy intensive than mechanical nutrient removal at a wastewater treatment plant. Additionally, some of the land practices could produce a biomass crop that in turn could be co-digested with municipal sludge at the WPC Facility to generate electricity.

Staff anticipates bringing the **WPC Structural Rehabilitation** Phase 2 contract to Council for award at the first meeting in June. Other projects that should appear on a June agenda include: WPC Primary Clarifier Drive Replacement Project (award) and WPC Final Clarifier Launder Covers (notice to bidders). Staff will also be issuing solicitations for replacement security cameras at WPC and construction of a stand-alone storage building at the new Water Plant.

## **Police**

Although it is not a City program, the May launch of the **Eyerly Ball Mobile Crisis Team (MCRT)** represents an important step forward in serving citizens in crisis. A two person team will respond to residents struggling with depression, anxiety, suicidal thoughts, or other mental health illnesses. The team is dispatched through a 24-hour crisis call center (Foundation 2) in Cedar Rapids. Anyone can call the crisis line and request a response from the team. The crisis line will give priority to requests from law enforcement agencies. Many of the MCRT on-call team members live in the Ames and Boone areas, so they should be able to respond rather quickly to assist us. The team can respond to private homes, businesses, schools, group homes, etc. This is free to the user and is funded through our mental health region.

During May the **Mission Critical radio consultants** visited Story County communities and met with radio users. These meetings provided staff with an overview of the developing radio options and some of the features we can expect to see, and also started the process of specifying the communication needs of individual work units and radio users. On a related issue, staff had several weeks of radio performance problems in May due to a malfunctioning channel on the ISU tower location. Electronic Engineering eventually identified the problem and replaced the equipment.

### **Human Resources**

At the end of May the City’s recruiting staff piloted a new, **web-based applicant testing protocol** with 90 Secretary and Principal Clerk applicants. Staff’s hope is to soon offer hiring departments a choice among hundreds of standardized validated tests to help them identify the most technically qualified applicants. Those tests will augment the City’s ongoing emphasis on hiring and promoting employees who exemplify our *Excellence Through People* values.

The City’s **Employee Development Center** has a very busy schedule in May and June. Over 100 employees completed an LGBTQ 101 class facilitated by staff from One Iowa. A staff team is evaluating next steps and potential policies in this area for the future. In addition, the final two days of our “Creating the Culture” training for all formal leaders is being held in the Water Treatment Plant’s training rooms on June 4 and 5, and the quarterly New Employee Orientation is being held on June 6.

Most of the City’s **insurance coverage renewals** will be brought to Council for approval in June. In addition, Council approval will be sought at the June 12 meeting for a new liability insurance broker contract.

### **Parks & Recreation**

**Wibit Friday’s at Furman Aquatic Center** – Every Friday, 6:00-8:00 PM, beginning June 1, Wibit Fridays will be held at the Furman Aquatic Center! Wibit is the manufacturer of inflatable play structures for pools and lakes. This play structure, shown below, will be put in the deep end for patrons to enjoy. Come join the fun on Fridays and try to get across the Wibit without falling in!



**Healthy Life Center Educational Sessions** – Four educational sessions regarding the Healthy Life Center were held in May with more than 125 people attending. Participants received a Healthy Life Center brochure and were shown a power point presentation explaining the concept, preliminary designs, capital and operational cost estimates, proposed funding streams, philanthropic campaign, and next steps. There was also time for questions after the presentation. Overall the reaction from attendees was very positive and many comments and suggestions were received. Additional educational sessions are being planned to be held in Huxley, Nevada, and Story City.

## CyRide

- **Odyssey of the Minds/RAGBRAI Event Bus Service** – CyRide provided transportation for the Odyssey of the Minds competition over the Memorial Day holiday weekend and leading up to this weekend. With one less route operating this year due to construction constraints on campus, CyRide provided 73,000 rides during the five-day event to very warm participants, coaches and parents due to the mid-90 degree weather. Ridership was lower than two-years ago when this event was in Ames; however, if the additional route had been operated, ridership would have been higher.



In July, CyRide will provide additional service on its #2 Green route from Brookside Park to City Hall to support the transportation needs of RAGBRAI participants in moving between the campgrounds at the park and the activities in the downtown Ames area.

- **Facility Study Planning** – The Transit Board of Trustees has been discussing the best option for CyRide’s facility expansion. With approximately 22 buses parked outside between CyRide’s main facility and a City of Ames gravel lot in East Ames, discussions have centered on identifying the best option to house all vehicles in the most efficient manner. Four options were identified by board members for study as follows:
  - Option 1 – Expand the Building at CyRide’s Current Site and Relocate Employee Parking to a New Location
  - Option 2 – Second Facility within ½ Mile of Current Facility
  - Option #3 – Second Facility More Than ½ Mile From Current Facility
  - Option #4 – Second Facility Site Large Enough to Accommodate All Operations in the Future

The Transit Board of Trustees directed CyRide staff to begin a Site Analysis Study for the third option at their May 29<sup>th</sup> meeting. Upon selection of a site, staff will develop conceptual designs/capital and operating cost estimates for possible inclusion in a 2019 grant application(s) in late spring/early summer.

## Library

### Time to Sign Up for the Library's Summer Reading Program

The summer reading program starts June 1 at Ames Public Library. Sign up at [amespubliclibrary.beanstack.org](http://amespubliclibrary.beanstack.org). Provide an e-mail address to start logging minutes you spend reading or participating in activities to earn prizes.

*(Supported by APL Friends Foundation)*



### Summer Fun Every Day of the Week

Whether you want to expand your mind or just beat the heat, here are just a few new library opportunities to take advantage of in June:

- **Monday Bookmobile Storytimes in the Parks, Mondays** at 10:30 am – reading, dancing, singing and other activities! (6/11 at Ada Hayden; 6/18 at Brookside; 6/25 at Daley Park)
- **Terrific Tuesdays** at the Library from 10-11am and at Meeker Elementary School from 1- 2 pm – interactive learning and fun with science, other cultures, music, and more.
- **Afternoon Apps on Tuesdays & Thursdays**, 2-4 pm – stop in for one-on-one help checking out e-books, downloading audio books, streaming movies, brain training, and general use of all the library's online resources.
- **Tween and Teen Scene Hangouts on Wednesdays**, 3:30-4:30 pm – crafts, science, and engineering activities will alternate from week to week.
- **Water Rocks! on Thursdays**, 10-11 am for kindergarten graduates – 3<sup>rd</sup> graders. An entire series on watersheds with learning through activities, games, and songs. *(Provided in partnership with ISU Extension and Outreach – Story County)*
- **Rockin' Family Fun on Thursday evenings** from 6:30-8 pm. A mix of programs for families that will include crafts, science, and music.
- **Friday Flicks** at 1:30 pm – free PG-rated movies and popcorn! (6/1 – *Peter Rabbit*; 6/8 – *Coco*; 6/15 – *Trolls*; 6/22- *A Wrinkle in Time*; 6/29 – *Leap!*)
- **Saturday Playdates @ the Library**, 10 am-12 pm – fresh things for families each week. (6/16 - Camp Cardboard; 6/23 – young musicians in concert; 6/30 – Yoga Games)

### June 25 & 26: Author Events with a Focus on Iowa

Photographer David Ottenstein will discuss his new book, *Iowa: Echoes of a Vanishing Landscape* on Monday, June 25 at 7 pm. Ottenstein's book explores the transformation of a landscape dotted with diversified family farms into one geared toward industrial-scale agriculture. His photographs of rural and small-town Iowa depict sweeping landscapes, abandoned farmhouses, grain elevators, section roads, ethanol plants and many more "discoveries" made while wandering Iowa's back roads and forgotten corners.

The following day, Teresa Wilhelm Waldof will do a presentation on her book, *The Boy from Pumptown: The Story of the Scientist Who Solved the Manhattan Project's Uranium Problem*. The subject of the book is Dr. Harley Wilhelm, an Iowa State University chemist who was recruited to help the US obtain the millions of pounds of purified uranium needed for the World War II atomic bomb project. *(Provided in partnership with Ames Historical Society.)*

## Planning and Housing

### Planning

- The Department is working with the City Manager's office on preparing for the **June 19<sup>th</sup> workshop regarding the vision for Downtown**. City Council identified a desire for a Downtown workshop as part of its adopted goals for 2018. The purpose of the workshop is to seek input from downtown business owners, residents, Main Street Ames, and other stakeholders on a vision for downtown. City Council may then choose to provide direction on follow up issues for parking, plazas, development standards, and/or incentives.

### Housing & Community Development:

- On May 1<sup>st</sup>, the City of Ames was notified that it would be the recipient of **HOME Grant funds** for the first time since becoming an Entitlement Community back in 2004. HOME is funded and administered by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and can be used to construct housing units for both ownership and rental units, used for housing rehabilitation of both owner and rental occupied units, and to provide monthly rental assistance to eligible households. The amount allocated to the City beginning in July 2018 is \$601,264.
- Also on May 1<sup>st</sup>, the City was notified that for the program year beginning July 1, 2018 it will receive \$572,094 in **Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)** funds. This amount is an increase of approximately \$61,000 over the current year's allocation.
- Staff will be updating the City's current **5-Year Consolidated Plan and 2018-19 Annual Action Plan** to incorporate the HOME funding allocation.
- The construction of the Tripp Street Extension will start as part of the CDBG Neighborhood Infrastructure Project for the development of 321 State Avenue.



