Low Head Dam Project Improves Safety, Adds Recreation Features and Access

Improvements have started on the North River Valley Park Low Head Dam along the South Skunk River. Plans include modifying the dam and adding a water recreation feature designed to appeal to kayakers, tubers, and canoers. Also, a fish passage will be installed to allow the migration of aquatic species upstream. The project is slated for completion in November, weather permitting. River bank access will be improved so anglers, water trail users, and the public can enjoy the new water features.

Throughout construction, a portion of the shared use path through North River Valley Park will be closed to the public, and the Cottonwood Shelter is closed for the season. Paddlers should avoid the river in this area until the project is complete. Motorists along 13th Street should watch for truck traffic turning into and out of North River Valley Park.

The Low Head Dam Improvement Project will improve safety by eliminating recirculation hydraulics caused by the dam. The low head dam was constructed in 1984 to pool water in the South Skunk River to recharge the aquifer that supplies drinking water. The dam will continue to serve this purpose, but will be transformed into a safer and more accessible area. Boulder weirs will be installed to break up the uniform hydraulics, preventing the dangerous undertow from forming below the dam.

A portion of funding for the project was provided by Iowa Department of Natural Resources Low Head Dam Mitigation Grant Program and the Water Trails Grant Program. Contributions from the Outdoor Alliance of Story County, Iowa Whitewater Coalition, and the Hawkeye Fly Fishing Association have also been pledged. Total cost is estimated at $1 million.

The Great Pumpkin Disposal Returns!

The Great Pumpkin Disposal Program will start up toward the end of October. Instead of putting your jack-o-lanterns in the garbage, bring them to the Resource Recovery Plant, 110 Center Ave, and put them in the containers on the curb. Instead of creating scary garbage, we’ll make sure they get composted!
Calendar
City Council Meetings
The following meetings will be held in the Council Chambers, 515 Clark Ave.:

- 6 p.m. Oct. 9
- 6 p.m. Oct. 23

The Neighborhood Summit will be held at 7 p.m. on Oct. 16 (see below). For the most current information, go to: www.CityOfAmes.org.

Neighborhood Summit on Oct. 16
This fall the Ames City Council will host a Neighborhood Summit. The Neighborhood Summit is one way the City promotes its strong neighborhoods initiative. Neighborhood Association leaders are invited to share recent examples of accomplishments that have been a result of being an association and promoting community.

The Neighborhood Summit will be an opportunity for discussion and dialogue between the City Council, residents and neighborhood associations. The Neighborhood Summit will be held at 7 p.m. on Tuesday, Oct. 16, in the City Council Chambers, City Hall, 515 Clark Ave.

Look. Listen. Be Aware!
Fire Station Holds Open House
The Ames Fire Department will host its sixth annual Fire Station Open House from 9 a.m. to noon on Saturday, Oct. 13, at Fire Station No. 1, located at 1300 Burnett Ave. Participants can learn fire safety tips, experiment with fire fighting equipment, explore fire trucks up close, meet Ames firefighters, and tour the fire station. Also, Freddie the Fire Truck and Sparky the Fire Dog will be on hand. This free, fun, and informative event is great for all ages.

Fire Prevention Week will be held October 7 - 13. This year’s theme is “Look. Listen. Learn. Be aware. Fire can happen anywhere,” which works to educate the public about basic but essential ways to quickly and safely escape a home fire.

Statistics show that the number of U.S. home fires has been steadily declining over the past few decades. However, the death rate per 1000 home fires that are reported to fire departments was 10 percent higher in 2016 than in 1980. The National Fire Protection Association recommends families practice home fire drills twice a year. Conduct one at night and one during the day with everyone in your home, and practice using different ways out. Most people have less than two minutes to escape a fire, so teach children how to escape on their own in case adults can’t help them.

Healthiest State Walk Set for Oct. 3
Join us for the Healthiest State Annual Walk at noon on Wednesday, Oct. 3 in front of City Hall at 515 Clark Ave. This one mile walk begins at City Hall, passes through the Main Street Cultural District and ends at City Hall. Refreshing City of Ames water will be provided at the conclusion of this walk.

Since 2011, the Healthiest State Initiative has engaged hundreds of thousands of Iowans across the state to walk. The goal of this year’s event is to have walks in all 99 Iowa counties. Being physically active is one of the most important steps that people of all ages and abilities can take to improve their health. Increasing physical activity significantly reduces risk of chronic disease and premature death and supports positive mental health and healthy aging.

The Healthiest State Initiative invites all Iowans to take this first step in building a healthier lifestyle and hopes that you will make walking 30 minutes part of your everyday routine.

Yard Waste Free Days!
Mark your calendar for the four fall Yard Waste Free Days. Each day’s open hours are 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.:

- Saturday, Oct. 20 (leaves only)
- Saturday, Nov. 3 (leaves only)
- Saturday, Nov. 17 (leaves and brush)
- Saturday, Dec. 1 (leaves only)

The Yard Waste Free Day site is located at 400 Freel Drive. Those participating in Yard Waste Free Day are asked to enter the site from Southeast Fifth Street (via South Dayton Avenue) and exit onto Lincoln Way.
Rummage RAMPage Keeps Usable Items Out of Landfill; Reduces Dumping

The third annual Rummage RAMPage, a community rummage sale designed to keep reusable items out of the waste stream, diverted 102,550 pounds of furniture and housewares from the landfill and raised $18,607 for local non-profit agencies. In its third year, Rummage RAMPage increased proceeds by more than $4,000 and diverted an additional 25,000 pounds of materials when compared to results from 2017. The City of Ames, in partnership with the ISU Office of Sustainability and with assistance from the Volunteer Center of Story County, held the sale recently at the Ames Intermodal Facility, 129 Hayward Ave.

Because many leases in Ames terminate at the end of July, renters often discard items that may still be usable. During these weeks, the City of Ames Resource Recovery Plant (RRP) often sees an influx of couches, wooden furniture, clothing, and more as renters attempt to meet their move out requirements, according to RRP Superintendent Bill Schmitt. At the same time, new students moving in are often in need of furniture and household essentials. Rummage RAMPage is a collaborative effort to pair unwanted items with others seeking low-cost options for furnishing a home.

RRP takes garbage from all over Story County and processes it into fuel for the Ames Power Plant. Items such as textiles, carpet, furniture, and glass aren’t burnable or don’t produce quality fuel and can create mechanical problems. Diverting these items is helpful to our waste-to-energy process and keeping them out of the waste stream also keeps them out of the landfill.

“Every year at this time we see working, usable items piling up near trash bins, on curbsides, or in front yards. At the same time, we know other people are looking for these items,” Schmitt added. “Rummage RAMPage provides a location to donate unwanted items so others can purchase them. Our local non-profit agencies benefit by splitting the proceeds.”

Rummage RAMPage was staffed by volunteers from local non-profits. Residents donated items to the sale, and the sale was open to the public. “We were able to keep hundreds of sofas from going to the landfill and repurpose tons of other items that were still in good condition, only landfilling just over 6 percent of the total weight of donated items. This helps our recycling and processing of materials at the Resource Recovery facility,” Schmitt said. Because of the success of this year’s event, planning has started for Rummage RAMPage 2019.
Q: Is there still a rebate for installing LED lights?
A: Yes, the good news is that in spite of drastically dropping prices for LED bulbs, Ames Electric Services is continuing to encourage electric customers to invest in this important energy saving technology with a rebate for their purchase and installation. The rebate is 20% of the cost of the LED.

LED bulbs produce more light per watt than incandescent or fluorescent bulbs. Their small size allows them to be used on circuit boards, but they can also be grouped together for applications like household lighting, traffic signals, and street lights. LEDs light up very quickly and will achieve full brightness in milliseconds. They are ideal for applications that require quick on and off cycles and are not adversely affected by frequent switching. LEDs are dimmable and radiate very little heat. Typically, they fail by growing dimmer over time or shifting color, but don’t burn out abruptly. They contain no mercury, are relatively shock resistant, and can last up to 50,000 hours, which makes them ideal for hard to reach locations.

An LED replacement for a 100-watt incandescent will use only 14 watts of electricity and can cost $5-$10. In Ames, an LED will pay for itself in energy savings in about six months.

City of Ames Electric Services wants to help residential customers reduce electrical consumption, resulting in increased electric system reliability, a cleaner environment, a lower electric rate, and reduced electric bills. The Smart Energy Residential Efficient Lighting Rebate program helps customers replace certain fixtures and/or bulbs with more efficient ones. The rebate is designed to cover a percentage of the initial cost of your purchase to help you upgrade to efficient lighting systems.

Fill out a rebate claim form, sign it, and return it along with proof of purchase to Smart Energy, 502 Carroll Ave., Ames, IA 50010. For a claim form or more information visit, www.CityOfAmes.org/SmartEnergy, or call 515.239.5177.