Riverbank Stabilization Project Protects against Erosion

To protect a major sanitary sewer main from damage and to limit erosion on the banks of the South Skunk River, a Public Works project used more than 4,300 tons of stone, locked logs, bendway weirs, keys, and other erosion-control features to redirect the deepest channel of the river back to the center.

Ames Public Works Department staff worked with professionals, including a fluvial geomorphology team, to develop the South Skunk River riverbank stabilization project and protect the sanitary sewer main from damage. (Fluvial geomorphology studies the interaction between streams and the landscape.) In stabilizing the riverbank, the project also improves the water quality of the river. The shared used path along the South Skunk River near Carr Park has been closed during the project. In the spring, sections of the path will be repaved before reopening.

Beware of Frozen Pipes!

If you’re heading off for the weekend, the week, or even longer, remember to take care of your plumbing. Frozen pipes are an issue whenever the temperature dips, and weather can turn cold without warning. Be prepared before you leave. Turning down your thermostat to save energy and money is a great idea, but never below 55 degrees.

Keep your pipes warm. Heat tape, used according to the manufacturer’s instructions, can be applied on pipes that are near exterior or uninsulated walls. Pipe insulation or jacketing, used in conjunction with heat tape, will lessen the chance of your pipes freezing.

Open cupboard doors below sinks in the kitchen and bathrooms. If your indoor meter is in your basement, open the utility room door to let the heat in. If you have a modern space heater, turn it on and aim it at the pipes. Those with ongoing issues with freezing pipes might want to consider letting the indoor faucets trickle or drip water to keep water running through the pipes.

Erosion control work is almost complete along the South Skunk River. Top photo is looking south from near Carr Park. Left, this project used erosion control tools like locked logs and bendway weirs.
City Council Meetings

The following City Council meetings will be held in the City Council Chambers, 515 Clark Ave.:  
5:15 p.m. Feb. 12  
6 p.m. Feb. 26

A Council workshop will be held at 6 p.m. on Feb. 19. (Budget hearings listed below right.) For the most current information, go to: www.CityOfAmes.org.

Keep Hydrants Clear from Snow

As snow piles up along the curb, it does more than hamper visibility for drivers. Mounds of snow can obscure locations of fire hydrants. Ames firefighters ask residents to check fire hydrants located near their homes or businesses to ensure they are visible. If the fire hydrant is covered, we need your help! Please clear a three-foot wide area around the hydrant to ensure firefighters can locate it. During a fire emergency, every second counts. If you need assistance clearing the hydrant, call Fire Station No. 1, at 515.239.5109.

Public Budget Meetings Scheduled

The City of Ames began preparing for the Fiscal Year 2019-20 budget last fall with a series of internal staff meetings. Work continues throughout the winter months as each department’s budget is reviewed internally prior to presentation to the Ames City Council. There are still plenty of opportunities to get involved in the budget process. A budget overview will be presented to the City Council at 2 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 1.

Three additional meetings will follow in which representatives of each of the City’s departments present an in-depth review of their proposed budgets. All budget meetings will be held in the City Council Chambers, Ames City Hall, 515 Clark Ave.:  
5:15 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 5  
5:15 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 6  
5:15 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 7

A wrap-up of the budget will be held at 5:15 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 12. The final budget hearing is scheduled for 6 p.m. on Tuesday, March 5, and will include an opportunity for public comments. This is also a regularly scheduled City Council meeting. Like all Iowa communities, the City of Ames must submit its budget to the State of Iowa for certification by March 15. Budget documents for the current fiscal year are posted on the City’s website, and draft documents for 2019-20 will be posted by early February. For more information, go to www.CityOfAmes.org.

Public Art Commission Hosts Bird House Competition

If the long winter is getting you down, here’s a fun spring project that’s sure to lift your spirits! The Public Art Commission (PAC) is sponsoring a birdhouse competition to encourage creativity, resourcefulness, and new homes for birds in Ames’ local parks.

“The Commission is looking for ways to inspire residents to get creative by crafting unique backyard and park habitats to install when the weather warms,” said Kerry Dixon, PAC member.

Throughout the spring, PAC will work with ornithologists and wildlife experts to host special events to talk about Iowa birds and the importance of conserving Iowa natural landscapes. The birdhouse competition will include several entry categories such as children, adult, teams, professionals, and decorative only entries. Submission of completed birdhouses will be in mid-March. For more information on the Birdhouse Competition, go to www.CityOfAmes.org/Birdhouses.
Mary Greeley Medical Center Achieves Smart Business Platinum

In late November of 2018, Mary Greeley Medical Center was recognized for its exceptional achievements in sustainability with Platinum Certification in the Ames Smart Business Challenge. This City of Ames program encourages businesses to improve their basic functions and operations with the purpose of preserving the environment, community, and economy of Ames.

Currently, 33 Ames businesses have joined the Smart Business Challenge, but only eight have achieved the coveted platinum level. The platinum businesses include Duck Worth Wearing, The Fighting Burrito, Green Hills Retirement Community Health Care Center, The Loft Ames, McFarland Clinic, Morning Bell Coffee Roasters, Wheatsfield Cooperative, and Wild Water Car Wash.

Mary Greeley Medical Center has committed to be dedicated to all three facets of sustainability: environmental, social, and economic. The hospital’s focus on reducing its environmental impact results from internal decisions relating to efficient lighting and equipment, conservative water and waste management methods, and green landscaping and groundskeeping methods.

Additionally, Mary Greeley encourages community wellness and prosperity through many volunteer opportunities and initiatives. The hospital has donated used equipment for better use, and it has hosted community education classes on wellness and disease prevention. Other hospital sustainability initiatives include recycling appliances and equipment, purchasing locally, and actively pursuing cost reductions to promote economic longevity for the hospital and the community.

The Smart Business Challenge is designed to support a prosperous and successful future for Ames. As the newest Platinum Smart Business Challenge member, Mary Greeley is a shining example of that mission. By incorporating the basic principles of sustainability into its business, the hospital has reduced its footprint while promoting the community of Ames.

To read more about Mary Greeley Medical Center’s dedication to sustainability, go to the hospital’s sustainability webpage at https://www.mgmc.org/about/sustainability/

Carbon Monoxide Dangers

Carbon monoxide is an odorless, colorless gas produced when fuel burns. If a fuel-burning device such as a furnace or kerosene heater is installed, operated, or vented incorrectly, the carbon monoxide it gives off can build up in the air. Should the concentration of carbon monoxide get high enough, you will develop the symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning.

Symptoms may be hard to recognize because at first they are much like symptoms of the flu: headache, weakness, dizziness, and nausea. Other symptoms can include shortness of breath, chest pain, confusion, loss of consciousness, and heart arrhythmias. If you suspect carbon monoxide may be a problem in your home or you experience symptoms, call the Ames Fire Department at 515.239.5109.

Electric Services
Q: How do I know if I’m buying an efficient appliance?
A: Appliances can be expensive. That’s why it’s important to do a little research before you buy. According to the National Association of Home Builders and Bank of America Home Equity, a new refrigerator will last about 13 years, a washing machine about 10 years, and a dishwasher about nine years. Before you make a purchase, look for the Energy Star label. Energy Star has done all the testing necessary to determine which appliances exceed federal standards for efficiency. Most Energy Star certified appliances are 30 to 50 percent more efficient than standard appliances. However, the Energy Star is only half the story.

It’s also important to look for the yellow and black Energy Guide label. This handy at-a-glance guide will show you the estimated annual energy consumption and operating cost for each appliance so you can compare them yourself.

The Energy Guide label is required to be placed on all appliances by the manufacturers. The label provides information about energy consumption and shows you how much energy an appliance uses compared with similar models. Keep in mind that the numbers are averages; actual costs will differ somewhat depending on how you use them. The label shows the following:

- Manufacturer, model number, and size of the appliance
- Estimated yearly operating cost (based on the national average cost of electricity), and the range of operating costs for similar models
- The Energy Star logo (indicates the model meets strict criteria for energy efficiency)
- Estimated yearly electricity consumption
- Key features of the appliance and the similar models that make up the cost comparison range

It is important to note that the yellow Energy Guide doesn’t mean the appliance is efficient. Only those with the Energy Star label in the lower right-hand corner are identified as exceeding federal standards for efficiency. The Energy Star certification is necessary to qualify for a rebate from our Smart Energy program.

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**Renewable Energy**

**For November 2018**

20.1% of electricity used this month was generated from wind. 2.5% of electricity this month was generated by refuse derived fuel (RDF) from the Resource Recovery Plant.

132 Ames customers have invested in solar voltaic systems. 74 LED street lights installed for a total of 3,033.

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