

# - February Project Highlights - 2018

## Water & Pollution Control

### Water

- **Construction work at the new Water Treatment Plant** continues at a frustratingly slow pace. In late January staff met with senior executives from Knutson Construction and received a promise that the outstanding work would be rapidly pursued so the project could be completed and the SRF loan closed.
- Staff hopes to release a Request for Proposals in the near future to install a **Distributed Antenna System (DAS)** for the new Water Treatment Plant. The DAS will enable emergency responders to have access to their radio network throughout the facility, and will also allow cellular telephone access throughout the large structure.
- Staff is reviewing two proposals from Sprint to modify their **antenna assemblies** on the Bloomington Road Elevated Tank (BRET) and the Mortensen and County Line (MAC) tank. Based on the plans provided to date, there will be no increase in the overall height of the antennas and the public will likely notice no change in the aesthetics.



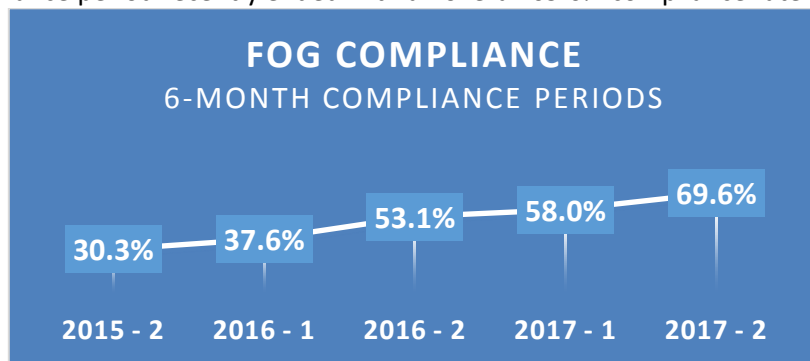
*Aerial view of the existing Sprint and iWireless antennas on the Bloomington Road Elevated Tank (BRET)*

- Staff has been working with a land owner just outside the City limits for more than a year in an attempt to acquire approximately two acres of **farm ground for a new well**. An appraisal was performed to ascertain the fair market value of the ground, and that price has been confirmed by an independent review appraisal. Staff has made multiple purchase offers to the land owner for as much as 25% above the appraised value. Unfortunately, the property owner is insisting on a price that is two and a half times that of the appraised value. Should the property owner not respond favorably to the City's best and final offer, staff will likely ask Council for authorization to initiate eminent domain proceedings.

- Staff is working with River Restoration to modify the plans and specifications for the **Low Head Dam Improvements Project**. The revised project is tentatively scheduled for a February 27 Notice to Bidders.

### Water Pollution Control

- Staff will release a Request for Proposals in early February to perform a **Nutrient Reduction Feasibility Study**. The RFP will place a high level of emphasis on identifying innovative, cost-effective alternatives that could be pursued in lieu of a major reconstruction of the WPC facility. Consistent with the City Council’s updated goals, one of the specific options the consultants will be directed to explore is the feasibility of offsetting all or a portion of the facility’s nutrient reduction by making off-site improvements in the watershed.
- Staff will present the revised **Industrial Pretreatment Program** to Council on February 13 for approval. Staff presented the Program to Council at the October 2017 workshop. Following feedback from the National Centers for Animal Health, which is subject to the program, some minor modifications have been made from what was presented last fall.
- **Compliance with the Fats, Oils, and Grease Control (FOG) Program** continues to improve. The fifth six-month compliance period recently ended with an overall 69.6% compliance rate.



### Electric

- **SunSmart Ames Community Solar project** – As you may have seen, President Trump imposed a 30% tariff on imported solar panels on January 22nd. Staff continues to ask ForeFront (the City’s chosen developer) if a tariff could impact their proposal to the City to construct the solar farm. Up to this point ForeFront has said the pending tariff should not have an impact. When asked again on January 23, ForeFront said they are "studying it".
- For the month of January, **the City's electric grid** operated very well. Customer outages were few and far between. On January 15 the City hit a new high with an all time winter peak load of 93.3 MW. This shattered the previous peak of 90.6 MW set in January 2014. Setting a new winter peak is not like setting a new summer peak. The City has additional capacity to meet winter peak growth.
- During the "Cyclone Bomb", frigid weather around Christmas and New Years, **natural gas prices** rose dramatically. With close monitoring of the market conditions by the Energy Markets and Power Plant staff, we were able to cover our natural gas needs without exposing our customers to the high price conditions.

## Planning and Housing

### Planning

- **New standards governing Wireless Communications facilities**, such as cell towers and small wireless transmitters, will be presented to the City Council in early March. The new standards will address installations on private property and separate requirements for installation within the right-of-way. The changes are needed to conform to recent state legislation that went into effect September 1, 2017.
- Staff is reviewing a **preliminary plat for Rose Prairie** that is expected to go to the Planning and Zoning Commission in early February. The plat is intended to break up the 170-acre tract into smaller, developable pieces which the owner intends to market to other developers. The preliminary plat will come to the City Council in late February or early March.
- **Menards** has submitted a site plan for the development of a new store on SE 16<sup>th</sup> Street. The development will include the store as well as two smaller parcels for future development. Menards will also be submitting a preliminary plat to divide up the existing two tracts to create the described developable lots. Council will review the Preliminary Plat at the end of February or March.
- Planning and Housing received four applications for **downtown façade assistance grants**. These will come to the City Council in early February for action. There is currently \$69,000 in unobligated funds which includes \$2,658 awarded in the spring to Evert’s Flowers for proposed awnings. The City received notice that Evert’s will not proceed with the project, making those funds eligible for a future disbursement.
- A **proposed new Roosevelt Neighborhood Association (NA)** held an initiation meeting in January. The proposed boundaries are generally described as the railroad tracks (west), 13<sup>th</sup> Street (north), and Grand Avenue (east) and 5<sup>th</sup> Street (south). The boundary will exclude the Emanon Neighborhood Association, which exists along Roosevelt Avenue and Marston Avenue, from 10<sup>th</sup> Street to 13<sup>th</sup> Street. Approval of the new NA will be on the February 27, 2018 City Council consent agenda.

### Housing and Community Development

- Staff will conduct public forums for the 2018-19 CDBG Annual Action Plan. Forum dates, times and locations are as follows:

<i>Date</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Location</i>
<b>Monday, February 5, 2018</b>	<b>11:30a.m.–1:00 p.m.</b>	<b>Ames City Hall Conference Room 235</b>
<b>Tuesday, February 6, 2018</b>	<b>6:00p.m. – 7:30 p.m.</b>	<b>Ames Public Library Farwell Brown Auditorium</b>

## **Library**

**Brain HQ** – The Library added [BrainHQ™ online brain training](#) to its arsenal of learning tools in 2017. BrainHQ contains dozens of brain exercises to help people think faster, focus better, and remember more. It is available 24/7 and can be used on the device of your choice. If you haven't tried it yet, go to BrainHQ through the e-Resources section of the [APL Website](#) to explore the fun activities and set up your account.

In studies across varied populations, BrainHQ has improved performance at standard measures of cognition (speed, attention, memory, and decision-making), standard measures of quality of life (mood, confidence, and health-related quality of life), and real world activities (balance, gait, driving, and everyday cognitive activities). A recently published study found an exercise in BrainHQ was the first intervention shown to reduce dementia risk in a randomized controlled trial, and the exercises are now also being used by pro athletes to achieve peak performance.

Brain training with BrainHQ is so valuable that in January, the U.S. Department of Defense partnered with Demco Software to provide BrainHQ to members of the armed services through the libraries of the Air Force, Army, Navy, and Marines. "The security of our nation relies on our personnel being in the right place, at the right time, with the right qualities and capacities to protect our resources," shared Kristen Campbell, U.S. Air Force Administrative Librarian. "We chose BrainHQ to help service members hone qualities such as lifelong learning, readiness, and resilience. This unique program will help our personnel improve their attention spans, decision making skills, and cognitive speed."