



CITY SIDE

FEBRUARY 2021

MIRACLE PLAYGROUND PROVIDES A PLACE TO PLAY FOR EVERYONE

In November, the construction fence surrounding the Barnes Family Inclusive Playground and Rotary Club of Ames Miracle Field was removed, and families have flocked to the area ever since. Located at Inis Grove Park, 2500 Duff Ave., the all-ages, all-abilities playground features five distinct play areas that allow families to focus on one activity at a time, as well as providing some natural spacing for participants to avoid over-stimulation.

Two metal “Let Miracles Happen” archways greet visitors from the east and west, and the spongy rubberized surface throughout the play area allows mobility

devices to roll easily while providing a softer landing if someone takes a spill.

A sensory plaza with a donor wall anchors the middle of the playground filled with names of the many individuals, families, groups, and organizations who donated over \$2.3 million to make the park a reality. The fundraising effort was spearheaded by the Ames Foundation, a group that has been working on the project with Ames Parks and Recreation since 2018. Next to the playground, the Miracle League Field is ready to host Miracle League games anticipated to begin in the spring, said Keith Abraham, director of Parks and

Recreation.

The pandemic has created challenges for a formal opening ceremony for the new playground and field, but that hasn’t dampened community excitement. Even in cooler weather, participants of all ages are busy exploring the features and enjoying the experience.

“True to its design, it is a place for everyone to play,” Abraham said.



VOLUNTEER FOR A CITY BOARD OR COMMISSION!

Volunteer in your community and make a difference by joining a City of Ames board or commission. Boards and commissions make recommendations to the Ames City Council and assist the Council in carrying out various functions of local government.

Despite the pandemic, City Boards and Commissions have continued to meet, although meetings have transitioned to a virtual format. There are 20 different boards and commissions, and 14 of those have vacancies occurring in the first part of

2021. While some current volunteers may seek reappointment, there are always vacancies that need to be filled.

More information about each board and commission, its purpose, when it meets, and an application to be considered are available at www.CityOfAmes.org/BoardsAndCommissions.

Applications are also available in the City Clerk’s Office. Deadline to apply is **5 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 5, 2021.**

CITY NEWS TO USE

IN THIS ISSUE:

- Biodiesel Fleet Grows in Number
- City Budget Process Continues
- Help Keep Fire Hydrants Clear
- Microgrid Solar Crate Arrives
- Energy Q&A

CITY OFFICES CLOSED:

City Hall and most City of Ames departments will be closed on Monday, Feb. 15, in recognition of Presidents’ Day. For more information about the City of Ames, go to: www.CityOfAmes.org.



MORE BIODIESEL PLOWS TO HELP WITH SNOW REMOVAL

If you notice bright green paint and graphics along a City of Ames plow, you should know that vehicle is clearing the streets and reducing our community's carbon footprint at the same time!

Last winter, an innovative partnership with Ames-based Renewable Energy Group (REG) and Optimus Technologies, from Pittsburgh, Penn., placed five biodiesel plows on Ames streets. Due to their success, seven more snow plows powered by B100 biodiesel are being added to the fleet. Harsh Iowa winters



create challenges for plant-based fuels, which have a tendency to gel in extreme temperatures. The Ames plows use two fuel tanks on each truck to hold both

diesel and B100. Once the engine has warmed using diesel fuel, the engine switches to run completely on B100. The biodiesel trucks have been generating data to provide efficiency measurements, and vehicles will be tracked for several more years.

From 2014 to 2018, the City's fleet grew, but carbon input decreased by 4 percent. Improved vehicle fuel economy, reduced engine idle time, and alternate fuel vehicle purchases have all contributed to the carbon reduction.

PUBLIC BUDGET MEETINGS SCHEDULED

The City of Ames began preparing for the Fiscal Year 2021-22 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 February, three meetings are planned for representatives of each of the City's departments to present an in-depth review of proposed budgets. All budget meetings will be held by Zoom teleconference:

- 5:15 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 2
- 5:15 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 3
- 5:15 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 4

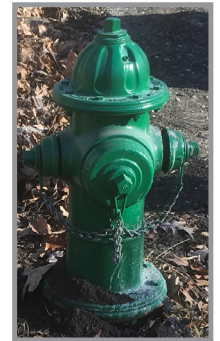
A wrap-up of the budget will be held at 5:15 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 9. Setting the maximum levy rate will take place at the Council meeting beginning at 6 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 23, and the final budget hearing is scheduled for 6 p.m. on Tuesday, March 9. It will include an opportunity for public comments. 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 the end of March. Budget documents for the current fiscal year are posted on the City's website, and draft documents for 2021-22 will be posted by early February. For more 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.

CITY COUNCIL MEETINGS

City Council meetings are held via Zoom teleconference.

Budget hearings:

5:15 p.m. Feb. 2,3,4

Meetings: 5:15 p.m. Feb. 9

6 p.m. Feb. 23

Council workshop at 6 p.m. on Feb. 16.

Final budget hearing at 6 p.m. on March 9.

MORE INFORMATION AVAILABLE AT WWW.CITYOFAMES.ORG



ELECTRIC

AMES ELECTRIC SERVICES HOSTS TEMPORARY MOBILE MICROGRID

It's hard to miss the solar panels and crate in front of the Ames Power Plant, and the most common question Ames Electric Services has answered these days is: What is that?

Here's the answer. It's called a mobile microgrid.

Electric Services is supporting the Electric Power Research Center at Iowa State University and its project partners, SunCrate, PowerFilm Solar, and the Iowa Army National Guard in a new mobile microgrid project. The project is an operational solar battery crate developed for deployment in emergency outage situations. The solar crate is being used temporarily in the green space west of the Ames Power Plant, where the public can charge electric vehicles (EVs) with free solar energy.

This arrangement allows public interaction with the project and keeps the project close to campus so students

and researchers can use it for tours and case studies. The crate, which is expected to stay 6 to 9 months, was created with funding from the National Guard and Iowa Economic Development Authority.

"This is a win-win for both the project creators and the public," said Ames Electric Services Director Donald Kom. "The site offers great visibility and opportunity for public education. Also, the EV charging allows the solar-powered batteries to be partially discharged, which is better for battery life."

The crate is roped off and under 24/7 camera surveillance, and the only part that can be touched is the EV charger. Electric vehicles will need access to the parking space in front of the crate, so other vehicles should avoid those spaces if other parking spots are available.

"As we bring our own solar project online, it's exciting



Above, the mobile microgrid has been placed just west of the Ames Power Plant. It offers free charging for electric vehicles (EVs). At left, is a close up of the mobile microgrid.

to collaborate with others to showcase creative renewable energy solutions for disaster situations like the derecho that Ames experienced this summer," Kom added.

Ames Electric Services' SunSmart Ames community

solar farm is producing electricity. Ames Electric Services customers can purchase solar energy by signing up for "Power Packs."

For more information, go to www.CityOfAmes.org/Solar

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

Power Out	515.239.5240
Street Light Out.....	515.239.5500
Utility Bills.....	515.239.5120
Energy Questions	515.239.5177
Tree Too Close to Electric Line?	515.239.5500
Digging? Contact Iowa One Call.....	811
Storm Water Concern.....	515.239.5160
Rusty Water.....	515.239.5551

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ENERGY Q&A

Q: With Valentine's Day coming up soon, what are some fun, innovative, creative energy-conscious ways to show my special person how much I care?

A: What a great question and an awesome idea for a thoughtful gift. For those of you who want to show the love this Valentine's Day, here are some ideas for a more sustainable twist on standard traditions.



1. Most indoor social gatherings are canceled this year, but you can bundle up and take a hike with a loved one to get a break from your home. Set your thermostat back while you're out on the trails to save on your heating bill. If you don't already have one, install a smart thermostat to make it even easier to save. Did you know there's a rebate for that? (Check out www.CityOfAmes.org/SmartEnergy under high efficiency air conditioner rebate.)

2. Instead of cut flowers, opt for a potted plant that will last much longer and improve the air quality in your living space. You could really go the extra mile and start some seeds to transplant this spring into an outdoor garden!

3. Spend quality time together disconnected from the internet

and all its distractions. While you're disconnected, you'll also be reducing your energy consumption! The American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy estimates that the internet uses an average of about 5 kWh to support the utilization of every GB of data.

4. Sealing air leaks that make your honey shiver is one possible act of service. Realign doors if needed to reduce the size of cracks and then apply weather stripping to block out cold drafts.

5. If you're looking for a gift for an earth-conscious valentine, consider a share in the SunSmart community solar farm. It's the perfect size, no extra calories, and who doesn't love renewable energy? SunSmart Ames is already producing electricity, and Power Packs are still available for purchase at www.CityOfAmes.org/solar

You don't need to wait for a special occasion to show your love through energy efficiency. However, if you miss Valentine's Day, don't worry. Earth Day is coming up in April!

Kayley Barrios Lain, Energy Services Coordinator
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AT-A-GLANCE ENERGY NUMBERS

FOR NOVEMBER 2020

3.6%	ELECTRICITY THIS MONTH WAS GENERATED BY REFUSE DERIVED FUEL (RDF) FROM THE RESOURCE RECOVERY PLANT	70	LED STREETLIGHTS INSTALLED FOR A TOTAL OF 5,385
75%	SUNSMART AMES POWER PACKS PLEDGED	175	KILOWATT HOURS OF VEHICLE CHARGING AT PUBLIC ELECTRIC CHARGING STATIONS

DEGREE DAY INFORMATION AVAILABLE AT WWW.CITYOFAMES.ORG/ELECTRIC

INFORMATION

CARBON MONOXIDE DANGER

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 are much like symptoms of the flu including headache, weakness, dizziness, and nausea.

If you suspect a carbon monoxide problem in your home or experience symptoms, call the Ames Fire Department at 515.239.5109.