

FEBRUARY 2024

MONTHLY PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS



Report compiled by
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City Manager's Office

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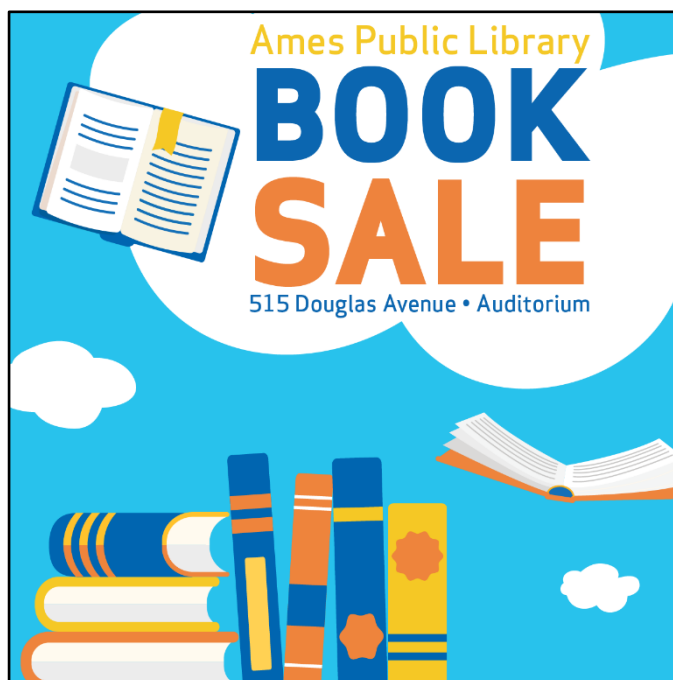
515 Clark Avenue, Ames, IA 50010



LIBRARY

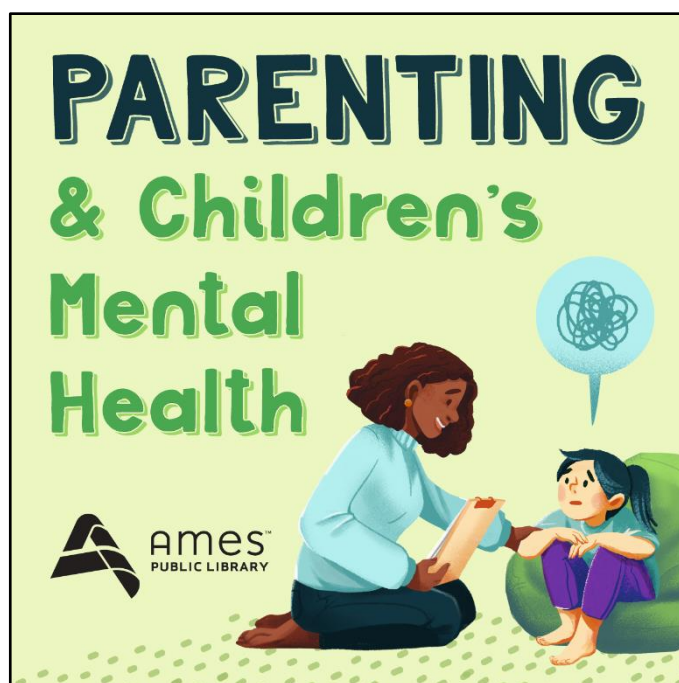
Book Sale March 7-10: The Ames Public Library Friends Foundation will hold its spring book sale March 7-10. Used books, movies, music, and more will be sold to benefit Ames Public Library. The Book Sale schedule is:

- Thursday, March 7 – 5:30 to 8:30 p.m.
 - General Admission: \$2
 - Donors to the Ames Public Library Friends Foundation at the \$20 level and above: Free admission and early entry starting at 5:00 p.m.
- Friday, March 8, and Saturday, March 9 – 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.
 - Free Admission
- Saturday, March 10 – 12:00 to 5:00 p.m.
 - Last day! Admission is \$1, and everything in the Auditorium is free!



Educational Opportunities for Parents: Ames Public Library will hold a presentation about Parenting and Children’s Mental Health Thursday, March 14, at 7:00 p.m. (available in person

and on Zoom). Local mental health professionals will talk about mental health issues that affect children. They will share information about local resources and programs along with tips for finding service providers that fit your family’s needs.



The Library will also hold Small Talk sessions for parents of young babies starting March 20. Small Talk shares tips and resources for talking and interacting with babies to build strong brain connections early in life.

Seed Library Launch March 23: Ames Public Library loans a wide variety of items, from movies and video

games to STEM kits and Wi-Fi hotspots. Soon, flower and vegetable seeds will join the list!

Ames Seed Library – a collaborative project between Ames Public Library, Iowa State University Extension Master Gardener Program, Mustard Seed Community Farm, and Ames Repair Café with support from the Ames Public Library Friends Foundation – will launch March 23 with an Open House from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Visitors can visit the Seed Library on the Library’s 2nd floor near the Adult Services Desk to “check out” some seeds. Seeds don’t need to be returned, of course, but seed donations are welcome!

There will be also be a Seed Starting Workshop and an Apple Tree Grafting workshop on March 23. Visit www.AmesPL.org/events for more information.



PARKS AND RECREATION

Ada Hayden Heritage Park Fire: On Friday, February 23, a fire started at Ada Hayden Heritage Park and burned approximately two and a half acres of prairie before being extinguished by Ames Fire Department. Fires are not allowed in the park system except in the cooking grills near park shelters. The pictures below depict the extent of the fire.



Ames/ISU Ice Arena: A “Great to Skate” event was held on February 10. This event was made possible through a US Figure Skating grant and featured informational booths for the Ames Figure Skating Club, Ames Minor Hockey Association, and Iowa State University (ISU) Hockey. The event also offered skating with a hockey player and mini skating lessons. Over 200 people attended the event, with the first 60 through the door receiving a ticket for a free hot dog.

Aquatics: Spring swim lessons began February 13 at ISU Forker Pool with a total of 187 registrants. This will be the final session of swim lessons that will be held at ISU Forker Pool as it is planned to close at the conclusion of the Spring 2024 semester. Staff has been conversing with other indoor pool operators within the community to utilize non-City facilities for swim lessons, certification classes, and staff trainings outside the Furman Aquatic Center season.

Brookside Park Wading Pool Demolition: With the spray pad at the Steven L. Schainker Plaza opening in 2024, staff decided to demolish the Brookside Park Wading Pool. Additionally, a water line break was discovered last fall, and rather than incurring the expense to fix it, the timing of demolition was accelerated. Compared to the wading pool, the Schainker Plaza spray pad will be open longer each day and will not require staff to supervisor the users.

Public Works maintenance staff assisted with the demolition of the Brookside Park Wading Pool (pictured below). All concrete will be taken to the Public Works West Yard so it can be crushed and reused, while the rebar and fencing will be taken to the metal scrap yard. Once removed, soil will be used to level the area and then seeded to turf.



Forestry: Parks and Recreation Forestry staff stayed busy, reporting the following activities:

- Removed all trees at the site of the new Fitch Family Indoor Aquatic Center in preparation for upcoming building demolition.
- Completed tree inspection and pruning at Parkview Park and Country Gables Park.
- Completed inspection and pruning of over 1,400 trees in four right-of-way zones.
- Removed two log jams along Clear Creek at locations in Munn Woods.
- Gabbi Edwards and Matt Rochford attended the 68th Annual Iowa State University Shade Tree Short Course.
- A contractor removed five large dead oak trees along the Shared Use Path in Inis Grove Park near the sand volleyball courts.

Hiring Tailgate: Parks and Recreation held its second annual Hiring Tailgate on February 24 at the Homewood Golf Course Clubhouse. The event took place from 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m., with food, games, and prizes. Approximately 35 individuals attended to learn about job opportunities available through Parks and Recreation, meet staff, ask questions, discuss the hiring process, and complete an online application. There was a higher number of retirees this year compared to last and overall attendance was about one third of attendance in 2023. Staff will evaluate this event and make changes for next year.

Homewood Golf Course: Homewood partnered with Painting with a Twist to host a painting class on Valentine’s Day weekend, with 28 people registering for the event. The class was intended for two painters to participate together, with each person creating one half of a larger painting. Individual registration was also offered with individuals creating their own masterpiece.



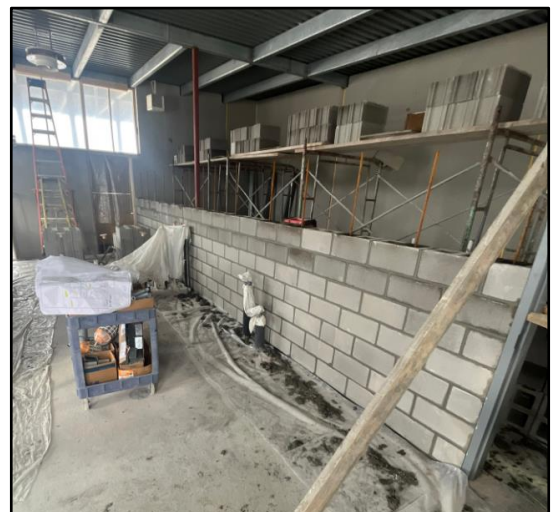
Below is a chart with the current Clubhouse rental hours and revenue amounts compared to the same time frame last fiscal year.

	July 1, 2022 – February 27, 2023	July 1, 2023 – February 27, 2024
Paid Event Hours	99.75	92.75
Revenue from Paid Events	\$9,875	\$9,443.75
Non-Paid Events Hours	115	135.25

Inis Grove Park Stair Project: Staff completed the renovation of the Inis Grove Park Stair System, located on the northeast side of the park. The stairs are used by individuals to go from Inis Grove Park to the Skunk River Trail that goes through Carr Park and River Valley Park. The project included new stair treads and railings.



Steven L. Schainker Plaza: Henkel Construction, LLC., Ames, Iowa, continued making progress on the Steven L. Schainker Plaza in February, including installation of the concrete floor in the restroom/mechanical building and construction of the interior walls. Everything Ice will be back at the site in early March to start the installation of the ice-making chiller and the condensing unit. Pictures below depict the interior of the restroom/mechanical building.



Wellness: A new session of Fitness classes began February 12 with 438 registrations in-person and 29 virtual registrations.

PUBLIC WORKS



Garbage Truck Fire: There was a garbage truck fire the morning of Thursday, February 22. The driver followed protocol and guided the vehicle to the nearest empty parking lot, dumped the load, and called 911. A Public Works backhoe in the vicinity was brought over to spread out the load so that Fire Department could extinguish the fire. The cause of the fire was undetermined, but it is a good opportunity to remind the community to recycle batteries by dropping them off during open hours at Resource

Recovery. Lithium-ion batteries are particularly problematic; they catch fire easily going through RRP’s shredders. These batteries are in many items today: laptops, cell phones, vaping devices, toys, electronics, wireless headphones, handheld power tools, small and large appliances, electric vehicles, digital cameras, watches, solar energy storage, pacemakers, portable powerpacks, personal mobility scooters, emergency power backup systems, surveillance and alarm systems, e-bikes, electric toothbrushes, hoverboards, e-readers, flashlights, landscaping tools – the list goes on and on!

Meeker and Fellows Elementary Science Nights: Resource Recovery Plant (RRP) employees staffed Science Nights for elementary students at Meeker Elementary School on Thursday, February 22, and Fellows Elementary School on Friday, February 23. At these open house style events, each group is assigned a classroom to set up activities, demos, and other hands-on opportunities. Students and families go from room to room at their own pace. RRP staff explained the



expanded recycling opportunities available at RRP and challenged the kids to sort sample items into the proper recycling bins. Staff also explained where SmartTrash goes and how it helps the City of Ames by generating electricity at the Power Plant.

WATER AND POLLUTION CONTROL

Dotson Wetland: Staff continues to partner with the Iowa Department on Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS) and Story County Conservation on the design and construction of a large wetland complex just north of Ames. The project will intercept the drainage from approximately 2,200 acres of farm ground and residential areas, removing an estimated 22,000 pounds of nitrogen each year prior to the water being discharged into Ioway Creek upstream of Ames. The City Council approved a cooperative 28E Agreement between the parties in February. The design, which is being prepared by Ducks Unlimited at no cost to the partners, is expected to be ready for bid by IDALS later this summer.

FEMA Grant for Wellfield Standby Power: There is finally good news to report on a longstanding project. Staff initiated an application for a Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) Hazard Mitigation Grant immediately following the 2020 derecho event. The proposed project will provide emergency standby power to five drinking water supply wells located in the Hunziker Youth Sports Complex.



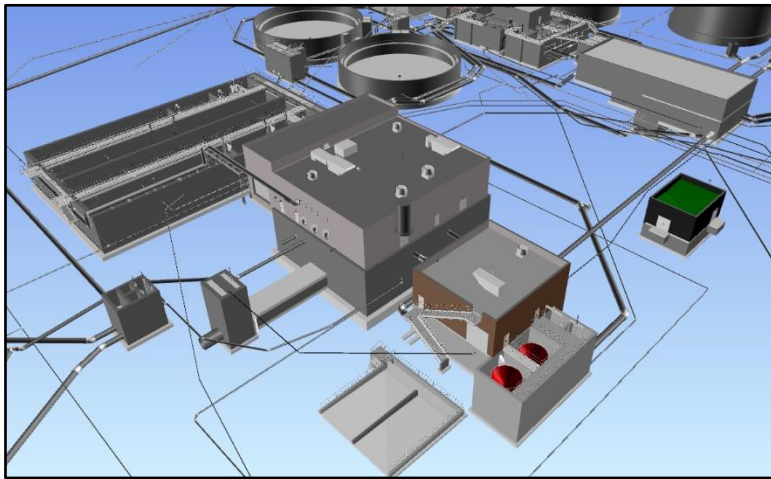
On February 15, staff was notified that the City was awarded a grant for Phase I of the project of up to \$162,454. The Phase I grant allows the City to hire an engineer to begin the final design and to hire an archaeologist to confirm that the proposed work will comply with environmental and historic preservation obligations. At the conclusion of the Phase I work, with FEMA's concurrence, a Phase II award would be made to fund the construction of the emergency generator.

Flood Warning 28E Agreement: Following the devastating floods in 1993, the City of Ames, Story County, Iowa Department of Transportation (IDOT), and Iowa State University (ISU) came together to fund, construct, and operate an early flood warning system. The feeling at the time was that the National Weather Service (NWS) had not provided information that was as timely or accurate as was needed. The locally-managed early warning system is not intended to provide warning to the public; in fact, it would be confusing to the public to have two different entities providing warnings. Over the years, City and NWS staff in Johnston have formed a close working relationship, with the local NWS team providing a key link to the NWS's River Forecast Center in Minneapolis, where flood warnings for central Iowa originate. On occasion, the NWS has used the City's predictions as the basis of its public warnings.

A 28E agreement that allowed for the joint funding of the early flood warning system was originally executed in 1994 by the City of Ames (40% cost share), ISU (40%), Story County (10%), and IDOT (10%). The installed system includes a network of ten rainfall gauges and four stream gauges strategically placed throughout the Ioway Creek and upper South Skunk River basins, along with three stream gauges maintained by the US Geological Survey and funded in part by the City. It also includes a communication system that transmits the data back to the Ames Water Plant, where a technical support team runs a hydraulic model. That model provides an estimate of flood peak and timing that is used to coordinate emergency response actions.

The 2014 agreement is expiring this year. Staff has initiated a renewal of the agreement with the three funding partners to continue the program for an additional ten years.

Nutrient Reduction Modifications: Design work is nearly complete for the first phase of the Nutrient Reduction Modifications at the Water Pollution Control Facility. A public hearing is scheduled for the March 12 City Council meeting to present the Environmental Information Document prepared by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR). The conclusion of the Iowa DNR’s environmental evaluation was a Finding of No Significant Impact. Holding this public hearing is an important community engagement step in the project.



While the design of the treatment portions of the facility are complete, staff continues to work with the team from Strand Associates on the new Administration Building. Pictured is a screen capture of the 3-D design process being used to prepare the construction plans.

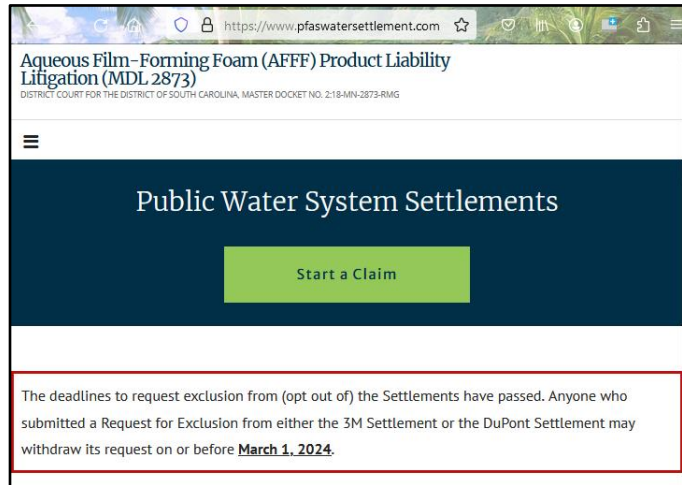
It appears likely that the building will be eligible for Leadership in Energy and Environmental

Design (LEED) certification, much like the administrative wing of the Water Treatment Plant. This is a welcome accomplishment that is in keeping with the goals of the City’s Climate Action Plan.

Staff has also learned that neither an in-depth archaeological review of the project nor a Sovereign Lands Construction Permit will be needed for the project, both items that could have slowed the timeline for bringing the project to bid. Staff now anticipates an April or May Notice to Bidders, depending on the time required for permitting review. Allowing for a five-week bid window, construction pricing could be in-hand as soon as June.

PFAS Class Action Settlement: Over the past several years there has been an increasing interest in a class of chemicals called per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). These chemicals have been widely used in consumer products like non-stick cookware, stain-resistant and water-repellent fabrics, and food packaging. One of the biggest uses, however, has been in firefighting foams.

There are currently two separate class action lawsuits against the largest manufacturers of these compounds: E.J. DuPont de Nemours and the 3M Company. It is expected that the massive class will be certified this spring. Because the City of Ames did not affirmatively opt out of the litigation, the City now a part of the class action. Pictured is a webpage with details of the complex PFAS drinking water contamination class action settlement litigation with DuPont and 3M.



Proceedings in the DuPont case are running about two months ahead of the 3M suit. Staff has begun compiling the voluminous data needed to make a claim in the DuPont case, which will need to be submitted sometime in May. Any payout from the \$1.185 billion DuPont settlement could be received by the City in early 2025. Timing on the \$10.5 to \$12.5 billion 3M settlement is not clear, but would likely be sometime in 2025. The amount the City would be eligible to receive depends on a complex formula that allocates funds based on the number of systems that detected PFAS in its source water and the relative concentrations among those systems. Staff estimates that the amount received by Ames would be in the seven-figure range.

South Skunk River Water Quality Standard Study Completed: When the Water Pollution Control Facility received its most recent discharge permit, a new limitation for copper was included for the first time. The monitoring data provided by the City to the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) did not include any violations of the Water Quality Standard for copper, but the data set was small enough that the DNR could not conclude with statistical certainty that there was “no reasonable potential” for a future violation.



Staff knew that copper toxicity in the river is strongly dependent on the hardness of the water; the higher the hardness, the less toxic that copper is to sensitive aquatic species. Staff proposed to the DNR an extensive study to look at the actual hardness, both in the South Skunk River and in the Facility’s effluent. With the DNR’s concurrence, the Laboratory Services Division undertook a year-long study, collecting paired samples of the river upstream

from the Facility and of the Facility’s effluent twice per week. Pictured is an Atomic Absorption Spectrophotometer, used by the Laboratory Services Division to analyze for heavy metals like copper.

At the conclusion of the study, staff presented the conclusions to the DNR on February 13. The results appear to support a substantial increase in the site-specific toxicity of copper due to the actual hardness being considerably above what was presumed in the statewide standard. Staff is optimistic that the DNR will now be able to conclude with statistical certainty that there is “no reasonable potential” for the discharge from the Water Pollution Control Facility to cause or contribute to a water quality standard violation. While this is obviously good news for the environment, it is also good for the facility, as it means that the expense for monitoring copper can be eliminated from the Facility’s permit.

Proposed Site-Specific Standard for Copper (in micrograms per liter)

	Acute (short-term) Copper Standard	Chronic (long-term) Copper Standard
Statewide Default Copper Standard	26.9	16.9
Site-Specific Copper Standard	33.2	27.2

Water Meter Supply Chain Issues: The good news is that the conversion to an Automatic Meter Reading (AMR) system is more than 75% complete. The bad news is that obtaining new meters continues to be a challenge. Staff is working through a pricing dispute between the manufacturer of the meter reading equipment (Itron) and the manufacturer of the meters (Badger), which has resulted in orders for new meters placed as far back as July 2023 remaining unfilled.