

MARCH 2024

# MONTHLY PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS



Report compiled by  
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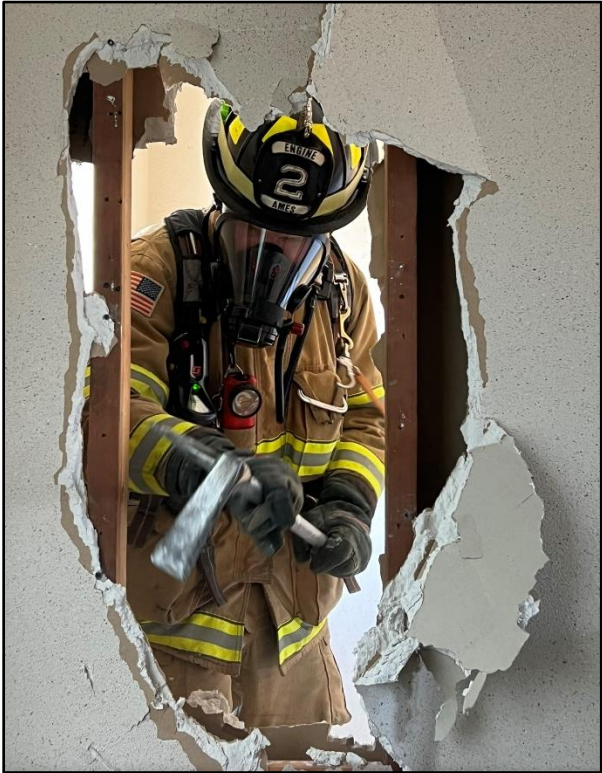


# FIRE

**Career Fair:** The Ames Fire Department participated in the Des Moines Area Community College Fire and EMS Career Fair. Firefighter recruitment and retention is an ongoing process.

**Training Opportunities:** Construction of the new Fitch Family Indoor Aquatic Center will be starting soon, and one of the first steps will be the demolition of the former Iowa Department of Transportation building on the site.

Ames firefighters had the opportunity to access the building prior to its demolition for specialized training. Fire crews practiced forcible entry techniques, ventilation drills, and emergency wall breach drills. It is a rare opportunity to have access to a building of this type to practice these specific skills. A special thanks is due Keith Abraham and the entire Parks and Recreation Department for having a Total City Perspective and providing the Ames Fire Department access to the building!





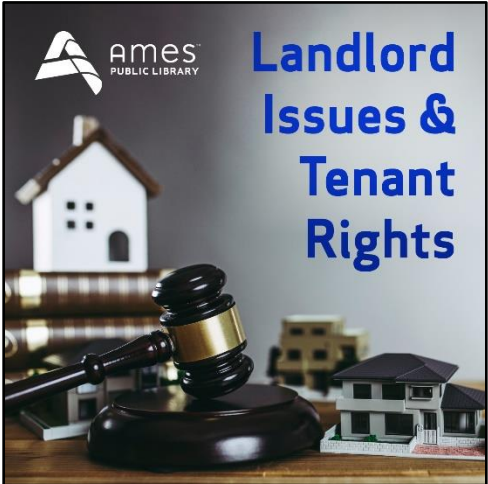
# LIBRARY

**Black Arts Festival:** The Library will celebrate the artistic and cultural contributions of African and African American visual and performing artists with a Black Arts Festival April 20. There will be artist talks, music, dance, spoken word performances, and more throughout the day. Art exhibits will be on display April 2-30 in the Library’s vestibule and lobby.

**Bluey Palooza:** Ames Public Library’s spring break Bluey Palooza event was a hit, drawing over 900 attendees during the one-and-a-half hour drop-in event! Families enjoyed photos with Bluey, themed activities, books, and more.



**Civic Engagement at the Library:** The Library partners with local experts and organizations all year



long to foster civic engagement. Last month’s “Overview of Property Taxes” focused on what to expect with this year’s property taxes and featured Story County Auditor Lucy Martin. The event was presented in partnership with the League of Women Voters of Ames and Story County.

On April 13, Legal Aid of Story County will present “Landlord Issues & Tenant Rights.” Ames Public Library will also celebrate First Amendment Days with “Fundamental Rights,” a First Amendment-themed pun battle, on April 16.

**Solar Eclipse:** Ames Public Library will have a limited supply of solar eclipse glasses available to participants at our two solar eclipse events. “Solar Eclipse 2024!” will be an informational event featuring the Ames Area Astronomers on April 2 at 6:00 p.m. Storybook Science on April 5 at 10:30 a.m. will be an Eclipse Special for families. Eclipse glasses supplies are limited and will not be available outside of these special events.



# PARKS AND RECREATION



**Ada Hayden Heritage Park Motus Tracking System:** Staff worked with the Friends of the Ada Hayden Heritage Park and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to install a Motus wildlife tracking system in the northwest parking lot adjacent Hyde Avenue at Ada Hayden Heritage Park. The tracking system is used to track migration patterns of birds across Iowa. The Friends of Ada Hayden Heritage Park is covering all expenses for the system and will assist the Iowa DNR in collecting data from the system. Pictured left are City staff and Iowa DNR staff completing the installation of the system.

**Ames City Auditorium:** In March, the Ames City Auditorium continued its “Fifth and Clark Fridays” series with performances from Andrew Hoyt and Eleven Moons. Andrew Hoyt is a pop/folk singer based in Des Moines who played a solo performance on March 1. Eleven Moons is a psychedelic rock band located in Ames and featured as many as 11 musicians on stage at various times during its March 22 performance. This series features one more performance in April.



Auditorium staff learned recently that the funding match requirement for the Arts Project Grant was reduced from 1:1 to 50%. This means that if the Auditorium applies for the Arts Project Grant again next year, it would be possible to double the grant award amount without increasing the Auditorium’s financial contribution to the project. If awarded, the additional funding would allow for increased pay for the performers, expansion of the number of artists hired, and coverage of more Auditorium staffing expenses.

A brand-new concert series in the Auditorium kicked off in March featuring “Tribute” acts. The purpose of this series is to add a new musical offering at the facility and attract visitors from outside of Ames to the facility. Auditorium staff arranged to split the ticket revenue 50/50 with the artists. The first performance on March 9 featured Southbound: A Tribute to the Allman Brothers Band with over 150 people in attendance. On March 23, Jett Threatt: A Tribute to Joan Jett and the Blackhearts performed to around 75 people. The performers for both bands were gracious for the

opportunity and enjoyed performing on a nice stage in a venue with good acoustics. The final performance in this series will take place on April 13.



A positive development for the concerts in FY 23/24 is the number of new auditorium patrons. During pre-show announcements, staff has been asking the crowd how many people are coming to an Auditorium show for the first time. Staff has observed that 30-40% of attendees are in the Auditorium for the first time. This is good news, as only 10-20% were new to the facility in past years.

**Aquatics:** During spring break, Parks and Recreation partnered with Iowa State University (ISU) to offer a lifeguarding class with 10 participants, six of whom will work at Furman Aquatic Center this summer. Additionally, a Lifeguarding Instructor class was held in partnership with ISU, and four Furman Aquatic Center staff registered.



Staff is preparing for the summer season with shift leader training, CPR class, two lifeguard classes, Lifeguard review, and orientations to be held in April and May.

A babysitter class is scheduled for March 30, 2024, with six participants registered.

**Fitch Family Indoor Aquatic Center:** Story Construction has installed the construction fencing and has been communicating with a contractor to disconnect the water and sanitary lines to the current buildings. Demolition of the existing buildings is expected to start the week of April 1. It

is anticipated that 75% of the demolition debris will be diverted from the landfill. Staff has also been working with several communication companies to relocate its overhead lines so they do not go through the site. Once these communication lines are moved, the electric poles on the site will be removed. Staff also removed several trees and limestone blocks from the site.

**Forestry:** Staff removed volunteer and invasive vegetation from the south ditch of 190<sup>th</sup> Street between Ada Hayden Road and Hyde Avenue and also along George Washington Carver Avenue from 24<sup>th</sup> Street to Barcelos Street.

Staff removed three hazardous trees from Moore Memorial Park and also completed tree pruning in the park. Ash trees were also removed by staff from the roadside ditch between Grand Avenue and Dawes Drive. Dead ash trees were removed in several locations, including behind the west bathroom at Inis Grove Park, along the trail near Ames Middle School, and in Stuart Smith Park.

**Furman Aquatic Center Pool Basin Repainting:** Amusement Restoration Companies (ARC), Burnet, Texas, has started the Furman Aquatic Center Pool Basin Painting Project by brush blasting the lap pool and the lazy river. ARC is expected to finish brush blasting the splash pool by the first week of April. Water's Edge Aquatic Design, Kansas City, Kansas, developed the specifications and will be assisting with oversight of the project, which is expected to be completed prior to filling the basins in early May. Pictured below is a staff member from ARC blasting the lap pool.



**Homewood Golf Course:** Due to the unseasonably warm weather in March, along with favorable course conditions, Homewood Golf Course opened for the season earlier than expected on Monday, March 11.



The table below shows the current clubhouse rental hours and revenue amounts compared to the same time frame last fiscal year.

	<b>July 1, 2022 – March 25, 2023</b>	<b>July 1, 2023 – March 25, 2024</b>
<b>Paid Event Hours</b>	114.25	95.75
<b>Revenue from Paid Events</b>	\$11,486	\$9,759
<b>Non-Paid Events Hours</b>	129.25	159.75

**New Playground Equipment:** Staff removed the current playground and prepared the soil subbase for a new playground at Lloyd Kurtz Park, 3710 Hyde Avenue. Also included as part of the project is the installation of a four-foot-wide concrete playground border, Engineered Wood Fibers (playground surfacing), and a two-bay swing set. New playgrounds will also be installed this spring at Country Gables Park, 500 Crystal Avenue, and Christopher Gartner Park, 400 Abraham Drive. The picture below shows staff at Lloyd Kurtz Park removing the current playground.

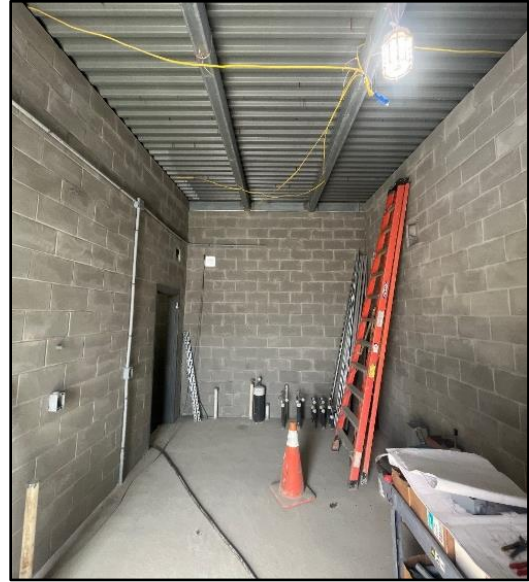


**Ontario Park:** Staff is in discussions with a local farmer to continue to farm the southern 20 acres of the property acquired in November 2023. If terms can be agreed upon, a lease agreement will be brought to the City Council for approval.

**Steven L. Schainker Plaza:** Henkel Construction, LLC, Ames, Iowa, continued to make progress on the Steven L. Schainker Plaza in March. Everything Ice completed the installation of the chiller



and pump skid for the ice-making system. Everything Ice is waiting on the delivery of the condensing unit that will be used for the ice-making system, which will be installed in mid-April to the east of the building. The masonry contractor completed the installation of various walls in the restroom/mechanical building. The pictures below depict the chiller and pump skid for the ice making system (left) and the room that will house the spray pad equipment (right).



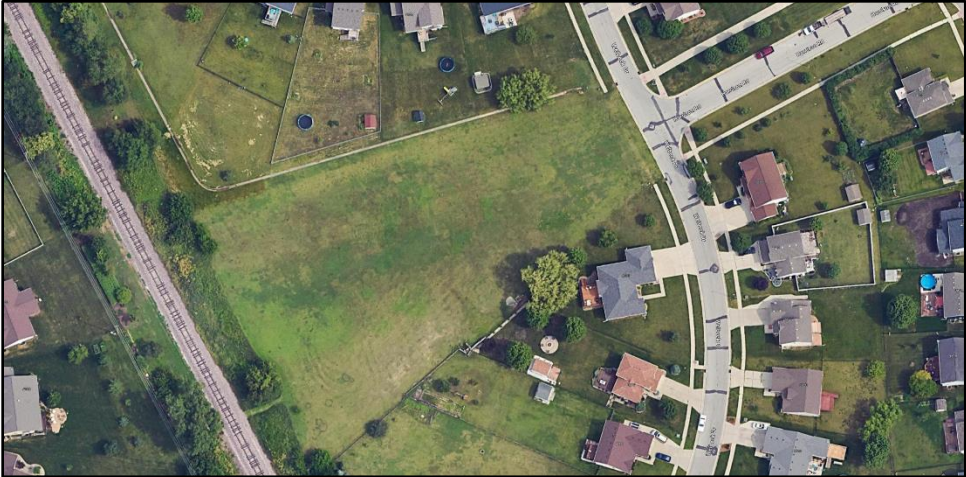
**Wellness:** A new session of Tae Kwon Do began March 5 with 114 registrations. On March 25, a new session of adult dance started with 11 registrations for Beginner Line Dance and 18 signed up for West Coast Swing.

Free drop-in classes were held over spring break March 10-16 with 263 participants in the 27 classes. In lieu of charging fees, food was collected for the Food at First food bank.

New weight room equipment has been selected for the Community Center Weight Room and is scheduled to be delivered this summer.

# PLANNING AND HOUSING

**City Land Harrison Road Neighborhood Meeting:** During the December 2023 discussion of infill and redirection area options, staff indicated that this site could be a candidate for a small single family infill project. Staff will hold a special neighborhood meeting on April 11 to gather neighborhood feedback about the idea before presenting the information to the City Council to then decide if the land should be made available through a RFP process for private development.



**City Urban Revitalization Area for Construction of New Ownership Housing:** April 9 is the public hearing date for the City Council to consider approval of a citywide incentive program for construction of new ownership housing in the community. The draft program would allow for a 3.5 year program to start construction of new homes and to be eligible for up to \$500,000 of property tax value abatement. More information can be found on the Planning Division website under What’s New: [www.cityofames.org/planning](http://www.cityofames.org/planning).

**Development Outreach and DRC:** The Planning and Housing Department Director and Fire Chief attended the Ames Homebuilders Lunch-N-Learn on March 22 to provide an overview of City Council initiatives and staff initiated process improvements. Staff highlighted City Council goals for 2024-2025, recent direction by the City Council to consider additional flexibility with zoning and subdivision standards, and the upcoming hearing on approving Partial Residential Property Tax Abatement for ownership housing. Staff also explained the Development Review Committee (DRC) process and internal steps to improve the customer experience.

**Downtown Plan Partnership with Ames Main Street:** Ames Main Street has completed its interviews for hiring a planning consultant to prepare a Downtown Plan. Ames Main Street intends to make a final selection and proceed with initiating the Downtown Plan work in April or May with a goal of completing preliminary recommendations by October 2024. Ames Main Street staff will lead the project and manage the consultant team. City staff will be part of review team and coordinate with Ames Main Street staff.

# POLICE

**Soundproofing Project:** The Police Department completed a smaller project to soundproof the booking area. The high ceiling and concrete surfaces in the booking room create significant echoing, which makes communication difficult. Panels were installed on March 27 which will help to deaden some of the echoing to improve the area. The stainless steel bench was also treated with a coating to help deaden the sound.