A hand is shown pouring honey from a bear-shaped dispenser onto a slice of pizza. The dispenser is a clear plastic bear with a yellow cap, and the honey is being poured from its mouth. The pizza is on a white plate and has melted cheese and toppings. The background is dark and out of focus.

# AMES *Insider*

A local guide to **attractions,**  
**shopping, dining, events,** and more

DISCOVER  
*Ames*<sup>IA</sup>

# Discover Ames invites you to, well, **discover Ames**

Discover Ames. That's our name, our passion, and our goal for YOU, a true Ames insider.

This is our second-annual Ames Insider publication, created specifically for residents of Ames. This year's issue has expanded, with new itineraries, new curated lists, and new advice about the coolest things to do in Ames.

Ames Insider is a guide to all the places you'll want to take your family and friends when they visit Ames, and it's also a guide to the hidden gems you'll want to keep all to yourself. It's a sneak peek at some of the biggest events happening in town in 2024, a guide to kid-approved fun, and insider tips for exploring the best of Ames.

So, flip through this guide and discover a new brunch spot, holiday tradition, or music venue.

We encourage you to get out and discover local shops, restaurants, parks, pop-up markets, playgrounds, museums, music venues, the arts, and more.

You can discover more food, more shopping, more activities, and up-to-the-minute events at **DiscoverAmes.com**. Be sure to follow us on Facebook and Instagram, and watch our videos on YouTube and TikTok!

*-The Discover Ames team*





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Scan the QR code to subscribe to our biweekly Ames Insider newsletter or visit [DiscoverAmes.com/newsletter](https://DiscoverAmes.com/newsletter)

# The Best of Ames

AMAZE YOUR OUT-OF-TOWN FRIENDS AND FAMILY WITH THESE TOP FIVE **MUST-DO ACTIVITIES** IN AMES



## 1. The *best* downtown

Stroll the downtown district for unique shopping, cozy coffee shops, and local bars and restaurants. Don't miss the Main Street Farmers' Market (May to October), pub crawls, seasonal activities, and family-friendly events.

## 2. The *best* football weekends

Looking for something to do before and after the big game? Plan the ultimate football weekend with your favorite Cyclone fans: Tailgate like a pro, trek across the pedestrian bridge, enjoy an after-game meal, grab a cold one at Torrent or Alluvial breweries, play golf, stroll through Reiman Gardens, and savor Sunday brunch.

## 3. The *best* food

Try something new, or stick with tried-and-true. We promise your friends will NOT leave hungry!

## 4. The *best* shows

You'll find the hottest tickets to Broadway musicals, country music concerts, museum exhibits, singer-songwriter performances, and a whole lot more.

## 5. The *best* butterflies ...and pumpkins and flowers and holiday lights

Reiman Gardens is your year-round, go-to destination to impress your friends and family. This year's "Living Landscape" theme features garden playhouses and special places. But don't forget the annual Spring Enchantment, Garden Art Fair, Spirits in the Gardens, and Winter Wonderscape holiday lights.

# Family fun

## EIGHT KID-APPROVED PLACES TO GO IN 2024

### 1. Ames Public Library

More than just a place to check out the latest chapter book, the APL offers story time, teen video games, baby time, Pokémon Club, special events, and more.

### 2. Ames Play Yard

Coming in 2024! Ames Play Yard is a space where parents and caregivers can relax, work, and sip coffee while kids play in a safe space. Located at Ames Fitness South.

### 3. Inside Golf & Games

Experience duckpin bowling! This new, smaller format is perfect for the whole family. Located at North Grand Mall.

### 4. Center Grove Orchard

Get lost in a corn maze, pick the perfect pumpkin, have breakfast with Santa, or just bask in a day on the farm. Located south of Ames in rural Cambridge.

### 5. Treehouse Village

Kids will love the suspension bridge, tree houses, play area with accessible ramps, a wheelchair-accessible swing, slides, and ground-level zipline. Coming this spring to the Iowa Arboretum in nearby Boone County!

### 6. Boone & Scenic Valley Railroad

Take a ride on Thomas the Tank Engine, Pumpkin Express, or Santa Express. The memories will last a lifetime!

### 7. Parks

So many parks...so little time! From Furman Aquatic Center to Miracle Park at Inis Grove, there's a perfect destination for your family courtesy of Ames Parks and Rec.

### 8. Reiman Gardens

Check out this summer's garden playhouse exhibit, plus a secret children's garden, bugs and butterflies, kid-friendly activities, and youth day camps.



Ames Public Library

# Outdoor adventure

THERE'S NO EXCUSE TO STAY INDOORS!

## Take a hike...

...ride a bike, take a run, or just run around. Ames and Story County parks, trails, prairies, lakes, and woodlands are yours to explore.

## Head west

In nearby Boone County you'll find Seven Oaks Recreation, the High Trestle Trail Bridge, and Ledges State Park. And don't miss Rail Explorers, with pedal-assist motors to ride the rails in a whole new way.

## Tee off

Ames is a golfer's paradise. Coldwater Golf Links, Veenker Memorial, and Homewood Municipal are public golf courses; Ames Golf & Country Club is a private facility.

# THE PARKS ARE CALLING!

Explore more than 3,500 acres of local county parks



- Nature programs for all ages
- Hiking & biking trails
- Two public beaches
- Camping
- Hunting & fishing

**NEW! Kayak & paddle board rentals.**



Visit [www.Storycountyconservation.org](http://www.Storycountyconservation.org) or scan QR code to find a park near you.



@storycountyconservation

# Insider TIPS

YOU'LL BE **IN THE KNOW** WITH THESE TIPS FROM DISCOVER AMES

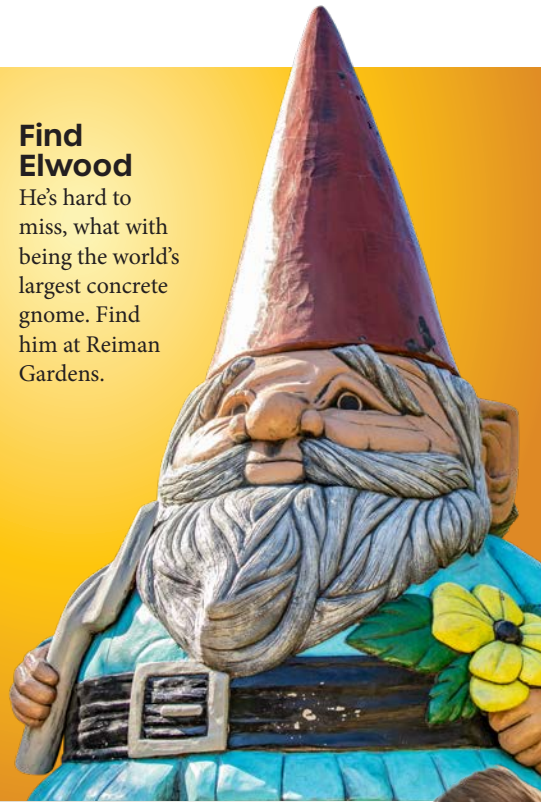
## Explore the Byways

Lincoln Highway and Jefferson Highway heritage byways span the state east/west and north/south, respectively, with Ames smack-dab in the middle of both. Discover the history and culture of these national historic byways!



## Find Elwood

He's hard to miss, what with being the world's largest concrete gnome. Find him at Reiman Gardens.



## Have a party

Host your next baby shower, graduation party, or retirement reception at Clouds, Sweet Caroline's, The Recipe, Della Viti, or Prairie Moon Winery. If it's a kid's birthday party you're planning, consider Ames Fitness South / Ames Play Yard, Furman Aquatic Center, Ames/ISU Ice Arena, Perfect Games, or Cy Bowl in the Memorial Union.

## Meet new people

Here are 8 ways to meet people who share your interests:

1. Dog-Eared Books Official Book Club
2. Trivia nights (all over town, pretty much every night of the week)
3. Podcast Brunch Club
4. Cooking classes at The Recipe
5. Wine tasting at Della Viti
6. Ames Adult Recreation Leagues
7. ACTORS auditions
8. Live music all over Ames (don't forget to tip the musicians!)

## Pamper your pup

Ames is paws-itively pet friendly! Show off your furry friend at Ames Main Street Farmers' Market (the best place to see and be seen with your dog), or try Ames Dog Park, Rovers at Reiman events, pup-friendly patios, and Treats on a Leash.



## Follow Discover Ames

To find out what's going on in Ames, sign up for the Ames Insider newsletter and follow Discover Ames on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok. Go to [DiscoverAmes.com](https://DiscoverAmes.com) for all the details.





# Ride the trains in Boone, Iowa

**BOONE & SCENIC VALLEY RAILROAD**

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**in Ames**



# Embrace the arts in Ames

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THESE **10 LOCAL GEMS**,  
MANY OF WHICH ARE FREE OR LOW-COST.  
YOU JUST NEED TO KNOW WHERE TO LOOK!

1. View the famous **Grant Wood murals** inside Parks Library on the Iowa State campus. They are the largest works of art designed by this American Regionalism artist.
2. Catch a concert at the **Maintenance Shop** in the ISU Memorial Union and help this eclectic venue celebrate its 50th year.
3. Do a walking tour of artist **Christian Petersen's** sculptures on the ISU campus.
4. See an **ACTORS** stage show in their own unique theater in west Ames. ACTORS have been performing since 1956!
5. Enjoy a concert or play at **Ames City Auditorium**, and take advantage of many other live music venues in Ames.
6. Tired of the same old dinner-and-a-movie? Try **Date Night** at University Museums.
7. Check out the annual **Barjche** modern dance performance by Orchesis Dance Company at Iowa State. Pro-tip: Pronounce it "bar-SHAY."
8. Take a tango lesson or an art class at **The Workspace** in the Memorial Union.
9. Visit the community gallery at the **Octagon Center for the Arts**.
10. Sign up for maker nights or a floral design workshop at **Reiman Gardens**.

# YOUR FAVORITE PLACE IN AMES

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# Weekends with your **BESTIES**

## **GO OUT ON THE TOWN WITHOUT LEAVING AMES!**

Schedule a girls' night out, a guys' weekend, a couples' date night, or whatever you enjoy. Build your own itinerary from these Discover Ames ideas:

### **Wake up and smell the coffee**

No matter what your plans are for the rest of the day, coffee and breakfast are a must! Grab a quick morning coffee at Café Diem or Stomping Grounds, or sit down to a full breakfast at The Café, The Grove, or Provisions Lot F.

### **Buy what you love**

If group shopping sounds like a bore, consider this: In Ames, you can buy the latest outdoor equipment at JAX Outdoor Gear, best-selling books at Dog-Eared Books, sustainable clothing at The Loft, and Cyclone apparel all over town.

### **Take a class**

Book your group in a cooking class at The Recipe or make your own candles at Oak Lane, both in Downtown Ames.

### **Wine down**

Discover a taste of the vine at Della Viti wine bar, or try local varietals at Prairie Moon Winery.

### **Games in Ames**

Get your game on at Inside Golf and Games, with golf and baseball simulators, duckpin bowling, axe throwing, and a bar. Or go to Perfect Games (bowling, games, and pizza!), sleuth your way out of an escape room at No Escape Iowa, or play old-school games at Time Out.

### **Hit the trails**

Work up an appetite! You can bike, kayak, and canoe at Ada Hayden Heritage Park, or hike the trails at McFarland Park.

### **Brews & barbecue**

You could spend your entire weekend tasting barbecue and beer in Ames. Try the finger-licking smoked meats at Cornbred BBQ, Jethro's, and Hickory Park, and find an excellent beer selection at Alluvial Brewing, Torrent Brewing, and Welch Ave. Station, among many other Ames establishments.

### **Listen live**

End the day with live music at the M-Shop, Noir, Alluvial, or Roosevelt Park.

# ENJOY YEAR-ROUND ACTIVITIES AT **SEVEN OAKS RECREATION**



**SEVEN OAKS**



[www.SevenOaksRec.com](http://www.SevenOaksRec.com)

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# Celebrate the holidays in Ames

Mark your calendars now! Merry & Bright Holiday Weekend is an Ames-area celebration featuring community activities in Story and Boone Counties. Held the first full weekend in December, the event is filled with holiday concerts, home tours, the Reiman Gardens Winter Wonderscape Holiday Light Show, holiday markets, the downtown Ames Snow Magic kickoff, carriage rides, ISU WinterFest, Santa Express on the Boone & Scenic Valley Railroad, and many other activities.

**Merry  
AND Bright**  
HOLIDAY WEEKEND

**December 6-8, 2024**

But the holiday fun does not end there. Winter Wonderscape lights will glow each weekend (Thursday through Sunday) in December; Snow Magic activities continue downtown, the Santa Express rolls on, The Nutcracker ballet comes to Stephens Auditorium, and many other events will be announced as we get closer to the holiday season.



- Named a "Top 10 Garden Worth Traveling for in North America" (2023) – International Garden Tourism Awards
- Rated the #1 Best Thing to do in Iowa (2023) – Vacation Idea Magazine

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The Cafe

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Noir

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Main Street  
Farmers' Market

**STROLL**

# Do the districts

SHOPPING,  
DINING &  
ENTERTAINMENT  
DISTRICTS IN  
AMES

Sure, you can always go to your favorite retail shop or restaurant, but maybe it's time to branch out? Discover a NEW favorite at one of Ames' many districts: Downtown, Campustown, South Duff, North Grand, and beyond!







# Destination Downtown

Do you remember that peppy Petula Clark song from the 1960s, “Downtown”? The chorus goes something like “Go downtown, things’ll be great when you’re / Downtown, don’t wait a minute more / Downtown, everything’s waiting for you.” Yeah, that makes us think about downtown Ames, and we have a few suggestions to help you fully embrace our Main Street district:

**Try something new:** Visit the newly expanded Ames History Museum (opening soon); take a cooking class at The Recipe; and drink, eat, and shop the vintage collection at Potter’s Shoppe & Eatery. Also, we’re eagerly awaiting the opening of Shinker Plaza this year – we think that space will add a whole new dimension to downtown.

**Attend events:** Take a “walk” downtown – Art Walk, Music Walk, Witches Walk...you get the picture. Each Thursday-night event is a district-wide celebration! Also, enjoy 515 Days in May, the 4th of July parade, Snow Magic, Octagon Art Festival, Saturday farmers’ markets, and so much more.

**Go holiday shopping:** From Small Business Saturday throughout the month of December, shopping in downtown Ames will make you feel like you’re in one of those Hallmark movies.

## Spotlight on a hidden gem: Vinyl Café

Coffee, with a side of vintage record albums, tucked away below street level on Kellogg, just south of Main Street. Long live 33 1/3!



## 515 WEEK: An Ames tradition

### Wednesday, May 15

Downtown After Sundown: Music, beer garden, food trucks, farmers’ market

### Thursday, May 16

Family Night, with kids’ activities in the district

### Friday, May 17

The Big Bash at Bandshell Park:  
Free concert, food trucks, beer garden

EST.  2020

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# 7 reasons TO GO THE AMES MAIN STREET FARMERS' MARKET

Saturday morning markets, from May to October, are the best place to meet friends and shop for the season's freshest foods. Do you need more reasons to go? Here are just a few:

1. The local fruits and vegetables, of course



2. Flowers and plants



3. So many cute dogs



4. Food trucks



5. Sweet treats



6. Live music



7. Kids' activities like petting zoos and pony rides, face painting, and balloon animals





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\*One-time use only

# Discover these districts

*Campustown, North Grand, South Duff, Somerset*



## Inside Golf & Games



When was the last time you visited **Campustown**? It's high time you go back. It's home to some of the city's best pizza (Blaze, Pizza Pit, Jeff's), and it's a great place to pick up some Cyclone gear (Dogtown University, Barefoot Campus Outfitter). You'll find other unique and delicious food (Stomping Grounds/Bar La Tosca, Thai Kitchen, Es Tas, Café Beaudelaire, Macubana), cookies (Insomnia), and the best view in town (Clouds). Make a day of it – there's a lot more to explore!

The **North Grand** district is constantly changing. Have you tried Clayton Farms Salads or shopped at Essence of Natural Beauty or Daily Thread? Have you checked out the expanded Inside Golf & Games? With a movie theater, farmers' markets, food, shopping, and kid-friendly activities, North Grand can be a great destination.

**South Duff** continues to grow, with new restaurants like Garbanzo, new shops like Rally House, and a ton of food and retail options.

Head north to **Somerset** for great eats at The Café, Burgie's, Wallaby's, El Azteca, and Brick City Grill.

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# 2024 Ames-area calendar of events



## Spring



### Reiman Gardens Spring Enchantment

Month of April

### Rovers at Reiman

Tuesdays in April

### Renaissance Faire

April 14

### Pizza Pie Looza

Nevada, May 11

### 515 Week

Downtown Ames, May 15-17

### George Strait/Chris Stapleton/Little Big Town

Concert at Jack Trice Stadium, May 25



## Summer



### Reiman Gardens "Garden Playhouses" exhibit

June 1 – Oct. 1

### Art Walk

Downtown Ames, June 6

### Downtown Ames Farmers' Market

Saturdays May through October

### Special Olympics of Iowa Summer Games

May 16-18

### Ames on the Half Shell

Summer concerts in Bandshell Park

### Ames Municipal Band

Thursday nights in June & July, Bandshell Park

### Roosevelt Summer Sundays

Throughout the summer

### Trace Adkins Concert

Central Iowa Expo, June 22

### 4th of July Celebration

Fireworks July 3, parade July 4

### Garden Art Fair

Reiman Gardens, July 14

### Senior Variety Show

Aug. 23-24

### Farm Progress Show

Aug. 27-29



## Fall



### ISU Football gamedays

Aug. 31 (North Dakota), Sept. 21 (Arkansas State), Oct. 5 (Baylor), Oct. 19 (Central Florida), Nov. 2 (Texas Tech), Nov. 16 (Cincinnati), Nov. 30 (Kansas State)

### Music Walk

Downtown Ames, Sept. 19

### Octagon Art Festival

Sept. 22

### Witches Walk

Downtown Ames, Oct. 10

### Spirits in the Gardens

Reiman Gardens, Oct. 11-13

### Ames city-wide trick-or-treat

Oct. 31

### ISU Homecoming

Nov. 2



## Winter



### Merry & Bright Holiday Weekend

Dec. 6-8 (ISU WinterFest, Downtown's Snow Magic, TUBACHRISTMAS, and much more)

### Winter Wonderscape Holiday Light Show

Reiman Gardens, Thursday – Sunday nights in December

### Downtown Snow Magic

Throughout December

For an up-to-the-minute list of Ames events, links to community-wide calendars, and event details, go to [DiscoverAmes.com/events-calendar](https://DiscoverAmes.com/events-calendar)

## **Express Care**

- Same-day, next-day appointments
- Common illness, immunizations
- 6 months of age or older
- Brief work and sports physicals

Services vary by location - call for more information.

### AMES

Lincoln Center Hy-Vee  
640 Lincoln Way, Ames  
515-956-4044

West Ames Hy-Vee  
3800 Lincoln Way, Ames  
515-956-4100

### MARSHALLTOWN

Hy-Vee  
802 South Center Street  
641-844-5200

## **Urgent Care**

- Same-day appointments
- Non-life threatening illnesses & injuries
- Physician staffed
- X-Rays and Lab on site

### AMES

3815 Stange Road, Ames  
515-956-4044

### CARROLL

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[McFarlandClinic.com/NeedCareNow](http://McFarlandClinic.com/NeedCareNow)

 **McFarland Clinic**

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## Hey Homeowners!

Are you ready to have TIME TO ENJOY the things you LOVE? Are you looking to have a recurring, one time, move in/out, deep cleaning that's TAILORED to your needs? Are you tired of calling a new cleaning company every 6 months because of the service you are not getting?

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# A taste of Ames



**LET THE  
FEASTING  
BEGIN!**

We'll get you started with suggestions for weekend brunch, happy hours, sweet treats, fresh greens, and perfect patios. You can take it from there!



# Sweets & treats

TREAT YOURSELF TO THESE **BEST-OF-AMES DELIGHTS:**

- Cookies straight from Mom's kitchen at **Cookies, etc.**
- Unique, small-batch ice cream at **Marmalade Moon**
- Creamy peanut butter pie from **Aunt Maude's restaurant**
- Delightful Ukrainian-baked goods from **Piece & Freedom Bakery** (at Ames Main Street Farmers' Market and sometimes at Marmalade Moon)
- European chocolates and gelato from **Chocolaterie Stam**
- Iowa State University-themed ice cream flavors at **ISU Creamery**
- Decadent desserts at both **The Café** and **Provisions Lot F**
- Perfect donuts and pastries at **Dutch Oven Bakery** or at **Bricktown Bakery** in nearby Nevada





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# All hail the perfect brunch

## WEEKENDS ARE FOR BRUNCHING! HERE ARE SOME OF THE BEST OPTIONS IN AMES:

- For the biggest cinnamon roll you've ever seen: **Cornbred Barbecue**
- For an elevated (and European!) experience: **Clouds**
- For ever-changing menus that offer something for everyone: **Provisions Lot F** and **The Café**
- For a bountiful breakfast buffet: **The IowaStater**

P.S. Don't forget the mimosas!



# The freshest!

- With greens grown on site and harvested daily, **Clayton Farms Salads** get a big thumbs-up for FRESH. Try the crunchy Asian salad or the Southwest wrap, and we guarantee you'll taste the freshness.
- For other fresh options, head to the **Main Street Farmers' Market** (Saturdays May through October), **Wheatsfield Co-op grocery** on the west end of Downtown, or **Slim's Country Market** on Hwy 69 in Story City.



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# Happy hour

**IT'S 5 O'CLOCK SOMEWHERE!  
CHECK OUT THESE DRINK  
SPECIALS AND APPETIZERS FOR  
THE HAPPIEST HOUR OF THE DAY!**

- **Della Viti** topped the list for Best Happy Hour in the "Best in Story County 2023" voting by readers of the Ames Tribune. This downtown wine bar has 20% off wine pours, \$1 off beer, and \$1 off small plates. Wine not try it?
- **Wallaby's Bar & Grille** has been named Best Sports Bar in Story County, and it's one of the best places to watch the Cyclones. It also ranks high for its happy hour!
- Every night brings a different happy hour special at **Boulder Tap House**. Go for \$2 off beer flights or try 99¢ bone-in wings.

Della Viti

# Patio season

**IT'S BY FAR THE BEST SEASON!**

- This spring, we're looking forward to sitting on the patio at the newly opened **Potter's Shoppe & Eatery** in downtown Ames.
- Meet your friends on the **Dublin Bay** patio, **Wallaby's Bar & Grille** rooftop, or **Stomping Grounds/Bar La Tosca** patio, where large groups can be accommodated easily.
- Also, try **Della Viti** for downtown-style people watching, **Cornbred Barbecue** for live music in the Railyard, **West Towne Pub** or **Provisions Lot F** for a lake view, and **Lockwood Café** for coffee and crepes on a cozy patio.



# Parks & Recreation



## AMES HAS SO MUCH TO OFFER!

- Homewood Golf Course and Clubhouse
- Furman Aquatic Center
- Youth Activities
- Adult Activities
- Social Gatherings
- 40+ Parks
- Ames/ISU Ice Arena
- Ames City Auditorium
- Fitness & Wellness Classes
- Community Center & Weight Room

**FACILITY RENTALS:** Many Parks and Recreation facilities are available to rent! Reserve your next event, celebration, or meeting.

[AmesParkRec.org](http://AmesParkRec.org) • 515-239-5350 •

# What's **NEW** in Ames?

## RECREATION & GATHERING SPACES

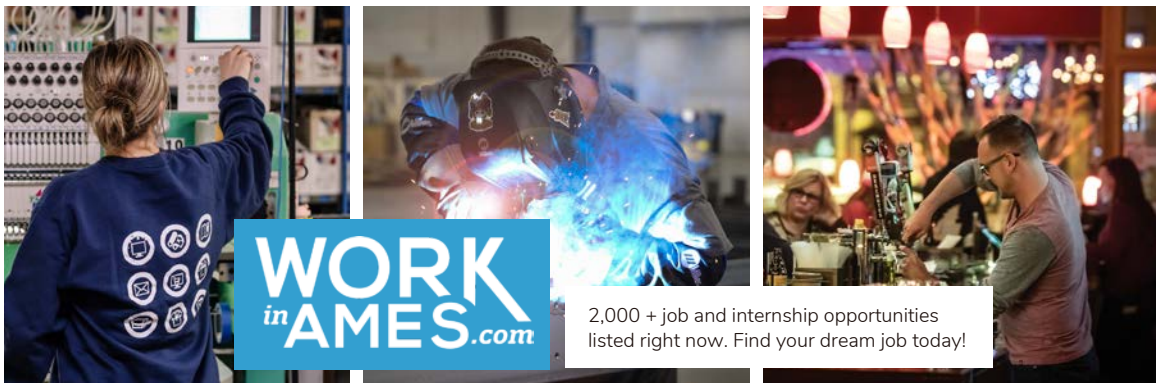
- **Steven L. Schainker Plaza:** Located across the street from City Hall, with spray pad, landscaped green space, public art, restrooms, and ice skating ribbon (summer 2024 opening)
- **Fitch Family Indoor Aquatic Center:** Located on Lincoln Way at North Elm St., featuring a water slide, lap pool, zero-depth-entry pool, wellness pool, and more (groundbreaking spring 2024, completion fall 2025)
- **Deppe Family Conservation Area:** Located near McFarland Park; 124 acres will protect wildlife from commercial and residential development
- **Ontario Park:** A 50-acre space for recreational activities and hiking in northwest Ames (currently working on masterplan)
- **More Ames Parks & Rec news:** New pickleball courts installed at Emma McCarthy Lee Park, agility course will be added at Carr Park, and splash pad will be installed at Daley Park

## ATTRACTIONS

- **Ames History Museum:** Located on Douglas in downtown Ames, the museum is undergoing a major renovation and expansion (grand-reopening in August or September 2024)
- **Treehouse Village:** Located at Iowa Arboretum in rural Boone County; includes inclusive play area for children of all ages and abilities, with treehouses, bridges, and swings (opens spring 2024)
- **Ames Play Yard:** An indoor play area located near Ames Fitness South
- **Reiman Gardens' 2024 theme:** "The Living Landscape" features garden playhouses (June 1 – Oct. 1), garden exhibits, and educational programs
- **Inside Golf & Games:** Expanded to add duckpin bowling and batting cages, North Grand Mall
- **Board & Brush:** A creative sip-and-paint studio, located at 3326 Lincoln Way
- **CYTown entertainment district:** Located between Jack Trice Stadium and Hilton Coliseum, the parking lot and infrastructure project is under way; watch for McFarland Clinic, followed by retail and office space, suites, a restaurant/brewpub, hotel with conference space, and more
- **The Linc:** The first phase of this Lincoln Way project – a hotel and conference center, retail space, apartment units, and an open-air commercial plaza – is scheduled to begin by the end of 2024.

## COMMUNITY RESOURCES

- **60 Forward Center:** Heartland of Story County's new facility features health and wellness center, duckpin bowling, adult day care, a bistro, hobby hub, and more (opening in 2024)
- **Boys & Girls Club:** A future expansion will add 7,500 square feet to the facility at 210 5th St.
- **Bridge Home:** 18 apartments will provide homes for people who are currently unhoused
- **Ames Surgery Center:** New facility will be supported by Mary Greeley Medical Center and McFarland Clinic



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## SHOPS, RESTAURANTS & MORE

In the ever-changing Ames business landscape, here are just a few new faces:

- **RAYGUN:** Expressive T-shirts and gifts 301 Main opened in summer 2023
- **Harbor Freight Tools:** Coming to North Grand Mall area
- **Overstock Thrift Store:** Adding a new location 919 E. Lincoln Way
- **The Recipe:** Cooking classes and private events in a bright, modern space, downtown Ames at 412 Burnett Ave.
- **Potter's Shoppe & Eatery:** Opened late 2023, featuring sandwiches, soups, baked goods, coffee drinks, and vintage finds, 330 5th St.
- **Garbanzo Mediterranean Fresh restaurant:** Opened at 414 S Duff
- **Pasta Al Forno:** Italian family restaurant opened April 2023 at Quality Inn & Suites on East 13th St.
- **New hotels:** Staybridge Suites (IHG extended stay suites opened in 2023) and Home2 Suites by Hilton (under construction)

515.733.4214

JUST A QUICK  
10 MILES NORTH OF AMES

**Visit  
Story City**

WWW.STORYCITYGCC.ORG

ANTIQUE CAROUSEL (OPEN MAY-SEPTEMBER) ~ PARKS ~ PUBLIC GOLF COURSE  
HISTORIC SWINGING BRIDGE ~ ANTIQUES ~ AND SO MUCH MORE

# About Discover Ames



**Pop quiz: Who or what is Discover Ames?** Formerly known as the Ames Convention and Visitors Bureau, Discover Ames is the **official destination marketing organization** for the city of Ames and the surrounding area. The organization brings meetings, conventions, events, and leisure travelers to Ames and the Iowa State University campus and provides services to those groups and visitors.

Discover Ames produces an annual visitors guide, weekly newsletters, a tourism website, and social media aimed at visitors and locals alike. This year's tourism campaign is "Best. Day. Ever!" Ames and Iowa State are also featured in the state of Iowa's tourism campaign that shows Iowa from a new perspective and proves, once and for all, that Iowa is MORE than just a fly-over state. Stay tuned for some jaw-dropping footage of Jack Trice Stadium and Reiman Gardens!

Last year was a big year for Ames with RAGBRAI riders rolling through in July. But 2024 is shaping up to be an even bigger year, with Odyssey of the Mind World Finals (May 21-24), George Strait concert in Jack Trice Stadium (May 25), and 2024 Farm Progress Show (Aug. 27-29) among many other events.

## DISCOVER AMES ALSO:

- Enhances the quality of life for the Ames community, promotes small businesses to leisure travelers, and provides funding for local events through the Discover Ames Community Grant
- Works closely with Iowa State's Conference Planning and Management on major events
- Partners with Ames businesses that provide opportunities for visitors to stay, play, eat, and shop in Ames
- And just a reminder, **Discover Ames is NOT affiliated** with the Ames Chamber of Commerce, nor the City of Ames... although we love working with them!

## HOW CAN I CONNECT WITH DISCOVER AMES?

- Find things to do in Ames on the online event calendar, blogs, and itineraries
- Follow Discover Ames on Facebook and Instagram
- Watch our videos on YouTube and TikTok
- Subscribe to the bi-weekly Ames Insider newsletter
- Request a 2024 visitors guide to have handy when friends and family come to town
- Stop by our office at 1601 Golden Aspen Drive, Suite 110 – right off South 16th St.

Find everything you need at **DiscoverAmes.com**







# DISCOVER AMES Community Grant

## — PROGRAM —

Since 2007, Discover Ames has administered a community grant program, distributing well over **\$1 million** to local organizations. In 2024, more than **\$83,000** has been awarded to 27 organizations for events and activities. Grant funding comes from a portion of the local hotel/motel tax.

Events range from an arts festival in Ames to a pizza fest in Nevada, from stage shows to the annual 4th of July fireworks show. What do they have in common? They improve the quality of life for Ames-area residents and attract visitors to our community.

Applications for 2025 grants are due in October. You'll find requirements and an application form at [discoverames.com/community-grant](https://discoverames.com/community-grant) this spring.

## 2024 COMMUNITY GRANT RECIPIENTS

- ACTORS opening night event
- Ames Fly-in
- Ames History Museum grand opening
- Ames Main Street Farmers' Market
- Ames Pridefest
- Ames Town & Gown: Michelle Cann Lecture/Recital
- Ames TUBACHRISTMAS
- Ames Writers Collective: Langston Hughes Project
- Beautiful Land Pop-up at downtown Fareway
- Bill Bergan 5K on the 4th
- Business of Art Conference
- Campus Service Day
- Campustown and Downtown After Sundown
- Dancenter Dancer Company Concert
- Emma McCarthy Lee Pickleball Courts grand opening
- Friendship Ark's Tropical Sangria Escape
- Goldfinch Room Reunion Festival
- Independence Day Fireworks / Discover Ames (July 3)
- Iowa Games Athlete Tailgate
- Octagon Art Festival
- Pizza Pie Looza (Nevada)
- Senior Variety Show
- Special Olympics Iowa Summer Games
- Spirits in the Gardens
- Stacks for Stead Pancake Breakfast / Dance Marathon
- Story Theater Company spring musical: "Finding Nemo, Jr."
- WinterFest (ISU)
- Zearing Days Celebration



# Livable Ames

## QUICK FACTS



Population  
66,424



Home of Iowa State  
University and  
Cyclone Athletics



Cost of living below  
U.S. average



New Ames High  
School in fall 2022



Accessible, advanced  
health care at McFarland  
Clinic and Mary Greeley  
Medical Center



Located along  
Highway 30 and  
Interstate 35 in Iowa's  
Cultivation Corridor



Opportunities for new  
businesses to locate  
and for existing  
businesses to expand



Unemployment  
rate consistently  
lower than state  
and national rates



### IN THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS, AMES HAS BEEN NAMED:

- **No. 3** Best College Towns to Live in After Graduation (*Livability, 2023*)
- **No. 3** Best Small Cities for Small Businesses (*VerizonSpecials.com, 2023*)
- **No. 6** Best College Town in America (*BestColleges, 2023*)
- **Top 10** Best Places to Bike in medium-sized cities (*PeopleForBikes, 2023*)
- **Top 10** North American Gardens Worth Traveling For: Reiman Gardens (2023)
- **Top 100** Best Places to Live (*Livability, 2022*)
- **No. 32** Most Educated Cities in the Country (*24/7 Wall Street, 2022*)
- **No. 8** Best College Town in the Midwest (*RentCafe, 2024*)



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[AmesDowntown.org](https://AmesDowntown.org)





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