

News Release



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Ames Event Center will be anchor for “transformative” community development

Discover Ames leads group providing initial notice to Ames City Council

(AMES, Iowa – October 14, 2025) Discover Ames, in collaboration with the Ames Regional Economic Alliance and local developers “The Away Team,” presented to the Ames City Council with initial plans for a state-of-the-art event and conference facility to anchor The LINC development near downtown Ames.

A feasibility study conducted among event planners, and Ames-area businesses and residents earlier this year indicated the need for a local facility to host groups of 400 to 1,000 for various activities. The planned Ames Event Center at The LINC will have 30,000 to 40,000 square feet of open space, with capacity for 800 to 1,000 in a banquet setting and the ability to separate into smaller rooms. The Ames Event Center will be connected to a 200-room, upscale, full-service hotel property.

“People love to host and attend events in vibrant areas where there is a lot to do, said Discover Ames President and CEO Kevin Bourke. “The LINC itself may be the single most transformative development Ames has ever seen, and the Ames Event Center will be the ideal anchor that can serve all types of groups and events.”

The LINC is a \$150 million project along Lincoln Way between Kellogg and Clark; The LINC will connect Lincoln Way with downtown Ames via a pedestrian bridge and become a mixed-use space featuring restaurants and bars, retail, businesses, hotel accommodations, apartments and green spaces.

“What a tremendous complement this will all be to everything else being planned in our area — including Iowa State University’s CyTown,” Bourke said. “Think about how more attractive Ames will be to athletic fans, visitors, students and potential students, event and conference attendees, and area residents.”

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The group's presentation to the Ames City Council was an important early step summarizing plans to continue moving forward with the Ames Event Center, which will include architect and construction partner selections ahead of an anticipated groundbreaking next year. Discover Ames anticipates an opening of the Ames Event Center in 2028.

The Ames Event Center will be developed using private funds, city and county funds, federal and state grants, and tax incentives. Once built, it will operate as a nonprofit under Discover Ames, Ames Regional Economic Alliance, City of Ames or Story County.

"This fantastic facility will be ours—whether it's hosting weddings, reunions, concerts, or community events," Bourke said. "We want all of Ames residents to have more spaces to celebrate life's milestones and traditions, and we want this same facility to give out-of-town guests and event planners a compelling reason to choose Ames."

For more information on preliminary plans, an FAQ is live at AmesEventCenter.com. The page will be updated as plans progress.

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About Discover Ames

Discover Ames is the official destination marketing organization for Ames, attracting and securing conferences, events, and visitors for Ames and Iowa State University. Discover Ames provides unparalleled services to groups and visitors, and helps enhance quality of life for the Ames community. The Ames tourism industry accounts for a major and irreplaceable source of revenue for area restaurants, shops, cultural organizations, attractions and hotels. Discover Ames focuses on the overall Ames experience, and contributes to the economic well-being of the city through leadership and innovation in the hospitality industry.