



Fall 2023

# Strategic Plan Update

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# A Message From the City Manager

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*Honorable Mayor and City Council:*

It is my great privilege to present the 2022/2023 year end strategic plan report. This plan encompasses the City Council's overall vision for the future. These priorities focus on what the community needs and wants and may take several years to accomplish. The plan is then used to guide the development of the five-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP).

I appreciate all the work and dedication from all our City Staff to implement the vision

that the Mayor and City Council defined in their Strategic Planning. During the course of the year, a few unexpected challenges occurred that caused staff to pivot to address these matters.

- Storm Lake was an overnight host for RABRAI's 50th Celebration which provided us the opportunity to promote our beautiful community to 40,000 participants. Planning for this event took a lot of time away from employees' regular roles.

- Storm Lake United lost two key positions, which caused the City to step up and provide services and events that typically are not the responsibility of the City.

- Difficulty filling vacant positions with qualified individuals that want to work in the public sector.

During the course of the year, we were able to complete a significant amount of deferred maintenance within our park system since the management of the Storm Lake Marina reverted back to the Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

I look forward to our future discussions with the Mayor and Council as we implement the 2023/2024 strategic plan initiatives.

Sincerely,

**Keri Navratil**  
City Manager

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# 2022-23 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

## Objectives

### HIGH/MEDIUM PRIORITY

- CONTINUE BUILDING HOUSES (ESPECIALLY SINGLE-FAMILY DWELLINGS)
- GROW THE COMMUNITY IN AN OUTWARD DIRECTION
- UPDATE THE SIGN ORDINANCE, IMPROVE WAYFINDING
- RE-EXAMINE THE FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION TO STORM LAKE UNITED (REVISIT THE RESOLUTION AND CONSIDER APPOINTING A MEMBER FROM CITY COUNCIL)
- SUPPORT LEADERSHIP ROUNDTABLE
- PURSUE WATER REGIONALIZATION EFFORTS (AVOID TAX BURDEN)
- DEVELOP A RECREATION PLAN FOR THE SPOILS SITE
- CONTINUE TRAIL CONNECTIONS AND ENHANCEMENTS
- REINFORCE STORM LAKE AS A SAFE COMMUNITY
- STRENGTHEN AND ENHANCE PUBLIC INFORMATION EFFORTS (ESPECIALLY SOCIAL MEDIA)



# 2022-23 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

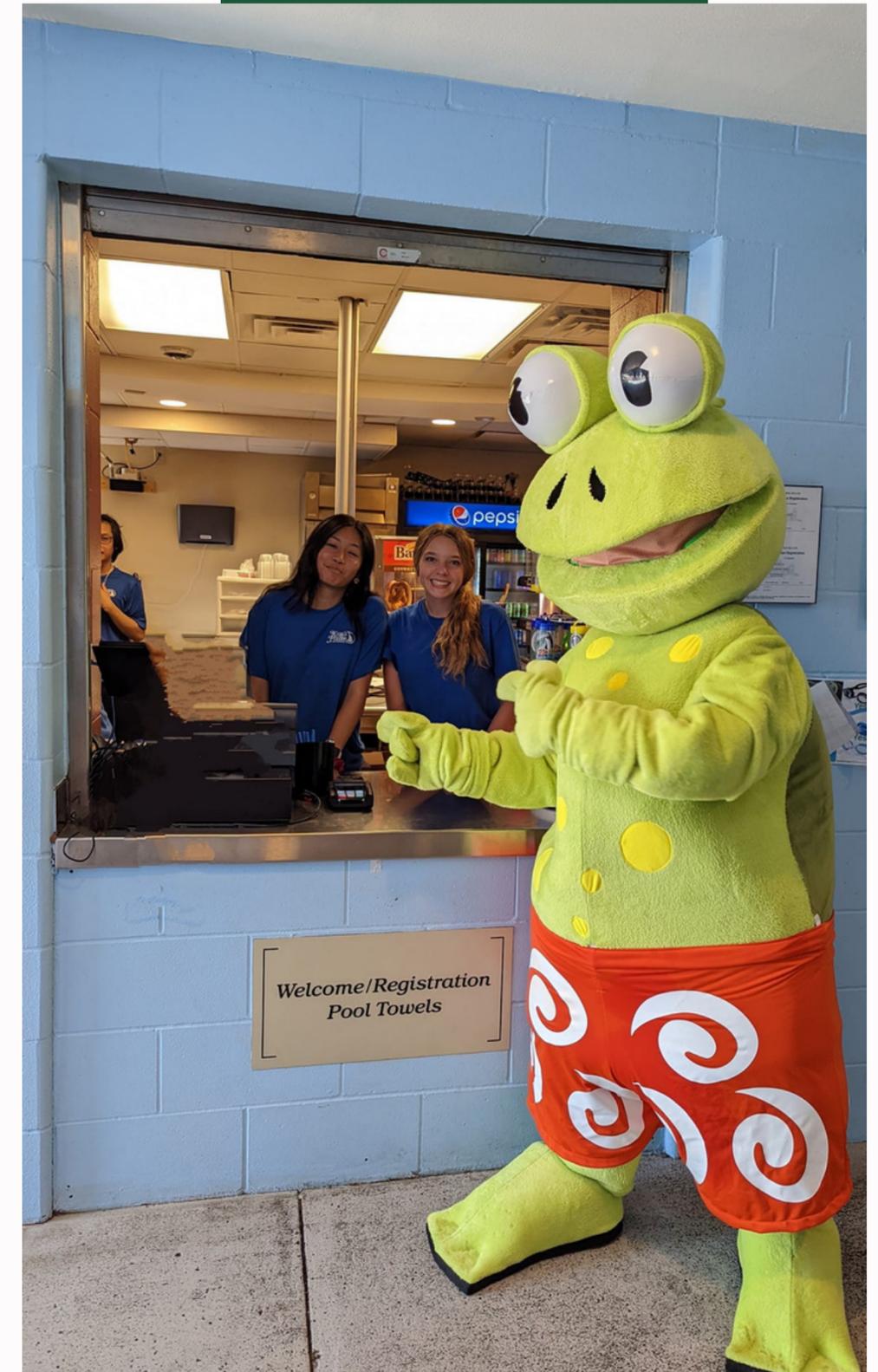
## Objectives

### LOWER PRIORITY

- UPGRADE AND IMPROVE DISTRESSED PROPERTIES (INFILLS)
- IMPLEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE DOWNTOWN MASTER PLAN
- DEVELOP APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS
- IDENTIFY JOBS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE TO KEEP THEM IN STORM LAKE
- IMPROVE AND EXPAND COMMUNITY OUTREACH EFFORTS (ELECTED OFFICIALS AND STAFF)
- USE KING'S POINTE RESORT AND OTHER VENUES TO MEET WITH COMMUNITY MEMBERS
- CONSIDER HOLDING CITY WORK SESSIONS AWAY FROM CITY HALL (CHANGE MEETING NIGHTS)
- INITIATE A RECREATION FEASIBILITY STUDY
- INVESTIGATE NEW PICKLE BALL COURTS
- SOLICIT ASSISTANCE FROM THE UNIVERSITY FOR MARKETING HELP

### OTHER

- EMPHASIZE THE POSITIVE
- WORK CLOSELY WITH THE SCHOOLS
- UPDATE THE CITY'S WEBSITE
- WORK CLOSELY WITH STORM LAKE UNITED



# Focus Objectives

01

Public Information Efforts

02

Economic Development

03

Housing

04

Utilities/Infrastructure

05

Recreation

06

Community Outreach

07

Tourism & Volunteerism



# PUBLIC INFORMATION EFFORTS

Visibility

The City of Storm Lake has made tremendous strides toward meeting goals in 2022-23.

- A City Council Code of Ethics was implemented.
- A completely new website had been created and released in 2023, featuring articles on city developments, photography, video, information sources and important links.
- The City's Facebook page has seen a 600% increase in followers, with a post reach of over 350,000.
- New social media and website features have been developed such as daily community photos, a Destination Storm Lake travel series, Sesquicentennial daily history posts, over 100 videos created to date in 2023, and regular project notifications. These efforts have focused more attention on the community from within and also from around the state and beyond.
- An automated "Ask Stormy" feature was developed and trained for the city website that allows users to access commonly-sought answers to their questions 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

## LATEST NEWS

Stay up to date with Storm Lake



### SLPD helping to 'Fight for a Cure'

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month, and the Storm Lake Police Department is geared up to stand with those who have faced or are still battling breast cancer.

[Read on...](#)



### Volunteers kick off Storm Lake tree planting effort

Community volunteers including students from Storm Lake St. Mary's and Storm Lake High School took part in a recent tree planting event at West 10th Street Park and Frank Starr Park.

[Read on...](#)



### WiFi HOTSPOTS AND LAPTOPS FOR CHECKOUT COMING TO STORM LAKE PUBLIC LIBRARY

Storm Lake Public Library has been selected to participate in Community Connect: Fostering Digital Access, an initiative of the American Library Association (ALA) and Capital One.

[Read on...](#)



# Public Information



## Focus on Quality

Many Sesquicentennial events and projects added, plus daily history posts for 2023

## Message Delivery

Social media posts and web articles were vastly increased. Press releases, photography and graphics were upgraded

## Emphasizing the Positive

Destination Storm Lake posts, seasonal tourism promotions and multiple City community events provided opportunities to promote all of Storm Lake's advantages and attractions.

## Public Safety Events

More police and fire events were added - such as Movie With a Cop and Taco With a Cop; Fire Prevention Week and Fire Safety Education trailer.

## Website Update

Completed, with much positive reaction.



# By the Numbers



As of October 10, 2023

**Facebook followers up  
600% since June 2022**



**36,500**

YouTube  
views  
over 3  
months,  
up 999%



**477,775**

Facebook  
views in 28  
days,  
120,003  
responses,  
503 new  
followers.  
Best post  
283,000+  
views

**6,300**

Website  
new users  
in past 28  
day period,  
54,000  
event count.

**86**

Videos  
produced in  
past 12  
months,  
plus 15  
tourism  
reels (best  
performing  
reel in the  
state)

# HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

Building

## STORM LAKE BUILDING & CODES COMPLIANCE

### **Priority: Continue building houses (especially single-family homes.)**

- The City has adopted the most current building codes to allow use of newer materials and techniques. For example, the current version of the International Residential Code contains provisions for tiny homes. Regulations must be specifically adopted for them to be enforced and/or allowed. If there was interest in this type of development, we would have a good starting point for regulations. This is an example of the current codes addressing emerging techniques and ideas.
- The City is currently in the process of adopting the Comprehensive Plan and updating the Zoning Ordinance. This will provide the City with an opportunity to review any changes that could help spur additional home construction.
- The Building Inspector has started a contractors meeting in the spring to go over any upcoming changes, answer questions from contractors, and allow new contractors to meet City staff to open communications and allow for smoother projects.

### **Priority: Upgrade and improve distressed properties (infills).**

- We coordinate with the Community Service Officers to get properties in compliance. The Code Enforcement Officer regularly checks distressed properties for sale, for potential acquisition and demolition to allow for into new housing.



# COMMUNITY GROWTH

Building

## STORM LAKE BUILDING & CODES COMPLIANCE

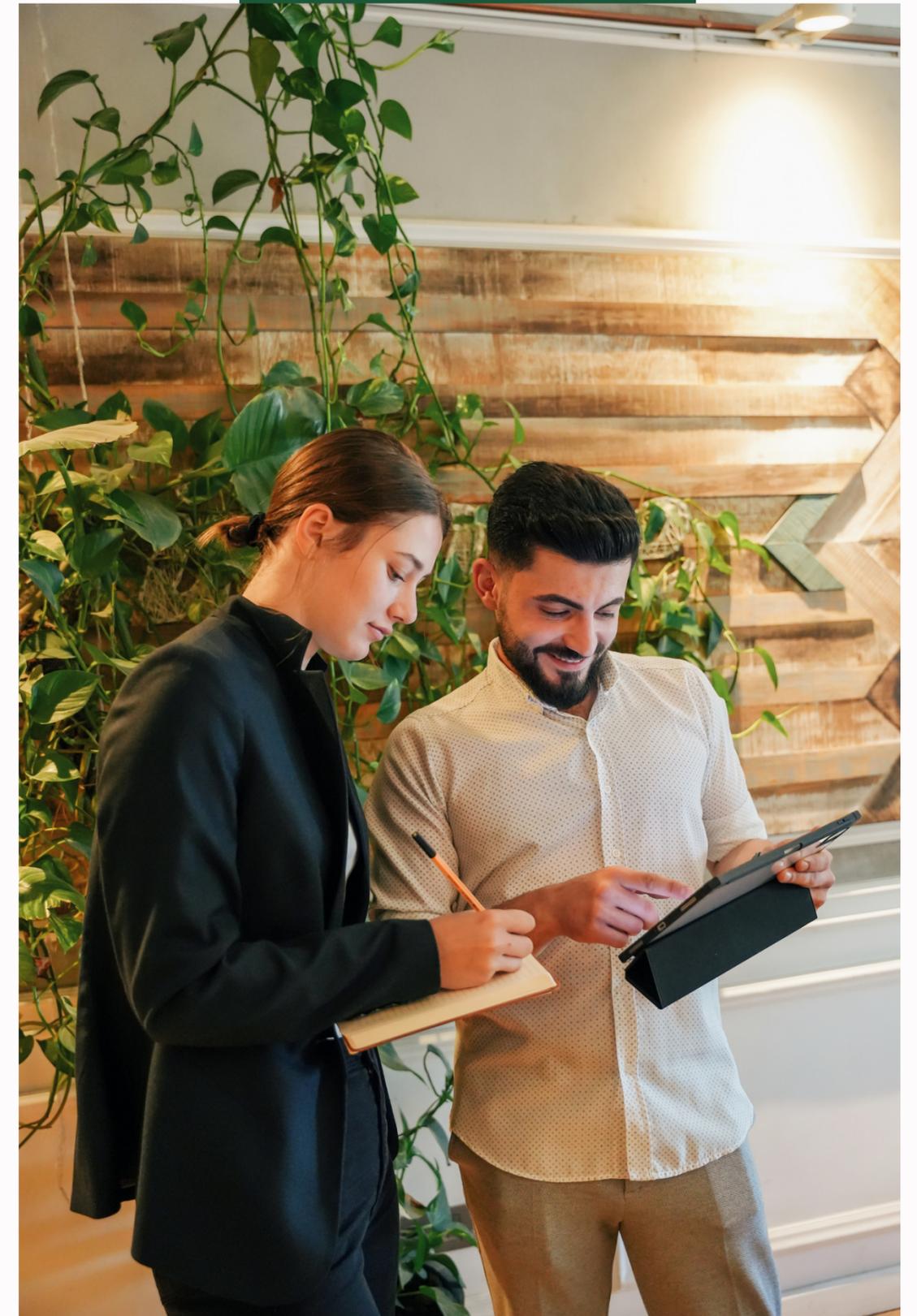
- **Priority: Grow the community in an outward direction.** The department shares information with the Public Services and Public Works departments. When there is a proposed project such as a sewer main extension, we look at it from not just the immediate need but the potential for future development. If development does occur in the future, we are better prepared to move forward from an infrastructure perspective.
- Completing the new Comprehensive Plan better positions the City for potential expansion by providing a strategic approach to future land use outside of the current corporate limits.
- **Priority: Updating the Sign Ordinance, improve wayfinding:** While updating the Zoning Ordinance the section regulating signs will be reviewed. The City will take into consideration the recommendations in the Comprehensive Plan and the Downtown Development Plan. This will provide an opportunity to improve signage for businesses in the Central Business District, and also the Commercial, Civic, and Industrial Districts.



# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## Initiatives for 2023

- Created a “Where Do I Start” information packet for start-ups/entrepreneurs that includes a business plan template, 10-step guide to start a business, a business entity chart, IA business tax registration form, a list of funding options and insurance information. Created a database of available buildings and properties.
- Built an Economic Development page on the city website to provide online access to topics such as: Starting a New Business, Business Tool Kit, Funding, Site Selection, Workforce, Housing, Webinars and Workshops, Development News, Retail Coach Reports and Retail Site Development Opportunities, Downtown Master Plan and ADA information.
- Worked with The Retail Coach to establish our Community Retail Profile, Demographic Snapshot and identified our Primary Retail Trade Area for retail recruitment. Created a webpage on city website so reports are available to our business community.
- Conducted 35 Business Retention & Expansion visits (BRE), coordinated with Iowa Lakes Corridor.



# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Business

## Program Highlights

- Provided strategic business planning and building location assistance to help start and open four new businesses.
- Secured a Rural Child Care Market Study Grant through the IEDA and formed a child care steering committee for analysis and planning.
- Hosted the State Small Business Credit Initiative (SSBCI) Roadshow at Our Place for an informational session to learn about SSBCI programs, and how lenders, business owners, economic developers and venture capitalists can engage with funds to encourage business growth and investments.
- During BRE visits identified business owners with no succession plan in place. Provided direction and assistance with succession planning resources that connect business owners planning to sell, retire or transition out of a leadership role with entrepreneurs looking for an acquisition or expansion opportunity.
- Hosted IEDA Downtown Forum “Designing the Downtown Experience” for wayfinding and façade improvements at The Foundry.
- Co-presented at 2023 Iowa Downtown Conference in Sioux City “Explore Downtown Master Planning + Engagement The Storm Lake Downtown Master Plan”.



# INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT: \$5,031,067

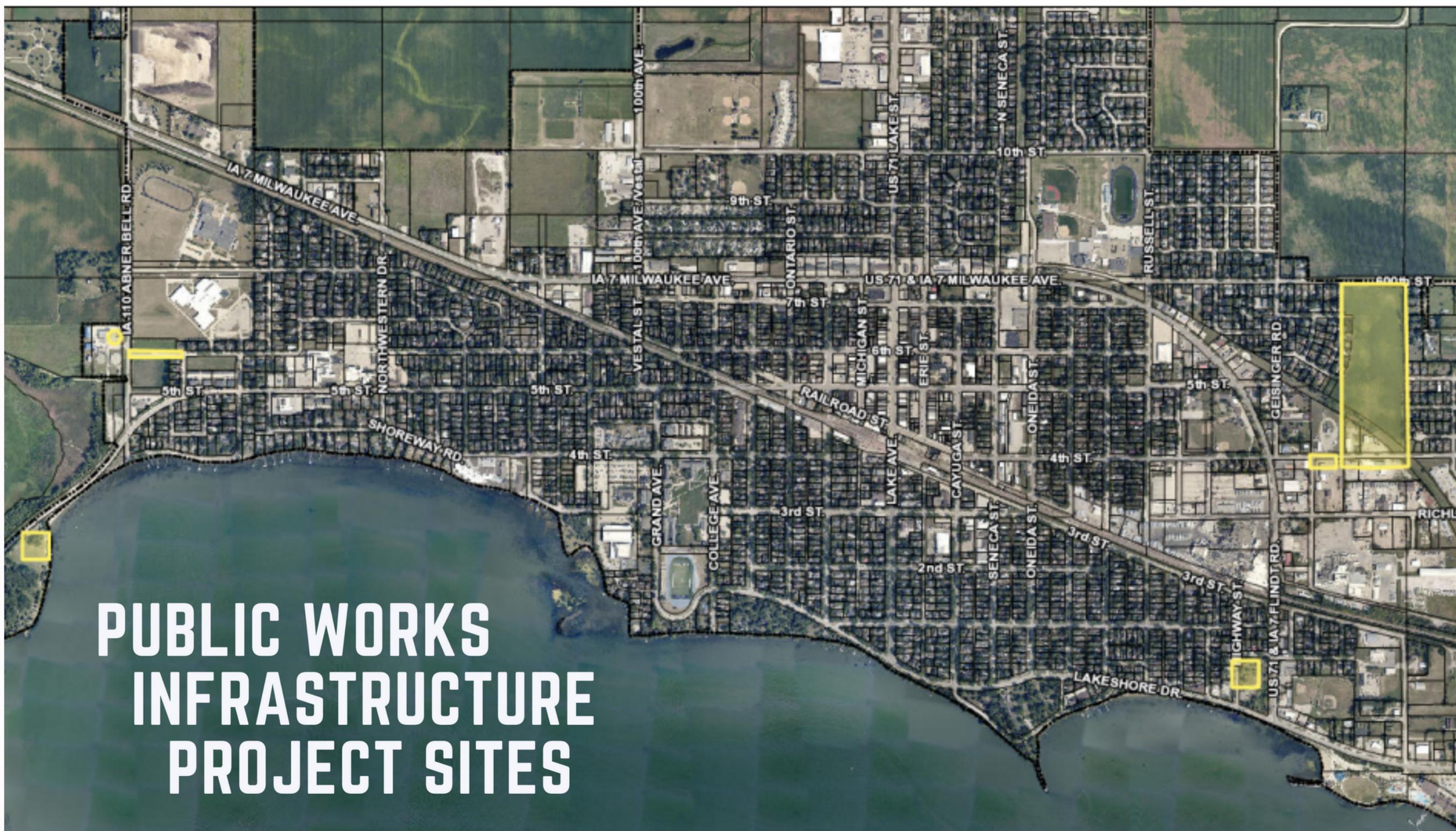
## STORM LAKE WATER/WASTEWATER DEPARTMENT

- Installed new well #21 at Frank Starr Park.
- Well 11 rehab January 2023 (installed 1972). Well rehab is needed to clean well screen to improve flow. This also improves water quality coming into the water plant.
- Well 14 rehab July 2023 (installed 1988).
- Water tower mixer installed in towers 2&4, June 2023. The purpose of the mixer is to improve water quality and keep water from freezing in the winter.
- 4th St. water/sewer ext. completed August 2023. This project included looping the water main from Kading property to the existing water main on 4th Street, which has improved water quality in the area. A water salesman was installed to better service contractors needing water. A sewer dump station was also installed to allow campers to dump sewer waste.
- Radio Park Lift station. Completed January 2023. A new lift station was constructed to replace the old one. With the new lift station, the city has added resiliency to the sewer system.
- Rehab Aeration Basins. Constructed 1983. The two



2,000,000-gallon basins each had a full replacement of the 4,600 air diffusers between the two basins. This has improved the biological process and in turn improved water quality leaving the wastewater plant to outlet creek.

- West 6th St. water/sewer extension. Completed August 2023. Adds water and sewer on W. 6th Street from Highway 110 to Renshaw Drive.
- Hosted Work in Water Experience students.



# PUBLIC WORKS INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT SITES

**SUMMER SEASON 2023**  
(WATER AND WASTEWATER INCLUDING WELL #21, LIFT STATION  
AND SEWER PROJECTS.)

# INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT: \$1,527,055

It's been a busy summer for the Storm Lake crews. In addition to their usual work maintaining parks, playgrounds, golf course, beaches, campgrounds and docks, along with street and storm sewer repairs, they have had a number of improvement projects on their plate. Here's some of what has been achieved:

## PARKS

- Chautauqua - Pickleball courts installed
- West 9th St Baseball - Installed new scoreboard
- Frank Starr - Insulated/heated bathrooms to allow use year around
- Awaysis - Replaced lighthouse elevator  
Stained lighthouse stairs, decking  
Playground was re-surfaced  
SnackShack/ bathrooms - HVAC for longer open season
- Great Lawn - electrical upgrades
- Hwy. 71 lighthouse - sandblasted/repainted
- Kiwanis Park - Assisted with basketball/pickleball court installation  
Poured pads for existing benches/picnic tables
- Sunset - New dock installed
- Various - Poured pads for lighthouses and wood carvings



# INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT

## PUBLIC ART

- Installed art lighthouses:  
Sunset Park  
Radio Park  
Kiwanis Park  
Public library (pending)
- Installed Wood, Wine & Blues carvings

## CAMPGROUNDS

- Seal coated south side roads
- New pads for picnic areas. New tables, fire rings.

## STREETS

- Blacktop Overlays Circle Park
- Hyland Dr. (Angier to Hwy. 110)
- Memorial Road paving near Grand Central
- Chip seal North Lake Ave. Edwards to 20th St.
- Concrete repairs at Geisinger/4th St
- 4th St. - North of Street Shop
- Hyland Dr. - Pinecrest intersection
- Russell/4th Street intersection
- Handicap ramp repairs 5th and Cayuga
- Early and Iowa St.



Pothole Repairs - 40 tons of cold mix used  
Street sweeping and rain garden maintenance

## STORM SEWERS

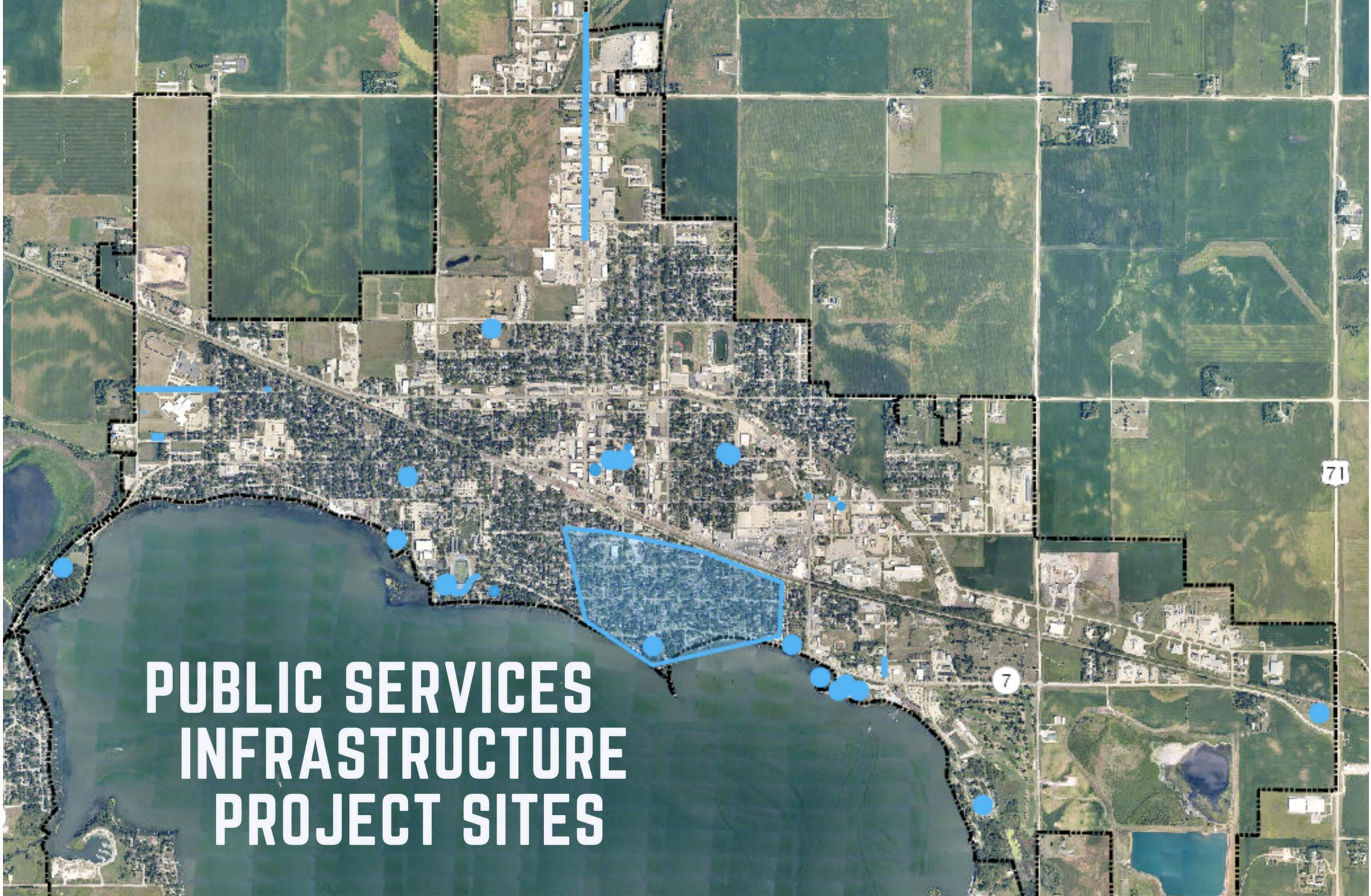
Santa's Castle alley and Circle Park

## TREE REMOVAL (Since July 2022)

- 288 trees removed, stumps ground, filled and seeded

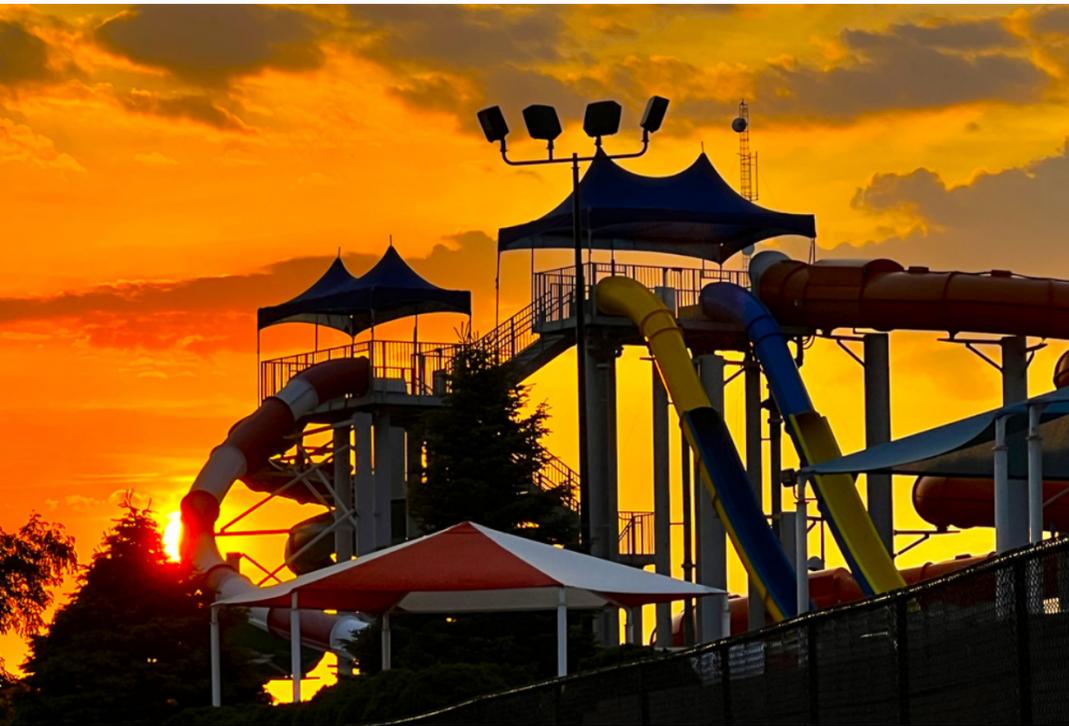
## VENUES

- Preparations for the Downtown Jam concert,
- Kids Fest, RAGBRAI and Wood, Wine & Blues.



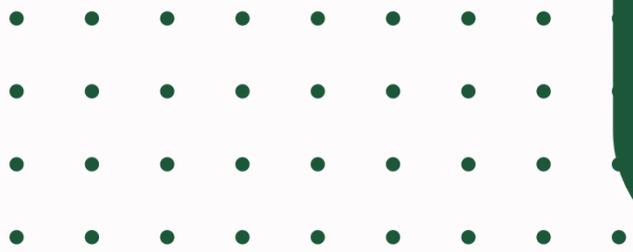
# PUBLIC SERVICES INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT SITES

**SUMMER SEASON 2023**  
(STREET REPAIRS AND OVERLAY, CAMPGROUND, TREE REMOVAL, ETC.)



- Built pickleball courts in Chautauqua Park
- Assisted gogo-ball project
- Waterparks upgrade investments
- Golf course irrigation and other improvements
- Replaced Awaysis playground safety surface
- Added new dock at Sunset Park
- Supported groups in various walk and run events
- Groomed beaches
- Assisted in addition of Kiwanis Park basketball court
- Obtained trail-building equipment
- Spoil site master plan
- Backlog of deferred park maintenance completed

# Recreation

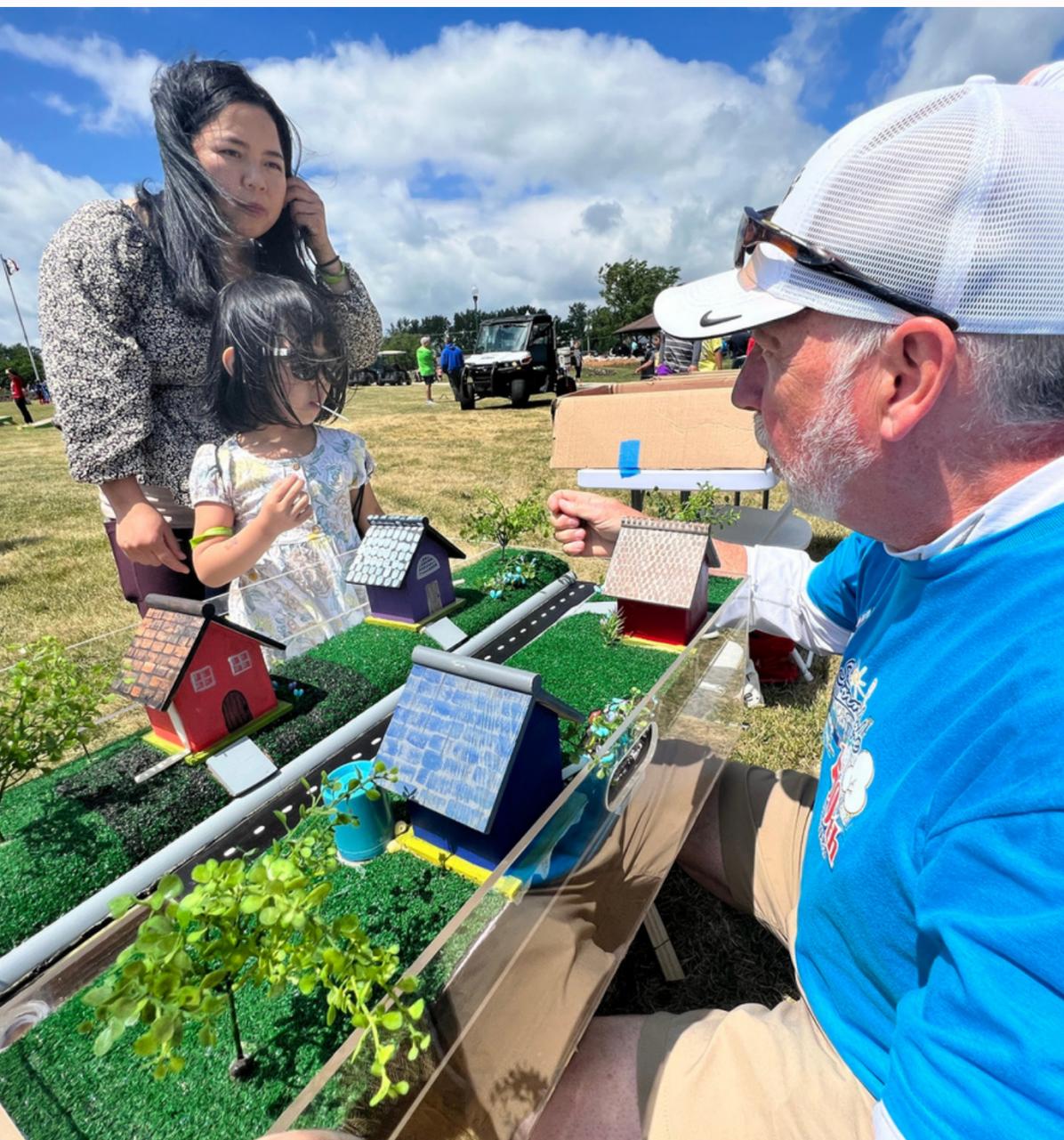


# EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

- Established Kids' Fest in cooperation with King's Pointe as a highly popular community festival, with over 1,500 attending.
- Planned and hosted Downtown Jam, the City's first concert event and a Downtown Master Plan achievement.
- Due to staff shortages at Storm Lake United, City staff took on large events including Chills & Thrills, Miracle on Lake Avenue parade and assisting with Wood, Wine & Blues.
- Played a major role in planning and staffing the RAGBRAI event.
- Partnered with Historical Society for Sesquicentennial events such as a lake history lecture and open house for the log cabin and schoolhouse.
- Planned a new Breakfast With Santa event for Dec. 16.
- Held a Sesquicentennial time capsule opening ceremony.
- Promoted the Municipal Band concert series, including a special Sesquicentennial show.
- Used social media reach to help promote dozens of positive events, fundraisers and awareness campaigns for various Storm Lake organizations.
- Worked toward public arts developments by contributing to a mosaic mural, funding a 150th anniversary lighthouse painting project, and placement of chainsaw sculptures.
- Staff increased City visibility by volunteering for many events.
- Volunteer reception and volunteerism slide show in October.

CHILLS &  
THRILLS





**Kids Fest**

# Downtown Jam

a Downtown Master Plan goal



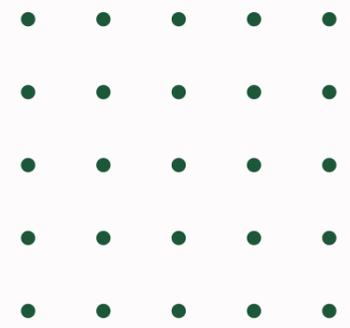
**Chills & Thrills**

**Events**

COMING IN  
December



Breakfast  
with SANTA



# Tourism

*Increased Advertising*

*Added Events*

*New web visitor page*

*Destination SL posts*

*Statewide reels added*

Examples of 2023 Storm Lake Tourism Reels produced



# Travel Promotions



## Social Media

Destination Storm Lake weekly travel promotion posts, as well as additional advertising and press materials.



## Film

Participating in “My Town” documentary film in cooperation with Iowa Lakes Corridor.



## Marketing

Won inclusion in 2023 Soul of Iowa influencer program. Created ads for King’s Pointe.



## State Programming

Participated in Localhood reels through Travel Iowa, produced the state’s highest view-rate reel to date.

# COMMUNITY OUTREACH

SLPD

Administration, police, fire and other departments have stepped up their efforts even further to reach out to the public.

## STORM LAKE POLICE

- SLPD: Movie With a Cop, Tacos With a Cop, Pop up BBQs, Coffee with a Cop events
- New YumVee H2 vehicle with neighborhood visits
- Diversity and Inclusion presentations for Iowa League of Cities
- Breast Cancer Awareness sticker campaign
- Run Ranger Run and Patriot Challenge campaigns to raise funds and awareness for veteran programs
- Hero's Parade and other programs within the schools
- Pay-It-Forward Fridays program with local businesses
- Back to School Block Party with free student haircuts
- National Night Out - 15 block parties for 2023
- Operation Hoop Dreams court repainting
- Attended several cultural celebrations/ceremonies
- Blue Blood - blood bank drive
- Santa Cop with Upper Des Moines
- Read Across America participation
- Served breakfast at Prime Time event



# COMMUNITY OUTREACH

SLFD

Administration, police, fire and other departments have stepped up their efforts even further to reach out to the public.

## STORM LAKE FIRE DEPARTMENT

- Increased public relations and public education presentations and engagements.
- Purchased and rehabbed the fire safety education trailer.
- Launched the Community Connect program.
- Hosting a second annual Open House event
- Fire Prevention Week community events
- Participated in Heroes Parade, High Five Friday and other events in the schools
- Hosted Japanese student tour with BVU
- Grand Marshals for Spectacular Parade
- Hosted disaster drill with BV County Emergency Management & other agencies
  - Kids Fest - provided safety education trailer, fire truck, gear for kids to try on



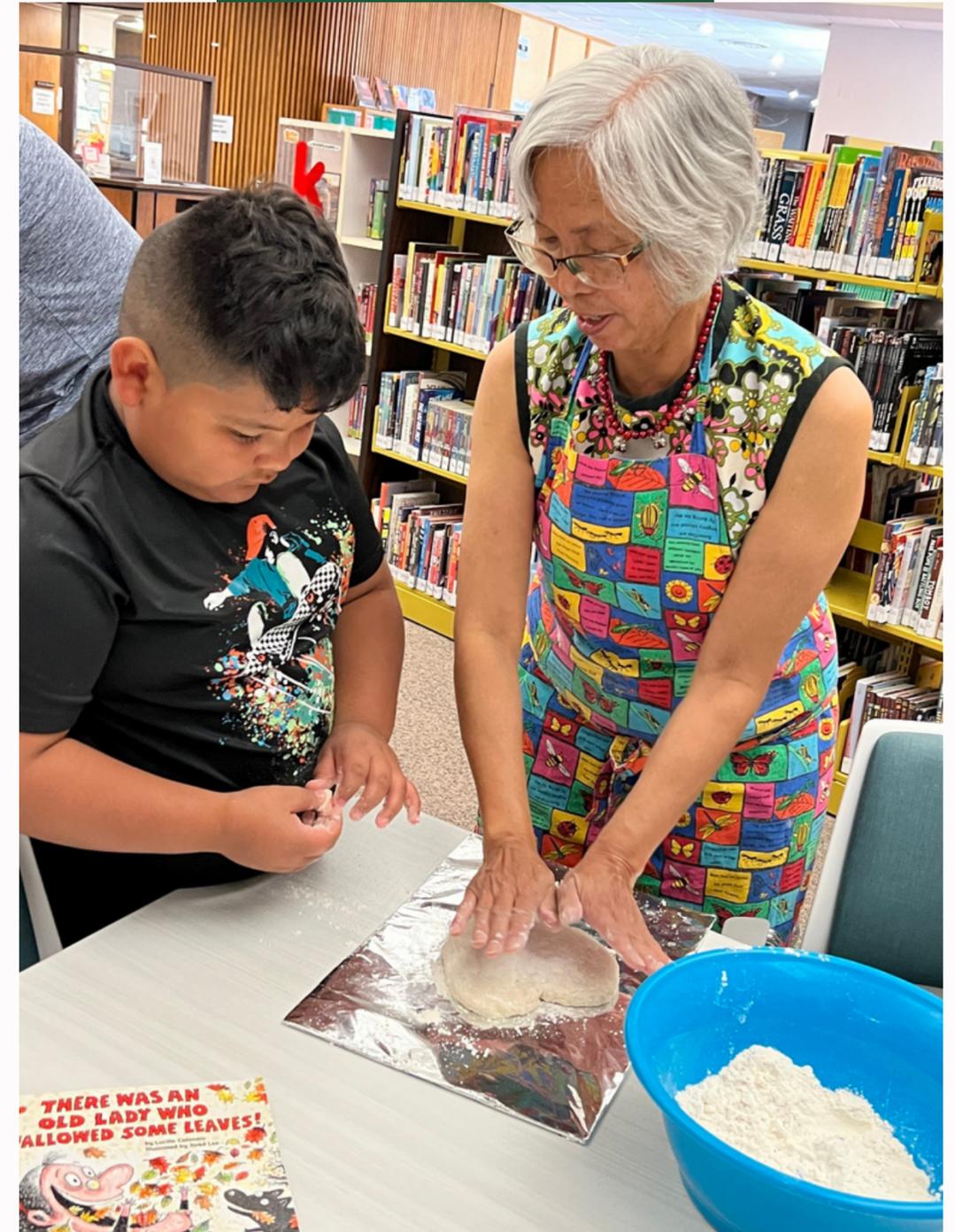
# COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Administration, police, fire and other departments have stepped up their efforts even further to reach out to the public.

## STORM LAKE PUBLIC LIBRARY

- Created a new telehealth facility
- Improved inclusion with LGBTQ+ literature and Spanish language materials
- Opposed censorship with Banned Book display
- Community Connect grant to provide hotspot and laptop checkout to bridge rural digital divide
- New financial capability programs through Community Connect grant
- Family and youth programming supported by the Friends of the Library funding
- Renovated little-used space into a welcoming coffee shop area with Friends funding
- Seed planting activity for Kids' Fest
- Hours of service increased to 51.5 after Labor Day
- Social worker/Service Navigator to assist community members with connections to needed resources
- Opened library to serve RAGBRAI riders
- New children's programming including a yoga series
- Hosted 150th time capsule opening event.

Library



# Child care study

The City of Storm Lake sought and was awarded a \$10,000 rural Child Care Market Study grant to address family needs in the community.

The grant program supports use of data and analysis by communities to determine specific needs and solutions for local child care. The Storm Lake City Council approved \$5,000 in additional funding for the study, and city staff promoted surveys for parents, businesses and providers.

The data was received late in 2023, and a volunteer committee was formed and began meeting on how to put the information to use in seeking additional child care opportunities.



# Volunteerism



## Expand Outreach

The City hosted open house and volunteer recognition events at King's Pointe. Also public events for Downtown Master Plan and Comprehensive Plan.

## Partnership

City Staff assisted Storm Lake United to maintain important public events, launched a day care study, and worked closely with SALUD, schools, civic groups.

## Neighborhood outreach

15 National Night Out block parties were held. YumVee and Fire Prevention events reached out into the community. Tree plantings and Storm Lake Proud events engaged participants.

## Beautification

Nuisance and code enforcement were emphasized. Citywide Clean Up Days and park cleanups were promoted with city staff volunteers,



# Volunteerism

- Participated in RAGBRAI
- preparations
- Expanded on volunteer
- recognition event
- Created ‘Making a Difference’ decals
- Increased staff volunteerism in the community
- Storm Lake Proud week events
- Tree panting grant and ceremony
- Increased community events
- Chosen for a Volunteer Iowa pilot program
- Team completed extensive volunteerism training
- Creating new Volunteer and Donor guides

The City wishes to thank our many volunteer partners. To name a few - the RAGBRAI committee, Kiwanis, Rotary, Friends of the Library, The Bridge, Paxton Trust, Iowa National Guard, iJAG, BVU sports teams, BVU Center for Diversity & Inclusion, SALUD, Witter Gallery.



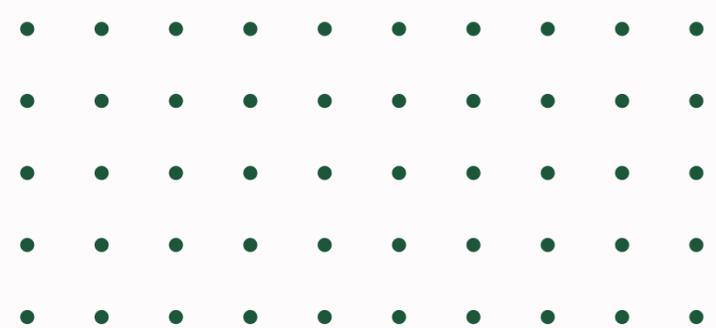
BVU volunteers: Circle Park monthly cleanups

# Sesquicentennial

A special celebration throughout 2023



A colorful past **150** An exciting future



- Created a campaign, logo, street banners, decals, shirts, bookmarks.
- Produced daily history posts, more than 300 in all.
- Expanded Kids' Fest as an anniversary party
- Planned events monthly, including a puppet show, history presentations, downtown concert, waterpark and golf specials, time capsule opening, Breakfast With Santa, an Open House, tree giveaway and more.
- Commemorative badges
- Teamed with Spectacular for a 150th themed parade.
- Teamed with local and state historical societies for events



Sesquicentennial tree giveaway

# Celebrating 150 years



Time capsule opening event



Open House for the community



Shirts, decals and wristband memorabilia



Historical lecture and tours



Hosted state's mobile museum



# Guiding Principles

## VISION STATEMENT

**“Storm Lake to be a premier recreational and economically progressive community.”**

## MISSION STATEMENT

**“Through teamwork create a welcoming environment that encourages economic growth, celebrates our unique blend of cultures, treasures our natural resources, and promotes recreational opportunities”**

# THANK YOU

To the Storm Lake City Council for supporting the dreams and projects that make the community a growing, vital and fun place to live, work, and play. It's been a 150th year to remember.







