

## COMMUNITY VISIONING/CITY BRANDING



A vision is a **promise** – which must be delivered upon consistently with every interaction

### Emotion

It is driven by how you want stakeholders to **feel** when they interact with you.

### Differentiation

Your promise should be **different** from promises made by competitors, describing a feeling only you give them.

### Relevance

It should be **meaningful** to stakeholders, focused on where their greatest needs intersect with your strengths.

## THE AMES VISION



## ORIGINAL Ames Promise/ Vision

***Ames, Iowa is the Heartland's leading edge.*** As a city, we are committed to fostering creativity and innovation at the forefront of the world's important issues that the Midwest is uniquely positioned to address, including agriculture, veterinary medicine, sustainability, development , diversity, education and health care.

For those who want the charms and convenience of a small town with the opportunities and amenities that come from a major University, Ames' position at the Heartland's leading edge creates a community – and a region – where everyone has opportunities to discover and thrive.

## THE AMES VISION



## **SUGGESTED REVISED Ames Promise/ Vision**

Ames, Iowa is a forward-thinking community. As a city, we are committed to fostering creativity and innovation at the forefront of the world's important issues that the Midwest is uniquely positioned to address, including agriculture, veterinary medicine, sustainability, development , diversity, education, and health care.

For those who want the charms and convenience of a small town with the opportunities and amenities that come from a major university, Ames' position as an intelligent, progressive community creates a city and a region where everyone has opportunities to discover and thrive.

***Ames, Iowa is the Smart Choice!***

## THE AMES VISION



These are our **“VERBS”** – they define the actions we take every day to deliver on the promise.

### **Require Innovative Solutions**

When an issue is brought to the table, Ames looks beyond its boundaries to discover innovative approaches. Ames will insist that any key initiative undertaken can be considered among the most innovative in the region, if not the nation.

### **Stand for Collaboration**

In order to create opportunities for everyone to discover and thrive, every voice needs to be heard and respected. In Ames, we seek to find common ground rather than hold our ground.

### **Be Decisive**

While we are thoughtful, a Leading Edge city is not paralyzed by debate. At the outset of an issue, we set a limit for discussion, determining what information we need by when in order to make a decision and move on to other important concerns.

## THE AMES VISION



These are our “**ADJECTIVES**” – they define how we would like to be described five years from now.

### **Smart**

*Forward-thinking, Intellectual, Contemporary*

We apply the brightest and latest thinking to our initiatives, remaining always mindful of choosing a sound and prudent approach.

### **Open-Minded**

*Respectful, Flexible, Understanding*

We remain open-minded about issues and approaches, believing that our fellow citizens also have the best interests of Ames at heart.

### **Confident**

*Assured, Positive, Bold*

We are confident in our assets as a city and our abilities as a citizenry. We proudly tell our story and assert our role in the region.

## THE AMES VISION



Emotional?	Differentiating?	Relevant?
Driven by how you want stakeholders to feel when they interact with you.	Different from promises made by competitors, describing a feeling only you give them.	Meaningful to stakeholders, focused on where their greatest needs intersect with your strengths.
<i>Smart Open-Minded Confident</i>	<i>Not only a “small town with big city opportunities”</i>	<i>Taps Ames’ potential to be a place where everyone can thrive</i>

## THE AMES VISION



## What is a tagline?

**Taglines are a creative expression of the promise.** They should be short, memorable and emotional.

They should help signal to inside and outside audiences what Ames is trying to be, and they empower both audiences to hold you to that promise.

Taglines should be expected to last approximately 10 years.

## RECOMMENDATION – TAGLINE

*Ames, Iowa is the Smart Choice!*





## Ames Logopalooza

Ames identity is fragmented by the use of different logos by entities representing the city to internal and external stakeholders. It has become a best-practice for cities to unify under one logo, with the occasional exception of a tourism-driven identity that is more consumer focused.



## RECOMMENDATION - LOGO



## Logo

**Consider developing a new logo that more strongly communicates the promise.** The logo will signal a new direction for Ames and will serve as a visual reminder to keep stakeholders aligned with the vision.

A new logo should be used collectively to create a unified external identity for Ames. The city should also request that other entities in Ames utilize the logo in communications that reference the city.

## RECOMMENDATION – SHARED LOGO



## Logo Solution:



## RECOMMENDATION – SHARED LOGO



## • RECOMENDATION – VISUAL SYSTEM

### What is a visual system?

A visual system is the strategic and systematic use of color palette, typography, photography and graphics to create a consistent image that reflects the promise.

Visual systems are designed once, often (but not always) in conjunction with a new logo. Then guidelines are developed, and all future materials are designed in accordance with the guidelines.

The visual system is applied to all communications materials, including collateral, web, ads, and stationery.

Good visual systems provide:

Visual impact

Brand recall / recognition

Cost efficiencies (not reinventing the wheel with each design)



- RECOMENDATION – BRAG TEAM

### Create and Empower a “Brag Team”

Activate and formalize the partnership of Ames communicators, including representatives from the City, Chamber of Commerce, ACVB, AEDC, ISU, School District, Hospital and other groups.

The Brag Team should be led by the City’s PIO and should meet regularly (at least monthly) to direct communications initiatives and ensure consistency of message and identity from all sectors of the community.

Provide a “Train-the-Trainers” (T3) workshop for all Brag Team members, teaching them the vision findings and concepts from the inside-out so that they can in turn train other community members about the vision and help guide implementation.

This will ensure that the communication is aligned in perpetuity. When one Brag Team member moves on, they are responsible for training their replacement.



- RECOMENDATION – ROLL OUT

**Roll out the vision to community sectors in a series of meetings**

Following train-the-trainer sessions, the Brag Team should conduct vision roll-out meetings with the governing bodies and key community groups in the relevant sectors.

In each session, the leader should facilitate discussion of how the vision will be applied within that sector, and should obtain commitments for next steps.

The session leader should also collect proof points of the “Smart Choice” concept from that sector.



- RECOMENDATION – PROOF POINTS

### **Inventory and communicate “Smart Choice” proof points**

During their community meetings and as a collective group, the Brag Team should create an inventory of “Smart Choice” proof points – examples of how Ames is currently delivering on the vision (both now and historically.)

Once a substantial list has been developed, the Brag Team should institute a process for keeping the list current and communicating it within the city, regionally, and nationally when appropriate.

One Brag Team member (probably from the Chamber or the AEDC) should be responsible for communicating significant new proof points externally, expanding Ames’ PR footprint outside the city to both the region and the nation.

The Brag Team can also leverage the powerful presence of ISU Alumni and communicate advancements in Ames through that audience.



## • RECOMENDATION – THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

### **Establish Ames' thought leadership in the region**

Create an Ames Speaker's Bureau, encouraging Brag Team members and sector leaders to present their "Smart Choice" ideas and strategies at conferences or other public forums, both regionally and nationally.

Pursue a convention and visitors' strategy that recruits conferences and other meetings that would align with Ames' "Smart Choice" promise. Create a perception of Ames as being a "natural" venue for such meetings, perhaps including a tour or overview of Ames' "smart" accomplishments.

Likewise, the AEDC should continue to pursue a business recruitment strategy that aligns with the vision, pursuing "smart" businesses as natural prospects for Ames.





## • RECOMENDATION – MESSAGE CONSISTENCY

### **Ensure that the vision idea and language is infused into city communications**

City should ensure that all communications materials from the city are reflecting the promise:

- Update “About Ames” section on the website and infuse the vision into other web articles and copy elements

- Re-cast print materials as they come up for re-printing and incorporate messaging into any new materials

- Focus on the “adjectives” to inform the tone: Smart, Open-Minded, Confident

Develop new language for press releases and provide language to all partners to use when they describe Ames.

Consider creating a communication tools site that can be accessed by all city stakeholders to provide language, logos and visual elements so everyone is using the correct materials.



## THE AMES VISION – QUESTIONS?

