

## 2011 Neighborhood Summit Agenda

February 15, 7pm, City Council Chambers

### **Introduction by Mayor Ann Campbell**

#### **Communication by Susan Gwiasda**

- Neighborhood Newsletter
- CityofAmes.org
- City of Ames on Facebook & Twitter

### **Neighborhoods Intro & Current Initiatives by Jeff Benson & Barbara Kloth**

- Neighborhood Associations
  - What they are, process of creating one, why they're important, benefits
  - Annual Report & Recommendations
- Ames Repair & Care Program
  - What it is, how it works, success stories

### **Neighborhood Inspections by Natalie Herrington**

- Exterior Inspections
  - Cases, types of issues, work through ARC

### **Police by Chuck Cychosz, Howard Snider, Brad Baker**

- Crime Free Housing Program
- Safe Neighborhoods Program
- Community Resource Officer

### **Comments from Neighbors**

# **City of Ames Neighborhood Association Annual Survey Report**

**Report of 2009/2010 Activity  
Surveyed & Recorded Fall 2010**

Department of Planning and Housing

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Prepared by:  
Barbara Kloth  
Neighborhood Intern

February 7, 2011

## Neighborhood Association Annual Survey Results

The list of Ames Neighborhood Associations numbers up to 45; however, there are now only 40 listed. Those 40 Neighborhood Associations were contacted with a letter and form to fill out regarding annual events and meetings to determine their activity level. The annual report form is attached. At the time of this report, 37 responses were collected.

### Active Neighborhood Associations

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- Timberland Road N.A.
- Colonial Village N.A.
- Historic Old Town N.A.
- Westbend N.A.
- Northridge Homeowners Association
- Stone Brooke Home Owners Association
- Friendship N.A.
- Meadow Glen Rd. N.A.
- North Old Town N.A.
- King-Am N.A.
- Meeker North N.A.
- Westside N.A.
- Oak-Wood-Forest N.A.
- Ironwood Court N.A.
- Oak-Riverside N.A.
- Top-O-Hollow N.A.
- Wilson-Beardshear N.A.
- South Campus Area Neighborhood (SCAN)
- Somerset Village
- Bloomington Heights N.A.
- Emanon N.A.
- Allenvue N.A.

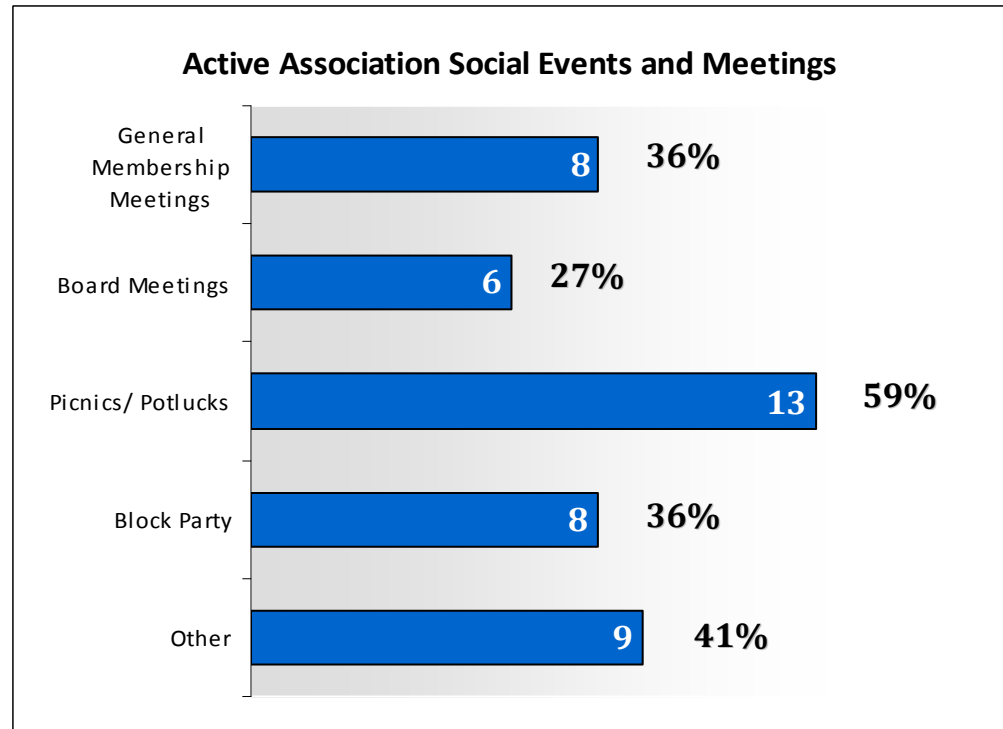
22 of the 40 associations that responded indicated they were active and held regular meetings or events during the year. Some associations have events twice a year, board meetings monthly, women's group meetings, social meetings at a local café, luncheons every other month, a neighborhood garage sale, ice cream social, soup suppers in the winter, meetings with the City, a walk-through of the neighborhood, and more. These events are sometimes highlighted in citywide literature like the Neighborhood Newsletter.

The responses are shown in Figure 1.

**Figure 1**

Active associations generally hold more than one event annually and do more types of events. 15 of the 22 associations checked multiple categories for annual events.

*Note: The percentages are the number of active associations who marked that type of event.*



### Communication and Organization

These more active associations tend to use more forms of communication, especially the emails and newsletters that come out yearly or seasonally. Two of the associations also send out a directory for the streets including family member names, pets, and other general information with the contact information. The main difference that sets these associations apart from the less active neighborhoods in Ames is their strong communication.

These responses are recorded in figures 3 and 4.

14 Neighborhood Associations have an upcoming annual event already planned. All of these associations were listed as active. Picnics, Potlucks, and Block Parties again were the most common type of annual event. These events were planned for Summer and/or Fall for the most part, with only four over Winter or early Spring months. A reason could be finding a large enough area within or nearby the neighborhood to host these events free of charge. The two Homeowners Associations, Northridge H.A. and Stone Brook H.A., plan to host their next events indoors at Iowa Greater Credit Union and the Stone Brook Community Church, respectively, while the Historic Old Town N.A. plans to use the Unity Church. Scheduling events further in advance helps to organize volunteers, provide a sense of consistency in the association, and increase participation.

## **Inactive Neighborhood Associations**

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15 of the 37 respondents said they were not active. For some of these associations, their inactivity is because they were initially formed to deal with a specific issue affecting the neighborhood (e.g. street changes) which are no longer present. Over the phone, major comments expressed as to why they are not active included difficulty contacting the large number of people, difficulty planning events because of a mix of demographics- especially low income rentals and single family homes - and not having enough help planning and putting on the event. The following neighborhood associations are targeted for encouragement and assistance from City staff or delisting.

### Somewhat Inactive Associations

Though many of these neighborhood associations claimed to be inactive, it came out in conversation that smaller (unofficial) events were going on within the neighborhood. The following chart shows the types of events neighborhood associations are having broken down by whether or not they claim to be active.

- Prarie View N.A.
- Northeast N.A.
- Michigan Ave. N.A.
- Kate Mitchell N.A.
- Hodge N.A.
- Bandshell N.A.
- Bel Air N.A.
- Northwest Parkview N.A.
- Brookside N.A.

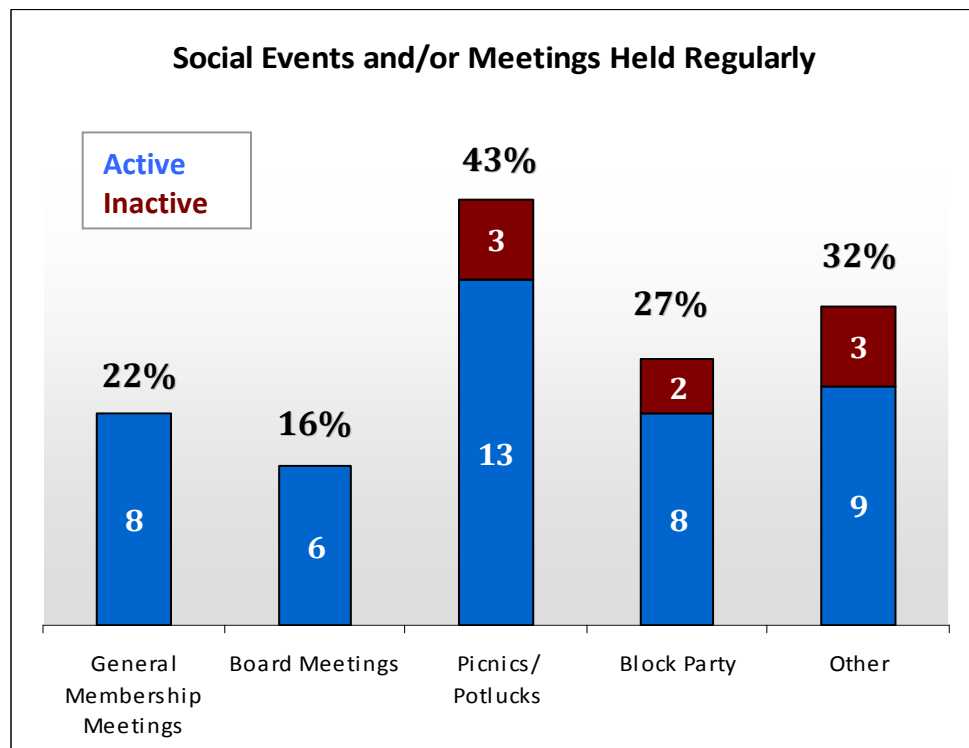
The majority of these associations indicated there are events such as block parties and potlucks held within the neighborhood but only for smaller groups of residents. These events are typically held annually and have been recorded in Figure 1. None of these 9 associations had yet planned a future annual event. Flyers, Door-to-Door, and Word of Mouth were indicated as the primary ways of contacting residents with information about events and other news for the neighborhood.

Northeast N.A. indicated a regular potluck held as well as a clean-up event for 25<sup>th</sup> Street which all neighbors were invited to despite the representative listing the association as inactive. The Bandshell N.A. representative responded that the summer concerts (Ames on the Half Shell) typically draw out a fair number of residents from the neighborhood. The association also puts on occasional events during the year. These responses are shown in Figure 2.

**Figure 2**

The most common events are social events not centered on neighborhood 'business'. Many of these events are annual or semi annual with a few smaller groups within neighborhoods meeting more often (e.g. monthly ladies luncheon).

*Note: The percentages are the total number of responsive associations that marked the event.*



It is great to see there are pockets within neighborhoods having events and interacting. However, in order to truly represent them, a Neighborhood Association representative should be connected with the majority of neighbors and know the issues and concerns of these residents. The City of Ames neighborhood liaison and neighborhood intern could offer to help to expand that small circle to identify and include: additional leadership, issues, new communications, and have one unified event. If these associations are not interested in this process they may be dropped from the City list of Neighborhood Associations.

### Completely Inactive Associations

These 6 Neighborhood Associations are not active and reported not having had events of any kind for a number of years.

- Ontario N.A.
- Ferndale/Furman N.A.
- S. Riverside – S. Russell N.A.
- Grand-Summit N.A.
- Onion Creek N.A.
- Edwards N.A.

Although these associations could be dropped from the list, there is an option to change the representative to a “Neighborhood Contact” and work with them to foster communication in the neighborhood. This contact would not be speaking for the neighborhood, but rather serving as an intermediary between the City of Ames and neighbors.

The Ontario N.A. representative still goes to other types of events related to neighborhood associations, including City of Ames events, but the association does not put on events or meetings of any kind. This association should be notified and dropped from the list. However, this representative could be a good option for a N.A. Contact role.

The Ferndale/Furman N.A. representative stated the last event was at least 10 years ago. They also do not have any other form of communication aside from newspaper and city publications. The representative did indicate wanting to have a block party in the near future. This association could benefit from the Street ‘N’ Greet Block Party Trailer and tools to increase communication like a listserve. A block party could help to generate new interest in reforming as a Neighborhood Association. If no activity happens within the next year, the association should be notified and dropped from the list.

The Grand-Summit N.A. representative was interested in a block party in the future as well as starting a blog and creating a listserve for the association. Information about the City of Ames blog training and the Street ‘N’ Greet Block Party trailer was dispensed. The City staff could offer to work with this association for a year to develop stronger communication and participation.

The Onion Creek N.A. has not had an event in recent years, and there are no plans to have one in the near future. This Neighborhood Association is outside the city limits. They do have an email list that is used occasionally when issues arise in the neighborhood. Possibly more information should be gathered on how often and what types of notices are going out to the neighbors. If the notice is primarily conveying information available through City of Ames sources (i.e. the newspaper or CitySide) it may not be necessary to have a formal association. If that is found to be the case, staff would recommend the representative be notified and the association be dropped.

The Edwards Elementary School hosts an annual Ice Cream social which is the only event held in the Edwards N.A. The association itself does not host any events or conduct any meetings. The number of attendants at the Ice Cream Social from the neighborhood should be gathered to determine whether the social is serving as an informal annual event. If the association is not active, then the lack of initiative on the association’s part for further activity also leads to the recommendation they be notified and dropped.

## **Non-Responsive Neighborhood Associations**

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- Garden District N.A.
- Homewood N.A.
- State Ave N.A.

These 3 associations did not reply to the mail survey, and were also attempted to be contacted via phone and/or email. At the time of this report the representatives were unresponsive. A recommendation of attempting again to contact and receive information on activity level and events should be done. However, if still neglecting contact with the City, the process of delisting the associations could begin. The first step of this may be to contact each residence in the neighborhood to inform them they will be delisted unless further action is taken within a given time period (6 months to a year). The brochure for Neighborhood Associations could be sent along with this notice. The intent is to create strong, active neighborhoods and leaders that are willing to invest in them.



## Communication in Neighborhood Associations

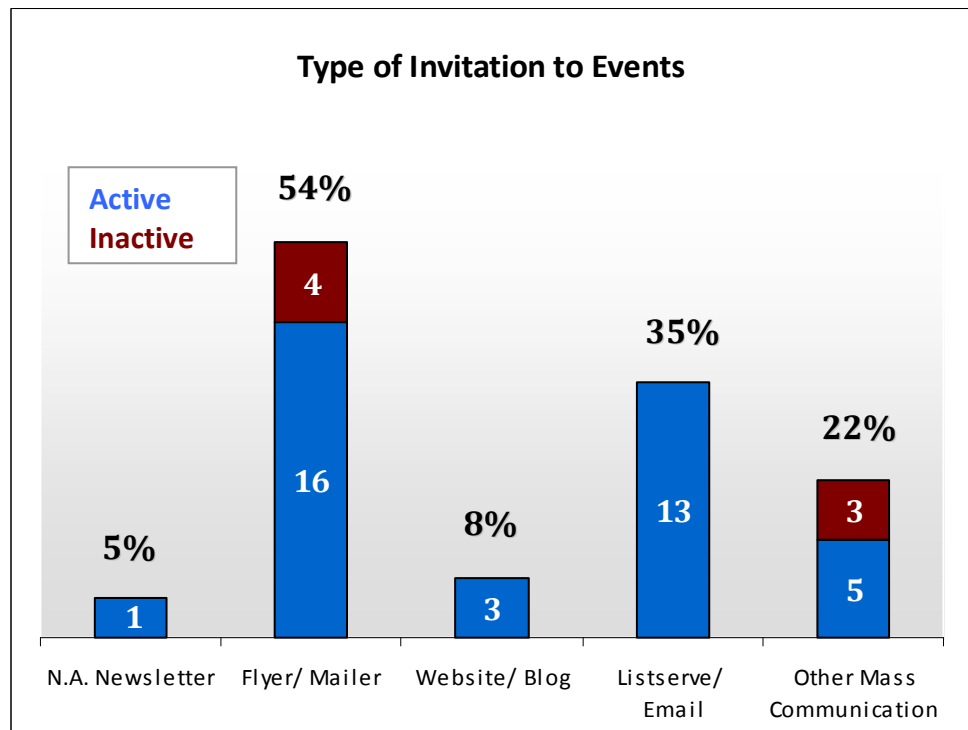
Reaching neighbors with news about events was another point of interest for the City. The majority of the neighborhoods distributed fliers about events. Two different neighborhood association leaders related there are 'street chairs' who distribute the fliers and relay messages to residents on their streets. The system seems to work fairly well and combats the issue of large areas and poor communication within these associations. A fairly significant number of respondents used email lists (listserves) to inform neighbors about these events. However, not all these listserves are complete, leaving some people unaware of events if this is the only form of communication like it was for four of the associations.

Seven neighborhood association leaders contact members about events using "Other Mass Communication;" only two used this as their only invitation. Door-to-Door and Word of Mouth communication was most common, with occasional phone invitations if people could not be easily reached. One responded over the phone said she noticed higher attendance numbers when she contacted people in person with the fliers.

These responses are recorded below in Figure 3 by whether or not the association indicated they were active.

**Figure 3**

Flyers and Mailers were the primary ways residents were contacted for events for the Neighborhood Association. Word of Mouth was used to invite neighbors for 3 of the 8 respondents under Other Mass Communication.

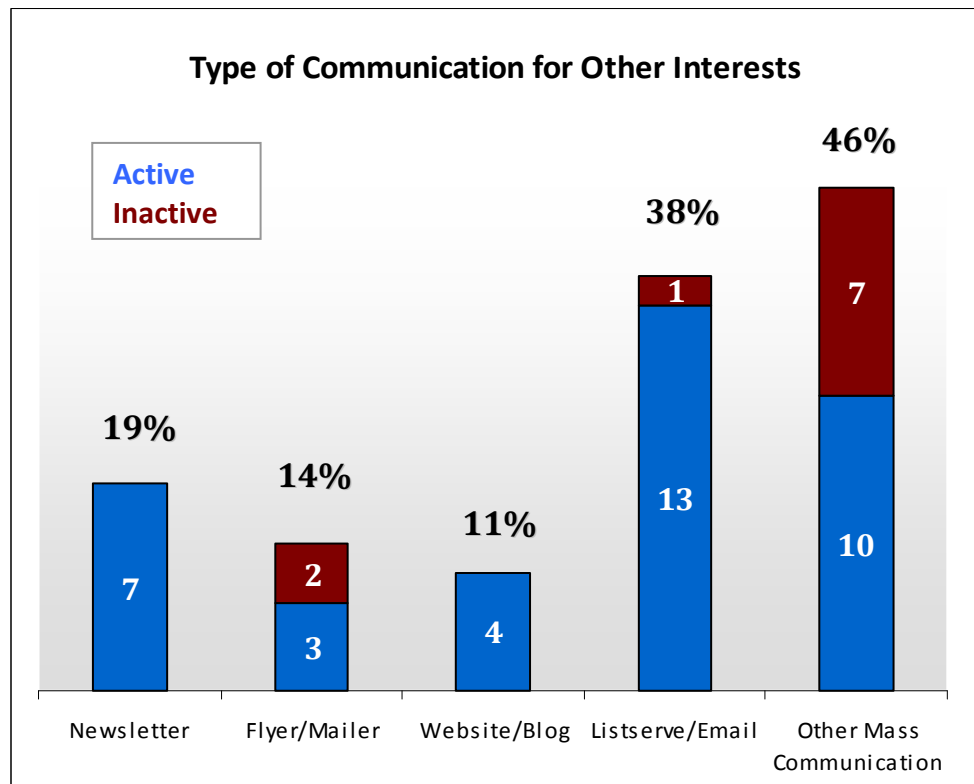


### How are your neighbors informed of other events or issues of interest?

The associations were also asked to report on how they informed neighbors on other events or issues of interest to the neighborhoods. These events or issues could be street changes, city meetings, neighborhood watches, and other items that affect some or all of the residents. Nearly half of respondents use Other Mass Communication to inform their neighbors of these topics. The most popular form of this was Word of Mouth and Door-to-Door. Two of the 'inactive' answered they simply use newspaper and city publications but have no other means of informing neighbors. This essentially means they are not adding any communication that people without a Neighborhood Association already receive. Eight of these 17 used this 'Other' form of communication to augment one of the other types of notice. The responses are recorded below in Figure 4.

**Figure 4**

Word of Mouth, Door-to-Door and email lists were the most common ways respondents inform their neighbors of other events and issues. More formal associations have a newsletter going out to all homes or a website where they post any news.



## Concluding Remarks

There is a wide range of size, activity level, and formality in Ames Neighborhood Associations. The main contact for the associations plays a large role in the activity level. During phone conversations especially, respondents indicated some of the lack of activity was due to health issues as well as the main issues from above (First Question). When asked about getting other neighbors involved some responded others were too busy, especially families with children. The more formal associations tended to be ones in more defined areas geographically like Somerset, or with strong goals like Historic Old Town.

The City understands it is not necessary to have regular board meetings and by-laws to be an active association. However, in inactive associations one or a few neighbors may not be representative of the entire area and therefore may not be able to speak on behalf of all the residents. Showing these inactive Neighborhood Associations on the City's map and list is misleading.

From the several options presented above to address inactive or somewhat inactive neighborhood associations, City staff makes the following recommendations:

- City staff will attempt one more time to contact those three neighborhood associations that have not yet made contact. If not contact is possible, these three will be removed from the City's list and map.
- City staff will notify the representatives of the six completely inactive neighborhood associations that the association will be removed from the City's list and map, but offer to maintain that person as a "Neighborhood Contact," that is someone to whom the City will provide information of interest to neighborhoods (e.g. special notices of meetings, Neighborhood News). This Neighborhood Contact could share this information with neighbors, but there will be no specific geographic area associated with that neighborhood contact.
- City staff will offer to work with representatives of the nine somewhat inactive associations to help them engage more members and expand two-way communication between neighborhood residents and the neighborhood association representative. If the neighborhood association representative does not respond or does not choose to take advantage of this assistance, then the association would be dropped from the City's list and map. Again the City staff will offer to maintain that representative as a Neighborhood Contact.
- City staff will also offer the opportunity to be listed as a Neighborhood Contact to contacts made through the Street 'N' Greet Block Party Trailer and the Neighborhood Improvement Program. City staff will also continue to

offer assistance to help these smaller groups to expand and become Neighborhood Associations should they care to or help them in less formal ways to strengthen their neighborhoods.

It is a goal of City staff to encourage communication within neighborhoods in Ames and in this way to encourage and help leaders to make strong neighborhoods.

### Active Associations

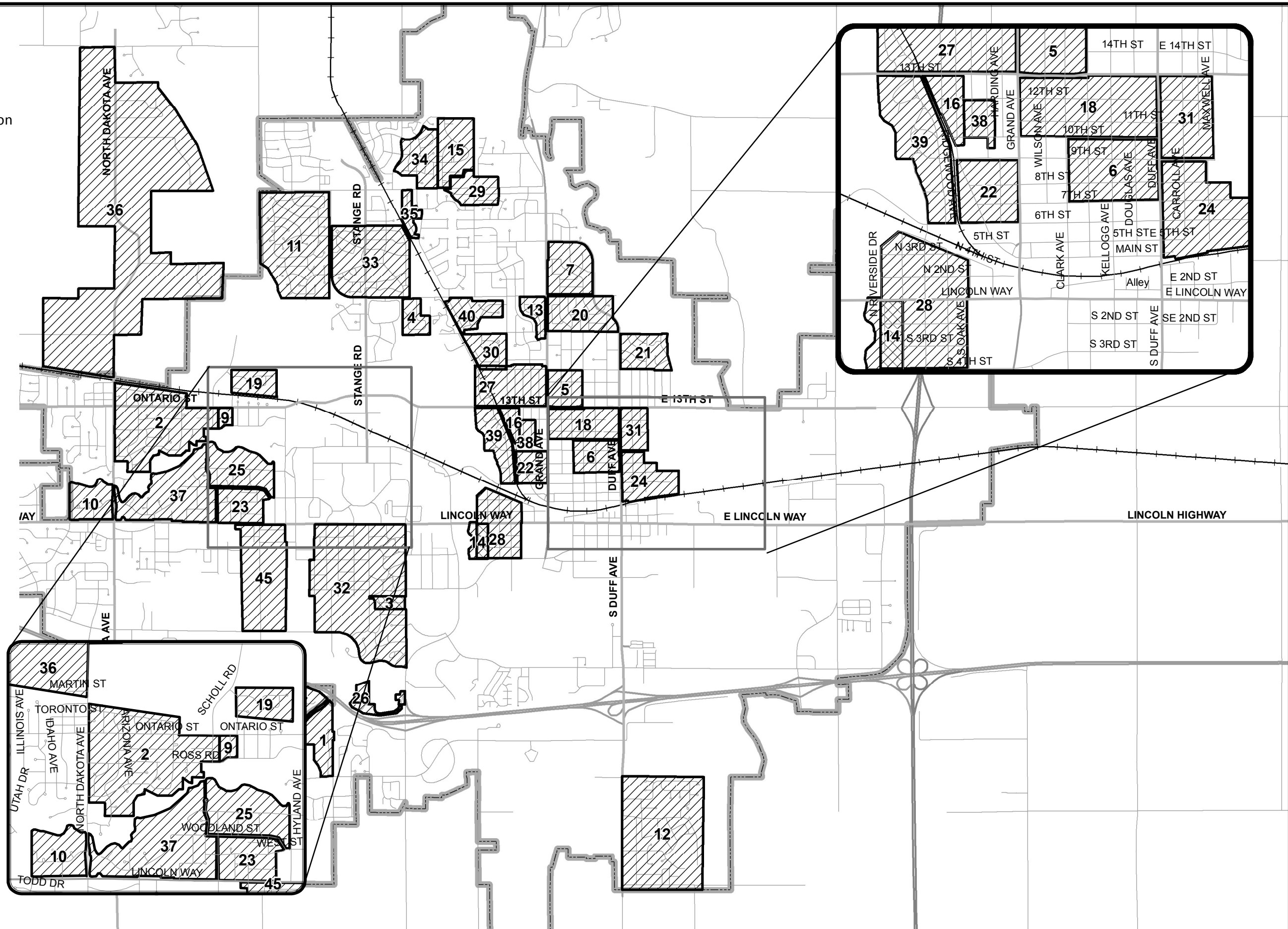
1. Timberland Road N.A.
3. Colonial Village N.A.
6. Historic Old Town N.A.
10. Westbend N.A.
11. Northridge Homeowners Association
15. Stone Brooke N.A.
16. Friendship N.A.
17. Meadow Glen Road N.A.
18. North Old Town N.A.
19. King-Am N.A.
20. Meeker North N.A.
23. Westside N.A.
25. Oak-Wood-Forest N.A.
26. Ironwood Court N.A.
28. Oak-Riverside N.A.
29. Top-O-Hollow N.A.
31. Willson-Beardshear N.A.
32. South Campus Area N.A.
33. Somerset Village N.A.
34. Bloomington Heights N.A.
38. Emanon N.A.
40. Allenview N.A.

### Inactive Associations

2. Ontario N.A.
4. Prairie View N.A.
5. Garden District N.A. \*
7. Northeast N.A.
9. Michigan Ave N.A.
12. Kate Mitchell N.A.
13. Ferndale/Furman N.A.
14. S.Riverside-S.Russell N.A.
21. Homewood N.A. \*
22. Hodge N.A.
24. Bandshell N.A.
27. Grand-Summit N.A.
30. Bel Air N.A.
35. Northwest Parkview N.A.
36. Onion Creek N.A.
37. Edwards N.A.
39. Brookside N.A.
45. State Ave N.A. \*

\*denotes non-responsive association

Patterns are shown only to clarify Association boundaries.





## Neighborhood Association Annual Report

**Required Information** *for the period January 2009 to December 2009*

**1. Neighborhood Association Name:**

**2. Current President/Primary Representative**

Name:

Address:

Zip Code:

Phone Number:

E-mail Address:

**3. Does the neighborhood association have regular social events and/or meetings?**

**YES** ☐ **NO** ☐

**A. If so, which ones?**

☐ General Membership meetings

☐ Block Party

☐ Board meetings

☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ Picnics/potlucks

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**B. When were the last such events?**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**4. How are the neighbors informed of these events?**

☐ Neighborhood Assn. newsletter

☐ Listserve

☐ Flyer/Mailer

☐ Other mass communication

☐ Website/Blog

**5. When and at what location do you plan to have your next annual meeting or other annual event?**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**6. How are your neighbors informed of other events or issues of interest?**

☐ Newsletter/Mailer

☐ Listserve

☐ Website/Blog

☐ Other mass communication

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Who should the City send development notices to (if not contact above)?**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**8. Document Submittal-** please attach a copy of the following information *should it apply to your association*:

**A. The name, address, phone number and e-mail address of each board member and officer** (please list the president first).

**B. A list of each committee, describing its purpose and structure. Include the name, address, phone number and e-mail of each committee Chair.**

**C. A copy of your Articles of Association and Bylaws** (if they have changed since your last report). Staff is supportive of updating the Articles of Association and Bylaws in order to eliminate or alleviate opportunity to be directly or indirectly exclusive in membership (this would include but not be limited to, charging dues or fees to be a member or restricting voting (to 1) rather than all who join in any meeting).

***Optional Information***

The following are only suggestions to better keep the City informed:

- Neighborhood community-building events
- Partnerships you've developed with other organizations
- Other successful activities, projects or programs
- Photos of events
- Communicating with the City about proposed development projects
- Any changes to Association documents (i.e. Bylaws, Articles of Association, etc.)

***Thanks for your help and your commitment to your neighborhood!***

**Contact Information:**

Jeffrey D. Benson  
Neighborhood Liaison  
e-mail: [jbenson@city.ames.ia.us](mailto:jbenson@city.ames.ia.us)  
Ph: 515-239-5269  
FAX 515-239-5404  
City of Ames, Iowa  
515 Clark, P.O. Box 811  
Ames, IA 50010

Barbara Kloth  
Neighborhood Intern  
  
Ph: 515-239-5227  
FAX 515-239-5404  
City of Ames, Iowa  
515 Clark, P.O. Box 811  
Ames, IA 50010

# Basics of ARC Volunteers

The tenants of this program are to provide assistance to those who would not otherwise be able to maintain their residences due to age, disability or lack of financial resources. The result of volunteer assistance will help avoid the risk of citations for nuisance or maintenance violations and their cost.

Volunteers are provided to the home owner in need. A volunteer could expect to participate in any of the following activities:

- Removal of yard debris and outdoor storage
- Trimming trees and shrubs
- Mowing tall grass & controlling weeds
- Snow removal
- Minor painting
- Repairing or installing exterior handrails and guardrails

This program also provides neighbors the opportunity to work together to maintain and improve the condition of residential, owner-occupied property for the betterment of the neighborhood and community as a whole.

## Contact Information

### Volunteer Center of Story County

Shellie Omgard, Executive Director

Volunteer Center of Story County (VCSC)

130 South Sheldon Suite 201

Ames, Iowa 50014

Phone: 515-268-5323

E-mail: [shellie.omgard@vcstory.org](mailto:shellie.omgard@vcstory.org)

### City of Ames

Jeff Benson, Neighborhood Liaison/City Planner

Planning & Housing Department

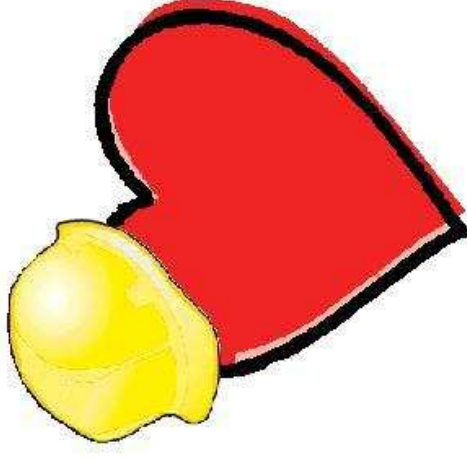
City of Ames

515 Clark Avenue

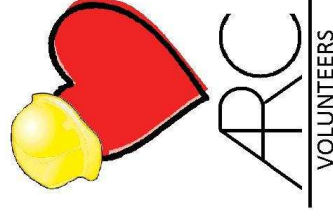
Ames, Iowa 50010

Phone: 515-239-5400

E-mail: [jbenson@city.ames.ia.us](mailto:jbenson@city.ames.ia.us)



## AMES REPAIR & CARE VOLUNTEER PROGRAM



*a partnership between the City of Ames &  
the Volunteer Center of Story County*





**The Ames Repair & Care Volunteer Program is organized into three sub-programs to better fulfill the needs of the entire community.**

## **Volunteers** **Repair & Care**

The first sub-program can help a home owner comply with the city codes and avoid a citation. Either on their own or upon referral by the City Inspector, a property owner can apply for the Volunteers Repair & Care program. The Volunteer Center of Story County would identify volunteers who can do the needed maintenance work and coordinate as needed with the volunteer and the City Inspector so that the work is completed according to city codes.

### **How to apply for assistance:**

Contact the City of Ames for an application.

### **How to volunteer:**

Contact the Volunteer Center of Story County and ask about the program. They will ask you to provide them with information regarding your skills and capabilities as a volunteer and your availability.

You will also be given the option to work within your neighborhood and/or anywhere in the community.

## **Clubs** **Repair & Care**

The second sub-program offers various fraternal, social and youth groups throughout the community the opportunity to connect with people who need help with maintaining their residences throughout Ames or within a particular neighborhood.

This sub-program is similar to the Volunteer Repair & Care; however, the volunteers provide assistance for ongoing needs such as periodic weeding or snow removal.



### **How to apply for assistance:**

Contact the City of Ames for an application.

### **How to volunteer:**

Contact the Volunteer Center of Story County and provide information about your group, skills, and availability for your organization to participate as Club for ongoing maintenance needs of a neighborhood or households throughout Ames.

## **Neighborhoods** **Repair & Care**

The last sub-program helps an entire neighborhood work together to maintain and improve the condition of residential, owner-occupied property. Neighborhoods Repair & Care promotes these enriching experiences and makes a difference in neighborhoods and in the community. City staff will help neighborhood residences to organize one or more events or "work days" when all interested residents help each other with property maintenance.

### **How to get involved:**

A neighborhood representative should contact the City of Ames Neighborhood Liaison to organize a meeting. Neighbors can discuss what maintenance items should be addressed and how they can work together to complete them.

A survey of all neighborhood residents will be distributed where residents can list their skills and also indicate that their own properties have the type of maintenance needs identified at the neighborhood meeting.

City staff will help the neighborhood organize a work day, a work weekend, or any other time frame that best fits the type of work that the neighborhood has decided to work on.

## Strong Neighborhoods

Strong Neighborhoods have the following 6 qualities.



### 1. Organized Neighborhoods

The City of Ames keeps up to date information and a map of all the existing Neighborhood Associations.

### 2. Attractive Neighborhoods

The City has many clean-up and arts programs and grants available to improve neighborhoods.

### 3. Connected Neighborhoods

The Neighborhoods Newsletter is free to any resident. Blog training is also available.

### 4. Involved Neighborhoods

The City of Ames puts on a free six-session course annually called the Ames Citizens Academy.

### 5. Safe Neighborhoods

The Ames Community Resource Officer works with neighborhoods to ensure crime prevention and safety.

### 6. Green Neighborhoods

Maps of bike trails and EcoSmart tips help further the go-green initiative of the City of Ames.

# Guide to Neighborhood Associations



For more information on any of these programs, existing neighborhood associations, or to get started, visit the City of Ames website at:

[www.cityofames.org](http://www.cityofames.org)

Check out some other neighborhood resources online at:

<http://ctb.ku.edu/>

<http://www.nusa.org/organize.htm>

<http://www.neighborhoodsonline.net/>

<http://www.iowalifechanging.com/community/neighborhood/assoc-start.aspx>

## CITY OF AMES NEIGHBORHOOD LIAISON:

**Jeff Benson**

**Planning and Housing**

**515 Clark Ave**

**Ames, IA 50010**

**(515) 239-5269**

**[jbenson@city.ames.ia.us](mailto:jbenson@city.ames.ia.us)**

*Get involved in your  
neighborhood!*



515 CLARK AVE  
AMES, IA 50010

## What is a Neighborhood Association?

A Neighborhood Association is a group of residents who devote time and energy to improve and enhance the quality of life in a defined geographic area. Neighborhood Associations can be highly structured or more informal. The way yours is organized depends on what works best for you and your neighbors. Neighborhood associations are a great way to get to know your neighbors and become involved in your community!

### What do they do?

The types of projects or events a Neighborhood Association takes part in depends on its members. Your priorities and interests translate directly into your Neighborhood Association's actions!

#### A few ideas are:

- o Block Parties or Festivals
- o Neighborhood Crime Watch
- o Neighborhood Clean-up
- o Community Garden
- o Neighborhood Art Project



*Block Parties are a great way to introduce and get to know new neighbors!*

## All about Benefits...

### Direct Contact with City Officials

The Ames City Council holds an annual neighborhood summit so it can gain more understanding of current neighborhood news and issues. Additionally, the City of Ames has a Neighborhood Liaison who works with neighborhood associations and programs.

### Official Notices & Invitations

Registered Neighborhood Associations receive official public notices for zoning changes, subdivision, special use permits, home occupations and other land use issues and changes.

### Special Grants

- o Neighborhood Newsletter Grant
- o Neighborhood Improvement Program Grant
- o Neighborhood Sculpture Program

### Other Programs & Opportunities

- o Neighborhoods Repair & Care (division of Ames Repair & Care Volunteer Program)



*This pergola was built with a Neighborhood Improvement Grant.*



*Other popular projects under this grant are tree and flower plantings and neighborhood benches.*

## How to become a Neighborhood Association

### Step 1- Complete a Formal Application

- o Describe your proposed Neighborhood boundary
- o Provide contact information for one contact person
- o Submit to Department of Planning and Housing

### Step 2- Conduct a Kick-Off Meeting with your Neighbors

- o Review the role and benefits of registered Neighborhood Associations
- o Confirm or adjust the boundaries of the Neighborhood Association
- o Identify strengths or positive attributes of the neighborhood
- o Identify aspiration of neighbors for their neighborhood
- o Discuss potential organizational elements of the Neighborhood Association, such as meetings, social events, contact lists, membership, by-laws, and leadership structure
- o Provide opportunities for more neighbors to become involved