

Staff Report

VISIONING/BRANDING

July 12, 2011

On June 14, 2011 Christy Harper from Brand Endeavor presented the results of her efforts to establish a new vision/brand for our community in response to one of the City Council's top goals

Her recommendations include:

VISION/PROMISE RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Approve the promise/vision statement and strategic platform** (Attachment I)

IDENTITY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Identify a tagline** which is a creative impression of the brand promise
 - The City's tagline should be THE HEARTLAND'S LEADING EDGE.
 - This tagline should be used by the City, Chamber of Commerce, Convention and Visitors Bureau, and Economic Development Commission.
 - Other prominent entities such as the School District, Hospital, and University should be expected to use the tagline when communicating about the city.
- **Develop a new logo** that more strongly communicates the brand promise
 - A new logo will signal a new direction for Ames and will serve as a visual reminder to keep stakeholders aligned with the vision.
 - The new logo should be collectively used by the City, Chamber of Commerce, Convention and Visitors Bureau, and Economic Development Commission.
 - Other prominent entities such as the School District, Hospital, and University should be expected to use the logo when communicating about the city.
- **Develop a new visual system** that strongly communicates the brand promise
 - A new visual system should be considered whether or not we pursue a new logo.
 - The new visual system should be collectively used by the City, Chamber of Commerce, Convention and Visitors Bureau, and Economic Development Commission in order to create a unified external identity for Ames.

COMMUNICATIONS RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Create and empower a Brag Team** led by the City's Public Relations Officer
 - This communication partnership should include the City, Chamber of Commerce, Convention and Visitor's Bureau, Economic Development Commission, University, School District, Hospital, and other groups.
 - This team should meet at least once per month to direct communications initiatives and ensure consistency of messaging.
 - A Train-the-Trainer workshop should be scheduled for all Brag Team members to teach them about the findings and concepts so they can train other community members to assure future continuity.
- **Roll out vision** to community sectors in a series of meetings
 - Following the Train-the-Trainer meetings, 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 how the vision will be applied with that sector and obtain commitments for the next steps.
- **Inventory and communicate "leading edge" proof points**
 - During each community meeting, the Brag Team should create an inventory of leading edge proof points that reflect how Ames is currently delivering on the vision (both now and historically).
 - The Brag Team should develop a process for keeping the list current and communicating it within the city, regionally, and nationally.
 - A Brag Team member from the Chamber of Commerce or Economic Development Commission should be assigned to communicate significant new proof points externally.
- **Establish Ames' thought leadership in the region**
 - A Speaker's Bureau should be established whereby Brag Team members and sector leaders present leading edge ideas at conferences.
 - Pursue a convention and visitor's strategy that recruits conferences and meetings that align with the leading edge promise.

- AEDC should continue to pursue a business recruitment strategy that aligns with the vision.
- **Ensure that the Vision idea and language is infused into city communications**
 - The City should ensure all communications materials reflect the brand promise by updating “About Ames” section of the website, recasting print material, and focusing on the adjectives: smart, open-minded, and confident.
 - Develop new boilerplate for press releases
 - Develop new boilerplate language to for all partners to use in describing Ames
 - Create a new communication tools site to be accessed by all stakeholders
- **Create visual reminders of the Vision to encourage adoption and accountability**
 - Display posters with logo and tagline in City Hall, Council Chambers, Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development Commission, Convention and Visitors Bureau, Library, and other locations as appropriate.
 - Distribute wallet cards at community roll out meetings.
 - Include tagline on gateway signs.
 - Create Wall of Fame recognizing leading edge accomplishments in the community.

ACTION RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Assess and close gaps between promise and delivery**
 - Use the inventory of proof points to create a gap analysis to determine in what sectors are we strongly delivering on the “leading edge” and in what sectors are we having challenges.
 - Develop a strategic plan with the assistance of a relevant expert to help determine how to close the gaps.
- **Determine a process for evaluating whether key initiatives align with the Vision.**
 - When evaluating key initiatives, develop evaluation criteria to help measure the proposal’s alignment with the vision.
 - Consider a decision tree to accomplish this evaluation.

- **Encourage personal responsibility and recognize those who embody the Vision**

- Expect every citizen to deliver on the brand promise by requiring innovative solutions, standing for collaboration, and being decisive.

- Everyone must take personal responsibility for behaving in a way that aligns with the brand.

- Develop an annual awards program to recognize those in the community who are living the vision every day.

NEXT STEPS

Now that the vision/branding study has been completed, the City Council should decide which of the recommended actions suggested by Brand Endeavor should be pursued in order to accomplish one of the City Council's top priorities.

The 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.

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The Ames strategic platform

WHO we're for	Those who want the charms and convenience of a small town with the opportunities and amenities that come from a major University
WHAT we do	Ames is the Heartland's leading edge , fostering creativity and innovation at the forefront of the world's important issues that the Midwest is uniquely positioned to address
WHY we do it	To create a community where everyone has opportunities to discover and thrive

HOW we do it	REQUIRE innovative solutions	Stand for COLLABORATION	Be DECISIVE
WHO we are	Smart	Open-minded	Confident

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