

Staff Report

**PROPOSED NEW TAGLINE RECOMMENDATION
FROM VISIONING STEERING COMMITTEE**

November 1, 2011

In September City staff reported to City Council a concern with the recently adopted new tagline. In doing a search on the suggested tagline, it was determined the City of Council Bluffs, Iowa, was using a tagline strikingly similar to the one suggested by Brand Endeavor. In light of this revelation, our community visioning consultant, Brand Endeavor President Christie Harper, offered to work with outside writers to bring other options to the table. During the September meeting, Council asked that the Visioning Steering Committee be reconvened to work with Ms. Harper to identify a new recommended tagline for the City Council's consideration.

On Friday, October 14, the Visioning Steering Committee met with Ms. Harper via telephone. In advance of the meeting, steering committee members were supplied with 10 potential taglines (see Attachment I), with some having alternate variations. The taglines were discussed in great detail with the pros and cons of each variation debated. The options generated significant feedback and commentary.

From the large list, the tagline options were narrowed to seven (see Attachment II). Steering committee members began doing searches on those options via the Internet to look for potential issues. During this preliminary search, one of the well-received options was later viewed by several members as unacceptable. The tagline was:

City of Ames, Iowa
America's Smartland

Although this tagline was considered bold, brash, aggressive, and fun by the committee, there were some Internet references from a song lyric that caused many members to back away. When the taglines were ranked, "America's Smartland" was eliminated by several committee members. Of the remaining six options, two taglines were much more highly ranked than the other four. The two highest ranking options are listed below.

No. 1

City of Ames, Iowa
Where Discovery Grows

No. 2

City of Ames, Iowa
Heartland Inspiration. World-Class Innovation

“Where Discovery Grows”

The “Where Discovery Grows” tagline found its strength in its subtle nod to our community’s roots in agriculture. Alternate versions of this tagline included “Innovation” vs. “Discovery” and “Thrives” vs. “Grows” as options. (For example, “Where Innovation Thrives”). “Where Discovery Grows” refers back to Ames as a university community with a commitment to learning, research, and education. It focuses on our strengths as identified by both insiders and outsiders in the extensive surveying performed during the visioning process.

Others thought the agriculture reference was too pronounced at a time when our community is seeking to broaden its image beyond agriculture. In conducting Internet searches, the word “discovery” was often found in connection with museums, science-related organizations, and travel marketing.

Heartland Inspiration. World-Class Innovation.

Ms. Harper believed this tagline was the most “solid, traditional, and safe.” Its rhythm appealed to many committee members, as well as tie-ins to our school and university communities, which both promote “world-class education.”

While the words and the phrasing were considered very positive and encouraging, it was noted this tagline lacks a verb or “action” word. Others complained it was too wordy and hard to remember.

Internet Search

Internet searches on multiple search engines (Google, Yahoo, Bing, Ask, etc.) did not reveal a conflict with either of these taglines. A trademark search found “innovation” and “inspiration” where often words associated with tech companies, but neither tagline would be in conflict with an existing trademarked taglines.

OPTIONS RELATED TO A NEW TAGLINE:

1. The City Council can move ahead to approve “Where Discovery Grows” as the community’s new tagline.
2. The City Council can choose not to approve a new tagline.

VISIONING STEERING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION FOR A NEW TAGLINE:

Selecting a tagline proved to be a more difficult task than most members expected. Unfortunately, there was not a single tagline that jumped out to everyone as the best. However, after analysis and discussion, it appeared there were several taglines the committee members were comfortable recommending. When the final rankings were provided, two taglines moved to the forefront, with “Where Discovery Grows” garnering the highest ranking. While not ranked as a highly, the next four were grouped together, suggesting they all had about the same level of support.

CITY OF AMES
EXPLORING ALTERNATIVE TAGLINES
October 13, 2011

The Assignment

To explore alternative taglines for the City of Ames that will express the ideas contained within the vision platform agreed upon by Ames citizens and city council in June 2011.

Brand Endeavor assembled a team of 6 highly experienced strategists and copywriters, each of whom worked independently to develop taglines. The team then came together collectively for a brainstorming session, in which we generated more than 75 different taglines. We worked together to select the best 10 taglines, with a few alternates for many of the 10, which we present to you in this document.

You should evaluate the taglines based on the following criteria:

- Does it creatively express the vision?
- Is it should short (3-5 words is ideal, 7 is maximum,) memorable and emotional?
- Does it signal to inside and outside audiences what Ames is trying to be?
- Does it empower inside and outside audiences to hold you to that promise?
- Could it last approximately 10 years?

The taglines shown in this document have not been screened at all through search engines or the US Patent & Trademark Office website. The Steering Committee will vet any taglines you deem to be finalists. You should assume that at least 50% or more of the lines you select will be later eliminated due to potential conflicts – so you should plan to find at least 6 favorites to submit for screening in order to narrow the list to 3 finalists.

Once the committee has selected its preferred line, Brand Endeavor will re-write the strategic platform and vision statement to incorporate the line.

Key Concepts

The tagline should express the core idea expressed in 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

Key concepts and words we explored included:

- Ames' role as the creative innovator of the Midwest
Innovation, Discovery, Future, Create, Breakthroughs, Smart, Advance
- Ames' unique role and location in America's Heartland; and its small-town charm
Heartland, Heart, Home, Center, Inspiration, Promise
- Subtle acknowledgement of Ames' leadership in agriculture and veterinary innovation
Cultivate, Grow, Thrive, Abundance, Bounty

RECOMMENDED TAGLINES

The preferred line is shown locked up with the name of the city in the left column. Alternate lines are presented in the right column. The lines are not presented in order of preference, but are grouped thematically.

Preferred Taglines	Alternative Lines
<i>Ames, Iowa</i> Welcoming Innovation	Welcome Innovation Welcome to Innovation
<i>Ames, Iowa</i> The Heart of Innovation	The Center of Innovation
<i>Ames, Iowa</i> Home to Innovation	The Home of Innovation
<i>Ames, Iowa</i> The Promise of the Heartland	Fulfilling the Promise of the Heartland
<i>Ames, Iowa</i> Creating the Future from the Heartland	Creating the Future in the Heartland Reinventing from the Heartland
<i>Ames, Iowa</i> America's Smartland	
<i>Ames, Iowa</i> Heartland inspiration. World class innovation.	Small town inspiration. World class innovation. Turning inspiration into innovation
<i>Ames, Iowa</i> Cultivating Innovation	Cultivating Breakthroughs Cultivating the Future
<i>Ames, Iowa</i> Where Discovery Grows	Where Innovation Grows Where Innovation Thrives
<i>Ames, Iowa</i> Abundant Innovation	Innovation in Abundance A Bounty of Innovation

ATTACHMENT II

Visioning Steering Committee's Top Seven Suggested Taglines:

AMERICA'S SMARTLAND

HEARTLAND INSPIRATION. WORLD-CLASS INNOVATION

WHERE DISCOVERY GROWS

WHERE INNOVATION THRIVES

GROWING DISCOVERY

WHERE DISCOVERY HAPPENS

CULTIVATING INNOVATION