CITY OF Algona IOWA

Lea este boletín en español

FALL/WINTER 2025

NEWSLETTER

Creating a dynamic downtown district



The City of Algona received a $100,000 Community Catalyst Grant from the Iowa Economic Development Authority for a downtown renovation project. Read more on page 3.

A vibrant downtown serves as the heartbeat of a community. In addition to shopping, services and dining, the downtown district provides a space for connection, culture, and building community with one another.

Throughout the past several months, Algona's downtown has experienced several significant updates. Some of these are completed and others are still underway, but all have the potential to make an incredible difference to our broader community.

Earlier this year, the City began working on improvements to the Welcome Center on State Street. The Welcome Center opened in December of 2005, and has since served as a place for both residents and travelers to take a break, learn about upcoming events and access public restrooms downtown. Recently we replaced the carpeting and improved the restroom fixtures. Exterior updates include new sidewalks, landscaping and signs on the north side of the building, adjacent to the alley and parking lot. A special thanks to volunteers with the Master Gardeners for their help with the landscaping work.

In June, we began work on the Nebraska Street Corridor. This project includes the full reconstruction of two blocks on Thorington Street, one block of Nebraska Street and reconstruction of the adjacent city parking lot. In addition to replacing important underground infrastructure and improving storm water management, this project will create an environment to support outdoor events. The new and improved parking lot will feature trees and "green infrastucture" to offer an inviting space for downtown shoppers, visitors and residents alike.

This summer, the City of Algona was awarded a $100,000 Community Catalyst grant from the Iowa Economic Development Authority for renovations at the former State Hotel building. Luke Arrowood, of Arrowood's Active Aging, is taking the lead on the project. Luke offers personal training services on the lower level of this building. He plans to transform the main floor into a Ninja-warrior style gym and workout space, a retail area and an apartment. Once the first phase of the project is complete, Luke will begin improvement plans for the second floor of the building, which once served as a hotel. It's a large project with many exciting possibilities that will positively impact the entire downtown district.

Enhancements like updated infrastructure, inviting public spaces, and improved walkability make downtown more accessible and enjoyable, encouraging both residents and visitors to spend more time there. Together we can, and together we are, ensuring that Algona's downtown remains a thriving, welcoming destination for years to come.

Mayor Rick Murphy

New faces join City of Algona staff



Daniel Cotterill, *Patrol Officer*

Daniel Cotterill joined the Police Department in August. Cotterill has 16 years of experience as a law enforcement officer. He most recently served as an officer with the City of Humboldt, and has also worked in West Branch, Lisbon and at the University of Iowa in addition to police agencies in the United Kingdom.



Stephen Hale, *Patrol Officer*

The Police Department added Stephen Hale in September. Hale recently served as an officer with the City of Humboldt and in Lake City, Iowa, where he also was the acting police chief. Previously, Hale served as an E5 Sergeant in the United States Army Reserve from 2008-2020 as a Military Police Officer.



Clarence Carlson, *Dispatcher*

Clarence Carlson joined the Algona Police Department as a dispatcher in September. Carlson is from the rural Sexton area and most recently served as Director of Operations for the Chrome Corner.

FIND CITY JOB OPENINGS ONLINE AT:
www.algonaiowa.gov/apply



Kate Wind, *Librarian*

Kate Wind began as a library assistant in August. Wind earned her Bachelor of Fine Arts from the University of Minnesota and the Guthrie Theater Actor Training Program. In addition to experience as a performer and collaborator in a variety of theatrical and film productions, Wind has served with the Minnesota Reading Corps as a literacy coach and college prep tutor for students in Twin Cities public schools. Most recently she worked as a senior stylist for Stitch Fix.



Michele Espe, *Librarian*

The library welcomed Michele Espe in September. A rural Fenton native, Espe returned to the area and served as the library director for the Fenton Library. During her time there, she enjoyed a wide range of duties, including implementing a successful speaker series. Espe taught high school social sciences for many years in Minnesota and Iowa.

Three retire from city staff

This fall three employees with the City of Algona are retiring from their respective roles. Best wishes to each in their retirement!



Judy Schiltz
Algona Public Library
23 years of service



Pam Burtnett
Algona Public Library
11 years of service



Craig Barslou
Algona Police Department
22 years of service



$100,000 GRANT SUPPORTS DOWNTOWN RENOVATION

"We are incredibly grateful to the City of Algona and IEDA for these grants, which provide us with a unique opportunity to revitalize an underutilized building. Our immediate focus is to ensure the structural integrity of the building, preserving it as a lasting landmark for future generations."

-Luke Arrowood

Renovations to the building will include the addition of a studio apartment in the west rear portion of the building and a retail storefront in the east half of the front of the building. The wall separating the building into 210 and 212 will be opened and the renovated space will be utilized as a gym, activity space and training area. The other side of the building will house a commercial gym. Arrowood currently utilizes the lower level of the building as a personal training facility

This project includes infrastructure to allow for the development of second floor apartments in the future. Restoring the building's historic double storefront is also a key aspect of the project, with the installation of new windows and doors and other façade improvements. The completion date for the grant-funded portion of the project is July 2027.

"The State Hotel building has a large footprint in our downtown and has been largely unutilized for several years. Projects like this are beneficial to the entire downtown district, in addition to bringing new retail, services and living space to State Street," said Deputy City Administrator Barb Smith.

City awarded IEDA Community Catalyst grant

The City of Algona was awarded a $100,000 Community Catalyst grant from the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) for a project with Luke Arrowood of Arrowood's Active Aging for the redevelopment of the State Hotel Building located at 210 and 212 E. State Street.

The City contributed an additional matching economic development grant of $100,000 to the project.

Through the Community Catalyst Building Remediation Program, the IEDA provides grants to communities for the redevelopment, rehabilitation or deconstruction of buildings to stimulate economic growth or reinvestment in the community.

To learn more about economic development programs available for local businesses, contact Algona City Hall at 515-295-2411.



Luke Arrowood is using the lower level of the building for his personal training business, Arrowood's Active Aging.

ABOVE LEFT: Arrowood and Deputy City Administrator Barb Smith in front of the building on State Street. Renovations are currently underway to redevelop the property, which was awarded a $100,000 grant from the Iowa Economic Development Authority.

Revolving Loan Funds SUPPORT LITTLE SPROUTS DAYCARE

The City of Algona's Small Business Revolving Loan Fund program offers loans between $5,000 and $20,000 per applicant. The program guidelines limit the interest to half of the prime interest rate, with a maximum of 2.5 percent.

The goal of the fund is to aid business start-ups and existing businesses with expansion, remodeling or relocating to Algona or to facilitate business succession. Funds may be utilized for the acquisition, construction, and reconstruction of retail and commercial buildings, structures, and other real property, acquisition or modernization of equipment and machinery, reuse of vacant or abandoned facilities, façade improvements, product development and marketing.

Projects must be exclusively located within the City of Algona and be consistent with the City's comprehensive plan. To apply for a revolving loan, businesses may submit an application, along with documentation of the project cost, profit and loss statements, a business plan, credit report and other details.

For additional information about the Small Business Revolving Loan Fund, contact Barb Smith at City Hall at 515-295-2411 or email her at bsmith@algonaiowa.gov.





Little Sprouts Daycare was the recipient of a revolving loan from the City of Algona for roof repairs.

The Algona City Council approved a Small Business Revolving Loan Fund for $20,000 to Little Sprouts Daycare. Funds will be utilized for roof repairs at the daycare facility, located at 121 N. Dodge Street.

Little Sprouts Daycare, owned and operated by Samantha Elbert, R.N., opened in October of 2021 and has steadily grown over the past four years. The center can care for up to 64 children from six-week-old infants to kindergarteners with the help of approximately 20 employees. Little Sprouts Daycare is rated by the State of Iowa's quality system, the Iowa Quality for Kids (IQ4K) program.

"This is a great example of how the City's Revolving Loan Fund can help small businesses, whether they are new or an existing business," said Deputy City Administrator Barb Smith. "Childcare is essential to supporting our local workforce and the broader economic development within the region. We are glad to be able to offer this loan to Little Sprouts to help them maintain a safe and high-quality facility."





The Nebraska/Thorington Street parking lot will be finished in October, with additional work wrapping up by November 15.

Progress continues on the Nebraska Street Corridor

This project includes full reconstruction of two blocks of Thorington Street, from State Street to McGregor Street, one block of Nebraska Street, from Thorington Street to Dodge Street, and reconstruction of the adjacent city parking lot. The scope of work includes:

- Replacement or improvements to underground utilities (storm water, water, and sanitary sewer)
- New street subdrains and installation of sump pump collector lines
- New street and parking lot lighting
- Fire hydrant improvements
- Replacement of existing and construction of new sidewalk
- Installation of bike racks and benches
- Storm water management improvements, including permeable pavers and underground storage, along with several bio-cell and tree trench systems, landscaped planting areas and more than 40 trees.
- Other related improvements

The parking lot is expected to open in October, with all major construction work completed by November 15, 2025. The final completion date for the project is June 15, 2026 to allow for spring plant installations, if needed due to fall weather conditions.

Fall decoration reminders for city cemeteries

Vases in the fall and winter

Vases in East Lawn Cemetery and the Memorial Addition of Riverview Cemetery must be in the inverted, stored position in the provided recess well of the marker or ground vase container with the bottom of the vase flush with the marker or vase holder from October 15 to April 15. The City reserves the right to invert all empty vases the first week of November of each year.

Artificial flowers

Artificial flowers will be allowed year around in both cemeteries when securely fastened in a vase, which is a permanent part of the marker or monument. If artificial flowers are left in the vases all year round and the vases are not inverted by October 15 of each year, the City will not be held responsible for any damage to the flowers or vases. No glass containers are allowed.

Wreaths and Shepherd Hooks

One shepherd hook will be allowed per monument located directly adjacent to the monument on the right side of the monument from April 15 to October 15 of each year and from December 1 to March 1 of each year. One flower saddle is allowed per headstone year around. Wreaths are allowed on graves from December 1 to March 1. The City is not responsible for damage to decorations.

Work on wastewater treatment facility continues



Significant changes have occured on the wastewater treatment facility campus since August 2024 (left) and August 2025 (right).



The most significant upgrade at the plant is a change in the treatment process from a trickling filter facility to a suspended growth process using activated sludge treatment system via an oxidation ditch. The construction of the oxidation ditch is shown in August 2024 (above left) and in August 2025 (above right).

Transitioning to a new treatment system

In the new system, wastewater will flow into the oxidation ditch after the initial screening.

Helpful bacteria live in the water and break down waste as it moves through different stages. In the first stage, there is no oxygen in the water, which lets certain bacteria start removing nutrients.

In the next stage, oxygen is added by slow-turning machines or bubbling air, allowing other bacteria to eat the remaining waste and change harmful ammonia into safer forms. Later, the oxygen is reduced again so bacteria can turn leftover nitrogen into harmless gas that escapes into the air.

After the oxidation ditch, water travels into clarifiers and settling tanks where solids sink to the bottom and are removed. The water then flows through an Ultraviolet (UV) disinfection unit where powerful lamps shine UV light into the water killing bacteria like E.coli as well as harmful viruses and other microorganisms.

Once the water passes through UV, it is clean enough to leave the plant by flowing into the river.

Find more information and project photos online at:
www.algonaiowa.gov/wastewater

Project goals

Reduce Nutrient output: This project is driven by the need to reduce the nutrient levels exiting the plant. The Iowa DNR has required all major wastewater facilities to implement treatment processes for reducing nitrogen and phosphorus in the facility effluent. Nutrient runoff causes water quality issues throughout the Mississippi watershed all the way to the Gulf of Mexico. Improvements at the Algona plant will reduce output of total nitrogen by 66% and total phosphorus 75%. This part of the project accounts for nearly $20 million of the total cost.

Increased Flow and Loading Capacity: As more major storm events occur, increased capacity at the facility is needed to reduce system back-ups. The plant's peak capacity will be increasing by nearly 30% from 4.72 to 6.08 million gallons/day. Critical equipment is also being raised, to improve operations during storms and during times when the river level is high.

Update Equipment and Structures: Several major pieces of equipment and structures have exceeded or are nearing the end of their useful life. Previously identified upgrades were deferred to coincide with this larger project.



SNOW ORDINANCE REMINDERS

When the snow begins to fall, the City of Algona may issue a snow emergency. When a snow emergency is declared, the ordinance impacts city parking lots and street parking.

Snow emergencies are announced via Alert Iowa, online at www.algonaiowa.gov, the City of Algona's Facebook page, and on KLGA/KLGZ radio (92.7/98.5).

Residents can sign up for Alert Iowa notifications by visiting the City's website at www.algonaiowa.gov and clicking on the Alert Iowa icon in the lower left corner of the page.

Avoid a ticket this winter

- Vehicles must park off the streets once the snow emergency goes in effect and remain off the streets until the snow emergency is terminated (emergency vehicles are an exception to this). A vehicle in violation of this Ordinance is subject to a fine of $25.
- A vehicle in violation of this Ordinance may also be towed, as directed by the Chief of Police. The owner of a towed vehicle is responsible for the standard fine, towing and storage costs.
- Do not push or blow snow onto or across public streets or into alleys.
- Snow from sidewalks is to be removed within 24 hours of the end of a snowfall.
- Vehicles that are parked in city lots must park on side "A" and then alternate to side "B," as instructed in the snow ordinance, from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. for the duration of the snow emergency.

For more information, call City Hall at 515-295-2411.

Sanitary sewer updates

Cost share program now available for footing drain improvements

Last year the City of Algona began its investigation of footing drain connections in neighborhoods with a history of sewer backups, through the Footing Drain Inspection Program.

The goal of the program is to identify homes that have illegal connections to the sanitary sewer system, as the excess water from these connections can overload the system and contribute to sewer backups. After investigating approximately 620 homes, representatives of WHKS & Co. reported that 32 violations were found (about 6%).

The Algona City Council established a sanitary sewer footing drain disconnection cost share pilot program in April, to assist property owners with the expense of fixing issues related to illegal connections. The program will provide a cost share incentive for up to 50% of eligible expenses, not to exceed $2,500, to disconnect improper footing (foundation) drains from the sanitary sewer system. Additional information is available at www.algonaiowa.gov/permits.

The City will continue to investigate the sanitary sewer system through a variety of initiatives. In September the council approved a manhole and sanitary sewer pipe lining rehabilitation project, which will begin this fall and continue into the spring of 2026.

The scope of work was developed based on testing of public infrastructure (smoke testing, dye testing, etc.) from the fall of 2024 which consists of the central, southern, and eastern sections of the city. Work includes replacing pipe/connections to manholes, replacement of eight manholes, lining and grouting of manholes, and rehabilitation/replacement of castings (top of manholes) of 96 manholes throughout the city.

To learn more about the program, call 515-295-2411 or visit www.algonaiowa.gov/wastewater.





FINAL PHASE OF AIRPORT RUNWAY EXTENSION PROJECT

The Algona Municipal Airport runway closed in August to complete the final phase of the runway extension project and is expected to reopen this fall. The grass runway will close in early October for approximately two weeks to complete the project.

Project planning, assessment and reviews

Planning for the runway extension began in 2013. A need for the project was determined when a FAA flight obstruction study identified U.S. Highway 18 as an obstruction to the approach surfaces of Runway 12 and took away night approaches onto Runway End 12. As a result, the northern 200-foot runway surface needed to be displaced for landing to the south. After completion of the project all approaches, including Runway End 12, will be restored for daytime and nighttime use by pilots.

Environmental assessment and reviews began in 2016, and planning and design work proceeded in 2017 and 2018. In 2018 the City Council declared its intent to fund final site-specific design for construction of the runway extension and authorized procedures to acquire land and easements for the future extension. In 2019 the City approved a grant agreement with the FAA for 90% of the allowable costs for acquisition of parcels necessary for the extension. Acquisitions were completed in 2019 and 2020.

Project phases

In 2021 the City of Algona approved an engineering services agreement and GIS data collection for the future extension. Phase 1 of the project was originally planned to occur in 2022 but was delayed due to additional federal reviews. Phase 1 consisted of grading and drainage improvements to extend Runway 30 by 240 feet to the southeast; displace the end of Runway End 12 by 200 feet; construction turnaround on the ends of Runway 30 and Runway 12. Phase 1 improvements were completed in the fall of 2023.

In June 2024, the City Council awarded a construction contract to Voltmer, Inc of Decorah, Iowa for Phase 2 of the project, which included paving, edge lighting, vault navigation aids and pavement markings, for $1,759,634.50 contingent upon FAA approving grant funding. Based on the FAA grant cost-share ratio, it is expected that the FAA will be responsible for $1,583,671 (90%) of the as-bid cost with the City funding the remaining costs of $175,964 (10%).

Final phase paves runway

This final phase of the airport project involves paving a 240-foot runway extension to the south of the existing Runway 30, a 200-foot displacement of Runway 12, and constructing turnarounds beyond the hold position markings at both ends of the runway. These turnarounds will allow pilots to pull off the runway on either end to perform run-ups and other checks.

Additionally, a new electrical vault building will be constructed, and related equipment installed, to ensure functional lighting and navigational aids for pilots. The PAPIs, lights that guide pilots on the proper approach angle to the airport, and REILs, strobe lights at the ends of the runways, will be moved and replaced with new ones. New edge lighting will also be installed for the runway, turnarounds, and taxiway.

Once complete, the runway numbering classifications will be updated from 12/30 to 13/31 per Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations to reflect the changes in runway headings due to magnetic declination.









Public Safety Night Out held on September 11

Hundreds of people from across Kossuth County gathered at the Kossuth County Fairgrounds to reflect on September 11 and celebrate the important role that public safety personnel play in the community.

Mayor Rick Murphy began the evening with a speech to welcome guests and reflect upon the anniversary of September 11, followed by the National Anthem sung by the Algona High School choir.

"Thank you for gathering with us today as we honor and remember the lives lost on September 11, 2001. It has been 24 years, yet the memories of that day remain vivid in our hearts—the shock, the sorrow, and the unity that followed," Murphy said.

"Our remembrance carries an even deeper weight as we continue to remember and mourn the loss of Officer Kevin Cram, who was tragically killed while serving our community on September 13, 2023. His dedication, courage, and sacrifice reflect the same spirit of service we honor today—the willingness to do your duty with kindness and compassion for others. Today is about remembrance, but it is also about reflection. Reflection on the values that carried us forward—compassion, courage, and a deep commitment to one another. As we celebrate this night of community and connection, let us stand together in a spirit of unity and respect, keeping alive the promise to never forget," he said.

A wide range of activities and events were shared throughout the night, including K-9 demonstrations, obstacle course, drone demos, public safety vehicles and equipment on display and much more. In addition, games, activities and information from community organizations, businesses and churches was also available.

Public Safety Night Out is coordinated by the Algona Police Department, Kossuth County Sheriff's Office, Algona Fire Department, Kossuth County EMS, Kossuth County Emergency Management and the City of Algona.

THANK YOU, SPONSORS!

Thank you to the generous sponsors who helped make Public Safety Night Out a success! In addition, thank you to the churches, community organizations, businesses and volunteers that took part in this event.

- ***Algona Publishing***
- ***Corteva***
- ***Countryside BBQ Sauce***
- ***Fareway***
- ***Hy-Vee***
- ***KLGA/KLGZ Radio***
- ***Kossuth County Cattlemen***
- ***Kossuth County Fair Board***
- ***Smithfield***
- ***Tom Eischen Sales***



FIRE PREVENTION WEEK

October 5 - October 11

Watch for Operation EDITH and firefighters visiting area classrooms.

Open Burning not allowed

Algona Municipal Code 8.16.050 does not allow open burning.

Yard waste, leaves, grass clippings, garden debris or brush, may be brought to the Veterans Park brush pile. Unacceptable items at the brush pile include rocks, garbage or other items that could damage equipment.

New Firefighter, *Kevin Lohman*



Welcome to Kevin Lohman, new member of the Algona Fire Department.

Gatton serves as first School Resource Officer at AHS

In August, longtime Algona Police Officer Ben Gatton began a new role as the School Resource Officer (SRO) with Algona Community Schools. The Algona City Council approved a resolution finalizing the agreement with the school district for the 2025-2026 school year.

Joe Carter, Algona schools superintendent, said that the two entities have been working together for 18 months in preparation for the new position to begin.

"We've had fantastic and productive discussions with Chief Bo Miller about bringing an SRO to our district. We are incredibly enthusiastic about the potential for this position, and the opportunities to grow our environment and best meet the diverse needs of our students. We see this as a huge step in fostering an even safer and more supportive learning community," Carter said.



Ben Gatton now serves as a School Resource Officer with Algona Community Schools.

The SRO will be a resource for students and school staff and a liaison among law enforcement.

"Officer Gatton is a great fit for carving out this new role at the school," said Algona Police Chief Bo Miller. "He has been involved at the school as a coach and is well integrated in the system. That, along with his years of experience as an officer, will provide an excellent foundation for this position."

Costs associated with hiring the additional officer will be shared between the school and the city, with Algona Community School District covering 75% of the costs and the City of Algona covering 25%. The School Resource Officer will be at the school while classes are in session and serve as a patrol officer with the Algona Police Department during the summer.

Some of the SRO duties include being a presence on the school campus, providing security, observation and feedback regarding transportation practices, providing classroom instruction or assistance for programs, engaging in individual and small group discussions to establish rapport with students, attend parent and/or faculty meetings, assist with law enforcement or crime prevention, develop plans and strategies to minimize dangerous situations, evaluate safety plans, and other duties as needed.

Carter anticipates that Gatton will work collaboratively with the school and community organizations to connect students and their families with mental health care, drug and alcohol treatment and other services as needed.

To learn more, contact the Algona Police Department at 515-295-3515.

Algona Fire Department conducts training exercise





The Algona Fire Department conducted a controlled burn of a house and outbuildings located at 607 W. College Street in late August as a training exercise for its firefighters.

Local partnership provides youth recreation

Recreation Department and Algona Family YMCA working together

Algona's Recreation Department and the Algona Family YMCA are working together to offer youth activities this fall.

Nick Diers of the Algona Recreation Department will provide programming duties for flag football and youth volleyball, and the YMCA will provide registration, administrative coordination, and facilities.

"We are excited about this new partnership and think it will work well for both organizations," said Diers. "We are trying this out with our fall youth programs, and if all goes well we will do the same for our winter and spring sports."

Participants do not need to be a member of the YMCA to participate in the activities. YMCA members receive a discount on program pricing. Non-members are eligible to receive a reduced rate based on financial need. To learn more, contact Nick Diers in the Algona Recreation Department at 515-295-9251.

Youth Volleyball

Volleyball is available for girls and boys in 1st through 6th grade. Practices are held twice a week on Tuesdays and Thursdays from November 4 to December 18 at the YMCA. The cost of the program is $40 for YMCA members and $60 for non-members.

- 1st and 2nd grade: 4:15 to 5 p.m.
- 3rd and 4th grade: 5 to 5:45 p.m.
- 5th and 6th grade: 5:45 to 6:30 p.m.

Registration is available through the YMCA and is currently open online at www.algonaymca.org/programs.

Co-Ed Adult Volleyball

The adult volleyball league plays on Thursday nights from November 6 through January 22, 2026. The location and time for this program are still being determined. Updates will be available on the Algona Parks and Recreation Facebook page.

Youth Basketball

The youth basketball program will be offered through a partnership with the Algona Family YMCA. Program dates are January 6 through February 14 for first grade through sixth grade students. There must be at least 10 students in a class for the program to be offered. Registration will be available through the YMCA at www.algonaymca.org/programs.

Family Dodge Ball

Dodgeball is a free event held on multiple Monday nights throughout the winter and spring. The time and location for this year's Dodge Ball Nights are still being determined. Watch the Algona Parks and Recreation Facebook page for updates.

Indoor Pickleball

Details for indoor pickleball are still being determined for this season. Watch the Algona Parks and Recreation Facebook page for updates.





New zipline at Tietz Park added by Noon Kiwanis Club



The Algona Area Chamber Ambassadors and the Algona Family YMCA summer daycare joined the City of Algona and the Algona Noon Kiwanis group for a ribbon cutting ceremony at the new zipline in July.



Members of the Noon Kiwanis group worked together to hang the new zipline at Tietz Park.



People of all ages have enjoyed the zipline, including Evie and Kinley Courtney of Algona.

Another new park feature is now available, thanks to support from the Algona community. The Algona Noon Kiwanis Club worked with the Parks and Recreation Department to create a plan for a zipline at Tietz Park, located near the Algona Family YMCA on the corner of Finn Drive and E. State Street.

The final pieces of the zipline were completed this summer, and a ribbon-cutting ceremony was held at the park on July 18 to celebrate. People of all ages have enjoyed trying it out.

When using the zipline, please keep the following safety rules in mind:

- Understand and accept the risks involved with ziplining.
- Do not go backwards or upside down.
- No loose, hanging clothes such as scarves, dresses or skirts.
- Long hair must be tied back in a ponytail.
- Do not wear jewelry or watches while using the zipline.
- Empty your pockets before using the zipline.
- Wear closed-toe shoes while using the zipline.
- No individuals under the influence of drugs or alcohol may use the zipline.
- To use the zipline you must be between 75 and 250 lbs.
- It is recommended for children under the age of 18 to have adult supervision while using the zipline.

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Algona Parks and Recreation







Algona Rotary, Leadership Class help with dog park updates

The City of Algona moved forward with additional upgrades at the Veterans Park dog park this year. Changes included new shade structures and additional seating within the dog park. In 2024 a new paved walkway from the parking lot was added, as well as improvements to the gates that lead into the park. Donations for the dog park have come from the Algona Rotary Club and the Algona Leadership Class of 2023-2024. The Algona Rotary Club applied for and received a Rotary District Grant in 2023 to make improvements at the Veterans Park Dog Park. The Leadership Class raised funds to help with dog park improvements.

New slide added to the Herman Wise Masonic Memorial Park



The Masonic Park, located on the corner of Maple and McCoy Street, upgraded to a new slide this fall.

Curry earns Congeniality Award



Teri Curry, left, received a Congeniality Award from the Algona Area Chamber of Commerce, presented by Chamber Ambassador President Bridget Galligan at a Chamber event in July. In 2025, Teri celebrated 25 years of service at the Algona Aquatic Center. Congrats, Teri!

CALLS FROM SANTA

Santa made special arrangements with the Parks and Recreation Department to call area children (ages 7 and under). To receive a call, register with City Hall by Monday, December 1. Calls will be made on Tuesday, December 2, starting at 6 p.m. To learn more, call 515-295-9251.



Rod Vitzthum to retire after 35 years of service



Rod Vitzthum, AMU Electric Line Manager, plans to retire in 2026.

After 35 years of service with Algona Municipal Utilities, Rod Vitzthum will retire at the beginning of the year. Vitzthum currently serves as the AMU Electric Line Manager, after beginning as an electric lineman in October of 1990.

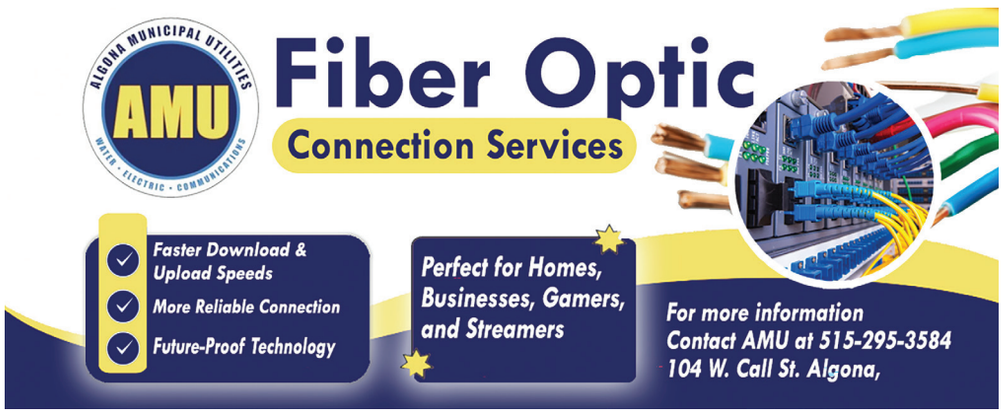
He graduated from the Power Lineman program at Northwest Community College in Sheldon before starting his career in Ruidoso, New Mexico, with the Texas New Mexico Power Company in 1982. In 1984, he transferred to Lewisville, Texas, where he worked as a service technician until he was promoted to service superintendent in 1988. Vitzthum said that in 1990, he decided it was time to start a family, and he felt there was no better place for that than Algona. AMU hired him as a lineman, and in 1995, he was promoted to electric line manager.

Vitzthum said there were two primary voltage systems when he came to AMU, a 2,400-volt electric distribution system and a 13,800-volt electric distribution system, which went online in the 1970s. At that time, AMU began moving overhead lines underground, which Vitzthum said was the smart way to go. According to Vitzthum, AMU's East Substation, now known as the Allen K. Buchanan Substation, went online about two weeks after he arrived at AMU. He said that electric substation was needed as Algona continued to grow. Vitzthum said that growth continues today with new residential and remodeled homes, churches, and businesses.

Vitzthum said he had great years working for Algona Municipal Utilities and had the luxury of working with highly educated and competent people throughout his tenure, which made his life easier. He has no immediate plans, as retirement starts another chapter in his life. His wife, Laurie, will continue to serve as president of Iowa State Bank, and he plans to spend time with his grandchildren, doing odd jobs, and helping others. John Bilsten, AMU General Manager, thanked Rod for his services to AMU and the community.

"Rod's dedication, knowledge, and persistence have greatly improved the AMU electric distribution system while always being mindful of the impacts on electric rates. These improvements have significantly lowered outages and losses while increasing overall efficiency. Under Rod's leadership, the Algona community has consistently enjoyed high resilience and redundancy, highlighting his important role as the Electric Distribution Manager at AMU. We wish him good luck in his retirement," Bilsten said.

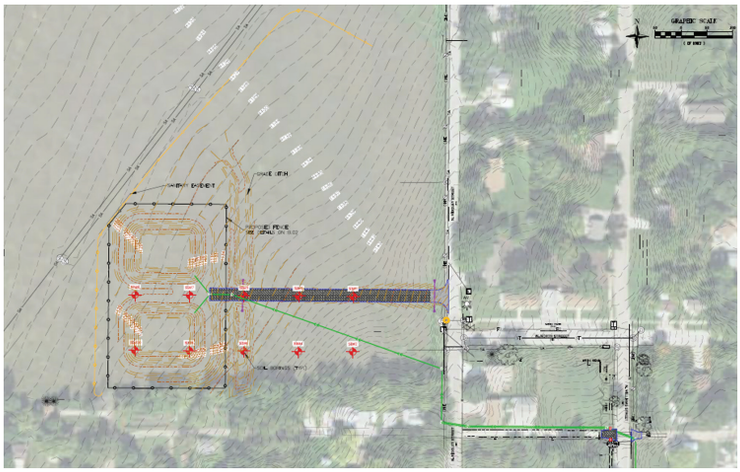




Fiber To The Home project begins Oct. 1

Work on the AMU Fiber To The Home (FTTH) project will start this fall. In August, the AMU Board of Trustees approved the $5.9 million contract with CDB Utility Contractors of Davenport, Iowa. CDB will begin work October 1, 2025, going neighborhood by neighborhood, with completion expected by July 30, 2027. AMU has installed FTTH in parts of its service area, including downtown Algona. According to John Bilsten, fiber is more reliable, providing faster Internet speeds and higher bandwidths with reduced latency (lag time) for AMU Communications business customers and those who work from home, stream, and play online games. He said fiber will make it easier for AMU Internet customers to implement innovative internet-driven technology in their homes and businesses.

AMU Backwash Ponds project



The AMU Board of Trustees awarded Erpelding Excavating Enterprise the contract for the Backwash Ponds Project. Two rapid infiltration backwash ponds will be built on land owned by AMU, located west of North Ridgley Street and north of West North Street. The project involves installing about 1,100 feet of 8-inch PVC pipe from the AMU Water Plant to the ponds and constructing two rapid infiltration ponds.

As part of the water treatment process, gravity filter backwash water containing iron will be pumped into the ponds to allow it to filter into the ground slowly, leaving a small amount of iron in the ponds. The iron residue will be removed in the future. The water level in each pond will be maintained at roughly 3 inches, evaporating and infiltrating into the ground throughout the day. A berm will be constructed around the ponds, and security fencing will enclose them. Work on the ponds began on September 22 and is expected to be substantially completed by the end of November.

The total cost of the project is approximately $530,000. The project provides essential infrastructure for improved water treatment and regulatory compliance. With a solid design, competitive bids, and a payback period of just over four years, the project supports sustainable operations and future city growth.

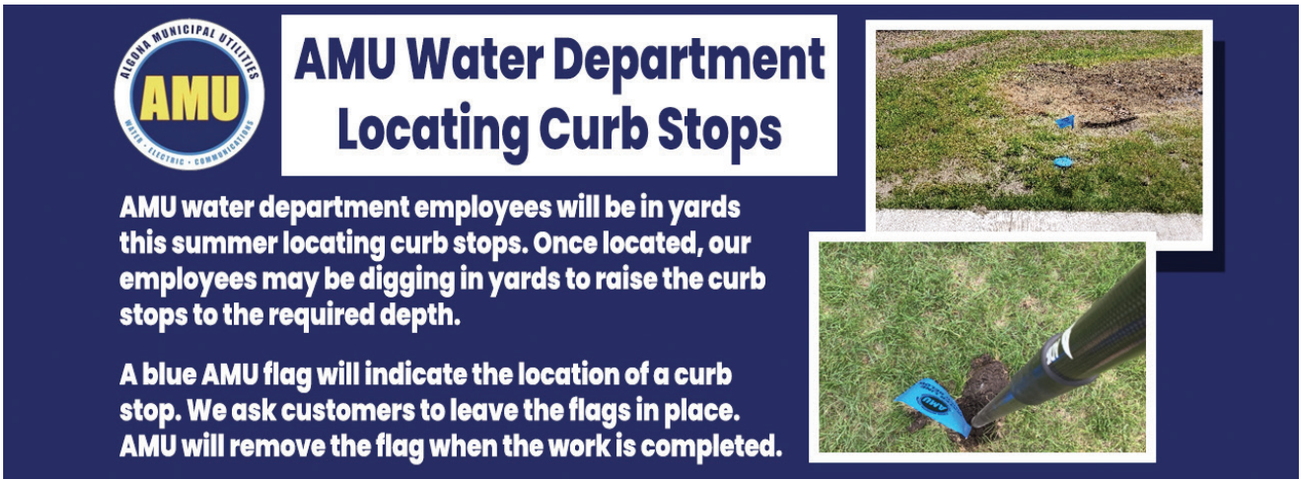
Electric Underground Conversion Project moves forward

The AMU Board of Trustees approved an agreement with DGR Engineering for the Electric Feeders #1 and #2 Overhead to Underground Conversion Project. DGR will provide the engineering services to replace existing overhead electrical lines with underground systems.

The project will begin near the AMU power plant on North Hall Street, continue along 169th Avenue, and terminate near River Road. New underground lines will also extend east and west along Highway 18. A smart switch will be integrated with AMU's SCADA system, enabling remote opening and closing for system restoration. DGR's work is not to exceed $328,000. The total project cost is estimated at $3.4 million, including labor, materials, engineering, and contingencies. A Department of Energy grant will pay $2 million of the project costs. Bidding will occur in late 2025 or early 2026, with work beginning in spring 2026.

Locating curb stops underway

AMU water customers may see water department employees in their yards throughout the year as they locate curb stops for water services. A water curb stop is a special shut-off valve located underground near the curb or property line. Its primary function is to control the water flow to an individual property. The curb stop allows AMU to turn off or regulate water to a building or property—for emergencies, repairs, maintenance, or when the property is vacant for an extended time. AMU is working to find all curb stops in Algona and keep them accessible. Once located, the curb stops will be marked with an AMU blue flag, and AMU requests that customers leave the flag in the ground until AMU removes it. The flags allow AMU to GPS the exact location of the valve for future identification. If needed, AMU water department employees will repair the curb stops and raise them to the required depth, which may involve digging in the yard. This project will continue until there is frost in the ground.



CITY OF ALGONA

The City of Algona newsletter is distributed twice a year. Find more news and updates online at www.algonaiowa.gov.

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POSTAL CUSTOMER

Free technology classes at the Algona Public Library

The Algona Public Library offers free computer classes covering a range of technology-related topics. These free classes provide opportunities for adults and older students to learn and practice basic computer skills. Participants may bring their own laptops, if that is preferred. Register for one class or the entire class series by calling 515-295-5476 or stop by the library during regular hours. All classes are on Tuesdays from 10 to 11 a.m.

October 7: ***Internet Basics***
Learn about web browsers and search engines, build skills to navigate the internet and discover tips and tricks for basic and advanced online searches.

October 14: ***Cyber Safety and Scams***
Meet at the Algona Senior Center
Guest presenter Josh Adams will share information about online safety and protecting yourself from fraudsters and scams. This session will build participants' confidence when they are visiting websites, creating passwords and responding to emails. This session is co-sponsored by the Active Seniors of Algona.

October 21: ***Understanding AI (Artificial Intelligence)***
Meet at the Algona Senior Center
This session, offered by guest presenter Josh Adams, will provide an understanding of what AI is and how it can be used both positively and negatively. This session is co-sponsored by the Active Seniors of Algona.

October 28: ***A Deeper Dive into AI***
Using presentation materials found on The Achievery website and other online resources, we will gain an understanding of how AI materials are generated and how we can make practical applications to our needs.

November 4: ***Email Basics***
We'll be using Google's free email program called Gmail. Learners will create a Gmail account and learn how to perform basic email functions such as sending, receiving and replying to email. Learn to recognize and deal with spam, organize and delete emails and search for messages.

November 11: ***Working with Google Docs***
Learn how to use Google Docs (online documents), including the basic features for creating, editing and sharing word processing documents.



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