

FRIENDS & NEIGHBORS

THANKSGIVING EVE

Interfaith service is Wednesday

Persons of all faiths are encouraged to attend the Interfaith Thanksgiving Eve Service at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Nov. 25, hosted at United Church of Christ Congregational, 217 Sixth St., in Ames. The service will be brief. Donations of food will be collected and a freewill offering also will be taken. All donations will be split between Food at First and the Church World Services' CROP program, which raises funds to feed hungry people throughout the world.

For more information, contact Dave Scott at scott@iastate.edu.

AMES LIBRARY

Holiday closings announced

Ames Public Library and the Bookmobile will be closed Thursday and Friday, Nov. 26 and 27, for Thanksgiving. Regular hours will resume Saturday, Nov. 28.

COLLEGIATE-WESLEY ANNEX

Barn dance is Saturday

Central Iowa Barn Dance will host an evening of music and dance, contras and squares, from 8 to 11 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 28, at the Collegiate-Wesley Annex, 130 S. Sheldon Ave. The Porch Stompers with fiddler Alice McGary will play live music, and Lonna Nachtigal will be the caller. Admission is \$5 or \$3 for students. All dances are taught and called. No partner is needed. Everyone is welcome. For more information, visit www.cibd.org.

REIMAN GARDENS

Butterfly release is Dec. 5

A special opportunity to release a butterfly will be from 8:30 to 10 a.m. Saturday, Dec. 5, in the Butterfly Wing at Reiman Gardens, 1407 University Blvd., in Ames. The cost for each butterfly released will be \$5 for CoHort members and \$5 plus admission cost for nonmembers. Participants will receive a special certificate with their name, the name of the butterfly and the date. Registration and payment is recommended. A limited number of butterflies will be released on a first-come-first-serve basis for those who do not register. Call (515) 294-2710 to reserve the number of butterflies you plan to release.

Compiled by Kristy Marnin
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School board to clear nutrition fund debt

By KATHY HANSON
Staff Writer

The Ames Community School Board on Monday took the first step toward creating a clean slate for its nutrition fund's long-standing, cumulative debt.

The board approved the district's request to the School Budget Review Committee for modifying allowable growth, at a board meeting held in conjunction with a facility planning work session.

If the committee approves the request, the district would have the spending authority it needs for a one-time, per-

manent transfer of \$934,945.96 from the general fund to the nutrition fund.

The district's legal council said the one-time transfer would formally document incremental transfers made in the past as loans and would be the ideal solution to resolve the debt. Chief Financial Officer Karen Shimp said the action would not affect the district's cash flow because the money was already transferred in prior years.

Shimp said the debt has been accumulating since fiscal year 1989-90 because the district's general fund loaned cash to

the ailing nutrition fund, particularly during the years between 1996-97 and 2003-04.

The district currently contracts with a food service management company, Shimp said, and no longer runs a deficit. She said she expects the nutrition fund to net about \$80,000 this year.

If the School Budget Review Committee fails to allow the district's modified allowable growth request, which is on the agenda for a meeting Dec. 14, the district will need to seek outside financing that involves interest rates at taxable debt levels.

In other business, the board approved contracts with the district's partners in the state voluntary preschool program for 4-year-old children, and approved using American Recovery and Reinvestment (stimulus) Funds to augment the services provided to students at Rosedale Shelter.

Facilities planning

The board reviewed the action steps for its long-range facility planning guide, adjusting timelines beginning in January 2010 for seeking proposals from architects, for example, and the action steps that follow architect selection.

"The board believes it's important to have an architect in place to help guide the master planning process," board president Paul Sodders said.

The board has been working with a facility planning expert to move forward with a comprehensive, K-12 long-range facility plan.

Sodders said the board will work through the planning guide at least once more before bringing it forward for approval at a regular board meeting.

Kathy Hanson can be reached at (515) 663-6933 or khanson@amestrib.com.

CHECK-UP ON READING

McFarland Clinic pushing parents to read to their children

By KATHY HANSON
Staff Writer

Pediatricians who perform well-child check-ups at McFarland Clinic in Ames ask all the questions parents would expect during the head-to-toe assessment. In addition to measuring height and weight and other physical milestones, doctors also query parents about other developmental benchmarks.

Dr. Jack Swanson, for example, asks parents of infants, toddlers and preschool-aged children, "Are you reading to your child?" If the child is old enough to read, he asks how their reading and vocabulary skills are progressing.

But Swanson doesn't just ask questions. He also gives books to children, provided by Reach Out and Read Iowa.

Swanson said he participates in the program because, in his more than 34 years in working with children and families, he knows the importance of evidence-based practice. He said in addition to studies showing the importance of parents reading to their children, other research indicates parents who get books and literacy counseling from their doctors and nurses are more likely to read to their young children, read to them more often and provide more books in the home.

McFarland Clinic, together with eight other well-child providers in Story County, is a part of the Reach Out and Read Iowa Coalition, a national children's literacy program that focuses on the children at greatest risk, those aged 6 months to 5 years living at or near poverty.

Doctors participating in Reach Out and Read distribute developmentally and culturally appropriate books including bilingual books available in 15 languages. Each child who participates in Reach Out and Read starts kindergarten with a home library of up to 10 books and a parent who has heard at every well-child visit about the importance of



By KATHY HANSON/THE TRIBUNE

Montserrat Sanchez, 6, listens as U.S. Rep. Tom Latham, R-Iowa, reads a book to her Monday at McFarland Clinic in Ames.

Reach out and Read

- Reach Out and Read Iowa serves children at 72 locations across the state, reaching more than 51,000 infants, toddlers and preschoolers each year.
- The program provides 17 reading corners in nine clinics around Story County.
- Participating 2-year-olds score 4 to 8 points higher on vocabulary tests than their peers, giving them a 6-month head start developmentally, according to the program.
- Since it was founded in 1989, Reach Out and Read has trained more than 50,000 doctors and nurses who have given more than 20 million books to children in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico and the United States Virgin Islands. International programs modeled on Reach Out and Read have been started in Bangladesh, Italy, Israel, the Philippines, England, and Canada.

- **Web site:** www.reachoutandread.org
- **Twitter:** www.twitter.com/ReachOutReadIA

Source: Reach Out and Read

books and reading. The Story County Reach Out and Read Iowa clinical sites provide books to nearly 5,000 children every year.

Last month, Story County received Reach Out and Read's "Bookend Community" award. The award caught the attention of U.S. Rep. Tom Latham, R-Iowa, an Ames resident who represents the state's 4th District. Latham is a member of the House Committee on Appropriations, who is interested in exploring the committee's role in supporting early childhood education.

Latham visited McFarland Clinic on Monday to learn about the program and read with young patients, Montserrat Sanchez, 6, and her brother, Alex Sanchez, 9,

and little sister, Camilla Sanchez, 20 months.

Latham also observed Swanson interacting with patients during a well-child check up for 3-year-old Izabella Berkland and her little sister, Jenna Berkland, 15 months.

"I'm interested in learning the benefits of the program, seeing how it fits in with other programs and learning how many people utilize it," he said.

A book about farm animals occupied Jenna Berkland during the check-up.

In the middle of a stream of babble, she pointed at a picture, looked up at Swanson and said, "Kitty?"

Kathy Hanson can be reached at (515) 663-6933 or khanson@amestrib.com.

City Council to consider future of railroad bridge

Union Pacific offers donation of bridge or its demolition

By JENNIFER MEYER
Staff Writer

The Ames City Council will decide tonight whether or not to accept the Union Pacific Railroad's offer to donate to the city an abandoned railroad bridge that crosses Squaw Creek near Brookside Park.

In a report, City Manager Steve Schainker advised the council against accepting the bridge because of unknown structural integrity and surface improvement costs, which could range from \$125,000 to \$275,000.

Union Pacific will demolish the bridge if the city declines the offer. The city would accept all liabilities if it accepts the steel structure bridge with wooden railroad ties.

The council must determine its response when it meets at 7 tonight in Council Chambers at City Hall, 515 Clark Ave.

Union Pacific requires a response by Wednesday, Nov. 25, and a firm commitment by Friday, Dec. 11.

The city may accept the donation pending a structural analysis, estimated to cost \$5,000.

The Parks and Recreation Commission rec-

ommended accepting the bridge provided there are no significant structural deficiencies or costs. Residents in the Sixth Street area also support improving the bridge for public use.

The council's agenda also includes:

- A request from Ames Public Library for \$68,000 from its capital improvements project funds to conduct a feasibility study of fundraising potential for the expansion/relocation plan.

- An amendment to the Ringgenberg Subdivision that would facilitate the sale of 38 acres of 114 acres, platted in 2005 for 220 housing units west of Cedar Lane and south of Oakwood Road, to be sold to Iowa State University. ISU plans to use the land for crops and to buffer its livestock farms to the west, and has requested for the city to exempt the university from sharing in infrastructure costs required of the original developer.

Jennifer Meyer can be reached at (515) 663-6918 or jmeyer@amestrib.com.

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The Brekke's would like to say Thanks to those who stopped by during our 31st Anniversary.

Mel & Sue Brekke

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