

CITY OF STORM LAKE

2025

ANNUAL
REPORT

A Year of Milestones & Achievements



LETTER FROM the City Manager

The past year in Storm Lake City government has been filled with growth, innovation, and significant milestones.

From rebounding after damaging storms in the spring, to completing a once-in-a-generation water tower construction, the City team has worked tirelessly to best serve our residents and their evolving needs.

Recreation enhancement has been a particular goal. An Iowa Water Recreation Enhancement Grant has allowed for major improvements at the City's boat ramp to better serve our lake users and guests, including a new floating dock and restroom. A Parks and Open Spaces grant allowed for planning on a Nature Area development to get underway. New roof installation on parks buildings is also taking place. Waterpark renovations led into a positive summer tourism season.

Water is among our most core services, and far-sighted improvements to the system are also among the highlights of a memorable year. In addition to a new water tower, new wells have been added, and with the help of an ad hoc committee, planning toward a new water treatment facility has begun. Attention is focused on all facets of water needs to ensure a consistent supply of high quality water for a generation to come.

Public Safety is always a priority, and the Police and Fire departments have continued to improve on already-impressive community outreach efforts. Important upgrades include new translation-capable body and car cameras for police officers, and two new fire trucks ordered to replace aging equipment.

Streets, parks, library services, golf course and other city sites and programs have all seen improvements. A grant helped to replace many trees lost to storm damage and disease on public property around the community.

City-sponsored events have been fun and successful. Kids' Fest served an estimated 1,000 children in June, and Breakfast With Santa was attended by over 500 guests. A new-concept Citywide Cleanup program was launched.

The City has networked with other agencies and efforts within the community, including the Hometown Pride Committee which has recently completed its first year of efforts for beautification and improvement projects.

We are excited to welcome a new mayor, and two new city council members, as City leadership moves into a new era. As we move forward, we remain committed to our mission of community service, and are excited about the opportunities that lie ahead.



Keri Navratil, City Manager



Contents

- 2 Letter from the City Manager
- 4 About Us
- 5 Our Mission
- 6 City Council 2026 goals

2025 Highlights

- 7 Storm Recovery
- 8 City Events
- 10 Outdoors
- 12 Water

Department annual reviews

- 14 Public Services
- 15 Police
- 17 Fire Department
- 18 Public Library
- 19 Water & Wastewater
- 21 Building & Codes
- 22 Economic Development
- 23 Communications/Tourism



About Us

Storm Lake is one of rural Iowa's fastest-growing cities - a premier site for recreation and tourism, and an economically-progressive community. Known as the state's most culturally diverse community, it boasts exceptional schools, higher education including Buena Vista University and an Iowa Central Community College campus. The community is bristling with unique public art installations, art galleries, a museum, and a dazzling array of community events year-around.

COMMUNITY HIGHLIGHTS

- **Glacial Lake:** Storm Lake is the fourth-largest natural glacial lake in Iowa, spanning over 3,000 acres, popular for fishing (walleye, channel catfish, perch and bass) and water sports of all kinds.
- **Recreation Hub:** Offers parks, beaches, marinas, trails, campgrounds and the King's Pointe Waterpark Resort with indoor/outdoor waterparks, mini-golf, and Sunset Pointe golf course.
- **Diverse Community:** Known for its multicultural population (over 35 languages spoken), events celebrating the community's multicultural appeal, and diverse international-style dining options.
- **Buena Vista University:** Home to BVU, a private liberal arts college with a campus on the lake's shore. BVU serves over 1,900 students. Over 76 percent of Storm Lake campus graduates and 82 percent of Online and Graduate program graduates stay in Iowa to work and contribute to their professions and their communities.
- **'The Lighthouse City':** Storm Lake features three full-size lighthouses, including one offering visitors a climb to an observation deck for an amazing view out over the lake. The "Storm Lake Lighthouse Project," a public art installation, features the work of a wide range of artists on fiberglass lighthouses scattered around town.
- **King's Pointe:** An ultra-rare community owned resort, King's Pointe offers 100 rooms and suites, on-site signature restaurant and outdoor dining deck, meeting and event spaces including a ballroom, and exciting indoor and outdoor waterparks.
- **Volunteerism:** An annual "Storm Lake Proud" event involves many people and groups in heartwarming community betterment service.



CITY OF STORM LAKE

OUR MISSION

“Through teamwork create a welcoming environment that encourages economic growth, celebrates our unique blend of cultures, treasures our natural resources, and promotes recreational opportunities.”

The city government aims to exceed expectations with exceptional services for our residents, and a welcoming atmosphere for newcomers and travelers. We believe in building strong relationships based on trust and transparency, empowering our community to reach its goals.

We invite every resident, and every visitor, to join us on a journey of growth and discovery.

Together, we can create a brighter future, filled with possibilities and enriched experiences for all.



Vision

City Council planning 2026



The City of Storm Lake Strategic Planning Retreat was held in December, with the resulting plan approved by the council. In a visioning exercise, the City Council identified their priorities for Storm Lake for the coming year:

- Streets
- Neighborhood Committees
- Fire Department
- Police Department
- Water Plant

The following items and initiatives were identified as the most important “strategic goals and objectives” for 2026. After listing their priorities, the Mayor and Council provided details on the steps that would be necessary to implement the measures.

Street Resurfacing & Maintenance

- Continue to focus on proactive resurfacing and maintenance
- Educate the public on the cost of street maintenance

Neighborhood Committees

- Utilize the Police Department to jump start Neighborhood Committees
- Contact neighborhood members that organize National Night Out

Fire Department Modernization and Expansion

- Staffing- Change of interest affecting volunteerism - may need more full-time staff

Police Recruitment and Retention

- Promote total salary and benefits to attract officer applicants
- Promote community involvement with Police Officers

Water Plant

- Continue planning and education on new water plant
- Water Treatment Plant Water Rates and Design (The Advisory Ad Hoc Committee provided recommendations to Council at the Jan. 5 council meeting)

Other Issues

- Efforts to reduce truck traffic on 5th Street
- Repair sidewalks in parks system
- Use of Hometown Pride Group for development of goals
- Multilingual social media posts
- Purchase electronic traffic speed limit signs
- Media relations
- Nuisance and property maintenance code enforcement
- Youth City Council - work with IJAG and Leadership Class at SLCS





Disaster

Response

“ THANK YOU. ”

RISING TO THE CHALLENGE OF BRUTAL SPRING STORMS

On the night of April 17, two powerful storm cells tore through the community, with estimated in-line wind speed of 70 miles an hour. The event caused significant damage to buildings, power lines and trees, and blocked streets. Most of the community was plunged into darkness.

The crisis tested all of the City's emergency response capabilities.

City workers and community members responded with tremendous effort and volunteerism. Cleanup stretched for two weeks and delayed other planned City work for the season, but the heartwarming teamwork fully illustrated Storm Lake's ability to bounce back stronger than ever.

Buena Vista County Emergency Management provided key assistance. MidAmerican Energy worked tirelessly to restore power. Residents reported to the parks to clean up downed tree limbs. Volunteer agency Go-Serv Global mobilized to organize volunteers and help remove debris. Help came from surrounding communities in the form of individual volunteers and firefighters.

Within a weekend, much of the damage had been cleaned up and life returned to normal for most in the community.

Storm Lake earned its name that night. The City would like to once again thank everyone who helped with this recovery. As memorable as the damaging storms of 2025 will be, the way the community came together in response illustrates what Storm Lake is really about.



KIDS' FEST

The 3rd annual Kids' Fest is a City of Storm Lake original. A special day in June invites all children and families to Chautauqua Park for free fun at its gleeful best. There's a wet and wild foam party, magic show, dancing, mascots, games, inflatables, sports and art - plus creative activities provided by more than a dozen of the city's community partners. An estimated 1,000 young people attend to take part in this high-energy event that helps to build Storm Lake pride and togetherness.



BREAKFAST WITH SANTA

The City of Storm Lake loves its youngest residents, and Breakfast With Santa builds memories they will cherish for a lifetime. Partnering with King's Pointe Resort, the event includes a free breakfast for all, photos with Mr. Claus himself, Grinchly mischief, face painting, balloon art, a coloring contest, and more. No one does the holidays like the Storm Lake community, and the City of Storm Lake is proud to serve up its share of cheer.



THE GREAT OUTDOORS

Storm Lake partnered with Trees Forever in the fall of 2025 to not only plant new trees to replace many lost to storms in our parks and public spaces, but also to educate young people from elementary to college age on planting techniques and the importance of tree canopy.

The City also expanded its plantings in its own tree nursery, to start strong trees that can be moved to public spaces in future years.

Caring for its one-of-a-kind Tree Museum with a priceless collection of living history trees related to people and places in American history, is also an ongoing priority.



HARMONY GARDEN COMPLETION

A captivating Harmony Garden project has transformed the Storm Lake Public Library/Witter Gallery grounds into a park-like setting punctuated by the joyful ring of music and the laughter of children.

The project started in 2024, with completion in 2025 including landscaping and placement of additional features, all accomplished by City team members.

Harmony Garden was designed as the City of Storm Lake won a T-Mobile Hometown Grant to obtain seven colorful outdoor musical instruments, drawn from cultures around the world, such as samba drums, calypso chimes and a cavatina.

An outdoor performance deck, game tables, accessibility-friendly benches, a device charging station, and sculptural art completes the scene, replacing the worn concrete that once surrounded the facility. Thanks to a Trees Forever grant, children helped to plant magnolia trees that will grow to provide color and shade.

The synergy is striking – literature, visual art and now music in a facility that represents the cultural heart of Storm Lake. Harmony Garden also served as the gathering spot that the downtown has lacked. While children are drawn to the music features, studies also show that music has a positive impact on brain function and mental well being, especially for older adults and those with special needs.

Meanwhile, a site once showing age and wear has become a lush green space with welcoming seating and attractive, long-lasting plantings.

As one of Iowa's most culturally-diverse communities, music is a common language. Harmony Garden development serves as a pleasant atmosphere for all ages – a place to play, a place to rest and recharge, a place to join in a community creative class, or just enjoy a favorite book in the sunshine.



NATURE AREA

INVESTING IN THE OUTDOORS

✓ Project Overview:

- Phase 1 of the Storm Lake Nature Area project initiates complete transformation of unused land into a 239-acre nature preserve, offering outdoor recreational opportunities for the region and attracting tourism. Phase I includes site clearing; restoration via reintroduction of native plantings; and construction of a driveway, parking area and aggregate hiking/biking trail loop.

✓ Impact:

- This project further establishes Storm Lake as a leader in healthy outdoor recreation and environmental preservation. Residents and visitors will enjoy a new opportunity to hike, bike and cross-country ski in an diverse natural area.

✓ Future Potential

- With less than 1/10th of 1 percent of Iowa’s original prairie and woodland remaining, the Nature Area provides precious preserve land for future generations to enjoy. Moving forward, the City will have options to add additional trail loops, sports and recreation areas, educational opportunities, event space and adjacent commercial development.

✓ Funding

- The City has been awarded a \$125,000 Iowa REAP Parks and Open Spaces grant for Phase 1.
- Existing City funding have been set aside in recent years.



CITY OF STORM LAKE

THE FUTURE IS WATER

Nothing is more core to community service than an abundant, high-quality water supply.

That mission has been a particular focus for 2025, and will continue to be over the years to come. As a growing community, Storm Lake's water needs are growing also. Now is the time to address the needs for the future.

In July, the City Council established a Water Treatment Plant Water Rates and Design Advisory Ad Hoc Committee. The committee studied current and future needs in a series of meetings over four months, preparing recommendations that would be delivered to the City Council in January of 2026.



Ad hoc community leaders and volunteers dedicated months to studying water needs.

The committee included residents of Storm Lake and representatives of users outside the city limits, along with a consulting engineer, representatives of major industrial users, a representative of Storm Lake United, and representatives of the local hospital and Buena Vista University.

The committee concluded that a new water treatment facility in Storm Lake is a vital need, and that planning and construction should progress as soon as possible.

The planning envisions not just a treatment plant, but encompasses the complete system needs for the future, including wells, storage, and infrastructure.

Storm Lake has seen steady population growth since the era when the existing water plant was constructed in 1978, and water demand has grown at a similar pace.

The committee recommends construction of a new plant with a capacity of 8 million gallons per day, as compared to the current plant's maximum of around 5 million gallons. The committee stressed that room for future expansion will be important, to extend the effective lifespan for the new future plant.

It is anticipated that the development could span the next four to five years, including planning, land acquisition, engineering; construction would be expected to spread over two years.

“Designing a water treatment plant is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. We all know how vital water is to our community.”

- City Manager Keri Navratil



CITY OF STORM LAKE

A TOWERING ACCOMPLISHMENT

Storm Lake largely completed construction of the City's fifth and largest-ever water tower (Tower 5) near Mae Street to help meet growing demand. The tower is made up of a 1.75 million-gallon steel tank on a concrete column that encloses all workings. Tower 5 rises 117 feet over the surrounding landscape, providing crucial storage and capacity for the growing community and industrial development. The project is part of a larger infrastructure plan, including new wells, to ensure a stable water supply for the next 20 years and beyond.



Watching the project develop over two years, and seeing the tank raised on July 11, 2025, was a unique experience for the community. It is the first tower constructed by the City since 1991.



PUBLIC SERVICES

The Public Services team, Storm Lake's jacks-of-all-trades, keep streets, parks, campgrounds and golf course in top shape. The department has installed several improvements in 2025, from a new boat dock and restroom to an all-accessible swing and other playground additions.

The Public Services staff looks forward to continuing its efforts in 2026, including street upgrades, Nature Area development and more.

2025 ACHIEVEMENTS

STREETS

- Storm damage cleanup/repairs - 1,920 hours
- Purchased mastic melter and placed 45,000 lbs. of patching material
- Performed tree removal and completed tree trim requests
- Jetted numerous intake/storm sewer lines
- Assisted Storm Lake Proud and tree planting events
- Storm sewer repair: Emerald Drive, E. 9th/Erie Street, E. Milwaukee Ave., College Street, Lake Ave./3rd Street
- Street repair: Emerald Drive, Radio Road, Oneida Street/Tornado Drive, 13th Street, Prairie Lane
- Asphalt overlays: Angier Drive, Shoreway Road, Northwestern Drive, Seneca Street

PARKS

- Installed We-Go disability-accessible swing at Chautauqua Park
- Installed gazebo and basketball goal at Kiwanis Park (purchased by Kiwanis Club)
- Installed new floating dock in boat ramp project
- Installed foundation and placed new bathroom building for boat ramp project
- Finished lawn area and tree plantings at Harmony Garden (library grounds)
- Installed park restrooms epoxy flooring and steel roofing
- Assisted with numerous events in the parks

GOLF COURSE

- Moved 40 trees from tree nursery onto course to replace lost ash trees

CONTINUING PRIORITIES

Crosswalk painting

- Street sweeping
- Rain gardens maintenance
- Install and remove 15 seasonal docks, including King's Pointe and boat ramp
- Mowing of airport grounds
- Traffic signal maintenance/repair
- Snow removal

CAMPGROUND

- Installed new playground at campground to replace site damaged by storms



2025 ACHIEVEMENTS

SLPD HIGHLIGHTS

- Purchased an additional drone that has the capabilities of indoor flight. This drone is more compact and has more technology and will be useful in tactical situations. This purchase was funded by asset seizure from drug investigation, and was purchased after police saw the value of them during the a 2025 standoff incident on Oneida Street.
- On November 12th, SLPD welcomed Officer Chase back from military deployment.
- On December 7, Lt. Solem, Officers Fritz and Villahuer assisted Jason Hoffman (Public Services) with lifesaving measures on a man who was found unresponsive on the side of the roadway as Hoffman was operating a snowplow. This subject was transferred to another hospital in critical condition but later recovered. All four will be honored with the lifesaving award during police week in May.
- On December 11, Officers Garcia and Winey and Detective Weflen assisted with life saving measures for a person having a heart attack. The officers assisted with CPR and shocked the individual with an AED unit. The subject recovered from the incident. All three will receive the life saving award during police week in May.
- In December, Thomas Lane rejoined the department after serving for a short time with the county sheriff's department. With that hire, the department ended the year fully staffed, with one officer deployed for military service.
- K9 Duke began SLPD service.

POLICE TRAINING/HOURS COMMITTED

- In 2025, SLPD employees received a total of 1,617 training hours covering topics such as:
- Defensive Tactics (57 hours)
- Firearms (114)
- Law Updates (57)
- Sex Crimes (32)
- Undercover Social Media Investigations (16)
- Search warrant Operations Planning (32)
- SWAT Tactical Team Leader (40)
- Advanced Roadside Impairment Driving Enforcement (48)
- SWAT Tactical Rescue Task Force (72)
- Tactical Response to Active Threat Training (48)
- Active Shooter Response Training (152)
- K9 Training (160)
- Report Writing (10)
- Taser Instructor (16)
- Firearms Instructor Certification (80)
- Drug Recognition Expert Recertification (10)
- Tactical Interviewing (40)
- Electronic Search Warrant Training (30)
- Gracie Survival Tactics Instructor (40)
- Sniper Observer Certification (40)
- Interview & Interrogation (30)
- Less Lethal Instructor Certification (24)
- Law Enforcement Intelligence Conference Training (24)
- Cannabis Law Updates (4)
- Proactive Policing (16)
- Safety Training (19)
- Taser Recertification (38)
- State of Iowa Mandatory Reporting Recertification (80)
- Tactical Training (288)



DEPARTMENT ANNUAL REPORTS

POLICE

The Storm Lake Police Department is committed to serving and protecting all residents. In 2025, the SLPD continued to stress outreach and community involvement.

In addition to patrol services, the department includes an Investigations Division, K9 (police dog) Unit, Narcotics Unit, Hostage Negotiation Team, Drone Program, Clandestine Drug Lab Team, Search and Recovery Dive Team, Sexual Assault Response Team (SART), and a Tactical Entry Team.

SLPD OUTREACH AND PUBLIC SERVICE

2025 HIGHLIGHTS

- Hosted a tour of police facilities for BVU Japanese exchange students
- Organized National Night Out event
- Coffee with a Cop outreach events
- Hosted Blue Blood blood drive
- Assisted Sleep in Heavenly Peace to build/deliver beds to those in need
- Student leadership events
- Bike Safety Workshop, elementary school
- Assisted the Kiwanis Triathlon with traffic control
- Sponsored CE youth softball team
- Welcome speech, Memorial Day event
- Tacos With a Cop outreach events
- Participated in Saturation Saturday Impaired Driving Enforcement Project
- Took part in Kids' Fest, Breakfast With Santa, Kiwanis Kar Show, Chills & Thrills and Star Spangled Spectacular community celebrations
- Produced Public Safety videos
- Attended Buddhist Temple events
- Assisted Step up and Run 5K and Half Marathon traffic control
- Attended ribbon cutting for downtown mosaic art creation
- Took part in the 9/11 Heroes Parade at Middle and Elementary schools
- High 5 Friday school events
- Assisted SLHS Homecoming Parade
- Attended the Ribbon Cutting event at Kiwanis Park
- Attended the YJAM event at Seneca Park



- Escorted SLHS cross country team for a State Meet
- Helped organize and attended Dia De Los Muertos (Day of the Dead) celebration and art contest

- Organized Movie with a Cop at Vista 3 Theater
- Attended a National Honor Society Induction

- Attended Miracle on Lake Ave Parade Event
- Volunteer bell ringing for the Salvation Army
- Santa Cop holiday charitable campaign

FIRE DEPT.

The Storm Lake Fire Department is committed to providing outstanding protection and emergency service to the residents of Storm Lake, surrounding communities, and mutual aid partners. The department responded to 440 calls for service in 2025, logged nearly 1,800 hours of training, and participated in numerous educational efforts and community events. The department looks forward to continued improvement in service, and fostering growth and teamwork in the communities the SLFD serves.

“I am incredibly grateful and proud of the drive, passion, and determination of our staff. The sacrifices they make to respond to a neighbor in need show character, commitment, and credit upon themselves and the community they serve and call home.” - FIRE CHIEF TERENCE SINNER

2025 SLFD ACHIEVEMENTS

- Provided protection for a 93 square-mile coverage area, including three rural townships
- Staffed department with three full-time employees and 21 on-call volunteer firefighters
- Completed 410 fire safety inspections. Identified 51 safety deficiencies, with a 100% compliance rate for eliminating those threats
- Completed trainings such as CPR, Fire Officer, Technical Rescue Operations, High Angle Rescue and Ice Rescue
- Hosted Firefighter 1 and 2 and Fire Officer training/certification classes
- Welcomed new firefighters Ehlers, Kutz and Zamora, while marking the retirements of firefighters Nebitt, Ripke and Ortman
- Provided educational outreach with events such as Fire Prevention Week, National Night Out appearances, Red Wreath program, and school outreach visits. Logged 134 2025 public education activities including presentations, drills, tours and public relations opportunities.
- Took part in numerous community events such as Kids Fest, Breakfast With Santa, Miracle On Lake Avenue, Chills & Thrills and Star Spangled Spectacular
- Attended and participated in the Annual Iowa Firefighters Association Convention
- Offered 263 rental unit inspections
- Conducted 13 building fire investigations



PUBLIC LIBRARY

The Public Library thrived in 2025 despite some uncertainty over federal funding, which was delayed until late in the year. The Friends of the Library volunteer group stepped in to finance multiple new programs.

New, more-accessible shelving was installed in the library, and a self-checkout station was added.

A successful summer reading program and expanded children's events have been enjoyed by the community. A grant was extended for the Hot Spot program offering help for residents who cannot afford internet.

2025 LIBRARY ACHIEVEMENTS

- New monthly youth programs: Gaming Hour (tweens), Dungeons and Dragons (teens), Friendship Bracelets (all ages)
- New little faces in monthly Book Babies
- New adult financial literacy programs, partnered with Citizen's Bank and funded by American Library Association Community Connect grant
- New foreign literature selected in Arabic (North African residents), Italian (Eritrea residents), French (Vietnamese residents). New Spanish literature selected in October
- New Social Work Study Intern, fall semester
- Harmony Gardens updated with trees and landscaping. Molly Richardson's class (PIE partners since 1998) planted trees
- Library Director attended American Library Association, Reforma Conference, Spanish language library service division
- American Library Association Continuation Grant, Community Connect extends hot spot lending grant from December 2025 to April 2026 due to additional funds from Verizon. Also, Capital One Financial funded Wall Street Journal subscription for patrons (many completed financial literacy programs)
- Summer Reading Program: 100 registered students in June and 11 Bingo Reading Log winners in August
- Hosted County Election Polling Place #2
- STEM makerspace cabinet purchased by the Friends of the Storm Lake Public Library
- Friends of the Storm Lake Public Library was awarded American Library Association grant from United For Libraries division for programs and books

- Continued 28-year tradition of making Gingerbread Houses with PIE partners at Early Elementary, 27 years making 3-D Cookie Turkeys with PIE partners
- Second year of Knit One hats for the Christmas Tree. Some hats were donated to the Library's Winter Outreach with the Pohnpei and Pacific Islander Alliance
- 87% collection housed on new bookshelves
- Uptick in DVD use as streaming prices rise
- New youth animal books from Myers Trust
- Successful seed giveaway program
- Added self-checkout computer



WATER

The Water Department saw a historic year, as staff provided tours and information for the Water Ad Hoc committee, which ultimately provided a recommendation to the City Council for a new Water Treatment Plant.

Also, a new water tower, the first for the City since the 1990s, was completed and readied for service. A new well (Well 22) was completed in the west area of the community and put into service, and planning for a future Well 23 was completed.



At left, early construction for the City's new water tower on Mae Street. Above, a wellhouse goes into place at Frank Starr Park. That well was followed in 2025 by another new well, Well 22, in the west area of the community. Yet another well is planned for the near future.

As the community navigated growth combined with drought conditions in recent years, water conservation measures and education became an important focus to ensure a plentiful supply of quality water for all.

CITY OF STORM LAKE

Voluntary Water Conservation



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE PUBLIC:

- **Lawn Watering** – Water only when needed. If watering is necessary, do it early in the morning or later in the evening.
- **Backyard Pools** – If pools must be filled, avoid overfilling and spillage. Cover when not in use to avoid evaporating water.
- **Washing Vehicles** – Keep to a minimum. If washing at home, do so in grassy areas to avoid wasted runoff on concrete.
- **Power Washing** – Keep washing of buildings, sidewalks and driveways to a minimum. Use a broom to clean concrete.
- **Appliances** – Use washers and dishwashers at a full load.
- **Showers** – Reduce time with water running.
- **Faucets, pipes & toilets** – Fix leaks. A dripping faucet or running toilet can waste many gallons of water daily.

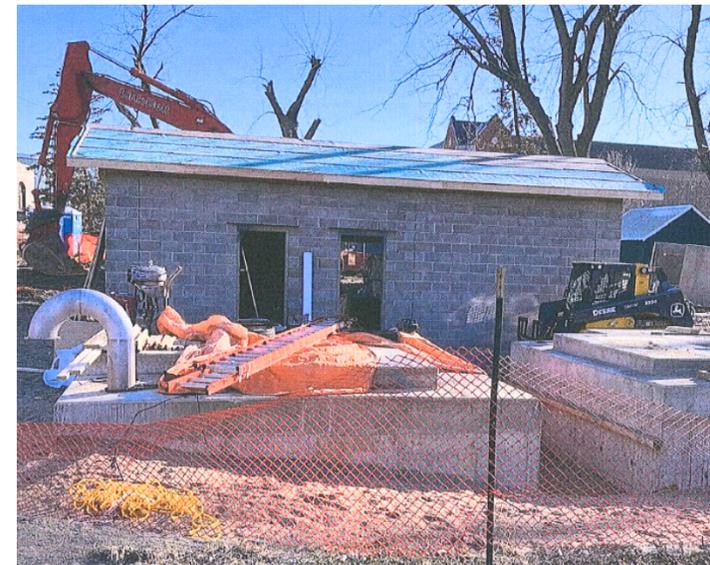
DEPARTMENT ANNUAL REPORTS
**WASTEWATER
 DEPARTMENT**

The department's focus in 2025 has been construction of three new lift stations - the pumping facilities necessary to move sewage to the wastewater treatment plant over changing elevations. All three lift stations are scheduled to go into service in 2026. A number of other technical improvements and maintenance projects are underway or scheduled, and jetting and televising of sewer lines continues to be a priority as the department assures consistent and sanitary service throughout the community.

2025 ACHIEVEMENTS

- Construction started in late April on the Scout Park and Icehouse (Vista Drive area) lift stations. This project was about 65% complete at year-end and is expected to be completed by early August of 2026.
- The next lift station that is being built is the College and 3rd station. This project was about 75% complete at year end and is expected to be completed in May of 2026.
- Rehabilitation began in July on the 1st Street lift station. There, the wet well was raised off the ground, a new control panel was installed, and two pumps replaced. Also, check valves and rail system were installed, and a new valve pit was added to the lift station. This project was completed in August.
- A concrete driveway was constructed for the Northwestern lift station, with Street Department assistance.
- Annual service maintenance inspection on the headworks rotary screen and grit system were completed, serviced by Huber Technology, with necessary equipment replacements.
- The department contracted with CIT Sewer for cleaning sewer lines and televising lines in sewer zones 1 and 2, with work ongoing at year end.
- In 2026, IPS lift station will be getting rehab including new control panels, two pumps, railing system, piping, check valves, and raising the wet well 3 feet. Also, the treatment plant staff is planning for replacement of scraper blades on two clarifiers.

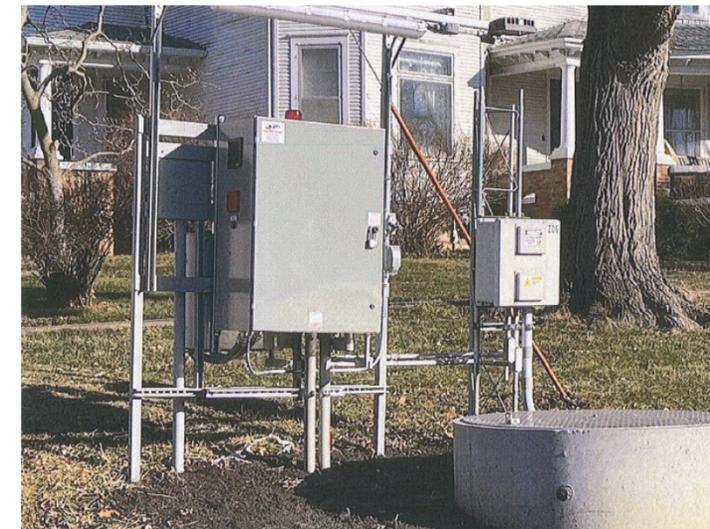
- The UV system used to disinfect City discharge water will be getting an upgrade in the display control screen, so it can be compatible with the plant's Scada system. UV bulbs will be replaced. A protective coating will be applied to the east aeration basin to prevent cracks and deterioration of the concrete and extend the useful life of the basin.
- Sewer lines in zones 3 and 6 will be jetted and televised in 2026.



Scout Park lift station construction



College St./3rd lift station construction



1st St. lift station rehabilitation



Headworks screen service



UV bulb replacement

BUILDING & CODES

The Department works to equitably enforce building, zoning, and code enforcement regulations throughout the community with the least amount of disruption to the developers and citizens building, remodeling, or creating new businesses.

The department worked with multiple new developments in 2025, and for 2026 will continue to ensure that neighborhoods and business districts grow responsibly.

2025 ACHIEVEMENTS

- The new duplex project constructed along West Sixth Street was completed this summer. The project provided 8 new homes
- The Building Department completed the final building inspection of the new townhouse development on West 10th Street. This was constructed by Kading development group. It is a mixture of duplex, four-plex, and six-plex units for a total of 76 new dwelling units. The site will have the final landscaping completed in 2026
- The third phase of the Early Elementary School has begun and will be open for students in the fall
- The final inspection of the Buena Vista University four-story apartment style dormitory was completed
- The Department also worked with Buena Vista University on a remodel of the former strength and conditioning area to provide new Wrestling training facility and football locker rooms, completed late in 2025
- The Building Department staff worked with other City Departments as well as County Emergency Management in the disaster response to the spring wind event
- Davita Dialysis has begun remodeling of a former retail space for a new dialysis facility to replace their former location which was damaged by the wind event this summer
- The Department worked with Merrill Manufacturing to get a temporary facility constructed to allow them to maintain business operations after the N. Lake Avenue facility was damaged by the wind event this spring
- Delight Donuts remodeled a former retail space for their new business
- Storm Lake Honda's new addition to their Dealership which will house a new product line of motorcycles and snowmobiles has been finished
- The Department worked with a family to review and start the construction of a new dwelling on Kelvin Road



A Kading townhouse development ribbon cutting. Well over 80 new housing units were added in Storm Lake in 2025.

- The new City 1.75-million-gallon water tower was completed and has been placed into service. There are some final details to be completed including the landscaping which will be completed in summer 2026
- Staff completed storm water inspections, performed nuisance abatement activities, completed the annual sidewalk inspections, and coordinating with the Fire Department for rental house inspections
- The Building Department had a Building Code Effectiveness Grading (BCEGS) review by the Insurance Services Office (ISO) and maintained an ISO BCEGS rating of 4 out of a 1-10 scale, with 1 being the highest rating. The State average rating is 6
- The Department adopted a cross-connection ordinance and continued program rollout in 2026
- Participated in storm water education and public outreach through SLCSD 2nd grade education and Kids Fest event
- The Department has also worked with several new businesses in the renovation of existing buildings into restaurants, service, and retail establishments

DEPARTMENT ANNUAL REPORTS

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

With an in-house Development Services Specialist, the City staff is dedicated to the economic revitalization of Storm Lake, acting as a catalyst for community prosperity by aligning economic development strategies with the city's evolving needs. Through hands-on engagement with local businesses, the City provides small business support and Business Retention and Expansion (BRE). Efforts prioritize the development of critical infrastructure - such as housing and childcare - to foster sustainable job creation and enhance the overall quality of life.

2025 ACHIEVEMENTS

- Conducted 35 Business Retention and Expansion visits (BRE)
- Assisted several business owners with succession and leadership transition planning
- Worked with developers to identify suitable land for future housing projects
- Maintained and updated LOIS, a national online location analysis tool that promotes available site and building inventory for Storm Lake
- Met with 18 local entrepreneurs and provide strategic business planning and site location assistance
- Assisted business relocations to temporary locations due to storm damage-caused displacement
- Attended DEV 25 Economic Development Conference
- In partnership with the Retail Coach Identified stakeholders and potential franchisees for recruitment of new retail
- Worked to fill vacant properties by connected the building owners with entrepreneurs interested in starting a new business
- Assisted in the collection of data for Maxfield Research & Consulting to complete a Comprehensive Housing Needs Assessment
- Built a Webinars, Workshop & Podcast page on the city website to provide online access to topics and help owners grow their business and expand their career skills
- Spearheaded the Ad Hoc Downtown Signage Committee and delivered recommendations to City Council, for comprehensive overhaul of Article 10 Sign Regulations. Integrated modern technology standards and historic preservation while streamlining code clarity and public safety

- Assisted the Iowa Lakes Corridor in the collection of data for UNI wage and benefit survey
- Saw numerous new housing units completed
- Guest speaking on Housing at ISU Extension and Outreach "Siouxland's Legacy of Workforce Opportunity" Conference.
- Contacts with the IEDA, SBDC, Iowa Workforce Development, ILCDC, The Retail Coach, SLU, The Foundry and ICCC pertaining to grants, loans, business and financial planning, apprenticeship programs, and development opportunities

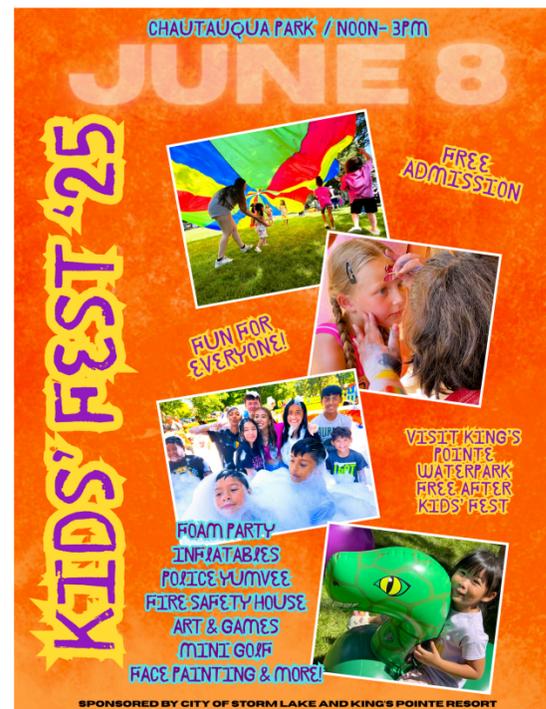
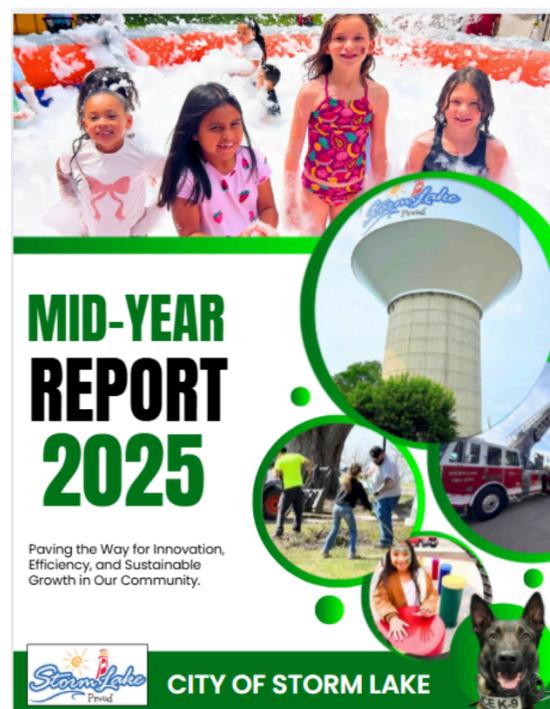


Above, ISU Extension presentation. Top right, business visit with Js Micro Corner. Bottom right, BRE visit at Tyson Foods turkey plant.



2025 ACHIEVEMENTS

- City Facebook following grown to over 19,500, with currently over 1 million views per month and approximately 37,000 post interactions per month
- Regular meetings with local media, information gathering for newspapers, radio and television across the region. Press releases written for City news
- Police and fire media releases managed
- Design and production for city documents, logos, web pages, social media
- Represent the City on Hometown Pride committee.
- Membership on community committees including SALUD, Hunger Dialogue, Friends of the Library
- Assisting City leadership in volunteer coordination
- Led planning for City-sponsored events including Kids' Fest and Breakfast With Santa
- Producing monthly City employee newsletter and other information
- Member of Employee Engagement Committee
- Creates monthly health and wellness programs for City employees
- Writing City project grants, including Harmony Garden, Boat ramp projects, Hometown Pride, Trees Forever and MidAmerican Energy tree grants, DNR grant for Nature Area
- Design and create City promotional advertising
- Write nominations for various award programs for the City
- Liaison for residents' comments and questions
- Alternate member, Solid Waste Commission
- Create Mid-Year and Annual City reports
- Emergency Management meetings/trainings as needed.



DEPARTMENT ANNUAL REPORTS **COMMUNICATIONS**

The City's in-house Communications program provides information via internal, media, and direct public avenues. It also manages City social media, website news and text alerts.

A consistent flow of photography, videography and articles keeps the community apprised of Storm Lake-related developments.

The program further provides leadership in planning and operation for City-sponsored events such as Kids' Fest and Breakfast With Santa.

The Communications coordinator also writes grants for the City, securing over \$580,000 in funding to date.

Focus will continue to be on networking and cooperation among all entities for the betterment of Storm Lake.

TRAVEL & TOURISM

The City added tourism coordination efforts into its Communications program in 2023.

Staff works closely with Travel Iowa to maximize travel appeal for the community. Efforts include travel advertising and articles, reels and video posts, and promotion of community-owned King's Pointe Resort and local attractions and events.

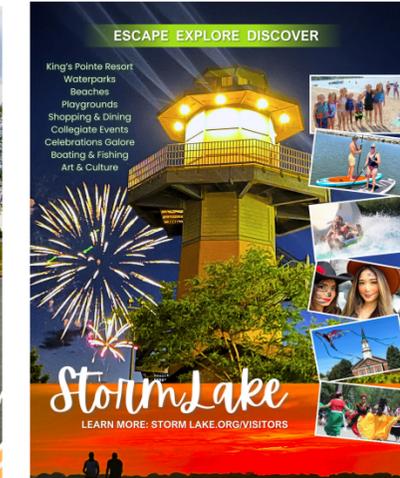
Storm Lake has emerged as a prime travel destination, as tourism contributes \$60 million in annual spending, \$8 million in state and local tax revenue per year in the county, plus 400 local jobs.

Tourism Impact



2025 ACHIEVEMENTS

- Primary strategy was to capitalize on low-cost and no-cost promotion, including Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Pinterest, LinkedIn and website content
- Worked with Travel Iowa on statewide postings
- Produced dozens of travel-related videos, reels and carousels, and hundreds of promotional photos
- Created in-house advertising for regional and state Travel Guides and magazines
- Wrote feature article and provided photography for Storm Lake feature in The Iowan magazine, July 2025
- Participated in Iowa Tourism Conference
- Provided photography to partners including Buena Vista University and Buena Vista Regional Medical Center
- Promoted King's Pointe Resort and other tourism assets
- Takeaways: trends for 2026 - nostalgia travel, wellness travel, "slowcations" and "disconnect" travel



HOMETOWN PRIDE



CITYWIDE CLEANUP

Helping residents to keep their community clean is the driving force behind the Citywide Cleanup program.

While the program has operated in the past in various formats, the Storm Lake City Council in 2025 revamped the effort to be more convenient and flexible for residents.

Instead of a single day to drop off unwanted items, the council provided for a six-month window in which participants can take items to the Recycling Center, beginning in the fall of 2025 and running through May of 2026.

Tickets for participants are available at City Hall for a small fee, while the City will provide the remainder of the needed financing. The council will evaluate the program after it closes.



Storm Lake is beautiful. We're working to keep it that way.

The City of Storm Lake joined eight other communities across the region in forming a Regional Hometown Pride organization, thanks to a grant from Keep Iowa Beautiful. A Storm Lake Hometown Pride Committee began its work in early 2025.

The committee takes on beautification and improvement projects in the community, and in 2025 assisted with efforts such as Storm Lake Proud Week and Kids' Fest. It also provided assistance in grant-writing for a Nature Area development.

Later in the year, Hometown Pride raised funds to add attractive benches throughout downtown Storm Lake. They will be installed in spring 2026.

The committee is also working toward public art and other exciting projects for the future.

The Hometown Pride program is a five-year commitment, with Keep Iowa Beautiful providing assistance and funding toward a Community Coach to serve the nine participating communities.



The committee has been meeting since early 2025. One of its early beautification efforts was planting flowers and creating chalk art in the Lake Avenue shopping district.



MORE IMPROVEMENTS 2025 CITY OF STORM LAKE

