



Ames MSCD chosen to host the Smithsonian Institute Traveling Exhibit

Baseball. Soccer. Hockey. Bowling. Football. People around the country are drawn to compete in these sports and many others. Still more gather on the sidelines to cheer for their favorite athletes and teams. Nowhere do Americans more intimately connect to sports than in their hometowns.

The Ames Main Street Cultural District (MSCD), in partnership with the Iowa Economic Development Authority and Main Street Iowa (MSI), will celebrate this connection as it hosts “Hometown Teams: How Sports Shape America,” a traveling exhibition from the Smithsonian’s Museum on Main Street program.

Ames is one of six communities chosen by the Iowa Economic Development Authority to host “Hometown Teams” as part of the Museum on Main Street program—a national/state/local partnership to bring exhibitions and programs to rural cultural organizations. The exhibition will be on display in Ames, along with complementing local exhibits, September 29 through November 11, 2018.

“It is not unusual for this exhibit to attract thousands of visitors while it is on display in a host community,” said Cindy Hicks, Executive Director of Ames MSCD. “We are excited to have the opportunity to bring this type of exhibit to downtown Ames.”

“Hometown Teams” will capture the stories that unfold on the neighborhood fields and courts, and the underdog heroics, larger-than-life legends, fierce rivalries and gut-wrenching defeats. For more than 100 years, sports have reflected the trials and triumphs of the American experience and helped shape the national character. Whether it is professional sports or those played on the collegiate or scholastic level, amateur sports or sports played by kids on the local playground, sports are everywhere in America. A short video about the exhibition can be viewed at <http://s.si.edu/1bSRDZd>.

“We are very pleased to be able to bring ‘Hometown Teams’ to Iowa,” said Jim Engle, Director of the Iowa Downtown Resource Center. “It allows us the opportunity to explore this fascinating aspect of our own region’s sports history and we hope that it will inspire many to become even more involved in the cultural life of our community.”

“Hometown Teams” will be located at the Octagon Center for the Arts, while local, complementing exhibits will be on display at the Ames Public Library, The Ames Historical Society, and ISU Design on Main.

“From high school and university athletics to adaptive sports and the design of innovative sporting equipment, there is so much to love about sports in Ames,” said Hicks. “Each stop on this exhibit will hold something exciting and new for visitors to explore.”

Through sponsorships and donations, Hicks says the goal is to offer the exhibit free of charge, to everyone who wants to see it. The local exhibits will include memorabilia, interactive experiences, videos, autograph signing days, hands-on art workshops for children, and learning lectures.

“This statewide project will bring additional traffic and visitors to Main Street Districts, helping to serve as economic development catalysts for the communities in which they are located,” said Michael

Wagler, State Coordinator for the Main Street Iowa program.

Other towns chosen to host the exhibit are Mount Vernon, Ottumwa, Guthrie Center, Jefferson, and Conrad.

“Hometown Teams: How Sports Shape America” is part of Museum on Main Street, a unique collaboration between the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES), and Iowa Economic Development Authority’s Main Street Iowa program and local Main Street Iowa communities. Support for Museum on Main Street has been provided by the United States Congress.

To learn more about Hometown Teams and other Museum on Main Street exhibitions, visit www.museumonmainstreet.org.

***The Main Street Cultural District** was established on January 1, 2004. Its mission is to advance and promote downtown as the destination district in the heart of our community. To keep updated on MSCD happenings, become a fan of the Main Street Cultural District on Facebook, bookmark www.AmesDowntown.org, or contact our office at 515-233-3472. MSCD is an affiliate organization of the Ames Chamber of Commerce.*

***SITES** has been sharing the wealth of Smithsonian collections and research programs with millions of people outside Washington, D.C., for more than 60 years. SITES connects Americans to their shared cultural heritage through a wide range of exhibitions about art, science, and history, which are shown wherever people live, work and play. For exhibition description and tour schedules, visit www.sites.si.edu.*

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