



## WWI trucks and Iowa's highway commission

Stan Ring, CTRE's Library Coordinator

FOLLOWING the armistice of World War I, the US Army made surplus vehicles available to the Iowa State Highway Commission (ISHC). According to the February-March 1920 *ISHC Service Bulletin*, Iowa received 578 War Department trucks, ambulances, and motor cars; 572 of the vehicles were new. The value was estimated at 2.5 million dollars.

More than half the vehicles were distributed to the counties. The ISHC kept 272 of them. These trucks were modified to serve as snow plows and graders and to perform other maintenance services.

To store the vehicles, ISHC leased a tract of land on the south side of Lincoln Highway and west of Grand Avenue in Ames. Four buildings were erected at a cost of 43,000 dollars to serve as storage buildings and repair shops. The 1920 ISHC annual report noted that at least four more buildings were needed.

Later, through donations, the people of Ames were able to purchase the land and give it to ISHC with the contingency that its headquarters remain there. Some of the original buildings are still in use as offices at today's Iowa Department of Transportation. •



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