

# City Side

Caring People Quality Programs Exceptional Service

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## Holidays in January

City Hall and most City of Ames departments will be closed on Tuesday, Jan. 1, 2013, for New Year's Day.



## New Stormwater Billing Structure Uses a Four-Tier System

In earlier editions of City Side, you may have read that the City of Ames is changing the way it charges for stormwater. Initially, the City was exploring a fee structure based on the amount of hard surface or impervious area contained on a property called an Estimated Residential Unit (ERU) system.

Currently, the stormwater fee on your utility bill is a flat charge of \$3.45 to every account, regardless of contribution to the storm sewer system. The Ames City Council wanted a fee structure that reflects actual contribution to the stormwater system and conforms to how other utilities are charged based on usage. However, after listening to customer feedback regarding the ERU system, the Ames City Council recently decided to consider a simplified version of the ERU system based on tiers.

Beginning in early 2013, the City of Ames will begin billing stormwater using a system which divides customers into tiers based on the amount of hard surface or impervious area (in square feet) on their property. The goal of the simplified tier structure is to provide an understandable stormwater fee that generates adequate revenue to fund the stormwater system serving Ames residents. Customers having larger impervious areas generally pay more than those with less impervious areas.

Most residential customers will fall into the first tier, which means their stormwater fee will remain at the \$3.45 level. However, that number can change as stormwater management projects are identified that require additional funding.

To access an estimate of the new stormwater fee on any current utility account in Ames and to identify which tier the property is classified, go to [www.cityofames.org/stormwaterfees](http://www.cityofames.org/stormwaterfees) to access the database.

## Reduce, Reuse, Recycle in 2013

Have you made a New Year's resolution? If not, the Resource Recovery Plant has got one for you! Many people view the holidays as a time to spend money and purchase items. Instead, why not consider reducing your environmental footprint?

Everything we throw away adds to our environmental footprint. The items you toss in the trash has to be made, packaged, and transported. Fortunately, when you throw something away in Ames, the Resource Recovery Plant recycles 75 percent of the trash received.



Glass should be thrown in the yellow glass recycling bins located at area grocery stores. Metals are removed and sold, and the burnable portion of the garbage processed becomes refuse derived fuel (RDF) for the Ames Power Plant. The use of RDF reduces our reliance on coal by 10 percent. Now that's smart trash!

# Calendar

## City Council Meetings

The following meetings will be held in the Council Chambers, 515 Clark Avenue:

7 p.m. January 8

7 p.m. January 22

A Council workshop will be held at 7 p.m. January 15. For the most current information, go to: [www.cityofames.org](http://www.cityofames.org).

## Christmas Tree Recycling Offered

The City of Ames will provide free disposal of Christmas trees at the Parks & Recreation Maintenance Shop, 1125 E. 13<sup>th</sup> Street. The designated drop-off days are from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Friday, Jan. 4 and Saturday, Jan. 5. On



these days the wood chipper will be running. The Christmas trees will be recycled into chips, which will be used in City of Ames parks. Trees can be dropped off at the Parks & Recreation Maintenance Shop at other times and dates throughout the winter. Specific information will be posted on our website. The driveway will be marked with a sign. The tree stand, tinsel, and all ornaments should be removed from the tree.

## Annual Survey Provides Feedback

# Resident Satisfaction Study Provides Citizen Input

An analysis of the 30th annual Resident Satisfaction Survey reveals a vast majority of Ames residents are pleased with the quality of City of Ames services. In the 2012 report, 97 percent of those surveyed ranked overall City of Ames service quality as “good” or “very good.” This represents a 2 percent increase in the overall ratings when compared to 2011.

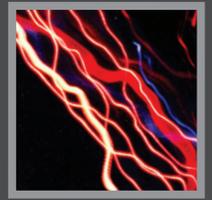
Surveys were mailed to 1,350 randomly selected City of Ames utility users and emailed to 1,000 randomly selected Iowa State University students last spring. There were 470 returned surveys for a response rate of 21 percent. The Resident Satisfaction Survey gathers feedback on priorities for ongoing services and capital improvements, satisfaction with law enforcement, safety, city utilities, and transportation, as well as providing an opportunity for comments. Along with dozens of benchmarking questions, the survey includes a section on current initiatives or issues. This year’s survey included a section on economic development.

The entire Resident Satisfaction Survey is available on the City’s website at <http://www.cityofames.org/modules/showdocument.aspx?documentid=9788> or look for it under the City Manager’s Office at [www.cityofames.org](http://www.cityofames.org).

# Volunteer for a Board or Commission

Here’s one way to volunteer in your community and make a difference. Join a City of Ames board or commission. Boards and commissions make recommendations to the Ames City Council and assist the Council in carrying out various functions of local government. The following boards and commissions have vacancies occurring in the first part of 2013. The number following the name of the board or commission indicates the number of pending vacancies. The number in parentheses denotes how many incumbents may be reappointed. Apply online at [www.cityofames.org](http://www.cityofames.org) (under Our Government, Boards & Commissions). Applications are also available in the City Clerk’s Office. **Deadline to apply is 5 p.m. February 8.**

Commission/Board	Meeting Days/Times	Vacancies
ASSET	2nd Thurs./5 p.m.	1 (1)
Building Board of Appeals	As needed	3 (3)
Civil Service Commission	4th Thurs./8:15 a.m.	1 (1)
Commission On The Arts (COTA)	1st Mon./5 p.m.	2
Electric Utility Operations Review & Advisory Board (EUORAB)	As needed	1 (1)
Historic Preservation Commission	2nd Mon./7 p.m.	1
Human Relations Commission	4th Thurs./5:30 p.m.	2 (1)
Human Relations Commission - Hearing Officers (must be educated in law)	As needed	5
Human Relations Commission - Investigative & Conciliation Officers	As needed	5 (2)
Library Board of Trustees	3rd Thurs./7 p.m.	3 (3)
Parks and Recreation Commission	3rd Thurs./4 p.m.	4 (4)
Partner Cities Association	3rd Thurs./5 p.m.	1 (1)
Planning and Zoning Commission	1st & 3rd Wed./7 p.m.	2 (2)
Property Maintenance Appeals Board	As needed	1 (1)
Public Art Commission	1st Wed./Noon	6 (5)
Zoning Board of Adjustment	2nd & 4th Wed. (Apr.-Oct.); 2nd Wed. (Nov.-Mar.)/7 p.m.	1 (1)



## Carbon Monoxide: Colorless, Odorless and Very Dangerous

Carbon monoxide is an odorless, colorless gas produced when fuel burns — such as in a furnace, gas water heater, kerosene space heater, or a car engine. If a fuel-burning device is installed, operated, or vented incorrectly, the carbon monoxide it gives off can build up in the air.

If the concentration of carbon monoxide is high enough, you will develop the flu-like symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning including headache, weakness, dizziness, and nausea. If you suspect you have been, or are being exposed to carbon monoxide, seek medical attention.

What can you do to stay safe each winter? Here are some tips. Make sure you have a qualified heating and cooling specialist check your furnace each year. Follow the directions for proper operation and ventilation on any supplemental gas or kerosene heaters you use. Install carbon monoxide detectors on each level of your home to help identify a problem before it gets serious. Finally, test your detectors at least once a month and replace them if they fail to respond correctly when tested. The sensors in carbon monoxide alarms have a limited life.

## Home Improvements Lower Bills

### Tips for Increasing Efficiency

While we hope for a mild winter, we live in Iowa where it can get very cold. Cold temperatures create high heating bills. According to the Department of Energy, many home owners have the potential to save 50 percent of their energy. There are many areas in your home you could address to improve efficiency. Probably the biggest three are air leakage, insulation, and your furnace.

- ♦ Sealing air leaks can save 40 percent of your heating energy. The largest sources of air leakage are the rim joist area at the top of the basement foundation. Another common leakage area is gaps or holes leading into the attic. Also, don't forget to caulk and weather strip your windows and doors.
- ♦ Insulation helps reduce the heat transfer in (during summer), and out (during winter), of your home. Heat is lost in relation to the level of insulation, not direction. The attic usually gets the most attention, but don't forget the walls and basement.
- ♦ Schedule a Smart Energy Residential Audit to receive a customized report on what you can do to make your home more energy efficient. For Ames Electric Services customers, the audit is free. Go to [www.cityofames.org/Smart Energy](http://www.cityofames.org/Smart Energy) for more information.

For more information or for a free copy of the Iowa Energy Center booklet, Home Tightening, Insulation and Ventilation, call (515) 239-5177.

## Eco Fair 2013 Reminder

The City of Ames is excited to once again host the annual Eco Fair. In an effort to help Ames residents embrace energy conservation and sustainable practices, the Eco Fair will showcase booths, displays, and vendors featuring energy-saving products. The Eco Fair replaces the former Energy Fair. Booths will include information on electric and water conservation, watershed protection, low-impact landscaping, and transportation efficiency.

Please join us on Saturday, March 30, 2013, at the Community Center Gym, 515 Clark Ave., from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The Eco Fair is fun and educational for all ages.

## Iowa One Call Phone Number

Always remember to call before you dig. The Iowa One Call number is even easier to remember. Just dial 811!



# Ask the Energy Guy

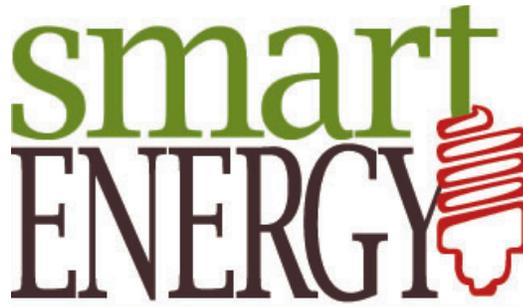
**Q: Why don't my compact fluorescent lamps last very long?**

**A:** Generally, people buy compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs) to save money and are sometimes disappointed when their lamp doesn't last as long as anticipated. That's not good when you spent more money on the compact than its equivalent incandescent bulb.

Compact fluorescent lamps are mainly affected by temperature, base position, and the duration of burn. Temperature extremes can reduce light output and reduce bulb life. Most compact fluorescent lamps fail when the temperature is too warm or cold. The heat created by the bulb itself can affect performance especially if it's enclosed in a covered fixture. Some manufactures make what they call an "amalgam" lamp that performs better in hot or cold environments. You can check packaging for information on temperature ranges.

Base position can also affect performance. Compact fluorescent lamps are commonly made to be operated in any fixture where a standard incandescent bulb works. However, some lamps are made for a specific purpose such as ceiling fixtures (base up) or lamps (base down). The lamps will not last as long if used incorrectly. Here again, looking for information on the packaging can save some difficulty down the road.

If you turn a compact fluorescent lamp on and off frequently, it will not meet its rated life expectancy. Compact fluorescent lamps work best if they are left on for more than 10 minutes each time they are turned on. Frequently switching them on and off will shorten the life of the lamp. If the life of the lamp is shortened significantly, you will not reap the savings you were looking for when purchasing the CFL.



Do you want to be rewarded for purchasing more energy-efficient residential lighting? Then take advantage of our Smart Energy lighting rebate program! It pays you to switch to the energy saving, more environmentally friendly choice. More information at [cityofames/SmartEnergy](http://cityofames.com/SmartEnergy).

**Steve Wilson**

*"The Energy Guy"*

Energy Services Coordinator  
(515) 239-5177

## Prime Time Power

The Prime Time Power program is available to all homeowners and small businesses with central air conditioners. You do not need to reapply for Prime Time Power if you've signed up before. The \$5 credit during each of the four summer months is automatically applied to your account. To sign up or receive additional information about the program, call Utility Customer Service at (515) 239-5120 or Steve Wilson at (515) 239-5177.

## Call for a Free Energy Conservation Packet

Need to improve your home's energy efficiency? Call (515) 239-5177 for a free energy conservation packet. You'll receive booklets from the Iowa Energy Center, a home self audit, and information on Smart Energy.

**City Side is a publication of the City of Ames, Iowa**

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## Questions?

515 Clark Ave.  
Ames, IA 50010  
Phone: (515) 239-5204  
[www.cityofames.org](http://www.cityofames.org)

## Numbers to Know

Power out .....239-5240

Street light out .....239-5500

Utility bill question ....239-5120

Renting security lights 239-5437

Energy questions.....239-5177

Tree growing too close to an electric line .....239-5500

Going to be digging?  
Iowa One Call: ..... 811

### Heating Degree Days

October			Season to date		
2012	2011	30-year Average	11/12	10/11	30-year Average
453	320	394	570	486	507

### Cooling Degree Days

October			Season to date		
2012	2011	30-year Average	2012	2011	30-year Average
6	28	15	1340	1150	1036

Degree Days are tabulated from hourly temperature data recorded at the Electric Services Power Plant. Monthly and seasonal degree days are averages since 1982. More degree day information is available on our Web site: [www.cityofames.org](http://www.cityofames.org)

