

# City Side

Caring People Quality Programs Exceptional Service

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## Labor Day Closings

City Hall and most City of Ames offices will be closed Monday, Sept. 2, for the Labor Day holiday.



## New Downtown Bike Racks Offer Unique, Functional Design

After Ames bicyclists provided input that additional bike racks were needed in the downtown area, the Ames Community Arts Council (ACAC), the Ames Public Art Commission, Main Street Cultural District, and the City of Ames worked together to develop a creative solution. When installation is complete, seven new uniquely designed bike racks will be available for bike riders throughout downtown Ames.

The seven bike racks include three racks designed by Brent Schipper located at City Hall and at the intersection of Douglas Avenue and Main Street, one rack designed by Jim Russell at Tom Evans Plaza, two racks designed by Michael Stanley at 233 and 319 Main Street, and one rack designed by Mack Geggie at 228 Main Street. Each artist's design is unique and functional.



*This bike rack, designed by Jim Russell, has been installed at Tom Evans Plaza.*

The racks range in size from small (two bikes), medium (three to five bikes), and large (six to eight bikes). Schipper's racks include a written word design element, Russell's design is a large rack that includes tubular elements, Stanley's racks include triangle shapes combined into "quasi-crystals," and Geggie's rack design is an abstraction of the new City of Ames logo.

A dedication ceremony for the functional art will be held on Sunday, Sept. 22, in conjunction with the 43rd annual Octagon Art Festival. For more information on the designs or rack locations, contact Corey Mellies, Public Works Operations Manager, at 515.239.5276.

## Ames Citizens Academy Has Answers!

The Ames Citizens Academy is back! Learn more about your local government by signing up for this free, informative, weekly class. Ames residents have the opportunity to learn more about topics including City programs, services, departments, and budgeting! The sessions will be held from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. for six consecutive Wednesdays from Sept. 11 through Oct. 16. Each session begins with a meal.

Those interested in participating should look for the application online at [www.cityofames.org](http://www.cityofames.org), or request one through the City Manager's Office by calling 515.239.5101. The Ames Citizens Academy is education, interactive, and fun. Class size is limited to 25 participants, and Iowa State University students are encouraged to apply.

# Calendar

## City Council Meetings

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

7 p.m. Sept. 10

7 p.m. Sept. 24

A Council workshop will be held at 7 p.m. on Sept. 17. For the most current information, go to: [www.cityofames.org](http://www.cityofames.org).

## Take the Library With You!

Everyone has heard of e-books, right? Now you can enjoy free e-magazines from the Ames Public Library! The Library is pleased to announce Zinio, the world's largest newsstand, is now available. Zinio provides cover-to-cover access to more than 50 magazines a reader can download straight to a computer or mobile device.

No limits, no holds, no due dates! Visit [www.amespubliclibrary.org](http://www.amespubliclibrary.org) or stop by the Library's Information Desk for more details on Zinio and other programs and services of your Ames Public Library. Remember, the Library's temporary address is 620 Lincoln Way.

Help Keep Our Local Waterways Clean!

## Partnership Keeps Trash Out of Local Streams and Rivers

The Skunk River Navy has partnered with the City of Ames for the past 15 years on stream cleanups along the Skunk River and Squaw Creek. Volunteers collect trash out of local streams, which is brought to the Resource Recovery Plant for disposal.

Under the guidance of Dr. Jim Colbert and Jim Holtz from Iowa State University, the Skunk River Navy cleanups are a service project for biology students and serve two purposes. First, they provide a chance to learn more about the biology and water quality of Iowa streams. Second, the cleanups improve the quality of the Skunk River and its tributaries by removing trash. Volunteers from the community are welcome to work alongside the students during the cleanups. The next stream cleanups are scheduled for Saturday, Sept. 21, and Saturday, Sept. 28. For more information, visit <http://www.facebook.com/groups/227780593931393> to learn more about volunteer activities (or search "Skunk River Navy" in Facebook groups).



*Members of the Skunk River Navy work on collecting trash from local rivers. The next trash cleanup days are planned for September.*

To learn more about the City of Ames' Smart Watershed Program and what you can do to help improve local stream quality, go to [www.cityofames.org/smartwatersheds](http://www.cityofames.org/smartwatersheds). The Smart Watersheds programs includes public outreach, education, and rebates to encourage clean rivers and streams. Rebate programs are available for rain gardens, soil quality restoration, and native landscaping.

## Entertaining? Be a Good Neighbor

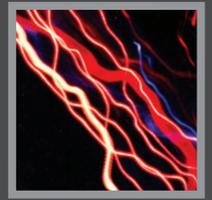
People host social gatherings, get-togethers and parties for many reasons. There's always a good excuse to celebrate! Whatever the reason for your party, two basic rules apply. First, it should be a pleasant experience for those in attendance. Second, it should not be an unpleasant experience for your neighbors.

Don't have "open" parties. Make attendance by invitation only and don't invite too many guests. Consider parking and the amount of room you have to accommodate your guests without having them spill out into your neighborhood.

Tell your neighbors you are having a party, when it will start and when it should end. Give them your phone number and encourage them to call you first if they have a complaint.

Basic rule: Keep noise to a minimum! Don't wait for your party to get out of hand, stay actively engaged. Police your own party by stepping outside occasionally and walking a short distance away. What you hear is what your neighbors hear. Make adjustments as necessary.

Want more information? Look for the "How to Party in Ames" brochure at [www.cityofames.org](http://www.cityofames.org) under "Living in Ames" then "Neighborhood Concerns."

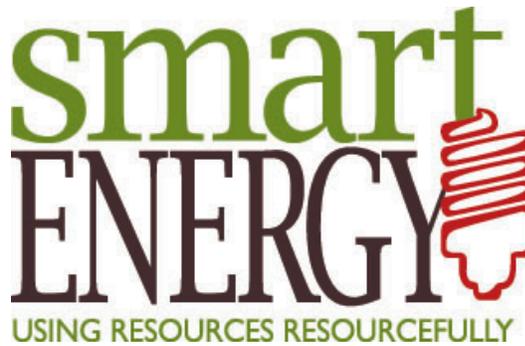


## Smart Energy Home Audits Provide Tips on Reducing Electricity, Bills

As part of the Smart Energy program, City of Ames Electric Services offers a residential energy audit for those interested in reducing energy usage and utility bills. Ames Electric customers who sign up for the free audit will receive a personalized evaluation of their home's energy use and a report offering suggestions on what can be done to save energy. Recently, Ames Electric Services contracted with a new audit provider, The Energy Group, but customers can expect the same customized approach and helpful tips they've come to appreciate.

The residential energy audit looks at windows, doors, heating and air conditioning equipment, the thermostat and settings, the water heater, kitchen appliances, insulation levels, and lighting. For those who own a home built in 2000 or earlier, there is also a free blower door test to check for air infiltration leaks.

Signing up for the audit is easy. Forms and more information can be found by visiting [www.cityofames.org/smartenergy](http://www.cityofames.org/smartenergy). There is a printable version to mail in or a fillable form to submit electronically, or call the Energy Guy at 515.239.5177.



## Do We Have Your Number?

Although Ames Electric Services can't guarantee that your power will never go off, we always do our best to restore service as quickly as possible. In fact, one of our greatest strengths as your local community owned electric utility is our ability to respond quickly in case of a power outage.

City of Ames Electric Services has upgraded its Outage Management System (OMS) to assist the restoration of power to our customers. The OMS pinpoints the outage and provides mapping for line crews. This saves precious time and reduces the duration of the outage.

How does it do this? The system identifies your phone number when you call, associates it with your address, and automatically adds your home to the outage list. Two telephone numbers can be associated with your account, such as a home phone number and a cell number or two cell numbers. Due to the increase in cell phone use and the problems with using cordless phones during a power outage, associating a cell phone number with your address is the safe and smart way of helping to ensure your electricity is reconnected in a timely manner.

How can you help? Contact Utility Customer Service at 515.239.5120 and make sure they have two current phone numbers for your home or fill out the form at [www.cityofames.org/outage](http://www.cityofames.org/outage).

## Summer Energy Savings!

- Clean furnace filters are necessary for efficient air conditioner operation.
- Adding insulation to your home can cut your cooling costs up to 25 percent.
- Turn your thermostat up 5 degrees and save up to 10 percent of your cooling energy.
- Clean your outdoor compressor unit each spring.
- Seal ducts so more cool air gets where you want it to go.
- Keep your registers free of obstructions so your cool air can do its job.
- Close your blinds and drapes to block out the heating rays of the sun.
- Have your cooling system checked periodically by a professional service person.
- Participate in Smart Energy programs to save energy. Visit [www.cityofames.org/smartenergy](http://www.cityofames.org/smartenergy).



# Ask the Energy Guy

**Q: Is it a good idea to replace a working furnace and air conditioner with more efficient equipment?**

**A:** Like a lot of things dealing with energy, it depends. A new system will likely save energy and dollars, but the amount you save may not be enough to entice you to make the move. The weather, home construction, thermostat setting, and what you buy all impact savings. Improving efficiency is a good idea, but it may not make financial sense to replace a perfectly good working heating and air conditioning system. Estimating a payback is one way to help you make the decision.

To calculate your payback, first estimate how much you spend on heating and cooling. You'll need to gather your gas and electric bills for the past year. For gas, look at a month when your furnace isn't running. This amount is roughly your base use gas cost. Subtract that amount from the months the furnace runs and add them up. This is your annual heating cost. Do the same with your cooling bills to give you an idea of your annual cooling cost. An old furnace might have an efficiency of 70 percent and replacing it with a new 92 percent efficient model should save about 24 percent on your heating bill. An old air conditioner might have a seasonal energy efficiency ratio (SEER) of 9 and replacing it with a new 14 SEER model should save about 35 percent on your cooling bill.

Let's say that after taking out your base loads and adding up your bills you find that you spend \$1,200 on heating and \$400 on cooling. Applying the percent savings to these cost estimates suggest the new equipment will save \$428 a year ( $(\$1,200 \times .24) + (\$400 \times .35)$ ). You save about 27 percent on your heating and cooling bill and the new equipment is eligible for rebates of \$250 from Alliant Energy and \$200 from the City of Ames. Let's say the new system costs \$6,000. After subtracting rebates the remainder is \$5,550 and your payback is 13 years.

The picture changes a bit if you buy equipment that qualifies for federal tax credits. A furnace must be 95 percent efficient and an air conditioner a 16 SEER to qualify for the tax credits. You would now save 30 percent on heating and about 40 percent on cooling. Using the annual costs from above savings are now \$520, and the rebates increase to \$325 on the furnace and \$400 on the air conditioner. You're saving about 33 percent per year on your heating and cooling bill and your payback is down to 10 years. However, in this case you qualify for a federal tax credit of \$300 on the air conditioner and \$150 on the furnace. Taking this into account shortens the payback to nine years.

**Steve Wilson**  
"The Energy Guy"

Energy Services Coordinator  
515.239.5177

## Energy Information

- Did you know attic temperatures can reach 150 degrees? Heat moves from the warm side of a barrier to the cold side. If your home is cooler than your attic, it will gain heat. Make sure your attic has 12 to 14 inches of insulation. Don't forget to insulate your attic access door. If the heat build up in your attic is extreme, you may benefit from an attic ventilation fan.
- Did you know that fifty percent of the heat in a home comes from the sun, 30 percent from air leaks, 10 percent from internal sources such as appliances and people, and 10 percent from conduction.

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

**Editor**  
Susan Gwiasda  
Public Relations Officer

**Questions?**  
515 Clark Ave.  
Ames, IA 50010  
Phone: 515.239.5204  
[www.cityofames.org](http://www.cityofames.org)

## Numbers to Know

Power out .....515.239.5240  
 Street light out ....515.239.5500  
 Utility bill questions .....515.239.5120  
 Renting security lights.....515.239.5437  
 Energy questions..515.239.5177  
 Tree growing too close to an electric line .....515.239-5500  
 Going to be digging?  
 Iowa One Call: ..... 811

### Heating Degree Days

June			Season to date		
2013	2012	31-year Average	12/13	10/11	31-year Average
31	8	19	5385	6633	6476

### Cooling Degree Days

June			Season to date		
2013	2012	31-year Average	2013	2012	31-year Average
226	288	226	318	456	306

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)