

# City Side

Caring People Quality Programs Exceptional Service

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## City Offices Closed

City Hall and most City of Ames departments will be closed on Monday, Feb. 16, in recognition of Presidents' Day. For more information about the City of Ames, go to [www.cityofames.org](http://www.cityofames.org).

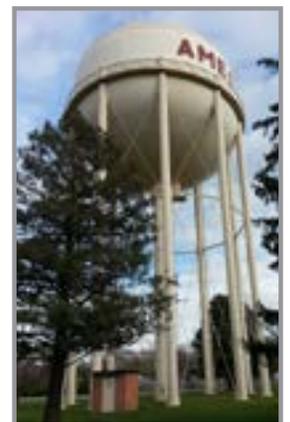


## West Water Tower Scheduled For Removal in 2015

The North Dakota Avenue Water Tower has stood watch over west Ames neighborhoods for more than 50 years. Yet for the last decade, the tank has been empty. No longer used as part of the water distribution system, the tower will be dismantled and removed this year.

In 2003, Ames water distribution was divided into two pressure zones reflecting growth in the west and southwest portions of the city. The new zones allowed the water utility to better regulate water pressure in the areas. At the time, City staff explored options for reusing the North Dakota tower, but its elevation proved incompatible with the new plan. The Mortensen Road and County Line Water Tower, constructed in 2003, joined the Bloomington Road Water Tower in providing water storage for the community. The State Avenue and Mortensen Road Water Tower was added in 2009. Combined, the three towers hold up to four million gallons of water.

In March 2014, the Ames City Council approved demolition of the tower as part of the 2014-2015 Capital Improvements Plan. Recently, the Council approved beginning the process to find a vendor to remove the tower, which will take place in 2015. Final plans for the property have not been determined. In the interim, the area will be seeded with grass and maintained by the City of Ames.



Constructed in 1962, the North Dakota Avenue Water Tower will be taken down in 2015.

## 'Rent Smart Ames' Provides Answers

Rent Smart Ames is a program providing landlords and tenants with the resources and expertise to make renting in Ames a smart choice. Through a collaborative effort between the City of Ames and Iowa State University communities, Rent Smart Ames incorporates information landlords and tenants need to know about renting conveniently located on one website: [www.cityofames.org/RentSmartAmes](http://www.cityofames.org/RentSmartAmes).



Rent Smart Ames focuses on three distinct areas of renting: rental housing, tenant education, and landlord education. Through the website, landlords can list their properties, prospective tenants can receive step-by-step guidance about renting, and both landlords and tenants can learn about their rights and responsibilities.

Information for tenants includes what to look for in a rental unit, what to expect while renting, and how to be a smart renter. Along with other information, landlords are provided with a free venue to publicize their available rental units.

# Calendar

## City Council Meetings

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

5:15 p.m. Feb. 10

7 p.m. Feb. 24

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

## Keep Hydrants Clear from Snow

As snow piles up along the curb, it does more than hamper visibility for drivers. Mounds of snow can obscure locations of fire hydrants. Ames firefighters are requesting residents check fire hydrants located near



their homes or businesses to ensure they are visible.

If the fire hydrant is covered, we need your

help! Please clear a three-foot wide area around the hydrant to ensure firefighters can locate it. During a fire emergency, every second counts. If you need assistance clearing the hydrant, call Fire Station No. 1 between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. at 515.239.5109.

Keep Your Water Flowing!

## When the Temperatures Drop, Watch for Frozen Pipes

Cold weather is here to stay and that means being prepared when the temperatures dip. A frequent - and often expensive - problem during days of very cold temperatures is a frozen water pipe or a frozen water meter. A few simple do-it-yourself steps will keep the water flowing and prevent costly repairs.

- ◆ Find out where your water meter is located. This is usually in an area where the water heater and furnace are located.
- ◆ Locate your shut-off valves. Most meter installations have a valve on the inlet and outlet sides of the water meter. If the temperatures are very low, it is advisable to turn off the inlet valve if you are going to be gone more than overnight.
- ◆ Check basement windows and make sure they are closed. Stop any outside air from entering the basement. Keep the basement temperature above 55 degrees. If this is not possible, cover or insulate the water service, meter and water pipes to prevent freezing. A large rug or old blanket placed over the water service and meter can help.
- ◆ If you will be gone for an extended period of time, have a friend or neighbor check your property periodically.

## Preparing Budget for 2015-16 Includes Series of Public Meetings

The City of Ames began preparing for the Fiscal Year 2015-2016 budget last fall with a series of internal staff meetings. Work continues throughout the winter months as each department's budget is reviewed internally prior to presentation to the Ames City Council. There are still plenty of opportunities to get involved in the budget process. A budget overview will be presented to the City Council at 2 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 30.

Three additional meetings will follow in which representatives of each of the City's departments present an in-depth review of their proposed budgets. All budget meetings will be held in the City Council Chambers, Ames City Hall, 515 Clark Ave. The schedule includes:

5:15 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 3

5:15 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 4

5:15 p.m. Thursday, Feb. 5

A wrap-up of the budget will be held at 5:15 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 10. The final budget hearing is scheduled for 7 p.m. on Tuesday, March 3, and will include an opportunity for public comments. This is also a regularly scheduled City Council meeting. Like all Iowa communities, the City of Ames must submit its budget to the State of Iowa for certification by March 15. Budget documents for the current fiscal year are posted on the City's website, and draft documents for 2015-16 will be posted by early February. For more information, go to [www.cityofames.org](http://www.cityofames.org).





## Eco Fair 2015 Scheduled for April; Fun, Educational Event for All Ages

The 15th annual City of Ames Eco Fair will be held at the Community Center Gym, 515 Clark Ave., on Saturday, April 4, 2015, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Bring your kids and play games, see interesting displays, register for door prizes, and enjoy refreshments. The Eco Fair features City department booths, as well as community organizations and vendors who offer energy-efficient products, programs, or services.

In addition to showcasing electric conservation, the Eco Fair includes water conservation and watershed protection, landscaping, and transportation efficiency. Additionally, learn more about the Resource Recovery Plant! Get useful information on products and services from area vendors, see interesting displays, register for door prizes, play games, and join us for free food. You won't want to miss this free, fun, and educational event!



*ABOVE: Images from Eco Fair 2014 showcase City of Ames departmental booths, prizes for participants, and safety information available at the annual event.*

## Space Heater Safety Tips

Electric space heaters are not intended for the whole house or for continuous operation, but they are a great way to take the chill off. Most heaters use around 1,500 watts of electricity, which costs approximately 15 cents an hour. When operating a space heater, users must be careful. Here are some safety tips:

- Operate the heater in a stable, upright position with 3 feet of clear space around the unit.
- Never operate the heater in a closed area, such as beneath furniture, or behind curtains or drapes. It should not be hung from a wall or ceiling.
- Do not use a heater with a damaged cord or plug.
- Do not run the cord under rugs or carpeting.
- Never locate a heater in a wet area like the bathroom, kitchen, or laundry.
- Always unplug a heater when not in use or when cleaning it.
- Make sure the heater has been tested by a lab such as Underwriters Laboratories.
- If an extension cord is needed, use one that is rated to handle the wattage of the heater.

## Use Less Energy, Lower Your Bills

- Save 1 to 2 percent on your energy bills by using foam gaskets on exterior outlets and switches.
- Use water-saving shower heads, faucet aerators, hot water pipe insulation, and reduce hot water temperature to save up to 50 percent on water heating energy.
- Caulk, weatherstrip, and plug any holes to the outside. Air leakage can account for 30 to 40 percent of your heating bill. The average American home loses \$150 worth of energy per year through air leaks in its ceiling, walls, and foundation.
- Drain a bucket of water out of your water heater at least once a year to reduce sediment and help with efficient operation.
- Change your furnace filter monthly during periods of heavy usage like extremely cold weather. A dirty filter will make your furnace work harder and increase operating costs.



# Ask the Energy Guy

**Q: I hear a lot about carbon dioxide emissions and how this greenhouse gas can negatively affect the planet. What can we do about it?**

**A:** Great question. This is an important issue. According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) is the primary greenhouse gas in the atmosphere. In 2012, CO<sub>2</sub> accounted for about 82 percent of all greenhouse gas emissions in the United States. Carbon dioxide is naturally present in the atmosphere as part of the Earth's carbon cycle (the natural circulation of carbon among the atmosphere, oceans, soil, plants, and animals). Human activities add CO<sub>2</sub> to the atmosphere as well. There are natural CO<sub>2</sub> mechanisms, like forests, that help clean the atmosphere. The good news is that we can also assist in the clean up by practicing energy conservation.

Saving energy is always a good idea. It keeps rates low over time, helps to maintain a reliable electrical system, can reduce our bills, and contributes to a cleaner environment. When we use less energy, we burn less fossil fuel. This reduces the amount of emissions from power plants, in particular carbon dioxide. According to the Environmental Defense Fund, the United States releases about 40,000 pounds of carbon dioxide per person into the air every year.

Here are a few ideas for reducing energy and carbon dioxide emissions:

- Don't run your dishwasher until it is full, and use the energy-saving setting to dry the dishes. Carbon dioxide savings: 200 pounds per year.
- Turn your thermostat five degrees up in summer and down in winter. Savings: about 1,200 pounds per year.
- Caulk and weather strip around doors and windows to seal leaks. Savings: up to 1,000 pounds each year.
- Insulate your walls and ceilings. Savings: up to 2,000 pounds per year.
- Install the best energy-saving windows when it is time to replace your current ones. Savings: up to 10,000 pounds annually.

**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, 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

## Numbers to Know

**Power out .....515.239.5240**  
**Street light out ....515.239.5500**  
**Utility bill .....515.239.5120**  
**Energy questions..515.239.5177**  
**Tree growing too close to an electric line .....515.239.5500**  
**Going to be digging?**  
**Iowa One Call: ..... 811**  
**Stormwater Concern:.....515.239.5160**

**Power Plant Renewable Energy Use For November 2014**  
Wind purchased: 7,339,763 kWh  
Refuse Derived Fuel (RDF) Used: 27,994 tons

### Heating Degree Days

November			Season to date		
2014	2013	32-year Average	13/14	12/13	32-year Average
1040	905	813	1539	1369	1319

### Cooling Degree Days

November			Season to date		
2014	2013	32-year Average	2014	2013	32-year Average
0	0	0	890	1196	1044

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 website: [www.cityofames.org](http://www.cityofames.org)

