

# City Side

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### Discounts Available

Discounted season passes are available to the Furman Aquatic Center. Purchase a new pass before May 15 and receive a 10% discount. Renew your old (2014) season pass before May 15 and receive a 20% discount!



## Resource Recovery Plant: Recycling Trash for 40 Years!

Since 1975, the Resource Recovery Plant (RRP) has served as the repository for garbage from around Story County. Trash dumped on the tipping floor may not seem a valuable commodity, but processed garbage can be converted into refuse-derived fuel (RDF). By using RDF as a renewable, supplemental fuel, the Ames Power Plant reduces the amount of coal burned by 10 percent. As the Ames Power Plant moves forward on a major conversion to natural gas, RDF will continue to serve as an energy source.

Pursuing a waste-to-energy facility in the 1970s reflected the progressive, innovative thinking of City leadership who wanted to tap into new technology to address two community concerns: decrease reliance on non-renewable fuels and avoid using valuable farmland for landfills. Initial planning for the Ames facility began in 1971, and construction began in 1974. Since opening in August 1975, the RRP has been cited in engineering journals, recycling articles, and public works publications as a model system.

Producing RDF relies on a mechanical separating process to create a combustible product. From the RRP tipping floor, garbage is placed on a conveyor and taken through a series of shredders which make it smaller in size. An electro-magnet and an eddy current remove ferrous and non-ferrous metals for recycling. An air knife separates the material into either burnable RDF or heavier non-burnable rejects. The RDF is pushed into a pneumatic tube, which is sent underground to the Ames Power Plant.

Although the process rejects very large pieces, glass, and wet garbage, the amount of recycling exceeds rates of traditional recycling. The non-burnable material is sent to a landfill. Since it is shredded, it takes up much less volume in the landfill than it would if it were buried whole. Since 1975, the RRP has reduced coal usage by more than a half million tons and saved approximately 100 acres of land from becoming landfill.

Ames residents have been active participants in waste-to-energy recycling for four decades. Throughout 2015, the RRP will be celebrating its 40th anniversary. Watch for more details on how you can participate!



### Don't Trash Your Glass!

Beginning in 2006, the City of Ames began a program of glass recycling to reduce the amount of glass in the waste stream. When pieces of glass are mixed with refuse-derived fuel and injected into the furnace section of the Power Plant boiler, the glass melts.

Solidified glass, called slag, collects in the boiler tubes causing expensive repairs. Additionally, glass often ends up with the non-burnable garbage sent to the landfill, which increases transportation and dumping costs. Large yellow recycling drop boxes have been placed in local grocery store parking lots to collect your glass. The glass recycling program has diverted more than 500 tons of glass out of the landfill.

# Calendar

## City Council Meetings

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

7 p.m. March 3

7 p.m. March 24

For the most current information, go to: [www.cityofames.org](http://www.cityofames.org).

## Stash the Trash Set for April

It's still cold outside, but spring cleaning is just around the corner. The City of Ames Resource Recovery Plant will again join community partners in participating in the annual "Stash The Trash" city clean-up day. The event will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday, April 18.

Volunteers can sign up online ahead of time for a location to pick up trash. Those interested can go to the Volunteer Center website at [www.vcstory.org](http://www.vcstory.org).

At last year's Stash the Trash, more than 3,000 volunteers worked together to collect six tons of garbage abandoned throughout the community. In 2013, more than three tons of trash were recovered.

Annual Program Ensures Water Quality

## Fire Hydrant Flushing Planned for Late March

The Ames Public Works Department will begin to flush rust from city water mains the first week of April and continuing for approximately two weeks. The purpose of this annual program is to provide Ames residents with the safest and highest quality water possible. Flushing serves the following purposes:

- Dislodges and removes mineral deposits and sediments from the water mains.
- Verifies the proper operation of fire hydrants and valves.
- Helps identify weaknesses in the water system.
- Checks for closed valves and weak flows in the water system.



During the flushing process, Ames residents may experience rust in the water, even when crews are not working in the immediate area. To avoid rust, follow these tips:

- Turn on cold water first to check for rust to avoid drawing it into the hot water heater.
- If the water looks rusty, run the tap for one to two minutes until it clears.
- If rust discolors clothing in a washing machine, rust remover is available at the City Hall information desk, 515 Clark Ave., Ames fire stations, or by calling 515.239.5550.

Specific information about the times, dates, and locations of the crews will be released to the local media prior to beginning the flushing, or you may check the City's website at [www.cityofames.org](http://www.cityofames.org).

## Severe Weather Awareness Week

Before severe weather arrives is the best time to make a plan of action. In Iowa, the risk of severe weather is greatest in the spring. That's why Iowa's Severe Weather Awareness Week will be held from March 23 to 27. This week provides the opportunity to increase awareness about the dangers of severe weather and to practice responses.

In addition to the regularly scheduled outdoor weather siren test at 10 a.m. the first Wednesday of each month, the City of Ames will participate in an additional test during Severe Weather Awareness Week. Ames residents can expect a second test at 10 a.m. on Wednesday, March 25.

The outdoor warning system includes 16 sirens located around Ames, and five sirens on the Iowa State University campus. The outdoor warning system was designed to alert people outside of approaching tornadoes or storms systems. To stay safe indoors and to be sure dangerous weather has passed, every home and business should have a weather radio. When sirens are activated, they will sound for five minutes. If necessary, they will be reactivated. There is no "all clear" signal from the sirens.



## Ames Eco Fair Provides Residents With Earth Friendly Information

The City of Ames is excited to once again host the annual Eco Fair. The purpose of the event is to encourage Ames residents to follow conservation practices and promote the goal of becoming a sustainable community. City departments and dozens of different vendors will provide information through booths and displays.



The Eco Fair showcases energy saving products and services, water conservation, watershed protection, landscaping, and transportation efficiency. “Over the years, the Eco Fair has grown tremendously. We include the Ames Public Library, Fire and Police Departments, and all our City of Ames utilities,” said Steve Wilson, Energy Services Coordinator. “Participants of all ages can learn more about sustainable practices at this event.”



Join us on Saturday, April 4 at the Community Center Gym from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. This is a great opportunity to get useful information on products and services from area vendors, see interesting displays, register for door prizes, play games, and enjoy cookies and lemonade.

## Want to Lower Energy Bills?

### Tips to Increase Your Home’s 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 homeowners have the potential to save 50 percent of their energy. There are many areas you might address in your home 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, and holes into the attic. Don’t forget to caulk and weather strip your windows and doors. For those customers served by natural gas from Alliant Energy, there is financial assistance to caulk and weather strip your home.
- Insulation helps reduce the heat transfer in (summer) and out (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. Alliant Energy also offers financial assistance to add insulation.
- You always save by turning down your thermostat no matter how long. The money you save by turning the temperature down outweighs any extra catch up cost.

For more information or for a free copy of the Iowa Energy Center booklet, *Home Tightening, Insulation and Ventilation*, call 515.239.5177.

## Visit Smart Energy on Web

Check out Electric Services’ Smart Energy website for information on programs and incentives available to help you improve your efficiency, conserve energy, and reduce your bills. Smart Energy is good for the environment, good for Ames, and good for you! For current program information go to [www.cityofames.org/smartenergy](http://www.cityofames.org/smartenergy), or call 515.239.5177.

## Carbon Monoxide Warning Signs

Carbon monoxide is an odorless, colorless gas. It is 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. Without intervention, the results can be deadly. Symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning are like the flu: headache, weakness, dizziness, and nausea. Know the signs, and be cautious!



# Ask the Energy Guy

**Q: I try to conserve, but why does it seem that I end up using more energy?**

**A:** Good question. When it comes to energy, we are inclined to think nothing ever changes in our lives. Our perception is that we do the same things year after year. While our base energy habits tend to remain the same, it may be the accumulation of little things that drive up energy use. Many utility customers have embraced conservation in major areas like insulation and appliance efficiency, but overlook the number of electric-using amenities they have added to their household over the years.

According to the Energy Information Administration (EIA), while most home appliances have become more efficient over the past 30 years, the average U.S. household uses many more consumer electronics such as personal computers, televisions, and related devices.

In 1978, personal computers were expensive and not typically used by U.S. households. In 2011, the Census Bureau reported more than three-quarters of households reported having a computer. Similar shifts occurred for household Internet use as 71.7 percent of households reported Internet access in 2011, up from 18 percent in 1997. In the City’s 2014 Resident Satisfaction Survey, 95 percent of Ames residents reported having Internet access at home.

In 1978, most households had only one television but by 2009 the average household had 2.5 televisions. By 2010, 98.9 percent of American homes owned at least one television. It’s interesting to note that this fell to 96.7 percent by 2012 because viewers began replacing TVs with Internet streaming, leading to an increased number of homes owning more than one computer, or tablet, or smart phone.

As of 2009, 79 percent of homes had a DVD player, and 43 percent had a DVR. Nearly one-third of all households also had at least four electronic devices, such as cell phones, plugged in and charging at home. But while collecting consumer electronics makes a significant contribution to our energy use, it doesn’t tell the whole story. So, while it seems as if we should be saving beaucoup energy, we may actually be using more. Sometimes we forget about the “other” stuff but it’s there, and we pay for it.



**Steve Wilson**  
“The Energy Guy”  
Energy Services Coordinator  
515.239.5177

**Prime Time Power**  
Even though it’s winter, customers can still plan ahead for warm weather. Prime Time Power is available to homeowners and small businesses with central air conditioners. An important note: You do not need to reapply for Prime Time Power if you signed up in a previous year. The \$5 credit during each of the four summer months is automatically applied to your account. For more information, 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?**  
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## 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 December 2014**  
Wind purchased: 6,986,067 kWh  
Refuse Derived Fuel (RDF) Used: 27,750 tons

### Heating Degree Days

December			Season to date		
2013	2012	32-year Average	12/13	11/12	32-year Average
1118	1456	1246	2657	2825	2565

### Cooling Degree Days

December			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 Web site: www.cityofames.org

