

City Side

Caring People Quality Programs Exceptional Service

Inside

- 2** Dispatchers Prepare for Text-to-911
- 2** Celebrate Parks & Recreation Month
- 2** Live Green This Summer
- 3** Tips to Lower Summer Energy Bills
- 3** What To Do When Power's Out
- 3** Tree Trimming Keeps Power Flowing
- 4** The Energy Guy

Fourth of July Closings

Most City of Ames departments and divisions will be closed Friday, July 3 in recognition of Independence Day. Offices will resume normal business hours on Monday, July 6.

Automated Meter Reading Provides Efficient Upgrade for Customers

As technology continues to change the way we live, it also affects the way your local utilities operate. The Ames Water and Pollution Control Department, in collaboration with Ames Electric Services, recently implemented new meter reading technology that is less invasive to customers, more efficient for the City, and builds a solid foundation for future improvements.

Automated Meter Reading (AMR) is a process that uses radio technology to transfer data from a home's meter to a computer. In 2013, the Water and Electric Departments began researching the benefits of an AMR system. The goal was to develop a strategy for efficiently reading meters today while preparing for the installation of equipment upgrades in the future. As always, the financial impact of these improvements played a major role in the analysis. Historically, reading meters has been a labor intensive endeavor. For homes with inside meters, meter readers must manually gather data from within the home. The AMR system provides information when meter readers are near the meters, so entering homes is no longer necessary. This technology sets the stage for an upgrade to an Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) system that will read both electric and water meters through a centralized data collection system. The AMR system being installed can be incorporated into an AMI system without replacing water meters, meter registers, or radio units.

Upgrading the meters is an investment. It costs \$167 per meter for the AMR system. Currently, there are more than 18,900 meters in Ames. This equates to \$3.15 million to complete the transition. The City's meter readers read both the water and electric meters at each location, so the meter reading efficiencies are cost-effective. Four full-time meter readers read approximately 40,500 water and electric meters every 30 days. The City of Ames continually looks for ways to meter more accurately in order to keep rate increases as low as possible. Using new technology is just one of the ways we are working to continuously improve service to our customers.

Enjoy Fourth of July Pancakes!

Ames residents are invited to join members of the Ames City Council at this year's Fourth of July Community Pancake celebration. The event will be held from 8:30 to 10:30 a.m. on Saturday, July 4, just prior to the Fourth of July parade at 11 a.m.

Remember that fireworks will be held after dusk on Friday, July 3.

During the celebration, free pancakes, sausage, and coffee will be served at the front entrance of City Hall, 515 Clark Ave. Children are invited to bring their bikes, decorate them at the breakfast, and join the parade. Breakfast will be served rain or shine!



Calendar

City Council Meetings

The following meetings will be held in the Council Chambers, 515 Clark Avenue. Please note the NEW START TIME for all City Council meetings:

6 p.m. July 14

6 p.m. July 28

A Council workshop will be held at 6 p.m. July 21. For the most current information, go to: www.cityofames.org.

Celebrate Park & Rec Month

July is National Park & Recreation Month, and this year marks the 30th anniversary! Join Ames Parks & Recreation in



celebrating the past, present, and future of parks and recreation.

Parks and recreation departments play an important role in maintaining the quality of life in communities and improving the health and well-being of residents. Ames Parks and Recreation programs build on the mission of “enriching lives by providing excellent parks, facilities and programs for current and future generations.” Special events (1980s-style!) for all ages are in the works and will be posted on Facebook and our website, www.amesparkrec.org.

Text-to-911? It's Coming!

Technology is improving the way the City of Ames provides programs and services including changes at the Ames Police Department. The Ames Emergency Communications Center has partnered with the Story County Sheriff's Office and the Iowa State University Police to install new 911 telephone equipment in anticipation of a statewide move to accept text-to-911.

While there are more steps to complete before the system is implemented, Ames Dispatch is working to be ready for the change, said Ames Police Commander Geoff Huff. The new system will be all digital and can handle both 911 and non-emergency calls. It also includes equipment to



record both telephone and radio traffic. State officials and the mobile phone companies are moving forward on plans to implement text-to-911 and anticipate having the technology available by early 2016.

“We’re always going to prefer a phone call to a text message because of the ability for two way communication,” Huff explained. “When we receive a phone call, we can ask questions and get information. But it will be helpful to have text-to-911 because there are times for people in certain circumstances when speaking isn’t practical.”

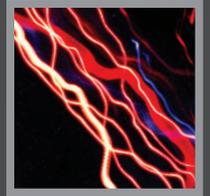
Recycling Tips to Live Green

This is the time of year for grilling, picnics, camping, and outdoor fun. But what do you do with that empty (or nearly empty) propane canister from your camp stove or tank from your grill? The little green canisters are not refillable, so get rid of them at no charge at the Resource Recovery Plant, 110 Center Ave. The large grill tanks are refillable, so take those to your local retailer for an exchange. Propane tanks are dangerous if thrown in the trash, so keep them out of your garbage.

Picnics are another fun summer tradition. Instead of paper or plastic tableware, why not use regular plates, cups, forks, spoons and knives? Reusable table service reduces your carbon footprint by producing less waste. However, if you opt for disposable products, make sure all your garbage makes it into the trash. Garbage in Ames and surrounding communities is processed at the Resource Recovery Plant (RRP) and converted to refuse derived fuel. By using garbage for fuel, the Ames Power Plant burns 10 percent less coal to produce electricity.



Are you enjoying summer with your own backyard pool? If you use swimming pool chemicals to keep the water clean, be careful about proper use and storage. Remember that any extra product at the end of the season doesn't belong in the trash. Other materials like lawn fertilizers, cleaners, motor oil, CFL light bulbs, and more should be disposed of safely and efficiently. To schedule a Wednesday afternoon appointment through the Resource Recovery Plant's Household Hazardous Materials program, call 515.239.5137.



Summer is the Season for Energy Conservation

Summers in Iowa are hot and humid, which is a combination that drives utility bills higher. The good news is there are things to do that will help reduce those costs. Any reduction in the amount of electricity you consume on hot summer days benefits the utility system, helps keep our rates low, improves our environment, and lowers your bills. Here are some tips:

- You can save energy by using foam gaskets under all exterior outlet and switch plates.
- Only use bathroom and range hood fans when necessary. Fans pull conditioned air from the home.
- Clean or replace filters regularly. Clean, free-flowing air is necessary for efficient operation.
- The average American home loses \$150 worth of energy per year through air leaks in its ceiling, walls, and foundation. Seal and save.
- Adding insulation to your home can cut your cooling costs up to 25%.
- Clean your outdoor compressor unit each spring, and make sure it is not blocked with debris.
- Seal distribution ducts so more cool air gets where you want it to go.
- Keep your registers free of obstructions such as furniture, rugs, and drapes, so your cool air can do its job.
- Close your blinds and drapes to block out the heating rays of the sun.

Power Out? Here's What To Do

Although we 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.

Here's what to do if your power goes off. First, check if the power is off in the whole house or just part of it. This includes checking your main electric panel to see if a breaker has tripped or a fuse has blown. If the problem is not in your panel, check to see if neighbors have been affected.

If you can't identify the problem, call the outage reporting number at 515.239.5240. You will be asked to provide your name, address of the outage, and phone number at the outage address.

Tree Trimming

- Inform City of Ames Electric Services if you notice any foliage clearance problems near power lines. Call 515.239.5500, or visit the website at www.cityofames.org.
- Electric Services will follow up with residents about their tree clearance concerns.
- Once trimmed, the homeowner has the option to keep or remove any burnable wood. If it is kept, it is cut into pieces 24-inches long with a diameter of 4 inches or more, and stacked.
- All of the trimming, cutting, stacking, and removal is done at no cost to the homeowner.



Ask the Energy Guy

Q: What is Prime Time Power and why is it important?

A: As our community grows, so does the demand for electricity. Before we know it, Ames Electric Services will have to make arrangements for the installation or purchase of additional electric

capacity. The more we need, the more expensive it will be. In order to keep rates as low as possible, it's important to reduce the amount of electricity we need. One way to do this is through a program called Prime Time Power.

Prime Time Power is a residential and small business air conditioner load management program which lowers the peak demand for electricity during hot weather. A radio-controlled switch, installed free of charge, prevents air conditioners from running for 7 1/2 minutes out of every 30 minutes when Prime Time Power is activated. By coordinating the "off" cycle of all air conditioners equipped with switches, electric demand is lowered.

The switch does not harm the air conditioner, and the impact on comfort is minimal. Most people are unaware that their air conditioner is being controlled. During an average summer, Prime Time Power is only initiated on five or six days and typically between the hours of 3 and 8 p.m. For participating in Prime Time Power, Ames Electric Services customers receive a \$20 credit on their bill each summer, \$5 per month from July through October, for every central air conditioner supplied with a switch.

By lowering the demand for electricity, Prime Time Power helps keep the rate low, cleans our environment, and contributes to maintaining a healthy utility system. Currently, about 9,500 control switches are installed in Ames. When needed, the demand for electricity can be lowered by about 3.5 megawatts (MW). The ability to consistently reduce summer demand by this amount saves the utility over \$3 million. Prime Time Power is good for Ames, good for the utility, and good for customers.

Prime Time Power is part of Electric Services' Smart Energy programs. For more information, or to sign up, visit www.cityofames.org/smartenergy, or call Steve Wilson, the Energy Guy at 515.239.5177



Steve Wilson
"The Energy Guy"
Energy Services Coordinator
515.239.5177

Ceiling Fans Save Electricity

Ceiling fans can reduce energy costs by making a room feel cooler. But ceiling fan direction is crucial for comfort. The rule to follow is fairly simple, "counter-clockwise" or "forward" is used to blow air down on occupants during summer. Reversing the direction to "clockwise" pushes heat off the ceiling and circulates it into the room during winter.

Comfort's a good thing, but how does this save energy? The idea is to use the fan in cooperation with setting the thermostat higher a few degrees. Fans do nothing to the temperature of a room, but because of wind-chill effects, the moving air provided by a fan allows one to tolerate higher temperatures and not forfeit comfort.

**City Side is a
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Questions?
515 Clark Ave.
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Phone: 515.239.5204
www.cityofames.org

Numbers to Know

Power out515.239.5240

Street light out515.239.5500

Utility bill515.239.5120

Energy questions..515.239.5177

Tree growing too close to an electric line515.239.5500

Going to be digging?
Iowa One Call: 811

Stormwater
Concern:.....515.239.5160

**Power Plant Renewable Energy Use
For April 2015**
Wind purchased: 4,245,784 kWh
Refuse Derived Fuel (RDF) Used: 29,224 tons

Heating Degree Days						
April			Season to date			
2015	2014	33-year Average	14/15	13/14	33-year Average	
356	496	444	6340	7299	6330	

Cooling Degree Days						
April			Season to date			
2015	2014	33-year Average	2015	2014	33-year Average	
3	11	13	3	11	14	

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

