

City Side

Caring People Quality Programs Exceptional Service

Inside

- 2 Snow Route Regulations
- 2 Fire Safety Tips For Happy Holidays
- 2 Sculpture Applications Due Dec. 15
- 3 Project Share: How You Can Help
- 3 Holiday Lights Safety Tips
- 4 The Energy Guy

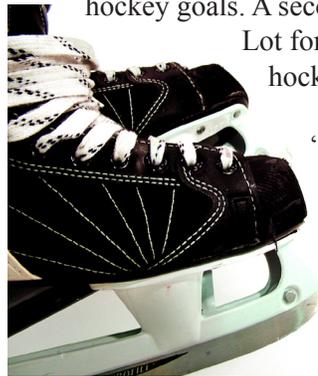
Holiday Closings

Most City of Ames offices will be closed Monday, Dec. 26 and Tuesday, Dec. 27. Additionally, most City offices will be closed on Monday, Jan. 2, 2017 for New Year's Day.



Winter Recreation Opportunity: Enjoy Outdoor Ice Skating!

Ames residents who enjoy ice skating and being outside in the winter will have two options to grab their skates and get some exercise. Ames Parks and Recreation Department plans to create two outdoor skating rinks this season. A rink geared for hockey players will again be provided in North River Valley Park near Cottonwood Shelter and maintained by the Ames Minor Hockey Association. This rink will include hockey goals. A second rink will open in the Homewood Golf Course Parking Lot for the recreational skater. This rink will not include nets, and hockey will be prohibited.



“Years ago Homewood Golf Course provided winter ice for local skaters, and we know it was popular with kids, young adults, and families,” said Joshua Thompson, Parks and Facilities Superintendent. “We thought this would be a good location to offer more outdoor recreation choices.”

The outdoor ice will be available once the weather has settled into a pattern of below freezing weather. In the past, that has taken place after the Christmas holiday. The rinks will be located in areas near lights and benches. There will be no shelters, skate rental, or restrooms available.

“We have had more and more requests for outdoor ice accommodations,” Thompson added. “Staff felt the parking lot at Homewood Golf Course was a great location to add another rink in addition to the rink at North River Valley.”

Leaving for the Holidays?

While holidays can be a season of cheer, the Ames Police Department sees an increase in home and vehicle burglaries during holiday breaks. Residents, particularly Iowa State University students, should take precautionary measures when leaving town for breaks. Police officers patrol building complexes, student housing areas, and other areas of the community during the holidays, but there are steps you can take to reduce your chance of being victimized.

- Make sure locks are in good working order and lock all doors and windows.
- Consider installing timers on interior lights and install exterior motion lights.
- Write down serial numbers of valuables (televisions, laptops, gaming consoles, DVD players) and take photographs in case items are stolen.
- Remove valuable technology from apartments or residence. Take items with you, if possible.
- Don't leave backpacks, purses or bags in plain view in your apartment or vehicle.

Calendar

City Council Meetings

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

6 p.m. Dec. 13

6 p.m. Dec. 20

There will be no City Council workshop in December. For the most current information, go to: www.cityofames.org.

Share the Art!

If your neighborhood is interested in acquiring one of the sculptures currently on display along Main Street as part of the Ames Annual Outdoor Sculpture Exhibition, all you need to do is fill out an application!

Neighborhoods can apply for a sculpture to be placed in their neighborhood at no cost. The artwork must be displayed in a "public" area that is open and can be accessed by the citizens of Ames, such as a neighborhood park or cul-de-sac.

For more information, go to the City's website at www.CityOfAmes.org/PAC. Click on the "Neighborhood Sculpture" link. The deadline for applications is Thursday, Dec. 15.

When It's Snowing, Avoid Towing!

Do You Park on a Snow Route? Stay Informed this Winter!

Winter weather is just around the corner, and that means snow, snow plowing, and moving your vehicle if you live on a snow route and park in the street. How do you know when the snow ordinance is in effect? Pay attention to local media, check the City's website (www.cityofames.org), watch City Channel 12, and join the City of Ames on Facebook and Twitter! All of these sources will help you get updates and notifications.

The Ames snow removal policy was established by the City Council and states that plowing will begin after two inches of snow accumulates on the city's major streets (Grand Avenue, Lincoln Way, Duff Avenue, etc.). Reaching two inches on these streets also activates the snow ordinance. The best way to know if the snow ordinance will be in effect is to watch the weather! When the snow ordinance is in effect, drivers parked along snow routes – marked with red and white signs – need to move their vehicles to avoid ticketing and/or towing. Vehicles may return to the street when it has stopped snowing, no additional snow is forecast, and the street has been plowed from curb to curb. Since this happens at different times throughout the city, there is no official notice when the parking ban is lifted.

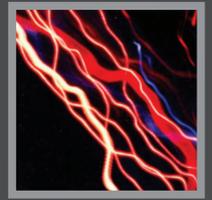
For questions or concerns about snow removal on city streets, call the Snow Desk at 515.239.5543 or email the Public Works Department at snowstreets@city.ames.ia.us. For concerns about sidewalks that aren't cleared, call the Snow Walks hotline at 515.239.5468 or email snowwalks@city.ames.ia.us.



Fire Safety Tips for Happy Holidays

Winter holidays are a time for families and friends to get together, but that also means a greater risk for fire. The Ames Fire Department reminds residents that following a few simple tips can help ensure a happy and fire-safe holiday season.

- Be careful with holiday decorations. Choose decorations that are flame resistant or flame retardant.
- Keep lit candles away from decorations and other things that can burn.
- Test your smoke alarms and tell guests about your home fire escape plan.
- Keep children and pets away from lit candles.
- Keep matches and lighters up high in a locked cabinet.
- Stay in the kitchen when cooking on the stove top.
- Ask smokers to smoke outside. Remind smokers to keep their smoking materials with them so young children do not touch them.
- Provide large, deep ashtrays for smokers. Wet cigarette butts with water before discarding.
- Blow out lit candles when you leave the room or go to bed. Turn off all light strings and decorations before leaving home or going to bed.



Your Contributions Allow Project Share to Help Others

A simple way to share the warmth with those in need is to make a monthly pledge or a one-time contribution to Project Share. Project Share is a program developed by Ames Electric Services to assist low-income customers with the payment of their winter time utility bills. The program's success is the result of your compassion and generosity. Through your support, Ames Electric Services has been able to provide \$390,982 in assistance to 3,271 households since the program's inception in 1990. Last winter the program was able to provide \$17,080 in assistance to 136 households.

The purpose of the Project Share program is to solicit and accept contributions to assist low-income utility customers. A committee appointed by the Ames City Council determines the permissible uses of the funds donated to Project Share. The Committee has established guidelines to ensure that every dollar contributed to the program is used to assist low-income customers.

Ames Electric Services ensures that contributions go to those in need by providing the staff and materials needed to administer the program. Last year, Ames Electric Services contributed \$4,330 toward the cost of administering the program. Mid-Iowa Community Action (MICA) also assists in the administration of the program by determining the eligibility of households for Project Share funds.

Please Consider a Contribution to Project Share

I wish to make a monthly contribution to Project Share. I understand this amount will be listed on my monthly utility bill and that I can cancel my pledge at any time by contacting the City of Ames Utility Customer Service office.

\$1/month \$2/month \$5/month \$10/month other \$____/month

I wish to make a one-time contribution to Project Share rather than making a monthly pledge. I have enclosed a \$_____ donation to Project Share.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Please return this form with your utility bill payment or mail to: Ames Electric Services, Attn: Project Share Committee, P.O. Box 811, Ames, IA 50010-0811.

Holiday Lighting Safety Tips

It's the time of year when beautiful lighting displays adorn our homes and businesses. Use common sense and caution to ensure a safe and happy holiday season!

- Check all light strands and cords for worn insulation, bare wires, lights with broken or cracked sockets, or loose connections. Don't try to fix old or deteriorated decorations. Throw them away.
- If you must use an extension cord, make sure it's of adequate size and power capacity. Use a grounded cord that is rated #16 or greater.
- For outside lighting, only use lights and extension cords that are specifically listed for outdoor use by Underwriters Laboratories.
- If you are using a ladder to hang decorations or work on your roof, avoid contact with overhead lines.



Ask the Energy Guy

Q: As it gets colder, what can I do to reduce energy costs?

A: As much as I love the new, interesting innovations aimed at making our lives easier and more efficient, there's value in spending time with the old mainstays. These are the things that form the foundation upon which energy conservation is built. Insulation is one of these foundation formers, and it's something few of us really understand. The good news is that there is plenty of information out there.

Unless your home was constructed with special attention to energy efficiency, adding insulation will probably reduce your utility bills. Much of the existing housing stock in the United States was not insulated to the levels necessary to provide adequate protection against heat loss and gain. It's no surprise that older homes are likely to use more energy than newer homes. This leads to higher heating and air-conditioning bills.

Heating and cooling can account for 50 to 70 percent of energy used in the average American home. Inadequate insulation and air leakage are leading causes of energy waste. The benefits of insulation are well known. Insulation makes homes more comfortable by helping to maintain a uniform temperature throughout the house. It makes walls, ceilings, and floors warmer in the winter and cooler in the summer. Heat flows naturally from a warmer to a cooler space. During the winter, the heat moves from conditioned living spaces to the outdoors and to any unheated attics, garages, and basements. When we insulate ceilings, walls, and floors, we effectively decrease the mechanical heating or cooling requirement – and our bills – by providing an effective resistance to the flow of heat. Because insulation is made of materials that resist heat flow, it is given a “resistance” value commonly called its R-value. The higher the R-value, the greater its insulating effectiveness.

You can determine how much insulation you have with a ladder, flashlight, and a ruler. Or you can have a free energy audit done on your home. Make an appointment for a free energy audit online by clicking on the “Residential Programs” link at www.cityofames.org/smartenergy. Also, you can always call me with your energy questions at 515.239.5177.

Numbers to Know

- Power out515.239.5240
- Street light out515.239.5500
- Utility bills515.239.5120
- Energy questions..515.239.5177
- Tree growing too close to an electric line515.239.5500
- Going to be digging?
- Iowa One Call:811
- Storm Water
- Concern.....515.239.5160

Renewable Energy For September 2016

- 13%** of electricity used this month was generated from wind.
- 2%** of electricity this month was generated by refuse derived fuel (RDF) from the Resource Recovery Plant.
- 75** Ames customers have invested in solar voltaic systems.
- 58** LED street lights installed.

Degree Day information available at www.CityOfAmes.org/Electric

Steve Wilson

“The Energy Guy”

Energy Services Coordinator
515.239.5177

Energy Tips

- Don't forget to insulate and weather-strip your attic access door.
- Save 1 to 2 percent on your energy bill by using foam gaskets under all exterior wall switch and outlet covers.
- Use bathroom and range hood fans sparingly. They exhaust conditioned air and create a suction that pulls in outdoor air.
- Insulate pipes and ducts in unheated areas to reduce heat loss.
- Tape all the joints in your furnace ductwork to reduce air leakage.

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

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Questions?

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