Call if You Can, Text if You Can’t; Text to 911 Program is Here

In an emergency, it’s always preferred that you call 911. However, if the situation prevents you from calling, now you can text to 911 for access to Ames emergency services. Using Text-to-911 in an emergency might be helpful if you are deaf, hard of hearing, have a speech disability, or if making a voice call to 911 might be dangerous or not possible. However, if you are able to make a voice call to 911 and it is safe to do so, you should call instead of sending a text. Voice calls are usually the fastest, most efficient way to reach emergency help.

Texting 911 is different than making a voice call. If you text 911, the dispatcher may not receive your phone number or location. So regardless if you text or call 911, it’s best to provide a correct address or location as quickly as possible. If you attempt to send a text to 911 where that service is not available, you should receive a “bounce-back” message informing you that the service is unavailable.

To text 911, simply type 911 into the “To” field of a new text message. Provide a short description of the emergency. Use simple words and no abbreviations. It goes without saying, but it’s worth repeating: Do not text while driving!

When Do Outdoor Warning Sirens Sound?

Whenever you hear the Emergency Outdoor Warning System, the important message is to seek shelter. Multiple sirens located throughout the community create a weather warning system for people who may be caught outside during changing conditions. You may not hear sirens while inside with windows shut. Those inside should have a weather radio or use local media for weather alerts.

The Ames emergency sirens will be activated by the Ames Police Department under the following circumstances:

- The National Weather Service announces a tornado warning for Ames.
- Information about a tornado affecting Ames is received from a trained weather spotter.
- An actual tornado sighting is reported.
- Winds are occurring or are forecast to be 70 miles per hour or greater.
- Hail 1.75 inches (golf ball) or greater is occurring or forecast.

The system is tested the first Wednesday of each month, weather permitting. If delayed, the test is generally rescheduled for the next Wednesday, weather permitting.
The following meetings will be held in the Council Chambers, 515 Clark Ave.:

- 6 p.m. Sept. 12
- 6 p.m. Sept. 26

A Council workshop will be held at 6 p.m. on Sept. 19. For the most current information, go to: www.CityOfAmes.org.

Yard Waste Free Days

Summer will remain for several more weeks, but some residents may be thinking about fall chores. For those who like to plan ahead, the fall Yard Waste Free Days will be held:

- Saturday, Oct 21 (leaves only)
- Saturday, Nov 4 (leaves only)
- Saturday, Nov 18 (leaves and brush)
- Saturday, Dec 2 (leaves only)

The Yard Waste Free Day site is located at 400 Freel Drive. Those participating in Yard Waste Free Day are asked to enter the site from Southeast Fifth Street and exit onto Lincoln Way.

Traffic Rules Keep Everyone Safe

For pedestrians, bicyclists, and motorists, navigating around Ames can be tricky when transportation routes intersect, but following the “rules of the road” makes the journey easier for all. Obeying traffic laws, signs, and signals makes anticipating how others act more predictable and increases safety. “Safety can’t be delegated to one person,” said Commander Jason Tuttle, Ames Police Department. “Whether you’re walking, running, skateboarding, biking, or driving, you play a role that includes being aware of your surroundings and following the law.”

With students soon returning to classrooms, traffic patterns change. More students will be walking, biking, riding buses, and being transported to and from school. Drivers, in particular, must be more attentive to the change and keep all distractions to a minimum. Pedestrians in the crosswalks have the right of way, so drivers must be prepared to yield. Yet, pedestrians should never assume a driver will give you the right of way. “Always make eye contact with the driver of a stopped or approaching vehicle before crossing the street,” Tuttle warned.

Another consideration is school buses. Remember, it is illegal to pass a school bus that is stopped with its red stop lights on. The Ames Police Department conducts speed enforcement in the school zones to ensure children’s safety, and speed trailers are placed in the school zones to help attract attention to the speed limit in the area.

Take the Survey to Share Thoughts on Internet Service

Do you have access to the internet service that you want for your home or business? Recently, residents have expressed frustration to the Ames City Council that various types of high speed internet services are not offered. Others believe the products are available in the community, but they experience a lack of options specifically in their neighborhood. The City of Ames does not offer internet service, but many residents view the internet as a utility. The internet has become such an important part of daily life, many residents consider it a necessity.

Internet service providers want to be responsive to resident needs and have asked for help in learning what services residents want and how much they are willing to pay for them. With that data, they will consider the best ways to expand or improve offerings. Internet access is essential for some residents who work from home, and many school-age children in Ames require internet access to complete homework.

The City has created a survey linked to our website. The survey asks for an address in order to collect information by geographical area from residents about their satisfaction levels with internet access, dependability, reliability, and options. To complete the survey, go to www.CityOfAmes.org and look for the survey toward the bottom section, “In the Spotlight.” The survey will close on Tuesday, Sept. 5.
McFarland Clinic Solar Receives Mayor’s Green Team Recognition

McFarland Clinic extended its membership in Mayor Ann Campbell’s “Green Team” recently. The business received an Ames Electric Services rebate check and recognition for the energy-saving installation of solar panels on the rooftop of its west clinic, 3600 Lincoln Way. McFarland has been recognized twice in the past for its sustainability efforts on two other buildings.

The 312KW solar array is expected to generate 338,900 kilowatt-hours (kWh) of energy per year for the building – nearly covering its electric needs. This will save the organization approximately $29,400 annually. The future avoided costs for City of Ames Electric Services is estimated to be $1,067,110. Additionally, the solar installation will reduce carbon dioxide by 6,100 tons. By installing the solar panels, McFarland Clinic qualified for a rebate in the amount of $133,555.

“McFarland Clinic stands as a shining example of energy and environmental stewardship,” said Donald Kom, Ames Electric Services Director. “We are excited this organization continues to make the commitment to improving on standard practices and works hard to promote a more sustainable Ames.”

In 2007, Mayor Campbell joined mayors from across the country in signing the U.S. Mayors’ Climate Protection Agreement, and the Ames City Council has made it a goal to reduce the carbon footprint of City of Ames operations. The Mayor’s Green Team Award honors business and industrial electric customers who initiate energy-saving improvements through the Smart Energy program. The Smart Energy Rebate offers Ames Electric Services customers an incentive to explore energy-efficient changes. The rebate pays a portion of the cost of improving efficiency, and recipients more quickly realize a return on their investment.

Ames Electric Services customers have participated in Smart Energy programs 18,422 times, and approximately 9,800 customers have a Prime Time Power switch on their air conditioner. These efforts save the community 31 million kWh of electricity a year, reduce summer demand for electricity by 17 MW, and help clean 26,000 tons of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.
Q: What should I do if my power goes out?
A: Tree limbs, animals, and weather are all possible culprits when there’s an interruption of your electric service. 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 are some helpful hints if you find yourself in the dark:

- Check if the power is off in the whole house, or just part of it.
- Check your main electric panel to see if a breaker has tripped or fuse has blown.
- If the problem is not in your panel, check to see if neighbors have been affected.
- Call your 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.

The outage reporting service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. A crew will be dispatched to restore power as safely and quickly as possible. With the system’s ability to take numerous calls at once, you should be able to report your outage immediately. Your call is important because it indicates the number of customers affected and often helps pinpoint the location and cause allowing us to restore power sooner. Before you experience an outage, make sure the outage reporting system recognizes your phone number. Go to www.CityOfAmes.org/Outage to associate as many as two current phone numbers for your address. If you prefer, you may call Utility Customer Service at 515.239.5120 during business hours to update your phone numbers.

One more tip. If you’re ever curious about an outage, check out our real time electric outage map at www.CityOfAmes.org/ElectricOutage. This handy link provides a map that highlights the affected area as well as information on how many customers are out. The link even gets updated as customers are re-energized!

### Numbers to Know

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<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Power out</td>
<td>515.239.5240</td>
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<tr>
<td>Street light out</td>
<td>515.239.5500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Utility bills</td>
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<td>Energy questions</td>
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<td>Iowa One Call</td>
<td>811</td>
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<tr>
<td>Storm Water Concern</td>
<td>515.239.5160</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### Renewable Energy For June 2017

- 16.6% of electricity used this month was generated from wind.
- 4.11% of electricity came from Refuse Derived Fuel.
- 132 Ames customers have invested in solar voltaic systems.
- 70 LED street lights installed for a total of 1,178.

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