

Altoona Life

JANUARY
2018



Providing a healthy dose of Altoona Attitude!

METRO HOME IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

WHAT'S NEW?

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- P2... Water Reminders
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CITY WIDE CLEANUP

Saturday, April 21—
Monday Trash Day

Saturday, April 28—
Tuesday Trash Day

-see details on page 4-

The City of Altoona, with the collaboration of seven other metro cities, participates in The Metro Home Improvement Program (MHIP) with the purpose to preserve affordable housing stock in these communities. The participating cities are Ankeny, Altoona, Bondurant, Grimes, Polk City, Urbandale, West Des Moines and Windsor Heights. The Program is currently accepting applications from homeowners interested in the program. The Program is able to assist three to four homeowners per funding period per city. Homeowners that are not assisted presently will be placed on a waiting list for the next available funding.



The assistance is for housing repairs such as siding, roofs, windows, electrical and plumbing, as well as any city code violations up to \$12,500. The awards are in the form of a five-year forgivable loan to eligible households with income less than 80% of the Area Median Income (AMI) for Polk County. Eligible property types are owner-occupied dwellings (both single family & townhouses/condos) and do not include mobile homes, homes being purchased on contract, or rental units. The house assisted must be the primary residence of the applicant and not assessed above \$183,000. Property taxes, mortgage payments and insurance must be current.

The Metro Home Improvement Program is administered by the City of West Des Moines. The program is funded through the participating cities and the Polk County Housing Trust Fund. For further information or a program application, visit the following link www.wdm.iowa.gov/mhip or contact Christine Gordon or Kay Schoon at (515) 273-0770.



You can help!

The City of Altoona relies on our residents to let staff know of safety concerns created by weather conditions, snow removal operations, water main breaks, potholes, etc. If you have a concern, please contact City Hall at 967-5136 (Monday—Friday; 8am—4:30pm) or 967-2734 (during off hours and weekends).

CITY ELECTIONS RESULTS WITH SOME FAMILIAR FACES AND A NEW ONE.



Outgoing Mayor Jeanie Conkling had the honor of swearing in Council Member Dean O'Connor as Altoona's newest mayor on November 20, 2017 (pictured right). At the Tuesday, January 2nd Council Meeting Mayor Dean O'Connor swore in the newest council member, Scott Duer (picture bottom left) and appointed council member Michelle Sloan (pictured bottom right). The City Council appointed Michelle Sloan to fill Mayor O'Connor's seat which was vacated when he won the mayoral position in November. Council Member Sloan will fill the seat until the special election in March 2018.



WATER REMINDERS

PAY YOUR WATER BILL ONLINE

You may access the online payments website from our website www.altoona-iowa.com. You may also access the website directly at <https://www.municipalonlinepayments.com/altoonaia>.



Once you have accessed the website, you can make a one-time payment (called Quick Pay), or set up a Member Account with a unique user name and password. For either option, you will need to know your utility account number (with the dashes) that is found on your bill, AND your last payment amount. If you choose to set up a Member Account, you can view past consumption and payment history, and store your credit card information on the secure site for future payments. You only need to put in your utility account number and last payment amount the first time you set up a Member Account, but you will need it each time if you choose the Quick Pay option.

Our online service provider will assess a separate charge of \$1.25 for each online transaction that is made. This fee is retained by the service provider, and is not paid to the City of Altoona.

If you have any questions regarding online payments, please call 515-967-5136.

WINTER BLUES BRINGS SPRING DREAMING

Are you dreaming of greener grass? How you care for you yards affects the larger community. Clean streams start with healthy soil. Soil Compaction and lack of soil organic matter is not only a sure death sentence to all plant life, but it has the potential to pollute our streams and rivers and harm the aquatic life too. The trouble starts when not enough nutrients or moisture are in the ground when your lawn needs it to green and grow.

Both challenges can be overcome with a little time and effort. There are five simple steps you can take to start mending your yard, beginning with the soil.

1. Re-open compacted ground through aeration, which mechanically creates voids in your yard by removing small plugs or soil cores.
2. Re-fill newly created soil voids with quality compost.
3. Re-seed with quality grass seed.
4. Rake for a good "seed to soil contact."
5. Water as needed and watch it thrive.

Information was provided through the Iowa Storm Water Education Program.



-SEWER RATE INCREASE -

The sewer rate per 1,000 gallons will increase from \$7.33 to \$7.62 effective January 1, 2018. This increase was planned to cover debt service costs related to the WRA and the City's capital projects planned.

AUTO DRAFT FOR UTILITY BILLS

The Auto Draft program debits your utility bill payment from your checking or savings account automatically on the due date.

If you are not currently an auto draft customer and wish to sign up, please visit our website, www.altoona-iowa.com. Click on the

"I Want To" tab and choose 'Pay My Utility Bill'. Complete the Auto Draft Form and send it to City Hall. You will receive a \$5.00 credit on your first utility bill after signing up.

HOW ELSE CAN I PAY MY UTILITY BILL?

24-hour water payments slot on the back wall of the City Hall Building (407 8th St SE). Cash or check payments may be deposited through the slot. Envelopes are provided at the window. Please note, city staff cannot communicate with you through the window.

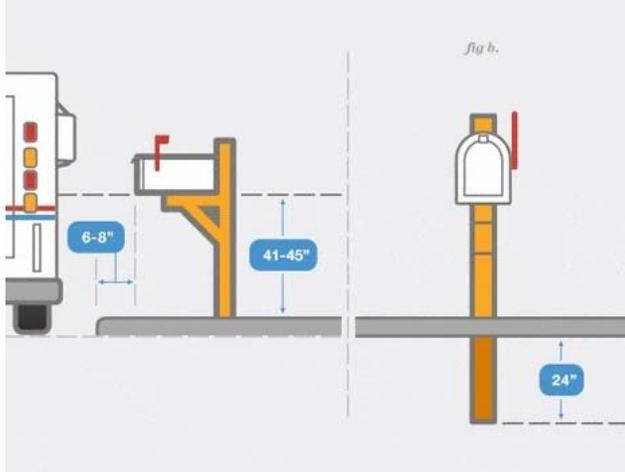
HyVee Customer Service Counter will accept cash or check payments from the 15th of the month through the 3rd when you have your payment stub.

Cash, Check, or credit card payments can be made in person at City Hall during business hours (Monday – Friday, 8:00 – 4:30).

Credit card payments can be made online. Visit our website www.altoona-iowa.com for details. Click on the "I Want To" tab and choose 'Pay My Utility Bill'.

Online Bill Payment through your financial institution. Please note, your bank or credit union will send us a paper check in the mail. Please allow at least 7 days for the payment to reach our office. Do NOT initiate a bill payment transaction after the 1st of the month. It will not reach us in time to prevent a disconnect notice! We cannot credit your account until we receive the check from your bank (even if your bank has already debited your account).

WINTER REMINDERS



Clean around mailboxes and be sure the mailboxes are properly installed behind the curb line to withstand snow clearing efforts by the City. The illustration shows proper placement required by the U.S. Postal Service. To understand the USPS requirement, please check out the following website: <https://www.usps.com/manage/mailboxes.htm>

The City assumes NO responsibility for mailboxes damaged during snow removal.

The City Council passed an amendment to Altoona City Code 136.03 on November 19, 2012, amending provisions pertaining to removal of snow, ice and accumulations. The amendment allows abutting property owners to sprinkle fine cinders, sand or deicing

chemicals when accumulations have formed upon any sidewalk so that it cannot be reasonably removed. The sprinkling of these materials must be done in a manner as to provide traction and prevent the sidewalk from being dangerous to persons using the sidewalk for the entire length and width.

WINTER TRASH & RECYCLING CART PLACEMENT

Please remember that your garbage and recycling totes must be accessible 18 inches from the curb.

Your clean driveway approach may be the best option during heavy snow times.

Please do not place your toter on City streets. City snowplows can not clear snow properly when toters are placed on city streets. This is especially true in cul-de-sacs which are impossible to plow if toters are placed in the road.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.



EMERGENCY ACCESS

Maintain your sidewalks and driveway of snow and ice. If you do require an emergency response, a cleared approach to your door will be the safest route for the emergency responders and you. Maintain your outdoor lights to illuminate your numerical house numbers. If you call "911" for an emergency response, turn on your lights on to make it easier and faster for responders to find your home.

PONDS MAINTAINED BY THE CITY

The only recreation allowed on ponds maintained by the City of Altoona at any point in the year is fishing from the shore. The following ponds are maintained by the City of Altoona:

<u>POND NAME</u>	<u>GENERAL LOCATION</u>
Bass Pro Pond	Bass Pro Shops
Bennett Bay	Bennett Bay Subdivision
Clay Estates Pond	Clay Estates Subdivision
Falcon Ridge Pond	Falcon Ridge Subdivision
Ironwood Pond	East end of Stonegate Ct.
Ironwood South Pond	currently under construction
Loupee Park Ponds	Fieldstone Estates
Oak Hill Pond	Oak Hill Park
Porter Pond	Greenway Park
Prairie Heritage Ponds	From 1 st Ave. South to Venbury Dr.
Tuscany Pond	Tuscan Estates Subdivision



CITY TRAIL IN WINTER

The City of Altoona does clear the snow off of the trails during winter. We do not treat the trails with salt or sand. The trails are cleared last following the city facilities' sidewalks and parking lots. Many communities close all trails during winter months but we want ours to be open for use. Please enjoy the trails but be cautious of the weather conditions.

SNOW MUCH FUN!

City of Altoona attempts to remove all snow from all streets in a reasonable amount of time following a snow event. The first priority is to get the arterial streets cleared and maintained to provide access for the public, police, fire and rescue units.

Sand, salt, and liquid de-icers are used to maintain the roads during winter weather events. The truck pictured is one of many the City uses to clear the roads and apply sand and salt. Please maintain a safe following distance of at least 50 feet from all snow removal equipment.



Streets may be temporarily closed if they become impassible due to automobile accidents or stranded automobiles. City roads will be cleared only if city equipment can safely push the snow without hitting vehicles parked in the street. Cul-de-sacs will not be cleared if garbage and recycling totes are placed in the city street. The roads will be cleared when the obstructions are removed either by the owners or towed at the owner's expense.

SNOW ORDINANCE

All vehicles **MUST** be off the streets anytime there is an accumulation of 1 inch of snow or ice anywhere in the City, and remain off the street for 48 hours after the snow event subsides.

HOMEOWNER SNOW REMOVAL RESPONSIBILITIES

All sidewalks adjacent to your property are your responsibility. All complaint calls will be referred to the Building Department for follow-up and code enforcement.

Snow placed on sidewalks by City plows where the sidewalk meets the street is the responsibility of the property owner to remove. City snowplows will not clear private driveways except under emergency conditions and with the approval of the supervisor on duty. The snow placed in your driveway by the city plows is your responsibility to remove. Please do not move snow from your driveway into the street.

Clean around fire hydrants in your yard, so the Fire Department may have easy access to your hydrant in case there is a fire in your neighborhood.

CITY WIDE CLEAN-UP



Altoona's City Wide Cleanup will run a little differently this spring. The city wide clean-up will take place over two (2) separate days.

If **Monday** is your scheduled trash day, then **Saturday, April 21st** is the day for your clean-up items. If **Tuesday** is your scheduled trash day, then **Saturday, April**

28th is the day for your clean up items..

Please have all items out on the curb by 6:00am of your designated morning. Some common items that residents can place on the curb for pick up are: bagged clothing, charcoal grills, televisions, chairs, tables, mattresses, and carpet.

Common items NOT included for pick up are: tires, concrete chunks, major building parts, large piles of building materials, asphalt shingles or appliances (microwaves, stoves, washer, dryer, dishwasher, water heaters, etc.)



SATURDAY, APRIL 28th

8AM – 12PM

The City of Altoona will have a tire drop off at the Street Department, also, on April 28th. Residents of Altoona can drop off a household maximum of five (5) tires (**rims removed**) at 406 5th Avenue SW (across from Altoona Elementary playground) between 8:00am and 12:00pm.

Please present your driver's license to verify your residency.

*This program does **NOT ACCEPT** the following types of tires at the collection site:*

- Tires generated from businesses
- Farm or tractor tires
- Solid tires (lawnmower, forklift or golf cart tires)
- Bicycle tires



ALTOONA'S NEW FIRE CHIEF

Altoona welcomed our newest Fire Chief at the end of the year. Chief Ogbourne started with the city on December 23rd. Mayor O'Connor officially swore him in at the January 2nd council meeting. Ogbourne began his career as a firefighter in 1996 as a Firefighter First Class with the Mason City Fire Department. In 2003, Ogbourne was promoted to Lieutenant at Mason City. He was moved to a Captain position with the Mason City Fire Department in 2011. We are excited to have Chief Ogbourne working with us.



Lt. Doug Richardson received his Fire Officer Designation from the Centers for Public Safety Excellence. Assistant Chief Lee Richardson received his Chief Fire Officer Designation from the Centers for Public Safety Excellence. They demonstrated through education, leadership and management skills that they possess the requisite knowledge, skills, and abilities required for the fire and emergency services profession. The designation program is a voluntary program designed to recognize individuals who demonstrate their excellence in seven measured components including experience, education, professional development, professional contributions, association membership, community involvement and technical competence. In addition, all applicants are required to identify a future professional development plan.

EVERY DAY IS THE WEEKEND!



The City of Altoona bid farewell to John Cowell who decided to retire before at the end of 2017. John had worked with us since 2002 where he started in the Waste Water Department. He became a Street Operator when we consolidated our waste water services with the Water Reclamation Authority and shut down our waste water treatment facility. We wish him well in retirement.

COMING SOON... ANNUAL TREE SALE

The City of Altoona Parks Department will be selling trees again this Spring in honor of Arbor Day. Check out the city's website at www.altoona-iowa.com in February for information on this year's Residential Tree program.



Park Shelter Reservations

PLEASE NOTE: Lions Shelter can be rented all year. Please contact City Hall at 515-967-5136 to reserve Lions Shelter.

Enclosed Shelters:

Lions Park Shelter
***1/2 Day Rates**
\$75 – residents
\$125 – non – residents
\$100 – deposit for residents & non-residents
***Full Day Rates**
\$150 – residents
\$250 – non-residents
\$100 – deposit for residents & non-residents



Rental Schedule:

Morning (1/2 day) 7:00am – 3:00pm
Afternoon (1/2 day) 4:00pm – 10:00pm
Full Day 7:00am – 10:00pm

Open Air Shelters:

Haines Park Shelter
Haines Park Performance Stage
Haines Park Rose Garden Gazebo
Enabling Garden Shelter
Village Park Shelter
***1/2 Day Rates**
\$50 – residents
\$60 – non – residents
\$50 deposit for residents
\$60 deposit for non-residents
***Full Day Rates**
\$100 – residents
\$120 – non-residents
\$50 – deposit for residents
\$60 – deposit for non-residents

SPECIAL ELECTION

Tuesday, March 6th

Altoona residents will be voting on the Polk County 1¢ sales tax. Also, residents will be choosing a new council member for a seat left vacant after the last election in November.





ALTOONA PUBLIC LIBRARY

Altoona Public Library Hours

Monday—Thursday 9am—9pm;
Friday & Saturday 9am—5:30pm;
Sunday 2pm—5:30pm

Phone #: 515-967-3881

The winter cold and snow puts a crimp on outdoor activities, but there's no shortage of fun and games at the Altoona Public Library in February.

Altoona Kids Olympics

Tuesday, Feb. 20 at 6pm



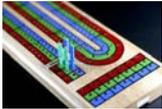
We're having our own indoor Olympic games! Registration is required. Ages 7-12

Elephant & Piggie Party

Saturday, February 24 at 1:00 PM

Join us in celebrating Mo Willems's popular book series with some fun games and activities. We will be making crafts, reading stories, and playing games that are Piggie approved! All ages welcome. Registration is required.

Senior Set



Stop by this open-house style program on every 1st and 3rd Tuesday (Feb. 6 & 20) from 1-3pm. We'll have cribbage, giant checkers, giant dominoes, cards, backgammon and more. We'll supply coffee, tea, and snacks; you bring your friends!

Teen Test Kitchen: Tasty Truffles Edition

Teens--grab a friend or come solo and make some tasty truffle treats to keep or share with someone special! Register please! Sunday, February 11 at 2:30pm; grades 7-12.

Teen Late Night Lock-In

Back by popular demand! Come hang out after hours at the library, starting at 5pm on Friday, Feb. 23. We'll provide dinner and drinks. Play a game, stream YouTube videos or a movie, paint your nails, play hide and seek...it's up to you! Grades 7-12; registration and parent signed permission slip required. Permission slips available at the library and at the event. All attendees must arrive on time and stay for entire event.



Library Hours – Staff Training

The library will only be open from 12-4pm on Wednesday, March 28, 2018, so that all staff can attend training that evening.

KEEPING YOUR HOME SAFE

Breathing radon in your home can cause lung cancer

Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas released in rock, soil and water that can build up to dangerous levels inside any home; this means new and old homes, well-sealed and drafty homes, and homes with or without a basement. Radon gas is odorless and invisible and the only way to know if your home has a radon problem is to test for it.

Breathing radon can increase your risk of lung cancer. Radon is the number one cause of lung cancer among people who do not smoke. It is the second leading cause of lung cancer for people who do. EPA estimates that radon causes more than 20,000 deaths from lung cancer each year in the U.S. If you smoke and your home has a high radon level, your risk of lung cancer can increase even more.

You should test for radon

Testing your house for radon is easy. If your house has a radon problem, it can be fixed. Fixing a radon problem reduces the risk of lung cancer for you and your family. A simple test will tell you if your home has a high radon level. Most radon tests last between 2 and 7 days. It's as easy as opening a package, and putting the test kit in the right place. After sending the test kit back to the address in the package, the company will send your radon test results in about 2 weeks.

Many local home improvement or hardware stores sell test kits. Test kits can be ordered online too. Sometimes you can get a test kit from your state radon office. You also can hire a qualified tester to do a radon test for you. Your state radon program may keep a list of these professionals.

Kansas State University, under a cooperative agreement with EPA, provides national radon program services, including selling radon test kits and answering toll-free radon hotlines. For more information about radon testing call 1-800-SOS-RADON (1-800 767-7236) or visit www.epa.gov/radon/radontest.html.