

# Altoona Life

OCTOBER  
2019



*Providing a healthy dose of Altoona Attitude!*

## GETTING READY FOR WINTER



Iowans are not unaccustomed to snow and ice covered roads. One might say we pride ourselves on our stamina to get from point A to point B without a scratch on our vehicle. We scoff at the rest of the U.S. when they shut down for what an Iowan would consider a nuisance. There are some signs we, Iowans, are beginning to value reports by law enforcement and weather forecasters by staying home when the interstate is shut down or stay in our neighborhood to go sledding when the local school closes rather than head out to the local mall. One of the easiest and often overlooked pieces to winter driving is including an emergency winter car kit. The following are some items you may already have in your car or some extra items you can find around your home:

- Flashlight
- Telephone change
- First Aid Supplies
- Basic tools (knife, screwdriver, adjustable crescent wrench, emergency tire sealant, etc.)
- Cell phone (fully charged)
- Boots
- Hat
- Coat
- Gloves
- Jumper Cables
- Sand or kitty litter for traction
- Ice scraper & brush
- Blanket (old sleeping bag)
- Chocolate Candy or trail mix
- Bottled water
- Clean coffee can or tin can
- Candle & matches
- Flares or reflective triangle
- Distress sign

### WHAT'S NEW?

- P1... Renovations
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### BEGGARS' NIGHT



Altoona's  
Trick or  
Treating night  
Monday, October 30th  
6—8pm

### CITY OFFICES CLOSED

#### Thanksgiving

Thurs. 11/28 and Fri. 11/29

#### Christmas

Tues. 12/24 and Wed. 12/25

New Year's Wed. 1/1

## ALTOONA PARKS



The permanent bathrooms located at Haines, Lion's, Village parks and Sam Wise Youth Complex will be closed on approximately October 15 for the season. Portable bathrooms located throughout the city parks will be removed for the season on approximately October 15. The City does this to protect the pipes from freezing. Although we may have some beautiful, warm fall days, the nights may dip into freezing temperatures. The City anticipates being able to open the bathrooms and provide portable bathrooms in the spring on approximately April 15, weather permitting.

Please check out the following on our website for rental and planning forms:

<http://www.altoona-iowa.com/i-want-to/reserve-a-park-shelter/>  
<http://www.altoona-iowa.com/i-want-to/plan-an-event-in-altoona/>

**If you have questions about whether your event may require additional approval, please ask the city staff person who is helping you with your rental at 515-967-5136.**

Rentals of the outdoor park shelters will also cease on October 15th. Park shelter reservations for 2019 will begin on Thursday, January 4, 2019.

**PLEASE NOTE: LIONS SHELTER CAN BE RENTED ALL YEAR AND RESERVED UP TO A YEAR IN ADVANCE.**

# ALTOONA FALL REMINDERS

**JOIN THE ALTOONA FIREFIGHTERS ASSOCIATION FOR PANCAKES ON OCT. 26 FROM 7—11AM AT THE FIRE STATION.**



Hy-Vee Pharmacy will be providing a flu shot clinic at the same time. The cost is \$30 per shot or Hy-Vee Pharmacy will take your insurance.

*What better way to get over a shot than some pancakes!*

## LAST BRUSH DROP OFF IS NOVEMBER 2nd

The brush pile is open from 8:00am—12:00pm on November 2nd. Residents disposing of brush can enter through the north gate of the Altoona Aquatics Park (located at 1200 Venbury Dr.) and south of the Altoona Skateboard Park.

Please have information identifying you as a City of Altoona resident ready when you drop off brush.



**Yard waste Compost it! season ends on November 29th.**



*Remember to change your clocks back one hour on Sunday, November 3, 2019.*

*This is also a great opportunity to change the batteries in your smoke detector.*

**If you have difficulty changing the batteries in your fire alarm, please contact the fire department at 515-967-2216. Someone will come out and help you.**

## **CARBON MONOXIDE –**

Leading Cause of Poisoning Deaths in America

Cold weather means your furnace will be getting a workout. Proper care, maintenance and regular filter changes are required for your furnace to operate effectively and efficiently. Proper and routine maintenance helps to eliminate the possibilities of carbon monoxide poisoning.

Everyone is at risk for carbon monoxide poisoning. A colorless, odorless deadly gas, carbon monoxide adheres to hemoglobin in your body's bloodstream, offsetting oxygen, which is needed to survive. Symptoms are as minor as flu like symptoms. As levels of carboxyhemoglobin increase, vomiting, loss consciousness and eventually brain damage or death may occur.

Sources of carbon monoxide inside buildings include house fires, faulty furnaces, heaters, wood-burning stoves, internal combustion vehicle exhaust, electrical generators, propane-fueled equipment such as portable stoves, and gasoline-powered tools such as leaf blowers, lawn mowers, high-pressure washers, concrete cutting saws, power trowels, and welders. Please do preventative maintenance to protect yourself and loved ones. Also, purchase a carbon monoxide detector for your home.

## **LEAVES – Nature's Natural Fertilizer**

Leaves are nature's way of providing nutrients for your lawn and garden. Chopped leaves feed the soil. The job takes little time and the materials are free. A mulching-type lawn mower will chop the leaves which you will need to leave over winter. You can leave ½ inch to 1 inch of chopped leaves on the grass. Just be sure some grass blades are sticking up above the mulch. The mulch will settle down in a few weeks. The organic material settles into the soil under the turn and causes a microbial population explosion, which reduces soil compaction, improves water storage, and leads to better drainage. Perhaps most important, these microbes are producing food for the grass plants all the way into early next summer, reducing fertilizer needs.

If you have a huge amount of leaves or you choose not to mulch, please remember not to blow the leave into the street where they can clogged the storm sewers.

## **Drug Take Back Day**

You have the opportunity to drop off any unused prescription drugs at the Altoona Fire Department on Saturday, October 26th when you stop by for pancakes. If you miss your chance, you can still use the drop off mailbox located in the lobby of the Altoona Police Department.



## **Weather Radios**



NOAA Weather radios are fastest for instant information about severe weather watches and warnings in your area. These specially equipped radios pick up broadcasts from your area's National Weather Radio 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. In severe weather situations, your NOAA Weather Radio will sound an alarm anytime severe weather threatens if it is equipped with a Tone Alert feature. Most models can be programmed to sound alert for specific counties.

# WINTER REMINDERS

## SNOW ORDINANCE

The snow removal parking ban is in effect from October through May or anytime snow and/or ice removal efforts are required. When weather forecast predicts weather conditions that will require enforcement of the parking ban, a notice will be published on the City of Altoona's and/or Altoona Police Departments Facebook and Twitter pages.

## 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. 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. Please try and keep your driveway and approach to your house clear in case the police or fire personnel need to respond to your home.

Clean around mailboxes and be sure the mailboxes are properly installed behind the curb line to withstand snow clearing efforts by the City. **The City assumes NO responsibility for mailboxes damaged during snow removal.**

## 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.

## Christmas Tree Pick Up

**Only on December 31—January 11**

Christmas trees placed at the curb on your regular trash collections day will be picked up. Trees must be free of all ornaments, have NO plastic bags on them, and must have a "Compost It" sticker (\$1.25) attached. If there is snowfall on the day of collection, you must be sure that your tree is accessible for pickup. Thank you.



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.

## Emergency access

Maintain your sidewalks and driveway by removing 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 your lights on to make it easier and faster for responders to find your residence.



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).

## TRASH & RECYCLING CART PLACEMENT IN WINTER

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 totes are placed on city streets. This is especially true in cul-de-sacs which are impossible to plow if totes are placed in the road.



# WATER NEWS

## Payments can be paid to:

- **Altoona City Hall**, 407 8<sup>th</sup> St. SE, Office hours: Monday – Friday 8:00am – 4:30pm.
- **Deposit Drop Box**, behind City Hall, 407 8<sup>th</sup> St. SE – box is emptied each morning.
- **Hy-Vee Food Stores**, Customer Service Department – accepts payment between the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month to the 3<sup>rd</sup> of the month, but do NOT take payments after the 3<sup>rd</sup>.
- **Automatic Payment** – deducted from your checking or savings on the due date of the month. (You will receive a \$5.00 credit on your next bill for signing up on the automatic plan.) <http://www.altoona-iowa.com/download/City%20Departments/Water/Auto-Draft-Form.pdf>
- **Pay By Phone- 833-271-0804**- You will need your utility account number and address to make this transaction. You can pay with a Visa or Mastercard. **There will be a \$1.25 for each transaction made through the Interactive Voice Response system.** This fee is retained by the service provider, and is not paid to the City of Altoona.
- **Online Payment** – check out [http://www.altoona-iowa.com/departments/community-services\\_\\_trashed/water/](http://www.altoona-iowa.com/departments/community-services__trashed/water/)

## Altoona Rain Barrel Grant Program

To promote stormwater Best Management Practices throughout the city, funding has been allocated to provide a grant program for purchase and installation of rain barrels for residential homes. The Rain Barrel Grant Program allows for reimbursement for costs of the rain barrel up to a maximum of \$75 with a limit of one per residential property.



Rain barrels collect and store rainwater from rooftops for watering lawns and gardens. The water captured reduces the amount of stormwater running off the property during rainfall events. Because this water is not treated, it should not be used for drinking water.

For more information on how to apply to the Rain Barrel Grant Program please check out: <http://www.altoona-iowa.com/download/City%20Departments/Stormwater/Rain-Barrel-Grant-Application.pdf>

## Delinquent Water Bills:

- Water bills are mailed out on the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month, and due at the end of business (4:30 p.m.) on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of the month. If the the 3<sup>rd</sup> of month falls on the weekend or holiday, the bills are due by 3:00 p.m. the next business day. Billing period is the month prior to the bills. Example: January 15<sup>th</sup> bills are for water/ sewer used from the middle of November to the middle of December.
- A ten percent (10%) late penalty is applied at the end of the day on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of the month. If the 3<sup>rd</sup> of month falls on the weekend or holiday, the ten percent (10%) late penalty is applied at 3:01 p.m. on the next business day.
- RED TAGS are delivered and a \$10.00 service fee assessed if the bill is not paid in full within 23 days of billing date.
- Service disconnected if the bill is not paid in full within 25 days of billing date. Altoona Municipal Code Section 98.12.
- A fee of \$25.00 during work hours (8:00 am to 4:30 pm) and after hours \$75.00 (after hours, for health emergency only) will be required and the total bill paid in full prior to turning service back on.
- A \$15.00 fee is charged for all checks not honored by the bank.
- If the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of the month falls on a weekend or a holiday, the due date will be 10:30 am on the next business day after the 3<sup>rd</sup>.

## Reconnect Fee:

If water is shut off, a reconnect fee will be assessed as follows:

\$25 (8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.) or \$75 (after hours, for health emergency only)

Call the Clerk's office between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. at 515-967-5136 for more information.

## THINKING TOWARDS NEXT SUMMER...



Whether your home is new construction or has that lived in feel, an irrigation meters can help you save money on your monthly water bill, especially in the summer.

An irrigation meter is a separate meter that measures the amount of water used for items such as lawns, washing exterior surfaces, washing vehicles, filling pools, etc. By having the irrigation meter installed, the sanitary sewer rate fee is not assessed for water usage in the "irrigation system," which would include the outside faucets. A separate meter is the only way to accurately measure the water used exclusively from outside faucets. You can find out more about irrigation meters at: [http://www.altoona-iowa.com/departments/community-services\\_\\_trashed/water/](http://www.altoona-iowa.com/departments/community-services__trashed/water/)



## Altoona Public Library Hours

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

### HOLIDAY HOURS

#### *Thanksgiving*

Wed. 11/27—Close @ 5:00pm  
Thurs. 11/28 & Fri. 11/29—  
CLOSED

#### *Christmas*

Tues. 12/24 & Wed.. 12/25—  
CLOSED

#### *New Year's*

Tues. 12/31 at 3:00pm &  
Wed. 1/1—CLOSED

### **EXTRA! EXTRA! SAFETY INFO**



A lot of emphasis is placed on making sure your furnace is in sound condition prior to the cold months. An important item to make sure your furnace will continue to work properly and safely is to have 3 feet of space free around your furnace and water heater. It is understandable that following the holidays and during the cold months that more items need to be stored indoors and space is hard to come by. Basements and storage closets that house furnaces and water heaters create the “out of sight, out of mind” situation. Although new furnaces and water heaters have sealed combustion chambers, the equipment still needs to be provided with some room. Too much clutter can present itself as a fire hazard, especially for those who have more “aged equipment. Please take the time to ensure the space surrounding the furnace and water heater is clear.

### **Death Comes for Us All - Victorian Fascination with Death**

Thursday, Nov. 7 at 6pm.

Victorians had a different attitude about death than we do in the 21st Century. This program explores the Victorians' fascination with death & the culture they developed to memorialize the dead. Program is presented by Kathy Wilson, Historian and Genealogist.

### **Senior Set: Games**

Tuesday, Nov. 5 and 19 at 1pm

Stop by this open-house style program. We'll have Rummikub, cribbage, Mexican train, cards, backgammon and more! Bring your friends—we'll supply coffee, tea, and snacks.

### **Senior Set: New Year's Eve Extravaganza**

Tuesday, Dec.31 from 1-2:30pm

It's a special Senior Set: Speaker Series as we'll be celebrating at our New Year's Eve Extravaganza! An opportunity to ring in the new year with music, food, games, and a bit of reminiscing of years past. We'll have party decor and maybe even kazoo's!

### **Children's Programming: Game On!**



Wednesday, Nov. 20 at 2pm

Join our kids' gaming group! We will have video games, board games, and virtual reality games available for kids to explore and play with their friends.

Ages 7-12 (7 year-olds must be accompanied by an adult)

Registration is required.

### **Dinosaur Party**

Saturday, Nov. 23 at 2pm

Do you love dinosaurs? Join us for special dinosaur activities, games, and crafts to celebrate DINOvember.

All ages are welcome. Registration is required.

### **Teen Programming**

#### **Out-of-the-Box Game Night**

Thursday, Nov. 7 and 21 at 6pm

Come raid our collection of games! We've got loads of options, from classics like Sorry and Life to crazy Kickstarters or Exploding Kittens and Goat Lords! Play an oldie but goodie, or find a new favorite! Grades 7-12.

### **Movie & Munchies: Super Scary Edition**

Saturday, Nov. 16 at 2pm

Scary stories? Check! Tasty snacks? Check! Join us for a spooky new release! Grades 7-12; permission slip required for those under 13.



### **THE LIBRARY AT YOUR FINGER TIPS**



Remember that you can access books (audio & digitally), movies, music, research information and show much more 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. All you need is your own library card. Stop by and pick one up today!