

Ask the Energy Guy

Q: I've heard my computer consumes a lot of energy. Is this true, and what can I do about it?

A: It is true that a computer can use a lot of energy. Some of the new "gaming" computers can use as much as 1,000 watts of electricity. That's as much as a 9,000 Btu window air conditioner! A standard desktop computer can use 200 to 300 watts of electricity, and if it's left on all the time it can cost over \$150 a year.



Laptops are often more energy efficient than desktop computers.

According to Mark Steffen of Winning Solutions, Inc., there are some things you should look for when deciding to purchase a new computer.

- You may wish to consider a laptop instead of a desktop/tower type PC. Since laptops are designed to run from a battery (at least for a period of time) they are more energy efficient.
- Replace your old tube style monitor with an LCD flat panel type. LCD monitors use much less electricity.
- Look for an 80-Plus certified power supply. These convert more electricity into useful work on your computer and produce less waste heat.
- Look for the Energy Star rating when buying a new computer. A new specification known as 4.0 will go into effect this summer, and is the first new specification in 15 years! Qualifying computers will be much more efficient than those in service today.
- Look for computers designated tier-1, which represent the top 25% in terms of efficiency. This designation includes efficiency requirements for system idling, or launched-but-not-running applications. For example, to qualify for tier-1, a basic desktop PC must consume 50 watts or less when in idle mode.

For those who are environmentally minded, Dell Computer is offering a new program known as "Plant a Tree for Me." As the name implies, this program allows participants to pay a fee to have a tree planted to offset their computer's carbon footprint. To learn more about this program, go the Dell Web site and type "Plant a Tree" in the search box. You don't have to be a Dell computer owner to take advantage of this program. Dell spends 100% of the money received by this program on tree-planting efforts.



Steve Wilson
Energy Services
Coordinator, 239-5177

Call Before You Dig
Remember to call before you dig. The Iowa One Call number is 1-800-292-8989

Prime Time Power: It's NOT Too Late!
If you haven't done so already, sign up for Prime Time Power. You'll receive a \$20 credit on your bill for the summer and will be helping keep our electric rates low. If you have signed up in the past, you don't have to do anything. You're all set!

Perform Your Own Self Audit
Improve your home's efficiency. Call 239-5177 for a free audit packet, or visit our Web site at www.city.ames.ia.us/electricweb.

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If you have questions about City operations, please call 239-5204 or write to: 515 Clark Ave., Ames, IA 50010.

www.cityofames.org

Numbers to Know

Power outage 239-5240
Street light out 239-5500
Utility bill question 239-5120
Renting security lights... 239-5207
Energy questions 239-5177

Tree growing too close to an electric line 239-5500

Going to be digging?
Iowa One Call 800-292-8989

Heating Degree Days						
June			Season to date			
2007	2006	25-year Average	06/07	05/06	25-year Average	
0	11	21	6077	5686	6498	

Cooling Degree Days						
June			Season to date			
2007	2006	25-year Average	2007	2006	25-year Average	
251	269	222	397	384	302	

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.city.ames.ia.us/electricweb.