Hall, Renee

From:	Pete Steinmetz <steinmetz.petemonica@gmail.com>
Sent:	Friday, December 6, 2024 2:04 PM
To:	City Council and Mayor
Cc:	steinmetz.petemonica@gmail.com
Subject:	Text messages for utility outages - add support for rental property owners to also receive alerts.

Hello!

We were asked by the City of Ames Utilities department to forward our question/request to this email address for consideration.

We had contacted them today as landlords in Ames. Our tenants pay for their own utilities and receive text notifications of utility outages. We were hoping that as the property owners we could also enroll our phone numbers to receive the same text messages about utility outages. We were told there is currently no way to do that.

The reason for our request is the following:

All of our properties have Wifi thermostats that send us notifications when the house temperature drops below a set threshold. Last week, one of those Wifi thermostats prevented significant damage to our property when the students living there went home for Thanksgiving break and turned off the furnace on the way out the door. The Wifi thermostat alerted us of the low temperature, and we were able to turn on the furnace and prevent the house from freezing.

Today, we discovered there is a flaw in that process. There was an extended power outage at one of our properties which kept the furnace from running. The temp dropped below our set threshold, but without power, the Wifi thermostat was unable to communicate the low temperature to us and allow us to act.

This instance turned out ok because of the short duration of the power outage. Our concern is with a longer outage of several days during Christmas break when the students are away.

If we were able to receive utilities outage alerts, we would be aware of the power outage and know to take action.

Please consider adding this as a service for landlords to properties they own that are serviced by Ames Utilities.

Thank you!

Pete and Monica Steinmetz
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