



# THE WIRE

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## AMU Works to Resolve TV Interference Issues

AMU Cable TV customers who have experienced interference issues with local TV stations will soon see a difference in the reception of those stations. Algonia Municipal Utilities has contracted with Iowa Network Services (INS) in Des Moines to have INS provide local TV signals from the Des Moines, Mason City, and Austin, Minnesota markets to AMU via fiber. Design work has been completed and AMU is now waiting for delivery of equipment to convert the TV signals from an Internet protocol signal to a radio frequency signal so the programming can be seen on the AMU Cable TV system. The work should be completed no later than early this fall.

Up to this time, AMU has received local TV signals off-air. Prior to June 12<sup>th</sup>, 2009, TV stations transmitted their primary signal in an analog format. Since that date the

signal has been broadcast in a digital format. The signal broadcast in a digital format is subject to the same interference as a signal broadcast in an analog format. The difference is when there was interference with an analog signal it showed as static or "snow". When there is interference with a signal broadcast in a digital format it will show tiling or pixels on a TV screen or there will be no picture or audio at all. When you are watching a TV station and see "No Program" or "No Signal" flash across the screen it means AMU is no longer receiving the signal from the source or TV station.

Signals can be affected by atmospheric conditions that are occurring in Algonia or at the source of the signal in Des Moines, Mason City, Austin or Mankato. Weather conditions, such as ice, fog, or humidity in Algonia or at the

source of the signal can cause interference. Electromagnetic interference coming from cell phone towers, radio towers, wind towers etc. can also affect the TV signal.

The FCC required TV stations to cut back the amount of power that they can broadcast their signals. The FCC said the power required to broadcast a digital signal in a market area is less than what was needed to broadcast an analog signal in the same market area. According to a chief engineer for a Des Moines TV station, "the FCC went too far in the reduction of power and the TV station can't cover the market area it once did with an analog signal."

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## Lightning Strikes Can Cause Damage & Death

Summer is the peak season for one of nature's dangerous phenomena — lightning.

Lightning is powerful and unpredictable. It can cause fires and explode power lines, causing outages. Lightning is electricity that occurs when positive and negative charges are attracted to each other and explode in the air. Thunder is the sound of that explosion. Since air is not a good conductor of electricity, lightning will try to ground at the nearest conductive object it can find. Play it safe during a thunderstorm.



If you are inside:

- Remove electric plugs from walls
- Use surge protectors on all electronics
- Don't talk on the phone with a cord
- Do not take a shower or

use a sink.

If your outside:

- Take shelter if possible.
- Stay away from bodies of water.
- Do not hold metal objects such as baseball bats.
- Get away from trees or other tall objects.
- If your hair stands on end, crouch down on the tips of your toes to decrease your height and protect yourself from lightning strikes.

## Water Conservation in the Lawn & Garden

At least 30% of water used annually by a single-family household is for outdoor irrigation. A large portion of that goes to waste through evaporation or runoff caused by overwatering.

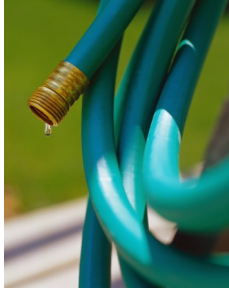
**Let it grow:** Adjust the height of your lawnmower to cut the grass higher. This helps protect roots from heat stress and reduces the loss of moisture to evaporation.

**Promote deep root growth:** A lawn with deep roots requires less water and is resistant to drought and disease.

**Sidewalks don't need water:**

Avoid planting turf in areas that are difficult to irrigate properly, such as steep inclines or isolated strips along sidewalks and driveways.

**Plug away:** Aerate clay soils at least once a year to help the soil absorb and retain moisture.



**Think small:** Choose younger smaller plants that require less water to become established.

**Keep it cool:** Water your lawn and landscape plants early in the morning when the sun's rays aren't working to evaporate your water.

**Do it the hard way:** Use a broom or rake, not a hose, to remove debris from driveways.

**Make it shine:** Use a bucket of soapy water and a hose with a shutoff nozzle to wash your car.

## NFL Network to Broadcast Preseason Games



The NFL Network is your official home for all the best

preseason action in the league, bringing you every single preseason game.

See your favorite players, rising stars, and seasoned vets compete for roster spots, bragging rights and more. Airing 65 games either live or tape delay, fans of every NFL team will be

able to prepare for the regular season by tuning in to the NFL Network.



AMU Cable TV customers can watch the NFL Network on channel 30 or in HD on channel 315. If you don't have AMU Cable TV and want to watch the NFL Network, stop at AMU in downtown Algona to schedule an appointment to install AMU Cable TV.

## IMPROVE WINDOW AIR CONDITIONER EFFICIENCY

A window air conditioner can inexpensively cool down a single room or small apartment.



**Selection an efficient unit:** Purchase an Energy Star® certified unit with an energy efficiency rating of 10 or more. Look for features such as a slide-out filter for easy cleaning, variable fan speeds, and a

digital thermostat.

Install the unit in a north or east facing window. Make sure the outdoor heat exchanger

is shaded. Direct sunlight reduces efficiency by 10 percent.

Avoid placing hot appliances, such as lamps or

TVs, near the unit's thermostat. This causes the unit to run longer than necessary.

**Size it up:** Allow for 20 British Thermal Units (Btus) for each square foot of living space you need to cool. If the air conditioner is too small, it won't cool sufficiently, and if it's too big, it won't cool uniformly.

**Hibernate during winter:** If possible, remove the unit in late autumn and store it until summer to prevent chilly drafts.

## AMU Works to Resolve TV Interference Issues

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It is possible to also get poor reception if the signal strength is too high and overload receivers at AMU. When TV signals are weakened due to atmospheric conditions, some stations have increased power causing the signal to overpower AMU equipment.

When signal interference occurs, AMU checks its equipment to see if there is an issue. Our employees also contact the TV stations and ask if they have any issues.

"As AMU employees we understand the frustration and concerns over poor local TV reception as our employees pay for and enjoy the same service as all our customers. Since the digital transition we have been working on solutions to resolve the signal issues. Finally, we came to the conclusion that we could not fix the problem with the over-the-air signal issues and we began searching for a new source of signal. Receiving the signal from INS via fiber is the best solution," according to AMU General

Manager John Bilsten.

Bilsten further said that AMU "appreciates the patience of our customers as AMU works to resolve the local TV reception issue." "This is even more frustrating because these same over-the-air-channels that have reduced their signal power began charging us a few years ago for signal in an amount that exceeded \$50,000.00 in 2009 while providing substandard signal quality," stated Bilsten.



*Community Owned  
For  
Community Benefit!  
That's Our  
Commitment to You,  
Our Customer and  
Owner!*