

**Spring Water Main
Flushing Info Inside**

CUSTOMER UPDATE



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Spring Water Main Flushing Info Inside

OPU MEMO



Roger Warehime,
General Manager

OPU Commission

Mr. Dale E. Simon
Mr. Matt Kottke
Mr. Kent Rossi
Mr. Randy Doyal
Ms. Dena Keilman

I write this memo on Day 3 of the statewide two-week stay-at-home order to slow the spread of the coronavirus. Although OPU's workforce is considered essential, almost half of our employees are working from home. We, like many companies, had already taken many pandemic mitigation steps (including telework and closing our office doors to the public) before the governor's order went into effect. Therefore, this week has been a time of settling into the "new normal" and beginning to refine plans for how we will emerge when restrictions are lifted while continuing to protect our employees so that we can continue to serve our community.

I have heard from a number of our employees how grateful they are to have a job where they are able to continue working throughout the pandemic response. They have real empathy for friends and neighbors who work at (and/or own) companies that have been shut down either through direct order from the state or because demand for their products and services has been greatly reduced.

OPU, like practically all utilities across the country, has suspended disconnecting customers for non-payment. We understand that many of you have extending extenuating circumstances that will make it difficult for you to stay current on your account. Whether you are residential customer or a small business owner, please call and speak to one of our customer service representatives so that they can work with you to come up with a payment agreement if you are having issues paying your bill.

We don't know when we will get back to normal. As Dr. Fauci says, "The virus makes the timeline." Because of the importance of protecting our employees so that they can continue to serve you, I suspect we will keep many of our protective measures in place even after the state has removed restrictions and our economy is getting back to work. For example, currently our field workers are entering homes only for emergency calls, and they are screening customers by asking COVID-related questions before entering. When we return to doing non-emergency calls, we most likely will continue with the screening process. Please don't be offended when our employees ask you these questions or ask for personal space from you while they perform their tasks. They are protecting not only themselves, but also others in the community they will come into contact with.

While this pandemic experience has been painful for many, there are positives that are coming out of it. For one, I have noticed a growing sense of community both within our walls and throughout Owatonna. People are stepping up and reaching out in all kinds of ways to help one another through. We realize more than ever our interdependence and we find new, and sometimes even better, ways to stay connected and strengthen our relationships. If you haven't already, check out the Facebook page "Owatonna Stronger Together" for some inspirational stories showing local businesses and individuals supporting one another in all kinds of ways.

Stay strong! We will get through this, and we will come out the other side better than ever.

CONSERVATION TIP\$

Are you the only coffee drinker in your house and a full pot is more than you drink by yourself? Try making a half pot or 2/3 pot. This conserves water and electricity as well as helps your coffee grounds go further!



It is now Spring and we are looking forward to another year of road construction. The following is an update of where plans and construction is at as of the end of March.

Bridge Street from Interstate 35 to 24th Avenue is planned for reconstruction in 2020. A virtual drive through of the project can be seen at the City of Owatonna Public Works homepage <http://www.ci.owatonna.mn.us/482/Public-Works>. The video does a good job of showing what the project will look like when complete. A new traffic signal is planned at the intersection of Park Drive and Bridge Street and a new roundabout is planned at the intersection of 24th and Bridge. Construction is expected to take most of the summer and into fall.

Cherry Street from the bridge over Maple Creek to the golf course parking lot is planned for a new bituminous surface, along with an overlay of the trail. Safety improvements and ADA improvements are planned for the trail as well. Greenhaven from Crestview to just north of Keller Place is planned for a new bituminous surface.

Shady Avenue from East Rice Lake Street to School Street is planned for new aggregate base and bituminous surface.

Cardinal Drive Stormsewer is planned to get started early this spring. The project involves installing a new storm pipe across County Road 48 (Bixby Road) and the Canadian Pacific Railway. The pipe will help to alleviate localized flooding at the north end of Cardinal Drive.

Engineering is working on plans for a new entrance to Manthy Park from 3rd Avenue NE. This entrance will be constructed along with creating additional parking spaces within the park parking lot. Plans are being developed in conjunction with the construction of the Miracle Field and We All Play Playground. Accessibility to the park will be addressed with the parking lot improvements. Plans were also completed and the work is scheduled to reroute the trail around the Chalet at Morehouse Park. The trail currently runs through the parking lot and the new alignment will allow trail users to stay on the trail and not have conflict with cars in the parking lot.

The City of Owatonna was awarded a Transportation Alternatives Grant (TAP) for the construction of a trail extension along 18th Street South. The trail is planned for 2024 construction and will extend the existing trail from Linn Avenue to Austin Road. The \$405,000 of Federal Grant pays for approximately 65% of the estimated construction cost for the trail extension. Planning is underway to determine a route that will eventually extend the trail to the future high school site.

The following streets are planned for overlay in 2020: Mound St SW – Allan Ave to Hilltop Ave, Thomas Ave SW – Mound St to LeMond Rd, Robert Pl SW – Mosher Ave to Circle, Linn Ave SW – Plainview St to Southview St & Holly St to Barney St, Southview St SW – Linn Ave to West, Almar Pl SW, Kellford Pl SW, Hobart St SE – Cedar Ave to Elm Ave & Elm Ave to Grove Ave.

Construction will continue on Rose Street. The work remaining includes sidewalk improvements and the construction of a roundabout at Grove and Rose.

Please stay safe in workzones, your safety and the safety of the workers depends on you. Slow down and be attentive.

MAYOR

Tom Kuntz

COUNCIL MEMBERS

David Burbank

Nathan Dotson

Jeff Okerberg

Kevin Raney

Greg Schultz

Brent Svenby

Doug Voss



LED STREET LIGHTS

They are on all night. They are on during storms. They light our roads and sidewalks. They are often forgotten about, except when they stop working. Street lights are an important part of our infrastructure, but they also use a large amount of electricity.

Owatonna Public Utilities has committed to replacing the current street lights in town with new LED street lights. The new LED street lights will provide a number of benefits over the old street lights.

First and foremost, LED street lights will greatly reduce the amount of electricity used to light our streets and sidewalks. Existing street lights use about 550 kWh per year while the new LED street lights will use less than half that, around 240 kWh per year.

Another benefit of the new LED street lights is the features built into them. Dimming capabilities allow the new LED street lights to be set to the correct light output for each installation. For example, a street light that is on a taller pole needs to provide more light than a street light on a shorter pole. By adjusting the settings for each location, OPU may be able to stock one or two models of street lights to meet the community's needs instead of 10 or 12 models. Dimming reduces the amount of energy that particular street light uses even more.

Most street lights use a device called a "photocell", a light sensor, to turn the lights on when the sun goes down and off when it comes back up. When these fail, it usually means the street light turns on and stays on day and night. The LED street lights OPU are installing use a photocell that is actually a "learning" photocell. After a month or so, the photocell basically learns where it is on the earth so that it will continue to turn on and off at the right time of day even if the photocell fails. This will reduce the number of street lights that are on when they don't need to be.

Starting in April 2019, OPU installed the first 250 LED street lights. The first batch were installed around the schools and in the city parks. We purchased the next 500 street lights at the end of 2019 and have been installing them around town since. Right now, when an old street light goes out we are replacing them with one of our new LED lights.

You will see crews installing the rest of the 500 LED street lights throughout the year which will leave about 2000 more arm-mounted street lights to replace in future years.



2020 OPU Natural Gas/Water Projects

WATER PROJECTS

- SW 39th Avenue - 5500' of 16" water main
- Cherry Street - 550' water main replacement
- Bridge Street - City reconstruction project (Watermain reroute)
- Commission water main - New Industrial pressure zone - May 12

NATURAL GAS PROJECTS

- Industrial Park Gas Main Extension
- Costco service & meter set
- Minimizer service & meter set
- Truman Avenue gas main & services moved (For 2021 City Project)
- 2020 5# to 50# Conversion Project
- Lakeside Foods meter set work
- Foremost Brewery - meter set
- South Pointe II - meter set
- Bridge Street & 24th Avenue gas main work



ELECTRICAL SAFETY: DOWNED POWER LINES

Here are some important, life-saving safety tips from Owatonna Public Utilities:



- Call us at 507-451-2480 if you see a downed power line.
- Always assume a downed power line is energized.
- Stay 10 feet away from a downed power line.
- Don't drive over a downed power line.
- If a power line falls on your car, stay inside the vehicle, warn people to not touch the car, and call 911.
- If the car is on fire:
 - Open the door, but do not STEP out of the car.
 - With hands at your side, jump completely free of the vehicle so you are not touching the car when you land on the ground.
 - Never make a connection between your body, the car's shell, and the road.
 - Keep both feet close together and shuffle away from the vehicle WITHOUT picking up your feet.
- Never climb a tree with power lines running through it.



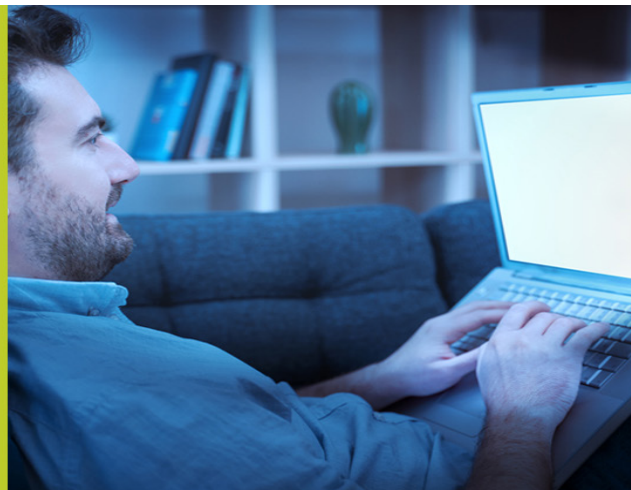
Project Conserve & Save

Project Conserve and Save helps Owatonna 5th-grade families use energy wisely with free energy efficiency kits and curriculum. The program is offering further at home learning opportunities, as well. Pictured are St. Mary's School students working on the project before social distancing was a "thing".

CONSERVE & SAVE

**CALL
BEFORE
YOU DIG**

**DIYer by
day and
streamer
at night?**



Stay safe during social distancing by calling 811 before starting any new project, so you can stay connected to the internet and utility services you rely on.

**Call 811 or go
to your state 811
center's website
before digging.**



Call811.com/811-your-state

FLUSHABLE DOESN'T ALWAYS MEAN FLUSHABLE

Due to an increased demand and subsequent shortage of toilet paper as a result of COVID-19, we have heard of the increased use and flushing of non-flushable materials such as baby wipes, napkins and paper towels. While the "flushable" wipes concern is not new to wastewater facilities, there is an increased risk due to the current shortage of toilet paper. We ask that our community members pay extra attention to what they are using and flushing and remind you not to flush anything other than toilet paper.



Properly addressing this issue requires each of us to be extra mindful, especially in the days and weeks ahead, but also beyond the containment of COVID-19. We ask that you pay close attention to what is being used in your home, and make sure you are only flushing toilet paper and properly disposing of all other materials.

As a reminder, the following products are NOT flushable and must be disposed of in a waste basket:

- Paper towels
- Napkins
- Kleenex and other tissues
- Wet wipes/baby wipes (even those labeled as "flushable" wipes)
- Diapers
- Feminine hygiene products
- Gauze/Band-Aids

Thank you for helping keep our community and facilities clean and functioning! If you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to us at 507-444-2452.

REBATES

REBATE APPLICATION DEADLINE EXTENDED!

Due to our COVID-19 office closure,
Owatonna Public Utilities is
**EXTENDING THE DEADLINE FOR
2019 REBATE SUBMISSIONS
FROM MARCH 31 TO APRIL 30.**

Rebate forms can be mailed
to us or placed in our
drop box locations.

*Thank you,
and stay well!*



Visit www.owatonnautilities.com to learn more and download rebate applications with complete terms and conditions.

CONSERVE & \$AVE[®]



P.O. Box 800 208 S. Walnut Ave.
Owatonna, MN 55060

Office: 451-2480 Service: 451-1616

INDICIA

OFFICE HOURS:

Monday-Wednesday:

8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Thursday:

8:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Friday:

8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Saturday & Sunday:

Closed

Payment Options

- Online at www.owatonnautilities.com
- Automatic Withdrawal; bank account or credit card
- Drive-up drop box located in the parking lot south of building
- Drop box locations at Cash Wise Grocery Store and HyVee Food Store
- Mail
- At Owatonna Public Utilities; cash, credit card, check or money order

Moving?

Remember to contact the Customer Service Department **ONE WEEK** prior to moving, 451-2480.



Sam



Brandon



Jeff

National
Lineman
Appreciation
Day



Nate



April
18
2020



Tom



Tony



Nick



Jake



Collin

Thank You
For All
You Do!

Gas Leak?

If you smell gas and can't find the source immediately, go to a neighbor's house and call OPU at 451-1616.



Don't turn electrical switches on or off or use a flashlight or telephone in the home, because an electrical spark could ignite the gas and cause an explosion.

Hey! Did you know?

Spring Water Main
Flushing Begins Monday
April 27, 2020.
More details inside.



WWW.OWATONNAUTILITIES.COM