



**OWATONNA**  
**PUBLIC UTILITIES**

VOLUME 28 | ISSUE #12  
DECEMBER 2018

# CUSTOMER UPDATE

## Shop Cyber Safe this Festive Season



### FEATURING: CYBER SECURITY

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[WWW.OWATONNAUTILITIES.COM](http://WWW.OWATONNAUTILITIES.COM)

# OPU MEMO



Mark Fritsch,  
General Manager

## OPU Commission

Mr. Kim Cosens  
Mr. Dale E. Simon  
Mr. Matt Kottke  
Mr. Kent Rossi  
Mr. Randy Doyal

This will be my last newsletter as I somewhat look forward to retirement. Having the privilege and honor to be part of Owatonna Public Utilities is one of the best things that has happened to me. That is why retiring is bitter sweet for me. I came here primarily to turn an old power plant into a repurposed facility. I've stayed because it's been the best place I've ever worked. Working with employees, the city and the community filled me with great belonging, fun and rewarding experiences.

I am very pleased to be turning over a great utility to Roger Warehime. He is one of the most dedicated, competent and enjoyable people I've worked with.

The future for OPU is very bright and promising because of its employees. Our most recent Gallup survey of employee engagement rated us one of the most engaged workforces in the country. In the U.S., the average for employee engagement is 30%. Our recent survey ranks us at 73%.

The results of an engaged workforce is easy to see at OPU. Both locally and nationally, we are recognized for safety, reliability and financial stability. From a budget and rates standpoint, we are one of the few utilities debt free and we are proud to be able to reduce some of our rates for next year.

As I've shared with you before, our infrastructure investments for the next several years continue to increase, primarily due to replacements and improvements needed to support reliability and customer growth.

The good news is, despite the fact we are making significant infrastructure investments over the next several years, we are able to control our rates to minimize the effect on our customers. Water commodity rates will increase 4.9%, while electric commodity rates will decrease 3% and natural gas commodity rates will decrease 2%. The net effect for the average residential customer not enrolled in our air conditioning load management program will be an annual decrease of \$24.25 per year. We are able to decrease electric and gas rates primarily due to decreases in our wholesale costs.

Customers in our air conditioning load management program will see their savings offset by a change we are making to the load management program. As air conditioners have become more and more efficient (and thus a smaller percentage of the average customer's load), the discount paid has become more than the savings realized by OPU. To bring the discount more in line with the actual savings, we will be applying the 5% commodity credit only in the summer months of June through September rather than in every month of the year. The net effect of the rate changes and the change to the load management credit for an average residential customer enrolled in the load management program will be an increase of \$2.91 per year.

I wish you a safe and happy holiday season! I'm so proud of OPU and will miss working here.

## CONSERVATION TIP\$

Running a humidifier in the winter may allow you to reduce the temperature of your home while maintaining a proper comfort level.



# CITY SPOT

HIGHLIGHTING: OWATONNA PUBLIC LIBRARY

## OWATONNA CITY COUNCIL



A warm welcome and hello from your Owatonna Public Library! Fall weather is here and we have returned to staffing the building for you every day. Owatonna Public Library is open 9:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday, Friday and Saturday 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. and 1:00 – 5:00 p.m. on Sunday. If you

have Internet access, the website and online resources are available 24/7 at [www.owatonna.info](http://www.owatonna.info).

### **OPL Mobile**

If you have a smart phone or a tablet you can take your library with you! Find the free OPL Mobile app in the app store for your device. You can also go to **[owatonna.boopsie.com](http://owatonna.boopsie.com)** to install OPL Mobile or to preview it. With OPL Mobile you can search the library catalog, check your account, find OPL events, take a look at monthly Staff Picks, ask a question, check out and download eBooks or eAudiobooks. Use your card to download or stream music from Freegal (Free + Legal!).

### **Hoopla**

The Owatonna Public Library is now offering Hoopla to its Patrons. What is Hoopla? Hoopla is a digital media service that allows you to borrow movies, music, audiobooks, ebooks, comics and TV shows to enjoy on your computer, tablet, or phone – and even your TV! With no waiting, titles can be streamed immediately, or downloaded to phones or tablets for offline enjoyment later. We have hundreds of thousands of titles to choose from, with more being added daily. Hoopla is like having your public library at your fingertips. Anytime. Anywhere. If you have any questions please contact the library.

### **Children's Programs**

Tuesday mornings are **Story Time** for preschoolers in Children's Services, at 9:30 a.m. and again at 10:30 a.m. In addition, it is also offered on Thursday evenings at 6:30 p.m. Your preschooler ages 0-6 sings, rhymes, and reads. No need to register, and Mom, Dad, Grandparents, big sister or brother, and any other family or friends are invited to join the fun.

Once a month a **Family Fun Night** is held at 6:30 p.m. in Children's Services. The first half hour is used for Story Time, followed by a craft or other activity. The first event is scheduled for November 29th and the theme will be Birthday Stories.

### **Movies offered at OPL**

**Movies at the Library** are presented on the 2nd and 4th Thursday of each month, with showings at 2:00 p.m. in the 3rd Floor Gainey Room. A family friendly movie presentation is shown on the third Monday at 6:00 p.m. in the Gainey Room.

### **Building Maintenance**

The storm water project is now complete. This project has proved itself to be successful, as shortly after it was completed we had a very heavy rainfall. Recently, a new dumpster enclosure was built on the east side of the public parking lot.

### **[www.owatonna.info](http://www.owatonna.info)**

For more information, visit your Owatonna Public Library in person at 105 North Elm Ave. or call 507-444-2460. Visit us without leaving your couch via the OPL Mobile app or online at [www.owatonna.info](http://www.owatonna.info). Find us on Facebook and @owatonnalibrary on Twitter.

### **MAYOR**

Tom Kuntz

### **COUNCIL MEMBERS**

David Burbank

Nathan Dotson

Jeff Okerberg

Kevin Raney

Greg Schultz

Brent Svenby

Doug Voss



# CYBER SECURITY

THINK BEFORE YOU CLICK

*Information for this article provided by KnowBe4.*

Whether you took advantage of the crazy Cyber Monday sales or you're just starting Christmas planning, one cannot deny the increasing appeal to shop from the comfort of your own home and avoid the manic malls at this time of year. However, as convenient as it may be, there are still a few security concerns when it comes to online shopping. Before clicking "check out", we want you to check if you're being ALERT:



**A**ctivate two-factor authentication on all banking transactions. This means that you need to input an OTP which is sent by your bank (via SMS or email) to confirm the transaction. It adds a level of confidence as should someone try to make a purchase with your card details they would also have to have access to your mobile phone or email account.



**L**ook for signs that the site you are shopping on is secure. Before you type your card details into a website, look out for a small padlock symbol in the address bar (or elsewhere in your browser window) and a web address beginning with https:// (the s stands for 'secure').



**E**nter a web address yourself and don't access it through links. Links in email messages, text, instant messages and pop-ups can take you to websites that look legitimate but are not. Type in the address yourself to be sure.



**R**everview all transactions, check your statements and SMS notifications to ensure that all debits from your account are familiar. Use credit cards, not debit cards for online shopping. Credit cards offer better fraud prevention and consumer protection.



**T**reat your details with care. Don't save your cards details on your computer or in your browser. Be selective as to where you input your details, avoid shared devices and always make sure your security software is up to date.



# EQUIPMENT SERIES



The recording and maintaining of accurate location information of our facilities is an essential part of our responsibilities here at OPU. Our newest method of collection this information is utilizing high accuracy GPS units. This collection method supplements the traditional measurement method of using tapes and measuring wheels to measure from known objects such as fire hydrants and property corners. While these measurements will always be important, referenced objects can and do change. GPS points will always remain relative to their actual position on the face of the earth.

Over the past several years, we have acquired eight Trimble high accuracy hand-held GPS units. Under favorable conditions points and lines can be collected within 4 inches of their actual physical location. Collecting with this level of accuracy is especially important when installing underground features for our gas, water and electric systems and for any features exposed for maintenance or repairs.

Having this level of accuracy does not come cheap. These units cost in the range of \$6,000 each. The good news is that they are extremely durable, long lasting and easy to use. They are actually mini computers so in addition to collecting GPS points and lines, database functions can collect, store and transmit detailed information about features on board and to the "cloud".

With advances in technology, GPS accuracy will continue to improve in other mobile devices such as smartphone and tablets. They haven't achieved the level of accuracy that we require yet so for the immediate future, we will continue to rely on these dependable devices for our data collection needs.

## RECYCLE HOLIDAY LIGHTS

DON'T THROW AWAY OLD HOLIDAY LIGHTS.  
**RECYCLE THEM!**

Once you've purchased all the new energy efficient LED holiday lights you need this season (and applied for your rebate from Owatonna Public Utilities; see our website), what should you do with the old ones?

**Owatonna Public Utilities will recycle all of your old holiday light strands for FREE!**

It's easy – just bring your old strands of lights into the Owatonna Public Utilities lobby and drop them in the bins designated for holiday light recycling.

Available now through January 31



## OPU HIGHLIGHT

The Owatonna Public Utilities is proud to host the OHS Carolers on Wednesday, December 12, 2018 in our lobby at 4:45 p.m. Stop in and enjoy the sounds of the season with us and the OHS Carolers.



Photo from OHS Magnet

# SMELL GAS? GET OUT!

## THEN CALL OPU • 24 HRS • 507.451.1616



- Smell gas? (odor is like rotten eggs)
- Can't immediately find the source?
- DO NOT turn on a light switch or use the phone because the potential spark could ignite the gas and cause an explosion!
- Get out and call OPU from your mobile phone or a neighbor's house.



### 2019 Stormwater Utility Fee Changes

Beginning January 1st, 2019 you will notice a change in your Stormwater Utility Fee. As a result of the 2015 rate structure study conducted by Foth Infrastructure and Environment, LLC the stormwater utility fee is set to gradually increase on an annual basis through 2019 in order to provide an equitable, stable and fair funding source for all stormwater management activities.

The rate for a single-family residential property is a constant monthly fee of \$4.35 (starting 2019). All other properties are based on the following equation that evaluates the equivalent residential unit, acreage, and land use:

$$\text{FEE} = (\text{Parcel Acreage}/0.33) \times \text{Intensity Factor} \times \text{Current ERU}$$

Year	ERU
2018	\$3.87
2019	\$4.35

If the property is multi-family, townhomes, and or mobile homes with individual meters, it will be billed at 80% of the current ERU per unit.

For more information regarding the Stormwater Utility Fee, please contact Bradley Rademacher at 507-774-7300.

# REBATES

# ENERGY STAR®

*A Gift That Keeps On Giving!*

**Help the  
Environment,  
Save Energy,  
Save Money,  
and Get Rebates!**



Visit [www.owatonnautilities.com](http://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](http://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.

# Merry Christmas and Happy New Year from all of us at OPU



Tell Us How We're Doing

Your opinion matters to us. Please take a few minutes to tell us how we did by visiting our website at [owatonnautilities.com/customerurvey](http://owatonnautilities.com/customerurvey) or simply scan the QR code above.

## From the Editors

We welcome your comments and suggestions for future issues. Feel free to give us a call at 451-2480 or send an email to [schmoltt@owatonnautilities.com](mailto:schmoltt@owatonnautilities.com).

## 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.



[WWW.OWATONNAUTILITIES.COM](http://WWW.OWATONNAUTILITIES.COM)