



OWATONNA
PUBLIC UTILITIES

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CUSTOMER UPDATE

NEW REBATE PROGRAM



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OPU MEMO



David Olson, Jr.
Director, Finance & Administration

OPU Commission

Kent Rossi
Randy Doyal
Jay Johnson
Doug Zirngible
Greg Vetter

A new electric rate pilot program is now available for most Owatonna Public Utilities (OPU) residential customers! In the past, residential customers were all assigned the residential electric flat rate where every kilowatt hour of electricity cost the same, regardless of when they were used. Now most residential customers can choose the new residential electric time-of-use (TOU) rate.

As you might guess from the name, in a time-of-use electric rate, the price of electricity varies based on when the electricity is used. This really makes sense when you consider that OPU's cost to buy electricity is highest on summer weekday afternoons when usage peaks, so the TOU rate is also higher during those critical-peak timeframes. On the other hand, OPU's cost of electricity is lowest at night and on weekends, so the TOU rate is much lower during those off-peak periods. By charging less when the cost of electricity is lower and charging more when the cost of electricity is higher, the TOU rate provides customers with the information to make smart usage choices and they are rewarded with cost savings when they shift some of their usage to off-peak timeframes.

So how do you know whether the residential electric time-of-use rate is right for you? Well, here are a few questions that may help you decide.

- Do you have the flexibility to delay some of your electricity use to off-peak times? For example, could you do laundry on weekends, or set your thermostat to pre-cool your home in the morning, or charge your electric vehicle during the night?
- Do you want to do your part to make the electric grid more resilient? High peak usage puts increased stress on both the electric transmission grid and OPU's local distribution network. Shifting load to lower the peak helps the system to operate more efficiently and reliably.
- Are you interested in being "green"? During peak usage timeframes, it is more likely that carbon based generation will be needed, so shifting some of your usage to off peak timeframes can reduce the need for that type of generation.

If you are curious and would like to learn more about residential time of use, please visit our web page at <https://www.owatonnautilities.com>. Hover over the menu item "Your Home" and click on the "time-of-use program". There you will find information about the program including a list of frequently asked questions and an enrollment form. If you have additional questions, you can call and talk to one of our friendly customer service representatives by dialing (507) 451-2480.

CONSERVATION TIP\$

Does your house have large icicles in the winter? This is a sign your home could use attic air sealing and insulation. Icicles form on roof edges because warm air escapes into the attic, melting snow, which refreezes as icicles. Attic air sealing and insulation is the most cost-effective energy saving update you can do to your home!



Watch for upcoming openings to serve

The City of Owatonna encourages community members to attend public meetings and serve on any of its 12 boards and commissions. Applications will be posted on the City's website in March for board and commission openings that begin May 1. Visit owatonna.gov for additional information.

2023 Building Permits Indicate Community Growth

The City of Owatonna had a record-breaking year for new construction in 2023. The valuation of new construction projects totaled \$110,530,779. This is the highest total in Owatonna's history. The City also issued 1,761 building permits in 2023 which indicates future growth as they are an initial step taken for construction projects. Other growth indicators in 2023 include \$12,400,000 in construction of new multi-family housing and 252 commercial and industrial permits totaling \$71,144,771. 2024 is expected to be another year for significant new construction in Owatonna with many large private projects in the planning stages.

KAMP Automation Has Moved to Owatonna

KAMP Automation has recently moved from Waseca into their new facility in Owatonna's Industrial Park. The 50,000-square-foot facility is at the corner of 24th Avenue SW and Lemond Street SW. KAMP Automation provides custom automation systems to manufacturing companies. Their 23 current employees relocated to Owatonna and the company is in the process of hiring 25 additional employees. The City sold the site to KAMP as part of a deal that included tax increment financing. Tax increment financing will be used to pay for the land over nine years. The City also assisted the company in obtaining \$175,000 from the Minnesota Invest Fund and \$800,000 from the state's Job Creation Fund. Welcome to Owatonna, KAMP Automation!



Merrill Hall Improvements Advancing

City staff are collaborating with tenants at Merrill Hall to coordinate logistics for their temporary relocations as plans get underway to begin renovations on the 100-plus year-old building. The Little Theatre of Owatonna (LTO) and Wee Pals Child Care Center both lease space in this City-owned building. Both operations will temporarily relocate when building renovations are set to begin this Spring.

LTO's spring production will be held as planned in April. For ongoing updates about their 58th season, visit Little Theatre of Owatonna (<https://littletheatreofowatonna.duplie.com/>). Wee Pals will relocate to its temporary location over Spring break. For additional information, visit Wee Pals Child Care Center – Owatonna, MN (<https://weepalschildcarecenter.org/>).

The City Council approved a \$5.3 million project for ICS to design and provide general construction work to renovate Merrill Hall. The first phase of improvements will include replacing the roof, upgrading the mechanical, electrical, lighting and HVAC and adding a fire sprinkler system. The renovations are expected to be completed in late 2024.

MAYOR

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Dan Boeke

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NEW REBATE PROGRAM

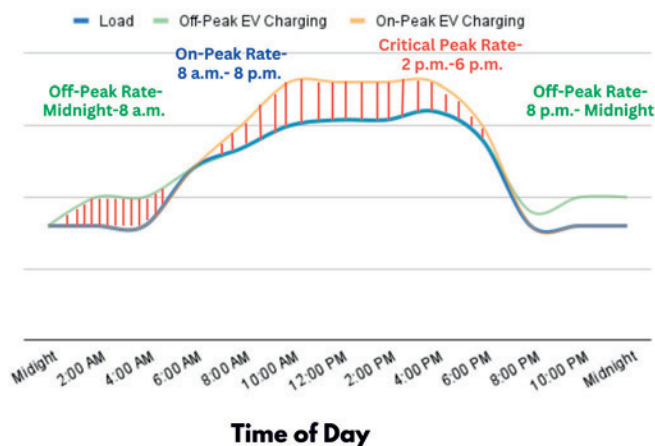
Electrification, the movement to switch from burning fossil fuels like gasoline to electric use, is becoming more popular every day. We see this most commonly with increased electric vehicle (EV) ownership, electric lawn equipment uses, and heat pump technology adoption. With these greater electrification efforts, utilities are naturally seeing more charging for EVs and electric lawn equipment which can impact utility systems and costs.

It's important for EV and electric lawnmower owners to consider the time of day they charge electric vehicles and electric lawn equipment, and the impact charging can have on utility systems and costs. Charging during on-peak periods, especially in the summer, can increase the system load during high demand times which increases costs. These higher costs during peak periods aren't reflected in standard residential rates but are passed through to customers in the form of either rate increases or higher Energy Acquisition Adjustment (EAA) charges. Charging during off-peak periods, from 8:00 pm to 8:00 am, reduces impacts to utility systems and keeps costs down.

In the chart to the right, the blue line represents what the load for a utility looks like without charging. The red area represents what the utility load might look like if all EV's and electric lawn equipment charge during the on-peak periods, when the load is already high. Charging during the off-peak periods, represented in green, still increases the load, but at a time when it's much lower and the system can handle the additional load without increased costs.

To encourage off-peak charging, Owatonna Public Utilities is rolling out a new rebate program for EV and electric lawn mower owners to sign up for our new time-of-use (TOU) rate pilot. Qualifying equipment includes full electric vehicles, plug-in hybrid EV (PHEVs), battery operated residential push mowers, and battery electric residential riding lawn mowers. To qualify for this new rebate, customers must be a residential electric customer of OPU, sign up for the TOU rate pilot, and submit a completed rebate application. *

Load



Rebate Levels

First EV/PHEV when signing up for TOU Rate	\$200
Additional EV/PHEV, or customers already on TOU rates	\$50 each
Electric Riding Lawn Mower	\$100
Electric Push/Walk Behind Mower	\$50

Customers can find more information about OPU's TOU rate pilot and the new Electric Vehicle and Electric Lawn Mower rebate on our website.

**Some limitations apply to OPU's TOU rate pilot. Hybrid EV's that cannot be charged do not qualify. Electric mowers must be battery operated with minimum battery voltage of 36v.*

OUR OFFICE WILL BE CLOSED **MONDAY, FEBRUARY 19** IN OBSERVANCE OF PRESIDENTS DAY

Furnace Safety Tips

- Your furnace should be serviced once a year to help maximize its life and performance.
- Have your furnace checked for fire hazards such as damaged firebox and dislodged, clogged, or rusted vents.
- Clean or replace your filter after each month of heavy usage.
- Replace the blower door cover after checking your filter.
- Securely fasten the door that covers the pilot light and burner area.
- Be sure that no burnable materials- paints, solvents, fuels- are stored near your furnace.
- Air-supply vents must be clear of obstructions. Furnaces need a constant supply of fresh air to run efficiently.

LEARN MORE

OWATONNAUTILITIES.COM



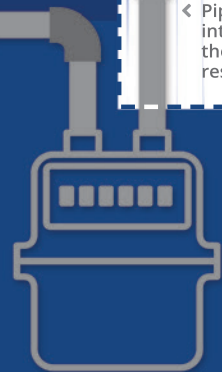
Customer Owned **BURIED GAS PIPING NOTIFICATION**

In compliance with the Department of Transportation, Pipeline Safety Regulations, Part 192.16,

Owatonna Public Utilities is notifying customers about their responsibility for customer-owned gas piping. Owatonna Public Utilities DOES NOT own or maintain gas piping downstream (house side) of the natural gas meter. Gas piping after the gas meter is customer-owned. Maintenance and inspection of customer-owned piping is the customers' responsibility.

To ensure safe and reliable operation, customer-owned buried gas piping should be:

- › Periodically inspected for leaks
- › Periodically inspected for corrosion if the piping is metallic
- › Repaired if any unsafe condition is discovered, or flow of gas should be shut off
- › Located and marked in advance when excavation is performed or is about to be performed near the buried gas piping
- › Carefully excavated by hand when work is performed near the piping



◀ Piping coming into the home is the customer's responsibility

One question we get a lot is, "What is SmartHub?"

There's a big logo for it on the front page of our website at owatonnautilities.com, and if you've ever stopped down here at OPU to maybe pay your bill or something along those lines, you've probably seen a flyer or two on the counter at Customer Service. So, what is it?

Coincidentally enough, it's something you could've used to save yourself a trip and NOT had to come down to OPU to pay your bill – not that we don't enjoy seeing you, because we absolutely do – we're just also slightly obsessed with trying to make your lives easier, at least as far as your utilities go. This is where SmartHub comes in.

SmartHub is our customer account management portal. Hmm, ok so the business and internet world have all kinds of fancy words for simple things, and I think if I heard that, I would then immediately ask, "Uh-huh... so what's a customer account management portal?"

SmartHub is how you can pay your bill online. It's a super-fast way to pay your bill, all from the comfort of your couch. All you need is your OPU account number and an email address. You can use SmartHub in a web browser on a computer, or on your phone (there's an app).

But wait...there's more! You can view your current bill, you can view all your old bills, and you can look at cool graphs showing your service(s) usage over the months – even years! You can also setup a dizzying array of little automated notifications that will text you or send you an email; like your bill has been posted and is available to pay, or maybe a notification your bill is past due, or you could even setup an alert for when your usage of a given service goes over a certain amount (which you set).

SmartHub does all kinds of useful and handy things. But there's even more! You can setup autopay so your bill just gets automatically paid when it's due, you can report an outage, SmartHub can even walk your dog! Ok, that last one wasn't exactly accurate, I got a little jazzed up by all the fun things SmartHub can do and kinda started free-forming there but rest assured - if we could get SmartHub to walk your dog; we would. Until we figure out the dog part, you can still use SmartHub to pay your bill online.



Sign up for SmartHub today!

- Pay your bill
- View your consumption
- Manage your account
- Set up auto payments
- Manage your notifications

smart hub

Sign up on our website or download the app!

We **love** saving water with every flush!

Install an efficient WaterSense® Toilet and get a **\$25 rebate per toilet.**



By replacing old, inefficient toilets with WaterSense models, the average family can reduce water used for toilets by 20 to 60 percent—nearly 13,000 gallons and more than \$100 every year.

Nationally, we could save 520 billion gallons of water per year, or the amount of water that flows over Niagara Falls in about 12 days!

To apply for a \$25 rebate per toilet, download a Water Efficient Appliances & Equipment Rebate Application at www.OwatonnaUtilities.com.

WORD SEARCH

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BATHROOM
EFFICIENT
FLUSH

GALLONS
NIAGARA FALLS
CONSERVE
SAVE
MONEY
REBATE

Z J E A Z N K I M L P G Q U Q
X Q J P O I Z N C J T C E G C
S T M V H A W Y O D O H L L S
A E C J H G A C F K I O E Z N
F L U S H A X H N U L M F T K
W W A T E R S E N S E E F R S
I F C X B A P M L H T F I E A
O P O R A F R G A O S A C B V
U K N L T A W U A I N V I A E
L N S X H L A V P L D H E T I
F N E Y R L P A J W L X N E M
E Z R U O S V X F C R O T O O
Y T V L O N X T U O C G N C N
U S E Y M P Y U P A U N T S E
I B A S E K H E V C B U A Y Y

CONSERVE & \$SAVE™



Commercial Customers

Install an efficient WaterSense® Flushometer-Valve Toilet and get a **\$50 rebate per toilet.**

By replacing old, inefficient flushometer-valve toilets with WaterSense models, an office building with 500 occupants can save over a half-million gallons of water and nearly \$2,500 in water and sewer costs per year.

Nationally, we could save nearly 39 billion gallons of water per year. That's equivalent to nearly one full day's flow of water over Niagara Falls!

To apply for a \$50 rebate per toilet, download a Water Efficient Appliances & Equipment Rebate Application at www.OwatonnaUtilities.com.



P.O. Box 800 208 S. Walnut Ave.
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National salary range
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Employee Interview

Job description: Provide skilled and technical expertise to assure electrical and electronic equipment, instrumentation, and related devices located in OPU-owned substations, and OPU-owned power generation facility operate safely and reliably. Work on similar electrical and electronic equipment, instrumentation, and related devices in OPU's electric, water, and gas departments. As directed by Southern Minnesota Municipal Power Agency (OPU's power supplier) will provide electrical and electronic equipment services at SMMPA and other SMMPA members' substations. Direct and perform switching operations from Engineering and Xcel Energy.

Education Requirements:

2-year technical
college associate
degree in electronics,
or substation related
certificate/diploma

* American Public Power Association Survey

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.smarthub.coop
- Phone at (507) 451-2480 Option 2 or 1-888-228-2398 (Available 24/7)
- Automatic Withdrawal; bank account or credit card
- Drive-up drop box located in our parking lot
- Drop box locations at CashWise and HyVee Food Store
- Mail to P.O. Box 800, Owatonna, MN 55060

Moving?

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



WWW.OWATONNAUTILITIES.COM