



**OWATONNA**  
**PUBLIC UTILITIES**

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# CUSTOMER UPDATE



## CONSIDERING GOING ELECTRIC?



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# OPU MEMO



Roger Warehime,  
General Manager

## OPU Commission

Mr. Matt Kottke  
Mr. Kent Rossi  
Mr. Randy Doyal  
Mr. Jay Johnson  
Mr. Doug Zirngible

As I write this memo, there are just a couple days left in 2021. We will soon be finalizing the numbers on our scorecards for 2021 and establishing new goals for 2022. We did very well with many of our metrics, but there is one area where our results do not meet expectations. That is an electric reliability measure called SAIDI with Major Outages.

SAIDI is a measurement of how many minutes over the course of the year an average customer is out of power. Did it seem like you were out of power a lot more this year than you were in previous years? How you answer that question will depend upon where you live, but we had many more customers experience outages this year than is typical.

To calculate SAIDI we sum up the total number of customer outage minutes (for each outage that occurs, we multiply the length of the outage in minutes by the number of customers affected); we then divide the total customer outage minutes for the year by the number of customers on the system. This gives us a number (in minutes) which represents how long each customer on our system can expect to be out of power during the year "on average".

Any outage event which adds 6.66 or more minutes to the annual SAIDI number is classified as a "major outage". In a typical year we may have one or two major outages, and in some years we have had none. In 2021 we had 5 major outage

events! Four of these events were caused by various equipment failures. The fifth one was caused by the windstorm on December 15th.

It is important to look at reliability numbers both with major outages and without. The number without major outages tells us what our overall trend is; are we trending higher or lower over time? Outage minutes from a major outage will skew the number and make it less meaningful because we can't see the trend from year to year. However, major outages often provide us with the most opportunities for learning. We do a formal "lessons-learned" after each major outage to study what happened and determine things we can do better for the future.

The table below shows what a dramatic impact this year's 5 major outage events had on our SAIDI. In 2020 we had one major outage event; our SAIDI with major outages was 26.8 minutes compared to 12.2 without. We were significantly better than the APPA regional average for both cases (with major outages and without major outages).

Our 2021 SAIDI excluding major outages, at 10.1, is actually better than 2020. With major outages, however, it is 128.0; this is almost 5 times what it was in 2020 and it is more than the APPA regional average.

SAIDI (customer outage minutes/total customers)			
	APPA Regional Average	OPU 2020	OPU 2021 (Prelim)
With Major Outages	42.0	26.8	128.0
Without Major Outages	31.7	12.2	10.1

These major outages were one of the factors that led us to decide that "Reliability and Resiliency" needs to be one of our strategic focus areas for the next 3 years. Other factors include increased cyber-security concerns and increasing severe weather events. We have a number of projects lined up for 2022 and the following years which will positively impact our reliability so that we can provide the reliable service you expect and deserve.



## HIRE A RESIDENTIAL BUILDING CONTRACTOR

Home remodeling is a considerable investment and it is worth your time to do some research before hiring a contractor for your project. Since the beginning of 2021, the City of Owatonna Building Inspections Division has issued 702 residential building permits with a total of \$26,305,326 in labor and materials. For more detailed permit information, please visit <http://ci.owatonna.mn.us/690/Monthly-Building-Permit-Reports>.

Where do you look to find a reputable contractor? Most people start with a google search or ask friends or neighbors who have completed projects who they hired to do the work. It is good to ask for references and contact former customers to see if they were satisfied with the quality of the work or encountered any problems. Once you have selected a contractor to contact you will want to make sure to protect yourself and hire a licensed contractor.

A few red flags may indicate that a contractor may not be reliable and it is probably best to avoid working with a contractor who is unsolicited or use high-pressure sale tactics or asks the homeowner to obtain permits for the project. The permit holder is the responsible party to meet minimum building code requirements so it is best to have the contractor who is performing the work acquire any needed building permits and inspection approvals. If the consumer obtains the permits, he or she is responsible for ensuring code compliance for the project.

Make sure to ask for the contractor's license number and check the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry Construction Codes and Licensing website to verify the contractor is currently licensed. <https://secure.doli.state.mn.us/lookup/licensing.aspx>. It is also good to check with the Better Business Bureau and check for lawsuits or judgements involving the company or its owners.

The benefits for hiring a licensed contractor include ensuring the company has met requirements that include having a principal of the company that has passed an exam and has liability and property damage insurance. A licensed contractor must complete continuing education classes each year, continuing education ensures licensees have appropriate knowledge in their fields and are able to comply with state and federal laws. Licensees must also attend courses approved by the MN Department of Labor and Industry every two years at minimum. Protect yourself, don't let an unlicensed contractor ruin a great project. <https://www.dli.mn.gov/hirelicensedmn>

A building contractor, remodeler or roofer license is required for anyone that contracts directly with a homeowner to provide building construction or improvement services in more than one skill area.

Hiring a licensed contractor provides another very important benefit of access to the State of Minnesota Contractor Recovery Fund. [www.dli.mn.gov/workers/homeowners/contractor-recovery-fund](http://www.dli.mn.gov/workers/homeowners/contractor-recovery-fund). Homeowners are able to obtain compensation from the Contractor Recovery Fund if they suffer a loss because of a contractor's failure to perform but only if the contractor is licensed.

For more information, see a consumer's guide to Hiring a Residential Building Contractor [http://www.dli.mn.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/rbc\\_consumer\\_contractor.pdf](http://www.dli.mn.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/rbc_consumer_contractor.pdf)

For more information please visit the City of Owatonna Building Inspections website at <http://ci.owatonna.mn.us/149/Building-Inspections> or call 507-444-4370 if you have any questions.

### MAYOR

Tom Kuntz

### COUNCIL MEMBERS

Dan Boeke

David Burbank

Nathan Dotson

Kevin Raney

Greg Schultz

Brent Svenby

Doug Voss





## Considering an Electric Vehicle?

### WHY CONSIDER AN ELECTRIC VEHICLE?

With more positives to owning an Electric Vehicle (EV), this could be the year you go electric. More models, improved performance and the fact that they are FUN to drive are all good reasons to make the switch. Electric vehicles have lower operating costs, lower maintenance costs, and many models are still eligible for tax credits. Even though EVs have a higher initial vehicle cost, they have a lower cost of ownership over the lifetime of the vehicle. As the charging network in America grows, EVs are not only becoming more affordable, but also more convenient to charge.

### TYPES OF ELECTRIC VEHICLES

Two basic types of EVs are available: Plug-In Hybrid Electric Vehicles (PHEV), and Battery Electric Vehicles (BEV), both systems allowing vehicles to run on full electric for a period of time. PHEV's have smaller battery capacity with a shorter full electric range, but also have an internal combustion engine (ICE) to provide energy while driving long distances. Many PHEVs provide 30-40 miles of battery only driving allowing individuals who live and work in the same town to do the majority of their daily driving on battery only. BEVs, on the other hand, have much larger batteries which provide enough energy for most commuting workers. Some models of BEV's now have up to 400-mile ranges on a full battery.

### CHARGING LEVELS

Level 1 (L1)	Level 2 (L2)	DC Fast Charger (DCFC)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2-5 miles per hour of charging</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>20-80 miles per hour of charging</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>40+ miles per 10 minutes of charging</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Standard 120v AC plug</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Common for home charging and public charging</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Faster versions being developed</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provided with the purchase of new EV's</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>240v AC, direct wired or 240v outlet</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not compatible with some older EVs</li> </ul>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public Charging</li> </ul>

### CHARGING AT HOME

Home charging accounts for about 85% of all EV charging. Therefore, it's important to understand both the solutions available as well as the impacts of charging on Utilities. Level 1 charging works well for individuals that drive less than 30 miles per day. Level 2 chargers, being much quicker, are more common for individuals who commute or drive more than 30 miles per day but may require professional installation. As more homes add L2 chargers, the impact to Utilities becomes more important to understand. Charging in the evening and overnight (after 10:00pm) has the least impact to Utility costs that would be passed along to customers. Most EVs can be programed to delay charging, providing you the convenience of plugging in when you get home but the benefit of not charging until evening.

### CHARGING IN PUBLIC

Level 2 and DCFC are usually used in public charging. To charge at a public charge station, you will need to know the type of charge station and plug available. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, there are currently more than 24,000 public electric vehicle charging stations across the country and growing rapidly. Drivers can use apps like the PlugShare Trip Planner feature to plan a roadtrip with your electric vehicle and easily view all the best charging locations along the way. Always remember to move your vehicle after your charge is complete so other EV drivers can access the charger.

## 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), what should you do with the old ones?

**Owatonna Public Utilities will recycle all 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 Jan 31



## **NEED HELP PAYING YOUR ENERGY BILLS?**

**SEMCAC's Energy Assistance Program**  
may be able to help you with winter  
energy bills.

(eligibility is based on household income)

**CALL SEMCAC!**  
**800-944-3281**

Serving Dodge, Fillmore, Freeborn, Houston, Mower, Steele & Winona Counties.

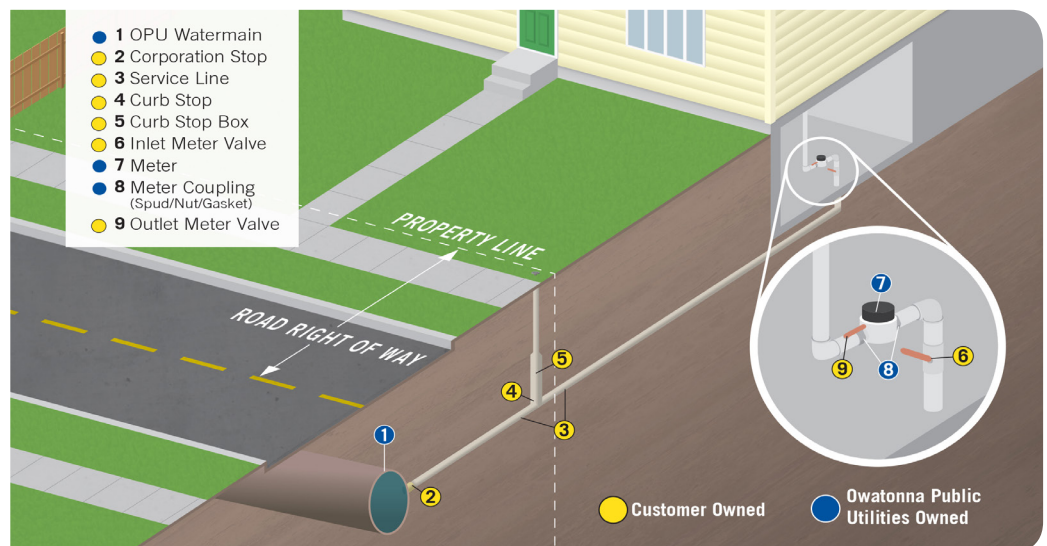
The Energy Assistance Program is funded by the State of Minnesota Department of Commerce through a block grant from the Federal Health and Human Services Department.

## **Water Service Line Protection Program**

OPU's Water Service Line Protection Program provides owners of residential properties an option for affordable protection against the significant costs of repair or replacing leaking or frozen water service lines. In addition to providing a valuable service to OPU customers, the program is intended to minimize disruption and public hazard due to leaks which would not otherwise be repaired in a timely manner.

The cost is \$0.99 per month, billed on your monthly bill and is offered to residential customers with a 1" or smaller water service. (Additional terms and conditions can be found at [owatonnautilities.com](http://owatonnautilities.com)).

The graphic to the right shows what a typical water service line looks like and the ownership of facilities. In Owatonna, the property owner owns the water service from the main in the street to the meter in the house.







## JUST A REMINDER, KEEP YOUR OUTDOOR METERS FREE OF SNOW AND ICE

In Minnesota, snow and ice tend to cover everything at some point. When your gas meter is covered with ice and snow, it can cause a potentially dangerous situation. If there is snow on your meter, brush it off. If it's covered with **ice**, give us a call at 451-2480 option #1 and we'll take care of it for you.

In addition, snow and ice should be cleared from exhaust and combustion air vents for gas appliances to prevent the accumulation of carbon monoxide in buildings and to prevent operational problems for the combustion equipment. Monitor the accumulation of snow or ice blocking regulator or relief valve vents which could prevent regulators and relief valves from functioning properly. Use caution in cleaning snow from around the piping on service regulator set as it is susceptible to damage that could result in failure of the equipment. Where possible, use a broom instead of a shovel to clear snow off regulators, meters, and associated piping.

As always, 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 a spark could ignite the gas and cause an explosion.

## 2022 Stormwater Utility Fee Changes

Beginning January 1st, 2022, you will notice a 4% 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 and then generally match the approximate rate of inflation years following, in order to provide an equitable, stable and fair funding source for all stormwater management activities.



Year	ERU
2021	\$4.35
2022	\$4.52

There were no rate changes for years 2020 and 2021.

The rate for a single-family residential property (ERU) will be a constant monthly fee of \$4.52 (starting 2022).

All other properties are based on the following equation that evaluates the equivalent residential unit, acreage, and land use:

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

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.

Additional information can be found at: <http://ci.owatonna.mn.us/482/Public-Works>

**For more information regarding the Stormwater Utility Fee please contact the Public Works Department at 507-444-4350.**

# REBATES

## BONUS GREEN FOR BEING GREEN!

**EXTENDED  
THROUGH  
MARCH  
2022!**

In addition to base rebates, Owatonna Public Utilities is offering

**BONUS (DOUBLE) REBATES** for the following efficient natural gas

equipment purchases made through December 31, 2021 **MARCH 31, 2022!**



### NATURAL GAS EQUIPMENT

### STANDARD REBATE

### BONUS REBATE

### TOTAL REBATE\*

Attic Air Sealing <sup>^</sup>	\$200.00	\$200.00	<b>\$400.00</b>
Attic Insulation <sup>^</sup>	\$350.00	\$350.00	<b>\$700.00</b>
Attic Insulation - Self Installed	\$200.00	\$200.00	<b>\$400.00</b>
Boiler ≥85% AFUE	\$200.00	\$200.00	<b>\$400.00</b>
Boiler ≥90% AFUE	\$400.00	\$400.00	<b>\$800.00</b>
Boiler ≥95% AFUE	\$500.00	\$500.00	<b>\$1,000.00</b>
Furnace - Retrofit ≥92% AFUE	\$150.00	\$150.00	<b>\$300.00</b>
Furnace - Retrofit ≥95% AFUE	\$300.00	\$300.00	<b>\$600.00</b>
Furnace - Retrofit ≥97% AFUE	\$400.00	\$400.00	<b>\$800.00</b>
Rim Joist Sealing/Insulation <sup>^</sup>	\$150.00	\$150.00	<b>\$300.00</b>
Smart Thermostat	\$50.00	\$50.00	<b>\$100.00</b>
WaterSense Showerheads	\$25.00	\$25.00	<b>\$50.00</b>

\* Combined TOTAL REBATE not to exceed purchase price

<sup>^</sup> Requires a House Call Energy Audit and  
CEE Contractor Installation

Visit [www.owatonnautilities.com](http://www.owatonnautilities.com) to learn more and download a Natural Gas Rebate Application with complete terms and conditions.

# CONSERVE & \$AVE®





INDICIA

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

Office: 451-2480 Service: 451-1616

### 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](http://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
- ACH bank draft sent directly from your bank

### Moving?

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



### Gas Leak?

If you smell gas and can't find the source immediately, go to a neighbor's house and call OPU at 451-2480 option 1.

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



### CONSERVATION TIP\$

Check the gasket on your fridge and freezer to make sure they seal properly. Over time, gaskets can come loose from the door, crack, or lose their tight seal causing cold air to escape making your fridge work harder to stay cool and your furnace fight the extra cold air. To test your gasket, close a piece of paper in the door. If it pulls out easily, it is time to check or replace your gasket.



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