



OWATONNA
PUBLIC UTILITIES

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CUSTOMER UPDATE



Be a
Leak Detective
for



Fix a Leak Week

March 14-20, 2022

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OPU MEMO



Josh Prokopec,
Gas/Water Design
Engineer

OPU Commission

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

Believe it or not, warm weather is on the horizon and with warm weather comes watering the yard, watering our gardens, and enjoying the occasional dip in the swimming pool. In our daily lives we take for granted that every time we turn our faucets on, that water will always come out. What if that wasn't the case? This wasn't intended to scare you, but to be a reminder that conservation is a good thing and a good habit to create, to preserve this natural resource for as long as possible.

In 2020 Owatonna consumed a whopping total of 1,373,300,000 Gallons of water, averaging about 3,762,000 gallons of water each day. The peak day in 2020 was on July 8 and we used 6,568,000 gallons of water. On the flip side, our lowest consumption occurred on December 24th at a total of 2,166,000 gallons.

In comparison, in 2021 Owatonna's consumption decreased a little to a total of 1,347,028,000 gallons of water, averaging about 3,690,000 gallons of water each day. The peak day in 2021 was on June 18, 2021 at about 7,092,000 gallons of water. On December 25th we used the least amount of water in 2021 at 1,832,000 gallons.

Comparing water consumption from the winter months to the summer months:

In the winter months of October 1, 2020 through March 31, 2021 our community used 570,579,000 gallons of water. In the summer months of April 1, 2021 through September 31, 2021 we used 794,169,000 gallons of water. During the summer months, 60% of the yearly water consumption occurs.

I know that's throwing a lot of numbers at you, but a person doesn't appreciate the volume of water consumed without seeing the length of number in front of you! With consumption, we continue to stress the importance of conservation. As a utility, we will continue to pass along helpful tips to make conservation as easy as possible and preserve that valuable resource we call WATER!

Some easy self-help tips to help reduce water consumption:

- Check all faucets, toilets and showerheads for possible leaks – Have a licensed plumber fix these issues.
- Install a low-flow showerhead - Low flow showerheads deliver fewer gallons per minute of water than conventional showerheads (Low flow showerheads deliver about 1.6 gpm, compared to 5 gpm of conventional heads. You can also take shorter showers or even take a bath (a partially filled tub uses less water than all but the shortest showers).
- Install a water-saving toilet – This type of toilet uses 1-2 gallons per flush instead of 3-5 gallons.
- Wash your car the efficient way – You can save up to 150 gallons of water every time you wash your car by turning the hose off between rinses.
- Use the dishwasher and washing machine only when they are full – Both appliances use a tremendous amount of water, so it's important to fill it up before starting.
- Turn the faucet off while handwashing dishes – Once all dishes have been scrubbed, turn on the water at that time to rinse off the dirt and soap. This saves a lot of water versus letting the water run.
- Turn the faucet off while you brush your teeth – If everyone followed this habit, the water savings would be tremendous.
- Water your lawn only when it needs it and when you do, deep soak it – Water it long enough to seep down to the roots where it is needed. A light sprinkling that sits on the surface will simply evaporate and be wasted.
- Water during the cool parts of the day – Early morning is better than dusk since it helps prevent the growth of fungus.
- Plant drought resistant trees and plants – Many beautiful trees and plants thrive without irrigation.
- Put a layer of mulch around trees and plants – Mulch slows the evaporation of moisture.

These are just some of the many ways we can all do our part to help reduce water consumption.

Just a couple interesting facts to pass along:

- Three-quarters of all indoor water usage is in the bathroom
- In a typical North American home, the toilet accounts for about one-quarter of total water use
- Running a sprinkler for two hours can consume as much as 500 gallons of water

CITY SPOT

HIGHLIGHTING: CITY OF OWATONNA PARKS AND RECREATION

OWATONNA
CITY COUNCIL



Winter blahs? Spring is on its way

Owatonna's Parks, Trails, Programs and Pavilions offer an escape from Minnesota's winter doldrums

By: Jenna Tuma, Director of Parks, Trails, Recreation and Facilities Department.

The City of Owatonna's Parks, Trails, Recreation and Facilities Department has a full range of activities, programs and events in the works as we all look forward to warmer weather!



Watch your mailbox for the Spring/Summer 2022 Activity Guide for information and registration details for youth recreation, swimming lessons, adult softball, season passes for Brooktree Golf Course and River Springs Water Park and more! Some registration deadlines are approaching fast and there are early registration discounts for some programs. To check out what's offered, scan the Registration QR code with your smartphone, visit owatonna.gov/Departments/Parks & Recreation, call 507-444-4321 or stop by 540 West Hills Circle. You can also follow us on Facebook – search for the Owatonna Parks and Recreation page, the Brooktree Golf Course page or the River Spring Water Park page.



Free summer fun

There are many events, activities and amenities in Owatonna that are free. Be on the lookout for Facebook posts highlighting Summer Fun in Owatonna opportunities throughout the coming months.

It's time to plan a get-together!

Spring and summer are the best times to get out and enjoy the many amenities Owatonna has to offer. Plan a reunion, graduation party or bridal shower at one of the City's indoor or outdoor event and meeting spaces available for private events. Visit owatonna.gov/rentalspaces for options and reservations.

Parks & trails packed with activity choices!

Walking in nature, jogging, biking, mountain biking, fishing, swimming, kayaking, playing disc golf, picnicking, playgrounds are just some of the activities that are calling you outdoors to play, regardless of your age or physical ability. Check out the Owatonna Park Finder map app at Owatonna.gov to find the ideal spot for nearly any outdoor activity!

Tell us what's missing...

We feel like we've thought of everything Owatonnnans would want to use City facilities for – but we want to hear from you about what's missing. Take a short survey by scanning this QR code to tell us which programs, amenities and facilities you value most and how we can better provide recreational and wellbeing offerings. Complete the survey by March 31 for a chance to win a \$25 Parks & Recreation gift card. Visit <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/QPRNNQQ> or scan this QR code with your smartphone.



Join the Parks & Rec Team!

We are hiring part-time, seasonal positions for spring and summer. Many positions offer a variety of duties and shifts available including grounds, maintenance and guest services at nearly all of our facilities. Visit <http://agency.governmentjobs.com/careers/owatonna> to see if anything seems interesting and for application deadlines.

I hope to see you on a trail, at a playground, using one of our many courts or fields or just relaxing in a park. For additional information, you can always email us at parkrec@ci.owatonna.mn.us or send a message through our Facebook pages.

MAYOR

Tom Kuntz

COUNCIL MEMBERS

Dan Boeke

David Burbank

Nathan Dotson

Kevin Raney

Greg Schultz

Brent Svenby

Doug Voss



Be a Leak Detective for



Fix a Leak Week

Information and graphics for this article obtained from WaterSense® for Partners

Did you know...that easy to fix water leaks account for more than 1 trillion gallons of water wasted each year in U.S. homes? In fact, the average household leaks more than 10,000 gallons of water per year, or the amount of water it takes to wash 270 loads of laundry, and could be costing you an extra 10 percent on your water bills.

In just 10 minutes, you can search your home for leaks and crack down on water waste. Many common household leaks are quick and easy to fix. Worn toilet flappers, dripping faucets, and leaking showerheads are all easily correctable and can save on your utility bill expenses and water in our community.

Put on your detective hat, lace up your shoes and take a quick inventory of clues to water waste. Start by checking your utility bill or taking the toilet test. Check your January or February utility bill. It is likely a family of four has a serious leak problem if its winter water usage exceeds 12,000 gallons (or 16 ccf) per month. You can also look for spikes – is your water use a lot higher than last month? Put a few drops of food coloring in the tank on the back of your toilet and let it sit for 10 minutes. If color shows up in the bowl, you have a leak. Be sure to flush it right away to avoid staining your bowl. You may also stop down to OPU to pick up a leak detection kit the whole month of March.

Other areas to look for clues:

In the bathroom

- **Faucets:** Listen for drips and turn on the tap to check for water going in the wrong direction.
- **Showerheads:** Turn on and look for drips or stray sprays that can be stopped with tape.
- **In the tub:** Turn on the tub, then divert the water to the shower and see if there is still a lot of water coming from the tub; that could mean the tub spout diverter needs replacing.
- **Under the sink:** Check for pooling water under pipes and rust around joints and edges.

In the laundry or utility room

- **Under the sink:** Check for pooling water under pipe connections.
- **Clothes washer:** Check for pooling water, which could indicate a supply line leak.

In the kitchen:

- **Faucet:** Listen for drips and tighten aerators or replace fixtures if necessary.
- **Sprayer:** Check to make sure water is spraying smoothly and clean openings as needed.
- **Under the sink:** Check for pooling water under pipes and rust around joints and edges.
- **Appliances:** Check for pooling water underneath dishwashers and refrigerators with ice makers, which could indicate a supply line leak.

In the basement or utility room:

- **Water Heater:** Check beneath the tank for pooling water, rust, or other signs of leakage.
- **Water softener:** Listen for running water outside the unit's normal cycle.

Don't forget to go outside:

- **At the spigot:** Ensure tight connections with the hose and see if the hose washer needs replacing.
- **In-ground irrigation system:** Check for broken sprinklers or nozzles spraying in the wrong direction. You may want to consult an irrigation auditor certified by a WaterSense labeled program to improve system efficiency.

Throughout the house:

- Check for signs of moisture and mold on your walls, ceilings or floors. This could indicate a pipe is wreaking havoc behind the scenes and requires the attention of a professional.

If you want to do a more detailed investigation for leaks, check out the Arizona Municipal Water Users Association Smart Home Water Guide at www.smarthomewaterguide.org.

If any of your fixtures need replacing, remember to look for the WaterSense label when purchasing plumbing products. WaterSense labeled products are independently certified to use at least 20 percent less water and perform as well or better than standard models.

For more information, visit <https://www.epa.gov/watersense/fix-leak-week>



Rain Barrel Class

Participants will repurpose a plain plastic barrel into a rain barrel. The barrel and all the hardware will be provided.

WHEN: Thursday, April 7 | 4:00 p.m.

WHERE: Owatonna Public Utilities
208 S Walnut Ave

WHO: OPU customers only. Limit 12 households (1 barrel per household).

COST: \$25 will be added to your OPU bill after the class. Includes barrel and all hardware.

HOW: Sign up online at
www.owatonnautilities.com



Stop by our booth at the



Minnesota Municipal Utilities Association

Tom Bovitz Memorial Scholarship Program

OPU is accepting scholarship essays and applications for the MMUA Tom Bovitz Memorial Scholarship. For more information visit our website at <http://www.owatonnautilities.com/residential-customers/energy-education/>

Applications are due in our office by March 28, 2022.

GAS TRUE UP CHARGE REMOVED

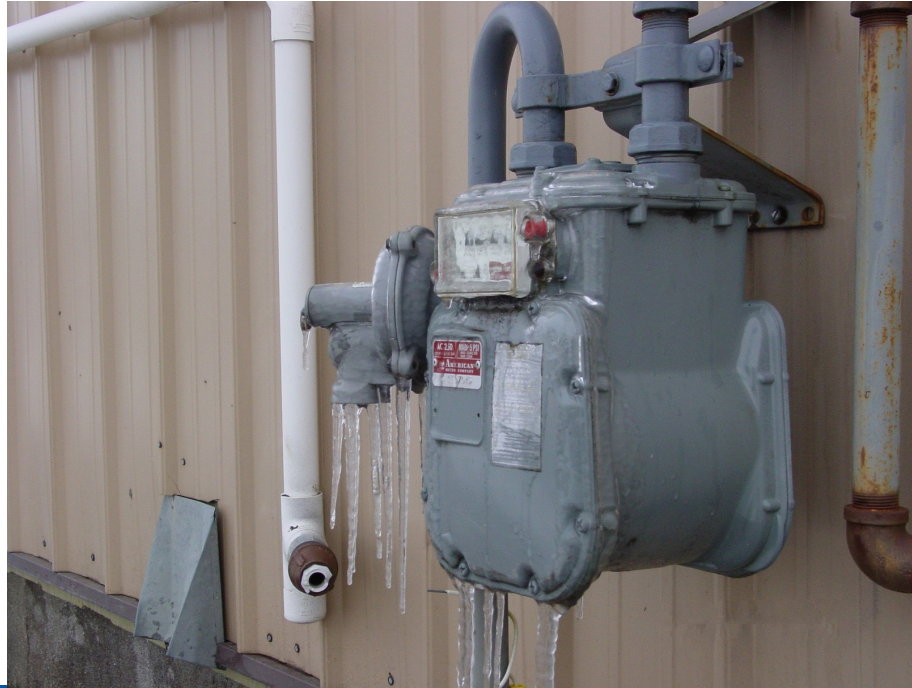
We are happy to report the Gas TrueUp recovery amount was collected in 11 payments. The 12th charge has been removed and there is no longer a "Gas True Up" charge on your bill.

ICE ON METERS

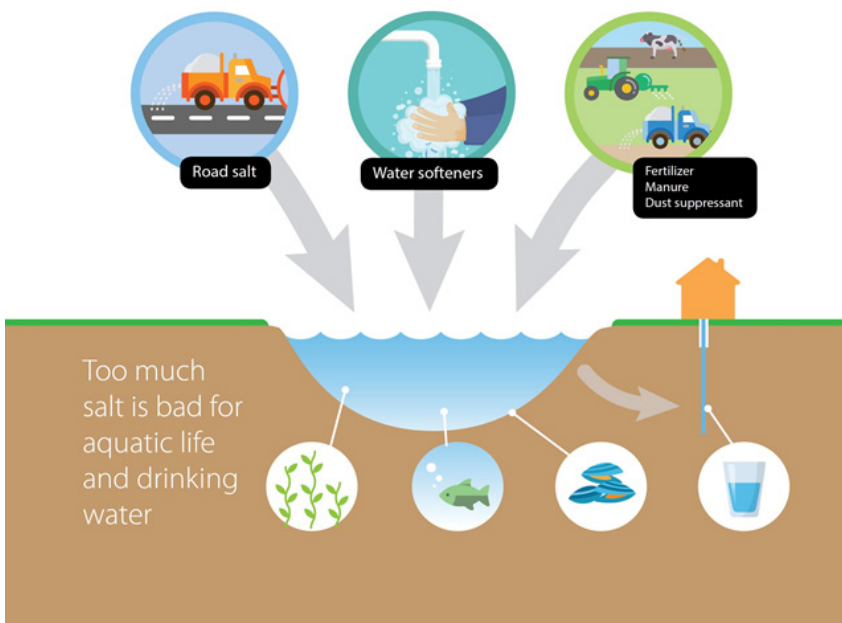
When your gas meter is covered with ice and snow, it can cause a potentially dangerous situation. If there is snow on your meter, brush it off. If it's covered with ice, give us a call at 507-451-2480 option 1 and we'll take care of it for you.

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.



Salt pollution comes from several sources



Help Keep Chloride Out of Our Lakes and Rivers:

1. Hire a Smart Salting Contractor, visit pca.state.mn.us to find certified contractors.
2. Educate your family, friends, and coworkers on the importance of proper and safe use.
3. Apply minimum amount necessary. Less is more.
4. Sweep up any excess salt. Remember if it is visible on pavement, it will just wash away.
5. Be patient, more salt never results in faster melting. Shovel, shovel, shovel.
6. Make sure to check your water softener for proper ratios or stop using a water softener all together.
7. If you store large piles of salt (commercial or industrial business), make sure it's covered and on an impervious surface. Furthermore, make sure continuously sweep transfer and storage areas.

Learn more about our Stormwater Program at ci.owatonna.mn.us/stormwater or contact Brad Rademacher, Stormwater/ Water Quality Specialist at 507-774-7300 or stormwater@ci.owatonna.mn.us

SOME LIKE IT HOT

The average water heater lasts 10-15 years. Is yours due to be replaced before it fails? If so, make sure you choose an energy efficient model. Do your research to find one that best fits your needs: www.energy.gov/energysaver/selecting-new-water-heater

Remember, Owatonna Public Utilities offers several water heater rebates to help with your purchase!



WATER HEATER REBATES:

- **Storage (Tank)**

0.62 UEF = \$125

0.80 UEF = \$250

- **Instantaneous (Tankless)**

0.82 UEF = \$200

0.91 UEF = \$250

- **Solar Hot Water:**

\$15 per sq ft NET aperture

(up to \$1,200 max lifetime total rebate per location)

Before you shop, go to

www.OwatonnaUtilities.com

to download rebate applications with minimum efficiency requirements and complete terms and conditions.

WORD SEARCH

WATER HEATER

STORAGE

TANKLESS

HEAT PUMP

SOLAR

GALLONS

EFFICIENT

REBATES

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

CONSERVE & \$AVE®



For our commercial customers,
Owatonna Public Utilities offers a

\$200 REBATE
PER 100,000 BTUH INPUT
FOR WATER HEATERS WITH
88% OR HIGHER THERMAL EFFICIENCY

Download a Commercial Water Heater
rebate application with complete
terms and conditions at
www.OwatonnaUtilities.com.



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.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.

March 18th is National Natural Gas Utility Worker's Day



Gas Leak?

If you smell gas and can't find the source immediately, go to a neighbor's house and call 911.

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.



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