



**OWATONNA**  
**PUBLIC UTILITIES**

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# CUSTOMER UPDATE



## FEATURING: WATER FOR PEOPLE

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# OPU MEMO



Roger Warehime,  
Director, Field Operations

## OPU Commission

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

to ditch plastic bottles and drink tap water instead. The main points were that tap water is just as safe and clean as bottled water, costs a fraction of the price, and is better for the environment. These points are just as true today as they were six years ago.

Also, at that time, we were encouraging companies to install bottle fill stations wherever they had a drinking fountain so people could easily fill their refillable water bottles. Six years ago, bottle fill stations were something novel. It makes me happy to see they are now commonplace.

I did a little research while writing this memo to see if the trend of people drinking more bottled water had changed in the past six years. I guess it is a good news/bad news scenario. The bad news (from my perspective) is that bottled water consumption continues to increase in the United States (roughly 7-10% per year). The good news (from a health perspective) is that in 2016 the per capita consumption of bottled water in the United States exceeded the per capita consumption of soda for the first time. While consumption of bottled water has been increasing, consumption of soda has been going down as people seek healthier alternatives.

In conclusion--whether your preference is tap water or bottled water--let's take a moment to be thankful for the access we all have to clean, affordable, abundant drinking water.

The theme for our newsletter this month is safe drinking water. Our featured article is about the non-profit organization Water for People and the work they do to move toward their vision of a "world where every person has access to reliable and safe water and sanitation services". Our equipment series is about the portable back-flow prevention devices we install to protect the water supply when water is being taken from a fire hydrant. And lastly, we are providing official notification that our 2017 Drinking Water Report (also known as the Consumer Confidence Report) is complete and available for viewing on our website.

With the assistance of the Minnesota Department of Health, we have been publishing the Consumer Confidence Report annually since 1999. Our water is tested for more than 100 different contaminants. It is not unusual to detect contaminants in small amounts, and the improvement of the testing equipment in recent years has made it possible to measure minute levels that a few years ago would have been undetectable. Still, of the more than 100 contaminants tested for, only six are detectable in our water supply. These are copper, lead, gross alpha, combined radium, total chlorine, and fluoride. All six are well below EPA limits.

Our safe drinking water theme made me think back to six years ago when I wrote a couple of OPU Memos encouraging people

## Interesting Owatonna Water Facts:

- Owatonna has 8 wells, 6 water towers, and one ground level storage tank
- One of Owatonna's wells is the deepest potable water well in the state (1,325 feet deep)
- Our water comes out of the ground at 51 degrees Fahrenheit year round
- Our oldest water tower was constructed in 1923 and is located near the high school on Academy Street
- Our newest water tower was constructed in 1996 and is located near McKinley School
- Owatonna uses 3.3 million gallons of water each day
- Owatonna residents use about 70 gallons of water per day. Americans on average use about 100 gallons of water per day. Europeans use half that amount and residents of sub-Saharan Africa use only 2 to 5 gallons per day.

## CONSERVATION TIP\$

Use your oven light instead of opening the door to check your food. Opening the door can reduce the temperature by 30 degrees, increasing the cost of running your oven and the time it takes to cook your food.

Go to [www.tinyurl.com/OPU-Tips](http://www.tinyurl.com/OPU-Tips) for more conservation tips.





## Prevent Cooking Fires When Grilling

When the warmer weather hits, there is nothing better than the smell of food on the grill.

Seven out of every 10 adults in the U.S. have a grill or smoker\*, which translates to many tasty meals. But it also means there's an increased risk of home fires.

### Grilling by the numbers

- July is the peak month for grill fires (17%), including both structure, outdoor or unclassified fires, followed by May (14%), June (14%) and August (13%).
- In 2012-2016, an average of 16,600 patients per year went to emergency rooms because of injuries involving grills.\*\* Half (8,200 or 49%) of the injuries were thermal burns.
- Children under five accounted for an average of 1,600 or one-third (35%) of the 4,500 thermal non-fire grill burns. These burns typically occurred when someone, often a child, bumped into, touched or fell on the grill, grill part or hot coals.
- Gas grills were involved in an average of 7,900 home fires per year, including 3,300 structure fires and 4,700 outdoor fires annually. Leaks or breaks were primarily a problem with gas grills. Twelve percent of gas grill structure fires and 24% of outside gas grill fires were caused by leaks or breaks.
- Charcoal or other solid-fueled grills were involved in 1,300 home fires per year, including 600 structure fires and 700 outside fires annually.

\*Source: NFPA's Research, Data & Analytics Division

There is nothing like outdoor grilling. It is one of the most popular ways to cook food. However, a grill placed too close to anything that can burn is a fire hazard. They can be very hot, causing burn injuries.

Follow these simple tips and you will be on the way to safe grilling.

### SAFETY TIPS

- Propane and charcoal BBQ grills should only be used outdoors.
- The grill should be placed well away from the home, deck railings and out from under eaves and overhanging branches.
- Keep children and pets at least three feet away from the grill area.

- Keep your grill clean by removing grease or fat buildup from the grills and in trays below the grill.
- Never leave your grill unattended.
- Always make sure your gas grill lid is open before lighting it.

### CHARCOAL GRILLS

- There are several ways to get the charcoal ready to use. Charcoal chimney starters allow you to start the charcoal using newspaper as a fuel.
- If you use a starter fluid, use only charcoal starter fluid. Never add charcoal fluid or any other flammable liquids to the fire.
- Keep charcoal fluid out of the reach of children and away from heat sources.
- There are also electric charcoal starters, which do not use fire. Be sure to use an extension cord for outdoor use.
- When you are finished grilling, let the coals completely cool before disposing in a metal container.

### PROPANE GRILL SAFETY

- Check the gas tank hose for leaks before using it for the first time each year. Apply a light soap and water solution to the hose. A propane leak will release bubbles. If your grill has a gas leak, by smell or the soapy bubble test, and there is no flame, turn off both the gas tank and the grill. If the leak stops, get the grill serviced by a professional before using it again.
- If the leak does not stop, call the fire department.
- If you smell gas while cooking, immediately get away from the grill and call the fire department. Do not move the grill.
- If the flame goes out, turn the grill and gas off and wait at least 5 minutes before re-lighting it.

If you have further questions please contact the Owatonna Fire Department at 444-2454.

\*Information provided by the National Fire Protection Association

### MAYOR

Tom Kuntz

### COUNCIL MEMBERS

David Burbank

Nathan Dotson

Jeff Okerberg

Kevin Raney

Greg Schultz

Brent Svenby

Doug Voss





## WATER FOR PEOPLE

*Information for this article obtained from the Water For People brochure and an article published by AWWA in Journal AWWA in 2016.*

Water For People is an international development organization working on sustainable water and sanitation solutions across a diverse group of 11 countries, in Asia and Africa, and Central and South America. They exist to promote the development of high-quality drinking water and sanitation services, accessible to all, and sustained by strong communities, businesses and governments. They work in drought- and flood-prone areas, rural and peri-urban areas to show that long-term water and sanitation solutions are possible everywhere and for everyone. Their work across locations may vary, but their vision for long-lasting solutions to solve the worldwide water and sanitation crisis remains constant.

According to Water For People 2.4 billion people around the world do not have access to adequate sanitation; 1.8 billion people do not have access to safe water; and over 500,000 children died last year from water-related diseases.

**Water Changes Everything.** Water For People know that sustained access to quality drinking water and sanitation services improves health and education and drives economic productivity. For them, it's not just about building wells, installing toilets, and setting up pumps. They are looking to create water and sanitation services for Everyone Forever.

The Everyone Forever model brings together four forces – community, government, private sector and technical players – to create sustainable systems that provide water and sanitation services to everyone (even the hardest to reach) for generations to come. The model focuses on building an infrastructure that provides water services to everyone – every family, clinic and school. Once the water infrastructure is in place, Water For People works closely with municipal governments to ensure that water keeps flowing and is supported by technical expertise, management know-how and monitoring, and the financial mechanisms (e.g. rates) that are needed to create a sustainable water system. The overarching goal of Water for People's Everyone Forever model is to build an infrastructure, provide support and education, and eventually leave a municipality once its water and sanitation services is established.

As part of the organization's work with local governments, Water For People spends time establishing norms and quality-control processes to ensure construction and infrastructure vendors are thoroughly vetted and there is proper oversight of

all construction because in any global context, systems with low-quality construction will fail. Additionally, the organization helps communities and municipalities understand the importance of high-quality work and how to manage their own oversight.

In order to implement sustainable water and sanitation systems, there must be a strong pool of educated and skilled candidates who will ensure its sustainability. Water For People has skilled, knowledgeable employees in its country program offices. Success is based on building local capabilities and strong training programs to ensure succession planning and the continuous development of new water and sanitation professionals.

Proper planning at the watershed and micro-watershed levels is another area where the organization establishes awareness and action at the local level. Understanding the nature of their water supply, and the impact other activities can have on water resources, is critical for municipalities and communities to understand in their maintenance of sustainable water supply and services.

Thankfully, Water For People has strong supporters like American Water Works Association (AWWA) that have joined the mission to end global water poverty. Water For People is also surrounded by fellow practitioners, researchers, and advocates in the water development sector. As the organization continues to see progress in several places, Water For People is inspired and driven to continue implementing services that change entire communities and last for generations to come.

The American Water Works Association (AWWA) is an international, nonprofit, scientific and educational society dedicated to providing total water solutions assuring the effective management of water. Founded in 1881, the Association is the largest organization of water supply professionals in the world.

Their membership includes over 3,900 utilities (including OPU) that supply roughly 80% of the nation's drinking water and treat almost half of the nation's wastewater.

For more information about Water for People, visit their website at [waterforpeople.org](http://waterforpeople.org). For AWWA, visit their website at [awwa.org](http://awwa.org).

# EQUIPMENT SERIES



During the summer, you may notice this box hooked up to a hydrant somewhere around town. This box is a water meter and backflow preventer used when a hydrant hookup is necessary. This includes providing temporary water service to homes affected by road reconstruction and water main replacements.

OPU built, and maintains, three of these backflow preventer and meter boxes. The backflow

preventer inside the box ensures the safety of the water system. These are similar to backflow preventers on your home irrigation system but on a larger scale. Metering the water is also important to properly account for, and bill, the water being used. Each of these cost about \$1500 to make and require ongoing maintenance.

Any time a large hydrant connection is needed, OPU connects one of these backflow and meter boxes. The backflow preventer device is then tested to ensure proper operation before it can be used. The box is then left connected to the hydrant for the duration of the work.

Hydrant connections are not common, with only about 10 large connections per year. If you see someone connecting to a fire hydrant without one of these boxes, please call our office and ask to speak to our engineering department.

## EV CHARGING STATION



The Owatonna Public Utilities partnered with Tesla to have two electric vehicle charging stations installed in the downtown area. These chargers are located in the parking lot next to the new Arrow Ace Hardware store and are available for customers with Tesla electric vehicles to use at no cost. The units are "destination" or level 2 chargers and are designed to allow users to enjoy beautiful downtown Owatonna while charging their car.

Electric vehicles produce zero direct emissions, which helps improve air quality in urban areas. The electric drivetrain is 4 times more efficient than a traditional internal combustion engine (ICE) drivetrain. The rapid improvement in battery technology is taking each new batch of EVs to a new level. On a full charge, ranges vary, depending on the vehicle brand and manufacturer, from 335 miles to 107 miles.

For more information regarding Tesla electric vehicles, visit their website at [www.tesla.com](http://www.tesla.com).

## OPU HIGHLIGHT



**Roger Warehime,**  
**Director, Field Operations**  
**(with daughter, Jackie)**

Roger Warehime has been with OPU since 2004 when he joined as our Energy Conservation Officer and was also responsible for external relations. He has also supervised our Customer Service and SCADA (Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition) teams and his current role is Director of Operations.

He grew up in Mitchell South Dakota and completed his Bachelor's in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Minnesota. He also holds a Masters of Business Administration from St Thomas University.

Roger and his wife of twenty-five years, Kristin, have two adult children. Jacob will soon graduate with an English degree from Luther College in Iowa. Jackie is studying Product Design at the University of Minnesota.

Roger is an Owatonna Forward Steward and is also leading the charge to open the Steele Tap Cooperative Brewpub. In his free time, when he is not spending time with his family and friends, he puts about 2,000 miles per year cycling. He also has a fat tire bike which he off roads with in different terrains.

Roger enjoys working at the Owatonna Public Utilities; he appreciates the dedication of people and the culture that exists within.

# CALL BEFORE YOU DIG

Minnesota Law **REQUIRES** homeowners, do-it-yourselfers, excavators and contractors contact Gopher State One Call two business days prior to digging, driving stakes, or performing any other activities that involve disrupting the ground. ***Never assume the depth of a utility or that the depth of the utilities are consistent.***

Gopher State One Call will contact the utility companies in the area to have underground lines marked. Once all utility lines are marked, digging may begin. Proceed with caution and avoid the tolerance zone or hand dig with a shovel within 2 feet of the marked utility lines.

Watch for private facilities such as sprinklers, power lines to garages or out buildings, gas grill lines or invisible fencing as these will not be located by Minnesota utility companies.

Visit [gopherstateonecall.org](http://gopherstateonecall.org) to learn what information will need to be given when contacting Gopher State One Call.

The service is **FREE**. Call toll free at 800-252-1166 or simply dial 811.



**Know what's below.  
Call before you dig.**



## **Clean H2Owatonna Community Service Opportunity**

The City of Owatonna seeks stewards, volunteers and organizations to participate one of our CleanH2Owatonna Stormwater Programs. This is a perfect way to enjoy the beautiful spring weather and get involved in the community while having a positive impact on your environment and community. Gather your friends, family, and organization groups for this excellent volunteer opportunity!

## **Storm Drain Marking Program**

Participants will check out a Storm Drain Marking Kit with all needed supplies to stencil a "No Dumping Drains to River CleanH2Owatonna" message near the catch basin. The City will also provide a storm system map your area of interest. It is best to participate as a group.

## **Catch Basin Adoption Program**

Participants will select nearby catch basins to adopt. Responsibilities of the adoptee include ensuring the catch basin remains clear of debris, periodic grate cleaning, and stenciling of the catch basin. Participants will receive a complimentary CleanH2Owatonna rake.

**Remember:** the distance between your yard and the water's edge is as close as the nearest storm drain or ditch.

The City Engineering Department offers several other community programs, including Rain Garden Cost Share.

*Interested in our programs? Contact Brad Rademacher, Water Quality/Stormwater Specialist, (507)-774-7300 or [Bradley.rademacher@ci.owatonna.mn.us](mailto:Bradley.rademacher@ci.owatonna.mn.us)*



# REBATES

## *Mother Nature Approved!*

### **WaterSense® Weather-Based Irrigation Controllers**

Replacing a standard clock timer with a WaterSense® irrigation controller can save an average home nearly 8,800 gallons of water annually from not overwatering lawns and landscapes! To encourage our customers to conserve this precious resource, Owatonna Public Utilities is offering a \$75 rebate per controller.



**\$75**  
**REBATE**  
PER CONTROLLER

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.



## 2017 CONSUMER CONFIDENCE REPORT

City of Owatonna, PWSID 1740007

In a continuing “Go Green”, effort, a 2017 Consumer Confidence Report (CCR) regarding our community water supply system is available for your review on-line at the following address:

[www.owatonnautilities.com/consumer-confidence/](http://www.owatonnautilities.com/consumer-confidence/)

Please take a few minutes, read the CCR, and be aware of the water quality of your drinking water!

Current MCL violations: **NONE**

State and Federal Safe Drinking Water Regulations require all Community Public Water Systems to distribute an Annual Water Quality Report, officially known as the Consumer Confidence Report, by June 30th of each year. This report is available at the above link, however, if you would prefer a paper copy of the report, please feel free to call 507-451-2480.



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.



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