



OWATONNA
PUBLIC UTILITIES

VOLUME 29 | ISSUE #5
MAY 2019

CUSTOMER UPDATE

May is...

NATIONAL ELECTRICAL SAFETY MONTH

ESFi.

FEATURING: ELECTRICAL SAFETY

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WWW.OWATONNAUTILITIES.COM

OPU MEMO



Jared Hendricks,
Energy Conservation/Key
Accounts Officer

OPU Commission

Mr. Dale E. Simon
Mr. Matt Kottke
Mr. Kent Rossi
Mr. Randy Doyal
Ms. Dena Keilman

PROJECT CONSERVE & \$AVE®

Last year, Owatonna Public Utilities partnered with Austin Utilities (AU) and National Energy Foundation (NEF) to launch Project Conserve & Save, a new energy education program for elementary students in our communities.

Project Conserve & Save made its debut appearance in 5th grade classes all around Owatonna in April this year in conjunction with Earth Day. This energy education program consists of two major components: an in-class experience and an at-home conservation kit.

In the classroom, teachers went through a set of classroom activities with students. These exercises are designed to give students a better understanding of energy and how it's used, as well as the environmental and financial benefits of using it efficiently. Classroom exercises incorporated the STEM skills that are becoming more common in education and directly tied to the Minnesota Academic Standards.

After completing the in-classroom portion, students were given a Take Action Kit to bring home. Each kit contains energy saving devices for the home, including an LED light bulb, LED night light, low flow faucet aerators, and low flow showerhead just to name a few. Students will work with their parent or guardian to not only install the new energy saving devices but also discuss energy and energy use as a family through the family guide.



In an effort to reduce waste, students are also asked to share the items in their Take Action Kit with neighbors, family, or friends if they are unable to be used in their home, or bring them back to their classroom with their final worksheet so I can pick them up and they can be reused.

With the positive impact of reaching over 425 students in Owatonna and over 430 students in Austin, Project Conserve & Save is receiving national recognition as well! The American Public Power Association (APPA) has recognized the benefit this type of program offers to a community and will be highlighting it at their National Conference in June.

Finally, I would like to thank each and every 5th grade teacher in Owatonna for participating in Project Conserve & Save. This program would not have been successful without your support!

CONSERVATION TIP\$

Take time to brush and vacuum your refrigerator coils while you do your spring cleaning. Refrigerators use more electricity with dirty coils by working harder and longer. Coils are generally found behind or underneath your refrigerator.



May, July Peak Months for Grilling Fires

Grilling season is right around the corner and grill gurus everywhere are preparing for many family parties and barbecues. In collaboration with the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), the Owatonna Fire Department encourages grillers to pay attention to safety during the spring and summer months when home fires involving grilling incidents occur most often.

In 2011 – 2015, fire departments responded to an average of 9,600 home fires involving grills, hibachis or barbecues each year. That number included 4,100 structure fires and 5,500 outside or unclassified fires, according to NFPA. These fires caused an average of 10 civilian deaths, 160 civilian injuries, and \$133 million in direct property damage per year.

July is the peak month for grilling fires followed by May, June and August. According to the Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Association, 73 percent of consumers grill on the Fourth of July, 60 percent do so on Memorial Day, 58 percent grill on Labor Day, and 45 percent grill on Father's Day.

Owatonna Fire Department reminds everyone that all types of grills pose a risk for fires and burn injuries. The following are tips for all grillers to keep in mind this grilling season:

- 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.

If you are using a charcoal grill, here are a few additional tips:

- 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.



MAYOR

Tom Kuntz

COUNCIL MEMBERS

David Burbank

Nathan Dotson

Jeff Okerberg

Kevin Raney

Greg Schultz

Brent Svenby

Doug Voss

ALWAYS ASSUME **LIVE** ALL DOWNED LINES ARE

Downed power lines can be **deadly**. Always assume a downed power line is **live** and avoid approaching them or anything near them.

Use Precaution



Downed power lines can energize the ground up to **35 feet away**. Even more in wet conditions.



If you see a downed power line, **call 911**.



Never drive over downed power lines or anything in contact with them.



Never try to move a downed power line.

If a vehicle contacts a **power line** or **utility pole**...

STAY AWAY AND CALL 911



Consider **all lines** to be live and dangerous.



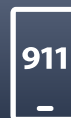
Stay in place or inside your vehicle unless you see **fire** or **smoke**.



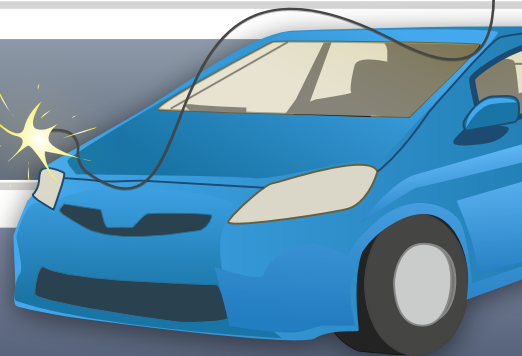
Warn others to stay at least **35 feet away**.



Tell others not to approach vehicle, downed lines, or anything that may be in contact with downed lines.



Call **911**.



In the Event of Fire or Smoke

Do not touch the ground and vehicle at the **same time**.



Jump from the vehicle with your **feet together**.



Shuffle away, avoid lifting your feet.



www.facebook.com/ESFI.org

www.twitter.com/ESFI.org

www.youtube.com/ESFI.org

Underground Project Update

Directional boring will begin soon for this year's work on the Joint Underground Project with Jaguar Communications. This project, once complete, will allow OPU to move most of our overhead lines in neighborhoods into conduit underground reducing the risk of storm damage.

The main area of town being completed this year is the South East corner of Owatonna then moving to other areas on the south end of town.

Please feel free to contact us with any questions regarding this project.

EQUIPMENT SERIES



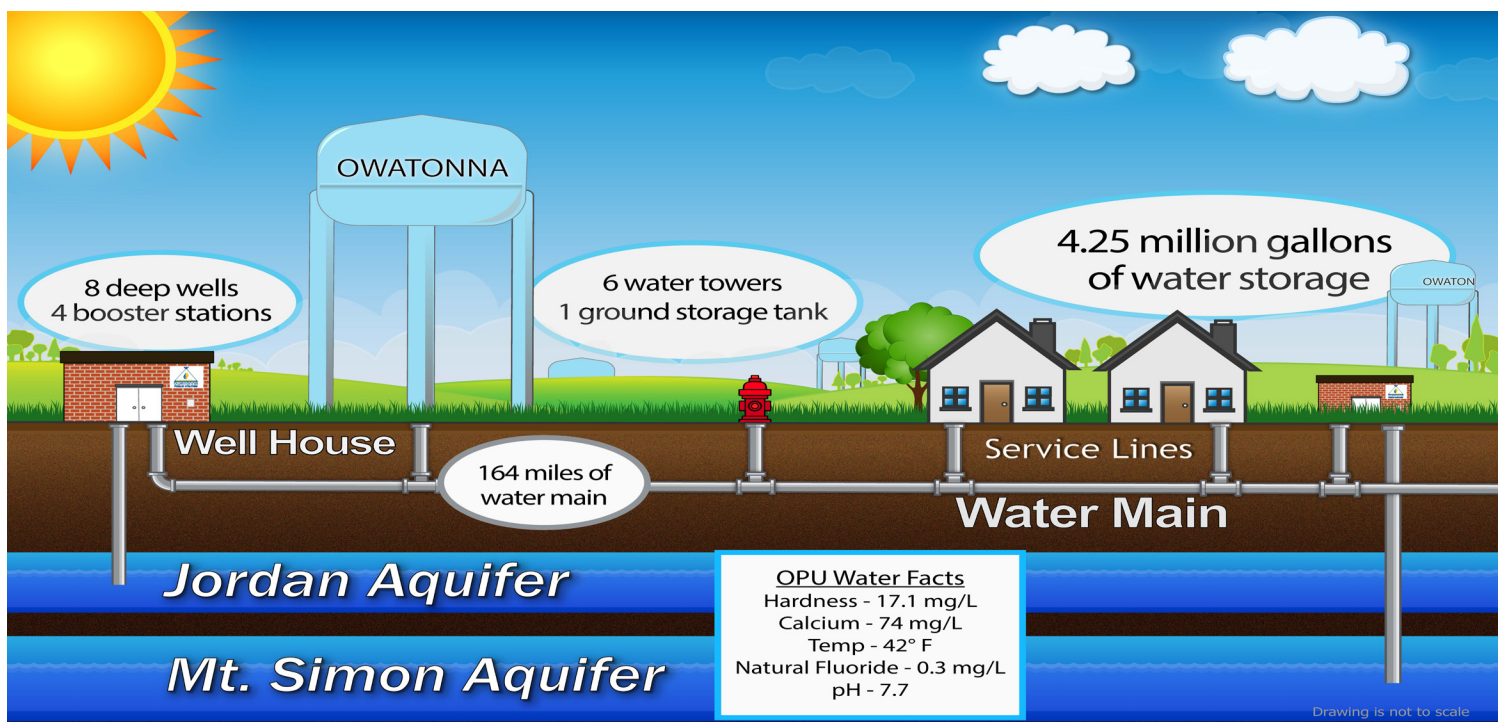
Your power is out. The next thing you know there is a utility worker in your backyard holding a really long stick. This means there is probably a fuse blown on the pole. The

hot stick, as it's called, allows the worker to install a new fuse from the ground without having to climb the pole and without having to drive a truck into your yard. A win-win for everyone.

A hot stick expands to a length of 40 feet, yet collapses small enough to fit in the truck bins for easier storage and transportation. They are made of fiberglass and periodically tested at 20,000 volts per foot. With routine cleaning and testing hot sticks last approximately 10 years at a cost of about \$500 each.

It takes practice and upper body strength to get the hook of the hot stick into the loop on the fuse. When the wind is blowing, rain/snow are hitting the linemen in the face, or when the sun is in their eyes is when it is the most challenging to use it.

OWATONNA WATER SYSTEM



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 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

REBATES

It's time to schedule some

Spring Cleaning!



Complete a
Central Air Conditioner
Clean & Tune
and apply for a

\$25 REBATE!

Regular preventative
maintenance is
the best way to
ensure trouble-free,
energy-efficient
operation.

Visit 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
- 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.



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 or simply scan the QR code above.

From the Editors

We welcome your comments and suggestions for future issues. Feel free to email us at tammy.schmoll@owatonnautilities.com.

2018 CONSUMER CONFIDENCE REPORT

City of Owatonna, PWSID 1740007

In a continuing “Go Green”, effort, a 2018 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/

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.

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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