



OWATONNA
PUBLIC UTILITIES

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NOVEMBER 2023

CUSTOMER UPDATE

*Stay Warm
this Winter*

And keep costs down...tips inside

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OPU MEMO



Roger Warehime,
General Manager

OPU Commission

Kent Rossi
Randy Doyal
Jay Johnson
Doug Zirngible
Greg Vetter

November has arrived, and with it comes what has now become my annual forecast for the winter's heating costs. While the past two years have necessitated warnings about rising costs, I'm pleased to report that this year brings encouraging news.

In 2021, the uptick in natural gas prices was due to a surge in demand as the world recovered from the pandemic and the supply struggled to catch up. The situation in 2022 was somewhat similar: the increased demand for natural gas in Europe led to exports outpacing the growth in supply.

The good news? Last winter's milder-than-expected temperatures in both the United States and Europe helped the U.S. accumulate more gas in storage. This has brought supply and demand back into balance, and as a consequence, wholesale natural gas prices have reverted to more normal levels.

Looking ahead to 2024, we expect our effective rates to decrease by about 11.5% compared to 2023. Your heating bill, as always, is shaped by both the energy cost and your consumption levels. On the consumption front, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) anticipates a warmer-than-average winter for our region, thanks to El Nino. Additionally, you might recall that Northern Natural Gas (NNG), our pipeline provider, implemented a rate hike this past January. We joined up with other utilities to challenge it, reached a settlement in May, and are now issuing refunds averaging \$30 per residential customer. Look for these credit on your upcoming November and December bills.

Though it's great news that bills are projected to be lower, let's continue to be mindful of conserving energy. As we all know, natural gas prices can be volatile. To assist you, this month's newsletter features several tips on energy conservation.



Winter Parking Restrictions Begin November 15

The Owatonna Police Department would like to remind community members of the upcoming winter parking clause in the City of Owatonna parking ordinance which goes into effect beginning November 15 and remains in effect until March 31, 2024. The purpose of the ordinance is to facilitate snow removal and street maintenance.

If it is necessary for you to park a vehicle on the street between 12:01 a.m. and noon, you should park on the even house numbered side of the street on even numbered calendar days and on the odd numbered house side of the street on odd numbered calendar days. If you park your car after noon and intend to leave it parked overnight, you should anticipate the midnight date change. Also keep in mind that in December and January, there are two odd days in a row, December 31 and January 31. It is the responsibility of hosts to notify visitors or guests of the odd/even side winter parking restriction.

Odd/Even parking enforcement is not contingent on an impending snowstorm or a snow event. It is the objective of the Owatonna Police Department to educate community members and seek voluntary compliance, followed by consistent enforcement for a significantly more effective and efficient street maintenance operation.

Use the Owatonna Winter Parking Map App (<https://gis.ci.owatonna.mn.us/portal/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=a514111773524a1fa3f266bfa1c5b7ed>) to see where parking is allowed and areas that are exempt from the winter parking restriction. Easily search an address to determine the odd and even side. Please review the initial screen for pertinent information that explains how to interpret and understand the winter parking restriction. A green line indicates the side that is even. A red line indicates the side that is odd. A black line indicates this area is exempt from the winter parking ordinance due to restrictions. A yellow line will appear during 12:01 a.m. and 12:00 p.m. (noon) to indicate the side of the street you should park on if the area is not restricted. You can also access the Winter Parking Map App by scanning this QR code.



SCAN ME

The Owatonna Police Department would like to thank everyone for adhering to the winter parking restriction ordinance. For more information, please call the Owatonna Police Department at 507-774-7200 or visit owatonna.gov.

CONSERVATION TIP\$

Double check the programming on your thermostat before winter arrives. Although most thermostats have a separate programming for heating, it is a good time to review the programming and make adjustments to save energy all winter.



Stay Warm this Winter

And keep costs down

With the winter heating season around the corner, utility bills will be on the rise. Customers can take steps to keep utility bills down this and every winter. One of the best ways to do this is by reducing the thermostat 2 degrees compared to last winter. While this can sacrifice some comfort, there are easy steps you can take to reduce the impacts! The tips below are a few to try this winter.



Additional tips can
be found here



Wear slippers and socks. Keeping your feet warm will help you feel warmer in a cooler house.



Program your thermostat to reduce the temperature overnight.



An electric blanket or mattress pad will keep you toasty at night even while the house is cooler.



Keeping heat registers and vents clean of dust and clear of furniture will help improve your heating systems efficiency.



Adding reflectors behind radiators reduces the heat loss through walls, making it more comfortable in the home.



Add window insulation film to old, single pane windows and add a bead of caulking around the trim to keep out the cold air.



Turn off the electronics and enjoy physical activities with family, friends, or pets. Exercise and physical activity help the body stay warm long after you have stopped.



Use a space heater with a thermostat in a baby's room and allow the rest of the house to cool off. Make sure you are using a space heater with the proper safety features and follow the manufacture's safety instructions.



Double check the water heater temperature at the tap. If the temperature is over 120 degrees, lower the temp at the water heater and recheck the temp 24 hours later.



Use a humidifier and turn the thermostat down an additional 2 degrees. A dry house will feel cooler than a house with the proper humidity in the winter.

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

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

**TIME IS
RUNNING
OUT!**



CONSERVE & \$AVE



Due to new federal lighting standards, **rebates for screw base LED bulbs for all residential and commercial customers will end on Dec 31, 2023.**

Apply before they are gone! Download a rebate application with complete terms and conditions:

owatonnautilities.com



Owatonna Public Utilities is proud to be a drop off location, again this year, for Toys for Tots. Bring your unwrapped toy to our office before December 8th.

SMELL GAS?

GET OUT!

CALL 911



- Smell gas? (odor is like rotten eggs)
- Can't immediately find the source?
- DO NOT turn on a light switch or use the phone because the potential spark could ignite the gas and cause an explosion!
- Get out and call 911 from your mobile phone or a neighbor's house.

Learn more about Gas Safety at
www.OwatonnaUtilities.com



Think Outside the Lawn

In urbanized areas, stormwater carries phosphorus and other pollutants directly into Minnesota's water resources through the drainage system. Unlike Owatonna's household wastewater, stormwater does not go through the Wastewater Treatment Facility. In many cases, stormwater is discharged directly to our rivers and creeks.

Fall Clean Water Tips

1. Have a storm drain near your home? Volunteer to adopt it through the City's Adopt a Catch Basin Program and receive a complimentary rake to keep it free of leaves and debris.
2. Sweep up your grass clippings, leaves, and other debris from driveways, sidewalks, and the street. Don't forget to keep the gutters cleared.
3. Clean up any excess fertilizer that has spread onto hard surfaces during application.
4. Even as the weather turns cold, continue scooping your pet's waste.
5. During routine fall tune-ups check your vehicle and outdoor equipment for leaks.



Learn more about the Adopt-A-Catch Basin Program by contacting Bradley D. Rademacher, Water Quality/Stormwater Specialist at (507)-774-7309 or stormwater@owatonna.gov

Will you have a houseful for the holidays? Make sure your appliances are ready!

Replace your refrigerator, freezer, dishwasher, clothes washer, and others with energy efficient Energy Star® models. Then apply for CONSERVE & SAVE™ rebates on your purchase.

Visit owatonnautilities.com to download an Energy Star® Electric Appliances Rebate Application with complete terms and conditions.

ENERGY STAR® ELECTRIC APPLIANCES WORD SEARCH

ENERGY STAR	DISHWASHER
EFFICIENT	HEAT PUMP CLOTHES DRYER
APPLIANCES	FREEZER
REBATES	REFRIGERATOR
CLOTHES WASHER	ROOM AIR CONDITIONER
DEHUMIDIFIER	

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CONSERVE & \$AVE™

Commercial Compressed Air Equipment Rebates

Compressed air is the most expensive utility in a plant. Significant savings can be realized through upgrade projects such as variable speed compressors, compressor controls, and demand reduction.

Visit OwatonnaUtilities.com to download a rebate application with complete terms and conditions.





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

Office: 451-2480 Service: 451-1616

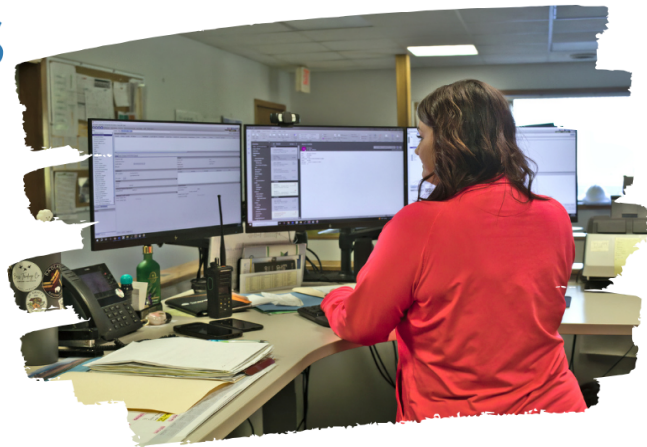
EXPLORE THE HIDDEN GEMS OF UTILITY CAREERS

Discover the possibilities

Dispatcher

National salary range

\$52,562 - \$103,854*



Scan to watch
Employee Interview

Job description: Under general supervision, performs a variety of work coordination and scheduling tasks including assembling inventory items for field crews. Answers incoming service calls from OPU customers and makes decisions for the appropriate action/response including dispatching OPU personnel and notifying management when necessary. Monitors OPU's SCADA system as directed, monitors and updates OPU's Outage Management System coordinating and tracking outages to ensure power has been restored to all customers and maintains OPU's Fleet Management program. Also, processes rebate requests from customers and serves as back-up to the waterworks operators.

Education Requirements:

Associates Degree
in Business or
related field

* 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.

