



**OWATONNA**  
**PUBLIC UTILITIES**

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# CUSTOMER UPDATE

## USING A SPACE HEATER?



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## COMMISSIONERS

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*This article was written by Josh Prokopec (left), Manager, Facilities, Gas & Water Operations and TJ Kalis (right), Electric Design Engineer*



2022 has been a very busy and hectic year here at OPU. All our crews have been going non-stop with no end in sight. Several projects required the combined efforts of all our crews while other projects required each crew's individual expertise.

The Maple Creek Estates development included the installation of electric facilities, as well as almost 2,000' of plastic gas main (PE). New electric and gas services were installed to the new Holiday Gas Station on North Street; Smart Garage; Community Pathways; the new downtown Marriot Hotel; the Pearl Street Apartments; Modern Metal and Old Town Bagels.

In Colonial Manor, a good portion of problematic steel gas main and several gas services were replaced.

In the 100 and 200 blocks of North Cedar, as part of the Downtown Streetscape project, almost all the old steel gas main was abandoned, and the majority of gas meters were moved from inside the buildings to the outside. By moving the meters outside, those services were able to connect to the higher 50# operating pressure system. In the 100, 200 and 300 blocks of North Cedar all the old street light feeds were abandoned, and contractors installed all new lights and feeds. On the water side, all mains and services were replaced with new 8" PVC.

At the new Owatonna High School, 2,000' of 4" PE and another 2,000' of 1" PE was installed.

A second water main is being installed along Industrial Road to add additional security for the upcoming Wastewater Treatment Facility. Currently, one feed supplies the whole facility. This additional feed will give much needed security in the event something happens to the older cast iron feed currently running under Hoffman Road.

By working closely with the City of Owatonna on street projects, we are able to replace problem mains and services while street repair is being conducted which helps keep costs down and the inconvenience to our customers at a minimum. One of these joint projects, wrapping up in the next month or so, is the installation of new water main and services to Linn Avenue between 16th and 18th St. SW. Several water main breaks have occurred in this area recently.

Our contractor, NPL, began work in May on the 5# to 50# gas conversion project and is approximately 80-90% complete. They have replaced roughly 430 gas meters, installed almost 200 new PE gas services, installed 20,000' of 2" PE gas main and pressure tested another 20,000' of 4" PE gas main. They will wrap up in October for the season.

By the time the cold sets in, almost 40 residential gas and electric services will be installed.

Along with the projects discussed above, crews have routine maintenance, water main breaks, electrical outages and other regular tasks they are required to deal with on a daily, weekly, monthly and yearly basis.

Even though some of these projects are completed or near completion, there is still much to do before the snow flies which means the next couple months will remain busy and jampacked. Keep an eye out if you enter a work zone and give our crews a brake as they are wrapping up these projects.

# CITY SPOT

HIGHLIGHTING: OWATONNA FIRE DEPARTMENT

OWATONNA  
CITY COUNCIL



**As Fire Prevention Week approaches, the Owatonna Fire Department reminds residents: "Fire won't wait. Plan your escape."**

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The Owatonna Fire Department is teaming up with the National Fire Protection Association® (NFPA®) to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Fire Prevention Week™ (FPW), October 9-15, 2022. This year's FPW campaign, "Fire won't wait. Plan your escape™", works to educate everyone about simple but important actions they can take to keep themselves and those around them safe from home fires.

According to NFPA, today's homes burn faster than ever. Experts say that residents may have as little as two minutes (or even less time) to safely escape a home fire from the time the smoke alarm sounds. The ability to get out of a home during a fire depends on early warning from smoke alarms and advance planning, which is why creating a home fire escape plan is so important.

Owatonna Fire Department wants to share these key home fire escape planning tips:

- Make sure the plan meets the needs of all family members, including those with sensory or physical disabilities.
- Smoke alarms should be installed inside every sleeping room, outside each separate sleeping area, and on every level of the home. Smoke alarms should be interconnected so when one sounds, they all sound.
- Know at least two ways out of every room, if possible. Make sure all doors and windows open easily.
- Have an outside meeting place a safe distance from the house where everyone should meet.
- Practice the home fire drill at least twice a year with everyone in the household, including guests. Practice at least once during the day and at night.

To kick off Fire Prevention Week, Owatonna Fire Department is hosting their annual chili feed and open house on Sunday, October 9 from 4 to 7 p.m. at the fire station. Equipment and trucks will be on display and firefighters will be available to answer questions as part of the open house.

To find out more about Fire Prevention Week programs and activities in Owatonna, please contact the Owatonna Fire Department at 507-444-2454. For more general information about Fire Prevention Week and fire prevention in general, visit [www.fpw.org](http://www.fpw.org) and [www.sparky.org](http://www.sparky.org).

## CONSERVATION TIP\$

Spending a few dollars to caulk around window and door trim can save money on heating bills this winter and for years to come! When buying caulk, look for paintable window caulking to ensure it lasts as long as possible.





# USING A SPACE HEATER THIS WINTER?



## Space Heater Considerations

Information for this article obtained from the website CNET.com

Winter's coming. Electricity and Natural Gas prices are on the rise. You may be considering supplementing your home's heating unit with a space heater. Here's some things to consider.

**First, pick the right space heater for your needs.** If you're looking for some extra heat in the winter a space heater can be an excellent option. But not all space heaters are made the same. You'll want to take into account the amount of space you're trying to heat, the way they heat the space, and the amount of energy they consume to perform the task.

**Second, determine how much it will cost to run the space heater.** There are a number of factors you'll need to consider when determining how much it will cost to run a space heater. The first is the type of heater you've chosen, including its size and wattage. Larger heaters cover more area and are more effective (smaller heaters in big spaces are inefficient) but also cost more to run. A small personal heater can be as cheap as \$20, whereas a full room heater can cost up to \$300, depending on the model and heating capacity.

The second thing that you'll want to consider is energy efficiency. This is tricky when it comes to space heaters because they are not currently evaluated by the Environmental Protection Agency's EnergyStar program. As a result, you'll have to take the word of the manufacturer when it comes to energy efficiency.

Finally, you'll need to take into account electricity rates. This will determine the cost per hour you can expect to incur by running your space heater. These prices might also dictate how long you'd like to run your space heater.

On average, you can expect to pay about 20 cents per hour to run an average space heater that is 1,500 watts and can heat a standard room. If you run it for 8 hours per day, you'll pay about \$1.60 per day. That comes out to just under \$50 per month.

**Lastly, while space heaters can keep you cozy during the winter months, they can also be a major hazard if used incorrectly.** No matter what type of space heater you buy, be sure to check it's a recent model with an Underwriters Laboratories label; ensure it is designed for the size of room you want to heat and ensure these following safety features are included:

- Tip-over switch – shuts the unit down if it's not in an upright position
- Automatic shut-off/overheat protection – automatically shuts down the unit in the case of overheating.
- Thermostat – monitors indoor temperature, which allows the unit to determine when to turn on and off.
- Plastic face – Keeps the grill from heating to the point of burning the skin upon contact.

Keep these safety tips in mind to keep yourself and your home safe while using a space heater:

- Review instructions and warning labels to ensure safe operation.
- Inspect your heater for damage.
- Place space heaters on low, flat surfaces.
- Keep out of high-traffic areas or doorways.
- Keep space heaters at least 3 feet away from flammable items and objects, such as papers or curtains.
- Avoid leaving a space heater unattended – especially for long periods of time.
- Do not plug space heaters into extension cords or power strips.
- Unplug space heaters when not in use.

Space heaters are handy appliances to have, especially as the weather outside gets frightful and you need to start layering your clothes. When used correctly, they can be a convenient, semi-affordable option to quickly and easily supplement your home's central heating system. But you'll want to prepare yourself for the cost of using a space heater. An additional \$50 per month of utility costs can significantly impact your budget if you aren't prepared for it.



# 2-1-1 HOPE STARTS HERE.

United Way 2-1-1 is a trusted source for information. Save time and stress by cutting through the noise to get reliable information that can help you address a problem or find an opportunity.

Contact 2-1-1 to learn about the following services:

-  • Food and housing support
-  • Mental health and substance abuse resources
-  • Legal assistance
-  • Youth programs
-  • Medical and dental clinics
-  • Job training opportunities
-  • Household items  
...and much more!



Minnesota  
**2-1-1**  
TM  
Powered by: Greater Twin Cities United Way



Dial 2-1-1, text 898-211  
or visit [211UNITEDWAY.ORG](http://211UNITEDWAY.ORG)

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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.)

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

**Call SEMCAC!**  
**800-944-3281**

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



## What is HeatShare?

HeatShare is a voluntary non-governmental program of The Salvation Army that has been in existence since 1982. When you give to HeatShare, you are helping to warm the lives of the elderly, people with disabilities, and others who have nowhere else to turn. HeatShare provides financial assistance on a year-round basis and is used for electricity, natural gas, oil, propane, or wood.

## Who does HeatShare help?

- Seniors with low income and no alternate source of help.
- People with disabilities who are limited in their ability to maintain income to adequately cover energy costs.
- People who have an unexpected crisis and as a result cannot pay for household energy bills.

## What can you do to support your neighbor?

You can give the gift of heat by sending a tax-deductible donation to:

The Salvation Army, HeatShare Program, 2445 Prior Ave., Roseville, MN 55113

\*Please make checks payable to Heatshare

[www.heatshare.org](http://www.heatshare.org); 1-800-842-7279



# 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](http://www.OwatonnaUtilities.com)**



### **CLEAN STREETS FOR CLEAN WATER!**

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](mailto:stormwater@owatonna.gov)

# BONUS DOUBLE REBATES!

Bonus rebates will **DOUBLE** what customers normally receive for these standard rebates:

- Furnaces (excluding new construction)
- Boilers
- Smart Thermostats
- Water Heaters
- Showerheads
- Attic Insulation
- Attic Air Sealing
- Rim Joist Sealing/Insulation

For these bonus rebates, the following requirements **must be met**:

- Equipment must be installed between October 1, 2022, and March 31, 2023
- Rebate form must be submitted within 3 months of final installation date
- Equipment must meet all applicable rebate requirements, terms, and conditions
- Standard Rebate plus Bonus Rebate cannot exceed purchase price (excluding tax and labor)



## BONUS REBATES WORD SEARCH

BONUS	WATER HEATERS
DOUBLE	SHOWERHEADS
REBATES	ATTIC
FURNACES	RIM JOIST
BOILERS	SEALING
SMART THERMOSTATS	INSULATION

P A O H F A S H O W E R H E A D S E P A  
 M O H F C X T I N S U L A T I O N Y L E  
 Y B Y U G L P G Q S Q J P O M P U U M J  
 L H L R P T I N G D M U V E J R P O J N  
 R V K N W M O L Z K N C S D L E Q J Y J  
 H U V A B E W K D S O F M V K B E P Z N  
 D I L C X X B A L G D F A O I A P O J Z  
 D P X E B N W V T X H Z R B M T Z E A J  
 S P J S Y F H T H E H V T I A E E Q F M  
 E Z Q B F O B I R K R I T S Z S R S O I  
 A W K O Q R D M W D N H H I U W O Q S U  
 L R T N R Y P O A H Y I E C G K E V U A  
 I I C U U L M E U Q Z D R A H T C Q B P  
 N M F S Q N K L T B N Y M P T Y R P O S  
 G J T F N L S D N Q L T O E J E V T I A  
 E O Q G L M A F W X H E S G Q W R V L R  
 U I G R W X T G H C C C T J K R N S E F  
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 M T H K K O I H E L P H T W P Q P C S O  
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Visit [www.OwatonnaUtilities.com](http://www.OwatonnaUtilities.com) to download an application with complete terms and conditions.







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#### Friday:

8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

#### Saturday & Sunday:

Closed



# LED Light Bulbs

**ON  
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NOW**

*Reduced pricing through December while  
supplies last at these participating retailers:*



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Arrow Hardware & Paint  
Batteries + Bulbs  
Lowe's  
Walmart**



### 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 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.



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