

CUSTOMER UPDATE



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Roger Warehime, Director, Field Operations

OPU Commission

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

OPU MEMO

This is the third issue of our newly redesigned 8-page newsletter. As Tammy Schmoll stated in the January memo, this new format is part of our continuing efforts to maintain and increase our reputation for excellence in all we do including providing valuable information to help our customers make informed decisions regarding utility related issues.

We received several compliments from customers who appreciated the new format and the information provided. The two-part series on electric vehicles was well received, and we had some requests for additional information. Two of the questions we received were: 1) How does the carbon footprint of an EV compare to that of an internal combustion vehicle? 2) What happens to the batteries at the end of the vehicle's life?

According to the Union of Concerned Scientists the comparison of emissions between EV and internal combustion vehicles varies based on where in the country you live. This is because different regions have a different mixes of fuels used to generate electricity. The map below shows that in our region, a gasoline vehicle needs to achieve at least 43 MPG in order to have emissions as low as an EV.

But what about the emissions on a life cycle basis—from manufacturing of the vehicle and battery to its ultimate disposal and reuse? To answer this question, the Union of Concerned Scientists undertook a comprehensive, two-year review of the life cycle basis. They concluded that, for the country as a whole, electric cars generate half the emissions of the average comparable gasoline car, even when pollution from battery manufacturing is accounted for.

Because electric vehicles are relatively new to the market, only a small number of them have approached the end of their useful lives. Therefore, the battery-recycling infrastructure is limited. As electric vehicles become more common, the

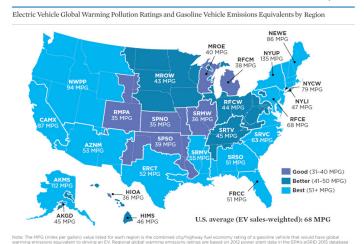
battery recycling market will likely expand. Another solution for used batteries is to re-use them in stationary applications. The Sandia National Laboratory conducted a feasibility study and concluded in a report that the "second use scheme" is viable and that they did not identify any insurmountable technical barriers to its implementation.

We would love to hear from our customers who own electric vehicles about their experiences. If you own an electric vehicle and would like to share your story, please send us an email at customerservice@owatonnautilities.com or through our "Contact Us" button on our website.

Sources for more information:

http://www.ucsusa.org/clean-vehicles/electric-vehicles/life-cycle-ev-emissions#.WLRevYWcG5i

http://www.rmi.org/Content/Files/Technical%20and%20 feasible.pdf





Did you know you could save nearly \$100 a year just by changing your furnace filter on a regular basis? Dirty and clogged filters restrict air flow and make your furnace work harder. Just like your car, when your furnace works harder it uses more gas causing your utility bills to increase. For the most benefit and cost savings, your furnace filter should be changed monthly.

Visit www.tinyurl.com/OPU-Tips for more energy savings tips from OPU.



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CITY SPOT

HIGHLIGHTING: PARKS & RECREATION



Are you ready for green grass and sunny skies? So are we! Spring and opportunities abound here at Parks & Recreation.

We are now hiring for part-time, seasonal positions for spring and summer. Keep checking the website, http://agency.governmentjobs.com/owatonnamn/default.cfm, for a complete listing and application deadlines. Many positions offer a variety of duties and shifts available.

Spring registration is underway; if you did not receive our brochure, stop by our office to pick up a copy. We strive to offer new programs each quarter, if you have a suggestion for something new, let us know! We have a Virtual Suggestion Box on the Parks and Recreation Website, give us those new ideas, suggestions for improvement, or tell us we are doing a good job!

The Parks and Recreation Department takes pride in our customer service, providing quality experiences wherever you go. Additionally, it is our goal to keep you posted regarding what opportunities are available to you and your family.

Communication is very important to us, and we try to use a variety of outlets.

Owatonna People's Press – Wednesday's article has SeniorPlace happenings, and Saturday's article has upcoming Parks & Recreation events and focuses on different areas each week.

Steele County Times – monthly calendar of events, and quarterly Park & Rec happenings.

KRFO radio shows – Tuesday and Thursday mornings at 8:40 a.m.

Website - www.ci.owatonna.mn.us/parksrecreation

Facebook Pages – Parks & Recreation, Brooktree Golf Course, River Springs Water Park, SeniorPlace and Owatonna Dog Park

Make time to take advantage of your Parks and Recreation trails, facilities, and programs during this wonderful time of year and all year long! The Benefits are Endless as Your Best Investment is your Parks and Recreation Department!

How to reach us:

Office Hours – Monday through Friday – 7 a.m. – 5 p.m. – 540 West Hills Circle Main office line: 507-444-4321 (extension 2 for cancellations, 3 for office staff)

E-Mail: parkrec@ci.owatonna.mn.us Message us on Facebook

2017 Important Dates:

March 9 - Deadline - Youth Soccer, Little League/Minor League, Youth Softball

March 15 - Adult Softball team registration deadline

March 18- Washer board tournament benefitting Parks & Recreation Scholarship Fund

April 2 - Boat and Water Safety Class

April 4 – Coaches meeting for Youth Soccer at Four Season's Centre

April 8 - Pre-season evaluations for Little League

April 10 - Youth Soccer begins

April 24 - Adult Softball schedule handout, Annual Meeting, mandatory managers meeting

April 22 – 4th Annual Munchkin Market at the Four Season Centre 9 am-12 pm

NEW – Family Fun Fest Activities included!

April 22 – Bark & Rec's Run FUR Fun starting at the Fairgrounds at 9 am

April 18 - Summer Brochure released, registration begins

May 9 - Deadline for Youth T-ball, and Squirt ball

May 5-7- Corky's Earlybird Slowpitch Softball Tournament

OWATONNA CITY COUNCIL

MAYOR

Tom Kuntz

COUNCIL MEMBERS

David Burbank Nathan Dotson Jeff Okerberg Kevin Raney Greg Schultz Brent Svenby Doug Voss

May 14 – Mother's Day Special at Brooktree Golf Course

May 20 – Humane Society Golf Tournament at Brooktree Golf Course May 26 – Two-Four-Fun at Brooktree Golf Course

May 29 – Memorial Day - Park & Recreation office, Tennis & Fitness Center, and SeniorPlace closed

May 30- Little League Baseball kickoff at the Four Seasons

May 31 - T-ball and Squirt Coaches meeting

May - Lake Kohlmier Beach will be open end of May with no lifeguards on duty On-going- Calendar contest submission through October 2017

On-going – Sunday Family Funday at Brooktree Golf Course

June 2 – River Springs Water Park Opens

June 8 & 9 - Safety Camp

June 14 – Flag Day – Veteran's Special at Brooktree Golf Course

June 17 – Young Life Tournament at Brooktree Golf Course

June 18 – Father's Day Special at Brooktree Golf Course

June 30 – Two-Four-Fun at Brooktree Golf Course

July 8 – Ken Bey Football Tournament at Brooktree Golf Course

July 14-16 – Owatonna's Weekend Out



The information for this article is provided by the Minnesota Department of Health, Environmental Health Division

Safe drinking water is no accident. Many drinking water experts from federal, state and local governments as well as other environmental groups work to protect this valuable resource. It depends on many people, including **you**, to keep it this way.

Drinking water comes from surface water or groundwater. Surface water is water from lakes and rivers. Groundwater is taken from an aquifer – a natural underground layer of sand, gravel, or porous rock, that contains water.

Public water supply is regulated by the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) and must meet the standards of the Safe Drinking Water Act. Private wells are regulated by the MDH as well when they are being constructed and then it is the well owner's responsibility to protect and maintain the well to ensure the well continues to provide safe drinking water going forward.

Public water supplies are regularly tested for more than 100 contaminants by either MDH or the public water supplier. Private well owners are responsible for testing their own drinking water. Contaminants are substances that may be harmful to human health and they can occur naturally in the environment or as a result of human activities. Some ways contaminants can get into drinking water include:

- Naturally occurring elements including arsenic, radium, and manganese
- Products we use, including medicines, personal care products, lawn and garden products, and household cleaners
- Farming practices such as fertilizers and pesticides, large scale animal farms, and irrigation and drainage systems
- Industrial waste disposal, past and present
- Water pipes and plumbing can release lead and copper into the water, and
- Leaks and spills of gasoline, oil and other products

Some contaminants are not regulated; however, if contaminants show up at a level higher than the levels set by the federal government, information regarding the contaminant must be made available through the Consumer Confidence Report. OPU's Consumer Confidence Report can be accessed on our website at owatonnautilities.com/consumerconfidence.

We all must do our part in maintaining this valuable resource - from the source to the tap. Activities we do on the land affect the health of our water sources. Drinking water is a limited resource. Take action to protect and conserve our drinking water:

In your home:

- Save water by fixing leaky faucets, running full loads of laundry or dishes, and taking shorter showers
- Use soaps, lotions, and other detergents that are biodegradable and less toxic
- Don't flush leftover medicines, paints, oils, or antifreeze down the sink or toilet. Look for safe ways to dispose of them
- Use water-saving appliances. Look for the WaterSense label. Install low-flow showerheads and toilets.

In your yard:

- Landscape your yard to reduce the need for watering and prevent or filter runoff. Make a rain garden. Install a rain barrel
- Minimize your use of fertilizers and pesticides
- Clean up chemical spills immediately and store chemicals safely away from wells, lakes, rivers, streams, and stormwater drains

For more information on protecting this valuable resource, visit the Minnesota Department of Health's website at www. health.state.mn.us/drinking water.

EQUIPMENT SERIES



Owatonna Public Utilities maintains 1238 public and 113 private fire hydrants within the city limits. The oldest fire hydrant is dated 1924 and is located on Agnes St. The average cost of a new fire hydrant is \$2,500. Maintenance of fire hydrants consists of painting and annual flushing. Every hydrant is flushed yearly.

Water main flushing is the process of cleaning or "scouring" the interior of water distribution mains (pipes) by sending a rapid flow of water through the mains. This scouring cleans our pipes allowing them to last longer and do their job. Flushing also helps maintain water quality. The water entering our distribution mains is of very high quality; however, water quality can deteriorate in distribution mains if the mains are not properly managed.

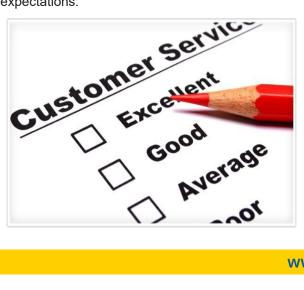
This is why flushing is important. Flushing maintains water quality in several ways. Iron and manganese are naturally occurring minerals in water and do not pose health concerns. Once these minerals start to form sediment in the water, they can degrade the "acceptability" of the water affecting the taste, clarity, and color. Therefore, flushing is necessary to remove these fine sediments from the water distribution mains to ensure water quality. During the flushing process, the iron and manganese sediments get stirred up and can cause your water to have a rusty color. This can be resolved by opening and letting a faucet run for a few minutes until the water clears up. Flushing also helps remove "stale" water. Much of our distribution system is designed with "loops" or interconnected grids, which keep water constantly moving around. However, some areas have dead-ends where water moves slowly and sits for longer periods of time. Such dead-end mains need to be flushed to ensure the presence of fresh water and acceptable taste and smell. Watch for the annual flushing schedule in the April newsletter.

CUSTOMER SURVEY

In an effort to maintain and continually improve the overall customer experience, we reach out to the community through a biannual customer satisfaction survey. This survey is conducted by phone and historically has reached 350+ OPU customers. The results have helped OPU develop key goals and continue the overall mission of delivering excellence.

Please note this year's survey will be starting in March and ending in May. We appreciate the few minutes it takes to answer the questions that help us not only meet your expectations, but exceed your expectations.

In addition to the annual survey, it's important that we understand how we're doing in every interactions with our customers, as a reminder there is a survey on our website at www.owatonnautilities.com\customersurvey. This short, six question, survey will give customers an opportunity to provide us with immediate feedback about your experience via phone, email, or a visit to our office.



OPU HIGHLIGHT



MMUA Tom Bovitz Memorial Scholarship

The Owatonna Public Utilities is accepting scholarship essays and applications for the MMUA Tom Bovitz Memorial Scholarship. The essay deemed to best address the subject of "Municipal Utilities: good for all of us" will receive a \$500 scholarship from OPU and will be forwarded on to the Minnesota Municipal Utilities Association for entry in the Tom Bovitz Memorial Scholarship state-wide contest.

The Tom Bovitz Scholarship fund is split into \$2,000, \$1,500, \$1,000 and \$500 scholarships, and awarded to essay contest winners who plan to attend a post-secondary educational institution.

Resource materials for the essay can be obtained from OPU, www. mmua.org or www.publicpower. org.

Scholarship money will be payable upon receipt of a fee statement copy from an accredited post-secondary educational institution and will be made payable to the contest winner and the post-secondary institution.

For complete details visit our website at owatonnautilities.com and click on education opportunities.

Completed essays must be submitted to OPU, attention Tammy Schmoll, by March 31, 2017.

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 451-1616 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.





Be Smart About Salt

As snow and ice melts it collects and washes surface pollutants into our lakes, streams, wetlands, and groundwater. One of the major pollutants carried into our waterbodies during the winter months is road salt. Once in the water it becomes very difficult to remove the chloride. At high concentrations, it can harm aquatic life and contaminate drinking water.

A recent study found 47 waterbodies in Minnesota that tested above the water quality standard for chloride and estimated Minnesotans dump over 350,000 tons of salt on roadways and parking lots annually.

How does it get in our water? Two main sources:

- 1. Winter road application
- Water softeners

How to make a difference:

- 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. Never use more than 4 pounds/1,000 sq. ft.
- 4. Sweep up any excess salt, if visible on pavement it will just wash away.
- 5. Be patient, more salt does not result in faster melting.

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



SAVE WITH A REBATE!

Buy efficient appliances and equipment and apply for a rebate from OPU on your purchase.



SAVE ENERGY & WATER!

For example, an Energy Star® Clothes Washer uses 25% less electricity and 45% less water than regular washers.



SAVE MONEY!

As your efficient appliances save energy and water, you'll save money on your utility bill.

CONSERVE & \$AVE

Learn more at www.owatonnautilities.com

REBATES

WASH. DRY. \$AVE. It's That Easy!

REBATES FOR WASHERS & DRYERS



*Visit our website to download a rebate application with minimum efficiency requirements and complete terms and conditions:

www.owatonnautilities.com







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

Office: 451-2480 Service: 451-1616

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.

March 18th is National



Byron and Mike, for all you do!





Your opinion matters to us.

Please take a few minutes
to tell us how we did by
visiting our website at

owatonnautilities.com/customersurvey 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 schmollt@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.



