



OWATONNA
PUBLIC UTILITIES

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DECEMBER 2022

CUSTOMER UPDATE

MMUA MUTUAL AID TRIP TO BARTOW, FLORIDA



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OPU MEMO



Roger Warehime,
General Manager

OPU Commission

Matt Kottke
Kent Rossi
Randy Doyal
Jay Johnson
Doug Zirngible

But I knew our employees were active in the community in their personal lives as well, so I asked them to share the ways they contribute individually to our community. Not surprisingly, they shared a wide range of activities. Some OPU employees contribute their time and talents to the Community Pathways food drive. Many serve on church committees or ring bells for the Salvation Army. We have Park and Rec coaches, and Big Brothers/Big Sisters "Bigs." Others don't mentor with BB/BS but help fundraise for the organization. Still others volunteer with Meals on Wheels, Junior Achievement, Knights of Columbus, Steele County Safety Camp, the Steele County Free Fair, and SKYWARN.

I'm grateful to have the opportunity to lead an organization which is so deeply ingrained with the community it serves. I'm proud of the work my fellow employees perform both within their official roles at OPU as well as community members outside of their work.

I'm also grateful for you, our customer, for embracing us as a vital part of the Owatonna, and I wish you a very blessed and happy holiday season.

December is the season of giving. While we often use this phrase to refer to the giving of holiday gifts, lately I've been reflecting on how OPU gives back to the community. Our mission at OPU is to "enhance the quality of life in our community by safely and reliably delivering customer-focused utility services." But going beyond our core mission, what are other ways we contribute to the community in which we live?

There are the obvious ways, the things we do collectively as an organization: OPU recently concluded our annual United Way campaign, raising almost \$6,500 with just under 60 employees. We adopted Morehouse Park, gathering once each month to walk the park and pick up every piece of trash we find. We are a collection location for Toys-for-Tots and we participate in the Angel Tree program. Our crews put up holiday lights and banners and we decorate a truck for the lighted parade.



CONSERVATION TIP\$

Sealing your attic access properly will keep warm air from escaping the living space, reducing your heating costs. Sealing an attic access can be as simple as applying a bead of caulking around the trim and where the door or access panel meets the trim. Using removeable rope caulk can also be used to ensure the access can be easily opened and resealed.



City of Owatonna Budget Process

The City of Owatonna held its annual Truth-in-Taxation meeting December 6. Each taxing jurisdiction (the City, County and School District) holds a Truth-in-Taxation meeting annually to publicly present a summary of and receive input on their proposed budgets. The City Council is expected to adopt its final 2023 budget and levy at its December 20 meeting. Until the final budget is adopted, the City Council may lower it from the preliminary budget amount but cannot increase it.

The tax statements received by property owners from the County Auditor's Office in November were created based on property tax valuations and the City's proposed 2023 levy and budget. Property tax valuations were set in March and the public was invited to attend the annual Board of Appeal and Equalization meeting in April to provide input on valuations. Budgets for all three taxing jurisdictions are planned based, in part, on tax revenues calculated from these valuations.

Check out the City's budget in an interactive document that can be found online at www.owatonna.gov/Finance. Community members are encouraged to provide input throughout the budget process by contacting a City Council member or the mayor. For questions regarding property valuations, taxes or property tax relief options, please contact the County Assessor's Office at (507) 444-7435.

What is Owatonna's Brand?

Work is underway to develop a community-wide brand. The City of Owatonna, the Owatonna Area Chamber of Commerce & Tourism and several local businesses have been meeting since last year to explore the benefits and feasibility of developing a common brand.

How will a community-wide brand help Owatonna?

An authentic brand centered on what makes Owatonna unique and distinct will help promote its healthy economy, attract new residents and young professionals, private investors and visitors. Other communities that have developed and implemented effective branding strategies have experienced the following benefits:

- Differentiates the community from other areas.
- Replaces out-of-date, inaccurate and unbalanced perceptions with accurate and positive ones.
- Enhances awareness about the community's unique treasures and attributes.
- Improves revenue and profit margins for businesses, lodging tax, property tax, etc.
- Increases tourism which creates jobs and enhances overall awareness.
- Increases the ability for employers to attract and retain talent.
- Provides a foundation for future economic development, new business growth and investments in the community.
- Enhances community pride, advocacy and involvement.
- Increases residents' community pride so citizens become ambassadors for their community.

More than a logo or tagline, an effective brand captures the thoughts and feelings associated with a community. It creates a sense of belonging and recognizability that distinctly conveys the unique attributes of the community.

Last month, North Star Place Branding & Marketing was selected as Owatonna's partner in developing its community-wide brand. The City of Owatonna allocated \$25,000 in its proposed 2023 budget to support the project. Additional funding is being provided through the Owatonna Area Chamber of Commerce & Tourism and contributions from local businesses.

Community input is essential!

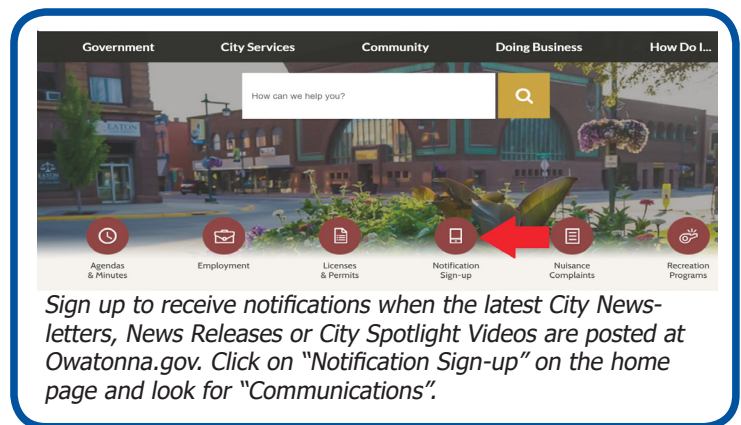
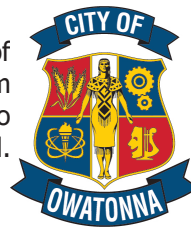
Everyone in the community will be invited to provide input as North Star learns about Owatonna and helps shape its brand identity. Please watch for additional information to be posted at Owatonna.gov or follow the City of Owatonna on Facebook to find out about opportunities to participate in this process over the coming months.

MAYOR

Tom Kuntz

COUNCIL MEMBERS

Dan Boeke
David Burbank
Nathan Dotson
Kevin Raney
Greg Schultz
Brent Svenby
Doug Voss





Mutual Aid

Hurricane Ian made landfall in Southwest Florida on the evening of September 28th. Ian has tied the record for the fifth strongest hurricane ever to hit the United States, it was a Category 4 hurricane with wind speeds reaching 150 MPH. The damage caused by Hurricane Ian is estimated to be around 7 billion dollars and left 2.6 million Floridians without power. Minnesota Municipal Utilities Association (MMUA) was contacted by Kissimmee Utility Authority for a request for mutual aid assistance and from there MMUA organized a crew of 40 linemen, mechanics, and coordinators from 14 different utilities across Minnesota to help in restoration efforts after Hurricane Ian.

Owatonna Public Utilities sent three linemen Tony Hartle, Lance Diderrich, and Samuel Bahl as well as a bucket truck and a pickup truck. At 9 a.m. on September 28th, 23 trucks left Rochester Public Utilities and made the trip down to Florida. On the second night down, the convoy arrived in Gainesville, Florida, where they waited for the rest of the storm to pass. This is when they found out they were not headed to Kissimmee, they would now be heading for Bartow, Florida instead.

When they first arrived at Bartow, Florida roughly 11,000 of Bartow's 12,600 customers were without power. Before MMUA had arrived, only the Bartow linemen and four linemen from Illinois had already started to work. After they arrived, they were split up into crews of 9-10 guys and were given work orders. Tony, Lance, and Samuel's crew consisted of two linemen from Shakopee, four linemen from Moorhead, and a Bird Dog from Bartow.

The crews were down in Florida for five days. On the first day, there were 10 Spans of 795 Aluminum conductors laying on the ground, considered one of the hardest hits in town. They had to clear multiple trees to get where they were going. After the first day of getting the trees cleared away, poles set, and framed they were ready to put the

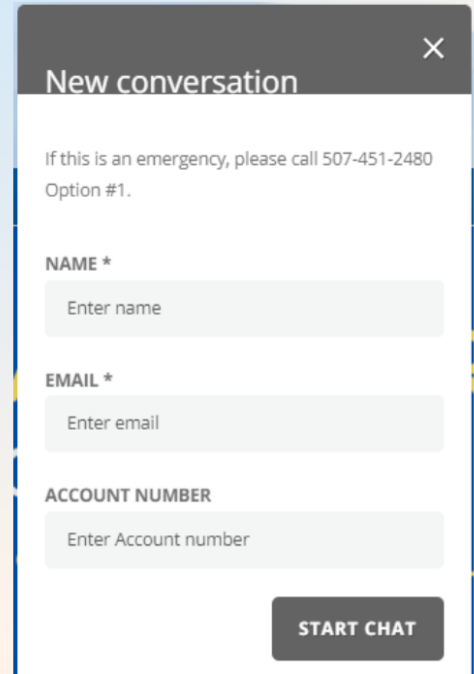
wire back up. They were able to heat this section of the line up and this got roughly 100 houses back on! Day three consisted of getting a long stretch of three-phase back on. There were multiple broken poles, wires on the ground, broken cross arms, and even some underground that had to be fixed. They were able to get about 200 customers back on in a retirement community that day. On day four of work, after getting all the three-phase feeders back on, the outages were down to just single-phase lines, secondaries, and services. The crew also changed out a backyard secondary pole and replaced a three-phase transformer bank to feed some residential AC. On day five they were down to just a few remaining customers. The crew worked on replacing a cement double riser pole with a wood pole in the morning. In the afternoon, they changed out a single-phase broken pole on a 680-acre orange farm!

Overall, Samuel, Lance, and Tony said it was an amazing experience and something they will never forget. They said the people of Bartow were some of the most appreciative people they have ever met. The crew of guys they got to work with was awesome and their Bird Dog had even mentioned that he had not seen a group of guys that had never worked together before get along so well and accomplish that much. The Electrical Supervisor had also said that the next time they have a major hurricane hit Bartow the first call they would be making is to Minnesota!

Our OPU crew felt as if they accomplished many things on this trip, but safety was number one on that list. Everyone from OPU and Minnesota came home safe with no injuries all while demonstrating many of our core values.

NEW Value Added Service!!

We recently updated our website to include Live Chat as an additional channel of communication with our customers. While browsing our website, a customer can click on the Live Chat link located in the lower right corner of the site. During normal business hours, customers will be connected to one of our customer service representatives who will assist the customer in real time. Outside of normal business hours, customers can leave a message and a team member will follow up with them the next business day. This new feature allows customers additional flexibility in how they want to contact us. If you smell gas or are reporting an outage, please call 507-451-2480 option #1 instead of choosing Live Chat.



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

WINTER

Drive Safely Around our Crews

- DON'T DRIVE DISTRACTED
- STAY ALERT FOR CREWS WORKING IN ROADWAYS
- GIVE PLENTY OF DISTANCE BETWEEN YOU AND THE DESIGNED WORK ZONE
- OBEY THE TEMPORARY TRAFFIC CONTROLS
- IF VISIBILITY IS DIMINISHED, DECREASE SPEED AND INCREASE FOLLOWING DISTANCE
- TURN ON YOUR HEADLIGHTS AND WEAR YOUR SEAT BELT
- TURN OFF THE CRUISE CONTROL
- BE PATIENT AND REMEMBER WORKERS ARE JUST TRYING TO FIX SOMETHING



JUST A REMINDER, KEEP YOUR OUTDOOR METERS FREE OF SNOW AND ICE

In Minnesota, snow and ice tend to cover everything at some point. 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 451-2480 option #1 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.



2023 Stormwater Utility Fee Changes

Beginning January 1st, 2023, you will notice a 3% change in your Stormwater Utility Fee. As a result of the 2015 rate structure study conducted by Foth Infrastructure and Environment, LLC the stormwater utility fee is set to gradually

increase on an annual basis through 2019 and then generally match the approximate rate of inflation years following, in order to provide an equitable, stable and fair funding source for all stormwater management activities.

There were no rate changes for years 2020 and 2021.

The rate for a single-family residential property will be a constant monthly fee of \$4.66 (starting 2023).

Year	Rate
2022	\$4.52
2023	\$4.66

All other properties are based on the following equation that evaluates the equivalent residential unit (ERU), acreage, and intensity factor for the associated land use:

$$\text{Stormwater Utility Fee} = (\text{ERU}) \times (\text{Intensity Factor}) \times \$4.66$$

$$\text{ERU} = (\text{parcel acreage}/0.33)$$

If the property is multi-family, townhomes, and or mobile homes with individual meters, it will be billed at 80% of the current single family residential rate, per unit.

The City is anticipating undertaking another rate study in the near future. Additional information can be found at: <http://ci.owatonna.mn.us/482/Public-Works>

For more information regarding the Stormwater Utility Fee please contact the Public Works Department at 507-444-4350.

Give your house a warm blanket... **INSULATE!**

Insulating and air sealing your home not only reduces energy loss and lowers your heating and cooling costs, but also improves comfort.

Owatonna Public Utilities offers an
Attic Insulation Rebate of \$125
(for self-installations).

To be eligible for some exclusive rebates, we recommend scheduling a CONSERVE & SAVE® House Call Energy Audit to have a professional determine how much and what type of insulation you need. Call us today to schedule your audit!

HOUSE CALL REBATES:

Attic Air Sealing - \$200

Rim Joist Sealing - \$150

Attic Insulation - \$350

Wall Insulation - \$300 (injection)

Wall Insulation - \$200 (exterior)

Visit www.OwatonnaUtilities.com to download applications with complete terms and conditions.

INSULATION + AIR SEALING WORD SEARCH

ATTIC	INSULATION	SAVE
AIR	R-VALUE	REBATE
RIM JOIST	COMFORT	HOUSE CALL
WALL	EFFICIENCY	ENERGY
SEALING	CONSERVE	AUDIT

V S D R E B A T E R R A R A D
A A A Q Q I D Q M I V R Z B R
N V E K K G Z M A M A H A I H
O E G T D Q F M U J L N P D O
T U F C E I A V D O U B Y W U
I C B O J F V G I I E Y T A S
N O M M V Z F E T S M A B L E
S N Z F X M A I R T U F Z L C
U S J O R P K E C R C F K I A
L E N R M M Y H V I R V R O L
A R K T E N E R G Y E B T Y L
T V W X A G H J X E N N H W H
I E C Z H K Q A T T I C C O T
O R X T V D S E A L I N G Y Q
N U E W H V K Q F Z R M B R U

CONSERVE & \$SAVE®



Compressed Air Equipment & Leaks

Compressed air is the most expensive utility in a plant! Significant savings can be realized through equipment upgrade projects. And did you know that you could be losing 20-30% of your compressed air through leaks?

Owatonna Public Utilities offers valuable rebates for new equipment and leak correction.

Visit www.OwatonnaUtilities.com to download rebate applications with complete terms and conditions.



INDICIA

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.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.



MERRY
Christmas

AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR

From all of us at the Owatonna Public Utilities.

May this holiday season bring you peace, love, joy and good health.

To allow our employees to spend time with their families this holiday season, OPU is closed these days:

- Friday, December 23, 2022
- Monday, December 26, 2022
- Monday, January 2, 2023

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.

