

# CUSTOMER UPDATE



## FEATURING: WEATHER-BASED IRRIGATION SYSTEMS

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# OPU MEMO



Shannon Petty,  
IT Systems Administrator

## OPU Commission

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

When folks in the southern states think of what life in Minnesota might be like in the summer - considering how cold and snowy our winters are - I sometimes get the impression they think that we're still bundled up in heavy winter coats in August, wildly waving snow shovels in our be-mittened hands, shooing polar bears from our knee-deep, snow covered lawns. Which is, of course, absurd - the polar bears typically migrate from our lawns back to the North Pole in early July.

The summer months in Owatonna can get quite hot. Temperatures in the 90s are not uncommon, and spikes into the 100s are not unheard of. When the temperature rises, and we're outdoors for extended periods of time, we're going to sweat. And if we don't replenish the fluids we're losing when we sweat, we become dehydrated.

Dehydration is pretty straightforward: Your body is losing more fluid (sweating, going to the bathroom, etc) than you are taking in. That's not good. Water is critical to your body. Your tissue, your organs, even the cells in your body need a steady supply of water, or things start to go very wrong. Your good health is at risk. So what are some of the signs that you might be dehydrated?

- Dry mouth
- Extreme thirst
- Fatigue
- Headache
- Confusion
- If you're dizzy or lightheaded
- Little or no urine, or your urine is darker than usual

Water is best for staying hydrated. Typically, somewhere around six to eight 8-ounce glasses of water each day is recommended, but different people need different amounts of water to stay hydrated. For some, just drinking water when they're thirsty is enough, but others may need to stay ahead of the game and drink water a little more consistently.

While you can get water from other foods and drinks - fruits and vegetable, juices, milk, things of that nature - it should be pointed out that some of those items may add extra calories from sugar to your diet, or may contain high levels of salt. It should also be pointed out that while sports drinks are a reasonable source of water to help with dehydration, and will typically contain carbohydrates and electrolytes that can increase your energy, they may also contain caffeine or salt.

It should also be pointed out that energy drinks are not the same as sports drinks. They often contain large amounts of caffeine, and are often high in sugar. If you are dehydrated, consider reaching for a glass of water instead.

Here are some tips for staying hydrated:

- Keep a reusable bottle of water near you throughout your day. And something to bear in mind: OPU water from the tap is clean, safe, and tastes great. It is tested regularly for contaminants and meets or exceeds all Federal and State water standards. Not to mention the cost savings. A 16 oz. bottle of water from the store might cost a dollar or more, but OPU water straight from the tap into a reusable bottle costs around \$0.00016753 per 16 oz!
- Drink water before, during, and after you work out doors, or when you exercise.
- Your body can sometimes send mixed signals - thirst can sometimes feel like hunger. If you're feeling hungry, drink a glass of water. In addition to hydrating, if it turns out that you were a little hungry, drinking some water might satiate your hunger for awhile and can help a little with weight loss.
- Try to get in the habit of drinking a glass of water right after you wake up, after you eat breakfast, lunch, dinner, and just before you go to bed. In between, as always; grab a glass of good OPU water when you need it to stay hydrated.

## CONSERVATION TIP\$

Save energy during the summer by using a toaster oven instead of your kitchen oven for smaller dishes. It takes more energy to heat up and keep a full-size oven at temperature than a toaster oven. Not only will you save energy for cooking, but your house won't heat up as much so your air conditioner won't have to work as hard.



### Lake Kohlmer Rentals:

Rent Single Kayaks, double kayaks, canoes, paddle boards, paddle boats, hydro bikes, tandem bikes, electric assist trikes for \$5 per hour. Hours are Monday-Friday 1 pm-6 pm and Saturday-Sunday from 12 pm-7 pm.

### River Springs Waterpark

Open through August 11 from 12 noon-8pm and August 12-18 from 12 pm-7pm. There are several special events and special prices throughout the summer. Call 774-7370 for more information.

### Youth Fall Registration

We are currently taking registration for Fall!

3 ways to register:

1. On-line (<http://owatonnaparksrectest.maxgalaxy.net/Home.aspx>)
2. In person at 540 West Hills Circle (Monday-Friday 7am-5 pm)
3. Call 444-4321  
Register for:
  - Youth volleyball (grades 3-6)
  - Youth football (grades 1-6)
  - Fall swim lessons

For a complete listing of dates/times for each program, check our website at <http://ci.owatonna.mn.us/parksrecreation>.

### Fall Brochure

Our Fall brochure came out the Owatonna People's Press on July 23. Pick up your at our office!

### Archery Range

The archery range is open – located at 711 N Elm. Hours are 7 am-dusk.

### Park Pavilions

We are taking reservations for summer/fall park pavilions! Reserve for family reunions, parties, small gatherings, graduations, weddings, receptions etc.! Call 444-4321 for availability!

### Movies in the Park

This summer we have one more family-friendly movie. Movie begin at sunset (between 8:30pm and 9:00pm). Movies are free and concessions are available!

September 6 (raindate Sept 7) – Movie to be determined

### Woofstock

**Saturday, August 24th – 10:00am-12:00 Noon**

#### Lake Chase Dog Park

Celebrate our 4th Annual event to celebrate National Dog Day! Bring your four-legged friend to visit local vendors, take a picture in the photo booth, get your face painted, and take a canoe for a ride on the lake! Don't have a dog? That's fine! This a free event for everyone!

### Youth Basketball Registration

Youth basketball registration (grades K-6) will begin September 19. Register on-line at <http://owatonnaparksrectest.maxgalaxy.net/Home.aspx> or by stopping at our office Monday-Friday 7 am-5 pm (540 West Hills Circle).

### The Park Passport is back!

Use the insert in the Fall Parks & Recreation brochure, find one online at [ci.owatonna.mn.us/parksrecreation](http://ci.owatonna.mn.us/parksrecreation) or stop in the office to pick yours up! In the 11 miles of trail used to complete a passport, you'll see the beauty of Owatonna's parks. Look for the signs, approximately 2-4 feet from the ground, at each park to complete a 10-word phrase. The signs will be posted from September 6-October 7. Only one entry per household, but bring the whole family to search! Prize packages include a Park and Recreation Gift Card, a Family Season pass to River Springs Water Park for 202, a bike package gift certificate from Straight River sports, and a sports pack. So get those hiking boots out & get ready to hit the trail!

### 6th Annual Trick or Treat Trail

**Saturday, October 26th – 2:00 – 4:00pm**

#### Steele County Fair Grounds

Ghosts and Goblins of all ages grab your trick or treat bags and head to the Steele County Fair Grounds for our 6th Annual Trick or Treat Trail! Note, the new location for better parking and more space! Visit local businesses along the trail for treats, games, a photo shoot, and crafts. Visit the cute animals in the large petting zoo, take a ride on the kiddie train ride and find spooky treasures in the scavenger hunt. The Woof or Treat Trail will be back at this year's event! Dress up your furry friends and visit the separate trail, with treats and goodies, just for them. Enter your pooch into the costume contest and win a great prize! We'll also have two bounce houses, free hot chocolate and food trucks. Mark your calendars!

We want to hear from you! Parks and Recreation is Your Best Investment. Are there things you would like to see offered... let us know! Are there things we do really well...let us know! What's your favorite part of Parks & Recreation...let us know! What additions or improvements would you like to see...let us know! Although budget and time constraints limit what we can do...we'd like to know what you want to do!

Until next time, get out and enjoy your parks!

### MAYOR

Tom Kuntz

### COUNCIL MEMBERS

David Burbank

Nathan Dotson

Jeff Okerberg

Kevin Raney

Greg Schultz

Brent Svenby

Doug Voss

# Weather-Based Landscape Irrigation Controllers



Information from this article obtained from the EPA WaterSense website.

**R**esidential outdoor water use in the United States accounts for more than 7 billion gallons of water each day, mainly for landscape irrigation. Experts estimate that as much as half of this water is wasted due to overwatering caused by inefficiencies in irrigation methods and systems.

Cutting-edge irrigation control technologies can significantly reduce overwatering by applying water only when plants need it. WaterSense®, a partnership program sponsored by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), will help consumers and facilities identify weather-based irrigation controllers that can reduce water use in landscapes.

Weather-based irrigation controllers use local weather and landscape conditions to tailor irrigation schedules to actual conditions on the site. Instead of irrigating on a preset schedule set by a clock timer controller, weather-based controllers allow irrigation to more closely match plants' water requirements. By using weather-based controllers instead of standard clock timer controllers, homeowners, businesses, and organizations would no longer need to worry about sprinklers automatically operating when landscapes don't need water.

## End Overwatering

Many homeowners and facility managers set their irrigation systems to water according to the hottest, driest month of the year, usually July. Throughout the year, the schedule is left untouched, resulting in a system that applies the same amount of water to the landscape during all summer months. This leads to periods of extreme overwatering.

By using a scheduling system that tracks weather and landscape conditions and irrigates accordingly, weather-based irrigation controllers can reduce water use by 20 percent compared to systems with standard clock timer controllers. If every home with an irrigation system made this switch, it could save 150 billion gallons of water per year across

the United States. Commercial and institutional facility irrigation systems could help save even more water across the country.

## Performance Is Key

All WaterSense labeled products must be independently certified to ensure they meet EPA's water-efficiency and performance criteria. EPA worked with a variety of stakeholders to develop criteria and performance measures for weather-based irrigation controllers, based on the industry's Smart Water Application Technologies™ protocol for climatologically based controllers.



The WaterSense Revised Draft Specification for Weather-Based Irrigation Controllers includes supplementary features, such as multiple programming capabilities, that controllers must have in order to receive the label. In the future, weather-based irrigation controllers that earn the WaterSense label must demonstrate that they meet the watering needs of a typical landscape, while not overwatering.

Whether you are replacing an older, standard clock timer controller or looking for options to reduce water use and utility bills from your irrigation system, the WaterSense label will soon be able to help you identify weather-based irrigation controller models that are high-performing and water-efficient. For more information, visit [www.epa.gov/watersense](http://www.epa.gov/watersense).

# SUMP PUMP BACKUPS

Powerful storms often cause power outages and leave homes at risk of flooding if a backup system for the sump pump isn't in place. Utilities, including OPU, cannot guarantee power 100% of the time so it is up to homeowners to decide if a backup system is appropriate. Fortunately, there are different types of backup systems homeowners can consider.

Portable generators are readily accessible and are a very common option for backup power during outages, not only to sump pumps, but also for refrigerators, freezers, and some household lighting. Generators must be operated properly, though, to ensure the safety of everyone in the home. Generators must be operated outdoors but not directly downwind or too close to the house or garage. Sump pumps and appliances must be plugged into the generator directly or using extension cords, never wire a portable generator into your home electrical panel as this can back feed the utility system and injure linemen working to restore power.

Battery backup systems and water powered pump systems are two other options available that automatically kick in, providing peace of mind during outages. These systems both have their advantages and limitations. For instance, battery backup systems are easily self-installed, but require battery maintenance and don't provide long term pumping backup where water powered systems can provide backup for a multiple day outage, but require professional installation and might not keep up.

No matter the backup system chosen, please make sure that systems are operated and installed according to the manufacture instructions and safety directions.



## INTERCONNECTION DOCUMENTS

The policy and process for interconnecting solar (and other qualifying equipment) to the grid have been updated. OPU's updated documents, which follow updated guidelines by the State of Minnesota, are available on our website at: <https://www.owatonnautilities.com/residential-customers/solar-interconnection/>

## COMMUNITY SOLAR

After extensive planning and review, OPU has decided to press pause on Community Solar at this time. There were a number of reasons for this decision, including the inability for subscribers to claim Renewable Energy Credits. This decision was presented to and supported by the Commission, OPU will review opportunities in the future as they become available.



**Take Action for Water Quality in Your Community!**

**Visit the Cannon River Watershed Partnership and City of Owatonna Fair Booth**

Take the opportunity to learn a little bit about what the CRWP and City of Owatonna has been working on as well as the opportunity to be comment and review the City of Owatonna's Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan as part of the communities MS4 Program. The Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan document will be available at the booth for you review! You may also review and comment by filling out a survey on the City's website at <http://ci.owatonna.mn.us/stormwater> Your input is greatly valued! Steele County Fair dates: August 13th – 18th, 2019.

**Save the Date - 11th Annual Watershed Wide Clean-up**

For the past 10 years, volunteers have combed the stream banks and waterways around Owatonna with the goal of cleaning trash and debris from the Straight River. With every passing year, more and more garbage is removed by hard working individuals and businesses who are dedicated to making a difference. Since 2009, residents of Owatonna and the surrounding cannon river watershed have volunteered cleaning up local creeks, the Cannon and Straight River.

The 11th Annual Watershed Wide Clean-up will take place in Owatonna on **September 17th from 9am to 12 noon** at Morehouse Park. The event is hosted by the Cannon River Watershed Partnership, who helps to find sponsors and coordinate the clean-up event. After the event, all volunteers are provided lunch and an opportunity to share their big finds of the day.

*Get Involved! If you are interested in helping or sponsoring the event, visit [www.crowp.net](http://www.crowp.net). Please come and join us to ensure our waters stay clean, safe and healthy!*

**Learn more about the Stormwater Program** by contacting Bradley D. Rademacher, Water Quality/ Stormwater Specialist at (507)-774-7300 or [Bradley.rademacher@ci.owatonna.mn.us](mailto:Bradley.rademacher@ci.owatonna.mn.us)

# REBATES

## OUR WATER REBATES

# Make a Splash!



Clothes Washers up to \$125

High Efficiency Toilets \$25

Rain Barrels \$10

WaterSense Showerheads \$25

Weather-Based  
Irrigation Controllers \$75

Look for the Energy Star®, Energy Star®  
Most Efficient, and WaterSense® labels.

These products are certified to use  
at least 20 percent less water, save energy,  
and perform as well as or better than  
regular models. Plus, you can apply for  
a rebate from Owatonna Public Utilities!



Visit [www.owatonnautilities.com](http://www.owatonnautilities.com) to learn more and download rebate applications with complete terms and conditions.

# CONSERVE & \$AVE®



INDICIA

P.O Box 800 208 S. Walnut Ave.  
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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](http://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

# Come visit us at the Steele County Free Fair in the Four Seasons building August 13-18, 2019

## Moving?

Remember to contact the Customer Service Department **ONE WEEK** prior to moving, 451-2480.



Your opinion matters to us. Please take a few minutes to tell us how we did by visiting our website at [owatonnautilities.com/customerurvey](http://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](mailto:tammy.schmoll@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.

