

# CUSTOMER UPDATE



## FEATURING: ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING EXPANSION

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# OPU MEMO

## 2020 PROJECT REVIEW

84 new residential electric services installed

19 new commercial electric services installed

11,861 ft of primary cable pulled into conduit for overhead to underground conversion

400 Street lights converted to LED

40 new residential water services installed

7,823 ft of water main buried

16 new commercial water services installed

383 new natural gas meters & 201 new service lines installed as part of the 5 to 50 lb conversion

14 new commercial natural gas services

18,967 ft of new gas main installed

40 new residential gas services installed

### CONSERVATION TIP\$

Using a heated mattress pad on your bed will keep you toasty warm all night, allowing you to turn your thermostat down and save money on your utilities. Make sure to adjust your program to include a setback of at least 8 degrees to maximize your cost savings.



**MAYOR**

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## Enjoy the Owatonna Public Library from the Comfort of Your Home

With the changing way we have had to deliver our services this year we have found that our eBooks, eAudiobooks and databases have been more popular and essential than ever before. Being able to connect our patrons to this wealth of content has become one of our most important jobs. Whether it is downloading an eBook from your favorite author or finally getting around to learning a new language, the Owatonna Public Library can help.

Overdrive, and its companion app Libby, are a great source of electronic content offering both eBooks and eAudiobooks as well as a selection of magazines. The collection is outstanding and there are offerings for all ages. Another very popular database is Hoopla. Hoopla offers eBooks and eAudiobooks along with an impressive collection of graphic novels, CDs and movies.

If you are thinking now is a good time to learn a new language, Mango Languages can help. With easy to follow instructions and guidance to make sure you are on the right track, Mango is a great tool to help get you started on your language journey. The interface is engaging and makes learning fun. You can even learn how to talk like a pirate!

Looking to stretch those crafty muscles this winter? Our newest database, Creativebug, has thousands of ideas for you. For beginners or the more advanced users, Creativebug will have you knitting, crocheting or jewelry making in no time. The instruction videos are easy to follow and will help guide you through all the steps of the creation process. With downloadable patterns, templates, recipes and more it has never been easier to get those creative juices flowing.

Of course if you would like to get materials from the library we have a couple of options for you. You can take advantage of our Contactless Materials Pick or set up a Browsing Appointment. All of the details can be found on our webpage at [www.owatonna.info](http://www.owatonna.info).



During these continued trying times, we urge residents to support your locally owned businesses in Steele County. Show them we are all stronger together.



Information and graphics for this article obtained from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency.

To support electric vehicle (EV) use and make ownership practical for more residents, Minnesota needs a statewide network of EV charging stations. The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) has awarded grant funds to ZEF Energy, Inc., of Minneapolis to install 22 EV charging stations around Minnesota.

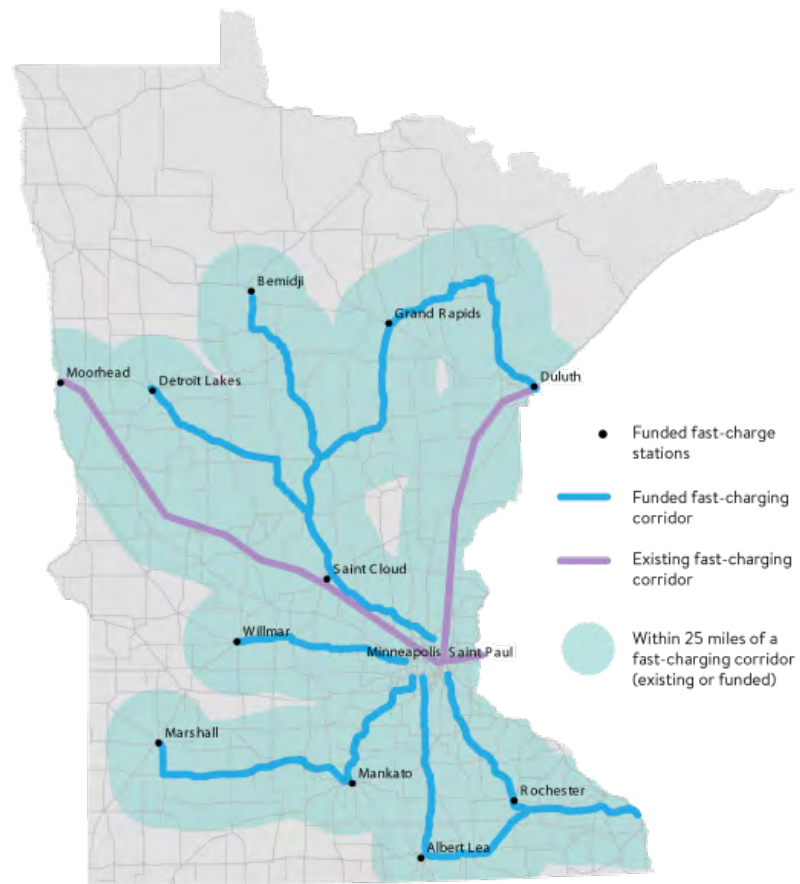
The investment in fast-charging stations along major roadways will increase Minnesota's charging network by 1,110 miles, expanding EV access into greater Minnesota and allow drivers to travel longer distances throughout the state, reducing range anxiety.

When completed, ZEF Energy will install a 150 kW fast-charging station in Southern Minnesota with the remaining 21 locations receiving a 50 kW fast-charging station. Owatonna is one of the locations receiving a 50 kW fast-charging station.

Preparation for the Owatonna station, which will consist of one 50 kW fast-charger and two Level 2 chargers, began in late November (as seen on the cover of this newsletter) and will be completed by the end of 2020. ZEF Energy came to an agreement with the Owatonna City Council to utilize the municipal parking lot on the east side of South Walnut Avenue, across from the Owatonna Public Utilities' office building for the charging station.

This location provides easy, 24/7 access for interstate travelers needing to charge. This location is also within easy walking distance to restaurants, stores and the trail system which will help bring more business to downtown.

The national Volkswagen Diesel Emission Mitigation Settlement provided funding for this project. Minnesota is leading by example and spending the maximum amount allowed under the terms of the settlement — 15% — on zero-emission vehicle infrastructure. In August, the MPCA announced a second phase which will add up to 38 additional charging stations for a total of up to 60 fast-charging stations funded by the MPCA when complete.



# WINTER CHECKLIST FOR A SAFE & ENERGY EFFICIENT HOME

Have a furnace/boiler clean & tune performed to ensure your Equipment is working safely & efficiently

Turn off the water to your outdoor spigots to keep them from freezing (check your basement, crawlspace or mechanical room for shut off valves)

If you have a plastic chimney and air intake for your furnace/boiler, make sure the area around them is clear of debris and snow to ensure safe operation

Visit our website for more energy saving ideas.

Test your carbon monoxide and smoke detectors and change batteries every 6 months

Insulate and tarp around through-wall air conditioners

Replace worn or missing weather stripping around doors and windows

Caulk around window and door trim if you detect drafts

Consider having a House Call Energy Audit performed on your home to find out the best way to save energy in your home.

## 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:

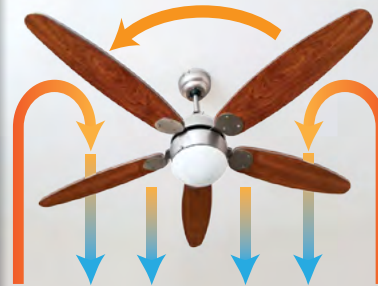
- › Periodically inspected for leaks
- › Periodically inspected for corrosion if the piping is metallic
- › Repaired if any unsafe condition is discovered, or flow of gas should be shut off
- › Located and marked in advance when excavation is performed or is about to be performed near the buried gas piping
- › Carefully excavated by hand when work is performed near the piping



Piping coming into the home is the customer's responsibility.

## Ceiling Fans for Year-Round Comfort

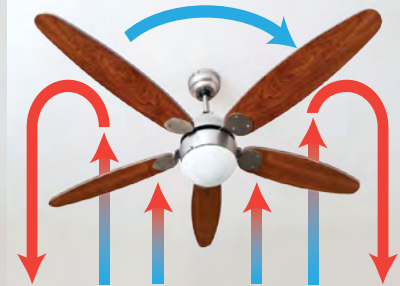
Summer – Counterclockwise



**DOWNDRAFT**

1. Cooling wind chill effect on your skin makes a room feel up to 8° cooler.
2. Save up to 40% on air conditioning costs.
3. Reduce use of central or window air conditioning units.

Winter – Clockwise



**UPDRAFT**

1. Redistribution of warm air makes a room feel warmer and more comfortable.
2. Save up to 15% on heating costs.
3. Reduce clutter and electric hazards such as space heaters and heating blankets.



## LED Light Bulbs

ON SALE NOW

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



Alexander Lumber Co.  
Arrow Hardware & Paint  
Batteries + Bulbs  
Lowe's  
Walmart



# Carbon Monoxide Poisoning or COVID-19?

**SYMPTOMS:**  
Headache • Dizziness  
Drowsiness • Weakness  
Nausea • Vomiting  
Convulsions

**NO CO DETECTOR?  
Feeling symptoms?  
Do not call OPU. Call 911**

**CO DETECTOR ALARM?  
No symptoms? Get out!  
Call OPU: 507.451.1616**

Learn more at [OwatonnaUtilities.com](http://OwatonnaUtilities.com)



Deicing salt accounts for approximately 75% of chloride found in our waterways. During precipitation events and snowmelt, stormwater gathers excess salt and washes it into our nearby streams and lakes. The remaining 25% of chloride in surface and groundwater is from the Wastewater Treatment Facility from water softeners. Chloride in water has major negative impacts to wildlife, the environment, and us.

Knowing how much salt to use and the best time to apply is critical to keeping the balance between safe roads, driveways, parking lots, and sidewalks and a healthy sustainable environment.

**Did you know?** 1 teaspoon of salt pollutes 5 gallons of water!

#### Ways to make a difference:

1. Hire a Smart Salting Contractor, visit [pca.state.mn.us](http://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. Less is more.
4. Sweep up any excess salt. Remember if it is visible on pavement, it will just wash away.
5. Be patient, more salt never results in faster melting. Shovel, shovel, shovel.
6. Make sure to check your water softener for proper ratios or stop using a water softener all together.



Learn more about our **Stormwater Program** at [ci.owatonna.mn.us/stormwater](http://ci.owatonna.mn.us/stormwater) or contact Brad Rademacher, Stormwater/ Water Quality Specialist at 507-774-7300 or [stormwater@ci.owatonna.mn.us](mailto:stormwater@ci.owatonna.mn.us).

# Celebrate with Savings!

## BUY ENERGY EFFICIENT HOLIDAY LIGHTS OR DECORATIONS & APPLY FOR A REBATE:

- Purchase new LED holiday plug-in (not battery or solar operated) lights and decorations by December 31, 2020.
- Complete this page and submit it to your utility:
  - by March 31, 2021
  - with original sales receipt
  - with packaging showing the LED logo and number of lights per string (one package per type).
- Rebate is limited to 50% of LED string or package cost, tax excluded, up to maximum amounts listed below.

Customer Name \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Installation Address (if different from above) \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Phone # (with area code) \_\_\_\_\_  Home  Cell  Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Account # \_\_\_\_\_  Residential  Commercial

A Date Purchased (MM/DD/2020)	B Lamp Size	C # of Lamps per String	D Cost per Package	E Qty of Packages	F Total Cost of Packages (D X E)	G Rebate Amount	H Total Rebate (F X G) (up to max amounts*)	I OFFICE USE ONLY
___/___/2020	<input type="checkbox"/> Mini <input type="checkbox"/> Other		\$		\$	50%	\$	\$
___/___/2020	<input type="checkbox"/> Mini <input type="checkbox"/> Other		\$		\$	50%	\$	\$
___/___/2020	<input type="checkbox"/> Mini <input type="checkbox"/> Other		\$		\$	50%	\$	\$
___/___/2020	<input type="checkbox"/> Mini <input type="checkbox"/> Other		\$		\$	50%	\$	\$
___/___/2020	<input type="checkbox"/> Mini <input type="checkbox"/> Other		\$		\$	50%	\$	\$
___/___/2020	<input type="checkbox"/> Mini <input type="checkbox"/> Other		\$		\$	50%	\$	\$

**\* Rebate is 50% of string or package cost (tax excluded), up to maximum amounts listed below:**

# of Lamps	Maximum Rebate per String
less than 99	\$3.00
100 - 199	\$6.00
200 - 299	\$9.00
300 or more	\$12.00

**OFFICE USE ONLY:** ID# \_\_\_\_\_  
 DATE Received \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date Processed \_\_\_\_\_

**GRAND TOTAL REBATE:** \$ \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

*(Rebates under \$75 will be applied to your account.)*

**TEAMING UP TO SAVE YOU MONEY**

**CONSERVE & \$AVE**

**Austin Utilities**  
 Attn: Rebate Processing  
 1908 14th St NE  
 Austin, MN 55912  
 507.433.8886  
 www.austinutilities.com

**Owatonna Public Utilities**  
 Attn: Rebate Processing  
 P.O. Box 800  
 Owatonna, MN 55060  
 507.451.2480  
 www.owatonnautilities.com

**Rochester Public Utilities**  
 Attn: Rebate Processing  
 4000 E River Rd NE  
 Rochester, MN 55906-2813  
 507.280.1500  
 www.rpu.org

Recipient must be an electric customer of Austin Utilities, Owatonna Public Utilities, or Rochester Public Utilities. Valid only on purchases made by December 31, 2020. All Electric Efficiency Rebate terms and conditions apply.

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](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 629, 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.



FROM ALL OF US AT OPU

*Merry  
Christmas  
& Happy  
New Year!*

*May this holiday season bring you peace,  
joy and happiness.*

**HOLIDAY HOURS:**

**Christmas Eve:**  
December 24 - Closed

**Christmas Day:**  
December 25 - Closed

**New Year's Day:**  
January 1 - Closed

**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.