


# CUSTOMER UPDATE



## BE PREPARED FOR A **POWER OUTAGE**

### **Know How to Protect Yourself During an Outage**



**FEMA**

FEMA V-1008/May 2018

### FEATURING: OUTAGE PREPARATION

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# OPU MEMO



Roger Warehime,  
General Manager

## OPU Commission

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

In our February newsletter, Meter Serviceworker Jeri Blazek, talked about an exciting opportunity OPU was about to embark on regarding the upgrade of our current meter reading data field collection system. We are pleased to announce the project will soon begin!

As a reminder, the project consists of changing out or retrofitting all current meters to a more advanced meter. The benefits of this project are many. The new advanced meters will help us give you, our customers, improved service and more billing information. It will provide OPU with improved operations capabilities while also reducing costs.

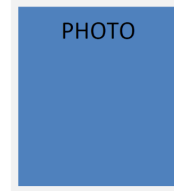
OPU has partnered with ITRON Utility services and Keystone Utility Systems (KUS) to install the new meters and devices in phases. We are expecting the installations to begin around the middle of June 2020 and expect the project to be wrapped up by end of summer 2022.

Authorized Owatonna Public Utilities Contractor



So, what does this mean for you? You may begin to see KUS vehicles and employees around your neighborhood and in your yard. All employees of KUS will have identification badges similar

to the one shown here. Vehicles will have the KUS logo on the side of them (also pictured below). If you are concerned about the authenticity of the badge, please call OPU at 507-451-2480.



Name : Tech Name	
DOB : 01/01/80	
H: 6' 0"	Eyes: Brown



Much of the work can be performed outside with minimal interruption to your daily life. When it comes time to replace your water meter, we will need access to the inside of your home. We will send notifications, in advance, letting you know when your neighborhood is scheduled to have the new meters installed and KUS or Itron will work with you to schedule a convenient time to access your water meter.

We believe this advanced metering network will help us best serve you and contribute to our overall mission of enriching the quality of life in our community by delivering reasonably priced, reliable, safe and customer-focused utility services. We thank each of you, in advance, for your help as we move forward with this project.

## CONSERVATION TIP\$

Avoid "browsing" your refrigerator with the door open by keeping a list of food and snacks on the outside of the door. The longer the door is open, the harder your refrigerator works to catch up, costing you more money on your electric bill.



### **Staying Home? Remember to be Fire Safe!**

Most fires happen where we are the most comfortable – right at home. As we spend more time at home due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Owatonna Fire Department is reminding everyone to keep a few fire safety measures in mind:

- Practicing your culinary skills? Stay in the kitchen when cooking. If you must leave the kitchen, turn the burner off first. Keep anything that can catch fire – oven mitts, wooden utensils, food packaging, towels or curtains – away from your stovetop.
  - Facts:
    - The leading cause of fires in the kitchen is unattended cooking.
    - Most cooking fires in the home involve the kitchen stove.
- Need a break from the TV? Take 5 minutes to test your smoke alarms. Working smoke alarms give you early warning if there is a fire. Make sure you and your home are protected.
  - Facts:
    - Smoke alarms should be installed inside every sleeping room, outside each separate sleeping area, and on every level.
    - 3 out of 5 fire deaths happen in homes with no smoke alarms or no working smoke alarms.
- Trying to catch up on some laundry? Check the lint trap in your dryer. You should clean it out every time you use your dryer.
  - Fact:
    - The leading cause of home clothes dryer fires is failure to clean them.
- Looking for a new activity for the kids? Practice your family escape plan. Don't have one? Make one! Visit the fire department website and download a guide on how to make one: <http://ci.owatonna.mn.us/310/Fire-Prevention>
  - Fact:
    - According to an NFPA survey, only one of every three American households have developed and practiced a home fire escape plan.
- Using real candles to decorate? Consider using flameless candles instead. They look and smell like real candles.
  - Facts:
    - More than one-third of home candle fires started in the bedroom.
    - Three of every five candle fires start when things that can burn are too close to the candle.
- Planning on using your grill? Make sure you clean it first. Keep it at least three feet from the side of your house.
  - Facts:
    - July is the peak month for grill fires.
    - Roughly half of the injuries involving grills are thermal burns.

### **MAYOR**

Tom Kuntz

### **COUNCIL MEMBERS**

David Burbank

Nathan Dotson

Jeff Okerberg


Kevin Raney

Greg Schultz

Brent Svenby

Doug Voss





# BE PREPARED FOR A POWER OUTAGE

Information for this article obtained at [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov)

## HOW TO STAY SAFE WHEN A POWER OUTAGE THREATENS

### Prepare NOW

- **Take an inventory now** of the items you need that rely on electricity.
- **Talk to your medical provider** about a power outage plan for medical devices powered by electricity and refrigerated medicines.
- **Plan for batteries and other alternatives** to meet your needs when the power goes out.
- **Install carbon monoxide detectors with battery backup.**
- **Determine whether your home phone will work in a power outage** and how long battery backup will last.
- **Review the supplies that are available in case of no power.** Have flashlights with extra batteries for every household member. Have enough nonperishable food and water.
- **Keep mobile phones and other electric equipment charged and gas tanks full.**

### Survive DURING

- **Keep freezers and refrigerators closed.** The refrigerator will keep food cold for **about four hours**. A full freezer will keep the temperature for **about 48 hours**. Use coolers with ice if necessary. Monitor temperatures with a thermometer.
- **Use food supplies that do not require refrigeration.**
- **Avoid carbon monoxide poisoning.** Generators, camp stoves, or charcoal grills should always be used outdoors and at least 20 feet away from windows. Never use a gas stovetop or oven to heat your home.
- **Check on your neighbors.** Older adults and younger children are especially vulnerable to extreme temperatures.
- **Turn off or disconnect appliances, equipment or electronics.** Power may return with momentary “surges” or “spikes” that can cause damage.

### Be Safe AFTER

- **When in doubt, throw it out!** Throw away any food that has been exposed to temperatures 40 degrees or higher for two hours or more, or that has an unusual odor, color, or texture.
- **If the power is out for more than a day, discard any medicate that should be refrigerated,** unless the drug’s label says otherwise. If a life depends on the refrigerated drugs, consult a doctor or pharmacist and use medicine only until a new supply is available.

Experiencing an outage?  
Report it on your  
SmartHub account or  
visit our website at [www.owatonnautilities.com/  
outages](http://www.owatonnautilities.com/outages).

# Watch a movie and...






## Pay your utility bill with Auto Pay!

Authorize regularly scheduled payments to be made from your checking account or credit card.

Enroll at [OwatonnaUtilities.com](http://OwatonnaUtilities.com)

## Get Your Grill On ... Natural Gas!

-  Cheaper than propane
-  Never run out of gas
-  Portable models available

Check with your favorite local retailer for available natural gas models and Get Your Grill On... Natural Gas!\*

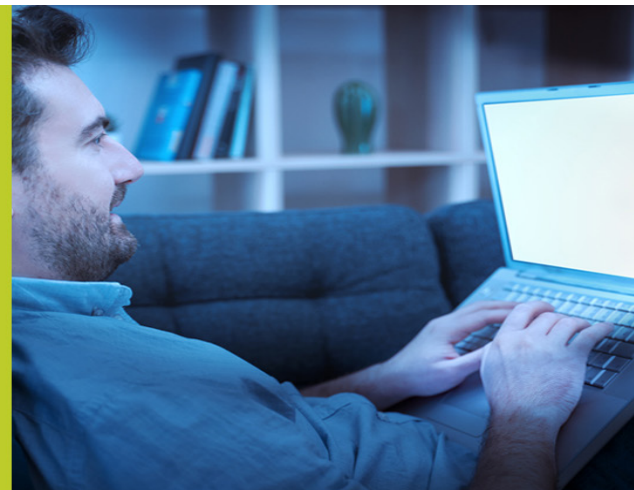
\*Natural gas grills require installation of gas line with shut off to the grilling area. Professional installation required.



## STOP THE SPREAD

In a continuing attempt to encourage social distancing and to protect our employees and the residents of Owatonna from the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19), public access to OPU buildings will remain restricted until further notice. We remind customers, our customer service reps are available by phone to help answer your questions. Utility payments can be made in a variety of ways that do not require face-to-face interaction. See the back of this newsletter for all payment options.

# DIYer by day and streamer at night?



**CALL  
BEFORE  
YOU DIG**

Stay safe during social distancing by calling 811 before starting any new project, so you can stay connected to the internet and utility services you rely on.

**Call 811 or go to your state 811 center's website before digging.**



**Call811.com/811-your-state**

## Community Service Opportunity – Spring Stormwater Pond Clean-up

Winter months leaves behind large amounts of trash and unwanted debris in waterways and stormwater ponds. Contributing to unwanted water pollution and clogging the stormwater system. The City is seeking volunteers to help remove garbage from our 29 publicly owned ponds. This is a perfect way to get out of the house for fresh air and exercise, enjoy the beautiful spring weather, and get involved in the community all while having a positive impact on your environment. The City can provide garbage bags and pond locations if necessary.

### **Safety Considerations**

- Do not go in or near the water edge and all inlet/outlet structures
- Always wear gloves
- In some locations in may be advisable to wear boots
- Do not grab anything that may be sharp or hazardous
- A trash picker or rake may be necessary to reach some objects

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** All CDC and MDH Covid-19 related guidance needs to be strictly followed while walking the ponds. Keep your distance from others of 6 feet at all times, wear a face covering and continually wash your hands.

The City Engineering Department offers several other community programs, including Rain Garden Cost Share, Storm Drain Marking Program, Catch Basin Adoption Program, and Rain Garden Adoption Program.

**Interested in our programs? Contact Brad Rademacher, Water Quality/Stormwater Specialist, (507)-774-7300 or [Bradley.rademacher@ci.owatonna.mn.us](mailto:Bradley.rademacher@ci.owatonna.mn.us)**



# REBATES

It's time to schedule some

# Spring Cleaning!



Complete a  
Central Air Conditioner  
Clean & Tune  
and apply for a

**\$25 REBATE!**

Regular preventative  
maintenance is  
the best way to  
ensure trouble-free,  
energy-efficient  
operation.

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

# CONSERVE & \$AVE<sup>®</sup>

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.



**2019 CONSUMER CONFIDENCE REPORT**

*City of Owatonna, PWSID 1740007*

In a continuing “Go Green”, effort, a 2019 Consumer Confidence Report (CCR) regarding our community water supply system is available for your review on-line at the following address:

[www.owatonnautilities.com/consumer-confidence/](http://www.owatonnautilities.com/consumer-confidence/)

Please take a few minutes, read the CCR, and be aware of the water quality of your drinking water!

Current MCL violations: **NONE**

State and Federal Safe Drinking Water Regulations require all Community Public Water Systems to distribute an Annual Water Quality Report, officially known as the Consumer Confidence Report, by June 30th of each year. This report is available at the above link, however, if you would prefer a paper copy of the report, please feel free to call 507-451-2480.

**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.

**Can't Stop Our Heart Virtual Race**

*Thank you to everyone who donated and participated in the "Can't Stop Our Heart" virtual race. At the print time of this newsletter, donations raised for the From the Heart foundation were over \$3,100.*

