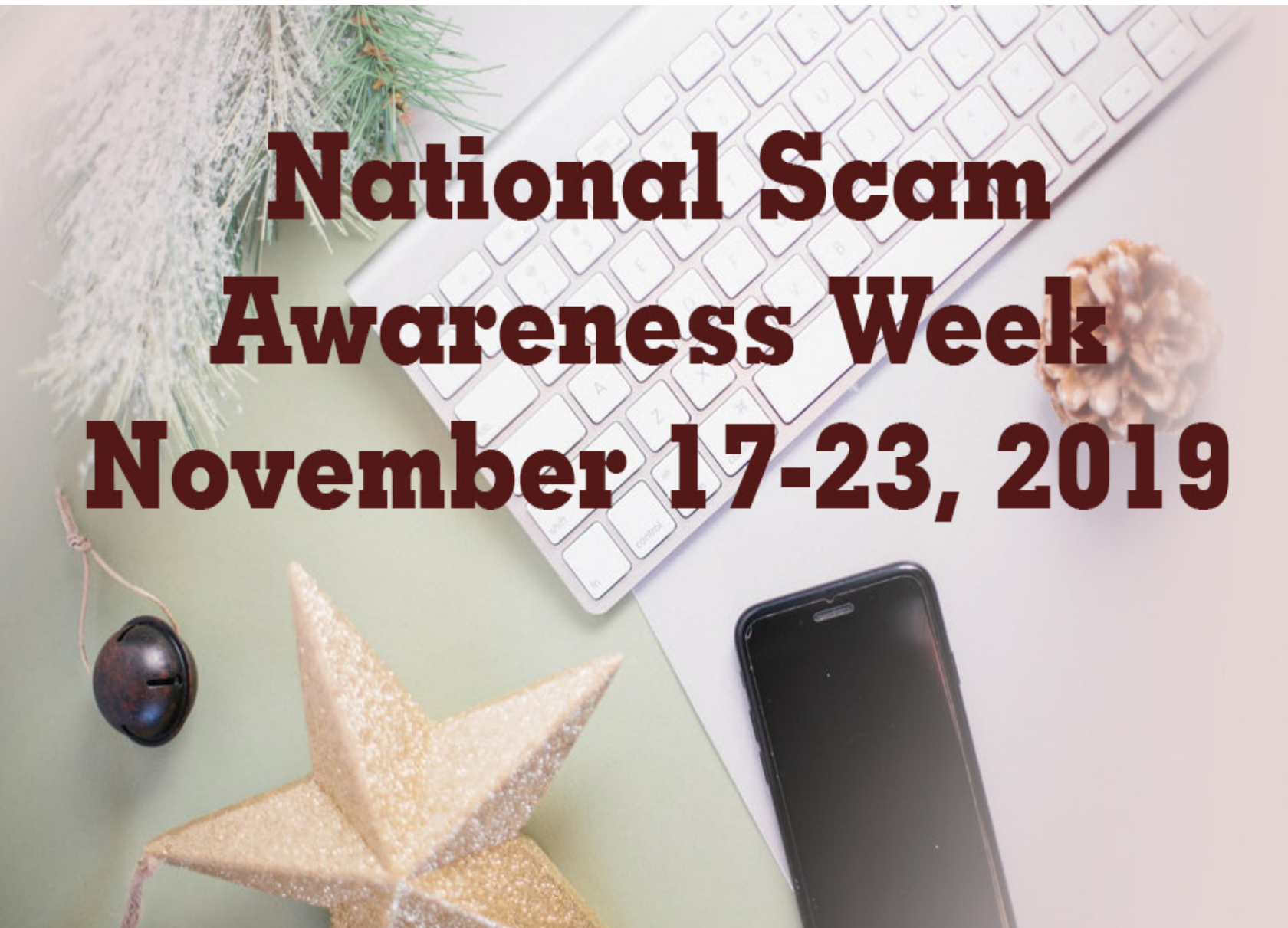


CUSTOMER UPDATE



National Scam Awareness Week November 17-23, 2019

FEATURING:

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OPU MEMO

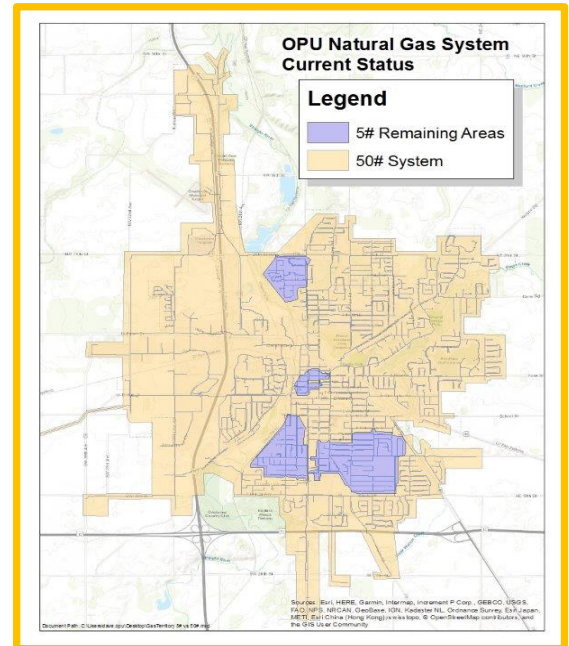


Josh Prokopec
Gas Design Engineer

OPU Commission

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

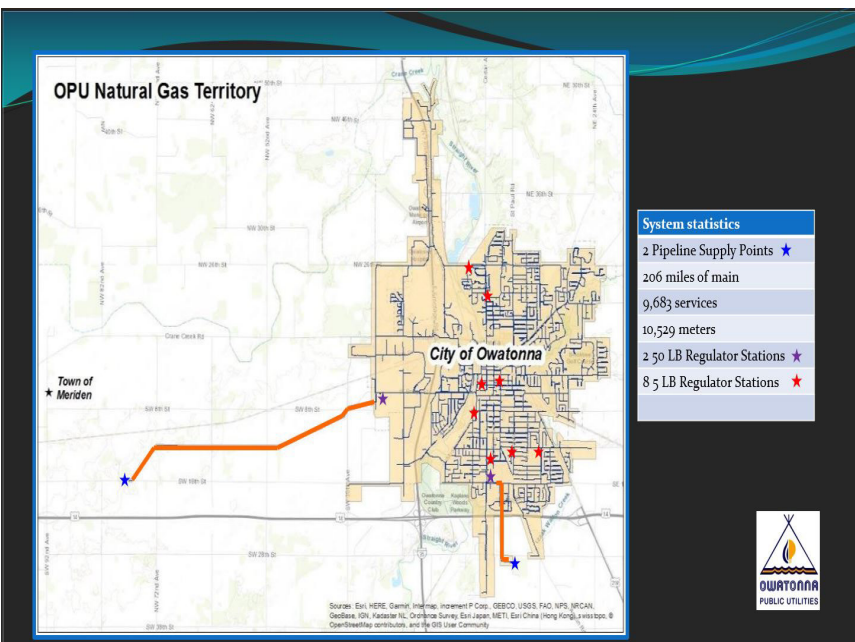
2019 was a very successful year in terms of gas accomplishments. OPU continues to push forward with the 5# conversion project in the northeast part of Owatonna. The project consists of uprating the existing 5# system to a more robust 50#. This will allow us to shore up any uncertainty or weak areas in our gas system. With the growing popularity of on-demand hot water heaters, garage heaters, and generators, uprating our current gas system is a must. This year's project completed approximately 10,000' of new 2" PE gas main, 3,000' of new 4" PE gas main, 13 new gas valves, and 131 excess flow valves. Approximately 3,000' of existing 4" PE gas main and 11,000' of existing 2" PE main was pressure tested for the new 50# pressure. Next year's project looks to be about 30% larger which will complete the north portion of Owatonna with the new 50# pressure. In doing so, we will be



eliminating the last two remaining regulator stations in that area. Our own OPU gas crew has been very busy this summer, not only with keeping up with their normal maintenance, but also has completed nearly 40 new residential gas services and 6 commercial services this construction season.

In the picture below you can see the extents of the OPU Natural Gas Territory. It consists of 2 pipeline supply points near Meriden and another approximately 1 mile south of Owatonna just east of County Highway 45. Both supply points deliver gas to Owatonna at around 280 psi. That pressure is then reduced to 50 psi at one of 2 50# regulator stations. 50# gas is delivered to the majority of Owatonna, with the exception of small areas in the SE, SW and the downtown area that remain 5# and regulator stations will regulate pressure to 5# in that part of the system. In the

near future, the goal will be to have our system all 50# and eliminate the 5# regulator stations all together.



Over the next six months, and the foreseeable future, OPU will be taking on the assignment of modeling our current gas system. This basically means taking our gas mapping system and incorporating live data and usage stats for all meters in Owatonna, both residential and commercial, to simulate how our system is performing. This will allow us to be better prepared for future development and incorporating those future loads into the model to see how it effects our current system. Gas modeling will allow us to identify potential weak spots in our system, learn the behavior of our system in different seasons, and allow us to make our system even more robust where it is needed most.

ODD/EVEN Winter Parking Ordinance Resumes

Owatonna's long standing odd/even side parking ordinance is in effect from November 15 to March 31. The purpose of the ordinance is to facilitate snow removal and street maintenance. If it is necessary for you to leave a vehicle on the street between 12:01 AM and 12:00 PM (noon), park on the even house numbered side of the street on even numbered calendar days and likewise, park on the odd numbered house side of the street on odd numbered days. You should anticipate the midnight date change. Also keep in mind that in December and January we will have two odd days in a row, the 31st and 1st.

Odd/Even parking or alternate side parking regulations are common in Minnesota. A notice is posted at all entrances to the city and on streets throughout the city. It is the responsibility of hosts to notify guests of the odd/even side parking restriction.

Odd/Even parking enforcement is not contingent on an impending snow storm. It is not our objective to write parking tickets when it snows, but rather to get people into the habit of consistently complying with the ordinance. Writing tickets to illegally parked cars during or after a snow storm doesn't help in the snow removal operation. Voluntary compliance, precipitated by consistent enforcement, results in a significantly more effective and efficient plowing operation.

To view the ordinance, visit <https://www.ci.owatonna.mn.us/> and under the Government tab select City Codes, Section 72.02 Parking during Street Maintenance and Snow Emergency. The ordinance reads:

72.02 PARKING DURING STREET MAINTENANCE OR SNOW EMERGENCY.

- (A) (1) No person shall park or leave standing any vehicle on any street in the city on any day between the hours of 12:01 a.m. and 12:00 noon from November 15 through March 31, except as hereinafter provided:
- (a) On even-numbered calendar dates, vehicles may be parked on the near side of the street adjacent to lots and houses which have been assigned even numbers; and
 - (b) On odd-numbered calendar dates, vehicles may be parked on the near side of the street adjacent to lots and houses which have been assigned odd numbers.
- (2) This division (A) does not apply to any street where parking is limited to one side, to any cul-de-sac which has combined even and odd house numbers, nor to any street which has more restrictive parking requirements.
- (3) This division (A) does not apply to street parking within a two-block radius of duly constituted churches for regularly scheduled weekend services, holiday services, funerals and weddings. Street parking is allowed one hour prior and one hour after the scheduled service times.
- (B) Signs announcing the existence of the winter parking ordinance and the hotline telephone number shall be placed at all entrances to the city.
- (C) No vehicle shall be parked or be permitted to remain on any street in or serving the Business District, as defined in § 71.065 of this code of ordinances, between the hours of 2:00 a.m. and 5:00 a.m. on any day, contrary to the signs ordered by the Council to be posted on such streets. Signs in place effective upon the adoption of this chapter shall be in effect until ordered changed.
- (D) Any violation of this section shall be subject to the penalties set forth in § 71.999 of this chapter.

Streets exempt from winter parking ordinance:

- All cul-de-sacs (any street with the word "PLACE" in its name).
- Any "DRIVE" or "LANE" where the house numbers change from even to odd on the same side of the street.
- Any street where parking is limited to one side.
- Any street that has other more restrictive parking requirements.

The Owatonna Police Department would like to thank everyone for taking the time to adhere to this ordinance. The general intent of this ordinance is to provide on street parking for our residents and visitors and to assist the city street maintenance crews by ensuring efficient and effective snow removal that benefits all of us. The Owatonna Police Department wants to wish everyone a safe and joyous holiday season, and travel with care! For more information, please call the Owatonna Police Department at 507-774-7200.

MAYOR

Tom Kuntz

COUNCIL MEMBERS

David Burbank

Nathan Dotson

Jeff Okerberg

Kevin Raney

Greg Schultz

Brent Svenby

Doug Voss

PROTECT YOURSELF AGAINST SCAMS

The holiday season isn't just about gingerbread lattes and holiday feasts. It's also peak season for phishing, when scammers use email, text messages, and fake websites to trick people into giving up their personal information. It's "prime crime time" when phishers and fraudsters creep out of their holes to take advantage of people when they're distracted: businesses are wrapping up end-of-year activities, and record numbers of online holiday shoppers are searching for the best deals, spending more money than they can afford, looking for last-minute credit, and feeling generous when charities come calling.

In November 2017 F5 Labs published an introductory report entitled *Phishing: The Secret of its Success and What You Can Do to Stop It*. In the report, they looked into specifically the problem of phishing and fraud that peaks during the "holiday season", beginning in October and continuing through January. Key highlights from the research include:

- Phishing and fraud season ramps up in October, with incidents jumping over 50% from the annual average, so be on the lookout **now**.
- Seventy-one percent of phishing attacks seen from September 1 through October 31, 2018 focused on impersonating 10 top-name organizations. The organizations happen to be the most widely used email, technology, and social media platforms on the Internet, so phishing targets everyone.
- With the cloning of legitimate emails from well-known companies, the quality of phishing emails is improving and fooling more unsuspecting victims.
- Financial organizations are the fastest growing phishing targets heading into the holiday phishing season, however a rise in ecommerce and shipping is expected, as well.
- Attackers disguise the malware installed during phishing attacks from traditional traffic inspection devices by phoning home to encrypted sites. Sixty-eight percent of the malware sites active in September and October leverage encryption certificates.

In the utility industry, scammers posing as utility companies often utilize phishing to steal your money or obtain personal information. Utilities never ask their customers for Social Security numbers, driver's license numbers, passwords, or financial information **by email**. Scammers often mimic legitimate utility company correspondence to trick you into opening an email, clicking a link, making a payment, or giving away your personal information.

There are several things you can do to protect yourself from scammers:

- Protect Personal Information – Never provide personal information to anyone **initiating** contact with you.
- Take Your Time – If someone reaches out to you to pay your bill immediately to avoid disconnection, tell them you would like to verify they are legitimate. Call the utility directly. Beware if the caller seems impatient, annoyed or angry when you question them.
- Utilities Mail Disconnection Notices – You will not be notified by phone, email, in person or text message as your **FIRST** and **ONLY** notification about a potential disconnection.
- Always Ask Questions
- Report the Scam to Your Utility
- Pay Your Utility **ONLY**

For more information regarding utility scams and ways to protect yourself from them, visit the UtilitiesUnited.org website. They have excellent information regarding scam types and things you can do to protect yourself. As always, if you receive a phone call or email you feel doesn't seem right, call OPU at 507-451-2480 for verification.

Information for this article obtained from F5 Labs and Utilities United Against Scams

CONSERVATION TIP\$

Adding a timer to your holiday decorations not only saves you money but also makes sure they get turned off overnight without having to remember to unplug everything.



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; see our website), what should you do with the old ones?

Owatonna Public Utilities will recycle all of 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 January 31



LED Light Bulbs

ON SALE NOW

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



Alexander Lumber Co.
Arrow Ace Hardware
Batteries + Bulbs
Mills Fleet Farm Walmart



OPU HIGHLIGHT

TOYS FOR TOTS



U.S. MARINE CORPS RESERVE

OPU is proud to be a drop off location, again this year, for Toys for Tots. Bring your unwrapped toy to our office before December 12th and receive an LED light bulb for free!

Important Changes to 2020 Commercial Lighting Rebates

Starting January 1, 2020, LED lamps and fixtures installed in new construction facilities **must be ENERGY STAR® or DesignLights™ Consortium/DLC Certified to qualify** for a 2020 Commercial Lighting Rebate. Certificates will need to be submitted with the application.



Non-certified lighting equipment purchased in 2019 will still be eligible for the 2019 Commercial Lighting Rebate, as long as the project is completed in 2020.

For more information, contact your Account Representative, or visit www.owatonnautilities.com



CARBON MONOXIDE

SYMPTOMS? = GET OUT! • CALL OPU • 24 HRS • 507.451.1616

- Poisonous, potentially deadly gas
- Dangerous because it is colorless, tasteless, and odorless
- Learn the symptoms of exposure listed below:
 - HEADACHE
 - DIZZY
 - DROWSY
 - WEAK
 - NAUSEA
 - VOMITING
 - CONVULSIONS



Learn more about Carbon Monoxide at www.OwatonnaUtilities.com



Say No To Straws! Save Our Beaches!

Over 500 million straws are used daily in the United States. This is enough to circle the earth more than two and half times. Straws now account for one of the top ten debris items found in our water bodies.

Other consumer goods, often single-use disposables (SUDs), that are littered or improperly managed, find its way into rivers, streams, and other waterways.

These ultimately empty to our lakes and oceans where the trash becomes marine debris. Not only does the debris threaten wildlife and water quality, it plugs up stormwater systems, causing localized flood issues.

Trash, packaging, and improperly disposed of waste from sources on land account for 80% of the debris found in water and on beaches. Examples of such SUDs include plastic utensils, plates, water bottles, plastic bags, fast food bags, cigarettes, and wrappers/packaging.

Stop Waste Before It Starts

While recycling is a critical component of the "3-R's" of waste management, we often forget about the first two "R's". Reduce and Reuse. It's important to clean-up litter from our community but it's also critical to prevent the waste from getting there in the first place. Consider alternatives to single-use disposables as consumers and producers.

What Can Be Done?

- Avoid using consumer goods that are single-use
- Purchase reusable stainless straws, water bottles, and cloth shopping bags
- Anytime you take a walk around the neighborhood, in a park, or at a beach set aside a few minutes to pick up garbage
- Join one of several local clean-up events
- Ensure your waste bins are properly enclosed and not overflowing

For further information, contact Bradley D. Rademacher, Water Quality/Stormwater Specialist, (507)-774-7300 or Bradley.rademacher@ci.owatonna.mn.us

It's a great time to start planning your holiday decorations. Whether you plan to put up a few simple strings of lights, go all out, or anything in between, do it right this year by upgrading to LED holiday lights.

Improvements in LED technology over the last few years provide great benefits to holiday lighting. LED lighting is the most energy-efficient string lighting available today. Strings, decorations, and pre-lit trees come in all kinds of color and style options. Options such as white, single color, multi-color, blinking, strings, nets, and icicle lighting are all available in LED.

Compared to the typical incandescent holiday lights, an LED holiday light of the same string size can save up to 90% in energy costs. This reduction in energy use also means increase in safety. Multiple LED strings can be connected together without overloading the wiring and circuit breaker. This reduces the risk of fire both inside and outside your home during the holiday season.

LED holiday lights and decorations continue to be more expensive than the traditional incandescent options which is why OPU continues to offer rebates to customers. LED holiday lights can qualify for up to \$12 per string or decoration depending upon the number of lights. Qualifications can be found on the rebate form below.

Celebrate with Savings!

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

1. Purchase new LED holiday plug-in (not battery or solar operated) lights and decorations in 2019.
2. Complete this page and submit it to Owatonna Public Utilities:
 - by March 31, 2020
 - with original sales receipt
 - with LED packaging showing the LED logo and number of lights per string (one package per type).
3. Rebate is limited to 50% of LED string or package cost, tax excluded.

Customer Name _____

Mailing Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip + 4 _____

Installation Address (if different from above) _____ City _____ State _____ Zip + 4 _____

Home Phone # (with area code) _____ Home Cell Other: _____

Account # _____ Residential Commercial *(Rebates under \$75 will be applied to your account.)*

A Date Purchased (MM/DD/19)	B Lamp Size	C # of Lamps per String	D # of Strings	E Cost per String	F Rebate per String (E X .50) up to max amounts*	G Total Rebate (D X F)
____/____/19	<input type="checkbox"/> Mini <input type="checkbox"/> Other			\$	\$	\$
____/____/19	<input type="checkbox"/> Mini <input type="checkbox"/> Other			\$	\$	\$
____/____/19	<input type="checkbox"/> Mini <input type="checkbox"/> Other			\$	\$	\$
____/____/19	<input type="checkbox"/> Mini <input type="checkbox"/> Other			\$	\$	\$
____/____/19	<input type="checkbox"/> Mini <input type="checkbox"/> Other			\$	\$	\$
____/____/19	<input type="checkbox"/> Mini <input type="checkbox"/> Other			\$	\$	\$

*** 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

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

*Recipient must be an electric customer of Owatonna Public Utilities.
 Valid only on purchases made in 2019.
 All Electric Efficiency Rebate terms and conditions apply.*

GRAND TOTAL REBATE: \$ _____

OFFICE USE ONLY: ID# _____
 DATE Received _____
 Date Processed _____

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.

Freezing Temps Can Cause Broken Pipes!

The OPU Water Serviceline Protection Program provides eligible homeowners with protection from many of the unexpected costs of water service line repairs. Whether it's severe damage repair or thawing a frozen water service line, OPU will cover the costs and allow customers to work directly with contractors to save time and money.

To find out if you are enrolled in the program, look for "Water Svc Line Protect" on your bill. If it's not there, call our customer service department to get enrolled for only \$.99 a month.

To learn more about the program, visit our website at <https://www.owatonnautilities.com/residential-customers/residential-programs/water-service-line-protection-program/>.

Stay Protected With OPU's Water Service Line Protection Program

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.

HOLIDAY HOURS:

Veterans Day:
November 11 - Closed

Thanksgiving:
November 28 - Closed
November 29 - Open 8a - 4p

Christmas Eve:
December 24 - Closed

Christmas Day:
December 25 - Closed

