



the municipal Advantage

PEOPLE...POWER.

MARCH/APRIL 2020



**More Information,
More Timely,
More Often**

Introducing our new bi-monthly newsletter! We are a public utilities, that means we are here to serve you.

For that reason we are including more information about New Ulm Public Utilities people, programs and activities. Plus energy saving tips, history, contests, announcements and more.

Contact us with suggestions of what you'd like to know more about by calling 233-2110, emailing DerekN@newulmmn.gov, or visiting the New Ulm Public Utilities office at 310 1st N. St.

Like us and follow on Facebook for current information.



Water Filtration Plant Pilot Project Underway

Taking a cue from the successful public works pilot project at neighboring City of Lafayette, New Ulm Public Utilities (NUPU), and its consulting engineers, are testing a similar eco-friendly water filtration system.

"The initial purpose (of the Lafayette project) was to remove ammonia from the raw water," said George Brown, NUPU Water Department Supervisor. "Ammonia in the water can consume nine times its concentration in chlorine, which increases the amount of chlorine needed to be added to the water for adequate disinfection. During the Lafayette project it was found that this process could also remove iron and manganese from the water without adding any chemicals. Since New Ulm has similar groundwater quality, we want to determine if this process will work for New Ulm."

NUPU customers would benefit from the cost savings from using natural processes to remove the iron, manganese and ammonia without adding costly harsh chemicals.

—George Brown, Water/District Energy Dept. Supervisor

GEORGE BROWN
Water
Department
Supervisor



■ ABOVE, GEORGE BROWN holds one of the many plastic balls that float in the test water holding tank. The balls provide the wet surface area upon which organisms can grow. The more surface area, the more effective the process is.

The pilot project works by encouraging living organisms that are in the groundwater, to naturally consume the ammonia, iron and manganese (these can cause water to have a reddish brown to a black color) from New Ulm's well water, without adding any harsh chemicals.

Continued to page 2...

NEW ULM PUBLIC UTILITIES NEWSLETTER
newulmmn.gov • 507-233-2110

...Continued from Page 1

**Potentially
there could be
a cost savings
of over
\$50,000 per
year.**

"NUPU customers would benefit by the cost savings from using natural processes to remove the iron, manganese and ammonia without adding costly harsh chemicals," explained Brown. "Potentially there could be a cost savings of over \$50,000 per year."

The City of Lafayette has rebuilt their water treatment plant to implement this



■ ABOVE, THE PILOT project system is set up to test if naturally occurring organisms in New Ulm's groundwater can remove undesired elements without the use of chemicals.

process. With this trial, NUPU seeks to discover if the same process will work in New Ulm's water treatment and what it would cost to modify our water treatment plant. Over the last 10 years there has been a significant increase in interest in using naturally occurring biological

treatment for water plants in place of adding harsh chemicals.

"We expect to have this pilot plant operating over eight or nine months in order to see how it responds to water of changing quality, quantity and temperature," said

Brown. "After this time we will receive a report from the consulting engineers detailing how the pilot plant performed. If it performs well, then we would determine if this process can be utilized in our treatment plant and the cost to install and operate the system."

★ Outstanding in Their Field

Employees of the Month

Jeremy Hillesheim started as a summer intern in 1999 and was promoted to a Class D wastewater operator that fall.

He became a Class A wastewater operator in 2009 and was promoted to chief of maintenance. He is in charge of the work order program, producing, editing and issuing work orders. Jeremy takes the lead on all maintenance projects. Jeremy makes sure the right parts are on hand, and that all systems are in working order. He is usually the first person to recognize a mechanical or electrical failure at the plant. Jeremy's overall knowledge of the Wastewater Treatment Plant is invaluable.

**JEREMY
HILLESHEIM**
Chief of
Maintenance
Wastewater
Treatment
Plant



**TOM
FISCHER**
Crew Chief
Electric
Distribution

Tom Fischer has been employed by the Electric Distribution Department since July

2007 and has been a crew chief since 2016.



Tom is a valuable employee, not only as a lineman and crew chief, but when the electric systems technician retired, Tom stepped up to the plate and was willing to learn those duties. Tom is expected to play a big role in the future of the Electric Distribution Department.

Susan Fix

NUPUC's First Female Commission Member



March is
**Women's
History Month**

★ **When did you serve on the New Ulm Public Utilities Commission (NUPUC)?**

I began on January 1, 2005 and thereafter completed two more terms of three years each finishing on December 31, 2013.

★ **What is the Public Utilities Commission**

The Public Utilities Commission consists of five individuals who are given the sole, exclusive management in control of any utility owned or operated by the City of New Ulm and as determined to be a public utility by the City Council.

★ **What do they do and how do they affect NUPU activities?**

Commission meetings are held once a month. The meetings consist of approving the minutes from the prior month; hearing the Utilities Director's report for the month; reviewing any communications received; and taking action on matters which come before the Commission, such as adopting the Public Utilities budget and authorizing the City Manager to advertise for bids, award bids and enter into contracts. Each Commissioner is also appointed to serve on the Energy Awareness Commission, Personnel

Committee or Cable Communications Advisory Board.

★ **How does one get to be on the Commission?**

Speak with the Mayor and let him/her know that you are interested in being on the Commission. Joel Albrecht was the mayor at that time and spoke with me about the Commission, when it meets, etc. After thinking about it for several days, I called him and said yes.

★ **As the first woman to serve on the Commission, how do you think that affected the dynamic?**

When I started on the Commission, Gary Gleisner was the Utilities Director, with the other Commissioners being Jim Hogen, Jim Schuetzle, Tom Hendel and David Lynn. All were professional and respectful, and made me feel like a part of the Commission from the beginning.

★ **What qualities should a person have to serve on the Commission?**

A person needs to be able to make a serious commitment to make time available to attend the meetings, to care

about what is happening with the Public Utilities, to have the desire to learn, listen and research, and not be afraid to make a tough decision.

★ **What was the most challenging aspect of serving?**

The need to make sure that utilities such as gas, electricity, steam, water, and wastewater were working in the community, not only at the present time, but into the future.

★ **Do you think, as a woman, you brought a unique perspective to the decision-making process of the Commission? If so, what?**

I feel that my perspective on issues were that of a working woman in the legal field, mother, caregiver, and active community member. It is vital to the success of our city to have a variety of people from all walks of life in the decision making process participating in city activities/committees. The experience of those people is what will make our city even greater and I'm proud to have added a unique perspective during my time with the Commission.



Feb. 11 Meeting
NOTES

- Approved contract with Minnesota Valley Action Council (MVAC) to provide services to low income customers
- Reviewed Conservation Improvement Program (CIP) audit conducted by Energy Insight LLC
- Was notified that Minnesota Center for Energy and Environment will conduct home energy audits in 2020
- Discussed Home and Health Show booth ideas
- Was notified that the "Savings Watts and Drops" campaign was completed
- Discussed 2020 CIP budget and accounts
- Welcomed new commission members: Tom Henderson, Sarah Fischer, and Gary Wiltschek
- Elected Jordy Veit as commission chair

How do we rate?

New Ulm Public Utilities (NUPU) recently finished the rate reclassification of commercial and industrial customers and has sent letters to customers changing rate classes.

A rate reclassification is conducted yearly during the last few weeks of January. A rate reclassification looks at a customer's usage from January through December of the prior year. All utilities that NUPU offer are looked at to verify if reclassification is necessary based on customer usage and the rate schedule approved by the New Ulm Public Utilities Commission. Rate schedules for utilities can be found at newulmmn.gov.

A reminder to commercial and industrial customers that reclassifications are done annually and can change yearly based on usage. If you have questions on rates, call NUPU at 507-233-2110.



What is Energy Star?

DEREK NELSON
Energy Services
Representative



Energy Star is a voluntary program backed by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Department of Energy (DOE). Energy Star is known as the symbol of "Energy Efficiency." Since 1992, Energy Star's main purpose or goal is helping consumers and industries save money and save the environment. Statistics supplied by Energy Star from 2017 showed Americans purchased over 300 million Energy Star certified products and more than 300 million Energy Star certified light bulbs.

Those certified items purchased resulted in saving consumers around 370 billion kWh (kilowatt hours) of electricity resulting in reductions of 290 million metric tons of greenhouse gases.

Energy Star has over 70 product categories with products being the same or better than standard products, only they use less energy.

New Ulm Public Utilities utilizes the Energy Star label for many rebates it offers to customers, including LED lighting, refrigerators, freezers, dishwashers, clothes washers and dryers, room air conditioners, and natural gas water heaters. Utilities use the Energy Star certification to know the money rebated back to customers is going toward the most energy efficient products being sold.

If you have questions regarding rebates or if your purchase qualifies, call 507-233-2110, email DerekN@newulmmn.gov, or stop in at the Public Utilities office, weekdays between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m.

REBATE\$ reminder!

When looking to purchase new products, look for the Energy Star logo. Products that do not have the Energy Star logo are likely not eligible for rebates.

And the award goes to
The Energy Star!

For an outstanding performance in **efficiency, energy cost savings and environmental friendliness**, Energy Star appliances take center stage!

New Ulm Public Utilities applauds those who purchase new Energy Star clothes washers and dryers, dishwashers, room air conditioners, refrigerators and freezers by **offering rebates from \$10 to \$50. ENCORE!**

If the qualified product costs more than a conventional, less-efficient counterpart, purchasers will recover their investment in increased energy efficiency through utility bill savings, within a reasonable period of time.

\$aving Watts & Drops

New Ulm Public Utilities (NUPU) and Clean Energy Resource Teams (CERTs) collaborated in 2019/2020 on a ***Saving Watts and Drops*** campaign.

The ***Saving Watts and Drops*** campaign targeted multi-family housing within NUPU territory and focused on easy-to-install energy saving products such as LED bulbs and faucet aerators. NUPU purchased 3,350 9-watt LED (light emitting diode) light bulbs, 186 low flow kitchen aerators and 186 low flow bathroom aerators. NUPU was able to purchase the large quantity of merchandise with the help of CERTs and their ability to obtain Energy Star LED light bulbs and aerators for a very reduced rate. CERTs also helped NUPU by contacting many of the multi-family units in New Ulm.

Of the multi-family units that were contacted, six locations participated in the program. Management and maintenance staff at participating locations picked up the merchandise in the fall of 2019 and have been installing items at their locations. The replacement of incandescent light bulbs to LED bulbs will help decrease electrical usage in residents' apartments and reduce their electric bill.

The kitchen and bathroom aerators will add an additional savings to residents in the form of lower water consumption (not wasting water) and, depending on what type of water heater is utilized, a reduction in natural gas or electric usage when using hot water.

NUPU sends thanks to all multi-family units that participated in the ***Saving Watts and Drops*** campaign.



**FRANK UYS,
ST. MICHAEL'S
APARTMENTS**



Turner Hall Receives Clean Energy Resource Teams Grant

New Ulm Turnverein recently received a seed grant from Clean Energy Resource Teams (CERTs) in the amount of \$5,000 to upgrade lighting in the gymnasium of the Turner Hall building. Seed grants are awarded through CERTs to applicants within seven different regions of Minnesota seeking to enhance their business by implementing clean energy projects. In 2020, each CERTs region had a pool of \$20,000 to award to applicants. A total of five entities in CERTs' southwest region received a seed grant to use in 2020 ranging in the totals of \$2,500 to \$5,000.

Currently, the Turner Hall

gymnasium uses 24 bulbs which were replaced by 12 light-emitting diode (LED) lighting fixtures. The existing bulbs consist of 12 bulbs using 500 watts each and 12 recessed bulbs using 300 watts each. The LED bulbs replacing the existing lighting will use roughly 215 watts per bulb. Turner Hall will see a dramatic reduction in electrical usage and an additional reduction on the electric portion of their utility bill.

Due to the technology within LED bulbs, they can *possibly* reduce the number of fixtures needed. Such is the case in the gymnasium at Turner Hall. LED lighting is very different from other lighting sources such as

incandescent bulbs and compact fluorescent lights (CFLs). According to the U.S.

Department of Energy, key differences include the following:

- **Light Source:** LEDs are the size of a fleck of pepper, and a mix of red, green and blue LEDs is typically used to make white light.

- **Direction:** LEDs emit light in a specific direction, reducing the need for reflectors and diffusers that can trap light. This feature makes LEDs more efficient for many uses such as recessed downlights and task lighting. With other types of lighting, the light must be reflected to the desired direction, and more than half of the light may never leave the fixture.

- **Heat:** LEDs emit very little heat. In comparison, incandescent bulbs release 90% of their energy as heat and CFLs release about 80% of their energy as heat.

According to CERTs' website, the next request for proposals for seed grants will be released in the summer/fall of 2021. CERT seed grants can be researched at cleanenergyresourceteams.com.



BEFORE



AFTER



See us at

New Ulm's Home & Health Show
 March 27-29

Learn about:
Saving Energy
Saving Money
Electric Vehicle Charging Station Stats & More ...
Free Goodies!



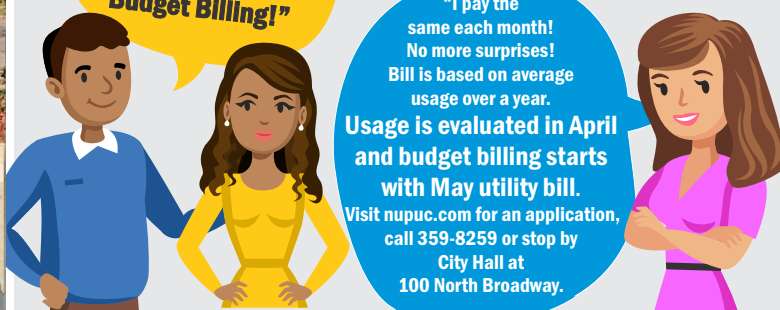
BUDGET BILLING... It's No Surprise!

"We received a \$20 CREDIT when we signed up for Budget Billing!"

"I pay the same each month! No more surprises! Bill is based on average usage over a year."

Usage is evaluated in April and budget billing starts with May utility bill.

Visit nupuc.com for an application, call 359-8259 or stop by City Hall at 100 North Broadway.



CALL FOR PHOTOS!

New Ulm's Best Kept Secrets 2021 Calendar



No one knows New Ulm like you do! Take photos throughout the year of what YOU see that maybe others don't. What is hiding in your backyard, scenes at your favorite grocery store, your kid's dance recital, cats and dogs, picnics in the park, secret alleyways or a night out in downtown hot spots. Take photos of whatever you see that others may not, then submit them to New Ulm Public Utilities for the opportunity to be published in NUPU's 2021 Conservation & Rebate Calendar.

Photos can be from any year. Submit high resolution digital photos, or prints, with year taken, location, event, activity or scene information along with your name and contact information to **DerekN@newulmmn.gov**, drop off or mail: **New Ulm Public Utilities, 310 1st N. St. to the attention of Derek Nelson.** Call 233-2110 for more information.

CELEBRATE & PARTICIPATE!

NUPU encourages customers to be aware of special months and days that spotlight people, groups and themes that promote environmental awareness, pay tribute to those who work in the utility industry and more.

■ MARCH:

Women's History Month

19: First Day of Spring

22: World Water Day

25: National/World Agriculture Day

30: Take a Walk in the Park Day

■ APRIL:

Keep America Beautiful Month

National Safe Digging Month

7: World Health Day

22: Earth Day

22: Administrative Professionals Day

24: Arbor Day

19-25: National Volunteer Week

**CHECK OUT
POWER GRID
FREE FOR
CLASSROOM
USE!**

New Ulm Public Utilities Power Grid Kit is an engaging platform to help students of all ages to learn about the power grid. The kit is a functioning, electricity producing, load driven model, with metered hubs to display output. It is designed for applications in both formal and informal educational environments and provides a hands-on exploration of core science concepts about energy consumption and generation. Contact Derek Nelson at 233-2110 or email **DerekN@newulmmn.gov** for details and to check out for free for educational use.



DEPARTMENT **highlights**

DEPARTMENT STAFF SHARE
IMPROVEMENTS, PLANS,
ACTIVITIES AND
ANNOUNCEMENTS

**DAVE
KUEHN**
Chief Engineer
Electric
Production

The Electric Production Department is in the process of updating the controls on our #4 boiler. We are adding variable frequency drives to our fans and electronic actuators to control our dampers in the system.

The old system used pneumatic drives that are obsolete and were in need of repairs. The addition of this equipment will make the boiler more efficient and safer to operate.

In the next month or so we will be doing a major inspection and controls upgrade to our #6 Elliott steam turbine generator. This is required by our insurance carrier every 10 years. Every five years we are required to have the safety devices inspected. Controls were installed in 1996 when the unit was rejuvenated. They are now obsolete and are in need of an upgrade as part of the major inspection. This will save money and make this unit more efficient and safer to operate.



Spring is around the corner but in Minnesota can still be winter weather. The New Ulm Public Utilities **Gas Department** and the Minnesota Office of Pipeline Safety urge pipeline operators, building managers and residents of single- or multi-family buildings to be aware that accumulations of water, ice, and snow can cause serious damage to gas facilities.

**DAVID
O'BRIEN**
SUPERVISOR
Gas
Department

Homeowners and businesses should take proactive measures to safeguard outside service regulators, meters, and other facilities from accumulation of water, ice, and snow.

Exercise caution when removing snow because snow removal equipment or falling ice can easily strike or damage gas facilities. Snow removed from driveways, walks, streets and parking lots should not be placed near a meter set, service regulator, or other pipeline facility.

Just for FUN!

New Ulm Public Utilities encourages kids of all ages to learn about safety, saving energy, saving money, and environmental awareness.



Earth Day is a national day for people to focus on the environment and caring for our planet. Get out your crayons and markers and color your world.

Here are some ideas you can do to conserve energy and help our planet. Fill in the blanks:

★ WHEN I BRUSH MY TEETH I SHOULD _____.

★ WHEN I'M COLD I COULD _____.

INSTEAD OF TURNING UP THE HEAT.

★ WHEN I AM NOT WATCHING TELEVISION I SHOULD _____.

COLOR YOUR WORLD! April 22 is Earth Day



EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES WITH NEW ULM PUBLIC UTILITIES

★ Relief Boiler Operator

Full time, Electric Production

Under the direct supervision of the Power Plant Operator, to operate and maintain all steam generating equipment. This position will work shifts, which does include working weekends. This position does receive a 3.5% shift differential.

Visit newulmmn.gov for details and to apply. Select **CITY DEPARTMENTS** and then **HUMAN RESOURCES**.

To apply for an opening, complete an online application by clicking "Apply" at the top of the job announcement and then clicking "Create an account."

You may access a free public computer at the New Ulm Public Library.



CUSTOMER! tips & tricks!



We asked NUPU customers for energy saving tips they use in their own homes.

★ **Fawn:** Our front porch windows are very drafty, so we hang a heavy quilt over the doorway between the porch and the kitchen. It makes a big difference!

★ **Carol:** When the sun goes down or when it's windy, close all curtains/drapes/blinds. Makes a world of difference!!

★ **Rebecca:** Unplug appliances when not in use. Turn off water when brushing your teeth. Keep your thermostat at the same temperature. For your furnace, keep as low as you can stand in winter, and for air conditioning, as warm as you can stand in summer.

★ **Aubrey:** Putting shrink plastic on the inside of leaky windows.

★ **Heidi:** If you're going to build a new home, it is well worth spending the extra money to spray foam the entire house. You will save \$\$\$ every year.



New Ulm Public Utilities
 310 1st North Street
 New Ulm, Minnesota 56073



the municipal
Advantage

**NEW ULM PUBLIC UTILITIES
 NEWSLETTER**

Water Filtration Pilot Project	1
Employees of the Month	2
Women's History Month: Susan Fix	3
Energy Awareness Commission Notes	3
How Do We Rate?	3
What is Energy Star?	4
Appliance Rebate	4
Saving Watts and Drops	4
Turner Hall Receives Grant	5
Home & Health Show	5
Budget Billing	5
Call for Photos: New Ulm's Best Kept Secrets	6
March Awareness Month Calendar	6
Department Highlights	6
Check Out the Power Grid	6
Just for Fun	7
Customer Tips & Tricks	7
Employment Opportunities	7



**NEW ULM PUBLIC UTILITIES
 310 1st North Street**

MAIN NUMBER	233-2110
Billings & Connections	359-8259
Administration	359-8264
Electric Distribution Dept	359-8295
Gas Dept	359-8289
Material Distribution Center	233-2134
Power Plant Chief Engineer	233-2128
Power Plant Operator	233-2129
Utilities Director	359-8264
Wastewater Treatment Plant	359-8360
Water/Steam Dept	359-8279
AFTER HOURS ALL CALLS	359-8204