



the municipal **Advantage** PEOPLE...POWER.

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2022

**New rates
effective with
February 2022
billing.**

Cost of Service and Rate Increase

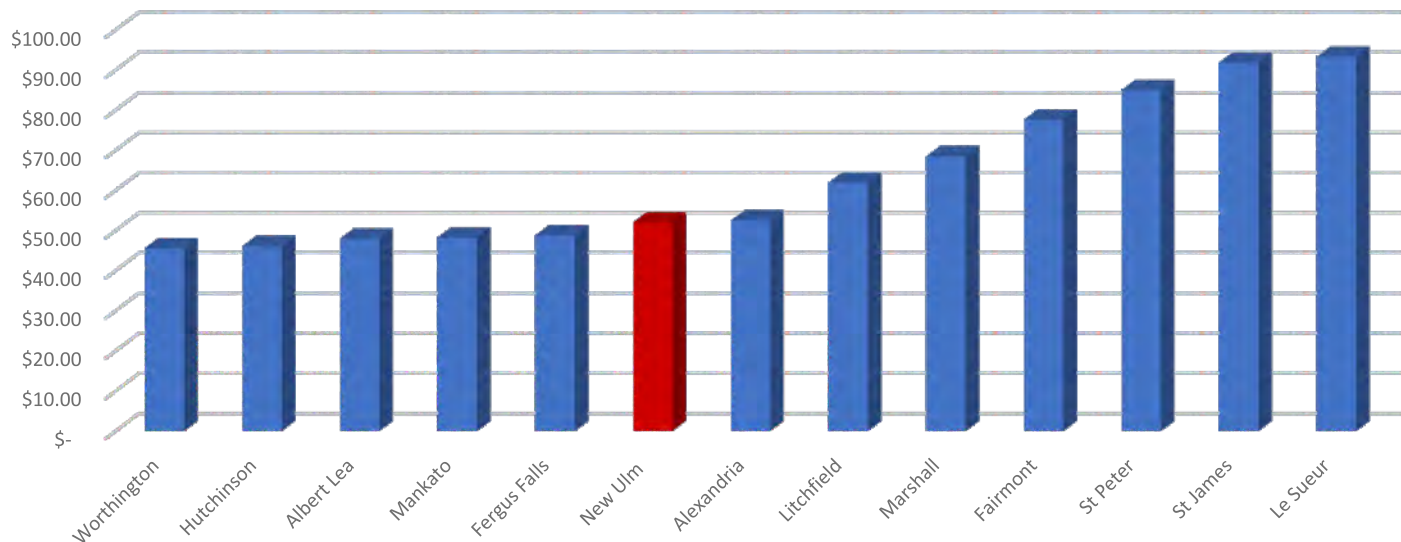
New Ulm Public Utilities (NUPU) is responsible to provide safe, reliable, high-quality water to the citizens

and businesses of New Ulm. In 2021, a cost of service and rate study was completed (by a third party) which recommended an increase in the water and wastewater (sewer) rates.

While NUPU strives to provide affordable utility rates, with aging infrastructure, increased costs to provide service and state and federal regulations, an

Rates continued on page 2

Residential Water & Sanitary Sewer Comparison
based on a monthly 3000 gallon flow



Data from SEH Cost of Service and Rate Design Study completed June 1, 2021

PUBLIC POWER WEEK PRIZE WINNERS

Thank you to all individuals who participated in Public Power Week (PPW) 2021. Over 400 customers participated in our prize giveaway celebrating community-owned public power. We look forward to doing something similar in the upcoming years to celebrate public power and our customers.

★ Paul Thiede
★ Peg Sandgren
★ Christine Pfeiffer

★ Deanne Donovan
★ Patti Hengel
★ Cassandra Peterson



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

Rates from page 2

increase in rates is necessary. The water and sewer utility rates have not been adjusted since 2014. The increase will be effective with the February 2022 billing.

For our residential and small commercial customers, the

approximately \$5 increase is about the cost of a cup of coffee at your favorite coffee shop.

Visit newulmmn.gov for increases to other classes, and for more information regarding utility rates, and to view the cost of service and rate study.

Water and Sewer Line Protection

Over the last few months New Ulm residences have been receiving mailings from Service Line Warranties of America (SLWA). NUPU wants to remind customers that this is a voluntary program and is not mandatory to enroll, nor is it an NUPU program.



However, if you are interested and need additional information on SLWA's policy, or to stop mailings, you may find material on their website www.slwofa.com, or by calling them toll-free at 1-866-922-9006. Additionally, homeowners should also think about contacting their insurance agent to see if they carry the same or similar coverage for water and sewer lines.

DO FLUSH

The following can be flushed down the toilet.

Toilet paper

DO NOT FLUSH

The following cannot go in the toilet as they can clog pipes and septic systems.

Paper towels

Cigarette butts

Disposable diapers

Wipes
(Baby or flushable)

Feminine hygiene products

Plastics

Medications

Cotton
(Cotton swabs or balls)

Dental floss

Toxic Substances

Dispose of these items in the trash.

Where Does Our Water Come From?



New Ulm's drinking water comes from a groundwater source: 13 wells ranging from 62 to 247 feet deep, that draw water from the Mt. Simon, Cretaceous, Undifferentiated and Quaternary Buried Artesian aquifers.

New Ulm works hard to provide you with safe and reliable drinking water that meets federal and state water quality requirements.

Contact George Brown, Water/District Energy Supervisor, at (507) 233-2132 or GeorgeB@newulmmn.gov if you have questions about New Ulm's drinking water. You can also ask for information about how you can take part in decisions that may affect water quality.

You may view the entire Consumer Confidence New Ulm Drinking Water Report at newulmmn.gov.



NOTICE

Did you Submit a Furnace Check and Clean Rebate in November-December?

Customers who submitted a Furnace Check and Clean rebate application in late November and December may not have noticed a bill credit on their most recent utility invoice. This was due to the program running out of funds for 2021.



Rebates are only given when accounts are active during the year they were serviced, installed or purchased. Funds will no longer be available to rebate customers until the following year when accounts are replenished. Rebates in a given year do not carry over to the next year. If allocated rebate funds are depleted in a given year for a given program, no more rebates will be available that year.

Thank you to all customers participating in this and other rebate programs in 2021.



**DAVID
O'BRIEN**
Gas Department
Supervisor

NUPU Gas Department Provides FREE Services for Your Convenience and Safety

● The New Ulm Public Utilities Gas Department provides a service you may not be aware of. **When you experience a problem with the operation of a gas appliance, call the Gas Department first at 507-359-8264 during work hours or 877-868-3636 anytime.** We will send a Service Technician to make sure the problem is not with the gas supply at no charge to you.

After the technician has checked the gas meter and regulator for proper operation it may be necessary to contact a qualified repair person to service your appliance. We do not make any adjustments or repairs.

If you call an appliance repair person or plumber before calling us and the problem turns out to be the gas meter or regulator you will not be reimbursed for the appliance service call.

● **Annually, the New Ulm Public Utilities (NUPU) staff change out gas meters to ensure the accuracy of our meters.** If your meter is scheduled to be replaced, a tag will be placed on your home's exterior door. Upon receiving this door tag, please contact NUPU as soon as possible to schedule an appointment. It is necessary for NUPU staff to enter your home to complete the installation of the new meter due to the brief interruption of service which occurs during the meter change. NUPU staff will re-light pilot lights and make sure your gas appliances are working before leaving.



● Every home should have a carbon monoxide (CO) detector in it. CO detectors are just as important as smoke detectors and should be installed in a central location outside each sleeping area and on every level of the home. Carbon Monoxide is an odorless, colorless

gas that when accumulating over time can be fatal. **If your CO detector alarms, immediately move to a fresh air location outdoors or by an open window or door and call the New Ulm Public Utilities Gas Department.** We will send a technician to check the level of CO present and try to locate the source.

● And lastly, before you begin any excavation project, **call your Gopher State One-Call Center at 1-800-252-1166 or 811** for locate requests. This service is available to you, free of charge, so that you are aware of any underground utilities before you dig. Your family's safety is very important to us.



Take Steps to Reduce the Risk of Frozen Water Pipes

Cold weather brings a chance of water pipes freezing and breaking. This risk increases with long stretches of extremely cold weather. Here are some tips to help avoid frozen water pipes in your home.

✓ Most water service lines enter the home in the basement, make sure that the basement temperature is at least 55 degrees.

✓ Expose water pipes to warmer air by leaving cupboard doors open under the kitchen and bathroom sinks to allow heat to enter that space.

✓ Check for air leaks in your home that could freeze the water pipes.

✓ Monitor the temperature of your home's water by running the water in a sink closest to your water meter until the water is at its coldest temperature. For example, use a laundry sink in the basement. The water temperature should be around 45 degrees in the winter. If the temperature drops below 40 degrees, your service line may be starting to freeze up.

✓ If your service is prone to freezing or the temperature of the water is below 45, you can help prevent a service line from freezing by letting the water run from a faucet at 1 quart per minute. This would be a pencil size flow of water from your faucet. This results in a flow of about 5,400 gallons in one month and would cost about \$42 for the month above your usual water/sewer usage. The cost to have a contractor thaw a frozen water service is estimated at a minimum of \$400.

The risk of frozen water service lines will continue until the extreme cold passes and the temperature returns to normal levels.



Winter Tree Trimming



Beginning in mid-December, the Electric Distribution Department began their yearly winter overhead maintenance programs. These programs include tree trimming, hardware tightening and transformer protection upgrades.

When trimming trees around power lines as well as service lines, it is our practice to contact the property owner to discuss the extent of trimming required prior to starting the work. If the attempt to contact the property owner directly is unsuccessful, a tag will be placed on your door with information relating to trimming as well as contact information.

You may submit your questions as well as your permission to trim trees on your property to the Electric Distribution Department by email or by calling 507-359-8295.



PUC AND EAC MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

PUC Agenda Highlights (October and November 2021)

- Presentation of 2022 Preliminary budget
- Purchase agreement for fiber optic install between City Hall and Public Utilities buildings
- Purchase agreement for energy management services for procurement of natural gas
- 9/11 Commemorative Coin presented by Brown County Veteran Services to Michael Fischer (Power Plant) and Nick Price (Water/District Energy)
- Schedule of Fees and Charges approved for January 1, 2022
- Center Street lighting replacement plan approved.

EAC Agenda Highlights November Meeting *GreenStep Cities Items*

- Approved Best Practice 27.3- Create, assist with, and promote local food production/distribution within the city.
- Approved Best Practice 5.1- Adopt an historic preservation ordinance/regulation and encourage adaptive reuse.
- Approved Best Practice 1.4- Implement IT efforts and city employee engagement to reduce plug loads, building energy use and workflow efficiency.

January is...

Walk Your Dog Month
Take advantage of
New Ulm's
Dog Park located at
527 S. German Street



February is...

National Library Lovers Month
Visit New Ulm Public Library
and discover more than books.
Videos, programs, online
arts and craft lessons & more!

CUSTOMER tips & tricks!



**New Ulm Residents
were asked:
What do you do in
winter to keep your
homes warm while
saving money at
the same time?**

Casi: Putting plastic on windows with kits you can get at Walmart or Menards.

Jerin: Long Johns as unders for our clothes and night clothes. We also keep our inside doors closed with the pads on the bottom to keep cold air from coming or going. Keep the storm windows on the outside sealed well so the inner windows aren't leaking cold in. Blackout curtains also help block the cold and heat in the appropriate areas.

Jared: You'd be surprised at how much air leakage there is through the dryer vent. Keep your dryer door closed inside and make sure that the flap on the outside of your home where the dryer exhausts is not full of lint and stuck open! Easy to overlook that! It also goes for bathroom exhaust fans and stove exhaust fans. Make sure that they are all equipped with dampers!

Julie: Foam insulators behind outside wall outlets and light switch covers and outlets not in use. Child safety covers are inserted. Caulk around all windows and doors inside and out. Windows with direct sunshine always left uncovered (no shades). Good weather-stripping around all doors. Outside doors kept dead bolted for better seal. Make sure all windows are locked.

Kate: Wood burning stove, get free wood by removing dead trees.

Carol: Keep drapes /curtains closed at night & cloudy days!

Justin: Heat up rice bags in the microwave. Best personal heaters in the winter months.

Shari: I have a cat that sleeps on my lap. Always toasty warm! We turn the thermostat down at night and we have the south blinds open during the day when the sun is shining in.

Gerhard: Wear long underwear, and a sweater. Put a blanket over you. Turn thermostat down.



★ Outstanding in Their Field Employees of the Month



**PATTY
FAERBER**
Custodian
Administration
Dept.



**RYAN
STADICK**
Boiler Operator
Trainee
Electric
Production
Dept.



**ALEX
SCHAPEKAH**
Storeroom
Clerk
Administration
Dept.

Patty consistently does a great job of keeping the PUC Admin building and the Material Distribution Center neat, clean and organized. She is always willing to lend a helping hand and regularly helps out wherever needed. During 2020 she was very diligent about cleaning and sanitizing, and always made sure that the safety and cleaning supplies were in stock and available to staff. She also volunteers to help with additional projects outside of her normal custodial job duties. She planned and worked with contractors to add a break room at the NUPU Admin building, worked with contractors to install handicapped door operators, and has also been working on a multi-year project with electricians to replace the lighting at the NUPU Admin building with energy efficient LED lights. Patty is very much a team player.

Ryan has shown the ability to adapt to all phases of the Electric Production Department. He has assisted with all aspects of maintenance, has been learning the boilers, sits in as Relief Boiler Operator during the day, has been filling in for the Results Analyst when that person is out. Ryan is also preparing for his 2nd Class Engineers license test. He has been a quick learner and has grasped our procedures and noted changes that needed to be altered. He has been a tremendous help to the department wherever he is needed. Ryan is a proven asset in the short time he has been with us.

Alex works in the Material Distribution Center. He was recently promoted to his current position of Storeroom Clerk. Alex gives a high level of service to fellow employees and others who stop at the MDC for materials and supplies. He is always willing to learn new things and offers suggestions on how to improve processes and efficiencies. Alex has a cheerful and outgoing personality and always makes others feel welcomed.

Linda: Put bubble wrap on windows so they give light but are insulated.

Haley: Plastic sheets over the windows to lessen any possible air leak from the outside.

Linda: I keep toasty warm covered with an electric blanket while watching tv.

Duncan: Corn/pellet stove.

Teresa: I use electric blankets, bed, couch, guest bed. I also keep doors closed to rooms not in use.

Dale: We dress for winter and keep the thermostat at 64 during the day and with a extra blanket 58 for sleeping. We do turn it up for company.

Shelley: Making sure all windows are actually locked so they are airtight (seems so obvious, but maybe we aren't the only ones!)

Mary Ellen: Have programmable thermostat, set to low 60s at night and mid 60s day. I think a humidifier helps too for warmth, and an extra quilt on bed . Updated window replacements also.

Terry: When we bought our older mobile home it had giant Styrofoam blocks under it around the inside of the skirting. We attached them to the inside of the skirting with adhesive and it really helps keep our floor warmer! Also locked windows, plastic over windows and we changed out to newer windows. We also use our electric fireplace more in the evenings in the living room where we are so to not overheat all the rooms, and then turn thermostat down at bedtime.

Daneen: Plastic, plastic, plastic.

**CUSTOMER
tips & tricks!**



Weben: I noticed a big difference in turning our furnace fan from auto to on. Circulates the warm air longer and keeps our main level warmer. It also keeps our furnace from constantly turning on and off.



Increase Efficiency and Save Money as Temperatures Plummet

DEREK NELSON
Energy Services
Representative



A cold winter can bring an equally cold reality: higher heat bills. This winter, keep your costs and energy use as low as possible by following these winter efficiency tips:

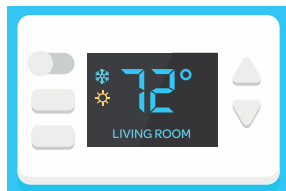
★ Have a heating system checkup and **change your filter** every month or two during winter.



★ Make sure there's **plenty of insulation** in attics and crawl spaces. Check the ductwork that's in your basement or attic. Air leaks in ducts can account for about 20 to 30 percent of wasted heat. If there are leaks or holes in your ducts, use sealant or metal tape.

★ **Check** for gaps and air leaks around doors, windows, outlets, etc. **Seal** these areas with caulk, sealant, weather stripping, etc.

★ Use a **programmable thermostat** to set your temperature lower when you're away to prevent energy waste from heating an empty house. Using a programmable thermostat can help you save about \$180 each year.



★ **Leave space** around heating registers so warm air can easily enter the area.

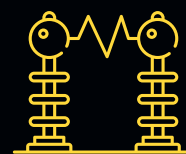
★ Consider **replacing older heating equipment** with newer, more efficient systems.

★ **Keep curtains open** to let direct sunlight heat the home during daylight hours. Remember to **close your curtains in the evening** to reduce drafts.

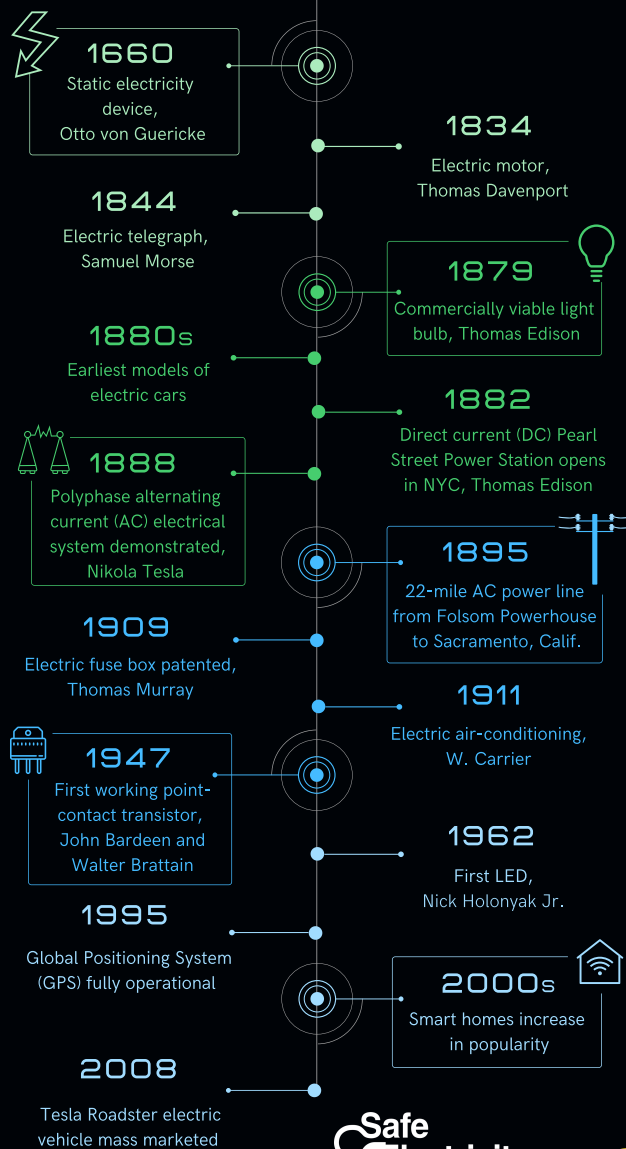
★ **Turn your water heater down** to the "warm" setting, or to about 120 degrees, to cut back on the energy waste and reduce the likelihood of scalds. Water heating consumes a higher percentage of heating costs than you might think, nearly a fifth.

IMPORTANT INVENTIONS THAT CHANGED THE WORLD

Electricity was discovered by the work of many great minds. It wasn't until the 1600s and 1700s that it was studied scientifically, however.



The first scientist to coin the term "electricity" was William Gilbert, who studied the effects of electricity and magnetism on amber.



Safe Electricity.org®

UTILITY trivia

Outside of major adverse events (e.g., storms), customers of a public power utility are likely to be without power for less time - 62 minutes a year, compared to 150 minutes a year for customers of private utilities.



Time for FUN!

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

HOW TO PLAY ENERGY CONSERVATION BINGO

Tear off this page and post on your refrigerator or other easy-to-see spot in your home!

This game requires team effort. Kids (and adults) in the family work together to accomplish simple energy saving tasks.

After a task is accomplished, they can mark it off on the Bingo board (at right). Once the kids work together to get four in a row down or five in a row across they get to have a special family celebration!

If you do "black out" as a family and cover up EVERY square during the week you get to do an additional celebration! Perhaps a night out at (or order in) from a local restaurant or buy something special at a local retailer.

TASKS:

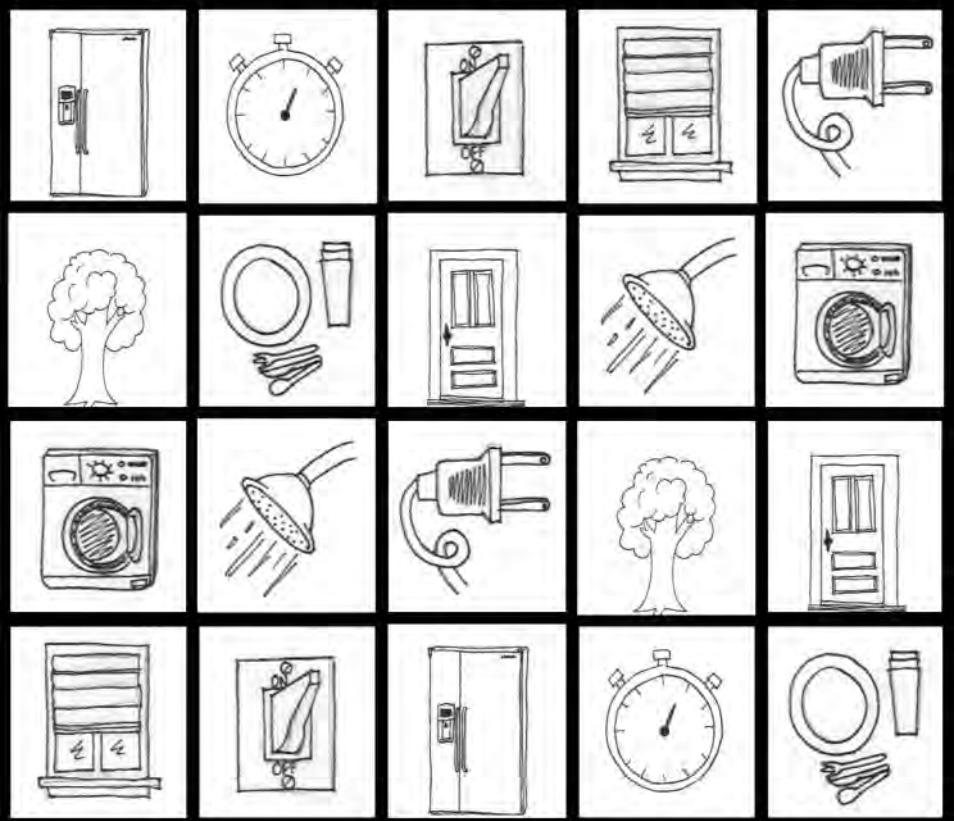
- ✗ Take a short shower instead of a long bath.
- ✗ Don't leave the refrigerator door open
- ✗ Wipe dishes instead of rinsing to help use less water.
- ✗ Unplug electronics when they're not in use.
- ✗ Open your shades (instead of using the lights) on winter days.
- ✗ Shave a minute off shower time and save water.
- ✗ Turn off lights when not needed. Turn off lights during peak hours.
- ✗ Plan an outing to stay cool, like a trip to a shaded park or the splash pad.
- ✗ Fill the washer up with a full load of laundry. Don't just wash a few items.
- ✗ Keep doors & windows shut when heat or A/C are on.

Just for Laughs



"OK, who set the thermostat to 33?"

SAVE ENERGY BINGO



Visit newulmmn.gov

Find the latest news and announcements, department information, rebate information and forms, along with employment opportunities and more!



Follow us on Facebook!



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

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US POSTAGE
PAID
MANKATO, MN
PERMIT 609



the municipal
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NEW ULM PUBLIC UTILITIES
JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2022 NEWSLETTER

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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