



# the municipal **Advantage**

PEOPLE...POWER.

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2022

"This is the spirit of a municipal utility worker. I am very proud of all the municipal employees of New Ulm Public Utilities."

—Kris Manderfeld  
NUPU Director



## NUPU Line Workers Assist Florida Hurricane Victims

In late September of this year, Minnesota Municipal Utilities Association (MMUA) received a call from Kissimmee Utility in Florida to help restore power in the ravaged communities during the aftermath of Hurricane Ian. Fourteen Minnesota utilities responded, including New Ulm Public Utilities (NUPU).

NUPU line workers James Henderson, Brandon Devorak and Joe Weber, met with other Minnesota utilities in Rochester before traveling to Bartow, Florida to help relief efforts which included rebuilding the line, replacing equipment and restoring power to the community.

Mutual aid calls for utility work are

not unusual. Henderson said there is usually at least one mutual aid request a year. New Ulm line workers have responded to calls in Redwood Falls, Owatonna and Lake Crystal over the years. These calls usually happen in the spring following extreme storms. Devorak said they have also helped in Iowa and South Dakota before, following ice storms.

Traveling to Florida was a unique experience as it's not every day that Minnesota linemen get to help following a hurricane. Much of the work was repairing power lines that went down in the storm.

According to Henderson, most of the power lines in Florida are above

*HURRICANE continued to page 2...*



Volunteers from left:  
Joe Weber,  
Brandon Devorak,  
James Henderson



**NEW ULM PUBLIC UTILITIES NEWSLETTER**  
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## HURRICANE continued from page 1...

ground. Unlike in Minnesota, power lines cannot easily be buried underground due to the sandy soil and groundwater.

Devorak commented that, unlike Minnesota utility poles, Florida poles were made of concrete but for the most part it was not too different from Minnesota.

Henderson said one benefit of working in Florida was not digging to replace a pole. They simply pulled the old pole out of the ground and stick in the new one.

Though replacing a pole was quicker, linemen had to be careful of other hazards. As many of the areas had been without power for days, some residents and businesses had backup generators running. They had to be careful around down wires because some could be live, hence wearing protective gear was essential.

Another unique feature of working in Florida was the wildlife. Henderson said you had to watch your step. The New Ulm linemen never encountered any reptiles, but they heard from other mutual aid workers about large snakes and alligators hanging around repair zones.

The three men worked 16-hour days to help restore power along with other utility workers from across the country. All three New Ulm linemen praised the professionalism of everyone involved in the mutual aid call. The entire process was extremely efficient.



Henderson said organizing and getting crews to Florida went very well. Once on location, they were able to start working almost immediately.

Many of the residents had been without power for days and were thankful to the lineworkers who brought it back online. Homeowners would bring pizzas and breakfast sandwiches as they worked.

The three said it was a great experience and the locals were grateful for their efforts. All three linemen said they would absolutely help again if the call came.

Henderson wanted to praise the work of Devorak and Weber. He said they were fantastic and safe workers.

Henderson, Devorak and Weber were also commended by New Ulm Utility Director Kris Manderfeld during Tuesday's Public Utilities Commission meeting for their willingness to respond to the emergency.

"This is the spirit of a municipal utility worker," Manderfeld said. "Whether it be electric, water, gas, or wastewater, they stand to help fellow employees and citizens in our community and others. I am very proud of all the municipal employees of New Ulm Public Utilities."

Based on *New Ulm Journal* article by Clay Schuldt (edited)



*New Ulm Public Utilities (NUPU) recently received a thank you letter on behalf of Kissimmee Utility Authority.*

*The letter thanked line workers James Henderson, Brandon Devorak, and Joe Weber of NUPU who assisted with mutual aid support following the devastation of Hurricane Ian.*

*The letter read:*

**"We are grateful for our public power community who comes together to help one another in times of need. We cannot thank you enough for your quick response to our request. Please know that KUA and most importantly, our citizens, are most appreciative of all your support."**





## Winter Heating Season is Here...

Winter weather is here, and you may have heard talk about the increase in natural gas prices.

Natural gas prices have actually been **increasing since March** of this year. You may not have noticed as your consumption is lower in the summer months than the winter months.

There are several factors at work in the rising gas costs. Here is an explanation and what you can do to **help reduce your usage and control your bill.**

## A Quick Look at Your Natural Gas Rate



**Your Gas Rate has two components:**

1. The wholesale cost or market cost of natural gas and the cost to deliver that gas to New Ulm.
2. The distribution cost to supply that gas to your home or business.
  - ✓ The distribution cost to deliver the gas to your home or business has not increased since 2005.
  - ✓ The market rate of natural gas has increased significantly over the last 12 months by approximately 113%. This has resulted in an over 20% increase in your natural gas charge on your utility bill.
  - ✓ This increase is not kept by the Utility but is passed on to the natural gas supplier.

## Why is There an Increase in the Market Price?

*Market price follows supply and demand. At this time, demand is exceeding the current supply of natural gas.*

- ✓ Increased demand for electric power generation – as power plants move away from coal to cleaner natural gas generation – an increase in demand for natural gas has occurred.
- ✓ Natural gas use increasing due to intermittent capacity of renewables.
- ✓ Increased demand for liquefied natural gas (LNG) – exports of LNG is increasing at a rate that is overtaking production. Prices are higher in European and Asian markets which is prompting International exports.



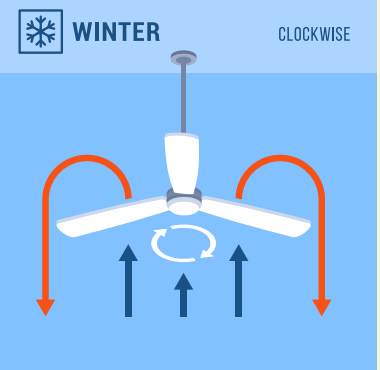
## What is New Ulm Public Utilities Doing?



- ✓ NUPU has contracted with Kinect Energy to help with purchasing natural gas. Kinect Energy is experienced in the commodities markets, and advises other utilities and industries on their natural gas needs.
- ✓ NUPU buys up to 70% of our natural gas needs on the futures market to help level the volatility of the natural gas commodities market to help lower costs to our customers.
- ✓ Entered into a natural gas prepay agreement allowing the utility to get a monthly discount on a portion of our natural gas purchases.

## What Can You Do?

- ✓ Dial down your water heater to 120 degrees.
- ✓ Change furnace filters during the heating season as a clogged filter makes an inefficient system.
- ✓ Consider the replacement of an old furnace with an upgraded system that could save up to 20% on heating costs – remember NUPU offers rebates on new furnace and boilers depending on efficiency ratings.
- ✓ Reduce your thermostat. Every one degree reduced could save up to 5% on heating costs.
- ✓ Open drapes for the sun's warmth and close drapes at night to help insulate against cold drafts.
- ✓ Seal air leaks around doors and windows and add insulation to walls and attic.
- ✓ Use cold water in your washer to save in water heating costs.
- ✓ Turn your ceiling fans to turn clockwise in the winter to circulate warm air on the ceiling down.





## 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.
- 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.

## PUBLIC POWER WEEK WINNERS



140 NUPU customers entered for a chance to win 1 of 10 bags of energy saving devices. Products included in the contest included a Google Nest E thermostat, Wi-Fi & BLE-enabled A19 smart LED bulb, 7-outlet advanced power strip, and a solar charging power bank. Thank you for to all

customers who participated in this year's Public Power Week event and congratulations to the following winners:

**Mary Lund**  
**Rod Karnitz**  
**John Gaertner**  
**Neil Bode**

**Sara Johnson**  
**Alison Miller**  
**Jason Moldan**

**Eugene Goblirsch**  
**Al Wiltscheck**  
**Patti Bock**



**DEREK NELSON**  
Energy Services  
Representative

## Keep Holiday Time Energy Use Under Control

**W**hile many things can seem uncontrollable during holiday season, or when you have guests in your home, one thing that can be controlled is how much energy you consume. Many people will see an increase in their energy consumption due to factors such as holiday lights, cooking and baking, and guests using resources such as showers and laundry.

Below is a short list of opportunities to control energy consumption during the holiday season or any time you may have a crowd at your house. To find more opportunities, talk with others to see what they do or explore websites such as [energystar.gov](http://energystar.gov) or the U.S. Department of Energy at [energy.gov](http://energy.gov).

★ LED (light emitting diode) holiday lights are much, much more efficient than the incandescent lights that have traditionally been used. While, at times, LED lights can have an initial higher upfront cost, the savings can easily be captured when a person considers how long during a given night/season they are used. LED lights also last longer and are safer to use than traditional lights.

★ When guests arrive, be sure to turn down the thermostat. Many people in a single-family home will increase room temperature. Additionally, the stove/oven may also contribute to room temperature.

★ Since cooking was mentioned, use the oven light to check on foods being prepared. Frequently taking a "peek" by opening the oven door will reduce the heat within the stove. This action forces the oven to get back to the pre-set temperature, using more energy.

★ If using an electric stove top, make sure to use a pan that makes a contact with the stove top. Using a wobbly or dented pan will increase cooking time and energy consumption.

★ Electronic gifts are always popular. If purchasing an electronic gift, see if it can be purchased with an Energy Star certification. Better yet, purchase gifts that do not use electricity or batteries.

★ Use timers on inflatable decorations and lighting to stop them from running during hours when no one sees them.



## Is There an Invisible Killer Lurking in your Home?

Often called the invisible killer, carbon monoxide (CO) is an odorless, colorless, tasteless gas created when fuels (such as gasoline, wood, coal, natural gas, propane, oil, and methane) burn incompletely. In the home, heating and cooking equipment that burn fuel can be sources of carbon monoxide so make sure appliances are working correctly. CO can be generated from fire places, furnaces, generators, power tools, hot water heaters, cooking equipment, gas clothes dryers, charcoal grills, vehicles, and lawn mowers. At lower levels of exposure, CO causes mild effects that are often mistaken for the flu. These symptoms include: headaches, dizziness, disorientation, nausea, and fatigue.

Every year more than 400 people die in the U.S. from accidental carbon monoxide poisoning and nearly 5,000 others are treated for CO poisoning. CO exposures especially affect unborn babies, infants, pregnant women, the elderly, and people with anemia or a history of heart disease.

- 1) Have your furnace cleaned and checked, including chimneys and vents, by a qualified service technician.
- 2) Install a carbon monoxide detector in your home near your bedroom.
- 3) If you need to warm a vehicle, remove it from the garage immediately after starting it. Do not run a vehicle or other fueled engine or motor indoors, even if garage doors are open. Make sure the exhaust pipe of a running vehicle is not covered with snow.
- 4) During and after a snow fall, make sure vents for the dryer, furnace, stove, and fireplace are clear of snow build-up.
- 5) Gas or charcoal grills, kerosene heaters and generators can produce CO — only use outside.
- 6) Never use a gas range or oven for heating.

### KNOW THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF CARBON MONOXIDE POISONING



CO detectors are just as important as smoke detectors and should be installed in a central location near each sleeping area and on every level of the home and in other locations where required by applicable laws, codes, or standards. For the best protection, interconnect all CO alarms throughout the home. When one sounds, they all sound. Test CO alarms at least once a month and replace batteries every year. CO detectors with a digital read-out and

UL listed 2034 are recommended. For your safety, you may want to use a battery operated CO detector in your fish house also.

If the CO alarm sounds, immediately move everyone to a fresh air location and call the New Ulm Public Utilities Gas Department.

**Emergency Gas or CO calls:**  
**During business hours: 507-359-8264**  
**After hours: 507-359-8204**  
**Anytime: 877-868-3636**

**Deadline: May 31, 2023**



**Help your neighbor.  
help your friends  
help your family...**

Fb: @MVACMankato

## 2022-2023 THE ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

**A grant for income eligible households to assist in paying heating and electric bills.**

Available to homeowners, renters who pay heating/electric costs and renters with heat included in their rent\*

MVAC serves the following counties:  
 Blue Earth, Brown, Faribault, Le Sueur, Martin, Nicollet, Sibley, Waseca, and Watonwan

Hablamos español

\* Crisis assistance is also available for disconnection notices, shut-offs, and no fuel emergencies.

Assistance with heating unit repairs is available to approved homeowners who have a no-heat situation.

| Household income cannot be more than these income guidelines for 3 months: |          |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| Household Size                                                             | Income   |
| 1                                                                          | \$7,643  |
| 2                                                                          | \$9,994  |
| 3                                                                          | \$12,346 |
| 4                                                                          | \$14,698 |
| 5                                                                          | \$17,050 |
| 6                                                                          | \$19,401 |
| 7                                                                          | \$19,842 |
| 8                                                                          | \$20,283 |
| 9                                                                          | \$20,724 |

**MINNESOTA VALLEY ACTION COUNCIL**  
 "Community Action: Helping People, Changing Lives"

To request an application:  
 (507) 345-6822 | (800) 767-7139

Applications available for download at:  
[www.mnvac.org](http://www.mnvac.org)





## ★ **AT YOUR SERVICE** Employees of the Month Honored

**R**oss is willing to put in extra time to learn processes, and identifies issues and areas for improvement as he goes. During the implementation of Executime, Ross worked extra hours to get the system set up and developed a good understanding of how things work, and maintained in the future. During the implementation he was able to keep up with his normal responsibilities and continued to learn more of the responsibilities of his position. Ross is always willing to help customers and coworkers and has built good relationships with both.

**ROSS  
GRATHWOHL**  
Accountant  
FINANCE  
DEPT.



**T**he Administration office has seen a lot of turnover over the last couple years. Kathy has gone above and beyond to help where it has been needed. She has been available to fill in and complete work for other departments, as well as playing a major role as trainer for new office employees. She is knowledgeable about all aspects of the office and has been a constant in a time of change. The Utility has implemented a new asset management system and Kathy has been instrumental in working through all of the changes with the software and the development of procedures. Staff can always count on her willingness to do more and take on projects outside of her primary job.

**KATHY  
SCHAEFER**  
Clerical  
Assistant  
ELECTRIC  
DEPT.



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## MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

### **NUPU OCTOBER**

- Received letter of appreciation from Kissimmee Utility Authority regarding Hurricane Ian mutual aid relief.
- Received presentation of preliminary 2023 budget for New Ulm Public Utilities
- Approved City Council to establish the Special Assessments for 2022 delinquent water and wastewater charges.
- Approved the addition of two Direct Regulating Stations pressure monitoring devices to existing SCADA application at HWY 27 and 22nd Street North.
- Approved #4 Generator overhaul project.
- Accepted quote for installation of raw water main under Minnesota River.

### **NUPU SEPTEMBER**

- Approved agreement between NUPU, Minnesota Valley Action Council, and Department of Commerce to cooperate and deliver the Minnesota Energy Assistance Program for 2023.
- Received proposal from Minsait (ACS) for engineering and programming services for the Remote Terminal Unit (RTU) replacement at the Center Street and Fort Ridgely Substations.
- Approved change of EAA (Energy Acquisition Adjustment) of \$0.02287 effective October 1, 2022
- Approved natural gas CIP (Conservation Improvement Program) funding when State Statute minimum sales requirement is not met.

### **EAC SEPTEMBER**

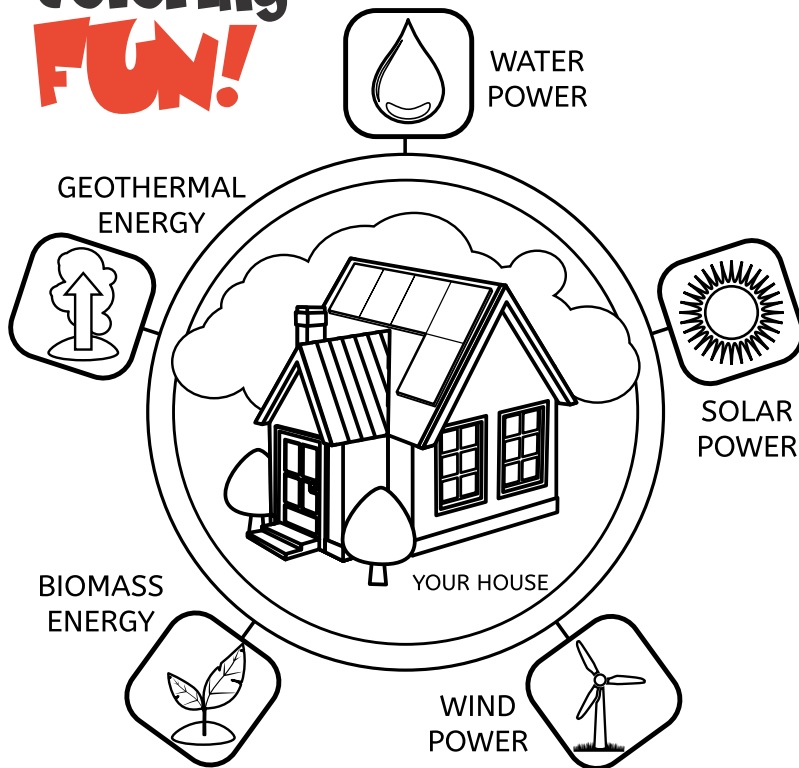
#### ***Approved GreenStep Cities Best Practices:***

- 27.2: Facilitate creations of home/community gardens, chicken and bee keeping.
- 12.2: Conduct an Active Living campaign such as Safe Routes to School program.
- 20.1: Compare the energy use and financial performance of water and wastewater facilities with other peer facilities using standardized free tools.
- 4.8: Replace the city's existing traffic signal indications with LEDs.
- 4.3: Replace the city's existing street lighting with Dark Sky-compliant LEDs, modifying any city franchise/utility agreement and adding smart grid attributes.

# get current

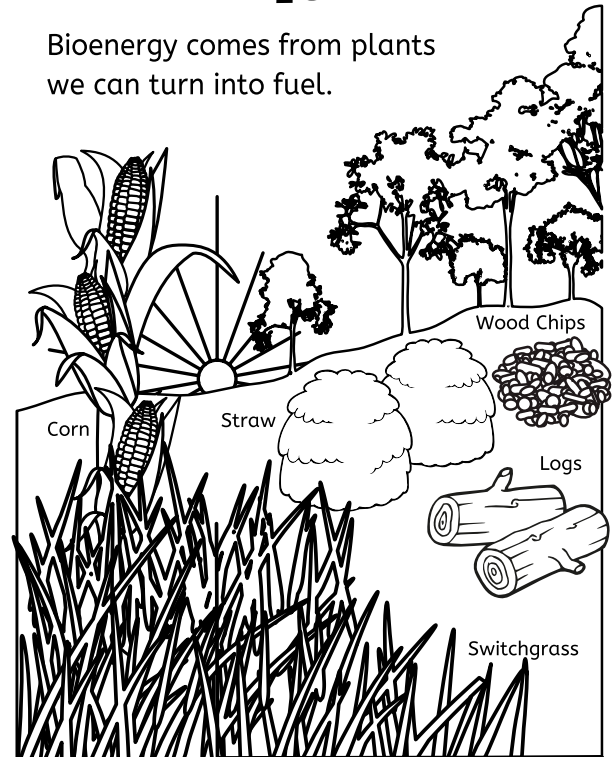
Be part of the  
Clean Energy Generation!

**coloring  
FUN!**



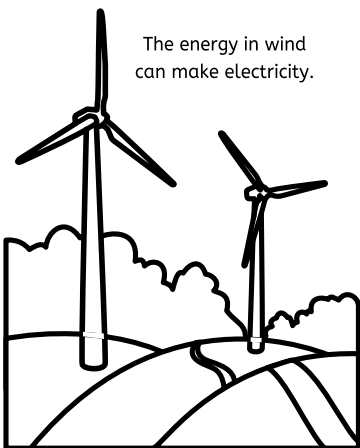
## BIOENERGY

Bioenergy comes from plants  
we can turn into fuel.



### WIND POWER

The energy in wind  
can make electricity.



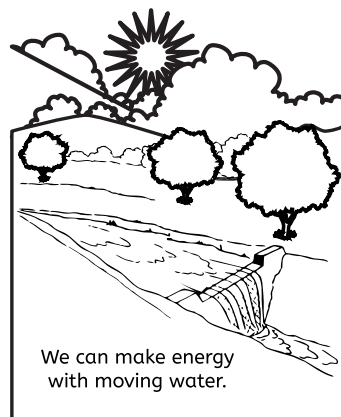
### SOLAR POWER

Clean energy  
can come from  
the sun.



### WATER POWER

We can make energy  
with moving water.



### GEOTHERMAL

We can use energy  
from the earth  
to heat and cool  
our homes.



## New Ulm Public Utilities Commission Members:

• Linda Heine,  
President

• Sean Finland,  
Vice President

• Shannon  
Hillesheim

• Mary Ellen  
Schanus

• Seth Visser



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

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 MANKATO, MN  
 PERMIT 609



the municipal  
**Advantage**

NEW ULM PUBLIC UTILITIES  
 NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2022 NEWSLETTER

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

|                              |                 |
|------------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>MAIN NUMBER</b>           | <b>233-2110</b> |
| 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        |
| <b>AFTER HOURS ALL CALLS</b> | <b>359-8204</b> |