



the municipal **Advantage**

PEOPLE...POWER.

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2024

Investing in a Healthier, More Sustainable Future

This month, you may notice an increase in your municipal utility rates. In a time when everywhere you look, costs and expenses are rising, we understand that this might be a cause for concern, and I want to provide you with some insights into the factors contributing to these changes.

Your family, I'm sure, has been dealing with the rising cost of groceries, gas, and other essentials. **We have been dealing with the same as the cost of operating and maintaining municipal utilities has risen over the years.** Factors such as increased labor costs, materials, and energy prices contribute to the overall operational expenses. These costs play a significant role in determining the rates necessary to sustain and improve service quality. In some cases, we have seen the critical infrastructure needed to supply service to our customers increase by over five hundred percent.

Fluctuations in the economy can impact municipal making it challenging to cover the costs associated with utility services. Rate adjustments become necessary to ensure the continued provision of reliable services. The impact to an average residential customer with this increase will be approximately 5%, however,

The municipal utility is driven by a commitment to providing affordable and stable utility rates, while maintaining and securing the assets of its citizens.



**KRIS
MANDERFELD**
Utilities
Director

the utility has not raised electric rates since 2019.

Another primary reason for the rate increase is the need for substantial investments in the municipal infrastructure. **Aging electric grids, steam systems, water treatment plants, and wastewater facilities require modernization to meet the demands of our communities.**

Municipalities across the nation are at a point of needing to upgrade these essential systems to ensure reliability, efficiency, and compliance with environmental regulations. Just as your house needs a new roof or appliances need to be replaced, the Utility will be going through a period of upgrades and replacements in the coming years.

Stringent environmental regulations require the Utility to adopt cleaner and more sustainable technologies. While these initiatives are crucial for the well-being of our communities and the planet, they may come with higher implementation and maintenance costs. **The transition to environmentally friendly practices is an investment in a healthier and more sustainable future.**

It's essential to note that we carefully consider the impact of rate increases on our residents and businesses. The municipal utility is driven by a commitment to providing affordable and stable utility rates, while maintaining and securing the assets of its citizens. If you are struggling to afford your utilities, please know there are programs in place to assist low-income households and mitigate the effects of rate adjustments on vulnerable populations.

Thank you for your understanding and continued support.

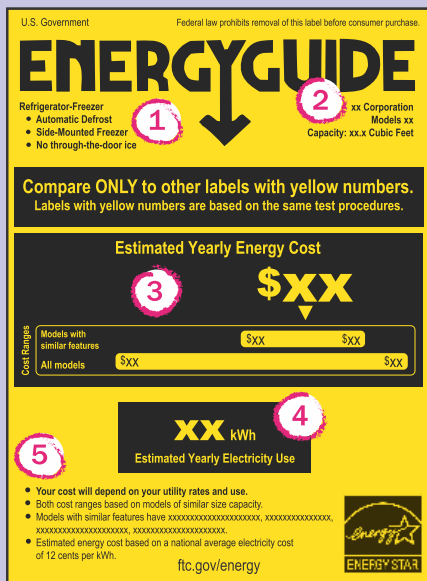


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NEW ULM PUBLIC UTILITIES NEWSLETTER
newulmmn.gov • 507-233-2110

SAVE MONEY AND ENERGY!

How to Read the EnergyGuide Label



The EnergyGuide label is required to be placed on all appliances by the manufacturers. The label provides information about energy consumption and shows you how much energy an appliance uses compared with similar models. Keep in mind that the numbers are averages; actual costs will differ somewhat depending on how you use them.

The EnergyGuide label includes the following:

1. Key features of the appliance and the similar models that make up the cost comparison range
2. Make, model number, and size of the appliance
3. Estimated yearly operating cost (based on the national average cost of electricity) and the range of operating costs for similar models
4. Estimated yearly electricity consumption
5. Key features of the appliance and the similar models that make up the cost comparison range.

Download your Energy Saver booklet and learn about a variety of topics to save you money and energy in your home! Information includes assessing your home's energy use, weatherizing your home, heating/cooling a home efficiently, EVs, and more. Visit energy.gov/sites/default/files/2022-08/energy-saver-guide-2022.pdf, for all the details.



Now's the time to purchase Energy Star appliances and lighting, PLUS get REBATES from NUPU!

Appliances, ceiling fans and bulbs must be Energy Star certified to qualify for a rebate.

REBATE AMOUNTS:

- Clothes washer **\$50**
- Electric clothes dryer **\$50**
- Dehumidifier **\$15**
- Dishwasher **\$25**
- Refrigerator **\$40**
- Freezer **\$40**
- Energy star residential LED lighting **No more than 50% of purchase, nor over \$7 per bulb or \$20 per fixture**
- LED ceiling fans **No more than 50% of purchase, nor over \$15 per fixture**



★ RATE RECLASSIFICATIONS NOTICE

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 NUPU offer are looked at to verify if reclassification is



necessary based on customer usage/consumption and the rate schedule approved by the New Ulm Public Utilities Commission. Rate schedules for utilities can be found at newulmmn.gov/438/Utility-Rates-Fees-and-Charges.

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

★ MEETING MINUTES

NUPU Commission November 2023

- ✓ Approved 2024 Schedule of Fees and Charges effective January 1, 2024.
- ✓ Approve Schaefer Well Drilling to conduct work on the rehabilitation of Well 20.

NUPU Commission December 2023

- ✓ Approved new Schedule of Steam Rates effective February 1, 2024.
- ✓ Approved new Schedule of Water Rates effective February 1, 2024.
- ✓ Approved new Schedule of Wastewater Rates effective February 1, 2024.
- ✓ Approved new Schedule of Electric Rates effective February 1, 2024.
- ✓ Approved the development of phase 1 facility plan at Wastewater Treatment Facility.

EAC January 2024

- ✓ Heard presentation on City of New Ulm's 2022 Comprehensive Plan.
- ✓ Approved GreenStep Cities Best Practice 15.2: Purchase energy used by city government with a higher renewable percentage than required by MN law.



Time to ditch your old space heater?

If you can't remember when you purchased your space heater, it might be time to replace it. Just like the flip phones of yesteryear have progressed into today's modern cell phone, portable space heaters have come a long way too. Most of today's models have built-in safety features, such as non-exposed coils and sensors that detect overheating or touch, as well as an automatic shut-off feature in case it gets tipped over.

Regardless of whether your space heater is fresh out of the box or several years old, it should be used safely, since most home heating fire deaths (86%) involve using one, according to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). In fact, heating equipment is the second-leading cause of U.S. home fires, right behind cooking.

Along with using a unit that is in good working order, be sure to keep clothing, papers, rugs, and other flammable items at least 3 feet away from a space heater. More than half of the heating-related home fires start when items are too close to the heat source, according to the NFPA, including upholstered furniture, clothing, a mattress, or bedding.

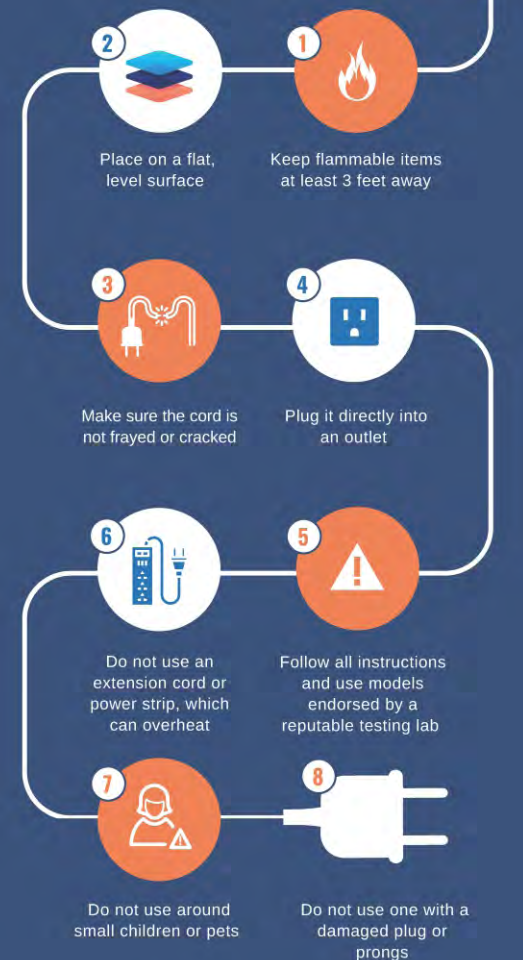
Additional space heater safety tips to know:

1. Read all instructions and only use as recommended.
2. Do not leave a space heater unattended.
3. Plug it directly into an outlet; most power strips and extension cords are not equipped to handle the energy spikes caused by a space heater cycling on and off.
4. Unplug any other item from the outlet you are using; also try to use a dedicated circuit to avoid overload.
5. Keep children and pets away from space heaters.
6. Turn them off before you leave the room or go to sleep.
7. Do not use a heater in disrepair or with a frayed cord or damaged plug.
8. Place them on flat, level surfaces and never place them on furniture, counters or carpet, which can overheat.

Use a space heater with care. For additional safety tips, visit [SafeElectricity.org](https://www.SafeElectricity.org).

feeling chilled?

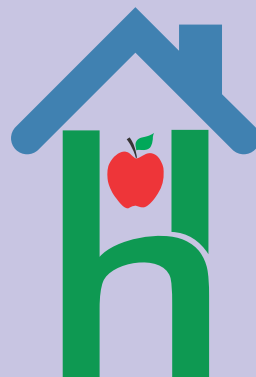
HEAT YOUR SPACE SAFELY



[SafeElectricity.org](https://www.SafeElectricity.org)



Stop By
March 22-24!



New Ulm's
**Home
&
Health
Show**

Visit the New Ulm Public Utilities at the New Ulm Home & Health Show to learn about lead service lines and more! Also chat with members of the Energy Awareness Committee.

Free Treats!



**DAVID
O'BRIEN**
Gas Department
Supervisor

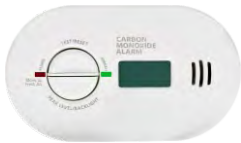
NUPU Gas Department Provides FREE Services for Your Convenience and Safety

● 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 letter will be sent to you. Upon receiving this letter, please contact NUPU as soon as possible to schedule an appointment. It is necessary for NUPU staff to enter your home to relight pilot lights and to make sure your appliances are operating again 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.



Submit 2023 Natural Gas Rebates by February 29!

As stated in our last newsletter, rebates funded from the natural gas department were depleted towards the end of 2023.

If you are a customer that submitted a natural gas type rebate in 2023 and did not receive a rebate, don't fret! Those rebates submitted in 2023 will be rebated in 2024. Additionally, actions and purchases from 2023 eligible for rebate need to be submitted by February 29, 2024. After this date, 2023 rebates will no longer be eligible for a rebate.



336 customers entered our last drawing from our 120th Anniversary celebration trivia contest. Each selected winner will receive \$100 Chamber Dollars.

Winners are:

- Jim Prokosch
- Lucus Reid
- Bobbi Fuhr
- Jody Walls
- Debra Whitcomb



LET'S GET THE LEAD OUT!

REMINDER:
We need your help
collecting this data!
THANKS to all who have
completed this form.

GET THE LEAD OUT INITIATIVE.

New Ulm Public Utilities is following the guidelines set by the Minnesota Department of Health and the United States Environmental Protection Agency in the Lead & Copper Rule to collect an inventory of pipe materials used in water service lines and mains.

We need the help of all homeowners in this process!

We ask that you assess the water service line coming into your home and send us that information on a form available on our website. See the QR code and website information below. If you'd prefer to have a representative of the Water Department assess your service line, you can call to make an appointment.

Scan the QR code to direct you to the form.



Or visit our website

<https://forms.ci.new-ulm.mn.us/forms/LeadAndCopperSurvey>

Have questions?

We're here to help with your questions or concerns and are available to set up an appointment to have one of our team members do your assessment if preferred.

NUPU Water Department

(507) 359-8279

NUPU Administration

(507) 233-2110

No computer access?

Complete the form below and mail to or drop it off at:
New Ulm Public Utilities; 310 1st North, New Ulm, MN 56073
or City Hall; 100 North Broadway, New Ulm, MN 56073

Name _____

Address _____

Phone # _____

Email _____

I am the home, business or property owner _____

I am a renter _____

Service Pipe Material

Copper _____

Plastic _____

Galvanized Steel _____

Lead _____

***Please include a picture of the service line.**

I prefer to schedule an evaluation. Please contact me. _____

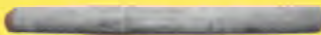
To identify the material of your service line pipe, find the service line coming into your home - generally in the basement. Lead is a dull grey color and very soft. If scraped with a key, it will turn a bright silver color. Try sticking a magnet to the pipe - even a strong magnet will not stick to lead.



Lead: A dull, silver-gray color that is easily scratched with a coin. Use a magnet - strong magnets will not cling to lead pipes.



Copper: The color of a copper penny



Galvanized: A dull, silver-gray color. Use a magnet - strong magnets will typically cling to galvanized pipes.



Plastic: Smooth, colored, semi-rigid pipe that is joined to the water supply with a clamp.

There is no charge for a representative from the Water Department to assess your line. There is also no obligation to remove or upgrade lines!



★ AT YOUR SERVICE Employees of the Month Honored

Logan is friendly and pleasant and is always ready to work. He has worked hard correcting the steam meter displays as well as repairing steam meters.

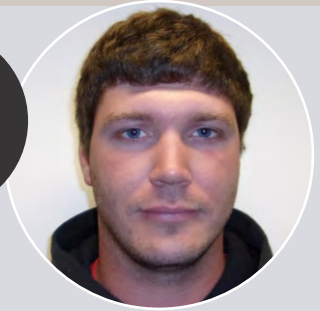
Recently he worked with Darlis Bode to improve the filing system for seasonal meter paperwork. Logan works well with our customers, in both departments.

LOGAN SANDGREN
C Operator
WATER/DISTRICT
ENERGY
DEPT.



Jagger continues to show leadership in the Gas dept. through his eagerness to take on any project he is asked to do, and through his suggestions on ways to improve solutions to issues. He is almost always one of the first employees to work and is ready to go for the start of the workday. He has performed well as the Corrosion Tech. by taking full responsibility of the cathodic protection system. He has pursued the education necessary to understand the job and does well by applying his knowledge to practical applications in the field that results in keeping our system free of corrosion. He has learned all aspects of the department and is often looked to for help when new technologies are introduced or when assistance is needed. He is always willing to help any way he can and has proven he works well with everyone.

JAGGER HOFFMANN
Corrosion
Technician
GAS
DEPT.



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF
ENERGY

Making Our Homes More Efficient: Clean Energy Tax Credits for Consumers

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: Who is eligible for tax credits?

A: Homeowners, including renters for certain expenditures, who purchase energy and other efficient appliances and products.

Q: What do consumers do to get the credit(s)?

A: Fill out IRS Form 5695, following IRS instructions, and include it when filing your tax return. Include any relevant product receipts.

Q: Where do I get even more detailed information?

A: More information on the energy efficient home improvement credit and residential clean energy property credit is available for tax professionals, building contractors, and others at IRS releases frequently asked questions about energy efficient home improvements and residential clean energy property credits | Internal Revenue Service. See: irs.gov/newsroom/irs-releases-frequently-asked-questions-about-energy-efficient-home-improvements-and-residential-clean-energy-property-credits.

Equipment Type	Updated Tax Credit Available for 2023-2032 Tax Years
Home Clean Electricity Products	
Solar (electricity)	30% of cost
Fuel Cells	
Wind Turbine	
Battery Storage	30% of cost
Heating, Cooling, and Water Heating	
Heat pumps	30% of cost, up to \$2,000 per year
Heat pump water heaters	
Biomass Stoves	
Geothermal heat pumps	30% of cost
Solar (water heating)	
Efficient air conditioners*	30% of cost, up to \$600
Efficient heating equipment*	
Efficient water heating equipment*	30% of cost, up to \$600
Other Energy Efficiency Upgrades	
Electric panel or circuit upgrades for new electric equipment*	30% of cost, up to \$600
Insulation materials*	30% of cost
Windows, including skylights*	30% of cost, up to \$600
Exterior doors*	30% of cost, up to \$500 for doors (up to \$250 each)
Home Energy Audits*	30% of cost, up to \$150

*Subject to cap of \$1,200/year



New Ulm Public Utilities Commission Members:

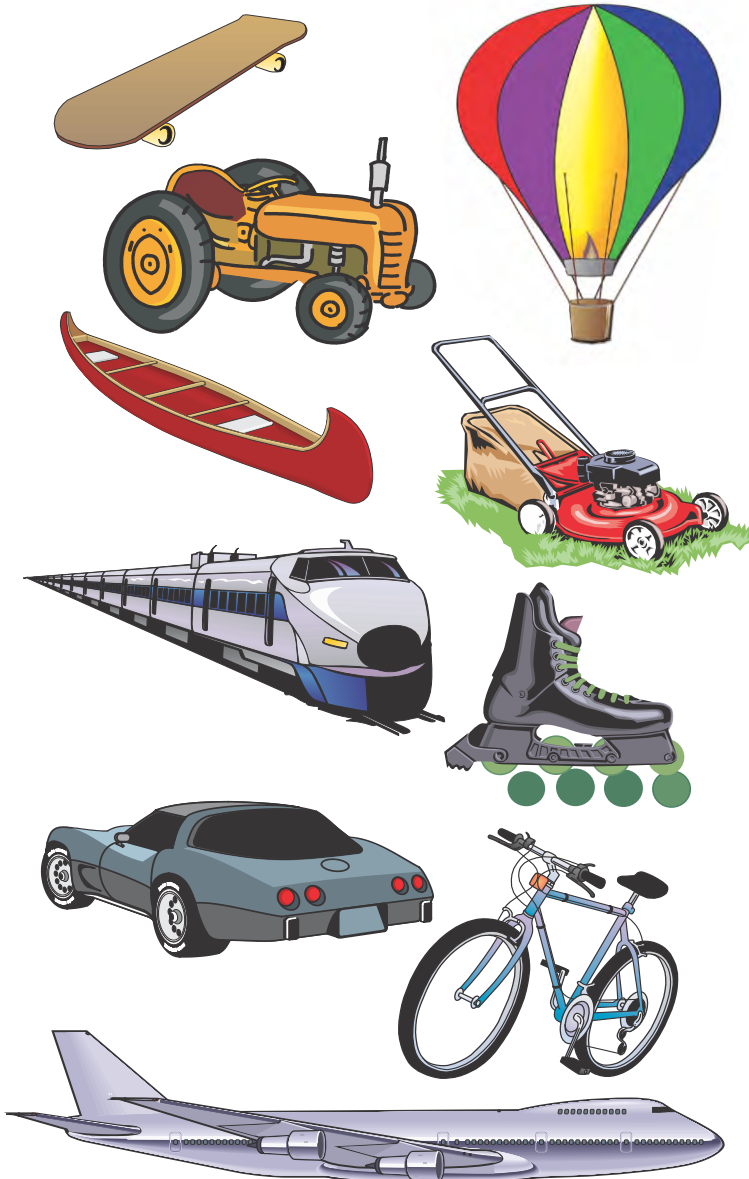
• Kim Williams • Sean Fingland • Shannon Hillesheim • Mary Ellen Schanus • Seth Visser



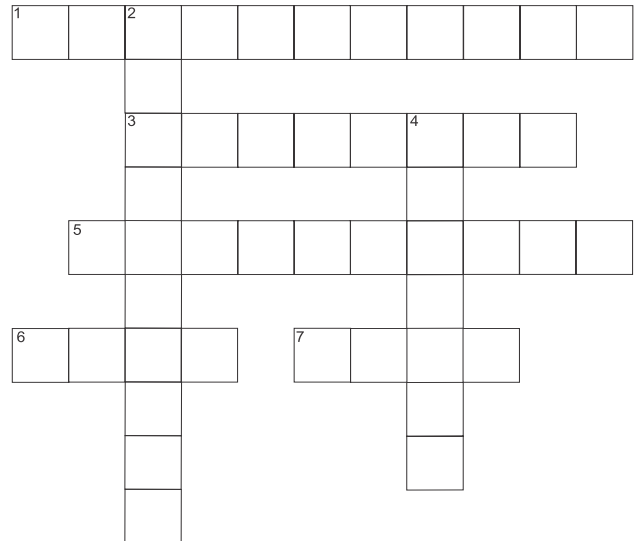
ENERGY ACTIVITIES!

Motion

Make a circle around the objects that burn fuel to move.
Make an "X" through the objects that need people power to move.



Energy Word Puzzle

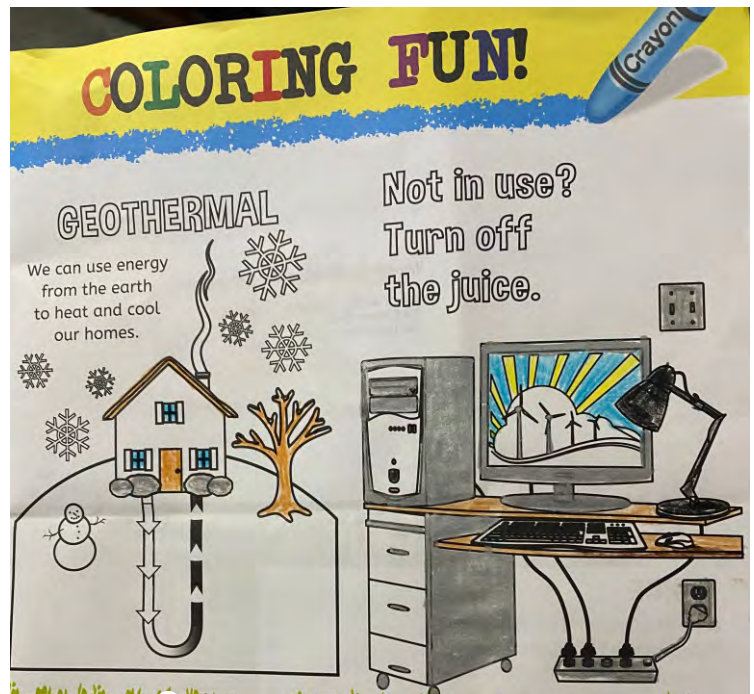


ACROSS

- 1 This powers our light bulbs.
- 3 A form of transportation that burns fuel to move. (Hint: It flies.)
- 5 Propane turns into a liquid after this has been done to it.
- 6 A black rock full of energy.
- 7 In the U.S., ethanol is made from what plant?

DOWN

- 2 When a drop of water becomes invisible, it does this.
- 4 The color black does this to solar energy.



Thank you Savannah Moldan for submitting your Coloring Fun page!

ATTENTION PARENTS! Have your kids do the activities above and we will randomly choose some to be published in future newsletters as space allows.

Send a digital photo or art via email to: derekN@newulmmn.gov
or mail or deliver to:

New Ulm Public Utilities, Attn: Derek Nelson
310 1st N. St., New Ulm, MN 56073



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
Advantage

NEW ULM PUBLIC UTILITIES
JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2024 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