



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

MAY-JUNE 2024

Katharina Reischwich interns at PUC

Katharina Reischwich, a student from Germany, is currently undertaking a 5-month internship at New Ulm Public Utilities. She was raised in northern Germany but relocated to western Germany for college.

“For this internship, I condensed my life into two suitcases and embarked on a journey across the globe,” said Katharina. “I’m currently living with the city council president, Andrea Boettger, and her family.”

★ What is your educational background?

I am currently a senior undergraduate student studying environmental engineering at the University of Applied Sciences in Muenster, Germany. Following my 5-month internship, I will need to write a bachelor’s thesis to complete my degree. Subsequently, I intend to pursue a master’s degree in water engineering.

★ What is your role at New Ulm Public Utilities?

My days never look the same. Some days involve testing drinking water to gather data for an upcoming project,

while others are spent familiarizing myself with the operations at the plants to understand the work environment I can expect in Germany. Additionally, I assist extensively with data collection, analysis, and verification. Soon, I will begin daily testing routines. Overall, I am engaged in a variety of tasks, ensuring that each day is dynamic and different.

★ How did you come to be an intern with NUPU?

My professor, Dr. Wetter, maintains a strong relationship with the University of Minnesota. As a result, there are multiple internship opportunities available each year. I applied to these placements without knowing where I would be assigned. Consequently, my professor matched me with New Ulm. The city is involved in the Climate Smart Municipalities (CSM) project led by the University of Minnesota and was looking for an intern. Thus, here I am!

★ What do you bring from your education and background that benefits the utilities?

My college courses have equipped me with knowledge in

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various environmental topics. I have studied 'green' energy, pollution control, air quality management, waste management and recycling, resilient city development, and, most importantly to me, the entire water cycle—from the aquifer or river, through urban infrastructure, and back into the river. This comprehensive understanding allows me to contribute across a range of subjects.

Additionally, I'm here to facilitate knowledge exchange between Germany and the US. We're actively sharing ideas about challenges and solutions faced by both countries. Furthermore, my practical experience gained through coursework has prepared me well for the hands-on aspects of my internship. The testing conducted by the Public Utilities serves as a practical application of the skills I've acquired.

★ **What have you learned so far or what do you hope to learn in your experience at NUPU?**

One skill I have significantly improved is my proficiency in Excel. I believe I now know every command within the program. However, the most valuable aspect of my internship has been gaining insight into how the city manages the extremely hard raw water in New Ulm. While

the water is already considered as hard in many parts of Germany, New Ulm's water is ten times harder. Observing how this impacts the treatment process has been fascinating.

On the wastewater front, I've had the opportunity to witness how industrial activities influence treatment methods. However, one unexpected experience has been visiting a steam plant as I haven't seen nor learned about it.

★ **Anything surprise you about life here?**

Since we are learning a lot about the US, its people and culture, there is not much that has surprised me. It has rather surprised me, how truthful the stereotypes are. As for example, how open and friendly people are or how big everything is. In general, I would say, that I only had positive surprises.

★ **How have you enjoyed the community so far?**

The community always makes me feel welcome, and I enjoy spending time with residents of New Ulm, regardless of their age. I feel like New Ulm is a close-knit community where everyone knows each other and gets along well. I appreciate the opportunities to explore and engage with the area and its surroundings.

★ **Any differences stand out from how things are done in relation to conservation of resources the United States vs your country?**

There is! In Germany, for example, we have four different waste bins: paper, organics, plastics, and residual waste. Additionally, there are separate bins for glass, which are further divided into white, green, and brown glass. But what I miss most is that every plastic and glass bottle would have a deposit. So, every time you purchase a bottle, you pay a small deposit that you get back upon returning it. This system encourages higher recycling rates.

★ MEETING MINUTES

NUPU Commission

April

- ✓ Received and order filed the 2022 Conservation Improvement Program electric and natural gas results to the Minnesota Department of Commerce.
- ✓ Received and order filed the Certificate of Commendation from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency honoring the Wastewater Treatment Plant for exceptional compliance during 2023.
- ✓ Accepted proposal for the Cybersecurity Program.
- ✓ Authorized payment for labor and materials to complete the Center Street Bypass Project.

May

- ✓ Offer resolution approving the Heartland Energy renewal of the 2024 Integrated Resource Plan.
- ✓ Authorized bid for two grit pumps and six valves for 20th Street South Lift Station and wastewater treatment plant.
- ✓ Received and order filed presentation on 20th Street Lift Station MCC upgrades.
- ✓ Received and order filed the purchase for valves and accessories for the Schell's Brewery Lift Station.

Did You Know?

Watch for the 2023 New Ulm Drinking Water Report in your mailbox by July 1! Learn the value of water, where our supply comes from, backflow safety, lead information and more!





Wastewater Treatment Plant recognized by MPCA

Submitted by Dan O'Connor, Wastewater Treatment Plant Supervisor

The New Ulm Wastewater Treatment Plant was recently recognized by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) for exceptional compliance with its NPDES/SDS wastewater permit during the 2023 review period.

To receive this recognition, facilities must demonstrate consistent compliance with monitoring, operations, and maintenance requirements; submit accurate, on-time reports to the MPCA; and employ staff certified by the MPCA in wastewater operations.

New Ulm submitted all reports on time and met

permit limits set by the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES). Minnesota has approximately 1,600 municipal and industrial MPCA permitted wastewater facilities with only 248 or 15% achieving this recognition.

The New Ulm Wastewater staff takes great pride to protect human health and safeguard the waters of the state, for the benefit of its residents, by treating its wastewater in compliance with MPCA rules and regulations.

Congratulations to the staff of the Wastewater Treatment Plant for submitting their permits properly and for providing effective wastewater safeguards.



Why are flags and paint markings of different colors on my property?

Flags and paint markings are used by different utilities to identify infrastructure (water, natural gas, sewer, telecommunication lines, etc.) buried underground. State law (Minnesota State Statute 216D: Excavation Notice System) requires that utilities are located through the Gopher State One Call system prior to excavation activities to help avoid unnecessary damage and accidents caused by striking of buried utilities services. Activities could include (but not limited to) the repair or removal of sewer/water lines or installation of new telecommunication lines. These markings could also appear if a property owner in the area is making an improvement to their property such as the installation of landscaping walls, a swimming pool, or planting of trees.

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.

NOTICE



New Ulm Public Utilities was notified that an individual has been approaching homes stating they can help homeowners get reimbursements for solar panels and/or energy rebates for solar farms in the area.

NUPU is not associated with this company. While this individual may be from a legitimate company looking for solar customers, it can be hard to distinguish. Please remember to never share personal information.



New Ulm Public Utilities Recognized for Exceptional Electricity Reliability

Courtesy *New Ulm Journal*

New Ulm Public Utilities received a Certificate of Excellence in Reliability for 2023 from the American Public Power Association, an award they have received for the past six years.

Utility Engineer Dan Pirsig explained that the award is given for electric system reliability, ensuring power is there when it's needed for the people. To do so, they track their outage data and use three metrics.

One is how often the system is interrupted per customer, two is how long interruptions are per customer, and three is how long the average interruption is.

"It's one way we can benchmark our system to compare ourselves to others and ask 'How are we really doing?'" Pirsig said.

While they had previously received the award for several years, Pirsig said he's not sure how New Ulm could have had a better year. In

"People have worked very hard for a long time on this achievement."

—Dan Pirsig,
Utility Engineer

terms of outages per customer, he said they registered a 0.02, meaning on average there were only two outages per 100 customers. Across the entire region, the average was 0.58, or 58 outages per 100 customers.

New Ulm also shined when it came to average outage time per customer. Spread across all customers, the average person only had around one minute of outage time the entire year. This is well below the regional average, where the average customer had around 47 minutes of outage time for the year.

The margin was closer on average interruption time. The average time

service was interrupted in 2023 was 62.25 minutes, less time than the regional average of 75.97 minutes. Of the major interruptions in 2023, only two affected more than one person, and only one of those affected more than 100 people.

What were the keys to success? The Utilities has high maintenance standards, including replacing cables, trimming trees, testing pole strength and preservation, and five-year testing of breakers, switches, and relays.

"People have worked very hard for a long time on this achievement," Pirsig said.

Pirsig said they also got a tad lucky, as a lack of really bad weather events in the summer ensured service was smooth and outages were kept to a minimum.

"One really bad weather event can really damage our numbers," he explained adding that bad numbers almost always reflect a storm event.



with NUPU AC REBATES

★ **CENTRAL AIR CONDITIONING
CLEAN & CHECK**

Must be performed at locations connected with electric service supplied by New Ulm Public Utilities and be performed by an HVAC professional.

REBATE AMOUNT:

\$40 credit to your utility account.

★ **CENTRAL AIR CONDITIONER**

• Central AC and mini split ac systems 20,000 btu/h or less

REBATE AMOUNT:

\$100-\$240

• Central AC and mini split ac systems over 20,000 btu/h

REBATE AMOUNT:

\$200-\$320



GRILLING: A delicious and energy-friendly option for cooking

Grilling and America go together like hot dogs, baseball, and apple pie. There's nothing like a sizzling grill on a summer day. So, let's fire up the grill and save energy!

The cost of staying cool

As refreshing as it is to feel the cool breeze of an air conditioner (AC) on a hot summer day, its energy consumption can be hefty. Depending on the model, it can consume as much energy as a marathon runner (and run almost non-stop), using anywhere from 0.48 to 5.14 kWh per hour. That is enough to make anyone break a sweat.

Did you know that millions of people add to their AC's energy consumption without realizing it? How? By opening the oven door while cooking. According to the book *Bakewise* by Shirley O. Corriher, an oven can lose up to 150 degrees within 30 seconds. Where does all that heat go? You guessed it — right into your home. Plus, even with the door closed, your oven still radiates heat into your home since it has nowhere else to go.

The solution: grilling

If you are looking to maintain a cool vibe and lower your AC's energy consumption, head outside to the grill.

Rather than generating heat indoors, the heat is dispersed outside, reducing strain on the AC, which ultimately lowers utility bills. Additionally, you will be chowing down in no time like a true grill master, as grills reach a toasty 375

degrees in just 5 minutes. Compare that to the oven's sluggish 20-minute warm-up, and you'll be laughing all the way to the butcher shop.

Tips for safe grilling

Make sure your next BBQ extravaganza is a sizzling success without any burns or mishaps. Here are some safety tips to follow:

- **Take it outside.** Only use grills in the great outdoors.



- Keep your grill at least 10 feet from any buildings or structures.
- Make sure your grill is on a flat, steady surface.
- Stay close. Never leave your grill unattended while preheating, cooking, or cooling down.
- Dress for success. Avoid loose or long clothing that can catch fire.
- Keep a water spray bottle beside your grill to tackle any little flames that flare up quickly.
- Keep your cool with a fire extinguisher nearby, just in case.

Keeping your grill clean

Grills should undergo deep cleaning

once or twice per year. Follow these steps to keep your gas grill in prime condition:

- **Burn away buildup:** Turn on the grill, close the lid and set the heat to maximum for at least 30 minutes. This process will eliminate any remaining grease or food debris.

- **Scrub it clean:** In a bowl, mix warm water with soap and dip a wire brush into the mixture. Scrub the grates to remove any carbon buildup.

- **Let it cool:** Allow the grill to cool down completely before storing it. Now your grill is ready for your next barbecue feast.

- **Regular maintenance:** In between uses, preheat your grill, and then scrape it off with a wire-bristled brush before adding food.

Happy grill, happy life

In addition to keeping your grill clean, it is also important to regularly check the propane tank and replace it if necessary. Inspect the hoses and connections for any leaks or damage. Make sure the burners are free of debris and function properly. Finally, covering your grill when not in use can help protect it from the elements and prolong its lifespan.

Menu options are truly endless when it comes to grilling. Grab your apron, fire up the grill and get ready to impress your friends and family with your grilling skills while saving energy.



★ AT YOUR SERVICE Employees of the Month Honored

Lynne is always ready and willing to help wherever needed. Recently, she stepped up to help the Water and Steam Department with our lead and copper service line assessment door to door survey, in addition to her meter reading duties.

Lynne dealt with customer appointments in a friendly and efficient manner and learned how to enter the service line assessment information into our GIS system. She is friendly and pleasant and works well with customers and other staff members. Lynne is a positive asset to the utilities and deserves recognition.

**LYNNE
AVERILL**
Meter Reader
METER
DEPT.



As a relatively new plant operator, Charlie has caught on quickly, demonstrating the composure and skills needed to do the job. He has learned to operate all of the turbines while monitoring the SCADA system, and helps the boiler operators when needed. Charlie always keeps busy cleaning or painting whatever may need attention at the plant, and will come in if another shift needs to be filled on his time off. His work habits and good attitude warrant his being honored as one of the employees of the month. He represents New Ulm Public Utilities very well.

**CHARLIE
SCHOFIELD**
Plant Operator
ELECTRIC
PRODUCTION
DEPT.



2025 REBATE & CONSERVATION CALENDER THEME

New Ulm COOKS!



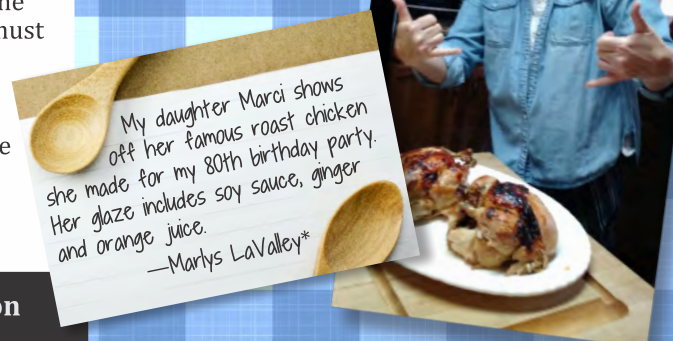
New Ulm Public Utilities 2025 Rebate & Conservation Calendar will feature customers' family meal memories, cooking tips, short recipes, and photos of food creations, families and friends gathered for picnics, holidays and meals, etc.

Only high resolution digital photos will be accepted. If you have prints only, feel free to take cell phone photos of them. Please provide a caption with photos describing food, event, or activity. You may choose to identify the people in the photo at your discretion. Photos from past or present events accepted. You must be a PUC customer to enter but people in the photos do not need to be New Ulm residents.

All entries must include your name. Food tips, memories and recipes must be short. Photos do not necessarily need to accompany tips, memories, recipes.

We reserved the right to edit or reject as space allows.

- Email tips, short recipes, memories, and high resolution digital photos to: DerekN@newulmmn.gov.
Submissions accepted until September 30, 2024.



*Examples only



LEARN ★ PLAY ★ LAUGH



How do energy-conscious people feel about wind power?

THEY'RE BLOWN AWAY!

THIS NOT THAT

Easy Swaps to Go Green(er)



REUSABLE TOTE OR BAG



REUSABLE BOTTLE OR CUP



KITCHEN TOWEL



METAL STRAW



REUSABLE CUTLERY

PLASTIC OR PAPER BAG



PLASTIC WATER BOTTLE



PAPER TOWEL



PLASTIC STRAW



PLASTIC CUTLERY

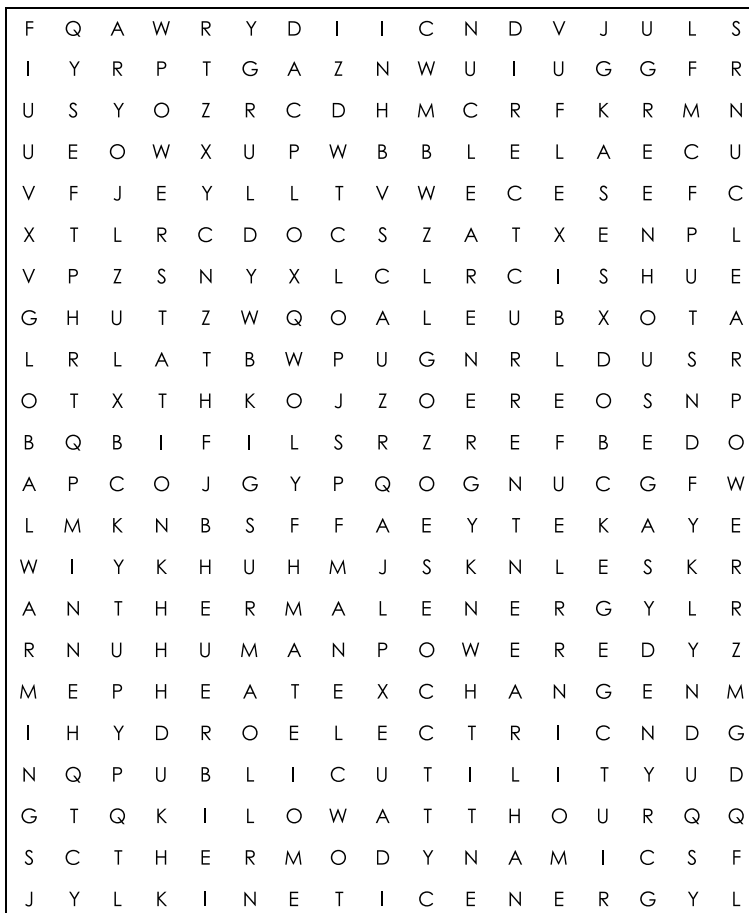


Even if you are not removing water bottles from the ocean and recycling every shred of paper and plastic you use, there are easy ways to reduce waste, use less energy and help keep America beautiful.

Safe Electricity.org®



Energy Word Search



DIRECT CURRENT

PUBLIC UTILITY

HUMAN-POWERED

GLOBAL WARMING

THERMAL ENERGY

HYDROELECTRIC

GREENHOUSE GAS

THERMODYNAMICS

KILOWATT-HOUR

KINETIC ENERGY

FLEXIBLE FUEL

NUCLEAR POWER

NUCLEAR ENERGY

HEAT EXCHANGE

POWER STATION



New Ulm Public Utilities Commission Members:

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



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

PRSRT STD
US POSTAGE
PAID
MANKATO, MN
PERMIT 609



the municipal
Advantage

NEW ULM PUBLIC UTILITIES
MAY-JUNE 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