



the municipal **Advantage**

PEOPLE...POWER.

SEPT-OCT 2024

Drone Safety Tips

It's a bird! It's a plane! It's a drone? Drones are unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) that are increasingly being used both recreationally and professionally.

From disaster relief and surveillance to photography and filmmaking, professionals and hobbyists alike have literally taken their craft to new heights with the use of drones. Despite the opportunities that these unmanned aerial systems introduce, it is important for drone operators to look out for hazards and keep safety in mind when taking flight.

As the number of drones sold increases, so has the possibility of collisions and accidents caused by drones. This leads to a heightened awareness of electrical reliability and safety concerns when drones are flown close to power lines and electrical substations.

If a drone flies into a power line, it could cause power outages. It could also result in downed lines, which pose a dangerous electrical safety hazard. The resulting falling debris could also endanger public safety.

As reported by ABC7 in San Francisco, a January 2016 drone crash resulted in a loud explosion, and approximately three dozen homes lost power. Fortunately, utility crews restored power within two hours.

The FAA (Federal Aviation Administration) is at the forefront of drone regulation. As of August 29, 2016, to fly a drone outdoors, owners must register their devices with the FAA. For aircraft between .55 and 55 pounds, failure to register these aircraft can result in criminal and civil penalties. Complete this registration online at registermyuas.faa.gov.

"It is important that drone operators familiarize themselves with safety tips, including keeping drones safely away from electrical equipment," advises Natalie

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NEW ULM PUBLIC UTILITIES NEWSLETTER
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Hemmer, Safe Electricity Advisory Board member. "For new drone owners, it is a good idea to learn how to fly these devices in an open field, clear of obstacles. This will reduce the chance of crashing into dangerous objects, especially power lines, which are often difficult for new drone pilots to see."

Electrical power lines are buried below ground or are overhead due to their high voltage. These electrical lines can seriously harm or kill someone if damaged. When out flying a drone, be aware of power lines and electrical substations:

- Keep drones at least 200 feet away from power lines, substations, and other utility equipment. Power lines can interfere with the radio signals to your drone causing it to veer off course or crash. This can pose danger to people below or damage your drone or the power lines.
- If a drone becomes entangled in a power line or substation, do not



When out flying a drone, be aware of power lines and electrical substations.

recover it yourself. Attempting to recover the drone from a power line or substation could result in electrocution. Substations are private property of the utility and only authorized individuals can enter these premises. Call the local utility to notify them of the situation.

- If you are in an unfamiliar area or don't know the name of the utility, electrical poles and substations may be marked with the utility's

name and may have an emergency phone number. If you're still unable to contact the utility, call 911 and ask for assistance. Depending on where your drone has landed, it could cause a power outage or damage to the electrical equipment.

The FAA shares the following safety advice:

- Do not fly indoors, near restricted or heavily populated areas, or close to other aircraft.
- Fly only during the day, at least 30 minutes after sunrise, and finish your flight 30 minutes before sunset.
- Always keep your drone within sight range. Avoid drone usage on cloudy or foggy days.
- Respect the privacy of others while using your drone. Do not operate your drone in a manner that is careless or reckless.
- As always, be sure to familiarize yourself with community-specific rules and regulations.

Light up your Holidays!

Let the holiday season shine with strings of energy saving LED lights! AND get some extra jingle in your pocket with a rebate from New Ulm Public Utilities.

Receive \$5 in New Ulm Chamber Dollars per string, up to five strings, with a minimum of 25 lights purchased between October 1 and December 16.

Attach the portion of each package that shows the number of lights per string.

Call 233-2110 for more information or visit newulmmn.gov.

Limited Chambers Dollars available on a first come first served basis. Chamber Dollars will not be given out after funds are depleted.

2 PEOPLE...POWER.

SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2024

SAVE on Your Electric Bills

New Ulm Public Utilities is celebrating **Public Power Week Oct. 6-12**, along with the **American Public Power Association** and approximately **2,000 other community-owned, not-for-profit electric utilities** that collectively provide electricity to **54 million Americans**.

This year, we are focusing on our immense sense of pride in providing reliable, affordable, sustainable, and customer-focused service to our community. To mark Public Power Week, New Ulm Public Utilities is offering tips on how to save energy and money in your home as we build for the future:

According to the Alliance to Save Energy, the average U.S. home uses 70 light bulbs. Even though modern bulbs are energy efficient, you should still turn them off when they aren't in use.

✓ Swap out old incandescent bulbs for new LED bulbs. According to the Department of Energy, residential LEDs — especially ENERGY STAR-rated products—use at least 75% less energy, and last up to 25 times longer, than incandescent lighting.

✓ Heating and cooling your home uses a lot of energy. Set your thermostat lower in the winter and higher in the summer to save energy and money on your power bill.

✓ Unplug appliances when you aren't using them. Even when they aren't being used, they are sometimes drawing "phantom power," which wastes energy.

✓ Your home's water heater is a big energy user. Make sure to use cold water when you can and turn off the hot water while you are scrubbing your hands.

✓ Consider asking your utility about a home energy audit. Energy efficiency experts can use special equipment to find things around your home—like air leaks—that may be costing you energy and money.

✓ We know that using energy wisely to lower monthly electric bills is important to New Ulm residents. And we recognize that even as our utility builds for the future we encourage our customers to do their part to help save energy. While we are sharing these tips during Public Power Week, we hope our community will keep an eye on energy efficiency all year round as we work to provide a reliable, safe, affordable, and renewable power supply.

New Ulm Public Utilities offers a variety of programs to help you use energy wisely. To find out more visit newulmmn.gov/206/Energy-Rebates.



Celebrate Public Power Week Oct. 6-12 with New Ulm Public Utilities

Enter to Win One of the Following Prizes!

- Milwaukee Tool M18 FUEL 16" Chainsaw (electric)
- Milwaukee M18 FUEL 10" Pole Saw w/QUIK-LOC (electric)
- Greenworks G-MAX 20" 40 volt DigiPro Single-Stage Brushless Cordless Snow Blower (electric)

All items include a battery and battery charger.



Name _____
Address _____
Phone _____
Email _____

Drop off your entry or mail to:
New Ulm Public Utilities
310 1st N. St.
New Ulm, MN 56073
Or email to: DerekN@newulmmn.gov



Enter by October 18, 2024





**Your furnace can
get into some
hairy situations
with dust, dirt and
other issues that
can keep it from
running efficiently.**

Remember, furnaces do not have nine lives. Have a professional HVAC technician perform a **CHECK & CLEAN** to make sure your heating unit is in top shape.

A heating system that runs efficiently will save energy resources and energy costs, as well as extend the life of your furnace or boiler.

Take advantage of our \$25 rebate.



**"Rebate!
Rebate!"**

**Visit newulmmn.gov/206/Energy-Rebates
Applying is easier than ever with our online fillable form!**



**Public Power
is Proud to
Provide...**

Local Jobs

Public power employs over 96,000 people—**about 16%** of our nation's utility workforce—from the communities they serve.

Affordability

On average, public power customers have the lowest bills and **pay 9% less** than customers of other utility types.

Reliability

Public power utilities restore electricity quicker than other utility types. In 2022 public power customers experienced 1.5 fewer hours without power than other utility types.

Minnesota's Cold Weather Rule

(CWR) is a state law that protects residential utility customers from having electric or natural gas service shut off between October 1 and April 30. To protect your service from disconnection you must make and keep a payment plan that you and your utility agree upon.



Help your neighbor.
help your friends,
help your family.
Help them to apply today

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



SCAN HERE FOR
APPLICATION

2024-2025 Energy Assistance Program

Deadline: May 31, 2025

* 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:

Household Size	Annual Income	1 Month Max Guidelines
1	\$35,799	\$2,983
2	\$46,814	\$3,901
3	\$57,829	\$4,819
4	\$68,845	\$5,737
5	\$79,860	\$6,655
6	\$90,875	\$7,572
7	\$92,940	\$7,745
8	\$95,006	\$7,917
9	\$97,071	\$8,089

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



★ MEETING MINUTES

NUPU Commission

July

- ✓ Received and order filed presentation from German intern Katharina Reisch on her internship with the New Ulm Public Utilities.
- ✓ Received and order filed the purchase of consulting services from Frontier Energy for a study of the PUC Admin HVAC system.
- ✓ Approved the City Manager to accept the quote from Zivaro for Phase 1 installation of the Verkada security camera system on NUPU facilities.

August

- ✓ Declare Wastewater Department's Unit #35, a 1991 F5070 International pumper truck as surplus property and authorize disposition pursuant to requirements of the City Code and Charter.
- ✓ Received and order filed the report on the New Ulm Public Utilities Water Leak Detection Survey as prepared by Westrum Leak Detection.
- ✓ Authorized the approval of the 3-year quote provided by TSG for the renewal of our Arctic Wolf MDR platform.
- ✓ Approved the agreement between New Ulm Public Utilities, Minnesota Valley Action Council, and the Minnesota Department of Commerce to cooperate and deliver the Minnesota Energy Assistance Program for

Federal Fiscal Year 2025, October 1, 2024 to September 30, 2025, and authorizing the Finance Director to sign the agreement on behalf of New Ulm Public Utilities.

- ✓ Approved the invoice for Well 23, sand issue investigation from Traut Companies.
- ✓ Approved the invoice from Traut Well Company for Well 27 for investigative work and a quote for replacement parts and installation.
- ✓ Approved the quote from WW Goetsch Associates, Inc. for an Aurora pump.
- ✓ Approved the quote from Pro Maintenance for the Reclaim Room floor coating.
- ✓ Approved the purchase from MN Mechanical Solutions Inc. (MMS) for labor and installation of two grit pumps and six valves for the 20th Street South Lift Station and wastewater treatment plant.
- ✓ Authorized the City Manager to accept the bid from MN Mechanical Solutions Inc. (MMS) for removal, disposal, and installation of odor control media for 85 - 87 ATAD (Autoheated Thermophilic Aerobic Digestion).
- ✓ Approved the quote from ARR Construction for the construction of the new Cooling Tower MCC building.
- ✓ Approved the resolution for Commission support in applying for the small utility match of \$111,367.00 through the Minnesota Department of Commerce's State Competitiveness Fund: Matching Funds Program.

Lead Service Line Update

Inventory on water service lines has been submitted to the Minnesota Department of Health. New Ulm Public Utilities is currently waiting on approval from them and next steps.

The campaign to collect information of water service lines in New Ulm is an on going task. We will continue to collect this data until informed by the MN Dept. of Health.

If you were unable to submit data on your water service line, please contact New Ulm Public Utilities' Water Department at 507-359-8279 at your earliest convenience.

Thank you to those who have already submitted the needed data for this campaign.



★ AT YOUR SERVICE

Employee of the Month Honored

Tyler has been employed at the New Ulm Wastewater plant since 2009. Tyler currently has Class B Wastewater license and a Type IV land application license. He is a reliable employee and is comfortable doing any and all tasks assigned and respected by his co-workers, Tyler has the "get 'er done" attitude and helps wherever needed.

**TYLER
ANTONSEN**
Wastewater
Operator
WATERWATER
TREATMENT



**"Rebate!
Rebate!"**



✓ ENERGY STAR APPLIANCES ✓ LED LIGHTING

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

■ REMINDER!

Rebate amounts dependent on minimum qualifications. Rebates are only given when funds are available and during the calendar year in which items were purchased, installed, or when an action occurred, to NUPU customers only. NUPU's Conservation Improvement Program, expenses, and energy savings associated with activities need to fall within the same year, and reported for the year in which they occur. If funds run out within that year, no rebates will be available. Rebate submissions are accepted until January 31 of the following year for the prior year purchases.

Two Wells Approved for Overhaul After Failure Issues

The Public Utility Commission approved the purchase of a new pump, motor and check valves for Well 27 at their August meeting. They also approved to begin the process of an overhaul to Well 23.



The utility SCADA monitoring system showed a failure on well 23, which further testing showed a catastrophic motor failure. The failure was found to be caused by gravel and sand getting in through a hole at the joint in the well's casing. The Utility Engineer Dan Pirsig said that the pump picks up sand and gravel and gets imbedded in the pump and motor. If we just put in another pump and motor, it will happen again. The well will be out of commission for some time due to the project's scale. Engineering on the overhaul will start immediately with construction sometime early next year.

Well 27's pump also failed this summer and testing showed that this pump was sand locked which was caused by a failure in both the check valve and the inline check valve. The failure of both check valves is surprising. Well 27 is an essential well and is due to be repaired once the parts arrive.

The well failures will not affect New Ulm residents, according to Pirsig, as there is plenty of cushion between the two failed wells output and the 5,000 gallons a minute maximum capacity, we can get with all the well running.

The New Ulm Public Utilities Commission unanimously approved \$4,550 in funds to pay for Well 23's failure investigation and \$31,765 for investigative work and parts plus installation to repair Well 27.

PUBLIC POWER = Local Decisions + Local Solutions + Local Jobs



★COLOR... BE PUBLISHED!



Color this community celebrating Public Power Week and drop off, mail, or email this page. We will publish submissions in an upcoming newsletter as part of our ongoing spotlight on the benefits of a public utility.

email DerekN@newulmmn.gov

Drop off or mail to:

**New Ulm Public Utilities, 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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MANKATO, MN
PERMIT 609



the municipal
Advantage

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**“Rebate!
Rebate!”**

NUPU has on-going rebates year 'round!
See inside, visit newulmmn.gov, call 507-233-2110
EASY ONLINE APPLICATION!

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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