



the municipal **Advantage**

PEOPLE...POWER.

NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2024

To Our Valued Customer,



**KRIS
MANDERFELD**
Utilities
Director

I hope this message finds you well and enjoying the holiday season. In conjunction with the 2025 annual budget, an increase in water, sewer and steam rates is being proposed for 2025. These rate increases will be brought to the New Ulm Public Utilities Commission for approval at their December 18, 2024 meeting, to be effective on February 1, 2025.

These changes are necessary to ensure the continued delivery of high-quality water, wastewater, and steam services, as well as to meet the increasing costs of maintaining and upgrading the infrastructure that serves our community.

Why Are the Rates Increasing?

The decision to raise rates was not made lightly, but is essential to support the following:

- **Ongoing Infrastructure Investments:** Regular maintenance and improvements to our aging systems are vital to prevent service disruptions and to comply with environmental regulations. The utility is committed to ensuring the reliability of our utility system for years to come, but this requires significant investment.
- **Rising Operational Costs:** Increases in energy, labor, chemicals and material costs affect our ability to deliver services. These costs have been compounded by inflation and supply chain disruptions. These changes will help us keep pace with inflation and rising costs.
- **Environmental and Regulatory Initiatives:** We are committed to ensuring that our water and sewer systems are sustainable and able to support future growth. The increased rates will contribute reducing water consumption and improving wastewater treatment practices.

What Can You Expect?

For most customers, the increase in rates will be as follows:

- **Water Rates:** A \$2.00 per meter increase in water rates, which will appear on your monthly water bill. This means that the average household's water bill will increase by approximately \$2.00 per month.
- **Sewer Rates:** A \$1.00 per meter increase in sewer rates, impacting your sewer service charges. The average household's sewer bill will increase by approximately \$1.00 per month.
- **District Energy Rates:** A 1% increase in steam rates, will increase the steam bill by approximately \$3.90 per month.

What We Are Doing to Help You Manage Costs

We understand that rate increases can be challenging for our customers. We are committed to helping you manage your utility expenses in the following ways:

- **Water Conservation Programs:** Take advantage of water-saving devices to reduce consumption and lower your bill. Please contact our Energy Services Representative (507-233-2110 ext. 401) if you need any assistance in finding equipment that can help in this area.
- **Payment Assistance for all Utilities:** If you are experiencing financial hardship, we encourage you to contact our billing department (507-359-8259) to explore available payment assistance programs.
- **Billing Transparency:** You will see these rate changes reflected on your upcoming bills, and we will continue to provide clear and transparent billing to help you understand the charges.

How to Stay Informed

We are dedicated to keeping you informed about any changes in our services. For more information about the rate adjustments, please contact our customer service team at 507-233-2110 ext. 401.

Thank you for your understanding and continued support as we work to provide you with reliable water, sewer and steam services.



Follow
us on
Facebook!

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

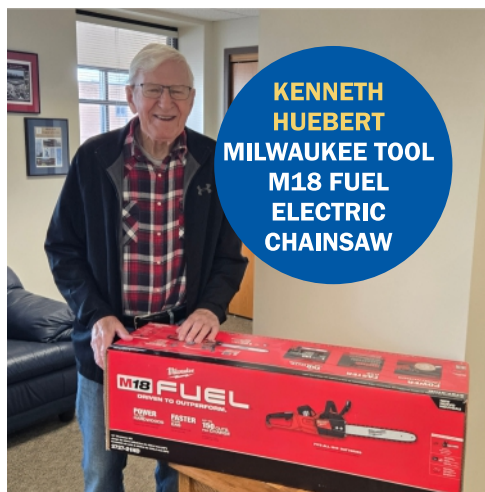


Public Power Week WINNERS!

Thank you to all 533 customers who entered in our Public Power Week drawing!



ASHLYNN KUESTER
GREENWORKS
G-MAX CORDLESS
ELECTRIC
SNOW BLOWER



KENNETH HUEBERT
MILWAUKEE TOOL
M18 FUEL
ELECTRIC
CHAINSAW



SHARON PIZEL
MILWAUKEE M18
FUEL
ELECTRIC
POLE SAW

Home Energy Audits



New Ulm Public Utilities along with the help of Center for Energy and Environment completed home energy audits at residential locations for the 2024 season. Thank you to all who participated in receiving a home energy audit.

If you missed receiving a home energy audit in 2024, no worries! We will resume offering energy audits in 2025. If you would like to schedule a home energy audit,

contact Derek Nelson, Energy Services Representative with New Ulm Public Utilities at 507-233-2110 ext. 401, or DerekN@newulmmn.gov. If you prefer to discuss an energy audit in person stop by our office located at 310 1st N. St.

Home energy audits are paid for by the Utility through our CIP (Conservation Improvement Program). Below is a brief explanation of what happens during an energy audit.

During an energy audit, a trained energy expert collects and analyzes data on how your home uses energy. Auditors will commonly perform the following tasks:

- ★ Inspect your home's interior and exterior.
- ★ Analyze insulation levels throughout the home.
- ★ Determine the age and efficiency of your heating and cooling equipment as well as your water heater.
- ★ Conduct combustion safety tests on your mechanical equipment.
- ★ Conduct a blower door test to see how much air your home loses through leaks.
- ★ Use an infrared camera to scan and document insulation levels (if possible).
- ★ Sometimes auditors can review utility bills to aid their analysis of your energy usage (you may be asked to supply them with utility bills prior to their visit).

What is the outcome of the energy audit?

Auditors will provide a summary report that explains what they found as well as prioritizing next steps. There will often be information about rebates in the document as well.



★ **MEETING MINUTES****NUPU Commission****October**

- ✓ Accepted the engineering proposal from Short Elliott Hendrickson (SEH) to oversee the reconstruction of Well 22 & Well 23.
- ✓ Received and order filed the Cottonwood Area Water Service Planning & Analysis report from Short Elliot Hendrickson (SEH).
- ✓ Scheduled meeting to review the Preliminary 2025 Budget for New Ulm Public Utilities.

November

- ✓ Approved the 2025 Schedule of Fees and Charges to be effective January 1, 2025.
- ✓ Authorized the City Manager to advertise for bids and set the bid date for the Burner Management Controls project on #4 Boiler.
- ✓ Receive and order filed the purchase from Thermal Process Systems for odor control media replacement for ATAD (Auto-heated Thermophilic Aerobic Digestion).
- ✓ Authorized the City Manager to accept the quote from MEI to repair and upgrade the elevator in the PUC Administration building.

REBATE CHANGE NOTICE:

**“Rebate!
Rebate!”**

NUPU staff have been looking into whether rebate program changes need to occur. Rebate program changes occur to keep up to date with Minnesota Department of Commerce requirements and technical changes. These changes can occur at any time within the year.

The natural gas water heater rebate will have two changes in 2025. The changes will impact the minimum uniform energy factor (UEF) requirements and rebate amount.

2025 Water Heater Rebate Changes:

- Storage (Tank) Water Heater-Minimum Requirement: 0.81 UEF=\$250
- Instantaneous Water Heater- Minimum Requirement: 0.95 UEF=\$250

The Heat is On!

Oh the weather outside may be frightful, but your furnace is so delightful... that is, if you have an energy efficient model that saves energy and money!

New Ulm Public Utilities encourages saving energy by offering a \$100-\$200 rebate on a new qualifying boiler or furnace for residential and small commercial customers.

A new energy efficient furnace can save energy as well as money off your heating bill!

Visit newulmmn.gov/206/Energy-Rebates

Applying is easier than ever with our online fillable form!

Steam Upgrades

**“Rebate!
Rebate!”**

District energy/steam customer are eligible for a 50% rebate, up to \$7,500, on steam upgrades, such as thermostatic valves, pipe insulation, and steam trap replacement within their building.

Did You Know?

Wash clothes in cold water. About 90% of the energy needed to run a washing machine is used to heat the water.

★ ★ ★ **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



Winter Tree Trimming Notice

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.



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

Energy Assistance Program

Deadline: May 31, 2025

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:

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



SCAN HERE FOR APPLICATION

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



SPACE HEATER Safety Tip

Never use extension cords or a power strip with a space heater, and make sure the unit is not plugged into the same circuit as other electric appliances.

SafeElectricity.org

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.



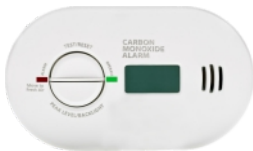
NUPU Gas Department Provides FREE Services for Your Convenience and Safety

● 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 that are more than 10 years old 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. This is part of our regular maintenance and at no cost to you!



● 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.

CLEAR YOUR GAS METER

AFTER EVERY SNOW FALL, REMEMBER TO:

- Keep your meter free from snow and ice.
- Clear a 3-foot area around the meter.
- Look above the meter for ice that may fall.

For more information :

📞 (507) 359-8289

NOTE: If blocked, pressure may build up, creating a dangerous situation and causing appliances to fail.



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 begin to rise.



★ AT YOUR SERVICE

Employee of the Month Honored

Aaron's knowledge of the water plant was instrumental while working with the consulting staff, and the intern from Germany to complete the water filter assessment. This assessment will be used to plan future improvements needed to the water plant. Aaron's historical knowledge of New Ulm's raw water characteristics from each of our 13 wells helped the consultant plan out what the pilot part of the filter study would look like. Aaron took responsibility to mentor our intern by giving her hands on plant operation time, and time for her to be part of plant maintenance projects.

AARON DUCHENE
Operational Chief/
Plant Operations
Water/Steam



Jim came to the aid if a woman who had fallen in her driveway as he was working in town locating underground utilities. He made sure she was ok before resuming his job. His comments were that it was not a big deal and was glad he was in the right place at the right time. His kindness shows his helpful nature. Jim is one of those employees who takes a lot of pride in his work. He is always willing to jump in and help. You can always count on him.

JIM HENDERSON
Electric Systems
Technician
Electric
Dept.



Darcy has shown excellent leadership and skills during startups we have done for MISO. He knows what must be done with the turbines and is always willing to help the boiler operators when they need it. Darcy is always thinking ahead to make sure we meet the deadline during this busy project. When Darcy is not in the relief position, he helps with maintenance throughout the plant, and is willing to do any job that is presented to him safely and in a timely manner. Darcy is a great person to work with and is deserving of this recognition.

DARCY SIEG
Relief Power
Plant Operator
Electric
Production
Dept.



★ Thank you! ★



Thank you to all who submitted photos, recipes and tips to our NUPU Rebate & Conservation Calendar. We hope you enjoy this community-involvement project. Watch the next

newsletter and social media for the 2026 theme!

You're a CONTROL FREAK!



That's right—take control over high heating bills with a programmable thermostat! Set it and forget it. You say when the furnace goes up (when you're home) and when it goes down (when you are out or at night). And here's a hot deal...receive a rebate of \$30 (non-Energy Star) and \$75 (Energy Star rated) from New Ulm Public Utilities with your purchase! Save money, get money... warms the heart, doesn't it?



WHERE SHOULD IT GO?

The location of your thermostat can affect its performance and efficiency. Read the manufacturer's installation instructions to prevent "ghost readings" or unnecessary furnace or air conditioner cycling. To operate properly, a thermostat must be on an interior wall away from direct sunlight, drafts, doorways, skylights, and windows. It should be located where natural room air currents—warm air rising, cool air sinking—occur. Furniture will block natural air movement, so do not place pieces in front of or below your thermostat. Also make sure your thermostat is conveniently located for programming.

★ FUN ★ TRIVIA ★ FACTS

According to energy.gov...

900+

Clean Energy Factories
Announced Since 2020

■ **If you could gather all the energy in a lightning bolt how much would it be?**

The average lightning bolt contains about 5,000,000,000 joules. This is equivalent to exploding 1000kg of TNT!

■ **In 1752 what did Benjamin Franklin use to prove that lightning is an electrical phenomenon?**

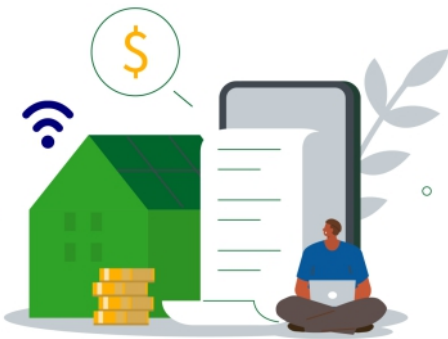
A kite, a key, a silk ribbon, a metal wire, and a special jar for storing electricity.

400,000+

Clean Energy Jobs Created Since
2020

3,400,000

Families Accessed Clean Energy Tax
Credits in 2023



**HOME AND APPLIANCE
UPGRADES ARE ELIGIBLE FOR
REBATES OR TAX CREDITS!**

Visit energy.gov/save/home-upgrades to
find out the facts!

**Kara Carlson brought our Community
Powered illustration to life with her coloring
skills in celebration of Public Power Week!**



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
NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2024 NEWSLETTER



**“Rebate!
Rebate!”**

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

INSIDE

Message from the Director..... 1
Public Power Week Winners..... 2
Home Energy Audits..... 2
Meeting Minutes..... 3
Rebate Information..... 3
Tree Trimming..... 4
Energy Assistance & Cold Weather Rule..... 4
Gas Dept Messages..... 5
Reduce Risk of Frozen Pipes..... 5
Change Your Air Filter..... 5
Employees of the Month..... 6
Programmable Thermostats..... 6
Fun, Trivia & Facts..... 7



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