



# the municipal Advantage

PEOPLE...POWER.

MAY/JUNE 2020

## SAVE Water Money Energy

**W**aterSense, a voluntary partnership program sponsored by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), is both a label for water-efficient products and a resource for helping you save water.



The WaterSense label makes it simple to find water-efficient products, certified new homes, and programs that meet EPA's criteria for efficiency and performance. WaterSense-labeled products and services are certified to use at least 20 percent less water, save energy, and perform as well as or better than regular models.

There are many products that have a WaterSense label. Products such as showerheads, bathroom/kitchen faucets, toilets, pre-rinse spray valves, and irrigation controllers exist for both residential and commercial locations. *Check out the facts below from the Environmental Protection Agency and visit [www.epa/watersense](http://www.epa/watersense) for additional information.*

### Every drop counts:

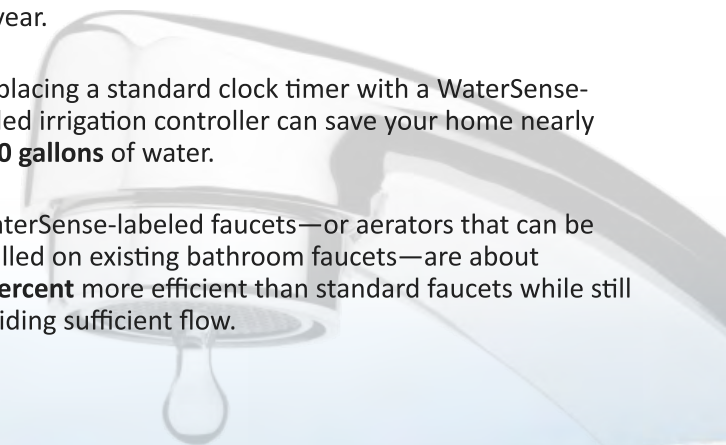
- Bathrooms are the largest use of water in the home, using more than **50 percent** of all indoor water.
- Approximately 5 to 10 percent of US homes have easy-to-fix leaks that drip away **90 gallons** a day or more.
- Residential outdoor water use across the US accounts for nearly **9 billion gallons** of water each day, mainly for landscape irrigation.



- On average, a urinal in a public place gets flushed **18 times** per day.
- Heating water is typically the **second largest** use of energy in a home (after space heating and cooling).

### Did you know?

- Replacing showerheads with WaterSense-labeled models can save **4 gallons** of water every time you take a shower.
- Replacing old, inefficient faucets and aerators with WaterSense-labeled models can save **700 gallons** of water per year.
- Replacing a standard clock timer with a WaterSense-labeled irrigation controller can save your home nearly **8,800 gallons** of water.
- WaterSense-labeled faucets—or aerators that can be installed on existing bathroom faucets—are about **30 percent** more efficient than standard faucets while still providing sufficient flow.



**NEW ULM PUBLIC UTILITIES NEWSLETTER**

[newulmmn.gov](http://newulmmn.gov) • 507-233-2110



Just chill this summer with a new central AC unit and refreshing rebate!

Customers who purchase a central air conditioning unit with a Seasonal Energy Efficiency Ratio (SEER) rating of at least 14.5 are eligible for a **rebate starting at \$200.**



Want a window AC? **NO SWEAT!**

Customers who purchase an Energy Star window air conditioner are eligible for a **\$25 rebate.**



# Madeleine Pearson NUPU Essay Contest Scholarship Winner

## What is the Tom Bovitz Memorial Scholarship?

- Minnesota Municipal Utilities Association's (MMUA) scholarship program was created as a public relations tool to increase the awareness of public power
- The program provides high school seniors the

opportunity to earn a scholarship by writing a short essay on the benefits of public power, with a deadline in early April

- Annually, four scholarships totaling \$5,000 are awarded by MMUA to essay contest winners who plan to attend a post-secondary educational institution
- New Ulm Public Utilities awards \$500 to essay winners within their service territory

Local entries were collected and reviewed by NUPU staff with the selected essay being sent to MMUA (Minnesota Municipal Utilities Association) for a chance to receive an additional scholarship of up to \$2000.

This year's local entry winner is Maddie Pearson from Minnesota Valley Lutheran High School. Her essay is below. Maddie plans on majoring in business administration at Concordia University Wisconsin. New Ulm Public Utilities would like to thank Maddie for her submitted essay on the benefits of public power and wish her luck in her schooling.

## Municipal Utilities: Good for All of Us by Madeleine Pearson

"Good for all of us" reflects the goal of the Minnesota Municipal Utilities Association which is to unify, support, and serve these utilities so they improve service to their customers and communities. Local people work together to fill the needs of their town. Though advertised as a large association across the state of Minnesota, each municipal utility is shaped to fit the needs of their community. Not only do public utilities benefit local citizens, but also the city. Municipal utilities are non-profit organizations, and their funds are drawn from operating revenues or sale of tax-exempt bonds. Minnesota municipal utilities provide service for communities, big or small, and allow locals to have control in their community.

from construction and maintenance of municipal water pumping, street lighting programs, natural gas, energy efficiency and conservation projects. Without these services, our towns could not operate. Municipal utilities also help with relief efforts during natural disasters. The great Halloween blizzard of 1991 struck the area and ice storms downed many electrical lines in southern Minnesota. Fortunately, the power outages lasted only a short time before the power was returned. This was due to the local public utilities. Municipal utilities are controlled by city councils. This allows each community to shape their municipal utilities to fit the needs of their specific town. Instead of having one huge business that regulates all of the towns in the entire state, each municipality is individualized. There are 125 municipal electric and 31 municipal gas utilities in Minnesota. The size of utility ranges from Rochester, which serves 100,000

Most people assume that utilities include simply water and electricity when, in fact, utility services range

*Continued to page 3...*

## TREE REBATE DISCONTINUED

Beginning this year (2020) New Ulm Public Utilities will no longer offer a rebate for trees. Last year NUPU was notified by the Minnesota Department of Commerce, which oversees Conservation Improvement Programs (CIP), that CIP funds cannot be used for tree rebates. While trees have many advantages, including energy conservation, CIPs are gauged on the first year of installation or implementation. Based on how the Department of Commerce gauges savings, trees do not yield an energy savings within the first year of being planted. NUPU is sorry for this news but is looking for ways to implement tree planting in the future.



## MEETING NOTES

### March New Ulm Public Utilities Commission meeting:

- Recognized Scott Altmann, Gas Department, as Employee of the Month
- Commended upon retirement Tom Gareis, Electric Distribution Department, for 12 years of service
- Authorized NUPU to waive penalties and suspend disconnection of services due to the declaration of COVID-19 Peacetime Emergency until April 30
- Approved natural gas interconnection regulator replacement
- Approved Phase 2b of assessment for NUPU filing to become a Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) transmission owner

No Energy Awareness meeting was held in March.





...Continued from Page 2

people, to smaller cities that only serve 500 people.

Public utilities set the standard for smaller, private utility companies. This constant competition helps all electric consumers. For example, in New Ulm, we have a power plant that can produce energy to light the town, but most of the time we purchase energy from Heartland Consumers Power District. However, when that cost goes up, we have the ability to produce our own power if it is more cost-effective. That is a win for the consumers. This is how public utilities can have some of the lowest rates across the state. The United States average revenue per kilowatt hour, per state, in 2007 was over 9 cents. The Minnesota average was 7.83 while the public municipal average was 7.79. This demonstrates the difference between not only Minnesota and the United States, but the Minnesota average compared to the public municipal average.

Our public utilities also promote being eco-friendly in New Ulm. The utility commission sponsors several programs to help homeowners save money when they do their part to conserve energy. For example, with the ReLeaf Program,\* homeowners can get reimbursed when they plant shade trees or wind breaks on their property. The utility department also offers several different rebates for installing Energy Star appliances and lighting fixtures. When our family finished off our basement, our electrician made sure to show us how we could get a rebate for all the light fixtures we installed because they were Energy Star rated. This gave us a little money back after completing the project. Through these programs, the public utility is promoting responsible global citizenship and good stewardship of the earth.

Not only do municipal electric utilities provide reliable, cost effective service, but they also return money to the city general

fund. This extra money helps cities keep their property taxes lower. In most cases, municipal utilities support cities financially, with their time, and through physical materials. Having a public utility within a city benefits the city's fund and the citizens.

Wherever there is public power, there is a picture of the American people working together to fit their needs, a symbol of the American ideal. Even though the Minnesota Municipal Utilities Association is a large brand across the entire state, each local utility molds their service around the needs of the community. When there is an issue, rather than a major corporation being notified and trying to solve the problem, the individual city with the problem is contacted and reliable, small-town, service solves the problem right away. This is why a municipal utility is good for all of us.

\*ReLeaf tree rebate program has been discontinued.

# Electric Vehicle Charging Station Data Report



The New Ulm Public Utilities Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Station located at 127 N. German St. in New Ulm was monitored in February and data was collected on time spent at the charging station, gasoline savings, charging time and more. Time spent in New Ulm while the vehicles were charging ranged from under one half hour, to over six hours. While local electric vehicle owners do use the charging station, the people and vehicles that were documented during this observation period were all from other cities including Woodbury, New London, Marshall and Bloomington. This raises the question— does the EV station help to bring additional business to New Ulm from other communities? The conclusion could be drawn that while a traveler is charging, even for an hour and up to several hours, that the driver and possible passengers may shop, visit parks, eat at local restaurants and discover other amenities that New Ulm has to offer.



<u>START DATE</u>	<u>END DATE</u>	<u>TOTAL DURATION</u>	<u>ENERGY (kWh)</u>	<u>GREENHOUSE GAS SAVINGS</u>	<u>GASOLINE SAVINGS</u>	<u>FEE</u>	<u>DRIVER ZIP CODE</u>
2/5/2020	2/5/2020	1:39:18	11.21	4.708	1.407 gallon	\$2.56	56273
2/8/2020	2/8/2020	6:44:39	45.985	19.314	5.771 gallon	\$8.13	N/A
2/8/2020	2/8/2020	1:50:12	12.633	5.306	1.585 gallon	\$2.76	55439
2/9/2020	2/9/2020	3:03:07	19.878	8.349	2.495 gallon	\$3.76	56258
2/11/2020	2/11/2020	0:17:28	2.03	0.853	0.255 gallon	\$1.28	55129
2/11/2020	2/12/2020	2:41:06	18.356	7.71	2.304 gallon	\$3.55	56273
2/12/2020	2/12/2020	0:05:05	0.562	0.236	0.071 gallon	\$1.00	55129*

\* The 2/12 station use was in progress when data was collected and is not complete.



DEPARTMENT STAFF SHARE  
IMPROVEMENTS, PLANS,  
ACTIVITIES AND  
ANNOUNCEMENTS

DEPARTMENT

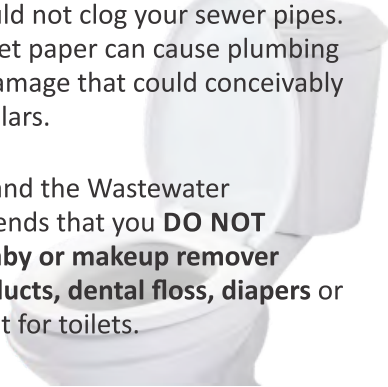
# highlights

## What You Flush May Cost You \$\$

DAN  
O'CONNOR  
Wastewater  
Treatment  
Supervisor

**A**s a result of the COVID 19 virus pandemic, the unavailability of toilet paper at times may lead some to resort to other options. That may include paper towels, tissues and baby wipes. Please be advised that these items should not be flushed down the toilet now, or at any time. Even if the packaging says the item is "flushable," it does not mean that it could not clog your sewer pipes. Flushing anything but toilet paper can cause plumbing issues that could cause damage that could conceivably cost you thousands of dollars.

New Ulm Public Utilities and the Wastewater Treatment Plant recommends that you **DO NOT FLUSH—paper towels, baby or makeup remover wipes, hair, sanitary products, dental floss, diapers** or anything that is not meant for toilets.



## South Side Booster Station Upgrade on Horizon

GEORGE  
BROWN  
Water  
Department  
Supervisor

**A**n update of the pumping equipment at our South Side Booster Station at the New Ulm Country Club golf course is tentatively scheduled for later this summer.

By way of background, in our system, a booster station consists of a pumping station and a ground level storage tank located at an elevation higher than most of the city, and the tank is filled from the Treatment Plant near German Park. At the South Side Booster Station, some of that water flows back downhill to provide pressure below Summit Avenue. The tank here also serves as a reservoir for the pumps located adjacent to the tank. These pumps "boost" the water up into the water towers located in Nehls Park and by the airport. The water from the water towers provides pressure to the parts of town at the highest elevations in town. Our project will replace pumps that were installed in the 1970s. The new pumps will have variable frequency motors that will allow the pumps to continuously vary their speed and the amount of water being pumped. The old pumps only run at one set speed—full speed when the pump is running. These new pumps will also allow our Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) system to better control how the water flows in our distribution system. These updates will bring this booster station up to the same level of operation and control as the other two booster stations in our water distribution system.

# ★ Outstanding in Their Field

## Employees of the Month

Scott Altmann has been an employee of the New Ulm Public Utilities Gas Department since July of 2018. Scott brought with him years of experience in underground excavation that he learned while working for Lafayette Excavating. His experience operating backhoes and other equipment has given all NUPU employees better insight to safer equipment operation and excavating procedures. Scott is still learning how the natural gas system operates but has shown that he has what it takes to be a valued employee. Scott needs little direction, asks questions, and makes sure things are completed properly.

SCOTT  
ALTMANN  
Mechanic  
Welder  
Gas  
Department



things without much of supervision has been invaluable. She is a quick learner and a self-starter. Beth is not afraid to participate and add new ideas. She will bring a new perspective to the job and looks forward to the role that she will develop into. NUPU is lucky to have her and will benefit from the knowledge that she brings.

BETH  
KRAL  
Financial  
Manager  
Administration  
Department



Beth Kral came to the Utilities from the City Finance Department as the previous Assistant Finance

Director. Beth has the ability to review tasks and work from past documents which has made training very easy. Her ability to figure out





# Gas Leak Survey Underway

**W**hen you need assistance from the Gas Department whether it is a gas odor or a carbon monoxide detector alarming, please respect the workspace of the technician who responds to your call. Let them know if anyone in the house has been ill recently and try to keep 6 feet away from them if possible.

**DAVID O'BRIEN**  
SUPERVISOR  
Gas Department Supervisor

optical leak detector. We also check the service lines and meters that run to your house or business at least once every three years. We walk the entire service line from where it is attached to the gas main all the way to the gas meter checking for leaks along the way. If any leaks are found, they are repaired as soon as possible.

Our annual leak survey is underway. Every year our technicians check all the natural gas mains for leaks. We do this by driving over the mains with an

Call 811 before you dig, respect the flags that mark your utilities and have a safe summer. See more details below:

## THE 811 PROCESS **811** FOR HOMEOWNERS

### 1 NOTIFY

Notify your local one-call center by calling 811 or making an online request 2-3 days before work begins. Visit [gopherstateonecall.org](http://gopherstateonecall.org) for more details.



### 2 WAIT

Wait 2-3 days (visit [gopherstateonecall.org](http://gopherstateonecall.org) for state law information) for affected utility operators to respond to your request. On average, between 7-8 utility operators are notified for each request.



### 3 CONFIRM

Confirm that all affected utility operators have responded to your request by comparing the marks to the list of utilities the one-call center notified. State laws vary on the process for confirmation; visit [gopherstateonecall.org](http://gopherstateonecall.org) for more information.



### 4 RESPECT

Respect the marks. The marks provided by the affected utility operators are your guide for the duration of your project. If you are unable to maintain the marks during your project, or the project will continue past your request's expiration date (varies by state), call 811 to ask for a re-mark.



### 5 DIG CAREFULLY

Dig carefully. If you can't avoid digging near the marks (within 18-24 inches on all sides, depending on state law), consider moving your project to another part of your yard. If you must dig near the marks or use machinery of any kind, please read "The 811 Process for Contractors" at [call811.com/start-here/contractors](http://call811.com/start-here/contractors).



For projects that include planting a tree, installing a mailbox or building a deck, among others.

DEPARTMENT STAFF SHARE  
IMPROVEMENTS, PLANS,  
ACTIVITIES AND  
ANNOUNCEMENTS

## DEPARTMENT **highlights**

### Updates on Horizon

**DAVE KUEHN**  
Chief Engineer  
Electric Production Department Supervisor

**T**he Electric Production Department is in the process of updating the controls on our #4 boiler. We are adding variable frequency drives to our fans and electronic actuators to control our dampers in the system. The old system used pneumatic drives that are obsolete and were in need of repairs. The addition of this equipment will make the boiler more efficient and safer to operate.

In the next month or so we will be doing a major inspection and controls upgrade to our #6 Elliott steam turbine generator. The insurance carrier has required this as it has not had a major inspection since 2005, and is now noted that it needs to be done every 10 years. Every five years is required to have the safety devices inspected. The controls were installed in 1996 when the unit was rejuvenated and are now obsolete. We will upgrade them as part of the major inspection to save money, and make the unit more efficient and safer to operate.

### May is Electric Safety Month! Here are some great tips for homeowners:

use a qualified electrician for repair work	repair loose outlets; replace cracked, worn electric cords	watch for hot or discolored switch plates, flickering lights, or buzzing sounds.
get regular check-ups for older homes	use bulbs with correct wattage for the fixtures	if children are present, install lamper resistant outlets to protect against shock
use extension cords temporarily, not as permanent wiring	unplug electrics if you smell something burning	keep cords out of walkways and high traffic areas
educate the household on electrical safety		

# Beware of Utility Scammers!



New Ulm Public Utilities would like to remind customers that during times of crisis there are individuals who try to take

advantage of others. There was a recent article in a utility publication which stated over the past few months, several public power utilities have reported a higher frequency of scamming activity targeting their customers.

An article in the publication *American Public Power* titled "Utilities caution about uptick in attempted scams" noted that scammers are utilizing social media platforms targeting customers through ads. Other utilities reported the usual scam via telephone. Not only are residential customers targeted but many small businesses were mentioned in this article as targets of scammers. Businesses that were targeted were generally contacted on weekends "when they may be more likely to panic about having" utilities disconnected. The NUPU will never disconnect a customer on the weekend.

Listed below is NUPU payment information. If you do receive a call regarding your utilities and are uncertain about the call, please contact NUPU. Do not give out personal information over the phone. Contact NUPU with a listed phone number from a trusted source as a phone book or phone number on your utility bill.

### ■ UTILITY PAYMENTS

You will receive a monthly billing based on monthly meter readings. If a meter reading is not available, a card will be left at the door or the billing will be estimated.

All utility payments are due by the "due date" which is 15 days after the billing date as indicated on your utility bill. Any payment made after the due date shall be subject to a late penalty of 5% of the amount of the bill, with a minimum penalty of 25 cents per service.

### ■ PAY BY PHONE

Dial 833-309-4326

### ■ PAY ONLINE

[municipalonlinepayments.com/newulmmn](http://municipalonlinepayments.com/newulmmn)

- Pay by credit or debit card
- View updated billing and consumption history
- Account balances are automatically updated

### ■ PAYMENT LOCATIONS

- Finance Department located at City Hall, 100 North Broadway
- Drop box is located in the parking lot behind City Hall on the median across from the ATM machine behind Citizens Bank
- Hy-Vee Food Store\*, Customer Service Counter, 2015 South Broadway

*\*Any payment made on an account scheduled for shut-off within 48 hours must be made at 100 North Broadway.*

### ■ UTILITY TRANSFERS

If you are moving to/from a property, please notify us one business day prior to the move to schedule a time for the meters to be read. Notification can be done in person or online using forms found at [newulmmn.gov](http://newulmmn.gov) under "Utility Payments and Transfers." Additionally, utility transfers are conducted at City Hall, 100 N. Broadway on the main floor.

### ■ NOTICE OF APPEAL

A utilities customer who disputes the amount of a utility bill, or who is unable to pay all or part of the bill, may on or before the deadline of the filing of a notice of appeal, fill out a Notice of Appeal form and submit to the Finance Department. Deadline for filing is five (5) days after the late notice is mailed or the next working day.

Questions or concerns, please contact the Finance Department at 507-359-8259.

## CELEBRATE & PARTICIPATE!

*NUPU encourages customers to be aware of special months and days that spotlight people, groups and themes that promote safety, environmental awareness, pay tribute to those who work in the utility industry and some just for fun!*

### ■ MAY

- Electrical Safety Month
- National Bike Month
- Clean Air Month
- May 3-9 Drinking Water Week

### ■ JUNE:

- National Safety Month
- National Great Outdoors Month
- National Homeowners Month
- National Pollinators Month
- June 21-27 Lightning Safety Week



## NOTICE FROM MINNESOTA VALLEY ACTION COUNCIL

The Minnesota Department of Commerce is expanding Crisis eligibility.

At this time, many connected utilities are not issuing disconnect notices. The Commerce Energy Assistance Program is implementing an option to pay a past due bill, allowing households to qualify for Crisis without a disconnection notice. Past due is any previously unpaid balance beyond the current month's charges.

Households with any unpaid past due balance are eligible to request Crisis to pay their past due and current balance. The Department of Commerce modified the FFY20 application to indicate this new option.

A revised application form can be found at [mnvac.org](http://mnvac.org). People can also call MVAC at 800-767-7139 or 507-345-6822 and request an application.





**Just for FUN!**

New Ulm Public Utilities encourages kids of all ages to learn about safety, saving energy, saving money, and environmental awareness.



**CALL FOR PHOTOS!**  
**New Ulm's Best Kept Secrets 2021 Calendar**

No one knows New Ulm like you do! Take photos throughout the year of what YOU see that maybe others don't. What is hiding in your backyard, scenes at your favorite grocery store, your kid's dance recital, cats and dogs, picnics in the park, secret alleyways or a night out in downtown hot spots. Take photos of whatever you see that others may not, then submit them to New Ulm Public Utilities for the opportunity to be published in NUPU's 2021 Rebate & Conservation Calendar.

Photos can be from any year. Submit high resolution digital photos, or prints, with month and year taken, location, event, activity or scene information along with your name and contact information to **DerekN@newulmmn.gov**, drop off or mail: **New Ulm Public Utilities, 310 1st N. St. to the attention of Derek Nelson.** Call **233-2110** for more information.



Junior Safety Agent, your help is needed to crack the code!

Safe Electricity has important safety tips to help keep people safe from electrical hazards while playing outside. Your mission is to discover what these safety tips are by completing the sentences below. Then, put the circled letters in the decoder. When you have finished all the sentences, the clues will come together to form a secret message!

1. Keep yourself and any play items away from power  \_ \_ \_ \_ .
2. It is dangerous to climb trees near  \_ \_ \_ \_ lines.
3. Never play around padmount  \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ .
4.  \_ \_ \_ \_ should be flown far away from overhead power lines or other electrical equipment.
5. A kite string can  \_ \_ \_ \_ electricity from a power line through a person to the ground.
6. It is safest to fly kites in large, open areas like a  \_ \_ \_ \_ or a field.
7. Never climb a  \_ \_ \_ \_ surrounding the substation for a ball or other toy. Call your utility for help.
8. Keep electronics like  \_ \_ \_ \_ away from pools and hot tubs.
9. Be aware of the hazards, also known as  \_ \_ \_ \_ , inside and outside your home.
10. Know where to fly model  \_ \_ \_ \_ to avoid contact with power lines.
11. Damaged power lines are dangerous. Never touch a  \_ \_ \_ \_ power line.
12. Making contact with electrical appliances while  \_ \_ \_ \_ is dangerous.
13. Remember to think about  \_ \_ \_ \_ before deciding where to play outside.
14. Always dispose of  \_ \_ \_ \_ balloons properly.
15. Weatherproof covers should be used for exterior  \_ \_ \_ \_ .
16. Never  \_ \_ \_ \_ trees that are close to power lines.
17. Never swim in  \_ \_ \_ \_ where boats are plugged in to shore power.
18. Don't plant tall  \_ \_ \_ \_ near power lines.
19. Walk carefully, and don't run in areas near extension  \_ \_ \_ \_ .

Congratulations! You've cracked the code, Junior Safety Agent! Be sure to share what you know about electrical safety to help keep your friends and family safe. Learn more at [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).

1. lines; 2. power; 3. transformers; 4. kites; 5. conduct; 6. park; 7. fence; 8. radios; 9. dangers; 10. planes; 11. downed; 12. wet; 13. safety; 14. Mylar; 15. outlets; 16. climb; 17. marinas; 18. trees; 19. cords

**EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES WITH NEW ULM PUBLIC UTILITIES**

**\* Relief Boiler Operator**

Full time, Electric Production  
 Under the direct supervision of the Power Plant Operator, to operate and maintain all steam generating equipment. This position will work shifts, which does include working weekends. This position does receive a 3.5% shift differential.

Visit [newulmmn.gov](http://newulmmn.gov) for details and to apply. Select **CITY DEPARTMENTS** and then **HUMAN RESOURCES**.

To apply for an opening, complete an online application by clicking "Apply" at the top of the job announcement and then clicking "Create an account."

You may access a free public computer at the New Ulm Public Library.

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



the municipal  
**Advantage**

**NEW ULM PUBLIC UTILITIES  
 MAY-JUNE 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>