



# the municipal Advantage

PEOPLE...POWER.

JULY-AUGUST 2021

## Water/Wastewater Rate Study

As consumers we turn on our water faucet and have clean, safe drinking water without a thought. Many areas of the country are not as fortunate to have an abundant source of water. But water treatment and waste disposal are critical to our everyday lives.

While we may, as a consumer, take for granted the availability of water and waste disposal, there is a lot that goes on behind the scenes. The Water Department has thirteen wells that supply water to the City of New Ulm. This water travels to the treatment plant, which was built in 1994, to be treated and sent out to two elevated water

towers and two ground reservoirs. From there, treated water is then sent through 94 miles of distribution lines to your homes. That is a lot of infrastructure! On the flip side, all waste from our homes is taken away through 88 miles of sanitary sewer lines to the waste treatment plant which was built in 1975. The wastewater goes through an anaerobic process to be treated to the point that it is safe to leave the plant.

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency has regulations and rules that are required in making wastewater clean before leaving the plant. The same goes for drinking water, as the Minnesota Department

**While we may, as a consumer, take for granted the availability of water and waste disposal, there is a lot that goes on behind the scenes.**



**KRIS MANDERFELD**  
Utilities Director

of Health has established numerous guidelines on safe drinking water.

The New Ulm Public Utilities (NUPU) Commission engaged Short Elliott Hendrickson (SEH), to perform a cost of service and rate study for the Water and Wastewater Treatment

**WATER continued on page 2**



**NEW ULM PUBLIC UTILITIES NEWSLETTER**

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

## Do you and your community need funding to get a clean energy project off the ground?

The Clean Energy Resource Teams (CERTs) can help!

The Clean Energy Resource Teams (CERTs) seeks to provide Seed Grants to support clean energy projects that spur community development in Minnesota. Clean energy projects include those related to energy conservation and efficiency, renewable energy, electric vehicles, and energy storage. Priority will be given to proposals that provide forums for community education about the technologies and their economic, ecological, and community benefits.



“Since 2006, CERTs has awarded more than \$1.3 million to over 393 projects,” said Lissa Pawlisch, Clean Energy Resource Teams Director. “Those projects ranged from energy efficiency for a food shelf and a library to solar curriculum and public EV chargers, and much more.”

✓ **Proposals for Seed Grant projects must be submitted no later than 4pm on Friday, October 8, 2021. The official Request for Proposals (RFP), Application, and answers to frequently asked questions can be found at [cleanenergyresourceteams.org/seedgrants](https://cleanenergyresourceteams.org/seedgrants).**

CERTs offers many tools and resources to help you plan your project, so get started today! CERTs staff are happy to assist you throughout the process from talking through your project idea to getting that idea down on paper.

Funding for these projects is provided through the Minnesota Department of Commerce, Division of Energy Resources.

WATER *continued from Page 1*

Departments. This study was to review the Utilities operating and capital expenditures for the water and sanitary sewer system and develop a financial plan and cost-based rates. SEH presented the results of the study at the June NUPU Commission meeting. Rate recommendations were developed for the next five years. The rates can be adjusted based on actual performance each year if necessary. It is the intention of the Utility to implement a water and wastewater rate adjustment for January of 2022.

The table below shows the increase in residential rates from 2021 to 2022. There has not been an increase in water rates since 2014 or an increase in wastewater rates since 2013. While no utility wants to raise rates for their customers, we are doing it as conservatively as possible while still maintaining the funds to continually maintain and upgrade infrastructure that was put in place 25 – 50 years ago. So, for the cost of a cup of coffee and donut, you are helping maintain the investments that were built many years ago.

<b>Residential Water</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>
<b>Up to 5,000 gallons</b>	<b>\$3.78</b>	<b>\$3.80</b>
<b>Over 5,000 gallons</b>	<b>\$4.73</b>	<b>\$4.75</b>
<b>Water base fee</b>	<b>\$10.10</b>	<b>\$12.00</b>

<b>Residential Sewer</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>2022</b>
<b>Non-Industrial</b>	<b>\$4.22</b>	<b>\$4.22</b>
<b>Sewer base fee</b>	<b>\$6.75</b>	<b>\$10.00</b>



# WATER CONSERVATION DURING A DROUGHT

Recently the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has issued a drought warning for Minnesota. At this time New Ulm Public Utilities (NUPU) is asking customers to reduce their water usage.

Lawn irrigation is a major use of water in the summer. Here are some tips below to be good stewards of our water supply.



## Outdoors Water Conservation: Irrigation & Watering Timing

Daily water application is unnecessary for healthy established turf. Before watering, verify that the grass needs watering:

### Step on the grass.

- **Do not water** if the grass springs back.
- **Water** if the grass stays flattened.

### Efficient lawn watering:

- Water landscapes and lawns during the early morning when it is still cool.
- Lawns need about 1 inch of rain or water per week. Deep soaking is better for roots than frequent shallow watering.
- Water your lawn infrequently, one time or less per week, assuming no rainfall has occurred.
- Cut grass 3 to 4 inches.

### Residential automatic irrigation leads to over watering by hundreds of gallons through “setting and forgetting.”

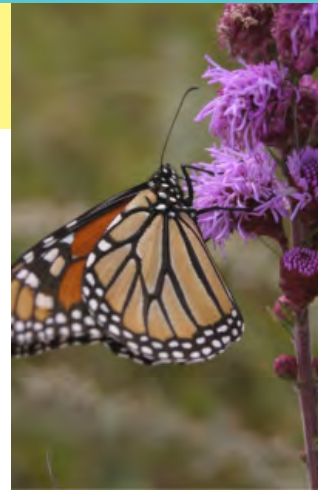
- Turn off automatic irrigation completely and use them only during extended dry spells.
- Soil moisture sensors prompt irrigation only when needed. Most cost between \$120 and \$160. They rarely require replacement. Minnesota irrigation systems must have technology that interrupts irrigation when there is sufficient moisture, and that the user can adjust.
- Many Minnesota cities have odd/even watering restrictions during the summer months to reduce consumption. It is best to water deeply and infrequently (usually once or twice a week during dry months) to promote healthy and hardy turf and conserve water.

### To adjust the lawn irrigation frequency, visit the following websites:

- [epa.gov/watersense/watering-tips](http://epa.gov/watersense/watering-tips)
- [turf.umn.edu/lawn-info/irrigation-resources](http://turf.umn.edu/lawn-info/irrigation-resources)

## Drought Resistant and Native Plants

Kentucky blue grass lawns are a common grass species that are poorly suited to survive hot summer months without assistance. In peak summer months, as much as 50 percent of a utility’s water can be for irrigating turf. Fine and tall fescue grass species are very drought resistant and shade tolerant varieties that survive hot Minnesotan summers without extensive assistance.



Using native and drought-resistant plants in residential landscapes reduces water consumption dramatically and requires no fertilizing. Using native plants saves water and maintenance. A good goal is at least 20 percent native plantings as part of your landscape design. Increased native plant coverage also provides habitat for native pollinator species, improving the health of your local ecosystem.

These DNR PDF guides provide information for you to transform and take care of your landscape:

### • *How to Use Native Plants for Landscaping and Restoration in Minnesota*

[files.dnr.state.mn.us/assistance/backyard/gardens/native\\_plant/nativelandscaping.pdf](http://files.dnr.state.mn.us/assistance/backyard/gardens/native_plant/nativelandscaping.pdf)

### • *Landscaping with Native Plants – References for More Learning*

[files.dnr.state.mn.us/assistance/backyard/gardens/native\\_plant/references.pdf](http://files.dnr.state.mn.us/assistance/backyard/gardens/native_plant/references.pdf)





## Annual Notification to Customer Base regarding DER (Distributed Energy Resources)

In compliance with New Ulm Public Utilities adopted rules relating to cogeneration and small power production, New Ulm Public Utilities is obligated to interconnect with and purchase electricity from co-generators and small power producers, who satisfy the conditions as a qualifying facility. New Ulm Public Utilities is obligated to provide information free of charge to all interested members upon request regarding rates and interconnection requirements.

All interconnections require a utilities service application, interconnection application and approval to become a qualifying facility. Any dispute over interconnections, sales, and purchases are subject to resolution by the New Ulm Public Utilities Commission. Interested customers should contact New Ulm Public Utilities, 310 1<sup>st</sup> North Street, New Ulm, MN 56073 or call 507-233-2110.

## Be Mindful Where You Build!



The Public Utilities Commission does not allow any permanent structure to be built over an electric or natural gas service. If a utility is found under an existing structure, it is the customer's responsibility to pay for the re-location of the services. If you are planning to build a structure on your property, it is your responsibility as the homeowner to contact the Public Utilities at 507-233-2110 to have your service location checked. It may be necessary to relocate your service, or a new service may need to be installed.

If utility work needs to be done, you will be instructed to stop at the New Ulm Public Utilities office located at 310 1<sup>st</sup> North Street to fill out a service application. Service applications can also be found online at [newulmmn.gov](http://newulmmn.gov), under **SERVICE** (Install, Change, or Upgrade Your Utility Service) where a PDF of the application form is available.

## HOW SMART IS A Smart Thermostat?



### MYTH VS FACT

My thermostat automatically saves me money.



That depends on how it's programmed and your preferences. It still uses the same amount of energy to reach and maintain temps.

A smart thermostat is smart straight out of the box.



The thermostat needs a little time to learn your heating and cooling preferences.

My thermostat is only as smart as I am.



Sort of. Most models are independent thinkers and adjust the temperature if no one's home.

It's creepy, my smart thermostat seems to know when I'm home.



It's smart for a reason! Geotechnology syncs your thermostat with your arrival. Some models use geofencing technology that tracks your smart phone location and kicks on when you're nearby.

My smart thermostat makes me smarter.



We'll give you this one! It can help you save money and make your home more efficient.

## It's like having your own robot!



New Ulm Public Utilities encourages you to save energy and money by offering a \$20 rebate when you purchase a programmable thermostat! Visit [newulmmn.gov](http://newulmmn.gov) for forms or stop by New Ulm Public Utilities office.

## NOTEWORTHY

### THE ENERGY STAR BACK-TO-SCHOOL SHOPPING LIST

✓ **Computers, Laptops, Tablets and More:** These days a computer is probably the #1 item on just about every student's back-to-school list. If you are in the market, looking for a model that has earned the ENERGY STAR can help your student use 60% less energy.



✓ **Imaging Equipment:** If you are using a computer, a printer is probably next on your must-have list. Print out your next book report using a product that has earned the ENERGY STAR. ENERGY STAR certified imaging products like printers and scanners are 30% more efficient than conventional models.

✓ **Small Network Equipment (SNE):** You can't research that upcoming term paper without the products that enable your computer to connect to the net. SNE products like modems and routers that earn the ENERGY STAR use 20% less energy than conventional models, on average.

✓ **Mini-Refrigerators:** Late nights spent studying make a mini-fridge one of the most important items in a college dorm room. Look for the ENERGY STAR label to find a model that is about 9% more energy efficient than standard models.

✓ **Light Bulbs:** You can't even begin to study for that big test if you don't have good lighting. Did you know that ENERGY STAR certified LED bulbs use 70%-90% less energy than incandescent bulbs, and last at least 15 times longer? Grab some today and save nearly \$55 in electricity costs over each bulb's lifetime.

## Month of Giving

#PublicPower



New Ulm Public Utilities (NUPU) purchase power supplier, Heartland Consumer Power District (HCPD), was recently in New Ulm to help promote American Public Power Association's *Public Power Month of Giving*.

This year, numerous bird feeders and seed were delivered to senior living centers in New Ulm. Thank you to HCPD for donating to our senior living centers.



★ **Ridgeway on German:** Derek Nelson-NUPU; Kaitlyn-Ridgeway Employee, Nate Jones HCPD; Liz-Ridgeway Employee; McCord Stowater-HCPD; Marian-Ridgeway Resident; Adam Graff-HCPD; Laura-Ridgeway Employee; and Ronda-Ridgeway Resident.



★ **Orchard Hill-** McCord Stowater-HCPD; Adam Graff-HCPD; Nate Jones HCPD; Derek Nelson-NUPU; Kari Apitz and Yvonne Schell-Orchard Hill.



★ **Prairie Senior Cottages-** Derek Nelson-NUPU; McCord Stowater-HCPD; Julie-Prairie Senior Cottages; and Nate Jones-HCPD.



# ★ Outstanding in Their Field

## Employees of the Month



**NATE BERAN**  
IT  
Supervisor  
Administration  
Dept.

**N**ate has been employed by New Ulm Public Utilities since 2015. Nate's

responsibility is to manage the computer and network systems throughout the City and the Utility. This itself is a demanding job but with COVID, the responsibility increased with the demand for work from home solutions and the implementation of funding of projects under the Cares Act. Nate was able to develop a streamlined process for individuals to facilitate work from home requirements while maintaining the security needed to protect the integrity of the City network.

With the Cares Act funding, several projects were identified that would qualify but there was a very short window to accomplish all that was necessary to complete the projects. Nate was able to use his organizational skills to schedule and complete all of the projects in time to be eligible for 100% of the funding.

Nate brings to the utility a wide range of knowledge and an attitude to do what is best for the City and Utility. We are very fortunate to have Nate on our team.



**RACHEL CUNNINGHAM**  
Lab Technician/  
Manager  
Wastewater  
Treatment  
Plant

**R**achel has been employed as a Lab Technician /Lab Manager at the Wastewater plant since 2006.

She has B.S. Degree in Chemistry from the University of Minnesota and holds her Class B wastewater license.

Rachel keeps current on ever-changing rules, regulations and analysis procedures from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency Lab Accreditation program. Rachel trains and makes sure all wastewater employees are aware of changes in lab procedures.

Rachel consistently passes all the annual Proficiency Testing and blind sample analysis required for our certified wastewater lab.

Rachel is an active member of the Minnesota Wastewater Operators Association (MWOA); she is currently on the MWOA Lab Committee and is the MWOA Southwest secretary/treasurer.

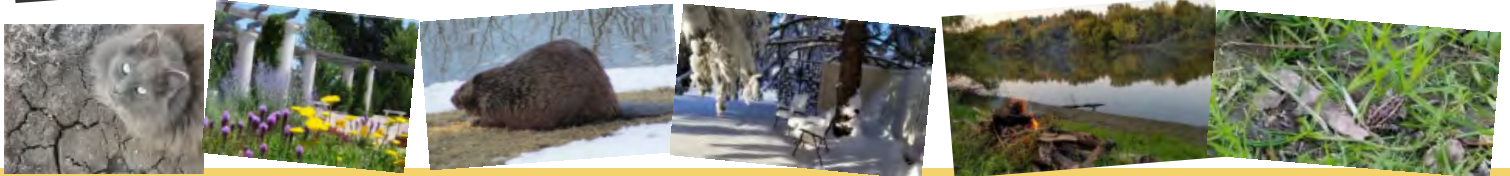
Recently Rachel has helped with payroll and other administration duties in the absence of the wastewater secretary.



## CALL FOR PHOTOS!

Send us your best photos of all things nature in New Ulm, from your **garden, back yard, birds, pets, rivers, parks, sky, trees...you name it!** If it's part of the nature of New Ulm, we would like to include as many photos as space allows in our 2022 Rebate & Conservation Calendar. They can be from any year. Please identify year, month, and location of the photo along with your submissions.

Please email high resolution digital photos to: [DerekN@newulmmn.gov](mailto:DerekN@newulmmn.gov)  
Mail prints to: **Derek Nelson, 310 1st N St., New Ulm, MN 56073**  
(Photos will be available for return at the Utilities office after Dec. 1)



**DEADLINE: SEPTEMBER 30 • ANY NEW ULM RESIDENT CAN ENTER INCLUDING CITY AND PUBLIC UTILITIES STAFF!**

# Just for Laughs



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

# Just for FUN!

## CREATE YOUR OWN



### 5 WAYS I AM A SAFETY SUPERHERO

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_



## Public Power Week is October 3-9

### New Ulm Public Utilities:

- ★ Brings electricity and other utilities to homes and businesses
- ★ Generates and buys power
- ★ Is a not-for-profit entity
- ★ Is owned by the community
- ★ Involves citizens in decision-making

More than 2,000 cities and towns in the United States light up their homes, businesses and streets with public power—electricity that comes from a community-owned and operated utility. Public power utilities are like our public schools and libraries: a division of local government, owned by the community, run by boards of local officials accountable to the citizens.



## Visit [newulmmn.gov](http://newulmmn.gov)

Find the latest news and announcements, department information, rebate information and forms, along with employment opportunities and more!



Follow us on Facebook!

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

PRSR STD  
US POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
MANKATO, MN  
PERMIT 609



the municipal  
**Advantage**

NEW ULM PUBLIC UTILITIES  
JULY-AUGUST 2021 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
AFTER HOURS ALL CALLS	359-8204