



# WILLMAR MUNICIPAL UTILITIES

WILLMAR MUNICIPAL UTILITIES WILL PROVIDE SAFE, RELIABLE & QUALITY UTILITY SERVICES AT COMPETITIVE RATES FOR THEIR CUSTOMERS.

DEC 2021

## A MESSAGE FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER



At one time, Willmar's Power Plant was an icon. However, with changing times, environmental concerns, and the financial impact of keeping it running, the decision was made to shut the Power Plant down. Throughout the process, the Commission has provided an opportunity to anyone interested in repurposing the facility to come forward, the opportunity to come forward ceased September 1, 2021.

We had a number of interested individuals tour the facility and concluding the tour, indicated the building was not suitable for repurposing. We are moving forward with the asbestos cleanup followed by demolition of the building. The current plan is to have the asbestos cleanup completed by early 2023 with demolition to follow.

Design of the NE Water Treatment Plant (NEWTP) is 95% complete. The cost of the NEWTP is estimated at \$21 million. To minimize rate increases, WMU is pursuing grant opportunities at both state and federal levels. These plant improvements are needed to provide additional capacity and water quality for Willmar's water supply.

Willmar Municipal Utilities completed a Facility Needs Study in 2010 with an update conducted in 2016. In 2010, the Commission set a target date to be in a new facility by 2020, the current target date to be in a new facility is 2024/2025.

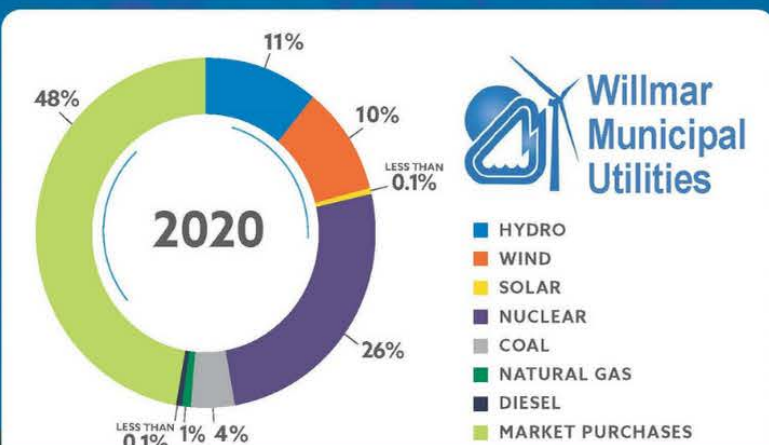
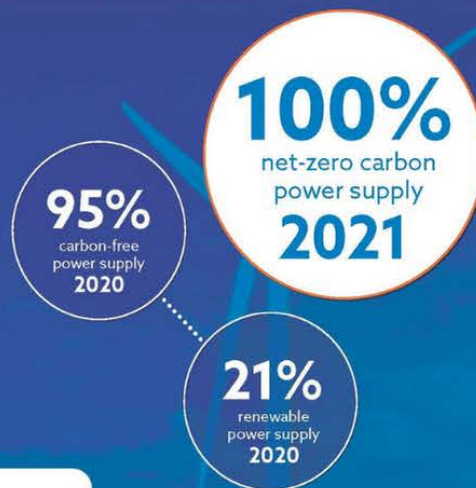
In closing, it is a pleasure to serve the Willmar community, and we welcome your ideas and suggestions on how we can better serve the community.

Thank you for your continued support,  
John Harren, General Manager

## CREATING A CLEANER ENERGY FUTURE

### WILLMAR'S POWER SUPPLY MIX

Below is the makeup of WMU's energy supply. Currently our community has 21% of all of its energy from renewable sources. Additionally, through the purchasing of RECs (Renewable Energy Certificates) we can proudly claim that 100% of our energy is considered Net-Zero Carbon.



**Willmar Municipal Utilities**  
700 Litchfield Ave SW  
PO Box 937  
Willmar, MN 56201

## WILLMAR MUNICIPAL UTILITIES COMMISSIONERS

President:  
Justin Mattern

Vice-President:  
Bruce DeBlieck

Secretary:  
Abdirizak Mahboub

Treasurer:  
Cole Erickson

Members at Large:  
Kerry Johnson  
Shawn Mueske  
Dave Baumgart

# LET'S TALK ABOUT WIND TURBINES



Presently, there are approximately 65,000 wind turbines in the United States, accounting for 125 gigawatts of energy produced annually. This provides sufficient wind power to serve 39 million American homes and is America's largest source of renewable energy. WMU's wind turbines provide approximately 2% of our power. They are 13 years old and most wind turbines have an effective life cycle of roughly 20 years, meaning our units are closing in on their life expectancy.

WMU has experienced some challenges with our wind turbines. The company that built the units no longer exists, therefore replacement parts and support are scarce. This may result in the wind turbines not reaching 20 years of operational use. This past year, we experienced some down time as staff diagnosed and repaired issues including damage to the hub and blades, multiple electrical faults, gearbox speed sensors and the yaw system to name a few.

We are fortunate to have a highly trained maintenance staff who do an amazing job of keeping the units available to run (wind permitting) and maintained yearly. Keeping the wind turbines running consistently will continue to pose a challenge for staff as the units age and near the end of their expected life cycle, and parts become more scarce. Your community-owned utility is committed to keeping the units operational for as long as possible.

Kevin Marti - Facilities & Maintenance Supervisor

## IN MEMORY OF TODD GRAVES

On January 22, 2021, WMU lost our Line Distribution Supervisor, Todd Graves. He was employed with WMU for 27 years as a lineman. He was a dedicated employee, coworker and friend who is sadly missed.



## WMU Employees Give Back

Volunteers from WMU and their families celebrated Earth Day by cleaning up the 55 acres that make up Robbins Island Regional Park in Willmar. They collected 10 bags of garbage to help keep the park clean for the enjoyment of others.



## meet our NEW HIRE

Christopher Radel  
Energy/Safety Outreach Coordinator

WMU has energy and appliance rebates for households and businesses. If you have any questions or would like to learn more, call our office and ask to speak with Chris.

## EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION



### 10 Years of Service

Jeron Smith, Electrical Engineer and Adam Braegelman, Linemen Crew Chief were recognized for their 10 years of dedicated service at WMU and the customers we serve.

## FALL OUTREACH EVENT



Willmar Municipal Utilities, along with seven other organizations, participated in a community outreach event at the Regency of Minnesota, Inc., manufactured home park. WMU along with the Clean Energy Resource Team (CERTs) used this event to educate customers on energy and water conservation, and UCAP and available Energy Assistance programs. It was a successful event bringing local organizations and community members together sharing education and resources.

## 2021 WMU SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

Congratulations to Riley Zammert who took first place and Jessica Miller who took second place for their 2021 essay "Municipal Utilities: Good for All of Us". Both winners are graduates from Willmar Senior High School.

### 2022 Scholarship

The 2022 scholarship materials will be available in December. Contact WMU at 320-235-4422 for more information.

# Water Department



A huge thank you to the residents of Willmar for their assistance this year in helping with water conservation efforts due to the drought. Conservation is a vital component to keeping our water supply hardy for the future. There are often upgrades inside your house that not only save water, but ultimately save on your monthly bill.

1. Replacing the aerators on faucets and fixtures or showerheads can save up to 16 gallons of water per day per faucet.
2. Toilets can also be a source of savings by installing a dual flush system inside the tank. The main benefit of a dual flush system is it uses about half as much water per day as a standard toilet. Most dual flush kits are inexpensive, easy to install and can be purchased at a hardware or big box store.
3. A toilet leak is common. This leak happens in the tank, where the flapper will stick open, or the valve doesn't fully close after the last flush. The toilet runs 24/7 and the homeowner doesn't know until they receive their monthly bill and the water charge is significantly higher. Using a few drops of food coloring or purchasing a leak detection kit will help identify a leak you may not be aware of. Check the website at [www.wmu.willmar.mn.us](http://www.wmu.willmar.mn.us) for these and other helpful ideas.

Alan Neer - Water System Supervisor

## Electric Department

Ed Zurn, promoted to the Line Distribution Supervisor, has been a Lineman for nearly 30 years and oversees the Electric Distribution and Meter Departments. He is responsible for maintaining our transmission system, along with the overhead and underground distribution system.

The Line Distribution Department provides service to our commercial and residential customers and maintains all street lighting and electric meters. Our staff is available 24/7 to provide power effectively, efficiently, and safely. WMU's average service reliability is 99.99%, which is highly respectable on a national average. WMU will continue to work hard to keep the lights on for all of our customers.



## MINNESOTA COLD WEATHER RULE

The **Cold Weather Rule** is a Minnesota law identified in state statute 216B.096. If a residential customer's account is current as of October 1st, a utility must go through certain steps before disconnecting a customer's service. The rule applies from October 1st through April 30th. The purpose of this notice is to inform you of your rights and responsibilities under the **Cold Weather Rule**. These rights and responsibilities are designed to help you with winter utility bills. You must act PROMPTLY. If you choose not to assert your rights or choose not to enter into a mutually acceptable payment schedule, your service may be disconnected.

The **Cold Weather Rule** provides you with the following rights and responsibilities:

**THE RIGHT** to declare your inability to pay your utility bill. If you do so, you must enter into a payment schedule with Willmar Municipal Utilities (WMU) to maintain your utility service. You have the right to appeal any proposed disconnection to WMU. You will have to provide WMU proof that you are unable to pay and were current in payments to the utility. If you appeal a disconnection, your service will not be disconnected until the appeal is resolved. Appeals are resolved locally.

**THE RESPONSIBILITY**, if you choose to declare inability to pay, to complete the "Inability to Pay" form found on WMU's website or from Customer Service and return it to WMU within 10 days of Notice of Disconnection. If you have proof that you are receiving any form of public assistance, you do not need to fill out the Inability to Pay form, but you MUST contact WMU to arrange a payment plan.

**THE RIGHT** to a mutually acceptable payment schedule with WMU. This payment schedule will cover your existing arrears plus the estimated usage during the payment schedule period. If you are able to pay but still wish to enter into a payment schedule, contact WMU immediately to arrange a schedule. (This payment schedule may be arranged by your designated Third Party.)

**THE RESPONSIBILITY** of making payments as agreed or promptly notifying WMU why you cannot keep the agreement. You may then request that the original payment schedule may be changed. Any change is subject to WMU's approval.

**THE RIGHT** to request that the utility notify a Third Party if your service becomes subject to disconnection. If you have requested Third Party notification, a copy of this notice has been sent to the third party.

Disputes regarding the previously listed options can be appealed to Willmar Municipal Utilities during regular business hours at 700 Litchfield Ave SW, Willmar, MN 56201.

# Payment Assistance Programs

Energy Assistance Program (EAP) is a federally funded program and provides grants for energy and utility bills, available to renters and homeowners. New for 2021-2022 is the Water Assistance Program, administered by the Energy Assistance Program, to help Minnesota households pay their water and wastewater bills. Applications for both programs must be submitted through your Energy Assistance Program provider, United Community Action Partnership (UCAP).

If qualified, Energy Assistance Programs provide financial assistance to pay a portion of a household's energy, heating, water, and wastewater bills. In addition, the program offers emergency assistance for utility disconnection, educates consumers to use home heating energy efficiently and safely, and provides emergency heating system repair or replacement for homeowners.

HeatShare is a Salvation Army Program that provides emergency utility assistance for people with no place left to turn. The program is funded in part by Salvation Army donors and by local utility companies and their customers. Funds are typically used to pay for natural gas, oil, propane, and electricity.

We encourage our customers to apply as the income levels have changed to assist as many households as possible.



United Community Action  
Partnership (UCAP)  
PO Box 1359  
Willmar, MN 56201  
[www.unitedcapMN.org](http://www.unitedcapMN.org)



Salvation Army HeatShare  
521 4th St. SW  
PO Box 734  
320-235-2033  
[www.salvationarmynorth.org](http://www.salvationarmynorth.org)



Kandiyohi County Family  
Services  
1900 Hwy 294 NE  
Willmar, MN 56201  
320-231-7800



Willmar Municipal Utilities  
PO Box 937  
Willmar, MN 56201

Valued Willmar Municipal Utilities Customer

