

Fall 2026

WMU Board of Commissioners

President:
Steve Ammermann

Vice-President:
Carol Laumer

Secretary:
Jeffrey Schultz

Treasurer:
Brad Michelson

Members at Large:
Doug Muzik
Dan Tollefson
Vacant

City Council Liaison
Tom Gilbertson



700 Litchfield Ave SW
PO Box 937
Willmar, MN 56201
320-235-4422
www.wmu.willmar.mn.us

A Message from the General Manager



To the Willmar Community,

As I reflect on my second year as General Manager, I am reminded that our greatest strength is not just the infrastructure we operate, but the people who keep it working every day.

This year, Willmar appointed six new residents to our seven-member governing commission. With this transition, I want to recognize outgoing commissioners Dave Baumgart, Bruce DeBlicke, John Kennedy III, Shawn Mueske, Terry Sieck, and Patricia Elizondo. We are grateful for their time, experience, and thoughtful leadership, which helped guide WMU and establish a strong foundation for the future. We also want to thank our current commissioners. We are fortunate to have residents who are willing to step forward and serve our community.

Our dedicated field crews also deserve special recognition. When service is interrupted, they answer the call—whether in the middle of the night, during sweltering summer heat, or in bitter winter cold. Their work can be demanding and often unseen, but they remain committed to restoring service safely and as quickly as possible. We are fortunate to have such hardworking and dedicated employees.

Finally, thank you to our office staff, who put customers first every day. They are often the first people our customers turn to with questions or concerns, and they respond with patience, professionalism, and a genuine desire to help. Their work is an important part of what makes WMU excellent.

Willmar Municipal Utilities is much more than pipes, pumps, poles, and power. It is people serving people. I am grateful for everyone who has contributed to our success, and I am proud of the team that continues our tradition of service to the Willmar community.

Jeron Smith, General Manager

Employee Retirements

- Alan Neer - Water System Supervisor

Promotions

- Matt Kaderlik - Water System Supervisor
- Fabian Tomaschett - Water Foreman
- Shawn Krouth - Executive Assistant

New Employees

- Luke Gilbertson - Line Technician
- Brett Sulier - Water Operator
- Matthew Baumhardt - Customer Service



2026 WMU Awards

WMU was recognized with several awards which demonstrate staff's dedication and commitment to the customers we serve.

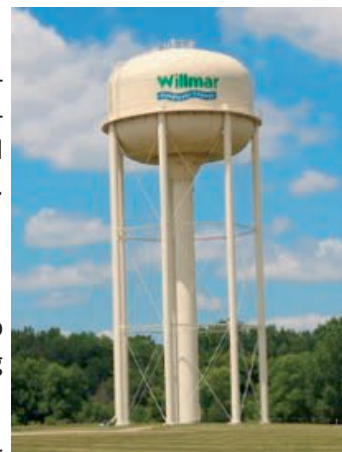
- APPA RP3 Diamond Level
Reliable Public Power Provider
- APPA Excellence in Reliable Electric Service
- APPA Safety Award of Excellence -
Diamond Level
- MN Governors Safety Award



Water

Water Tower Painting

WMU has partnered with USG Water Solutions to paint the Northeast water tower. This will protect its exterior, extend its service life, and give it a fresh appearance. Residents may notice contractors, equipment, and increased activity around the tower during the project, which is expected to take 6 to 8 weeks to complete. We appreciate your patience and cooperation.



Lead and Galvanized Service Line Replacement

As required by the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), WMU continues to work to identify and replace lead and galvanized water service lines. Replacing these older lines helps protect public health and improve water system reliability.

The program will identify affected service lines, prioritize replacements, and coordinate with property owners as needed. Residents selected for replacement will receive more information as the program moves forward.

Consumer Confidence Reports

Recent changes by the MDH require WMU to publish a Consumer Confidence Report twice a year. These reports share information about drinking water, including water quality test results, regulated contaminants, and other key system updates. We encourage residents to review each report to stay informed about the quality and safety of their drinking water. The reports can be found on our website at www.wmu.willmar.mn.us.

Thank you for your continued support as we work hard to maintain and improve the water system for the community.

Electric



The WMU distribution system continues to support the growth and modernization of WMU's electrical system, including new commercial projects and residential developments. In 2026 we completed an underground conversion on 2nd Street SE, which will improve reliability for residents in that area. We will continue with underground conversions and wire replacements in 2027. The use of electric vehicle chargers continues to grow. Contact us to learn more about how you can save money by charging your vehicle during eligible off-peak hours. This balanced growth has helped us maintain a reliable electrical system throughout our service territory.

Streetlights remain vital to community safety and visibility. Please help us keep them shining by reporting outages to our office at 320-235-4422 or through our website at www.wmu.willmar.mn.us.

We appreciate your continued support and trust as we serve your electric needs.



2

Did You Know
Public Power communities experience 4x fewer outages than other providers?



#PublicPower



Wind Turbine Decommissioning

In 2024, the Commission approved the decommissioning of the wind turbines. The utility partnered with DGR Engineering to develop a demolition and site restoration plan, and the project was awarded to Viet & Company of Rogers, Minnesota. Demolition began in March 2026, with both turbines safely brought down using explosive charges. Site restoration was completed in early June. The property was restored to a “better than we found it” condition, including the full removal of the concrete foundations, and was returned to Willmar Public Schools, the property owner.

Originally commissioned in 2009, the turbines operated for 15 years and generated 99,830,155 kilowatt-hours (kWh) of energy at an average cost of \$0.148 per kWh, nearly 54% higher than we can purchase power for.

The DeWind wind turbines provided more than a decade of renewable energy production and valuable operational experience for WMU. Although evolving technology, limited vendor availability, and operational risks ultimately required early retirement, the project played an important role in advancing WMU’s renewable energy goals. WMU remains committed to pursuing a diversified, carbon-free energy portfolio while maintaining fiscal responsibility and environmental stewardship.

WMU Facilities Project

Spring of 2026 brought an extensive and expensive building repair to the Service Center building that houses our Line and Water Departments, due to water intrusion. Repairs included brick and window repairs, mold abatement, wall repairs, and painting. We continue to experience costly repairs to our aged facilities, with additional major repairs on the horizon.

WMU continues to explore land options and planning for a new facility. With the support of the Willmar City Council, we hope to purchase land and begin the design in 2027, and begin construction in 2028-2029. As a utility provider, we are always forward looking for our customers. A new location and facility will serve the utility staff and support community growth for the next 75-100 years, bringing energy savings, efficiencies and an elevated level of service and response to our community.



#PublicPower

Customer Satisfaction and Service Excellence

Willmar Municipal Utilities (WMU) plays a vital role in delivering reliable electric and water services to residents and businesses throughout the Willmar community. WMU remains committed to providing dependable service while promoting energy efficiency, water conservation, and strong community engagement.



A key part of that commitment is listening to our customers. In 2025, Missouri River Energy Services sponsored an independent Customer Satisfaction Survey conducted by Great Blue Research for its member utilities. The survey found that WMU continues to demonstrate strong customer satisfaction and performance, with results that were largely consistent with or slightly above the regional composite average across most measured categories.

WMU is pleased with the positive feedback received from customers and values the opportunity to learn where improvements can be made. The survey identified several areas of focus, including physical office accessibility, the availability of safe and adequate parking, and enhanced customer communications through channels such as text messaging and social media. WMU is actively exploring ways to address these opportunities and further improve the overall customer experience. We appreciate everyone who took the time to participate in the survey. Customer feedback is one of our most important tools for evaluating our services and ensuring we continue to meet the needs of our community.

WMU also encourages customers to enroll in the Online Payment Portal, which provides convenient access to account information, billing statements, and payment scheduling. Customers can create an account by visiting www.wmu.willmar.mn.us, selecting **Customer Service**, and then **Online Payment Accounts Login**. The Customer Service Team is available to assist customers with the setup process over the phone if needed.

To make monthly payments even easier, WMU continues to promote its **Auto Bank Pay** program. This free service automatically withdraws utility payments from a customer's bank account on the bill's due date, eliminating the need to write checks, purchase postage, or worry about missed payments. Customers still receive their monthly bill showing utility consumption and the total amount due before the payment is processed.

WMU would also like customers to be aware that a fee for credit card payments may be implemented in the future due to rising payment processing costs. To avoid these charges, customers are encouraged to enroll in Auto Bank Pay, which remains a free and convenient payment option.

By offering flexible payment solutions, maintaining transparent communication, and continuously evaluating customer feedback, Willmar Municipal Utilities remains dedicated to providing high-quality service and improving the customer experience for the residents and businesses it serves. Customers who have questions or need assistance are encouraged to contact the WMU Customer Service Team, which is always ready to help.



Willmar Municipal Utilities Authorization for Automatic Bank Pay (No Additional Fees)

Name _____ WMU Account # _____
 Service Address _____
 Mailing Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____
 Phone Number _____ Email Address _____
 Name of Bank _____ Location of Bank (town/city, state) _____
 Routing #: _____ Checking Acct #: _____ OR Savings Acct #: _____

You are hereby authorized, until such time as I may cancel this agreement, to pay Willmar Municipal Utilities the total amount of my utility bill each month from the account listed from the financial institution designated. I understand if at any time I decide to change or discontinue this payment service, I will contact Willmar Municipal Utilities.

Signature _____ Date _____
 Printed Name _____

Residential and Business Rebates available!

For information about WMU's rebate programs, contact our Energy Services Coordinator at 320-235-4422 or visit <https://wmu.willmar.mn.us/energy-programs/rebates/>



Recycle fluorescent light bulbs for FREE!

WMU customers can recycle their fluorescent light bulbs for free! Bulbs can be brought to Kandiyohi County Household Hazardous Waste at 1400 22nd St SW in Willmar during their business hours. Bring your WMU statement with (or access on the WMU website).

For more information, visit <https://wmu.willmar.mn.us/energy-programs/conservation/>

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 1, a utility must go through certain steps before disconnecting a customer's service. The rule applies from October 1 through April 30. 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.

Where can you receive financial assistance?

If you need help paying your gas or electric utility bills, you may qualify for state or federal fuel assistance. For complete qualifications and application information, contact your local county human services office or Community/Citizens' Action Council (CAC). These organizations may also provide budget assistance counseling. Examples of a CAC include:

Local Energy and Utility Assistance Options

Salvation Army
HeatShare Program
521 4th St SW
Willmar, MN 56201
320-235-2033

United Community Action
Partnership (UCAP)
200 SW 4th St
Willmar, MN 56201
320-235-0850

Kandiyohi County
Family Services
2200 23rd St NE, Suite 1020
Willmar, MN 56201
320-231-7800





Willmar and MRES Partner to Support Reliable, Affordable Power

Providing reliable and affordable electricity requires planning for both current needs and the needs of decades to come. Since joining Missouri River Energy Services (MRES) in 2018, Willmar Municipal Utilities (WMU) has worked with MRES to help ensure the community has an adequate, reliable and cost-effective power supply.

A portion of Willmar's power comes from its allocation of federal hydropower through the Western Area Power Administration (WAPA). MRES provides the supplemental power needed beyond that allocation to meet the community's overall electricity demand.

To meet those needs, MRES maintains a diverse portfolio of generation resources designed to reduce risk and support reliability. That portfolio includes hydropower, coal, wind, natural gas, nuclear, solar and fuel oil generation, along with generation owned and operated by member communities through Reserved Capacity Agreements.

Having a variety of resources is important because no single resource can meet every need at all times. Weather, energy demand, fuel availability, market conditions and planned or unexpected outages can all affect the electric system. A diverse portfolio gives MRES greater flexibility to provide reliable power for its members while managing costs over the long term.

"Our partnership with MRES gives Willmar the benefit of being part of a much larger and more diverse power supply system," said General Manager, Jeron Smith. "Our federal hydropower allocation is an important part of our power supply, and MRES provides the additional resources we need to serve our customers. Access to that diverse mix helps us manage risk, maintain reliability and keep affordability at the forefront for our community."

Willmar also contributes to that diverse system. Through a Reserved Capacity Agreement with MRES, WMU is adding four diesel standby generators, bringing WMU's total standby generation capacity to approximately 22.9 megawatts.

WMU will own, operate and maintain the generators, providing an important local resource that can be used during emergencies. MRES will also be able to call on the units when additional generation is needed to support the regional grid. In return, MRES will compensate WMU for making the capacity available, helping offset the community's investment.

It is an example of the value of the public power partnership: Willmar benefits from the resources and collective strength of the larger MRES membership while maintaining local ownership and control of its municipal utility.

Together, WMU and MRES help ensure Willmar has reliable power when it is needed while keeping costs affordable for the people and businesses WMU serves.

Missouri River Energy Services



Energy Star® APPLIANCES



Air Cleaner: \$25

Room air cleaners remove fine particles, such as dust and pollen, from indoor air. An ENERGY STAR model could save about \$144 in energy costs over its lifetime.

Ceiling Fan: \$25

ENERGY STAR ceiling fans are 20% more efficient than standard models.

Clothes Washer: \$25

ENERGY STAR clothes washers use 25% less energy and 33% less water compared to standard models.

*Rebate available for homes with electric water heaters only.

Dehumidifier (portable): \$25

Dehumidifier (whole-home ducted): \$200

ENERGY STAR dehumidifiers have more efficient refrigeration coils, compressors and fans than conventional models, so they use less energy.

Dishwasher: \$25

A standard-sized ENERGY STAR dishwasher costs about \$55 per year to run and can save about 3,850 gallons of water over its lifetime.

Heat-Pump Water Heater: \$200

ENERGY STAR heat-pump water heaters can save a four-person household about \$330 per year on electric bills compared to a standard electric water heater.

LED Recessed Downlights: \$4

ENERGY STAR recessed downlights produce far less heat and last at least 10 times longer than incandescent.

Room Air Conditioner: \$75

ENERGY STAR room air conditioners use less energy than standard models and often include timers for better temperature control.

Heating & Cooling REBATES

Air-Source Heat Pump

(electric backup): **\$150 – \$350**

Air-Source Heat Pump

(gas/propane backup): **\$600 – \$1,050**

Air-source heat pumps provide up to three times the amount of energy they consume. Use a certified Quality Install contractor and receive an **additional \$100 rebate**.

Central Air Conditioner: \$250 – \$350

High-efficiency models will cut your cooling costs. Use a certified Quality Install contractor and receive an **additional \$100 rebate**.

Central A/C or Heat Pump Tune-up: \$40

Tune-ups keep your equipment running efficiently and help cut cooling costs. Apply for this rebate every other year.

ECM Recirculating Pumps: \$75 – \$900

ECM recirculating pumps help ensure hot water is readily available at faucets without waiting for it to travel from the water heater. ECM pumps modulate their speed, saving energy and money.

Geothermal Heat Pump: \$200/ton

Geothermal heat pumps are among the most efficient and comfortable heating and cooling technologies available because they use the earth's natural heat to provide heating, cooling and, at times, water heating.

Mini-Split Heat Pump

(per outdoor unit): **\$250 – \$400**

Mini-Split Air Conditioner

(per outdoor unit): **\$150 – \$200**

Mini-split systems use multiple indoor units connected to an outdoor unit via refrigerant lines. These highly efficient systems allow for customized heating and cooling in each space.

Smart Thermostat: \$25

ENERGY STAR smart thermostats automatically adjust to save energy when you are asleep or away. They can be controlled remotely using a smartphone, tablet or computer.

ELECTRIC VEHICLES (EVs)

ChargePoint® Home Charger or Level 2

Charger: **\$150 – \$500**

Connect a Wi-Fi-enabled ChargePoint Home Flex charger to your local utility and receive a \$500 rebate. Receive a \$150 rebate by purchasing a qualifying Level 2 charger of your choice.

Get your rebate today!





Willmar Municipal Utilities
PO Box 937
Willmar, MN 56201

PRSRT STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
MN MAIL



Willmar Municipal Utilities
PO Box 937
Willmar, MN 56201
www.wmu.willmar.mn.us



Follow us on
Facebook



Willmar Municipal Utilities will provide safe, reliable & quality utility services at competitive rates for their customers. 8



Willmar Municipal Utilities

2027 Post-Secondary Scholarship Information

Willmar Municipal Utilities (WMU) will be offering scholarship opportunities to 2027 graduating seniors who plan to enter post-secondary education. There will be three \$1,000 winners selected. Application materials for our 2027 graduates will be available in December 2026. Please watch our website at www.wmu.willmar.mn.us, email us at energyservices@wmu.willmar.mn.us, follow us on Facebook or check with your schools guidance counselors office to learn about the scholarship information. We strongly encourage graduating seniors to apply for this scholarship opportunity. The student or their parent/legal guardian must be a customer of WMU; immediate relatives (children/grandchildren) of WMU staff are ineligible.



Congratulations to our 2026 WMU Scholarship Winners!

Adeline Engan

Cole Laughlin

James Dickman