



# CUSTOMER CONNECTION

SPRING 2022

## New This Spring

Updated utility app, bulk water station, and building update.

## Projects In Your Area

Utility work ahead!

## Storm Preparedness

Tips for before & after a storm and what our linemen have to say about the job.



**Drive-thru Brat Fry!**

# A Note from the GM



Welcome to the first edition of Marshfield Utilities' Customer Connection! My name is Nicolas Kumm, General Manager of MU.

This new bi-annual newsletter focuses on providing information to you, our customers and the community, about utility related topics. We hope you find the information interesting and useful. Please connect with us if you have ideas for future topics that you would like us to cover.

With each edition, I will provide my thoughts on a topic. This edition I will focus on energy prices. You have likely noticed energy prices (along with almost everything else) have increased over the past 18 months. So what is causing the increase? There are a number of factors that contribute to the increase.

Over the past 20 years or so, there has been a shift in the generation mix with retirement of coal plants and an increase in natural gas generation. In general, this shift was driven by lower carbon emissions generated by natural gas compared to coal plants. This greater reliance has caused energy prices to a greater degree be coupled to the price of natural gas. The price of natural gas has been relatively stable for the past 10 years. During the early stages of the pandemic, the demand for natural gas decreased causing a drastic reduction in drilling rigs for supply. As we have returned to normal, the demand for natural gas has outpaced supply which has drastically increased the natural gas price. This demand has come from domestic uses like electric generation and heating. Some natural gas is piped to other counties in North America, and some is turned into liquefied natural gas that is shipped to Europe. While supply is increasing, the demand is greater which leads to increased natural gas prices. Current prices are 3-4 times greater than historical, around \$8/mmbtu (NYMEX). European prices are over \$30/mmbtu for natural gas.

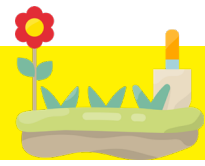
Electric generation still relies on coal. As I write this, the Midcontinent Independent System Operator real-time fuel mix chart shows 37% of electric generation coming from coal in the Midwest. The demand for coal after the pandemic is outpacing supply. The coal price has increased recently 2-3 times compared to historical. The lack of supply is due to a curbing of mining production capacity for recent years as the electric generation mix switches to other sources.

The electric generation mix is changing from large, centralized coal and nuclear facilities to smaller natural gas, wind, solar, battery storage and other generation types. This change requires additional transmission infrastructure investment to move the electricity from where it is generated to where it is needed. These generation changes will take time to normalize and unfortunately means energy prices are going to fluctuate for the foreseeable future. From a planning perspective, if you called me and asked how you should budget for future electricity cost, I would tell you to plan for additional increases until the energy market is able to stabilize. The increase in energy prices is occurring across the United States and something everyone is experiencing.

My comments are provided to give insight into some of the current and future challenges in the energy market. By no means are we advocating for one generation type over another. Our focus is providing the reliable electricity you depend on at the least cost now and into the future.



# New This Spring



## Construction Continues



The payment dropbox is temporarily moved to the north side of the new parking lot. Forms and envelopes are located in the entryway next to the inside dropbox in the new building atrium. The lobby is anticipated to reopen in June. The next phase of the building project is to remove the old building, expand the parking lot and construct the garage. A public tour will be arranged in early 2023 after the completion of the final phase of construction. This is to ensure the safety of the public, allow for more adequate parking and a full tour of the completed facility.

We anticipate the payment dropbox to move 2 -3 more times during construction. If you want to avoid the construction we have several no fee payment options for your convenience:

- [PowerPay](#): Set up automatic payments from your bank account or credit card.
- Pay by phone with check or credit card 833-250-7781.
- Online at our [website](#) with check or credit card.

## BULK WATER STATION



The bulk water station has moved to 1818 N. Oak Ave. Now available 24/7!

You must have your ACCESS number and PIN number to operate the station. If you are a first-time user, please call our Customer Account Specialists at 715-387-1195 to set up your account.

## Download the NEW app today!

The Marshfield Utilities app has been upgraded! Manage your utilities from your smart phone or tablet when and where it is convenient for you.

### Features

- Account Summary
- View Your Statement
- Usage History
- Pay Your Bill
- Payment History
- Notify Us of an Outage

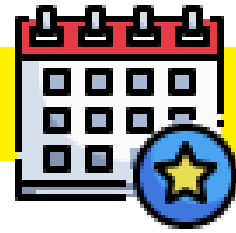


Google Play



Apple App Store

# Important Dates



## Calendar of Events:

**Drinking Water Week:**  
May 2-7th

**Customer Appreciation Day:**  
May 17th - Drive-thru Brat Fry 

**Public Power Week:**  
October 2 - 7th

## Commission Meetings

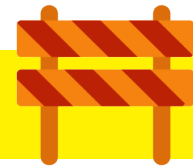
May 9  
June 13  
July 11

August 8  
September 12  
October 10

All meetings begin at 4pm  
in the W. H. Upham meeting  
room.

Check our website and follow us on social media for special events and current utility updates.

# Projects In Your Area



There are several electric and water projects scheduled for this year. Some have already started, while others won't begin until later this summer. For the most current list of projects visit our [website](#).

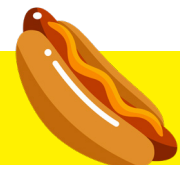
MU was awarded a grant from the DNR to assist customers with replacement of private side lead water service. We will contact those customers that qualify.

Do you have questions about PFAS? Please read our [Frequently Asked Questions about PFAS](#) on our website.

Planning your own projects? Call before you dig! 811 or (800) 242-8511



# Customer Drive-thru Brat Fry!



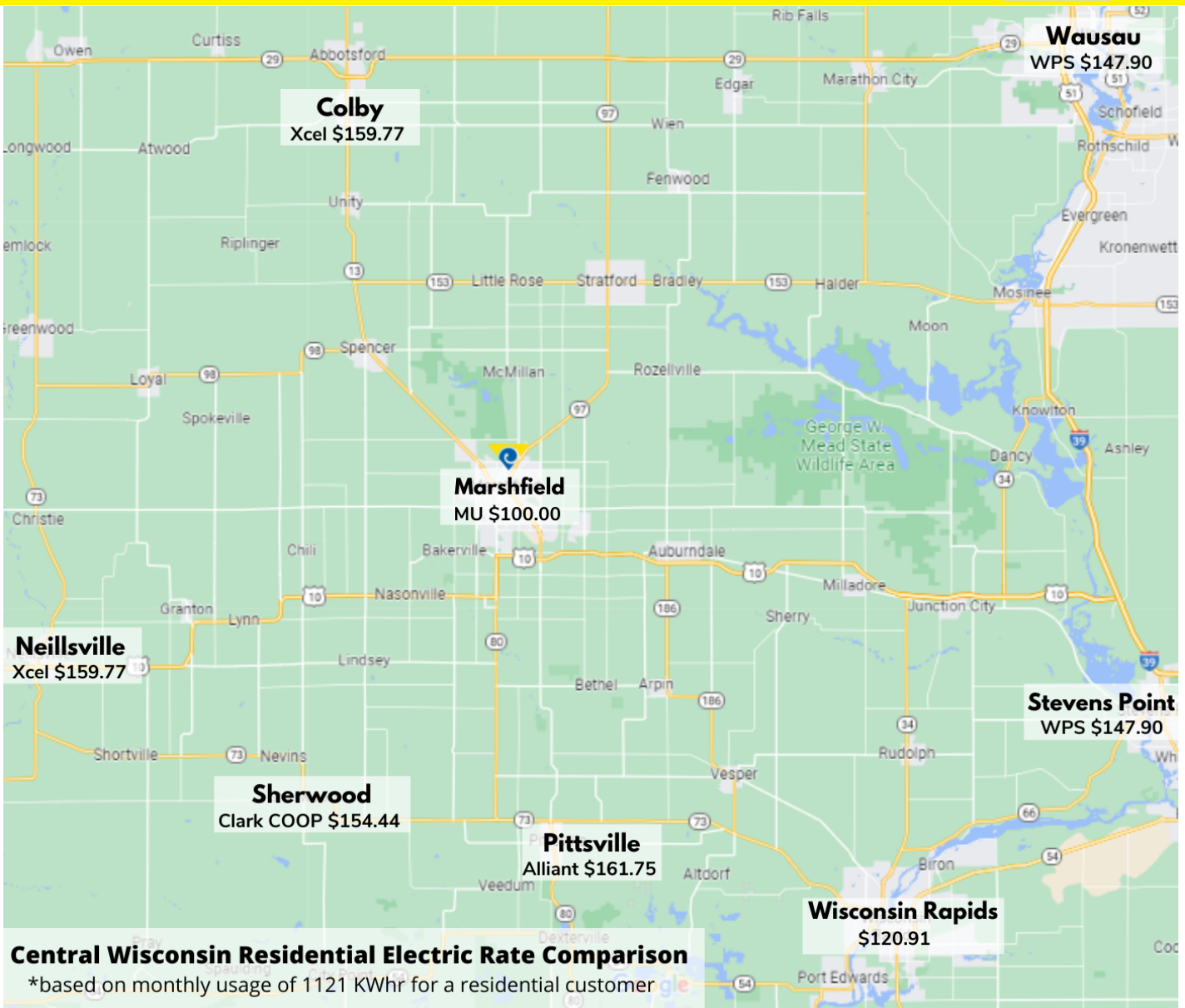
**Tuesday, May 17, 2022**  
**11 am - 1 pm**  
**Vandehey Waters**

MU Customers will enjoy a Brat, chips, cookie, beverage & raffle ticket for local family fun activities.

**Enter the drive-thru from Roddis Ave**  
(Please only drive thru once)

Winners of the drawings will be posted on our website and Facebook page.

# Electric Rate Comparison



On this Central Wisconsin Residential Electric Rate Comparison map you can see that for \$100 a month Marshfield Utilities' customers would receive 1121 KWrs of electricity. Additionally, you see what other cooperatives and investor owned utilities for surrounding communities charge for the same amount of electricity.

# Storm Preparedness



Spring and summer storms can become a serious weather threat when underestimated. Tree branches, outdoor furniture, and other loose objects can be turned into dangerous projectiles in high winds. Being prepared will help protect your property, family, and aid in preventing damage to power lines. Below are some tips for before a storm and in the event of a power outage.

## Be Prepared:

- Subscribe to text alert services to stay informed of local weather conditions. Text your zip code to 888777.
- Keep trees trimmed. We will trim tree branches that could impact power lines free of charge.
- Pick up and secure loose items.
- Check if your elderly or low-mobility neighbors will need help getting to a safe space in the event of a storm.
- Talk to your medical provider about a power outage plan for medical devices powered by electricity and refrigerated medicines. Find out how long medications can be stored at higher temperatures and get specific guidance for any medications that are critical for life!
- Everyone should have a three-day supply of water available for use in emergencies. One to 3 gallons, per person, per day, is recommended.
- Have flashlights and extra batteries available in multiple rooms/areas
- Have a car charger available for your cell phone, or consider purchasing a solar-powered recharger.
- Test generators and stock-up on fuel. Never run a generator in an enclosed space or indoors.

## During a Power Outage:

- To prevent damage, unplug everything as soon as the power goes out. Keep one light on so you know when power is back on.
- Communicate outages and downed power lines with your power company. Check breakers first! Also, report if you know neighbors are without power.
- Avoid downed power lines! Stay inside your car if a power line falls on your car and call for help.
- If the outage lasts more than a couple of hours, place milk, other dairy products, meat, fish, eggs, gravy, and spoil-able leftovers into a regular or disposable cooler surrounded by ice.
- Stay clear of power crews working for everyone's safety.
- For additional tips, visit our website at <https://www.marshfieldutilities.org/pdf/outage-preparedness.pdf>.

## Meet our Linemen

Our linemen are key to maintaining the utilities quick response time and lower than average outages per customer. They take pride in their work and the community. Many of them have been part of the Marshfield community for decades. Andy Goettl and Dean Bohman are perfect examples. Andy was born and raised in Marshfield, a 2018 graduate of Marshfield High School and began his career at MU as a general summer helper. He stayed on part-time while completing the nine month Electrical Power Distribution program at Northcentral Technical College. Andy is now a full-time Apprentice Linemen. Dean is a 31-year veteran employee of MU. He also began his career with us as a summer helper and worked his way to Journeyman Linemen. He grew up in Marshfield and was part of



the 100th class to graduate Marshfield High School. He and his wife have raised their three kids here, the youngest graduates this year.

Over the decades, Dean has seen a lot of changes as a Linemen. Most notable are the changes in safety, the tools that they use, and it is now only four years of training to become a journeyman. Previously it took seven years. He also notes that the work is a more collaborative team environment than when he started.

When a storm is expected our Linemen prepare their own homes and ready themselves in case they are called out for outages. If the storm is expected overnight, crews communicate a plan before leaving work for the day. When the Linemen are called to an area to make a repair they first complete a tailgate report identifying hazards of the scene, what circuits they will be working on, the address and the plan for repairs. Working safely is an important factor of getting the power restored.

If you've seen our crews out working in the bucket trucks you may have wondered

what it's like up there in the bucket as the wind is blowing. Dean and Andy both agree that working in adverse weather gets the adrenalin going. Andy said "It can get your heart racing and it's important to stay alert of our surroundings." Dean said "it's exciting to see the lights come back on." The guys enjoy speaking to the citizens that come out to thank them for getting the power restored and they appreciate the occasional soda or cup of coffee that residents offer.

What the Linemen want customers to know:

- The 'ground man' watching the person working up in the bucket is a spotter to help ensure the safety of the person in the bucket.
- If citizens see something potentially impacting power lines call the office to report it so a crew can evaluate the situation and make repairs if needed.
- Sometimes the crew takes their well-deserved breaks on the side of the road.

We sympathize with how inconvenient it is to have the power go out. "We'll get to you as fast as we can." – Andy



# Conservation Corner



## Conservation Tips to Reduce High Utility Bills in Summer

Often utility bills will increase during the summer months due to the use of air conditioners, kids being home all day, watering the lawn and outdoor plants, or many other reasons. Below are our top tips to help you reduce your utility bill:

- Get a rain barrel. Set up your rain barrel beneath your gutter's downspout to collect rainwater. You can reuse that water for your flowers and garden.
- Water your lawn in the morning or evening to allow for proper ground saturation.
- Check your toilet for leaks. Add a few



drops of food coloring to the tank. If the color shows up in the bowl, you have a leak. Often this is a simple fix by replacing the rubber flapper.

- Shorten your shower. A standard shower head uses about 25 gallons of water for a 10-minute shower. If you cut your daily shower down to 8 minutes, you could save 1,825 gallons per year.
- If you have a pool, cover it when not in use to reduce evaporation.
- Wash your car at a car wash.
- When the air is cool at night, turn off your air conditioning and open the windows. In the morning, shut the windows to keep in the cool air.
- Wash your laundry with cold water.
- Use ceiling fans to reduce the use of air conditioning.
- Unplug electrical devices when not in use.
- Conduct a Do-It-Yourself home energy assessment to identify more opportunities to save energy. Visit <https://www.energy.gov/energysaver/do-it-yourself-home-energy-assessments-to-learn-more>.

## BBQ Season

Our staff's favorite recipes!



## Flavorful Burgers

**2 Pounds** Ground Hamburger  
**2 Packets** Lipton's Onion Soup Mix  
**1 - 2 Tbls** Worcestershire sauce  
(Measure with your heart)

- Mix all ingredients in a large bowl thoroughly.
- Form burger patties slightly larger than



the size of buns.

- Cover and let rest at room temperature for about 30 minutes.
- Cook on grill to desired doneness.

## Tortilla Pinwheels

**8 oz.** Sour Cream

**8 oz.** Cream Cheese, softened

**4 oz. can** Diced green chilies, well drained

**4 oz. can** chopped black olives, well drained

**1 C.** Grated Cheddar cheese

**1/2 C.** Chopped green onion

**1/4 - 1/2 tsp** Garlic powder (to taste)

**1/4 - 1/2 tsp** Seasoned salt (to taste)

**5** - 10" flour tortillas

Salsa or Queso for dipping

- Mix all ingredients thoroughly.
- Divide the filling and spread over the tortillas; roll up tortillas.
- Wrap each roll tightly with plastic wrap, twist the ends, and refrigerate 2-3 hours until firm.
- Unwrap and cut into slices 1/2" thick.

## Red, White, & Blue Strawberries

**Fresh Whole Strawberries**

**White Chocolate Bark**

**Blue food color**

- Clean the strawberries, leaving the stem, and gently dry with towel.
- Coarsely chop the white chocolate bark and melt over a double boiler.
- Divide 3/4 of the white chocolate in a separate bowl. Add blue food coloring to the remaining chocolate until reach desired shade of blue.
- Dip strawberries into the white chocolate 3/4 of the way up. Set to harden on wax paper. Once hard dip in the blue chocolate 1/2 way of the white and set on wax paper.
- Store in refrigerator until ready to serve.

## Raspberry Sherbet Punch

**2 liter bottle** Sprite or 7-up

**2 liter bottle** Club Soda

**12 oz. can** Pink Lemonade, thawed

**12 oz. can** Pineapple juice, thawed

**6 - 8 scoops** Raspberry Sherbet Ice Cream

Fresh or frozen raspberries

Pineapple slices

- In a punch bowl, combine both cans of juice, Sprite/7-up and Club Soda.
- Add pineapple slices and raspberries.
- Top with scooped sherbet just before serving.

You can use any flavor of sherbet ice cream to change it up and change the garnish fruit to match. If you prefer more of a fruit punch flavor, switch out the pink lemonade for fruit punch!

### Give Us Your Thoughts

Did you enjoy the newsletter? We would like your feedback. Please take a few minutes to take a [short survey](#) to tell us your thoughts on this newsletter, distribution and suggestions for changes. Thank you!



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### Office Hours

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7:00 am - 4:00 pm  
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