

Henning Happenings

VOLUME 15

NOV. 9TH, 2018

Utility Updates

NATURAL GAS RATES:

New gas rates will go into effect in the December 2018 meter reading cycle. The rates will go up \$0.045 per Ccf, from \$.84 to \$.885 for residential gas users, to reflect the increase in our contracted price. Natural gas prices will always fluctuate with supply and demand. You will see the new charges on your January bill. We are still well below our 2014 rate, so we have been able to lock in on affordable rates for the last several years.

ELECTRIC RATES:

We will be changing our electric rates effective January 1st, 2018 as recommended by our Cost of Service/Rate Study, which was conducted in July of 2018. The survey was done by our power supplier Missouri River Energy Services, and was conducted to determine our Cost of Service, which means to determine how the City's money is being spent to serve our customers.

One of the recommendations is to raise the meter charges from \$8.00 to \$9.75 for residential, and \$18.00 to \$20.00 for small commercial customers.

Another recommendation was to add a large commercial rate class for commercial customers with monthly demands over 25 (kWh). Large commercial customers

will be billed partly by demand and partly by kWh usage. Demand is based on the maximum amount of power (peak) that is used in a given period of time (usually 15 minutes). Even though the peak might be achieved in a short interval, the City still needs to supply that amount of power to the customer at all times, so it is there when they call for it. Since a large portion of what the City gets charged is based on demand, it makes sense to pass some of those charges on to our high demand customers therefore ensuring customers are paying for their own usage.

Large commercial customers will begin receiving a demand charge, but, will see a lower kWh charge. Customers will be notified if they fall into the large commercial class.

The study recommends increase in January 2018, 2020 and 2022, however, the City will review the rates annually. Although some customers might see an increase in their electric bill, some will actually see a decrease, depending on individual usage. Currently, we have a two tiered rate system. For residential users, you pay .09 for up to 1000 kWh, and .08 for 1000+ kWh. This two tiered structure will be eliminated and the rate will be .086 kWh no matter the usage amount.

For those that typically use under 1000 kWh, this will result in the decrease of your electric bill.

Overall, based on the recommended rate changes, the City should see a revenue increase of 2% for each of the three increases. The last Rate Study was done in 2001 and the City has not increased electric rates, other than to cover supply increases since then. The increased revenue will be used for infrastructure improvement and long-term maintenance only.

PROJECT UPDATE:

As we enter the fall season we will begin to wrap up our current electric project. Phase 1 of this project started in 2017 near Balmoral Ave and ended in the alley behind the drug and hardware stores. Phase 2 occurred this year and went behind the bank and ended near School Ave. The 3rd and final phase will go from School Ave. and end near Marshall Ave. The goal of this project is to replace aging overhead infrastructure with underground lines. This will improve system reliability and will improve the esthetics of the neighborhoods where the overhead lines are replaced. With completion of this project we will have almost 40% of our system upgraded, including the entire downtown business district, without

having to raise rates up until now. Any new rate increases will be used to continue the process of updating our system.

CREDIT CARD PAYMENTS:

The City of Henning will soon be providing the ability to look up and pay your bill online with a credit or debit card. You will also be able to call in to an automated payment line as opposed to the office, so you can pay by card during non-business hours.

We hope to have this up and running by the first of the year. We will have a link on our website to Govpay.net, making payments fast and easy.

You will also be able to pay your ambulance bill in the same manner.

User fees will be passed to the customer, causing a significant amount in savings to the City. As we will no longer absorb the user fees, and know you may not want to either, we encourage customers who use their debit or credit cards to pay on the 20th of the month, to consider our ACH option. This service is free to our customers and is also drawn from your account on the 20th of each month.

Contact the City for more info and watch Facebook for updates on this change.

Upcoming Dates to Remember

St. Edward's Catholic Church Community Thanksgiving Dinner, Thursday, November 22nd Noon-2pm

"Santa Day"/ First National Bank Luncheon at the Landmark Center 11:00am-1:00pm.

"Christmas with Elvis" at the Trinity Center Saturday, December 8th 6pm. Call Carleen Markuson 701-212-6943

"Community Live Nativity" Sunday, December 9th, 2018 5-5:30pm at the Trinity Center

Father/Daughter Dance at the Trinity Center Saturday, Dec. 22nd 3-5pm. Grades 2-5 Call Tammy Fosse 701-212-3408

Medora Family Christmas Musical Sunday, December 16th, 4pm. Call 218-548-5760 for ticket information.

Water Edge's Church Community Soup Suppers Thursdays Dec. 6, Jan. 3rd, Feb. 7th 4:00pm-7:00pm

Henning Rod and Gun Club Fishing Derby Saturday, Feb. 2nd, 2019

SNOW REMOVAL POLICY:

The City of Henning will begin snow removal operations the morning after a snowfall of 2" or more. There may be cases where less than 2" of snow has fallen, but snow removal would still be appropriate, most likely occurring on a weekday. There may also be cases where more than 2" has fallen, but snow removal is not necessary, most likely occurring on weekends or holidays. The order of snow removal will be determined by traffic and safety. Generally, the Industrial Park and Railway Ave areas will be first due to heavy truck traffic. The business district will be next. Windrows will be made in the center of the street on Front St, 2nd St, Fergus Ave (between Front and 2nd) and Holden Ave (between Front and 2nd). School Ave (between Marshall and Front) will also get windrowed, but the timing will be determined by the school schedule. The next areas are the outlying areas of the city, such as Airport Rd. and Old 67. The rest of the town will follow. After windrows are made in the business district the city crew will clean them up and haul them away. Although MNDOT plows Douglas Ave; in the areas between Front St. and 3rd St, the city crew will clean up the snow near the curb. Sand will be spread where and when it is prudent. Special attention will be given to intersections and high traffic areas, as well as areas around the school. City staff will clean snow off of city owned parking lots and sidewalks along city property. The cleaning of sidewalks will not be done until city streets and parking lots are cleaned. Businesses and residents are responsible for cleaning and maintaining their sidewalks. Snow that is pushed onto sidewalks from our equipment is still the responsibility of the homeowner or business, to remove.

The snowplow typically starts around 3am, with the tractor and dump-truck beginning at 5am. Please be aware if you are along a snow route, you will be ticketed if your vehicle is not moved. If you do not live along a snow route, and are able to move your vehicle off of the street it will allow for more complete snow removal. We also emphasize the need for vehicles and foot traffic to avoid the area where the city crew is working. It is extremely hard to see with blowing snow from the equipment. If you notice they are working in an area, please refrain from parking in that area until they are finished, so they can complete their work without having to navigate around vehicles. Although we will do our best to follow the policy, some situations may call for the city crews to deviate from it, therefore; the Utilities Superintendent will make the ultimate determination of when or when not, to begin snow removal.

Meter Safety

With the snow piling up, we ask that you keep your utility meter clear of ice and snow. All utility meters must be easily accessed for safety and maintenance reasons. We also ask that you take precautions to prevent snow and ice that might fall off of your roof and onto the meters. Snow and ice that slides off of your roof and onto your electric service could cause your meter to be dislodged from its socket. Falling snow and ice can also cause gas leaks if it falls on your meter or connected pipes. You also need to keep your gas meter clear. If it becomes covered in snow, it could result in gas entering into your home. Make sure to check out the Natural Gas Safety article inside this news letter about what to do should you smell gas in or around your home. Please make sure paths to your meters are clear and any gates and doors leading to your meters are operable.

Sidewalks

Ordinance 92.01 (B1) Duty of owners and occupants. "The owner and the occupant of any property adjacent to a public sidewalk shall use diligence to keep the walk safe for pedestrians. No owner or occupant shall allow snow, ice, dirt or rubbish to remain on the walk longer than 24 hours after its deposit thereon. Failure to comply with this section shall constitute a violation." (B2) Removal by city. "The City Clerk or other person designated by the City Council may cause removal from all public sidewalks all snow, ice, dirt, and rubbish as soon as possible beginning 24 hours after any matter has been deposited thereon or after the snow has ceased to fall. The City Clerk or other designated person shall keep a record showing the cost of removal adjacent to each separate lot and parcel."

Skating Rink:

The skating rink is maintained by the City of Henning Public Works Staff. It will be posted when it is closed if maintenance is being performed. Please do not walk on the rink when we are making ice, holes created by walking on it too early, tend to delay the opening of the rink by days to weeks. We rely on the community to help keep it clean and safe. We also will not always clear it on weekends in the event of snow, but keep plenty of shovels on hand if people would like to shovel an area to use.

Community Follow-up

We recently have had several discussions of different buildings in town and what is the best use of and for them. Initially it was presented to the Council that the roof on the "Old City Hall" needed repair. After looking at what it would cost to fix it, the idea was presented about looking into the cost of demolition. At what point do we stop putting money into aging infrastructure? It was decided that we should consider demo as an option when comparing fixing costs vs. tearing down costs. However, after further review and exploring other options, we decided the building was worth fixing and using as it serves multiple people and departments in the community. Besides the roof leaking through the copula mainly during heavy rains, the rest of the building is very solid and has a long life ahead of it. Currently it houses the food shelf, the Haunted House, Fire Equipment and the second squad for the Police.

The next step was to look at budgeting for the cost of repair; do we levy the repair costs or do we look into ways to cut costs on some of the properties we own and use that savings to repair the roof. We looked at what we pay to heat the Senior Citizen Center and decided we would approach them about relocating to another City owned property. We presented different options and asked them to evaluate the locations and decide if one could serve their needs. We asked them to work with us towards a solution that would work for everyone and produce costs savings to all our residents. The "City" would save roughly \$4500.00 yearly if we did not have to heat the Senior Center. As we already heat several other properties that we believe would suit their needs, we did pursue a conversation with board members about moving locations. As of the printing of this newsletter, we have not moved forward with anything more than the discussion with the Seniors, nor designated a timeline for when any decisions need to be made.

As always, we welcome community input regarding these discussions and ideas for problem solving these issues.

Natural Gas Pipeline Safety

The City of Henning Natural Gas Utility operates a system of underground natural gas pipelines to provide safe and economical energy to the residents and businesses of our community. We are required, by the Minnesota Office of Pipeline Safety, to send gas safety notices twice a year, to all natural gas customers, and once a year to anyone along our gas route.

Pipelines are one of the safest transportation methods available. If in the unlikely event a natural gas leak occurs, it can cause a fire or explosion. We want to help you stay safe around gas facilities. This notice is designed to assist in that effort, providing information on reacting to and reporting gas leaks and on excavation safety. If you have further questions, please contact us using the provided numbers.

Suspected Gas Leaks:

Indications of possible gas leaks include: Unusual odor inside or near the pipeline outdoors, hissing noise, bubbles in puddles, dirt being blown into the air, or dead or discolored vegetation near an underground pipeline.

If you Suspect a Leak:

Evacuate the area immediately. Travel upwind to escape any potentially dangerous accumulation of gas and do not re-enter until told by City Staff or emergency personnel it is safe to do so. Call the gas supplier from a safe location— NOT the building where you smell gas. DO NOT light a match, operate light switches, appliances, engines, landlines, cell phones, or any other sources of ignition. Keep other people out of the area until help arrives.

Remember, suspected gas leaks are potentially dangerous. Leaks must be reported and investigated immediately. We need your help to continue to operate a safe distribution system.

Dig-in (excavation) damage is a leading cause of gas system damage. To minimize this hazard, the most important thing you can do is **CALL BEFORE YOU DIG!** Gopher State One Call, or GSOC, is a FREE statewide service that allows utilities to locate any buried facilities they own, before you start digging. Call 811 or 800-252-1166 before digging.

Please call the City Office with any questions or concerns you may have at 218-583-2402. To report a gas emergency after hours, call 218-583-4089 or 911.

Henning Food Shelf

The Henning Food Shelf is open Mondays from 3:30-5:00pm, located at 604 2nd St. Henning. They will be closed on December 24th and 31st due to the Holiday Season. Donations can be dropped off during their business hours or you can call director Karen Stueve at 218-583-2136 to arrange a different time. They are always in need of food, personal care items, diapers, and cash. A friendly reminder to please check the expiration dates on your items, as they are not able to use expired food. Please remember the Henning Food Shelf in your end of year donations!

Henning HOPE

The Stocking Stuffer Trees will be visible in the downtown district the week of Thanksgiving. Visit Henning Hardware, First National Bank, or Seip Drug to choose a stocking for a local child in need. New this year, you can drop your purchases at Henning City Hall during regular business hours from 8:00am-4:30pm, Monday through Friday. Please support the local businesses while doing your Stocking Stuffer Shopping!

Henning Ambulance Service

The Henning Ambulance Service is looking for individuals interested in becoming an EMT. We are especially in need of people who can take daytime hours, but need people for all day/night coverage, and have immediate openings available. We currently only have 11 EMT's to provide 24 hour coverage with two rigs in our service. All of our current EMT's are also employed with other occupations, making scheduling difficult. The Ambulance Service contributes to the cost of class. Please consider becoming an EMT today! Contact the City of Henning at 218-583-2402 for more information.

Henning Fire Department

The Henning Fire Department would like to remind you to make sure you change the batteries or have properly working Carbon Monoxide Detectors throughout your house. Spring and Fall time changes are a perfect time to change the batteries in both your smoke and Carbon Monoxide detectors. Carbon Monoxide is odorless and colorless. Breathing it in can cause flu like symptoms including, headache, dizziness, weakness, vomiting, chest pain, and confusion. Carbon Monoxide Poisoning is responsible for 20,000 ER visits and 400 deaths a year. Ways to prevent poisoning are to make sure you have proper venting of gas appliances, keep your chimneys clean, check the exhaust systems in your vehicles (always run your car with the garage door open) Additionally it is important not to run portable generators in-doors, and make sure they are vented away from your house. This is important to remember in fish houses and campers also. If you suspect poisoning call 911 right away.

In addition to working detectors, it is important to have your house properly marked in the event of an emergency. If you need to call 911 for Police, Fire or Ambulance, make sure they are not delayed, due to a poorly marked house. Display your house number in a prominent location, visible from the street, on your house and mailbox.

City of Henning

612 Front St
PO BOX 55
Henning, MN 56551

Phone: 218-583-2402
Utilities After Hour Emergency: 218-583-4089
Cityofhenning@arvig.net

*Visit us on Facebook
or at
cityofhenning.com*

Council Meetings are the first Tuesday of each month at 5:30 at City Hall. Any special meetings, or EDA meetings will be posted at least 3 days in advance at First National Bank, B & D Grocery, and the Post Office. As always, we encourage the public to attend. If you would like to be on an email list to be notified of meetings, please contact the City Office.

We post all minutes upon completion on our City Webpage. You will also find them in the Citizen's Advocate

Meeting Agenda's are posted on the City Facebook Page the day of the meeting. You may also call and request the agenda prior to the meeting. If you would like to be on the agenda, please notify us by Noon of the preceding Friday to be added.

Energy Assistance

The Energy Assistance Program helps low-income households pay their home heating bills. Payments are made directly to the household's fuel dealer. To receive assistance, household income for the last three months must be below the following guidelines:

<u>Household Size</u>	<u>Gross Income for the Last 3 Months</u>
1	\$6,495
2	\$8,494
3	\$10,493
4	\$12,492
5	\$14,490
6	\$16,489

To request an application call Mahube-Otwa at: (218)
847-1385 Detroit Lakes 739-3011 Fergus Falls
632-3600 Wadena Toll Free 1-888-458-1385

Please call the Henning City Utility Office if you need further assistance.