



CUSTOMER CONNECTION Spring 2023

Open House pg. 13

May 18, 2023

Reliability Report pg. 7

Outage causes



pg. 4 **Focus on Saving**

Energy saving deals from
Focus on Energy

A Note From The GM



Like you, I enjoy seeing the sun after many months of cloudy and dull weather. With the sun comes spring, construction season, and MU's Customer Connection newsletter! I hope you find the information contained within informative, and please let us know if you have any ideas for future articles.

2022 was another busy year for MU with many projects and the completion of our new office, garage, and warehouse facility! The facility will support utility operations for the next 50-100 years. Construction began in the spring of 2021. In April 2022, we moved into the new office.

Later that year in December, the garage and warehouse space was completed. An open house and tours will be held in May (more information later in the newsletter).

The size of the facility was based on space needs studies that reviewed current needs and planning for future opportunities. Space needs studies are a common approach used to determine what the size of a facility should be to meet current and future needs. Some of the items we considered included the size and type of equipment necessary to ensure safe drinking water and reliable electricity. Over the past 50 years, we have added vacuum excavators, mini backhoes, and backyard machines to serve our customers. What new equipment will be needed to serve the customers in the next 50 years?

We have added professional employees over the years to handle regulatory compliance, conservation, graphical information technology (GIS), and information technology, all of which weren't needed 50 years ago. What new professional employees will be needed to serve our customers for the next 50 years?

Fifty years ago, options to pay your bill or contact us was limited compared to today's standards. Today, we accept many different payment types. Customers can contact us in person, by phone, email, chat, text, and through social media. Our customers enjoy being able to select the option that works best for them. Managing all of these options require dedicated staff and resources. How will customers contact us and pay their bills in the future?

An enormous amount of consideration went into the design, size, and layout of the facility to answer all of these questions. The selections were based on ensuring our staff have the resources today, and into the future to support our customers.

The project was completed on time and under budget. From a timing perspective, we couldn't have completed the project at a better time! All bids were secured before the inflationary increases many construction projects have since experienced. Estimates from construction contractors have indicated if we started the project now, less than two years later, the overall price would be 40-60% higher. Supply chain issues had a limited impact on the project due to the planning efforts of everyone involved.

The facility project was a success and something that will serve the community into the distant future! Please join us in May for the open house.

Nicolas Kumm
General Manager
Marshfield Utilities

Important Dates

Calendar of Events:

Winter Moritorium Ends - April 15

Business Appreciation Brat Fry - May 9*
MU business customers can pre-order brats for their staff.

Customer Open House - May 18*
Join us for the ribbon cutting and a tour of the new facility.

*See flyer at the end of the newsletter

Commission Meetings

April 17 at 9 a.m.

May 15

June 19

July 10

August 14

September 11

All meetings begin at 4 p.m., unless otherwise noted, in the W. H. Upham meeting room.

(Meeting dates can change at the discretion of the council.)

Projects In Your Area

Call 811 or visit diggershotline.com before digging to protect underground utilities and keep you and your family safe.



With warmer weather comes a new season of water & electric projects. There are several water projects scheduled that will run in conjunction with other street repairs. The electric department has projects already underway with more to begin in April. For the most current status of projects visit our [website](http://www.diggershotline.com).

Planning your own projects? Call 811 or visit diggershotline.com at least 3 days before digging to protect underground lines and pipes.

Conservation Corner

Reduce your heating and cooling expense by making energy efficiency updates to your home, plus you may qualify for Energy Efficient Home Improvement credits.

- Exterior doors & windows
- Insulation materials
- Heat pump water heaters

Learn more at <http://bit.ly/3ZKNNsX>



Focus On Saving

MU's partnership with Focus on Energy offers exclusive incentives, rebates, energy-saving deals and more to all Marshfield Utility customers. Reduce your energy usage and save money through the Focus On Energy Online market place.

Every year customers qualify for a FREE Focus pack to help you save. Choose from Focus on Showers, Focus on Baths, Focus on Comfort, or Focus on Electronics. Get yours at <https://bit.ly/free-foe-pack>.

If you are looking for additional ways to save water, reduce electricity usage, improve your air quality or better regulate room temperature check out the deals in the [Online marketplace](#).



LED Light Bulb Packs
starting at \$16.00

Smart Thermostats
starting at \$79.00

Showerheads
starting at \$4.00

Air Purifiers
starting at \$61.99

Power Strips
starting at \$12.00

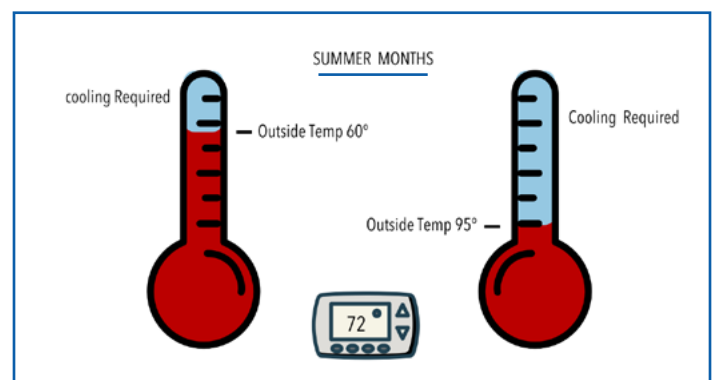
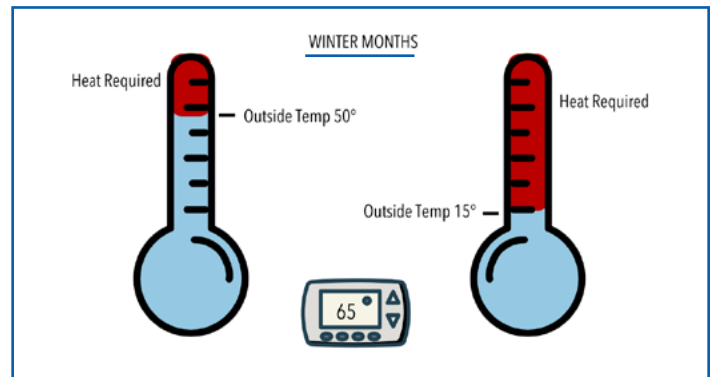
Temperature Impact

Have you ever wondered why your bill fluctuates despite keeping your thermostat at the same setting? It's because of the outside weather conditions impact on your inside temperature.

During the months that you have your furnace on, the colder it is outside your heating system will have to run more often to maintain the inside set temperature. Keeping your thermostat set as low as you can comfortably stand during the winter will help keep heating costs down. Recommended settings range from 62- 68 degrees.

Summer is the opposite if you are running air conditioning. 72 - 78 degrees is ideal for thermostat settings to limit how often your air conditioner runs.

For more energy saving tips visit https://bit.ly/save_energy_tips.



Customer Experience Upgrades

The office team is committed to providing quality interactions to meet the needs of each customer. Whether by phone, email, Online chat or in person, they are happy to assist. Efforts to enhance customer experience are a priority and there are several new features we are excited to announce.

The incentive for registering to use the PowerPay® program has changed. Customers now receive a one-time \$10.00 statement credit when they sign up for both PowerPay® and paperless statements. Sign up for these services at https://bit.ly/new_powerpay.

The next enhancement that has recently been implemented is a new phone service. With the new provider we are able to offer more options to callers so they may expedite their call to reach the person they need.

The option to text us with questions or outage notifications is also a new feature of the phone system. Testing of this service is underway. We anticipate this being available by the end of April.

While texting to us will be new, some customers may have already received text messages from us. In 2022, we started implementing texting to communicate with a small segment of customers. As this process becomes more efficient we

anticipate a broader implementation. Using text messages for payment reminders, known outages, and urgent notifications to help improve communication to our customers.

For the most current offers and notifications, follow us on [Facebook](#) or [Instagram](#).

Meet The Team.

The customer service team is small but mighty. Seven friendly and devoted people that take care of over 13,000 customers. Joe V. and Ross lead the team. Holly, John, Jenni, Ashley, and Joe H., make up the rest of the squad. We asked them a few questions so that you can get to know them.

What is your favorite part of working at Marshfield Utilities?

They all agree that the great people they get to work with is a favorite part of the job. Additionally, Jenni shared that knowing "[she] is part of the process of getting drinking water and power to the City of Marshfield" is important to her. Holly's favorite, "MU is always looking to make customers lives easier through new technology."



What has been the most significant change in your career at MU?

Of course the new building has been a significant change for those who started their career in the previous building. This change has improved security, and reduced distractions to improve productivity.

Also mentioned, the initiative to going paperless and incorporating texting to better reach our customers!

What is the most interesting project you've worked on here?

Nearly all of the team has been part of the training of new staff members joining the customer service department. Some of the more experienced team-members have also served on various committees like John, who has been part of the Safety Committee and Holly was a member of the building committee.

Joe V. played a role in seeking and launching the new phone system to better meet the utilities needs.

What is one thing that you wish people knew about your job?

You, the customer are at the core of all of the responses. The entire MU team cares about the customers and providing reliable, safe services. The office team makes every effort possible to try and help customers avoid getting disconnected.

Jenni said it best, "Call and let us know you need help. We will try everything possible to get you the information you need. Whether you need guidance where to go for financial help or are looking for suggestions on how to lower your bills. Just ask, we cannot help unless you tell us what your needs are."

An unfortunate part of the job is also dealing with collections. It can become very stressful. However, great conversations are also had and provide opportunities to learn something new every day.

Why do you think customers should sign up for Paperless & PowerPay?

"Going green is not only helpful to our environment but doing so offers an amazing convenience for our customers allowing them to set up automatic payments and receive notifications to their mobile phone and by email which grant access to view their statements right on their phones!" - Joe V.

They all agree, it makes life easier. Automatic payments help avoid penalties, late payments and have less paper in your house!

Tips for Customers

- Embrace technology to make life easier.
- Don't be scared of going paperless, it is actually very easy and you have more information at your fingertips?
- If you are struggling to pay your bill, continue to make any payment you can during Winter Moratorium.
- Take advantage of our Focus on Energy Resources. They offer freebies, rebates, incentives and have amazing deals on LED light bulbs. Converting to LED will turn into saving more on your MU bills!

What's on your bucket list?

Some just want to enjoy the simple things, their children growing up, retire with good health and savor moments as family grows through marriage and grand children. Who can argue with that? It sounds pretty amazing.

A common bucket list item for many on the MU team is owning a cabin on a lake in the north woods. A great place to enjoy retirement.

Travel was a frequent response to this question. Including goals of a Harley ride through the Rocky Mountains, exploring Australia, visiting all of the Hawaiian islands, and taking an authentic cooking class in Italy. Perhaps you share the dream to go on adventures.

There are great things happening to improve customer experience and our team is happy to answer any questions you may have. We hope you have enjoyed getting to know a little about the customer service team and what they love about serving you the customer.

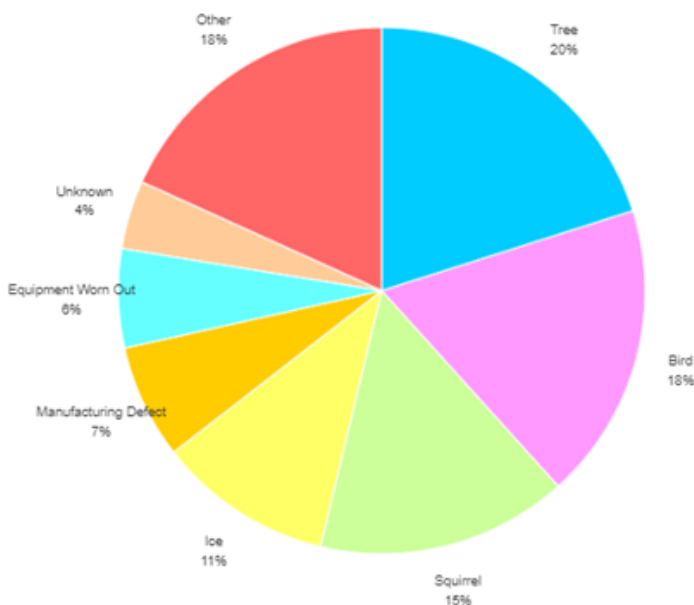
Reliability Report

Electricity on demand when needed is a basic expectation that most people have. It's not really something that a person thinks about regularly, just expected to be there when the light switch is flipped or the power button is pressed. When there is an outage or interruption it's inconvenient and there is a cost due to lost productivity. MU aims to keep the frequency and duration of outages as low as possible.

In 2021, (this is the most recent data available to compare to other local investor owned utilities), the average number of outages a customer experienced was 0.26. This means only 1 in 4 MU customers experienced an outage compared to investor owned utilities in the area where the average was 1.45 outages. MU's average outage duration was 26 minutes compared to local investor owned utilities outages lasting 555 minutes. That is 21 times shorter! The shorter outage length saves MU's customer about \$2.5 million on interruption cost. Since 2016, the preventative measures we have implemented continue to improve our reliability and have saved an estimated nearly \$17 million for our customers.

What is MU doing to thwart service interruptions?

- Aggressive rebuilding of service lines. Including replacing overhead lines with underground service. As you can see below, trees and animals are the largest causes of service interruptions. Moving lines underground helps to reduce these issues.
- A robust tree trimming program on a five-year cycle throughout the service area. MU assumes responsibility for trimming trees along the primary line. Learn more about our tree trimming program at <https://bit.ly/mu-tree-trimming-program>.
- Proactive system maintenance.



Tree	43
Bird	39
Squirrel	33
Ice	23
Manufacturing Defect	15
Equipment Worn Out	13
Unknown	9
Lightning	8
Wind	7
Vehicle Accident	4
Wildlife	4
Electrical Failure	3
Storm	3
Contractor-Dig-In	2
Other - Wildlife	2
Contact with Foreign Object	1
Weather	1
Heat	1
Non-Utility Construction	1
Equipment Damage	1
Equipment	1

Total 214

Protecting Our Water

Clean and safe to drink water is the expectation when one turns on the faucet. The DNR's Bureau of Drinking Water and Groundwater regulates the standards for public water systems. Marshfield Utilities strictly adheres to the regulations and even participates in testing studies with the DNR.



Each day approximately 1.8 million gallons of water go through the Water Treatment facility. Through the treatment process iron and manganese are removed from the groundwater.

What kind of testing is done on Marshfield's water?

Routine test per the Safe Drinking water act for various water quality parameters such as VOC's (Volatile Organic Compounds), THM's (Total TriHalo Methanes), HAA's (Halo Acetic Acids), Nitrates, coliform bacteria, Synthetic Organics, PFAS & PFOA, Radionuclides, inorganics, and lead and copper levels. There are a lot of tests that are done over the course of a year. Some are daily, some are weekly, some are monthly, some are quarterly and some are yearly. That is a lot of testing! Not all of it is done by MU staff. Third party laboratories are also used for testing. In 2022, nearly \$27,000 was spent to perform testing to adhere to the regulations.

After the water is "cleaned" it flows through our Water Treatment facilities to you our customers. Some components of the distribution system are from the 1950s. As you might imagine there is some deterioration after all those years. This is why MU has taken an aggressive approach on lead replacement. Lead components have been replaced as found since 2016. The Wisconsin DNR began new requirements in 2021 requiring mass replacement of lead services. In 2022, approximately \$1.4 million dollars was spent on replacing 348 lead affected services. There is an estimated 1,004 lead services still to be replaced.

Well water is susceptible to contaminants and is the

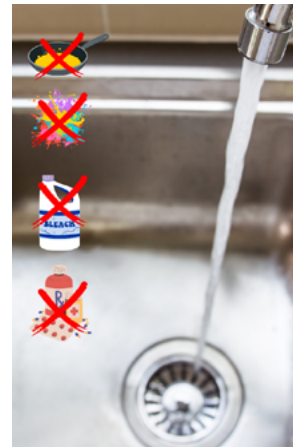
responsibility of the property owner to have their water tested. The DNR recommends the following annual testing for private wells:

- **Bacteria:** once a year and when you notice a change in taste, color or smell.
- **Nitrate:** once a year and before the well will be used by a woman who is or may become pregnant.
- **Arsenic:** every well should be tested once. Sample yearly if arsenic was present in previous tests.

For information on sample collection, finding a certified laboratory, and understanding test results visit <https://bit.ly/private-well-testing>.

What can you do to help keep contaminants out of the water?

- Dispose of toxic chemicals properly. Be careful of what you rinse down the drain or flush down the toilet. This includes bleach, paint, paint thinner, and ammonia.
- Use cleaners that are non-toxic and biodegradable.
- Do NOT pour fat or grease down the drain.
- Use Phosphate-Free detergent & dish cleaner
- Dispose of medication properly. Never flush medicines down the toilet. Prescription and over-the-counter medication can be dropped off for disposal at the Marshfield Police Department and some Marshfield Clinic Pharmacies.



Is bottled water held to the same standards?

Bottled water is NOT regulated by the same agency as public water systems. The Food and Drug Administration is responsible for the standards of bottled water products.

According to FDA.org, bottled water regulations focus on:



- “Standard of identity” regulations that define different types of bottled water
- “Standard of quality” regulations that set maximum levels of contaminants—including chemical, physical, microbial, and radiological contaminants—allowed in bottled water
- “Current good manufacturing practice” (CGMP) regulations that require bottled water to be safe and produced under sanitary conditions

Bottled water may be tap water. “Bottled water that has been treated by distillation, reverse osmosis, or another suitable process may meet standards that allow it to be labeled as purified water.” Learn more about bottled water regulations at <https://bit.ly/bottled-water-safety>.

Storm Preparedness

Severe weather can hit at any time of year. The ice and snow storms that we all experienced last December caused power interruptions for much longer than our average outage duration. While that was one of the worst disruptions in decades, it is important to always be prepared.

- Stock up on bottled water and non-perishable food that doesn't require electricity to prepare.
- Have a generator and fuel on hand. Make sure generators are only operated outdoors! Follow the generator instructions.
- If you don't have a generator make sure you have flashlights, extra batteries, and a portable power bank.



- Have alternate plans for refrigerating medicines or using power-dependent medical devices.
- Have a plan for proper care for your animals.
- Fill your vehicle with fuel and have provisions in the vehicle in case of an accident.
- Have a contingency plan to stay with family, friends, or at a hotel if the power is out for an extended period of time.

Our electric meters detect outages and send automatic notification to us. You can report power outage by calling 715-387-1195 during office hours. After hours call 715-384-8515.

If a line is on the ground do NOT touch it. If a line comes down on your vehicle while you are inside of it, call 911. DO NOT get out of the vehicle!

If the line is sparking, arcing, touching a vehicle, or across a road stay at least 10 feet away and call 911.

How We Prioritize Reported Situations:

1. Life and safety situation based on the information we have are first priority.
2. Restoring all outages
3. Addressing down lines, trees or branches on lines with no outages

When an outage occurs the MU line crew works as quickly and safely as possible to restore service.



**Business Appreciation
Brat Fry**

MAY 9, 2023

**THIS IS A PRE-ORDER AND PICK-UP EVENT FOR MARSHFIELD
UTILITIES' BUSINESS CUSTOMERS**

Use the link or QR code below to reserve your brat meals for your business!

Max of 50 brat meals per business.

Order today! Limited quantity available!

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/bratfry>





May 18, 2023
2 pm - 4 pm

OPEN HOUSE

We formally invite you to the ribbon cutting event and open house for the new Marshfield Utilities facility.

The ribbon cutting will be at 2 p.m. followed by refreshments and tours.

- Facility Tours
- Refreshments
- Door prizes

2000 South Central Ave

Mai Tai Mock-tail

This mock-tail party punch is great for a small get together with friends or double the recipe for your next party!

Ingredients:

1 liter orange juice
1 liter pineapple juice
1/2 cup lime juice
1/2 cup almond syrup
1/2 cup grenadine
1 liter sparkling/seltzer water
Ice
Oranges, limes, cherries for garnish



Directions:

In a pitcher mix together orange juice, pineapple juice, lime juice and almond syrup for the punch base. This can be mixed ahead of time and kept in the fridge until you are ready to serve.

To serve individual glasses, add ice to the cup and fill half full of juice. Add a splash of grenadine and top it off with seltzer water. Garnish with fruit.

To serve in a punch bowl, mix grenadine, juice and seltzer water, then add ice and fruit.

For a traditional Mai Tai cocktail, add rum.

Recipe is from Liz on Call. For more punch recipes visit <http://bit.ly/3yAgyp2>



2000 South Central Ave
Marshfield, WI 54449

Office Hours

Monday - Friday
7:00 am - 4:00 pm
(715) 387-1195

After Hours: (715) 384-8515

Lobby Hours

Tuesday - Wednesday - Thursday
7:30 am - 4:00 pm

Follow us!

