

EPA’s ‘Clean Power Plan’ draws controversy, 1,600 comments

The issue of the authority of a branch of the federal government to decree sweeping change is all over the news, and the electric utility industry is no stranger to the phenomenon.

On June 18, 2014, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) published a Proposed Rule in the Federal Register that will have a tremendous impact on the electric utility industry, including North Branch Municipal Water & Light. The proposed rule, which is intended to address climate change concerns, would establish emission guidelines for existing electric generating units. The EPA cites the Clean Air Act as its authority to issue this transformative regulation, known as the ‘Clean Power Plan.’



In the Proposal, the Agency has asserted new-found authority to become the primary regulator of electric power within the United States, including regulating (i) the dispatch of electric generation, (ii) the amount of renewable power to be built, and (iii) requiring customers to limit their electricity consumption. This is exactly what the Supreme Court has previously stated the EPA could not do, said the state’s municipal electric utilities.

As of early December, the EPA had received some 1,600 comments on the issue.

While expressing a willingness to work with EPA, the state’s municipal electric utilities said the Proposed Rule is deeply flawed.

Among other points, we believe the EPA proposal reads into the Clean Air Act the type of enormous and transformative expansion of EPA regulatory authority that the U.S. Supreme Court has found to be lacking without “clear congressional authorization.”

The Proposed Rule, if implemented in its current form, would have an enormous and disruptive impact—economically, and with respect to principles of federalism and the separation of regulatory authorities.

Use space heaters wisely

Heating a home with electricity is generally more expensive than using natural gas. However, using a UL Certified space heater in occupied rooms can increase your comfort on a cold winter day and may help hold down overall heating costs.



Do not use space heaters in unoccupied rooms.

And if a room is rarely used (and has no water supply), you may want to close the heat register and the door, thereby lowering overall energy costs.

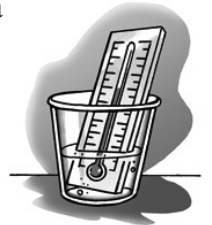
The Connector

North Branch Municipal Water & Light

Keep an eye on water temps

Frozen water lines were a problem throughout the state last winter. Property owners are responsible for the water line from the house to the curb stop. Let’s hope we don’t have another winter like the last one, but if we do here is some basic information:

In extreme cold, monitor the temperature of your water. If the water temperature reaches 40 degrees F. or lower, run a pencil-size stream of cold water from one faucet. If you notice an unusual burst of rust from a faucet, it could mean you’re going to have problems, so flush out the line until the rust is gone and let your water run at a steady trickle. **Contact North Branch Municipal Water & Light if you are going to run water.**



Thawing a frozen line can be very expensive and difficult for the homeowner. The cost of running some water and other preventative measures will be minimal in comparison!

The gift that keeps on giving— ENERGY STAR rated products

Some products just keep giving, not only during the holiday season but year-round. ENERGY STAR products are like that. They save energy, save money and help protect the environment—every day of the year. So look for the ENERGY STAR label.



It identifies products that consume less energy and meet guidelines set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and U.S. Department of Energy.

The Department of Energy estimates that if only one in ten homes were to purchase ENERGY STAR labeled appliances, the change to our atmosphere would be like planting 1.7 million new acres of trees, every year. And if all consumers purchased ENERGY STAR qualified appliances, consumers would save almost \$5 billion in energy costs over the next 15 years.

Appliances that have earned the ENERGY STAR label meet strict energy efficiency criteria without sacrificing performance. They're made to fit the style of your home with state-of-the-art designs and premium features.

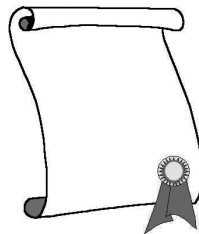
Choosing an ENERGY STAR-labeled appliance has never been easier. North Branch Municipal Water & Light can help

you identify qualifying models, point out savings advantages and even provide you with rebates to lower your initial cost of purchase.

For a complete listing of our rebates for ENERGY STAR qualified products, search the web for 'save energy in North Branch.' Being a local business, you can also give us a call at 674-7100 or stop by our office at 6388 Maple Street.

North Branch high school seniors eligible for scholarship

The Minnesota Municipal Utilities Association (MMUA) has budgeted \$5,000 for its Tom Bovitz Memorial Scholarship Award program. The scholarship fund is split into various prizes and awarded to essay contest winners who plan to attend a post-secondary educational institution.



High school seniors, whose parent(s) and/or guardians are municipal electric utility customers, are eligible for the contest.

The local governing body of your utility picks a local winner. Every MMUA member may then enter the one local essay contest winner to the state contest. The deadline for having utilities forward local winners to MMUA will be in April. Local deadlines are set earlier, to allow the local governing board time to

review the entries. MMUA will announce the winners in May.

Please talk to your high school guidance counselor or the utility if you have any questions or comments.

HeatShare helps less fortunate

HeatShare is a Salvation Army program that provides emergency utility assistance for people with no place left to turn. Funds are used to pay energy costs for seniors, the disabled and families in crisis. The program has provided more than \$32 million worth of assistance since 1982. Annually, more than 4,000 households receive an average of \$370 to keep their homes warm.



Annually, nearly 40,000 households request HeatShare assistance. Year after year, requests for assistance are typically greater than the available resources.

HeatShare does not receive government funding. To learn about HeatShare and The Salvation Army go to www.heatshare.org. If you wish to contribute send a donation to us with your utility bill or to HeatShare, The Salvation Army, 2445 Prior Ave., Roseville, MN 55113 or visit heatshare.org and donate on-line. All donations are tax deductible and will be used in the North Branch area.