

**October 2018**

The VPU office will be closed on the following dates:

November 12, 22 and 23, 2018

December 24th & 31st, 2018 at noon

December 25, 2018

January 1, 2019

## Gas Service Installation Ahead of Schedule

Conversion process 1/3<sup>rd</sup> complete

The first summer of the steam conversion process is coming to a close very successfully. Last spring we believed we could handle installing gas services for 300 new gas customers. We achieved that by late August and to date we have 430 gas services in place. That's one third of the total. Mechanical contractors are planning to work year round to keep up. A handful of customers have chosen to convert to electric heat.

## Northside Ready to Go

Northside gas mains are now in place and so next year we will be working both the Northside and Southside conversion zones. Just like we did this year, we will guarantee, at a minimum, the installation of 300 services next summer to the first 300 applicants. With 80 applications currently submitted only 220 guaranteed slots remain.

## Deadlines for Conversion

The conversion deadline for the Southside conversion zone is October of 2020.

The conversion deadline for the Northside conversion zone is October of 2021.

## Conversion Loans

Roughly 75% of the conversion customers are taking advantage of our loan program while the remainder are taking the rebate of 75% of 2017 steam costs. The 0% loans are for the full cost of the conversion. Once your conversion project gets started, things can change and sometimes unexpected things happen. So, we made every effort to be as flexible as possible in this loan process.

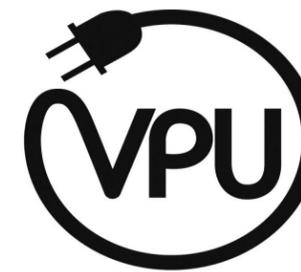
## AEOA Accolades

A good number of our customers are accessing the free technical support that AEOA is providing for those who ask for it. VPU has received many expressions of appreciation for the fine work they have done and the competency they have displayed. Kudos to Vince and Sam at AEOA's weatherization department.

## Equal Pay

Completed Conversion customers may request downward adjustment

Equal Pay customers who have converted from steam to natural gas will see a drop in their billing, but will not see a drop in their equal pay amount. The Utility is willing to review your account and adjust your billing accordingly. So, if you're an equal pay customer who completed the steam conversion this summer, please call our office if you would like us to adjust your equal payment amount.



## Virginia Public Utilities

The VPU Quarterly is a customer newsletter published by the City of Virginia, Minnesota Department of Public Utilities.



## VPU – QUICK NOTES

### KNOW THE SMELL OF

### NATURAL GAS—BE SAFE!

If there is a faint smell of natural gas, call VPU at 218-748-7540.

If in doubt, leave the building immediately & call 9-1-1.

### STREET LIGHT OUT?

If you notice a street light that is burnt out or flickering, please call VPU at 748-7540 so that we may get it fixed and keep our streets bright!

### Before You Dig,

### Contact Gopher State One Call

Dial 1 8-1-1 or 800-252-1166 or [www.gopherstateonecall.org](http://www.gopherstateonecall.org)

### CHECK YOUR WALL PATCHES

If you have steam heat in your home, or an abandoned steam line to your home.....

Periodically check the wall patch where the steam enters your building for leaks.

If you have a vacant property please check property often, as damage can occur quickly...

Call 748-7540 with questions.

## Solar Panels

With the considerable drop in the cost of solar panels we've seen a few customers install these on their houses, etc. Some of these installations have been done without the Utility being made aware. On a comfortable summer day those panels actually feed electricity back to our system. Should our system be down for any reason, that back feeding could put our linemen at risk. That said, all such solar installations connected to our grid are required to meet certain requirements for the safety of our crews. This primarily will involve the installation of a trip mechanism that breaks the circuit should the Utility's power be out.

## Ballot Question for the Miners Event and Convention Center

Guided by the overwhelming feedback from the community-wide survey conducted in the spring of 2018, and from meetings with over 30 user groups, the Virginia City Council has recommended a ballot question be placed on the November 6, 2018 general election for up to a 1% sales tax to fund the construction of a new Miners Event and Convention Center.

### THE GENERAL ELECTION BALLOT QUESTION IS AS FOLLOWS:

*"Shall the Virginia City Council seek special legislative authorization to impose by ordinance a sales' and use tax of 1.0 percent for a period of up to 20 years for the purpose of paying all or part of the capital and administrative/financing costs of renovation, reconstruction, expansion, and improvement of the Miners Memorial Recreation Complex and Convention Center?"*

## Challenges With The Existing Miners Building

- Inadequate building infrastructure that limits programming and activities.
- The cost to renovate and expand the existing Miners Event and Convention Center is estimated at \$33.2 million and the cost to build new is estimated at \$42.8 million. Renovation still leaves us with a 61 year-old building.
- By itself, the \$12 million state grant we have secured does nothing to improve program space, economic impact, quality of life, etc. Instead, the \$12 million by itself will only pay for improvements to the mechanical and electrical systems.

## Potential Solutions

### Economic Impact

- An additional \$2.25 million in economic impact could be generated each year by a new Miners Event and Convention Center as compared to the existing building.
- Will increase significantly with ability to add additional private development like hotel/restaurant project(s) that will likely result from the new Miners building.

### Modern space to improve programs and activities in 2018 and beyond:

- Accessible for all.
- Regional event/conference/convention space.
- Banquet/reception/meeting hall for 500 people.
- Commercial/catering kitchen.
- Concessions area.
- Breakout meeting rooms.
- Indoor walking track.
- Two ice sheets with locker rooms and spectator seating.

## Improved quality of life in Virginia

- Funded with a \$12 million state grant and up to a 1% sales tax
- The majority of sales tax revenue will be generated by people living outside the City.
- Purchases exempt from sales tax: Automobiles (already pay vehicle tax), food and clothing.

You Can Vote Early Beginning Fri, Sept 21 to Mon, Nov 5 at Virginia City Hall OR You Can Vote on Election Day, Tuesday, November 6, 2018 Between 7 a.m. - 8 p.m.