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Newsletter

FALL/WINTER 2021

BATTLE LAKE CITY COUNCIL:

- Richard Bullard, Mayor
- Marjorie Quammen, Council Member
- Donald Maslow, Council Member
- Julia Everts-Demars, Council Member
- Ryan Christensen, Council Member



BATTLE LAKE CITY STAFF:

- Todd Quantance, Police Chief
- Tim Sweazy, Police Officer
- Ethan Mahrer, Police Officer
- Val Martin, City Clerk-Treasurer, Zoning Official, EDA Director
- Karalee Brandner, Deputy Clerk-Treasurer
- Tami Olson, Admin. Assistant
- Chris Johnson, Public Works Director
- Trevor Meece, Public Works Technician
- Adam Schwartz, Public Works Technician
- Brad Grewe, Public Works Employee
- Adam Freyholtz, Liquor Store Manager
- Jack Uselman, Assistant Liquor Store



My first year as Mayor has reached the final quarter. It has been an interesting, educational, and rewarding experience. Thanks to the council members for their patience with me. Thanks to the City staff for their guidance and hard work. We are a blessed community to have these hard working and dedicated council members and City employees.

This year started amid the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the EDA and Battle Lake Area Community Fund responded by creating and soliciting funds from area residents to help business owners who were in a forced shutdown. Thanks to the generosity of our community over \$32,000 was generated and distributed to affected businesses and non profits.

The Lake Shore/North Shore utility and road project was finally completed. Perks Coffee Shop is now under construction and is located in front of Touch of Class Salon.

Hatchery Row demolition and preparation of the site has been completed. Thanks to our City Clerk Val Martin and staff for obtaining three grants to fund that portion of the project. The developers still plan to begin construction this fall. The city was able to obtain refinancing on a 3 million dollar Natural Gas bond. By refinancing the City will see a savings at the reduced interest rate.

We were able to acquire a \$973,000.00 dollar grant for a road resurface project on Olaf Avenue and Memory Lane. Thanks to our City engineer Jade Berube for writing this grant request. This project will begin in 2022.

Two projects that hoped to get started, Bethel Lutheran Church and Blue Spruce Twin Homes, have been delayed to 2022. Hopefully construction materials and availability will be better by the Spring of 2022.

Lakes Area Community Center continues to move forward with their plan to move into the Hatchery Row complex once it is completed. It has been a very busy year for our City council and City staff. Thanks to everyone for their contribution to make Battle Lake a wonderful place to work and live.

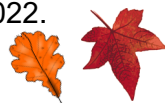
Smart Room is available at City Hall for public use complete with access to Wi-Fi and technology. A great idea for job interviews, on-line learning, virtual meetings, and more. Contact City Hall for more information.



Housing in Battle Lake

The EDA continues to work on ideas for the housing shortage. It is an ongoing topic at meetings. West Central Initiative recently worked with the EDA to complete a Housing Study and also worked with MN Extension on a Housing Survey. The results provided valuable information for a grant application through MN Housing to build 2 or 3 new homes in Hidden Meadows. This has been a joint project with Otter Tail County HRA. If successful, the grant will provide gap assistance to qualified property owners. The gap is the difference between the cost of construction and the assessed value after construction. A great opportunity for qualified buyers to get a new home at a reduced price! More information will be provided if we receive the grant and we will know in January if that grant is successful.

Other new housing projects include Hatchery Row on Henning Street which will provide 12 to 15 rental units and Blue Spruce will continue working on plans throughout the winter and plan to start construction on townhome rentals south of Hidden Meadows in the spring. They plan to complete four units in 2022.



www.Ci.Battle-Lake.mn.us

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	\$8,809
2	\$11,520
3	\$14,230
4	\$16,941
5	\$19,651
6	\$22,362

- ◆ Deadline to apply for assistance is May 31, 2021.
- ◆ There are no deductions from income.
- ◆ Households must provide proof of income when they apply.

To request an application call

Mahube-Otwa at:

847-1385 Detroit Lakes 739-3011 Fergus Falls
935-5022 Mahnomen 732-7204 Park Rapids
632-3600 Wadena Toll Free at 1-888-458-1385

Energy Assistance is administered in Mahnomen, Hubbard, Becker, Otter Tail and Wadena Counties by Mahube-Otwa Community Action Partnership, Inc., PO Box 747, Detroit Lakes, MN 56502. Mahube-Otwa offices are located in Detroit Lakes, Fergus Falls, Mahnomen, Park Rapids, and Wadena.

Program funding provided by the US Dept. of Health and Human Services.

BATTLE LAKE BUCKS

Make great gifts for that "hard to buy for" individual. They can also be used for door prizes, employee incentives, birthdays or Christmas gifts and more!

Battle Lake Economic Development Authority in conjunction with First National Bank have established the Battle Lake Bucks program. Battle Lake Bucks are pre-paid checks that are available in any denomination and can be used at any establishment in Battle Lake.

Stop in to First National Bank to purchase yours today!

BATTLE LAKE NATURAL GAS REMINDS YOU:

Please check your private natural gas lines for damage and we recommend PAINTING your exposed line to lessen corrosion issues. Safely remove foliage and snow around your natural gas meter to

**KEEP YOUR
METER CLEAR**



COLD WEATHER RULE INFORMATION - During the period from October 15 through April 15,

a utility cannot disconnect a residential utility customer for nonpayment if the disconnection would affect their primary heat source for the residential unit and all the following conditions are met:

The household income of the customer is at or below 50 percent of the state median household income. A municipal utility may verify income on forms it provides or obtain verification or income from the local energy assistance provider. A customer is deemed to meet the income requirements of this clause if the customer receives any form of public assistance, including energy assistance, that uses an income eligibility threshold set at or below 50 percent of the state median household income.

A customer enters into and makes reasonably timely payments under a plan agreement that considers the financial resources of the household. A customer receives referrals to energy assistance, weatherization, conservation, and other programs likely to reduce the customer's energy bills.

This notice is to tell you about your rights and responsibilities under the Cold Weather Rule. These rights and responsibilities are designed to help you with winter utility bills. You must act **promptly!** If you choose not to assert your rights or choose not to enter into mutually acceptable payment schedule **your service may be disconnected.**

If you need help paying your natural gas bills, you may qualify for state or federal fuel assistance. Weatherization or conservation programs to reduce your energy bills may also be available. To find out if you qualify and how to apply, contact the following : **MAHUBE-OTWA Community Action Partnership, Inc., 128 W. Cavour Avenue—Fergus Falls, MN 56537—Phone 218-739-3011 or 1-888-458-1385**

BATTLE LAKE NATURAL GAS - During winter months, snow and ice can damage your natural gas meter and appliance vents, or cause them to malfunction. Follow these simple tips and stay safe all winter long:

- * Gently brush away any ice or snow that has accumulated around the meter, regulator vent and other outdoor piping
- * Clear the snow or ice using a broom or by hand—not with a shovel.
- * When plowing, blowing snow or shoveling, do not push or pile snow around your meter.
- * Clear a path to your meter so Battle Lake Natural Gas employees and emergency responders can access it in an emergency.

Keep appliance vents clear of snow and ice:

- * All outdoor appliance vents should be cleared of snow, ice and foliage—the best time to locate your vents is before the first winter storm hits.
- * A clogged vent may cause your appliance to shut down or malfunction and create a hazardous buildup of carbon monoxide.

Watch for falling snow or ice near your natural gas meter:

- * Falling snow and ice can seriously damage natural gas meters and regulators.
- * Be aware of the locations of utility meters when removing snow and ice from your roof or contact a qualified contractor to perform this work for you.

Anytime you smell a natural gas odor leave the area immediately and call 911 or Battle Lake Natural Gas at (218) 862-5550.

UTILITY ASSISTANCE

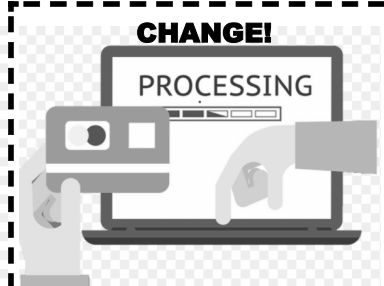
During a long, cold winter, your heat bill swells and you receive a notice from your energy provider that all utilities will be disconnected unless you can pay the overdue balance. Or, maybe a job loss forced you to choose between paying rent or paying your utility bill. You choose rent and just received a shut off notice.

The HeatShare program is offered at most Salvation Army centers in Minnesota and can pay your utility bill once you have a shut-off notice in hand. To request assistance call the HeatShare hotline at 1-800-842-7279 for immediate help. To contact the Fergus Falls Salvation Army at 218-739-9692 for more information.

If you would like to donate to this worthwhile cause—Donations are tax-deductible and can be sent to: The Salvation Army HeatShare Program
2445 Prior Ave N
Roseville, MN 55113



Natural Gas is available to all residents within the City limits of Battle Lake and several areas outside of our boundaries. If you are interested in connecting to our system, or have questions, please call City Hall at 218.864.0424.



The City of Battle Lake will no longer be using Payment Services Network (PSN) for online utility payments. You can access the new payment provider through the City's website and clicking on the Pay my Utility Bill link. Payments can be made online, or by phone using debit card, credit card, or banking account information.

MINNESOTA'S WATER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Congress has created a new program in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The water assistance program began on October 1, 2021 and can make payments to public water suppliers on behalf of eligible residential customers. These funds can pay for past due water and wastewater usage charges and fees. For more information please contact **Mahube-Otwa Toll Free at 1-888-458-1385.**

WE WILL BE



- November 11, 2021 Veterans Day
- November 25, 2021 Thanksgiving Day
- November 26, 2021 Day after Thanksgiving
- December 24, 2021 Christmas Eve
- December 31, 2021 New Years Eve

Natural Gas rates

As most people are aware, natural gas has been a volatile market with rates increasing throughout the country. The City of Battle Lake has not increased rates during the off season but will need to adjust the rates to coincide with the contracted rate we will have to pay this heating season. Rates will be adjusted to **\$1.07** per CCF from \$.80 over the last season. This will start with the October billing. We will also monitor the wholesale price we receive and may need to adjust during the heating season as the City is limited on the amount we can contract. This means there may be a portion that the City will pay at market rate once we've gone over our contracted amount. The same thing is happening with LP gas - rates have gone up 30 to 50% since last year and continue to rise.

Battle Lake Natural Gas—Private Line Notice Battle Lake Natural Gas maintains the natural gas service lines up to and including each meter. Battle Lake Natural Gas **does not** maintain the customer's PRIVATE natural gas lines. Private lines include service lines that branch off the main meter to garages, guest houses, and other customer owned structures. For customer safety, it is very important that private lines be maintained properly. A natural gas service line that is not properly maintained may be subject to potential hazards from corrosion and leakage. Private metallic natural gas service lines should be inspected periodically for leaks and corrosion. Any unsafe conditions should be repaired immediately. Service lines should be located in advance if excavating near the customer's buried natural gas service line. To avoid accidental nicking or puncturing of the lines all excavating near these lines must be done by hand! Local plumbing and heating contractors may be able to assist you in locating, inspecting, and if necessary repairing your service line. If Battle Lake Natural Gas discovers a problem with the customer's private service line, the flow of gas will be shut off and the customer will be advised of the needed repair.

HATCHERY ROW After nearly four years of work, the Hatchery Row Development project is now becoming a reality. Hatchery Row is located on Henning Street, just west of Highway 78 and adjacent to Battle Lake's beautiful downtown area. It's the perfect area for new development. Demolition and clean-up have been completed with a beautiful site available for development. Goodneighbors Properties from Alexandria are the developers and have come up with a beautiful design for the area. They feel the final design fits well with the character of both the former Hatchery buildings and the downtown Battle Lake area. The final floor plan is not yet complete but it will feature 15 -20 apartments and 12,000 – 15,000 square feet of commercial space. Construction will start yet this year and be completed by the fall of 2022.



With the help of several grants from MN Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), Otter Tail County Community Development Agency and USDA Rural Development, this project was able to move forward. Additional expenses not covered through the grants will be recovered through Tax Increment Financing. If you would like more information, please contact Val Martin at Battle Lake City Hall.

FALL SAFETY TIPS Lions and Tigers. Goblins and Ghouls... It's that time of year again – scary and cute costumes galore and mountains of candy...**HALLOWEEN!** Even with all the excitement and fun of the festivities, safety is still very important to remember. Here are few tips to ensure the night stays fun:

- * Walk in groups
- * Fasten reflective tape to costumes and bags to help drivers see you
- * Swords, knives, and similar costume accessories should be short, soft, and flexible
- * Hold a flashlight while trick-or-treating to help you see and others see you
- * Examine all treats for choking hazards and tampering before eating them
- * Look both ways before crossing the street. Use established crosswalks wherever possible
- * Only walk on sidewalks or on the far edge of the road facing traffic to stay safe
- * Wear well-fitting masks, costumes, and shoes to avoid blocked vision, trips, and falls
- * Never walk near lit candles or luminaries. Be sure to wear flame-resistant costumes.



Of course, you do not want to forget your pets on Halloween, either. The following are some tips to keep them safe and healthy:

- * As much as your dog or cat may beg for some of your Halloween candy, remember that chocolate is deadly to them in any amount. Also, the wrappers, such as tin foil, can get stuck in your pet's digestive tract and make them ill or cause death.
- * Large dogs can have lethal tails when it comes to wagging them. Don't leave any lighted candles or Jack-O Lanterns where they could be knocked over by a swinging tail or by a curious cat. Not only could your pet start a fire but they could severely burn themselves in the process
- * Be careful that your cat or dog doesn't dart out through the open door as you hand out candy. Best bet is to just put them in a room with some food and water for the night and check on them once in a while to let them know everything is fine.



Keep your household SAFE in an emergency. Protect your loved ones by creating a Smart911 "Safety Profile." You can provide 9-1-1 with lifesaving information in an emergency and receive important community and weather alerts.
Register Today! ottertailcountymn.us/smart911