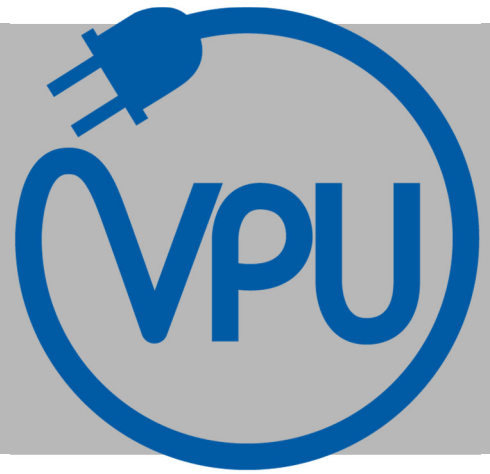


The VPU Quarterly

July 2025



Energy Conservation & Optimization

Did you know Minnesota's initial energy conservation program dates all the way back to 1980? At that time, conservation efforts were geared towards much larger utilities than VPU, but over the last forty-five years, the program has been modified, expanded, and even renamed. Today's Energy Conservation & Optimization (ECO) program guides utilities to set savings goals that are focused on targeted energy efficiency incentives, rebates, and programs for all customers—low income, residential, and commercial.

- **Low Income:** VPU has partnered with AEOA to provide energy audits to our low income customers. This service is funded by VPU and may include measures such as water heater replacements, appliance replacements, heating system inspections & tune-ups, replacement of incandescent light bulbs, programmable thermostats, and low flow faucet aerators and shower heads. If you qualify for energy assistance and are interested in an energy audit, please call AEOA (218) 735-6821 for additional information.
- **Residential:** If you have purchased an Energy Star-rated appliance, LED light bulbs, a programmable thermostat, or upgraded your furnace and/or AC in the current year, you may be eligible to have a one-time rebate applied to your VPU utility bill. Rebate forms may be found under the Conservation tab of our website (www.vpuc.com) and include details regarding any required documentation needed to process the rebate.
- **Commercial:** In 2024, VPU commercial customers received over \$32,000 in rebates and an estimated 768,146 kwh in savings thanks to our partnership with Frontier Energy. If you operate a commercial entity and are interested in pursuing energy savings, please reach out to Doug at (763) 222-3039 to begin the process.

Quick Notes:

The office will be closed on the following dates:

September 1st

Know the smell of natural gas!

If there is a faint smell, call the VPU at (218) 748-7540.

If in doubt, exit the building & call 911!

Sign up for Direct Pay and eliminate the need to write a check each month!

Forms are available in the VPU office or on our website at www.vpuc.com.

Core Conversion

The deadline to convert off steam heat and onto another heating source is

October 31, 2026

On this date, VPU will be shutting down all steam production. This deadline will not be extended.

If your property is heated with steam, please reach out to VPU at (218) 748-7545 to request the necessary paperwork to begin the process. If you are unsure what you need to do, or if you would like some guidance to help navigate your conversion, do not hesitate to reach out to Erik at AEOA at (218) 780-8061. Erik is available to assist all commercial and residential customers through their conversion process and to help access any grant funding for which you may be eligible.

Water Losses & Leak Surveys

Accounted for water is water that has been treated and used through a metered tap or hydrant, and therefore, we know how the water has been consumed. For example, any water used in one's home is considered to be accounted for, since it runs through a meter. Unaccounted for water, on the other hand, is the term we use for water that has been treated and pumped into the distribution system, but it is never consumed through a metered service. Instead, this water is lost somewhere in the system via unknown breaks. Much to our consternation, VPU has seen a gradual incline in our unaccounted for water trends over many years, which has culminated in a significant amount of treated water presumably being absorbed into the ground. We have been working towards reducing that number, and our ultimate goal is to get it below ten percent, as that will align VPU with the federal standard set forth by the Environmental Protection Agency, as well as the state goal that is set by the Minnesota Department of Health. The threshold of ten percent applies to all water suppliers, so by meeting compliance, VPU will be doing its part to continue offering competitive water rates, safeguard the environment, and actively reduce waste through conservation.

With roughly 70 miles of water mains running throughout the City, leaks can be difficult to find if they do not break through the ground surface. In 2024, we had Water Conservation Services complete a City-wide leak survey that turned up several, mostly minor, leaks that never broke ground and instead were being absorbed into the dirt. Thanks to their highly-sensitive, specialized equipment that can efficiently detect potential leaks underground, VPU was able to find and repair previously unobservable breaks. Despite most of these leaks being minor, water that is flowing for 24 hours per day, seven days per week can add up quickly. Once we received the list of potential problem areas, VPU crews began the process of excavating the pipes and completing repairs to them. The Water Conservation Services team returned again in June of 2025 to complete another City-wide leak survey. As of this writing, an additional 18 possible leaks have been discovered. At this time, VPU water crews are preparing to further investigate each of these potential break sites in anticipation of having to dig the lines and repair any leaks that are confirmed. The water leak surveys have proved invaluable, as our unaccounted for water has significantly decreased since last year. With another round of repairs coming, we are hoping to be very close to or below the ten percent goal by the end of summer.