

“Municipal utilities: Good for all of us”

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Electricity is important in today's society, especially for the teens of today's world. Electricity is a crucial part of everyday life! The publicpower.org website shared where a family's home energy dollars go: 44% to heating and cooling; 33% to lighting, cooking, and other appliances; 14% water heating (probably more with my showers); and 9% for refrigeration. There are so many reasons why I can say, "how would I survive without our local public utility?" For selfish reasons I can say I need electricity for things like keeping my cell phone charged so I can be in touch with my friends, eating safe food, taking a shower, hot and cold air, or playing my video games. For most people, survival without electricity is unimaginable. But for those immediately around me, there are other reasons far more important. The Hibbing Public Utilities company employs my dad...and about 61 other people in my hometown, providing jobs locally. My dad works hard every day, is reliable, and works with others to be efficient and to meet the needs of our community, just like electricity!

From a teenager's perspective, not only does the utility provide services for the customers' home, but for other facilities in town that are important to kids. Many different teams and fine arts groups use the local schools for sports practice like basketball, volleyball, and wrestling, along with fine arts like band, choir, drama, and Lego-robotics. Big lights loom over the baseball fields in the summer so we can finish our games after dark. The Lincoln elementary school will hold our All-Night Grad Party in honor of the graduating seniors. Due to COVID-19, alternate accommodations have to be taken and our high school prom will be held at the Memorial Building, a historical building in Hibbing. These are all things that are important to the youth of Hibbing. Without electricity and steam provided by the public utility, where would we be? We wouldn't have lights to see or heat in the winter months.

Since the utility is a nonprofit organization, having a local public utility can keep costs lower for all of the Hibbing customers including commercial users; whereas big corporations are all about making money. Utility consumers are encouraged to attend commission meetings or reach out to their appointed commissioner so they can provide input, keep priorities in check, and so the customers have a voice in what's important locally; in a private setting, customers don't have these options. We need to make a hard and conscious effort to keep electricity affordable for all, especially so we can attract new business to our community. Innovation and technology are important aspects of today's society and you can be assured electricity will be involved in the process. It won't be long before most people drive an electric car; who would have thought? As we move forward, I anticipate a bigger and bigger need for electricity.

My hope for the future is that Hibbing continues to keep the utility prosperous so not only can the youth continue to enjoy the things they like, but the city can continue to employ the people of the community. But more importantly, so there can be cost effective and productive growth of our town and our state.