

CUSTOMER UPDATE

EQUIPMENT SERIES



What is that Green Box?

Customers often ask us, “There’s a green box on my lawn — what is it and what does it do?”

Those green boxes (pad-mount transformers), and the metal cans (pole-mount transformers) you see on utility poles, hold equipment that lowers electric voltage so it can be used in your homes and businesses.

OPU uses about 735 pad-mount transformers and 1,700 pole-mounted transformers to deliver electricity to roughly 12,000 homes and businesses across Owatonna. Each “box” or “can” is able to serve between four and 12 homes. They cost between \$600 and \$2,000 each and they can last as long as 60 years.

If they serve the same purpose, what determines whether a “box” or a “can” will be placed in your

neighborhood? It depends on whether your neighborhood is served by overhead lines or underground ones.

Older neighborhoods in Owatonna are served by overhead power lines, utility poles and pole-mounted transformers. But pole-mounted transformers, because they’re exposed to the weather, squirrels and trees, are more vulnerable to power outages.

To reduce the chance of power outages, OPU is placing more of its power lines underground. That means in the future, you will be seeing more pad-mounted transformers (green boxes), and fewer pole-mounted transformers (cans).