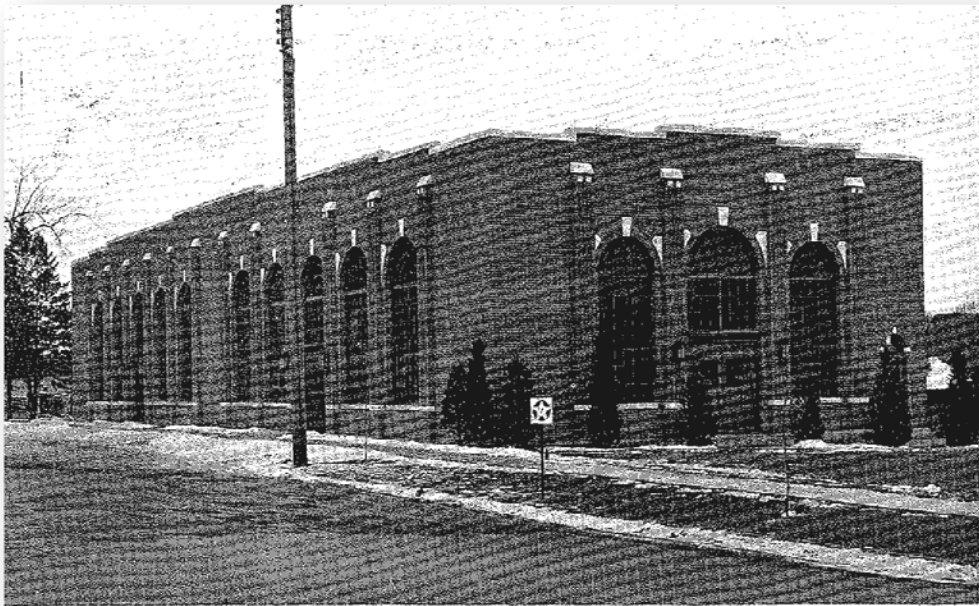


### 3. A Historic Day for Hutchinson

Lights flickered to life first along the streets, known as the “White Way” in the community, at 8:30 A.M. on the fateful day of November 27, 1936. The first residential recipient of power transferred over from the wires of NSP was Frank J. Zila.<sup>xxi</sup> Zila was owner of the infamous Zila Hardware Store in Hutchinson. He was bestowed this honor after being one of the most zealous advocates for establishing a municipality in Hutchinson.<sup>xxii</sup> The Leader covered this monumental occasion. It reported,

November 27, at precisely 8:30, with a small crowd on hand to witness the ceremony, Dr. R.I. Sheppard, chairman of the Light and Power Commission, turned the air valve on the first big Diesel engine at the new \$250,000 Municipal Power plant on North Main St. that started the engine turning and generating current. Then Dr. A.J. Thompson, another member of the commission, adjusted the switchboard, and R.W. Dahl, secretary of the commission, threw the switch that sent the first current through the distribution system. These three simple operations were historic in the life of the Hutchinson community. This meant that for the first time at least some part of Hutchinson was being supplied from a city owned plant. The first Diesel has been ready for several weeks, and Tuesday of this week the second engine was started for the first time. The third engine is now on its foundation but it will be about two weeks before it is ready. The general changing over will proceed rapidly and it is expected that the leads will be connected and meters installed at the rate of from 30 to 50 customers a day in a short time. Since the first electricity or use was generated on Nov. 27, the entire white way system and street lighting, holiday decorations, water pumps, sewage disposal plant, public library and a few residences have been connected.<sup>xxiii</sup>



The Original Power Plant, circa 1936.