TIME TO WELCOME Spring Back!

What you need to know regarding RPU services and offerings to be ready for spring!
Why Tree Trimming Is Always a Top Priority for RPU

RPU will spend nearly $1 million this year on proactive tree trimming and vegetation management. This investment will provide a safer and more reliable electric system for Rochester. As RPU crews and RPU tree-trimming contractors are out working on clearing lines safely, there are things that customers should know.

• Safety and system reliability are the reasons for RPU tree trimming.
• RPU will send a mailing, connect with you in person at your door, or leave a door hanger to affected neighborhoods in order to communicate what work is being done and when.
• It is important to stay a safe distance away from the coned-off work zones while trimming is being done.
• All tree trimming for RPU is done by licensed, certified tree trimming experts. They are also specially trained to safely trim near overhead lines.

Customers can help RPU by doing an inventory of trees on their property and noting ones that may be getting close to overhead lines. RPU would be happy to come by and inspect those trees and take corrective action, if necessary, to help ensure that you aren’t affected by an outage due to trees damaging overhead lines and infrastructure.

Here is a graphic to help you understand all of the important items found on a typical RPU utility pole.

COLD WEATHER RULE WINDOW ENDING SOON!

The Minnesota Cold Weather Rule window is coming to an end on April 15, 2019.

If you are behind on paying your RPU bill, please contact RPU Customer Relations to make arrangements to bring your account current by April 15.

If no arrangement has been made and your account is not current as of April 15, your electric service may be shut off for non-payment. RPU Customer Relations (507.280.1500) is available from 8 am to 5 pm, Monday through Friday to assist you.

CALL BEFORE YOU DIG

As you are plotting out your tree plantings, landscaping, or even a new deck or play area, remember to always Call Before You Dig this summer. Gopher State One Call is a free utility locating service. Gopher State One Call is an important service to help keep customers and utility workers safe. It’s not only quick and easy; it is also your responsibility as a homeowner.

Color Code Chart
The American Public Works Association encourages public agencies, utilities, contractors, associations, manufacturers, and all others involved in excavation to adopt the ULCC Uniform Color Code using the ANSI standard Z53.1 Safety Colors shown below. These colors are used to mark the various underground utilities that may be found during a dig. Flags or paint are examples of materials that are used to mark areas using the colors below.

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- **Proposed Excavation**
- **Temporary Survey Markings**
- **Electric**
- **Gas-Oil-Steam-Propane**
- **Communication-CATV-Fiber**
- **Water**
- **Reclaimed Water-Irrigation**
- **Sewer**

www.gopherstateonecall.org
1.800.252.1166

The grass is always greener on the energy efficient side of the fence.

Attend one of our FREE energy efficiency workshops and qualify for a $50 home energy audit! Learn more at www.rpu.org.

LAST 2 CLASSES UNTIL FALL!

**Saturday, April 6, 2019 • 10-11am**
**Thursday, May 9, 2019 • 6:30-7:30pm**
Northrop Community Education Center • 201 8th St NW
Free childcare available.

TO REGISTER
Call: 888.734.6365 • Email: sbootscamp@mncee.org
Spring is a great time to plant new bushes and shrubs in your yard. However, did you know that there are issues and potential problems with planting them near and around transformers?

Improving the aesthetics of the community and neighborhoods is one of the reasons why RPU installs new electric service underground and it’s also the reason why some customers choose to plant around the pad-mounted transformers. However, there are guidelines and access requirements so RPU crews can safely work on the transformers.

Each pad-mounted transformer has a warning sticker affixed to it, outlining the dangerous voltage inside, the dangers of digging and planting around it, and a diagram for safe planting distances. This information is for the safety of both the customer and RPU lineworkers.

In most cases, RPU has a utility easement of 10 feet from the front of the property line to work in. If there are plantings or landscaping within that 10 feet, RPU may need to remove or cut the landscaping to ensure a safe working environment. The recommended clearance for all plantings near a transformer is to keep them 12 feet away from the front and 3 feet from both sides. If you have questions regarding landscaping near a pad-mounted transformer, call RPU at 507.280.1500.

In an effort to promote safe and responsible tree planting in Rochester, we have partnered with local tree and planting experts to provide a discount on trees and tree care service. Cut out the coupons on page 5 and bring them to participating Partners in Planting!
### Partners in Planting

#### $10 Nursery Coupon

Complete and submit to the nursery of your choice: Jim Whiting Nursery & Garden Center or Sargent’s Gardens

In support of RPU’s Partners in Planting Program. Must be an RPU customer to participate. One coupon per household. Offer valid on any tree priced at $99 or more. Regularly priced trees only. Not good with other discounts or promotions. Must be presented at time of sale.

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On which side of your home will you be planting the tree?  
- [ ] north
- [ ] south
- [ ] east
- [ ] west

#### $20 Arborist Coupon

Complete and submit to Maier Tree & Lawn

In support of RPU’s Partners in Planting Program. Must be an RPU customer to participate. One coupon per household. *Offer valid on arborist services over $200. Not good with other discounts or promotions. Must be presented at time of sale. Refunds not available.

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#### $20 Off

The purchase of any tree care service

In support of RPU’s Partners in Planting Program. Must be an RPU customer to participate. One coupon per household. *Offer valid on arborist services over $200. Not good with other discounts or promotions. Must be presented at time of sale. Refunds not available.
Hang With Us!
At RPU’s 17th Annual

Arbor Day Celebration

Friday, April 26, 2019 • 11am-1pm
Three Links – Silver Lake Park
(Rain Location: RCTC’s Field House)

FREE ADMISSION!
• FREE Food, Trees & Giveaways (while supplies last)
• Live Music & Family Activities
• Poster Contest Winners Awarded

TAG THE TREE FUN!
#RPUArborDay2019

QUESTIONS: Stephanie Humphrey 507.280.1639
MORE INFORMATION: www.rpu.org

SPONSORING PARTNERS:

CO-SPONSORS:

PARTICIPANTS:
Boys & Girls Club of Rochester • Minnesota Children’s Museum Rochester •
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources • Olmsted County Environmental Resources •
Quarry Hill Nature Center • Rochester Police Department • Rochester Public Library •
Rochester Public Works • Rochester Water Reclamation Plant • Sekapp Orchard •
Zumbro Valley Audubon
RPU Commercial Customer Corner: The Time for Clean and Tune Is Now

What is spring without spring cleaning? Commercial and industrial facilities can greatly benefit from a deep cleaning at least once per year, and spring is the perfect time. Deep cleaning not only enhances the appearance of your building, it also improves indoor air quality and lowers your operating costs.

When cleaning their facility, most will overlook one important building component: the cooling system.

Testing and keeping your cooling system clean is an effective, cost-saving measure which can ensure building occupant’s comfort all year round. Neglected maintenance could lead to efficiency decline, as well as an increase in peak demand.

Whether you have a rooftop unit, a split system, or a cooling tower, these are all exposed to various weather conditions that can result in wear and tear on the equipment. This is especially true in the winter, as cold air, snow, and ice can damage system components and reduce overall performance. In addition, most air conditioning units remain dormant throughout the winter, allowing for dust, dirt, and debris buildups in system mechanisms, ductwork, and vents. This can lead to various maintenance problems, reduced capacity, and unnecessary load increase on the unit.

Here are some of the recommended actions you can partake in before the warm weather returns:

- Inspect and clean coils, blowers, fans, motors, valves, etc.
- Clean heat transfer coils and replace filters as needed.
- Check the heat exchanger for rust, cracks, or leaks.
- Conduct a thorough operational check of controls and adjust as needed.
- Inspect belts for tension, alignment, and overall condition.
- Test refrigerant pressure and check oil levels.
- Check dampers for malfunctions and measure airflow for optimal performance.

Hiring a qualified professional to test, clean, and inspect your HVAC system at least every other year, can extend the life of the equipment, and help achieve peak performance. Having your system cleaned and inspected by a qualified professional before the cooling season begins, can also qualify for a rebate. See your RPU representative for more information on system optimization and our Conserve & Save® rebate program.

Monthly Tip for Plugging into Savings!

PLANT A TREE FOR ARBOR DAY!

If you plant a tree today on the west side of your home, in five years your energy bills should be 3% less. In 15 years the savings will be nearly 12%.
Why Homeowners with Irrigation Systems Need to Request Testing This Summer

An irrigation system can certainly be convenient for watering the yard, but it can also be a cause of water contamination if the backflow preventer isn’t tested and working properly.

Residential irrigation systems have Pressure Vacuum Breakers (PVBs) that serve as a backflow assembly to prevent water from flowing back into your home. A recent change in the Minnesota Plumbing Code made annual testing mandatory for all backflow assemblies, including PVBs most commonly found in residential irrigation systems.

Backflow is the flow of water or other liquids, mixtures, or substances (under positive or reduced pressure), into the distribution pipes of a potable water supply from any source other than its intended source. Backflow is caused by either backsiphonage or backpressure. Backsiphonage occurs when a flow of used, contaminated, or polluted water from a plumbing fixture or vessel enters into the public water system, often due to negative pressure in a pipe. Backpressure occurs due to a drop in pressure from the water system. It is important to note that a drop in pressure is out of your control and can occur at any time.

The testing is easy to have done and typically takes less than an hour to perform. Testing must be completed by a certified backflow tester. Contact your irrigation system contractor and ask if they have a certified backflow tester, alternatively, many local plumbing contractors also have certified testers.

After the test has been completed, the certified tester sends the results to RPU. Testing is required to be completed on an annual basis.

If the certified tester finds that the backflow assembly has failed, normally the company will have a licensed plumber on staff to repair the backflow assembly. If not, you will have to have it repaired immediately and then confirmed with RPU.

Visit the RPU website (www.rpu.org) for more information on RPU’s Backflow Prevention Program.