

RPU Plugged In



**RPU WATER CREWS ARE ALWAYS
READY FOR MINNESOTA WINTERS**

What Goes Into a Water Main or Service Line Fix in the Winter?

► Read more on page 2.





In back row: Matt Brekke, Jon Lenn, Pat O'Neill, Rich Rain. Seated in the truck: Scott Rendler. In front row: Kevin Meyers, Chris DeMarino, Steve Quandt, Heidi Andrist, Kris Putzier, Steve Johnson, Ron Kruger, Dale Kurtz, Roger Horsman, Cary Johnson, Tim Jestus, Craig Langbehn, Donn Richardson, Doug Klamerus. Not Pictured: Duane Bjelland and Mike Heimer

RPU WATER CREWS ARE ALWAYS READY FOR MINNESOTA WINTERS

What Goes Into a Water Main or Service Line Fix in the Winter?

You probably don't give it a second thought when you go to your tap for water, and that's just how we like it. Ensuring reliable and safe drinking water to Rochester residents is what the group of RPU employees pictured above strive for each day.

During the winter months, the work that goes into distributing water to homes and businesses can be significantly more difficult due to ice, frost, snow, and cold temperatures.

Cold weather can affect water mains and water service lines into your home. As the ground freezes, the ground shifts and moves, including water mains and service lines. When this happens, a break can happen, which requires RPU water crews to repair it.

Watch for water coming up from the street or the ground. (It can be a significant flow or just a small amount.)

If you see water coming up from the ground or the street, call RPU. This can be an indication that there is a break in the water main or the service line. RPU will send someone out to inspect the area and to identify what the issue is. Often times, the repair will require excavation of the street or yard depending on the location. One of the necessary steps in this process is identifying underground utilities by calling in for locates to be done. This is when the colored flags and paint are marked on the ground to show what underground utilities are in the area.

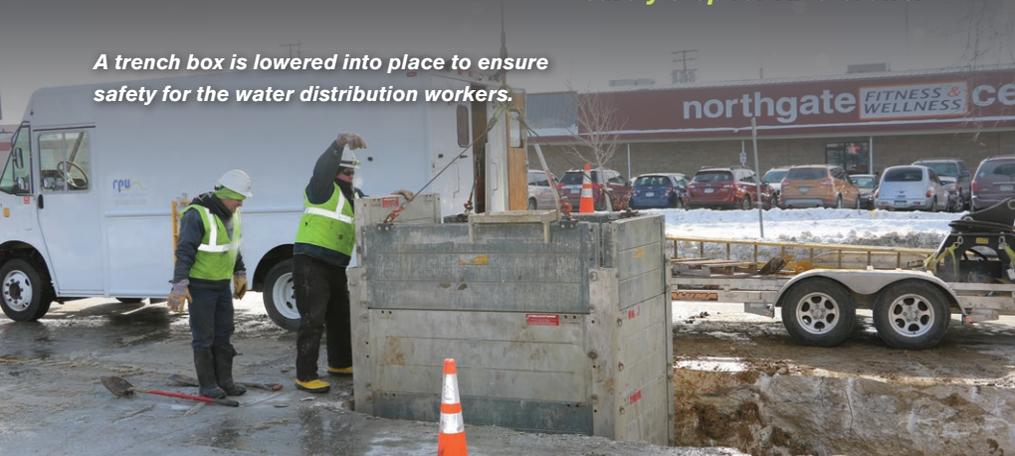
Marking underground utilities before digging is an important safety step for RPU crews.

Water mains and service lines can be buried 6 to 7 feet underground. It takes time to safely dig down that far to expose the broken pipe. Once the hole is large enough to diagnose the issue, a trench box is always used to prevent the hole from caving in. This is another very important step in the repair of a water main or service line.

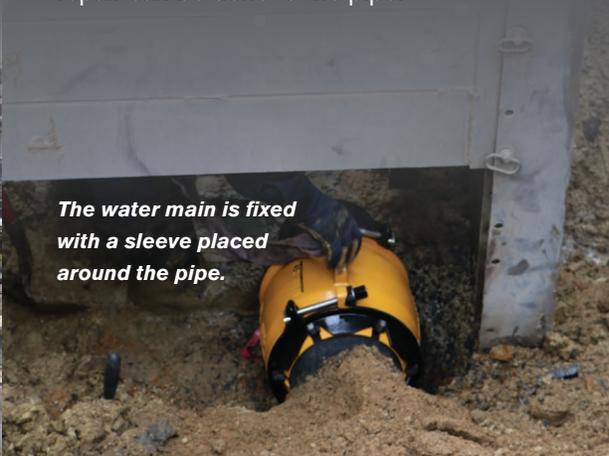
Once inside the trench box, the water distribution worker is probably standing in mud and very cold water. At times, the water level is so significant that water has to be pumped out of the hole before it is safe to work in.

Since the backhoe is used to gain access to the main area, more digging is usually required by hand to carefully get close to the affected pipe. After more digging and then cleaning of the area, a sleeve can be added, or other repair can be done to the pipe.

A trench box is lowered into place to ensure safety for the water distribution workers.



The water main is fixed with a sleeve placed around the pipe.





A trench box is another important safety tool used in repairs.

The work isn't done yet. After the pipe is repaired, the water distribution system has to be flushed to ensure the availability of clean water. The 6- to 7-foot deep hole also has to be carefully filled back in and covered with gravel to allow traffic to drive over it.

Use caution when driving near RPU work zones.

While we work to minimize the time impact on customers, RPU water distribution workers need to take the necessary time to do everything safely. Please remember to use caution when driving near RPU work zones. Safety is a responsibility for everyone, and is appreciated by each and every RPU employee!

So the next time you see a crew of RPU water distribution workers digging a hole or placing a trench box, you now have a better understanding of what goes into the work they are doing.

Photos by Josh Banks

COME SEE US AT THE 2018 RAB HOME SHOW!

We always have a great time visiting with our customers at the Rochester Area Builder's (RAB) Home Show.

Do you have questions about your RPU services? Maybe you are interested in purchasing new energy- and water-efficient equipment this year and you need guidance regarding rebates. Stop by our booth and let us know how we can help you.

The RAB Home Show is from February 9–11, 2018, at the Mayo Civic Center.



CONSERVE & \$AVE

Energy and water conservation is not only the right thing to do, it can be easier than you think. Stop by the RPU booth to find out how to get started conserving and saving!

WHY IT'S IMPORTANT TO SHOVEL AROUND FIRE HYDRANTS IN THE WINTER

It is crucial for everyone in Rochester to be aware of the importance of shoveling around fire hydrants this winter. With more than 6,000 hydrants in Rochester, all homeowners and business owners need to do their part to ensure that a hydrant is visible and accessible in case of a fire emergency.

It is recommended to dig snow out from 3 feet around the hydrant and create an access point from the road. RPU has flags available for homeowners and business owners to mark the hydrant location. Call RPU (507.280.1500) during business hours and we will install a flag to the hydrant.



IS YOUR HOME COMFORTABLE AND EFFICIENT?

Have you been staying comfortable at home this winter without bundling up or breaking the bank?

Cold drafts and ice dams go hand in hand and create annual winter headaches for many Minnesotans. When the heat we're paying for is allowed to escape through unsealed attic spaces, the unwanted result can be ice dams. This constant air movement – warm air leaving, cold air being pulled in – makes our homes feel unnecessarily cold, drafty, and dry. Fortunately, there's a way to tackle these problems to ensure you stay warm this winter, keep your heating bills down, and eliminate energy waste.

The Neighborhood Energy Challenge (NEC) is here to help! It's a full-service home efficiency program for Rochester residents that helps folks improve comfort and reduce energy waste in their homes. We provide solutions that are low-to-no cost and offer guidance for larger issues that may be affecting the overall efficiency and durability of your home.

NEC begins with attending a FREE educational workshop that provides

techniques for saving energy and money. After the workshop, participants can schedule a customized, discounted home energy visit (free visits are also available for income-qualifying households). The visit includes a blower door test to measure air leaks, an insulation inspection, a heating system and water heater safety test, and installation of energy and money-saving materials.

These materials may include:

- LED light bulbs
- High-efficiency faucet aerators and showerheads
- Hot water pipe insulation and more

Participants will also receive information about rebates and innovative financing, only available to program participants (for those wishing to complete larger projects).



▶ UPCOMING WORKSHOPS:

Saturday, March 10, at 10 a.m.

Thursday, May 10, at 6:30 p.m.

Northrop Community Education Center,
Room 316

201 8th St. NW, Rochester, MN 55901

To reserve your spot or for more information, contact Stacy Boots Camp at **888.734.6365** or sbootscamp@mncee.org.

Neighborhood Energy Challenge is provided by Minnesota Energy Resources and Rochester Public Utilities in partnership with the Center for Energy and Environment.

“ HERE ARE SOME OF THE COMMENTS FROM PAST PARTICIPANTS: ”

“Informative, friendly, convenient, and helpful.”

– Mark

“I wrote down a lot of things that I didn't know I could do to make my home more efficient.”

– Lindsay

“The person that came to my house was very knowledgeable.”

– Todd

“Very informative – time well spent. I had an energy audit and plan to complete the recommendations. I'm sold on this process. Thank you for making it easy to understand.”

– Suzanne

Utility Payment Arrangements Available for Military Service Personnel

When a household member has been ordered to active duty, for deployment, or for a change of duty station, some customers may find it hard to pay their utility bills. Minnesota Law protects military personnel from shut-off if they cannot pay their bill in full. To qualify for this protection, you must enter into and keep reasonably current with one of the payment plans described below.

- ▶ **If your household income is below the state median household income, pay 10% of your household's gross monthly income toward your RPU bill.**
- ▶ **If you receive energy assistance, pay 10% of your household's gross monthly income toward your RPU bill. The full statute description for Minnesota Statute 325E.028 can be found on the state of Minnesota website <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/pubs/>.**
- ▶ **If your household income is above the state median household income, make and keep a payment plan.**

If you would like to sign up for payment arrangements or have questions regarding the "Military Service Personnel Disconnection Law," please contact RPU customer service at **507.280.1500**.

WATER CONSERVATION

Monthly Tip on Saving From the Tap!











 One drip every second adds up to five gallons per day! Check your faucets and showerheads for leaks.


 we pledge, we deliver®

CONSERVE & \$AVE

ENERGY CONSERVATION

Monthly Tip for Plugging into Savings!



Do the dollar bill test! Check your refrigerator and freezer door gaskets by placing a dollar bill between them and closing the door. If the bill pulls out easily, it suggests either a gasket or door adjustment problem.




 we pledge, we deliver®

CONSERVE & \$AVE

RPU Commercial Customer Corner

Enjoy Savings with RPU's Conserve & Save® Rebates

It pays to review RPU's Conserve & Save® rebates! If your business is planning a project in 2018 that can improve efficiency and save energy, check out RPU's rebate offerings. You can reduce your initial costs by selecting more efficient equipment while also reducing your ongoing operational costs. If you have any questions regarding RPU's Conserve & Save® rebates, please contact your RPU representative.

2018 RPU Conserve & Save® Commercial Rebates

Electric Rebate Programs	
LED Lighting	Up to 50% of lighting cost
Other Lighting (T5, HID, etc.)	Rebates vary – see application
Energy Audit	Rebates vary – see application
Energy Audit Bonus Rebate	\$0.015 per annual kWh saved
Anti-Sweat Heater Controls	\$35-\$45 per controller
Compressed Air Leak Correction	Up to \$9 per total compressor HP
Custom Efficiency	\$0.045 per annual kWh saved
Electric Efficiency Appliances and Equipment	\$15-\$100
Food Service Equipment	\$100-\$1,000
Guest Room Energy Management	\$75-\$85 per room
Cooling Equipment	Rebates vary – see application
Heat Pumps (Air Source)	Rebates vary – see application
Heat Pumps (Ground Source)	\$200 base with \$25 EER bonus per ton
Heat Pumps (Water Source)	Rebates vary – see application
Motors	\$15-\$2,700
Variable Speed Drives	\$100-\$2,000
Solar	\$0.50 per watt, capped at \$5,000

CONSERVE & \$SAVE®



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Contact your RPU representative for more information on lighting and our Conserve & Save® rebate program.

Water Rebate Programs

WaterSense® Toilets	\$25
WaterSense® Flushometer-Valve Toilets	\$50
WaterSense® Low Flow Pre-Rinse Spray Valves	Up to 50% of cost
WaterSense® Weather-Based Irrigation Controls	\$75
Energy Star® Clothes Washers	\$25-\$100
Rain Barrels	\$10 per rain barrel, capped at 5 barrels



Tom Bovitz Memorial Scholarships for High School Seniors

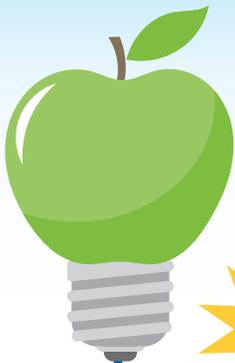
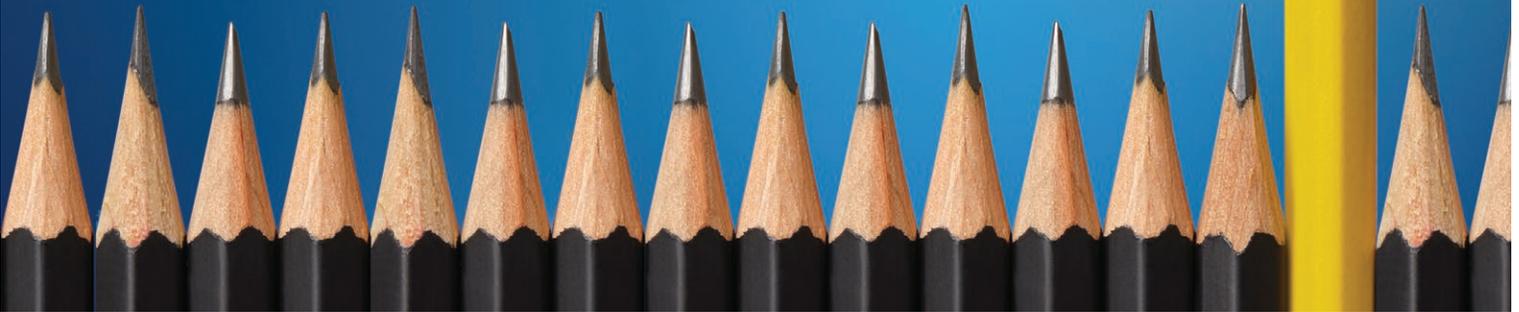
Entries Due to RPU by March 30, 2018

ESSAY SCHOLARSHIP CONTEST:

- First Place\$2000
- Second Place\$1500
- Third Place\$1000
- Fourth Place\$500

Essay theme is "Municipal Utilities: Good for All of Us."

Visit www.rpu.org for guidelines and to download an entry form. Good luck!



Energy Education

FREE CLASS ON SOLAR ENERGY!



Solar Energy for Your Home or Business

Sat Feb 24, 2018

10am – 12pm

Northrop Community Education Center

REGISTER:

Call: 507.328.4000

Online: rochester.thatscommunityed.com

Sponsored By:



CONSERVE & \$AVE

Learn more at www.rpu.org



4000 East River Road NE
Rochester, MN 55906
507.280.1500
www.rpu.org

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STANDARD
US POSTAGE
PAID
Bluespire



Where to Find RPU

Find us on social media for the latest RPU news and updates!

 @rpuoutages for outage information

 @rpualerts for RPU news and general information

 Rochester Public Utilities

Freezing Temps Can Cause Broken Pipes...

and a water service line repair or replacement can cost you \$4,000 to \$8,000 – or more!

Make sure you're covered by RPU's Service Assured® program. To learn more and/or enroll, visit www.rpu.org.



"What a relief! Very thankful that we had Service Assured® coverage. RPU just took care of everything. \$3 a month is a pretty nominal cost compared to the cost of replacing and digging up one of those [underground water] pipes."

– Richard Bennett, Service Assured® Customer



RPU SERVICE CENTER Holiday Hours

The RPU Service Center will be closed on:
Presidents Day
Monday, February 19