

RPU *Plugged In*



An RPU lineworker works to restore power, in the rain, to a Rochester neighborhood during the storms that swept through on June 5th.

POWER OUTAGE SAFETY

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Photo by Josh Banks



Power Outage Safety

An RPU lineworker uses a bucket truck to repair overhead lines in order to restore power to homes on June 5th.

Power outages can happen for any number of reasons including overgrown vegetation, equipment failure, animals, auto accidents, and storms. We understand that it is an inconvenience for customers anytime the power goes out. Many RPU employees are also RPU customers, experiencing the same outages as you. In those times, all available resources are used to address the outage immediately.

RPU's first and foremost concern during any outage regardless of size, is safety for customers, the community, and RPU employees. We will never compromise the safety of anyone to expedite power restoration.

Never go near a downed power line. Stay away from the area and contact RPU immediately at **507.280.9191**. Even if a power line looks like it is disconnected, it still can be energized and will cause severe injuries if contact is made with it.

If your house is fed from overhead lines and there is possible storm damage to

the line or connection into your home, you will need to take additional steps to safely have your power restored. Keep in mind, the electric service can get pulled down or dislocated from your house and still be working.

- If a line is down, regardless if it is working or not, it may require additional attention to ensure safety and proper service.
- Call RPU's outage line at **507.280.9191** to have a crew inspect your overhead service.
- If repair work is required, RPU will disconnect your service, and will then instruct you to have a licensed electrician make necessary repairs.
- Once the electrician has completed their work, they will notify a city electrical inspector to ensure the work was done properly.
- The inspector will then notify RPU for a reconnection.

Your safety, along with the safety of our employees and community, is our priority.

RPU lineworkers will not go out to assess or work on outage restoration if there is inclement weather in the immediate area, which could compromise the safety of the RPU line crews.



For large outages, we use Twitter @rpuoutages for sharing outage information and restoration progress. RPU outage map – www.rpu.org

Photo by Josh Banks

POWER OUTAGE EMERGENCY PLAN

As much as we try to keep the power on, there are circumstances that can cause the power to go out for minutes or even days. What is your plan for you and your family if you were to lose power? Here are some things to consider:



Report the outage. Have RPU's outage line in your cellphone or easily accessible to report your outage – **507.280.9191**.



Have a back-up location. Do you have a list of friends or family in the area who you could go stay with if necessary? Even if your home is heated by natural gas and the electricity is out, you will not be able to heat your home because the fan on your furnace is powered electrically.



Keep your cellphone charged. If bad weather and strong winds are in the forecast, keep your cellphone charged in case the electricity goes out.



Keep refrigerators and freezers closed. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, food left in a closed refrigerator or freezer should be safe for no more than 4 hours. Keep the door closed as much as possible. Discard perishable foods that have been above 40 degrees Fahrenheit for more than two hours. For more information, visit: http://www.foodsafety.gov/keep/charts/refridg_food.html.



Hydro FAQs – Lake Zumbro Dam

The Lake Zumbro Dam (LZD) is located on the south fork of the Zumbro River in Wabasha County. It is 18 miles north of Rochester. The dam is owned and operated by Rochester Public Utilities (RPU).

1. When was the LZD constructed?

The Lake Zumbro Dam was constructed in 1919. RPU will be celebrating the 100-year milestone for the dam in 2019.

2. How much energy does the LZD generate annually?

Electrical generation has averaged 12,500 megawatt hours (MWh)/year since 2000 – enough electricity for approximately 1,500 homes. In 2016, generation was 16,100 MWh, the highest since 1993.

3. How tall and wide is the LZD?

The LZD is 55 feet high and spans 440 feet.

4. How does RPU operate the dam?

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources regulates dam operations and requires RPU to operate as Run-Of-The-River. Basically what's flowing into Lake Zumbro is flowing through or over the LZD.

5. How much water can pass through the turbines?

590 cubic feet of water per second (cfs) when both turbines are at 100%.

6. How much water goes over the LZD's spillway when there is a foot of water?

1,500 cfs

7. Who regulates and enforces the "No-Wake" status on Lake Zumbro?

No-Wake status is regulated under Olmsted County Ordinance #94-109 and is enforced by the Olmsted County Sheriff. The No-Wake is initiated when lake levels exceed 915.6 Mean Sea Level (MSL) and the No-Wake is lifted when it reaches levels below 915.3 MSL.

8. How close can I drive my boat to the LZD?

The warning buoys are placed 200 feet in front of the dam.

9. How often is the LZD inspected?

Annually, with more in-depth inspection every 5 years.

10. Who do I contact if I have questions on the LZD?

Todd Osweiler, Environmental and Regulatory Affairs Coordinator, **507.280.1589** or tosweiler@rpu.org.



Store extra flashlights and batteries. Keep flashlights and new batteries in an accessible location to provide some light and safety.



Be aware of medical conditions. If you or someone you know has a medical condition, and they rely heavily on electricity for medical equipment, seek medical attention early rather than waiting for the electricity to come back on at your home.



Know your garage door. If you have an electric garage door opener and the power goes out, it may be difficult to find the release cord in the dark.



Consult your garage door opener manual and find out how to release the opener in case the power goes out. This will allow you safe and easy access to opening your garage door even without power.

Practice safety first. Never go near downed power lines or wires. Power lines can still stay energized even if they are lying on the ground. Call RPU immediately at **507.280.9191**.

Landscaping Around RPU Transformers Is a Safety Concern

The summer 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 is 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 line workers.

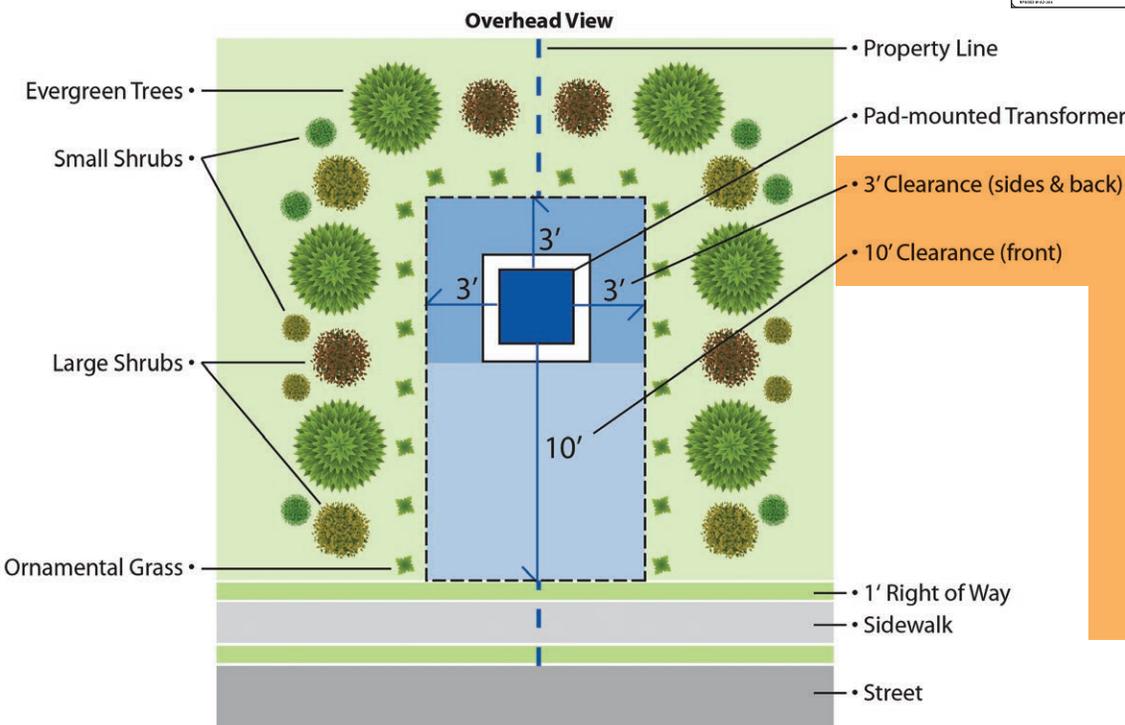
In most cases, RPU has a utility easement of 10 feet from the front of the property line to work in. If there are plantings or landscaping within that 10 feet, RPU may need to remove or cut the landscaping to ensure a safe working environment. The recommended clearance for all plantings near a transformer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

Planting too close to a transformer can cause a safety concern for RPU lineworkers and the public.



Always note the warning sticker on transformers to ensure safety.

<p>WARNING</p>  <p>Hazardous Voltage Inside Can shock, burn, or cause death</p> <p>KEEP OUT If open, damaged, or unlocked immediately call Rochester Public Utilities 507-280-9191</p>	<p>WARNING</p>  <p>Underground Hazardous Voltage Cables Buried in this Area</p>  <p>Call GOPHER STATE ONE-CALL 48 hours before digging 1-800-252-1166.</p>	<p>NOTICE</p>  <p>We need room to work safely on this device. Please keep shrubs and structures 12 feet away from front side and 3 feet from other sides. Obstructions will cause delays when restoring electrical service. For planting instructions call: 507-280-9191</p>
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If you choose to plant landscaping closer than the space recommended by RPU, keep in mind that it may be removed, altered, or damaged by line crews needing safe access to the transformer and is done at the homeowner's own risk.

RPU Commercial Customer Corner

Manage Your Energy for Savings

Do you know if all the energy you purchase is contributing to your business's success, or is it being used inefficiently, or worse, being wasted? Wasted energy creates an expense that does not have a payback and is a direct subtraction from your business's bottom line.

How do you know whether you are using energy efficiently and without waste? You manage it like any other resource in your business, such as production, financial, or human resources. By managing energy you can save energy, which is an effective way to lower costs and increase profits while also helping the environment.

To help you get started, The Environmental Protection Agency's Energy Star® program has developed guidelines for energy management that consist of seven steps:

1. Make a commitment to making energy management a priority with the appropriate staff and funding to be successful.
2. Assess performance, which can be done through benchmarking. (Benchmarking was discussed in last month's *Plugged In* article.)
3. Set goals that are clear and measurable.
4. Develop an action plan that defines steps to meet the goals.
5. Implement the plan. An energy team composed of members of all departments can be a great way to implement the plan and get buy-in across the organization.
6. Evaluate progress of the action plan.
7. Recognize achievements to sustain and support your energy management program.

The full **Guidelines for Energy Management** can be found on the Energy Star® website.

CONSERVE & \$AVE®



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See your RPU representative for more information on energy management or our Conserve & Save® rebate program.

Important Notice from the City of Rochester Regarding Use Tax

Use tax is the counterpart of sales tax. You owe use tax when Minnesota sales tax, Olmsted County sales tax, and/or Rochester sales tax is not charged on taxable items you buy, whether you buy them anywhere in Minnesota or outside the state.

For example, if you travel to another state or country and bring back items that are normally taxed in Minnesota, you owe use tax on those purchases. The same applies if you buy taxable items through mail-order catalogs or the internet and Minnesota sales tax is not charged on the purchase. If you buy a taxable item from a Minnesota business and the seller

doesn't collect sales tax from you, you owe use tax on those purchases as well.

Information that further explains the use tax procedures can be found on the two MN Department of Revenue websites shown below:

For Businesses:

http://www.revenue.state.mn.us/businesses/sut/Pages/Use_Tax.aspx

For Individuals:

http://www.revenue.state.mn.us/individuals/use_tax_individual/Pages/Individual_Use_Tax.aspx

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.

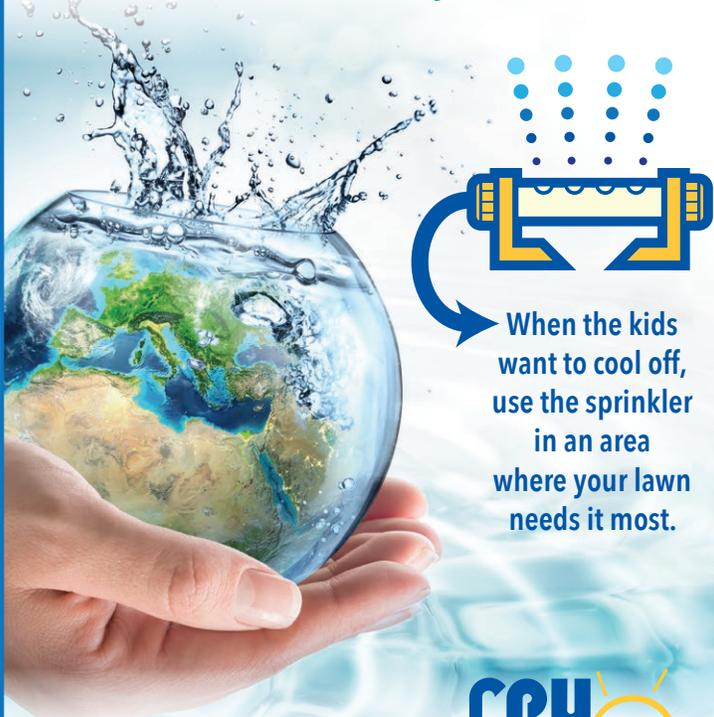
	Proposed Excavation		Communication-CATV-Fiber
	Temporary Survey Markings		Water
	Electric		Reclaimed Water-Irrigation
	Gas-Oil-Steam-Propane		Sewer



www.gopherstateonecall.org
1.800.252.1166

WATER CONSERVATION

Monthly Tip on Saving From the Tap



When the kids want to cool off, use the sprinkler in an area where your lawn needs it most.

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ENERGY CONSERVATION

Monthly Tip for Plugging into Savings!



Summer sunlight can heat up your home quickly, making your air conditioner work harder to keep your home comfortable.

To reduce your utility cost and save energy this summer, close the shades on the south and west side of your home during the daylight hours.

CONSERVE & \$AVE  *we pledge, we deliver*

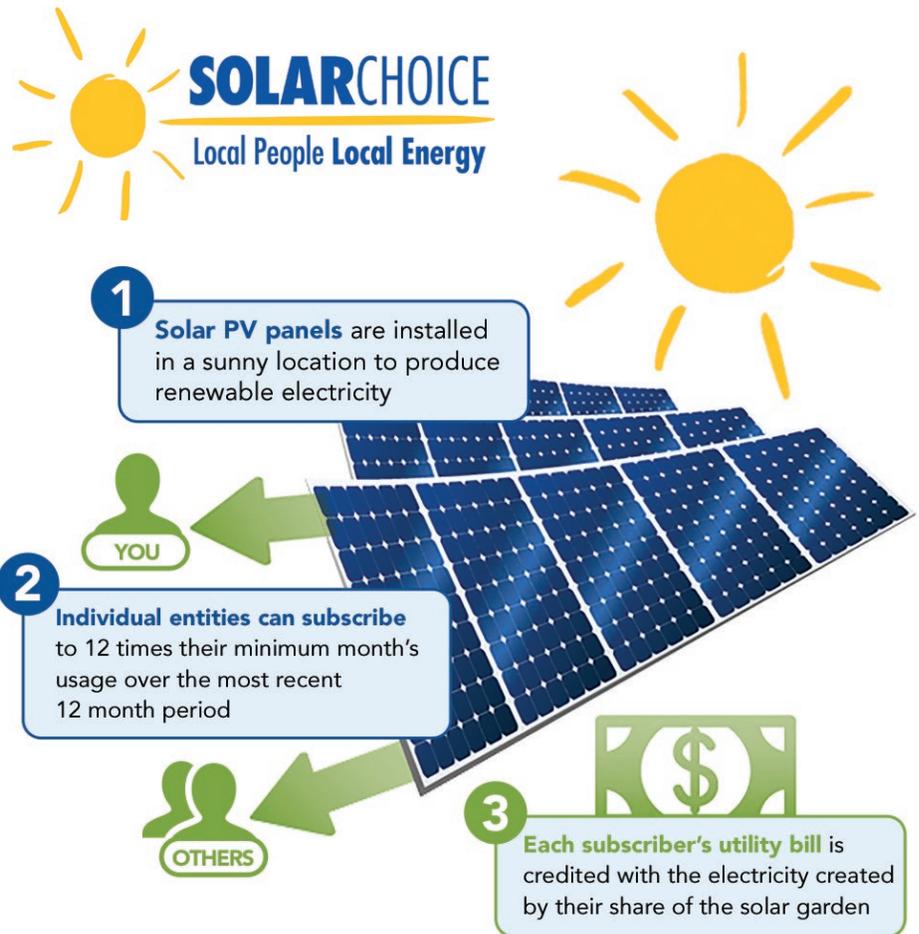
Take Advantage of RPU's NEW Community Solar Program, **SOLARCHOICE**

RPU is pleased to offer our residential customers a new community solar program called **SOLARCHOICE**. According to the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL), only 25% of residential rooftops are suitable for solar nationwide, which means 75% of homes could not enjoy the benefits of solar until now. This program allows you to participate in solar energy without having to purchase and install solar panels on your home. Instead, we build a large solar project called a community solar garden with thousands of panels allowing solar access to all.

With the **SOLARCHOICE** program, a customer subscribes to the output of one or more solar panels for the next twelve years. Every month the actual energy (kWh) output from the solar array is used to credit the subscriber's account, which directly reduces the amount of energy for which they are billed. The expected output is 501 kWh per panel per year. The upfront cost of \$650 per panel can be either a one-time payment or it can be paid over the first twelve months. The cost includes all ongoing insurance and maintenance.

The **SOLARCHOICE** solar garden is going to be built in Princeton, MN, and will have a total capacity of three megawatts. The project is being developed by RPU's wholesale supplier for RPU and the other member communities. Together the communities create the demand for a larger array, allowing a lower cost due to the economies of scale.

RPU is now accepting subscription applications through December 31, 2017. Subscription payments and energy (kWh) credits will start in January 2018.



Want to Learn More About **SOLARCHOICE** and Sign Up for the Program?

Attend one of our informational meetings. Register by calling **507.280.1500**. Space is limited! **MUST REGISTER** to reserve your spot today.

Dates:

- Tuesday, July 25, 2017 •
12:00 – 1:00 pm
- Tuesday, August 15, 2017 •
5:30 – 6:30 pm

Location:

Rochester Public Utilities
4000 East River Road NE
Rochester, MN 55906

Customers who want to learn more can attend an upcoming Community Solar Informational Meeting.

For additional questions, please visit our website at www.rpu.org or contact Customer Service at **507.280.1500**.



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

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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



Photo by Josh Banks

RPU and the Minnesota Children’s Museum Partner During the Rochesterfest Parade

“Playful and Powerful Learning” was the theme when RPU and Minnesota Children’s Museum (MCM) Rochester came together during the Rochesterfest Parade. Following RPU’s bucket truck in the parade were MCM volunteers handing out giveaways to parade goers.

The partnership includes RPU exhibits at the MCM promoting and teaching energy and water education. If you’d like to see the exhibits and activities at the MCM, visit their website <https://mcm.org/visit/rochester/>.



RPU SERVICE CENTER Holiday Hours

The RPU Service Center will be closed on: Tuesday, July 4, in observance of Independence Day