

RPU Plugged In



Overall poster contest winner, Nicole Yang, and her class from Hoover Elementary with the tree planted in her honor.

RPU's 15th Annual Arbor Day Celebration!

See page 2 for details



Poster contest winners with Smokey Bear at RPU's Arbor Day Celebration.



#RPUArborDay2017

Celebrating Arbor Day has become a can't-miss event for many Rochester citizens and RPU customers. This year's event lived up to the hype and had plenty of fun, food, and trees for all of the estimated 2,000 people who attended.

Just like every year, the free trees were the stars of the event, but there were many fun activities for everyone to enjoy. People lined up to see the balloonists, to get a temporary tattoo, play the football toss, and of course to see Smokey Bear.

At noon, winners of the Rochester elementary school Arbor Day poster contest were recognized. This year's overall winner was Nicole Yang, a fourth grader from Hoover Elementary, who received a \$100 Barnes & Noble gift card and had a tree planted in her honor.

Photos by Josh Banks & Marie Ferguson

This year was RPU's 15th Annual Arbor Day Celebration!



2017 Poster Contest Winners



OVERALL WINNER
Nicole Yang, Fourth Grade
Mrs. Disrud • Jefferson Elementary



FIRST GRADE
Ella Fisher • Mrs. Adams
Bamber Valley Elementary



SECOND GRADE
Lejla Dudakovic • Ms. Erpenbach
Gibbs Elementary

Thank You!

Sponsoring Partners



This free community event wouldn't be possible without all of the sponsors, participants, and volunteers. Please thank them for their participation and support of this great event promoting the benefits and beauty of trees.

Co-sponsors of this year's event include: Hy-Vee, Minnesota Energy Resources, Sargent's Gardens, and Seneca Foods.

Participants included: Boys & Girls Club of Rochester, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Olmsted County Environmental Resources, Olmsted Soil & Water Conservation District, Quarry Hill Nature Center, RNeighbors, Rochester Public Library, Rochester Public Works, and Zumbro Valley Audubon.

Look for these posters in our 2018 RPU calendar!



THIRD GRADE
Sasha Herasevich • Mrs. Eckhoff
Gibbs Elementary



FOURTH GRADE
Sophia Cornish • Mrs. Schultze
Harriet Bishop Elementary



FIFTH GRADE
Rayan Thompson • Mrs. Logan
Gage Elementary



RPU Lineworkers Compete at the 2017 American Public Power Association Lineworkers Rodeo

Established in 2001 by the American Public Power Association, the Public Power Lineworkers Rodeo is where public power lineworkers come together from all over the United States, and some U.S. territories, to demonstrate their skill and knowledge in the craft of linework. At the Rodeo, journeymen and apprentice lineworkers can compete for professional recognition, attend training courses, and practice essential skills in a safe environment. Furthermore, attendees have a unique opportunity to connect with and learn from the nationwide community of lineworker professionals.

This year the rodeo was held in San Antonio, Texas. RPU sent a journeyman team consisting of Tyler Meiners, Chad Peterson, and Rob Adamson, along with apprentice lineworker Tanner Winter who participated in the apprentice competition.

The journeyman team competed in five different events including:

- Hurt Man Rescue
- OCR Replacement
- Crossarm Changeout
- 3-Phase Tie-in
- Cutout Replacement

The events were judged based on the time it took to complete the task safely, with deductions for dropping tools, dropped material, or safety violations.

The apprentice lineworker events consisted of five events as well, including:

- A written test
- Hurt Man Rescue
- 2-phase Insulator Changeout
- Obstacle Course
- 3-Phase Cutout Replacement

The hands-on events were all performed on 40-foot-tall wood poles with safety gear consisting of a hand line, climbing gear, and hand tools. No bucket trucks were used during the competition. Some of the events typically take two to three minutes to complete, with some of the more complex events taking up to 20 minutes for successful completion.



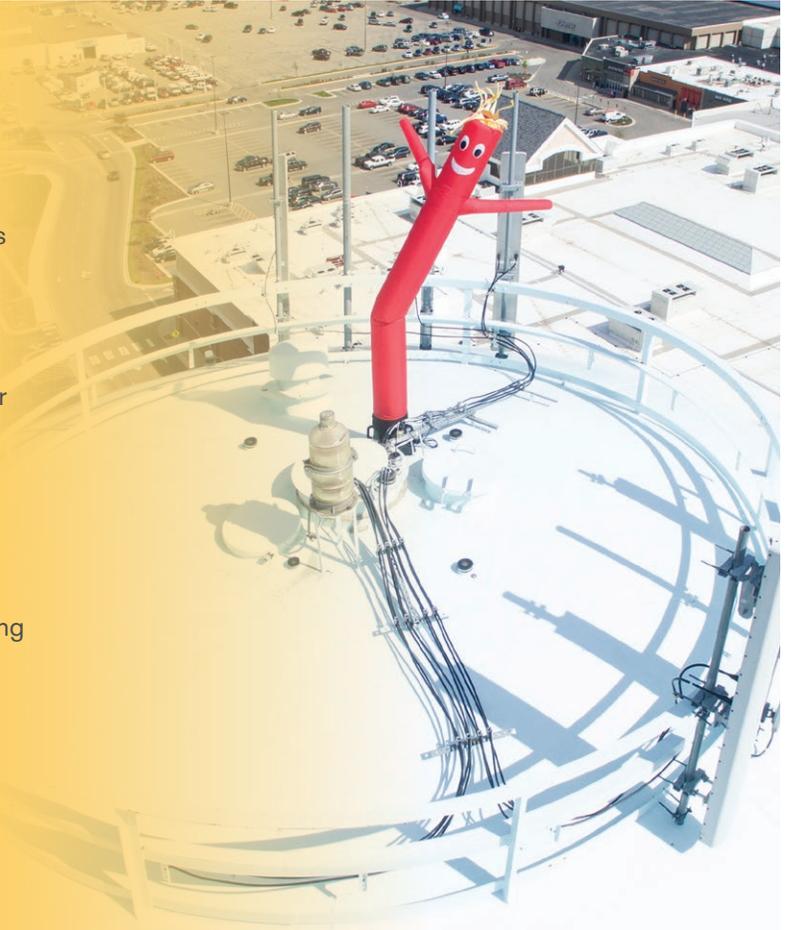
WIND DANCERS ARE BACK!

Much like how migratory birds make their way back to Minnesota after the cold winter, the wind dancers have shown back up on top of a number of RPU water towers this spring.

Turkey vultures have long been a nuisance to RPU and have made a mess on the outside of RPU water towers. Knowing that motion helps to keep turkey vultures away, an RPU Water Operator suggested installing a wind dancer on top of the Apache Water Tower back in 2015. Since then, the flailing arms and constant movement of the wind dancers have been a welcome sight for RPU.

It may be a funny sight to see on top of a water tower, but the value of having them up on four towers now, certainly is nothing to laugh at. Cleaning a water tower can cost thousands of dollars, whereas a wind dancer costs a small fraction of that.

The next time you see a wind dancer on top of an RPU water tower, be happy knowing that they're saving you and all the RPU water customers money!



WATER CONSERVATION

Monthly Tip on Saving From the Tap



Create a suggestion and incentives system at your Homeowners Association to recognize water-saving ideas.



CONSERVE & \$AVE

Tree Trimming

If you have trees encroaching overhead lines on your property, call RPU to have them inspected. Never trim trees near overhead lines yourself; leave this to a qualified, licensed professional!



RPU Commercial Customer Corner

How Can Benchmarking and Energy Audits Make Your Business More Profitable?

Q: *Is 12 miles per gallon (mpg) good for a vehicle?*

A: Some would say no. However, that question in itself is meaningless unless we have a reference for comparison. Compared to an 18-wheeler that is only achieving 6 mpg, then absolutely yes, 12 mpg is wonderful. Yet, compared to a family minivan that is getting 24 mpg, the cost is twice as much for traveling the same distance. The point is, you need something to compare it to.

Your commercial building can be analyzed in much the same way. How much energy does your facility use? How does it compare to others?

Benchmarking is a comparison to similar buildings and how much energy is used per square foot. This is sometimes referred to as Energy Use Intensity (EUI) and is commonly measured in Btu/ft²/year.

To get accurate comparisons for benchmarking, you need to find many similar buildings and their energy use. Fortunately, that information is readily available and one of the best resources is free. Energy Star[®] has a program called Portfolio Manager that helps you benchmark your building and lets you know how your building ranks compared to similar buildings. For more information on this program visit: <https://portfoliomanager.energystar.gov>.

The state of Minnesota has been very proactive collecting data on public buildings for years, including schools, government buildings, and even fire stations. This information is public and can be found here: <https://mn.b3benchmarking.com/Report>.

Q: *Now I know where I should be going, how do I get there?*

A: **Energy Audits** are evaluations that provide details on how your facility uses energy, identify improvements that could be made, and recommend improvements based on cost effectiveness. While there are many types of audits, RPU recommends having at least a level II audit completed. A level II audit includes a bill analysis, an intensive discovery of your facility with measurements, and a written report.

Operating expenses are controllable and reducing them can increase your profitability.

How can RPU help you? RPU offers rebates for qualifying energy audits and a bonus rebate on an identified energy conservation measure. Contact us today! →



CONSERVE & \$AVE[®]



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HOW TO READ YOUR UTILITY BILL

If you have any questions that are not fully answered here, please call one of our helpful Customer Service Representatives at 507.280.1500.

RPU CHARGES: RESIDENTIAL ELECTRIC

- Energy Charge** is calculated according to the metered kilowatt-hours (kWh) consumed during the billing period. The per kWh rate is multiplied by the metered usage for the set billing period.

Note: Two energy charges may appear during the transition between summer (June–Sept) and non-summer rate schedules. This reflects a meter read during two rate schedules. In the example bill to the right, the customer's bill is for usage from May 9 to June 8; usage in May is charged at the non-summer rate and the usage in June is charged at the summer rate.

- Energy Customer Charge** is a set charge for all residential customers regardless of energy usage. This charge covers the cost to maintain facilities and infrastructure to continue supplying customers with reliable electricity and includes costs for meters, distribution poles, safety equipment, miscellaneous supplies, and account administration.

- Clean Air Rider** covers the bond payments for the Emission Reduction Project (ERP). The amount that customers pay on the clean air rider is dependent on energy usage. The rate of the clean air rider will change each year depending on the debt service payment schedule. The payments are scheduled to be complete by 2030.

- Power Cost Adjustment** is charged if the cost to supply customers with the electricity needed exceeds projections. This adjustment is made in cases such as high fuel costs, higher market pricing for electricity, or the load is higher than projected. This adjustment is based on usage.

RPU CHARGES: RESIDENTIAL WATER

- Water Usage Charge** is calculated according to the metered water usage during the billing period. The usage is based on the number of units of water used. Each unit of water equals 100 cubic feet of water or 748 gallons. The rate is an increasing block rate to encourage water conservation

- Water Customer Charge** is a set charge to cover the cost to maintain water facilities and infrastructure. This can include the costs for meters, pipes, fittings, excavation tools and machinery, and account administration.

- Fire Hydrant Charge** is for the installation, maintenance, and availability of water for the City and other emergency services, e.g. the fire department. All residential, commercial, and industrial water customers are impacted by the charge. It is based on the rate class, not the meter size.

- State Mandated Water Charge** is required by the MN Department of Health and funds the required testing for drinking water.

- Products and Services** area is where charges for additional offerings will appear. The additional offerings include SERVICE ASSURED® (RPU's Underground Utility Repair Coverage) and RPU's CARBON OFFSET PROGRAM, which offers renewable energy credits (REC) for purchase as units of renewable energy.

RPU CUSTOMER SERVICE 507.280.1500 or 800.778.3421		RESIDENTIAL ELECTRIC		
PAYMENT OPTIONS PAY BY PHONE: 855.210.2285		Meter #93489 Readings		
PAPERLESS BILLING & PAY ONLINE		JUN 08 45004	Actual reading	
ELECTRONIC PAYMENT For electronic, automatic, or credit card payment options visit www.rpu.org		MAY 09 44632	Actual reading =	372 KWH
PAY IN PERSON - RPU's Service Center 4000 East River Rd NE		1 Energy Charge		\$11.18
CONSERVE & \$AVE For rebates and program information visit www.rpu.org		2 Energy Charge		\$26.88
		3 Electric Customer Charge		\$16.40
		4 Clean Air Rider		\$0.83
		5 Power Cost Adjustment		\$0.06CR
		RESIDENTIAL ELECTRIC		\$55.23
		RESIDENTIAL WATER (1 Unit = 748 Gallons)		
		Meter #22001728 Readings		
		JUN 08 617.70	Actual reading	
		MAY 09 610.67	Actual reading	7.03 Unit(s)
		6 Water Usage Charge - 7.00 Unit(s) @ \$0.727 - 0.03 Unit(s) @ \$0.799		\$5.09 \$0.02
		7 Water Customer Charge		\$5.53
		8 Fire Hydrant Facilities Charge		\$1.22
		9 State Mandated Water Charge		\$0.53
		RESIDENTIAL WATER		\$12.39
		9 PRODUCTS AND SERVICES		
		Service Assured Electric & Water for July		\$2.99
		PRODUCTS AND SERVICES		\$2.99
CITY OF ROCHESTER CHARGES				
		RESIDENTIAL WASTE WATER		
ROCHESTER PUBLIC WORKS 201 4th St SE Rm 108 Mon-Fri 8:00am-5:00pm		10 4.73 Unit(s)		\$14.67
STORMWATER MANAGEMENT For more information visit: www.rochesterstormwater.com		11 Waste Water Customer Charge		\$13.37
		RESIDENTIAL WASTE WATER		\$28.04
		RESIDENTIAL STORM WATER		
		12 Storm Water Utility Fee		\$3.18
		13 Storm Water Customer Charge		\$3.00
		RESIDENTIAL STORM WATER		\$6.18
TAXES				
		14 City Sales Tax 0.50% and County Transit Tax 0.25%		\$0.43
		16 State Sales Tax 6.875%		\$4.00
		TAXES		\$4.43

CITY OF ROCHESTER CHARGES: RESIDENTIAL WASTE WATER

- Unit Charge** The average water usage from January-March sets a base (or maximum) that you will be billed for the rest of the year. If your actual water usage in any month from April through December is less than the base (or maximum), you will be charged for actual use. In cases where your actual water usage in any month of April thru December is more than the base (or maximum), then you will be charged the base (maximum).
- Waste Water Customer Charge** is a fixed charge per sanitary connection made per month to cover the cost to maintain sewer facilities and infrastructure.

CITY OF ROCHESTER CHARGES: RESIDENTIAL STORM WATER

- Storm Water Utility Fee** is proportional to a property's contribution to storm water runoff and impact on water quality. Every developed residential and non-residential property parcel is charged a fee based on its size, land use and the amount of impervious (or hard surface) area.
- Storm Water Customer Charge** is a monthly charge used exclusively to support the Public Works Storm Water Management program.

TAXES

- City Sales Tax** is the additional sales tax that the City of Rochester imposes on all taxable items or services in the city, including utility services. The current city sales tax rate is 0.75%.
- County Transit Tax** is the additional sales tax that Olmsted County imposes on all taxable items or services in the county, including utility services. The City of Rochester falls within Olmsted County; therefore, this tax is required. The current county transit tax rate is 0.25%. This tax is used to fund maintenance on roads and bridges, construct public infrastructure, and for other transit and transportation projects within the county. This tax will change from 0.25% to 0.50% on July 1, 2017.
- State Sales Tax** is the sales tax charged by the State of Minnesota on retail sales of taxable products and services, including utility services. The current state sales tax rate is 6.875%.

Note: Utility services are generally taxable; however, some exemptions may apply. Information can be found on the Minnesota Department of Revenue website to further explain possible sales tax exemptions. Customers who qualify for a sales tax exemption must provide RPU with a valid Certificate of Exemption (ST3 form).



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www.rpu.org

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STANDARD
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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



RPU Lineworkers and Rochester Parks & Recreation Plant Trees for Arbor Day

Despite being delayed a week due to weather, 40 boulevard trees were planted in NE Rochester by RPU lineworkers and Rochester Parks & Recreation staff as part of the Arbor Day activities. The tree species were specifically chosen for their planting location along 11th Avenue NE.

Remember to contact Gopher State One Call (www.gopherstateonecall.org) for utility locates if you are planting a tree this summer.





**RPU SERVICE CENTER
Holiday Hours**

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