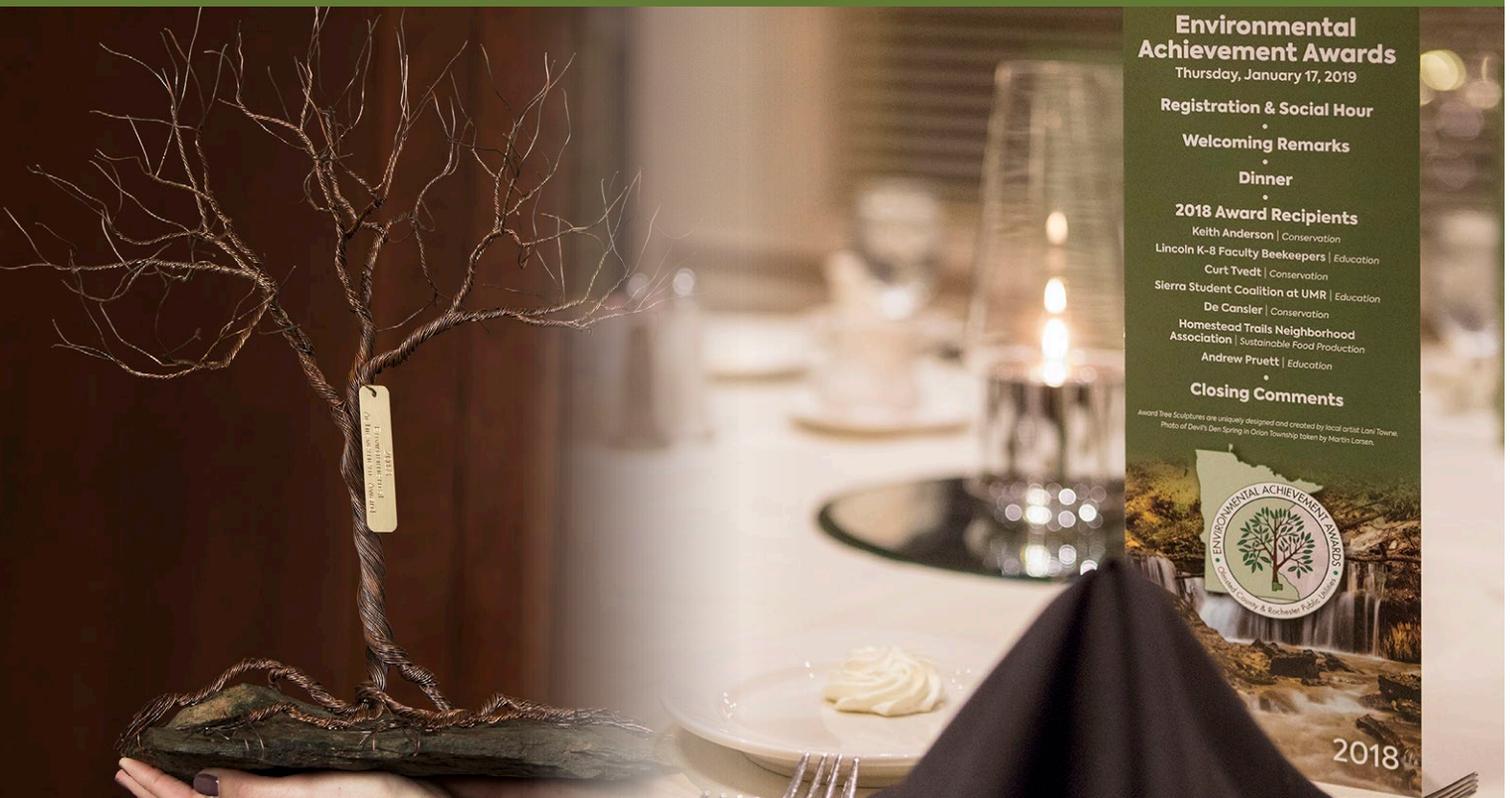


RPU Plugged In



2018 Environmental Achievement Award Recipients

See page 2 for full details.



Environmental Achievement Awards
Thursday, January 17, 2019

Registration & Social Hour
Welcoming Remarks
Dinner
2018 Award Recipients

- Keith Anderson | Conservation
- Lincoln K-8 Faculty Beekeepers | Education
- Curt Tvedt | Conservation
- Sierra Student Coalition at UMR | Education
- De Cansler | Conservation
- Homestead Trails Neighborhood Association | Sustainable Food Production
- Andrew Pruett | Education

Closing Comments

Award Tree Sculptures are uniquely designed and created by local artist Lori Towne. Photo of Devil's Den Springs in Oregon Township taken by Martin Larsen.



2018

1



Keith Anderson

2

Lincoln K-8 Faculty Beekeepers:
Jason Howes, James Kulzer, Beth Napton

3



Curt Tvedt

4



De Cansler



Introducing the 2018 Environmental Achievement Award Recipients

RPU and Olmsted County recognized seven organizations and individuals for their environmental achievements in Rochester and Olmsted County during the Environmental Achievement Awards in January.

The 2018 recipients are:

1 | Keith Anderson

Nominator: Sandy Bauter

The Monarch butterfly is easy to spot with its wings of bright orange, black, and white polka dots. Every fall, these amazing creatures embark on a journey that extends over 2,000 miles, migrating from Canada and the United States to the forests of Central Mexico. These insects contribute to the environmental health of our planet by pollinating plants along the way. Unfortunately, populations are in serious decline due to habitat loss and a changing climate.

Keith Anderson is trying to change that. One day in the spring of 2017, he saw a monarch lay an egg. He then went looking for and found about a dozen monarch caterpillars. The next day, all of them were gone. This motivated him to begin raising the butterflies indoors. Since then, Keith has raised over 1,000 butterflies from the eggs found in his yard alone. He has shared chrysalises with Quarry Hill Nature Center, the MN Master Naturalists, and local schools. His work is inspiring others to raise and release butterflies of their own.

2 | Lincoln K-8 Faculty Beekeepers

Nominator: Jim Sonju

Honey bees are all-star pollinators. The U.S. Department of Agriculture claims that managed colonies add at least \$15 billion of value to U.S. agriculture annually through increased yields and quality harvests. With the overall health of the species in question, faculty members at Lincoln K-8 District-Wide School found a way to introduce their students to these amazing insects.

In May 2018, the school purchased a Flow™ Hive and built a foundation for it to sit on. This style of hive allows the students to see what's going on inside the hive without disturbing it. The school worked with the Boy Scouts of America to locate the hive at the Gamehaven Council Headquarters. The University of Minnesota Extension was crucial to the project's success in educating the teachers on how to properly care for the bees. The school's hive will serve as an active learning opportunity for many classes to come.

3 | Curt Tvedt

Nominator: Shona Snater

Curt Tvedt is a lifelong learner with a passion for soil health. He has been incorporating conservation practices since he began farming decades ago, but as of 2015, Curt has learned that we can build soil back relatively quickly through no-tilling and cover-

cropping. For the past three years, Curt has planted soybeans into living rye in the spring and later crimped the rye to provide a mat of residue for the soybeans to grow through. This protects the soil from heavy rains and naturally suppresses weed growth.

Curt has started peer-to-peer education groups to promote conservation farming. As a member of the Land Stewardship Project — an organization that promotes sustainable farming — Curt has hosted field-days to share his successes through demonstrations. He has also taken courses in microbiology to better understand processes that build organic matter back into the soil.

4 | De Cansler

Nominator: Alissa Naymark

"People protect what they love, they love what they understand, and they understand what they are taught." These words from Jacques-Yves Cousteau stuck with De Cansler throughout her teaching career. De used monarch butterflies donated by the University of Minnesota Monarch Lab, as a focal organism in her middle school science classes. The students watched science come to life as the butterflies progressed through life cycle stages. In 2006, she spent a yearlong sabbatical in the U of M's Monarch Lab. When the Monarch Lab stopped distributing eggs and larvae to classrooms in 2008, De began breeding and raising her own monarchs.

5



Sierra Student Coalition at UMR:
Matt Spiten, Cassie Zell, Lis Pearson

6



Homestead Trails Neighborhood Association:
Dee Schemmel, April Sutor, Hal Rowe

7



Andrew Pruett (with his son, Theodore Pruett)

If you know of someone who could be a candidate for an Environmental Achievement Award, watch for the call for nominations this spring, along with a nomination form and guidelines on the RPU website (www.rpu.org).

De retired in 2010, but her work with butterflies continued. She has delivered countless eggs, larvae, and chrysalises to schools across Southeastern Minnesota at no charge. She also shared her knowledge with teachers nationwide. Thanks to her work, thousands of students have a better understanding of the natural world around them.

5 | Sierra Student Coalition at UMR

Nominator: Joe Marchesani

The Sierra Student Coalition (SSC) at the University of Minnesota Rochester (UMR) believes that through teamwork and creative collaboration, citizens can contribute to scientific discovery and local policy designed to protect people and the environment. In March 2017, the SSC began collaborating with the following organizations to develop a community-driven air quality study:

- Rochester Sierra Club
- Rochester Energy Commission
- RNeighbors Association
- Zumbro Valley Medical Society
- Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
- Pediatric Asthma Epidemiology Research Unit
- Fresh Energy Board
- UMR Faculty and Staff

The Rochester Air Quality Feasibility Project was modeled after an air quality study conducted by faculty at the University of Iowa (UI). SSC students

talked extensively with the creators of the UI study when deciding research methods, materials, and the study's structure. Air samples were collected at multiple locations across Rochester in August and December 2017.

The study provided preliminary data that supports the addition of more air monitors in town.

6 | Homestead Trails Neighborhood Association

Nominator: Rene Halasy

In 2010, the Homestead Trails Neighborhood Association worked with the Rochester Parks & Recreation Department to establish a policy that allows residents to plant vegetable and flower gardens on parkland and/or public lands. Neighbors began clearing a lot at the junction of King Court SE and Neville Court SE, previously used as an old construction dump site. The neighborhood received RNeighbors Project Grants to rent equipment to remove the debris. Fresh dirt and compost were brought in to restore the lot's soil fertility, which allowed the establishment of a community garden.

An average of 35 neighbors help with the garden each year and an estimated 55 individuals have been involved since the project began. Key accomplishments:

- At least 25 homes now have access to fresh veggies four months of the year.



The Environmental Achievement Award is a tree made of recycled copper wire and placed on natural stones collected from Lake Vermillion. Each award is individually handcrafted by local artist Lani Towne.

- Planting trees and restoring native grasses/flowers reduce stormwater runoff.
- Native flowers bloom around the garden and attract pollinators.

7 | Andrew Pruett

Nominator: Jill Danielsen

Andrew Pruett's connection to Quarry Hill Nature Center goes back almost 30 years. At 12 years old, he would ride his bike to the Nature Center to help feed the animals. As a high school senior, he cleared buckthorn from Quarry Hill Park's oak savanna. Andrew now volunteers as a beekeeper and cares for the captive animals. His passion for honey bees stemmed from his father, who kept bees and subscribed to the *American Bee Journal*. Years later, Andrew's passion was reinforced by his future wife, an experienced beekeeper and former Wisconsin Honey Queen.

Andrew oversees bee care at Quarry Hill Nature Center. He feeds the bees, regularly checks on the queen, and monitors the overall health of the colony. Andrew also keeps three hives on his own property to supplement Quarry Hill's hive if the population drops. He also cares for the Nature Center's captive animals. He hopes his efforts will inspire the next generation to appreciate wildlife as much as he does.



Surviving the Polar Vortex!

Record cold wind chill temps, deep snow, ice, and frost couldn't stop the RPU line crews from restoring power during the polar vortex in early February. We are proud to serve the Rochester Community, even in the cold!

#CommunityPowered



MMUA
Minnesota Municipal
Utilities Association

It's the **WRITE** time for scholarship money!

Tom Bovitz
Memorial Scholarships for High School Seniors
Entries Due to RPU March 29

- 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.

RPU Commercial Customer Corner:

Reward Your Organization with Energy Management Savings

Energy use is a cost worth managing. Energy management programs can benefit from the involvement of individuals at all levels — from administration, to facility operations, to top management. Recognizing individual achievements is a proven strategy for motivating staff and maintaining program success.

The most common approach to improving energy efficiency is to concentrate on one-time solutions, such as upgrading to a more efficient lighting or heating system. This often shifts the focus toward short-term savings at the expense of whole-building performance improvement. However, an organization-wide, strategic, energy-management program can optimize long-term savings through continuous improvement.

Careful planning, teamwork, and follow-through are necessary in order to develop a successful energy management program. While every organization is different, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has outlined a seven-step process for continuous improvement across the board:

1 Making a commitment. Successful energy management requires readily available resources and adequate funding for continuous improvement. Form a dedicated energy-management team from all departments and establish an energy policy that outlines your organization's commitment to energy efficiency and lists clear objectives.

2 Assessing performance. We can assist with gathering energy-use data and benchmarking your facility against similar organizations. This will help you discover savings opportunities and also serve as a baseline to measure progress.

3 Setting goals. Performance goals should guide energy-management actions and serve as the basis for developing strategies, as well as measuring and tracking progress. Goals should be clear, measurable, and have a specific target date.

4 Creating an action plan. With performance data and goals in place, develop a systematic process to implement energy-saving measures. Your action plan should define roles, responsibilities, recourses, and any technical steps or specific targets you hope to achieve. Your plan should be updated regularly to reflect any performance changes and/or shifting priorities.

5 Implementation. Ensure that the necessary resources are available to carry out measures specified in the action plan and achieve performance goals. Training, sharing successful practices, and providing encouragement are critical to long-term success.

6 Evaluating the progress. Measure your progress by reviewing the energy use and comparing your performance against your established goals. Examine your action plan to identify best practices, progress made, and lessons learned, and then make necessary adjustments.

7 Recognition. Recognizing achievements is a confirmed strategy for maintaining program success and perseverance. Promote and publish the results throughout the organization, and recognize or reward those who have helped achieve your goals, and saved energy. This will motivate other team members and bring positive exposure to your energy management program.



Jan Blevins
Commercial Account
Representative
jblevins@rpu.org
507.280.1578



Dru Larson
Energy and
Environmental Advisor
dlarson@rpu.org
507.280.1607



Josh Mason
Energy and
Environmental Advisor
jmason@rpu.org
507.280.1588



Anna Basimamovic
Energy and
Environmental Advisor
abasimamovic@rpu.org
507.280.1565

CONSERVE & \$AVE®

When in doubt, you can always contact an RPU representative for more information on energy management and our Conserve & Save® rebate programs.



**Pictured (l to r):
Todd Osweiler
and Brian Kelly.**



**Pictured (l to r): Lynette Fey
and Anna Basimamovic.**

Thanks for Visiting with Us at the Rochester Area Builder's Home Show!

RPU employees always have a great time meeting and talking with customers at the Rochester Area Builder's Home Show. This year our focus was the very important topic of electrical safety inside and outside the home.

If you have questions about electrical safety and didn't get a chance to stop by our booth, give us a call (**507.280.1500**) or visit our website at www.rpu.org.

RPU Is Partnering with Channel One Regional Food Bank to Beat Hunger

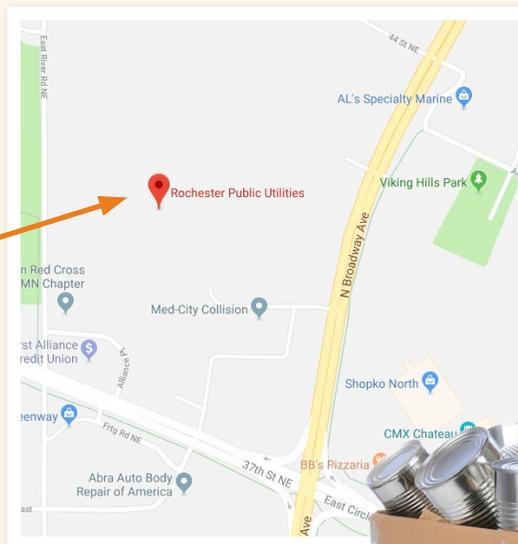


There are 12,550 people in Olmsted County who have limited or uncertain access to adequate food. RPU is partnering with Channel One Regional Food Bank to make it even easier for RPU customers to help beat hunger in our community. We need your help!

Drop off non-perishable food items at the RPU Service Center (4000 East River Road NE) from now through April 7.

Your support is crucial to our community members:

- 12,550 people are food insecure in Olmsted County – 4,400 of them are children.
- Channel One feeds people living in Olmsted County and 3,500 households use the Supplemental Food Shelf every month.
- All food donations that are collected during the campaign stay in our local community.



Holiday Light Recycling Tally!

A grand total of 3,199 pounds of holiday lighting was collected for recycling this year. Since we started the recycling of holiday lighting back in 2011, this is the second highest collection year ever!

Holiday Light Recycling

Pounds recycled	Year
2011	4,500
2012	2,037
2013	873
2014	1,493
2015	1,578
2016	2,042
2017	1,820
2018	3,199

TOTAL 17,542 lbs.



Thank you to everyone who brought in old holiday lighting for recycling, rather than letting them go to a landfill. We appreciate your help and participation!

Freezing Temps Can Cause Broken Pipes!

Did you know a water service line repair or replacement can cost \$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

*Service Assured® costs \$1.99 per month for water service coverage and only \$1.00 more to cover your underground electric service also. Contact us to determine your eligibility; some exclusions apply. Visit www.rpu.org to review our Terms & Conditions.

ENERGY CONSERVATION

Monthly Tip for Plugging into Savings!



Outlets and switches on exterior walls is a common place for cold air to leak into your home.

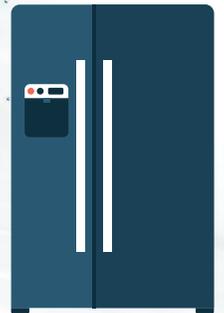
Consider adding insulators to these outlets and switches to help reduce heating costs and increase your comfort!



CONSERVE & \$AVE

WATER CONSERVATION

Monthly Tip on Saving From the Tap!



Don't use running water to thaw food. For efficiency and food safety thaw food in the refrigerator.





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

PRESORTED
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



The RPU Service Center will open at 10 a.m. on Thursday, March 7, due to an employee meeting.

Images may be from ©iStock and/or ©Fotolia.
©2019 Rochester Public Utilities

Save the Date to Hang With Us!

At RPU's 17th Annual

Arbor Day Celebration

Friday, April 26, 2019 • 11am-1pm
Three Links – Silver Lake Park

FREE ADMISSION!

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

QUESTIONS: Stephanie Humphrey 507.280.1639

MORE INFORMATION: www.rpu.org

SPONSORING PARTNERS:

