



ROCHESTER
PUBLIC UTILITIES
WE PLEDGE, WE DELIVER

Plugged In



RPU to Use Drones to Inspect Electric Infrastructure:

Learn about the benefits to
customers inside on page 2.



How Drones Are Going to Benefit RPU Customers Today and Into the Future



Drones have been around for many years and used for many reasons. RPU has previously worked with photographers and videographers who have used drones for publication purposes, but now we are expanding our use of drones to include inspection of electric infrastructure.

There are a number of safety and risk certifications that must be acquired before any commercial drone pilot can fly. When it comes to electric infrastructure, there is an even higher degree of risk that requires only highly trained operators to do this type of work.

The use of drones to inspect electric infrastructure is going to greatly benefit RPU and RPU customers. Below is a short list of these benefits.

Safety

- Lineworkers will not have to climb on and over structures to gain access to poles.
- Lineworkers will be able to inspect poles and the tops of poles without having to be near energized equipment.

- Line crews will not have to maneuver large equipment into right-of-way or easement spaces, which can be dangerous due to available space.

Reliability

- RPU can conduct scheduled inspections of equipment without having to de-energize the circuit which would be an outage to some customers.
- RPU can inspect more infrastructure and can be proactive by addressing needs before an outage occurs.

Cost Savings

- Injuries cost money. Utilizing drone inspections can help to minimize injuries from climbing poles to accessing overgrown spaces.
- Outages can cost customers money. Addressing issues seen by the drone inspection can limit the outages caused due to aging equipment or pole damage.

RPU has always had a very robust infrastructure inspection program, but now with the use of drones we can be even more efficient and safer, which will benefit RPU and RPU customers.

We make every effort to communicate with local customers when we are working with a drone. RPU staff will try to connect with customers in the area prior to flying and we will use social media as much as possible. You can find RPU on Facebook, Twitter, and Nextdoor.



Never fly a drone near overhead electric lines or infrastructure. Leave this to trained and qualified drone professionals.



TIPS FROM TONY

DO NOT FALL VICTIM TO A UTILITY SCAM CALL

Please be vigilant and mindful of utility scams. Scams come in many forms, but the one we are made aware of the most is the phone scam. Never offer financial or bank information over the phone, unless you prompted the call to RPU at **507-280-1500**.

Imposters are calling RPU customers stating that their utilities will be shut off unless immediate payment is made over the phone by credit card or pre-paid debit cards. These calls can happen at any time of the day or night. Beware – with phone technology today, the scammers can even make the caller ID show RPU’s customer service line (**507-280-1500**). This is not how RPU operates, and remember, RPU would never call with this threat.

RPU will never request bank or secure information from you over the phone unless you ask to discuss your account. The RPU representative will then ask for information to identify who you are and that you are authorized to speak on behalf of the account.

What to do if you receive a scam call:

- ✓ If someone calls threatening to cut off your power if you don’t pay, hang up!
- ✓ Call RPU at **507-280-1500** to report the scam.
- ✓ Never give personal or financial information to an unknown caller.
- ✓ Remember that RPU will never use threatening language or make forceful demands for payment.

This type of scam is not just seen in Rochester. Utilities throughout the nation deal with scam calls as well. Please share this information with friends and family to help ensure that they don’t fall victim to a phone scam.

Thank you for...

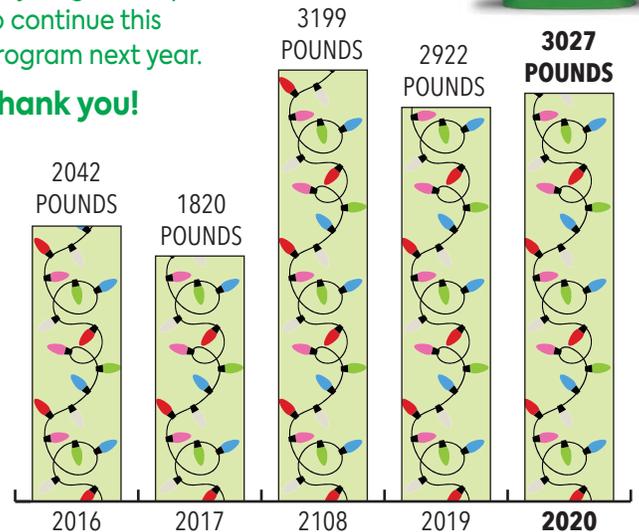
RECYCLING!

Through RPU’s annual holiday lights recycling program, customers brought in **3,027 POUNDS** of old lights this year!

Since 2011, a total of 23,491 POUNDS of lights have been turned in for free recycling. We hope to continue this program next year.



Thank you!



Coming Soon!



Helping customers with utility assistance
Caring enough to donate
Sharing with an open heart

We will soon be inviting our customers to participate in **Neighbors Chipping In**. In this voluntary program, we will round up your monthly utility bill or add a specific amount, depending on your preference. Three Rivers Community Action will allocate the funds to income-qualified RPU customers who need help paying their utility bill. Your gift of a few extra cents can go a long way towards helping others in need within Rochester.

Watch for more information!

Get to Know the New City Council Liaison on the RPU Board



Patrick and all of the RPU Board Members can be contacted via email at rpuboard@rpu.org. All RPU Board meetings are open to the public and available via livestream. Visit the RPU website for dates and information.

RPU operates under the direction of a five-member, mayor-appointed Utility Board and under the Rochester City Council. Beginning in January, Patrick Keane, Rochester City Council Ward 1 Representative, assumed the role as City Council Liaison on the RPU Board.

Patrick Keane

Patrick Keane was born in Chicago and came to Minnesota for school and work. He moved to Rochester in 1980 to work for IBM where he held a variety of technical and management roles over his 35-year career.

Patrick was elected to the Rochester City Council in 2018. Prior to his election, his government involvement was serving on advisory and appeal boards. His community involvement has included serving as a school classroom volunteer (National Engineering Week, Junior Achievement, and Odyssey of the Mind), a youth sports volunteer and coach, on local YMCA Finance

and Board positions, and at his local church.

Patrick holds a master's degree in Science from the University of Minnesota and a bachelor's degree from St. Mary's University (Winona).

Patrick and his wife, Lori, have lived in their Meadow Park home since 1985. The couple has three adult children and six grandchildren all residing in Minnesota.

"Being a part of our public utility board is both an honor and a challenge," shared Patrick. "I come to this assignment with great respect for the RPU Team, and a clear view of the challenges in the coming years."

Interestingly, Patrick worked as a summer IT intern at the Chicago area public utility back in the 1970s. His assignment was a mapping program that tracked water pipe locations and service records.



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

Tom Bovitz Memorial

Scholarships for High School Seniors

Win up to \$2,000!

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

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

Entries Due to RPU by March 26



Minnesota Municipal
Utilities Association



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

ENERGY CONSERVATION

A Helpful 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%.



CONSERVE & \$AVE®

WATER CONSERVATION

A Helpful Tip on Saving From the Tap!



Short Showers

Time your shower to keep it under 5 minutes. You'll save up to 1,000 gallons per month!



CONSERVE & \$AVE®

Everybody's Doing the ELECTRIFICATION

Electrification? Isn't that the latest dance move? No.

Electrification: The conversion of a machine or system to the use of electrical power. Traditionally, these technologies might have been fossil-fueled machines; think furnaces, water heaters, and cars changing to heat pumps, heat pump water heaters, and electric vehicles.

Why Electrify?

The number one reason to electrify is for **efficiency**. In the case of heat pump furnaces, instead of creating heating, you are moving heat. For every unit of energy you put in, you get 3, 4, or even 5 units out. No matter how cold the temperature is outside, there is still heat in the air. It is just a matter of collecting that heat and bringing it inside. This reduces overall emissions and makes the air we breathe cleaner.

A more efficient system is usually a **cost savings** as well. Using the case of electric vehicles, the cost of driving 100 miles in an electric vehicle can be $\frac{2}{3}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ less than the cost of gasoline. For every 100 miles traveled in a gasoline vehicle you may spend \$10 of fuel, while in an electric vehicle it may cost you only \$3 in electricity. Plus, there is very little maintenance saving you money in the long haul.

Electrification can make a workplace **more comfortable**. Using a heat pump water heater extracts heat from a hot kitchen and puts it into the water, cooling the air, and providing inexpensive water heat.

Electrification is also **safer**. There isn't any carbon monoxide produced or gas lines to protect.

Electrification isn't always the right solution for you, but in many cases it can be the perfect solution.

To Learn More

If you have questions about electrification, please contact a Commercial RPU Representative.



Jan Blevins
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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

RESIDENTIAL TIME-OF-USE RATE PILOT PROGRAM*

The Time-of-Use Rate Pilot Program is available to residential customers interested in potentially saving money on their utility bill by using energy during off-peak hours!

Visit www.rpu.org to learn more or call 507-280-1500 to speak to an RPU Customer Care Advisor.

*This program is limited to the first 200 residential customers who sign up and qualify. To request an enrollment form, please email us at TOUPilot@rpu.org or call 507-280-1500.



Please note that in some circumstances, service under the Residential Time-of-Use (TOU) rate may result in higher billed costs than would occur under the regular Residential Service rate. No refunds will be given if the rate results in a higher bill. You can decide to leave the TOU rate without penalty at any time with a 45-day notice; however, you will not be allowed back on. Terms and conditions for each rate can be found in the rate schedule on the RPU website at www.rpu.org/my-account/rates-fees.

Join one of our FREE Online Energy Efficiency Workshops

You'll qualify for a \$50 home energy audit, valued at over \$400! Visit www.rpu.org for more details.

**Saturday March 6
10:00-11:00am**

-OR-

**Tuesday May 18
6:30-7:30pm**

Register to receive an email link with instructions 2 days prior to the class date.

**Call or email Stacy:
888.734.6365**

sbootscamp@mncee.org

One of our **CONSERVE & \$AVE**® programs.



4000 East River Road NE
Rochester, MN 55906
507-280-1500
www.rpu.org

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STANDARD
US POSTAGE
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PLANT A TREE!

RPU encourages you and your family to go out and plant a tree in April in honor of Arbor Day! Together, we can make a difference.

Social Media:

- rochesterpublicutilities
- @rpuoutages
@rpualerts
- Rochester Public Utilities
- blog.rpu.org
- RPU TV
- Rochester Public Utilities

Mobile App:



Customer Care: 507-280-1500
Toll-Free: 800-778-3421
Pay By Phone: 855-631-3643
(toll-free • no fee • 24 hrs)
Electric Emergency:
507-280-9191 (24 hrs)
Water Emergency:
507-280-1500 (8am-5pm)
507-280-9191 (5pm-8am)

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CALLING FOR NOMINATIONS!



2021

Photo by Keith Anderson
2018 Environmental Achievement Award Recipient

Environmental Achievement Awards are given annually for outstanding environmental achievement in Olmsted County. **Nominations are sought for individuals, families, youth, organizations, or businesses in any or all categories:**

- Climate Change
- Conservation
- Education
- Energy
- Renewables
- Sustainable Food Production
- Water
- Other

**Download a nomination form at www.rpu.org.
DEADLINE IS OCTOBER 1.**