

ROCHESTER PUBLIC UTILITIES

Plugged In

October 2020

RPU's Fall Checklist

Let RPU's experts help you to get your home ready for fall!

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RPU's Fall Checklist

Use this step-by-step checklist to make sure your home is prepped and ready leading into this fall season. Our team of RPU experts want to help you to be more energy and water efficient, prepared, and safe in your home. Let's get started!

✓ **Walk around the outside of your home.** Visually inspect the outside of your home for areas that could become bigger issues as the temperature drops and snow comes. Make sure your hoses are all disconnected from outside faucets on the house. If left attached, they can freeze and cause damage to the internal plumbing of the house.

✓ **Look over the trees and bushes.** RPU budgets well over \$1 million for vegetation management each year to trim trees and branches away from overhead lines to prevent outages and to ensure safety for the public and lineworkers. If you see any of your trees encroaching overhead lines, never try to trim them yourself. Call RPU at **507.280.1500** to have RPU inspect the trees and to remove or trim them as needed.

If you are served by an underground service, you can make sure that your service is safe as well. If there are bushes or trees planted next to or near the pad mounted transformers (green boxes usually), they could be unsafe. No planting should be within six feet of the transformer. If there is a need for lineworkers to access the transformer, they may need to cut down or remove those bushes to ensure safe working conditions.

✓ **Sign up for RPU Service Assured® Underground Utility Repair Coverage Program.** RPU Service Assured® is available to RPU customers living in single-family homes or single-owner duplexes. We also offer Service Assured® to some townhome associations, individual twin homes, and triplexes where each unit has its own service line. Some exclusions apply, so call us at **507.280.1500** to determine if you qualify.



✓ **Change lighting to LEDs.** During the fall and winter months there is less daylight, which requires more reliance on lighting inside the home. Be more energy efficient and save money by switching your lighting to LEDs, rather than incandescent bulbs. Make sure to purchase bulbs that qualify for an RPU rebate too! Visit the RPU website, **www.rpu.org**, for full rebate details.

✓ **Check safety devices.** Test smoke and carbon monoxide detectors and replace batteries as needed. Check expiration dates on fire extinguishers and replace if needed.

✓ **Have an AC check done.** The spring and summer are busy times for AC checks and maintenance, so beat the crowd and have your AC maintenance done now to make sure that it is ready to go next season. Check the RPU website, **www.rpu.org**, for details on the AC Clean & Tune rebate available to homeowners.

✓ **Sign up for a FREE Neighborhood Energy Challenge online workshop.** Learn about ways to save energy and to use energy more wisely in

your home by attending a Neighborhood Energy Challenge online workshop. After the workshop, you will be given an opportunity to sign up for a discounted energy audit of your home. Sign up today for the next Neighborhood Energy Challenge online workshop (November 21) by contacting Stacy Boots Camp at **888.734.6365** or **sbootscamp@mncee.org**.

✓ **Have your irrigation system winterized and serviced.** Remember to schedule your fall service with your irrigation company. The fall service includes blowing out the lines so water doesn't freeze and damage your water service or your irrigation system. Make sure to ask to have your backflow assembly tested. This is a required test per Minnesota Plumbing Code.



What You Should Know About the Minnesota Cold Weather Law and Winter Bills

RPU's objective is to ensure that residential customer accounts are protected during the cold weather period and to follow the requirements of Minnesota Statute 216B.097.

Minnesota Statute 216B.097 states that a municipal utility must not disconnect and must reconnect the utility service of a residential customer during the period between October 15 and April 15 if the disconnection affects the primary heat source for the residential unit and all of the following conditions are met:

1) The household income is at or below 50% of the state median income. RPU may verify income on forms it provides or obtain verification of income from the local energy assistance provider. A customer is deemed to meet the income requirements of this clause if the customer receives any form of public assistance, including energy assistance, that uses an income eligibility threshold set at or below 50% of the state median household income;

2) The customer enters into and makes reasonably timely payments under a payment agreement that considers the financial resources of the household. "Reasonably timely payment" means payment within five working days of agreed-upon due dates;

3) The customer receives referrals to energy assistance, weatherization, conservation or other programs likely to reduce the customer's energy bills.

To be protected from service disconnection during the cold weather rule period, customers are required to complete an application which is available by contacting RPU. Before disconnecting service to a residential customer during the period between October 15 and April 15, RPU will provide the following information to the customer:

- 1) A notice of proposed disconnection;
- 2) A statement explaining the customer's rights and responsibilities;
- 3) A list of local energy assistance providers;
- 4) A form on which to declare an inability to pay; and
- 5) A statement explaining available time payment plans and other opportunities to secure continued utility service.

The contact information for the local energy assistance provider is:

Three Rivers Community Action
800.277.8418
www.threeriverscap.org



LED Light Bulbs

ON SALE NOW

Be Bright this fall!

Through November 30, while supplies last, our residential electric customers are eligible for reduced pricing on **select models of ENERGY STAR® qualified LED light bulbs**. We've partnered with the local retailers below to offer energy-efficient bulbs for as little as 12¢ each!

ENERGY STAR-labeled LEDs use 80% less energy and last up to 25 times longer than incandescent light bulbs. But less watts doesn't mean less light. By replacing the five most-used bulbs in your home with LEDs, you can save up to \$40 in energy costs during the first year alone.

Remember, supplies are limited so get your discounted LEDs before they sell out!



Arrow Ace Hardware
Batteries + Bulbs
Costco
Home Depot

Lowe's
Sam's Club
Walmart

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.

CONSERVE & \$AVE

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Public Power Week 2020 Safety Reminder

Public Power Week is October 4-10, 2020, and is a time to highlight all of the benefits of having a public power provider in the community.

We also want to highlight our commitment to safety and to ask you to help ensure that all RPU lineworkers and employees make it home safe to their families each night. As the temperatures drop, and snow and ice start to overtake the roadways, please use caution anytime you see an RPU work zone.

Note: Photos taken prior to COVID-19.



PUBLIC POWER is...



**local
service!**



**being part of
the community!**



RPU employees at Safe City Nights event
Summer 2019 (prior to COVID-19 requirements)

**local
response!**



Important Changes to 2021 Commercial Lighting Rebates

Starting in 2021, we will no longer offer rebates for New Construction Lighting.

As LED's become cost neutral with other lighting technologies, we can no longer offer incentives for new construction lighting projects. However, rebates for retrofit projects will remain to encourage replacement to efficient LED's.

If you have a project that has started in 2020, but may not be completed until 2021 or later, please contact us regarding qualification.

For more information, contact your Account Representative or visit our website: www.rpu.org



Anna Basimamovic
507.280.1565



Jan Blevins
507.280.1578



Dru Larson
507.280.1607



Josh Mason
507.280.1588

FREE ONLINE CLASS Solar Energy For Your Home or Business

**Sat, Oct 10, 2020
10am–12pm**

Register to receive an email link to the online event:

Call: 507.328.4000 -or-

Online: <https://rochester.ce.eleyo.com>

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Visit www.rpu.org for class details.

Online Energy Efficiency Workshop

Participate in our FREE Neighborhood Energy Challenge online workshop and qualify for a \$50 home energy audit, valued at over \$300!

**Sat
Nov 21
2020
10-11am**

Register to receive an email link 2 days prior to the class date with directions on how to join the online event:

Call: 888.734.6365

-or- Email Stacy:

sbootscamp@mncee.org

Visit www.rpu.org for more details.

Poster Contest Winners from RPU's 18th Annual Arbor Day Celebration

RPU's 18th Annual Arbor Day Celebration was cancelled this year due to COVID-19 and following CDC guidance on avoiding mass gatherings. Prior to the cancellation of the Arbor Day Celebration, usually held at Three Links – Silver Lake Park, local elementary students had already been working hard on designing their posters for the annual poster contest.

Not wanting their hard work to go unnoticed, we moved forward with our judging and selection of the poster contest winners. Each year, the winners from each grade and an overall winner are selected and featured in the RPU calendar for the following year. We had many great submissions and are excited to announce the winners this year!

This year's overall winner was Ruby Truong, 5th grader from Mrs. Reid's class at Gibbs Elementary School. A tree was planted by Ruby and her class to commemorate her as the overall winner.

*We missed seeing you all,
but please save the date for
next year's celebration:*

Friday, April 30, 2021

*We are looking forward
to reconnecting with you
at next year's Arbor Day
Celebration!*



2020 Poster Contest Winners



Overall Winner
Ruby Truong, 5th Grade • Mrs. Reid •
Gibbs Elementary



First Grade
Macy Bohm • Mrs. Grupczynski •
Churchill Elementary



Second Grade
Vivian Chen • Ms. Tiedeman •
Jefferson Elementary



Third Grade
Maya Riedemann • Mrs. Hull •
Jefferson Elementary



Fourth Grade
Evie Strouf • Mrs. Schultze • Harriet
Bishop Elementary



Fifth Grade
Wendy Brandt • Mrs. Olson • Harriet
Bishop Elementary

Photos by Josh Banks and Marie Ferguson



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www.rpu.org

PRESORTED
STANDARD
US POSTAGE
PAID
Bluespire



RPU Service Center Holiday Hours

The RPU Service Center will be closed on:
Thursday-Friday, November 26-27 for Thanksgiving



Social Media:

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

Mobile App:



Customer Service: 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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Snowbird? Leaving for the Winter?

Make sure your contact information is up-to-date in case of an issue with your water or electric service.

If you are a customer that leaves Rochester for an extended amount of time over the winter, there are a few things you can do to help ensure that your electric and water services are safe and working properly while you are away.

- **Call RPU before you leave to make sure your contact information is up-to-date.** If there is a question regarding your bill or irregular usage is seen at your home, RPU may need to call you.
- **Tell RPU how long you will be away.** When you contact RPU, our Customer Relations Team will note your account with the period of time that you will be away.
- **Put a backup contact on your account.** Adding a backup contact of someone in the Rochester area can help you in the case of a utility emergency. Their name and phone

number must be on your account, and they must be noted as an authorized person on your account.

- **Check to see if you are signed up for Service Assured®.** RPU's underground utility repair coverage could save you expensive out-of-pocket repairs to your electric and water services. Don't be stuck with a surprise expense while you're away. (Some restrictions apply.)
- **Ensure your RPU bill is forwarded to your winter location.** Having your bill forwarded to your winter location is as easy as calling the RPU Customer Relations team to provide them with your winter address. We can ensure any correspondence will reach you while you are away.

Contact RPU Customer Relations Monday-Friday, 8am-5pm, at 507.280.1500.