



ROCHESTER
PUBLIC UTILITIES
WE PLEDGE, WE DELIVER®

Plugged In

**RPU Recognized
as a Smart Energy
Provider**

Learn more on page 2

JAN / FEB
2023

RPU Recognized as Smart Energy Provider

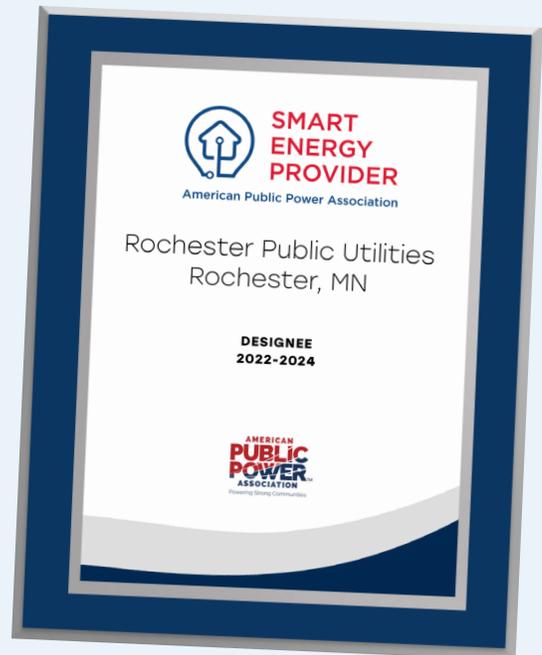
Rochester Public Utilities was recently recognized as a Smart Energy Provider (SEP) by the American Public Power Association (APPA). The distinction is earned by public power utilities that demonstrate a commitment to and proficiency in energy efficiency, distributed generation, and environmental initiatives that support the goal of providing safe, reliable, low-cost, and sustainable electric service.

The SEP designation is earned on a two-year cycle. It is judged on the utilities' proficiency in four main disciplines:

- smart energy program structure
- energy efficiency and distributed energy programs
- environmental and sustainability initiatives
- customer experience



Pictured L-R- SEP Panel Interim Chair, Patrice Townsend, Patty Hanson (RPU), Mikki Valere (RPU)



ENDS JAN 27!

It's your last chance to bring your old holiday light strands to RPU for free recycling!

Bring your old holiday string lights and decorations into the **RPU Service Center lobby (4000 East River Road NE)** and drop them in the designated bins.

NOT ACCEPTED:

- Appliance cords
- Battery packs
- CFL lights
- Cord adapters
- Electric cords
- Plastic rope lights
- Telephone cords

HURRY! Recycling ends Friday, January 27.





RPU Aids After Hurricane Ian

RPU and 13 other Minnesota municipal utilities sent crews and support staff to help with power restoration after Hurricane Ian hit the state of Florida. RPU sent a crew of four lineworkers and two mechanics to make the trip. Crews were initially

scheduled to provide mutual aid in Kissimmee, FL, but were rerouted to Bartow, FL, a city about 50 miles southwest of Kissimmee.

On September 29, the city of Bartow, Florida posted on its Facebook page that 11,000 of its 12,600 electric customers were without power. The team of Minnesota lineworkers, along with Bartow and other mutual aid crews, were able to get the city fully restored by October 4. Thank you to

our brave and helpful community of employees!

The RPU team included:

- Bjorn Olson, Lead Lineworker
- Tom St. Marie, Lead Lineworker
- Colton Koster, Lineworker
- Chad Peterson, Lineworker
- Luke Wilder, Fleet Mechanic
- Ray Papenfuss, Fleet Mechanic

Come in to the RPU Service Center and

PICK UP YOUR FREE RPU 2023 CALENDAR!*

If your child was a winner or participated in the 2022 Arbor Day poster contest, their artwork may be in our calendar!

FEATURING:

- 2022 Arbor Day posters drawn by Rochester area elementary school children
- Monthly energy and water conservation tips

*limit one per customer; while supplies last

Taking steps to save energy is as easy as 1, 2, 3!

- 1 Free Energy Workshop
- 2 Home Visit + Installation of Energy Saving Materials
- 3 Help With Next Steps

TAKE THE FIRST STEP! | **SAT JAN 28** | **SAT MAR 4**
 Attend one of our free workshops: | 10-11a.m. | 10-11a.m.
FREE CHILDCARE IS PROVIDED!

NEIGHBORHOOD ENERGY CHALLENGE

To register, call or email Stacy:
 888-734-6365 | sbootscamp@mncee.org

To learn more, visit: www.rpu.org

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



Hydrant flushing is a necessary task that Water Distribution Workers do regularly to maintain the RPU water system.

How to Become a Water Worker

Though water is often something taken for granted, there are many people working behind the scenes to safely distribute it throughout the community. RPU employs teams of Water Operators and Water Distribution Workers to ensure RPU's water infrastructure is sound and the water is safe.

Water Operators are typically responsible for a variety of tasks centered on operating and maintaining a water system or plant. They typically work in water treatment, distribution, water collection, or wastewater. Water Distribution Workers maintain, assess, and repair water infrastructure such as water main, valves, hydrants, and water meters across Rochester.

With a career in water, you can expect:

- A mix of working inside and outside
- Extensive work with your hands and specialized tools
- Working as a team
- An emphasis on safety
- Working with heavy equipment, large vehicles, and excavators
- Unique working conditions such as the opportunity to work from heights (water towers) or with underground utilities
- Good wages

A high school diploma or GED is required to get started in a water career with RPU. Other experience or formal training is helpful, and may be required, based on the level of responsibility of the position. A technical college 18-month program is a proven path to a water career with specific programs for water and waste water. RPU employs water staff from schools such as St. Cloud Technical College and St. Paul Technical College.

"I got into the water/wastewater field after hearing about a job opening from my future father-in-law. With my previous experience as a mechanic and some luck, I got my foot in the door at a smaller SE Minnesota town, and I've been moving up the ladder ever since."

—Matt Brekke, RPU Lead Water Distribution Worker

A four-year degree in Civil Engineering, Environmental Engineering, Hydrogeology, or Environmental Science are required for some water careers. A number of Water Distribution Workers came to RPU with past experience with a smaller municipal water system or experience in utility construction. As workers become more experienced and specialized in their water career, some employees choose to test to get their Minnesota Water Supply System Operator License. The test is conducted by the Minnesota Department of Health and covers all



"After high school I worked for a City as a seasonal. Of all the departments I got to work with, I enjoyed the Water Department the best. From climbing towers, meter reading and flushing hydrants I thought it would be an enjoyable way to make a living. So I went to an Water Environment Technologies College program and have made an enjoyable fun-filled career out of a seasonal summer job." -Mike Bucholz, Water Operator.

aspects of being a Water Operator. Some areas covered in the testing are mathematics, safety, chemical delivery, water infrastructure, and laws/rules.

If you have an interest in a water career or have questions, your best resource may be the water workers right here in Rochester. They would be happy to answer your questions or tell you more about their experiences.

Call RPU at 280-1500 for more information.

"I started in the water field in 2001 on a sewer and water construction crew. During the 2008 recession, I was still fascinated with the water world and I took a new job in a smaller city. Later, I knew RPU had the wide variety of the water industry. That's why I chose to keep my career going at RPU. I've been a part of the water Industry for 22 years." – Adam Hovden, Water Distribution Worker

"I went to school for building utility maintenance and worked at the county incinerator for two years, then at RPU's Silver Lake Plant working with boilers. This job opened up, and it had some of the aspects of what I went to school for and sounded interesting. I applied and got it. I've been here for 18 years and am retiring soon. It's been a great career!" –Ron Kruger, RPU Lead Distribution Worker



Pictured L-R- Matt Brekke, Ron Kruger, Mike Bucholz, Adam Hovden



A team of water workers assess a water main break before they safely repair it.

DON'T WORRY ABOUT DELIVERY DELAYS. USE AUTO PAY!

Designate your checking/savings account or credit/debit card, and we'll automatically deduct your utility bill payment on the due date.

When logged into your RPU Connect account, click 'Billing' and then 'Auto Pay'. Add your preferred method of payment using the 'Add Payment Method', select the 'Mode of Payment', and then 'Method of Payment'. Agree to our Terms and Conditions and click 'Enroll'.

Note: If you have several accounts online, you will need to complete this process for each account.

Avoid mail congestion and late fees. Sign up for auto pay and paperless billing using RPU Connect or contact customer care.



Be green in 2023 with energy and money saving rebates for your home!



DON'T FORGET!

All rebate applications for purchases made in 2022 must be submitted to RPU no later than March 31, 2023!



ENERGY STAR® Appliance Rebates	Amount
Clothes Washers	\$25-\$65
Dehumidifiers*	\$15-\$25
Dishwashers	\$25-\$40
Freezers*	\$25
Heat Pump Clothes Dryers	\$25
Refrigerators*	\$25
Room Air Conditioners*	\$25
*Bonus Recycling Rebate	up to \$15, for recycling of working units only

Electric HVAC and Water Heating Equipment Rebates	Amount
Central Air Conditioners	Rebates starting at \$100
ECM Circulator Pumps	\$50-\$600, not to exceed 50% of cost
Furnace Fan Motors Replacements	\$50
Air Source Heat Pumps	Rebates starting at \$100
Ground Source Heat Pumps	Rebates starting at \$200
Smart Thermostats	\$50-\$100, only for electric heat systems
Heat Pump Water Heaters	\$60-\$400, not to exceed 50% of the cost, for electric-only retrofit or new construction

ENERGY STAR® LED Lighting Rebates	Amount
LED Bulbs	50% of bulb or package cost, not to exceed \$7 per bulb
LED Light Fixtures	50% of fixture or package cost, not to exceed \$20 per fixture
Ceiling Fans with LED Lighting	50% of fixture cost, not to exceed \$15 per fixture (\$25 for ENERGY STAR® Most Efficient models)

Water Rebates	Amount
Clothes Washers	\$25
High-Efficiency Toilets	\$25
Rain Barrels	\$10
Weather-Based Irrigation Controllers	50% of cost, not to exceed \$75 per controller

Solar Electric Rebate	Amount
Grid Connected Solar Photovoltaic (PV) System	\$500

Visit www.rpu.org to download rebate applications with minimum efficiency requirements and complete terms and conditions.

CONSERVE & \$AVE®



Commercial Corner

RPU's Energy & Environmental Advisors: What Can They Do for Me?

Energy and Environmental Advisors are your single-source contacts at RPU. Whether you are interested in learning about your energy usage, understanding your bill, or have an energy project in mind, you'll have a friendly face to turn to through the entire process. Additionally, our Energy and Environmental Advisors have a wide range of experience in energy efficient equipment, buildings, and energy management strategies to help reduce your energy usage. If you are considering retrofitting, expanding, or purchasing new equipment, our Energy and Environmental Advisors are here to help.

Call your RPU representative for more information on energy management or view our Commercial Conserve & Save® rebate program at www.rpu.org.

What are some of the financial tools available from an Energy and Environmental Advisor?

Our Conserve & Save® commercial rebates for new construction or remodels can lower your project costs while saving you energy and money. LED lighting, air conditioning, and industrial kitchen equipment are just a few of the areas where we can help make sure you're utilizing RPU's available rebates and putting money back into your pocket.

Our Partnering in Energy Solutions program (PIES) will help ensure your business is connected with the right people to install or design a system that is energy efficient and eligible for our Conserve & Save® rebates. Through our PIES program, your company may be eligible for zero percent financing that can be applied to your monthly RPU bill.

2022 might be behind us, but any energy efficiency project eligible for our Conserve & Save® rebate program can still be submitted for processing until March 31, 2023.

CONSERVE & \$AVE®

For questions regarding our Commercial programs and services, contact one of our Energy and Environmental Advisors.



Josh Mason
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507-280-1588



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RPU Plugged In is now designed and printed right here in Rochester.



RPU will be closed Jan 2, Jan 16 and Feb 20, 2023

Social Media:

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

Mobile App:



RPU Service Center: Hours
(8am - 5pm) Monday - Friday
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)



Rochester Public Utilities is excited to announce a partnership with Minnesota Energy Resources in offering a program designed to weatherize and update the equipment efficiencies in the homes of qualified low-income elderly residents to improve health, safety, and independent living, while reducing energy burden.

We recognize that energy expenses can be a significant part of a household's budget. Improving a home's efficiency helps save money, but overcoming the up-front cost associated with installing energy-efficient retrofits can be difficult—especially on a limited or fixed income.

This exciting new program covers the installation costs of cost-effective, energy efficiency opportunities identified by an energy audit.

Potential services that may be eligible to seniors at no cost could include:

From RPU:

- LED bulbs
- Major appliance replacement
- Room air conditioners
- Central air conditioning

From Minnesota Energy Resources:

- Insulation, caulking, and weather stripping
- Programmable thermostats
- Showerheads and aerators
- Carbon monoxide detectors
- Major weatherization, heating system, or heating system replacement

Contact RPU Customer Care at 507-280-1500 for more information.