



ROCHESTER
PUBLIC UTILITIES
WE PLEDGE, WE DELIVER®

Plugged In

New Payment Kiosk

Details on back



JULY / AUG
2023



RPU employees that helped with the 2023 Arbor Day Celebration

Thousands Attended Our Arbor Day Celebration

Leading up to 2023's Annual Arbor Day Celebration, weather forecasts were not looking favorable for an outdoor event. Fingers were crossed. The afternoon before the event, the decision was made it was going to be held outdoors regardless. The weather worked in our favor and the sun even came out for the celebration.

Over 2,200 local elementary students, educators, and chaperones gathered at Three Links-Silver Lake Park to have lunch and celebrate everything trees. In addition, hundreds of local community members came out to celebrate—and to get a free tree seedling to plant themselves.

As part of our Arbor Day festivities, RPU held a poster contest. Hundreds of local elementary school students submitted posters highlighting the theme, "Trees are Terrific and They Keep Our Water Clean!" This year's winners were recognized at the Arbor Day Celebration and their posters will be included in the 2024 RPU calendar (available at the end of 2023).



Overall Winner - Sophie Liu
Fifth Grade
Washington Elementary
Teacher - Mrs. Barlow



First Grade - Jacob Hansen
Jefferson Elementary
Teacher - Mrs. Scha



Second Grade - Lauren Winter
Gibbs Elementary
Teacher - Mrs. Witter



Third Grade - Shaarav Nawale
Washington Elementary
Teacher - Mrs. Seefeldt



Fourth Grade - Stella Huelsbeck
Jefferson Elementary
Teacher - Mrs. Osowski



Fifth Grade - Eleanor Ribikawskis
Bishop Elementary
Teacher - Mr. Paul



Hundreds of free tree seedlings were given out at this year's Arbor Day Celebration





Nominations Now Being Accepted for the 2022-2023 Environmental Achievement Awards

In partnership with Olmsted County, RPU is looking for the environmental superstars in the area that are making a positive impact on the environment.

The awards were developed in 1992 to recognize individuals and groups making Olmsted County a more sustainable community through innovative programs and practices that demonstrate environmental leadership. Categories available for nomination include climate change, conservation, education, energy, renewables, sustainable food production, water, and other.

Do you know the perfect person, organization, or business that should be nominated? Here are the steps to submit a nomination:

- Visit the RPU website (rpu.org) and go to the Environmental Achievement Awards page
- Fill out the nomination form
- Save the form as a pdf on your device
- Email the form to Olmsted County at pwservice@olmstedcounty.gov
- Email submissions by Friday, October 6, 2023

Marion Road Substation Transformer Delivery



The Marion Road Substation is being built to provide increased electric reliability and stability for downtown and southeast parts of Rochester. One of the keystone moments in constructing a substation is the delivery of the transformers. The transformers are the pieces of equipment that step down the voltage of the electricity so it can be delivered safely to homes and businesses through the electric distribution system.

The two transformers for the Marion Road Substation were delivered and installed in mid-May. Here are some transformer facts:

- Manufactured by Prolec GE in Monterrey, Mexico
- Weight of each transformer as shipped is around 94,000 lbs each
- Weight of each transformer when fully assembled is about 156,000 lbs each
- Transformer voltage is 161,000 volts high side and 13,800 volts low side
- From RPU Board approval to on-site delivery it took approximately 70 weeks



Arbor Day Boulevard Tree Planting

One Arbor Day Celebration activity is the annual boulevard tree planting that RPU lineworkers participate in with Rochester Parks & Recreation staff. Selecting the right type of tree for a specific location is called 'The Right Tree in The Right Place' by the Arbor Day Foundation (arborday.org), and is important for tree health and community safety. This year, the planting was a week after the Arbor Day Celebration, with over 30 appropriate-sized boulevard trees planted in neighborhoods surrounding Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Park.

Taking Action Against “Forever Chemicals”

In recent years, perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances, known as PFAS, have emerged as substances linked by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to negative health effects. Unfortunately, thousands of types of PFAS have been found in hundreds of consumer products such as fast food wrappers, the lining of disposable coffee cups, waterproofing products, and many types of stain resistant coatings used in textile manufacturing. While PFAS have been phased out of use in commercial products, they do not break down naturally, and may ultimately make their way into surface and ground water from historical uses. They are often called “Forever Chemicals.”



Wastewater

Rochester’s Water Reclamation Plant (WRP) treats wastewater from homes and businesses before discharging cleaned water to the Zumbro River. Conventional treatment technologies cannot remove PFAS from wastewater and there are no economically feasible options on the horizon.

So if treatment isn’t the option, what is the City doing?

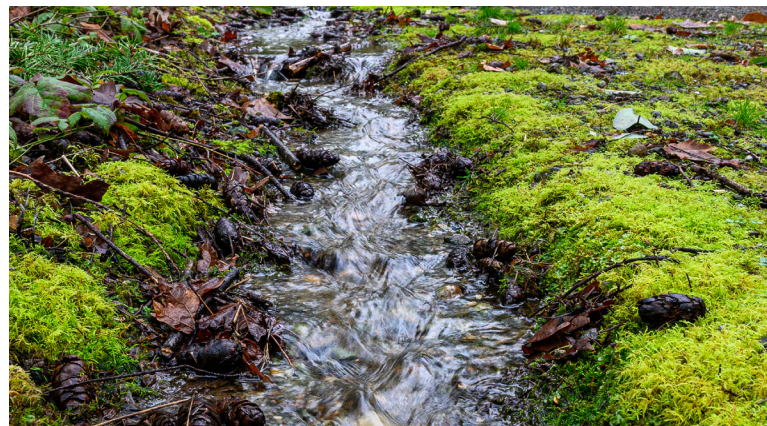
- The City is partnering with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency and approximately 100 other municipalities to monitor PFAS levels in wastewater and to reduce them at their source.
- The City is also working with its partners to develop a balanced, informed approach to the problem. The hope is to develop an approach that doesn’t force premature multi-million dollar investments to move the pollutant around to other waste streams without fully destroying the pollutant.

Drinking Water

The health, well-being, and safety of residents are of utmost importance to the City of Rochester. We recognize the concern with PFAS and fully support the need to address this issue. Municipalities are at the forefront of providing safe drinking water and protecting human health and the environment.

RPU continues its stewardship of public health by:

- Conducting PFAS testing on RPU wells to ensure compliance with EPA and Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) requirements.
- Following the rigorous scientific framework of the EPA and MDH for best water quality practices.
- Remaining transparent to the public and welcoming questions and comments about water quality.
- Remaining committed to providing safe drinking water.



Stormwater

Stormwater ponds and other best management practices (BMPs) are effective tools for cleaning stormwater runoff and protecting our surface waters. Unfortunately, these BMPs are unable to remove PFAS from stormwater runoff. Consumer awareness and behavior change will be key instrumental in reducing the impacts of PFAS on our lakes, rivers and streams.

Other resources: PFAS | Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, PFAS | Minnesota Department of Health



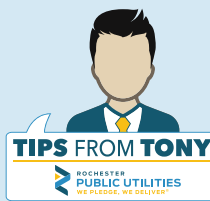
Due to new federal lighting standards

TIME IS RUNNING OUT FOR LED BULB REBATES!

**Rebates for screw base
LED bulbs for all
residential and
commercial
customers
will end
Dec 31, 2023.**

Apply before they
are gone! Download
a rebate application
with complete terms
and conditions:
www.rpu.org

CONSERVE & \$AVE®



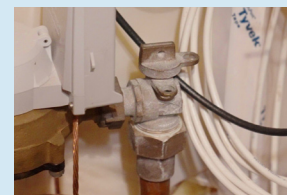
Residential Water Shutoff

It's important to know the two
ways to shut off the main water
service inside your home.

Both options will turn off the water to your home
if you are doing plumbing work, have a water
emergency, or are leaving your home for an extended
period of time. These are safe ways to protect
your water service and they do not require RPU
or a plumber.



1. An angle valve
before the
water meter



2. A ball valve after
the water meter

Give us 2-4 degrees and we'll give you \$75!*

Participate in our new Bring Your Own Thermostat (BYOT) program!
During the season of high electric use (May 1 - Sept 30) you'll agree
to allow RPU to adjust the temperature of your smart thermostat^
by 2-4 degrees during Peak Savings Events.

***When you join BYOT, you'll receive a one-time
\$50 enrollment incentive bill credit plus a
\$25 annual, year-end bill credit for participating.**



Visit www.rpu.org
to learn more
and enroll today!

**PARTNERING IN
SMART ENERGY
SOLUTIONS**
PROGRAMS BROUGHT TO YOU BY RPU

^RPU electric customers who have installed a qualifying connected smart thermostat
controlling their central air conditioning or heat pump system are eligible.

Water Efficiency Rebates

**Through RPU's CONSERVE & SAVE® rebate program,
more than 3 million gallons of water was saved in 2022!**

When you are shopping, look for the Energy Star®, Energy
Star® Most Efficient, and WaterSense® labels. These
products are certified to use at least 20 percent less water.



**Most Efficient
2023**
www.energystar.gov



To download an application with complete terms and
conditions, visit www.rpu.org.

You can apply for a rebate on the following:



**Clothes
Washers**
(\$25)



**High Efficiency
Toilets**
(\$25)



**Rain
Barrels**
(\$10)



**Weather-Based
Irrigation
Controllers**
(50% of cost,
not to exceed
\$75 per controller)

CONSERVE & \$AVE®

Letter from the General Manager

On August 23, I will hang up my RPU hard hat and turn off my computer for the last time as I retire and begin the next chapter of my life.



**Photo of Mark Kotschevar
from the RPU archives**

While it has been an honor and a privilege to serve as RPU's General Manager since 2014, I have been an RPU employee pretty much my entire adult life. When I began as a new college graduate electrical engineer, Kim Carnes, Diana Ross, and Kenny Rogers were on the radio; the North Stars had lost to the Islanders in the Stanley Cup (a sad day for a hockey fan like me); the first space shuttle launched; IBM debuted its first PC using Microsoft MS DOS; and Ronald Reagan was President.

Rochester has grown from around 58,000 people in 1981 to over 125,000 today. Our economy has grown, our community has diversified, and projects such as the Destination Medical Center are propelling this region into an exciting future.

I owe a debt of gratitude to all those who taught, mentored, and supported me over my career. I am blessed to have worked with such incredible people to provide safe, reliable, affordable, electricity and water to support this growth and vitality. So many people contribute to make this happen:

The City Council, Mayor, and RPU Board make sure that RPU reflects the values and priorities of our community. City Administration and the leadership team ensure that we work together.

Engineers and planners design the distribution system to meet customer needs. Field crews install and maintain infrastructure, working all hours in all kinds of weather to restore service. Water and electric system operators continuously monitor and respond to system activity. Customer care representatives help people with service requests and work with customers through challenges. Energy advisors assist customers with optimizing sustainability and conservation. Plant operators and maintenance personnel keep our generation resources in tip-top shape. The facilities crew keeps our work environment comfortable, neat and organized. Fleet mechanics keep the trucks rolling. Finance, accounting, metering, purchasing, stores, information technology, business services, GIS and mapping, environmental, and safety professionals all make sure back-office operations run smoothly. The list goes on and on, but to say "it takes a village" to run a utility this size is an understatement.

When I accepted the offer for the General Manager position, I did so knowing the caliber of people I'd be working with and I was not wrong. It is difficult to walk away from a place as special as RPU has been for me, but I leave behind so many dedicated, caring people who have embraced our vision—We Will Set the Standard for Service—wholeheartedly in providing critical services to our community. Through all the years and changes, this vision has been and will continue to be our "True North."

In August, Tim McCollough will settle into this chair. Please welcome him just as you welcomed me to this community 42 years ago.

Meanwhile, I'm going to hook up the boat, put on my lucky fishing hat, head to a lake and remember fondly the people and memories during my time at RPU.

Mark Kotschevar, General Manager

**Would you like to
round up your
utility bill to help
people in need?**

RPU's **Neighbors Chipping In** program collects donations to help people in our community pay their utility bill. It's easy to give with a recurring monthly donation.* You can round up or add a specific amount. Call RPU Customer Care at 507-280-1500 to enroll or learn more at www.rpu.org.

D ♥ N A T E



*Donations can be cancelled at any time.

SIGN UP FOR



POWER OUTAGE

ALERTS



Log in to >>
RPU Connect*

Go to >>
My Account

Go to >>
Notification
Preferences

*Log in to RPU Connect via
"My Account" on www.rpu.org
or download our mobile app:



Available on the
App Store



GET IT ON
Google play



RPU Announces Appointment of Tim McCollough as General Manager

The RPU Board has announced the appointment of Tim McCollough as the incoming General Manager for RPU. Mark Kotschevar, who started with RPU in 1981 and has led RPU since May 1, 2014 and will retire with 42 years of service to the community. McCollough is anticipated to start July 31, 2023.



Tim McCollough

McCollough most recently served as the President and Chief Executive Officer for Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative. Prior to serving Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative, he was the Deputy Director of Light and Power Utilities for the City of Fort Collins. McCollough started his career at MidAmerican Energy Company, holding several roles before transitioning to City of Ames Electric where he served as a Power Plant Engineer, Electric Services Operations Superintendent, and Electric Distribution Manager. Tim has a Bachelor of Science in Mechanical Engineering from Iowa State University.

"We were pleased to have many qualified candidates apply for the General Manager position, and Tim stood out in several ways. His impressive work history at multiple utilities will bring new insights and best practices to RPU. The utility industry is undergoing rapid change, and his emphasis on continuous improvement and partnering with others for success will allow RPU to continue to set the standard for service. Finally, his empathetic leadership style with a focus on employee well-being and customer service is integral to our community values and the culture of a hometown utility. We look forward to Tim joining our team," shares Melissa Johnson, President of the RPU Board.

Key focus areas of the role include:

- Lead and implement a strategic vision and plan for RPU in collaboration with and under the direction of the RPU Board.
- Oversee long term infrastructure planning including generation capacity, amount of purchased power, transmission facilities, electric distribution system, well water capacity, water storage facilities and water distribution system.
- Lead RPU operations in a manner that results in high customer service satisfaction levels, leveraging of resources, and continuous improvement.
- Serve as an RPU and City representative explaining and discussing views, interests and policies to the RPU Board; City Council; state and national organizations.
- Provide sound fiscal management of RPU budgets and finances.

McCollough highlights, "I am thrilled to join RPU as the next General Manager. I am deeply impressed by the vision and forward-thinking approach that RPU embodies. The opportunity to engage with the Board of Directors and the employee team during the recruitment process has solidified my belief that RPU and the community are comprised of exceptional individuals who are dedicated to serving the well-being of the community with the utmost professionalism and integrity. Together, we will navigate the evolving challenges in the utility industry and continue to provide the highest level of service to the community of Rochester. I look forward to bringing my family to join the community soon."



Call Before You Dig Gopher State One Call (GSOC)

Remember, contact GSOC at least 48 hours (not including weekends and holidays) in advance. Always check yard markings and GSOC Positive Response ticket status before excavating. To request a locate, **call 811**.

More info at gopherstateonecall.org

The color of paint or flags identifies the type of underground facility.



- Area of Excavation
- Temporary Markings
- Electric
- Gas, Oil, Steam, Propane
- Communication
- Water
- Reclaimed Water, Irrigation
- Sewer

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



Neighborly

RPU Plugged In is now designed
and printed locally in Rochester.



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)

New Payment Kiosk



RPU installed a new payment kiosk, which went live on May 1, 2023 in the vestibule of the Service Center at 4000 East River Rd NE. It is completely self-service; available 24/7, 365 days of the year.

To pay is easy! Bring your RPU bill—this will have your unique QR code to scan at the kiosk to access your RPU account. If you don't have your QR code, use your RPU account number to look up your account information to make a payment.

Your RPU bills can be paid with cash, check, or credit card. Please note: no change is provided when paying with cash.

Safe City Nights Free Food & Activities 6-8pm



July 11
Jefferson
Elementary



July 25
Bishop
Elementary



August 8
Longfellow
Elementary



August 22
Watson Field

