Plugged In
April 2020

Everything you need to know about vegetation management this spring and how it pertains to your RPU services.

Tree Trimming, pg 2
Planting Near RPU Transformers, pg 4
Partners in Planting coupons, pg 5
AND MUCH MORE!
Why Tree Trimming Is Always a Top Priority for RPU

RPU will spend nearly $1.4 million this year on proactive tree trimming and vegetation management. This investment will provide a safer and more reliable electric system for Rochester. As RPU crews and their tree trimming contractors are out working on clearing lines safely, there are things that customers should know.

- Safety and system reliability are the reasons for RPU tree trimming.
- RPU will send a mailing, connect with you in person at your door, or leave a door hanger to affected neighborhoods in order to communicate what work is being done and when.
- It is important to stay a safe distance away from the coned-off work zones while trimming is being done.
- All tree trimming should be done by a licensed and certified tree trimming professional.

RPU plans to do proactive trimming along 17 different feeders in 2020. The maps of the active trimming locations can be found on the RPU website, www.rpu.org. The maps will be updated as trimming locations change.

Customers can help RPU by doing an inventory of trees on their property and noting ones that may be getting close to overhead lines. RPU would be happy to come by and inspect those trees and take corrective action if necessary to help ensure that you aren’t affected by an outage due to trees damaging overhead lines and infrastructure.

**COLD WEATHER RULE WINDOW ENDING SOON!**

The Minnesota Cold Weather Rule window is coming to an end on April 15, 2020.

If you are behind on paying your RPU bill, please contact RPU Customer Relations to make arrangements to bring your account current by April 15.

If no arrangement has been made and your account is not current as of April 15, your electric service may be shut off for non-payment. RPU Customer Relations (507.280.1500) is available from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday to assist you.

Leaving Town or Moving?

In all of the hustle and bustle of leaving town, remember it’s important to contact RPU if you will be away for an extended period of time. Whether it’s a long vacation, a trip to the cabin, or you’re going away for the summer, notifying RPU may protect you from false meter readings, future charges, and possible service issues that could arise while you are away.

If you are a renter or homeowner and are moving away permanently, do not rely on your property manager or landlord to cancel your account. As the primary account holder, you are responsible for your account and will be responsible for additional usage and charges if left active.

Please make time to contact RPU Customer Relations to let them know you will be away from your residence and a note will be placed on your account. Contact us at 507.280.1500, or stop in at the RPU Service Center during business hours.

If you’ve recently discontinued your landline phone or changed your cellphone number, please contact RPU to ensure your contact information is up-to-date.

Rochester Public Utilities invites you to become an e-SMART contractor!

Check out our free materials, interactive training tools, training tips, videos, and case studies. Each of these is designed to help you and your team work safely around electric lines. Please share this site with your crews and co-workers!

GO TO: rpu.e-smartonline.net/contractor/

What will you do with the money you save?

Find out how much you could save on your utility bill! Attend our next FREE energy efficiency workshop and qualify for a $50 home energy audit!

Tuesday, May 19, 2020 • 6:30-7:30pm
Northrop Community Education Center (free childcare available)

TO REGISTER:
Call: 888.734.6365
Email: sbootscamp@mncee.org
Learn more: www.rpu.org

What will you do with the money you save?

Vacation?
Savings Account?
New Pet?

Find out how much you could save on your utility bill!
Attend our next FREE energy efficiency workshop and qualify for a $50 home energy audit!

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The spring is a great time to plant new bushes and shrubs in your yard. However, did you know that there are issues and potential problems with planting them near and around transformers?

Improving the aesthetics of the community and neighborhoods is one of the reasons why RPU installs new electric services underground and is also the reason why some customers choose to plant around the pad-mounted transformers. However, there are guidelines and access requirements so RPU crews can safely work on the transformers.

Each pad-mounted transformer has a warning sticker affixed to it outlining the dangerous voltage inside, the dangers of digging and planting around it, and a diagram for safe planting distances. This information is for the safety of both the customer and RPU line workers.

In most cases, RPU has a utility easement of 10 feet from the front of the property line to work in. If there are plantings or landscaping within that 10 feet, RPU may need to remove or cut the landscaping to ensure a safe working environment. The recommended clearance for all plantings near a transformer is to keep them 12 feet away from the front and 3 feet from both sides. If you have questions regarding landscaping near a pad-mounted transformer, call RPU at 507.280.1500.
$10 NURSERY COUPON

Complete and submit to the nursery of your choice: Jim Whiting Nursery & Garden Center or Sargent’s Gardens

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Customer Name
Address
City
State
Zip
Phone
Email

In support of RPU’s Partners in Planting Program. Must be an RPU customer to participate. One coupon per household. Offer valid on any tree priced at $99 or more. Regularly priced trees only. Not good with other discounts or promotions. Must be presented at time of sale.

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$20 ARBORIST COUPON

Complete and submit to Maier Tree & Lawn

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Customer Name
Address
City
State
Zip
Phone
Email

$20 OFF THE PURCHASE OF ANY TREE CARE SERVICE

In support of RPU’s Partners in Planting Program. Must be an RPU customer to participate. One coupon per household. *Offer valid on arborist services over $200. Not good with other discounts or promotions. Must be presented at time of sale. Refunds not available.
CALL BEFORE YOU DIG

As you are plotting out your tree plantings, landscaping, or even a new deck or play area, remember to always Call Before You Dig this summer. Gopher State One Call is a free utility locating service. Gopher State One Call is an important service to help keep customers and utility workers safe. It’s not only quick and easy; it is also your responsibility as a homeowner.

Color Code Chart
The American Public Works Association encourages public agencies, utilities, contractors, associations, manufacturers, and all others involved in excavation to adopt the ULCC Uniform Color Code using the ANSI standard Z53.1 Safety Colors shown below. These colors are used to mark the various underground utilities that may be found during a dig. Flags or paint are examples of materials that are used to mark areas using the colors below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Color Code</th>
<th>Utility Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Proposed Excavation</td>
<td>Gas-Oil-Steam-Propane</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporary Survey Markings</td>
<td>Communication-CATV-Fiber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electric</td>
<td>Water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reclaimed Water-Irrigation</td>
<td>Sewer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

www.gopherstateonecall.org 1.800.252.1166

EVENT CANCELLED

In light of the recent progression of COVID-19, and the CDC guidance to avoid mass gatherings, we have made the difficult decision to cancel this year’s Arbor Day Celebration.

We will miss seeing you all, but please save the date for next year’s celebration: FRIDAY, APRIL 30, 2021

Thank you, and stay well!

RPU’s 18th Annual Arbor Day Celebration
Friday, April 24, 2020

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WATER CONSERVATION

Monthly Tip on Saving From the Tap!

Adjust your lawn mower to the height of 1.5 to 2 inches. Taller grass shades roots and holds soil moisture better than short grass.

ENERGY CONSERVATION

Monthly 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%.

Connect with your RPU account... anytime, anywhere!

Our new customer online portal and mobile app allows you to manage your account, pay your bill, view your usage, control communication preferences, connect with us, and much more!

Questions? Need help? Our Customer Relations Team is happy to assist you! Call us Monday–Friday, 8am–5pm at 507.280.1500. We also have helpful videos at www.rpu.org.
RPU Recognized as a Tree Line USA Recipient for 2020

For the 11th consecutive year, RPU was recognized as a Tree Line USA recipient by the Arbor Day Foundation. Tree Line USA recognizes public and private utilities for practices that protect and enhance America’s urban forests.