

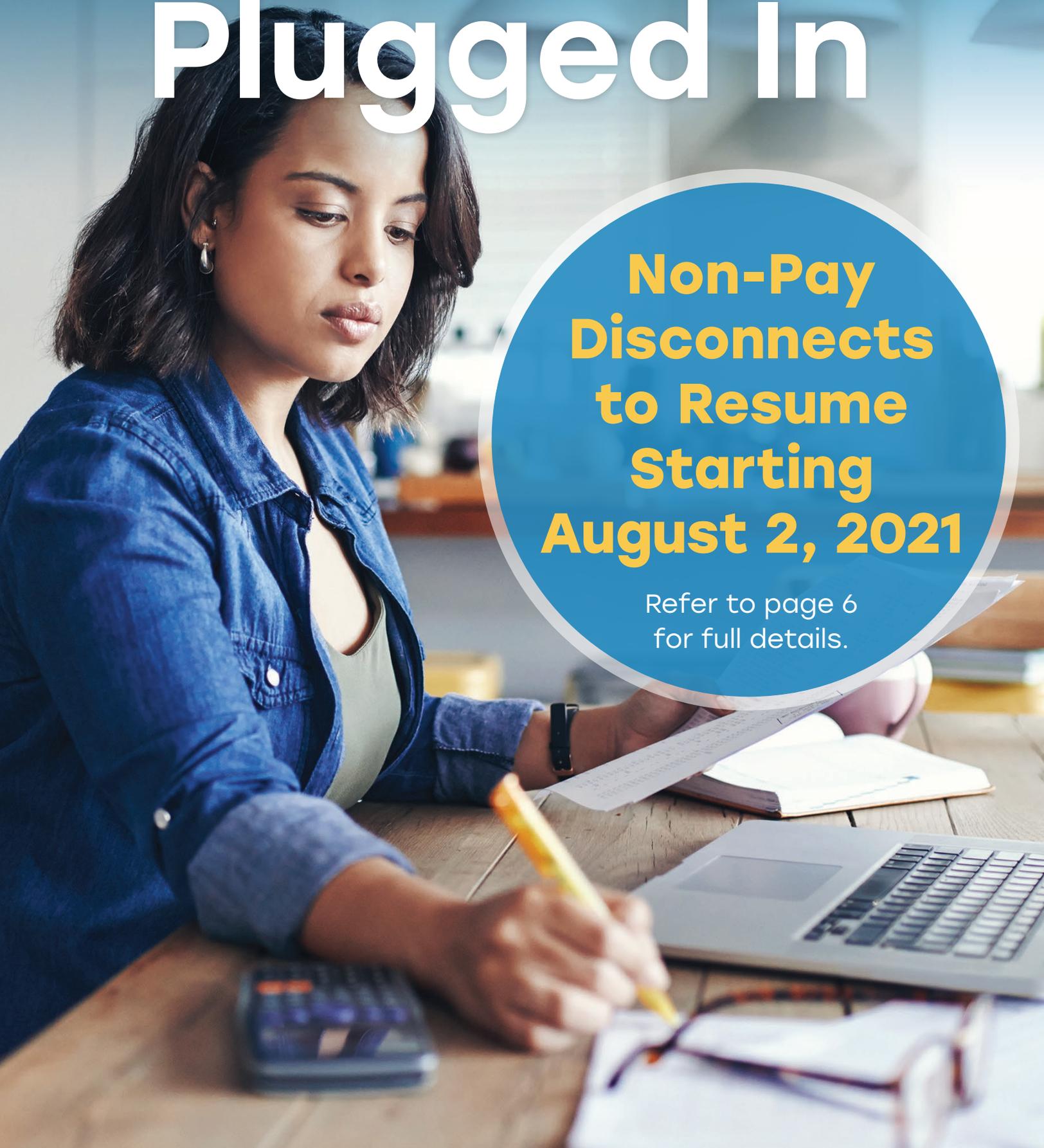


ROCHESTER  
**PUBLIC UTILITIES**  
WE PLEDGE, WE DELIVER

# Plugged In

**Non-Pay  
Disconnects  
to Resume  
Starting  
August 2, 2021**

Refer to page 6  
for full details.



# Power Outage Safety

Power outages can happen for any number of reasons including overgrown vegetation, equipment failure, animals, auto accidents, and storms. We understand that it is an inconvenience for customers anytime the power goes out. Many RPU employees are also RPU customers, experiencing the same outages as you. In those times, all available resources are used to address the outage immediately.

RPU's first and foremost concern during any outage regardless of size, is safety for customers, the community, and RPU employees. We will never compromise the safety of anyone to expedite power restoration.

Never go near a downed power line. Stay away from the area and contact RPU immediately at **507-280-9191**. Even if a power line looks like it is disconnected, it still can be energized and will cause severe injuries if contact is made with it.

If your house is fed from overhead lines and there is possible storm damage to the line or connection into your home, you will need to take additional steps to safely have your power restored. Keep in mind, the electric service can get pulled down or dislocated from your house and still be working.

- ✔ If a line is down, regardless if it is working or not, it may require additional attention to ensure safety and proper service.
- ✔ Call RPU's outage line at **507-280-9191** to have a crew inspect your overhead service.
- ✔ If repair work is required, RPU will disconnect your service, and will then instruct you to have a licensed electrician make necessary repairs.
- ✔ Once the electrician has completed their work, they will notify a city electrical inspector to ensure the work was done properly.
- ✔ The inspector will then notify RPU for a reconnection.

Your safety, along with the safety of our employees and community, is our priority.



*RPU lineworkers will not go out to assess or work on outage restoration if there is inclement weather in the immediate area, which could compromise the safety of the RPU line crews.*



***RPU System Operations is staffed around the clock, overseeing all RPU operations and systems. In addition, RPU electric and water crews are always on-call and available when a service outage occurs.***



For larger outages, we use Twitter @rpuoutages for sharing outage information and restoration progress. Make sure to also opt-in for outage notifications on the RPU Connect app. RPU outage map – [www.rpu.org](http://www.rpu.org)

# Welcome to DAVE ANDERSON!



RPU is pleased to announce the addition of Dave Anderson to the marketing team as an Energy and Environmental Advisor. Dave will be working with commercial customers to assist with their energy service needs. Dave

attended the Minnesota State University, Mankato earning a Mechanical Engineering degree.

He has 11 years of experience in renewable energy including power generation and ethanol production. He enjoys his cabin up north, mechanical projects, and coaching. Dave has been married for 17 years and has two children.

## POWER OUTAGE EMERGENCY PLAN

As much as we try to keep the power on, there are circumstances that can cause the power to go out for minutes or even days. What is your plan for you and your family if you were to lose power? Here are some things to consider:



**Report the outage.** Have RPU's outage line in your cellphone or easily accessible to report your outage – **507-280-9191**.



**Have a back-up location.** Do you have a list of friends or family in the area who you could go stay with if necessary? Even if your home is heated by natural gas and the electricity is out, you will not be able to heat your home because the fan on your furnace is powered electrically.



**Keep your cellphone charged.** If bad weather and strong winds are in the forecast, keep your cellphone charged in case the electricity goes out.



**Practice food safety.** FoodSafety.gov offers important food safety tips for before, during and after a power outage at: <https://www.foodsafety.gov/food-safety-charts/food-safety-during-power-outage>.



**Store extra flashlights and batteries.** Keep flashlights and new batteries in an accessible location to provide some light and safety.



**Be aware of medical conditions.** If you or someone you know has a medical condition and they rely heavily on electricity for medical equipment, seek medical attention early rather than waiting for the electricity to come back on at your home.



**Know your garage door.** If you have an electric garage door opener and the power goes out, it may be difficult to find the release cord in the dark. Consult your garage door opener manual and find out how to release the opener in case the power goes out. This will allow you safe and easy access to opening your garage door even without power.



**Practice safety first.** Never go near downed power lines or wires. Power lines can still stay energized even if they are lying on the ground. Call RPU immediately – **507-280-9191** – if you ever see a downed line and keep others away from the area.

*For any questions on commercial programs and incentives, contact one of our Account Representatives below:*



**Dave Anderson**  
Energy and Environmental Advisor  
[danderson@rpu.org](mailto:danderson@rpu.org)  
507-280-1578



**Anna Basimamovic**  
Energy and Environmental Advisor  
[abasimamovic@rpu.org](mailto:abasimamovic@rpu.org)  
507-280-1565



**Dru Larson**  
Energy and Environmental Advisor  
[dlarson@rpu.org](mailto:dlarson@rpu.org)  
507-280-1607



**Josh Mason**  
Energy and Environmental Advisor  
[jmason@rpu.org](mailto:jmason@rpu.org)  
507-280-1588

# 2021 Arbor Day ACTIVITIES

In order to ensure safety for RPU staff, customers, and the Rochester community, we celebrated Arbor Day this year without the annual Arbor Day Celebration at Silver Lake Park. However, we were fortunate to still be able to safely participate in and promote Arbor Day in the community through many other ways.

Local elementary students submitted hundreds of poster entries for the Arbor Day poster contest. The winning posters will be used in the 2022 RPU calendar and are featured on the RPU website and in RPU *Plugged In*. The overall winner gets a special visit from RPU and a local Arborist to plant a tree on their school's property in recognition of their winning poster.



Of course, we had to find a safe way to have a tree giveaway, so we organized a safe drive-thru tree giveaway at Silver Lake Park in late April. A total of 800 Burr Oak tree seedlings were given away at the drive-thru event which welcomed cars, bicycles, walkers, and even some four-legged companions to grab a tree seedling to be planted in the Rochester community.

*This year's winners are:*



OVERALL WINNER  
**Bhavya Yerriboyina**  
5th Grade, Mrs. Markert  
Riverside



First Grade  
**Shaarav Nawale**  
Mrs. Gronemeyer  
Harriet Bishop



Second Grade  
**Eliana Kerich**  
Ms. Henry  
Gage



Third Grade  
**Jia-Xin Fan**  
Mrs. Peterson  
Gibbs



Fourth Grade  
**Noella Westra**  
Mr. Lynch  
Gibbs



Fifth Grade  
**Norah Jensen**  
Mrs. Rietkerk  
Jefferson



RPU lineworkers enjoy being a part of the Arbor Day festivities each year by joining in with Rochester Parks & Recreation workers to plant boulevard trees. The boulevard trees that are used for this project are always carefully selected to ensure they are the proper species of tree for planting in that location. Planting the wrong type of tree in the wrong space could affect the health of the tree and could be a safety concern as it matures.

## RPU Service Center Lobby Hours and RPU Drop Box Changes

Due to COVID-19, the RPU Service Center hours were changed in an effort to ensure safety for RPU staff and visitors. The normal lobby hours have been reinstated and are back to Monday-Friday, 8am-5pm for walk-in service or help over the phone.

As of June 1, 2021, RPU drop boxes at local Hy-Vee locations and City Hall are no longer available. Customers are welcome to utilize the drop boxes at the Silver Lake Plant and at the RPU Service Center to drop off their monthly payment. Another convenient option is to use the RPU Connect customer portal on the RPU website ([www.rpu.org](http://www.rpu.org)) or download the RPU Connect app and pay your bill from your phone or tablet.

# What You Should Know About Non-Pay Disconnects Resuming on August 2, 2021

Due to the pandemic, RPU discontinued non-pay disconnects for all customers starting March 2020. Beginning August 2, 2021, non-pay disconnects will resume for residential and commercial customers with outstanding balances. Customers with outstanding balances will receive a disconnection notice with a date of disconnect. If you feel you are behind on your payments and need help with your RPU bill, contact Customer Care at **507-280-1500** before August 2 to prevent disconnection. We continue to work with our customers on payment arrangements, ways to reduce usage to help lower monthly bills, and connect our customers to financial resources within our community.

Information regarding financial resources is available on our website at [www.rpu.org](http://www.rpu.org) under the Community Resources page. Here you will find a full list of local community resources available including energy assistance, rent help, food assistance, and Veteran assistance.



RPU has a new program called **Neighbors Chipping In**. This program allows you to donate funds to customers in our community who need assistance with their RPU bill. This is a voluntary program and you make a one-time or recurring monthly donation by rounding up your utility bill to the nearest dollar or a specific dollar amount. Once enrolled, you may opt out at any time.

To learn more or to enroll, visit our website at [www.rpu.org](http://www.rpu.org).

## 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](http://www.rpu.org). DEADLINE IS OCTOBER 1.**

## Neighbors Chipping In



Helping, Caring, Sharing

ROCHESTER PUBLIC UTILITIES  
WE PLEDGE, WE DELIVER

Your gift of a few extra cents can go a long way towards helping others in need within Rochester. This RPU program collects donations and disburses the funds to help people in our community pay their utility bill.

**It's easy to participate in our voluntary program with a recurring\* monthly donation. You can either:**

- 1) Round up your utility bill, or
- 2) Add a specific amount.

Learn more about **Neighbors Chipping In** and download an enrollment form at [www.rpu.org](http://www.rpu.org).

*Thank You!*

\*can be cancelled at any time

# More Minnesotans Eligible for Energy Assistance: Application Deadline Extended

Published April 22, 2021

More Minnesota households are now eligible for Energy Assistance and have more time to apply for these important benefits.

The household income eligibility guidelines have increased from 50% of the state median income to 60% of the state median income. This applies either to a household's annual income or the three most recent months of income. Here is a sampling of the new household income eligibility guidelines. (See the Department of Commerce website for income guidelines for households beyond 7 people.)

Additionally, the deadline to apply for Energy Assistance has been extended from May 31 until September 1, 2021.

The Minnesota Department of Commerce, which is the state agency in charge of administering federal Energy Assistance Program dollars, recently made these program revisions as Minnesota is receiving additional federal funding.

The funding will help income-eligible households keep up with their energy bills, deal with increased natural gas bills that resulted from the price spikes in February, and help prevent shut-offs. Some cooperative and municipal utilities have been shutting off customers for non-payment during the Governor's peacetime emergency. Investor-owned utilities, which were previously prevented from disconnecting customers, will resume disconnections on August 2. RPU will also resume non-pay disconnections on August 2, 2021.

## 2021 Maximum Energy Assistance Program Income Guidelines

Household Size	3 Month Max	Annual Income
1	\$8,479	\$33,918
2	\$11,088	\$44,355
3	\$13,697	\$54,791
4	\$16,307	\$65,228
5	\$18,916	\$75,664
6	\$21,525	\$86,101
7	\$22,014	\$88,058

Please reach out to your local Energy Assistance provider to ask questions about the program and to submit an application. Applications can be found at the Department of Commerce Energy Assistance webpage at <https://mn.gov/commerce/consumers/consumer-assistance/energy-assistance/>.

Source: <https://cubminnesota.org/more-minnesotans-eligible-for-energy-assistance-application-deadline-extended/>

## RENT HELP MN

### A Resource for Renters in Need of Rent or Utility Assistance

Renters who owe back rent or past due utilities, and meet eligibility requirements, can apply online for assistance at [www.renthelpmn.org](http://www.renthelpmn.org). This program can help with past rent, past due utilities, and upcoming rent. If you are a landlord and have renters that are behind on their rent, please share this information. Your tenants may need assistance gathering documentation needed to apply. For renters and landlords that need additional program information or application assistance, please call **800-543-7709**.





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

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RPU Service Center Hours are 8am-5pm, M-F.

**RPU Service Center Holiday Hours** | The RPU Service Center will be closed on:

• Monday, July 5, Independence Day Observed • Monday, September 6, Labor Day

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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# SIGN UP FOR 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:



POWER OUTAGE  
**ALERT**