

RPU *Plugged In*



PUBLIC POWER WEEK

OCTOBER 7-13, 2018

Powering Strong Communities

**Learn what
being a public
power provider
is all about!**

See pages 2 and 3.



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PUBLIC POWER WEEK 2018

What being a public power provider is all about!

Helping Others

One year ago, RPU along with 15 other municipal utilities from across Minnesota, headed to Florida to help with power restoration efforts after Hurricane Irma. The restoration effort began in Kissimmee, FL, and then moved onto Lake Worth, FL, which was also hit hard by hurricane damage.

According to the Kissimmee Utility Authority, over 38,000 of their 72,000 customers were without power at the peak of the storm.

The mutual aid efforts and concern for other municipal utility customers is a perfect example of what being a public power provider is all about. However, this is just one example of why having a public power provider is beneficial to the community.



JOIN US IN CELEBRATING PUBLIC POWER WEEK

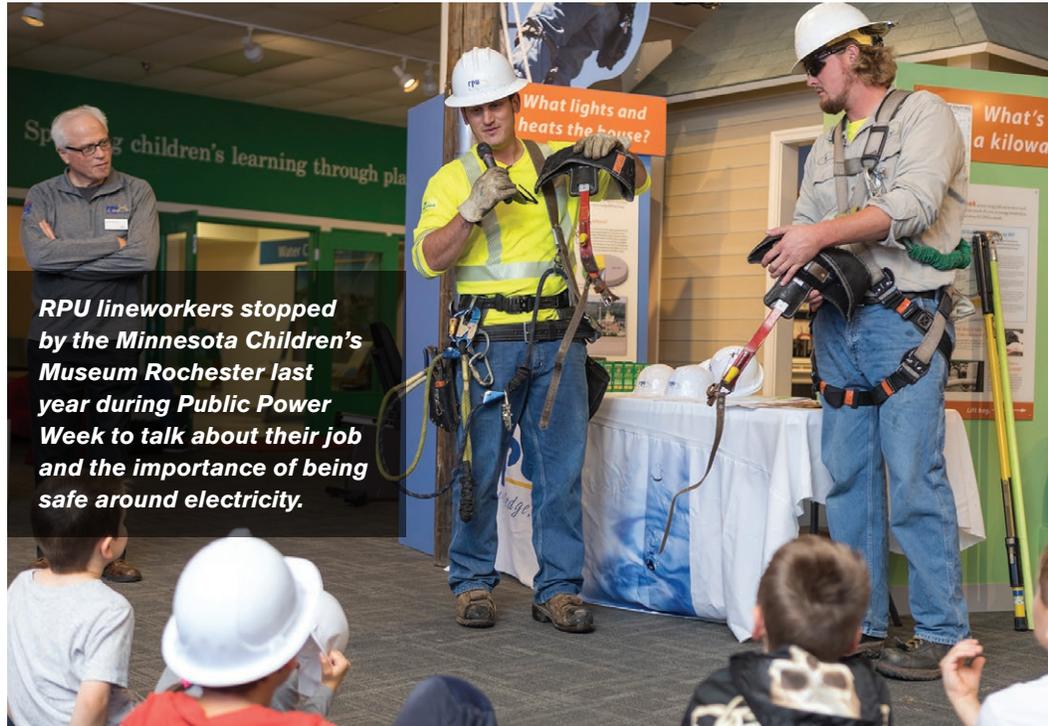
What: RPU's Public Power Week Celebration Free Play Day
Where: Minnesota Children's Museum Rochester,
 1643 N. Broadway St., Suite A, River Center Plaza, Rochester, MN 55906
When: Saturday, October 13th, 9 am-5 pm
Why: Free admission for everyone!



Minnesota
 Children's
 Museum
 Rochester

This year, we are excited to celebrate Public Power Week with our customers by partnering with the Minnesota Children's Museum Rochester to provide a FREE Public Power Week Celebration on Saturday, October 13th! Everyone is welcome to come and explore for FREE! RPU will have experts on hand to help answer your electric or water questions, lineworkers will bring a bucket truck by at 10 am and 2 pm to share with the visitors, and we will have free giveaways. Make sure to check out the RPU exhibits including the RPU Energy House, Powering the City, Water Connections, and the NEW Electrical Safety Exhibit – Power Pathways!

Public Power Week (PPW) is an opportunity for the over 2,000 community-owned, not-for-profit, public power utilities from across the nation to celebrate their service with the communities that they serve. Rochester Public Utilities (RPU) is the largest public power utility in the state of Minnesota. RPU serves over 54,000 electric customers and over 39,000 water customers.



RPU lineworkers stopped by the Minnesota Children's Museum Rochester last year during Public Power Week to talk about their job and the importance of being safe around electricity.



We will be handing out Halloween goodie bags and pumpkins to kids who visit the RPU Service Center during the month of October.*

* While supplies last.



BENEFITS OF PUBLIC POWER



THE COMMUNITY CONNECTION

Like public schools and libraries, **public power utilities are owned by the community and run as a division of local government.**



BY THE NUMBERS

Across the U.S., 2,011 public power utilities power **49 million people in 49 states and five territories.** Which means that 1 in 7 electricity customers is served by a public power utility.



RELIABLE

Customers of public power utilities lose power less often. **Customers of a public power utility are likely to be without power for just 59 minutes a year.**

Seeing Double?

You may do a double take when you receive your October billing and see two energy charges. This actually happens twice a year: once in June and again in October. The reason behind the dual energy charge is the change in the rate. As of October 1st, the cost per kilowatt drops from eleven cents to nine cents per kWh (kilowatt-hour). This means that part of your usage is prorated at the higher (summer) rate and part of your usage is prorated at the lower (non-summer) rate, hence the reason for two separate energy charges appearing on your bill.

As of June 1st, the rate then goes back up to the summer rate. The reason for the rate adjustment twice a year is to accommodate the costs due to the increased usage during the summer months when there is a larger demand for

energy. Increased usage in the summertime results from higher usage of air conditioners and dehumidifiers.

So, when you receive your October statement, don't fret. It's not a double billing. It's just a prorated adjustment to your bill based on the shift in the rates. The energy customer charge is a flat fee on the billing statement and that will stay the same regardless of how much energy you use.



If you have questions about summer and non-summer rates, contact RPU Customer Relations at **507.280.1500**.



WHERE IS YOUR HOUSE ON THE ENERGY EFFICIENCY SCALE?



ATTEND ONE OF OUR FREE ENERGY WORKSHOPS TO FIND OUT!
Saturday, November 17, 2018 • 10-11am – OR – Saturday, January 26, 2019 • 10-11am
 Northrop Community Education Center • 201 8th St NW (Room 308)

Attendees qualify for a \$50 home energy audit where you will receive **FREE** “first step” water and energy saving products! You’ll also get expert help with “next step” efficiency improvements.



TO REGISTER
Call: 888.734.6365
Email: sbootscamp@mncee.org

Learn more at www.rpu.org

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 who 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.** A note can be made on your account notifying RPU customer service 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 RPU customer service and leaving your winter address with them.



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

Be Bright Campaign Is Back!



Be Bright this fall! Through November 30th, while supplies last, RPU residential electric customers are eligible for reduced pricing on ENERGY STAR® qualified LED light bulbs. We've partnered with these local retailers below to offer energy-efficient bulbs for as little as \$0.99 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! LEDs produce bright light for less cost because they use less electricity and last longer than incandescent and compact fluorescent bulbs – saving time and money on replacements. And, by replacing the five most used bulbs in your home with energy-efficient LEDs, you can save about \$40 in energy costs during the first year alone.

Remember, supplies are limited, so get your discounted LEDs before they sell out! **Discounted LEDs purchased during this promotion are not eligible for our LED lighting rebate program.**

Arrow Ace Hardware
Batteries + Bulbs
Costco
Home Depot

Mills Fleet Farm
Sam's Club
Walmart



Freezing Temps Can Cause Broken Pipes...

and a water service line repair or replacement can cost you \$4,000 to \$8,000 – or more!

Make sure you're covered by RPU's Service Assured® program. To learn more and/or enroll, visit www.rpu.org.



"What a relief! Very thankful that we had Service Assured® coverage. RPU just took care of everything. \$3 a month is a pretty nominal cost compared to the cost of replacing and digging up one of those [underground water] pipes."

– Richard Bennett
Service Assured® Customer



Service Assured® costs \$1.99 per month for water service coverage and only \$1.00 more to cover your underground electric service also. Contact us to determine your eligibility; some exclusions apply. Visit www.rpu.org to review our Terms & Conditions.

ENERGY CONSERVATION

Monthly Tip for Plugging into Savings!



Hunt Vampire Power with a Kill A Watt® meter! Learn how much energy and money can be saved by replacing, unplugging, or using a smart power strip. RPU has Kill A Watt® meters that you can use in your home for free! Call 507.280.1500 to reserve one today!



CONSERVE & \$AVE

WATER CONSERVATION

Monthly Tip on Saving From the Tap!



Let your lawn go dormant (brown) during the autumn. Dormant grass only needs to be watered every three to four weeks, less if it rains.



CONSERVE & \$AVE

RPU Commercial Customer Corner: We Are Working for You

Did you know that you get your electricity and water from a public power utility? What does that mean to you?

- 1. RPU wants your business to succeed.** We live in this city too. You employ our family, friends, and neighbors. Your businesses help support resources we need as a community. The more your business can succeed, the more the city succeeds.
- 2. Decisions are made locally.** RPU's board, City council, and RPU staff are made up of members of our community and surrounding communities. We understand the dynamics and challenges of our community and make decisions in the best interest of our customers.
- 3. We are not for profit.** We don't need to satisfy stockholders that are looking for profit. Your rates are based on the cost of service and nothing more.
- 4. Your voice matters.** All the board meetings are open to the public and we welcome your comments and suggestions.
- 5. We are easy to reach.** Whether it be our friendly linemen, water operators, or our customer service staff, we are easy to contact. Whether by phone, email, or at our service center, we are available for you. Our staff is ready to meet you at your facility to discuss your needs with you.



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CONSERVE & \$AVE®

We want to hear from you. If you have any questions or concerns, contact one of your Energy and Environmental Advisors or just stop in to the service center at 4000 East River Rd. NE.



Behind the Scenes Shooting Tips from Tony

A quick peek behind the camera to show what it takes to shoot a *Tips from Tony* spot. Make sure to watch for new tips coming soon!



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www.rpu.org

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Where to Find RPU

Find us on social media for the latest RPU news and updates!

- @rpuoutages for outage information
- @rpualerts for RPU news and general information
- Rochester Public Utilities

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 percent 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 percent 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

