Plugged In

RPU Earns Diamond RP3 Designation

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RPU Ears Diamond RP3 Designation

RPU earned the 2022 Reliable Public Power Provider (RP3) Diamond designation by the American Public Power Association (APPA). The RP3 program recognizes public power utilities that demonstrate proficiency in reliability, safety, workforce development, and system improvement.

APPA is the voice of not-for-profit, community-owned utilities that power 49 million people in 2,000 towns and cities nationwide.

The RP3 designation has three possible levels of designation: Gold, Platinum, and Diamond. The application and review cycle is done on a three year cycle. RPU earned the Diamond designation previously in 2016, and 2019, making this year the third consecutive time RPU has been awarded the highest designation.

The RP3 application asks questions in four disciplines and is evaluated by a panel of 18 industry experts. The Diamond designation signifies that a utility has met over 98 percent of the evaluation criteria.

Letter from the GM

Summer brings hot temperatures and potential for severe weather. RPU and other area utilities regularly prepare for and practice measures to ensure the safety and reliability of the grid.

RPU is a member of the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO), which manages the high voltage electric grid across 15 states and parts of Canada. This spring, MISO issued a report cautioning MISO’s north and central regions about the possibility of energy emergencies during peak summer conditions. If electric load demand exceeds the available electric generation, the electric grid can be thrown off balance. To maintain the integrity of the regional system, MISO will implement their energy emergency procedures starting with using all available generation resources, voluntary calls to reduce usage and as a last resort, requiring utilities to shed electric load for a certain amount of time resulting in intermittent service interruptions.

While RPU has sufficient generation resources to serve our projected demand, we are required to respond to these emergency requests in ensure the reliability of the larger interconnected grid.

While these situations are rare, please know that RPU and MISO continually prepare for summer season situations that include training and conducting exercises in preparation to act if necessary.

While we cannot predict the future or see what weather conditions may arise, trust that everyone at RPU is working to provide electric services without interruptions of any kind. If MISO calls on its members, including RPU, to reduce load with the possibility of interrupting electrical loads, RPU will provide timely communication through the local media, RPU social channels, and the RPU Connect app with its customers and stakeholders.

Mark Kotschevar
RPU General Manager
RPU and Olmsted County are proud to announce the recipients of the 2021 Environmental Achievement Awards.

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. 2021 categories available for nomination included climate change, conservation, education, energy, renewables, sustainable food production, water, and other.

The Environmental Achievement Awards are proud to recognize community members, businesses, and organizations making a significant contribution to environmental quality in Olmsted County. Congratulations!

Award Tree Sculptures are uniquely designed and created by local artist Lani Towne.

RPU is Accepting Nominations for those Making a Difference in Local Environmental Quality

To nominate an individual, family, youth, organization, farm, or business, print a nomination form from the RPU website (rpu.org). Completed nominations for 2022 are due by Friday, October 7, 2022 to Anthony Wittner (wittner.anthony@co.olmsted.mn.us).
Successful 2022 Arbor Day Festivities

In April, it was great to be back with customers and the Rochester community to celebrate Arbor Day together at RPU’s 20th Annual Arbor Day Celebration!

As part of our Arbor Day festivities, RPU held a poster contest with hundreds of local elementary school students submitting 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 2023 RPU calendar (available at the end of 2022).

RPU lineworkers joined in the Arbor Day festivities by partnering with Rochester Parks and Recreation to plant boulevard trees. This year, trees were planted along 14th Street NW between 4th Street and 11th Street. The boulevard trees were carefully selected to ensure they were the proper species of tree for the 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. This is called ‘The Right Tree in The Right Place’ by the Arbor Day Foundation (arborday.org).

Overall Winner - Jia-Xin Fan
Fourth Grade,
Gibbs Elementary,
Teacher - Ms. Bottema

First Grade - Mia Huang,
Churchill Elementary,
Teacher - Mrs. Mueller

Second Grade - Shaarav Nawale,
Washington Elementary,
Teacher - Mrs. Hanzlik

Third Grade - Adelaide Meyer,
Hoover Elementary,
Teacher - Mrs. Cox

Fourth Grade - Nadine Saadalla,
Folwell Elementary,
Teacher - Mrs. Lanza

Fifth Grade - Inge Zetsche,
Hoover Elementary,
Teacher - Mr. Majerus
Join your neighbors & Rochester Police Department for a night of free food & activities

Be sure to visit the RPU booth and truck on display!

**TUESDAYS 6-8PM**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>George Gibbs</td>
<td>June 14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ben Franklin</td>
<td>June 28</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jefferson</td>
<td>July 12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Folwell</td>
<td>July 26</td>
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<tr>
<td>Slatterly Park</td>
<td>August 9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Watson Field</td>
<td>August 23</td>
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**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.

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

More info at [gopherstateonecall.org](http://gopherstateonecall.org)

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**Give the gift of a few extra cents.**

**Neighbors Chipping In** helps people in Rochester pay their utility bill.

It's easy to give. You can round up your utility bill or add a specific amount.

Call 507-280-1500 to enroll or visit [www.rpu.org](http://www.rpu.org) for more information.

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**RPU has been made aware of solar contractors soliciting door-to-door.**

RPU does not endorse or work exclusively with any solar contractors, so ask for licenses, credentials, references, and get multiple quotes.

Visit our solar page on [www.rpu.org](http://www.rpu.org) for information on choosing a solar installer.
Power Outage Safety

Power outages can happen for reasons such as overgrown vegetation, equipment failure, animals, car accidents, and storms. Many RPU employees are also RPU customers. We understand the inconvenience for customers anytime the power goes out. RPU assures that all available resources are made available to address the outage immediately.

Regardless of outage size, RPU's first priority is safety for customers, the community, and RPU employees. We will never compromise the safety of anyone to expedite power restoration.

RPU line workers 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.

If You Experience a Power Outage 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, additional steps to safely have your power restored may be required—even if dislocated lines are still 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 will be contacted for a reconnection.

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

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.

Create a 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. If you were to lose power, does your household have a plan? Here are some things to consider:
Prepare cell phones. Add RPU's outage line to your contact list to report your outage (507-280-9191). Download the RPU Connect mobile app. If bad weather and strong winds are in the forecast, keep your cell phone charged.

Find back up locations. Create a list of friends or family to stay with if necessary. Even if your home is heated using natural gas, heat will not work when the electricity is out because the fan on furnaces is powered electrically.

Review garage doors. 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 before an outage to find out how to release the opener manually.

Have accessible light. Keep flashlights and new batteries in an accessible location to provide light and safety. Though most phones also have a flashlight, it's best practice to minimize cell phone use in a power outage.

Consider medical conditions. If you or someone you know has a medical condition that calls for electricity for medical equipment, seek medical attention early rather than waiting for the electricity to come back on at your home.

Stay away from lines. Never go near downed power lines or wires. Power lines can stay energized even when lying on the ground. Call RPU immediately (507-280-9191) if you ever see a downed line. Keep children and pets away from the area.

Minimize fridge use. If a power outage occurs, remember that according to the US Department of Health, food left in a closed refrigerator/freezer should be safe for consumption for up to 4 hours. Keep the door closed as much as possible. Discard refrigerated perishable foods after four hours without power. Read details at foodsafety.gov/food-safety-charts/food-safety-during-power-outage
Clean Water Actions

**Summer’s Top 5 Clean Water Actions**

1. **Practice Smart Landscape Watering**
   Water your lawn and gardens during early morning or later evening hours to minimize evaporation and ensure the water gets soaked up by plants.

2. **Don’t Flush Wipes**
   All wipes—even ones that claim to be flushable—will clog sanitary sewer pipes. All wipes should be put in the trash and not in the toilet.

3. **Install a Rain Barrel**
   Rain barrels capture rainwater for future use. The water can be used to water lawns and landscaping, wash windows, cars, or equipment. It’s a great way to conserve water, and there’s an RPU rebate available after installation!

4. **Adopt a Drain**
   By participating in the Adopt-a-Drain program, you can formally select a drain in your neighborhood and keep it clear of leaves, trash, and other debris to reduce water pollution. Sign up at [adopt-a-drain.org](https://adopt-a-drain.org) today.

5. **Grow Native Plants**
   Native plants help rainwater soak into the ground where deep roots can remove pollutants before the water replenishes the groundwater aquifers. Native plants also provide food and a home for wildlife - especially pollinators like bees, butterflies, and birds.

Already practicing our top five? Find more tips at [rochesterstormwater.com](https://rochesterstormwater.com) and [rpu.org/water](https://rpu.org/water).