



ROCHESTER
PUBLIC UTILITIES
WE PLEDGE, WE DELIVER™

Plugged In

**RPU Honored
with Prestigious
Awards for Safety
Excellence**

Details on page 5

JUL / AUG
2024

From the Desk of the General Manager



Tim McCollough
General Manager

The five R's have been the foundation of RPU's strategic plan for many years. The five R's include: Reliability, Rates, Responsibility, Relationships, and Reputation. Recently, an update of the strategic plan was conducted, and data collected from assessment surveys showed that the five R's are still relevant today and will remain unchanged into the future. **This issue highlights Reliability.**

The severe storms on May 21 knocked out power to nearly 7,000 customers at about 100 different locations. Over the course of 28 hours, field crews cleared tree limbs and replaced broken power lines while internal staff dispatched line crews and managed customer calls. RPU's ability to quickly and safely respond to weather events like this demonstrates our dedication, skill, and professionalism to providing reliable electric service to the community we serve.

Our Pledge:

We will maintain optimal levels of reliability by balancing system investments and prudent utility practices for both water and electric services, without compromising the safety of our teammates or the public.

Strategic Outcomes:

- Maintain optimal levels of water and electric reliability that are above industry standards.
- Keep reliability as a major driver in future power supply decisions and strategic investments.
- Mitigate risks to reliability proactively and cost effectively.

I look forward to sharing more about the other pillars of our strategic plan: Rates, Responsibility, Relationships, and Reputation. Each plays a crucial role in ensuring that we meet and exceed your expectations. On behalf of our entire team, thank you for your trust and support as we serve our community.



RELIABILITY



RATES



RESPONSIBILITY



RELATIONSHIPS



REPUTATION

Plugged In added digital!

Scan the QR code to join our digital mailing list.



ROUND UP



FOR ROCHESTER!

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 your utility bill or add a specific amount. Call RPU Customer Care at 507-280-1500 to enroll or scan the QR code to learn more at www.rpu.org.



*Donations can be cancelled at any time.



Aerial photo of the 71-acre Valleyhigh Drive site with 10 megawatts of solar installed.



RESPONSIBILITY

Valleyhigh Solar Site Receives Minnesota Habitat-Friendly Solar Project Designation

Rochester Public Utilities (RPU), in conjunction with West Side Solar Partners LLC, proudly announces that the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources has designated the solar installation on Valleyhigh Drive a Minnesota Habitat Friendly Solar Project. This recognition underscores RPU's commitment to sustainability and environmental stewardship.

The Minnesota Habitat Friendly Solar Standard, established by the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources, acknowledges

projects that demonstrate significant benefits to local ecosystems, particularly gamebirds, songbirds, and pollinators. The Valleyhigh Drive site has met and exceeded these standards, contributing positively to the region's biodiversity.

To ensure ongoing compliance with the standard, project owners or managers must submit an assessment form for established projects at the end of the third year of vegetation establishment, with subsequent assessments every three years thereafter.

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

Help RPU reduce electric demand during Peak Savings Events. Participate in our Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) program.

During the season of high electric use May 1-September 30, you'll agree to allow RPU to adjust the temperature of your smart thermostat^ by two (2) to four (4) degrees during Peak Savings Events. **Peak Savings Events will not occur on weekends or holidays.** Read the BYOD FAQs and Terms and Conditions at www.rpu.org.

***When you join BYOD, 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 enroll today:



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



RPU May Need Access to Your Water Meter: What You Need to Know

RPU will be contacting a portion of customers regarding the replacement of aging communication devices on water meters. This initiative aims to enhance the efficiency and reliability of water meter readings, ensuring accurate billing and better service for all customers.

Why does RPU Need Access?

The current communication devices on water meters have power sources that have come to the end of their life span and need replacement. When the power source fails, the devices will not communicate reads to RPU.

What to Expect

- *Phone Call:* Customers can anticipate receiving a phone call from RPU to schedule an appointment for the replacement.
- *Appointment:* RPU understands the value of your time. That's why appointments will be scheduled within two-hour windows to accommodate your schedule as much as possible. Because RPU water technicians need to enter the home, we will require that an adult be present during the appointment.
- *Installation:* During the appointment, RPU water technicians will quickly and efficiently replace the communication device on your water meter. The RPU

employee will arrive in an RPU vehicle, have an RPU uniform on, and will have an employee identification badge to share. We ask that customers have clear access to the meter and around the meter, to ensure safety for the technician. Please note that your water will need to be shut off during the exchange but will be restored before the technician leaves your home.

- *Updated Equipment:* By replacing the communication device on the water meter, we can ensure accurate meter readings, which will also contribute to the overall efficiency and reliability of the water utility system.

For any questions or concerns regarding the process, contact RPU's Customer Care team at **507-280-1500**.



Pictured are new water meter styles that are being installed.

Is it time for a more energy efficient cooling system?

RPU's Central Air Conditioner and Air Source Heat Pump rebates start at \$100.



CONSERVE & \$AVE™

Scan the QR code to visit www.rpu.org and download an Electric HVAC rebate application with complete terms and conditions.





RPU Honored with Prestigious Awards for Safety Excellence

RPU has been honored with two awards for outstanding safety practices in 2023—a testament to our unwavering commitment to safety and excellence.

We proudly announce that RPU has been recognized by the American Public Power Association (APPA) with the esteemed 2023 APPA

Safety Award of Excellence. This recognition underscores RPU’s dedication to maintaining the highest standards of safety in our operations. The rigorous criteria for this award include:

- Demonstrating a clear commitment to safety culture.
- Implementing effective safety policies and procedures.
- Continuously striving for improvement in safety performance.

This achievement reflects the collective effort of every RPU employee who prioritizes safety in everything we do.

Additionally, we are delighted to share that RPU has also been honored with the Minnesota Governor’s Bronze Safety Award. This accolade further validates RPU’s exceptional safety record and our ongoing efforts to ensure the well-being of our employees and the communities we serve.

At RPU, safety isn’t just a priority; it’s a core value ingrained in our organizational culture. From our field crews who maintain our infrastructure to the staff at the RPU Service Center who support our operations, every RPU employee plays a vital role in ensuring a safe work environment for our customers and colleagues.

These awards serve as reminders of the importance of maintaining vigilance and dedication to safety at all times to ensure everyone goes home when the workday is done.




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 for information on choosing a solar installer.





Rain couldn't dampen the fun at RPU's Arbor Day Celebration 2024

When stormy weather began the morning of RPU's Annual Arbor Day Celebration, the planning team quickly secured the RCTC Fieldhouse for the enormous event. Happily, the thousands of students, attendees, and vendors didn't seem phased by the venue change. The community still gathered to celebrate and learn about the benefits of trees in the Rochester area.

The elementary school Arbor Day Poster Contest winners were recognized for their posters celebrating this year's theme, "Trees Are Terrific... For Animals Too!" The winning artwork will be featured in the upcoming 2025 RPU calendar, which will be available for free later this fall.

RPU lineworkers and Rochester Parks & Recreation staff were excited to celebrate Arbor Day as they do each year by partnering to plant boulevard trees in neighborhoods. This year, they selected neighborhoods near John Adams Middle School and planted four different species of trees appropriate for boulevard planting.

The 2024 Poster Contest Winners



Overall:
Shaarav, 4th Grade
Mrs. Peloquin-Fink
Washington Elementary



First Grade:
Naomi
Ms. Beck
Longfellow Elementary



Second Grade:
Hannah
Mrs. Parker
Gibbs Elementary



Third Grade:
Beckett
Mrs. Butler
Gibbs Elementary



Fourth Grade:
Sienna
Mr. Lynch
Gibbs Elementary



Fifth Grade:
Addison
Mr. Wiest
Bishop Elementary

Thanks again to our partnering sponsors:





Tree Trimming Prevents Outages & Promotes Safety

RPU will spend nearly \$1.7 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 working on clearing lines safely, here's what you should know:

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

Customers can help RPU by inventorying 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 to ensure that you aren't affected by an outage due to trees damaging overhead lines and infrastructure.



ARBOR DAY CELEBRATION 2024



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








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



Our office is closed on July 4 for Independence Day.

Social Media:


-  @rochesterpublicutilities
-  Rochester Public Utilities
-  blog.rpu.org
-  RPU TV
-  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)



SIGN UP FOR OUTAGE ALERTS!




Log in to >> RPU Connect*
Go to >> My Account
Go to >> Notification Preferences




*Scan the QR code to log in to RPU Connect via “My Account” on www.rpu.org or download our mobile app:







**POWER OUTAGE
ALERT**



**POWER OUTAGE
UPDATE**



**POWER OUTAGE
RESTORED**