



ROCHESTER
PUBLIC UTILITIES
WE PLEDGE, WE DELIVER®

Plugged In

Join us for our
**Annual Arbor Day
Celebration**

Details on page 2

MAR / APR
2023



2023 MMUA Tom Bovitz Memorial Scholarship Award

A local high school senior could get up to \$2,000 to attend a post-secondary educational institution from the Minnesota Municipal Utilities Association (MMUA).

Guidelines for Submission

The decisions by judges and disqualifications according to the guidelines are final. Please read and follow guidelines closely:

Only high school seniors are eligible. Those eligible must be, or have as a legal guardian, a customer of an MMUA-member municipal electric or gas utility.

Contact Tony Benson at RPU to schedule an in-person meeting with an RPU representative to gather information and background prior to writing the essay. To schedule, email tbenson@rpu.org or call 507-280-1534.

Once approved by RPU, applicants must compose and submit a required essay. Essay is to be original and range in length from 500 to 750 words, typed, and double-spaced.

All essays should include a cover page with the writer's name and address.

Judges look particularly for originality and the relevance of the prompts to the writer and his/her city.

The deadline for submitting essays to RPU is March 31, 2023. Entries shall be submitted to the governing body of the municipal utility. The local governing body may appoint a separate individual or group to judge entries. The local governing body will send the winning essay to MMUA for entry into the statewide contest.

A committee of MMUA members will select the winners, with an announcement by mid-May. An independent person or body may be designated to select the winner of the local essay. If there is an independent body selecting the winner and they do not know who wrote which essay, relatives of utility personnel are eligible to enter the contest.

Essay Prompt

Write a 500 to 750 word, typed, double-spaced essay reflecting on one or more of the following prompts:

- What is the benefit of a city maintaining local control of its utilities?
- How does your hometown provide reliable, sustainable, and affordable utility service?
- How does your municipal utility make life easier for its customers?

Prizes

The scholarship fund is split into \$2,000, \$1,500, \$1,000 and \$500 scholarships, and awarded to essay contest winners who plan to attend a post-secondary educational institution.



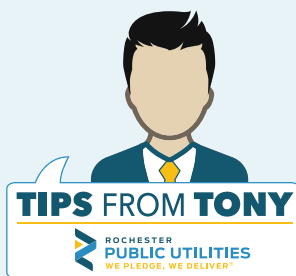
Be Aware of Utility Scams

Please be vigilant and mindful of utility scams. Scams come in many forms, but phone scams are most frequently reported to RPU.

Imposters are calling RPU customers stating utilities will be shut off unless immediate payment is made over the phone, usually requesting payment via credit card, pre-paid debit card, or mobile cash app. These calls can happen

at any time of the day or night. Beware—with new phone technology, scammers can even make the caller ID show RPU's Customer Care line of 507-280-1500.

RPU will never request bank or secure information from you over the phone unless you ask to discuss your account. The RPU representative will then ask for information to identify who you are and that you are authorized to speak on behalf of the account. The only time it is appropriate to offer financial or bank information over the phone is if you, the customer, prompted the call to RPU at 507-280-1500.



What To Do If You Receive A Scam Call:

If someone calls threatening to cut off your power if you don't pay, hang up! Call RPU at 507-280-1500 to report the scam. Never give personal or financial information to an unknown caller. Remember that RPU will never use threatening language or make forceful demands for payment. This type of scam is not unique to Rochester. Utilities throughout the nation deal with scam calls. **Please share this information with friends and family to help ensure that they don't fall victim to a phone scam.**

Join us at RPU's 21st Annual Arbor Day Celebration

Friday, April 28, 2023 • 11am-1pm
Three Links – Silver Lake Park
(Rain Location: RCTC's Field House)

FREE Food, Trees, and Giveaways (while supplies last)
Live Music • Family Activities • Poster Contest • More!



2022 Arbor Day Poster Contest Overall Winner • Jia-Xin Fan

CALLING FOR NOMINATIONS!



2022-23

Nominate someone you know for outstanding environmental achievement in Olmsted County.

Climate Change • Conservation • Education • Energy • Renewables • Sustainable Food Production • Water • Other

FORMS: www.rpu.org • DUE: Oct 6, 2023



How to Become a Power Generation Employee

The Power Generation section of RPU operates and maintains a wide variety of technologies used to generate steam or electricity including hydroelectric, gas turbines, reciprocating engines, and large boilers. These resources can be dispatched by an outside entity, Midcontinent Independent System Operators (MISO), at any time, day or night. Power Generation employs engineers, electricians, mechanics, controls technicians, and operators that are always ready to start, repair, calibrate, and troubleshoot the equipment. Each generation unit uses its own unique control system, which means staff must be knowledgeable in all types of computer programs and mechanical tools. The team includes hard-working and creative people willing to learn the many intricacies of power generation.

With a variety of different generation technologies, there are many avenues to starting your career within the power industry. Many of the employees in Power Generation have gone through the Building Utility Mechanic (BUM) or Facility and Services Technician fast programs at RCTC to build a base set of knowledge before specializing their craft. RPU also hires mechanical or electrical engineers, and supervisors who enjoy working with people. Others start their education in one of the local apprenticeship programs such as the IBEW 343 Electrical Workers Union. Much of the knowledge can be gained on the job meaning you just have to get your foot in the door!

Shift Foreman Dave Holtorf in front of Silver Lake Plant Unit 2 turbine generator. The 1953 boiler and auxiliary equipment in the background allowed this unit to produce up to 120,000 lbs/hour of steam at 625 psi and 830F on natural gas or coal for 60 years. RPU currently uses this unit to produce steam using only natural gas.

"I started with the two year BUM course at RCTC and held a maintenance job at a local hotel for nine years. I was offered a job at the Silver Lake Power plant, and WOW, this was an awesome dream come true. I had my boiler's license and was super fascinated by the generation process. The city had many opportunities to advance and build a career. The people I've worked with over the last 27+ years have been wonderful and I could not have picked a better place to work than RPU."
- Dave Holtorf, Steam Operations Foreman

With a career in Power Generation, you can expect:

- An emphasis on safety
- Good wages
- A mix of inside and outside work
- Using a variety of calibration, electronic, and mechanical tools
- Learning various control logic programs
- Disassembling and reassembling complex pieces of equipment
- Working with high pressures, temperatures, and flows
- A sense of accomplishment after major repairs and overhauls
- Working with different crafts as a team to solve problems





Jeff Olson stands next to RPU's Westinghouse 251B2 Gas Turbine (GT) originally installed in 1974, and most recently overhauled in 2022. This GT can produce 30 MW of electricity.

"It all started when a friend graduated from the BUM Mechanic Program at RCTC and was hired at RPU. I thought to myself, I can do that! So at age 28, I followed his path and signed up for the BUM program and interned at RPU when I had the opportunity. I was hired as a summer helper on the Operating Crew before graduating, which was challenging working the rotating 12-hour shift while balancing school and family life. I have worked on the Operating Crew, Coal Crew, and am now currently a Controls and Instrumentation Results Technician."

-Jeff Olson, Control & Instrumentation Results Technician

Mechanic Zach Peterson and Lead Mechanic Jim Pettis stand next to one of RPU's five Wartsila W20V34SG reciprocating combustion engines installed in 2017. These five units can produce a total of 47 MW of electricity.

"I joined RPU in 2018 after starting my career in the power generation world at the Olmsted County Waste-to-Energy Facility. Working in both the operations and maintenance sides has given me hands-on experience with the equipment we operate to provide the most reliable electric power possible. Knowing our equipment is maintained and ready to be called on at any time day or night is something our entire group should take pride in."

-Zach Peterson, Plant Mechanic

Minnesota Cold Weather Rule Ends April 30

The Minnesota Cold Weather Rule window is coming to an end on April 30, 2023. If you are behind on paying your RPU bill, please contact RPU Customer Care to make arrangements to bring your account current by April 30. If no arrangement has been made and your account is not current as of April 30, your electric service may be shut off for non-payment.

RPU Customer Care (507-280-1500) is available from 8am to 5pm, Monday through Friday to assist you.

For full details on the Minnesota Cold Weather Rule, visit the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission website at mn.gov/puc/consumers/shut-off-protection/.



Are You Planting Too Close? The Dangers of Digging Near Transformers

Spring is a great time to plant new bushes and shrubs in your yard. However, be aware of potential problems when planting near or around transformers.

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

Each pad mounted transformer has a warning sticker affixed to it outlining the dangerous voltage

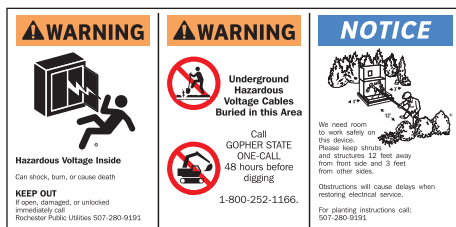
inside, the dangers of digging and planting around it, and a diagram for safe planting distances. This information is for the safety of both the customer and RPU line workers.

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

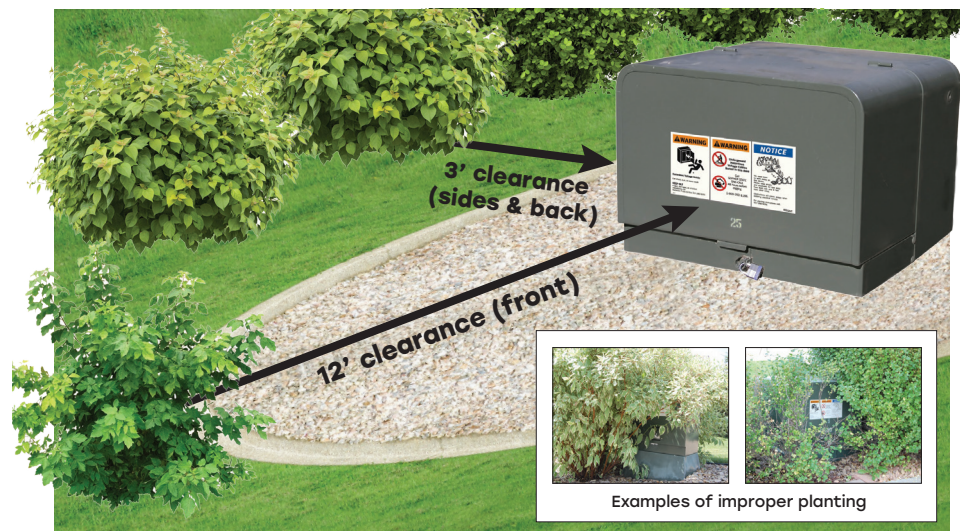
within that 10 feet, RPU may need to remove or cut the landscaping to ensure a safe working environment. The recommended clearance for all plantings near a transformer is 12 feet away from the front and 3 feet away from both sides. If you have questions regarding landscaping near a pad mounted transformer, call **RPU at 507-280-1500**.

HERE ARE YOUR GUIDELINES TO REMEMBER WHEN YOU PLANT NEAR TRANSFORMERS:

- 1. Contact Gopher State One Call before you dig anywhere in your yard!** They locate and mark underground utility services for you. Call (800) 252-1166 or submit an e-ticket at www.gopherstateonecall.org.
- 2. Maintain a 3-foot clearance to the sides and back of the transformer.** Equipment inside the box generates heat and needs air circulation to keep cool and run efficiently. Overheating could cause an outage.
- 3. Maintain a 12-foot clearance in front of the transformer.** Equipment inside is energized at high voltage. Line crews work on “energized” transformers to avoid interrupting your service. The linemen use long fiberglass insulated tools and need the clear space to work safely.
- 4. Use gravel, wood chips, grass or low ground cover around the transformer.** Flowers are okay but may get trampled if we have to work on it. To maintain reliable service, we check and service transformers on a regular basis without prior notification.



People prefer underground electric lines in their neighborhood. Pad-mounted transformers are part of the underground system. They are placed on easements in yards and serve the same purpose as transformers on utility poles. Because transformers may serve several homes, underground lines may go out from them in many directions.



Commercial Corner

New Energy and Environmental Advisor



RPU is pleased to announce the addition of Jake Shones to the Utility Programs and Services department as an Energy and Environmental Advisor. Jake will be working with commercial customers to assist with their energy needs.

Jake has over 16 years of experience in the energy industry. His background is in facility conservation and energy management—including 15 years with RPU in the Power Generation department and one year with Xcel Energy as a Technical Instructor for their nuclear generation plants. Jake is also a certified LEED Green Associate.

Jake was born and raised in Rochester, Minnesota and still currently resides here with his two young sons, Hayden and Grayson.

CONSERVE & \$AVE®

For questions regarding our Commercial programs and services, contact one of our Energy and Environmental Advisors.



Josh Mason
Energy and Environmental Advisor
jmason@rpu.org
507-280-1588



Mohamed Faal
Energy and Environmental Advisor
mfaal@rpu.org
507-280-1607



Anna Basimamovic
Energy and Environmental Advisor
abasimamovic@rpu.org
507-280-1565

Give Your House an Energy Makeover!



Attend one of our FREE energy efficiency workshops. Learn low-cost/no-cost ways to save and qualify for a \$50 home energy audit (\$400 value) which includes installation of energy saving materials.



MINNESOTA ENERGY RESOURCES | ROCHESTER PUBLIC UTILITIES WE PLEDGE, WE DELIVER

Saturday, March 4 10:00-11:00 a.m. -OR- Wednesday, May 24 6:30-7:30 p.m.

FREE CHILDCARE PROVIDED!

To register, call or email Stacy:
888-734-6365 | sbootscamp@mncee.org

To learn more, visit: www.rpu.org

One of our **CONSERVE & \$AVE®** programs.

Would you CHIP IN to help people in need?

RPU's Neighbors Chipping In program collects recurring donations* on your utility bill to help people in our community pay their bill.

Learn more at www.rpu.org or call RPU Customer Care at 507-280-1500 to enroll.



* Donations can be cancelled at any time.

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



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



Social Media:

-  @rochesterpublicutilities
-  @rpuoutages / @rpualerts
-  Rochester Public Utilities
-  blog.rpu.org
-  @rpualerts
-  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)

Holiday Light Recycling Results

RPU collected holiday lights from customers for recycling again this year. This event ran from November 1, 2022 through January 27, 2023. This year 2,814 pounds of holiday lighting was recycled. Here is a look at what we have collected over the years:



Year	Pounds Recycled
2011	4,500
2012	2,037
2013	873
2014	1,493
2015	1,578
2016	2,042
2017	1,820
2018	3,199
2019	2,922
2020	3,027
2021	2,425
2022	2,814
Total:	28,730

Coming Soon: RPU Payment Kiosk

A new, free, and convenient way to pay your bill is coming soon! An RPU payment kiosk will be installed at the RPU Service Center at 4000 E River Rd NE, available for making RPU bill payments anytime, 24/7.

The kiosk will accept cash, check, and credit card payments (Visa, MasterCard & Discover), which will post immediately to your RPU account.

