

RPU Plugged In

Photo by Chad Johnson

A spring sunset at the
Mayowood Stone Barn.

Prepping for spring!
What you will want to do
now to be ready for spring



PREPPING FOR

Despite what the weather conditions are today, warmer spring weather will soon be upon us. Before we know it, we will again be watering our yards and running our air conditioning to keep our homes comfortable when the dreaded Minnesota humidity comes.

With the anticipation of the spring season, now is a perfect time to address all of the necessary energy and water tasks to ensure that you will be ready for spring. We've developed a checklist for you to make sure you don't miss a thing!

❑ **Change the air filter.** Nothing will hinder the efficiency of your air conditioner more than letting dust and debris cake on your air filter. It is recommended that you change your air filter every month.

❑ **Clean and survey all of your light bulbs.** Dust build-up can greatly reduce the light output from your light bulbs. Also, make sure all of your bulbs are working properly. If you need new bulbs, remember RPU's rebate for compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) and light-emitting diodes (LEDs). For details, visit RPU's website at www.rpu.org.

❑ **Clean your coils.** It is a good practice to pull your refrigerator out each year and vacuum the coils on the bottom of the unit. The dust build-up provides more heat build-up and requires the unit to work harder, which uses more electricity. (Consult the owner's manual before beginning work.)

❑ **Test run your air conditioner (AC).** Spring is a good time to test your air conditioning unit to ensure that it is working properly. Contact your local AC contractor for a spring AC tune-up if you have concerns. (See page 6 for details on RPU's AC clean and tune rebate.) They should go over your unit thoroughly and provide you with measurements and areas of concern, if any. By calling now, the wait time for a service call should be shorter and the weather is cooler than it will be two months from now. If you need to purchase a new AC unit, refer to RPU's Conserve & Save® rebates on qualifying units. Visit www.rpu.org for more information.

❑ **Buy a power strip.** When the weather is warmer the family will want to be outside. Don't pay for electricity you don't need by leaving something on when you are outside; ensure everything gets turned off by putting it all on a power strip. A perfect application for this is for a TV and cable/satellite box or home

theater system. With one flick of the switch, you will know nothing is drawing power while you are outside enjoying the outdoors.

❑ **Invest in a rain barrel.** The spring showers will be coming soon, so make sure you collect and use the rain water when and where you want to. A rain barrel is an inexpensive way to collect rain water from the roof of your house. Get a rebate of \$10 per rain barrel from RPU!

❑ **Inspect your garden hoses.** Over the winter, hoses can become brittle and crack from the extreme changes in temperature. That's why it's important to inspect your garden hoses each spring to make sure that you aren't watering the driveway when you want that water for your new flower garden. Water lost down the driveway or sidewalk is literally money running down the drain.

❑ **Set irrigation timer.** Make sure you are getting the most out of your irrigation system by setting it to water at the most efficient time. We recommend setting your





irrigation timer to water in the early morning hours when your yard will be able to soak up the most water without having it evaporate from the sun. A deep soak of 45-60 minutes two to three times a week should be adequate, but that can be increased during dry, humid conditions. Also, inspect your sprinkler heads to ensure that the water is making it to your yard and not hardscape areas.



Photo by Josh Banks

ELECTRIC SAFETY MESSAGE

Each year, around this time, we start promoting our electrical safety demonstration which we make available for 3rd grade classes in Rochester to attend. It touches on the dangers associated with playing around overhead lines, taking safety precautions inside the house, and what to do in other scenarios involving electrical hazards.

The message about dangers involving electricity doesn't just pertain to school-aged children, but to everyone. That is why RPU is launching a new public awareness campaign around electrical safety. The program kicked off last month and reminds customers about the real dangers associated with electricity.

Electrical dangers can exist while working around the yard, using an electrical appliance, in storms, or even planting a tree. While all hazards can be avoidable by taking the necessary precautions, there are other instances on the rise that are illegal and very risky.

Tampering with RPU facilities, structures, and equipment is illegal and could be fatal. RPU employees working around the high levels of electricity are specially trained and have protective equipment to protect them while they work.



Attempting to access a service box or transformer for the purpose of removing metals or wire is also illegal and potentially deadly. The risk and danger is great and not worth taking a chance for.

Please report any suspicious activity around RPU facilities or if you think someone may be trying to tamper with a service box. Call RPU's emergency line at **507.280.9191**.



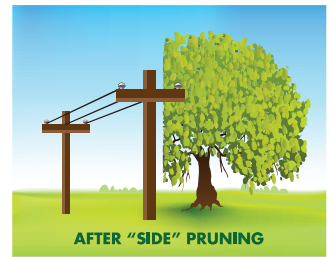
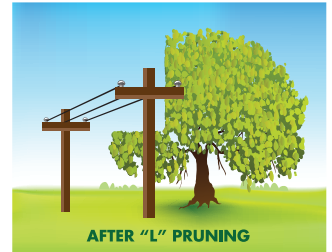
Check out www.gopherstateonecall.org for more information on where to dig.

Helpful Information on RPU Tree Pruning Operations



Taking an aggressive approach to tree pruning operations each spring is vital to maintaining the high electric reliability that RPU customers have come to expect.

RPU tree pruning crews along with RPU's tree pruning contractor, Wright Tree Service, will be diligently working throughout the spring and summer seasons to safely clear away vegetation from overhead lines. It is important that this work be left up to crews who are specially trained and certified to work around energized distribution and transmission lines.



RPU's recent tree survey of the city of Rochester identified more than 1,100 hazard trees, which if left unattended could become a cause of an outage. While we are aware of many trees and areas that need attention, we simply don't have the resources to know about every area where trees and vegetation are growing near overhead lines. Homeowners can help RPU by walking their property and taking their own tree inventory each spring. If you see a possible hazard on or near overhead electric lines, contact RPU immediately. RPU will send out a tree pruning expert to survey the situation and make a recommendation. Never under any circumstance try to remove the branch or limb yourself.

Depending on the location and severity of the problem, the tree may be pruned back or be recommended for removal. RPU clears vegetation away from lines a minimum of 10 feet, but again depending on the location a cut further back may be recommended.

RPU will be pruning in many areas of Rochester this spring and summer. Tree pruning location maps will be posted on the RPU blog as the tree pruning crews' progress.

Partners in Planting

\$20 ARBORIST COUPON

Submit to Maier Tree & Lawn for \$20 OFF the purchase of any service.

Must be an RPU customer to participate. One coupon per household.

Maier Tree & Lawn
3930 Hwy 14 E
Rochester, MN 55904
507-286-TREE (8733)
www.MaierTreeandLawn.com



In support of RPU's Partners in Planting program.

0313

Partners in Planting

\$10 NURSERY COUPON

Good for \$10 toward the purchase of any tree priced at \$75 or more, from Jim Whiting Nursery or Sargent's Gardens.

Must be an RPU customer to participate. One coupon per household.



www.jimwhitingnursery.com
3430 - 19th St NW • 289-3741



www.sargentsgardens.com
7955 - 18th Ave NW (289-0022) • 1811 - 2nd St SW (289-6068)

Name: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: (_____) _____ Email: _____

Type of tree purchased: _____ Size of tree purchased: _____ Planting distance from house: _____

On which side of your home will you be planting the tree?

☐ north ☐ south ☐ east ☐ west



In support of RPU's
Partners in Planting program.

0313

RPU Drinking Water Week Celebration

RPU will be hosting an open house at Cascade Meadow on May 9-11 to celebrate the benefits of water. Water experts will be on hand to answer questions and will be handing out FREE reusable water bottles while supplies last.

Check out the water exhibits and learn about what goes into ensuring water quality in Rochester, learn water conservation tips, and see how water gets to your home and business. Finish a fun worksheet and get entered into a drawing for a free rain barrel!

If you can't make it May 9-11, you can still finish a worksheet and register for a free rain barrel during the month of May. We will have a drawing each week to give away another rain barrel. Worksheets are available at the welcome desk at Cascade Meadow starting May 9.

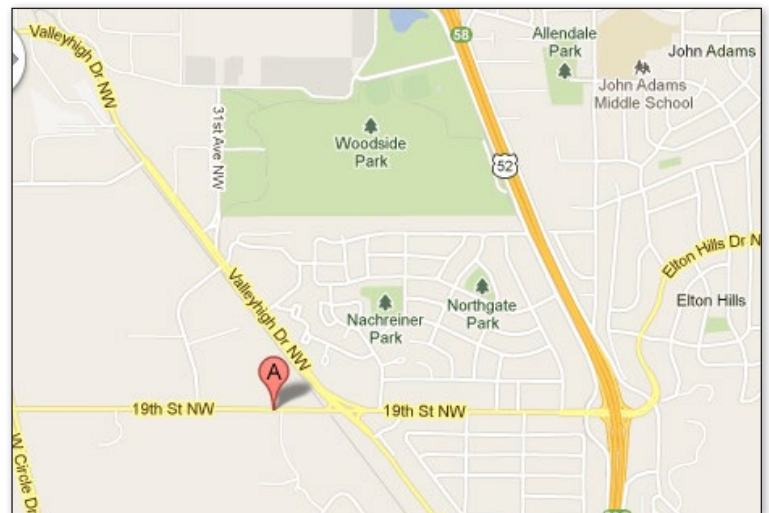
Cascade Meadow Wetlands and Environmental Science Center

When: Thursday – Saturday,
10 a.m. - 4 p.m., May 9-11

Address: 2900 19th St. NW (Next to the Rochester Athletic Club)

Phone: 507.252.8133

Website: www.cascademeadow.org



RPU Receives Source Water Protection Leadership Community Certificate

During Governor Dayton's proclamation of Safe Drinking Water Week in Minnesota for 2012, Lt. Governor Yvonne Prettner Solon handed out certificates to four Minnesota communities, including Rochester. The Source Water Protection Leadership Community certificates are designated by the Minnesota Department of Health. The communities received the certificate for serving as an example to other communities of how local government involvement by land owners, community residents, and government can lead to innovative and effective implementation of source water protection efforts.

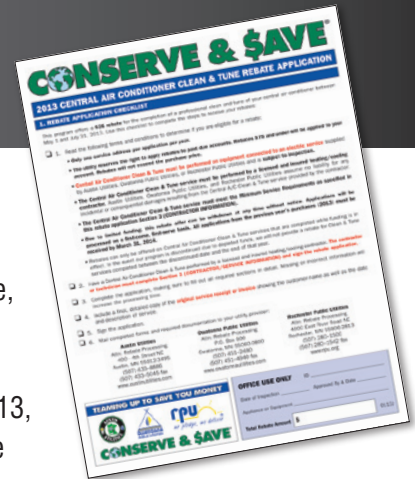
Pictured left to right: Joe Hensel, RPU; Todd Osweiler, RPU; Lt. Governor Yvonne Prettner Solon.

A/C Clean & Tune for Efficiency

and get a \$25 REBATE!

Would you drive your car 20,000 miles without oil changes or some kind of maintenance? Of course not! The same is true for your central air conditioning system. Regular preventative maintenance is the best way to ensure trouble-free, efficient operation.

Complete a **Central Air Conditioner Clean & Tune** between May 1 and July 31, 2013, and you can apply for a **\$25 CONSERVE & SAVE® rebate from RPU!** The service must be performed by a licensed, insured HVAC contractor who will thoroughly inspect your unit, provide you with measurements, and point out areas of concern. For the service to be eligible for a rebate, the technician needs to fill out a service checklist, found on the back of our rebate application.



Visit the RPU website at www.rpu.org to download a 2013 Central Air Conditioner Clean & Tune Rebate Application with complete terms and conditions.

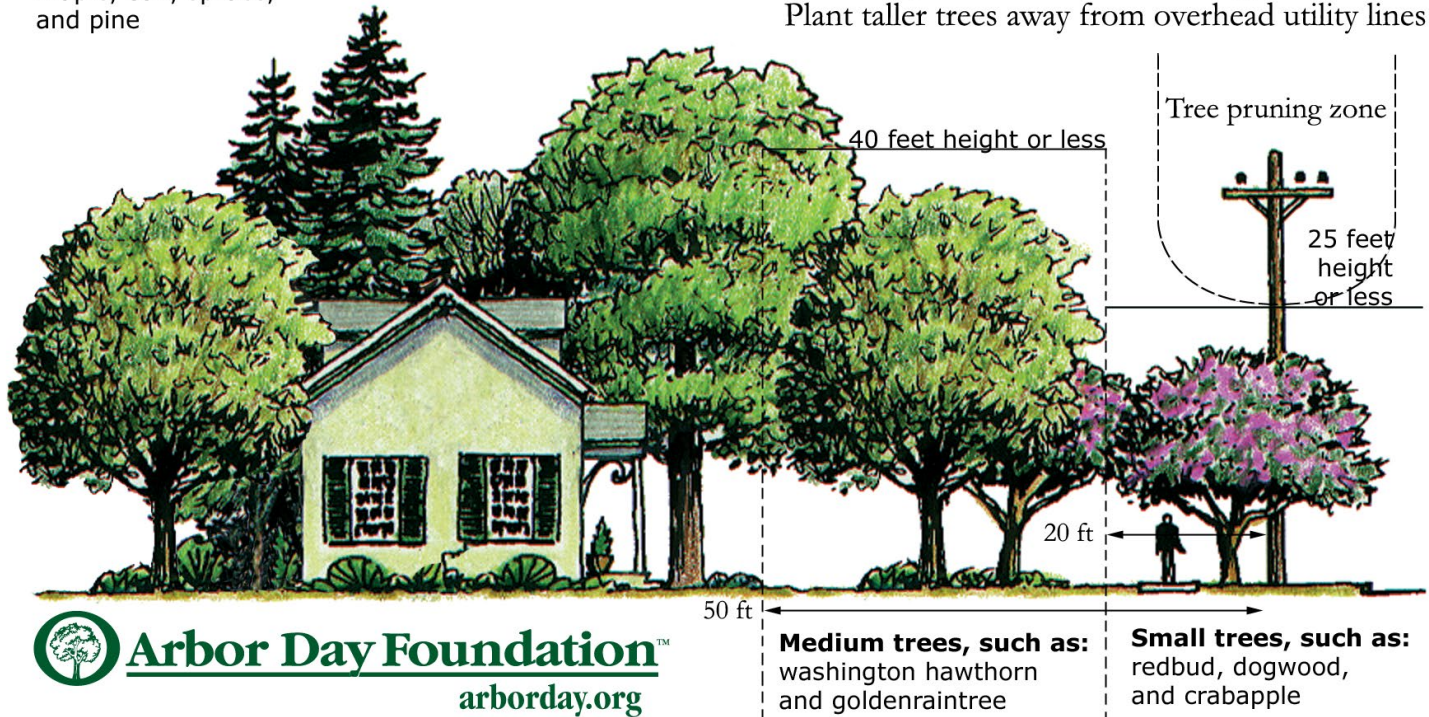


CONSERVE & \$AVE®

Tall trees, such as:
maple, oak, spruce,
and pine

Plant the right tree in the right place

Plant taller trees away from overhead utility lines



RIGHT TREE, RIGHT PLACE

When planting a tree in your yard, it is important to take into account the type of tree you are planting, the location, and the function for the tree. All of these items feed into the Arbor Day Foundation's Right Tree, Right Place education.

Planting a large tree under or near overhead power lines will require future maintenance of the tree, including pruning to an

unnatural size and shape or possibly even removal of a healthy tree. Large trees near overhead lines cause a major issue for electric reliability and for safety.

Always consult with your local tree expert or contact RPU before planting trees near overhead lines.

Call Before You Dig

As you are plotting out your tree plantings, landscaping, or maybe even a new deck or play area, remember to always *Call Before You Dig* this spring. Gopher State One Call is a free utility locating service.

Gopher State One Call is an important service to help keep customers and utility workers safe. It's not only quick and easy; it is also your responsibility as a homeowner.

www.gopherstateonecall.org
1-800-252-1166



Color Code Chart

The American Public Works Association encourages public agencies, utilities, contractors, associations, manufacturers, and all others involved in excavation to adopt the ULCC Uniform Color Code using the ANSI standard Z53.1 Safety Colors shown below. These colors are used to mark the various underground utilities that may be found during a dig. Flags or paint are examples of materials that are used to mark areas using the colors below.

	WHITE - PROPOSED EXCAVATION
	PINK - TEMPORARY SURVEY MARKINGS
	RED - ELECTRIC POWER LINES, CABLES, CONDUIT AND LIGHTING CABLES
	YELLOW - GAS, OIL, STEAM, PETROLEUM OR GASEOUS MATERIALS
	ORANGE - COMMUNICATION, ALARM OR SIGNAL LINES, CABLE OR CONDUIT
	BLUE - POTABLE WATER
	PURPLE - RECLAIMED WATER, IRRIGATION AND SLURRY LINES
	GREEN - SEWER AND DRAIN LINES





4000 East River Road NE
Rochester, MN 55906
507.280.1500
www.rpu.org

PRESORTED
STANDARD
US POSTAGE
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BlueSpire



RPU's 11th Annual Arbor Day Celebration

Friday, April 26 • 11 am-1 pm
Mayo Park - Downtown Rochester

FREE ADMISSION **FREE FOOD***
GIVEAWAYS* **FREE TREES***
LIVE MUSIC • FAMILY ACTIVITIES • AND MORE!

Sponsoring
Partners:



For more information visit: www.rpu.org

*while supplies last



Did You Know?

- Residential outdoor water use across the United States accounts for nearly 9 billion gallons of water each day, mainly for landscape irrigation.
- Experts estimate that as much as half of the water we use outdoors is being wasted due to evaporation, wind, or runoff caused by inefficient irrigation methods and systems.
- Homes with automatically timed irrigation systems use about 50 percent more water outdoors than those without. Your system can waste even more if it's programmed incorrectly, a sprinkler head is pointed in the wrong direction, or you have a leak.
- A home with an automatic irrigation system that isn't properly programmed or maintained can waste as much as 30,000 gallons of water annually.
- A broken or missing sprinkler head could waste as much as 25,000 gallons of water and more than \$90 over a six-month irrigation season.



Upcoming RPU Board Meetings

Join RPU during one of their
Board meetings.

Location: RPU service center
When: April 30
Time: 4 p.m.

Payments can always be made online
at www.rpu.org or over the phone by
calling **855.210.2285**.