Larry Koshire retiring at the end of April.

Thanks for your dedication and service to the city of Rochester!
Message from Larry Koshire

As this issue of RPU Plugged In goes to press, the winter of 2014 is still very close in our rearview mirror. We have experienced historic cold spells, the occasional blizzard, and continuous and accumulating snowfall. All of this has combined to challenge Rochester Public Utilities (RPU) to keep the water flowing and the electricity available to our customers. This is especially an unusual year for the cold, and low amounts of early snow helped the frost penetrate to unexpected depths. As a result numerous water service lines froze and challenged RPU crews and plumbers to thaw them out and maintain water flow. As we speak, the frost is not totally out of the ground, and we would encourage customers to remain vigilant on their services by monitoring the temperature of the water coming into their home. It should be above 40 degrees, to prevent any freezing that might occur. Warm weather outside does not necessarily mean that the frost is immediately coming out of the ground.

In addition to the difficulties of the cold weather and the frost, the winter winds and heavy wet snows challenged RPU electrical crews from time to time. RPU customers, in the face of these outages, have been very patient, and RPU crews have appreciated the cooperation and the patience shown while they are working long hours to restore service. The RPU staff, including inside staff and outside crews, have only one thing in mind, and that is to provide safe and reliable service to our water and electric customers. My thanks and recognition goes out for all of their combined efforts during this especially difficult winter of 2014.

We would also like to recognize others who have worked very hard, and in difficult conditions, to maintain public safety and respond to individual issues. These would include the local police force, local fire department, and public works employees who worked very diligently to clear the roads and provide for safe passage. Let us hope we do not see this type of winter again for many years.

We are encouraged by longer days and warmer weather, and can look forward to our spring activities and what Minnesotans like to do, and that is being outside. Please put on your calendar our celebration of Arbor Day on April 25, 2014. Please look in the local media for more information on the details of this celebration of trees sponsored by RPU. We have no guarantee but only hope the snow will be gone by then.

Larry

Koshire has been the general manager of RPU since 1997.
More on Frozen Water Services

This winter was certainly a trying time for many water utilities in Minnesota and the Midwest including RPU. The unprecedented frost levels caused many water service lines to freeze in Rochester. Here are some statistics from this winter and helpful information and resources to help you as Rochester thaws.

- More than 265 frozen water services have been reported to RPU.
- 1,700 customers have reported that they are running their water.
- More than 2,300 visits on February 20 to the RPU website. An average day is around 400.

Has the cold and frost line ever affected RPU water service lines like this in the past?

Customer/water service lines have been affected in the past, but never to this extent. By all accounts from current RPU staff, these are the lowest frost levels we have experienced, and the most frozen services ever recorded.

Where can I monitor the frost level?

Customers are able to monitor the Rochester frost level on the RPU website home page, www.rpu.org. Look for the red bar in the middle of the home page.

Should I keep monitoring my water temperature?

As long as the frost level continues to show at or near 6 feet below the ground level, there is a possibility of a frozen water service. If your water temperature is below 40 degrees Fahrenheit, run a constant pencil-width (1/4”) stream of water from a faucet for the next two months. Customers should call RPU customer service during regular business hours if they are going to be running their water so we can note their account (i.e., higher water usage and to add to the list for recalculating wastewater base).

Can I sign up now for RPU’s Service Assured® Underground Utility Repair Coverage Program?

At this time, in order to sign up for Service Assured®, customers must have an inspection done by RPU. The inspection includes measuring their water temperature, inspecting their meter valve, and their boulevard shut off. Please call RPU at 507.280.1500 to schedule an inspection.

How will I know it is safe to turn my constant water stream off?

RPU will notify customers in the media and on the RPU website (www.rpu.org) that it is safe to turn off the constant stream of water. We anticipate this time being around late April.

What can I do to ensure that my water service lines don’t freeze next winter?

- Monitor the frost level on the Minnesota Department of Transportation website and monitor the temperature of your water throughout the winter.
- Pay close attention to your water service lines coming into your home.
- Make sure the cold air return for your furnace isn’t turned toward your service line pipes.
- In the fall, remove all outdoor hoses from outdoor spigots.

THANKS! FOR LETTING IT RUN

We suggest that you...
PLEASE KEEP IT RUNNING!

Running your water has helped alleviate the problem of frozen services, but it is not time to stop!
RPU's 12th Annual
ARBOR DAY CELEBRATION
Friday, April 25, 2014 • 11am–1pm

NEW LOCATION!
Three Links – Silver Lake Park
840 7th St NE • Rochester

RAIN LOCATION: RCTC’s Field House

ADMISSION IS FREE!!

Live Music • Tree Experts • Family Activities • Poster Contest • Winners Awarded

AVAILABLE WHILE SUPPLIES LAST:
Tasty Food • Giveaways • Free Trees

QUESTIONS: Stephanie • 507.280.1639
MORE INFORMATION: www.rpu.org

Sponsoring Partners:

Co-Sponsors:

Participants:
• Minnesota Department of Natural Resources • Olmsted Soil & Water Conservation District •
• Quarry Hill Nature Center • Rochester Public Library • Rochester Public Works • Zumbro Valley Audubon •
Here’s a peek into the RPU Arbor Day photo book from last year!

Photos by Josh Banks.
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 education for The Right Tree in the Right Place.

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.

**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
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.

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.

RPU NURSERY COUPON

0314

PARTNERS IN PLANTING

$10 NURSERY COUPON

In support of RPU’s Partners in Planting program.

SUBMIT TO MAIER TREE & LAWN FOR $20 OFF THE PURCHASE OF ANY TREE CARE SERVICE.

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

$20 ARBORIST COUPON

FREE ENERGY WORKSHOP

Kellogg Middle School • 6:30pm

MONTING 05.12.2014
Lincoln K-8 Choice School • 6:30pm

Attendees are eligible for a $50 home energy audit! ($400 value) Learn more at www.rpu.org.

NEIGHBORHOOD ENERGY CHALLENGE

REGISTER WITH ASHLEY:
888.734.6365 • arobertson@mncee.org

RPU’s Partners in Planting program.

0314
Thanks for Stopping by Our Booth!

Thanks for stopping by our booth at the Rochester Area Builder’s Home Show! We enjoyed talking with all of the visitors to our booth and answering customer questions. If you have further questions or are looking for more information, call RPU at 507.280.1500 or visit the RPU website at www.rpu.org.

Hydrant Flushing Reminder

Check the blog on the RPU website (www.rpu.org) to see where RPU water crews will be flushing water hydrants in April. Fire hydrants are flushed to remove mineral deposits and sediment from the water mains and to ensure proper operation for fire protection.

* Weather permitting.

RPU received the 2014 award for “Best Tasting Water” in the Southeast Section of the American Water Works Association (AWWA). This is the third year in a row that RPU has received this award.