

RPU Plugged In



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.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "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.



ADMISSION IS FREE!!

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

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:**



Maier
TREE & LAWN
a **DAVEY** company



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!

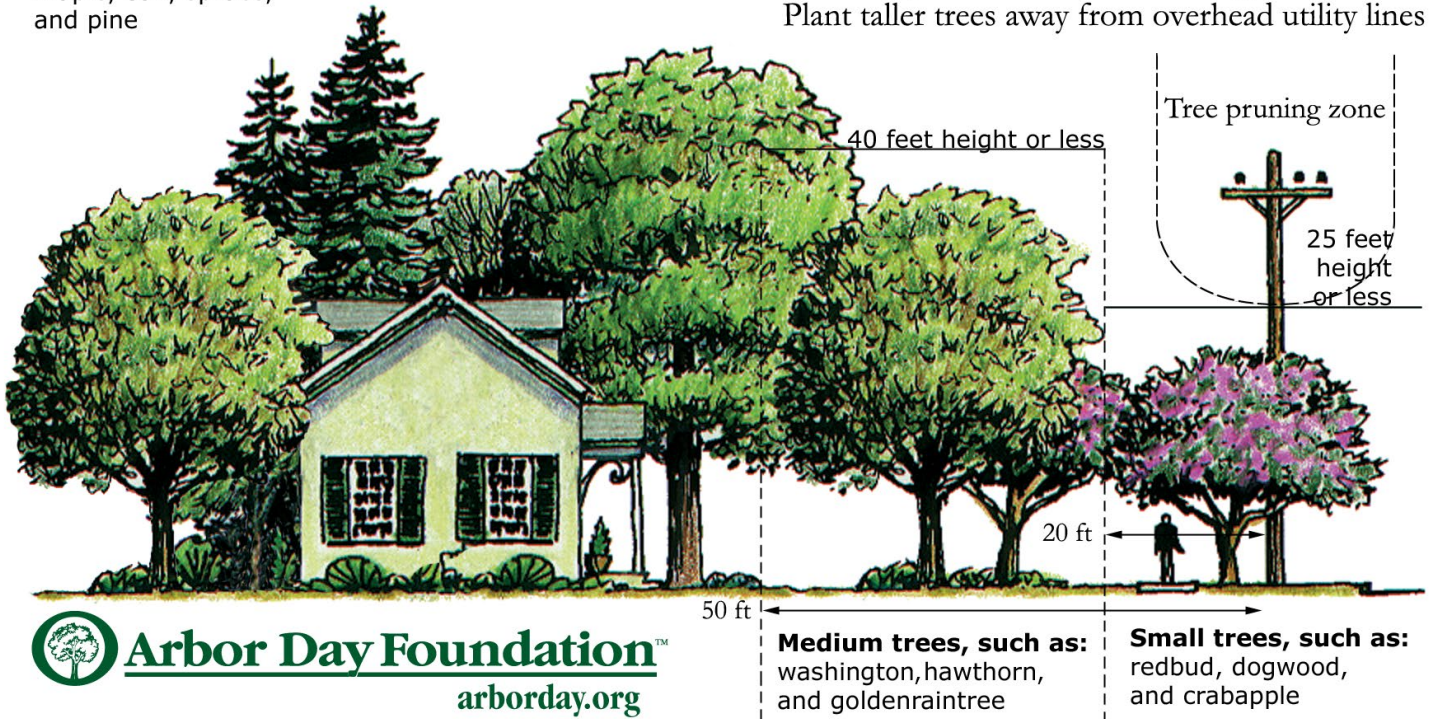


Photos by Josh Banks.

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



THE RIGHT TREE IN THE 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 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.



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

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.

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

0314

JimWhiting
Nursery & Garden Center

www.jimwhitingnursery.com
3430 - 19th St NW • 289.3741

SARGENT'S
Gardens

www.sargentsgardens.com
7955 - 18th Ave NW • 289.0022
1811 - 2nd St SW • 289.6068

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we pledge, we deliver

In support of RPU's
Partners in Planting program.

Partners *in Planting*

\$20 ARBORIST COUPON

**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.



Maier
TREE & LAWN

a **DAVEY** company

3930 Hwy 14 E • Rochester, MN 55904

507.286.TREE (8733)

www.MaierTreeandLawn.com

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In support of RPU's Partners in Planting program.

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FREE ENERGY WORKSHOP

**NEXT
CLASSES**

MONDAY 04.14.2014

Kellogg Middle School • 6:30pm

MONDAY 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.**



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MINNESOTA
ENERGY
RESOURCES

REGISTER WITH ASHLEY:
888.734.6365 • arobertson@mncee.org



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

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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.

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.