

RPU Plugged In

RPU SENDS LINEWORKERS TO THE
APPA LINEWORKERS RODEO IN SHAKOPEE





RPU lineworkers practice for the APPA Lineworkers Rodeo.



RPU Sends Lineworkers to the APPA Lineworkers Rodeo in Shakopee

Established in 2001 by the American Public Power Association (APPA), the Public Power Lineworkers Rodeo is where public power lineworkers come together from all over the United States and some U.S. territories to demonstrate their skill and knowledge in the craft of linework. At the Rodeo, journeyman and apprentice lineworkers compete for professional recognition, attend training courses, and practice essential skills in a safe environment. Furthermore, attendees have a unique opportunity to connect with and learn from the nationwide community of lineworker professionals.



This year's Lineworkers Rodeo will be held on April 1-2 in Shakopee, Minnesota. Lineworkers from RPU pictured on the cover (from left to right) include:

Front row (kneeling):
Rob Castillo, 1st Class Lineman; Collin Webb, 1st Class Lineman; and Colton Koster, Apprentice Lineman.

Back row (standing):
Lee Timmerman, 1st Class Lineman; Mitch DenBoer, Apprentice Lineman; Hunter Gleason, Apprentice Lineman; Tyler Meiners, 1st Class Lineman; Chad Peterson, 1st Class Lineman; Matt Tupper, 1st Class Lineman; Tanner Winter, Apprentice Lineman; Rob Adamson, Apprentice Lineman; and Chad Grinhaug, Apprentice Lineman.



RPU Lineworkers Stay Busy Ensuring Safety and Reliability by Deterring ... Woodpeckers?

It's true! Pileated woodpeckers cause significant damage to the distribution and transmission poles in Rochester.

The damage left by woodpeckers in the utility poles compromises the integrity of the poles, which could lead to safety concerns or outages. Depending on the damage, the type of pole, and the age of the pole, certain things are done to repair the pole and then deter woodpeckers from doing future damage.

In the case of the transmission poles behind Mayo Field heading east toward Quarry Hill, the wood poles were able to be filled in, if necessary, and then a heavy wire mesh was installed around the poles.

RPU lineworkers spent a number of days inspecting the transmission poles for damage and then installing the wire mesh. The mesh doesn't allow the woodpeckers the space they need to dig into the poles, so they (hopefully) move onto trees for their habitat.



Lineworkers installing wire mesh to the transmission poles behind Mayo Field to prevent woodpecker damage.

A Quick Q&A about RPU Tree Trimming



Matt Behrens

RPU puts significant resources into its tree trimming program to better ensure that overhead lines and equipment are clear of tree limbs and other vegetation. In 2015 alone, RPU budgeted nearly \$1 million for tree trimming operations.

Our electric outage statistics show that the added attention to tree trimming has paid off in fewer and shorter outages due to less clearing needed along distribution lines. This work often goes unseen by customers until a storm requires clearing of vegetation, but it is important that customers understand the tree trimming process and reasons behind it.

We sat down for a few minutes to speak with RPU's tree trimming operations work planner Matt Behrens to find out more about the importance of tree trimming and how it can affect electric outages.

Q Why is tree trimming so important to electric reliability?

A Storms and weather cause damage all the time to trees, causing branches and sometimes entire trees to fall into overhead lines and equipment. When this happens, we often find that it could have been prevented with proper tree trimming and clearing around the lines.

Q What can homeowners do to help prevent overgrowth into overhead lines?

A If a homeowner has trees and branches growing into the line, they can call RPU (507.280.1500) to have this assessed. If necessary, RPU will remove branches and vegetation near the lines. There is no charge for this service.

Q What if a homeowner is concerned about losing the tree coverage on their property?

A We work with homeowners all the time to educate them on the types of trees that should go in certain areas of their property. Clearing vegetation away from overhead lines will help to ensure that you and your neighbors don't lose power in a storm, but it can also be a safety decision as well.

Q Talking about safety, why should a homeowner never try to do the tree trimming themselves?

A Tree trimming is very dangerous work and when electricity is involved it can be even more dangerous. Leave the work to the experts, by calling RPU or a licensed and certified tree trimming professional.

Q As we get closer to spring, what do you recommend homeowners do to prevent outages due to trees and overhead lines?

A Each spring, homeowners should walk their property and look for areas where vegetation is getting close to overhead lines. As leaves and foliage begin to grow, keep an eye on those areas and if limbs are weighing down too low or the branches are close to lines, call RPU (507.280.1500) to have an assessment done.

Q In 2015, how many vegetation areas did you trim or how many trees did you remove that could have potentially affected electric reliability?

A We trimmed almost 1,300 locations and removed 284 trees that could have potentially caused electric outages.

Q What would you like to leave as a final message to readers?

A Always keep safety as a priority. Leave tree trimming and tree trimming decisions up to the experts. Do not try to do the work yourself. Call RPU (507.280.1500) for an assessment of your trees and vegetation near overhead power lines.



Congressman Tim Walz (left) sits with RPU general manager Mark Kotschevar (right) and answers questions from the local media.

U.S. Congressman Tim Walz Visits RPU

U.S. Congressman Tim Walz stopped by RPU on February 18 to visit with RPU general manager Mark Kotschevar and other RPU staff. Congressman Walz spoke about the value of local energy and the importance of utilizing the expertise of local utilities such as RPU for local energy decision-making.

RPU's 14th Annual Arbor Day Celebration

and Minnesota DNR's 2016 State Arbor Month Celebration Kick-off Event



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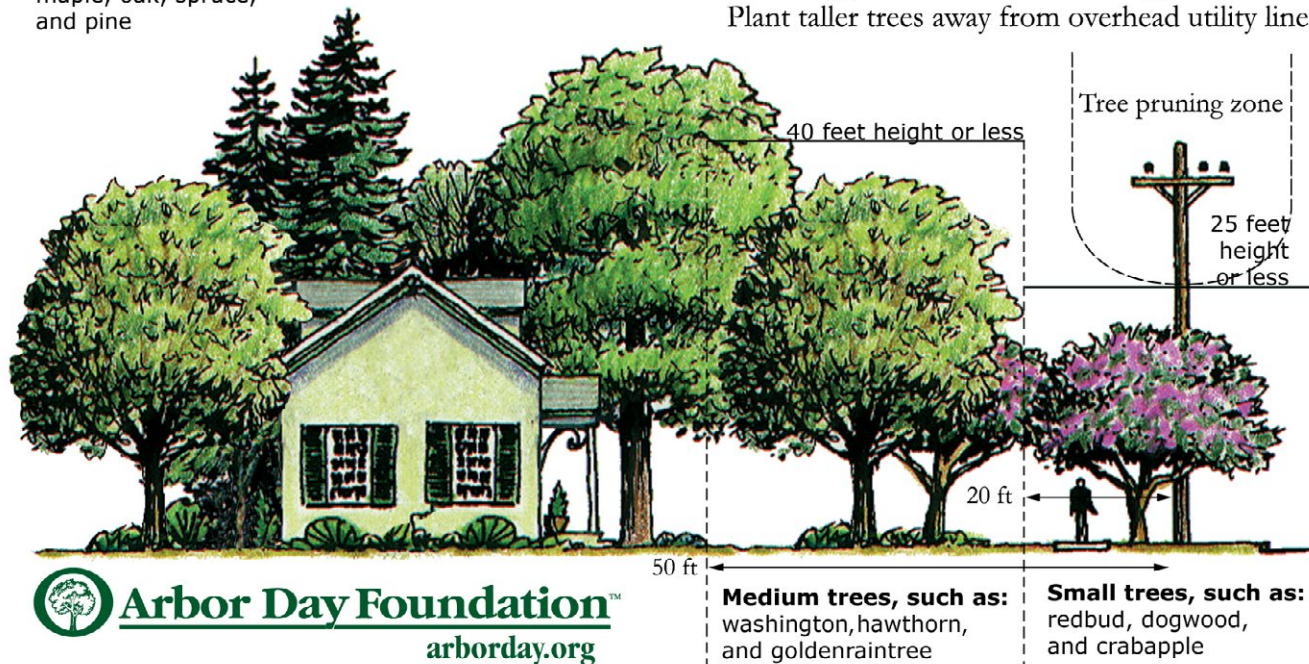
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Tall trees, such as:
maple, oak, spruce,
and pine

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.

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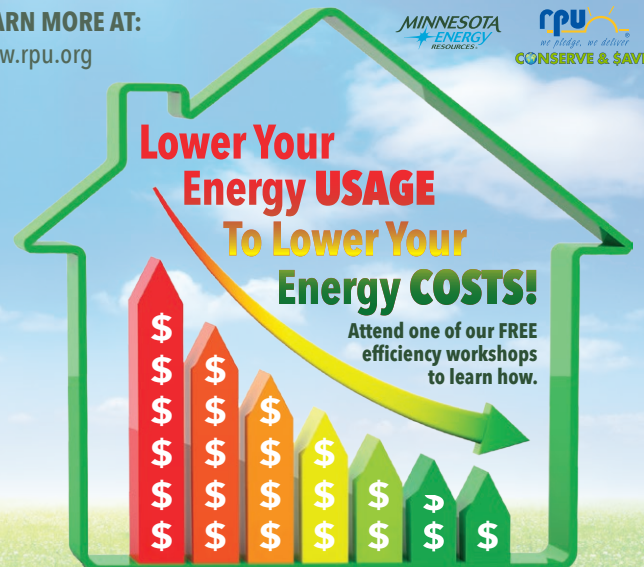
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Call Before You Dig

As you are plotting out your tree plantings, landscaping, or 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.

	Proposed Excavation		Communication-CATV-Fiber
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RPU water distribution workers Steve Johnson (left) and Matt Brekke (right) pose for a photo at the RPU booth, with RPU's residential account representative Stephanie Humphrey (center). Stephanie led and coordinated RPU's presence at the Home Show.

Be Sure to Join Us!
**RPU's 14th Annual
Arbor Day
Celebration**

Friday, April 29, 2016
11am-1pm
Three Links - Silver Lake Park
Rain Location:
RCTC's Field House
*See full details inside on page 4.

Thanks for Stopping by Our Booth!

We had a great time meeting and talking with everyone who stopped by our booth at the Rochester Area Builder's Home Show! If you weren't able to stop by the booth and you have questions, give us a call at **507.280.1500**.