

RPU *Plugged In*

OUTAGE COMMUNICATION

How do you want to communicate with RPU during an outage?



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Outages are never fun and are an inconvenience whether the outage is two minutes or two hours. When outages do occur, we can minimize the impact by providing you with the communication methods that you want to use when reporting an outage and staying updated during the outage. So we are asking our customers – How do you want to communicate with RPU during an outage?

Fill out the form below, cut it out, and return it to the RPU Service Center to let us know how we can serve you better during an outage. You can also fill out and submit this form on the RPU website home page, www.rpu.org. Look for the Outage Communication feedback link on the RPU home page. The information we gather will be used to improve our outage communication planning.

Currently, we have a set number of telephone trunk lines that are utilized for RPU business including answering outage calls. When an outage occurs, calls can fill all of the dedicated lines, therefore, callers wait for an answer or receive a busy signal. If callers prefer to use the IVR (Interactive Voice Recognition) system to report an outage, this is a quicker option, but still takes up a phone line.

Some information we are looking for from our customers:

- Would you report your outage via SMS text message?
- Would you use a mobile application to report an outage?
- Do you think you would see value in an outage map viewable on a mobile device?



How do you want to communicate with RPU during a power outage?

- Phone 
- Email 
- Text 
- Mobile App 
- Social Media ( @rpuoutages)

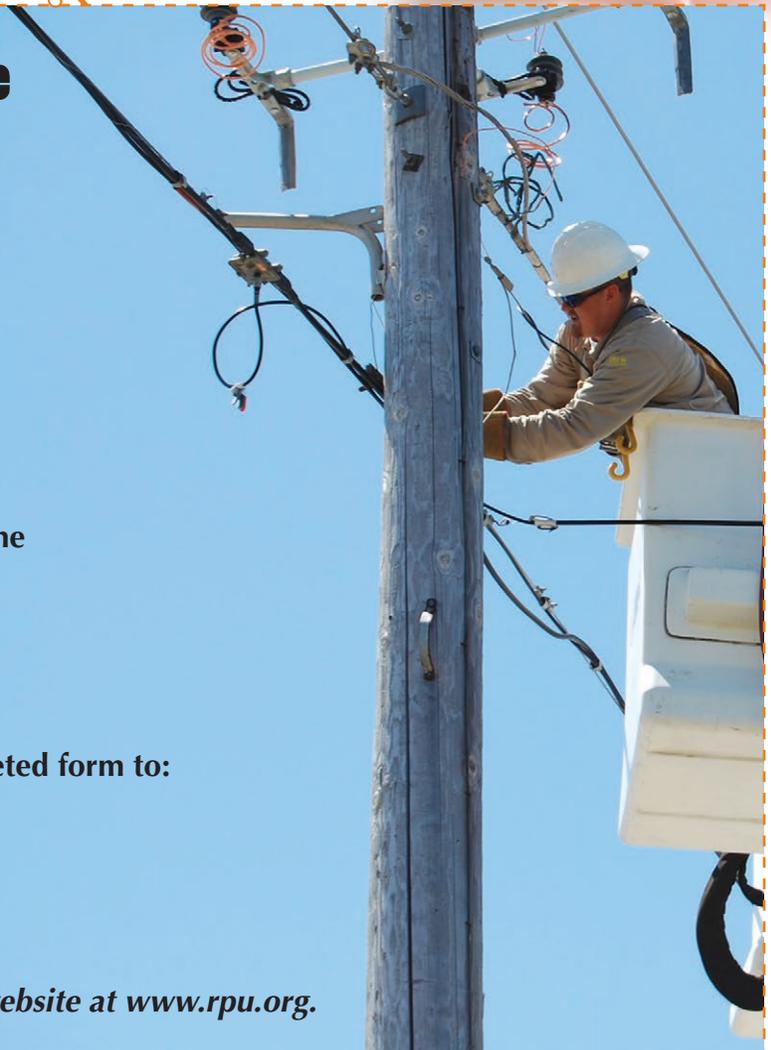
Would you view an outage map on your smart phone to stay informed on an outage?

- Yes
- No

Thank you for your input! Please return this completed form to:

Rochester Public Utilities
Attn: Manager of Customer Service
4000 East River Road NE
Rochester, MN 55906-2813

You may also complete this questionnaire on our website at www.rpu.org.



Update on the Silver Lake Plant

Since the decision by the RPU Board to decommission the Silver Lake Plant (SLP) back in August of 2012, the big question often asked is “What is going to happen to SLP now?” SLP’s future seems to be more transitional rather than being decommissioned, at least in the near future.

RPU does not anticipate major changes to SLP as it is still a focal point for many operational necessities that will continue for years into the future. Although the burning of coal ceased in November 2013, electric generation will remain available until June 2015 by using natural gas. The demand and price of electricity in the market will dictate whether or not SLP will be dispatched. The decision to halt electric generation in June as opposed to December was based on economic conditions of the market, regulatory requirements, safety of equipment and personnel, and the availability of staff to operate the facility.

RPU recently signed a long-term agreement with the Mayo Clinic to continue providing steam for their co-generation needs through the end of 2025. In order to continue providing the contracted amount of steam to the Mayo Clinic, RPU will have to maintain the necessary systems and boilers at SLP and to employ a workforce to achieve those needs. This will almost guarantee that the SLP structure and a majority of the property surrounding the plant will be left mostly unchanged while the steam contract is still in place.

Other additional duties reside in SLP including the remote oversight and operation of other facilities including the Silver Lake dam, the hydroelectric dam on Lake Zumbro, the diesel generators at IBM, and the combustion turbines at RPU’s Cascade Creek Substation.

What Could Change in the Near Future?

There have been discussions regarding changing the aesthetics to the exterior



Silver Lake Plant



Coal pile photo from circa 2010.

grounds of SLP. This could include planting trees and bushes along the fence line on 1st Avenue NE, cleaning up any debris or clutter within the fence, and any other minor improvements to the property.

Long-term future decisions have not been made with regards to the coal yard which used to hold over 50,000 tons of coal at any given time. This space has been recently cleared of coal, and grass has been planted which may allow for it to be repurposed for near-term RPU uses.

Inside the main structure, RPU inventoried and auctioned off some of the equipment that is no longer needed. The sale was focused on equipment and spare parts that dealt with the handling of coal or ash. After December 31, 2015, RPU will only utilize two boilers for providing steam to the Mayo Clinic.



Recent photo of the coal yard.

Additional equipment may be cleared out of SLP at that point as well.

We will continue to keep updating readers in future editions of *RPU Plugged In* on new changes at SLP.

MMUA Tom Bovitz Memorial Scholarship Essay Contest



Steve Downer (MMUA) presents the first place 2014 MMUA Tom Bovitz Memorial Scholarship to Andrea Walker of Rochester.

Each year, along with our state association, Minnesota Municipal Utilities Association (MMUA), we invite Rochester high school seniors to submit an essay with the theme, "Municipal Utilities: Good for All of Us" for the Tom Bovitz Memorial Scholarship Contest.

Last year, the state-wide essay selection was written by Andrea Walker of Rochester. Andrea received the top scholarship prize of \$2,000 to go toward her college tuition at RCTC.

Visit the RPU website (www.rpu.org) for rules and full details.

UTILITY PAYMENT ARRANGEMENTS AVAILABLE FOR MILITARY SERVICE PERSONNEL

When a household member has been ordered to active duty, for deployment, or for a change of duty station, some customers may find it hard to pay their utility bills. Minnesota law protects military personnel from shut-off if they cannot pay their bill in full. To qualify for this protection, you must enter into and keep reasonably current with one of the payment plans described below.

1. If your household income is below the state median household income, pay 10% of your household's gross monthly income toward your RPU bill.
2. If your household income is above the state median household income, make and keep a payment plan.
3. If you receive energy assistance, pay 10% of your household's gross monthly income toward your RPU bill.

The full statute description for Minnesota Statute 325E.028 can be found on the state of Minnesota website <https://www.revisor.mn.gov/pubs/>.

If you would like to sign up for payment arrangements or have questions regarding the Military Service Personnel Disconnection Law, please contact RPU customer service at **507.280.1500**.

MMUA
Minnesota Municipal Utilities Association

Tom Bovitz Memorial Scholarships for High School Seniors
Entries Due March 27, 2015

ESSAY SCHOLARSHIP CONTEST:

- First Place \$2000
- Second Place \$1500
- Third Place \$1000
- Fourth Place \$500

rpu
we pledge, we deliver®

Essay theme is "Municipal Utilities: Good for All of Us."
Visit www.rpu.org for guidelines and to download an entry form.
Good luck!

Solar Energy for Your Home or Business

An overview of solar electric and solar heating systems will be presented. There will be many photos of solar installations so that you can get a good idea of what they look like and how they are installed. Many basic questions will be addressed such as: How well does solar energy work in Minnesota? How much energy do the systems produce? What are the costs involved and overall economics? What incentives are available? Is there any maintenance? There will be plenty of time for questions and discussion.

Instructor: Micah Johnson

Bio: Micah is the operations manager for Solar Connection of Rochester, MN. Solar Connection, www.solarconnectioninc.com, installs solar energy systems for commercial, residential, and farm applications. Solar Connection is a licensed general contractor and NABCEP™ Certified for PV Installation. NABCEP is the National Board of Certified Energy Practitioners.

Date: Saturday, February 21, 2015 **Session(s):** 1

Time: 10 am-12 pm **Cost:** FREE

Location: Cascade Meadow Wetlands & Environmental Science Center

Get Out of the Dark: Brighten Your Knowledge of Home Lighting Purchases

Deciding what lighting to purchase for your home can be a confusing process ... LEDs, CFLs, watts, lumens, soft white, warm white, 2700 K ... what does it all mean? LEDs may use the least amount of energy but they may not be the smart choice for every room in your home. This workshop will help you make sense of it all to make smart decisions. You will learn:

- What to look for when choosing light bulbs and how to make the right choice.
- Why and when to choose LEDs.
- The cost of lighting on your energy bill.
- Utility lighting rebates.
- Why choose ENERGY STAR®.

Instructor: Kelli Lewis

Bio: Kelli is a District Sales Representative with Phillips Lighting, selling lamps, ballasts, fixtures, and controls through distributor customers in Minnesota, western Wisconsin, and North Dakota.

Date: Thursday, March 26, 2015 **Session(s):** 1

Time: 6-8 pm **Cost:** FREE

Location: Cascade Meadow Wetlands & Environmental Science Center

Registration for a Community Education class can be made by calling 507.328.4000 or online through the Rochester Community Education website at <https://rochester.thatscommunityed.com>.

 Space is limited.

Want to save some energy and money this winter?

ATTEND A FREE WORKSHOP
Get a \$50 home energy audit! (\$400 value)

UPCOMING WORKSHOPS:

Tues 2.10.2015 • 6:30pm
Bamber Valley Elementary School

Tues 3.17.2015 • 6:30pm
Kellogg Middle School



MINNESOTA ENERGY RESOURCES **rpu** *we pledge, we deliver*
CONSERVE & SAVE

Learn more at www.rpu.org

Register with Stacy • 888.734.6365 • sbootscamp@mncee.org

**A typical underground water service repair costs over \$3,500...
Protect Yourself with Service Assured®!**



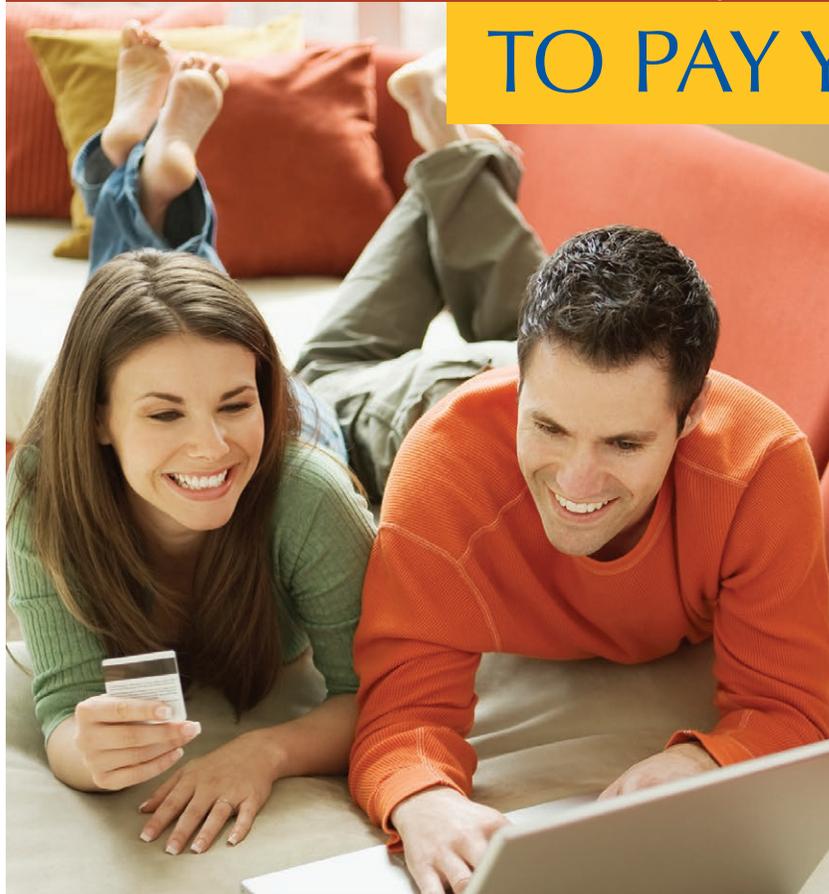
For only \$2.99 per month*, you can rest assured if your underground electric or water service breaks, you won't have to pay costly repair bills out-of-pocket. To learn more and/or enroll, please visit: www.rpu.org



* Contact us to determine your eligibility; some exclusions apply. Visit our website at www.rpu.org to review our Terms & Conditions.

Choose Your Way

TO PAY YOUR RPU BILL



Go Paperless

Receive an email that payment is due and your bill is available to view at www.rpu.org.

Budget Billing

Monthly payments stay the same based on the average of the previous 12 months of service.

Automatic Payments

- Automatic Checking or Savings Account Debit
- Automatic Credit/Debit Card Payment
- Can be combined with Budget Billing

How to Enroll

Enroll at www.rpu.org or fill out the form below and mail this page to: RPU Customer Service
4000 East River Road
Rochester, MN 55906-2813

Visit www.rpu.org to learn how to Pay Online, Pay By Phone, or use Pay Stations and Drop Boxes.

RPU BILL PAYMENT OPTIONS ENROLLMENT FORM *You may also enroll at: www.rpu.org*

Last Name (As It Appears On Your Account): _____

First Name (As It Appears On Your Account): _____

RPU Contract Acct Number: **300000** _____

Service Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Mailing Address: _____

(If Different Than the Service Address)

City/State/Zip: _____

Primary Phone: _____

Phone Type: Home Cell Other: _____

Email Address: _____

(Required to Go Paperless)

SIGNATURE:

By signing above, I hereby request RPU to enroll my account in the options I select to the right, and acknowledge that I have read and agree to the terms and conditions as outlined on www.rpu.org.

BILL PAYMENT OPTIONS:

GO PAPERLESS (Provide an email address at the lower left.)

BUDGET BILLING

AUTOMATIC PAYMENT OPTIONS:

PLEASE DEDUCT MY PAYMENT: (Check one.)

When Bill Is Invoiced When Payment Is Due

Checking Account Debit (Attach a VOIDED check.*)

Bank Name: _____

Savings Account Debit (Attach a VOIDED deposit slip.*)

Bank Name: _____

Credit / Debit Card

DISCOVER  MasterCard  VISA 

Card Number:* _____

Exp Date: ____ / ____ / ____

*To protect your privacy, RPU will destroy the credit card information on this form, as well as any voided checks and deposit slips.

PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT IS NO GAME!

but it's not too hard either! It only takes a little bit of your time and effort to learn how to conserve energy and water. Renewable energy is energy that is generated from natural sources such as sunlight, geothermal heat, water, or wind. This energy cannot be exhausted and is constantly renewed.

Find the renewable energy terms in the word search below!

KIDS CORNER



WORD LIST:

- BIOFUELS
- CARBON DIOXIDE
- CARBON FOOTPRINT
- CONSERVATION
- EFFICIENCY
- ENERGY
- ENVIRONMENT
- GALLON
- GEOTHERMAL
- HYDROPOWER
- KILOWATT
- PHOTOVOLTAIC
- RAINBARREL
- RECYCLE
- SOLAR
- TURBINE
- WIND

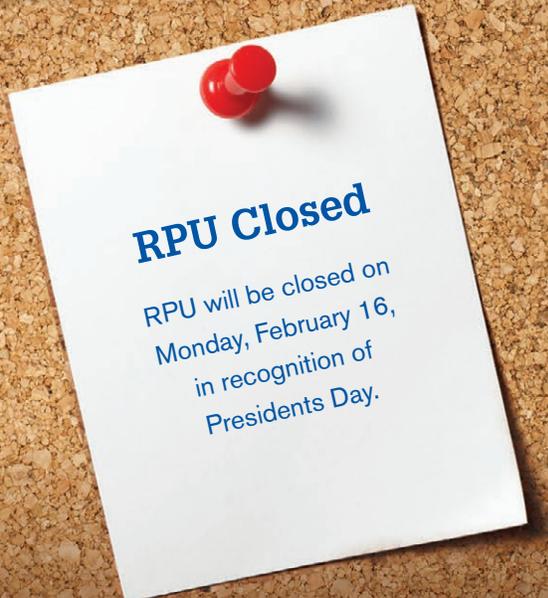
Renewable Energy Word Search

R	A	I	N	B	A	R	R	E	L	W	E	T	R	P
E	W	I	N	D	O	N	L	E	L	K	N	N	E	H
A	C	E	T	A	T	E	T	D	L	V	I	I	W	O
E	O	A	T	B	O	N	R	I	C	Y	B	R	O	T
E	N	A	A	I	T	V	E	X	U	C	R	P	P	O
B	S	E	W	N	N	I	S	O	D	N	U	T	G	V
I	E	G	O	N	I	R	S	I	P	E	T	O	E	O
O	R	A	L	I	R	O	E	D	M	I	R	O	O	L
F	V	L	I	O	O	N	E	N	H	C	E	F	T	T
U	A	L	K	E	C	M	S	O	G	I	C	N	H	A
E	T	O	O	N	T	E	T	B	O	F	Y	O	E	I
L	I	N	R	E	C	N	F	R	B	F	C	B	R	C
S	O	U	L	R	N	T	D	A	F	E	L	R	M	Z
M	N	U	R	G	L	Y	L	C	Y	X	E	A	A	J
E	L	V	R	Y	H	P	S	O	L	A	R	C	L	Q



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

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Visit the RPU Booth at the Home Show

Come visit with RPU employees, ask questions about your energy and water efficiency, and learn about solar energy at the RPU booth at the Rochester Area Builder's Home Show February 6-8.

And back by popular demand, RPU is again partnering with Solar Connection to have plenty of solar experts on hand to answer all of your questions.

Make sure to ask about available rebates! Funds are limited!



Pictured L to R: Micah Johnson (Solar Connection), Steve Monson (RPU), and Dirk Bierbaum (RPU).

CONSERVE & \$AVE

Rocks-Water-Landscapes:

How Water Makes Rocks and Rocks Affect Water

Sunday, February 22, 2015; 2-3:30 pm; Rochester Public Library

Have you ever noticed that Rochester sits in the bottom of a landscape bowl? Our landform has arisen from the interplay between water and our underlying bedrock, over hundreds of thousands of years. Learn how inland oceans, rushing glacial melt water, and tiny raindrops have formed, dissolved, and carved the rocks upon which we live.

Todd Osweiler (Rochester Public Utilities) and Barb Huberty (Rochester Public Works Department) will take you on a sojourn through geologic time and help you discover how Rochester's geology guides the City's storm water management and groundwater protection decisions.