

# RPU Plugged In

A close-up photograph of a person's hands wearing bright red knitted gloves, holding a large, perfectly heart-shaped snowball. The person is wearing grey pants and brown boots. The background is a snowy, outdoor setting.

**Fall in Love with  
Conservation!**



## Fall in Love with Conservation!

**W**hether you love the environment, saving money, or saving energy – be happy this Valentine's Day by falling in love with conservation. Conserve energy and water this year and fall in love with the results! Follow RPU's steps to fall in love with conservation.

1

### Use RPU as an Energy and Water Efficiency Resource

Utilize the resources, rebates, expertise, workshops, and events that RPU has throughout the year to make your home and/or business more energy and water efficient. Save money by getting a Conserve & Save® rebate back on qualifying equipment and then save money every month through lower use of electricity and water.

Throughout the year, RPU is out at numerous public events including home shows, Community Education classes, and the ever-popular Annual RPU Arbor Day Celebration, for customers to talk with RPU energy and water experts. Additionally, RPU will be hosting the Neighborhood Energy Challenge (NEC), throughout 2016, which is free and provides helpful tips and ideas for homeowners wanting to be more energy efficient. The NEC and Community Education class lists can be found on page 4.

2

### Try One New Energy or Water Efficiency Change and See What You Think

There have been many advances recently in energy and water-saving technologies and products. For instance, if you only have used incandescent lights in your home, when one burns out this year, replace it with an Energy Star® LED (light-emitting diode) and see what you think of the light. The LED won't be hot to the touch like an incandescent bulb and will use at least 75% less energy and can last 35-50 times longer than an incandescent. Don't forget to submit a Conserve & Save® rebate application for your rebate on the Energy Star® LED bulb!

3

### Drink Only Tap Water

RPU tap water continues to be a safe, clean, and affordable option for drinking water. Bottled water is expensive and continues to add plastics to landfills. Challenge yourself and your family to a taste test and chances are you won't be able to pick bottled water from RPU tap water. Your wallet will thank you!

4

### Buy a Rain Barrel

Capture and reuse rain water by utilizing a rain barrel. It can be an inexpensive addition to help with your water needs around your yard this spring, but is invaluable in helping to conserve water. RPU has a rebate for qualifying rain barrels at [www.rpu.org](http://www.rpu.org)!



# HELICOPTERS OVERHEAD

**C**apX2020 crews are using a helicopter to assist in building the new transmission line. In December 2015, the first of eight highway crossings was completed along Highway 52 near Goodhue County Road 7. A helicopter is used to guide a rope through pulleys prior to pulling the conductor (wire) into place.

When the helicopter is hovering over the highway, traffic is temporarily stopped in both directions as a safety precaution. The remaining seven highway crossings will take place over the next six months.

Ninety miles of the CapX2020 Hampton-Rochester-La Crosse project was energized in September 2015; an additional 16-mile segment was energized in 2014. The entire project is expected to be complete and energized by September 2016.



Photos by Josh Banks

## WATER CONSERVATION

*Monthly Tip on Saving  
From the Tap...*



**Don't use  
running water  
to thaw food.  
For efficiency  
and food safety  
thaw food in the  
refrigerator.**

**rpu**  
*we pledge, we deliver*

**CONSERVE & \$AVE**



## Beware of Products “Guaranteeing” Energy Savings

There are many products that appear out of nowhere and guarantee significant energy savings. Some of these products may reference fancy terminology such as harmonics and promise a quick ROI (return on investment) for a home or business owner.

If you receive a call or a visit from a sales person selling a product promising energy savings, contact an energy expert at RPU to help you make an informed decision.

RPU energy experts are available to help by calling **507.280.1500**.

# FREE Energy Education Classes

**D**iscover your energy conservation potential by attending FREE energy education classes being offered by RPU. Whether your interest is in lighting, solar power, or energy conservation, we have you covered with upcoming classes in February and March.



## Neighborhood Energy Challenge

The Neighborhood Energy Challenge (NEC) continues to be a popular offering for customers looking for ways to be more efficient with their energy use in their homes. Many great tips, tools, and ideas are offered, along with the opportunity to have a discounted home-energy audit conducted.

### Upcoming NEC Dates\*:

**Tuesday, February 16, 6:30 pm**

Lincoln Choice Elementary School  
1122 8<sup>th</sup> Ave. SE

**Saturday, March 12, 10 am**

Saint Mary's University of Minnesota-Cascade Meadow  
2900 19<sup>th</sup> St. NW

**Tuesday, May 17, 6:30 pm**

George Gibbs Elementary School  
5525 56<sup>th</sup> St. NW

For questions regarding the Neighborhood Energy Challenge or to sign up, contact Stacy Boots Camp at **888.734.6365** or [sbootscamp@mncee.org](mailto:sbootscamp@mncee.org).

\* Dates and locations are subject to change.

## Solar Energy for Your Home or Business

**February 20**

Is solar right for you? Come to the FREE Community Education class to get answers to your solar questions and to see if solar is for you.

There are a number of factors to consider before deciding if solar energy is right for your home or property. Things such as your energy efficiency, land/roof orientation, and payback goals are just some of the factors that may play into your decision.

The solar energy class is on Saturday, February 20, from 10 am-12 pm.

The class will be held at Saint Mary's University of Minnesota-Cascade Meadow.

**Registration:** 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>.

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

**March 1**

Lighting accounts for a significant part of your energy bill each month. Make the best decision for your home by being informed about current and new lighting trends and technologies by attending the FREE Home Lighting Community Education class on Tuesday, March 1, from 6 pm-7:30 pm. The class will be held at Saint Mary's University of Minnesota-Cascade Meadow.

**Registration:** 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>.

Attend all or some of these great educational classes hosted by RPU, but remember space is limited so sign up today!  
**Registration is required!**

For more information on each class, visit RPU's website at [www.rpu.org](http://www.rpu.org).



*Energy Tip from the Minnesota Department of Commerce*

# Apply Basic Energy Efficiency Measures Before Renewables



**D**o you have renewable energy on your New Year's resolution list? Are you planning to add solar panels or perhaps a small wind system? Maybe you're thinking of subscribing to a community solar garden to help reduce your carbon footprint.

Installing your own renewable energy system is an admirable goal. But to help achieve this objective in a cost-effective manner, the Minnesota Department of Commerce recommends that homeowners first apply some simple, energy-saving measures before investing in a renewable energy system.

By investing in energy efficiency up front, you can lessen your energy demand, which will reduce the investment needed for your renewable energy system and optimize the returns on your system.

Energy improvements such as air-sealing, adding insulation, and

replacing or repairing home heating and cooling systems are some of the best energy-saving investments you can make.

A good first step is an advanced energy assessment to determine your home's energy performance. It can identify what needs fixing, upgrading, or replacing. It can also suggest some simple low-cost measures to save energy, such as weather-stripping doors.

Minnesota utilities provide advanced home energy assessments. Many offer discounts for the service, as well as rebates for energy improvements. Visit [www.dsireusa.org](http://www.dsireusa.org) to learn about utility discounts and rebates.\* Energy assessments are also provided by several nonprofit community groups, and the Minnesota Building Performance Association offers a list of private contractors who conduct energy assessments.

Once you have taken these basic energy efficiency measures, then you are ready to explore whether a renewable energy system is right for your home.

For more information on home energy assessments and energy-saving improvements, check out the Home Energy Guide on the Minnesota Department of Commerce website, [www.mn.gov/commerce](http://www.mn.gov/commerce).



Minnesota Energy Tips is provided twice a month by the Minnesota Department of Commerce, Division of Energy Resources. Contact the Energy Information Center at [energy.info@state.mn.us](mailto:energy.info@state.mn.us) or **800.657.3710** with energy questions.

\* Visit the RPU website ([www.rpu.org](http://www.rpu.org)) to learn about energy efficiency and solar energy rebates available!

# Climate Change Exhibits at Cascade Meadow

**W**ill southern Minnesota's leafy trees creep north and eventually crowd out needled pines and firs in the north woods?

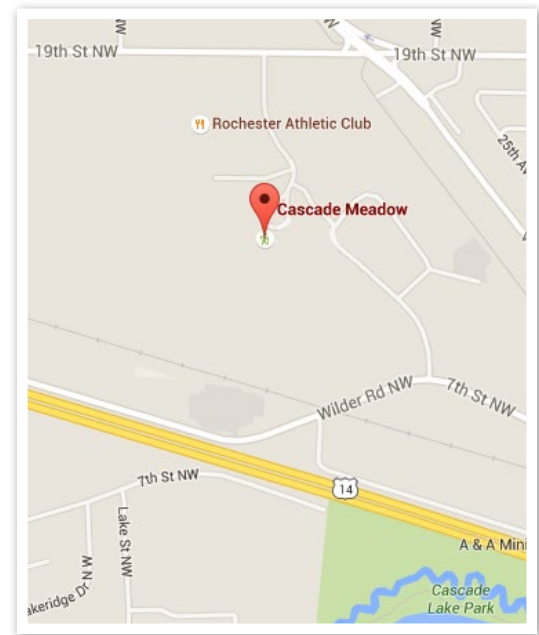
Saint Mary's University of Minnesota-Cascade Meadow focuses on climate change and its potential effects in Minnesota this winter with a special exhibit. "Climate, Energy, and Community" will appear through April 1 in Cascade Meadow's lower exhibition hall.

Scientists say "tree migration" is possible if average temperatures continue to rise over future decades. A group of displays gives a glimpse of environmental shifts that have been occurring in Minnesota. Visitors also

can learn some ways to make small adjustments to their lifestyles and, at the same time, make a difference to our environment!

"Climate, Energy, and Community" captivated thousands of visitors at the Minnesota State Fair last summer. It appeared courtesy of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency and the Energy Resources Division of the Minnesota Department of Commerce.

Rochester Public Utilities is a primary partner at Cascade Meadow with permanent exhibits about energy and water at the complex. The 100-acre campus is owned and operated by Saint Mary's University of Minnesota.



*The Steps to a better climate exhibit offers ideas on how you can adjust your lifestyle in small ways to make a positive impact on the environment.*





## Utility Payment Arrangements Available for Military Service Personnel

**W**hen 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.

- If your household income is below the state median household income, pay 10% of your household's gross monthly income toward your RPU bill.
- If your household income is above the state median household income, make and keep a payment plan.
- 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**.

## Why Public Power



Public Power systems, deeply rooted in the history of the United States, are an expression of the American ideal of neighbor helping neighbor – local people working together to meet their local needs. More than 2,000 cities and towns throughout the United States own and operate electric distribution systems and provide many benefits to the 47 million Americans they serve, including:

- **Local control/local decisions** – citizen-owners have direct say in how their utility is managed
- **Cost consciousness** – Public Power is not-for-profit, and spending decisions are made with the community in mind
- **Economic development** – because Public Power is reliable and low-cost, commercial and industrial companies like to locate and operate in these communities
- **Funding for community projects and services** – Public Power revenues stay in the community and provide additional funding for city initiatives and operations



## Give Yourself a Valentine Protect your home with Service Assured®

**A typical underground water service repair costs over \$3,500!**

That amount of money can harden even the softest of hearts toward your home! But with Service Assured®, for only \$2.99 per month\* you can rest assured that 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](http://www.rpu.org)**



\* Contact us to determine your eligibility; some exclusions apply. Visit [www.rpu.org](http://www.rpu.org) to review our Terms & Conditions.



4000 East River Road NE  
Rochester, MN 55906  
**507.280.1500**  
[www.rpu.org](http://www.rpu.org)

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# CONSERVE & \$AVE®

**GET SWEET REBATES  
AND FALL IN LOVE AGAIN!**  
(with your utility bill, that is...)

RPU shows our love to customers who purchase and install efficient appliances and equipment.

We give you sweet rebates on your purchase, and you continue to save on your utility bills.

Your heart will skip a beat when you learn how much you can save!

Wink at [www.rpu.org](http://www.rpu.org) for up-to-date rebate offerings and amounts.

