RPU’s Renewable Energy Outlook for 2015

FEATURING: 4 2015 RPU Board Meeting Calendar 4 New Year – New Scams 6 Electricity and Water Saved in 2014
RPU’S RENEWABLE ENERGY OUTLOOK FOR 2015

This year, RPU Plugged In will include a number of articles about RPU’s renewable energy – what RPU has currently and what RPU is looking at into the future. The need for renewable energy isn’t just for show. As new regulations come from both state and federal legislation, utilities including RPU will have to commit significant resources and money to meet Minnesota’s Renewable Energy Standard, calling for utilities to provide 25% of their total electric generation from renewable sources by 2025.

When explaining where RPU sits with regards to renewable energy, we need to look first at RPU’s wholesale provider, Southern Minnesota Municipal Power Agency (SMMPA). Since 1977, RPU has been in a contract for a contracted rate of delivery of power at 216 megawatts (MW). RPU is the largest of the 18 member utilities and accounts for 42% of SMMPA’s load.

SMMPA owns and operates two 950 kilowatt (kW) wind turbines (installed in March 2003), two 1,650 kW wind turbines located in member community Fairmont (installed in late 2004/early 2005) and two 1,650 kW wind turbines located in member community Redwood Falls (installed in late 2004/early 2005). Additionally, SMMPA purchases all energy generated from 67 wind turbines totaling 100.5 MW at Dexter, MN, 26 miles south of Rochester, MN.

With these combined wind turbines, SMMPA supplies the energy needs of over 38,000 homes.

Currently 12% of the energy SMMPA supplies to its 18 municipally owned member utilities comes from renewable and carbon-free sources.

RPU and SMMPA also purchase the excess energy from the Olmsted County Waste to Energy facility in southeast Rochester.

Add in two other significant RPU-owned renewable energy pieces, RPU’s hydroelectric facility on Lake Zumbro and demonstration-size wind and solar at Cascade Meadow, and then it just increases RPU’s overall renewable portfolio.

In 2015, RPU is going to look at increasing its renewable energy footprint in a number of ways. A recent presentation
at 2.3 megawatts with the two turbines currently installed there. What many aren’t aware of is the facility was actually built back in 1920 to house three turbine generators, but only two were installed at the time.

As we move forward on renewable energy efforts in 2015, we will plan to keep you up on what we are doing. Watch for updates and additional renewable energy articles in future editions of RPU Plugged In.

at an RPU board meeting laid out some future possibilities for RPU solar projects. The options revolved around how RPU would own or work with SMMPA to provide an equal partnership while keeping the RPU/SMMPA contract in mind.

The open space at the RPU Service Center could look significantly different in 2015. RPU is looking at that space to be the home for up to 500 kW of renewable, emission-free solar energy.

RPU has also been working with an engineering firm to see if increasing the capacity at the Lake Zumbro hydroelectric dam is a possibility. Currently, it is rated
Utility Board Meeting Dates for 2015

Utility Board meetings are regularly scheduled on the last Tuesday of the month (see calendar below for exceptions) at 4 p.m. at the:

RPU Service Center
4000 East River Road NE
Rochester, MN 55906.

Special meetings are scheduled as needed. Call 507.280.1540 to confirm.

**Dates:**
- January 27
- February 24
- March 31
- April 28
- May 26
- June 30
- July 28
- August 25
- September 29
- October 27
- November 10
- November 24
- December 15

RPU stands behind all of the services and programs it offers because they are valuable and beneficial to customers.
A Friendly Reminder!

If you are on auto pay, and you recently changed your credit card number, please remember to give us a call to notify us of the change. A quick phone call can make sure that we have your updated information on file for the start of the New Year. We appreciate your help!

RPU customer service is available M-F, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Call 507.280.1500 to talk with a customer service representative.

RPU CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY

RPU is going to continue mailing out customer satisfaction surveys in 2015. We received valuable feedback from our customers in 2014, and hope to gather even more information so we can continue to increase our level of service to you.

We mail out 1,000 surveys quarterly to a random list of customers. If you receive a survey, we would greatly appreciate your time to fill it out and tell us how we are doing. If you have received and taken a customer satisfaction survey from RPU recently, thank you for your time.

We have appreciated hearing that many of our customers are very satisfied with their services from RPU, and we are working diligently to answer and address all of the concerns that you shared with us as well.

New Year’s Resolution: WORRY LESS
(By enrolling in Service Assured®)

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 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

* Contact us to determine your eligibility, some exclusions apply. Visit our website at www.rpu.org to review our Terms & Conditions.
How Much Electricity and Water Was Saved in 2014?

By working with our residential and commercial customers, we saved over 20,867,755 kilowatt-hours of electricity and over 8,492,747 gallons of water.

Thank you so much for submitting your Conserve & Save® rebates for qualifying electric and water purchases! Here are just a few of the commercial customers we worked with this past year to reach these savings.
Moody’s Investors Service Maintains RPU’s Aa3 Bond Rating with a Stable Outlook

As an RPU customer, what does this mean to me? Our electric rates are directly impacted by the interest payments we have to make on money borrowed through the issuance of bonds— the higher the bond rating, the lower our interest rates, which helps hold down electric rates.

In December, the bond rating agency Moody’s maintained RPU’s bond rating at Aa3 (Electric Utility). Aa3 is Moody’s fourth highest rating out of 25 possible rating categories. Bonds that carry the Aa3 rating are judged to be of high quality and are subject to very low credit risk. In their ratings report, Moody’s noted that RPU is a well-established enterprise with a long, stable operating history and good financial liquidity.

The Rochester community also plays a part in this positive rating as Moody’s commented that RPU’s service area (which is the City of Rochester) is economically sound with a highly educated workforce and low unemployment. Maintaining the Aa3 bond rating is good news.

Want to save some energy & money this winter?

ATTEND A FREE ENERGY WORKSHOP and get a $400 home energy audit for a co-pay of only $50!

UPCOMING WORKSHOPS:
Tuesday 1.13.2015 • 6:30 pm • George Gibbs Elementary School
Tuesday 2.10.2015 • 6:30 pm • Bamber Valley Elementary School

TO RESERVE YOUR SPOT CONTACT:
Stacy Boots Camp • 888.734.6365 • sbootscamp@mncee.org

Learn more and find future, monthly workshop dates at www.rpu.org.
The RPU Service Center will be closed on Monday, January 19, in recognition of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

Frost Level Back on the RPU Website

Track how deep the frost level gets in Rochester by clicking on the link on the RPU website home page, www.rpu.org. Last year, frost was found at five-feet deep or more. If frost levels get to dangerous levels again this year, RPU will post additional information on the RPU website about monitoring and testing your water temperature if freezing conditions exist.