

# RPU Plugged In



## RPU'S RENEWABLE ENERGY OUTLOOK FOR 2015





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**T**his 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.



*Solar at Cascade Meadow.*



*Wind at Cascade Meadow.*

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.

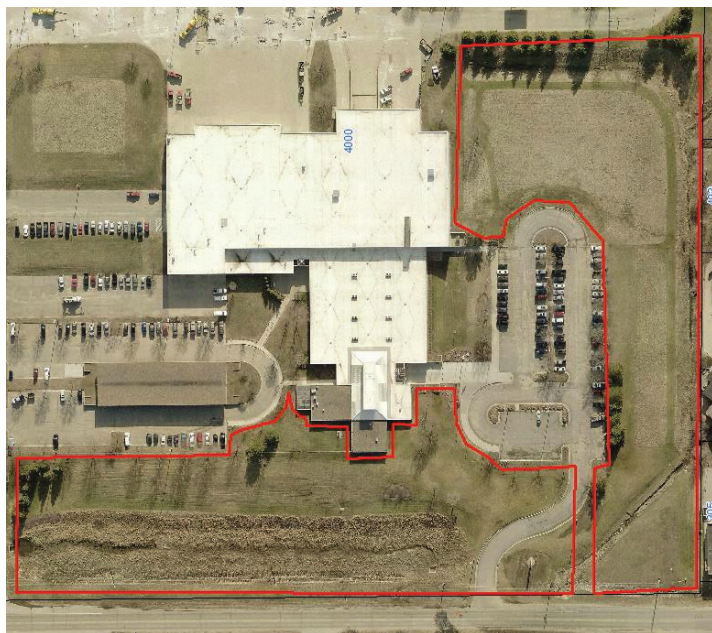
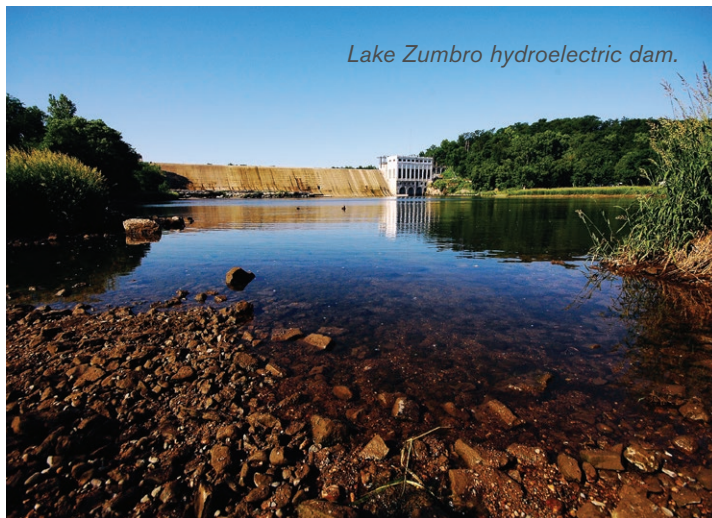
Add in two other significant RPU-owned renewable energy pieces, RPU's hydroelectric facility on Lake Zumbro and demonstration-size wind and solar at Cascade Meadow, and then it just increases RPU's overall renewable portfolio.

In 2015, RPU is going to look at increasing its renewable energy footprint in a number of ways. A recent presentation



*Two wind turbine photos courtesy of SMMPA.*



*Solar at Cascade Meadow.**Lake Zumbro hydroelectric dam.**Space for renewable, emission-free solar energy.*

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

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*.

# 2015 RPU Board Meeting Calendar

**C**onsider being a part of the decision-making process at RPU by attending a Board meeting in 2015. All RPU Board meetings are open to the public and allow time for visitors to address the Board, if they choose.

Meetings are held at the RPU Service Center (unless an alternate location is otherwise noted on the RPU website).

Meeting time is at 4 p.m. (unless an alternate time is noted on the RPU website).

Board meeting information can be found on the RPU website, [www.rpu.org](http://www.rpu.org), under the "About RPU" tab.



## 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	June 30	November 10
February 24	July 28	November 24
March 31	August 25	December 15
April 28	September 29	
May 26	October 27	

## NEW YEAR — NEW SCAMS

RPU Customer Service  
**507.280.1500**

**M**ailers have already started to find their way into Rochester mailboxes this year promising to save you energy, money, time, peace of mind, water, and service protection. Whatever the "great" offer might be, we recommend consulting with an RPU customer service representative before signing up for any offer or product.

For every single offer you receive in your mailbox, chances are the local RPU representative you talk with will have heard of it and three other similar ones. Often times, third party offers promise coverage or a product from a company that is not local or known in the Rochester area. In times of needing support or help, who will be the one to help you? Chances are it won't be a local individual, but a contracted company from out of state.

One of the more prominent offers seen recently has been for water service coverage. The coverage is being offered for nearly \$60 per month and is not a local company. RPU has a water service protection program call **Service Assured®** and it is \$1.99 per month. If you have an underground service pipe issue, and you have RPU **Service Assured®** service, we will likely have you covered, protecting you from the high costs of having a contractor fix the service. In addition, the person who comes to fix your broken service will be an RPU employee or a qualified local contractor that meets RPU's service standards.



You can also cover both your water and electric service for \$2.99 per month. Call RPU today to sign up for **Service Assured®**!\*

Don't leave your underground utility protection in the hands of an out-of-town company you've never heard of before.

\* Contact RPU to determine eligibility. Some exclusions apply.

**RPU stands behind all of the services and programs it offers because they are valuable and beneficial to customers.**



## RPU CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEY

**R**PU 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.



### 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.



## 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](http://www.rpu.org)**

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





## How Much Electricity and Water Was Saved in 2014?

**B**y 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.

### CONSERVE & \$AVE®

#### 2014 ELECTRIC SAVINGS

**20,867,755**  
kilowatt-hours  
of electricity

=

the average annual  
electric usage of over  
**2,729 homes**  
in Rochester!

#### 2014 WATER SAVINGS

**8,492,747**  
gallons  
of water

=

the amount of  
water needed to fill over  
**12 Olympic Size**  
Swimming Pools!



**Customer – Rochester Athletic Club**  
Energy Solutions Partner – Werner Electric (not pictured)  
RPU – Jan Blevins



**Customer – Shoot-N-Save Sports**  
Energy Solutions Partner – Himec Mechanical  
RPU – Jan Blevins



**Customer – Benchmark Electronics**  
Energy Solutions Partner – Foster Electric  
RPU – Jan Blevins and Dru Larson



**Customer – ServiceMaster of Rochester**  
Energy Solutions Partner – Nietz Electric  
RPU – Jan Blevins



**Customer – Joe's Auto Care**  
Energy Solutions Partner – Scott Binner Electric (not pictured)  
RPU – Jan Blevins



**Customer – First Alliance Credit Union**  
Energy Solutions Partner – Winkels Electric  
RPU – Jan Blevins



# Moody's Investors Service Maintains RPU's Aa3 Bond Rating with a Stable Outlook

**A**s 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



MINNESOTA  
ENERGY  
RESOURCES

rpu  
we pledge, we deliver  
CONSERVE & \$AVE

Learn more and find future, monthly workshop dates at [www.rpu.org](http://www.rpu.org).





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

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## RPU Closed

The RPU Service Center  
will be closed on Monday,  
January 19, in recognition of  
Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

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## 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](http://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.