

RPU

Plugged In

POWER OUTAGE SAFETY

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Safety is always the priority during an outage restoration.

POWER OUTAGE SAFETY

Power outages can happen for any number of reasons including overgrown vegetation, equipment failure, animals, auto accidents, and storms. We understand that it is an inconvenience for customers anytime the power goes out. Many RPU employees are also RPU customers, experiencing the same outages as you. In those times, all available resources are made available to address the outage immediately.

RPU's first and foremost concern during any outage regardless of size is safety for customers, the community, and RPU employees. We will never compromise the safety of anyone to expedite power restoration.

Never go near a downed power line. Stay away from the area and contact RPU immediately at **507.280.9191**. Even if a power line looks like it is disconnected, it still can be energized and will cause severe injuries if contact is made with it.

If your house is fed from overhead lines and there is possible storm damage to the line or connection into your home, you will need to take additional steps to safely have your power restored. Keep in mind, the electric service can get pulled down or dislocated from your house and still be working.

- If a line is down, regardless if it is working or not, it may require additional attention to ensure safety and proper service.
- Call RPU's outage line at **507.280.9191** to have a crew inspect your overhead service.
- If repair work is required, RPU will disconnect your service, and will then instruct you to have a licensed electrician make necessary repairs.
- Once the electrician has completed their work, they will notify a city electrical inspector to ensure the work was done properly.
- The inspector will then notify RPU for a reconnection.

Your safety, along with the safety of our employees and community are our priority.

The local media is an ally for us when the power goes out. As information is available, we try to keep in contact with the local media. We do our best to share causes, locations, and the number of customers affected by the outage but sometimes confirming this information takes time and we do not want to provide misinformation.



RPU on Twitter:
@rpuoutages



RPU outage map:
www.rpu.org

POWER OUTAGE EMERGENCY PLAN

As much as we try to keep the power on, there are circumstances that can cause the power to go out for minutes or even days. What is your plan for you and your family if you were to lose power? Here are some things to consider:



Report the outage. Have RPU's outage line in your cellphone or easily accessible to report your outage – **507.280.9191**.



Have a back-up location. Do you have a list of friends or family in the area who you could go stay with if necessary? Even if your home is heated by natural gas and the electricity is out, you will not be able to heat your home because the fan on your furnace is powered electrically.



Keep your cellphone charged. If bad weather and strong winds are in the forecast, keep your cellphone charged in case the electricity goes out.



Keep refrigerators and freezers closed. According to the U.S. Department of Health, food left in a closed refrigerator or freezer should be safe for no more than 4 hours. Keep the door closed as much as possible. Discard perishable foods that have been above 40 degrees Fahrenheit for more than two hours. For more information, visit: http://www.foodsafety.gov/keep/charts/refridg_food.html.



Store extra flashlights and batteries. Keep flashlights and new batteries in an accessible location to provide some light and safety.



Be aware of medical conditions. If you or someone you know has a medical condition and they rely heavily on electricity for medical equipment, seek medical attention early rather than waiting for the electricity to come back on at your home.



Know your garage door. If you have an electric garage door opener and the power goes out, it may be difficult to find the release cord in the dark. Consult your garage door opener manual and find out how to release the opener in case the power goes out. This will allow you safe and easy access to opening your garage door even without power.



Practice safety first. Never go near downed power lines or wires. Power lines can still stay energized even if they are lying on the ground. Call RPU immediately – **507.280.9191** – if you ever see a downed line and keep others away from the area.

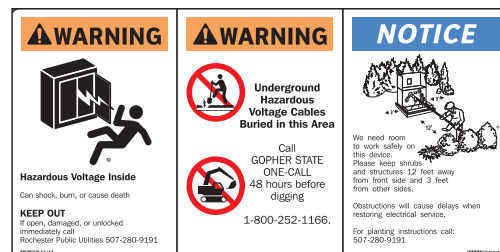
Stay Safe in the Summer Heat by *Staying Hydrated*

As you enjoy the summer days outside being active, don't forget the importance of staying hydrated.

Make sure to always have plenty of safe, great-tasting RPU drinking water on hand this summer. Your body will thank you for it!



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Landscaping Around RPU Transformers Is a Safety Concern

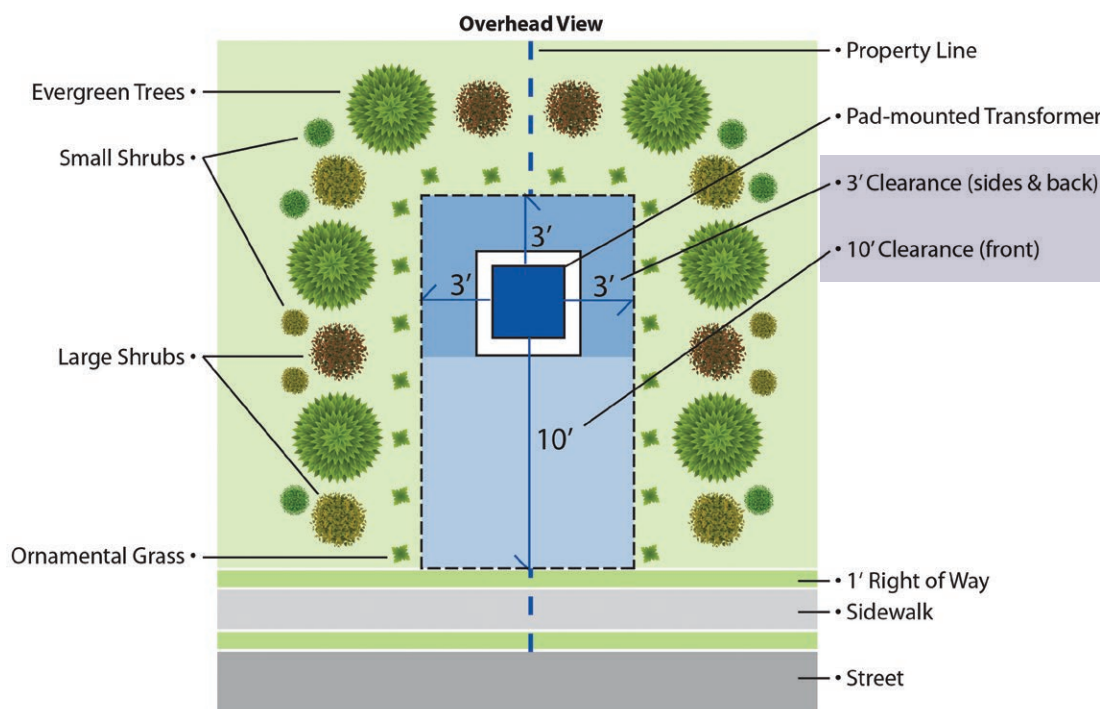
The summer is a great time to plant new bushes and shrubs in your yard. However, did you know that there are issues and potential problems with planting them near and around transformers?

Improving the aesthetics of the community and neighborhoods is one of the reasons why RPU installs new electric service underground and is also the reason why some customers choose to plant around the pad-mounted transformers. However, there are guidelines and access requirements so RPU crews can safely work on the transformers.

Each pad-mounted transformer has a warning sticker affixed to it outlining the dangerous voltage inside, the dangers

of digging and planting around it, and a diagram for safe planting distances. This information is for the safety of both the customer and RPU lineworkers.

In most cases, RPU has a utility easement of 10 feet from the front of the property line to work in. If there are plantings or landscaping within that 10 feet, RPU may need to remove or cut the landscaping near it to ensure a safe working environment. The recommended clearance for all plantings near a transformer is to keep them 12 feet away from the front and three feet from both sides. If you have questions regarding landscaping near a pad-mounted transformer call RPU at **507.280.1500**.



If you choose to plant landscaping closer than the space recommended by RPU, keep in mind that it may be removed, altered, or damaged by line crews needing safe access to the transformer and is done at the homeowner's own risk.

RPU Lineworkers Stop by the Minnesota Children's Museum Rochester

As part of the Minnesota Children's Museum Rochester program called "Little Builders," RPU lineworkers stopped by the museum with a bucket truck to visit with the visitors. RPU lineworkers Rob Adamson and Hunter Gleason shared information about their truck, tools they use, and how important safety is.



RPU Receives Minnesota Safety Council Award

Rochester Public Utilities received the Meritorious Achievement Award from the Minnesota Safety Council for excellence in injury prevention performance in occupational safety in 2015.

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*must meet minimum efficiency requirements; see Water Efficiency Rebate Application

Do You Want to Offset Your Carbon Footprint?



RPU's Carbon Offset Program is available to RPU customers that want to support renewable energy by purchasing renewable energy credits (RECs) and help offset their "carbon footprint."

Carbon dioxide is a greenhouse gas that is emitted into the atmosphere through natural processes as well as through human activities such as burning fossil fuels for electricity generation, industrial uses, and transportation. The amount of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases we emit as individuals is called our "carbon footprint."

Burning fossil fuels such as coal is what produces a majority of the electricity that we use every day. Even though RPU has retired its coal facility, a large portion of energy is still served by coal-fired power plants across the Midwest. One way to reduce the reliance on burning coal and other fossil fuels for electricity is to produce the electricity through renewable means such as wind, solar, and hydro power. Renewable energy utilizes natural resources to fuel the production of energy, but can be an expensive and time-consuming venture. Another option is to purchase RECs through RPU's Carbon Offset Program.

A renewable energy credit (REC, pronounced "rek") is a trackable, serialized credit that is attached to a megawatt of energy from a qualifying resource, such as the Lake Zumbro hydro or the Olmsted Waste to Energy Facility. For each megawatt generated by the qualifying resource, one REC is made available.

Through RPU's current standing power sales agreement, a majority of RPU's load is served by purchased power from Southern Minnesota Municipal Power Agency (SMPA). RPU generates more renewable energy than is required by the Renewable Energy Standard (RES), which gives RPU an excess of RECs. The remaining RECs can be purchased by RPU customers to offset their carbon use. The purchase of one REC will equal the offset of one metric ton of carbon dioxide (one REC equals one MWh, equivalent to 1,000 kWh, of renewable energy).

Be aware that there are other companies that sell RECs, but you often end up paying significantly more than you would with RPU's Carbon Offset Program. Give RPU a call if you are interested in purchasing RECs and comparing RPU's pricing and service with some of the other vendors you are considering.

Can anyone claim that their energy usage is from 100% renewable sources?

The only way is if the user is 100% off of the electric grid and all of their energy is produced onsite with renewable sources. Anyone connected to the grid is theoretically connected to every generator online at any given time. Most everyone making renewable claims are utilizing offsets. This gives everyone an equal chance to participate in renewable energy.

At \$4 per REC, we offer four levels of participation for households and businesses:

25%
SILVER

50%
GOLD

75%
PLATINUM

100%
DIAMOND

The amount you choose to offset will be determined by your previous year's electric energy usage.

FOR EXAMPLE



an average home uses
7,800 kWh/year.

To participate at the Gold level
(50%) take **7,800 x .50 = 3,900**

3,900 ÷ 1,000 = 3.9 quantity
of RECs

RECs are purchased in whole numbers
so your purchase would be 4 RECs

4 RECs x \$4 = \$16 per year

You have the option of choosing either a monthly or one-time charge on your utility bill. Don't know your annual energy usage? Contact Customer Service at **507.280.1500**.



For more information, visit our website at www.rpu.org or call Customer Service at **507.280.1500**.

tweet! tweet! @rpualerts

general inquiries • communication • questions • feedback



IT'S NOT JUST FOR FROZEN PIPES!

Invasive tree roots, seasonal changes, and aging pipes can cause a water or underground electric service to break. You can't prevent it or predict it. Worst of all, most homeowner insurance policies do not cover repairing it, so you'll have to pay for it. **Is your home protected?**

Visit www.rpu.org to learn more about Service Assured® and enroll online.



WATER CONSERVATION

Monthly Tip on Saving From the Tap



Keep a pitcher of drinking water in the refrigerator instead of running the tap.

This way, every drop goes down your throat and not the drain!

CONSERVE & SAVE

rpu
we pledge, we deliver®



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Winners Selected in MMUA's Annual Tom Bovitz Memorial Scholarship Contest

Abby Anderson of Rochester was the third place winner in the MMUA (Minnesota Municipal Utilities Association) Tom Bovitz Memorial Scholarship Award.

The contest was created as a public relations tool to increase the awareness of public power and create goodwill in the community for the local municipally owned utility. Essay theme was "Municipal Utilities: Good for All of Us."

The essays were initially submitted to the governing body of the local utility. Winners of the local contests were then entered into the statewide contest. Judges included six MMUA member utility representatives and one MMUA staff member. Judges ranked their top four essays, point values were assigned, and winners selected.

The award is named in honor of the late Tom Bovitz, a firm believer in the value of education, who was a former general manager of Hibbing Public Utilities and MMUA president. MMUA, headquartered in Plymouth, represents the interests of the state's 125 municipally owned electric and 33 municipally owned gas utilities.

This is the third year in a row that a Rochester student has been selected as a scholarship award winner.



Pictured (L. to R.): Abby Anderson and Dave Reichert, RPU Board President