

RPU Plugged In



Photo by Josh Banks

2015 Environmental Achievement Award Recipients

Environmental Achievement Award nominations for 2016 are now open! Visit www.rpu.org for details. Submit nominations up until Friday, October 21, 2016.



2015



2015 Environmental Achievement Award Recipients Honored

Seven local individuals and organizations were selected to receive the Environmental Achievement Award for their environmental efforts in 2015. The award banquet held in late January was a small gesture to recognize their big contributions in protecting and promoting a healthy environment in Rochester and Olmsted County.

The 2015 recipients are:

1 Mary and Ivan Idso

With the support of community volunteers, Mary and Ivan Idso organized and facilitated Rochester's inaugural Earthfest Celebration, a nine-day event that ran from April 18-26, 2015. The celebration included educational sessions at Assisi Heights, Quarry Hill Nature Center, Cascade Meadow Wetlands & Environmental Science Center, and Olmsted County and City of Rochester Parks. The final day of the Earthfest Celebration included a climate march through Rochester, and a free Eco Fair at the Mayo Civic Center. The event drew many people from varying backgrounds and called attention to numerous environmental causes.

2 Zumbro Valley Bassmasters

There are currently 35 active members in Zumbro Valley Bassmasters (ZVBM), which has been an organized fishing club in Rochester since the early 1980s. ZVBM's mission is to provide Rochester's youth a chance to experience the outdoors and instill in them a lifelong love of fishing. ZVBM events provide opportunities for families to share quality time, while participating in one of our nation's favorite pastimes.

This year marked the fourth annual youth fishing event for ZVBM. Members from the club host this event to educate youth on a variety of angling topics. The kids are shown how to properly remove a hook and release a fish. Habitat conservation was also emphasized during the event. Chris Matejka accepted the award on behalf of ZVBM.

3 Leslie Hall

When Leslie is not chairing the Extension Master Gardener Dyers Garden at the Olmsted County History Center, she can be found working on her own yard, which she has restored with native plants. Native plants help retain water and prevent soil erosion; they also clean our surface water by filtering out pollutants. Another portion of Leslie's yard is dedicated to plants that can be used to dye textiles.

Leslie has been a Certified Extension Master Gardener for nine years. She spends much of her time teaching classes on how to use botanicals for dyeing textiles, and why it is important. By using botanicals, Leslie gets all the color she needs to dye fabrics without the chemical waste.

4 Silver Lake Foods

Silver Lake Foods is committed to energy efficiency. They were the first store in Rochester to replace their existing open reach cooler cases with a new technology called the "No Energy Door." This technology uses less lighting than conventional cases and eliminates the need for heaters that control condensate on the glass doors. They also installed electronic commutated motors that reduce the energy load for evaporator fans. Additionally, the entire store has switched to LED lighting. In total, these upgrades have reduced the store's energy consumption by approximately 212,000 kWh annually. Brian Cooper accepted the award on behalf of Silver Lake Foods.

5 Rochester Alternative Learning Center

Students at the Rochester Alternative Learning Center (ALC) have busy schedules. Some hold family responsibilities well beyond that of a normal teenager, many work part-time jobs, and all have coursework to prepare for. In spite of their obligations, ALC students make time to give back to the environment. This past summer, a group of students participated in a collaborative project that involved bagging

PICTURED ON THE FRONT COVER (L-R):

Front row - Ivan Idso, Mary Idso, Ray Schmitz, Chris Matejka, Frank Martinez Colon, Faysal Muhumed, Leslie Hall, Brian Cooper, and Bruce Frutiger. **Back row** - Edward Cohen, Lawrence Svien, Brad Hak, Issac Karon, Kevin Lynch, Norrie McIlraith, John Winkels, Cheryl Mortel, and Paul Callahan



Mary and Ivan Idso



Chris Matejka
Zumbro Valley Bassmasters



Leslie Hall



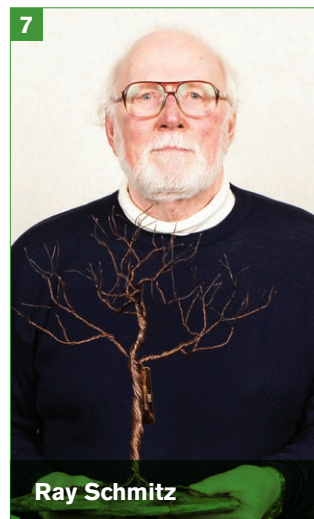
Brian Cooper
Silver Lake Foods



**Frank Martinez Colon and
Faysal Muhumed**
Rochester Alternative Learning Center



Bruce Frutiger



Ray Schmitz

FOR MORE
INFORMATION
ON ENERGY
CONSERVATION OR
THE ENVIRONMENTAL
ACHIEVEMENT
AWARDS, VISIT
WWW.RPU.ORG.

Olmsted County compost, and selling it at the People's Food Cooperative in Rochester. This undertaking served as a pilot project for a local nonprofit's (Growing Home - Olmsted County) vision of establishing a sustainable urban farm.

ALC students also create their own compost with the school's kitchen waste, and excess food scraps from the Channel One Regional Food Bank. This compost is used to supplement the school's garden, which in turn is used to teach students about nutrition. Students have also spent time assisting the Southeastern Minnesota Water Analysis Laboratory in testing water at multiple locations on the Zumbro River. Frank Martinez Colon and Faysal Muhumed accepted the award on behalf of ALC students.

6 Bruce Frutiger

Mention Mr. Frutiger to former students from Century High School, and you'll find he was likely a big influence on their environmental ethics and love of nature. Bruce has worked to involve students in a variety of projects:

- Conservation activities at the Olmsted County Fair
- The Envirothon
- Glacier Stops Here

- Earthfest
- Collecting winter water samples for nitrogen testing
- Stream studies data collection for the Department of Natural Resources and Smallmouth Bass Alliance

He is a board member and active volunteer for the Zumbro Watershed Partnership and Eagle Bluff Environmental Learning Center.

7 Ray Schmitz

As a longtime Rochester area environmental activist, Ray Schmitz has been involved in many local and regional organizations:

- Environmental Commission
- Zumbro Watershed Partnership, current board member
- Sierra Club
- Eagle Bluff Environmental Learning Center, current board member
- Southeast Minnesota Clean Energy Resource Team, current steering committee member
- Rochester Energy Commission, vice chair
- Minnesota Regional Sustainable Development Partnership, current board member
- Rochester Earthfest Eco Fair planning committee

A Peek into a Water Main Break Repair

As the temperatures drop and the frost line dips below 25 inches, the ground shifts, which can cause breaks in the water mains. This was the case back in late January when a water main break was detected along 7th Street NW.

Water mains in Rochester can range in age from new to over 125 years old. The water main material may also be different depending on the age of the water main. Older water main material is comprised of cast iron, which is strong, but very brittle. The majority of our water main breaks occur in cast iron water mains due to this fact. Cast iron water mains were installed in Rochester until 1970 when a switch was made to ductile iron water mains.

The material of the water main in the 7th Street break was cast iron. The pictures represent a simplified look at the process to excavate the area, find the break, and then repair the main. The entire process – once buried utilities were found – took over four hours in -2 degrees Fahrenheit.



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.



Thank You for Attending Our Trade Ally and Commercial Customer Meeting

RPU, in partnership with People's Energy Cooperative and Minnesota Energy Resources, held its annual Trade Ally and Commercial Customer Meeting in late January. This meeting is important for customers and trade allies alike, to keep them apprised on all of the current and new rebate offerings and programs available to customers.

Over 130 attendees came to the meeting to hear from the three utilities. Being equipped with the latest rebate information and knowing where to readily find it will help both the customers save energy and money and will help the trade allies build business and provide value to their clients.

To access all of RPU's rebate information for 2016, visit www.rpu.org for full details.



The team of employees from People's Energy Cooperative, Minnesota Energy Resources, and RPU that hosted the Trade Ally and Commercial Customer Meeting.



Community Matters Event

RPU general manager, Mark Kotschevar (seated far right), speaks on the panel at the Rochester Area Chamber of Commerce event "Community Matters – Minnesota's Energy Revolution: What You Need to Know as a Business" on January 15.

RPU Continues Providing Safe Quality Drinking Water to Rochester

Rochester Public Utilities (RPU) continues to provide safe drinking water for Rochester residents to drink and use.

Here are some pertinent facts regarding RPU's water quality.

- Rochester's water source is from the Jordan groundwater aquifer, which is historically of high quality and lead-free.
 - RPU continues to meet all state and federal drinking water health standards.
- The main source of lead in drinking water is older water service lines and household plumbing.
 - RPU adds polyphosphate at the wellheads for corrosion control by coating water service lines and

- household plumbing to prevent the leaching of lead into drinking water.
- RPU collects and tests water samples from inside 50 homes every three years to comply with the Safe Drinking Water Act.
 - RPU has never exceeded the 90th percentile action level limit of 15 ppb (parts per billion). The 90th percentile is the value required by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).
 - RPU's 2014 Water Quality Report, as required by the Minnesota Department of Health, measured 6.4 ppb of lead.
- Current water sustainability studies have shown the Jordan aquifer in Rochester will provide a high quality, long-term source of supply for future generations.



- A sustainable source allows RPU to continue its proven treatment methods.

For more information regarding RPU water quality, conservation tips, or water system, visit the RPU website www.rpu.org.



Tom Bovitz Memorial Scholarships for High School Seniors

Entries Due to RPU by March 31, 2016

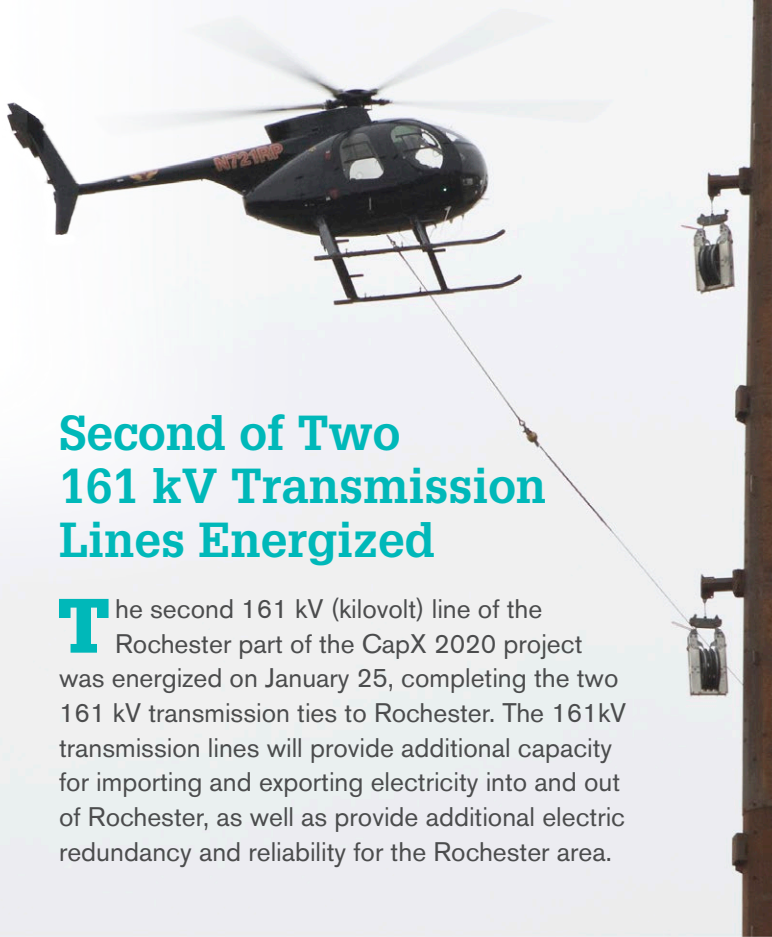
ESSAY SCHOLARSHIP CONTEST:

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

Essay theme is "Municipal Utilities: Good for All of Us."

Visit www.rpu.org for guidelines and to download an entry form. Good luck!





Second of Two 161 kV Transmission Lines Energized

The second 161 kV (kilovolt) line of the Rochester part of the CapX 2020 project was energized on January 25, completing the two 161 kV transmission ties to Rochester. The 161kV transmission lines will provide additional capacity for importing and exporting electricity into and out of Rochester, as well as provide additional electric redundancy and reliability for the Rochester area.

WATER CONSERVATION

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



Time your shower
to keep it under
5 minutes.
You'll save up to
1,000 gallons
per month.

rpu
we pledge, we deliver®

CONSERVE & \$AVE®

ATTEND A FREE ENERGY WORKSHOP & QUALIFY FOR A \$50 ENERGY AUDIT!*

*Audit has a \$400 value!

**Lower Your
Energy USAGE
To Lower Your
Energy COSTS!**

Attend one of our FREE
efficiency workshops
to learn how.



**MINNESOTA
ENERGY
RESOURCES**

rpu
we pledge, we deliver®
CONSERVE & \$AVE®

There Are Only Two
More Workshops
Until Fall.

**REGISTER
TODAY!**

UPCOMING WORKSHOPS:

Sat 03.12.2016 • 10am • Saint Mary's University - Cascade Meadow
Tue 05.17.16 • 6:30pm • George Gibbs Elementary

TO RESERVE YOUR SPOT CONTACT:

Stacy Boots Camp • 888.734.6365 • sbootscamp@mncee.org

LEARN MORE AT: www.rpu.org



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

PRESORTED
STANDARD
US POSTAGE
PAID
BlueSpire



Cold Weather Rule Window Ending Soon

The Minnesota Cold Weather Rule window is coming to an end on April 15. If you are behind on paying your RPU bill, please contact RPU customer service to make arrangements to bring your account current by April 15.

If no arrangement has been made and your account is not current as of April 15, your electric service may be shut off for non-payment. RPU customer service is available from 8 a.m. - 5p.m., Monday - Friday to assist you.

Visit the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission website for full details on the Minnesota Cold Weather Rule at <http://www.puc.state.mn.us/puc/consumers/index.html>.

Images may be from ©iStock and/or ©Fotolia.
©2016 Rochester Public Utilities

Save the Date!



GET YOUR DAILY DOSE OF TREES
for a healthy you and me

RPU's 14th Annual Arbor Day Celebration

and Minnesota's 2016 State Arbor Month Celebration Kick-off Event

Friday, April 29, 2016 • 11am-1pm

Three Links - Silver Lake Park

- FREE Food* • FREE Trees* • Giveaways* •
- Live Music • Family Activities • Poster Contest Winners Awarded •



QUESTIONS: Stephanie Humphrey 507.280.1639 • **MORE INFO:** www.rpu.org

*while supplies last