

# RPU Plugged In



**Celebrate Public Power Week 2016**

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**PUBLIC POWER**

AN AMERICAN TRADITION THAT WORKS®

Public Power Week • October 2-8, 2016

**FEATURING:** 3 Learn More About LED Bulbs | 4 Ribbon Cutting for New Water Tower | 6 Vampire Power Could Be Taking a Bite Out of Your Electric Bill



# PUBLIC POWER WEEK 2016

The fall season seems to be a favorite for many RPU customers for a number of reasons. The outdoor temperatures are cooler, allowing for turning the air conditioner off and opening the windows to bring the cool fall breeze in. And, if you have an irrigation system, you can reduce the frequency of watering and the length of each time, since the hot sun isn't drying your lawn up. Of course, another reason is because Public Power Week is upon us during the first week of October (October 2-8).

Public Power Week is an annual national event coordinated by the American Public Power Association (APPA) in Washington, D.C. The APPA represents not-for-profit, community-owned electric utilities that power homes, businesses

and streets in nearly 2,000 towns and cities, serving 48 million Americans. APPA partners with its members to promote public power, helping community-owned utilities deliver superior services through joint advocacy, education, and collaboration.

One of the many benefits to being a public power provider is that everything that we do as a municipal utility is done with our customers in mind. We take great pride in serving our community, friends, and neighbors and ensuring that the community of Rochester has safe, reliable electric service.

RPU has served the city of Rochester for over 120 years and currently employs over 170 local full-time employees.

## Halloween Bags and Pumpkins for Kids!

Kids 12 and under will receive a free Halloween bag with goodies and a pumpkin for stopping into RPU with their parents/guardians during the month of October.

(One bag and one pumpkin per child, while supplies last.)

Come and celebrate Public Power Week 2016 with us by stopping in the RPU Service Center (4000 East River Road NE) and getting a FREE Energy Star® LED bulb! **One bulb per household. Expires October 18, 2016, or while supplies last.** Energy Star® LED (light-emitting diodes) bulbs are more efficient, durable, versatile, and longer lasting. See the article on page 3 for more details on buying and using LED bulbs.

Don't forget, if you buy qualifying Energy Star® LED bulbs, you can apply for a rebate for up to 50% of the cost of the bulbs. Visit the RPU website ([www.rpu.org](http://www.rpu.org)) for full details on RPU's Conserve & Save® Rebate Program.

## NO TRICK... JUST A TREAT!

Bring this coupon  
in to RPU and  
receive a FREE LED  
Lightbulb!\*



\*8.5 watt LED (comparable to a 60 watt incandescent)

One bulb per household. Coupon valid through October 18, 2016 or while supplies last.



# LEARN MORE ABOUT LED BULBS

**L**ED stands for light-emitting diode. LEDs are small light sources that become illuminated by the movement of electrons through a semiconductor material.

## Do LED lighting products differ from other lighting, like fluorescent or incandescent?

LED lighting is more efficient, durable, versatile, and longer lasting than incandescent and fluorescent lighting. LEDs emit light in a specific direction, whereas an incandescent or fluorescent bulb emits light – and heat – in all directions. LED lighting uses both light and energy more efficiently.

For example, an incandescent or compact fluorescent (CFL) bulb inside of a recessed can will waste about half of the light that it produces, while a recessed-down light with LEDs only produces light where it's needed.

LED lighting products use light emitting diodes to produce light very efficiently. The movement of electrons through a semiconductor material illuminates the tiny light sources we call LEDs. A small amount of heat is released backwards, into a heat sink, in a well-designed product; LEDs are basically cool to the touch.

## Why should I choose ENERGY STAR® certified LED lighting products?

1. There are more lighting choices available on store shelves than ever before. Even with all the new choices, it's still simple – look for the ENERGY STAR label. ENERGY STAR means high quality and performance, particularly in the following areas:

### • Color quality

- Six different requirements for color to ensure quality up front and over time

### • Light output

- Light output minimums to ensure you get enough light  
 - Light distribution requirements to ensure the light goes where you need it  
 - Guidelines for equivalency claims to take the guesswork out of replacement

### • Peace of mind

- Verified compliance with more than 20 separate industry standards and procedures  
 - Long-term testing to back up lifetime claims  
 - Testing to stress the products in operating environments similar to how you will use the product in your home  
 - Three-year minimum warranty requirement

2. An ENERGY STAR qualified LED bulb:

- Uses up to 90% less energy and lasts 15 times longer than an incandescent bulb.

- Provides the same brightness (lumens) with less energy (watts).
- Turns on instantly – there is no warm-up time.
- Produces far less heat than an incandescent, which can reduce air-conditioning needs.
- Is durable – performs well outdoors and in cold temperatures.
- Is available in a variety of shapes and sizes for any application – including recessed cans, track lighting, table lamps, and dimmable bulbs.

3. You can get a rebate from RPU! Buy an ENERGY STAR labeled LED bulb or fixture, and get 50% of the cost\* back through our Conserve & Save® rebate program.

## What else should I look for besides the ENERGY STAR logo when buying an LED?

Look for the brightness of the bulb (lumens) and the light appearance or color. See Figures below.

Brightness	Incandescent	CFL	LED
450 lumens ☀	40W	9-13W	4-8W
800 lumens ☀	60W	13-16W	8-13W
1100 lumens ☀	75W	17-23W	11-15W
1600 lumens ☀	100W	23-28W	16-20W

← Least Efficient      Most Efficient →

## Different Colors, Same Brightness

Soft White, Warm White	Bright White, Cool White	Natural, Daylight
Living Room, Bedroom	Kitchen, Bathroom, Dining Room	Office, Laundry, Workshop, Garage
← Warm Color	Light Appearance	→ Cool Color
2700K	3000K	3500K
		4100K
		5000K
		6500K

## Do you need to recycle LEDs?

Yes, as they may contain trace amounts of hazardous materials, such as lead and nickel. Also, more than 95% of an LED bulb is recyclable. The recycling process will separate the glass from the other elements, all of which will eventually be recycled and reused. RPU residential customers can recycle them for free at the Olmsted County Hazardous Waste Facility. See page 7 for more information.

\* For lighting rebates, see application for minimum efficiency requirements and complete terms and conditions.



RPU employees pictured l-r are: Sidney Jackson, Steve Nyhus, Mark Kotschevar, Cary Johnson, Donn Richardson, Randy Anderton, Doug Klamerus, Mike Heimer, and Craig Langbehn

## RIBBON CUTTING FOR THE ST. BRIDGET WATER TOWER

**R**ochester Public Utilities (RPU) held a ribbon cutting for the new St. Bridget Water Tower in southeast Rochester and placed it in service as RPU's newest water storage facility.

The new 500,000-gallon tower will serve the St. Bridget Intermediate Zone, which includes the commercial developments adjacent to the Highway 63/48<sup>th</sup> Street SE interchange, with a north boundary at approximately 45<sup>th</sup> Street SE and the surrounding area near the new tower.

The tower was constructed by Chicago Bridge and Iron Company at a cost of \$1,139,000. The tower is paid for by the Water Availability Charges, which are paid by new development.

The St. Bridget Water Tower is the first tower in Rochester painted tan rather than the light blue that all other Rochester water towers are painted.

# Energy Education

• Presented by Rochester Public Utilities •

## • GET OUT OF THE DARK •

Brighten Your Knowledge  
On Home Lighting Purchases

Tuesday, October 4, 2016 • 6:00-7:30 pm

RPU's Community Room • 4000 East River Road NE

## • SOLAR ENERGY •

For Your Home or Business

Saturday, October 8, 2016 • 10:00 am-12:00 pm

RPU's Community Room • 4000 East River Road NE

## • SAVING ENERGY 101 •

Neighborhood Energy Challenge Workshops

Attendees qualify for a \$50 home energy audit!

Saturday, November 19, 2016 • 10:00-11:00 am

RPU's Community Room • 4000 East River Road NE

Visit [www.rpu.org](http://www.rpu.org)

to learn more about these **FREE**  
Energy Conservation Classes/Workshops.

**To register**, call 507.328.4000  
or sign up online at:  
[rochester.thatscommunityed.com](http://rochester.thatscommunityed.com)



# CONSERVE & \$SAVE®

# What You Should Know about the Minnesota Cold Weather Law and Winter Bills

**R**PU's objective is to ensure that residential customer accounts are protected during the cold weather period and to follow the requirements of Minnesota Statute 216B.097.

Minnesota Statute 216B.097 states that a municipal utility must not disconnect and must reconnect the utility service of a residential customer during the period between October 15 and April 15 if the disconnection affects the primary heat source for the residential unit and all of the following conditions are met:

**1)** The household income is at or below 50% of the state median income. RPU may verify income on forms it provides or obtain verification of income from the local energy assistance provider. A customer is deemed to meet the income requirements of this clause if the customer receives any form of public assistance, including energy assistance,

that uses an income eligibility threshold set at or below 50% of the state median household income;

**2)** The customer enters into and makes reasonably timely payments under a payment agreement that considers the financial resources of the household. "Reasonably timely payment" means payment within five working days of agreed-upon due dates;

**3)** The customer receives referrals to energy assistance, weatherization, conservation, or other programs likely to reduce the customer's energy bills. To be protected from service disconnection during the cold weather rule period, customers are required to complete an application, which is available by contacting RPU. Before disconnecting service to a residential customer during the period between

October 15 and April 15, RPU will provide the following information to the customer:

- 1)** a notice of proposed disconnection;
- 2)** a statement explaining the customer's rights and responsibilities;
- 3)** a list of local energy assistance providers;
- 4)** a form on which to declare inability to pay; and
- 5)** a statement explaining available time payment plans and other opportunities to secure continued utility service.

## FOR ASSISTANCE

The contact information for the local energy assistance provider is:

Three Rivers Community Action  
**800.277.8418**  
[www.threeriverscap.org](http://www.threeriverscap.org)

## Does your homeowner's insurance cover repairs UNDERGROUND?



For only \$2.99 per month\*, Service Assured® can protect you from out-of-pocket repair costs caused by a broken water or underground electric service.

Protect your home with Service Assured®! To learn more and enroll, go to [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.

## WATER CONSERVATION

### Monthly Tip on Saving From the Tap



Let your lawn go dormant (brown) during the autumn. Dormant grass only needs to be watered every three to four weeks, less if it rains.

**CONSERVE & SAVE**

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



# Vampire Power Could Be Taking a Bite Out of Your Electric Bill

**D**id you know, according to ENERGY STAR®, the average U.S. household spends \$100 per year on vampire power in the home? Vampire power is the power used to power devices even when the device isn't being used. Some common devices that suck vampire power include cellphone chargers, home electronics, power tools, and some office equipment. If you see an LED (light-emitting diode) or a display even when the device isn't in use, there is vampire power that you will want to eliminate.

Here are five easy steps for you get rid of vampire power in your home.

**1 Get unplugged.** All of your chargers (cellphone, MP3, laptop, and even electric toothbrushes) continue to draw electricity even when the device is not charging. Only 5% of the power drawn by a cellphone charger is used to charge the phone – the other 95% is wasted when it is left plugged into the wall.

**2 Use a power strip.** Choose a power strip with a switch to control clusters of products. When you're not using products, turn the power strip off. The most likely targets for clusters are computer equipment (PC, monitor, printer, scanner, speakers, etc.), entertainment centers (TV, DVD player, speakers, game consoles), audio equipment (receiver, amplifier, CD player), and battery chargers.



**3 Use a Kill A Watt™ Meter.** RPU has a number of Kill A Watt™ meters that you can use in your home for free! This device will tell you how much electricity products are using whether turned on or off. Once you

know how much power is being used when devices are running, or deceptively idle, you'll truly discover how much energy and money can be saved by replacing, unplugging, or using a smart power strip to cut off any power to that item.

**4 Turn your computer off.** Computers in sleep mode can cost an additional \$70 per year. If you are unable to do so, at least make sure the computer goes into a low-power sleep, standby, or hibernate mode. And watch out for those screen savers! Graphic intense screen savers can actually waste power.

**5 Look for the STAR.** Products that have earned the ENERGY STAR® use less energy while providing the same performance and features as conventional models. The ENERGY STAR® is awarded to products that meet or exceed the established criteria for energy efficiency; they are as much as 10% to 50% more efficient than conventional counterparts. They use less energy and save you money. You'll also get great rebates on your purchase of ENERGY STAR® products through RPU's Conserve & Save® rebate program.



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## VAMPIRE POWER CHART

	Watts in Standby Energy (Vampire Load)	Estimated Hours Off per Month (Vampire Energy)*	Avg kWh/Used per Month	Estimated Monthly Cost (10¢ per kWh)
Cellphone Charger (not charging, but plugged in)	1	630	0.63	\$0.06
Coffee Pot	1	655	0.66	\$0.06
Desktop PC (computer and LCD Monitor)	5	600	3.00	\$0.30
Computer Speakers	2	600	1.20	\$0.12
Computer Printer	6	715	4.29	\$0.43
Digital Cable Box	35	600	21.00	\$2.10
Dishwasher	1.8	695	1.20	\$0.12
Standard DVD	4.5	710	3.20	\$0.32
Energy Star DVD	0.9	710	0.64	\$0.06
Garage Door Opener	2.5	717	1.79	\$0.18
iPod Charger (not charging, but plugged in)	1	630	0.63	\$0.06
Microwave	3	713	2.14	\$0.21
Oven	3	670	2.01	\$0.20
Standard TV	5.9	600	3.54	\$0.35
Energy Star TV	2.5	600	1.50	\$0.15
Standard Stereo (rack system)	3.2	710	2.27	\$0.23
Energy Star Radio	0.9	710	0.64	\$0.06
Standard VCR	5.1	710	3.62	\$0.36
Energy Star VCR	3.5	710	2.49	\$0.25
Video Game Console	1	690	0.69	\$0.07

## 2016 “Be Bright” ENERGY STAR® LED Campaign

**B**e Bright this fall! Through December 31, while supplies last, our residential electric customers are eligible for reduced pricing on ENERGY STAR® qualified LED light bulbs at participating local and area retailers, for as little as \$0.99 each. Rochester retailers this year include Arrow Ace Hardware, Batteries Plus Bulbs, Home Depot, Lowes, Menards, Sam’s Club, and Walmart.

ENERGY STAR-labeled LEDs use 80% less energy and last up to 25 times longer than incandescent light bulbs – but less watts doesn’t mean less light! LEDs produce bright light for less cost because they use less electricity and last longer than incandescent and compact fluorescent bulbs – saving time and money on replacements.

By replacing the five most used bulbs in your home with energy-efficient LEDs, you can save about \$40 in energy costs during the first year alone. LEDs also produce less heat than incandescents – improving safety.

While these financial savings are a big draw, LEDs also offer environmental benefits to help make our community a little greener.



**Remember, supplies are limited, so get your discounted LEDs before they sell out! Visit [www.rpu.org](http://www.rpu.org) for the entire retailer list. Discounted LEDs purchased during this promotion are not eligible for our LED rebate program.**

**GOOD**  
  
**BETTER**  
  
**BEST**  


LED bulbs last the longest and save the most energy. Buy Energy Star® LED bulbs or fixtures and get a **50% REBATE!**

To apply, download a Lighting Rebate Application with complete terms and conditions from [www.rpu.org](http://www.rpu.org).

**CONSERVE & \$AVE**

NOTE: Rebates on Energy Star® CFL Bulbs & Fixtures will be ending Dec 31, 2016

**FREE CFL & LED BULB RECYCLING**  
**at the Olmsted County Hazardous Waste Facility**  
 Collect your CFL & LED bulbs in separate boxes. Limit is 100 total bulbs per load. Drop off the bulbs Monday-Saturday from 8am-5pm at **305 Silver Creek Road NE**.  
NOTE: RPU residential customers only. RPU Service Center is NOT a drop off site due to safety and handling concerns.



**CONSERVE & \$AVE®**  
 Need more bulbs? Get a 50% rebate from RPU! Visit our website at [www.rpu.org](http://www.rpu.org) for details.



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

PRESORTED  
STANDARD  
US POSTAGE  
PAID  
BlueSpire



Look inside on page 2 for information on the fun, free things RPU is doing for Public Power Week 2016.



# WHOOOO IS YOUR HERO?

Environmental Achievement Awards are given annually for outstanding environmental achievement in Olmsted County.



## CALLING FOR NOMINATIONS!

Nominations are sought for individuals, families, youth, organizations, or businesses in any or all categories:

- Climate Change
- Conservation
- Education
- Energy
- Renewables
- Sustainable Food Production
- Water
- Other



Photo by John Ohm

APPLICATIONS: [www.rpu.org](http://www.rpu.org) • DEADLINE: October 21

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