ROCHESTER PUBLIC UTILITIES

ROCHESTER
PUBLIC UTILITIES
WE PLEDGE, WE DELIVER™

Plugged In



Message from the General Manager: What We Learned from the Sept. 2 Storm

Details on page 2

NOV / DEC
2026

RPU.ORG



MESSAGE FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER

What We Learned from the Sept. 2 Storm

The Sept. 2 storm tested our electric system, our crews, our communication tools and the patience of thousands of customers waiting for the lights to come back on.

More than 11,000 RPU customers experienced an outage during the storm. What may have looked like one enormous outage was actually 167 individual outage incidents, each requiring crews to locate the problem, assess the damage, make the area safe and complete repairs.

Neighborhood Energy Challenge

Scan the QR code to learn more and register.

ATTEND ONE OF OUR FREE ENERGY SAVING WORKSHOPS.
Learn no- and low-cost ways to reduce energy use, grab a swag bag, and **qualify for an in-home energy audit (a $365 value) for only $75!**

NEIGHBORHOOD ENERGY CHALLENGE

MINNESOTA ENERGY RESOURCES

ROCHESTER PUBLIC UTILITIES

- Sat, Nov 14 | 10-11 a.m. | Northrop Community Ed. Center
- Wed, Dec 9 | 12-1 p.m. | **VIRTUAL ZOOM WORKSHOP**
- Sat, Jan 23 | 10-11 a.m. | Northrop Community Ed. Center

Register online at **www.rpu.org** or call **888-734-6365**.
Free childcare provided.



One of our CONSERVE & $AVE™ programs.

HOW WE RESTORE POWER

During widespread outages, RPU prioritizes restoration based on safety, system needs and the number of customers that can be restored. Crews address major system damage and critical facilities first, followed by repairs that restore the greatest number of customers before moving to smaller and individual outages.

That is why restoration does not always move geographically. A home across the street may have power while yours does not because it may be served by different equipment or have a separate problem farther down the line.

During the storm, we also partnered with the Rochester Police Department to use drone footage to assess difficult-to-access areas and help crews locate problems. Storm restoration is not as simple as flipping a switch. Behind every outage is a situation our crews must safely assess and resolve.

WHERE WE NEED TO DO BETTER

Our people and electric system performed well under significant stress. Our customer information systems did not.

The public outage map was temporarily unavailable, and we heard from customers who did not have enough information. That frustration was justified. We will fix the outage map and improve outage communication.

We may not always be able to provide an exact restoration time while crews are assessing storm damage, but we can provide better information. Advanced Metering and a new outage management system will improve our visibility into outages, help crews respond and provide customers with clearer, more dependable information.

I WAS ONE OF THE CUSTOMERS WAITING, TOO

The storm also showed us something worth remembering about our community: what "MN Kind" looks like when neighbors need one another.

My own home remained without power into the evening. Like many of you, my family wondered how long it would last and what would happen to the food in our refrigerator and freezer.

Then a neighbor with a solar-plus-storage system ran an extension cord across the lawn to help keep our deep freezer cold.

No big production. Just a neighbor seeing another family who needed help and helping.

Similar stories played out across Rochester as neighbors checked on one another and shared generators, extension cords, food and information.

That is what "MN Kind" looked like on our street.

A WORD ABOUT STORM TREE CLEANUP

RPU's role during a storm is to address electrical hazards and restore power. If a tree or limb is touching a power line, RPU leads the response to address the electrical hazard.

After a storm, however, tree limbs and debris left on private property are generally the property owner's responsibility to remove. Rochester Parks & Recreation may clear trees from streets and other public areas. If you are unsure who is responsible, **call 311**.

Never approach a tree or branch touching or near a power line, and always assume a downed line is energized.

See the Storm Tree Response guide for more information. →

STAY INFORMED

Sign up for outage alerts and report outages through RPU Connect. Customers can also visit rpu.org for outage information and the outage map, follow Rochester Public Utilities on Facebook during significant outages and follow **@RPUOutages** on X for updates.

MOVING FORWARD

Waiting for power to return is frustrating. Waiting without good information is even harder. Sept. 2 showed us what worked and where we need to improve. Thank you for giving our crews room to work safely, looking out for one another and being patient when the information available was not as good as it needed to be.

Our responsibility now is to learn from it. We will improve our outage map and communication and continue investing in the people, systems and technology that help Rochester recover better from the next storm.



Tim McCollough
General Manager,
Rochester Public Utilities





You Asked, We Answered:

Why am I not getting my bill on time?

If you receive your RPU bill by mail, delivery times can vary after your bill enters the U.S. Postal Service system. While RPU works to send bills on schedule, we cannot control how quickly mail is delivered once it leaves us.

The good news is you don't have to wait for the mail to know when your bill is ready.

With RPU Connect, you can access your account anytime from your computer, tablet, or smartphone. Customers can view their bill and payment history, make one-time payments, enroll in paperless billing, receive bill notifications and alerts by email or text, and set up or manage AutoPay.

And RPU Connect does more than billing. You can also:

- Track and compare your electric and water usage
- Report an outage and receive outage updates
- Start, stop, or transfer service
- Manage alerts and notification preferences
- Update your contact information
- Access rebates, programs, and ways to save



Already have an account? Log in to RPU Connect anytime to view and manage your account.

New to RPU Connect? Creating an account is quick and easy. Once registered, you'll have secure, 24/7 access to your RPU account and won't have to rely on the mailbox to know when your bill is ready.

Prefer to pay in person? Customers can also pay their utility bill using the payment kiosk at the RPU Service Center.

No matter how you choose to pay, RPU offers several convenient options to help you stay on top of your account and avoid delays associated with mailed bills.

If your bill hasn't arrived or you need assistance with your account, please contact RPU Customer Care at **507-280-1500**.

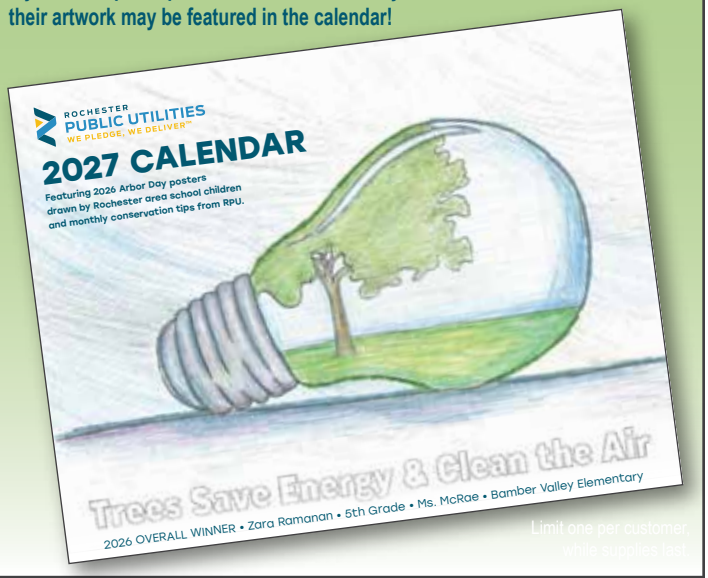
Annual Arbor Day Celebration

Learn more: www.rpu.org > Education & Environment

Come into the RPU Service Center and

PICK UP YOUR FREE RPU 2027 CALENDAR

If your child participated in the 2026 Arbor Day Poster Contest, their artwork may be featured in the calendar!



Limit one per customer while supplies last.

Supporting Rochester Businesses

COMMERCIAL CORNER

RPU's Marketing & Energy Services team works directly with Rochester businesses on energy efficiency, electrification, infrastructure, billing and other electric and water service needs. The team manages **RPU's Conserve & Save™** programs, supports energy efficiency projects, facilitates distributed energy resource interconnections and helps businesses evaluate new energy technologies. Commercial Energy Advisors also provide dedicated support to commercial and industrial customers, helping them understand their energy use, plan for future needs and connect with RPU programs and services.

MEET OUR NEWEST COMMERCIAL ENERGY ADVISORS

Mike Wirkus and Nolan Seaberg recently joined RPU's commercial team as Commercial Energy Advisors. In their roles, they work directly with local businesses to identify opportunities, connect customers with RPU programs and resources and support their ongoing energy and water needs.



Pictured left to right: Mike Wirkus, Shae Hanson, Alex Pruett, Laurie Cook, Nolan Seaberg



MIKE WIRKUS

Mike Wirkus brings more than 20 years of utility experience to RPU, with a background in coal-fired power generation, wind energy, wastewater treatment, substation maintenance and utility protective relaying.

As a Commercial Energy Advisor, Mike works with commercial and industrial customers on energy efficiency, operational needs and energy planning. He holds a Bachelor of Science in Energy Management from Bismarck State College and brings extensive technical and utility experience to his work with customers.

Outside of work, Mike enjoys spending time with his family, being outdoors, traveling and tackling home improvement projects.



NOLAN SEABERG

A native of nearby Byron, **Nolan Seaberg** brings a local perspective to his role as a Commercial Energy Advisor. He works with commercial and industrial customers to understand their energy needs, identify efficiency opportunities and connect them with RPU programs and services.

Nolan earned bachelor's degrees in environmental science and business management from the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse and is a LEED Green Associate. He also gained experience through internships with Trane Technologies, Destination Medical Center and the City of Rochester.

Outside of work, Nolan enjoys spending time outdoors, trying new Rochester restaurants, traveling to national parks and visiting thrift stores with friends.

WATER FOR TOMORROW:

Planning for Rochester's Future Water Supply

Rochester's drinking water is safe and meets all federal primary drinking water standards. But ensuring our community continues to have safe, reliable water for generations to come requires planning today.

Rochester currently relies primarily on groundwater from the Jordan Aquifer. As our community has grown, so have our water needs. RPU is approaching the state established limit on how much water can be withdrawn from the Jordan Aquifer without additional study. Our source water also contains naturally occurring minerals, including iron and manganese, which can contribute to rusty water, staining and other water quality concerns.

To better understand our future needs, RPU is conducting an extensive regional groundwater study covering more than 1,500 square miles. The study will evaluate how groundwater use may affect aquifer levels, streams, wetlands and other natural resources. The findings will help determine how Rochester can responsibly and sustainably meet its future water needs.

RPU is also evaluating future water source alternatives, including additional groundwater supplies and surface water options. This work will help guide future decisions about water sources, treatment, distribution improvements and other long-term investments.

This planning is part of Water for Tomorrow, RPU's effort to prepare Rochester's water system for the future. By planning now, we can carefully evaluate our options, protect our natural resources and make thoughtful investments over time while continuing to provide safe, reliable water for generations to come.

Community input is an important part of this process. Visit **rpu.org/water/water-for-tomorrow** to learn more, follow our progress and share your feedback.

CONSERVE & SAVE™ Rebates

Learn more: www.rpu.org > Rebates & Programs



Don't trash your old holiday lights. RECYCLE THEM!

It's FREE! Bring your old holiday string lights and decorations into the RPU Service Center lobby (4000 East River Rd NE) and drop them in the designated bins.

NOT ACCEPTED:
- Appliance cords
- Battery packs
- CFL lights
- Cord adapters
- Electric cords
- Plastic rope lights
- Telephone cords

Ends Friday, January 29, 2027.

Find Wally Watt!

Can you spot Wally Watt hiding somewhere in this issue of Plugged In? He may appear in different colors, so keep your eyes peeled!

How to enter:

1. Find Wally Watt.
2. Scan the QR code.
3. Tell us the page number and what he's hiding next to.

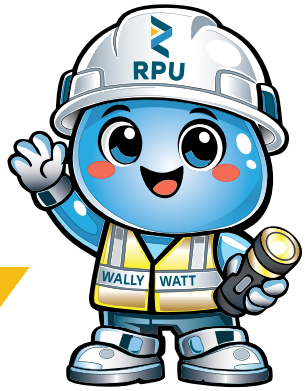


Congratulations to Our Last Winner

Congratulations to 5-year-old Kenna, our Sept-Oct Plugged In Find Wally Watt winner! After successfully spotting Wally, Kenna took home some fun prizes.

Wally's Energy Saving Tip

Be an Energy Detective! Check around doors and windows for chilly drafts. Keeping cold air out and warm air in helps your heating system work less, saving energy and keeping your home cozy all winter.



Did you find Wally Watt?

Scan to enter and view official contest rules.

One correct entry will be randomly selected to win a prize.

Make the Season Even Brighter!

1. Purchase new LED holiday plug-in (not battery or solar operated) lights and decorations by December 31, 2026.
2. Complete this page and submit it to RPU:
   - by March 31, 2027
   - with original sales receipt
   - with packaging clearly labeled as LED and showing the number of lights per string (one package per type)
3. Rebate is limited to 50% of LED string or package cost, tax excluded, up to maximum amounts listed below.

Customer Name

Mailing Address

City | State | Zip Code

Installation Address *(if different from mailing address)*

City | State | Zip Code

Contact Phone Number *(with area code)* ☐ Home ☐ Cell ☐ Other:

Email Address

Account Number ☐ Residential ☐ Commercial

(Rebates $500 and less will be issued as a bill credit to your account.)

A Date Purchased (MM/DD/2026)	B LED Bulb Size	C Number of LED Bulbs per String	D Cost per Package	E Quantity of Packages	F Total Cost of Packages (D x E)	G Rebate Amount	H Total Rebate – Up to Max. Amounts* (F x G)	I OFFICE USE ONLY
____/____/2026	☐ Mini ☐ Other		$		$	50%	$	$
____/____/2026	☐ Mini ☐ Other		$		$	50%	$	$
						GRAND TOTAL REBATE:	$	$

Recipient must be an electric customer of RPU. Valid only on purchases made by December 31, 2026. See complete terms and conditions at www.rpu.org. **Submit completed form and required documentation to RPU:**

Send by Mail: Rochester Public Utilities
Attn: Rebate Processing
4000 E River Rd NE
Rochester, MN 55906-2813

Send by Email: rebates@rpu.org

Questions: 507-280-1537

Website: www.rpu.org

CONSERVE & SAVE

1026

*Rebate is 50% of string or package cost (tax excluded), up to maximum amounts listed:

Number of Lamps	Maximum Rebate per String
less than 99	$3.00
100 – 199	$6.00
200 – 299	$9.00
300 or more	$12.00

OFFICE USE ONLY: ID# _____

Date Received _____

Date Processed _____

ROCHESTER
PUBLIC UTILITIES
WE PLEDGE, WE DELIVER™

PRESORTED
STANDARD
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
ROCHESTER, MN
PERMIT NO. 4

4000 East River Rd NE
Rochester, MN 55906
507-280-1500
www.rpu.org

Neighborly RPU Plugged In is designed and printed locally in Rochester.

Social Media:

- @rochesterpublicutilities
- Rochester Public Utilities
- blog.rpu.org
- RPU TV
- Rochester Public Utilities

Mobile App:

RPU Connect

Download on the App Store

GET IT ON Google Play

RPU Service Center Hours:
Monday - Friday
(8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.)

Customer Care By Phone:
Monday - Friday (8 a.m. - 5 p.m.)
507-280-1500

Electric Emergency:
507-280-9191 (24 hrs)

Water Emergency:
507-280-1500 (8 a.m. - 5 p.m.)
507-280-9191 (5 p.m. - 8 a.m.)

RPU Holiday Closure Dates

NOVEMBER 11
Veterans Day

NOVEMBER 26
Thanksgiving Day

NOVEMBER 27
Thanksgiving Holiday

DECEMBER 24
Christmas Eve

DECEMBER 25
Christmas Day

JANUARY 1
New Year's Day



