



**You Asked, We Answered:
During a regional power grid
emergency, how does RPU
keep electricity reliable
and what does it mean for
future reliability?**

Details on page 3

MAY / JUN
2026

MESSAGE FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER

At Rochester Public Utilities (RPU), reliability is at the heart of everything we do. In recent months, we saw that commitment in action during the January regional grid emergency and again during the March snowstorm that caused outages for thousands of customers in our community.

While the January MISO event was driven by extreme conditions across the Upper Midwest, our focus in Rochester remained clear: maintaining reliable service. Through preparation, system flexibility, and

strong coordination, we continued to serve our customers during a challenging time.

That same focus guided our response to the March outage. RPU crews worked quickly and safely to restore power as soon as possible, demonstrating the dedication and responsiveness our community depends on.

These events are a reminder that reliability takes planning, investment, and people. At RPU, we remain

committed to delivering safe, dependable service every day.

In this issue of Plugged In, you'll find more on how we maintain reliability, along with updates on water quality, upcoming events, and ways to save through rebates and programs.

Thank you for trusting RPU to serve your home and business.



Tim McCollough
General Manager,
Rochester Public Utilities

The RPU Utility Board: Guiding Reliable Service

RPU is governed by a five-member Utility Board that helps guide RPU's long-term direction. The board provides policy direction, oversees utility finances, and reviews electric and water rates, with a focus on reliable, affordable service for our community.

What the Utility Board does

- Sets policy and strategic direction for RPU's electric and water services.
- Provides financial oversight and reviews major investments and long-range planning.
- Reviews and acts on utility rate recommendations.
- Serves as a hearing body for certain appeals and related matters.
- Supports sustainability and stewardship priorities that align with community needs.

Meet the Utility Board



Malachi McNeilus
BOARD PRESIDENT
VP of Operations, Sterling
State Bank



Wendy Turri
BOARD VICE PRESIDENT
Public Works Director, City
of Rochester (Retired)



Brett Gorden
BOARD MEMBER
Division Chair, Facilities
Management, Mayo Clinic



Kelsey Vaszily
BOARD MEMBER
Director of Business
Development, Kraus
Anderson



Patrick Keane
BOARD MEMBER &
CITY COUNCIL LIAISON
City Council Member, City of
Rochester

Welcome,
Kelsey

RPU recently welcomed Kelsey Vaszily to the Utility Board, bringing business development and marketing experience and a strong connection to Rochester's growth and infrastructure needs.





You Asked, We Answered:

During a regional power grid emergency, how does RPU keep electricity reliable and what does it mean for future reliability?

During the recent January cold snap, customers across the region were asked to temporarily reduce electricity use. While that may raise concerns, it's important to understand that this was a regional grid event, not an issue specific to Rochester.

Extreme cold drove up energy demand across the Upper Midwest while some generation sources were limited. Wind generation dropped due to low wind conditions, and natural gas supplies were constrained due to increased demand for heating. This created temporary strain across the broader regional grid.



At the local level, RPU remained focused on reliability.

Our system is designed with flexibility in mind, including dual-fuel generation units that can operate on either natural gas or fuel oil. When natural gas became limited, RPU transitioned to fuel oil and operated peak-demand generators around the clock.

RPU staff and fuel suppliers worked continuously for more than 50 hours to support this effort. The operation included bringing tanker trucks to RPU power plants as frequently as every two hours to keep generators fueled and running, ensuring power remained available to our community.

These proactive efforts, combined with regional coordination and voluntary conservation by customers, helped reduce strain on the system and prevented the need for rolling outages in Rochester.

Events like this are rare and driven by extreme conditions. They are not reflective of everyday operations or the reliability of RPU's system. Situations like these are closely managed across the regional grid, with utilities working

together to maintain stability and service.

At RPU, reliability is our top priority. We are committed to providing safe, dependable service in all conditions and taking the necessary steps to keep the lights on for our customers.



To learn more, listen to RPU General Manager Tim McCollough's recent conversation on Rochester Today on KROC-AM, where he discusses the January grid event and how RPU works to maintain reliability.

Listen here: krocnews.com/rochester-january-power-grid-emergency/



Smart Thermostat Program Helps You Save Energy and Earn Bill Credits

Looking for an easy way to lower energy use and earn bill credits without changing your daily routine? RPU's Smart Thermostat Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) program makes it simple. By enrolling your qualifying smart thermostat, you can help reduce energy demand during peak times and receive a \$50 enrollment credit, plus a \$25 annual bill credit each year you stay enrolled.

HOW IT WORKS

During the summer months, when energy use is highest, RPU may call occasional "Peak Savings Events." These events typically happen on hot weekdays and last one to four hours. During that time, your smart thermostat will automatically adjust by just a few degrees to reduce strain on the electric grid.

Before and after each event, your thermostat returns to your normal settings, and you can opt out at any time.

WHO CAN PARTICIPATE

You may be eligible if you:

- Are an RPU residential electric customer or commercial small general service customer
- Use a smart thermostat to control central air conditioning or a heat pump
- Have a qualifying internet-connected thermostat

WHY IT MATTERS

By participating, you're helping reduce peak energy demand when it matters most. This helps:

- Improve grid reliability during high-use periods
- Reduce overall energy costs
- Support a more efficient and sustainable energy system for our community

WHAT YOU'LL RECEIVE

- **\$50 one-time enrollment incentive** (applied as a bill credit within 4 to 6 weeks after approval)
- **\$25 annual bill credit** for participating through the summer season (applied at year-end)
- Additional utility rebates for new smart thermostats may apply.

WILL IT AFFECT COMFORT?

Only slightly. Temperature adjustments are typically just a few degrees, and most customers notice little to no impact. You're always in control and can opt out of any event if needed.



Drinking Water Week Open House

TOUR AN RPU WATER TOWER AND WELLHOUSE



RPU invites the community to its annual Drinking Water Week open house on May 8 from 2 to 6 p.m. at the Apache Mall water tower, where you can learn how clean drinking water makes its way from the aquifer to your home.

Visitors will have the chance to tour the Apache Mall water tower and wellhouse and meet the RPU water professionals who help keep Rochester's drinking water system running safely and reliably. The open house offers a behind-the-scenes look at the infrastructure that serves more than 42,000 customers every day.

The Apache Mall water tower is a spheroid-style storage facility that can hold up to 500,000 gallons of water. For comparison, the St. Marys Reservoir stores roughly six times that amount, with a capacity of about 3.3 million gallons.

Drinking Water Week highlights the importance of safe, dependable drinking water and recognizes the dedicated teams who help ensure it flows 24/7. RPU's open house is a great opportunity to learn how Rochester's water system works and the role it plays in protecting public health.

Spring into Savings with RPU Rebates

With warmer weather finally here and summer right around the corner, many homeowners are turning their attention to projects inside and outside the home. It's also the perfect time to take advantage of Rochester Public Utilities (RPU) rebates that can help you save money while using energy and water more efficiently.

RPU's rebate programs are designed to support everyday upgrades that make a real difference. Whether you're replacing an appliance, tuning up your cooling system, upgrading outdoor equipment, or even taking advantage of warmer weather by riding an electric-assisted bicycle, you may qualify for cash rebates that help offset upfront costs and reduce long-term utility expenses.

This time of year is especially ideal for water-related improvements. As outdoor watering increases and home projects pick up, installing water-efficient appliances and equipment can help lower usage and keep bills in check throughout the summer months.



Customers can also find rebates for a wide range of energy-saving upgrades, including:

- ENERGY STAR® appliances
- Heating and cooling tune-ups and equipment
- Electric vehicles and home EV chargers
- Electric-assisted bicycles (e-bikes)
- Battery-powered lawn equipment

Applying is simple. Customers can download a rebate application, fill it out, and submit it to receive their rebate. Many applications are also available in fillable formats to make the process even easier.

Making efficient choices today can lead to lasting savings, improved performance, and reduced impact on shared resources. It's one more way RPU helps customers get the most out of their energy and water use.

See available rebates and applications on our website at: [rpu.org/consERVE-save-rebates/residential-rebates/](https://www.rpu.org/consERVE-save-rebates/residential-rebates/)

2025 Water Quality Report

Municipal water utilities, including RPU, are highly tested and scrutinized for safety and quality. In accordance with the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) Safe Drinking Water Act, the testing results over the past year are compiled and made available for the public. Each May, RPU releases the consumer confidence report (CCR) publicly. This year, RPU is pleased to announce that water provided by RPU, again met all State and Federal drinking water standards. Review the complete version of the CCR at [rpu.org/water/water-quality/annual-report/](https://www.rpu.org/water/water-quality/annual-report/). Questions and requests for a hard copy version of the 2025 Water Quality Report can be directed to Todd Osweiler at **507-280-1589** or tosweiler@rpu.com.

Planting for a Stronger, Greener Rochester

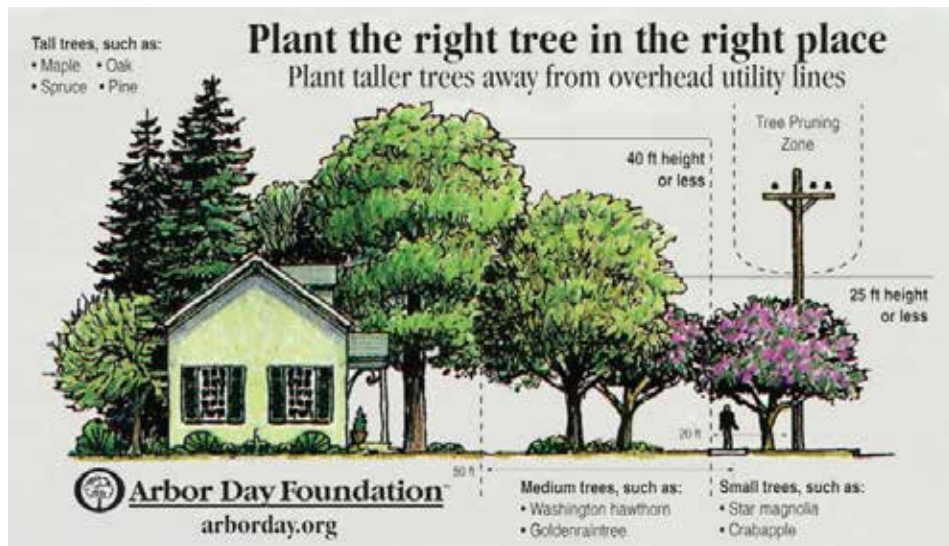
KEEPING OUR COMMUNITY SAFE, RELIABLE, AND ENVIRONMENTALLY RESPONSIBLE.

At Rochester Public Utilities (RPU), we're committed to keeping our community safe, reliable, and environmentally responsible. Through our Partners in Planting program and ongoing tree maintenance efforts, we're working alongside local partners and residents to ensure the right trees are planted in the right places.

Just as important as planting the right tree is maintaining safe distances from power lines. Trees that grow too close to overhead lines can create safety hazards and impact service reliability. That's why RPU regularly trims trees near power lines and encourages customers to select appropriate tree species and planting locations. Choosing smaller trees near power lines and placing larger trees farther away helps prevent future issues and supports long-term system reliability.

Please report any tree that is contacting the electric wires to RPU at **507-280-9191** so that RPU personnel can investigate and correct any safety hazards.

Trees play an important role in both energy savings and community beauty. When planted strategically, they can provide shade that reduces summer cooling costs, block winter winds to lower heating bills, and improve air quality. Through our partnership with the Arbor Day Foundation's Tree Line USA® program, the City Forester and local nurseries, RPU helps promote healthy urban forestry while offering customers resources and incentives to plant wisely.



See available tree rebates and coupons to the right.

Each year, Arbor Day serves as a reminder of the important role trees play in our community. RPU is proud to support local tree planting efforts and encourages residents to carry that momentum forward by planting and maintaining trees that are both beneficial and safely placed.

By working together, we can enhance Rochester's urban forest while maintaining safe and reliable electric service.



Find Wally Watt!

Wally Watt is a cheerful water drop who represents the services we deliver every day and a simple reminder that we all play a role in keeping our community safe and running strong.

Where's Wally?

Wally Watt is hiding somewhere in this Plugged In edition. He may appear in different colors, so keep your eyes peeled. Can you find him?



Did you find Wally Watt?

Scan the QR Code to submit your entry.

Find Wally Watt and Win!

Wally Watt is hiding somewhere... Can you spot him?

1. Find Wally
 2. Scan the QR code
 3. Tell us where he is (page number and what he is next to)
- Correct entries are entered into this issue's prize drawing.

Wally's Safety Tip

Turn off lights, TVs, and electronics when you're not using them. Saving energy helps your family and your community!



Official rules summary

Eligibility: Open to children 17 and under who live in an RPU customer household.

How to enter: Find Wally Watt in the current issue and submit the entry form.

Deadline: Entries must be received by 11:59 p.m. on May 25.

Winner selection: One winner will be selected at random from all correct entries received by the deadline and will receive a prize.

Notification: Winner will be contacted using the email or phone provided. If the winner does not respond within five business days, another winner may be selected.

Privacy: Information collected is used only for contest administration and prize delivery.

Congratulations to Our Last Winner

Congratulations to 9-year-old Max Brevig, our April-May Plugged In Find Wally Watt winner! After successfully spotting Wally, he took home some fun prizes.

Partners in Planting

Scan the QR code to learn more and to download instructions on where and how to plant a tree to save energy and money on your utility bill.



Partners in Planting

\$20

NURSERY COUPON

\$20 OFF ANY SHADE TREE \$200 OR MORE

Submit to Jim Whiting Nursery & Garden Center or Sargent's Gardens

JimWhiting
Nursery & Garden Center

www.jimwhitingnursery.com
3430 19th St NW
507-289-3741



SARGENT'S

www.sargentsgardens.com
7955 18th Ave NW
507-289-0022
1811 2nd St SW
507-289-6068

In support of RPU's Partners in Planting Program. Must be an RPU customer to participate. One coupon per household. Offer valid on any tree \$200 or more. Regularly priced trees only. Not good with other discounts or promotions. Must be presented at time of sale. Expires 12/31/2026.



ROCHESTER
PUBLIC UTILITIES
WE PLEDGE, WE DELIVER™

One of our
CONSERVE & \$AVE
programs.

Partners in Planting

\$20

ARBORIST COUPON

\$20 OFF ANY TREE CARE SERVICE \$200 OR MORE

Submit to ArborWise, Davey Tree, or Sargent's Gardens



www.arborwisemn.com
7173 Hadley Valley Rd NE
507-535-9082

DAVEY

www.davey.com
3930 Hwy 14 E
507-286-8733



SARGENT'S

www.sargentsgardens.com
7955 18th Ave NW
507-289-0022
1811 2nd St SW
507-289-6068

In support of RPU's Partners in Planting Program. Must be an RPU customer to participate. One coupon per household. Offer valid on arborist services \$200 or more. Not good with other discounts or promotions. Must be presented at time of sale. Refunds not available. Expires 12/31/2026.



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WE PLEDGE, WE DELIVER™

One of our
CONSERVE & \$AVE
programs.

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.



RPU will be closed Monday, May 25, in observance of Memorial Day.

Our crews are always available if an outage occurs. If you experience an outage, call 507-280-9191 (available 24/7).

Social Media:

 @rochesterpublicutilities

 Rochester Public Utilities

 blog.rpu.org

 RPU TV

 Rochester Public Utilities

Mobile App:

RPU Connect



RPU Service Center Hours:

Monday - Friday (8am - 4:30pm)

Customer Care By Phone:

Monday - Friday (8am - 5pm)
507-280-1500

Electric Emergency:

507-280-9191 (24 hrs)

Water Emergency:

507-280-1500 (8am - 5pm)
507-280-9191 (5pm - 8am)

Stay Alert: Know the Signs of Misleading Solar Sales

RPU has received reports of door-to-door and phone solicitations promoting third-party solar offers that are not permitted under Minnesota law. These sales pitches can be misleading and may not reflect the true cost of installing and owning solar.

If you are approached with a solar offer, ask to see a valid peddler's license and take time to verify any claims before making a decision. Customers are also encouraged to report suspicious activity to local authorities.

RPU supports solar done right and is here to help customers make informed, confident decisions about their energy options.

**LEARN MORE
ABOUT SOLAR**

and how to protect
yourself at:

rpu.org/outages-electric-safety-construction/construction/distributed-energy-resources-solar/

