



# Plugged In

## Advanced Metering Update: What to Expect as Crews Begin Meter Upgrades

Details on page 5

MAR / APR  
2026



MESSAGE FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER

# Transparency on rates and charges

We know many of you are asking the same question right now: why are utility bills increasing, and what do the charges on your bill actually pay for? It's a fair question, and you deserve a clear answer.

Rochester Public Utilities (RPU) is a not-for-profit municipal utility. That means rates are set to recover the cost of providing safe, reliable electric and water service, with oversight by the Utility Board and final approval by Rochester City Council. Over time, costs can change due to factors like wholesale power prices, inflation, and the ongoing investments required to maintain reliability and replace aging infrastructure.

In this edition, we're focusing on transparency. You'll find a simple breakdown of the main parts of your bill and why they exist, including the customer charge, the energy charge, and the power cost adjustment. Our goal is to help you understand how rates are designed and how costs are shared fairly.

We're also investing in upgrades that will give customers better tools and information over time, including our advanced metering project. The pilot is already underway, and as we expand installation in early 2026, these improvements will support reliability and provide enhanced usage insights to help customers better understand and

manage their energy and water use.

Thank you for trusting RPU to power and protect Rochester. We remain committed to transparency, reliability, and continually improving how we serve you. We also hope you'll join us in the community this spring. Watch for details on upcoming events, like Arbor Day where we can connect, share information, and answer questions.



Sincerely,



**Tim McCollough**  
General Manager,  
Rochester Public Utilities

## Convenience Fee for Card Payments Now in Effect

Beginning in February, RPU introduced a convenience fee for customers who choose to pay their bill with a credit or debit card. Residential customers are charged \$2.95 per card payment per utility bill, and commercial customers are charged \$15.95 per card payment per utility bill. RPU does not profit from this fee. It reflects the processing charges imposed by card companies.

**NO-FEE PAYMENT OPTIONS:**

- Bank draft/ACH (autopay or one-time payment)
- 24-hour kiosk (cash and check)
- Pay in person at the RPU Service Center (cash, check, or money order)
- Check by mail or drop box (located at Silver Lake Plant and the RPU Service Center)

**PAYMENT OPTIONS WITH FEES:**

- Credit or debit cards (autopay or one-time payment)
- 24-hour kiosk (credit/debit card payments)
- Apple Pay or Google Pay in our office (convenience fees apply)
- Walmart Pay (third-party fees may apply)
- PayPal through their app (third-party fees may apply)

For questions, contact RPU Customer Care at **507-280-1500** or [customer care@rpu.org](mailto:customer care@rpu.org).



# You Asked, We Answered: Why are my rates and fees increasing, and what do all the charges on my bill actually pay for?

When rates change, it's natural to want a clear explanation. Utility bills include a mix of charges because some costs stay the same each month to keep your service available, while other costs depend on how much electricity you use. Your bill is designed to be transparent, with line items that show what you're paying for and why.

## RPU's role and how rates are set

RPU is community owned and not for profit. Rates are built to cover the cost of operating, maintaining, and improving the electric and water systems so service stays safe and dependable. Any rate updates go through a public review process with the RPU Utility Board, then move to Rochester City Council for approval.

## Why bills can increase

Bills can increase due to changes in rates or changes in usage. Rates are reviewed annually and may be adjusted when operating costs go up. Even if rates stay the same, your bill may increase if you use more energy or water.

### CUSTOMER NOTICE

## Interconnection and Rates for Distributed Generation

In compliance with RPU adopted rules relating to cogeneration and small power production, RPU is obligated to interconnect with and purchase electricity from cogenerators and small power producers that satisfy the conditions as a qualifying facility. RPU is obligated to provide information regarding rates and interconnection requirements free of charge to all interested customers upon request. All interconnections require an application and approval to become a qualifying facility. Any disputes over interconnection, sales, and purchases relative to qualifying facilities should be brought to the RPU Board for resolution, per RPU Distributed Generation Rules adopted March 27, 2018. Interested customers should contact RPU, 4000 East River Rd NE, Rochester MN 55901 and [DER@rpu.org](mailto:DER@rpu.org) or call 507-292-1200.

## Common Reasons for Rate Changes

- Higher wholesale power costs (what RPU pays to buy or generate electricity).
- Inflation and rising costs for equipment, materials, and contracted services.
- Replacing aging infrastructure and maintaining reliability (poles, water mains, wires, substations, meters).
- Investments to modernize the system and serve a growing community.

## Increased Energy or Water Use

While rates are one factor, the most common reason for higher bills is increased energy or water use. RPU has seasonal electric rates, with higher prices in the summer when electricity use is usually greater.

## Usage may increase due to:

- Extreme hot or cold weather
- Changes in household or business activity
- Less efficient appliances, equipment, insulation, or windows

## Ways to lower your monthly bill at home

- Adjust your thermostat: raise a few degrees in summer.
- Use LED bulbs: especially in high-use rooms.
- Unplug or use smart power strips: reduce "always on" electronics draw.
- Run full loads: dishwasher and laundry, and use cold water when possible.
- Shift heavy use to off-peak hours if you're on Time of Use rates: especially EV charging and laundry.
- Monitor your usage in RPU Connect: watch for spikes in your water or electric use.

## Designed to be clear and fair

If you ever notice a change in your bill, the line items are there to help you see what's driving it: a fixed cost to keep your service ready, a usage-based cost tied to how much you consume, and an adjustment that reflects real-time power supply costs. That structure helps RPU maintain reliable service, invest in the system over time, and keep costs shared fairly across all customers. For a closer look at how these line items appear on your statement, see the "How to Read Your Utility Bill" guide on the next page.

# HOW TO READ YOUR UTILITY BILL



If you have questions that are not fully answered here, please contact RPU Customer Care at [customercare@rpu.org](mailto:customercare@rpu.org) or 507-280-1500.

## SUMMARY OF CHARGES

- 1 **Account Number** is your unique RPU number. Please reference this number when calling us with account or customer service related questions.
- 2 **Amount Due** is the amount to be paid. This total will reflect your previous balance, recent payments, adjustments or credits (if applicable), and current charges.
- 3 **Account Information** includes your account name and service address.  
*NOTE: Accounts with multiple service addresses will not have an address listed here. Please see the back of your bill for specific address details.*
- 4 **Billing Period** is the period of time when charges are accrued and billed to your account.
- 5 **Total Current Charges** is the total of each service (i.e. Electricity, Water, etc.) and any applicable taxes summarized for the current billing period.  
*NOTE: See the back of the bill for meter readings and usage.*
- 6 **Total Amount Due** is your amount to be paid. This total will include any activity since your last bill, showing your previous balance, recent payments, adjustments or credits (if applicable), and current charges.
- 7 **Message Center** is the area where important messages from RPU are communicated – general and/or account specific.
- 8 **Payment Stub (front)** is the bottom portion of your statement that should be returned when mailing in your payments. This will include the amount due and the due date. *If you are on autopay, this portion will indicate the date and the amount to be deducted.*
- 9 **Payment Kiosk QR Code** can be scanned at our payment kiosk (located in our vestibule at our Service Center), available 24/7, to quickly access and pay your bill.
- 10 **Payment Stub (back)** includes information regarding payment options, as well as compliance information, electronic check conversion, convenience fee charges, and late penalty terms.
- 11 **A Late Fee** of sixty-five hundredths percent (.65%) or five dollars (\$5.00), whichever is greater, may be charged on balances not paid by the due date. Accounts that become past due because of a returned check or declined electronic payment may be charged a late fee and a returned/declined payment fee.

Account #1234567  
Amount Due \$219.30

**JANE DOE**  
For service address 12345 UTILITY AVE NE ROCHESTER, MN 55902

<b>Billing Period</b>	5/14/26 - 6/11/26	Previous Balance	\$118.35
<b>Electricity</b>	\$124.79	Payment	\$118.35CR
<b>Water</b>	\$28.31	Balance Forward	\$0.00
<b>Products &amp; Services</b>	\$3.00	Current Charges	\$219.30
<b>Rochester Public Works</b>		Current Bill	\$219.30
<b>Wastewater</b>	\$42.51	<b>Total Amount Due</b>	<b>\$219.30</b>
<b>Stormwater</b>	\$10.30		
<b>Taxes</b>	\$10.39		
<b>TOTAL CURRENT CHARGES</b>	<b>\$219.30</b>		

Payment Stub (Front):  
1234567 - 12345 UTILITY AVE NE  
Current Bill \$219.30 Due 07/02/26  
Total Amount Due \$219.30  
Amount Enclosed \$

Payment Stub (Back):  
**PAYMENT OPTIONS**  
Pay Online @ [my.rpu.org](http://my.rpu.org)  
Pay By Phone: 1-844-234-2643 - Available 24/7  
In Person: RPU Service Center • 4000 E River Rd NE  
Drop Boxes: RPU Service Center • 4000 E River Rd NE; RPU Silver Lake Plant • 425 W Silver Lake Dr NE  
Kiosk: RPU Service Center • 4000 E River Rd NE  
Note: A convenience fee applies to all credit/debit card payments.  
Residential: \$2.55 per utility bill account payment  
Commercial: \$15.95 per utility bill account payment

## BUDGET BILLING SUMMARY (if applicable)

- 12 **Budget Billing (BB) Plan** is your monthly Budget Billing (BB) amount.
- 13 **Actual Charges Billed this Period** is the total of your actual charges during the current billing period.
- 14 **Difference of BB Plan and Actual Charges** is the difference between your monthly Budget Billing (BB) amount and your actual charges during the current billing period.
- 15 **Previous Carry Over Balance** is the balance from your previous billing period.
- 16 **New Carry Over Balance** is the cumulative account balance at the end of each billing period. This balance takes into account your actual charges, your monthly Budget Billing (BB) Plan, your previous carry over balance, and assumes the recent Budget Billing (BB) amount billed is paid in full by the due date.  
*NOTE: This balance could be a debit or credit. 'CR' indicates a credit.*

*NOTE: You will find the Budget Billing Summary (if applicable) on page 2 of your bill.*

<b>Budget Billing Summary:</b>	
Budget Billing (BB) Plan	\$190.00
Actual Charges Billed this Period	\$219.30
<b>Difference of BB Plan and Actual Charges</b>	<b>\$29.30</b>
Previous Carry Over Balance	\$21.95
<b>New Carry Over Balance</b>	<b>\$51.25</b>
<small>*This summary is comparing the amount billed to your monthly BB Plan</small>	

# Advanced Metering Update: What to Expect as Crews Begin Meter Upgrades

RPU is continuing work on advanced metering, a modernization project that upgrades electric and water meters so they can securely communicate usage information. This helps improve service, supports faster outage detection, and gives customers access to more detailed usage information over time.

A pilot phase has already started successfully, and as the project continues, you may see RPU crews and authorized contractors in neighborhoods across our service area.

## What to expect at your home or business

- Electric meter upgrades are typically quick and usually do not require you to be home.
- Water meter upgrades take longer and require an appointment because the water meter is located indoors.
- If access inside is needed, we will coordinate ahead of time, and our staff will show identification before entering.

## How to Recognize an RPU Worker

### Visible Components of an RPU Utility Worker



### When to call

If you see someone you suspect may not be an RPU employee trying to gain access to RPU equipment, please call RPU immediately at **507-280-1500**. If it is after business hours, call **507-280-9191**.

Thank you for your cooperation as we modernize our metering system. We will continue to share updates as the project expands over the next several years.



# Public Power Mutual Aid: Minnesota Crews Head to North Carolina

Winter Storm Fern caused widespread outages across the Southeast. In response, RPU joined a statewide mutual aid effort through the Minnesota Municipal Utilities Association (MMUA), partnering with other Minnesota public power crews to support restoration work in North Carolina.

RPU deployed a small transmission and

distribution crew with fleet support and specialized equipment, sending four lineworkers and one fleet mechanic to assist crews in Kings Mountain, North Carolina.

RPU is part of a larger Minnesota mutual aid team of 41 public power workers from communities including Alexandria, Anoka, Austin, Brainerd,

Chaska, Detroit Lakes, Elk River, Grand Rapids, Hibbing, Hutchinson, Marshall, Moorhead, New Ulm, Owatonna, and Shakopee, along with MMUA support. When communities need extra hands, equipment, and expertise, we step up. Mutual aid is one more way we put our slogan into action, on the road and at home: We pledge, we deliver.

## Introducing Wally Watt!

Meet Wally Watt, RPU's tiny new helper. Wally is a cheerful water drop who represents the services we deliver every day and a simple reminder that we are all part of keeping our community safe and running strong.

### Where's Wally?

Starting with this issue, Wally Watt will be hiding somewhere in every Plugged In edition. He may appear in different colors, so keep your eyes peeled!

### 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

Playing outside is fun in the spring, but storms can roll in fast. If you hear thunder, go inside right away. Lightning is still a danger even when it's not raining, so wait until the storm passes before heading back out.

### 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 pm on March 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 5 business days, another winner may be selected.

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



### Did you find Wally Watt?

Scan the QR Code to submit your entry.





# RPU's 24th Annual Arbor Day Celebration

Scan the QR code to learn more.



# SAVE THE DATE!

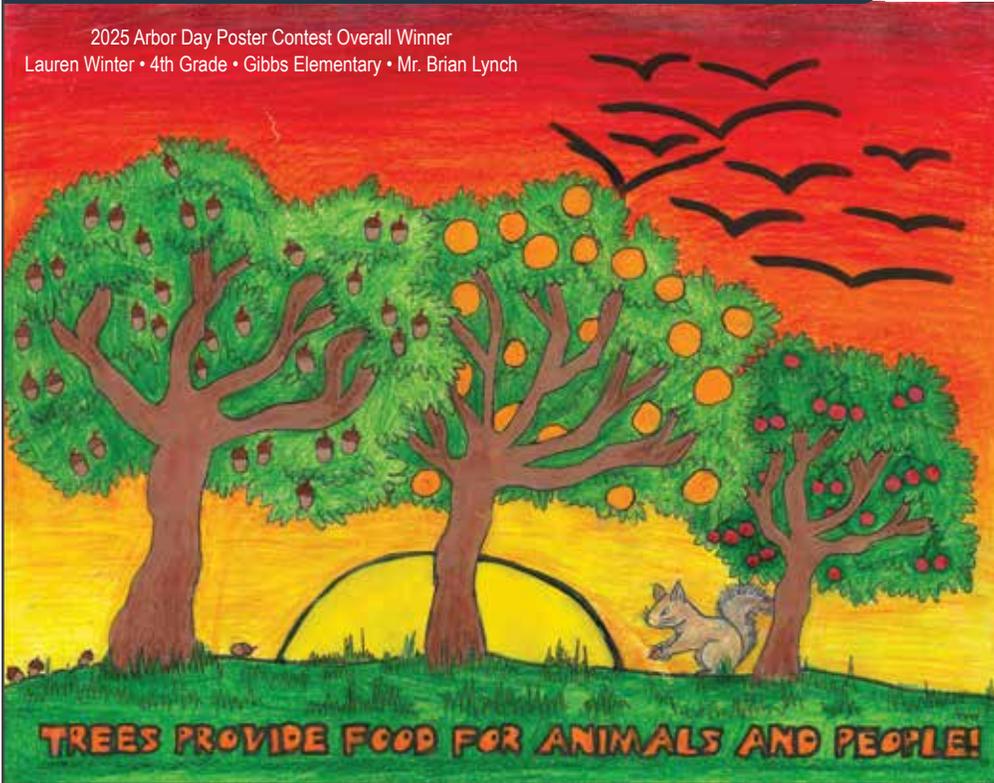
**Friday, April 24  
11am-1pm**

**NEW LOCATION!  
McQuillan Field Park  
1655 Marion Rd SE  
Rochester, MN**

- FREE Food\*
- FREE Trees\*
- FREE Giveaways\*
- Live Music
- Family Activities
- Poster Contest Winners Awarded
- And much more!

\*while supplies last

2025 Arbor Day Poster Contest Overall Winner  
Lauren Winter • 4th Grade • Gibbs Elementary • Mr. Brian Lynch



## Cold Weather Rule Ends April 30

The Minnesota Cold Weather Rule ends on April 30, 2025. If you are behind on your RPU bill, it is important to take steps now to avoid potential service disconnection. You can contact Three Rivers Community Action at [info@threeriverscap.org](mailto:info@threeriverscap.org) or **507-316-0610** to apply for energy assistance. Please note that these funds are limited and available on a first-come, first-served basis. Additionally, you may reach out to RPU Customer Care to make payment arrangements or bring your account current by April 30 to avoid disconnection. RPU Customer Care is available by phone Monday through Friday, from 8am to 5pm, at **507-280-1500**.



## Neighborhood Energy Challenge

Scan the QR code to learn more and register.



MINNESOTA ENERGY ROYALTY & ROCHESTER PUBLIC UTILITIES

**Attend one of our FREE workshops and qualify for a \$75 home energy audit valued at over \$400!**

Sat, March 7 | 10-11 a.m. or Thur, May 7 | 6-7 p.m.

\*\*\*free childcare provided\*\*\*

Register online at [www.rpu.org](http://www.rpu.org)

or call 888-734-6365.



One of our **CONSERVE & SAVE**™ programs.

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



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



**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)



A MILESTONE WORTH CELEBRATING

## 20 Years of Energy Savings

RPU reached a major milestone in 2025: 20 consecutive years of meeting our energy conservation goal. This success is powered by customers across Rochester making everyday choices to save energy, and RPU's efficiency programs designed to make those savings easier and more affordable.

Over two decades, the cumulative energy savings are nearing the equivalent of two Westside Energy Station power plants. Each year, the savings are comparable to the energy use of nearly 1,600 homes, meaning less energy wasted, lower costs over time, and a stronger, more efficient local energy system.

Thank you for helping turn conservation into real, measurable results. We'll continue sharing tools, tips, and programs that help you manage energy use and your monthly bills.

