



THE WIRE



CURRENT NEWS FROM THE ELKHORN RURAL PUBLIC POWER DISTRICT

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Serving the Elkhorn River Valley since 1940

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RICK CHERINGTON RETIRES AFTER 40 YEARS

Rick Cherington, Staking Engineering Tech, has retired as of July 31, 2017.

He joined Elkhorn Public Power District on May 1, 1977. He remembers that he got a long coop; April - August, when most had only had May - August. They needed "young blood" to build a lot of line that summer. Fred Fundum was the foreman and Milton Smith was the general manager.

Rick remembers that he did about every operations job at Elkhorn - lineman, foreman, load control and then for the last 22 years, staking. He also remembers running about every piece of equipment.

He recalls that he was one of the first four linemen at Elkhorn to

learn to do rubber gloving or "hot work" - working on the line when it is energized - and that Elkhorn was one of the first Districts to do rubber gloving. He taught the rubber gloving school for 12 years. Safety was a big deal for him too. He was on the first safety committee that included office staff. Rosemary Real, CSR, joined the committee at that time.

A lot has changed over the years. He remembers using a transit to get levels for a job. Now they use satellites and GPS to set points - with elevation, latitude and longitude. He can be very accurate, well beyond the industry standard. Rick stated, "It might not be necessary to be that accurate, but it sure does

look nice." He also stated that it helps with the integrity of the structure and therefore the reliability of the system.

"There used to be more outages - I remember one weekend I worked 21 hours over a Saturday and Sunday. That doesn't happen much any more. The lines are constructed to a higher standard - they used to be built to withstand a 40 mph wind and 1/2 inch of ice. Now the lines are built to withstand 60 mph wind and 1 inch of ice. The design is better."

He has learned a lot in the years of staking; how to build super-structures and guy them for river crossings after several floods, as well as, keeping up **con't on page 3**



Rick (right) is working with representatives from Transit Works learning new staking equipment.



Rick (third from left in the 2nd row) pictured with other ERPPD staff in 1985. You might recognize some other recent retirees. . .

NEW ROLES FOR FAMILIAR FACES



Kenn Capler has taken over as Staking Engineering Tech. He replaces Rick Cherington who retired at the end of July.

Kenn has been with ERPPD for over 38 years, starting as a lineman, working with towns in the western part of the district and then helping in metering and staking departments.

He has been helping with staking for the past four years.

Kenn listens to the customer and offers suggestions for them to consider for the job. He then works hard to provide the best value for all parties involved with the project.



Marc Ahlers is our SCADA Field Tech. He succeeds Brian Suckstorf, who is now the Energy Services Rep.

Marc joined Elkhorn in 1999 after working for the City of Lexington. He has been a journeyman lineman at the Neligh outpost.

Marc brings experience with meters and he has worked with Brian on managing the field SCADA functions.

We are grateful we have such talented staff that they can take on these new roles (*see the Succession Planning article to the right*) to the benefit of everyone.

SUCCESSION PLANNING WORKS

There have been many staffing changes over the last couple of months at Elkhorn. We have had three employees retire and have had four positions to fill.

ERPPD is not alone in these changes with staff. The trend is toward an aging workforce as the Baby Boom Generation has reached retirement age. For power districts and coops around the nation, we are seeing a large number of retirements.

We have been planning for this change in staff for many years.

We began by looking at critical positions in our organization and determining contingency plans for those positions. We then worked on finding those employees with interests and strengths in those areas and providing cross training. That way we were able to be in the best possible position when there was a vacancy, whether for a retirement, illness, unexpected absence or other situation. It has served us very well over the last two years.

With this planning, we are able to empower our employees and have the best people in the right positions, strengthening our organization for the future.

That works in our customers' best in-

terests because we can continue to provide safe, reliable, cost effective electricity.



Working for Nebraska

Nebraska is the only public power state in the nation. There are other public power districts in the nation, but we are the only all public power state. That makes us pretty unique. Our electric utilities are created by the people to serve the people of Nebraska. We here at Elkhorn take this mission seriously and provide the safest, most reliable, most cost effective electricity we possibly can to serve our customers to the best of our abilities. There is no profit mo-

otive, no shareholders to please. We answer to you.

As we celebrate our state's birthday, let's celebrate one thing that makes us "unique and great."

Have a look at the new less-than 2-minute Working for Nebraska video by going to www.erppd.com and clicking on the link on the front page.

You can also go to ERPPD's Face Book page to view the video.

Retirement continued from front page with all the construction rules and regulations.

One of his more memorable contributions came during a storm job when a pole was broken and they were looking at having to replace it and thinking about how long that would take. Rick suggested that they just place the pole back up and bolt it in place. The electricity could be turned back on and crews could come back when they had more time to set the new pole. They were able to use that in storm jobs all over the state.

Rick declared, "The best part about my job was being able to build relationships over the years with the customers and the different vendors I worked with - the engineers, state and county agencies, and city officials. We were able to work together to do the best job we could for our customers. I always tried to do my best for the company and through that our customers."

Rick will be missed. His smile, a can-do attitude and all his knowledge of the system and construction regulations won't be easy to replace.



Rick doing a pole top rescue drill in 2005.

Work Zone Safety

WORK ZONE CRASHES, INJURIES, AND FATALITIES ARE **AVOIDABLE.**



**DRIVE SAFE IN WORK ZONES...
SO WE CAN ALL GET HOME SAFELY.**

Please drive safely this summer. Work zone accidents are preventable.

The infographic above shows the number of work zone injuries and worker deaths for 2014 in Nebraska (<http://dot.nebraska.gov/safety/driving/work-zone/>).

Those numbers have decreased in the last couple of years, but we need to continue to be vigilant!!

Slow down and follow the suggestions in the above graphic.

Then we can all get home safely!



Please slow down and give ERPPD crews room when you see them working on the line.

YOUTH TOUR AND YOUTH LEADERSHIP CAMP

Kira Widger, a junior at Elgin Public School, daughter of Marty and Lori Widger was Elkhorn's delegate on National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) 2017 Youth Tour to Washington D.C. in June. She was one of 26 students that were sponsored by Nebraska Public



Kira Widger is pictured in front of the Capitol Building during the NRECA 2107 Youth Tour.

Power Districts.

Kira presented about her trip to the Board of Directors at their July meeting. She gave highlights from each day of the week long trip to our Nation's Capital. She enjoyed the tours, activities and meeting new people from all over the U.S.

Kira was very grateful for the opportunity to go on Youth Tour: "This was a once in a lifetime opportunity - you get to see all the different monuments, memorials, meet policy makers and learn about our Nation's history and the issues affecting power districts in Nebraska and across the nation."

Kaden Hackerott, a sophomore at Humphrey St. Francis School and the son of Jeff and Julie Hackerott represented Elkhorn RPPD at the Youth Energy Leadership Camp in Halsey, July 10-14. He really enjoyed all the information and activities at camp, but the canoeing and the dance on the last night



Kaden Hackerott, Youth Energy Leadership Camp

were his favorite.

At the camp you can try out to be an Ambassador to represent Nebraska for the Youth Tour. Kaden tried out with about 20 other youth



Kira took this picture of the Nebraska delegation going to the Capitol for a private night tour with our 3rd District Congressman, Adrian Smith.

from across Nebraska. He wasn't selected, but said that the experience was worth it.

Elkhorn is proud to be able to offer these opportunities for the youth in our communities. Only youth that have attended Youth Energy Leadership Camp in Halsey are considered for the Youth Tour.

If you know of a youth that is in high school; incoming freshman - junior; that is interested in Youth Energy Leadership Camp contact Stacie Young at (800) 675-2185.

VEGETATION MANAGEMENT

Tree spraying has been contracted to Wilson Tree Service and Midwest Spray Team.

Wilson Tree Service is spraying in the Neligh, Clearwater, Elgin and Oakdale areas. They started in late June and will continue until finished in early August.

Midwest Spray Team will be spraying west of Elgin, Clearwater, and Ewing areas. They will start in the late summer and finish in the early fall.

We contract for spraying the right-of-way to help with the safety and reliability of your electricity. If vegetation gets into the line, it can affect reliability and can make it dangerous for our crews and for our customers.

We recommend that you plan before you plant and put the proper vegetation by any lines that you might have on your property.

If you have questions about planting, you can call us at (800) 675-2185 or visit our website at www.erppd.com/safety/tree-planting-tips/.