



THE WIRE



CURRENT NEWS FROM THE ELKHORN RURAL PUBLIC POWER DISTRICT

November 2017

Serving the Elkhorn River Valley since 1940

Volume 26, Number 11

WELCOME NEW DIRECTOR

Raymond C. Payne was appointed as the new Sub-District III board director to fill an open term.

Ray is a long time resident of Elgin. He lives outside of town with his wife Peggy.

He has served on several boards in the community and is ready for a new challenge. He said he is ready to learn a lot about the electric industry and serve our customers.

We are looking forward to having Ray on the board!



Ray Payne above and right - taking the Oath of Office at the October board meeting.

WHY OPERATION ROUND UP?

Last month you were given a broad overview of what the Operation Round Up program is about.

This month we are looking at "Why Operation Round Up?". That is probably the burning question, after you hear that Elkhorn Rural Public Power District is starting the Operation Round Up program. Our Directors asked the same question.

Operation Round Up gives ERPPD and our customers a tangible way to give back to our communities and to fund organizations and causes that help support you, our customers. Presently, due to state statute, ERPPD very restricted

on any donations we can give to the schools, volunteer fire/rescue departments, libraries, museums, or other community organizations.

Operation Round Up provides our customers with a mechanism to contribute literally cents a month to a fund that will collectively make a BIG DIFFERENCE to our communities.

Starting January 2018, we will implement Operation Round Up. You will not see this until you February billing. On your February bill for your January usage you will see a line item for the Elkhorn Rural Public Power District Community Development Fund. Your

bill will be rounded up to the nearest dollar and the odd cents from that will be applied to the fund, so that what you pay will be an even amount.

The Elkhorn Rural Public Power District Community Development Fund is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization that **continued on back page**



APPRECIATING ELECTRICITY

As you remember the things you are thankful for this Thanksgiving season, this article by Curtis Condon, editor of *Ruralite* magazine in Hillsboro, Oregon, reminds us that electricity is about the only thing that you can buy and still get value for a penny's worth.

"I'm old enough to remember when penny candy actually cost a penny. For a nickel, you could buy enough candy to rot your teeth out, as my mother used to say. But what does a penny buy these days? Not much.

The government can't even make a penny for a penny anymore. According to the U.S. Mint, it now costs 1.5 cents to produce one.

About the only thing of value you can still get for a penny is electricity. You might call it "penny electricity." No, I'm not kidding.

Think about it. To make the math easier, let's say the average rate for a kilowatt-hour of electricity is 10 cents. That is 60 minutes of 1,000 watts of electricity for a dime, so a penny of electricity equates to 100 watts.

It's enough to power a 9-watt LED light bulb—the equivalent of a 60-watt incandescent bulb—for 11 hours, all for only a penny. Where else can you get that kind of value? How many eggs will a penny buy? How much milk, bread, coffee, medicine or gasoline?

Gas has come down from its stratospheric levels of several years ago, but there is still no comparison to the value of electricity. For example, if a gallon of gas costs \$2.50 and your car gets 25 miles to the gallon, you can drive 176 yards—about two blocks—on a penny's worth of gas. I will take 11 hours of lighting for a penny over a two-block drive any day.

The value is just as evident when powering things other than lighting. Take, for instance, your smartphone. Using the same 10 cents per kWh price, penny electricity allows you to fully charge your iPhone more than 18 times for a penny. You can charge it once every day of the year for about 20 cents total.



Not impressed? Well, how about these other examples of what you can do with just a penny's worth of electricity: power a 1,000-watt microwave on high for 6 minutes; run a 200-watt desktop computer for 30 minutes; watch 2.5 hours of your favorite shows on a 40-watt, 32-inch, LED television or 1.3 hours on a 75-watt, 75-inch mega TV.

The examples are endless.

We are fortunate electricity is such an excellent value because we have a huge appetite for it. We tend to forget that. Electricity is not expensive. It's that we use it for so many different things: lighting, heating, cooking, cooling, refrigeration, cleaning, washing, pumping, entertainment, communications—even transportation these days. Few corners of our lives are left untouched by electricity.

Unfortunately, we don't always appreciate it. When our monthly electric bill comes, we open it and may complain about the cost. It's a knee-jerk reaction ingrained in us as consumers. We don't stop to think about the value we received for the

money.

Early in my career, I had the pleasure to interview an elderly woman who vividly remembered the day electricity came to her farm. Her name escapes me, but I do remember she proudly showed me the worn, dog-eared membership certificate the co-op issued to her husband.

"You young people will never know what it was like to have electricity for the very first time," she said. "It was glorious. Nowadays, you take it for granted."

Her farm was energized in 1940. She said the price of electricity at the time was slightly less than a penny a kilowatt-hour—true penny electricity.

A lot has changed since then. Wages and the cost of living today are a far cry from 1940, when the average annual wage was less than \$150 a month and the average cost of a house was \$3,920.

But one thing that hasn't changed is the value of electricity. In 77 years, its price has risen much slower than the rate of inflation. A penny in 1940 had as much buying power as 17 cents today, which means the resi-

dential price of electricity—which now averages 12 cents a kWh nationally and less than 10 cents in the Pacific Northwest—is actually a better deal today than it was in 1940.

So to my way of thinking, the value of

electricity is like the bygone days of penny candy, and it's OK to indulge yourself a little. But, unlike penny candy, penny electricity won't rot your teeth out."



SAFETY

Customer Safety

Each month at Elkhorn's safety committee and staff safety meetings, near miss information is shared. According to the National Safety Council, "A near miss is an unplanned event that did not result in injury, illness or damage - but

had the potential to do so. History has shown repeatedly

that most loss producing events both serious and catastrophic, were preceded by warnings or near miss incidents."

So reviewing near miss incidents is a very important part of a safety program, both at work and at home.

Recently, a near miss with a service provider was reported.

A crew was responding to an outage on an irrigation service. The disconnect handle was in the off position when they arrived. There did not appear to be anyone around, but they replace the fuse and left the disconnect off. A few minutes later an electrician drove out of the field where he had been working on the irrigation system. If the crew had closed the switch, he could have been severely injured or worse. It is just as important for our customers to use safety procedures as it is for our employees.

In this case a lock out/tag out procedure should have been used.

The Occupational Safety and



Health Administration (OSHA) provides clear standards for The Control of Hazardous Energy (Lockout/Tagout), Title 29 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 1910.147. This addresses the practices and procedures necessary to disable machinery or equipment, thereby preventing the release of hazardous energy while employees perform servicing and maintenance activities.

According to the OSHA Lockout/Tagout 2002 fact sheet, employees servicing or maintaining machines or equipment may be exposed to serious physical harm or death if hazardous energy is not properly controlled. Craft workers, machine operators, and laborers are among the 3 million workers who service equipment and face the greatest risk. Compliance with the lockout/tagout standard prevents an estimated 120 fatalities and 50,000 injuries each year. Workers injured on the job from exposure to hazardous energy lose an average of 24 workdays for recuperation.

Having a lockout/tagout in place in this instance, would have ensured that the switch would not have been closed.

Another area where customers and service providers need to be diligent

is with moving large loads. It is state statute that if someone is moving a oversized load through our district they need to give us 10 day advance notice.

If you have an oversize load to move, you can call us at (402) 675-2185 or go to our website, www.erpppd.com under the customer service tab and download the form.

This allows us to survey the route and determine what infrastructure will be affected and how to move the load safely and efficiently through the district.

Larger farm equipment may fall into the oversized load category. Please take time to look around and determine if your new machinery or, if you have purchased new ground or are taking a different route to get to your fields, will affect getting under the electric infrastructure. Road work or improvements to driveways or field access can also affect the height of the equipment.

At Elkhorn, we want every employee and customer to return home safely from work. So please implement safety practices such as lockout/tagout and Look Up and Live to your safety routine.



LEGISLATIVE AIDES VISIT



Legislative Aides Spencer Head, District 19, Patrick Roy, District 37, and Edward Boone, District 41, (pictured upper left in order left to right) visited on September 27. They came to learn about Public Power and what electricity does for rural Nebraska. We make these contacts to educate legislators about the public power model. See our FB page for more pictures.



ERPPD Offices will be closed **Friday, November 10**, to observe Veteran's Day and **Thursday, November 23** through **Friday November 24** to observe Thanksgiving.

Operation Round Up continued from first page

was created to receive and distribute these funds.

The Fund will have a 5 member board of trustees that will consist of one member from each of the 3 sub-districts and 2 at large members. Please contact the office if you or someone you know would be interested in serving on this board of trustees.

We are excited to be able to participate with our communities in this very substantial way. The Operation Round Up Program has collected millions of dollars nationwide and helped countless communities, organizations and individuals. A little change, added together, to make a **big** difference.

If you do not want to give back to your community through the Round Up program, or don't want certain meters in the program, you can opt out at any time, by calling 402-675-2185, e-mailing erppd@erppd.com, or filling out the form in your bill and sending it in with your payment. Please give your name and any accounts that you do not want in the program.