

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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Ivy Prater of Elgin presenting the Nebraska flag at the NRECA Annual Meeting in New Orleans

Ivy Prater Represents Nebraska on NRECA Leadership Council

Following is a letter from Ivy, highlighting her experiences over the past 2 years. Ivy attended the Nebraska Rural Electric (NREA) Youth Energy Camp July of 2011. She was chosen as one of three campers to return in 2012 as a camp counselor. She also earned a spot on the Youth Tour to Washington, D.C. in June of 2012. Ivy was chosen from the Nebraska delegation to represent Nebraska on the 42-member National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) Youth Leadership Council. Last month, Ivy and other Youth Leadership Council members worked as ambassadors at the NRECA annual meeting in New Orleans, where nearly 6,000 representatives of rural electric utilities met to set the legislative and organizational agenda on issues affecting rural America. Here is a summary of Ivy's experiences in her own words:

"These opportunities have led to many experiences I will never forget! It all started with Energy Camp. My parents wanted me to go, however I refused. Eventually I gave in and decided I would go. Once I got to camp I automatically realized it wasn't just a camp. By the end of camp I didn't want to leave. I bonded with friends from across the state. I also learned a lot more than I thought I would ever know about electricity. I also gained so much confidence during camp, by doing the ambassador program I gained the courage and confidence

to get in front of my peers and give a speech. It was nerve racking at first, but it sure paid off. After camp was over I was looking forward to youth tour and being a counselor. When I came back as a counselor I enjoyed being able to help out the campers and share my experience of youth tour and camp. I helped out whenever someone needed help or just a friend to talk to. I had a great time at camp and I wanted everyone to have that experience. Youth tour is an amazing program. Not only do you get to bond with your state youth tour members, but you also get the opportunity to meet people from across the country while you're touring DC. By the end of youth tour I gained a ton of knowledge. I now understand the government a lot better. Also getting to meet with my senators and congressmen was exceptionally rewarding. Lastly, I will never forget my friends on the Nebraska youth tour. We became a family. I was honored on Youth Tour to be chosen as the Nebraska Youth Leadership Council Representative. When I went back in July to DC I did not know what to expect. I found my life changed when I got back. While there I was able to gain many leadership skills as well as meeting the CEO of NRECA. When I went to New Orleans I was so excited to finally see my friends from across the country again. While in New Orleans I worked at the congressional action center. At the congressional action center I entered in data as well as getting members to send letters to congress. I was also able to understand how coops actually work and what they do for rural America. Lastly, I learned so much from my friends and will never forget all of the memories we had together. I never thought this program could change me so much but it has. Its great to meet friends from across the country that have the same goals as me. They truly are quality people. In 2 years I am hoping to go back as a red shirt, because I would love to give back to the this amazing program. Overall this program has moved me. It means so much to me I love going places and seeing people I know from camp or even from the NREA. I love talking to them and catching up. It truly is a remarkable program, and I am honored to have a chance to be a part of it. I would have never been able to have these experiences if it weren't for the this program."

Congratulations, Ivy. We are so proud of your accomplishments, and proud to have you as a representative for Elkhorn RPPD, NREA, and NRECA.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Comeback for Energy Tax Credits

Feds revive incentives for efficient home upgrades

Ready to boost your home's energy efficiency without breaking the bank? The American Taxpayer Relief Act of 2012 revived energy efficiency tax credits to the tune of \$500.

The credit offsets the cost of upgrades such as super-efficient water heaters and furnaces, boilers, heat pumps, central air conditioners, building insulation, windows, and roofs.

This marks the third extension of the incentive initiated by the federal Energy Policy Act of 2005. The last round expired in 2011; the new legislation covers 2012 upgrades along with projects undertaken in 2013. If you've already received an energy tax credit, you're out of luck—there's a lifetime cap of \$500.

Full details on qualifying upgrades and individual caps are at www.energystar.gov/taxcredits. Here are a few ways to lower your electric bill and save at tax time.

Insulating Factors

Recoup up to 10 percent of the cost of upgrading a home's envelope. The tax credit is capped at \$500 for all improvements; labor costs are not covered. Eligible upgrades are:

- Insulation materials
- Systems designed to reduce a home's heat loss/gain
- Exterior doors
- Skylights and windows (\$200 maximum for upgrades between 2006-2013)
- Qualifying metal or asphalt roofs

Heating and Cooling

Replacing your home's heating or cooling system? You could qualify for a tax credit ranging from \$50 to \$500 for units put in place between Jan. 1, 2012, and Dec. 31, 2013. Eligible improvements are:

- High-efficiency water heaters (energy factor of at least 0.82 or thermal efficiency of at least 90 percent; \$300 cap) [NOTE: This is for natural gas, propane, or oil water heaters—remove if you promote electric water heaters].
- Electric heat pump water heaters with an energy factor of at least 2.0 (\$300 cap)
- Advanced main air circulating fan (\$50 cap)
- Qualifying central air conditioner (\$300 cap)
- Biomass stove (select fuels; \$300 cap)

Tax Credit Basics

Energy tax credits are non-refundable—they can increase your refund by reducing the taxes you owe, dollar for dollar, and can be carried forward to reduce taxes in following years. You don't get a separate check for the credit amount.

File for energy tax credits with IRS Form 5695. Be sure to keep a Manufacturer Certification Statement (a signed statement from the manufacturer certifying that the product or component qualifies for the tax credit) for your records. Eligible upgrades must be made to a taxpayer's primary residence by Dec. 31, 2013.

Did you know?

- Elkhorn Rural Public Power District purchases 100% of its electricity for distribution to its customers from the Nebraska Public Power District (NPPD)
- 40% of the electricity produced by NPPD is carbon-free (nuclear, hydroelectric, wind, methane)
- The remaining 60% is produced by burning clean, low-sulfur coal from the Wyoming coal fields
- All of NPPD's generation facilities meet current environmental standards

Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month

Keep energy efficiency in mind as the ground thaws and you plan spring landscaping. Properly selected and planted trees, shrubs, and bushes can create a windbreak that lowers home heating bills in the winter and insulates your home year-round. Before you start, check on the right plants and techniques for your climate at EnergySavers.gov.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy

ONGOING MAINTENANCE

S&L To Test Poles

As part of ERPPD's continued commitment to provide the most reliable service possible, S&L Pole Testing, Inc., will inspect about 3,200 distribution poles, many of which were last inspected in 1996 and 1997. The process should begin sometime in May.

ERPPD began testing poles in the mid-1970s and completed the first inspection of the district's 2,500 miles of line in 1995. The program helps find weak links in the distribution system which, after completing any needed maintenance work, has resulted in fewer outages due to faulty poles. ERPPD's present goal is to test enough poles each year to cover the entire district every 15 years.

This year, contractors will be testing poles in the following areas: south and west Tilden and Meadow Grove, and south of Ewing.

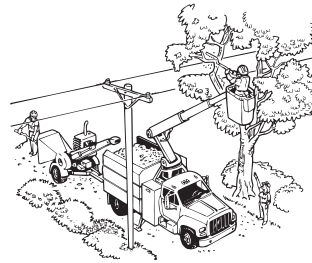
Testing occurs as follows:

1. Check pole's age; test any older than 15 years.
2. Dig down about 18 inches all around the pole.
3. Pole is "sounded" with a hammer.
4. Pole is drilled in four spots to check the core.
5. Pole is treated at ground level and holes are filled with treatment rod.
6. Each pole is passed/rejected and its condition recorded.
7. A work order is made for ERPPD crews to replace rejected poles.

Please call 1-800-675-2185 if you have questions.

Tree Trimming

ERPPD has contracted with Wilson Tree Service to cut or trim trees in the power line rights-of-way in the Tilden-Oakdale area.



Landowners will be contacted before cutting or trimming is done.

There are three main reasons for trimming and cutting trees. The first is safety. Children love to climb trees and sometimes do not look around first to see if the tree

has grown up around the power lines. The power lines carry 7,200 volts of electricity and accidental contact would be fatal.

The second reason to trim trees is for reliability of the electrical system. Trees are a good conductor of electricity and whenever a tree branch touches the power lines, electricity travels through the tree into the ground, causing blinks or outages if the contact is enough to open the breakers on the line.

The third reason to trim trees away from the lines is to cut down on line loss. Line loss is electricity that we all pay for and no one benefits from. Trees contacting the lines provides a path to the ground for the electricity.

Please welcome the tree contractor and we appreciate your cooperation in this project.

Please call 1-800-675-2185 if you have any questions.

SAFETY NEWS

Help Keep Our Employees Safe From Chemical Exposure

Help our linemen avoid exposure to pesticides, herbicides, and other potentially dangerous chemicals you may use on your crops.

If you use dangerous chemicals in your fields, PLEASE FLAG THE FIELD ENTRANCE AND INCLUDE THE CHEMICAL NAME AND DATE APPLIED. Our line workers, meter technicians, or our SCADA technicians may need to enter your field to do service work or install load management switches. We request your help for our safety.

Call Before You Dig!

Are you planning to install a fence, build an outdoor shed, plant a tree, or some other project that requires excavation on or near your property?

If so, call Diggers' Hotline of Nebraska at 811, or call 1-800-331-5666 at least two days before you start. The one-call notification center will contact all of the utilities in your area to make sure that any underground facilities are marked before you begin your work.

When you call Diggers' Hotline of Nebraska, anytime 24-hours a day, seven days a week, an operator will answer and ask for some or all of the following information: name, address, telephone number; type of work being done; city and county; and township, range, section.

The information is entered into a computer and your "locate request" is sent by fax, e-mail, or phone to each utility (including ERPPD) that has underground facilities in the area. Each utility uses a flag of a different color, for example, electrical wires are marked with a red flag.

Diggers' Hotline is a free service to you, and ERPPD's response to locate requests is also free. We want to make it as painless as possible to keep you and your workers safe.

48 Hours Before You Dig Anything Anywhere
Call 811 for Diggers Hotline
or visit the website at ne-diggers.com

CUSTOMER SERVICE NEWS

Customer Service Call Procedure Changes

Our employees continually strive to find ways to improve efficiencies within the organization, which in turn makes them more productive. Becoming more productive has a direct impact on the cost of delivering electricity to our customers.

The latest efficiency improvement was placed into action during the last week of March. Telephone calls placed to our Neligh office are automatically forwarded after one or two rings to the headquarters office in Battle Creek. This will streamline the process and enable us to provide better service and quicker response.

We are also asking you, our customer, to help us in this efficiency

measure by calling the Battle Creek office at (800) 675-2185 for assistance, whether it be a new service request, project scheduling inquiries, billing questions, etc. Our customer service representatives have the knowledge and training to assist you with nearly all of your inquiries. All work is now scheduled by our workflow coordinator in the Battle Creek office and the status of the project is posted on our computer system, so our CSR's can give you a very close estimate as to when your project is scheduled, or when it might be scheduled if it is new.

We feel that this will take some pressure off the engineering department, and give them more uninterrupted time to plan and stake the projects.

Remember, for the quickest response to your inquiries or requests, please call (800) 675-2185.

LOOK BEFORE YOU LEAF



Power lines and tree limbs do not mix. You can help minimize power outages and necessary pruning by selecting the right tree to plant near overhead power lines and other electric facilities.

For more tree planting tips, please call our office at (800) 675-2185

In partnership with our supplier, Nebraska Public Power District, we deliver energy to you.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

with Board position and subdivision

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- Larry Lindahl
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Director I
- Joe Thiele
DirectorIII
- Greg Weidner
Director I
- David Hoefler
DirectorIII

MANAGER

Tom Rudloff

For Emergency Service or Outage Reporting 1-800-675-2185

After Hours Note:

The entire 800-number *must* be dialed, even for a local call.

Communicate Electronically With ERPPD

Internet: www.erppd.com

E-mail: erppd@erppd.com



**Know what's below.
Call before you dig.**

**It's the law!
Call 811 Before
You Dig!**

Or 1-800-331-5666
Diggers Hotline
of Nebraska

Outage Checklist

In the case of an outage:

- First check to see if the fuses below the meter are good.
- If you have breakers, make sure they are on and have not kicked out.
- If you have a double-throw switch for standby power, make sure it is in the correct position.
- Check with neighbors to see if they have power. By doing this before calling us, we can determine if it is a line or an individual outage. This can help cut down on outage duration.
- Please, be prepared to give the name on the account, plus the consumer number and/or the legal location. This will assist us in sending our crews to the correct place.

Questions about your bill?

Please call the ERPPD office at 402-675-2185 or toll-free, 1-800-675-2185, during office hours, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. M-F, in regards to billing questions. When calling the office concerning billing problems, it will save time if you would have your meter serial number or customer account number. Remember to call the Battle Creek office if you have billing questions. All account payments should be mailed to:

**Elkhorn Rural
Public Power
District
P.O. Box 310
Battle Creek, NE
68715**