

# THE WIRE

CURRENT NEWS FROM THE ELKHORN RURAL PUBLIC POWER DISTRICT

August 2008

Serving the Elkhorn River Valley since 1940

Volume 17, Number 8

## Grassroots efforts place energy issues centerstage

Pressure is mounting in Congress to do something about climate change. And while political debates in Wash., D.C., may seem far away, the outcome will have a direct impact on Elkhorn Rural Public Power – and on its customers.

Climate change is only one aspect of a looming energy crisis created by increasing demand and decreasing capacity to meet that demand. Experts now say some areas of the country will be short of power within one or two years.

Yet energy supply isn't an issue elected representatives are spending a lot of time on. However, these two forces, the desire by government to reduce greenhouse gas emissions quickly and the growing demand for power by consumers, are about to collide. Some say we can meet demand through energy efficiency and renewable energy. The reality is that all the efficiency and renewables that can be achieved is needed, but that alone will not be enough.

To avert an energy crisis, the federal government must exercise true leadership, the same leadership that got Americans to the moon in the 1960s. Without that leadership – without a sound, responsible plan – government risks not only the reliability of our electric system, but literally the ability of many Americans to be able to afford to pay their electric bills.

Public power customers must call on elected officials to provide this leadership. ERPPD is encouraging its customers to contact their elected officials. It doesn't take an energy expert to ask questions. Asking questions can help find answers to solve the problem of balancing climate change goals with keeping the lights on and electric bills affordable.

Members of Congress (and state elected officials as well) are hearing from many different interest groups who have ideas about how to address climate change. No one is talking to consumers, however. A plan is needed that people can live with today while they deal with the climate change problem of tomorrow.

ERPPD, in conjunction with the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, is kicking off this effort with

See 'Grassroots...' on page 4



## Our Energy, Our Future A Dialogue With America

Experts say that our nation's growing electricity needs will soon go well beyond what renewables, conservation, and efficiency can provide; What is your plan to make sure we have the electricity we'll need in the future?

What are you doing to fully fund the research required to make emissions-free electric plants an affordable reality?

Balancing electricity needs and environmental goals will be difficult. How much is all this going to increase my electric bill and what will you do to make it affordable?

## Efficiency actions save energy, can earn \$

*Fact:* Compact fluorescent light bulbs save energy for residential customers.

*Fact:* Commercial and industrial accounts save energy by revamping their lighting systems.

*Fact:* Homeowners save energy with new electric heat pump systems, in areas of both heating and cooling.

*Fact:* People who look at their energy usage, see savings by simply unplugging an old, inefficient, spare refrigerator or freezer.

These facts will save energy and could earn money for ERPPD customers in 2008 and beyond.

During the remainder of the year, Elkhorn Rural Public Power District, with monies placed into an efficiency fund by its wholesale power provider, will kickoff a variety of rebate and saving opportunities in many of these areas. So, in times past, where customers could save only energy by implementing efficiency measures, now they will be able to earn a few dollars for the kilowatt-hours (kWh) they save as well.

The principle is simple. For every kWh that is not used, one does not have to be generated. In addition, if it costs \$0.035 (3.5 cents) to generate a kWh, but it costs only \$0.02 (2 cents) or less per kWh to incent an energy efficiency program, it makes sense to implement the program.

Here are some of the programs that are coming to ERPPD customers later this year. More are in the works, too.

### C&I Lighting

Another lighting program will provide rebates to commercial and industrial (C&I) customers who replace or retrofit a number of applications in their

facilities. Qualifying options range from converting high-bay mercury vapor units to fluorescent units, changing from incandescent exit signs to exit signs that feature light-emitting diodes (LEDs), and replacing or retrofitting those 4-foot or 8-foot T12 fluorescent units with T5 or T8 units. A rebate grid will be available that shows the various rebates for the various options.

Program starts Sept. 1, 2008.

### High-Efficiency Heat Pumps

A program offering rebates for high-efficiency heat pumps will also kick-off later this year. Minimum requirements stipulate that – to be approved – the heat pump must be Energy Star-qualified. While the seasonal energy efficiency rating (SEER) must be 14 SEER or greater and determines the level of rebate, all qualifying heat pumps must also have a 8.2 heating seasonal efficiency factor (HSPF).

HEAT PUMP	REBATE
14 SEER	\$200
15 SEER	\$250
16 SEER & higher	\$300
Water Source or Geothermal HP	\$400

For the customer to qualify for the rebate, the heat pump installer must perform a system verification on the unit, and that document must be signed by the customer before being submitted to ERPPD for payment.

Program roll-out is Sept. 1, 2008.

### Refrigerator/Freezer Buy-Back

Although this program is not yet approved, it is likely that a third party contractor would be available for ERPPD customers to call and have those old, inefficient, energy hogs removed. The refrigerator or freezer must be operating when picked up.

The customer qualifies for a \$35 rebate; and the contractor picks up the unit, removes it from the premises, and sees to the disposal.

After the program is approved, the contractor's applicable contact information (phone number, e-mail address, and/or website) will be published in future editions of *THE WIRE*.

Roll-out is set for Sept. 1, 2008.

### Compact Fluorescents (CFLs)

Beginning Oct. 1, retailers throughout Nebraska will again be asked to provide in-store coupons for savings on Energy Star-qualified CFLs.

With the coupon, store shoppers will save one dollar on a single-pack. Coupons for \$3 off will also be available for the purchase of packs with more than one bulb.

The coupon requires only that the shopper write his or her home zip code on the document.

During the initial year of the program, more than 30,000 CFLs were sold in Nebraska stores during November and December 2007. Madison and Antelope counties ranked second and fifth, respectively, for number of bulbs sold.

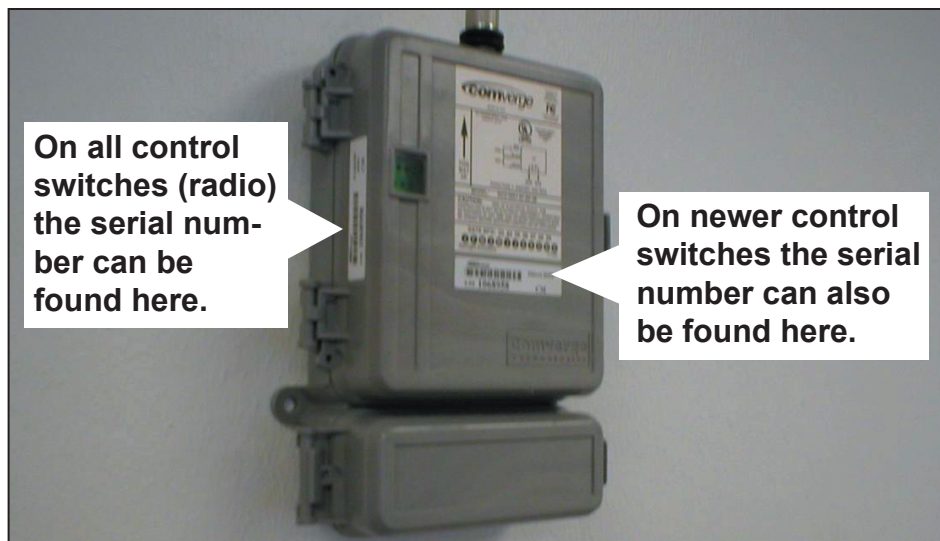
The kick-off of the 2008 program will coincide with the nationwide annual "Change a Light, Change the World" campaign. This year's program will last three months, ending on Dec. 31.

The bottom line for ERPPD customers is this: Those who plan to save energy through the rest of 2008 could end up earning a little cash, too.

Don't just think about it. Do it!

Contact Mark Gronau at ERPPD to learn about the details.

## IRRIGATION



On all control switches (radio) the serial number can be found here.

On newer control switches the serial number can also be found here.

### Irrigator's switch number is important

This irrigation season, if an ERPPD irrigator has occasion to call the utility, he or she should reference the system's switch number when giving information.

While account number and location are necessary components, it is the switch number that will best help district personnel to provide the irrigator with the fastest resolution to his or her situation.

See illustration at left for example.

---

---

***ERPPD's Load Control status during the season? Call 1-800-238-0185***

---

---

## Q&A: POWER QUALITY

### Why won't my power company replace my electronics or appliances if my systems have been the victim of a power spike, surge, or dip?

This is a common question. Certainly power district personnel feel bad when something occurs that causes a problem for any customer.

In this day and age, there are an increasing number of electric devices that can be damaged by voltage that is suddenly too high (a spike), regularly too high (a surge), or too low (a dip). Large, expensive motors can be damaged by a power outage on any one or more of the three phases that serves them.

When damage happens to private property, the people at the power district understand that the customer did not do it and that he or she is not happy

about losing an expensive appliance (like a television set, a computer, or a motor). When questioned, however, courts have always ruled that the power company is not liable for damages, unless they have been negligent in some way.

Negligence has been defined this way: when the power company could have reasonably foreseen some event and no action was taken to avoid it. Courts have tried to be practical and have determined that the responsibility for protecting the customer's property or equipment rests with the individual customer, not with the utility.

In other words, there is a risk in accepting electric service. Each customer must determine how much insurance and what kind of coverage they require to protect their possessions from possible electrical problems.

In addition, there are relatively low-cost devices, such as surge suppressors and uninterruptible power supply systems, that provide some protection for expensive electronic equipment.

If power companies were held liable for any and all damages incurred because of excessively high or low voltages, then electric rates would skyrocket.

# OUR ENERGY, OUR FUTURE

## 'Grassroots'

continued from page 1

three basic but critical questions—one at a time. The questions are listed on **WIRE-Page 1** under the "Our Energy, Our Future" logo.

To make things easy, a website is available that will send an individual email for each customer. Go to [www.ourenergy.coop](http://www.ourenergy.coop); type in the customer's home address; there a customer will ask the series of questions to their representatives in Washington. Another option is completing the response card (pictured at right). Mail it to ERPPD.

Far too often questions don't get asked until plans go wrong. It is ERPPD's belief that it makes sense to know the answers *before* the laws are passed. ERPPD customers can help their elected officials and themselves by having this conversation. The electric bill that's saved may be your own.



## Start The Dialogue

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

HOME ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

HOME PHONE (\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

I AM A CUSTOMER OF Elkhorn Rural Public Power

SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_



America's Electric Cooperatives

For more information visit [www.ourenergy.coop](http://www.ourenergy.coop)

### When you have an emergency, our people are standing by!

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 your neighbors to see if they have electricity. 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 give the name that 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 Battle Creek office, toll-free, 1-800-675-2185, during office hours, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m., 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 and current meter reading. 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**

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

with Board position and subdivision

- Rod Zohner  
President.....II
- Tim Means  
Vice President..II
- John Thiele  
Secretary.....III
- Dennis Kuchar  
Treasurer.....I
- Robert Kee  
Director.....II
- Larry Lindahl  
Director.....III
- Mark Miller  
Director.....I
- Joe Thiele  
Director.....III
- Greg Weidner  
Director.....I

**MANAGER**  
Terry Carson

### 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](http://www.erppd.com)**

**E-mail: [erppd@erppd.com](mailto:erppd@erppd.com)**



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

Or 1-800-331-5666

"Diggers Hotline of Nebraska"