

THE WIRE

CURRENT NEWS FROM THE ELKHORN RURAL PUBLIC POWER DISTRICT

August 2010

Serving the Elkhorn River Valley since 1940

Volume 19, Number 8

2011 Rates

Although nothing is finalized at this time, the board of directors of Nebraska Public Power District (NPPD), our wholesale power provider, authorized management to revise the preliminary wholesale rate increase to 9.8% for purposes of rate design and discussions with wholesale customers and conducting the completion of the Wholesale Cost of Service Study.

According to NPPD, their biggest cost driver is decreased revenue due to decreased sales in Nebraska and reduced market price for out-of-state markets when they try to sell excess electricity, conditions that are directly related to the downturn in the economy.

Once final numbers are received from NPPD, our rate consultant will be conducting a rate study to determine what impact this wholesale rate increase will have on our retail rates.

Power costs amount to about 70% to 75% of the annual expenses for ERPPD. ERPPD is looking for ways to mitigate the increase by becoming more efficient and utilizing technology to cut down on expenses.

In 2010, ERPPD was faced with a 6.2% increase in power costs, but we were able to manage our controllable costs and only increased retail rates by an average of 4.9%.

Stay tuned for more updates as they unfold throughout the coming months.

What Is A Renewable Portfolio Standard? How Does It Affect Me?

A renewable portfolio standard, or RPS, is a term that is found in legislation which politicians or regulators pass to encourage the building of low carbon-emitting generation, such as wind or solar. An example would be Colorado, which passed a renewable portfolio standard of 20% by 2020. This means that over the next 10 years sufficient new green electric generation needs to be built in order to generate 20% of all electricity used in the state from renewable sources. This sounds like a pretty good idea, but consumers need to know the rest of the story.

Nebraska has the 5th lowest residential electric rates in the nation. This has not happened just by chance. As public power districts we are bound by state statute to "provide for dependable electric service at the lowest practical cost for the citizens of the state." Consequently, the management and boards of rural power districts tend to be quite conservative and try to keep rates as low as possible. Our power suppliers use sound financial and economic models when selecting generation sources. A renewable portfolio standard could change all that.

In effect, a renewable portfolio standard creates an artificial market for renewable electric generation based on a government mandate. Rather than using sound financial analysis to select new generation because it makes economic sense, renewable generation is put into the portfolio because it is green, with little regard for higher costs.

If either Congress or the Nebraska legislature passed a renewable portfolio standard it will affect rates. You just can't pay higher costs for generation, be required to build new transmission infrastructure, integrate the new generation into the electric grid, and continue to have sufficient base load backup generation to augment renewables (because they don't run all the time), without substantially higher costs.

Even though a renewable portfolio standard may sound like a good idea, know that, if implemented, it will mean higher electricity costs for everyone in the state.

Automatic Meter Reading Project

At this point of our automatic meter reading project, we have installed over 4,000 of the new meters, but still have around 2,500 to install.

We will not be reading the new meters for billing purposes until April 2011, after we have installed all the new meters and tested the system for accuracy, so if you are required to read your own meter please continue reading your meter each month until we notify you that we are taking over the meter reading function from the office.

We appreciate your patience and cooperation with this project. If you ever have any questions about the project or the new meters, please call the office at 1-800-675-2185.

Area Chemical Applicators and Farmers

In recent years, throughout Nebraska there have been several occasions where utility personnel have been exposed to toxic field chemicals, or due to those chemicals, could not get access to the power line to restore power to their customers.

In an effort to keep our employees safe, Elkhorn Rural Public Power District is asking that if you are spraying or applying chemicals that are toxic or may be hazardous, that you please let us know that information when you call for service that may subject our employees to enter the treated area. This will allow us the opportunity to determine the proper Restricted Entry Interval, or to re-assign our employees to a different work location and therefore prevent putting them in an unnecessarily dangerous situation.

We would very much appreciate your cooperation with this issue. Please feel free to call our office at 800-675-2185 if you have any questions.

"We value our employees and their safety, please value them, too, by notifying our office if your fields have been treated with chemicals."

Will we have the affordable electricity we need in the future?



Our Energy, Our Future

A Dialogue With America

Start the dialogue with your elected officials at:
www.OurEnergy.coop

or contact our office for a postcard to get signed up.

Kerkman Promoted to Foreman



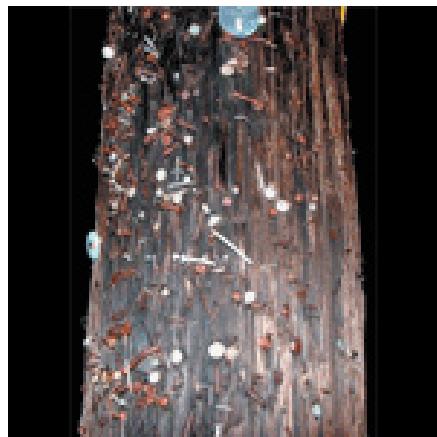
Jeff Kerkman

Jeff Kerkman of Neligh has been promoted to crew foreman. He works out of our Neligh outpost. Jeff has 20 years of experience in the utility line profession, starting out as an apprentice, then as a first class lineman, and now as crew foreman.

Jeff and his wife Becky have three children and live in Neligh. He is originally from the Elgin area.

Congratulations Jeff.

Posting Items to Utility Poles Creates Safety Risks



Signs, balloons and other materials on utilities poles are more than just an unpleasant neighborhood eyesore, they can be dangerous - even life threatening - to the professionals who maintain our vital lines of electricity, communication and other services. Safe Electricity urges everyone to help keep utility poles free of such materials.

"Help protect those who work hard to give us essential electric service, instant communication and other modern amenities through the nation's 120 million utility poles," Molly Hall, director of Safe Electricity, said. "Remember that anything left on a pole can cause power line workers, telecommunications utility personnel and other workers harm."

The climbers used by line workers to climb poles are vulnerable to becoming snagged on staples and nails embedded in posts. Foreign objects can also tear utility workers' protective clothing, which is the first line of protection from an electric shock. They can also injure workers despite the safety gear they wear to avoid contact with rough surfaces.

Such practices also present a public safety hazard as well. The materials posted on the poles not only distract people as they drive, but they also degrade the quality, effectiveness and stability of the wood. This poses a safety hazard for pedestrians as they walk by and increases the risk failure if the pole is struck by a vehicle. Posting items to utility poles is usually a violation of local ordinances as well.

It is also just as important to avoid tampering with or disrupting the guy wires that surround utility poles as well. Please inform children not to play or swing on them, and maintain your distance when performing yard work. If you see the poles or guy wires are disrupted in some way, please call your local utility company immediately.

Keep food safe during a power outage

We've all been there: a summer storm rolls through, toppling trees and damaging power lines. The lights go out. And although it may only be a matter of minutes or hours before your electric co-op gets things up and running again, thawing food in the refrigerator and freezer can make that relatively short time seem like an eternity.

It's important to keep cold food safe during a power outage, and a little advanced preparation and know-how can keep your family safe from food-borne bacteria. First and foremost, keep your refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible to maintain the cold temperature: if unopened, a refrigerator will keep food safely cold for about four hours; a full freezer will do so for about 48 hours (24 hours if it's half-full).

A sure-fire way to know if food is safe is to monitor its temperature. Meat, poultry, fish, and eggs should be refrigerated at or below 40 degrees Fahrenheit and frozen food at or below 0 degrees Fahrenheit. If the power goes out, a digital, dial, or instant-read food thermometer and appliance thermometers will help you know if the food

remains at safe temperatures.

If the power stays out for a prolonged period, there are a few ways to aid your refrigerator and freezer in the fight to keep things cold. The simplest tip is to keep your freezer full. If it's



not full, group items close together to preserve the cold.

Dry ice can help keep freezers chilly: find it by scanning for "ice" or "carbon dioxide" in the phone book. It will take 25 pounds or so to keep a full, 10-cubic foot freezer safe for three to four days. Fifty pounds of dry ice should hold an 18-cubic foot full freezer for two days. Wear heavy-duty gloves or use tongs when handling dry ice—the temperature of dry ice is -216 degrees Fahrenheit.

heat—and separate it from food with cardboard to prevent freezer burn.

During cold months, it may be tempting to store food outside. Although this may work for cold drinks, food can spoil in direct sunlight. Curious animals may also take advantage of an outside stash.

Rather than putting the food outside, consider taking advantage of the cold temperatures by making ice. Fill buckets, empty milk cartons, or cans with water and leave them outside to freeze. Then transfer the homemade ice to your refrigerator, freezer, or coolers.

Power back on? Make sure your food is still safe by either checking its temperature or looking for ice crystals. If frozen food is 40 degrees Fahrenheit or below or ice crystals are visible, it's safe to refreeze. Discard any perishable refrigerated food (meat, poultry, fish, eggs, and leftovers) that have been above 40 degrees for 2 hours.

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Food Safety and Inspection Service



Energy Efficiency *Tip of the Month*

Consider using ceiling and other fans during the cooling season. They provide additional cooling and better circulation so you can raise the thermostat and cut down on air conditioning costs. ENERGY STAR-certified ceiling fans do even better, especially those that include compact fluorescent light bulbs.

Source: Alliance to Save Energy



Increasing demand.
Rising rates.
CO₂ reductions.
Transmission overload.

If Americans want to keep electricity safe, reliable, and affordable, Congress and America's electric cooperatives and public power districts must work together.

The message to send to Congress is that energy policy must be Fair, Affordable, and Achievable.

Check out Our Energy, Our Future on Facebook and Twitter to keep tabs of federal energy legislation.

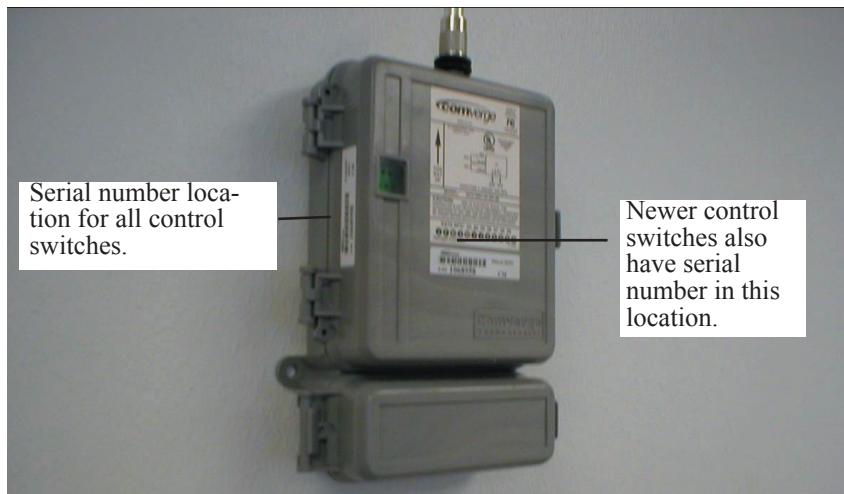
IRRIGATION

Irrigator's switch number is important

This irrigation season, an ERPPD irrigator who has occasion to call the utility 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 below for location examples:



Lights have meaning

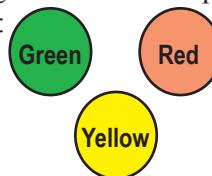
Three LED lights on the control box have particular significance.

Red - No Control

Red and Green - Control

Yellow - Signal Test (has no effect)

The light configuration on the display appears this way:



If the lights are not working, please check the fuses before calling ERPPD's outage number at **800-675-2185**.

Check on Irrigation Control Status

June 1-Sept. 15

Phone: 1-800-238-0185
OR

Internet: www.erppd.com
(click on "Irrigation Control")

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

with Board position
and subdivision

Rod Zohner
President.....II
Tim Means
Vice President ..II
Larry Lindahl
SecretaryIII
Dennis Kuchar
TreasurerI
Robert Kee
DirectorII
Mark Miller
DirectorI
Joe Thiele
DirectorIII
Greg Weidner
DirectorI
David Hoefer
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 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**