

# THE WIRE

CURRENT NEWS FROM THE ELKHORN RURAL PUBLIC POWER DISTRICT

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Serving the Elkhorn River Valley since 1940

Volume 21, Number 8

## Elkhorn RPPD sends a big THANK YOU to our customers for their patience and understanding

Due to the extreme hot and dry weather conditions throughout the state, Nebraska Public Power District, our power supplier, is experiencing unprecedented electric demands on its generation and transmission system. This phenomenon is mirrored on the ERPPD subtransmission and distribution system. Since early July, power districts throughout the state have been asking all customers to curtail load during periods of high electrical usage.

Even though the high electrical usage was occurring statewide, NPPD experienced overloaded transmission lines and substation equipment that supply power to ERPPD and other power districts to the north, west and south of Norfolk. This overloading resulted in NPPD calling for relief through a program called TERM (Transmission Emergency Relief Message).

When a TERM is issued by NPPD, ERPPD and other wholesale customers of NPPD respond by curtailing load wherever possible. The first TERM was issued on July 4, and ERPPD responded by shedding groups of wells on a rotational basis for up to 2 hours at a time. This resulted in a load reduction of 9 mw of electricity on the grid which, in combination with other power districts, towns, and conservation of electricity by individual customers, allowed NPPD to avoid shutting down the grid and blacking out the electric-

ity in the region. At this time, ERPPD experienced 23 hours of control and rolling blackouts.

On July 18, NPPD's Doniphan Control Center opened the breaker serving several of our substations in order to protect their 115 kv transmission line out of Norfolk. ERPPD personnel took action to provide relief by controlling five groups of irrigation wells throughout the night to avoid continued blackouts. A public service announcement was sent to the radio stations to ask all customers to help reduce the electrical usage on the system.

For several days in a row, ERPPD and other utilities in the region were faced with the need to provide NPPD with emergency transmission relief. This relief sometimes resulted in the need to control for 23 hours a day. This was unacceptable, so the power districts in the region met with NPPD to work out a compromise. The result of that compromise was to divide the utilities in the region into three groups, so that each group of utilities could provide relief for 12 hours. Since ERPPD's shift was at night, a compromise was crafted so that ERPPD customers would only be on regular control for a 10 hour period from 10:00 pm to 8:00 am, and then subject to emergency relief from 8:00 am to 10:00 am. This compromise has actually resulted in more run time for our irrigation customers each day,

while still protecting NPPD's transmission grid.

The ERPPD system has held up very well, considering the extreme heat and high electrical usage and that we were asked to control loads at night instead of during the heat of the day, which is a tribute to the operations and maintenance and the engineering departments. The operations department did have to replace a section of line that was failing due to the heat and loading. It was determined that this line had been weakened during the recent ice storms. The crews replaced 2 miles of wire with new, heavier wire. Working in extreme heat, they worked efficiently and got the wire replaced in only six hours.

On Sunday, July 22, the 7,500-kva transformer in substation #19, which is located 5 miles west of Elgin on Highway 70, failed at 2:00 pm, and the operations department again responded in force to correct the situation. Crews went to work immediately to switch line to other substations so all residential customers would have electricity for water and lights. Irrigation wells had to be kept de-energized during the entire change-out procedure to avoid overloading the other substations when the line was switched. In the meantime, our spare transformer was readied for travel, a crane and flatbed were contracted to move the transformer from

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# Four area students represent ERPPD at the NREA Youth Energy Camp



*Sharla Schindler*



*Hannah Kerkman*



*Kaili Hackerott*



*Regan Wiese*



Elkhorn Rural Public Power District sponsored five area students to the 2011 Nebraska Rural Electric Association Youth Energy Camp. The event is held annually at the State 4-H Camp in the Nebraska National Forest west of Halsey, Neb. This year's camp was held July 9 through July 13.

Those from the area attending were: Kaili Hackerott, Humphrey St. Francis High School; Regan Wiese, Lindsay Holy Family High School; Hannah

Kerkman, Elgin Public High School; and Sharla Schindler, Elgin Public High School. Junior counselors from ERPPD were Briley Wiese, Lindsay Holy Family High School and Ivy Prater, Elgin Public High School.

ERPPD also provided an adult counselor for the camp. Katelyn Thiele of Clearwater, former camper and Youth Tour ambassador, volunteered to return to the camp to help coordinate the activities and provide supervision. Thank you Katelyn, it was much appreciated.

Campers were treated to educational sessions on electric safety, energy efficiency, career opportunities, and public power in Nebraska. They visited the Gerald Gentleman coal-fired generating facility near Sutherland, Neb., and the Kingsley hydroelectric station at Lake McConaughey near Ogallala, Neb. The week was inter-

mingled with fun activities, including sports tournaments, canoeing, dancing, a get-acquainted party, socializing and making new friends.

These students are eligible, after they return from camp, to apply for the opportunity to represent ERPPD on the National Rural Electric Youth Tour to Washington D.C., held in June of 2013. Students who have attended the NREA Youth Energy Camp may complete an application and one will be selected by ERPPD to be our Washington Youth Tour representative for 2013.

While at the camp, campers also had an opportunity to compete for a spot on the 2013 National Rural Electric Youth Tour, which will be held in June, and be sponsored by the Nebraska Rural Electric Association.

Above all, they enjoyed a great time with other high school students from across the state.

# IRRIGATION

## Tips for Irrigators

- **Auto-Restart:** This would help maximize your actual run-time by allowing your system to start as soon as control is released and power is restored.
- **Three Phase Motor Saver:** This would protect your motor by shutting it down if one or more of the phases is out due to an outage or a fuse has blown.
- **Power Factor Corrective Capacitor:** This would help your motor run more efficiently, which in turn saves you money; and will also extend the life of your motor and related equipment.

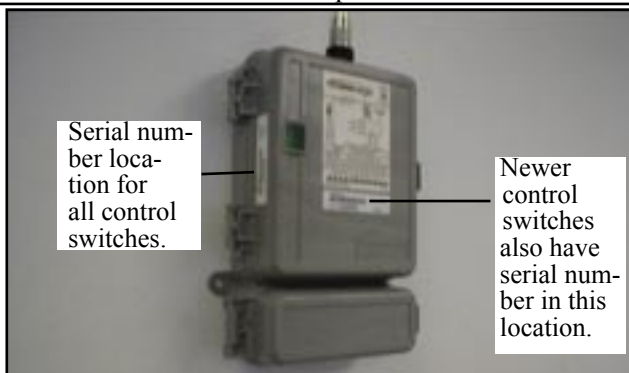
If you are interested in any of the items mentioned above, contact your electrician or serviceman for more information and pricing.

## 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

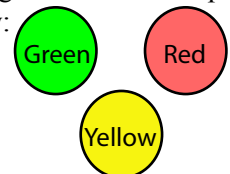
Three LED lights on the control box have particular significance.

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**.

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our yards to the substation, and a crew was assembled to disconnect the failed transformer and install and test the replacement transformer. Power was restored to the substation by 10:00 that evening, line was switched back to sub 19, and power was restored to all irrigation wells.

On Monday July 24, the replacement transformer failed at 8:00 pm, causing ERPPD personnel to repeat the procedure of the night before. This time, however, personnel had to use the next contingency plan, which was to contact Cedar-Knox Public Power District and travel to Hartington to

pick up a spare transformer that they were willing to loan to us. All other steps were repeated, and power was restored to sub 19 by 6:30 am Tuesday morning.

As you can see, these have been trying times for all of us, but through great cooperation from you, our customers, and great teamwork from all the employees of the district, we have maintained the integrity of our electrical distribution system. Without the tremendous cooperation of everyone, we most assuredly would have experienced many more problems.

Many thanks go to you, our customers

for responding to requests for cutting back on electrical use in your home and for your willingness to adapt to different irrigation load control strategies.

As of this writing, it seems as if the system has stabilized. We apologize for the inconvenience that the changes may have caused.

Due to the recent extreme weather event, we have come to realize once again that we have the greatest customers and employees that anyone could ask for.

## Automatic Meter Reading has Added Benefit

Elkhorn RPPD personnel have expanded the use of our TWACS automatic meter reading system. The AMR system now allows system operators to check the operation of our load control switches from the office. By looking at, or pinging, a meter or all the irrigation meters, operators can tell whether the radio control switch actually turned off the well when it was supposed to.

Service tickets are processed for services that were not shut down when they were supposed to be, and service techs are dispatched to those services. They will either replace the radio control switch, or correct any other wiring issues that may be obstructing the control switch.

One example of the cost savings returned to the district by proper control is the following: If a 100 hp motor is allowed to run for one hour during the control period, the resulting cost to the district is \$5,000.

This project is living proof that ERPPD is taking a proactive approach to controlling costs, which in turn help to control rates. If you see ERPPD service techs in your area, they have probably been sent to fix a radio control switch that is not controlling properly.

## Cell Phone Contact

Is your cell phone your primary phone contact? It is important that we have your current phone contact on file in the office. We use this phone number to contact you.

If you have discontinued your land-line phone service and now have only a cell phone as your primary contact, please contact our office at 800-675-2185.

Please rest assured that your cell phone number will not be given to other parties.

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to serve you better through better communication.

## Energy Efficiency

### Tip of the Month

Look to your windows for energy savings. Use weather stripping on old windows, and, if you can, add storm windows. In hot climates, add solar film screening to west-facing windows to catch heat. For new units, consider double-glazed panes; in cold climates, "low-e" coatings on glass can help reduce heat loss. Find more ways to save at TogetherWeSave.com.

Source: National Rural Electric Cooperative Association

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

with Board position and subdivision

- Rod Zohner  
President.....II
- Tim Means  
Vice President ..II
- Larry Lindahl  
Secretary .....III
- Dennis Kuchar  
Treasurer ..... I
- Jerrell Dolesh  
Director .....II
- Mark Miller  
Director ..... I
- Joe Thiele  
Director .....III
- Greg Weidner  
Director ..... I
- David Hoefler  
Director .....III

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

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