

# THE WIRE

CURRENT NEWS FROM THE ELKHORN RURAL PUBLIC POWER DISTRICT

February 2010

Serving the Elkhorn River Valley since 1940

Volume 19, Number 2

## Tree trimming, construction work slows; AMI/AMR installations to pick up pace

ERPPD crews, which were scheduled to trim trees or undertake construction work this winter, have been hampered by difficult to impossible accessibility, winter snow storms, and blizzard conditions. As a result, these projects are being delayed until working conditions improve.

Instead, crews will be working in greater numbers to outfit ERPPD substations with Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) and to install Automatic Meter Reading (AMR) meters for area business and residential customers.

AMI is technology that allows ERPPD's main office in Battle Creek to retrieve data from district substations; individual AMR units will allow the district to remotely read customer



ERPPD Meter Technician Jim Ridder demonstrates the process he uses to test one of the new Automatic Meter Reading (AMR) units at his office in Battle Creek.

meters through the AMI equipment from the office.

Customers who currently read their own meters should continue to do so, until they are notified that the new sys-

tem is totally in place, has been tested, and is ready to go.

As of press time, seven substations are equipped with AMI, and 410 homes and businesses have the AMR meters.

### Can I know I'm getting my electricity from renewable resources?

Absolutely. Electricity generated for any renewable program is fed into the same electrical grid as the one that serves all the district's customers and brings power to your home. It is impossible to determine the difference between electrons, but the energy actually flowing into your home involves a mix generated by wind turbines, hydroelectric facilities, or biomass production as well as coal, nuclear, and natural gas. Be assured that any renewable energy generated by your power supplier is actually put into the grid and helps power your home. Elkhorn Rural Public Power District and other electric utilities in Nebraska support the development, construction, and operation of renewable energy projects, and the energy is online today.

### Roger Borchers retires March 1



Roger Borchers

Roger Borchers has announced that he will retire from Elkhorn Rural Public Power District on March 1.

Roger has 36 years of service at ERPPD, serving the last eight years as the district's Operations Manager. ERPPD wishes Roger the very best.



# OUR ENERGY

## Carbon laws on horizon; electric bills to increase

### ARRA offers credits, deductions

The economic uncertainty we're facing these days has many of us putting money into something we feel comfortable with: our homes. Making a few upgrades around the house generally pays big dividends. And when boosting energy efficiency is one of them, the decision becomes a no-brainer.

For any energy efficiency work made at your residence during the coming year, Uncle Sam will foot 30 percent of the bill—not a bad deal! Through the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act—better known as the stimulus bill—the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) offers a personal tax credit of up to \$1,500 for energy efficiency improvements made to existing homes during 2009 and 2010.

The credit covers 30 percent of the cost of adding insulation materials and exterior doors, windows, and roofs designed to help reduce a home's heat loss or gain. It also includes efficient central air conditioners, air-source heat pumps, hot water boilers, and biomass stoves.

For weatherization-related work the credit covers only the cost of materials. With heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems as well as biomass stoves installation costs also count toward the credit.

So how does the math work out? Say you spend \$1,000 on new insulation. You would get, in the form of a tax credit, \$300 back. If you spend \$3,000 to purchase a new HVAC system and have it installed, you'd have a \$900 tax credit to show for it.



To take advantage of the program, a home improvement must have taken place after Feb. 17, 2009 (the day the stimulus bill was signed into law), and products must meet specific energy efficiency criteria. A few rules of thumb will help you determine those criteria.

For exterior windows and skylights, rely on the Energy Star label. For other efficiency upgrades, request what's called a "Manufacturer Certification Statement" that the product or component qualifies for the tax credit. Many manufacturers post these on their websites, but be sure to verify that the product does qualify before making a purchase. You can also visit [www.irs.gov/recovery](http://www.irs.gov/recovery) to review guidelines for eligible purchases.

Energy tax credits reduce taxes owed, dollar for dollar, and can be carried forward to following years. While they can help boost any refund you receive, you won't receive a check directly for the credit amount. You can file for energy tax credits using IRS Form 5695, with a total maximum value of \$1,500 for improvements made in 2009 and 2010.

To take advantage of these tax credits, call a professional tax consultant. For suggestions on how you may make your home more energy efficient, contact Elkhorn Rural Public Power District. ERPPD has a number of energy efficiency rebates in place to help you save even more money. These are listed on the next page.

Federal curbs on emissions of carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas blamed as a principal cause of climate change, are quickly becoming a reality. Public power utilities believe that any controls on CO<sub>2</sub> should be established by Congress, where the impact of these proposals can have a full public debate.

Unfortunately, climate change bills drafted by the U.S. House last summer and the U.S. Senate Environment and Public Works Committee in November include unachievable goals and timelines for reducing carbon dioxide emissions, inadequate incentives for technology development, and no guarantee that electric bills will remain affordable. Current proposals will unfairly penalize consumers in fossil fuel-dependent states (like Nebraska) by saddling them with higher bills to essentially subsidize and lower electric bills for those in other regions.

Climate change legislation should protect consumers. Otherwise, utilities and businesses could be burdened with the task of trying to comply with more than one set of regulations. Rural utilities are fighting to ensure that any climate change policy goals adopted are fair, affordable, and achievable.

To make your voice heard in this debate, join NRECA's **Our Energy, Our Future™** grassroots awareness campaign at [www.ourenergy.coop](http://www.ourenergy.coop) or go to [www.erppd.com](http://www.erppd.com) and click on the link. To date, more than 600,000 electric consumers just like you from all across the country have already done so.

# ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROGRAMS

## EnergyWise<sup>SM</sup> incentives reward energy savings

Elkhorn Rural Public Power District, in partnership with Nebraska Public Power District (NPPD) and its other wholesale customers, is offering energy efficiency programs to assist customers in becoming more energy efficient. The purpose of programs under the EnergyWise<sup>SM</sup> logo is to make electric customers more aware of ways they can use electrical energy more efficiently and the savings that come with these practices.

### Residential High-Efficiency Heat Pump Incentive

Homeowners who install a qualified heat pump (14 SEER or higher cooling ratio and 8.2 HSPF or greater heating ratio) will be eligible for a variable rebate, depending on the SEER of the unit. ERPPD customers who replace a window or central air conditioner with a qualified heat pump will earn a double rebate.

Heat Pump Qualifying Installation	Basic Rebate	Replace A/C Unit
14 SEER	\$200	add \$200
15 SEER	\$250	add \$250
16 SEER (& up)	\$300	add \$300
Geothermal Unit	\$400	add \$400

The installing HVAC dealer will also receive an incentive payment if the new unit operates within 10% of manufacturer's specifications.

### Residential High-Efficiency Heat Pump Low-Interest Loan

A low-interest loan (2.5%) gives the homeowner a choice of incentive OR loan (but not both). Contact ERPPD, then work with a local lender of your choice. This program works in conjunction with the local lender, the Nebraska Energy Office, and NPPD. *This program may be changing in 2010.*

## ENERGYWISE<sup>SM</sup>

Use less. Spend less. Do more.

### Cooling System Tune-Up

An incentive of \$30 is available to homeowners who have their cooling systems tuned up (Does not include heating systems). Eligible systems include air conditioners, air source heat pumps (regardless of back-up source), and water source heat pumps. Contact your HVAC dealer.

### Residential Attic Insulation

The attic insulation program allows a homeowner to install at least six inches of attic insulation in up to 2,000 sq.ft. of attic space in an existing home. The rebate is \$0.15 per square foot with a maximum rebate for any one dwelling to be \$300. See ERPPD or a building or remodeling contractor for details.

### Refrigerator/Freezer Recycling

This program will resume in March.

### Commercial and Industrial Lighting Efficiency Program

Customers have an opportunity to earn incentives for upgrading to qualified, more efficient lighting. Incentives are available for both indoor and outdoor technologies.

Prescriptive and custom programs are available. Contact Mark Gronau at ERPPD to discuss the one that is right for your business, then contact the lighting contractor of your choice.

### Commercial HVAC system

The commercial HVAC program allows rebates to businesses for installing water-cooled or air-cooled air conditioners or air source, water source, or ground source heat pumps. The rebate

is dependent on total tonnage of the unit(s) and/or one of two performance ratings, either the SEER or the Actual EER. Please contact your HVAC dealer for specific details about the program. Some cooling systems do not qualify, so be sure to contact an HVAC dealer. Brochures are available at ERPPD that define both the type of equipment and the associated equation to figure the rebate.

### Premium Efficiency Motors

One way for businesses to reduce the cost of starting and running motors is by upgrading to premium efficiency motors. Incentives are prescriptive and range from \$20 to \$400 based on motor size. Those who qualify for irrigation incentives cannot qualify for this incentive.

### Variable Frequency Drives

Variable frequency drives (VFDs) can be effective at reducing power and energy consumption to centrifugal equipment such as pumps and fans. Incentive is \$30 per horsepower. Those who qualify for irrigation incentives cannot qualify for this incentive. Contact ERPPD to see if a VFD is right for you and if it can be used on your lines.

### Irrigation Efficiency

This program seeks to help irrigators utilize water and electric energy in the most energy efficient and cost-effective manner. It is designed to provide customers with financial incentives to help assess irrigation system performance and improve areas of inefficiency. The incentive is \$0.20 per kWh saved per year for the first year.

Call Mark Gronau at ERPPD for details about any of these programs.

Ask a tax preparer if your efficiency improvements can qualify for tax deductions or credits.



# NOTICES

## STATEMENT OF NONDISCRIMINATION

The Elkhorn Rural Public Power District, a public corporation, furnishes the following Statement of Non-Discrimination to its customers, employees and the general public.

The Elkhorn Rural Public Power District hereby certifies that it will fully comply with all requirements of the Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to the end that no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subject to discrimination in the conduct of its program and the operation of its facilities.

The Elkhorn Rural Public Power District is committed not to discriminate against any person on the grounds of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability in its policies and practices relating to applications for service, or any other policies and practices relating to treatment of beneficiaries and participants, including rates, conditions, and extensions of service, use of any of its facilities, attendance at and participation in any meetings of customers and participants or the exercise of any rights of such customers and participants in the conduct of the operations of this organization.

—Elkhorn Rural Public Power District

## LEGAL NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that regular monthly meetings of the Board of Directors of the Elkhorn Rural Public Power District will be held at 206 North 4th Street, Battle Creek, Nebraska, on the 2nd Tuesday of each month, beginning at 10 o'clock a.m.

Said meetings are open to the public and an agenda of matters to be considered at each meeting is kept continually current and is available for public inspection at the principal office located at Battle Creek, Nebraska, during normal business hours.

—Elkhorn Rural Public Power District

**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](http://www.OurEnergy.coop)

### 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
- Robert Kee  
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., 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**