

THE WIRE

CURRENT NEWS FROM THE ELKHORN RURAL PUBLIC POWER DISTRICT

February 2011

Serving the Elkhorn River Valley since 1940

Volume 20, Number 2

2011 Unicameral in Session

The 102nd Nebraska Legislature convened at 10:00 a.m. January 5 for its 90-day session. The session will run from January 5 to June 8.

Senators representing constituents in the ERPPD service area include: Stanton County-Lydia Brasch; Madison County-Michael Flood; Antelope, Boone, Wheeler Counties-Kate Sullivan, Pierce County-Tyson Larson, Holt County-Tyson Larson, and Platte County-Paul Schumacher.

The format of the mailing addresses for the senators is:

- Senator Name
- District #
- State Capitol
- P.O. Box 94604
- Lincoln, NE 68509

Web pages for the senators can be found at www.nebraskalegislature.gov/senators. The senators' web pages contain office numbers, email addresses, phone numbers, updates on bills, etc.

If you are not sure which legislative district you live in, you can find your senator by visiting www.nebraskalegislature.gov and click on "Senators" and "Find your Senator". This will open a map that permits you to enter your address or click on the area in which you live.

ERPPD Employees Honored for Years of Service in 2010



Steve Petersen



Dan Belt



Jeff Kerkman



Todd Knutson



Jim Wennekamp



Stacie Young



Carmen Thelen



Laura Rutjens



Galen Beckman



Tim Means



Joe Thiele

The nine employees and two directors pictured above were honored for their service to ERPPD and its customers at an awards banquet on January 7. Steve Petersen was honored for 30 years; Dan Belt and Jeff Kerkman for 20 years; Todd Knutson, Jim Wennekamp, and Stacie Young for 15 years; Carmen Thelen for 10 years; and Galen Beckman and Laura Rutjens for 5 years. Director Tim Means was honored for 10 years and Director Joe Thiele for 5 years.

Congratulations to these honored individuals and thanks for your years of service.

Old Refrigerators Eat Energy and Money

Does this sound familiar? You bought a new refrigerator and moved your old fridge to a garage or basement to keep a few drinks and some surplus food items cold. Here's a tip from Elkhorn Rural Public Power District that can help you save energy and money.

Old refrigerators, especially those bought before 1993, use more than twice as much electricity as a new ENERGY STAR model. What's more, refrigerants in these older appliances weaken over time and door seals start to leak, causing a decline in the performance.

If you have moved your old refrigerator to an uninsulated location, such as a garage, it will use even more energy during hot weather. A fridge in a 90 degree environment, for example, uses nearly 50 percent more power than one in a 70 degree environment. And if the temperature falls below about 40 degrees in winter, the refrigerator's thermostat may not run its cooling and defrost cycles for the appropriate amount of time.

By pulling the plug on that old refrigerator, you can save \$146 a year. For other tips on how to save energy—and money—visit www.erppd.com, www.energysavers.gov, OR Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives energy-saving website, www.TogetherWeSave.com or call the efficiency experts at ERPPD (800-675-2185).

Save 50% on your Energy Costs While Keeping Warm? Tough to Do!!!

Magazine, newspaper, and even television advertisements are claiming you can save up to 50 percent on your heating bill by using their special space heater. "Wow! I spent a lot of money keeping warm last winter. I can cut that amount in half."

Then, you see the special offer. Originally \$499.95, you can order now for \$299.00! You are convinced you will save that much in one winter. This is an incredible deal!

But before you rush out and buy one of these miracle heaters, look closer at what you are going to have to do to achieve those savings. The fine print says that savings to your heating bill comes from setting the main thermostat in your house to as low as 50 degrees and moving the space heater to a single room. In doing so, the savings does not come from operating the heater, but rather from turning down the thermostat for the rest of the house. In fact, if you use a miracle heater and don't lower your thermostat, you can actually spend more heating your home!

This practice of using space heaters to warm individual rooms is known as zone heating. If used correctly, it can provide some benefit. For example, if you are consistent in turning down your main system's thermostat and use the space heater to heat just the room you occupy, you can save money. Also, if you have an area of your



home that is hard to heat, a space heater will make that area more comfortable. However, it will cost you more for the additional heat.

In reality, very few homeowners achieve the maximum savings portable heater manufacturers claim. After one heating season, homeowners are sometimes disappointed they did not save more, and in some cases even increased their electric bill, especially if the heater was used in addition to their furnace. Homeowners need to be aware that the heater is using 1500 watts (or other rated wattage) of electricity whenever it is operating.

A portable heater can improve comfort in hard-to-heat areas, but it does not guarantee you will save in heating costs. Note that most homeowners can achieve greater savings by investing in insulation, weather stripping, servicing their heating and cooling equipment, changing filters, installing compact fluorescent lamps, using programmable thermostats, purchasing ENERGY STAR appliances, or setting back the thermostat when not at home.

For more information on steps homeowners can take to improve the efficiency of their homes, contact Mark Gronau, Energy Services Representative at Elkhorn Rural Public Power District, visit the ERPPD web site at www.erppd.com, or visit the ENERGY STAR Home Advisor at www.energystar.gov/homeadvisor.

ELECTRIC SAFETY

Lives are at stake: Including yours and your family's

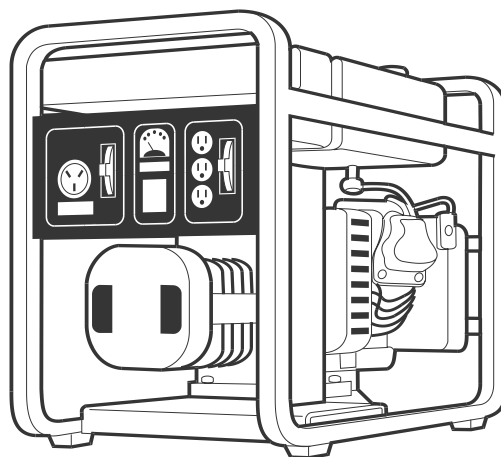
Once a luxury, electricity is now essential to our everyday lives. To deal with weather-related electrical outages that can occur, many households and businesses are looking into back-up power generators for use in an emergency.

There are many different sizes and configurations of generators available. Some of them are equipped with a gas or diesel engine and others operate from the power take-off (PTO) on farm tractors. All of these devices have one thing in common—they produce electricity in sufficient quantities to cause injury, death, or property damage. Generators need to be correctly sized and installed properly.

More important than the size of your generator is the correct installation. If you are going to provide power to your home, auxiliary power sources must be completely isolated from Elkhorn Rural Public Power District lines that are attached to your meter. This is to prevent “back-feed” of electricity into our electric system. When our crews are working to restore your power, this back-feed could seriously injure or kill them or a neighbor who comes in contact with the line. The back-feed could also damage your generator. To prevent this from happening a special switch, called a double-throw switch, is required to eliminate a generator's feedback from passing through ERPPD transformers and power lines.

To protect yourself, your family, your property, and our linemen, read the following guideline for safety:

- Carefully read and follow the manufacturer's instructions that come with your generator.
- Always use a double-throw switch when installing your generator *if you are going to run your en-*



tire house. It is required by the National Electrical Code. Make sure you properly disconnect from ERPPD's service BEFORE starting your generator.

- Make sure the generator's electrical system is adequately grounded to prevent electrocution.
- Always operate your generator in a clean, dry, and well ventilated area to avoid electrical hazards, like shocks, and carbon monoxide poisoning. Do not use it indoors and make sure it is far away from windows, doors, and vents when installed outdoors.
- **Whether running the entire house or not,** make sure you have a carbon monoxide detector in your house and test it before starting your generator.
- Never use a worn, damaged, undersized, or ungrounded extension cord with your generator. Always plug your appliances directly into the generator or the extension cord coming from the generator.
- Never plug your generator into a wall outlet to provide power to your house. This will cause “back-feeding” into the line and

could seriously injure a lineman or your neighbor if they are on the same line, or it could damage your generator.

- Place your generator on a surface, like a concrete slab, to provide lower conductivity.
- Don't exceed the rated load capacity of your generator by attaching too many items or appliances with high load ratings.
- Voltage sensitive appliances (computers, TV's, stereos, etc.) should not be powered by a generator without proper surge protection.
- Never attempt to fuel your generator while it is running. Always turn the engine off and let it cool before beginning the fueling process. Make sure there is a fire extinguisher available during the fueling process.
- Avoid getting burned—many parts of a generator are hot when it has been running.
- Keep children away from the generator.
- Turn off all equipment and appliances powered by the generator before shutting down.

Installation of your generator is not a do-it yourself project. Hire a qualified electrician. Working with electricity can be dangerous, especially if it is not done correctly.

Nebraska law requires that a state electrical inspection be done on residences and commercial entities when the consumer makes any changes on the customer side of the meter. A licensed electrician will submit all required applications for electrical permits to the state for the customer.



LEGAL 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



Energy Efficiency
Tip of the Month

Ninety percent of the energy it takes to wash clothes is used to heat water. If you wash in cold water, you could save \$40 per year if you have an electric water heater and \$30 annually if you have one powered by natural gas.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
with Board position and subdivision

Rod Zohner
President.....II

Tim Means
Vice President ..II

Larry Lindahl
SecretaryIII

Dennis Kuchar
Treasurer I

Jerrell Dolesh
DirectorII

Mark Miller
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.

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Communicate Electronically With ERPPD

Internet: www.erppd.com

E-mail: erppd@erppd.com

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

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

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

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