

# THE WIRE

CURRENT NEWS FROM THE ELKHORN RURAL PUBLIC POWER DISTRICT

July 2008

Serving the Elkhorn River Valley since 1940

Volume 17, Number 7

## 2008 Youth Energy Camp update



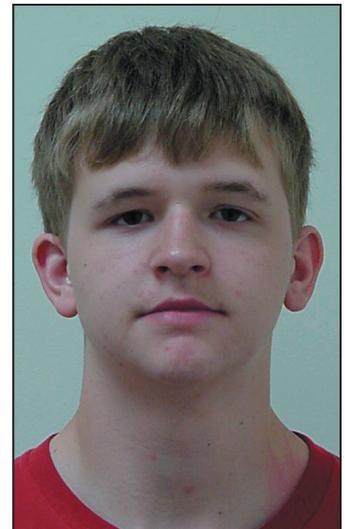
*Michaella Duff*



*Jeremy Hemmer*



*Sydney Pokorny*



*Greg Roberg*

### Four area students to represent Elkhorn Rural PPD

Four area students will represent Elkhorn Rural Public Power District at the annual Youth Energy Camp in July.

The four students and the high schools they attend are Michaella Duff, Clearwater; Jeremy Hemmer, Humphrey St. Francis; Sydney Pokorny, Clearwater; and Greg Roberg, Newman Grove.

The camp is facilitated by the Nebraska Rural Electric Association and is sponsored by ERPPD and the other 34 member electric systems in Nebraska, South Dakota, Wyoming, and Colorado.



This year's edition of the camp will be July 14-18 at the State 4-H Camp within the boundaries of the Halsey National Forest just west of Halsey, Neb.

Campers experience a variety of interactive opportunities with adult counselors (who are mostly power district employees) and other campers (high-schoolers representing rural electric systems throughout Nebraska): team-building events; hands-on classes about energy efficiency, electric safety, and public power in

Nebraska; tours of two of Nebraska's electricity generating plants (Kingsley hydroelectric at Ogallala and one of the Gerald Gentleman coal-fired units at Sutherland); canoeing, hiking, volleyball, and basketball; a talent show, banquet, and dance; and a competition for one of three scholarships to represent Nebraska at the National Youth Tour, which will be held the following June in Washington, D.C.

Katelyn Thiele, the daughter of ERPPD Director Joe Thiele and a 2007 Youth Energy Camper by virtue of winning a scholarship to the camp from the statewide Women In Rural Electrification, will make a return to the camp as a junior counselor.

## ERPPD joins Touchstone Energy® Alliance

Elkhorn Rural Public Power District has joined the ranks of consumer-owned electric utilities across the country as a Touchstone Energy® partner. Touchstone Energy® is a nationwide branding alliance that complements the local connection public power districts have with their customers while providing the resources of a vast, integrated network of cooperatives.

Touchstone Energy® represents more than 600 cooperatives in 44 states that collectively deliver power and energy solutions to more than 16 million customers every day. The program communicates the unique qualities of cooperatives to business and residential customers, reinforcing the dedication that co-ops have to serving member-owners with integrity, accountability, innovation, and commitment to community. By overseeing national marketing and communications campaigns, employee education programs, and numerous events and projects that help co-ops strengthen and cultivate relationships with business and residential customers nationwide, Touchstone Energy® ensures the benefits of consumer-owned electric utilities are recognized.

“The Touchstone Energy brand will provide a distinctive symbol for those customers to identify with, to feel a part of, and to take pride in,” said ERPPD General Manager Terry Carson.

“It’s more than a graphic addition to our name and logo. It’s a commitment to our customers that they can count on us, as a locally based and controlled utility to deliver them with innovative, reliable, affordable energy services and to be an advocate for their energy and community needs,” he said.

“The dictionary definition of touchstone is a test of genuineness. Touchstone Energy® symbolizes everything that electric cooperatives and public power districts represent today: electric power, human connections, and the strength of the utilities’ commitment to the communities and the consumers they serve,” he explained.

“We’ll help our consumers cut

through all the clutter,” he said. “We’ll be here for our customers over the long haul. If it’s accountability, service, and commitment to community you want, look no further than Elkhorn Rural Public Power District.”

For some facts about the 10-year-old Touchstone Energy® Alliance, see related item on page 2.

## Facts about Touchstone Energy®

The name Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives is an alliance of local, consumer-owned electric cooperatives and public power districts across the country committed to providing superior service to all customers, large and small.

Touchstone Energy®—the national brand of electric cooperatives—has core values that consumers have long associated with cooperatives: integrity, accountability, innovation, and genuine commitment to their communities.

Touchstone Energy® cooperatives and public power districts use the resources of a national network and take advantage of economies of scale that enhance their unique relationships with their local customers.

They provide high standards of service to all customers—residential, commercial, industrial, and agricultural.

### Touchstone Energy®:

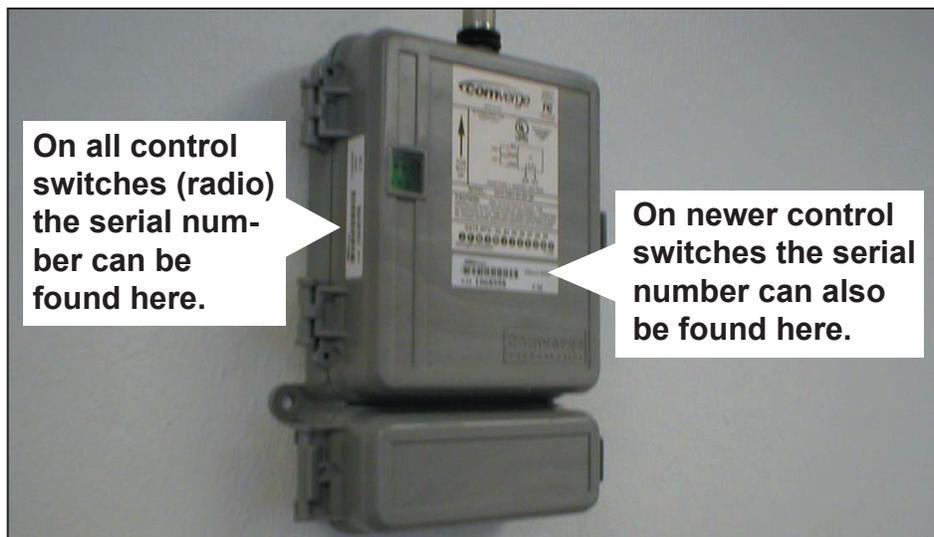
- Communicates electric cooperatives’ and public power districts’ unique characteristics in a changing marketplace where these values and differences matter more each day;
- Emphasizes the significance of each district’s local presence and unique ties

to the community, but offers the advantages of a nationwide network to bring added value and benefit to all;

- Produces award-winning advertising and communications materials;
- Places television ads on various networks, including CNBC, CNN, The Weather Channel, Discovery, and Direct TV and print ads in national publications, including Time, Newsweek, and U.S. News and World Reports;
- Teams up with respected national partners like Discovery Channel School, the American Football Coaches Association, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation to provide programs that local cooperatives can use to enhance the quality of life in the communities they serve;
- Delivers valuable employee education programs that equip employees with the skills to communicate the cooperative difference and provide top-notch customer service;
- Provides the tools to evaluate and improve consumer satisfaction;
- Offers an array of services and programs to enhance cooperative relationships with business and residential customers.



## 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.

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

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## ONGOING MAINTENANCE

### S&L tests poles; Wilson, Big Timber trim trees

As part of ERPPD's continued commitment to provide the most reliable service possible, S&L Pole Testing, Inc., will inspect about 4,500 distribution poles, many of which were last inspected in 1996 and 1997. The process should begin sometime in June.

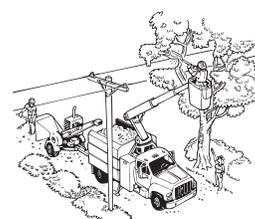
ERPPD began testing poles in the mid-1970s and completed the first inspection of the district's 2,500 miles of line in 1995. The program helps find weak links in the distribution system which, after completing any needed maintenance work, has resulted in fewer outages because of faulty poles. ERPPD's present goal is to test enough poles each year to cover the entire district every 10 to 11 years.

This year, contractors will be testing poles in the following areas: north of Battle Creek, south and west of Elgin, and east and north of Neligh.

Testing occurs as follows:

1. Check pole's age; test any older than 15 years.
2. Dig down about 18 inches all around the pole.
3. Pole is "sounded" with a hammer.
4. Pole is drilled in four spots to check the core.
5. Pole is treated at ground level and holes are filled with treatment rod.
6. Each pole is passed/rejected and its condition recorded.
7. A work order is made for ERPPD crews to replace rejected poles.

#### Trimmed trees reduce outages



ERPPD has contracted with Wilson Tree Service, of Norfolk, and Big Timber Tree Service, of Verdigre, to cut/trim trees in the rural rights-of-way. Wilson will be working both north and south of Norfolk. Big Timber will be working both north and south to the west of Battle Creek. Tree work will continue through the summer and into the fall. Landowners are contacted before any work is done.

Call 1-800-675-2185 if you have questions about either operation.

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

## Grant funds available for Antelope, Holt Counties

CORE Development Inc. (CORE) has grant funds available! CORE is a non-profit organization that was formed to assist the rural areas in Antelope and Holt County by encouraging business development and job retention, and improving the quality of life through improvement of housing, recreation, and community development.

At the present time, CORE has down payment assistance funds available for income eligible homebuyers that are looking to purchase a home within one of the eleven communities that are within the CORE service area. The eleven communities include: Brunswick, Chambers, Clearwater, Elgin, Ewing, Inman, Neligh, Oakdale, Orchard, Page, and Royal.

If you have questions regarding the grant funds or would like an application please call the Housing Adminis-

trator, Randy or Leigh Alexander, of Community Development Services, at 402-582-3580.

The CORE Development, Inc. Board of Directors has been a recipient of CDBG, Affordable Housing Trust Funds, and HOME funds for the past 10 years. These funds were used for both housing rehabilitation and homeownership down payment assistance for persons of low-to-moderate income status and very low income, as determined by the most recent income limits for Antelope and Holt Counties. CORE has submitted regional grant applications which allow for participation of all member communities, along with adjacent rural areas.

The results of completed Housing Rehabilitation and Down Payment Assistance projects are immeasurable

and are expected to continue to greatly benefit the member communities. Not only has there been an effect on improving housing stock, but local communities have also benefited. Impacts and continued expected results include additional jobs for contractors and suppliers, motivation for homeowners and renters to improve their properties, additional businesses, families relocating to CORE communities, upgrading living standards, and improving community and self pride.

CORE is a wonderful community organization and would like to assist their member communities in promoting homeownership through the use of down payment assistance funds they have been awarded.

Call Randy or Leigh Alexander at 402-582-3580 to find out more!

### 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.

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• **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”