

# THE WIRE

CURRENT NEWS FROM THE ELKHORN RURAL PUBLIC POWER DISTRICT

May 2009

Serving the Elkhorn River Valley since 1940

Volume 18, Number 5

*Redesigned [www.erppd.com](http://www.erppd.com) on web—*

## ERPPD provides news updates on home page

Have you ever wondered what is happening at Elkhorn Rural Public Power District?

In the past, you would have had to wait until this monthly newsletter arrived in the mailbox. Then, because of the deadline for submitting the camera-ready pages of this newsletter to the printer, the news you would have read would have been nearly a month old.

Now, you can check out the most current ERPPD news by going online

to [www.erppd.com](http://www.erppd.com). From this day forward, ERPPD will be keeping you informed about a variety of issues that the electric industry and its customers will be facing in the future.

When will ERPPD have its contractors in the area for pole-testing or tree-trimming? And where will they be?

How much impact will a federal cap-and-trade policy have on monthly electric bills? What other carbon-control legislation will take effect?

When will ERPPD be installing new Automated Meter Reading equipment (AMR) in its facilities, while incorporating the new Advanced Meter Infrastructure (AMI)—one of the major components in the new SmartGrid technology?

These and other critical issues will be addressed in the coming months on the home page of the district's new website. Check out all the features at [www.erppd.com](http://www.erppd.com).

## Kester is new hire

ERPPD has welcomed a former co-op intern and Neligh native to ERPPD's line crew at the Neligh office. **Kyle Kester**, who did a summer internship for ERPPD in 2004, joined the staff on March 5 as an Apprentice Lineman.



*Kyle Kester*

Kester and his wife, Tabitha, and their six-year-old son, Brock, have spent the last three years in the York area. He worked at Perennial Public Power District there.

Kyle says that he enjoys fishing, golfing and a little hunting in his spare time. Kyle's parents are Don and Vicki Kester of Neligh; Tabitha's parents are Dan and Rhonda Schwager of Clearwater.

## 2-year project to bring AMI, AMR to ERPPD

Elkhorn Rural Public Power District is launching a two-year project that will bring automated meter reading (AMR) to district customers. AMR is one of the major benefits of the overall project, which is referred to as Advanced Meter Infrastructure or AMI, which will allow ERPPD personnel to obtain meter readings from the utility's office in Battle Creek.

The entire AMI project is expected to pay for itself within five to seven years through savings in meter reading costs (including labor and transportation) and increased efficiencies in both billing and collections departments.

Added benefits of AMI will allow ERPPD personnel to verify the operation of irrigation control switches, ensure more accurate data of electrical usage for both proper transformation sizing as well as data-reporting functions, and provide a communications path for future "Smart Grid" applications.

The initial phases of the project are set to kick off in May with the placement of AMI equipment in ERPPD's "Sub. 4," which is located five miles north of Battle Creek, and installation of individual automated meters at residences, farms, and businesses connected to that substation.

At first, customers will experience no change in the process, and those who usually submit their own meter readings should continue to do so until they are specifically asked to do it differently.

NOTE: For additional customer convenience, ERPPD has made on-line reporting of meter readings available on the district's website. Customers who want to use this feature should go to [www.erppd.com](http://www.erppd.com), hover over the "Customer Service" drop down, click on "Meter Reading," then follow the directions on that page.

**Elkhorn Rural Public Power District**  
May 2009

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

**WIRE**  
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# COMPARING ELECTRIC USAGE

## Learn more about how electricity is used

Comparisons between the energy bills of two neighbors will likely reveal one startling result: That lifestyles and households cause energy bills to be vastly different.

Most of the time, this kind of comparison leads to all types of questions and the answers aren't always easy or apparent. To put it simply, it is difficult to compare one's electric bill to a friend's or neighbor's because of the variety of ways people use electricity.

No two families own the same appliances, they don't have the same habits, nor do they use energy in the same way. Even if the homes are of similar size, slight differences in insulation, windows, doors, types and ages of heating and air-conditioning systems, and the setting of the thermostat can cause large variations in the amount of energy used.

Here is a list of common causes of electric bill variations:

### Conditions beyond control

- Seasons of the year
- Hours of daylight and dark
- Weather extremes
- Daylight-saving time
- Months with five weekends
- Number of days in a billing cycle

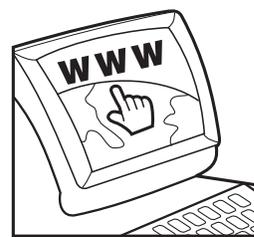
### Changes in usual living conditions

- Size of family
- Average age of family members
- Long-term houseguests
- New baby
- Changes in living habits
- Vacations
- Holidays
- Repairs or remodeling
- Hired help
- Sicknesses
- Spring or fall cleaning

### Appliances

- New appliances added
- Older appliances in use
- Low-performing appliances in use
- Frost on refrigerator unit
- Shortage of refrigerant
- Inefficient usage
- Excessive use of hot water
- Leaky faucets
- Clogged air filters
- Thermostat too high in winter
- Thermostat too low in summer

For anyone who has ever wondered how much electricity—on average—is used by many of the appliances or electronics commonly found in today's modern homes, Elkhorn Rural Public Power has a website for you. Go to [www.erppd.com](http://www.erppd.com) and click on the Energy header to take advantage of the handy Appliance Calculator. When you



first arrive at the Welcome Home page, you can cursor over and click on any room of the house to see more specific ideas for energy efficiency or to locate some of those potential energy hogs.

There is even a calculator that compares energy use between different kinds and sizes of televisions. (These are "in-use" numbers, but a phantom load calculator on the ERPPD website under Energy can point out the ghosts that could be stealing energy.)

Learning more about how much electricity is used around the home will allow ERPPD customers to become more energy efficient and better stewards of Nebraska's energy resources. It can also help customers to realize why and how energy bills can vary so much from month to month.

Always remember, ERPPD is here to serve its customers, providing electric energy when needed and teaching how to be more efficient in the use of electricity.

## Wasps are big energy users at one ERPPD farm

An Elkhorn Rural Public Power District customer recently installed a second meter, effectively separating the "farming" side of his operations from the "residential" side of it. After the meter was installed, it was spinning "like crazy" for an area of the farm that should have been using little or no power.

After opening breakers and eliminating as many possibilities of power use as he could conceive, the customer located the unlikely culprit who was using all that energy. Mud wasps had built their home in the breaker box of an

unused outbuilding, establishing a connection from energy source to ground. This resulted in "spilling" all that energy into the ground without getting any advantage from it.

Most often, the biggest energy users are the members of one's own household, but once in a great while, some unwanted guests infiltrate the peaceful surroundings and remain unseen in their energy use—until the bill arrives.

The lesson? It pays to check one's facilities on a regular basis for clean and operable breaker boxes and other electrical equipment.



# ENERGY EFFICIENCY REBATES

## Earn a rebate for installing an electric heat pump

### How does a customer become eligible for a heat pump rebate?

A residential customer can:

1. Convert to a qualified air source heat pump; or Convert to a water source/geothermal heat pump;
2. Build new and install any qualified heat pump; or
3. Upgrade a lower-SEER heat pump to a qualified higher-SEER heat pump.

\* *Replace an A/C unit with qualified heat pump and double the rebate.*

### How does the residential customer get the rebate?

The heat pump installer must complete a verification form for a unit that meets the minimum standards (see box). Verification ensures that the new unit is operating within 10% of manufacturer specifications. The dealer must sign the form; the customer must sign it; then it must be submitted to Mark Gronau at ERPPD.

• *Rebates are available first-come, first-served until funds are exhausted.*

Air Source Heat Pump Rebates	New Unit	No A/C
Energy Star, 14 SEER, 8.2 HSPF	\$200	+ \$200
Energy Star, 15 SEER, 8.2 HSPF	\$250	+ \$250
Energy Star, 16 SEER or higher, 8.2 HSPF	\$300	+ \$300
Water Source or Geothermal Heat Pump Rebate		
Energy Star-qualified	\$400	+ \$400

## Commercial, industrial lighting get efficiency rebates

### 4-Step To-Do List

1. Discuss potential C&I Lighting projects and guidelines (at right) with ERPPD's Mark Gronau and get an application form.

Call ERPPD at 800-675-2185.

2. Select a contractor; install any of the systems identified in the box below.

3. After installation, complete the application form.

4. Within 90 days of installation, submit the signed application (along with copies of the proof-of-purchase identified in the application's terms & conditions) to Elkhorn Rural Public Power.

### Guidelines

- All replaced/retrofitted lighting equipment must be permanently installed.
- Only commercial and industrial customers qualify for the energy-efficient fluorescent fixture incentives.
- All incentives sought that are \$5,000 or greater require a pre- and post-installation inspection to be conducted by Elkhorn Rural PPD.
- An equal number of lighting fixtures will be impacted when compared to the number of fixtures considered for retrofit or replacement. Only existing lighting systems qualify for upgrade. New construction or addition of more light fixtures in a facility or in a facility addition do not qualify.
- Area lighting may be metered or unmetered, and area lighting may be customer-owned or utility-owned via a rental/lease agreement.
- *A custom program is available if these prescriptive measures don't apply. Call ERPPD for specific details.*
- *Rebates are available first-come, first-served until funds are exhausted.*

COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL LIGHTING REBATES		Per fixture
What does the customer have now?	What is the customer changing to?	Rebate
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>High Bay Lighting</b> Replace Metal Halide fixture</li> </ul>	with Fluorescent High Bay fixture	\$50-\$75
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Exit Signs</b> Replace or retrofit Incandescent Exit Sign</li> </ul>	with LED Exit Sign	\$20
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>4-ft Fluorescent Tube Lighting</b> Replace or retrofit T12 fixture (w/ 2,3,4 lamps)</li> </ul>	with T8 and electronic ballast fixture	\$10-\$20
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>8-ft Fluorescent Tube Lighting</b> Replace or retrofit any T12 fixture</li> </ul>	with T8 and electronic ballast fixture	\$15
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Area Security Lighting</b> Replace Mercury Vapor lamp</li> </ul>	with comparable High Pressure Sodium	\$20-\$40

# 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.

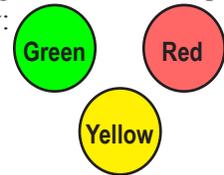


## Lights have meaning

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.

**Call for ERPPD's  
Load Control Status  
during the season.  
1-800-238-0185**

**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.

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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)

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**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 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 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**