

# THE WIRE

CURRENT NEWS FROM THE ELKHORN RURAL PUBLIC POWER DISTRICT

May 2010

Serving the Elkhorn River Valley since 1940

Volume 19, Number 5

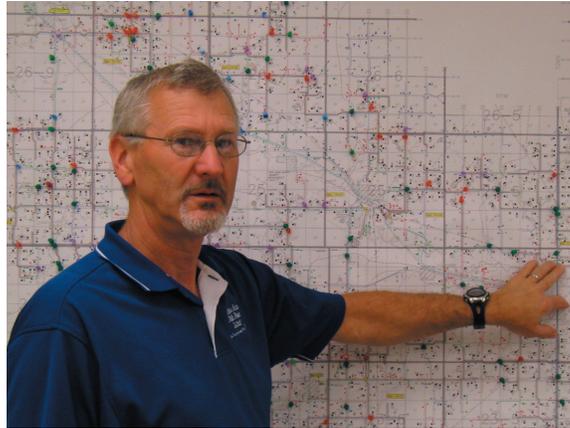
## Jim Ridder Chosen As New Operations Manager

Jim Ridder of Battle Creek was chosen to fill the position created when former Operations Manager Roger Borchers retired. Jim has been with the district for 30 years, first serving as an apprentice lineman, then as a journeyman lineman, and most recently served as the lead meter tech.

Jim graduated from the Northeast Community College Utility Line Program, and worked for the City of Wayne. He then became an lineman instructor in the Northeast Community College Utility Line Program before joining Elkhorn Rural Public Power District in 1979.

Jim and his wife Becky have three grown children, Chastity, Paul, and Zach. Jim's hobbies include traveling, wine-making, hunting, boating, spending time with family, and spoiling grandchildren.

Jim's goals for the district include promoting safety for our employees and our customers, assisting in controlling rates through efficient utilization of our employees and equipment, and system planning to maximize efficiencies.



## May is National Electrical Safety Month

Elkhorn Rural Public Power District is dedicated to promoting safety in all that we do. One of the resources we make available to our customers is our membership to SafeElectricity.org. This membership is sponsored by our insurance provider.

Compelling stories told by people personally touched by electricity-related tragedies are just a mouse click away. And you don't have to travel far to see a live power line demonstration. Just log on to [www.SafeElectricity.org](http://www.SafeElectricity.org) and click on the Live Line Demo link. The 30 minute video-streamed program and other video productions are among thousands of resources available on the web site dedicated to educating people about electrical safety.

## NPPD Seeking Proposals for Wind Farm

Continuing its pursuit of generating 10 percent of its electricity from renewable resources by 2020, the Nebraska Public Power District issued its third request for power purchase agreements for wind projects.

Developers have until June 4, 2010, to propose projects that can be developed on an NPPD site in Madison County, or on a developer's site that has adequate transmission. Projects may range from 50 to 300 megawatts in size and are encouraged to meet community-based energy development (C-BED) criteria.

If a project is deemed acceptable, NPPD would seek in-service dates anywhere between 2012 and 2014 and will look for other Nebraska utility participants to share the wind energy produced with other Nebraska utilities. This may include Omaha Public Power District, Lincoln Electric System, Municipal Energy Agency of Nebraska, and the City of Grand Island.

In comparison, the Ainsworth wind farm is 60 megawatts and the Crofton farm is 80 megawatts.

Initiating a request for proposal (RFP) does not require NPPD to select any of the projects, but it is an opportunity for bidders to take advantage of current tax credits, incentives, and reduced construction costs.

NPPD anticipates a decision in August regarding the proposals.

# 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 3,500 poles, including both transmission and distribution poles. This accounts for about 8% of all of the poles in the district and allows for all poles to be tested in a 12-year period. This pole testing program began in the mid 1970's and has lowered the failure rate from approximately 15% to less than 1%. The program helps find weak links in the transmission and distribution system which, after completing any needed pole replacements and maintenance work, has resulted in

fewer outages.

This year, the pole testing contractors will be testing poles in the following areas: south of Tilden to Elgin, southwest of Neligh, southwest of Clearwater, west of Elgin, and south of Meadow Grove.

Testing occurs as follows:

1. Check pole's age; test any poles 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 rights-of-way. Wilson will be working in the Woodland Park area, and Big Timber will be working north and west of Clearwater. Landowners are contacted before any work is done.

# ENERGY EFFICIENCY

## 5 Ways to Spring into Energy Efficiency

Spring is a perfect time of year to make your home more energy-efficient. Here are five quick tips that will save both energy and money. To learn about additional ways to cut your energy bill this spring, visit [TogetherWeSave.com](http://TogetherWeSave.com), or contact an energy expert at Elkhorn Rural Public Power District at 800-675-2185.

1. **Seal the cracks and gaps around your home.** Spring may be the right time to put away those storm windows, but it is also a good time to add weather-stripping and caulking around leaky window panes. [TogetherWeSave.com](http://TogetherWeSave.com) shows how easy it is to use a caulking gun to seal up leaks around your house around doors, vents, ductwork and windows. A typical customer at ERPPD can save more than \$200 annually.

2. **Change filters regularly.** Furnace and air conditioner filters need to be changed monthly, which can really help lower monthly energy bills. Dirty filters can restrict air flow and reduce the overall efficiency of your cooling system and make it work even harder on hot summer days.
3. **Clean the refrigerator inside and out.** Now is a good time to not only throw out the leftover fruit cake from the holidays, but also to check the temperature settings on your refrigerator. Ideally, a refrigerator's temperature should be between 37 and 40 degrees for maximum operating efficiency. When it's time to replace that old refrigerator, be sure to buy an ENERGY STAR® rated appliance. Energy-efficient appliances can save ERPPD customers as much as \$100 a year based on calculations from the [TogetherWeSave.com](http://TogetherWeSave.com) website.

4. **Think sun block.** [TogetherWeSave.com](http://TogetherWeSave.com) demonstrates that by pulling the shades on your windows this spring and summer, you could save about \$35 a year. Your local hardware or do-it-yourself store has lots of inexpensive window coverings. Best of all, by blocking the sun, your house will stay cool and comfortable year-round.
5. **Enjoy the spring breezes.** Use a clothesline throughout the warmer months to let the sun and breeze dry clothes naturally. This will reduce both energy and water bills, and add a genuine clean scent to your family's laundry.

You can learn more about ways to lower your monthly energy bill by visiting [TogetherWeSave.com](http://TogetherWeSave.com) or by calling the energy experts at Elkhorn Rural Public Power District.

# GPS Survey Equipment To Improve Engineering Efficiencies

Elkhorn Rural Public Power District is experiencing tremendous growth with numerous residential services, grain bins, and irrigation growth. Along with this growth, we also are experiencing growing pains related to keeping up with the surveying and staking of new lines required to support this growth. An analysis was made on the most efficient way to increase our productivity in the surveying department. The results were to either add staff, or purchase equipment that would allow the present staff to keep up with the workload.

It was decided to purchase a GPS-based system for surveying, which would allow one man to stake a line build in less than half the time it would normally take two men to stake it with our present surveying equipment.

In the accompanying photo, ERPPD Engineering personnel Bob Coble and Rick Cherington are receiving training on the new GPS equipment. The equipment has sub-centimeter accuracy, and does not need line of sight setups to accurately survey in the hills, valleys, and trees. The range of the equipment is up to six miles from the base setup, which virtually eliminates the need to continually move and reset the base. Once the section corners are located, the equipment will keep the line stakers on course using GPS-technology, much like the GPS technology in new farming equipment.



*ERPPD engineering personnel Bob Coble (second from left) and Rick Cherington (right) receive GPS survey base setup training from Transit Works personnel.*

## Governor Heineman Signs Wind Energy Bill Into Law

On April 12, 2010, Nebraska Governor Dave Heineman signed into law LB 1048 which allows for the development of renewable energy export facilities in Nebraska. This measure provides a clear path for the development of renewable energy resources in Nebraska by private developers while protecting Nebraska ratepayers from increased electric rates. Nebraska has great potential for the development of wind energy resources, however, keeping electric rates low as we exploit these resources is a must. LB 1048 allows private developers to invest in Nebraska and capitalize on this potential without compromising the low-cost electric rates Nebraskans enjoy.

The Nebraska Rural Electric Association (NREA), of which Elkhorn Rural Public Power District is a member, along with the Nebraska Power Association was pleased to play a role in the development of this legislation and fully supported the bill. We would like to thank those of you who reached out and contacted your state senator on this issue. Our grassroots efforts are vital to our success when fighting for the issues that affect our industry.

You can get involved in these grassroots efforts for both state and national issues by signing up for the Our Energy, Our Future campaign at [www.ourenergy.coop](http://www.ourenergy.coop). You can receive alerts asking you to contact your legislators about important legislation affecting the electricity industry.

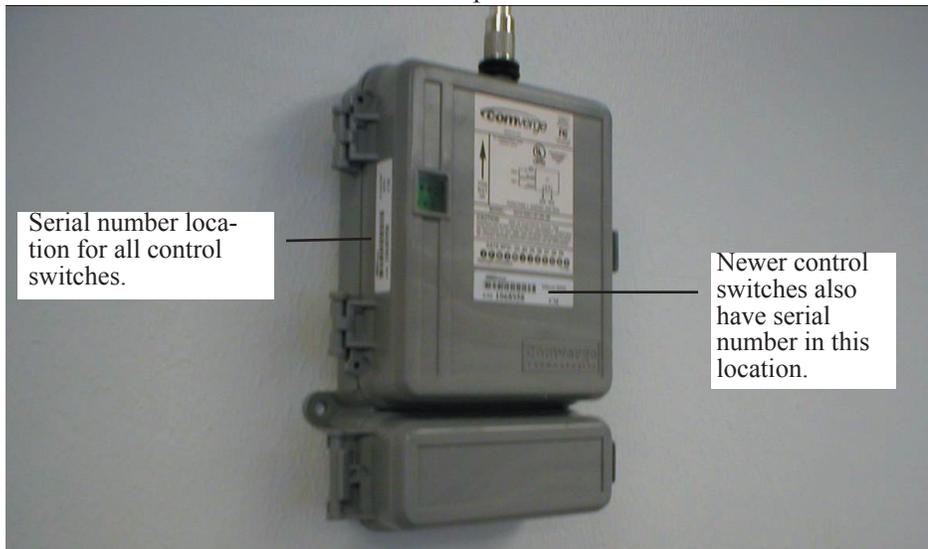
# IRRIGATION

## 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

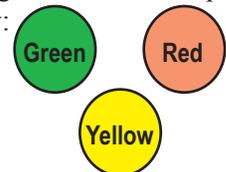
Three LED lights on the control box have particular significance.

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.

## 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 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**