

THE WIRE

CURRENT NEWS FROM THE ELKHORN RURAL PUBLIC POWER DISTRICT

November 2009

Serving the Elkhorn River Valley since 1940

Volume 18, Number 11

ERPPD doesn't call you asking for personal info

The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association is getting some reports from various states where electric co-op and public power district consumers are receiving phone calls from fraudsters posing to be from the co-op or utility and asking the consumer to provide credit card or other financial account information and personally identifiable information over the phone.

PPDs and cooperatives are not alone here, this is hitting other utilities and businesses of all types.

There are at least two flavors of this scam:

One is to say the consumer owes on his or her account and will have service shut-off unless payment information is provided immediately.

The other appears aimed more specifically at seniors. The caller claims

the consumer can receive Federal stimulus dollars to pay their utility bills or some sort of a bill credit, but the consumer must first provide his or her personal information (for example: Social Security Number and utility account number).

Cooperatives and PPDs are doing at least two things in response:

- (1) They are alerting their staffs about these scams and emphasizing current fraud prevention and "red flags" identity theft procedures.
- (2) They are reminding consumers about account payment, collections, and service shut-off policies and procedures.

Utilities and co-ops also are directing their consumers to information about protecting themselves from identity theft and what to do if they believe

they are a victim. There are state level resources (through the Nebraska attorney general's office) as well as national resources through the Federal Trade Commission's identity theft site: www.ftc.gov/idtheft.

Additional information is also available from the FTC's main site: <http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/menus/consumer/data/idtheft.shtm>.

Don't be snookered, don't get hoodwinked, and don't be a sucker. Elkhorn Rural Public Power District personnel will not call you asking for personal information, without thoroughly identifying themselves by name. If you are ever in doubt about such a phone call, tell the caller you will hang-up and call us at our local office to take care of it. We will ask for this information from time to time, but only when you call the district office.

Watch the issues!

Your congressman and senators are in Washington, D.C., to serve you. However, sometimes they need to be reminded what's best for you. Concerns about electric affordability, energy capacity, and carbon technology abound. See the ad on *WIRE-Page 2* for more information, then voice your concerns by sending your message to them at www.OurEnergy.coop. Do it today.

Our Energy, Our Future

A Dialogue With America

www.ourenergy.coop

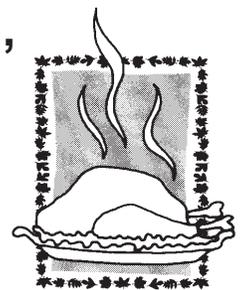
Elkhorn Rural Public Power District
will be closed

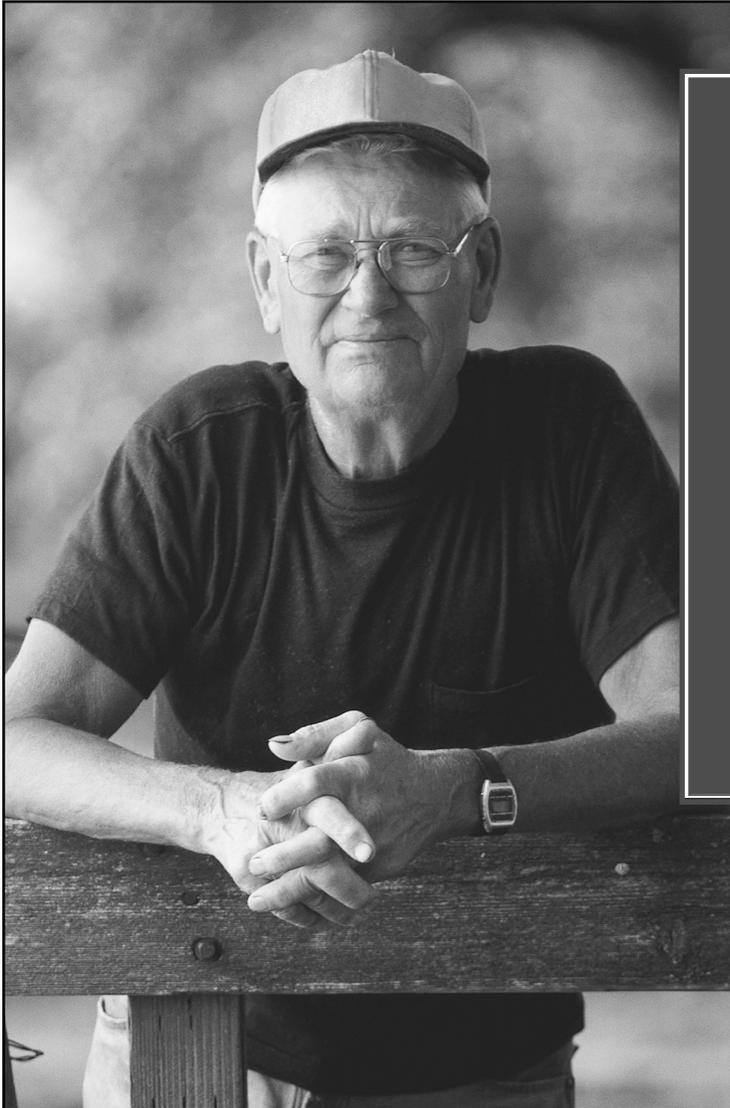
Wednesday, Nov. 11,
for **Veterans Day**

and

Thursday & Friday,
Nov. 26 & Nov. 27,

to celebrate the **Thanksgiving weekend.**





They want to put Wall Street in charge of my electric bill?

Congress is debating a plan to put Wall Street in charge of reducing carbon emissions from the power plants that serve Nebraska. It's called "cap and trade."

And yes, it would be expensive, complicated, and wasteful – and would raise your monthly electric bill substantially.

There are better, cost-effective ways to solve the problem, including finding new ways to conserve electricity or use it more efficiently, using a sensible approach to wind energy and renewables, and adding more low-emission power plants. Teaming with our power supplier, we're working on them all.

Want to know more?
Call ERPPD at 402-675-2185,
Visit www.itsyourpower.org
for more details, or
Visit www.ourenergy.coop
to Contact your Senator.



***Elkhorn Rural
Public Power District***

Looking out for you.

YOUR ELECTRIC METER

“Don’t compare me with others! I’m all yours!”

This is the fourth in a four-part series featuring thoughts from your electric meter—

“While it is tempting to compare your electric bill with your neighbor’s, it can also be misleading.

“I am your own individual electric meter. Your neighbor’s home has its own meter. And both of us operate by what we see come through our sensors.

“Even if the sizes of your two families are similar, no two families have the same lifestyle. In fact, you could sell your home to a family that is exactly the same size as yours, and the electric consumption by the new family could be much different than when you owned the house.

“Many electric customers call and ask, ‘Why is my neighbor’s electric bill lower than mine?’

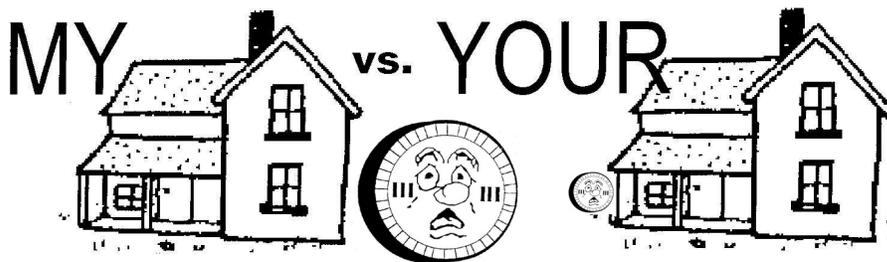
“They point out that the neighbors are home all day and they themselves are not. The neighbors leave more lights on at night and the neighbor’s house is bigger. The list goes on and on.

“What you should keep in mind is that not everyone uses electricity the same way. Some appliances, such as water heaters, furnaces, and clothes dryers, often use fuel sources other than electricity.

“Here are some of the possible answers to the question ‘Why is my neighbor’s electric bill lower than mine?’”

Heating /Air Conditioning settings can vary. Not everyone is comfortable at the same indoor temperature. During the winter, you may keep your house at 71°F. while your neighbors keep their house at 67°F. The same can be true—with the numbers reversed—during the summer if you have air conditioning. Other factors such as ceiling and wall insulation contribute greatly as to how much your heating or air conditioning systems work. A well-insulated home requires less energy to heat or cool it than a less well insulated house.

Water heater and water use differs immensely. Everybody uses different amounts of hot water. One water heater may be set at 135°F. while the neighbor may use a 120°F. setting. You may fill your tub with 10 inches of water, but your neighbor may use only six inches. You may take a 10-minute shower, but your neighbor’s shower may last only seven minutes. You might shower twice a day, but your neighbor may shower once every other day. Some people need to wash clothes every day, while others may wash only a load or two a week. Some families use an automatic dishwasher; others do the same chore with elbow grease.



Refrigerators/Freezers aren’t treated the same either. Energy escapes each time the refrigerator or freezer door is opened. The frequency of how often and how long these doors are open can vary greatly from one family to the next. Different brand name appliances also consume electricity at different rates. Generally, frost-free appliances consume more electricity than do manual defrost units. Ice makers and cold-water features also can add to energy consumption.

Whether you have a **clothes dryer** or not has a say on energy use. Is the clothes dryer used year around? Maybe your neighbor hangs clothes on the line during the spring, summer, and fall.

Habits with lights and small appliance can affect your bill. Do you turn off lights or the television when you leave a room even for a few minutes? Maybe your neighbor does.

Your meter says, “It is to be hoped that, through my experience as your electric meter, you can see the point of this article: Everyone uses electricity differently. Asking why your neighbor’s electric bill is lower than yours is much like asking why your neighbor eats a different menu during the week than you do. Personal preference and habit make the big differences. Take it from your personal electric meter.”

Reading accuracy is important!

When reading your electric meter and recording your reading, please be aware that accuracy is important. Inaccurate readings can occur due to numbers being read wrong, numbers being written incorrectly or transposed, the “0” being left off in the ones digit; and/or the numbers being “guess”timed. Also, neglected or skipped readings for several months will not reduce or eliminate usage for which the customer is responsible.

When an inaccurate reading is sent to our office, three things happen: (1) It is recorded to your account as if true; (2) Your billing is based on that figure; and (3a) After the error is discovered, an adjustment to your account is needed; and (3b) If the error is not discovered for a long period, the difference could be extensive.

Please, be accurate when reading your meter!



ELECTRIC SPACE HEATERS

EnergyWiseSM Tip: "Beware of Space Heater Promises"

"It's a miracle ..." You may have seen ads in the magazine section of your Sunday newspaper for "miracle heaters." They claim you can save up to 50 percent on your heating bill! Just purchase one (or more) of these technological marvels, the advertisement trumpets, and you will never be cold again.

Before you rush to buy, however, you should look a little closer at the miracle heater's claim. The ad's fine print clearly states the way to reduce your heating bill is to set the thermostat in your house to as low as 50 degrees and move the space heater from room to room. In this case, savings do not come from operating the heater, but because you turned down the thermostat to 50 degrees.

Customers, who don't lower their thermostats, can actually spend more heating their home!

The practice of using space heaters to warm individual rooms is known as zone heating. If used correctly, it can provide one of two benefits. From a cost savings standpoint, if you are consistent in turning down your main system's thermostat and use the space heater to heat just the room(s) you use, you can save money. The second benefit is from a comfort standpoint; if you have areas of your home that

are hard to heat, using a space heater will make them more comfortable, but this will cost you a little more for the additional heat.

Bottom line: Heating parts of your home with a portable heater is seldom the cure-all that the catchy ads would have you believe. A portable heater can improve comfort for hard to heat areas, but using one doesn't guarantee you will save in heating costs. Instead, most homes will gain greater benefit from money spent on insulation, weather stripping, servicing your heating and cooling equipment, changing filters, installing compact fluorescent lamps, using programmable thermostats, or purchasing ENERGY STAR appliances, and setting back the temperature on your thermostat when away.

These things will help reduce the amount of heating or cooling your home needs or use less energy performing the same work.

For more information on steps homeowners can take to improve the efficiency of their homes, contact Elkhorn Rural Public Power District, or visit the ENERGY STAR® Home Advisor at <http://www.energystar.gov/homeadvisor>. Lots of useful energy efficiency information is also available at <http://www.nppd.com>.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

with Board position and subdivision

- Rod Zohner
President.....II
- Tim Means
Vice President ..II
- Larry Lindahl
SecretaryIII
- Dennis Kuchar
Treasurer I
- Robert Kee
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.

Communicate Electronically With ERPPD

Internet: www.erppd.com

E-mail: 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