

# THE WIRE

CURRENT NEWS FROM THE ELKHORN RURAL PUBLIC POWER DISTRICT

October 2009

Serving the Elkhorn River Valley since 1940

Volume 18, Number 10

## Electric bills to increase if Congress passes CO<sub>2</sub> legislation

Electric energy and the environment are high profile issues today. As your local public power district, the management and directors of Elkhorn Rural Public Power District do their best to balance customer needs for safe, reliable, and affordable electricity with environmental protection and economic development.

The U.S. Congress is currently considering carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) and greenhouse gas legislation called “cap-and-trade.” This bill could significantly increase your electricity bill.

New costs or taxes would be imposed on companies whose products or processes release CO<sub>2</sub> into the atmosphere. The costs of this legislation would be determined by a new financial market



**Our Energy, Our Future**  
A Dialogue With America

that would be created to trade CO<sub>2</sub> emission allowances. Utilities and other industries would be forced to pass those new costs to their customers through higher rates and prices.

Today, half the nation’s electric energy (and more than 60% in Nebraska) is generated by burning coal. These power supplies are essential to providing reliable, cost-effective service that public power customers have come to

expect. Under the current proposal in Congress, customers in the coal-reliant central U.S. would pay a disproportionate share of this tax.

We at ERPPD are concerned that if Congress passes legislation imposing restrictions on CO<sub>2</sub> emissions without adequate consumer protection, these additional costs of compliance may create financial hardships for customers.

There are alternatives to “cap-and-trade” for addressing carbon emissions that pose fewer risks to customers and the U.S. economy. If you want to learn more about proposed legislation or write a letter to your senator or representative, go to [www.ourenergy.coop](http://www.ourenergy.coop) for more information.

### Energy Efficiency Rebates—

## Residential attic insulation, commercial HVAC began Sept. 1

Two new EnergyWise<sup>SM</sup> energy efficiency programs made their debut for Elkhorn Rural Public Power District on Sept. 1.

The attic insulation program allows a homeowner to install at least six inches of attic insulation in up to 2,000 sq.ft. of attic space in an existing home. The rebate is \$0.15 per square foot with a maximum rebate for any one dwelling to be \$300. See ERPPD or a building or remodeling contractor for details.

The commercial HVAC program allows rebates to businesses for installing water-cooled or air-cooled air conditioners or air source, water source, or

**ENERGYWISE<sup>SM</sup>**  
Use less. Spend less. Do more.

ground source heat pumps. The rebate is dependent on total tonnage of the unit(s) and/or one of two performance ratings, either the SEER or the Actual EER. A generic chart of rebates is at right (the Actual EER is indicated by \*EER); however, please contact your HVAC dealer for specific details about the program. Some cooling systems do not qualify, so be sure to contact an HVAC dealer.

Brochures are available at Elkhorn Rural Public Power District.

Air-cooled AC	Rebate
14 SEER <5.4 tons	\$100
15 SEER <5.4 tons	\$125
16 SEER <5.4 tons	\$150
≥5.4 to <11.3 tons	\$20 x (*EER-10.3) x tons
≥11.3 to <20 tons	\$20 x (*EER-9.7) x tons
Water-cooled AC	Rebate
<20 tons	\$20 x (*EER-10) x tons
Air Source HP	Rebate
14 SEER <5.4 tons	\$200
15 SEER <5.4 tons	\$250
16 SEER <5.4 tons	\$300
≥5.4 to <11.3 tons	\$25 x (*EER-10.1) x tons
≥11.3 to <20 tons	\$25 x (*EER-9.3) x tons
Water Source HP	Rebate
<20 tons	\$25 x (*EER-10.5) x tons
Ground Source	Rebate
Open loop ≤20 tons	[\$10 x (*EER-16)+180] x tons
Closed loop ≤20 tons	[\$20 x (*EER-14)+180] x tons



# ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROGRAMS

## EnergyWise<sup>SM</sup> incentives reward energy savings

Elkhorn Rural Public Power District, in partnership with Nebraska Public Power District (NPPD) and its other wholesale customers, is offering energy efficiency programs to assist customers in becoming more energy efficient. The purpose of programs under the EnergyWise<sup>SM</sup> logo is to make electric customers more aware of ways they can use electrical energy more efficiently and the savings that come with these practices.

### Residential High-Efficiency Heat Pump Incentive

Homeowners who install a qualified heat pump (14 SEER or higher cooling ratio and 8.2 HSPF or greater heating ratio) will be eligible for a variable rebate, depending on the SEER of the unit. ERPPD customers who replace a window or central air conditioner with a qualified heat pump will earn a double rebate.

Heat Pump Qualifying Installation	Basic Rebate	Replace A/C Unit
14 SEER	\$200	add \$200
15 SEER	\$250	add \$250
16 SEER (& up)	\$300	add \$300
Geothermal Unit	\$400	add \$400

The installing HVAC dealer will also receive an incentive payment if the new unit operates within 10% of manufacturer's specifications.

### Residential High-Efficiency Heat Pump Low-Interest Loan

A low-interest loan (2.5%) is an option that gives the homeowner a choice of the incentive or the loan (but not both). Contact ERPPD, then work through the local lender of your choice.

This program works in conjunction with the local lender, the Nebraska Energy Office, and NPPD.

## ENERGYWISE<sup>SM</sup>

Use less. Spend less. Do more.

### Cooling System Tune-Up

An incentive of \$30 is available to homeowners who have their cooling systems tuned up. Eligible systems include air conditioners, air source heat pumps (regardless of back-up source), and water source heat pumps. Contact your HVAC dealer.

### Commercial and Industrial Lighting Efficiency Program

Customers have an opportunity to earn incentives for upgrading to qualified, more efficient lighting. Incentives are available for both indoor and outdoor technologies. Lighting applications developed over the last decade can help cut lighting costs by 30% to 60%, while enhancing lighting quality and reducing environmental impacts.

Prescription and custom programs are available. Contact Mark Gronau at ERPPD to discuss the one that is right for your business, then contact the lighting contractor of your choice.

### Refrigerator/Freezer Recycling Program

The goal of this program is to remove old, inefficient, operating secondary refrigerators or freezers from ERPPD's distribution system. Customers receive a \$35 incentive for qualifying up to two working units they arrange to recycle.

This program is administered through a third party, JACO Environmental, who specializes in utility refrigerator recycling programs.

Interested customers should call JACO (toll-free 1-866-444-9160) for information or to arrange an appointment for pick-up.

### Irrigation Energy Efficiency

This program seeks to help irrigators utilize water and electric energy in the most energy efficient and cost-effective manner. It is designed to provide customers with financial incentives to help assess irrigation system performance and improve areas of inefficiency.

The incentive is \$0.20 per kWh saved per year.

### Premium Efficiency Motors

For some businesses, energy consumption by electric motors may represent more than half their electricity costs. One way to reduce that cost is to reduce the amount of energy used by upgrading to premium efficiency motors.

Premium efficiency motors are up to 8% more efficient than standard motors, and they are designed to meet or exceed standards set forth by the National Electric Manufacturer's Association (NEMA) in NEMA's MB1-1993 publication.

Incentives are prescriptive and range from \$20 to \$400 based on motor size. Those who qualify for irrigation incentives cannot qualify for this incentive.

Contact Mark Gronau at ERPPD for more information.

### Variable Frequency Drives

Variable frequency drives (VFDs) can be especially effective at reducing power and energy consumption to centrifugal equipment such as pumps and fans. Incentive is \$30 per horsepower. Those who qualify for irrigation incentives cannot qualify for this incentive.

Contact ERPPD to see if a VFD is right for you and if it can be used on your lines.

Ask a tax preparer if your efficiency improvements can qualify for tax deductions or credits.



# YOUR ELECTRIC METER

## “Beware Meter Eaters! They are all around you!”

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

“Help! I’m under attack! As your electric meter, I am being bombarded almost daily by the energy wasters in your home. They are the household activities that cause me to spin out of control.

“I call them Meter Eaters, but in reality they eat kilowatt-hours and can be major contributors to high energy bills.

“Meter Eaters can be anywhere and everywhere. Some Meter Eaters are obvious. They are easy to see and identify. Other Meter Eaters are virtually invisible and take a diligent attitude, some common sense, and consistent vigilance to detect and subdue them.

“The good thing about Meter Eaters is this: once detected you can put them on a diet, or better yet, you can eliminate them.

“So what kind of things do Meter Eaters do? And where can you find them?

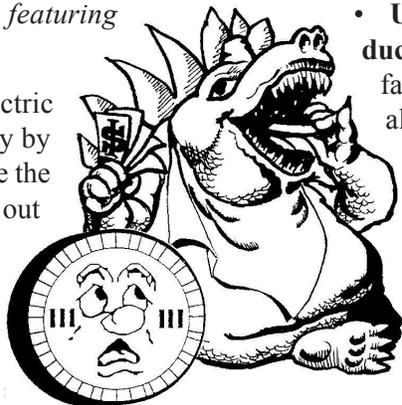
“Here are just a few of the ways to locate them:

“Meter Eaters drink from electric water heaters.”

- **Leaky faucets:** New washers are easy to install. For washerless faucets, buy a kit containing all necessary parts.
- **Water running unnecessarily:** Don’t leave hot water running when you are not using it.
- **Water heater set at 150°F:** Turn down the water heater temperature to 120°F. Some automatic dishwashers require water heated to 140°F. Check the owner’s manual.
- **Uninsulated water pipes:** A great deal of heat is wasted by uninsulated water pipes, particularly on long pipe runs.
- **Dishwasher running but not full:** A dishwasher run once a day uses less hot water than three or four washings by hand throughout the day.

“Meter Eaters were born in a barn.”

- **Doors without weather stripping:** Install weatherstripping around doors to keep out cold drafts in the winter and hot, humid air in the summer.
- **No storm windows or caulking:** If nothing else, install plastic shields to keep out winter’s cold.



- **Uninsulated heat and air conditioning ducts:** Ducts in the attic or crawl spaces are favorite hiding places. Replace worn tape with aluminum mastic tape (not plastic ‘duct’ tape.)
- **Uninsulated walls:** Outside walls are more difficult. You’ll likely need expert help. Insulate walls between garage and attic/living spaces since this is the area of greatest loss.

“Meter Eaters dine in the kitchen.”

- **Dry, cracked gaskets on refrigerators:** Replace any worn or cracked seals.
- **Refrigerator door left open:** Each time the door is opened, air inside a refrigerator or freezer is warmed and the unit must work to cool it again.
- **Freezer covered with inches of frost:** Don’t let frost build up to more than one-half inch.
- **Coils blocked or dusty:** Keep the area behind the unit clear so coils can work efficiently; clean them regularly with a vacuum.
- **An oven peeper:** Sometimes even good cooks like to see what’s happening, but each time the oven opens can cost about 20% of the heat.

“Meter Eaters picnic on HVAC units.”

- **Smothered air conditioners:** Trim your bushes to make sure air can flow freely.
- **Dirty filters:** Clean or replace AC and furnace filters once every three months or sooner if needed.
- **Heating set above 68°F. in winter:** Find the lowest comfortable setting: leave it there. At night, you can reduce it even more.
- **Cooling set below 78°F. in summer:** At 78°F. or higher, you achieve the most economical operation. “ON” uses more electricity than “AUTO.” Don’t install a bigger AC unit than needed.

“Meter Eaters wear down a laundry room.”

- **Washing with hot water and overdrying:** A warm or cold wash with a cold rinse will work just as well as using hot water. Also, get a full load together before using the dryer. Better yet, hang your clothes outside to dry.
- **Dirty lint trap:** Clean the lint trap on your clothes dryer before starting each load.

“Help me out. If you look for them, you’ll find them.

“I’ll talk to you again next month.”



# USE ENERGY WISELY



## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Only 20 percent of homes built before 1980 are properly insulated. You can increase the comfort of your home while reducing heating and cooling needs up to 10 percent by investing in proper insulation and sealing air leaks.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy

## New rebate offered on page 1

If the U.S. Department of Energy is correct, then people should start addressing this issue. Now, ERPPD has found a way to help its electric-heat customers to save heating and cooling costs and to put insulation into their home's attic at the same time.

See the article on Page 1 to find out how you can get a rebate for adding six inches of insulation to your attic.

# Why Public Power

Public Power is your community's partner offering:

- Low rates
- Excellent reliability
- Efficient Service
- Customer responsiveness
- Not-for-profit status
- Focus on community
- Local employment
- Economic development
- Local management
- Commitment to conservation
- Safe operations
- Dedication to the environment
- Local control
- Focus on service, not profits

Find out more at

[www.erppd.com](http://www.erppd.com)

by clicking the link to  
**Our Energy Our Future.**



### 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., 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**