

# THE WIRE

CURRENT NEWS FROM THE ELKHORN RURAL PUBLIC POWER DISTRICT

November 2012

Serving the Elkhorn River Valley since 1940

Volume 21, Number 11

## NPPD Announces Rate Increase for 2013

The board of directors of Nebraska Public Power District (NPPD) has announced the need for a 3.75% average increase in rates to their wholesale and retail customers, effective January 1, 2013. The NPPD board will take action at their November meeting to approve the proposed rate increase. This means that Elkhorn RPPD, as a wholesale customer of NPPD, will pay on average 3.75% more for the electricity we purchase from NPPD, and ultimately deliver to our customers. Power cost, which accounts for over 60% of our overall costs, is the single greatest expense associated with delivering power to our customers. To ensure that costs are distributed equitably to all rate classes, ERPPD has contracted with the Utility Financial Solutions consulting firm to conduct a rate design.

Management and employees continually focus on ways to mitigate rate increases by managing costs whenever possible, without jeopardizing the integrity of the electrical system. The ERPPD board will be reviewing the rate design results and acting on the 2013 rates at their regular December meeting. Additional details will be provided in the January issue of "THE WIRE".



Elkhorn Rural Public Power District  
November 2012

## Irrigation Waiting List Currently Being Revived

As a result of the limitations in Nebraska Public Power District's transmission system in our area that were uncovered during the electricity demand record-shattering summer of 2012, we have been asked to limit the amount of new connected load for 2014-2015.

NPPD has made plans to upgrade some of its existing transmission lines in our area, which are scheduled to be completed by the summer of 2013. These upgrades will allow us to continue with our commitments for 2013, but these commitments will consume most of the added capacity made available by the upgrades.

NPPD has begun the process of constructing a 345,000 volt transmission line from Hoskins to Neligh. They have begun the process of hosting public meetings to accept input from the landowners in the proposed corridor.

The original plan was to have this line completed by 2019, as part of a major transmission line build from Hoskins west through Cherry County and then south to tie in with the transmission grid near the Gerald Gentleman Power Plant at Sutherland. However, given the transmission line constraints experienced in the area this past summer, NPPD is working on accelerating this portion of the project. It is their hope to have the Hoskins to Neligh portion of the line operational by the summer of 2016. This transmission line will have enough capacity to allow ERPPD and other power districts west of highway 81 to take on additional electrical load at that time.

In the meantime, ERPPD is committed to fulfilling contracts signed with irrigators for the 2013 season. Beyond that time, we may need to limit additional irrigation services until the 345,000 volt transmission line is in place.

If you have any questions, please call our office at 1-800-675-2185.



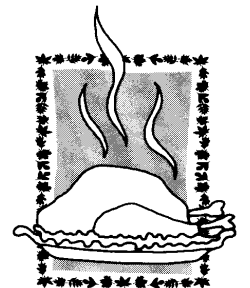
## Elkhorn Rural Public Power District

will be closed  
**Monday, Nov. 12,**  
**for Veterans Day**

and

**Thursday & Friday,**  
**Nov. 22 & Nov. 23,**

**to celebrate the Thanksgiving weekend.**



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## Generator Safety

Portable generators may come in handy during long-term power outages. The growing popularity of portable electric generators has resulted in millions being placed in homes and small businesses across the nation. However, recent studies show that an overwhelming percentage may be installed incorrectly. As part of the "Teach Learn Care" TLC campaign, Safe Electricity urges consumers to understand the proper safety steps that must be taken.

"A qualified vendor or electrical professional should be consulted to determine the best equipment for your situation or needs," advises Mike Ashenfelter, electrical inspector and member of the Safe Electricity advisory team. "A reliable vendor will know existing safety codes and your utility's safety requirements. If installed and operated correctly, use of a standby or portable electric generators poses little danger, but improper installation or use could be deadly."

Properly connecting the generator into the system is a critical step for safe and effective use. A licensed professional should install a permanent, standby electric generator and can help with proper equipment for safely using a portable generator.

Have a qualified electrician install a transfer switch. The transfer switch breaks the path of electricity between the power lines and your main electrical panel. This is the best way to protect you, your neighbors and repair crews from 'back feed.' Back feed occurs when an improperly connected generator begins feeding electricity "back" through the power lines. It is your responsibility to take necessary steps to prevent the injury of anyone near lines, especially crews working to restore power.

"Safety for the operators and users of a generating system in the home and utility crews cannot be over-emphasized," says Ashenfelter.

Some homeowners choose smaller,



portable generators to power essential electrical equipment during outages. Safe Electricity offers these tips for the safe operation and use of portable generators:

- Read and follow all manufacturer operating instructions to properly ground the generator. Be sure you understand them before hooking up the generator.
- Maintain adequate ventilation. Generators emit carbon monoxide. It is against fire code to operate a generator in your home, garage or other enclosed building. Place it in a dry location outdoors
- Never plug a portable electric generator into a wall outlet or connect directly to a home's wiring. This can energize utility power lines and injure you or others working nearby. Electrical back feed can also damage the generator and home electrical equipment.
- Turn off the generator and allow cooling before refueling. Gasoline and its vapors may ignite if they come in contact with hot components or an electrical spark. Store fuel in a properly designed container in a secure location away from the generator or other fuel-burning appliances, such as water heaters. Always have a fully charged, approved fire extinguisher located nearby.
- Protect your appliances. Turn off or disconnect all appliances and lights before you begin operating the portable generator. Once the generator is running, turn your appliances and lights on one at a time to avoid

overloading the unit. Remember, generators are for temporary usage, prioritize your needs.

- Generators pose electrical risks especially when operated in wet conditions. Use a generator only when necessary when the weather creates wet or moist conditions. Protect the generator by operating it under an open, canopy-like structure on a dry surface where water cannot form puddles or drain under it. Always ensure that your hands are dry before touching the generator.
- Keep children and pets away from portable generators at all times. Many generator components are hot enough to burn you during operation.
- Use proper extension cords. Use only safety-tested, shop-type electrical cords designed and rated for heavier, outdoor use to connect appliances. Many generators are equipped with twist-lock connects to reduce the chance of accidental disconnections due to vibrations.
- Shut down the generator properly. Before shutting down a generator, turn off and unplug all appliances and equipment being powered by the generator.
- Remember maintenance between uses. It's important to drain the gasoline from the generator while it is being stored. It's also a good idea to inspect the fuel and oil filters, spark plug, oil level and fuel quality and start the generator on a regular basis before an emergency situation happens.

Safe Electricity suggests that these safety guidelines and basic operating instructions be posted in the home and with the generator.

For more electrical safety tips, click on the SafeElectricity link on our website at [www.erppd.com](http://www.erppd.com).



# ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROGRAMS

## 2012 Energy Efficiency Incentive Program

### Residential

• Cooling System Tune-up	A/C or Heat pump tune-up	\$30
• Dealer Incentive		\$50
• Low Flow Showerheads	Complimentary for electric water heaters	up to \$10/head reimbursed
• Low Interest Loan (NEO)	Loans for residential heat pumps	2.5%
• Attic Insulation	Attic insulation (all-electric homes)	\$0.15/sq. ft. (up to 2,000 sq. ft.)
• Heat Pump (incentive is doubled if the heat pump replaces an air conditioner)		
	14 SEER	\$100
	15 SEER, 12.5EER, 8.5 HSPF	\$300
	16+SEER, 12.5 EER, 8.5 HSPF	\$300
	Ground Source HP-any EER	\$400
	Outdoor HP unit only (14 SEER min)	\$100

### Commercial/Industrial

For commercial and industrial incentive information, contact our Energy Services Representative, Mark Gronau, at 1-800-675-2185. Following is a list of categories that have incentive programs available:


- Commercial HVAC
- HVAC System Optimization
- Custom Process
- Custom Lighting
- Prescriptive Lighting
- Variable Frequency Drives

### Agricultural

- Irrigation Pump Efficiency Program (call Mark Gronau at 1-800-675-2185 for details)

**ENERGYWISE**  
Use less. Spend less. Do more.

IT  
PAY



to make energy-efficient choices

**Financial incentives are available**

to qualified customers that help cover costs related to a variety of energy-efficient upgrades.

- Residential
- Commercial
- Agricultural
- Industrial

Contact us for more information.

**Elkhorn Rural Public Power District**  
**1-800-675-2185**

In partnership with our supplier, Nebraska Public Power District, we deliver energy to you.

**Energy Efficiency**

*Month Tip of the*

Two degrees can make a big difference on your electric bill. Setting your thermostat 2 degrees Fahrenheit higher in summer and lower in the winter results in major energy savings. Investing in a programmable thermostat can save even more—these devices automatically lower and raise your home's temperature. Set it and forget it.

Source: NRECA

# OPERATIONS REPORT

## Close Call: Reminder to “Look Up and Live”

We want to remind anyone who works with tall equipment to please “Look Up and Look Out” for power lines.

There was another close call in our district last month when two workers could have been killed or seriously injured. They are alive today only through the grace of God.

The workers were steadying a grain bin as the crane operator was lifting it to move it into position. No one on the crew had noticed the 7,200 volt three-phase line overhead. As the operator was swinging the bin to place it on the cement pads, the crane boom or the cable contacted the phase wire and the electricity found an easy path to the ground. Fortunately for the workers, the boom also contacted the neutral wire at the same time. Since electricity always seeks the easiest path, and that path to the neutral offered the least resistance, the workers experienced a sensation, but no serious injury. The phase wire, however, was burned nearly in two and the neutral wire was completely burned down.

I shudder to think of the consequences if the boom had not been in contact with the neutral wire and the workers’ bodies would have provided the easiest path to the ground.

I believe that these workers will never forget to “Look Up and Look Out”. I hope with all of my heart that each and every one



*Photo shows neutral wire burned completely down and the phase wire burned nearly in two.*

of you will learn from this incident and keep yourself and your workers out of harm’s way by always checking out the power lines in your work zone.

For your safety and that of your coworkers, please obey the “10-ft rule” whenever working with large equipment. The “10-ft rule” simply states that people and machines must not approach within 10 feet of any high voltage wires.

**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

Jerrell Dolesh  
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. 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**