

# THE WIRE

CURRENT NEWS FROM THE ELKHORN RURAL PUBLIC POWER DISTRICT

April 2014

Serving the Elkhorn River Valley since 1940

Volume 23, Number 4

## Ivy Prater of Elgin Chosen as a “Red Shirt” for the NRECA Washington, DC, Youth Tour

Ivy Prater, daughter of Tracy and Cindy Prater of Elgin, was recently selected to be a “Red Shirt” staff assistant at the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association’s (NRECA’s) Washington, DC, Youth Tour, held each year in June. Ivy is only the second Red Shirt ever chosen from Nebraska. The other Red Shirt from Nebraska was Katelyn Thiele of Clearwater, who was chosen following the 2008 Youth Tour. Katelyn was also a representative from the Elkhorn Rural Public Power District.

Ivy began her journey by representing ERPPD at the Nebraska Rural Electric Association Youth Energy Camp in July of 2011. She was one of three campers that were selected to attend the NRECA Washington, DC, Youth Tour in June of 2012. At the end of the Youth Tour, she was selected to represent Nebraska on the NRECA Youth Leadership Council (YLC) and returned to Washington, DC, in July of 2012 for the Youth Leadership Conference. As part of the YLC, she represented Nebraska at the NRECA annual meeting in New Orleans, LA, in February of 2013.

As a “Red Shirt”, Ivy will serve as a staff assistant to the NRECA tour staff during the 2014 NRECA Youth Tour, held in Washington, DC, in June. Her duties will include greeting state buses upon their arrival to the hotel and giving the kids the rules for the week, and also organizing the Youth Tour office,



*Ivy Prater, third from the left, pictured with JoAnn Emerson, CEO, of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.*

which will include making signs, name badges, and preparing packets for the arrival of each of the 43 state delegations.

We wish to extend our congratulations to Ivy for her accomplishments while representing ERPPD and Nebraska on the Youth Leadership Council.

Remember, all things great start out with a single step, so if you would like to have an opportunity to represent ERPPD on the Washington, DC, Youth Tour, you need to take the first small step of submitting an application to attend the Nebraska Youth Energy Camp. The application is due by April 21 and can be found in “The WIRE” insert in the March issue of the Rural Electric Nebraskan magazine, or by calling our office at 1-800-675-2185.

**Energy Efficiency**  
*Tip of the Month*

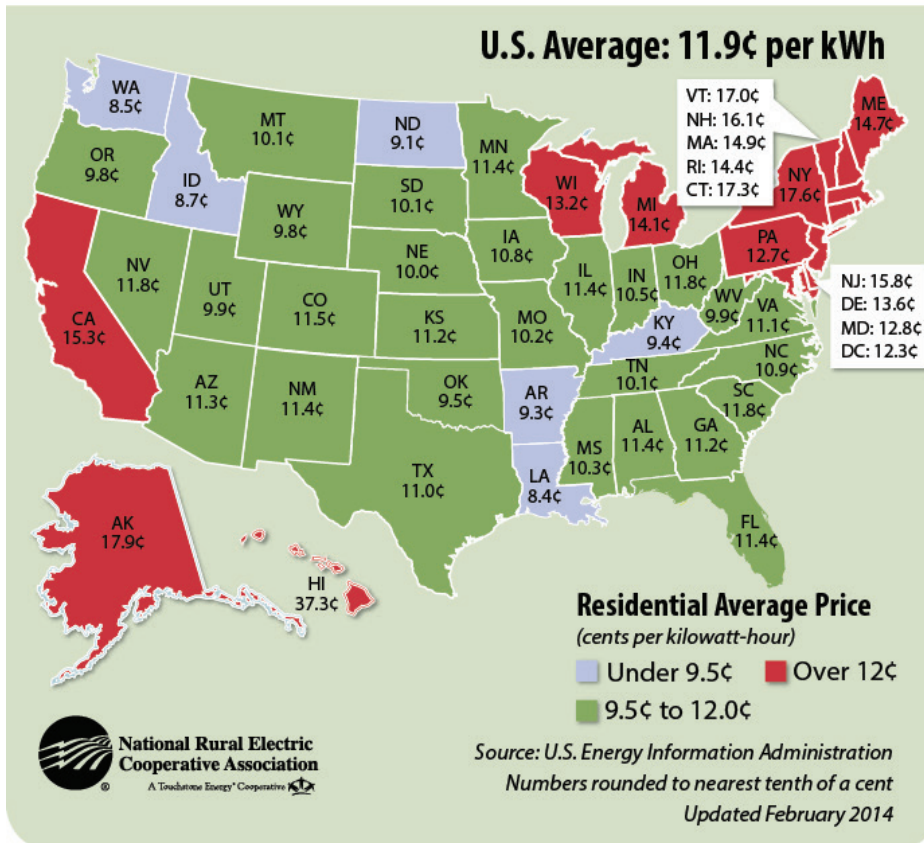
These days, it may be easier to trim your refrigerator’s energy use than it is to trim your waistline. Consider this energy-saving and maintenance regimen to keep your refrigerator in shape. Set the refrigerator temperature above 37 degrees Fahrenheit. Make sure door seals are in place and are snug when closed. And keep outside coils unobstructed and clean; dirty ones could over work the unit’s compressor.

Source: Energy.gov

# ENERGY NEWS

## Average Prices for Residential Electricity

2012 figures, in cents per kWh



## Nebraska #12 On The List of Lowest Rates in the Nation at 10.0¢ per KWH

According to the latest data released by the U.S. Energy Information Administration (see chart at the left), the average price for residential electricity in Nebraska in 2012 was 10.0¢ per kWh. This average comes in as 12th on the list of lowest electrical rates in the United States. Nebraska's rates are lower than all of its bordering states except Wyoming at 9.8¢.

The highest rates in the U.S. are found in Hawaii at 37.3¢, Alaska at 17.9¢, New York at 17.6¢, and Connecticut at 17.3¢.

We are very fortunate in Nebraska to have a combination of factors keeping our rates among the lowest in the nation. These factors include: 100% Public Power (customers are owners), close geographic location to high-quality low-sulfur coal, and a diverse generation mix including coal, nuclear, hydroelectric, natural gas, and wind.

# OPERATIONS NEWS

## Top Stories for April

- The Operations Department typically spends the spring and summer months updating existing utility lines and building new lines in our service area. We are currently finalizing the planning for our summer projects. If you are considering an expansion to an existing service or planning to build a new service, please contact our office at 1-800-675-2185. Any new service or upgrade you might be considering needs to be planned and incorporated into our construction schedule. A word of advice, the sooner you call, the better your chances of getting your service completed in a timely manner. Thank you in advance for your assistance in our planning process.

### Major Projects Scheduled for April:

- Building transmission line to the new Substation 28, Trease Substation, near Orchard
- Rebuilding the Clearwater Substation to convert to higher voltage to increase capacity
- Contractor building the new Trease Substation near Orchard

# ONGOING MAINTENANCE

## S&L To Test Poles

As part of ERPPD's continued commitment to provide the most reliable service possible, S&L Pole Testing, Inc., will inspect about 3,200 distribution poles, many of which were last inspected in 1996 and 1997. The process should begin sometime in May.

ERPPD began testing poles in the mid-1970s and completed the first inspection of the district's 2,500 miles of line in 1995. The program helps find weak links in the distribution system which, after completing any needed maintenance work, has resulted in fewer outages due to faulty poles. ERPPD's present goal is to test enough poles each year to cover the entire district every 15 years.

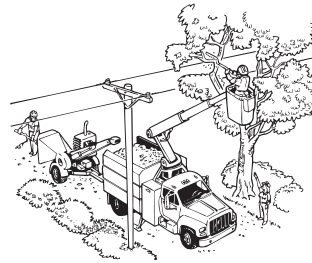
This year, contractors will be testing poles in the following areas: north of Newman Grove, south and east of Meadow Grove, north of Norfolk, and southeast of Norfolk Testing occurs as follows:

1. Check pole's age; test any 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.

Please call 1-800-675-2185 if you have questions.

## Tree Trimming

ERPPD has contracted with Wilson Tree Service to cut or trim trees in the power line rights-of-way in the Tilden-Oakdale area.



Landowners will be contacted before cutting or trimming is done.

There are three main reasons for trimming and cutting trees. The first is safety. Children love to climb trees and sometimes do not look around first to see if the tree

has grown up around the power lines. The power lines carry 7,200 volts or more of electricity and accidental contact would be fatal.

The second reason to trim trees is for reliability of the electrical system. Trees are a good conductor of electricity and whenever a tree branch touches the power lines, electricity travels through the tree into the ground, causing blinks or outages if the contact is enough to open the breakers on the line.

The third reason to trim trees away from the lines is to cut down on line loss. Line loss is electricity that we all pay for and no one benefits from. Trees contacting the lines provides a path to the ground for the electricity.

Please welcome the tree contractor and we appreciate your cooperation in this project.

Please call 1-800-675-2185 if you have any questions.

# SAFETY NEWS

## Help Keep Our Employees Safe From Chemical Exposure

Help our linemen avoid exposure to pesticides, herbicides, and other potentially dangerous chemicals you may use on your crops.

If you use dangerous chemicals in your fields, **PLEASE FLAG THE FIELD ENTRANCE AND INCLUDE THE CHEMICAL NAME AND DATE APPLIED.** Our line workers, meter technicians, or our irrigation control switch radio technicians may need to enter your field to do service work or install load management switches. We request your help for their safety and good health.

## Call Before You Dig!

Are you planning to install a fence, build an outdoor shed, plant a tree, or some other project that requires excavation on or near your property?

If so, call Diggers' Hotline of Nebraska at 811, or call 1-800-331-5666 at least two days before you start. The one-call notification center will contact all of the utilities in your area to make sure that any underground facilities are marked before you begin your work.

When you call Diggers' Hotline of Nebraska, anytime 24-hours a day, seven days a week, an operator will answer and ask for some or all of the following information: name, address, telephone number; type of work being done; city and county; and township, range, section.

The information is entered into a computer and your "locate request" is sent by fax, e-mail, or phone to each utility (including ERPPD) that has underground facilities in the area. Each utility uses a flag of a different color, for example, electrical wires are marked with a red flag.

Diggers' Hotline is a free service to you, and ERPPD's response to locate requests is also free. We want to make it as painless as possible to keep you and your workers safe.

**48 Hours Before You Dig Anything Anywhere**

**Call 811 for Diggers Hotline**

**or visit the website at [ne-diggers.com](http://ne-diggers.com)**

# Right Tree--Right Place

If you are landscaping your backyard, preplanning is the best insurance for your future tree and shrub planting effort. Ensure the oak or maple tree you planted for future generations does not have to be removed by utility tree trimming crews before its benefits are realized. Careful placement of trees and taller shrubs is necessary to avoid interference with overhead and underground electric utility lines.

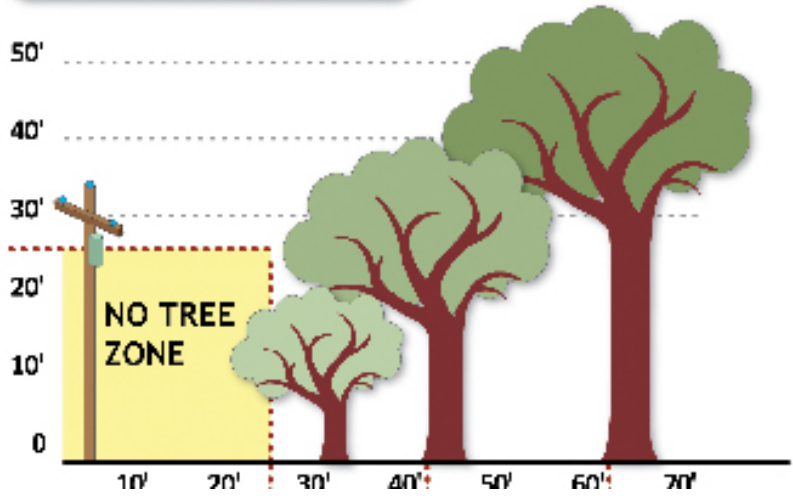
Arbor Day on April 25, the last Friday in April, is a perfect time to teach the younger generation the benefits of tree planting, selection of the proper species for your location, and how to correctly plant a tree and foster its growth. However, one element of the lesson should be to teach youngsters that trees can interfere with overhead electric lines and safety can be compromised when limbs contact the wires. The same lesson can be taught about roots which may be cut, if buried electric lines have to be repaired or replaced.

Trees conduct electricity and can create a safety hazard if limbs grow too close to electric lines. Power outages or momentary interruptions can occur when trees and branches come into contact with overhead lines.

Another concern is the safety risk when children climb trees near power lines. Accidental contact of electric wires with a tree limb or person playing or trimming around the tree could be fatal. Also, trees growing near power lines must be pruned to maintain a safe distance from the wires. This results in increased right-of-way maintenance costs and ultimately rate increases. If you have trees that appear to be growing into power lines, contact us at 1-800-675-2185. Never try to prune them yourself.

To learn more about which trees might work best in your yard, visit [www.arborday.org](http://www.arborday.org), or call ERPPD at 1-800-675-2185.

## Tree Planting Guide



### 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