



THE WIRE



CURRENT NEWS FROM THE ELKHORN RURAL PUBLIC POWER DISTRICT

April 2022

Serving the Elkhorn River Valley since 1940

Volume 30, Number 4

ENGINEER JOINS ELKHORN

Kevin Baker, Professional Engineer, joined the Elkhorn Rural Public Power District staff on February 11, 2022.

Looking at future staffing needs, it was decided that an engineer dedicated to optimizing the ERPPD system would be a good investment for our customers.

There are many changes coming with renewable energy, batteries, electric vehicles, and how customers will be utilizing the distribution system.

Having an engineer on staff will give us flexibility and the ability to be proactive with these changes.

Kevin comes to us from Socorro, New Mexico and the National Radio Astronomy Observatory - Very Large Array - see below,

where, for the last five years, he managed the electrical infrastructure for the radio antenna array as well as for the super computer that analyzes all the data collected from the antennas.

The electrical infrastructure included medium and low voltage distribution systems underground facilities. He also managed upgrades and planning for future capacity for the system.

Prior to the Very Large Array, Kevin's experience was working at General Dynamics Electric Boat in Connecticut. He worked on aft end propulsion distribution electrical grids for nuclear submarines.

There, he followed in his grandfather's footsteps. Kevin's grandfather worked on the first nuclear



submarine, the USS Nautilus.

Kevin's father is also an engineer, subcontracting for the Naval Submarine Program.

Kevin has a Master's in Electrical Engineering from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and has received his PE license for both Nebraska and New Mexico

Kevin and his wife, Allison, are excited to call Northeast Nebraska home with their cat, Maestro, and their many fish (10-12 tanks).



The Very Large Array, one of the world's premier astronomical radio observatories, consists of 27 radio antennas in a Y-shaped configuration on the Plains of San Agustin fifty miles west of Socorro, New Mexico. Each antenna is 25 meters (82 feet) in diameter. The data from the antennas is combined electronically to give the resolution of an antenna 36 km (22 miles) across, with the equivalent sensitivity of a dish 130 meters (422 feet) in diameter. Source: <http://www.vla.nrao.edu/>

Cultivate safety

Remember to look up and look out for overhead power lines this planting season.



MARCH STORM

A weather event in March left approximately 4,000 customers without power for various durations over the weekend.

March's storm was unique in the way the ice coated the line and the wind was blowing. In a video posted to ERPPD's Facebook page it shows 69 kV twisted pair conductor galloping destructively, which is basically unheard of. The twisted pair conductor is designed to keep the movement of the wire to a minimum to decrease damage, blinks and outages. That was not the case during the March weather event.

You can see from the pictures some of the damage from the galloping lines.

These pictures and information were posted to Facebook to help with understanding the magnitude of the storm and what crews were dealing with.

During the storm, the difficult decision to have crews come in while

customers were out of power was based on the facts that the wind had not died down and fixes that were being made were not holding. Also, more severe damage to the line and equipment could have resulted from having the lines energized with those conditions. The wind was supposed to die down some in the morning and the sun would be out to get the ice off the line. It was also a concern that crews would be able to safely fix line during the night with the wind, ice and low visibility.

We don't like to have our customers without power and work to the best of our ability to make sure that doesn't happen very often.

We so appreciate your patience and willingness to work with us during storm outages.

Also, thank you for the well wishes, prayers, thoughts and thank yous that we received during and after the event!



Pictured above – transformer bracket broken and transformer hanging by the jumper. Pictured below left to right - 69 kV switch opened and arcing due to the destructive galloping of the line (picture from video taken by Keith Heitoff); broken cross arm and insulator has been shaken off the pole.



CAPITOL VISIT

It is a little quieter at the capitol due to disruptions caused by the COVID pandemic, but things are opening back up and the State's business continues.

It is important for ERPPD to be active on the political scene to help us achieve our mission of safe, reliable cost effective electricity for all our customers.

Legislation on the state and federal level can affect anyone of those pieces of our mission and we want to be an advocate for our customers.

On February 23rd, three board members and two staff were able to go to the Capitol. We were able to attend some of the floor debate and were announced as guests of Senator Flood.

We were also able to meet with Senator Flood, Moser, Hughes and Gragert to address Public Power issues and the legislative session.

It was a very successful trip for meeting and building relationships with legislators so that we can be a resource for them.



Clockwise from upper right: Tim Means, director and Senator Hughes, District 44; Rod Zohner, director and Senator Moser, District 22; Senator Gragert, District 40, speaks with directors about legislation in the Capitol Rotunda; Front row left to right: Tom Rudloff, general manager; Mark Miller, director; Back row left to right: Tim Means; Rod Zohner and Jennifer Adams, HR Specialist/Corporate Communicator.



Digging into an Outdoor Project?

Before you dig, dial 811 or visit www.ne1call.com to protect underground utilities. Digging without knowing what is below can cause harm to people, pipelines and underground facilities. Contact 811 first and help keep our community safe.

Nebraska 811

Know what's below.
811 before you dig.

PLANNING A CHANGE - CALL US

NEEDING A NEW OR EXPANDED ELECTRICAL SERVICE?

If you are building a new structure, adding load or needing a different type of service, please give us a call before you start.

There are many variables to consider with a new or expanding service:

- * Will you need a new service or will an existing service be adequate?
- * Will the existing service size need to be changed?
- * What size service will you need?
- * If it is an existing service and

you are changing the use or expanding the load, what rate class is the existing service and will it need to be changed?

- * What budget constraints need to be considered?
- * What materials will be needed for both sides of the meter and how long will it take to get them?

Currently, the last question may be the most important one.

By now you have probably heard about the supply chain issues for pretty much everything.

Materials for building services are no different. We are seeing

significant lead times for materials and we are trying to stay ahead of it by planning and estimating the amount of materials we will need. So the earlier you can let us know about a project the better off you will be and the better prepared we will be to help you with your project.

Before starting that new shed, or looking at expanding your irrigation or grain bin service, give us a call at 402-675-2185 and let us help you with your electrical needs.



ERPPD LINEMEN

| Name | Position | YOS |
|-------------------|---------------------------|-----|
| Marc Ahlers | SCADA Field Tech | 24 |
| Dan Belt | BC General Foreman | 32 |
| Grady Bellingtier | Appr. Lineman | 2 |
| Chris Bentley | Appr. Lineman | 2 |
| Patrick Hintz | Staking Eng. Tech | 19 |
| Jeremy Holecek | Journeyman Lineman | 20 |
| Jeff Kerkman | Neligh Gen. Foreman | 32 |
| Kyle Kester | Journeyman Lineman | 13 |
| Ryan Kittelson | Safety Dir./Jrny. Lineman | 25 |
| Todd Knutson | Operations Manager | 27 |
| Tyler Lamoree | App. Lineman | 1 |
| Paul Lichty | Journeyman Lineman | 29 |
| Jason Lyon | Journeyman Lineman | 15 |
| Blake Papik | Apprentice Lineman | 3 |
| John Paul | Meter Tech | 16 |
| Eric Scranton | Foreman | 21 |
| Dominic Smedra | Journeyman Lineman | 20 |
| Andy Starman | Staking Meter Assistant | 12 |
| Jared Suckstorf | Journeyman Lineman | 20 |
| Chris Tillotson | Journeyman Lineman | 24 |
| Jim Wennekamp | Foreman | 27 |
| Travis Wiebelhaus | Foreman | 21 |

LINWORKER APPRECIATION DAY

We thank lineworkers for their courage and commitment to powering our community.

On April 11, Lineworker Appreciation Day, ERPPD would like to recognize all our lineworkers and what they do for the district and for keeping the lights on. ERPPD lineworkers have more than 383 years of combined service and experience. #thankalinerworker