

# THE WIRE

CURRENT NEWS FROM THE ELKHORN RURAL PUBLIC POWER DISTRICT

December 2015

Serving the Elkhorn River Valley since 1940

Volume 24, Number 12

## ERPPD's CHRISTMAS GIFT TO YOU!

### No Rate Increase

Good news! There will be no rate increase for customers in 2016! This is the third consecutive year without a rate increase.

There was an overall transmission increase from NPPD of 5.7%, that is about 10% of Elkhorn's total power bill, so Elkhorn had an increase of .60%. In the last three years NPPD has had minimal rate increases and

most have been transmission related. Transmission is the cost of getting the power to the customer.

Part of the reason there was no rate increase this year was because the board signed the new wholesale power agreement - see the Wholesale Contract Article below. Another reason was other general efficiencies in processes and service that keep costs down and allowed the cost to be



absorbed in the budget.

Elkhorn continues to provide cost effective electricity for all our customers!

## WHOLESALE CONTRACT

After extensive discussion and weighing of the information, the Elkhorn board of directors have signed a long term wholesale power contract with the Nebraska Electric Generation & Transmission Association and in turn with NPPD.

There are many thoughtful reasons for this. Here are just a few:

1) NPPD is a stable and reliable partner. They have consistently been below the average on costs. According to CFC power costs, NPPD has rated in the 25 percentile most years. That means that 75% of the 812 systems that CFC tracks have costs above NPPD.

2) NPPD has a good energy mix, which like an investment portfolio reduces risks if one sector is effected. They also have 42% non-carbon emitting energy generation, which will help them comply with government regulations. Their agreement with the Monolith project will bring the non-carbon

emitting generation mix to 46%. In the past, NPPD has adapted to federal regulations and have applied anti-pollution devices to stay ahead of regulations. They have proven to be good environmental stewards.

3) Like ERPPD, NPPD is focused on stakeholders not shareholders. This leads to decisions that focus on the interests of taking care of the customer, not based on making a profit. ERPPD customers will benefit from a long term relationship with a non profit company with the infrastructure in place to provide for our future electrical load.

4) We are able to share information and resources to the benefit of our customers. In the past NPPD has assisted ERPPD with labor, equipment, and materials, during regular operations and emergencies. NPPD also understands the unique needs of Nebraska customers; less customer density

and irrigation load, for example. That gives ERPPD customers an advantage as NPPD goes to the market for power, keeping costs down.

5) The new contract has performance standards that send a strong message to NPPD to hold costs down and be accountable to its customers. Very few power contracts have performance standards.

6) There may be "deals to be had" on the short-term market, but they come with a lot of risk and uncertainty. Right now there is a glut of supply in the market which is keeping prices down. That will swing the other way with shifts in the commodity prices, such as natural gas, and suppliers closing plants or making other adjustments to comply with governmental regulations.

NPPD has been a reliable and cost effective partner with Elkhorn for many years and we look forward to that continuing well into the future.

# INDUSTRY NEWS

**WOTUS Shelved for the Moment** | Electric cooperatives are “encouraged” by a 2-1 decision from the Sixth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals that temporarily blocks the controversial Waters of the United States (WOTUS) rule—authored by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers—from taking effect. The court held that states, utilities and other groups had shown “a substantial possibility of success” in contesting the regulation, which redefines government control over bodies of water. The nationwide stay will remain in effect until the appeals court decides whether it has jurisdiction over the challenge. In August, a federal district court in North Dakota issued a WOTUS stay that applied to 13 Midwest states. Under WOTUS, ditches, tributaries and even features on seemingly dry land could be affected based on the “ordinary high water mark” and historical data, such as old maps and aerial photographs, rather than current conditions. The end result—more permits, more uncertainty, and more delays for electric cooperatives to build and maintain power lines that cross or are near a body of water. *Source CFC*

## EMPLOYEE FIELD TRIP

Do you remember going on school field trips? It was always very exciting to pack your lunch and ride the bus to an exciting new location and learn about new things. It also brings events or processes to life - remember going to the state capital and watching the legislators debate a topic? That was much better than being in the classroom trying to remember names and dates.

Recently two Customer Service Representatives, Joyceln Vogel and Stacie Young, were able to go on a “field trip” to look at substations, meters, fuses and breakers, and other equipment to learn more about ERPPD’s system and better serve our customers.



Joyceln commented that it was very interesting to actually see the way the lines and substations work. “We hear about these things every

day, but until you see what they are talking about it is just a concept.”

In particular she could now understand why it is important to get information on how an outage occurred when she answers the phone. Did the lights blink a couple of times or just go out? If they blinked how long were they off? That information has to do with the OCR which act like breakers when something like an animal or tree comes in contact with the line. If the line is cleared then the system returns to normal after a couple of “blinks”. If the line is not cleared then the OCR opens the circuit to prevent further damage to the line or surges to your home.

Joyceln also enjoyed getting to know the service area and seeing



*Above - Substation equipment*

the houses and businesses of the customers that she deals with on the phone, but may have never met.

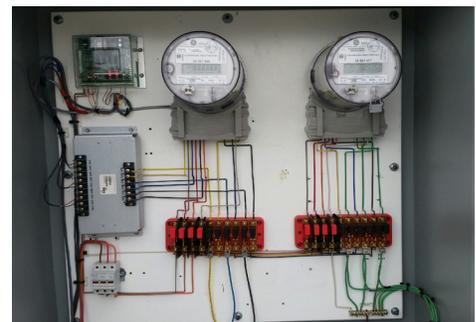


Stacie also enjoyed seeing the businesses that Elkhorn serves. She writes contracts for new services and got to see what those

services actually looked like.

Stacie also noticed the changes from substations - ERPPD’s newest one has a lot more technology involved than some of the older substations.

*Below - Metering equipment*



# SAFETY NEWS

## Winter Weather Preparedness

“Oh the weather outside is frightful. . .” We here at ERPPD would like to help you make sure that you are prepared for winter weather. ERPPD staff are trained on how to be prepared for winter weather, storms and emergencies; and they are good tips for everyone to have, because preparing for incidents before they happen, goes a long way in keeping everyone safe and from minor incidents turning into major emergencies.



First, visit [erppd.com](http://erppd.com) and click on the Safety tab at the top and then the Safety Planning link. There you will find links to excellent sources for winter weather preparedness.

Next, get prepared at home. If there is a winter storm that creates outages, the major issues to be addressed are keeping warm and having enough food and water to sustain you for a period of time. Heating alternatives could include fireplaces or heating stoves. Generators that could power space heaters would also be an alternative. Otherwise, going to a designated community shelter to stay warm will be an option.

For food preparedness, plan for three days. You will need approximately one gallon of drinking water per person per day. You will also need non perishable, easy to prepare foods. Crackers, granola bars, and cereal are good options.

Other items to plan for are any medications, hygiene items, first aid kit, flashlight and battery powered radio. Emergency contact information is also good to have on hand especially if your only address book is in your phone or on the computer. Also having a shovel and sand, salt or non clumping kitty litter available to provide traction on slick surfaces.

If there is a winter storm please, report any outages to Elkhorn at (402) 675-2185 or to the after hours number (800) 675-2185. Be prepared and stay safe this winter.

**Safe Travels:** It is also good to be prepared while traveling during the winter months. Below is a diagram of the mobile ready kit for your car. If you are traveling and get caught in inclement weather, find shelter as soon as possible. If there are downed power lines, stay clear of them and report to local authorities or to ERPPD if you are traveling close to home.



**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.

### Fun Fact:

A single snowstorm can drop 39 million tons of snow, carrying the energy equivalent to 120 atom bombs!

source: *almanac.com*

# ERPPD CHRISTMAS WISHES!

**E**very year

**R**ound this time

**P**eople gather celebrating the season,

**P**leased with their warmth, goodies and lights.

**D**elivery of your electrical service is our delight!

**Merry Christmas**

**&**

**Happy New Year**

from all of us here at

**Elkhorn Rural**

**Public Power District**



Jennifer Adams

♣ Marc Ahlers ♣

Dan Belt

♣ Galen Beckman ♣

Konnie Beutler ♣ Ken Capler

Rick Cherington ♣ Rich Egmann

Garland Goracke ♣ Mark Gronau

Patrick Hinz ♣ Jeremy Holecek

Dave Hrabanek ♣ Bill Hughes ♣ Jeff Kerkman

Kyle Kester ♣ Ryan Kittelson ♣ Todd Knutson

Paul Lichty ♣ Jason Lyon ♣ Dave Meyer

John Paul ♣ Steve Petersen ♣ Jim Ridder

Dan Schrage ♣ Teresa Schwarzing ♣ Eric Scranton

Bill Seifert ♣ Dominic Smedra ♣ Andy Starman

Brian Sackstorf ♣ Jared Sackstorf ♣ Carmen Thelen

Chris Tillotson ♣ Joycehn Vogel ♣ Jim Wennekamp

Travis Wiebelhaus ♣ Stacie Young ♣ Kevin Zohner

♣ Tom ♣

Rudloff

Jerrell Dolesh ♣ Dave Hoefler

Dennis Kuchar ♣ Larry Lindahl

Tim Means ♣ Mark Miller

Joe Thiele ♣ Greg Weidner

Rodney Zohner

## “Let Every Day Be Christmas”

Christmas is forever, not for just one day,  
for loving, sharing, giving, are not to put away  
like bells and lights and tinsel, in some box upon a shelf.  
The good you do for others is good you do yourself.

Peace on Earth, good will to men,  
kind thoughts and words of cheer,  
are things we should use often  
and not just once a year.

Remember too the Christ-child, grew up to be a man;  
to hide him in a cradle, is not our dear Lord's plan.  
So keep the Christmas spirit, share it with others far and near,  
from week to week and month to month, throughout the entire year!

by Norman Wesley Brooks  
U.S. Design Engineer (1923–2002)

**Elkhorn Rural  
Public Power  
District**

offices will be closed  
Christmas Day  
**Friday, Dec. 25,**  
and New Year's Day  
**Friday, January 1**