



THE WIRE



CURRENT NEWS FROM THE ELKHORN RURAL PUBLIC POWER DISTRICT

December 2021

Serving the Elkhorn River Valley since 1940

Volume 30, Number 12

WOULD YOU BELIEVE A RATE DECREASE?

It is the season of wonder and making wishes come true. Asking Santa for the perfect Christmas gift and



waiting for it to arrive under the Christmas

tree has been a long standing tradition for this time of year.

You might think that you are too old to believe in Santa Claus but how about a rate decrease?

For the last nine years, we have been able to hold rates steady with no overall rate increases for our customers. We are pretty proud of that track record.

This year under your Christmas Tree there will be a 4% rate decrease for 2022.

You read that right - a 4% decrease in overall electrical rates. As noted in past articles, individual bills will vary based on rate class and usage patterns.

In a period of increases in everything from food to fuel and health care to building costs, ERPPD is looking



at a decrease. Financial projection analysis showed that a rate decrease would be sustainable over time which is

very important to us, while still keeping reliability high. We currently have

99.98% reliability.

Think this is too good to be true?

Think again! ERPPD has done many things to set us up for success. Some of these include:

-sticking to our core mission of providing safe, reliable, cost effective electricity

- having dedicated, engaged and educated leadership on our Board of Directors developing policies and overseeing the strategic objectives of the organization

- the Board of Directors making good long-term financial decisions

- paying down and restructuring debt

- having continued growth in the service territory

- evolving the rate structure by utilizing technology and data to create fair and equitable rates that are less weather dependant

- having long-term power supply strategies have led to stable power costs

- no longer installing secondary underground to pivots, allowing us to focus on our mission and growth of the system

- having well trained employees who work safely and efficiently

- pushing decision making to front-line employees to cut through the “red tape” and increase efficiency and cost-savings



- investing in technologies that allow employees to work smarter, saving time and money

- securing grants (the last one being \$1.76 million) to pay for infrastructure (November 2021 Wire)

- in years past, accelerating building infrastructure when material costs were low.

You are also an important part in helping to keep rates cost-effective. Your willingness to work with us through load control, granting right-of ways and outage management, as well as timely payments, helps us to control costs. Your trust in us that we are working in your best interest also allows us the flexibility to make needed changes for everyone’s benefit.

Perhaps this rate decrease will reignite your belief in Santa, because sometimes wishes can come true.



Elkhorn Rural Public Power District
will be closed
Friday, December 24,
Christmas Eve Day
and
Friday, December 31,
New Year’s Eve Day

IRRIGATION UPDATE AND OPPORTUNITY FOR INPUT

The front page article is about the good news that we are able to have a 4% overall rate decrease and the many ways that the board and staff are working to keep costs in check, while still keeping reliability high.

At the November board meeting the Board of Directors approved the rate design from our rate consultant. This includes a change in the way the irrigation rates will be calculated.

In addition, we continue to look for ways to manage costs through strategies with the load control program.

There will be irrigation meetings 10 - 11 a.m., **January 19** at the Farmers Pride Cooperative in Battle Creek and 10-11 a.m., **January 20**, at the American Legion in Clearwater to discuss the rate design changes and load control program, get your input and answer any questions you may have.

Your input into this program is valuable to us because, as public power, we are working for you. As we manage costs through our load control program, that value is returned to you with stable rates and reliability.



STAY TOASTY AND WARM WHILE

TURNING DOWN THE THERMOSTAT



When the winter winds blow, it is tempting to adjust the thermostat up a few degrees to stay toasty and warm. However, turning to other (FREE!) ways to help keep you warm could help reduce your energy bills.



Each degree you reduce your thermostat saves 1% on your heating bill. No one home during the day? Adjust your thermostat 7 to 10 degrees from its normal setting to save up to 10% annually.

Source: Department of Energy

Here are ways to help you stay warm when it is cold outside:



Bundle up by wearing layers and heavy socks

Get your body moving and stay active

Use blankets while sitting still

Caulk windows and door frames that leak air



Replace or update old or ineffective door seals



Make sure your home's heating system is working properly

Keep your furnace clean and change the filter monthly



Let the sun shine in during the day and close window coverings at night



Reduce how long you use ventilation fans (they transfer warm air outside)



Keep a fireplace damper closed when not in use

Humidify your home to make the air feel warmer



If you use a portable space heater, use it safely and for short amounts of time. Using one for extended periods can cause your energy bill to spike since it draws a lot of power.

Learn more at:



"CHANGING" COMMUNITIES



As the third year for the Operation Round Up Program and the ERPPD Community

Development Fund comes to a close, it is good to reflect on how the "change" that is being given by our generous customers is helping to change the lives and communities in our service territory.

See the box to the right for all the numbers.

Numbers don't tell the whole story. Each organization that has received funds from the Fund has been able to impact the lives of people in the community.

One recent example of how the Fund has impacted the community comes from a parent whose daughter is part of the S.M.I.L.E. program. The parent writes, "Thank you for supporting S.M.I.L.E. Your support has helped our daughter's health, independence, and her (and our) quality of life. Seeing the horse, Freddy and Haley (her primary helper) and the lessons are a hopeful spot in our week."

Over the past three years, many projects for non-profit organizations have been funded. See below for the

Community Development Fund Requests and Awards (November 2021)

Organization	Project	Location	Amount Awarded
Battle Creek School TeamMates	T-Shirts	Battle Creek	\$500.00
Lambrecht Cemetary Association	Restore Historical Headstones	Foster/Pierce	\$1,000.00
City of Madison	Youth Recreation Programs	Madison	\$1,000.00
Oakdale Cemetary Auxillary	Beautification and Tree Maintenance in Oakdale Cemetery	Oakdale	\$1,000.00
S.M.I.L.E.	Scholarships and Horses	Madison	\$1,000.00
St. Vincent de Paul	Assit Individuals with Basic Life Needs	Norfolk	\$1,000.00
Summerland TeamMates	Background Checks	Ewing	\$500.00
	TOTAL		\$6,000.00

FIRST Quarter

**Application Deadline
January 24, 2022**

**Board Meeting Date,
February 7, 2022**



Fund trustees are pictured from left to right, Sarah Ahlers, chair, Subdivision III; Eldon Peters, vice-chair, Subdivision I; Kory Lingenfelter, Secretary/treasurer, Suidivision II; Larry Petersen, at-large and Anne Parks, at-large.

last quarter 2021 funded projects.

Listed here just a few of the total projects that have been funded:

*Youth summer programs for libraries and city recreation programs

*Technology and programs to enhance children's exposure to science and technology through school and library programs

*Safety equipment and personal protective equipment for volunteer fire departments

*First aid equipment for police units that are usually first on the scene of accidents

*Background checks for TeamMates mentor programs

*Community events and festivals so that entertainment can be free or at a greatly reduced amount

*Christmas presents for children
*Preservation of historical artifacts and documents

*Support for a new fire hall

*Cemetery upgrades and upkeep

*Upgrade for canoe/kayak trailer

for boy scout troop

The Fund is able to help many organizations fund projects and help individuals outside of the organization's daily operations.

Information, guidelines and an online application can be found on the ERPPD website.

The Fund is managed by a board of trustees made up of 5 members - one from each of ERPPD's three subdivisions and two at-large members. The trustees are pictured above.

If you have questions or would like an application emailed to you, contact Jennifer at (402) 675-2185.

BY THE NUMBERS:

\$124,720.40 - Total funds collected since the beginning of the program to September 2021.

\$103,927.46 - Total funds distributed from August 2018 to November 1, 2021.

66 - total number of organizations helped

128 - total number of project applications submitted for funding

70 - percentage of customers that round up

50 - average number of cents per service that is rounded up

Priceless - the gratitude of the organizations and people helped through the Operation Round Up program. Thank you!

HOLIDAY ENERGY SAVINGS

Whether you've already decked your halls or you're just getting started, there's still time to incorporate energy savings into your holiday décor planning.



If you haven't strung your twinkle lights, be sure to use LED light strands. LEDs consume far less energy than incandescent lights and they can last 40 holiday seasons. They're also safer because they're made with epoxy lenses, not glass, making them more resistant to breaking—and they're cool to the touch, so no burnt fingers!

If you missed Santa's memo about energy-saving LEDs and your holiday lights are already up, you can still save on lighting costs. All you need is a programmable light timer. Most models cost between \$10 to \$25 and can be purchased through online retailers like Amazon or at big box stores like Menard's or Wal-Mart. With a light timer, you can easily program when you want your holiday lights turned on and off, which will save you time, money and energy. If you're using a timer for exterior lighting, make sure

it's weatherproof and intended for outdoor use.

If Clark Griswold's décor style is a bit much for your taste, consider a more natural approach.

Many Christmas tree farms give away greenery clippings from recently trimmed trees. With a little twine, extra ornaments and sparkly ribbon, you can create beautiful garlands and wreaths to hang over

your front door or windows.

To add extra twinkle at night, you can install solar-powered spotlights to illuminate your new (essentially free!) greenery. Solar spotlights can vary in price, but you should be able to purchase a quality set of four for about \$30—and because they run on solar energy from the sun, there's



no additional cost to your energy bill.

Regardless of how you decorate your home for the holidays, there are plenty of ways to save energy throughout the season. Visit www.erppd.com for additional energy-saving tips.

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Heading out of town for the holiday season?

Remember to unplug electronics that draw a phantom energy load. Some gadgets like TVs, phone chargers, gaming consoles and toothbrush chargers use energy when plugged into an outlet—even when they're not in use.

