

THE WIRE

CURRENT NEWS FROM THE ELKHORN RURAL PUBLIC POWER DISTRICT

January 2015

Serving the Elkhorn River Valley since 1940

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Dylan Widger of Elgin on National Youth Leadership Council

Dylan Widger of Elgin addressed the annual meeting of the Nebraska Rural Electric Association (NREA) which was held in Kearney in December. Dylan is the chosen National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) Youth Leadership Council representative from Nebraska.

In 2013, Dylan applied and was selected by Elkhorn Rural Public Power District (ERPPD) to represent the district at the NREA's Youth Energy Camp, held each year at the Nebraska 4-H Camp in the Halsey National Forest. Following the conclusion of the camp, Dylan again applied to ERPPD and was selected to attend the 2014 NRECA Youth Tour of Washington, DC, in June.

More than 1,500 students participated in the Youth Tour. Dylan was selected to represent Nebraska on the NRECA National Youth Leadership Council. Members of the council will act as ambassadors for the nearly 10,000 rural electric system directors and managers attending the NRECA Annual Meeting in Orlando, Florida, in February.

Dylan is the son of Marty and Lori Widger of Elgin, and is a junior at Elgin Public Schools. Congratulations Dylan, we are proud of you and your accomplishments. You are representing Elkhorn RPPD and the rest of Nebraska very well. Keep up the good work.



No Rate Increase for 2015!

Elkhorn Rural Public Power District will not increase electric rates for its customers in 2015. This is the second year in a row with no rate increases.

The ERPPD board made its decision in November to keep the rates the same for 2015. The decision was made based on the results of a Cost of Service study. The study looks at the revenue needed to safely and reliably distribute electricity to our customers in the most cost-effective manner.

ERPPD is a public power district, and as such is a not-for-profit business that operates at cost. There are several factors that make up a rate, including the wholesale cost of the electricity, operations and maintenance costs, administrative costs, etc.

Your publicly-elected board of directors is your watchdog on the expenses that are within their control, which is under 30% of all expenses. Wholesale power costs, which are out of their hands, make up over 70% of the total expenses. The directors make sure that costs are managed in such a way to keep the cost of electricity reasonable and cost-effective.

You can learn more about public power on the internet by navigating to our website, www.erppd.com, and clicking on the Working for Nebraska.org link. There you will find articles and videos on the benefits of public power, including Affordability, Local Control, Reliability, and New Technology.

Public Power Fact: Did You Know?

Public power was conceived in the 1930s by the late George Norris, United States Senator from Nebraska, who believed that electricity is the right of the people.

Change in Billing Procedure for Pasture Pump Services

The Elkhorn Rural Public Power District board of directors recently authorized monthly billing for pasture pump services, beginning in January of 2015.

In the past, the customer charge for the entire year was collected in January, and then the customer was billed at the end of the year for any electricity used during the year.

Starting in 2015, pasture pump services will have the same monthly billing structure as all other single-phase services. The monthly bill will include the monthly customer charge plus the electricity used during the month. All pasture pump meters are read automatically from the office, and the monthly bills will be included with a customer's other bills.

Customers may pay the bill monthly, or if it is more convenient, customers can sign up for automatic bank withdrawal (ACH) for the monthly bill, or they can make an advance payment on the account, which will be held as a credit and applied to the account as necessary. Either way, customers will receive a monthly statement to check on account balances throughout the year.

By receiving a monthly statement, operators can monitor the usage on pasture pumps for high consumption on a monthly basis rather than waiting until the end of the year.

If you have any questions, please call our office at 800-675-2185, and one of the Customer Service Representatives will be happy to assist you.

Major Construction Projects Budgeted for 2015

Following are the major construction projects planned for 2015. These projects are part of our 5-year system improvement plan, and are included in the 2015 budget, which was approved in December of 2014:

- Upgrade underground 7,200-volt distribution wire in Woodland Park
- Construct 16 miles of three-phase distribution line
- Construct 2 miles of transmission line
- Construct future irrigation projects
- Move distribution lines as necessary for NPPD's Hoskins to Neligh 345,000-volt transmission line project and its associated 115,000-volt lines.

Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month

They're out of sight, but don't forget about your air ducts. Taking care of them can save money and energy. Check ducts for air leaks. Take care of minor sealing jobs with heat-approved tape, especially in attics and in vented crawl spaces. Call the pros for major ductwork repairs.

ERPPD General Manager Thomas Rudloff Inducted Into Northeast Community College "Hall of Success"

ERPPD General Manager Thomas Rudloff was honored by the Northeast Community College board of governors as the recipient of the Hall of Success award. The award is given to NECC graduates who have achieved significant professional success, exhibited exemplary citizenship qualities and who have made significant contributions to their communities and/or community affairs.

Tom earned a degree in electrical residential and commercial wiring from NECC prior to receiving his master's in business administration. He started his electrical career at Creighton Electric and then went to work for North Central Public Power District as a lineman. He worked his way up the ladder to become the Operations Manager at North Central PPD. He was then hired as the General Manager of Elkhorn Rural Public Power District in 2009.

Tom said that the education he received at NECC opened doors of opportunity for him and when he decided to return to college to further his education, he turned to NECC because of their reputation for meeting the needs of non-traditional students.

Congratulations, Tom, on your Hall of Success award from NECC.



General Manager Thomas Rudloff



November accident scene at the intersection of South First Street and Sherwood Road.

Major Outage Caused By Vehicle Accident

On Saturday, November 15, a driver lost control of his vehicle on icy roads and struck and broke a pole at the intersection of First Street and Sherwood Road. The pole was a 34,500-volt transmission line pole with connections that fed circuits to southeast Norfolk for Nebraska Public Power District and also southwest of Norfolk to two substations owned by Elkhorn Rural Public Power District that serve customers around Madison and customers south and east of Battle Creek.

The accident knocked out power to over 1,100 ERPPD customers and over 600 NPPD customers for about 3 hours before crews from ERPPD and NPPD were able to backfeed around the damaged transmission line and restore power.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind everyone to stay away from downed wires. There were no serious injuries resulting from this accident, but it could have been very serious if anyone would have touched any of the 34,500-volt power lines that were on the ground. It is impossible without the proper equipment to determine if the downed wires are still energized, so please stay away if you find yourself in this situation. Also, if you are in the vehicle, stay there until the utility line workers have de-energized the line.

We value you as a customer and want to keep you safe.

ERPPD, SCPPD to present safety demonstrations at Farm Show on Jan 14-15, 2015

Visit the Nebraska Farm and Equipment Show on January 14-15 at Northeast Community College.

Elkhorn Rural and Stanton County Public Power Districts will be teaming up to present several high-voltage safety demonstrations, which deal with the hazards of overhead power lines.

The demonstrations are scheduled throughout the two days of the show. They are real eye-openers, even for the most experienced electrical workers.

The portable model, which is owned by five public power districts in northeast Nebraska, is built on a flatbed trailer, using actual poles, transformers, and electrical equipment. The model uses an actual pole-mount transformer connected in reverse to change 240 volts to 7,200 volts for the demonstrations.

For more information on scheduling high-voltage safety demonstrations in your



High voltage safety demonstration.

community, contact Wayne McCormick, Safety Director at Elkhorn Rural Public Power District, by phone at 800-675-2185, or by email at wmccormick@erppd.com.

Electric Reliability is of Utmost Importance

Every time you flip the switch in your living room, you expect the lights to turn on – just like they have nearly every other time. You also expect your house to stay warm in the winter and cool in the summer. That’s all possible because of reliable electricity. Elkhorn Rural Public Power District has maintained reliable electric service 99.99% of the time, which is calculated by dividing the total outage hours (# of customers affected times outage time) by the total number of customer hours (total # of customers times hours in a year).

Reliable electric service can be impacted by anything from the type of generation resource used to severe weather to government regulation. Nebraska incorporates a diverse portfolio of coal, nuclear, natural gas, hydroelectric, and renewable energy resources to protect against this variability. When fuel costs increase from one resource other resources can be used. Likewise, if severe weather damages one power plant or transmission line, redundancies are built into the system to ensure electric service remains while repairs are made.

Reliability can also be impacted by government regulation. The Environmental Protection Agency’s proposed rules on existing power plants will have an impact on our electric service. Last winter, the frigid polar vortex left parts of our nation on the brink of rolling blackouts. Those blackouts were only avoided because electric utilities tapped into all of our available energy resources. The proposed EPA regulation will shutter many of the coal fired power plants that were used to keep the lights on during this storm.

This month is also a great time to highlight the importance of the hardworking utility workers that put themselves out there during extreme weather conditions to keep our lights on. Anyone that knows a lineman knows that they are a passionate group of people that are proud of the work they do. We should all be thankful that such a group exists and is willing to work in extreme conditions to keep your lights on. If you do experience an outage this winter, be sure to thank those individuals that had to weather the storm to get your lights back on.

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ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROGRAMS

2015 Energy Efficiency Incentive Program

Residential

• LED Light Bulbs	Upgrading to LED	\$5.00 per bulb, up to 15 bulbs
• 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.)
• Residential Heat Pump <i>(incentive is doubled if the heat pump replaces an air conditioner)</i>		
	14 SEER, 8.2 HSPF	\$200
	15 SEER, 12.5 EER, 8.5 HSPF	\$400
	16+ SEER, 12.5 EER, 8.5 HSPF	\$600
	Ground Source HP-any EER	\$1,200
	Variable Capacity Ground Source HP	\$1,700
	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. The incentives for the following categories depend on the size and the efficiencies of the equipment installed:

- Commercial HVAC
- HVAC System Optimization
- Dusk-to-Dawn (LED) Lighting
- Custom Process-Lighting
- Lighting
- Variable Frequency Drives

Agricultural

- Irrigation Pump Efficiency Program Contracted pump efficiency test Up to \$350
- Irrigation Pump Efficiency Program Calculated on pre and post tests (call Mark Gronau at 1-800-675-2185 for details)