



THE WIRE



CURRENT NEWS FROM THE ELKHORN RURAL PUBLIC POWER DISTRICT

January 2018

Serving the Elkhorn River Valley since 1940

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RATES FOR 2018



From the General Manager: Happy New Year! First, Thank YOU for being our customer and second we look forward to serving you in the New Year. We work hard day in and day out to provide Safe, Reliable, and Cost-effective electricity for All customers.

We continually strive to work with you to find more efficient ways to deliver the power that you depend upon. The fruit of this effort is realized again this year as there will be **no overall rate increase** needed for 2018. This is the fifth consecutive year without an overall rate increase.



Elkhorn's rates remain competitive. Recently released information from the Energy Information Administration (EIA) ranks Nebraska 11th lowest in the nation in residential rates for 2016 (most current data available) at an average of 10.8 cents/kWh. Comparatively, ERPPD residential rates for 2016 were 9.8 cents/kWh.

OPERATIONS MANAGER SET TO RETIRE



Jim Ridder, Operations Manager will be retiring in 2018. His open house will be January 26, from 1:30 - 4:30 at the Battle Creek headquarters building.

Jim started in 1979 with Elkhorn as a lineman. He graduated from the lineman school in 1976 and went to work for the City of Wayne. After he was approached by Al Ehlers, one of the instructors at the lineman school in Norfolk, he took a teaching position in 1977. With encouragement from Al, Jim did an internship with Elkhorn in 1978 to get some "rural" line experience and then took a full time position when it opened in May of 1979.

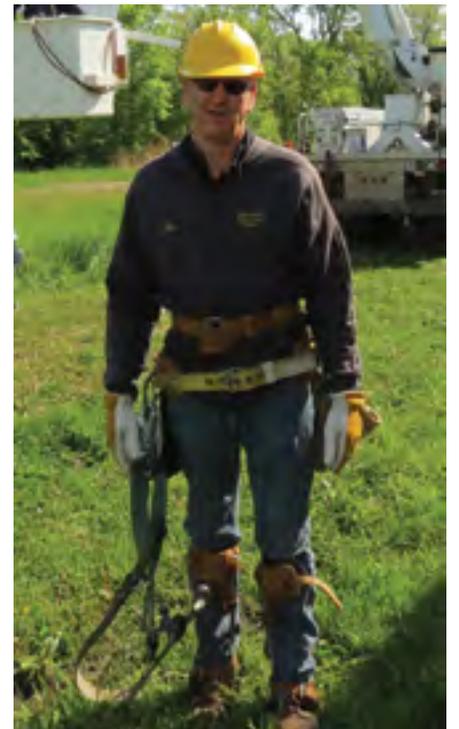
Jim remembers watching some of

the linemen do work when he was growing up and he always thought that would be fun. There was one moment of hesitation when a friend of his was going to Milford to become a machinist that he thought maybe that he might be missing out on something. But after that, he never looked back.

Jim has worked as a lineman and then in metering. In the 1980's when PCBs became an issue in transformers, he tested and tracked transformers to make sure they met the criteria or were replaced. He is proud that one of his accomplishments during his time here is that all of the transformers are in compliance.

He, along with Mark Gronau and Bob Coble were instrumental in selecting the Automated Metering Infrastructure (AMI) in 2009 that has ushered in the era of technology for

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Once a lineman always a lineman. Jim pictured above in his lineman gear after completing poletop rescue in 2016.

RETIREMENT CON'T

continued from front page electrical systems and did away with the need for customers to read their own meters.

Jim remembers when pole testing consisted of replacing poles after they came down in a storm.

He also remembers needing to climb poles for everything - stringing line, mounting transformers, fixing lights, etc. He remembers falling off a pole while doing a transformer change when his safety belt broke. He fell about 20 feet and didn't break any bones, but did require stitches in his arm where he snagged it on the barbed wire fence. Technology and better equipment have really made a difference for safety and efficiency.

He remembers one particularly cold trouble call in January. He

went on a call with Al Stuckwisch. A fuse in a pad mount transformer had blown and they needed to replace it. They were on an exposed hill and could only stand to be out in the cold and wind for short periods of time. They were able to get the fuse replaced and it worked on the first try! He then remembers being invited into the house for coffee and the announcer on the radio saying that the wind chill was a minus 87 degrees Fahrenheit!

For the last seven years, Jim has lead the operations department. He has really enjoyed this position, because he enjoys working with numbers, spreadsheets and planning. All very good traits for the strategic planning side of operations. He has helped strengthened the system to

a 99.98% reliability factor, while keeping safety and costs at the forefront. He is looking forward to his retirement and having more time for his hobbies - vehicle restoration, beer and wine making, scuba diving, and traveling. But best of all will be spending time with his wife of 41 years, Becky, three children and eight grandchildren.



BILLING CHANGE OPPORTUNITY

As the electric industry adapts to new technologies presenting new opportunities, Elkhorn Rural Public Power District (ERPPD) wants to ensure we are positioned to support those changes and opportunities.

Individual customers are using the distribution grid differently with more variation in size of service and renewables that produce back onto the system.

ERPPD has an advanced metering system which allows us to obtain more metering data in a very cost effective manner. Our billing software also allows us to incorporate this data on an individual service basis.

With these technological advancements, costs can be assigned specifically to each customer based on their actual load profile rather than on rate-class averages.

ERPPD has hired an independent rate consultant with excellent electrical industry experience to assist in adapting to this change in the industry.

The consultant performed a cost of service study to ensure that expenses are covered and that costs are recovered in a fair and equita-

ble way based on how individuals impact the system.

Currently, some of our rates have two components: a customer charge and energy. By adding a third component, kW demand, to the rate structure and reducing the cost of energy, we more accurately allocate appropriate costs. For ERPPD as a whole, this is a revenue neutral adjustment. However, as with any rate change the impact of the change will vary as every customer's load profile is different.

By starting this change in the near future, we strategically have time to make small adjustments that minimize the individual impact to our customers.



Space Heater Safety Tips

Space heaters are a great way to warm specific rooms in your home without having to crank up the thermostat, but using space heaters doesn't come without risk! Use the tips below to keep your home safe.

DO: Plug your space heater directly into the wall outlet.



DO: Keep your space heater in low-moisture rooms.

DO: Keep your space heater at a safe distance (at least 3 feet) from kids, pets and flammable items.



DO: Buy a unit with an automatic shutoff in case the unit tips over, or you forget to shut it off.



DO: Always follow the directions and take a broken space heater to a qualified appliance service center.

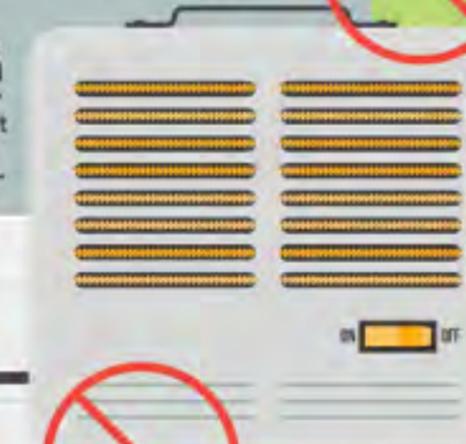


DON'T: Leave your space heater unattended. Always unplug it before you leave the house or go to bed.



DON'T: Use an extension cord to plug in your space heater. It can cause the heater to over-heat, and can be a tripping hazard.

DON'T: Place your space heater near curtains, clothing, furniture or bedding.



DON'T: Try to repair a broken space heater yourself.



DON'T: Put your space heater in your bathroom. The moisture can damage the unit, which could cause it to malfunction.



STAFFING

Todd Knutson and Dan Belt have new positions at Elkhorn Rural Public Power District.



Todd Knutson will take on the Operations Manager position starting January 1. He will take over from Jim Ridder who is retiring this year. Todd has worked for Elkhorn for 22 years as a lineman, crew chief, foreman and general foreman. Todd has great organization, project management and leadership skills. He is dedicated to fulfilling Elkhorn's mission statement and serving our customers.

Dan Belt has been named General Foreman for the Battle Creek operations. He started this position December 1. Dan has been with Elkhorn for 27 years. He has worked as a lineman, crew chief and most recently, as foreman. Dan is very knowledgeable about district infrastructure, line building and operations.



Both Todd and Dan are well qualified for their new leadership positions, and we look forward to a bright future for Elkhorn.

10 Quick Tips to Avoid High Winter Bills

Looking to lower your bills this winter? Use the 10 tips below to conserve energy.

- 1 Seal air leaks and insulate well to prevent heat from escaping and cold air from entering your home.
- 2 Reduce waste heat by installing a programmable thermostat.
- 3 Turn off lights when not in use.
- 4 Lower your water heater temperature. The Dept. of Energy recommends using the warm setting (120 degrees) during fall and winter months.
- 5 Unplug electronics like kitchen appliances and TVs when you're away.
- 6 Open blinds and curtains during the day to allow sunlight in to warm your home.
- 7 Close blinds and curtains at night to keep cold, drafty air out.
- 8 Use power strips for multiple appliances, and turn off the main switch when you're away from home.
- 9 Wash clothes in cold water, and use cold-water detergent whenever possible.
- 10 Replace incandescent light bulbs with LEDs, which use at least 75 percent less energy.

AMERICA'S ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES

OPERATION ROUND UP

This month starts Operation Round Up. You will receive in your bills, again this month, the flyer with the frequently asked questions and the opportunity to opt out of the program. If you have already responded about your accounts, you will not need to do that again.

Next month in February, you will see a line item on your bill for how much was rounded up and put in the Community Development Fund.

The program is designed to pool customer's change - it averages out to 50 cents per month per account - and provide those funds to community organization, needs and causes.

Here are some examples from other districts that have had an Operation Round Up program for many years;

- *Rescue Squad - Defibrillator/patient care monitor;
- *Volunteer Fire Department - Vehicle extraction lift; training area;
- *TeamMates- background checks;
- *4-H Council - two flags;
- *Historical Society - front window; vacuum cleaner;
- *Village - plastic tables;
- *Hospital - pediatric advance life support bag.

As you can see from the above examples, your change can make a

huge difference to your community.

We have had good response for volunteers to serve on the board of trustees for the Community Development Fund. Thank you to those that have expressed interest! Those selected will be appointed by the Elkhorn Board of Directors in the coming months.

