



THE WIRE



CURRENT NEWS FROM THE ELKHORN RURAL PUBLIC POWER DISTRICT

January 2021

Serving the Elkhorn River Valley since 1940

Volume 30, Number 1



LET'S POWER VALUE



On average, Nebraskans pay \$3.45 a day to run their homes. That's less than you'd pay for a hamburger and fries, or one of those fancy coffees, to heat your home, keep the lights on and appliances running. At Elkhorn, our residential rates are lower than the state and national averages, and there has been no general increase to rates for the last eight years.

COST-EFFECTIVE is one of the guiding principles in the Elkhorn Rural Public Power District's mission statement and a way that we provide value to our customers.

For the eighth consecutive year, there will be no overall increase in rates. Electricity continues to be a good value to our customers. As noted above, the average amount to run a home is less than \$4.00 a day. Compared to the cost over time of other common household expenses like groceries, rent, repairs, etc., it is a very stable value.

The board continues to monitor and adjust rates as needed through rate study and design to make sure the true cost of providing electricity is collected. KW demand, facilities charges

and kWh energy charges were all adjusted to reflect the 2020 cost of service study. Individual customers may see a slight increase or decrease in their bills, based on usage, but the overall changes will be revenue neutral for Elkhorn's budget.

Instrumental in keeping our rates stable is the cost of electricity, which is almost 70% of our cost of providing electricity to you. Our wholesale provider has been able to maintain power rates. Our supplier will be returning a Production Credit Adjustment (PCA) in 2021.

After much consideration of the matter, the Board of Directors has decided to use the PCA on multiple projects that will increase reliability and enhance our service to you. For example,

in the budget for 2021 there are sub-t plan projects (see December 2019 *Wire* for a detailed look at the 10-year Sub -T plans) and a new Automated Meter Infrastructure (AMI) system. The AMI system will replace an aging and soon to be obsolete system and be more efficient in outage situations.

This provides rate stabilization to you in that we will not have to increase rates or borrow money to complete these projects, which keeps your rates consistent year to year.

We will continue to work hard to fulfill our mission to provide value through the safe, reliable, cost-effective delivery of electricity to all customers.

VEGETATION MANAGEMENT - TREES

It is that time of year when line construction slows down and crews start working on line maintenance. This includes tree trimming.

Clear power lines make it easier and safer for line crews to access lines and fix problems that may occur. It also makes it safer for customers, as trees in the line can make it dangerous for little ones climbing or playing around them, or they can start fires.

This has been in the news lately with the wildfires in California and electric companies taking outages when the danger of fire is imminent. We prefer to manage the vegetation in the right-of-way, rather than have outages or, worse, fires caused by power lines.

Trees are beautiful and beneficial to have as windbreaks and shade. We understand the investment and care landowners have with trees and we want to make sure they grow for years to come. They just can't be in the power line right of way. Remember when planting trees to be aware of power lines and give them a wide berth. See the chart, top right, for acceptable tree planting practices.

If you have trees that are growing into the power lines, please contact ERPPD to discuss the issue. DO NOT attempt to remove the tree yourself.

Keeping vegetation away from the power lines helps to keep customers and employees safe and contributes to our 99.9% reliability rate.

Plant the Right Tree in the Right Place

For safety, plant taller trees away from overhead utility lines



Pictured Above: Crews trim a tree that is growing to close to the line.



Make one of your New Year's resolutions updating your information with us.

Current information makes it easier for us to contact you for planned or unplanned outages or billing purposes.

You can update your information online if you pay online or with the app. Or, you can call our office, 8 am - 4:30 pm, Monday - Friday at 800.675.2185 and speak with our friendly, helpful customer service reps.



UPDATE YOUR CONTACT INFO

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BE AWARE OF SCAMS

Help protect yourself by being aware of common utility scams like those to the right.

Spot a Scam:

- *Be wary of immediate payment demands with threats of disconnection.
- *Watch for payment methods: We will not ask for payment with a pre-paid card or gift card.
- *Is the caller asking for sensitive financial information? We will not call you to ask for credit card information. We may call with an automated reminder and offer payment options.
- *Do some research: ask for a call back number and where the person is calling from.
- *Call the office at 800-675-2185, if you have questions or concerns about a call or your bill.
- *Report any scam activity to the Nebraska Attorney General's office on-line: <https://protectthegoodlife.nebraska.gov/report-scam> or by calling (402) 471-2682.



COMMON UTILITY SCAMS: DISCONNECTION DECEPTION

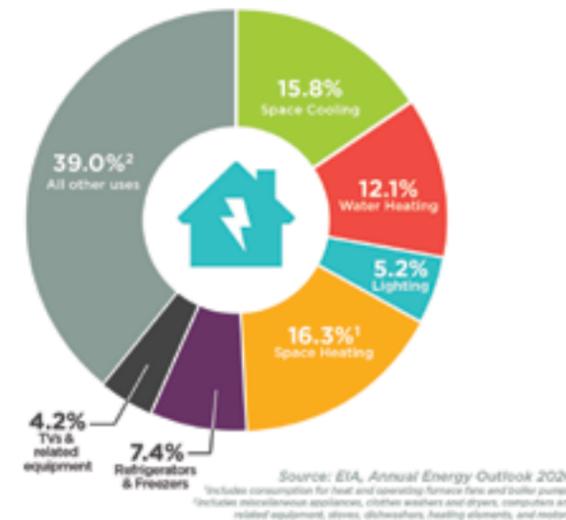
Scammers call and threaten service disconnection, demanding immediate payment.

COMMON UTILITY SCAMS: OVERPAYMENT TRICK

Scammers call claiming you overpaid your bill, asking for your personal banking information.

How Americans Use Electricity

The latest data from the U.S. Energy Information Administration shows the combined use of clothes washers and dryers, computers, dishwashers, small appliances and other electrical equipment (noted as "all other uses" below) accounts for nearly 40% of electricity consumption in American homes.



Safe Winter Driving - Know Before You Go

This winter when you travel, make sure you know about any weather or road conditions that may make driving hazardous.

A great resource in Nebraska is 511. You can go online or download the app to stay current with road conditions.

The Department of Transportation (DOT) also provides updates on road closures due to weather on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/nebraska511>.

Be safe on the roads this winter.



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WHAT IS THE COST OF SPACE HEATERS?

Space heaters can seem like an economical way to heat an area in your home, and, in some cases, may be a good option. However, it is a good idea to be aware of how running a space heater may affect your electric bill.

All electric space heaters with the same wattage use the same amount of energy. See the chart below to see how those costs can add up. For the purposes of the calculation, ten cents per kWh of electricity was used. Elkhorn's residential rate is 9.6 cents.

Instead of utilizing a space heater consider taking some energy saving steps to keep your home warmer this winter:

*Caulk around windows and

window frames.

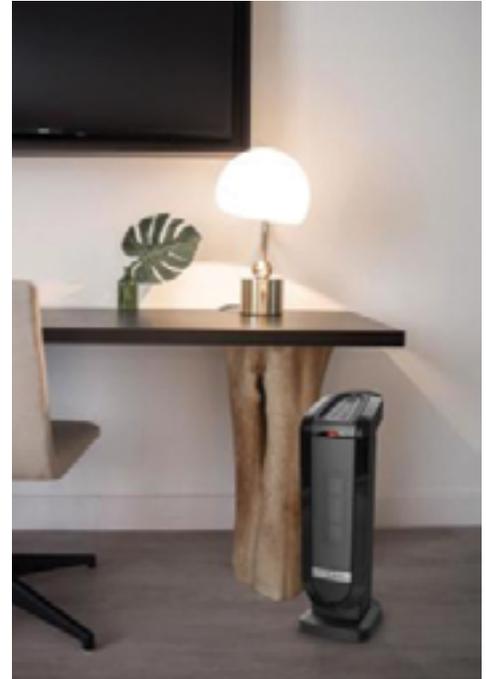
*Put clear plastic over drafty windows.

*Place weather strips around doors.

*Leave your curtains open during the day to let the sun in and close them at night to keep the cold out.

*Check your insulation and install some if needed.

Elkhorn offers incentives to energy savings options, such as putting in insulation or installing a heat pump. Check out the EnergyWise™ incentives below for cost savings or go to www.erppd.com/energy or call Brian Suckstorf at 800-675-2185, for more information.



AVERAGE COST OF OPERATING AN ELECTRIC SPACE HEATER

HEAT SETTING (watts)	DAILY HOURS OF OPERATION					Cost per month (24 hours/day)
	1	4	8	12	24	
600	\$0.06	\$0.24	\$0.48	\$0.72	\$1.44	\$43.20
750	\$0.07	\$0.30	\$0.60	\$0.90	\$1.80	\$54.00
900	\$0.09	\$0.36	\$0.72	\$1.08	\$2.16	\$64.80
1350	\$0.14	\$0.54	\$1.08	\$1.62	\$3.24	\$97.20
1500	\$0.15	\$0.60	\$1.20	\$1.80	\$3.60	\$108.00

The chart is based on \$0.10 per kWh.

EnergyWise™ Incentives

Residential Heat Pump Water Heater

\$400 for air source with EF>1.9
\$650 for ground source with EF> 28

High Efficiency Heat Pump

\$400-\$3,000
Minimum SEER 15, EER 12.5 & HSPF 8.5. Includes Air-to-Air and Water/Ground source

Residential Attic Insulation

\$0.15/sq. ft maximum \$300

SMART Thermostat

\$25-\$100

Cooling System Tune Up

\$30

See the details for these and more incentives online at www.erppd.com or call Brian at 800.675.2185

Space Heater Safety Tips

Materials -Parts like metal grating can be hot to the touch and may burn anyone who gets too close. Make sure you purchase a heater cool to the touch and one that has guards over the coils.

Placement - It is safest to place the heater on a level floor on a non-flammable surface. Placing the space heater on the floor can help keep it from tipping over, preventing fire hazards. The most important rule about space heater placement is the THREE-FOOT RULE. Always keep a space heater three feet away from flammable materials and out of the way of children and pets.

Cords - You should never use an extension cord when using a space heater as it can cause overheating. Plug it directly into a wall outlet. Do not use space heaters with frayed or cracked cords.

Use - Never leave a space heater unattended while in use. If you are leaving your house or going to bed, make sure to unplug the heater.