



# THE WIRE



CURRENT NEWS FROM THE ELKHORN RURAL PUBLIC POWER DISTRICT

January 2024

Serving the Elkhorn River Valley since 1940

Volume 33, Number 1

## PLANNING FOR THE NEW YEAR NO GENERAL RATE INCREASE FOR 2024

*From the GM – Mark Johnson*

Happy New Year! It is a time for new beginnings and resolutions. Making resolutions is the easy part. The challenging part is putting in the work, being consistent and making it stick.

**The resolution** – Provide safe, reliable, cost-effective electricity for all customers. Here at Elkhorn our new year starts with our 5-year budget with an emphasis

on the current year, 2024, that was approved by the board in December. The budget is a tool for the board and management to use in setting the overall direction of the organization.

**The process** - Putting the budget together takes a lot of input from the board, management, employees and, yes, you the customer. The budget process starts in August/September with staff reviewing expenses in the current year and projections/projects for the coming year. Trends, like inflation, supply chain, labor etc. are also considered for planning. A rate consultant is utilized to ensure that we are collecting rates appropriately. Over the last 5

years, the rate structure has been changed to be less volatile and weather dependent, which helps normalize revenue projections for the budget.

A big part of budgeting is providing services for our customers. For example: due to supply chain issues that began in 2021, and continues today, we are ordering some materials 2-3 years in advance in anticipation of customer needs for service. Customer energy consumption is another major part of the budget. Revenue is based on past usage and projected usage from new services. Consumer energy consumption is also used to forecast our wholesale power

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In 2024, ERPPD is celebrating the people, places, and history that helped Nebraska become the only state with 100% Public Power.

Please see the first public power highlight on the back page of this issue.

Stay tuned for more content, contests and prizes throughout the year in our People are the Power Campaign!

## TERESA SCHWARTING RETIRES



Teresa Schwarting, customer service representative, has retired from Elkhorn Rural Public Power District as of January 5, after 32 years of service.

Teresa and her husband, Tom, are moving to Omaha to be closer to her daughter, son-in-law, and grandchildren.

We wish Teresa the very best in the next stage of her journey!

# No Rate Increase Continued. . .

costs. We add expected system losses to our forecast to calculate our estimated purchased power requirements. This is significant because power costs make up 70% of the expenses for providing services to our customers. Our wholesale supplier, Nebraska Public Power District, has announced they will not have overall rate increases in 2024. Work plans, construction projects, and maintenance of the system drives our operating expenses. For 2024, 86 irrigation services with approximately 27 miles of line builds are budgeted for construction. You can see with the graph to the lower right that irrigation service growth in

the last several years has been significant. There is also a hazard mitigation project with FEMA funding that was started in 2023 that will be finished in Q1 of 2024. The project is a \$3.5 million, 9-mile sub transmission line between two subs in the northwestern part of the district that will increase our reliability though a loop feed that can help restore services during major outage events. FEMA pays 75% of the cost of building the line. Our new Automated Metering Infrastructure (AMI) will be completely installed and will be depreciated over 15 years starting in 2024. This will open opportunities for our customers with

outage management and increased reliability. **The Results** - That brings us to the consistency part of our resolution and making sure the lights come on when you flip the switch. ERPPD has a good track record already that helps us stay the course. There has not been a general rate increase for over 10 years and ERPPD decreased overall rates by 6% the last two years. Projections and other financial benchmarks indicate that ERPPD is in sound financial health and rates will remain unchanged for 2024. New Year's resolutions are not easy to keep. Only 9% of those that make resolutions are able to keep them. But with planning, accountability, and hard work, ERPPD will keep to its mission to provide safe, reliable, cost-effective electricity for you!

## RESPECT SUBSTATIONS

and all other electrical equipment

## REPORT SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY

Only authorized utility workers should approach a substation, touch the fence or enter the gate.

Paying attention to activity in or near substations and other utility equipment helps keep everyone safe.

**Authorized workers should:**

- Wear proper personal protective gear and display an ID badge.
- Use work vehicles that have utility branded logos/information.

**Suspicious activity includes individuals in street clothes who are:**

- Near or inside a substation fence.
- Tampering with equipment, such as power poles, meters and padmount transformers.

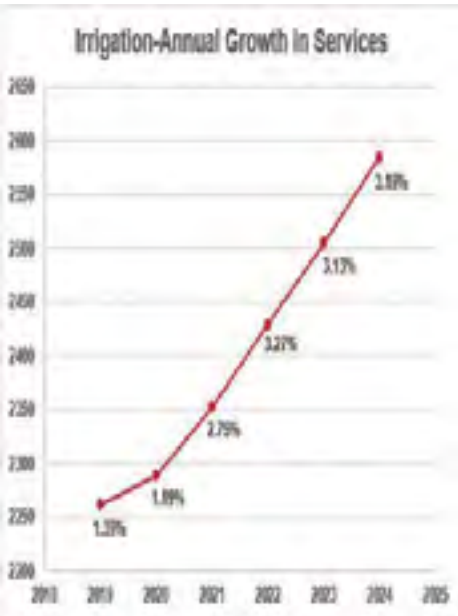
**If you notice anything unusual at a substation, please report it to the electric utility. Examples include:**

- An open or unlocked gate.
- A damaged fence.
- Obvious damage inside the fence.

**Call 9-1-1 and then the electric utility if you see:**

- Smoke or fire.
- Non-utility workers inside the substation fence.
- Non-utility workers on a pole or tampering with a meter.

Learn more at: **Safe Electricity.org**



The graph above shows the increase in irrigation services, which is part of what drives the operating expenses and revenues in the budget.

# ENERGYWISE INCENTIVES



We offer a wide range of EnergyWise<sup>SM</sup> incentives and rebates designed to help you **SAVE ENERGY AND MONEY**, and contribute to a more sustainable future for all Nebraskans.

Be sure to check out the EnergyWise<sup>SM</sup> incentives on the ERPPD website under the “Energy” tab to see how you can save on your electric bill. There are some changes for 2024 in addition to the great incentives for cooling system tuning, heat pumps, water heaters and irrigation systems - see the table below. New for 2024, are additions to the agricultural program. There is now a \$300 incentive for installing a moisture sensor with an irrigation management

program. Also new for 2024, is a \$0.011 per bushel of bin capacity for automated grain aeration. Other ag related incentives include irrigation system updates, as noted below, corner pivot variable frequency drive \$18/hp, hog heat mats, \$40-\$80 per mat depending on size and up to \$350 for having a professional efficiency test conducted on electric irrigation pumps. There is also an option for custom ag incentives for projects that are not part of the prescriptive programs.

As heating and cooling are the largest energy expense in most homes, take advantage of the free home energy calculators and information on the ERPPD website. More insulation might help you lower your electric bill significantly. You can view these changes and all the incentives at [www.erpdpd.com/energy](http://www.erpdpd.com/energy) or you can call Brian at 402-675-2185 with any questions you might have.

**ENERGYWISE<sup>SM</sup>**  
Use less. Spend less. Do more.

EnergyWise <sup>SM</sup> Incentives		
<b>Residential Heat Pump Water Heater</b> \$400 for air source with EF>1.9 \$650 for ground source with EF> 28	<b>Beneficial Electrification</b> - Induction cook top or range 20% incentive for a purchased new cook top or range with a 30" minimum width. - Lawn and garden 20% incentive for new battery-powered or corded electric lawn mower. Battery powered chain saws, tillers, and snowblowers are also eligible. - Smart Thermostat Up to \$100 for a qualified thermostat	<b>Ag Systems</b> - Irrigation Moisture Sensors (NEW) \$300 for installing moisture sensor with an irrigation management program - Automated Grain Aeration (NEW) \$0.011 per bushel of bin capacity - Irrigation System Updates \$500 for the replacement of all existing outlet components such as sprinkler heads, sprayers, rotators, plates, pads and nozzles and regulators on qualified systems
<b>High Efficiency Heat Pump</b> \$400-\$3,000 Minimum SEER 16, EER 12.5 & HSPF 8.5. Includes Air-to-Air and Water/Ground source		
<b>Residential Attic Insulation</b> \$0.30/sq. ft. maximum \$600		
<b>Cooling System Tune Up</b> \$30		



# COOPERATIVE HALL OF FAME



Jerrell “Jerry” Dolesh, pictured left with Governor Pillen and wife, Bonnie, was inducted into the Coop Hall of Fame in November 2023.

The Nebraska Cooperative Council Hall of Fame was established in 1999 to recognize those exceptional people who have served, supported and promoted the cooperative way.

Jerry worked at a cooperative for 12 years in Minnesota before starting his own farming operation. He then joined the cooperative and served on the

board for 30 years and as Chairman for 15 years.

He was also part of the Nebraska Cooperative Council for 10 years serving on the board as well as the legislative advisory, education and Hall of Fame committees.

You can watch a video on Jerry and his cooperative service at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2UbMzEQTU-Q>

We are proud to have Jerry serving on the Elkhorn Rural Public Power board. His term on the board started in 2011.

## THE PLACES OF PUBLIC POWER IN NEBRASKA



The first public power department in Nebraska was formed in 1887 in the city of Crete. Today, the municipality continues to generate it's own power. Since it's founding, every village, town, city, and county is powered 100% by public power.

Source: Nebraska Power Association

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Connect with us Online:



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SCAN ME

Customer Service: 402-675-2185  
For Outages: 1-800-675-2185

### Board of Directors

#### Subdivision I

- Mark Miller, President
- Dennis Kuchar, Treasurer
- Hunter Frisch, Director

#### Subdivision II

- Tim Means, Secretary
- Jerrell Dolesh, Director
- Rod Zohner, Director

#### Subdivision III

- Joe Thiele, Vice President
- David Hoefer, Director
- Raymond Payne, Director