THE WIRE

CURRENT NEWS FROM THE ELKHORN RURAL PUBLIC POWER DISTRICT

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ERPPD is dedicated to providing **SAFE**, **RELIABLE**, **COST-EFFECTIVE** electricity for **ALL** customers.

Elgin Project Update

The project to upgrade the town of Elgin from 2400/4160 to 7200/12470 Volts is on schedule for this summer.

This project will allow for more reliable electricity for the town of Elgin and will help Elkhorn keep prices cost-effective, by eliminating some of the specialized materials and equipment needed to service the town.

Upgrading transformers is about one third completed. The other two thirds will be changed when the conversion is completed as power will need to be cut to make the upgrades.

At the time of this publication, the alternate feed from the west should be completed. According to Todd Knutson, General Foreman, "The alternate feed from the west will allow one more pathway for electricity to flow to the city of Elgin, minimizing outages and increasing reliability." There will be three different feeds into Elgin: 1 from the west, one from the south and the city substation.

The alternate feeds will also allow the conversion to be smoother, keeping outage times shorter.

It is still estimated that the conversion will take place at the end of summer after the summer peak and loading season is over, probably early September, weather permitting.

The conversion process will take about two weeks. There will be more extended outages as poles and transformers are changed. We will continue to communicate where those outages will be and try to minimize the impact of the outages on those affected.

We appreciate your patience as we make improvements to our system.

If you have questions about the project, please do not hesitate to call the office at (402) 675-2185.

Grassroots News

Contact your Congressman

We are encouraging our customers to contact your Congressional Representative about H.R. 5167, that will extend the geothermal tax credit.

Across the nation, public power districts and electric cooperatives help our member-owners save energy and money by promoting the use of geothermal heat pumps. These super efficient heat pumps can cut home heating and cooling bills by up to 70 percent. Many Nebraskans, with the support of their public power electric supplier, have installed geothermal units with assistance from the geothermal tax credit. The tax credit expires at the end of this year, jeopardizing the continued use of this energy efficient technology.

Please help us to ask Congress to extend this credit by supporting H.R. 5167. You can go to **www.erppd.com** and click on the link or mail a letter of support to your Congressman.

RURAL VOTES COUNT

Whole House Energy Monitoring

By Tom Tate - Contributor to the National Rural Electric Coop Associations's *Straight Talk*

Whole house energy monitoring systems are a topic I can really sink my teeth into. I have had one in my home for over eight years, and love it. True, I am a gadget guy, so on that basis alone it appeals to me. But beyond its techno goodness is a real opportunity to learn how your home uses electricity and to teach everyone in your family about what uses watts. Let's take a look at these useful systems.

There are two primary ways in which whole house energy monitors get their data. The first is to have a sensor you mount on your electric meter. I would not recommend this route. Sensors are hard to align, and Mother Nature can knock them out of alignment later down the road. The sensor can also hinder Elkhorn's efforts to manage the meter.

The second option, which I recommend, uses current transducers (CTs) placed around the big wires that feed into your electric panel. The clips are a snap to install (pun intended) and are out of the way. These connect to a transmitter that sends the information to your system's monitor. A caution here; if you are uncomfortable taking the cover off your electric panel, ask an electrician or knowledgeable acquaintance to handle this part for you.

After the transmitter is in place and sending data, you can program the monitor with a variety of information. My particular system allows me to set up a couple of electric rates, the time, day and so forth. From there, the unit presents my data in a predetermined format.

I mentioned that these systems help you learn how your home uses energy. Step one is to determine the base load of your home. Base load is a utility term that means the lowest power consumption possible with only essential items using electricity. The typical home today (three bedroom, two bath) should have a base load between 600 – 700 watts. This is your refrigerator, freezer, fans and other equipment. At my previous home, it was 650 – 698 watts. In my new, smaller domicile, it is around 450 watts. The best time to find this information is late at night when only you are awake, looking to find your base load.

Why is this useful? You want to start identifying how much different items in your home add to your electric use. Going below your base load means turning off something you probably shouldn't. Above that indicates a discretionary use. Here is a fun test. Turn everything possible off to get to the base load. Now, start turning on appliances, lights and so forth. Note how much each uses. Over time, you can look at the display and know what's running.

Use this data to educate your family. Kids won't turn off their game console or television? Show them the monitor, have them turn their stuff off and let them see the difference. Then offer to deduct the cost from their allowance. Yes, I am a meanie. Or, offer to split the savings. You choose what is right for your family.

I have reduced my energy use as a result of having my system. Knowing the cost of each item makes me really think before I start using something. The benefits will add up over time. Lower bills, fewer carbon emissions and lifelong lessons-come-habits for your kids. It is a beautiful combination!

Suggested websites for whole house energy monitoring:

(All of the sites listed below offer products that use current transducers (CTs)).

http://www.currentcost.com/products.html. What the author used.

http://www.theenergydetective.com,

http://efergy.com/us.

Pictured to the left - monitors for the current transducer system. The one to the far left shows usage without a space heater on. The one on the right shows the usage with a space heater running.

Safety news

As you are outside this summer camping, boating or just enjoying a backyard barbecue, please be aware of your safety, especially in regard to lighting and electricity. Below are some tips to be safe this summer!

*According to the National Weather Service (NWS), 70 percent of lightning fatalities occur during outdoor recreation activities. You are not safe from lightning strikes while outside, so once you hear thunder, get to a safe shelter such as an enclosed building with electricity or plumbing or an enclosed metal-topped vehicle with its windows up. Wait until at least 30 minutes have passed without thunder to return outside. The NWS advises "When thunder roars, go indoors."

*Staying inside reduces the risk for lightning strikes, but according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, approximately one-third of lightning strike injuries occur indoors. Safe Electricity recommends the following tips to help keep you safe inside the home during a thunderstorm:

• During a storm, stay away from anything that conducts electricity inside of the home. This includes corded phones, plumbing, or running water. Cellular or cordless phones are safe to use during a storm.

• Never use your computer, gaming systems, washer, dryer, or any other appliance that connects to an electrical outlet.

• Stay at least a few feet away from electrical appliances that are plugged into the wall.

• Do not lie or lean on concrete floors or walls, which can conduct electricity.

• Lightning can enter inside through wiring, such as cables or pipes or through an open window or door. Do not watch a storm from a porch or through a garage door.

*Be aware of your surroundings. Always check the location of nearby power lines before boating or fishing. Make sure you are casting the line away from power lines to avoid potential contact.

*Do not raise a mast or antenna when your boat is near a power line. Never attempt to move a power line out of the way so that a boat can pass underneath. Maintain a safe distance of at least 10 feet between your boat and nearby power lines. Keep in mind that water levels are constantly changing, altering the distance between the water and the line.

*If your boat does come in contact with a power line, do not enter the water. The water could be energized. Instead, stay in the boat and avoid touching anything metal until help arrives or until your boat is no longer in contact with the line.

*Do not swim around docks with electrical equipment or boats plugged into shore power. If you are in the water and feel a tingle of electric current, shout to let others know, try to stay upright, tuck your legs up to make yourself smaller, and swim away from anything that could be energized. Do not head to boat or dock ladders to get out.

*If you see someone who you suspect is getting shocked, do not immediately jump in to save them. Throw them a float, turn off the shore power connection at the meter base, and/or unplug shore power cords. Try to eliminate the source of electricity as quickly as possible; then call for help.

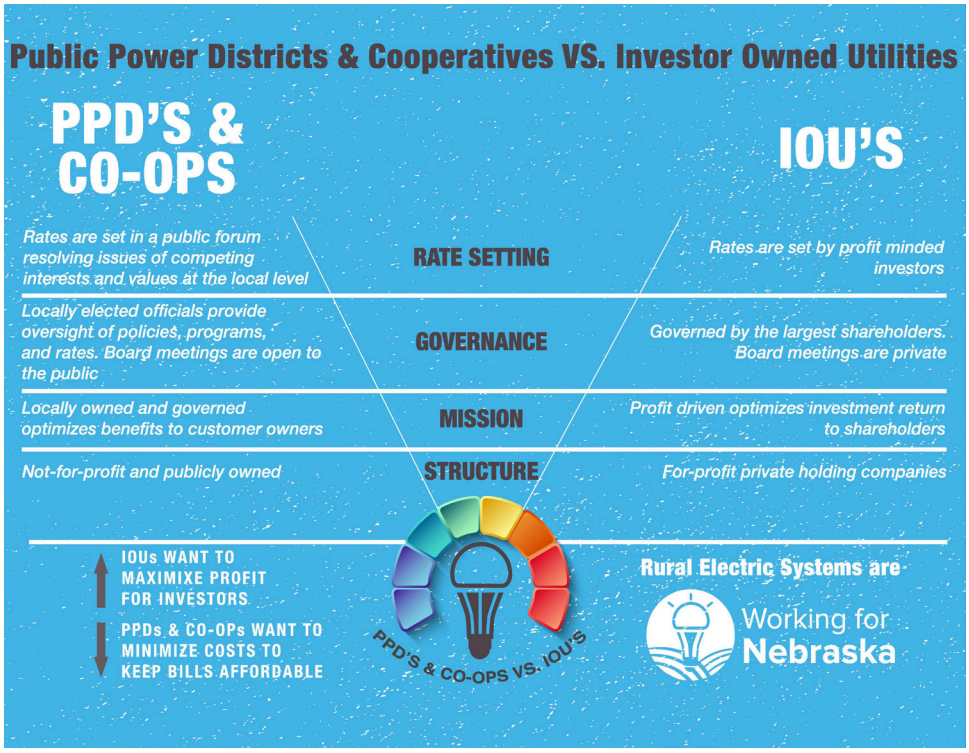
*To help prevent the risk of electricity entering the water, have your boat and dock electrical systems regularly inspected and maintained by a professional familiar with marine electrical codes.

To learn more about electrical safety, please visit erppd.com and click on the safety link at the top. *Source - Safeeletricity.org*

70% of lightning fatalities occur June through August

- National Weather Service

There is no safe place from lightning when you are outside. If you hear thunder, lightning is close enough to pose an immediate threat. That is why the National Weather Service advises, "When Thunder Roars, Go Indoors!" Lightning can strike up to 10 miles away from rain, even if you don't see clouds.



What are the differences between Public Power Districts (PPDs) and Investor Owned Utilities (IOUs). Plenty - as you can see from the infographic above - from rate setting to structure. The biggest difference is YOU. ERPPD is dedicated to providing safe, reliable, cost effective electricity for all its customers, because of its cusomers, not its profit. --The infographic is courtesy of Working for Nebraska.

Congratulations to Our Winners!

Mr. and Mrs. Arland Mozer were our winners for two tickets to the 2nd Annual Ag Banquet held on June 23, at the Madison County Fairgrounds. They were randomly selected from all of our customers for this honor.

Neil Kreiekmeier was the other winner of two tickets to the Ag Banquet for liking us on Facebook.

Energy Efficiency *Tip of the Month*

Use small electric pans, toaster ovens or convection ovens for small meals rather than your stove or oven. A toaster or convection oven uses one-third to one-half as much energy as a full-sized oven.

Source: energy.gov

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Director I
David Hoefer
Director III

MANAGER
Tom Rudloff

For Emergency Service or Outage Reporting

1-800-675-2185

After Hours Note:
The entire 800-number *must* be dialed, even for a local call.

Communicate Electronically With ERPPD

Internet: www.erppd.com

E-mail: erppd@erppd.com

Know what's **below.** **Call** before you dig.

It's the law! Call 811 Before You Dig!

Or 1-800-331-5666
Diggers Hotline
of Nebraska

Outage Checklist

In the case of an outage:

- First check to see if the fuses below the meter are good.
- If you have breakers, make sure they are on and have not kicked out.
- If you have a double-throw switch for standby power, make sure it is in the correct position.
- Check with neighbors to see if they have power. By doing this before calling us, we can determine if it is a line or an individual outage. This can help cut down on outage duration.
- Please, be prepared to give the name on the account, plus the consumer number and/or the legal location. This will assist us in sending our crews to the correct place.

Questions about your bill?

Please call the ERPPD office at 402-675-2185 or toll-free, 1-800-675-2185, during office hours, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. M-F, in regards to billing questions. When calling the office concerning billing problems, it will save time if you would have your meter serial number or customer account number. Remember to call the Battle Creek office if you have billing questions. All account payments should be mailed to:

Elkhorn Rural Public Power District
P.O. Box 310
Battle Creek, NE 68715