



THE WIRE



CURRENT NEWS FROM THE ELKHORN RURAL PUBLIC POWER DISTRICT

October 2020

Serving the Elkhorn River Valley since 1940

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#POWER ON - PUBLIC POWER MONTH

Every October we take a few moments to celebrate what it is to be public power. ERPPD reached a milestone this year with 80 years of serving our customers following our mission to provide safe, reliable, cost-effective electricity to all our customers. (See the April *Wire*) #PowerOn seems like a good theme for this year's celebration. Through good times and challenges, ERPPD has committed to #PowerOn for our customers. How do we do that?

****Dedicated Employees -** Working safely and efficiently, rain or shine, day or night, helps ERPPD have some of the lowest residential rates in the state (9.6 cents as compared to 10.6 cents, the 2018 state average) and very reliable service - 99.9% reliability.
****Local Control -** Our system is shaped by our customers. Your



input through your locally elected board of directors and feedback, whether through surveys or calls to the office, help us to serve you better.
****Community Participation -** We live and work in the communities we serve. Also, through your generosity in rounding up your bills, we are able to give back through

the Operation Round Up/ERPPD Community Development Fund - (see the September *Wire* for more information on the Fund)
****Environmental Stewards -** ERPPD takes the long view on preserving resources and protecting the environment for future generations. We offer energy saving incentives through the EnergyWise program and educate on ways to be efficient and save power. Our summer irrigation load control program helps to lower peaks and therefore generation demand. We purchase PCB-free transformers and energy efficient vehicles. Most recently, ERPPD entered into a power purchase agreement to buy 6.5 MW of solar generation from SunVest Solar. (See the January and February *Wire*)

As we celebrate Public Power Month, we are certainly grateful to be able to #PowerOn, serving you.



OPERATION NEWS

Even with COVID-19 affecting our lives and how we work, it has been a busy year for ERPPD and it doesn't look to slow down!

Earlier this year, thirty-seven new irrigation services were installed. System maintenance is ongoing.

The annual pole inspections were completed by Sundance Power Pole Inspectors, LLC. They inspected 3,500 poles this summer. The Sundance inspection report shows that our system is in good shape, which means our pole and other maintenance programs are working - keeping the lights on for our customers.

This year's budgeted distribution work plan projects include hardening the system around Substation 15, which is northeast

of Newman Grove. For several years this area has been hard hit by storms. In 2018, there were three significant storm events that damaged the line in that area. (See pictures below).

To harden the system in that area, a total of six miles were budgeted for rebuilding the line.

In the spring, east of the substation, two miles of the line rebuild project were completed. Four miles of line are scheduled to be built west of the substation, early this fall.

New with the four-mile line-build is the use of fiberglass crossarms. This type of crossarm has not been used by ERPPD, however, other areas of the country have used fiberglass crossarms with positive results.

The wire has also been upgraded to T-2 1/0 aluminum conductor steel reinforced (ACSR), or what is referred to as a twisted pair wire. Using this wire reduces the galloping of the lines with ice build up, helping to prevent major damage during storms.

Another project currently underway is the relocation of substation 18 - just east of Neligh to 4 miles north of Neligh. This requires a 69 kV sub-transmission line build as well as a substation build.

The 69 kV sub-transmission line build will be constructed by Watts Electric out of Waverly, NE. Construction began on September 14 and will be done in December.

This project is part of ERPPD's 10 year Sub-T plan; you can read about the whole plan in the December 2019 *Wire*.



Todd Knutson, operations manager explains the goals of the projects: "These projects will increase reliability and allow for future

load growth for our customers, while maintaining our safety and cost-effectiveness."

Pictured top left: Line by sub 15 after the blizzard in April of 2018, which caused widespread outages in the area for two days. Pictured bottom left: Line by sub 15 after the line was fixed.



CYBER SECURITY MONTH

Safety isn't just about electrical lines, although that is very important. It is also about keeping your information and identity safe for your wellbeing.

October is Cyber Security Month and below are some tips to keep you safe on-line.

Keep your defenses up!

- Make sure all your computer software—including your web browser—are updated with the latest software. Keeping software up-to-date ensures security patches can succeed in blocking security threats.

- Create a strong password and keep it private—it could take up to two centuries to crack a password consisting of 12 characters or more!

- Treat all Wi-Fi networks as a potential security risk. Encrypt sensitive data when using a public Wi-Fi network. And never check financial or other sensitive accounts when using public Wi-Fi.

Don't Fall for a Phish!

- Be on the lookout for emails, phone calls and other messages that try to get to secure data. If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. If something seems off, trust your instinct and don't click the link or answer the questions.

- Don't click on links or attached

INTERNS

Two interns are joining us this fall.

Kellan Green (pictured below left) and Carter Lammers (pictured below right) are both students in the NECC Utility Line program.

Kellan is from McCool Jct., NE. He likes to work with his dad at

his business restoring old cars. He likes to learn and is looking forward to what he will learn at ERPPD. He will be working with our Neligh crew.

Carter is from Hartington. He likes to work on machines and is a hard worker. Carter will be working with our Battle Creek crews.



We can all play a part in making our interconnected world safer.



Do Your Part.
#BeCyberSmart.



October is National
Cybersecurity Awareness Month.
Visit staysafeonline.org for cybersecurity tips.

files in emails or text messages from senders you don't know. Even if you do know the sender, hover over the link before you click as they may have been

hacked or someone could be spoofing them! There are many ways to spot a phish, and you can visit www.staysafeonline.org to see the current list.

BE ALERT AND ALIVE

Fall harvest is here again. Along with shorter days and cooler weather comes a busy season for farmers. ERPPD wants you to have a safe and productive harvest. Following are some things to keep in mind as you plan and start the harvest season.

- Start each morning by planning your day's work. Know what jobs will happen near power lines and have a plan to keep the assigned workers safe.
- Keep yourself and equipment at least 10 feet away from power lines in all directions, at all times. Use a spotter when moving tall equipment and loads.
- Be aware of increased height when loading and transporting larger modern tractors.
- Never attempt to raise or move a power line to clear a path. If power lines near your property have sagged over time, call your utility to repair them.

- Always lower equipment extensions, portable augers, or elevators to their lowest possible level, under 14 feet, before moving or transporting them. Wind, uneven ground, shifting weight, or other conditions could cause



you to lose control of equipment and make contact with power lines.

- As in any outdoor work, be careful not to raise any equip-

ment, such as ladders, poles, or rods, into power lines. Remember, non-metallic materials, such as lumber, tree limbs, tires, ropes, and hay, will conduct electricity, depending on dampness and dust and dirt contamination.

- If you are in equipment that contacts a power line, do not exit the equipment. When you step off the equipment, you become the electricity's path to ground and receive a potentially fatal shock. Wait until utility workers have de-energized the line and confirmed it is safe for you to exit the vehicle. If the vehicle is on fire and you must exit, jump clear of the vehicle with both feet together. Hop as far from the vehicle as you can with your feet together. Keep your feet together to prevent current flow through your body, which could be deadly.

These safety tips will help you be alert today, to be alive tomorrow.

Remember we have stickers and decals to place on equipment to remind you to look up and out for electrical lines. Please stop by or contact us at 402-675-2185 to get the window decals (below) and/or stickers.



Middle picture: Part of the safety live line demo shows how electricity can continue to arc through the air with an open fuse. Bottom picture: The safety combine reminds you to "Look Up and Look Out" for power lines during the harvest season.

