



THE WIRE



CURRENT NEWS FROM THE ELKHORN RURAL PUBLIC POWER DISTRICT

October 2021

Serving the Elkhorn River Valley since 1940

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PUBLIC POWER - IT'S ALL ABOUT YOU

Since its inception, public power has been for you and about you. You make public power possible.

Public Power Month gives us a time to celebrate the public power story:

Community Born - Back in the 1930s rural areas were being left behind, as cities and towns electrified homes and businesses, the rural areas were dark.

U. S. Senator George Norris of Nebraska was concerned that the descendents of homesteaders and other people living in rural America were not getting a 'fair chance.' Norris lamented that in rural America the men and women were "growing old prematurely; dying before their time; conscious of the great gap between their lives and the lives of those whom the accident of birth or choice placed in towns and cities."

Norris and other senators and congressmen believed that access to electricity would revolutionize the rural way of life. Therefore, in 1936 Congress passed the Rural Electrification Act to give rural Americans a 'fair chance.' (Source: Nebraska State Parks online www.nps.gov)

Community Led - Rural Nebraskans saw the opportunity to make a better way and neighbors helped neighbors to start public power districts and



I ♥ Public Power!

Community born. Community led. Focused on YOU.

October is Public Power Month!

bring electricity to rural areas.

For ERPPD, it was the summer of 1938, amid the droughts and crop failures; when critics were saying, "You're crazy! You'll never get enough signers because it will cost too much. Farmers scarcely have the money for kerosene for their lamps and lanterns, how are they going to find money for a monthly



electricity bill?"

As history shows, there were enough signers and electricity came to the farms in Madison and Antelope counties in 1940 and continues today.

Focused on You - At ERPPD we pride ourselves on serving you with safe, reliable, cost-effective electricity each and every day.

The public power story is your story, we just get the privilege of serving you and making the story a bit better every year.

Pictured left: Texas Senator Sam Rayburn, President Roosevelt and Nebraska Senator George Norris at the May 20, 1936 signing of the Rural Electrification Act, that put in motion public power in Nebraska.

OPERATION NEWS



*Todd Knutson,
Operations Manager.*

It has again been a busy year for construction and maintenance on the system.

Crews have been able to continue work through the pandemic without much difficulty. Sixty-six irrigation and numerous new house services have been installed.

However, we are now seeing some disruption in our supply chain. We are increasing our inventory for items with longer than normal procurement time - wire, transformers, meter sockets and disconnects.

If you have plans to install irrigation next year, the sooner you can let us know to be able to plan the work and materials the more likely it will be that we can complete the work when you want it.

We have also been told by customers that secondary wire and supplies are harder to get at this time too, so you may want to check with an electrician on those lead times as well.

Work plan construction this year has included two miles of line replacement with a twisted pair southwest of Battle Creek. Twisted pair wire is T-2 1/0 aluminum conductor steel reinforced (ACSR). Using this wire reduces the galloping of the lines with ice build up, helping to prevent major damage during storms and gives more capacity for load growth.

Seven more miles of line builds are planned. There are three miles to be built by the Enola road and four miles southwest of Clearwater.

Our Sub-T projects continue with a new substation (Sub 30) being built late last year and another substation (Sub 31) north

and east of Clearwater scheduled to be started later this year with a 69 kV line built between the two subs.

Maintenance on the system also continues.

The annual pole inspections were completed by Sundance Power Pole Inspectors, LLC. They inspected 4,663 poles this summer around Sub 15 by Newman Grove and Sub 16 west of Pierce. We had a 1.5% fail rate on the poles. To put this in perspective, our goal is to be under 2% and the Sundance inspection report shows that for our regional area the average fail rate is 2.5%. So, our system is in good shape.

Also this year is ongoing regulator and breaker maintenance. Regulators step up or down voltage depending on the need at the time. Breakers or oil circuit reclosures (OCRs) operate when there is a fault on the line (see the August *Wire* for more information on how the breakers work).

Annual maintenance on regulators and breakers is performed on a rotating basis to ensure that these important components of the system are working properly, so we can continue to provide reliable electricity.

Pictured left: Ground work and foundations for Sub 30 that was completed earlier this year. This sub is part of the 10 year Sub-T plan to strengthen the system to enhance reliability and increase capacity for growth.



DO YOUR PART #BECYBERSMART

At a time when we are more connected than ever, being “cyber smart” is of the utmost importance. This year has already seen more than a fair share of cyber attacks and breaches, including the high-profile attacks on the Colonial Pipeline and other critical infrastructure. Furthermore, as has been underlined by these recent breaches, cyber attacks are becoming more sophisticated with more evolved bad actors cropping up each day. Luckily, there are several steps that we can take on a daily basis to mitigate risks and stay one step ahead of malefactors.

Here are a few quick tips:

1) Enable multi-factor authentication.

Multi-factor authentication (MFA) adds that necessary second check to verify your identity when logging in to one of your accounts. By requiring multiple methods of authentication, your account is further protected from being compromised, even if a bad

actor hijacks your password. In this way, MFAs make it more difficult for password cracking tools to enable attackers to break into accounts.

2) Use strong passphrases/password manager.

This may seem obvious, but all too often securing strong passphrases/password managers is overlooked. People spending more time online during the pandemic has certainly contributed to more bad actors prowling for accounts to attack. Using long, complex and unique passwords is a good way to stop your account from being hacked, and an easy way of keeping track and remembering your passwords is by using a password manager.

3) Perform software updates.

When a device prompts that it's time to update the software, it may be tempting to simply click postpone, and ignore the message. However, having the latest security software, web browser, and operating system on de-

vices is one of the best defenses against online threats. So, don't wait - update.

4) Do your research.

Common sense is a crucial part of maintaining good online hygiene, and an intuitive step to stay safe online is to do some research before downloading anything new you are downloading to your device, such as apps. Before downloading any new app on your device, make sure that it's ok by checking who created the app, what the user reviews say, and if there are any articles published online about the app's privacy and security features.

5) Check your settings.

Be diligent to double check your privacy and security settings and be aware who can access your documents. This extends from Google docs, to Zoom calls, and beyond. For meetings on Zoom, for example, create passwords so only those invited to the session can attend, and restrict who can share their screen or files with the rest of the attendees.

Being cyber smart and maintaining stellar online hygiene is the best way to protect yourself and others from cyber attacks. No single tip is foolproof but taken together they can make a real difference for taking control of your online presence. Following these tips is also easy, and free. By taking preventive measures and making a habit of practicing online safety, you can decrease your odds of being hacked exponentially - and prevent lost time and money, as well as annoyance.

PASSWORD DOS AND DON'TS
A strong password can make all the difference in protecting your personal information. Follow these tips for stronger passwords.

DO:

- Change the manufacturer's Wi-Fi password on your router.
- Use two-factor authentication.
- Use unique phrases (like lyrics to your favorite song) to remember passwords.

DON'T:

- Don't use common words or numbers like "password" or "1234."
- Don't use personal details like your date of birth in a password.
- Don't use the same password for multiple accounts.

October is Cybersecurity Awareness Month.

Do Your Part. #BeCyberSmart

DO YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO?

You know to look up and out for electrical lines and how to prevent electrical contacts by being aware of your surroundings and the equipment you are using.

But do you know what to do when you are in an accident with a power line?

First - Is the wire down or is the equipment in contact with the electrical line?

If yes, **STAY IN THE VEHICLE OR ON THE EQUIPMENT.**

If you can safely drive away from the line, do so slowly.

If not, stay put and contact ERPPD (800-675-2185) right away or call 911 and they will contact us to make sure the line is de-energized.

If for some life threatening reason, such as fire, you must exit the vehicle, be sure to exit the vehicle without touching it and, then, with feet close together hop or shuffle away to a safe distance from the power line approximately 40 feet or more.

Next, whether in the vehicle or out, try to make sure no one approaches or tries to move the wires, until crews have arrived and made sure the lines are de-energized.

See the info graphic on step potential to the right from Safe Electricity. Step potential is the reason it is so dangerous to leave your vehicle after an accident with high voltage lines.

Contact us for window decals to put on your equipment that have these life saving instructions (402) 675-2185.

Stay safe this harvest season.



STEP POTENTIAL



What you need to know:



A downed line does **NOT** have to be arcing or sparking to be energized — and dangerous.



Even if you do not touch lines or equipment, you can still be killed or seriously injured.



The **danger exists beyond** the point where the downed line is making direct contact with a vehicle or the ground.

Electricity can flow **360°** around it.

What is step potential?

If a person connects **two different points** of this gradually decreasing voltage by walking away, stepping out of a vehicle, or touching the vehicle and ground at the same time — electricity flows through the individual (path to ground).



Stay safe.

If you're in a car accident that involves downed lines, **stay in the car**. If you come upon a scene with a downed line, stay far away and **call 911** to have the utility notified.



Learn more at

Safe
Electricity.org