



# THE WIRE



CURRENT NEWS FROM THE ELKHORN RURAL PUBLIC POWER DISTRICT

October 2024

Serving the Elkhorn River Valley since 1940

Volume 33, Number 10

## CELEBRATE PUBLIC POWER MONTH



*From the GM,  
Mark Johnson*

Growing up in the Midwest, October has always been my favorite month.

The season

brings crisp fall air, football games, and the golden hues of harvest. It's also the time we celebrate something close to my heart—Public Power Month.

In Nebraska, where public power has deep roots, this is a month to reflect on the benefits that come from having a public utility. We take pride in being part of a public power system that is locally owned, not-for-profit, and focused

on the needs of our community. Public power allows us to prioritize reliable service, reinvest in infrastructure, and keep rates affordable for our customers. It's all about ensuring that the people we serve have access to safe, reliable, and cost-effective electricity, no matter what challenges arise.

At Elkhorn Rural Public Power District, we view public power as more than just a utility service. Our goal isn't to generate profits for outside

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## KIM BETTENHAUSEN NEW CSR



Meet Kimberly (Kim) Bettenhausen, who joined Elkhorn Rural Public Power District as the new Customer Service Representative on Tuesday, September 3rd. Kim is passionate about ensuring every customer has a positive experience and brings a wealth of knowledge and a friendly demeanor to every interaction.

Kim formerly worked as the Accounts Receivable Manager and in customer service for Nebraska Irrigation. Kim is committed to understanding your needs and providing timely solutions, making her a valuable part of our team.

A native of Columbus, Kim and her husband Jeff have been integral members of the Norfolk community since 2002, where they have raised their three sons.

In her free time, Kim enjoys going for walks, traveling, and spending time with her family. We are excited to welcome Kim to ERPPD!

# CELEBRATE PUBLIC POWER CON'T.

shareholders or stockholders, it's about building lasting relationships with the people we serve. Our customers are not just account numbers; they are our neighbors, friends, and local business owners. We understand the critical role electricity plays in daily life, whether it's powering a family farm, a small business, or a home.

This personalized, community-focused approach sets public power apart. Public Power Month reminds us of the trust placed in us to deliver that service and of the hard work our employees put in every day to meet those expectations. It also highlights the important responsibility placed on our board of directors, whose local

leadership helps guide decisions that reflect the best interests of our customers and the communities we serve.

As October rolls on and we celebrate Public Power Month, I encourage everyone to take a moment to appreciate the benefits of public power. It's not just about keeping the lights on—it's about being a part of something bigger, something that strengthens our communities and keeps Nebraska moving forward.

**October is Public Power Month**  
*Nebraska is the only public power state in the nation. Public Power Districts provide safe, reliable cost-effective electricity for our customers which is something to celebrate!*



## THE PEOPLE OF PUBLIC POWER IN NEBRASKA

### Thank you to all ERPPD employees!

Leroy Hanson was the first lineman hired at Elkhorn Rural Public Power District in 1940. He later served as general manager from 1952-1973. At the 10,000 meter milestone open house in July 2023, Leroy's son, Ken Hanson, said, "You think you are serving the customers, which you are, but the truth is this place provided for many families throughout the year..." Ken couldn't have said it any better. Each and every employee, and their families, are a part of the legacy of public power in Nebraska. Their contribution has fueled innovation, reliability, community, and so much more.



## Trivia

In the 1920's—before widespread rural electrification efforts commenced in the mid-1930's—how many American farms had electricity?

**Answer:** 2.6%  
 (By 1953, the number had increased to 88%.)



Elkhorn Rural Public Power District  
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# STAY SAFE ONLINE

Did you know the average household with internet access owns about 17 connected devices? That figure covers a wide range of electronics, including smart phones, computers, streaming devices, smart speakers, home assistants and more. Given our increasing reliance on internet-connected technologies, the likelihood of new cyber threats is ever-present.

ERPPD is deeply committed to ensuring our local system is safe and secure. We routinely monitor and manage cyber risks, and we work together with other co-ops to share the latest advancements in cybersecurity measures that make us stronger. But you can help, too. When we all work together to stay safe online, we lower the risk of cyber threats to our systems, on-line accounts and sensitive data. October is National Cybersecurity Month, and while good cyber hygiene should be practiced year-round, we'd like to share a few cybersecurity tips to help you bolster your online safety.

**1. Learn how to recognize and report phishing attacks.** Don't take the bait when cyber criminals go phishing. The signs of a phishing attack can be subtle, so take the extra time to thoroughly inspect emails. Most phishing emails include offers that are too good to be true, an urgent or alarming tone, misspellings and poorly-crafted language, ambiguous greetings, strange requests or an email address that doesn't match the company it's coming from. Most platforms like Outlook,



Gmail and Mac Mail allow users to report phishing emails. If you suspect a phishing attempt, take an extra minute to report it.

**2. Use strong passwords and a password manager.** Your passwords should always be long, unique and complex. Create passwords using at least 12 characters, never reuse passwords for multiple accounts and use a combination of upper- and lower-case letters, numbers and special characters. If you have a lot of accounts, consider using a password manager to store them easily and securely in one place.

**3. Enable multi-factor authentication.** Also known as two-step verification, multi-factor authentication adds a second step when logging into an account (to prove you're really you), which greatly increases the security of the account. Not every account offers multi-factor authentication, but it's becoming increasingly popular and should be utilized when

available.

**4. Update software.** It may seem obvious, but regularly updating software is one of the easiest ways to keep your personal information secure. Most companies provide automatic updates and will send reminders so you can easily install the update. If you're not receiving automatic software updates, set a reminder to do so quarterly. Be aware that some cyber criminals will send fake updates; these typically appear as a pop-up window when visiting a website. Use good judgement and always think before you click.

Let's all do our part to stay cyber smart and create a safer digital world for all. Visit [www.staysafeonline.org](http://www.staysafeonline.org) for additional cybersecurity tips.



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# ENERGY EFFICIENCY 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.

From October to March, the average Nebraska home consumes more than one third of its annual energy requirements to keep warm. It is no wonder heating is the largest energy expenditure most people have.

As you look to winterize your home for winter, remember to take the steps that will keep you warm and keep your electric bills in check.

For example: seal air leaks; tune up your heating system; use space heaters wisely and manage your fireplace by keeping the damper closed if there is no fire burning. These things will keep you warm and cozy.

If you are looking to complete

upgrades to your home like new insulation or a new heat pump, or just want to upgrade to a smart thermostat, there are incentives available to you through the EnergyWise<sup>SM</sup> program.

Earn up to \$600 off you electric bill for adding or replacing attic insulation, for example.

If you aren't sure of where you can become more energy efficient, use the online home energy assessment at <https://erppd.energywisenebraska.com/tools-resources/>.

Brian Suckstorf, energy services rep, is also available during office hours at 402-675-2185 if you need more information or if you have questions.

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

If you recently made or plan to make energy efficiency upgrades to your home, you may be eligible for federal tax credits. The Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) of 2022 empowers homeowners to save up to \$3,000 annually to lower the cost of efficiency upgrades by up to 30%. A few upgrades covered through the IRA include new exterior doors, windows, insulation, heating/cooling equipment and other major appliances. If you have completed or are considering an efficiency upgrade, visit [www.energystar.gov/federal-tax-credits](http://www.energystar.gov/federal-tax-credits) to learn if you qualify for tax credits.

Source: energystar.gov



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Todd Knutson

Connect with us Online:



[www.erppd.com](http://www.erppd.com)



SCAN ME

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

### Board of Directors

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