

North Central's News

Delivering a difference to parts of Knox, Antelope, Pierce, and Holt Counties Since 1945



Thoughts and Comments from General Manager, Keith E. Harvey

Rummaging through the papers on my desk . . .



In the “such a deal we have for you” category, the Southwest Power Pool has decided that its

member utilities in nine states (including NPPD, OPPD and Lincoln Electric System) should all contribute financially to the construction of high-voltage transmission lines in western Kansas for the purpose of powering the wind industry. And the amounts being talked about are not menial – from \$356 million to \$456 million dollars! This neat little process allows individual

utilities to spread the cost of their project across all of the utilities in the pool. Jeff Davis, a commissioner on the Missouri Public Service Commission stated “It’s

“It’s like being able to remodel your house and assess your neighbors for it”.

like being able to remodel your house and assess your neighbors for it”. Oh, and the route for these two 345,000 volt lines were chosen to avoid the habitat of the lesser prairie chicken. Omaha Public Power District may drop its membership in this group over this funding process.

Their board of directors will make a decision on retaining their membership by August 25, 2011. The federal government seems to agree that only those that benefit

should pay as evidenced by a statement by the chairman of the

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission that costs must be allocated commensurate with the estimated benefits derived and those receiving no benefits should

pay none of the costs. (The information for this paragraph came from the Journal Star, July 25, 2011).

There is a major problem for industries including the electric industry lurking just below the horizon waiting to wreak havoc across the entire country. This problem is the looming retirement of thousands of well-trained, industry workers who will be taking vast amounts of knowledge and expertise with them. And there really are no replacements available – there are people eager to work and fill the positions but it will take months to years for these new hires to even approach the knowledge base of the retirees. In the electric utility industry the average worker is 50 years old. More than 148,000 utility employees fall in the 55-to 64-year-old age with another 26,000 employees being over 65 years

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High electrical usage alert for residential and commercial customers

Last month in July, Mother Nature turned up the heat for the last two weeks of the month. With the temps in the upper 90s, plus the high humidity forced many customers to turn their thermostats down trying to stay comfortable by cooling their homes and/or businesses.

Customers with residential or commercial services in the Villages of Bazile Mills, Brunswick, Center, Niobrara, Orchard, Royal, Page, Santee, Verdigre, and Winnetoon may experience some unusually higher electric bills in August this year, as a result of the scorching temperatures and the time the meters were read in July. The meters in the villages are typically read monthly by the

15, so it is a good chance that none of the usage for the “heat wave” that started on July 16 has been read or billed. And if these high temperatures continue into the first couple of weeks of August then by the time the meters in the villages are read again, there will be about 30 days of extremely hot and dry weather reflected in the costs on the August bill.

The District’s rural customers who call their readings into the office between the 20 and the 28 of the month have already experienced the results of the “heat wave” with increases in their July usage which in turn means higher bills also.

Customers are reminded that the electric rates did not change from June

to July but there is a good chance the number of kWh used increased – possibly by a significant number. And if you are wondering if there is a problem with the meter, this is highly unlikely, meter manufacturers say a failure rate of .2% can be expected. In the event there was a problem with a meter it will typically record less kWh than are being used.

This high electric usage alert is to caution customers that their August billing (the bill you receive in September) will probably be higher than normal. It might be wise as you budget for the August bill to allow an extra amount for what is likely to a higher bill than usual.

New 85-15 Hoffman Substation brought on line

The construction of the new 85-15 Hoffman substation that began in December of 2010 is nearing completion and was put on line on August 3, 2011. This new substation is located southwest of Brunswick.

It will be serving the Village of

Brunswick, many rural residential, commercial, irrigation, pivot drive, and seasonal services in the southern portion of the District. This new substation will also provide relief to adjacent substations nearing capacity. It will also provide alternate source of electricity during outage

situations.

This substation is the District's 15th substation put into service and will replace the existing 85-9 Brunswick Town substation located south of Brunswick. Construction costs for this project were near \$600,000.



Contract awarded for the Winnetoon Transmission Line Upgrade Project

At North Central's June board meeting, the Board of Directors awarded the Winnetoon Transmission Line Upgrade FEMA & Winnetoon South Transmission Line projects to Mid-Plains Power, LLC out of Grand Island, NE. Mid-Plains Power, LLC submitted the low bid of \$604,597.70 for the Winnetoon Transmission Line Upgrade FEMA portion and \$270,343.22 for the Winnetoon South Transmission Line portion for a combined bid of \$874,940.92.

This project will replace approximately 11.5 miles of 69,000 volt (69kV) line and an equal amount of 7,200 volt (7.2kV) three phase distribution line. Currently the 7.2 kV line runs along a county road and the 69 kV line is located in the center section line. These lines will be relocated along the county road with both lines combined on a to single pole.

Preparations for this project have already begun with District representatives meeting with landowners to discuss the proposed route and obtaining right-of-way easements, in addition to tree work being completed along the route. Mid Plains Power LLC is scheduled to begin construction on this project in September 2011 with a completion date of March 2012.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) selected North Central to receive a Hazard Mitigation Grant in the amount of \$1,479,862 to help fund this project. This amount must be matched by North Central with \$493,287 of District funds for a project total of \$1,937,149.



Pictured above are two linemen preparing the new 85-15 Hoffman Substation to be energized.

Pictured to the left crews are installing a switch pole that feeds the new 85-15 Hoffman Substation.

Energy efficiency tips and rebates

Is your summer electric bill getting you down? This month I have some energy efficient ideas I would like to share with you. These tips when implemented could help lower your electric usage and your bill, plus by having a lower electric bill will hopefully help pick you Up.

- Click you're A/C thermostat up 2 degrees
- Set your water heater to 120 degrees
- Tape up hot water heater pipes with insulation tape
- Unplug unused electronics and chargers
- Check to see if your lights & ceiling fans are turned off when you leave the room
- Install a low flow shower head
- Fill up the dish washer and clothes washer before you run it
- Use Compact Fluorescent Light (CFL) bulbs
- Look up in the attic to see if you have plenty of insulation
- Clean refrigerator condenser coils once a year
- Seal up and replace old weather stripping around doors and windows



Linda Sokol, Energy Advisor

I would also like to remind our customers we have several different energy efficient rebates available. If you would like to learn about these rebates contact me at 402-358-5112 or 800-578-1060. Following is a list of these rebates:

- ✓ Attic Insulation
- ✓ Heat Pumps
- ✓ New Window A/C's
- ✓ Cooling system check up
- ✓ Refrigerator Recycling
- ✓ High Efficiency Motor's
- ✓ Variable Frequency Drives
- ✓ Custom and Prescriptive Lighting
- ✓ Custom Irrigation

Rummaging

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old. Also, the National Rural Electric Association showed that 61% of all line superintendents are 50 or older. The extreme shortage of electrical engineers and the number of new ones graduating every year paint a very bleak future for the engineering of our very complex electric grid. When this current business recession eases up you can probably count on a mass exodus of knowledge and skills as employees across the U.S. retire. This has tremendous implications for electric utilities in the not too distant future as the industry grows more complex daily.

In the latest in wind energy news it appears as if the Section 1705 loan-guarantee program by the Department of Energy has been eliminated, possibly only temporarily, and has thus created a great deal of uncertainty and angst for offshore wind projects. When these guarantees were available the DOE would provide the credit subsidy costs and guarantee up to 80% of the loan amount provided to a renewable energy project

financed by a qualified financial institute. Since March 2009 the DOE has provided 19 loan guarantees –with taxpayer money for private developers – totaling \$11 billion in investment. Now the goose is out of golden eggs so wind developers are singing the blues (as in NRG Bluewater Wind) and claiming that European countries recognize the value of offshore wind and subsidize it to the maximum degree and wants the U.S. to do the same. What a sweet deal. A group of investors can go out and borrow a whole gob of money and get a subsidized interest rate and have 80% of the principal guaranteed by the government. Add this to the production tax credit of 2.2¢per kWh (which is almost what it costs to produce a kWh from coal) and accelerated depreciation on these projects and you have a very nice package for someone.

One other development in the world of big wind energy is the concern in Ontario, Canada that a conservative may be elected in the October 2011 elections and do away with the Green Energy Act claiming that it is “fiscally wasteful and impudent”. He also seeks to end the

From our homes to yours . . .

Tried & Tasted Delicacies

Fresh Corn on the Cob (microwave)

Cook fresh corn on the cob in microwave with husks and silk intact. They will cook in their own natural moisture.

Place on dampened paper towel. turn ears over and rearrange after 1/2 cooking time.

Cooking Timetable:

- 1 ear - 1 1/2 minutes
- 2 ears - 3 to 4 minutes
- 3 ears - 5 to 6 minutes
- 4 ears - 7 to 8 minutes
- 6 ears - 8 to 9 minutes

When ears are hot to the touch, remove and wrap in kitchen towel or foil. Let stand at least 5 minutes. Remove husks and silk (which are easier than when cold) and serve. Serve with melted butter and enjoy.

FIT (feed-in tariff) that guarantees wind power purchases for 20 years at 13.5¢ per kWh for land-based wind; 19¢ per kWh for offshore wind; and 14 ¢ per kWh for community-based or aboriginal wind based projects (10 MW and under). This deal makes the U.S. deal previously mentioned look relatively mild by comparison. John Yakabuski, a Progressive Conservative energy critic summed it up “We’ve been clear from the outset that these expensive energy experiments do not represent good value for Ontario families paying the bills. We’re not going to support that – the gravy train is over.” Maybe we should pay heed to what our Canadian neighbors are finally realizing.

Well it has been a real hot and dry couple of weeks and we at North Central are certainly ready for some rain and cooler temps. As you are out and about enjoying the summer despite its heat please be careful and do things safely. In the meanwhile were working diligently to keep you cool during the hot days and insure that you have lights on at night.



1409 Main St • PO Box 90 • Creighton, NE 68729-0090
www.ncppd.com • E-Mail: ncentral@ncppd.net
Customer Service: 402-358-5112 or 800-578-1060
Reporting Power Outage: 888-358-5112

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The Bargain Barn

For Sale: Big round oats / hay bales and oats/straw bales. Please call 402-847-3395, if no answer please leave a message.

For Sale: Sofa, recliner, television, standing lamp, metal desk, tricycle, crib and queen size bed frame with rollers. Best offer. You must haul. Please call 402-358-5409.

Wanted: Land owners with deer problem. Experience Bow hunter looking for land to deer hunt on. Will close all gates. Prefer alnd in the Royal, Verdigre, Niobrara and Center areas. Please call 402-841-2242.

Do you have something to sell or are you looking for something in particular? You can call, send or email (bargainbarn@ncppd.net) your description of what's for sale or what you are looking for into our office. We will run the ad in the Bargain Barn section free for one month. Please include name and telephone number. No commercial ads will be accepted, personal items only.

Irrigation Hotline
402-358-7025

Two different messages can be heard.
Press 1 - Weekly Forecast
Press 2 - Daily Load Control Hours

Meter Reading Reminder for Rural Customers

Meter readings for rural residential and commercial services should be submitted into North Central's office between:

August 20 and 28, 2011

Meter Readings can be submitted by:

- Phone - 402-358-5112 or 800-578-1060
- Electronically - www.ncppd.com or Email - ncentral@ncppd.net

Accounts without a meter reading at end of month billing will be subject to the \$20 Estimated Meter Reading Fee

RURAL CONSUMERS please read your meter between the 20th and the 28th. If you are calling your meter reading(s) into our office use our local or toll free "800" telephone number. If you call after our normal business hours 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, you may leave your reading on our answering service. To submit your meter reading electronically log onto our web site at www.ncppd.com and click Submit Your Meter Readings. You can also email your meter readings into our office by using the following email address - ncentral@ncppd.net. If you are unable to call your meter reading(s) into our office, you can mail your readings into our office by the date listed above.

Town meters are read by North Central PPD personnel.