

# 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*

## “It’s a strange, strange world we live in Master Jack”

- “Master Jack” by Four Jacks and a Jill – 1967

Over three million people are out of power at the conclusion of the unseasonably strong snowstorm that blasted the eastern United States last weekend with up to three feet of heavy snow in some areas from Virginia all the way to Maine. At the time I am writing this article there are perhaps as many as a million people that are still suffering the hardships associated with having no electrical power. The sad part of this very serious situation is that a good deal of this calamity is self-inflicted by the residents of the states affected. The recipe for this disaster was heavy snow, wind and lots of trees that were still heavy with fall foliage – lots and lots and even more lots of trees. Unfortunately thousands of these beautiful trees were near, under or actually grown into overhead power lines. Now they are broken and twisted monsters

that have taken down an untold number of poles and wires when their snow-laden branches and trunks became entangled with power lines as these once beautiful monarchs plunged in pieces to the ground. We all know that mile after mile of power lines on the ground wrapped up in tree limbs is not at all conducive to getting power restored to customers. The tree limbs and trunks must now be removed from the lines and then the lines need to be put up on new poles – using new conductor.

Anywhere that customers decide that the beauty of having a tree near or under power lines is more important than having that tree trimmed properly or even removed then these customers are in essence saying that they are willing to



*This picture is from the November 2011 snow storm in the northeastern part of the United States.*

be without power for any period of time (a few minutes to a week or more) and still have their tree cut down should an ice storm or properly-timed snow storm descend on their location. They are also making that same decision for all of their neighbors who will also be out of power thanks to their tree or trees. Electric utili-

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## 2012 Retail Rate Adjustment

Keeping customers informed on changes to their electric rates is a priority of North Central's so that you can be prepared as you consider your personal budget. Customers will experience a rate adjustment effective January 1, 2012. North Central's wholesale supplier, Nebraska Public Power District (NPPD) announced they will be raising our rates 6.5% in January.

A cost of service and rate impact study has been conducted by an outside rate consultant, Mark Beauchamp of

Utility Financial Solutions. This study is done so that the board of directors and management can determine that each rate class is being charged the correct amount. The study is the basis for the rates that will be charged for 2012. Wholesale power costs, different operating and maintenance costs and capital improvements for each rate class are included in the study. After these costs are allocated to the different classes the new rates are established.

North Central's board will review

the rates in November or December and will analyse what rate adjustments customers will experience in 2012.

Approximately sixty cents of every dollar that North Central collects from our customers for energy used goes to NPPD for wholesale energy charges North Central has incurred.

North Central board members and employees will continue to work hard to keep costs as low as possible, as we have in the past.

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# Master Jack

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ties are waging a never-ending battle with trees especially when they are planted under or close to power lines by customers and that will someday cause a power outage for the utility.

Please don't think that I am a tree hater because I certainly am not. I have trees planted all the way around my house and I thoroughly enjoy them. Just recently I had one of them cut down because it was planted too close to a power line and I was not going to let it become a potential outage problem for me or my neighbors

One of the things that will come out of this storm and its associated damage is that somehow, somehow – this will end up being blamed on the utility. Those people at the power company should have done something different to avoid this current scenario. Who planted the trees? Who owns the trees? Could there be a problem with utility tree-trimming practices and schedules? Perhaps there is a problem and then again perhaps not. The problem is that some people want their trees, they want their power AND they want low electricity prices. One thing that will almost certainly be discussed is why doesn't the utility bury all of their wires underground and all problems with trees would be solved. Let's look at that idea a little bit closer.

In December of 2002 a severe ice storm struck a large portion of North Carolina and caused unprecedented electrical outages. This event was the trigger for the State of North Carolina commissioning a study to determine the feasibility of burying all of the electric distribution lines in the state. When the study was completed it was determined that underground lines were 50% more reliable than overhead lines but also that it took 58% longer to repair underground faults as compared to overhead problems. So if you did lose power in a storm from maybe a tree root destroying a power line as the tree above was uprooted by wind (or a fault for some unrelated reason) then you may have to wait 58% longer than if the lines were located overhead.

This study also determined that it would cost \$41 billion and require 237 million man-hours of work to complete.

It would create a six-fold increase in the value of the distribution assets from \$7.36 billion to the \$41 billion. It would take 5,000 employees 25 years to complete the task and result in an increase in annual revenue requirements of \$8.8 billion. This increase would permanently add 10 cents per every single kilowatt-hour purchased by every customer in the state. And after twenty-five years of construction it would be time to start repairing and replacing the line that was buried early on in the program. The State of North Carolina decided that it was not economically feasible to bury all of the distribution lines underground and that dealing with the vegetation problem might be a better solution.

Now, switching gears, I want to expose to you what has to be the worst wind-energy project in the United States. Those are not my words but those of a communications strategist at a March 23rd webinar sponsored by the American Council on Renewable Energy called "Speaking Out on Renewable Energy: Communications Strategies for the Renewable Energy Industry". This webinar was dealing with the fact that when people discover the true cost of wind energy and what wind turbines do to property values – the wind loses support. This communications expert (spinmeister) told the wind proponents to stress that wind is a clean energy source and that it provides jobs. I'll talk more about this statement later.

The actual worst project of which I speak is the 845-megawatt Shepherds Flat project in Oregon courtesy of federal taxpayers. And the windfall (pardon the pun) from this project will go to the "struggling companies" of General Electric, Google, Sumitomo and Caithness Energy. Not only are these companies getting loan guarantees of \$1.06 billion but when GE's 338 turbines start turning at Shepherds Flats, the Treasury Department will send these developers another \$490 million grant. This means that these companies will only have about 11% equity in this deal and should receive a return on their investment of about 30%.

If any of you out there think that the \$529 million bankruptcy of Solyndra was corporate welfare then you would really like the skulduggery behind this project. However, since that is a politi-

cal discussion I'm not going to go there. However anyone wishing to delve into the politics of this situation can read them and reach your own conclusions at <http://www.nationalreview.com/articles> and look for "America's Worst Wind Energy Project" by Robert Bryce published October 12, 2011.

The reason why I dislike this project is that it is being built in Oregon to furnish power to Southern California. By adding this project to their generation mix the residents of Southern California are adding to the serious electricity congestion problems that are plaguing the region served by the Bonneville Power Authority. Basically with the Bonneville Power Authority's dams full of water for hydro-power and more and more wind being built, the area simply has too much renewable capacity and now will have to fund hugely expensive transmission lines to find someplace to export their excess. This project will create 35 permanent jobs at Shepherds Flat. One of GE's partners in this venture said that they were pleased to be bringing "green energy jobs to our economy." If you ignore the billion plus dollar loan and only focus on the \$490 million grant – each of these "green energy" jobs cost about \$14.0 million dollars (\$490 million divided by 35 jobs). That same amount of money would only create about 327 permanent jobs (30 years each) at \$50,000 per year. – but after all it's just taxpayer money.

And the government is thinking of cutting some of the provisions in the Farm Bill to save money?? It truly is a strange world we live in Master Jack.

I had several other renewable debacles to discuss but have run out of room to write for this month. Perhaps next month I will discuss the growing problem of bankruptcies among renewable energy companies – and all backed by taxpayer guarantees. Have a great month and may Thanksgiving be meaningful and pleasant. Work and play safe and we will do our level best to deliver the power you need at each and every instant that you need it.

## Seasonal Service Transfers

Customers are reminded the annual customer charge for Seasonal Service accounts will be billed in December. The annual customer charge is for the upcoming year (2012) and will appear on the December 2011 billing statement, which should arrive in the customer's mail box the first week in January.

If you have a seasonal service that will no longer be in your name in 2012, please notify our office to have the service transferred. This will allow the billing department to complete the transfer process and bill the appropriate customer the seasonal service annual customer charge for 2012. When requesting a transfer of service please provide our billing department with the following information:

- Eight digit meter number (found on the face of the meter)
- Final meter reading
- Location number (see your most recent billing statement)
- Name and contact number of the person whom the service is to be transferred to.

## Are you a Snowbird?



Are you a snowbird who is heading to a warmer locale for the winter months, or leaving home for an extended period of time? Please contact us with your new phone number and mailing address so that you will receive your electric bill in a timely manner. Mail that is forwarded by the U.S. Postal Service may be delayed.

A delay in receiving your billing statement may make it difficult to pay your bill by the due date (15th of each month). Payments received after the due date maybe subject to a late payment penalty.

We recommend snowbirds sign up for the Automatic Bank Payment service we offer. You can be certain that your payments are always received on time when you use this service. The service authorizes the payment to be made directly from your bank account on the payment due date each month. Automatic payments are convenient and accurate. There is no check to write, saving you time and money on postage, plus you also avoid any late payment penalties. To learn more about this service contact our office at 402-358-5112 or 800-578-1060.



## Holiday Hours Office Closed - November 24 & 25

North Central's office will be closed for the Thanksgiving Holiday on November 24 and 25. Meter readings can still be submitted during this time. If calling your meter readings in, please leave your meter readings along with the eight digit meter number on our answering service. Readings can also be submitted on our web site [www.nccpd.com](http://www.nccpd.com) or by email at [nccentral@nccpd.net](mailto:nccentral@nccpd.net).

*From our homes to yours . . .*

## Tried & Tasted Delicacies

### Nippy Cheese Dip

- 1 lb. Velveeta Cheese
- 1 - 5 oz. jar Horseradish
- 1/2 c. mayonnaise
- 5 drops hot sauce

Melt cheese in pan on stove. Stir in other ingredients. Pour into serving dish. Refrigerate. Serve with crackers or vegetables.

### Hot Corn Dip

- 2 cans drained white shoepeg corn
- 1 can drained yellow corn
- 2 cups shredded mixed cheese
- 1 can chopped green chilis
- 1 cup mayonnaise
- 1 cup sour cream
- dash of Tabasco

Mix all ingredients together, put in a shallow baking dish. Bake at 350 degrees until bubbly. Serve with corn chips.



North Central will be hosting the opening night of Santa Land in Creighton on Saturday, December 3 from 6 to 9 p.m.

We encourage everyone to come and visit Santa Land. Santa and Mrs. Claus will be at Santa's Workshop giving children the opportunity to sit on Santa's lap and give him their Christmas wish list. Refreshments will also be served. Please plan to come visit Santa Land.



1409 Main St • PO Box 90 • Creighton, NE 68729-0090  
 www.ncppd.com • E-Mail: ncentral@ncppd.net  
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## The Bargain Barn

**For Sale:** Rare antique laundry stove. Please call 402-847-3274.

**For Sale:** Winco stand by generator, 20,000 watts, 4 cylinder Ford engine, natural gas or propane, 120/240 volt, 9 yrs old, 141 hours on generator - \$3,000. Please call Jacque at 402-755-2233.

**For Sale:** 1985 Olds 88, runs good, cloth seats, electric windows and seats, good tires - \$500 or best offer, price negotiable. Please call 402-842-2405.

**For Sale:** Longhorn roping saddle - 15" seat - \$350. Please call 402-316-6139.

**Wanted:** Small animal surgery table. Please call 402-316-6139.

**For Sale:** Invacare Pronto M91 Power tilt wheelchair, Whirlpool microwave oven, KitchenAid dishwasher, Electrolux carpet shampooer, and antique wood stove. Please call 402-655-2222.

**For Sale:** Winchester Model 1200 Shot Gun - 3 chokes interchange. Please call 402-842-3125.

**For Sale:** Pickup topper in good condition; Load Handler for 4x8 pickup box, easy one person unloading. Please call 402-655-2200.

**For Sale:** 1 new tire Goodyear Wrangler GS-A 31x10.50R-15LT. Please call 402-841-8087.

## Meter Reading Reminder for Rural Customers

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

**November 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](http://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](mailto: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.