

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

Updates on the Energy Front or the Death of Common Sense



Hurricane Irene recently moved up the east coast of the United States and left a massive path of destruction and misery behind it. One of the biggest problems was the vast number of people that were without electricity as a result of this storm. In some cases the power companies are saying it could even be weeks before everyone has their power restored. However, even working around the clock and bringing in numerous crews from all over the nation – this is still not enough for the pious, know-it-all lawmakers of the great state of Massachusetts. Ignoring the fact that the biggest cause of the majority of the power outages was trees and tree branches falling into the lines and de-

stroying wires and poles, one Massachusetts Senator wants to financially punish the utilities. Since there is no way to get these customers to trim or remove trees around power lines because every growing tree is a good tree – the idea is to put all of the blame on the utilities for not preventing this consumer-created disaster. What a bunch of yahoos!! In any event he or she wants to pass a law that would make the utility give the consumer two days of free electricity for every day that the consumer is out of power. I must say that this logic defies normal thought processes but then remember where this is taking place. First as a policy-maker you make it nearly impossible for utilities to trim or remove trees, then a storm uses these same trees as a means to nearly destroy the electrical distribution system, the power companies spend

a fortune to repair a mess that is not of their making, and then you further drain their financial resources by having them give away electricity. Welcome to the funny-farm of U.S. politics and policy-making.

Now on to the once-great-state of Colorado and the recent ruling by the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) regarding a rate increase request of 18.8% by Black Hills Energy. It seems that Black Hills Energy is in the process of building a new gas-fired power plant in the vicinity of Pueblo, Colorado to serve that city and others in southern Colorado. The need for the plant was justified by the fact that Black Hills Energy's contract with Xcel Energy for 75% of the power that Black Hill's sells expires December 31, 2011 and Xcel is not go-

continued to page 2

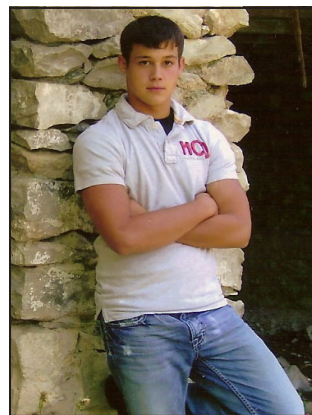
Peter E. Thomassen Scholarship Recipients

The recipients of the 2011-2012 Peter E. Thomassen Scholarship are Nick York and Spencer Frederick. North Central's Board of Directors selected these two recipients to receive \$500 each to use towards their academic tuition.

To be eligible to be considered for this scholarship applicants must be enrolled in the Utility Line Program at Northeast Community College (NECC) and must be a customer or a dependent of a customer of North Central's.

Nick is the son of Brian and Ronda York of Center and Spencer is the son of Jeff & Denise Frederick of Verdigre. Nick and Spencer are in their second year of the utility line program.

In almost two decades North Central has awarded this scholarship to several recipients who have selected the electric utility industry for their career. This scholarship was established in 1990 in honor of the late Peter E. Thomassen for his dedicated years of service to the district. Thomassen served North Central for 36 years before retiring from his position of general manager.



Spencer Frederick



Nick York

Winter rates go into effect October 1st

On October 1st the winter rates go into effect. These rates are lower than the summer rates and will be in effect for the next eight months (October through May). These rates reflect the lower cost of wholesale power the District purchases during these months. These low rates encourage customers to switch to electric space and water heating sources. The additional winter electric consumption helps the District offset the effects of large summer demands. For a listing of the District's rate log onto our web site www.nccpd.com, click on the Customer Service tab, and then the Rate Schedule link.

Updates on the Energy Front

continued from page 1

ing to renew the contract. This 320 MW combined-cycle gas-fired plant is going to come in at somewhere around \$500 million and create about 20 full-time jobs and greatly increase reliability for affected customers. The PUC holds a public meeting and in marches a representative of almost every low-income assistance program in the area to oppose the rate increase. Being true bureaucrats the PUC unveils a new rule that they will issue in the Fall of this year requiring all utilities to develop a low-income assistance program for the growing problem of people with severe economic hardships. All this rule does is suggest that utilities put families on income-based bills - their income would dictate the most that they could be charged for electricity or gas (4% of their income) regardless of how much they actually use. And to put the cherry on this bad idea is what is called the "safe harbor" model that would make utilities forgive all prior debts if the low-income customer pays their reduced energy bills on time for two years. Where do they

get this stuff? And what happens to the customers that pay their bills on time even if they may have to give up some of the discretionary things that make life a little easier? They get to pay their own increased utility bills and the bills of those on a reduced billing amount or they get disconnected or maybe they get to suffer with decreased reliability. This is because – all together now – **THERE ARE NO FREE LUNCHES!** I do understand that there are customers that for very good reasons cannot pay their utility bills in a timely manner, but I do not think that forcing socialism on the utilities and their paying customers is the proper way to go about fixing the problem. The low income assistance programs available are good as designed but are being overwhelmed by a state and national economy that is in the tank. That is not the fault of the utilities any more than it is the fault of government taxation, or increased gasoline prices, or food prices, or anything else that increases in price or even the price of tea in China. The problem is an economy that is not expanding and a serious lack of jobs. Another problem is that a customer is usually a month or two behind in their payments before disconnection is initiated so the reconnect is very expensive. Perhaps the PUC should be pushing for pre-paid meters for these people so they do not get so far in arrears before they seek out help. The number of people in poverty in the United States today is a national tragedy and is a problem that requires resources and compassion to address. However, it is a societal problem and is a problem much too large to be put on the back of energy companies and their already stressed customers. (P.S. In the recession of 1982 I was personally in the position of low-income and full-well understand the issues associated with it.)

Next I would like to touch upon an article in the Omaha World Herald by Jonah Goldberg titled "Green Jobs Oversold". This is an amazingly insightful piece based on the fact that it is in the newspaper of a major U.S. city. It states that green jobs have always been a con as has been clearly shown by the dismal failure of the green jobs program in Spain. There 2.2 jobs in other industries were lost for every one green job created

and each green job averaged 500,000 Euros to create. Oh and Spain is at 21% unemployment so all those jobs lost to green jobs sure didn't help matters much. And even the New York Times, a bastion of green thinking has admitted that "federal and state efforts to stimulate creation of green jobs have largely failed, government records show." And lastly the most telling reason why green jobs or any other energy program cannot get off the ground regardless of government subsidies comes from – where else – California. It seems that a massive weatherization program was delayed for seven months while the Department of Labor decided on the prevailing wage standards for the industry to implement this program. When all the labor unions were figured in it seems the program was too expensive for homeowners. Go figure.

Finally, here is a quote from a Beetle Bailey cartoon in the Tuesday, September 6, 2011 Norfolk Daily News – when you see who said it then it brings true perspective as to where we are as a nation. "The budget should be balanced. The treasury should be refilled. Public debt should be reduced. The arrogance of officialdom should be controlled... assistance to foreign lands should be curtailed lest (we) become bankrupt..." Words by the Roman Cicero in 55 B.C.

Well – summer is winding down and the crisp air of autumn seems to creep in a little more with each passing day. Have a safe and bountiful harvest. If anyone of you is having real problems paying your electric bill please contact our office before you are way behind so that we can work out some payment arrangements with you. And as always we will do our level best in the next month to keep your power on every single minute. One last thought - If you have trees in our lines you might want to take a look at what happened back on the east coast and let us work with you to remove these leafed outages that are just waiting to happen. It's not a matter of if they will cause an outage – just when (and they prefer high winds, nasty weather and snow and ice storms).

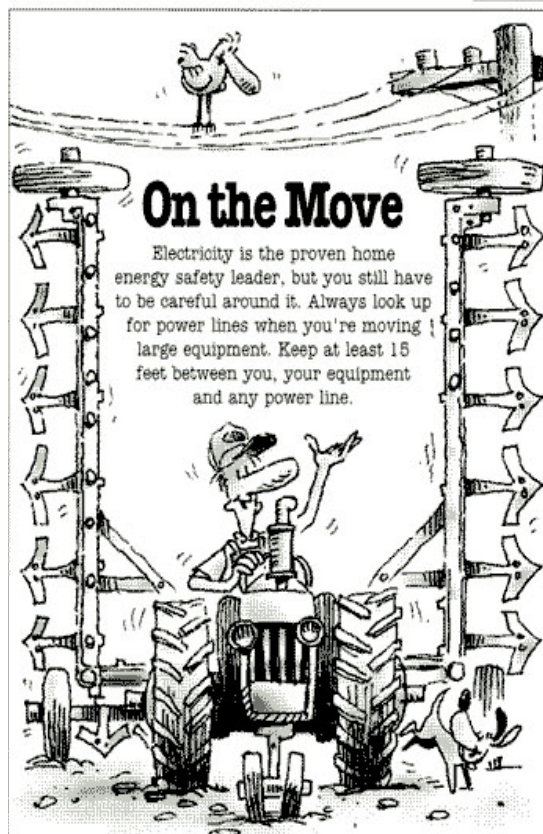


Linda Sokol, Energy Advisor

September is Farm Safety Month

I would like to remind farmers and their families that September is Farm Safety Month, with National Farm Safety and Health Week being September 18-24. I have listed below some farm safety tips taken from the American Society of Safety Engineers for you to look over and keep in mind not only during this busy time of the year but all year long:

- » Educate yourself about farm equipment. Read and follow all instructions according to the equipment's operation manual.
- » Conduct regular equipment inspections, as this act can prevent farm-related injuries by identifying problems and hazards early.
- » Do not wear loose clothing while entering confined spaces such as grain bins, silos and hoppers to prevent entanglements.
- » Install Rollover Protection Structures on tractors.
- » Use seat belts while operating all farm equipment. Do not allow additional passengers to ride on the tractor with you.
- » While operating tractors and other farm equipment, be very cautious on rural roadways. Look for oncoming cars while making wide turns. Watch for pot-holes, ditches and steep hills. Be sure to keep equipment at least 20 feet from any overhead power lines or wires that support poles.
- » Use protective gear when operating machinery and appropriate protective gear for handling chemicals or other hazardous materials. Make sure the protective equipment is approved by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health.
- » Consistently educate your family and co-workers about safety practices, especially children. Make sure children are involved only in age appropriate tasks as describe at www.nagcat.org.
- » Look into receiving proper first aid and emergency training. Have emergency contact information easily available.



From our homes to yours . . .

Tried & Tasted Delicacies

Banana Cream Supreme

- 1 1/4 c crushed graham crackers
- 1/4 c butter, melted
- 3 tbs. granulated sugar
- 1 c sour cream
- 1/2 c cold milk
- 1 - 3.4 oz. box instant vanilla pudding
- 1 large container whipped topping
- 3 medium bananas, sliced
- 2 tbs. sliced almonds

Crush graham crackers, add melted butter and sugar; mix well. Press mixture into a 9x13 inch cake pan. Whisk sour cream and milk. Add pudding mix and whisk until pudding is dissolved. Add half of thawed whipped topping, mix well until blended. Spread half of filling over crust. Slice bananas and arrange over filling. Spread remaining filling over bananas. Cover with remaining whipped topping and sprinkle almonds over top. Chill and serve.



Energy Efficiency

Tip of the Month

One of the easiest ways to make your home more energy efficient is to add insulation in the attic. To see if you need insulation, look across an uncovered attic floor. If the insulation is level with or below the floor joists, you probably need to add more insulation.

Source: Energy Star



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

Presorted Standard
 U.S. POSTAGE
 PAID
 NORFOLK, NE
 Permit No. 1

Delivering a Difference

The Bargain Barn

For Sale: Fold down ramp tailgate, fits Ford or Chevy, etc. Please call 402-857-3793.

For Sale: Queen size mattress and box spring in excellent condition, four years old. Please call 402-668-2271.

For Sale: 1985 Oldsmobile 88. Runs good, good tires, cloth seats, split front seat, power windows and seats, Green color, A.C. does not work. \$750 price negotiable. Please call 402-842-2405 in the evenings.

For Sale: Four Blue Heeler/Red Heeler/Border Collie cross puppies, out of working parents. Please call 402-358-5567 or 402-841-6219 or 402-841-6217 after 6:00 p.m.

Do you have something to sell or are you looking for something in particular? You can call, send or email (bargain.barn@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.

Meter Reading Reminder for Rural Customers

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

September 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.