

THE WIRE

CURRENT NEWS FROM THE ELKHORN RURAL PUBLIC POWER DISTRICT

August 2009

Serving the Elkhorn River Valley since 1940

Volume 18, Number 8

Wind Farm bus tour a big hit with customers

Elkhorn Rural Public Power District recently sponsored a bus tour of Nebraska Public Power District's wind energy facility at Ainsworth, Neb. The primary purpose of that trip was to inform ERPPD customers (and particularly those who have an interest in a potential wind energy generating facility between Elgin and Petersburg) about the facts of wind energy.

In all, 65 men and women on two buses made the journey to Ainsworth. Among them were customers, four directors, and four personnel of ERPPD; two employees of NPPD; two employees of the Nebraska Rural Electric Association; one state senator; one county commissioner; two students in Northeast Community College's wind energy diploma program; and others with a specific interest in the subject at hand.

The tourists received a packet of information about wind energy in Nebraska, among which were maps, brochures, and fact sheets dealing with various aspects of wind energy in Nebraska.

Tour participants were treated to three videos: the first updating riders on the "Our Energy Our Future" campaign (see *WIRE-Page 2*), a second presenting up-to-date information of renewable energy resources in the state, and a third explaining specific facts about the Ainsworth facility.

After lunch at the Ainsworth Public



State Senator Kate Sullivan (third from left) joined ERPPD directors, general manager, and customers on a tour of NPPD's Ainsworth Wind Farm. Directors are, from left, Bob Kee, Dave Hoefer, Rod Zohner, and Greg Weidner. At far right is ERPPD General Manager Tom Rudloff.

Schools Education Center, the ERPPD contingent was welcomed by KBR Rural Public Power General Manager Rich Walters. In his presentation, Walters presented the technical aspects of the wind towers and turbines.

After Walters finished, he ushered everyone back to the buses, and escorted the tour party to the wind farm site a couple miles south of Ainsworth.

On this day, the wind farm—whose maximum output is about 58 megawatts (MWs)—was generating about eight MWs. This low output was attributed to the slow wind speed as well as to the number of towers and turbines

which were undergoing some form of maintenance.

While standing under a non-operating tower, the wind actually dropped so much that the blades of the nearby working turbines nearly stopped. "We are not generating any electricity now," said Walters.

Walters went on to say that this wind farm has a 40 percent capacity factor. In the industry, that is an excellent number. Capacity factor is the amount of total operating time compared to the total time that it could have been operating (24 hours a day, seven days a week, 52 weeks a year). He gave an analogy for what this 40 percent capacity factor means to electric consumers: "When you flip your light switch five times, the lights will actually come on twice; but you don't know which times or when."

Visitors were able to enter a tower to see the control area and instrument panels. Tour participants were also allowed to walk to the nearest of the working towers and they noted how quiet it was.

In the end, wind has a definite place among the fuel resources in Nebraska's generation mix. However, careful planning must be used to maintain an appropriate balance among those resources, so that electric customers in Nebraska do not lose the reliable and affordable electric energy that they have come to rely on so regularly and to take for granted so often.

OUR ENERGY OUR FUTURE

Balancing renewable energy with affordability

'Our Energy Our Future' finds energy solutions with customers in mind.

While renewable energy is more and more often being embraced as the answer to America's energy crisis, the price tag associated with its development—and how reliably those renewable projects operate—often leaves a lot to be desired. It is clear that developing such power generation resources as solar, wind, and biomass to meet government renewable energy mandates will impact electric bills. The amount of these increases may depend on how closely Congress is willing to work with electric power providers.

Elkhorn Rural Public Power District is committed to providing its customers with affordable and reliable power in an environmentally responsible fashion. ERPPD's management and directors want to work directly with Congress to ensure that the utility's rates for electric-

ity don't rise too much as a result of any federal mandates requiring utilities to add a certain percentage of "clean and green" power to the generation mix. Investments in renewable energy must be made with the impact on electric bills in mind.

Power districts are well ahead of the curve when it comes to investing in renewable resources. In fact, 11 percent of the power that public power districts and electric cooperatives deliver nationwide comes from renewables, compared to 9 percent for the entire utility industry. In the years ahead, power districts will bring much more renewable power online.

When it comes to meeting the nation's energy challenges, the personnel from not-for-profit, state owned and locally governed electric power districts will

be offering Congress their experience on how to make the right choices on behalf of customers. But this effort will need the help of the district's customers as well.

Through the "Our Energy Our Future" grassroots campaign, hundreds of thousands of electric customers, like those served by ERPPD, have sent more than 2 million messages to Congress asking lawmakers to focus on issues related to generation capacity, new available technologies, and keeping electric bills affordable when developing energy and climate change policy.

It's time for all ERPPD customers to get involved in the campaign by asking representatives on Capitol Hill the important question: Are you willing to work with electric providers like Elkhorn RPPD to ensure that this nation has reliable power at a price that consumers can afford?

Take Action Today

To learn how to begin a dialogue with Nebraska's elected officials, visit www.ourenergy.coop today. Affordable renewable energy is possible if everyone works together.

The information below will be helpful when registering for the program.



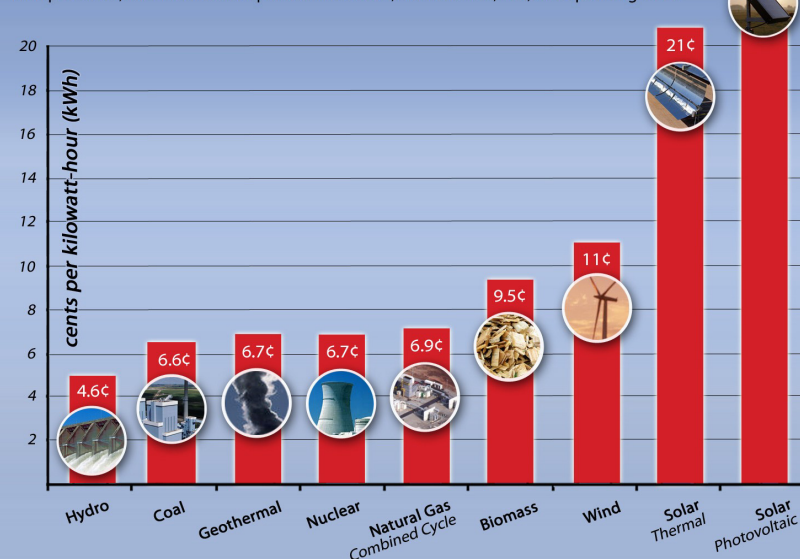
Our Energy, Our Future
A Dialogue With America

Will we have the electricity
we need in the future?

Start a dialogue
with your elected officials at:
www.OurEnergy.coop

When Pennies Count: The price of new generation

The cost to build new power plants can vary widely depending on how the electricity is produced. Each type of generation carries a ballpark price tag. The amounts shown below, based on each kWh produced, take into account plant construction, maintenance, fuel, and operating costs.



Estimates by National Rural Electric Cooperative Association using U.S. Energy Information Administration Annual Energy Outlook 2009 data

YOUR ELECTRIC METER

‘Vacation time for you is still work time for me’

This is the first in a four-part series featuring thoughts from your electric meter—

“I’m your electric meter. Vacation time doesn’t mean that I get to take time off, too.

“I have been assigned a full-time job and I cannot schedule a two-week vacation from doing it anytime, much less whenever I feel like it. When I am assigned a task, I take care of it immediately.

“For example, when you watch TV, I am recording the amount of energy it takes you to do it while you are doing it. If you have a home repair to make, I document the kilowatt-hours you need to operate that power tool—while you drill your hole or use your saw.

“My activities don’t change when you leave your home, whether it is for a few minutes or for an extended period.

“When you are on vacation, the refrigerator and/or freezer still need energy to operate. Your security lights still come on at night when the photo cell tells them that it is dark enough. And an electric water heater will continue to cycle through its process of keeping the water hot and available whether or not you are there.

“And don’t forget about the equipment that you use to heat and cool the air inside your home. Air conditioners and attic fans during the summer and electric heaters in the winter time can be big users of electric energy. I record every kWh taken by these

“You need to remember that any clocks, attic fans, and TV sets with ‘instant on’ features also require energy at all times. I make a note of it.

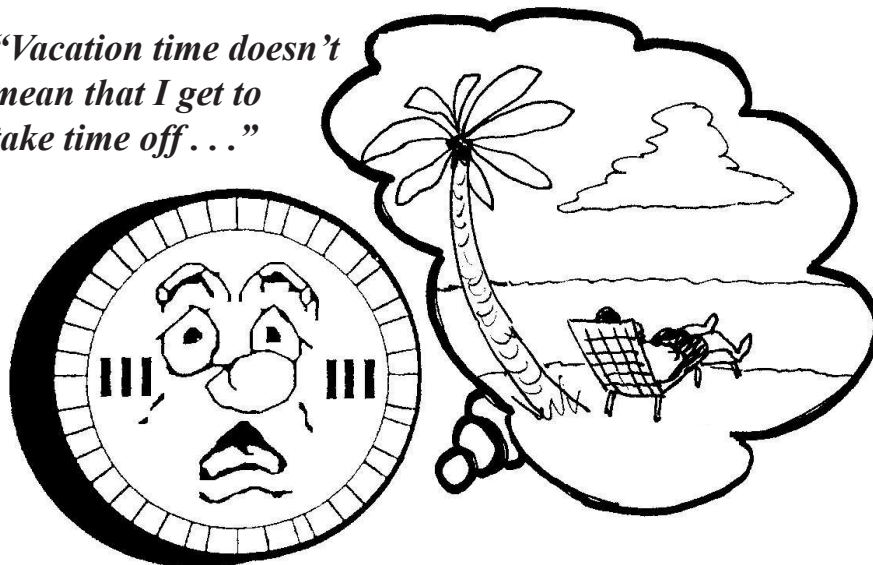
“If you truly want to give me a break, which will lower your energy bill, just remember a few of these vacation-time

energy-saving tips below.

“Before you leave on vacation, take a few minutes to turn off and unplug equipment. You’ll save energy and

avoid safety hazards. You might want to read me before you leave and when you return — it’s a good way to spot any hidden energy wasters.”

“Vacation time doesn’t mean that I get to take time off...”



What to unplug, turn off, or turn down before a vacation

- **Lights:** Turn off all lights except for one or two fitted with compact fluorescent bulbs. Put these lights on timers that can be set to random patterns to discourage potential prowlers. Photo sensors or motion detectors are good ideas for outdoor lights.
- **Air conditioning:** Turn it off. Close window coverings to help keep heat from building up in your home while you’re away.
- **Heating:** Turn it off or turn it down if it is very cold outside and you’re worried about pipes freezing.
- **Electric water heater:** During the summer, turn off your water heater at the electric breaker panel if you are going to be away for more than a few days.
- **Natural gas water heater:** Turn it down, but not off.
- **Refrigerator:** If you’re leaving on an extended trip of a month or more, you might want to empty, clean, and unplug your refrigerator to save energy. Prop the door open to prevent odors.
- **Other appliances:** Many appliances draw energy even when they are turned off. So, unplug your television, VCR/DVD player, stereo, computer, washer, and other appliances. You may need to reset the clock on VCR/DVD players or clock radios when you return. For safety’s sake, don’t overlook small appliances that are best left unplugged when unattended — items like toasters, coffee makers, irons, curling irons, hair dryers, and electric tools.

IRRIGATION

Irrigator's switch number is important

This irrigation season, an ERPPD irrigator who has occasion to call the utility should reference the system's switch number when giving information.

While account number and location are necessary components, it is the switch number that will best help district personnel to provide the irrigator with the fastest resolution to his or her situation.

See illustration below for location examples.

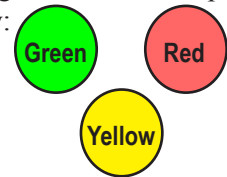


Lights have meaning

Three LED lights on the control box have particular significance.

- Red - No Control
- Red and Green - Control
- Yellow - Signal Test (has no effect)

The light configuration on the display appears this way:



If the lights are not working, please check the fuses before calling ERPPD's outage number at 800-675-2185.

**Call for ERPPD's
Load Control Status
during the season.
1-800-238-0185**

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
with Board position and subdivision

Rod Zohner
President.....II

Tim Means
Vice President ..II

Larry Lindahl
SecretaryIII

Dennis Kuchar
Treasurer I

Robert Kee
Director II

Mark Miller
Director I

Joe Thiele
DirectorIII

Greg Weidner
Director I

David Hoefler
DirectorIII

MANAGER
Tom Rudloff

For Emergency Service or Outage Reporting

1-800-675-2185

After Hours Note:

The entire 800-number *must* be dialed, even for a local call.

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• **Communicate Electronically** •

• **With ERPPD** •

Internet: www.erppd.com

E-mail: erppd@erppd.com

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**Know what's below.
Call before you dig.**

**It's the law!
Call 811 Before
You Dig!**

Or 1-800-331-5666
Diggers Hotline
of Nebraska

Outage Checklist

In the case of an outage:

- First check to see if the fuses below the meter are good.
- If you have breakers, make sure they are on and have not kicked out.
- If you have a double-throw switch for standby power, make sure it is in the correct position.
- Check with neighbors to see if they have power. By doing this before calling us, we can determine if it is a line or an individual outage. This can help cut down on outage duration.
- Please, be prepared to give the name on the account, plus the consumer number and/or the legal location. This will assist us in sending our crews to the correct place.

Questions about your bill?

Please call the ERPPD office at 402-675-2185 or toll-free, 1-800-675-2185, during office hours, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m., in regards to billing questions. When calling the office concerning billing problems, it will save time if you would have your meter serial number or customer account number and current meter reading. Remember to call the Battle Creek office if you have billing questions. All account payments should be mailed to:

**Elkhorn Rural
Public Power
District
P.O. Box 310
Battle Creek, NE
68715**