

# THE WIRE

CURRENT NEWS FROM THE ELKHORN RURAL PUBLIC POWER DISTRICT

April 2010

Serving the Elkhorn River Valley since 1940

Volume 19, Number 4

## Timely safety education means happy ending

**“Know what to do in case your vehicle brings down a power line.”** Elkhorn Rural Public Power District’s safety program is built around this premise.

When teenagers Lee Whittaker and Ashley Taylor saw a power-line safety demonstration at their high school, they never dreamed their new knowledge would be put to the test. Five days later, they and two classmates were in a car that crashed into a utility pole, bringing live power lines to the ground.

Fortunately, they heeded the advice safety expert Kyle Finley had presented in his Live-Line Demo program. All four survived because they knew the right actions to take. Often times, others who don’t have that knowledge are not as fortunate.

Safe Electricity’s 2010 Teach Learn Care TLC campaign strives to increase awareness about the dangers when power lines are brought down in car accidents.

Whittaker and Taylor are sharing their story as the centerpiece of the campaign. “That information saved my life and my friends’ lives,” said Lee Whittaker.

“You have to remember that you can’t smell, hear, or see electricity, but the power in that line is tremendous and can be deadly,” Safety Instructor Finley said. “The safest place after a crash is inside the vehicle, and the best thing you can do for a loved one who is trapped is to stay back and call the utility to disconnect power to the line.”



There were injuries when the teens’ car crashed into the utility pole, bringing a power line down on the car. However, they knew not to get out of the car. They informed those who approached the scene to keep their distance. They waited for line crews to arrive and deactivate the power line.

And they are grateful to their local Indiana utility, White County Rural Electric Membership Corporation, who sponsored Finley’s program for their school and other schools across the region. White County REMC, like ERPPD in Battle Creek, is a Safe Electricity program partner committed to safety education and outreach.

According to the National Highway Traffic and Safety Administration, in 2008, almost 2000 people were killed in collisions involving utility poles. There are tens of thousands of incidents each year in which power poles are struck by cars or large equipment. Each one of these accidents has the potential to bring down power lines. Without awareness

of the right moves to make, surviving the accident itself might not be enough to stay alive.

In the vast majority of those accidents, inside the car is the safest place to be. Only in the rare instance of fire should people exit the car. Then, they must know how to do so safely, jumping free and clear of the vehicle, landing with feet together and hopping away. It’s difficult to exit the vehicle without creating a path for current to flow, which is why one should stay inside unless forced to get out.

“When people are involved in a car accident, electricity is usually the last



**Lee Whittaker and Ashley Taylor are alive today because of a live-line safety demonstration presented by their power district. ERPPD offers a similar presentation to schools and civic organizations.**

thing on anyone’s mind,” Safe Electricity Executive Director Molly Hall said. “We’re often more concerned about whether anyone was injured, or how badly the vehicle is damaged. We often forget that by exiting the vehicle, we’re

See ‘Alive Today . . .’ on page 4

# ENERGY EFFICIENCY ACTIVITIES



*In an EnergyWise® Energy Efficiency Program, Norfolk Iron & Metal recently converted 455 old and dim light fixtures in its Norfolk facility to T-5 High Bay fluorescent bulbs (2,730 bulbs). The before and after difference is literally night (at left) and day.*

## ‘Let there be light: and there was light.’

Most people hear the words of the headline, and they attribute them to what the Bible says in Genesis chapter one and verse three.

These days, however, those words are being heard in many parts of Nebraska – but in a much different context. Today’s comments deal with efficiencies in commercial and industrial lighting.

Norfolk Iron and Metal (NIM), one of Elkhorn Rural Public Power District’s largest industrial electric customers, is one example.

Through ERPPD’s association with the Nebraska Public Power District EnergyWise<sup>SM</sup> energy efficiency program, NIM recently changed 455 high-bay light fixtures in its 30-year-old Norfolk warehouse facility. At six bulbs per fixture, that meant installing 2,730 T-5 fluorescent bulbs. NIM General Manager Scott Orwig said, “This upgrade makes the lighting in our Norfolk facility look like the lighting in our brand new building in Iowa.”

NIM contracted with Model Electric to do the work, and after four weeks the process was completed.

Energy efficiency was the primary reason behind the reconfiguration, and NIM received an incentive check from ERPPD’s energy efficiency funds through NPPD for \$46,032.90 to make the change.

According to Orwig, that’s only part of the story. “Yes, we’ve reduced our energy use per fixture, but it’s not just energy efficiency,” he said. “The amount of light that we are getting from each fixture is wonderful. It’s not hard to recognize the difference when you’re familiar with the before and the after. Our people love it!

“Safety is important to all of us, and it’s easier to be safe when you can see what you’re doing. In addition, employee morale has improved and our productivity has increased. It’s definitely been a great change for us.”

Norfolk Iron & Metal, a 101-year old company, began its operations in Norfolk, Neb. This Steel Service Center operates additional facilities in Greeley, Colo.;

Emporia, Kan.; Durant, Iowa; and Rock Island, Ill. Simply put, NIM’s inventory, processing, and distribution capabilities and its dedicated employees make it the clear choice for carbon steel needs.

Arnie Robinson, NIM Executive Vice President, added his appreciation for the project. “We had great partners in Model Electric and Elkhorn Public Power. Their partnership has helped Norfolk Iron to stay at the leading edge of our industry with a very important ‘green’ project.”



*Mark Gronau, Energy Services Representative for ERPPD (at left), presents a check for \$46,032.90 in energy efficiency incentive to Norfolk Iron & Metal officials, Scott Orwig, General Manager (center), and Arnie Robinson, Executive Vice President.*

# ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROGRAMS

## EnergyWise<sup>SM</sup> incentives reward energy savings

Elkhorn Rural Public Power District, in partnership with Nebraska Public Power District (NPPD) and its other wholesale customers, is offering energy efficiency programs to assist customers in becoming more energy efficient. The purpose of programs under the EnergyWise<sup>SM</sup> logo is to make electric customers more aware of ways they can use electrical energy more efficiently and the savings that come with these practices.

### Residential High-Efficiency Heat Pump Incentive

Homeowners who install a qualified heat pump (14 SEER or higher cooling ratio and 8.2 HSPF or greater heating ratio) will be eligible for a variable rebate, depending on the SEER of the unit. ERPPD customers who replace a window or central air conditioner with a qualified heat pump will earn a double rebate.

Heat Pump Qualifying Installation	Basic Rebate	Replace A/C Unit
14 SEER	\$200	add \$200
15 SEER	\$250	add \$250
16 SEER (& up)	\$300	add \$300
Geothermal Unit	\$400	add \$400

The installing HVAC dealer will also receive an incentive payment if the new unit operates within 10% of manufacturer's specifications.

### Cooling System Tune-Up

An incentive of \$30 is available to homeowners who have their cooling systems tuned up (Does not include heating systems). Eligible systems include air conditioners, air source heat pumps (regardless of back-up source), and water source heat pumps. Contact your HVAC dealer.

**ENERGYWISE<sup>SM</sup>**  
Use less. Spend less. Do more.

### Residential Attic Insulation

The attic insulation program allows a homeowner to install at least six inches of attic insulation in up to 2,000 sq.ft. of attic space in an existing home. The rebate is \$0.15 per square foot with a maximum rebate for any one dwelling to be \$300. See ERPPD or a building or remodeling contractor for details.

### Refrigerator/Freezer Recycling

Remove inefficient, operating secondary refrigerators or freezers from ERPPD's distribution system and receive \$35 per unit for up to two working units. This program is administered through JACO Environmental, which specializes in refrigerator recycling. Customers should call JACO (toll-free 1-866-444-9160) for information or to arrange an appointment for pick-up.

### Commercial and Industrial Lighting Efficiency Program

Customers have an opportunity to earn incentives for upgrading to qualified, more efficient lighting. Incentives are available for both indoor and outdoor technologies.

Prescriptive and custom programs are available. Contact Mark Gronau at ERPPD to discuss the one that is right for your business, then contact the lighting contractor of your choice.

### Commercial HVAC system

The commercial HVAC program allows rebates to businesses for installing water-cooled or air-cooled air conditioners or air source, water source, or ground source heat pumps. The rebate depends on total tonnage of the unit(s)

and/or one of two performance ratings, either SEER or Actual EER. Contact your HVAC dealer for specific details about the program. Some cooling systems do not qualify, so be sure to contact an HVAC dealer. Brochures are available at ERPPD that define both the type of equipment and the associated equation to figure the rebate.

**NEW!** An HVAC System Optimization Program is also available.

### Premium Efficiency Motors

One way for businesses to reduce the cost of starting and running motors is by upgrading to premium efficiency motors. Incentives are prescriptive and range from \$20 to \$400 based on motor size. Those who qualify for irrigation incentives cannot qualify for this incentive.

### Variable Frequency Drives

Variable frequency drives (VFDs) can be effective at reducing power and energy consumption to centrifugal equipment such as pumps and fans. Incentive is \$30 per horsepower. Businesses who qualify for irrigation incentives cannot qualify for this incentive. Contact ERPPD to see if a VFD is right for you and if it can be used on your lines.

### Irrigation Efficiency

This program seeks to help irrigators utilize water and electric energy in the most energy efficient and cost-effective manner. It is designed to provide customers with financial incentives to help assess irrigation system performance and improve areas of inefficiency. The incentive is \$0.20 per kWh saved per year for the first year.

Call Mark Gronau at ERPPD for details about any of these programs.

Ask a tax preparer if your efficiency improvements can qualify for tax deductions or credits.



# TOP STORY

## Alive Today . . . from page 1

risking bodily exposure to thousands of volts of electricity from downed power lines.”

Ashley and Lee called Finley soon after the accident to thank him for educating students about electrical safety hazards and providing information that saved their lives.

To learn more about the teens’ experience and power line safety during car accidents, see the video on [www.SafeElectricity.org](http://www.SafeElectricity.org). Visitors can also watch a streamed live power line demonstration, just like the one the Indiana teens saw at their school.

ERPPD presents this type of demonstration with a high-voltage trailer that is co-owned by five public power districts in northeast Nebraska.

Safe Electricity is a public awareness program of the Energy Education Council ([www.EnergyEdCouncil.org](http://www.EnergyEdCouncil.org)),

a registered 501(c)3 non-profit dedicated to promoting electrical safety and energy efficiency. Council members include hundreds of electric utilities, energy-related organizations, educators and others who share in this mission. A link to [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org) is on the [www.ERPPD.com](http://www.ERPPD.com) website.



An ERPPD lineman draws an arc during a live-line safety demonstration.

# IRRIGATORS

If you have not yet returned the 2010 letter indicating name changes or rate changes (due on Apr. 1), please contact ERPPD immediately.

Your action is necessary by April 15.

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

with Board position and subdivision

- Rod Zohner  
President.....II
- Tim Means  
Vice President ..II
- Larry Lindahl  
Secretary .....III
- Dennis Kuchar  
Treasurer ..... I
- Robert Kee  
Director .....II
- Mark Miller  
Director ..... I
- Joe Thiele  
Director .....III
- Greg Weidner  
Director ..... I
- David Hoefler  
Director .....III

### 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.

## Communicate Electronically With ERPPD

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

E-mail: [erppd@erppd.com](mailto:erppd@erppd.com)



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