



# Polk County Rural Public Power District

*"Committed to enhancing the lives of our customers by providing safe, reliable, economical energy now and into the future."*

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

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## From Dark to Light - October is Public Power Month *By Erin Dickey*



The 1930's. A decade full of dark times and dark people. The fall of the stock market in 1929 paved the disastrous road of The Great Depression. The Dust Bowl stripped away the fertile top soil of agriculture. Extremist like Stalin and Hitler reeked havoc between the scared lines of politics and humanity. With the confidence and energy of Americans dwindling under the pressures of war and a broken economy, the need for a light at the end of the tunnel was eminent.

Franklin D. Roosevelt promised a change for Americans. "Throughout the nation men and women, forgotten in the political philosophy of the Government, look to us here for guidance and for more equitable opportunity to share in the distribution of national wealth... I pledge myself to a new deal for the American people. This is more than a political campaign. It is a call to arms."

Roosevelt's 'call to arms' came in the form of the New Deal. One

component of the New Deal was the Reconstruction Finance Corporate (RFC) Act that provided a source to stimulate funding and boost the country's confidence. Nebraska Senator George Norris had a dream of bringing electricity to rural America through publicly controlled entities. The idea to provide electricity to the rural areas would aid agriculture, thus bringing an increase to the economy. In 1933, the Nebraska Legislature passed Senate File 310 which provided the creation of public power and irrigation districts under the funding of RFC Act. There was now a light at the end of the dark tunnel.

Nebraska began to gain strength in the deep roots and fertile bushels of agriculture which did indeed fuel a positive turn for the economy. With the development of public power, rural areas blossomed proving the need and necessity of locally controlled and affordable electricity. Nebraska is the only state in America

that is totally served by public power that is owned by the residents and delivers electricity as a nonprofit service.

Nebraska's publicly owned power district consistently delivers some of the lowest cost rates for electricity in the nation. There are multiple factors that allow for Nebraska's reliable service and consistent low rates. The first factor being, that it is controlled by locally appointed and elected people who act as public trustees and ensure quality customer service. While many other states have a mix of public and private power, only Nebraska is



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# Nebraska One-Call Enforcement Report

By Melissa Johnson-Wiles, Assistant Attorney General

In 2014, the Attorney General's Office received 45 complaints alleging violations of Nebraska's One-Call Violation Act, and 32 were resolved. The violations ranged from failing to call the One-Call Center prior to excavation, causing damage, to failing to notify the One-Call Center of damage to an underground facility. A total of \$35,000.00 in civil penalties was assessed against various contractors throughout the state for violations of the One-Call Act. Some of the assessed civil penalties may be waived if a contractor maintains compliance with the One-Call Act for a

period of time, and attends a Damage Prevention Safety Education course approved by the State Fire Marshal. Civil penalties are allocated to the lo-

**1-800-331-5666**  
**Whenever you plan excavation activities within the State of Nebraska, it is necessary that you first contact Digger's Hotline of Nebraska by calling 1-800-331-5666. It's a law!**

cal school fund in the county where the violation occurred.

Once a complaint is received, the Attorney General's Office reviews the complaint and conducts an additional investigation, if necessary. A notice of potential violation will be sent to the contractor, with an opportunity to respond to the complaint. If you have questions, or would like to file a complaint, please visit our website at [www.ago.nebraska.gov](http://www.ago.nebraska.gov) and click "contact us" to file the complaint. A complaint may also be found on the Nebraska811 website.

**Respect electricity. Always be aware of where overhead power lines are located when moving irrigation pipe and farm machinery. Many types of utilities have underground conductors or cables in service. Don't trench or dig until you notify Nebraska's hotline at 811. We care about your safety as much as our own.**



**Harvest season is upon us. Please use caution around power lines.**

# Berggren and Sunday Score Perfect at State Fair Lineman's Rodeo

By Judy Rieken



There's so much to do at the Nebraska State Fair! Excitement fills the air as people of all ages gather in Central Nebraska for one of the state's most attended events and some of the best entertainment around.

Electric line-workers from across the state share in that entertainment as they showcase their skills and knowledge through events that simulate real-life situations where they test their speed, agility, accuracy and safety. This opportunity gives Nebraska line-workers the chance to perform tasks they do on a daily basis to ensure that we all have power at the flip of a switch. This is a reminder to everyone in Nebraska, the nation's only public power state, of the benefits we have with public power and the unique brotherhood the state's utility line-workers share.

Polk County Rural Public Power District linemen Mickey Berggren and Justin Sunday competed at the Lineman's Rodeo this past weekend where they sharpened their skills competing against some of the state's largest and smallest utilities. It's not all about competition. "This event is about 'perfecting' skills, learning

and sharing with others in the industry," Sunday said. Berggren and Sunday excelled in all four events with a perfect score! There are several areas judged in each of the four events and while they did score perfect in each event of the overall jour-

neyman-lineman division, they fell just short of the gold based on time performance. For Berggren and Sunday, bringing home a beautiful trophy and belt buckles is an awesome accomplishment. Areas of climbing competition included: An obstacle course where participants climbed a de-energized 45' pole equipped with three (3), eight (8) foot cross arms. Line-workers are encouraged to stop at each crossarm, do a relocate and work with the groundman to complete the task. Next comes the crossarm change out where competitors change out an 8' crossarm with two conductors on the arm. Their challenge is to untie the conductors, remove the crossarm, and replace it with new ties and crossarm. The third area of competition requires teamwork in changing out lightning arrestors on a simulated energized line.

Utility line workers have one of the most dangerous professions, yet one of the safest and they intend to keep it that way. State fair crowds were impressed with the remaining event, the 'hurt man' rescue. Polk County RPPD Safety Director, Tim Tee-

gerstrom states, "Safety is the most important part of our job. We want our line-crews to work safely at all times and go home to their families at the end of each work day. I am glad that pole top rescue is a part of this competition. Team members use a life-size mannequin to simulate rescuing an injured worker. This event reinforces the importance of safety and camaraderie when performing line work."

Polk County RPPD's General Manager, Phil Burke said, "We support the competition and make sure the public is aware of what it takes to keep the lights on. The Lineman's Rodeo is an exhibition of people who are great at their trade doing whatever it takes to keep the power on. These folks take time to train, working constantly to improve their skills to make sure they are as good as they can be at what they do." "I am very proud of these two individuals and our entire crew," he added.

The state of Nebraska is the only 100% public power state so there are no investor owned utilities. Public Power is consumer owned, consumer driven and there are 160+ not-for-profit municipalities and public power districts in the state. All utilities work together in a public power sense, non-profit sense to make sure that we keep electricity not only affordable, but safe and reliable across the state."

While you're at the fair don't forget to check out the "Public Power" booth located on the Marketplace. Unique and exciting presentations will reveal the power of electric lines and show the public how to respect electrical safety. The public can interact with a wind turbine simulator, check out the solar cars, become a human battery and much more.

# Keep Heated and Cooled Air Where it Should Be - Inside Your Home

Do you know that new homes built in Nebraska are required to have R-38 or R-45 insulation in the attic? For example, with blown-in cellulose that is approximately 12-15 inches deep!



If your home's attic has six inches or less of insulation, and electricity is your primary heat source there is an EnergyWise™ incentive available to help you. Attics are places where it can really pay to have the right amount of insulation. Making sure your home's insulation level is adequate keeps heated and cooled air where it should be: inside your home, and the outside air temperature stays where it should be: outside!

To help make it affordable, customers participating in the residential EnergyWise™ program are eligible for an incentive of \$0.15 per square foot with a maximum incentive amount of \$300 per existing residential dwelling. New construction and/or additions do not qualify.

Start with your attic. On a sunny, summer day, with the hot sun blasting directly on the roof, attics can get up to 140 degrees Fahrenheit when the inside of the house is 75 degrees. That is a 65 degree temperature differential.

Your house acts like a chimney in the winter, where cooler air enters the house in the lower areas and attempts to exit the house in the warmer, higher areas. A house with a poor and leaky envelope will show significant heat loss through the attic and eaves.

If you have little insulation in the attic (six inches or less on average) and add at least six inches or R-19, take advantage of the EnergyWise™ incentive.

## From Dark to Light

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served by public power and empowers locally elected residents to govern a nonprofit operation system. Keeping the power close to home, business and work. Secondly, the use of effective resources by continually reinvesting funds to improve facilities assures customers with reliable and quality service. The reinvestment into communities offers a form of economic development and growth. Lastly, the ability to operate as a nonprofit entity. Focusing on customer service is easy to do when the need to concentrate on making a profit is cut out. Serving urban and rural areas with the same quality of service keeps cost affordable and reliable statewide.

The transition from dark to light in the 1930's took the effort of many people. A belief in the importance of agriculture to our economic future laid the pipes of progressive and efficient electricity on behalf of all Nebraskans. The task of providing low-cost electricity with equal access to all, began with one small light in rural Nebraska and now illuminates across thousands of acres of hard work, sweat and the good life.

**ATTENTION FARMERS:** The next time your exterior lighting is in need of repairs, don't forget to ask about our Caretaker™ 12 LED aerial light. You will be eligible for a \$50.00 direct incentive. Call 402/764-4381 for details today.

