



Polk County Power

'The Livewire'




Your Touchstone Energy® Partner

PO Box 465 Stromsburg NE 68666

January 2018

You're Never Alone in the Dark



Electricity powers our lives. We depend on it for nearly everything we do. So we understand how frustrating it can be when you're left in the dark.

Power outages are never convenient. It takes a lot of hands to keep your power on, and even more hands to get it up and running when an outage occurs. Polk County Rural Public Power District works hard to restore your electric service when outages occur, but there are necessary steps to take to ensure that power is restored to the majority of customers as quickly and *safely*, as possible.

After a major storm, Polk County RPPD line crews must identify which towers, poles and lines have incurred damage. Very rarely, but occasionally, in the case of a major storm such as a tornado, wind or ice storm transmission towers can be damaged. If that is the case, hundreds of customers could be affected. Repairing damage to transmission lines is a top priority when it comes to restoring power.

High voltage transmission stations feed power to Polk County RPPD's eight rural and two urban distribution substations. These substations serve hundreds of customers. If there is no damage done to transmission towers, the local distribution substations are checked. If the issue is isolated and can be resolved at the substation level, great! That means hundreds of people can get their power restored at once.

At times, the issue cannot be isolated to one of our distribution substations. If that is the case, Polk County RPPD crews inspect distribution lines between the substations and the meters they serve. If the distribution lines can be repaired, power can be restored to the towns and homes those lines serve, as long as there is no damage to the tap lines.

Tap lines carry power to the transformers located underground or connected to poles outside of homes and other buildings. Polk County Rural Public Power District line crews identify which damaged lines to work first based on which lines will restore power to the greatest number of customers.

Many times, the issue is resolved once the tap lines are repaired. But, have you ever lost power only to look next door and see the lights still blazing from your neighbor's window? When this happens, it generally means that the service line between your home and the nearby transformer has been damaged. If this happens, call the District right away so we can send a line crew to your home.

Power restoration can be a tricky business, so if you lose service in your home or neighborhood please remember the following:

- Stay clear of downed power lines. Contact with these lines could be life threatening.
- Report the outage to Polk County RPPD at 402/764-4381 as soon as possible.
- Make sure to inform us if loss of power to your home affects life support systems or could cause any additional threat to health and safety.

We appreciate your patience and cooperation whenever an outage occurs.

We Work for You!

403 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE
WORKING FOR YOU!

Tim Teegerstrom	42
Judy Rieken	41
Phil Burke	37
Grace Gerrard	37
Randy Reese	36
Scott Lindburg	27
Andy Roberts	25
Jodie Alvis	24
Jeff Waller	23
Barb Fowler	20
Justin Sunday	17
Mickey Berggren	15
Trevor Willhoft	13
Dawn Dudgeon	12
Cindi Perdue	8
Anthony Schnell	8
Yancy Krol	5
Michel Peterson	5
Ryan Carlson	3
DJ Crowell	3
Josh Suckstorf	1
Megan Brooke	1/2

Twenty-two full time employees have nearly 403 years of experience averaging just over 18 years per employee. We are committed to enhancing the lives of our customers by providing safe, reliable and economical energy now and into the future.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!



Seasonal Services Billed December and January

Seasonal type services may include cabins, stock wells and fencers, grain drying and aeration, or farm shops. All rate schedules for seasonal service accounts were billed for the 2017 energy use on December 20th. These account balances are due upon receipt and delinquent as of January 10th, 2018. In January we will bill for the 2018 annual minimum. This bill is due upon receipt and delinquent on February 10th. Upon receipt of either of these bills, please contact our office at 402-764-4381 if you have any questions.

Reminder...

Please do not staple your payment stub to the check. When a staple is removed, a slight tear may result and the check or stub may jam our processor. Also, please do not write checks in red ink. Most scanners do not read red ink. Black or blue ink is the preferred choice.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation in assisting us to promptly process payments to your account(s).

Policy #428 Billing Penalty and Fees REMINDER - SUMMARY BY FEE:

- Residential deposit: \$250.00
- Penalties: \$10.00 for balance over \$30.00, plus 1.33% per month on account receivable balance
- Collection fee: \$40.00 per account
- Reconnection fee within 24 hours and during normal business hours \$60.00
- Reconnection fee beyond 24 hours and outside of normal business hours \$100.00
- Non-sufficient payment: \$20.00 per return
- Remember: A simple phone call can save you lots of money. If you receive a delinquent notice, please read the reverse side of the notice. One payment arrangement is acceptable per notice and must be kept!

Year End Duties Not Your Normal Work Month

The crew spent a week in mid November doing inventory. No materials can be used until the auditor can check our count and there is generally a three week period between the count



input to the tracking and teamed up with the guys to share ideas which will improve the inventory process.

In addition to inventory, crews spend colder days in the shop cleaning and inspecting rubber goods. We also inspect and test all slings and personal grounds. Between inventory and inspections crews are in and out for approximately three weeks throughout the month.

Operations Manager, Randy Reese, reported that as of now we will be constructing three new irrigation services. He noted that any additional requests for new services or upgrades will be worked into their schedule prior to the irrigation season.

and audit. Crews must set aside materials needed for scheduled jobs for that time frame. With the mild weather, counting poles in the pole yard was easier than previous years when they can be covered in snow! In December we take time to clean up and reorganize the warehouse and materials in storage bins.

This year Finance Managers, Grace Gerrard and Megan Brooke, offered

Crews began construction on three miles of T-2 line north and east of Silver Creek. They should have this completed this month. Crowl Tree Service completed maintenance in the sub 3 area this past month.

Reese reported we had 31 outages this month, 21 of which were planned outages.

Grace Gerrard, Finance Manager reports that it will be very busy un-



The accounting team from left: Megan Brooke, Jodie Alvis and Grace Gerrard review inventory counts and it looks like they are having fun doing so! Above, Technician, Jeff Waller shown testing meters.

til her retirement in early 2018. The accounting department is closing year end work orders, preparing the final budget, and planning for the audit next month. Between training, budget, financial reports, audit preparations and other year end processes these gals will be putting in a few extra hours to meet all deadlines.

In the IT Department, Barb Fowler states that she has completed the Automatic Vehicle Location (AVL)

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Vegetation Management

Why it Matters to You...

Right of way (ROW): Refers to a strip of land underneath or around power lines that Polk County RPPD maintains and clears. Trees must grow at a distance far enough from conductors where they will not cause harm to individuals, or disruption to electrical service.

Nearly 15 percent of power interruptions occur when trees, shrubs or bushes grow too close to power lines. By managing vegetation, we keep safe and reliable power flowing to you.

Crews maintain a safe work area at all times, generally marked by cones and/or signs. If you approach contractors or district crews out and about working through the winter months, please slow down and proceed cautiously through marked work zones. Thank you for your cooperation in helping keep our crews safe!



Polk County RPPD



is reminding you to watch for outage updates on our Facebook page.

Our page is used to promote the good and well being of our business and the communities we serve. Our posts will be business relevant. This means of communication will allow us to get information to you in a timely manner. We also want to hear from you!

January EnergyWise™ Tip of the Month-Space Heaters

Year End Duties

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Can you really save up to 50 percent on your heating bill by using a special space heater? Some advertisers would like you to believe so. When seeing their ads, initially you may think, "Wow! I spent a lot of money keeping warm last winter! I can cut that amount in half?"

Then, you see the special offer price. Originally \$499.95, you can order now for \$299.00!!! You are convinced you will easily save that much in one winter. This is an incredible deal! Or is it?

Before you rush out and buy one of these miracle heaters, look a little closer at what you are going to have to do to achieve those savings. The fine print at the bottom of the page says that savings to your heating bill come from setting your main thermostat in your house to as low as 50 degrees and moving the space heater to the single room you will be occupying. In doing so, the savings do not come from operating the heater, but rather from not heating the rest of the house. Unfortunately, most people do not realize this. If you do not lower your main thermostat, you could actually spend more heating your home while using your magic heater!

Very few homeowners achieve the maximum savings heater manufacturers claim they can. After one heating season, homeowners are often disappointed they did not save more and are frustrated that they paid a lot of money for a heater that performed the same as one they could have purchased for under \$100.

What's the truth? The first truth is that electricity is often the most expensive energy to heat your home with unless a heat pump system is being used. People who rely on electrical resistance heating systems are some of the most motivated at finding other ways to conserve energy (and save money).

The second truth relates to claims from some electric heater manufacturers that their units are more efficient than their competitor's models. These claims are simply not true. Why? Because all resistance based electric heaters are 100 percent efficient at converting electricity to heat. The cheapest unit creates heat just as efficiently as the most expensive one and in the same way.

A portable heater can improve comfort in hard-to-heat areas, but using one does not guarantee you will save in heating costs. Note that most homeowners can achieve greater savings from money spent on insulation, weather stripping, servicing their in-place heating and cooling equipment, changing filters, installing LED lamps, using programmable thermostats, purchasing Energy Star® appliances or setting back the setting on their thermostat when they are not at home.

Polk County RPPD and our power supplier, Nebraska PPD, wish you and your family a cozy and warm winter season. Part of our commitment to providing you outstanding customer service includes helping you make the most of the energy you use throughout the year. For more ideas on how your home or business can be more EnergyWise™, contact Polk County RPPD. In some cases, you may receive incentives when making efficiency improvements to your home or business.

data to stream live to our mapping system. This program will greatly assist us during outages.

Over 30 percent of the customers returned the saturation survey which will be analyzed by Research Services. We will use this information in our strategic planning to evaluate strengths, weaknesses and areas in which we can be of better service to our customers.

The district is in the process of developing procedures and is working with the Department of Homeland Security regarding cyber and physical assessment services.

The Customer Services Department recently sent out mailings in efforts to educate customers about the importance of having a Telephone Consumer Protection Act (TCPA) form completed and on file. An EnergyWise™ irrigation efficiency mailing was sent and in a few days many customers will be mailed information regarding e-bill, interactive voice response payment by phone and other payment plans offered by the district.

Seasonal account meters were read in November and those bills were processed December 20th. In January seasonal services will be billed annual minimums which will be past due on February 10th.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate contacting our office at 402/764-4381.

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

Ford Thinks it's a Perfect Fit.

Plug-in Hybrid Electric Cars Work Well for Many Businesses, so Why not Law Enforcement

The automaker unveiled the Special Service Plug-In Hybrid Sedan, its first PHEV police vehicle. But don't expect to see it in one of those chases that the news channels like to show. The automaker said it's designed for "police and fire chiefs, detectives, and other government personnel whose jobs don't require a pursuit-rated vehicle."

On a fully-charged batter, the car has a 21-mile range with a top speed of 85 mph when operating in electric-only mode. Stephen Tyler, Ford police brand marketing manager, said it's the company's first police vehicle "that can potentially get through an entire shift using no gasoline whatsoever." The vehicle plugs into a regular 12-volt wall outlet to recharge. The car can also switch to gasoline mode, giving it a range of some 500 miles.

Alan Shedd, director, energy solutions, at Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives, and a PHEV owner, noted that several police departments already use fully electric cars, including BMWs in Los Angeles.

"Plug-in hybrids are a good option-providing the economy and low emissions for typical driving and the ability to run on gasoline for longer trips," said Shedd.

"Police cars and other vehicles used in shifts, including cabs, trash trucks and buses leave from, and return to a specific location where charging facilities can be set up," he said. Additionally, police vehicles spend a lot of time parked or idling.

"They're often parked at highway construction sites and at locations where police are directing traffic. The vehicles sit at idle to power lights, equipment, and the air conditioner, which wastes gas and is hard on the engine," said Shedd. "Plug-in vehicles are a good solution. Other than high-speed chases, a lot of police work is at low speeds."

