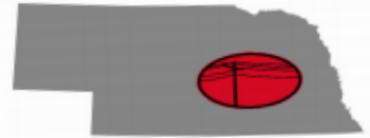


POLK COUNTY RURAL PUBLIC POWER DISTRICT

'The Livewire'

"Committed to enhancing the lives of our customers by providing safe, reliable and economical energy through excellence in customer service and innovation"



October 2019

October is Public Power Month

by Wade Rahn

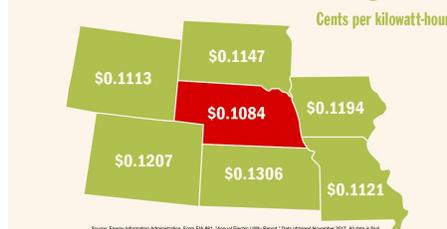
In 1933 the Nebraska Legislature passed Senate File 310 authorizing public power districts to be formed as political subdivisions of the state. Less than two years later, a committee was formed, and a public meeting was held. As a result, on May 6, 1935, Polk County Rural Public Power District was formed. Since then, PCRPPD has been 100% public power 100% of the time.

Customers today hear the term Public Power but may not understand what advantages they receive by being served from a customer-owned, non-profit Public Power District. This process all begins at the ballot box. Our board consists of directors who are elected by you. These directors live and work in the communities they represent and are your neighbors, family, and friends. Our board takes the duty of being a director seriously, as they are held accountable by the customers in the district they represent. Additionally, the monthly board meetings are open to the public should you like to attend.

The non-profit component of our business model is another great thing for you, the customer. It allows us to keep rates low. We have all received an electric bill that is higher than we would have liked. Knowing the rate you are paying is based on the cost to produce, deliver, and maintain the service can serve as some comfort. When comparing Nebraska with other states, our rates are among the lowest.

Reliability is also something we hang our hat on. In comparison to other states, Nebraska ranks #1 in this category.

When it comes to residential electric prices
HOW DO WE COMPARE with our neighbors?



Nebraska ranks as
THE BEST STATE
for power grid
reliability

#1 Nebraska
#2 Arizona
#3 North Dakota
#4 Rhode Island
#5 Nevada

U.S. News
BEST STATE RANKINGS

Last year PCRPPD had a reliability percentage of 99.98%, meaning on average your power was available to you at any given time except 0.02%. That's not too bad when you consider Mother Nature can strike at her will and wreak havoc on the system.

Through rain, wind, snow, sleet and hail,
NEBRASKANS TRUST PUBLIC POWER
will get their power on as soon as safely possible.



There are numerous other benefits of public power, but as you can see public power is an excellent thing for you, the customer. We will continue to work hard for you and serve you for many years in the future!

With public power, governance
**BEGINS AT THE
BALLOT BOX**
and is carried out through city
or town councils, or utility boards.

VOTE

**ELECTRIC
BILL**

Public power utilities
offer many ways
to help customers
**SAVE ENERGY
AND MONEY.**

Preventing Electrical Fires

Electricity is an essential part of our everyday lives. Because of this, it can be easy to let our guard down when it comes to our safety around it. Yet, electrical hazards in our homes can develop if left unchecked. PCRPPD encourages you to take steps to keep your family safe from and prevent electrical fires.

According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), an estimated 37,900 home fires were reported in 2014 that involved electrical distribution and lighting equipment. These fires resulted in approximately 530 deaths, 1,290 injuries, and \$1.4 billion in property damage.

The Red Cross estimates that after a fire has started, you have just two minutes to escape your home. In order to exit your home safely, education and preparation are your best tools for staying safe. With the two-minute goal

in mind, construct, and communicate with all family members about an escape plan. Look for two ways to exit each room in the home, and practice emergency evacuation plans several times a year. Choose a meeting place outside the house.



Smoke detectors can be life-savers in providing a warning for you and your family to reach safety. The Red Cross reports that 60 percent of fires occur in homes without working alarms. Install working smoke alarms that are approved by an independent testing laboratory on each level of the home. Test both your smoke and carbon monoxide alarms monthly and replace each alarm at least once every ten years.

“Taking small steps to help prevent accidents is important in preventing safety issues before they happen,” advises Andy Roberts, Osceola Assistant Fire Chief, and PCRPPD Crew Chief.

Use the following checklist to help find possible issues with your electrical system or appliances before they become a fire hazard in your home:

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WATCH OUT FOR UTILITY SCAMS



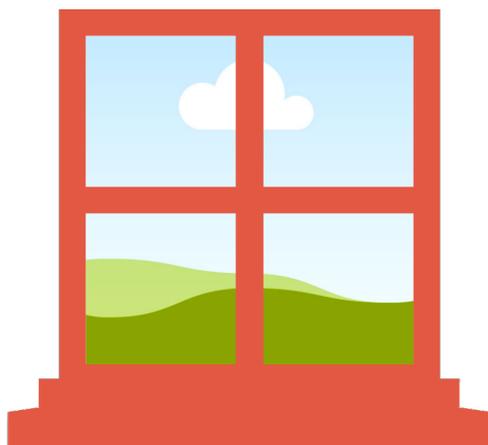
You get a call saying your electricity will be shut off unless you pay a past due bill. You may not think you have a past due bill. But the caller sounds convincing, and you can't afford to ignore it, especially if you're running a small business.

Actually, you can't afford to believe it.

If you get a call like this, here are some things you can do:

- Concerned that your bill is past due? Contact the electric utility directly using the number on your paper bill or on the utility's website. Don't call any number the caller gave you.
- Never give banking information over the phone unless you place the call to a number you know is legitimate.
- Report it to the real electric utility. If you already paid, tell the payment provider – such as the wire transfer or gift card company. You may not get your money back, but it's important to tell them about the scam.

DID YOU KNOW?



An average home has enough air leakage to add up to a two-foot square hole.

That's like leaving a medium-sized window wide open 24 hours per day.

An advertisement for safety stickers. It features several overlapping signs: a white sign with a red 'DANGER' oval and 'POWER LINES MAY BE OVERHEAD' text; a blue sign with 'LOOK UP AND LIVE' and a yellow arrow; and an orange sign with 'CAUTION LOOK UP! POWER LINES MAY BE OVERHEAD'. The background is a dark, textured surface. Text at the bottom reads: 'HAVE YOU PURCHASED NEW EQUIPMENT OR HAVE OLD FADED STICKERS? Your safety is important to us, and these serve as great reminders. If you are in need, please stop by the office or call PCRPPD Safety Director Justin Sunday (402) 764-4381 or (888) 242-5265'. A small logo for Polk County RPPD is also visible.

Fires *Continued from Page 2*

- ☑ **Electrical outlets** – Check for loose-fitting plugs and loose wall receptacles. Replace missing or broken wall plates so wiring and components are not exposed. If you have young children, install tamper resistant outlets (TROs). Avoid overloading outlets with adapters and too many appliance plugs.
- ☑ **Electrical wiring** – If an outlet is not working, it may be an indicator of unsafe wiring. Have an electrician check it out. Also check for loose wires and loose lighting fixtures. Listen for popping or sizzling sounds behind walls. If light switches are hot to the touch or lights spark and flicker, immediately shut them off at the circuit breaker and contact a qualified electrician to make repairs.
- ☑ **Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCIs)** – Make sure GFCIs are installed in your kitchen, bathrooms, laundry, workshop, basement, garage, and outdoor outlets. GFCIs help protect against electrical shock. Use the test button

monthly to ensure they are working properly.

- ☑ **Arc Fault Circuit Interrupters (AFCIs)** – Consider having AFCIs installed in your home. An AFCI installed in a circuit breaker monitors the flow of electricity throughout your home. If the AFCI detects any abnormality, it will shut the breaker off, preventing a fire.
- ☑ **Plugs** – Do not remove the grounding pin (third prong) to make a three-prong plug fit a two-conductor outlet.
- ☑ **Cords** – Make sure cords are not frayed or cracked, placed under carpets or rugs, tightly wrapped around any object, or located in high traffic areas. Do not nail or staple them to walls, floors, or other objects.
- ☑ **Extension cords** – These are not intended as permanent household wiring, so use them on a temporary basis only. If you find you need more electrical outlets, talk to an electrician about installing more so you will not need to use extension cords.
- ☑ **Light bulbs** – Verify that your light bulbs are the intended wattage for the lamp or fixture they are in, and

make sure they are screwed in securely so they do not overheat.

- ☑ **Appliances/Electronics** – If an appliance repeatedly blows a fuse, trips a circuit breaker, or has given you an electrical shock, immediately unplug it and have it repaired or replaced. Use surge protectors to protect expensive electronics. Make sure your appliances and electronics are placed in dry locations. If an appliance has been water damaged, be sure to replace it.
- ☑ **Circuit breakers/fuses** – Check that circuit breakers are working properly. Fuses should be properly rated for the circuit they are protecting.
- ☑ **Service capacity** – As you continue to upgrade your home with more lighting, appliances, and electronics, your home's electrical service capacity may become overburdened. If fuses blow or trip frequently, you may need to increase the capacity of your electrical service or add new branch circuits. A qualified electrician can determine the appropriate service requirements for your home.

Energy Vampires Suck the Money Out of Your Wallet

Ghouls, goblins, and ghosts might be frightening, but they aren't nearly as scary as a high electric bill.

There may be electronics in your home sucking power out of your outlets and money out of your wallet, even when they aren't in use. Televisions, computers, DVD players, cable boxes with DVR, cell phone chargers, printers, and game consoles are just a few of the culprits that unknowingly suck energy. Over time, the cost adds up.

PCRPPD has some tips to help you stop energy vampires in your home:

- When possible, unplug electronics that you are not using.
- Plug electronics into a power strip and turn the power strip off when items are not in use.
- Purchase smart power strips for your computers and televisions. These devices sense when the computer or television is sleeping or off. The smart strip cuts off power to related electronics, such as DVD players, video game consoles and printers.
- Buy low-standby products. Most Energy Star-endorsed products draw smaller than average amounts of electricity when turned off.



- Avoid electronics with unnecessary features as these might use more energy.

For more energy efficiency tips, contact PCRPPD's Customer Service Director, Wade Rahn.

HOME ENERGY SAVINGS 101

OCTOBER 22ND

6:30PM

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

LEARN TIPS AND CREATIVE WAYS
TO MANAGE AND REDUCE YOUR
MONTHLY UTILITY BILLS

STROMSBURG PUBLIC LIBRARY

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