

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”



April 2023

Teen Driving Campaign

By Wade Rahn

Teenagers often look forward to getting their driver's license as it represents a new level of independence and freedom. However, with this freedom comes responsibility, and safe driving should always be a top priority. One topic typically not discussed with young drivers is what they should do if they hit a power pole. This can be a scary and dangerous situation, and if not handled properly, it can be deadly. To better educate local teens, Justin Sunday, PCRPPD's Safety/Compliance and Engineering Manager, has started a new campaign on what to do in these situations by working in conjunction with the local schools and their high school students. While this campaign is vital for the education of new drivers, even the more seasoned drivers can benefit from a refresher on what to do in these situations. According to the US Department of Transportation, roadway departures accounted for 57,475 highway deaths between 2016 and 2018 with contact with utility poles as the top cause of fatalities.

Sunday explained, “Firstly, it's essential to understand the potential dangers of hitting a power pole. Power lines are live, and hitting a power pole can cause the line to contact your vehicle. Should this happen, if not handled properly, it can be fatal. Next, assess the situation. Assume the lines are live and do not attempt to exit the vehicle, and call 911. If you must exit

the vehicle because of fire or another imminent danger, take care to avoid touching the car and the ground at the same time. Jump out of the car, landing with both feet together, and shuffle away from the scene, keeping your feet close together and shuffling until you are at least 30 feet away from the car and any wires.” Sunday added, “It's important to remember that you should never attempt to touch or move any wires or equipment damaged in the accident. Even if the lines appear dead, there is still a risk of electric shock.”

As part of the campaign, all students are encouraged to watch a short six-minute video on YouTube, “This is your License to Live,” which can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OLUFHKc67ms>. Additionally, all students are given cards to put on their visors, shown below. If you have a student participating in the education campaign

at the local high schools, please remind them to put these in their vehicle.

Also, if you'd like a copy of these for your vehicle, have questions, or would like to schedule a presentation on this topic for a group, call Justin at (402) 764-4381.

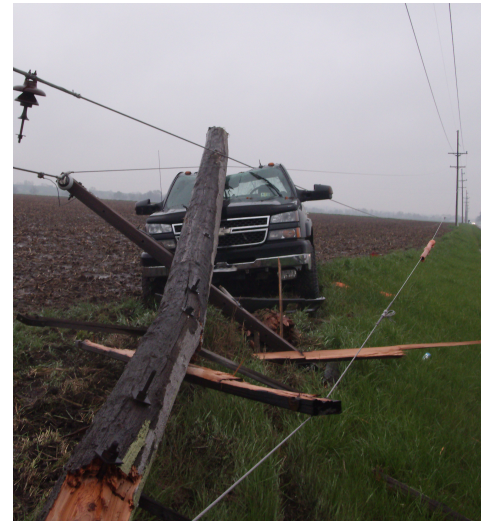





Photo Courtesy of Safe Electricity

IF YOU HIT A POLE...

- 1 STAY IN YOUR CAR 
- 2 CALL 911 
- 3 WARN OTHERS TO STAY AWAY 

More info on back

WHAT TO KNOW

If you are in an auto accident with power lines.

If the car you are in hits a utility pole, your vehicle and the surrounding area can become energized.

STAY IN YOUR VEHICLE UNLESS IT IS ON FIRE.

If you must leave your vehicle, **jump** clear of your vehicle with your **feet together**.

MAKE SURE YOU DO NOT TOUCH THE GROUND AND THE VEHICLE AT THE SAME TIME!

Continue to **hop or shuffle** with your feet together as far away as you can. Even if you do not touch lines or equipment, you can still be killed or seriously injured.



Watt Matters

By Barb Fowler - General Manager

This month, we will celebrate Lineman Appreciation Day by spoiling our linemen just a little bit with our annual work-cooked, warm appreciation breakfast. We know our linemen crew is the key to ensuring the safe delivery of electricity to your homes, farms, and businesses and they deserve recognition for their dedication and commitment to serve.

Linemen work in all kinds of weather conditions. Sure, some days are those beautiful Nebraska days when we office-folk longingly look out our work-windows. But our guys are also

out working on those dark, blustery frigid-cold nights or in the middle of a thunderstorm when we are at home, hoping for quick power restoration.

The job of a lineman is physical, skilled, and technical and has the potential to be dangerous. The physics of electricity is not forgiving and often does not give second chances. Mistakes and missteps cannot happen. Our crew works tirelessly, not only for you, our customer-owners, but also so they may return home safely to their families.

So, please take a moment to thank your linemen for their hard work and

dedication in keeping the power on throughout your day. You wouldn't have your home-cooked, warm breakfast without them.



Rahn Completes Training

By Barb Fowler - General Manager

Wade Rahn, Polk County RPPD's Customer Service/IT Manager, has earned recognition as a professional key accounts manager in a nationwide program offered by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA). Rahn recently completed the NRECA Certified Key Accounts Executive course and subsequent project and business plan development. "Customer service is a top priority for Polk County RPPD and we are proud of the commitment Wade has made to our customer-owners by participating in this great learning opportunity," commented Polk County RPPD's General Manager, Barb Fowler. Rahn has been the Customer Service Manager/IT at Polk County RPPD for over three years.



Safety Tip

Before beginning an outdoor project, always look up and look out for overhead power lines. Use extra caution when carrying a ladder or removing debris from gutters.



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Office Hours

8am-4pm

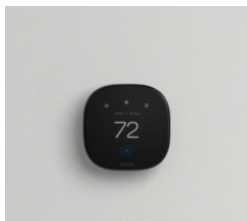
Efficiency Upgrades to Help You Save \$\$\$

By Abby Berry - NRECA

Spring and summer are opportune times for home upgrades and DIY projects. If you plan to improve your home, consider upgrades that promote better efficiency.

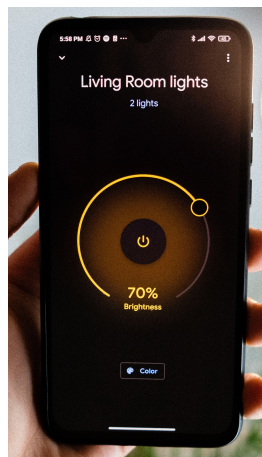
Here are a few projects that can help you save energy and money—and increase the comfort of your home.

Installing a smart thermostat. This is one of the simplest ways to manage home energy use and keep summer bills in check. Smart thermostats are easy to install



and allow you to control your heating and cooling system from your phone. You can purchase a smart thermostat for as low as \$100, which can save you 8% on annual heating and cooling costs, about \$50 per year. This upgrade will quickly pay for itself, and you'll gain insight into better ways to heat and cool your home. Additionally, PCRPPD offers an EnergyWise Incentive of up to \$100 toward the purchase.

Smart LED bulbs. Speaking of smart, additional devices like smart LED bulbs also offer convenient control and help boost energy savings at home. With smart lighting, you can schedule when and how your lights should be turned on or off. And the next time you head out to run errands and realize you left



the lights on, all you have to do is turn them off through your phone. Smart lights come in various shapes, colors,

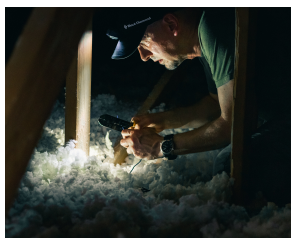
and brightness levels—and you can purchase bulbs for indoor or outdoor use. Schedule outdoor smart lights to illuminate your home at night and when you're out of town for better security.

Sealing air leaks around your home.



new (or replacing old) weather stripping around doors and windows can instantly make your home more comfortable and reduce energy waste. Applying caulk to fill gaps can also improve the seal of your home. Caulk can be applied to a variety of areas, including windows, doors, bathtubs, and sinks.

Additional insulation. If your home feels too warm during summer (and too chilly during winter) even after you've sealed with weather stripping and caulk, your home may need additional insulation. Insulation is considered a m o r e



expensive efficiency upgrade; however, if your home is under-insulated, additional insulation can greatly impact energy use and costs. The cost of new insulation depends on a variety of factors, like materials, the size of the home, and whether you use a contractor. Typically, the project costs can be recouped in a few years, and your home will immediately feel more comfortable. PCRPPD offers an

EnergyWise incentive of 15 cents per square foot toward attic insulation on some installations. To see if you qualify, reach out to PCRPPD.

Of course, additional efficiency upgrades can significantly impact energy use, like replacing old appliances with ENERGY-STAR® models or replacing old, leaky windows with new, energy-efficient windows. But these upgrades can be a bit pricey.

If you want to make your home more energy efficient but are unsure where to start, your best bet is to contact Wade Rahn at PCRPPD by calling (402) 764-4381. He can easily identify areas to boost efficiency, and then you can determine the projects you want to tackle first based on your budget and needs.

Making efficiency improvements?

Call Wade at (402) 764-4381

We may have incentives to help!

ENERGYWISE SM
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CALL 811 BEFORE YOU DIG

Digging without locating underground utilities could leave neighborhoods in the dark, cause thousands of dollars in damages or cause severe electrical shock.



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MORE INFO
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