

News from the Northeast Nebraska Public Power District

April 2009

Sholes Substation to get larger transformer

The increased irrigation-pumping load in the Sholes area has required the purchase of a larger transformer. Load growth at this Substation has been substantial as the transformer size was increased in 2005 and now again in 2009. The expected delivery date for the new transformer is April and there will be a planned outage while cranes lift the new transformer into place. The existing transformer at Sholes will be moved to the Wayne Substation to provide more capacity in and around Wayne. The cost of the new Sholes transformer is \$185,000.

Let Congress hear your concerns about future taxes on Electricity

We have been encouraging our customers to use the website <https://www.ourenergy.coop> to send emails directly to your federal elected officials if you are concerned about future taxes on your electric bill. Recent media reports indicate that the Obama administration's plans to implement a 'Cap and Trade Program' to regulate carbon emissions which would increase the costs of electricity *multiple times*. Congress will undertake the debate on implementing either a 'Cap and Trade Program' or 'Carbon Tax' this spring. It isn't too late for you to weigh in on the future costs of electricity.

If you want, we will send the email to your elected officials for you. Simply sign this newsletter and return with your bill. By signing, you are authorizing us to ask your Congressional leaders these basic questions:

- How is Congress going to help us meet the future demand for electricity?
- How are they going to help us develop technology to reduce carbon dioxide emissions?
- How is Congress going to help keep electricity affordable?

You should expect a letter back from your Congressman explaining his stand on these issues.

YES, please send an email for me:

NAME: _____

MAILING ADDRESS: _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

PHONE: _____

What are 'Aid to Construction' payments?

To keep rates as low as possible, the District asks customers who need electric line extensions to pay some or all of the costs. Put another way, there isn't money built into electric rates to run electric line anywhere for any reason. 70% of all money collected by the District goes to NPPD to pay for the cost of wholesale power. The District's engineers evaluate each line extension to determine if it should be paid in part by the general rate payer or should be paid for by the customer requesting the new line to be built. The District has a policy that provides some credit to help new customers, but if the line extension becomes too costly then the 'Aid to Construction' payment is required to keep general ratepayers from having to pay for line that will not benefit the District's overall efficiency or reliability. Collecting Aid to Construction payments is a standard industry-wide practice.

Kill-A-Watt devices available for loan from NeNPPD

Simply plug the Kill-A-Watt device into an outlet and then an appliance into the device to see how much energy is being used. The devices are commercially available to purchase, but the District will loan them to you for 2 weeks at no cost with the payment of a \$25.00 refundable security deposit. Call the office for details. Everything can be done through the mail or come by to pick one up from the office.

Estimated meter readings will now be marked as an estimate on the face of the bill

We continue to strive to produce a better-looking bill with more information. Recently, we added a comment to the bill for those few bills that are an estimated reading. It is common utility practice to estimate monthly usage when a reading isn't available. Although we use our Automated Meter Reading (AMR) system to read each meter every night, there are some meters that have yet to reliably communicate. If the billing date arrives and it has been a few days since we received a reading, then we will likely estimate the bill. At first we didn't foresee that the bill should be marked as an estimated reading. We now have this corrected and any estimated reading would plainly be marked as such on the face of the bill. We have a practice of not issuing more than two estimated bills in a row.

The District to convert to new billing software in the summer of 2009

It is our hope to offer customers greater access to their electric accounts through the web. We will begin offering the many services of the Southeastern Data Corp. (SEDC) this summer. Possibly by the fall of 2009 we can offer customers to see on-line their full electric account history, make payments directly with their credit and debit cards, take their own meter readings through the AMR system, and check previous meter readings. We hope to extend these kind of services to include pre-payment options to help customers avoid disconnection fees and penalties. This will be a big undertaking, but one that will help customers directly and help us by doing more of the work of billing and processing payments efficiently.

New Office Building will likely be open in May

Our company is 11 years old. It was formed in 1998 by combining 2 rural power districts and a group of 14 towns and villages from the NPPD. This allowed for the savings of not having 3 managers, office staffs, and etc. Combining the operations of these 3 companies has been a steady and slow process. Everything couldn't be done in a year. The last phase of the consolidation is the relocation of the General Office Building to the new warehouse site in Wayne. Consolidating our facilities has allowed us to sell 2 buildings in Ponca, 2 buildings in Emerson, and 2 buildings and a warehouse in Wayne. The office building at 303 Logan St. in Wayne, which has been in service since 1949, has been sold to American Broadband, Inc. of Blair, NE.

Nebraska is 6th lowest cost state in Nation for electricity

The US Dept. of Energy has posted a map showing the comparisons on average paid by customers from state to state, <http://www.eia.doe.gov/fuelelectric.html>. Nebraska's paid an average 6.07¢/kWh while the national average was 8.9¢/kWh in 2008. The highest cost State on the mainland was Massachusetts with 15.5¢/kWh and the lowest was Idaho with 4.9¢/kWh. Our customers averaged 6.45¢/kWh or about 72% the national average. Typically, rural electric systems charge a little more than cities because of having much fewer customers per mile of line. NeNPPD rates for winter residential sales can be as low 4.7¢/kWh with electric heat, when usage is over 1500 kWh in a month.

EnergyWise Tip: Reduce "Phantom" Energy Loss

Did you know that even after you push the OFF button on your TV remote, a TV although darkened, may continue to draw electric power, costing you money unnecessarily? It's a distinct possibility. Many of today's electric-powered appliances and electronic components, like televisions and computers, continue to use power after they are shut off. The amount of energy a typical household may lose to these "phantom" loads can range from 4 to 12 percent, according to recent electrical industry studies. In the average home, 75 percent of the electricity used to power home electronics is consumed while the products are turned off. Unplugging the appliance or using a power strip to cut all power to the appliance can avoid this loss of energy. Unplug battery chargers when the batteries are fully charged or the chargers are not in use.

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