



June 2024

# Weathering the Storm

## Wheat Belt Public Power District's Remarkable Recovery Efforts

BY: **KELLI CHAON** *Customer Engagement Manager*



In the wake of the storm that struck on April 6th, Wheat Belt Public Power District found ourselves facing one of our greatest challenges yet. With over 1100 poles broken or damaged and power disrupted to more than 1500 accounts, the task of restoration seemed daunting.

Thanks to the efforts of our amazing crews, support staff and the assistance from mutual aid crews from Dawson Public Power (Lexington, NE), LaCreek Electric (Martin, SD), Loup Valleys Rural Public Power (Ord, NE), McCook Public Power (McCook, NE), Midwest Electric (Grant, NE), Northwest Public Power (Hay Springs, NE), PREMA (Alliance, NE), Roosevelt Public Power (Scottsbluff, NE) and Southern Public Power (Grand Island, NE), we had all residential services restored by April 17th. These crews fought mud, rain, wind, and long hours throughout this restoration process,



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*Editor - Kelli Chaon*

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## LUCKY DRAWING

Congratulations to Willaim and Geraldine Reuter our April "Lucky Draw Winner"!

William was raised on the family farm and still lives there. He has been farming and ranching his whole life and Geraldine is a cosmetologist. Willaim and Geraldine have one grown son.

In their spare time, the Reuters enjoy hunting and photography.

William and Geraldine received a \$50 credit on their account for their prompt payment. If you would like to be included in our next drawing, and avoid a \$5 delinquent fee, please send your payment before the 16th of the month.

For your convenience, we offer several payment options. Please give us a call at 308-254-5871, or visit [wheatbelt.com](http://wheatbelt.com), and select the Customer Engagement page for more information.

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# Weathering the Storm.....continued

but never gave up.

After all the residential accounts were back on, our focus turned to irrigation accounts. At this point we still had just over 100 irrigation accounts without power. Our mutual aid crews went home, and contracting crews were brought in to help with the line rebuild. By May 10th, we had all these irrigation accounts restored. There were still around 35 accounts left to get back on that consisted of stock wells, fencing services, and abandoned farmsteads. Keep in mind that some of these accounts required one to two miles of line rebuild for just one service. The goal is to have every account back up and going by the end of May.

Through this process, we have learned a lot about storm restoration, NEMA (Nebraska Emergency Management Agency) and FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency). It seems like there is more and more to learn each day.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to each and every one of our customers, businesses, and community members for their unwavering support throughout this challenging period. Your patience, understanding, and assistance have been instrumental in our journey towards restoration.

As we reflect on the events of the few months, we are reminded of the strength and resilience that define the Wheat Belt community. Together, we have weathered the storm, emerging stronger and more united than ever before.



# Don't Overload Your Home's Electrical System

With power strips and outlet converters (a multiple outlet “bar” plugged directly into an existing outlet), we can plug in multiple items in or near the same outlet.

But just because we can, doesn't mean we should. (I can eat a whole box of chocolates, but that doesn't mean I should.)

Just like chocolate consumed in excess can overload your body with too many calories, attempting to draw too much power from an outlet or circuit can overload your home's electrical system. Depending on how your home is wired, you may get away with it — or you may not. If too much current is drawn, usually a circuit breaker would trip or fuses would blow, but this is never guaranteed.

The results of overloading a circuit could range from a damaged appliance to starting a fire. That is because when too much electrical current flows through a circuit, things can overheat. Whether it is a wire, an outlet, or any other part along the electrical path, excess heat can cause serious problems.

Wheat Belt Public Power District and Safe Electricity remind you of the following electrical safety tips to help prevent overloading a circuit:

- Do not plug too many things into one outlet, extension cord, power strip, multi-outlet device or outlets on the same circuit.

- Look for loose connections or damaged or corroded wires, which can also cause an overload.

- If you continually upgrade your home with more electrical demands (lighting, appliances, electronics and so on), your home's circuits may not be able to handle the increased load.

- Plug in a space heater to a dedicated outlet (with nothing else plugged in) and do not plug a space heater into an extension cord.

- Major appliances (e.g., refrigerator, stove, washing machine) should be plugged into their own outlet since they draw a lot of power. For smaller appliances, do not plug more than two into one outlet.

- Know how much power you draw on an outlet or circuit; some experts recommend no more than 1,500 watts per outlet or circuit.

- Consult a qualified electrician to assess your home's electrical system, especially if you have an older home.

Although we take for granted that our homes are electrically sound or that we can plug in “just one more thing,” don't take chances. When in doubt, have a qualified electrician assess your home, and mention any odd symptoms you may notice, like flickering or dimming lights, warm or discolored outlets or cover plates, and frequent blown fuses or tripped circuits.

For more information about electrical safety, visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).






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## ENERGY EFFICIENCY TIP OF THE MONTH

Did you know ceiling fans can help you save energy? Ceiling fans create a windchill effect on your skin to make you feel a few degrees cooler. Raise the thermostat a few degrees and turn on fans to reduce air conditioning costs.

Set fan blades to rotate counterclockwise during summer months and clockwise during winter months. Remember, ceiling fans cool people but don't actually lower the indoor temperature. Turn them off when you leave the room.

Source: *energy.gov*



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