

the Wheat Belt Connection



SCHOOL BEGINS - DRIVE SAFELY

AUGUST 2019

You are never too young or old to learn about Electrical Safety

Each year, we offer and perform safety demonstrations and classes around our service territory. Area public power districts and cooperatives have a "life sized" demonstration trailer, and we also have a table-top model. Tri-State G & T is also willing and able to attend school assemblies or individual class rooms to promote safety.

Accidents are preventable, and the more safety is drilled into a person, the more likely they will have an automatic reaction or response to a situation.

This is why we start, at a very young age, training and stressing the do's and don'ts of electrical safety.

Wheat Belt PPD makes a conscious effort to promote electrical safety in the schools, but we want everyone to know, that we are more than happy to attend 4-H or Scout meetings, home school events or any civic or community event, and arrange a Safety Session. We would also be willing to attend your Work Place Safety Meeting. We can use the demo or plan a session that is relative to your situation.

Yolanda Hruska is the coordinator of these events. Please feel free to contact our office at 308-254-5871 or 800-261-7114 to arrange a demonstration and discuss what you would like to see at your event.

Earl Reilly, Wheat Belt Operations Manager, also has served as Safety Director for many years. Dedication to safety and a culture of safety is of the utmost importance to the Wheat Belt Board, staff and employees. Stay Safe!



Wheat Belt Connection

Editor

Pam Wieser

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Drawing Winner

Yolanda Hruska

Congratulations to Bernie Marquardt, our June "Lucky Winner!" Mr. Marquardt has been a Wheat Belt customer since 2008. Bernie is married and has three children and two grandchildren. He continues to actively participate in his own business. Western Nebraska is his retreat from the busyness of the eastern part of our state. He enjoys farming and is an avid outdoorsman, especially duck and goose hunting.

Bernie will receive a \$50 credit for his prompt payment. If you would like to be included in our next drawing, and avoid the \$5 delinquent fee, please send your payment before the 18th of the month.

For your convenience, we offer several options. Please give us a call or visit wheatbelt.com, and select the Customer Services menu.

Nebraska Statute Requirements

If we do not receive payment by the delinquent date stated on your billing statement, we are required by Nebraska statute to send a notice. The notice includes all the information required by law including information on the payment plan that is offered (if your account is current), and necessary steps if there is a medical situation in your household.

For those customers that have never received a notice, the notice appears to be harsh in its wording. The wording is a requirement of statute. As a public utility, we must treat all customers alike. There is a charge for the notice, and it does indicate the possible charges should the account be subject to disconnect. This, too, is required by statute.

Wheat Belt also has an automatic phone notification procedure. If your payment is not received prior to the disconnect date, we do send a phone notification. This is a courtesy call. If you do not want the call, it is not required by law, and you can be removed from the list; however, we have found that it has served as notification to a number of customers that their payment, which was mailed (and should have been received), was not received. It has saved customers the disconnect fee in the past, so although it may be annoying, you may want to consider the alternative.


Auto-pay is a very convenient service we offer. We do not draw the funds until near the delinquent date or around the 18th of the month. It certainly takes the worry out of paying your monthly bill. If you would like more information, please contact our office. 308-254-5871 or 800-261-7114.



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Quotes to Ponder

"Others may define you because of your past. That doesn't mean you have to. Only you have the power to define your future. Everyday you wake up, you have been given the opportunity to start new!"

Unknown

"No one has the right to anything for which you have worked. To give freely is a kindness - to have it taken, is theft!"

Unknown

"Patience is a form of wisdom. It demonstrates that we understand and accept the fact that sometimes things must unfold in their own time."

Jon Kabat-Zinn


"There are some people who live in a dream world, and there are some who face reality; and then there are those who turn one into the other."

Douglas H. Everett

"Taking the high road not only makes you look good, it gives you a better view."

Unknown

"Some people enjoy hurting others-as an individual, you need to learn that only your opinion matters as to who you are." Unknown



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One of the largest benefits of being a part of your public power district is the ability to have a local say in how it operates by electing local individuals to govern and set the policies and direction of the district. Those same elected officials also run the various organizations of which we are member-owners, including Tri-State Generation and Transmission, from whom we purchase all of our electricity to serve you. In recent months, there has been a push by the Colorado Legislative and Executive Branches, as well as the Colorado Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) to determine if the CPUC should be able to regulate the rates, electric generation resources, and other items of Tri-State. This raises several flags to us as Nebraska power consumers.

We have several concerns with the ability of the CPUC regulating our power supplier. The first concern is that the control, direction, and decisions of our energy will be taken out of the hands of 43 elected individuals that have intimate knowledge of the industry, a direct tie to the home system and the consumer, sound judgement with very little "political" interference in the decisions that are made, and are accountable to the power consumer of the district. This control will be put into the hands of a board of three individuals who are appointed by the Governor of the State of Colorado. These three individuals believe that they know what is best for Nebraska, Wyoming, New Mexico, and Colorado, more so than the local elected officials and members of the community. They bring their political baggage into the decisions that they make on our behalf, and have no accountability to the consumer.

The second concern ties in with the first - the loss



Watch for kids!

of local control. Every decision made at a higher level of government on our behalf takes a piece of the local control away. We then start to become what is best for someone else, not what is best for us as a community or us as a state. We have seven individuals that do a tremendous job in meeting our purpose.

The third concern is the dictation of direction by a state in which we have no representation. We are currently struggling with the energy policies of the three other states that make up Tri-State. We take a prudent and paced approach as Nebraskans and become penalized for being "smart". This would be one more level of control that another state can impose on us without our ability to be represented. We have attempted to intervene in the CPUC cases, but have been denied. We have a vested interest in this issue, just as much as the other 42 rural electrics that make-up Tri-State, but we, as Nebraskans, cannot even be heard in the process.

These are yet other battles that we fight to maintain a strong, local power district. We work hard to keep the cost of energy down, but the price of energy is becoming more influenced by public policy and less by actual cost to produce and deliver.

Because of the significant cost shifts that will likely occur to us based on these cases, Tri-State made the decision to become regulated by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. Though local control is the best way to govern, in this case, moving to federal regulation will provide a fairer opportunity for us to be represented in these issues, and not pit one state against another. Historically, we would have not been in favor of this additional regulation, but we believe now, it will be the best protection for Nebraska electric consumers.

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Safety First

BY PAM WIESER

Education and Safety Begins at Home

We don't always know what is being taught in our schools or how. We don't know if personal protection is taught or that our children are listening. To make sure they know and understand how important safety is, make sure you reiterate it at home.

- Have you ever discussed what your child should do if there is a lock down or active shooter in the school? Ask what they have practiced or been told to do. Get involved.
- What about if they are being bullied by other students, would your child come to you with the issue?
- If your child witnesses something that they feel is not right, are they comfortable speaking to you about it?
- The more open you are at home, the more you discuss safety, whether it be on the school campus or at athletic events, the safer your child will be.
- Children don't always open up about events that are happening around them. Ask them about their day, and what happened. "Fine" is not the answer.
- Taking a few moments to really listen is key. Visit about the dangers of tobacco or substance abuse. Talk about germs and protecting themselves. Most importantly be the parent. It is OK to be nosy!

Wheat Belt Public Power District
P O Box 177, Sidney, Nebraska
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