



OCTOBER 2020

THE WHEAT BELT CONNECTION

NEBRASKA RURAL ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION (NREA) JOB TRAINING AND SAFETY



Wheat Belt hosted the annual NREA Workshops at our Don Winkelman Training Field located north of Sidney. Hotline School, also known as Rubber Gloving, was held September 1-3 and Underground School was held September 9-10. The school is open to linemen from municipal and rural utility providers.

NREA provides a comprehensive Job Training and Safety Education Program to member-system employees. The training enables our employees to work safely and productively. Larry Oetken, of Norfolk, is the JT&S Coordinator.

Thirty-two linemen attended Hotline School which was conducted by experienced linemen from various utility companies. Groups were divided into three levels, Beginner, Intermediate, Experienced, and rotated to different hands-on stations. Time spent at each station varied with the different levels.

Twenty-four linemen attended Underground School which was conducted by manufacturing representatives and vendors of NREA. Groups were assigned and rotated to five different stations. Each session was 1 1/2 hours long.

In order to maintain a healthy environment, a health check was performed at the start of each day for everyone. Face masks were worn while inside the buildings and outside, if a six foot distance could not be maintained (e.g. while working in a bucket truck). All

continued on Page 12-B

IN THIS ISSUE

Editor - Yolanda Hruska

NREA cont'd	Page 12-B
Preparing for the Big Hunt	Page 12-B/D
Rural Broadband Update	Page 12-C
Pole Top & Bucket Rescue	Page 12-C



DRAWING WINNER

Congratulations to Tyler and Bobbi Burkholder, our August "Lucky Winners"! The Burkholders have received a \$50 credit on their account.

Tyler, a District Manager for 21st Century Equipment, and Bobbi, a stay-at-home mom, recently finished a complete remodel of their farm home located north of Julesburg. They, along with 12-year-old twin boys, enjoy life on the farm. The family makes time for hunting, sporting events, 4-H events, and all outdoor activities. They also look after their animals which include chickens, turkeys, dogs, and cattle.

If you would like to be included in our next drawing, and avoid the \$5 delinquent fee, please send your payment before the 15th of the month.

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

P.O. BOX 177, 11306 RD 32, SIDNEY, NE 69162

P 308.254.5871 | T 800.261.7114 | wheatbelt.com | www.wheatbelt.com

PREPARING FOR THE BIG HUNT: CONSIDER ELECTRICAL SAFETY, TOO

As you prepare for hunting season, keep in mind that along with general hunting safety, electrical safety should also be at the top of the list.

You might be preoccupied and excited about the big hunt, but be sure to look up and out for power lines. Never place a tree stand near a power line. Contact with the power line, utility pole, or related equipment can alter the path to ground, sending electricity through anyone or anything that comes too close or in direct contact with the power source. (Even coming within 10 feet can cause an arc, transferring energy from the power line/source to an object or person.)

In addition, do not shoot near or toward power lines, utility poles, transformers or substations. Stray bullets or pellets could damage equipment, possibly interrupting electric service. Even more concerning, they could drop a power line to the ground, causing a hazardous scenario: those who get within 50 feet of the downed line could be shocked or electrocuted.

Wheat Belt and Safe Electricity remind hunting enthusiasts of these electrical safety tips:

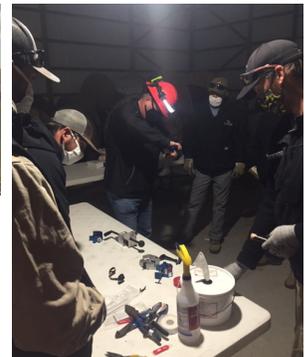
- Familiarize yourself with the area before heading out to hunt. Take note of power lines and equipment, especially when hunting in densely wooded areas.
- Observe all signs or postings that advise electrical safety, especially when scouting out a location for your tree stand.
- Do not use power poles to support a tree stand.
- Do not locate a tree stand near a power line or pole.
- Be in the habit of looking up and out for power lines and do not come within 10 feet of an overhead line or pole when setting up or taking down a stand.

continued on Page 12-D

NREA continued from Page 12-A

equipment was disinfected prior to being used by each person.

Both schools provided different challenging scenarios that could occur, encouraging group input and focusing on methods to avoid risk and how to safely complete the job.



Photos by Larry Oetken

Creekside
ANIMAL HOSPITAL

JENNIFER ELLIOTT, D.V.M.
Dr.Elliott@CAHSidney.com

308-254-4998 284 Illinois Street
www.CAHSidney.com Sidney, NE 69162

Moe's

Brian (Moe) Moffat

Heating

Electric Heat Pumps

PO Box 410
Oshkosh NE 69154
308-772-3223
Cell: 308-778-6100

& Air Conditioning

POINTSWEST
Community Bank
A new direction in banking.

Proudly serving western Nebraska
from these convenient locations:

<p>Sidney 809 Illinois Street, Phone: (308)254-7110</p> <p>420 Glover Road, Phone: (308)254-5100</p> <p>Dalton 301 Main Street, Phone: (308)377-2313</p>	<p>Kimball 201 South Chestnut, Phone: (308)235-3663</p> <p>Chappell 774 2nd Street, Phone: (308)874-2215</p> <p>Lisco 102 Coldwater, Phone: (308)772-3226</p>
---	--

Find us on Facebook

www.pwcbank.com

Member FDIC

Timothy Lindahl
General Manager/CEO

Tim's Tidbits

RURAL BROADBAND UPDATE



The State of Nebraska created a Rural Broadband Taskforce, <https://ruralbroadband.nebraska.gov>, to identify challenges in getting affordable broadband to our rural communities. The taskforce submitted a report to the Unicameral late in 2019. Legislation was introduced, LB992, which addressed some of the roadblocks that were identified in the report. LB992 passed and was signed into law in July of this year.

This new law removes some of the barriers to broadband expansion. The law also strongly encourages the development of partnerships and coordination of infrastructure, so that this service can be brought to all rural communities in the most efficient and economical way. It also encourages electric utilities to play a role, where it makes sense, through a change in how public utilities can lease excess fiber capacity back to a telecommunications provider.

We stay involved in determining how we may facilitate expansion of solid and affordable broadband service. As we continue to evaluate our communication needs and address our aging infrastructure, we will work with others to make sure that if we can help, we will, as long as it does not negatively impact our electric rates, our reliability, or our safety.

POLE TOP AND BUCKET RESCUE



On August 14, 2020, Wheat Belt PPD linemen participated in our monthly Safety Meeting focusing on Pole Top and Bucket Rescue.

Our fully geared linemen are required to climb a pole and rescue an injured "lineman". Our training uses a 160 lb. mannequin, plus approximately 20 lbs. of additional gear. They must secure the mannequin and safely lower it from the pole top to the ground. Our distribution poles range from 30 to 55 feet and rescue must be done within four minutes.



Linemen also trained rescuing an injured lineman from a bucket truck.

The training was conducted by NREA Job Training & Safety Instructor Joel Duffield.




**DAY & NIGHT
PLUMBING & HEATING, LLC**
Unparalleled Service Since 2002*Reliable Professionals
COMMERCIAL * RESIDENTIAL * INDUSTRIAL
NEW CONSTRUCTION * REMODELS

- ♦ Plumbing
- ♦ Air Conditioning
- ♦ Radiant/Radiant In-Floor
- ♦ Reverse Osmosis
- ♦ Fixtures
- ♦ Heating
- ♦ Geothermal Heat Pumps
- ♦ Water Softeners
- ♦ Maintenance Agreements
- ♦ Water Heaters

7am-4pm * Monday-Friday * 1400 Jackson St., Sidney NE
308-254-1008 * 24-hour Emergency Service

ROOD'S TIRE CENTER

- 24 Hour Farm & Road Service
- 4-Wheel Alignment (Cars or Trucks)
- Complete Suspension Work
- Computer Balance (Cars/Light & Large Trucks)
- Shocks and Struts
- Complete Exhaust Work
- Complete Brake Work
- Alignments
- Oil Change & Lube
- Wheels

Most Major Brand Tires
Michelin - Uniroyal - Firestone - BF Goodrich - Kelly - Goodyear

1744 Illinois
Sidney NE 69162
308-254-6127 or 800-303-6127




PREPARING FOR THE BIG HUNT continued from Page 12-B

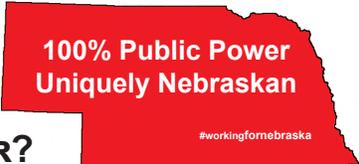
- Never climb a utility pole.

Please report any damage to a line or other related equipment to us so that we can address it. Although we perform routine maintenance, damage may not be noticed for weeks or months unless an outage occurs due to the vast number of lines that cover our service area.

Of course, always take the time to observe general hunting safety measures as well. Stay safe out there!

For more information about safety around power lines and other sources of electricity, go to SafeElectricity.org.

**OCTOBER IS
PUBLIC POWER
MONTH:
WHY PUBLIC POWER?**



Public Power is Affordable and Reliable - Electricity is one of the few great bargains left. Low electric rates benefit all Nebraskans. Here, a homeowner can meet all of their electric needs for about \$3.45 per day. This is less than the cost of a drive-thru meal to keep your home at a comfortable temperature, your lights on, and your appliances running.

Public Power is Environmentally Friendly - Public power works hard to be good stewards of the environment. Nebraskans enjoy a 65% carbon-free footprint with wind, solar, hydro-electric and nuclear energy.

Public Power is Not-For-Profit - No Stockholders, just neighbors. Because local public power utilities are operated by the people they serve, there are no stockholders to please or profits to make. Rates are set locally-usually by locally elected boards in open meetings where you can have your voice heard.



VISIT US IN DALTON!

*Made to Order Deli Sandwiches
In-House Ground/Hand Cut Meats
Groceries & Supplies
Nebraska Products & Gifts
Convenience Items*

OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK!
Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.
Saturday 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.
Sunday 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Located on the East side of US HWY 385
308-377-2333

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- PRESIDENT**
Bernie Fehringer, *Sidney*
- VICE PRESIDENT**
Brian Zimmerman, *Big Springs*
- SECRETARY**
Brian "Moe" Moffat, *Oshkosh*
- TREASURER**
John Gortemaker, *Oshkosh*
- ASSISTANT SECRETARY**
Mike Blomenkamp, *Broadwater*
- DIRECTORS**
Doug Smith, *Chappell*
Stuart Morgan, *Dalton*

STAFF

- GENERAL MANAGER / CEO**
Tim Lindahl
- MANAGER OF CORPORATE SERVICES & BUSINESS STRATEGIES**
Lacey Gulbranson
- CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT MANAGER**
Kelli Chaon
- OPERATIONS MANAGER / SAFETY DIRECTOR**
Earl Reilly
- CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER**
Carolyn Hostetler
- STAKING / CONSTRUCTION SUPERVISOR**
Ryan Borges
- MANAGER OF TECHNOLOGIES**
Jim Weeda

OFFICE HOURS: 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
P 308.254.5871 • T 800.261.7114 • F 308.254.2384



The Moose & The Goose Gallery
Custom Framing & Antiques
1017 Illinois Street
Sidney NE 69162
308-254-0500 or 249-0338

Clip and save this ad. Present at time of order for 10% off framing.

We Buy Antiques!

facebook.com/mooseandthegoose