

August 2009

## Supplying Electricity to Nebraskans

By Rick Nelson, General Manager

My July radio show focused on issues related to our wholesale power supplier, Nebraska Public Power District (NPPD). I was lucky to have Ron Asche, CEO of NPPD, here to talk with Dave Birnie of KCNI/KBBN about the history of NPPD, NPPD's mission, the power plants that generate electricity for NPPD, what the future holds in terms of load growth, and additional generation and legislative issues affecting your PPD.



Manager Nelson

NPPD supplies your home with electricity from coal, natural gas, hydro, nuclear and wind. They have to keep those resources running and operational to meet the daily changing needs of their wholesale customers and their retail customers. Then they must design the transmission system to get the power to where it needs to be on a daily basis.

To be successful, they need to know what our future requirements will be in order to have adequate power available when we need it. As in so many things, the ultimate answer depends upon good communication.

We talked about irrigation load control and how Custer was the pioneer in that new technology in the 1970s. In 2008, by using load control and shifting the use to a less expensive time and when there is more electricity available, NPPD shifted over 700 megawatts, or 700,000 kWh, the equivalent of a large base load generating unit. That's a

huge savings for the rate payers of NPPD and Custer.

There are many challenges ahead. We face increasing costs for just about everything, plus unknowns at the Federal level in terms of legislation.

Closer to home, recent decreases in natural gas prices are lowering generation costs for utilities outside of Nebraska, which in turn reduces the market prices

of any generation being sold. NPPD sells excess power when it is not fully loaded, and that saves our consumers money. This year, however, NPPD power sales have brought greatly reduced prices, which puts upward pressure on our rates.

Ron also talked about wind development in Nebraska. He described the NPPD owned and operated facility in Ainsworth and also the private developer wind sites that are now operational, including the potential for a wind development in Broken Bow.

I am beginning to understand why people sometimes think it is a curse to say, "May you live in interesting times." This year is Custer's 65th anniversary, and that gives me pause to reflect that through all the changes, through all the challenges, through all the ups and downs, our history tells us that if we stay true to the goal of looking out for our customer-owners, we'll succeed.

# Heat and Cool Your Home Efficiently

Energy costs continue to rise ... with no end in sight! There is, however, something you can do to counteract this energy sticker shock. For some homes, up to 50 percent of the energy used annually is for heating and cooling. Fortunately, you have an option to minimize this expense.

- What is a heat pump? When you drive by a house, you can't tell if the heating/cooling equipment is a heat pump or an air conditioner – they look the same, are connected to the furnace the same, perform the same in the summer in terms of cooling and efficiency; however, heat pumps are able to also heat in the winter and deliver 200-300 percent efficiency.
- Why does this matter? Because for 70 percent of the winter the heat pump is able to heat the home by itself. When it gets really cold, the thermostat senses the heat pump needs help, and it cycles the electric or gas furnace with it to heat the home. All this is done automatically – simply set the thermostat to “heat.”
- Why should you care? Based on today's electric and fossil fuel costs, with a heat pump an average home can save \$300-\$400 a year in heating costs because the heat pump is so efficient. For a majority of the winter you are heating your home with a system that is 200-300 percent efficient rather than the normal 80-95 percent efficiency of a furnace which burns fossil fuel.
- Are incentives available? Check with Custer Public Power, there are NEW incentives available for customers who put in a high efficient heat pump. Choose between either a direct cash incentive (\$200-\$400) or 2.5% low interest loan through the Nebraska Energy Office.



There are very few cases where it makes sense from the homeowners' standpoint to install an air conditioner outside rather than a heat pump. They both perform exactly the same function in the summer – but the heat pump provides big savings during the winter.

**ENERGYWISE**  
Use less. Spend less. Do more.

You owe it to yourself to make an informed decision regarding your home's heating and cooling system because it is one that will be with you for a long while. Contact Custer Public Power to find out about the efficient, modern heat pump. While you're at it, check out the many EnergyWise programs being offered to help you use electric energy efficiently and save money.

# Youth Energy Camp '09

The week of July 13-17 was the Nebraska Rural Electric Youth Energy Camp at the State 4-H campsite in Halsey. There were 69 teenagers attending this camp from all over the state. Custer Public Power District sponsored 2 youths this year. They were Chance Giles from Halsey, Nebraska and Hannah Meeks from Taylor, Nebraska.

The week consists of several activities for the youth. Seminars are held on various topics including demonstrations on energy, benefits of teamwork, electrical effects, safety, and high voltage. Campers also have a chance to see how well they can climb a pole. In the middle of the week the campers and counselors load onto buses and head to Kingsley Hydro-Electric generating station at Lake McConaughy in Ogallala, then off to Gerald Gentleman Station at Sutherland. The youth and adults get a very informative tour of the coal burning power plant owned by Nebraska Public Power District. There are also some fun activities for the youth like canoeing and various water sports.

All youth attending the camp have an opportunity to try for an all expense paid trip to Washington D.C. as an ambassador for the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's annual Youth tour held in June. This tour brings high school students from across the country representing 1,000 rural electric systems. They get to share ideas, learn about rural electrification and tour the nation's capital. This competition consists of applying for the position and then your peers vote on the top ten finalists. Chance was one of the finalists that gave a 5 minute speech on a subject dealing with electricity.

This is a unique opportunity to participate in a learning and educational experience while forming memories and friendships that will last a lifetime. So, if you are in grades 9 -11 be watching for our application to attend camp next year. This is a wonderful experience for all those attending.



# Vegetable English Muffins Pizzas



**Prep Time:** 20 min **Total Time:** 24 min **Makes:** 4 servings

## What You Need

- 4 whole wheat English muffins, halved, toasted
- 1/3 cup pizza sauce
- 1 cup fresh mushroom slices
- 1/4 cup chopped green pepper
- 1 cup KRAFT 2% Milk Shredded Mozzarella Cheese
- 1 Tbsp. KRAFT Reduced Fat Parmesan style grated topping

## Make It

*SPREAD* English muffins with pizza sauce.

*TOP* with remaining ingredients.

*BROIL* 3 to 4 minutes or until mozzarella cheese is melted.

### Nutrition Information (per serving)

Calories 180  
Total fat 5 g  
Saturated fat 2.5 g  
Cholesterol 10 mg  
Sodium 650 mg  
Carbohydrate 25 g  
Dietary fiber 4 g  
Sugars 2 g  
Protein 12 g  
Vitamin A 10 %DV  
Vitamin C 8 %DV  
Calcium 60 %DV  
Iron 10 %DV



## CUSTER CURRENTS

Newsletter of the  
**CUSTER PUBLIC POWER  
DISTRICT**

**Broken Bow, NE - Phone 872-2451**  
**www.custerpower.com**

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Hooker, McPherson, Logan and parts of  
Sherman, Garfield, Brown, Cherry,  
Lincoln, and Dawson Counties

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and Loss Control  
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## Board Meetings

The regular monthly meeting of the Custer Public Power District Board of Directors is on the last Thursday of each month, beginning at 10:00 a.m. in the main office in Broken Bow on Hwy. 2.

An agenda for each regular meeting of the board is available for public inspection during business hours.

In the event of matters of an emergency nature or conflicts with other meeting dates, the Board of Directors will set changes. Any change in the monthly meeting date will be posted in the legal notice at the main headquarters building at Broken Bow and at each of the District's area service centers located in Callaway, Sargent, Stapleton and Thedford, Nebraska.