

January 2011

Moving Forward

By Rick Nelson, General Manager

It always feels good to start a new year. I have a feeling that 2011 will be interesting and challenging. The challenging part is increasing rates, which doesn't necessarily make us feel good. We've talked about this most of the second half of 2010, but I think it would be good to remind everybody of where we're at.

Our power supplier, NPPD, announced a 9.8% average wholesale increase for 2010. This means Custer's costs for wholesale power will be increasing. This is bad news since wholesale power costs represent about 60% of our total costs and your monthly bill.

Why that increase in wholesale power cost? Part of it is the same thing you see in any business, such as increased costs in fuel for generating plants, for NPPD's truck fleet, and higher costs for steel and other commodities.

Another factor has been less revenue when NPPD sells off-peak power to other utilities in the region. A weaker economy and low natural gas prices lowers the market price NPPD can get and thus cuts into revenue.

Our goal has been to find efficiencies and savings so that we can absorb some cost increases instead of passing them on to you. We were fairly successful, as such things go in the utility world, and have trimmed about a third off what the increase would have been.

For example, we are restructuring some benefits to



employees and refinancing debt that we use to rebuild the backbone of a system that will be in service for generations. These actions resulted in hundreds of thousands of dollars savings for the District.

We'll continue to work diligently to make sure your dollars are spent wisely. Bear in mind, though, that at some point cost-cutting becomes a false savings if it undermines the long-term strength of the power system – the lines, the poles, the equipment, and the people who make it run.

We've been working hard on improving our efficiency while still providing the service you expect, but still have to face increases in the cost of steel, fuel, material, wire and vehicle expenses. And while that is the day-to-day reality, the good news is that we are in strong financial condition with excellent prospects for a stable 10-year financial forecast and successful completion of our five-year work plan. Not all utilities in the U.S. can say the same thing.

Since it is generally cheaper to encourage people to conserve energy than it is to build new power plants, you can look for more from us in the way of conservation and efficiency measures in 2011.

We will strive to keep you informed on issues that pertain to our industry and focus on our mission to safely deliver electricity to our customer/owners. We'll work hard to keep the District in a sound financial position and exceed expectations in service and reliability. Together we have the power to make a difference.

Director Abel Thanks CPPD Customers

"I just want to say thank you to all of the customers of Custer PPD who voted for me and supported me during the past ten years I have been on the board. I have learned a lot and have enjoyed working with the other Directors. It has been a pleasure to serve you. Thanks again for the opportunity."

-Linda Abel



Don't Invite Old Man Winter into Your Home!

The weather outside might be frightful, but inside, you can still keep things delightful. This winter, save money and stay warm. Considering that nearly half the energy you use in the home goes towards keeping things comfortable, often there are huge energy-saving opportunities you may not have considered. Keep your energy bills low this winter by taking a whole-house approach to heating.



Seal it up!

- Weatherstrip and caulk windows. Check window frames for cracks and fill them with caulk that contains silicon. Putty-like "rope caulk" can help seal large cracks.
- Replace any broken window panes and repair any large holes in attics, crawlspaces or basements.
- Close the fireplace damper and seal the opening shut when not in use.
- Keep doors and windows closed as much as possible. That includes overhead doors on attached garages. Install foam insulation gaskets behind electric outlets and switch plate covers.
- Seal exposed ductwork. Sealing helps your heating system run more efficiently and also ensures that heated air gets to where it should go.

Open it!

- During the heating season, keep the draperies and shades on south facing windows open during the day to allow sunlight to enter the home and closed at night to reduce the chill from cold windows.

2011 Custer Power Calendar Features New Photographers



With the busy holidays behind us, we hope you will have a moment to look at your 2011 calendar. Once again, thanks to our customers for their entries. John Whitney was the first to submit an entry for the calendar this year. He took the shot from the Dunning Bridge in Blaine County last February and brought it in immediately. In addition to John, photographers sending in pictures for the first time included Pat Jones, Craig Zimmer, Bob Peterson, Jennifer Rice, Desarae Catlett, and Patty Guggenmous.

In addition to Custer County, photographs from Blaine, Logan, Hooker, and Loup are included. Don't miss the collage in the center of the calendar. Faye Zmek, artistic advisor for the project, did a great job putting together a series of photographs representing daily activities at Custer PPD. A big "thank you" to everyone who submitted photos to be used in the calendar this year. Don't forget to look at the information on the back page.


Retiring Employees Honored at Annual Meeting

**HAPPY
RETIREMENT**



Mick Kozeal (42 years), Doug Johnson (35 years), Noel Parker (35 years), and Shirley Gottula (22 years) were honored at the Annual Meeting of the Nebraska Rural Electric Association held at the Kearney Holiday Inn on December 2, 2010, for their years of service and retirement from Custer PPD. They were guests at the Noon luncheon and were presented with certificates during the afternoon session.

Wasabi Deviled Eggs

Looking for a way to make deviled eggs fiercer? Manager Nelson adds wasabi, which gives it a bit of a kick. The Breakfast Show staff (Dave, Bob, and Cynthia) at KCNI/ KBBN and Custer employees gave it a  review.



What You Need

- 8 large eggs
- 1/3 cup mayo
- 1 ½ teaspoons wasabi paste
- 2 teaspoons unseasoned rice-wine vinegar
- 2 large scallions, minced (3 tablespoons)
- Coarse salt
- Pinch of curry powder and sprouts for garnish

Make It

Prepare an ice-water bath. Place eggs in a medium saucepan. Add enough cold water to cover eggs by about one inch. Bring to a boil. Cover, and remove from heat. Let stand 13 minutes. Drain, transfer eggs to ice-water bath until cold.

Peel eggs and halve lengthwise. Transfer yolks to a medium bowl, and mash with a fork until smooth. Stir in mayonnaise, wasabi, vinegar, and scallions. Season with salt. Spoon filling into whites. Garnish. Makes 16 servings.

Nutritional Information:

Calories 60	Total fat 4.5 g	Saturated fat 1 g
Cholesterol 105 mg	Sodium 150 mg	Carbohydrate 2 g
Dietary fiber 0 g	Sugars 1 g	Protein 3 g
Vitamin A 2 %DV	Vitamin C 0 %DV	Calcium 0 %DV
Iron 0 %DV		

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

CUSTER CURRENTS

Newsletter of the **CUSTER PUBLIC POWER DISTRICT**

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

Serving Custer, Loup, Blaine, Thomas,
Hooker, McPherson, Logan and parts of
Sherman, Garfield, Brown, Cherry,
Lincoln, and Dawson Counties

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Brad Bartak, Merna.....Vice President
Brad Howard, Litchfield.....Treasurer
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John Blakeman, Merna.....Director
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Greg Smith, Milburn.....Director

Staff

Rick Nelson.....General Manager
Tom Knott.....Director of Operations
and Loss Control
Cheryl Taylor.....Director of Finance and
Administration

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.