

Public Power Boards: Community Leaders in Challenging Times

By Rick Nelson, General Manager

On November 6, you will be casting your vote for three directors of Custer Public Power District.

When you grow up in Nebraska, you take it for granted that you get to elect the men and women who run your electric utility. In most places, shareholders do that, and the people they elect are bound first and foremost to profit the investors.

Nebraska is the only state in which all electric utilities are locally owned and controlled by directors elected by the consumers. Their first duty is not to some far-off shareholders in the hunt for the greatest short-term gain; *their first duty is to you, the consumer.*

It makes a big difference.

It means that Nebraska has some of the lowest rates in the U.S., and I'd like to think that it also means you get better service for those low rates, since the owners of the utility and the customers are one in the same – and our employees know it!

The board's job is to set policy at the big picture level, then leave it up to the staff to run the utility according to those policies day-to-



day.

When the District promises safe, reliable electricity at an affordable rate to all customers, it makes a commitment backed by the best judgment of its board and the management hired by the board to run the District.

Directors bring to the boardroom success in business, financial analysis or operational activities. It is also helpful if they possess an understanding of the special challenges facing public power districts.

The business is complex and getting more so every day. We have to balance a growing array of conflicting demands (keep it cheap, make it green, keep the lights on but don't you dare trim the tree by Grandma's house, etc.)

When directors come on board,

they have quite an education curve to climb to learn about all of those challenges, what has gone before, and what lies ahead.

We invest in training for our directors, sending them to a number of workshops, conferences, and seminars. Yes, it costs money to do that. But the alternative is worse. As one long-time leader in the public power movement put it, "If you think it's expensive to run a utility with a well-trained board, trying running one with an ignorant board for a little while."

Following an assortment of big corporate scandals in the 1990s, Congress threw another challenge to directors. It passed the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002. Essentially, that law compels directors to take the reins into their own hands to assure that the company operates with integrity and that its financial reports do not contain funny business.

We operate Custer PPD according to those principles. It helps us ensure adherence to the highest ethical standards in the operation and governance of the District.

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PUBLIC POWER WEEK

OCTOBER 7-13, 2018

Powering Strong Communities

HELP CELEBRATE PUBLIC POWER WEEK

Custer Public Power District is celebrating Public Power Week (#PublicPowerWeek), Oct. 7-13, along with more than 2,000 other community-owned, not-for-profit electric utilities that collectively provide electricity to 49 million Americans.

Public Power Week celebrates the reliable, affordable electricity Custer Public Power provides to our community. Public power puts the people of our service territory first, and Public Power Week gives us the chance to emphasize the advantages of locally grown, locally owned power to our citizens.

Custer Public Power District is proud to have served rural Nebraska since 1944.

Public Power Week is an annual national event coordinated by the American Public Power Association in Washington, D.C. The American Public Power Association is the voice of not-for-profit, community-owned utilities that power 2,000 towns and cities nationwide.

The Association represents public power before the federal government to protect the interests of the more than 49 million people that public power utilities serve, and the 93,000 people they employ. It advocates and advises on electricity policy, technology, trends, training, and operations. Its members strengthen their communities by providing superior service, engaging citizens, and instilling pride in community-owned power. More at www.PublicPower.org.

The STEM Connection Lab is on the road again.

SCIENCE
TECHNOLOGY
ENGINEERING
MATHEMATICS

The STEM Connection Lab will be visiting 13 schools located in the Custer Public Power District service territory. The Lab will be at each school for two and a half weeks throughout the school year. It includes 10 stations that encourage students to explore design, engineering, fabrication, technology, and education.

Empowering progress for the future of rural communities by investing in our youth.



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Considering the speed at which the environment of the electric utility industry is changing, it's important that directors establish long-range goals. As the old saying goes, "If you don't know where you are going, any road will get you there." The more difficult the challenges ahead, the more we need a good road map and a wise set of goals to set our direction. That is the director's job.

Finding men and women who are equal to such challenges is a tall order. Fortunately, here at Custer PPD we've been blessed with an abundance of such leaders. Whoever may win these elections, know that they are stepping forward to give of their time and energy to help their neighbors and help build a stronger community.

One good way you can express your appreciation of the special privileges that we as Nebraskans enjoy is to make sure you cast your ballot. There are many places in the U.S. where consumers sure wish they'd had that opportunity.



OCTOBER IS NATIONAL CYBERSECURITY AWARENESS MONTH

YOU are our organization's first line of defense!

Protect Sensitive Information

- Use encryption to protect sensitive data.
- Do not put confidential information in emails, or instant and text messages.
- Treat all public Wi-Fi networks as a security risk.



Goopy Chocolate Caramel Brownies



Ingredients:

For the cake/brownie:

- 1 box chocolate cake mix (I like Devil's Food)
- 1 cup evaporated milk
- 1/2 cup (1 stick) butter, melted
- 2 cups semi-sweet chocolate chips

For the caramel filling:

- 1 (11 oz.) bag caramels, unwrapped
- 1/3 cup evaporated milk

Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 350F degrees.
2. Spray 9 x13 baking dish with nonstick cooking spray.
3. In a medium bowl, combine cake mix, 1 cup evaporated milk and 1/2 cup melted butter.
4. Mix until combined (batter will be thick).
5. Spread HALF of the batter into the baking pan (we'll use that other half later).
6. Put baking dish in the oven and bake for 15 minutes.
7. While it is baking, start making your caramel filling.
8. In a medium sauce pan, over medium heat, combine caramels with 1/3 cup evaporated milk.
9. Stir frequently until caramel is melted and smooth.
10. When brownie bottom is finished baking (it will only be partially baked), take out of oven and sprinkle with 2 cups chocolate chips.
11. Then drizzle with prepared caramel sauce.
12. Take the rest of the cake batter and drop by the teaspoonfuls onto caramel layer.
13. Bake for an additional 25-30 minutes (until the center is set).

Amount Per Serving
Calories 434

Recipe can be found at
www.thecountrycook.net



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

Officers & Directors

Brad Bartak, Merna.....President
John Blakeman, Merna.....Vice President
Greg Smith, Milburn.....Secretary
Brad Howard, Litchfield.....Treasurer
Tom Roberts, Loup City.....Asst. Treasurer
Lloyd Ramsey, Broken Bow.....Director
Wayne V. Licking, Thedford.....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.

