

# 2026

# Happy New Year 2026

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Newsletter of the

## Custer Public Power District

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

Custer Public Power  
District Newsletter  
is published bimonthly by:

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### Staff

<b>Brad Noack</b> <i>General Manager</i>	<b>April Gross</b> <i>Customer Service Manager</i>
<b>Jamie Hurlburt</b> <i>Operations Manager</i>	<b>Dustin Miller</b> <i>Purchasing Manager</i>
<b>Alex Coleman</b> <i>Accounting Manager</i>	<b>Jason Chaplin</b> <i>Engineering Manager</i>

### Officers & Directors

<b>Brad Bartak</b> <i>Merna President</i>	<b>Wayne V. Licking</b> <i>Theadford Asst. Treasurer</i>
<b>Sadye Taylor</b> <i>Broken Bow Vice President</i>	<b>Troy Mack</b> <i>Broken Bow Director</i>
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#### POSTMASTER:

Send address changes to:

Custer Public Power District  
P.O. Box 10  
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#### Comments or Questions:

**Tarin Burrows**  
*Executive Assistant*

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## From the **GENERAL MANAGER'S** desk

### **Custer Public Power District Announces New General Manager**

Custer Public Power District is pleased to announce the appointment of Brad Noack as its new General Manager. The Board of Directors worked with the NRECA Executive Search team to conduct a nation-wide search.

Brad Noack will begin his employment with Custer Public Power District on January 5, 2026.

Brad Noack brings more than 25 years of experience in the electric utility industry, including key leadership roles in engineering and operations at several utilities in Texas and Wisconsin. He most recently served as Vice President of Operations at Tri-County Electric Cooperative in Azle, Texas, where he led grid modernization initiatives, system improvements, and strategic reliability planning to support continued growth.

Brad holds a Bachelor of Business Administration and a Master of Business Administration degree, which he earned from Sam Houston State University. Throughout his career, he has demonstrated

a commitment to operational efficiency, safety, and customer-focused service. His leadership style emphasizes transparency, collaboration, and accountability, qualities that align closely with the values of the Custer Public Power District.

Brad and his family are eager to become part of the Broken Bow community and look forward to making Nebraska their home. He will officially assume his duties as General Manager in January 2026.

Brad commented, *"I am truly honored to join Custer Public Power District and look forward to working with our employees, Board of Directors, and community partners," Brad said. "Custer has a long history of dependable service and community commitment, and I am excited to build on that foundation while preparing for the opportunities that lie ahead."* ♦

### 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. (CT) in March at the main office in Broken Bow at 625 E South E 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 Theadford, Nebraska.

# Working Together to Lower Demand

When outdoor temperatures drop, electricity use naturally rises. Colder weather drives us indoors, where we rely more heavily on home heating systems, more lighting and household appliances. Heating systems run longer and more frequently to maintain comfortable indoor temperatures. Combine that with the fact that most people use electricity at the same times—typically in the mornings and early evenings—and the result is significant pressure on our electric grid.

Custer Public Power District works closely with NPPD, our G&T partner to plan for these seasonal weather patterns and changes and ensure you have reliable power every day of the year. This partnership involves detailed resource and infrastructure planning to make certain electricity is available whenever you need it. However, it's important to remember that our local system is part of a much larger regional and national

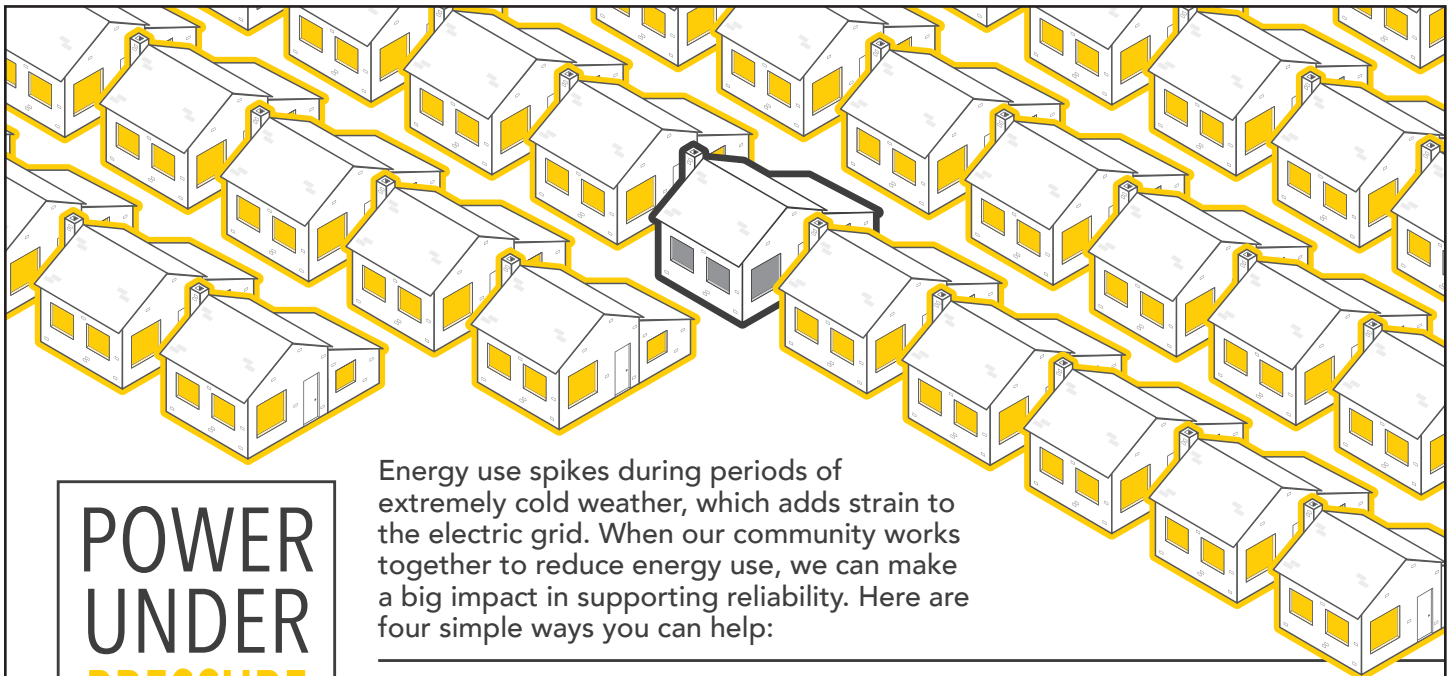
electric grid.

During the winter months, when homes and businesses across the country are using more electricity simultaneously, overall demand can approach—or occasionally exceed—available supply. This is especially true during severe weather events, such as ice storms, sudden temperature drops or equipment malfunctions that reduce generation capacity. In rare cases when demand threatens to outpace supply, the regional grid operator may call for temporary, controlled outages—often referred to as rolling blackouts—to prevent broader system failures. If such a situation arises, Custer PPD will provide timely updates and information to members.

To prepare for these scenarios and minimize risks, Custer PPD and our G&T partner take proactive measures to strengthen reliability year-round. These include routine system

maintenance, investments in grid modernization and comprehensive disaster response planning. These proactive steps are designed to ensure our portion of the grid remains resilient even under extreme conditions. Yet, maintaining a reliable electric system requires a collective effort—and every member plays an important role in lowering demand when the grid is under stress.

Understanding how winter weather impacts electricity demand is key to maintaining system reliability. By practicing simple energy conservation habits at home, you not only save money on your monthly bill—you also help strengthen the resilience of the grid that powers our community. Together, through small actions and shared awareness, we can ensure that our homes remain warm, our lights stay on and our local grid continues to serve us reliably throughout the season. ♦



## POWER UNDER PRESSURE

Four Ways to Ease Grid Strain This Winter

Energy use spikes during periods of extremely cold weather, which adds strain to the electric grid. When our community works together to reduce energy use, we can make a big impact in supporting reliability. Here are four simple ways you can help:

1. Lower your thermostat. Even a difference of a few degrees can help.
2. Delay using large appliances. Run them in the evenings or midday when demand is lower.
3. Lower your water heater to 120 degrees and avoid back-to-back showers.
4. Unplug unnecessary devices. Electronics and lighting add up. Unplug any unused items.



## Utility scams in this age of AI: How to spot and avoid fraud

Someone calls claiming to be from your utility company. They say your service will be cut off if you don't pay them immediately. Real utility companies don't do this. But scammers want to scare you into paying before you have time to confirm what they're telling you. And scammers are now using Artificial Intelligence (AI) to craft frauds that are difficult for consumers to detect. Learn how to protect yourself.

### Beware of these common scam tactics

- Disconnection threats: Scammers claim your service will be cut off without immediate payment.
- Caller ID spoofing: Fraudsters use software to make their calls appear legitimate.
- Overpayment claims: They may say you've overpaid and ask for personal or banking information to issue a refund.
- Smishing: Scammers send fake text messages that seem to come from your utility company.
- Phishing attempts: Beware of emails that look like bills; always verify the sender's email before clicking links.

If you have any doubt about the status of your electric service, call your utility company using the customer service phone number on their website.

### Watch for the following red flags

- High-pressure tactics that demand urgent action.
- Unusual payment method requests (wire transfer, gift cards, reloadable cards or cryptocurrency).
- Poor grammar, misspellings and suspicious email addresses.

### AI use enhances utility scams

By leveraging AI-powered techniques, utility scammers can create sophisticated and convincing frauds that are hard for consumers to recognize and avoid.

- AI helps scammers craft convincing emails that appear to be from legitimate utility companies and include the use of company colors and logos.

- Scammers use AI to create realistic-looking utility company websites that are nearly indistinguishable from legitimate ones.
- AI technology can clone the voices of utility company representatives, making phone scams convincing.
- AI analyzes victims' online presence and social media to create highly personalized spam related to your utility services.
- Scammers create geographically targeted online ads that appear when users search for keywords related to their energy bills.
- Scammers use AI to launch large-scale utility scam campaigns quickly and efficiently.

According to Kathy Stokes, AARP Director of Fraud Prevention Programs, "the ability of AI to improve and scale scam tactics is the equivalent of the Industrial Revolution for fraud criminals."

### Protect yourself

- Take your time: Don't rush into payments or action.
- Verify any communication by calling your utility company directly using the number on your bill.
- Never share personal information. Legitimate companies won't ask for sensitive details over the phone.
- If someone claims to be a utility worker, request official identification.

If you suspect a scam, report it to your utility company and the FTC at [ReportFraud.ftc.gov](https://www.ftc.gov/report-fraud).

Remember, legitimate utilities will provide multiple notices before disconnection and will not pressure you for immediate payment. If you are in doubt, let your utility company know so they can take proactive measures to both protect you and others from becoming victims.

Learn more at:



# Utility service scams and other forms of fraud and identity theft

by Safe Electricity.org

It is the world we live in today – the necessity to pause and consider before we click, answer or respond to someone seeking information. No industry, person or business is off limits to scammers, who even try to con their way into the utility industry.

The Better Business Scam Tracker reports that victims usually lose \$274 in all types of scams and \$500 in a utility scam.

When it comes to power bills, scammers make threatening phone calls to consumers to demand immediate payment, or else! (Or else their service will be shut off, they threaten.) This deceiving claim is often made during the height of summer or winter, when people want to stay comfortable during the extreme heat or cold.

However, utilities typically send initial disconnection notices in writing.

## Utility scams: How they get you

Scammers request that immediate payment be wired, loaded on a reloadable gift card or debit card or sent using cryptocurrency (a digital money system that does not rely on banks for verification). Only scammers request this type of payment and threaten immediate service disconnection. Do not provide any information (including your utility account number) or agree to immediate payment; instead, hang up and check with your utility by using the phone number listed on your power bill. Fake numbers and links can appear in emails and texts.

Utility bills that double the amount due may be a utility scam. Utilities are closely regulated and may not have the right to raise prices substantially. Consumers should trust their gut reaction; if it seems like a fraud, it probably is.

## Protect personal info

When supplying your utility (or any business or person) with sensitive information such as a social security number, proof of address or death certificate, do not email the information. Additionally, do not give

out sensitive information to anyone who calls you. Verify the phone number and call the utility directly to discuss any matter that would involve providing personal information. In general, some companies do have password-protected, secure methods to obtain personal information via an app or portal, but always verify this before using.

## At your door

The famous song by Paul McCartney, titled "Let 'Em In," features the artist's welcoming plea, "Someone's knockin' at the door; Someone's ringin' the bell ..Do me a favor; Open the door and let 'em in," but that is not always great advice these days.

Door-to-door scams may involve impersonators of utility workers saying the meter is broken or offering to perform other repairs or an energy audit — all at the consumer's cost. Your utility will contact you in advance, prior to arriving at your home for service or for any other reason. Do not let someone in the house without a pre-approved appointment.

## Scams in general

The American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) warns that phishing emails and texts attempt to convince individuals to make payments or provide personal information. Thieves use stolen information to open accounts and pass charges on to the victim.

## Caller ID can fib

Over the phone, calls appearing to be local are not always an accurate assessment of who is calling. AARP has a fraud watch network that provides alerts of new frauds; do an internet search for the fraud watch network to

learn more.

## Scams are everywhere

Non-utility-related scams may include the announcement of an inheritance or pop-ups on a computer warning that technical support is needed. There are even puppy purchase cons when cute and often sought-after breeds are offered in all their puppy cuteness, but scammers take your money and run. There are student loan forgiveness scams and one-time password bot scams.

Hackers even prey on the many smartphone users who have cracked screens. It is called the "chip in the middle attack," and scammers get ahold of a screen replacement and install it on your phone with a spyware chip. Always verify a screen-fix-it phone number or take your phone to a store/servicer you trust. If the company cannot be verified by a search engine, do not trust it.

No matter the scam, the goal of the scammer is to gather personal information. Stay safe: Do not share Social Security numbers, account details, credit card numbers, bank information, death certificates or birth dates. Thieves can use this information to steal their victim's identity.

If you become a victim of a scam, report it to the local police and your bank. Consumers can protect themselves by blocking unknown callers and keeping software updated on phones and computers. ♦

# NEVER EMAIL PERSONAL INFORMATION

Please bring any sensitive information to our office and do not email it to us. We want to help you keep your personal information secure.



# RECIPES

## Minestrone Soup

Courtesy of Love & Lemons @ [www.loveandlemons.com](http://www.loveandlemons.com)

### INGREDIENTS:

- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 medium yellow onion, diced
- 2 medium carrots, chopped
- 2 celery ribs, thinly sliced
- 1 teaspoon sea salt, plus more to taste
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 3 garlic cloves, grated
- 1 (28-ounce) can diced tomatoes
- 1½ cups cooked white beans or kidney beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 cup chopped green beans
- 4 cups vegetable broth
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme
- ¾ cup small pasta, elbows, shells, orecchiette
- ½ cup chopped fresh parsley
- Red pepper flakes
- Grated Parmesan cheese, optional, for serving



© Jeanine Donofrio

### DIRECTIONS:

- Heat the oil in a large pot over medium heat. Add the onion, carrots, celery, salt, and several grinds of black pepper, and cook, stirring occasionally, for 8 minutes, until the vegetables begin to soften.
- Add the garlic, tomatoes, beans, green beans, broth, bay leaves, oregano, and thyme. Cover and simmer for 20 minutes.
- Stir in the pasta and cook, uncovered, for 10 more minutes, until the pasta is cooked through.
- Season to taste and serve with parsley, red pepper flakes, and parmesan, if desired.

## Easy Herb Parmesan Biscuits

Courtesy of SugarSalted @ [www.sugarsalted.com](http://www.sugarsalted.com)

### INGREDIENTS:

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon fine sea salt
- 1 ½ teaspoons dried thyme
- 1 ½ teaspoons dried sage
- 8 tablespoons unsalted butter chilled
- ½ cup freshly grated parmesan cheese or Parmigiano Reggiano
- ¾ cup sour cream
- Freshly ground black pepper



© Alice






### DIRECTIONS:

- Preheat oven to 400°F (200°C), line a baking sheet with baking paper and set aside.
- Combine flour, baking powder, salt, dried thyme and sage in a large bowl. Stir with a fork so that the herbs are evenly distributed through the flour.
- Take 7 tablespoons (100g) of butter (store 1 tablespoon for later) and slice it into small cubes. Add butter to the flour mixture and mix it in with your hands by squeezing each butter cube with your fingers. Keep doing this until the mixture looks crumbly in texture.
- Add the grated parmesan and stir to combine.
- Fold in sour cream, either with a spatula or your hands and roughly shape a blob of dough. Scrape it out onto a floured surface and shape it into a small rectangle.
- Roll it out to about ½ inch (1-cm) thick. Fold the ends to meet in the middle, then fold the dough again at the seam. However you do this, you want 4 layers of dough. Pat it down with your hand or a rolling pin, so you get a rectangle again, at least 1 inch (2.5 cm) thick. Slice it into 8 pieces.
- Place biscuits on the baking sheet, leaving some space around each one. Melt the remaining 1 tablespoon of butter and brush the biscuits with it. Sprinkle with freshly grated pepper and bake in the middle of the oven for about 15 minutes. Just until the biscuits are deep golden brown on top.
- Remove from the oven, allow to cool slightly and enjoy.

Share your favorite recipe and earn a gift when it is published.

Mail to:  
Custer Public Power District  
Attention Tarin Burrows  
P.O. Box 10  
Broken Bow, NE 68822

# Purchasing Appliances and Electronics: **Best Times to Buy**

Product Type	Best Time to Buy for Discounts
 <p><b>Refrigerators and Freezers</b></p>	<p>Late winter to early spring (March/April); New models arrive in spring, and older models are discounted; Holiday sales (Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day).</p>
 <p><b>Washers/Dryers, Dishwashers, Ovens and Ranges</b></p>	<p>September and October when new models are released and older models are discounted; Holiday sales (Labor Day, Black Friday, Presidents' Day, Memorial Day); End-of-year clearance.</p>
 <p><b>Large Home Electronics (TVs, home theater)</b></p>	<p>Holiday sales (Black Friday and Cyber Monday); Amazon Prime Days; Late fall/early winter; Other promos, like Super Bowl sales for televisions.</p>
 <p><b>Smart Assistants and Other Smart Devices</b></p>	<p>Holiday sales (Black Friday, Cyber Monday); Other sales events, like Amazon Prime Days.</p>
 <p><b>Air Conditioners, Heaters and Other Seasonal Appliances</b></p>	<p>Off season (purchase AC units in fall or winter, heaters in summer); Retailers offer bigger discounts when demand is low.</p>

## Additional Purchasing Tips:

- When possible, bundle major appliances for significant savings.
- Be on the lookout. When new models arrive, older models drop in price.
- Retailers typically clear out inventory at the end of the year, which mean big discounts.
- Local retailers typically try to meet end-of-month/end-of-quarter sale quotas, which could mean flexible prices and/or negotiating.





## OFFICE HOURS

Monday through Friday  
8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. CT.

Closed on:  
January 1 to observe New Year's Day.

For after hour emergencies,  
call 1-888-749-2453.



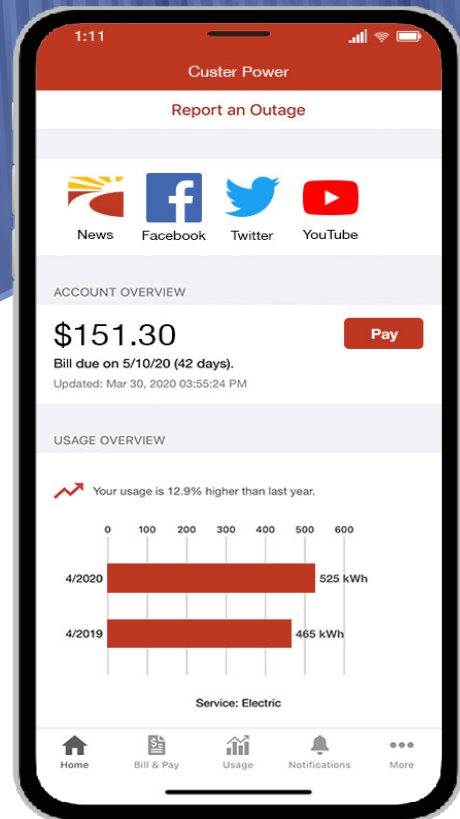
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