

CUSTER

PUBLIC POWER DISTRICT

With Area Service Centers in Sargent,
Callaway, Stapleton and Thedford

Currents



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Newsletter of the

Custer Public Power District

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Custer Public Power District
P.O. Box 10
625 E South E Street
Broken Bow, NE 68822

Phone: (308)872-2451
1-888-749-2453

Website: www.custerpower.com

Staff

Rick Nelson General Manager	April Gross Customer Service Manager
Jamie Hurlburt Operations Manager	Dustin Miller Purchasing Manager
Alex Coleman Accounting Manager	Jason Chaplin Engineering Manager

Officers & Directors

Brad Bartak Merna President	Wayne V. Licking Theadford Asst. Treasurer
John Blakeman Merna Vice President	Lloyd Ramsey Broken Bow Director
Greg Smith Milburn Secretary	Sadye Taylor Broken Bow Director

Tom Roberts
Loup City
Treasurer

POSTMASTER:
Send address changes to:

Custer Public Power District
P.O. Box 10
Broken Bow, NE 68822

Comments or Questions:
Tarin Burrows
Executive Assistant

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From the **GENERAL MANAGER'S** desk

Every July, citizens reflect on and celebrate our Nation's history. We remember how the actions of a few helped shape the way we live today.

This time of year makes me think back on the history of the Public Power movement; and how a small group of determined individuals were able to improve their quality of life and the quality of life for all those who would come after them. Every day, Custer Public Power District's customers and employees pay homage to the legacy of our Public Power founders. With being a Public Power District, we have the power to impact our present and shape the future, just like those who came before us.

Custer Public Power District leverages the rural values of our District to provide cost-effective and reliable services. The Custer PPD powerlines serve rural communities, homes, farming operations, and ranching operations. Custer PPD works with local businesses and community organizations to achieve economic development goals. This collaboration creates better opportunities and increases the quality of lives for our communities and families – just like our founding Public Power members did 74 years ago.

Custer Public Power District leverages the collective power of Public Power to get things done. We work with other Public Power Districts, state-wide organizations, Nebraska Public Power District, Legislators, and government agencies to help

facilitate strong partnerships that enhance the Public Power tradition of publicly-owned electricity that is affordable and reliable.

Custer Public Power District understands that the decisions made today affect how future generations live. Custer PPD and Public Power Districts in Nebraska and across the Nation are helping to build the next generation of leaders through the Washington, D.C. Youth Tour Program. High school students from across the Nation go each year to Washington, D.C. to experience the State Capital's history and to meet their State Congressmen and Representatives. The Youth Tour participants leave our Nation's Capital feeling energized and inspired to make a difference in their communities.

All of these things, plus so much more, make-up the "Public Power Difference". This Fourth of July, as citizens reflect on the past and look to the future, Custer PPD will remember what it took to bring power to our rural communities and let the determination of those who came before us guide us. ♦



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 9:00 a.m.(CDT) in 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.



Nebraska Lineworker's Rodeo July 22, 2022 at the Custer County Fairgrounds Broken Bow, Nebraska

Opening Ceremonies begin at 8:30 a.m. CDT



Posting Items To Utility Poles Creates Safety Risks

Signs, balloons and other materials on utilities poles are more than just an unpleasant neighborhood eyesore; they can be dangerous -even life threatening- to the professionals who maintain our vital lines of electricity, communication and other services. Safe Electricity urges everyone to help keep utility poles free of such materials.



The clamped safety boots used by line workers to climb poles are vulnerable to becoming snagged on staples and nails embedded in posts. Foreign objects can also tear utility workers' protective clothing, which is the first line of protection from an electric shock. They can also injure workers despite the safety gear they wear to avoid contact with rough surfaces.

Posting items to power poles can also be a public safety hazard. The materials posted on the poles not only distract people as they drive, but they also degrade the quality, effectiveness and stability of the wood. Posting items to utility poles is usually a violation of local ordinances as well.

It is also just as important to avoid tampering with or disrupting the guy wires that surround utility poles. Please inform children not to play or swing on them, and maintain your distance when performing yard work. If you see the poles or guy wires are disrupted in some way, please call your local utility company immediately. ♦

Teen's encounter with
downed power lines:

'Mary did everything right'



Most teenagers are quick on their feet, and Mary Gehrig is no exception.

Mary was having a good time hanging out with a friend. Realizing that a storm was brewing, she pulled the weather card and used it as an excuse not to leave. As teens often do, Mary led with her most compelling reason. "Oh no, I can't come home right now. It's dangerous," referring to the half-hour drive.

Her mom, however, was not buying what Mary was selling. Karen Gehrig's maternal instinct kicked in, and like moms everywhere, she wanted her

daughter home before the skies opened. Mary reluctantly headed home around 9 p.m.

On any other evening, 17-year-old Mary's protest about coming home mixed with a smidge of teenage attitude might have been nothing out of the ordinary. Everyone in the family would be safe and sound and come morning, they would make small talk over muffins and orange juice. However, on this night, the evening unfolded in a way that no one would have anticipated.

Her ride home started fine. It was raining, but nothing Mary couldn't handle. "I've never really been

afraid to drive in storms; I'm pretty good with them," she explained.

But as she got closer to home, things took a turn for the worse. Mary recalls that many cars had pulled off to the side of the road due to low visibility caused by torrential rains, but since she was almost home, she thought she would keep going.

However, the storm took a drastic turn and got so bad that she was driving blind.

After she made one of her last turns onto a county road, she said that flashes of lightning illuminated glimpses of white lines

in the distance, but she could not tell what they were. As she got closer, she realized that there was nothing small about the linear obstructions strewn across the roadway.

“By the time I realized it’s on the road, it’s big and I was not going to (be able to) drive over it. I was like, I am going to hit this,” Mary recalls. She slammed on the brakes and her car struck whatever was in the road. She said her next thought was, “Oh my gosh, what did I do.”

What she hit was a massive, high-voltage transmission power line that was no longer hung from tower to tower in its proper place. The wrath of the storm had damaged several structures and brought down large lines. It was as if nature’s fury was in the ring with metal transmission towers, and Mother Nature won the match, bending many of them in half with her unapologetic wind shear.

Although transmission towers are designed to withstand all kinds of conditions, many of them were irreversibly damaged due to the storm system that took on a life of its own, becoming much more volatile than originally forecasted.

“You’re looking at all these towers, and they’re doing toe touches,” said Chris Gehrig, Mary’s dad.

After Mary’s car came to a stop, she says it began malfunctioning and was rendered undrivable. It was a life-changing moment that could have gone either way, depending on what she did next. Fortunately, Mary’s next thought was to call her parents.

“When we learned that she had hit a power line,” her dad Chris recalls, he told Mary in no uncertain terms to, “Stay put. Don’t move. Don’t do anything. Call 9-1-1.” Luckily, her phone’s charge lasted an hour or so after she hit the power line.

Fire chief Rich Schock, who was on the scene that night, said, “Those are large transmission lines with a lot of volts in them, and this could get bad fast.”

Although Mary experienced a full range of emotions while waiting in her car, she could not get out and first responders could not approach it until it was confirmed that the power lines were deenergized.

This process took some time since the transmission lines were not local and spanned several states. Her local electric cooperative worked closely with the company that owned the transmission lines to ensure that no one would get hurt.

If Mary would have gotten out, which she admits she did consider doing at one point, her body could have become the path to ground for the stray voltage and she could have been electrocuted. However, Mary stayed put, and the Gehrigs hope that others will learn from her experience. Her family is quick to credit everyone involved with her safe recovery.

“I think Mary did everything right,” Schock said, since Mary stayed inside the vehicle until it was safe to exit.

After returning home in the early morning hours, “She was very happy, probably happier than I’ve ever seen her, to be home and see us,” her mom Karen said.



Chris, Mary and Karen Gehrig

“I feel like that energy and that fritz of ‘this could be the end,’ it helps you appreciate things so much more,” Mary said. “Now, I drive slower. I’m more cautious, especially in the dark. I appreciate my friends and parents more. Having that kind of death-defying moment, it gets to the core of you; it gets to your heart real quick.”

To watch Mary’s story and to learn more, visit:



RECIPES

Sweet/Tart Brussels Sprout Salad

Courtesy of CookColorful.com

Ingredients:

- 2 lbs. fresh Brussels Sprouts
- 1 lb. granny smith apple, chopped
- 2/3 cup dried cranberries or other dried fruit
- 2/3 cup pomegranate arils
- 1/2 cup toasted pepitas, walnuts or any other seed or nut you prefer

Dressing Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup good quality olive oil
- 4 Tbsp. apple cider vinegar
- Juice of 1 lemon (about 2 Tbsp)
- 1 Tbsp. dijon mustard
- 1 tsp. powdered garlic
- salt/pepper to taste



Instructions:

1. Combine all dressing ingredients except the oil and mix.
2. Gradually add the olive oil while whisking vigorously to emulsify the dressing. Put aside until ready to dress salad.
3. Shred Brussels sprouts in your food processor or by hand. I use a thin slicer blade in my food processor
4. Chop apples and toss with a bit of lemon juice to prevent browning
5. Combine all remaining salad ingredients. Toss with dressing and serve.

If making ahead, I suggest not dressing the salad until just before serving so that it stays nice and crunchy. If you want to dress it ahead of time, it will keep for several hours in the refrigerator before wilting.

Fire and Ice Tomatoes

Courtesy of Lanascoking.com



Ingredients:

- 2 large Vidalia onions sliced and separated into rings
- 6 tomatoes quartered
- 1 large green bell pepper cut into strips
- 3/4 cup white vinegar
- 1 1/2 teaspoons celery seed
- 1 1/2 teaspoons mustard seed
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 3/4 cup water
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper

Instructions:

1. Cut the tomatoes into wedges and the onions and peppers into rings.
2. Place vegetables in a shallow dish.
3. Bring remaining ingredients to a boil and cook for one minute. Pour over vegetables.
4. Cover dish and refrigerate for several hours or overnight.
5. Keeps in refrigerator for several days.

Share Your Recipes

Earn a free gift if we publish your recipe.

Mail to:

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



2022 Scholarship Recipients

Every year Custer Public Power District awards two scholarships. The scholarships are open to traditional and non-traditional applicants. To be eligible, applicants must live within our Custer Public Power District service territory. The scholarship can be used for associates or vocational programs. The scholarship deadline is March 1.

Adam Morse, a 2022 graduate of Anselmo-Merna Public School, will be attending Pratt Community College at Pratt, Kansas. He is enrolled in the Electrical Power Technology program. Adam is the son of Brian and Rebecca Morse.

Garrett Porter, a 2022 graduate of Anselmo-Merna Public School, will be attending Northeast Community College at Norfolk, Nebraska. He is enrolled in the Utility Line Program. Garrett is the son of Jeff and Jamie Porter. Garrett is also the scholarship recipient of the Margaret Bradley Memorial Scholarship.

Utility Line programs that have been attended in the last five years are Northeast Community College at Norfolk - Nebraska, Pratt Community College - Pratt, Kansas, Western Nebraska Community College - Alliance, Nebraska, and Metropolitan Community College - Omaha, Nebraska.

If students are looking to pursue a Utility Line degree, early application is crucial. The waiting list at the colleges is typically a year out. Custer Public Power District encourages potential scholarship applicants to job shadow during their Sophomore and Junior years of high school. Lastly, apply for multiple programs during the winter and spring quarters of their Junior year. After graduation, most students will intern at Custer Public Power District, the summer before starting college.



Adam Morse



Garrett Porter

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Nebraska Public Power District

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Nebraska 811

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CALL BEFORE YOU DIG

It's Easy! It's Free!

Planning a digging project in your yard or on your property? If you dig without knowing what is located below, you could damage an underground line.

Not only could you become seriously injured, but you will be responsible for the cost of repairs. To avoid hassles and fines, call 811, the Call Before You Dig number, at

least two business days prior to breaking ground. (811 locators do not mark privately owned underground lines or pipes, such as service to outbuildings, sprinkler systems or invisible fences.)

An uneventful digging project is the best kind to have.



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