

CUSTER

PUBLIC POWER DISTRICT

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

Currents



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© Deb Hostick
2021 Calendar

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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From the GENERAL MANAGER'S desk

Looking Back at 2023 and Looking Ahead to 2024

In the end-of-year newsletter, I like to recap what Custer Public Power District has accomplished for the year. 2023 has been a little crazy with the wet weather in the spring followed by the dry, hot weather at the end of summer. This led to irrigation being up and down all summer. While that didn't cause Custer PPD any issues, the supply chain and manufacturing kept us on our toes. The supply chain created a bottleneck in just about everything Custer PPD has purchased, including transformers. Then, inflation has affected everything we and you have purchased.

We have completed a major irrigation project and are getting ready to start another one. Regular service territory field work and line builds are happening along with changing poles because the poles were at the end of their useful life.

Custer PPD has started getting material for next year's projects. Custer PPD is looking at 2024 being the same as last year as we continue building for new customers and repairing or replacing our infrastructure.

Along with the outside work comes the inside paperwork. When you see the linemen building a new line it can sometimes be thought of as the tip of the iceberg. The remainder of that iceberg is the planning, the project study, engineering, material, accounting, and the inspection that goes along with that line rebuild. In my opinion, we've gotten a large amount of work completed in 2023.

As I think about Custer PPD's accomplishments in 2023, I want to note a few positive things that Custer PPD does in and around the communities in our service territory. Custer PPD sponsors high school students to attend the NREA Leadership Energy Camp and the Washington DC Youth Tour because we believe in educating students on the

heritage of public power in our rural communities. Custer PPD provides scholarships to high school seniors who want to pursue a career as a lineman. Those scholarship winners have the opportunity to work the following summer as an intern. Custer PPD wants to keep our young people in our rural communities.

Besides the NREA Camp, the Washington DC Youth Tour, and scholarships, Custer PPD teaches electrical safety in schools, participates in safety days for kids, and provides the high voltage demonstrations and low voltage demonstrations to groups who want to learn about electricity and understand the hazards involved with electricity.

Custer PPD employees help with the Nebraska State Fair Public Power booth, community festivals, parades, and area barbecues. They donate their time and effort to give back to their community.

Custer PPD belongs to the Loup Basin RC&D and Sandhills RC&D. We participate in economic development groups and the scenic byway and contribute to our service territory fire departments. Custer PPD is committed to the communities in our service territory.

For all of this I am truly grateful.

I hope everyone has a joyous holiday season.

*Custer Public Power District
General Manager Rick Nelson*



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 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.

Serving up Savings During the Holidays



The holiday season is just around the corner and soon, festive music will flood the airwaves, sparkling lights and decorations will adorn homes and businesses, and good tidings will abound.

The holidays also bring a frenzy of decorating, cooking and family gatherings, and amid the hectic hustle and bustle, you may receive higher-than-usual energy bills.

Keeping this in mind, I thought this month would be a good time to remind customers of a few programs and efficiency tips to help lower your monthly energy use.

Programs designed to help you save.

Winter months typically bring some of the highest energy bills of the year. Making minor, low-cost improvements, like weather-stripping exterior doors and caulking around old, drafty windows can make a positive impact on energy bills. If you're not sure where to start, contact Customer Service Manager April Gross to schedule a free home energy audit.

Our customer service representatives are available to help, so give us a call if you'd like to learn about specific programs and services that can lower your bills.

Be festive without breaking the bank.

LED holiday lights use 88% less energy than incandescent holiday lights. To put that into perspective, the Department of Energy estimates that with standard holiday decorations, LED lights typically increase energy bills by about \$5 to \$7.

But with incandescent lights, energy bills will typically increase by \$33 or more. For homes that go above and beyond with incandescent holiday lighting (think Clark Griswold), energy bills could increase by as much as \$350. Beyond energy savings, LEDs provide additional benefits, such as being shock-resistant, shatterproof and cool to the touch, making them safer for the home.

You can also lower energy use by conveniently managing holiday lighting. Smart light timers can help you save energy by connecting to a smart phone app or voice assistant to program lights to turn on and off at set times. If you don't use smart home technology, you can still save energy by using traditional timers.

Additional easy ways to save during the holiday season include turning off overhead lights and using your Christmas tree to illuminate your home. If you have a fireplace, remember to close the flue when you're not burning a fire to ensure heat doesn't escape through the chimney.

Cook up energy savings in the kitchen.

If you plan to have family and friends over this holiday season, you can cook up energy savings by using small counter top appliances like

microwaves, air fryers and slow cookers when possible, as they use much less energy than the stove top or oven.

When using the oven, bake multiple dishes at once for maximum efficiency. After all, it takes as much energy to cook one dish as it does to cook several. Turn the oven off a few minutes before the recipe's end time and allow the residual heat to finish baking the dish. Once the food is done, leave the stove door ajar to allow the residual heat to warm the room. When using the stove top, match the pan size to the burner to maximize the stove top's efficiency.

Custer Public Power District hopes a few of these tips will be helpful as we approach the holiday season. Remember, we're here to answer any questions you have about managing energy use or your monthly bills. With a little planning up front, you can find efficient ways to save on everything from holiday décor to your favorite soup recipes.

From your friends at Custer Public Power District, we hope you have a wonderful holiday season. ♦

Custer Public Power District wants to keep you happy!

The 2023 Customer Survey begins December 4, 2023.

During a two week period, NRECA Market Research will be contacting Custer Public Power District customers.

NRECA Market Research will be conducting a survey on our behalf. Please answer our call/email and let us know how we are doing.



***If you receive a call from
area codes 844 or 952,
please accept the call.***

***If you receive an email from
the suffix @NRECA.coop,
please complete the survey.***

Thank you for helping us better serve you.

“Winter weather conditions such as snow, sleet and slush cause more than 550,000 traffic accidents each year...”



“Stay safe as you go over the river and through the woods this holiday season.”

The winter holiday season is a busy time of year for many of us. Along with putting out decorations and baking cookies, we often spend more time in our cars than usual: shopping for presents, traveling to family gatherings or attending holiday events. However, all that time in the car can also mean facing extreme weather conditions that can make safe driving difficult.

According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, winter weather conditions such as snow, sleet and slush cause more than 550,000 traffic accidents each year, leading to approximately 138,000 injuries and 1,700 fatalities.

Along with risk of injury, possible damage to your vehicle, and plain inconvenience, collisions may also involve downed power lines or other electrical hazards. Unfortunately, when this happens, it adds another very significant danger to the mix that can cause severe shock, burns or electrocution. Knowing what to do in this situation can save lives.

If you are in an accident involving a downed power line:

- Call 9-1-1, and tell the dispatcher a downed power line or other electrical equipment is involved in a collision. Power company personnel will be dispatched to the scene to deenergize the power.
- Put your window down and alert others not to approach the scene. They could be shocked or electrocuted if they walk or run over the energized area or touch anything that is energized.
- Never attempt to drive over a power line or through water, snow or other debris that could be hiding one. There is no way to tell if a power line is energized, even if it is not sparking or buzzing.
- Do not exit the vehicle UNLESS the vehicle is on fire or you see smoke. The vehicle acts as an insulator that keeps you safe from stray electricity.
- If you MUST exit the vehicle, cross your arms across your chest, put your feet together, and make a clean jump from the vehicle. Then hop with feet together as far as you can— at least 50 feet away. Once a power line is in contact with a car or truck, the ground or other objects, it energizes the area. The electrical current spreads to the vehicle and ground, and it ripples out. Each “ring” of the ripple represents a different voltage. Stepping from one voltage to the next can cause your body to become a path for electricity and electrocute you.
- If a power line is inside the vehicle due to damage or an open window, stay in the vehicle. DO NOT touch or try to move the wire. DO NOT attempt to use other objects to move it.
- If your vehicle collides with a pad-mounted transformer, which houses electrical equipment connected to underground power lines, the same safety precautions apply.

Keep your family safe while on the road this holiday season! For more information about safety around electricity, go to SafeElectricity.org. ♦

Holiday LIGHTING Safety

Use only holiday lights that have been safety tested and have the **UL label**.



Before using, **check each strand** for broken sockets, frayed cords, or faulty plugs.



Don't string together more than **three** standard-sized incandescent sets of lights or you could **overload the circuit**.



Don't throw lights over tree branches that are **near power lines** and service connections.



Always unplug lights before leaving your home or going to bed; a timer can help with this.



Learn more at





CYBER SECURITY

Playing it Safe Online

By Rick Nelson

In today's world, most of us don't leave the front door unlocked. We protect our homes, loved ones and valuables from intruders with locks, alarms and other security measures. Cyber security is no different. It's the practice of protecting other valuables such as your identify, banking and health records and other sensitive information from digital attacks and theft.

Protecting our personal information is a year-round practice, at Custer Public Power District. Custer Public Power District has implemented new software and added new layers of security at the offices and on our infrastructure during the last few years.

Given our increased reliance on internet-connected devices and gadgets, I'd like to share a few cyber security tips and let you know how Custer Public Power District is working to boost our own cyber security efforts.

According to the Cyber security and Infrastructure Agency (CISA), an agency of the United States Department of Homeland Security that is responsible for strengthening cyber security and infrastructure protection, these are the four best ways to keep you and your family safe online.

1. Implement multi-factor authentication (also known as two-step verification) on your accounts. The additional layer of protection makes it much harder for criminals to access your information. Even if a hacker obtains your password, they may be unable to access your accounts if multi-step verification is enabled.
2. Update your software. This is one of the easiest ways to protect your personal data. When

downloading a software update, make sure it's coming straight from the company that created it. Beware of fake pop-ups that request urgent downloads. Better yet, turn on automatic updates.

3. Think before you click. Most successful cyber attacks start with a phishing email. Don't take the bait when cyber criminals go phishing. Avoid emails (or texts) that look too good to be true, oddly urgent, poorly crafted or include unusual requests.

4. Create strong passwords, using long, unique and complex words or phrases. Consider using a password manager to save time, work across all devices, protect your identity and notify you of potential phishing websites.

For the young people in your household

Just as you would talk with your children about safety in the physical world, discuss ways to stay safe online. Help them understand the public nature of the internet. Young people need to know early on, that what is shared online stays online



and is difficult (if not impossible) to take back. Just as you would guard your money or valuables, children need to learn to guard their personal information, especially on social networks. As a parent or guardian, help your children learn about and use the privacy and security settings on social networks and gaming sites.

Keeping the electric grid and your data secure

We're doing our share on the cyber front. Part of offering excellent service is keeping that service secure and reliable. For Custer Public Power District, reliability means repairing wear-and-tear, upgrading our equipment to withstand storms and severe weather, and using technology and best practices to keep our system secure from cyber security issues. Custer Public Power District has added software with internal alarms that warn us of failed attempts or compromised equipment.

We also work together with co-ops and public power districts across the country to develop new technologies and infrastructure, learn from each other and keep the grid's network secure. For example, we belong to E-ISAC, it serves as the central information hub for members and partner organizations. It provides quality analysis and rapid sharing of security information on how to mitigate complex, constantly evolving threats to the grid and infrastructure. Our employees' network with other public power districts and organizations in the Nebraska Rural Electric Association to share best practices.

While we can't stop a storm or predict every disruption, as a public power district, we do everything we can to keep the lights on and our members protected. Because if we all do our part, our interconnected world will be safer and more secure for everyone. ♦

RECIPES

Slow Cooker Beef Burgundy

Courtesy of Wholesomelicious @ www.wholesomelicious.com

INGREDIENTS:

4 strips thick bacon
1.5 lbs sirloin steak or stew beef cut into 1-2 inch pieces
1 medium size white onion chopped (+optional pearl onions)
2 cloves garlic minced
1/4 cup arrowroot starch
3 cups beef broth
2 cups Burgundy wine or high quality red wine
1 tbsp tomato paste
1 cup chopped or sliced carrots
1 cup pearl onions* (optional)
12 oz sliced mushrooms
1 sprig of rosemary
2 bay leaves
2 tbsp coconut sugar or brown sugar
salt and pepper to taste



© Amy Rains/Wholesomelicious

DIRECTIONS:

Begin by cooking the bacon on the stove, remove from heat but reserve the bacon fat.

Use the bacon grease to saute and brown the beef along with the onions and garlic. This should only be about 4 minutes!

Now transfer the beef, garlic, onion, and bacon to the pot. Mix the arrowroot starch with the beef broth, and pour over the beef. Now add in the wine, tomato paste, carrots, mushrooms, rosemary, bay leaves, and sugar.

Cook on low for 6 hours.

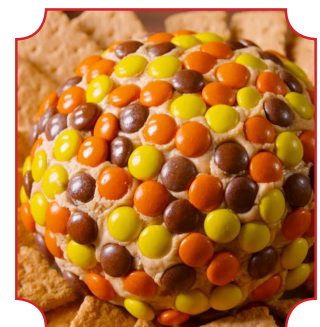
Remove the rosemary sprig and bay leaves.

Reese's Peanut Butter Ball

Courtesy of Delish @ delish.com

INGREDIENTS:

12 oz. cream cheese, softened
3/4 c. powdered sugar
1 tsp. pure vanilla extract
1 c. peanut butter, warmed in microwave
1/2 c. chopped Reese's peanut butter cups
2 c. Reese's Pieces, for decorating ball
Graham crackers, for serving



© Chelsea Lupkin

DIRECTIONS:

In a medium bowl using a hand mixer or in the bowl of a stand mixer using the whisk attachment, blend cream cheese, powdered sugar, vanilla, peanut butter, and chopped Reese's until combined. Transfer mixture to plastic wrap and shape into a ball. Fold up sides and cover with plastic wrap.

Refrigerate until slightly firm, 1 hour. Unwrap and place on a serving platter.

Place Reese's Pieces all over and let soften 20 minutes before serving. Serve with teddy graham crackers or pretzels.

Christmas Shortbread Cookies

Courtesy of Samantha Skaggs @ www.fivehearthome.com

INGREDIENTS:

1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter, at room temperature
3/4 cup powdered sugar
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
1/4 teaspoon pure almond extract
2 1/3 cups all-purpose flour
1/2 cup sprinkles

DIRECTIONS:

Add butter, powdered sugar, salt, vanilla extract, and almond extract to the bowl of a large food processor. Process until smooth (about eight 1-second pulses). Add flour and pulse until mixture looks crumbly and chunky (about six 1-second pulses). Add sprinkles and quickly pulse several more times, until the sprinkles are just evenly incorporated.

Turn the dough out onto a work surface and shape into a rough ball. Cut ball in half and form each piece of dough into a 7 1/2- to 8-inch long log. Tightly wrap each log in plastic wrap and freeze for 30 minutes (or refrigerate for at least 4 hours and up to a week).

Place rack in center position of oven. Preheat oven to 350°F. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper. Remove one log of dough from the freezer (or refrigerator). Cut dough into 1/4-inch to 1/3-inch thick slices, rolling log every few slices to maintain the round shape of the cookies. Arrange cookies on lined baking sheet. Bake until cookies just barely turn a light golden color around the edges, between 10 and 15 minutes. Allow to cool on baking sheets.

Repeat steps with the second log of cookie dough. Once cookies are completely cool, store in an airtight container.



© Samantha Skaggs @ FiveHeartHome

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



*"Let us give thanks for food - which
nourishes our bodies;
family - which nourishes our souls;
and friends - who keep us laughing."
~Unknown~*



OFFICE HOURS

Monday through Friday
8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. CT.
The office and area service centers
will be closed:
November 10
November 23 & 24
December 25
January 1, 2024

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



P.O. Box 10
Broken Bow, NE 68822

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May your lights shine bright during the holiday season!

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