

# North Central's News

*Delivering a difference to parts of Knox, Antelope, Pierce, and Holt Counties Since 1945*



*Thoughts and Comments from General Manager Keith E. Harvey*



## 2018 edition of U.S. News & World Report's Best States ranks Nebraska's "power grid reliability" as No.1 in the nation

There was a very wise person who once said that a person does not miss something until it is gone. With that said, I would like you to read the title of this article again because power grid reliability is something that you will miss if it is ever diminished or compromised. The interesting thing is that Nebraska is a rural state with miles and miles of electric lines exposed to wind, ice, animals, trees and every other environmental condition. This includes distracted drivers running into poles with increased frequency, and yet we still manage to keep the power available a very high percentage of the time. This is not just a noteworthy feat – it is a fact that approaches the status of almost being miraculous. And that miracle has a name – public power.

Hopefully, most of you are aware that Nebraska is the only state in the United States that is 100 percent public power. This means that there are no investor-owned utilities furnishing the citizens of Nebraska with their retail electricity. It should be noted that there are a few utilities that are now purchasing their power out of state, but all of these still fall

under all of the laws that govern public power utilities in Nebraska. Thus, we are 100 percent public power from a statutory perspective. In any event, I would like to make a few things clear about public power for any of you who are unaware of the amazing business form that was chosen in the course of history of this great state – public power. Recently the Nebraska Rural Electric Association (NREA) did a customer survey for its 34 rural electric utility members here in Nebraska, and here is my analysis of the results:

- Public power entities are NOT FOR PROFIT! It was amazing how many people that answered this survey thought that public power utilities were for profit. No, those that are for-profit are called Investor-owned Utilities (IOU) utilities.
- Public power utilities are governed by a board of directors that are local and are elected in a general election of voters located within their service territory.
- Electric rates are set by the local board of directors, but are required by statute to be cost-based

and thus are calculated by professional rate analysts and then presented to the board for discussion and action.

- Public power districts are political subdivisions of the State of Nebraska, but are not reliant on taxes to support their operations and mission. Thus, it is a grey area, to me, when it is discussed as to who owns the power districts – the customers who support them through their electric rates, or the State of Nebraska that completely controls them from a statutory standpoint.
- Power districts do pay sales tax on everything purchased and collect sales tax on all electricity sold to customers, except those with sales tax exemptions.
- Power districts do pay property taxes through the five percent Gross Revenues Tax that is collected from all customers as described in Article VIII, Section 11 of the Nebraska Constitution.
- "The legislature may require each such public corporation to pay to the treasurer of any county in

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## "power grid reliability" ....

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which may be located any incorporated city or village, within the limits of which such public corporation sells electricity at retail, a sum equivalent to five (5) per cent of the annual gross revenue of such public corporation derived from retail sales of electricity within such city or village, less an amount equivalent to the 1957 payments in lieu of taxes made by such public corporation with respect to property or operations in any such city or village" (Nebraska Constitution, Article VIII, Section 11). This is also found codified in Nebraska Revised Statute 70-651.03.

- No, public power entities DO NOT return profits (since they have none) to stockholders. Instead, any money collected above the cost of doing business in any year, or years, is held in reserve and used to upgrade, improve and update the electric system for the benefit of the customers. This is how high reliability is achieved and maintained.
- Resiliency, though not mentioned in this report by *U.S. News & World Report*, is also high in Nebraska due to the variety of generation resources (coal, nuclear, natural gas, hydro-electric, renewables) and the robust transmission system that is currently available and is being upgraded and updated on a continuous basis.
- Just for your information, other infrastructure rankings in this report were Renewable Energy Usage #10; Transportation #29; Bridge Quality #45; Commute Time; #6; Public Transit Usage #41; Road Quality #12; Internet Access #34; Energy #4; Broadband Access #40 and Electricity Price #17. The most telling thing about the previous number rankings, in my opinion, is the low ranking of our internet services – that is a problem that needs to be

addressed. Trouble is that there may simply not be enough revenue from two or three internet customers per mile of fiber, or to pay for the infrastructure of wireless high speed internet. The digital divide in Nebraska between metropolitan and rural areas is both significant and troublesome since it may well be the engine of economic development for the future of rural areas.

To close out this article, I wanted to share some of Nebraska's other rankings in this report. I have included the link to this article in the citations and if you like to "click" on information, then this is the article for you. Here is some other information from this interesting report:

- Nebraska has an area of 77,248 square miles – 16th largest state. Alaska is No. 1 at 663,267 square miles (you could put 8.5 states the size of Nebraska inside Alaska!).
- With 1.9 million residents, Nebraska's population density is about 25 people per square mile – contrast that to the 184,570 people per square mile in Manila, Philippines.
- In Nebraska, the median income is \$30,391 (or \$14.61 per hour based on a 40-hour work week).
- In the Health Care category, Nebraska is ranked #9 overall; #27 in access to health care; #12 in health care quality; #9 in fewest hospital readmissions; #9 in nursing quality; #38 in low obesity; and #5 in mental health.
- The Nebraska ranking for education is #9 in the nation. Higher education ranks #7; 2-Year college graduation rate is ranked #12; 4-Year college graduation rate is at #23; College readiness ranks #32; and high school graduation rate ranks #5.
- The Economy category finds Nebraska ranked #21 in the nation; #45 in the nation is Nebraska's ranking in Growth of Young Popu-

lation; Employment is #6; Labor Force Participation is #4; Low Unemployment Rate is #4; Low Tax Burden is #40 and Top Company Headquarters is #7.

- Nebraska is ranked #13 in Opportunity Rank; Economic Opportunity ranking is #17; Household Income is #22; Affordability is #5; Cost of Living is #13 and Housing Affordability is #4.
- In the Crime & Corrections category, Nebraska ranks #19; Corrections ranks at #37; Public Safety is at #18; Low Property Crime Rate ranks at #21; and Low Violent Crime Rate is at #17.
- Nebraska is ranked #11 in the Fiscal Stability category; #11 in Long-Term Fiscal Stability; #13 in Short-Term Fiscal Stability; #15 in Government Credit Rating Score; #2 in Pension Fund Liability (this is really a huge benefit to the state); #30 in Budget Balancing; and #13 in liquidity.
- Finally, in the Quality of Life category, Nebraska ranks #14 overall; Community Engagement at #13; Voter Participation at #15; Natural Environment at #21; Low Industrial Toxins at #10; and Social Environment at #13.

I hope that you have found something interesting in the information in this article. If you would like to dig a little deeper into this, then please follow the link in the citations at the end. I want to wish each of you a happy and safe Spring. Remember that you are important to North Central and that we exist for the purpose of providing you with safe, reliable and resilient electrical service. And when the power does "go out" you are never alone, and we are there to restore, as quickly as possible, your quality of life that is made possible by the magic of electricity. Be safe.

Retrieved from <https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/rankings>

# Youth Energy Leadership Camp Application Available



Linda Sokol,  
Energy Advisor

Every year North Central Public Power District (NCPPD) makes a trip to the Nebraska Rural Electric Association's Youth Energy Leadership Camp available to teen applicants. This year's camp will be held July 9-13 at the Nebraska State 4-H Camp in the Halsey National Forest, Halsey, NE.

If you have a student in the 9th, 10th or 11th grade that would like to attend, the deadline for submitting an application is May 1, 2018. The Youth Energy Leadership Camp is established as an operating rural electric system and provides a "hands-on" approach to member-owned business-

es. The students will join high school students from Nebraska and Wyoming, along with adult counselors and junior counselors. The adult counselors are employees of rural electric systems who donate their time and talents to the camp. The junior counselors are selected by their peers to return to next year's camp.

A highlight of the camp involves a tour of the Kingsley Hydro Station at Lake McConaughy and Gerald Gentleman Station, a coal-fired power plant at Sutherland, NE. Recreational activities include basketball, volleyball and canoeing, with a banquet and a dance.

An application form can be obtained on our website [www.ncppd.com](http://www.ncppd.com) under the Youth Programs link, at your local school from your guidance counselor, or contact our office and we will mail or email it.

NCPPD's board of directors will review the camp applications and select which students will be invited to the camp.

## Creighton Home Show

A little bit of snow did not deter North Central PPD's Energy Advisor Linda Sokol from attending the Creighton Home Show. Linda used an "Answer Button/Light" when asking questions about energy. The box lit up if someone gave a correct answer or buzzed when an answer was wrong.



*Linda handed out many prizes, including rain gauges and fidget spinners. Gordon Fulton (left) and Ashtyn Fritz (above) received rain gauges.*

*From our homes to yours . . .*

## White Cheddar Scalloped Potatoes

### Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 container (8 oz) refrigerated prechopped onion
- 2 ½ cups whipping cream
- 1 ½ tsp chopped fresh rosemary leaves
- 1 tsp salt
- ¾ tsp pepper
- 2 bags (20 oz each) refrigerated sliced potatoes
- 2 cups shredded sharp white Cheddar cheese

### Directions

Heat oven to 375°F. Spray 13x9-inch (3-quart) glass baking dish with cooking spray. In 12-inch skillet, melt butter over medium heat. Cook onion in butter 8 minutes, stirring frequently, until tender. In medium bowl, stir whipping cream, rosemary, salt and pepper with wire whisk until blended. In baking dish, arrange half of the potatoes. Top with half each of the onion and cheese. Layer with remaining potatoes, onion and cheese. Pour cream mixture evenly over potato mixture. Cover; bake 55 minutes. Uncover; bake 10 minutes longer or until lightly browned. Let stand 10 minutes before serving.



When cooking with fresh and dry herbs, there is a general rule when it comes to the ratio of fresh to dry. Because dried herbs are generally more potent and concentrated than fresh herbs, you'll need less -- typically three times the amount of fresh herbs as dry. For example, if a recipe calls for 1 tablespoon of fresh oregano, you need only 1 teaspoon of dried, since 3 teaspoons equal 1 tablespoon.





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**FOR SALE:** 1984 Chevy 4x4 1/2 ton pickup. New engine, transmission, transfer case. All new frame up parts. Would be excellent farm or work truck. Have over \$12,000 invested. First \$5000 cash gets it. Call 402-841-2242.

**WANTED:** Paying top dollar for scrap metal. Any kind of metal. Will pick up. Please call 402-841-2242.

**FOR SALE:** Krause 1900 disc, 21 ft. \$4900. Call 402-360-2225.

**FOR SALE:** John Deere 112 riding lawn mower. \$450. Call 402-360-2225.

**FOR SALE:** One beef. Call 402-847-3395.

**FOR SALE:** Brunswick-Balke-Collender Monarch Cushion 5x10 snooker table.

Made sometime around 1917. \$5000. Call 402-750-4146.

**FOR SALE:** 16 ft Aluminum Lund Rebel Special, 28 HP trolling motor, 1 yr old trailer with new tires, bait tank and trolling motor. Nice boat. Call 402-336-8360.

Do you have something to sell or are you looking for something in

particular? You may call, send or email (bargain.barn@ncppd.net) your description of what's for sale or what you are looking for to our office. The ad will run in the Bargain Barn section free for one month. Please include name and telephone number. No commercial ads will be accepted, personal items only.

## North Central PPD accepting sealed bid

### 2005 Yamaha Kodiak 450 4x4 ATV



The machine has 5,550 miles and 1,365 hours.

Item will be sold "as is" to the highest bidder. All sealed bids must be submitted to the NCPPD office no later than close of business on **April 16, 2018**. For further information, or to inspect the item, contact Brent at 402-358-5112. NCPPD reserves the right to reject any and all bids.