

# North Central's News

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



**General Manager  
Doyle Hazen**

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## **Rate Study May Produce Changes**

Whew! The last few years have been a challenge. Since the 2020 Covid crisis, everyone has endured the impacts of inflation. The pre-2020 cost of hardware has gone up 20-25%. Poles and transformers have increased almost 200%. Although some of the pole costs have reduced, those pre-2020 prices will probably never be seen again.

Wholesale electric rates have generally held steady over the past four years. From a national perspective, many industries have moved to Nebraska to enjoy the advantages of reliability and steady electric rates. Due to the increase in demand for electricity, our power supplier will need to increase generation and transmission capacity. The expenditure on improvements will amount to well over \$2 billion. The debt service that the power supplier will face will be passed on to North Central Public Power District (NCPD) and all the other wholesale and retail customers.

Approximately 65% of NCPD's overall costs are power cost. The balance of overall costs are materials, transportation, overheads, and the most important resource, the employees. NCPD has been very efficient over the years. In 2000, we had 4836 meters that we serviced with 22 employees. With a 43% increase of meters to 6938 as of 2024, NCPD

continues to serve its customers with 22 employees.

NCPD recently had two rate decreases, 2% in 2020 and 7% in 2022. These decreases were managed through the pre-ordering of supplies, tapping cash reserves and day-to-day management of resources by the NCPD team. We have sustained the decreased rates over the past four years.

We are currently going through a rate study to assess what changes may be needed. NCPD contracts with a third party rate analyst based in Holland, Michigan. The analyst does rate studies for all sizes of cooperatives, power districts and municipalities nationally and has several clients in Nebraska. At this writing, we are not sure what the exact changes may be for our customers. With the needed generation and transmission by our power supplier and the increases in operating costs, I am sure there will be some sort of increase.

It is the intention of NCPD to be transparent and give its customers the best information to make their best decisions. We continue to do everything that we can to maintain your quality of service at the highest level. We remain committed to providing the best value for your dollar spent. Keep safe.

# Tree Maintenance

## Proactive measures benefit everyone

Over the next few months North Central Public Power District (NCPD) will focus on tree maintenance, which is one of the leading causes of power outages. Tree trimming and removal is a proactive approach to this ongoing problem. We understand the importance of trees and realize their value to our customers. Proper tree maintenance is a benefit to everyone.

### Advantages of Utility Tree Maintenance

- Safety of Customers
- Minimize Line Blinks for All Customers
- Reduce Outages and Lengthy Repairs



For tree maintenance this year, NCPD's Operations Department will be contacting customers in Antelope, Knox and Pierce counties to receive tree trimming and removal permission. The 85-4 Brunswick rural, 85-6 Verdigre rural and 85-7 Plainview rural substations will be the focus of attention for tree maintenance.

Customers are reminded to report any potential issues concerning trees and power lines. We are continuously working to ensure our customers have safe and reliable electric service.

## Contractor Hired for Tree Removal

North Central Public Power District (NCPD) has contracted C&N Firewood & Tree Removal, LLC, from Plainview, NE, to cut and remove trees in the City of Plainview. Trees are one of the leading causes of power outages. Tree trimming and removal is a proactive approach to this ongoing problem.

Customers are reminded to report any potential issues concerning trees and power lines. NCPD works continuously to ensure its customers have safe and reliable electric service.



## What to do before using a PORTABLE GENERATOR

### Prepare

Install battery operated carbon monoxide (CO) alarms throughout your home; ensure they are working properly.

### Position

Place a portable generator outside at least 20 feet from windows and doors; do not use one in a garage or carports.

### Read

Carefully review and follow all manufacturer's instructions.

### Protect

If it is wet outside, keep it dry by placing it on a tarp. Position it under a portable canopy (not a carport).

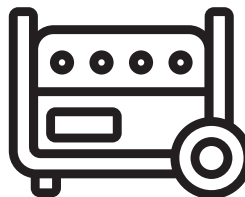
### Refuel Safely

Turn off your portable generator and let it cool down before refueling.

### Inspect and Maintain

Inspect a portable generator before each use and make sure it is properly maintained.

Using a portable generator can be useful during an outage; however, use one correctly to prevent CO poisoning and to stay safe.





Linda Sokol,  
Energy Advisor

## 8 Holiday Hacks to Help You Save Energy



### Lower the thermostat before holiday gatherings

Holiday cooking and extra warm bodies automatically raise the temperature in your home, so you can save by turning down the heat when guests arrive.

### Help your fridge and freezer save energy

Help reduce their energy use with these tips: Make sure to always use safe food handling procedures. Set your refrigerator temperature to between 35 and 38 degrees and your freezer to 0 degrees. Let food cool before putting in the fridge, to keep it from using extra energy to maintain a cool temperature. Cover liquids and wrap foods stored in the refrigerator because uncovered foods release moisture and make the compressor work harder. Don't block air vents with large items – it can make the items freeze and cause other parts to run too hot.

### Reduce your hot water use to save on heating costs

How? Here are a few easy ways: Set your water heater temperature to 120 degrees, wash laundry in cold water, always wash full loads of laundry and dishes.

### Put lights and decorations on a timer

Use timers to control the amount of time your holiday lights and displays are in action each day, turning them on when it gets dark and off at bedtime. Fewer hours = less energy use on your bill.

### Deck the halls with LED Lights

LEDs are ideal for tree and holiday lighting since they are brighter, can last up to 10 times longer than traditional bulbs, use a fraction of the energy of conventional bulbs (about 75% less) and stay cooler, reducing risk of fires.

### Adjust your indoor lighting to account for your glowing decorations

Set the holiday mood and reduce energy usage by turning off household lights and letting your holiday LED lights shine as the main lighting source.

Bake several dishes at the same time to reduce energy use from your oven. Use room-temperature ingredients and cook multiple dishes in your oven at once to conserve energy. And don't open the door to peek – keep the heat where it belongs.

### Use a smart thermostat while you're traveling or gone for periods of time

If you travel during the holidays, remember to adjust your thermostat. Making the temperature just a few degrees cooler will have a significant impact.

*From our homes to yours . . .*

## Tex-Mex Chicken and Rice Soup

### Ingredients

- 2 tbsp butter
- 1 package (20 oz) boneless skinless chicken thighs, cut in 3/4-inch pieces
- ½ tsp salt
- ¼ tsp pepper
- ½ cup chopped onion
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1 carton (32 oz) chicken broth
- 1 can (14.5 oz) fire roasted crushed tomatoes, undrained
- 1 tsp chili powder
- ½ tsp ground cumin
- ½ cup uncooked long-grain white rice
- 1 can (4 oz) chopped green chiles
- 1 cup frozen whole kernel corn
- Shredded Mexican cheese blend, tortilla strips and chopped fresh cilantro leaves, if desired

### Directions

In 5-quart Dutch oven, melt butter over medium-high heat; season chicken with salt and pepper. Cook chicken in melted butter 6 to 8 minutes, stirring once, until chicken is browned on outside. Using slotted spoon, transfer to bowl; cover and keep warm. Add onion and garlic to butter and drippings in Dutch oven; cook over medium-high heat 30 to 60 seconds, stirring frequently, until softened. Stir in chicken broth, tomatoes, chili powder and cumin; heat to boiling. Stir in rice, chiles, frozen corn and the browned chicken; return to boiling. Reduce heat; simmer uncovered 23 to 28 minutes, stirring occasionally, until rice is tender. Serve soup topped with remaining ingredients.





**FOR SALE:** New Ariens Razor self-propelled mower. 7.25 hp, rear discharge. Purchased July 2024/\$500. Asking \$350 OBO. 402-860-0317 Plainview.

**FOR SALE:** Two 1994 Mack DM690S concrete trucks. Can be repurposed as ag tank trucks or dump trucks. One has 130K miles, the other 176.5K miles. Call 402-668-2624 for information. \$4,500 OBO.

**FOR SALE:** 4 wheel 250 Gallon Cattle Lick Tank, \$175; Way Pig small animal scale, \$275; mounted buzz saw (with blade), mounts on 2 cylinder JD Tractor, \$125; Mesa Verge Receiver Hitch on back of vehicle motorcycle carrier, \$100. Call 402-358-0310.

**FOR SALE:** Falken Wildpeak AT tires 225/65 R17 set of 4. \$200 or best offer. 5000 miles on tires. Call 402-893-2251.

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.

**SantaLand  
Light Display  
in Creighton**  
Nov 27- Dec 31, 2024  
6 p.m. - 10 p.m.

**Santa's Workshop  
and  
Mrs. Claus'  
Gingerbread House**  
Dec 1- Dec 23, 2024  
6 p.m. - 9 p.m.

Check Facebook for closures due to weather.



North Central PPD will host  
Santa's Workshop  
on Dec. 19, 2024

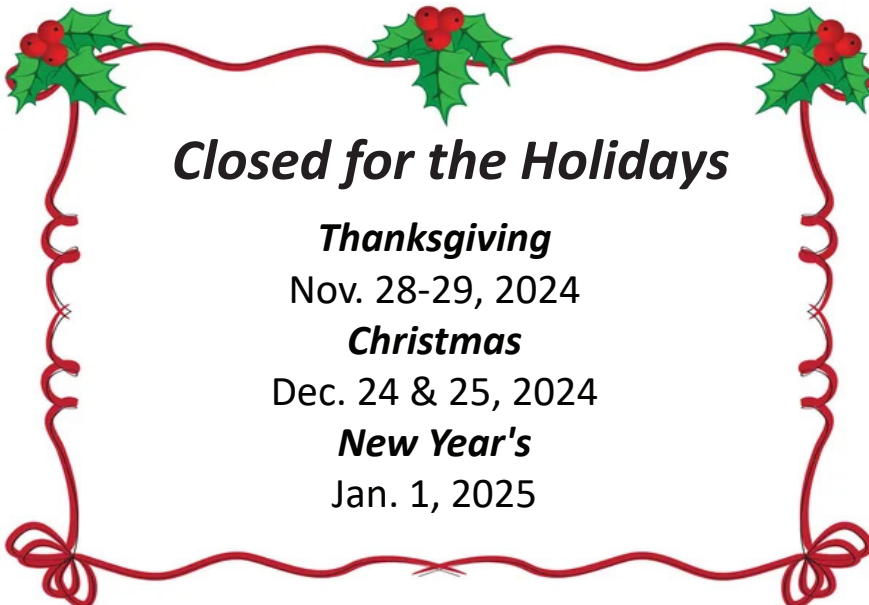


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**Closed for the Holidays**

**Thanksgiving**  
Nov. 28-29, 2024  
**Christmas**  
Dec. 24 & 25, 2024  
**New Year's**  
Jan. 1, 2025