



24th year 10th Issue

October 2012

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Happy
Halloween!



Have fun and be safe
while Trick-or-
Treating!!



Congratulations to all Niobrara Electric staff on the No Lost Time Accident Award! Let's keep up the good & safe work!

Fires, Fires, Fires!

As many of you are aware there were recently some large fires in the Harrison, Crawford, and Chadron areas. The "Douthit Fire" burned much of NEA's Northeastern territory, destroying 61 poles. This fire burned through the brand new ten miles of line that was built on the Cottonwood Tap earlier this year, and amazingly, none of those poles burned down, thanks to good right-of-way clearing and the turned dirt at the bottom of each pole. Our linemen, with the help of Ward Electric, were able to replace all burned poles and line to restore power to the affected consumers in a timely manner. Great job guys! Pictures on the following pages...



Left: Ward Electric, the company that re-built the Cottonwood Tap earlier this year, helps the NEA line crew replace poles and re-build line that was burned during the “Douthit Fire”.

Below Left: The top of a pole burned off and is hanging by the line.

Below Right: The arrow points at some pole hardware still clinging to the line. A new pole lays on the ground waiting to replace the burned stump next to it.





Both of the pictures on this page show the new Cottonwood Tap with all poles still standing! Notice in the picture to the left, the good right-of-way clearing through the timber, which was a large factor in this line staying in tact during the fire.

Our thoughts go out to everyone who was affected by these devastating fires and to the fire fighters who spent countless hours trying to tame the blazes to save houses, ranches, live-stock, etc.



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Touchstone EnergySM

Office Hours

Monday—Thursday

7:30 am—5:00 pm

Fridays 7:30 am—
4:00 pm

Electricians Department

7:00 am—5:30 pm (M-Th)

Outages1-800-322-0544
or 307-334-3221

Phones are answered 24 hours a day. Phones will be answered by Niobrara Electric Association during office hours and the Niobrara County Sheriff's office will take all other calls and dispatch NEA personnel.

Our line crews replace poles, insulators, and other equipment every working day, many times that work is completed without any customers ever noticing because they have the equipment to do their jobs in a way that they don't need to turn off the power to work safely. They actually work on the lines energized at over 14,000 volts. I don't know about you, but I don't like to work on household wires at 120 volts without disconnecting the power source. Occasionally the crews make the decision that they can't safely do what is needed to make repairs with the line energized, so they de-energize the line to complete the job. This is when members notice that the crews are out there. We appreciate your patience and understanding during the times where we have no choice but to shut off the power to work safely.

I would like to take a moment and thank my employees for the award that you see pictured on the front page of the newsletter. NEA completed 2011 with over 83,000 hours of work with no lost time accidents. In an industry where there are a lot of opportunities for different types of workplace injuries, it takes an employee group that is attentive to those risks and willing to take the steps necessary to avoid putting themselves into harm's way to keep up a record like that. By the time this article is in your hands, we should be nearing the 3 year mark since our last lost time accident.

I have seen a quote that goes something like this... Life is like baseball, it's the number of times that you make it home safely that counts. Try to keep that in mind as you go about your work and fun.

Manager Ken Ceaglske

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Boardroom News

July/August Board Meeting

Many topics were discussed during the July and August Board Meetings. Some of these topics included the following: Director Life Insurance, the ONEOK project, the house project, safe grouse corridor issues, potential new loads, the Van Tassel Substation transformer, and radio work.

Remember, if any Members have issues/topics they would like brought up in a Board Meeting, please feel free to call or stop in. Meetings are the 4th Mondays of each month at 1:00.