

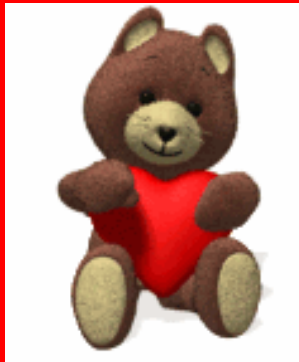
25th year 1st Issue

February 2013

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Happy Valentines Day!



#### ATTENTION *EARLY* IRRIGATORS...

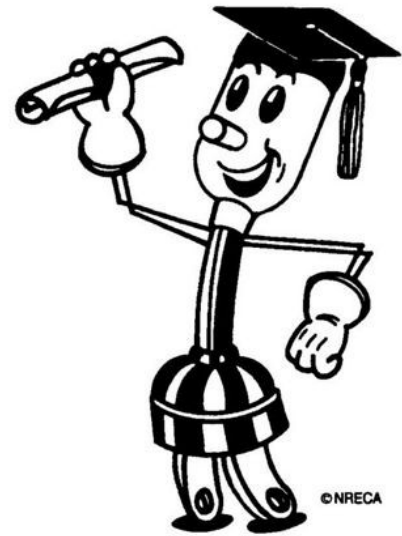
Visit with Chris Rejda, NEA Billing Clerk, ASAP so all the proper paperwork is in place and scheduling can be accommodated. Regular season irrigators will receive their paperwork in Mid-March.

#### REMINDER...

The combined NEA, Basin Electric and Tri-State G&T scholarships are currently available on the NEA website, at both Sioux County High School and Nebraska County High School as well as the NEA office. These scholarships are due no later than 5:00 p.m. on Friday, February 22nd.

There are also several scholarships for line worker careers, with later due dates that are available at the NEA office and on the NEA website.

Once again NEA is offering a Non-Traditional scholarship for someone beyond the traditional first-time college student age, who is seeking to either return to school or, having never been, wants to now enter.



The application is on the website and available at the NEA office. The due date for the Non-Traditional scholarship is 5:00 p.m. Friday, February 22nd.

In order to better serve our members....

In the past, our Electrician Department worked a 4/10 schedule, M-TH. Work to be done on Friday had to have arrangements made in advance with special scheduling or was considered OT. Now, we have the personnel to offer a new schedule and all week coverage. Electricians will still work ten hour days; two of the four men off on Mondays and other two men off on Fridays.



**Welcome new Journeyman Lineman Andrew Krueger (top left) and New Master Electrician Brian Keithly (lower left) to the NEA crew.**

**Brian joined team NEA in October and Andrew arrived in November. Both the line department and the electrician department greatly benefit from the additional skilled manpower.**

**We're very pleased to have acquired both men!**



#### **Van Tassell Substation update.**

For those in Nebraska, you will recall all too well the problems in late June when the substation fuses blew. We were able to borrow a mobile transformer from our coop neighbor, High Plains Power, to carry the load through the irrigation season. We had the transformer inspected and tested and came to no solid conclusion on the cause, other than a remote possibility that another piece of equipment failed inside the substation causing the fuses to blow. As of late November, the original transformer is back in service with a clean bill of health. We plan on doing a little preventive maintenance on it next spring that should keep it serving our members for years to come.



The pictures above show our NEA line crew working together with the contractor, Mid Plains Power, making the final connections on the switch structure just north of Lusk, near the intersection of Hwy 85 and Kirtley Road. This was the final major step in getting the new substation ready for service for the ONEOK pump station.

The same morning, we coordinated additional maintenance on a switch structure off of the 28 Road that is used to feed most of the NEA system. While this was one of the coldest mornings we have had in this winter, at least one of the insulators on the pole was damaged to a point where it could have caused a major outage lasting many hours had it failed completely without warning. The crew was prepared to replace all of the insulators on the structure if they showed signs of damage, but only needed to change out the one. This allows us to keep a couple in stock for spares should we need them in the future. This outage was originally scheduled to last two hours, but since the crew only needed to replace 1 insulator, they completed the work and all switching in about 1 hour.

The NEA crews then went up to Kirtley Road and assisted the Mid Plains crew with the switch structure. With this assistance, the outage on the north end of the system was completed in about 3 hours, instead of the 5 hours originally scheduled. With this switch installed, we can do maintenance on the line feeding the pump station without interrupting the power on the rest of the system.

NEA would like to thank our members for their patience during outages like these. While the weather was a bit cold and windy, our crews worked diligently to get the power restored as quickly as possible.

If we failed to make contact with you prior to the outage, we apologized for any inconvenience. Due to material delivery issues and the timeline to energize the line, we needed to get the outage taken care of quickly and may have missed you. Also, we have been noticing that our member database may be missing some phone numbers. If you have a chance to visit with our office staff, please be sure to take a minute and check if your contact information is up to date.



**[www.niobrara-electric.org](http://www.niobrara-electric.org)**  
**[www.facebook.com/NiobraraElectric](https://www.facebook.com/NiobraraElectric)**



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**Touchstone Energy<sup>SM</sup>**

## 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-F)**

**Outages** ....1-800-322-0544  
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.

## Happy new year!

For this first edition of the New Year, I want to say thank you to all of the members, staff, and other local folks for making my first year at NEA a wonderful experience. We were not without challenges, but that is what makes the job more interesting.

2012 brought dry and warm weather to the NEA territory. We had significant fires in all corners of the territory. I'll always remember my first Wyoming wildfire, Rick and I went out to check on our three phase south of town that was near a fire. By the time the night was through, we were in the midst of it, thumping out fire lines with the soaking wet arms of some old coveralls that were handy at the farm site we stopped at. They worked great on the grass, terrible on the yucca! The Douthit fire near Harrison will also leave a lasting impression. Probably the greatest thing to note about both of these times is to see how much the community bands together in times of need. That is what is so appealing about life in a rural community. Many positives came out of 2012 as well. We were able to rebuild 10 miles of line in Nebraska along the Cottonwood road (that did not have 1 pole damaged by fire later in the summer). We gained new load from new members on the system, the oil field on the west end, and the ONE OK Pipeline. I will miss John and Bob on the board, but look forward to working with Andy and Jim and the rest of the board to make 2013 even better.

Things on the horizon for 2013 include rebuilding another 10 miles of line between Lusk and Manville, completing the upgrades at Podolak Sub that ONE OK funded, and another ONE OK pump station in the north end of the system. One of the challenges that I am working on now is the rate structure change from our power supplier, Tri-State G&T, which I will have more information to report next month.

Many thanks to all our members and I hope 2013 treats you well,

Kenny

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### District

John Hester	1	Keeline, WY	President
Andy Barnette	2	Lusk, WY	
David Keener	3	Marsland, NE	Sec./Treas
Bill Wilson	3	Harrison, NE	
Jack Hammond	1	Lance Creek, WY	
Jim Dunn	3	Harrison, NE	
Kenny DeGering	2	Lusk, WY	
Andy Greer	1	Lance Creek, WY	
JD Wasserburger	2	Lusk, WY	Vice President

## Boardroom News

### December Board Meeting

- NEA Attorney John Skavdahl discussed collections, travel policy, FED EX claim, and Temple waiver.
- Manager Ceaglske reported on various personnel issues, new lineman hiring, budget and salary changes, TIER/DSC requirements, RUS refinancing, electrician report definitions, NRECA, request for funding, MIP part 1, WREA mutual aid agreement, upcoming manager meetings, legislative events, Tri-State rates, ONEOK progress, GIS/engineering model and west load options.
- Director Greer discussed WREA issues, Director Keener reported on NREA and Midwest issues and Director Hammond reported on Tri-State issues.