

26th year 15th Issue

June 2014

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Government agencies are proposing legislation that, if enacted, will change what you pay for electricity. Become aware, educate yourself, be involved; you can make a difference. Go to www.action.coop for information with Cooperative Action Network.

New purchase of equipment...

The JCB 260T skid steer was chosen for its maneuverability in sandy and muddy areas; additionally, it leaves less of a "footprint" in the work area. It also provides access to areas large trucks can't fit into. It has significantly more lifting/carrying capacity for poles, wire reels and shipments in excess of 1200 lbs that the old NEA tractor simply couldn't manage. Another advantage the purchase provides, is the ability to help split crews to manage work load more efficiency and increase productivity. The purchase of complimentary equipment, such as a trailer, are soon to follow.



Pole Testing.

NEA will continue with our pole testing program, performed by John Thayer, throughout the summer in the areas of Western Nebraska into Eastern Wyoming.

Testing of our aging poles is an essential function NEA focuses on each year to help us identify and fix issues before they become problematic.

Mr. Thayer observes, samples and records all pole inspection findings, along with any other notable information the NEA may need for system maintenance/improvement.

You may see Mr. Thayer in his personal vehicle(s), including ATV(s), following NEA power lines; he will not be driving NEA vehicles. If you have questions or concerns, please feel free to call the NEA office and speak with Manager Kenny Ceagske or Line Superintendent Rick Bridge.



With the return of warm weather days, many of us are busy working outside. Construction, planting and tree trimming are among our many summer tasks. We want to remind our consumers to be ever mindful of our power lines while going about these activities.

Always remember the "look up and live" motto. The line that was in place yesterday may be sagging in the tree you plan to trim today. The new row of trees you are planting may be directly under a power line and while that may not give you pause today, better to never have planted there than to have to remove it later, and is there a continuously clear operating path for the ladders and moving equipment you plan to use erecting that new building?

Permitting.

Per State Electrical Inspectors regarding de-energized services: If NEA removes power for any consumer in order that work may be done on such service, the service must be brought up to code before it can be reenergized, thus permits will be pulled for this work to take place and should be completed by a licensed electrician.

No exceptions. Permitting will be required on oil field, commercial, agricultural, irrigations, as well as residential services.

In the case of large 3 phase, that may include an additional disconnect at the pole, below the meter.



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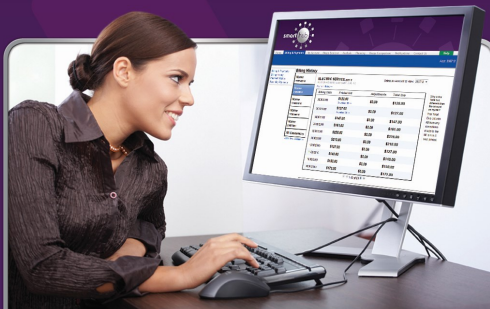
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<https://niobraraelectric.smarthub.coop/#login>:

Contact the NEA office if you have any questions concerning the SmartHub.

Office: 1-800-322-0544 or 1-307-334-3221

Current payment options are EFT Auto payment & E-Checks. Sorry no Credit or Debit Cards at this time.



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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-F)

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.

“Hey, you test these poles every so often, how come you still have outages from broken poles?” was a recent question asked of me.

First, the testing that we do is on a 10-20 year cycle designed to catch most of the poles that could give us trouble, as well as to locate a general weak area that needs consideration for upgrading the entire line. If something that passed some years ago gets worse before the next test cycle, it may fail.

Second, we do non-destructive testing, meaning we drill a hole into the most likely place for a pole to rot and get weak, near the ground line. Unfortunately, mother nature does destructive pole testing, stressing the entire length of the pole, finding the hidden weak spots that may exist anywhere in the pole-similar to finding a weak knot area in the middle of a 2x4. We do a visual inspection up the pole, but wood can sometimes hide its weakness, no matter the age of the pole.

Poles are designed for mostly vertical load, with the grain. Occasionally, we get ice on the lines, then wind and the side load can exceed the strength of the top of the pole. It is amazing to calculate both the weight of ice 2” in diameter and 400’ long, not to mention the surface area that is catching the wind compared to just the conductor!

As part of a corrective plan, poles that do fail testing will be replaced on a 2 for 1 one type plan to limit the stresses on the newer poles. The poles that were originally set out there had some fairly long spans. This is an attempt to shorten those spans to lower the loading when iced or under pressure from the wind, when we see most of our failures.

Manager Kenny Ceaglske

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Boardroom News

April Board Meeting

- Director Hammond spoke regarding Tri-State business.
- Director Keener discussed NREA business.
- Director Greer shared WREA information.
- Attorney Stecher spoke on collection matters.
- Line Superintendent Rick Bridge gave an operations report.
- Manager Ceaglske gave the managers report.