

## From the desk of the Manager

### Technology – It’s Not All Bad

As a parent I cringe a bit when I think about how cell phones have captured the attention of the next generation. The information and technology at the fingertips of our kids today is really quite amazing even though you have to wonder about how dependent society is becoming on these little gadgets. Some people are unable to read simple maps because they’ve become accustomed to letting a cell phone app guide them to their every destination. But many things in our day to day life have been improved immensely with technology advances and like anything else, being able to identify the value of something becomes very important.

Today’s technology allows us to do some incredible things in the area of automation and monitoring of our electrical distribution system too. But every penny we spend must be collected from our rate-payers so identifying value and practicality is extremely important to us. Just because something is “neat” and can be done, doesn’t mean that it is worth doing or cost effective. We could spend a small fortune automating every device in our system but the costs would simply outweigh the benefits. However, technology has improved most everything that we work with on a daily basis too and that’s not to say there aren’t new things worth investing in to make our operations more efficient.

The benefits and efficiency gained from the Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) technology that we installed a few years ago has been nothing short of amazing. When I think about the cumbersome billing process of years past when our rural consumers had to read their own meters (some had many) and figure their bills, it really does seem almost primitive now. The readings from customers would typically

trickle in over several weeks, generally delaying the payment process by a month or more. Understandably, some of the meter readings were inaccurate, late or forgotten causing further delays or extra charges to customers. Thousands of truck miles and many man-hours were spent each month reading specialty meters and following up on inaccuracies, discrepancies or missing information.

Consider that now each of our nearly 7,300 meters can be read consistently, accurately and remotely on a schedule and automatically downloaded into the computer system (without any manual keying), creating a billing file ready for staff to execute on a given day. Individual meters can be read at any time from our office for account transfers or during storm work to identify

lingering outages and we can actually disconnect/reconnect an account for non-payment remotely without sending out a truck. Hourly usage profiles can be established to resolve disputes and help consumers better understand their electrical usage. The district’s billing and meter reading expenses have plunged and total miles traveled by our fleet has dropped by 10%, all while the quality, accuracy and timeliness of customer service and billing have been greatly enhanced.

Certainly the billing process has been streamlined, but our operations and engineering departments are harvesting a wealth of information from the AMI system

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Dan Leise

### NREA YOUTH ENERGY LEADERSHIP CAMP

July 13-17 2015 in Halsey Nebraska

We are looking for students currently in 9th, 10th and 11th grades in high schools within our service territory. Please consider signing up for this camp as it has a lot to offer. It’s free, you are going to make life-long friends, and learn about the electric industry through interesting workshops and demonstrations. You will tour Gerald Gentleman Station and Kingsley Hydro-Electric Power Plant. There is plenty of time for fun such as canoeing, sports contests, a banquet and dance. While there, you have an opportunity to win a free trip the Washington, D. C.

Complete the application and return to our office at Cedar-Knox PPD in Hartington by April 15, 2015.

For more information contact Carol McGregor at 402-254-6291 or carolmac@hartel.net.



#### 2015 YOUTH ENERGY CAMP APPLICATION FORM

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Current Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone number (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Name of parents or guardian \_\_\_\_\_

Sponsoring rural electric system \_\_\_\_\_



# Rebate Programs for 2015

In conjunction with NPPD, Cedar-Knox PPD is offering the following rebate programs this year. Check them out.

## Residential

**Attic insulation** – Must have less than 6” of existing insulation, electric heat, and add 6” or more new insulation.

**Cooling System Tune-up** – Central air condition, Air Source heat pump, Geo-thermal heat pump -Incentive \$30 (maximum 1 rebate every 3 years)

**LED Lights** – LED lights purchased, receipt and fill out form to receive \$5 per light, with maximum of 15 per year per account.

**Heat Pump** – Install a minimum of 8.2 HSPE – Air-source heat pump to receive rebate of \$200 to \$600 (Seer ratings dictate the rebate amount) or Ground Source/Geo-thermal \$1200 to \$1700, rebate amount also dictated by options.

**Commercial rebates** are also available on some lighting projects, irrigation efficiency, to name a couple. Please contact Gary Wiese at CKPPD 800-891-5196 or gwiese@hartel.net for more details on these rebates as well as others listed above.

# Revolving Loan Funds through Cedar-Knox PPD

The definition given in the on-line free encyclopedia, Wikipedia, for a revolving loan fund (RLF) is “a source of money from which loans are made for multiple small business development projects.” Cedar-Knox Public Power has established this type of fund and has funds available for loan purposes that meet the criteria of its business plan which was established in 2007. Some of the criteria that are part of the requirements for approval of an application for a loan are start and/or expand an existing business, improve infrastructure, and job creation or retention.

We have revolved these funds several times in the past and are ready and willing to do again. Burbach’s Countryside Dairy and Trail Manor Mfg., both of Hartington

have used this method to improve their businesses in the past. Also DownTown Auto of Crofton and The Main Attraction of Laurel are two more businesses taking advantage of this low interest plan. As these loans have been or are in the process of repaying their loans, funds accumulate and are available for relending.

Revolving loan funds are not an all-purpose tool for funding development projects, but may be appropriate for your future financing needs. We would be glad to assist you, and if the need exists, please contact Janet Albers @ Cedar-Knox PPD for more details on this program. We are proud of our opportunity to work with businesses for the betterment of our community, from which we ALL BENEFIT.

# Easter Greetings!

Our office will be closed starting at noon on **Good Friday, April 3.**



**Remember to call  
before you Dig  
800-331-5666**



# Stacy Knutson Joins Our Team



You will see a new face at Cedar-Knox PPD starting March 2, 2015. Because of the upcoming retirement of Janet Albers, Director of Accounting, June 1st, we have begun to prepare for some transitions. Stacy Knutson will be our new receptionist/billing clerk and we are confident that Stacy and Pam, our customer service/billing department, will continue to handle all our customer needs at the highest level.

Stacy lives in Hartington with her husband Todd and daughters, Tessa, 15 and Maya, 11. We welcome Stacy to our team.

*Welcome Stacy!*

## From the desk of the Manager

### Technology... (Continued from front)

also. Along with normal kilowatt-hour usage, every meter now allows us to check voltage levels, line blinks and outages at every corner of the district. Staff can utilize energy profiles to easily identify overloaded circuits, transformers and equipment, making engineering studies much more accurate and cost-effective. As we go forward we plan to incorporate geographic information technology that will arm employees with more current and accurate data and mapping information that will improve safety and further enhance efficiency.

This AMI system is easily the largest technology investment we've made since the irrigation load control equipment that was installed back in the early 1980s. That peak-management system has saved our customers a lot of money and provided great value for many years just as I expect the new AMI system to do. Just like in farming or any other business venture, either you stay efficient or lose your competitive edge. I'm sure the next generation will show us a thing or two about utilizing technology, I just hope my kids can teach me enough to keep up.