

## You Own and Control Us!

by Jamey Pankoke

**C**elebrating Public Power Month provides us an opportunity to remind you of the advantages that public power offers. Being the only state in the nation where every electric utility is publicly owned certainly gives Nebraska an accolade that no other state can claim. Why is this important? It's important because unlike many private utilities that include profit in their price of electricity to satisfy stockholders, public power only exists to serve customers. Having this as our sole focus helps in keeping electric rates low and customer service high.

Electricity costs in Nebraska are well below the national average of 10.28 cents per kilowatt-hour. In 2016, according to the Energy Information Administration the average price of electricity in Nebraska was 9.90 cents. Although the state's ranking has slipped a bit from what it was years ago, public power still provides a great value. For the record, last year Perennial's average price per kilowatt-hour was 8.94 cents. And although we are just in the process of working on our 2018 Work Plan and Budget, at the present time it appears that we once again will not need to increase electric rates. If this turns out to be the case, it will make five consecutive years that our customers have gone without a rate increase. Remember, as a publicly owned company, keeping your electric rates low is a primary focus of ours.

Nothing probably gives our employees more



*Jamey Pankoke*  
General Manager

satisfaction than knowing that customers are pleased with the service that they have received from us. As just one example, we often receive thank-you notes from customers following storms and the restoration of widespread power outages. We make sure that these notes get pinned to our bulletin boards, as I truly believe that it gives our employees satisfaction knowing that they served our customers well, and were recognized for it.

However, keeping electric rates low and providing a high level of customer service are really side benefits of public power. In my mind, the most important distinction of public power is that you own and control us! You are in control of who runs Perennial. In election years you have the chance to vote for who will represent you on the board of directors, or for that matter, run for the board yourself. And because our directors are customers of ours who live and work in the communities that we serve, they always consider how their decisions will impact fellow customers, whether it is in the price of electricity or the quality service.

As an owner of a public power district that has control of our operations through locally elected directors, you can be assured that we will continue to focus on providing you low-cost, reliable and excellent service. The aspect of customer ownership and control is what sets us apart from much of the country, and it's a cause for celebration.

# Public Power: Locally Grown, Community Owned

by Sue Kelly, American Public Power Association

Americans, especially millennials, like to “shop local” — and not just for groceries. In fact, some 40 percent of millennials claim a preference for buying local. This should come as no surprise: people want to feel connected to what they pay for and prefer to know more about where their products and services come from and who’s behind them. They like knowing that the people and places they buy from care about their community as much as they do. They want to be involved and included.

While farmer’s markets and concepts like AmazonFresh are gaining more traction every day, many people are not familiar with the concept of public power. Not even many of the 48 million people served by public power utilities.

Close to 2,000 cities and towns in the U.S. power their homes, businesses, and streets with public power — electricity that comes from a community-owned utility that the local government runs, just like it does its schools and libraries. Each public power utility is different, reflecting its hometown values and characteristics, but all have a common purpose: providing reliable electricity at a reasonable price, while protecting the environment. At its heart, public power is all about hometown decision making that puts customers first — because it is not-for-profit. Community members have a direct and powerful voice in utility decision making.

**Public power works. Public power gives back. Public power cares.**

**How does it work?** Public power has survived and thrived in America for well over a century. Citizen-owned public power utilities first appeared more than 100 years ago when communities created electric utilities to provide light and power to their citizens. The number of public power utilities has grown from fewer than a dozen in 1890 to nearly 2,000 today. While many utilities were sold to large corporations during the 20th century, others chose instead to preserve community ownership and local control of power supply.

Public power utilities often have to fight to keep their communities powered affordably and reliably. They push for effective competition in wholesale electric markets so they can get power at reasonable rates for their customers. They struggle

to navigate a sea of often conflicting laws and regulations that constrain power supply sources and increase costs. And they must counter and defend against evolving threats to the security of their transmission and distribution grids. Through it all, they keep the lights on, improving lives every day.

**How do we give back?** Public power utilities have no stockholders and are driven by the singular mission to serve their customers. They measure success by how much money stays within the community through low rates and contributions to the city and town general funds, not by how much profit goes to often remote stockholders. There are no divided loyalties.

Public power residential customers pay about 14 percent lower electricity rates than private power customers, based on national averages. Public power utilities return to their communities 33 percent greater contributions than the state and local taxes paid by private companies.

**How do we care?** Neighbors look out for each other. That’s the power of community — and the strength of public power. Public power utilities send line crews and trucks to help their neighboring utilities (and even utilities that are many states away) restore electric service after a weather event. And I am deeply impressed by how our member utilities go above and beyond to ensure reliability. On my first day as CEO, just a few weeks ago, I was in Key West, Florida, visiting Keys Energy Services. I toured its new transmission and distribution center, designed to withstand a Category 5 hurricane. Virtually every electric pole I saw was made of concrete — an expense the utility took on because it wanted to better protect its customers from outages.

**Public power makes a difference, every day.**

That’s why I’ve been representing community-owned utilities for over three decades now. I believe in our business model — delivering low-cost, reliable, energy while practicing good environmental stewardship. As president and CEO of the American Public Power Association, I am proud to help advance the mission of our members — to serve their customers.

If you live in a public power community, I hope you appreciate and support your homegrown utility.



## Don't Sacrifice Safety for Speed During Harvest

For many farmers, the harvest season is a flurry of activity with long hours and little rest. The pressure to harvest as much as possible — in combination with fatigue and looming deadlines — can result in too little attention being paid to potential hazards. Safe practices should never be compromised for the sake of speed. Doing so could potentially end in tragedy.

Farmers and agricultural workers have dangerous occupations. One of the causes of injury and death in the agricultural industry is electrocution. Of those injuries, overhead power lines are the most common cause of electrocution.

If you are a farm operator or worker, be aware of the location of power lines and keep the following safety guidelines in mind during the harvest season:

- Always use a spotter when operating large machinery near lines.
- Use care when raising augers or the bed of grain trucks around power lines.
- Keep equipment at least 10 feet from lines — at all times, in all directions.
- Inspect the height of the farm equipment to determine clearance.
- Always remember to lower extensions to the lowest setting when moving loads.
- Never attempt to move a power line out of the way or raise it for clearance.
- If a power line is sagging or low, call Perennial immediately.
- If your equipment does hit a power line do not leave the cab. Immediately call 911, warn others to stay away, and wait for the Perennial crew to cut the power.

The only reason to exit equipment that has come into contact with overhead lines is if the equipment is on fire, which is very rare. However, if this is the case, jump off the equipment with your feet together and without touching the ground and vehicle at the same time. Then, still keeping your feet together, hop to safety as you leave the area.

To help ensure a safe harvest, stay alert for power lines, exercise caution, and always put safety first. If you or someone you know would like more information on electrical safety, visit [www.safeelectricity.org](http://www.safeelectricity.org).

## Utility Line Scholarship

Perennial Public Power District is offering a \$1,000 per year scholarship to a student planning to enroll in an accredited utility line program. Applicants must reside within Perennial's service area to be eligible.

This scholarship program is aimed at highly-motivated and safety-conscious individuals who want to become a line technician. Perennial PPD does not guarantee future employment through this program.

The deadline for applying for the scholarship is December 31, 2017. Scholarship applications and applicant guidelines are available on our website, [www.perennialpower.com](http://www.perennialpower.com) or contact Courtney VanSkiver at [courtneyv@perennialpower.com](mailto:courtneyv@perennialpower.com).

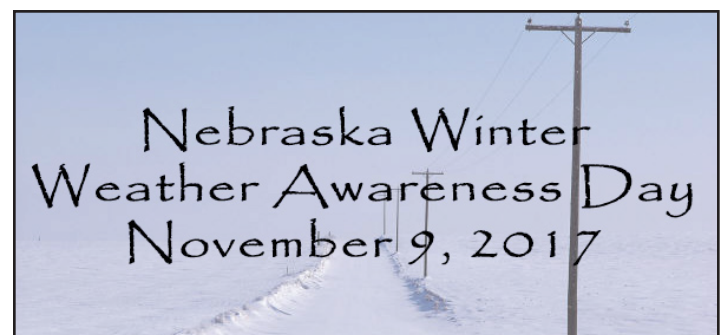
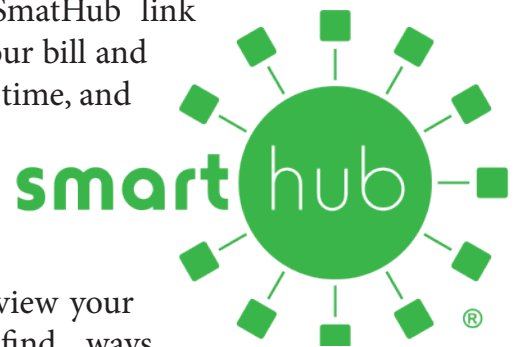
## Save Time - Pay Online!

Use our SmartHub link to pay your bill and avoid mailing time, and possible penalties.

SmartHub can also

be used to review your usage, and find ways to save energy and save

money! You can find a link on our website: [www.perennialpower.com](http://www.perennialpower.com). To set up your account you just need your account number and the name listed on your bill. If you do not want a SmartHub account but want to take advantage of the on-line payments, you can click on the "Pay Now using Smart Hub" link on the Perennial website. You will need your account number for this process as well.





Perennial Public Power District will be closed on the following dates in observance of Veteran's Day and Thanksgiving:  
 Veteran's Day - Friday November 10, 2017  
 Thanksgiving - Thursday November 23, 2017 & Friday November 24, 2017.

### This is your last Rural Electric Nebraskan Magazine

Starting in December we will be producing our own magazine which means you will no longer receive the Rural Electric Nebraskan magazine produced by the Nebraska Rural Electric Association (NREA). If you wish to continue to receive the Rural Electric Nebraskan magazine subscriptions are \$10 for one year, \$15 for two years and \$20 for three years, plus local and state tax. To subscribe please fill out the form below and send a check for the correct amount to Rural Electric Nebraskan, P.O. Box 82048, Lincoln, NE 68501. If you have any questions about what the check amount should be, who to make the check out to or questions about how to subscribe, please feel free to call the NREA at(402)475-4988.

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 2 Years at \$15 + State & Local Tax  
 3 Years at \$20 + State & Local Tax

402-362-3355  
 800-289-0288  
 402-362-3357- Outages

**Perennial Public Power District**  
 2122 South Lincoln Avenue  
 York, NE 68467

Office Hours  
 7:30 a.m. ~ 4:30 p.m.  
 Monday ~ Friday

## Operations Report

### Distribution Projects:

Along with building new services, work is also being scheduled for this fall to upgrade half mile of conductor in the Henderson area, 2 miles in the Grafton area, and half mile north of Bradshaw. Perennial will continue with the pole replacement program in York County. Osmose Utility Services pole inspection crews are scheduled to be testing poles in the Bradshaw area and south of Waco. Crews will continue to clear right of way in the Villages that Perennial serves as well as rural areas.

**Reminder:** If you are considering a new service whether it is a house, business, irrigation service, etc. please keep Perennial in mind when considering your project. It is very helpful if we are involved from the onset to plan the work and to have time to order special materials that may be needed to complete your project.



### Efficiency Tip

Energy

Slay energy vampires and save. These phantom energy suckers can account for as much as 20% of your monthly electricity bill. Slay energy vampires with these four simple strategies:

1. As simple as it sounds, all you need to do is identify the culprits and unplug them.
2. Plug your appliances into power strips.
3. Curb idle time making use of the energy-saving features, such as sleep mode, that are commonly built into computers.
4. Make smart electronics and appliances upgrades.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy

