Perennial NEWS

A PUBLICATION OF THE
PERENNIAL PUBLIC POWER DISTRICT

June 2026 Vol. 27 No. 3

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Spotlight on McCool Junction.

The first of our series on the towns we serve.

I hit a power pole or other electrical equipment: now what?

A helpful article on how to stay safe after your vehicle comes in contact with electrical equipment.

Energy for Generations
PERENNIAL™
PUBLIC POWER DISTRICT

PerennialNEWS
CONNECTIONS

Why Vegetation Management Matters

Steve Gerken
Operations Manager

From an operations standpoint, vegetation management is one of the most critical and cost-effective tools Perennial Public Power District has in its toolbox to maintain a safe and reliable system. While it may not always be the most visible part of our work, it directly impacts outage frequency, restoration times, and overall system performance.

We've all seen what can happen when severe weather rolls in—strong winds, heavy ice, or sudden storms can bring down branches and, with them, power lines and poles. Trees and other vegetation are among the leading causes of unplanned outages across the United States. Over the last 5 years, trees accounted for approximately 5 percent of all of Perennial's outages.

Shayde Linabery and Aaron Norquest load a tree into the wood chipper, picture by Will Clayton.

That's why you may notice crews from Perennial or our experienced contractors working in neighborhoods throughout the year. Our crews are highly trained, following the latest industry standards to ensure the job is done safely and effectively. Their work might seem routine, but it's anything but—it's a proactive step that helps prevent problems before they start.

Electric utilities across the country are obligated to manage vegetation near power lines. Scheduled trimming helps remove dead or weakened limbs and keeps fast-growing trees from becoming hazards. It's about staying one step ahead, especially as we prepare for the increasing frequency and intensity of severe weather events.

Safety is another primary driver. Vegetation contacting energized lines can create hazardous conditions for the public and for Perennial personnel. Downed lines caused by tree failures pose immediate dangers. By maintaining proper clearances, Perennial can reduce the likelihood of these dangerous scenarios. Controlled and planned trimming operations are far safer than emergency work, where time and pressure can increase risk.

There's also a financial component that cannot be overlooked. While vegetation management requires ongoing investment, it is far more cost-effective than responding to repeated outages, equipment damage, and emergency callouts. Proactive trimming cycles and targeted removals can help us avoid the higher costs associated with reactive maintenance.

You can help, too. When planting new trees, consider their mature height and distance from nearby power lines. Trees that grow up to 40 feet should be planted at least 25 feet away from overhead lines. Larger trees—those that exceed

continued on pg. 7

On Our Cover:

McCool Junction Water Tower. *Picture by Trey Perry.*

Perennial News **(USPS 21610)**

is published bimonthly by:
Perennial Public Power District
2122 South Lincoln Avenue
York, NE 68467
Phone: (402) 362-3355
www.perennialpower.com
email: perennial@perennialpower.com
Subscription Rates: $1.00 per issue
Periodical postage paid at York, NE.

POSTMASTER:
Send address changes to:
Perennial News
2122 South Lincoln Avenue
York, NE 68467

Don't Fall Victim to Utility Scams

Every day, millions of Americans are targeted by scammers through phone calls, emails, text messages, online, or in person. Scammers' tactics can change daily, which is why it's important for consumers to stay on top of the latest scam reports from local and national news outlets, as well as your local utility companies.

- Our employees will never show up at your door to demand payment.
- Never give personal information to an unknown caller or visitor. Our representatives have access to the details they need to service your account.
- Demands for immediate payment by wire transfer, cryptocurrency, gift cards or cash reload cards should immediately raise red flags.
- If you think you've been contacted by a scammer falsely representing Perennial, please let us know as soon as possible.

Just last month, several Perennial customers were targeted through a phone scam where the scammers threatened to shut off power and demanded immediate payment via a texted barcode. Perennial will never send you a barcode and ask you to go to a store to have the link scanned for payment of your electric bill.

We want you to be aware of three trending scam tactics. One is the overpayment trick, where a scammer contacts you and claims that you have overpaid your utility bill. The scammer will say they need your personal banking information or your credit card number to refund the credit back to you. Don't fall for this scam! If you make an overpayment on your energy bill, Perennial will automatically apply the credit to your account, which will carry over to your next billing cycle.

Another trending scam is smishing (short for SMS phishing). Many consumers know to watch out for suspicious emails, but we tend to trust text messages sent to our smartphones. Always question suspicious texts, especially from someone claiming to represent a utility.

The most common tactic that scammers use is the disconnection threat. They use a fake message claiming a bill is past due, and that service will be disconnected immediately unless payment is made on the spot. The call may sound official. The message may include account numbers or appear to come from Perennial's phone number due to caller ID spoofing, they may also transfer you to multiple people to create confusion. The scammer's goal is simple: create panic so you pay first and question later. In reality, Perennial follows clear procedures and provides advance notice before any disconnection. A demand for instant payment, especially with threats attached, is a major red flag.

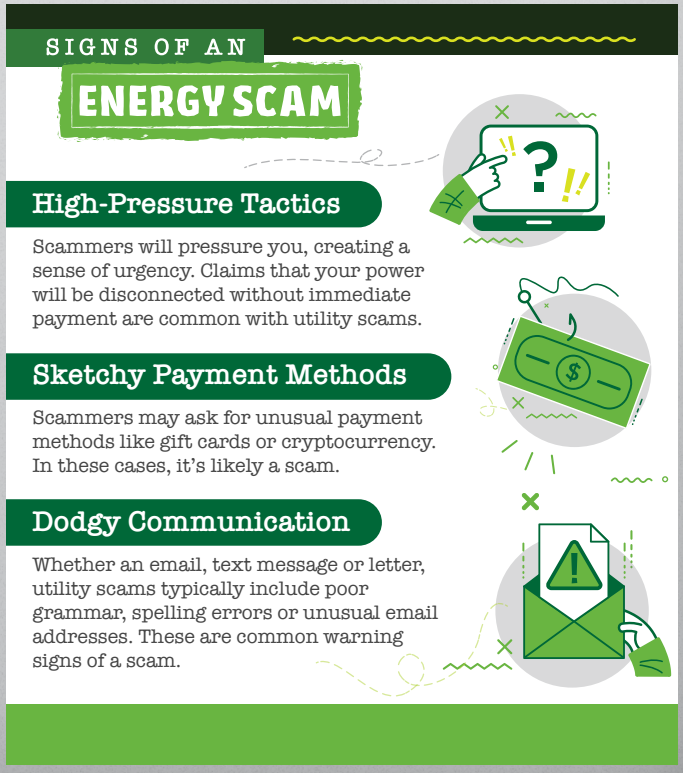
Here are a few reminders on how to take control of the situation when you've been targeted by a scammer:

Take your time. Utility scammers try to create a sense of urgency so that you'll act fast and hand over personal information, especially over the phone. Take a moment to think about the situation before acting.

Be suspicious. Scammers typically request immediate payments through prepaid debit cards or third-party apps. Unusual requests like this should raise red flags. Remember, if the request seems strange and out of the ordinary, you're likely being targeted by a scammer.

Confirm before you act. If you're contacted by someone claiming to represent Perennial or another utility but you're unsure, just hang up the phone and call Perennial directly. You can reach us at 402-362-3355 to verify the situation.

Our increasingly connected world provides scammers with more opportunities to connect with unsuspecting consumers. Be vigilant, and please report any utility scams to Perennial and local law enforcement so we can let others in our community know. Together, we can help prevent our friends and neighbors from being victimized.



PERENNIAL

COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHT

McCOOL JUNCTION

We are excited to launch a new series highlighting the unique communities we serve, and the first community we will be highlighting will be McCool Junction.

Strategically located along Highway 81—just five miles south of Interstate 80—this vibrant community of 430 residents is a testament to small-town resilience and pride. McCool Junction officially became our customer in late 1999 during the realignment between Nebraska Public Power District and what was then York County Rural Public Power District (now Perennial).

AT A GLANCE

POPULATION: 453

LOCATION: Highway 81; Five miles south of I-80

PERENNIAL CUSTOMER SINCE 1999

KNOWN FOR: Mustang Roundup, Northside Park, McCool Junction Public Schools

The sign along Highway 81 as you come into town.

The ballfields at Northside Park.

McCool Junction's railyard depot building and a Burlington Northern caboose.

Rooted in History

The area's history dates back to 1867 when the first settlers homesteaded along the river. Interestingly, the town we know today began as "Niota," which is now the southern part of McCool Junction. A new village was platted in late 1886, and with that, Niota lost its townsite and name. The town was renamed for the promoter and general manager of the St. Joseph and Grand Island Railroad, Daniel McCool. The Junction was added later as it became a junction for two railroads that met just south of town.

Along the River

Once affectionately known as "The City on the Blue," McCool Junction has long been a hub for celebration. Historically, the banks of the Blue River on the east side of town hosted legendary carnivals, dances, and community meals.

A Source of Pride

There are three parks in McCool Junction, the largest being Northside Park, which covers 12 acres and has two lit ballfields, a playground, a splash pad, a camping area, a concession stand, picnic shelters, a frisbee golf course, and restrooms.

The playground equipment at McCool Junction's Northside Park.

School Spirit

While agriculture serves as the backbone of the local economy, the true soul of the village is the McCool Junction Public Schools. In an era of frequent school consolidations, McCool has fought hard to remain independent.

McCool Junction Public Schools.

Annually, McCool Junction throws a town celebration, which they call Mustang Roundup. It occurs every September, generally in the third week. This year, Mustang Roundup will be September 18th – 20th. Mustang Roundup has something for everyone. There is a car show, food trucks, a lunch stand, grand parade, BBQ cook-off, bounce houses, golf around town, a dance, a fish fry, and so much more. The McCool Community Improvement Foundation also hosts the annual Evening With the Stars fundraiser, a signature event that supports local school and community projects.

The Chairman of the Board of McCool Junction, Sandra Browitt, would like everyone to know, "McCool is a great place to raise a family, or if you are thinking of retirement, we offer so much. A quiet, small village with just enough to be comfortable and not a large place where you may not even know your neighbors. We are just a hop and a skip away from York for shopping, and we are located halfway between Lincoln and Grand Island for those larger shopping conveniences."

Whether you're visiting for the Roundup or just passing through, it's easy to see why McCool Junction is more than just a spot on the map—it's a place people are proud to call home.

All the pictures for the article were taken by Trey Perry.

I hit a power pole or other electrical equipment:

Now what?

We all think it will never happen to us, but it can, and in an instant.

Motorized vehicles can veer off the road and run into a power pole. Farmers sometimes make contact with a power line while driving tractors or other machinery. Dump or feed truck drivers raise or lower their bed and snag a power line.

People can become dangerously close or enter electricity's path. Knowing what to do in that situation can save your life. Incidents with power lines or other utility equipment break the electrical current's usual path. This can make the ground, vehicles, and other equipment electrified.

If you hit a power pole, pad-mounted transformer ("green box"), or other electrical equipment with your car or vehicle, **DO NOT get out**. Instead, **call 9-1-1 and wait for Perennial crews to come and de-energize the power.**

Here are some examples; in all instances, call 9-1-1:

- Your tractor or car strikes a guy wire (guy wires are the wires staked into the ground that stabilize utility poles). Under normal conditions, the guy wire is neutral, but if the wire is weakened, pulled out of the ground, or otherwise damaged, it could become energized.
- You hit a patch of ice and go off the road and hit a utility pole. Or you are in a car accident, and one of the vehicles strikes a power pole. Only get out of the car if there is smoke or a fire; otherwise, stay put. If there is a fire, make a clean jump or hop from your car or truck (without touching it), and hop with your feet together or shuffle, keeping your feet on the ground at least 50 feet to safety. Think of the downed line sending electrical current across the ground in a ripple-like effect. Each ring of the ripple represents a different voltage. If you step from one ring to another, this is called step potential, and it can electrocute you.
- You see an accident that involves a downed power line. DO NOT approach the scene.
- You hit a pad-mounted transformer or other type of electrical box.
- Your vehicle hits a substation.
- You ran off the road, hit a pole, and it's dark out, but YOU DON'T KNOW if lines are down.

Other situations

- You get something stuck in power lines (drone or remote-control device): Do not try to retrieve it.
- You see kids climbing or sitting on pad-mounted transformers: Tell them not to sit or play on it.
- You are carrying a tall ladder or pole: Look up for power line locations and keep at least a 10-foot clearance at all times.
- You see kids climb trees that have power lines above: Warn them not to climb trees near power lines.
- You are using a portable generator: Never plug it into a wall outlet. This can cause backfeeding into the line and kill a lineworker or neighbor.

For questions about any of these scenarios, call Perennial at 402-362-3355. For more information about electrical safety, visit safeelectricity.org.

What to do if your car crashes into a utility pole

Always consider power lines and other electrical equipment to be live and dangerous!

If a power line falls on your vehicle and there is NO fire:

Your safest option is to stay inside your vehicle until help arrives. The vehicle acts as a path for the electrical current to travel to reach the ground. You are safe inside the vehicle, but if you get out, you could be electrocuted.

Call 911 or Perennial for help.

If a power line falls on your vehicle and there IS A FIRE:

Only attempt to leave your vehicle if it is on fire.

To exit safely:

- Jump out of the vehicle, making sure NO part of your body or clothing touches the ground and vehicle at the same time.
- Land with both feet together and in small, shuffling steps, move at least 40 ft. away from the vehicle.
- The ground could be energized.Shuffling away with both feet together decreases the risk of electrical shock.

Call 911 or Perennial for help.

NRECA PowerXchange

In March, Perennial General Manager, Brandon Lehman, and Perennial Board Member, Mark Becker, attended the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) PowerXchange in Nashville, Tennessee. PowerXchange is the largest gathering of electric cooperative leaders, designed to embrace the challenges of our ever-changing industry and cultivate future-focused thinkers. While there, the two attended several sessions that will help them improve Perennial. Some of the sessions included serving data center loads, updates for Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) assistance, and new nuclear technology. They also attended the NRECA Annual Business Meeting, where they voted on different things in the industry. Some of the items of interest from the meeting were: the Cooperative Business Model; Cooperative Governance and Leadership; Member-Owner Relationship; Workforce Safety; Security and Operations Management; Investment and Financial Matters; Power Supply; Power Delivery; Energy Markets and Industry Structure; Environmental and Courtesy Resolutions.

Vegetation

continued from pg. 2

40 feet—should be planted at least 50 feet away. If you're landscaping near pad-mounted transformers, keep shrubs at least 10 feet from the front and 4 feet from the sides to allow safe access.

If your neighborhood has underground lines, don't forget to call 811 before digging. It's a simple step that can prevent serious accidents.

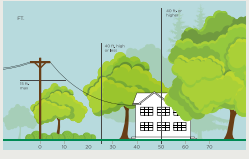
In 2026, contractors are scheduled to perform vegetation maintenance in the villages of Milligan and Grafton in Fillmore County, and Perennial crews will be trimming trees in the villages of Lushton and Thayer in York County. We will also have a contractor performing work in rural York County, north of York, as part of our vegetation management program.

Ultimately, vegetation management is not just a maintenance activity – it is a strategic operational function. It requires planning and consistent execution to be effective. When done well, it operates in the background, preventing problems before they start.

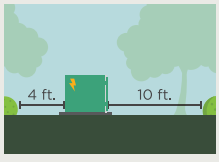
3 Ways to Help Limit Tree Trimming

Did you know electric utilities are required to trim trees and other types of vegetation that grow too close to overhead power lines? We know you love your trees, and we will do everything we can to avoid trimming them.
Here's how you can help:

1. Plant trees in the right place. Trees that will be <40 ft. should be planted at least 25 ft. away from power lines (>40ft. should be at least 50 ft. away).



2. Don't block pad-mounted transformers. Plant shrubs at least 10 ft. away from transformer doors and 4 ft. from transformer sides.

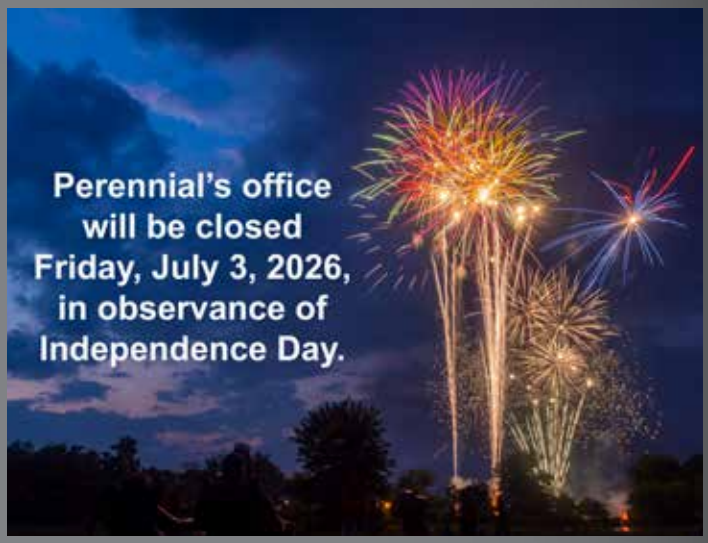


3. Report dangerous branches. If you spot a tree or branch that is dangerously close to power lines, please let us know.

Trimming improves safety for all. Let's work together to enjoy the beauty of trees and reliable electricity.

Calendar of Events

June 12-14	Milligan June Jubilee
June 20-21	Ohiowa Days
June 26-27	Waco Days
July 3	Perennial Office Closed *In observance of Independence Day*
July 16-20	Fillmore County Fair
July 10-12	Henderson Community Days
July 24-26	Exeter Days
August 6-9	York County Fair



Mail Delays?

SmartHub Can Help.

Recent changes to how mail is handled by the United States Postal Service has caused mailing delays. If you would like to receive an email or text when your bill is created each month you can register your account using SmartHub. Using the QR Code you can register your account to set up notifications, go paperless, and view usage.

Sign up for SmartHub.
Just scan this QR Code