

# Perennial NEWS

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PERENNIAL PUBLIC POWER DISTRICT

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### Winterization Tips for Your Home

*It is getting colder. Is your home ready?*

### Prepare for Winter Storms

*Here are some tips to be prepared  
for winter weather—inside and out.*

Energy for Generations  
**PERENNIAL**<sup>TM</sup>  
PUBLIC POWER DISTRICT

## Supply Chain Solutions

In today's world everyone has seen the effects of the ongoing supply chain issues. The electric utility industry is no exception. Over the last year we have seen lead times and costs on material increase substantially.

One item required for every electrical service we install is transformers. From 2020 until now we have seen prices on transformers increase by about 75 percent. Increases on larger pad mount transformers used for underground installations have been even more. Additionally, the lead times on these transformers has increased from a few weeks to a year or more. Transformers are just one example of hundreds of items that are stocked to keep the electrical grid maintained.

Due to long lead times on all material, we have started looking at projects two to three years in advance. This has allowed us to continually upgrade our existing infrastructure and complete new line builds. If you are planning a new construction project or doing any work that would require Perennial to update your existing electrical service, it is critical that you call while you are in the early planning

stages of the project. This will allow us to procure the necessary equipment and material to complete the project within a reasonable timeline.

In an effort to continue to provide the level of service our customers have come to

expect, Perennial has had to find creative solutions to source material. The storms that occurred on April 29th, May 12th, and June 15th damaged several pole mounted transformers throughout the District leaving our inventory increasingly low. On two separate occasions we were able to purchase excess inventory from other public power districts in Nebraska. This allowed us to get our inventory levels back where they should be and rebuild the services that were damaged in the storms.

While we hope this is not a long-term problem, you can rest assured that Perennial and its employees are continually working to provide solutions to the long lead times and rising costs of materials. With your help in the planning process, we can help keep your project moving forward. If you have a project that you would like to discuss, call our Operations Department at 402-362-3355 to discuss the details.



Transformers being stored at Perennial's warehouse.



**Steve Gerken**  
Manager of Operations

**Perennial News (USPS 21610)**

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### On Our Cover:

Bundle up! Winter weather is on its way.

# Cecil Kennel Retires

At the January, 2000 board meeting Cecil Kennel was sworn in to serve on the Board of Directors for Perennial Public Power District. At that time the District was in the final stages of changing its name from York County Rural Public Power District to Perennial. During his tenure Cecil attained his Credentialed Cooperative Director Certificate from the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association. He held several positions within Perennial's Board, as well as serving on the Job Training and Safety Committee for the Nebraska Rural Electric Association.

Kennel stated "It has been an honor and rewarding experience to serve on the Board of Directors at Perennial Public Power for 23 years. And he

would like to send a special thank you to all of Perennial's dedicated employees for the great job they do as well as the past and present Directors for their service."

Perennial was fortunate to have Cecil serve on the Perennial Board of Directors as he was a dedicated and engaged Board member. Kennel was committed to learning the electric industry and was very willing to ask questions and offer suggestions in a professional manner.

Cecil and his wife Sharon, will always be a part of the Perennial family. Fellow directors and Perennial employees would like to thank Cecil for his many years of service and leadership, as well as wish them the very best in the future.



## PERENNIAL EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

### Mike Haumont

*Manager of Finance and Accounting*



**10**  
YEARS

Mike Haumont began his career at Perennial Public Power District on December 3, 2012 as the Information Technology (IT) Administrator. He was promoted to Manager of Finance and Accounting in October of 2013. Mike is responsible for overseeing the daily operations of accounting and finance for the district. He also still assists the District with its IT operations.

When asked what he enjoys most about working for Perennial, Haumont said, "I enjoy the variety of duties and working with others to solve issues."

Haumont served in the Nebraska Air National Guard before attending Southeast Community College (SCC) where he received an Associate of Science in Business/Accounting. After SCC he went on to attend Bellevue University where he received his Bachelor of Science in Business Information Systems.

Mike and his wife Anita live in Geneva. Mike and Anita have seven children and nine grandchildren. When not at work Mike enjoys golfing, hiking, and spending time with family.

# Five Ways to Fight the Winter Chill and Save

We all have our favorite season. Some people love crisp, cool weather and bundling up under a favorite blanket, while others prefer the warm temperatures summer brings and all fun outdoor activities that go with it.

But there's one thing we can all agree on: high winter bills are never fun. Perennial is here to help you find ways to manage your home energy use and keep winter bills in check.

Here are five tips to help increase your home's energy efficiency this winter:

1

## Mind the thermostat.

This is one of the easiest ways to manage your home energy use. We recommend setting your thermostat to 68 degrees (or lower) when you're home. When you're sleeping or away for an extended period of time, try setting it between 58 and 62 degrees; there's no need to heat your home when you're away or sleeping and less active.



2

## Button up your home.

The Department of Energy estimates that air leaks account for 24% to 40% of the energy used for heating and cooling a home. Caulking and weather stripping around windows and doors is another simple, cost-effective way to increase comfort and save energy. If you can feel drafts while standing near a window or door, it likely needs to be sealed.



3

## Use window coverings wisely.

Open blinds, drapes or other window coverings during the day to allow natural sunlight in to warm your home. Close them at night to keep the cold, drafty air out. If you feel cold air around windows, consider hanging curtains or drapes in a thicker material; heavier window coverings can make a significant difference in blocking cold outdoor air.



# Fight the Winter Waste Energy



## Consider your approach to appliance use.

When combined, appliances and electronics account for a significant chunk of our home energy use, so assess how efficiently you're using them. For example, if you're running the dishwasher or clothes washer, only wash full loads. Look for electronic devices that consume energy even when they're not in use, like phone chargers or game consoles. Every little bit helps, so unplug them to save energy.



If you're taking steps to save energy but continue to see major increases in your bills, give us a call at 402-362-3355 or take advantage of our free home energy audits on Perennial's website. Perennial's energy experts can help identify areas and other factors impacting your home energy use and recommend next steps for savings.

Winter months often bring some of the highest energy bills of the year. By being proactive about saving energy, you can increase the comfort of your home and reduce monthly bills. Visit our website at [www.perennialpower.com](http://www.perennialpower.com) for additional energy-saving tips.



## Think outside the box.

If you're still feeling chilly at home, think of other ways to warm up—beyond dialing up the thermostat. Add layers of clothing, wear thick socks and bundle up under blankets. You can even add layers to your home! If you have hard-surface flooring, consider purchasing an area rug to block cold air that leaks in through the floor.



# Fuel your knowledge before powering up a generator

Before you grab your portable generator to use it for backup power, there are important lifesaving safety steps you should know. It is best to familiarize yourself with how to use a generator properly before needing one.

Before using a portable generator, be sure to do the following:

- Check carbon monoxide (CO) detectors. Protect yourself and those you love by making sure there are battery-operated CO testers in your home that are working properly/ have fresh batteries.
- Read the instructions. Many people are tempted to skip this step, but incorrectly using a generator can cause CO poisoning, which is often deadly. These are instructions you should take the time to read.
- Know how to use one properly. Operate generators at least 20 feet from doors and windows and never use one in any type of enclosed structure, such as a garage, shed or tent. If your RV has a generator, be sure to operate it safely to avoid CO poisoning.
- Keep it dry. If it is wet outside, place the portable generator on a tarp. If it is raining or snowing, position it under a portable canopy (but not under a carport).
- Keep utility workers and others safe. Never plug a portable generator into a wall outlet. Never use a permanent generator without throwing the transfer switch. Doing either of these things can cause dangerous backfeed into the power grid.



- Make sure the transfer switch is endorsed by a reputable testing laboratory, such as UL, and that the installation meets all applicable electrical codes.
- Plug items directly into a portable generator and use heavy-duty extension cords that are in good working condition and are the correct gauge. The lower the gauge number and the thicker the cord, the more electricity it can safely carry; refer to the owner's manual for specifics. Do not plug one extension cord into another.
- Let the generator cool down before refueling. Also, store fuel safely.
- Keep it well maintained and have it inspected regularly.

To learn more about safe generator use and electrical safety in general, visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).

## What is a Generator Transfer Switch?

A transfer or throw switch, sometimes called a double throw switch, is an essential mechanism that shuts off power to the grid before backup power is used.

### The transfer switch has an important job.

The switch is typically used for generators rated at 5,000 watts or more.

It connects the generator to your home's main circuits to provide backup power during an outage.

In other words, the transfer switch changes or transfers the power load from one source to another.

It prevents power from backfeeding into the power grid and endangering utility workers and others.

### The type of switch depends on the type of generator.

A permanent standby generator has an internal switch that automatically transfers the source of power. Standby generators must be installed by licensed contractors, usually at the side of a home.

Standby generators are called just that because they automatically turn on when the power goes out.

Not all permanently installed generators are standby versions. Some have manual transfer switches. Make sure your permanent generator and switch are installed to code and working properly.

Portable generators can also be connected to your home's electrical service panel that is properly wired through a transfer switch. If you use a portable generator, never plug it into a wall outlet as this can cause backfeed.

### Always use a generator safely.

# Stay safe during severe winter weather

## Ice and other severe winter weather can result in power outages

When severe winter weather hits, power outages can occur. Roadways can be dangerous. Do all you can to prepare your pantry, home and car for the next severe winter storm. Once you are ready, watch and listen for weather bulletins mentioning winter storms, blizzard warnings or windchill dangers.

**Supplies for the storm:** At home, have enough nonperishable food, water and medical supplies/medicines for 72 hours. The Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention suggest storing one gallon of water per person per day. Have cell phones and chargers, as well as backup charger sources, ready. Gather important documents and medical records. Protect your pets and make sure you have enough supplies for them as well. Also have these items ready: a first-aid kit, a flashlight and batteries, hand sanitizer, blankets and warm clothing.

**Readying the house:** Weatherproof your home ahead of winter by caulking windows and doors and looking for other air leaks that need attention. Inspect chimney flues for wood stoves or wood-burning fireplaces. Install smoke and carbon monoxide detectors on each floor of your home. Protect pipes from freezing.

### Prepare your vehicle with an emergency kit:

According to Consumer Reports, it can be cheaper to buy a prepared emergency kit than to purchase items individually. A kit typically includes battery booster cables, an ice scraper, a portable shovel, flashlights, a signaling cone, backup batteries for the flashlight, roadside triangles, a reflective vest, a basic first-aid kit (add in what is needed for individual needs) and a cell phone charger.

In addition, your car or truck should also be stocked with gloves, a blanket, a rain poncho, wipes, rags, boots and a hat. It cannot hurt to also have bottled water and nonperishable snacks in your vehicle in case you get stranded.

**Prepare your vehicle:** Complete annual maintenance, test the car battery and cooling system, use winter tires and replace them if the tread is less than 2/32 of an inch, check tire pressure and wiper blades, add wiper fluid rated for less than minus 30 degrees and keep the gas tank at least half full.

Know that when the power goes out, we work hard to restore it safely and efficiently.

For information about electrical safety or storm preparation, visit [SafeElectricity.org](http://SafeElectricity.org).

### Preparing for Storm Season?

## DON'T FORGET TO READY YOUR CAR

According to the National Safety Council (NSC), every vehicle should have an emergency supply kit onboard. Kits should be checked twice a year and expired items should be replaced regularly. Emergency supply kits should include:



Snowbrush  
Shovel  
Windshield washer fluid  
Cat litter for traction



Warm clothing  
Blankets  
Drinking water  
Nonperishable foods



Properly inflated spare tire  
Wheel wrench & tripod jack  
Jumper cables  
Fire extinguisher



Reflective triangles  
Reflective vest  
Brightly colored cloth  
(to tie on side mirror)



First-aid kit  
Flashlight and batteries  
Compass  
Car charger for cell phone

## 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. Participation in this program offered by Perennial does not guarantee future employment by Perennial.

The application deadline for this scholarship is December 31, 2022. Scholarship applications and applicant guidelines are available on our website, [www.perennialpower.com](http://www.perennialpower.com) or contact Courtney Giesenhagen at [cgiesenhagen@perennialpower.com](mailto:cgiesenhagen@perennialpower.com).

**Perennial's Office will be closed  
in observance of:  
Christmas Day - Monday, December 26, 2022  
New Year's Day - Monday, January 2, 2023.  
Wishing You a Safe and  
Happy Holiday Season!**



### Keep it Clear

Blocked air vents force your heating system to work harder than necessary and increase pressure in the ductwork, which can cause cracks and leaks to form.

Make sure all air vents are unobstructed from furniture, drapes or other items to ensure sufficient circulation throughout your home. If necessary, purchase a vent extender, which can be placed over a vent to redirect air flow from underneath furniture.

