

# Perennial NEWS

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PERENNIAL PUBLIC POWER DISTRICT

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Energy for Generations  
**PERENNIAL**  
PUBLIC POWER DISTRICT

## Lower Cost for Electric Service in 2021

For as long as I can remember, our mission has been to provide reliable and affordable electricity to people in York and Fillmore County. This goal no doubt goes back to when the District was created in 1939. I'll address the issue of reliability in my article in the next edition of *Perennial News*, but for now I will briefly address the subject of affordability.

Although many of our operating expenses and cost of materials continue to rise,

next year will be our eighth consecutive year without a base electric rate increase. We are proud of the fact that we will be able to provide service to you in 2021 at the very same rate that we did in 2013. But at the same time, we

realize that what largely determines the amount of bills is how much electricity is used. To repeat a longtime industry saying, 'Customers pay bills, not rates'. Still, not having to increase our price of electricity is a good thing. If we could keep the cost of groceries, rent and other household monthly expenses the same for nine years, most of us would welcome the stability.

But there is more good news in addition to not having to raise base electric rates next year. Your board of directors has approved more than double the amount of money to return to you through a PCA credit in 2021 than was returned to you this year. As a reminder, PCA stands for Production

Cost Adjustment. It can be used to reflect the change in the District's cost of power purchased at wholesale from Nebraska Public Power District (NPPD). The PCA is a separate line item on your bill which is calculated by multiplying the PCA rate by the kilowatt-hours you consume during the billing period.

Every year NPPD uses cost projections to set rates at a level that attempts to match its revenues and expenses. But there are

many variables, like weather, that can impact actual revenues and expenses. For NPPD, one variable over the last few years has been the surplus it has realized by earning margins through the selling

of excess power into the regional market. Recently, NPPD announced its plan for a one-year refund of these excess funds to Perennial and the other wholesale customers. And in turn, we will pass funds on to you through the PCA credit. After all, it's your money.

Because of the value that stable prices provide customers, especially during a difficult period of time like we are currently experiencing, it's a pleasure to be able to tell customers that our rates will be exactly the same next year as they have been for quite a few years. It's even more enjoyable when we can say that they will actually have a lower cost for electric service.



**Jamey Pankoke**  
General Manager

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**A drive-thru meal  
COSTS MORE**

than a day's worth  
of electricity for an  
average Nebraska  
homeowner





# Old Electronics Deserve a Proper Burial

WAIT! Before you give your outdated or dilapidated electronics the heave-ho, consider this earth-friendly advice from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA):

## Consider recycling

- Electronics are made from metals, plastics, and glass that require energy and time to reproduce. For example, according to the EPA:
- Recycling one million laptops saves the energy equivalent to the electricity used by more than 3,500 U.S. homes in a year.
- For every million cell phones that are recycled, 35 thousand pounds of copper, 772 pounds of silver, 75 pounds of gold, and 33 pounds of palladium can be recovered.

## Before you donate or recycle

Can you upgrade the hardware or software on your current computer to extend its life? If the answer is no and you ultimately decide to get rid of a computer or other device, destroy all personal information from the device first. Also, remove any batteries from your electronics for separate recycling.

## How to remove data before recycling

There are various ways to permanently erase (or “sanitize”) data from your electronic devices before getting rid of them, and methods vary from device to device. According to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Earth 911, and other electronic recycling gurus, general guidelines include:

**Back up data.** Save your data to another device or second location (external hard drive or cloud).

**Delete data.** Although files appear to have been removed, data is still there, according to Homeland Security. Even if you empty the virtual trash, the deleted items can still be retrieved. Permanent data deletion requires several steps; spend some time researching how to effectively delete data for the device you are recycling.

**Overwrite.** This is when you delete sensitive information and write new binary data over it. Unless you are a computer expert, you might want to consult a professional for this.

**Destroy.** Take your stress out on your device. Physically destroying a device is the ultimate way to prevent someone else from retrieving your personal information. Some companies specialize in disintegrating, burning, melting, or pulverizing your computer drive and other devices.

For more information on steps 1 through 4, refer to the Department of Homeland Security’s website.

## Where to donate or recycle

Several manufacturers, local and national retailers, offer donation or recycling options. The EPA’s Sustainable Materials Management (SMM) tracks and publicizes participants, and major companies include Best Buy, Dell, Sprint, Sony, and Vizio. SMM participants strive to send 100 percent of used electronics they collect to certified recyclers and refurbishers.

For more information about recycling electronics, refer to EPA’s website and other reputable sources.

Source: SafeElectricity.org.





# Holiday Cooking

The kitchen can be a busy place during the holiday season: prepping and preparing favorite recipes (or sampling those favorite recipes). While this year's holiday festivities may look different for many of us due to COVID-19, people are spending more time in their own homes and kitchens than ever before.

Whether you are a seasoned cook or novice baker, it's important to keep electrical safety in mind. According to the National Institutes of Health, in the United States alone, approximately 1,000 deaths occur each year as a result of electrical injuries. An additional 30,000 non-fatal shock incidents occur each year.

The following kitchen hazards may cause electric shock:

- Damaged or worn electrical cords.
- Equipment and appliances with improper or faulty wiring.
- Using damp cloths or water for cooking or cleaning near sources of electricity.

The following tips may help prevent injury or fire in your home:

- Never leave cooking equipment unattended, and always remember to turn off burners if you have to leave the room.
- Supervise the little ones closely in the kitchen. Make sure children stay at least three feet away from all cooking appliances.

## Be a Smart Cookie Holiday Baking Tips

If you're planning to cook feasts or create treats this holiday season, follow these basic safety tips:

### Test Smoke Detectors

Make sure they're working properly



### Watch Your Sleeves

This is not a good time for loose sleeves



### Put a Lid on It

Have lids handy in case of a grease fire



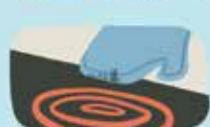
### Old Things Don't Become New

Don't use appliances in disrepair



### How the Cookie Crumbles

Consider having a fire extinguisher on hand



### Where There's Heat There Could Be Fire

Keep flammables such as pot holders away from the stove



### Not Child's Play

Keep children and pets away from cooking areas



### Keeping Time

Use a timer when the oven or stove is on



### Stay With It

Don't leave the room if you are broiling, frying or simmering food



### Pay Attention

Take a nap after the feast



- Prevent potential fires by making sure your stovetop and oven are clean and free of grease, dust, and spilled food.
- Remember to clean the exhaust hood and duct over your stove regularly.
- Keep the cooking area around the stove and oven clear of combustibles, such as towels, napkins, and potholders.
- Always wear short or close-fitting sleeves when cooking. Loose clothing can catch fire.
- To protect from spills and burns, use the back burners and turn the pot handles in, away from reaching hands.
- Locate all appliances away from the sink.
- Plug countertop appliances into ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI)-protected outlets.
- Keep appliance cords away from hot surfaces like the range or toaster.
- Unplug the toaster and other countertop appliances when not in use.
- Be sure to turn off all appliances when cooking is completed.

- Always read and follow an appliance's operating instructions.
- Always dry your hands before handling cords or plugs.
- If an unplugged appliance cord gets wet or damp, do not plug it in until it is thoroughly dry.



# g Safety Tips

- Do not handle electrical cords or appliances when standing in water.
- Pull on the plug, not the cord, to disconnect an appliance from an outlet.
- To avoid damaging cords, don't run them across walkways or underneath rugs. Draping them over walkways is also a tripping hazard.
- Regularly inspect electrical cords and plugs for damaged insulation and exposed wiring; immediately discard any damaged item. Avoid using any cord or plug that is frayed, cracked, taped or otherwise questionable.
- Only handle the insulated part of a plug or cord when disposing it.
- Do not overload extension cords, multi-pack "power strips" or surge protectors with too many appliances or other items or plug them into each other. Use them only as a temporary solution, and not a permanent one.
- Ensure extension cords, power strips and surge protectors are in good condition and the appropriate gauge for the job (the lower the number, the bigger the gauge and the greater the amperage and wattage).
- Never remove the third (round or U-shaped) prong from a plug, which is a grounding/safety feature designed to reduce the risk of shock and electrocution.
- If you have doubts about your home's electrical system, have a licensed electrician evaluate wiring, outlets, and switches to verify they are in working order.
- Educate yourself and everyone in your household on how to properly turn off your home's power in case of an emergency.



For more important safety tips to keep you and your family safe this holiday season and throughout the year, visit [www.esfi.org](http://www.esfi.org) or [www.safeelectricity.com](http://www.safeelectricity.com).



# PERENNIAL EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

## Steve Gerken

*Operations Coordinator*



**15**  
YEARS

Steve was hired in December of 2005 as an Apprentice Line Technician. In the fifteen years Gerken has been employed at Perennial; he has advanced from Apprentice Line Technician to a Journeyman Line Technician. Then to a Lead Line Technician and in 2016 he was promoted to his current position as Operations Coordinator. The

Operations Coordinator acts as the safety director for the district, this position is a critical link between the Operations Manager, customers, and line crews.

While all employees have a hand in our safety record of 2,842 days without a lost-time accident, Steve Gerken, as the safety director, directly influences our success. He coordinates and implements the safety program for the district, which includes scheduling our safety meetings. Along with keeping our employees safe, Gerken works to keep our customers and community safe by educating our customers as well as the community about electrical safety. Steve stated that “working with our customers and talking to children about electrical safety was the most rewarding part of his career.”

Steve resides in McCool Junction with his wife Susan along with their four children, Madison, Payton, Braxton, and Dawson. Gerken is very involved with the McCool Junction community by serving as the Vice President of the McCool Junction School Board, as well as serving as the Head of Trustees for the McCool Junction United Methodist Church. After work, he spends his time camping, fishing, and watching his children’s activities.

Perennial is lucky to have employees like Steve, who help keep our Operations Department running smoothly, helping to provide reliable electricity and make sure employees, as well as customers, remain safe around electricity. Thank you, Steve, for 15 years of hard work and dedication!

## Keith Hoffman

*Journeyman Line Technician*



**15**  
YEARS

Keith Hoffman will celebrate fifteen years of employment at Perennial in January 2021. He graduated

from York high and then received his Associate’s Degree in Utility Line from Omaha Metropolitan Community College. Hired in 2006 as an Apprentice Line Technician, he was promoted in 2010 to his current role as a Journeyman Line Technician. His responsibilities include general maintenance and construction of overhead and underground electrical infrastructures.

When asked about his favorite part of being a lineman, Hoffman stated, “Bringing power to our customers, either by restoring line after an outage

or building new line, is my favorite part of the job.”

Keith lives in rural York County with his wife, Cassie, along with their three children, Wyatt, Emry, and Ryker. After work, Hoffman enjoys hunting, fishing, boating, and spending time with his family.

Perennial is privileged to have employees like Keith, who not only take pride in maintaining a safe and reliable infrastructure but enjoy it. Keith, we’d like to thank you for fifteen years of dedicated service.

This is a six-year project to strengthen the infrastructure between three substations; there will be a total of 26.5 miles of lines rebuilt. We are three years into this project; in 2020 an additional six miles were completed. This brings the total of completed lines rebuilt to 14.5 miles.

Lastly, Perennial would like to remind you to contact us if you are considering a new service in 2021. It is beneficial if we are involved from the beginning of a project. This allows Perennial to plan the work and have time to order special materials that may be needed to complete your project.

**Randy Martin**  
*Manager of Operations*

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## 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, 2020.** 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 on the following holidays: Friday, December 25, 2020 in observance of Christmas Day, Friday, January 1, 2020 in observance of New Years Day.**

**Wishing you a safe and happy holiday season.**



### Cookware Efficiency Tip

Copper-bottomed pans heat faster on the stove. In the oven, ceramic and glass dishes are better than metal. With ceramic and glass dishes, you can turn the oven down about 25 degrees, and your meal will cook just as quickly.

