

Northern Plains gives updates on large projects, system construction and repairs



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Northern Plains construction updates

Northern Plains Electric Cooperative (NPEC) is in the midst of its busy construction season – building new services, doing system improvements, converting some overhead power lines to underground and more – to continue giving our members safe, reliable and affordable electric service. The following is an update on the projects you might see in your neck of the woods.

Jamestown project

Central Power Electric Cooperative is building a new substation for NPEC south of 37th

St. S.E. and west of 81st Ave. S.E. NPEC will bury the existing three-phase overhead line that runs along the south side of 37th St. S.E. from one-half mile east of 84th Ave. S.E. to the new substation, to make room for the new transmission line taking its place. This transmission line will provide power for the new substation being constructed.

NPEC will also continue west of the new substation to 79th Ave. S.E., converting the three-phase overhead to underground cable. This 5.5-mile project should provide more reliable power for the rural customers west of Jamestown and provide extra capacity for load growth in the Jamestown area.

Bisbee project

NPEC is adding a new feeder out of the existing Bisbee substation to help with the load growth in the Bisbee area. The project extends along 84th St. N.E. from 57th Ave. N.E. to the Bisbee dam. This project is 3 miles long and should provide better reliability to the rural areas surrounding Bisbee.

System construction

Many new services are being put into place for members, especially in the southern half of the system. These new services include new homes and irrigation requests. If you are in need of a new service or would like to upgrade your line, please get your request into NPEC sooner than later to ensure fitting it into our short construction season.

Across the system, about 30 miles of overhead to underground conversions are scheduled to take place this summer and fall. These improvements are intended to increase electrical capacity, reduce voltage drop and improve reliability. The replacement of overhead lines mitigates outages caused by severe weather, which includes ice buildup, strong winds and lightning during thunderstorms.

Another way NPEC maintains the system is by conducting pole testing to find damaged or decayed poles. This spring, NPEC contracted RAM Utilities LLC to conduct pole testing around Belcourt, Rocklake and Mylo in Rolette and Towner counties. Some 350 poles were found compromised and will be replaced this summer and fall by NPEC line crews. Crews will be doing the pole change outs “hot,” meaning members will not lose power. If any issues do arise where they do need to cut the power, members will be

Bisbee Project



Jamestown Project



notified beforehand.

In addition to the scheduled projects, our crews have been busy fixing lines and replacing poles due to farm machinery accidents. Damage to cooperative-owned lines, poles and other equipment can create dangerous situations, unnecessary power outages for you and your neighbors and could cost a significant amount of money.

In 2019, NPEC recorded over 50 public accidents that involved cooperative equipment and line that crews were dispatched to fix. We encourage you to be aware of power lines and other electrical equipment around your property. Look up. Look down. Look around. If you notice something potentially unsafe, give us a call. ■



Protecting your electronics

Some things that are certain in the summertime are dandelions, mosquitos and thunderstorms. You can spray to rid of dandelions and mosquitos, but how do you protect yourself if lightning would strike?

First, seek shelter. Lightning can strike many miles ahead of a storm front. If you hear thunder, seek shelter immediately, because that indicates lightning is within 10 miles of you. Safe shelter includes inside a building or in an enclosed metal-topped vehicle.

Second, unplug. If you are inside a building, the National Weather Service advises you to stay off corded telephones and away from any electrical device that could carry an electrical surge if lightning entered into your home through wiring. Turn off or unplug such appliance, stay away from television sets, and do not depend on surge protectors to absorb a lightning strike. A lightning strike can cause a surge of millions of volts. Appliances and tech gadgets are not made to withstand that much electricity all at once and will essentially fry.

In the case lightning would strike a cooperative substation, a brownout could possibly occur. A brownout is when there is a voltage drop and this can be indicated by your lights dimming into a "brownish" color. Brownouts can be very hard on your electronics. It is best to unplug all electronics right away or turn off your main breaker to the home.

Wait 30 minutes. Authorities warn against outdoor activities until 30 minutes after the last clap of thunder. Thirty minutes is also the suggested time to wait before turning your electronics back on. Although lightning strikes are rare, it is best to be play it safe.



NPEC welcomes summer help

Northern Plains Electric Cooperative (NPEC) has hired two temporary apprentice lineworkers as summer help. Jordan Pfeifer and Jordan Omlie began working for the cooperative on May 18 to help through NPEC's construction season.

Pfeifer, originally from Zeeland, is working with the Carrington West crew. After high school, he enrolled in the lineworkers program at Bismarck State College (BSC) and graduated this spring. In his spare time, he enjoys hunting and fishing.

Omlie, whose hometown is Lankin, joined the Cando line crew. After high school, he enrolled in the lineworkers program at Bismarck State College (BSC) and graduated this spring. Before joining the NPEC team, he worked for an



Jordan Pfeifer

electrician near his hometown. In Omlie's spare time, he enjoys fishing and hunting.



Jordan Omlie

Northern Plains Electric is happy to have these two on our team! ■

PLANNING A TRIP TO MEDORA THIS SUMMER

Northern Plains Electric Cooperative is able to offer its members a discount by being a Touchstone Energy® member. Simply call 1-800-MEDORA-1 and give the discount code of "Touch 2020" for a 15 percent discount on the any of the following during any night of the season:

- Tickets to the Medora Musical
- Pitchfork steak fondue
- Bully Pulpit Golf Course

Lodging at any of the following:

- Elkhorn Quarters
- Badlands Motel
- Rough Riders Hotel



Don't put safety on autopilot.

Global positioning system (GPS) technology provides farmers with real-time, accurate location data about a field. But while GPS can help the driver plant straight rows and maximize potential, it can also give a false sense of security. Northern Plains Electric Cooperative reminds our members not to put safety on autopilot.

When farmers enter the field using GPS, they do an outside round and set the borders and boundaries of the field. Then, they set the angle and straight line, so they know the direction the GPS will take.

If there is a slough, rock pile, fencepost or power pole in the middle of the field, they still need to manually drive around the hazard and set a boundary for it, if the system allows. Once set, less focus may be needed on steering, but drivers still need to be aware of navigation issues.

Farming equipment is vulnerable to hitting power lines because of its large size, height and extension. When drivers set their GPS, that tractor is basically driving itself – and it doesn't always account for structures in the field. Because the tractor is programmed, drivers may not be paying as much attention as they did years ago. When they rely on technology, it's a lot easier to hit something that is in their field. Unfortunately, that's a lot of power poles.

Too often, people say they didn't see the power pole because they were playing a game on their smartphone or reading the newspaper. Advanced technology like GPS is great when it works. But it doesn't eliminate the need to stay alert to possible hazards and changing conditions.



Northern Plains Electric Cooperative encourages members to evaluate their fields regularly, looking for low-hanging lines when entering a field, turning in end rows, leaving the field and driving back to the farm.

If your equipment does make contact with a power line, do not leave the cab. Immediately call Northern Plains Electric to de-energize the line, if an emergency call 911 first and warn others to stay away.

The only reasons 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 report system damage that is not in need of immediate repair, call Northern Plains Electric Cooperative at 800-882-2500.

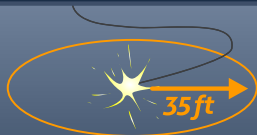
Members, your safety matters. Working together helps ensure the safety of all! ■

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ALWAYS ASSUME **LIVE** ALL DOWNED LINES ARE

Downed power lines can be **deadly**. Always assume a downed power line is **live** and avoid approaching them or anything near them.

Use Precaution



Downed power lines can energize the ground up to **35 feet away**. Even more in wet conditions.



Never drive over downed power lines or anything in contact with them.



If you see a downed power line, **call 911**.



Never try to move a downed power line.

If a vehicle contacts a **power line** or **utility pole**...

STAY AWAY AND CALL 911



Consider **all lines** to be live and dangerous.



Stay in place or inside your vehicle unless you see **fire** or **smoke**.



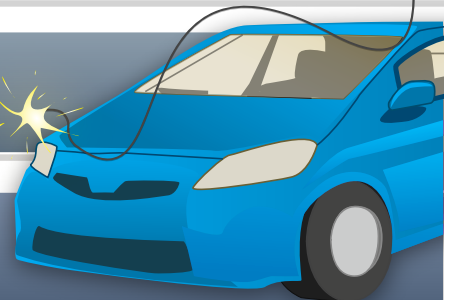
Warn others to stay at least **35 feet away**.



Tell others not to approach vehicle, downed lines, or anything that may be in contact with downed lines.



Call **911**.



In the Event of Fire or Smoke

Do not touch the ground and vehicle at the **same time**.



Jump from the vehicle with your **feet together**.



Shuffle away, avoid lifting your feet.



Play safe this summer



We're all looking forward to getting outdoors and enjoying the sunshine this summer, but Northern Plains Electric wants you to stay safe, too. Ground-fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) are one form of protection from electrical hazards outdoors. GFCIs detect dangerous situations where a shock may occur and cut off power to prevent shock. Any situation where electricity is used near water is a shock hazard. You should have GFCI protection on lighting around pools and near hot tubs.

Here are other tips to stay safe in or around swimming pools:

- Do not put electric appliances within 10 feet of a swimming pool.
- Any electric outlets within 20 feet of a pool should have a GFCI.
- Never swim during a thunderstorm.
- When you leave the pool, don't touch any electrical appliances until you are dry. Never touch any electrical appliances when you are wet or standing in water.

If you plan to go boating or fishing this summer, be aware of your surroundings and potential electrical hazards.

- Check for the location of power lines before fishing. Make sure you are casting the line far away from power lines to avoid contact.

**NORTHERN
PLAINS** Electric Cooperative

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