CONNECTIONS

CORNHUSKER PUBLIC POWER DISTRICT • FEBRUARY 2024

Board passes 2024 budget, rates remain stable

Cornhusker Public Power District's Board of Directors voted to keep electric rates steady for 2024 at the November board meeting.

Additionally, Cornhusker Public Power District Board of Directors agreed to utilize a production cost adjustment (PCA) credit. This is the fifth consecutive year Cornhusker Public Power District has passed a PCA credit on to their customers. The PCA credit will be a line item on customers' bills and will run from January 1, 2024, through December 31, 2024.

CEO/GM Clay Gibbs said, "It is great we will not have a rate increase in 2024. Our wholesale power provider - NPPD and Cornhusker Public Power District continue to focus on controlling expenses and improving efficiencies without compromising reliability or safety to ensure rates remain competitive."

The 2024 budget was approved at the December 2023 board meeting. The budget includes $6.2 million for capital additions, system improvements and maintenance expenses.

A 2024 work plan was created to analyze the capacity and condition of existing facilities (lines, poles, transformers, breakers, substations) relative to existing and expected load growth to determine what system investments are necessary to provide adequate and economical service to customers.

A new circuit will be added at the Maple Creek Substation, located north of Leigh. "A three-mile line extension will be built for the new circuit," says Technical Services/Safety Director Brian Strong. "This will provide better redundancy and increase reliability."

Work will continue on the substation north of Primrose in 2024. "Approximately three miles of distribution line will be built out of the Primrose sub," says Strong. "This will help with power quality during the irrigation season."

Additionally, transmission line will be built out of the Cedar Rapids Substation, located north of Cedar Rapids, and connect to the Primrose Substation.

"Additional line regulators and upgrades to the system are also in the 2024 construction budget," says Strong.

Photo: (In Bucket) Corey Boryca, Griffin Babb, (ground l-r) Scott Miller, Marc Pelster and Marty McKay string line by Spalding.

What happens behind the scenes during a power outage

Nebraska is ranked first in power grid reliability in the 2023 U.S. News & World Report State Rankings based on the number of minutes of power outages the average customer experiences in a year, according to data from the Department of Energy. Average total lengths - excluding major events - in a state can range from under an hour to multiple hours over the course of a year.

The number one ranking is a direct result of being a public power state. It's your friends, family, and neighbors who work tirelessly for our local utilities, ensuring electricity is available to power our lives 24/7, 365 days a year.

What happens on our end when your power goes out? Rest assured we swing into action in a safe and efficient manner to ensure your power is restored. How long that takes depends on several factors: the extent of the event's destruction, the number of outages, and how long it takes for our work crews to safely access the storm-damaged areas. We are careful to follow standard restoration procedures to ensure safety and to get the job done right.

> "Safety is our number one priority. We need to make sure our employees can come home to their families at the end of the day."

"When an outage is called in, either during business hours or after, we dispatch a crew to the area," says Operations Director Mike Stockwell.

"First, the crew needs to determine the cause of the power outage," says Stockwell. "It is not always obvious like ice, wind, or even an accident. Sometimes our crews have to identify the open breaker." Crews may need to patrol miles of line to find the issue. Before power can be restored, crews make sure the line is clear and there are no downed power lines or guy wires.

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After addressing and identifying the safety risks, crews can start the process of restoring power by:

- Assessing damage to utility equipment
- Prioritizing repairs restoring power to the greatest number of people first.
- Repairing transmission lines carrying power to large areas.
- Assessing and repairing (in this order) substations distribution lines, and service lines to properties.

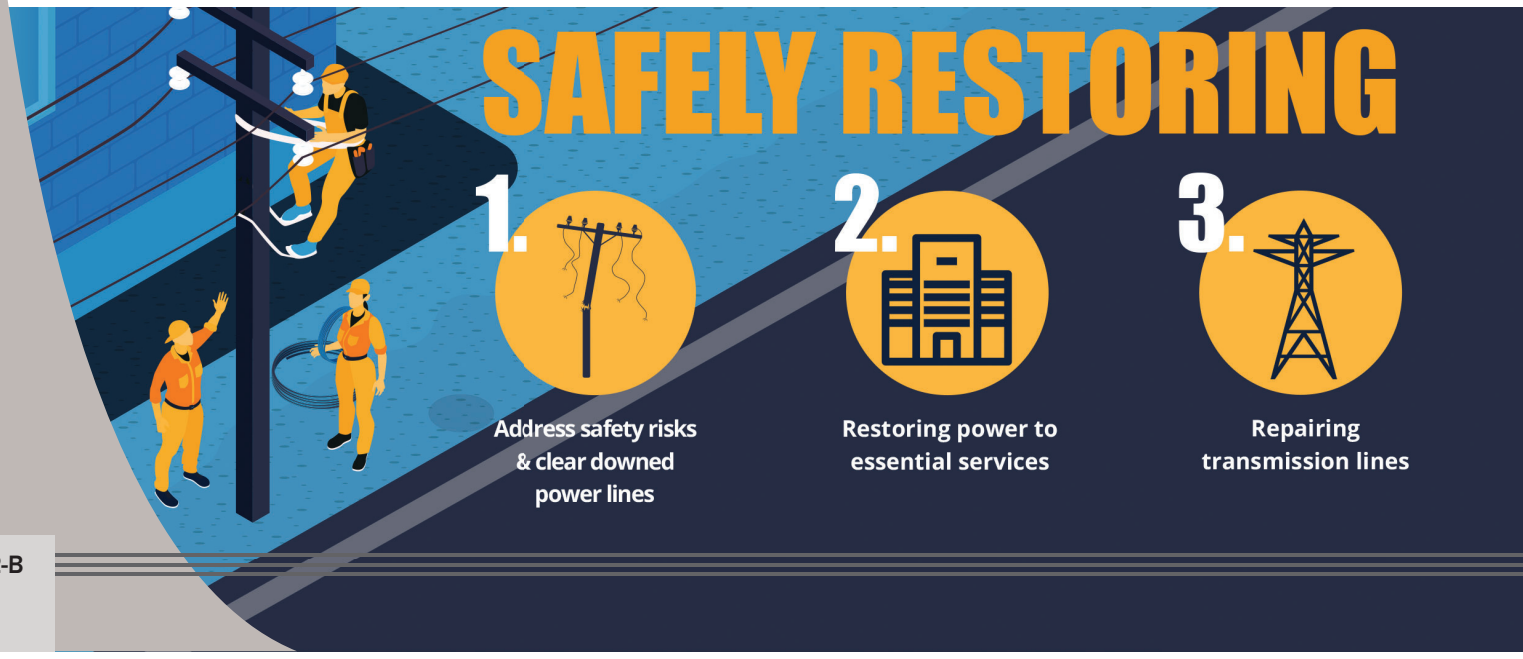
Outages can happen at any time for any reason. We check and maintain our equipment regularly, but sometimes unexpected malfunctions happen. Have an outage kit prepared and easily accessible at all times. Some items to include in the kit are bottles of water, non-perishable food items, a portable phone charger, battery-operated radio, flashlights, extra batteries, pet supplies, blankets, warm clothes, and a first-aid kit.

If you experience an outage, please call 402 564 2821 and have your meter number ready.

Power outage causes

Many times, the reasons for outages are beyond our control. Here are the main reasons the power goes out:

Storms — Conditions brought on by storms such as high winds, ice and lightning can interrupt service. Lightning itself does not impact outages as much, but it can strike trees and cause branches or even whole trees to fall on distribution lines.



Lightning can cause a problem, however, if it strikes substation equipment, such as a large transformer. Strong high winds and ice accumulating on lines can also impact distribution lines.

Galloping lines – Galloping power lines are typically caused when ice and high winds occur at the same time. Freezing rain creates icicles and odd-shaped ice formations on power lines and conductors. The ice buildup changes how wind and air impact the now misshapen, ice-covered line. This change in airflow can cause the power line to start to bounce. Once the lines get going, they can bounce and buck enough to hit another line, damage themselves enough to cause a power outage or even fall to the ground. There is not much we can do to alleviate galloping lines since the wild motion is caused by Mother Nature.

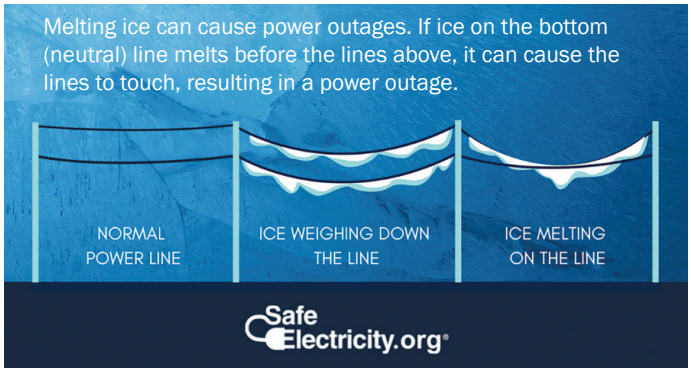
Trees and vegetation – Branches, limbs or trunks can fall on lines and vegetation (such as vines) can grow around poles, lines, or other equipment. Ice and wind can make matters worse. This is why we work so hard to keep power lines and equipment clear of trees and vegetation.

Animals — It is estimated 11 percent of all outages are caused by our furry friend the squirrel. They love to chew on the weatherproof coating around lines. Other rodents like raccoons can interfere with service too. A bird on a wire is harmless and safe for the bird as long as it touches the line and nothing else.

Accidents — Cars, trucks, and farm equipment can have a run-in with a utility pole causing an outage.

Public damage — Unsafe digging, equipment or line damage, vandalism or theft can all cause interruptions in the energy chain.

Equipment — We maintain and inspect all our lines and equipment regularly; however, sometimes equipment malfunctions. We strive to address any problem as soon as it happens.



Downed power lines

When you see power lines on the ground, stay away, warn others to stay away and contact Cornhusker Public Power District or 911. Lines do not have to be arcing or sparking to be live. Any utility wire, including telephone or cable lines sagging or down, could be in contact with an energized power line, also making it dangerous. DO NOT try to guess the types of lines —STAY AWAY from all lines.

Be alert to the possibility that tree limbs or debris may hide electrical hazards. Downed power lines can energize objects around them, such as chain-link fences and metal culverts.

Keep in mind a dead line could become energized during power restoration efforts or improper use of generators. Never drive over a downed line. It could start a chain reaction and cause additional poles or other equipment to collapse.

If you are in a car in contact with or near a downed power line, stay in your vehicle. Wait until the utility crew has arrived and de-energized the line. Warn others not to approach the vehicle.

Only exit a car or cab near or on downed lines if there is a fire. If this happens, cross your arms over your chest and make a solid jump out and away from the car with both feet together. Then hop away, as far as you can, while continuing to keep both feet together.

POWER after a storm

Safe Electricity.org®

4. Checking sub stations and transformers

5. Repairing distribution lines

6. Restoring power to homes & businesses

Notice, a neighbor may have power while you do not.
Your home might be on a different transformer or feeder or the service line to your home may be damaged.

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 back-feeding 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 automatically transferring the source of power. Standby generators must be installed by licensed contractors, usually at the side of a home.

Standby generators 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, but it must be properly wired through a transfer switch. If you use a portable generator, never plug it into a wall outlet as this can cause back feed.

Back feed happens when a person connects their portable generator to a wall outlet, which allows power to flow in reverse – that is, the alternate power source feeds energy back through their home's electrical system, their meter, and back into the power lines.

Potentially deadly back feed can also happen with permanently installed generators not used or installed correctly. They should be wired into your home by a qualified electrician, who will install either an automatic or manual transfer switch, depending on the generator.

To keep utility crews safe, never plug a portable generator directly into a wall outlet or electrical system, and ensure transfer switches are professionally installed and working properly.

Troy Norman

Crew Foreman

33 Years

Bryan Mohnsen

Lead Mechanic

4 Years

cornhusker-power.com

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