



Summer storms kept crews busy



Parts of the steel-pole transmission line along HWY 40 near Amherst were flattened by the storm on June 20. Dawson PPD asks that the public stay away from downed power poles and lines. Lines may still be energized and broken equipment can pose hazards on the roadways.



Tornados and strong winds splintered poles and left grass hanging from the conductor in some areas.

Is your electric account on the correct rate?

There are two basic rates for residential customers based on the type of heating equipment installed in the home.

The standard rate is a General Service rate. This is the rate for homes heated by natural gas furnaces or propane heaters that do not use heat pumps.

The General Service with Space Heating rate is available to customers who use 10 kw or more of installed electric heating. Some heat pumps will qualify for this rate. The home does not need to be "all electric" to qualify.

Your rate is listed on your monthly statement or can be found on the ebill site. Look for a rate code of 12 or 14 to indicate you are on the electric space heating rate.

Your Co-op Connections card will be in the mail soon

Dawson PPD's residential customers will be receiving a free Cooperative Connections discount card. It will be mailed in October.

The card provides discounts at many local businesses. The list of local discounts will be printed in an upcoming issue of the Dawson Dynamo.

It also entitles customers to discounts on prescriptions, hotels and several on-line retailers.

The Cooperative Connections discount card is offered as a benefit of being a Dawson PPD customer.



Co-op Connections discount cards will be mailed in October. There is no charge for the card -- it is a benefit of being a Dawson PPD customer.

Discounts include...
10% to 60% off prescriptions at participating pharmacies





Is the smart grid really smart?

One of the big debates in the electric industry these days is about implementing the smart grid. I often hear different definitions from many so-called experts of what a smart grid really is. I am also of the opinion that most electric customers don't have any idea what everyone is talking about or why this may be important to them. I will attempt to shed some light on this subject.

What is it?

The smart grid is about a communications system. For most of the last 50 years, the communications system most utilities used was a radio in a lineman's truck so the office and linemen could talk to each

other. Over the last 10 – 15 years we have found out we could send signals down the electric lines and we now are using a power line carrier system where we can receive meter readings, outage and voltage information from customer meters. We can also communicate with some of our devices in our substations.

The smart grid is the next big step in improved communications. It would be internet based, wireless and have 2-way communications ability. Its kind of like having a smart phone at each meter, capacitor bank, regulator, or substation device. It will allow District personnel to continually monitor the health of

the entire electric distribution system as we will be gathering data and identifying problems in real time.

Why is this important for customers?

By using this system, outages can be identified faster so linemen can quickly be dispatched to problem areas. We also will be able to identify problem areas before they turn into an outage so they can be fixed in a maintenance mode. Hopefully, our system reliability will improve with faster response and fewer out-

ages. In addition, with data from a customer's meter we can provide internet based access to all of their usage and billing information. Daily or monthly charts will be available. We even anticipate apps being available for smart phones for mobile information flows.

This development will also be important for the District. It will allow us to be operationally efficient. What I mean is that we will also manage the voltage on each one of our 150 circuits out of our 52 substations. By efficiently managing our voltage, we can expect to reduce line losses on our electric system. For every 1 % we save by more efficiently managing our electric distribution system, we save over \$300,000 in wholesale power costs, our single largest expense.

Dawson currently does not have a smart grid in place but we continue our due diligence on examining new technologies which we would consider implementing. In summary, a smart grid is only as smart as the people operating that grid. We are taking our time and intend on doing it right.

Until next time...

Robert Heinz, General Manager



Smart grid technology will give utilities more information about the way the electric system is working. One of the advantages is detecting problems before they become outages.

Daberkow teaches mechanics at a Haitian utility

"Mechanics needed..." were the words that sent Dawson PPD's Lauren Daberkow on a two-week teaching mission to Haiti for National Rural Electric Cooperative Association International in June. Daberkow has 36 years of experience as a mechanic for Dawson PPD.

"It was nice to have an opportunity to share knowledge with people that needed it. Some of the people were very capable of learning, but they had no resources to learn on their own," Daberkow explained.

Before he left Nebraska, NRECA International employees had explained the conditions he would face in Haiti.

"I expected a country of poor people living in poor conditions, but the surprise was the corruption and politics involved," he explains.

Daberkow worked with Electrical de Haiti or EdH in Haiti's capitol, Port-au-Prince. The utility officially serves about 50,000 meters in the city. However, so many people have illegally tied into the electrical system that it is estimated that the utility is actually serving about 150,000 services. Power is usually available about 14 hours per day. EdH has been purchased by the World Bank, which is working to make the utility more self sufficient and modern.

Skills can't solve all of Haiti's problems

The utility's fleet of vehicles was a combination of old and new donations from different countries. The mechanics are only allowed to change oil and do routine maintenance on the vehicles when the utility's managers approve it. Many of the fleet mechanics were unable to read, so service manuals and inspection records held little value. Despite the challenges, he found mechanics who were interested in learning. Daberkow helped teach the Haitian mechanics how to take the vehicles apart to get to broken parts, in hopes that someday the mechanics would be able to get the parts they need.



ABOVE: Lauren worked with fellow volunteer, Steve Burch (left), Fleet Manager at Empire Electric Association in Cortez, Colorado.

Dawson PPD mechanic Lauren Daberkow went to Haiti to teach basic skills and fleet vehicle maintenance principles with NRECA International.

"One of the cranes needed a power steering pump. If it were in the United States, you could get it running. But there isn't a desire to make that happen in Haiti," he explains. Parts aren't available in Haiti. Shipping them into the country isn't easy either -- because you would have to 'tip' so many officials to get the parts to their destination.



Needing to cap a hydraulic hose, Haitian mechanics used a spark plug because it was available.

Unfortunately, with such a mix of vehicle brands in the fleet there isn't an opportunity to take parts from one vehicle to fix another, either.

While in Haiti, Daberkow and another volunteer from Colorado, helped EdH choose a new site for the motor pool within their guarded

compound. Then they helped workers clear out old equipment that had been stored in the building.

Hope in the face of reality

NRECA International has set up many precautions for volunteers. Myk Manon, the coordinator in Haiti, has spent 44 years working in third world



countries. While he is very positive and hopeful for the future of Haiti, he admits it won't change overnight. He encouraged the volunteers to be happy with the small steps that are being made to improve the country.

Volunteers are housed in a hotel surrounded by a large fence and an armed guard in the middle-class part of Port-Au-Prince. They are allowed to walk a few blocks from the compound during daylight hours on the weekend. However, foreigners are often approached by people on the street who want "twenty-five dollars" to act as a personal body guard.

Each morning, a driver would take the mechanics and their interpreter to the EdH compound, about seven miles away. During this trip they saw stolen transformers powering illegal electric services -- many of which were wired in a very dangerous fashion. They also noticed that trees only existed on

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Daberkow... *Continued from Page C*

privately owned land, inside gated compounds. Trees in public areas have been harvested to produce charcoal for cooking. Many homes are built on the side of mountains, leaving them vulnerable to earthquakes and mud slides.



Linemen in Haiti usually use ladders to access line hardware instead of bucket trucks. The job is a dangerous one -- with fewer safety rules in place than in the U.S. Fourteen EdH linemen lost their lives on the job in 2010.

Meals were eaten at the hotel restaurant -- which only seated eight people. Breakfast was spaghetti and eggs. Other meals included fried fish or chicken with a Creole sauce, goat stew, beans and rice and fried bananas. After a few days with the limited menu, Daberkow and his fellow volunteer went to a grocery store and purchased granola bars. He says that he enjoyed a stash of his wife's homemade cookies. Although there were street vendors selling food, it was not safe to eat. Vendors often put food on the street before or while they prepare it and it isn't uncommon for the streets of Port-au-Prince to

contain sewage and garbage. Many Haitians have been hospitalized with E. coli and cholera.

The volunteers had an opportunity to visit a rural area, where they reported that the residents were more friendly. Daberkow believes this is because they could be more self-sufficient, growing food to feed their families.

"The people of Port-au-Prince are in survival mode. They are doing whatever they can for income. There are people everywhere trying to get money -- either by selling goods or trying to extort money from others," he explains.

"It will take time for the people to change Haiti."

However, Daberkow still sees hope for Haiti. When conditions improve, he would consider returning to

work with NRECA International.

The National Rural Electric Cooperative Association International helps bring electricity to homes and businesses in countries affected by poverty and political unrest. The goal is to model the electric system after NRECA member systems in the United States -- providing safe, reliable and affordable power. NRECA International relies on rural electric employees from the U.S. to mentor workers in these countries.

Understanding Haiti...

	<u>Haiti</u>	<u>Nebraska</u>
Area	17,243 mi. ²	77,358 mi. ²
Population	9,719,932	1,826, 341
	<i>2,143,000 in Port-au-Prince</i>	
Millions of KWH Consumed	309 in 2010*	28,811 in 2008
	*They produced 650 million kwh	

Other facts about Haiti...

- 52.9% of people over 15 are literate
- Creole is the official language... a mix of French, Spanish and English
- 80% live under the poverty line
- 40.6% of Haitians are unemployed
- An estimated 2 million Haitians died after the 2010 earthquake

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