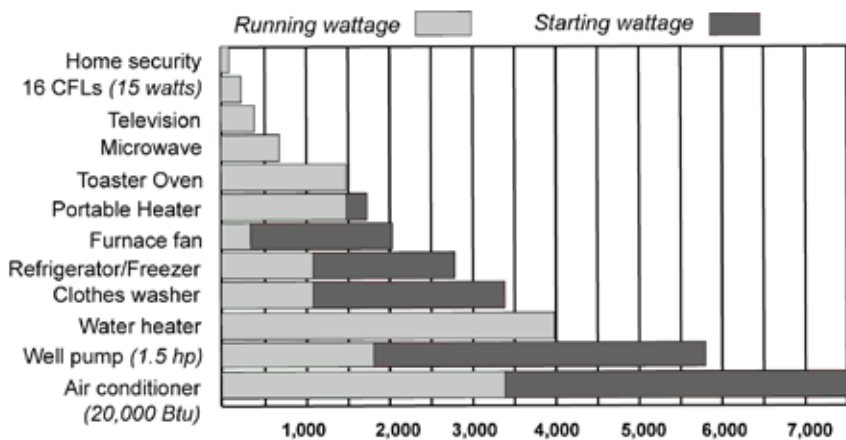


## Preparation is key to safe generator use

### The Right **Portable Generator** for the Job

Before purchasing or operating a portable generator, make a list of the appliances you will need to run at the same time. Find both starting and running wattage requirements on appliance nameplates or in owner's manuals; add them up to determine the total wattage your generator should handle.

Sample running wattages, as compared to spiked starting wattages:



Sources:  
North Carolina Association of Electric Cooperatives; National Rural Electric Cooperative Association

An electric generator can offer many benefits during a long-term power outage caused by a storm. However, you need to plan your generator use carefully.

#### **Capacity and features vs. price**

Before you purchase or use a generator, prioritize the equipment or appliances you plan to use. Ask the generator salesperson if they have a way to calculate what size you will need. Most have calculators available on their websites. The generator output rating will guide you as to how much load you can safely operate. You may have to trade off certain appliances to keep the load manageable.

Look for some sort of voltage regulation feature on the generator to protect any electronics that will be connected. Spikes and sags created by the generator can destroy sensitive electronics.

#### **No cutting corners on safety**

If you plan to power your entire home or business with a generator, you will need a transfer switch or double-throw switch.

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## State encourages radon testing

Testing in the state continues to indicate that Nebraska has a high prevalence of radon gas in homes. Of over 70,000 tests conducted since 1990, 57 percent have been above acceptable health levels, according to the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services.

The EPA-set health standard for radon is 4 picocuries per liter of air, although even exposure to lower levels may raise a person's risk. The average level of picocuries in homes and other buildings across the state is 5.9 picocuries.

"The data supports what we've known for some time," said Sara Mor-

-- Continued to Page D

## If you call to report an outage...



In order to give you the best service, Dawson PPD asks that you:

- Check the breakers or fuses at your home or business before you report an outage. They may just need reset or replaced.
- Have your account information available when you call. A meter or account number can be extremely helpful information for our dispatchers.

## North Platte Service Center has new office hours

Dawson PPD's North Platte office, located at 1115 Prospect Drive, will now be staffed during the mid-day. The new hours of service are:

**11 a.m - 2 p.m.**  
**Monday - Friday**



## Energy efficiency:

# Helping to take a bite out of your electric bill



When I go to the grocery store, I carry a list with me. Otherwise, I'm bound to forget something.

The same goes for the hardware store when I want to undertake some projects around the house. What materials do I need? And if the work involves weatherization, will it really help me save money on my electric bill?

Generally, the answer to that last question is a resounding "yes." Even small energy efficiency measures will save money. For as little as \$2, the cost of an outlet and switch plate insulator kit, you can begin to drastically improve comfort around your residence.

What areas should you focus on? Start with the basics: applying weather stripping and caulk around doors and windows; replacing traditional incandescent lightbulbs with compact fluorescent lightbulbs (CFLs). Then look at some bigger expenditures: adding insulation to your attic, installing a programmable thermostat, and sealing ductwork. You can find even more ways to save on the U.S. Department of Energy's EnergySavers.gov.

The employees at Dawson PPD are committed to doing everything possible to keep your electric bills affordable. And we're controlling costs

through innovation—our energy efficiency programs are just one way we can help you manage your energy use.

For more information about these projects and other energy efficiency programs, visit our website at [www.dawsonpower.com](http://www.dawsonpower.com) or call 308-324-2386.

[dawsonpower.com](http://www.dawsonpower.com) or call 308-324-2386.

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Contact Dawson PPD at 308-324-2386 or visit [www.dawsonpower.com](http://www.dawsonpower.com)

## Thuernagle celebrates a service anniversary

Consumer Accounts Representative Charla Thuernagle is celebrating five years of service at Dawson Public Power District.

Thuernagle started her career in the billing department and now works at the front desk, assisting customers.

Charla and her husband Steve live at Johnson Lake.



Charla Thuernagle

# Take time for a home electric safety check

Now is a good time to create a home electrical safety checklist to help ensure a safe winter of indoor activities for you and your family. While some of the benefits of a checklist include energy efficiency, the most important benefit is family safety.

More than 400 electrocutions occur in homes each year according to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CSPC). The CSPC says about 45% of those electrocutions can be attributed to large appliances, 20% to exposed wiring, and another 9% to power tools.

The CSPC offers these suggestions to help make sure your home is up to the task of preventing electrical injuries and eliminating some of the 140,000 fires in the US annually that are attributed to electricity.

- ☑ Make sure all switches and outlets are cool to the touch and working properly. Unusually warm switches could indicate a problem and they should be serviced by a qualified electrician.
- ☑ Check to see that plugs fit snugly into outlets. Loose plugs can cause overheating and fires. Ensure that all three pronged adapters in the house are being properly used, with the wire or metal tab on the adapter connected to the center screw of the outlet.
- ☑ Make sure all outlets have faceplates to reduce the danger of electrical shocks by accidentally sticking a finger or another object into the socket. Place safety covers on all outlets if there are small children in the house.
- ☑ Check the bathrooms to make sure appliances there are not plugged in when unattended and that they are in good working condition.
- ☑ Install Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCIs) in appropriate locations like kitchens, bathrooms, laundry rooms, and garages and that Arc Fault Circuit Interrupters (AFCIs) are installed in appropriate locations. Always use a qualified electrician for jobs like these.
- ☑ Make sure that all kitchen counter top appliances are unplugged when not in use and that all cords are clear of hot surfaces like stoves and toasters. Also make sure those appliances are located away from sinks.



## Also on your checklist...

- ☑ **Make sure all lights have the correct wattage bulb for the fixture.** If unsure what wattage to use in a fixture, don't put a bulb rated at more than 60 watts. Remember that compact fluorescent bulbs have an actual wattage rating (use that number) and a "replaces a XX wattage rating."
- ☑ **Check that portable heaters have a nationally recognized seal of approval.**
- ☑ **Check extension and power cords for cracked insulation or fraying.** Remove them from traffic paths, under rugs or carpeting and make sure they are not wrapped tightly around any object. This is a good chance to make sure there aren't any extension cords being used as permanent solutions.
- ☑ **Inspect the fuse box to make sure fuses are the correct size for the circuit.** Turn off and on the freezer, refrigerator, and air conditioner circuit breaker three times annually, to ensure they are not stuck and are in good working order.
- ☑ **Make sure extension cords that are used outdoors are marked for outdoor use.**
- ☑ **Give electric blankets the once over to check for any problems.** Look for cracks or breaks in wiring, plugs, and connectors. Also look for dark, charred, or frayed spots on the blanket. Any of these conditions indicate a fire hazard and the blanket or pad should be discarded.

# Radon testing... -- Continued from Page D

gan, Indoor Air Quality Program Manager. "Nebraska homes are very likely to have high levels of radon."

Radon is a colorless, odorless, naturally occurring gas that originates in the soil and builds to dangerous levels in homes. Since it is radioactive, it is very damaging to lung tissue when people breathe it in. EPA estimates that approximately 21,000 lung cancer deaths per year are due to radon exposure.

"Lung cancer is usually a fatal illness. People should reduce their risk as much as possible, and radon testing is

the first step," said Dr. Joann Schaefer, Chief Medical Officer.

On the Nebraska Radon Program website, new maps show radon averages across the state, as well as separate county maps which show radon averages at the zip code level.

"The maps are not a predictor of what radon level an individual home will have," Morgan said. "Even counties with low averages have some homes with high radon levels. Likewise, some high average counties have homes with low radon levels. Your neighbor's radon level is not an indication of what your radon level will be, so each homeowner needs to test."

The Nebraska Radon Program can provide homeowners with a low-cost radon test kit, interpret the test results and explain the mitigation system.

To purchase a short-term radon test kit for \$5, send a check or money order with your name and mailing address to: Nebraska Radon Program, 301 Centennial Mall South, Lincoln, NE 68509.

*Dawson PPD provided the story about radon testing as a public service. DPPD does not conduct radon testing or install mitigation systems.*

<http://www.hhs.state.ne.us/radon/>

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[www.epa.gov/radon/eddies\\_story.html](http://www.epa.gov/radon/eddies_story.html)  
1-800-SOS-RADON

Indoor Air Quality (IAQ)

# Generator...

-- Continued from Page D

This switch stops the flow of electricity back onto the power line when your generator is running. This is important for the safety of line workers who may be working in the area.

Never connect your generator to a fuse box or circuit breaker.

Make sure you know how to operate the generator safely. Unsafe operation can threaten you, your family, neighbors, and even the linemen working to restore power. Unsafe installation or operation may also result in a lawsuit and your insurance may not cover your liability.

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