

Out on the line: Replacing poles south of Cozad



ABOVE: The North Platte construction crew worked with linemen from the Gothenburg Service Center to replace two poles south of Cozad on September 27.

LEFT: Lineman Adam Rhoades unfastens the power lines from the old pole so they can be transferred to the new pole.



ABOVE: Crossarms and insulators are added to the new pole before it is set in the ground. As the new pole is set, the linemen will remove hardware from the old pole so hardware can be salvaged and reused. (Photos: M Holscher Banzhaf)

2012 rates being studied

Dawson PPD management and board of directors are considering a rate increase for 2012. The primary driver for the rate change is an increase in the cost of wholesale power that Dawson PPD purchases from Nebraska Public Power District.

Additional rate information will be available in later issues of the Dawson Dynamo. Any rate increases will be put into effect with the first full billing cycle in 2012.

More protection for your credit card information

In an effort to step up protection for private customer information, Dawson PPD is changing the way it processes credit card payments. Customers who want to pay by credit card are encouraged to use the secure ebill service at www.dawsonpower.com or they can opt to use an automated phone system.

Customers need to have their account number and payment amount before using either system.

To make credit card or check-by-phone payments to Dawson PPD, call...866-999-4497

You must have your account number to use this service.

"We understand that customers like to talk to a person when they call in to make a payment, However, in order to comply with laws called Red Flag Rules we need to use the automated phone system or the ebill system" says Gwen Kautz, Manager of Customer Service.

Customers who call Dawson PPD to make a payment by credit card will be transferred to the automated phone system.

The economic cost of reducing irrigated acres



Two years ago, the Dawson Public Power board and management conducted a strategic planning effort to help the District identify threats and opportunities as we looked into the future. One of the threats identified was the current practice of water management entities in the state buying up water rights, thereby reducing irrigated acres for the purpose of enhancing stream flow.

'Significant impact'

This practice is being widely used on the Republican River Basin and now more recently on the Platte River

in the areas that have been identified by the Department of Natural Resources as over or fully appropriated. These parcels of land in essence become dryland and obviously produce less crop. Our first inclination was to look at impacts on the District for stranded investment -- electric lines which were built to serve irrigation load that would be no longer used. But as we examined the issue further we realized that the loss of crop production really has a huge impact on the rural agriculture economy in the areas affected. This particular water

management practice has significant impact on our farmers, agri-businesses, banks, counties, schools, and small towns in our service area.

Looking at the numbers

The District wanted to examine this issue further and commissioned an Economic Impact study to be done by the Bureau of Business Research of the University of Nebraska Lincoln. We have just received the preliminary results of the study and I will share with you some of the highlights.

The study area is Lincoln, Dawson, and Buffalo counties within the District service area. Two scenarios were developed. The first was a reduction of irrigated acres of 3,500 and the second was a reduction of 18,600 acres, both feasible objectives under current water management policy in place. 2010 average yields and pricing from the 2009 Agricultural Outlook were used in the model.

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<u>Economic Measure</u>	<i>Annual change in dollars per...</i>	
	<u>3,500 acres removed</u>	<u>18,600 acres removed</u>
Business receipts	-\$2,229,000	-\$11,847,000
Labor income	-\$694,000	-\$3,690,000
Employment	-26	-138

This table displays the results of a study commissioned by Dawson PPD to determine the effect of turning currently irrigated fields into dryland farming in Dawson PPD's service area. Changes like this would impact local businesses, economies and the taxes needed for our counties and schools.

Celebrating 30 years of service

Billing supervisor, Connie Hird, is celebrating 30 years of service to Dawson Public Power District. Hird began her career as a consumer accounting clerk and was named as supervisor in 1995.



Connie Hird

Employees earn journeyman status

Noah Rowe and Aaron Jore have completed course work and on-the-job training to earn journeyman linemen status. Rowe started his career at Dawson PPD in 2007 and Jore started in 2008.

After earning their utility line degree, linemen begin their careers as an apprentice with much more to learn about their job. At Dawson PPD, apprentice linemen must complete the Merchant's Training Course. It is a self-directed study with a series of tests related to utility line work. In addition, the apprentices must learn and be able to demonstrate competency in job related skills such as digger truck operation, bucket truck operation, safety procedures and line construction and repair. Skills are reviewed by the apprentice's supervisors before the decision is made to advance the employee to journeyman status.



Noah Rowe



Aaron Jore



Staff are key to the quality of care



“We’re not here to make a profit, we are here to serve,” explains Elwood Care Center and Assisted Living Administrator Kate Reiners. “Our staff knows our residents and their families. These aren’t strangers taking care of your loved ones.

“Before we admit a resident we get their complete history because it is important to honor who they are in their life,” Reiners says.

Reiners says that the Elwood facility offers the highest quality of care, which she attributes to the staff. They try to keep their ratio between staff and residents high, setting themselves apart from other skilled nursing facilities.

Residents enjoy buffet style meals, a beauty shop and transportation to doctor’s appointments and on outings. In addition the facility offers on-site physical therapy services to residents and members of the community.

The Care Center and Assisted Living wing fill half a city block, just south of the Gosper County Courthouse. They are one of the largest employers in the community. The Elwood Care Center and Assisted Living Center are owned by the Village of Elwood -- a unique situation among care centers. A local board of directors oversees the financial reports and larger expenditures are approved by the Elwood Village Board.

Accomplishments and plans for the future

In 2012, the Elwood Care Center will celebrate its 40th anniversary. The Assisted Living will celebrate 10 years. They are planning several events to help mark these milestones. However, they aren’t content to look back at their accomplishments.

“Our board is planning for the future and working with an architect to determine the improvements we need to make. We want to make sure that our facility continues to meet the needs of the population and our staff for years to come. We also want to make the facility more energy efficient,” Reiners says.

Funding is one of the largest challenges when planning improvements. Because the Elwood Care Center and Assisted Living facility are non-profit and owned by the Village, they don’t have enough resources to tackle all the improvements on the list at one time. Two of the planned improvements are to expand the therapy area and the beauty shop.



Captions, top left to lower left:

Residents enjoy working on projects together in the activities center.

New greeting cards are made by recycling the artwork and verses in older cards. They are then made available to residents who give them to family and friends.

The Elwood Care Center has been serving the area for nearly 40 years.

An enclosed patio includes a garden area, bridge, waterfall and murals of a Gosper County pasture landscape.

Economic cost... *Continued from Page B*

The direct annual impact of a reduction of crop sales, impact on business receipts, impacts on workers and wages along with loss of tax revenues were examined.

So what does this all mean?

In my opinion, because of multi-state compacts and endangered species demands, water managers in the state of Nebraska are very focused on maintaining stream flows and have enacted regulations, such as irrigation reduction, to meet their objectives. In that process, sufficient economic analysis was not done to develop understanding of the consequences that this type of regulation has on the local economy. Maybe a cost benefit analysis should be required to enact such regulation in the future. At the

very least both environmental and economic benefits of changing water consumption need to be considered to help identify policies which yield the highest net benefit for all Nebraska residents.

Nebraska has been blessed with world class water resources. Instead of fighting over who gets the water in the streams and rivers which are the remnants of the hydrological cycle, efforts need to be made to refocus on the complete water cycle and study the opportunities a water balance consumption model can bring. Maybe it's time for the next evolution of water policy development in Nebraska?

Until next time...

Robert Heinz, General Manager

***“...both
environmental
and economic
benefits of
changing water
consumption
need to be
considered...”***



Is your washing machine more than 10 years old?

According to the U.S. Department of Energy, families can cut related energy costs by more than a third—and water costs by more than half—by purchasing a clothes washer with an ENERGY STAR label. Choose a front-load or redesigned top-load model.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy

Staying informed

Dawson Public PPD prints legal notices in the Kearney Hub, North Platte Telegraph and the Tri-City Tribune newspapers.

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