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Dawson PPD prepares for the spring crane migration

In an effort to protect migratory birds, several bird flight diverter devices have been installed on power transmission lines that cross the Platte River at the Lillian Rowe Sanctuary, south of Gibbon. The goal is to help birds such as sandhill cranes see the lines and avoid flying into them.

"The product we're using is called a Firefly. It has reflectors and glow-in-the-dark stickers on a small plastic card that rotates in the wind, making it appear to flicker," says Kerry Teetor, Manager of Operations at Dawson Public Power District.

Audubon and wildlife officials say that during low-light times of the day, power lines can seem to blend in with the horizon. By adding Fireflies to the line, it is hoped the movement and flickering light will alert the birds and cause them to fly over the top of the power lines.

As a cooperative project, Dawson Public Power District has been working with officials at the National Audubon's Rowe Sanctuary, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission. The Fireflies were purchased by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Dawson PPD provided the labor and equipment to install them. The University of Nebraska at Kearney is assisting with a study of the project.

Another style of flight diverter, which looked more like a yellow coil, was installed about 10 years ago.

In order to install the Firefly devices, a special track-driven man lift was rented, allowing crews to drive through the Platte River. Within three working days, crews installed Firefly devices at 20 foot increments on the top two wires of the transmission lines. When crops are harvested from fields near the river, linemen will use bucket trucks to complete the job. In total, approximately 460 of the devices will be attached to the lines.

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PRESS RELEASE

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