Hello, customers and teammates!  
  
As we celebrate Public Power Month, we recognize how far we’ve come in this industry, and how far we have the potential to go in the future. Our monthly Board meetings are a great way to learn the latest happening not just at NPPD, but within the entire energy sector. This month, we heard from Electric Power Research Institute Senior Vice President of Energy Delivery and Customer Solutions Rob Chapman. As NPPD seeks to renew our agreement with EPRI, Rob provided us with an update on the organization’s research, which affects every part of our business.

While Tom sits on EPRI’s board, several teammates, including myself, serve in governance and advisory positions. NPPD is also involved in EPRI programs being accelerated to reduce the economy’s carbon footprint, explore the viability of emerging technologies, increase electrification and harden our electric grid against extreme weather events. Like NPPD, EPRI places great value on affordable, reliable, resilient and sustainable energy, and relies on collaborating, sharing technical expertise, and building credibility through independent, science-based research. Through our partnership, we have the ability to play a monumental role in the transition to a safe and sustainable energy future as we also explore grid optimization, enhanced system operation and improved customer service.  
  
As NPPD begins making investment decisions on how to best expand our generation mix to serve customers’ growing load, having access to this research is invaluable. Further, this collaboration means NPPD is not alone in this age of transformation. Together, we can better manage associated risks.

The Board was also updated on NPPD’s tiger team created to identify valuable programs worth pursuing within the Inflation Reduction Act and Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. NPPD’s team is heavily engaged in researching programs, informing customers of opportunities, and collaborating with consultants on grant writing and to ensure we meet compliance requirements for programs we are pursuing in all areas of prevailing wage and reporting, procurement and finance. Delayed release of program details and tax credit guidelines continues to be an obstacle.

Because there are a variety of programs at various levels of development, with more acronyms than you can count, please review our Board presentations on nppd.com to learn more.

NPPD is partnering with the Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy, or NDEE, on an Environmental Protection Agency Solar for All program which encourages installation of solar in disadvantage communities and low- or moderate-income residences. This will include residential rooftop, multi-family or community solar and has the potential to reduce customers’ electric bills. Should the NDEE be awarded this grant next March, NPPD will work with NDEE over the next year to build its program and five years to execute it to receive funding.

In safety news, NPPD has documented 17 OSHA recordable injuries compared to 26 total last year; 11 DART injuries compared to 16 total last year, and 10 preventable vehicle accidents compared to 21 total last year.We must prevent dangerous situations by recognizing and mitigating unsafe conditions. There are many tools available to help keep us all safe, including the lessons learned database, hierarchy of controls, and human performance, to name a few. Use of these tools and practices will ensure everyone goes home safely.  
  
Safety isn’t just physical – I would encourage you to think of cyber safety as well, especially during National Cyber Security Month. As the holidays approach and you begin online shopping and donating to charitable causes, please be wary of possible imposters and do your research to ensure you are connecting with legitimate organizations and businesses.

Financially, NPPD is faring well for the year, with a September surplus of $8.2 million due to favorable variances for firm and off-system sales, O&M expenses and interest income. Year-to-date, the surplus is $66.1 million, with a forecasted year-end surplus of $63.3 million.

While updates were given on several proposed 2024 wholesale and retail rates, which will be submitted for approval in December and then become effective in January 2024, the Board granted approvals for revised rate schedules for both wholesale and retail demand response resource pilot programs. As a reminder, these programs allow customers with controllable load to bid into, and be compensated by, the Southwest Power Pool’s Integrated Market should they be able to curtail their load when called upon. With the approved changes, NPPD will now help cover the costs to install necessary metering required to participate in the programs, effective Nov. 1.

Next, the Board approved NPPD’s 2024 employee benefit plan. Due to significant inflation associated with cost of care, NPPD will need to increase employee premiums by 5% for the District’s hospital-medical and dental plans in 2024. The good news is this is significantly less than the 15.4% required increase because NPPD’s Board agreed to absorb 10.4% of it. Another positive action taken by the Board is the acceptance of management’s recommendation to increase the overall percentage NPPD covers for total hospital medical funding from 85 to 90% by 2026, which will reduce the employee share from 15 to 10%. The plan also includes a new voluntary health coaching program to help eligible members and dependents reverse their Type 2 diabetes diagnosis. In addition to this program, starting in 2024, NPPD will also pay 100% of the cost of insulin.    
  
Happy Public Power Month to everyone; thank you for all you do on behalf of our customers and to keep public power a valuable service to those in Nebraska.

Until next time, stay healthy, and stay safe.  
  
Robyn