Hello, customers and teammates!

The September Board meeting was quick and succinct, allowing teammates to attend last Thursday’s 32nd Nebraska Open, a golfing event supported by NPPD in which funds are raised for scholarships for students to attend community colleges across our service territory. To date, $1.9 million dollars has been raised to support scholarships. It is a privilege to hold this event each year, and I’m grateful to our hardworking teammates who organize the event, as well as those who attend and build relationships with our many industry sponsors.

I also want to thank teammates who facilitated and participated in events last week in recognition of National Suicide Prevention and Awareness Month, including the walks and the special “Into the Light” edition of *EZ News*. The mental health of our colleagues is incredibly important to NPPD’s leadership team and Board members. I encourage teammates to read the “Into the Light” articles, where you’ll learn how to identify risk factors and how to best support others facing challenging times, as well as identify how and where to find your own help if needed. This includes the 988 national dialing code for crisis and our NPPD-specific BestCare Employee Assistance Program, or EAP, services for counseling.

As for NPPD’s current safety performance, we have 15 OSHA recordable injuries, 10 DART injuries and nine preventable vehicle accidents year to date. To state it simply, we can do better. Teammates are getting hurt, and that is unacceptable. We all need to continue to focus on safe work practices and look out for each other to ensure we all go home every day healthy and safe.

During last week’s joint Board meeting with the Nebraska G&T, the value of having a questioning attitude arose. We each have a duty to avoid complacency by continuously challenging our existing conditions and activities that might result in error, discrepancies, or injury. Having a questioning attitude is an overall skill to continuously improve performance excellence in all areas of work, and a questioning attitude will also help keep us Safer Together, Every Time.

Board members heard an update on NPPD’s economic development activities over the past year and an overview of Strategic Directive 08 centered on the topic. NPPD’s Economic Development department is structured statewide to better accommodate economic development initiatives, especially in areas of agriculture and manufacturing. I’m proud to report that in 2022, 1,315 new jobs were created in areas of food processing, data centers and manufacturing, resulting in $860 million in direct capital investment. This equates to 50 megawatts of new load from commercial and industrial customer projects alone last year – projects like Sustainable Beef in North Platte, the city of Norfolk’s Milk Specialties project, and the PetSource expansion in Seward.

The bottom line? Public power is working for Nebraska. NPPD and our public power partners are pivotal in retaining, expanding, and drawing new businesses into our state. Our competitive rates, and our creation of innovative products like demand response programs and interruptible market-based rates, are why many eyes are on Nebraska right now. It’s a huge opportunity for us to meet the ever-changing needs of industries with high energy consumption while improving the quality of life for all Nebraskans. The communities we serve have an opportunity for significant capital investment, for good job creation, and for retaining our population.

NPPD’s Integrated Resource Plan, or IRP, was approved by the Board this month, and I’d be remiss if I didn’t acknowledge all the various groups who helped update this essential planning tool. It takes a lot of outreach and time spent listening and speaking with customers and the public. The process was very well done. I did overview future action items from the IRP during last month’s Board debrief, some of which include the continued operation of Gerald Gentleman Station on coal while exploring carbon capture and sequestration options; pursuing a second relicense renewal for Cooper Nuclear Station; and pursuing required modifications at Sheldon Station for environmental compliance as we also obtain estimates on potentially restoring the site to natural gas. For a full list of action items, please reference the Board presentation on nppd.com.

The Board also approved several contracts, including a Unit 2 boiler tube floor and lower sidewall replacement at Sheldon Station, as well as a Unit 2 baghouse filter bag replacement at Sheldon Station. The Board also increased capital authorizations for work at the Olive Creek substation for Monolith Materials and approved the purchase of six aerial bucket trucks and chassis.

Finally, NPPD continues to perform well financially, with an August surplus of $7.2 million due primarily to favorable variances for firm and off-system sales. Year-to-date, the surplus is $58 million, with a forecasted year-end surplus of $49.2 million. Your focus on operational excellence is bringing incredible value back to our customers. Thanks for all you do.

Until next time, stay healthy, and stay safe.

Tom