

ENERGY INSIGHT

Second Quarter 2025

VOLUME 18 • ISSUE 2

Current news about Nebraska Public Power District

SUNSET AT LAKE MALONEY

PLUS: Introducing emPOWERING Nebraska's Tomorrow; celebrating our 2025 graduates and Arbor Day; providing financial resources to customers in need; and a look back at Winter Storm Nyla

THINK BEFORE YOU ACT

An overhead power line can become damaged or fall due to a severe storm. If you see a downed power line, take these actions:



Consider all power lines energized and deadly.



Stay at least 50 feet away.



Call 9-1-1 or the utility to report the downed line.



Do not approach it or try to move it with another object.



Do not get out of a vehicle or cab.



Do not approach the scene.



Warn others to stay away.



Turn around and go another way.

Other safety tips



Energized downed lines spread voltage through the ground or nearby objects.



If you go near a downed line, you can become electricity's path to ground.



You cannot tell if a power line is live just by looking at it.



Even if a power line appears coated, it is never safe to go near it. Never approach a downed power line.



Nebraska Public Power District

Always there when you need us



Energy Insight is published by the **Nebraska Public Power District** Corporate Communications Department as a service for employees, customers and friends of NPPD. Its purpose is to communicate NPPD news and information and to recognize achievements of employees, retirees and their families.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jerry Chlopek, Chair
Wayne Williams, First Vice Chair
Chris Langemeier, Second Vice Chair
Aaron Troester, Secretary
Sue Fuchtman
Mary Harding
Rob Hinrichs
Rusty Kemp
Ron Mogul, Jr.
Kirk Olson
Derek Rusher

CORPORATE COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS MANAGER

Heidi Elliott

MANAGING EDITORS

Jill Novicki, jrnovic@nppd.com
Cassie Rief, cjrief@nppd.com

PHOTOGRAPHY

Cole Hein
Gary Pelster

GRAPHIC DESIGN

Dan Zastera

CONTRIBUTORS

Tannon Asche
Christy Avery
Kathy Fadschild
Stephanie Farmer
Abby Hunt

REPORTERS

Kelly Phillips, *Chadron*
Kathy Fadschild, *Columbus*
Stephanie Farmer, *Cooper Nuclear Station*
Sandy Stroh, *Doniphan Control Center*
Brandi Hild, *Gerald Gentleman Station*
Brenda Norris, *Kearney*
Carol Johnson, *Lincoln*
Lynette Lewis, *McCook*
Becky Hahn, *Norfolk*
Judie Sauer, *Ogallala*
Nicole Sedlacek, *O'Neill*
Lottie Kellison, *Plattsmouth*
Margie Allen, *Rushville*
Lynette Lewis, *Scottsbluff*
Cindy Holsing, *Sheldon Station*
Kris Cross, *South Sioux City*
Heather Becker and Anna Johnson, *York*



THE MANUAL ABOUT THIS ISSUE

4 President's Message

President and CEO Tom Kent expresses excitement over a new program committed to emPOWERING Nebraska's Tomorrow.

7 Meet NPPD's 2025 Graduates

NPPD is honored to recognize and celebrate a record number of graduates this year. Congratulations to all!

12 Complete Circuit

Nothing lights NPPD teammates up like making their communities a better place to live! While you read about the latest events, check out a "By the Numbers" infographic about Winter Storm Nyla.

14 Positively Charged

Accolades must be given to several teammates for their noteworthy accomplishments in areas of safety, technology, community involvement, nuclear power and more.

18 Remembrances

Honoring those in the NPPD family who have recently passed, including Cooper Nuclear Station Senior Systems Analyst Charles Suhr.



About the Cover: Lake Maloney is a dream at sunset, as the day's heat fades and the catfish are awakened by a hopeful lure and jig. From Lake Ogallala to the Sutherland Reservoir to the many biking and hiking trails near North Platte, NPPD's recreational areas are open to the public and await your next adventure!



TOM KENT

Looking Ahead Together

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO

At NPPD, we’ve always been grounded in a simple but powerful mission: serve Nebraskans with safe, affordable and reliable electricity. For more than 50 years, that mission has guided our every decision, and because of each teammate within our organization, it’s a promise we’ve kept.

We are now entering a new chapter filled with opportunity, growth and challenges that require innovative problem-solving. Across our service territory, interest from new and expanding businesses is growing fast, especially in agriculture, manufacturing and data-driven industries. They see what our team has established here: a strong and resilient grid, ongoing competitive rates, and a steady evolution of improving services and products. Most importantly, they see our unwavering focus on putting customers first. And, they want in!

This is a legacy moment for us all. It’s work we will remember with pride years down the road, not just because it is filled with purpose and passion, but also because it will leave a long-lasting, positive impact on our state and

our customers. The excitement about our future is palpable.

This kind of momentum doesn’t happen by accident. It’s the result of decades of hard work by teammates, past and present, who’ve kept the lights on, found groundbreaking solutions, and always kept customers the top priority, alongside safety of course. Now, we have the opportunity and the responsibility to carry that

legacy forward through our new strategic program, which we call emPOWERING Nebraska’s Tomorrow.

This program is about planning wisely. It’s about ensuring that as demand grows, we’re ready with the right infrastructure, the right generation mix, and the right approach. We’re not simply reacting to this

growth; we’re actively preparing for it. In fact, we have been for some time.

Some may wonder: *Are we running out of power?* The answer is a resounding “NO.” But, we are experiencing significant interest in new load. To meet that interest head-on, we’ve created a new load process designed to be transparent, fair, and built to help both our customers and our team prepare for what’s

.....
**Together, we are
emPOWERING
Nebraska’s Tomorrow
as we focus on what’s
best for the people and
communities we serve.**
.....



ahead. We’re aligning growth with generation, while keeping reliability and affordability front and center.

Of course, we’re also navigating a shifting national landscape. Federal legislation, like the Inflation Reduction Act and Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, has introduced both opportunity and uncertainty. Projects tied to this federal funding can shift timelines or expectations, and it’s our job to remain agile and protect our ratepayers from unnecessary risk. That’s exactly what we’re doing.

Even as we expand generation capacity, we’re never compromising our standards. We’re looking at cost-effective, flexible

solutions that complement our current fleet and allow us to continue being a dependable energy provider, no matter how much we grow. Resource adequacy, system resiliency, and customer trust are non-negotiable.

To our teammates: Thank you for your continued hard work, adaptability and pride in what we do.

To our retirees: You helped build this foundation, and we carry your legacy with every project we launch.

And, to our customers: Thank you for your trust. We don’t take it lightly.

Together, we are emPOWERING Nebraska’s Tomorrow as we focus on what’s best for the people and communities we serve.💡

NPPD’S PLANNED FUTURE GENERATION PROJECTS (as of June 2025)

PROJECT	ESTIMATED MW	LOCATION	TARGET IN SERVICE
Reciprocating Internal Combustion Engines (RICE)	216 MW	Princeton Road Station North of Sheldon Station	June 2029
Combustion Turbines (CT)	478 MW	Princeton Road Station North of Sheldon Station	June 2029
Combustion Turbines (CT)	717 MW	Beatrice Power Station	To Be Determined
Cooper Nuclear Station (CNS) License Extension	835 MW	CNS	January 2034

NPPD’s planned new generation will be cost-effective and responsive, complementing and adding capacity to our already diverse fleet and strengthening our ability to meet the future energy needs of existing and incoming customers.

NPPD brings home safety awards

NPPD recently accepted two awards for its safety numbers at the close of 2024. Most recently, members of NPPD's team accepted the National Safety Council's Safest Company Award with Distinction and Workplace Driving Safety Award. This award is based on three years' worth of safety log data and evidence of programs/policies.

Earlier this spring, the safety team accepted the American Public Power Association's Safety Award of Excellence for safe operating practices in 2024. With more than 200 utilities entering the 2024 APPA awards, applicants are placed according to their number of work hours and ranked based on the most incident-free records and the overall state of their safety programs and culture.

"Both awards are a testament to the safety culture NPPD has built and the hard work that goes into ensuring team members have a safe work environment and that we are committed



On behalf of NPPD, Corporate Safety Manager Brad Palu, Director of Corporate Safety & Health Jenni Shuler, Safety & Human Performance Lead Mitch Homolka and Vice President Energy Production Art Wiese accept the National Safety Council's Safest Company Award with Distinction & Workplace Driving Safety Award.

to health and safety through a collective mindset that all injuries are preventable," said Corporate Safety Manager **Brad Palu**.

emPOWERING
Nebraska's Tomorrow



Scan to
learn more!

What tomorrow holds
depends on what we do today.
We are ready to begin
another new chapter
in powering our customers,
as we strive to empower
Nebraska's tomorrow.

Learn more at nppd.com.


Nebraska Public Power District
Always there when you need us

Congrats GRADUATES

BEST WISHES FOR A FRUITFUL FUTURE

Congratulations, graduates! NPPD is incredibly proud of these students and excited for what their futures hold.

On the next few pages, graduates are listed by name and school. Their parent(s) who work at NPPD are listed below the orange line.

HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES



Olivia Anderson
Lutheran High Northeast

NOC Strategy &
Transformation Team Lead
Kris Anderson



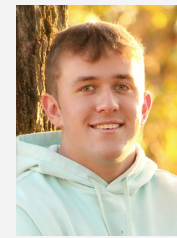
Cuyler Aue
Auburn H.S.

CNS Cont. Improv.
Program Mgr.
Rhonda Burch



Lilyan Becker
Auburn H.S.

CNS I&C Supv.
Jeffrey and CNS Maint.
Support Supt. Tiah Becker



Max Berntson
Hershey H.S.

GGs Production Consult.
Timothy Berntson



Kristen Billings
Auburn H.S.

CNS Work Week Mgr.
John Billings



Neveah Blecha
Pawnee City H.S.

CNS Cyber Security Supv.
Nicholas Blecha



Bryce Bossert
Kearney H.S.

Kearney Cust. Services Leader
Traci Bossert



Sarah Carlock
M.E.S. Clover Academy

North Platte Systems Operator
Randy Carlock



Ryker Copeland
Sutherland H.S.

Sutherland Mechanical Tech.
Ramsey Copeland



Grady Dempcy
Sutherland H.S.

GGs I&C Tech.
Derek Dempcy



Owen DeRosier
Tarkio H.S.

CNS Work Control
Center Administrator
Brian DeRosier



KayDee Duering
Fairfax H.S.

CNS Mechanical Instructor
Dee Duering



Levi Edgington
Lourdes Central Catholic H.S.

CNS NRC Exam Spec.
Clyde Edgington



Jayme Ewers
Falls City H.S.

CNS Outage Coord. Brandon and
Non-Licensed Nuclear Plant Oper. II
McKayla Ewers



Adriana Faust
Lutheran High Northeast

CGO VP, Cust. Services &
External Affairs & CCO
Courtney Dentlinger



Jake Franklund
Auburn H.S.

CNS Operations Mgr. - Support
Deric Franklund



Maddy French
Columbus H.S.

CGO Drafting Services Spec.
Sandy French



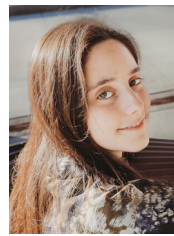
Christian Gage
Auburn H.S.

CNS Sr. Reactor Operator
Josh Gage



Nolan Gardner
Auburn H.S.

CNS Nuclear Independent
Oversight Dir.
Gabriel Gardner



Isabella Hill
Columbus H.S.

CGO Engineer - Delivery
Greg Hill



Mason Painter
Ainsworth H.S.

Ainsworth Renewable
Energy Tech.
Devin Painter



Elaysyn Pinkelman
Cross County Comm. H.S.

CGO Program Mgr. - Electrification
Chad Pinkelman



Dalton Pokorney
Shelby-Rising City H.S.

CGO Executive Admin. Asst.
Wendy Pokorney



Avalon Quick
North Platte H.S.

North Platte Hydro
Systems Operator
Justin Blessin



Jakob Shaul
Kearney H.S.

Kearney Eng. Spec. Jared
and Customer Contact Spec. I
Shelly Saar



Rance Hofstetter
North Platte H.S.

North Platte Sr. Line Tech.
Shawn Hofstetter



Corbyn Jakub
Rock Port H.S.

CNS Lead Planner
Jeff Jakub



Jacob Jarecki
Columbus H.S.

CGO Master Data Analyst
Kay Jarecki



Hannah Jensen
North Platte H.S.

North Platte Workforce
Care Coord.
Sandi Jensen



Nick Jensen
Nebraska City H.S.

CNS Mechanical
Design Engineer
Luke Jensen



Brynn Smith
Minden H.S.

Kearney Sr. Project Coord.
Bryan Smith



Elisabeth Suiter
Columbus H.S.

CGO Drafter II - Structural/Civil
Bill Suiter



Ayden Swift
Syracuse H.S.

CNS ALARA Outage Coord.
Alissa Swift



Rylie Tonniges
Scotus Central Catholic H.S.

CGO Digital Content Lead
Ann Tonniges



Anna Triplett
Summer-Eddyville-Miller H.S.

Kearney Sub-T&D System
Control Supv.
Dirk Triplett



Anna Kent
Nebraska City H.S.

CNS Mechanic I
Gabe Kent



Lily Klassen
Nebraska City H.S.

CNS Stores Operations Supv.
Joe Pummel



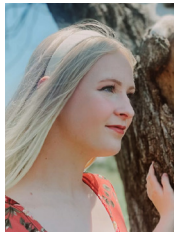
Kinsie Land
Minden H.S.

Kearney Sub-T &
Distribution Coord.
Butch Land



Tyler McFadden
Norfolk H.S.

NOC Journey Substation Tech.
Darin McFadden



Ellie Moeller
Ogallala H.S.

GGs Shift Supv.
Daniel Beauchamp



Maxx Vredenburg
Lincoln Southwest H.S.

Sheldon Station
Operations Spec.
Eric Vredenburg



Aniston Weber
Scotus Central Catholic H.S.

CGO Business Continuity Mgr.
Tami Weber



Luke Wemhoff
Scotus Central Catholic H.S.

CGO Cont. Improv. Mgr.
Lisa Wemhoff



Maxon Wemhoff
Scotus Central Catholic H.S.

CGO Accounts Payable Spec.
Amy Wemhoff



Kalib Whisler
North Platte H.S.

North Platte Sr. Line Tech.
Shawn Hofstetter



Ayla Moore
Norris H.S.

Sheldon Station Asset
Mgmt. Spec. - Production
Jeremiah Moore



Logan Moore
Hershey H.S.

GGs Maint. Mgr.
Shane Moore



Connor Morton
Tarkio H.S.

CNS Sr. Systems Analyst
Nathan Morton



Jocelyn Olberding
Falls City Sacred Heart H.S.

CNS Licensing Spec.
Jodie Olberding



Samuel Olmer
Scotus Central Catholic H.S.

CGO Strategy &
Transformation Team Lead
Kevin Olmer



Brilee Wiese
Cozad H.S.

Lexington Sr. Line Tech.
Josh Smith



Taylen Wilson
Norris H.S.

Sheldon Station
Material Handler
Marty Wilson

COLLEGE GRADUATES



Joshua Barker
UN - Lincoln

CNS Dir. of Engineering
Troy Barker



Anna Berntson
Fort Hays State University

GGS Production Consultant
Timothy Berntson



Melody Billings
UN - Omaha

CNS Work Week Mgr.
John Billings



Emma Brownlow
UN - Lincoln

CGO Transmission
Planning Engineer
Brian Brownlow



Regan DeBower
Bryan College of Health Sciences

CGO Land Mgmt. Supv.
Ross DeBower



Regan Sucha
UN - Omaha

CGO Treasury Spec.
Dawn Sucha



Morgan Tanner
Bryan College of Health Sciences

CNS Radiation Protection
Shift Supv.
Kevin Tanner



Carter Thorson
UNMC

CGO Corporate Physical
Security Mgr.
Donnie Thorson



Ross Thorson
UN - Kearney

CGO Corporate Physical
Security Mgr.
Donnie Thorson



Christian Tietz
UN - Lincoln

CNS Control Room Supv.
Lenny Tietz



Abigail Gocek
UN - Omaha

CNS Electrical Engineer
Steve Gocek



Cara Goodman
University of Iowa

CNS Outage Mgr.
Daniel Goodman



Barett Griffith
Wayne State

NOC Journey
Substation Tech.
Kelly Griffith



Aspyr Harrison
Culver-Stockton College

CGO Strategy &
Transformation Team Lead
Shari Watts



Rebecca Hazlett
Dakota State University

CGO Sr. Security Analyst
Tracy Hazlett



Megan Welch
Concordia University

CGO Land Mgmt. Analyst Lisa Endorf and
CGO Workforce Development Spec.
Jeff Endorf



Alea Willson
Bryan College of Health Sciences

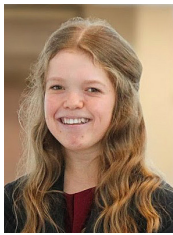
CGO Retail Billing &
Systems Team Leader
Lisa Willson



D'Ann Wurdinger
Purdue Global University

CGO SOC Spec. II

POST-COLLEGE GRADUATES



Hannah Keller
Wayne State University

Bassett Local Mgr.
Todd Keller



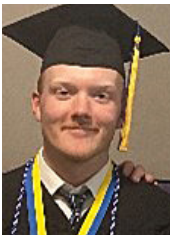
James Loutzenhiser IV
Nelson University

NOC Energy
Efficiency Consultant
James Loutzenhiser III



Kylie Mangers
UN - Lincoln

Doniphan Sr. Systems Analyst Brian
and Trans. System
Control Analyst Theresa Mangers



Alex Novicki
UN - Kearney

CGO Sr.
Communication Spec.
Jill Novicki



Tori Osten
Northeast Community College

CGO Retail Billing Leader
Tammy Osten



Tyler Barker
UN - Lincoln
Ph.D. - Computer Engineering

CNS Dir. of Engineering
Troy Barker



Sierra Harrison
Wayne State
M.S. - Org. Mgmt. & Info. Tech.

CGO Technical Analyst
CGO Strategy &
Transformation Team Lead
Shari Watts



Alissa Vlach
UN - Lincoln
M.S. - Architecture

CNS Performance
Improvement Analyst
Tricia Vlach



Erik Weinmeister
UN - Omaha
M.S. - Cybersecurity

CGO Sr. Systems Analyst



Tyler Palmer
UN - Omaha

CGO Business Continuity Mgr.
Tami Weber



Kaylie Phillips
Casper College

Chadron Distribution
Support Spec. II
Kelly Phillips



Casey Rose
UN - Lincoln

Aurora Renewable
Energy Consultant
Ron Rose



Emma Ruskamp
UN - Omaha

CGO Sr. Procurement Spec.
Bill Ruskamp



Rylee Sand
Doane University

Sheldon Station Financial
Planning Mgr.
Jill Sand

Complete CIRCUIT

CUSTOMER HAPPENINGS & HIGHLIGHTS

NPPD, Norfolk host first Community Assistance Fair

NPPD recently held a one-day Community Assistance Fair for residents in and around Norfolk. The event offered a safe and welcoming environment for attendees to visit and ask questions about NPPD’s services, including the Pennies for Power Program. Other entities, including housing authorities, utility companies and other public services, were also on hand to share information.

“Our team recognized the need to bring people together and help guide and inform them about available resources,” said Customer Services Leader **Tomas Jimenez**.



Arbor Day festivities held in Tekamah



From left: General Manager of Retail Services Pat Hanrahan and Assistant General Manager of Retail Dave Mazankowski help plant a tree during the Arbor Day celebration in Tekamah.

NPPD is a proud, long-time supporter of the Arbor Day Foundation’s Tree Line USA program. In honor of Arbor Day, NPPD partnered with the Tekamah-Herman school system and others in the community to celebrate. District teammates and the fourth-grade class gathered to plant six Autumn Blaze maple trees. Following the down-and-dirty digging, a ceremony was held, with guest speakers and student presentations covering various Arbor Day topics.

Contact center celebrates 25 years

NPPD’s Customer Care Contact Center (C4) has provided outstanding customer service for 25 years! On April 16, the C4 celebrated with colleagues, retirees, board directors and executive team members. Highlights included tours, lunch, reminiscing of memories, and appreciation for the team’s dedication to the District.



NPPD teammates celebrate C4 milestone anniversary.

“Stories shared throughout the day often returned to memories of large storms and outages, including teammates camping at the C4 to ensure they could cover their shift the next day and having a bucket truck pick another teammate up so they could get to work,” said Contact Center Team Leader **Katie Donner**. “Overall, the journey and changes over the last 25 years are special. I’m proud of our past successes and excited for a future filled with new opportunities and continued customer service excellence.”

WINTER STORM

by the numbers

Winter got the last word March 19 when a blizzard hit the state following a few gorgeous, 80-degree days. NPPD and fellow public power districts successfully tackled outage restoration work safely and efficiently for thousands of customers across the state from March 19-23. A heartfelt thank you to the many customers who expressed patience and supported lineworkers with meals and kind words as they graced neighborhoods and local business districts to restore power lost during the storm.

A LOOK BACK AT WINTER STORM NYLA

NPPD retail customers’ power restored:
More than 15,000

Wood structures damaged/broken:
54 transmission structures
93 sub-transmission structures
25 distribution structures

Crossarm replacements:
23 sub-transmission crossarms
23 distribution crossarms

Total calls received in 24 hours:
4,148 (average is 626)

Total calls from March 19-24:
10,837 (includes NPPD retail and after-hours answering service partners)

Mutual aid:
63 teammates provided mutual aid

Social media:
More than 356,000 people reached on storm-related social media posts



Nebraska Public Power District
Always there when you need us



Rodeo recap: NPPD shines at APPA contest

At the end of March, 10 of NPPD’s linemen traveled to sunny California for the annual American Public Power Association’s (APPA) Lineworkers Rodeo. Touted as the ultimate venue for public power lineworkers to demonstrate their abilities and knowledge, this year’s competition gathered more than 300 contestants and 100 judges/volunteers.

“Our teammates self-elect if they’d like to participate,” York Operations Program Manager **Trevor Roth** said. “This is a way for them to showcase their talents and to represent NPPD as a company. As an added benefit, they gain leadership experience, courage and relationships from competing.”

Individuals and teams from the District took part in the following events: Journeyman Hurtman Rescue, Journeyman Crossarm Change Out, Journeyman Double Dead-end Bell Change Out, Journeyman Riser Pole Arrester Replacement, Journeyman Phase Conductor



Hundreds of lineworkers from across the U.S. gathered for the annual APPA Lineworkers Rodeo, where NPPD teammates boasted a strong performance.

Tie-in, Apprentice Hurtman Rescue, Apprentice Lightning Arrester Jumper Replacement, Apprentice Obstacle Course, Apprentice Sidewalk Guy Installation and Apprentice Written Test.

South Sioux City Line Technician **Turner Korth** earned an impressive second-place finish in the written test portion. Additionally, one of NPPD’s Journeyman teams

received seventh overall, and two apprentices placed in the top 10 out of the 119 total apprentices.

Congratulations to all who entered and shared NPPD’s skills with a nationwide audience. We look forward to cheering you on as you compete closer to home this summer at the Nebraska Lineworkers Rodeo!

Tom Kent receives honors, Columbus



Tom Kent

President and CEO **Tom Kent** is adding more experience and prestige to his resume. In April, the Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI) named him board chairman. Kent joined EPRI’s board as an interim director in 2022 and was elected to his own, four-year term in 2023. EPRI noted Kent’s significant contributions throughout that time frame. EPRI President and CEO Arshad Mansoor acknowledged EPRI’s strong position moving forward thanks to Kent’s ongoing leadership, which will support organizational goals in using research and science to advance society toward a clean energy transition while maintaining reliability, affordability and resiliency.

In addition, Kent was honored with the James D. Donovan Individual Achievement Award at the American Public Power Association’s National Conference in New Orleans in early June. The award recognizes individuals who have made significant and sustained contributions to the electric utility industry and to public power.

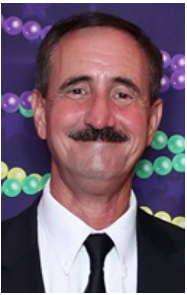
Roth appointed to Underground Excavation Safety Committee, York

The Governor has appointed and the legislature has confirmed Operations Program Manager **Trevor Roth** to serve on the Underground Excavation Safety Committee. This committee is responsible for applying the policies related to underground digging in connection with the Nebraska 811 program to owners and operators who don’t comply with the policies. “It’s essential to be mindful that project locations may contain underground utility lines,” said Roth. “I’m honored to help this committee educate Nebraskans on the role Nebraska 811 plays in preventing injuries, service outages and potentially costly repairs.”



Trevor Roth

Fuehrer focuses on students, Lincoln



Cory Fuehrer

Energy Efficiency Program Manager **Cory Fuehrer** has proudly supported the development of Nebraska’s youth for the last 22 years through the Nebraska School Activities Associations High School Speech Program. Throughout those two-plus decades, Fuehrer also volunteered as a coach’s aid, supporting speech practices for students within five high schools a couple days a week after school. State championships concluded at the end of March – the third year Fuehrer has judged the event. Fuehrer has also judged numerous other state speech competitions for 4-H, Future Farmers of America and Future Business Leaders of America.

“During my high school years, speech and theater provided a place to belong, grow and achieve at a time when I didn’t know how or where to start,” said Fuehrer. “These activities also helped me develop the communication skills I’ve used every day since. Over my volunteering years, my greatest reward has been helping those in search of a place to belong and grow.”

NPPD team takes top honors in TEA Hackathon

In March, The Energy Authority (TEA) hosted its annual Symposium and Hackathon in Florida. The Hackathon portion of the event challenged teams from different organizations to develop innovative solutions to real-world industry problems using artificial intelligence (AI). These teams were given the option to solve a prepared problem statement or to use a “wild card” to bring in an issue of their own. NPPD’s team won first place over seven other competitors, choosing the “wild card” route and focusing on a project that uses drone-captured images to automate vegetation management alerts.

Through their proof of concept, the team showed that aerial drone footage of tree inspections could be compared to a bank of designated “good” or “bad” images, resulting in an overall score. That score could then determine if a work order for maintenance needed to be generated and proceed with generating a notification to the users. In practice, this could help utility providers quickly identify and address areas in need of trimming, ensuring greater reliability by preventing outages caused by vegetation interference.



From left to right: Tate Olsen, Andrew Daro, Allen Vornhagen, Cory Hanson, Erik Weinmeister

Judges were impressed with NPPD’s integration of multiple AI tools to streamline the process that captured the drone photos, analyzed tree health and proximity to power lines, and notified field crews of needed action. They noted NPPD’s strong business case, which can be a scalable and practical solution for many utilities across the country.

Team members included Director of Business Transformation **Cory Hanson**, Strategy & Transformation Team Lead **Tate Olsen**, Senior Strategy & Transformation Team Lead **Jeff Kosch**,

Strategic Sourcing Technical Consultant **Allen Vornhagen**, Senior Systems Analyst **Erik Weinmeister** and Transmission Services Program Manager **Andrew Daro**.

Similar to the Hackathon project, NPPD already has a workflow in place to inspect electric infrastructure for missing bolts, damaged crossarms, and other infrastructure issues using drones, an image library, and AI. The victory further solidifies NPPD as a leader in innovation and technological advancements that may someday become standard practice for our industry.

Japan delegates visit Cooper Nuclear Station

Leaders from Chubu Electric Power Co. visited Cooper Nuclear Station (CNS) in February as part of efforts by Japanese utilities to restart the country’s nuclear power plants following the Fukushima Daiichi disaster. The benchmarking visit, a recommendation provided to the Japanese delegation by the Institute of Nuclear Power Operations, focused on the training and leadership within CNS’ Operations department and building a culture that promotes open feedback and coaching.

According to Site Vice President **Khalil Dia**, “One of the unique qualities of nuclear power is the sharing of ideas and experience from one organization to another. It was an honor to be chosen for this visit, and both sides walked away learning from each other.”

Feedback and coaching

Feedback and coaching were focus areas for the benchmarking visit. Chubu Electric Power’s leadership expressed the need to transition to a culture that promotes open dialogue between station management and the workforce rather than top-down feedback. The CNS team shared specific examples of station processes that encourage feedback and coaching from all levels of the organization. In addition, the Japanese delegation observed Operations crew training and the formal post-training critique process.

Safety over production

Another theme that surfaced during conversations was the need to promote safety over production within the Japanese nuclear culture. CNS and Chubu Electric Power’s leadership discussed equipment challenges and shared operating experience and lessons



Chubu Electric Power Co. officials meet with CNS executives for benchmarking study.

learned. At the end of these discussions, the Japanese delegates walked away with a better understanding of how to respond to challenges in a way that prioritizes safety.

Other benchmarking visits

This was the fourth Japanese benchmarking visit to CNS over the past year. Other visits were from representatives of the Japan Nuclear Safety Institute, Japan NUS Co., and Kyushu Electric Power Co. in August of 2024, and the Tokyo Electric Power Company and Electric Power Research Institute in October and December of 2024.

On March 11, 2011, Japan was struck by a massive earthquake, which initiated a tsunami that led to one of the most severe nuclear power site accidents in history at the Tokyo Electric Power Company Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant. Following the accident, the Prime Minister of Japan suspended the country’s nuclear fleet for mandatory safety checks and upgrades. Chubu Electric Power is one of the utilities engaged in an ongoing effort to restart its Hamaoka Nuclear Power Station.



REMEMBRANCES

HONORING LIGHTS THAT SHINE IN OUR HEARTS & MEMORIES

A Special Remembrance

Cooper Nuclear Station (CNS) Senior Systems Analyst **Charles Suhr** passed away on April 1. Charles began his career with the District in 2011 as an instrument & control



CHARLES SUHR

technician. It wasn't long, however, until he found himself transferring to the Enterprise Technology team, first becoming a systems analyst in 2013. Charles was then promoted to the senior level in 2015, where he spent the remainder of his tenure at NPPD.

"Charles had a broad understanding of the plant. His Navy nuclear operations background combined with his time in the CNS Maintenance department established a strong foundation of knowledge and positive relationships," CNS Information Technology Manager **Jace Wissler** said. "As a cyber security analyst, he helped build our program framework and leveraged his experience to engage site personnel, helping anyone and everyone. Charles has been a valued team member, and his unexpected loss touches many individuals across the entire CNS family."



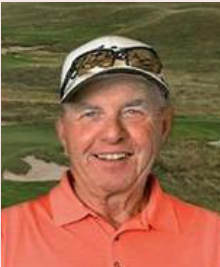
ARDITH BEHLEN

Retired Columbus Economic Data Coordinator **Ardith Behlen**, 80, passed away March 19. Ardith began her NPPD career in 1962 and retired in 2011.



CHAD KORDICH

Retired Cooper Nuclear Station Chemistry Technician **Chad Kordich** passed away March 25. Chad began his NPPD career in 2007 and retired in 2022.



RON GUMM

Retired Columbus Engineering Technician **Ronald "Ron" Gumm**, 79, passed away March 28. Ron began his NPPD career in 1970 and retired in 2006.



WAYNE SHIPFERLING

Retired York Subtransmission Dispatcher **Wayne Shipferling**, 88, passed away March 16. Wayne began his NPPD career in 1986 and retired in 1996.



KENNY SOULLIERE

Retired Norfolk Line Technician **Kenneth "Kenny" Soulliere**, 84, passed away March 30. Kenny began his NPPD career in 1970 and retired in 2003.



FRANK KWAPNIOSKI

Retired North Platte Water Resource Advisor **Francis "Frank" Kwapnioski**, 74, brother-in-law of Columbus Contract & Analysis Specialist **Mary Kwapnioski**, passed away April 16. Frank began his NPPD career in 1976 and retired in 2010.



DELBERT BENEDICT

Retired Columbus Senior Engineering Technician **Delbert Benedict**, 93, passed away April 22. Delbert began his NPPD career in 1971 and retired in 1994.



SUE SCHERMER

Retired Columbus Consumer Education Supervisor **Eleanor "Sue" Schermer** passed away April 9. Sue began her NPPD career in 1972 and retired in 1988.



CRAIG EHRENBURG

Retired Columbus Procurement Specialist **Craig Ehrenberg**, 70, passed away May 4. Craig began his NPPD career in 1984 and retired in 2024.

Making our communities

A BETTER PLACE TO LIVE



81 communities across the state count on Nebraska Public Power District to power their everyday. From preparing them for economic growth to partnering in local events, our role is more than “keeping the lights on.” We are charged with creating connections that are just as trusted and reliable as the electricity we provide.



Nebraska Public Power District

Always there when you need us

nppd.com | (877) ASK-NPPD



Nebraska Public Power District

Always there when you need us

P.O. Box 499
Columbus, NE 68602-0499

Address Service Requested

PRSRT STD
US POSTAGE
PAID
COLUMBUS NE
PERMIT NO. 3