

# Northwestern Electric News

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Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative



August 2014

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## What causes my power to blink?

At one time or another, we've all returned home or woken up late for work to see a blinking "12:00" on our digital alarm clock. You then have to reset every digital clock in your house that doesn't have a battery backup, from the microwave oven to the answering machine. Usually, this state of "eternal midnight" was caused by a "blink" in the electrical system.

While blinks can be annoying, they show an electrical system is working exactly as designed. And while Northwestern Electric has taken steps to reduce the number of blinks across its power system, there are measures you can take as well.

Let's look at blinks. These momentary power interruptions can occur anywhere along a power system—from the time electrons are generated at a power plant to being shipped across transmission lines to substations, or during distribution from a substation to your home.

### Why blinks?

Blinks are created when a breaker, or switch, opens along any portion of the power system. The breaker usually opens because of a large, quick rise of electrical current. A large rise, called a fault condition, can occur when a tree branch touches a line, lightning strikes, or a wire breaks. When this happens, a relay senses the fault and tells the breaker to open, preventing the flow of power to the problem site. After



opening, the breaker quickly closes. The brief delay, which allows the fault to clear, usually lasts less than two seconds. If the fault clears, every home or business that receives electricity off that power line has just experienced a blink. This could include thousands of accounts if the breaker protects a transmission line or a substation.

### Reducing the blink's effects

NWEC employs methods to reduce blink frequency. Tree trimming is probably the easiest and most common way, and one area where you can help. Make sure we know of any trees or limbs located close to a power line. Call 580.256.7425 or 800.375.7423 to tell us about potential problems. (8825001)

Meanwhile, you can reduce the frustration of blinks by purchasing an alarm clock equipped with a battery backup. This type of digital clock offers "ride through" ability for momentary outages. It will also keep the correct time and sound an alarm in case of a long-duration out-

age, provided a charged battery is in place. As an added benefit, these devices only use the battery in the event of a power interruption.

Blinks affect all electrical equipment, not just digital clocks. If there is a blink while you are operating a computer, your computer may crash and you will have to reboot, hoping all the while that there will be few corrupted files.

An uninterruptible power supply (UPS) on your computer can help prevent information loss. The UPS incorporates surge suppression technology with a battery backup and provides you some time to save whatever you were working on and exit your computer properly.

### The future of blinks

NWEC operates an active system maintenance program and works hard to identify and fix sources of service interruptions. Even though blinks will never disappear from our system, by working together we can minimize effects of the interruptions and the frequency with which they occur.

**NORTHWESTERN  
ELECTRIC  
COOPERATIVE, INC.**

Woodward, Oklahoma  
Operating In  
Beaver, Dewey, Ellis, Harper,  
Major, Woods and Woodward  
Counties in Oklahoma

**TYSON LITTAU  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

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**IN CASE OF TROUBLE CALL:  
24 HOUR EMERGENCY  
1-877-9NOPOWER  
877.966.7693**

If no answer call:  
John Kirkwood ..... 580.866.3245  
Bob Appell ..... 580.273.4088

**NOTICE**

A copy of NWEK Bylaws will be made available for any member upon request.

**Web page: [www.nwecok.coop](http://www.nwecok.coop)  
E-mail: [nwec@nwecok.coop](mailto:nwec@nwecok.coop)**

NWEC is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

If you wish to file a Civil Rights program complaint of discrimination, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, found online at [http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint\\_filing\\_cust.html](http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), or at any USDA office, or call 866.632.9992 to request the form. You may also write a letter containing all of the information requested in the form. Send your completed complaint form or letter to us by mail at U.S. Department of Agriculture, Director, Office of Adjudication, 1400 Independence Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250-9410, by fax 202.690.7442 or email at [program.intake@usda.gov](mailto:program.intake@usda.gov).

**SUMMER ENERGY EFFICIENCY:  
*Myth vs. Fact***

**Myth #1:** When I'm not home, keeping my air conditioner at a lower temperature throughout the day means it doesn't have to run harder to cool my home when I return.

**FACT:** To save energy, set your thermostat to a higher temperature during the day, and lower it when you return home.

**Myth #2:** Closing vents on my central air conditioning system will boost efficiency.

**FACT:** Closing vents can cause the compressor to cycle too frequently and the heat pump to overload. You'll also use more energy.

**Myth #3:** Time of day doesn't matter when it comes to running my appliances.

**FACT:** Time of day does matter when running electrical loads. For example, take advantage of the delay setting and run your dishwasher at night to avoid peak times of use and save energy.

**Myth #4:** Bigger is always better when it comes to cooling equipment.

**FACT:** Too often, cooling equipment isn't sized properly and leads to higher electric bills. A unit that's too large for your home will not cool evenly and might produce higher humidity indoors.



**Woodward County Fair free hot dog feed**

Thoughts of a county fair bring back memories to many people of fun times—sack races, showing a calf, winning a blue ribbon, visiting with friends and the best tasting hot dogs in the world.

Join us this year at the Woodward County Fair on Aug. 23, from noon until 1 p.m., for a free hot dog. Due to construction on the current facilities in Woodward, the fair will be held at the Mooreland fair barn.

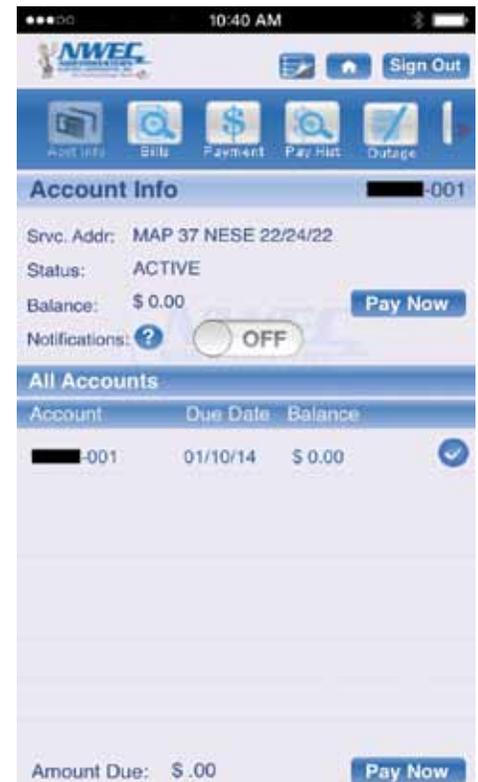


**May 2014 Operating Report**

	2013	2014
Revenue - Billing .....	2,465,521	2,974,082
Cost of Power .....	1,642,108	2,046,891
Miles of Lines .....	4,936	4,955
Members Connected .....	11,639	11,799
Density per Mile .....	2.36	2.38
Average Member KWH .....	2,334	2,417
Average Bill .....	211.83	252.06
KWH Purchased.....	30,048,987	31,773,354
KWH Sold.....	27,160,346	28,512,443
Income per Mile.....	503	604
Expense per Mile .....	531	606

## Manage your account on the go with our mobile app!

Northwestern Electric offers a mobile app designed to give you fast, secure access to your accounts. With the mobile app, you can view your bill and account balances, make payments and find payment locations, schedule alerts and reminders, and receive push notifications. You can also view and report outages and stay connected with us via facebook and twitter. Nearly everything you can do from our “Online Account Portal” can be handled instantly whether you are at home, at work, or on the go.



The smart app is available for both Apple and Android™ products. The app for iPhone®, iPad® and iPod® touch can be downloaded from the App Store<sup>SM</sup>. The Android App is available on Google Play<sup>TM</sup>. To locate the app, type “NWEC” in the search bar. You will need your account number(s) to set up your login information.

### Hidden account number contest

Last month's numbers went unclaimed. They belonged to Tracy Mulbery and David Smith.

We have hidden two account numbers somewhere in the articles in this newsletter. The numbers will always be enclosed in parentheses and will look similar to this example (XXXXXX).

If you recognize your account number, all you have to do is give us a call on or before the 8th of the current month and we'll give you a credit on your bill for the amount stated.

This month's numbers are worth \$50 each. Happy hunting!

### Cooking

#### Sand Plum Jelly

**5 pounds sand plums, halved and pitted**  
**4 cups water**  
**1 package (1-3/4 ounces) powdered fruit pectin**  
**7-1/2 cups sugar**



In a stock pot, simmer plums and water until tender, about 30 minutes. Line a strainer with four layers of cheesecloth and place over a bowl. Place plum mixture in strainer; cover with edges of cheesecloth. Let stand for 30 minutes or until liquid measures 5-1/2 cups.

Return liquid to the pan. Add pectin; stir and bring to a boil. Add sugar; bring to a full rolling boil. Boil for 1 minute, stirring constantly.

Remove from the heat; skim off any foam. Carefully ladle hot mixture into hot sterilized half-pint jars, leaving 1/4-in. headspace. Remove air bubbles; wipe rims and adjust lids. Process for 5 minutes in a boiling-water canner. **Yield:** about 8 half-pints.

# Got capital credits? We do!

It pays to be a member/owner of Northwestern Electric Cooperative

**W**hen you sign up for service with Northwestern Electric Cooperative, you become a member/owner. One of the benefits of being a member/owner is capital credits. When Northwestern Electric makes more money than it needs for operating costs, capital improvements and cash reserves, we return that money to you, our member/owners, in the form of capital credits.

Capital credits are allocated annually based on how much you paid to the co-op for electricity during the previous year. There are two ways capital credits are refunded: general retirement (when board approves) and estate retirements (when a member is deceased). The following addresses questions/scenarios we often encounter.

► **What's the difference between allocated and retired capital credits?**

Allocations are made annually based on NWEC's margins (profits) and reflect member equity/ownership. The funds have no cash value until they are retired. When capital credits are retired, a physical check is mailed to the member or credit is given on active electric accounts for the year(s) being retired.

► **How often do members receive capital credits?**

Northwestern Electric's board of directors decide every year whether or not to refund capital credits. When the Cooperative is strong enough, the board directs our staff to refund a portion of past years' capital credits. In March 2014, our board approved a refund of over \$850,000 for the years 1992 and 1993.

► **Do I lose my capital credits in the years the board decides NOT to approve a general retirement?**

No. All capital credits are allocated for every year members are served by NWEC and are maintained in individual member accounts until a retirement is approved.

► **What happens to capital credits when a member leaves the cooperative's service area?**

The allocated amount is held in the former member's capital credit account. When the retirement is approved for the year(s) the member received service from NWEC, a check is mailed to the forwarding address we have on file. It is important to leave a valid forwarding address when you move so you can receive your next allocation notice and general retirement checks years down the road.

► **What happens to the capital credits of a member who dies?**

The capital credits of a deceased member can be approved to pay without waiting for a general retirement. However, these estate payments are not automatic. A representative from the estate must contact our office or visit our website ([www.nwecok.coop](http://www.nwecok.coop) Account Services- Capital Credits) to receive a proper form to complete on behalf of the deceased's estate. Along with the completed form, a certified copy of the death certificate and final decree of a will or a trust is required to complete the application process. These are approved and paid out monthly by our attorney and board of directors.

These legal documents are required because capital credits are considered to be personal property of the member (NOT whoever is paying the bill). They are distributed according to the will/trust provided for the member(s) who's name is on the account.

When a member passes away, we recommend the surviving spouse or family member contact our offices (Buffalo or Woodward) so a name change on the account can accurately end accruals and start the claim process for capital credits. (9144001)

► **Why is it important that my electric service account be in my own name?**

The name on the account is the person receiving the allocations and capital credit refunds—whether they are paying the bill or not.