

Northwestern Electric News

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Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperative 

November 2015

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Directional pruning promotes better tree health

When Alfred Joyce Kilmer wrote “I think that I shall never see a poem as lovely as a tree,” he was probably trying to tell an electric utility worker he didn’t want his trees trimmed or removed. And contrary to popular belief, electric utility workers like trees as much as Mr. Kilmer—unless they are growing under or too close to a power line.

Nearly one-third of power outages can be traced to tree interference. During windy and stormy weather, swaying and broken tree limbs can cause blinks, widespread outages and fires.

Northwestern Electric’s lines and poles are engineered to withstand many forces of Mother Nature. However, they may not withstand the force of a fallen tree or large branch. Trees touching power lines can actually drain electricity off the system, and in severe cases can cause line-protection devices to take a circuit out of service. Voltage dips caused when trees contact a power line can damage appliances and sensitive equipment.

Our right-of-way maintenance program—including tree trimming—is an important aspect of our goal to deliver power to you that is safe, reliable, environmentally responsible and afford-



Proper line clearance pruning can look severe but it is the best method to help promote a healthy tree.

able. In fact, it can help reduce outages caused by branches falling on lines during storms, shrubbery interfering with voltage levels or weeds in right-of-way areas making access to equipment difficult.

Trees growing too close to power lines also present a danger to the

linemen and the public—especially children who like to climb trees. Northwestern Electric adheres to the National Electric Safety Code which requires electric utilities to prune tree limbs at least 10 feet away from power lines and electrical equipment.

Although most people understand why we need to trim trees close to power lines, they often question our tree pruning methods. Correct line clearance pruning can look quite severe. Our tree trimming crew no longer uses the misguided practice of topping trees. Tree topping, or “round-over” pruning, may be the most pleasing to the eye, but it is the most harmful to the health of the tree.

Ironically, many people top their trees because they think it will make them safer. Instead, topping creates hazardous trees. Along with promoting

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According to Dr. Alex Shigo, world renowned scientist and author on the subject of arboriculture (trees), topping is the most serious injury you can inflict upon a tree. Topping often removes 50 to 100 percent of the leaf-bearing crown of a tree. Because leaves are the food factories of a tree, removing them can temporarily starve a tree. The severity of the pruning triggers a sort of survival mechanism. The tree activates latent buds, forcing the rapid growth of multiple shoots below each cut. The tree needs to put out a new crop of leaves as soon as possible. If a tree does not have the stored energy reserves to do so, it will be seriously weakened and may die.

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ELECTRIC
COOPERATIVE, INC.**

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Operating In
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Major, Woods and Woodward
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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
E-mail: 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, 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.

Directional pruning promotes better tree health
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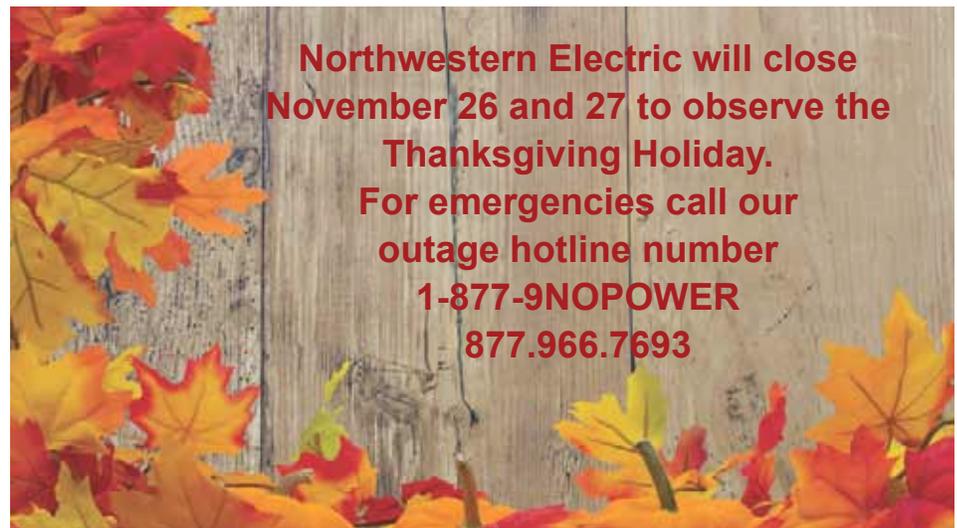
rot, starving the tree and creating weak limbs, topping also increases wind resistance. The thick regrowth of suckers or sprouts resulting from topping make the tree top-heavy and more likely to catch the wind. This increases the chance of blown down trees in a storm. Selectively-thinned trees allow the wind to pass through the branches. It's called "taking the sail out" of a tree.

Northwestern Electric uses an experienced utility arborist, Riggs Tree Service, for our tree trimming needs. "We use a method called directional pruning. It is better for the health of the tree, causing less rot, and stimulating less water sprout regrowth," explains Jeremy Riggs, owner of Riggs Tree Service. "Rather than making many smaller cuts close to the wires, it is more preferable to make fewer, larger

cuts, removing interfering branches where they meet the larger parent stem, or back to good sized side branches."

According to Riggs, directional pruning helps save rate payers in the long run. "A topped tree must be done and re-done every few years and eventually removed when it dies. Topped trees also present a safety hazard because they are prone to breaking and can be hazardous."

Unfortunately, there are no nice solutions to the problem of trees growing into power lines. The ideal situation would be no trees growing under or within 10 feet of power lines at all. But as long as trees grow naturally underneath the lines and homeowners prefer to have trees growing in their yards, tree trimming is the best method to keep limbs out of the lines.



August 2015 Operating Report

	2014	2015
Revenue - Billing	3,456,831	2,909,255
Cost of Power	2,267,696	1,706,609
Miles of Lines	4,960	4,981
Members Connected	11,943	11,934
Density per Mile	2.41	2.40
Average Member KWH	2,865	2,607
Average Bill	289	244
KWH Purchased	35,872,713	31,876,665
KWH Sold	34,215,105	31,110,075
Income per Mile	701	587
Expense per Mile	673	543

Turn clocks back

Daylight Saving Time ends on Sunday, Nov. 1, at 2 a.m. Remember to set your clocks back one hour.

This is also a good time to check and replace the batteries in your smoke and carbon monoxide (CO) alarms. Replace any smoke alarms older than ten years. Replace any CO alarms older than five years.



Say "Thank You" to a Vet

In honor of Veterans Day, we would like to recognize and thank our current employees and directors who have served in the armed forces. The next time you see these men, please take a moment to thank them for their willingness to serve our country.

Chris McGraw, Army

T. J. Province, Marine Corps

John Bruce, Jr., National Guard

Clair Craighead, National Guard

Wayne Hall, Army

Duane Henderson, National Guard

Ray Smith, Army

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Programmable thermostats can save up to \$160 a year in energy costs. Match thermostat settings to your schedule: cold when you're away and warm when you're at home. In winter, set the thermostat to 68 degrees during the day (lower at night when you're snug in bed). By turning your thermostat down 10 to 15 degrees for at least eight hours, (989636004) you can shave 5 to 15 percent from your heating costs.

Source: U.S. Department of Energy, TogetherWeSave.com

Hidden account number contest

Congratulations to Donna Hurt for recognizing her number in last month's issue. The other number belonged to Justin Thompson.

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 \$25 each. Happy hunting!

Countryside Cooking

Oven-baked Chicken Parmesan

- 4 boneless, skinless chicken breast halves**
- 1 egg**
- 3/4 c. Italian seasoned dry bread crumbs**
- 1 jar (about 2 cups) spaghetti sauce**
- 1 c. shredded mozzarella cheese**



Preheat oven to 400°.

Dip chicken in egg, then bread crumbs. In 9x13-inch glass baking dish, arrange chicken. Bake uncovered 20 minutes.

Pour spaghetti sauce over chicken, then top with cheese. Bake 10 minutes or until chicken is cooked through out and no longer pink.

Serve with pasta or rice.

Prepare a winter survival kit

Severe winter storms often bring heavy accumulations of ice and snow, which can lead to downed power lines and extended outages. NWEC's crews will work hard to restore power, but having a winter survival kit on hand is a smart idea.

The American Red Cross and Federal Emergency Management Agency suggest keeping some basic items on hand in case of an emergency.

- **Food:** Store food that does not require cooking, such as canned goods, crackers, dehydrated meats and dried fruit. Keep a large supply of water on hand. (14131001)

- **Medication:** Be sure to refill all prescriptions in the event of a major power outage.

- **Identification:** Keep all forms of identification handy, such as driver's licenses, photo IDs and social security cards. Bank account information and insurance policies are also good to have on hand.

- **Other items:** First Aid Kit, blankets, flashlight, battery-powered radio and extra batteries.

Be Prepared Before the Storm

Here are some basic items you should store in your home in case of emergency:

-  **Water:** Three day supply, one gallon per person per day
-  **Food:** Three day supply, non-perishable, high-energy
-  **Clothing, bedding, and sanitation supplies**
-  **Tools:** Can opener, plates, utensils, flashlight, batteries, cash, bleach, hand sanitizer
-  **First aid supplies, medicine**
-  **Important documents**

Visit redcross.org/domore to learn more about disaster kits.



Source: American Red Cross, Federal Emergency Management Agency

Save with Northwestern Electric's rebate program

Get cash back on qualifying water heater and heat pump installations

Northwestern Electric will pay a cash rebate to qualifying members who replace or install new energy efficient heat pumps or electric water heaters.

Rebates for electric water heaters are being paid for tanks of 40 gallon or larger with an energy rating of .93 or greater. First time installation of a high efficient model, new or conversion from gas, qualifies for a \$100 rebate. Replacement of an existing electric tank qualifies for a \$50 rebate.

Once the new water heater is purchased and installed, contact NWE. Jonna Hensley will come out and verify the installation. She will need to see the old tank and will ask for information pertaining to your purchase. After she verifies the new tank qualifies for the rebate, NWE will mail a

check directly to the homeowner.

Heat pumps, both air source and ground source, qualify for varying amounts of cash rebates.

For an air source heat pump unit to qualify, it must have a minimum rating of 16 SEER, 13.4 EER and an 8.5 HSPF. The rebate for a new unit or gas conversion is \$250 per ton. If you are replacing an old electric unit, the rebate is \$150 per ton.

Ground source heat pumps must meet a minimum rating of 16.1 EER and a 3.3 COP for closed loop systems and an 18.2 EER and 3.6 COP for open looped systems. New units and gas conversions qualify for a rebate of \$250 per ton. Replacement units qualify for a rebate of \$150 per ton.

The verification process for heat pumps is similar to the water heater

process. Jonna will need to verify the installation and see the information pertaining to the purchase. After the verification process has been completed, Northwestern Electric will mail the check to the homeowner.

Rebates can not exceed \$1,000 per application and all units must be AHRI certified. A rebate application form for heat pump installations is available on our website at www.nwecok.coop or you can call the office to request a form. All requests for rebates must be made within 30 days after the installation is completed.

Additional funds may be available for heat pump installations from our power supplier, Contact Jonna at 256.7425 or 800.375.7423 for more information.