

**BURT COUNTY**

# PUBLIC POWER

*It's Your Power!*

PO Box 209  
Tekamah, NE 68061



## Beautify Your Yard, Not Utility Equipment

Green or grey utility boxes, known as pad-mounted or padmount transformers, are part of the supply chain that helps provide power to your neighborhood. Those boxes sit on an easement, which allows us access to them.

What are green boxes for? Their job is to step down high-voltage electricity to a lower voltage needed for the underground wires supplying power to the lights and appliances in homes.

Please do not paint, enhance, block or otherwise obstruct padmount transformers. By respecting all utility equipment, including meters and transformers, you can help keep the power on and your local utility workers safe.

As you beautify your yard this spring and summer, **Burt County Public Power and Safe Electricity** remind you of these safety tips:

- Contact us with questions about landscaping around or installing fencing near a padmount transformer (or any other changes) to learn what is allowable.
- Contact us if the transformer becomes unlocked or if it or any other type of utility equipment appears to be damaged.
- Call 811 prior to digging around a transformer and respect the clearance requirements noted above. If you dig near a transformer (even if it is beyond the clearance requirements), you could inadvertently hit a live underground cable. Always call 811 prior to any digging.
- Keep a clear path to the transformer. Even though the transformer seems like it is in ‘your yard,’ it is technically on an easement, and our workers need clear access to it to maintain equipment and keep power running smoothly.

## *Burt's Briefs*

**Practice Safe Pesticide Use.** Spring is probably the busiest time of the year for farmers. It is important to remember personal safety and protection to avoid accidents. While pesticides can greatly increase agricultural productivity, they can also be harmful to humans, animals, and the environment if not used properly.

**April Yard and Garden Tips.** Prune broadleaf trees and shrubs before they break dormancy. Clean and tune up lawn and garden equipment. Rake the lawn to remove twigs and debris that accumulated over winter. Apply a fungicide treatment to your lawn in mid-April.

**First Aid on the Farm.** Make sure first aid kits occupy farm buildings, sheds, combines, tractors and trucks. The quality of treatment a victim receives immediately following an accident will have a major influence on the recovery process. In some cases, immediate treatment is key to survival.

**Service Retirements can Prevent Outages.** If you have an old service that’s not been used for a period of years or just isn’t needed, why not remove it. Old wiring or old poles cause the majority of outages during stormy weather. Even just a little wind can wrap up old wires and take a line out for miles.

**Diggers Hotline.** Call Diggers Hotline (1-800-331-5666) or 811, 48 hours before you begin digging. Make sure you know the location of buried electrical lines.

4.13.2020

LINEMAN APPRECIATION DAY

# Thank You

IT TAKES A TEAM TO  
POWER A COMMUNITY



## Planning a Yard Project? Don't Just Dig In

April is National Safe Digging Month. It reminds us all that as we begin beautifying our yards, we shouldn't just dig in. According to 811, the "Call Before You Dig" national hotline, an underground utility is damaged **every nine minutes** because someone didn't call before digging.

Whether it is a do-it-yourself project or you are hiring a professional, call 811 two to three days prior to starting any digging project to request that all underground utilities be marked. (Call-to-completion time varies from state to state). The service is free.

You may think it won't hurt anything to dig in an unmarked yard when landscaping, installing a fence, deck or mailbox, or even "just" planting a small flower bed or bush, but damaging an underground cable can have serious consequences.

Hitting a line could result in serious injuries and disrupted service for you and your neighbors. It could also make a dent in your wallet for repair fees or other fines.

The 811 hotline points out that there is more than one football field's length of buried utilities for every man, woman, and child in the U.S.

Before digging:

- **Notify** your state's one-call center by calling 811 or making an online request 2-3 days before work begins.
- **Wait** the required amount of time for affected utility operators to respond to your request.
- **Confirm** that all affected utility operators have responded to your request and marked underground utilities.
- **Dig Carefully** around the marks with care.

Remember that **privately owner underground lines** will NOT be marked by location flaggers. Examples of private lines/equipment include well and septic, underground sprinkler systems, invisible fencing, gas or electric lines that serve a detached building, as well as any lines (electric, water, sewer) from the meter to your home.

## WHAT LURKS UNDER THE DIRT?

Before beautifying your yard, **don't just dig in**. Call 811 or your state's utility locating service before you dig.

An underground utility is **damaged every nine minutes** because someone didn't call before digging.



## Solar Farm in Final Stages of Development in Burt County

By, Elizabeth A. Elliott  
*Oakland Independent*  
[news@enterprisepub.com](mailto:news@enterprisepub.com)

Burt County could soon be home to a solar farm.

A conditional use permit was approved for Bluestem Energy Solutions in Omaha for the farm, which will be located seven miles north of Tekamah on the west side of U.S. Highway 75, on December 27th during the Burt County Board of Supervisors regular meeting.

Matt Robinette, Vice President of Development at Bluestem Energy Solutions, said the seven-acre project is \$2.5 million and will provide \$3,500 a year in taxes. The racking of the panels run north and south and panels rotate east and west. There is no chance of glare on the highway.

The project is in the final stages of development, according to Will Crane, director of product management and Bluestem. They are working with Burt County Public Power District (BCPPD) on two different sites within their service territory.

Bluestem is a developer, owner and operator of low carbon generation assets.

"Burt County Public Power District went through Bluestem's development process. The outcome highlighted the optimal areas of their distribution system, along with the generation and storage technologies that provide the best economics," Crane said.

There will be multiple positive impacts for Burt County, according to Crane, including an increased tax base, carbon free energy generation and construction opportunities for local suppliers.

"From our vantage point, we feel it is a way to control costs and try to maintain affordable services," Jon Dockhorn, general manager of Burt County Public Power District (BCPPD), said.

Dockhorn said the solar farm will interconnect with their distribution system.

"This is a 25-year contract so we know what the price will be for the energy coming out of it and we can manage costs based on that."

Dockhorn pointed to another positive aspect of this project—a solar and battery energy storage system (BESS).

"The interesting aspect with this one that brings additional benefit is it also has a battery storage site on it so we'll be able to store and generate electricity 24/7 with the battery," Dockhorn said.

"All power generated and stored at this site will be used locally," Crane said.

Two landowners are involved in the project.

"Bluestem and BCPPD have been working through Bluestem's development process, beginning in 2019, to discover and optimize a customized local renewable energy generation project specifically for BCPPD's system," Crane said. "The two sites were chosen strategically to provide the most effective and efficient product to BCPPD and its members."

Crane said each site is under a megawatt, which considers Burt County's contractual obligations, their wholesale rate structure, Regional Transmission Organization (RTO) and Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) regulations.

"This extensive process ensures the projects are realistic and still competitive for BCPPD's rate payers," he said. "All these different factors drive the final size of a Bluestem project. (It is) all part of a distribution resource planning effort offering new opportunities for public power entities across the state."

Dockhorn said BCPPD is "always looking at how we can improve service for our customers, along with maintaining costs so that it remains affordable."

The project is expected to be constructed in the spring, according to Dockhorn.

# Nebraska Rural Electric Association



## 2020 Youth Energy Leadership Camp July 20-24

**Nebraska State 4-H Camp**

### **NO, IT'S NOT JUST ANOTHER CAMP**

I bet you are thinking this is the zillionth camp flyer you have received and that this camp is just like all the rest. It costs a bunch, you won't know anyone there, it's going to be awkward, and you won't get anything out of going except maybe a sunburn. Well think again! This camp is free, you are going to make life-long friends, and learn about the electric industry through interesting workshops, fascinating demonstrations and presentations by regional experts addressing the many issues affecting the rural electric program. There's also canoeing, sports, a banquet and a dance. A tour to the Gerald Gentlemen Power Station and the Kingsley Hydro-Electric Power Plant provide for a first-hand look at the process of generating electricity.

You should apply if you have: Leadership potential, an awesome personality, a strong academic record, or interest in meeting new people. If you are interested in applying for this all-expense paid camp, complete the application form and return it to our office. So don't delay...apply today!

**You also could win a FREE trip to Washington D.C.**

Three campers will be selected to serve as Nebraska's Ambassadors to the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's Rural Electric Youth Tour in Washington D.C. To be eligible for this year's camp you must: Currently be in the 9th, 10th, or 11th grade, live in a home served by Burt County Public Power District, and complete the application form below and return it to Burt County Public Power District, P. O. Box 209, Tekamah, NE 68061, Attention: Zach Olson.



### **2020 Youth Energy Leadership Camp Application Form**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Current Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of parents or guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

# Nebraska Extension News

By Aaron Nygren , Extension Educator

## Stay Safe This Spring While Working with Pesticides!

As field work ramps up this time of year, it's easy to get in a hurry and forget to do the little things that we know are in our best interest to stay safe. While it's often easier said than done, be sure to make it a routine to try and slow down and focus on staying safe on the farm when working with potential hazards. One of those potential hazards that I wanted to take the time to remind you about is the importance of protecting yourself and those around you when working with pesticides.

First and foremost, the most important thing to do when using pesticides is to read and follow the label. While this sounds simple, pesticide labels are incorporating more and more information so they can be daunting to read, especially when they are printed in small sized type! However, if you just get in the habit of making sure to look through the label anytime you use a product, you are more likely to stay safe. Take the time to look for the following areas related to your safety:

- 1) Signal Words – Danger, Warning, or Caution that indicate the relative toxicity of the product.
- 2) Emergency Telephone Number
- 3) First Aid
- 4) Precautionary Statements—These guide the applicator to take precautions to protect humans and animals. The personal protective equipment (PPE) is often listed in this section.
- 5) Environmental Hazards Statement—These guide the applicator/mixer in ways to reduce environmental concerns.
- 6) Agricultural Use Requirements—This section will often list the restricted entry interval or REI requirements, which is the number of hours that one should wait before re-entering the field after an application has been made.

While each of the above areas is important, it is critical to make sure you are using the required personal protective equipment or PPE. Whether that means wearing the typical gloves, long sleeve shirt, pants and shoes plus socks or something more substantial like a respirator, goggles, or an apron, it is critical to do whatever the label says to keep the pesticide off your skin or body.

To illustrate the importance of wearing PPE, it's good to look at a recent result from the Agricultural Health Study, a long term study of farm workers and their spouses in Iowa and North Carolina. The study found that applicators that didn't wear gloves and that didn't have good hygiene practices had a greater risk for Parkinson's when they used three pesticides, paraquat – which is not widely used in Nebraska, permethrin – which is an insecticide that is widely used, and trifluralin – which is the active ingredient in the herbicide Treflan. Applicators who did wear gloves and cleaned up properly had no increased risk, so wear your gloves! Some other simple but important ways to reduce you and your family's exposure to pesticides include:

1. Have decontamination supplies (clean water, soap, single-use towels) with you when spraying.
2. Wash your hands before eating, drinking, chewing gum or tobacco, or going to bathroom.
3. Remove work shoes before entering your home to prevent bringing pesticides into the house.
4. Shower/bathe and shampoo hair immediately after any spill and at the end of the work day.
5. Change into clean clothes before any physical contact with

April, 2020

Burt County Public Power District

## Burt County

### Public Power District News

Tekamah, Nebraska 68061

Phone 374-2631 or 1-888-835-1620

### Board of Directors

Gerald Bohling	President
Michael J. Chaff	Vice President
Michael R. Williams	Treasurer
Greg Johnson	Secretary
Dwane Pierre	Director
Scott Lindstrom	Director
Jonathan Dockhorn	Manager
RVW, Inc.	Engineer
Blankenau Wilmot Jarecke LLP	Attorney

### Meetings

In accordance with Nebraska Statute, notice is hereby given that the Board of Directors of the Burt County Public Power District are held on the 1st Thursday of each month, commencing at 9:30 A.M. at the district office located in Tekamah, Nebraska. In the event that a holiday falls on the said 1st Thursday, the meeting date shall be as set by the Board of Directors and published in the Legal Notice.

An agenda for each regular meeting of the board is available for public inspection during business hours at least three (3) days prior to each meeting; provided however, that the Board of Directors shall have the right to modify the said agenda to include items of an emergency nature.

**Office Hours**  
**7:30 A.M. to 4:00 P.M.**

children and your family.

6. Put your work clothes into a bag to prevent others from coming into contact with them.
7. Wash work clothes before wearing them again.
8. Wash work clothes separately from all other laundry. Tell the person washing your clothes that they may have pesticide residues on them.

When I said pesticides at the beginning of the article, your mind probably went straight to spraying an herbicide or an insecticide. However, one area that we don't always associate with a pesticide hazard is treated seed. This day and age, virtually all corn seed is treated with either a fungicide or an insecticide and a majority of soybean seed is treated as well. When you stop and read the seed tag for most of these products, they will state to wear PPE, just like any other pesticide. So this planning season, remember to check your seed tags and wear the correct PPE, such as chemical resistant gloves.

For more information on pesticide safety, visit the UNL Pesticide Safety Education Program website at [pested.unl.edu](http://pested.unl.edu) or contact your local Nebraska Extension office.

