BURT COUNTY PUBLIC POWER

PO Box 209
Tekamah, NE 68061

It's Your Power!

Trimming Trees Near Power Lines Can Kill

There's really no other way to say it: Trimming branches or limbs near power lines can kill.

If you look the other way, get distracted by deciding which limb to trim next or lose your footing, you could inadvertently make contact with a power line. You might think you have a steady hand, but moving a few inches off course could be the last thing you ever do.

It doesn't take contact with a wire to cause a fatal shock — electricity will jump to find the quickest path to the ground. Keep yourself and your tools or equipment more than 10 feet away from lines.

Did you know trimming within 10 feet (in any direction) of a power line is illegal? Only OSHA-certified line clearance workers are authorized to trim near power lines. So when hiring a tree trimmer to trim near power lines in your yard or on your property, make sure the person you hire is certified to do so.

Remember: Trimming trees within 10 feet of a power line can be fatal. Never trim branches or limbs near a power line. It's the law: only OSHA-certified line clearance workers are authorized to trim near power lines.

Call us with any questions about trees and power lines at **402-374-2631 or 888-835-1620.**

Electric Co-ops are Contributing to a Smarter Grid

By: Tracy Warren

It's a familiar scene: poles and wires stretching into the distance alongside a rural highway. This image might appear no different now than it did many years ago. But look more closely.

Invisible to most of us is an overlay of new equipment—chips, sensors and fiber—linking remote distribution infrastructure to the utility's operations center using advanced communications technology.

Those iconic poles and wires are not part of a "smart grid" that can be operated using software and automation.

For electric cooperatives, "digitalization" of electric infrastructure kicked into high gear in 2013 when the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) funded new technology research at 23 electric co-ops across the country That partnership has now evolved into a robust research program exploring everything from drones and smart solar inverters to cybersecurity training and carbon capture technology.

Here are some of the ways co-op consumer-members are already benefiting from a smarter grid:

- **Fewer power outages.** In certain situations, smart feeder switching can re-route power around problems such as downed power lines, which reduces the number of people affected by an outage.
- **Pre-pay programs.** Most co-op pre-pay billing programs no longer impose hefty reconnection fees because, thanks to advanced digital meters, the co-op doesn't need to send out a truck to physically reconnect the home.
- **Cost savings from increased efficiency.** Many of the new technologies are improving the efficiency of co-op operations—from reducing the amount of electricity lost in transmission to reducing the need for sending out trucks. These cost savings are passed on to co-op members.
- **Improved safety for co-op workers and the members.** The data from smart technologies provide utility operators a more detailed view of what is happening on the electric system. Co-ops have found that the data can help them identify electrical hazards faster.

The research partnership between electric cooperatives and the U.S. DOE, including the national laboratories, has enabled co-ops nationwide to increase their total solar energy capacity, install cutting-edge batteries for energy storage and microgrids, develop data analytics tools and find new ways to capture emissions from coal and natural gas power plants.

This partnership gives electric co-ops in some of the most remote regions of the country access to an amazing network of researchers, including researchers at Carnegie Mellon University, Purdue University and the University of California at Berkley, to name a few.

In exchange, the researchers can see how these new technologies operate in the real-world.

So, the next time you are driving down a long highway and you see poles and wires stretching into the far distance, know there's more to that system than meets the eye. While the electricity in your home powers the toaster just as it always did, that electricity is more efficient, more reliable and safer thanks to innovation made possible by cooperation.

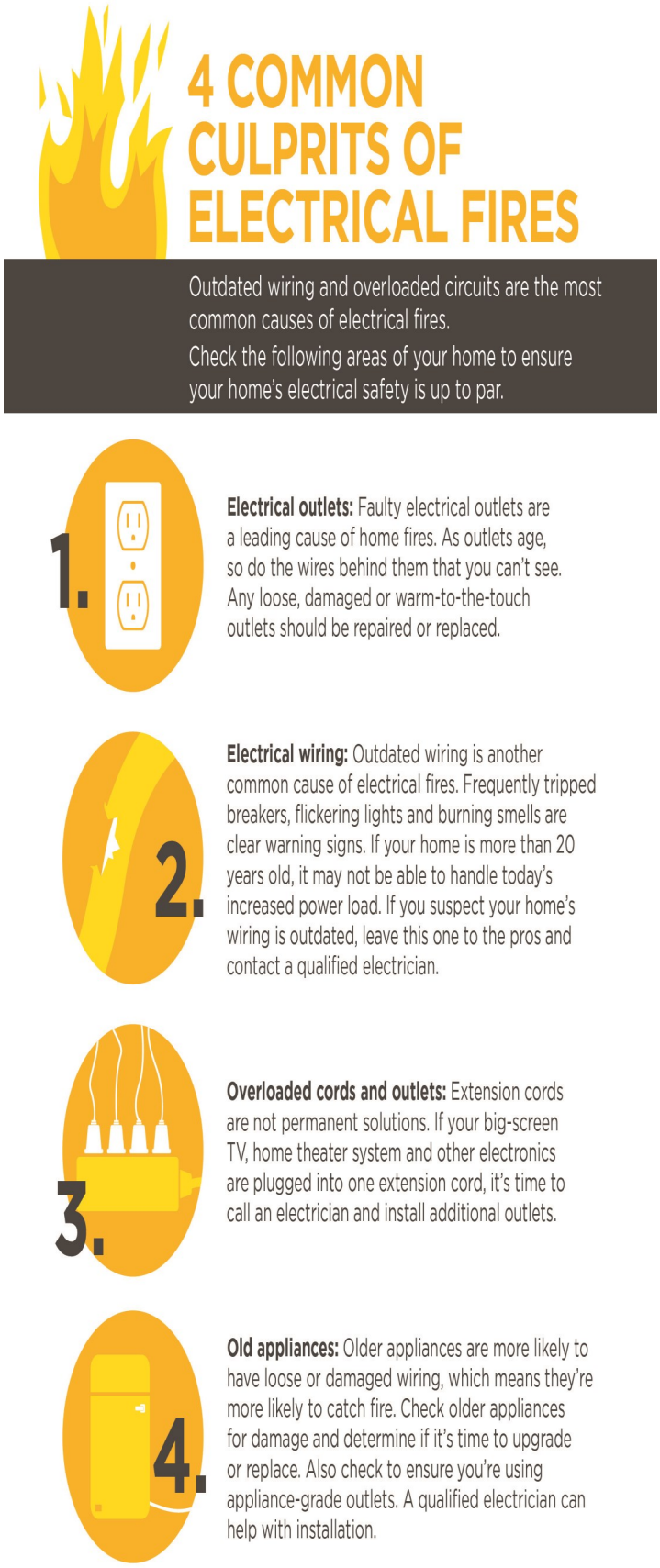
Get Your Summer On, But Use Decorative Lighting Safe

The summer months are approaching, and that means social gatherings will soon move outdoors. Outdoor electrical string and sphere lighting, as well as illuminated jars and outdoor fixtures can add ambiance and visual flair to open-air living spaces.

Burt County Public Power and **Safe Electricity** offer these tips when using decorative lighting outdoors:

- Only use strands, globes or other decorative fixtures that are approved for outdoor use and that have been tested by a reputable safety laboratory, such as UL.
- Only string together the number of strands recommended by the manufacturer.
- All outdoor outlets should be protected by ground-fault circuit interrupters (GFICs).
- Unplug or turn off lights when not in use.
- Only use extension cords that are rated for outdoor use and do not overload them.
- Do not use metal tacks or nails to drape or attach string lights.
- Consider using LED lighting, which gives off less heat and uses less energy than incandescent versions.
- Planning on adding extra outlets/running electricity to a gazebo or She (or He) Shed? Hire a qualified electrician to install them.
- Use outdoor-rated bulbs.
- Just like indoor lighting, do not use builds that surpass a fixture's maximum wattage.
- Inspect lights and cords before using them.
- Make sure that everything you are plugging in—such as decorative lighting, outdoor kitchen appliances, and other electrical items—won't overload the circuit. A qualified electrician can help with this.
- Adding permanent outdoor lighting? It is best to hire this out as well.

For more information about electrical safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.



Nebraska Extension News

By Aaron Nygren , Extension Educator

Setting Yourself Up For Good Weed Control This Year

Farmers are good at adapting to changing conditions, whether it's the weather, crop prices, or management styles. The last couple year's one change farmers have increasingly dealt with is the spread of herbicide resistant weeds. Unfortunately, during the summer months, it has not been hard to see that weeds are putting up a good fight in many fields! So, let's talk about a couple of the most important management practices for herbicide resistant weeds that should help keep your fields clean this year, using multiple modes of action and residual or pre-emergent herbicides.

One of the most critical management practices is to use multiple effective modes of action. A mode of action is the manner that a herbicide affects of kills a week. When you apply a single mode of action, herbicides will kill susceptible weeds, but any weeds with genetics that give them resistance will survive and likely make seed for next year. Over time, using the same herbicide mode of action over and over shifts the weed population to those that survive, resulting in the spread of herbicide resistant weeds.

By using a herbicide with multiple effective modes of action or a combination of two or more herbicides with different modes of action, a weed with resistance to the first mode of action herbicide should still be controlled by the second or third mode of action, preventing the production of seed. The key word in this scenario is "effective!" For example, if we spray a field of waterhemp with glyphosate, which is a group 9 herbicide, and dicamba, which is a group 4, are we using more than one mode of action? In reality no, because most fields in Nebraska now have waterhemp with some level of resistance to glyphosate, so the dicamba is now the single mode of action that is controlling waterhemp.

There are a couple great resources for learning more about what modes of action you are using. First off, the 2020 Guide for Weed, Disease, and Insect Management in Nebraska (EC130) is an excellent resource and has a herbicide mode of action chart. Another great resource is the iwilltakeaction.com website, which has lots of information about herbicide resistance, has an app that you can download to your cell phone or tablet, and also has materials that you can request to be mailed to you. Another resource to visit with about herbicide options are your local extension educations, crop consultants, and coops. Lastly, herbicide labels now list the modes of action at the very top, so take the time to read your herbicide labels.

The next important practice is the use of residual or pre-emergent herbicides. Residuals are important for two reasons, first they increase the number of herbicide modes of action in your program and secondly it is much easier to control weeds before they emerge versus controlling them with post-emergent herbicides. On this second point, let's look at a hypothetical 80 acre field that only has 1 waterhemp per acre this year. If we let these waterhemp go to seed, each will produce 100,000 seeds, although waterhemp can produce up to 1 million per plant. Now, not all of those are going to germinate the next year, so let's assume 25 percent will grown in year two. If we didn't use a residual herbicide, this would be a total of 2 million waterhemp that we need to control in year two! So, even if we use a residual product that only 80% of those that try to grow, we cut the number that have to be controlled by our post-emerge program down to 400,000 waterhemp on our 80 field. This simple reduction in numbers is key to reducing the pressure on our post-emerge programs.

One challenge with residual herbicide is what to do when weather or timing prevent their application before crop emergence. If you find yourself in this situation, first off, be sure to verify that the product you were planning on applying is labeled for application after crop emergence. For corn, there are lots of options for residual herbicides that can be applied after crop emergence, with products coming from site groups 2, 3, 5, 15, and 27. While corn has lots of labeled options, the number of soybean residual products that can be applied after emergence is much more limited with products coming from groups 2 and 15. If you find yourself in this situation, be sure to always read your herbicide labels before application to double check that the herbicide can be applied after emergence.

For more information on managing herbicide resistance with multiple modes of action and residual herbicides, feel free to give me a call at 402-352-3821, email me at anygren2@unl.edu, or contact your local Nebraska Extension office.

Burt County
Public Power District News
Tekamah, Nebraska 68061
Phone 374-2631 or 1-888-835-1620

Meetings

In accordance with Nebraska Statute, notice is hereby given that the regular meetings of 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.