

# ENERGY

## CONNECTIONS

**NorthWestern**  
**Energy**  
*Delivering a Bright Future*

SEPTEMBER 2012

### Committed to Community Growth



After a record-setting hot summer, NorthWestern Energy wants to provide extra shade for some of the communities we serve. In celebration of our centennial as a company, NorthWestern Energy employee volunteers will be working with community officials to plant trees throughout September in the following locations:

#### Montana

- Big Timber
- Butte
- Great Falls
- Red Lodge
- Thompson Falls
- Whitehall
- White Sulphur Springs
- Townsend

#### South Dakota

- Aberdeen
- Huron

#### Nebraska

- Kearney

Trees are important to a utility for many reasons. Most notably, we want to encourage our customers to *plan where they plant*. Thinking about how the tree will grow 5, 10, or even 50 years into the future is important. Another thing to consider is how trees are the original energy savers. Shade trees help you conserve energy by keeping your home cooler naturally in the summer and reduce carbon dioxide emissions to improve air and water quality.

While tree trimming is a homeowners' responsibility, we always want you to call before you trim a tree near a power line. We'll stop by and make sure it is safe for you to proceed. In addition, by calling 811 before you plant, you will reduce the risk of hitting an underground utility line when digging a home for your new tree.

In the coming months, watch our website for a recap of the tree planting events.



### Safety Information for Dog Owners

Every day, meter readers, gas service representatives and other utility employees enter yards and homes to read meters, re-light gas pilots and provide other types of customer service. Our employees are trained on how to avoid situations that may result in a confrontation with cranky canines.

But there are times when even the best training can't prevent attacks by dogs.

NorthWestern Energy asks dog owners to consider these suggestions to help prevent dog-related injuries to company employees whose job takes them onto private property:

- Notify NorthWestern Energy if you have an aggressive dog. The company then will alert field personnel, such as meter readers and linemen, to take particular care at your home.

- If possible, when fencing your yard, consider arranging fencing so that your service meter is located outside of your new fence.
- If you tie up your dog, please ensure that the chain is strong enough to restrain your dog in an area well away from your power meter.
- Post a "Beware of Dog" sign on your fence or house to avoid any surprises.

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, dogs bite about 4.5 million people every year, and about 20 percent of the injuries require medical attention. Even friendly dogs can become aggressive when protecting their owners and their turf. For the safety of both your pets and our utility workers – please ensure your dog is securely confined.

# Act Now



Believe it or not – now is the best time to weatherize your home. An energy-efficient home is a strong defense against winter winds, rain, sleet, snow and chill. Making energy efficient changes before the snow starts to fly and temperatures get more and more brisk – makes doing the work easier in nice weather and prepares you to get the most from your efforts.

NorthWestern recommends three things that homeowners can do now to cut heating bills this winter:

1. “Insulate” yourself from price shocks. Appropriate insulation for your climate based on R-values can increase your comfort and reduce

your heating costs. Start with attic insulation, followed by exterior and basement walls, and crawl spaces. Insulate and seal attic air ducts.\*

2. Check your home for air leaks – otherwise, you’re paying to heat the outdoors. Seal leaks between moving parts (between door and frame) with weather stripping. Caulk leaks between non-moving parts (between window frame and wall). Install foam gaskets behind outlet and light switch plates.

3. Install a programmable thermostat that “remembers” to lower the temperature during the day, when perhaps no one is at home. You don’t have to rely on your memory when you’re in

a rush. The programmable thermostat meets your daily and weekend patterns and comfort needs plus it comes in a variety of scheduling options.\*

A good place to get started is with our website: [www.northwesternenergy.com/eplus](http://www.northwesternenergy.com/eplus). You’ll find ways to reduce your energy use, calculate the cost to run your appliances with our CalcUPal tool, get do-it-yourself tips, plus much more. NorthWestern Energy’s website is full of useful information. You can download a series of “how to” videos that walk you through the do-it-yourself steps to:

- ✓ install weather-stripping and door sweeps
- ✓ where and how to use expandable foam seal
- ✓ how to install foam gaskets under light switch plates and outlet covers
- ✓ how to install window plastic on a single-pane window

\*NorthWestern Energy has rebates available in Montana that are funded through supply rates. Qualifications apply. See the website for complete details.

## What Does It Mean to be a Regulated Utility?

Safe, reliable energy is important to all our customers – and to us. And we all want rates to be reasonable and fair.

When the costs go up, some businesses can respond by simply raising their prices. NorthWestern Energy is different. We’re a regulated utility – and because we’re regulated, our rates are set through a long, detailed and transparent public process.

The bottom line is our rates can’t change without state approval.

*Who are the regulators?*

In Montana, Nebraska and South Dakota, independent utility regulators are elected. South Dakota regulatory commissioners are elected on a statewide basis whereas in Montana and Nebraska, the commissioners are elected by residents of specific districts within their states. The regulatory system is designed to ensure an affordable, reliable and adequate supply of energy is available to our customers.

In the states where NorthWestern operates, the regulatory commissions are:

Montana Public Service Commission:  
[www.psc.mt.gov](http://www.psc.mt.gov)

South Dakota Public Utilities Commission:  
[www.puc.sd.gov](http://www.puc.sd.gov)



Nebraska Public Service Commission:  
[www.psc.state.ne.us](http://www.psc.state.ne.us)

In addition to looking at every aspect of our costs, the regulatory process takes testimony from the public, NorthWestern Energy customers, commission staff and groups like the Human Resource Development Councils, Montana Consumer Council and the AARP. These groups and others make recommendations, but the decision-making authority rests with the commissions.

NorthWestern Energy’s Board of Directors, our management and our dedicated employees are committed to serving our customers with reliable and cost-efficient electricity and natural gas.

## — See a bit of — OUR HISTORY

Check out “THE POWER” display at the Butte-Silver Bow Public Archives from September 4 through the end of the year.

## Contact...

### MONTANA

Customer Contact Center (888) 467-2669  
7 a.m. - 6 p.m. M-F  
Emergency 24/7 Service  
Call Before You Dig 811  
Energy Efficiency (800) 823-5995

### NEBRASKA

Customer Contact Center (800) 245-6977  
7 a.m. - 6 p.m. M-F  
Emergency 24/7 Service  
Call Before You Dig 811

### SOUTH DAKOTA

Customer Contact Center (800) 245-6977  
7 a.m. - 6 p.m. M-F  
Emergency 24/7 Service  
Call Before You Dig 811

### PAYMENT

Automated Phone  
Payment Option: (800) 218-4959  
(via checking, savings, or money market account)  
SpeedPay Automated  
Phone Payment Option: (877) 361-4927  
(via credit card account)

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