

# ENERGY

## CONNECTIONS

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

JANUARY 2013

### Lots Ahead in the New Year

Happy New Year! In late December, NorthWestern Energy employees and retirees gathered across our service territory for a variety of breakfast celebrations to bring a close to the company's yearlong centennial recognitions. The events marked the end of "celebrating our past" but 2013 marks the beginning of "building for the future."

After two years of planning and phase-in work, 2013 promises to be a watershed year for NorthWestern Energy's Distribution System Infrastructure Project, known as DSIP.

The money alone tells much of the story. After spending about \$20 million in 2011 and \$30 million in 2012 on DSIP work, the plan is to spend about \$66 million in 2013 on projects across the company's Montana service territory.

"It should be right around \$65 million or so for the next five years," said Blain Nicholls, DSIP's general project manager. The work will span all the electric and natural gas areas outlined in the DSIP plan. However, pole replacement is a big part of the DSIP project and poles will continue to require extensive

inspection and replacement work. There are nearly 300,000 wooden poles in the Montana service territory. "That's over \$100 million alone," Nicholls said of the multi-year pole replacement plan.

In addition to pole replacement, numerous other projects will be expanded or implemented in 2013, including capacity improvements, substation upgrades, automation and communication initiatives, tree trimming and rural reliability upgrades. Underground electric cable inspection and replacement also will accelerate in 2013, with more than \$10 million budgeted in that area.

Numerous natural-gas distribution projects are on tap in the coming year, including the removal of stubs and lines under structures, farm-tap upgrades and general repairs. Natural-gas line inspection and replacement will move ahead with a focus on business district lines and meters.

DSIP was developed to address the emerging issue of aging infrastructure and prepare our system for the next generation of technology.

### Safety Education Resources Available

NorthWestern Energy has a strong commitment to energy safety and energy efficiency education. We provide electric and natural gas safety and energy conservation materials for teachers and students. Topics include energy efficiency, electric and natural gas safety, and the science of electricity and natural gas.

Our Public Safety Education Professionals work with schools and civic organizations to educate the communities we serve about the services

NorthWestern Energy provides and the value and impact those services have on your comfort and security. Representatives are available to make presentations, designed especially for children grades K-6, and senior citizens.

Educators may be interested in the Education Resource Guide (PDF) and its online order form, which is available on our website. To inquire about a presentation for your classroom or event, call (800) 440-2497.

### Analyze Your Bill

NorthWestern Energy's online CalcUPal tool can help you identify the major causes of changes in your energy use. This tool will also suggest ways to reduce energy use and lower bills.

CalcUPal details how your bill was impacted by weather, billing days, average cost, daily

usage, and other factors. Plus, you can compare previous bills to learn how to adjust your usage and keep costs in check.

Check out how your energy use compares and you might be surprised to find little ways you can save.



# Make a Resolution to Save

The number one New Year's Resolution for 2013 is to save money, and while many financial experts would recommend increased savings, investing or getting out of debt; one thing to consider would be a resolution to save money and energy. Not only does saving money on energy bills provide you with the best return on your most valuable investment – your home, but it also increases your comfort.

Here are some easy ways you can save money and energy in the New Year...

- ✓ Keep vents clear. If you have things in front of heaters or on top of vents, you're warming those instead of your house.
- ✓ Check furnace filter. Check the furnace filter regularly. If it's dirty, change it. Use drapes or shades. Window coverings are one of the easiest ways to help insulate your house. Keep them closed on cold days and open on sunny ones.
- ✓ Unplug chargers. Chargers for devices like computers, cell phones and other items, pull electricity even when they're not in use.
- ✓ Turn computers and gaming systems off. Sleep and hibernation modes may save



energy, but switching them off at night is the difference between using some electricity and using none.

Visit [northwesternenergy.com](http://northwesternenergy.com) for more energy efficiency tips.

## Congrats!

Congratulations to our 2012 Easy Energy Billing contest winner: Cody Broadhead, Butte, Mont. Cody was the lucky recipient of a new ENERGY STAR® laptop computer. Thanks to all that participated!

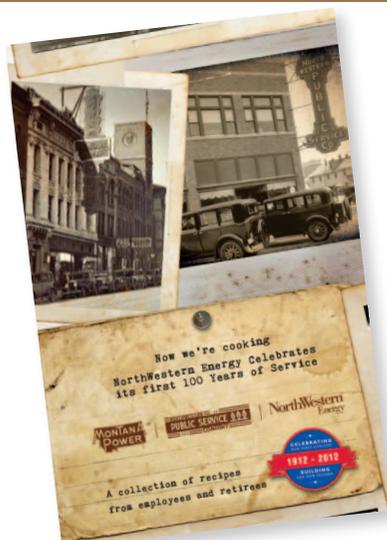


## Now We're Cooking!

Beginning this month, you will receive a recipe card in each 2013 issue of Energy Connections. The recipes come from the Centennial Cookbook that was compiled in 2012 as part of the company's Centennial Celebration.

Current and former NorthWestern Energy employees dusted off their family recipes to share. Many added personal notes relating memories of family and friends to their recipe and others reminisced about their work at the company.

We thought the collection was too good not to share! Enjoy!



## In the News

Here are some recent news highlights that were reported in local media...

- Keloland news featured a video of the South Dakota crews were sent to help restore power on the east coast following Superstorm Sandy. In the immediate aftermath of the storm, NorthWestern responded to requests from the mutual-aid groups that assist utilities in deploying employees and equipment to work on system repair and restoration following a disaster. An eight-person crew from South Dakota made the 2.5-day long trek in addition to 29 contract crews from Montana and South Dakota who were released from their NorthWestern Energy commitments to go assist. Following the storm, more than 9.6 million people needed power restored.
- Work continues on an extensive power-pole replacement project in Philipsburg, Mont., with the completion date for the work expected early in 2013. The project is aimed at improving the reliability and safety of electric service in the area.
- The Montana Public Service Commission approved the placement of NorthWestern Energy's Battle Creek natural gas assets into rate base. NorthWestern Energy purchased the proven Battle Creek production field and gathering system in 2010 for \$12.4 million as part of an overall strategy to provide rate stability and customer value through the addition of regulated assets that are not subject to market forces.
- President and CEO, Bob Rowe, recently announced in a news release "We're pleased to add Spion Kop Wind Farm, a 40-megawatt wind project near the central Montana community of Geyser, to our growing portfolio of owned electric generation resources in Montana."

## Contact...

### MONTANA

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