

# energy

## CONNECTIONS

January 2010

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

in this  
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DID YOU KNOW?

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### *Charitable Giving Program Continues in 2010*

*NorthWestern Energy strives to make the communities it serves better places to live, work and prosper. That is why the company is proud to donate to a variety of worthy causes every year. We, at NorthWestern Energy, encourage qualified nonprofit organizations that operate within our service territory to apply for donations through our Charitable Giving Program.*

*To review the guidelines and download an application for requesting funds, go to [www.northwesternenergy.com](http://www.northwesternenergy.com) and select the Community button to see the Charitable Giving link. The company distributes submitted applications to employee committees throughout the service areas. The committees review the applications and make funding decisions regarding the requests that pertain to organizations in their specific communities.*

*To be eligible for consideration, qualified nonprofit organizations must submit an application fund request with proof of tax exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) or Section 170(c)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code.*



## Smart Meters Installed In Yankton Area

**N**orthWestern Energy is taking steps to make its electricity grid smarter. One small part of this effort is to install 675 smart meters in the Lake Andes, Ravinia and Marty areas of South Dakota. Unlike older electric meters that simply record energy usage, smart meters are part of the Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI) that allows a two-way exchange of information between the meter and the utility. The meters used in these parts of the Yankton Area are Turtle meters. They send energy usage information along the power line to the substation where a computer collects the data and sends it to the utility. In turn, the utility can send information back to the meter via the same steps.

*“It is exciting for the Yankton Area employees to be installing such modern technology for our South Dakota operation.”*

*–Brad Wenande, Yankton Area Manager*

Turtle meters are beneficial in areas where distance or terrain make reading meters difficult and time consuming. A Turtle meter automatically sends electricity use information to a computer so a utility can measure a customer’s usage without sending a meter reader to visit the premise in a vehicle or on foot.

In addition, the AMI Turtles are another piece in the Smart Grid puzzle because they allow utilities to gather energy use information, to control meters remotely and to share usage information with customers more readily. Installation of smart meters is not in itself a Smart Grid. Smart meters are, however, one part of the electricity network of the future that will combine information and communication technology with the generation, delivery and use of electricity to make the electric grid cleaner, safer and more reliable and efficient.

“Time will give us a full understanding of the true capability of this technology, but right now we know just the automatic meter reading process and remote control of some meters alone will save valuable time for our district superintendent for that region,” said Brad Wenande, area manager – Yankton. “It is exciting for the Yankton Area employees to be installing such modern technology for our South Dakota operation, and the experience we glean from this will be used in years to come.” ■

# Titan Wind Farm Comes Online



In mid-December, BP Wind Energy and NorthWestern Energy announced full commercial operation of the Titan I Wind Farm in Hand County, South Dakota, less than six months after the project started construction. Located on a 7,500-acre site south of the town of Ree Heights, phase one of the wind farm will generate approximately one hundred million kilowatt hours of clean, renewable electricity every year for South Dakotans.

The Titan I Wind Farm is 100 percent owned and operated by BP Wind Energy, with the power produced sold to NorthWestern Energy for use by its South Dakota customers. Built by Mortenson Construction, the wind farm uses 10 Clipper C89 wind turbines each with a rated capacity of 2.5 megawatts. More than 170 workers were employed during peak construction of the first phase of the facility and a full-time staff of six is employed to monitor and maintain phase one.

The first phase of the wind farm will tie into an existing 69 kV NorthWestern Energy transmission line. ■



## Portable Heater Safety Tips

Portable space heaters can provide an excellent additional heat source when Old Man Winter is at his finest. However, improper use can result in fires, electric shock or carbon monoxide poisoning. For your safety and that of your family, here are a few important tips:

- ◆ Always follow the manufacturer's instructions for the safe and efficient use of your heater.
- ◆ Keep the heater away from curtains, bedspreads or anything that could catch on fire.
- ◆ Keep electric space heaters away from bathtubs, showers and sinks.
- ◆ Fix or replace frayed or exposed wiring on electric heaters.
- ◆ Use only heavy-duty extension cords rated for the heater's amperage.
- ◆ Avoid plugging space heaters into outlets that could overload an electric circuit.
- ◆ Make certain heaters are stable and cannot tip over easily.
- ◆ Keep a constant watch on small children near portable heaters.
- ◆ Ensure heaters with live flames - like those fueled by kerosene, natural gas, propane or wood - have adequate oxygen and are vented properly to the outdoors. Always consider ventilation requirements any time you use additional heating sources. ■

## did you know?

Did you know that carbon monoxide (CO) can build-up in your home if fuel-burning appliances, such as water heaters and gas fired heating systems, don't have an adequate combustion air supply or if vents, flues or heat exchangers become clogged from debris or snow or are damaged or cracked. Carbon monoxide is a poisonous gas that can be deadly in high concentrations. It is especially hazardous because it has no odor or taste. Using a good-quality CO detector and knowing the symptoms of CO poisoning are essential. Symptoms often are described as flu-like and may include headache, fatigue, nausea, vomiting, confusion, tightening of the chest, unusual yawning and irritation of the nose and eyes. Mild symptoms may go away when you leave the home only to begin again when you return to your house or residence. If you have reason to suspect CO poisoning, call NorthWestern Energy or 911 immediately and seek fresh air. ■

# contact...

## MONTANA

Customer Contact Center  
7 a.m. - 6 p.m. M-F (888) 467-2669  
Emergency 24/7 Service  
Electric (888) 467-2353  
Natural Gas (888) 467-2427  
Call Before You Dig 811  
Energy Efficiency (800) 823-5995

## NEBRASKA

Customer Contact Center  
6 a.m. - 10 p.m. M-F (800) 245-6977  
Emergency 24/7 Service (800) 245-6977  
Call Before You Dig 811

## SOUTH DAKOTA

Customer Contact Center  
6 a.m. - 10 p.m. M-F (800) 245-6977  
Emergency 24/7 Service (800) 245-6977  
Call Before You Dig

## 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)

## Keep Your Meters And Vents Free Of Snow and Ice

NorthWestern Energy customers who heat their homes with natural gas or who have natural gas or other fuel burning appliances should ensure their appliance exhaust vents are clear of blowing and drifting snow - especially after a winter storm. Blocked appliance vents could result in a loss of heat or buildup of deadly carbon monoxide in the structure.

The company also encourages its customers to clear snow away from natural gas meters gently. This will help prevent a natural gas regulator from freezing over, which would interrupt the normal flow of natural gas into a home or building. It will also make it easier for our employees to read your meter or shut off natural gas service in case of an emergency. ■