



For many in Montana, hydroelectric dams mean reliable energy, fishing, and recreation. But behind the dams, a dedicated team ensures they remain safe and dependable— work that Boyd Burnett has proudly dedicated his career to.

As an engineering supervisor at NorthWestern Energy, Burnett primarily focuses on dam safety for the company’s hydroelectric facilities across Montana.

“Most people hear ‘dam safety’ and think OSHA safety,” Burnett laughs. “But our group focuses on the safety of the dam itself.”

Burnett joined NorthWestern in 2012 and has helped monitor and inspect all 11 of the company’s hydroelectric dams. His work includes inspecting structures, spillways, penstocks, and flow lines, as well as measuring dam movement and monitoring seepage to ensure the facilities operate safely.

Every August, Burnett and his team survey all 11 dams to accurately track structural movement over time.

“We monitor, inspect, evaluate, and assess any needed updates to ensure public safety,” he explained.

Burnett also works with emergency responders, local agencies, and community partners to ensure preparedness and public safety planning are up to date.

“Everything in dam safety is about keeping the general public safe,” Burnett said. “Our job is not only to make sure nothing happens to the dam, but also to have a plan in place if there ever were an unlikely incident.”

Originally from Idaho, Burnett earned BA & MA degrees in Civil Engineering from the University of Idaho before pursuing his career in rivers and hydraulic structures.

“Our dams provide power, but they also create incredible recreational opportunities,” he said.



## Homemade bread

Outside of work, Burnett enjoys baking homemade bread, a tradition passed down through growing up in a large family.

“When at work, if the coffee is out, you create a new pot,” he joked. “In my family of non-coffee drinkers, if the bread is out, you just make more bread.”

Below is Boyd’s famous homemade bread recipe:

### INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups warm water
- 1 tablespoon yeast
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/3 cup of vegetable oil
- 1/3 cup of honey
- 5-6 cups flour (white, wheat, or combination)

### DIRECTIONS

- 1 Add 1 tablespoon of yeast to the two cups of warm water in a mixing bowl and let the yeast start its work for a few minutes.
- 2 Then add oil, honey, salt and 3-4 cups of flour and start mixing on low. Slowly add the remaining flour until the dough is at a good consistency.
- 3 Let the dough rise until it reaches the top of the mixing bowl (about an hour). Knead, divide in two and place in two oiled regular-size loaf pans.
- 4 Let it rise again until it’s at or above top of the bread pan (about 30 minutes) and bake at 350° for 25-30 minutes.

## CONTACT US

### 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 AND 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

Paymentus Automated  
 Phone Payment Option:  
 (via checking, savings, credit or debit card)  
 English: 833-970-2262  
 Spanish: 833-970-2263

### CONSTRUCTION CENTER

1-83-FOR-BUILD (1-833-672-8453)

[NorthWesternEnergy.com](http://NorthWesternEnergy.com)    

We are proud of the diversity in the communities we serve. To better serve the needs of some of our customers, we translate important customer information into two languages: Spanish and Karenic. To request translated customer information, please contact us at the numbers listed above.

Estamos orgullosos de la diversidad en las comunidades a las que servimos. Para satisfacer mejor las necesidades de algunos de nuestros clientes, traducimos información importante del cliente a dos idiomas: español y karénico (Karen). Para solicitar información traducida del cliente, contáctenos a los números indicados arriba.

ပသးခုဒီးပပ်ကမာလာဘဉ်ပသးလာ ပမာစာဘဉ်ပုၤကဗျာ်ဖိအါကလုာ်အါဗွဲ လာအအိဉ်လာ လီၤကဝီၤဖဲအံၤန့ၣ်လီၤ. ဒ်သီးပမာစာဘဉ်သုကအါထီၣ်အဂီၢ်, ပကွဲးလီၤလိာ်ကတိၤကျိၣ်ထံ တၢ်ဖျါအရုၣ်တဖၣ်ဆူ (Spanish)စပဲနဲးအကျိၣ် ဒီး (Karen)ကညီၣ်ကျိၣ် န့ၣ်လီၤ. သုမ့ၢ်လိာ်ဘဉ်လိာ်လာ ပုၤကွဲးကျိၣ်ထံ အံၤဝဲဒီး, ဝံသးစုၤသုဆဲးကျိးပုၤသုဖဲ လိာ်ဖိနီၣ်ဂံၢ် ဒ်အအိဉ်ပျါလာတၢ်ဖိခိဉ် အသီးန့ၣ်လီၤ.

**Energy Connections Editor**  
 11 E Park St, Butte, MT 59701  
[news2@northwestern.com](mailto:news2@northwestern.com)

# Energy Connections

Customer Bill Insert  
**Montana | June 2026**

In this issue: Dam safety | Week of Service | Outages  
 Utility easements | Homemade bread recipe



**Bright ideas to save**

## Keep your cool

Closing the blinds on your windows during the day can help keep sunlight from overheating your home.



## Be Dam-Safe near hydro facilities

Water near hydroelectric dams can be dangerous in numerous ways that may not be obvious. Observe all posted and audible warnings to avoid serious injury or death.

Remember:



**Stop:** Take time to read the safety signs around dams and waterways. Observe all warning signs, fences, buoys, and barriers and keep out of restricted areas.



**Look:** Watch for increased water velocity or water rising over previously exposed rocks or brush. When wading, swimming or boating in rivers, maintain an awareness of rising water levels. If the water level is rising or the flow is increasing, get out of or off the water, or quickly move your boat downstream.



**Listen:** Listen for warning sirens that signal when the dam spill gates open. Stay well away from dry riverbeds below dams; they can quickly become rapidly flowing waterways when spill gates open.

Remember, never take your boat past restrictive cables or warning signs. Depending on maintenance schedules and periods of high river flow, boat restraining systems upriver of a dam may not be in place. Never wade or swim alone.



## 2026 Week of Service Recap

NorthWestern Energy hosted its third annual Week of Service in late April. This year, more than 350 employees participated in volunteer events across our service territory. In recognition of their volunteerism, NorthWestern Energy will donate more than \$35,000 to roughly 29 community organizations throughout our service territory. This annual event underscores our commitment to enhancing the lives of those in the communities we serve.

This year, some of the Week of Service projects included:

**Billings:** Supported environmental and community wellness efforts by trimming trees and cleaning up areas along the Yellowstone River in partnership with the Yellowstone River Parks Association, and by filling backpack meals for students facing food insecurity through the Billings Education Foundation.

**Bozeman:** Assisted the community through a variety of service projects, including sorting donations for the HRDC food pantry, helping set up the One Valley Give Big Fest, supporting the Best of the West volleyball tournament, and volunteering at the Special Olympics Area Games as referees, scorekeepers, and event support.

**Butte:** Took part in multiple neighborhood and environmental cleanup efforts, including cleaning Continental Drive, the Butte Civic Center and Engine 25 area, Blacktail Creek Trail, George Street, and assisting with the Uptown Butte Neighborhood Cleanup.

**Colstrip:** Participated in a community-wide cleanup effort to beautify public spaces.

**Great Falls:** Supported youth, environmental education, and community improvement by serving as judges for the North Middle School Archery Tournament and the Envirothon, assisting with NeighborWorks community cleanups in multiple neighborhoods, staffing an informational table at the Cochrane Dam Crossing, and participating in the Bashin' Trash river cleanup.

**Havre:** Helped clean up Beaver Creek Park.

**Helena:** Completed trail and grounds cleanup projects at Grove Park in East Helena and the Tri-County Fire Safe Working Group Demonstration Garden in Montana City.

**Laurel:** Helped at the Build a Better Laurel community cleanup event.

**Lewistown:** Assisted with clearing and removing cottonwood trees at Farm in the Dell.

**Madison Dam:** Removed noxious weeds along the Madison River and around the dam flowline to support environmental health.

**Missoula:** Participated in multiple shifts of the Clark Fork River Cleanup.

**Whitehall:** Supported the Whitehall Garden Club Arbor Day event with cleanup and community beautification efforts.

## Stay in the know during summer outages

Summer thunderstorms can lead to outages. Sign up now to receive email or text notifications if your power goes out and when it's restored. You can also sign up for billing and payment notifications and more. Learn more at [NorthWesternEnergy.com/notifications](https://NorthWesternEnergy.com/notifications).

## Understanding utility easements

From time to time, you may notice NorthWestern Energy employees or other energy company employees accessing your property. Utility companies are allowed to access private property without first asking for permission.

Utility companies have a legal right to access any of their infrastructure located on customers' property due to easement rights. Easements play a key role in maintaining our electric and natural gas system and delivering safe, reliable energy.

Refusal to grant access to utility personnel can be grounds for termination of service.

If NorthWestern Energy or a contractor needs to access your property, they will be dressed in clothing with the NorthWestern Energy logo and be driving vehicles with the logo. They can also provide a company I.D. if requested.

