

# ENERGY

## CONNECTIONS

NorthWestern<sup>®</sup>  
Energy

JULY 2013

Delivering a Bright Future



## Coming Soon!

Later this fall, we will be implementing a new Customer Information System called eCIS+. The new system is a primary tool that we will use to bill customers, process payments, create service orders, and respond to customer inquiries.

With eCIS+, we will be able to serve our customers more efficiently and provide additional online self-service tools to customers.

More information will be forthcoming as the implementation nears, so stay tuned!

## Protect Yourself from Scammers

New scams seem to appear every day. We try to keep up with them – especially those targeting utility customers – to help keep the public informed. You can learn to recognize a scam by familiarizing yourself with some of the telltale signs.

If you suspect that you've responded to a phishing scam with personal or financial information, take these steps to minimize any damage and to protect your identity.

Scams can contain the following:

- ✓ Alarming messages and threats of account closures.
- ✓ Promises of money for little or no effort.
- ✓ Deals that sound too good to be true.
- ✓ Requests to donate to a charitable organization after a disaster that has been in the news.
- ✓ Bad grammar and misspellings.

- ✓ Change the passwords or PINs on all your online accounts that you think might be compromised.
- ✓ Place a fraud alert on your credit reports. Check with your bank or financial advisor if you're not sure how to do this.
- ✓ Contact the bank or the online merchant directly. Do not follow the link in the fraudulent email message.
- ✓ If you know of any accounts that were accessed or opened fraudulently, close those accounts.
- ✓ Routinely review your bank and credit card statements monthly for unexplained charges or inquiries that you didn't initiate.

*What to do if you think you have been a victim of a scam?*

## Everyday Internet Security Tips

Every day, millions of us use our connected devices for just about everything you can think of – email, shopping, gaming, banking, and so much more. In fact, the average U.S. household has nearly five connected devices! This means managing multiple passwords, subscriptions, and software updates.

devices and computers. Using a full security suite with multiple layers of protection (and which protects multiple devices) is the best way to protect your entire family and the "stuff" that matters on all of your devices.

We often talk about making sure you are using your devices efficiently – power them off and unplug them when not in use – but we also want to make sure you are protecting your identity and using them safely too.

In addition to the hassles of managing several devices, many of us also tend to overlook some simple security measures to ensure that our computers and information stay safe. Here are some tips.

To make juggling your devices and keeping them secure easier, you should consider using an all-in-one security suite that can manage multiple

1. Create unique passwords for each site, and make sure that each password contains at least eight characters. Avoid easy-to-guess passwords such as "password" and "123456." Including special characters,

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# Warning: Work Zone Ahead!



Summertime driving often requires maneuvering through new work zones. Be cautious and alert, and plan for extra time when traveling the roadways.

Remember to slow down whenever you enter a work zone. Look ahead and watch for signs to direct you. Be extra cautious around flaggers and those working on the roadways. The flagger is the most important person in a work zone; they are there to protect and direct you.

Reduced speed limits are commonly posted. The posted speed in a work zone is the speed the state Highway Patrol uses as a basis for writing citations. All fines double in a work zone and could be as much as \$1,000. The most common accident in a work zone is a rear-end collision. Remember to pay attention to traffic and drive defensively! Keep a safe distance between you and the vehicle in front of you.

We do our best to alert the community if our work will require road closures. Watch your local news for press releases and notices.

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spaces, capital letters, and numbers will make your password even more secure. If you have difficulty keeping track of multiple passwords, consider using password management software.

2. When entering personal information into a website, make sure that the URL starts with https://. The "s" stands for secure and means that any information entered into the website is encrypted so that no one else can access it.

3. Use caution when connecting to unfamiliar Wi-Fi networks. These networks are sometimes referred to as "zombie" networks and can be the gateway to malware or viruses. As an extra safety measure, and to save energy, turn off your Wi-Fi or Bluetooth when you are not using it.

By following these tips and maintaining up-to-date security software on all your devices, you and your "stuff" should stay safe and secure.

## Don't Post Signs



Planning a garage sale, holding an open house, or selling your car? We wish you the best in advertising your event, but ask you not to post information on our power poles.

Working on power poles can be a dangerous job. To ensure reliable service, line crews must climb up and down poles in all kinds of weather, day and night. The job is made even more hazardous if people put nails or heavy staples on power poles to attach signs and posters. This may seem harmless but can become a nightmare for line crews. Nails and staples can increase the danger of electrocution if they come in contact with live wires.

Line crews wear protective clothing and gloves to prevent electric shocks. Sharp, protruding nails can tear this protective equipment, and result in injury. They also have special boots and climbing hooks to allow them to get up the pole to inspect or make repairs to lines. If these hooks hit metal, they may be deflected, causing the line crewmember to fall.

NorthWestern Energy line crews are on the job to assure you quality, efficient, dependable service. Show them you care by not using power poles to post signs or posters.



## Balloons in Power Lines

NorthWestern Energy is reminding outdoor partiers that those shiny, metallic Mylar balloons can take out an entire bash in a flash. And they can bring down much of the neighborhood at the same time.

When a metallic balloon makes contact with an electrical line or substation equipment, the power can go out, resulting in fires and possible injuries.

To reduce the risk of these incidents, remember to always attach a weight to the balloons and never release them outdoors. After your event, deflate the balloons and dispose of them properly. Go ahead and be festive – just stay safe by keeping your balloons secure.

## 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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