

IRRIGATION NEWSLETTER

Plus Sunday: Yes, it is a control day

Load control options are now listed with "plus Sunday" as a reminder that irrigation systems may be under load control on Sundays.

"While we don't load control every Sunday during the summer, it is a possibility. We want customers to be aware," explains Cole Brodine, Manager of Engineering.

Energy rates change

An approximate three percent increase in irrigation kilowatt hour prices was approved by the Dawson PPD board in February. The changes go into effect on April 1.

"An in-depth rate study showed that our irrigation rate isn't generating the revenue needed to cover the costs we incur from serving these customers. This was one of the drivers for putting a long range plan on the table. We also know our producers are facing tough times and we believe letting them know ahead of time what to expect in the next few years will be beneficial for their own planning. We will help customers become more efficient so these rate changes create minimal impacts."



Dwight Eisenhower once said "Good planning without good working is nothing." You can count on Dawson PPD to produce the work necessary to provide you with safe and reliable power.

From the General Manager:

Looking at the future of rates

Predicting the future is not an exact science. However, we want to give you a glimpse at the next few years regarding rates.

First, credit is due to Nebraska Public Power District for their ability to hold rates steady for the past few years. They've changed the way they bill us which means we need to follow suit. The changes are small but will be impacting because our small power and commercial customers will need to adjust to a demand component on their future bills. These rates apply to some grain facilities.

NPPD made critical decisions, tackling cost components which included reducing their workforce. Dawson PPD made that difficult choice as well when we opted to close the customer service piece of our North Platte and Kearney offices. Customer traffic had declined significantly due to additional payment options and opportunities to interact with us.

We had a hurdle in 2018 and it required us to think outside the box regarding revenue requirements. Had it not been for the cash reserves we had in place, the significant drop in irrigation sales due to a wet season could have been very detrimental. It demonstrated the importance of having reserves for times just like this. We made adjustments in our budget but those weren't enough. (Our 2019 system improvement budget is \$3.8 million; the past eight year average was \$8.2 million.)

At the January 2019 board meeting, the directors were introduced to a three-five-ten-year plan for rates.

The one factor that has the biggest impact on Dawson PPD is something we have no control over: the weather.

The multi-year strategy uses



Gwen Kautz
General Manager
gkautz@dawsonpower.com
308-324-2386

financial metrics that the directors feel are crucial to the district as it relates to safety, reliability and sound business practices. It changes our plans

for system improvements and reducing financial liabilities. It strives to consider long-term rate impacts on customers and adjusts how we bill customers based on how we are billed by NPPD.

For irrigators, increases will be required in the future. Dawson PPD has made large investments in infrastructure in order to serve our irrigation loads during our peak season. We design our rates so that one type of customer doesn't subsidize another. Through a rate study, we found that we need to increase rates for irrigators so the rate sustains itself. Over the next five years, the irrigation rate needs to increase about ten percent. The 2019 increase is a step toward that goal. Of course, all rate increases are presented to the board for a vote so this projection is subject to approval. It may also be changed by weather patterns and wholesale energy costs.

Call for assistance; don't tamper with load controllers

Did you know that Dawson PPD will give you some time off load control to repair a pivot?

“Contact us if you need to have a service taken off load control for a few hours while you make repairs to your irrigation system. We can send the signal and have your system running within minutes,” explains Cole Brodine, Manager of Engineering.

Brodine explains that he and his staff are available during every hour of load control throughout the season. Call 308-324-2386

or 800-752-8305.

Bypassing a load control switch is not allowed. Yet each year, Dawson PPD employees see controllers that have cut seals or non-standard wiring.

“If a customer finds that someone has altered a controller, they need to report it to Dawson PPD immediately,” he says.

If Dawson PPD personnel detect tampering or a bypass, the irrigation account will be moved to the *uncontrolled rate* for both demand and energy charges.

The customer will be responsible for the additional costs, plus mile-

age and labor costs associated with the investigation. In addition, the irrigator may be prohibited from participation in the load management program in the future.

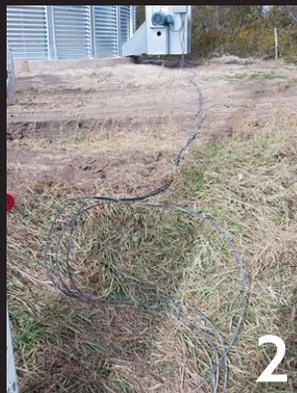
“We want to work with our farmers and their contractors. It takes just a few minutes to send an override signal once you call, so the customer or technician aren't waiting long,” Brodine says.



Can you spot the hazards? Be safe this year.



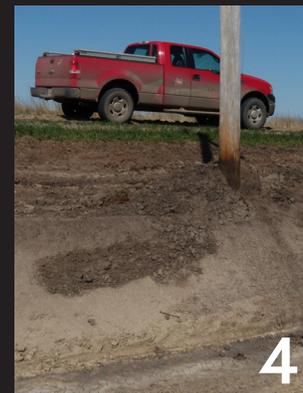
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Note: each of the situations documented in these photos has been addressed and corrected. Dawson PPD encourages customers to remember the importance of safety for themselves, their employees and others in the area.

1. Pivots should have a separate stop device. They should not be installed on a Dawson PPD pole.

2. Underground wire should be buried according to the National Electric Code. Temporary solutions need to be corrected quickly.

3. Customers are not allowed to install lights or other devices on Dawson PPD poles. This light is especially close to primary voltage wiring.

4. When moving soil near poles, contact Dawson PPD. This can weaken the electric grid, causing reliability and safety problems.



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5. Look up before moving or storing an auger. It would be better to park it elsewhere on the property. Decrease your risk of a deadly line contact.

6. Use extreme caution with large equipment around electrical substations and poles. If you contact a line, stay in the vehicle and call for help.

Efficiency and profits are promoted with TAPS

The UNL-TAPS (University of Nebraska Lincoln Testing Ag Performance Solutions) is an interactive farm management competition bringing together scientists, producers, industry professionals, students and more to promote efficiency and profitability. The competition, developed by University of Nebraska research and extension specialists and educators, just completed its second year and is preparing to begin its third year. Rather than a typical learning environment, participants interact in the real life farm management competitions administered in North Platte.

In 2018, the competition expanded from the pilot sprinkler irrigated corn

program to also include a sprinkler irrigated sorghum competition. The corn contest had 20 participating teams and the sorghum contest had eight teams with participants from Nebraska and Kansas representing 12 Nebraska Natural Resource Districts and two Kansas Groundwater Management Districts. Expanding the program allowed for the inclusion of new and returning producer teams, as well as non-producer teams.

Each team is randomly assigned a set of three experiment sized plots, totaling about one half of an acre. The yields and costs from each "farm" are amplified to represent 3,000 harvested acres for the corn competition and 1,000 harvested acres for the sorghum competition, which is more representative of a modern farm size. Participants have control over six parameters: irrigation management, nitrogen management, hybrid selection, seeding rate, grain marketing and crop insurance. All other management decisions are fixed by the University and were the same for all plots.

"Participants devote a couple hours before planting season to select their hybrid, seeding rate and crop insurance program," explains Chuck Burr, UNL Extension Educator. "During the growing season, they spend about an hour per week looking at crop markets and determining nitrogen and irrigation applications."

Daran Rudnick, UNL assistant professor and irrigation management specialist, adds that there are in-person events in March, August and December that give



participants an opportunity to receive updates and meet with peers, industry leaders and researchers.

The 2018 competition concluded in December with the awards banquet where the results were presented for the top "farms" in three categories including greatest grain yield, highest input use efficiency and most profitable farm.

"Last year the producers choices had a range of 90 pounds of nitrogen and over six inches of irrigation water. It has been very enlightening to see some growers producing similar yields with much lower inputs," Burr says.

One of the greatest benefits of the TAPS program is that it encourages peer to peer exchange of ideas and innovation. The winners of past years, as well as other competitors are invited to serve as speakers or part of a growers panel at the West Central Water and Crops Field Day that is held in mid-August.

"This program has provided an opportunity to experience and showcase the complexity of farm management, which will help in developing future management recommendations," explains Rudnick.

The 2019 program will kick off in March, featuring the sprinkler irrigated corn and sorghum contests, as well as a new subsurface drip irrigation corn competition. For more information on participating in the competition, or sponsoring the event please contact Krystle Rhoades at Krystle.rhoades@unl.edu.

To learn more, visit taps.unl.edu to subscribe to their newsletter. Follow the project on Twitter at UNL_TAPS.

"The biggest surprise has been that the efficiency award winner also had some of the top yields... you don't have to give up yield to be efficient."

— Chuck Burr

2019 irrigation rates

Anytime (formerly six-day) + Sunday

Demand charge	Energy charge	2018 energy
\$28.22/HP	6.25¢/kwh	6.07¢/kwh

Four day + Sunday

\$33.72/HP	7.85¢/kwh	7.62¢/kwh
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Three day + Sunday

\$38.72/HP	8.50¢/kwh	8.25¢/kwh
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Two day + Sunday

\$43.72/HP	9.14¢/kwh	8.87¢/kwh
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One day + Sunday

\$48.72/HP	9.79¢/kwh	9.50¢/kwh
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No control

\$53.72/HP	10.42¢/kwh	10.12¢/kwh
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Standby

\$22.50/HP

Important dates and deadlines

March 15	Deadline for changes to load management options
April 25	Demand or horsepower charges due
May 1	Load control season begins
September 15	Load control season ends
November 25	Energy charges are due