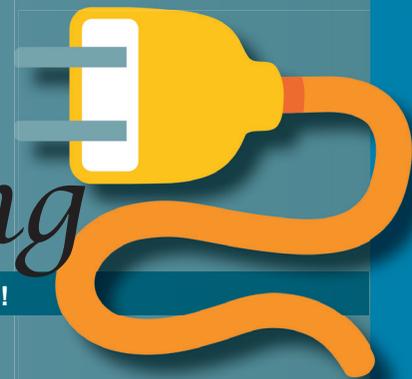




Nelson, Nebraska

# Watt's Happening

Keeping you plugged in to what's happening!



OBJECTIVE: To make electricity available at the lowest cost consistent with sound economy and good management.



## Manager's Column

by  
**Craig Cox**

### WILL ROLLING BLACKOUTS BE THE NEW NORMAL?

The rolling blackouts we experienced on February 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> were unprecedented in our region of the country. In the weeks since, we've been given the reasons why they were necessary, but not much has been said about how we fix the problem. There will be many in-depth studies to come.

The problems that arose were not rooted in Nebraska. We have maintained a diverse mix of power plants that include plenty of coal and nuclear capacity. We are, however, still part of an interconnected power grid that shares resources. The Southwest Power Pool (SPP) oversees the power grid and energy market for Nebraska and part, or all, of 13 other states.

Interestingly, SPP issued a press release on January 26, 2021, proclaiming SPP as the first regional grid operator in the nation with wind as it's No. 1 annual fuel source. A quote from the SPP CEO states, "Maintaining reliability with this large amount of wind is extraordinary." Just 2 weeks later, on February 9<sup>th</sup>, emergency alerts started coming from SPP calling for customers to conserve power. By February 15<sup>th</sup>,

rolling blackouts were necessary across to entire SPP footprint to prevent a cascading failure of the entire eastern electric grid.

Granted, the extreme cold affected all types of generation in the southern states, where plants were not designed to operate at these temperatures. The biggest underlying problem, however, was the lack of natural gas and wind. Natural gas supply was limited, in part, by heating needs. Gas and Electricity prices skyrocketed. Wind was producing at around 15% of capacity. Other problems limited the distribution of natural gas to where it was needed, and natural gas has limited on-site storage capability.

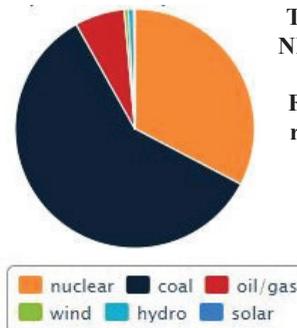
Because wind is unreliable, it has to be backed up with an equal amount of dispatchable generation that can adjust quickly to the rapid changes in wind generation. The resource of choice for backing up wind generation is natural gas. Coal and nuclear plants aren't designed to ramp up and down as fast as wind. They are best run flat out to supply base load. Particularly in the south, coal and nuclear plants have been closed as more wind and gas generation has come on line.

Through the week of extreme cold and rolling blackouts, NPPD's coal, nuclear, and gas plants were all generating. They were producing anywhere from 135 to 620 megawatts more power than we needed in the state. Excess power had to be moved south to support the wind and gas reliant southern states. Produc-

tion from NPPD's 341 megawatts of wind capacity was insignificant with the calm wind conditions we experienced. Coal and Nuclear were producing over 90% of our power at that time.

Losing power can be life-threatening in these extreme conditions. It was bad enough that many of our customers had to experience 45-60 minute rolling outages. Worse yet, if we had lost a major north-south transmission line or a few more large generators, the entire power grid would have collapsed. It takes several days to restore power after a grid failure. There would have been major losses to livestock, equipment, and even people with temperatures 50 degrees colder than during a typical ice storm event.

We have to maintain a balanced generation mix to prevent this from happening in the future. That is becoming increasingly more difficult, given the current political environment. People need to be aware of the consequences if we continue down the path toward zero carbon using variable resources like wind and solar. At some point, we have to take another look at the potential of nuclear power and carbon capture technology for coal plants.



This graph shows NPPD's generation mix at 9:00 am February 15<sup>th</sup> as rolling blackouts started. Updated every minute

# LINEMAN APPRECIATION DAY

## APRIL 12, 2021

**THANK YOU**



South Central Public Power District has 14 linemen with a combined 213 years of experience at South Central. Some of our linemen also had previous experience as linemen at other utilities. These 14 individuals are dedicated to doing whatever is necessary to provide our customers with safe, reliable electricity 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. They are willing to put in the work, many times under extreme conditions, to “keep the lights on”. We would like to take this opportunity to say “Thank You” for their services.



### Nelson Crew:

Top Row L to R, Terry Daniels, Leon Fanning, Jarrod Hajny, Ben Reinke

Bottom Row L to R, Preston Brinegar, Owen Grube, Allen Schiermeyer

(Not Pictured): Lorrell Peterson

### Clay Center Crew:

Cody Barbee, Tyler Loberg, Alan Brown, Jim Piper, Trey Dasher, Steve Johnson



Steve Johnson -	37 Years	Jarrold Hajny -	19 Years	Preston Brinegar -	2 Years
Lorrell Peterson -	36 Years	Jim Piper -	18 Years	Alan Brown -	2 Years
Allen Schiermeyer -	32 Years	Ben Reinke -	8 Years	Owen Grube -	2 Years
Leon Fanning -	22 Years	Tyler Loberg -	7 Years	Cody Barbee -	1 Year
Terry Daniels -	21 Years	Trey Dasher -	6 Years		

# Let's Go To NREA's Youth Energy Leadership Camp!



## 2021 Youth Energy Leadership Camp RSVP Form July 19 - 23, 2021

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Current Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Name of parents or guardian \_\_\_\_\_

Sponsoring Rural Electric System: **South Central Public Power District**



The Rural Electric Youth Energy Leadership Camp involves about 65 highly motivated high school Freshmen, Sophomores and Juniors from Nebraska, Wyoming, South Dakota and Colorado whose homes are served by one of the Nebraska Rural Electric Association's member-systems. The camp offers educational and recreational experiences, leadership training, environmental awareness, character building and social interaction.

Through workshops and guest speakers, students learn about energy generation, electric safety and careers in the rural electric program. A highlight of the camp is the tour of the Gerald Gentleman Power Station near North Platte and the Kingsley Hydro-Electric Power Plant near Ogallala.

The week is intermingled with fun activities, including sports tournaments, canoeing, dancing, a get-acquainted party, and some free time to socialize and make new friends.

**Those selected by their sponsoring rural electric system will receive an all-expense paid trip to the Youth Energy Leadership Camp at the State 4-H Camp near Halsey. Camp begins around 3:30 pm. (CDT) on Monday, July 19th and will end around noon on Friday, July 23th. Your sponsoring rural electric system will provide you with transportation to and from the camp.**

Leadership is stressed when students compete to win a free trip to Washington D.C. as ambassadors and/or return to the next year's camp as a junior counselor. Campers sponsored by South Central PPD, who do not win the free trip while competing at the camp, can apply for sponsorship to the Washington DC Youth Tour in a contest offered by South Central PPD after the camp.

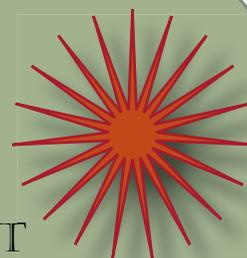
**To apply, complete the RSVP form at the top of this page and mail it to South Central Public Power District, PO Box 406, Nelson, Ne 68961 by April 23rd, 2021. If you need more information, contact South Central PPD, (402-225-2351).**

# Meet Our New Director.....



## MARK ZALMAN

SOUTH CENTRAL PUBLIC POWER DISTRICT



Mark Zalman became South Central PPD's Sub-District 7 Director on January 17, 2021. He was appointed to the Board due to the retirement of Dean Zalman.

Mark is a lifelong resident of the Red Cloud area. He graduated from Red Cloud High School in 1979.

Mark and his wife, Leisa, live south of

Red Cloud. Mark and Leisa have a daughter, Jordan, who currently lives in Cambridge, United Kingdom. Jordan is a geologist employed by the University of Cambridge. Before the United Kingdom, Jordan had previously lived in Norway. Mark and Leisa were able to visit Jordan while she lived in Norway but Leisa is the only one to make the trip to England since she moved there.

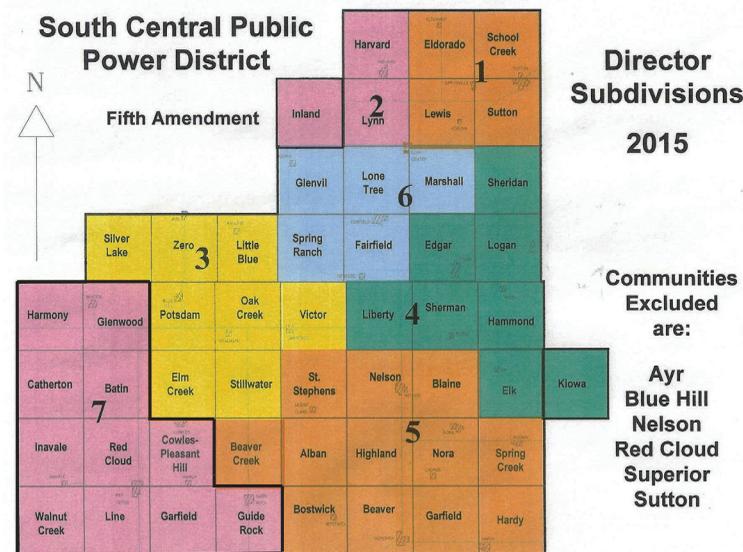
Mark's wife, Leisa, is retired after working for over 20 years in the Hastings Public Schools system.

Mark raised cattle for many years. He is now employed by Meyers Aerial Service. He does the ground work for their Red Cloud operations.

Mark enjoys golf in his spare time and is also a devoted Husker football fan. He is a season ticket holder and rarely misses a home game. He is hopeful to return to Memorial Stadium for the 2021 season.

Mark commented on his father, Dean Zalman's, 44 years of service on the South Central Board of Directors but said he doesn't believe he will be able to match that milestone.

South Central PPD is fortunate to have dedicated and informed Board members who work very hard to insure our customers have reliable and affordable electricity available to them. We welcome Mark to the Board of Directors and believe the District will be well served by him.



**SmartHub provides convenient account access to make payments and check your usage history. Call us to help set up a SmartHub profile. 402-225-2351 1-800-557-5254**

### WATT'S HAPPENING

Newsletter of the South Central Public Power District  
Nelson, Nebraska

#### NOTICE

The regular meeting of the Board of Directors of South Central Public Power District is held the third Tuesday of each month at 9 a.m. at the District's office in Nelson, Nebraska.

Current Comments Editor: Royce Schott

### Board of Directors

David Woods -----President  
Neal Carpenter -----Vice President  
David Hamburger -----Secretary  
Philip Wehrman -----Treasurer  
John Greer -----Director  
James Hoffman -----Director  
Mark Zalman -----Director  
John Hodge -----Attorney  
Craig Cox -----General Manager

### Nelson Office Hours

8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday  
402-225-2351 or 1-800-557-5254  
For **Billing Questions**, please call:  
(M-F, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.)  
402-225-2351 or 1-800-557-5254  
For **Power Outages**, please call:  
(Any time of day or night)  
402-225-2351 or 1-800-557-5254