

# THE UTE LETTER

238 Edition of the Nebraska City Utilities News

October 2018

## FROM THE DESK OF JEFF KOHRS:

We had a great crowd for Applejack. The weather was perfect, some of the old events were brought back like the water barrel fights and some events in other communities that usually conflict with the Applejack weekend didn't conflict this year. All these things made for a great weekend with lots of activities and lots of people. Hope everyone enjoyed a great weekend. Thanks to everyone that helped, whether it was hooking up the electric or water for the vendors or helping with the water barrel fights or helping with other things. It's cooperation and assistance by NCU employees that helps events like this be a huge success for our community.

Mayor Bequette read a proclamation at the October 1<sup>st</sup> City Council meeting, recognizing the week of October 7<sup>th</sup> thru October 13<sup>th</sup> as Public Power and Public Natural Gas week. John Hodges and Bryan Turner were present at that meeting and were introduced representing the Gas Department. Jake Coyan and Howard Orndorff were also present, representing the Electric Department and were introduced as well. Dan Patton was also present. Thanks guys for giving up some of your evening time to attend this meeting. Thanks Karen for organizing the display tables and refreshments for the week.

We'll be starting to put together information and reports for the annual audit. Thanks to everyone that will be helping to put all the information together.

The rain (and subsequent flooding) continues to be a challenge to access our existing well field property as well as the potential new well field property. We're anxious to get in there, but have to have patience, we'll get it done.

We are continuing the process of interviewing potential candidates for the Wastewater Plant Superintendent position. We hired John Stidd for the wastewater operator position and he is expected to begin working on October 15th.

I was able to watch Stuart, Adam, Jake, Chris, and Jon (hope I didn't miss anyone) assist at the Lewis and Clark Center on October 3<sup>rd</sup>. They replaced one of the support logs on the entrance to the center that was rotten and replaced it with a new support. The guys made it look easy, but I know it wasn't. Great job guys.

Work safely and let's be careful out there.

## SUPERINTENDENT OF OPERATIONS:

Dan Patton

The Tree Crew, Rob and Jake have been clearing right-of-ways and trimming from 904 West to the Palmyra Tee. They will finish at Palmyra, Douglas, and Bennet on the West Line, then they are back in Nebraska City to take care of a few projects that need done for the sewer lift station on North 4<sup>th</sup> street.

The power plants that NCU are partners in, OPPD NC2 and WEC2 both are back online at full capacity. WEC2 was in a major turbine overhaul, boiler repairs, fan repairs, cleaning of the catalyst, and as much that they could do until everything was back into service and running good.

Gary and Mike are still working on communications issues, on the new SCADA system at the WTP and WWTP, on the documentations, and drawings.

They both have been looking at and designing new communications for monitoring more of our sites, to get up to date, current time of events, changes of status, and to receive that information back at our offices. Gary has been very busy working on upgrading all of our Network Systems. Mike has been working with the Power Plant staff on controls for both unit #11 and #12. He will also build out controls for the new 9th street lift station soon.

The 904 Substation Upgrade has started with enlarging the substation area and fencing, then the concrete pads, 69kv Circuit Switcher, 25kv Breaker, and New Control Building. This will allow for having adequate area for the new equipment and clearances. Then Jordan Transformer will come back to field dress, install all bushings, and do the final testing on the transformer before it is placed back into service.

Fall is approaching quickly, so keep your cool weather gear close. Watch out for our local farmers on the county roads and highways as they haul in grain, also move equipment around from farm to farm. Keep up your tail gate meetings and follow all safety procedures in your daily work schedule in each of the departments. Thank you, everyone for all you do each and every day, safely and effectively.

#### **LORI NEEMAN:**

I have posted notices on the bulletin boards, there will be United Way and Community Charity Forms in the Oct. 5<sup>th</sup> pay checks. Please have the United Way and or Community Charity donation cards returned to me by Friday, Oct. 12, 2018.

Also, I wanted to let everyone know that we will not be offering a separate flu clinic this year at the Utilities. The flu shots were part of our insurance Health Fair, that we took part in September 28th. Walgreens, Walmart, and our Dr. Office all offer the flu shot. Thank you!

#### **ELECTRIC DEPT:**

Carl Abbott

The Electric Department has been very busy trying to keep up with the jobs that are coming in. You can always tell the number of construction jobs going on in the area, because the first sign of weather starting to change seems to expedite, alert, or remind people they need to contact the Utilities. Most of the time we are not notified until they really need us. Go figure!!!!!!

Both crews have been very busy at the Sr. Housing project in Nebraska City. That project is about 6 weeks behind schedule, so we are trying to get where we need to be before the winter frost. We have several projects lingering, but still are hoping to get some good weather so we can split back up and get some of them completed.

We recently advertised for a new pick-up and UTV. We are real close on getting the spec's finalized for the replacement of Truck # 21 (2-man Aerial Bucket truck). Some of the material is starting to show up for the rebuild of Sub 904 west of Syracuse.

Please help fill in your remaining vacation days on my calendar. The Huskers better get by Bethune-Cookman or Iowa could beat us. OMG the thought is scary. lol

#### **STORES DEPT:**

Sharon Smulling

Things back here in the warehouse area are still very busy. Hopefully, everyone had a chance to inspect their hard hats. If you need a new one or suspensions, please see Tony. Alas, the cooler weather is here. The Stores Department has glove liners and hard hat liners. Stop in and see Sharon Crunk if you need anything. We will be having our inventory soon. Will let you know the date. As always, we appreciate you all accurately charging out material.

**GAS & WATER DEPARTMENT:**

Bryan Turner

Greetings, Hope everyone had a WONDERFUL APPLEJACK WEEKEND! We've been keeping busy here in the Gas and Water Department. Ron and Dan's crews have been working on a lot of smaller projects, running gas services, fixing water leaks, and moving a water service to make room for our new 9<sup>th</sup> Street Lift Station. Speaking of which the contractor has started moving in equipment and should be starting on that project in the next week or so depending on the weather.

Of course, the river is flooding again and is making it difficult to get in to the wells. Thanks to Todd Fleck for getting his boat out and helping Mark Lant get to well 10 to take care of some problems there. It has also put another delay on our water study for a possible new well site as we can't get in to drill test wells.

Tommy and Kyle are out doing our biannual flushing of the Fire Hydrants and Shawn is busy with meter testing and has updated our list of pressure factored meters. John has been busy just about everywhere bouncing around to help the crews when needed, helping keep us beautiful with mowing and seeding yards, plus walking the gas lines weather permitting. Brad as always is busy with locates and getting our GIS system up to date and working the way it should. Thanks to Gary for his help on that. Ken is keeping everything going in Syracuse and helping the crews on a few projects out there.

It's the time of year when a lot of High School sports are starting to compete in district and state tournaments, Good Luck to all. Remember, stay safe and report any unsafe conditions.

**SERVICE DEPT:**

Mary Lynn Hall

The season has changed, and we are into our fall service calls. Customers are scheduling appointments to connect their gas meters for that warm heat for their homes and businesses. We have almost completed our gas meter change out program with only a few left. GREAT JOB, Kathy Lechner and Al Harker for your dedication to getting the job done!!

On the electric side Craig continues to be constantly busy with whatever and where the work needs to be done.

Please be careful and watch out for those ghosts & goblins out and about this Halloween.

Enjoy the beauty fall brings and consider each day a blessing.

**WATER PLANT:**

Mark Lant

Hello NCU Family and Happy October! It sure didn't take long for the weather to cool off did it. This time of year, always reminds me of how much needs to be done before Winter sets in, and the list always seems to be pretty long.

Things here at the Water Plant are going well and we are continuing to tackle one project at a time. Wanted to give a shout out to Todd Fleck for getting me to well 10 a few weeks ago to check on an issue. The Water level was too high, so we sailed in on his bass boat. I sure appreciate the help. Stay safe everyone and enjoy this October in 2018. Every day is a Blessing! Thanks for all that you do.

### NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS:

Linda Cutler	11-11-1963
Mona Kuhlenengel	11-14-1964
Mark Lant	11-22-1977
Jeff Lollmann	11-13-1985
Karen Tift	11-10-1964
Kory White	11-01-1982

### NOVEMBER WORK ANNIVERSARIES:

Casey Borer	11-01-2017
Kevin Grundman	11-20-1978
Chris Koperski	11-07-2011
Ron Lechner	11-26-2001
Jerry Osborn	11-12-2001
Frank Stidd	11-16-2001
Kory White	11-17-2014

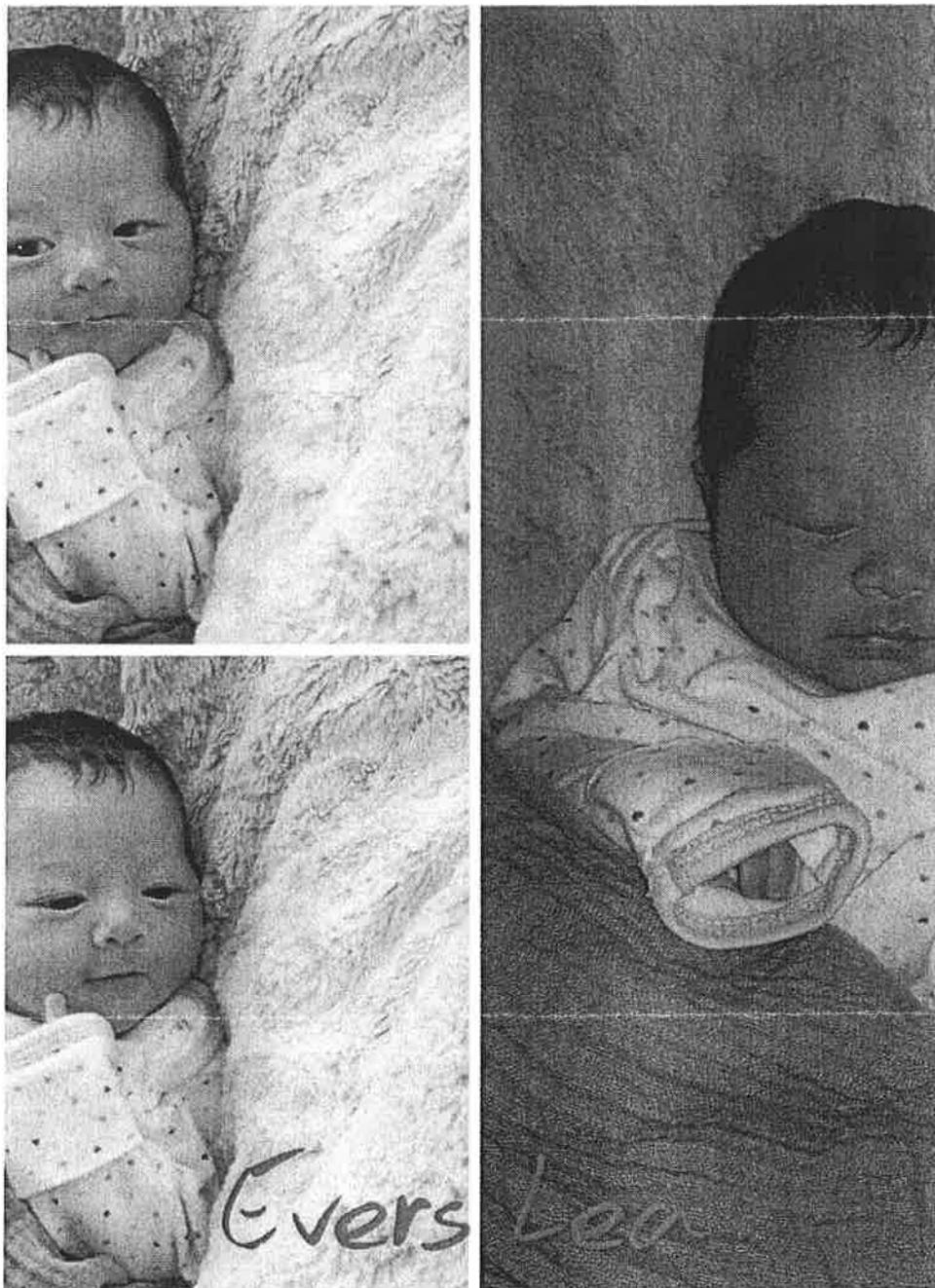
### RECYCLE:

**Just a reminder** there are receptacles around the building for your plastic recyclable items. Please remember to use them. Let's help make NCU green.

Also, your recyclable items, both plastic and aluminum can be brought in from home. Any questions please see Miki or Elaine! Thanks!



HAPPY HALLOWEEN



Congratulations to Chessa (Hall) and Jon Clay on the birth of their daughter Evers Lea Clay, born September 17, 2018. She weighed 7 lbs and was 19<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>" long. At home, she joins big brothers Jadus and Xander. Proud Grandparents are Tim and Mary Lynn Hall.

# FrontLine Employee

WELLNESS, PRODUCTIVITY AND YOU!

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## RELATIONSHIPS: The secret to happiness

Many articles, books, and speeches have discussed the secret to finding happiness, but there is only one 75-year study that has attempted to pin down the answer. It's the Grant and Gluek Study, which began in 1934 and continues today.

The project focuses on the lives of two completely different groups of people — a large group of low-income people from Boston, Massachusetts, and a similarly large group of Harvard graduates. The only finding common to both groups of what ultimately brings joy is quality relationships.

Recent studies on the negative effects of loneliness lend support to these findings. Developing strong and positive relationships is a social skill that has some important ingredients. The good news is that it can be learned and Continuum EAP's counselors can help you do that.

If you're past your teens and younger years and you find your health and relationships are lacking, it can be a bit more of a challenge to fire up an active friend network. For advice on reestablishing a social life

after lots of time away from the practice of doing so, consider the book, "The Friendship Crisis: Finding, Making, and Keeping Friends When You're Not a Kid Anymore."

Source: <http://www.adultdevelopmentstudy.org/grantandglueckstudy>.

## Stress tip... PLAN FOR TOMORROW

Jotting down your to-do list for tomorrow before going to sleep tonight may help you sleep better. Surprisingly, the ritual helps you off-load thoughts and reduce worry, not stress you more about what lies ahead.

Research seems to support another often recommended productivity tip — planning ahead for the next day. This includes jotting down your schedule, deciding what you will wear, planning breakfast, and choosing the personal items you'll take to work. Starting your day with less chaos, having time and a few mini-successes, and experiencing less stress in the a.m. can help you have a better day.

Source: [www.baylor.edu](http://www.baylor.edu) [in search article: 192388]

## How to ask for LESS MICROMANAGEMENT

Micromanagement is a common complaint among employees, but most micromanagement is not malicious. It stems from a lack of understanding of how to delegate. A micromanager may actually trust you, but it's fear that keeps him or her from letting go.

To intervene, don't grow weary, stress out, or bark out your frustration. Instead, meet in private and explore the issue. If you have not done so before now, you'll discover the solution is likely good communication about each of your needs. You may need two or three follow-up discussions to achieve consistency, but a few more small progress reports from you will usually resolve the issue.

## RESPECTING personal boundaries at work

Respect in the workplace brings to mind words like tolerance, diversity awareness and bias. But disrespect has a much broader brush of issues that can impact productivity. One of them is not respecting the personal boundaries of a co-worker. Do you walk through a co-worker's door unannounced, call after hours when he or she is at home, or sit in a chair close by while the co-worker is on the phone, waiting your turn to speak with him?

Employees who appreciate the importance of honoring personal boundaries will get along better. Here's why: When you disregard personal boundaries, you send this nonverbal message: "I'm more important than you, so I don't need to respect your space."

All of us teach each other what our personal boundaries are and how we want to be treated. Making them known is a combination of assertiveness, diplomacy and immediacy. "I would love to speak with you right now, but I need to take this phone call in private," combines all three elements of how to establish a personal boundary.

The most important rule in maintaining personal boundaries is to practice what you preach. In other words, if you don't want people phoning after 8 p.m. to discuss a work issue, don't phone them after 8 p.m.

## Are teenagers SWITCHING TO XANAX?

Many teenagers who have been using opioids may be switching to prescription drugs like Xanax, say addiction treatment professionals who specialize in teen substance abuse. The war on street opioids, related overdose fears, and the risk of death when using fentanyl may be influencing the switch. Drugs like Xanax are often plentiful in medicine cabinets of parents and grandparents. Stealing the substances and distributing them among peers is not uncommon.

Once you are addicted, quitting Xanax suddenly can be life-threatening. Because drug-using teens often drink, using Xanax, Valium and similar drugs can be particularly hazardous. If you have been prescribed medications like Xanax, manage these substances so



they cannot be stolen. Never give your medication to your teen as a way of controlling his or her anxiety.

Keep in mind, teens more susceptible to Xanax and other benzodiazepine addiction will be those with family histories of substance abuse. If you are worried about your teen, contact Continuum EAP for help creating a plan to address your concerns and getting them the help they may need.

Source: <http://www.pewtrusts.org> [search: "Xanax"].

## Caregivers & depression

Do you care for a chronically ill person who also suffers with depression? If so, guard and protect your own mental health. Research has shown that caregivers are more at risk for depression themselves if they care for a person with depression.

And it's not unusual for caregivers to develop mild or more serious depression from the constant demands they face while providing care. Be sure to have a social support and psychological support system, and practice basic stress management skills.

October 11, 2018, is National Depression Screening Day. It's dedicated to education, reducing the stigma of depression, and encouraging people to get screened. Early attention to the symptoms of depression may help to prevent the development of a more serious depression over time.

If you or a family member are dealing with depression, Continuum EAP has resources available to help.