

THE UTE LETTER

240 Edition of the Nebraska City Utilities News

December 2018

FROM THE DESK OF JEFF KOHRS:

Happy Holidays!! I hope everyone was able to enjoy Thanksgiving with family and friends.

We had lots of food for the "Pig Out" day December 7th. Thanks to everyone that participated. It's was good to see and visit with some of our retirees that attended.

I wanted to take a moment to recognize Bob Gray. After the passing of Shoey, Bob volunteered to come in and work at the WWTP. Bob put in (I'd hate to guess how many hours) going thru reports, updating information, and organizing some of the paper work until we were able to fill the vacancy. Bob went beyond the call of duty to help us out, and I wanted to recognize Bob for doing that. It really speaks to how dedicated Bob was/is to Nebraska City Utilities and how much he cared. Thank You Bob.

Hopefully all of you have gotten the message that the Mayor declared Christmas Eve Day as an additional holiday for all City employees.

The parking lot will start to look rather empty at times as we get closer to the end of the year and lots of folks use the balance of their vacation days.

I am hopeful that everyone will be able to relax a little and enjoy the holidays.

Whatever you're doing, regardless of the time of year, please remember to work safe and let's be careful out there.

OPERATIONS SUPERINTENDENT:

Dan Patton

Well, winter is here about six (6) weeks early this year, we have had some heavy wet snow a couple of time already this season. Please, everyone plan for any type of weather conditions as we are out working on all of our projects this fall and winter.

The Tree Crew, Rob and Jake are back out West clearing right-of-ways and trimming from 904 West to Palmyra Tee, they will finish at Palmyra, Douglas, and Bennett on the West Line. We have had some snow days that they have worked in Nebraska City taking care of a few projects that need done. The West Line from 904 Substation in Syracuse west to Bennet will be completed by the time you read this.

The Power Plants that NCU are partners in, OPPD NC2 and WEC2 both are back online at full capacity, both units have been operating very well with very few issues. NCU Power Plant staff is working on unit #7 at Plant Site #2 in Syracuse, making necessary repairs and maintenance. This unit was having issues running efficiently and needed to be torn down and inspected, parts have been sent off for repairs and we received those last week. The staff is installing and putting this unit back together now.

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. They have also been looking at controls for all of the wells to bring back more information that is needed.

The 904 Substation Upgrade is moving forward with the setting of 69kv Circuit Switcher, 25kv Breaker, and New Control Building. The conduits have been installed and are getting the control cables pulled into each of those different types of equipment and then connected. Jordan Transformer came back to field dress, install all bushings, and do the final testing on the transformer before it is placed back into service. Everything tested out good and the units were also set into their permanent place for use in the substation and on the spare pad.

Thank you everyone and have a Very Merry Christmas and a Great New Year in 2019.

ELECTRIC DEPT:

Carl Abbott

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. The holiday season is coming very fast and shortly the 2018 year will be behind us. I know the calendar rolls over very rapidly and months go by faster than ever. The crews have worked very hard this year in getting many of the jobs completed before the weather change. We still have lots of jobs pending for completion, but I feel very good where we are at.

We have all the infrastructure in at the Sr. Housing Project and a couple of the services installed, we will continue to progress as each new dwelling is completed. We have a new 36 home development wanting to get started in Bennet. Not sure if this will take off before spring, but there is a push to start 5 lots. We have plenty of work to keep us very busy through the winter.

We will need a lot of help from Mother Nature. Snow and frost can limit us in a lot of the work that we have on the table in the underground installs, but we have plenty of overhead construction and maintenance to do.

I hope everyone gets the opportunity to spend the holidays with their loved ones and family. Please enjoy your time off and practice safety at work and home. I would like to thank the Mayor for allowing us the extra day to spend with our families. I also would like to thank everyone for their hard work and efforts to make this a great place to work.

SERVICE DEPT:

Mary Lynn Hall

I would like to say a huge "THANK YOU" to all of our generous employees of NCU who contributed to the family in need we sponsored. It's so wonderful to know they will now be able to have a Christmas. Your concern and thoughtfulness is overwhelming. All of our family's needs and wants were taken care and we had cash donations that were able to go towards other children who hadn't been sponsored. We are all very blessed, and to share our blessings with those in need brings out the true meaning of Christmas. Have a very Merry Christmas and may God Bless You and your families.



Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

GAS & WATER DEPT:

Bryan Turner

Merry Christmas, hope everyone has been good this year, can't have Santa mad at you. Everyone in the Gas & Water Department has been good this year keeping busy and getting their jobs done. Everyone has been hard at work on the new 9th Street lift station, work is progressing, and the new station is scheduled to arrive the week of the 17th.

Dan's crew just finished up the annual inspections of the DRS's and the Border Stations. Ron's crew has been busy with water main breaks, moving some gas services, and have started turning water valves. Brad's been busy with locates, the GIS system, and some record keeping. John has been doing business leak survey and helping the crews when necessary. Tommy is working hard on making sure the lift stations are running properly and flushing some mains. Shawn has been keeping up on his meter maintenance, getting rid of some obsolete equipment in the meter shop, helping in the service department, and taking readings when necessary.

As always keep an eye on safety, if you see a situation report it immediately. I wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Everyone have safe travels and enjoy your time off.

STORES DEPT:

Sharon Smulling

Happy Holidays!

Things back here in the Stores Department are busy as usual. Tony has re-labeled the warehouse with white alum tags. Please take a look. We will use these tags as identification for where material is stored and for inventory. Speaking of inventory....we have come up with a date. It will be on February 4th. I know, please settle down, you all will be able to participate. Details will be coming later.

I thought that I would update you all on Mike Crunk. Mike fought thru another health scare. He has recently been transferred to Madonna in Lincoln. Mike is progressing well there. Please keep him in your thoughts and prayers.

Reflecting on 2018, I personally have many things to be thankful for. I hope you all have a safe and fun holiday season, and look forward to a rock and roll 2019. I recently heard this quote that I would like to share: There are wooden ships. There are sailing ships, there are ships that sail the sea, but the best ships are friendships, and may they always be. Peace out....

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS:

Stuart Abbott	1-08-84
Travis Conner	1-26-82
Logan Crunk	1-28-85
Mark Francois	1-24-66
John Hodges	1-27-79
Ron Lechner	1-14-71
Frank Stidd	1-21-77

JANUARY WORK ANNIVERSARIES:

Carl Abbott	1-23-1978
Justin Conner	1-03-2012
Jeff Liesemeyer	1-12-1998
Rob Schreiner	1-05-1998

FrontLineEmployee

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ANGER *in the* WORKPLACE

If you blow up at disappointments, rage at inconveniences, or bark at others' mistakes, then you may already recognize that you have an anger management problem. Are you still struggling to get a handle on it?

The change you want entails:

- Education about anger, self-awareness and triggers.
- Practicing alternative responses.
- Logging attempts at change.
- Practicing response tactics.
- Apologizing to others when you slip up.
- Measuring of progress.

Anger responses become engrained, which is why a programmatic approach is often needed for long-term success.



Contact Continuum EAP to work with a professional and develop a plan that helps you gain and keep control.

Safeguarding your SOBRIETY during the holidays

Risk of relapse for recovering alcoholics can increase between Thanksgiving and the new year because many opportunities exist to socialize around alcohol.

If you are newly sober and facing the holidays for the first time, relapse need not happen to you. It takes some planning and focused effort, but the rewards of making it through the season are beyond measure. Stress, alcohol everywhere, and "It just happened!" are excuses people often use to explain relapses. Getting honest means accepting the fact that relapse happens because the addictive disease patient does things they should not be doing, while not doing things they should be doing to safeguard their sobriety.

Best practices for relapse prevention are found among those who've succeeded at doing it. Alcoholics

Anonymous is a great resource. Meetings, sponsors, reading materials and wisdom — help is there.

Still, no matter where you find guidance, even online, nearly all prevention tips fit within two idea tracks: *planning strategies* to avoid using substances and *adding support*.

Planning may include figuring out how to manage stressful events and interactions or keeping a friend or sponsor on-call so you can talk to someone who understands your program.

Adding support may include attending more gatherings with like-minded recovering persons who share your goal or finding satisfying ways to spend free time away from alcohol.



Overcoming impostor syndrome

Impostor syndrome is an unfounded fear of not being deserving of your position or achievements despite your training, capacity and skills. It often includes fear of others noticing it too. Impostor syndrome is a common experience. Even Albert Einstein reportedly suffered from it. Expect impostor syndrome if you are trained in what you are doing, but simply lack on-the-job experience. Intervene in impostor syndrome by forming relationships with peers who allow you to share concerns, successes and doubts. Choose an area of your job or profession — a niche — and decide to be the go-to expert on it.

Learn more impostor syndrome; don't minimize your own achievements; and recognize that if you think you are good, others are likely to see you as great. Continuum EAP professionals can give you tools to help boost your self-esteem and challenge negative self-talk, both great strategies so you can beat impostor syndrome.

DON'T TOUCH THAT IRA!

Withdrawing money from your IRA early in life can pull the plug on your retirement fund. You can irreparably damage it. Enormous leverage exists when an IRA sits undisturbed over time. Perhaps you have heard this lecture before, but if you are young and face a need for cash, it is hard to grasp the totality of this fact. The money you withdraw is also shockingly less because of penalties and taxes you immediately owe.

Taxes won't apply to a Roth IRA — you've paid them already — but **don't** view this as a nice surprise. Before signing a withdrawal slip, contact Continuum EAP and talk with a financial coach about your life situation. Or, speak to a financial advisor; doing so is usually free at a bank or a credit union.

Think of it this way, if you wouldn't burn a winning lottery ticket, don't mess with your IRA.

Parenting tip... SAYING "NO" TO TEENS

Saying no to a teenager (and making it stick) is tough for many parents. Fear of conflict leads to backing away in the face of rebellion. Sound familiar?

To make saying no easier, distinguish between house rules and guidelines. Rules are nonnegotiable, like a rule about no drug use. Guidelines are flexible and based on circumstances, like having a curfew of around 10:30 or 11 p.m. Think of guidelines as "leash extenders." Use them to help your child practice responsibility — and accountability.

Tip: Begin months or years earlier to educate a young teen about rules and guidelines. Saying no will be easier and your authority will be more easily accepted.

Reduce CATASTROPHIC thinking

Humans worry, but when we focus on the worst-case scenario, it is called catastrophic thinking. It's worry on **steroids**.

Catastrophic thinking is agitating and exhausting. And it can be toxic to your mental health.

Catastrophic thinking can be applied to almost anything — child safety concerns, bills, personal health, the environment, deadlines, etc. However, remaining concerned while avoiding one's worst fears is possible.

- 1 Recognize that catastrophic thinking is a drain on your mental energy.
- 2 Reduce worry levels by constructing contingency plans and solutions in writing.
- 3 Take a mental break with "thought blocking" by refusing to worry about something for a set period of time.
- 4 Consider how you engaged in catastrophic thinking in the past, but here you are today with those past fears or concerns never having come to pass or coming without the effect you originally imagined.