

# THE UTE LETTER

266 Edition of the Nebraska City Utilities News

February 2021

## FROM THE DESK OF JEFF KOHRS:

This previous week we encountered some of the coldest weather we've had in a long time. We are certainly seeing an increase in natural gas and electricity sales. Thanks go out to the gas and water crews for dealing with the cold/wet conditions fixing water main breaks and to the electric guys for restoring power to some customers in Bennet when a pole went down. Thanks to everyone that has to work in these cold conditions. Please be careful and make sure you take enough breaks to warm up. Watch out for slick conditions as well.

On the COVID front: I still have not gotten an update on when we might expect to have the vaccine available to NCU employees. I will send out a mass email to all employees, that have given us their email address, when the vaccine is available. I will also ask supervisors to post a notice in their respective department, so everyone is notified. Earlier I shared with everyone that the emergency paid sick leave hours were extended until March 31, 2021. That means that if you hadn't used all 80 hours by the end of 2020, you could still use the remaining hours through the end of March if necessary.

By the time you read this, we will have another new employee working at NCU. Mitchell Buck was hired with an expected start date of February 15<sup>th</sup>. Mitchell will be working in the Gas and Water Department. Please welcome Mitchell as he begins his career with NCU.

Remember to work safe and let's be careful out there.

## ELECTRIC DEPT:

Carl Abbott

January has gone very fast. The warehouse is shaping up more every day. Our goal was to get things put together before the real bad weather got here, so we could work on sorting, organizing, and labeling before inventory. The final picture has been a working project. I truly believe everyone is starting to see the fruition that will show dividends for many years. I have seen some guys walking in and knowing which aisle to go down for materials. Wow! Dan Hopper has really been involved in the process and has visions of how he wants the warehouse to look. I also have recognized that many of the ideas have been discussed and thought out, especially on how to load and unload material more efficiently. The items that used to be stacked ceiling high are now on shelves and much safer and faster to get to. Thanks to everyone for helping.

The crews have completed the line extension for Andy Snodgrass, The Motherhouse for the Franciscan Nuns, and the 3-phase overhead upgrade for the Studio Town Homes. Some preliminary work has started on the Hyvee Project. The guys have been working on all the cleaning and testing of the fiberglass arms and switch sticks along with washing and waxing of the fiberglass boom and buckets for dielectric testing. The GIS mapping continues to move forward. The deep snow makes that a more challenging job.

Kory, Jake, and Travis have been working on their pole climbing skills. Keep up the good work Guys. Think safety every day. Looking forward to a non covid day soon. Let's not let our guards down yet. Want to also welcome Ryan Worthey to our tree crew.

## **OPERATIONS SUPERINTENDENT:**

Dan Patton

The Tree Crew has a new employee Ryan Worthey that started in January, Rob has been taking Ryan around to different departments and some of the areas that we serve and been clearing power line in Palmyra and Nebraska City. Please welcome Ryan and the other new employees that have joined our staff here at the Utilities. Jake Walters has transferred from the tree crew to the Electric Department as a lineman, he has been working with the Electric Crews for a few weeks now, congratulations.

The power plants that NCU are partners in, OPPD NC2 is online and has been running well, but today we were informed that they are going to take the unit offline as soon as possible to make repairs on tube leaks in the boiler. WEC2 is online and running well, it has been having a good run and now with this colder weather the loads have picked up and the plant has been running at full load a lot of the time.

The NCU Power Plant staff has been working on equipment and unit at Syracuse, testing controls, piping and calibrations of equipment. They have been making necessary repairs on units, equipment, so the plant is ready for any other reason that might come up. We are planning on running two units this week for testing that is needed on each unit every year for meeting our requirements in the power markets.

Gary and Mike are working on communications issues, on the SCADA system at the WTP and WWTP, on the documentations, drawings. They both have been designing new communications for monitoring of our wells, water tower, for backup systems, which will assist us in getting up to date information. Both have been called to the Water and Wastewater plants to help solve issues that come up. They have also been working on The Electrical SCADA controls and adding new equipment on the West Line, add new switches on the new line that is being built between Douglas T and Panama T and Unadilla T and Palmyra T.

Winter is here and the cold weather is here to stay for some time, so everyone work safely and talk over your project on how to complete it while staying warm and staying aware of your co-worker and how everyone is coping with the outside conditions of the worksite with all our utility projects this winter.

## **WATER PLANT:**

Mark Lant

Ladies and Gents of the NCU Family, The Water Plant Crew says a BIG "Hello and Happy February". We hope that you are all doing well and are managing to stay above Freezing temperatures. We are all doing well here at the Water Plant, and everything is running smooth. We are still in the process of our winter maintenance, and the A Upflow will be finished and filled up by the time you all read this. Then we will start draining the B Upflow and will get that basin washed out. A big Thank you to Rob Schreiner and crew for giving our Lime Delivery Driver a hand getting out of the ditch recently. I will continue to say that we work with great people here.

Have a great month everyone, work safe and God Bless you all!



## **GAS & WATER DEPT:**

Bryan Turner

Stupid Ground Hog! I don't know what he did, but I don't like it. The guys are all keeping busy doing their Operator Qualifications for Gas. This is the second year with the new OQ and it seems to be going well. The guys have also been working on equipment, making sure it's ready for this cold weather. They've been scooping snow and making sure the Fire Hydrants are clear around town and our gas regulators are free of snow and ice. We do have a couple of gas services to run and we'll be doing them once the weather permits.

With the extreme cold I want everyone to take extra precautions if having to work outside, always have someone with you. Mitchell Buck will be starting with us on the 15<sup>th</sup>, we will be showing him around and making introductions, please make him feel welcome. There will be more on him in the next Ute Letter. Let's continue to be safe out there and look out for one another.

## **MARCH BIRTHDAYS:**

Elaine Boyer	3-28-62
Todd Chaney	3-25-62
Alan Harker	3-23-58
Steven Roush	3-09-83
Mike Tellez	3-09-78
Derek Walters	3-12-85
Tom Walters	3-26-69
Jerry Whitehead	3/28/60

## **MARCH WORK ANNIVERSARIES:**

Linda Cutler	3-30-18
Mona Kuhlengel	3-18-91
Jeffrey Lollmann	3-17-14
Ken Parde	3-01-88
Steven Roush	3-19-14
Reno Stitt	3-16-16
Mike Wells	3-24-14

## **\*NEW EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT\***

**WELCOME** to the new Tree Trimmer, Ryan Worthey. He and his wife Erika live in Auburn with their 2 boys, Atticus 6 and Samson 2 months. Ryan enjoys being a Dad, shooting, hunting, and fishing with his boys. He also enjoys working with stocks and cryptos.

Ryan graduated from HTRS and has been working with line clearance for the last 7-8 years. He has worked with Wright Tree, and also for a year in Napa Valley, CA.

**WELCOME** to the new Power Plant Assistant Operator, Seth Kerwin. He and his girlfriend Chelsea, have 3 children. Miranda 12, Carsyn 10, and Emmitt 5. Seth enjoys hunting, fishing, and farming.

Seth worked at Millwright and also was an Operator at an Ethanol Plant.

**Let's give our new employees a warm welcome into the NCU Family!**