



Look, up in the sky!
It's a bird! It's a plane!
It's an OPPD drone!

OPPD is using drones more than ever to help maintain the electrical grid and deliver reliable power to customers.

The unmanned flying devices are a big help for OPPD's field workers, engineers and communications department. They have so many uses that the utility has organized a group of in-house pilots to serve the district.

Some OPPD employees use drones to inspect power lines, substations, smokestacks and other equipment. Others use them to document storm damage. Recently, drones came in handy to get an elevated view of ice jams that clogged the Missouri River, which some of our plants use to generate electricity.

Every pilot in the informal, 15-member group has earned a commercial license from the Federal Aviation

Administration, allowing them to fly legally on the job. The utility's drone pilots collectively logged about 200 flights last year, with 45 hours of flight time.

OPPD's drone group has also developed standard operating procedures to promote safe flying and holds quarterly safety briefings to discuss new technology, software, regulations, and any issues that arise in the field.

Smart Energy

OPPD's commitment to energy efficiency, locally sourced electricity, renewable power and environmental sustainability has won recognition from a national industry group.

The American Public Power Association recently designated OPPD a Smart Energy Provider. The SEP program recognizes utilities that have shown a commitment to smart

energy program planning, environmental and sustainability programs, and customer communication and education.

Initiatives that helped OPPD qualify include its Energy Efficiency Assistance Program, Smart Thermostat Program and Solar Trade Ally Program.

The Energy Assistance Program provides qualified applicants with up

to \$2,000 in assistance to make their homes more energy efficient.

The Solar Trade Ally Program empowers local OPPD-approved companies with knowledge and resources to connect customers with valuable rebates.

Under the Smart Thermostat Program, OPPD manages participants' air conditioners at certain times to help reduce load and keep energy costs low.

APRIL BOARD MEETINGS

All-committee meeting: Tuesday, April 18 (see oppd.com/BoardMeeting for details). **Regular board meeting:** Thursday, April 20, 5 p.m. (see oppd.com/BoardMeeting for details). Hearing-impaired call 531-226-3208, 72 hours prior to request an interpreter. Agendas posted and meetings viewable on oppd.com/BoardMeeting.

Outlets

OUR MISSION

Provide affordable, reliable and environmentally sensitive energy services to our customers.

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OPPD
Omaha Public Power District

OPPD's new Greener Together Program

OPPD's new Greener Together Program has awarded funding to its first two community environmental projects that will benefit the greater Omaha area.

The program, launched last year, focuses on grassroots improvements, with projects designed to make a positive, long-term impact. More than 4,700 customers have signed up to contribute monthly to the program. All donated funds go toward selecting and supporting green projects in the greater Omaha community.

The nonprofit group Whispering Roots was awarded \$50,000 to work with K-12 students on sustainability, STEM and agricultural fields of study.

Students participating in the

project will build a raised garden bed using plastic that was diverted from landfills. In the process, they will learn how to grow food sustainably and use resources responsibly.



Whispering Roots works with students who live in socially and economically underserved communities. The award will help cover the cost of building and installing the garden beds as well as soil, peat moss, vermiculite, plants and veg-

etables and compost. The project aims to build beds at 10 Omaha-area schools.

Habitat for Humanity of Omaha was the second recipient, with \$80,000 awarded for a pilot program to help reduce utility costs for low-income households.

The project will provide access to solar energy for homeowners who could not otherwise afford it. The funding will cover the cost of three solar energy systems, including solar panels, battery storage and insulation.

The next round of applications for the Greener Together Program opened on Feb. 1. Applications for this round will be accepted through March 31.

Landscaping near electrical equipment

Spring is coming, and maybe you're thinking about where to plant new flowers, trees and shrubs.

Before you start landscaping, though, keep in mind these tips to stay safe around electrical equipment in your yard.

That big green box

It might seem tempting to camouflage the metal utility box in your yard with plants, but beware: There are specific safety guidelines to follow.

The box, known as a padmount transformer, is a locked steel cabinet mounted on a concrete pad. These transformers help lower the voltage on power lines to a level that your home can use.

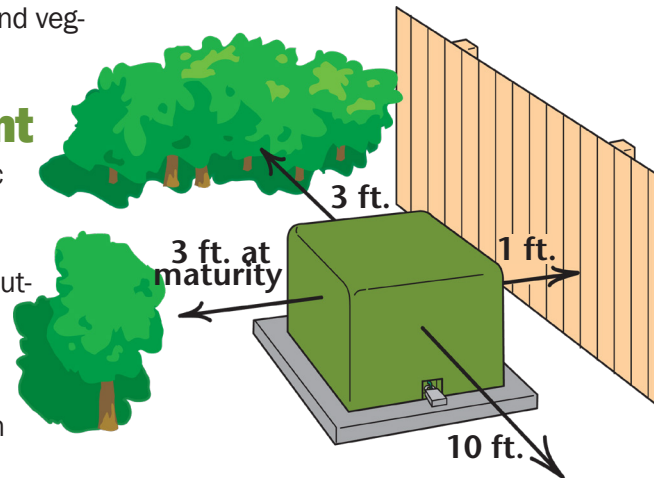
Like most equipment, padmount

transformers require periodic maintenance and may need attention when OPPD crews are responding to an outage. Crews need at least 10 feet of clearance in front of the transformer (the pad-locked side) to work safely on these units.

They also need three feet of clearance on two sides and at least one foot of clearance on the fourth side.

Use caution when digging

Before you start any project that involves digging, state law requires you to call to have underground utility lines located and marked. This free service typically takes place 48 to 72 hours after you call.



In Nebraska, you can call 1-800-331-5666 or 811. Nebraska also has a website, ne1call.com.

What to plant

It's important to consider the mature size and spread of a shrub or tree, especially near overhead power lines. For more information, visit oppd.com/residential/trees-power-lines/.

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