

Keeping airspace **SAFE**



Ever wonder what those bright red balls are doing on OPPD's power lines?

The answer – warning aircraft to steer clear – is one of many steps the utility takes to ensure a safe distance between its transmission lines and low-flying planes and helicopters.

Every day in Nebraska, planes swoop low to land, spray crops or

perform other work. Even the smallest country airports generally see a few takeoffs each day. While pilots are ultimately responsible for avoiding obstacles, OPPD has worked proactively for years to help minimize any collision risk.

Some airspace safety precautions are obvious, like the 3-foot-wide marker balls on wires and bright lights on towers that serve as a visual cue for passing aircraft. The FAA

generally requires them in the vicinity of airports, but OPPD also places them on lines over rivers, where planes will occasionally make low passes, and near hospitals with helipads.

A big part of promoting safety is public education, with occasional reminders about the presence of power lines for anyone who might come close to them, such as farmers in large combines.

BEWARE of scam calls



OPPD is warning customers to be aware of a new string of scam phone calls and text messages.

One reported scam features a message telling customers they're

eligible for bill credits and a rate reduction if they sign up for a program. The message asks callers to "Press 1" on their phones if interested. Another scam involves a text from an 800 number, offering discounts through a QR code with OPPD's logo.

The scam calls often appear to be from local area codes and even, in some cases, OPPD's call center

number. If you receive one of these phone calls, hang up. Dial OPPD directly at 402-536-4131. Only by calling us yourself can you be assured you are talking to an actual OPPD representative. If you receive a suspicious QR code, do not scan it.

If you receive a call like this, contact OPPD at 402-536-4131 if you're the Omaha area or 877-536-4131 outside the Omaha metro.

MAY BOARD MEETINGS

All-committee meeting: Tuesday, May 16 (see oppd.com/BoardMeeting for details). **Regular board meeting:** Thursday, May 18, 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

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OPPD leads effort to draw girls to engineering

OPPD is leading an effort with local businesses and government agencies to draw more women into engineering careers.

The coalition launched its first “Introduce a Girl to Engineering Day” event recently at Westview High School, giving more than 100 young women a chance to try hands-on activities and interact directly with engineers.

The event drew students from Westview, North High School and Buffett Middle School, ranging in age from sixth grade to high school seniors. It was hosted by OPPD’s Women’s Network, in partnership with OPPD’s Society of Engineers (OSE).

OPPD engineers shared their career journeys with the students, recounted how they landed in their chosen fields and the different, intriguing challenges they face daily.

The gathering, and others like it, are part of OPPD’s efforts to create



a stronger and more diverse workforce, especially in fields that don’t tend to attract as many women.

The event also featured presentations from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Metropolitan Utilities District, the University of Nebraska Omaha, Valmont Industries and the engineering firm Olsson Associates.

OPPD has several outreach programs for students, including

Electricity 101, started by OSE, and the Marshmallow Challenge, sponsored by OSE. Those programs introduce students to the basics of electricity and encourage teamwork and innovative thinking. OSE also participates in Careers in Energy, an annual event that encourages high school students to explore energy and utility careers.

Heat the Streets raises \$138,000 for energy assistance



The 2023 Heat the Streets Run & Walk for Warmth was one for the record books, raising its second-highest total of \$138,000 to help customers who are struggling to pay their utility bills.

The March 4 event at Aksarben Village attracted a record 911 runners and walkers. Omaha Public Power District and Metropolitan Utilities District host the event annually during the winter to draw attention to

the challenge some utility customers face to keep their homes warm and safe.

Last year’s Heat the Streets raised more than \$150,000, with the donations from that event alone providing much-needed assistance for 460 households served by M.U.D. and OPPD.

Money raised through Heat the Streets is administered by **Dollar Energy Fund**, a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit that serves low-income utility customers. Funds are equally distributed between M.U.D.’s Home Fund and OPPD’s Energy Assistance Program.

7”x 2.5” AD SPACE AVAILABLE IN 2023 Proceeds benefit EAP. For details, please email lskinghoman@oppd.com.

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