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(Neb.)-NPPD Challenged By High Electrical Loading During Hot Conditions

By: Roxie Graham-Marski Posted at: 07/20/2012 09:42 AM

(COLUMBUS, NEB.)-Due to the extreme hot, still, and dry weather conditions throughout the state, Nebraska Public Power District is seeing unprecedented electric demands on its generation and transmission system. Since early July, NPPD has been asking all customers to curtail load during periods of high electrical usage.

On Wednesday night and into early Thursday morning, NPPD's system operators took action to manually control load in north central Nebraska, in order to maintain the reliability of the transmission system. A surge of electrical demand, combined with no wind generation available in the region, created the need to implement emergency relief. The load shedding action resulted in brief power outages (30-45 minutes in length) to NPPD's retail customers and wholesale utilities in the area that purchase electricity from NPPD for resale to their customers.

NPPD Chief Operating Officer Tom Kent met with wholesale utility partners on Thursday and thanked them for their cooperation, while asking for patience as NPPD works to prevent overloading conditions. "While we plan generation and transmission additions 20 years out to meet customer needs, we are seeing loads today not anticipated for the next 10 years, and there is no weather relief in sight," Kent said. "We will continue to ask customers to voluntarily reduce energy usage in these weather conditions in an effort to avoid additional emergency measures."

In addition to conserving electricity at their own facilities, NPPD and its wholesale utility partners request that residents, businesses, irrigators, and industries voluntarily cut back on the use of electrical power and only use electricity as absolutely necessary. Cooperation with this voluntary request helps reduce the potential for overloads on the transmission system and prevent power interruptions.

Last night's need for emergency relief affected customers served by Elkhorn Rural Public Power District, Custer Public Power District, North Central Public Power District, and Niobrara Valley Electric Membership Corporation, as well as some retail customers of NPPD. "While we are able to generate enough electricity to meet the requirements of our customers across the state, the increased demand taxes our transmission equipment in certain areas, as we saw overnight," Kent explained.

On its Facebook page, NPPD is collecting innovative ways customers are conserving energy. Homeowners, businesses, cities, and industries are all encouraged to share their efforts.

--Submitted by NPPD