

# CUSTOMER CONNECTION

Energy news for our customers · Vol. 16 No. 6 · November 2009

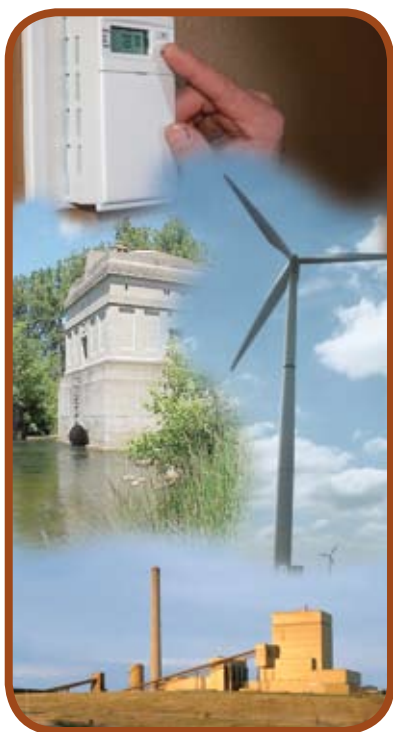
## Otter Tail Power Company's balanced energy plan in line with company mission

During the next decade Otter Tail Power Company will be challenged to meet our customers' projected increase in demand for electricity, which is one of the reasons we take a balanced approach to our energy resource plan.

To ensure a brighter and more secure energy future requires a balanced approach that's mindful of our customers' need for reliable electricity that's affordable and environmentally responsible. We're accomplishing that with demand-side management and energy efficiency, renewable resources, plant and operating efficiencies, peaking plants, and prudent baseload generation.

As you likely have learned, Otter Tail Power Company was unable to continue participating in the Big Stone II project due to the economic downturn and regulatory uncertainty. We'll keep you posted on future generation projects as they come about and/or progress.

And with a mission to produce and deliver electricity as reliably, economically, and environmentally responsibly as possible...and to improve the quality of life in the areas in which we do business, we are committed to keeping balance at the forefront.



## Survey results show customer interest

The readership survey conducted with May's *Customer Connection* confirmed that our customers enjoy and use this bi-monthly newsletter.

Of the respondents:

- 97 percent read every issue or most issues.
- 49 percent made one of the recipes.
- 41 percent used one of the household tips.
- 36 percent took specific steps to reduce energy use.
- 12 percent attended a community event.
- 10 percent enrolled in one of our electronic bill-payment programs.
- 10 percent changed to one of our low off-peak rates.
- 9 percent visited our web site.

Thank you to each customer who took the time to complete and return the survey. Your feedback helps us to continue producing an interesting and informative newsletter.

Congratulations to the four randomly selected survey participants who each received a \$100 Energy Gift Certificate!

*R. Gruchala, Minto, North Dakota*  
*C. Kolbe, Oakes, North Dakota*  
*J. Kranhold, Peever, South Dakota*  
*M. White, Trail, Minnesota*

## LED lights bright choice for holiday displays

If you enjoy using lights in your holiday decorating, LED holiday lights are a bright, efficient, durable choice.

LED (light-emitting diode) bulbs use less energy and last longer than traditional incandescent bulbs. Last winter Otter Tail Power Company retrofitted the lights outlining the roof and corners of our General Office building in Fergus Falls, Minnesota. Maintenance employees removed 780 incandescents and replaced them with LEDs. The switch gave the display an updated look and helped the company save energy. The old C9 incandescent bulbs consumed nearly 4.8 kilowatts an hour; the new C9 LEDs consumed less than 2.2 kilowatts an hour!

### Invest more, save more

Energy savings and durability help offset the higher cost of the LED lighting, says Scott Fritz, leader of Otter Tail Power Company's facilities energy-efficiency team. "The LED replacements for these large bulbs cost \$1.22 each but are extremely durable and have a lifespan of 100,000 hours," Fritz says. "The incandescent replacements for bulbs of this size cost just 28 cents each, but their average lifespan was only 3,000 hours. And they were fragile so they had to be replaced quite often."

### Switch over time

During the next several years we plan to replace incandescent holiday lighting at our other facilities, Fritz says, "and we'll request LEDs in the lighted wreaths and garland we purchase. That way people can look at any of our holiday lighting and get ideas for their own displays."

By investing in a few strands of LED lights a year and retiring a few incandescents, you can save energy and a little piece of the environment too.

## Holiday lighting safety tip

To help ensure safety, high quality, and long lifespan, purchase only UL-certified holiday lights made by trusted manufacturers.



Fergus Falls ripples  
with red, white, blue

## Veterans' Walk of Flags sight to behold



It started with a birthday gift. Perrie Sheldon's son and daughter-in-law gave him Flag 498 in the Sheldon, Iowa, Walk of Flags. When Sheldon visited Iowa and saw his flag flying with hundreds of others, the World War II veteran returned home with an idea to start a Veterans' Walk of Flags in Fergus Falls, Minnesota. With the help of other volunteers, he did.

For \$75 a donor can dedicate a 3-by-5-foot flag on a 10-foot fiberglass pole to any honorably discharged veteran or can commemorate one's own military service. All flags are numbered and are flown in the same locations on 10 holidays a year. The first 101 flags went up in Fergus Falls' Veterans' Memorial Park on Memorial Day 2002.

### Old Glory's ever-expanding reach

With flags spaced six feet apart along walkways and later placed in rows, Veterans' Memorial Park reached capacity at 383 flags. So, volunteers installed more bases in NP Park. That wasn't enough so they encircled the Otter Tail County Courthouse and First Lutheran Church. Next they expanded into Wright Park, onto Union Avenue, and into Neese Park. After incorporating the grounds of City Hall they still didn't have enough space to meet demand. "So," Sheldon says, "we went onto Friberg Avenue. That's where we're putting up new flags."

Sheldon anticipates that more than 1,600 flags will fly by the next Memorial Day.

### Overwhelming to see, challenge to maintain

The impact of seeing so many flags on display is difficult to describe. People say it's "Awesome." "Beautiful." "Fantastic." Emotions emerge as tears.

Public appreciation—and the opportunity to honor veterans—keeps volunteers such as Korean War veteran Bert Hoffman engaged. As president of the board, Hoffman is at the helm of a major operation, deploying 80 or more volunteers to unload the numbered flags from four trailers and plant each in its proper base. With enough help, the flags can be put up in about an hour; it takes a little longer to take them down.

### Flag etiquette

Despite the massive number of flags being handled, Hoffman says, "I don't know if I've ever seen one touch the ground." Keeping the flag off the ground is a crucial part of flag etiquette.

Flag etiquette—and volunteer availability—is why the Veterans' Walk of Flags is in its full glory only from 7:30 A.M. to 4:30 P.M. each holiday; the United States flag should not be flown after dark unless properly lighted.

Flags may be stored rolled onto their display poles, but whenever a flag is removed from its pole it should be folded into a triangle, star-side out. Detailed instructions on how to fold a flag and other rules of flag etiquette can be found at: [www.usflag.org/flagetiquette.html](http://www.usflag.org/flagetiquette.html).

Whether it's one flag or 1,600, by respecting the flag we show our respect for all service members, those who served in the past and those who serve today.

### Pine-to-prairie events

**Winter Wonderland**, Crookston, MN, Dec. 4, 218-281-4320, [www.visitcrookston.com](http://www.visitcrookston.com).

**Lake Benton Opera House Christmas Show**, Lake Benton, MN, Dec. 5, 507-368-4620, [www.lakebentonoperahouse.org](http://www.lakebentonoperahouse.org).

**Christmas on Parade**, Britton, SD, Dec. 5, 605-448-2222, [www.brittonsouthdakota.com](http://www.brittonsouthdakota.com).

**Old Fashioned Christmas**, Drayton, ND, Dec. 5, 701-454-3474, [www.draytonnd.com](http://www.draytonnd.com).

**Frontier Christmas at Fort Sisseton**, Lake City, SD, Dec. 12, 605-448-5474, [www.sdgifp.info/parks/regions/glaciallakes/fortsisseton.htm](http://www.sdgifp.info/parks/regions/glaciallakes/fortsisseton.htm).

**Devils Lake Volunteer Fire Department Ice Fishing Tourney**, Devils Lake, ND, Jan. 30, 701-662-3913, [www.dlvfdicefishingtourney.com](http://www.dlvfdicefishingtourney.com).

### Get your Otter Water here

Paying it forward through community partnership has been a theme throughout Otter Tail Power Company's centennial celebration. One way we're paying it forward is by providing bottled water, bearing our 100th anniversary logo, to the communities we serve. We call it Otter Water; you'd call it plain ol' good water.

If you could use some Otter Water at your next community celebration or nonprofit event, call your local Otter Tail Power Company Customer Service Center and place your request. All we ask is that you recycle the empty plastic bottles.

*Otter Water must be given free of charge to your event participants. It cannot be sold.*



### Customers' cookery

#### Pumpkin spice cookies

|                                |                 |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| 2/3 cup butter, melted         | 3/4 tsp. cloves |
| 3/4 cup brown sugar            | 1/2 tsp. nutmeg |
| 2 eggs                         | 1/2 tsp. soda   |
| 1/4 cup molasses               | 1 tsp. cinnamon |
| 2/3 cup canned pumpkin, mashed | 1/2 tsp. ginger |
| 3 cups flour                   | 1 tsp. salt     |

Place melted butter and brown sugar in a mixing bowl and beat them together. Beat eggs, molasses, and pumpkin into the mixture one at a time. Stir in the dry ingredients. Let dough chill for a few hours. Drop dough on greased cookie sheet and bake at 375° for 15 minutes.

*Enjoy after your holiday dinner!*

*Ann Streifel, Harvey, North Dakota*



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For upcoming issues, send your favorite recipe or household tip to [shoff@otpco.com](mailto:shoff@otpco.com) or to the above address.

If we use your recipe or tip, we'll send you a gift to thank you. Please indicate your preference for an LED night-light, deck of playing cards, or bean-stuffed toy otter.



Please recycle

