

# SPD Newsletter

Series 35, Issue 3  
March 2018

LIGHTING THE WAY

## *When Temperatures Drop, Bills Escalate!*

Every winter, it is not unusual for us to receive calls from customers who are concerned about bills that were higher than expected. In February, we received a large number of these calls with customers expressing concern, and asking questions about the cause for higher bills. We are glad when you reach out to us with those questions, and we would like to share some useful information on this topic.

First, what we saw for the billing period ranging between December 20-January 20 was overall increased usage. We attribute this to extreme cold temperatures. While we have experienced cold snaps in the past, this one was different. Low temperatures dropped below zero, and well below zero in some cases, between Christmas and the first few days of January. The entirety of this cold snap was captured within the start and finish of this billing cycle, and that means that heating systems were working hard to keep your indoor temperatures comfortable. Add to that extra usage that may have occurred due to additional activities during the holidays. You may have had kids home from school, or hosted holiday guests, everyone's situation is unique. But it all adds up to the use of more electricity.

Secondly, we have a tool that can help you monitor your usage DURING the current billing cycle. If you are using SmartHub for bill payment, please be aware that this online app also enables you to monitor your electrical usage on a daily basis. It is a great way for you to keep track of your usage before you receive your bill. This can also help you identify your own usage habits, and may even help you to identify areas where you can improve your home's efficiency.

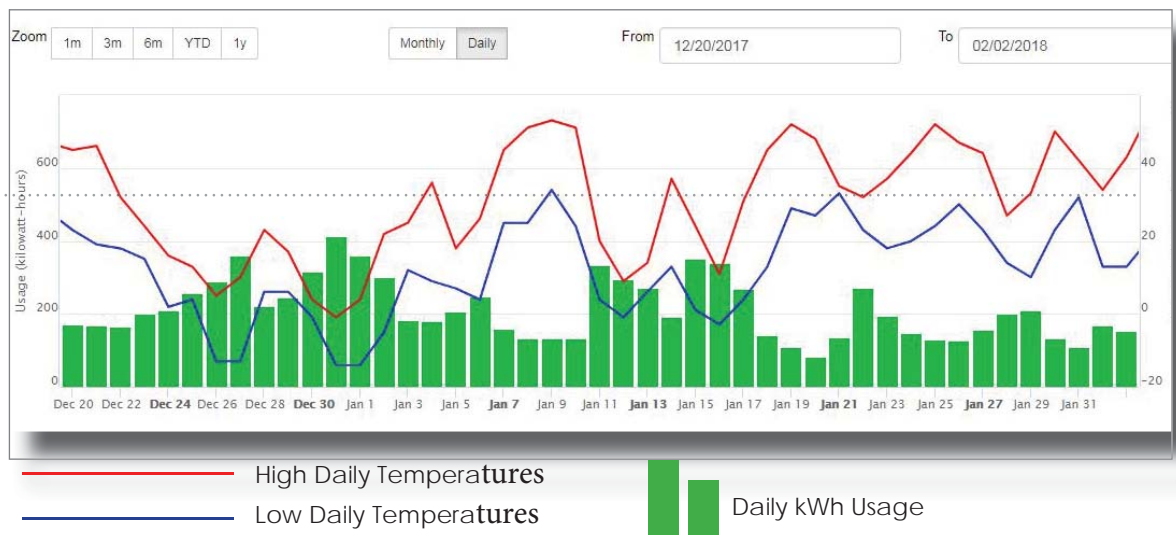


The chart below--which is an actual example of an SPD customer's usage--highlights the information you can see on SmartHub. The tools allow you to compare your usage to the high, low and average temperatures each day. It is clear to see that as temperatures fall, electrical usage climbs.

If you'd like to sign up for SmartHub, log on to [www.southernpd.com](http://www.southernpd.com) and look for the SmartHub icon. Our Customer Services staff can also answer your questions at 800-579-3019.

### Freezing Level

Nearly every day during our December 20-January 20 billing cycle saw lows below freezing. In fact, we experienced a 12-day stretch where highs did not exceed the freezing point. Chart at right, take note of the usage spikes as temperatures dropped.



# Sights & Experiences



## Sandhill Crane

### PROFILE



Migratory Bird



Northern US, Canada, Alaska, & Siberia



March-Early April,  
South Central  
Nebraska Platte River  
Valley



Partners with One  
Mate for Life

To learn more about viewing sites within Southern's service territory, we recommend visiting the website of our local Convention & Visitors Bureaus.

### Grand Island Convention & Visitors Bureau

[www.visitgrandisland.com](http://www.visitgrandisland.com)

### Kearney Visitors Bureau

[www.visitkearney.org](http://www.visitkearney.org)

Every year, for thousands of years, Sandhill Cranes have made Nebraska their short-term home along the path of their migratory journey from north to south across North America. Specifically, the cranes converge throughout the Platte River Valley.

Their stop here is similar to a "destination vacation". Their intent while here is to rest along their migration route. With farms in close proximity to the river valley, it is a great place for them to feast, building up their energy to continue their journey toward their breeding grounds in locations further to the south. The sandbars along the Platte River offer them a location for rest at nighttime, safe from predators.

As they venture out each day from the Platte River, they venture into area farm land, where they interact with other birds. It is not uncommon for bird spectators to observe the crane dance", which is part of their social interaction.

During this migration season, it is a rare and unique opportunity for spectators to locate a Whooping Crane among the Sandhill Cranes. While the Sandhill Crane stands about 3-3.5 feet tall, the whooping crane can be up to five feet tall and has a wingspan of over seven feet. They are mainly white with black wing tips, so they are easy to spot among the other cranes with gray feathers.

The arrival of the Sandhill Cranes brings a large number of spectators to our region each year. It is estimated that about 80 percent of the world's population of Sandhill Cranes arrive in Nebraska each year!

### VIEWING ETIQUETTE

If you are out and about viewing these majestic birds, please adhere to basic etiquette practices:

- Do not stop on roadways, driveways or gated entries to farms or other properties.
- Do not make sudden stops on roadways, or create obstacles for traffic.
- Most land in the Platte River Valley is privately owned. Never enter property without obtaining permission from property owners.
- Do not approach cranes or other fowl in the field, which disrupts their feeding and threatens them in their roosts.
- Do not honk horns at the birds, flash headlights or disturb them with other loud noises.

# Round Up Grants Distributed to 12 Projects



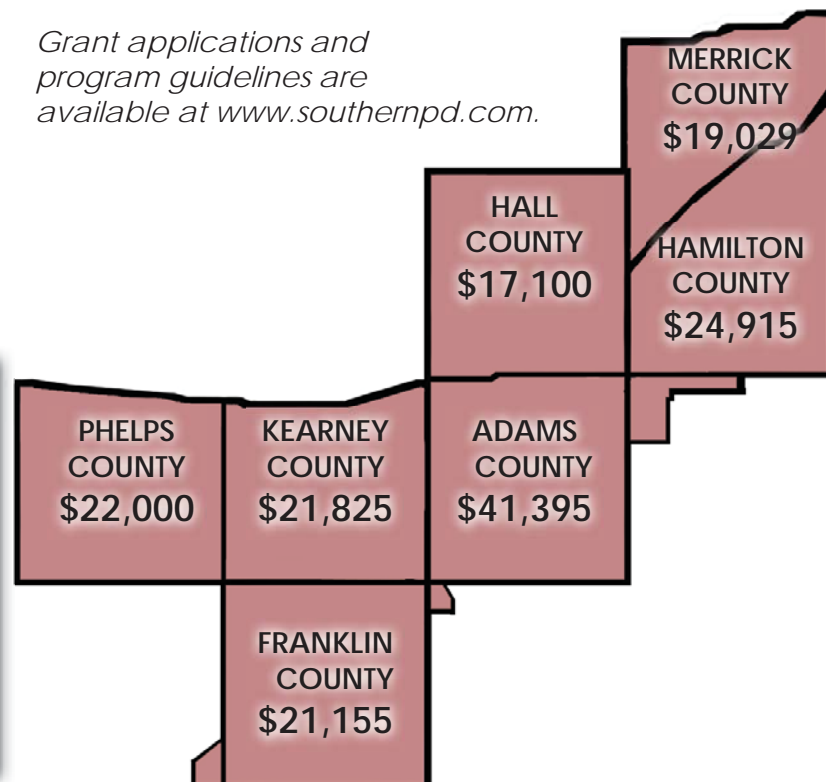
It has been an exciting year, watching ROUND UP funds go back into our communities to help support some fantastic projects. We thank our customers who are participating in this program! Grants were awarded to the following 14 projects, totaling \$23,370 for the fourth quarter of 2017:

<b>Burton-Beyer Post #120 of the American Legion</b> <i>Automatic Entryway Door Openers</i>	<b>\$2,500</b>	<b>Bertrand Lions Foundation</b> <i>Musical Playground Equipment</i>	<b>\$1,500</b>
<b>Village of Axtell</b> <i>Village Emergency Siren</i>	<b>\$2,500</b>	<b>Kenesaw Fitness Center</b> <i>Flooring</i>	<b>\$2,500</b>
<b>Roseland Rural Fire Protection District</b> <i>Air Compressor and Cascade System</i>	<b>\$2,500</b>	<b>Adams County 4-H Council</b> <i>Cattle Panels</i>	<b>\$2,500</b>
<b>Naponee Fire Department</b> <i>Bunker Gear</i>	<b>\$2,500</b>	<b>Central City FFA Chapter</b> <i>Greenhouse</i>	<b>\$2,500</b>
<b>Village of Prosser</b> <i>Playground Equipment</i>	<b>\$2,500</b>	<b>Merrick County Child Development Center</b> <i>TV's For Educational Programming</i>	<b>\$500</b>
<b>Merrick County Youth Council</b> <i>Concession Equipment</i>	<b>\$1,120</b>	<b>Lone Tree Quilting Guild</b> <i>Quilting Supplies</i>	<b>\$250</b>

Applications are now being accepted for the second quarter of 2017. Qualified applicants may apply for up to \$2,500 during the calendar year. Complete information, guidelines and application forms may be found at [www.southernpd.com/roundup](http://www.southernpd.com/roundup).

Since the Operation ROUND UP Program was initiated in 2014, a total of **\$167,419** has been distributed back into projects throughout the seven counties we serve. Applications received are reviewed by a seven-member Board of Directors. Each application is weighed against the program guidelines, as well as the funds available each quarter for distribution.

Grant applications and program guidelines are available at [www.southernpd.com](http://www.southernpd.com).





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This newsletter is published as a service to Southern Power District's customers.

Comments or questions?

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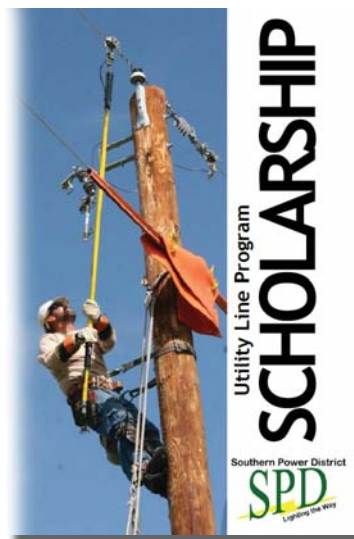
## Scholarship Deadline Is April 1st

High school students, the deadline to apply for a Utility Lineworker Scholarship from Southern is less than a month away!

For students interested in pursuing a career as a utility lineworker, this scholarship offers \$1,000 toward the cost of a one year program, or \$2,000 toward a two year program.

In addition to the assistance provided by the scholarship funds, this program also allows you to "test the waters" in this career, by completing a 12-week internship with Southern Public Power District.

Completed applications must be submitted to Brad Kool at SPD prior to **April 1, 2018**. The application can be found on our website at [www.southernpd.com](http://www.southernpd.com).



## Geothermal Heat Pump Tax Credits Reinstated

Federal legislation was passed recently which extends federal tax credits for residential and commercial installations of Geothermal Heat Pumps. The reinstated tax credits are retroactive from January 1, 2017 and extended through January 1, 2022. Language in the bill also changes considerations for commercial GHP projects, making them eligible if commenced by January 1, 2022 rather than placed into service.

## Artichoke Rice Salad



**INGREDIENTS:**

- 4 C. chicken stock
- 2 C. uncooked white rice
- 3 (6.5-oz) jars marinated artichoke hearts, chopped
- 2 C. mayonnaise
- 1 tsp. curry powder
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 5 green onions, chopped
- 1 green bell pepper, chopped
- 3 stalks celery, chopped
- 1/4 C. chopped parsley

**PREPARATION:**

1. Combine chicken stock and rice in a medium saucepan. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to low. Cook until tender, about 20 minutes.
2. In a small bowl, mix together artichoke marinade, mayonnaise, and curry powder. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Set aside.
3. In a large bowl, combine artichoke hearts, green onions, green bell pepper, parsley, and celery. Mix in cooked rice, then mix in reserved marinade mixture. Cover and chill overnight. Serve cold.