Ron Housh went to work at Northwest Rural a few years after graduating from Hay Springs High School on Sept. 16, 1974. Housh was raised on the family farm south of Hay Springs and began working as an Apprentice Lineman.

Nearly 42 years later, Housh is looking forward to his retirement this month on July 15.

“Gene Brice (then NRPPD Engineer) asked me to come in and talk to him on a Sunday afternoon. I went to work Monday morning,” Housh recalled.

His first co-workers included Gene Brice, Tom Peabody Sr., LaVern Hankins, Wendell Hunter, Rolland Skinner, Jerry Anderson, Dale Gilming, Irma Peterson, Francis Ehrman and Don Armstrong, all of whom have since retired and several passed.

Over the past four decades, Housh climbed the ladder beginning as an Apprentice Lineman, promoted to Foreman in 1983 and began serving as Meterman in 2001. He was promoted to Planning Engineer in 2004 replacing Lavern Hankins who retired that year.

The electrical industry has changed a lot over the past four decades. “Everything is now done out of a bucket truck versus climbing poles,” said Housh. “Computerized equipment has made things automated and allowed for remote switching, gathering substation data and meter readings,” explained Housh.

Housh recalls two of his largest projects being the Rush Creek Substation and AMI Project. The Rush Creek project was completed in May 2013.

It took over four years of planning and construction. Northwest Rural needed the ability to back up the existing Gordon substation, because of the age and increased load, which was the only substation on the eastern third of the system. “The location of the Rush Creek Substation was in a great location with exiting lines from the Gordon, Hay Springs and Flats Substations,” explained Housh, in the June 2013 REN. The Rush Creek Substation, located four miles south of Rushville on Hwy. 250, NRPPD has the capacity and ability to keep all of the Gordon Substation customers in power for normal maintenance requirements and emergency loss of power at the Gordon Sub.

The AMI (Automated Metering Infrastructure) Project took three years to implement and was fully completed in 2015.

Northwest Manager Chance Briscoe said, “In the two years I’ve had the pleasure of working with Ron, I’ve been impressed with his level of loyalty to Northwest and his desire to do what’s right for the customers. Ron’s openness to share his experience and system knowledge has been a great help to me while getting familiar with Northwest and to help guide Northwest forward into the future.”

Northwest’s Planning Engineer Ron Housh Retires

NRPPD Planning Engineer Ron Housh
Housh Retire--

(Continued from Page 1)

moves into this next phase of enjoying his retirement. I wish him all the best!”

Housh’s favorite part about working at NRPPD has been “working with rural people that I have known the majority of my life.” He has always liked living in Northwest Nebraska. “It is home. A friendly rural atmosphere.”

Longtime Board Member Bob Richenbach stated, “Ron is a trusted and loyal employee that has a wealth of knowledge that Northwest will miss. Ron has been a strong representative for his fellow employees and is well known and respected in the Community. I first met Ron when I became a board member and he always presented us with informative reports of the projects he was working on. He will be missed, but I wish him the best in his retirement.”

Housh has been a member of the Hay Springs Volunteer Fire Dept. since January 1975 where he continues to serve as Vice President.

He and his wife Sharon have one son Craig, who is a lineman for Nebraska Public Power District. Their daughter-in-law, Heather owns and operates Shear Style in Hay Springs.

Sharon is the Vocational Program Director at the Office of Human Development in Chadron.

Retirement is official July 15, 2016 and Ron plans to travel to Alaska the day after. Ron says “Northwest Rural PPD has treated me well and is a great company to work for.

A Retirement Celebration will be held in Ron’s honor on Friday, July 8 from 2:30 to 4 p.m. in the Northwest Rural Shop.

“Ron showed professionalism and put his whole heart into his job”, said Board Member Gary Fuchser.
Gardening in July?

Hopefully, you are enjoying the garden by this time. July should be a time when you can sit back, sip on your iced tea, and enjoy the fruits of your labor. It is time to smell the roses, so to speak.

Okay, breaks over! There are things that need to be done.

• WATERING - This is the most important and primary job during the hot days of July. How much water depends on your weather conditions. As a general rule of thumb, water deeply and thoroughly each time you water and then let the soil dry out between watering. This allows the roots to grow deeper and your plant will be less likely to dry out.

• DEADHEADING & TRIMMING - (removing the dead flowers from the plant).
  -- Deadheading encourages a second and third round of blossoms on your flowers. If some of your flowers such as petunias or coleus are beginning to look leggy, trim them back to half of their height. This will encourage new growth creating a bushier plant with more flowers as the season progresses. Water well and fertilize with a general purpose fertilizer. Be sure to follow the directions on your fertilizer container for a maximum benefit.

  -- Summer blooming shrubs should be pruned for shape after they have finished flowering. Remove any dead or diseased branches as well.

• FERTILIZING - Roses need a rose fertilizer once a month through the summer and your container gardens need regular feeding with a liquid all purpose fertilizer. Flowering shrubs will benefit from a feeding as soon as they have finished their bloom.

• DIVIDE YOUR IRIS - If your iris has created a bare spot in the middle and seem to have fewer flowers, now is the time to divide the plant. Dig up the entire clump and remove the soil with a gentle spray of water. Cut the leaves back to approximately four to six inches. Use a sharp knife to divide sections from the central rhizome, with at least one bud or eye and roots on each. Transplant only the vigorous ends of the iris clump and discard the older center portion.

• VEGETABLES
  -- For continued harvest of salad crops, plant successive crops at this time. Cool season crops such as peas, broccoli, or salad greens should be direct seeded into the garden by mid July to continue harvest into late fall. Keep beans, cucumbers and other crops harvested so plants remain productive.

  -- Empty areas of your garden as soon as crops have finished. You can replant these areas with a fall vegetable - or plant a cover crop such as clover or vetch to help control the weeds. Cover crops can be tilled into the soil later to add humus and nitrates to the soil.

  -- Garlic needs to be harvest when the tops start to yellow and dry. Do not wait until the leaves are completely dry or storage life will be shortened.

• WEEDING - Keep your weeds under control. Whether you hoe them out, mulch them out or simply mow them off; it is important to NOT let them seed. "A year of seeding = 7 years of weeding"

• LAWN CARE - Mow and water your lawn as necessary. Raise your mowing height to 3 inches as the temperature rises. Do not fertilize the lawn during the heat of the summer.

• THINK ABOUT NEXT YEAR - July is the perfect time to sow seeds of Hollyhocks, English daisies, Foxgloves, Violas, Canterbury bells, and Sweet William into the garden. They will begin their growth and fill your garden with colorful blooms next year.

About relaxing and enjoying the garden. We put in extra effort in the early spring so we can truly enjoy the fruits of our labor. Share the time with the neighbors and have a barbecue. It is time to "Sit back and Smell the Roses."

Central Office
218 S. Gibson
Hay Springs
1-800-752-9584
(308) 638-4432
www.westplainsco.com

Featured Employee Corrections

In the June REN Spotlights, in Tyler Potts information, it should have stated "He says his favorite part about working at Northwest is working with co-workers Darren Drabbels and John Hessler (instead of Horrocks as it was stated).

In Cale Anderson’s it should have read his apprenticeship will end in November 2016 instead of “he will receive his journeyman in 2016.”

We apologize for any inconvenience this may be caused.
Following high school, Knapp attended Chadron State College where he earned his business degree with an emphasis in Agriculture in 1999.

Prior to working at Northwest Rural, he was employed as an Agronomist for Farmer’s Co-op and United Ag Products (UAP).

Knapp’s favorite part about working at NRPPD is “being outdoors, and working with the farmers and ranchers in the area.

His most memorable moment at Northwest is when he bet his co-worker Abe Young that he couldn’t drop a crossarm on top of a sign post from 20’ in the air. Abe did it and stuck the landing end to end!”

In Knapp’s spare time he enjoys camping, fishing, old cars and motorcycles.

Favorite food: Seafood and steak
NRPPD Employee: Darren Drabbels

Darren Drabbels,
Lineman

Darren Drabbels came to work at Northwest Rural on Aug. 21, 2006 to work on the lines. He is a Hay Springs native and graduated from Hay Springs High in 2003. Prior to Northwest, he was employed on a Sod Farm and worked for Quality Lawn Care.

His favorite part of the job is getting to view the “beautiful scenery”.

Drabbels noted there are just too many reasons why he likes working for Northwest Rural, but recalls co-worker Abe Young getting shocked as memorable.

He is a single father to a daughter, Natalia. In his spare time he enjoys golf, softball and hunting. Mentors: Parents Gary and the late Raylene Drabbels.

Residential Customers

Residential customers will have a new rate schedule applied to the July usage, which will be billed the first week of August, 2016. The new rate for residential customers will be:

**Monthly Access Charge:** $30.00

**On Peak (12:01 pm to 10:00 pm):**
- Block 1 (or the first 500 kWh) per kWh $0.1351
- Block 2 (or all additional kWh) per kWh $0.1051

**Off Peak (10:01 pm to Noon):**
- All kWh per kWh $0.0751

Customers that are already familiar with the current residential rate will note that the monthly charge has been increased by $2.00. However, as an offset to the monthly base charge the Off Peak time frame has been extended 6 hours. The Off Peak extension will be a great opportunity to reduce the total bill for most of the residential customers.

The Off Peak rate is about 28% less than Block 2. Customers who are able to shift usage to the late evening or morning hours, may be able to cut their monthly electric bill substantially. If you have any devices such as a clothes dryer or dish washer that can be set on a timer it would be beneficial to set those devices to run after 10:00 pm or during the morning hours, until noon.

**EXAMPLES:**
- **Clothes Dryer** using an average of 92 kWh/month = $9.67 On Peak vs. $6.91 Off Peak = $2.76 monthly savings when using only during the Off Peak hours.
- **Water Heater** using an average of 300 kWh/month = $31.53 On Peak vs. $22.53 Off Peak = $9.00 monthly savings when used only during the Off Peak hours.
- **Heating and Air Conditioning** consume more than 60% of the energy used in most homes. Water heating uses nearly 15% of the energy. Cooking and refrigeration are big energy users also.

As illustrated above, you can see how a substantial savings can be achieved when the homes electrical usage is geared around the Off Peak hours.

If you have any questions about this rate change or how it may affect your specific account, please contact the Northwest Rural office.
NRPPD Area Activity Calendar

FUR TRADE DAYS 2016
TENTATIVE SCHEDULE
(Subject to minor changes)

WEDNESDAY, JULY 6
All Day Primitive Rendezvous Setup (3 mi E/8 mi. S, on Bordeaux Road)
10 a.m Library sponsored tour of the High Plains Herbarium, Room 131 CSC
4:30 p.m. Ceremony and Blessing by Jerome Kills Small
*5 p.m. Storyteller Jerome Kills Small "Harvesting Foods and Medicines in the Dakota Tradition"
*6 p.m. Reception for film "Medicine Woman" and meet dignitaries (Library)
*6:30 p.m. Steve and Susan Rolfsmeier, "The Ethnobotanical Legacy of Dr. George Morgan and Dr. Ronald Weeden"
*7 p.m. Premier Showing "Medicine Woman"

THURSDAY, JULY 7
All Day Primitive Rendezvous Setup
*10:30 a.m. Story Time Presenter Vana Bannan/Oskatewin, reading children's books
*5 p.m. Artist in Residence Stephanie Sorbel displaying and selling Native American dolls
*5 p.m. Opening Reception "Native American Flute Performance" by Michael Murphy
*6 p.m. Dr. Jim Hanson introducing Trading Stories and opening film, "The Revenant"
*7:30 p.m. Ghost Hunt, sites of crimes and ghostly events

FRIDAY, JULY 8
All Day Primitive Rendezvous

SATURDAY, JULY 9
All Day Primitive Rendezvous
All Day Softball Tournament
All Day Living History at the Museum of the Fur Trade. Historic Firearms, Trappers and Traders at the Bordeaux Post
*All Day Artist in Residence and Guest Artist Tom Swift Bird
6:30 a.m. Rotary Colter Run Registration (CSC Armstrong Gym)
7:30 a.m. Colter Run Starts
7 a.m.-1 p.m. Pancake Feed (Masonic Hall 4th & Main)
9 a.m. Traders' Market Opens (Courthouse)
10 a.m. 40th Annual Fur Trade Days Parade (10th & Main to 1st & Main)

AFTER PARADE
Buffalo BBQ (Courthouse)
Bald Mountain Rounders (Courthouse)
Ice Cream Social - Congregational Church

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### Sheridan County Fair

#### SATURDAY, JULY 23
- 8 a.m. Queen Contest, McGinley Arena

#### SUNDAY, JULY 24
- 8 a.m. 4-H Horse Show starts at McGinley Arena
- 7 p.m. Color Fun Run, McGinley Arena

#### MONDAY, JULY 25
- 8 a.m. Cat Show
- 10 a.m. Dog Show
- 12-4 p.m. 4-H and Open Class Check-In
- 3 p.m. Tractor Pull Register, North Side of the Grand Stands.
- 6 p.m. Jr. Rodeo at McGinley Arena

(Continued on Page 8)

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SHERIDAN COUNTY FAIR
(Continued from Page 7)

TUESDAY, JULY 26
7:30-9 a.m. Swine Weigh-In
9-10 a.m. Beef Weigh-In
10-11 a.m. Sheep, Goat, Rabbit, Poultry Check-In
11 a.m. Mandatory Livestock Meeting
1 p.m. Poultry, Rabbit and Pet Show
5-5:45 p.m. Mutton Bustin' Entries
5:30 p.m. Mutton Bustin' begins at McGinley Arena
7 p.m. Stray Gathering/Ranch Bronc Riding McGinley, Arena $5 for Adults

WEDNESDAY, JULY 27
6 a.m. Farmer's Co-op Breakfast
8 a.m. Market Beef Show
1-2 p.m. Fitters Competition
4 p.m. Sheep & Goat Show
7 p.m. Steer Roping at McGinley Arena

THURSDAY, JULY 28
**MAC CARNIVAL**
8 a.m. Swine Show
10 a.m. Cake Judging
4 p.m. Cake & Cookie Jar Auction
5 p.m. Buyer Bonanza
5:30 p.m. Clover Bud Parade
6 p.m. Livestock Sale
8-11:30 p.m. Teen Dance

FRIDAY, JULY 29
**MAC CARNIVAL**
8 a.m. Security First Breakfast
8:30 a.m. Beef Showmanship
9 a.m. Rodeo Slack
12:30 a.m. Livestock Judging
2 p.m. Small Animal Round Robin
7 p.m. Open Rodeo at McGinley Arena
9-11:30 p.m. Teen Dance
9 p.m. Rodeo Dance with Seth Turner & the High Desert Drifters - Gordon American Legion

SATURDAY, JULY 30
**MAC CARNIVAL**
7 a.m. Cowboy Breakfast
9 a.m.-4 p.m. Quilt Show
10 a.m. Parade on Main Street
* Family Fun Day at McGinley Arena after the Parade
1 p.m. Open Rodeo
2 p.m. Family Load Out
3 p.m. Packer Load Out
7:30 p.m. Lexi Larsen Concert - Opening for Chancey Williams & the Younger Brothers Band
9 p.m. Rodeo Dance with Seth Turner & the High Desert Drifters, Gordon American Legion

SUNDAY, JULY 31
9 a.m. Rodeo Slack *If Needed

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Contact Phone Numbers are Important

Please contact Northwest Rural Public Power District to verify or update office personnel with the best phone number to contact you with. Seems more and more phone numbers on file are not operable or valid.

Having your current phone number on file allows the District to make contact with you as the need arises. There can be a multitude of reasons for making contact: planned outages, troubleshooting a particular line, billing questions, cattle on the road, or service change out questions.

You can see and understand the importance of having your current home or business phone number on file with the District.

Northwest Rural “Cares About the Consumer”
(308) 638-4445
Bacon Ranch Pasta Salad

- 1 (12 ounce) package uncooked tri-color rotini pasta
- 10 slices bacon
- 1 cup mayonnaise
- 3 tablespoons dry ranch salad dressing mix
- 1/4 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic pepper
- 1/2 cup milk, or as needed
- 1 large tomato, chopped
- 1 (4.25 ounce) can sliced black olives
- 1 cup shredded sharp Cheddar cheese

Bring a large pot of lightly salted water to a boil; cook rotini at a boil until tender yet firm to the bite, about 8 minutes; drain.

Place bacon in a skillet over medium-high heat and cook until evenly brown. Drain and chop.

In a large bowl, mix mayonnaise, ranch dressing mix, garlic powder, and garlic pepper. Stir in milk until smooth. Place rotini, bacon, tomato, black olives and cheese in bowl and toss to coat with dressing. Cover and chill at least 1 hour in the refrigerator. Toss with additional milk if the salad seems a little dry.

* * * * *

Texas Ranch Potato Salad

- 1 (1 ounce) package ranch dressing mix
- 2 cups mayonnaise
- 3/4 cup chopped green onion
- 1 pound bacon slices
- 5 pounds unpeeled red potatoes

Bring a large pot of lightly salted water to a boil. Add whole potatoes, and cook until tender, 15 to 20 minutes. Drain, run under cold water to cool, and chop into 1 inch cubes. Transfer to a large serving bowl, and refrigerate until completely chilled, about 2 hours.

In a small bowl, stir together the ranch dressing mix, mayonnaise and green onion. Cover, and refrigerate for about 2 hours to blend flavors.

Wrap bacon in paper towels and place on a plate. Cook in the microwave until crisp, about 15 minutes depending on the power of your microwave. Cool.

Stir the mayonnaise mixture into the bowl of potatoes. Crumble bacon into the bowl, and stir to distribute. Serve.

* * * * *

Sarge’s EZ Pulled Pork

- 1 (5 pound) pork butt roast
- salt and pepper to taste
- 1 (14 ounce) can beef broth
- 1/4 cup brewed coffee

Cut roast in half. Rub each half with salt and pepper, and place in the slow cooker. Pour broth and coffee over the meat.

Turn the slow cooker to Low, and cover. Cook for 6 to 8 hours, or until the roast is fork tender.

Carefully remove the roast to a cutting board. Pull the meat off the bone with a fork. You may also chop it with a cleaver afterwards, if you like it really finely cut.

* * * * *
Stay Safe With and Around Irrigation Equipment

Irrigation electrical hazards are a growing problem in many regions of the country. In the summer heat and during dry spells, farm irrigation can be vital for profitability. However, it is equally vital that operators know, follow, and share proper safety precautions to avoid potentially deadly electrical accidents when operating, handling and working around watering systems.

While working around irrigation equipment -- stay away and do not make contact. Keep in mind that metal and water are conductors of electricity. Aluminum irrigation pipes, while lightweight and easier to handle, are excellent conductors of electricity.

To ensure safe operation of irrigation equipment, the Safe Electricity program offers the following tips:
• Make sure that irrigation system wiring is properly grounded. Before the start of each irrigation season, have a qualified electrician check the pump and wiring.
• Store unused irrigation pipes far away from power lines or electrical equipment.
• Position irrigation pipes at lease 15 feet away from power lines.
• Position the water jet streams so that there is no chance of them spraying onto power lines. If this happens, the entire system could become energized, creating a danger for anyone nearby.
• Stay away from the piping during any lightning activity.

Install lightning arresters to protect your equipment.
• If fuses continually blow or circuit breakers repeatedly trip, have a professional check the wiring. This could indicate a potential electrical hazard.
• Always shut off and lock the master electrical control switch before servicing the machine.
• Avoid moving irrigation pipe and equipment on windy days, as a sudden gust could lift pipes into overhead power lines. This power line contact could prove fatal to a person holding the pipe.
• Take some time to survey your surroundings before moving equipment. Look up and around you; not any power lines that could be close enough to come into contact with equipment -- and stay away.

For more information on electrical safety, visit SafeElectricity.org

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It’s So Hot...

• Ice pops are melting in the freezer.
• Somewhere in the US a corn stalk turns into popcorn.
• That people are baking cookies on their dashboards.
• You need a spatula to remove your clothing.
• When the beer gut and big butt don’t keep you from wearing shorts.
• You wish you had gotten the cloth seats instead of leather.
• You ask your boss for extra work so you can be in the air conditioning as much as possible.
• I’ve got to go flip my egg on the sidewalk so it fries evenly.
• I saw two trees fighting over a dog.
• I heard a fire hydrant whistling for dogs.
• It’s hot enough to melt the hinges off of the gates to Hell.
• I put bacon strips on my tomatoes and 15 minutes later, BLT’s for all!
• I saw a coyote chasing a jack-rabbit and they were both walking!
• The birds have to use potholders to pull worms out of
the ground.
• Farmers are feeding their chickens crushed ice to keep them from laying hard-boiled eggs.
• The cows are giving evaporated milk.
• You eat hot chiles to cool your mouth off.
• You can make instant sun tea.
• You learn that a seat belt makes a pretty good branding iron.
• You’ve experienced condensation on your butt from the hot water in the toilet bowl.
• You would give anything to be able to splash cold water on your face.
• You can attend any function wearing shorts and a tank top.
• You discover that you can get a sunburn through your car window.
• You notice the best parking place is determined by shade instead of distance.
• Hot water now comes out of both taps.
• It’s noon in July, kids are on summer vacation, and not one person is out on the streets.
• You actually burn your hand opening the car door.
• No one would dream of putting vinyl upholstery in a car or not having air conditioning.

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