

Rates

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our employees weren't even born the last time we asked for a rate increase."

NorthWestern is seeking PUC approval to increase electric rates in its South Dakota service territory by \$26,509,557 annually, or 20.24 percent.

The company states the proposed increase would be \$16.76 monthly for a typical residential customer using 750 kilowatt-hours (kWh) per month. The proposed rates may potentially affect approximately 62,100 customers in NorthWestern's South Dakota service territory.

According to Bird, the typical residential bill (750 kWh per month) went from \$62 monthly in 1981 to \$77 in 2014, a cumulative annual increase of two-thirds of 1 percent annually.

"Adjusted for inflation, the monthly bill should have stood at \$201.40 in 2014, so your bill could be \$100 higher," he told the audience.

According to Bird, three major capital projects – Big Stone/Neal Pollution Control, Aberdeen Peaker and the Yankton Substation – account for 96 percent of the requested \$26.5 million increase. More than half of the requested rate increase relates to federal mandates on pollution control.

Brad Wenande, the Yankton area manager for NorthWestern, explained the Yankton project and its need for serving the area. The \$21 million project includes the switchyard, transmission line and substation. It addresses capacity, reliability and maintenance needs. Construction is under way, with completion expected this fall.

"We are moving from three transmission circuits to six circuits and from 80 megawatts to 140 megawatts," he said. "It will serve Yankton very, very well."

During comments from the floor, audience member Jeff Gudahl said the proposed 20 percent increase will provide a hardship for consumers.

"I would think you would raise it 5 percent a year for five years instead of one shot," he said. "This is a high retirement community and also people on disability

Parks

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After the hike, the public is invited to the showing of nature movies at Chief White Crane and Lewis and Clark amphitheaters at 9 p.m.

"We are hoping families will come," Teachout said. "There will also be popcorn furnished by Hy-Vee."

On Saturday at 7 p.m., a pie iron cooking and sampling class called "Give Pie A Try" will be held at the Lewis and Clark Amphitheater.

"There will be demonstrations with free samples," Teachout said. "It's going to be delicious and fun."

On Saturday and Sunday, free archery classes for ages 8 and up will be offered.

"The equipment will be provided," Teachout said. "We do ask that people make reservations for that by calling our Welcome Center (at 605-668-2985)."

Teachout said there is equipment available for use free of charge, not only during the event but also throughout the summer.

"We really are trying to promote local families to come out and use our park," she said. "We have plenty of areas that people can use during their day. For instance, at Pierson Ranch (Recreation Area), we have big soccer fields where people may check out soccer balls. We also have three disc golf courses; for those, we have discs that can be checked out at our Welcome Center at no charge."

Other free equipment and games that can be checked out are bocce ball sets, adult and youth horseshoe sets, ladder ball sets, croquet sets and badminton equipment.

"We also just received two paddle boards," Teachout said. "We will be instituting programs for those throughout the summer. Personally, I am really excited about that."

According to Teachout, Yankton parks still have many campsites available for this weekend's event.

To make a reservation or for more information, go to www.campsd.com or call 1-800-710-2267.

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and welfare. This is going to impact a lot of our people."

Bird noted the entire South Dakota service territory would be covered by the rate increase, not just Yankton. He said NorthWestern customers could also suffer from "rate fatigue" if the company raised its rates each year rather than go through one rate increase.

In explaining the PUC process, Hanson noted the utilities go through a long, complex hearing process each time they request a rate increase.

"It costs a significant amount of money to go through this process," he said. "We don't want to have protracted rate cases or more rate cases than necessary. They (utilities) have the right to recover their costs."

The PUC and utilities go through negotiations over requested rate increases, with a balancing act to serve all interests, Hanson said.

"We are here to protect the consumer and also to protect the utility companies so they can survive," he said. "It's in your (consumer) interests for the companies to survive."

"We (commissioners) also want to see the full picture at one time," Nelson added.

Gudahl also questioned whether NorthWestern was building its Napa Junction project to benefit a possible grain handling facility for Dakota Plains near the site.

Wenande emphasized the \$21 million investment for Yankton represents all three projects together. He also noted the Napa Junction project was built to meet the utility's needs and its location near the proposed Dakota Plains grain facility is strictly coincidence.

Yankton resident Jerry Pollard asked how long before Yankton meets its current electric capacity.

Wenande responded that Yankton currently sees 1-2 percent demand growth a year. However, there could be significant increases by current businesses that expand their electrical demand

and the recruitment of new businesses.

"Could we have done this (current project) smaller today? Potentially, and then 10-15 years from now, the construction costs would be that much higher," Wenande said.

"When we get this online, it will position us well, and we won't have to make substantial investments for years to come."

Audience member Bruce Brazelton asked about the costs of complying with federal mandates.

NorthWestern officials noted their rate increase reflects the costs of current Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) mandates. They said their costs would explode with the implementation of proposed mandates.

"If those mandates go through, you'll have another rate case in the future," Bird said. "We're very concerned."

Hanson noted, under proposed mandates, the estimated compliance costs would amount to a 25 percent rate increase for some companies and 90 percent for other companies.

"And some companies will find it physically impossible to comply with the mandates," he said.

Fiengen noted the efforts by state officials and the South Dakota congressional delegation to fight the EPA mandates.

Nelson talked about a meeting of the PUC and utilities in Sioux Falls in which they talked about the proposed federal mandates. Those regulations will be finalized this summer.

"We came away sick (from that Sioux Falls meeting) because of the tremendous cost that will be forced (on utilities) and will be charged on South Dakotans and across the nation," Nelson said.

"What we're talking about here tonight (at Yankton about rate increases) will be small compared to what the costs will be as proposed."

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Bird Flu Found On South Dakota Chicken Farm

BY KEVIN BURBACH
Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS — An eastern South Dakota farm with 1.3 million egg-laying chickens is the first in the chicken-production business in the state to be infected with a deadly flu virus despite efforts to prevent it, state and farm officials said Thursday.

Flandreau-based Dakota Layers, which accounts for nearly half of the state's almost 2.7 million egg-laying chickens, reached out to the state veterinarian Wednesday after it noticed an unusual number of dead birds in one of its nine barns.

A South Dakota State University lab confirmed the presence of the highly pathogenic H5 avian influenza virus. Officials hadn't confirmed yet Thursday whether it was the H5N2 strain. If so, then the virus will have led to the deaths of more than 33 million chickens and turkeys in the Midwest, primarily at farms in neighboring Minnesota and Iowa.

South Dakota State Veterinarian Dustin Oedekoven said crews would begin euthanizing the chickens after they determined how best to handle the largest outbreak the state has seen thus far.

Dakota Layers' Chief Executive Officer Scott Ramsdell said in a statement Thursday that Dakota Layers had taken "extensive biosecurity measures" over the last two months to prevent an outbreak in

their barns.

"Unfortunately, as many poultry farms are discovering, even our extraordinary measures proved ineffective in preventing the spread of avian influenza into one of our barns," Ramsdell said.

Dakota Layers produces more than 90,000 dozens of eggs daily and ships about 70 percent of its eggs to California. Agriculture officials have stressed there is no danger to the supply and very low risk to humans.

Oedekoven said it was disappointing to see a large-scale operation lose it birds after taking all the appropriate precautions.

"It's a big loss, it's a big hit," he said.

Officials from the U.S. Department of Agriculture were on site Thursday to evaluate the operation and work with the state in figuring out how to proceed. Bird flu has already been found at eight turkey farms in South Dakota — affecting almost 500,000 birds — but none of this magnitude.

The hens would likely be humanely euthanized with carbon dioxide gas, Oedekoven said, but the state hasn't yet decided how to dispose of the carcasses. Officials have primarily been burying turkey carcasses in addition to composting them.

"It's not pleasant work, but we've had great cooperation with our industry and we hope they can make it through this," Oedekoven said. "We'll proceed as best we can and continue to hope for the end of this plague."

Man Pleads Guilty In Strangling Death

SIOUX FALLS (AP) — A homeless sex offender has pleaded guilty to manslaughter in the killing of a woman inside her Sioux Falls apartment.

Arthur Lee Brundige, 57, is charged in the Nov. 22 strangulation death of 39-year-old Sabrina White.

The *Argus Leader* reports that Brundige entered his plea on Wednesday.

"I don't think I'm guilty. I just want to get this over with," he said in court.

A sentencing date has not been set. Brundige faces life in prison with the possibility of parole.

A relative found White Nov. 25 dead in her apartment. Her death was initially ruled an unattended death by police. An autopsy later determined she died by strangulation.

Detectives were able to locate several of White's acquaintances who had seen her soon before she died. They told police that

Brundige and White had been introduced on Nov. 22 through mutual friends at her home. Witnesses told police that they left White's apartment about 11 p.m., but Brundige stayed.

Brundige is a registered sex offender because of sexual conduct convictions in Minnesota and Nebraska in 1982 and 1989. He was on probation in Minnehaha County for failing to register as a sex offender at the time of his arrest.

PRESENTING

THE YANKTON AREA CONCERT ASSOCIATION 2015-16 SEASON

All Concerts Are Presented At The Yankton High School Summit Center Theatre



Karsnoyarsk National Dance Company of Siberia

This fabulous 50 member dance company is sheer intoxication! The technical ability of the dancers, the exquisitely embroidered elegant costumes, the choreography, stunning highlights of acrobatics and gymnastic techniques, traditional folk dances and modern sophistication, this troupe does it all! This is the concert you'll be talking about for weeks afterwards (Tuesday, October 6, 2015)

Inspirational Broadway

We open our 2015-16 concert series with the quartet stylings of Ernie Haase and Signature Sound. This group is both Grammy nominated and GMA Dove Award winning. They have been around the world and been nicknamed The Gospel Globetrotters. Although their reputation is that of a gospel quartet, this program will concentrate on big Broadway show tunes. An instrumental trio will accompany the quartet and together they will set the stage ablaze. (Saturday, September 19, 2015)



A Tribute To Neil Diamond

Who doesn't love the music of Neil Diamond? This is a tribute band known for their fun, family show. Not only featuring the music of Neil Diamond, but Johnny Cash, Ricky Nelson and Glen Campbell to name a few. This concert features the beautiful baritone singing voice of Denny Diamond and his two sons. You'll leave with a song in your heart, a smile on your face and a spring in your step. (Sunday, November 1, 2015)

Maniacal 4

This is an internationally acclaimed group of four great musicians... a hip quartet of trombones. They are well versed in classical, jazz, Latin and rock music. They perform exclusively by memory and have performed on three continents with their wide range of musical styles and songs from various time periods. They are the finest trombone quartet performing today. (Saturday, February 27, 2016)



Norfolk Men's Chorus

For the past 25 years, the Norfolk Men's Choir have entertained audiences performing songs from various genres including religious, spirituals, Christmas, show tunes, patriotic and many more. The Chorus's music styles include chorals, barbershop, two, three and four-part music. (Saturday, March 12th, 2016)



The Piano Men

This concert features Jim Witter at the grand piano and his sizzling musicians on keyboards, guitar, bass, flute, sax and drums. Witter unleashes his golden tenor voice on hit after hit as the group takes you on a musical journey through the 70's featuring the songs of Elton John and Billy Joel. They will utilize rear-screen projection and feature newspaper headlines, automobiles, people, events, toys and even TV shows that shaped the decade of the 70's (Thursday, April 28, 2016)

JOIN NOW & ENJOY A BONUS CONCERT FRIDAY, MAY 15TH!

"Close To You: The Music of the Carpenters" Friday, May 15, 7:30 At The YHS Summit Center Theatre

Adult Tickets @ \$60

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Patron @ \$135 (2 memberships)

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Or visit our website at www.concertassociation.net/yanktonsd

For Additional Information, Contact Betts Pulkrabek At (605) 463-2206 or Vi Ranney at (605) 665-3596