

# NREA GRASSROOTS NEWS



## Take Action Alert

### Participation Totals.

Custer	106
Cornhusker	30
Norris	30
Dawson	28
McCook	28
Elkhorn	22
Polk Co.	19
High West	17
Midwest	17
Southwest	17
Twin Valleys	17
Butler	16
Chimney Rock	16
Wheat Belt	16
Cedar-Knox	14
Roosevelt	13
Seward CO.	13
Northwest	12
Howard Greeley	11
Cuming Co.	10
Perennial	10
Stanton	10
Loup Valleys	8
Burt Co.	7
Niobrara Valley	7
North Central	6
PREMA	6
KBR	5
South Central	5
Northeast	4

Nebraska Total 563



Photo of the tents of "Occupy Lincoln" movement: by Wayne Price.

## NREA Candidate Training School Scheduled

**November 17<sup>th</sup>** in Lincoln and **November 18<sup>th</sup>** in North Platte, the Nebraska Rural Electric Association will host a Candidate Training School. Plans are coming together to have an informative course that will help to make the campaigning process less intimidating for anyone interested in running for office.

The class is only a few short weeks away and we would like to boost our participation numbers. This course can benefit board members up for election or can be used as a way to help influence someone who might not consider running for office otherwise. Making a phone call or giving a personal invitation to someone to attend may help them to feel more comfortable and make the decision to seek a public office.

In the past, this class has proven to be a valuable opportunity for those who attend. Please make sure you do what you can to get the word out in your service area. Not only is the class a way to educate rural Nebraskans about campaigning, it is also an opportunity to highlight a program rural electric PPD's and cooperatives are offering to better our local communities.

## Important Dates:

<i>KBR RPPD GR Presentation</i>	November 7
Cuming County PPD GR Presentation	November 10
Dawson PPD GR Presentation	November 16
<i>NREA Candidate Training School-Lincoln</i>	November 17
NREA Candidate Training School-North Platte	November 18

To register for the NREA Candidate Training School contact James Dukesherer at the NREA office at 402-475-4988 and we will send you the registration form for the class. The cost of attending is \$35 for the day-long course and lunch will be included.

## How Did Your Member-System Measure Up with the Last Take Action Alert?

This month the NREA asked our grassroots participants to sign an email to our members of the House of Representatives asking them to support a measure which would continue to allow coal ash to be recycled into construction materials and be disposed of as non-hazardous waste. Nationwide Nebraska had a strong showing sending 563 emails to our House members ranking us third behind South Carolina and Missouri.

Check out the results in the left hand column of this newsletter and see how your member-system measured up to the others in the state. Every member-system should have a publically posted Rural Electric 15 list of individuals in your office that have made a commitment to participate in these Take Action Alerts. Make it your member-systems goal to reach at least 15 participants on every Take Action Alert.

Just today I received a call from my Congressman, Jeff Fortenberry, thanking me for sending in the letter and weighing in on the issue. Our Representatives are paying attention to our correspondence, and every participant we can get for these alerts will strengthen our message.

Congratulations for the great turnout from Nebraska, especially from Custer PPD with more than 100 participants, WOW! Please continue to make grassroots participation in your member-system a priority. Over time, if we continue to highlight grassroots involvement, participation will become second nature. A culture of grassroots involvement will develop among our board members and employees and we will see greater education of the issues among our members and increased participation in our advocacy efforts.

## How can I Boost Participation in Grassroots Take Action Alerts from my Consumers?

Take Action Alerts can be a valuable way for your member-system to communicate with consumers about issues that will impact their electric rates. But how can your member-system get consumers to sign up to be included in the Take Action database?

Now that the Grassroots Initiative has been in place for more than 3 years we have learned a number of techniques that work to increase participation in grassroots activities. One success story has been the use of bill stuffers asking consumers to sign up to receive take action notices by email. It is also clear that some bill stuffers are more effective than others. As you draft your member-system's plan to get consumers to join the Grassroots Initiative, consider these helpful hints:

- Consider using a one-page bill stuffer with a detachable sign-up card at the bottom--Not sure why this format works, but it does.
- Make all messages local—Don't just talk about how rates in Nebraska or our nation could go up as a result of these issues, talk about how rates at your member-system could go up and sign the message from your member-system manager.
- Highlight that we want the individuals email address--Most of our grassroots correspondence will be by way of email. The more email addresses we have, the more valuable the database will be for us.
- Tell consumers that we need their help--The more they understand that they can help to make a difference, the more likely they are to participate.

Of course, the NREA is always available to help you draft messages and can provide examples of what others have successfully done in the past.

## Sponsor a Student to the 2012 Youth Tour In Washington, D.C.

Now is the time to start to think about sending a student from your member-system to the NRECA 2012 Youth Tour in Washington, D.C. Youth Tour provides a once-in-a-lifetime experience for these students and possibly a life-long advocate for our industry as these students grow up and take their position in our society.

Not only is Youth Tour a valuable opportunity for the students who attend, it provides yet another opportunity for our member-systems to boost public relations in their local communities. As these students return from their trip, the NREA will issue a press release which often gets published in local newspapers. Often printed thank you notes, and word of mouth also help to let the public know that we are actively investing in the local community.

Kristen Gottschalk will need to know the number of students your member-system plans to send to Youth Tour by December 16<sup>th</sup>. We would like to see every member-system participate in the program giving a rural Nebraska student, who may not have had the opportunity to see our nation's capitol, the trip of a lifetime.