

“safe, reliable, hassle free service”

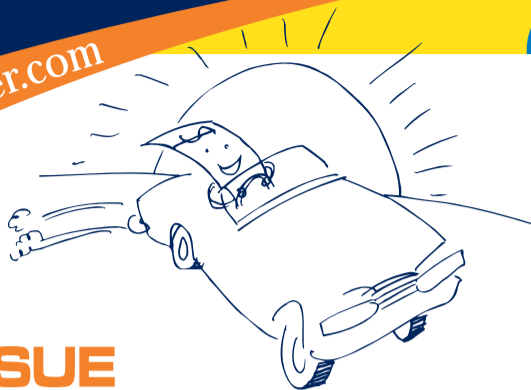
CUSTOMER NEWSLETTER

MARCH 2005

Northpower

www.northpower.com

\$6 MILLION DISTRIBUTED  
to Northpower customers



Northpower recently announced a \$6million line charge holiday. All customers who were connected to the Northpower network on February 15th receive a credit on their line charges. The credit varies from \$50 to \$195 depending on each customer's electricity usage. Most residential customers and small businesses use 2,000 to 15,000 units per year, which will result in a \$120 credit.

Because Northpower is responsible for the lines network and not the actual sale of electricity, a line charge holiday is the

best way we can reduce electricity charges for customers in the Northpower area. The credit has been distributed via electricity retailers and should have appeared on your electricity bill for the period which includes February 17th.

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## Looking for a Guest Speaker?



Northpower's customer advisor Jan Thomsen, spoke to over 20 community groups, visited more than 28 schools and gave countless small-appliance demonstrations during 2004 on electrical safety and energy efficiency.

Her work is recognised nationally and Northpower is regarded as a leader in electrical safety education programmes. "School children especially are at risk," says Jan, "since they love climbing and don't always recognise the danger of overhead wires or of playing near ground mounted Transformers."

Jan is available to speak to any audience and can draw from a great collection of examples to illustrate her message.

Jan can be contacted on

09 430 1841

or email [jan.thomsen@northpower.com](mailto:jan.thomsen@northpower.com)

## Helicopter Appeal Exceeds Target



The 2004 Northland Electricity Rescue Helicopter Appeal was a huge success, with more than \$159,000 raised for the Northland Emergency Services Trust (NEST). The Trust is responsible for the Electricity Rescue Helicopter service throughout Northland. The annual appeal aims to raise \$150,000. This covers the standing costs of the rescue service, such as wages, training and insurance.

Northpower sponsors the Trust

in conjunction with Top Energy, paying for all the design, print and advertising costs associated with the appeal. This means that every cent donated by Northlanders goes directly to the Electricity Helicopter.

Northpower Marketing Manager Darren Mason says the Company has been associated with NEST since 1988 and has helped raise over \$2 million dollars. "The Helicopter provides a valuable emergency rescue service, and it's reassuring to know they are there when we need them."

## Power Disconnected for Six Months or More.



Northpower inspector, Leo Hay testing a temporary supply.

When people go overseas, or have a bach or house that is unused throughout the winter, they often arrange for the disconnection of the electricity supply. However, if you have the power disconnected for six months or more, your house or bach needs to be inspected before the power can be reconnected.

Northpower, along with other qualified electrical inspectors, can provide the inspection service for a fee. Once your house has been inspected, you need to contact your electricity retailer and agree to pay a reconnection

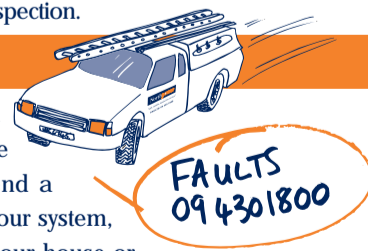
fee. The retailer then arranges for Northpower to visit your installation, sight the certificate of verification and reconnect the power.

If you are unsure of the length of time your power has been disconnected, contact your electricity retailer or Northpower with your ICP number. They will be able to tell you exactly how long the electricity has been turned off and advise whether you need an inspection.

## Got a fault? Call us first.

If you have no power or no hot water, it is a good idea to call Northpower first. We have qualified people who can give free advice over the telephone. If required, Northpower will send a faultman out to see you and assess the fault. If the fault is on our system, we will of course repair it at no charge. If the fault is within your house or section, you have the choice of using the Northpower faultman or your regular tradesman to repair the fault. If you use your tradesman, Northpower will only charge for the visit. Costs are charged at a competitive hourly rate.

If you call your regular tradesman first, and they diagnose a fault on Northpower's equipment, you will still need to call Northpower to arrange for repair of the fault. You cannot pass your tradesman's bill onto Northpower for payment. So to avoid any unnecessary bills, call us first on 430 1800.



## Earth Mat Safety tests

Part of Northpower's maintenance schedule for its network of Distribution Substations (Transformers), is a five-yearly inspection to test the 'earth mat'.

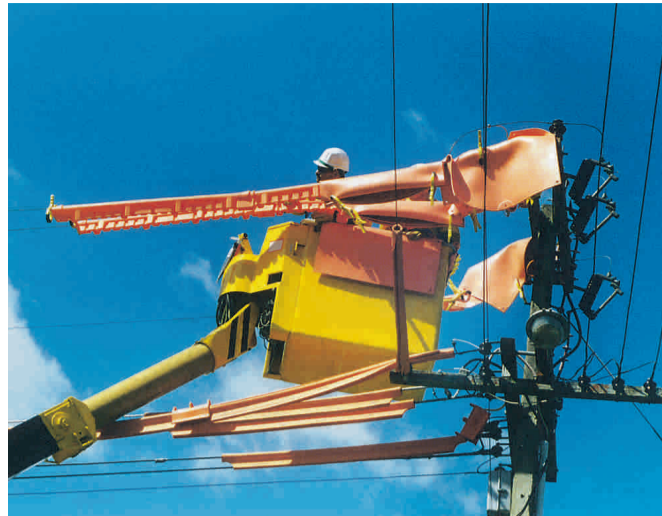
Like houses, Transformers need to be properly earthed, to enable any fault currents in the electrical environment, e.g. lightning, to safely dissipate into the earth. Each electricity transformer has a series of cables and copper rods buried in a trench below ground level. This is known as an earth mat.

If an earth mat is found to be substandard, a soil test is done to determine the corrective action required.

Carrying out inspections is a huge task. Northpower owns approximately 6500 distribution transformers on their network, each of which requires a separate visit.

Some transformers are located on private property, and although testing causes no disruptions to electricity supply, landowners are notified before any inspection or corrective action takes place. There is no cost to owners if any remedial work needs to be carried out.

## Line Quality Remains Our Focus



Glove and Barrier methods minimise shutdowns.

As a lines company, Northpower always needs to consider the quality of our lines network, versus the cost of maintaining or upgrading them. To find out whether improvements are required, we complete regular surveys with a range of our customers. The latest survey told us that, in general, our customers are happy with the reliability of our lines. They do not want to pay more money in exchange for a better quality service.

Northpower works very hard to maintain the quality of our lines. Line quality can be measured in a number of ways. The SAIDI system (System Average Interruption Duration Index) is both an internationally recognised measure and a legal requirement in New Zealand. It measures the average number of minutes per year that each customer is without power, and provides an indicator of how well the whole network is performing.

Northpower was well within its SAIDI target for the 2003/04 financial year, and is projecting even further improvement for the year to 31 March, 2005. "We minimize the number of planned shutdowns by using glove-and-barrier techniques (working on live lines) as much as possible," says Network Planning Manager Russell Watson. "We have improved our systems for targeting maintenance, and are basically working smarter."

This year the focus will be on pole maintenance and upgrades, vegetation management and general line maintenance. The plans for the next two to three years include increasing capacity at four substations to meet the demands of industrial growth. This project will begin in 2005.

## Enterprise Education



Clockwise from left - Jan Thomsen, Northpower Customer Advisor; Lyn Sneddon and Anne Cooper, Principals WGHS; Janet Lang, Northpower Enterprise Co-ordinator; David Templeton, Regional Co-ordinator.

Northpower's sponsorship of Enterprise Education in Schools has been cited as a significant factor in the success of the Young Enterprise Scheme (YES) and Young Entrepreneur Programme (YEP). Schools in the Whangarei and Kaipara districts have nearly 200 participating students, which is due in no small part to Northpower's support for the teachers coordinating the scheme.

The Northpower funded Management Unit for each Coordinator recognises the amount of work required in working with students as they 'create a company', prepare business plans, market a product and monitor the results.

Students are encouraged to regard their project as a 'real business' in every sense, and must take responsibility for making management decisions and accurate record keeping.

According to David Templeton the Regional Coordinator, the learning points for students can be staggering. For some it means an insight into the harsher realities of running a business while for others the experience provides greater clarity in their subject choices for further learning.

## Safe Lines are Everyone's Responsibility



Serviceline pole requiring replacement.

Many consumers assume Northpower is responsible for the entire power system. This is not correct - consumers have responsibilities too. As a general rule, Northpower owns the power system to the point where it enters private property. For most residential properties, this is where the supply line crosses the boundary of the public road. In rural areas, where Northpower lines may cross several properties, the customer must take responsibility where the line becomes solely for their own supply.

Inside the property boundaries, the consumer or property owner is also responsible for the safety and maintenance of their electrical installation. The only exceptions to this rule are meters, relays and transformers on private property, which are owned by Northpower.

Customers are legally responsible for ensuring that their installation is maintained in a safe working condition. This includes any overhead or underground lines that form part of their installation or service line, not just the wiring inside a building. Customers also need to ensure that trees are kept clear of overhead wires, and roots do not damage underground cables. If you have any concerns, Northpower can carry out safety inspections, using Registered Electrical Inspectors, at a very competitive cost. (Please phone 09 430 1803)