



RESCUE SERVICE
NEEDS HELP

NORTHPOWER
TURNS 80

NETWORK KEEPS
IMPROVING

NORTH READY
FOR FIBRE

SAVE POWER
THIS SUMMER

Your community newsletter

www.northpower.com

Girl Power comes to Northland!

If you're in Northland and you notice a Northpower line mechanic looking a bit more feminine than usual – well that's because SHE is!

Robyn Dawes, Heidi Adams and Kat Petry are breaking new ground as the company's first Northland-based female trainee 'linees'.

They were selected following a 'boot camp' developed by Northpower.

The women are in the early stages of their two-year training period, which includes block courses at Utilitech in Auckland combined with on-the-job coaching.

Supervisor Derek Passmore says they are performing as well as any

trainee, and were picked because they had a great attitude, were keen and showed initiative.

He says: "This has always been a male-dominated industry, but the women have fitted in well. Their male colleagues are impressed by what they've seen so far."

Heidi, who hails from South Africa and has a background in administration and call centre work, says she loves her job and is so happy in her new career she cannot stop smiling. She says: "I had got to a point where I felt I was stuck in a rut, waking up in the morning and not wanting to go to work. I needed a change and to challenge myself.

"As soon as I saw the job advertised, I knew it was the challenge I was looking for. I just loved the boot camp and felt like I was in my element".

"I haven't felt this way in a long time – I can't wait to get to work because every day is a new experience. The feeling is indescribable, and I am absolutely loving it."

Heidi says she loves the fact that in the electricity industry, she is working on something that everybody needs.



Electricity Rescue Helicopter Appeal

The 2010 Electricity Rescue Helicopter Appeal is well under way, and members of the public are again being asked to dig deep to support this lifesaving service.

Northland's independently operated helicopter rescue service has now been in the skies for 22 years, making an astonishing 10,000-plus rescue transfers in total.

The appeal, sponsored by Northpower and Top Energy, runs throughout November. Donations can be made through any branch of the ASB Bank in Northland, and you can also give money by returning an appeal envelope delivered to your home. Whatever amount you donate, we will match it up to \$150,000.

In the last year the Electricity Rescue Helicopter has undergone a major refurbishment, which was such a success that it was able to keep flying during the worst of the winter weather. On one occasion, four patients were successfully transferred to hospital during a 'weather bomb' – something that would not have been possible without the new fit-out.

Don't miss out on your chance to vote!

Voting for the election of Trustees to the Northpower Electric Power Trust (NEPT) takes place this month, with internet voting available for the first time.

This is your chance to influence the long-term development of Northpower, which is owned by consumers via the Trust. Voting papers have been delivered to households and voting closes at noon on 19 November.

You can choose to vote by post or via the internet, by going to www.northpower.com and clicking on the NEPT election banner on the home page. This will connect you to the voting site.

Each voting pack contains a return envelope for postal votes, as well as voting instructions and a unique PIN number and password for those wishing to vote online.

Electors must choose only one method of voting, as sending in a postal vote and an internet vote will render both invalid.

Seven Trustees are elected in total, five from the Whangarei district and two representing the Kaipara district. An election is held every three years.

When the company was corporatised in 1993 as a result of government legislation, the Trust was formed to hold all the shares in Northpower on behalf of the Trust beneficiaries – that is you, the consumers.

This ensured that ownership of the company remained locally for your benefit.

The election result will be announced on 24 November.

NORTHPOWER
Electric Power Trust

Northpower turns 80!



In August your local lines company reached its 80th birthday. Chief Executive Mark Gatland reflects on the wisdom of those whose vision and foresight led to the company's development.

Northpower has evolved from the vision and determination of a few very enterprising people. In 1920, most people could not imagine how they would ever need reticulated electricity, or how they would be able to afford it.

The founders took a financial risk to build the foundations of an electricity network, which in 1930 became the North Auckland Electric Power Board, supplying the Kaipara and Whangarei districts. The work that was carried out those many years ago, and the spirit in which it was undertaken, initiated a culture of forward thinking and a constant desire to improve.

The decisions made 80 years ago provided the strong foundation upon which Northpower is maintaining its current infrastructure and building its future. It is important for us to pay tribute to the contribution of those men and women of an earlier age whose skill and commitment has helped make it possible.

The Northpower of 2010 is a very different organisation to that which began its journey 80 years ago.

However, our tradition of consumer ownership has remained, and continues to shape and direct the company.

As well as owning and operating the Whangarei/Kaipara lines network and the Wairua hydroelectric power station, Northpower has developed its construction arm into one of NZ's leading providers of electricity network construction and maintenance services. We have well recognised capability in fibre optic networks and we are building our expertise in transmission line construction. Northpower also sells its services to other utility providers throughout the North Island, in Perth, Melbourne and the Pacific Islands.



The First North Auckland Electric Power Board.

This expansive and technically challenging business gives Northpower substantial capability, and its competitive nature drives our 900 employees, many from Northland, towards constant improvement. It will continue to grow and create more opportunities for people keen to take up the challenge.

Our expansion into fibre optic technology, to provide ultra-fast broadband, has assisted the community by bringing the Northland region to the forefront of telecommunications technology.

We continue to support the local community through our sponsorship of the Electricity Rescue Helicopter Service and the Whangarei Native Bird Recovery Centre, and our contribution to the Healthy Homes Tai Tokerau retrofitting project.

And as a consumer-owned Trust, Northpower returns cash to households and businesses through line charge holidays and consumer credits – since 1993 more than \$150 million has been given back to our customers.

Planning for *the future*

Residents and businesses in central Whangarei are benefitting from a major \$2.4 million upgrade aimed at future-proofing the network and improving security of supply.

Installation of a new 33,000 volt underground cable from the Kensington substation to the Alexander Street substation has been completed, with the extension of switchboards at both substations allowing the cable to be connected.

The demand for power in the Central Business District and surrounding area has been increasing steadily, and this upgrade will cater for continued growth for years to come. It also strengthens the security of supply by bringing a direct feed into the city centre.

With future planning in mind, a fibre duct was installed alongside the new cable, which will be used to supply ultra-fast broadband as part of Northpower's telecommunications network.

Russell Watson, Network Planning Manager, says the upgrade gives Northpower a very strong feed to the centre of Whangarei. It greatly increases the reliability of supply and avoids the potential for major blackouts, as experienced by Auckland in 1998.

He said: "With so many people dependent on a reliable power supply, it is part of Northpower's role to continually maintain and upgrade its assets, and to think and plan ahead. Typically, Northpower planners look to the next 10 to 15 years in their strategic management of the network. Ongoing work involves upgrading the older parts of the network, while ensuring that plans are made to keep up with future demand for electricity."

As part of the push to improve network reliability, six major switchboard upgrades have been carried out in a three-year project. The ageing switchboards at Tikipunga, Ruakaka, Dargaville, Onerahi and Maungatapere have all been replaced with modern switchgear, and work is currently under way to upgrade the Kamo switchboard.

Northpower also has planning permission for the development of a new sub-station at Maunu.



Northpower expands into the Pacific



A team of Northpower linemen has headed to the tropics to work on a major electrical project in Samoa.

Northpower won the contract to upgrade switch gear at three hydro power stations and a diesel power station in the small Pacific nation, significantly boosting its power capacity and security of supply.

The Northpower team has specialist skills which are not available in Samoa. The contract gives Northpower the chance to bring in overseas revenue, which is especially welcome in a time of recession.

The project is funded through a Power Expansion Project grant from the Asian Development Bank. Northpower is working in conjunction with the Electric Power Corporation (EPC), the Samoan government division which maintains and operates the generation and distribution network.



Bringing *Ultra Fast Broadband* to Northland

Whangarei was a telecommunications backwater, with poor internet speeds, expensive pricing and little choice, until Northpower announced its fibre-based ultra fast broadband project nearly three years ago.

The advent of our fibre-based network gave local businesses real choice in telecommunications for the first time, and provided performance equal to the best available in New Zealand. This choice has now been extended to residential customers in the Kensington area.

Northpower's Fibre Manager, Darren Mason, says the network is now spurring the development

of new service providers, offering competitively priced, fibre-based residential phone and broadband packages for the first time.

Whangarei has been named as one of 33 key urban centres in need of a fibre broadband network, as part of the Government's \$1.5 billion Ultra Fast Broadband Initiative. Northland also stands to benefit from the \$300 million Rural Broadband Initiative.

In September Northpower was shortlisted for prioritised negotiations as part of the Government's partner selection process for the first stage roll-out of the Ultra Fast Broadband Initiative.

Darren Mason says Northpower already has a fibre network connecting many local businesses and homes, and the injection of government backing will ensure a fast expansion of the network.

He says: "Northpower is a very capable and proven infrastructure provider and we are ready for the fibre initiative.

"With the money the Government has put on the table, we are able to take fibre to the door of all Whangarei residents within a number of years, and to the rest of Northland singled out under the Rural Broadband Initiative in well under 10 years."

Consumer Responsibilities on Private Properties

Many consumers do not realise they are responsible for power lines and poles which supply electricity to their property. As a general rule, Northpower owns the power system to the point where it enters private property; for most, this is where the electricity service line leaves the public road and enters private property.

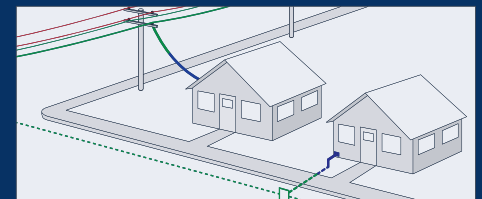
Inside private property boundaries, consumers are legally responsible for the safety and maintenance of their

electrical installation, including any overhead or underground service lines. Where service lines are shared with neighbours, the responsibility for maintenance and safety is also shared.

The only exceptions to this rule are Northpower-owned meters, relays and transformers on private property.

Customers also need to ensure that trees on their property are kept clear of overhead wires, and roots

do not damage underground cables. Northpower can carry out safety inspections on any of the above, using specialist staff, and at a very competitive cost.





Ask Jan?

If you have any electrical or Northpower focused questions why not ask Jan.



Featured questions will receive a **prezzy card**

\$25

Q Geoff of Whangarei Heads asks:

I run a portable cooling fan over summer for several hours during the day. Is this going to increase my power bill by heaps?

A Cooling fans use less energy than a standard light bulb. For example a large free standing fan draws 50W per hour = 1.3 cents per hour. Running for 10 hours a day will cost 13cents or for a month, \$3.90.

A portable cooling fan is an inexpensive way to keep cool.

Go to our website and subscribe to our online newsletter to receive the latest news and regular updates, including tips from Jan.

www.northpower.com/subscribe



Power Saving Tips for Summer

* Use cold water to wash clothes, and the occasional hot wash to flush through your washing machine. (The optimum water temperature for soil removal is 20 degrees C, so in winter it may be necessary to add a little hot water to the wash to reach this.)



* Dry your clothes outside as often as the weather allows, or have an undercover area to hang your clothes. A dryer will cost you 54 cents per hour (based on Meridian's tariff).



* Turn off your hot water if you are going away for more than a week.

* Defrost freezers regularly, the more ice build-up the more energy it used.

* Try not to open and close the fridge door too often.

* Don't overstock your fridge/freezer – it's important for air to circulate.

* Run a full dishwasher.

* Turn off computers, towel rails, lights and other appliances if not in use.



For more information contact **Jan Thomsen on 09 430 1841**