

Nebraska's public power giants are moving to nearly double generation by 2030. Your capital plan is where that happens.

OPPD alone is planning to roughly double its nameplate capacity this decade to serve data centers, food processors, and manufacturers, while coal converts to gas, solar scales, and Cooper nuclear keeps running. Every one of those forces reshuffles the projects on your list — and here the board answering the question is elected, not a commission. Invizion helps electric utilities re-sequence a capital portfolio in a click, and defend every decision.

~2x¹	\$2.0–2.2B¹	2,789 MW²	100%³
Generation capacity OPPD plans to add by 2030 — nearly doubling its nameplate portfolio.	OPPD capital investment in new generation through 2030.	OPPD's all-time summer peak (Aug 2023) — a third straight record year.	Nebraska is the only U.S. state served entirely by public power — no investor-owned electric utilities.

THE NEBRASKA LANDSCAPE

Four forces are moving your project list at once

None of these is theoretical, and none of them waits for your next budget cycle. Together they mean the capital plan your board approved last year may already be the wrong plan.

DEMAND — LOAD GROWTH

A decade of load growth, arriving now

After adding roughly 4 MW of new generation a year, OPPD now plans to build about 100 MW a year and nearly double its nameplate capacity by 2030 — driven by data centers, food processors, manufacturers, and agricultural processors expanding at once.¹

That build carries a \$2.0–2.2 billion capital price tag through 2030 and projected rate increases of 2.5–3% a year from 2027 to 2030.¹ Every large new customer is a capacity commitment competing for the same capital.

RELIABILITY — PEAKS & SPP

Record peaks, tighter reserve rules

OPPD set an all-time summer peak of 2,789 MW on Aug 21, 2023 — its third consecutive record year — the same day the Southwest Power Pool set a regional record of 56,184 MW.²

SPP has raised the stakes on paper too, now requiring members to carry a 36% planning reserve margin in winter and 16% in summer — obligations that turn into steel, not just spreadsheets.⁴

GENERATION — THE TRANSITION

Coal to gas and solar, nuclear holding the base

Coal is still Nebraska's largest source at roughly 44% of generation, with wind near 32% and nuclear about 16%.⁵ OPPD is retiring the oldest North Omaha units and refueling its remaining coal units to natural gas, a schedule its board has repeatedly extended for reliability.⁶

New gas peakers — Standing Bear Lake (162 MW) and Turtle Creek (550 MW) came online in 2024, with the Cass County Station expanding toward 995 MW — sit alongside NPPD's 835 MW Cooper nuclear plant and its 1,365 MW Gerald Gentleman coal station, still the state's largest.^{7,8,9}

CAPITAL — GRID & TRANSMISSION

Build generation and the wires to match

OPPD's 2025 corporate operating plan runs about \$2.3 billion, with three major transmission projects underway — Cass to Sarpy and Cass to Nebraska City among them — to move new load and meet SPP's reserve requirements.^{10,4}

The growth also lands on the bill: OPPD approved 6.3% average rate increases for both 2025 and 2026, and lifted vegetation-management spending to about \$29 million.¹⁰ New obligations don't replace the backlog — they stack on top of it.

WHO RUNS NEBRASKA'S GRID

Three public power giants, then a web of districts and coops

Nebraska has no investor-owned electric utilities. The grid is carried by three large publicly owned utilities and more than a hundred rural public power districts and cooperatives — all governed by boards, not a commission.

Large public power utilities

Rates set by elected or appointed boards, not a PUC

Omaha Public Power District (OPPD) ~855,000 people, Omaha & 13 counties · elected board⁷

Nebraska Public Power District (NPPD) 530,000+ Nebraskans across 84 of 93 counties · elected board¹¹

Lincoln Electric System (LES) ~153,000 accounts · mayor-appointed board¹²

OPPD alone plans \$2.0–2.2 billion of new-generation capital through 2030, on top of a ~\$2.3 billion annual operating plan.¹¹⁰

Rural public power districts & cooperatives

Governed by boards & members; many buy wholesale from NPPD

Rural public power districts Distribution to rural Nebraska (Loup, Cornhusker, Norris, others)

Nebraska Rural Electric Association members Member-governed distribution cooperatives

NPPD wholesale partners 52 communities & 25 districts/coops buy wholesale¹¹

Public power serves 1 in 7 U.S. electricity customers — but Nebraska is the only state where it serves everyone.¹³

No commission — the board is the decision-maker

Nebraska has no public utility commission setting electric rates. Instead, publicly elected and appointed boards do — which means capital decisions are made, and defended, in front of the customers who vote.

No state rate regulation. Nebraska electric rates are not set by a PUC; they are set by each utility's governing board — OPPD's eight-member elected board⁷ and NPPD's eleven-member elected board.¹¹

LES is governed by a nine-member Administrative Board appointed by Lincoln's mayor and confirmed by the City Council — public capital decisions, made in open meetings¹⁴

Southwest Power Pool (SPP) is the functional oversight layer: it operates the regional market and sets the planning reserve margins — 36% winter, 16% summer — that drive Nebraska capacity plans⁴

Integrated resource planning happens through each utility's own process — OPPD's board-approved generation plan targets nearly doubling capacity by 2030, the closest thing to an IRP hearing Nebraska has.¹

The capital is committed — can your plan absorb it?

In an all-public-power state, most of the money on the table is self-funded capital and long-term contracts, sharpened by federal clean-energy incentives. The constraint is sequencing: which projects, in what order, against SPP deadlines and rate limits.

OPPD: \$2.0–2.2B new-generation capital through 2030 — the core of the plan to nearly double capacity, financed on a ~\$2.3B annual operating plan.¹⁰

250 MW renewable PPA — OPPD signed a power-purchase agreement with Nebraska-based Sandhills Energy for a new 250 MW facility in Burt County (2026).¹⁵

1,000–2,000 MW of advanced nuclear under study — OPPD and three other utilities are exploring new nuclear to meet long-run load, a multi-billion-dollar option that would dominate any capital plan it enters.¹⁵

IRA elective (direct) pay lets public power utilities and cooperatives capture the full value of clean-energy tax credits as cash — putting utility-scale solar, storage, and nuclear in reach for OPPD, NPPD, LES, and Nebraska's districts.¹³

NEBRASKA'S GRID, IN BRIEF

Questions Nebraska utility leaders are asking

Short, sourced answers — the same facts we dig into with utilities looking at their capital programs.

Does Nebraska have investor-owned electric utilities or a PUC?

No. Nebraska is the only U.S. state served entirely by public power, and it has no public utility commission for electric rates. Rates are set by elected or appointed utility boards.³⁷

How fast is Nebraska's electricity demand growing?

Fast. OPPD is shifting from roughly 4 MW of new generation a year to about 100 MW a year, aiming to nearly double its capacity by 2030 to serve data centers, food processors, and manufacturers.¹

What is happening to Nebraska's coal plants?

Coal is still the largest source (~44%), but it is shrinking. OPPD is retiring its oldest North Omaha units and refueling the rest from coal to natural gas, while adding gas peakers and solar; NPPD still runs the 1,365 MW Gerald Gentleman coal station and the 835 MW Cooper nuclear plant.⁵⁶⁹⁸

Who regulates capital and reliability if there is no commission?

The utility's own board approves rates and capital, and the Southwest Power Pool sets the market rules and reserve margins — 36% in winter, 16% in summer — that shape how much capacity Nebraska utilities must build.¹⁴

What is that growth doing to rates?

OPPD approved 6.3% average rate increases for both 2025 and 2026 and projects 2.5–3% annual increases from 2027 to 2030 to fund reliability, growth, and modernization.¹⁰¹

How does Invizion help Nebraska electric utilities plan capital?

Invizion is scenario-based capital portfolio optimization for utilities. It lets you model how a data-center interconnection, a coal-to-gas conversion date, an SPP reserve-margin change, or a nuclear decision reshuffles your whole project list, re-sequence the portfolio automatically, and keep a defensible record of every trade-off for your board and your customers.

REFERENCES

Sources

Every figure in this briefing is tied to a primary or authoritative source.

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ABOUT INVIZION

Capital program optimization for utilities

Invizion is a purpose-built capital lifecycle management platform for utilities. It integrates budgeting, CIP, scenario analysis, and funding-source tracking in one system — so utilities can re-sequence a capital portfolio in a click and demonstrate audit-ready, defensible decisions to regulators, boards, and rating agencies.

See how utilities keep capital plans current and defensible with Invizion.

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