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NPPD: No Plans To Close Cooper Nuclear Station

(NRN)-- The Omaha Public Power District board of directors will consider closing the Fort Calhoun Nuclear Power Station next month. The president and CEO of Nebraska Public Power District Pat Pope says that is not going to happen to the Cooper Nuclear Station near Brownville.

“It’s a tremendous carbon-free resource for us,” Pope said. “In 2015, NPPD’s resources were 46 percent carbon-free. Cooper accounted for 34 percent of that. So, it’s huge for us.”

Pope said he feels nuclear power is the best way to decarbonize the eclectic sector.

He says you need fuel diversity in the power industry. He says right now there is a push to use natural gas to generate electricity but says in 1978 the government banned utilities from using it.

Pope says the energy picture changes all the time.

“I think things will change in the future,” Pope said.

While we never know what will happen to gas prices in the future and if they go up so will the power bill. He says having nuclear power in the mix, natural gas, coal and hydro in the mix allows power companies provide an affordable service.

Pope says nuclear power is a constant, reliable source of energy.

“Reliability is huge,” Pope said. “In 2015, Cooper generated 98.7 percent of its’ maximum capability. It is there when you need it. Whether the sun is shining, rain, snow, you name it: it’s there.”

He says Cooper has had its share of problems as well but they invested \$600-million into the facility that was built in 1974 and it is good to operate until at least 2034.

Cooper Nuclear is one of the largest employers of people living in Nemaha and Richardson counties in Nebraska as well as Atchison County, Missouri.

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