

NEBRASKA

Magazine

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September 2023

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PLACED BY NI-KU-RI LADY, DAUGHTER OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION BLAIR, NEBRASKA
ERECTED BY PATRIOTIC FONTANELLE CITIZENS 1926

FIRSTS OF FONTANELLE

Exploring the Historic Legacy of a Small Nebraska Village

Inside:

- Youth Tour Give Students Opportunities
- Farm-To-School Programs Help Nebraska Students Eat Fresh, Local Foods
- Staying Safe During Harvest Season



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Telling the story of
Rural Nebraska

Volume 77
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A large rock notes the location of Fontanelle University, also known as Nebraska University. See the related article on Page 6. Photograph by LaRayne Topp



Wayne Price

Visit our new website at
nebraskamagazine.org



The Importance of Cooperative Communications

Nebraska Magazine is really the cornerstone of NREA's public outreach and education program and we rely on the participation of our members to make that program a success! The magazine contains valuable information and a statewide connection for electric consumers they won't receive if their electric system does not subscribe to the magazine for them.

Nebraska Magazine has been published since January 1947. The role of the magazine is to inform consumers about the challenges faced by rural electric service providers, chronicle the benefits and challenges of rural community life, inform consumers of the status of the rural electrification programs, and to provide electrical safety and energy conservation information.

It probably won't come as a surprise that I think one of the most important purposes we can serve with the magazine is to educate our readers about national and state issues critical to the electric industry and rural residents. We recently updated the magazine, which has continued to evolve over the years as we strive to provide our readers with trustworthy information about issues like electric industry changes, rural economic development, renewable energy, and climate change, to name a few.

In this respect, the magazine serves a critical "grassroots lobbying" function that can help educate and motivate consumers to talk to their elected officials about issues that can have significant impacts on your utility and the people of rural Nebraska. The magazine can help ensure our elected officials aren't just hearing from paid lobbyists.

The magazine also emphasizes safety and energy conservation issues to protect consumers and hopefully save them money.

One of the other important functions of the magazine is it provides a way for Nebraskans to become more familiar with their state and their fellow Nebraskans. We run stories about people, places, and things in the state that many people who live here are not aware of. I hope by reading those stories our readers feel more "connected" to their home state.

Nebraska Magazine covers a wide range of topics important to electric consumers like our youth programs including Youth Tour on page 14 of this issue, agricultural and technology issues, travel, and the Nebraska Legislature.

While the cost of the magazine has gone up recently due to rising paper prices and soaring postage rates, it continues to cost less than 75 cents per issue. That's a pretty good deal for the amount of information consumers are receiving from their rural electric utility.

If you enjoy receiving *Nebraska Magazine* each month, I would encourage you to contact your rural electric utility and tell them so.



Mike Lammers

Mike Lammers is the General Manager of Cedar-Knox Public Power District, headquartered in Hartington, Nebraska

Understanding the Impact of Power Generation Changes

Safe, affordable, and reliable are the three pillars of public power that you have heard talked about many times before. Of these three, reliability is one that is not discussed very often as it has historically been taken for granted that it will always be there. The Nebraska Rural Electric Association (NREA) consists of power districts and electric cooperatives with very reliable distribution systems that typically do not own any large generation or transmission, as we are in purchase contracts for power with Generation & Transmission companies (G&T's). However, we have reached a level of concern in the United States about the future of reliability on the transmission electrical grid due to the lack of reliable generation. I recently read an article from Jim Matheson, CEO of the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA), that addressed his same concern for this issue and is working with policymakers in Washington, D.C. to try to prevent further risk moving forward.

This has been a hot topic across the industry for quite some time as many baseload generators have been retiring. Matheson reported the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) recently published the 2023 Summer Reliability Assessment and stated “an especially dire warning that America’s ability to keep the lights on has been jeopardized.” NERC warns that “two-thirds of North America is at risk of energy shortfalls this summer during periods of extreme demand.” This is not solely due to the retirement of conventional generation like coal but also includes factors like large increases in electricity demand, supply chain issues, widespread weather events, fuel delivery issues with natural gas and coal, and recent Environment Protection Agency (EPA) proposed rules that may force generators to meet strict emission restrictions.

While there is no problem with reducing or eliminating carbon-emitting generation long term, there must first be a reliable alternative in place before the coal and other baseload generation is removed. Wind and solar renewables can help serve the kilo-watt hour energy replacement but cannot replace the reliability of baseload generation being there when the wind doesn't blow and the sun doesn't shine. Matheson stated “American families and businesses expect the lights to stay on at a cost they can afford, but that's no longer a guarantee. Nine states saw rolling blackouts last December as the demand for electricity exceeded available supply and the new EPA's power plant rule will greatly compound the problem.” Nebraska residents are no different in that we expect the lights to stay on, irrigations to run, commercial

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Firsts of Fontanelle

Exploring the Historic Legacy of a Small Nebraska Village

by **LaRayne Topp**

One conversation with an Indian leader. One letter on a rubber stamp. One twist in the route of a railroad. One switch of a county line. One vote. All of these seemingly insignificant “ones,” have fashioned the history of Fontanelle, Nebraska. In the running to be the capital of the new Nebraska Territory, Fontanelle today rests as a quiet and unincorporated village on the banks of the Elkhorn River.

It also remains a village of firsts: the first seat of Dodge County; the first site of Nebraska University; the first school west of the Missouri River to offer college courses; its post office among the first in the territory.

Fontanelle’s story begins in 1854 when the United States Congress passed the Kansas-Nebraska Act, claiming Indian land for the Nebraska Territory, encompassing portions of what is known today as Nebraska, Wyoming, the Dakotas, Colorado and Montana.

A month after this bill passed, a joint stock company of German immigrants, primarily from Quincy, Illinois, formed the Quincy Colony Company, desirous of establishing homes in this new territory. On an 1855 visit, they ferried across the river at Omaha City, meeting Logan Fontenelle, a leader of the Omaha nation. He guided them to an Elkhorn River bluff about forty miles northwest of Omaha City, and from this overlook showed them a promising grassy plateau below.

With the mistaken idea that the river was navigable and could be used as a means of transportation, the Colony agreed on the sum of \$100 to purchase the 20-square-mile property. Mary Cole, a steamboat bringing up early families, struck a snag in the river below Omaha City and sank, proving this idea might be folly.

The Colony named the settlement Fontenelle in honor of the Omaha leader. Years later, a worn-out rubber stamp



The original Fontanelle Town Hall is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

designed to approve village paperwork was replaced by a manufacturer. It came with an “a” instead of an “e” and the misnomer, Fontanelle, stuck.

Early years were difficult for the colony. Snow blew in through the cracks of primitive log houses, fronted by wagons and farm implements, with cows, pigs and chickens wandering the streets, wrote early inhabitant Perla Evans Houston.

Fontanelle homes were lighted by tallow dips, and even those were scarce. “One candle—we felt—was a necessity,” Houston wrote. “Two, an extravagance; but when three were lighted, neighbors gathered for a party.”

In addition, the villagers were plagued with prowling wolves, howling blizzards, fierce prairie fires, and violent summer electrical storms.

Streets were named after the country’s thirteen colonies, and four bachelors built the first log cabin in the community, for the Lutheran congregation’s services.



Above: Eleanor Harmon and her son, Steve, look over the history of Fontanelle. Eleanor is the great-granddaughter of one of its founders, Henry Sprick.

were among those favored to become the first Territorial Capital. An act of the Legislature approved Omaha City on January 30, 1855. However, blueprints had already been drawn up for the layout of the Fontanelle capital and are on display at the Washington County Museum at nearby Fort Calhoun.

A section from Andreas' History of the State of Nebraska, Washington County, explains it this way: "... Fontenelle entered the lists as a contestant for the prize of the Territorial Capital, but failed after having exhausted every expedient known to the politics and diplomacy of those times. She, however, was incorporated and became a city, by legislative enactment, on March 14, 1855. She also succeeded in securing a charter for a college, named Nebraska University, to be located there; so she was not altogether destitute of consolation."

In 1860, the western boundary of Washington County was redefined, removing Fontanelle from its status as county seat of Dodge County. According to the Andreas' History, "she lost her bright future metropolitan prospects."

Once the settlement was no longer the county seat, plus lost its bid for territorial capital, the town's university, built in 1856, was in a precarious position as well.

One of these bachelors was Henry Sprick, who returned to Quincy in 1857 to bring back Sophia, his bride. He became a successful farmer and businessman, purchasing land from those who left, discouraged by the hardships of such a new country. Eventually he came to own 3,000 acres of prime Nebraska farmland, and served in the Nebraska Legislature for three sessions, traveling on the train from Nickerson to Lincoln.

Sprick's obituary stated they were establishing a town "which at that time had its chief existence on paper and in the minds of the colonists who had planned to make it a great city, and if possible the capital of the state soon to be created... vying with Omaha in importance; and at the first meeting of the territorial legislature it only lacked one vote of becoming the capital of the territory."

A reroute of the Burlington Northern to the other side of the river changed everything.

Plattsmouth, Brownville, Omaha City and Fontanelle

Continued on Page 8

From Page 7

The first building of Fontanelle University, also known as Nebraska University, was a two-story structure fashioned entirely from local cottonwood lumber. This four-year-college became a center of activities for the town, the meeting place for Good Templars Lodge Lyceum and Debating Society, a temperance movement, plus the Congregational Church.

A Professor Burt was the first principal, enjoying a salary of \$40 a month, right up until the first college building burned in December of 1865. Rumor says the fire was ignited by a chemistry experiment gone bad.

Burt resigned and the college was rebuilt. Three prosperous years followed, prompted by strict rules for attendance: no use of tobacco, games of chance, profane language or intoxicating drinks. Students were required to attend worship on the Sabbath, and all pupils were to be engaged in study or recitation between designated hours, retiring to bed at 10:00 each evening.

Plans were made for expansion; however, in 1871 a windstorm hit. By 1872, the college was moved to Crete and became Doane College. Today, the college's initial location is indicated with a large rock.

Henry Sprick's great-granddaughter is familiar with the rock. Eleanor Harmon's parents first met at the rock's dedication. Now in her 80s, when Harmon was a girl, the town was buzzing, with a blacksmith shop, a brickyard, a school for grades Kindergarten through 10th, and a general store where folks picked up their mail and purchased everything from ice cream and Fig Newtons to kitchen items. It came with a dance hall on the second story.

Eventually the school closed, as well as the general store and brickyard. The high school is now a private home. Fontanelle never became the territorial capital and isn't a county seat or large university town. Instead, it's a small, safe and close-knit community, where a family can still come to church on a Sunday morning. Its tidy, well-kept homes are nestled in on streets named after the country's first 13 states, right alongside the original Village Office, proudly listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Exactly the kind of town for which the original settlers of Fontanelle were hoping.



Center: A large rock notes the location of Fontanelle University, also known as Nebraska University. Now relocated to Crete as Doane College, the four-year college was a center of activities for Fontanelle.

Above: A cemetery near Camp Fontanelle, several miles south of the town, is the final resting place of many of the community's original settlers.

Photographs by LaRayne Topp

Getting a Higher Education in Dorm Room Safety

By Larry Oetken



Living in a dorm room, being away on their own, and of course keeping up with the whirl of studies all adds up to a pretty heady experience for your college student. Odds are that the last thing on their mind will be following electrical safety precautions.

That could be a dangerous oversight. Underwriters Laboratories reports approximately 1,800 fires a year take place in dormitories and fraternity and sorority housing. And those statistics don't include off campus housing where around 2/3 of students reside.

While they're home for a long weekend, the Leviton Institute recommends that you take the time to alert your child to the potential dangers in their dorm room. If you're driving them back to school afterwards, use this list to check for dorm room

trouble spots:

• **Cooking Equipment:** Almost 41% of dorm room fires are caused while cooking, and most of those are due to lack of attention, according to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA). Never let anything cook unattended, and always keep hotplates, toasters, microwave ovens, and coffeemakers at a safe distance from flammable materials like bedding, drapes, clothing or paper. It's a good idea to switch off appliances, or better yet, unplug them when not in use. And remember to check your college's guidelines on approved equipment for dorm rooms.

• **Overloaded Circuits:** Older dorm rooms weren't built to supply the power needs of today's microwaves, laptops, refrigerators, stereos, and other appliances. The result is often overloaded circuits. Test them by touching a plug or outlet to see if it's hot; if so, unplug it immediately and get help from the campus housing staff. In general, try to use common sense and run as few appliances into one outlet as possible.

Larry Oetken is the Job Training & Safety Coordinator for the Nebraska Rural Electric Association.

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Visit us at www.tristate.coop/electrify-and-save



Farm-To-School Programs Help Nebraska Students Eat Fresh, Local Foods

By Russell Shaffer

A growing number of Nebraska school districts are sourcing ingredients for their school meals from local farmers.

In a state like Nebraska, that makes sense, said Jordan Rasmussen, an Extension Educator with Rural Prosperity Nebraska. But as much as the farm-to-school movement is a logical extension of the state's robust ag economy, it's also a holistic approach to improving Nebraska's communities.

"Not only does it address a community's physical health, but also economic, educational and social health," Rasmussen said.

Hosted jointly with Nebraska Extension, the Nebraska Department of Education's annual Farm-to-School Institute trains communities on the logistics of farm-to-school programs. Workshops, lectures and seminars not only help connect schools with producers, but focus on goals, action plans and grant opportunities.

In the Cafeteria

The cafeteria is where farm-to-school is most apparent. Working with Rasmussen and fellow Extension Educator

Kayla Hinrichs, Burwell Public Schools recently received two U.S. Department of Agriculture grants of nearly \$130,000, which allowed them to replace and upgrade kitchen equipment. Pius X High School in Lincoln, which also attended the institute, used grant funds to purchase immersion blenders and make other upgrades to their kitchen, allowing them to process and store the produce that comes in abundance in autumn.

"During the fall, we'll get lots of tomatoes," said Carmen Goeden, Pius X's director of nutrition services. "We can't go through all of those tomatoes fresh, so we've learned to process them. We'll blend them, and then freeze them and use them for sauces or soups."

Burwell and Pius X have also received the Nebraska Department of Education's Local and Indigenous Foods Training grant, which brings Extension educators into schools to teach about the benefits of local foods. Hinrichs calls these visits the "Chef's Table," where she has made roasted turnips and Moroccan meatballs with students. Recently, Pius X taste-tested bison pizza.

"Ultimately, we want students to eat a variety of healthy foods," Hinrichs said. "If they're exposed to them in school, I think that's a great start to building good nutrition throughout their life."

But it goes beyond produce, Goeden said. After connecting with producers through the institute, Pius X has embraced introducing children to healthy foods by serving eggs from local growers, as well as cheese from Jisa Farmstead in Brainard, and whole grain breads from Rotella Bakery and milk from Hiland Dairy, both in Omaha.

In the Classroom

While some schools bolster their menus from local sources, others serve produce grown on their own grounds. At Southern High School in Wymore, Brady Meyer teaches an agriculture education class in which students grow produce in a greenhouse and with hydroponic towers.

"We've got a bunch of peppers out there right now that we're going to harvest at the end of the week, and the kids are going to make a salsa," Meyer said.

Classes such as these help students step away from the



Students grow bell peppers in a hydroponic growing tower at Southern High School in Wymore.

theory and engage in the practice. In Burwell, high school students visited Trotter's Garden Shoppe and Learning Center in Litchfield, where they harvested produce.

Recently, Alan and Jeanette Koelling, owners of Simply Sunflower farms, presented on the sunflower oil-making process to Burwell Elementary School students. And at Overton Public Schools, Julie Loudon, an agriculture educator, uses ag-centered object lessons in pre-existing classroom curriculum.

"It's just being a little bit more purposeful about connecting the things we already teach to the cafeteria," she said. "That's the most tangible place for food for kids. That's the first connection from cafeteria back to the classroom."

In Macy, farm-to-school at Umónhon Nation Public School focuses on students' connection to food and food's connection to community. Delberta Frazier and Brenda Murphy teach the Let's Go

Outside program, which includes in-class lessons and hands-on experiences.

"We grew a lot of carrots and radishes, parsley and lettuce," Frazier said. "We grew tomatoes and taught students about artificial pollination, so the kids did the pollinating."

Part of the program also includes helping students

connect with their language and culture. For one lesson, students dry and bottle herbs, label them with their scientific and Indigenous names, and report on how the herbs can be used for food and medicine.



Gary Fehr, owner of Green School Farms in Raymond, shows students from Pius X High School how to plant tomatoes. Photographs by Russell Shaffer, Rural Prosperity Nebraska

In the Community

Farm-to-school serves another purpose beyond students. It supports local businesses and keeps money in the local economy.

"Keeping that money here in Nebraska is huge," said Mark Roh, owner of Abie Vegetable People and co-owner of Lone Tree Foods, a produce distributor to schools in the Lincoln and Omaha metro areas. "Those are the end goals for the local food movement — not just one-off sales, but can farms and families start to design how we cash-flow our entire year on (programs) like this?"

In 2017, the Nebraska Department of Education hired Sarah Smith as the first farm-to-school coordinator. In 2022, the state legislature passed LB396, the Adopt the Nebraska Farm-to-School Program Act, which provided funding opportunities specifically for schools and farmers involved in farm-to-school.

"This is an exciting time for the farm-to-school movement in Nebraska," Fehr said. "It's kind of taking it from the one-on-one grassroots level and expanding it to get a lot broader participation."

Logistics aside, farm-to-school is already having an impact on communities across the state, Rasmussen said. She believes that as the programs grow, Nebraska will benefit.

"It's not a magic wand, where all of a sudden we're going to eat 100% fruits and vegetables," she said. "Farm-to-school programs aim at the fundamentals. If students are starting their day with a belly full of good, nutritious food, as opposed to junk food, it makes a big difference in how those students perform in the classroom, on the athletic field and in life in general."

To learn more about farm-to-school programs in Nebraska, visit <https://foodsystems.unl.edu/farm-to-school>.



Students receive their lunches at Pius X High School in Lincoln.

Youth Tour Gives Students Opportunities

In June, public power districts and electric cooperatives across the U.S. sent groups of high school students to Washington, D.C. for the 2023 National Rural Electric Cooperative Youth Tour. Nebraska sent 18 students and two chaperones, representing Nebraska public power districts and electric cooperatives.

While in D.C., Nebraska's Youth Tour delegation visited many of the major monuments and memorials, including the Washington, Lincoln, and Jefferson Memorials. They also spent time on Capitol Hill, meeting with Senator Deb Fischer and Congressman Adrian Smith.

The students were inspired by extraordinary exhibits found in the Smithsonian Museums, including the Hope Diamond and the Wright Brothers' 1903 Flyer. They also visited Gettysburg and Mount Vernon, as well as the National Holocaust Museum.

Youth Tour was born from a speech at the 1957 NRECA Annual Meeting by then-Sen. Lyndon B. Johnson. He was a longtime advocate of electric cooperatives, having lobbied for the creation of Pedernales Electric Cooperative in 1937 as a young politician in Texas.

"If one thing comes out of this meeting, it will be sending youngsters to the national capital where they can actually see what the flag stands for and represents," the future president said.

The Youth Tour experience provides students with a chance to see history come to life; the tour also gives them an opportunity to connect with other student leaders just like them from across the country.



James Doyle of Osmond, Neb., was selected as Nebraska's Youth Leadership Council member. He was sponsored by Northeast Power.

"Youth Tour was one of the greatest experiences in my life," he said. "During the Youth Tour I got the chance to explore many of DC's historical sites and museums, meet other Youth Tour students from different states, and enjoy new foods."

Doyle said he hopes others can take advantage of the Youth Tour just as he did and are able to enjoy this amazing experience.

"In addition to all of these new experiences and opportunities I was able to make many new friendships," he said.

Youth Tour is just one of the ways the Nebraska Rural Electric Association is investing in our future leaders. Nebraska's public power districts and electric co-ops do so much more than provide safe, reliable and affordable power—we are dedicated to improving the futures of students in our community because we know they are next in line to lead the way.

Alexa Tollman, Northwest RPPD

“The connections, the friendships, and the experiences from this trip of a lifetime will never fade! The highlight of my week was getting to reconnect with my friends from camp and getting to experience Washington, D.C. together. I am so grateful I had the opportunity and would encourage youth to look into the NREA Youth Energy Leadership Camp next summer!”

Olive Sabey, Norris PPD

“Attending Youth Tour in Washington, D.C. was truly the trip of a lifetime and I’m beyond thankful that I got to attend this year. We saw all the historic sites, famous monuments, and incredible memorials. Before going to D.C. I didn’t fully realize how much our country had done in only 247 years. I’m so grateful for the experiences, knowledge, and friendships this trip gave me.”

Lenora Kester, Elkhorn RPPD

“I enjoyed the entire trip. Standing out of my comfort zone, trying new things, and meeting lots of new people was very interesting and exciting. I wanna thank all of NREA staff for allowing me this once in a lifetime opportunity. The whole trip was just spectacular!”

Austin Smith, Dawson PPD

“I enjoyed every second of it and learned so much about our nation's history. Gettysburg was an enlightening glimpse into a world only seen in our textbooks and the capital tour was a unique way to see how law is made. I was able to meet Deb Fischer personally and see that they are people and not just politicians. I hope that everyone gets an opportunity to see what our nation is made of and keep it with them as I will.”



Delaney Rogers, Custer PPD

“Youth Tour was an amazing once in a life time trip. I was able to meet with kids around the country to compare and contrast rural electric. I also got to know more kids from around my state and made really close connections with quite a few of them. All in all, the entire trip was unforgettable.”

Carlee Livingston, North Central PPD

“My favorite thing about the Washington, D.C. trip was probably seeing all the memorials. It was really cool to see the memorials you see on TV and learn about the presidents you hear about all the time. There was lots to see and overall it was a super fun trip! I am grateful I had the opportunity to go.”

Youth Tour students visit the World War II Memorial (opposite) and Gettysburg National Military Park (above).

Grayden Sutherland, Southwest PPD

“The Washington, D.C. trip was very educational, inspiring, and all around fun. I learned about how our country started, how it is ran, and the true complexity of the government that not everybody sees or understands.”

Hailey Hunzeker, Cuming County PPD

“My favorite part of this trip was the Holocaust Museum and George Washington’s Mount Vernon. I enjoyed the group of people I went with and the memories I will remember for a lifetime. It was an awesome trip.”

For many farmers, fall requires long days in the field and little rest. The pressure to harvest as much as possible, combined with fatigue and looming deadlines, increases the risk of injury. In fact, most injuries occur during the spring and fall when stress and fatigue are common among farmers.

The safety and health of workers, including making time for sleep, should be a priority when considering a farm's productivity, according to Josie Rudolphi, University of Illinois Extension associate research scientist. "Rushing and cutting corners can lead to injury, which no one has time for, especially during the harvest," Rudolphi says.

Rudolphi grew up on a farm and understands the pressures of harvest season. She says that getting proper rest can make a huge difference in staying safe, but during the time crunch of harvest season, farmers sacrifice sleep to work late into the night.

"Sleep deficiency has been associated with increased injury, reduced reaction time, and reduced concentration," Rudolphi says. "All of which could impact health and safety, as well as productivity."



The demands of harvest are stressful, and a lack of sleep can intensify that and lead to errors in the fields or even on the roads.

To improve sleep, Rudolphi advises farmers to go to bed and wake up at regular times when possible. They can use rainy days to catch up on sleep.

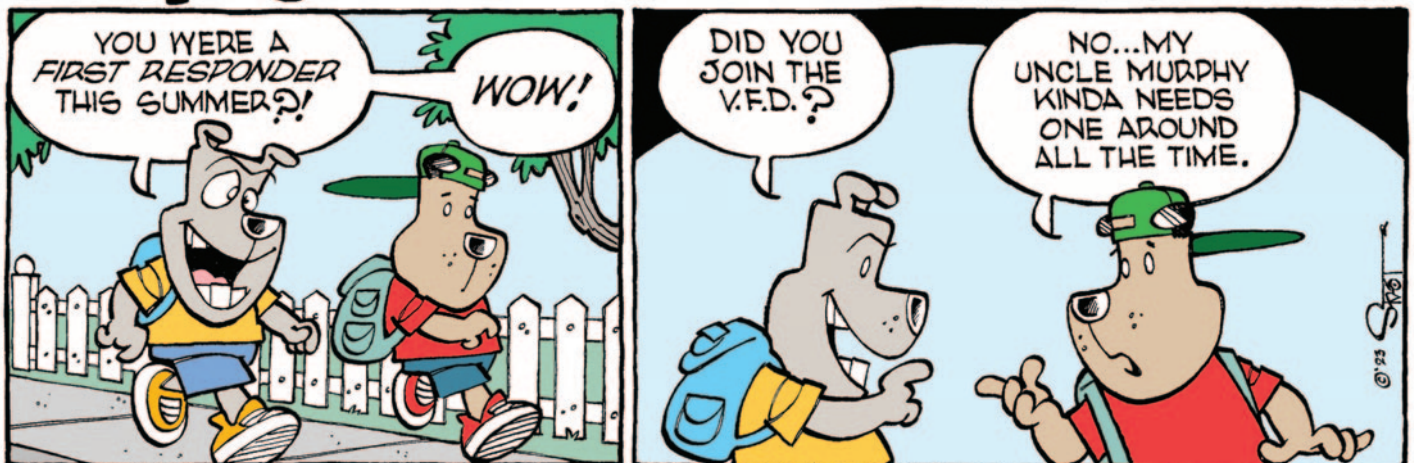
Other sleep health tips include:

- Create a bedroom environment that encourages sleep; keep it quiet, dark and cool.
- Limit electronic device use.
- Avoid large meals, caffeine and alcohol before bedtime.

In addition to improving sleep, managing stress is an important component to injury prevention, health and safety, according to Rudolphi. "By using the 'Four A' Method of avoid (planning ahead), adapt (changing expectations), alter (changing the situation when you can) and accept (acknowledging that a situation is what it is), farmers can successfully manage the stress of long hours and unpredictability," she adds.

For information about safety around electricity, including farm and ranch safety, visit SafeElectricity.org.

Murphy



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Upgrading or improving your windows is an important component of your home's energy efficiency. According to the Department of Energy, heat gain and loss through windows consumes 25% to 30% of residential heating and cooling energy use.

Start by identifying the kind of windows you have. Are they single pane or double pane? Looking closely at the window's edge, you can see the number of windowpanes. Are the frames metal, wood or vinyl? Some manufacturers etch the make and model numbers in a corner of the glass, so you can look up the manufacturer for more information.

Single-pane windows and double-pane windows with metal frames are the least energy efficient. The lower the efficiency of your existing windows, the higher the potential for energy savings.

There are several options for improving your windows, ranging from replacement windows to storm windows to budget-friendly repairs.

Window Efficiency

Several components can make windows more efficient. High-quality frame materials insulate and reduce heat transfer. Two or more panes of glass with space in between (filled with air or gas) improve the window's insulation capability. Warm edge spacers hold the panes of glass the proper distance apart and help insulate the edges of the panes. Low-emissivity coatings applied to the glass can reflect infrared light, keeping the heat in during the winter and out during the summer.

Window efficiency is rated in U-factor and Solar Heat Gain Coefficient, or SHGC. U-factor measures heat transfer through the window, which relates to how well it insulates. The lower the U-factor, the more efficient the window. The SHGC measures how effectively the window blocks heat from the sun.

Replacement and Maintenance

If you want to replace your existing windows, I

recommend shopping for EnergyStar-certified windows. EnergyStar sets specific U-factor and SHGC requirements based on your geography, so you get the best fit for your location. Replacement windows offer additional benefits, like improved operability and

aesthetics. As with many industries, the window industry has been impacted by price increases over the past few years, so keep in mind, this can be an expensive upgrade.

Storm windows are a lower-cost solution for some homes. Traditional storm windows are made with clear glass. Low emissivity storm windows have energy savings similar to replacement windows at about a third of the cost.

Storm windows are mounted to the interior or exterior and are available in operable styles, so you can still open and close your windows. Look for EnergyStar-certified models.

If you want to maintain the historic architecture of your existing windows, low-e storm windows are a great option.

Some companies can refit your existing

window frames with custom double-pane glass and weatherstripping.

As with any home improvement project, be sure to get multiple quotes to compare pricing and scope of work. You may find additional savings with rebates from your electric utility, or state or federal tax credits for window upgrades.

If new windows or storm windows are not in the budget, your best bet is to maintain your existing windows. Keep the paint and caulking on the exterior in good condition. That will help prevent damage from the elements. Caulk around the inside trim, ensure sash locks are installed properly and seal tight when locked. There are a variety of weatherstripping types for windows to keep drafts at bay.

Whether you replace or make improvements to what you have, adding efficiency to your windows will add year-round comfort to your home.



When checking your windows, ensure sash locks are installed properly and sealed tight when locked. Photograph by Mark Gilliland, Pioneer Utility Resources

Continued from Page 5

and industrial businesses to be productive, and heating and cooling to be there when needed. We are also not strangers to rolling blackouts from back in February 2021, when we had short-duration blackouts across the state due to a very cold weather event that covered the vast majority of the U.S. This was not due to lack of generation within the state of Nebraska, but power shortages within a much larger footprint called Southwest Power Pool which is the Regional Transmission Authority from roughly North Dakota to North Edge of Texas.


It is good going into the future to hear that Matheson say “these

reliability threats are unacceptable.” It is the policymakers and the EPA that must be very cautious as they proceed to ensure that all energy resources provide a diverse mix to ensure reliability and affordability into the future. While nuclear power is a clean, dependable power that I personally prefer, the current 10 plus years I hear for licensing and construction processes need to both be vastly improved, all while remaining affordable. They need to allow time for technology to develop and new transmission lines to be built to aid in the improvements to the grid system. While I feel

confident, we live in a good part of the country with reliable power providers, we are still participants of the much larger Regional Transmission Organizations and extreme events have already proven they can happen. The old saying of “if it will happen” seems to be headed towards the path of “when and where will it happen” if we do not change our course for the future. For the time being, we need to slow down and prevent closures of baseload generation until we have the answers to ensure the lights come on when we need them, at a price we can all afford to pay.

PLAN WHEN YOU PLANT

WHERE TO PLANT



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Send Kids Back to School with Fun Foods

Back-to-school season brings change to routines and often makes each day slightly more hectic, especially for families with little ones. This year, despite the hustle and bustle, you can make quick and easy lunches for your kids (and yourself) that are both simple and better for you. These sandwich suggestions can brighten busy school days with a taste of home.

Brighten your children's day with a fun, colorful Caterpillar Sandwich inspired by the experts at Nature's Own. This tasty snack calls for ham, lettuce, cheese, tomato, cucumber and fresh, soft, fluffy bread before using a cookie cutter to cut out sandwich rounds and shape them into a creepy-crawly (yet delicious) "caterpillar."

Made with the protein power of peanuts, these Peanut Butter Ice Cream Sandwiches are easy to prepare on hot days that call for a cold dessert. Just bake chocolate chip cookies, spread them with peanut butter, add a scoop of ice cream and roll in chopped peanuts, chocolate chips or toasted coconut for a sweet bite of perfection.

Find more inventive sandwich ideas at naaturesownbread.com/recipes.



Caterpillar Sandwich

- 4 Nature's Own Butterbread slices
- 4 ham slices
- 2 lettuce leaves
- 4 American cheese slices
- 1 cherry tomato
- 1 green onion
- 2 Roma tomato slices
- 6 cucumber slices
- toothpicks
- mayonnaise or cream cheese

Using bread, ham, lettuce and cheese, make two ham and cheese sandwiches and two lettuce and cheese sandwiches.

Cut cherry tomato in half. Cut

green onion into circles.

Using small biscuit or cookie cutter, punch out two rounds from each sandwich.

Arrange sandwich rounds on sides, alternating slice of cucumber and tomato between each. Use toothpick to secure.

Place halved cherry tomato on each end.

Using small amount of mayonnaise or cream cheese, "glue" green onion rounds to cherry tomato for eyes.

Reader Submitted Recipes



Peanut Butter Ice Cream Sandwiches

- 24 fresh baked chocolate chip cookies (about 3 inches in diameter), cooled
- 1 1/2 cups creamy or crunchy peanut butter
- 1 1/2 quarts vanilla ice cream, slightly softened
- chopped peanuts, for topping (optional)
- mini chocolate chips, for topping (optional)
- toasted coconut, for topping (optional)

On 12 cookies, top sides down, spread layer of peanut butter. Add one scoop of ice cream to each. Create sandwiches by topping with remaining cookies.

Roll edges of ice cream in chopped peanuts, mini chocolate chips or toasted coconut, if desired. Place on baking sheet in freezer and freeze until firm.

Serve slightly frozen.

Sour Cream Apple Pie

- 2 eggs
- 1 cup sour cream
- 1 cup sugar
- 6 Tablespoons flour divided
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 3 cups apples, peeled & chopped
- 1 unbaked 9" pie shell
- 3 Tablespoons butter or margarine
- 1/4 cup packed brown sugar

In a large bowl, beat eggs, add sour cream, stir in sugar, 2 Tablespoons of flour, vanilla and salt. Mix well. Stir in apples. Pour into pie shell and bake at 375 degrees for 15 minutes. Meanwhile, combine butter, brown sugar and the remaining flour. Sprinkle over top of pie. Return to oven for 20-25 minutes until filling is set. Cool completely on a wire rack. Serve or cover and refrigerate. Yields 8 servings.

Cindy Connell, Newport, Nebraska

Hash Brown Pizza

- 1 large package frozen hashbrowns, thawed
- 1 can cheddar cheese soup
- 1 lb. ground beef
- 3 celery ribs, chopped
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 can (8 oz.) tomato sauce
- 1 jar (6 oz.) mushrooms
- 1 1/4 teaspoon chili powder
- 3/4 teaspoon seasoning salt
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 2 cups shredded cheese

In a large bowl combine hashbrowns and soup. Spread in a greased 15" X 10" pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 25 to 30 minutes. In large skillet brown hamburger, celery and onion until done. Drain meat mixture and add sauce, mushrooms and spices. Spread over hashbrown mixture. Sprinkle with cheese. Bake 10 minutes or longer until the cheese melts.

Mary Loeske, Ewing, Nebraska

Zucchini Brownies

- 1 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup cooking oil
- 1/4 cup water
- 2 cups grated zucchini
- 2 teaspoons vanilla
- 2 cups flour
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 1/2 teaspoons baking soda
- 1/2 cup cocoa
- 1/2 cup chopped nuts

Mix first five ingredients together. Then mix dry ingredients into other mixture and add nuts. Bake in 9" X 13" pan or jelly roll pan for 15 to 20 minutes at 325 degrees.

Lucille Schliep, Glenvil, Nebraska

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