

NEBRASKA

Magazine

February 2022

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Wayne Price

Capturing History On Canvas

I've had an interest in history since I was a young boy and before I was bitten by the journalism bug I had considered becoming a history teacher. While attending the University of Nebraska at Lincoln I collected enough course credits in history to graduate with a minor, along with my bachelors degree in journalism.

On page 10 and 11 in this issue is an article about the Nebraska Prairie Museum, just north of Holdrege on Highway 183. It is an amazing museum and I would encourage you to make plans to visit. They have an incredible display about Camp Atlanta, a prisoner of war camp that was located near Atlanta, Neb. during World War II.

However the display I was most impressed with was an art gallery by Thomas Naegele, who served as a U.S. Army soldier at Camp Atlanta and also at another camp near Indianola, Neb. He was an interpreter and also a painter. The gallery features a collection of his paintings from his service at the camps.

Naegele was born October 11, 1924 in Stuttgart, Germany. His family fled Germany when he was a teenager and ended up in New York City shortly before his 16th birthday. His mother, a

doctor, had relatives in New York who sponsored the family. She took a nursing job until she got her license to practice in America. His father was an artist.

Naegele was not yet a citizen when he was drafted into the U.S. Army. Naegele, a 20-year-old corporal, was stationed at Camp Indianola, 30 miles southwest of Holdrege, for about a year. He was later assigned to Camp Atlanta.

When Camp Atlanta shut down in 1946 Naegele returned to New York and worked as an artist his entire life. The Nebraska Prairie Museum opened its POW Interpretive Center in 2001 and Naegele contributed a gallery of his artwork that depicts life at Camp Atlanta.

Micah Huyser, executive director of the Nebraska Prairie Museum, told me a local historian, Glenn Thompson, was a good friend of Naegele and was instrumental in getting the exhibit off the ground.

Naegele's paintings capture the events and routines of the German and Italian POWs and the U.S. Army troops assigned to guard them. It is definitely worth a visit.





Jon Dockhorn

Jon Dockhorn is the General Manager of Burt County Public Power District, headquartered in Tekamah, Neb.

Public Power Is For Everyone

In the fall of 2018, Nebraska released a new slogan, “Nebraska. Honestly, it’s not for everyone.” That slogan replaced “Nebraska Nice” and prior to that “Nebraska ... the good life.” At first, I was not a fan of the new slogan, but it has grown on me and really depicts Nebraska like the previous two slogans did. Here in Nebraska, we do things a little different than everyone else. We have the only Unicameral Legislature system, we have the largest indoor rain forest, we have “Carhenge” and we are the only state in the nation with 100% public power.

Electricity is very important in today’s world as it fuels both our economy and our every day lives. One hundred percent public power is important to Nebraska as it gives us a competitive advantage in price and reliability. Since we are 100% public power, our stakeholders are our consumers. We don’t have profit margins to maintain for stockholders like investor-owned utilities, instead we return affordability and reliability to our stakeholders.

Energy price and reliability are at opposite ends of the balance scale. To have very low prices, you have to give up some reliability. To have 100% reliability, you will have to pay substantially for it. It is our job to balance reliability and affordability to meet the needs and wants of the people. That is why as you travel across the state from power district to power district, you will see subtle differences between each utility. Every NREA member in the state has a goal to provide safe, affordable, and reliable electricity to all customers. However, local preferences, priorities, and nuances each play a role in how that is achieved. For example, some parts of the state experience more lightning strikes than other parts. That requires some systems to install more or different equipment to protect from surges and outages caused by lightning. Another example, is in some parts of the state a “large” irrigation motor is 40hp, where in other parts a 100hp irrigation motor is “large.” This localized difference requires the use of larger conductors and equipment to serve the load. All of these subtle system differences change how each system balances affordability and reliability.

Just like you and your neighbor, even though each NREA member is a lot alike each one is also unique. That is advantageous as we can share different ideas and perspectives, utilize our strengths, and work together to ensure that we are providing safe, affordable, and reliable electricity to all Nebraskans. So, while our state tourism slogan says, “Nebraska. Honestly, it’s not for everyone,” in Nebraska public power is for everyone.



Honoring Nebraska's First Native American Female Physician and Her Legacy of Hope and Health

by **LaRayne Topp**

Hammocks swing in a lengthy, screened veranda, gentle breezes wispig around patients settling in to enjoy the morning sun. A mix of Western medicine and American Indian remedies await them, under the direction of Dr. Susan LaFlesche Picotte at the turn of the century.

Not only was Picotte the first American Indian doctor to practice in the United States in all of its history, she walked in two worlds. Those two worlds are coming together today to preserve the hospital she built in 1913, the Dr. Susan LaFlesche Picotte Memorial Hospital in Walthill, Nebraska.

Picotte was born on the Omaha Reservation in northeast Nebraska on June 17, 1865, at the time of an

epidemic, according to winter counts of various Plains tribes. Picotte's mother was Mary Gale, the daughter of a U.S. Army surgeon and a woman of Omaha, Otoe and Iowa descent. Her father, Joseph LaFlesche, was also mixed race and became a principle leader of the Omaha nation.

Susan also studied in two worlds. Educated in reservation boarding schools charged with assimilating Indian students into White society, Picotte went on to study at the Elizabeth Institute in New Jersey, plus the Hampton Institute in Virginia, a destination for both Black and Native American students.

Witnessing the death of an Indian woman at the refusal of a White doctor to treat her, the young woman was motivated to train as a physician, recalling the days when smallpox, malaria (White man's sickness) and measles



The exterior of Dr. Susan LaFlesche Picotte Center in Walthill has been restored. Fundraising is now underway to restore the interior for use as a Community Center. Photographs by Kurt Johnson



(little smallpox) decimated the Omaha tribe. Consequently, Picotte graduated in 1889 from the Woman's Medical College of Pennsylvania as valedictorian of her class at a time when few medical schools accepted women.

Picotte's medical career began at the government boarding school on the Omaha reservation. As such, she was the only physician on the 307-square-mile reservation, traveling on horseback throughout the day and night to care for patients of all ages, both Indian and White, oftentimes putting in 20-hour work days. During

this time she married Henry Picotte, a Sioux Indian from the Yankton agency.

Noting the benefits of fresh air and cleanliness, Picotte utilized the best of both Native American and Western medicine, said tribal historian and Picotte ancestor, Calvin Harlan. Picotte was relentless in her fight against alcoholism and tuberculosis, banning communal drinking cups, educating the populace on prevention and awareness, and house-proofing homes against houseflies and the diseases they were carrying.

Other roles in her community included interpreter, teacher, social worker, missionary, preacher and advocate for Omaha Indian rights. Estimates say, in Picotte's career she served more than 1,300 patients, traveling over 1,350 miles of open prairie, treating tuberculosis, influenza, cholera, trachoma and dysentery.

But that was not enough. In the early 1900s, she

Continued on Page 8

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realized the value a local hospital would provide.

According to writer Joseph Starita in his book, *A Warrior of the People*, Picotte worked tirelessly to make personal appeals, explaining to possible donors how the Omaha were suffering, how babies were dying, telling them how desperately her people needed a local hospital, and that hardscrabble roads to the nearest hospitals in Omaha and Sioux City made for a long and hazardous journey.

These appeals resulted in an \$8,000 pledge from the Presbyterian Board of Home Missions to build a fully-equipped, modern hospital in Walthill, in the heart of the Omaha Reservation. Other donors began to respond, giving benefit performances, and offering to equip and furnish hospital rooms, operating and obstetrics rooms, the laboratory, the kitchen and some of the wards. Another donor purchased an acre of the land for the hospital's location, and still another assisted with upkeep and maintenance.

To build a hospital in a village the size of Walthill was a unique medical achievement for its day. The \$9,000 price tag would be comparable in today's dollars to almost \$300,000, noted Ross Greathouse, one of the 13 like-minded board members of the Dr. Susan LaFlesche Picotte Center.

Even though Picotte had expended boundless energy setting up the new hospital, her health was in decline. By the time it opened in 1913, she was too frail to serve as its sole administrator. By early 1915, she was suffering greatly from bone cancer, and passed away on September 18, 1915.

Starita describes the newly-opened, 39-room, two-and-a-half story hospital, with large windows and a screened-in porch: "built without a penny of public tax dollars, the first modern hospital in Thurston County,

now open for business to young and old, Indian and White, farmers and lawyers, to anyone about to deliver a baby, who needed stitches, had a broken ankle, a troublesome cough, a worrisome rash, fever and chills, red and itchy eyes, or needed any other type of medical attention, anyone who might need a personal touch, in Omaha or English."

However, and there's usually a however, that's not the case today. The facility acted as a hospital until the 1940s, then served the community in a variety of ways: as a museum, upholstery shop and community event center.

Purchased by a non-profit corporation in the early 1980s,

in 1993 it was declared a national historic landmark by the National Park Service. It was closed in 2018 as a result of water damage and general disrepair, and listed in the top eleven of the National Trust for Historic Preservation's most endangered historic sites.

Local residents purchased the building during a tax sale in 1992 with the hope of bringing it back to its original glory. Today, those involved in the restoration include the Nebraska Commission on Indian Affairs, the Omaha

Tribe, the Susan LaFlesche Picotte Center Non-profit Corporation, and the Village of Walthill. Through their efforts, the restoration of the exterior is complete; on the grounds are what are believed to be some of the original lilac bushes planted by Dr. Picotte.

Dreams for the \$2.8 million renovation project include space for behavioral health services, youth activities, and a suite of rooms to be used for the historical interpretation of Picotte's life and medical practice, a gift shop, Native arts gallery, sweat lodge and teepee. An interpretive walking path and community garden will wind through the property, allowing visitors to reflect on the state's first Native American female physician, Dr. Susan LaFlesche Picotte, and her legacy of hope and health.



The building renovation project includes space for youth activities, a Native arts gallery and a gift shop. Photograph by Kurt Johnson

New Tech Alert: Iron-Air Batteries

By Maria Kanevsky

As the electric grid continues to evolve, new technologies are being developed to help advance the grid of the future. One of these technologies is a new form of battery storage technology called the iron-air battery, which could potentially provide long-duration energy storage for hundreds of hours.

Current battery technologies can only offer storage for tens of hours, meaning the innovative iron-air battery could provide energy for roughly 10 times longer than existing grid-scale batteries. This new technology could help ensure grid reliability even with extreme weather, such as hurricanes or powerful thunderstorms. Long-duration energy storage will also be crucial for adding more solar and wind energy to the grid since renewable energy is dependent on the weather and may not always be available when we need it. New iron-air batteries could provide the missing link by storing excess energy to be used when the sun isn't shining or the wind isn't blowing.

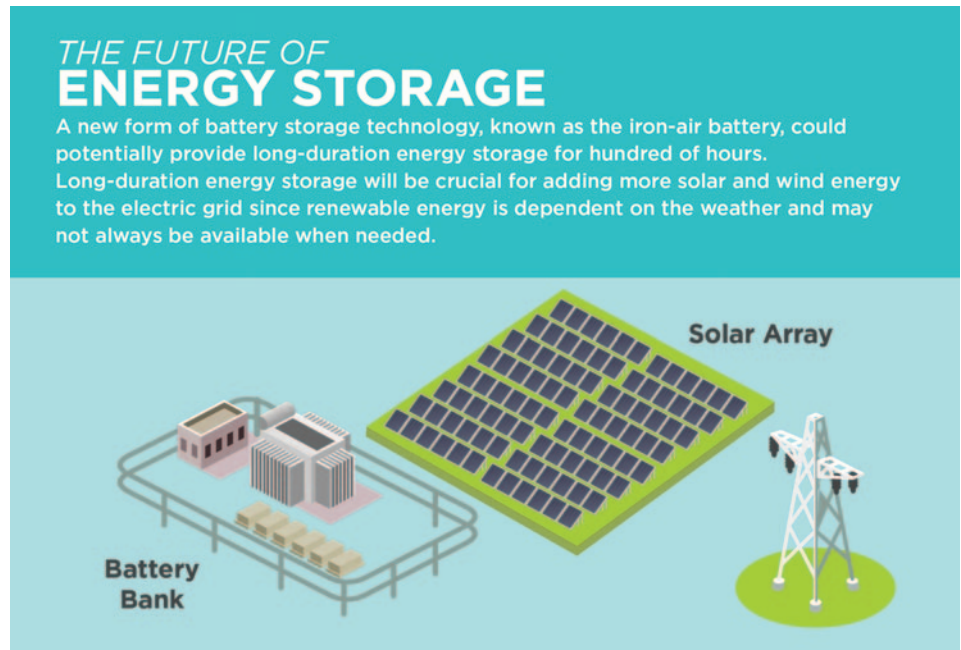
The battery technology itself is made up of thousands of small iron pellets that develop rust when exposed to oxygen. This process discharges the battery. When the oxygen is removed, the pellets revert back to iron, which then charges the battery. According to Form Energy, the startup company developing this new technology, this process is known as the principle of “reversible rusting.” Since the battery technology mainly uses the abundant and cheap resources of water, air and iron, the technology is relatively low-cost. These resources also make the technology relatively safe since there are no heavy metals, and also make the batteries simpler to recycle.

A key feature of these batteries is their low cost, with Form Energy promising a price of less than \$20 per

kWh. That price is about one-tenth the cost of lithium-ion battery technology, which is currently the cheapest battery technology on the market.

Individual iron-air batteries are about the size of a washing machine, making it easy to group many batteries together into a larger, scalable system. The size of the battery module group can vary, depending on the storage needed at a specific site. This means the batteries can be placed in a variety of areas, from rural to urban, to meet energy needs.

While this technology may be a solution for long-duration energy storage, the battery is not yet ready at the commercial level—although it is close. Form Energy



estimates the battery should be ready for mass production by 2025. As a pilot project to test this groundbreaking technology, Form Energy is working with Great River Energy, a generation and transmission cooperative located in Minnesota. The project is anticipated to go live in 2023.

Time will tell if the iron-air battery, or any other long-duration battery, becomes successful as a new emerging technology. In the meantime, electric utilities can start to understand where this technology may potentially fit within their own systems to make the grid more resilient and reliable. Whether this technology becomes mainstream or not, utilities will continue finding ways to provide affordable, long-duration storage as the electric grid continues to change.

Celebrating Nebraska



Looking Back at History

The Nebraska Prairie Museum, located north of Holdrege on Highway 183, has something for just about everyone, from antique ag equipment to wedding dresses to military memorabilia.

Micah Huyser, executive director, leads a group of staff members and volunteers in providing visitors with a glimpse back in time via interesting and unique exhibits.

"One of the things that makes this museum fun is that there's something for everyone here," Huyser said. "We have the story of the German prisoner-of-war camp at Atlanta, and plenty of information on just local history."

A popular attraction is a town square, which is a replica of what local businesses looked like in the late 1890's to 1900's. Volunteer Bill Perry helped by building most of the displays in the square, Huyser said.

The museum was organized in 1966 by the Phelps County Historical Society in the halls of the courthouse. Later, the museum moved into the vacated Salvation Army building. On April 22, 1975,



ground was broken for a steel structure on Highway 183. Several large additions and improvements have been made over the years.

Huysen noted that a flood in 2019 resulted in a complete redesign on the museum.

“We had carpet and the flood forced us to move everything out and start over,” he said. “The museum made subtle changes to the layout of many of the displays, resulting in a better flow through the exhibits.”

After the flood the community came together to help with the clean-up, he said.

“We had lots of people that came out of the woodwork, some that I had never met before,” Huysen said. “They just thought we needed help.”

According to Huysen one of the most popular displays is the POW Interpretive Center, which features a scale model of the POW Camp at Atlanta, Neb. in 1941-43. Camp Atlanta had 18 “branch” camps designed to provide labor across Southern Nebraska

The Nebraska Prairie Museum has something for just about everyone, including period clothing (top left), a scale model of Camp Atlanta, a WWII prisoner of war camp (top), antique vehicles (above), and military memorabilia (bottom left).

and Northern Kansas. A total of nearly 100,000 German soldiers passed through Atlanta’s gates on their way to their assignments. German soldiers worked as auto mechanics, bakers, in food processing plants, building construction and in the completion of huge reservoirs and canal systems that make up the current irrigation and hydro-electric power for several counties.

There are also three buildings on the grounds to tour: a farm house, a one-room school house, and a Lutheran Church from south Phelps County.

The museum is open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday and from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays. Admission is \$5.00 for adults with children 12 and under free.

Nebraska 60-day Legislative Session Begins in Lincoln

Debate in this year's Nebraska Legislature is well underway. Access to broadband internet will continue to be an important topic of discussion among policymakers. The COVID pandemic has highlighted the need for increased connectivity. As federal funds become available for expanded broadband development, the legislature will weigh in on how, and how much, of these funds are used to deploy broadband infrastructure across our state.

Last year, the Legislature passed into law the Broadband Bridge Act which appropriated \$40 million over two years for increased development. The Nebraska Public Service Commission (PSC) met in January to award the first round of matching grant awards under the Act, allocating more than \$18 million to projects across the state.

Under the parameters of the Act, to be eligible for the matching grant, an internet provider must use the funds to provide broadband service capable of 100 mbps download speeds and 100 mbps upload speeds, commonly referred to as "broadband." To avoid the overbuild of existing broadband infrastructure, and to ensure that grant dollars are being used efficiently, an existing internet provider can challenge an application stating that they are already capable of providing broadband services to a proposed project area. If a challenge is made, the PSC reviews the challenge and makes a determination as to whether or not the area in question is served or unserved. If an area is deemed to be already served, the application will be denied.

A unique grant application under this program was filed by Glenwood Telecommunications Inc. and Southwest Public Power District. The application proposed a public/private partnership between a public power district and a small telephone cooperative to join forces to reduce costs, utilize existing infrastructure, and ultimately provide broadband service to an entire rural area in south-central rural Nebraska. Unfortunately, an existing provider of internet in the project area challenged the application stating they were already providing service to some customers within the project boundaries.

To combat the notion that customers in the area had

adequate access to broadband, South Central PPD and Glenwood Telecommunications gathered customer-level internet speed test data that confirmed that most consumers in the area did not have access to the broadband speeds required under the Act. Despite this data, the application was denied.

This application process spotlighted a very important question as we look to further develop rural broadband. What defines a "served area" and what does "access to" broadband really mean? Many rural Nebraskans are aware of fiber infrastructure that may run near their home or farm, but they cannot simply call up their local internet supplier and expect service. Despite the fact that actual connectivity may not be an option for many rural Nebraskans, federal broadband maps and the Nebraska PSC may look at these areas and deem them as served since there is broadband infrastructure already deployed in the project area.

Furthermore, as broadband service is brought to rural municipalities without a plan to reach beyond the city limits, the business case for further development is diminished. Simply stated, once municipal customers have access to broadband internet, the business case for building out fiber infrastructure beyond city limits is reduced.

A business case for broadband development in rural towns without federal and state support can be made. Internet providers that choose to use state and federal support to bring service to municipalities without a plan to serve outside the city limits may never see an incentive to expand service to rural customers. Funds for broadband development in Nebraska should be targeted for only the most rural areas where service will not be provided without support. Companies that present comprehensive applications with plans to serve both the urban and rural project areas should be given greater preference in the application scoring process.

As we hear about legislation this year that will bring broadband to rural Nebraska, please keep a keen eye on those rural Nebraskans that do not dwell within city limits. As we watch the debate unfold in the Legislature, the NREA will be watching to ensure no one is left without true access to service.

Take Precautions to Avoid Cold Weather Exposure

By Larry Oetken



Enjoying the Nebraska winter can be some of the most fun a person spends outdoors. Whether it's hunting, ice fishing, cross country skiing, sledding or snowshoeing, the state has great outdoor opportunities.

Being outdoors in the winter also means being safe in the coldest of temperatures. Avoiding hypothermia is key. Hypothermia is a low body temperature most often is caused by exposure to cold weather or immersion in a cold body of water. Left untreated, hypothermia can lead to complete failure of the heart and respiratory system and to death. Primary treatments for hypothermia are methods to warm the

body back to a normal temperature.

Dress warmly in layers of clothing that may be added or removed as necessary. Warm hats, gloves or mittens and boots will prevent heat loss through the top of the head, hands and feet.

Symptoms of moderate to severe hypothermia include:

- Shivering
- Clumsiness, lack of coordination, slurred speech
- Confusion, or poor decision making
- Drowsiness or very low energy
- Gradual loss of consciousness
- Weak pulse and slow, shallow breathing

A person with hypothermia usually is not aware of his or her condition, because the symptoms often begin gradually and because the confused thinking associated with hypothermia prevents self-awareness.

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

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Shine a Light on Home Security



by Paul Wesslund

Lighting up your yard will keep the burglars away, right? That's mostly true, but like a lot of things in life, it's not that simple. A brightly-lit yard could make it easier for the bad guys to see during a break-in.

From street lights to porch lights, studies show that better outdoor lighting reduces crime. But those same reports say that security lighting works best as part of a plan that takes into account what crooks look for.

The basic advice from law enforcement, insurance companies and home security system vendors is, don't just flip on the yard light before bed. In fact, you may want to turn it off before turning in.

The goal is to make it look like people are home. Turning lights on and off gives your home that lived-in look. And if you're not there, well, there's an app for that.

Above: From street lights to porch lights, studies show that better outdoor lighting reduces crime. Photograph provided by Ring

Lighting the path to safety, it turns out, involves making a plan, wise use of technology and a little help from your friends. Here are six tips to electrify your outdoor lighting tech and increase your home security.

Think like a burglar. Intruders tend to enter a home through a door, and they'd rather you not be home, so they watch for signs that people are at work. That's why most burglaries happen in the day, and why leaving your lights on all day and night, or when you're on vacation, can be an advertisement that no one's home. Do keep the yard lit while you're up and around to show normal activity—turning off the porch light at bedtime can be a sign to a potential intruder that someone is in the house. Pay attention to spots that could cover up a break-in—keep trees and bushes trimmed.

Light for the right reasons. Are you trying to light a walkway for guests or keep intruders away from an entrance? Place lights so they achieve your objective. And safety isn't just about reducing crime. A well-lit outdoor space can also prevent trips, falls and other accidents.

Enlist technology. Electronic timers and lights that turn on when they sense motion can give the impression that someone's home and can light the sidewalk when you return from an outing, without leaving the lights on all the time. Increasingly, lights and fixtures can be linked to a smartphone so you can turn them on and off while you're out and about.

Weigh the pros and cons of a home security system. Security cameras, alarm systems and protection services offer a wide range of conveniences including fire protection or checking whether your pets hop onto the dining table when you leave. A security camera can also help identify someone stealing a package delivered to your doorstep. They can be expensive, so do your research carefully, and know what you're trying to achieve.

Protect yourself from internet hackers. Internet-connected devices can be hacked by digital-savvy troublemakers. Whether it's a security camera or a smart light bulb, they offer cyber crooks a way into your personal information. The basic internet security advice is to have strong passwords and change them regularly, especially on your home's central router. Keep software updated on your devices—those updates often add the newest cyber protections. Even though it's tempting, don't use social media to tell the world you're on vacation. Consider sharing your travel photos after you get back.

Go old school. Besides electricity and technology, use people to reduce crime. Invite a police officer to give a safety briefing at a neighborhood meeting. They can describe the best steps for your area. And of all the crime-reducing tips, experts say the best one is to get to know your neighbors, who can recognize and report any out-of-the-ordinary activity.

If your home heating system does not deliver the toasty warmth you want or you would like to dial down your thermostat to save on your energy bill, a space heater can help make up the difference. Multiple types exist on the market, but the most important thing to remember is to buy one that you can operate safely.

Dispose of old space heaters with exposed coils, those that are dangerous to use (e.g., worn or cracked cords) or those that operate inefficiently. Many that are available today have safety features that older versions do not, such as timers, tip-over prevention or auto shut-off.

Before you purchase an electric heater, determine the square footage of the space you want to warm and whether you have a safe spot to place it. Inefficient or excessively large options will only run up your electric bill without much benefit to you or your family.

Types of space heaters include:

Metal coil and fan: Perhaps the most common and affordable type of space heater, this type uses electricity



Space heaters have one purpose—to provide supplemental heating. Never use them to thaw pipes, cook food, or dry clothing or towels.

to heat a metal coil that is safely tucked inside. The fan(s) suck cold air from the room, heat it, and redistribute it at a higher temperature.

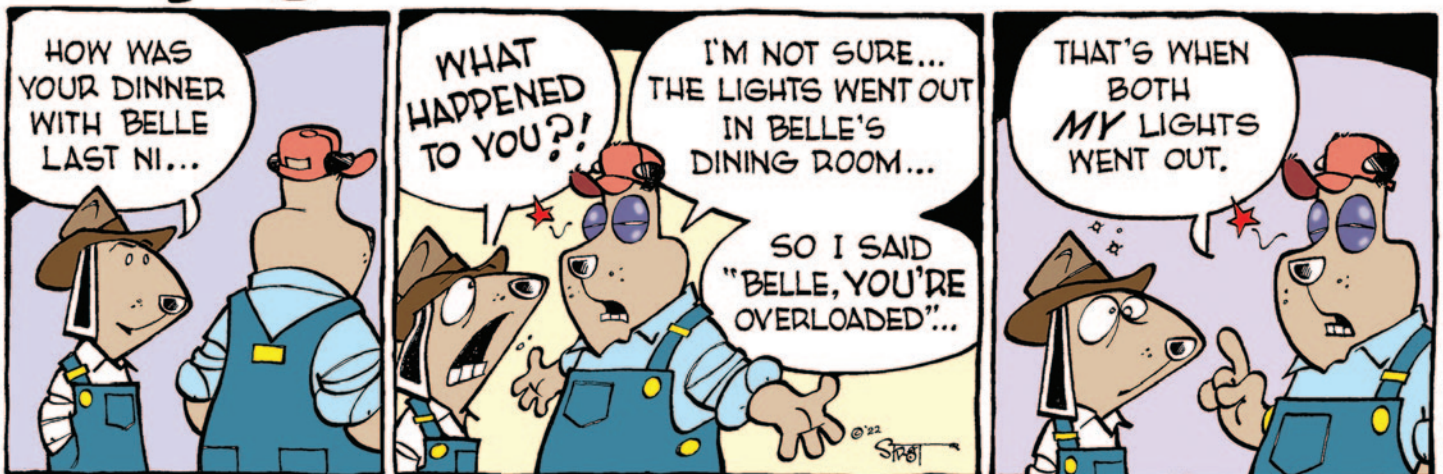
Ceramic radiant: Similar to the metal coil variety, these space heaters also include ceramic plates inside. They absorb and store heat so that it radiates outward, even after you turn the heater off. Quick and long-lasting radiant heat makes these some of the most efficient space heaters.

Infrared: These larger and usually more expensive space heaters use electromagnetic waves to heat objects in the room. In other words, your furniture, walls and you are heated up safely, so the increased

temperature radiates out from everything. This technology is often used in fake fireplaces.

Radiator-style oil: If you like the appearance of old-fashioned radiators or need something larger without a fan, consider an oil-filled space heater. An upside is that these radiate a lot of heat after they are turned off; the downside is that the unit itself can get quite hot and increase the risk of burns.

Murphy



Tim Stethem Receives Good Neighbor Award

Tim Stethem, operations manager, at Loup Valleys Rural Public Power District, is the recipient of the 2021 Good Neighbor Award for his continued commitment to the safety and well-being of the employees at Loup Valleys RPPD, especially his selfless dedication of time and treasure.

Tim started at Loup Valleys RPPD in 1995 after graduating from Northeast Community College. In January 2021, he was asked to take on the duties of operations manager and still cover his existing line superintendent position. This was an extremely challenging task, but Tim made a seamless transition helping Loup Valleys RPPD become a team-oriented environment that is very safe, efficient, and an enjoyable workplace. He is currently the operations manager with 26 years of service.

One evening Tim learned that a fellow employee, not in his department, was suffering from severe depression. He spent many hours making very difficult evaluations and decisions to help get the individual to a safe place that night. He had to make unpopular decisions with the employee that night, but he kept him safe. He also followed up with this employee for several years helping him to get back to a good mental state.



NREA Job Training & Safety Coordinator Larry Oetken, right, presents Tim Stethem with 2021 NREA Good Neighbor Award. Stethem received the award at the NREA Annual Meeting held December 2021 in Kearney, Neb.

Just a few years ago, a lineman at Loup Valleys RPPD lost his significant other – mother of their two little girls in a head-on collision. Tim became very close and helpful to this lineman, and he spent time with the lineman nearly every night for at least two years and they are now very close friends. During this time, Tim opened his home to the lineman and his little girls when the lineman had to go out on outages day or night for work. Tim is also selfless in other's time of need; he is the first to toss something in the hat to help others or deliver meals to their homes.

Ron Sandoz, manager at Loup Valleys RPPD, said "Tim is not only a great asset to me, but an impressive leader at Loup Valleys RPPD. He is a person that you are most appreciative to have at your company, on your management team, and as a neighbor."

Outside of work, Tim helps friends with carpentry projects and his three children keep him busy with their sporting events.

Q : I don't have a big budget for energy-efficiency upgrades. Can you share any budget-friendly, energy-saving tips?

A : You don't need a lot of money to save on your energy bills. I have some suggestions that are low-cost, simple adjustments you can make in your home, whether you rent or own.

We all want to afford being comfortable in our homes. If you're having trouble paying your energy bills, you are not alone. The U.S. Energy Information Administration reports one in three households face challenges meeting their energy needs.

Decreasing monthly bills and being more efficient at home is something we all should practice. Here are some budget-friendly energy efficiency tips targeting one of the biggest energy users in the home: the heating system. Heating and cooling account for nearly half of a U.S. home's energy consumption.

Add Coziness to Your Home

One way you can feel warmer in your home without turning up the thermostat is by making your home cozy.

The way our bodies perceive the temperature of a room is based more on the surfaces in the room than the air temperature. In general, harder surfaces feel colder. For example, your tile floor will feel cooler than your fabric sofa.

Cold floors in a room make us feel colder. Adding an area rug to a hard-surface floor can make us feel warmer, even with the same setting on the thermostat.

The same goes for windows. Windows are typically the least-insulated surface in a room and can feel cold in winter months. Adding or closing curtains can help the room feel warmer.



Adding an area rug to a hard-surface floor can make your home feel warmer. Your pets will enjoy the coziness, too. Photograph by Mark Gilliland, Pioneer Utility Resources

Check Your Windows

Make sure your windows are closed and locked. Locking windows pulls the sashes tighter together, reducing gaps that allow air to flow through and cause drafts. If your sash locks don't form a tight fit, adjust them or add weatherstripping.

There's a variety of window weatherstripping products available for less than \$20. Most are simple to install and only require tools you most likely already have around the house, such as scissors and a tape measure.

Seal Your Doors

Weatherstripping doors is an easy do-it-yourself project. Make sure your doors seal tightly and don't allow drafts to pass through around the edges or under the door.

Make sure any doors leading to an unheated space—outside or into a garage—are sealed tightly. If you can see

light around the edges or underneath the door, or feel air movement when the door is closed, you know you are losing energy.

Because doors need to open and close easily, expect to do a bit of adjusting after installing weatherstripping. If weatherstripping isn't installed correctly, it can make the door hard to close. Making it too loose defeats the purpose. You need to get it just right.

Layer Up

Dressing for the season prevents going overboard on your energy use. It can be tempting to adjust the thermostat to increase your comfort. Putting on a sweater or comfy sweatshirt can have the same comfort impact without increasing your energy use. Slippers can be a big help, too, especially when your feet touch a cold floor.

The next time you consider turning up the thermostat a few degrees, try some of these tips first to stay warm and leave increased energy bills out in the cold.

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A Hall of Fame Feast for Football Fans

Gathering your team to plan for a truly memorable game day at home starts with almost everyone's favorite part of the festivities: the food. From meaty meals and zesty appetizers to sweet, long-lasting snacks, fuel your crowd with recipes that keep them coming back from kickoff to overtime.

Pulled Beef and Slaw Sliders are perfect for piling high with delicious toppings before hitting the couch just in time for kickoff. Snacking throughout the action is a preferred approach for many fans, making Cast-Iron Smoked Queso Dip a go-to option for armchair quarterbacks.

These crowd-pleasers make game day worth celebrating, especially if you use a salsa with high-quality ingredients like vine-ripened tomatoes, crisp vegetables, zesty peppers and spices found in Fresh Cravings Salsas.

One superstar of the menu at many homegating parties is salsa, whether it's used as a finishing touch in recipes or as a standalone snack to enjoy with chips, veggies or other pairings. In fact, according to the Game Day Eats Report from Fresh Cravings, 22% of guests would insist on running out to pick up salsa if it wasn't available for the feast; 18% would even be devastated and consider leaving.

To find more championship-level game day recipe inspiration, visit FreshCravings.com.



Pulled Beef & Slaw Sliders

Pulled Beef:

- 2 pieces (about 3 pounds each) beef chuck roast**
- 2 tablespoons taco seasoning or barbecue rub**
- 1 cup beef bone broth**
- 16 ounces Fresh Cravings Chunky Mild Salsa**

Salsa and Queso Slaw:

- 16 ounces Fresh Cravings Chunky Mild Salsa**
- 16 ounces broccoli slaw blend**
- 1/4 cup green onions, sliced**
- 1 teaspoon salt**
- 1 cup crumbled queso fresco**
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard**
- 1/2 cup mayo**
- 2 tablespoons apple cider vinegar**
- 2 tablespoons cilantro (optional)**

To make pulled beef: Season both sides

of beef with taco seasoning. Wrap with plastic wrap and place in fridge 2-12 hours before cooking.

Place meat, beef bone broth and salsa in pressure cooker; seal according to pressure cooker directions. Cook on high 60 minutes. Once pressure cooker is safe to open according to instructions, open and let meat rest in liquid 15 minutes.

Remove meat from liquid and place in large bowl. Carefully shred meat. Pour liquid, up to half, over meat while shredding to keep it juicy.

To make salsa and queso slaw: In large bowl, mix salsa, slaw blend, green onions, salt, queso fresco, Dijon mustard, mayo, apple cider vinegar and cilantro, if desired. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate until needed.

To assemble sliders, place pulled beef and salsa and queso slaw on slider buns. Top with salsa, barbecue sauce, pickles, jalapenos, sliced cheese, roasted peppers and onions.



Cast-Iron Smoked Queso Dip

- 2 cups cheddar cheese
- 1 cup Monterey Jack cheese
- 1 teaspoon almond flour
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 1 cup Fresh Cravings Restaurant Style Salsa
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- 1 teaspoon sea salt
- 1/4 cup cooked chorizo
- 1 teaspoon liquid smoke
- cilantro, for garnish
- diced bell pepper, for garnish

In cast-iron pan, mix cheddar cheese, Monterey Jack cheese and almond flour. Pour in heavy cream and salsa; bring to gentle simmer. Whisk while simmering 5-7 minutes, or until queso dip begins to thicken. Add paprika, salt, chorizo and liquid smoke; adjust seasoning as necessary. Garnish with cilantro and bell pepper.

BBQ Meatballs

- | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 can (13 oz.) evaporated milk | 2 teaspoons chili powder |
| 3 lbs. ground beef | Topping: |
| 2 cups quick oatmeal | 2 cups ketchup |
| 1/2 cup chopped onion | 2 tablespoons liquid smoke |
| 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder | 1 1/2 cups brown sugar |
| 2 teaspoons salt | 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder |
| 1/2 teaspoon pepper | (mix together) |

Mix above ingredients by hand. Make into balls (about 30-40). Spoon on topping. Bake 350 degrees for 45 min-until topping caramelizes. This is a large recipe, so I always freeze 1/2 meatballs with topping. I never fail to get compliments on this recipe when I serve them.

Jere' Sue Schroer, Kearney, Nebraska

Dark Banana Bread

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1/4 cup oleo | 1/2 teaspoon salt |
| 1 1/2 cups sugar | 1 1/2 teaspoons cloves |
| 1 cup oil | 1 teaspoon vanilla |
| 4 eggs | 1 1/2 cups floured raisins |
| 3 cups flour | 2 teaspoons cinnamon |
| 6 ripe bananas | 1 1/2 cups chopped nuts |
| 2 teaspoons baking soda | |

Mix all together in a large bowl, put in greased and floured loaf pans (2 pans). Bake in 325-degree oven for 1 1/4 hours or till toothpick comes out clean. Very moist and delicious!

Brenda Prill, Atkinson, Nebraska

White Chicken Chili Soup

- | | |
|--|--|
| 4 cups chicken broth | 1 teaspoon cumin |
| 4 cans (15.5 oz.) Great Northern beans, drained and rinsed | 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder |
| 2 cups cooked, shredded chicken | 1/2 teaspoon oregano |
| 1 small can diced green chilies | 1 cup sour cream |
| | 1/2 teaspoon pepper |
| | 2 cups shredded cheese, Monterey Jack or Mexican blend |

In a large pot, add broth, beans, chicken, green chilies, cumin, garlic powder, oregano and pepper. Simmer on low-medium heat for 20-30 minutes or until it is heated through. Right before serving, stir in sour cream and cheese until it is all blended and melted.

Diane Cerney, Shelby, Nebraska

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