

RURAL ELECTRIC

NEBRASKAN

July 2018

**Birdwatching
Around the World**



Leading Acid Reflux Pill Becomes an Anti-Aging Phenomenon

Clinical studies show breakthrough acid reflux treatment also helps maintain vital health and helps protect users from the serious conditions that accompany aging such as fatigue and poor cardiovascular health

by David Waxman
Seattle Washington:

A clinical study on a leading acid reflux pill shows that its key ingredient relieves digestive symptoms while suppressing the inflammation that contributes to premature aging in men and women.

And, if consumer sales are any indication of a product's effectiveness, this 'acid reflux pill turned anti-aging phenomenon' is nothing short of a miracle.

Sold under the brand name AloeCure, it was already backed by clinical data documenting its ability to provide all day and night relief from heartburn, acid reflux, constipation, irritable bowel, gas, bloating, and more.

But soon doctors started reporting some incredible results...

"With AloeCure, my patients started reporting less joint pain, more energy, better sleep, stronger immune systems... even less stress and better skin, hair, and nails" explains Dr. Liza Leal; a leading integrative health specialist and company spokesperson.

AloeCure contains an active ingredient that helps improve digestion by acting as a natural acid-buffer that improves the pH balance of your stomach.

Scientists now believe that this acid imbalance is what contributes to painful inflammation throughout the rest of the body.

The daily allowance of AloeCure has shown to calm this inflammation which is why AloeCure is so effective.

Relieving other stressful symptoms related to GI health like pain, bloating, fatigue, cramping, constipation, diarrhea, heartburn, and nausea.

Now, backed with new clinical studies, AloeCure is being recommended by doctors everywhere to help improve digestion, calm painful inflammation, soothe joint pain, and even reduce the appearance of wrinkles – helping patients to look and feel decades younger.

FIX YOUR GUT & FIGHT INFLAMMATION

Since hitting the market, sales for AloeCure have taken off and there are some very good reasons why.

To start, the clinical studies have been impressive. Participants taking the active ingredient in AloeCure saw a stunning 100% improvement in digestive symptoms, which includes fast and lasting relief from reflux.

Users also experienced higher energy levels and endurance, relief from chronic discomfort and better sleep. Some even reported healthier looking skin, hair, and nails.

A healthy gut is the key to a reducing swell-

ing and inflammation that can wreak havoc on the human body. Doctors say this is why AloeCure works on so many aspects of your health.

AloeCure's active ingredient is made from the healing compound found in Aloe vera. It is both safe and healthy. There are also no known side effects.

Scientists believe that it helps improve digestive and immune health by acting as a natural acid-buffer that improves the pH balance of your stomach.

Research has shown that this acid imbalance contributes to painful inflammation throughout your entire body and is why AloeCure seems to be so effective.

EXCITING RESULTS FROM PATIENTS

To date over 5 million bottles of AloeCure have been sold, and the community seeking non-pharm therapy for their GI health continues to grow.

According to Dr. Leal, her patients are absolutely thrilled with their results and are often shocked by how fast it works.

"For the first time in years, they are free from concerns about their digestion and almost every other aspect of their health," says Dr. Leal, "and I recommend it to everyone who wants to improve GI health without resorting to drugs, surgery, or OTC medications."

"I was always in 'indigestion hell.' Doctors put me on all sorts of antacid remedies. Nothing worked. Dr. Leal recommended I try AloeCure. And something remarkable happened... Not only were all the issues I had with my stomach gone - completely gone - but I felt less joint pain and I was able to actually sleep through the night."

With so much positive feedback, it's easy to see why the community of believers is growing and sales for the new pill are soaring.

THE SCIENCE BEHIND ALOECURE

AloeCure is a pill that's taken just once daily. The pill is small. Easy to swallow. There are no harmful side effects and it does not require a prescription.

The active ingredient is a rare Aloe Vera component known as acemannan.

Made from 100% organic Aloe Vera, AloeCure uses a proprietary process that results in the highest quality, most bio-available levels of acemannan known to exist.

According to Dr. Leal and several of her colleagues, improving the pH balance of your stomach and restoring gut health is the key to revitalizing your entire body.

When your digestive system isn't healthy, it causes unwanted stress on your immune system,

which results in inflammation in the rest of the body.

The recommended daily allowance of acemannan in AloeCure has been proven to support digestive health, and calm painful inflammation without side effects or drugs.

This would explain why so many users are experiencing impressive results so quickly.

REVITALIZE YOUR ENTIRE BODY

With daily use, AloeCure helps users look and feel decades younger and defend against some of the painful inflammation that accompanies aging and can make life hard.

By buffering stomach acid and restoring gut health, AloeCure calms painful inflammation and will help improve digestion... soothe aching joints... reduce the appearance of wrinkles and help restore hair and nails ... manage cholesterol and oxidative stress... and improve sleep and brain function... without side effects or expense.

Readers can now reclaim their energy, vitality, and youth regardless of age or current level of health.

One AloeCure Capsule Daily

- Helps End Digestion Nightmares
- Helps Calm Painful Inflammation
- Soothes Stiff & Aching Joints
- Reduces appearance of Wrinkles & Increases Elasticity
- Manages Cholesterol & Oxidative Stress
- Supports Healthy Immune System
- Improves Sleep & Brain Function

HOW TO GET ALOECURE

This is the official nationwide release of the new AloeCure pill in the United States. And so, the company is offering our readers up to 3 FREE bottles with their order.

This special give-away is available for the next 48-hours only. All you have to do is call **TOLL-FREE 1-800-578-6012** and provide the operator with the Free Bottle Approval Code: AC100. The company will do the rest.

Important: Due to AloeCure's recent media exposure, phone lines are often busy. If you call and do not immediately get through, please be patient and call back. Those who miss the 48-hour deadline may lose out on this free bottle offer.



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Is an Electric Vehicle Right for You? 14

Electric vehicle sales are booming, growing 25 percent last year. And they're getting better and cheaper as researchers improve the batteries that power them. Writer Paul Wesslund shares a guide to help you decide if an electric car is for you.

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On the cover

Nebraska is home to many rare grassland birds, and the numerous lakes that across the state act as a magnet for wintering waterbirds such as the white egret. See related article on page 6. Photograph by Alfred Leung/Unsplash

The need for broadband access in rural Nebraska is vital

Broadband is a term we hear a lot these days. Increased speeds for access to the internet is something the advertisers are telling us we need daily. But what is broadband? The answer is one that changes on a regular basis. A basic technical definition is that broadband is a high-speed communications network with a frequency range that supports multiple channels for the simultaneous transmission of signals. Those signals have speeds coming down as we access information and up as we send information from an internet connected device such as a computer, iPad or smartphone. The internet transmission speed is the part of the definition that changes.



by Kim Christiansen

What we know now is that broadband has become a significant economic driver for business. All business, including agriculture, sends and receives information from the internet. The more information we have or need, the higher speeds we require. And, while high speed internet access (broadband) continues to be improved and developed in urban areas, much of rural America has been overlooked for expansion of the newest technologies.

Business will not come to a rural community if there is no reliable broadband service. Every piece of agricultural equipment that comes off a production line is equipped with technology designed to make farming more efficient and it needs access to a high-speed internet signal. Unfortunately, we can't take advantage of that technology in many areas of the state.

Students require access to the internet to complete coursework. In some rural areas it is not uncommon after school is over for the day to see students sitting in cars surrounding the school building, so they may access an internet signal to do their homework.

NREA's members serve rural Nebraska. Coming from a rural area myself, I appreciate and value the lifestyle that rural America offers. It is sobering to see how the population of rural Nebraska has changed. We are fortunate to have thriving, growing urban communities in the state and overall Nebraska's population has grown. From 2016 to 2017 we grew by almost 13,000 residents,

but most of that growth was seen in the metropolitan areas of the state.

Because broadband is a strong economic driver, NREA has created a broadband issues task force. We are working with Nebraska Public Power District, Rural Development, the University of Nebraska, Farm Bureau, internet and telecommunications providers and others interested in the economic prosperity of rural Nebraska to determine how we can bring rural Nebraska out of digital poverty. Our goal is to facilitate broadband access to unserved or underserved areas of rural Nebraska.

Significant federal dollars have been awarded to telecommunications providers to develop broadband services. While some of those dollars are spent in rural areas, much more has been spent improving broadband service in urban areas. This needs to change as more federal funding becomes available.

As use of the world wide web increases at an astronomical pace, rural Nebraska has a long way to go just to catch up. Rural Nebraska deserves and needs broadband services of the complexity and speeds equal to what is available to our urban counterparts. Access to broadband is critical to compete now and in the future.

Across rural America in areas where for-profit broadband providers will not provide service, many rural electric cooperatives (RECs) have stepped up to the plate. These RECs are installing and operating broadband networks to benefit the consumers their rural areas. That movement is reminiscent of how electricity was brought to rural America—working together to bring a service when no one else would.

Under current law, NREA members are not able to provide rural electric consumers broadband services nor is it our desire to do so. We pledge to continue to bring our customers safe, low cost, reliable electric service. But, with the ever-increasing need for broadband in rural Nebraska, both for our business needs and for the needs of our consumers we need to look at innovation and partnerships to ensure we do what we can to end digital poverty.

Wish us luck. As Socrates said "The secret of change is to focus all of your energy, not on fighting the old, but on building the new." Our efforts on broadband try to do exactly that—build rural Nebraska.

It's not a Wheelchair... It's not a Power Chair... It's Better... It's a Zinger!

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Meet the future of personal transportation.

More and more Americans are reaching the age where mobility is an everyday issue. Whether from an injury or from the everyday aches and pains that come from getting older—getting around isn't as easy as it used to be. You may have tried a power chair or a scooter. The Zinger is NOT a power chair or a scooter! The Zinger is quick and nimble, yet it is not prone to tipping like many scooters. Best of all, it weighs only 42 pounds and folds and unfolds with ease so you can take it almost anywhere, providing you with independence and freedom.

Years of work by innovative engineers have resulted in a mobility device that's truly unique. They created a battery that provides powerful energy at a fraction of the weight of most batteries. The Zinger features two steering levers, one on either side of the seat. The user pushes both levers down to go forward, pulls them both up to brake, and pushes one while pulling the other to turn to either side. This enables great mobility, the ability to turn on a dime and to pull right up to tables or desks. The controls are right on the steering arm so it's simple to operate, and its exclusive footrest swings out of the way when you stand up or sit down. With its rugged yet lightweight aluminum frame, the Zinger is sturdy and durable yet lightweight and comfortable! What's more, it easily folds up for storage in a car seat or trunk— you can even gate-check it at the airport like a stroller. Think about it, you can take your Zinger almost anywhere, so you don't



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The Zinger folds to a mere 10 Inches.

by Gayle Gresham

Birdwatching around the world



Opposite: A birdwatcher scans the foliage for birds. Photograph by Ryan Magsino on Unsplash

Left: A male American goldfinch. Photograph by Ken Christison

Middle: A killdeer, which often perform a “broken wing” routine when predators are too close to their nest to draw the predator away. Photograph by Ken Christison

Right: The red tailed hawk watching a squirrel. Photograph by David Morris on Unsplash

Looking for your travel to take flight this year? Become a birder and enjoy all kinds of new places to visit while adding bird species to your list and enjoying time spent wherever this activity takes you.

Birdwatching is rising in popularity in the United States and throughout the world. Anyone can do it, whether you live in the city, the suburbs or the country. You can set up your own feeders in your own backyard and keep a list of the species that visit you. Or, if you love to travel and you enjoy birdwatching, you can visit wilderness refuges, travel to bird festivals, and take guided tours of bird habitats anywhere in the world.

Backyard Birdwatching

It's great to start bird watching by simply looking out your window and seeing the birds that congregate in your yard or on your patio. Is that a bluebird? What type of bluebird? An eastern, western, or mountain bluebird? You can go old school by checking a field guide like Peterson's or Sibley's or you can look up bluebirds on <http://allaboutbirds.org> (Cornell Lab of Ornithology). Check the range map and see which is common in your region. Look at the markings and distinctive features.

Many birds show enough variation to make an ID with ease. The All About Birds website also contains recordings of each bird's song so identification can also be made by the birdsong.

Going high-tech with your identification tools can make it easier to take them along when you travel. Download the Merlin Bird ID app (Cornell Lab of Ornithology) to your cell phone. The app asks five questions to help identify a bird. It then pulls up bird photos matching the description that have been seen in your region. Or, take a photo of the bird, upload it to Merlin and it will identify the bird for you.

Those who catch birdwatching fever often keep a list of the birds they have seen or heard.

A life list consists of all of the bird species seen in your lifetime while a yearly list ticks off every bird species seen in a year. A list can be kept in a simple notebook, in a special birding notebook, or it can be a simple notation of date and place beside the picture in a guide book. Computer list options include Birder's Diary software, which also allows photos, or

use the eBird mobile app for cell phones which uses GPS coordinates for bird species sightings.

As you become familiar with the birds in your backyard, you will be able to recognize when a bird not common to your area appears. When you see a rare bird, you can report it through eBird or the American Birding Society so other birders can visit your backyard and add it to their lists.

Local Birding

If birdwatching has captured your attention and your curiosity has grown beyond the birds showing up in your backyard, then what? It's time for some birding excursions.

First, call someone you know who is a birdwatcher. Don't know anyone? Start asking around. You might be surprised by which of your friends are birders. Ask at your library about birdwatching clubs or search the internet for local and state birding clubs and chapters of the Audubon Society for programs, events and field trips. You can go out on your own, but it's helpful to have someone teach you how to locate and identify the birds. Grab your binoculars, camera and cell phone and head to the wilderness or city park.

One way to learn from an

More on Page 8

Birdwatching From page 7

experienced watcher is to join the Audubon Society's annual Christmas Bird Count which allows beginner birders to take part. Participants count every bird seen or heard in a 15-mile diameter designated circle over a 24-hour period of time between December 14 and January 5. The count acts as an annual census of birds across the world.

Travel Birding

Your interest in birds has been piqued and now you'd like to see species of birds that are not local to your area. It's time to travel! You can either travel to see birds in a certain locale or go on vacation and see what

interesting birds are in your planned location. Once again, the internet can help you identify places to see birds. There are more than 562 National Wildlife Refuges and 38 wetland management districts in the United States. Visit the www.fws.gov/refuges website for locations and information. There are also 10,234 state parks and 58 national parks, giving you plenty of opportunity to travel and find birds.

At least 38 states have American Birding Association Birding Trails. A designated Birding Trail system links wildlife refuges, state parks and national parks in a state, along with noted habitats found along the route. The trails may be hiking trails or highways to drive. Information on state birding trails can be found on the internet.

The World Birding Center in the

Lower Rio Grande Valley in Texas features nine locations with more than 500 species of birds at the convergence of two major migration flyways. Bird festivals are another great way to see specific birds and take part in workshops and tours. (See sidebar) Many festivals coincide with migration to see the greatest number of species in a set place.

Competitive Birding

You've learned to identify birds, enjoy the challenge and you're ready to dive further into birding, perhaps on a competitive level. There are various events for all ages sponsored by bird organizations. Join The Big Sit! hosted by Bird Watcher's Digest — 24 hours of sitting in a 17-foot diameter circle with a team counting every birds species seen.

"Big Day" events or birdathons are sponsored by bird associations and often raise pledges for their societies and conservation by counting how many species of birds can be seen in 24 hours. They can be done individually or in teams. The Global Big Day is sponsored by eBird and on May 13, 2017, almost 20,000 birders from 150 countries turned in 50,000 checklists with 6,564 species of birds spotted in one day. That is more than 60 percent of all of the species of birds in the world.

Stretching that day to a year, The Big Year is the ultimate challenge in birding. It is a competition to see who can see the most birds in one year in a specific geographical area. (See sidebar)

A little curiosity and a greater awareness of birds can take you in many directions. Travel, see the country, see the world, see the birds as you go! Maybe a Big Year is in your future.

Gayle Gresham writes from her electric-cooperative powered home in Elbert, Colorado. She now has Merlin Bird ID on her phone and is ready to go watch some birds.

American Bird Festivals

American bird festivals are a great way to learn more about birds, add species to your life list, and enjoy traveling to new places to enjoy the great outdoors. Bird festivals are held year-round coinciding with migration patterns. Some festivals center on a certain species of bird—hummingbirds, bald eagles, sandhill cranes—while others offer the opportunity to see an amazing number of species in a short amount of time. The festivals also raise money for the conservation of birds and habitats.

Here are a few of the many festivals across the United States that you may want to check out:

Sedona Hummingbird Festival July 27-29 in Sedona, Arizona

The three-day festival features guided tours of private gardens, hummingbird banding demonstrations, and the Hummingbird Marketplace held in the lobby of the Sedona Performing Arts Center.


3rd Annual Grebe Festival August 24-26, 2018 in Chester, California

Visit Lake Almanor field to view the "dancing" grebes — Clark's and

western grebes in nesting colonies. Workshops and kayak and pontoon field trips are also available.

25th Annual Rio Grande Valley Birding Festival November 7- 11, 2018, Harlingen, Texas

Seminars and workshops with professional tour guides leading every trip. Add at least 30 new birds to your life list if you've never been to the Rio Grande Valley. Over 60 bird-related vendors at the Birders Bazaar.

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50-54	\$11.50	\$9.70	\$18.50	\$15.50	\$36.00	\$30.00	\$88.50	\$73.50
55-59	\$14.20	\$11.95	\$23.00	\$19.25	\$45.00	\$37.50	\$111.00	\$92.25
60-64	\$17.20	\$13.30	\$28.00	\$21.50	\$55.00	\$42.00	\$136.00	\$103.50
65-69	\$20.50	\$16.00	\$33.50	\$26.00	\$66.00	\$51.00	\$163.50	\$126.00
70-74	\$27.40	\$21.40	\$45.00	\$35.00	\$89.00	\$69.00	\$221.00	\$171.00
75-79	\$37.00	\$30.10	\$61.00	\$49.50	\$121.00	\$98.00	\$301.00	\$243.50
80-85	\$50.50	\$42.55	\$83.50	\$70.25	\$166.00	\$139.50	\$413.50	\$347.25

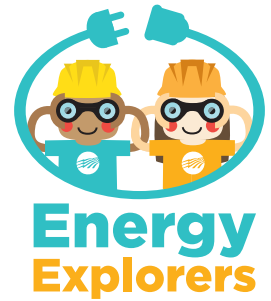
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***In FL policy is renewable until age 121.

SUMMER FUN WORD SEARCH



Summer is the best time of the year! Can you find all the words associated with summer fun in the puzzle below? Use the word bank for help.

T U O K O O C P V R I K P G N
X G H M C W Y E H C U A S K F
S E T G I C X L E J P S A S Q
Y A E E Q D I C G F I J F H Q
N B O H F I R Q N M V O I C Y
V Z P J S E H W O W T T R A I
L R K P A U O X D W D Z E E U
S W I M M I N G P O O L F B V
C W F D T L R S H G O U L T K
O I T H X W Q N C R H H I C P
V B N A M O Z F K R W E E H D
X O U C Z I N K V D E J S M H
Z J Z I I P U M Y L J E P G T
U K T R X P K U U L O H N R W
O Y Z L N G Q U S G G K R C V

WORD BANK

BEACH

COOKOUT

FIREFLIES

ICE CREAM

PICNIC

SUNSCREEN

SWIMMING POOL





Shining Light on LED Savings

LED lights last up to 30 times longer than incandescents, reducing the need to replace bulbs in high or hard-to-reach places. Where can you use LEDs?

Living Room Lamps

Table or floor three-way lamps using LED bulbs provide 620, 1,600 or 2,150 lumens of soft white light and deliver up to 25,000 hours of light.

Kitchen

Dimmable recessed LED conversion lights add a warm glow of up to 1,200 lumens for kitchen workspaces and add far less heat. Each bulb could last 10 years.

Bedrooms and Hallways

Long-life LEDs are ideal for ceiling fixtures. A 9-watt LED produces the same 800 lumens of light as a 60-watt incandescent, and uses about 80 percent less energy.

Bathrooms

Omnidirectional LED globe bulbs provide a warm glow ideal for bathrooms. A 6-watt bulb produces 450 lumens and lasts up to 15,000 hours.

Outdoors

A 6-watt, 500 lumen LED bulb can replace a 40-watt incandescent bulb. The LEDs last up to 30,000 hours, so it could be a one-time switch.

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Navigating emerging efficiency technologies

by Kaley Lockwood

Investing in energy efficient technology is becoming an increasingly attractive way to cut costs for homeowners and renters alike. This rings true especially in the deep heat of summer. Hotter days often result in higher energy bills, partially due to A/C units working overtime to keep homes cooled and comfortable.

New and emerging technologies are continuously offering innovative ways to effectively manage and reduce a home's energy consumption. Smart thermostats, for example, have proven their worth in shaving 10 to 15 percent off an average home's electric bill. These thermostats, in time, will effectively pay for themselves which make them an attractive option to many. Unfortunately, not all technologies can live up to their hype and some even come with side effects that can arguably overshadow their benefits.

The Mistbox Air Conditioner Cooler is one such technology. Mistbox claims to save its customers

between 20 to 38 percent on their electricity bills. This technology requires a simple installation to a home's outdoor A/C unit and works by spraying a mist to precool the air around the unit. In using this evaporative cooling method, your A/C unit theoretically doesn't have to work as hard to pump cool air into your home. This may be beneficial when air temperature is at its highest. In the short term Mistbox may work, but there are some real caveats that need to be considered.

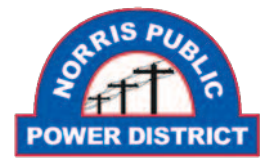
A primary point of concern is that an A/C unit is not designed to be sprayed down with such frequency. Although the Mistbox system comes with a water filter, the company only recommends using its technology if your home's water has a hardness less than 500 parts per million. This automatically rules out anyone who uses well water. Even if you do have a home with the required water hardness, the filtration system can't completely prevent your system from rusting. Corrosion will occur resulting in a damaged unit.

Public power districts and electric cooperatives know it's important to help consumers navigate these

emerging technologies and provide the most cost-effective and beneficial energy management solutions. If you're interested in taking steps to become more energy efficient, we recommend these tried and true tips:

- Clean and change the filters on your HVAC system regularly to make your unit run more efficiently, keeping your house cooler in the summer and warmer in the winter.
- In spring and summer months, set your ceiling fans to turn in the counterclockwise direction to create a cool breeze. In autumn and winter months, set your fan to turn in the clockwise direction. This will redistribute warm air throughout the room.
- Add caulk or weather stripping to seal air leaks around leaky doors and windows.
- Insulation is important. Properly insulating your home reduces heating and cooling costs, and improves comfort.

Remember, there are easy steps you can take now to improve the energy efficiency of your home. To learn about additional ways to save, contact the energy experts at your local electric utility.



A color guard from VFW Post 10042 and a 21-gun salute by Legion Post 27 were part of the dedication ceremony. Retired U.S. Army General Charles "Jim" Barr was the guest speaker.

Norris Power Goodwill Fund supports Pickrell Veterans Memorial

A dream to create a Veterans Memorial in Pickrell, Neb., was achieved with financial support from local residents, businesses and Operation Round Up funds distributed by Norris Public Power District.

A dedication ceremony was held for the Pickrell Veterans Memorial on June 10, 2018. Retired United States Army General Charles "Jim" Barr was the guest speaker for the dedication. He thanked all veterans for their service and reminded those in attendance that "freedom is never free."

"As the monument proclaims, all gave some and some gave all," Barr said. "I consider this side hallowed ground. Whether you're related to someone whose name is here or not, you share a kinship."

Barr encouraged students and young people to visit the memorial and learn about the sacrifices veterans made to protect America's freedom.

The Veterans Memorial includes the name of area veterans inscribed in granite. A flag for each branch of the military is on display along with the United States flag and a flag remembering American prisoners of war.

While the memorial is home to the names of many local veterans, there is also space available to add the names of future local veterans.

Numerous veterans of all ages from all branches of the military attended the ceremony along with a color guard from VFW Post 10042, a 21-gun salute by Legion Post 27, and members of the Legion Riders motorcycle group.

Pickrell residents Melvin and Faye Winkle presented a memorial wreath during the ceremony.

The Pickrell Historical & Betterment Association was awarded Operation Round Up funds from Norris PPD in 2016 & 2017 that were associated with Veterans Memorial.

Norris Public Power District

launched its "Operation Round Up" program in 2001. Operation Round Up is a voluntary program that enables customers to have their monthly electric bills "rounded up" to the next highest dollar. The additional cents are placed in the Norris Power Goodwill Fund. The fund is administered by a Board of Directors made up of one Norris customer from each of the six counties served by the district. The board meets quarterly to consider requests and make disbursements.

Participation in the program is strictly voluntary. The average contribution per customer is about 50 cents a month, or six dollars per year. This is perhaps considered small change to the individual, but the thousands of dollars the program generates means a big difference to the people in the six-county service area. Since its inception, Operation Round Up has granted a total of \$828,089.92 to organizations within the Norris PPD service territory.



by Paul Wesslund

Is an electric vehicle right for you?

The economics of electric vehicles are affected by geography, climate and how your electricity is generated.

Should your next car be an electric vehicle? The answer could depend on where you live and how much you drive.

Electric vehicles account for just 1.2 percent of the U.S. vehicle market, but sales are booming, growing 25 percent last year. And they're getting better and cheaper as researchers improve the batteries that power them. Here's a guide to help you decide if an electric car is for you—or if you just want to be smarter about one of the next big things in energy.

The first thing to realize about electric cars is they can drive more than enough miles for you on a single charge, even if you live out in the wide-open countryside.

Location issue #1: the distance myth

Try keeping track of your actual daily use, advises Brian Sloboda, a program and product manager at the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association.

"If you're an insurance salesman, you're logging a lot of miles, so an electric car's not going to be for you," he says, noting that a typical range

for an electric car today is over 100 miles, and ranges of 150 to 250 miles are becoming common. "But if you look at how many miles you drive in a day, for most people in the United States, even in rural areas, that number is under 40 miles per day. So if your car has a range of 120 miles, that's a lot of wiggle room."

According to the Federal Highway Administration, the average American drives 25 miles a day, and for rural areas, that average is 34 miles a day.

Sloboda says another reason it's worth thinking realistically about your daily mileage comes from the most likely way an electric car would be refueled. When an electric car is done driving for the day, you can plug it in to recharge overnight. Essentially, you're topping off the gas tank while you sleep, giving you a fully-charged battery every morning.

There are three ways to charge an electric car:

Level 1—The simplest charging technique is to plug the car into a standard home outlet. That will charge the battery at a rate that will add from two to five miles to its

range each hour. That's pretty slow, but Sloboda notes the battery might start the charging session already partly charged, depending on how far it's driven that day.

Level 2—Faster charging will require a professional installer to upgrade the home's voltage for a unit that will add between 10 and 25 miles of range for each hour of charging—a rate that would fully charge the battery overnight. Sloboda says installing a Level 2 charger in a house or garage would run \$500 to \$800 for the equipment, plus at least that much for the labor. Timers can also be used to charge the vehicle in the middle of the night when electric consumption is typically lower.

Level 3—DC fast charge requires specialized equipment more suited to public charging stations, and will bring a car battery up to 80 percent of capacity in 30 minutes. Sloboda warns this high-speed technique should only be used for special long-distance driving, since it can degrade the battery over time. That's also why DC chargers shouldn't be used to bring the battery up to 100 percent.



Location issue #2: off-peak electric rates

What you pay to charge your electric car could also depend on where you live, says Sloboda. He advises checking to see whether your local public power district or electric co-op offers a lower rate to charge an electric vehicle overnight, when the utility has a lower demand for electricity.

“It’s different depending on where you are in the country,” says Sloboda. Some local utilities have fairly stable electric demand throughout a typical day, so they may not offer a special electric vehicle rate. He adds, “There are areas of the country where the on-peak, off-peak difference in price is extreme,” so that it might make financial sense for the utility to offer an over-night charging rate.

Another factor affecting the economics of an electric car is, of course, the cost of the vehicle.

“These cars are really in the luxury and performance car categories,” says Sloboda. As electric cars improve, projections put their cost coming down to match conventional vehicles by about the year 2025. But

today, the average electric car costs close to \$40,000, compared with less than \$30,000 for an internal combustion engine.

Location issues #3 and #4: environment and geography

For many people, one of the biggest selling points for electric cars is their effect on the environment, and that can also depend on where you live.

The sources of electricity for a local utility vary across the country—some areas depend heavily on coal-fired power plants, others use larger shares of solar or wind energy. One major environmental group analyzed all those local electric utility fuel mixes, and determined that for most of the country, electric vehicles have much less of an effect on the environment than conventional vehicles. That study by the Union of Concerned Scientists shows that in the middle part of the country, driving an electric vehicle has the equivalent environmental benefits of driving a gasoline-powered car that gets 41-50 miles per gallon. For much of the rest of the country, it’s like driving a car that

gets well over 50 miles per gallon.

“Seventy-five percent of people now live in places where driving on electricity is cleaner than a 50 MPG gasoline car,” says the report from the Union of Concerned Scientists.

Other local factors that will affect an electric car’s performance include climate and geography, says Sloboda. The range of the vehicle will be affected by whether you regularly drive up and down mountains, or make a lot of use of the heater or air conditioner.

Sloboda concedes that electric vehicles are not for everybody—yet. One limit to their growth is that no major carmaker offers an especially popular choice, a pickup truck.

Sloboda says there’s no technological barrier to making an electric pickup. He even suggests possible advantages: a heavy battery in the bottom would lower the center of gravity for better handling, and at a remote worksite the battery could run power tools.

“Within the next 24 months I believe there will be a credible pickup truck on the market,” says Sloboda. “It’s just a matter of time.”

Use caution with Fourth of July fireworks

What would the Fourth of July be without cookouts, baseball games, and pyrotechnic displays in the night sky? But it's easy to forget that fireworks are dangerous explosives, and carelessness could have deadly consequences.

Every year, thousands of people are injured by fireworks, according to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC).

The federal government has banned sales of the most dangerous fireworks to consumers, such as cherry bombs and M-80s. But sparklers, firecrackers, and other smaller fireworks remain legal in most states.

To help make sure your holiday celebrations don't end with a trip to the emergency room, follow these safety tips from the CPSC:

- Sparklers aren't safe for small children. They burn at very high temperatures—up to 2,000 degrees Fahrenheit, hot enough to melt some

metals—and can easily set clothes on fire.

- Ignite fireworks in a clearing, away from power lines, homes, other structures, dry leaves and grass, and other flammable materials. Never light them in any type of container.

- Keep a bucket of water handy in

case of emergencies and for fireworks that fail to ignite or explode.

- Check instructions for storage, but generally keep fireworks in a cool, dry place.

- Do not place any part of your body directly over fireworks while you're lighting them, and immediately move away as soon as the device is lit.

- “Homemade” fireworks kits are illegal. Never try to make your own.

- After fireworks have completely burned out, soak them with a hose before throwing them in the trash to help prevent fires.

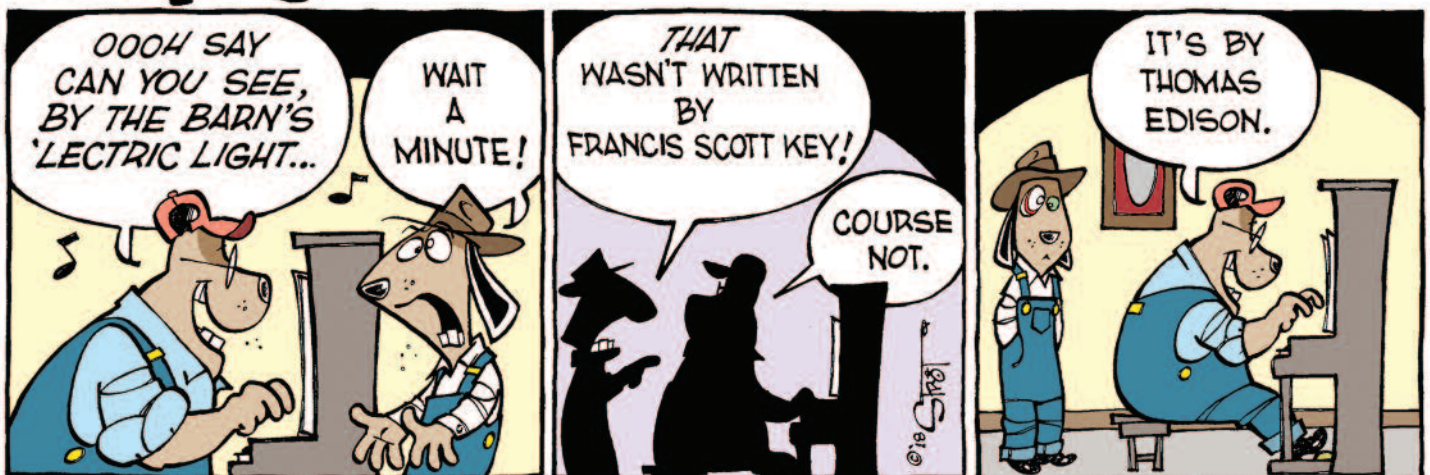
“The Fourth of July is a time to celebrate, but we urge you to use caution with fireworks—and always look up for power lines before you shoot anything skyward,” urges NREA Job Training and Safety Coordinator Larry Oetken.



An illegal M1000 explodes a watermelon at the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission's fireworks demonstration.

Source: U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission

Murphy



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Understanding your energy bill

by Pat Keegan

Q : Every month, I look over my electric bill, but a lot of it doesn't make sense to me. Is there information included on my bill that can help me save money?

A : It's always a good idea to understand how you're spending your money. You look over your credit card statement carefully each month, so you should do the same with your utility bills. As you'd suspect, analyzing your bill can help you save energy and money.

If you live in an all-electric home, all of your home energy costs will be on the monthly bill from your public power district or electric cooperative. This bill will probably have one or more fixed charges that cover some of the costs your utility incurs in delivering the power to your home. Beyond these fixed fees, you will pay for the power you have used that

month, which is sold in kilowatt-hour (kWh) units. One kWh is equal to 1,000 watts over a one-hour period. Think of 10 100-watt lights that are used for one hour. Most rural electric utilities charge the same rate for a kWh no matter when you use it, but some offer a Time-of-Use rate that is higher during peak energy hours—when the wholesale price of electricity is higher because there's greater demand. Some utilities have different rates for different use tiers, so the rate could be higher or lower as monthly use increases. Electric rates can also vary by season and cost more during high-use months.

If you're being charged more for energy use during On-Peak hours, you can often adjust the time you use certain appliances and equipment, like your dishwasher, air conditioner, clothes washer or oven to Off-Peak

hours. This won't reduce your electric use, but it can save you money if your electric utility offers a Time-of-Use rate.

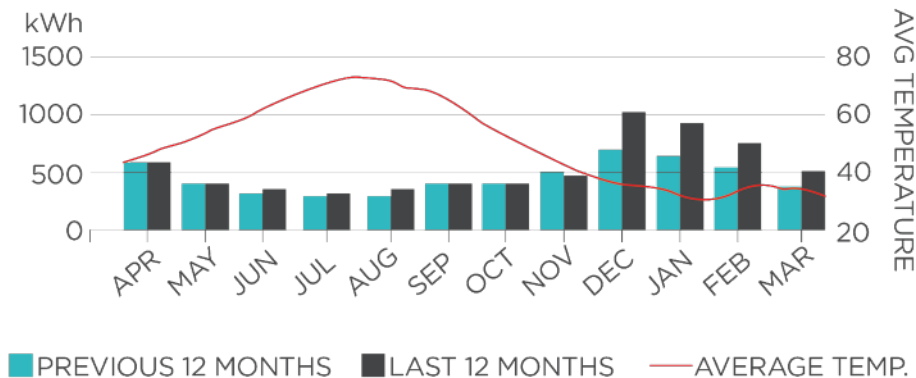
Most energy bills include a chart that shows your electric use over the past 12 months. If your home is electrically heated, you will see how much your use goes up in the winter. This chart can also show how much your use goes up during the summer when you're running your air conditioner.

Your public power district or electric co-op may offer tools on their website to help you track energy use and estimate how much you use for space heating, air conditioning and water heating, which are often the three largest energy uses. Knowing how much you spend on heating or cooling can help you determine how much you might save by installing a new heat pump or other energy efficiency upgrade.

Nebraska Public Power District offers a number of energy cost calculators on their website at www.nppd.com. The calculators cover everything from appliances to televisions. They also have heating, air conditioning and water heating cost calculators available.

Some rural electric utilities also offer online energy audit tools that provide ways to reduce energy costs based on a detailed set of questions about your home. If your utility doesn't offer an online audit tool, or if you want a different perspective, you can try the EnergyStar Home Energy Yardstick. This resource can give you a good idea of your space heating and cooling use without using an online tool. Just total up your average electricity use for the months when you use the most energy and subtract the average amount you use in "shoulder months"—when you're not cooling or heating your home. The difference is likely the amount you pay each month for heating and cooling.

Sample Energy Use Chart

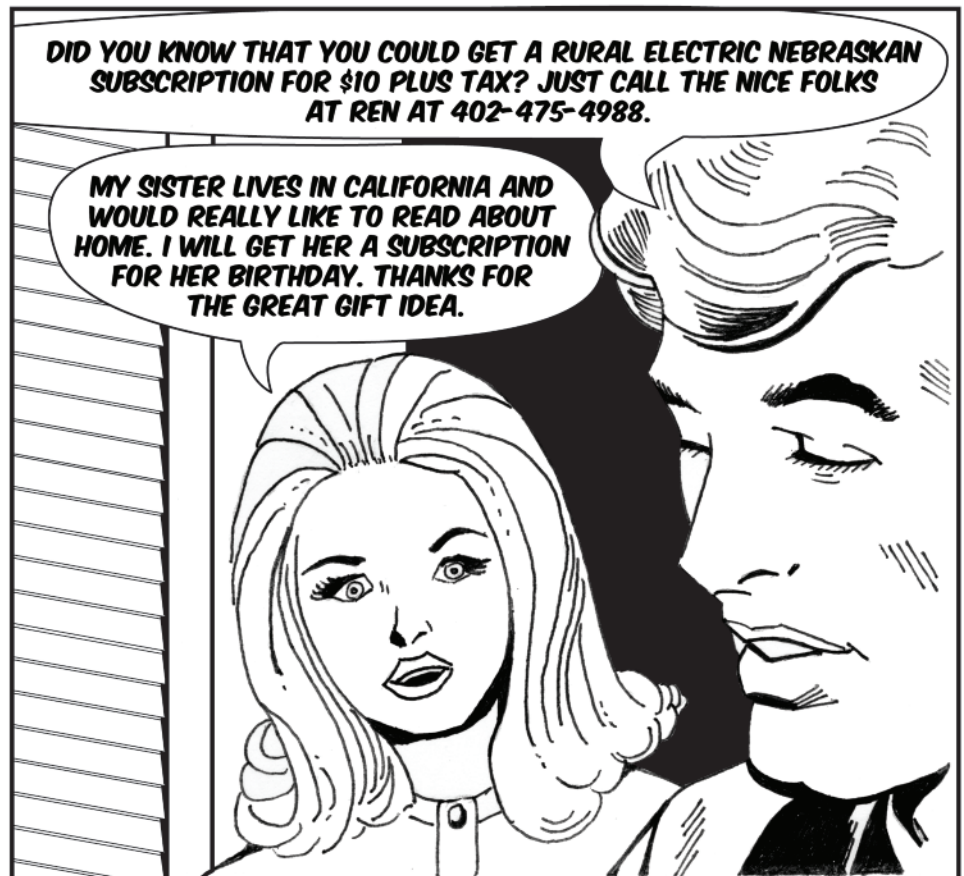


Most energy bills include an annual energy use chart, which can provide clues to identify areas of energy efficiency opportunities. Graph provided by Collaborative Efficiency

If someone says switching to a new heating or cooling system could save you 20 percent, they may mean you can save 20 percent on heating or cooling costs. Some homes also have significant uses besides heating and cooling that increase their winter or summer bills, like a well pump, spa or swimming pool.

You may receive a separate monthly bill for natural gas, or for propane or heating oil which might be delivered on an as-needed, keep-filled basis. The Home Energy Yardstick can accommodate any type of fuel you use in your home.

Hopefully this information can help you analyze your energy bill and give you some general ideas on how you might be able to cut your energy expenses. The best way to turn these ideas into specific actions is to conduct an energy audit of your home. Contact your rural electric utility to see if they offer free energy audits.

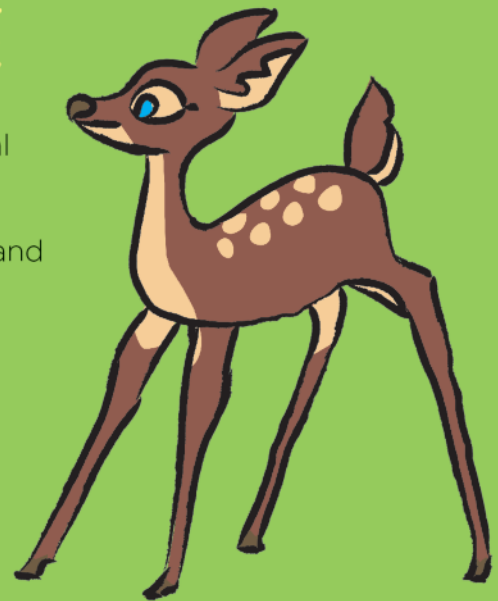


LEAVE WILDLIFE BABIES ALONE

It is natural for some people who see a young wild animal apparently abandoned by its mother to want to rescue it. The correct course of action is to leave it alone.

Here are some rules of thumb from the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission regarding wildlife babies:

- A lone fawn, or other young bird or mammal, may appear to be abandoned or injured, but the mother frequently is off feeding or drinking. Do not move it. The longer the fawn is separated from its mother, the slimmer the chance that it will be reunited with her. In some cases, other deer will adopt an orphaned fawn.
- It is normal for a doe to leave its fawn to keep it from being detected by predators. Predators can see the doe as it feeds, so she leaves the fawn hidden and leaves the area to draw attention away from the fawn's location.
- Do not try to raise wildlife babies as pets. As animals mature, they become more independent and follow natural instincts to leave and establish their own territories. Rescued animals are poorly prepared for life in the wild.
- Most wildlife babies are protected by state or federal law and it is illegal to possess them.



Add some spice to summer entertaining

Warmer weather may mean finding ways to cool off, but that doesn't mean you can't bring bold flavors to the party.

When the sun is shining, it's time to fire up the grill, which means you can get creative and show off your skills. Add a little flavor to your world with a versatile ingredient like Tabasco Sauce, which has helped personalize the flavors of food across the globe for nearly 150 years. Whether used as an ingredient or condiment, it can add flavor to virtually any type of cuisine, including Mexican favorites like this Parrillada Mixta with Garlic and Sweet Chipotle Marinades.

Throw some steak, shrimp and chicken on the grill and combine with sweet and spicy marinades to create a grilled spread that's nearly irresistible. Take it up a notch and serve it with sides such as fresh limes, sizzling onions, creamy guacamole, pico de gallo and soft corn tortillas to complete your meal. It's a tasty way to add an extra kick of flavor.

Find more recipes and ways to flavor your world at Tabasco.com.

Parrillada Mixta with Garlic and Sweet Chipotle Marinades

Garlic Chipotle Marinade:

- 14 garlic cloves, peeled
- 1 medium white onion, quartered
- 1 1/2 cups light Mexican beer
- 3/4 cup olive oil
- 1 tablespoon coarse black pepper
- 4 tablespoons Tabasco Chipotle Pepper Sauce
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 flank steaks (1 pound each)

To make Garlic Chipotle Marinade: In blender, puree garlic, onion, beer, olive oil and pepper. Transfer puree to large mixing bowl; add chipotle sauce and salt.

Place steaks in re-sealable plastic bag and pour in marinade.

Note: Marinating time depends on the cut of beef selected. For fajitas or skirt steak, marinate at least 6 hours.

Sweet Chipotle Marinade:

- 8 garlic cloves, peeled
- 1 red bell pepper, de-seeded and stemmed
- 1 small white onion
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
- 8 tablespoons olive oil
- 8 tablespoons agave syrup
- 4 tablespoons fresh lime juice
- 1 1/4 cups orange juice
- 1 1/4 cups cold water
- 4 tablespoons Tabasco Chipotle Pepper Sauce salt, to taste
- 2 pounds extra-large shrimp, peeled, deveined and tails on
- 4-6 boneless, skinless chicken breasts

To make Sweet Chipotle Marinade: In blender, puree garlic, bell pepper, onion, cinnamon, paprika, olive oil, agave, lime juice, orange juice, water and chipotle pepper sauce.

In separate re-sealable plastic bags, divide marinade over chicken and shrimp. Allow shrimp to marinate 8 hours and chicken 24 hours.

To prepare meat: Remove steak, shrimp and chicken from marinade and set aside. Heat grill to medium-high heat. Brush off excess marinade and grill chicken first, to desired doneness, then steak and shrimp.

Note: Cooking times will vary depending on cuts of meat and desired doneness. For best results, use a meat thermometer.

Serving suggestion: Place steak, shrimp and chicken on large platter and serve with side items.





Pineapple Pork Kebabs

- 1/2 Smithfield Prime Boneless Fresh Pork Loin**
- 1 sweet onion, cut into 1-1 1/2-inch square pieces**
- 1 red bell pepper, cut into 1-1 1/2-inch square pieces**
- 2 cups pineapple chunks**
- 3-4 tablespoons barbecue rub**
- 2 1/2 cups teriyaki marinade**
- 3-4 flexible skewers**

Heat grill or smoker to 250 F. Cut pork loin into 2-inch cubes.

Season pork loin, sweet onion, red bell pepper and pineapple chunks with rub.

Thread pork loin, onion, pepper and pineapple on skewer; repeat until length of skewer is almost full. Repeat with additional skewers.

Put assembled kebabs in large resealable bag and add teriyaki marinade. Carefully remove air from marinade bag and refrigerate 20 minutes.

Remove kebabs from marinade bag and place on grill over indirect heat; cook 12-14 minutes, remove and set aside.

Increase grill temperature to 400 F. Sear kebabs at high heat, until caramelized. Using meat thermometer, check pork loin cubes for doneness; remove from heat once pork reaches internal temperature of 145 F.

Find more summer grilling tips and pitmaster-perfected recipes at SmithfieldGetGrilling.com.

Strawberry Lemon Streusel Muffins

- 1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour**
- 1/2 cup sugar**
- 2 teaspoons baking powder**
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon**
- 1/4 teaspoon salt**
- 1/2 cup milk**
- 1/2 cup butter or margarine, melted**
- 1 egg**
- 1 1/2 cups fresh strawberries, chopped**
- 1 teaspoon lemon peel**

Lemon Streusel Topping: Combine 1/4 cup chopped pecans, 1/4 cup packed brown sugar, 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour, 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon and 1/2 teaspoon grated lemon peel. Add 1 tablespoon melted butter or margarine and stir till crumbly.

Lemon Glaze: Combine 1/2 cup powdered sugar and 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice in small bowl, stirring till smooth.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Paper line 12 muffin cups. Prepare lemon streusel topping and lemon glaze, set aside. Combine flour, sugar, baking powder, cinnamon and salt in large bowl. Combine milk, butter and egg in small bowl until well blended. Stir into flour mixture just until moistened. Fold in strawberries and lemon peel. Spoon evenly into prepared muffin cups. Sprinkle with lemon streusel topping evenly over top of muffins. Bake 20 to 25 minutes. Remove from pan, cool for 10 minutes, then drizzle glaze over tops of muffins. Serve warm or cool. Makes 12 muffins.

Beverly Stava, Bruno, Nebraska


Roasted Ratatouille

- 1 eggplant, cubed**
- 1 sweet onion, cubed**
- 1 sweet pepper, cubed**
- 2 medium zucchini, cubed**
- 3 cloves garlic, sliced**
- 2 tablespoons oil**
- 1 teaspoon thyme, rosemary or both**
- Salt and pepper**
- 2 cups cherry tomatoes**

Place everything but tomatoes on a large baking sheet and toss with oil to coat. Roast at 425 degrees for 20 minutes or until vegetables are browned on the bottom. Remove pan from oven and stir in tomatoes. Roast about 15 minutes longer or until tomatoes are softened. Serve warm or cold.

Hanna Cox, Kearney, Nebraska


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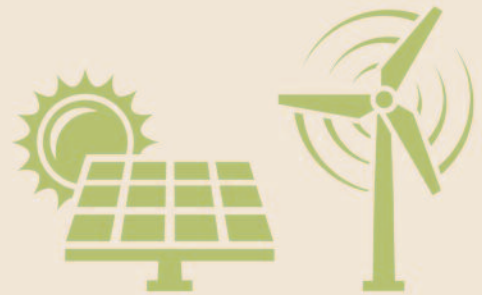
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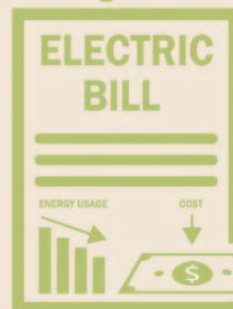
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